

Intro:

You're watching television alone in your living room.
Without your involvement, the channel changes.
A pale inhuman being stares at you through the screen.
You turn the television off. And now the creature stands feet away from you.

You need my help.

This is A Voice From Darkness.

Hello, as always this is Dr. Malcolm Ryder, parapsychologist. Here to answer your supernatural questions, warn you of otherworldly threats that span our country, and teach you a bit of bizarre American history. We have a full show tonight, so why don't we get right to our National Alerts.

National Alerts:

Our first national alert is for North Carolina. Bars and music venues in and around Asheville have hosted a rock band called Spirit Mirror. Following each of their performances, those who were in attendance have reported they can no longer see their own eyes in reflective surface. When they stare into a mirror, there are two black voids where their eyes once were. Their eyes are not missing. Anyone who looks at the affected see nothing wrong. Only those who heard the live music of Spirit Mirror cannot see their own eyes. The band has no website, no contact number, or any other means of getting a hold of them. When asked, each music venue was unsure how the gigs were booked. To those in North Carolina, do not attend any concerts or shows featuring the band Spirit Mirror.

Our second national alert is for central Pennsylvania. Small towns across the region have relayed to me that a man in a grey suit missing his left ring finger has journeyed into their communities and parlayed with their people. Offering them the extravagant and impossible in exchange for the seemingly inconsequential. To the people of central Pennsylvania, do not make any deals with The Traveling Salesman. Do not meet with him. Do not shake his hand. Do not even nod your head in response when he tells you, "Good morning." Nothing pleasant can come from any interaction with him.

That is all for national alerts.

Quick Questions:

For our next segment, I'll be answering quick questions you've sent to us either via Twitter @vfdarkness or by email at avoicefromdarkness@gmail.com. If you have a question you'd like answered on the show, please tweet us at @vfdarkness or write us at avoicefromdarkness@gmail.com

Our first question comes from Sarah. She writes, "Dr. Ryder, I moved into a new house recently. Multiple nights I've gone to bed in the master bedroom, but I'll wake and find myself in the closet of one of the other bedrooms. A loud banging on the door always wakes me. I'll call out to whatever's causing the sound, but they only answer by furiously hitting the closet door harder. When the morning comes the noise stops. I have no history of sleepwalking or hearing things that aren't there. What's happening to me in my new house?"

Well Sarah, if I were to make a guess, I'd say you have two entities in your house. One trying to protect you, and guiding you in your sleep to a place they feel is safe - that other bedroom's closet. And then a second entity that means you harm. Are the entities spirits or some other unworldly creature? I don't know. I'd be happy to get you in touch with a good spiritualist in your area. They'd better be able to assess the nature of the haunting you're experiencing and help put an end to them.

Our second question comes from Bob in Minnesota. They write, "I was on the road, passing through Montana and I stopped at a diner one night. Place wasn't crowded. A large man in a t-shirt that read: They Are Here. They've Always Been Here sat a few stools away from me at the counter. Before the waitress came over to take my order, she spilled a container of sugar, laughed about it, and asked the large man in the t-shirt what his plans were for the fourth of July. Thought that was weird, since the holiday's months away. Didn't say anything about it though. Just got my food, kept to myself, and left. The thing is, I had to come back that way on my return trip. Again I stopped at the diner, about the same time of night. Place was as busy as before. I sat at the counter. The large man, wearing the same t-shirt, was already there, eating the meal he had before. The same waitress came out. She once again spilled sugar. Laughed and asked the gentleman about his fourth of July plans. He was partway through giving the answer I'd overheard my previous visit - but I interrupted. Asked why they were having a conversation about the fourth of July - twice now - so many months out. They stopped talking. Both had concerned, nervous looks about them. The waitress pulled out a bunch of papers. Coffee-stained, held together with brass tacks. She came over to me and whispered, "That's not your line. Aren't you off book yet?" Her finger guided me down the page of a playscript. I saw stage directions and dialogue. For the waitress, for the large man. For myself. Her spilling the sugar. Her lines about the fourth of July. His response, my sitting down, my ordering a meal - all in the script. There were lines I was supposed to say to the both of them. Things that made no sense to me. Things I'd never say. So I ran out the diner. Ran out, got in my car, and drove as

fast as I could for as long as I could. What did I walk into, Dr. Ryder? Please help me understand what happened.

Bob, I'm afraid I don't know what you walked into. I could say something trite about how Shakespeare believed all the world's a stage, but obviously he didn't mean that literally. If you would, please send in more information - the name and address of the diner. I'd like to visit it myself perhaps or ask a colleague to stop by there. Gather some first hand intel, so I can better understand what's happening at this Montana diner.

That's all the time for questions we have for your written questions. Onward to Today In Odd America, and then we'll open up our phone lines.

Today In Odd America:

Today in Odd America we find ourselves in Guilford, Connecticut. Earlier this evening, the children of Guilford put on masks sculpted from wax - made to resemble hideous monsters. They trampled through streets with a candlestick in one hand and a bag in the other. Children playfully hit adults with their candlesticks, and in return were given candy. A bonfire was lit in the middle of the town's square. After the fire had been burning for a few hours, a skeleton in a misshapen wax crown, dubbed the Candlestick King, was thrown in. Children cast their masks off into the flames as well, and presented the Candlestick King some of their candy bounty. At the end of the night, children buried their candlesticks in their backyards - where they'll remain until next year. This is a holiday that only exists in Guilford.

Most believe it is a second Halloween. And seeing how the holiday is celebrated, it's understandable to draw that conclusion.

But that's not what the Candlestick Riot is.

To better understand the holiday's true meaning, let us go back on this day to the year 1748, when the first Candlestick Riot occurred.

William Martin was twelve years old at the time of the initial event. Forty years later, he'd write a few pages about the night in his memoir on his career as a judge. No other details in the book deal with the supernatural. Almost everything else he wrote can be corroborated with other documents from the era. So we'll take William's account of the Candlestick Riot at face value.

Sometime late in the night, William felt a compulsion to rise from his bed. I say compulsion, though William stated it was unclear if he were controlling his body at this time, and throughout the rest of the night, or if he were merely a spectator to the acts his body committed. He left his

bedroom and made his way down the hall. Behind him came his two sisters from their room. His parents in front of him, coming from their bedroom. No one spoke.

The Martin family silently shambled into the dining room. On the table were several unlit candles in brass and iron candlesticks. Each family member grabbed a candlestick with one hand and held a candle in the other. Father turned to mother. Mother to father. William turned to his two sisters - and they back to him. All at once they rushed each other. William broke the jaw of one sister, and cracked several ribs of the other. They each offered him their candles. When they did, he stopped beating them. His mother was not so lucky.

His father, Mathias, beat his wife to death with a heavy iron candlestick. Afterwards, he reached down and grabbed the blood-soaked wax from her hand. He then turned to William - who presented his three candles to his father.

This offering was accepted. Afterwards, Mathias and William made their way outside. The sisters stayed behind with their mother's body.

The Martin's neighbors stood outside their own homes. Bloody. Bruised. Those holding candlesticks and wax charged at each other. From across streets and yards: men, women, and children were beaten. Dozens to death. More would die in the following days of injuries they sustained. But the night was not yet over.

Those who gathered the most candles from their skirmishes lit small fires all over Guilford. They melted their wax and rubbed it over their heads. They burned their skin and hair doing so. But it didn't stop them. They molded the wax into monstrous shapes.

While they did this, those who lost their candles but who were not too injured to walk, gathered wood and carried it to the center of town. They lit a bonfire.

Soon all ambulatory members of Guilford gathered around the fire. Two circles formed. The outer, and bigger, was filled with those who lost their candles. The inner circle all wore wax masks and held bloody candlesticks.

The outer circle locked arms and swayed back and forth. They chanted: "Flame against the shadow. Flame against the shadow. Protect us from the echo. Protect us from the echo."

William chanted along with everyone else. The meaning of their chant, unclear to him.

The inner circle walked closer to the fire. They let their hideous wax masks melt. They held their candlesticks in the flames - until they burned their hands.

The third round of fighting began. The inner circle consisted of only a dozen or so. Mostly men. When it was all over, only one remained. Mathias Martin stood alone - victorious. The outer

circle moved in. They took the wax from the dead and placed it over his body. Once encased, he could barely move. But he stepped closer to the bonfire.

Mathias shouted, "Who is your Candlestick King?"

The outer circle reformed with locked arms and chanted back, "You are the Candlestick King."

"Who protects you from shadow and echo?"

"The Candlestick King!"

This call and response went on for sometime. But it ended when Mathias walked into the fire.

As his body burned the outer circle chanted, "Shadow and echo are defeated. Long live the flame." Over the chanting, William claimed he heard his father's last words: "Keep a candle lit, William."

The outer circle chanted until only ash was left. Ash and a skeleton clutching a heavy iron candlestick.

The sun began to rise. The outer circle collected the candlesticks and dispersed. But before reentering their homes, they dug into the earth and buried their candlesticks. Only then was the night truly over.

The dead were collected. The injured, looked after. No one was charged with any crimes for what occurred.

Townfolk were terrified the events might repeat. But the next night passed. And the next. When the anniversary of what was now referred to as The Candlestick Riot approached, Guilford again worried the event might repeat itself. But it did not. For over a century, The Candlestick Riot fell into obscurity.

No one knows when The Candlestick Riot turned into an annual holiday. A strange, childish, almost mocking echo of what the first event was, but it's now been celebrated annually by the community for decades.

My grandfather, Professor Duncan Ryder had a fascination with the ritual. He was the one who first told me of the holiday's history. This will seem like a non-sequitur, but he also hated Frank Sinatra. Early in Sinatra's career, in 1940, he recorded a song called "We Three (My Echo My Shadow And Me). My grandfather believed Sinatra had secret knowledge of whatever forces compelled Guilford to behave the way it did during the inaugural Candlestick Riot.

He once confronted Sinatra at a show sometime in the '60s. Demanding the singer tell all he knew about shadow and echo. Security grabbed my grandfather and hauled him away. But as they did, Sinatra said to him with a wink, "Keep a candle lit, William."

Not since the first Candlestick Riot has anything like it occurred in Guilford. Was the sacrifice made by Mathias Martin enough to ward off shadow and echo? Was the event simply a mass delusion? Or was it real... and shadow and echo have since triumphed? And the world now waits for a new Candlestick King to defeat them? The answers to these questions remain a mystery. But maybe you should keep a candle lit, just to be safe.

And now back to our main show.