

Exorcism and Possession

Presented by Rev. Elijah Elam

This panel, held in the basement of the lodge, welcomes attendees to an unlit room with one wall of damp concrete where a projector screen hangs and three sides of tall temporary dividers. There is no door, instead only an opening that lets in a stream of yellow light. It's the only thing aside from the white of the projector that cuts through the darkness.

At the back of the room a volunteer stands at the projector, a whirling old beast, and at the front sits just one man at a white table. He sits looking at the blank projector screen, leaning on his elbows with his fingers casually interlaced in front of his face. He's wearing priest's clothing, and to his side is a very large black bag. It looks like a doctor's bag, large, leather, with silver clasps and depressed folds at the top that when the bag is open would offer straight vertical sides, easy access to any tools inside...

Slowly people trickle in taking their place in the fold out metal chairs lined in rows. Unlike other panels attendees might have attended there is no ceremonious introduction. After a few minutes in a settled room the priest simply begins to speak.



Thank you. Thank you all for taking the time to be here for my presentation. I am father Elijah.

Today I hope to impart my knowledge regarding the spirits and forces beyond our control. These things that are far beyond our limited, worldly, perception...

I know that many of you are simply here because, maybe you're a fan of the exorcist. Rosemary's Baby, Poltergeist, the list goes on, and that's not a bad thing, but I'm going to tell you right now that this presentation, as dramatic as it may come across, isn't about sensationalism and ghost stories.

It's about you. Giving you all the tools to face these very real, very dangerous things, because often, when we do, we will be on our own.

So I hope that while you might enjoy my presentation that you also take it as seriously as you can.



And so the presentation began...
well... almost.

"To just get us started are there any questions you all might like to ask me?"

A man with a beard that looked like a moss had grown over his neck raised his hand... and once called on he began instead of asking questions of the topic at hand asking Elijah questions about religion, primarily it's logical fallacies in an overly superior tone... minutes pass and the projector whirs on with no slides to accompany it. You wonder if the presentation will get a chance to start at all with this man berating the priest... *perhaps you should cut in.*

UNFORTUNATELY A WILD NECKBEARD HAS APPEARED AND DECIDED TO COMMANDEER THE PANEL WITH UM ACTUALLY!!! WHAT A PREDICAMENT.

In order to get further information of Elijah's expertise players must **ASK QUESTIONS** to divert the conversation back on topic for brief reprives. As questions are asked more sections of this document will be unlocked and added for character enjoyment.

PRESENTATION SECTIONS

LOCKED
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AL. GATOR

The whirr of the projector paced like a heartbeat, breathing life into the depths of a room in rigor mortis. Dust had sat suspended in the air, breathlessly forgotten to time.

It was the man's ominous bag that caught Al's eye initially, was that equipment to exercise? Would there be a live spirit banishment presentation like the in the films? Maybe Father could help with Al's troublesome droning in the shower drain... A hint of anticipation raised the hairs on the back of his neck, frozen in place with the inert air. He trusted this man of great patience.

When Alphonse raised his hand- he'd never expected or wished to be called upon first. But the weird neckbeard fanatic had to be silenced, a blatantly disrespectful jerk. He shot the creep a cold glare, before tilting the brim of his hat down. Al spoke up over the rudeness, projecting as well as he could from beneath his disguise.

"HELLO, YES, FATHER ELIJAH SIR, MY NAME IS GATOR, AND MY QUESTION IS AS FOLLOWS: YOU SEE, I HAVE Been mulling over a conundrum of supernatural sorts for many years..." The echo on the walls made him cringe internally, having projected a little too well. Al adjusted.

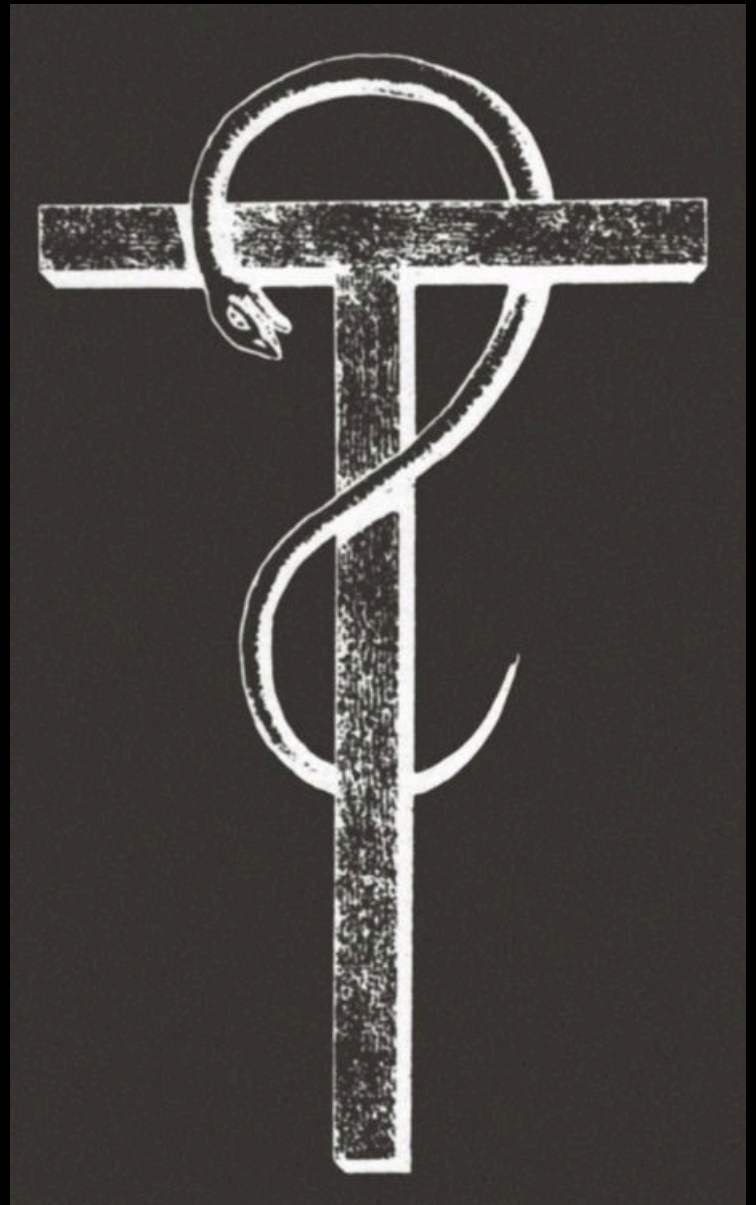
"Hypothetically, what should an average person like myself do when they come face to face with a demon, nefarious spirit or possessed entity while entirely alone? Say, in their bedroom... Any wisdom you could spare would be greatly appreciated." His voice got progressively softer near the end, looking to the speaker with hope glistening in his eyes.

HOW WOULD YOU PROTECT ONESELF?

"This is one of the most difficult questions to answer. It's one plagued with nuance and uncertainty, especially when dealing with forces beyond our sight, beyond our knowledge, and beyond our very reality..."

"It is impossible to fully prepare oneself for an encounter with any supernatural entity. Even myself with a lifetime of experience and then some cannot take for granted that my knowledge is complete, or that my intuition alone is honed enough to guarantee my safety. As I've said. These forces are beyond our comprehension. Which is why, when faced with the task of protecting ourselves, we must likewise turn to things that we may not, by modern standards, fully understand."

"I am not here to give you a theological lecture, instead, I consider this very practical, and so as we discuss these methods, keep in mind I am not asking you to suspend whatever beliefs you hold sacred in favor of what I present here. Rather, I am presenting methods of protection, warding, and detection that I consider effective--"



SIGNS

How might you detect the presence of an entity from beyond our perception? A demon, a ghost? There are several ways, for now I will not speak on possession specific signs, but signs you can see around you. For several years now, we have had the luxury of equipment to help us detect the possible presences of otherworldly forces. Things such as Parabolic microphones, DOT projectors, motion detectors, infrared. The list goes on and on," Elijah gestures dismissively, "I don't bother with these things, obviously, I'm not exactly the most tech savvy- but I do believe in the benefit of these things, and that is because from the time electronics have entered the world, our connection with entities beyond the veil has heightened exponentially. You can use all sorts of technology to your advantage both with detecting entities, and..." Elijah seems to stop himself, "Well. We're worried about avoidance here aren't we."

The assistant all the while has been shuffling through pictures of orbs captured on camera, lights, even faces with no body to speak of. It is the lingering slide before Elijah moves on.

"Ghosts and spirits interfere with electricity and atmospheric states, and this can be attributed to things like hairs standing on end, goosebumps. The like."

The next slide depicts steam escaping from the mouth of someone, the rest of their face not in view.

"A decrease in the environment's temperature is often the sign of ghosts and spirits, while a sharp increase can also be an indication of an entity. Be most alert when these sudden changes are otherwise unexplainable."

"Another environmental sign is unexplained or disembodied sounds. These can be whispers, voices, or the infamous three knocks. Though I will not tell you all this is a sign of a demon every time, you should be especially wary if three knocks are heard at 3 am. I refer to it as the Devil's hour; some of you may know it as the witching hour. This is a time to be overly cautious with oneself. The veil is thin, and the protections are fewer at this time."

The next slides cycle through the image of a mirror, a trail of footsteps, the harsh image of a flash reflecting on broken mirror pieces in an otherwise dark room with dark droplets

around it, and a sheet seemingly draped over someone whos mouth is unnervingly widely opened.

"And finally crossing the line between signs and detection, you may find physical evidence of entities. Footsteps in dust and other easily disturbed materials, small items moving without explanation, the breaking of mirrors, or visions within mirrors. Again something to be especially avoidant of at night."

"Mirrors are windows as much as they are anything, while they can be great tools to capture spirits, they are conduits themselves, especially if one is reckless with certain charming childhood games. But I'm not here to put ideas in your heads."

PREVENTATIVE METHODS

"Now it may surprise you that I am not here to tell you to run to the church each time you run into one of these signs. Though I might recommend it, the effectiveness of any spiritual authority depends as much on that person's capability as it does on not only your belief but... The qualities of the spirit itself. Entities beyond our reality are complicated, again, incomprehensible, no one text or doctrine can encompass all there is to understand of these things. Of that even my brothers in the catholic church can agree. Though we may consider ourselves the highest authority..." there is a pause, but he does not finish the thought.

"There are several ways to protect oneself from the insurrection of an entity into your self. Wards of cultural and spiritual significance across cultures are very effective in prevention. I do not presume to know why, but I personally believe that the symbols humanity has come to revere as sacred are so revered for a reason-" a sentiment he punctuates with firm

gestures and a held gaze.

On the screen several different religious idols and symbols are cycled through. It lands lastly on a hamsa.

"I and my closest friends in my cause hold different core beliefs and use many different idols, doctrines, symbols, tools, in our personal work to help those afflicted by things beyond our human realm. However, I will emphasize that this does not mean that any arbitrarily adopted practice will work simply because it is revered, with select exceptions. Do not adopt practices or use idols you do not fully understand, but- if you and your family hold something sacred, using those times, those words, those symbols can be very effective in fortifying yourself against outside influence. This might be a passage of the Quran, a particular tea, a talisman, ect. Trust what you hold true and sacred to yourself."

"I will speak briefly on some tools I use that I have found to be very effective. One, you see here now is the hamsa. This symbol has become all but universal as a tool to ward off evil. It is especially popular among Abrahamic cultures but it is far older and more pervasive than that. Early use traced as far back as the dawn of human civilization. The hamsa is presented in one of two ways, with the hand facing down to give blessings, or, up as to ward off evil. This is a *powerful* symbol. One I advise the use of even if in a simple form of jewelry, along with other such evil eye talismans."

"Next- I will talk briefly on the idea of traps. Traps that may be constructed to confuse, confine and even destroy spirits and other entities- and now I will show you what may be the most valuable tool to acquire-" Elijah then finally reached into his back, straightening the sides as he plunged his hand into

the depths to pull out- a pair of old shoes.

"I suggest the use of everyday items, old well loved shoes are ideal. They carry your essence, and thus can confuse an entity, so that they will hopefully enter the shoe rather than yourself."

"Devil's shields are another method of warding. They involve the use of different patterns, often concentric circles, or extensively hatched lines carved into doorways or places often busy with activity- you see these often in the historical buildings of New England. They were used much to the displeasure of the church, thought to be using a Devil's Shield against a Devil's Sword. However. In my view- effective is effective. These are simple symbols, thought to be able to entangle demons. Entities which we most of all wish to avoid."

"There are countless other methods across all cultures for protecting oneself against unwanted unseen influences, what I've shared here are just a select few that I feel the most confident in speaking on, myself, in any advisory sense. Those things in which humanity has placed significance and superstition hold power, which came first the power in the thing or the faith in that power I am not authorized to even guess." He does not pause but suddenly there is shift in the gravity of his tone, "But, just as moses called the people to look upon the bronze snake and be saved, and we ask christians to look upon the cross that held christ, I might ask you to turn to your symbols of power, because like the venomous snakes, god sent these devils among the people. "

AL. GATOR

Al begins quickly jotting notes in the small book on his lap, only ever glancing down at the end of the page. He was rapt with the speaker's attention.

NOTES: Equipment to purchase > electricity and atmosphere
> change in temperature
> familiar whispers and 3 knocks at 3am Devils Hour...
> visions in mirrors
hmm deep night/early morning was about the time the drains become clogged with sound. Hardly a coincidence.

The symbols that humanity has come to revere as sacred are revered for a reason.

Such secular insight from a priest pleasantly stunned Alphonse, he's truly never met a father so open minded before. The eye contact was briefly too much, but he still met the look with hesitation. Items his family treasures can be used as preventative measures? Something like the beloved old christmas tree angel his sister drew a mustache on and snapped the arms off of could potentially protect him? Good to know!

NOTES: A hamsa- Would a tattoo of both orientations be double successful? Maybe theres an artist at the fest
> old smelly shoes can distract a stinky ghost > draw circles on door

Maybe he shouldn't have renounced religion and thrown out grand-pere's crosses all those years ago. The sounds started around the same time. hmm.

"Your thoroughness, experience, and preparation, are well appreciated. I... apologize for whatever necessity drew you to these conclusions. Regardless, I will be implementing this wisdom. Thank you, Father."

His tone nearly reverent in respect. After he speaks, Al sits down looking over his notes, satisfied. Maybe he will get some sleep tonight!

ELIJAH

Elijah was very effortless in closing this section of a lecture interrupted- though the statement seemed to catch him starkly by surprise, "Oh- no need to apologize. We all have our walks of life, our paths to follow- and mind has led me here- just as yours have all led you to this panel in this rural Vermont wilderness... I'll try not to get too theological but, we cannot control the challenges we face- we can only do our best to be prepared for them. But thank you for your compassion, and thank you for your question that gave me the opportunity to share my experience with you all..." he said with a small nod Gator's direction- before his eyes glanced upward, "And now I see there are quite a few hands... I'll take some questions while I can- since I'm not sure how much time has passed..."

And after appearing over the very dimly lit crowd Father Elijah pointed to Vassago, "You young man- why don't we start with you. Please feel free to ask whatever you like-" he said lacing his fingers on propped elbows once more as the image of the serpent on the staff continued to flicker on the screen.

VASSAGO

Vassago was not the one to overtly believe in all the superstitious mumbo-jumbo, but Meg managed to masterfully hammer some of these compulsions into his head.

The only reason for his presence was that there was nothing else for him to do. When confronted with a list of panels, he simply decided to pick the most interesting-sounding one which lead him down into this basement. Which was pretty ironic, given the etymology of his own name. After hearing the stock of information that Elijah provided, Vassago mentally cycled through a couple of question, but it was clear that something has caught his interest pretty much instantaneously following the panellist's explanation...

"Name's Vassago, Father. You say that to ward off these... Spirits you need some typa talisman." The young man briefly reached behind his collar pulling out a chain with a pendant attached to it.

It was a six-pointed star-shaped pendant, except unlike the Star of David, instead of overlaid triangles it was composed of one continuous line - two sharp points on each side and two larger points on top and the bottom where the lines connected. From the looks of it, the pendant scarcely showed any wear.

"My brother gave this to me. Would this be of any use? Like you said, it's pretty special to me." He briefly recalls Meg attempting to explain the pendant's significance as they attempted to rope him into their interests.

ELIJAH

Father Elijah rested his chin against his thumb and forefinger thoughtfully as Vassago rose to ask his question, regarding him with an intense stare... a small furrow to his brow forming from the time his name was spoken, and his eyes and his eyes alone shifting to the pendant as it was produced.

His eyes did not leave the pendant the entire time Vassago spoke, though aside from his drawn gaze he seemed only deep in thought.

He inhaled and tilted his head back before he finally spoke, was there hesitation there, "Are you your brother or your family Thelemites?" he asked with an note of curiosity that was unreadable as positive or negative.

VASSAGO

That was the word Vassago was looking for. Obviously he couldn't quite recall what Meg was on about, but they've often spoken of Crowley (a name he was aware of) as some kind of a puppet, which was amusing. They regarded him as a sort of a pantomime character within the spread of early 20th century mystics. It was a character-centric affair, where the image of the man

garnered more attention than the religion he had produced.

"I mean, my brother is." He confirmed.

Meg had owned a copy of the Lesser Key of Solomon, funnily enough the very origin of his own given name. **"Don't know about family-"** He wondered whether Meg still pursued a similarly murky path that they were on prior to his departure. The speakers and the conduits were metaphorical for the Thelemites, hyperstitional, even (self-fulfilling actualization was at play there, somewhere). Not that Vassago really cared for it or intimately knew of the in and outs of that pretence. But somewhere along the way, had he known, it would have made sense to him.

Vassago was not the one to overtly believe in all the superstitious mumbo-jumbo, but Meg managed to masterfully hammer some of these compulsions into his head.

ELIJAH

Elijah simply looks at Vassago for a minute. Before finally nodding, "I see-" he almost hums, flatly. Then he adjusts in his seat as if to sit more upright, as if preparing to speak more seriously.

"This actually brings up an excellent point. That as there are symbols and, prayers, rituals, etcetera that can ward, and protect us from these powers that be.... there are likewise things that can invoke these powers. Invite them into our lives.... While what you have there alone is only a pendant of an unicursal hexagram it has been used by several peoples for various purposes. Most notably Thelemites, or followers of Aleister Crowley, and by followers of Hermetic schools of thought, alchemists when people would call themselves that- and at its core it is an symbol of invocation," Elijah begins gesturing demonstratively as he speaks his body open to the class but his eyes set on Vassago that slight furrow still to his brow, "It deals with universal powers, even divine powers, and their interconnection with the mundane- or invoking that connection- the idea of this as a unity," there is a pause as Elijah seems to contemplate his next words carefully..

"I- I'm not sure if I am answering your question- or if I even

can," he admits, bringing his hands back together and interlacing his fingers once more, "It is a powerful symbol, yes, and many symbols invoke connections, such as the cross, or the pentagram, however this one you have here- it is a rather relative symbol. It has been used for eons for various purposes, good and bad...- the all and nothing that is in between.... And so- speaking purely on my knowledge I would advise you that anything you hold significant has a power to yourself. Clearly you have taken good care of that pendant, it brings comfort to you... and I don't know your brother or his intentions so, unfortunately though that I believe is relevant I can't speak on. But regardless of that. The symbol itself you hold there represents an interconnection of all things... and thus is indiscriminate weather it connects you with the benevolent or the malicious."

"And symbols like that may be thought of as a door... one without a lock. For my purposes... I prefer a deadbolt."

VASSAGO

Vassago mused, means I can summon demons, right...? Fucking wicked. But he kept the thought to himself. Some of the superstitions he latched on so tightly advised him against it. He was not about to reckon with some unknown powers, since that was already the reality of his present every day life.

"I guess the last thing I need is flinging doors open." He replied, hiding the pendant back behind his collar. **"But thanks, Father, that was insightful...!"** He sat back with his arms crossed, sporting a smile, contradicting his internal thought process.

Regardless of whether he concretely believed in it or not, it was hella interesting, he had to admit. All this talk of locks and doors put him into a rather contemplative mood...

Vassago spaces out.

ELIJAH

Elijah's expression really didn't shift with Vassago's cheerful attitude. Instead he continued to regard him- with an air that was hard to place. Scrupulous to be sure, "Glad to help however I can." His fingers as he pulled and pressed his own knuckles moved more than that gaze for a handful of moments, then finally- with an silent inhale he seemed disinterested in Vassago altogether. At the very least no more interest than any face in the crowd.

Then finally he turned his attention to another hand in the crowd, his gaze falling on Tart, "Do you have a question as well?" he asked simply hoping to address as many as possible.

TART HART

Tart blinked as he was finally called on. Taking extra note of the discussion at hand, so far everything was ticking to what he was wondering. But there was something that dug at him. Something that still is a mystery to him. Despite being called on, he still rose his hand and vocalized his inquiry,

"Father, I do appreciate your time and insight of the topic. My question, however, may teeter a smidge close to a topic you didn't want to discuss: Demonic possession. However, I cannot help but wonder: How do you tell that there is a demonic and/or otherworldly entity attached to a person? If you still don't want to discuss possession in full detail I can rephrase it to this What about attaching themselves to an object?. Let's say a house. These questions focus without the use of technology to aid us."

A smile and a bow of his head!

"Pardon me if that seems a bit convoluted to ask. I'm just extremely curious due to," a clear of his throat. "Circumstances in my life."

ELIJAH

Elijah acknowledged the thanks with a humble nod and then simply gave Tart his full attention- his fingers falling over each

other neatly as a sign of curiosity as he admitted his question may be a bit of a detour. The projector continued to whir as the words echoed out in an otherwise quiet room demonic possession. Elijah seemed comparably unphased and receptive as Tart elaborated. At the last caveat, that is without the use of technology Elijah tilted his own head back thoughtfully leaning back into his seat, before responding, openly to Tart's admission, "No, no, you're fine. We all have our personal experiences. I would hope you'd take this opportunity to ask specific questions, one you might not be able to ask elsewhere. These things are not often taken seriously, and when they are they are grossly misinformed by popular depictions. I might not be able to answer your questions, and I'll admit that when I need to, but- I am here today for you to ask," he said, taking a point during these first moments to speak to Tart directly before he began addressing the room again.

"Demonic possession, and possession in general is a very real occurrence. It happens. It happens to everyday people like everyone here. You can disagree with me all you like, and you're welcome to leave this panel at any time, but you will not change my mind," he spoke with unshaken certainty, as he began speaking once more with his hands.

WHAT DOES A REAL POSSESSION LOOK LIKE?

"In my life, even before my time as a priest- I was unfortunate enough to become intimately familiar with the presence and... persistence of these forces I've discussed. Things beyond our capability for true understanding. Demons, ghosts, spirits, and more that were malicious, or if not malicious blindly destructive. These things eat away at a person. I have seen them crumble the very strongest and goodest of people to absolutely nothing. From the inside out," Father Elijah was speaking now with more pointed conviction than he had for the entire presentation, he looked around the room as if he was searching each person's eyes individually for true understanding. His eyes were lit with that conviction as he continued, "These forces are dangerous. Deadly. And once they find their way into you there is little you can do within the body it's made home. Your body, that will suddenly be made a prison. My own experiences are exactly why I'm here. I am here to share my knowledge and prevent as many as I can from being left defenseless."

There was a moment's pause as he seemed for the first time to truly look at the people present there. He seemed out of habit to re-lace his fingers, and said to the projectionist, "Jubilee if you could bring up slides 13 through 16 and then 30 through 42."

OTHERWORLDLY ATTACHMENT

"Now you used a specific word when you spoke, attached. How can we tell if something is attached to a person, a place, an object? I will preface this by saying- my knowledge is not exhaustive. I speak to what I have seen and experienced.. and I apologize now

for any shortcomings in that knowledge. Because you see certain entities, particularly those that were never human, are all distinct. Their behavior is beyond human logic. If you are lucky enough that they play by any rules at all, they are rules we can never fully understand. Still I will do my best to explain these things as I know them..."

At that moment a slide clicks into place as the light projector whirs. The new slide depicts an old house, beautiful and life worn but with the windows all broken out. Clearly abandoned by those that once cherished it.

"Attachment, as you put it, is a broad term, and that is because it is a broad occurrence. Entities, from the most humble of human soul to the most malicious of demon all have their own motivations. Even those human souls that are not aware of their own state are drawn to things. Most commonly places and things from the tangible world that are familiar to them from their time here. Their homes for instance, their dearest possessions, or places of unforgettable significance. Maybe the church where they were married, a battlefield where they lost their innocence or even their life even if their body was only ever there for a short time. They remember it. And these are some of countless examples."

"These places can act as both anchor points for the mortal soul, and as sand-traps where the farther the soul drifts from the center the more they're pulled back. And the most powerful attachment for souls that were originally human is their own physical remains, wherever those may be. Usually a human soul will not be able to remain as a ghost if their body no longer recognizably exists in some way. Though they can cling to other anchors somewhat."

"Which is why destroying items and remains and even

burning down houses can be so beneficial in exercising spirits that have once lived among us- but," he interrupted himself abruptly, "I'm not here to encourage defacing human remains or arson especially given this event's reputation," and he gestured to the projectionist to change the slide.

SIGNS OF ATTACHMENT

The slide changes to show a simple porcelain doll.... floating in mid air.

"With objects, signs of an entity's presence is simple to see. If the force is powerful enough then the objects might move, doors of a house might slam, the eyes will play tricks on you and you may even see an image of the person as if they were over their grave or in their old room. You may even hear voices. Your emotions might suddenly swing while holding an item or entering a room. All those things you've seen in so many movies. There is some truth to them, they come from our own stories."

"But it should very pointedly be noted that I am saying entities not ghosts- and this is because demonic and malicious entities will show these same exact signs if they are active in an area. Just because your sister's doll whispers to you doesn't mean she is the one that's speaking."

`Without Elijah signaling a Raggedy Ann doll appears on screen in a glass case. This is one many enthusiasts of the supernatural might know as the infamous Annabelle, a doll believed to be possessed by an inhuman spirit and responsible for several deaths.

"They will imitate life to trick you into trusting them or fearing them. Anything they can do to put you in a vulnerable state for their own purposes."

"You must remember no matter what you believe you may be in contact with, even if it is someone you love, you have something they don't, something that they can't help but crave desperately. Your soul and your life."

"But. I digress..."

A HAUNTING

"Attachment, or really to call it by its proper name, haunting, of people isn't so easy to see in a person as it is in objects. This is because people are plagued as much by demons of this world as they are the demons beyond it, and many of the symptoms of possession align with perfectly mundane conditions in people. Ones that don't need an exorcism but community support and mental health intervention. This is why the Vatican is so stringent in modern times when considering conducting exorcisms. This includes evaluations by medical and psychiatric doctors, and the recommendation a member of the clergy."

"So keep this in mind as I describe some of the early symptoms of a presence of this kind in one's life. I am bringing these to your attention not to use without discretion, rather to use in combination with your best judgment and intuition."

He goes on to elaborate and as he speaks several terrifying images of what you can only assume are possession victims cycle across the screen one after another. Some simply look soulless back at you. your eyes play tricks as some seems to flash and move despite the fact that all of the slides are still images...

GHOSTLY HAUNTINGS

"Ghosts, or spirits that were once human tend to be

more attached to locations and specific objects than people. Though there are exceptions, especially in the case of mediums and the connected of us. These people draw in ghosts and demons alike and can act as anchor points for all kinds of entities. But, generally human spirits do not move as freely as other entities because of their ties to the tangible world, our world. It is hard for a human spirit to follow a living person without one of those anchors I mentioned unless they are actively possessing the person. So simply moving homes or avoiding certain areas can prevent a possession by an human spirit."

SIGNS OF HAUNTINGS

- Trouble sleeping.
- Restless mind.
- Having/Expressing thoughts that are uncharacteristic to the person. Initially they may regard them as intrusive thoughts that they don't know the origin of.
- Sudden increase in dreams and their intensity
- Sudden appearance of new habits
- Mood swings
- Confusion

SIGNS OF GHOSTLY POSSESSION

- Loss of time
- Dramatic changes in personality
- Changes in certain physical characteristics, such as distinctive mannerisms i.e. sudden appearance of a limp, an accent, or even a change in eye color.

DEMONIC HAUNTINGS

"Demonic hauntings are often short lived, often for the worst reason you might expect. Their signs are reminiscent of those I mentioned when speaking of the Devil's hour, and unexplainable activity around the

home, but demons can be much more persistent. They are not bound to this world or anything in it like a human soul may be, and so they can pursue someone relentlessly unless the person is otherwise properly protected."

"Thus there are really no 'early' signs in a person of a demonic possession. Once someone is overcome they are overcome, which is why the demon's goal is to weaken your resolve and make you unable to resist their possession. Any pretense of the increasing severity of symptoms is purely the demon toying with the victim and those around them."

SIGNS OF DEMONIC POSSESSION

- Loss or lack of appetite
- Cutting, scratching, and biting of skin
- A cold feeling around the person
- Unnatural bodily postures and change in the person's face and body
- The possessed losing control of their normal personality and entering into a frenzies of mania or rage. In these states they may endanger or attack others or themselves.
- Change in a person's voice
- Abnormal physical characteristics
- Levitation and indirect movement of objects
- Supernatural Strength
- Suddenly having knowledge beyond the persons ability to have such as:
- Suddenly speaking or understanding languages the person never learned
- Knowledge of past events they could not know of.
- Knowledge of current happenings they should have no way to know of.
- Predictions of the future that become accurate.

They reached the final slide, landing on a man with a twisted body and disfigured face. Again it seemed to move unnaturally, perhaps a jitter in the projector but it was unsettling regardless. The Father didn't

seem to notice.

"Again, certain entities, they go beyond any list of symptoms and signs we could create. The reality is that some of these forces are powerful and they are capable of hiding any sign of their presence. Demons tend to be too destructive and unused to a human body to hide themselves well for long, but human souls, they can be persistent and enduring once they take hold of someone truly. Each really has their dangers."

"In any case I hope that that answered your question at least in part" he said looking at Tart as the final slide was finally removed from the projector leaving the blank flickering screen.

TART HART

Throughout the whole thing, Tart a roller coaster of emotions on his face. Momentarily, snapping out of it times. But it did answer most of the questions that had eaten at him for a few years. Maybe it did provide a form of relief. Relief that could've been granted earlier, but he was able to have it now. In a way.

He unknowingly chewed on his thumb as the slides continued, and Elijah furthered his explanation. Out of anxiety? Out of stress? Good question. The fhev continues until Tart accidentally nips himself, his reality sinking back in as with the slides and the priest before him.

He blinks. Right.

He was now staring eye to eyes with Elijah. A smile forms on his face as he removed his finger away. Tart had work to do. **"Father," he begins, "This was insightful. Extremely insightful. I'm not kidding when I say I've been thinking about this for a good decade. However."**

His voice deepens as his expression flashes with a look. Not many freaks see him display: Seriousness. Pure, raw seriousness.

"However," Tart repeated himself, "It seems you're not being clear with hauntings. As informative as it is, I have a deep curiosity for his subject that I can't help but wonder—Apologies, if this is personal, but Why exactly are you hosting this panel? For someone that discloses the strict mature of the church, why are you going out of your way to inform these in tangible details? As some form of medias have shown, there usually has to be an approval of the church for something like this. Especially down to images. Sorry, Father. I can't help but wonder is there something you're concerned about? To take an immense risk like this?"

ELIJAH

Elijah was plainly acknowledging at first, he wasn't expecting the however, but it was the drop in tone that made him sit back in his seat. The entanglement of his fingers loosening.

Elijah appraised the boy with scrutinous eyes. There is silence for a long time as Tart brought forth is relentless questioning. He inhales, and its only as you see how much tension is released with the exhale how upset he might have been. He leans forward, and for a moment, some may think they see a flash in his eyes, "I am concerned for you."

"I am concerned for each and every one of you. Because I know exactly how close and real the horrors of these forces are every day..." he pauses starring at Tart, "You know that too. Don't you?"

There is a long pause.

"The church has its reasons for doing things, their reasons for being so conservative in their practices, valid ones," he pauses again, "but for their best-efforts people now, are dying every day. Suffering. Their views and thus when they take action is all limited by the constraints of what is sanctioned, what is accepted in canon. They would not accept anything that I have to say about protective efforts, or even the proposal of the existence of human souls capable of possession... ghosts, according to catholic belief do not exist. Only demonic possession is possible. And while my heart lies in that church in many ways... I just know the truth to be different, and I am tired of seeing people die because of some misguided belief in their own exclusive right to act. In the idea that if people do not go through the authority of the church that they are better

left damned. I can't accept that. They don't understand how present these things truly are."

"I am simply trying to do what I think is right... and I hope one day my fellow clergymen will join me," he finished, his ire dissipating by the time he came to this final resolution. One might get the impression this was a resolution long held.

TART HART

Tart didn't quite expect his serious manner to cause the priest to sit back in his seat. Observing him as if he were a specimen on a petri dish, slowly picking him apart. The same could be same about the stare that Tart returns back to Elijah.

The tension of Elijah's exhale was enough for Tart to soften up his stare. Just a smidge. Like a dog that was showing aggression with the flattening of its ears to slowly unflattening it. The two had somewhat of a mutual understanding with the other.

He truthfully answers, "I do, Father. Every day of my life, but as you said prior, it's not easy to disclose in the day-to-day life. It's easy to be seen as someone entering a mental break more than anything. No one wants to listen to the rambling of a "crazy" person. So it is reassuring hearing how your experiences, though vague, have urged you to educate us."

He nods, continuing, "That's why I do want to thank you again, Father for taking a risk like this. It's not an easy feat to inform us all about the dangers that lurks out of sight. The fact you took this risk for strangers like ourselves does show that you care. That you want things to change not for yourself, but for everyone's sake. That was something I lacked when I underwent my circumstances. Truth be told, this does press my inquiry a bit more. It's not an every day thing you see a clergyman speak so passionately about a topic that may have altered," Tart takes a moment to observe every single person in the room with him. Familiar faces are spotted, "Some of our lives in some capacity."

"Though, I think I may be taking too much of everyone's time if I continue here pushing my questions others may want to ask. But I don't mind asking, Father, if you'd be willing to discuss more of the topic after the panel with me? A selfish request, but I cannot stress enough that I feel like my experiences is acknowledged. I, too, would also like everyone's safety to be

considered. Thank you again, Father."

And with that Tart seems to be done asking questions.

ELIJAH

Elijah listens to Tart's admissions with an unreadable but not rejecting manner to him. His eyes intense as they rest on Tart, it was only slowly and subtly that one might notice the most minor softening of his features.

Eventually he relented enough to nod understandingly at the acknowledgement that is was not every day you saw a man of the church in such a place being so forward. Catholicism was all about the close guarded secrets of being the facilitators of ones relationship with god- to take things that the common person was thought unfit to handle themselves.

With Tarts last request Elijah's eyes apprised him with refreshed interest, and he seemed to consider for a moment before answering, and perhaps surprisingly his tone was almost soft "I would be willing to speak with you. I am happy to hear your story and give what comfort and guidance I can. As much as I am here to speak to all of you, it is because I hope to help any of you that might need it. Each one," his voice falls to nothing at the end, and he turns to glance over the hands in the crowd again when suddenly his attention appears to be caught by the projectionist.

Father Elijah nods, "I think I will have to make that question the last- thank you all for coming."