

Ghostbusting on Los Angeles Avenue: Apparition haunts home, likes music and plays with children's toys

Jeff Munson
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She likes to play with other people's children. It's probably because she lost one of her own at some point in her life. She died, but no one is really quite sure when that was.

Nobody knows this woman's name or her life story, but one South Lake Tahoe family wishes they did, so they could understand why she hangs around in the children's bedroom.

Whoever she is, Rodolfo Maya and his family wish her well, but at the same time they wish she would just go away.

"I don't know what to think. All I know is that toys will move, the radio will turn on by itself and my kids are scared," said Maya, who rents the Los Angeles Avenue home that he and others say is visited frequently by this ghostly apparition.

The father of three and self-described non-believer - until he observed the paranormal anomalies himself - came into the Tahoe Daily Tribune on June 24 asking to speak with someone who would listen to his story.

With an empty newsroom and an open mind to all things paranormal, that someone was me.

Maya, a licensed contractor who does custom tile and marble work, is married and has three children. He moved into the Al Tahoe neighborhood about three months ago to be closer to his work. The spacious two-story home was perfect for the family, with the children's bedrooms upstairs, a modest kitchen and large back yard for the family's toy poodle, who shares the family's last name: Maya.

Shortly after moving into the home, the father told of how his children began having nightmares, something they haven't experienced with any frequency before.

"I remember going into the room one night and my son was screaming. 'Get away from me! Get away from me!' We woke him up and he had this look on his face like he saw a ghost."

That was within their first couple of weeks in the house.

And then things started getting weird: Toy dolls would move on their own. The kids' radio would come on by itself. A toy guitar would begin playing songs.

"One day we're sitting in the room and the dog just moved its head around, like it was following something. She moved her head back and forth, like a dog would follow a fly in the room. But there wasn't any," he said.

He said he called the South Lake Tahoe Police Department to ask them if anyone had died in the house. The police department had no record and he was told to call the sheriff's department. No record was found but records don't go back that far, he was told.

Enter South Shore psychic Dayle Schear. During Maya's visit to the Tribune, the ever-intuitive Schear happened, by chance, to drop by the newspaper as she does every month to pique the minds of staffers.

When I saw Schear in the building, the first thing that came to mind was a line straight out of the movie "Ghostbusters" when Peter Venkman, played by Bill Murray, was on the telephone with Egon Spengler, played by Harold Ramis. Venkman explained how he discovered that his would-be girlfriend, Dana Barrett (played by Sigourney Weaver), was possessed by a ghost. While on the phone, Egon explained how he had a very possessed Louis Tully, Dana Barrett's next-door neighbor played by Rick Moranis, in the room with him.

"We've got to get these two together," were Bill Murray's words that came to my mind upon seeing the South Shore intuitive.

Schear, whose abilities dazzle audiences at Bill's Lake Tahoe Casino, couldn't resist my offer to sit down and hear Maya's unbelievable but believable story.

"There are no such things as coincidences. There was a reason that I came here today," Schear told us.

That's when the three of us, joined by Tribune photographer Dan Thrift went to the Maya house to see what this whole ghost haunting thing was all about.

Arriving at the home, we walked up the stairs and into the bedroom where the strange occurrences had been gyrating for some time.

Schear walks over to a small child's bed and lays down flat.

"I'm picking up something. Yes, yes. I see," Schear says. "There is a woman and she is wearing a white dress. I'm picking up ... 1939. When did you say this house was built?" She asked Maya.

"The planning department told me probably around 1936," he said.

"I see a woman and I see something traumatic that happened in 1939. She's telling me that she is looking for something missing. A child and a locket," she said.

The dog barks twice, moans and then scampers downstairs.

Schear points to a window in the bedroom.

"The woman is telling me that something is outside," Schear says. "That something is buried in the back yard."

At that moment Schear says she heard two taps on the wall. Maya said he heard them, too. Photographer Thrift and I looked at each other and agreed we didn't hear it.

"There is a locket in the back yard," Schear insists. "The knocks are her telling me, yes, there is a locket or something buried around or under the house."

The four of us go to the yard. The dog sniffs around the area, runs around the yard for a bit and then, for reasons unknown, begins digging along the fence line.

"The dog knows something. The dog knows that something is buried here," Schear says.

She then tells Maya that if he should ever get a sudden urge to start digging in the yard, he shouldn't think twice about it.

"The more you have the desire to go look, go dig," she told him.

The woman who lived in the house before told Maya of similar experiences in the house. Toys moved without being touched and strange noises emitted from the same bedroom.

Schear asked if Maya had the woman's number. He did. Schear called. The two spoke for about five minutes. And then Schear handed the phone to me, saying: "It's just what I thought."

South Lake Tahoe resident Tracy Brizendine explained to me how she lived in the house for two years and that she, too, had experienced a "presence."

"I always thought that it was a good presence, not a bad one," she said. "It was friendly, you know? I didn't feel like it was bad."

"Did toys move around in the room?" I asked.

"Toys moved around the room," she replied.

Schear explained later who she believes to be lurking inside the Maya home. It is a European woman, Gaelic perhaps (the word "Gaelic" came to her while lying on the child's bed, she says), who lost a young child at some point in her life.

The woman spends time in the children's bedroom because she loves children. She loves playing with them, Schear tells Maya.

He tells Schear that he wishes the spirit no harm but wants her to go away.

"You'll have to find the locket then. The locket is what she's looking for. It somehow is the key for her to get back to the other side. If you find the locket - which I think is buried somewhere in the back yard - then there's a good chance she will find the other side."

Maya quietly scanned the lawn. He looked at the dog. Its paws were dirty from all the digging. He had another idea. Instead of messing with spirits, perhaps making the situation worse, why not leave it to an authority who knows something about supernatural higher power?

On Thursday, a priest from St. Theresa Catholic Church came to the Maya house and blessed it.

"Since it has been blessed, it feel better. It feels very different," he said.

And the ghostly woman? Have there been any hauntings, I ask.

"I think she might have left," Maya replied.

Photo:4256552,right:

- Tribune city editor Jeff Munson

Dan Thrift / Tahoe Daily Tribune / Rodolfo Maya, left, watches as psychic Dayle Schear examines his children's bedroom for a supernatural presence.

