

SPECTRAL EXILE

WRITTEN BY NICKOLAUS A. PACIONE

I was a mere observer, and the things that went on in Chicago as far as the Gothic scene goes. When it was all said and documented. No one really knows and is able to explain what truly happens, knowing in detail what is seen in the clubs and the madness wandering in the eyes of someone with an unseen illness. Living in Chicago, it's always been a magnet for the morbid and bizarre. Some of the accounts can be said from a point of view of someone who carries an unsound mind.

Everyone knows someone that had some influence on someone, and is often seen dwelling upon things that can't be said or named. What they've seen and draw within a pattern of darkness, every form and way of perversion of truth and blasphemy that was embraced. Just in some ways it awakens something they cannot explain or begin to explain.

Typical thing about living in Illinois, everyone seems to have a weird story to tell and each story relates in the sense to the supernatural or the occult. Or the supernatural in the sense of Christianity; pending where in Illinois they've lived.

"We're going to the club tonight," Bella commented.

"What place you're going to?" I asked.

"It is a place in the city but I can't say where," she answered, while getting her long black velvet gown on. She had no idea where she would go would collect into something that draws into the depths of Rod Serling's journal and imagination. I just watched and asked myself, being the observer - known everything about what happened in a scene where its politics create a good part of how everyone behaves. She was rather calm when she was asking the questions about the event, and wary of the scene politics she wanted to go. Leading into something that would last beyond one's own imagination, yet standing in the portal of time as the supernatural lives on beyond their lifetime.

"Isn't that night eighteen or over?" I asked; looking at her almost like I would a strict parent asking their daughter what the hell they were doing wearing a dog collar. Just there were things I ask but will never get an answer, well the answer I didn't want to get anyway.

"Yes it is and I just turned eighteen two days ago, so I am going to go check it out -- they have this interesting Gothic personally but I don't know her name off hand. They say she's done this night off and on now for nearly twenty years. They got some interesting statues in there but they can't describe where they came from," she answers.

"I'll go with you as your date," I responded. Hell she was still celebrating her birthday and the fact she sold a short story to a small magazine. She's always been a well read lady too even when she was going to school.

In fact, she started out communicating with me via snail mail because I was published on a magazine she was trying to get into. In fact the high school literary magazine she got a

story published in was sent to my publisher, her teacher was part of the staff on the publishing company here part time. Her particular story that managed to catch the attention of the publisher happened to be a ghost story about an area near her family's apartment overlooking one of the more haunted cemeteries in Northeastern Illinois. The location was near where Mary Todd Lincoln had her nervous breakdown.

I was a little older than her brother, and the age span between her and her brother is easy being about nine years apart.

I just looked at her with a little bit of a puzzled emotion, I know I am not her father but old enough to be her brother.

"Want to come along? It sounds cool," Bella pleaded with me, "I know you're always looking for inspiration for your novels so why don't you come along. Who knows, I could have bragging rights in saying I inspired Nicholas Kane."

"Okay I am game to go, just as an observer to what is going on as an outsider. Let me see if I can collect my wife to see if she would go," I gave in and decided to join her. The wife just came back from a business trip over in Canada. She was doing some public relations work for my best friend who just sold his short story to a major magazine. That writer is named Howard David Matheson, and he helped me get a short story into a magazine that his younger sister helmed. My wife was the sister's best friend. In some ways, she knew him long before he became an author.

One thing he knew about when it came to Chicago was the Gothic scene was something that became the backdrop for one of his short stories – all the horrors seen in them known of everything that dwell within the nameless blasphemies and all the perversions in the pages told of all that lived or died. Just that no one around there understood exactly what was happening, or wanted to know. Known or unknown the wandering of mind – it was recorded to when they see everything or known of what happened, the beginnings of it or what it was.

I heard stories about walking into these particular places; some went in but never came out. Unless they were carried out on a gurney – which being the case in 2002 when a few in a south side nightclub were trampled underfoot. That wasn't even a Goth club that happened in either, but the stories I heard or seen when I heard Bella describe was one that easy can be something that fits an old vampire novel -- meaning they had to drag someone covered from neck to toe in a white blanket over them and tucked under them. No one knew exactly why the woman was carried out either; just that it had to do with going to the club.

She explained that the nightspot is often colder than a morgue in the winter months, but they couldn't explain why. So one of the reasons they say became an urban myth being about the person hosting the night would physically drain them without touching them. The name of the woman they dragged out of the club that night was named Josephine Stephens, age twenty. According to the doctors she had no record of physical health problems but they said she was sick from extreme cold exposure.

Some horrors are heard or seen, while others dwell within urban legends – this is often the case when one deals with a scene as it is in Chicago, Illinois. While others appear in the real life stories within the history of the city, namely the Chicago fire or the bearded bandits that robbed northern Cook County blind. An observer of a subculture one writes about in fiction, but never really seen anything as horrific as being the witness to someone being carried out in a half-coma state.

All the things that are seen within the nightmares and awakening hours, those who wandered inside the walls of the death cold nightclub. The person running the night was named DJ KnightBane, and there were a number of horror stories about people falling ill without reason during her nights – just that it seemed to be a collected account of all that happened. Some of the patients and subjects they were working on, they felt like they were half cold to the touch.

The Emergency Medical Technicians were on hand providing oxygen for one of the young club goers – she was barely breathing and wanted to sleep. They couldn't make what was going on because the victim that they carried out was perfectly healthy earlier that night. When they carried her out she had two cut wounds on her arm but they couldn't explain why they were there when she had no known histories of being a cutter. Looking on they couldn't express the horrors they've seen in the venue, wandering around and blood was covering the stairwells.

"What the hell is going on here," said one of the EMT's while the other looked on, "but all I can say is this is really *fucked up*!"

"You know I am starting agree with you, this isn't the first person we had to carry out tonight but I have to say it won't be the last," Donald Anderson responded back, "I think there are a few more laying around somewhere bleeding but I can't say where or how they started bleeding without reason or warning."

Strange things like this; damn it is hard to say how often they come about. It was almost similar to the club shooting that happened on October 25, 1996, I was about twenty years old at the time when that happened. It happened to be the same place and a night DJ KnightBane was spinning a few CD's no one explained exactly what happened or why it happened – just that someone drove away and disappeared after the shooting took place. The brother of one of the EMT's was working the shift at the time it happened, Donald's older brother – Anthony, in fact I knew him when he was studying to be an Emergency medical tech.

I went to high school with his younger brother Donald and the stories I heard Donald write about for his class were rather macabre, and the scarier thing was that they were true because they were something his brother would do when he came home from his shift. Tell him all the stories about pulling shards of glass out of the body of a car accident victim or be plucking bullets out of people who were near death. The teachers were asking him if he was making this up. The reasons being they read like it was a work of fiction and blurred the lines between the two.

"Reminds me of something my brother would tell me while I was in high school about how people walk around covered in blood. Shit – they looked like they were re-animated corpses but they were still alive," Donald commented to the other EMT, "They were walking but almost had no blood or very little blood in them. Some would be on the brink of death about this if they lost that much blood."

"Seems like something Nicholas Kane would write about, or even his best friend who saw the events unfold in the popular Chicago nightclub," the EMT commented as he looked around at the trepidation of now knowing that it wasn't anything he was prepared for.

"Goddamn, it felt like I just walked into a horror film that was rather disturbing. Could someone please tell me what the hell is going on here, there is blood everywhere I walk," the other EMT shuddered as he wandered the stairways of the nightclub.

"Yeah living and working in and around Chicago; you'll see some rather disturbing things – but this, the damage inflicted on the patrons in this place makes what they do in the old slasher films seem rather tame."

The emergency medical technicians looked around wondering what could have done what was done here. It seems the victims were still alive but felt like they were drained completely. Even still they walked around with cuts across their necks or arms -- almost in the way some would take their lives when sitting in a bath tub full of warm water.

"What the hell," Anderson responded and started to freak out more and more. Normally it is in contract that they are not supposed to freak out but during this case, there would be some exceptions to the rule.

Anderson scrambled around picking up some of the wounded and looked on as some of the most gruesome scenes were yet to come. Some appeared if they lost digits on their hand but they couldn't explain why they've lost them. Just they stared pale faced as the make up they've worn to the club, but that white was all over their skin – it wasn't make up this time around.

I watched within the walls of the club as all the horrific lunacy was going on. I had no idea that there were patrons bleeding if they were on their last drop of blood, but still alive. Here I was the observer to all that happened, the most horrific event to take place within a Chicago area night club, and everyone tried to scramble out of the club but they were missing limbs.

The emergency medical techs had their work cut out for them as I heard them trying to calm some of the patrons down so they can bandage their wounds. Some even required a tourniquet to stop or slow down the profuse bleeding. The thing that got to everyone was there was no one with weapons in the club – just a spectre or a poltergeist that had had a history of wounding patrons seriously. Everything as it seems appeared to be right out of a rather macabre nightmare, just as it appears – the details described as they were from a horror film.

Everything and everyone was going in a state of shock and absolute horror, when they

knew exactly what was happening every time when DJ KnightBane would have her nights. Someone either walks out deathly ill or severely bleeding. Either way she wasn't really paying attention, in fact she was too busy changing disks to realize the horror that was happening within her venue.

Just something about the atmosphere became the set up for the chasm that begins within the night and continues for a countless number of hours. I watched and it seemed like hours but it was only seconds, all the wounded or near death becomes almost relative within a sense of horrors when one stands around inside of a Gothic night club. The emergency medical technicians were doing everything they could not to freak out from all that was happening – they were the witness to the madness and horrors becoming unspeakable in their eyes.

If someone captured this on film, they would have a rather difficult time explaining of what was going on. The viewers would be horrified because they really had no idea that the horrors were either imagined or real. They were right there as I stood or some of the other patrons were as them being an eyewitness. They would understand that the horrors are real.

Even Bella had a hard time realizing what was taking place, whenever DJ KnightBane spins her set ---- it awakens something from the other side. Standing in observation while the surroundings are as frightening as it seems, some can't always explain if a DJ has the power to summon the supernatural by just doing their sets – just all the stories that follow this one around seems to be around for a number of years.

Everyone watched knowing that the gruesome cargo they're about to bare.

"This is similar to what my younger sister seen when she was working on this Goth girl in South Barrington, Illinois," the other EMT mentioned, "yet she was deathly ill but no blood was shown or seen. That was similar to the first patient we had to carry out of here. My younger sister was driving the ambulance for that one."

"The Cuba Road documentary, no shit," Anderson commented, "I've heard about that one. It was about a few college students doing a documentary about a local haunting around Northern Cook County. There was a Goth girl that was deathly ill doing the camera filming – she had to be carried off in an ambulance."

"That was my sister driving the ambulance."

"No shit," Anderson commented while trying to patch up a young female patron whose arm was sliced to ribbons.

"Could someone please stop the bleeding, I pray to God for this to stop but there was nothing he was able to do," the frightened patron said while shaking in sheer horror.

Her look when she was staring at the EMT's patching her up was one of a cold glaze – almost as it seems she was actually knocking at Death's Door. The skin she has was already pale as it was before she came into the night club, but when Anderson and his partner came in to collect her for the hospital they were barely able to get her out the door because how weak she was. I was the witness from afar as they were collecting the sick

and the wounded – wandering among the sick and the healthy, as they appeared with gashes on their arms.

The new form of leper looking on and asking themselves, “Why was this happening to them when they just wanted to have a night out? Is this some kind of spectral exile when they watch us within the night spots, the ghosts I mean -- why are they inducing this illness and the wounds?”

I watched everything as it happened, all of the horrors became instantly recognizable to me that night. As it was happening, it unfolded as a gruesome nightmare – looking as it was a monster waiting underneath a youth’s bed. All those stories one hears about the haunted night club, the gruesome details of patrons getting slashed or becoming seriously ill without warning become more detailed. Even to think about it to this day still makes me think what the hell is going on; everything that happened in that room would make someone die by just watching.

The atmosphere in the nightclub became much eerier as the horrors unfolded. Every hour passed and another person began to bleed without explanation, the Goth girl who was being worked on began to shake in fear of what was looking at her. Everything within her dark world becomes what no one was able to imagine, all the nightmares she lived out within a spectral exile. Wandering – all the blood that flows; the witnesses all horrified by what was happening around them. From this I was the witness, looking – watching, as it all happened.

I heard the emergency medical technicians working on the patients in the main area of the nightclub.

“Stay calm. We’re going to patch you up,” Anderson commented to one of the other patrons, but trying to keep calm himself. He collected one of the other patrons, “What’s your name lady?”

“Tina,” she answered while shaking, “Tina Stephens. I am scared as hell right now and don’t know what the hell is going on here.”

The EMT was wrapping her head wound and carried her over to the stretcher then told her to go lay down. She felt her breath in the cold room; the temperature was dropping without any sign of warning. I’ll only imagine what the newspapers will say when they get a hold of this one, especially trying to find the words to use to describe everything within the night. This would become a nightmare for the media alone, let alone the journalists who were admitted to do the articles on DJ KnightBane’s event.

Everything that they describe or what they try to make sense of what happened – knowing what was in there, the horror as it tore away the shards of flesh of the patrons.

“We are at the edge of the house of horrors,” one journalist said when she was speaking into the camera. “I’m Joline Swanson and reporting the events that are happening at this particular Goth event. I was supposed to do a story about the Gothic scene in Chicago, Illinois, and here I am knee deep in some horrific supernatural plot. I wish I can say what I wanted to say on here because this is network TV. I can’t swear. Who am I kidding, *oh*

shit – something came flying right at me.”

The journalist was actually dressed up in an old type of Victorian dress, to fit the part of the club she was doing an assignment for. She saw a small mug fly at her without warning and quickly ducked.

She saw pools of blood on the walls and on the floors; then noticed a patron pale as a ghost.

“God -- I swear I walked into Bat Country, what the hell. This seems like something out of Hunter S. Thompson’s drug crazed hallucinations, but this isn’t a hallucination,” Joline got up from ducking the flying beer mugs and shards of glass. Looking on she collects her composure and continues her coverage and story.

“EMT’s were working on people the whole night – one person got carried out in critical condition and each of the patrons are even more seriously injured than the last. I swear I walked into the pages of a horror novel,” the journalist commented while looking at the cameraman.

The cameraman was covered in blood from ducking the projectile mug. Staring at the surroundings around him, poor guy became more horrified as everything became more intensified. All the while the spectral activity became even more active within the room. All the while the DJ refused to notice, she just ran her set as she normally would. It just seemed that she had too many pills in her time. I noticed some of the needle tracks on her arms early on. Some couldn’t tell if she was on smack or just a diabetic. She truly had no idea that people were becoming seriously injured or ill, the music was so loud that it drowned out some of their bloodcurdling screams.

“God damn, I don’t know what the hell is going on around here, but I can say this much. It is scaring me out of my wits,” Tina Stephens said as the EMT’s were packing her onto a stretcher but they couldn’t take her out the door because something else was about to happen. Something blocked the doors without warning. Everything that took command of itself; seemed that the building became alive but by what they couldn’t say.

“From what they claim about the building itself, it was originally part of the old Chicago. This being the part of the city caught in flames so many years ago almost more than a century. It used to be a play theatre, the patrons in the theatre died in the Chicago fire as the city was in flames,” the journalist commented to the camera.

“What the hell is happening,” one of the patrons watched, wondering what the hell was going on. They were looking at some of the others and noticed all the blood on their arms, face, and legs. Everything that was happening couldn’t be the result of too many drugs because just about everyone in the venue was sober.

The emergency medical technicians watched and couldn’t make sense of everything – just something about what was going on didn’t add up to them. Observing all that did happen; their response to everything was that of nerve chilling fear. The emergency medical techs continued looking around almost if they stepped into something they couldn’t imagine, from the things that stood in their eyes wandered if they were wandering

in something of a writer's acid nightmare. I started to see them freak out even more when they noticed one of the patrons had their hand chopped off as the door closed on them.

"FUCK! Hurry and patch some of the patrons up then call some back up because we need more than just us to get these people out of here," Anderson screams, "try to find a phone so we can call dispatch. I don't know how I can explain this to them, but this is too much even for me. I swear this is nothing compared to what your sister saw in the South Barrington cemetery, no one was bleeding around her without warning."

Bella was on the other side of the venue when all this was going on, and she started to just see everything that was happening. Pulling out her camera she started to snap photographs with some morbid curiosity. Every aspect of something being levitated off the floor she managed to capture on film.

The type of thing no one seemed to understand or found how it added up, *just nothing seemed to add up that night*. I watched Bella take pictures of everything, every bloody and graphic detail of the incidents that happened in the event. I couldn't understand why she wanted to do the photographs of the gruesome details, looking on I couldn't begin to see why she wanted to do this – but I knew deep down when she was younger she wanted to be a documentary film maker.

She especially captured the footage of the young woman bleeding on the gurney while the emergency medical technicians were trying to patch Tina Stephens up.

"It does feel as I stepped into some bizarre landscape where everything seems like it is alive. Yet, no one knows why – but this entity is hurting people and causing them to become violently ill," Bella commented while she continued to snap away with her camera, "This is definitely Bat Country in the sense of everything that is happening. All the things within the surroundings and *I swear*; I would not have believed it if I've did not see it. First time to a Goth night and this happens, holy shit. Hard to believe that something could be triggered, waking the spiritual dead so to speak."

She was right; hard to say but I had this frightening revelation that she was. Every time when she goes to a night club or a bar – there was always something rather disturbing that happens. Something that she knew if she was sensitive to anything connected to the supernatural. I couldn't yet put my finger on why this was happening, but I thought this is a familiar thing when DJ KnightBane does her set – someone is always carried off on a gurney. Everyone in black but all that they've worn was soon covered in crimson vital fluids.

It stands in the places I can't say, but everything within the realms of unspeakable territories wander among waking nightmares. All within a nightclub that breaths and lives as it was alive – and the way the spirits of the old theatre turned nightclub survive is by the blood of the living. Unearthly madness some would say, but it is always the case when something that couldn't be explained – that often becomes the answer when someone asks, "What the fuck is going on? It just seems that everything had gone right to hell!"

All the injuries and gashes they received, but yet no way for the first responders were

able to patch up each and every one of them. They had their work cut out for them, and more so than the one's sister did when she worked on the South Barrington Haunting. I knew because I was there, and the eyewitness to the whole horrors that happened in the venue.

Strange happenings, the kind of thing journalists in a newspaper or local news often look for – but they don't find. When they don't look for it, they find it. Ghosts, I mean or some happenings of the supernatural since they always have their way in books or documentaries.

"Goddamn, this is getting even stranger and stranger – felt like I walked into the pages of *The Twilight Zone*," Bella commented as she snapped some more photos, "The small magazine I run; while readers will have a field day with these."

I watched and observed wishing I had a tape recorder on me because this is some of the most disturbing accounts of a ghost that I didn't write about. While a carefree DJ played her set everyone was becoming wounded or currently hurt by something beyond. Just something about these night clubs bring out the supernatural, similar in the sense to a moth when it sees a light bulb or a flame. An unexplainable bloodbath as it becomes a scarred portrait of the first time on a night out with the girlfriend.

I guess it is always true that when a horror writer steps out, they've become an observer of the strange and haunting. Something was there and it wanted a captive audience, even if they were in critical condition. If someone doesn't even begin to believe me that this happened they can shoot my cremated ashes from out of the rusty cannon, but if one lives along the historic Route 66 they have to be prepared for any weird story they're told. Since the venue the Goth night was at happened to be a theatre that was along the old highway, and happened to be haunted by its original inhabitants. Looking on, as it became darker still – I was only a mere observer.