

ROBERT RILEY

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The Messenger Arc: Fools Company (part 3)

To the world that caught the buzz of the Sean Best murder trial, they would be forgiven to think that he was nothing more than a bad seed, through and through. The truth was that he was actually, and wait-for-it: polite, quiet... a giver, private, wouldn't hurt a fly. To the psychologists who study him on a daily basis, they see no reason for his sudden change. The word possession would have never come in as a factor, but as I watched Sean talk about his double murder and about the malevolent form that told him to do it... I knew it was so.

Whether or not this was a connection to the mythology behind Jiri Ivanov and his deal with getting me involved in his story... at the time I didn't know. D.C. Harvey both agreed that we had to confront the entity deep in the office where Sean Best worked, and at the same time find the bodies that Sean said he'd given to his higher self.

Little did I realize, my purpose was about to be shaken to its very core.

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On the way to the Old Brows Tower, D.C. Harvey told me that they had already gone through the building in search of the two bodies of Gareth and Eric, the two work colleagues who met their end at the hands of Sean Best. He had been assured by his associates that they had done a thorough job of searching through both the renovated and the abandoned side of the building. Now he started to question that outcome. If as I had suspected that there was something in there of significant malevolence, no team of forensics would be in there for long. The entity inside wouldn't allow it. He could only go in and see with his own eyes and I would be with him, just like we had done during the parachute conspiracy.

First of all, we went to the renovated office building – which had now been battened down and closed off for access. It was now as cold and as dead as the abandoned part. We managed to break in - with care, consideration and a crowbar. Up to the third floor we went into the now vacant office room where Sean Best went about his day job. Electricity had already been cut, so we gave the room a once over with our flashlights. The first D.C. Harvey noted was that after half a year of being shut down, the office had not experienced any break-ins, graffiti artists or squatters. No temptation could get past the feeling that was present especially on that third floor. D.C. Harvey admitted that if I weren't with him, he would have turned around and gone home.

I could have said there was energy there, but I didn't feel or see anything. I wasn't being pushed away. I was being made to believe there simply was nothing of interest for the likes of me. I could see the quick plaster job that had been made to the hole in the wall. That was where Sean Best was possessed, according to his story. The entity had to be behind that wall, but still, I felt no signs.

'We need to bring him out of hiding.' I told the D.C. who was already one step ahead of me. Armed with the crowbar, he started to break through the plaster revealing darkness. I instantly shone the flashlight inside. As I expected, it was one of the burnt out room from the other side of the dividing wall.

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'This is where we expected to find the bodies.' D.C. Harvey announced. 'The team continued to extend the circle outward until the whole building was covered. They found nothing. They did look a little spooked when they emerged.'

'Chances are they were pushed away from find.' I added.

I peered through the hole and felt a sudden gagging sensation. My nerves heightened, and the pure signs of unrest came over me. I certainly was not at my best. This darkness was uncompromising, but no matter what, I was more than willing to face it full on.

I saw thick black shadows moving past in the distance... but that was just my eyes reacting to the darkness. I started to crawl my way in. Armed with my flashlight I stood in one of the blackened rooms. Ash and soot covered everything. The room was a wrap around open plan, but the central corridor that lead to the main stairs and elevators had been broken down. I walked to the edge of what I believed to be the start of the corridor. It was a pit of debris which also gave full view to the floors below. I can't tell you how difficult it is to describe the devastation I was seeing. What I could note at this moment was that it was quiet. Too quiet.

The D.C. and I decided to start from the top and work our way down to the ground floor. Together we located one of the stairwells that appeared intact. That would be our sure way up and down. Planning our route back, just in case things went bad was our first priority. We made no more than five steps advancing on the stairwell when the ground gave way. It was I who went down however. D.C. Harvey was too slow in grabbing a hold as I fell one floor down, landing onto a stack of broken wheel-caster chairs. It was a graveyard of office junk, and as I looked up at the D.C. through the hole from where I'd fallen, I couldn't help but let out a laugh. He asked if I was okay. I rolled off the pile and found my feet, brushed off the dust, and padded down to where I had hurt myself the most. My legs were scratched up a little; most likely grazing and bruising would be my penalty for clumsy footing. The D.C. said he would go ahead and find his way down. This gave me a good few minutes to explore the second floor.

I immediately felt something different on this floor. Something I could only describe as a sinful vibration. It was not pleasant. The corridors and the rooms were more intact from where I was standing. I moved though into the corridor and tried to locate the stairwell that D.C. Harvey would be arriving from. I saw another shadow slipping into the stream of my flashlight for a moment before retracting back into the entrance of another door. I took a deep breath and decided to take a look.

I found myself inside a break room - complete with burnt out couch, table and kitchenette along the surrounding wall. A big box TV set (one of those wooden cased ones from the late 80's) sat broken on the ground. I looked around, but there was nothing in there. A tug on the back seems of my coat told me otherwise.

I turned briskly; I saw the eyes, the face the small form of a male. The shock set me back, right against the blackened broken kitchen units. It was not just any male form however; it was a Japanese man,

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possibly in his early twenties. I was immediately confused and frightened, even though I knew deep down this was not the malevolent force we were looking for. That feeling was still somewhere below.

'You don't know me, but I need your help.' The boy said... in English.

I got a grip of my nerves and said, 'I do know you... Akio? What are you doing here?'

The spirit looked at me with a look of confusion. 'I don't know you? I came here because you know Jiri, and I know you are here to help him find the malevolent force.'

For a spirit, he spoke very quickly, very easily. There was lip movement. His form was also far too rich to say he was anything but the usual spirit entity. My suspicions immediately arose. I quickly assumed I was being manipulated. I decided to stand further away from the entity. Looking behind for a moment, I noticed the windows in this room were already gone leaving nothing but the frames. I couldn't go any further or I would be placed in a position where I could be pushed out of the window to my death.

'Who are you really?' I asked firmly. The Akio spirit I knew was a child after all, and furthering that thought, a child who couldn't speak a word of English. His story was still a mystery, so if this was indeed a negative force playing a game, it had chosen a very incomplete and inaccurate representation of the Akio I had met. Also, this entity didn't choose to recognize our having met before today. I immediately refused to play along and demanded that the entity leave. To my surprise, he said, 'As you wish', turned around and walked away without any resistance.

'As I wish?' I said after him, opening myself to the challenge. But it never came.

That was too easy, I thought. What game is being played here?

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Little did I know at the time that D.C. Harvey was also experiencing an encounter of his own-- During my visit from the assumed mimic, D.C. Harvey had met with "me" and he and an entity masquerading as "I" had already gone down the stairwell to the ground floor. D.C. Harvey was following my instructions as I had "an instinct that there was a basement that hadn't been discovered." Or so the entity made him believe.

As I was working past my reluctance to engage with what I thought was my own mimic, the D.C. was in too deep, and heading deeper.

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I waited a while on the second floor expecting D.C. Harvey to appear at any moment. When he did not, I headed to the stairwell and back up to the third floor. When I opened the stairwell door to reveal the third floor, I was given another surprise appearance by the Akio entity who was there waiting for me.

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It was then that I realized, *I'm not sensing him. I'm seeing him though as clear as ten spirits combined, but I'm not prepared for his appearance. This is not a good sign...*

'Don't shut me out Robert.' Akio spoke as if he was truly in the room. There was no resounding spiritual strain or interference in his voice. He sounded as though he was really there. 'I'm not demonic, or malevolent. You have to listen. I am here on request of Jiri Ivanov, from whom you are acquainted. Your friend, D.C. Harvey is in danger. He is with an entity that is pretending to be YOU. He's convinced and is following YOU, falling right into a trap. Now that is all I have to say, so before you push me away again, D.C. Harvey is not on this third floor. He met the entity in the stairwell; they are down on the ground floor. I suggest you move.'

I told the entity who claimed to be Akio that he would have to come with me this time and that he would lead me to D.C. Harvey. I also wanted him to walk ahead of me so that I didn't have any more surprises. He agreed and we hurried down the stairwell, avoiding structural damage as we went. We reached the first floor stairwell and had to divert to a safer way down to reach the ground floor. I asked Akio:

'Why are you able to surprise me? If not a mimic, or demonic, what kind of spirit are you?'

His response was unexpected. 'What on earth gives you impression that I'm dead?'

Profound! He made a good point, to which I will expand upon more in the epilogue of this tale. As we glided down the next set of stairs, down to the ground floor, I looked at Akio with a chaos of thoughts. I ventured one last question before hitting the ground running to catch up with D.C. Harvey before it was too late.

'Are you an astral traveler? Out of body traveler?'

'Got it in one!' Akio replied.

'But I did meet you as a child? You ARE the same Akio who haunted the little boy, taught him Japanese, right?' Clearly, the trust I had in him was weakening...

Akio looked at me with absolute strain. 'You encountered me already, no... that's not possible, but I was that child who lived in that school. That's where I first Astral travelled. I stayed in this country for at least two months, so my parents told me. I have never gone back there. But you have?'

'Yes. I went there because you were haunting the child, scaring him... but how could that have been you?'

Akio shook his head. 'That wasn't me. I think once you finish here, you better get back to that house. I doubt that whatever you met wasn't me, but something else using the dormant, residual energy I had left behind. There's a link Robert Riley. Whatever you met wasn't there for the child. It was there to get to know YOU.'

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After that, I felt giddy. The sickness to my stomach made me wonder if all of this was true. Why would Jiri have allowed me to go to that house in the first place? Was I being used as bait? From that moment, I reached for my book. I wanted to ask something but were already in the thick of finding D.C. Harvey. *One thing at a time Robert... first, find the D.C.*

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With the revelation that Akio was not actually a spirit, I remember not being able to wrap my brain around what he was exactly. An Astral Traveler was a person who was able to leave their bodies and see things in other parts of the world, as if they were a second observer to the body. The theory suggests that a person can be in two places at once: one in body, one in spirit. With experience, a person is able to both interact and be seen in both places in a conscious state. There are cases where two events had been observed by the same person simultaneously, and with records of others seeing that person at both places at the same time. What had this to do with the spirit realm? There had to be a link. Akio also knew Jiri? Does that put forward the possibility that Jiri was also using the realm of the spirit world in an unconventional way?

Never had I ever accounted for the possibility that there were an elite few who could actually reach through and interact with that world, or that maybe, although I wasn't a traveler, I was able to observe and interact with this realm also. At the time that Akio had told me, I didn't trust him or believe him, and with good reason. What did I have going for me in the way of trust? It even threw up questions about the messenger who had been with me for over a year. Was Jiri Ivanov to be trusted? Was I a fall to follow his written instructions from which I followed so blindly and without question? That to me was the business of a mimic. I didn't know anything about Jiri Ivanov then. What I know now however made all the difference...

...But... on with the case at hand: we went on to find D.C. Harvey, but to what end would we have to convince him that he was interacting with the wrong Robert Riley?

(To be continued...)

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