

CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS PRESENTS

# ROBERT RILEY

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## SHADOW INVESTIGATOR

Written by Stephen Radford

### #6. Red Means Go! – 2/2

Reverend Taylor McGuire listened to my story with a curious look on his face. He'd heard of personal exorcism cases, but never such a case. In a brief recap, after several leads, I discovered that on a particular stretch of road, between two towns, there were a high amount of accidents on a road junction. Only cars heading southbound seemed to carry such high statistics. There were multiple factors that lead me to believe something beyond the scope of crazy driving decisions was at play here. There was photographic data, and for each and every case where a car ran that south bound red light - causing a fatality for the driver = the speed camera prior to that junction picked them up. In every photograph, for each fatality, in the passenger seat, there was a anomaly, either shown as a light or a shadow depending on how the light hit the car on the moment that photo was taken. Incidentally, no other car driving southbound had the anomaly. The previous speed camera didn't fire, because the drivers didn't break the law so no picture was made of them, so walked the road, seeing if there was a reason why something would be with them on that fatal journey. That shadow passenger had to have plenty of time, and a good reason to latch on, and sure enough, I came across a small store, which was also a liquor store, right in between the two speed camera markers.

This is where the story gets less technical, and more spiritual. Inside that shop, I observed (but did not call attention to) a shadow being, very strong, very verbal on the spiritual plain. He sat on a chair by the door, pushing for suggestion. I followed the instincts, let my guard down and came out of the store not only with a packet of rare expensive cigarettes, a six pack of beer, even though I don't drink... and a shadow man who got into the passenger seat.

That was where I ended this, my first visit with the roadside spirit stalker. I turned my car around, ignoring the suggestions to drive south, and to keep going, no matter what light was red, what light was green... I suppressed and endured for a few moments the stalker's torment, until he forcibly left knowing he was not getting a victim out of me today.

The Reverend examined the cigarettes and the 6 pack of beer. He sensed nothing wrong considering that he wasn't ashamed to enjoy a beer or three, but the smoking was definitely not cool for the church.

“I’ll come with you, help rid this deadly being from the road, but I want you to promise to me you won’t make me smoke and drink all of this. I’m in trouble enough as it is.”

I took the Reverend’s words lightly. He needed to get onto this with clean and sober thoughts, even though we both knew we were both going to get roughed about on this venture. On the way to the small road side shop, I briefed the Reverend on everything he needed to know, including the researching I had done to identify the shadow stalker. I had a name, and I had the details of his death from the local news archives.

Bradley Tate died 28, having just left work, he looked forward to breaking into a 6 pack of Blue Rockville, smoke those cigarettes he enjoyed. He carried darkness about his life, and that darkness set him in that dreamy state as he ran the red light straight into a passing heavy goods vehicle. Bradley Tate: His name would be useful in the moment we approach the deadly junction, I said to the Reverend, “I doubt that nobody had ever spoken to him directly when he was at his most suggestive, moments before the accident occurred.”

Bradley the shadow stalker needed victims who deliberately repeated exactly what he’d done all those years ago, but boy was he going to be in for a surprise. The Reverend was going to be with me to unleash his cleaning ritual. The trouble was, we needed to keep Bradley Tate with us all the way; right to the end game: the four way road junction where the shadow stalker had his deal with death.

I went in, ignored the stalker, trying hard to forget in that moment that he had a name, an identity. Any thoughts heading his way could spoil the plan. I could sense him as he sat grumbling, suggesting from his chair next to the door. He was obviously a thing of residual memory, not recognizing me as the wise one that got away the last time. He went straight to work, leading me to the drinks fridge. A six pack of Blue Rockville, and slowly, so as to draw out the energy as much as possible, I worked my way around the shop, picking up items, reading package information before heading to the counter. I asked once again for a neat little packet of Bridge Red, filtered brand cigarettes. I paid and walked on out to the car. I felt Bradley stepping heavily behind me. I got into the front seat and passed the purchase to Reverend Maguire, who had by my request, disguised his collar with a scarf. None the less, Bradley started to growl, looking back at the Reverend who didn’t see anything. He held the plastic bag that contained the beer and the cigarettes.

So began the charade, I started by saying, ‘I bought Blue Rockville.’

‘You’re kidding Robert. That’s disgusting beer: Tasteless-toilet-water.’ He spluttered his disgust as he opened the bag pulling out the packet of cigarettes. ‘Bridge Red filtered? Little girls in school smoke these.’

Bradley responded to both insults with a strong sense of hostility. It was working. He was using his negative energy. I started to drive off, heading south. I could hear the words instilled into my mind. Keep going, keep going, and don’t stop.

I felt the energy, but it didn't grab me entirely, or so I first thought. Like a drug, I was in denial over his power. I believed in my mind and in my heart that I was in full control of what I saw. The cars ahead were driving steadily south. The low beams of cars heading north all appeared normal. Even the sudden onslaught of rain, I took control and started the window wipers. We were moments away from the junction. The reverend continued to provoke. It was our intention now to get him as riled up as possible, therefore, using more energy to do what he needed to do. It was not until the stop lights appeared in the distance that I knew the reverend and I saw completely different things.

'They're red.' I looked ahead and saw they were still green. With no cars in front of me breaking, I carried on at the same speed. I honestly thought it was the Reverend, with all his provocation, who was seeing red incorrectly. The road was quiet ahead. I heard Bradley lose his focus for a moment, and as the wipers brushed the rain clear from my view, I saw the lights change to red. I felt the moment hit too late. I forced my foot down and as we swerved into the middle of the junction, I saw a car head from my left. It stopped just short of hitting the side door. The honking started, and as I looked to the seat beside me, I saw a clear vision of Bradley, shivering. He started to fade, drifting away from the car, but I pulled him back in, simply by saying his name.

'Bradley.' He looked at me, and immediately Reverend Maguire started to preach an exorcism, even though there was no living entity to be exorcised, it seemed that the spirit of this one man who was possessed in life was being used in the state we know only as death. As the Reverend cast his barrage, Bradley seethed in pain. I slowly drove on, still heading south beyond the junction, not knowing still if I had seen red or green. I still cannot say. I kept one eye on the rear view mirror as the Reverend said his piece. Bradley never left the car. The growling soon stopped, and the forced suggestions faded like a lingering echo until there was just a dim reflection of the man who once was.

Bradley Tate vanished moments later and was never seen again. The Reverend was awash with sweat, shaking, not from the interaction with the spirit, but with spinning in a car almost to his death.

'Remind me to never hang out with you on a Saturday night.' He said, breaking the tension that filled the car. The heaviness lifted and I turned the car safely around and headed back north. The lights were red, and I stopped, waited for green before heading further up north. We had to stop one more time to the shop, get a sense of the place before leaving.

We parked up and straight away I noticed the shop keeper tossing out the chair that sat by his shop door, into a nearby workers skip. I waited until he went back inside before I headed on over. Stepping cautiously in, I was in full control of my thoughts and the shop seemed light, relaxed and open to self expression. The shopkeeper who stood behind the counter was slightly red eyed. He'd been crying, it seemed, and he tried hard to pretend that he hadn't. He smiled, and then recognizing my face

from the previous two visits, he turned and reached for the Bridge Red filtered brand of cigarettes. I was about to say no, but he went one shelf lower, taking a lighter.

'Let me guess.' He said as he handed the lighter to me. I smiled, taking a pack of gum from the rack.

'No thanks. I just decided to quit.'

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