

LIVING WITH GHOSTS (working title: WIDOWSVILLE)

LAST UPDATED 11/02/2021 TRANSCRIPT FOR CUT 14

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ACT I

Credit Bed

KAREN: He was a blind date. And I've never been on a date before. And it was... Amazing.

01. Croquet

STEF: Are you going or am I going?

JESS: I just went. It's your turn. I'm winning.

JESS: I can't believe it's only a year away already.

STEF: I know. Senior year. And then you guys are all alone. Are you gonna be lonely?

JESS: Yeah I'm going to be lonely!

STEF: I think Mom's done pretty good on her own, for a while. But I don't know if that's just because we've been around so often.

02. KEVIN DIES

JESS: The doctors had said he was healthy as a horse. You know, he was just a regular guy. So it was very shocking to us when it happened. Very unexpected.

KAREN: Kevin went to play racquetball with the gentlemen from his company. And during the game, he collapsed. At that time, the facilities did not have to have paddles to revive anyone who's had a heart attack. So they didn't have anything there.

ETHEL: When we got to the hospital, I said "I'm Kevin Beardsworth's mother." And the nurses all looked at each other. And then I knew he was gone.

JESS: That whole year after I found out what happened was just a blur. I don't remember it. I think maybe

subconsciously I suppressed it because I didn't know how to deal with it. Or didn't want to accept what had happened. But she was a mess. She really just was...

ETHEL: I went through a year of grief and mourning. But that was *my* time period. After a year I was no longer in mourning. I never told Karen this because she wouldn't, you know, appreciate that.

STEF: She believes, and we've talked about this, that you get one love your entire life, and as sad as it is, she had her love, and that's it for her.

JESS – He was really the glue that kept everything together. He was the peacemaker in the house. He was the one who cooked dinners , he was the one who planned the trips... the family vacations every year. He was the fun part of the family. He was the one who videotaped everybody. He was the musician. He was really the one who just kept everything going. And once he was gone, our lives just like stopped.

BACK SCREEN

03 KAREN AT GYM

To get through it I keep myself busy, I focus on my children, my job, my home. I work out at the gym or I do a bike ride, I take the dog out for a walk. I run. Those kind of distractions allow you to focus on something other than what's happened. My list on the weekends is very long. And maybe this is a security blanket for me: if I don't change things, I don't have to adapt. There's a piece of paper next to the washer/dryer where he has a little arrow that points to the hot and the cold so that we knew which dials to turn off and on and stuff like that, so, when they went to redo the kitchen I carefully took it down and then when they finished the kitchen I carefully put it back up. It's just a comforting thing to have things not change too much, because, this is going to be hard to say. Cause when he died, that change... just knocked me off my feet.

04. EXPERTS – SOCIETY & GRIEF

BROOK: we are not a society equipped to deal with grief. And part of that comes from our innate nature to want to fix things. Especially in America -- We're a society of fixers. But with grief, we can't fix it. Grief isn't something we move through quickly. It's not something we

actually fix. Grief is more about learning to live in a new and different state.

DR. JOE: When a person experiences sudden loss, of a spouse or a person in their life, that event produces a pretty strong emotion. Whether it's shock or it's sadness or grief. And it's healthy to experience that emotion. There's a refractory period of chemicals that are created from that event. But if we don't know how to regulate and transmute those emotions into something else – those emotions drive familiar networks in the brain that keep recalling the past. Which really means from a biological standpoint, we were altered from this moment biologically and we have not been able to change since.

SURVIVOR: He died in a motorcycle accident on January 10th...

MAXEY – We're used to getting better. We're being sold all kinds of stuff to make us better. But nothing prepares us for when it doesn't. And there's this kind of strange belief that everybody grieves in their own way. And so why try to find something that works for the majority of people. About 20, sometimes 30 percent are estimated of people who are grieving will have what you call complicated grief. Which basically means they're just not functional.

Coping mechanisms have been wrecked, support systems have been undone... 40% of people in psych hospitals have lost a loved one within two years of their admission.

There is something that helps most people, I've found. But usually all sorts of things are tried before they can discover it. If they ever do.

ETHEL WRITES

OCEAN, SEAGULL... We're now in FLORIDA

ETHEL awakens, preens in mirror, then auto-writes

STEF: My grandmother sits down with a legal pad and a pen, and she'll write questions and a voice in the back of her head gives her the answers. And she speaks to my father, her husband, and God himself. And I think that's amazing. To have that ability is great. But the one thing I don't know is if it's just her way of coping with things, or if it's actually her way of communicating. If she has this

sixth sense that she's able to do this.

KAREN: It was her way of coping. You know, whatever makes you get through the next day is just what she needed. So we didn't want to tell her that it was silly, um, and that we didn't believe. You know, you just shake your head and nod, you know, so glad for you.

STEF: She told me, "Stefanie: I can still speak to your father." And being 10 years old, that's not something normal to hear. It's not something you expect your grandmother to do!

JESS: After my grandmother introduced the automatic writing to my sister and I, my Mom was very upset.

KAREN: You know... this was their dad. They lost their dad. And to give somebody hopes of talking to him again -- you can't do that. That's cruel. I'm just very angry.

STEF: It just put the two of them on different sides. And it made it hard for me to choose who was right. You know the two of them don't really talk to each other that much anymore. You know... an occasional phone call, but my mom never visits. And grandma never comes here. So this ability, this amazing thing that my grandmother can do has created this space between us and I've been so frustrated with the fact that I'm not able to talk to him, that I've stopped believing in what my grandma can do.

7. ETHEL & SHRINK ROGER

ETHEL: It started in the year 2000. I happened to read a book by Ruth Montgomery who was fortunate enough to be doing automatic-writing. And that is receiving messages from the other side and going through her writing process. I decided I'd try it myself.

DR. SAMUEL: So your husband was communicating with you from after he passed away?

ETHEL: And my son Kevin.

DR. SAMUEL: I see.

DR. SAMUEL: Do you feel him as a presence or do you see him there with you when this is going on?

ETHEL: I feel his presence. I know it's him. I feel his personality. And what he writes is the way he used to talk and speak to me.

DR. SAMUEL: (formal) The most likely explanation for someone experiencing the presence of their spouse in their life is that they feel the loss tremendously and are very close to them. Sometimes it suggests that they're lonely or going through a depression. It's only when it's really abnormal or out of the ordinary that one considers it pathological such as they have a true belief that cannot be shaken in any way and they actually seem to communicate in person with that dead person, then one is worried about that. Otherwise, it's a way of dealing with loneliness or the loss of a loved one that they've been with for many years.

ETHEL: I don't hear a voice. I just feel his thoughts.

DR. SAMUEL: If I told you this doesn't really happen -- it must be your imagination? How do you respond to that?

ETHEL: That's your belief, but I know what I know.

8. Soul Origins

HUFFORD: People have been research into communication with the dead, and have been reporting experiences of communication with the dead really as long as there's been writing. We have ancient Greek samples of stories of visits from deceased people.

KRIPAL: An anthropologist named EB Tylor, argued that the origin of the belief in a soul goes back to primitive peoples who would have dreams or waking hallucinations of their loved ones after they've passed. And so it's because of these hallucinations, it's because of these dreams that they then concluded, oh, my loved one is still alive. Just in some other world, or some other plane of existence.

CATHY: Then the telegraph was invented. And the telegraph

was the first actual use of electricity. And so the idea that I can be in Philadelphia and tell someone in Idaho "I need you to come home now, the kid is sick," utterly amazing. A complete watershed moment in the history of communication. And so the invisible instant communication across space, it was just a mere matter of logic to think that maybe you can do that vertically as well as horizontally. And then when the Civil War comes along, just about everyone has lost a husband, a father, a brother. And so Automatic-Writing became a very popular form of communication to keep these domestic ties intact across the threshold of death.

05.BRIDGE

IRENE: My neighbor, Ethel, corresponds with her husband who passed away many years ago. And she has this thing where she hears from him in her head. And she does automatic writing...

THERAPIST: Okay...

IRENE: After my husband passed away, she comes over to my house

IRENE: And she tells me she has this direct correspondence with her husband...

THERAPIST: Well I'm sure she had good intentions. What disturbed you about that?

IRENE: Well... here I'm trying to adjust to the fact that he's gone... And she's bringing him back... this way.

THERAPIST: Uh huh

IRENE: Like he's in another world, but he can still be contacted.

THERAPIST: If Ethel's husband passed on a long time ago...

IRENE: About 20, 20 years ago...

THERAPIST: That's a long time. And she is still keeping up this writing, and corresponding, it may be that she has some denial about that. That it may be hard for her, after

all these years even to really accept the fact that he's gone. So this may be her way of dealing with it. But not the best way. That's a way that comforts her but it's not comforting for you. So in your own mind you can kind of forgive her. You have enough on your plate right now.

IRENE: I think so.

09. IRENE MOURNS

11. DARE

IRENE: you know, a funny thing is happening in my house. I've got lights blinking in every room.

MAXINE: Every room?

IRENE: Ethel told me lights are a symptom of dead people trying to get in touch with you, but I don't know whether to believe this crap. It's so foreign to me. I never thought about it before — you know, when people die people die. There's no more. But the way she talks, there's another life for them someplace else. And maybe we can contact them. What do you think?

MAXINE: You know what I think Bubbie?

MAXINE: You have to experience on your own.

IRENE: I'm very confused.

MAXINE: Go to a medium instead of a shrink. Decide for yourself what's real. Talk to your Rabbi. Maybe it's something like going to Kaballah.

ADD: IRENE: Oh, I don't know.

HUFFORD: Experiences like After-death communication are covered with layers of explanation from the modern world. From Academics, from scientists, from theologians, all kinds of folks. Which taken together have this generally skeptical attitude that it's a primitive kind of belief. We find them in history. And not subscribed to by the majority

of the people in this society. And yet people keep having experiences that support these beliefs and that contradict the conventional theories about where these beliefs come from.

CATHY: And even if people feel uncomfortable talking about their experiences, there's very much a conspicuous consumption aspect to ghosts...

Movie Clip: I see dead people.

We Love movies and television shows that feature mediums (or really any aspect of the supernatural) which are pretty much in agreement that the afterlife exists, and that your ties are not severed at death, and that there is a relationship between the dead and these forces we know exist but haven't REALLY EXPLORED.

JESS: After my father passed, my mom -- not forced -- but really wanted to do the right thing as a parent, and have all of us go to therapy together. My sister hated it. I didn't mind it because I didn't feel I needed it but I didn't mind talking about it at the same time. So I just did it. And I think my Mom didn't know what to do, didn't know how to react herself... she didn't know how to help herself, help her children deal with it...

JESS PICK UP

KAREN: So I was in search of a Church to try to see if somebody else could shed some light on it, so I went to a Baptist church, this Lutheran church, and then I went to this Pentecostal church. But I wasn't able to really come away feeling any different. What I don't see I just can't believe too much in.

JESS: We kind of made our own little new family and kind of just helped each other instead of going to someone to talk to. We just kind of talked to each other.

KAREN: It's been years since Kevin's died. The hole that I have... I don't think it's ready to be filled right now. That hole's going to live there for a little longer I think. And it's okay. I've lived with it for this long and it's part of 'us.' Stefanie's leaving for college. That's going to really be a wake-up call I think. So right now I'm just

going along with my day to day. But I know what's coming.
ADDED: We'll see.

ETHEL AT PIANO

Ethel: When Harold first wrote to me, I was a little frightened. I didn't know what I was getting myself into. But suddenly knowing that Harold is with me is very comforting. It's not quite like having Harold here physically. I'd love to get one of his bear hugs. But I don't think it's a coping mechanism, I feel it's an actual happening.

12. MEDIUMSHIP

IRENE WATCHES YOUTUBE CLIP

PAM BLAIR (on Computer Screen): I have had clients in my office who depended on the medium to prolong the relationship. And what I've encouraged my clients to do is prolong it themselves. That they develop their own way of finding a connection.

SELIG: I'm Paul Selig. I'm on the faculty of New York University. I also work as a psychic and as an empathy. In 1987 I went up to my roof, I think for some reason, at that moment in my life, I thought it was possible for someone to ask to be woken up and have an experience. And I had been raised an atheist so the fact that I was doing this was sort of pretty far out to me. But I had an experience of energy moving through my body. And I found that when I had my hands on people I started to hear things for them. So it was completely unintended. But I think people are coming to me for something a little bit different. So say you're having an issue with a family member, um, who's no longer where. You know, whose crossed. And you give me their name, I'll go into that dynamic. And I usually begin to resemble them and I usually get the dynamic between you.

FLASHBACK TO SELIG SESSION)

FLASHBACK SELIG: That's the face. He's like "what the Fuck! What the hell." He comes through, sort of placating you. This is usually holding you at bay, calming you down.

SELIG (FORMAL): Now we all have this capacity, but we live in a world where we're told that we don't. So we actually don't honor these huge parts of ourselves. I think that what I'm doing is strange. It has to be. But for whatever reason, whatever works through me seems to help people a whole lot. And I think what's mostly important is it gives people permission to have their own experience.

IRENE VISITS RABBI

RABBI: You know most of Judaism deals with law. And you know it's interesting, Irene. There is in Kaballah the idea of transmigrations of souls. Of reincarnation.

IRENE: Really. And that's Jewish.

RABBI: That's Jewish. So there is an idea of reincarnation...

IRENE: So, you know, you're hearing two different thoughts from Judaism, there's two different thoughts.

RABBI: There are. It's a balance. A balance between the finality of death and the realization that the person we love cannot come back in this world, but there's also the realization that every person leaves a legacy to the living. And whether that's the good work they did when they were living or through transmigration of souls.

IRENE: But how about contact now? What if I want to contact my husband now? Do you think that's wrong for me to do that?

RABBI: Irene, it's not wrong. But I don't want you to deceive yourself. You can try to contact Seymour in some way, but Judaism is very much a this-world faith. It's very much a this-world religion. And there's a realization that once the person has left this world, it's very hard to bridge that gap.

16 COLLEGE AND CHRISTIANITY

TRANSITION – Off to college road trip music

STEF and ONO at SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY

STEF: So my grandmother is able to speak to the dead. She has conversations with my father and my grandfather, who's her husband, I guess she's been doing this for a while, and she even wrote a book on it. So being in college now that I'm away from my Mom, if I were to try talking to my Dad, what would the risks be, what would I be giving up or burdening myself with.

ONO: The Catholic Church has always unequivocally been against trying to communicate with the dead. So to try in some way to communicate with your father like you're communicating with me would actually undermine the faith and whole character of Christianity. It's almost like trying to find evidence, real concrete evidence where you shouldn't be looking for that.

ONO: (Formal) The Church is not unsympathetic to those who have lost loved ones. After all, if you spend a whole lifetime or love someone intensely, when that person dies you do want to have a relationship with them. And the Catholic Church does encourage this relationship in a general sense. We can certainly interact with the dead in terms of praying for those who are in the intermediate stage, we can pray to saints and talk to them, but part of being human is accepting that people die. It's painful, but Christianity calls for patience. And we have to make sure we don't circumvent any of Gods rules or any of God's strictures. We should never try to channel the dead in any way.

STEF: If I were to try speaking to my father I would love the support of the church. To not feel like I'm breaking a law would be great! To not feel like I'm ruining a covenant with God. You know maybe these people like my grandmother are messengers to say "well you know what, I know what it's like in heaven and it's worth being nice to everybody. And it's worth, you know, not parking in two parking spaces and doing the right thing." Because going to the afterlife and being with people that just love immensely, is all worth it. It's a great place to be.

BUHLMAN: I find it almost a little bit amusing that, let's just say, some modern theologians are against After-Death Communication when the bible and holy books throughout the ages are filled with After-Death Communication. I mean there's hundreds of references to this exact thing occurring. The reunification of the living and the dead are as natural as breathing. Every country and every society and every culture has records of these types of encounters occurring. So for us not to be open to them and embrace them with joy is beyond me.

HUFFORD: Institutional religion relies on religious authority. And if people in the congregation have a basis for saying "I'm not sure if that's true -- that's not what my dead husband told me," or "that's not what God told me," or "that's not what I saw in my mystical vision," if you have authentic spiritual or visionary experiences erupting in the population, it's pretty difficult to maintain sort of consistent authority. Where if there's going to be any spirit, it better be the Holy Spirit. And not your deceased husband, not your dead brother, not Mom, because that would be 'spiritualism.' And Spiritualism is definitely out of bounds out in conventional modern Christianity. It's heretical, it's demoniacal, OR, from the scientific POV, irrational and psychotic. That's a level of social control that's very impressive, and very scary.

ACT II

19. JESS RESEARCH with BEAVER

VIA YouTube:

MAXEY: When you are in deep grief or you're in deep trauma, either one, you're in your own little world. You wake up in the morning and you can't believe you're in the world where your daughter died. So we took a process that was originally intended to help the trauma of combat veterans, and we put it to work with this trauma of grief in the service of reducing the pain.

BEAVER: Now I never would have thought that anything could heal that kind of depression, period, let alone in one or two sessions. I had never seen anything like it before. A complete lifting of the grief.

MAXEY: It's called 'Induced-After Death Communication therapy.' After-Death Communication is not what we're

aiming at. This therapy is about reestablishing a relationship. But After-Death Communication has to be part of the title so that you know what you're getting into... You have to know this is a possibility.

20 Psychology

ETHEL: When it first happened, Harold did not want me to tell anybody. He said because people may think you're not all there. So he wanted to..

DR. SAMUEL: Have you in the past had a time where you were drinking a lot of alcohol?

ETHEL: I Don't drink.

DR. SAMUEL: Either socially or Marijuana or cocaine or crack or acid?

ETHEL: No. I tried one cigarette when I was in high school.

DR. SAMUEL: Okay. Did you strike your head on anything or get knocked out?

ETHEL: No.. No I did not.

DR. SAMUEL(Formal): Grief can certainly trigger a disorder of a psychiatric nature. A denial response is to not believe they have lost the loved one in such an extreme way that one does not accept the loss and keeps living as if the loved one did not die or something bad did not happen to them. For that to last more than a short time would be a serious maladaptive function and would suggest that there may be a disease process going on. And the treatments range from psychotherapy to the use of medication, and sometimes even in some very severe cases, the use of electroconvulsive therapy or shock therapy.

CATHY: What this is is a battleground over the definitions of consciousness and sanity. So for millennia, voices speaking through people, trance states, the ability to talk to the dead... these are all religious concepts. By 1860, and birth of neurology, the domain starts shifting and the scientists want to claim these phenomenon for their own.

HUFFORD: And as psychology became an authoritative source for talking about human thought, you have a field that sort of wants to take over the inner life of humans, explain it,

pathologize parts, encourage other parts. And I don't mean to stigmatize psychology. Psychology has done a lot of good scientifically and therapeutically, but it's also overreached to a very considerable degree.

DR. SAMUEL: And in addition to communication with Harold, do you talk to anybody else? Or Communicate with any other beings?

ETHEL: You mean Aliens?

DR. SAMUEL: Aliens, or any supernatural beings.

ETHEL: No. Just former human beings.

DR. SAMUEL: Who do you think is really doing this to you?

21. Continuing Bonds

BROOK: Most grief practitioners are misaligned with the latest research. In 1917 Freud did a study called 'Mourning & Melancholia', and what was interpreted from that study at the time was that in order to grieve and mourn successfully we actually had to emotionally detach from the deceased. Basically put them out of our lives and move on. Later, in 1996, a study was done for a book called 'Continuing Bonds,' and fortunately that study validated that's not the case. Not only do we not detach, it's important to stay connected to our loved ones. Our relationship(s), even those relationships with the dead, continue to evolve over time.

22. KITCHEN SCENE

JESS: Look at you getting the garlic out. You already know what I'm going to do.

KAREN: There you go. You're all set.

JESS: Have you thought of like trying the dating websites again?

KAREN: No, I'm over that. That was a one-time thing.

JESS: Stef and I were worried because you're the one mourning, still. I was reading something the other day

online. And they have a study now. And it's basically what they used for veterans. The therapist has the person think about the traumatic memory, which for you would be losing Daddy, and just reliving that trauma in a more conscious setting for some reason, it separates the pain of it from the actual memory. Would you be open to trying something like that?

KAREN: Um... I don't think I want that. I like my little world the way I created.

JESS: I know. I just know I'd feel more comfortable with you ...

KAREN: A little healthier mentally?

JESS: I feel like it doesn't hurt to try...

Karen: Okay.

Jess: it works on 70% of the people so far. And when I was reading the article, on the bottom it said there was a free trial... It's a Saturday/Sunday, 90 minutes each day. And then that's it. It's not like a traditional therapy --

KAREN: That's not a lot of time.

JESS (continuing): where you're going for months at a time. That's why I figured it's kind of a win-win cause you're trying something new, you're not thinking about him being gone, and trying to live your life without him. It's bringing him back into your life in a more positive way. And I thought that was cool.

KAREN: (Dubious) It's different. It's different.

JESS: And I feel like it would benefit me too, because it would allow you to talk about him more and tell me more stories about him, without me feeling like I'm bringing up something painful...

(KAREN SIPS MORE WINE)

KAREN: It's also a little scary though, I have to say (tears up) ... because... sometimes it's not easy to bring up those raw emotions. Um... It's easier to just... keep them quiet. And maybe that's the reason why it's harder to move on. You have to understand: That's all I have. That's all I have of him.

JESS: What if it could be better though? Don't settle.

JESS: (while washing dishes). Life's short. You don't know until you try it. (Karen begins to cry). We should start talking about him more and you should tell me more stories about him before he became a dad. So I can get to know what he was like not just as a Dad. And this might help you be able to do that. Who knows what it will do? It might not do anything. Could you open the garbage for me please?

KAREN: Yeah... It's been a long time, huh?

JESS: It's been a very long time.

KAREN: I know. I know.

MAXEY: Not up for debate anymore is whether people need to feel the feelings that go with that concrete acceptance of the death. Yeah, you got to feel'em. You can't just put them away. They're there for a reason. They're asking for some kind of completion. Some kind of action on your part. If there's no movement and you just sit there with the feelings, they can replay endlessly in just the same fashion as they were in the beginning. And you can go into 30 years of grieving and still be in the same place, without that kind of movement.

25.KAREN FACETIME/SKYPE WITH STEF

KAREN: I don't know if it's a cure or just find it easier to live with. Would you do it?

STEF: I think for the past 17 years we've made the best of a bad situation.

KAREN: Yup, we have.

STEF: And there's always going to be sadness around that. I don't think that's something you can scientifically push away. I just don't. (NOW COVERED).

KAREN: Or if you want to push it way.

STEF: For me I like having those moments. To think that every time I'd look back at it I'd be happy and not mourn it... that to me would feel like it's no longer a big part of my life.

KAREN: It's nice to talk about him, huh?

STEF: And it's nice to cry.

KAREN: I know... it's very therapeu--

STEF: That's a kind of therapy!

KAREN LAUGHS.

JESS THINKS HARD.

KAREN: I'm assuming if it works the result is a good thing.

JESS: And if it doesn't... we're here.

KAREN: But no, no. That's what I'm saying. If it does work the result is a good thing, as opposed to if it works, I lose something that I have right now.

26: BRAIN LIKE RADIO

KRIPAL: People are often confused by these ideas about communicating with dead loved ones. It's actually really complicated. At the moment there's sort of two competing models of the relationship between mind and matter. The standard scientific physicalist model is that mind is somehow an emergent property of brain matter: neurons firing at incredibly quick and sophisticated ways produces this haze of consciousness in the brain and skull and tricks us into thinking we exist as conscious beings. And so in that model, when the brain stops firing, of course consciousness blips out like a light bulb after you hit the switch. The other model, which we call the transmission model, is that the brain is an incredibly evolved receiver or transducer or translator of mind. But mind isn't actually in the brain. IT'S EVERYWHERE. Everything is mind. Everything is conscious. So we call this panpsychism.

GREYSON: As you're listening to me speak, there is electrical activity in the temporal lobe of your brain in an area called Broadman's Area. But does that electrical activity in your brain suggest that your temporal lobe is producing the sound of my voice. Not at all. All of the studies showing brain areas associated with different mental functions show only correlations, not causation. Thoughts, perceptions, and memories could take place from a consciousness somewhere separate from the brain, but are then receive and processed by specific areas in the brain. It's much like a telephone, or radio, or a television. The signal, the message, is created somewhere else.

KRIPAL:

(SO...)when the brain dies, of course, mind is unaffected. **Very much as when your TV frizzes out, it doesn't mean the actors on it all just died.** It just means you've lost the ability to get the reception. That's all it means.

23. REVELATION

Boca Yoca Studio

Instructor: Palms are going to come together bend your knees and come back to forward fold.

IRENE: Somebody whose in my yoga class, she tells me the same things that Ethel tells me. She also contacts her husband. And he's in her home. And she talks him. So that's what I'm experiencing. He's in my home!

MAXINE: There's something I have to tell you, Irene. I didn't feel comfortable talking about this before. Please don't share this with anyone.

IRENE: Okay.

MAXINE: A few days after Bernard died, Um.. I was in my car, I was leaving the house to go to work. I decided that I couldn't stay home any longer. I had to leave. I had to go back to the world. And as I was backing out of my driveway, the garage door was open, and there was Bernard, just standing there, as he often did, to say goodbye to me

before I want to work. He was dressed in his jeans, you know. Denim shirt, and there he was. Just standing there. And I looked at him, and it was very difficult to say goodbye. Especially... I had to close that garage door

IRENE: Oh my. That's unbelievable.
You want to see him again I bet.

MAXINE: No.

IRENE: No?

Maxine. No.

IRENE: that was enough?

MAXINE: Yes.

IRENE: I understand.

MAXINE: Because where he is now, to me, for me, is everywhere.

IRENE: That's beautiful. Thank you. [Both laugh] Thank you.

24. Hallucinations

KRIPAL: "These are hallucinations." That's an assumption, Right? That's an interpretation imposed on someone else's experience that the scientists or psychologists did not have and should not be talking about in such certain terms.

HOLDEN: Grief-induced hallucinations. Brain chemistry gone awry. Research just doesn't support that idea. Actually after death communication is a rather common phenomenon.

HUFFORD: They were believed to be symptoms of pathological grieving. Even psychotic grieving. Now we know that they're not.

38. ACADEMIA

KRIPAL: So I wrote a piece on seeing dead people. And it was featured in the Chronicle of Higher Education which is

kind of the New York Times of the academic world. And the sort of Skeptic community, the kind of debunking community was quite upset with the piece. Primarily because of where it appeared.

MILLICAN (YouTube) All solid experimental evidence and all plausible scientific theory points to the brain as the basis of thought. And shows the brain acting only through causal intermediaries, sending signals through the nerves and so forth.

KRAUSS(YOUTUBE): Why are you proposing these things because you'll never measure them. And if you can't measure them, then are they science? It's just not even worth talking about. I like to keep an open mind. But not so open that my brains fall out.

DAWKINS(YOUTUBE): You're offended. Well so fucking what!

KRAUSS(YOUTUBE): I wanted you to say it, not me.

HOLDEN: Actually that viewpoint is considered 'Scientism.' It's when science becomes a religion and deviates from its actual roots. Science is actually a process. It's not about limiting research to only directly observable phenomena.

KRIPAL: those professional debunkers are acting as essentially intellectual police. So that the public discussion can stick in the very narrow, very depressing materialist track that it's in right now. It has nothing to do with the truth of things.

HUFFORD: we should inquire into unconventional topics with exactly the same rules that we approach the things that we expect to turn out to be true. We should not start the inquiry with the assumption that the belief that we're looking at has to be wrong. And that's what has been done in the research on spiritual belief in the modern world very consistently.

CARD: In 2008 at the University of Goteborg in Sweden, 82% of widows and widowers surveyed reported one or more visits from their deceased spouse. These visits were catalogued as hallucinations. The American Psychiatric Association concurs.

KRIPAL: if you go to the source, if you go to the data, if

you go to the human beings who actually have these experiences in the real world, they almost always take place in moments of trauma, physical danger, severe illness, or actual death. You need to do something extremely radical to the human organism to catalyze these remarkable experiences. What happens in a scientific laboratory is exactly the opposite. You can't hurt people you can traumatize them, you can't kill them. And you're usually boring the crap out of them. You're repeating some experiment over and over again and you're expecting this phenomena to appear in a robust way when it needs trauma, it needs death, it needs illness.

HUFFORD: We assume in the modern world that's it's irrational to believe in sprits. Well, try to imagine a psychopathology that occurs in some areas in the majority of the population, that is helpful to them. So that they are more resilient. Less likely to be depressed. less likely to lose sleep. Less likely to lose weight. How can anyone say we shouldn't encourage people to take from that kind of experience the consolation and joy that is natural to it when it encourages health? That's what's crazy!

Widows Montage

27. Ethel at Book Signing

28. ANYONE CAN DO IT

ETHEL: many people can communicate with the dead if they really and truly want to. They put their mindset to it, they can do it too.

SELIG: I don't think that what I'm doing is all that unique because I'm in dialogue with other people doing this kind of stuff. You know I didn't know that I had permission to do this publicly. And every time I take another step forward, becoming visible with this work, I have to butt up against my own resistance. In other ages they used to burn people at the stake and in fact in some countries now they are once again. It's in the news – truthfully.

SELIG (Cont'd) If can give people permission to know on some level that the world is much larger than they were taught to believe in, I think that's a good thing. I know my guides do that and they come through with energy that's again palpable. You really can't fake the energy. There's just no way to. If my guides say to a room full of people

"receive energy through the top of your head" and the whole room goes "WOW," you know we're all getting it. So there is this stuff that's available to us.

DR. JOE: A study was done on neuroimaging during trance state and it was measuring dissociative qualities. It points the finger at picking up information that exists beyond the senses. The atom, according to quantum physics, is 99.99999% nothing. It's information. It's energy. And it's .000001% matter or particle. So from a quantum perspective, we're keeping all of our attention on the particle. And so if there are realities that exist beyond the senses, that are in that 99%, then is it possible then to begin to tune out from this present reality and begin to tune into information in other realities. And the answer is, over and over again, we're starting to see that common people like you and I are beginning to do the uncommon.

PACKING

ACT III

31. PACK FOR TEXAS

KAREN: I do get in a funk where I just can't pull out of a sadness. No matter what I do, it doesn't seem to lift. That person who you were supposed to be with for the rest of your life is not there so it becomes more apparent as the household changes. So I think I'm sadder now than I was then.

Everybody finds some way of coping death. Death is a very difficult reality to grab onto. Because it's so definite. It's so ending. It's not just for a minute. It's a forever thing.

32a. CAR SERVICE

I want to believe in an afterlife. I think it would help me accept what's going on. I guess I'm just not a faith person. What I don't see I can't believe in too much in.

33. WELCOME TO TEXAS MONTAGE

MUSIC: Steel Guitar

34. UNT_ARRIVE

RECEPTIONIST: Hi. Are you guys here for the study?

JESS: Yes.

RECEPTIONIST: Your counselor will be with you right away.

JESS: (to Karen): Getting nervous

KAREN: Anxious.

JESS: Anxious?

KAREN: Yeah.

Insert BTS: OTHER VOLUNTEERS IN SESSION

MONITOR 1 VOLUNTEER: The person that I lost was my mom. She was my best friend.

MONITOR 2 YOUNG MALE VOLUNTEER: He died in 2012 when I was 18. He was kind of like a superhero to me.

35. INTAKE

INSIDE MAXEY'S OFFICE

MAXEY: Jessica, you told me that you were the one that kind of got her involved in this particular kind of therapy.

JESS: Well, we tried the traditional grief counseling and it didn't seem to have much of an impact on her.

KAREN: You do want the sadness to go away, but yet it's what I've had all my...

MAXEY: your fear is that it would take away the most intimate connection you feel you have with your husband.

KAREN: The only one I have.

MAXEY: The only one you have... but it's him that you actually want, not the sadness. The sadness is kind of the talisman it sounds to me like. "That's where I last saw him." Does that make sense?

JESS: That makes sense.

MAXEY: The first part of grief is "I have to get it that you're not physically here anymore." I keep looking for you, Kevin, I keep noticing I can't see you so I'm scanning, and then it hits me. And that takes a while for that to actually sink in so I don't keep doing that. I have

to practice it. This is kind of practicing it from the other end. I'm practicing my conversation with you because you're still here (gestures towards his head). I still get you. All you're going to have to do is help me find that memory that's kind of at the tip of the iceberg. And then we're going to use bilateral stimulation. Let me see your hands for just a minute. I'll be tapping the backs of your hands as you kind of lean into that memory. And that sounds a little bizarre.

KAREN: Yes it does. It does. It does sound a little bizarre.

MAXEY: (formal) Traumatic grief is a huge shock to anybody's nervous system. And that's what you're stuck with. So what we're doing with the bilateral stimulation is we're putting another part of the brain into play moving that energy from the emotional centers of your brain into the language part of your brain and down your central nervous system. And there's movement. Which has to change that memory. It is qualitatively different than it was before. The Trauma is not encapsulated anymore in one little piece of time. It's become part of me. I've integrated it, and that's what successful grieving is.

MAXEY: You're okay to go?

KAREN: I'm ready. I'm ready.

MAXEY: Okay. I think we're okay to go.

JESS: Good luck, Mommy.

KAREN: Thanks sweetie. (Kiss). I love you.

JESS: I love you too. Be open.

30. ENTANGLEMENT

GOSWAMI: In quantum physics, pretty early on, Einstein discovered the photon -- photonic nature of light. Before we thought light is just a wave, Einstein said no, it is really a particle.

DR. JOE: If you take two photons and you bind them in some

way, they are sharing information in some way, and you shoot one photon to one side of the universe, and you shoot the other to the opposite side of the universe, once there's an effect on one photon, at the exact same time in space there's an effect on the other photon. And Einstein didn't like this idea and called it spooky action at a distance.

DR. GOSWAMI: Besides communication thru local signals, there's also communication through quantum nonlocality. Nonlocality is a special quantum concept. Never before have we conceptualized such communication that can be instantaneous. Quantum physics is forced to concede that. As Einstein and his collaborators foresaw.

CARD: University of Mexico, 1987: Professor Jackobo Grinberg used electromagnetic imaging to demonstrate nonlocal communication between individual human brains; names phenomenon "transferred potential."

DR. JOE: the experiments that were done on Quantum nonlocality and how it all ties together is that when a person is sitting in a room and they're observing or experiencing something, and somebody else, who's bonded in some way, goes into a meditative state in a Faraday cage, and that person is having the same amplitudes and brain wave patterns, then just like those two individual photons, there's some kind of quantum entanglement going on.

Chyron: Faraday cages block electromagnetic signals

DR. GOSWAMI: So this experiment established signal-less communication. They're really communicating directly. But it also shows as a side effect, another great insight into how this quantum stuff works. It works through intention.

DR. JOE: Intention is getting clear on what you want. That's a neurological frontal lobe function. It's a mindful function.

DR. GOSWAMI: Through their intention, they connect.

DR. JOE: Now that yields a lot of credibility to the understanding of after-death communication, and our ability as conscious beings to tap into that field of information.

KRIPAL: we've known there's something about human emotion,

there's something about love, that connects people and results in these sorts of clairvoyant/telepathic experiences. So when people see a dead person, they very seldom see a stranger. It's usually someone they're deeply attached to and just lost. The emotional bonds are still very strong. And so when you pull them apart that bond doesn't go away. It appears to transcend death itself for at least a while.

BUHLMAN: It's shocking for many people because you no longer have an intermediary. We as consciousness, we have the ability to communicate face to face with our loved ones if we're just willing to learn the skills needed.

36.UNT SESSION 1

MAXEY: What we're looking for is that Apex point. That moment that you most felt ripped away from him.

KAREN: Kind of the raw...

MAXEY: Yeah, do you know where that is? Or where would you estimate it right now?

KAREN: Um...

KAREN: He was a blind date.

MAXEY: Really.

KAREN: Yeah... and it was amazing. I had never been on a blind date before. Then we got married. Two years later Jessica came along. (Music drowns out most details). So and so from this hospital and he says you're husband had a heart attack. And I said, "Will he be okay. And he said "no." I went out to run an errand or do something. I don't remember what it was. And life just went on. The stoplights...

MAXEY: How is that possible.

KAREN: Yeah. This catastrophic thing happened (cries).

MOVED: MAXEY (formal): When you get to people's memory and are able to reform it without the inner chatter or pain, they're very likely to re-experience that person... in real time... as though they were with them in some way. So that's

why it's called Induced After-Death Communication therapy. Because that happens regularly for people.

KAREN: Is it possible I'm not a candidate for this?

MAXEY: Possible what?

KAREN: Is it possible I'm not...

MAXEY: No, you're doing fine. You're doing fine.

37. IRENE ATTEMPTS Auto-Writing

ETHEL: Hello?

IRENE: Hi Ethel. I've been doing that automatic writing. It's not working.

ETHEL: Hmmm.

IRENE: Could you just show me, demonstrate it. And show me what you do. Maybe I can learn that way.

ETHEL: Let's get serious. Do you want to come to my house?

Irene: Yes.

39. BAR SCENE

MAXEY: I always thought of the job of therapy is to expand the playing field of the person who comes in – usually the problem they bring in is because they've constricted themselves so severely, we've got such a narrow way of dealing with our reality, and my job is to help them widen the field.

HOLDEN: And tragically because these communications often are so healing and facilitative of people's well-being, they're lack of information, misinformation or belief systems that contradict the experiences get in the way of them just accepting and benefiting from the experiences themselves.

KRIPAL: If you can show that afterlife communications are therapeutically powerful, then there's a practical therapeutic payoff to studying them, regardless of their

ontological or metaphysical status.

HOLDEN: Right. We keep trying to apply Newtonian physics to phenomena that are not Newtonian. The idea that I have only one consciousness that can take only one form at one time

Kripal: It's very atomistic.

Holden: It's very atomistic. Exactly right.

KRIPAL: We have more words for text messaging than we do about seeing our dead loved ones.

MAXEY: Maybe that's the answer. Maybe we can come up with acronyms, like LOL

KRIPAL: Emojis...

MAXEY: Emojis, yeah.

40. SESSION 2A

MAXEY: I was thinking about this last night. You know that time you went out and noticed nobody else was paying attention and you got really angry.

KAREN: Yeah, I wanted them to know – wanted them to know what happened.

MAXEY: Yeah. The world has ended.

KAREN: Yeah, it did.

MAXEY: You don't get angry unless you're hurt or afraid. Well what is the hurt and what is the fear in that situation?

KAREN: I can't go on the way I was supposed to --

MAXEY: "I don't fit here."

KAREN: -- within this community of people coming and going.

MAXEY: "They've isolated me."

KAREN: Yeah.

MAXEY: Because if they were with me, they'd stop.

KAREN: Right.

MAXEY: "Because I have."

KAREN. Uh huh. Yeah.

MAXEY: Maybe that's the ultimate sadness. The one that makes you feel the most severed from your husband. (Pause) Imagine being able to think about Kevin without feeling sad. Making time for people that you've lost is like making time for anybody else in your life. It helps your nervous system. I know I'm going to talk to Kevin at seven-thirty tonight and say "this is what I'm noticing, this is what I'm feeling, this is what I've discovered," everything that you would normally put in a conversation –

KAREN: (finishing his thought) with him when I got home from work or something.

MAXEY: Yeah. I will warn you about that. One lady told me that first crack out of the box, she sees him standing there.

KAREN: Oh.

MAXEY: She wasn't expecting it.

KAREN: No no no no no. And I'm not judging her.

MAXEY (now via Holden's monitor): After Death-communication is one of the remarkable byproducts of this therapy, but it is not the goal. There are many ways to reconnect to your deceased loved one.

41. JAN SKYPE WITH FOUNDER BOTKIN

HOLDEN: We had two clients in the IADC condition open their eyes and stop the process, indicating in different ways that they didn't believe in contact with the deceased, meaning that –

BOTKIN: It's not by job as a psychologist to push my beliefs on people. If people don't want their own view of reality shaken, I think as clinicians we should not push

them beyond that.

HOLDEN: So... I'm not actually sure how to...

BOTKIN: At its core, IADC is a trauma therapy. It's all about healing the trauma. So heal the trauma. Heal the pain. If they'll still let you.

MAXEY: (ON CCTV) When you shy away from reading ideas...

42. CULTURAL SCRIPT

DR. JOE: When we're confronted with the unknown, we're culturally been conditioned thru our experience to really decide on what part of reality we want to place our attention.

SELIG: So if you imagine this is the window that you see your world through, and your calling to yourself things that must conform to how you think the world should be, which is what you were taught the world should be, and what you've gone into the agreement with— 50 years ago Man couldn't go to the moon — so that wasn't part of the frame. You understand? That was an impossibility. So the frame, as you open it, allows much more in.

KRIPAL: Individual human beings operate with the false assumption that we're somehow seeing things as they really are, as it were. Where in fact, all of us are born into a story called a culture or religion, and a set of assumptions that are woven into every single word we speak... the grammar, the way we set up our physical spaces, our educational systems, our entertainment, all of these things are elaborate webs that we are born into and we come into maturity essentially being programmed.

KRIPAL (Cont'd) And that may seem like a negative message but it's actually very positive. Because what it means is we can rewrite it. We can rewrite the cultural script. So that when our children are born into this new culture, they will experience a different reality.

43. SESSION 2b

KAREN: you're going to be touching my hand and that's going to... I mean 17 years have gone by.

MAXEY: You're not going to be the same as you were before...

KAREN: Before the loss. No.

MAXEY: You're going to be different.

KAREN: Yeah.

MAXEY: But it doesn't mean you're disabled. If you broke your arm, when it healed it would be stronger at the break point – you'd actually have more calcium deposited there than in any other part of your arm. The difference between a broken bone and this situation is you get to choose how it heals. (Karen Thinks hard). Karen, I want you to go back to the bottom of the hill, stopping at the stoplight, I want you to experience the intensity if it were to go higher.

KAREN: Okay.

MAXEY: Okay?

TAPPING

DR. JOE: many of the classical paradigms are beginning to break apart. Whether it's the political model, the economic model, whether it's the education model, the religious model, the medical model, the environment... so many different systems are beginning to collapse because they can't sustain themselves any longer. What if the concepts of death are actually wrong? We can't wait for science to give us permission to do the uncommon. We have to do the uncommon and we have to do it repeatedly. And then we have to have science come and study us.

MONITOR_1 THERAPIST: And what are you aware of now?

MONITOR_1 VOLUNTEER: A sense of being held by her.

MOVED: MONITOR_2 VOLUNTEER: You know I really feel like I touched Bill, in a way. I really felt hugged by him.

BUHLMAN: Let's face it: throughout centuries often our capabilities have been limited by belief systems. Whether good bad or indifferent, it doesn't matter, but we've been

sold a bill of goods that we were limited in our scope. And now we're waking up to our full potential. We can explore beyond the limits of our physical body.

ETHEL: Would you like to ask Sy Something?

IRENE: Was he happy with me?

ETHEL: (reading her own writing) There were times I would have given up.

IRENE LAUGHS

ETHEL (Continued): But, basically, we had a good life together.

IRENE: Gee only good. I thought it was great.

SELIG: It's amazing the diversity of people who have these experiences. You know there are lawyers, there's doctors, teachers, bankers. But I think that until it becomes part of a dialogue, and consequently a bit more accepted, people will continue to be shy about it.

DR. JOE: if enough of us are doing it, it's just like a 4-minute mile. It begins to become the norm. It begins to become more accessible.

VOLUNTEER MARY(FLASHBACK): I saw tom.

BEAVER(FLASHBACK): You did?

VOLUNTEER MARY: (FORMAL) He popped. And he was there and then he was gone. He just talked to me. He called me "Babe." I haven't been called Babe since 2012.

MAXEY: When you saw him and you got that, that...

KAREN: I couldn't get sad. It was easy to think about it without trying to push it out of my head because it was going to hurt.

MAXEY: Kevin is more available to you now without the pain.

KAREN: Wow. That's crazy.

MAXEY: (LAUGHS) Yeah... Well, You're free.

KAREN IS DUMBSTRUCK

MAXEY: This is a need people have. They need to be able to grieve well so that they can live well. And what we've really validated, I think, is that this helps people live well.

MONITOR_2 VOLUNTEER: I don't know, I still like...

MONITOR_2 THERAPIST: You seem really blown away by that.

MONITOR_2 VOLUNTEER: There's been a shift in the way I see the world.

B-ROLL: Ethel shows Irene how to hold the pen to auto-write.

CATHY: I don't know if it's true, or real. But what it is is effective.

ETHEL: Don't squeeze. Just relax.

IRENE: I'm thrilled. I'm really thrilled.

CATHY: I think it's just a fascinating moment as an historian and as a human.

HUFFORD: I think it's clear that if medicine is not warming up to the healing power of Extraordinary Spiritual Experiences, gradually being won over by the data. More and more studies, particularly by clinicians, are showing positive outcomes, in the lives of people who have these experiences compared to others who don't have them.

DR. GOSWAMI: And we also get as a bonus, a science that encompasses all human experiences. Everything that is the case: Spiritual experience, creative experience, Feelings, values. experience of love, all is included.

45. DENOUNMENT

ON PLANE

KAREN: By time we hit Hartford, It's only an hour. SO it's only an hour.

Jess: We're not doing a selfie. We're talking. It's a video.

KAREN: Oh.

KAREN V/O: It's a happy thing not to be sad

MAXEY V/O: (laughs) I'm going to write that down.

KAREN V/O: (laughs) Oh please. Quote me. I want big quotes around that!

MAXEY V/O: It's a happy thing not to be sad.

EXT. RESTAURANT

REUNION WITH ETHEL

JESS: Grammy!

KAREN: How you doin'?!

Ethel: Wanted us together.

KAREN: Yay!

KAREN: He's still my husband. I turn to him and say, "What would you do in this situation." It's always nice to have that sounding board to have a second opinion which is what husbands and wives do all the time. So um, But my relationship with him is... he's still my husband.

END

ROLL CREDITS