Come with me as we walk along the forbidden path of the Skinwalker, and investigate the mysteries surrounding Skinwalker Ranch. This is more than a story; it is a chronicle of chilling events that actually happened, stories that I will never forget.

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I used to think that anyone doing anything weird was weird. I suddenly realized that anyone doing anything weird wasn't weird at all. It was the people saying they were weird that were weird.

-Paul McCartney
CHAPTER ONE

Road Trip to Vegas

“Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage”

—Lao Tzu

My trek into the paranormal started in the winter of 2007. It was about 1:30 in the morning and the day before New Year’s. I had been driving for God only knows how many hours, fighting fatigue and boredom. I found myself staring blankly out into the dark, desolate desert road that ran ahead, my attention drawn to the rubber of my tires as they rhythmically slapped along the paved surface. We were somewhere on I-70 cutting through the heart of Utah and heading to Las Vegas. My mind was preoccupied with thoughts of my soon-to-be wife, Iryna. She was seated beside me and either lost in thoughts of her own or dozing. She hadn’t said much these last few miles. I stole a glance in her direction to see if she was sleeping, but it was too dark to tell and I didn’t want to risk waking her by asking. We were on our way from Wisconsin to Vegas to get married.

But, hey, I’m getting ahead of myself.

Meeting Iryna in the Ukraine is a bit of a story worth telling, and though not paranormal, definitely what most people would consider normal. Disappointed with the kind of girl I
was constantly dating here in the States, and being somewhat whimsical and impulsive, I got involved in one of those mail-order bride things, the kind that arranges for single guys like me to go overseas and meet up with girls from the other side of the world. Essentially, the trip itself amounted to little more than club-hopping, but I did meet Iryna.

She wasn’t one of the girls hoping to find an American husband, but instead was a translator enlisted by the program to facilitate communication for the girls that were. Regardless, she was skinny, blonde, and beautiful, and definitely caught my eye. I went up and introduced myself. Apparently the translators had been told to remain aloof, and not socialize or mingle with us, but I didn’t know that, and she didn’t say.

She was wearing this kind of peasant girl dress, and it immediately appealed to a sense of innocence, of wholesomeness and family values all of which I was looking for. And despite the fact that she was projecting the airs and attitude of a runway model, I could picture her wearing jeans and eating a hot dog at the ball park. Of course, it didn’t hurt any that she spoke English as well if not better than most of the girls I tended to hook up with in the States.

To make a long story short, after all the other guys who made the trip overseas had returned to the States, I stayed behind and moved in with Iryna. We were together for a few of months when I thought it best to go home for a while. Over the next year or so I made a couple of trips back, and eventually convinced Iryna to come with me to the States. It wasn’t long before we had settled in Wisconsin and had a son—her first child and my second. I have a daughter from a previous relationship.
We had our boy only a few months before Christmas, and our little family unit was looking forward to our first holiday celebration together. I made sure to do my part to make it a memorable one by planning a secret and a surprise. Rather than new clothing, electronic gadgets, or some other trinket all too soon forgotten, I decided to surprise Iryna with a ring and the traditional knee bended proposal. I thought it was time we were married.

Come Christmas morning, I watched as Iryna began digging through the large box that I had taken extra care to wrap and tape—especially tape. She has a thing for pop culture, Chanel, and Dior, so I was pretty sure she’d go for the bait imaging statement that my oversized gift tempted her with. She tried to conceal her excitement, but she was like a raccoon clawing into a discarded box of cereal.

I shrugged with feigned innocence as her ripping and tearing managed to produce only the smaller wrapped box that I had concealed inside, and then again inside that one, one even
smaller. Her exasperation, however, melted away and the glow of her eyes throwing off the flames dancing in the fireplace suddenly flared as they welled with tears. Leaving them to roll unchecked down her cheeks, she threw her arms around my neck and between tears and I-love-you, we exchanged soft, salty kisses. But the ring was only part of the surprise. The playful smile I let slip across my face told her there was more yet to come.

“Well?” she asked, knowing I would give in.

“I would like for the two of us to drive to Vegas and get married in a few days!” I said.

There was a moment of hesitation, and I knew she was thinking about the baby.

“The baby will be fine with my parents,” I assured her. “We’ll only be gone a few days. He sleeps so much he’ll barely know we’re gone.”

She gave me a scowl and took a playful slap at my shoulder, but she knew I was right.

So less than a week later we set out on what we thought would be a romantic fantasy—a road trip filled with excitement, adventure, and self-discovery. The furthest thing from our minds was that on the road from Wisconsin to Las Vegas that we would drive directly into the path of a Skinwalker. But that’s exactly what happened, right there on I-70 in Utah, just south of Thompson Springs.
CHAPTER TWO
I can’t Believe What I’m Seeing

“But I do believe in the paranormal, there are things our brains just can’t understand”
—Art Bell

That encounter was something so surreal, so mind bending that Iryna and I just weren’t the same after. I found myself in a lonely, unyielding pursuit of the paranormal, and it was something that she couldn’t or wouldn’t understand. Ultimately, it became too much for our relationship. So she left me.

But again, I’m getting ahead of the story.

That last night in December of 2007, out there on that highway, I vaguely remember glancing at the car’s radio. It showed 1:36 am. My head had been bobbing up and down rather involuntarily for the last few miles, kind of like a marionette with a distracted puppeteer pulling absently at the strings. I knew it wouldn’t be long before the road would glaze my eyes and blur my vision. I’ve driven long distances at night before.
“Hey babe,” I quietly muttered reaching over to nudge Iryn. “You always wanted to learn how to drive, now would the perfect time. I’m sick of driving. I’m going to pull over.” I didn’t give her the chance to put up a protest.

As luck would have it a sign emerged in the distance. In large white letters against a green background it spelled out “Scenic Viewing Area Ahead” and “Mile 186”. As I steered the car off the highway and onto the exit ramp I was encouraged to see the viewing area had exceeded the bland expectations I had anticipated given the ride to this point. An expansive and mysterious valley lay before our eyes like a wrinkled bed sheet discarded by some giant.

I stepped out of the car and into the chilly December night and walked over to where I could get a good look at the scenery. The valley was silent and painted with the eerie glow of
the moonlight, the peaks and crevasses like flat shadows and distinguishable from one another by the differing shades of grey. The view was surreal as if we had been plucked from the earth and unwittingly transported to some exotic off-world.

I inhaled the dry cool air, and feeling the sudden urge to announce my presence to the vast unknown stretching below, I bellowed, “Hello, out there!”

The first syllable seemed to linger loud and long, trilling out over the valley. Impressed with the effect, I added, “I’m here!”—just in case there was someone actually out there, some unforeseen host lurking down within those haunting shadows and expecting my arrival.

But it was only the valley itself that paid me any mind, responding rather lazily and half-heartedly, the faint echo of my own voice drifting back to me from the distant hills.

To this day I am left to wonder if perhaps there really was someone or something that I had disturbed, something that I had unwittingly invited with my call, and that unbeknown to me at the time had accepted that invitation.

Thinking nothing more of the surreal or off-worlds, I turned my attention to my driving student, opened the passenger door and got in. I had more worldly concerns—sitting beside a beautiful, 22 year old Ukrainian, who had never driven a car before. In fact, a vast majority of Ukrainian women don’t own or drive cars. If there’s someplace they need to go, they either walk or take a taxi or bus. It’s a cultural thing: men drive.

“Beautiful out there isn’t it,” I said, attempting to lighten the moment.
Iryna ignored my attempt and instead whined, “How much further until the hotel? I’m tired.”

“Not too far,” I assured her, without really being sure how far. It’s not like there were an abundance of landmarks out here. The last sign I remember seeing said “Norwood”, and that was back a while not too long after clearing Colorado. I guessed we were somewhere between Cisco and Elba.

She reached up and jingled the keys with a tap of her finger nails. “How do you start this thing?”

The Jeep Cherokee that we were driving was an automatic, thankfully. I reached out with one hand and turned an imaginary key. At the same time I gestured to the gear shift on the center console and pretended to put the car in gear. She turned the key and the car started. She gripped the gear shift and put the Cherokee into drive and then stepped gingerly upon the gas pedal. The jeep lurched into gear with the uncertainty of a mutt finding the yard gate unlatched, and then not being able to make up his mind between bolting off at full gallop and nosing forward cautiously. Whimsically I remembered a funny Russian saying, “A woman learning to drive a car is like handing a grenade to a monkey”. I decided it was probably best at the moment to keep this one to myself.

The road open and straight, and nothing to speak of in the way of other cars, we passed the miles without incident. A quick glance at the dashboard clock showed the time to be 2:05 in the AM. Green River, Utah, and the comforts of our hotel couldn’t be that far ahead.
The road ahead continued to be dark and empty, and apparently we were the only car with any interest in this lonely stretch of desert. As the miles fell away behind us, I once again felt the rhythm and the hum of the road weaving its spell over me. My eyes couldn’t have been closed for but a moment, when suddenly Iryna broke the silence with a sharp scream.

“What the hell is that!?” she demanded, a hint of wonder to her voice.

Opening my eyes I saw that the inside of the car was bathed in the unearthly glow of a brilliant ruby red light which was reflecting off of the rearview mirror. I turned to look back over my shoulder through the rear window of the car. What looked like a child’s sparkler hung suspended in midair and directly behind our car, although a bit off in the distance.

“Really, what is it?” Repeated Iryna more forcefully. She had this habit of using the word really as a form of interjection when she was mad or excited.

“Probably just the reflection of a street light,” I said, but the hairs bristling on the back of my neck seemed to suggest otherwise.

I leaned deeper into the back seat to get a better view. What I saw was no street light. It was elongated, rather rectangular in shape, and the bright light itself seemed to be surrounded by an opaque body or structure which was more prominent at one end than the other. But I knew that it was a poor attempt on my part to rationalize the mysterious illumination, and as much for my own peace of mind as for Iryna’s. After all, how many street lights are there that hang in the air in the middle of the road and move? I didn’t look to see, but we had to be going at least 60 mph and whatever the source, the light was keeping pace.
How could a normal light radiate such a perplexing reflection? The light coming off the rearview mirror was as bright as if it was right there in the car with us. I had to shake my head to clear the cloud of desperation that was threatening to envelope my mind.

I reminded myself that I was an intelligent and rationale guy, and that there was a logical explanation. I got control over my racing mind and worked at making a mental list of logical possibilities.

Was this simply the reflection of common highway street lights? Regretfully, this stretch of highway was absent of roadside lighting. All I could make out in the dark was the barren outline of distant mountains highlighted by the glow of the retreating moon.

Had someone, retrofitted his sports car with aftermarket headlights? Those halogen ones come in all different shapes, sizes, and colors beyond the traditional white light. But then we would being seeing two distinct beams. All I saw was a single red flame, as if some fairy tale Cyclops; its one eye bloodshot afire and trying to chase down our fleeing vehicle.

Or perhaps we in our front row seats were the sole witnesses of the otherworldly mirage of a brilliant star in its last dying moments.

“Pull the car over,” I stammered, my voice giving away to my less than certain resolve.

Like a city girl on a horse for the first time, Iryna finally managed to convince the car who was the rider and who was the horse. We rolled off of the highway and to a stuttering stop on the shoulder. The car’s headlights reached out into the darkness casting foreboding shadows across the desert landscape. An irrational embrace of fear began to make its way
down my spine and I involuntarily shivered as if some mischievous friend had slipped an ice cube down my shirt.

I found the door handle with nervous fingers and hesitated a moment. I flung the door open fully aware that I had just removed the only barrier between the anomalous unknown outside and the haven within my own sanity.

Like a blind man I refused to accept the situation as anything more than what my senses told me. I began examining the car, peering into each window, sure that I’d find the source of light. Failing to find the luminous culprit, my attention was suddenly drawn to my feet which had cast a long shadow, the edges of which were tinged by a hypnotic pulsating red glow. As if in a trance, I noticed that my shadow appeared to be elongating and narrowing on its own as if struggling to free itself from the hellish glow tormenting it. Like a shadowy doppelganger, it seemed to sense the urgency of the situation more than I, for it had the good sense to keep its face turned away from whatever monstrosity lurked at my back while I was tempted to turn and look.

I did turn and look. There before my unbelieving eyes was an amorphous ball of flame suspended without sound in the chilly desert air. It hovered five feet from the ground and no more than thirty feet from our car. The orb began to pulsate, inhaling and exhaling its fiery breath in bursts of hot red, as if the air molecules themselves were kindling feeding the ghastly display. It was as if I had been transported into the Land of Oz, only there was no magic ruby slippers to shake me from this nightmare.
Those bursts of energy must have short-circuited my mind because I began to spiral into a sense of confusion and panic. I might have lost it right there if not for a more authoritative internal voice which rose up within me shouting over the din, “Ryan fight now! Or flee!”

My jaw fell slack, my chin dangled against my goose bump riddled neck. I made the effort to scream but no sound came out, only the shapeless shrill of a pleading whimper that sounded like it came from someone else, but surely not me. I mouthed the words, “Oh, my God! I can’t believe what I’m seeing, this is really it!” However, in my current state of mind I had no definition or description of what it might be.

Before I had time to fully take in the horror there in front of me, my frozen state of shock was shattered by a painful shriek behind me.

“Ryan!” screamed Iryna. “There are three things walking towards us!” Her voice sounded frail and each syllable cracked.

Hesitating, I chanced a quick gaze away from the fiery orb and glanced in her direction. From out of the field on our left were three dark entities slithering straight towards the car.

Looking back now, I’m not going to say they were doing anything that was all that menacing or threatening, but I was scared out of my mind, everything was so magnified. Whatever they were, they weren’t human, and they were coming right at us.

Mustering what remained of my courage and shaken manhood, I shouted in as commanding a tone as I could manage, “Get the in the car NOW!”
We scurried around the car like mice alerted to the stalking cat, crossing each other in a macabre game of Chinese Fire Drill. If there was an internal debate as to whether fight or flight was the better of the two options, my panic stricken mind had firmly sided with the option of flight—and damn fast.

I have no recollection of actually getting into the car, and I’m not even sure if I had checked to see that Iryna was safely aboard. All I do remember was that I smashed down on the gas pedal practically embedding it into the floor boards. The tires screamed as if the stalking cat failed to get its tail out of the way in time. The speedometer leapt to 87 miles per hour, but unfortunately that was all the jump she had. I could not coax her to go any faster.

Willing and nimble, our Jeep Cherokee roared down the desert highway, the red ball of light in unshakable pursuit.

TO READ THE REST OF THE STORY PLEASE PURCHASE THE BOOK
-CHAPTERS INCLUDE-
  Showdown
  The ghost Particle
  Shadow Stalkers
  An Itch That Couldn’t Be Scratched
  Skinwalker Hunters
  The Robotic Voice & The Disappearing Police Car
  Paranormal Power Lines
  Blue Fire Flies
  Trespassing
  Something Is—Coming!
  Home In Wisconsin...But Not Alone
  The Calling
  Sick as a Dog Wolf
  Werewolf Ridge
  The Ranch
  Invisible Intruders
  The Desert Speaks
  Phantom Lights
  Not My Problem
  Great Balls of Fire
  The Skinwalker Cometh
  It’s Got Me!