

My Lakota friends say that all of our ancestors line up behind us to extend through us. If we come into this world with an appropriate alignment of genetics and heritage, we might be honored to carry “the medicine.”

Ho, mitákuye oyás’n!

One

“My God! Follow that car!” I shouted, pointing emphatically beyond the gravel parking lot to the road ahead.

My friend Debbi shook her head. “Uh, excuse me. You’re the only one who can see it,” she said with a bemused smile as she turned the car onto the deserted road.

It was October, 1989.

I’d been asked by Debbi, who worked with a local search and rescue team, to assist with the search for a little boy who had been abducted. Debbi and I had been friends since grade school. Our history together had familiarized her with my special way of *seeing* the unseeable. Having never worked on a missing person case before, I was reluctant but willing to give it a try.

The little boy, four-year-old Lee Iseli, disappeared from a southeast Portland playground after walking to the store with his older brother. As Debbi presented me with the facts of the case, I *saw* the boy in a blue house. I felt certain he was still alive. At this point I remained hopeful because it felt like whoever had him loved him. On the third day of my involvement, I awoke with a heavy heart and phoned

Debbi. I knew Lee was dead. A day later the news reported that his body had been found near a parking lot at Vancouver Lake in Vancouver, Washington. Shortly after she heard the news, Debbi called and asked if I'd accompany her to the crime scene. The FBI hadn't yet concluded its investigation and she had obtained permission to bring me to the "dump site," as the search and rescue team referred to it, before the park was reopened to the public.

"The FBI? You've got to be kidding. They don't work with psychics," I protested, feeling more than just a little intimidated.

"Who cares?" was her glib response. "They said you could come. Let's go." She was eager for the opportunity. I was not.

Later, as we pulled into the lake's parking lot, continuing past the yellow crime-scene tape, I *saw* close to the tree line a parked car which appeared to me to be made of Plexiglas. I suspected Debbi couldn't see it, but I pointed anyway and excitedly asked if she saw it too.

"No," she confirmed.

I told her I needed to walk over to the *car* alone and asked her not to be concerned about what she might see me doing. Getting out of her car, we were approached by two men wearing hats and jackets emblazoned with FBI insignia. We introduced ourselves; they seemed more amused than impressed. I excused myself and approached this mysterious vehicle.

I soon identified the phantom car as either a Vega or Pinto, possibly blue, with wood-paneled sides. It was a hatchback. Stepping around to the back of the car, I found myself lifting the hatchback.

I looked down and noticed I seemed to be wearing steel toe work boots. I heard the word "Freightliner." I lifted a large gar-

bage bag from the trunk which I knew held the little boy's body. Turning, I carried the bag down a short path into the woods. After walking a few feet, I stopped and lay the body bag down among the dried leaves and pine needles. I brandished a scalpel-type knife and...

Horrified, I jumped back and the *seeing* stopped.

Turning to Debbi and the agents, who had quietly followed me, I described what I'd *seen*. The agents exchanged glances, but offered no comment.

I had been told previously by search and rescue that authorities were looking for a camper pickup. The car I had seen was unmistakably a hatchback, a Vega or Pinto, with wood-paneled sides. I insisted that was the vehicle they needed to search for. The agents thanked me and told me it had been "interesting." It was Debbi's and my turn to exchange glances.

I only shrugged. "Let's go."

We returned to Debbi's vehicle and as we buckled our seat belts, I *saw* the car again pulling out of the parking lot in front of us.

"Follow that car!" I shouted, pointing emphatically beyond the gravel parking lot to the road ahead.

We tailed the *car* for several miles, twisting and turning through downtown Vancouver. As we merged onto the highway leading to Camas, the *car* began to fade.

"Oh no," I groaned.

"What's wrong?" Debbi asked.

"We lost it," I announced.

She pulled over to the side of the road and turned to face me. "What do you think? Does the guy live in Camas?"

"No."

I sank back in my seat and closed my eyes. I *saw* him abducting another child.

"I believe that he's going to abduct another child soon. Most likely within the next 10 days. I think he'll strike in Camas!"

We sat quietly, staring at the cars zipping by on the highway next to us.

"A Vega or Pinto," Debbi mused.

I nodded. "He'll get caught this time. He'll make a mistake and get messy. They will catch him in Camas." I had no idea where these words were coming from.

"Great," Debbi said unenthusiastically. "We need to go back to the lake and give this information to the FBI."

"Are you kidding?" I asked incredulously. "They don't care about what a psychic sees."

"It doesn't matter," she said, turning the car around. "We're going back!"

That afternoon after she dropped me off at home, I excitedly shared with my husband T.J. what I'd seen. He was watching TV. As I finished my strange tale, he looked at me and said, "Great, so what's for dinner?"

One morning, two weeks later, as I made coffee and my husband left for work, life provided me with what I've come to refer to as a cosmic nudge toward my true destiny. T.J.'s morning ritual consisted of the drive down our long gravel driveway, opening the gate, stopping to grab the daily paper from the paper box and continuing on to work. This particular morning, however, I heard him turn around and head back up the driveway. Thinking he must have forgotten something, I greeted him at the door. He clutched the newspaper in his hand. He wasn't smiling. As he brushed past me, I followed him into the kitchen.

Turning to me, he threw the paper down on the coun-

tertop and spoke, carefully enunciating each word. "I want to know how the hell you do this!"

He slammed his fist down on the front page.

The bold headline across the top of *The Oregonian* blared "Police Arrest Suspect in Iseli, Neer Killings" above a color photo of a yellow Pinto hatchback with wood-paneled sides!

My mouth fell open. "Oh my God," I whispered as I picked up the paper. Westley Allan Dodd had been apprehended within blocks of a theater in Camas, Washington after attempting to abduct a young boy. The boy's screams had alerted nearby adults who then pursued Dodd. They were able to apprehend him because his car wouldn't start.

"My God," I whispered again.

The media swarmed the blue house where Dodd lived and had held Lee Iseli captive before killing him. Dodd had taken photos of Lee and kept a journal. In it he referred to his love for the boy. Scalpels were found. Dodd had at one time worked at a place called Fruitlander - not "Freightliner." It was all here: the blue house, the feeling of love, the scalpel, the employer. Everything I had *seen*.

I looked up at my husband, who was staring at me expectantly.

"Well, how did you do that?"

I said softly, "I just saw it."

We stared at each other, tensions mounting. Inside I quaked, trembling with excitement, knowing my *seeing* had been true.

"I don't like it," he said. Simultaneously, an old, deep fear was screaming at me as time collapsed. "And I don't want it in my life!" he continued, shouting now. "It's not normal!"

Two

“It’s not normal.”

I was eight years old, dressed up, gift in hand, ready to go to my friend’s birthday party. At eight, I’d begun a round of birthday parties. They were fun and I loved the games.

“Suzanne, are you listening?” My mother’s terse voice broke the spell of excitement I’d been feeling all morning in anticipation of the afternoon festivities with my school friends. “Suzanne!” she said again. My mother now had me by the shoulders, leaning over to look me in the eyes.

“Did you hear what I said? You can only go to this party if you promise not to bring home all the prizes.” Her voice was loud and clear.

“But I can see...” I began.

She cut me off with a shake. “It’s not normal!” she said dismissively. “I mean it. No prizes or there won’t be any more parties.”

I nodded reluctantly, struggling with the lump that had suddenly formed in my throat. Apparently I was a source of embarrassment for her. When playing party games, even with my eyes blindfolded, I could *see* where the tail went on the donkey, who was holding the thimble, etc. I thought I was just smart and clever.

I began to withdraw. Something in me was wrong.

I just wanted to fit in, to be normal. I nearly died trying.

On reflection, it's hard to recall any one incident as the single moment when the disconnect began. It probably occurred around the age of five or six. My night dreams were so vivid, so real, that I struggled with knowing when I was awake. With all of a child's innocence, I remember frequently asking my mother upon awakening which dream I was in now. It wasn't that question that made me feel different, but the look on her face as she attempted to respond to me.

When I was young, we rented a house in North Portland. It was a big old stone house, as cold inside as it looked outside. I began first grade at Peninsula Grade School. My best memory of that year was walking to school every day under the fir and chestnut trees that lined the streets. On windy days, an old fir along the way would creak and groan in the wind. I was scared to walk under it. So I ran.

During this time, I shared a bedroom with my younger brother and sister. Shortly after being tucked in for the night, I had my first *memory* of a future event. I remembered a bed catching on fire. I could see the smoke. Innocently, I discussed this at breakfast the next morning.

"Remember when Sally's bed caught on fire?"

Everyone looked at me with confounded expressions.

"Sally's bed never was on fire," my parents assured me. I was confused but accepting; they knew best.

A few weeks later the blanket on my sister's bed began smoldering from an electrical short. It happened just as I had *remembered*.

After this incident, I became more aware and cautious of the thoughts that visited my mind. I remember sitting on the front steps of that old stone house attempting to make my thoughts go away. I believed I made events occur by thinking about them. If I hadn't thought it, it would never have happened, right? In my magical child mind, I would try to hold only a white triangle, an innocuous image. If I could only do that, I believed all would be well in the world.

The next year, as I began second grade, school testing indicated I should be advanced to third grade. I am grateful that my parents decided against it. When asked a question on a test, I could *hear* or *see* the answer, rather than have a genuine understanding of the information. I was unable to demonstrate the process I used to arrive at my answers. It seemed that I had an inner informant.

At the beginning of my third grade year, we moved to a tiny white house in a big field next to a grade school in Southeast Portland. It had three rooms: a living room, kitchen and one huge bedroom that my parents partitioned off with a sheet to make two bedrooms.

It was at this house my life took a dramatic change through an unsettling series of events. My mother began providing daycare for some neighbor kids, two girls, ages three and five, and their brother, who was in my class. The three-year-old was not potty trained. Every time she wet her pants, my mom would scold and smack her. She sat on the toilet a lot. I'd seen Mom hysterical before, but she had never been physically hurtful. It scared me. If I cried, she'd turn on me and tell me that she would give me something to cry about. She had become really quick with her hands. I tried to stay out of the way. She'd make

us sit quietly on chairs for hours, threatening to tie us up if we moved. She left some old white clothesline in sight in case we doubted her.

I found comfort where I could. The neighbor boy had a red pony named, aptly, Red. I spent hours out by his pasture, pulling clover and vetch and feeding it to him. Comfort came on the scent of the sweet grass released when he chewed, and in the sound of the occasional snort and stomp of hoof when a fly would bite.

I was in love. I dreamed about horses. I dreamed I was a horse.

My father sold insurance and was frequently transferred. I went to eight different schools between kindergarten and fifth grade. I became an expert on Alaska and the Yukon Territory; it was what each new class was studying. With each move, I became quieter and more withdrawn, fearful to make friends. At each new house, I would explore the yard while my parents unpacked. I would get to know every flower, shrub and tree. I especially loved the trees. They were stalwart and dependable; they had deep roots, which I longed for. I envied their long lives and nobility. I would pretend that I was one of them. Often we talked, as they seemed, somehow, to care about me.

I had two schools and two teachers in Salem and then we moved to Vancouver, Washington. On our last move from Salem I didn't even know we were moving. My folks just showed up at school with a moving van. I couldn't finish the clay caterpillar I was making or my recorder lessons. I remember crying about that, but mostly I remember the sympathetic look in the teacher's eyes as she explained how I could finish it at home. I threw it away a few days later.

Somewhere, among all the moves, I began to see lights in my room at night. I would call out to my dad for comfort when the orbs would appear.

"There is nothing. See, there's nothing there," he insisted.

I knew they were there: three orbs, two large and one small, but after my initial surprise, they did not seem at all threatening. Over time I began thinking of them as "my light family." I would also awaken during the night to what appeared as illuminated cobwebs spanning my room. Frequently, large spiderlike forms moved through the dewy webs. Eventually I would no longer be startled by their appearance either.

My brother Russ had not yet entered school at eight years old. Russ had been slow to walk and slow to talk. He managed okay; he was just slow. He talked funny. We couldn't always understand what he was saying which often made him frustrated, but he was just one of us kids. His tortoiseshell glasses, at least, made him look smart. When Russ was eight, Mom enrolled him in school. My father and maternal grandmother attempted to persuade her to defer for another year and to at least have him evaluated first. Her decision was immutable.

Russ was so proud to be going to school. We had gone clothing shopping the week before, so we were confidently well turned out. We walked excitedly hand in hand to school that first day. I made sure that he arrived safely at his classroom, shiny new lunch pail and school supplies in hand.

At the end of the first week, after I had picked Russ up from his classroom, the principal called us into his office as we walked by. Handing me a note for my parents, he told me, "Your brother may not return here."

With much dread, I delivered the note and predictably, all hell broke loose. Mom became hysterical. As Dad attempted to reason with her, it escalated. We three children hid in the bedroom. I heard one of them reading portions of the note aloud. The words “Russ can’t learn his colors” stuck with me.

I felt certain I could remedy the situation. A few days later, out on the front porch I set up a classroom. I had paper and colors. I would teach Russ so that he could return to school. Mom interrupted our “class” and asked accusingly what I thought I was doing. She snatched up the colors and paper and demanded that I never, ever do that again. I sat stunned. Russ appeared divided and confused, unable to reconcile his eagerness to learn with Mom’s angry demands.

This new awareness about my brother pushed our mother over whatever edge she had been teetering on. Our world as children became full of inconsistency. One minute it was okay to be playing. The next we had to sit in our chairs without making a sound. It was Russ who took the brunt of it. At the least thing, he would get a whipping. It killed me to watch and be so helpless. The neighborhood kids soon found if they accused Russ of anything, Mom would come blasting out of the house and strike him. I couldn’t convince her that they were lying without her turning on me.

One day, I was helping a neighbor bake cookies. Her kitchen window looked out on our backyard. Suddenly she gasped and with tears in her eyes, more to herself than to me asked, “Why does she do that to him?” I looked out the window. My crazed mother was whipping on my brother. I had no answer for her.

Why did no one intervene?