

Lights on a Hill

Story goes that some Realtor goes missing for 3 years and is later found naked in a coma, with a mouth full of sand, up in some abandoned subdivision of Phoenix. Nothing huge right? Just second degree burns over his entire body, and a mouth full of fine grained alluvium. These keywords set in motion the dispatching of operatives to Phoenix, with an address and a name.

An investigation would reveal various facts:

Dental records reveal the comatose man to be 43-year-old James Thomas Jr., who had gone missing from the same real estate development just 3 years earlier. The discovery of the missing man was made by Deputy Carl Resnick of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, now 38 years old and patrol sergeant for the MCSO. He remembers the initial search for the missing man as well, and is a wealth of local information. In particular; police reports of eye-witnesses seeing strange lights and various calls from residents pertaining to strange lights around the west side of the Arrow Head estates development. Nothing solid, just nosy old neighbors and a handful of checks on the property by local officers.

James Thomas Jr. had been connected with a group that had been labeled a cult, a group of people with bizarre dress and speech. If you question his colleagues or look into his background electronically this will become painfully apparent through a series of interviews after the Phoenix Lights incident to a self-published online manifesto. Nobody is proud of this, especially James Thomas Sr. whose name is on the side of the building where the lesser James routinely disappears from for months to exotic locations while supposedly scouting for real estate opportunities.

Klein, Stafford & Thomas is a global leader in the premier commercial real estate services market, with over 1200 professionals in 14 countries. The Phoenix office of KS&T is 10th and 11th floor of Two Renaissance Square, a brown granite and coppery glass tower connected by skyway to its twin, a slightly larger version of itself. The aged James Thomas Sr. is glad a task force has been formed to look into the disappearance and apparent mutilation of his son and will grant access to the office of James Thomas Jr. Nothing interesting is in the office aside from a photograph that shows junior standing with 3 other men, the small brass engraving reads "Brothers". The men can be identified by James secretary. One is a friend of James who hasn't been around in years, one is in an expensive private hospital in Switzerland and the other now lives in some famous canyon in Los Angeles. The secretary finds the brass engraving to be odd, James Thomas Jr. has no siblings.

Written on the back of the photograph in small letters is Fellowship of Star-kin. According to an anonymous message archived on the internet; Fellowship of Star-kin is a coven of new age dope-smoking Crowley adherents. The rest of the thread is worthless. No other reference turns up online, and they do not appear in any local media accounts on microfiche at the library. The brothers of the Fellowship are a coincidence filled dead-end.

The empty house where James Thomas Jr. was found is in the 12000 block of Buena Vista Cir., a cul-de-sac at the top of a small hill at the north western edge of the Arrowhead Estates housing development 35 minutes from downtown Phoenix. Seven houses sit around this tear-drop shaped spat of asphalt, with only 3 complete homes and one that was ever fully completed and occupied. It is secluded by canceled projects and smooth sandy lots delineated by unused sidewalks and dusty new streets. The Arrowhead Estates money dried up when globally liquidity went into the toilet, and only a few walk-through demo's ever made it to the market.

Of the three completed homes, two are still setup as walk-through homes, just fake appliances, sunlight baked sales brochures and picnic furniture. The only home with residents is the Cassidy home at the top corner of the street. The Cassidy family is hard to reach, since no one is at their home as far as anyone can tell. Mr. Cassidy died a week after purchasing the house, 3 years ago. His wife, Mrs. Cassidy is in an end-of-life care facility in the city. The son has been in and out of jail.

Amazingly enough there is video footage of the hill that goes back as far as 3 months. Highway Traffic monitoring cameras can be seen on the way to the site and some are pointed within its general direction. The video footage is grainy and the hill is out of focus, far away and sitting in the bokeh of the shot. Municipal transit authorities wouldn't be the type to stand in the way of an investigation, especially since the footage shows a bright flash from the hill just about every 4 weeks.

Without any other leads besides a timeline for the appearance of anomalous lights, a stakeout seems in order. Nothing happens night one, the operatives basically just setup their surveillance gear and get ready for the long haul. They can do this from a cramped uncomfortable van or setup surreptitiously in the furnished and unoccupied Cassidy residence. From the dark of the dusty hill, Phoenix looks like a diamond rising out of depths of the sea.

On night number two, a little past midnight in the demo house where James Thomas was found, a bobbing light is seen moving from window to window, upstairs to downstairs. Not but 5 minutes after seeing the lights, a police cruiser running lights but no sirens drives up the hill towards the houses and stops a ways back. Eventually the police cruiser turns down all its lights and Deputy Resnick emerges, he walks up towards the first demo home and enters.

Shots fired.

The operatives had either run to assist, or sit and watch. If they sit and watch, Resnick never exits the house and cannot be found inside the home.

If they assist, they approach Resnick and offer aid. He is clearly shaken, and claims he ordered a man wearing a robe and carrying a wick lighter to stop and identify himself. When the suspect refused the deputies orders, he was fired on. The agents heard no such shouting. They heard gunfire.

Searching the house with Resnick leaves not much room for the escape of the robed man. The kitchen floor is sandy, which appears to be the only thing out of order in the empty house. If the kitchen is searched more intensely, it is discovered that the faux dish washer is sitting on sand with some manner of occult marking in it (an Adz). Digging out the sand reveals a tunnel under the home which leads to some sort of lair.

The first person to enter the tunnel gets a mouth full of sand is choking, bad enough to need real help from another operative or they will perish. It is the Cassidy boy in a robe, with the same healed second degree burns. With a simple hand movement, he can make roughly a cup of sand appear anywhere within 50 feet of his person.

There are also alcoves and numerous tunnels leading from this lair. The tunnels head to other houses, and the alcoves have comatose bodies with mouths full of sand, no burns. Also present are native artifacts and petroglyphs.

Cassidy must be stopped.