

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

You're listening to a Morbid Network podcast.

Mike Williams set off on a hunting trip into the swamps of North Florida where it was thought he met a gruesome fate in the jaws of hungry alligators, except that's not what happened at all.

And after the uncovering of a secret love triangle, the truth would finally be revealed.

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You guys went ham sandwich and ordered so many lunar dials in the pre-sale there.

I was like, oh my god, you became entire ham hoagies.

What's a ham hoagie?

What is that?

Isn't it like a sub?

But somewhere else there.

From where you call them hoagies?

A sub is a hoagie?

Yeah.

I thought I was going to say a hub is a soggy.

Well, I don't know.

All I know is that the motherfucking lunar dial is going to be available on the Wondery Shop starting August 1st.

www.wonderystore.com and that's starting August 1st.

But if you're not one for the internet, that's fine, because you can go out into the world.

This is my favorite part.

And you can go to some of my fucking favorite places.

Hell yeah.

Target.

Target.

Global.

Barnes and Noble.

And Amazon starting August 1st.

And you can buy it there, baby.

Play the game.

Play it.

Play it so hard.

Go get it.

Lunar dial.

A bunch of hoagies starting in August.

August.

Hey, weirdos, I'm Ash.

And I'm Elena.

And this is Morbid.

That was AI-generated.

I liked that.

Oh, no, no, no.

No, never.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

Literally.

Never.

We're not those kind of people.

We're not those kind of girlies, you know?

We're not robots.

We're not robots over here.

Sometimes I feel a little robotic.

Uh-oh.

You glitched.

Duh-duh.

Everybody's like...

Oh.

Cotton.

Cotton.

Cotton.

Cotton.

Cotton.

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[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

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Cotton.

But yeah, we were saying how TikTok listens to you and apparently according to Ash, I've been talking about the Sims a lot because I keep getting Sims content all of a sudden and I'm not mad about it.

No.

What is Sims content?

Just people showing you their Sims builds and also showing you funny things that happen in the game.

Okay.

Cause there's a lot of glitches that happen in the Sims that are hilarious and there's also a lot of like hidden places you can go and hidden things you can do.

Like creepy or like fun things.

Like you can like go inside of a tree, a fairy tree and go to like a fairy realm.

That's cool.

Like a hidden fairy realm.

I feel like your kids would love that.

Oh yeah.

Is the Sims ever scary?

Like do like bad things happen?

I never, I can literally never play with them.

That's wild to me.

I used to watch you, but-

It can be very unintentionally scary because glitches happen and they can be terrifying sometimes.

Like how so?

Like a horse apparently one of the new glitches.

There's like a new expansion thing out, I guess.

I don't have this one, but I saw a TikTok about it.

What?

Crazy.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

But one, it's like horse ranch is the thing.
So you can like have a horse ranch
and the horses like bend over backwards.
Like walk at you like these crazy asses.
Like a demon.
It's like a glitch in the game.
I feel like that's not a glitch.
I feel like that's just like somebody
in the office bored on the first day.
Probably.
Probably.
Wow.
Yeah.
That's crazy.
It's pretty fun.
That's, the Sims is fun.
Gotta say, I think a lot of people agree with me.
I know a lot of people, a lot of you play the Sims.
I know this.
Cause whenever I've mentioned it before,
I post something people like, hell yeah, Sims.
You know what else people play a lot that I've never played?
And I don't think you've ever played it either.
Animal Crossing.
I've never played that.
Do you remember during the panoramic
when Animal Crossing just like took over the nation?
No.
Everyone.
Everyone was buying the Nintendo Switch.
That's what it's called.
Oh, I didn't even know that.
Which Drew wants to buy one.
And I was like, I don't know.
Like, I don't know.
A gamer boy.
I don't know.
I don't know.
I'm not a, I'm not a huge gamer.
I'm not a gamer girl.
I love, I was a Sims gamer girlie.
Yeah.
And I do love a horror video game sometimes,
but I haven't played one in like a billion years

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

because it's, you know, when, but.

I'm not, and I never have been a video game girlie.

Like remember when Papa and I was sick

and he got me those computer games?

The Hobbit.

He got me the Hobbit and like an aerial game,

which I fucking loved the aerial game

because you just like put clothes on her.

Yeah.

Like it was like styling aerial.

And I was like, sign me up.

But then the Hobbit, I was like, do you know me, sir?

But who took the Hobbit game?

I gave that right to her.

She was like, can I play this?

And I was like, yeah, get the fuck away from me.

And this bitch over here spent the,

I was actually just talking about this recently.

I was telling Drew about it.

We were talking.

I think it was when we were talking about the Nintendo thing.

Yeah.

But I was like, Elena overtook this fucking game.

And I passed the point of me being sick.

I was cured at this point.

Oh yeah.

You just thriving.

You were on level after level after level.

That game ruled.

And I want to play it again.

That was a cool game.

It was a cool game.

Cause I remember at that point when you started playing,

I was like, could I play now?

And you're like, no.

I was like, no, I've always been, no.

But when we had a computer room.

Yeah.

That's when a computer room was a thing.

It's a wild thing to think about.

And the computer, it'll just scare me.

I'm on Puppet's house.

Why did it scare you?

It's a freaky ass room.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

Do you remember that room?

I mean, yeah.

Like the, the weird side closet and shit.

I think that room was my room at one point.

That room was also my room at one point.

I think it was everybody's room at some point.

We all like love to switch rooms all the time.

Yeah.

But yeah, I think that was my room at one point.

Was that like your childhood room?

No.

It was when I was like a teenager

and I was like, I want this cool little room to myself.

And then I was like, I don't like this room.

Yeah.

Honestly, that room's too small to be like a room room.

Truly.

Room.

People like the way we say room.

Oh yeah.

I've heard people say that.

I don't think people say room.

I don't think I'd say it differently.

We say room.

Room.

Like room.

And other people say room.

Like this is my room.

Wait, people say room?

Like room.

This is my room.

What?

Just.

It reminds me of room.

It reminds me of room.

No, no more girls.

I think they say, or do they say room?

Room.

We say room.

This is where we're losing all.

They're like, okay, that's what I say.

Everybody's like, and by.

Well, that was rooms, rooms, and video games for you all.

That was rooms, rooms, and rooms with Ash and Elena.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

Yay.

I like that.

You know what, this is a spooky, crazy episode.

So spooky, crazy.

So it makes sense that we're being
spooky and crazy leading up to it.

This case was particularly asked for by Dave.

By Dave.

Research assistant, Dave, my best friend.

We love Dave.

We love Dave.

It is the Smurl family haunting.

And Dave was like, this is a goodie.

And I was like, wow, so many wild things happen in this
that like, oh my God.

And you know what, with a name like Smurls.

It has to be good.

That's one of the things that I thought.

That's one of the things that I thought.

All right, so the story of the haunting
really gained traction on August 19th, 1996.

Oh, in the 80s.

It was very 80s.

But on August 19th, 1986, that was when a rather interesting
news story appeared in the Wilkes Bar Times leader.

And the article was written about the Smurl family home
in West Pitson, Pennsylvania.

And the Smurl family home was owned
by Jack and Janet Smurl.

Jack and Janet.

Jack and Janet.

But they claimed that's their couple songs.

I was gonna say that's their theme song.

Jack and Janet Smurl.

They claimed that for a period of about a year and a half
that they had been the victims of a truly insane haunt.

They said their home was infested
with ghosts wandering the halls.

They were tormenting the family dog.

Demons were attacking the kids in the house.

They were allegedly sexually assaulting
the adults in the house.

Oh, no.

It was a truly wild story from start to finish.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

Apparently.

Apparently.

Apparently.

I thought you said infested by goats at first, too, to be honest.

But then I took the context clues later.

That was a pretty good impersonation.

I thought it was a goat that just walked in here.

But it was just ash.

Tell her me a goat.

I don't know why I just like,

I'm dot you that hard.

I appreciate it.

Really like put us into business.

I feel like it was like an um, get to business.

So the article.

So the article.

In the times leader, it got a lot of attention.

And soon reporters from like all over Pennsylvania and even the surrounding states wanted to get an interview with the Smurls.

Oh, of course.

This is primetime media, my guy.

Yeah.

And the Smurls, they were happy to give one.

But unfortunately, during these interviews, like people would come to the house sometimes and all activity would cease to exist.

Like they could never show what was going on in the house.

They could never prove that anything had actually happened.

I mean, yeah.

But even though people couldn't see what had happened with their own eyes, the press at first and actually even the church believed the Smurls.

They were like, you know, I see what you're saying.

I don't see it.

But like I could see it.

Yeah.

Like I get that ghosts don't have media training.

So I understand why they wouldn't come out.

Be a little shy, you know?

It's okay.

And I think the thing was like what they were claiming was so wild that the people who believed them

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

were like they couldn't possibly make this up.
Yeah, like this would be a reckless thing to make up.
Exactly.

But after a while, though, people were like,
the lack of proof is really kind of like tugging at us.
And people started questioning whether or not
they had really experienced any kind of haunt at all.
Oh boy.

So this went from like full blown, hell yeah, Smurls.
I'm so sorry you're going through that to like,
what the fuck are you talking about, Kyle?

Like are you lying?

Yeah.

So people just started to talk the whole thing
up to a hoax that was created by the family
for like attention and fame.

And they eventually lost interest.

But who knows?

Maybe like something really did happen.

We don't really know.

Maybe.

So let's get into the story
and let's get into the key people involved.

We got John James.

Jack.

John.

James.

Jack.

So that's Jack Smurl.

He was born December 19th, 1942 in Wilkes Bar, Pennsylvania.

To his parents, John and Mary.

He was the younger of two kids and looking back,
he said that he actually had a pretty ideal childhood.

Spent a lot of time outside with friends.

They would, you know, go exploring.

They'd play sports.

They'd adventure through the woods in the area.

Yeah.

I literally wrote, you know.

Side note, isn't it fucking wild
that kids just used to go off and play in the woods?

Yeah, I used to play in the woods.

You used to play in the woods?

Yeah.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

In the 80s, they played in the,
well, yeah, I guess you grew up in more than 90s.
Yeah, it was like late 80s, early 90s.
We would play in the woods.
I didn't even know that you played in the woods.
I was going to say, we were talking to mom
about that recently and she would play in the woods.
Oh yeah, the woods were, was the shit.
Before everybody came and made it awful.
I know.
We went to like woods parties in high school,
but we never like played in the woods.
So technically, you played in the woods.
Quote unquote.
Yeah, you're not wrong.
Yeah.
But wow.
Yeah.
But overall though, Jack, he was said to be
a really easy going kid.
He was smart, got along with his peers
and everybody in high school really liked him.
And he went to a Catholic high school
in Wilkes Bar called St. Mary's.
Now, even though he did well in school
and he was clearly a pretty smart kid,
after he graduated from high school,
Jack was kind of just done with the whole school thing,
which is.
Some people are relatable.
But he wanted to, he just wanted like some kind of excitement.
He wanted a big adventure and he wanted to go see more
of the world than just Pennsylvania where he lived.
Yeah.
So in the early 60s, pretty much the best way
to guarantee traveling was to join the military.
So that's what Jack did.
And he served in the Navy from June of 1960
until his honorable discharge in 1965.
So got a lot of travel time under his belt.
Look at him.
And it turned out that his personality,
the fact that he was a worker,
like he had a strong work ethic

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

and he was very attentive to rule following.
It made him an excellent serviceman.
So he did really well during his Navy years.
And while he was enlisted,
he trained as in, I'm going to try this,
electroconclusive therapy technician.
It was more intimidating than I thought.
But it turned out that was another thing
he was really good at.
And he was naturally empathetic
and had like a lot of compassion
when it came to people struggling with their mental health.
So this work was just as rewarding
as his time in the Navy was.
Now, once he was discharged,
he had big dreams of settling down,
wanted to get married, wanted to start a family.
And it just so happened that during his time in the Navy,
he had met a girl named Janet.
Ah, I know her.
I do too.
He thought she would be the perfect girl
to eventually marry.
He was a little bit older
and Janet was in high school when they met.
But despite the age difference,
Jack and Janet hit it off immediately.
Janet was very into school.
She was kind of like a bookworm.
Robert Curran, who wrote The Haunted,
One Family's Nightmare.
Oh, put it that.
Janet, quote, had no interest in the drugs
or promiscuity favored by the hippie movement.
Oh yeah.
Fuck those people.
Fuck the hippies.
Yeah.
Okay.
My people.
So Janet was not like that and neither was Jack.
So that's why they kind of meshed so well together.
Guys, are you ready for the sentence
that I'm about to say

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

because I'm pretty excited about it?

Fall.

Fall is right around the corner.

And HelloFresh is here to help you plan
for that busy season ahead
with tasty dishes delivered right to your door.

All you have to do is choose your recipes
and pick your delivery date
and then lay back and enjoy the last days of summer
knowing that dinner is covered.

And even if like your kids are going back to school
and it's super hectic, don't worry about it.

You got dinner all set in the fridge.

And I personally think the key to dinnertime success
is variety and HelloFresh knows all about that.

They keep your taste buds on their toes
with 40 chef crafted recipes
to select from every week.

They have family friendly, they have fit and wholesome
and you'll always find new and exciting recipes to try
and love.

I made a HelloFresh meal the other night
and I'm actually salivating right now thinking about it.
It was the creamy garlic spinach ricotta ravioli.

If you know me, I'm not gonna say no
to any kind of ravioli, but this specific one,
I will say yes to like a zillion times over.

Creamy garlic spinach ricotta.

Delicious.

It was so yummy and so easy to clean up.

You gotta try HelloFresh.

Go to HelloFresh.com slash 50 Morbid
and use code 50 Morbid for 50% off plus free shipping.

Again, that's HelloFresh.com slash 50 Morbid
and use code 50 Morbid for 50% off plus free shipping.

HelloFresh is America's number one meal kit.

Yeah!

This show is sponsored by BetterHelp.

Sometimes in life we're faced with tough choices
and the path forward is not always clear.

I feel like a big part of that comes from anxiety
and maybe sometimes depression.

A lot of times those little voices
in the back of your head can tell you that

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

you're not good enough and you can't make this choice
and what happens if you make this choice
and everything will be ruined
and it's like at that point you're not trusting yourself
but trusting yourself to make decisions
that align with your values is like anything.
The more you practice it, the easier it gets
and I personally think that therapy
is going to be the number one thing
that will help in a situation like that.
I have benefited from therapy.
I know so many of my friends and family members who have.
I actually know that I have taken a little bit
of a break from therapy
and I thought I was doing really good for a little bit
but you know what, I think I'm gonna head back
because navigating life without therapy is not always easy.
So listen, you're not alone
and if you're thinking of starting therapy
give BetterHelp a try.
It's entirely online designed to be convenient,
flexible and suited to your schedule.
Just fill out a brief questionnaire
to get matched with a licensed therapist
and switch therapists any time for no additional charge.
Let therapy be your map with BetterHelp.
Visit [betterhelp.com slash morbid](https://www.betterhelp.com/morbid) today
to get 10% off your first month.
That's BetterHelp, H-E-L-P, dot com slash morbid.
Now, their initial meeting was actually pretty brief
but Jack just couldn't get Janet off of his mind
as he finished his years on the service.
So he was really thrilled when they met up again
by happenstance at the 1967 company Christmas party
for Topps Chewing Gum.
They actually both worked there
but in different departments.
Oh wow.
And they didn't realize it
until they met at the Christmas party.
Oh shit.
So it kind of seems like they were like meant to be a little bit.
Yeah, go to those holiday parties guys.
I used to fucking love my company's holiday party.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

Some of them are fun.
Some of them are fun.
So like Jack, Janet, she was also raised
and devout Catholic.
So they had similar morals and values
and they bonded over those.
And like I said, their personalities
just really seemed to complement each other's.
So they dated for one year
and then they decided to get married
in this massive Catholic ceremony.
Looking back on their relationship, Janet said,
I think I knew right away.
I really liked the way he presented himself
and the respect he had, not just for me
but all the things I valued.
I like the way you move.
That's really sweet.
I think she was like, I like,
God that you do too and the church is awesome
and we like it together.
You know, same thing.
Morals.
They were like OMG.
OMG morals.
Have those, me too.
Yeah, we love those.
Yeah.
So Jack and Janet weren't the couple
like out and about at parties.
They weren't joining in on protests
that a lot of people their age were joining in on
at this time period.
But they were just, you know,
readying themselves to make a family.
Jack said, they were just vibing,
making plans for a fam.
And Jack said, we both wanted a family
and we both wanted to make sure
that the family would be raised properly.
Just good old Catholic folk.
Okay.
So the early years of Jack and Janet's marriage
went really well.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

It was particularly pleasant.
Jack was ever the hard worker.
He got a promotion and a pay raise.
And by the end of the 60s,
Janet had given birth to the couple's two daughters,
Don and Heather,
which I think are really pretty names.
Yeah.
Don and Heather, yeah.
Now Janet had left work to be a full-time mom
and she said, she saw it as not only quote
her sacred responsibility, but a privilege as well.
That's cute.
So she really loved being a mama.
I love that.
Now as a young couple with two children support,
two support, excuse me,
it wasn't always easy to make ends meet on one income.
So the family ended up moving in with Jack's parents,
John and Mary Smerl into their house in Wilkes Barre.
Now living with Jack's parents,
but Jack's parents, that's hard to say,
and it makes you feel like you're saying it.
Yeah.
It is hard.
Jack's parents.
Jack's parents, it's cause of the two S's.
This is a...
How biblical of them is what I meant to say?
John and Mary, for some reason,
that didn't hit before.
Good old Catholic folk.
You know, just hit.
Yeah.
Oh, Bible.
Exactly.
And then we got John and Janet.
Yeah.
Janet from the Bible, either.
I don't know.
Janet from the Bible.
Janet was at the last supper, right?
I think she was one of them.
Wasn't that like only men?

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

Who knows?

I don't fucking know.

I think it was dudes.

Probably.

I think it was a guy's night.

I think it was dudes just being bros.

It was Saturday.

It was for the boys.

So they move in with John and Mary,
not the Christ kind, but the other ones.

Living with Jack's parents meant that he and Janet
could save money to buy their own house,
and they also had John and Mary around
to help with the kids, so that was an added bonus.

With the kiddos.

With the kids.

Little chicken dudes.

Little chickadees, chickenettes.

But unfortunately, the plan hit a major snag
in the summer of 1972, when Hurricane Agnes
swept through the East Coast.

Hurricane Agnes.

Bitch.

Sounds like a bitch.

She was like, yeah.

Like my grandmother's name was Agnes,
so I'm allowed to say grandmother's name was Agnes.

But she was apparently awesome, though.

Yeah, she was.

I didn't get to meet her.

But like, I don't know, a Hurricane Agnes
feels like she means business.

Yeah, she does.

You don't come in being like, hello, I'm Hurricane Agnes.

I'm just gonna rain a little bit.

Yeah, now you look like you fuck shit up.

Yeah, you fuck shit up.

Yeah, and she did, actually.

Oh, man.

The storm caused billions of dollars in damage.

Really?

And it actually, on a more serious note,
it actually killed over 100 people.

I didn't even know, I have to look up this storm.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

I didn't know that.
I hadn't heard of it either, actually.
Because I think the first major hurricane in my life,
I think it was Hurricane Bob.
I think it was.
Bob.
On the East Coast.
The one that sticks out to me the most is Ida,
but she may have been recently.
I think she was recent.
I'm pretty sure.
I don't know, I get them confused.
But Hurricane Agnes I have not heard of.
I'll have to look it up.
Neither.
But so it was a really devastating
hurricane for the area.
But luckily the Smerls, they were lucky in the sense
that they didn't suffer nearly as much property damage
as others did.
And they were actually able to fix much of the damage.
But what did happen to them was that the house
was actually seized by the city through eminent domain.
Oh, shit.
Isn't that, isn't that when like they can turn it
into like a hospital?
Or they can turn it into like something for the city.
Now that's the thing.
I was like, I'm not really sure how all of that works.
But Dave thought that the property was so ruined
that they were probably tearing down the area
and redeveloping.
So the city kind of like took it back and wow.
That's wild.
But either way, now the family was forced to find
a new home that could accommodate the entire
Smerl family, Jack's parents included.
Yeah.
So that's six people.
That's a lot of people that have to find shelter for.
Exactly.
Now, luckily though, it actually didn't take long
for Jack and Janet to find exactly what they were
looking for in a duplex at 330 Chase Street

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

in the small town of West Pitson, Pennsylvania,
about half hour outside of Scranton.

Scranton.

Dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun.

I literally wrote Q Elena office reference here.

Dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun.

You know.

No, I don't.

You all know.

I wasn't talking to you.

I was talking to everyone else.

I know you don't know.

She wasn't talking to me.

Is that Nietzsche's house?

No, it's you, Jim.

What?

Don't worry about it.

So in the middle of 1973, when the Smerls bought the house,
West Pitson, it really seemed to be like
the perfect area for them.

The town was filled with a lot of hard-working young people,
a lot like Jack and Janet, and most of them
were like working-class people again,
just like Jack and Janet.

So once they moved in, they wasted no time getting settled.

And as the quintessential homemaker,
stay-at-home mama of two,

Janet got active in this community,
which this is impressive, actually.

She worked to establish a girl's softball league.

Whoa.

She joined a local chapter of students
against drunk driving,
and she spearheaded the town's cherry blossom festival.

Damn, Janet.

Which I was like, okay, Janet, what's your wig made of?

All right, Janet.

Your mom's just here.

I had to finish it.

That was amazing.

What's your wig made of?

Cherry blossoms from the festival.

I spearheaded it.

Hell yeah.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

So Janet would have said, that's right.

Now, meanwhile, Jack was, I know, seriously, he was doing really well too.

He was moving up the corporate ladder at Tops to a middle management position, and he joined the local Lions Club.

Damn, look at him, assistant to the regional manager and everything. That's office.

Yeah, it is.

So years later, Jack and Janet, they looked back on those early years living in that home on Chase Street, and they actually agreed that they were some of the happiest times in their marriage, especially in light of all the chaos that followed.

Uh-oh.

So when they found their duplex on Chase Street, like I said, seemed to have everything they wanted in a home. As a duplex, it could easily accommodate Jack's parents, while still having more than enough space for everybody else.

So actually, Jack ended up selling his parents their side of the living space for \$4,000, which would be about \$25,000 now.

Which like, that's a fucking deal.

On a whole last home.

On a whole last home.

So when they bought the house, Jack and Janet didn't really know much about the owner. All they knew about him was that he was an elderly man who had been renting the property out for years.

But otherwise, the house passed all the standard inspections and all the major utilities, plumbing, electric, foundation, roof, yada, yada, yada.

They all seemed to be in perfect working order, which made the house feel like a steal at just \$10,000.

Damn. Yeah.

I forgot to put in the translation of that, like what it would be today.

I could see you were like,

I want to know how much that is.

Yeah, I forgot to put it in.

It's okay.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

But perhaps there was a reason that it was that cheap.

Perhaps there was.

Dun, dun, dun.

I'm ready to find out what it was.

So the first stranger currents anybody
in the Smerl family can remember
actually happened in January of 1974,
just a few months after they moved into the house.

Mary had recently bought a large red carpet
for her and John's side of the house.

But when the rug was delivered to the house
and rolled out on the floor,
they were pretty disappointed
because right in the middle,
there was a huge dark stain
that obviously wasn't there when Mary had bought it.

Huh.

So she was able to get the stain out of the rug.

She just used like regular old carpet cleaner.

But a few days later,

it inexplicably returned in the exact same spot.

Almost like she had never removed it in the first place.

Huh.

So they ended up throwing away the carpet
and they just didn't think much of it.

They were like, well, that was fucking weird,
but maybe I didn't get all of it out.

Like maybe it dried weird, you know?

Yeah.

They were just overall confused about the whole thing.

But I should say here

that the timeline of the Smerl family haunt
shifts around a lot.

Because it seems like when they first went to the press,
they said the whole thing lasted about a year and a half.

But then the timeline shifts again and again
throughout the entire story.

And I think that was part of the reason
why people started to have doubts.

Okay.

I honestly, I think like obviously a real like true haunting
where you have this evidence and you catch things on tape
and like catch things on, you know, video and all that.

That is fascinating and awesome.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

And that's like my favorite kind.
But there's something fascinating
about one where you question whether a whole fucking family,
including adults are like shit up.
Yeah.
Like there's something so fat
because I'm like, you all banded together.
Why did you do this?
Like what a weird thing to fake is a whole haunting.
It's funny that you say that in the way that you did.
I don't know how to like reiterate how you said it,
but I'm excited to see how that,
there potentially could be a reason
that everybody felt this way.
And I should mention that we might not get there
until part two.
Sorry, I forgot to tell you that.
We're beginning spooky season early.
Yeah, bitch.
It will kick off.
It's October somewhere.
Yeah, you know.
So while the stain on John and Mary's new carpet
seemed relatively innocuous,
in the timeline that they do later put together,
it was soon followed by a whole slew of issues in the home
that they believed were supernatural forces.
Okay.
Now, just a few months after the rug incident,
Jack said that he was watching the TV one night
when suddenly the TV burst into flames
without any warning or any sign of a problem.
Were you buried that leaf?
Sure did.
He was just watching TV one night
and the television burst into flames, he said.
These ghosts came in like a wrecking ball.
They never fell so hard.
They never did.
They were like, hey, I'm here.
Like what?
Wow.
That's pretty demonic.
That's demonic or you would think like

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

that's given dark-saddled or that's given faulty wiring.
It's certainly that's sinister wiring.
Sinister wiring is the problem there.
So that's the thing.
Jack and Janet were like,
we got some faulty wiring up in this bitch.
Yeah.
But then they were like, no,
everything passed inspection when we bought the house.
And then that TV fire was followed
by other small fires in the house.
Their new electric stove caught fire
and so did Jack's car.
Days after he brought it home from the dealership.
Oh my God.
Oh my God.
Oh my God.
There's a fire.
There's an actual fire.
Oh my God.
Is that demonic?
Oh my God.
Oh my God.
Oh my God.
It's giving sinister vibe.
What the fuck?
What the fuck?
Oh my God.
Oh my God.
Should we leave that in?
We were just talking about a faulty wiring fire
and then there was a fire.
Oh my God.
I didn't even do any.
I just stared at it.
I was just like, oh my God, fire.
I was literally hitting it.
I was just like, oh.
I was like, these damn,
they're getting into this right here.
Oh my God.
Fire, fire.
And I was like, oh.
I know, why did we continue to yell it in Southern accents?

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

How did that happen?

So that just happened.

Like not even shitting your dicks right now.

We left that on purpose.

Yeah.

And in the beginning, it kind of sounds like I'm being silly.

No.

A fire just happened.

It was not at all.

We had it.

What happened?

Because you saw it.

So Ash was talking about faulty wiring and.

And I said fire multiple times.

Wow.

That was sinister and all that.

And then I was just looking at Ash

because right now you can't see it, but I can.

Ash is bathed in rainbow light right now

because we have little rainbow things on our day.

Yeah.

Cause she's so gay.

And so I looked and I was like, wow.

She looks, she looks so angelic right now in this rainbow bath.

And so I happened to look over to my right and I said,

oh, that candle is really, really going.

And then I looked and I was like,

oh, that's a bonfire in our room right now.

And it just like lit.

I don't even know what lit on fire.

Was it like the paper underneath?

No.

No, cause we have like a little candle like.

Yeah.

I guess you would call that.

Like a candle holder.

And I think it just, she's just lit on fire.

I don't really know what happened here.

That was so scary.

And she was right next to Baffy.

And she was.

She was.

Yeah.

Like my little Baffumette statue.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

She was living over there.

Yeah.

He was like, as above, let's go.

Yeah.

I, yeah.

I don't know what just happened, but that was.

Terrifying.

That could have been real bad.

Now it was big.

I wish you guys had seen it.

Like not like massive, but.

I should have got control of my constitution

and I should have taken a video of it

while Mikey put it out.

I almost broke my beard.

I know.

Mikey saved us all.

I just want to be very clear.

I didn't move an actual muscle.

Did not move.

I did not move at all.

When she says didn't move a muscle,

she didn't even uncross her legs
from crisscross applesauce.

No, I sure didn't.

And I just went, oh my God.

This is like a bad.

I forgot everything from Stop Drop.

I got up.

But all I did was say, oh no.

And stand over Mikey while he put it out.

And I did open the door.

Did you just like it?

Yeah.

I blew really hard.

Yeah.

I was about to burn my beard.

Oh my God, I'm glad you didn't burn your beard.

Okay.

But yeah, that just happened.

So that was interesting.

I'm glad we could take you guys along for that ride.

But we're OK now.

Well, it smells a little crispy in here,

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

but we're all right now.
It smells a little crispy in here.
It smells like good though.
Yeah.
It's like crispy candle.
It's a bonfire.
It's a bonfire.
That just makes me think about childish canvino,
but I'm not going to sing that.
So anyways, so anyways.
So anyways, not a glove, but you know I'm just kidding.
So yeah, fire at the Smurl residence, cars,
electric stoves, TVs, the whole night.
But to the Smurls, the first few unfortunate events
in their home, they just kind of dismiss them as like surprise.
This is what makes me lull.
They dismissed it as surprises that come along
with being first time homeowners.
Yeah.
When I became a first time homeowner,
my car didn't burst into flames, nor did my television.
No.
So like I wouldn't chalk that up to that.
No, it definitely didn't happen to me either,
but you know, everyone's experience is different,
I suppose.
It is.
Wow, it really does smell crispy in here.
It does.
But anyways, some of the issues like, you know, wiring,
if that was the case, leaky plumbing,
those things probably could have been the result of them buying a house
with a pretty long history of unknown repairs.
Yeah, so they chalked it up to that for a minute.
I see why you don't want to immediately assume it is,
you know, the Dark Lord.
Yeah, I know.
I never want to go in with assumptions that it's the Dark Lord.
I would like to avoid that at all costs.
I can understand.
But here's the thing.
There was all, see, continuance to avoid the Dark Lord.
Sorry, Baffie.
There was also the fact that when these smell problems would come up,

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

usually it was Jack or John, his father, that would fix them.
And neither of them had any handyman experience really.
So like that could have led to more issues.
But John and Janet, they eventually
became convinced that there was a lot more to it.
Oh, my God, lately I have been such a hydration girly.
I'm like, hydrate, hydrate, hydrate.
I've been going on hot girl walks in the morning.
I've been sweating.
And then I'm like, well, I need to rehydrate myself.
And sometimes I get bored of water because, you know, water's great,
but tastes the same every time.
You know, it doesn't taste the same every time.
Different flavors of Liquid IV.
Liquid IV is the number one powered hydration brand in America.
And now it's available in sugar-free.
Years in the making, hydration multiplier, sugar-free,
uses a proprietary zero-sugar hydration solution
with no artificial sweeteners.
So don't worry about any of that nasty stuff.
With three times the electrolytes of the leading sports drink,
plus eight vitamins and nutrients for everyday wellness,
Liquid IV hydrates two times faster than water alone.
That is absolutely iconic.
And I've tried some of the new sugar-free flavors.
They're delicious.
And I'm not going to lie to you.
I was like, I don't know about these, but I know about them now.
White peach happens to be my personal favorite,
but there's also green grape and a classic lemon lime.
So freaking yummy.
It's so, so easy to take them on the go with you.
Just throw it right in your purse.
Pour it into your water bottle
and you are living your best life.
Real people, real flavor, real hydrating.
Now sugar-free.
Grab your Liquid IV hydration multiplier sugar-free
in bulk nationwide at Costco
or get 20% off when you go to liquidiv.com
and use code Morbid at checkout.
That's 20% off anything you order
when you use promo code Morbid at liquidiv.com.
It is every parent's nightmare unfolding in South Jersey.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

The search is on for an 11-year-old Cape May County boy missing since yesterday afternoon.

So far, searchers have found only his left sneaker near his home.

It's hard to imagine losing a loved one, a wife, a husband, a child.

For many, it's their biggest fear.

Amrissa Jones, host of *The Vanished*, a podcast that tells the stories of often overlooked and unsolved missing persons' cases.

Every week, I dive into a new case, sharing the details of their mysterious disappearance, including interviews with family, friends, law enforcement, and even suspects in an effort to reveal the truth.

And I'm proud to say that this podcast has aided in a number of arrests.

It's important to me to remember the human behind the headline and help family members find their vanished loved one or at least a sense of peace.

Follow *The Vanished* wherever you get your podcasts.

You can listen ad-free on Amazon Music or the Wondery app.

After they had installed a new sink and tub into their bathroom,

they described it as looking, quote, as if the talons of some frenzied beast had clawed at the porcelain.

Ooh.

But maybe they had just scratched it all up during the installation.

Maybe.

Or maybe it was the talons of a frenzied beast.

I don't know.

You don't know.

I don't know.

I wasn't there.

That's the thing.

So I don't know.

I don't know.

I don't know.

I don't know.

That's the thing.

So a lot of the unfortunate events in the beginning

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

and the early years could be chalked up to, you know, poor craftsmanship and shoddy work. But that kind of explanation would not cover the sudden change in behavior of the Smurl's oldest daughter, Dawn. In 1975, she started regularly going into her parents' room in the middle of the night and telling them that she had, quote, just seen people floating around her room. Ooh. Now, each time they would go into her room and look around but find nothing out of the ordinary. They didn't see people floating. Unfortunately, no. No. Or maybe fortunately for them. But like, I would find that unfortunate. Yeah. I'd be like, what a bummer. I'd be like, you just said you saw floating people. Don't bullshit me. Fake. Fake fan. So but almost every night, Dawn would come back and say the same thing. Like, and she wasn't on acid. She was like a child. I was going to say, and she was like a child. She's a child. Yeah. So for the most part, the unusual inexplicable things that happened in the Smurl House, they were just minor inconveniences, disruptions in their ordinary lives. Lots of like random noises. Radios would turn on by themselves. Drawers would open and close. They would hear footsteps up and down the halls in the middle of the night. None of those things seemed to have explanations. Yeah. And whenever they would happen, Jack, Janet and the kids, they would usually just ignore them because they were kind of getting used to it. And it became much easier in 1977

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

when Janet gave birth to twin girls, Shannon and Karen,
I believe, or Karen.

I think it's Karen.

Sorry.

So at this point, the family had their hands full.

So the noises were not something they were focusing on.

Yeah.

Because now there's like two screaming babies.

Because now it's noisy.

Yeah.

It's noisy.

So, you know, like by the 70s and the 80s,

Jack, Janet and the parents,

they were all so busy with like the babies

and just like other life things going on

that they weren't bothering with every little irritation

or like footstep that would happen.

Yeah.

But that would start to change in 1983

when the couple noticed an inescapable quote,

stench of smoke and rotten meat

that seemed to permeate the house no matter what they did.

Oh, imagine if your house just smelled like smoke
and rotten meat.

Damn.

And like no, no febrize, no incense,

no flammable candle.

I was just going to say right now it smells like smoke in here,
but not rotten, not rotten meat.

They couldn't do anything to fix it.

And later, Jack would claim that the first time he noticed
the stench was, quote,

while he was kneeling before his bed, saying the rosary.

So it was almost like some kind of demon.

Didn't like some demon saying cut that shit out.

Cut that shit out.

I don't like that rosary of yours.

It's very demeaning.

But at the time he and Janet thought that there might be
like a rational, non-demonic.

Denomination.

Denomination.

Prepare for total domination.

Domination.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

Demonic.

Spooky cases make us crazy.

Crazy.

It's usually.

Also fires do.

Fires make us pretty crazy.

But yeah, I feel like spooky is usually when we need like a little slowdown.

Yeah, that's when we really just shake out all the goofies.

You know.

So yeah, they thought that no demons, just rations and rationalities.

Yep.

So they were worried, though, that the smell was being caused by subsidence from all the heavy mining going on in the area at the time.

So subsidence for those who don't know because I didn't know.

I also don't know.

It's when a land of area, an area of land, excuse me, starts to cave in on itself.

Oh.

And I guess it smells.

I don't know.

I was going to say that it's stinky.

I think that.

I don't know why they thought it was so smelly, but Jack contacted the Department of Mines and he was told to check the foundation of the house for signs of cracking and crumbling.

But they didn't find any there.

Like there was no evidence that this was going on.

So once again, the Smurls were at a loss to explain the unexplicable happening in their home.

Yeah.

Since moving into the duplex in late 1970, 1973, they had endured more than a decade of unusual and like sometimes pretty frightening events in their home.

Yes.

Like fires.

Yeah.

And that's a long time to keep up a ruse.

It is.

And after a while, they said they just stopped looking for any kind of rational explanation, and they just came to

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

terms with the fact that they lived in a haunted house.

Yeah.

And they were cool with that for a little bit.

Yeah.

They were just like, you know, footsteps, the smell fire seemed to stop.

I guess they figured out a way to make it not smell like rotten meat.

Yeah.

But then in 1985, all that changed again because the activity took a dark and decidedly more threatening turn.

One winter afternoon in late 1985, Janet was in the basement, just, you know, separating laundry and running through her to-do list in her head, just stay at home mama things.

And she was loading up the washing machine while she did this.

And as she was doing that, she thought she heard someone call her name, Janet.

And so she stood up a little bit straighter and kind of like listened closer, just waiting to see if the voice would call out again.

And she was just about to explain it away as, you know, like coming from the TV upstairs or something when she heard it again.

A soft female voice calling, Janet.

And it seemed like it was coming from behind her.

So she whipped around to confront the voice, but like we know, no one was there.

Oh.

So that, that experience seemed to contradict that like everything Janet knew about ghosts and hauntings just from watching TV and movies.

It was the middle of the day, all the lights were on in the house.

She was like, why would this happen right now?

But still, here she was trying to listen over the sound of the washer and dryer for someone to call her name again.

And she said that she was just thinking about how violating it was, having something in her house that she couldn't see.

Like she was just thinking that when she heard the voice

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

call out her name again.
And this time, Janet made horror mistake, movie,
number, no, fucking it.
Horror movie mistake, number one.
And she screamed at the voice, what do you want?
Oh no.
You never do that, Janet.
No.
You never do that.
Nope, you don't say who's there and you don't say
what do you want.
And you don't say be right back.
Nope.
But obviously there was no reply.
So she made her way toward the stairs and she started
climbing up them slowly backwards all the way to the
top because she was fucking terrified.
Oh my God, when you just said that for a split second,
I was picturing like in like those scary like
exorcism movies where they like throw themselves
backwards and like spider up the stairs.
So Janet just decided to back bench her way up the stairs.
Whoa, in my head I was like, oh my God, you said that so
casually, but no, you just meant like a normal person.
Like she was like backing up the stairs.
Back up the stairs because she was also freaked out.
Thank you for clarifying that for me.
No problem, anytime.
I had the wrong idea.
Imagine if she just like, like dead girl up the stairs.
Yeah, like, you know, like haunted person.
No big deal.
But as soon as she got to the top, she heard her name
again, like this thing was fucking with her.
So she ran to the kitchen and she said she dropped to her
knees and immediately started praying.
And she said that she continued to periodically return
to the kitchen and pray like that for the rest of the night.
Damn.
And I guess it went away.
It's exhausting.
One would think.
So according to the Smerls, they had spent more than a
decade laughing off or, you know, trying to rationalize

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

the strange events that occurred in their home.
But this was different.
This time something spoke Janet's name.
It knew her.
Yeah.
She had her home without her permission.
Yeah.
So that night she went to Jack about it and she was like,
I'm not cool with this.
Like this is something I can't ignore.
No way.
We're not on a first name basis here.
No.
This person think they are.
Exactly.
Now, as a devotee Catholic couple, they had accepted a
certain belief in a paranormal world, but it was one
thing to believe in it.
A totally different thing to actually experience.
Of course.
Of it.
So they agreed that they should start looking into
options for help, but then the topic just kind of fell by
the wayside and they continued about their day to day
lives.
That makes sense.
So a few months went by and, you know, after Janet's
experience with the voice in the basement, nothing
happened, but then something did happen.
But then it happened.
She had a second experience and this time it was way
more convincing.
So months go by and then one February morning after she
had sent all the girls off to school, she was in the
kitchen ironing.
I feel like these ghosts don't like house chores.
No, they don't.
What are you doing?
They're honestly just telling her to live a little.
Yeah.
But she was ironing and she said that she felt a sudden
cold chill rush into the room and she said she looked up
from her chores, like thinking, oh, she left a window open
or something, only to see a quote, black human shaped

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

form, standing about 10 feet away from her.

Oh.

And she later said, to be honest, I wasn't sure at first whether it even existed.

I knew there was a possibility that I was hallucinating or something, but then it started moving toward me.

And I knew then that there was no doubt about it.

The thing, whatever it was, was real.

Very real.

Ooh.

But before the mass started moving toward Janet, she just stood there not really wanting to run or like move any kind of muscle that would alert it.

So she just stood there holding her iron in one hand and staring at the mass in her kitchen.

She said eventually, quote, this is wild, a cape fluttered from its back, but what was most upsetting was that the face had no features at all.

Huh.

A cape.

So it was a superhero?

No, it was stylish.

Oh, excuse me.

Obviously.

Sorry, I thought a superhero.

I mean, maybe.

Who might I say?

We don't know who this is.

I'm not the local authority on big mass figures.

It could be a stylish superhero, you know?

Look at that.

We don't know.

So she said the thing didn't appear to be a solid mass.

She could kind of see through it slightly.

And she said it was the height of an average man.

But all of the sudden, the shape again moving toward her.

And she's just standing there frozen in place with shock.

And it just kind of like moves through her.

Like, like moves like, you know?

Nope.

No, I don't.

I don't want to.

You know how that happens?

Like you'll just be ironing and then like you just let

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

the mass like move through you.

Just move right through you.

You don't know about that?

No, I don't.

Me either.

But Janet does.

And she said after a minute or two had passed,
she finally composed herself enough to look around the room,
but it was gone.

No, because now it's inside of you, I think.

I don't know.

I'm worried for you, Janet.

Or maybe it like went through a wall or something.

I also just thought about the cape thing.

Stylish and superhero are both like pretty innocuous.

You're like, that's fun.

Yeah.

What if it's like Jack the Ripper?

He's always wearing a cape.

Why did I quite literally know that you were going to say that?

In the pictures, he's always wearing a cape.

And it's wild because you have a Jack the Ripper like a pub
thing behind you.

Oh, yeah.

And he that's a black figure with a cape about the height
of a man.

Oh, I don't love that.

Hate it.

I don't love that.

Hate it.

So a few minutes later, she kind of went through the house
and like checked the other rooms.

But just like the voice she had heard in the basement,
there was no sign of this figure anywhere.

So when she was sure that it wasn't hiding anywhere
in the house, she went over to her in-laws side of the house
and knocked on the door, not really
sure what the fuck she was going to tell her mother-in-law,
but sure that she needed to talk to like anybody
about what just happened.

Now, for as long as Janet had known her mother-in-law, Mary,
Mary had been this warm, comforting presence in her life.

But on that day, there was something very off about Mary.

So the two of them sat there in the living room,

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

Janet just trying to figure out how to explain what the fuck she had just gone through to Mary.
When Mary leaned forward and said to her,
I have to tell you something, Janet.
Oh no, there's something about Mary.
There is.
So Janet could tell that Mary was really upset.
So she was like, OK, yeah, tell me.
And Mary goes, maybe you won't believe me, Janet.
I don't know if I believe me.
Maybe I'm getting old.
And then she explained that she had been sitting in the living room praying a short time earlier.
When she saw what appeared to be the hazy black shape of a man come through her wall as though it had simply walked through a door from Janet's side of the house.
Damn.
The form.
The form.
Mary told Janet I was sitting here in my chair saying my novenas?
I don't know.
When I felt some kind of presence,
I looked up and saw this black form appear.
It walked past me and disappeared.
So they both had the same experience.
Like whenever the shape left Janet's.
It just went straight to Mary.
It went through the wall to Mary's side of the house.
Wow.
So even though.
It doesn't really look like it's doing anything, though.
I think he's just passing through.
It's just vibing.
Yeah, he seems like he's just observing.
Seeing gurlies go to lunch with each other.
Yeah, be ladies who lunch.
Just like do something.
At least he's not being, well, not yet.
You know, I assume this this doesn't stay as docile.
I don't know.
As he is right now.
I don't know.
So even though they were both still scared,

absolutely shitless.

They were both a little relieved that they both seen the same thing and, you know, they weren't necessarily losing it.

Yeah.

It was validating to know that they weren't hallucinating or having any kind of episode. And that validation only strengthened Janet's belief that they couldn't wait any longer to do something about this.

Like this presence in their home was getting more and more frightening as the months and days passed.

Yeah.

But the problem was that Jack hadn't seen what his wife or his mother had seen.

And he was still very much of the belief that there was a rational explanation for what was going on.

I don't know how you rationalize like a black sheep shifting thing with a cape walking through your house, but.

That's so Jack.

Talk to Jack about it.

That's so Jack to try to rationalize.

Yeah.

You know, very Jack thing to do.

It is, I agree.

So a few more weeks passed without any unusual incidents in the home and, you know, Jack and Janet suspected that their ordeal was over, which just ended one day.

Yeah.

But their hopes went down the drain later that spring.

When a light fixture in the kitchen came crashing down out of nowhere, almost landing on Janet and Heather, who luckily managed to get under the table to avoid all the falling debris.

But Shannon, one of their daughters on the other hand, didn't move out of the way fast enough.

And the large fixture caught her in the shoulder and knocked her down to the floor.

Oh.

So Jack, he looks up at the ceiling and he was shocked because when he sees the hole in the ceiling,

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

it didn't look like the light had just fallen.

It looked like it had been ripped out of the ceiling,
he said, by some kind of force.

What?

Yeah.

So this incident reminded them about their commitment
to find outside help for this problem they were experiencing,
but they didn't know where to start.

Janet said, after that, we spent hours, days, weeks,
talking to people who might possibly be able to help us.

But unfortunately, a lot of the people
that the Smurls reached out to in the beginning
weren't really taking them seriously.

Yeah.

Because remember, this is like the 80s,
and everybody's like, what the fuck are you talking about?

Not a lot of people had gone through this before.

No.

Now, one of the people that they reached out to just
implied that maybe they were watching too many horror movies
and were letting their imaginations run wild.

Wow.

And Jack and Janet were really pissed off about that.

Yeah, I would be pissed off too.

Right?

Yeah.

So by the late spring, the Hans and the Smurl House
had escalated considerably and now included physical assaults.

Ooh.

This is strange.

OK.

So in one instance, Jack claimed that he woke up
from a nap to find himself suspended
in the air above his bed.

And at first, he thought that he was still dreaming.

But as he emerged from a sleepy state,
he realized that he was very much awake.

And after thrashing around in the air for a few seconds,
he dropped from the air and landed back on the bed
with no sign of what had caused this experience.

The only thing I can think of is he turned 16 years old
and he became a witch, finally.

I'll ask Sabrina the Teenage Witch.

But he had already turned 16 long ago.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

So it doesn't work.

It doesn't.

I don't know if they have like.

I officially don't have an explanation.

That was my explanation.

There's no explanation.

No, it's going to get particularly steamy here.

Oh.

So weeks after that, on a particularly steamy night in more ways than one in June, Jack and Janet had just finished getting together.

If you're picking up what I'm putting down.

Good for them.

I know, you know.

And they were laying in bed together when suddenly something grabbed Janet by her ankle and started pulling her from the bed.

Allah, the movie we were talking about this morning, Paranormal Activity.

Oh.

So Jack grabbed a hold of Janet and he held tightly on to her as whatever it was that was trying to do whatever it was trying to do with her was trying to rip her from the bed still.

Oh my God.

He said, it was like a tug of war going on.

I was holding on to her as hard as I could

because I had no idea what the thing wanted to do to her.

But the harder I tried to keep her next to me, the harder it pulled on her.

Oh, I hate it.

Now, after a few more seconds, whatever was pulling Janet abruptly let go and just seemed to vanish.

Huh.

And it left behind a horrible odor and started banging on the walls as it left.

So it farted in the left.

It kind of did, I guess.

It boofed and then it, and then it,

I was trying to think of a word.

I was going to say what else.

It boofed and then it banished itself.

Boof and banished.

Wow.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

Now, that's rude.

I know.

Right after they finished their, you know, moment together.

Sure.

Yeah.

The moment together.

It tries to steal her and then can't.

So it just farts on them and then leaves.

Like, that's so shitty.

It is.

That'll really, that'll.

That'll ruin any hope of an encore.

I can tell you that much.

Not even ruin, ruin, like whatever just happened.

Yeah, that's a bummer.

I know.

So in the months that followed, the assault on the Smirrel House continued and got worse and worse.

Day after day, Jack and Janet said they could hear the hissing of phantom snakes, drawers and cupboards opening and closing on their own, and heavy footsteps, of course, walking up and down the halls at night.

So they were totally still at a loss for what to do, because they're still even reaching out to people and getting door slammed in their face everywhere they go. So Janet started reading about the supernatural in any book that she could get her hands on.

And she also started keeping a diary of all the things that were happening in the house.

And then soon, one afternoon in early 1986, a call from a friend changed the course of the Smirrel's lives in ways they never could have imagined.

You don't say.

I do say.

After a blessing by their parish priests failed to resolve the haunting, Jack and Janet were starting to lose hope.

But then a new solution presented itself in the form of a phone call from Janet's friend, Carla.

I knew it was going to be Carla who was going to break this wide open.

Tell John.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

Yeah.

So Carla and Janet had been friends for years.
And Janet had confided in her girl, Carla,
about all the things going on in the house,
and especially how much it had been affecting the family.
Because at this point, it's affecting their relationships
with one another.

Clearly, you've got to do some ghost.
So Carla mentioned that she had come
across the name of a professor who
taught at Marywood College, which was a private Catholic
school in Scranton.

Scranton.

Pennsylvania.

I thought you were going to do the whole thing.
I was going to, but I thought it would be annoying.
And then I almost went to sing it,
but then my brain said to sing the Bluey song.
Oh, I mean, you can always sing the Bluey song.
But anyways, so Carla's like, hey,
I know this professor who teaches at a Catholic school.
And he has been studying the subject of demonic possession.
And it kind of sounds like that's what you're dealing with.
Wow, that's pretty awesome.

But convenient.

I know, super convenient.
But after all the negative experiences
that Janet had contacting like academics
like this in the past, she wasn't very hopeful.
She was actually kind of worried,
but it was going to be a waste of time.

But she was like, you know what?

My friend Carla is my good girl.

I'm going to listen to her.

What do I have to lose?

Let me appease my friend here and give this guy a call.

So she does.

And the professor at Marywood College
explained that his interest in the subject
was purely academic and he really
didn't think there was much he could do to help.
But he did provide them with the contact information
of two people who could most definitely help.

Two people.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

Are you talking about Ryan and Shane from BuzzFeed Unsolved?

No, as much as I fucking love those two individuals,

I'm talking about Ed and Lorraine Warren.

I bet you didn't even couldn't tell.

I could never have guessed.

I said, I bet you didn't even couldn't tell.

I didn't even couldn't have told.

You were correct in your assumption.

Oh, man.

And he described them as professional psychic researchers that quote, have even been hired by the United States Army.

Fuck yeah.

Which I know nothing about.

I don't either.

Now, by the summer of 1986, Ed and Lorraine, they had built up quite a name for themselves on the talk show circuit and among certain circles for their involvement in dealing with the supposed haunting of George and Kathy Lutz's house in Amityville, New York.

I don't know if you guys have heard of that one.

I don't know.

Maybe you've heard of this one, the claims of demonic possession in the murder trial of Arnie Johnson.

Have you heard of that one?

Elina covered it, and there was a bunch of other things that they were known for.

So some people had faith in Ed and Lorraine, but most people were deeply skeptical even about their methods and motives.

And the more vocal skeptics and scientific investigators usually pointed to documentation of fraud surrounding the Warrens, like the Lutz's admission of fraud in the Amityville case as evidence of their sus intentions.

Yeah.

Now, for their part, Ed and Lorraine always maintained that their intentions were good and that Lorraine had powers as a psychic medium, and those were genuine powers.

She said, we have a single message we want to get across to people.

There's a demonic underworld, and that on some occasions, it could be a terrifying problem for people.

Hey, you know.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

I agree with.

Seems legit.

Pour one out for Lorraine.

Now, after a brief telephone conversation with the Smerls, Ed and Lorraine were pretty sure they could actually help the couple.

So they agreed to travel from their home in Connecticut to Pennsylvania as soon as possible.

And in their initial interview with the Smerls, Ed and Lorraine kind of ran through their standard battery of questions regarding the couple's familiarity with Satanism, use of Ouija boards, practice of witchcraft, all the activities that the Warrens said could lead to a demonic infestation.

You know?

Yeah.

Obviously.

You know.

Now, as Ed Warren continued his interview with the Smerls, when they finally got out there, Lorraine started exploring the house, and she was accompanied by her friend, Rosemary, who also claimed to have psychic abilities.

And also had a baby.

No.

Maybe I actually have no fucking idea.

But I saw what you were doing there.

I picked up what you're putting down.

Now, the two psychic mediums immediately sensed the presence of evil.

No, you won't get that unless you watch SpongeBob.

But it seemed to get stronger as they made their way up the stairs to the second floor of the house.

And after exploring the second floor, when they reached the door to Janet and Jack's bedroom, they sensed that they would find whatever it was they were looking for behind that door.

But they checked the bedroom, and they found nothing in the actual bedroom.

All that remained was to look in the couple's closet.

So they did.

Now, up to that point, Lorraine and Rosemary claimed to have identified three ghosts in the Smerl home. Two were benign, and one was very angry.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

Now, later, when they were assembled at the kitchen table, Lorraine presented the profiles of the entities she believed were haunting the Smurl's home.

The first was an elderly woman.

Lorraine said that she was, quote, probably senile, but not violent.

She's just confused.

OK.

The second spirit was a young woman Lorraine described as, and this is her words, not mine,

an insane, violent spirit who might want to harm you.

But she said the spirit could be, quote, dealt with through prayer.

And then there was the third ghost,

a man with a mustache, who, quote,

possesses the ability to carry out great harm.

Oh, man.

So Lorraine.

It's the mustache.

It's the mustache, of course.

So Lorraine is.

Close the problems everywhere.

Mustaches.

What did I say in Buffy the other day?

They always tell lies.

Don't trust a mustache.

Don't trust it.

Never.

They always lie.

Yeah.

Listen to Buffy, the rewatcher.

Do it.

She admitted that other than that, she received no information from this specific ghost at that time or entity.

But finally, they got to the fourth entity in the house, which I believe they found in the closet.

And they said, this demon, Lorraine said, was there to, quote, create chaos and destroy the family.

Oh, shit.

Destroy them.

Damn.

Total domination.

Prepare for total domination.

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

Domination.

Domination.

And then do the sparky arm.

Like he's doing the actual dance.

Fantastic.

Bring it on.

Now, once Lorraine had finished presenting her spirit profiles on Bumble, just kidding,

Ed took over the conversation.

He told Jack, it's like I said before, Jack,

I suspect that the demon has been in the house dormant for decades.

But one thing I know is that your girls reaching puberty gave the demon energy.

Ooh, gross.

OK, I don't love that.

I don't even like it.

I don't even.

I actually don't perceive that.

I just don't perceive it.

I don't accept it.

He said, Ed, to Jack, he said, he told them about his belief that adolescents possessed a ton of psychic energy that had the potential to attract and even activate non-human entities leading to all manner of Panera, paranormal phenomena of Panera.

All manner of cheddar broccoli soup.

All manner of a U-pick, too.

Are you getting a cookie on the side, Jack?

Because it's time to end this shit.

He's going to be hungry business.

No, I'm glad you didn't have paranormal phenomena.

There you go.

He told the family, quote, you should get the broccoli cheddar.

You're like a battery.

It draws on for power.

It's a real psychic explosion.

It wants to keep you and your family confused and afraid.

That's why it often appears to only one of you at a time, which is true.

OK.

So based on their initial investigation,

Ed and Lorraine concluded that, in addition

[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

to the three ghosts haunting the house,
a demon had latched onto the smurls
and was drawing energy from the family.
And because it was able to draw this energy from the family,
it was growing more powerful and more aggressive.
And it was wearing on them day after day after day.
Janet remembered, as we listened to the Warrens and Rosemary
talk, I remember feeling a strange combination of relief
and dread.
The dread came from knowing that Ed and Lorraine and Rosemary
were confirming our worst suspicions.
Our house had been taken over by a demon.
A demon.
And the rest you'll have to wait to hear in part two.
But their house had been taken over by a fucking demon, y'all.
It certainly has.
And Panera.
It has.
Yeah, cheddar broccoli soup everywhere.
That's the kind of haunt I'm in for as long as I've
got a lactate.
Seems pretty rad, but a little sticky and smelly eventually.
Smelly.
Oh, maybe we just cracked the code.
It was cheddar broccoli soup.
When did Panera?
Panera.
It's fun to say it like that.
Do you ever say Panera instead of Panera?
I wonder when they opened.
Huh.
That's what we're going to find out.
We'll update you in part two.
Part two will let you know when Panera opened
and if it was their fault.
So yeah.
We hope you keep listening.
And we hope you keep it weird.
But that's a way that you don't get a you pick too after this
because why wouldn't you?
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[Transcript] Morbid / Episode 483: The Alleged Smurl Family Haunting pt 1

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Slash Survey.