



GEF THE TALKING MONGOOSE AND HIS CHILLING REIGN OF TERROR

When a perfectly normal farming family in rural Isle of Mann began hearing noises in their walls, they had no idea that it would turn out to be a naughty spirit who identified himself as Gef the Talking Mongoose.

KNOW IT ALL, GEF THE TALKING MONGOOSE, COMES TO STAY

The year was 1931 and autumn was just setting in. A farming family in Doarlish Cashen on the Isle of Mann were perplexed when one day they started to hear rustling and scratching in the walls of their farmhouse. They assumed it was a rodent infestation, but when they placed traps around the home, nothing was caught. Then the sounds became stranger. Barks, hisses and vocal noises that sounded like a baby crying were also heard.

The farmhouse was occupied by James, his wife Margaret and their 12 year old daughter, Voirrey. They each heard the noises coming from behind the wooden panelling. When no rodents were caught, James growled loudly at the wall, trying to scare whatever it was away. But the thing simply growled back. Shortly after this, the noises turned to strange gurgles that sounded like the creature was trying to speak English.

Gef the talking mongoose finally introduced himself officially to the family and explained that he had been born in Delhi, India in 1852. He told the family he was an "extra extra clever mongoose." In

appearance, Gef was the size of a large rat, with yellow fur and a big, bushy tail.

"I am a freak. I have hands and I have feet, and if you saw me you'd faint, you'd be petrified, mummified, turned into stone or a pillar of salt!" - Gef

GEF THE TALKING MONGOOSE LOVES TO SPILL THE TEA

The Irvings claimed the Gef would disappear for a while and then come back to tell them the local gossip. He was pretty scathing in his appraisal of human beings in general, and relished in scandalous gossip. After collecting many trite and useless tidbits about the lives of the villagers, Gef would always return to the Irvings.

Sometimes, Gef the Talking Mongoose would also read the newspapers aloud to the family. And all from behind his wooden panelling in the walls. After he had exhausted himself, he would retire to his sanctum, which was a small alcove above Voirrey's bed.

It was also said that Gef would guard the Irving's farmhouse, notifying them when people or strange dogs approached the property.

SCAREDY CAT SKEPTIC



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Emily Dewsnap

When the farmhouse became infested with mice, Gef hunted them like a cat. And like a cat, he preferred to play with them, rather than just hunt them.

The family would leave food out for Gef on a saucer that they suspended from the ceiling. Gef would sneakily eat the food when the family wasn't looking. On trips to the town, Gef would follow the Irvings and chatter to them all the way there. Albeit from behind a bush.

GEF IS AN EXTRA EXTRA NAUGHTY MONGOOSE

One day, James saw a huge cat out of the window of the farmhouse. It was orange and striped and resembled neither an English cat or a Manx cat. He loaded his shotgun and followed the cat out into an open field. But then the cat turned a corner and vanished. While James was telling Margaret about this strange encounter, Gef called out from inside the walls: "It was me you saw, Jim."

Rather than feeling like a family pet, Gef became a constant torment to the Irvings. He would often scream and roar from behind the walls. It sounded like a demon shrieking and scared them all.

VOIRREY BEARS THE BRUNT OF GEF'S AFFECTIONS

Here we are again. A young teenage girl in the grip of a paranormal force that's wreaking havoc on a family.

Voirrey was the only Irving to ever see Gef. While James and Margaret only ever heard him, apart from the run in James had had with the striped cat.

Voirrey started sleeping in her parents' bedroom so that she wouldn't be alone with Gef. While the bed was being dismantled to be moved, Gef screamed and shouted at the family, beating his fists on the walls.

"The voice was absolutely full of malice, hatred and spleen, and he was striking the wainscot with his fist with the greatest violence. When the removal had been completed, in a high-pitched voice, fairly trembling with rage, he screamed out 'I'll follow her, wherever you move her'" - James Irving

Eventually, the relationship between Voirrey and Gef calmed down, but he was still around and the bulk of his activity was centred around the young girl.

INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE CLAIMS OF GEF THE TALKING MONGOOSE

BREAKTHROUGH FORENSIC EVIDENCE IN THIS POLTERGEIST CASE

In 1935, James Irving sent off a handful of hair that Gef had left for him. The talking mongoose claimed that he had pulled the fur from his own back. The recipient of this odd package was Harry Price, a paranormal investigator who sent the hair to the Natural History Museum to analysis.

On testing the hair, the museum confirmed that it didn't belong to a ferret, mongoose



or any other small mammal. Instead, he said that the hairs resembled that of a long-haired dog. When Harry later visited the Irvings, he took some samples from their dog. On examining them, he concluded that the hair supposedly from Gef the talking mongoose was, in fact, hair from the Irvings' own sheepdog.

Harry wrote a book about the case called *The Haunting of Cashens Gap*. He refused to comment on the validity of Gef the talking mongoose and never saw him himself. However, he did say that he believed the family must have been involved somehow.

"I agree that the whole family must be mixed up in it but there still remains the question of motive. It certainly is not to draw people to Cashen's Gap, because they do their utmost to keep them away...the motive for the imposture lies much deeper than mere publicity," - Harry Price

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PAW PRINTS OF GEF THE TALKING MONGOOSE

Plaster casts, said to be from Gef's paws, were also sent for analysis, along with a cast of his teeth. The Natural History Museum reported that there was a huge disparity between the front and back paws. The front paws measured 8-10cm, which for a creature only 30cm long is enormous. They also looked suspiciously like a dog's paws, although it was hard to tell from the smudgy casts they'd received.

Gef's hands were said to be much more like human hands than dogs, according to the Irvings, and they were huge. Large enough to bang on the walls of the farmhouse and cause havoc.

The back paws were much more consistent with the supposed size of Gef the talking mongoose. But they didn't resemble the paws of any animal in existence. And when you look at the photograph, they look like badly sculpted gouges in clay. The teeth marks look like human teeth from a small human.



VENTRILOQUISM AND VOIRREY

Many people believed that Voirrey was the cause of the family's haunting. She was accused of ventriloquism. Many sceptics claim that when they heard Gef's voice, it was always coming from her direction. Gef the talking mongoose was also always hiding, even when he spoke. Conveniently he would say he was behind hedges or in the walls.

In 1970, Walter McGraw, a journalist who was fascinated by the case, tracked Voirrey down and convinced her to do an interview. She maintained that Gef the talking mongoose was a very real entity that had haunted her her entire life.

"I was shy... I still am... he made me meet people I didn't want to meet. Then they said I was 'mental' or a ventriloquist. Believe me, if I was that good I would jolly well be making money from it now! Gef was very detrimental to my life. We were snubbed. The other children used to call me 'the spook'. I had to leave the Isle of Man and I hope that no one where I work now ever knows the story. Gef has even kept me from getting married. How could I ever tell a man's family about what happened?" - Voirrey Irving

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE IRVING FAMILY

There was some speculation as to the mental wellbeing of the Irving family. Everyone who visited them said that they seemed to be very genuine and quite frightened of Gef the talking mongoose.

The Irvings had once been a wealthy family. They had lived in Wavertree in Liverpool and John had had a successful piano importing business. Sadly, the business had collapsed and the family had sought out cheaper accommodation. The farm at Doarlish Cashen had been a way for them to start again. However, the building had no electricity. It was exceptionally squalid for the time. There was no telephone on the premises and the only source of entertainment the Irvings had was a gramophone. They were very isolated, their circumstances very different to their old life.

Plunged into poverty, the family was no doubt suffering depression and potentially many other forms of mental illness. One psychologist who went to check out the claims of Gef the talking mongoose diagnosed James with split personality disorder.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO GEF THE TALKING MONGOOSE?

James Irving died in 1945 and Margaret and Voirrey moved back to the mainland. They sold the farmstead to a man called Leslie Graham.

In a very strange turn of events, Leslie said that he had caught a creature in 1947 and couldn't figure out what it was. It was neither ferret, nor stoat, nor weasel. He said that it actually matched the description of Gef the talking mongoose. Not long after this, Leslie left the farmhouse and it was demolished.



SCAREDY CAT'S TAKE

I think this is the daftest hoax yet. But I do think there's a correlation between poverty, teenage girls and poltergeists. I've mentioned before that I could accept some strange sort of energy as an explanation over dead people, but I think this case undermines the lot of them.

People living in poverty feel trapped and unseen. Whether consciously or not, I find the poltergeists in all cases to smack of a cry for help and attention.

You can read more about this kind of haunting in my other blog posts about poltergeists that seem to predominantly haunt poverty-stricken families. Funnily enough, the prologue episode of the podcast.

On talking to Barry Dodds about the house I grew up in, he pointed out that we clearly had a poltergeist. We didn't have much money, we lived in a tumble-down house. I can't say I did anything for attention, but some weird stuff definitely happened that I can't explain. Perhaps subconsciously it was all a cry for help. There was quite a lot of unhappiness bubbling beneath the surface in that house, in one way or another.

Unlike other cases, we never spoke about any of it, the unhappiness or the haunting. And going to the press about anything would have been unheard of. My goddess, I can't even imagine what the fallout would have been from that!

Anyway you can listen to that podcast episode below.

And let us know what you think about Gef the talking mongoose! Have you been to the Isle of Mann? Did you see any talking mon...geese? Mongooses?

