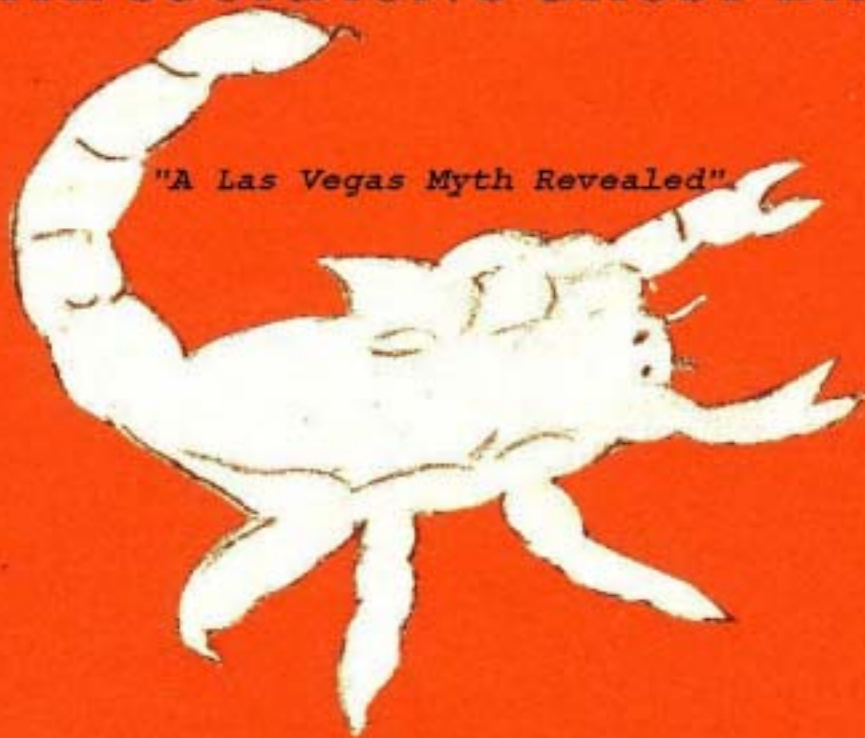


WHITE SCORPION'S GHOST DANCE

"A Las Vegas Myth Revealed"



by
James L. Peters

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Excerpt From Chapter 1

... As he sat and pondered these things, all of a sudden, he heard some blasts in the distance, so he got up from his chair and walked to a nearby window to investigate. He gazed outside and saw his once majestic skyscraper now reduced to a large pile of rubble. Smoke billowed toward the heavens. He assumed the explosions to be caused by pockets of natural gas caught beneath the debris.

"What the hell happened?" he wondered aloud. "Could it have been a bomb? Many bombs? Did we have an earthquake?"

He shook his head and returned to his seat. He was starting to feel responsible, and this burden of weight overwhelmed him. He began to shiver as cold chills ran up and down his spine. He felt queasy as he fought back tears. He stood up and paced the room, searching for a trash can to puke in. He found one under the desk and while he was vomiting, Inspector Chuck Watson entered the room carrying several compact discs.

"My God," exclaimed the Inspector, "are you okay?"

"I feel like dying," answered Nesmith.

"Settle down," ordered the FBI agent. "I've confiscated all the digital surveillance pictures. When you feel better, we're going to sit down and watch them. We have to figure out what happened here."

Watson was a slender man who stood about five-feet-ten and was in his mid fifties. His demeanor was mellow, yet while in his presence one could feel his dominating depth of control. His job was his life, and he claimed that his full scalp of gray hair was a result of many years of dedicated service.

Nesmith sat the trash can on the floor and began pacing the room. Watson reached into a desk drawer, pulled out a prescription bottle, opened it, extracted one green and white capsule and laid it on the desk.

"Are you allergic to anything?" he asked the pacing architect.

"No," was his answer.

"Take this pill," Chuck insisted, "it will calm your nerves."

Nesmith picked the pill off the desk and placed it in the palm of his right hand. He went to the water dispenser, grabbed a paper cup, filled it, placed the pill on his tongue, and with one large gulp consumed it.

"What did I just swallow?" he asked the agent.

"It's a full strength Prozac," said Watson, "now sit back down and give it a chance to kick in."

Robert took his seat while the agent loaded the compact discs into the DVD player. It seemed to take only minutes for the pill to create a mellow feeling throughout his body. His shoulders loosened up and his stomach settled.

Watson spoke, "I haven't been able to get any inside shots, yet. These are films taken by outside surveillance cameras operated by the police department to monitor mischievous activity. I got eight different angles, I should get more, later. The cameras are mounted on light poles and various buildings. That's the beauty thing about Vegas. Everything is on film! Are you ready to watch?"

Bob leaned back in his seat and nodded.

Chuck turned the television on and pressed the DVD button while saying, "At this time, everything we see is confidential. You and I are the only ones who are viewing these movies. Let's watch."

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The initial five minutes of each disc showed no movement, other than people arriving and entering the marvelous structure. Watson continually flipped from one disc to another to get all the angles. The viewpoints showing people entering the building were so far away that identities could not be made.

"Do we have any idea how many people were inside?" asked Nesmith.

Chuck sighed deeply, then answered, "At this point, all we really know is that the hotel was fully booked, and we believe all the guests were checked in."

Nesmith covered his mouth with his left hand and focused his attention back to the TV. Approximately six minutes into each disc it appeared as though all the cameras began to shake. The digital time sign on the screen indicated midnight January 1, 2010. Bob asked Watson to pause for a moment and check all angles. Upon pressing a few buttons on the remote, they observed wobbling from every angle filmed. The inspector stopped the movie.

"What are you thinking?" he asked.

"It looks like an earthquake," claimed Bob.

Watson pulled his cell phone from his jacket pocket and verbally requested the number to the UNLV seismology department. It automatically dialed and once he got someone on the other end, he insisted that all seismograph readings for this period of time be immediately facsimiled to his attention. As he re-started the discs, his fax machine began to reel off the ordered data.

As the DVD played, a series of light flashes could be seen inside the building across the entire first floor. Nesmith requested that Watson stop the DVD and once again replay the time frame from all angles.

"Do you think those could be bombs?" Chuck asked.

"I don't know," answered the architect, "you're the expert. What do you think."

The inspector replayed the video a third time - in slow motion.

"There is no upward surge," he uttered.

"What do you mean?" Bob asked.

The FBI man elaborated, "Normally when a bomb is involved on the first floor or in the basement of a building, the structure itself will surge upward - even though it may be slight - there is a surge. But I'm not sure about a building of this magnitude. The only thing I can compare it to is when the World Trade Center in New York City was bombed. Our surveillance cameras there showed a six inch upward surge in that structure as soon as the explosion occurred, however, the big difference is that your building is four times the size of the World Trade Towers."

"Let's watch it one more time," suggested Nesmith, "and this time run it frame by frame."

They slowly and carefully inspected each exposure and found the opposite of what they were looking for. Instead of a rise, they got a drop. Before commenting further, Watson grabbed the data from his fax machine and quickly perused it for clues.

"There's less than a one per cent variance from 11:55pm to 12:05am," he commented.

"What does that mean?" asked the architect.

"That means there was no earthquake," stated the agent. "Right now I'm baffled. The only surge I see is downward."

"What's causing the flashes on the first floor?" Bob wanted to know.

"Natural gas explosions is my guess," volunteered Watson. "Let's watch the rest of the film and see if we can deduce anything."

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As the building began to crumble, more flashes were present on other floors, and as they watched, their eyes became terror filled by a phenomenon neither could readily explain.

"My God!" exclaimed the FBI inspector. "The damn thing is sinking."

Nesmith could only gaze in awe as his magnificent structure seemed to be sucked floor by floor into the earth. The cameras rattled and the screen shook as each deck disappeared. The various photo angles showed each wing being sucked down evenly, seemingly pulled by the center core.

Their spines shivered as the final twelve decks or so appeared to burst into bits and pieces and scatter across the entire 300 acres of the complex's real estate. The time sign read 12:08a.m., 01/01/2010. Shortly after this, the picture went black and the show came to a halt. This tallest building in the world which had taken nearly eight years to complete, was gone in a matter of eight minutes.

Both men sat speechless, staring at the blank screen. The silence seemed to last an eternity. Nesmith rubbed his forehead with his left hand. Teardrops were beginning to form in the corners of his eyes.

"My wife, my nineteen year old son, and my sixteen year old daughter were in the building," he revealed. "I was running late, so I sent them ahead."

After taking a deep breath, Watson answered, "I'm sorry to hear that. Thank God you weren't there. I'm going to need your help in this investigation."

"What can I do?" he wanted to know.

"You have copies of the blueprints, don't you?" Watson queried.

"They are in my computer," claimed Nesmith.

"I'll need pictures of the various stages of construction, a list of materials used, purchase orders, documentation of inspector's approvals, anything you've got," the agent answered.

"I have all that stuff at home, in my office," he said.

"Good," replied Watson, "and there's one other thing I need."

"What's that?" asked the architect.

Watson sighed, "Your sworn secrecy. That's a direct request from the President of the United States - Harry Sanford. I talked with him earlier and we agreed that until we can figure this thing out, we have no comment. Were you aware that the Vice President was in the building at the time of the catastrophe?"

"I heard it on the television," claimed Nesmith.

"Well, at this point in time, it's a matter of national security," explained Chuck. "Understand?"

"Yes Sir," acknowledged Bob. "What time is it?"

Watson glanced at his wrist watch, "Seven A.M.."

"I'm exhausted," stated Nesmith.

"We don't have time to sleep," replied the agent. "I'm going to arrange for a helicopter to pick you up off this roof and fly you to your home so that you can get all the vital information I need. I want you to bring it back here immediately."

Chuck pulled out his phone and made two quick calls. Then he motioned for Nesmith to follow him to the elevators. He took him to the rooftop where they stood and waited for the chopper's arrival.

"Have you been able to get any information from survivors?" Nesmith asked.

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"Survivors?" Watson looked puzzled. "Here's what we know, Mr. Nesmith. There were, at least, nearly 300,000 people in that building, not only including the Vice President of this country, but many dignitaries from around the world. Half of Hollywood was here, for crying out loud. Reporters from every civilized nation were recording the event. Right now, I've got nearly 300 men divided into twenty-seven groups that have been searching for the past five hours or so. I've requested the National Guard to assist us with the hunt, because to this point we don't have any survivors. We can't find any witnesses. And we haven't yet uncovered one single body."

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