

There Was A Comfort / There Was A Presence

Ina Hunt interviewed by Rachel Hunt

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RACHEL HUNT: Dad had mentioned that you had gone in one night when you were really wee to stay in granny's room- I don't know if you had had a bad dream or something- and granny saw a different version of you kind of on top of you... or have you not heard that story yet?

INA HUNT: No, I hadn't quite heard that story- well...what I did hear was I was going- I was very young, I was only about six or seven- and I was going to Canada with an aunt and my granny. And mommy was very worried about me being so young and travelling like that and just then any problems I might have had travelling with just the other two ladies. And the night before I was due to fly off, I was actually sleeping in her bed with her... because she was able then to get me up 'cause I had to be up really early in the morning. Uhm- and she was very worried about me travelling... And then she kind of turned around to look to see was I sleeping and when she turned around to look she seen her mother... standing over me... looking down. And she thought then at that time. "Well, if my mother is keeping an eye on her and looking over her then she's going to be okay" and she turned back then and went to sleep.

R: So it's almost like a sort of guardian angel thing-

I: Yes... Yes. So, she always believed then that... her mother was MY guardian angel

R: So that's granny hunt then- so my biological great-grandmother.

I: No, this would have been my mommy's biological mother that none of us knew. She died when your granny- my mommy- was only about two coming up three... but she had photographs of her, you know, and she kind of knew what she was like but uhm... we never knew her so I would never have picked her out in a crowd. So, it would have been my mother's biological mother because the granny then that we knew- know today as granny- was actually her stepmum-

R: Yeah, granny Adair

I: Yeah- but she would have been- so she would have been granny Adair as well. Her mother would have been granny Adair as well. Yeah... because it was her father that re-married. So, when her mother died, her father remarried Annie so she became what we knew as granny Adair. Granda was dead, he had died after the war so we never knew him either so we just knew granny Annie Adair.

R: Granny Annie Adair- it's got a nice ring to it.

I: Granny Annie Adair- uh-huh.

R: And she had spooky experiences as well, did she not? Were there not stories of her-

I: I'm not sure of stories of her... Now- your granny, my mommy, would have had... more spooky kind of... things where she would have seen people who had passed or uhm... you know, felt the presence of people who had passed. 'Cause she used to always say, "You never have to fear anything from the dead- it's the living that you have to worry about." So then, a few times- now, I understand but I don't remember, but I understand- she would have said of a couple of times I had maybe mentioned somebody being there or something, but I would have been too young about then to remember any of that. But I do recall... on a couple of occasions, I would have maybe wakened up through the night and would have felt the presence of somebody-

R: That's what Sophie and I apparently had when we were younger-

I: Oh right!

R: - like seeing a shadow at the bottom of the bed or something-

I: It's kind of knowing- feeling... and nearly hearing somebody there. They're not necessarily speaking.

R: I've had... I might have been lying in bed at night and I would have heard, very distinctly, someone say "Rachel"- I've had that before-

I: Oh, I've had that. I have had that. I had- I actually had an experience like that in work. I was in the office on my own- I was always in very early in the morning- and it was a new office I was in, so I would have been in from maybe about sevenish- 'cause I started at half seven. There was no one else on the floor- it was an open office, so there were a couple of different sections all on the one floor- so nobody was in. I was sitting- writing, 'cause I had started early. So, I was sitting- writing, so my head was kind of down- and somebody came up beside me... and spoke my name. And when I turned around, I just thought it was somebody from work, but when I turned around, there was nobody there and the other end of the corridor was still in darkness- it was only my office light that was lit. But I had quite clearly heard them saying my name. And then another time, in the same office- uhm- I... heard the door at the end of the corridor open- and it definitely opened- and I thought "oh right, I'll see who this is" and I turned and waited... and nobody came. I went down to the end of the office, thinking "oh, maybe some of the secretaries have come in and they've gone in and they haven't realised I'm here" and the rest of the place was in darkness and there was nobody there.

R: How would you describe that- what did it sound like to you? 'Cause to me- it wasn't like an eerie whisper, you know, it was like... crisp-

I: No, it was a quiet- no, this was a quiet voice in my ear. I could feel and sense someone there. So, just at my ear, I could nearly feel the breath and the voice just saying, "Ina"- which made me think it was somebody in the office- but there was nobody else there. Now, I didn't hear anybody coming. I didn't- wasn't aware that anybody was coming but suddenly became aware of a presence on the side of me and then this kind of air at the side of my face and "Ina"- but it was a soft "Ina".

R: Oh, that's nice at least!

I: Well, that was nice so it so it wasn't just so scary. When I heard the door opening- there were no feet, there was no nothing. No noise. No voice. The door opened... and was closed. It was opened, purposefully opened, and then closed. But whenever I went down- I waited and nobody came and I went down- only waited like seconds 'cause I thought "oh, it wasn't that far from the door to where I was sitting"- but when I went down- nobody about.

R: Would you view that as more ominous than the voice? Or do you think that's, you know-

I: I just sort of thought-

R: You just thought it was weird, you just shrugged it off-

I: I just thought "Hm- that was strange" and then never bothered.

R: I mean, I've been in the shower before and like- the door handle has gone and I was like "Oh right, it's someone trying to get in" so I was like "Hello?" and then I went around the house- and there were only maybe two other people in the house and they were like "No, it wasn't me". They were in their own rooms. Obviously, you know, that could've been someone coming in and joking- but, you know-

I: No, I had a shower experience on a caravan site-

R: Oh?

I: Yes.

R: See, I don't think I've ever had it- I've only ever had it at home, I think. I don't get experiences very often- I think it was more when I was really wee.

I: No, I have had a couple- when I was- going back- right, the caravan experience- I was on a site, it was in England- so there was nobody there that knew me- and I was in- it wasn't in a shower block- the way they had it done it was like a separate wee bathroom. Uhm- and it had a shower and a toilet and a basin. So- and they were individual like that- and I was in the shower. While I was in the shower, obviously you're kind of- you're facing the shower appliance and the door and that is behind you- but I felt and heard somebody walking past me and I felt them brush past me. I turned around- and there was nobody there and there was nothing there- and I looked around the wee bathroom thing and there was nothing there. But when I turned the shower off and got out of the shower to get dried- I got out

and stood on a wee mat. And there was lady's footprints coming across from the door up to the shower. Now, they weren't my footprints- I knew that because I was wearing flipflops to be in the shower-

R: and they were bare footprints?

I: They were bare foot. I knew they were ladies because they were small- you know, they were a small foot. Now that was very strange but of course whenever I'd gone back to the caravan, I sort of said to William, "Oh, goodness me, there was somebody in the shower today" and he was like "huh?". One of the- one of the first sort of memories of it I had was- I was in bed and... I was asleep... and I could feel- I kind of was wakened by someone tucking in-

R: That's what happened with Sophie recently!

I: -tucking in my bed. Now this would have been a few years ago- tucking in my bed. I was lying and I could feel the bed clothes...tightening around me. I could feel like the bed- and I thought, you know- I didn't turn to look. It sort of felt kind of strange- but I put, 'cause I was lying on my side, I put my hand out and around behind me and I felt a lady's long, rough skirt. My arm- I felt the two legs against the arm. And that kind of- I thought "Oh my goodness"- now I couldn't see anybody or anything and your granny had said to me, "Oh that's probably your granny- just keeping an eye on you and tucking you in and making sure you're okay."

R: Yeah, that's what Sophie was saying- well, I haven't talked to Sophie about it yet but she kind of briefly mentioned it at dinner. She was saying how- yeah, my mum was like "oh you've got your visitors" and then my dad said "did they tuck you in?" and Sophie was like "yeah!"

I: It was like being tucked in-

R: Yeah, or did you feel them sitting on the bed or something like that?

I: Leaning against the bed which meant that if they were leaning over the bed- I could feel the pressure of them on me and I could feel the tightness of the bed clothes. And when I put my arm out... then that's whenever I felt the legs. And it was very clearly, with my hand, a skirt. A rough, gathered skirt. And the legs.

R: That's mad, isn't it?

I: Yeah- but, strangely enough, I didn't feel...afraid. I wasn't afraid of it. There was one night in our last house and I was in the bedroom. I had opened the wardrobe door and I was getting something out of the wardrobe and a man walked around the back of me and across the bedroom, over to the far corner. Now I don't know where he went... but it was a dark suited man. William came in then to get something out of his wardrobe and I just calmly was getting stuff out of the wardrobe and I went "oh there was a man in here- he's just walked

across the room” and William went “Don’t be telling me now at this time- I’ll be going to bed soon and I don’t want to hear that!” But again, it didn’t bother me.

R: Could you tell anything from his face or anything-

I: No-

R: You couldn’t see it- you just saw like a shadow?

I: I just seen the shadow-uhm-

R: It wasn’t like- how could you tell it was a man then?

I: Because it was a suit-

R: it was a suit then?

I: It was a suit. They went past- it was just the walk of a man, you know, a kind of-

R: Did it have an old feel to it then? Did it feel kind of... Victorian or something?

I: No, it just felt like-

R: Just felt like normal- like any man-

I: A man. Any man walking past, and I knew- I seen the shadow of it so that whenever I was actually looking in the wardrobe to lift stuff out, I seen his shadow... kind of coming around in front of the lamp.

R: Oh right-

I: So, whenever I turned, he was walking across and went up to the corner of the room.

R: I mean, I’ve had- am I the only one- I don’t really- maybe I don’t remember them. I don’t really remember anything from when I was wee but, you know, it was always, mum said, “oh you saw things at the end of your bed” and stuff like that. I’d go into her and be like “oh, there’s someone in my room!” and all this. I haven’t- I don’t think I’ve had anything like that but I do- when I go to bed now, I kind of cocoon myself. So, I mean, there’s no chance of me seeing anything! But one night- I think I was the last one awake, everyone else had gone to bed and they had turned all the lights off of course- so, I was in the bathroom and I came out and I turned the bathroom light off and I very clearly felt a hand. Now, I would say it was a man’s hand- it didn’t feel small and dainty, but it was a hand anyway- kind of grip my shoulder. I don’t know how- I wouldn’t say- it wasn’t, you know, a comfort grip but it wasn’t a scary grip, it was just a ‘place the hand on the shoulder’. So, I just sprinted into my room like “No, I’m not having that, not today”

I: No, strangely enough, any of those that I had didn’t- I wasn’t afraid of any of them-

R: Maybe that's why you have had more experiences then because you're not feeling fearful of it. Whereas Sophie and I probably- I mean you're used to it now, you've had plenty of experiences- but Sophie and I haven't really so maybe that's what it is. There's a tiny bit of fear in both of us but you're now just kind of-

I: No, I never... I don't recall being afraid of any. Now, I was a bit uncomfortable in the shower on the caravan site because I thought, you know, I don't know anybody here so obviously if this is somebody belonging- you know, on site- uhm- you know maybe the way everybody has a 'White Lady'-uhm- but none of the other ones I've ever been afraid of. I know they say that dogs and animals don't have spirits and don't have souls. But I had an experience in the caravan one night- now it was after the dog was dead-

R: Beauty?

I: Yeah, Beauty. She was dead a number of years and we were in the caravan. I felt her jumping up onto the bed and nuzzling up between me and the edge of the bed and just squeezing herself in and wiggling about to get in and be comfortable and put her head on the pillow. I could feel her down my back. And it was really-

R: That would have been nice then-

I: It was nice- it upset me because it was my dog- uhm- and I was upset about her- not afraid of her but I was upset about her, but I don't know- I sort of thought well maybe it couldn't have been 'cause people say dogs-

R: I've had times when I've been sitting in a room and I've been convinced I've seen a cat walk past- normally a cat, I suppose because we've had a number of cats. Just like the tail end of a cat going past, then I'd go out into the hall and they're nowhere to be found or they're sitting outside. My friend was saying today about an experience her mum had about a cat. Her mum was home alone and all the windows were closed, all the doors were closed and she felt a cat jump up on the bed and kind of come up and I think it put its paw on her face or something- I'm not sure- and sort of give her a sniff and then left again.

I: I wouldn't have liked that 'cause I'm afraid of cats!

R: So yeah, I don't know. I think it's a bit strange that I don't really remember any of those experiences I had but I've definitely been in bed at night or something and I've been like oh it feels, you know, like there's someone there-

I: Yes, there's somebody there.

R: I think I've had that with granny before... where I've just been sitting and I don't see anything but I just feel something and it feels familiar and it feels kind of- I don't want to say it feels like granny but you know what I mean? It kind of- something about it reminds me-

I: It's somebody you know and something that has a bit of comfort but has a... memory of something she did while you were with her

R: Yeah- maybe, I don't even know really, it was just kind of a feeling that... she was there and that someone was there.

I: The last one I had which- I don't know whether you could put it down as being a spooky happening or not but it was when I was in hospital there... in January... and it was, uhm... it was quite a bad place, quite a bad time and I wasn't well and all sorts of things had gone wrong and there was all sorts of equipment and stuff. I- the hospital room that I was staying in was BALTIC, absolutely freezing, and every time a doctor or a nurse came in, they would have said to me "Are you not cold in here? This is freezing!" and I had on like two t-shirts and a fleece it was so cold in the ward- the wee, you know, side ward. But I think the whole corridor, just the whole section was very cold and of course nobody's allowed in with you or anything so- uhm... I was... pretty low and...uhm... I suddenly was... I became aware of nurses or doctors or something, I think it was the nurses, trying to waken me up and they couldn't waken me up. Suddenly then, I was in a beautiful, warm, bright... not the room... it was like a really bright light, a really bright sunshine and it was the most comfortable... beautiful heat and feeling and I was sort of "no, I don't want to waken up, I don't want to come back from this" and... I was aware of them moving me and, you know, and pulling and I sort of thought "no...no...no" and I kind of rolled slightly to the bed and whenever I had kind of turned and opened my eyes- still bright, it was still warm and so comfortable and lovely and the bed felt soft and everything was really lovely and my mommy...walked in to the... room... and she looked...lovely and her hair shone white and she just looked all lovely and she wore a beautiful blue- beautiful colour of blue gown... and she came over and she broke in through the nurses that were trying to... waken me. Uhm- and she broke in through and started tucking my bed in and she walked up the side of the bed and kind of rubbed down my arm and looked over and smiled and I smiled and went..."mommy"....and she just smiled... and she backed out to go out of the room and then just looked and smiled again and went out and I thought... "oh it must be alright then, maybe I'll just... waken up." I woke up or came to or came out of whatever...uhm... situation I was in... and the room was baltic. And it was dark and they were pulling and calling my name and it was just...and I remembered sort of thinking..."why did they waken me up?" you know, "could you not have just left me there, it was lovely". So, I don't know whether that's a sort of spooky story or a down in the depths of illness story... and I think that was the most recent. Uhm- haven't had anything since, I don't think. Haven't had the lady with the skirt again.

R: Was that when you were really wee then?

I: No no. No, that would have been- uhm- well it could have been within- I would say maybe within the last... ten years... ten, twelve years- relatively recent but I wasn't a nipper.

R: Was it just that one time or was it a couple of time?

I: No, I think I was aware of her... being with me at times but I never... touched anything, I never- I just was aware- like you were saying earlier on, you know there was a presence, there was a comfort to it, so there was no reason to get... panicky or anything. No, I can't

think of any other particularly outstanding ones that I'm clear of- that I've seen something or I've touched something or-

R: Was there not something about a soldier? I thought dad had mentioned you were up at the caravan or something?

I: Now I think somebody belonging to William had an experience of a soldier. Somebody on the yard wall-

R: Ah- that's what it was! He mentioned that the other day- I must have forgotten already! Do you have any funny ones? Are there any that you remember that were- that just kind of made you laugh?

I: You see, that would be the way, any of the presences that I had- it was just kind of "Oh!... it's no big deal." I mean, the time whenever the man had come across the room, I just sort of turned, seen, you know, the shadow coming across the lamp which obviously dulled the lamp ever so slightly and then whenever I turned, I seen him... disappearing. But I just carried on, thought "Huh. Wonder who that was." And then William came in, went "Oh there was a man came across here just in behind me" –

R: It was the nonchalant-ness of it all-

I: Yeah! But obviously it worried him more.

R: "My wife's seeing things!"

I: Yeah!

R: I don't think I have anymore that I have to say- there's that one that you and my dad saw when you were really young. You said that it was near a park or something and talking about it being like a UFO or something!

I: Oh yeah! I don't know whether- would that be spooky? We were walking down- now we were young then, even I was in primary school then- and it's where, you know, it was where granny lived. We were walking down- because then I would have walked the three boys down the road and then the four of us got the bus around to school. But whenever we got to the bottom of the road, it was a lovely day, really bright and just up in the sky, above the trees and over... not a million miles away- of course space, light years it could have been anything- but it just looked like a glowing egg shape and it just seemed to just move along- no idea what it was. And we used to always think "Oh I wonder what that was- was that a UFO?" Of course, then we told everybody "Oh there was a UFO in the sky!"

R: So, was that all four of you? Or-

I: Well, I assume, from what I remember, we'd all seen this thing so I don't know that it would have been – I wouldn't have related that or put that in the same sort of category as any of those other feelings or presences that I would have felt. I don't think I can think of

anything... just sometimes it would just sort of- I would get a feeling if something seriously bad is going to happen...Now that's not a nice feeling.

R: I think I have had that a few times

I: Yeah... I... I don't like that now...

R: Now whether it- it hasn't always then followed through but sometimes I do get that kind of... "Oh that's not a good feeling"- you know- it's a feeling of something bad is going to happen but then that thing that's bad doesn't necessarily happen

I: You don't necessarily- you don't know at the time- "I don't know what it is but there is something wrong somewhere"-

R: Yeah, or something is going to be wrong but you don't know when

I: Mhm

R: Yeah. I've had that a few times and it's not nice.

I: No, it's not nice, it's not nice. 'Cause sometimes- it used to have been that I wouldn't have said to anybody "Oh I've got this awful, horrible feeling" but then I knew myself that maybe a couple of days or maybe the following week, you know we got news about somebody or... bad news about somebody or... something happened to someone or they became ill or- uhm- and I would never have said but...now if I get it, now I haven't had one of those in a while which is probably a good thing, I would now sometimes get the feeling, I would sit with it for a while and then I'll get so uncomfortable I'll then actually say then "Flip, William there's something wrong somewhere"... and low and behold some- sometimes it'll involve me or just sometimes then we'll get a phone call or I'll be speaking to somebody maybe the following week and, you know, "Oh wait 'til you hear what happened" and you know it's just sort of "Oh flip, I wonder should I have said to somebody... there's something-"

R: But you can't really-

I: No, you can't because you don't know what it is and it's just a feeling and other people will go "Oh aye right"-

[PHONE RINGS]

[END OF INTERVIEW]