

Welcome to Horrorworld (Interview with PS Gifford)

Contributed by Astrid Cooper
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Welcome to Horrorworld The life and works of author ps gifford

PS Gifford has shared the Preditors and Editors readers' poll, 2007 for "best author"; Congratulations to you Paul! He joins Astrid at The Specusphere to discuss his work and books; Competition:

One lucky reader can win a signed copy of the book (and other goodies). Read on for details.

ASTRID: Paul, you were born in Birmingham, England and your bio says that from the age of nine you had begun to write your own stories. What type of stories and what compelled you to write your own? Was it a lack of stories that you wanted to read, isolation or…? PAUL:

The stories that I penned at age nine were more fantasy themed by nature heavily inspired by my favourite children's author, Enid Blyton. However, by the age of 11, even my choice of reading fodder had dramatically shifted to mainly horror, and what I was writing followed suit. I have always held a fascination for the dark side of human nature, and writing about it feels the most comfortable thing in the world to me. I came from the clichéd broken home and I suppose, in hindsight, that I channelled a lot of my frustration and anger into those early stories. I will say that some of my writing got me into a little controversy at school. I submitted a horror story for a writing exercise, and whereas my teacher said that he did enjoy it, he felt the subject matter mutilation by kitchen appliances was not appropriate for a twelve year old.

ASTRID: You told me that for over 15 years you had to put writing aside to focus on other things. What made you return to writing? PAUL: I spent fifteen gruelling years in the restaurant business and for the most part I thoroughly enjoyed the fast-paced work environment. However, it required both long and unsociable hours. I typically worked evenings, weekends and holidays. After I became a husband and then a father I decided that it was no longer the right lifestyle for me and that I wanted to spend more time with my family. So, one night, on an impulse, I simply quit my job and went on a camping trip with my wife to the mountains. That dream of being a writer was soon rekindled and after much heated discussion with my better half, it was decided that I would become a stay-at-home-dad/writer. That was about the best decision I have ever made and none of us ever looked back.

ASTRID: What are your other published works? Do you consider yourself primarily a "horror writer"; or do you cross-genre? PAUL: I am currently working on a follow up to "The Curious accounts of the Imaginary Friend," aptly titled, "The Further Accounts of the Imaginary Friend." In addition a six book series of young adult book are also in the works, "Dr. Offig's lessons from the Dark Side Volumes one - six." I also have a couple of big surprises up my proverbial sleeve, but I can not presently divulge any further information until all the contracts have been signed. But I might suggest keeping an eye on my website as it appears 2008 is going to be a stellar year.

ASTRID: You edit and produce a print magazine called Glutonlumps Chilling Tales. What prompted you to produce our own zine? Tell the readers about the publication. PAUL: "Glutonlumps Chilling Tales," is heavily influenced by the style of horror prevalent in the 1940s and 1950s; a style utilising heavy atmosphere and clever plotlines to maximum effect. In my opinion what is implied is often far more terrifying than what is actually revealed. I feel that way, also, about the classic horror movies of that era, where all you see is an ominous figure in the shadows, or maybe just a monster's furry claw… the viewer's imagination fills in the rest of the details to far better effect. These days too much of the horror genre relies on simple shock and gore tactics, and has lost most of its magic. The magazine is available in the USA at selected book/comic stores and has distribution via mail order out of NZ, UK and the USA. Details can be obtained from my website: <http://www.freewebs.com/chillingtales/>

ASTRID: What type of stories inspire you? PAUL: Solid character driven storylines about convincing everyday people, utilising plots that are plausible and that the reader can relate to. I read a variety of genres, but confess that late in the evening I am usually lost in a good horror novel. My favourite author is Robert Bloch who is best known for writing the novel psycho which Alfred Hitchcock based his classic movie on. He was a true master of psychological horror.

ASTRID: You're scheduled to appear at several conventions this year. Which ones and what are you booked to do at each? If you have the links, please supply. PAUL:

I have several on the calendar tentatively scheduled. The one I am most looking forward to be is the Hypericon fantasy convention in Nashville Tennessee. The incredibly talented Joe R. Lansdale is this year's guest of honour. I hope that some of you reading this come down and say hello to me.

<http://www.hypericon.info/> ASTRID: As a writer, too, I am fascinated how others create plots and characters. Would you care to divulge how you go about creating your stories? PAUL: Inspiration strikes at the most peculiar times. Most of my characters, and indeed storylines, are based on true life experiences. I typically take an average Joe, in a common day occurrence and throw in the what if factor… Then I write a rough plot outline down. Followed by the clichéd beginning middle and end, and then fill in the spaces. I also jot down a complete description of what my main protagonist looks/behaves like to the tiniest detail. These details aren't always apparent in the

actual finished story, but makes the telling of it ring a lot truer. Quite often the ending I originally devised is abandoned as the characters take on a life and will of their own. I sometimes consider that I do not in reality write, but that in some bizarre way I am actually channelling the very characters that I have created.

ASTRID: What is your daily writing routine?

PAUL: I attempt to write between 3-5,000 words Monday through Friday; some days more and others significantly less. I spend the early part of my day consuming a pot of strong coffee and responding to correspondence. And then I typically write straight through until late afternoon. Weekends are strictly family time although I usually jot down a few notions that sprout up in my imagination for future reference.

ASTRID: Is there anything else you would care to tell The Specusphere readers about yourself, your books or the craft of writing?

PAUL:

I think the biggest mistake any writer aspiring or otherwise can make is to stop listening to that unique voice inside your head. Whatever you write some folks are going to love, others will despise, and the vast majority will be indifferent. Stay true to yourself, and never try to write something just because you think it will sell or something that you think others expect you to write.

Also do not get disheartened by rejection slips, use them as motivation to make that sale. Remember there is virtually no best selling author who did not acquire a neat pile of rejections before their big break came.

I am truly living the all-American dream here in California, but a lot of sweat, focus and hard work went into making it so. In life there are no easy shortcuts.

Book Preview

Title: The Curious Accounts of the Imaginary Friend

Author: P.S. Gifford

Format: Trade paperback anthology (mainly horror-themed). 234 pages

Publisher: Virtual Tales www.virtualtales.com

ISBN: 978-0-9782550-5-3 (printed version) \$14-95: available through www.amazon.com

ISBN: 10:1897442025 (electronic version) \$6.50 approx.: through mobipocket.com and fictionwise.com

Author website: www.psgifford.com

The Curious Accounts of the Imaginary friend.

Who Am I? Well, I am the Imaginary Friend. You know-the one you conjure up for conversation when you're consumed with loneliness, greed or visions of imminent doom. I have listened to thousands of stories and it would be a shame if they just stayed with me, never to be heard again. I have chosen to share only the ones I found to be particularly... curious. Have you ever been troubled by nightmares? Were you relieved when you woke up? No matter. Are you sure you can tell the difference between the nightmare and the waking state? Think it through before giving me your answer. Sometimes only an imaginary friend can truly listen to your deepest troubles and most distressing woes. Wouldn't you agree?

"A cross between Edgar Allan Poe and Stephen King."

— Lawrence Dagstine, *The Literary Bone*

Competition:

One lucky reader can win a signed copy of the book (and other goodies) by simply emailing the author at: paul@psgifford.com and on 1st April a name will be drawn from the hat. Simple!