

The Columbus Poltergeist Case: Part I

Flying phones, photos, and fakery

James Randi

MARCH 1984 CAME in like a lion at the home of John and Joan Resch in the North Side district of Columbus, Ohio. Reporters who were called in to witness the evidence found broken glass, dented and overturned furniture, smashed picture frames, and a household in general disarray. The focus of all this activity seemed to be 14-year-old Tina, an adopted child who had shared the Resch home with some 250 foster children who came and went over the years.

Tina, a hyperactive and emotionally disturbed girl who had been taken out of school and was being privately tutored through the Franklin County Children's Services (FCCS), was interviewed by every media outlet who could get near the two-story frame house where these poltergeist activities were claimed to be taking place. Every day the street outside was jammed with vans and cars stuffed with television crews, reporters, and photographers who joyously tumbled over one another in their enthusiasm for what had become a circus.

Mike Harden, a reporter for the *Columbus Dispatch*, was the first on the scene. He had written an article on the Resch family some five months before, praising their work with foster children. He was aware that Tina was trying to trace her true parents—against the wishes of Mr. and Mrs. Resch, who felt it was not a good idea. One of their other adopted children had found his parents, and it did not turn out very well. In view of his previous encounter with the Resches, Harden considered himself a friend of the family.

During that first big press conference at the Resch home, more than forty persons were jammed into a 20' × 20' room. Participants described it to me as “rude” and “typically media.” Comments from reporters we interviewed were:

“We didn't listen to what each of us was saying. We just jumped in.”

James Randi, magician and lecturer, has been investigating psychic claims for more than 30 years. He is a founding Fellow of CSICOP and the author of Flim-Flam, The Truth About Uri Geller, and other books.

There was “no development of questions.”

“We tried to find the truth. We’re obviously not equipped to do it.”

“It would have been much more comfortable with two teams—our three.”

“It was a complete free-for-all.”

“We were on her like flies on flypaper.”

“Our attention was constantly diverted. When a reporter knocked something over by accident and took the blame for it, there was general disappointment.”

Although the older Resches denied any prior belief in supernatural matters, they soon agreed that such goings-on probably resulted from a “poltergeist.” This translates as, “noisy spirit,” though some of the slightly less naive parapsychologists tend to ascribe these events to psychokinesis (PK) rather than ghosts. Since the record of past cases indicates that when these destructive phenomena take place very frequently an unhappy adolescent is in the vicinity and they cease when the youngster is recognized and satisfied, explanations other than supernatural ones immediately suggest themselves.

On March 5, photographer Fred Shannon, a 30-year veteran on the *Dispatch* staff, accompanied reporter Mike Harden to the Resch house to try to catch the elusive poltergeist events on film. By his own admission, Shannon was “afraid” of what might happen and was fully primed by Harden to witness miracles. During the first three hours of his visit, he took a remarkable series of photographs, but the actual story of how he and the public were apparently bamboozled by an adolescent girl is far more remarkable.

I have long believed that the major difference between the skeptic and the parapsychologist is one of expectation. The former does not believe that validation of paranormal claims is imminent; the latter depends upon that event for justification. Also, the skeptic will invoke parsimony—the simplest explanation consistent with the facts—where the parapsychologist eschews it. Personally, I find it much more reasonable, when objects fly about the room in the vicinity of an unhappy 14-year-old, to suspect poor reporting and observation rather than a repeal of the basic laws of physics.

It is true that the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP) was not invited to Columbus by the young lady at the center of these pranks, nor by her adoptive parents. But a call went out through the *Dispatch* for anyone who could help explain the phenomena. At that point, CSICOP chairman Paul Kurtz contacted me and asked if I would join Case Western Reserve astronomers Steve Shore and Nick Sanduleak in Columbus to look into the case. I arrived on March 13 and was met by a mob of generally hostile reporters at the airport. The official CSICOP statement released to them at the interview expressed the hope that we would be admitted to the Resch home to look

into the events first-hand.

When I arrived in Columbus via Chattanooga, Tennessee, where I had been lecturing, and was joined there by the other two CSICOP investigators, I had no guarantee from the Resch family that we would be allowed to actually investigate anything. Upon reaching the house, Steve Shore asked Tina's parents whether we would be welcome. Mrs. Resch—as was her right, of course—said that the two astronomers could enter but not the “magician.” She said it would be “sensationalizing” the matter to allow me access to the site. I did not see how she could honestly say that in view of the commotion brought about by the great number of press conferences and interviews that had taken place in the house. On one of those occasions there were, by actual count, more than 40 reporters, cameramen, and others rampaging about. The Resch case had become a major—though transitory—media event, featured all over the world.

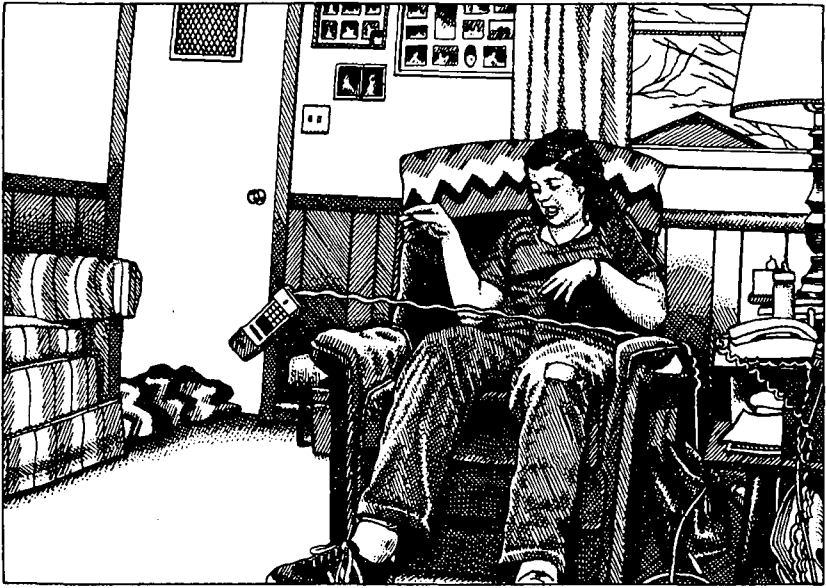
But when we arrived the Resch home was already occupied by two investigators from the Psychical Research Foundation of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. William Roll and Kelly Powers had been enthusiastically welcomed to the house, and they had been living with the family for several days. Roll is the author of *The Poltergeist*, which J. B. Rhine referred to as “a book on . . . what to do with a poltergeist until the parapsychologist comes.”

When asked why I had been refused admittance to witness the events—and we specified that we wanted to go in *after* Roll and Powers, so as not to interfere with them—Mrs. Resch told reporters that Roll had insisted that I not be admitted. Roll denied this, saying that it was her ruling, not his. Later Mrs. Resch said, “We have a circus going already, and I don't need a magic show as well.”

Roll said he would have let me in “if the conditions had been completely up to me, and if there had been no problem about the health situation.” He was referring to Mr. Resch's recently elevated blood pressure. But reporter Dave Yost of the *Columbus Citizen-Journal* told us that Roll had told him that he simply “didn't want Randi in there.”

Following the departure of Roll and Powers, the Resch family told us they were leaving on a long vacation and would not be available for an interview with us. However, we discovered that they were still in their house two weeks after that announcement.

Because of the inaccessibility of the Resch home, the evidence we gathered centered around the film that was shot by photographer Shannon. One photo printed from the roll of 36 negatives (frame number 25) was published around the world as part of an Associated Press release. I had first become aware of the case from seeing the AP story in a Chattanooga newspaper. As a result of that one photo and its caption, much of the reading public now apparently believes that it represents a genuine example of either psychokinesis or spirit possession. This photo shows a telephone



Frame 25. This is an artist's rendition of the widely published photo sold by the *Columbus Dispatch* to Associated Press.

suspended in mid-air in front of Tina Resch while she cowers in fright. We called it "Attack of the Flying Killer Telephones" since the accompanying text said that the child was being assaulted regularly by these objects. The photo clearly shows that two telephones had been placed on the table at Tina's left side and that the handset of one of them is in motion in front of her. The cord is stretched out horizontally and shows transverse blurring.

Although it apparently had not occurred to any other investigators—including the parapsychologists—we asked to see the other 35 photos on that roll of film. We discovered seven flying telephones in all, and when the photographer admitted he had not been looking at the subject when taking the photographs, there was little mystery left.

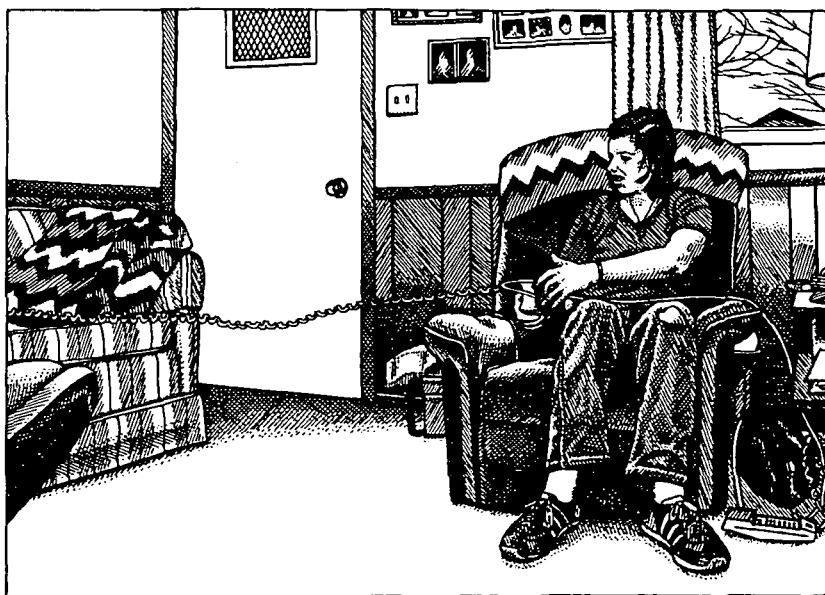
Shannon had found that holding the camera to his eye and waiting for an event to occur was useless. It always seemed to happen just after he had relaxed and looked away. He referred to "The Force" when he spoke of the phenomenon. "It was tricky, and I would have to be tricky if I were to capture it on film. I decided I would outfox the force," he said. While Tina sat in a soft chair with two telephones within easy reach, Shannon looked away. When he saw a movement from the corner of his eye, he pressed the shutter. One result was the photo of Tina used by AP.

Now these photos were taken at $1/125$ th of a second, using a strobe flash. Shannon used a wide-angle lens, of 24 mm focal length, which subtends an angle of 84 degrees. Further evidence of the wide-angle lens is seen in the distortion of objects and persons at the margins of each frame.

(For comparison, a “normal” lens of 50 mm focal length covers only 45 degrees.) Thus the cameraman would have to be much closer to the subject than might be supposed from the wide area shown by each photograph. If Shannon was, as he has said, “turned away” from the subject, and yet seated as close as he apparently was, he could have had no appreciable perception of whatever action really took place.

None of Shannon’s photos were taken in rapid succession, since the strobe flash (a Vivitar) would not have recycled in time. Only one of them, number 25, was published worldwide. Recall that this classic photograph shows transverse movement of the telephone cord. The others do not. In one of the other flying-phone photos, frame number 30, it can be seen that this blurring took place along the length of the cord. Any blurring shown in the photos was a result of the film registering ambient room light (from the nearby window) since the strobe flash lasts about one-thousandth of a second, freezing almost any rapid action. The conclusion is obvious: Frame 25 shows that movement of the telephone was caused in a different fashion than was the movement in frames 24, 30, 31 and 32—those in which telephones are actually frozen in flight. (Two others record the scene after the phone had fallen to the floor.)

What is different about the flying telephone in frame 25? Well, examination of frame 24, immediately preceding the photo published by the *Dispatch* and the AP, shows a strange situation. The phone cord is seen here already stretched out in front of Tina Resch, spanning the arms of

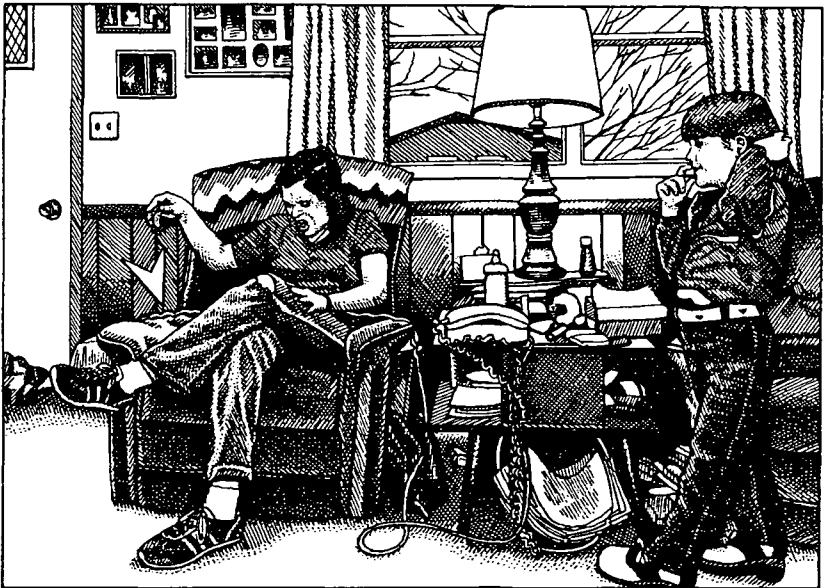


Frame 31. Tina appears to have been *holding* the phone base, and has *thrown* the handset out of frame. Note the foot of an (un-named) observer at the left margin.

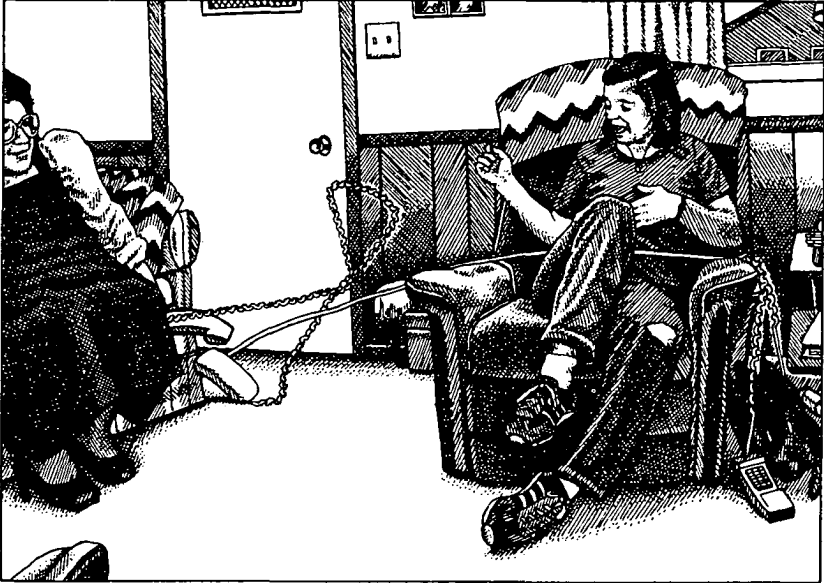
the chair in which she is sitting, stationary, with the attached handset out of sight at her right, hanging down behind the side of the chair. Tina, typically, has her mouth open in a scream. (And there is a little girl—Miss “X”—standing and watching on the right. She was an eyewitness to this event and shows up in five other frames as well. We’ll refer to her later.)

Simply by grabbing the phone cord at a spot near her right hand and yanking it hard, Tina could have caused the phone to fly up into exactly the position shown in the published photo, number 25. (We were able, at NBC-TV, to replicate this effect easily.) But looking at the other flying telephones that are revealed on the roll of film, we see longitudinal blurring, which indicates that Tina probably simply threw the telephone from camera right to camera left. In photo 12, Miss “X” is looking at the camera as if wondering whether that throw was convincing.

In photo 29, both telephones appear to have been in motion. Surely, it could be objected, if Tina simply tossed these phones around, she could not have tossed both of them without being caught at it! She surely would have been seen holding the phones, preparatory to throwing them when the “witnesses” were relaxed and looking away. A possible answer to this objection can be found when we examine frame 28, which shows Tina had a great deal of latitude in handling the equipment. She is freely holding the telephone apparatus in her hand while in animated conversation. It is evident that she, like other “psychics,” is running the show her way, regard-



Frame 24. By grasping the cord at the arrow, Tina could cause the phone to fly up into the position shown in frame 25.



Frame 32. The major witness watches as the phone "flies" at her. Again, note the foot of the other observer of this miracle.

less of any requirements of security or control.

Frames 13, 22, and 28 show Tina similarly occupied, with the ubiquitous and mysterious Miss "X" once more present. During this entire photo session, it seems that an atmosphere of rather loose gaiety prevailed, but we are told that that's the only way these things are expected to take place. Reporter Harden shows up in four frames, numbers 14, 21, 22, and 23. He is, in every case, either obediently not watching Tina, so as not to inhibit her performance, or paging through a phone book:

But there is another frame, number 32, in which a new witness appears at the left edge of the photo during a flying-phone event. We asked the *Dispatch* to identify this woman, but got no help at all. Finally, through a reporter in Cincinnati, we learned that she was Lee Arnold, Tina's caseworker. We contacted Ms. Arnold by phone, and she told us that she had been instructed by her employers, Franklin County Children's Services, that if she gave any information about her witnessing the events she would be in danger of losing her job. She told us nothing.

And what of that other frequent witness, little Miss "X"? She remains a mystery. Obviously, she could reveal a great deal about Tina's actions during the time those photographs were being taken. But try as we may, no one will inform us how we may contact her. That is most unfortunate, since her testimony might reveal very interesting data.

It is the last of the flying telephones on Fred Shannon's film that

really asks a great deal of our patience. It shows Tina Resch seated in the chair, her pointing left hand extended to her right across her body. The telephone cord is horizontally stretched out and the telephone handset is so far away as to be out of the frame altogether. Tina is in a stance suggestive of a major-league baseball player completing a throw to first base. Now, with the simple principle of parsimony in mind, we must ask ourselves if we will choose to believe that this is a photograph of a girl being affected by poltergeist activities or a photograph of a girl simply pitching a telephone across the room.

As I have said, the Resch household was inundated by the media. And, as luck would have it, Tina was caught cheating by them—though not by the parapsychologists who were the officially sanctioned investigators. On the only occasion that she believed she was not being observed electronically while television equipment was present, she was caught red-handed—twice—as can be seen in a news tape obtained accidentally by WTVN-TV, Channel 6 (ABC), Cincinnati. It happened at the end of a long press visit on March 8. The TV crew was packing up their equipment, but had left a camera aimed at Tina. Seated at one end of the sofa, near an end-table, and believing the camera was no longer active, she watched carefully until she was unobserved, then reached up and pulled a table-lamp toward herself, simultaneously jumping away, letting out a series of bleating noises, and feigning, quite effectively, a reaction of stark terror. It matched other performances quite well. The lamp, on the first try, did not fall. Encouraged by the reaction, the girl then repeated the performance. This time, the lamp toppled to the floor. The TV crew hurried away to process their videotape for the next news broadcast, unaware that Tina's cheating had been recorded.

Discovering the imposture, WTVN-TV broadcast the tape, asking their viewers to make up their own minds about the event. Tina, confronted with the evidence after the broadcast, said coyly, and with much squirming about, that she was “only fooling” and did it because she wanted to get rid of the TV cameraman.

We may never see the rest of the TV tape as it was originally shown to the CSICOP team by WTVN-TV in their remote unit before it was edited. I pointed out to the TV crew at that time certain notable aspects of that tape and asked if I might have a complete copy of it. A copy was delivered to me, but I found that it consisted of only the portion that had been edited down for broadcast. When I asked about this I was told that I could not have the remainder, and when I reminded them of their promise to me they suddenly discovered that they had erased it—in error.

The missing portion of the videotape showed Tina Resch carefully and obviously setting up the trick. She edged around the sofa, glancing about her to be sure she was not being observed—not knowing the video camera on the floor was still connected, of course—and reaching up to test

the height of the lamp shade. A moment later, thinking that she was safely unobserved, she is seen yanking at the shade and jumping away simultaneously, putting on her frightened act. Then she sets it up again and repeats the performance.

In frame number 20 of Fred Shannon's film, we see Tina doing the same trick. That same lamp falls in the same position, with her seated in the same place. Was this one, too, "only fooling"?

To take the edge off the cheating episode, after admitting that Tina had been caught, *Dispatch* reporter Mike Harden reassured his readers that WTVN-TV had witnessed a genuine miracle that same night: One of them had seen a table move mysteriously in the kitchen. But technician Robb Forest of WTVN told us that he'd caught Tina moving that table secretly with her foot, had accused her of it, and got only a horse-laugh from her for his trouble.

Similarly, Mary Anne Sharkey (a good friend of Mike Harden) of the *Cleveland Plain-Dealer* reported to us—but not her readers—that Tina's obvious hanky-panky with a candlestick had disillusioned her on the story. She had been there with three other reporters, two photographers, and a TV crew when Tina pointed out to her a candlestick located in a plastic wreath under a table. Sharkey wondered why it had been pointed out. One hour later, after they had all moved about the house, Tina announced that the candlestick had vanished, and she began looking for it. With Sharkey following her around, Tina "found" it under a chair. Sharkey was unimpressed, but this did not become part of her story. Instead, she reported another episode that seemed more convincing.

NBC-TV news reporter Bill Wolfson, at first fascinated by Tina's performances, changed his mind after prolonged exposure to events, contradictory reports, and reconsideration of what he actually saw—or didn't see. As for the press conferences, he said, "I thought the tone and quality of questions were somewhat less than poor. They were provocative and leading. The media were going crazy. One reporter asked Tina, 'Don't you feel guilty?' " Wolfson finally summed it up for us as "bunk."

While he snapped frame number 26, photographer Shannon, as he looked elsewhere awaiting a miracle, must have believed that something "psychic" was happening. It shows the footrest at the base of a "recliner" chair in the extended position, and Tina looking startled—as if it had suddenly popped out. I have one of these chairs at home. To make the footrest protrude, one need only grasp the arms firmly and push back. This is the only photograph among the 36 in which Tina is holding the chair arms. Her startled expression would indicate to me only what she has proven in the past (as in the videotapes)—that she is an excellent actress.

The *Dispatch* naturally had a fine time with this story. One Sunday edition contained a huge spread on the subject. Two new photos were

The Poltergeist Story: A Note to Readers

WHEN THIS report was originally planned, we intended to show you a number of photographs upon which most of the evidence concerning the Columbus poltergeist case is based. When the team from the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP) first responded to the open request from the *Columbus Dispatch* newspaper for an investigation of the case, it was able to obtain only a few 8" × 10" prints and a complete "contact sheet" (same-size prints) from the 35-mm film roll at the *Dispatch* photographic department. When strong indications of trickery by Tina Resch were immediately apparent, and we pointed out to *Dispatch* managing editor Richard Otte that a more careful examination of the film would have revealed this evidence, it suddenly became impossible to obtain additional prints, for either examination or publication.

Courtesy of *Discover* magazine, we were able to produce 8" × 10" blow-ups of the individual frames on the contact prints, and thus were able to have the other material we needed. Inquiries to the *Dispatch* from both *Discover* and the *Columbia Journalism Review* resulted in the response that its roll of film was now "locked up" and that prints were unavailable. However, readers should know that the *Dispatch* office discussed both price and possible usage of the requested photos with *Discover* and *CJR*, only to slam the door on access to them when they were told that information on negative frame-numbers had been obtained from James Randi. It appears that the *Columbus Dispatch* now realizes its error in judgment in failing to properly research its numerous stories on this matter and is attempting to discourage any further discussion of the case.

On August 24, 1984, the editor of the SKEPTICAL INQUIRER wrote to Otte, formally requesting, on behalf of CSICOP and the readers of *SI*, permission to publish the photos in question (which

shown. One (frame 17) shows Tina holding an already-broken picture frame. One can clearly see that the glass is broken, and Tina is holding it like a tray, with the shards of glass retained on it. The *following* photo (18) shows her tilting it forward to dump the glass. But in that Sunday newspaper account, we see that the caption for the *second* photo says, "Below, the picture shatters in her hand and falls to the floor."

we already had in our possession). He appealed to the newspaper's sense of journalistic integrity and said, "We feel they [the photos] are an essential part of the evidence in this case." When no answer was received, he telephoned Otte, who said he and his editor had decided not to grant permission. He said the *Dispatch* had already been hurt enough by Randi's disclosures and it didn't make sense for it to continue hitting itself over the head with a hammer. He said he felt Randi's statements had been unfair. When the *SI* editor protested that the *Dispatch's* denial served to withhold facts essential to the resolution of the case, Otte countered, "Randi has no facts." Said Otte: "The only mistake we made was to let Randi have the photos in the first place."

On December 11, CSICOP chairman Paul Kurtz wrote to Luke Feck, editor of the *Columbus Dispatch*, asking the newspaper to reconsider its decision. He said publication of the photographs would contribute to open scientific inquiry and help clear up an important issue that has aroused scientific interest. "To be denied this request is in effect censorship and prohibits the full scientific record from being published. To deny the request . . . is to violate the principles of a free press and . . . the public's right to know." He emphasized that we would pay the newspaper's normal fee. Its permission to publish the photographs, he concluded, "would contribute greatly to the open exchange of information and the exercise of a free press and responsible journalism."

Feck replied two days later. His letter criticized Randi, whom he referred to only as "a magician" and "Amazing What's-his-name," and concluded: "Permission to reproduce the photographs is denied. I have discussed this matter with our publisher and he concurs with my judgment. . . . This letter is not for publication."

Unable to legally publish the photographs, we arranged to have an artist make sketches from several of the more important ones. They accompany this article.

This is not a responsible representation at all. Reporter Dave Yost, who attended the Resch press conferences and followed Tina all the way to North Carolina when Bill Roll took her there for further observation, was frustrated by the attitude of the media. He said, "The real story here, I suspect, is the reaction of a duped media." Added Yost, "In spite of repeated efforts, I have never seen these reported events."

To return to the Shannon photos: In frame 21 (with reporter Harden studiously looking at the phone book at the right) we see a rollaway couch “jumping out” from the wall at Tina, who is again startled at another wonder of poltergeisty. But examination of a small lower section of a previous frame, this time taken from 90 degrees away with Tina standing in front of that couch holding an object for photographer Shannon, reveals an interesting fact: Tina clearly has her right foot hooked under the edge of the couch! A sudden pull backwards and the couch would “jump out” at her easily. We don’t know if that is how it was done when she was later “attacked” by the couch. But there is ample evidence here to believe that it might have happened that way, and none to show that it did not.

Admittedly, our team was not able to conduct a proper investigation of the Columbus poltergeist case. We were barred from the house and we never interviewed the girl involved. We could not trace one of two eyewitnesses to the photographed events, and the other witness was forbidden to tell us what she knew.

Witnesses we could identify were less than cooperative. Barbara Hughes, a neighbor and good friend of the Resch family and also a foster parent, spoke briefly with Steve Shore by phone, but refused to meet with us. She claimed to have seen one phenomenon while in the house. She said she addressed “The Force” out loud, demanding a demonstration. Something “fell,” and she fled in terror. Drew Hadwal, working with WTVN-TV, “saw three chairs move apart” in the kitchen, we were told. I tried hard to reach him, but though the receptionist at Channel 6 said she knew he was in, when I gave my name over the telephone I was told that he was not going to be at work that day. Even electrician Bruce Claggett (to whom we will return in Part II) failed to return our calls and, although he was scheduled to be on the program with me at the annual meeting of the Parapsychological Association, he failed to appear.

Several reporters we did interview told us of damning details they had observed but never reported. One expressed his anger at the rewrite artists who had “fluffed up” his stories to the point where they were hyperbolic. The *Columbus Dispatch* gave endless excuses why we could not meet Fred Shannon to discuss the evidence with him during our stay in Columbus, and reporter Harden eventually was “out” to us when we tried to call on him.

On the other hand, Bill Roll actually stayed at the Resch house. He stated his professional conclusions twice during a press conference before taking Tina off to his lab in Chapel Hill. He said that, based upon stories told by witnesses, neurological and psychological tests of Tina, and his own experiences (during a half-hour period in the last hour of the last day of three he spent in residence) “when I felt I had Tina under close observation” he concluded that she had demonstrated “genuine recurrent spontaneous psychokinesis (RSPK).” Then he admitted that though he was

"impressed . . . we are not dealing here with a controlled study, [but it was] sufficiently suggestive of RSPK." He added that his research was "in a very preliminary stage" and that he had come to "no definite conclusions."

Roll's evidence is based on a very short term of observation, with no other witnesses present and no direct experience of any event—only peripheral observations. His data consists of uncorroborated witnessing of a very few events, which he admits took place out of his direct line of sight at times when he was unable to anticipate them.

This is how he reported the events to the press conference: Immediately prior to the rush of phenomena, Tina had spent some 30 minutes upstairs, alone (only the two of them, so far as he knew, were in the house). Then she appeared at the top of the stairs screaming for him to rush up there and see miracles. A bar of soap, he reported, fell into the bathtub. Next, while they both were standing four feet from it, facing away, a picture fell from the wall. The nail had been pulled out of the wall. Roll and Tina rushed to it. Roll hammered the nail back with a pair of pliers. During this process, his small tape-recorder, which had been placed nearby on a dresser, flew to a position seven feet away. Roll and Tina went to it, Roll leaving the pliers behind. The pliers "moved from the dresser" to hit the wall near him.

Roll described his own observing abilities in such a way that we must place his performance in the paranormal-category. Or, at the very least, he had to have rather remarkable sensory powers. Consider: (a) He was hammering a nail back into a wall using the edge of a pair of pliers (he called them "tongs")—an act that requires undivided attention, obviously; (b) he was "watching Tina carefully" (contrast this with his statement that he "felt he had Tina under close observation") and remember that the "possessed" girl was standing off to one side of him; and (c) he saw the tape machine fly away from a position directly behind him—a remarkable feat indeed, especially when the layout of the room is known. (See Figure 1.)

Questioned, he admitted he had not once seen any object in place as it began to move. I postulate that, since he could not see the tape recorder, Tina had ample opportunity to throw it along the dresser, from which position it fell to the floor. Then she picked up the pliers as the two of them went to recover the tape recorder and threw them against the far wall as Roll examined the recorder. It was an assumption on his part that the pliers "moved from the dresser." He said, "She wasn't doing anything with her hands that I could see." (Roll is myopic and wears thick glasses; he is a poor observer.)

An examination of the videotape made in that room shows that the dresser on which the tape recorder sat was directly behind Roll as he faced the picture on the wall! He could not have seen it move. It is an impossible

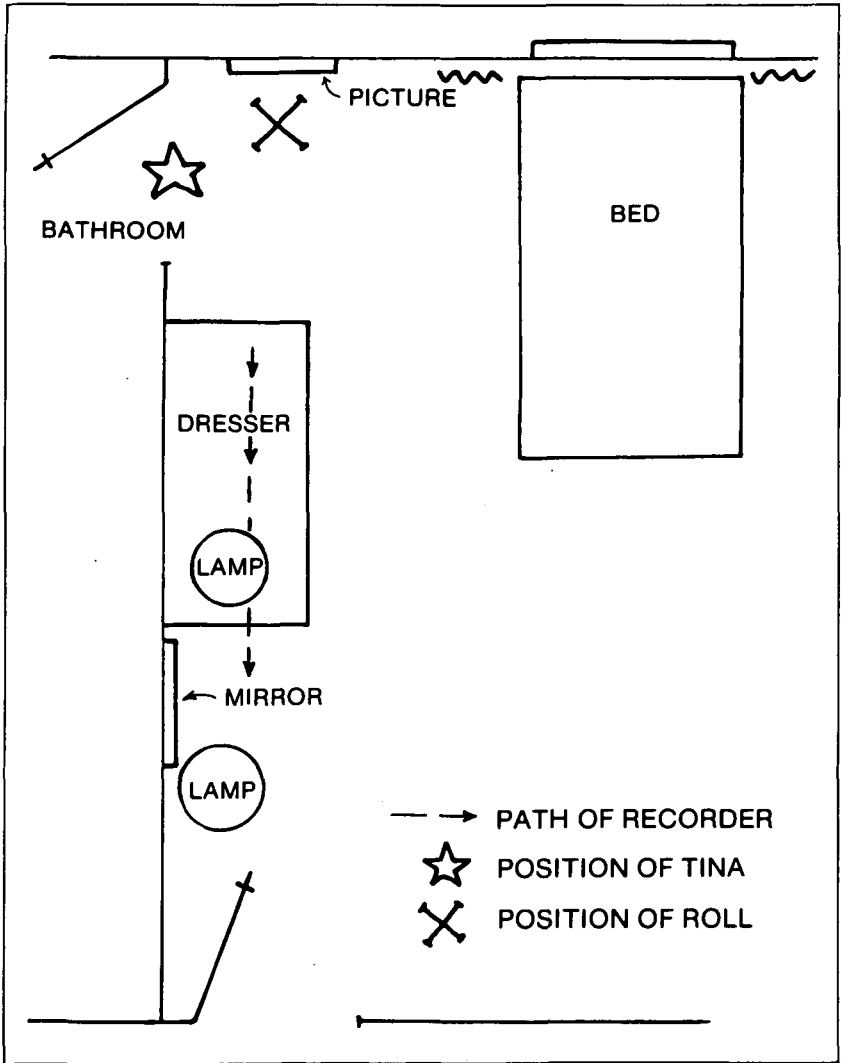


FIGURE 1. Layout of room in which Roll claimed tape recorder and pliers moved.

scenario.

But why would Tina Resch want to smash up her home and allow others to believe it was a paranormal event? Factors are found here that suggest strong motivation on her part to create a sensation. She was admittedly under stress and had good reason to want to attract media exposure: she wanted to trace her true parents, against the wishes of the Resches. And her “best friend,” Missy Johnson, had a fight with her and broke off their friendship two days before the phenomena began. She was

a girl looking for attention. And she got it.

The evidence for the validity of poltergeist claims in this case is anecdotal and thin, at best. The evidence against them is, in my estimation, strong and convincing. ●

In Part II, we will examine evidence offered by the most important witness of the phenomena exhibited in the presence of Tina Resch—photographer Fred Shannon. His address to the Parapsychological Association and a feature article in Fate magazine are compared with his own photographic record. We will meet electrician Bruce Claggett, who gave strange and contradictory accounts of the wonders in the Resch household. Other possible causes of the phenomena are discovered and evaluated, and evidence ignored by the media is brought to light.

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Sponsored by the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP) in cooperation with the United Kingdom branch of CSICOP.

A program, together with a registration form will be sent upon request.

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