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The Mottley Law Firm

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## 3 TALES FROM AN INSANE ASYLUM PHOTOGRAPHER MY NEIGHBOR'S SPOOKIEST GHOST ENCOUNTERS

When you photograph abandoned buildings as a hobby, ghost encounters are just part of the job. At least, that's what I assume after hearing several stories of haunts and horrors from my friend and neighbor, John Plshal. John has a thriving career as a medical device salesperson. But in his spare time, he pursues his passion for exploring and photographing old buildings.

John has been driving the back roads of Virginia for years, shooting photos of decaying houses, churches, schools, plantations, and even insane asylums. He often enters these crumbling buildings at night or in the gloomy lead-up to a thunderstorm to capture the most dramatic angles, stumbling upon scenes that would make even a ghost hunter shiver.



In an ancient church, he may find dusty hymnals in the pews, a moth-eaten Bible lying open on the pulpit, and a cloying feeling of foreboding in the air. In an asylum... well, just imagine a scene straight from a Halloween movie, complete with cobweb-covered medical instruments and upturned gurneys, ripped apart as if undead patients have just left them.

In one abandoned home, John came across a moldering artificial leg — complete with laced-up brown leather loafer! Yet even that find sounds tame compared to the paranormal encounters John has shared with me over a beer.

### The Ghost Nurse

Once, John showed me a photo he'd taken at the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum (formerly Weston State Hospital), where the ghost of a young patient

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## DOING GOOD DOES YOU GOOD

### BUILD THE COMMUNITY THROUGH GIVING

Volunteering not only strengthens the community but also benefits the person who serves. For those who enjoy spending their time giving back, check out how volunteering opportunities can benefit you!

overall health. Volunteering is a great way to network with members of the community and meet new people.

#### IMPROVES MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

When you do good, you feel good. Those positive emotions lead to emotional resilience, which helps you in the face of crisis or stress. They also decrease stress while increasing positive, relaxed feelings. Volunteering gives you a sense of meaning and appreciation, which can reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Likewise, after moving to a new neighborhood or leaving a career, it is difficult to find a new social group. But when you work with people toward the same goal, you may find you have common interests with other volunteers. You can even invite your family or friends to help, and then catch up while doing something good for the community.

#### GIVES A FEELING OF PURPOSE

Sometimes as life changes and you grow older, your sense of purpose may begin to fade. Volunteering can help recharge a zest for life and may even motivate you to set and accomplish new goals.

Volunteer activities also keep people moving. Whether it is carrying donation boxes, walking around the neighborhood, planting a community garden, or even cleaning litter from the roads, this moderate physical activity can help strengthen muscles, reduce blood pressure, and even alleviate symptoms of chronic pain.

#### PREVENTS ISOLATION AND PROMOTES SOCIALIZATION

Many older adults face social isolation, and it can have negative impacts on their

You should volunteer for many reasons, whether it's to give back to the community, help the environment, or satisfy your own personal needs. No matter why, it's a great way to get out there and do some good.





# KICK BACK AND RELAX WITH THESE HOME SPA TREATMENTS

It's nice to treat yourself to a good spa day, but it can be costly. So instead, create the same treatments from the much-less-expensive comfort of your own home. Light some candles, grab your robe, and kick back with these home spa activities.

## YOUR SPA SPACE

The best way to get the most out of your spa day is to set up your space to create a relaxing environment. Declutter the area you plan to relax in, grab your supplies so they're on standby, light a few candles, and add some mood music, that way it feels like a true spa room.

## AT-HOME TREATMENTS

Now that your spa room is set, it's time to indulge in different treatments!

- **Oatmeal and Honey Facial Mask:** These simple ingredients make for a wonderful face mask that leaves your skin super smooth and soft.

In a small saucepan over medium heat, mix 1/4 cup of water, 1/2 cup of uncooked oatmeal, 1/2 cup of milk, and 1 tbsp of pure honey, and cook for 5–6 minutes. Stir frequently, and when the time is up, remove from heat and allow to cool. Massage a semi-thick layer of pure honey over your clean face and neck before applying the mask.

Apply the mask with upward strokes, lie back, and relax for 15–20 minutes. You can remove the mask with warm water and a soft facial cloth!

- **Honey and Lemon Foot Soak:** This moisturizing and antibacterial foot soak is the perfect remedy for a day on your feet.



All you need for this treatment is 1/2 cup of honey, 1–2 tbsp apple cider vinegar, and 1 lemon sliced into thin rounds. You can either fill a large container or your bathtub with warm water, pour in the honey and apple cider vinegar, and mix! Then, top the water with the lemon slices — and soak your feet for 15–20 minutes.

## PRODUCTS FOR AT-HOME SPA DAYS

With these products, you can turn your home into a luxurious spa-like sanctuary. Consider the following:

- Bath neck pillow
- Gel eye masks
- Bath salts
- Oil diffusers

A full spa day is a great way to treat yourself, and we all deserve to sit back and relax every once in a while.

# THE SCARY SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES

## Watch for Them This Season!

Sure, ghosts, zombies, and vampires are spooky — but nothing is scarier than a monster that messes with your body from the inside out. Maybe that sounds like science fiction, but it's actually an uncomfortably apt description of a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

If you're injured by a bump or jolt to the head (in a car crash, while playing a sport, or during a fall at home), you could come away with a TBI, even if the blow doesn't break your skin. Perhaps the most terrifying thing about TBIs is the long-term symptoms. Here are three of the scariest warning signs that you may be haunted by a serious brain injury.

- **Mood and Personality Changes:** After a TBI, you might find yourself feeling more extreme emotions or notice your mood changing on a dime. One minute you may feel calm — and the next you might shout, laugh, or cry! You could also lose your motivation or miss social cues, leading to embarrassing situations.
- **Changes to Your Senses of Taste and Smell:** You could lose one or both senses, or they could be distorted by your brain injury. Imagine a world where you can't enjoy the scent of flowers or the taste of chocolate cake. Molly Birnbaum's memoir "Season to Taste" paints a vivid picture of this scenario.
- **Memory Problems:** TBIs can trigger amnesia or prevent you from forming new memories after your accident. Often, people with TBIs have trouble remembering conversations and events, and need to rely on memory triggers and other tricks to stay on track.



Every TBI is a little bit different, but if you're seeing any of these warning signs in yourself, a friend, or a family member, schedule a visit to the doctor right away. TBIs can be deadly, especially if left untreated. You should also call our team of attorneys. Depending on how you were injured, you might be eligible for compensation from an insurance company to cover your treatment.

You could have a shot at compensation if you were injured due to someone else's negligence or because of their intentional conduct (ex. assault). Our team can determine whether you have a case — and the sooner you contact us, the better.

## ... Continued from cover



named Lily is said to wander the halls looking for playmates. The shot actually raised the hair on my arms. Standing in the stairwell was the pale apparition of a nurse — perhaps on her way to find Lily and drag her back to bed.

## The Paranormal Fist Fight

On a trip to another abandoned insane asylum, this one in the western part of Virginia, John and a

videographer friend of his discovered a vacant church on the property. The door sealing the church was so heavy that it took all of their strength and straining muscle to force it open. They managed to budge it just enough to squeeze inside the cracked door.

After shooting the church, they headed back to the front of the church — only to find the heavy door wide open and swinging ominously in a nonexistent breeze. They managed to escape, but the spirit followed them to dinner at a local diner. John's photographer friend broke out in hives, and his knuckles bruised before their eyes as if he'd fought off an apparition.

## The Anti-Drone Kids

John has a whole collection of scary stories from his visits to Belle Meade Plantation on the James River in Powhatan County, Virginia, but the most chilling ones involve the on-site children's cemetery. According to John, a guest of his tried to fly a drone over the cemetery to take aerial photos.

It was as if the young ghosts seized control of the drone itself. No matter how much the drone pilot toggled the controls, the machine wouldn't rise beyond a certain height. When it left the bounds of the gravestones, the controls suddenly returned.

John is more than a photographer and accidental paranormal investigator; he's also a tour guide, historian, and author. His tabletop photography book, "A Beautifully Broken Virginia" is filled with jaw-dropping interior and exterior photos. Many of these are so moody and cinematic that you can easily imagine a ghost lurking just off camera — or even breathing down your neck.

John also shares the stories and legends swirling around the spooky spots he photographs in his "Stories of an Abandoned Virginia" program. You can book history tours with John through a few choice locations, like Swannanoa Palace, Belle Meade on the James, and the ruins of Presidents Park. I highly recommend the latter. You won't believe the scale of the neglected "presidents' heads" until the stone bust of Teddy Roosevelt is looming over you.

Do yourself a favor this October and check out John's work on [JohnPlashalPhoto.com](http://JohnPlashalPhoto.com). If there's a better way to celebrate Halloween, I can't imagine it!

—Kevin Mottley

# SUDOKU

3		5	6		2			8
			1	7			3	2
2	7				9			
6		1		8		2	9	
	3	8		2	4		6	
		9	7				2	
4	5			9	1		8	6
	6						1	9

## SOLUTION

6	1	5	8	9	2	7	4	3
8	3	2	9	1	7	8	5	4
4	8	7	3	6	5	2	1	9
5	3	8	9	2	4	1	6	7
3	2	7	5	1	8	6	4	9
7	9	4	6	3	8	5	2	1
2	7	4	8	3	6	7	9	5
8	9	6	1	7	5	4	3	2
9	5	6	4	2	8	7	1	3



## CREAMY BAKED PUMPKIN RISOTTO

## INGREDIENTS

- 5 cups of low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 2 cups Arborio rice
- 2 cups of pumpkin, diced
- 1 1/2 cups canned pumpkin purée
- 1/2 yellow onion, minced
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup fresh basil, chopped
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp mascarpone cheese
- 2 tbsp olive oil

## DIRECTIONS

1. Heat the oven to 400 F and arrange a rack in the middle.
2. In a 3-quart baking dish, combine broth, rice, diced and puréed pumpkin, and onion.
3. Season with salt and pepper, then stir until evenly combined.
4. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake until water has been absorbed and rice granules are puffed.
5. Remove from the oven and stir in basil, grated Parmesan cheese, mascarpone cheese, and olive oil.

Inspired by FoodNetwork.com