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The Nixon Channel

A project by Jeffrey Vallance

Back in 1994, I wrote the first account of the haunting of the Nixon Library, noting poltergeist-like phenomena in three areas of the facility: the Nixon Birthplace house, at Nixon's grave, and the Watergate display. At the Birthplace, a night watchman reported seeing a ghostly figure enter the house through a locked door. Over Nixon's grave, a hovering green mist had been observed. And in the original Watergate display area (which has since been renovated), tapping sounds were heard and the tape machines were in frequent disrepair. (According to psychic medium Dorothy Maksym, quoted in the 2003 book *The Haunting of the Presidents* by Joel Martin and William J. Birnes, the tapping sound was Nixon's way of distracting visitors, to keep them from concentrating on the Watergate materials.) Years later, according to Maksym, the channelled ghost of Nixon described, in detail, someone who could only be *me* as the original witness to the grave's green mist. Through Maksym, Nixon went on to state that his 'spirit is working' through *me* — which came as quite a disturbing surprise!

On a recent sunny Sunday afternoon, I conducted a ghost tour through the Nixon Library & Birthplace along with famed psychic medium Joseph Ross, known for his many radio and television appearances since the 1960s. The tour was sponsored by the League of Western Fortean Intermediatists, a loosely knit Southern California paranormal organization recently founded by Skyraire Alfvengren. Our group of 14 arrived at the Nixon Library in Yorba Linda, California, about 30 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles. Dressed all in black and wearing a necklace with a large crystal pendant, Ross looked like a cross between a priest and a 19th-century magician. As the group toured the massive facility, Ross continually channelled Nixon, who would comment on various aspects of the displays. Just beyond the museum entrance are cases of artefacts from Nixon's early life, prior to his entering politics — grade school essays, early photographs, love letters to Pat and Naval service documents. Here, the spirit of Nixon told the group that this was the only part of the library that he still enjoyed visiting.

We moved on to the Hall of World Leaders, which features life-size statues of Mao, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Sadat, Churchill and others. Here, two members of our group reported strange buzzing sounds in their ears, as if caused by insects, but none were found. At various locations, many in our group reported a nauseating smell whose origin could not be determined. It seemed to follow us throughout the day.

We arrived at the Watergate display area, which was renovated in 2007, some believed in the hope of exorcizing whatever force was causing the tape machines to malfunction. Many in the group immediately felt an unearthly chill. We searched for an air conditioning duct, but found nothing. For the library's first 17 years, the original Watergate display was a really creepy, dimly lit corridor that exhibited photographs of the Watergate burglars and their tools. It also had a row of tape players with headphones where visitors could listen to copies of the Watergate tapes.

Unfortunately, the newly remodelled Watergate display is lacklustre and feels almost like a shameful afterthought. The wall is painted an institutional olive drab colour, with the bank of large, interactive monitors all out of order.

Perhaps Nixon's troubled spirit hasn't left the area.

Next, we went outside to the Birthplace house. The tour guide said that although he had heard reports of the haunting of the house, he had not witnessed any phenomena. He posited if perhaps it was not Nixon haunting the house, but the spirit of a later inhabitant.

Inside the house, Joseph Ross said that this is where he feels Nixon's spirit most strongly, and that Nixon visits his birthplace every night.

It was getting late. One of the security guards informed us that the library was about to close for the day, so we gathered beside Nixon's grave, formed a circle and all joined hands as Ross did his final channelling. The sun was low in the sky, casting our shadows dramatically across the grave. Ross said that after many years of turmoil, Nixon's spirit was now considerably more at peace. With several security guards observing, I was trying to imagine who they thought we were. We must have looked like either some kind of fundamentalist prayer group, or a weird cult. As we released hands, everyone in the group was surprised to be overcome by a warm, peaceful sensation.

Before departing, I reached down and scooped up soil from Nixon's grave, which I have since preserved in several small glass vials, one of which I preserved in a reliquary which I keep close at all times.

Jeffrey Vallance is an artist, writer, curator, explorer, paranormal researcher, Visiting Assistant Professor in New Genres at UCLA, Los Angeles, USA, and Special Correspondent for Fortean Times. His book, The Vallance Bible, will be published in December 2009, alongside an exhibition at Centre d'edition contemporaine, Geneva, Switzerland. He lives in Los Angeles, USA.



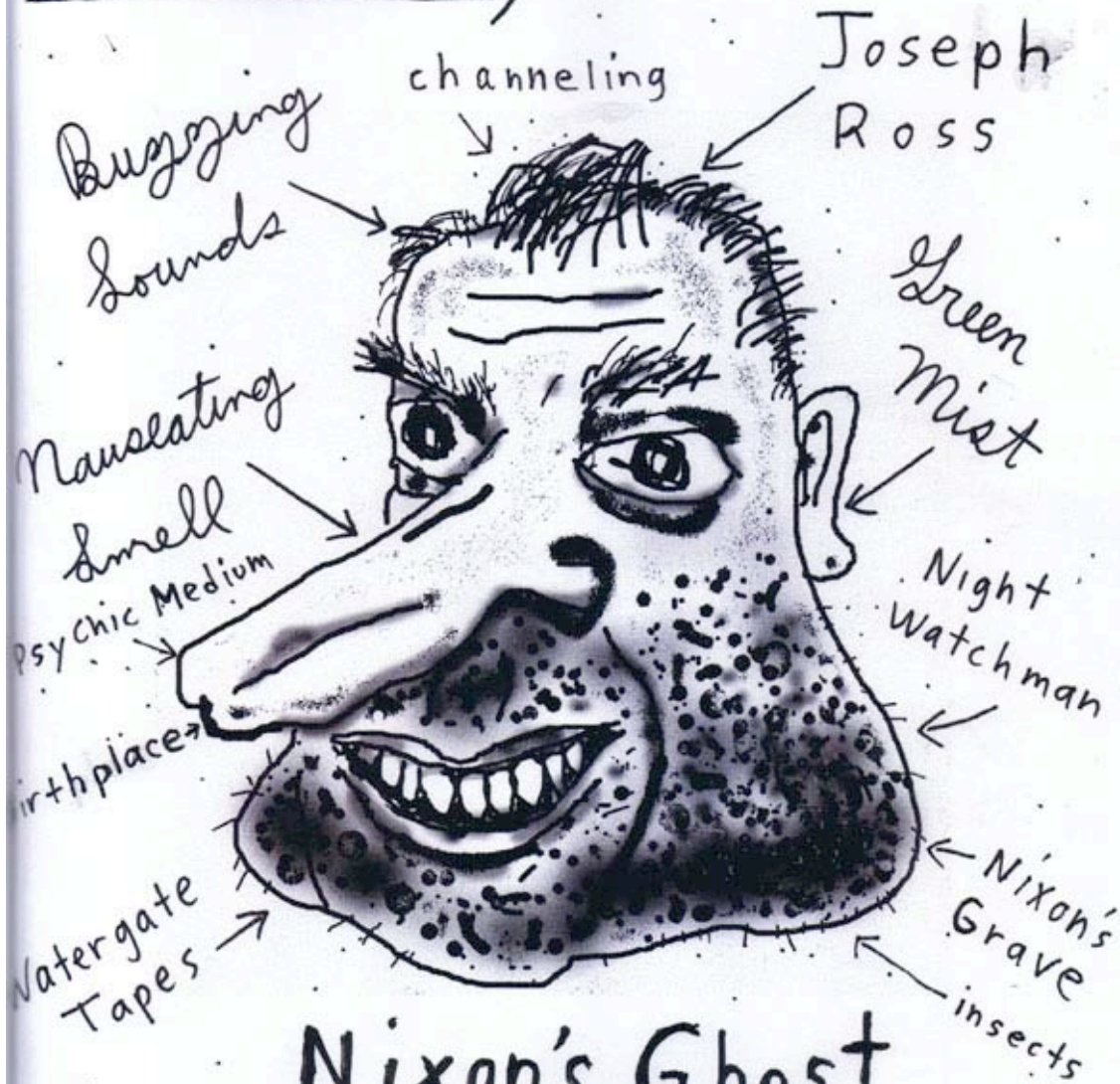
Above:
**Richard Nixon Grave
Soil (Reliquary)**
2009
Mixed media
13x7x3 cm

Opposite:
Nixon's Ghost
2009
Ink and correction
fluid on paper
28x22 cm

The Haunting of the Presidents

League of Western
Fortean Intermediatists

Nixon Library



Nixon's Ghost

Creepy Poltergeist Activity

2009

Yorba Linda

Jeffrey Vallance