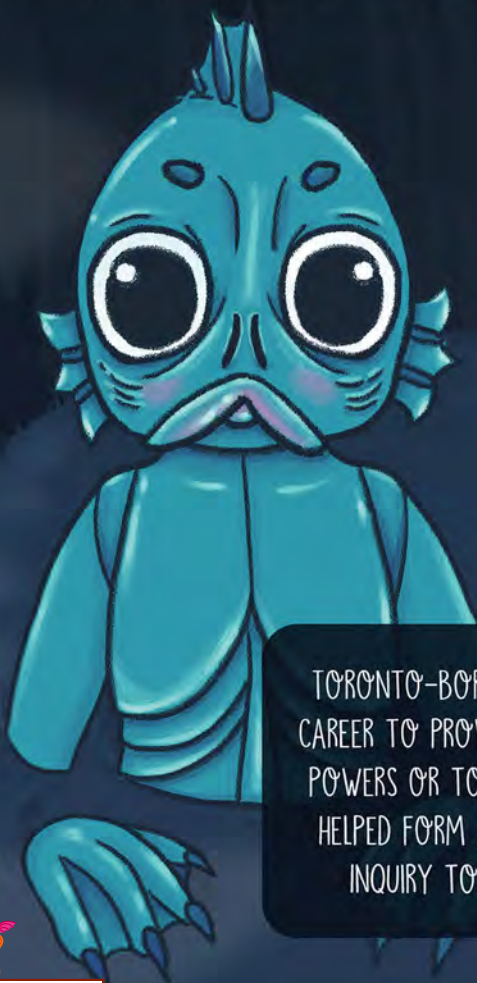


FOR REAL?

IT CAN BE FUN TO GET CAUGHT UP IN STORIES OF GHOSTS, POLTERGEIST, MONSTERS AND MORE. BUT IF YOU INVESTIGATE FOR YOURSELF, THERE'S OFTEN AN ORDINARY EXPLANATION.

Videos seem like definite proof that something exists, don't they? But if you're watching a video that claims to show Oogoo or a ghost, ask yourself a few questions before you trust it. For instance, if an object appears to be moving on its own, is it light enough for someone off camera to pull it using fishing line? Is the video one continuous shot, or has it been edited, meaning something may have been cut out or changed? If there's a ghostly image in a video, does it move when the camera moves? (If it does, it's probably dust or a smear on the lens.) Is it posted with a fake name or by someone willing to use their real name? And here's a big one: As you watch, ask yourself whether an ordinary person who wasn't expecting anything unusual would have time to get out a phone or camera fast enough to catch whatever they say their video shows. Most of us would stand in amazement, then fumble to get out a device, and probably never hit record in time to get footage of that Sasquatch crossing the road.



TORONTO-BORN MAGICIAN JAMES RANDI DEVOTED MUCH OF HIS CAREER TO PROVING THAT PEOPLE WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE SPECIAL POWERS OR TO BE ABLE TO TALK TO THE DEAD WERE LYING. HE HELPED FORM A GROUP CALLED THE COMMITTEE FOR SKEPTICAL INQUIRY TO INVESTIGATE SUPPOSED PARANORMAL EVENTS.



THE SHOW *MYSTERY HUNTERS* RAN FOUR SEASONS ON YTV IN THE EARLY 2000S. TWO TEENAGERS INVESTIGATED PARANORMAL STUFF WHILE A CAST MEMBER NAMED DOUBTING DAVE SHOWED HOW MANY OF THE SAME EFFECTS COULD BE CREATED USING SCIENCE.

Our brains are pretty good at freaking us out. If someone tells you a ghost story, the blood leaves your fingers and other muscles because your body is getting ready to run away from whatever's scaring you. That makes you cold, which in turn makes the story feel even more real. And of course once we're a bit uneasy, our brains can turn wind whistling through a window or a tree branch scraping a wall into something truly terrifying.



Named for a Christian saint, a ball of light or flame that appears out of nowhere is actually the odd but completely natural St. Elmo's Fire. It happens when a thunderstorm has filled the air with electricity. St. Elmo's Fire, which famously appears at sea but can also happen over land, is a bit like lightning looking for a place to go. It causes things like a church steeple or ship's mast to glow, and probably explains many sailors' tales of burning ghost vessels.