



Paranormal America: Ghost Encounters, UFO Sightings, Bigfoot Hunts, and Other Curiosities in Religion and Culture

Christopher Bader, F. Carson Mencken, Joseph O. Baker

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A significant number of Americans spend their weekends at UFO conventions hearing whispers of government cover-ups, at New Age gatherings learning the keys to enlightenment, or ambling around historical downtowns learning about resident ghosts in tourist-targeted “ghost walks”. They have been fed a steady diet of fictional shows with paranormal themes such as *The X-Files*, *Supernatural*, and *Medium*, shows that may seek to simply entertain, but also serve to disseminate paranormal beliefs. The public hunger for the paranormal seems insatiable.

Paranormal America provides the definitive portrait of Americans who believe in or have experienced such phenomena as ghosts, Bigfoot, UFOs, psychic phenomena, astrology, and the power of mediums. However, unlike many books on the paranormal, this volume does not focus on proving or disproving the paranormal, but rather on understanding the people who believe and how those beliefs shape their lives.

Drawing on the Baylor Religion Survey—a multi-year national random sample of American religious values, practices, and behaviors—as well as extensive fieldwork including joining hunts for Bigfoot and spending the night in a haunted house, authors Christopher Bader, F. Carson Mencken, and Joseph Baker shed light on what the various types of paranormal experiences, beliefs, and activities claimed by Americans are; whether holding an unconventional belief, such as believing in Bigfoot, means that one is unconventional in other attitudes and behaviors; who has such experiences and beliefs and how they differ from other Americans; and if we can expect major religions to emerge from the paranormal.

Brimming with engaging personal stories and provocative findings, **Paranormal America** is an entertaining yet authoritative look at a growing segment of American religious culture.

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