

## INTRO.

Alright, Ben - before I get started on this topic, I'd like to ask you: Mothman? Any familiarity?

[off script discussion]

My familiarity with it is based on years of watching random paranormal TV shows on Discovery, Destination America, The History Channel, and The Travel Channel. You and I both know that it's been covered up, down, and all around... so –

How do you tackle something that's been done and dusted about a thousand times on every paranormal television show, podcast, series, or whatever else there exists? I won't goof around, we all know The Mothman – especially if you found this podcast because of your personal interests.

You know who it is: straight from the *Folklife* blog from the Smithsonian Institute, our friend Mothman's well known origin story starts on November 15, 1966 after it stalks/attacks/harrasses Roger and Linda Scarberry and Steve and Mary Mallette on Route 62<sup>1</sup>. Described as the following...

[PAUSE]

Now, Ben – to make it all a bit more exciting, I am going to share the following audio with you. You can cut it into the show, but I specifically did this just to spice up this whole thing and potentially grow our audience into the same individuals who consume Love Island. I'm trying to grow my Hot Pockets Brand Constituency and I feel like they're the perfect individuals to help me cross the line.

So, without further ado – Let's go a little Love Island style on this<sup>2</sup>:

[THIS WEEK, A HOT NEW BOMBSHELL ENTERS THE VILLA]

*Hey it's me, Mothman.*

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<sup>1</sup> [An Ode to a Hometown Creature: Mothman of Point Pleasant, West Virginia | Folklife Magazine](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Love Island Theme Song / Tune \(Extended Version 2022\)](#)

*I'm 6-7 feet tall. Maybe even 11-12 feet. I look like a bird, or a man, or a bird man. You might be asking: "hey, Mothman, if you're a moth man – why do people say you look like a bird?"*

*Well, life can be funny. If you wanna know more about me, you can find me in Japan, Pripyat, New York City, and so many other places but I mostly call Point Pleasant, Virginia my home.*

*Come see me at the McClintic Wildlife Management Area or the TNT Area – who knows, maybe our connection can be just as explosive.*

### [RESUME]

Yes, yes – what accent was that? I don't know! Who decided that the Chernobyl movie series on HBO would be full of people without Russian or Ukrainian accents<sup>3</sup>? No I'm not joking, my great uncle bitch royalty Con O'Neill is in that with his beautiful as fuck raspy voice and nary a Russian or Ukrainian accent is within hearing distance. You could not throw a rock and hit someone with that accent.

It's basically like if I was cast in that docuseries and you had to suffer me calling my wife Yelyena and our son Dmytro for some hot dogs.

### SCRIPT FOCUS.

Anyway, just to spice things up and get a little bit brand new – we're **hyperfocusing on the Chicago Mothman phenomenon** (which apparently is an incredibly misleading name) by way of a documentary and a bunch of articles that I dove into, but also getting into a *little* bit of tea with **Paranormal Investigator shenanigans** and **research methodology**.

To get it started we'll hang with Robbie Telfer on an NPR article<sup>4</sup> for just a second as a jump off point – this all started around 2011 and got extra wild in 2017.

Hanging out on Lon Strickler<sup>5</sup>'s site *Phantoms and Monsters*, we find that the first 2011 sighting is of a man and his wife out on 63rd St. and Pulaski Road.

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<sup>3</sup> [Chernobyl: Why the Cast Didn't Use Russian or Ukrainian Accents | Den of Geek](#)

<sup>4</sup> [The Case Of The Chicago Mothman. NPR](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Phantoms and Monsters - Real Cryptid Encounter Reports - Fortean Researcher Lon Strickler: About Me](#)

But I did a little google sheet thing for us that I'll include on our source post for this episode with a timeline sheet and chart for every date I could find from this Mothman Sighting Map<sup>6</sup> because upon looking at *Phantoms and Monsters* I saw that this was a tale as old as time situation (aka 1999 in the area).

Basically, this jump off point that most folks know about involved a couple that was taking a strategically posed photo of a statue where if you stand just right it looks like the statue's thumb is its dick and off to the side you see what looks like an unidentifiable flying object of some sort, whether a machine or an actual organic thing<sup>7</sup>.

[[PHOTO HERE](#) - source: *Phantoms and Monsters* ]

Have a quick look at it and we will talk about it together in a bit. For now, we are just looking at evidence and not debunking or explaining!

2011 had a few other sightings according to the doc, but from the sightings map it looks more like 7, weirdly enough 2 of them happened near University of Illinois at Chicago!

Now, to get to the specifics of it, I'm going to primarily use a lot of timeline information from the documentary *On the Trail of Lake Michigan Mothman* from Seth Breedlove<sup>8</sup> of Small Town Monsters with some interjections from the sighting map/sheet.

## DOCUMENTARY; 2017 Sighting focus

According to the documentary, the Chicago Mothman phenomenon was big news in 2017 but there are actually 3 separate 'canons' for the phenomenon.

Though we're looking at the recent experiences, it's important that we chat about the 2017 sightings as our definitive jumpstart for the things we will discuss *today*. Not to say that this is the definitive start in general, which I've already established above and even more so in like a couple of shakes.

You're already aware of the 2011 Sightings I mentioned above: according to the documentary, these initially came to Illinois MUFON or the Illinois branch of Mutual UFO

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<sup>6</sup> [Chicago / Lake Michigan Winged Humanoid Regional Interactive Map](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Phantoms and Monsters - Real Cryptid Encounter Reports - Fortean Researcher Lon Strickler: Photo: 2nd Mothman / Bat-Like Object Witnessed Over Chicago](#)

<sup>8</sup> [On the Hunt for the Unexplained with "Small Town Monsters" Creator Seth Breedlove](#)

Network and then later Lon Strickler (Phantoms and Monsters). In the documentary, these were mentioned as the first reported instances concerning the Chicago Mothman.

When Breedlove talked to Sam Maranto (Head of Illinois MUFON) and Jack Chavez (solo paranormal investigator) they said it wasn't an actual sighting. According to the information on Strickler's post<sup>9</sup>: the person noticed it when they were reviewing the photos and not at the time of taking them (hence it being not a sighting). The person didn't necessarily think it was Mothman and mentioned that it was "similar to a bird or a bat."<sup>10</sup>

Now, you might be wondering – why would someone report a Mothman sighting to MUFON? Well – this person didn't initially think it was a Mothman sighting but just thought it was a strange flying object. He couldn't identify it – hence MUFON. In the documentary, Maranto did end up mentioning that upon examination – it was just likely a kite. I'm gonna now show you a clip of that part Ben.

**[PAUSE FOR CLIP:** Hi! I'm not sharing this section b/c it's a clip from the movie, which I did have to pay for and I'm not sure if they're down to sharing that in this way. But I will update this source if I am able to verify a decent way to share the clip.]

So, that evidence/sighting was scrapped but then came 2017 which has two different threads for us to follow: The suburbia/rural sightings/encounters with Mothman and the Downtown Chicago sightings, per the documentary.

The characteristics of the City Sightings are, according to the doc, apparently brief encounters that are not necessarily believable to them. The Suburbia/Rural sightings are more detailed from what is mentioned in the doc – folks doing random daily business, absolutely mundane shit, just experiencing a big fucking Mothman.

An example is Paula S. from the documentary, who experienced Mothman while she was taking out the trash on a regular morning in 2017. She described him as 7-8 feet tall, hunched over, black in colour, you couldn't see its eyes, and it was leathery. It was making groaning sounds and other creepy noises at her. When it noticed her, it started coming at her and she fucking *ran* straight back into her house.

In a horror movie-esque sort of way, one fun detail she had was that she knew her house keys were fucked up and she was mad struggling with them even more as she was running from the Mothman. Fucking nightmare scenario.

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<sup>9</sup> [Phantoms and Monsters - Real Cryptid Encounter Reports - Fortean Researcher Lon Strickler: Photo: 2nd Mothman / Bat-Like Object Witnessed Over Chicago](#)

<sup>10</sup> (see #9)

As she got into her house, she called up her upstairs neighbour to go have a cheeky look at our guy, but sadly the neighbour did not get a face full of the Moth.

A city example goes along the lines of: I was standing here, I saw this – it was quick and swooped by.

An example<sup>11</sup> was reported to Manuel Navarette at UFO Clearinghouse and it goes like this: Thursday night, an individual was walking to the train to go home when they noticed the following - a 7 foot tall bat-like creature on top of a light pole, near the Harold Washington Library. It lasted for 6 seconds. It was apparently scared away by a bunch of kids that took a flash photo of it (where are you, people with evidence).

The difference between the types of evidence sourced from Suburbia/Rural areas and City spaces is as obvious as the differences between the spaces.

You might also notice by now, if you are familiar with the P.P<sup>12</sup> lore of M.M that this also differs from *that* suggesting something beyond “oh, this isn’t the same Mothman – it’s his cousin, Mothguy”.

This documentary is interesting because it follows such an interesting line of questioning and ideas about the Chicago Mothman, later dubbed as the Lake Michigan Mothman by Tobias and Emily Wayland from the Singular Fortean Society.

It touches on something Ben and I frequently encounter on the show, which is – highjacking of narratives and genre shifts (as pointed out by my absolute favourite person on this documentary, folklorist Eleanor Hasken-Wagner [a PhD student at the time of filming, whose Mothman dissertation I did try to read at 250+ pages]).

A majority of these stories in the Lake Michigan area have an aspect of mundanity to them – an encounter while you’re taking out the garbage, coming home, or walking your mom to her car and seeing her off to work.

Hasken-Wagner points out that the Lake Michigan Mothman is just a teensy bit removed from the narrative of the Point Pleasant Mothman – who is deemed as a sort of harbinger of doom, post the fall of the Silver Bridge in 1967.

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<sup>11</sup> [Phantoms and Monsters - Real Eyewitness Cryptid Encounter Reports: 7 Ft. Tall Bat-Like Creature Perched On Downtown Chicago Streetlamp](#)

<sup>12</sup> POINT PLEASANT MOTHMAN SHORTHAND

P.P.'s Mothman is an omen, not a random encounter in the park. If you think about the supposed appearances of M.M in Japan, New York, and Pripjat/Chernobyl – they 'preempt' some sort of terrible shit.

L.M.'s MM<sup>13</sup> is out of nowhere, random moments during mundane activities. The only thing seeing him was a sign of, was one of a terrible experience that you're going to have to try and rationalise to whoever you're about to dump this story on.

An interesting sidenote: when it comes to the Harbinger of Doom aspect that P.P Mothman is known about, something I learned from Richard Hatem (who adapted John Keel, OG Mothman researcher and writer of *Mothman Prophecies*) in another Breedlove documentary *The Mothman Legacy*– Keel's book only contained just a wee bit of a suggestion and an implication of the harbinger aspect and Hatem just kind of blew it up.

My understanding of this is that Richard saw this thread and went – I'm about to fucking unspool this shit and let it go wild. A kind of hijacking of the narrative, in a softer way, since it was already there and Richard just kinda zoomed in and \*robot voice\* 'computer enhanced' that shit.

If you created a sort of Venn Diagram of PPMM and LMMM, it would, from the doc look like this – on the PPMM side you have a significance to the town, the disaster aspect of it, and later the omen like nature of it. Then you would have the LMMM, which does have this sense of dread to it, but it's sort of these quick interactions that are just - I was here, so was the LMMM, and this is what I was doing and what they were doing.

In the centre, you would have sort of the descriptions if you really smashed them together despite the differences in wording.

Additionally, according to the documentary and Hasken-Wagner – the MOTH idea was a later sort of thing. A lot of the OG experiencers of the MM actually referred to it as a bird! While there are still some variations in the PPMM, later there comes this sort of semi-unified idea/description of the MM. I read through 150+ sightings on the map from Strickler and boy did that shit vary even if they're from the same-ish area just a few blocks away from each other.

You have the following for LMMM: winged-humanoid, bat-like creature, crowman, giant blackbird, black bat, bat-humanoid, gargoyle, demon, phantom, big owl, shadowy being, monster bat, man bat, and red-eyed winged being.

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<sup>13</sup> LAKE MICHIGAN MOTHMAN SHORTHAND/CHICAGO MOTHMAN SHORTHAND

Hasken-Wagner also points out really wonderfully, which I think helps for those who might see the description differences as evidence towards it either not existing or not being the same stuff: people rarely have the exact vocab to describe a thing they've never ever seen before. They might relate it to something similar or whatever they already know of. Someone describing it as a bat vs. a large bird doesn't make it less real, but makes it relative to what they can describe it as.

I highly recommend you check out the documentaries done by Breedlove and all the other articles I cover for this, it's all so fun to follow. If you have the stamina, which I don't always have, I do recommend Eleanor Hasken-Wagner's dissertation. Shout out to Ben's partner for trying to find the article version of it for me – there was none so she just gave me some tips on how to actually read that thing.

Anyway, back to the topic at hand! Now that we are familiar with the Chicago/Lake Michigan Mothman based on the documentary and some other articles, let's get gritty.

## WHAT DO THESE DEVIATIONS MEAN?

I made the distinction between the PPMM and LMMM, but what exactly does that mean? What are the implications, beyond the idea that this could mean that there is (much like Bigfeet) a population of MM?

It is a suggestion of the growth of the M.M narrative outside of its original space, specifically that of Point Pleasant.

As pointed out by Hasken-Wagner, it is the story of Mothman removed from its origins in a non-negative way, but in a way that shows that the story is growing and changing.

From my brief understanding of this phenomenon: it is changing to suit the needs of the storyteller, the space, and the time.

If you consider some of the evidence and where it occurs, you might notice some patterns like I've mentioned prior to this. Each of them seem to serve a purpose and fit a narrative that could be specific to that moment or something. Not meaning that this person made it up for that exact moment, but they are experiencing it relative to what they are doing.

Of course, there's some other things that deviate! A hundred percent. Some of the sightings on the map say that they were attacked<sup>14</sup>

It's a lot like Momo Bird and the Babadook: there is an initial story, then a shift in the narrative, and everything else follows suit and again and again and again.

The encounters, this body of evidence, may not be like the source material of PPMM but that doesn't make it any less Mothman or any less real (I think).

## EVIDENCE.

Now, speaking of evidence – let's talk about how I got into this documentary and how I arrived at this line of analysis for half of the episode.

When I was first doing research into the Chicago Mothman – I was lured into this documentary b/c of an episode of Monsteropolis by Small Town Monsters<sup>15</sup> that I found when I was just attempting to find video evidence for LMMM.

Initially, I was hoping to get some information on sources and where to get started with all of this. What do we know? What can I possibly do with this that's new and not repetitive, but what I came away with on this instance was pretty fucking interesting: Seth Breedlove, while doing this documentary, actually caught some evidence of his own!

On the podcast, he described it as such: it was 10 at night-ish and he was on the street, located at Congress Hotel where he and his team were staying. What he saw felt like a massive bird and it was quick as it streaked through the sky. To quote him, it was a "large winged thing".

Just to get silly for a moment: do you say WINGED or WING-ED?

Anyway: this suggestion of video evidence? This got my ass.

Seth is a documentarian, so you know that his goal is to get evidence and explanations for things. I was glad that he experienced this – this dude who set out to go find something and was actually able to personally experience it. Luckily enough, he stated that he was hoping to shoot B-roll so he had a pretty decent camera on hand.

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<sup>14</sup> [Phantoms and Monsters - Real Cryptid Encounter Reports - Fortean Researcher Lon Strickler: 'Chicago Phantom' Attacks Couple in Piotrowski Park](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Chicago Mothman-Monsteropolis Episode 128](#)



The perfect “pics or it didn’t happen” moment just happened to a dude with a good fucking camera. Fucking finally, some good shit.

Once we do get into the documentary though... it takes a different turn.

**[PAUSE FOR CLIP:** Hi! I’m not sharing this section b/c it’s a clip from the movie, which I did have to pay for and I’m not sure if they’re down to sharing that in this way. But I will update this source if I am able to verify a decent way to share the clip.]

Now, Ben – I’m gonna go ahead and show you this evidence but before we get started – what are you expecting from the description I just gave you?

**[RESUME, EVIDENCE PLAYED FROM MOVIE]**

**[PAUSE]**

Yep. A far off flying thing in the sky that my little believer's heart was disappointed in. But, isn't that the usual thing? As a believer, I need that crisp fucking evidence to rock me in my shoes. You want “pics or it didn’t happen”!

Even Seth says, as Eleanor asks him to describe it prior to playing the video, he was aware that “it is more than likely some sort of bird”<sup>16</sup>.

You get the sense that there’s disappointment in Seth and I deeply understand it. In the moment, he was probably genuinely for a second thinking that he did it – he got the definitive Mothman evidence. Then, when he blew it up and had a look at it – his heart fell just a little bit; this could just be a sandhill crane or a blue heron.

Though, he does state that it seemed human sized! In the video, Seth points out that the bird was already way far off from the building, so if Seth is right – based on the distance and size of the building windows near it, it was a huge fucking bird. Maybe this *is* it but... maybe not?

While I was watching the documentary, I even decided to test out how fast it would be for me to open up the camera app on my phone.

I’m pretty quick, savvy on the phone, and I have the camera app on my main screen on the side of the phone where my thumb hangs out. I even have a “take a photo” shortcut

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<sup>16</sup> Direct quote from the movie

on my phone. I have a premium opportunity to be quick about it. I was able to get the camera open and take a photo in seconds.

But I also remembered that a day before that, my neighbour's dogs ended up in our backyard and were yelling at my cat. I was in complete shock and I muttered "you have to be fucking joking" to myself and stared for a few seconds before pulling up my phone to try and record.

It was dark and I was trying to record through a window, so I decided to run to the living room and get a video of them barking up a storm but by the time I got to the living room, camera ready, and filming – the dogs had already moved farther away from the sliding door and were in the darkness.

I could see them with my eyes, not with my phone, primarily cos my phone decided to also turn on flash while recording and all I saw was the screen door and maybe hear a little of their barking.

What I'm trying to say is that you and I could probably argue that we can pull up the camera on our phone fairly quickly when we try it out in normal situations. Try it out right now.

I'm gonna count to 10 but somewhere in that countdown I'm gonna yell "take a picture". But don't get your phone. Keep your phone where it is. If it's in your hand, awesome. If it's on a desk somewhere charging, cool! Let's start...

### **[COUNTDOWN]**

So, how'd you do? Did you do well? Let me know how that went for you on ISYMPod on twitter or instagram, I'd love to see and what you ended up taking a random photo of.

So – what happens when we're in the moment? I can't even get straight serious pictures of our cats on their belly because the second I move, they move too. Did you have to run out of your room? Did you have to close out a bunch of apps and suddenly forget where your camera app is?

You might then argue that Seth is a documentarian, should be quick, should have gotten it faster since he's already got Mothman on the mind. Well, Seth explains it as such – it was such a quick moment that by the time that he got the camera up and recording, it was mad far from him. Additionally, there were framing choices, lighting issues, and you know what – I get it.

You can say one thing and do another and it's just... it's just all too quick and you're never really prepared for this kind of stuff.

You're also probably fresh from listening to our Face Value episode where we watched video evidence of creature sightings. So I know, you might be thinking: how the fuck do the people on Paranormal Caught on Camera do it?

We'll just never fucking know, man. Oh to be the PCOC dropbox...

WHAT IS IT THEN.

So, now that we've talked evidence – you might now be asking: what the hell are these people taking photos of? Terrestrial explanations, per the documentary and just in general are: Non-living examples might be kites, far off aircraft, and other shit. Most folks will mention Sandhill Cranes, Blue Herons, and large owls.

According to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources<sup>17</sup>:

*The sandhill crane averages about 40 to 48 inches in length (tail tip to bill tip in preserved specimen). This bird has a wingspan of six to seven feet. A red patch can be seen on the top of the bird's head extending to the back edge of the bill. The feathers are gray in adults and brown in immature cranes. The crane has long legs and a long neck. The feathers over the rump stick out in a "bustle."*

Looking back on some of the evidence posed by folks who can actually deliver video/photo proof – even Seth Breedlove's evidence, I think more of the sandhill crane's description. In videos, you could see some legs and a long neck. According to the Chicago Audubon Society, in flight "you'll see their long dark legs trailing behind and their necks kept straight,"<sup>18</sup>.

If you think of the ones that mention an owl, it could just be an owl. I remember watching one show where they used Owl cardboard cutouts with red eyes and stuff and you know what, maybe some of them are that?

Suppose you looked at a map of the sightings and tried to connect it with

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<sup>17</sup> [Sandhill Crane \(Illinois Department of Natural Resources\)](#)

<sup>18</sup> [The Up and Up: Sandhill Cranes](#)

Wildlife Illinois description of the birds' coverage area as "northern Illinois, particularly in marshy areas in McHenry and Lake counties"<sup>19</sup>. Additionally, you might even consider the O'Hare airport Mothman sightings when hearing "because they are attracted to open areas, they can pose a nuisance near airports" from the same source.

Also – most buckwild of them all: what if it's *just* real?

## THE TEA AND THE RESEARCH.

One particularly interesting story line in this documentary that further drew me into this whole thing was the absolute boiling tea about Paranormal Researchers/Hunters embroiled in this whole thing.

Now, Ben and I aren't free from all of this tea and drama.

We frequently name drop Susan Slaughter our beloved theatre kid turned ghost experimenter and interdimensional icon. We jokingly audition for Paranormal Caught on Tape. We have outright said that you won't be attacked by vampires.

The drama that would exist here is that we could be believers that lean too hard into like, almost non-believing in all of this. One could confront us and say: do you really believe in all of this? None of this joking around and discrediting really says so! And to that I say: sure!

Just to be honest here: I truly believe that a bunch of sightings could just be misidentified birds but also think that some people may have seen an absolutely insane thing that I couldn't fathom. I'm here, there. Everything, Everywhere all at once.

When you talk about Mothman to me, I will follow you into the idea that this is a random creature that we've never experienced before and that it exists as a biological thing. Where you might lose me is the interdimensional, ultra-terrestrial, or alien aspect of it. Don't get me wrong, aliens are real for sure! But... is Mothman one?

I can even talk myself into thinking that this is 100% a fucking owl.

But how does drama talk relate to the Lake Michigan Mothman?

Well, Seth Breedlove and Heather Moser speak to Tobias and Emily Wayland from the Singular Fortean Society, Lon Strickler of Phantoms and Monsters, Sam Maranto of

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<sup>19</sup> [Sandhill Crane – Wildlife Illinois](#)

MUFON, and Jack Chavez and by the end of the documentary you can see the grouping of ideas and the rift that exists between the groups.

There's the party that believes that this (LMMM) exists and all instances are factual to the best of the witnesses' ability but there's the party that believes that this exists (M.M in general) but some of these are just exercises in creative writing. They're all believers but just like what I mentioned above, there's branching off into levels of belief and choosing of lore and who is into what.

This sort of draws several circles and groups up the people who are ready to believe every single story that they hear about vs. ones that are more critical vs. ones that are so critical they seem to not even believe in MM anymore.

This also creates some infighting when it comes to being The One to prove it, hence the race to find and report on MM sightings, the race to discredit someone b/c they won't share evidence with you, and the race to just call someone's information all made up and even say they made up a hoax.

Let's look at Lon Strickler's 2017 post *Daily 2 Cents: Strange Sounds and Lost Time -- Be Wary Of Who You Help -- Man Rigged Front Door to Electrocute Pregnant Wife* and Robbie Graham's interview with Allison Jornlin *Mothman Problems: An Interview with Allison Jornlin*. I do not have the time to unpack that first title but we're focusing on "Be Wary of Who You Help", so stick with me.

It all apparently started when Allison Jornlin began to question the validity of the evidence put forth by Lon Strickler at the time, as he was the major source of the sighting information. She questioned the sources, the evidence, and with the input of Sam Maranto, came to the conclusion that most of the evidence was made up.

Jornlin says:

*MUFON's Sam Maranto has also revealed to me that a significant amount of reports came from the same IP address and cited weather conditions or moon phases in the accounts do not line up with the facts. I've also discovered inconsistencies in witness statements compared to what I saw at the locations*<sup>20</sup>

Jornlin mentions going to the locations (as she's a Chicagoland local) and realising, as she was trying to match things up, that the evidence did not add up. Along with all of

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<sup>20</sup> [Mothman Problems: An Interview with Allison Jornlin](#)

this, Lon Strickler was pretty hesitant to share witness information. In the doc, Lon says that he is doing this out of respect for the people.

At this point, I get both sides. Within reason for one and for the other, I guess that would be me too right?

Anonymity/Confidentiality is something that is important for folks who provide evidence in instances like this. Let's explain the difference between either one.

Anonymity is when the researcher does not collect any information from the person taking part in the thing. There's no information that could be linked to you (e.g email, phone, address, gender).

Confidentiality is when only the researcher conducting the project has the information about the participants. The researcher has to do their best to make sure this information isn't accessible by anyone else<sup>21</sup>.

Strickler is using confidentiality and protecting the witnesses as a reason why he's not sharing this info and in turn Jornlin is using that act as a way to prove that these were all made up, then it circles back when Strickler is like nah, I can't share this and then Jornlin is like that means it's fake!

You get the [dril](#).

Jornlin, in Graham's article, is seen as level headed. Someone combing and sorting out the garbage fire that is 'fake' evidence. She is an investigator who believes but wants verifiable information - something that won't waste a serious investigator's time.

Jornlin, in Strickler's article, is seen as acting in a way that was "unbecoming of an investigator"<sup>22</sup>. The act of questioning sources, "demanding" information, etc. is a no-no. This pushes her to scepticism, instead of being a believer.

Then we have Sam Maranto putting forward the idea that Seth Breedlove and his team are responsible for the Mothman sightings. Maranto says that he thought Seth was doing guerilla marketing for *The Mothman Legacy*, though he doesn't say it unkindly to his face when Seth asks him about it. It's important to reiterate that Sam is on the same team as Jornlin when it comes to some of the evidence. He outright says that the

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<sup>21</sup> [What is the Difference Between Anonymity and Confidentiality? | Endicott College](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Phantoms and Monsters - Real Cryptid Encounter Reports - Fortean Researcher Lon Strickler: Daily 2 Cents: Strange Sounds and Lost Time -- Be Wary Of Who You Help -- Man Rigged Front Door to Electrocute Pregnant Wife](#)

evidence was “contrived”, just like Jornlin. In this he asks – why aren’t people being more critical? You are faced with evidence and all you do is, okay! Sure! No corroborating, no following up, just – okay? Sam, Jornlin, and Jack Chavez are not down with that.

If you wanna take note of who is on who’s side: Sam, Jornlin, and Chavez. Then Tobias and Emily with Lon and Manuel (UFO Clearinghouse).

Then there’s Heather Mosey, Seth Breedlove, and my light in the darkness Eleanor Hasken Wagner.

It’s as if they narratively placed themselves as happy middle in all of this. There’s Team A - so critical to the point of scepticism. Team B - willing to believe most things without question. Then there’s them, Team C - willing to believe, will question, but knows shit’s just freaky. I’m... I *think* Team C, which is why I was so down with this documentary.

Actually, I’m in Eleanor’s dissertation. Page 70 of it. I think. I’ve hallucinated through it, most likely.

I do want to step out and acknowledge this thread from Tobias Wayland on twitter.

“I have a good working relationship with Sam Maranto and we communicate about the investigation regularly”

<sup>23</sup>

That’s right, I’m not here to misinform. In this thread, Tobias clarifies some things that you may have gleaned from the documentary; tthe issues with Allison are more of “professional conduct and personalities clashing”, withheld info is due to the request of the witnesses and has actually worked w/ other investigators by sharing info, and then the best part of all of this – “I am perfectly capable of working with someone with who I disagree because I am an adult and can conduct myself like a professional”.

*Tea.*

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

Now that we’re done with that, let’s move onto some research methodology.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://twitter.com/SingularTobias/status/1468259857006485507?s=20&t=GLBZEmWIXa4Dw5kl-cxK1w>

This is not me stealing the Pasta Punch Up that Ben did a couple of episodes ago, I am not the BRB (Ben Review Board). I'm just vibing to so many questions, but won't ask. I'll let you do that. Within reason.

Outside of the anonymity/confidentiality thing that we talked about above, let's talk about research methods!

An interesting thing noted by Hasken-Wagner is the methods of research these investigators use.

Particularly, some do not have direct experience and rapport with the folks they interview; they are not as embedded and culturally aware of what goes on around the locale. Primarily it seems, research is done through phone calls, emails, or methods that are not necessarily on the ground work, I guess— unlike Mary Hyre in Point Pleasant, who was as embedded as one could be.

Though it's obvious that some of these investigators did travel to the sites and talk to people, they still have something particularly lacking in experience, rapport, and some cultural knowledge.

Something the doc noted was that Lon Strickler, someone who is on the forefront of the LMMM, is not on the ground. He's located currently in McSherrystown, PA. At that time, they noted that he hadn't been at the location since 2017.

**[PAUSE:** Now, I do have to get into it with the BRB. Ben, how would you conduct an investigation like this? What's your personal take?]

Now, to touch back on the issue, not everyone can afford to conduct face to face interviews or some subjects just don't wanna go out there and do this.

Pointed out by Tobias Wayland in that same clarification thread above<sup>24</sup>folks may not want to come forward or retell their experiences due to “perceived stigma” and “a [...] level of trauma from the event itself.”

I think that online, on the phone, and other digital research is cool especially for accessibility and distance reasons. Folks who cannot travel for monetary reasons, physical reasons, or anything else can conduct research regardless of being in that space.

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<sup>24</sup> [https://twitter.com/SingularTobias/status/1468272431404138504?s=20&t=fsGi\\_Q596WpSAs97Bq2UdQ](https://twitter.com/SingularTobias/status/1468272431404138504?s=20&t=fsGi_Q596WpSAs97Bq2UdQ)



We know from the past 2 years and now that travel can be limited and this may have changed the course of several research opportunities but also in some cases opened them up to more online/digital interactions.

This can be solved in a vein similar to Mary Hyre and John Keel's interactions – Mary was on the ground, had rapport with folks, and knew of the locations. John Keel utilised this to the best of his abilities – this was someone folks can trust and tell their stories to but also someone who could be a judge of these people's characters. The happy medium!

Ethnography is wild. I've had experiences with this as a particularly shy and non-confrontational person when I had to study the diversity and interactions between folks of different cultural and racial backgrounds in our city for an Urban Sociology class in college. I struggled with rapport in spaces but I was aware that I had to do something in order to get the best information I could! To gather my qualitative data, I had to talk to people! I hated it!

## CONCLUSION.

Anyway, Seth Breedlove's documentary was really enlightening and showed me a new aspect of Mothman. Not just location wise, but looking beyond the creature itself and examining the people behind the creature - no, not the folks who might be hoaxing it, but the folks who are responsible for spreading the story and helping the lore grow more and more with every revelation they make.

The longstanding lore of Mothman is interesting but with every new revelation there is growth in this story that has shifted outside of the PPMM, but doesn't make it any less interesting.

Also - Research is hard work, especially in something that folks might not even believe is real. You, as a paranormal researcher, might have to parse through so much information to get what you really need or might not even have the information you need!

You stand on the shoulders of those before you who have looked down the void tunnel and came back with a Bigfoot toenail or asscheek print.