

## The Story of my Ghost Story

In January of 1979 I developed a hernia in the groin area that flared and required (almost) immediate surgery. Since I lived in Chicago at the time, winter was upon us. Consequently, after I was released from the hospital, instructions were to remain off my feet as much as possible and because we were in winter I should not go outside where I might slip or slide on the ice.

After my divorce, I took up residence at my parent's. A second floor apartment and was told no stairs either. Basically, confined to quarters. Using the opportunity, I decided to type—yes type. On a Brother electric, self-correcting, portable typewriter, a story dancing in my head I thought I would take a stab at. And, when I created my first novel *Snow Ghost*.

A little over a year later, I decided to move to California to be nearer my children, who had moved there the previous year with my ex-wife. After settling in, I resurrected the manuscript and sent it off to an agent. For a reading fee, they did an analysis of the manuscript. Their analysis was contained in a letter filled with so many big words. I spent more time looking those words up than I did understanding what the analysis wanted me to do.

The company I worked for at the time owned a cabin in the mountains. They let employees use the place as a perk. I took the opportunity to go up there over a long weekend. Once there I proceeded to completely retype the manuscript, all three-hundred pages on clean 20lb white bond paper, following the changes and suggestions from the letter on my Brother electric typewriter.

However, weekend father, kids, work, life in general, the completed manuscript wound up sitting in a box until 2003, almost twenty-five years later when it surfaced again during a move.

I took on the task of typing those yellowing manuscript pages into the computer, if for no other reason than to have it saved for posterity. Around that time, I met an author, who told me about a new publishing option she was using and gave me the details. In addition, she offered to help me get one of my manuscripts published so I could determine if I liked the concept. I chose my Vietnam Memoir, to be the manuscript I would try using this new method.

Within the year I decided to publish my novel as well. Unfortunately, the novel wasn't ready for prime time. Never-the-less, I wanted the book out there and really didn't get the strength of the story (writing) at that time. In other words, the work needed work. Surprisingly, I sold quite a few copies.

Since I had been pitching my manuscript to agents and small publishers, I actually got a hit. A small publisher wanted to take on *Snow Ghost*. But, I needed to take it out of print for at least a year before they would consider. I removed it from production and since I had the time, I did a massive rewrite and restructure of the story. Of course, once again passing it by my editor for him to paint it red. Well the year passed, the thirteenth month, the fourteenth... I contacted the publisher asking for the status. They told me, personnel changed and the one interested in *Snow Ghost* was no longer with the company. Of course he wasn't. The person who took his position promised he would take a look and get back to me. A week later, the publisher informed me they had decided to pass on the project at this time.

No big deal normally. But, there were two other books created as part of a new trilogy. Unfortunately, I needed to get this book back in print and available rather quickly. Especially, since it is the first book in the trilogy. I did find a new publisher who was gracious enough to take on this work with short notice and did get the book back in print. Since I did all the rework and because *Snow Ghost* was the original manuscript (and original book), I decided to release the new version under a new name: *Winter Ghost*. However, I so liked the original title of *Snow Ghost*. I imagine if you search real hard, you could probably find a copy of the original *Snow Ghost* book floating around on the internet for sale. I did a Hardcover and Trade edition. I'm sure there are some out there.

The Ghost Story is still the biggest seller of the trilogy. However after ten years in production, I decided to retire the trilogy and take it out of production. Again, I'm sure, if you look, probably not hard at all, you will find copies of the book floating out there in internet land and probably the other two as well.

Well, for some inexplicable reason, I printed out a copy of the second original manuscript, the rewrite I did for *Winter Ghost*. I told myself to simply take a read through. Out of habit, I had my red pen in hand as I did. When the dust settled, I had a new version. Not only did I change all the character's names, but the location names as well. To further complicate matters I reworked the plot, added a twist or two (maybe three), and strengthened the main characters, giving them more detail, including the Ghost.

After spending a summer doing the rewrite, I couldn't quit there. I set about editing the story, piece by piece, chapter by chapter, until I felt sure this was as clean as could be. Now, excited about what I accomplished, I asked my current publisher if they would take it on. They agreed.

*Season of the Ghost*, was released March of 2020.

However, the reviews were not so favorable. It appears my attempt to restructure the work got me into a bit of trouble with tense changes. While the story still flows. The action still there. And the ending has been well received. The overall structure of the story not so much. However, there were those who did like the book & the story regardless. But, the reviewers were very vocal, or refused to say anything in their dismissal of the new book. After much deliberation I decided to take that book out of production. But, again, you might find a copy or two floating out there. This time I would say don't bother. Sorry.

I know it probably seems odd I would do three versions of the same story. The second version was more of an opportunity and I probably would have been best served to leave it at that. Well, since it was my very first novel and always one of my favorite stories. I couldn't resist the chance of taking another run at it. As I said above the story is still strong even if the structure got lost somewhere. You just might like the original story.

Because of the brow beating and general dislike of the latest version. I could not resist taking another run at the original story. I believe I have fixed all of the tense issues. I have also changed up the story somewhat and updated it to the present time. The original story was written in 1979 so it sure needed a facelift. The story was shaved of about 10,000 words in doing so, as well as cleaning up several paragraphs, phrases and repetitive sentences from my attempt to change directions. I chose to call this version: *Sarah's Last Visit*.

Lastly, I have decided not to put out another edition of this book. Lord knows I sure would like too. But, I just can not. Instead I have decided to post a PDF to my web site for all to read under the **Stories+** banner. I felt it was the least I could do to make up for my faux pas.

Thank you and I hope you get a chance to enjoy my Ghost Story.

And, if you do, let me know what you think. I sure would appreciate it.