

STRANGERS

“He’d stand over me, put his finger to his lips and say ‘shhhh’. I’d see him around our home all the time,” the nurse recalls.

“We moved to another house in the same area when I was about eight and he moved with us. I had no idea who he was until I was about 11. One day I was looking through my parents’ wedding album and on the third or fourth page I saw that same man standing next to my mum.

“It was her father — my grandfather — who’d passed away when I was eight months old, but I had no memory of him, and Mum and Dad had never put up photos of him around our house. After that day I barely saw him again. I wonder if he just wanted me to recognise him.”

Wright-Tabone, 47, is one of the city’s busiest paranormal investigators, often contacted by Melburnians puzzled by a strange presence or series of events unfolding in their home.

A national poll by Essential Research two years ago of 1075 Australians shows a significant number of people believe in the paranormal. About 39 per cent of those surveyed believe in angels and demons and more than a third believe in ghosts. About 34 per cent also believe extraterrestrials or aliens have visited our planet.

Wright-Tabone carries out paranormal investigations with her husband Bill, who uses a collection of hi-tech equipment to capture vision and communication with spirits — good or bad. Their Australian Paranormal Society Facebook page has more than 90,000 followers and receives numerous calls for help from people who are often terrified of what is happening in their own home.

She doesn’t charge for investigations but before venturing into a home, she carries out an analysis to discount possible explanations such as the presence of overhead powerlines or gas leaks that can cause energy disturbances or hallucinations.

With her medical background, she’s also sensitive to possible signs of drug use and mental illness that may negate the validity of reports.

But she says there are many genuine cases of people affected by spirits that refuse to move on.

“I investigated a case for a woman who was sleeping in her car with her kids because she was too terrified to sleep in her house,” Wright-Tabone recalls.

“We set up cameras and recorders inside the

old stove. It took eight months to clear that house and a priest also helped us with that.”

During these sessions, Wright-Tabone “protects” herself with prayers and positive energy. “I do get scared, but you can’t show fear — you have to be strong and be prepared to fight. Often you don’t know what you’ll be confronted with and it can be exhausting.

“But the people who contact us need help and after all these years I’m used to living in a world that’s not the same as everyone else’s.”

JOYCE Bok also investigates the strange and hard-to-explain. The Melbourne psychologist is a member of the Victorian UFO Action group (VUFOA), a UFO research organisation that analyses possible sightings from across the state.

In the past decade, the team of volunteers has been able to explain many sightings as aircraft, satellites, meteor showers or the International Space Station passing overhead. But there are always cases that defy logical explanation.

VUFOA’s case files are filled with reports of pulsating, triangular-shaped craft in Point Cook, strange hovering orange objects over Werribee, spinning pyramid-like craft in Mitcham, and much more.

“When VUFOA receives a report, we do a thorough investigation initially to discount a sighting being something like a plane, meteor shower, weather balloon or satellite,” Bok, 46, says.

“We look at the date, time and place of the sighting to work out what was happening in the area at that time. Was there a plane in the same flight path or was the International Space Station in the area? Was there a celestial phenomenon happening at that time? We do a lot of research to count things out.”

If the sighting withstands this kind of scrutiny, Bok then calls the witness to interview them and assess what they were doing at the time of the sighting and to find out if there were other witnesses. It’s also an opportunity to find out if the person reporting the potential UFO was partying at the time and so might have been intoxicated.

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While this process weeds out many supposed UFO sightings, a significant number cannot be explained, leaving open the possibility of them being contact from other civilisations, Bok says.

“One of the most interesting cases is of a man and his partner living in Healesville who couldn’t get to sleep one night. At about 2am they went for a walk. It was a very dark night with no moon, but the sky was clear,” Bok recounts.

“They were near a reservoir and as they



AMANDA WRIGHT-TABONE

house and then sealed it off. During the investigation we discovered seven entities in the house. We recorded these awful voices saying, ‘Who do they think they are?’ and ‘f*** off.’

“There were three women and four men who’d all been part of a local gang in years gone by. They’d once lived on the land where the woman’s house had been built and they were terrible, terrible characters who had done some awful things. There were burnt dolls left in the roof space and a gun was discovered behind the