

Common Mystics podcast

Bonus- Hometown Haunts in Forest Park, IL- Part 2

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00:00:09 On this bonus episode of Common Mystics, we revisit our hometown of Forest Park, Illinois, and share spooky stories from our childhood. I'm Jennifer James. I'm Jill Stanley. We're psychics. We're sisters. We are Common Mystics. We find extraordinary stories in ordinary places. And this week we complete our two-part series on our hometown haunts in Forest Park, Illinois. That's absolutely right. Jill, can you tell us a little bit about part one for those of our listeners who might not have listened? Well, first I want to say, I think it would be a good idea if you hadn't heard part one of this very special two-part bonus episode, stop right now and go back and listen to it. I agree. But what we discussed and described in part one was the history. We touched on a little bit of the history of Forest Park, the traditions of Native Americans who had buried their dead among or along the Desplaines River and how the white man who came in the area followed suit.

00:01:15 And eventually it caused Forest Park to be notable for having more dead bodies than living people. Some of those dead bodies had been misplaced, as we found out through our research with the construction of the Eisenhower Expressway. Creepy stuff. Right? What else? We discovered that there were multiple locations where there was satanic activity and worship around town. Creepy. Yeah, that was, that was not okay with me. There was also a rich history of the criminal underground, such as bootleggers and mobsters in Forest Park that are still haunting the place. Right? Who knew? So today we're going to do part two and talk more about our personal spooky experiences, as well as those of some of our friends who also lived in Forest Park. Jen, let's get right into it. Bring us to Burkhardt Court in Forest Park. Describe that location for me. So we had some friends who lived right on Burkhardt Court in Forest Park, which is a little street just north of Madison Avenue. Now Madison Avenue is downtown Forest Park. That's where most of the traffic, the shopping, the restaurants are. It's a busy, happening place. And yet if you turn north on Burkhardt from Madison Avenue, it feels strangely secluded. Would you agree? Absolutely. So our friends, Jonathan and Megan lived in the house. That was the last house on the left, on this little dead end street, Burkhardt Court. If you went to Burkhardt Court at night and you try to get into their house, the scariest thing is if the door was locked, because then you would have to wait for someone to come open the door. And all you're thinking is like, come on! come on! for absolutely no reason. You're just anxious about getting into the house and getting into their living room. That's nuts. It's true. So I want to share with you one of Jonathan's stories from the house on Burkhardt Court. So tell me what happened to Jonathan. So when Jonathan was a little boy, I think around eight or nine, he was sleeping in bed and it was late at night and he was woken up by the feeling that someone was watching him. Ooh. And his eyes, when they adjusted in the dark, it looked as if there was a figure standing in front of him. And he was immediately scared and he noticed he had trouble moving. And as he was just looking at this figure, it came clear to him that he thought that this figure was an alien. And he still was feeling trapped by unseen forces, unseen hands, holding him down in place.

00:04:07 Eventually he went back to sleep. But when he woke up later on, he was in the exact same position. That's creepy. So even if he was dreaming and it didn't happen, how like consciously he was in the exact same position in his dream. A little weird. Totally weird. Ooh,

that is freaky. You were also friends with his sister who lived in the same house. That's true. My Meggie. Tell us about Meghan. Meghan had shared a story with me that's crazy creepy. So their house was essentially an apartment building. The front door, when you opened it up, there were stairs leading up to a porch and then two doors, one into their living room, and then down the hall a little bit on the porch was another door that led to steps going upstairs to the upstairs apartment. Well, the door to their living room had three glass windows in the door.

00:05:08 So you can see if anyone was on the porch. Okay. So Meghan, one night, I think it was a Saturday night. Megan was watching TV in the living room and she heard the screen door from the porch bang. And she was expecting her younger brother to run up the stairs and come into the living room, as he often does. She didn't hear any footsteps and no one came into the living room. So she looked in, in the three windows that were in the door. She saw a dense black figure that looked to be hooded as if it was wearing a cloak with a hood.

Speaker 2 00:05:53 She was so scared. Holy cow. What did she tell you she thought it was? She said she thought it was death. Like the Grim Reaper. I know. Crazy. That's crazy creepy, Jill. Oh, well I have another creepy story. Tell me. If any of our listeners listened to our bonus episodes about our mom and our grandma, then they know that we grew up with a brand of Catholicism that was intertwined with the supernatural and the practice of earth magic and the divination arts. That's fair. Yeah. Wouldn't you say? But we went to Catholic school with many friends who did not have the same supernatural inclinations. And our sister, Jessica, was in school at St. Bernadine's Catholic School with two good friends of hers. We'll call them Emily and Allie. Emily, Allie, and our sister, Jessica, were really, really tight friends, so I know this to be true. Now, Emily and Allie's families were both strict Catholics. Emily and Allie wanted to try out the Ouija board and their parents said, no, they could not have a Ouija board, or a spirit board.

00:07:22 It was the devil's play. Little Catholic girls don't do that. Okay. You're asking for bad news if you do that. But they would not take no for an answer. And when their parents wouldn't buy them one, they decided to make their own. So they found a scrap of wood in a rectangular shape from Emily's dad's woodpile in the backyard. And they made a Ouija board, or a spirit board, by writing YES and NO and the numbers 1-9 and the letters A-Z. And then they used a glass turned upside down as the planchette, or the indicator, that you would push around the board when you're having communication with the spirits. Right? And so they knew that their parents would not allow them to use this, right? So they waited until a day when Emily's family wasn't home. And then they went into her living room and they sit, they sit in the middle of the floor and they're sitting knee to knee, and the board is balanced on their laps and their fingers are on the glass, which is turned upside down on the board.

00:08:34 And they ask the first question and the glass starts moving gently at first, but then it starts to move more wildly around the board, until they start to get scared. And one of them yells STOP!!! And at that moment, the board flies up off of their laps and crashes into a statue of Jesus that happens to be sitting on the table in the corner. They were so terrified. They shot up and they grabbed each other and they were crying hysterically. And that's when Emily's older sister walked into the room and found them hysterically crying. Oh my God. And from that day on, they weren't allowed to be friends anymore. Their families would not allow them to hang out together anymore. Oh my God. Do you believe that? That's crazy. That's crazy. That's really crazy. You have some strong thoughts on the Ouija board.

00:09:39 What do you mean? Do I? Yeah, you did. You had some strong thoughts on the board. How, if you make your own, you're asking for, like, double the trouble. It makes it more special. You're right. You're right. I forgot that. We talked about that. Absolutely. I do think that, that if you put a lot of energy into creating something like a spirit board, that intention of even creating it, I think that alone can conjure up something. I think it makes it even more powerful. I'm not doing it. Nope. Neither am I. So our next story comes from our friend Veronica, and she lived across the street from us. You spend a lot of time in that house. I did. And this first story is just about me spending the night with Veronica. You know what I mean.

00:10:34 We were in Veronica's room and the light fixture in the room was very plain. And it was just really a light bulb screwed into the socket. Right. And it had, at one time, that metal pull cord, that metal chain that you pull down to turn it on and off, but that had broken. So the light was broken and it was just off. So in the room, there were lamps. And we, because we were spending the night, I had a flashlight and that's how we lit the room while we were laying in bed. And we were giggling, like, just saying like ridiculous things. We weren't talking anything spooky or anything. And all of a sudden in the middle of the night, the light turns on. Oh my God. And there's literally no way for us to turn on the light physically.

00:11:30 So what happened next? We scream. Her dad... I remember her dad being in the room and us explaining to him like, "No, that light turned on" because he was like, what's going on here? And we're like, "No, no, no, that light turned on." And I can't believe it. Veronica told me I did spend the night and I did not go home, which I find really unbelievable. So we lived right across the street from Veronica. That's right. And our house was a bungalow built in 1912. It had a basement with a basement apartment, a main level, and then, two bedrooms and a bath upstairs. But it was the part of the house that faced the street, or the front half of the house, that I always thought was the creepiest. And I, I totally agree. I totally agree. So for instance, like the front door was of course in the front of the house and there was this small foyer and a, and a creepy closet. And at night when I was supposed to lock the front door, before I went to bed, I would always run in there, run into the foyer, lock it and run out... for no reason other than it was creepy. The front door was creepy. You're right. It was. What about you?

00:12:43 Wow. You know, it's funny in the basement, in that same area of the house, I did the same thing. If I were leaving the basement, I would haul my butt out of it. I never walked out of our basement in a slow place. I was always like jogging or sprinting out for that very same reason. I don't know why it's like turning your back on something. Something that you can't see. Yeah. A hundred percent. Absolutely crazy, crazy. Now upstairs, we slept in the bedroom in the back of the house, but mom's room was in the front of the house, overlooking the street. And I remember being a kid laying in her bed because I had stayed home from school and I was sick and she was like, feeding me liquid Jello, (kind of nice) anyway, but I remember laying there in the, in the late afternoon, in the winter time, just when it started to get dark and being scared because I kept seeing faces come out of the bedroom walls. Super creepy. It was really creepy. Oh my God. Yeah, I know it's scary. And it's that front... That front of the house.

00:13:58 Mom was laying in bed on her stomach because she worked crazy hours. She was always working like two or three jobs and she was trying to catch a rest. And she thought that our sister had approached and sat on the bed. She felt the indentation of someone sitting next to her and she turned around to say, "Hey" ... and there was no one there. Wow.

00:14:25 I believe that. Yeah. What else happened to you upstairs? So, upstairs between our room and mom's room was the main bathroom where we bathed. And I was in the bathtub and I heard our sister come up the steps. And I can tell you I heard our sister, specifically, because our steps had no carpet on them. And you would know who was on the steps by their walk. So I knew, I knew exactly who it was coming up the steps. And unfortunately for me, I didn't have anything to cover up with appropriately to get out of the bathtub and to go into our room to change. I left my clothes in the bedroom. So I was like, um, "You need to go back downstairs so I can get out." And nothing happened, no one talked back to me. No one went down the steps. So I was sitting there yelling, like, "Oh my God, I cannot believe you're doing this! I have somewhere to be!" And, nothing, for like 20 minutes. I'm, like, sitting cold in the tub. So finally I put on my old clothes (nasty) which you do not want to do. And I go out and and I go into our bedroom... and there's no one there. There's no one upstairs. So no one had walked up the stairs? No. Creepy. I believe it. Did I ever tell you about my sleepover? Yes. But can I tell you one more funny thing? Yeah. It's about you. Go ahead. When you were older and needed your privacy, you were able to take over the den that was downstairs as your bedroom. That's true. Right off the dining room. You had gone somewhere. I don't know where you were, but I, too, felt the need for some privacy and I wanted, and I wanted to see how it felt to have your own room for the night. So I tiptoed into your bedroom and snuggled in your day bed. And I felt so comfortable.

00:16:32 You're not laughing. Goldielocks. Exactly. Um, "This bed is just right." So I'm laying in bed and it's, you know, I'm fine. I'm excited because I like laying in bed. Laying in MY bed. Yes. And I'm feeling like, um, I'm feeling good about it. Sometime during the night, though, I have to tell you, I got that feeling like someone was watching me. So I was laying there. Have you ever done this? If you feel like there's a ghost and you're like playing possum, you're like, if I'm asleep, they're not there... put the, put the covers up over your head.... Like they can't see me now. It's like, I'm sleeping, I'm sleeping, I'm sleeping. So that's what I was doing. And so I was like, oh, it's fine. So I ended up going to sleep at night. But in the morning, it was really early, the doorbell starts ringing. And the doorbell chimes were right outside your bedroom door. And they were like, ding ding ding ding, like someone was going break the bell trying to get in the house, like to get someone to answer the door. So I was like, dude. So I was like, I don't know who this is. So I get up and I check the front door. No one's there. So then I go and I walked through the house to the back door, down the stairs. And as I'm approaching the back door, you're walking through the gate and we make eye contact. And I'm like, "Why are you ringing the bell?" I remember that. You were all bedhead, half asleep, and you're like, "Why are you ringing the bell?" And I was like, "I didn't ring the bell. I have a key. I live here. What is wrong with you?" Yeah. And then I remember I walked into my own, cold bed.

00:18:20 Like, weren't you like, why is my bed warm? I, you know, I didn't go right to bed. So I didn't even realize that you had been there. Oh, that's good. That is so funny. So some ghost like helped you out. Because I would have been really pissed to come home and find you in my room. And they knew that too, so there weren't all bad ghosts in the house.

00:18:42 That is funny. And tell me about your story you were going to tell. Okay. So I was about in third grade and I was going to have a few friends sleep over and there were four of us altogether. So three of my friends were sleeping over and we didn't have a lot of space in the house. So instead of sleeping up in the bedroom where you girls were, we camped out in the

front room, in the living room, by the front door in the front of the house. It sounds like fun. It was. So we had our sleeping bags and we were giggling and talking and playing games and it was getting later and later and dad came down, at least once already, to be like, "You girls need to stop talking and go to sleep." I mean, you know, so we were already kind of in trouble, but we are waiting for midnight because... you've heard of the legend of Bloody Mary.

00:19:35 Of course, of course. Well, it, it has a lot of different versions, but when I was growing up, the version I learned was that you went in front of a dark mirror at night and you repeated 13 times, "I believe in Bloody Mary." Now it's better if you have a candle, but I didn't have a candle and I wasn't about to play with fire. So, um, what's, what's supposed to happen is after you repeat it, I believe in Bloody Mary, 13 times, you're supposed to conjure the spirit of Bloody Mary. Then what, what do you do with it? I, well, you know, I don't know what you do with her then, but that's not the point Jill. The point is to conjure her. Gotcha. So, um, my friends and I were waiting for midnight, right? That's the witching hour. Waiting for midnight. I don't know if it's the witching hour, but our young minds thought it was. So midnight comes and we're daring each other to go into the hall bathroom to go, you know, through the dining room, into the hall bathroom and say, "I believe in Bloody Mary" 13 times. And we keep chickening out.

00:20:42 So we decided to go all together. So we tiptoe past the stairs upstairs where our parents and you guys are and, through the dining room, into the hall bath, and there's this big oval, gold framed mirror. Right? And so we all huddled in front of it. And we said 13 times, "I believe in Bloody Mary, I believe in Bloody Mary, I believe in Bloody Mary..." five times, "I believe..." all the way up to 13 times. And we're doing it, and nothing's happening, and it's dark, but it's not so dark that it's pitch black, because there was a window in there and there was enough street light and moonlight shining in. So we can see our dark reflections peering back at us as we're chanting. "I believe in bloody Mary, I believe in bloody Mary..." And then, I kid you not, suddenly, there is a figure above us and behind us on the left that is shrouded, and a dark face. That is not okay. And we screamed and ran through the dining room, back into the living room where we got into our sleeping bags and we're like crying laughing, crying laughing, you know the crying laughing??? I do. And then dad came downstairs and so he yelled at us and then he went back upstairs.

00:22:14 What did he say? He said, "Jennifer, I'm going to beat you and take your friends home if you guys don't go to sleep right now!" And so he went back upstairs and I was like, um, girls, he's really, he's literally going to beat me and drive you all home if we're not really, really, really quiet. But the games weren't over because we knew some quiet witchy games, which was a much better idea than running around screaming and conjuring the ghost of Bloody Mary. So the next thing we did was Light As a Feather, Stiff as a Board, you know this one, right? Yeah, of course. Yes. Yeah. So the idea is somebody, one of your friends, lays down, crosses their hands over their chest. And then the rest of you kneel around her and you only use two fingers on each hand and you put them under her body.

00:23:09 And then you repeat, "light as a feather, stiff as a board... light as a feather, stiff as a board," as many times as it takes for the body to levitate up, using just two fingers on each hand. So this seemed like a good idea, because it was a more quiet game. So we all knelt around. Now, remember there were only four of us. So one person was on the right. One person was on the left and one person was at the head with two fingers under each shoulder. And we started saying "light as a feather, stiff as a board... light as a feather, stiff as a board." I don't

know how many times we said it. We said it over and over again. Almost like we were meditating on it, until, until the body of my friend laying on the ground, literally, started to raise one inch, two inch, three inches...

00:24:00 We raised her off the floor six inches before we were so freaked out by what was happening, we dropped her. Oh my God. We dropped her. And then we stopped because it was just too much at that point. But yeah, that totally worked and it was freaky. And I don't think it was a coincidence that all of this happened when we were spending the night in that front room. Okay. So I just have to say something. Um, when Jen was originally, when we were talking out our stories that we were going to share with you, she's like, didn't you ever do "I believe in Bloody Mary"? And I was like, yes, I have done it. But it never worked... like, like, Oh my God. It worked. Oh my God. It absolutely worked. And Light as a Feather, Stiff as a Board. That's crazy, too. But the Bloody Mary thing? That gave me nightmares, just the thought of it.

00:24:56 Yeah. That was scary. Oh my God. She says "Hi" by the way. Oh no. Right. Oh, so do you, do you believe our house was haunted? Yes. I totally believe our house was haunted. I do, too. But there was a notable haunted house in Forest Park. Everyone knew was haunted. Hmm. That's right. It's the Lobstein house. Yes. It is a large Victorian house that was built in the late 1890s. It's really notable. It stands out in Forest Park as being one of the oldest, but also one of the biggest and most beautiful; it's over 4,000 square feet. And that's a large house if you have like half an acre in Forest Park. It had a huge covered porch on the front of it, a turret, and it was painted a deep green color, and had all of this intricate millwork around the eaves.

00:26:04 And of course the stained glass windows. I mean, it's just, it's still there. It's just a gorgeous home. It is. It's breathtaking. And it was a block away from St. Bernadine's where we went to school and church. That's right. And we used to walk to and from school and yet we never walked in front of that house. We never even walked down that block on Elgin. For some reason, it just didn't feel right. We always either cut through an alley or took a different way, but we never wanted to walk directly in front of that house. And if we had to go down that street, we would cross the street to give us some distance. I mean, it had that sort of energy. It was just emanating ghosts.

00:26:51 So do you think other kids around town knew or felt the same way about that house that we did? Well, Jill, when I was a kid, all my friends and I all knew it was haunted. You could look at it and tell it was haunted. Nobody had to tell us it was. So I believe so. What about you and your friends? Oh my gosh, absolutely. But there was a Chicago Tribune article in 2006 where the mayor of Forest Park was asked about the house and he said, and this is a quote from mayor Anthony Calderon. He said, he doesn't know if parents had told the kids about the house or if kids tell other kids or how word gets around, but it's always been captioned as the haunted house. Absolutely. That house is haunted. Right. You know, what else is pretty cool is that that house was also written about and featured in different books. The National Directory of Haunted Places features the house. And that book was by Dennis William Hauck. And Haunted Chicago: Famous Phantoms, Sinister Sites and Lingering Legends by Tom Ogden.

00:28:02 Wow. I did not realize it was that written about. That's crazy. Yeah. It's notable. Not just for Forest Parkers, but around the surrounding areas. Nuts. Well, you know, we looked a little bit into the lore surrounding the house and people say that Mr. Lobstein, the owner of the house, had a wife named Adeline or Addie who died giving birth in the house. Okay. And she is purportedly one of the ghosts that haunts it. People also say that the child that she died giving

birth to, Charlie, was supposed to be insane and that he committed suicide in the attic by hanging himself at the age of 12. Oh my. And Charlie is purportedly the other ghost. So that's the lore, the story surrounding the ghosts in that house. Have you heard any accounts of modern day happenings? As far as haunted activity in the house?

00:29:05 There was, in that same 2006 article, they discussed some of the hauntings and poltergeist activity that people have reported. What's interesting, Jill, is for some reason, and nobody knows why, but on November 6th of every year, there is a spike in poltergeist activity. Isn't that odd? That is crazy. Nobody knows why it's November 6th, but lights will go on by themselves, particularly in the attic. And there would be neighbors who would see lights going on in the library at, like, three or four in the morning and shadows walking around in the attic windows. That's creepy. That is way creepy. Also loud noises would be heard in the attic. Not just like creaks, like an old house settling, people would report that it would sound like the entire roof was caving in or like there were people having a fight up there. And on one occasion, the owners went up to the attic to investigate and they found that there was a huge, heavy roll of plastic sheeting that was up in the attic. It weighed a couple of hundred pounds. And it had moved from one side of the attic clear to the other side by itself.

00:30:31 Oh my gosh. These classic poltergeist activities and haunts were also experienced by other people, other people that didn't live in the house. So when the house is being renovated and the late 1990s, there were reports by the construction workers of footsteps, especially up in the attic where the attic was carpeted wall to wall. Doors being closed by themselves. There was a painter who went up there with a spray gun and the gun was working, but he couldn't get it to work in the attic. So he was like, forget it. This isn't working and laughed. And you felt creepy. I myself, during the renovation in the late 1990s had gone in that house with two of my classmates. That's crazy. They wouldn't let us in the attic. Oh no.

00:31:22 There are other reports, too, about visitors to the house. In particular, there was one that reported seeing a female figure with long brownish hair sitting at the end of the bed. Oh God, I don't even know what I would do. And then, Oh, there was a three year old girl who was visiting. She was sitting watching TV. Suddenly she looked over at the bottom of the oak staircase and said, "Mommy! Mommy! Lady! Lady!" The little girl said she saw a lady standing there in a white gown. Oh my gosh. That's crazy. Yeah.

00:32:04 Jen. So let's separate fact from fiction. What did we find when we researched the house? Well, if you recall the stories, there's talk about Addie, Mr. Lobstein's wife, dying giving birth in the house to a boy named Charlie who then kills himself at the age of 12. However, the facts are that Mr. John Lobstein built the mansion in the 1890s for his second wife Addie. Now his first wife, Christina, did die in childbirth, but that was not in the house and was before the house was even built. Okay. Now Addie did live in the house and they raised seven children together. But also Addie's brother, Charlie, lived with them in the house and he wasn't her son, clearly, but her brother, and he died at the age of 64. And there's no evidence that he committed suicide in the house at all. And as for Addie, she also died in the house, but it was in 1933 when she was the ripe old age of 81.

00:33:15 Well, it doesn't seem like the hauntings in the house can be attributed to any tragic or sudden deaths there. So yeah. What did you find that can help explain some of that, that haunting activity?

00:33:29 Well, you know, we looked into John Lobstein himself and there might be some negative restless energy attached to him. Explain yourself. Well, it seems that he had some curious business dealings. Clearly he made a lot of money. Yeah. He was in the lumber business and he had some shady or dishonest dealings with the county and the state to build a mental asylum in Cook County, Illinois. Apparently he was overcharging the municipalities, according to the Chicago Tribune in an 1887 article. And he had legal issues associated with this situation. And his lumber company was mysteriously burned down that same year. Oh my gosh. So yeah, he had some, uh, curious business dealings to say the least, and that will attract some negative energy, I think.

00:34:30 Well, as a matter of fact, there is a notable paranormal researcher and author. Her name is Ursula Bielski and she runs Chicago Hauntings Tours. And when she was asked about the Lobstein house, she said she has never been there, but she says that the house may actually have captured the energy of whatever was going on in that house at the time the energy was released. That energy is imprinted there, like a memory and a landscape, like taking a picture. Interesting. So why do you think that that happened, particularly, so why do you think that that house in particular is so spiritually charged?

00:35:15 Well, I think for a couple of reasons, one, he may have been under anxiety, had a lot of pressure and that could attract spirits to you. Also. I think that the house itself, especially over the years, has been a place where people go there to experience something.

00:35:38 That is the truth. That is the truth. And in a town like Forest Park, who knows what would show up there just to accommodate you? So Jill, why do you think there's so much energy in the village of Forest Park? There's so many reasons why people living and going through Forest Park feel that unsettled, unrested energy that's haunting the area. Number one, the Native American burial grounds that have been disturbed. Hmm. How about all of the graves that were disrupted with the building of the Eisenhower Expressway? Oh my gosh. Or the satanic rituals that had taken place in Forest Park. Yeah. We ran into some evidence of it. Didn't we? Also all the criminal activity, all the bootleggers and the mobsters that were associated with Forest Park. And let's not forget all of the cemeteries and all of the dead that are there in that small area.

00:36:41 You know, it's funny. We always set the intention when we do these episodes to give voice to the voiceless. We do. I think in Forest Park, in the case of Forest Park, we're giving voice to those spirits that still call Forest Park home. And that the living are only visiting there for a very short period of time. Wow. All of us living souls are actually just visiting aren't we? Oh, wow. That was a little too creepy for me to digest. I just can't. Jill, tell our listeners where they can find us. Well, you can check out our website, commonmystics.net. Find us on Facebook. You can listen and subscribe to us on Amazon music, Stitcher, Spotify, Google podcast, Apple podcast, where you can leave us a positive review so other people can find us. And lastly, this episode is dedicated to our Forest Park friends, both living and deceased, whose stories were included in this episode: Jonathan, Veronica, Jessica, Lisa, JR, Meghan (Hi, Megs!), Dorothy. Thank you all for sharing these stories with us and inspiring us. Thank you. Goodnight. Thanks. Good night.