

## OTAKU NO CULTURE

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# Occupants Set to Screen at San Deigo Comic Con& Looking Beyond

By Ed Sum (*The Vintage Tempest*)

Quite often, movies using the found footage format is used synonymously with a supernatural horror film and *Occupants* (<http://occupantsthemovie.com/>) is a film that subverts this idea. This movie will be screened during San Diego Comic-Con (<http://www.comic-con.org/>)'s Film Festival on July 23 and San Antonio Film Festival (<http://safilm.com/>) on July 28. For me, as an enthusiast of paranormal studies, this movie is highly recommended.

I would call this product more of a budget thriller instead of in your face horror. For once, this movie is not about another ghostly haunting. This time, the viewer (me) gets to see how one of these found footage films are constructed within the confines of itself. Director Russ Emanuel (<https://www.facebook.com/chasingthegreen>) crafted a wickedly fascinating look into the mirror darkly of the lives of a believably happy couple — Annie (Briana White (<http://www.briana-white.com/>)) and Neil Curtis (Michael Pugliese (<https://twitter.com/teammjp>)) — who are about to cleanse their body of various toxins found in food. Buried in the narrative is also a cleansing of who they are mind, body and soul.

Annie has cameras set up around their home to record their daily activities. Her goal is to monitor their lifestyle changes and document what else may take place. Little does she know that maybe her home is a portal to another world, perhaps Bermuda Triangle (<http://www.livescience.com/23435-bermuda-triangle.html>) style. I'm leaning more towards the mysteries around Mt. Shasta (<http://mtshastaspirit.org/general/mysteries-of-mount-shasta/>). Both are known to be probable portals to alternate realities. Some people venturing into either tend to disappear or experience a change in their own personal life that is seen as alien by others. Emanuel sweetly plays with that through a very careful interplay between one version of the Curtis' family and the other.



While she and hubby are still trying to adjust to a life without junk food, another version is seen pigging out on pizza and soda. As strange as that is, she is drawn to an unfolding narrative that is not quite hers. Certain parallels exist between her life and this mirror universe's version. But when a certain life gets cut short, just what happens next is the stuff of nightmares. Some parapsychologists believe that when we dream, our souls are reliving experiences from another life.



L-R: Annie (Briana White) and Neil Curtis (Michael Pugliese) Whether that's happening at the same time or from a previous, the feelings that can emerge out of it are real. Annie becomes connected to this other version of herself when she's looking at all the recordings she's made, and just how much she gets affected becomes this film's big draw.

Writer [Julia Camara \(http://www.juliacamara.com/\)](http://www.juliacamara.com/) really did her research for this film about how lives from parallel worlds can affect one another. The screenplay she wrote is believable. As other incidents of a similar nature are recalled by metaphysicist Dr. Alan Peterson ([Robert Picardo \(http://robertpicardo.com/\)](http://robertpicardo.com/), *Star Trek: Voyager*, *Stargate SG-1*). He makes the legends he's recounting eye-opening. I was looking for where my iPad (<http://www.apple.com/ca/ipad/>) went to to start googling up the stories he was telling, but like a certain piece of tech in this film, it was nowhere to be found! Could I be experiencing the same thing? I'm surprised the [Philadelphia Experiment \(http://io9.gizmodo.com/5944616/what-really-happened-during-the-philadelphia-experiment\)](http://io9.gizmodo.com/5944616/what-really-happened-during-the-philadelphia-experiment) was not given more of a spotlight, as that's the ultimate reality bending experiment not fully understood.

The thought of people jumping around back and forth to different parallel worlds have been explored before in television documentaries like *William Shatner's Weird or What?* and in fictional programs like Alliance Entertainment Canada's *Psi Factor*. I'm thrilled to see this subject is not being discarded as a story narrative. A few



Robert Picardo gets the green screen treatment for his video segments

similarities in style can be found with the latter Canadian-made program, where instead of the Office of Scientific Investigation and Research (O.S.I.R.), the Peterson Research Institute is "founded" to examine occult happenings. This fictional company would be more believable if only the webpage did not reference the Wikipedia to explain what parapsychology, mythology, metaphysics and ESP (which falls under the category of parapsychology anyways) is about, to set up more of what's to come. When I've been exploring the information, proper institutions like the [Rhine Research Center \(http://www.rhine.org/\)](http://www.rhine.org/) and [Society for Psychical Research \(http://www.spr.ac.uk/\)](http://www.spr.ac.uk/) offers, I will notice this discrepancy whenever it pops up in fiction. While this knowledge does not ruin the film, I have to point it out to those people not as well versed in which organizations are indeed real or not.

The producers are intending to further extend this world through comic books. The tie-in product is developed and is being distributed through and as an [IndieGoGo campaign \(https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/occupants-the-comic-book-tie-in#/\)](https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/occupants-the-comic-book-tie-in#/). It is set to debut hopefully at the same time the movie premieres.

**3½ Senses out of 5**



Tags: [Briana White](https://otakunoculture.com/tag/briana-white/) (<https://otakunoculture.com/tag/briana-white/>), [Independent Films](https://otakunoculture.com/tag/independent-films/) (<https://otakunoculture.com/tag/independent-films/>), [Julia Camara](https://otakunoculture.com/tag/julia-camara/) (<https://otakunoculture.com/tag/julia-camara/>), [Michael Pugliese](https://otakunoculture.com/tag/michael-pugliese/) (<https://otakunoculture.com/tag/michael-pugliese/>), [Occupants](https://otakunoculture.com/tag/occupants/) (<https://otakunoculture.com/tag/occupants/>), [Robert Picardo](https://otakunoculture.com/tag/robert-picardo/) (<https://otakunoculture.com/tag/robert-picardo/>), [Russ Emanuel](https://otakunoculture.com/tag/russ-emanuel/) (<https://otakunoculture.com/tag/russ-emanuel/>), [San Diego Comic Con 2016](https://otakunoculture.com/tag/san-diego-comic-con-2016/) (<https://otakunoculture.com/tag/san-diego-comic-con-2016/>)

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