

UNSOLVED MYSTERIES PODCAST | PETS AND THE AFTERLIFE

S1E36 Transcript

ROB GUTRO: Before I do a reading, I have to be in a peaceful frame of mind. I look at the picture of the pet on the computer and concentrate on the pet's name and try to connect with the pet. And I will be sitting in my chair and I will get back pain, or leg pain. I will feel kidney failure. I've felt a tumor burst in my nose. I've felt eye pain. So, they share that with me, and as I'm experiencing that physically, I'm typing it up to the pet parent. And that acts as a confirmation to them to know that I am actually connected to their pet.

NARRATION: IN 2005, BUZZ, A SEVEN-MONTH-YEAR-OLD WEIMARANER, IS HIT BY A CAR AND DIES. THE DOG'S OWNER, ROB GUTRO, IS HEARTBROKEN, BUT IT ISN'T LONG BEFORE HE STARTS WITNESSING SOME MYSTERIOUS SIGNS THAT HIS DOG IS TRYING TO REACH OUT TO HIM FROM THE AFTERLIFE. THE EXPERIENCE LEADS ROB TO DEVELOP WHAT HE BELIEVES IS A UNIQUE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH PETS WHO HAVE DIED. HUNDREDS OF PET LOVERS HAVE TURNED TO ROB FOR HELP TO RECONNECT WITH THEIR BELOVED ANIMALS. THEY ALL SEEK THE ANSWER TO ONE MYSTIFYING QUESTION: DO OUR PETS SURVIVE IN A SPIRIT WORLD BEYOND DEATH?

I'M STEVE FRENCH, AND THIS IS UNSOLVED MYSTERIES: "PETS AND THE AFTERLIFE."

BRETT SHELLEY: I was living in Herndon, Virginia, and, uh, we got, like, a free newspaper. When I start reading this newspaper, and there's an advertisement for Rob Gutro. He's going to be in the library.

NARRATION: JUST MONTHS EARLIER, IN AUGUST OF 2014, 44-YEAR-OLD BRETT SHELLEY LOST HIS BELOVED AUSTRALIAN SHEPHERD, BUDDY. SO, WHEN HE SEES THAT A SELF-PROCLAIMED PET MEDIUM NAMED ROB GUTRO, WILL BE APPEARING AT THE FALLS CHURCH LIBRARY, HE'S INTRIGUED.

BRETT SHELLEY: I'm not one of those folks that goes off and runs off to the, uh, fortune tellers, or anything. I mean, I'm an ex-military guy who writes software for a living. I was just strangely drawn to this. So, I told my wife, "We should go to this." And she was, she looked at me, rolled her eyes and said, "Sure. Okay." So, we ended up going to that event. We sat all the way in the back row, and Rob started with his, uh, presentation. In the PowerPoint slide, we're looking at the slide and it looked exactly like our dog. Rob gives his spiel, and he's got an — he's a really nice guy. He's not trying to make money off this. He's just saying, hey, this is the talent that he has that he didn't ask for. He's just telling the crowd about his experience and what some of the signs are when this kind of stuff happens, you know. So, the thing ended, and I told my wife, I said, "I just want to go and talk to him for a second." This is just so odd that that picture looked just like our dog, you know. And then I told him, I said, uh, "Hey, Rob, you know. Uh, my dog passed away, like, two months ago and I'm wondering if you could possibly make contact in the way that you do that." So, he looks at me. He can see the deep sadness in my eyes, or something like that. And he's like, "Send me an email, and I'll, I'll see what I can do."

NARRATION: FROM THE MOMENT BRETT PICKED UP BUDDY FROM THE PET STORE, HIS CONNECTION TO THIS DOG WAS REMARKABLE.

BRETT SHELLEY: I'm driving along with Buddy, and the dog reaches over and he's just, uh, probably at the 11/12 week mark, and he's sitting in the front seat, and he reaches over, and he puts his paw on my leg. And it was the cutest thing ever, you know. It was like, oh my God. And that dog, like, just stole my heart from there on.

NARRATION: BRETT'S WIFE WAS ORIGINALLY FROM GERMANY, SO BUDDY WENT WITH THEM ON SEVERAL TRIPS OVERSEAS TO VISIT HER FAMILY. THERE, BUDDY REVELED IN A LIFE SPENT MOSTLY OUTDOORS.

BRETT SHELLEY: If dogs were able to rate how much freedom they had in their life, this dog was, like, in the 98th percentile, you know, just short of dogs that spend their whole life on a farm. So, always, uh, went jogging with him, went hiking with him, took him out in the woods, let him run free.

NARRATION: BUDDY'S LIFE WAS AN ACTIVE ONE, AND HE WAS EVERYTHING BRETT COULD ASK OF A COMPANION. BUT BY THE AGE OF 14, BUDDY BEGAN TO SLOW DOWN.

BRETT SHELLEY: He started showing, uh, some signs of extreme back pain, and then his condition got a lot worse. That just really, really degraded his quality of life. We made that decision to relieve him of, of all his suffering. And it was, it was, um... anybody who's done that thinks that you can just do it. Well, man, that's, there's just no way to prepare for that. You're just not ready for it. The guilt was so immense, extreme, after we realized that he had passed. My wife had to, had to drive us home and all I could do, you know, in that 20-minute drive was to keep myself from, just to hold it in, and keep myself from screaming.

NARRATION: AFTER BRETT MEETS ROB GUTRO, HE SENDS HIM A SHORT EMAIL WITH BUDDY'S NAME AND PHOTOGRAPH. SEVERAL DAYS GO BY BEFORE ROB FINALLY REPLIES AND CONFIRMS THAT HE'S MADE CONTACT WITH BUDDY.

BRETT SHELLEY: This is what Rob is writing. "When he came to me, he was peaceful and happy and healthy again. He kept telling me to ask Dad about ice cream." I was always the one who would get ice cream for the dog. I would take the Ben and Jerry's lid off the container, put it on the ground, put a little bit on there, and then he would lick it up, go crazy, and then I would make him drop it off in front of me, and then he would start to bark. So, it was like this big, fun game that we had.

NARRATION: ROB'S MESSAGE CONTAINS EVEN MORE EERILY ACCURATE DETAILS, THINGS THAT A STRANGER WITH JUST A NAME AND A PHOTO COULD NOT POSSIBLY KNOW. ROB SAID HE COULD SEE BUDDY WALKING ON A LONG GRAVEL PATH IN A WOODED AREA. THERE WERE BIG TREES AND A HOME NEAR THE WOODS. BUDDY HAPPILY WALKED THROUGH THE FORESTED TRAILS.

BRETT SHELLEY: For Rob, that's something that is just some vision. For me, I can tell you that trail starts about 200 yards from my mother-in-law's house in Haibach, Germany. They were renting a house there, right on the edge of the woods. I mean, it's just mind-boggling that he would know that. And then, he also wrote, "He hears somebody calling off in the distance a name, like Elsa or Lisa, and he can't quite make it out. And the dog is with a woman with, looks like light hair, either light blonde hair

or white hair.” So, he's describing my mother-in-law exactly. My father-in-law's like 6’3”, my mother-in-law's like 5’3”, so the taller Germans would walk ahead, because they got longer legs, and they would always be yelling back at my mother-in-law, Elka. You know, not Elsa, but Elka. And it, it sounded kind of German-Germanized, so I can totally see him getting that wrong.

NARRATION: READING THE EMAIL, BRETT IS OVERWHELMED WITH EMOTION, CONVINCED THAT ROB HAS MADE GENUINE CONTACT WITH HIS DECEASED BUDDY.

BRETT SHELLEY: Some of the stuff that he described is just beyond explanation. I had tears coming out of my eyes when I read that stuff. One of the things he said, you know, the dog says he seems fine and healthy on the other side, and enjoying himself. That just kind of put me at peace. If nothing else, Rob did a really great thing for me from that light.

ROB GUTRO: My name is Rob Gutro, and I am a medium and an author. I write books about how spirits and ghosts communicate with the living, and then I teach people what signs to look for, so that they can get comfort from knowing their pets, and people who passed, are still with them. I am not a psychic. A psychic is someone who can read energies of past, presents, and future. So, they can tell you whether or not you should accept a job in the future, or if you're going to be moving in the future. I can't do that. I can only talk to people and pets who passed, and share what they want to tell you. I've become known more as a pet medium, because it's... seems to be a lot more easy for me to communicate with pets than people.

NARRATION: ROB RECALLS HAVING EXPERIENCES WITH THE PARANORMAL AT THE AGE OF 13 WHEN HE COMMUNICATED WITH HIS DEAD GRANDFATHER. BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL LATER IN LIFE THAT ROB DEVELOPED HIS SPIRITUAL ABILITIES WITH PETS — ALL THANKS TO A DOG NAMED BUZZ.

ROB GUTRO: Buzz was a puppy that I received as a birthday present, and I didn't know if I was going to be ready to be a dog dad. But, my bond with this puppy was immediate, because he came to me and developed pneumonia within two days. So, he was desperately ill. I remember taking vacation time, and sitting with him throughout the days, giving medication, putting up a tent, using a vaporizer, nursing him back to health. And when you do that with somebody, and you spend all that time together, you really form an emotional bond. All I had to do was just look in his eyes, and I could feel the love from him, and he could feel love from me. I think that's really what cemented my relationship with him. He was very appreciative of that, and that's why he came back to me, and he taught me many of the ways that our pets can communicate from the afterlife, so that I can help other people find that comfort, as well.

NARRATION: IN 2005, SEVEN-MONTH-OLD BUZZ, STILL IN HIS PUPPY PHASE, BREAKS AWAY FROM HIS LEASH AND IS TRAGICALLY HIT BY A CAR AND DIES. ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, ROB BEGINS TO BELIEVE THAT BUZZ IS SPEAKING TO HIM BEYOND THE GRAVE.

ROB GUTRO: After Buzz passed, the first thing he conveyed to me was a musical sign. I walked back into my house to call the vet, and there was a radio on. And the very first song was a song by Garth Brooks called The Dance, which is really about how a person loved very deeply, and short, and was just

very happy to have their short time with somebody they deeply loved. So that, to me, was a message. The second thing was, a couple of friends met me at the veterinarian's office, and we were all standing outside, and there was a trashcan next to us in the parking lot, and there was nobody around. Well, that trashcan lid popped off and shot four feet in the air and there was nobody there. And I knew it was Buzz, and he wanted to let me know that he is still very much around in spirit. Buzz went on to do a whole bunch of different things. We saw him move a shoe across the hallway when there was nobody there. I watched him appear visibly, and I followed him into a room that had no other exit, and he disappeared. He also led me to another dog that looked just like him when I was on vacation in Puerto Rico.

NARRATION: ROB EVENTUALLY DECIDES TO USE HIS EXPERIENCES WITH BUZZ TO HONE HIS ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER PETS AS WELL. BELIEVING HE'S DEVELOPED A UNIQUE AND POWERFUL GIFT, HE BEGINS TO OFFER HIS SERVICES, ASKING PET PARENTS TO SEND HIM A SIMPLE EMAIL WITH THE NAME AND PHOTOGRAPH OF THEIR DECEASED PET.

ROB GUTRO: Before I do a reading, I have to be in a peaceful frame of mind. And I look at the picture of the pet on the computer and concentrate on the pet's name and try to connect with the pet. And several things that come through all the time are the way the pet passed, or the way the pet felt physically before they passed. And I will be sitting in my chair and I will get back pain, or leg pain. I've felt eye pain. So, they share that with me, and as I'm experiencing that physically, I'm typing it up to the pet parent. And that acts as a confirmation to them to know that I am actually connected to their pet. Then the pet will go on about different things that were important to them. People's pets will convey things that I wouldn't possibly know in order to, number one, prove their identity. Pets on the other side will also tell me maybe their favorite toy, or who they're with on the other side. They'll give me a name. They may tell me what that person looked like on the other side, what they're wearing. And then I will try and address the questions that the pet parent has for me.

NARRATION: ROB HAS WRITTEN SEVERAL BOOKS AND HAS ALSO GIVEN NUMEROUS TALKS ON HIS EXPERIENCES AS A PET MEDIUM, IMPRESSING HUNDREDS OF PET OWNERS WITH HIS UNUSUAL ABILITIES. DAN MILLER IS JUST ONE OF ROB'S CLIENTS. DAN'S BOND WITH HIS DOG CHRLEY RAN DEEP FROM THE MOMENT HE LAID EYES ON HER.

DAN MILLER: I went to the shelter, and at the end of the kennel was Chrley. C-H-R-L-E-Y. We took her out in the yard, my girlfriend and I, and everything seemed fine. And there's a room where you socialize with cats and other things. And I went into the room with the dog and I kind of got down at that level on one knee, and she came and sat and leaned right into me. So, I think she picked me. She was a Mastiff-Bloodhound mix, grew to be 100 pounds. And always laying underneath my feet or beside me, beside the chair. You get up to walk across the room, and the dog gets up to go with you, even though you do it 20 times. That's... that was her.

NARRATION: GOING INTO HER 10TH YEAR, CHRLEY BEGINS TO DEVELOP AN ILLNESS KNOWN AS CUSHING'S DISEASE. THOUGH DAN DOES EVERYTHING HE CAN TO HELP CHRLEY, THE DISEASE IS INCURABLE AND HER HEALTH DETERIORATES.

DAN MILLER: The last few days of her life, she was very uncomfortable. And in the end, it was really obvious that, you know, I needed to do the right thing and put her down. The vet was gonna come down and help the next night, but she didn't make it. She passed away the next day. And I always felt that I kind of just did a disservice to her by not letting her go out with dignity. If you've ever been around a dog that's died, they go through a tremendous amount of agony. So, emotionally, that's the kind of thing I think of. Boy, I just... it could have been so much better, and it wasn't.

NARRATION: STILL RECOVERING FROM THE DEATH OF CHRLEY, DAN SENDS ROB HIS EMAIL WITH CHRLEY'S NAME AND PHOTOGRAPH.

ROB GUTRO: First thing is that his dog Chrley showed me that she was near water all the time. She loved water, and then she had a scare just before she passed.

NARRATION: THE DETAILS THAT ROB PROVIDES ARE INSTANTLY FAMILIAR TO DAN.

DAN MILLER: We used to go to a cabin up in Drummond Island, Michigan. My brother was building a cabin and the last time she went to Drummond Island with me, she gets out of the truck, went down to the dock and fell off the dock, right into the lake. And we had to get her out of the lake and then get her up on the dock and back into the boat. So nobody knew about that except for me and my brother.

ROB GUTRO: She also provided all kinds of physical signs that Dan said that nobody would know, only she would know.

DAN MILLER: She's also told him that, in the last few days, she had a tremendous pain in her right hip, and that's the leg that was all swollen. And the only people that knew that were me and the vet.

ROB GUTRO: One of the things that really shocked Dan was that he had asked me, "What was her favorite toy?" and I told him that Chrley's favorite toy was the un-squeaky duck.

DAN MILLER: He did mention a squeaky toy, or a squeaky duck that she had related to him that was her favorite toy. This is what really hit me. As I was driving away to a job site after I talked to Rob, I had to stop and pull over and take a picture of what was sitting on my dash. Because the day after she passed away, I grabbed a little Duck Dynasty duck, and I put her tag on it, and I put that on the dash of my truck. And it has been there ever since. The kind of thing that you just, you see it all the time, but you miss it, and you don't notice it because it's there so much. And Rob's conversation to me was the duck that used to squeak. And I hesitated, and then I grabbed that duck, and I checked and sure enough, it had a squeaker that didn't work, that she had bit through. And that's, that's for me, I don't know how he could pick out something that meant something to her that also meant something to me. That's what I wanted to keep around. And his comment during the interview was that she's glad that I have that toy. And I'm starting to break up about it now because that's, that's just, that was me and Chrley. We'd play fetch and squeaky toys and stuff. I still have it. It sits on the dash of my truck.

NARRATION: HIS EXPERIENCE WITH ROB CONVINCES DAN THAT THE COMMUNICATION WITH CHARLEY IS GENUINE AND THE EXISTENCE OF AN AFTERLIFE IS REAL.

DAN MILLER: Someone like Rob, who gives all these details about my dog, it gives me hope for the fact that there is something that's going to happen, and it's going to be good. It's going to be different. It's not going to be earthly, but the emotion that I felt was a little bit more like relief, and joy, and, I think, my vision and version of when I go, I'm going to be somewhere out in a, a field. It'll be sunshiny day and it'll be a big tree with a bunch of shade, and it'll be a great place, and all my dogs are going to be there.

NARRATION: THOUGH ROB SPENDS SOME OF HIS TIME WRITING BOOKS AND GIVING TALKS ABOUT HIS WORK AS A PET MEDIUM, HE ALSO HOLDS A DAY JOB AS A METEOROLOGIST — A CAREER THAT'S SHAPED HOW HE APPROACHES HIS EXPERIENCES WITH THE SPIRIT REALM.

ROB GUTRO: All of my books are based on the foundation of the science of energy — that energy cannot be destroyed, it can only be transformed. Every living thing has a soul. That energy that's physically within us combines with our memories, our personality, and our knowledge of this life. The soul question is a very big deal for me, because when I first started doing readings for pets on the other side, some people of various religious groups would say animals don't have souls. And that's, to me, that's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. There is no difference between a pet soul and human soul.

NARRATION: BUT ACCORDING TO ROB, THERE IS A DISTINCT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOULS THAT PASS TO THE OTHER SIDE AND SOULS THAT REMAIN ON EARTH.

ROB GUTRO: We make a conscious choice when we die, to stay here, Earthbound at a fixed location of our choosing, and I call that a ghost. Or, we cross over into the light and join the energies of the cosmos or heaven, and I call that a spirit. Energy is basically the science that I've come to as the foundation of the paranormal. And that's what I use to explain the difference between a ghost and a spirit, and how they get strong enough to convey messages, because not all spirits and not all ghosts have enough energy. I have learned that they use physical energies and emotional energies to get strong enough to convey messages. Ghosts use negative emotional energies, like fear, anxiety, depression, and anger. Those things help fuel the ghosts to get strong enough to communicate with us. So, if you go into a haunted house, and you have anxiety, you're basically plugging that ghost in to give you a sign that they are there. Spirits of our loved ones, like our pets, they use faith, love and hope that we have for them, and that strengthens them to communicate with us. Pets can be ghosts and spirits, but mostly they're spirits. Sometimes pets can be stubborn, like people, and they will decide to stay behind.

NARRATION: ROB BELIEVES PETS ARE STILL ABLE TO SENSE OUR LOVE AND NEED FOR CONTACT EVEN AFTER DEATH, AND SOME PET SPIRITS ARE CAPABLE OF SENDING US SIGNS, WHETHER WE RECOGNIZE THEM OR NOT.

ROB GUTRO: Love is an emotional energy and pets can read that. They do know that we love them, and if you think about your pet, or you speak to your pet verbally, they can also hear and understand that, because thoughts are energy. If you think about how we measure thoughts as little electrical impulses

in the brain, that's energy. Sound is also energy, so they can hear that, too, and they will give us signs from time to time. Not everything we see is a sign. But there are many, many ways that they communicate, from visible appearances to appearing in our dreams. One person even reported seeing a paw print in her bathmat weeks after her dog passed away. He just wanted to let her know that he was still around. Pets want us to know that their love will last forever, and they'll be waiting for us on the other side.

NARRATION: ARE THESE ACTUALLY SMALL SIGNS FROM OUR PETS ATTEMPTING TO MAKE CONTACT FROM THE BEYOND? MOST PEOPLE MAY BE HESITANT TO BELIEVE IT, BUT NOT MICHAEL VINCENT, WHO LOST HIS DACHSHUND, JOFFREY, IN 2019.

MICHAEL VINCENT: The really weird thing, the first night without Joffrey, the electrical line right outside our window blew, and all our electricity went out on our street. And, you know, the first thought that went through my head was, "Was that you, Joffrey?" Because I was thinking about him and so hoping to get some kind of sign from him. But I quickly just dismissed it.

NARRATION: LOSING JOFFREY WAS A PROFOUNDLY TRAUMATIC MOMENT IN MICHAEL'S LIFE. THE LITTLE DACHSHUND WAS THE FIRST PET MICHAEL CONSIDERED HIS OWN, AND THE BOND THAT THEY HAD FELT SEEMED UNBREAKABLE.

MICHAEL VINCENT: Back in 2005, I had never had my own dog before. And I told my partner, Brian, I said, "I think I really want to get a puppy and raise it, and I think it would really be nice." So, I happened to find an ad in, uh, the local paper for little dachshund puppies. They were all short haired. Two were red females and one was a dapple female. She was beautiful. And then there was one black and tan male. Right away, I fell in love with him. And so, we took him home that day, and I don't know. It's like something really happened to me because I had never loved an animal so much. It's almost like our souls were just intertwined. In fact, I used to always worry about the day I was going to have to say goodbye to him, and I always would whisper in his ear, "Please stay with me as long as you can, Joffrey."

NARRATION: MICHAEL BROUGHT JOFFREY EVERYWHERE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, AND JOFFREY IN RETURN ALSO CRAVED BEING IN MICHAEL'S ARMS AT ALL TIMES. BUT BY THE AGE OF 14, JOFFREY'S PHYSICAL AILMENTS WERE PILING UP, AND THE VETERINARIAN GAVE MICHAEL THE UNFORTUNATE DIAGNOSIS THAT JOFFREY WOULD ONLY CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE.

MICHAEL VINCENT: She told me, she says, "You know, the rest of his life will be going back and forth to the vet. It's just not going to be the same. I want you to know that." So, I asked her. I said, "Well, if he was your dog, what would you do?" She said, "I would probably put him down." And I knew she was gonna say it, and I was prepared to hear, but it was tough. I loved him so much and I didn't want him to suffer. So, I told her, I said, "Let's go ahead and just do it." One morning after Joffrey's passing, I kept hearing, like, a slow jingle, and that was the sound that Joffrey made as he was walking down the hall. Because he, you know, in his later years, he was just slow. And he'd walk slow, but I could hear the jingle of his tag on his chain. And I was, just remember sitting up in bed, and I was thinking, "Joffrey, is that you?"

NARRATION: DETERMINED TO MAKE FURTHER CONTACT WITH JOFFREY, MICHAEL TURNS TO ROB GUTRO FOR HELP.

MICHAEL VINCENT: He sent me an email with the reading from Joffrey, which just really surprised us. I didn't really know anything about contacting animals, or just how true that could be, because my thought was how can you really know what's in the mind of an animal that has passed on? It's one thing when they're alive, because I always felt like Joffrey was talking to me with his eyes, or his movements, or, or whatever. But being passed on, that was something that I wasn't really sure about. As he started off, he, he was kind of talking about things that I thought, yeah, that's something that you can say about any dog. You know, "I love mealtime." You know, "I love the treats that you gave me," you know, that kind of stuff. But he did say that, "I had two great daddies." And he said, "but I was more especially close to my daddy, Michael." And I thought, okay, he's got that right, because we did have a very special bond and he was my puppy.

NARRATION: WHEN MICHAEL READS ROB'S EMAIL, HE'S OVERWHELMED WITH EMOTION. SO MUCH SO, THAT HE HAS TO HAVE HIS PARTNER, BRIAN, READ THE REST OF IT FOR HIM.

MICHAEL VINCENT: Brian asked me, he said, "Did you tell Rob anything, or give him access to anything of yours?" I said, "No." He said, "He just asked about a ramp that Joffrey is telling him that was made for him." Well, Brian built a special ramp for Joffrey in our backyard. It goes from our deck into the yard because, in his older years, he had trouble hopping up onto the deck. So that just really, like, sealed it for us. It's like, wow. Okay, there is something to this, because there's no way Rob would even know about that deck.

ROB GUTRO: He is the only dog that I have actually done a reading for that told me how proud he was of learning how to use a ramp. He made me feel like it was a really incredible personal accomplishment. And Michael wrote me back and he said that the ramp thing was totally 100%. That Joffrey was so proud of being able to go up and down that ramp, and he told me that he was, it really choked him up.

NARRATION: MICHAEL IS ASTOUNDED AT ROB'S ABILITY TO KNOW SUCH AN OBSCURE DETAIL, BUT OVERJOYED BY THE SIGN THAT JOFFREY STILL EXISTS IN SPIRIT. MORE THAN EVER, MICHAEL IS GRATEFUL FOR THE TIME HE WAS ABLE TO SPEND WITH JOFFREY.

MICHAEL VINCENT: I almost feel like he came to this earth and came to me to open my eyes, and give me lessons in this life. Of course, I still miss him. There are times I think about him, and I, I miss him very much. But I, truly in my heart, just know he's in a very happy place, and he's happy, and he's healthy again. And I know that one day, I'm gonna see him again.

NARRATION: AFTER YEARS OF HELPING GRIEVING PET OWNERS FIND SOLACE IN THEIR PET'S PASSING, ROB HAS PICKED UP A GREAT DEAL OF INSIGHT INTO THE UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PETS AND THEIR HUMAN COMPANIONS.

ROB GUTRO: Some people who grieve their pets grieve them more deeply than the loss of people. And that's understandable, because they look at them as children. We raise our pets very much like we raise human children, to a point. We take them to school. We potty train them. We teach them how to behave well with others. We teach them some language. We teach them good habits. They know routine. They all have to get exercise, all the same things that we do with human children. So, they become like children to us, especially for those of us who do not have human children. The grief can be extreme when their pet passes, because, you know, as a human, we are raised to think our children will always outlive us. They'll always grow up and, you know, get a job and, and move out. But with pets, we know it's different because their lifespan is shorter, but it doesn't make it any less traumatic when they pass.

NARRATION: MORE THAN ANYTHING, ROB'S PREVAILING MESSAGE ABOUT OUR PETS IS ONE OF LOVE AND ENDURING CONNECTION THAT TRANSCENDS DEATH ITSELF.

ROB GUTRO: This is important to me because it helps me bring comfort to people who otherwise may not be able to find it, and to educate people, that life goes on, on the other side, and that everybody's waiting for us on the other side. One thing they do want us to know on the other side is that they're really grateful for us when we have the courage to help them cross over. They don't want us to feel guilt. Instead, they want us to treasure the memories that we had together with them. And they have nothing but love for us. That's their main message: "Please don't feel guilty for helping me cross over and find peace out of pain. Just remember the love that we shared together." We can all affect everybody's life in a positive way. And this is my way of doing that to people that I don't know, anywhere around the world. And I also have to acknowledge that this would not have been possible without the passing of my dog, Buzz. His sacrifice for living his short life has really turned into a gift, I think, that has been shared with people around the world. So, to me that's really important. It's a great way to honor his memory, by helping other people.

NARRATION: NEXT, ON UNSOLVED MYSTERIES...

BRYAN BUCKLEY: That's where we think the actual murder happened was right there in the driveway of his chicken houses. We went out to where he would normally park his truck and we searched the area and no shell casings was ever found.

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Unsolved Mysteries is a production of Cosgrove Meurer Productions and Cadence 13. It is executive produced by Terry Dunn Meurer and Chris Corcoran. Produced by Lloyd Lochridge, Christine Lenig, Courtney Ennis, Paige Hymson and Paul Yates. The Story Producer for this episode was Caitlin Cutt, and it was edited by Ryan Dann.

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THANKS FOR LISTENING TO EPISODE 36 OF UNSOLVED MYSTERIES.