

Ken Grimwood-Replay

I promised this article a month ago, so here it is.

Today's article is less specifically about the novel *Replay*, and more of the curious connection of the author to the work. *Replay* came out in 1987 and became a Fantasy Award winner in 1988. For me it was the first book that I read after my Canyon experience in 2005, and thus seemed to have a very detailed connection for me to that event.

It could be said to be the later premise of the movie *Groundhog Day*, except here the main protagonist (Jeff Winston) lives a large section of his life over, not just a single day. Each life he attempts to live differently, but in the end each life sort of dissolves into a non-importance element of it all, even in later lives when he can live with with another replayer as himself.

While some of the character development needed much more depth, and certain key ideas were never fleshed out (why does Jeff have to choose to be super rich every life as opposed to testing one out in pure poverty) there are a few key discussions that weave through the book as to the nature of this reality, and who is or is not actually "awake."

It was not just the time loop idea that interested me, but the idea that each world continued on independently after Jeff dies, thus creating several parallel realities, which matched my experience in 1999. So for me there was a lot in his work that was seeming to speak to my own life experience.

But this short article is about the author Grimwood. Because on studying him more closely, I am beginning to wonder if *Replay* was not a novel, but a personal biography. Grimwood might have been the replayer, living through several versions of the same life, as Jeff. Lets look at some key moments. Grimwood died of a heart attack in 2003, as his character Jeff would die of in each of his replays. Jeff's life in many ways mirrors his own: Grimwood went to Emory College in Atlanta, grew up in Pensacola Florida, spent a year in Paris, worked at an all-news station, also studied at Bard College (where Pamela the other replayer went to school). Grimwood was also married and did not have children, a key feature that after their first lives both Pamela and Jeff no longer wanted to parent children. Oddly Grimwood also owned the first betamax sold, and kept a large collection of movies to watch. I found a bit more, but will save that for a future article if there is one, but I can tell you some of it is odd.

I understand as an author that one writes about what one knows and has experience. But in this case the co-incidences are so uncanny. Jeff Winston's life is a mirror of Grimwood. I would not be surprised if his life was looked into further, there would be a Sharla, Linda, Frank and all the other characters as real people in his life.

The question is, was this Grimwood writing a story discussing his previous replays. In one of Jeff's, he too becomes a writer, though choosing to write about people who spent long amounts of time in solitude. That could be a metaphor, as Grimwood may have seen himself in solitude. It is claimed he had few friends. Did he have a fellow replayer that he knew? Hard to say. His other books have themes of reincarnation, immortality, and some other subjects that find their way into *Replay*.

Like I say I have more, but am not sure yet what to do with it, or how it applies such as his small articles that he posted in university newspapers in the 1960s. They are hinting at someone already who has seen a layer past normal reality.

So I will leave this here to give a brief overview. My plan is to read his other novels over the summer and see if there is something interesting in them that provides a few more clues if he had an

underlying message to the totality of his work.