"Nephite Sighting"

Katie Francis
katiefayfrancis@aggiemail.usu.edu

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“Nephite Sighting”
Supernatural Religious Legend

Informant:
Timothy Leonido Cabal (Tim), born 26 April 1991, is a friend of mine who was born and raised in Oceanside, California. His father is half Filipino, half Irish, and his mother is full Filipino. Tim was raised in the LDS church, served an LDS mission in Colorado, and is now a Theatre Arts Student at Mira Costa College in Oceanside, California. He continues to participate actively in his faith. In his spare time, Timothy is an avid portrait sketch artist, crocheter, and caretaker of his dog and pet Savannah Monitor Lizard named Thrawn.

Context:
This item was collected via a Facetime interview. I was in my home in Logan, Utah and Tim was at his home in Oceanside, California on Sunday, November 19, 2017. I had been in correspondence with Tim since we met while I was visiting friends in San Diego in March of 2017. He had told me this story several months earlier during a phone call as we were exchanging stories from our LDS missions. So the following text is transcribed verbatim from that Facetime call when I asked him to retell his story. Tim’s actual experience would have happened approximately in the winter of 2015 in San Diego. The individuals present at the time of the event were his mother, the gentleman whose carm broke down, and of course Sal, the man believed to be one of the immortal Three Nephites.

As for the legend of the Three Nephites, this legend can be found in the scriptural account of the Book of Mormon, a collection of sacred writings similar to the Bible. The Mormon faith believes that the prophets who wrote in this book recorded God’s dealings with the inhabitants of the Ancient Americas. They believe that the resurrected Christ appeared to this ancient civilization in America who called themselves the Nephites. He established his church there and as part of this establishment, he called twelve apostles as he had done in Jerusalem. Three of these apostles asked Christ to make them immortal so they could continue to carry out the Lord’s work upon the earth until his second coming.

Tim also mentions his patriarchal blessing towards the end of the interview, which is another important tenet of Mormon faith. Mormon youths, anywhere from the age of about twelve to twenty and beyond, receive a blessing by laying on of hands by a male member of the church who holds what is called the melchizedek priesthood and has been ordained to the office of a patriarch. The blessing is recorded for the individual on paper and includes blessings the individual may experience in their future life contingent upon their faithfulness.

Text:
Katie: I wondered if you could, like, tell that story again, about, the three Nephite-s? Do you remember that one? Where you like thought you met one of them?

Tim: Oh yeah.

Tim: I actually - Katie: Yeah.

Tim: - think it was John.

Katie: John? Like John the beloved?

Tim: Yeah, ‘cuz he’s still around too.

Katie: Right.

[pause]

Tim: Umm. [long pause] On my mission? That was out - that was here.

Katie: In San Diego.

Tim: It - [very long pause]

Katie: Oh no! Where’d you go?

Katie: Oh, there you are. Tim: Oh -

Tim: Am I freezing up? Am I freezing up?

Katie: Oh. You’re good, you’re good now.

Tim: Hold on one second, lemme try to -

Katie: Ope.

[pause]

Tim: Hummm… ah, what do I do hold on… [the facetime image disappears]

Katie: [In British accent] I can’t see you.

Tim: [Also in British accent] Sorry ummm..

Katie: [in silly voice] Ohhhh no!

[Long pause. The facetime image reappears.]
Tim: How’s, [pause] is that better?

[pause]

Katie: Yeah.

Tim: Can - meh - Yeah?

Katie: Yeah.

Tim: Ok. Alright.

Katie: Thanks. [pause] Umm so yes. You, why don’t - what - tell me the story again. How did it start?

Tim: Well, ummm, my mom and I were leaving the mall. In Carlsbad [California].

Katie: K.

Tim: We were driving, back home, on El Camino Royale, which is,...a street.

Katie: K. Tim: [laughs]

Tim: And,...umm, once we got to the intersection of El Camino Royale and Oceanside Boulevard,..

Katie: Mmm -

Tim: Uhh - we were stopped at that stop - light. And, umm, the next stop, well the - the next green light went but we weren’t able to go because the car in front of us, was - they had their hazzards on and there was something wrong with their car.

Katie: Mmmhmm.

Tim: And,...[pause] I pulled up next to the guy and asked if he needed help, and he nodded at me because he, didn’t speak much English he was a Hispanic man. And I told him that I would, repark my car in-to the, in the parking lot that was to the left of where, of the road that we were on.

Katie: Mmmhmm.
Tim: And, after, well so I go and park the car, and I, left my mom in the car, and when I went to go help this man push his car, not only, through the intersection but he was in the - the turning lane to turn left.

Katie: Mmmhmm.

Tim: And we - that - that intersection’s kind of - there’s kind of a slope to it so we have to kind of push it up - well, down and up. And then, to the left. And, as I was - started to help him there was a man that, umm, that got out of his car and was - started helping for about two seconds and the light turned green, and then he got back in his car and, he left. And I remember, it was just me helping him, I remember, as I was behind the car, I just said, “Heavenly Father just please give me the strength of Nephi.”

Katie: Mmmhmm

Tim: And then, not eve - not - not even, two second seconds after I finished saying that, this man appeared. He was wearing a tight, black shirt, and blue jeans. And his hair was kinda slicked back.

Katie: Mmmhmm Tim: He looked -

[slight pause]

Tim: - He look - he could definitely pass off as Native American -


Tim: And, he, started speaking to this man in Spanish.

Katie: K.

Tim: And then we ended up pushing, the car through, the intersection down and up over the slope and then to the left.

Katie: Mmmhmm.
Tim: And, as - we - got - through there, uh - well, once we got through there, he said, to me, “That’s enough.” And then we stopped pushing.

Katie: Mmmhmm.

Tim: And then, the - the gentleman with the car, kinda eased his car off to the right, and parked it, and then the police officer came and helped him out.

Katie: Mmhmm.

Tim: But this man and I - this man in the black shirt and I were walking back to the intersection -

Katie: Mmhmm.

Tim: And - he pressed the crosswalk, button to go one way, and, he asked me if I lived around here, and I’m like “Yeah I just live over in that area just pointing to - the area that I lived in.

Katie: Mmmhmm.

Tim: And he’s like, “Yeah I’m around - I’m - I’m from around here too.” And he told me that his name was Sal [pronounced like the first syllable of ‘Sally’].

Katie: Sal.

[pause]

Tim: And - umm, I - I told him my name. And then, I turned to press the crosswalk button to go, the other way - the opposite direction that he was going. And after I pressed the button, I turned around, and Sal was not there anymore. [slight pause] And, his, light to cross- to - for the crosswalk flashing and, he wasn’t in the middle of the street, umm,... nobody had picked him up and if he had a car, he would’ve parked - he would’ve left it on the - on the other side of the intersection.

Katie: Yeah.
Tim: And, it was only - I only turned, around, for maybe two to three seconds, maybe not even that. And he was just completely gone and I remember, umm, kinda just being a little, flustered a little overwhelmed. And almost instantaneously I’m like, “Heavenly Father was that real was that - was that a thing -

Katie: Yeah - yeah. Tim: - was that real?

Tim: And I remember kinda gettin’ teary eyed and, I, saw the light for the crosswalk flash for me, and then I - I - I - I’m pretty sure I ran across the street and - I got back to the car and, I got in the car, closed the door and the first thing I said to my mom was, “Mom - Mom, did you see that guy that was helping me push the car - did you see that guy?”

Katie: Mhmmm.

Tim: And then she’s like, “What guy?” [s slight pause] And, she didn’t see any other, person helping me push the car.

Katie: What?!

Tim: And [laughing] yeah.

Katie: Whaaa!

Tim: And then that’s when I’m like, “Ok. Alright. That was a thing.” [laughs] But, it was cool.

Katie: That’s pretty cool.

Tim: Yeah.

Katie: Whoa! So,

Tim: Sorry if that wasn’t, articulate [he articulates ‘articulate’ precicely].

Katie: Oh -

Tim: [laughing] I dunno.
Katie: No that was great. That was perfect. And, so, I mean last time you told me that you thought he - you kind of - suggested that was one of the three Nephites.

Tim: I did suggest that, yeah.

Katie: But this time you said that he might be John the Beloved.

Tim: I- I only say that because, all the stories that I’ve heard, and I could be wrong, this is - I guess this is sp-speculation or theory,... all the sources that I’ve heard of the three Nephites - it was all three of ‘em.

Katie: Yeah.

Tim: And then - and it wasn’t until - one time I shared this story in a talk in church, uh, that afterwards, one of my friends, brought up the question - well he’s like “I think it was John the Beloved. Because -

Katie: Yeah.

Tim: - he’s just one person.”

Tim: And that was the first time I started thinking about that I’m like “Oh wow what if it was?” Umm, but that was the only reason why I would -

Katie: Yeah.

Tim: Uh, three versus the one -

[slight pause]

Katie: Okay.

Tim: - thing.

Katie: Okay.

Tim: But, either way, umm, my patriarchal blessing - part of it says that I’ll be reach - I’ll be able to reach to the heavens and, umm, Heavenly Father will send me the help that I need, even those ministering angels that will tend to my needs. And -
Katie: That’s so cool *Whoa*!

Tim: I - I dunno I don’t talk about it a whole lot. But -

Katie: Yeah.

Tim: When, I do, I dunno it’s...it’s nice.

Texture:

The interview itself was obviously a bit choppy due to technical difficulties with Facetime. And Tim’s speech was also a bit choppy in general as he decided how to tell this to me. But Tim’s manner was very comfortable, cheerful, and natural. It is clear that Tim is a storyteller at heart. His inflections and tone were very engaging, and he is very open about his faith and his beliefs. However, Tim did tell me the first time he told this story that he does not tell this story very often; hardly at all, in fact, because it is so sacred to him. So this is a big deal to be hearing it from him again. As a last note, I use the word “storyteller” to describe Tim. But this was not merely a story to him. This was fact. And it was apparent that prospect of this man actually being a supernatural being was probable to him.