



## The Third Man Factor: Surviving the Impossible

By John Geiger

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### The Third Man Factor: Surviving the Impossible By John Geiger

*The Third Man Factor* is an extraordinary account of how people at the very edge of death often sense an unseen presence beside them who encourages them to make one final effort to survive. This incorporeal being offers a feeling of hope, protection, and guidance, and leaves the person convinced he or she is not alone. There is a name for this phenomenon: it's called the Third Man Factor.

If only a handful of people had ever encountered the Third Man, it might be dismissed as an unusual delusion shared by a few overstressed minds. But over the years, the experience has occurred again and again, to 9/11 survivors, mountaineers, divers, polar explorers, prisoners of war, sailors, shipwreck survivors, aviators, and astronauts. All have escaped traumatic events only to tell strikingly similar stories of having sensed the close presence of a helper or guardian. The force has been explained as everything from hallucination to divine intervention. Recent neurological research suggests something else.

Bestselling and award-winning author John Geiger has completed six years of physiological, psychological, and historical research on the Third Man. He blends his analysis with compelling human stories such as that of Ron DiFrancesco, the last survivor to escape the World Trade Center on 9/11; Ernest Shackleton, the legendary explorer whose account of the Third Man inspired T. S. Eliot to write of it in *The Waste Land*; Jerry Linenger, a NASA astronaut who experienced the Third Man while aboard the *Mir* space station—and many more.

Fascinating for any reader, *The Third Man Factor* at last explains this secret to survival, a Third Man who—in the words of famed climber Reinhold Messner—“leads you out of the impossible.”

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If only a handful of people had ever encountered the Third Man, it might be dismissed as an unusual delusion shared by a few overstressed minds. But over the years, the experience has occurred again and again, to 9/11 survivors, mountaineers, divers, polar explorers, prisoners of war, sailors, shipwreck survivors, aviators, and astronauts. All have escaped traumatic events only to tell strikingly similar stories of having sensed the close presence of a helper or guardian. The force has been explained as everything from hallucination to divine intervention. Recent neurological research suggests something else.

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A scientific mystery or divine intervention is how Geiger, the editorial board editor at the *Globe and Mail* and author of *Frozen in Time*, describes *The Third Man Factor*, the human knack of facing deprivation and possible death with an unseen presence pointing the path to survival. He researched these visitations for six years, chronicling their history in harrowing life-and-death events with mountaineers, sailors, divers, aviators and polar explorers. It is to Geiger's credit that he stresses the very human need to endure and survive through critical times in the included anecdotes over the sometimes convoluted scientific jargon, especially the gripping tales of the last 9/11 survivor Ron DiFrancesco, NASA astronaut Jerry Linenger aboard the Mir space station and merchant seaman Kenneth Cooke, who paddled in shark-infested waters. Whether this guardian angel factor is neurological or divine, Geiger's fresh, insightful book will tell readers things that are not easily explainable, but no less real for that. (Sept.)

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Review

"With an irresistible blend of harrowing anecdotes and hard science, John Geiger unravels the mystery of how the mind copes under extreme duress and in the process sheds fresh light on what it is to be human. A compelling, moving read." -- **Author of In Pursuit of Slow and Under Pressure "Carl Honore"**

"There is a curious force capable of guiding the destiny of men and women in extreme peril and John Geiger knows what it is." -- **Explorer-in-residence at the National Geographic Society and author of The Serpent and the Rainbo "Wade Davis"**

"Riveting...truly revelatory...an important book" -- **The Explorers Journal**

About the Author

**John Geiger** is the award-winning author of four non-fiction books, including the international bestseller *Frozen in Time: The Fate of the Franklin Expedition*. He is editorial board editor at *The Globe and Mail*. He is a fellow of the Explorer's Club, New York, and governor of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and chair of the Society's Expeditions Committee. His work has been translated into nine languages. He lives in Toronto.

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**Angela Gagne:**

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**Carolyn Rolon:**

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