

Wash. Evening
Star

The Rambler

... Goes
To Baltimore

By JOHN McKELWAY

There was a group of people visible in the two-story, brick row house on the outskirts of Baltimore when the visitor from Washington arrived.

Dr. Nandor Fodor, 65, a ruddy, stocky Hungarian with wild white hair, was sitting at the dining room table lecturing, with gestures, in a Viennese accent. He had been asked by the Parapsychology Foundation of New York to investigate the strange explosions in the house. Some people said the sailing sugar bowl, the oscillating chandelier, the popping flower pots were the work of the wind. Others maintained a nearby sewer had something to do with it. Dr. Fodor positively stated it was the work of poltergeists, or "noisy ghosts."

Wandering in and out of the living and dining rooms as Dr. Fodor spoke were a newspaper reporter, a radio reporter, a television repairman, who suspected a high frequency was causing vibrations, and a man named Douglas Dean, 43, a native of England, an "assistant in research" with the Parapsychology Foundation. There was also Edgar G. Jones, a retired fireman, a placid man, who owned the house and lived there.

And there was Mr. Jones' grandson, Ted Pauls, 17, a thin youngster with a pallid complexion. His parents were working. His father is a taxi driver. They also live in the house.

"In these cases," said Dr. Fodor, who is a psychologist and practicing psychoanalyst, "there is usually an individual who may be harboring great tension. It is either a repressed aggressiveness or, as in the case of the boy, a violent rage to create—to be productive.

"Frequently," he continued, his words flowing, "we find a definite association between puberty and poltergeists. In puberty, there is a violent biological explosion. We feel energy is released—like a bolt of lightning—and the subconscious may direct this force at a certain object.

"I say this boy is a 'wonder boy.' Look at his writing. This is all he wants to do. He is too smart for school. He rarely leaves the house. He should be a writer.

"I have given his ego a boost, an uplift. I do not think the explosions will take place again. This is my therapy."

The boy, Ted, seemed pleased. He went upstairs to get a copy of a weekly paper he turns out on a duplicating machine in the basement. There are 17 subscribers.

Mr. Dean was taking pictures of the broken china and the broken window, shattered by a flower pot which "rose and then turned at right angles and smashed against the window," as he said.

"I am investigating the explosions," he said, fascinated. "They have come from within the object. I have catalogued the 69 incidents for my report to the Foundation."

The television repairman wandered down in the cellar and looked at the pipes. He seemed perfectly at home. He had volunteered his detection talents and had been dropping by the house regularly. He did not accept Dr. Fodor's explanation.

Mr. Jones showed the visitor the damage. In the cellar, he had tied a rope around a china closet.

"So that thing," he said, explaining, "can't get in there."

There was an overturned chair, an overturned lamp and some broken bottles with caps still in place.

"The ornaments on the Christmas tree have busted each Christmas for the last three years," he said simply.

While no one had seen the explosions, Mr. Jones said he had seen a small, artificial Christmas tree rise up about a foot and then drop to the floor. He had also stopped the swinging chandelier.

Dr. Fodor bade the boy goodbye and left with Mr. Dean.

Riding back to Washington the visitor read the boy's publication. It seems to deal with science fiction.

"Numerical Fandom's, anyone?" he had written. "In Disjecta Membra, fandom's number one feud-zine for a period of time, there was what I considered a lively and interesting discussion regarding the number of the fandom we were in at that time."

