

Ryan's Story

Among the UVA case studies is the story of an Oklahoma boy named Ryan. A few years ago, the four-year-old woke up screaming at two in the morning. Over the preceding months, he'd been pleading with his bewildered mother, Cyndi, to take him to the house where he'd "lived before." In tears, he'd beg her to return him to his glittering life in Hollywood—complete with a big house, a pool, and fast cars—that was so fabulous, he once said, "I can't live in these conditions. My last home was much better."

When Cyndi went into her son's room that night, Ryan kept repeating the same words - "Mommy, I'm so homesick" - as she tried to comfort him and rock him to sleep. "He was like a little old man who couldn't remember all the details of his life. He was so frustrated and sad," Cyndi says.

The next morning, she went to the library, borrowed a pile of books about old Hollywood, and brought them home. With Ryan in her lap, Cyndi went through the volumes; she was hoping the pictures might soothe him. Instead, he became more and more excited as they looked at one particular book. When they came to a still of a scene from a 1932 movie called *Night After Night*, he stopped her.

"Mama," he shouted, pointing to one of the actors, who wasn't identified. "That guy's me! The old me!"

"I was shocked," Cyndi admits. "I never thought that we'd find the person he thought he was." But she was equally relieved. "Ryan had talked about his other life and been so unhappy, and now we had something to go on."

Although neither Cyndi nor her husband believed in reincarnation, she went back to the library the next day and checked out a book about children who possessed memories of their past lives. At the end of it was a note from the author, professor Jim Tucker, MD, saying that he wanted to hear from the parents of kids with similar stories.