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From the Virgin Islands to Horror Fiction's Rarest Space, Kevin Hughes Releases 'Patches'

Only five percent of horror writers are Black men. Even fewer are from outside the mainland. Hughes' second novel follows a family whose adopted dog may be tied to deadly violence rooted in ancient myth.

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A silhouetted figure runs through a dark, fog-filled forest pierced by beams of light, reflecting the ominous tone of *Patches*, Kevin Delano Hughes' supernatural horror novel about a family pet with a sinister secret.

Readers who enjoy the supernatural horror genre have a new offering from Virgin Islander Kevin Hughes, his [second published novel](#).

Patches is a story about a family who moves to a new town amid a backdrop of personal tragedy, and adopts a pet that turns out to be way more than any of them had ever bargained for. After horrific murders begin to occur in the Smiths' new neighborhood, suspicions fall on the family's adorable border collie, adopted from the local pet shelter.

While *Corporate Climbing*, Mr. Hughes' [debut publication](#), drew from Caribbean traditions of black magic to drive its plot, the underlying mythology of *Patches* comes from the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Mr. Hughes said that the novel required copious research, during the course of which he learned the roots of the Romani people. "They originated from India, and then some of them, a group of them, moved to Romania," Mr. Hughes shared. "Every book that I have, there's a lot of research that I put into it, and the reason why that's necessary is to make the concept possible."

The research, the writing, the revisions — all stages of the process take place in the hours when Mr. Hughes is not at work heading the District of Columbia's State Broadband Office. "Top executives need an outlet too," he laughed, when asked how he managed to juggle his day job with his storytelling aspirations. "I write, that's my hobby."

His hobby draws him back to cherished memories of the past. "It goes back to my childhood, being a young boy with my cousins and we're all sitting around family members telling stories." That strong tradition coupled with his fascination with the unknown, the spiritual, and the supernatural, have led him to his second novel – with more in the pipeline, he assured.

This is the overarching message the native Virgin Islander wants to send to his younger compatriots. "I want to encourage them and to tell them to follow your dreams. Never give up."

"It's not easy, he acknowledged. The writing in itself is hard...and then there's a whole other part of it, which is the marketing and promotion. The business end of it, that's very difficult...But at the same time, it's doable and I'm proof of that," Mr. Hughes told Consortium journalists. "I don't liken myself to Tim Duncan, or to Aliyah Boston, or to Emile Griffith, or to any of the famous Virgin Islanders. They are like superstars to me. But at the same time, what I do is important because I've carved out a little space for myself as a Black horror writer, right from the Virgin Islands."

The niche Mr. Hughes occupies is a small one indeed. Only 5% of writers in the horror genre are black men, he made known. Even fewer are from outside the mainland United States. "Hopefully people should be proud of what I'm doing. And hopefully they should purchase a copy of *Patches* and check it out."