GRAY GHOSTS

Wanna bet you can see gray where there is no gray?

THE SETUP
Stare at one of the black boxes in Figure 1. Ghostly gray spots will appear at the intersections of the white lines. To be a Ghostbuster, stare at one of the white intersections. That gray ghost will disappear, although ghosts will continue to haunt the other intersections.

Now stare at one of the white boxes in Figure 2. They’re haunted, too. Very faint gray spots will appear in the black intersections.

INSIDER INFORMATION
These are brightness illusions. White appears whiter when it is next to black, and black appears blacker when it is next to white. At the intersections of the white lines, white appears to be meeting white, producing the illusion of something less than white in other words, gray. The same is true when black lines meet black and produce something less than black gray, again.

When you stare directly at an intersection, the image falls on the center of your eye. The nerve cells there are better at detecting the difference between black and white than are the cells of your peripheral vision. So, no ghost appears