

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:23,760

In the state capital of Alabama, did an awful specter terrify this man?

2

00:00:23,760 --> 00:00:26,800

There was no expression on her face at all.

3

00:00:26,800 --> 00:00:29,520

It was just a kind of a blank stare.

4

00:00:29,520 --> 00:00:36,520

In a photograph of an empty room, what explains this ghostly figure?

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00:00:36,520 --> 00:00:42,640

And was the sale of this haunted house obstructed by real spirits from the past?

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00:00:42,640 --> 00:00:48,600

Mysteries from the files of Arthur C. Clark, author of 2001 and inventor of the communications

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00:00:48,600 --> 00:00:49,920

satellite.

8

00:00:49,920 --> 00:00:54,720

Now in retreat in Sri Lanka, he ponders the riddles of this and other worlds.

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00:01:19,920 --> 00:01:28,720

In the days of the British Empire, here in the highlands of Sri Lanka, the members of

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00:01:28,720 --> 00:01:33,520

the Hill Club used to while away their evenings in this reading room.

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00:01:33,520 --> 00:01:39,240

Tonight as I sit here in their place, every nook and cranny speaks of the past.

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00:01:39,240 --> 00:01:44,400

Presences from the 19th century seem to lurk in the shadows all around me.

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00:01:44,400 --> 00:01:50,560

Real adventurers, tea planters, map makers and surveyors, hunters weary from the pursuit

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00:01:50,560 --> 00:01:53,040

of elephants, leopards and deer.

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00:01:53,040 --> 00:01:58,840

In fact, I'm surprised no one has ever claimed that this room is haunted, as far as I know.

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00:01:58,840 --> 00:02:03,000

It fits the traditional picture of an abode of ghosts perfectly.

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00:02:03,000 --> 00:02:08,640

Yet, the more I investigate reports of hauntings, the more I realize they come from the most

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00:02:08,640 --> 00:02:12,000

unlikely places.

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00:02:12,000 --> 00:02:18,000

The Alabama state capital dates back to before the Civil War and needs skilled craftsmen to

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00:02:18,000 --> 00:02:20,840

maintain its traditional beauty.

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00:02:20,840 --> 00:02:24,680

James Gamage is a specialist in restoring old buildings.

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00:02:24,680 --> 00:02:31,520

One night he was working late, alone in the rotunda, when he got the fright of his life.

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00:02:31,520 --> 00:02:34,600

I've been through quite a few things, close calls and cars.

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00:02:34,600 --> 00:02:36,800

I've been in a few war zones.

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00:02:36,800 --> 00:02:41,480

Been on board a few airplanes that have come close to going in.

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00:02:41,480 --> 00:02:44,680

But this, I put at the top of the list.

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00:02:44,680 --> 00:02:49,800

This is one of the most frightful things I've ever had happen.

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00:02:49,800 --> 00:02:53,400

The glossy sheen of the metal doors acts like a mirror.

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00:02:53,400 --> 00:02:58,280

Intent on his work, James thought he saw the reflection of a person behind him.

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00:02:58,280 --> 00:03:04,160

He turned to speak, but his uninvited visitor was not of flesh and blood.

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00:03:04,160 --> 00:03:05,600

What I saw was a lady.

32

00:03:05,600 --> 00:03:08,360

She was dressed in Civil War period dress.

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00:03:08,360 --> 00:03:13,480

The dress she was wearing was not a heavy duty hoop type skirt, but it was outer ways

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00:03:13,480 --> 00:03:15,440

and it went down ways.

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00:03:15,440 --> 00:03:18,120

It was an opaque white type image.

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00:03:18,120 --> 00:03:21,880

It definitely was the figure of a lady.

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00:03:21,880 --> 00:03:24,000

There was no expression on her face at all.

38

00:03:24,000 --> 00:03:27,360

It was just a kind of a blank stare.

39

00:03:27,360 --> 00:03:33,880

And she moved across and went into the back direction back here behind me.

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00:03:33,880 --> 00:03:37,120

When she came back, she had the same expression.

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00:03:37,120 --> 00:03:39,600

Nothing changed.

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00:03:39,600 --> 00:03:43,240

Like I said, she took no notice of me whatsoever.

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00:03:43,240 --> 00:03:44,720

But I did take notice of her.

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00:03:44,720 --> 00:03:51,000

And I thought that it was about time to leave.

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00:03:51,000 --> 00:03:53,880

The next morning, James went to his boss.

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00:03:53,880 --> 00:03:59,160

He insisted he could no longer work alone at night in the capital.

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00:03:59,160 --> 00:04:01,240

Bill Woodsmoor was sympathetic.

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00:04:02,240 --> 00:04:04,520

He was somebody that I would depend on.

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00:04:04,520 --> 00:04:06,000

When he tells me something, I believe it.

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00:04:06,000 --> 00:04:07,000

He was very agitated.

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00:04:07,000 --> 00:04:08,000

He was nervous.

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00:04:08,000 --> 00:04:09,000

He couldn't keep his hands still.

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00:04:09,000 --> 00:04:12,920

He could tell something that happened the night before they had affected him.

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00:04:12,920 --> 00:04:17,240

My own custodial staff has talked about seeing shadows move through the building when they

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00:04:17,240 --> 00:04:20,880

know no one's there at night, hearing doors slam closed when they know they're the only

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00:04:20,880 --> 00:04:22,560

ones in the building at night.

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00:04:22,560 --> 00:04:25,320

So we have heard stories like that.

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00:04:25,320 --> 00:04:30,080

At the time of the Civil War, many Southern soldiers died on the battlefield.

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00:04:30,080 --> 00:04:35,120

It is said that the ghostly woman is a distraught wife searching the capital for news of her

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00:04:35,120 --> 00:04:36,120

husband.

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00:04:36,120 --> 00:04:41,760

When I explained it to Mr. Woodsmoor the following morning, he kind of laughed about it and told

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00:04:41,760 --> 00:04:44,480

me you're not the first one.

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00:04:44,480 --> 00:04:46,400

And you saw her.

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00:04:46,400 --> 00:04:47,400

You saw her come through.

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00:04:47,400 --> 00:04:48,400

I said, yes, I did.

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00:04:48,400 --> 00:04:51,480

And I said, I don't believe that I'll be doing any more work at night.

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00:04:51,480 --> 00:04:53,800

You will have to experience what I did.

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00:04:53,800 --> 00:04:57,400

You may make your own decision as far as your disbelief or whatever.

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00:04:57,400 --> 00:05:04,800

But I have experienced it and I believe in it.

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00:05:04,800 --> 00:05:09,800

From Bluebell Hill in Southern England come reports of a bizarre modern ghost.

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00:05:09,800 --> 00:05:15,160

She appears at random on this road and leaves her victims shaking with terror.

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00:05:15,160 --> 00:05:20,840

Ian Sharp was driving home one night when a girl appeared from nowhere.

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00:05:20,840 --> 00:05:23,120

The lady ran in front of the car.

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00:05:23,120 --> 00:05:26,760

I hit her on her left hand side.

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00:05:26,760 --> 00:05:31,840

As I hit her, she turned her head and she was looking at me.

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00:05:31,840 --> 00:05:35,440

She went down under the front of the car.

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00:05:35,440 --> 00:05:39,480

Now she had shoulder length hair rolled inwards.

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00:05:39,480 --> 00:05:44,360

Fair hair, a fringe with big eyes.

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00:05:44,360 --> 00:05:46,060

She had a round face.

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00:05:46,060 --> 00:05:52,760

She had a high neck jumper thing on her something and a light coloured coat.

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00:05:52,760 --> 00:05:53,760

I was terrified.

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00:05:53,760 --> 00:05:55,560

I didn't know what to do.

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00:05:55,560 --> 00:05:59,960

All I could think of was this lady under the car.

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00:05:59,960 --> 00:06:03,520

I then had to look under the car.

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00:06:03,520 --> 00:06:08,800

I bent down and looked under the car.

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00:06:08,800 --> 00:06:14,600

And there was nothing there.

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00:06:14,600 --> 00:06:15,840

My brain is going.

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00:06:15,840 --> 00:06:18,480

I don't know what to do.

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00:06:18,480 --> 00:06:22,640

Ian managed to call the police who raced to the sea.

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00:06:22,640 --> 00:06:25,520

I was still shaking like a loop.

91

00:06:25,520 --> 00:06:31,080

If I had been looking for the body or the person who I had hit, we couldn't find anybody.

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00:06:31,080 --> 00:06:37,120

And then it was then that the policeman told me we've got to put this down to another sighting

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00:06:37,120 --> 00:06:43,200

of the ghost of Bluebell Hill, which I had never heard of before.

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00:06:43,200 --> 00:06:48,680

The hauntings are thought to have begun after a fatal car crash on Bluebell Hill.

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00:06:48,680 --> 00:06:51,160

Every year produces new witnesses.

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00:06:51,160 --> 00:06:52,680

One is Chris Dawkins.

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00:06:52,680 --> 00:06:58,120

The girl ran out and sort of semi-turned towards me as I hit her.

98

00:06:58,120 --> 00:07:03,160

She was wearing a white or cream top jumper, a pillowed type thing.

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00:07:03,160 --> 00:07:07,280

I just stopped and got out and ran around the back and stayed in panic.

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00:07:07,280 --> 00:07:09,560

I mean, I thought I'd actually killed someone.

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00:07:09,560 --> 00:07:15,880

And when you actually get out and find that there's no one there, you know, you start

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00:07:15,880 --> 00:07:17,960

getting very worried about it.

103

00:07:18,960 --> 00:07:25,960

We actually found Chris sitting in his car at the telephone kiosk, sitting in a passenger

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00:07:25,960 --> 00:07:28,960

seat very shaken, very scared.

105

00:07:28,960 --> 00:07:32,960

And he absolutely adamant that he'd knocked somebody over.

106

00:07:32,960 --> 00:07:35,280

And so we checked all over his car.

107

00:07:35,280 --> 00:07:37,440

We checked around it underneath it.

108

00:07:37,440 --> 00:07:41,320

There was no signs of any damage to the car.

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00:07:41,320 --> 00:07:43,640

Nothing that would suggest that he'd hit anything.

110

00:07:43,640 --> 00:07:49,080

We then carried a thorough search out of the village itself where exactly it happened.

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00:07:49,080 --> 00:07:51,960

The gardens, the road, and we found absolutely nothing whatsoever.

112

00:07:51,960 --> 00:07:56,520

I can't begin to explain what happened to Chris that night.

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00:07:56,520 --> 00:08:00,920

He dealt with something, or hit something that night, which I'm no expert.

114

00:08:00,920 --> 00:08:02,920

I just can't explain.

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00:08:07,000 --> 00:08:12,240

Even in the early days of psychic research, at the end of the 19th century, investigators

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00:08:12,320 --> 00:08:17,680

called in physicians and psychologists to help explain the phenomena being reported from

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00:08:17,680 --> 00:08:19,680

apparently haunted places.

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00:08:19,680 --> 00:08:25,920

Today, experts agree that hallucinations and illusions often occur in the weird transition

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00:08:25,920 --> 00:08:28,960

period between sleep and wakefulness.

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00:08:28,960 --> 00:08:34,240

They can be caused by images from dreams lingering on, or thoughts assuming a solid

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00:08:34,240 --> 00:08:37,160

form as sleep approaches.

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00:08:37,160 --> 00:08:43,160

These may account for the spooky experiences sometimes described by people lying in bed.

123

00:08:47,160 --> 00:08:51,160

Captain Barney Concanon is an experienced airline pilot.

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00:08:57,160 --> 00:09:02,160

One of his regular overnight stops has been an airport serving the northeast of England

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00:09:02,160 --> 00:09:05,160

at Teeside.

126

00:09:05,160 --> 00:09:10,160

The crews were always booked into St George's Hotel, right by the airport.

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00:09:10,160 --> 00:09:15,160

When the building belonged to the Royal Air Force, the hotel was the officer's mess.

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00:09:15,160 --> 00:09:21,160

In 1951, a small plane crashed on landing, careered across the car park and smashed into

129

00:09:21,160 --> 00:09:23,160

the wall of the mess.

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00:09:23,160 --> 00:09:26,160

The pilot was killed by falling masonry.

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00:09:26,160 --> 00:09:30,160

The mess was rebuilt and is now part of the hotel.

132

00:09:30,160 --> 00:09:34,160

There are stories of a ghostly airman seen in its corridors.

133

00:09:34,160 --> 00:09:40,160

Captain Concanon was skeptical until the night he was booked into Room 62.

134

00:09:42,160 --> 00:09:48,160

I came into the room, got undressed as normal, put my raincoat on the bed because it was

135

00:09:48,160 --> 00:09:55,160

so cold. There were four or five blankets on the bed already and lay down on my stomach,

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00:09:55,160 --> 00:10:01,160

wrapping the blankets around me, just leaving my nose so that I could breathe.

137

00:10:01,160 --> 00:10:09,160

And I must have been lying there for five minutes when I felt a sudden pressure on my legs,

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00:10:09,160 --> 00:10:17,160

on the back of my legs, as if somebody had walked into the room and sat on my lower legs.

139

00:10:17,160 --> 00:10:20,160

It only affected me from the knees down.

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00:10:23,160 --> 00:10:29,160

I thought to myself, the story of the ghost came back to me at that time.

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00:10:29,160 --> 00:10:33,160

And I wondered whether I should put the light on or what I should do.

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00:10:33,160 --> 00:10:37,160

And I decided not to. I decided to brave it out, in fact.

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00:10:37,160 --> 00:10:44,160

And I turned around and I said, go away, but in much stronger language.

144

00:10:44,160 --> 00:10:53,160

And it went immediately. As soon as I said go away, it disappeared.

145

00:10:53,160 --> 00:10:58,160

I didn't even put the light on. Afterwards, the room became warmer.

146

00:10:58,160 --> 00:11:01,160

I was quite comfortable and I went to sleep.

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00:11:02,160 --> 00:11:06,160

Unaware of the stories on her first night in the hotel,

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00:11:06,160 --> 00:11:10,160

Stewardess Lisa Cox settled down for a good night's sleep.

149

00:11:10,160 --> 00:11:17,160

I woke less than an hour later and there was the weight of a heavy person lying on me

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00:11:17,160 --> 00:11:21,160

from the top of my head all the way down my body.

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00:11:21,160 --> 00:11:28,160

And it took me just a couple of seconds to realise that I wasn't at home and that I was in the hotel.

152

00:11:28,160 --> 00:11:32,160

And of course, then I was petrified. I couldn't move.

153

00:11:32,160 --> 00:11:38,160

And I realised that it just must be a ghost. There was no other explanation and I was wide awake.

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00:11:39,160 --> 00:11:42,160

I couldn't move an arm or a leg. I was pinned down.

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00:11:42,160 --> 00:11:45,160

And the only thing I could hear was my heart beating.

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00:11:45,160 --> 00:11:49,160

And whilst I was pinned down, I could see movement.

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00:11:49,160 --> 00:11:55,160

And when I moved my eyes, looked towards my left, the curtains which are very heavy and I'd drawn open,

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00:11:55,160 --> 00:12:02,160

were moving upwards from the ground, not blowing outwards as though in a breeze.

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00:12:02,160 --> 00:12:07,160

But as though somebody had put two hands underneath them and was lifting them up,

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00:12:07,160 --> 00:12:10,160

they were crumpling and they were about a metre off the floor.

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00:12:11,160 --> 00:12:14,160

After a couple of minutes, the weight left Lisa.

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00:12:14,160 --> 00:12:17,160

She fled the room too terrified to return.

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00:12:17,160 --> 00:12:21,160

Real as such experiences seem to those who suffer them,

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00:12:21,160 --> 00:12:26,160

some scientists suggest they are caused by a condition known as sleep paralysis.

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00:12:26,160 --> 00:12:34,160

Some people think that this sort of thing happens with particularly airline people who are flying all over the world,

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00:12:34,160 --> 00:12:39,160

different time zones and so on, getting very tired.

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00:12:39,160 --> 00:12:45,160

And when they go to sleep, they enter a state of semi-consciousness,

168

00:12:45,160 --> 00:12:51,160

neither sleeping nor waking, in which things like this can occur.

169

00:12:51,160 --> 00:12:59,160

But my answer to that would be, I've flown all over the world, I've stayed in hotels all over the world.

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00:12:59,160 --> 00:13:02,160

I've never had any problem of this sort before.

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00:13:02,160 --> 00:13:08,160

I know the St. George's Hotel is haunted, I'm 100% sure, because it happened to me, it wasn't a dream.

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00:13:08,160 --> 00:13:13,160

I know that I was wide awake and that's why I was so frightened, I was petrified.

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00:13:19,160 --> 00:13:26,160

Sometimes stories of hauntings clash with the hard commercial realities of the modern world.

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00:13:26,160 --> 00:13:30,160

Can the alleged presence of ghosts affect house prices?

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00:13:30,160 --> 00:13:34,160

Well, it's a question lawyers have had to take seriously.

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00:13:34,160 --> 00:13:40,160

In Italy in 1960 this paranormal problem was the subject of a learned treatise.

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00:13:40,160 --> 00:13:46,160

And more recently in the United States the courts have tried to untangle the answer.

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00:13:46,160 --> 00:13:52,160

NIAC is a comfortable suburb of New York on the shores of the Hudson River.

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00:13:52,160 --> 00:13:56,160

One property has more to offer than most.

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00:13:57,160 --> 00:14:02,160

The house's owner for 23 years, Mrs. Helen Ackley, now lives in Florida.

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00:14:02,160 --> 00:14:08,160

She and her husband brought up their three children in the house with ghosts for company.

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00:14:08,160 --> 00:14:14,160

My house was haunted by three different ghosts that we could say for sure.

183

00:14:14,160 --> 00:14:22,160

One was an older gentleman, one was a young girl, and one was a young navy lieutenant.

184

00:14:22,160 --> 00:14:29,160

Oh, I love the ghosts, all of them. They were there, I could feel them,

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00:14:29,160 --> 00:14:34,160

but however they did not intrude upon me, but they were there if I needed them.

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00:14:34,160 --> 00:14:42,160

And there were times I called on them, and it seemed as though they understood and tried to help.

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00:14:43,160 --> 00:14:48,160

Helen's friendly feelings towards the ghosts are confirmed by her neighbors across the road.

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00:14:48,160 --> 00:14:56,160

The Ursula family were close friends of the Ackleys. James Ursula grew up alongside Helen's son, William.

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00:14:56,160 --> 00:14:59,160

He remembers spooky incidents.

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00:14:59,160 --> 00:15:06,160

William had a habit of every night going down into the basement and locking up and making sure everything was secure.

191

00:15:06,160 --> 00:15:11,160

And this time he saw something white outside glowing and he had no idea what it was.

192

00:15:11,160 --> 00:15:19,160

And his eyes shot up and he saw this revolutionary war ghost, and he was panic-stricken.

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00:15:19,160 --> 00:15:23,160

And he turned around and ran right into one of the walls in the basement.

194

00:15:23,160 --> 00:15:30,160

And he came upstairs and his mother saw him and Helen, and she just started laughing

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00:15:30,160 --> 00:15:34,160

because she knew he had seen the ghosts for the first time.

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00:15:34,160 --> 00:15:39,160

The Ackleys really felt that the ghosts were part of their family, I'm sure,

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00:15:39,160 --> 00:15:44,160

because they never had any fear, there was never anything negative.

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00:15:44,160 --> 00:15:50,160

In fact, it was as though they were sort of guardian angels or something in the family.

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00:15:51,160 --> 00:15:56,160

The time came when widowed Mrs. Ackleys had to move from the 18-roomed house.

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00:15:56,160 --> 00:16:00,160

She wanted to join her son, who had set up a business in Florida.

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00:16:00,160 --> 00:16:03,160

With regret, she put the house up for sale.

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00:16:03,160 --> 00:16:06,160

The estate agent was Richard Ellis.

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00:16:06,160 --> 00:16:10,160

He was worried about mentioning the house's extra features.

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00:16:10,160 --> 00:16:15,160

We kind of took a deep breath and we approached the buyer on it and he left about it.

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00:16:15,160 --> 00:16:16,160

He just joked about it.

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00:16:16,160 --> 00:16:20,160

And then a couple of weeks later he called us and was very serious about the whole thing.

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00:16:20,160 --> 00:16:25,160

And at that point we set up a meeting for him to meet with Mrs. Ackleys.

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00:16:25,160 --> 00:16:31,160

And she spoke with great enthusiasm about the ghosts and at that point I think he became very concerned.

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00:16:31,160 --> 00:16:35,160

And shortly after that meeting he decided he did not want to buy the house.

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00:16:37,160 --> 00:16:42,160

The buyers had put down a substantial deposit, but they now wanted to cancel the deal.

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00:16:42,160 --> 00:16:45,160

A dispute arose over who would keep the money.

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00:16:45,160 --> 00:16:47,160

The case ended up in court.

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00:16:47,160 --> 00:16:53,160

The judge threw out the buyer's claim, saying it was too late for them to change their minds.

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00:16:54,160 --> 00:16:59,160

The buyers took the case to the appeal division of the Supreme Court of New York.

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00:16:59,160 --> 00:17:02,160

The presiding judge was Israel Rubin.

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00:17:02,160 --> 00:17:08,160

The basis of the appeal was that Mrs. Ackleys was not fulfilling her obligation to leave the house unoccupied.

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00:17:08,160 --> 00:17:12,160

It was still inhabited by the ghosts.

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00:17:14,160 --> 00:17:20,160

We had a balance of whether a ghost should have been disclosed as against a threat.

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00:17:20,160 --> 00:17:27,160

A ghost should have been disclosed as against a theory or principle of law that is almost universal in the United States.

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00:17:27,160 --> 00:17:37,160

That is caveat emptor, let the buyer beware that the buyer has to be beware of what they're buying and has to do an adequate search.

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00:17:37,160 --> 00:17:43,160

And once they do that search they're actually stuck with what they are purchasing.

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00:17:44,160 --> 00:17:52,160

Judge Rubin's ruling was that the deposit should be equally divided and that the unhappy buyers would not be held to their purchase.

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00:17:52,160 --> 00:17:56,160

He took practicalities into consideration when making his decision.

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00:17:56,160 --> 00:18:01,160

When you purchase a house you usually have certain inspections made of a house.

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00:18:01,160 --> 00:18:08,160

If you want to check on the construction of a house you call someone that's an engineer or someone that's an expert in construction.

226

00:18:08,160 --> 00:18:12,160

If you want to check for termites you call someone in that's a termite inspector.

227

00:18:12,160 --> 00:18:14,160

There's someone to call.

228

00:18:14,160 --> 00:18:19,160

So we said in this kind of a case we quoted ghostbusters we said who you're going to call.

229

00:18:20,160 --> 00:18:26,160

The immediate result of the case was that the presence of ghosts had to be revealed before a sale.

230

00:18:26,160 --> 00:18:29,160

But since then in New York the view has softened.

231

00:18:29,160 --> 00:18:32,160

Estate agents are not obliged by law.

232

00:18:32,160 --> 00:18:38,160

I think I would probably bring it up to a potential buyer as a matter of conversation.

233

00:18:38,160 --> 00:18:41,160

But we do not have to disclose it.

234

00:18:41,160 --> 00:18:44,160

On the other hand we cannot lie about it either.

235

00:18:44,160 --> 00:18:49,160

I mean we were asked directly do you know of a ghost that's in this house or have you heard of anything.

236

00:18:49,160 --> 00:18:51,160

We have to disclose that to a buyer.

237

00:18:53,160 --> 00:18:56,160

The Ursula's worry that the ghosts had not been consulted.

238

00:18:56,160 --> 00:18:59,160

James thinks they weren't best pleased.

239

00:19:00,160 --> 00:19:07,160

The first Christmas that the Ackles weren't here we had a lot of bells hanging around the house.

240

00:19:07,160 --> 00:19:10,160

And for some strange reason they just started ringing.

241

00:19:11,160 --> 00:19:17,160

And we thought they were because of the wind in the house we'd move them and they'd still ring.

242

00:19:17,160 --> 00:19:21,160

And I just thought it was so creepy that that would happen.

243

00:19:21,160 --> 00:19:28,160

I really think the ghosts were trying to express themselves and say we've had something happen here and we really don't like it.

244

00:19:29,160 --> 00:19:32,160

Our friends have gone and we're really upset about it.

245

00:19:36,160 --> 00:19:39,160

Hauntings are never easy to investigate.

246

00:19:39,160 --> 00:19:42,160

By their very nature they're fleeting and elusive.

247

00:19:42,160 --> 00:19:48,160

And the people who believe they've seen weird phenomena are often too frightened to provide rational testimony.

248

00:19:48,160 --> 00:19:54,160

So it's not surprising that explanations may take a long time to emerge.

249

00:19:54,160 --> 00:20:03,160

In fact more than a century later we're only just beginning to understand some famously spooky cases from Victorian England.

250

00:20:05,160 --> 00:20:09,160

This fine mansion in Cheshire was the seat of Lord Combermere.

251

00:20:09,160 --> 00:20:11,160

It boasts a splendid library.

252

00:20:12,160 --> 00:20:16,160

In 1891 a Miss Civil Corbett took a remarkable picture.

253

00:20:16,160 --> 00:20:21,160

Her technique intrigues photographic expert Adam Hart Davis.

254

00:20:22,160 --> 00:20:27,160

She exposed it for an hour, a long, long exposure between two and three in the afternoon.

255

00:20:27,160 --> 00:20:30,160

And you can see the sun is streaming into the room here.

256

00:20:30,160 --> 00:20:31,160

It's lovely.

257

00:20:31,160 --> 00:20:38,160

And when she came to develop the photograph she was amazed to find that in this chair on the left there is a sort of shadowy figure sitting.

258

00:20:38,160 --> 00:20:41,160

And she was rather surprised by this and she consulted her sister.

259

00:20:41,160 --> 00:20:44,160

And one of her sisters said that's Lord Combermere.

260

00:20:44,160 --> 00:20:46,160

Absolutely positive. She was absolutely certain.

261

00:20:46,160 --> 00:20:49,160

There is a slight difficulty though because Lord Combermere was dead.

262

00:20:50,160 --> 00:20:54,160

He'd been run over by a cab in London a few days earlier and he died from his injuries.

263

00:20:54,160 --> 00:20:59,160

And he was, while this picture was being taken, he was actually being buried in the graveyard a few miles away.

264

00:20:59,160 --> 00:21:03,160

And so that of course made everyone think it's got to be his ghost. It must be his ghost.

265

00:21:04,160 --> 00:21:08,160

Sir William Barrett, a pioneer of psychical research, was not convinced.

266

00:21:08,160 --> 00:21:17,160

He wrote an article suggesting that a footman had strayed into Miss Corbett's photograph, taking an illicit rest in his master's chair.

267

00:21:18,160 --> 00:21:20,160

There are various things that support this.

268

00:21:20,160 --> 00:21:28,160

One is that the figure is quite well lit on the side where the light is coming from so you can see one hand, but is very poorly lit on the other side.

269

00:21:28,160 --> 00:21:32,160

You can't see the figure's legs at all and there's a very neat point here.

270

00:21:32,160 --> 00:21:35,160

All across the picture all the bright lines are doubled.

271

00:21:35,160 --> 00:21:42,160

There's a bright one and then a very slightly less bright one beside it, which suggests that the camera was moved during the exposure.

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00:21:42,160 --> 00:21:48,160

Now Miss Corbett herself says that she was out of the room. So somebody jogged to the camera during the exposure.

273

00:21:48,160 --> 00:21:54,160

Could it be this person came in, sat down, moved a little bit, suddenly realised he was on camera, rushed out,

274

00:21:54,160 --> 00:21:57,160

kicking the tripod as he went out of the door. It's possible anyway.

275

00:21:58,160 --> 00:22:03,160

To test the theory, Adam has set his modern camera for an exposure of two minutes.

276

00:22:03,160 --> 00:22:10,160

His wooden study seat stands in for his lordship's armchair and as an extra gesture towards authenticity,

277

00:22:10,160 --> 00:22:13,160

a footman's coat seems appropriate garb.

278

00:22:18,160 --> 00:22:21,160

I'm going to have to sit here for a minute, but I don't want to be completely still.

279

00:22:21,160 --> 00:22:24,160

The right hand is still, the left hand must move about a bit.

280

00:22:24,160 --> 00:22:29,160

I have to move my legs so that they don't register on the picture and I need to move my head from side to side and up and down

281

00:22:29,160 --> 00:22:33,160

so that it'll register as a blur but still a head-shaped blur.

282

00:22:41,160 --> 00:22:52,160

The experiment's result is gradually revealed in the glow of the dark room.

283

00:22:52,160 --> 00:23:00,160

It's beginning to appear. It's the blacks that come up first and the ghost is shadowy so it'll come up last if it's there at all.

284

00:23:00,160 --> 00:23:06,160

I can see the books, I can see the chair. Yeah, there's definitely something there.

285

00:23:06,160 --> 00:23:12,160

There's a right hand. Yes, there's a ghost there. Look, look, I'm in it. Terrific, it's worked.

286

00:23:12,160 --> 00:23:15,160

So maybe, maybe we've solved the mystery.

287

00:23:18,160 --> 00:23:23,160

Here's the company photograph and here's my photograph and mine's like a sort of section out of this,

288

00:23:23,160 --> 00:23:25,160

a sort of small section blown up if you like.

289

00:23:25,160 --> 00:23:29,160

And if you look over here on the left, there's a chair and over here on the left of frame there's a chair.

290

00:23:29,160 --> 00:23:33,160

And here there's a shadowy figure. You can see a sort of blurred head

291

00:23:33,160 --> 00:23:38,160

and here there's definitely a shadowy figure and you can see a blurred head which does look rather like me, I have to admit.

292

00:23:38,160 --> 00:23:44,160

And over in the company of the photograph there's a rather sharp right hand and arm

293

00:23:44,160 --> 00:23:47,160

and that's exactly the same here, sharp right hand and arm.

294

00:23:47,160 --> 00:23:54,160

But there is no left arm or hand although there's a slightly blurry bit on the hand-dress there.

295

00:23:54,160 --> 00:23:59,160

And here there is no left hand although there's a slightly blurred patch just on the hand-dress.

296

00:23:59,160 --> 00:24:01,160

So, so far we're doing quite well.

297

00:24:01,160 --> 00:24:07,160

And here we've got no legs at all, the sharp edge of the chair and no sign of legs.

298

00:24:07,160 --> 00:24:11,160

And here, sharp edge of the chair, no sign of any legs.

299

00:24:14,160 --> 00:24:25,160

This could still be a ghost. I can't disprove that it's a ghost, but it seems to me that I've made a pretty fair representation of it, myself, just messing around in my own sitting room.

300

00:24:25,160 --> 00:24:33,160

I reckon that there's something like an 80 or 90% chance that this was just somebody who wandered into the picture and wandered out again.

301

00:24:39,160 --> 00:24:42,160

Most of us know a place that seems to be haunted.

302

00:24:42,160 --> 00:24:54,160

I certainly do. When I was a child living on an old farm in the west of England, the bells once used to summon servants would ring from rooms that we knew for certain were empty.

303

00:24:54,160 --> 00:24:58,160

In the end, we put it down to rats in the wiring.

304

00:24:58,160 --> 00:25:01,160

That experience taught me the power of suggestion.

305

00:25:01,160 --> 00:25:09,160

An ancient building, empty rooms, the dark shadows of night, conspired to create a ghostly scenario,

306

00:25:09,160 --> 00:25:15,160

but all too often a rational explanation comes only with the cold light of dawn.

307

00:25:15,160 --> 00:25:19,160

So, I am very skeptical about haunted places.

308

00:25:19,160 --> 00:25:23,160

But I must confess that I have a sneaking sympathy with a man who said,

309

00:25:23,160 --> 00:25:27,160

I don't believe in ghosts, but I'm scared of them.