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### Larry Flaxman Interview: February 9, 2008

BoA:Audio enters the ghost genre with Larry Flaxman, founder of the Arkansas Paranormal and Anomalous Studies Team. We'll discuss the ins and outs, creation and evolution, and research methods of the ARPAST group. We'll get Larry's critical thoughts on EMF meters, EVPs, orbs, and some of the problems with today's ghost hunting groups. Plus, we'll have lots of big picture discussion on the ghost hunting field, its explosion in popularity, and the plusses and minuses of the rapid growth for that esoteric genre. It's a new area of coverage for BoA:Audio, but we manage to retain our same flavour of in-depth esoteric discussion.

Full Preview: We kick things off with the standard bio / background on Larry Flaxman, finding out who he is and what prompted his interest in the esoteric, particularly ghosts. Larry talks about the formation and evolution of Arkansas Paranormal and Anomalous Studies Team (ARPAST). We discuss ARPAST's working with respected members of mainstream scientific fields, how the group finds these folks and their reaction to being approached by a ghost research organization. Given the enormous appeal of "ghost hunting" nowadays, we find out how ARPAST deals with new members and separating the serious people from the loons. We discuss the extensive training regimen that ARPAST has, contrasted with the general lack of professionalism in many ghost hunting groups out there today.

We discuss how ARPAST conducts an investigation, starting with determining if the person contacting them with a haunted location is legit or not. From there, Larry gives us a very detailed look at ARPAST's on-site methodology. Larry tells us about some of the on-site experiments that ARPAST members do during an investigation. Staying on the theme of the on-site investigations, we find out about the extensive equipment used by ARPAST, valued at close to \$250,000.

Larry debunks the popular notion that an EMF meter is the key to ghost detection. Larry also talks about the problem with this misconception being embraced by the ghost hunting community and the sheer lack of knowledge about how to use complicated equipment found on many "ghost hunts". Larry also talks about interacting with some of the groups who misuse their equipment and the reaction he gets when he explains to them that they are using it incorrectly.

Moving on to the other big "crown jewel" of ghost hunting, we get Larry's take on EVPs. Larry explains ARPAST's detailed classification system for EVPs. We also find out, based on ARPAST's classification system, if there are any trends that have emerged with regards to captured EVPs. Larry talks about what they do to weed out the "good stuff" when reviewing EVPs. We also talk about the nature of EVP collection, how the idea was novel at one point but is now rather overdone. We find out about the "impulse pop" that

Larry thinks is the key to genuine EVPs. Next we cover orbs and Larry explains why he is not a supporter of orbs as ghost evidence.

We find out what ARPAST does after they've conducted an investigation on a particular site. Larry also shares with us how many of the cases turn out to have a prosaic explanation for their unusual activity. He also shares the shocking percentage of cases that have no prosaic explanation behind them. Next we discuss if Larry has found any trends as far as locations where there seems to be something paranormal occurring.

After holding out as long as we can, we finally get around to asking the question of what's the spookiest thing Larry has encountered while doing a ghost investigation. In response, Larry rolls out a chilling tale of a recent encounter with some kind of anomalous being. We find out if he has ever encountered any hostility from anomalies while investigating.

This segues into a discussion on ARPAST's strict policy on evidence sharing and Larry explains the reasons behind it. He tells us about the intricate databases they use for studying their data. Larry talks about the prospects of releasing some of their data to the general public and why it is harder to do than one may think. The issue of people stealing the data and claiming it as their own.

We cover the big picture topic of the explosion in popularity of "ghost hunting" and we get Larry's reaction to the GH fad and the overall drama in the ghost research community. We discuss if anything can be done about the oversaturation of ghost hunters. Binnall gets gossipy and wants to know more about the drama in the ghost community. We get Larry's perspective, from the front lines, to the explosion of ghost hunting, how his initial thoughts quickly changed, and whether he sees the GH trend growing or waning. Larry goes over some of the tell tale signatures of an disreputable ghost hunting group.

Never one to overlook a big dog, we discuss the "TAPS family" and Larry explains what they are all about. We also talk about the double-edged sword that is TAPS, in that they are largely responsible for the explosion in popularity of ghost hunting but must also shoulder some of the blame for what ghost hunting has become today. Looking at the bright side to it all, we talk about how ghost hunting has attracted a lot of young people to its ranks.

Wrapping up the big picture discussion of ghost hunting as a field, we get Larry prognosis for where the genre may be in five to ten years, especially after the bubble bursts for ghost hunting. Larry also speculates on whether or not scientific ghost hunting will grow. Heading towards the end, we find out what Larry's big picture theory is on what ghosts really are all about. We tackle the question of what it will take to ultimately find the solution to the ghost enigma. Closing the interview, we find out what's next for Larry Flaxman and ARPAST.

Larry Flaxman Bio:

Larry Flaxman is the founder president of the Arkansas Paranormal and Anomalous Studies Team. He has been actively involved in paranormal research and investigation for over ten years, and melds his technical, scientific, and investigative backgrounds together for no-nonsense, scientifically objective explanations regarding a variety of anomalous phenomena. He has appeared in numerous newspaper, magazine, radio, and television interviews, and has authored several published articles regarding science and the paranormal. Larry also serves as technical advisor to several paranormal investigation groups throughout the country.

His website is [www.arpast.org](http://www.arpast.org).