

Photography Tips

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One of the more spectacular aspects of hauntings are visual apparitions and photographs of ghosts. When people see ghosts, most of them see lifelike figures. Sometimes the figure is solid, other times it is transparent or fragmented, but it is almost always recognizable as human or human-shaped. Most ghost photographs, particularly the ones taken many years ago, show the same thing. Many of these older ghost photographs have been discredited as frauds. A small percentage of people who see ghosts do not see figures, they see luminous balls of light or something vaguely cloudlike. There is a growing number of recent ghost photographs that do not show figures, they show glowing balls of light.

Why does the human eye see a figure, but the camera sees an anomalous shape? Another question might be, why do people see ghosts wearing clothes? Why don't we see naked ghosts, or balls of light or luminescent clouds? Maybe because our subconscious adds in details like clothing and features. This might explain how someone might subconsciously provide a paranormal explanation for natural phenomenon like flickering shadows, reflections or other natural disturbances to the environment.

At the same time, this reasonable explanation conflicts with cases where an observer who knows nothing of a haunting "sees" a ghost and describes it in detail, down to gender, age, clothing, hair color and actions. When they describe the incident to others, it turns out that their description matches known details of a past resident of the house. It would be a strange coincidence for someone to have such a directed hallucination, unless there is some kind of a psychic projection from the ghost or spirit into the living mind. This might explain why the camera, which does not have conscious or subconscious sees only a ball of light instead of a human figure. But are the balls of light captured on camera true pictures of ghosts or are they explainable as tricks of light or even bad photography?

Basic tips on using photography during a hunt or investigation:

- Open your film and load your camera after walking around the location for about 20 minutes first.
- Use at least 400 speed 35 mm film. 400 and 800 speeds work the best. 1000 speed film develops too grainy and I would avoid using it although many investigators do have success with it. Black and White film also works well.
- If you are an experienced photographer, you may want to try infrared film which also has had excellent results in the past.
- Make sure you note any other lights in the area so when you view your developed

pictures you will not think a street light is an orb.

- Make sure you clean your camera's lens regularly.
- No smoking at the location, this can appear like mist on the photos so you don't want to contaminate your evidence.
- Watch for dust or dirt being stirred up in the area you are photographing. They can give false positive pictures.
- All long hair should be tied back or under a hat, again this is to eliminate any false positive pictures and to give the skeptics less ammunition.
- Remove or tie up any camera straps so you don't take a picture of that, it looks like a vortex when photographed.
- Watch for reflective surfaces and make notes of them. The flash reflected off shiny surfaces such as windows, polished tombstones, etc. can look like an orb or other anomaly. Make note of street lights and any other light source that may appear on the film.
- Let fellow investigators know when you are taking a photo so that you don't get double flashes and the night scope operators can look away. If you think you have a double flash photo or any other false positive, log the picture number so you can exclude that photo from the batch when they are developed. Night scope operators can get eye damage if they are looking at a flash through the scope so this is important.
- In cold weather be conscious of your breath so you don't photograph that, it'll look like ectoplasm mist. If you think you may have, log that picture number and discard it when you develop the pictures.
- Many people like to ask the spirit if they can take their picture, it can't hurt.
- Take pictures anywhere and everywhere. If you feel something or someone else does, take a picture. If you think you saw something, take a picture.
- Sometimes you will see an orb, mist, or sparkles in your flash or others' flashes, take more pictures right there, you are near a spirit.
- You may only get about 1- 2 pictures for every 50 you take, that's about the average, so don't get discouraged. I've been at sites where I didn't get any and others where 30% of the ones we took were positive.
- Don't pay for fancy developing, you can get them developed anywhere. Just let the developers know to process and print every photo. I use the local discount store's photo service.

