

Second Opinion

By

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I received an e-mail the other night that I found quiet troubling. A person I went to school with contacted me about ARPAST and expressed curiosity in what we do. I assumed it was just a “hey, how you doin’?” contact with emphasis on the novelty of my involvement in paranormal research. That is until we corresponded a few more times.

This individual was very distraught about events that had recently occurred in their home. They had never given paranormal phenomenon a second thought and had grown up being taught and believing that the paranormal is just a bunch of rubbish. They were still having a hard time believing even though their children and spouse had been experiencing unexplained events in their home.

The real problem and concern for me was that the distress that this family was dealing with had put a severe strain on their family relationships and was threatening to tear their family apart. If that weren’t bad enough, that is not the worst of it. The reason the family relationship was being torn asunder was because of the information relayed to them by a local paranormal group that came and investigated their home. I use the word “investigated” very loosely.

They came out and after a short period of time, they informed the family that their home was a vortex with a gateway to the spirit world. They also told the family that the young boy, who was my friend’s stepson, had opened this vortex and it was his fault for the activity. The family was also informed that they had

six separate spirits in their home and one was the guardian of the “gateway to the spirit world”.

Ok, for those of you who are involved in legitimate, and I emphasize legitimate, paranormal research, you will understand why I am somewhat at a loss for words. Partly because I am pissed off and partly is because I don't deal well with stupidity. I don't fault the family at all. They were looking for help with a legitimate problem they were experiencing and they brought people into their home that they thought could help them. Instead the stupidity and arrogance of this group has caused more problems. Remember, the family issues arose not from the activity, but from the “detailed” and “informed” information this group relayed to them after just a few hours. They blamed a five year old boy for opening a vortex and letting ghosts into their home.

First of all, let's put aside the information they relayed to the family and focus on how their information was gathered. According to my friend, this group showed up with digital recorders, digital cameras and dousing rods. Excuse me, I had to laugh after I typed those last two words but we'll get back to that in a moment. Their evidence consisted of their dousing rods crossing in “key” locations in the home, an evp that allegedly says “he said so” and several orb photos. Excuse me but I had to laugh again after typing those last two words but we will get to why I find those humorous a little later. I, however, find no humor in a family being put in turmoil on the flimsy and ridiculous methods of one of the bad eggs in the field.

Ok, to all my intelligent counterparts in the field, what information did you derive from that evidence? Personally, I derived nothing. Dousing rods are useful tools for utility company workers and backhoe operators to identify buried utility lines, but there is no scientific validity in paranormal research because there is no quantifiable data obtained. Dousing rods can be manipulated both consciously and subconsciously by the user. One evp is interesting but I see nothing there that helps me glean any more information. Ok, now orb photos...orb photos are dust or other particulate matter in the air and nothing more. There have been numerous scientific studies that verify this.

For more information on the subject, I would strongly recommend checking out the links and articles on the ARPAST web site.

This is case in point, one of the biggest problems we have in paranormal research, irresponsible, ignorant, arrogant and downright stupid people that take advantage of another person's problems for their own selfish motivations or their own blatant lack of gray matter. Some do it just for kicks on a Saturday night. Either way it is equally damning to the rest of the legitimate paranormal community.

As researchers we must understand that we have a HUGE responsibility when going into a person's home. If we are not able to educate ourselves and act in a professional manner, which means do not make guesses on what you find in a person's home and do not disclose any results to the homeowners until all the data is analyzed, verified and cross referenced. If you cannot follow these simple rules, maybe you should limit your paranormal research to checking out old cemeteries or abandoned houses. We also have a responsibility to increase our efforts to educate the public. Information is power and the more we can educate the public on prosaic causes of the alleged phenomenon and if no cause can be found, how to make sure they are selecting the right group to investigate. A person's home is their place of solace, refuge and belonging. Having a stable home is imperative to the well being of individuals. Potential clients should treat a problem in their home no differently than if they were going to a doctor. If a doctor told me I had cancer and this is how we will treat it, I would definitely seek a second opinion to make sure I have all information available to me, especially if the first doctor diagnosed my condition with "dousing rods". Yes I know that some clients are paranormal hypochondriacs but there are many that are scared, confused and upset. They are looking to paranormal groups as experts and they are very likely to act on information relayed to them.

I implore everyone in the paranormal field along with every person in the general public to never take anything at face value. Always, always, always seek more information. Also, remember your responsibility to your clients. You are

there to help them deal with a problem, which the vast majority of the time is prosaic, so educate yourself! If you can't be educated then you probably shouldn't be in the field. I pray for this family and the hope that they will seek a second opinion.