

GREAT LAKES PARANORMAL RESEARCH TEAM

Electromagnetic Voice Phenomenons (EVPs)

This is one of the pieces of data we get a lot on investigations. The challenge is to discern if it is truly paranormal or not. Why? Folks, this is a very noisy world. The probability of environmental contamination is very high. The digital recorders used these days are of pretty good quality and are very sensitive. So don't get too excited yet. Know that historically, recording sounds on investigations is the oldest tool we have in the field.

Just because there was a ding or a bump sound, does not mean it was paranormal. A noise, is just that, a noise. Buildings are always making noises. Just because there was a faint something or another, does not mean it was paranormal either. An EVP really has to be obvious, in-your-face, clear, no doubt, there was something on the recorder that should not been there and really not possible. Or, there was a clear, direct response to a question or your conversation with someone else or with "something" else. As you can see, for an EVP to qualify as such, it has to be evaluated closely before excepting it as part of significant data.

There are quite a few variations in protocols on how to do your recordings for an investigation. We have posted some good links so you can look at other ways of doing EVPs. Some teams actually classify and quality the EVP. However, it is also advised not to because then you are slapping a label and attempting to narrow the meaning of what you heard. (For the sake of this write up, we will not add the classifications). The problem is, each person might hear something different or not hear or understand it at all. To a certain extent, it is best to leave it up to the client to give the interpretation of the recording. Why? Each person's hearing is different, some people are more sensitive than others. The recording might mean something to the client and not necessarily to you. It is far and few cases in between that you actually get a clear EVP that seems clearly related to the case. What are we trying to say? Be flexible, and open minded when reviewing EVPs.

What equipment: to use:

These days most teams are using digital recorders. There are those investigators that like to go old school, go analog, and use tapes instead. Up to you what you would like to use. The digital recorders as said above are of pretty good quality. You don't have to fork out a ton to get a good recorder. Memory capacity and the ability to down load to your computer helps a lot. Listening with bigger, good quality speakers can give an edge when trying to understand what you are listening to. But you don't want to use anything to alter or change the original recording in anyway.

External microphone can also help with quality, but not an absolute either. This is the paranormal world, if it is going to happen, it will happen. Don't sweat it.

In terms of brands, up to you. It is not the intent of this write-up to drive up the purchase of any particular brand.

GREAT LAKES PARANORMAL RESEARCH TEAM

Electromagnetic Voice Phenomenons (EVPs)

Price range?

Up to you. But \$45-50 will get you a good solid recorder. If you want to go beyond that, again, up to you.

How to record:

It helps to get samples of sound and the voices of people participating in the investigation prior to the investigation. That way, as you review after the investigation, you can compare the voices in the group, if something does pop up on the recorder.

There are two kinds of recordings: stationary and recorders you take along with you.

Taking a recorder along with you. Keep in mind if you take a recorder with you and have it running, there will be static, bumps and odd noises from when you are moving around. Do get into the practice of announcing your moves, coughs, etc. That way you will know what was caused by you and your team and what was not.

Stationary recording. This is a recorder you put down in a room and just leave it running. Sometimes it helps to have it next to another piece of equipment to compare results afterwards. If you walk into the room where the stationary recorder is, don't forget to announce your arrival, your moves, coughs, and other noises you will be making.

Recording EVPs:

There are a variety of ways of doing this. But there are two main ways investigators have been conducting EVPs:

- 1- Just walking around doing the investigation. Talking to one another as you go along.
- 2- Structured EVP. For this one, you use a set of questions (yes and no answers advised). In starting a structured EVP session, it is important you introduce yourself and others in the room. Include date, time and location in the building. Not all recorders have time stamps or sometimes people forget to synchronize the actual time of the investigation with the time stamp on the recorder.

Here is a sample of what you can use:

1. Is there anyone here?
2. Would you like to talk to us?
3. What is your name?
4. Did you live here?
5. Do you know where you are?
6. Are you female?
7. Are you male?
8. Are you an adult?
9. Are you a child?
10. Can you see us?

GREAT LAKES PARANORMAL RESEARCH TEAM

Electromagnetic Voice Phenomenons (EVPs)

11. Do you feel safe?
12. Do you know how you got here?

It is good to have at least 10 questions with you.

After going down your list of questions, leave at least 5 minutes of absolute quiet. You can decide to move to another room or go down the list of questions again.

If you begin to get responses signaled by other instruments or live review of your recording, you can get a bit more complex with your questions / instructions and see where it goes:

1. Give as many taps as people are in the room.
2. We would like to know what era you are from. Give two taps for “yes” and one tap for “no” when we give the correct century you belong to: 1700s, 1800s, 1900s, etc. If you can narrow down the year they were born, awesome. Usually we have not been successful in narrowing the date the person passed. How would you remember your date of death anyway?
3. Are you from this state?
4. Are you from the United States?
5. Were you born in another country other than the U.S?
6. Are you alone?
7. Are there more with you?

If you are having a fluid and consistent conversation: learn as much about the person or entity as you can. Sometimes out of excitement, we kick ourselves later for not asking those crucial questions that would have helped get more info: Were you ill. What kind of work did you do? Did you have a family? Etc.

As a warning and out of past experience of this author, from time to time we run into a “person” or “entity” who does not know they have passed. They have no clue they are in a different situation/reality. Once you have established a conversation and some trust, it helps to tell them that you can’t see them or hear them and they have passed on. This can be upsetting to them and your instruments might signal higher energy. You want to be respectful and allow them to absorb the information. Let things calm down. Show your verbal support. That is the best you can do.

Careful if you are NOT speaking with a person. We know little about other spirits/entities/energies, what they understand, what is respect or offensive to them. Tread carefully. Keep conversations simple and probably short, don’t engage too much.

If a fluid conversation starts to get a bit bumpy and does not feel safe, clearly indicate you are closing the conversation and moving on. Thank them and move on to the next room. You want to avoid triggering any negative reactions. Remember, you leave the home after the investigation, the owner remains in the home and you certainly don’t want them to have to deal with any negative aftermaths. In the paranormal world we have learned that people who were a pain in life, can continue to be a pain in the after life. Best to now give them much room to be angry with you or anyone else.

GREAT LAKES PARANORMAL RESEARCH TEAM

Electromagnetic Voice Phenomenons (EVPs)

Verbal confrontations of entities, spirits, energies is truly and clearly not advised. You can be firm and clear as to what you need, But again, we know little about their reactions and how they could impact you, your team or the owner. Be respectful at all times and under all circumstances. If you are respectful, they will respect you. Hard to get aggressive with someone who is being polite and kind. Above all, you don't want to start a problem you can't resolve.

Is this writer saying that she has had conversations with something she could not see or hear? The answer is yes. But all conversations were positive, respectful on both sides. That is an absolute key to any live and active EVP.

Environmental contamination:

This is the most frustrating part of EVPs. You have to deal with the environment you are in. Yes, we want to control it as much as possible. But you will run into situations such as: barking dogs, cars going by, people talking outside, beeps and groans from the home, your own stomach growling, etc. Do your best to announce these external sounds so you don't confuse them later with possible paranormal event. This is one of the reasons we do investigations at night, it is quieter and fewer people are active on the streets or nearby homes.

Review of your EVPs after an investigation:

If you did 3, 5, 7 hours of investigation, you will probably have that many hours of EVPs to review. Just keep that in mind. More hours, more data. Yes, you will need a form for that! Each team has their own forms to fill out when reviewing EVPs. GLPRT has their forms and detailed ones at that. The essential sections you need to put in your form are:

On the form, like in any form, you need a heading with date, location, case number if available and people present.

Basically you are doing an exact transcript of your recordings. You can roll your eyes, grown and sigh, but this is important so you don't miss anything. This entire transcript is added to the final report. Put in columns time recording started, time recording ended, what was said, what was heard, time it was said, time it was heard. Patterns are also important to note if any.

The human ear:

Know and understand that the human ear has limitations. Our hearing system is complex and not as sharp as we would want it to be. We can only hear in a narrow array/band of sounds and pitches. Even though you might be completely board and falling asleep during an investigation, sounds or voices might have happened without you perceiving or hearing them at all. The older we get, the less ability to hear and understand our environment. You really won't know what you might have recorded until you review after the investigation. The paranormal tends to either be of very low, growling sounds/voices or very high pitch, not much in between. Just be aware.

GREAT LAKES PARANORMAL RESEARCH TEAM

Electromagnetic Voice Phenomenons (EVPs)

The Science of Sound:

It is true that we just want things to be simple and practical. But if there is anything that is not practical or predictable is sound.

Sound is dynamic. It moves, twists, turns and eventually breaks up in the environment. In the paranormal work, this leaves us with one more challenge. We can record sound, but we can't control it. All we can do is our best.

For those EVPs in which we can't pin point the origin of the voice, tap, bang, leaves us with the homework to really understand how sound happens. In the famous Philip experiment (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_experiment), it was discovered that the knocking responses were coming from inside the wood of the table, not physically on the surface. The team was using high end equipment to record. In most cases we are not able to do that, however, it is an interesting point. This experiment left us with many questions. It is a good one to review and understand the pros and cons of the events that took place.

With sound you have to keep so many things in mind, distance, location, what produced it, how far did it travel, etc. We are not able to complicate ourselves too much during an investigation. But we do need to be realistic in our limitations in capturing good and clear EVPs.

All and any investigator needs to do their homework and do at least some reading about sound so we understand pros, cons, and what our limitations are. Expectations need to remain grounded. Any EVP work needs to be reviewed and attempts to debunk it should happen before making any final decisions.

Theories on EVPs:

Are EVPs real? Can we trust them? Or are we just hearing what we want to hear? There are a variety of theories out there. It is a complex web of answers. Some theories state that we are hearing our own "shadow" person per say. We are causing EVPs to happen with our own energies. Aliens are answering us. Or that we are hearing ourselves from a parallel universe. We are truly speaking to the dead. Other theories state that yes, EVPs are real, but we don't understand how they happen as of yet. All we have are tons and tons of recordings of questions and answers. For now, the simple function of an EVP is to help clarify what might be going on in a home or business. If the recording helped the investigation, great. If not, it just did not.