

# GREAT LAKES PARANORMAL RESEARCH TEAM

## Camera Care and Use

Aside from voice and sound recorders, photography in the paranormal field is one of the oldest tools we have. It has proven an excellent tool as a back up. We have learned that there are more sounds than visuals in the experiences of paranormal investigations. However, from time to time, photography has been a great help in catching a visual which has made all the difference and a very worthwhile investigation.

It is **not** suggested you use your phone for a true paranormal investigation. Your phone is vulnerable to accidents, hacking, battery issues and the quality will always be poor. A phone will not provide the quality we are looking for in this type of investigative work. If you are serious about paranormal investigation and research, get yourself a real camera.

Another reminder here: We have learned over the years that a paranormal event when it manifests visually, it can move either very fast or very slow. Hence a few strong suggestions here.

### **A few rules for using photography on investigations:**

As in any tool, be very familiar with your camera, inside and out. Know exactly what does what, when and how. Also get to know its limitations. Practice with it during non-investigative moments.

*Always use a tripod:* Sometimes we are not always steady on our feet and can be a bit unsteady with our hands. Find a light weight tripod, it will never fail you. Use it free handed when needed.

*Batteries:* from past experiences, batteries can be drained, easily, 1- because the location is large and you run the batteries down, or 2- You have some type of activity going on and “it” has drained the batteries of your camera. Be prepared.

*Test it before the investigation:* Always test the camera before you go out. Make sure everything is in working order, it is clean and ready to go.

### **Using photography appropriately on investigations:**

Remember that the paranormal is very unpredictable. It might not give you time or the wits to catch it when it all happens. We have noticed that visuals either happen very slow or very fast. It can also throw the investigator off emotionally when it happens. Due to these circumstances in the field, we have devised a few regulations for better photography during investigations.

Pre-investigation photos. These are taken as baselines of a home or business. You must go through the home or building and take photos of each area before the investigation starts. 5-8 shots of each angle. Pre-investigation photos are just as important as photos during the investigation. It helps greatly to compare to your investigation photos. Sometimes things just don't look or appear the same or an event can happen before the investigation starts. Just be aware.

# GREAT LAKES PARANORMAL RESEARCH TEAM

## Camera Care and Use

Always take minimal 5-8 shots of each angle you have chosen. Why?

1-Because an event can happen right in front of you without you noticing at all. You won't know something happened until you review your camera at home.

2-If the paranormal happens in front of you, but quickly or very slowly, your 5-8 shots will give enough time for something to move/run/walk in front of the camera. A great prize for sure.

3-If you train yourself well to remain firm and calm with your camera and take the 5-8 shots during a paranormal event, you will be the hero of the night! However, sometimes visual paranormal events don't always appear on camera, so don't be disappointed.

You can take a single shot later during the investigation. Sometimes while doing EVPs, you can take random shots.

Shiny surfaces and other lights around you. Don't take pictures into a light, such as a window or the light of a video cam. Your picture will become distorted and not clear at all. Look for another angle away from bright lights.

You must to take notes. (And you thought this would be easy). This is critical for any photographer in the paranormal field. Always, always, always, have a note pad with you. Always make note of the following:

**Name of the room** (laundry room, bedroom #1, room #14, Kitchen, first floor study room, etc). One room can start to look just like the next. At the time of your review, you might not remember what room you are looking at.

**Time of the set of photos were taken.** This is critical because we are looking for when it happened and what time. Sometimes time can show a pattern or give us more insight to the activity. Was it during the day? Was it night time? Did the event happen every 15 minutes on the dot?, did the event in the photo happen exactly at 3am? Was the time random, etc.

**Make note if anyone was around you at that moment of the set of photos.** This is to avoid confusing a shadow from your fellow investigator to something paranormal. Also make sure you yourself are not casting a shadow into your target area. It has happened many times that someone will become overly excited to see a shadow in their photo and come to find out, it was just a fellow investigator walking by at the time of the photo.

Paranormal activity. If you are in a paranormal active situation, it never hurts to ask for permission to take your photos first.

Your settings. While you are taking photos of a particular angle, always stay in the same setting, never change mid way during your 5-8 photos. You can change settings in your next set of shots if you need to change from regular lighting to a low lighting situation.

Know when to use your flash and when not to. Make sure there is no shinning surfaces in front of you when you use the flash. If you use the flash in front of a mirror or a window the light will bounce bank and give you a blur of a picture.

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When the investigation goes dark. Unless you have a super dupper camera that can see in the dark, a flash can be useful when in total darkness.

Sounds and photography. If voice recorders are around, always announced when you are about to take a set of shots. That way whoever is reviewing the recorder knows the beeps and weird clicks are your camera.

If your camera is shared in the family. **After an investigation, safeguard that camera.** Don't let anyone touch it until you have downloaded all your photos. Otherwise someone could come along and think, "who on earth wants all these boring photos of this building! Then...ZAP and delete all your hard work!

Type of camera:

People tend to ask what kind of camera should they use/purchase. This is a tough question. Why? It all depends. Again, the paranormal is unpredictable. Sometimes it helps to work with film cameras, sometimes it just won't matter. Sometimes Polaroid cameras have been of help, sometimes not. I always say, just a camera, whatever is more comfortable for you. A camera is a camera and the paranormal will either be cooperative or not.

It also depends on your pocket. As we know, cameras can be pricey. Don't go overboard, no need to. However, if you are an "aficionado" or a professional in photography and have something in mind, go for it. But just because your camera is bigger and meaner, does not mean you will catch something.

If any suggestions would be give here, they would be the following:

- Get a digital camera that can be downloaded to your computer. It helps to look at the photos from a larger screen.
- One that can be mounted on a tripod.
- Make sure the camera will have enough space for a least 100 photos, 500 photos minimal would be best.
- Make sure it has a flash.
- Best if it can take photos in very low lighting.
- The more specialized cameras can handle darkness such as those made for night vision. But those can be very pricey. Not team would be expected that from you!

In summary:

- The important thing is to have a camera that has good memory, has flash, can take photos in low lighting, can be mounted on a tri-pod and photos can be downloaded and you are set.

Photography in the paranormal can be fascinating and very exciting. But those exciting, yahoo moments are far and few in between.

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