



The ghosts of Ohio® Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 12 Issue 4

FROM THE SPOOKY DESK OF JAMES WILLIS:



James

Yeah, I know, April 1st is long gone. But try telling that to my daughter, Courtney.

2015 marks the year when my four-year-old daughter first “got” April Fools’ Day. Or so I

thought. The day started with Courtney bringing me my morning cup of coffee... filled with ice water. Being the cool dad that I am, I fell for her clever ruse and did one of the biggest spit-takes known to man. Courtney dug it. So much so that I believe I did four such spit-takes on April 1st alone. I say “alone” because on the morning of April 2nd, here comes Courtney with my “coffee.” Twice.

APRIL FOOL!

On April 3rd, I didn’t get coffee, but she did tell me my shoes were untied, my hair was gone, and my tongue had fallen on the floor. April 4th was when she told me there were deer in the back yard, my computer was broken, and that one of our cats had pooped in the dining room. All of which, while being quite plausible, turned out to not be true.

When I tried to explain to Courtney that we only play April Fools’ jokes on April 1st, she got this really serious look on her face and said, “Why?” I told her it was because April 1st was April Fools’ Day, to which she replied, “I say ‘April Fool’, not ‘April Fools’ Day.”

Leave it to a four-year-old to change my lifelong beliefs in something.

But she’s right, all my life, I’ve been reserving my April Fools’ jokes for April 1st. And why? Sure, I guess it’s the official

day for fools (and tomfoolery, for that matter), but it stands to reason that if you’re an April Fool, you’re that way the entire month of April (or even longer), right?

Guess it just goes to show that no matter how old you are or how long you’ve been doing something, if you look hard enough, you’ll eventually find a different perspective. And that’s exactly what I’ve been preaching about when it comes to paranormal research!

Until next time, be well and never stop looking for what’s not there.

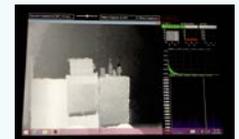
Oh yeah, and your shoelaces are untied.

Cheers,

James A. Willis
Founder/Director



TESTING OUT THE XCAM



Samantha

When our newest member, Frank Yensel, mentioned that he bought this device to try on investigations, I can’t say we were all that surprised. Frank is our self-proclaimed “gadget guy,” purchasing

inventions that he sees on programs like Ghost Adventures so that he can try them out and see if they have any real benefit when investigating the paranormal. “When I saw Ghost Adventures set up the Xcam,” Frank writes, “it was captivating. They

were in the process of measuring an energy field when they turned this on and saw a stick image emerge that can only be discerned as a person. They asked the image to move around, raise its arms and interact. It was captivating. I was hooked. I had to get one.” Apparently, so did a lot of other people. It was out of stock when Frank called to order one, and he was put on a waiting list. He received it a couple months (and \$1,275) later. “I thought it was a great value if it performed as I saw it in the episode.”

We asked Frank to bring the Xcam system to one of our monthly meetings so that we could conduct some experiments with it. We wanted to know how it works,

including its capabilities and limitations. Could it actually be useful on investigations?

The system, touted in the brochure as a “portable camera with a variety of sensors,” is essentially a tablet (with special software) attached to an Xbox Kinect. If you’re familiar with gaming, then you’ll know that when you play an Xbox game, the Kinect has an array of sensors that allow the game to “see” you in order to create your character on the screen, thereby allowing your basic image to be the game controller.

Let’s get technical about the Xbox Kinect for a moment in order to better understand what it does. The hardware contains three

(continued on page 2.)

TESTING OUT THE XCAM CONT.

important things that allow it to detect your body and your movements. First is an RGB (Red, Green, Blue) video camera with a resolution of 640x480. It takes 30 samples per second in order to track your movements throughout a game. Second, there is a monochromatic depth sensor that uses infrared to measure how far you are away from the unit. Third, there is a microphone (actually, an array of four microphones) that isolates players' voices from other background noise.

The software for the Xbox Kinect uses special algorithms to analyze all of the data collected by these three components, mapping out the game environment and the players involved. It creates human models based on a pre-programmed collection of skeletal structures.

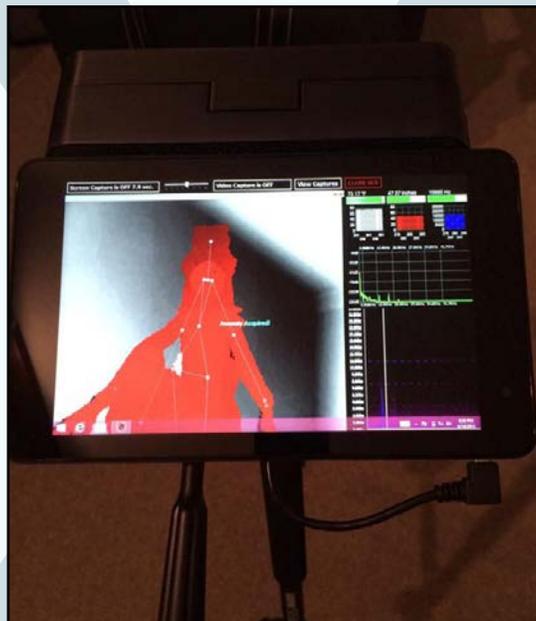
Okay, now that we know how the Kinect works, here's how the Xcam SLS "Structured Light Sensor" Camera system works.

Essentially, the Xcam SLS system uses Kinect technology in an attempt to detect figures in its field of vision that are both visible and invisible to the human eye, like ghosts. Stripped of the software that creates game characters, the figures that appear on the Xcam tablet screen (human or ghostly) are nothing more than basic humanoid stick figures. To be honest, this is a bit creepy, especially since nearly everything on the screen is in grainy gray scale except for occasional pops of red, blue, or green that signal the presence of an "anomaly." (By the way, red is an object closest to the unit, followed by green, and then blue.) Not only is there a video screen, but the Xcam's software also graphs audio, distance, and temperature over the course of an investigation.

Now for the fun part: trying it out. We planned a number of scenarios to test the Xcam in an effort to discern its capabilities and limitations. We discovered that it's best used in a confined environment, like a small room, since it doesn't detect anything beyond about 25 feet away. It doesn't matter if the lights are on or off; and adding infrared extenders to try increasing the distance only served to overwhelm the camera, obliterating figures with a wash of black. The obvious reason

for this limitation is that gamers would be standing relatively close to the camera, certainly not more than 25 feet away.

Regarding figures, while it does not detect animals like house cats, it does detect children and adults...AND also posts and other vertical objects that it mistakes for human. Let's remember that the Kinect's original purpose was to lock onto players in a game. Since it's looking for objects that are in a generally upright, human position, it will assume that a vertical post is human, giving it a head, arms, and legs like a person. It's also programmed to match figures to human skeletal structures, which is why it couldn't detect cats. The



cats were not in upright positions, and the software isn't capable of creating stick figures from things that aren't upright.

The Xcam has other limitations, too. It cannot detect anything through glass, like windows or sliding glass doors. Also, while it can distinguish between hot and cold objects (hot things appear darker, while cold things are whiter), it is not able to measure the temperature of anything specific. It seems to measure the ambient temperature of the area around the camera. As far as sound goes, since the Kinect is designed to pick up sounds that are close to the unit and filtering out background noise, it would seem that a ghost would have to be loud and near the camera to be

recorded at all. And regarding recording, the Xcam only records in 10-minute increments. Plus, the AC hole is the same one that connects the camera to the tablet, so there's no way to have the unit plugged into a wall while recording! The Xcam certainly seems less than ideal for full investigations.

This brings us to Frank's comments about the Xcam's performance at a recent investigation at a restaurant. Here's what he had to say: "I set up the camera and discovered some limitations. The device is a camera with a mini pad mounted to it. The camera runs off the battery in the computer and cannot run on a plug. The viewing screen kicks off after a period of time, so someone needs to watch it and touch the screen to keep it in view. There is a record button that will allow for continuous capture of screen view in 10-minute intervals. So either you stand by and hit record when you see something worthy of capture, or you just keep hitting the record button every 10 minutes. All captured images can be downloaded for permanent viewing later."

Frank continued, "In the VERY brief operation brochure it mentions how to turn it on and off, but from a technical viewpoint this is all T & E. Trial and error until you 'get it.' It would be great if it had a continuous power source. You never know when the battery would quit at an inopportune time. The software is included and is fairly easy to get operational. But honestly, what are we really seeing? Are comparing temperature and light differences material to identifying spirits? Time will tell as we use it. However, I must admit my skeptic antenna has gone up."

I agree, Frank. While it's interesting (and admirable) that someone has attempted to adapt current technology — Xbox Kinect — in a new and unique way, the limitations of this particular technology far outweigh the benefits when investigating the paranormal.

Frank has been in contact with the developer, Bill Chappel of Digital Dowsing, regarding this product. Unfortunately (but not surprisingly), Mr. Chappel declined to be interviewed about it. "Let the buyer beware" on this one!

VILLISCA: THE TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE UNSOLVED MASS MURDER THAT STUNNED THE NATION



James

Title: Villisca: The True Account of the Unsolved Mass Murder That Stunned the Nation

Author: Roy Marshall

ISBN: 1593300093 / 978-1593300098

Publisher: Aventine Press

Copyright Date: 2003

In 2003, Roy Marshall released *Villisca: The True Account of the Unsolved Mass Murder That Stunned the Nation*, a book that many touted as the first comprehensive look at the savage 1912 mass murder.

Most people's knowledge about the case does not extend far beyond the fact that in the early morning hours of June 10, 1912, an unknown assailant entered the Villisca, Iowa, home of 43-year-old Joe Moore, armed with an ax. Later that day, neighbors and relatives discovered the bodies of Moore, his wife, Sarah, their 4 children—Herman, 11; Katherine, 10; Boyd, 7; and Paul, 5—and two family friends, Lena and Ina Stillinger, inside the Moore home. All had been brutally murdered with the aforementioned ax. No one has ever been convicted of the crime. Theories behind just who committed the crime, and why they did it, could almost fill an entire book themselves. And in truth, had Roy Marshall decided to simply focus on the crime itself and the various theories surrounding it, I would more than likely be giving this book a much better review. Sadly, Marshall made the decision to cram every single bit of minutia about anything even remotely related to the town of Villisca into this book that it doesn't take long for things to fall off the proverbial tracks.

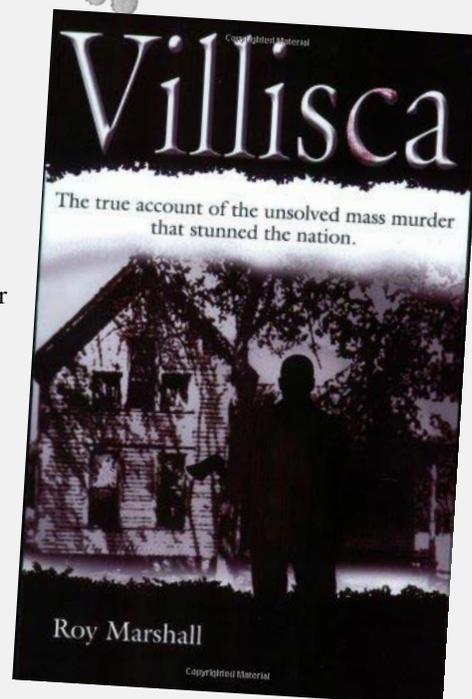
One of the subplots of the murder, and one that gets Marshall into trouble rather quickly, concerns the fact that several years after the murders, family members and Villisca residents banded together to hire detectives to try and solve the crime. One such group that was hired was the Burns Detective Agency. The agent put in charge was James Wilkerson, who immediately thought state senator (and local businessman) Frank Jones was behind the murders and began repeatedly questioning him. Before long, there was bad blood between Jones and Wilkerson,

which makes for an interesting sidebar or two. Still, Marshall inexplicably dedicates a disproportionate number of pages of his book to the antagonistic relationship between Frank Jones and James Wilkerson as opposed to the other suspects. In fact, Marshall often goes off on wild tangents about these two men that have no bearing on the case at all.

Marshall gets himself in deeper when he decides to stuff not one, but both grand juries that had convened specifically for the Villisca case into his book. Again, interesting stuff, but not to the depth that Marshall decides to cover it, often referring back and forth between the two cases for no apparent reason. To put things in perspective, information related to the two grand juries could take up an entire book by itself. Yet, Marshall attempts to cram it into a book that is already chock full of information from the murder itself. What the reader is left with is an uneven mess of a book.

Marshall also peppers his book with a liberal dose of reprints of various newspaper articles and even trial transcripts, both of which would have been interesting to see had Marshall perhaps chosen to edit them down and simply pull relevant sections out. Inexplicably, Marshall includes entire articles and transcripts, even portions that have no bearing on the case whatsoever.

All told, Marshall would have served his book, and his readers, well if he had sprung for a good editor. Aside from the inclusion of every tiny piece of information, Marshall also tends to jump back and forth between stories, talking about the murders themselves one minute and then leaping into an anecdote about one of the townfolk in Villisca the next. Characters have a tendency to pop in and out of Marshall's book on a regular basis. So much so that I often found myself putting Post-It notes on pages when new



characters were introduced so I could refer back to them when Marshall re-introduced them pages later. To be fair, Marshall does include a list of "main characters" and a brief description of each at the beginning of the book. Still, having to continually flip back and forth in and of itself is indicative of a poorly designed and/or written book. And I found myself doing a lot of flipping.

And then there were the typos. Granted, a typo here and there is something that happens. But there were so many in Marshall's book that they quickly became distracting. And with so many distractions (and frustrations) already existing within the pages of *Villisca*, every new typo I came across brought me closer to closing the book in frustration. A pity, really, especially since I have always had an interest in the case.

The Villisca Ax Murder is a fascinating case that reaches far beyond the events that took place in the wee hours of that June morning back in 1912. Creating a concise narrative on something as big as this case is something even a seasoned author would struggle with, so major props need to go out to Roy Marshall for attempting to tackle it in his book, *Villisca*. But in the end, it proves to be too big a case for Marshall to handle.

MURDERED IN THEIR BEDS:

THE HISTORY AND HAUNTINGS OF THE VILLISCA AX MURDERS



Mark

Title: Murdered In Their Beds: The History & Hauntings of the Villisca Ax Murders
Author: Troy Taylor
ISBN: 1892523787 / 978-1892523785
Publisher: Whitechapel Press
Copyright Date: 2012

Murdered In Their Beds chronicles a horrific series of brutal ax murders

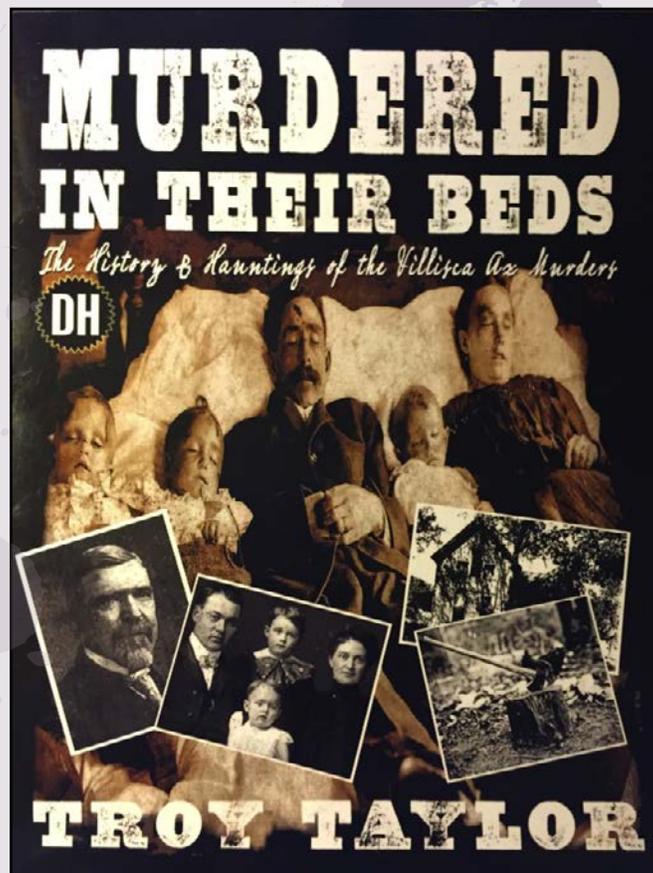
that occurred in the Midwest over a period of several years starting in 1911, crimes which remain unsolved to this day. Troy Taylor's book draws upon many historical records, from newspapers and periodicals of the day, to modern compilations of historical crime books, particularly Roy Marshall's book *Villisca*, published in 2003, which focused on the ax murders. This rich background of historical resources, combined with Troy's passion for retelling this historical crime drama, provides the basis for a literary fire hose of nearly endless detailed information—one that pours out over 225 pages of condensed, single-line-spaced print, offset in a few places by surviving photographs from that time.

The first one-third of the book focuses on the historical details surrounding a series of seemingly random, brutal murders of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, and children of all ages. All of the victims were killed in their sleep by an unknown "transient butcher" who apparently traveled across the Midwest prairie towns in Colorado, Kansas, Illinois, and Iowa, probably using the vast network of railroads that once connected them. Similarities in the murders abound: nearly all the victims' skulls were brutally crushed by the flat edge of an ax with repeated, violent blows, splashing great torrents of blood and gore on surrounding walls and ceilings. Often, the murderer covered the victims with sheets or blankets, closed the curtains, and usually left the bloody ax at the scene of the crime. In Villisca, Iowa, in 1912, an entire family and two visiting girls from another family were all murdered in their sleep one-by-one without anyone waking. Their

house in Villisca still stands to this day. It has been restored to its historically accurate condition when the murders occurred. In an era without sophisticated crime-scene investigative techniques and evidence collection, there was little hard evidence preserved at any of the horrific crime scenes to help investigators catch the murderer.

The remaining two-thirds of the book focuses on the public and private investigations into the crimes, particularly surrounding the Villisca murders. Here, you will read about an unsavory and unscrupulous "detective" named Wilkerson, who seemed hell-bent on convicting a prominent citizen of Villisca, Frank Jones, of the murders without a shred of evidence to support his attention-seeking allegations. Over the years, you can read about the rise and fall of Frank Jones in politics, as well as the literal trials and tribulations that followed. The relentless stream of historical details documented in this part of the book will not appeal to everyone; it is a little difficult for the average reader to take in, unless you enjoy endlessly small or trivial details supporting historical events a hundred years ago.

Finally, although the book is 225 pages long, there is no discussion whatsoever of ghosts or hauntings until the very last five pages of the book. In other words, about 98% of the book is pure historical detail.



Most avid readers of ghost books will find the subtitle misleading at best. Not that the investigative material in those last five pages isn't interesting, because it is! The repeatedly witnessed opening and closing of a simple closet door in the restored Villisca "Ax Murder" house sent shivers up my spine, and Troy's experiences there have led him to believe the house is truly haunted. Readers who seek out *Murdered In Their Beds* just need to be aware that, unlike many of Troy's other books on ghosts and the supernatural, this book is focused almost entirely on the historical crimes and follow-up trials and investigations for a century-ago mystery that will likely never be solved. Lastly, the book's cover artwork of a dead family from that era lying together on a bed is disturbing to say the least, but it is unrelated to the actual ax murders, which were far more gruesome and bloody to behold, as one can imagine.

VILLISCA:

LIVING WITH A MYSTERY



Samantha

Title: Villisca: Living With A Mystery
Genre: Documentary
Director: Kelly Rundle
Rating: Unrated
Running Time: 115 minutes
Release Date: 2006
Available: Vimeo and online streaming.
 Physical disc also available for purchase.

No one could have predicted, nor imagined, the horror that would befall the cultured, thriving small town of Villisca, Iowa on June 10, 1912. Still more unimaginable was the town's reaction afterward, when mass hysteria took hold, causing residents to live in fear, cast accusations, and spread wild rumors that have irreparably divided the town to this day. As the saying goes, "There are three sides to every story: yours, mine, and the truth." This outstanding documentary covers it all, and it honors the history that many living in Villisca would prefer to forget.

After the turn of the 20th century, Villisca was an above average small town of approximately 2,000 residents. Thanks to the railroad, progress and opportunity abounded; and Villisca was, in fact, one of the first towns in the state of Iowa to have a lively music and art scene. The town was thriving, which made the murders all the more shocking.

On the evening of June 9, 1912, the church held a Children's Day performance during which Sunday school children celebrated the end of the school year. Sarah Moore, the Matron of the church, attended with her husband Joe and their four children. They went home afterward, bringing along two of the Stillinger children, who were going to spend the night because the streetlights weren't on and they didn't want to walk home in the dark. They all arrived home at 10 p.m., had cookies and milk, and then went to bed.

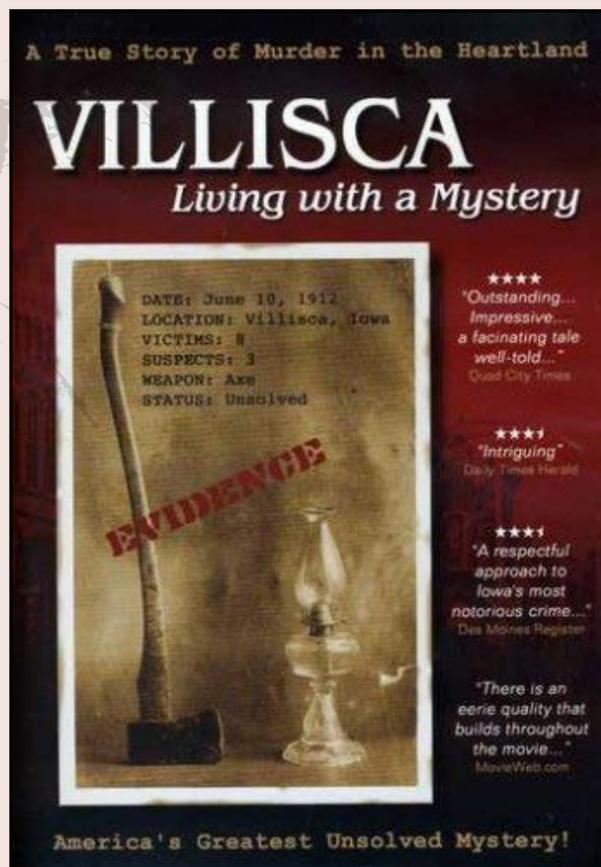
The next morning, a neighbor of the Moore family noticed that the Moore house was unusually quiet and contacted Joe's brother, who used his key to get

inside the home. Together, the two discovered that all of the shades had been drawn and all of the windows and mirrors had been covered. Then they found bodies. They immediately notified the marshal, Hank Horton. It was soon discovered that all eight of the victims were brutally axed to death in their beds

— Joe and Sarah Moore, their children, Katherine, Boyd, Paul, and Herman, and the Stillinger children, Lena and Ina. At the foot of a bed and at the top of the staircase were kerosene lamps that had had their chimneys removed and set aside, presumably to dim their light. In the room where the Stillinger children slept was a slab of unsliced bacon wrapped in cloth, as well as the bloody murder weapon leaning against a wall. It was truly one of the grisliest, and most puzzling scenes in American history.

Word about the tragedy spread through the small town like wildfire, and hysteria was close behind. To put it bluntly, everyone completely lost it. The townsfolk arrived at the Moore house in droves, storming around and through it, unwittingly moving, altering, and destroying any potential evidence that could have been left behind by the killer. The mob was so out of control that barbed wire had to be used to cordon off the home, and the entire town had to be put under marshal law.

The insanity didn't stop there. Every non-white person living in the town's vicinity was questioned (since the townsfolk couldn't imagine one of their *own* people committing such a crime). Residents formed posses to look for the



perpetrator; and when bloodhounds arrived by train to track the killer's scent, no less than 1,000 people followed the dogs to a pond where the scent was lost. A fingerprint analyst arrived drunk and didn't find anything useful; and a fortune teller was consulted, resulting in a vague "bearded man" description. Someone even came up with the idea that Mrs. Moore may have seen the killer as he struck, leaving a photographic impression of him in her eye (which would have been more interesting if she'd had any eyes left after the attack). There didn't seem to be any leads to go on, so people became fearful and paranoid. They rushed out to buy guns and locks, clearing out every store's inventory. Entire families moved in with one another for security. They even strung tin cans around their properties to warn them of intruders! Villisca had completely changed from a vibrant, peaceful small town into one of the most frightening places to live.

With fear comes rumor and speculation, and Villisca was full of it. Why would someone kill Joe Moore and his entire family? One theory involved one of the town's most prominent businessmen, Frank Jones. Jones was an arrogant, self-righteous political hopeful, and Joe Moore was friendly, outgoing, and Jones'

(continued on page 6.)

VILLISCA: LIVING WITH A MYSTERY CONT.

best salesman. The two men had had a falling out over wages, so Moore left to start his own competing business. This alone could make Jones angry, but there was more. It was discovered that Moore had been having an affair with Jones' daughter-in-law. Did powerful Frank Jones pull some strings to have Joe Moore and his family murdered? Those who believed this theory were quick to point the finger at a possible hit man — William "Blackie" Mansfield. Mansfield had a criminal record and was working at a farm in Kansas City when he was arrested and labeled "Blackie" (even though he was, in fact, white). The police forced a confession out of him by dangling him over a bridge by his ankles, and adding the name "Blackie" to his name pretty much ensured that the racist town would believe him guilty. (In fact, after his arrest, black people were no longer allowed to live in Villisca. Crazy, right?) Since the town was determined to arrest someone for the crime, he became their target.

While about half the town believed in Mansfield's guilt, the other half suspected that a strange man by the name of Pastor Lyn Kelly was to blame. He was visiting Villisca during the time of the murders and had, in fact, attended the Children's Day performance. He didn't speak to anyone that evening, which was odd enough. But there were other behaviors that weren't normal. During a stay with a local family, he insisted that the children be removed from the home so that he could think. The mother was so unsettled by him that she spent the night on the stairs to prevent him from going up near the rest of her family. Another incident involved him asking someone to type something for him in the nude. He also sent a number of obscene letters through the mail and peeped in windows, which landed him in St. Elizabeth's Mental Hospital in Washington D.C. for nine months. He turned himself in after the Villisca murders in May 1917, claiming that he had heard the voice of God that night, telling him to "slay utterly." He described following a shadow to find the murder weapon he would use, and then to each victim in the house. After each killing, the voice said, "Still more to be done." With a confession like that, who wouldn't want to believe he'd done it? As one interviewee on the documentary put it, the guy wasn't just nuts, he was "a whole carload of nuts." And it had to be a truly

disturbed individual to commit a crime so heinous.

The thing is, "disturbed" individuals come in all shapes and sizes, and I was most intrigued by hearing about option number three — Henry Lee Moore (apparently no relation to Joe Moore). In April 1911, Moore was paroled from the Kansas State Reformatory, where he spent one year for forgery. He then became a railroad employee. It seems that the Villisca tragedy wasn't as unique as first thought because on September 17, 1911, the Burnham family in Colorado Springs were murdered, as well as their neighbors, the Waynes. The ax that killed them was left at the second home. On October 1st, the Dawson family was bludgeoned to death in Monmouth, Illinois. Fourteen days after that, the Showman family was murdered, a cloak draped over their phone and a lamp at the foot of their bed. The Villisca murders happened on June 10, 1912. In December of that year, Henry Lee Moore wrote to his mother, telling her that he was going to bring her something nice for the holidays. When he went home on December 17th, he checked into a hotel under the name of L. Smith. The next morning, he supposedly found his mother and grandmother axed to death. The police wound up arresting Moore after finding blood evidence in his hotel room along with a collection of newspaper clippings about famous murders. It was also revealed that he had confided to friends about his obsession with mutilated corpses. In March 1913, Moore was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in the Missouri Penitentiary. There were no more ax murders after that. My guess is that he was the Villisca ax murderer, as well as the killer of all of those other families since the railroad allowed him to travel easily. We'll never know for sure. If the crimes had happened today, I'm sure that our investigative procedures and technology would have solved this case definitively.

As for the town of Villisca today, it remains conflicted about its past, and not just about whodunit. While some residents are open about what happened, others say that it should be erased from memory because the town shouldn't be defined by that tragedy. Reporters, writers, investigators, tourists, and even ghost hunters, all obsessed with the mystery

surrounding the murders, have visited the town over the years. I would think a small town would welcome the extra attention and revenue that tourism brings, which in turn helps to preserve history for future generations. This is a moment in history that should never be forgotten. Not only are there lessons to be learned (don't tamper with evidence, don't jump to conclusions, don't be racist, don't lose your cool when there's a killer on the loose), but there were eight residents of Villisca who were senselessly murdered. They worked, they played, they loved, and they lived. They don't deserve to be forgotten.





MOVIE REVIEW: ANNABELLE



Rick

Genre: Thriller / Horror

Starring: Annabelle Wallis (Grimsby, X-Men First Class, Snow White and The Huntsman), Ward Horton (The Wolf of Wall Street, Alto), Alfre Woodard (Scrooged, The Forgotten, 12 Years A Slave) and Tony Amendola (The Mentalist, Dexter, CSI).

Director: John R. Leonetti (best known for being the Cinematographer for The Mask, The Conjuring, Insidious, Mortal Kombat)

Rating: R

Running Time: 99 minutes

Release Date: 2014

Available: Netflix or Rental

Rating: 3 out of 5 skulls



First off, the main character's real name is Annabelle...creepy. For me, nothing is scarier than old people, small children, and spooky dolls! In *Annabelle*, the "spooky doll" category is a home run (the doll alone will give you nightmares). This movie is a prequel to the 2013 horror hit *The Conjuring*, in which Ed and Lorraine Warren help a family terrorized by a dark presence in their secluded farm house. However, in *Annabelle* you will not see the Warren's; apparently they get involved with the demonic doll at a later date. *Annabelle* is Hollywood's fictitious version of how the doll came to be. You don't need to have seen *The Conjuring* before seeing *Annabelle*.

The movie starts out introducing us to Mia and John (Annabelle Wallis and Ward Horton). John finds the perfect gift for his expectant wife; a rare vintage doll in a pure white wedding dress. Soon after their home is invaded by members of a satanic cult who violently attack the couple. Both intruders are eventually killed but not before spilling blood onto Annabelle, which conjures up an entity so malevolent that nothing can satisfy its thirst for annihilation.

Almost immediately things go bump in the night. Mia begins seeing things she cannot explain and her husband is not sure what to believe. Alfre Woodard as Evelyn, a kindly bookstore owner whose daughter died in a car accident, befriends Mia and becomes the compassionate ear she so desperately needs.

The film takes you on a constant ride of terror using simple effects that are highly successful. A scene where a young girl charges a closing door is about as simple as it gets, but it really works.

Annabelle holds that frequent horror movie mixture that has some audience members yelling "Just get rid of the doll!" while others are left screaming, both in fright as well as good fun.

For the most part, *Annabelle* is an effective thriller with a smattering of non-typical jumps and scares along the way. The acting is a bit robotic but it doesn't ruin the movie. My biggest issue with the movie is the ending; but without giving it away it just missed the mark with me. After you watch the movie, Google the image of the real Annabelle doll. It is nothing like the terrifying doll used in the movie; in fact, the real doll is quite cuddly.



TWIN CITY OPERA HOUSE RECAP



On Friday, April 17th, The Ghosts Of Ohio, along with a few lucky guests, invaded the Twin City Opera House in McConnelsville, Ohio, for an overnight private ghost hunt.

The Twin City Opera House has long had a reputation for being home to several spirits, from a ghostly girl named Elizabeth to a character who goes by the name Red Wine Robert (due to his apparent penchant for red wine). There's even the ghost of a former usher said to still walk the aisles. Oh, and let's not forget the "black mass" that has been seen down in the dark and musty sub-basement.

Is it any wonder we were all super-excited to see what the building had to offer?

Overall, it was a rather quiet evening, although there were a few unexplained events that took place. It started with the overwhelming feeling that we weren't alone the first time we entered the sub-basement. Later on in the evening, three women were trying out dowsing rods for the first time in the basement dressing rooms. All three women reported that while holding the dowsing rods, they distinctly felt what could only be described as someone (or something)

pulling and pushing on the dowsing rods. At one point, the rods were pushed out to the sides so hard that they spun completely around and hit the woman holding them and her friend beside her.

All in all, it was a great time getting a behind-the-scenes tour of the Opera House. Based on the number of "likes" on our Facebook page, our fans and friends liked the opportunity to see what goes on behind the scenes, too!



GET READY, OHIO! THE GHOSTS ARE BACK.

And boy, did we miss you!

Last year, The Ghosts of Ohio decided to take time off from our usual schedule and just enjoy the October/Halloween season. And while we certainly did enjoy ourselves, one thing was clearly missing: all your smiling, happy faces!

So this year, we're back. Boy, are we ever! New presentations, new spooky "evidence" to share, special guests, and more spooky surprises than you could shake a skeletal stick at!

We know it's not even summer yet, but demand for The Ghosts of Ohio has already been so huge, so we've already confirmed more than a few dates...and lots more on the way!

The following is a list of all CONFIRMED dates, meaning that while the specific time, etc., is still "to come," you can go ahead and circle the date on your calendar! Additional information will be announced, as it becomes available, on Facebook and our other social media accounts, as well as our newsletter.

So get ready, Ohio, because The Ghosts are coming for you!

Oh yeah, and if you're interested in booking The Ghosts of Ohio for a presentation/appearance, don't delay! Shoot an email to info@ghostsofOhio.org and get the ball rolling today!

CONFIRMED APPEARANCES

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Book Discussion/Presentation
Columbus, Ohio

Saturday, September 12, 2015

Meet James A. Willis & The Ghosts of Ohio
Eastlake, Ohio

Saturday, October 10, 2015

Meet James A. Willis & The Ghosts of Ohio
Piqua, Ohio

Thursday, October 22, 2015

An Evening With James A. Willis
Coshocton, Ohio

Saturday, October 24, 2015

Ghost Presentation
Defiance, Ohio



GOT A SCARY STORY TO TELL?

Have you had a ghostly encounter in Ohio? Want to see it featured in a future issue of The Ghosts of Ohio Newsletter? Then here's all you have to do:

Just write down your story and send it to info@ghostsofohio.org with the subject line "Newsletter Ghost Story." Be sure to also include your name as you'd like it to appear with the story. We'll take it from there and send you out an email letting you know which issue it is going to appear in. That way, you can get all your friends to sign up for the newsletter so they can see how famous you are!

COMING IN THE JUNE NEWSLETTER

Digging into the Kecksberg UFO case

More fun with the Structured Light Sensor (SLS) Camera

Celebrating **16** years with The Ghosts of Ohio

Investigations & Consultations

The Ghosts of Ohio are continuing to schedule investigations for 2015. If you or someone you know is experiencing something unexplained in a home or place of business, contact us at info@ghostsofohio.org or visit our website to fill out an investigation request. All investigations are offered free of charge, and confidentiality and discretion are assured.

Not sure if you want or need an investigation? The Ghosts of Ohio also offers consultations. Let us sit down with you to discuss your current situation and what help we may be able to offer. For more information, please visit <http://ghostsofohio.org/services/investigations.html>.

Interact with The Ghosts of Ohio

In addition to our website, here are a couple of places where you can find The Ghosts of Ohio lurking online:

 FACEBOOK
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/Columbus-OH/The-Ghosts-of-Ohio/60704381381?ref=mf>

 TWITTER
<http://twitter.com/ghostsofohio>

Administration

The Ghosts of Ohio Newsletter is a free, bimonthly email newsletter. To subscribe, unsubscribe, or change your email address, please visit <http://mailman.ghostsofohio.org/mailman/listinfo/ghostsofohio>.

Please do not send vacation notices or other auto-responses to us, as we may unsubscribe you.

The Ghosts of Ohio collects your name and email address for the purpose of sending this mailing. We will never share your name or email address with advertisers, vendors, or any third party, unless required by law. The Ghosts of Ohio will never sell, trade, or rent your personal information.

For more information, please visit us online at www.ghostsofohio.org.

NEWSLETTER STAFF: Editor-In-Chief: James Willis Copy Chief: Kathy Boiarski Designer: Stephanie Willis
Contributing Authors: Mark DeLong, Samantha Nicholson, Rick Tarantelli, and James Willis