

The Haunting of Reindeer Manor

Part 1 of: The Haunted Houses of Anderson

By
Kevin Michael Guest

SMASHWORDS EDITION

* * * * *

PUBLISHED BY:
Kevin Michael Guest on Smashwords

The Haunting of Reindeer Manor
Copyright © 2012 by Kevin Michael Guest

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without the prior written permission of both the copyright owner and the above publisher of this book.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, brands, media, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. The author acknowledges the trademarked status and trademark owners of various products referenced in this work of fiction, which have been used without permission. The publication/use of these trademarks is not authorized, associated with, or sponsored by the trademark owners.

To the wonderful volunteers of
Reindeer Manor,
The 13th Street Morgue, and
The Dungeon of Doom.

Some of the nicest people doing some of the strangest work.

To Pasty,
With you, I can only
Improve.



Deep in the tall grass, far out in the pasture, where the cattle were grazing in peace, the faint sound of a gunshot was heard. As the sound traveled across the pasture, echoing off a tree line in the distance, the cattle only lowed softly.

Moments later, the wind died as clouds blocked the sunlight. The tall grass that had been waving back and forth majestically stilled suddenly, as if stopping to notice. Only the fading echo of the gunshot could be heard, but it too went silent seconds later.

The air became stale and lifeless. The wasps in the distance calmed themselves and returned to their nests. The ants and spiders resumed their work. The cattle looked at each other, then slowly walked toward the back corner of the pasture. There, they found a hole in the fence, and left the property one by one, never to return.

Around 75 years later...

On a lonely road in northwestern Montana, a man was walking with his thumb out. The temperature was a ghastly three above zero with a wind chill of negative ten.

After several hours, a trucker pulled his rig over and offered the man a ride. "Where ya headed mister?"

"I have no destination."

The trucker tipped his hat. "Well, this load's going south. I wouldn't mind the company."

The truck was found abandoned twenty miles north of Denton, Texas, along interstate thirty-five. All identification on the truck had been destroyed, though the cargo remained. The driver was never found.



Dallas News
Friday, October 31, 2008

Ghost Confirmed!

Above you will see an actual photograph taken at the famous Reindeer Manor in Red Oak, Texas. A photographer for Dallas County, standing on Houston School Road, photographed the dilapidated road prior to reconstruction in February. One of his photographs captured a ghostly image standing just inside the property line.

Many investigators have visited the famous house and though they have recorded strange phenomena, none have produced such undeniable evidence. This may be in part because the owner of the property, who has requested we not publish his name, has never allowed anyone to stay for very long. Portions of some of the investigations can be found on the website YouTube, under the search phrase "Reindeer Manor."

The Project

All Hallow's Eve

Dr. Anderson put down the newspaper. Next to it laid his rejection. He had worked so hard and come so close that to be stopped now was almost criminal. Could this be the answer he was looking for? He thought about it all afternoon, then on the way home decided he had to go to Reindeer Manor.

Several hours later, Anderson was questioning his decision. On this October day, it had been raining all afternoon and into the evening. The traffic down Interstate thirty-five was horrid. Once he got off on Bear Creek Road, he thought things would ease up. How wrong he was. The line of cars heading to Reindeer Manor seemed endless. For forty-five agonizing minutes, he inched forward, until finally he came upon the entrance. Once he crossed under the iron arch, he thought he was home free, but to his dismay, another long line of cars was ahead of him. Thirty torturous minutes later, he was finally directed into a parking spot.

He stood outside his car, weary from the traffic. Unlike most of the patrons, who were young and able, he was an aging instructor of psychology, in his middle sixties, slightly overweight and balding. The rain falling from the sky, along with the cold temperature, made the night miserable. In the distance he saw a tractor dragging cars out of their spots. He felt lucky he was not forced to park in the mud.

In the distance, through the rain, Anderson saw a lone lantern. It glowed yellow, signaling all those around, "Over here, this way." With their heads bowed, the people resembled zombies, walking mindlessly toward the lantern.

Anderson was cold and his clothes were quickly saturating. He questioned his thought process and choice to venture out on this night. Only the prospect of completing his life's work gave him the motivation to continue.

As he reached the lantern, he was relieved to see an awning. Under the awning stood a crowd of people, waiting for something. He shook his head, thinking he would see a ticket booth. After such a long entrance, surely this would be the end of the waiting. He was mistaken.

As he walked under the awning, his subdued demeanor was shared by all. No one was talking; rather, they were huddling together for warmth.

The howl of the wind whistled through the trees as a light in the distance broke through the darkness. Everyone scooted forward as the tractor drove past them, towing a long trailer with seats of hay. Once the tractor came to rest, they boarded.

Because of his bad leg, Anderson was the last to get on. He had barely sat down when the tractor jerked and moved forward. The ride was bumpy and uncomfortable. Anderson gritted his teeth as every bump sent ripples of pain up his injured back. He thought of his prior hauntings, how those in need would come to him, but now those days had passed. He felt desperate, and in his mind he knew that desperation was often followed by bad decisions.

As the tractor pulled them along, they crossed through the old cemetery before plunging into the dark woods. The rain and wind were magnified by the speed of the tractor. It made an already miserable autumn night even worse.

As they emerged from the woods, they passed another iron gate with the name 'Reindeer Manor' on top of it. Without stopping, the tractor continued on, pulling the hay wagon along the dirt road, then around back of the 13th Street Morgue, and finally to the front entrance. As the tractor stopped, with a big whoosh, a huge fireball erupted right above their heads. Anderson looked as the ball of fire illuminated the dilapidated gas station underneath it. Only one pump remained, but the roof of the building had collapsed and a portion laid on top of the old pump. He could clearly see the price, forty-two cents a gallon. How dated it was, he thought.

As Anderson stepped off the hayride, he noticed the ground was as saturated and muddy as it had been in the parking lot. He sighed and smiled a bit, giving credit to the date; this was good weather for a haunted house, but even better for Halloween.

Finally, nearly two and half hours after he left his prestigious home in Highland Park, he saw the ticket booth. Luckily, since he was the last one on the hayride, he was the first one off. He walked up to the booth and was greeted by the friendly cashier. She happily sold him a premium ticket.

As Anderson walked away, the smell of slow burning hickory wood tickled his nose. His mouth began to salivate as he realized he had not eaten dinner. He followed the heavenly scent and found a group of people standing in line, drawn by the aroma.

Anderson joined the line, trying to block his hunger pangs until they could be satisfied. He watched as young children ran screaming from one of the attractions. They darted across the midway as ghouls chased them. He chuckled at their terror and wondered if he would be so affected by these haunts.

As the line moved forward, he had trouble staying upright. His left leg was weak from a previous car accident, and the cane provided little support on such saturated ground. As he stepped forward, his fear came true. The cane was properly stuck.

Fortunately for him, a nice young man walked over and freed his cane from the mud.

Finally, his time to order had come. He stood before a young man who had a smile that would warm even the darkest of hearts. Above him stood a sign, 'The Ole' Texas Smokehouse.' The man was wearing a black t-shirt, covered by a black apron that sported the same name as the banner. Atop his head was a hat that read, 'The nicest guy in town.' Dr. Anderson thought, *We shall see.*

The booth was made of cheap timbers and used lumber; parts of it even looked as if it had been in a fire. It was a hodgepodge of corrugated metal and wood, but perfect for the Neanderthal food of fire and meat.

As he looked down, he could see a beer cooler filled with cold drinks covered by ice. Even in such miserable conditions, a person could enjoy an ice-cold soda.

Beside the cooler was a wooden cutting board, with a large razor sharp cleaver laying on top of it. To the left of the board was a portable steam table, no doubt where the delicacies of the barbeque were held.

The man smiled and said, "How are you tonight?"

Anderson eyed him. "I'm fine."

"That's great! Now, how are you really?"

What a persistent man, Anderson thought. "Actually, I'm cold, tired, and regretting coming out here with my cane."

The barbeque man looked at his watch. "I can understand. It's Friday, it's Halloween, and it's half an hour 'til midnight. A lot of people are out here."

Anderson rolled his eyes. "So what's the deal with these houses? What's so special about them?"

"Well, since you're now the only one in my line, let me tell you a story."

Anderson motioned with his free hand. "Please do."

"In the early 1900s, a two story wooden house stood on the site of the current house. The owner of the house was James Sharp, a prominent Texas oil pioneer and banker who partnered with Howard Hughes, Sr. in the famed Sharp-Hughes Tool Company. He leased the house and property to a family of Swedish immigrants because he was often

away on business. Unfortunately, in the early hours of a morning in 1915, the silence of the farm was shattered by screams. Lightning had sparked a tragic fire, which quickly consumed the wooden house. The entire family of sharecroppers, including several small children, perished in an unspeakably horrific death. Upset by the fate of his tenants, or perhaps because of the loss of property, Mr. Sharp decided to rebuild, only on a grand scale.”

Anderson leaned against the booth. “Why would he do that?”

“Well, he decided that this time he would occupy the property and turn it into the crown jewel of all his properties. But that’s where his normal side ended. He wanted to make sure the newly built house would not succumb to something as pedestrian as fire. Even though it nearly tripled the cost of construction, he made sure the buildings on the property were as fireproof as possible. This explains the unusual construction of virtually all the structures on the property. If you visit them during the day, you will notice they are all almost entirely engineered with concrete, brick, and steel. The lack of wood in their construction is oh-so-odd.”

Anderson sighed, only slightly intrigued. “You don’t say.”

“Yes, well, it was not to be. Mr. Sharp was killed, but by whom is still unclear. Even the location of his death is a mystery. Some say he was killed in the manor, by both his mistress and his wife. Some say it was just his mistress. Additionally, there is a bit of proof that he was killed at his city house in Oak Cliff. Even the details of his affair with his secretary are unusual. Some say they were married, some say it was a general affair, and some say he was a devoted father and would never succumb to such temptation.”

Anderson felt his eye lids growing heavy. “Uh-huh.”

The barbeque man looked around, making sure he was not missing out on any customers. He leaned in to the professor. “Well, the fact is, no one really knows who killed Mr. Sharp. The details are vague because of the bare semblance of an investigation at the time. You see, the Widow Sharp didn’t want her husband’s rumored infidelity widely known. She pressured the county Sheriff to quickly close the investigation and thus end the wild speculation of the press and neighbors. However, a darker rumor still circulates, that Mrs. Sharp and his mistress, who may have been the second Mrs. Sharp, chopped him up and put him in the attic of the house. But that rumor really does not correspond with the coroner’s report, which stated that the cause of death was due to the loss of two to three ounces of brain substance.”

Anderson sighed as he considered ending this conversation, but the barbeque man continued, “Now, it gets even more interesting. In 1917, shortly after the death of his father, James Jr. moved into the newly completed manor, but the legacy of misfortune continued. He developed quite a prosperous farming and ranching operation, in addition to breeding horses for harness racing. Between 1918 and 1928, additional buildings were added to the grounds: servant’s quarters, barns, and a carriage house. It was important to Junior that the estate was well equipped with an appropriate amount of space, which a wealthy family was expected to have. Everyone thought the Sharp family had survived the untimely death of its patriarch and had even come out better for it.

“However, James Junior’s stewardship of the property was cut short with the onset of the Great Depression of 1929, which thrust the Sharp family into poverty. His wife, a prominent spiritualist at the time, was convinced that the family and the estate itself were cursed. With creditors threatening, Junior began to act strangely. The staff was not shy about spreading the rumors of Junior’s insanity to the locals. Though many did not

believe the help's stories, they began to notice how reclusive Junior and his wife had become. The rumors spoke of strange and unholy pursuits going on behind the doors of the main house.

"It was only later, after the fall of the estate, that some of the goings-on were revealed. One maid, named Bonita stated, 'Constantly tormented by the whispers of a Sharp family curse, James and his wife were obsessed with finding a solution to their woes. Strange folk were seen going in and out of the Great House, from psychics to witch doctors; Mr. & Mrs. Sharp invited anyone with access to the occult to their bedroom in the vain attempt to lift the hex. His wife held séances to contact James Senior from beyond the grave for advice and counsel. Potions were mixed and incantations were chanted to rid the home and family from the string of bad luck. No one is sure if they were instructed by a spirit or simply came upon the solution on their own, but soon the couple found a way to bring the Sharp family out of the shadows.'"

Anderson was becoming a bit more interested. "So what happened?"

The barbeque man smiled and wagged his finger. "The final chapter of the Sharp family ended with the discovery of James Junior's wife, dead by poisoning, and his lifeless body swinging from a noose in the barn. To this day it is unclear who killed whom or if it was a suicide pact. Either way the curse was lifted."

Anderson smiled. "Well I'll be. That's a tumultuous history all right."

"Well if you have a bit more time, there's more."

Anderson was beginning to sense a gold mine lay here. "Son, I've got all night."

He smiled. "Well, years after the Sharp family was no more, a man named Jonathon Maybrick leased one of the barns for his residence and funeral parlor, which was an expansion of his funeral home business in Alvarado, Texas. It is said that he intended to get the business going, then lease it out and return to his home in Alvarado. He was able to create a state of the art embalming facility, funeral chapel, and crematory. The north end of the barn was converted into a residence while the south end became storage for the horse-drawn hearse. The land to the west of the building was used to bury folks who could not afford a plot in the city cemetery. Even today, the owner still enjoys sizable tax discounts on the property for the paupers' graves.

"The Maybricks did well at their new location, but trouble began to brew when a local criminal met his end in a botched bank robbery. During the crime, a local widower's sixteen year old daughter was shot and killed. The widower, Alfred Helm, religiously kept his three children indoors for fear of losing them like he lost his wife. In a strange twist of fate, he had sent his eldest daughter, Abigail, to the bank that afternoon. The robber, Raymond Reynolds, an out-of-work railroad employee, killed the bank teller and Abigail for no apparent reason, though it was suspected that the teller resisted the robber's demands. As he tried to flee, he was shot dead by the town's only police officer.

"After the shootings, Raymond's mother came to the morgue to make final arrangements for her son. Even though Mr. Maybrick was hesitant to arrange the funeral for such a notorious villain, he finally acquiesced because he ultimately needed the money and media attention.

"As word spread of the funeral, Alfred Helm was not at all happy to hear the news that the murderer of his precious Abigail was to receive a proper funeral when he had to lay his child to rest on his own land with his own shovel. Rumors spread that Helms would show up at the funeral and cause trouble, but on the day of the event all was quiet.

“A few months later, close to Christmas, the public’s memories of the robbery and shootings were beginning to fade, but not in Mr. Helm’s mind. Early on the morning of December 13, Mr. Helm cut the phone lines and broke into the morgue. Dressed as Santa Claus to fool the children, he made his way into the building and into each of the bedrooms. After strangling the two small children, the wife, and finally Jonathon, Mr. Helm sat in the Maybricks’ living room, in Jonathan’s rocking chair, and shot himself in the chest. How long he sat there before killing himself is unknown, but the butt of a cigar was found on the floor, and Jonathon Maybrick did not smoke.

“The note Mr. Helm left read simply, ‘Please watch after my children. They are the product of an unholy mind.’

“After years of abandonment, I believe the Red Oak Fire Department used the main house as a training ground, since it would not burn. However, strange reports of floating objects and unexplained noises unnerved some of the firefighters. After years of petitioning the town for a new facility, in 1974 they received it. Shortly after, it was determined by city leaders that the strange events that occurred on the property could make a worthy fund raiser for the fire department. At that point, the haunted attraction was born and named after its mailing street, Reindeer Road. Years later, it was bought from the city and run by an unknown family who eventually sold to the current owner. When the history of the morgue was discovered, they decided to exploit that history as well; however, they have had more problems with the barn lately than the house. Some say the true evil lies there, where Junior hung himself and Alfred did his killings.”

Suddenly, Anderson saw spots before his eyes; he grabbed the cutting board to stabilize himself as his cane hit the ground. The barbeque man reached across the cutting board and grabbed him, arresting his fall.

Anderson stood up and regained his balance, “I’m sorry, I’m not sure what happened.”

The barbeque man smiled, “That’s all right. Here, just take a sandwich. It’s on me, just sit down and take it easy.”

“Thank you.” He took it and walked over to a table. As he sat there, he thought about the history and the newspaper article. It seemed too good to be true. He recalled days of wasted time spent staring at useless monitors and listening to the unexplained sounds of rickety old homes. His mind wandered to a specific haunting in his manuscript, a haunting he called ‘classic.’

Anderson finished the sandwich, then returned to the vendor. “Thank you for your kindness. May I have your name, for reference?”

The barbeque man smiled at him. “Kevin.”

“Nice to meet you, Kevin. Say, if I wanted to investigate the house, how would I do that?”

Kevin looked toward the manor. “Well, you would have to talk to Andy; he’s the owner. Unfortunately, he also runs the special effects, so he will not be available ‘til the show is over.”

Anderson raised his cane and smiled. “Thank you, sir.” He walked away, hopeful he had found what he was looking for. He wandered over to Reindeer Manor and enjoyed the rooftop show, the customers being put in the gallows, and the overall atmosphere. He stood in line and slowly inched his way ever closer to the house. Finally, after nearly two hours, he was escorted inside. Unlike the rest, though he enjoyed the acting, he was more

enamored with the house itself. He spent a good deal of time looking up at the ceiling, trying to authenticate that at one time this was a residence.

After the show, a group of actors took Anderson to Andy. As he walked along the large concrete porch of the house, he came to a special window. Inside, a thin man in his late forties was finishing up some kind of paperwork. Around him were knobs, buttons, computer screens, amplifiers, and ropes that disappeared into the ceiling.

The man looked up and saw him. "What can do for ya?"

"I'm sorry for staying behind, but I was told I would have to wait 'til the show was over to talk with you. My name is Dr. Jonathon Anderson."

"Nice to meet you. I'm Andy. Now, you waited a long time, doctor, what can I do for you?"

Anderson leaned his cane against the window, "I want to investigate the house. How might I go about that?"

Andy sighed. "Well, during the week, I will be happy to give you a private tour. We have prices for private parties."

"No, I want to stay in the manor."

Andy sat back in his chair. "No one spends the night here, ever."

"I am willing to make it worth your while. I have the backing of the psychological department at the university. The picture we saw in the paper has generated quite a bit of enthusiasm."

Andy folded his arms. "Dr. Anderson, there are places in this house that are sealed off. Not even I will go there. You have to understand, this place is like a museum. Enjoy it while you're here, but let it be. Let whatever resides here rest. You're not doing anyone any favors by stirring up further controversies. It's just a Halloween attraction. It's best if you leave it that way."

He was not deterred. "But you know it's more, much more. You're selling the history of the house; why do you deny its true form?"

Andy sighed and his smile faded. "I made the mistake of staying in the house after I bought it. I thought it would be a neat experience, but it's not. Sometimes things happen to visitors that are out of my control, but for the most part, things remain calm. I know this sounds like bad news, but it's not. Please, go back to the university. Leave this house alone."

Anderson shook his head. If only Andy knew how much this meant to him. "I cannot do that. Though you're warning me, it's only furthering my curiosity. I am offering you one hundred thousand dollars to allow myself and a staff of my choice to reside in the manor for five days. These are my conditions: return the house to its original design and open up any sealed-off areas. After five days, we will depart and make no further requests of you."

Andy shook his head. "I don't—"

"One hundred thousand dollars plus the cost to take down and rebuild. Take it or leave it." Anderson put his business card down and walked away.

After going over his finances and realizing what he could do with the money, for the first time, Andy decided to allow an extensive investigation. The next day he spoke with Anderson's secretary and approved the deal.

Obsession



Back in the peaceful setting of his Highland Park estate, Dr. Anderson's dream was anything but peaceful...

...Anderson was standing at the main entrance of Reindeer Manor, eager to enter. The fact that he was there alone did not bother him. He reached out, but as he touched the door handle, an unanticipated sense of dread came over him. He felt he was being watched, but not from afar. He felt as if he was being stared down, inches from his face. It was an unnerving sensation.

Suddenly he heard a whisper. "Open the door."

Anderson backed away. Though it was daylight, the house looked menacing, evil, and in disrepair. At night, with all the glitz and glamour of the haunted production going on, the real dilapidation of the structure was hidden. He could tell that at one time, this house had real glory, but now its faded red paint and crumbling bricks spoke of a slow death brought on by nature.

As he stood there, he heard a crunching sound. It resembled the sound of dry leaves being walked on. The sound continued to get louder, as if someone was approaching. He turned, but no one was there. The dread continued to build. Feeling he was losing control of the situation, he decided to leave.

Cautiously, Anderson began backing away. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw something. Slowly he turned as he held his breath. The three ropes in the gallows were swinging. "It's only the wind," he mumbled. Suddenly they stopped swinging, but one of the nooses was parallel to the ground and stretched, as if someone was hanging from it.

Quickly he turned and walked with his head down, refusing to look. Suddenly he heard a door swing and a piercing scream, followed by silence. *Oh God*, he thought. He wanted to look, to see if there really was a body hanging there, but he fought it. If he looked, what would he see-- himself? No, he had to go; it was not of his concern.

As he was about to round the corner of the snack bar, suddenly he stopped. *My cane*, he thought. He heard tapping coming from the house. He turned to his left to avoid looking at the gallows. In the upstairs window, there it was, leaning against the glass. He shook his head. "They want me to come inside," he said. Arguing with himself, he closed his fist. "No, I have to leave; I have to get out of here!"

Without a second thought, he turned and walked quickly. To his surprise, he did not need the cane. Faster and faster he walked, past the iron gate as it slammed shut. He stopped and turned, but no one was there. Suddenly a cold wind blew across him. The hair on the back of his neck stood up as he felt something breathing on him.

Slowly he turned, but again, no one was there. He shook his head and then with a burst of fear-fueled energy, he began running. Self preservation had taken over, and for

him it was flight. No matter how fast he ran, he could still feel the entity breathing on his neck.

Finally, off in the distance, he saw his car. He dashed for it, his leg aching intensely; now he wished he had gotten his cane. The sun disappeared behind the clouds as music began playing from the morgue. It was a dreadful dirge.

Finally, he reached his car, but to his horror, his keys were not in his pockets. *Oh God*, he thought, *where could I have dropped them?* As he turned to go back, a glimmer caught his eye. It was his keys, in the ignition.

With a sigh of relief, he quickly tried to open the passenger door, but it was locked. He ran around to the driver's side--again, locked! As he panicked, he felt three claws digging into the back of his neck. He screamed in agony and arched his back. Finally, in desperation, he smashed the driver's side window with his fist. Blood poured from his wound, but he did not care. He jumped into the car and started the engine. With the accelerator pressed to the floor, he sped down the bumpy entrance road, hitting his head on the roof multiple times.

As he rounded Dead Man's Curve, ahead he could see the barricades. They were closed. He gripped the steering wheel with all his might and kept the accelerator pressed to the floor. As the two thousand pound car slammed into the yellow barricades, they were dislodged from their post and sent flying into the air. As his car sailed onto Houston School Road, in an incredible impact, he was ejected from the car and thrown into the tall grass.

Moments later, as he lay there bleeding, he looked up and saw another vehicle on its side, smoking. After what seemed like an eternity, the sounds of sirens were music to his ears. Though he was having a hard time hearing, he heard a witness telling a police officer, "This guy came speeding out of Reindeer Manor as the other vehicle was coming down the road, and neither one could see the other."

Anderson watched as the medics attended to him, but all he could think was, "I got out."



The alarm went off as Anderson opened his eyes. He looked all around but was confused, unsure of what was going on. His emotions were in overdrive and his heart was racing. He was terrified and unable to speak. His brain raced to make sense of what was happening. "Am I dead?" he mumbled.

"No," a voice in the darkness said.

He stood from the bed. "Who's there?"

A light suddenly went on. "What are you doing, John?"

He sighed, "Apparently suffering the effects of a nightmare."

She looked at him like he had lost his mind. "Silly man."

He took a deep breath and sat back on the bed. A cold wet sensation came over him. He quickly stood as Lauren jumped up. "Oh John, you wet the bed!"

He leaned over to smell. "No, it's sweat."

She ripped off all the covers in disgust. As she walked from the room she mumbled, "You and your dreams."

He smiled as he reached over and turned on the radio. A bright cheery voice sounded through the speakers, "Good morning ladies and gentlemen, I hope you all had a spooky

weekend, but now Halloween's over and it's straight to Thanksgiving! For all of you who missed it, the Cowboys won last night over the—”

Anderson reached over and turned the radio off. “No, it's time to work!”

Lauren walked back in, “Well, are you gonna get dressed or not?”

In a burst of affection, he walked over and kissed her deeply. After the embrace, he sat her down, his hand on top of hers. “Yes, I am!”

Lauren stood and walked around him. “What's got into you?”

He followed her with his eyes. “Success, like a gift from above.”

As she opened her dresser, she looked at him. “I assume, then, that the publisher accepted your work? I have not heard a word since you submitted it.”

Anderson lowered his head. “Actually, no, they rejected it, for a number of ridiculous reasons. However, things happen for a reason, and I may have found my most interesting case to date!”

Disinterested, Lauren smirked as she dressed. “Well, you will have to do it a bit under-dressed. I hung up the pants you wore on Friday. I did not have a chance to go to the dry cleaners on Saturday, so just wear those and we will be back on track tomorrow.”

“Yes dear,” he said instinctively.

After dressing, Anderson wandered downstairs, where he found Lauren cooking. He walked over and sat at the table as she placed a plate of toast and an assortment of jams in front of him. He picked up the peach and spread it over the toast. He smirked. Why she insisted on putting out the others was beyond him; in thirty-eight years of marriage, he had never used anything but peach.

Lauren put a plate of eggs and bacon in front of him, and though he was anxious to leave, he took time to eat.

“You're cheery today,” she said.

He nodded. “I know.”

“It's good to see this side of you again. I will come by the university later. Don't forget we have dinner reservations.”

He had not the slightest clue what she was talking about. His mind was wrapped around one thing: Reindeer Manor.

As he was driving, he could not help but daydream about the success to come. He thought of the details and knew he would change his mind often, but finally after so long, a chance to investigate again was almost too good to be true.

He pulled into the parking lot and parked in his spot. He took a deep breath, wondering what the day would bring him. Quickly he gathered his things and hurried to his office. As he entered, he was grateful his secretary was already there.

“Good morning, Dr. Anderson.”

He smiled and bowed. “And good morning to you, Mary!”

“Well, my-my, what has you in such high spirits?”

He held up a file. “Reindeer Manor, my dear, Reindeer Manor!”

She was ecstatic. It had been so long since he had gone on an investigation. She had missed his eager, often boyish excitement. “Well, it's about time!”

“That it is, Miss Mary, that it is!”

She followed him with her eyes as he walked into his office and gently closed the door.

Inside, he found everything just as he had left it: his manuscript, the letter, the newspaper. He set his coffee on the desk, then picked up the phone and called Dean Shultz. With enthusiasm, he requested to go before the special projects board. To his delight, he was added to the meeting later that afternoon.

A few hours later, Anderson stood before the council. “Ladies and gentleman, my long term project, Texas Hauntings, was rejected by the publisher. However, with suggestions from the publisher, it can be edited and reworked. Specifically, publisher wants an additional investigation, to make it nine distinct hauntings. Though there are nine hauntings already, the issue with Faring High School is to be removed.”

The council looked at him with judging eyes. The rumors about that investigation had led some to question Dr. Anderson’s place at the university.

Anderson continued, “I believe I have found my final subject, Reindeer Manor. Though this is a Halloween attraction, and though it has been investigated before by my colleague, Dr. Weinstein, never in the history of the house has an investigator spent the night. The owner has refused to allow overnight guests--that is, until now.

“As most know, my department rarely uses its entire budget. In the accounts, my department has two hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars allocated for special projects. I intend to withdraw one hundred and fifty thousand. These funds will be used to rent the entire property of Reindeer Manor and to pay for the rental cars, new equipment, supplies, and three additional assistants.”

Anderson uncovered the aerial photograph of the property.



He used a laser pointer to focus the group’s attention. “On the right, you will see the main house. This is the Sharp residence. James Sharp, of the Sharp-Hughes Tool Company, began the construction of this house, but never saw it finished. He was killed, allegedly by his secretary, who was also his mistress.

“Following his death, Mrs. Sharp sold her fifty percent of the company and remained in New York. Her eldest son, James Sharp, Jr., was given the property to complete and reside in.”

Anderson pointed to some of the other buildings. “Junior completed the estate, but unfortunately when the stock market crashed in 1929, Junior’s investments were hit hard. He and his wife did not recover from this hit, and sank deeper in debt as time went on.

“As their finances continued to suffer, they took additional actions to deal with their overwhelming debt. In the end, they blamed the death of James Senior for the family losses, stating, ‘The sins of the father will revisit the son.’

“There were several employees working the property. They reported seeing less and less of Sharp and his wife as their wealth declined. From time to time, they appeared, almost magically, in the barn, five hundred feet from the house.

“Over time, the banks and lenders grew tired of waiting for the back payments. After many extensions, the lenders lost faith in the Sharps. They sent notices of foreclosure and threats of eviction, but they would go unanswered.

“Sticking only to the facts, to this day, the Red Oak police remain unsure as to how it all played out, but Junior was found in the barn, dead by hanging, and his wife was slumped over at the kitchen table, dead by poisoning.

“It was reported that there was no heir to the estate, but it would not have mattered. The property fell to the lenders, who then sold it to the county.”

Anderson looked at the council. He was pleased to see he had not lost their attention. “That in itself would make the house worth investigating, but there’s more. A man named Jonathan Maybrick leased the barn on the left and turned it into a funeral home.”

One of the council members rolled his eyes. Anderson addressed him. “Dean Shultz, you cannot make this stuff up.”

Shultz looked at him. “I know the story. The legend of Reindeer Manor and the deaths of the morgue are common knowledge. The real issue is the use of cash. You may step outside and the board will discuss your request.”

Anderson was bit disappointed at being cut short, but he nodded and left the room.

After Anderson left, the group whispered amongst themselves. The large amount of money was a sticking point for the council. After a few moments Dean Shultz stood. “We are at a crossroads with this professor. He has taken our psychology department down an unusual road. I am concerned that our students are not receiving a proper education. However, the funds are available for Dr. Anderson by right. He has generously given up parts of his budget in the past to support other departments, so I feel compelled to vote yes on his proposal, though it may be the last time I ever vote yes for one of his projects again.”

Outside, Anderson went over everything he had talked about in his head. He began preparing himself for additional questions and even an argument. He had not asked for a substantial amount of money in years, and other departments asked for funds regularly.

Half an hour later, he once again stood before the council. Dean Shultz, head of the council, addressed him. “We have approved this project and its funds. However, you will not be allowed to choose the three assistants. You may take your secretary with you since she has assisted you with other projects. For the remaining assistants, we will conduct an intensive search for the proper candidates. The council has decided your group will consist of an additional psychologist, a medium, and an observer with no skills in psychology. Those three will write independent reports for the council; you will not be allowed to view them until the council feels this project is at an end. Are we agreed?”

Anderson was more than delighted, “Yes sir, however, I would ask that the nature of this project be kept secret. I don’t want the team to have any knowledge of where they’re going. They shall go under this agreement or not at all.”

The dean had an additional requirement. "You will also keep this project out of the media and out of police station, do you understand?"

Anderson nodded. "That seems fair."

The dean continued, "Since you want the project details classified from the assistants, then you shall write the advertisement for the candidates."

"Yes sir."

The dean sighed, worried about what was to come. "This council is adjourned."

Anderson could not have asked for a more receptive group of people. As he walked back to his office, he saw Mary leaving for lunch. "When you return, cancel my afternoon classes; a new project is afoot!"

She smiled, "Yes sir." He was a giddy as a schoolgirl.

*FROM: The Office of Dr. Anderson
University Chair, Psychology Department
TO: All Students and Faculty*

The office of Dr. Anderson will be conducting a five-day study into the paranormal during the spring break of next year. This will be an off-campus investigation at a predetermined location in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Three candidates will be chosen based upon experience, writing ability, skill set, and project needs.

The University will hire one psychologist, one demonstrated medium, and one observer.

The observer should not be enrolled in the psychology program and is only required to possess excellent writing and descriptive skills.

The pay will be substantial, following completion of the project. In addition, the persons must complete all five days.

If you believe you possess the skills and qualities needed for this project, please submit a résumé, your beliefs on the supernatural, and a ten-page essay demonstrating your writing ability to Dean Shultz's office by the Thanksgiving holiday.

Candidates who meet submission guidelines will be contacted for an interview in December.

The Investigators

During the month of December, nearly five hundred applicants were interviewed and re-interviewed until only ten remained. Those ten were subjected to background checks, polygraphs, psychological and physical examinations, and more. Of the ten, only two passed.

The third one, a Dr. Albert Lynn Fletcher, was handpicked by Dean Shultz. In a meeting between the two, the dean outlined his expectations.

The dean handed the psychologist a cup of coffee then sat behind his massive antique desk. "Dr. Fletcher, having come from out of state, you bring a refreshing point of view to this institution. I want you to accompany Dr. Anderson on his project in March. Unfortunately, we do not have a teaching position open at this time, but we do have an opening in the summer for an adjunct professor."

Fletcher nodded at him. "Can I ask why you want me to accompany Dr. Anderson?"

Schulz frowned. "Honestly, it's best if you go without knowing. If what I think is true, you will reveal that on your own." Schulz eyed him. "Do this for me and the university will guarantee you a teaching position next fall."

Fletcher raised his eyebrows. "What about my background? It seems your human resources department cannot locate me."

Shultz stood and motioned for Fletcher to leave. "I think by the end of this project, we will have a good idea of who you are. Don't discuss our arrangement with Dr. Anderson. If he asks, tell him you were chosen by the committee, as were the other candidates. Now, please wait outside and my secretary will provide you a packet that will get you on Dr. Anderson's team."

~Dr. Albert Lynn Fletcher~

As Mary typed up new guidelines for Dr. Anderson's classes, a man in his early fifties, with dark hair, a full beard, standing about five foot nine, skinny, and with stained yellow teeth, approached her.

The stench of cigarettes announced his presence before he could speak. Mary gracefully reached into her purse and retrieved a bottle of perfume. She sprayed the pleasant liquid in front of her nose. Afterwards she looked at him. "May I help you?"

He handed her a yellow envelope. She opened it and read the judgment. She then sealed the envelope and smiled at him. "Congratulations, Dr. Fletcher; it seems you're the chosen psychologist to assist Dr. Anderson."

He smiled, "Thank you, ma'am."

Mary stood, "Let me see if he's available."

Anderson was sitting in his office, studying the ghostly image from the Halloween edition, looking for any imperfections or signs of trickery. He was as nervous about the project as he was excited.

Mary hit the call button on the intercom. "Dr. Anderson, Dr. Fletcher is here to see you."

The sudden voice startled him and he dropped his magnifying glass. It shattered as it hit the floor. He sighed and then hit the call button, "Let him in."

Mary motioned to Fletcher as he straightened his suit.

Anderson stood as Fletcher walked through the door. "Dr. Fletcher, it is good to meet you!"

"Likewise, Dr. Anderson, I have looked forward to this moment since I first heard of it."

"Yes, well, please come in. Would you like a cup of coffee?"

Fletcher put his hand up as he sat down. "No, I am fine, thank you."

Anderson smiled at Mary. She nodded and closed the door as he picked up his manuscript. He tapped on it with his finger. "Texas Hauntings, by Dr. Jonathon Anderson. I am finishing my life's work. With one more haunting, I will have definitively proved the existence of ghosts and the afterlife."

Fletcher nodded. "That's an amazing achievement." He scooted forward in his chair, nervously eyeing the manuscript. "I hope my contributions will be fruitful. The chance to assist a colleague in a project that will define his life is an honor unto itself."

"Indeed." Anderson held the manuscript firmly in his hands as he sat down. He stared at it as he talked. "You know, sometimes it seems that they call to me, the houses, as if finding them is not a random occurrence."

Fletcher did not quite understand. "How do the residents react when you arrive?"

Anderson laughed, "They often fall over backwards for me. Many times, they are at their wits' end, having all of their finances tied to the property. In addition, they are suffering extreme embarrassment, afraid if they go public, they will be ridiculed. A haunting is not just about objects that move or unexplained electrical and environmental phenomena, it's about the people who dwell within the house. Many times, the psychic energy of the resident is exacerbating the situation, or creating it altogether."

"So do you solve their problem, or is it just documentation?"

Anderson smiled. "From my end, it's pure research. In one instance, an owners of a rather large mansion in east Dallas did not want the haunting solved. In my manuscript I refer to this house as 'A Classic Haunting.' They rather enjoyed the thrill of living in a spiritually active place. However, the norm is paranoia. After the investigation, I usually contact the Catholic Church or another group on behalf of the owners. I supply them with my research and then move on."

Fletcher was intrigued. "Have you seen many haunted houses?"

Again Anderson laughed. This discussion was a massage to his ego. "Well, yes and no. I have not actually been in contact with a spirit directly. But I have seen unexplained phenomena that baffle science." Anderson folded his hands on his desk, excited to talk to someone on his own level. "I once saw water, dripping from the floor to the ceiling. It was a most remarkable thing. Another time, I saw a pen move itself across a table, jump from that table to the floor, and roll under a couch. Now, that might seem normal, but it took the pen almost ten hours to make the full journey."

"I don't actually believe that you can be contacted in a physical way by these phenomena. It's not like the movies. I am not entirely sure that whatever is causing the events is done by an intelligent being. My research is not about solving hauntings, but documenting them in a scientific way. I believe we, as an intelligent species, are still new to this planet, and though we feel we have attained superior knowledge, we are actually in our infancy about its mechanics."

"So this is more about busting the myth of ghosts rather than discovering them."

"It's a good method to use. By doing the research in a scientific manner, I hope that my findings can be rationalized. I believe if I go into a house looking for evidence of an unexplained intelligence, I will find it simply because I am looking for it. My mind will fill in the gaps. Therefore, for me to be convinced of paranormal activity, it has to come as I seek to disprove it."

Fletcher had chills running up and down his spine. "Do you think we will see such unexplained phenomena at the location you have chosen?"

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

