

Killer Clown Hysteria at Keystone College a Time to Remember



Written by Steve Skierski

In autumn of 2017, concurrent with the release of the new Stephen King's *It* movie, a rash of clown sightings swept college campuses across America. Keystone was no exception. As hype built for the blockbuster horror film, hysteria exploded across the sleepy campus.

It started for me when I returned to work on a Thursday after having the preceding two days off. I walked into the office to find our director pacing back and forth and dressed in a full suit. When he hung up his cell phone he told us all to hang out for a minute and then debriefed us on an ongoing situation. "I've been in meetings all day trying to get to the bottom of this." He began. He went to explain that a clown had been sighted multiple times by many students near Moffat Hall, and that parents were beginning to express concern and demand answers.

I laughed out loud.

“Are you serious? A Clown?”

My coworkers weren't laughing. They'd fielded many of the calls the previous two nights and told me it was all very real. Shaking my head, I grabbed a clipboard off the wall and headed over the Alumni Hall to conduct routine monthly fire extinguisher service checks.

While I was there, the walkie talkie rang. Knowing the boys were still in a meeting, I answered. A concerned mother's voice crackled across the line:

“Hi so my daughter has been telling me that y'all got clowns on campus.”

“Yes ma'am we're working on it.”

“I want my daughter to be escorted anytime she goes ANYWAY until these these these . . . clowns are taken care of.”

And she went on and on . . .

“Our director has been in meetings all day trying to figure this out ma'am, your daughter will be okay.”

I reassured her. She didn't want to hear it and kept going on and on until I finally thanked her for her time and hung up the phone.

I went back to HQ, where I scolded Jared and DJ for sitting there laughing and having fun while I dealt with the irate Karen on the phone. After some general small talk from our director, we split up and hit the campus. DJ and I took the golf cart. As we drove past Brooks, we were flagged down by “Mark” from IT.

“Did you guys get the clown?”

He asked with a grin spreading across his bearded face.

“I can't believe this shit.” I muttered. He laughed and told us to be careful.

We searched the campus for clues and didn't find any. We only heard increasingly sensational stories from students about what had gone down over the last few nights. The first person we interviewed said they saw the clown standing at the corner on the far edge of the Moffat parking lot holding a butcher knife. The second person said the clown approached them with its knife as they sat in their car (definitely not smoking pot) late that night. The third person claimed the clown wielded a chainsaw and brandished it outside their first-floor window. The stories got completely out of hand and felt entirely made up.

This fervour went on for about a week, with the climax coming when the guys from the baseball team finally decided they'd had enough. Sick of their girlfriends being scared, the boys were done waiting for College officials to act. They decided vigilante justice was the best approach.

They loaded into pickup trucks with their baseball bats, flashlights, and general rodlike implements and went on a little clown hunt.

I've always imagined the scarecrow from Wizard of Oz crouching behind some bushes and trying to hide as flashlight beams searched for him and shitty trap music blared in the background. I thank God every night the clown was not found by the ball team.

It turns out the clown was real. A young man who lived down the street named "Tony" was the lead clown at the local Reaper's Revenge Haunted Attraction. He used to be the head scarer in the clown event called the "Lost Carnival." He confessed to me years later that during the runup to the release of It, he would keep his makeup on after work and walk around on campus to fuck with people. While he never had a knife or a chainsaw, Tony was the real KC Klown and thought it was all hilarious in hindsight. While the ball team was driving around in Factoryville looking behind buildings for him, he was sitting in his house laughing at them.