

Wandering Souls in Hollinshead Hall



Written by Steve Skierski

Firsthand accounts:

Tragically, an unnamed student did take his own life in Hollinshead Hall, the sister building to Tewksbury Hall, sometime in the 2006-2010 date range. First, I hope his soul has found peace. Second, everyone at KPS respects the privacy and exact location of the incident.

I heard the story from a former chief of the local ambulance and fire company. One of my coworkers, who I'll affectionately call "Uncle Dave" used to receive visits from an old ambulance buddy during our particularly slow shifts. The two would sit and talk until one or the other got a call and had to get back to work. On one such visit, the topic of "Keystone not being safe" came up. As Uncle Dave railed on about campus safety officers having guns and formal disaster training, his companion told a story of his worst night at the College.

The ambulance was called when the gunshot was heard in a room in Hollinshead, and Dave's friend was the first person to open the door. He explained: "The police were there and they were like 'we're goin in first.' And I says 'NOBODY is going in there until after me.' When I opened the door . . . what was left of him was there." The young man had taken his own life with a firearm and was lying dead on the floor. The horrific scene was cleared, the room was deep-cleaned, and the incident 'didn't happen' to anyone except those who were there.

Personal Experience:

Another tragedy struck Hollinshead during the winter of 2016. A group of 4 students was returning to campus after a snack run to nearby Clarks Summit. The driver lost control, and two of the students tragically lost their lives on the highway that night. Thinking about the atmosphere of the suite where all 4 used to live before and after the tragedy is the kind of shit that keeps me up at night even now. A close-knit group of friends and exceptional people was brutally interrupted in an instant. The memorial services was the first and only time I ever saw the whole campus truly united in solidarity. Why does it take such a tragedy to bring out the best in us?

In fall of 2019, a student in my College Writing class, "Stephanie" reported a series of disturbing incidents in and around her room in Hollinshead Hall. She said that while she was grinding homework in her room one night, she heard someone yelling to her from the staircase winding through the building. When she checked, it was empty. This would occur multiple times until she was finally freaked out enough to talk about it in class. By this point, I had founded the KPS at the school and had talked about it in class. She broke down in front of 15 other people and explained how scared she was to even go back to her room.

Stephanie explained that she began to receive phone calls with only static and staticky unintelligible voices on the other line. She said that the calls would continue whether she answered or not, but that the numbers didn't exist when she tried to call back. She would hear noises in her room at night and felt like she was under constant surveillance from something she couldn't see. This messed her up and she wasn't sleeping. Her grades were slipping and she felt like she was losing her mind.

At this point, I was just listening. I try not to insert ideas into people's minds with these stories and prefer to let them play out before I offer anything. As Stephanie explained the phantom phone calls, another student, "Victor," interjected: "it'll do that. It'll send you a text. It'll have a family member voice if you talk to it. It's trying to scare you." My blood ran cold. Victor clearly suspected it was a demon trying to intimidate Stephanie.

Victor went on to tell a story of his own experience with such a malevolent entity. He said that after a grandparent died, he continued to received phone calls from their disconnected number.

He was particularly scared when he started getting texts from their phone, even though the grandparent didn't know how to text. He was convinced that evil spirits have adapted with the times and know exactly how to use technology to mess with us. He urged Stephanie to ignore it and try to find another place to stay. She didn't talk about it again after this incident, but I couldn't help but notice Stephanie's attendance begin to decline a bit as we came closer to the end of the semester.