

More Questions Than Answers: Where Does the Paranormal Field Go From Here?

It was around 1 p.m. when I pulled into the campground and found my site for the next three days. I was the first one there, so I had plenty of time to set up and pick my spot before anyone else arrived. I chose the most shaded area I could find, tucked back into the trees, and thank God I did because it felt like it was 100 degrees in the sun. It took me about an hour to get the tent and canopy set up and everything situated. Afterward, I sat under the canopy, escaping the heat and enjoying a cold beverage. With nothing else going on, my mind started wandering, and I began thinking about something I probably should have asked myself a long time ago: Why do I investigate?

I've been investigating for nearly two decades, but I never really stopped to think deeply about that question until about a year and a half ago, when I started my podcast. Since then, I've had some unbelievable guests on the show. We don't always agree. In fact, sometimes we have completely different opinions about investigating, equipment, evidence, spirits, and why we do what we do. But there is one thing that seems to hold true for almost all of us: we have more questions than answers. Why is that? With all the investigators out there, all the locations we've visited, all the equipment we've developed, and all the years people have spent doing this, you would think we would have more answers by now. The truth is, we don't.

This was the day before our first investigation. Nothing was planned besides hanging out, relaxing, and having a good time. But, as usual, I was sitting by myself with my thoughts. Over the next two nights, we would be investigating two completely different locations with two different histories and possibly two very different types of spirits. That brought me back to the same question: Why do we choose to do this? Are we really finding answers at these pay-to-play locations, or are we simply honing our skills until the day comes when we decide to step outside of what is comfortable and really start searching for answers? Because I'm not convinced we are finding them right now.

Don't misunderstand me. I love going out with my friends. I enjoy having a good time, visiting historical locations, hearing their stories, and hopefully getting a few

of those stories straight from the spirits themselves. Keeping those memories alive has always been important to me. But the deeper I get into investigating, the more I realize that, for me, that isn't enough anymore. I want answers. So how do we get there? I know one thing: walking into the same locations and asking the same questions that thousands of investigators have asked before us probably isn't going to get us there. There are people who are completely happy doing that, and I have no problem with it. Those locations deserve to have their stories told. The people who lived, worked, suffered, and died there deserve to be remembered. But personally, I want more.

This isn't an article telling you how to find the answers because I have no idea. If I did, trust me, I would be out there doing it and telling everyone else what I discovered. Think of this as a sequel to something I wrote earlier called "What Are We Doing?" Most investigators I talk to say the same thing I do: they want answers. But when I ask them whether repeating the same questions and using the same methods over and over will eventually get us those answers, the conversation usually gets quiet. Why? Because none of us really knows.

That is why I believe we have to start thinking outside the box. There are groups out there doing exactly that. When I watch what they are doing, I usually walk away with even more questions, and maybe that is a good thing. It can be frustrating. It can be a grind. You can spend hours trying something new and walk away with absolutely nothing. But we have to keep pushing. Will we finally get the answers? Maybe. Probably not in my lifetime. But maybe the work we are doing today helps set up the next generation of investigators to find something we couldn't.

Trying to answer specific questions about the paranormal is a daunting task, especially when you are entering territory that hasn't been explored much before. It is human nature to fall back on what we know when something new doesn't work. We go back to what gave us the most activity. We go back to the flashlight, the REM pod, the spirit box, the same questions, and the same experiments. That is where a large portion of the field remains. People want to be known as trendsetters, but many are still doing variations of the same things investigators have done for decades, maybe even centuries, and wondering why we are no closer to the answers.

Again, I'm not here to tell anyone how to find those answers. What I want to talk about is the paranormal field as a whole. Why are we stagnant? Why haven't we

gotten farther? Yes, there is new equipment available that may help us communicate. There is also plenty of equipment out there that, in my opinion, is complete bullshit, but that is a conversation for another day. Instead, I think we need to look at the people doing the investigating and ask ourselves what we are really trying to accomplish.

There are all kinds of investigators, but I believe most groups eventually fall somewhere between two categories: evidence and content. Are we investigating because we genuinely want answers, or are we investigating because we are looking for the next viral clip? That is something every investigator should ask themselves. I would guess 99.9 percent of investigators would immediately say, "I'm looking for answers." I don't completely believe that. If that were true, why does so much of paranormal social media consist of people and groups simply asking for followers?

Don't get me wrong. Having followers can be great for this field. Social media gives us a place to share interesting videos, EVPs, experiences, techniques, theories, and ideas. Maybe collectively, sharing those things can eventually help us get closer to some of the answers we are looking for. But when the majority of what you are posting is nothing more than "Follow me," maybe it is worth asking yourself why you are really here. Where is the evidence? Where is the research? Where are the experiments? Where are the ideas? What are you actually contributing?

There are plenty of ways to contribute to this field. I started a podcast because there was a period when I couldn't get out and investigate as much as I wanted to, but I still wanted to remain active in the paranormal community. That became my way of contributing. Maybe your contribution is investigating. Maybe it is historical research. Maybe it is developing new experiments, documenting locations, educating people, or simply getting a group of friends together and creating memories. If you are only doing this because it is fun and you want to build a following, I don't have a problem with that either. Just admit it. I would probably respect you more for saying it because at least you are being honest about why you are here instead of putting yourself on a pedestal and pretending you are changing the paranormal field when you are really just chasing followers.

Content is another rough subject because I believe it has taken a turn for the worse in the paranormal field, and I am not only talking about fake videos. I am also talking about the people who seem determined to debunk absolutely

everything they see. I sometimes want to ask the people ripping every paranormal video apart whether they actually investigate themselves. Do you put your own evidence out there? Because if you do, I promise someone can probably find something wrong with your videos too.

We have to stop trying to tear everyone else's content apart simply so we can make ourselves look better. This isn't just a paranormal problem. We see it at school, at work, and everywhere else. Instead of putting in the work to elevate ourselves, some people would rather knock someone else down. There is definitely fake paranormal content out there. There always has been. AI may make it easier now, but people were faking paranormal evidence long before artificial intelligence showed up. The people knowingly faking things know who they are. If they can live with it, that is on them. At some point, the rest of us have to stop obsessing over them and continue down the path we believe is right.

Debunking absolutely has a place in investigating. In fact, hopefully, we are trying to debunk things while the investigation is happening. But personally, the experience means more to me than getting a shadow figure on camera. When I review what I call evidence and capture an EVP, I might let a few people listen to it to see whether they hear the same thing I heard. After that, sometimes I delete it. I got the answer I was looking for, and that is enough for me. Do I post evidence occasionally? Absolutely. Have people told me something I posted was fake? Yep. Do I care? Not really. I know what happened during the experience. I know I didn't fake anything, and I am not going to waste my time fighting with someone on social media about it. Honestly, sometimes I find the comments entertaining, and every once in a while I will look at someone's explanation and say, "Damn, they were right." That is part of investigating too.

So has social media been negative for the paranormal field? Has paranormal investigating turned into entertainment, competition, and clout chasing? In some ways, yes. But social media has also given us something incredibly valuable. It has allowed investigators from all over the world to connect. I've met like-minded people I probably never would have met otherwise. I've learned new investigation techniques, seen new equipment, and heard theories that made me reconsider my own. Some of those people have become good friends. I've met some amazing people throughout this paranormal journey and created memories I know I will still be talking about years from now. There are positives and negatives to almost everything. My challenge to all of us is to start focusing more

on the positive and stop feeding the negative, even though I know that is easier said than done.

That brings me to one of the hottest topics in the paranormal field: ParaUnity. Does it exist? I've gone back and forth on this question many times, but today my answer is yes. I know plenty of people will disagree, but first we have to decide what "unity" actually means. Unity does not mean everyone agrees. It does not mean we all use the same equipment, believe the same theories, investigate the same way, or reach the same conclusions. Unity means we can disagree without trying to destroy each other.

Earlier, I talked about people whose main goal seems to be tearing apart everyone else's content so they can make themselves look better. In my opinion, those people are not contributing to the paranormal community. They are contributing to the negativity surrounding it. Remove that mentality, and maybe ParaUnity isn't as impossible as we make it sound. It sounds simple, but it definitely isn't easy. Negativity spreads faster than positivity. All we can do as a community is stop feeding it.

Some of you know I recently started something new on Trapped Souls called "The Paranormal Debate." It is something I've wanted to do for a while because of where I believe the paranormal field is heading. Notice I said field, not community. There is a difference. These shows are not always traditional debates. Many times, they turn into discussions about what is happening in the paranormal world and why. I'll admit something: they have become educational for me too. People have reached out and thanked me for bringing certain topics into the open.

One of the hardest things about anything paranormal, not just investigations, is that phrase: "Prove it." Prove the doll is haunted. Prove it isn't. Prove the psychic or medium is legitimate. Prove they are not. Most of the time, we can't. We have experiences, opinions, theories, and evidence that may be compelling, but undeniable proof is a completely different thing. I have strong opinions about haunted dolls, psychics, mediums, and other paranormal topics, and anyone who has watched the debates probably knows that. I am not going to argue all of those points here because that is what the debates are for. But I will say this: I will never build my podcast around publicly attacking someone by name. If you are watching one of my shows and think I am talking about you, even though we

have never met, maybe there is a reason it feels personal. Maybe that is something worth thinking about.

Another topic came up recently after someone made a social media post and attached my name to it. Luckily, the person who posted it is a friend, and I knew immediately that what she wrote wasn't exactly what she meant. If there had really been an issue with me, I know she would have contacted me directly. The subject was respect, not just respect for each other but respect for the spirits we are supposedly communicating with.

I recently investigated in the UK with several groups. During a conversation, I mentioned that the investigators I worked with there were extremely polite in the way they asked questions. I also said that, from my experience, American investigators tend to be more straightforward and blunt. Somewhere along the way, the word "aggressive" was used. That wasn't what I meant, but suddenly people in the United States were on the defensive. I'll admit, it was a little funny watching it unfold. I wasn't saying American investigators are disrespectful. I was making an observation.

From the groups I've worked with in the United States compared with the investigators I worked with overseas, I noticed differences in how questions were asked. That is not a bad thing. When I investigate with a new group, especially when I have been invited, I usually sit back at first and watch. I want to see how they investigate because that is how I learn, and I definitely learned while I was overseas. I brought home some great techniques for asking questions, and hopefully they picked up a few things from me as well.

During our first night, we reached a point where we were struggling to get answers from what we believed was a spirit. I had part of the story wrong, although none of us realized it at first. Eventually, I became a little more direct with my questions. By combining their approach with mine, I believe we were able to put together the young woman's story more accurately. Two different investigation styles, one result. To me, that is investigating.

While reading comments surrounding that discussion, I saw people saying things like, "I respect spirits," "I would never raise my voice," and "I would never disrespect a spirit." Great. Neither would I without a reason. But many of those same investigators constantly say that spirits were once people and should still

be treated like people. I agree 100 percent, but think about what that actually means.

If you are at work and someone starts yelling at you, disrespecting you, or calling you names in front of everyone, are you simply going to smile and thank them? Probably not. You are going to stand up for yourself. I am not talking about fighting or screaming. I am talking about having enough respect for yourself and the people around you to say, "That is not acceptable." So if we truly believe spirits were once people, and in some way still retain part of who they were, why wouldn't the same standard apply?

There have only been a few times throughout my years investigating when I felt the need to stand up, not necessarily for myself, but for members of my group. There is one location where women in the group have been disrespected. When that happens, I've had a little one-on-one conversation with whoever, or whatever, we believe we are communicating with. Why? Because I wouldn't allow someone to disrespect members of my group like that in everyday life. If you are asking me to treat spirits the same way I treat living people, then that goes both ways. I still have morals when I am talking to the past.

That doesn't mean walking into a location and immediately antagonizing a spirit. I don't believe investigators should do that. Think about it. Imagine I walked into your workplace, started calling you names, insulting you, and provoking you simply because I wanted to get a reaction. You would probably think I was an asshole. So why is it suddenly acceptable because we are conducting a paranormal investigation? Respect should always come first, but respect does not mean becoming a punching bag.

That brings me back to the question I started with: Where does the paranormal field go from here? Are we okay with visiting the same locations and asking the same questions over and over? Are we actually getting anywhere? Are we searching for evidence? Are we creating content? Are we preserving history? Are we chasing followers? Are we trying to communicate? Are we trying to prove something? Or are we still trying to figure out what the hell we are even looking for?

Once again, I have more questions than answers, and maybe that is okay. Maybe asking these uncomfortable questions is exactly what we need to do if we ever want this field to move forward. I wish I could end this article by telling you I

figured it all out while sitting under that canopy at the campground. I didn't. I am still looking for the same answers many of you are.

Maybe I'll never find them. But if I can contribute one tiny piece to a million-piece puzzle, then maybe everything I've done was worth it. Maybe someone years from now will pick up that piece, connect it to another, and finally see something the rest of us couldn't. Until then, we keep investigating, we keep questioning, we keep learning, and most importantly, we stop pretending we already have all the answers.