

## **Operational Security and Follow Through in the Paranormal**

Ask yourself this: How would you feel if you went to the doctor and at the end of your first appointment he told you that you definitely had cancer? You wonder how he knew you had cancer before he got the lab results back, but figure he's a doctor so he should know. He didn't schedule a follow up appointment or refer you to an oncologist. In fact, he never called you again. Then, one morning you wake up and read about your appointment on his clinic's timeline on Facebook about how exciting and interesting your examination was. You also read that he had a lot of positive lab results to go through and that he'd keep his clinic's followers posted. You saw pictures of your exam and your lab results on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. But you still never heard from him again. How would you feel?

We see and hear about this time and time again in regards to paranormal teams conducting residential investigations. If you wouldn't want a physician violating your right to privacy, the consideration should also be served to homeowners and tenants who have paranormal investigations conducted at their residence. To them, as one person told us, it's neither exciting nor anything they want anyone else to know about. Another homeowner was embarrassed because a large team showed up at his house with T-Shirts on that clearly stated whom they were all over their black shirts, carrying case after case of equipment into the house. They were talking loudly, smoking, and laughing so loud his neighbor noticed. She asked him what happened the following morning because she heard the commotion and watched from her window. She wouldn't let her son go play at the homeowner's house with his son anymore because of this. He was embarrassed and still received no resolve. He asked that we share what happened to him in the hopes no one else does it either.

In the military we have what we call OPSEC, which is operational security. (For those that have questioned why we think our military training aids in our paranormal quests, this is an example.) OPSEC is a process in which we hide our intentions/activity by identifying, controlling and protecting information that gives any indication of what one is doing to an outside observer. Basically, our intentions of conducting a paranormal investigation in a home should never be known to a neighbor or someone on the street just watching. It provides for the confidentiality of the client, as well as our team. It is paramount with our team. We don't even publicize local public places without consent first.

There are a lot of sick people out there that troll the internet so as to take advantage of vulnerable people. When you start Tweeting or posting about where you are and what you are doing, keep in mind there are some people that have the skillset to hone in your location through the internet. While in the military, we were briefed on ways that people can use Facebook and other tracking systems to

locate where a post is made...down the very room an individual is in. It's basically opening a door to the very place you're doing an investigation and asking these sickos to come right in. It opens the door to enabling others to case the location for fraudulent activity, harass the client, or even troll your team and your activities.

Additionally, there's the issue of follow through. If you say that there's activity at a location, what do you do next? We call our clients after an investigation, whether we found something or not, just to check on them. Are they doing better? Has anything else happened? For locations we found activity that lent to the possibility of paranormal activity, we found a member of their faith (priest if they are catholic, rabbi if they are Jewish, Shaman if they are Native, etc.) with their permission so they can assist them in any cleansings or blessings. We don't tell them, "that was really cool" and then just leave them be. We know several teams that also conduct follow ups but they've also shared with us that they have the same concerns. They have had to go back to a location after another team did an investigation and the residents never heard anything else from them. It's very frustrating and disheartening to the people who reached to the paranormal teams. They feel victimized by the very people they reached out to for help. It was a "kick to the stomach" when one homeowner read about the investigation done on his property. He's still waiting for "all the evidence collected" the team posted on their Facebook page to be reviewed and shared with him. One individual told us how shocked he was to see pictures of the inside of his home all over a team's Facebook page without his permission. One woman said that she knew exactly what the team was doing because of the play by play action on twitter and Instagram. Would you allow a group of strangers in your home to take pictures and then post it all over social media?

Most likely, your answer is no. So now we need to fix that huge problem that is the Ebola of the paranormal community. Protect your client's confidentiality! Follow up with them after you leave. Refer them to the proper people to help them, whether it be an electrician, plumber, HVAC maintenance crew, clergy, Shaman, whatever it is. Just don't leave them hanging on a limb waiting and wondering when you're going to call. It's unprofessional and unethical.

We're posting this note not to piss people off, but to get people really thinking about what they are doing when they go to a residence for an investigation. In the military, we hold no punches. If you're doing the wrong thing, prepare to get checked with no hesitation. We aren't afraid to stand up and speak out. We should do the same in the paranormal community. You don't have to put a team on blast by name. However, if you consistently see something that is essentially hurting the very people we're supposed to help, let the community know by using a generalized example of what's wrong along with a suggestion of how to improve or

correct. Stop hiding behind a veil of paranormal love and gather together in paranormal unity for the RIGHT thing. Stop looking the other way. Don't be afraid to speak up and out about what's wrong, so as to help make it better. That way other teams can learn and hopefully not make the same mistake. It's not anti-paraunity. It's the right thing to do.