

EXCERPTS FROM:

The World's Most Haunted Hospitals

By Richard Estep



Excerpt: 495 words

The Clark Air Base Hospital saw hundreds of babies brought into the world, and as we shall see, it was the last stop for many of those who were to leave it.

Thousands of civilian patients were treated there each month, including those who sought care at its flourishing dental practice. During the Vietnam War, Clark was a key strategic base, serving not only as a major logistical hub for the American forces, but also as the first point of medical evacuation for troops being flown out of the Vietnamese theater of operation. Clark's hospital wards would become a temporary home to soldiers who had been wounded on the battlefield – some grievously. Bullets, blades, punji sticks, artillery shells, and countless other weapons were capable of inflicting the most horrific injuries imaginable upon the human body, and after stabilization by trauma surgeons in the field tent hospitals, those survivors were shipped back to Clark for more definitive medical care.

It is also important to bear in mind the fact that the physical wounds of war can be matched (if not exceeded) by the psychological injuries, which are harder to find sometimes because they have a habit of lurking beneath the surface. What we know today as “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder” (PTSD) was referred to during the 1970s as “Vietnam Syndrome”. The name was different, but the effects were the same – crippling mental illness brought on by the extreme stresses of combat. The Clark Air Base Hospital did indeed have a mental health ward, but one has to wonder whether it was able to cope with the sheer volume of emotionally traumatized servicemen returning from the front lines. Entire bus-loads full of new patients would arrive there every day.

With so much raw emotion, and with so much sheer trauma of both the physical and the psychological kind passing through its doors, is it any wonder that a place such as the Clark Air Base Hospital should become the center of so many ghost stories?

When the volcano Mount Pinatubo erupted violently in 1991, tons of volcanic ash was hurled into the air, carried aloft on the winds, and ignominiously dumped over pretty much all of Clark Air Base. The hospital was hit particularly hard, and when the last American forces carefully took down the Stars and Stripes before departing from Clark for what they believed would be the final time in 1991, what was once a shining example of modern medical practice was allowed to languish and rot. To add further insult to injury, looters broke into the hospital and completely gutted it, stripping the rooms bare of anything that might hold even the slightest value. This included not only the expensive medical equipment, but fittings and fixtures as simple as door handles and window frames. Like maggots stripping a dead carcass down to its barest bones, the looters kept coming back until absolutely nothing was left but for the structure...and the ghosts.

Excerpt: 824 words

When one considers its centuries of bloody and tragic history, it should not be the least bit surprising to learn that the City of London is home to more reported ghost sightings per square mile than any other city in the world. Accounts of shades and specters drifting through the halls of the many historic London buildings are commonplace, and these are the ghosts of men and women who were both ordinary and extraordinary. Behind every ghost sighting can be found a fascinating human interest story, and none is more so than the tragic tale of a young lady by the name of Elizabeth Church.

As the Nineteenth Century drew to a close, Elizabeth (“Lizzie” to her friends and family) was a nurse working at University College Hospital, on Gower Street in the Bloomsbury area of the city. Her fiancée was admitted to the hospital as a patient, and a tragic twist of fate found Lizzie found herself assigned to care for him on one of the wards there. Although it’s not known precisely what illness or malady afflicted her beau, it must have been something which caused a great deal of pain because Lizzie was directed to administer morphine to him in order to provide some respite from it.

Morphine is a very potent analgesic drug which is still widely used today – in fact, I myself administer it to patients in my capacity as an emergency paramedic. I may find myself injecting it into the vein of a patient who is suffering from a heart attack, another who has sustained severe burns, or to somebody who has fractured a bone or dislocated a joint. Morphine is a drug which must be given with caution, because if it given too rapidly or in too great an amount, it may not only drop the blood pressure to dangerous levels, but can also depress the respiratory drive to such an extent that the patient stops breathing and dies.

For those of us who practice medicine in the Twenty-First Century, a drug is available to

counteract a morphine overdose – so if the patient reacts badly to the drug, there is something we can do about it. But Naloxone (or Narcan, as it is more commonly known) was not invented until 1961, almost seventy years after poor Lizzie Church accidentally administered a fatal overdose of morphine to her intended husband. Unable to live with the guilt of having killed the man she loved, Lizzie was overcome with grief and guilt, and the distraught nurse took her own life.

Doctors and nurses working at University College Hospital over the decades since then have sometimes been shocked to look up from their patients' bedside, only to see the apparition of a ghostly nurse hovering there in the background, staring balefully back at them. The apparition wears period clothing, and seems to be trying to convey a warning, one which all medical professionals would do well to heed:

Watch out for your drug dosing!

Can it really be a coincidence that the mournful ghost of Lizzie Church is most often seen when a patient is just about to be injected with painkilling medications...especially morphine?

Curses are one of those things in which one either believes or one does not believe, and most of us today tend to laugh them off as mere fodder for scary movies. But for those who *do* believe in them, curses are no laughing matter. For over one hundred and fifty years, the framed portrait of an eminent surgeon by the name of Marcus Beck was prominently displayed high on a wall at University College Hospital. The nursing staff at the hospital firmly believed that the painting was cursed, and that any unwary person who should sit underneath the painting and then drift off to sleep would become seriously ill, and in some cases would never wake up again.

It wasn't to be long before a dark superstition grew to surround the painting: if the surgeon's portrait were to be left uncovered overnight, either a patient or somebody employed at or connected with the hospital, would die suddenly because of it. Although most medical professionals are rational and scientific individuals by training and by nature, we are not entirely without our superstitious tendencies. The nurses at University College Hospital obviously set great store by the idea that Beck's painting had somehow become cursed. In what grew to become a long-term tradition, it was the solemn duty of the oncoming night shift nurses to solemnly cover up the painting when beginning their watch in the evening. Their daytime counterparts would uncover it first thing the following morning – until the year 2001, that is, when an opportunistic thief made off with the painting!

One is forced to wonder where the thief hung the painting. Hopefully not above any place that they might sit, or worse, fall asleep...

Excerpt: 1524 words

There is no doubting that something strange and mysterious is afoot inside Asylum 49, and I was sufficiently intrigued to want to find out for myself. Kimm and Cami Andersen were more than willing to let me and a couple of fellow investigators from my team, the Boulder County Paranormal Research Society, spend a night there and take a look at the place firsthand – which is why, on a bright and sunny Saturday morning in May, we loaded up our trucks and took Interstate-25 north out of Colorado. Our little two-vehicle convoy headed west through Wyoming and into Utah, putting over five hundred miles of empty prairie behind us in the rear-view mirror. When we hit Salt Lake City, ominous grey thunderclouds were hanging low in the sky. No sooner had I thought that it might rain, than the heavens opened and fat drops of rain started to spatter across my windshield as I drove the final leg of the journey into Tooele.

So many scary movies and stories begin with “it was a dark and stormy night,” but it’s rarely true of my real-life paranormal investigations. Tooele was very much the exception. Pulling into the parking lot at Asylum 49, it felt like the perfect night for something paranormal to manifest itself.

Because the daylight was starting to melt away into the gloom of twilight, we wasted no time in pulling out our cameras and circling the entire building, snapping photographs of the exterior. Working our way to the rear of the structure, we came upon some abandoned medical office buildings and then a very neatly-kept cemetery, the same one that I had seen Zak Bagans interview Kimm Andersen in during the *Ghost Adventures* TV episode. A disembodied hand clawing its way up out of the ground gave me the shock of my life, until I realized that it was nothing more than a latex prop, the sort that can be bought at a Halloween store. We left it for the next unwary traveler to enjoy!

Kimm, Cami, and their staff were warm, friendly, and very welcoming. Kimm was hard at work on construction of the building – Asylum 49 is a constant work-in-progress, as the Andersens strive to make it better and better with every passing season – but took a break to fill us in on some of the background to the case. Cami escorted us on a tour throughout the building, pointing out the areas of interest and the specific haunted hot spots.

Starting with the north wing, I’m not going to lie – I jumped halfway out of my skin as we turned a corner that led into the maternity area, only to come face-to-face with a life-sized “Human Centipede,” three dummies positioned nose-to-tail in the most disturbing way. “We go where other haunted houses don’t dare,” Cami laughed. She wasn’t kidding. During the course of our tour, we would encounter a crashed UFO complete with a snarling alien crew and eggs that oozed slime; a disturbing array of surgical oddities, such as dismembered bodies sewn together in a sinister tableaux that looked as though they had been pieced

together by a deranged anatomist; evil experiments conducted by a surgical team from Hell upon an unwilling, bedbound victim...all of this was barely scratching the surface. I don't want to give away all of Asylum 49's spooky secrets, but suffice it to say that it isn't a place for the faint of heart!

We heard about the impressions given by a number of mediums and people claiming psychic abilities who have visited Asylum 49. The resident spirits, they said, included at least one doctor and nurse, a pair of little girls named Tabitha and Sarah, and one adult spirit who is both deaf and unable to speak. Cami has seen the apparitions of Tabitha, the doctor, and the nurse herself. We were standing in the same location that doubled as the baby ward of Boulder Community Hospital in the TV miniseries adaptation of Stephen King's *The Stand*, something which my inner geek found to be extremely cool.

"This hospital was sort of known as the hospital of death," Cami said bluntly. "Nobody would come here if they could help it, for a combination of reasons. This is a small town, and the hospital was built mainly because there are a lot of military bases around here."

The Andersens have been running a haunted house in the city of Tooele for a decade now. "All the spirits here know what we do," explained Cami as she led us deeper into the building. "They like to peek in and sometimes be a part of the show. Sarah especially likes to scare the customers, I see her every year. She looks like the girl from the movie *The Grudge*, very pale with dark brown hair."

Kimm broke in to describe some of the evidence that he and Cami have gathered during their time running Asylum 49. He believes that the reason for them being able to gather such a wealth of fascinating results is that the Andersens have built and nurtured a relationship with the paranormal residents of the building, particularly because they both spend so many of their waking hours inside there doing renovation work.

While conducting his own amateur ghost hunt with some friends and family, a Serbian friend of Kimm's captured an extraordinary photograph in the main hallway late one night, containing what appeared to be the form of a man at the end of the empty corridor. "I can see you!" the ghost hunter exclaimed. "What is your name?"

The voice box that he was carrying immediately piped up with, "*My name is Robert.*"

Robert happened to be the name of a shadow figure which was well known by the Asylum 49 staff to haunt that very same hallway. But Robert isn't alone, and the figure captured by the Serbian's digital camera isn't him. When zooming in to blow up the facial features, they appear to be somewhat...*unnatural* in appearance, as though the man is wearing a mask of some kind. In fact, the features look decidedly clown-like, an opinion which Kimm went on to voice several times after the picture was taken.

Accompanying a medium through the building one day, Kimm was less than thrilled to be told that there was a spirit lurking in that hallway which was less than happy with him. “The spirit says that you make fun of him,” the medium continued. “He says that you call him a...a *clown*, or something?”

“The clown guy!” Kimm suddenly realized.

“His face looks like that because of how he died,” explained the medium. “He died in a fire.”

Shadow forms and figures are nothing new at Asylum 49. They crop up regularly on both the in-house security video system and on the cameras brought by visitors. One particularly chilling piece of video footage was taken in an area of the building which has been informally dubbed the “scary hallway” by Asylum 49 staff. A shadowy figure can clearly be seen lurking at the back of a guided tour group as it makes its way along the corridor, a ghostly hanger-on captured for posterity by a video camera.

Passing through what had once been the patient rooms, I made the observation that the beds looked old enough to have been the original hospital beds, which Cami confirmed. The Andersens both feel that because there are still residents at the hospital (the spirits who have remained there) that they would like to retain as many of the fixtures and fittings as possible. One of the rooms is haunted by the ghost of an older lady who likes to stimulate EMF meter readings when a deck of cards is brought out.

In the central hallway from which many of the rooms branch off, paranormal investigators have captured video footage of a shadowy figure walking into one of the rooms. We stopped at the door to the room which is said to be haunted by a patient named Wes, who suffered from the cruel and debilitating conditions known as Alzheimer’s and schizophrenia. A visiting medium stated that this particular ghost was still earthbound due to his having died in a state of confusion – although, if true, that would beg the question of why the millions of people who die in a state of confusion do not remain behind as ghosts.

When I told Cami that my fellow paranormal investigators and I do not believe in provocation as a means of stimulating an interaction with ghosts due to its disrespectful nature, we do favor encouragement – inviting them to touch us somewhere, for example. She cautioned us that Wes and some of the other residents of Asylum 49 have been known to respond by scratching and pinching overly provocative investigators. I pondered this warning thoughtfully as I stood outside Wes’ room, looking at the pencil sketch of him drawn by one of the visiting psychics: a placid-looking older man with a bald head and a level gaze stared back at me from where the drawing was placed outside his door.

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