

A Ghost Report. Palmer House Paranormal Conference.

Minnow Speidel, 2008

Friday, January 19th

Driving to the Palmer House Hotel in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, for a Paranormal Conference in mid January while it's a frigid 20 degrees below zero, we slowly pulled to the side of the road and parked on the corner of the well known Original Main Street and Sinclair Lewis Avenue. There was no moon and the sky wasn't just dark, it was very dark. It must have looked awkward if anyone was watching us...four people sitting in a car with our faces planted against the window, while gazing in awe at the hotel from the ground up, as if it were the first time we'd ever seen it. Growing up in Sauk Centre you could politely say, we all took the Palmer House Hotel & Pub for granted; it's daunting and intriguing history anyway.

I look at my husband, Jason, and asked "Are you ready?" I then immediately turned my head back to continue gawking at the hotel.

Eagerly he replies, "Sure. I'm ready."

The other two in the vehicle didn't say anything. There's a dreary silent pause between all of us.

Holding the vowel in the word 'you' and giving me a mischievous grin, Jason asks "Are yooooou ready?" This being our first paranormal investigation, Jason was exploding with excitement, while I was still a little hesitant.

"Yeah, I guess I'm ready. I can't turn back now. If you guys can't find me, you all know I dread the dark and I'll be outside getting a little fresh air if it's too much for me." The others in the vehicle laugh as if I were joking.

Walking across the street to the hotel, it looked much more interesting than other times, more authentic, spookier, mysterious.



Getting inside, hanging up our jackets, rubbing our hands together and being the Minnesotans we are, we started talking about the freezing cold. We then stopped to actually take in what was going on around us. Our eyes wondered around and our heads were turning every which way. Near the lobby, some people were chatting amongst themselves, some checking out the items and numerous books for sale. One corner was a gal getting a Tarot Reading, another was getting a back message from a masseuse, and some were checking out the jewelry. The pub had a few people around the bar with a draft in hand, in the café some were in line for an autographed picture from the celebrity paranormal guests Chris Flemming from the TV show Dead Famous and Patrick Burns from the TV show Haunting Evidence. Along with Chris & Patrick were Dave Schrader and Tim Dennis, from the radio show Darkness on the Edge of Town. Some had their video cameras rolling and flashes were lighting up the room from the picture taking, and then there were a select few like us...looking around wondering to ourselves "What do we do first?"

You could easily pick out the experienced from the few inexperienced like ourselves, yet it wasn't an uncomfortable feeling. There were roughly 70 people attending the whole weekend, which kept things small and personal. This wasn't an open house kind of event. You had to be preregistered to step foot in the Palmer House that weekend. At registration we got a friendly welcome and some handouts with information. We eventually split, went our own way, mingled and later met up in the cozy pub with our own draft in hand. We were enjoying the social gathering when they announced the first seminar was about to take place.

Gathered in the café, the first seminar was short, sweet, and straight to the point. Although they were humorous and kept the crowd laughing and at ease, Chris, Patrick, and Dave were incredibly serious at the same time; keeping us and everyone else engaged in their personal stories and they also gave strict guidelines for the upcoming ghost hunt. Everyone was on the edge of their seats, listening to every word:

No drinking, it will blur what's real or not real and who wants to be with a loud annoying drunk during a ghost hunt (only being on our first, we quietly put down our beer as if we didn't have one). Announce loudly "flash" when taking a picture, so when going back to review evidence they know if it was a picture being taken or something paranormal. Wear soft soled shoes, no one wants to hear your every footstep. Bring extra batteries, for they can be easily drained by spirit energy. If you should hear or see something, don't run in a huge panic with your hands wailing in the air, screaming "Oh my God!"; calmly acknowledge what you're seeing or feeling and share it with others. Relax and use all your senses; taste, smell, touch, see, and hear, and share with others if you sense anything. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with your surroundings, share what you're feeling with one of the lead investigators or leave immediately.

These were just a few of the many suggestions given.

A quick demonstration of all the investigative gadgets was given.

KII Meter (EMF Detector): Electromagnetic field detectors are very useful tools provided they are used properly. These meters detect fluctuations in EM fields. These ranges vary for 3 feet to 30 feet. Many things will give readings on an EMF meter but what we are looking for is abnormal and unnatural readings that have been tied to spirit activity. Ask a yes or no question and depending on the reading of the meter, you'll be able to tell if it's a yes or no answer.

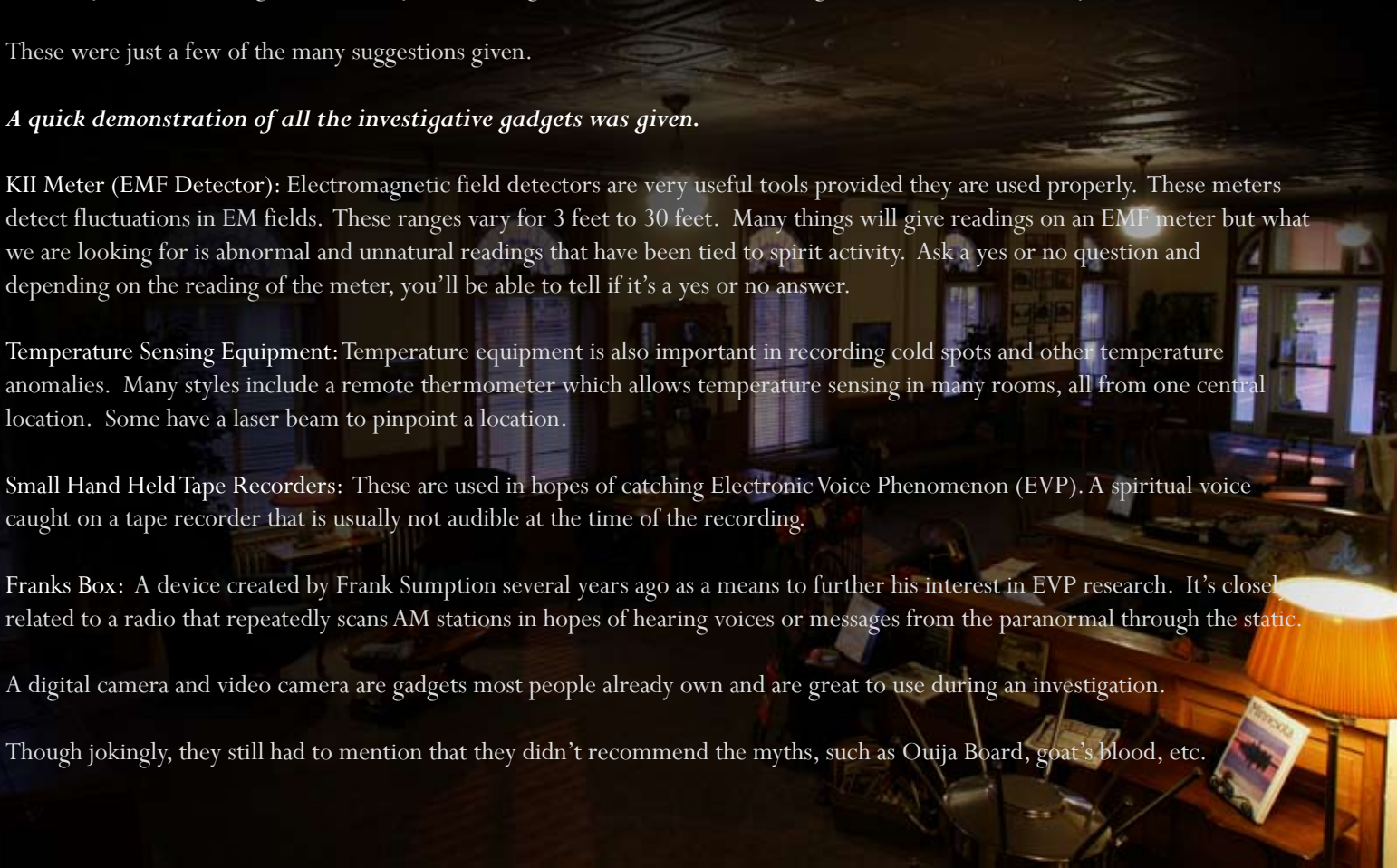
Temperature Sensing Equipment: Temperature equipment is also important in recording cold spots and other temperature anomalies. Many styles include a remote thermometer which allows temperature sensing in many rooms, all from one central location. Some have a laser beam to pinpoint a location.

Small Hand Held Tape Recorders: These are used in hopes of catching Electronic Voice Phenomenon (EVP). A spiritual voice caught on a tape recorder that is usually not audible at the time of the recording.

Franks Box: A device created by Frank Sumption several years ago as a means to further his interest in EVP research. It's closely related to a radio that repeatedly scans AM stations in hopes of hearing voices or messages from the paranormal through the static.

A digital camera and video camera are gadgets most people already own and are great to use during an investigation.

Though jokingly, they still had to mention that they didn't recommend the myths, such as Ouija Board, goat's blood, etc.



They're four floors to the Palmer House; the basement for storage, the main floor consisting of the pub, lobby, dining room, and kitchen. The second and third floors consisted of twenty hotel rooms; four of them being Jacuzzi suites. There were four lead investigators; Chris Flemming, Patrick Burns, Dave Schrader and Lisa Hottinger (cofounder and investigator of the Twin Cities Paranormal Society); with each one being assigned to a floor. We were split into four 12 person groups, and each group was assigned to a floor. The ghost hunt started at 10:00 p.m. On the hour, each group rotated to a new floor, with the ghost hunt ending at 2:00 a.m. for both Friday & Saturday night. This way we got to experience all four floors. The lead investigators did not rotate floors with the small groups, which gave us the opportunity to experience ghost hunting with each one individually.

On Friday, we started our ghost hunt on the 2nd floor. Walking up the stairs with our group I held Jason's hand. We were a little apprehensive, nervous, excited, and weren't quite sure what to expect. Reaching the top of the stairs, it was immediate whispering. Our lead investigator for the 2nd floor was Lisa and she gave us the lowdown about the floor. Room 11 was noted to be the most haunted, voices & footsteps were to be heard, and an apparition of a woman in a white dress was to be seen at the end of the hallway. Lights turning on and off, toilets flushing, drastic room temperature changes, and a little boy has been known to wake up hotel guests during the night bouncing his ball up and down the hallway.

She asked us to walk in and out of rooms, take advantage of EVP's, camera, video cameras, and KII meters if we had them. She then turned around and started walking down the hallways towards room 11 and most of the group followed her, in hopes they'd see something or maybe for support. My husband was one to follow and I too was right behind him. I turned around and found a younger couple with a bunch of paranormal gadgets walking alone down the other end of the hallway. I turned to Jason and quickly whispered "I'm following them!"

Investigating with this couple, I got to experience the use of EVP's for the first time, using a video camera and picture taking for paranormal evidence, and using the KII meter. We didn't experience any paranormal activity, but it was an experience in itself to see these gadgets being used.

Little did I know this was the beginning of my ghost hunt at the Palmer House Hotel & Pub. I don't have my own rock solid evidence to physically share with anyone, like video footage or photos. What I do have, is my personal experiences. I know, understand why, and respect that my experiences won't be understood by others. To fully understand, it's something you'll have to experience for yourself, and if you're curious like I was with an open mind, I highly recommend it.

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10:00 p.m. 2nd Floor: I was very apprehensive being on a ghost hunt, and nervousness of what I was about to experience. Room 10, Jason experienced a few cold spots. One investigator told how she kept having the name "Maria" come to her. Another investigator says she was touched on her shoulder. There was KII meter activity in room 9. I had no paranormal experiences.

11:00 p.m. 3rd Floor: Patrick Burns gave explanation of how the KII meter works, the Franks Box, EVP, and told of his own personal experience the night before. While staying on the 3rd floor the night before, he heard a man hollering the name "Maria" more than once right outside his room and no one being there after repeatedly opening his door to investigate.

12:00 a.m. Basement: Three different names came to mind to three different people; Hank, Jacob, and Bobby. There was a drastic temperature change in one particular room with Chris Flemming. Using a digital thermometer, the temperature started at 77 degrees and within 5-10 minutes, it dropped to 39 degrees. Right outside this room was a long hallway and with our whole group, we started using the KII meter and my yes or no questions were answered.

We were communicating with one adult man. There was also a little boy present and the little boy had one dog but never took care of anybody else's dogs. The dog reportedly being heard from upstairs is the little boy's dog. There was no live stock in the basement.

12:00 a.m. Basement: Moving onto other parts of the very large basement, investigators started spreading out. Remember, it's dark, very dark! You can only see what's in front of you with your little flash light. Jason, I, Chris Flemming, and the owner of the hotel, Kelley, who just happened to come down where we were in the basement at the right time, started using the KII Meter again. We stood by one of the set of stairs in the basement that's no longer in use. In the very black, dark basement, we pointed our flashlights over by the staircase. Chris held the KII Meter, while I asked numerous questions and getting an answer to each one of them...sometimes getting an answer before I could even spit the question out.

There is a husband, there is a wife, and there is a baby in the basement. They are a family. They all died in the hotel. The family died in the 1800's. The baby reportedly being heard crying from upstairs is their baby. They died from Tuberculosis. They all died very young. They were passerby's and not from Sauk Centre. They are aware they are in the basement. They do not leave the basement. They are not aware of the Palmer House Hotel; they died while the establishment was still The Sauk Centre House. They are not aware of any fire and are not aware of the Sauk Centre House burning to the ground and the basement being the only salvageable part of the building. They are aware there is a square cemented hole in the basement. They do not want us to dig underneath the stairs. They do not want us to dig under the cemented hole. The hole in the ground does not lead to an underground tunnel. There's nothing by the south brick wall. They do haunt people and do it for fun. They do not leave the basement. They are not Indian and they were not slaves. They didn't mind talking to us. They don't want to go towards the light. They don't know how to find the light.

1:00 a.m. Main Floor: Nothing much happened on the main floor for my husband & I...we were way to pumped about the spirit conversations we had in the basement.





Saturday, January 20th

Saturday, seminars began early. Jason and the couple friends that were attending the paranormal conference, decided to sleep in from Friday nights adventures and take it easy. Since Friday was such a long night and we didn't hit the pillow until 3:30 a.m., I didn't blame them. I was so impressed with the paranormal activity from Friday night, that I felt it was pertinent to attend Saturday's seminars. Some presentations didn't interest me personally, while others I was all eyes and ears. The speakers were well experienced, knowledgeable, friendly, and kept you entertained during their presentation. The crowd was small, which made it more personal and direct.

I couldn't wait for Saturday night's investigations. After my experience on Friday, I was overwhelmed with excitement to get back into the basement. But starting on the 3rd floor at 10:00 p.m., I was convinced that I wasn't going to experience any activity because I thought it was too early. I was even more convinced that I wasn't going to experience any activity in the basement, when we would have to switch to the basement at 11:00 p.m. So I started Saturday's ghost hunt with a little bitter attitude, but kept it to myself.

On the 3rd floor, our whole group along with Chris Flemming, crowded into the known haunted room, 22. This room was known to have a very angry man who likes to bully a woman who has a hard time leaving the room because of this man. Going into this room with 10 other people, increased my bitter attitude. I couldn't escape the thought of no paranormal activity happening because it's just too darn early in the evening and there's now too many people in the same room. The only tiny positive about the situation was that I was lucky enough to sit next to Chris and see the KII meter up close along with hearing the Franks box.

10:00 p.m. 3rd Floor: Upon entering one of the most paranormal rooms, 22, I felt at ease. After a short while, what the other investigators were asking with the Franks Box and the KII Meter, I quickly felt uneasy. I became fixated on an object in the room. My heart beat increased immensely. My hands became cold and very clammy, sweaty. I was focused on my heart rate, trying to take deep breaths to slow it down. It was the most intense, uncomfortable physical feeling. Mentally I felt angry and mad, then I'd feel very sad. It was almost as if my emotions were changing with each comment or question by other investigators in the room. After a short time of feeling so uncomfortable, I couldn't take anymore. I was scared. I told Chris I felt as if my heart was going to pop out of my chest. That it was beating so fast and hard, I was cold, and had clammy hands. He felt my hands and told me to leave right away. Next thing I know, I was sitting on top of the stairs shaking uncontrollably from being so cold. The shaking wouldn't stop. I then soon found another young investigator sitting on the stairs next to me, telling me he too had to leave the room and started explaining his experience he just had in room 22. Surprisingly, it wasn't much different than mine. The shaking still wouldn't stop. From my first step, it only took twenty minutes on the 3rd floor before I came hurrying down the stairs to get my fresh air outside. That kicked my bitter attitude right out the door.



11:00 p.m. Basement: Jason & I were a little more curious this time concerning the basement. What was actually in the basement, checking out the brick walls compared to the rock walls, the uneven cemented floors, and the only dirt floor in one area. We curiously looked at the old windows and window panels that were now covered from the street levels rising over the years, and still dumbfounded by the square cemented two foot hole in the ground. Investigating the hole more, we found there was plastic peeking out on one edge of the cemented seams and when pounding on the bottom of the hole...it sounds hollow. Hollow enough to make you wonder what's underneath it.

12:00 a.m. Main Floor: Dave Schrader had the Franks Box. We sat quietly while investigators and Dave periodically asked questions, listening close for any answers. Many things were said and called out by the Franks Box, but one name in particular that always seemed to come through often and so clearly, was the name "Patrick". Patrick Burns was one of the celebrity investigators with his own paranormal television show. We weren't the only group that weekend with the name "Patrick" coming in so clearly from the Franks Box. For kicks and giggles, we'd asked humorous questions every now and then. I guess we'll soon see if Hillary Clinton is our next president like the voices from the Franks Box claimed!

1:00 a.m. 2nd Floor: Not a whole lot of activity went on for me on the 2nd floor Saturday night. But two different names came to mind to two different people; Raymond and Lucy or Lucious.

Palmer House

GHOST

REPORTS

Sunday, January 21st

Sunday was dedicated to evidence review from fellow paranormal investigators. Lead investigators attended and shared their experiences with us too. For the investigators that had paranormal gadgets, there was no way to have gone through all EVP's, video footage, and digital photos, by Sunday morning. The evidence that was apparent and evident, was shared during the evidence review. The evidence found was EVP's and video footage. Unexplainable and unbelievable evidence. It's not worth explaining, because when I have explained some of the evidence to others of interest, I get a goofy look and a "yeah right." Most people who I share evidence with or my own personal experiences with have a hard time believing it. I can tell they want to believe, because they originally asked me about it and were and still are apparently interested, they just can't believe evidence as such exists. It's a classic case of "You have to see it, to believe it."

Overall, my experience was one that will stay with me forever. I couldn't name one emotion that I didn't come across that weekend and there's still some I haven't found the word for yet. The experience with the investigators was educational. The experience with the group was interesting. The experience with the hotel and hotel owners were overwhelmingly friendly. The experience with the paranormal was one I'll never forget.

Skeptic or believer, I strongly recommend going to www.thepalmerhousehotel.com and going to the Palmer House Haunt page. Here you'll be able to view the evidence yourself... then come and tell me "yeah right."



A National & State Historic Site

When the old Sauk Centre House, the town's first hotel, burned to the ground on June 26, 1900, a feeling of relief came over the townspeople. The delighted citizenry spoke among themselves, "Now at last, perhaps the town can have a first class hotel."

Then, in 1901, Ralph L. Palmer and Christena J. Palmer built The Palmer House Hotel, and it was a first class hotel! They lived there with their children Hazel Palmer and Carlisle R. Palmer. Christena's mother and brother, George Brandner, also worked at the hotel.

Modern for its day, The Palmer House was the first building in Sauk Centre with electricity. Salesmen traveling by rail regularly used the hotel for business meetings and relaxation. The hotel soon became the cornerstone of Sauk Centre's downtown area and served as a gathering place for the now-content locals. Nobel Prize winner Sinclair Lewis referred to the hotel as the Minniemashie House in his 1920 novel, *Main Street*.

The hotel endured an ambitious makeover in 1993, exposing its natural beauty from top to bottom with respect to Richard Palmer's idea. However, some of the comforts to which society has become accustomed have been added. The hotel originally housed 38 small rooms with guests sharing a common "necessary room" down the hall. There are now 20 rooms (each with its own bathroom facility), some complete with Jacuzzis to pamper you a bit.

When you stay at The Palmer House, choose a room tucked away in the recesses of the hotel or a room directly above the Original Main Street where you can look down from your vantage point and observe the hustle and bustle of small town life. Resist the urge to keep to your room, and explore. We have many delightful shops downtown to peruse.

The Palmer House's spacious lobby is perfect for whiling away the hours reading and visiting. You'll find The Pub, just off the lobby, to be well-stocked with your favorite cocktails and a cozy sometimes spirited place to spend an hour to two. Trying to resist the inviting aromas coming from the restaurant will be your only problem. The kitchen is open daily from 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM, and we have a baker who will tempt you back for more of her homemade goodies.

Come to The Palmer House for business, pleasure, or for the room 11 or 17. The friendly staff will be waiting to extend a warm greeting upon your arrival and cater to your every need throughout your stay. Whether it's a special event, your own personal investigation, or an intimate evening for two, call the Palmer House to discuss the many options they can put together for you.



Paranormal Conference Photography

Remember that during the investigations on each floor, it was very dark. All the lights were turned off. The only glimpse of light we'd get was from our flashlights or the flash from digital cameras.



One of the many books that were on display and for sale during the social hour Friday night.



Scott Roberts doing a Tarot Card reading.



Jewelry on display and for sale during the social hour on Friday night.



In the Pub; drafts in hand.



Relaxing massages given during the social hour Friday night.



Dave Schrader speaking during the 1st seminar Friday night.

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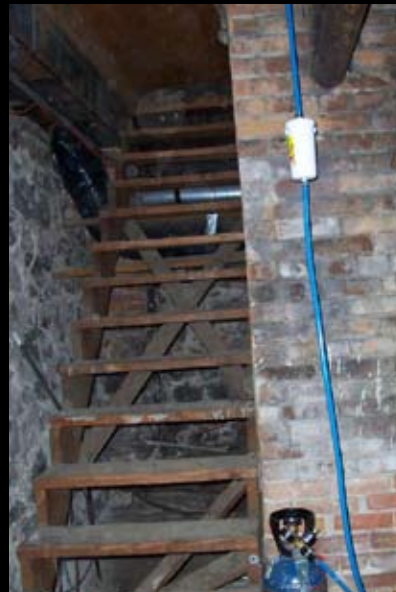
A long dark hallway in the basement.



One investigator silently sitting by himself using a KII meter.



In the basement, using a digital thermometer, the temperature started at 77 degrees and dropped to 39 degrees within minutes.



The stairs in the basement where Jason, Chris Flemming, the owner Kelley Freese, and I had a lengthy conversation with a spirit and a KII meter.



Chris Flemming holding the KII meter, while I asked questions near the stairs with the dirt floor in the basement.



Investigators tune in during one of Saturday's seminars.

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Patrick Burns standing in the cement hole in the basement, using a KII meter, while a few investigators gathered around.



Patrick Burns standing in the cement hole in the basement, using a KII meter, while being video taped.



Jason investigating the large square cement hole in the basement.



Where the flashlight is beaming in the square cemented hold in the basement, is where the seam is that an inch of plastic or so is peaking out. The hole has a hollow sound when pounded on.



Chris Flemming using a digital thermometer in room 22 Saturday night, with investigators intensely watching and listening.



Chris Flemming using a digital thermometer in room 22 Saturday night, just before I came in the room to join them.

Paranormal Conference Photography

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Under one set of stairs in the basement is the only dirt floor, where bones were reportedly dug up & found. There is garland in place of the hole.



In the basement, the floor had been obviously re-cemented numerous times in some areas.



A web cam was placed for all the online visitors, who got to experience and watch parts of the investigation all weekend.



Patrick Burns having a little fun in front of the web cam Sunday morning before the evidence review.



Investigators ask owner, Kelley Freese, to join them in answering some questions and sharing some stories during the evidence review on Sunday.



Lead investigators: Chris Flemming, Dave Schrader, and Patrick Burns. Tim Dennis, from Darkness On The Edge Of Town radio talk show, manned the equipment/technology.