

Portals to Hell: Investigating the LaLaurie Mansion - Travel Channel

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KATRINA: I'm Katrina.

JACK: And I'm Jack. And this is "Portals to Hell-- Enter the Underworld".

KATRINA: For this investigation, we are heading to New Orleans for the LaLaurie Mansion.

JACK: So the LaLaurie Mansion is located in the French Quarter. Most people probably know of this place because of "American Horror Story." They did-- a season they did a few years back was based about, you know, around Madame LaLaurie and her house and the things she did. By all accounts, you could probably argue that in real life Madame LaLaurie most likely was the first female serial killer in America. A lot of people died at that house. And it's, you know, theorized that it was at the hands of Madame LaLaurie. Sidney, what do we actually know about the mansion?

SIDNEY: It really was a real life house of horrors. The absolute worst mutilations, worst torture chamber that you could possibly imagine, cruelty beyond human belief.

KATRINA: Sidney Smith runs a tour company down in New Orleans. And so he's collected a lot of research over time about Madame LaLaurie and her house, what might have really happened there. So we sat down with him and spoke with him about his thoughts. And he had a lot of interesting things to say. I think most importantly is that a lot of the things being said about her he believes is incorrect. But he also kind of had a lot of beliefs that some of the more crazier things might be true. So, you know, I think we still had to sift through some of Sidney's research ourselves-- Yeah. --to find out what really was the foundation of everything going on there.

JACK: You know, when we were speaking with one of our main witnesses, which was a woman named Annie, who actually lived in the house for a few years. And she described some pretty terrifying things. I mean she was a pretty young girl when she lived there. She had heard what she described as pots and pans clanging a lot. Her dad woke up in the middle of the night to see a man in a top hat coming out from behind this big armoire. And then she was walking home one night and looked up and saw a young girl sitting on the roof. And she was incredibly emotional about this.

ANNIE: I think one of the most upsetting things was when I went back 20 years later to make peace with the house. And I was knocked down.

JACK: Wow. I didn't think that was very nice.

KATRINA: Yeah.

ANNIE: It was frightening.

JACK: So the LaLaurie Mansion to her is-- is not a fond memory.

KATRINA: So we met with Lisa and her mother, who are the caretakers at the mansion. And they took us around kind of showing us different places where they've had experiences, or that they've known of guests having experiences. And pretty much every single room has had something happen. Have you had odd experiences?

LISA: Some. I don't like staying in the kitchen by myself, because that door just flings open and shut randomly. You just don't know. And you can watch the door knob turn by itself and open, and there was nobody on the other side. I think the servants used that door to come in and serve the family.

KATRINA: Do you feel like they're here with us?

LISA: Yeah, definitely. I do.

KATRINA: Nothing like crazy, like somebody you know getting choked out in the middle of the night by ghost hands. But, you know, enough experiences where it's like something isn't right here. Something-- - Yeah. --out of the normal is going on. We pretty much immediately in walking into the mansion, I was feeling dizzy. And it intensified in certain rooms. And you know, it's hard to know if that's paranormal right off the bat. Because it could be something in the environment that's just making you feel a little wonky. But I have had it happen in multiple locations, where I can never find a natural explanation for it. It's a very weird experience. And it's not the same as like just getting dizzy, from you know spinning around in a circle. It's a very different distinct feeling to it. Yeah. So whenever I touch on that. I normally say it out loud, because I'm like, I bet you anything somebody else has experienced this. Yeah.

JACK: What the [beep]? This is-- this is really weird. Who's in the kitchen with us right now? Oh--

KATRINA: Just disappeared.

JACK: It just [beep] vanished. So the 3D mapping camera is-- it's kind of a newer piece of gear that's being used in paranormal investigations. And the thought process is it uses technology which can map out human figures. And it uses this laser grid. And if any-- it knows what is a humanoid versus your cat, or a chair, or a window, or whatever. And the thought is that whatever's crossing the laser grid, it will pick up on and map out the silhouette of whatever entity is there, that has the shape of a human. Katrina, can you go stand right there?

KATRINA: Yeah.

JACK: Now just hold still for a second. Oh, it's back. This is insane. It's in a totally different spot.

KATRINA: I'm going to move my hand. Am I getting closer? It's actually increasingly cold on my hand right now. The most I've ever felt when, you know, you kind of reach towards something you're finding on the 3D mapping is that maybe it's a little colder. But that's really it. It's not like, you know, I think a lot of people maybe expect it to be like this whole thing where you're like, I feel it through my body, oh my god. And it's not-- [chuckles] it's not like that. [singing] Yeah. [laughing] It's a very subtle experience.

KATRINA: One of the thoughts in the paranormal and why experiences happen is because they're tied to traumatic events at a location. And you know LaLaurie Mansion certainly has these traumatic events. And we know there was a lot of tragedy and suffering happening within the walls of her property. I think it makes sense when we're going back through, and we're having these experiences, and we talk to other people who have had these experiences, they all kind of seem to correlate with the history that we know. So I think it makes sense to connect them, that, you know, there is a possible tie from, you know, the tragedies that happened here and what's happening in present day.

JACK: I do believe the place to be haunted. I don't think it's as evil and twisted as people say.

KATRINA: Agreed.

JACK: You know, I think a lot of it is residual hauntings. Although I do think that there was some non-residual intelligent spirits there. But I don't feel it's evil. I don't feel it doesn't want people there. I just think it wants to be acknowledged.

KATRINA: Hey guys, thanks for watching. Be sure to tune in to more "Portals to Hell" and behind the scenes action at Travel Channel Go.