

Police investigator recalls ghost voice - Recordings made at the Raymond fire station are cited as evidence.

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A Fresno Police Department crime scene investigator says he recorded a disembodied voice while on a weekend ghost hunt in an old fire station in Raymond -- but skeptics say it's just pseudo-scientific nonsense.

Mickey Burrow and seven other hobbyists operating under the name Pacific Haunting Investigations spent Saturday night in a historic fire station in the foothills community. According to local folklore, it is haunted by a ghost named Homer.

Burrow and his team brought along video cameras, electromagnetic detectors, long-range thermometers and other equipment. Burrow said Thursday that he heard strange tapping sounds and voices -- including at least one captured on a voice recorder.

Burrow said he was alone in the pitch-dark basement when he asked out loud to no one in particular whether Homer wanted him to turn on the light. He said he recorded a response that sounded like: "I'll turn on the light."

Burrow said he was startled, but he kept talking and explained that he was just there to help others understand. Then he said he captured the same voice as it replied: "OK."

But such recordings are highly suspect, said Richard Moore, one of the founders of the Central Valley Alliance of Atheists and Skeptics.

Moore said the fact that Burrow was alone means that even if he has a recording of a voice, there's no way to tell scientifically whether it was recorded at the time and location Burrow maintains.

And if Burrow could show that the recording was made in the basement during the ghost hunt, it would still take an independent analysis of the recording "to remove the bias of the observer" and determine what the sound is, Moore said.

Moore, who said his group has about 30 members, said there is no evidence that devices like Burrow's electromagnetic field detector, motion sensors or night-vision video recorder can detect paranormal activity.

At the nonprofit Center for Inquiry in Amherst, N.Y., senior research fellow and author Joe Nickell said he has been involved for nearly 50 years in investigating folklore and legends.

"There is no scientific evidence, not any, that ghosts exist," Nickell said. "Not one ghost has ever been authenticated by mainstream science."

Burrow said he needs more time to examine electromagnetic readings and other data collected on the ghost hunt.

"We have not disproved that there's a haunting there," Burrow said.

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