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The White Figure

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Sarah Snow
Logan, Utah
November 19, 2018

“The White Figure”
Occupational Folklore/Memorate/Legend

Informant:

Sarah Snow is a coworker and good friend of mine. She is a server at Herm’s Inn, a local breakfast hub in Logan, Utah, and has been working there almost three years now. She is twenty-five and a Cache Valley native. Most importantly, she is one of several employees who has claimed to have encountered a ghost or something similar in our building at work.

Context:

“Herman’s Inn,” as it was initially called, made its debut in the early 20th century, with the exact year and date unknown. Built and founded by Herman (“Herm”) and Elizabeth (“Lizzy”) Johnson along Canyon Road, Herm’s Inn was, at one point in time, quite literally one’s last chance to “gas up” before entering the mouth of Logan Canyon. Decades later, after over half a century of neglect, Herm’s was bought and restored by local businessman Jim Laub to revive the building and its glorious history. Reestablished in 2012, Herm’s Inn is now a popular breakfast and lunch destination for those who know how to find it. Despite its unassuming appearance and quiet location within a residential area, Herm’s holds a colorful history, including an underground whiskey operation during prohibition, and age-old notions of the building being haunted.

Herm’s Inn is now home to a collection of old stories and legends that still circulate around the Valley today, not to mention a series of newly developed jokes, traditions, and numinous experiences among current employees.



*Herm’s Inn in its original state. Exact date unknown.
(Source: www.hermsinn.com/history)*



*Herm’s Inn today.
(Source: www.hermsinn.com/history)*

I interviewed Sarah along with five other coworkers from Herm’s in the living room of my apartment. The setting of this group interview was very casual: we were all circled around my coffee table, drinking beer and wine, as we often do on our evenings after work.

The following story is one Sarah has openly discussed in the past, however the majority of people present during the interview had never heard her personal account before. Gette Luke, Steve Bailey, and myself were involved in this specific section of the interview as she gave her account.

The other pieces from this interview can be found under the following names: “The Children See Ghosts,” “Tired of Talking to Ghosts,” “The Pantry Door,” “Haunted Coffee Spoons,” and “The Heroin Spoon.” I also interviewed the owner, Heather Santi, and manager, Andrea Steffes, about their uncanny experiences at Herm’s, which can be found under the following titles: “The Ghosts of Herm’s Inn,” “The Moving Lockers,” “The Black Figure,” and “Something Down the Stairs.”

Text:

Sarah: Ok, well this was about two years ago, and it was the middle of a lunch rush and I was downstairs getting ice. And that little hallway that leads to the back door [pause] and this was back when the cooks wore like white [pauses, looks around the room for recognition] I don’t think any of you worked there.

Steve: A chef’s coat?

Sarah: Yeah they wore like chef coats, and [pauses, looks at ceiling, seemingly trying to recall what she was saying] so I was getting ice and then I saw like a shadow move from where the conference doors are and go to like pass [waves hand] like it was going out the door, and then I looked over, and I was like, “oh,” and it was a white figure, so I was just like-

Gette: You thought it was a cook?

Sarah: Yeah, [referencing her inner monologue:] “Oh it’s just somebody going out through the door and upstairs,” and then I didn’t hear the door shut at all so I like peaked around the corner, and there was no one going up the stairs, and I like waited to see if I just didn’t hear it, and I saw something, like, well [glancing at the ceiling] I didn’t see this, but I was waiting to see if I saw something turn the corner, like they were going to go inside and upstairs.

Steve: Yeah, yeah into the restaurant?

Sarah: Yeah, but there was nothing, and I just got like chills [eyes widened] like all over my body, and then I went up and I told Bobby and Brady [two other servers, who are both very talkative], and they, like freaked out and told everyone within a matter of like ten minutes [group laughter], and then Heather [owner] comes up to me and she's like, [pitch rose to mimic Heather's voice] "Did you just fucking see a ghost?!" and I just said "Yes," and, oh yeah Sami [another server] is deathly scared, or afraid of ghosts so she asked me about it too and they were all like super weirded out about it [pauses to catch her breath] and then like months later this psychic came in from Salt Lake and told Heather that she could feel a spirit that's like in the building, and like Heather made me talk to that lady and tell her about what I saw [group laughter]. I was like...[glances at the floor] yeah. And then apparently Andrea saw a ghost not too long ago [points to me, acknowledging a previous conversation we had about this].

Steve: Well it's the same old white man apparently.

Gette: Yeah it's the same old dude in white!

[Diversion of a few minutes as Gette shares her own stories]

Mira: Sarah do you believe in ghosts?

Sarah: Yes! [enthusiastically] Because...I don't know I just get this weird feeling in that building any time like late at night like at a, like when we do events and stuff.

Gette: When you're by yourself?

Sarah: I get like this creepy feeling...and even the manager and the owner of the building, of the business, doesn't even wanna be in there.

Steve: Yeah I feel like, even, any time you're in the basement, like late at night, or just after the sun has gone down, in the basement, it's just a creepy time.

Gette: [laughing] It's just creepy.

Mira: Yeah, Robyn [head chef] says she keeps all the lights on when she's there. [group laughter]

Steve: I always feel like there's somebody in the banquet room, just like waiting for me to come around that corner. [laughter]

Gette: [laughing] He's just watching tv.

Sarah: Um, I would totally haunt that building if I were a ghost.

Everyone: [all almost in unison] Why?

Gette: Well, I mean if it's named after him...that's why he lives there right?

Sarah: Yeah, well it's like, it's [the building] a hundred years old.

Steve: That's true.

Gette: Didn't it used to be a gas station and a, like a hotel? He probably died there.

Texture:

Although Sarah believes in ghosts and viewed her account as legitimate evidence of this, she seemed very lighthearted about the subject matter as she told this story (perhaps this is due to several conversations in the past among Herm's workers about these ghosts having no malintent). She was leaning forward in her chair, holding a beer, and talking a little faster than normal; apart from speaking quickly, however, her voice and mannerisms were completely natural and easygoing. The content shared was typical among this group (as we talk about work often) and everyone present seemed comfortable, as they were all drinking and laughing periodically.

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