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The Black Figure

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Andrea Steffes
Logan, Utah
November 28, 2018

“The Black Figure”
Occupational Folklore/Memorate

Informant:

Andrea Steffes has been the general manager at Herm’s Inn for almost two years, having also worked there on and off as a server in years prior. Andrea grew up in the Midwest, but has spent most of the last decade in Cache Valley. She is not only my manager but also a good friend that I spend time with outside of 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 Cache 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)*

Herm’s opens for the day at 7am and closes at 2pm. Right as the last customers are leaving at the end of the work day, all the employees sit down together to eat lunch. This is normally the time when we sit and joke and tell stories to one another about work. It was during this break that I interviewed Andrea. Everyone had already gotten up to finish their closing work, however they

were still nearby when the interview took place. This item is Andrea's personal narrative of her supernatural experience at Herm's.

The other item from this interview can be found under the following name: "Something Down the Stairs." I also interviewed the owner of Herm's, Heather Santi, as well as other Herm's employees, which can all be found under the following titles: "The White Figure," "The Children See Ghosts," "Tired of Talking to Ghosts," "The Pantry Door," "Haunted Coffee Spoons," "The Heroin Spoon," "The Ghosts of Herm's Inn," and "The Moving Lockers."

Text:

It was at, like, 8 in the morning. 8 or 8: 30 in the morning. So a time where, normally when I come after work or if it's super early that's when I [pause] it was a point in the day when I'm never freaked out to go downstairs, which I thought was interesting. [long pause] So I was walking downstairs with some boxes [indicating with hands as if she were holding them] and KJ [line cook] was working. He's like, what was KJ? Like 6'2ish, 6'3 right? So as I'm turning the corner, I see something walking [extends hand forward] and in my mind [pause] you know how when you see something, but it's not [pause] you know how your brain completes things for you? Like looking back on it, it was a black figure, but in my mind I was like, "That's KJ. It's totally KJ. What's KJ doing walking into the conference room?" So I followed him [eyes widen, and she leans forward slightly] to see if [pause] I thought maybe he was on the phone and something wasn't okay. So I followed him into the conference room and [pause] nobody was in the conference room, and I was close enough where I would've heard a door or seen the back door, ya know something would've [pause] I was that close. So nobody was there, KJ was upstairs, and like [laugh] after that happened I think, I hope this is okay to swear [pause] oh, fuck, like realizing that [pause] wasn't [pause] what I saw, it was, it was just a black shadow that was tall and like [widens shoulders and pumps out chest] huskier, just walking into the conference room [laughter] And um it was like person-shape but it was nothing, like no details. [I ask if it was out of her peripheral vision] No it was dead on [extends hand outward] It was,

like, somebody's walking in there [pause] And the weirdest thing to me is why I followed it. 'Cause I am such a scaredy cat. Like that was the weirdest thing. And I wasn't scared, until I, when I realized it was like "oh shit" but it wasn't, like, in my mind, 'cause I've never really experienced anything like that, and it could be nothing, easily, but, um, I wasn't afraid. Like it didn't feel malicious or weird or anything, it just [pause] was [pause] what it was. [after a conversation deviation from the conversation I ask if Andrea believes in ghosts] I don't know [speaking quietly, thoughtfully looking at me] I wanna say that I believe in energies, and I think that things can, like, maybe manifest, like, like if something kinda like if there's something [pause] I wouldn't say that I don't believe in them but I tend to think that like things can kinda stay in [pause] like if something bad has happened somewhere over and over again there's gonna be some sort of energy there that is there. But again I don't think this is a bad energy so that kinda conflicts with what I, what I think, ya know? [long pause] And it could totally be nothing. Heather [owner] and I did mess with the shadows, cause she [laughing] she was like I went downstairs, cause I didn't know if I should tell her, but it was just too, like I'd never felt that sure about something for sure happening [pause] like something happened, and there was no way for us to get a shadow in that spot of the room. And it was in the day. I mean it was light out, super light out, the lights were on down there, so [pause] Well I was carrying boxes so I kinda went down again and saw where my shadow was. My shadow was in the hallway still right [using hands to gesture to hallway] 'cause it's not long enough with the way that the lights were, so. I could've, I mean it could've just been my brain doing some sort of malfunction [laughing] like I don't know [laughter] but I did, I don't know if this, I don't know if this is worth putting in anything but a few days before that happened, I came into work after work, and I don't really like to be here when no one else is here, cause it just gives me the heebie-jeebies, so I brought

Olive [Andrea's dog] in with me, and [in a whisper, eyes widening] Olive like lost her mind. It was really weird. But I think there's weird noises in here that she doesn't understand but we were in the office and she stayed under the desk and like, cried. Until we left. Which I thought was really weird. I think it could've been the ice machine, so that is something that I think is possible- [breaks] ya know? It could just be that and she didn't know the, doesn't really know the building [pause] but she typically doesn't act like that, so I thought that was weird.

Texture:

Andrea was evidently nervous, as she admitted herself, to be recorded and interviewed about this experience. She paused often, and also nearly overlapped her own words a few times. Despite this, however, we were in a very casual setting wherein we would normally discuss such matters, which I believe put her a little more at ease. It seemed throughout the interview that she believed everything she told me, but was hesitant to admit it; she seemed to want to explain everything away.

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