

Interview with Mike McKinney

24 February 2003

Paranormal Activity at NMU

START OF INTERVIEW

Interviewer (I): I am interviewing Mike McKinney, and today's date is February 24th, 2003 and he's gonna tell us what he knows about paranormal activity or sightings, or happenings on Northern's campus.

Mike McKinney (MM): Okay, this won't take very long. But I've been at Northern for about 28 years this past October. But back in my early days back in the early 70s I worked with a guy in the Fine Arts Building named Perry Gazzet [spelled phonetically]. He was a big guy, but he was short he was about 300lbs, 5'7" but he was an ex-army guy. I think he was a paratrooper in the military. _____. But anyway he's been _____ a picture for a quite some year at that time and he's been married once as far as I know, his wife died in child birth and that was a few years after they were married. He never remarried and he ended up living with his mother here in Marquette and she was getting older and in poor health so he pretty much had to take care of her. He basically just waiting around, he liked to hunt and fish all of that, so he's basically waiting around for her to pass away so he could dump everything in Marquette and move to, up in the mountains down there he had a camp, so he was gonna go down there to spend the rest of his life. And one of the student workers suddenly one morning found him dead in the elevator in the Fine Arts Building, door opens and there he was. It was really strange because people were looking all over the building for him that morning when he came to work. And there was where they found him, it was strange because when the door opened, it was dark in building we're in the morning so the door opened and the lights on the elevator were the only ones on the floor. He was already dead so there wasn't much we could do but, it kind of had a bad impact on the kid, he was kind of shook up for quite a while after that.

I: Sure.

MM: But anyway after that nobody thought anything about it, but it seemed... This guy was a jokester, he was funny, tell a lot of jokes you know through his experiences and stuff so. He was kind of a happy go lucky guy, but I'd like say that with all the tragedy in his life he had a little of that kind of hanging in there with him too I think. Anyway, shortly it wasn't too long after his death, the elevator in the Fine Arts Building started acting really weird, it would do all kinds of strange stuff. Whether it was mechanical, who knows? But there was one guy that got on it one day, or one night, pushed the button he could feel it going up you know? When it stopped the door opens and he was on the same floor that he started on. Might have been, like I said, something mechanical. But then you'll be walking through the building sometime at night, it even happens now I think, the door will just open automatically. Could be when it gets dark too, and the lights on in the elevator but its dark in the hallway. So it's weird, it opens and it closes. So people always say that Perry's always riding the elevator and stuff, he's still in the building.

I: And this is in the Thomas Fine Arts Building?

MM: Thomas Fine Arts. Perry basically took care of the Thomas Fine Arts, he was the building attendant there. But he hung around the theatre a lot, he liked the people in the theatre department. He knew people in the theatre. It wasn't too many years ago that the North Wind had a story on him, that he was still around you know? It was a Halloween article I think, maybe 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 years ago. But anyway people in the theatre say they feel his presence when they're off stage. Like when they're off in the wings and it's dark and they can just feel the presence of somebody behind them and they can feel somebody brush them sometimes, and there's nobody there. The only other things I know of is, well there's the guy that still works in building over there now. As a matter of fact the guy that's over the now built the building, he worked for the construction company that built the Fine Arts Building and he started working there after it was completed and he's been there ever since. He's supposed to retire this next year, his name is Jerry Maki.

I: Jerry Maki?

MM: Yeah. He was there one night [laughter] waiting to go home. He said he was pretty tired, I guess he had worked pretty hard you know. So he was about half asleep, kind of dozing, and all of a sudden this loud whistle woke him up and scared him. He looked at the clock and it was exactly time to punch out. But he kept thinking about the whistle that he heard, there's nobody in the building he had locked it up already. The whistle he heard was the same distinct whistle that this guy used to have. You know it was one of those really loud...

I: Perry you mean?

MM: Perry yeah. So that was the whistle he had that woke him up. But that's about the extent of it. The guy, I mean he was a nice guy he wouldn't be one of these mean ghosts if he is over there.

I: Right, [laughter]. Did they ever determine what his death was?

MM: It was a heart attack.

I: Heart attack?

MM: Yeah like I said he was a big guy. I think he was even taking heart medication at the time.

I: But you've only heard of these invisible happenings? Nobody's ever?

MM: No, not really.

I: Nobody's ever seen a ghost or a figure or anything?

MM: No, the closest is, like I said there's people brushing up, account of feeling something. But never really seeing anything. Just some weird things that have happened.

I: Have you ever heard about any other unusual things happening in any other areas of campus?

MM: No.

I: Halverson?

MM: No, this one was the only one that I know of.

I: Nothing weird going on in this building? [Laughter].

MM: No this one is pretty, I don't think anyone has ever _____ stuck around. That's about all I can tell you.

I: Okay.

MM: I mean I know quite a bit about the guy, he was a nice guy, considering I knew Perry at the time.

I: Did he have a child? You said that.

MM: No, they both um.

I: The mother and the child died?

MM: Yeah, that was... _____. So he might be just hanging over there.

I: What year was that again? That he died?

MM: Probably in the early '80s. Early to mid '80s, I'm not sure exactly.

I: Okay, thank you very much.

MM: Yeah, that's about all I can give ya.

END OF INTERVIEW.