**UNSOLVED MYSTERIES PODCAST | The Haunting of Ball Cemetery**

TY DUNCAN: Over the years I think I've told a few people that, you know, I trusted enough to not think I was completely crazy. Processing the events of that day in my mind, I wouldn't really say that it was a possession so much as maybe more like a channeling of something, someone. It was almost as if what was being channeled was, “I've already warned you not to be here. I've already tried to tell you this was a bad place to be. You don't want to be here. And now I'm going to show you that you don't want to be here. Your challenge to this place is accepted."

NARRATION:

ABOUT 15 MINUTES SOUTH OF SPRINGFIELD, NEBRASKA, AND JUST NORTH OF THE PLATTE RIVER, A WINDY DIRT ROAD SNAKES ITS WAY UP TO A BLACK IRON GATE, SHIELDING A SECLUDED GROVE OF CEDAR TREES. A SIGN WARNS: DO NOT TRESPASS, ADVICE THAT COUNTLESS INTRUDERS HAVE IGNORED AND REGRETTED. THIS IS BALL CEMETERY, THE FINAL HOME FOR A FEW HUNDRED SOULS. MANY OF THEM REST IN PEACE. OTHERS DON'T. FOR DECADES, IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THIS DARK AND LONELY PLOT OF LAND IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE IS HAUNTED BY MYSTERIOUS ENTITIES THAT DEFY RATIONAL EXPLANATION.

NARRATION:

I'M YOUR HOST, STEVE FRENCH. THIS IS UNSOLVED MYSTERIES: “THE HAUNTING OF BALL CEMETERY.”

DAVID RODRIGUEZ: The place is really creepy. As you're coming in, it's this gravel road, but then it turns into a dirt road and it's kind of tree lined. And as you're coming there at night, it's really spooky. It's kind of a tattered cemetery. You pull into this dirt area and you will see two big white posts with, you know, ‘Ball Cemetery’ on top. And there's only one way in one way out. It's just a very strange cemetery.

NARRATION:

DAVID RODRIGUEZ IS THE FOUNDER OF THE PARANORMAL RESEARCH GROUP, PRISM. FOR OVER 20 YEARS, HE HAS INVESTIGATED HAUNTED LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES, INCLUDING OVER 1000 CEMETERIES. BALL CEMETERY HAS BEEN ON DAVID'S RADAR SINCE HE FIRST STARTED INVESTIGATING THE PARANORMAL.

DAVID RODRIGUEZ: The first time I heard about Ball Cemetery was in 2004, when I started the paranormal research team. You'd hear people see graves being tipped over, people feel something touching them. I have had people contact me saying that they've had bruises, scratches, maybe a little push or a little tug and then there's nobody near you. It's a small cemetery and all those graves are right next to each other. It is a private, family-owned cemetery, been there since the late 1800s. You have to have permission to enter that cemetery. Whether it's day or night, they will arrest you.

NARRATION:

TRESPASSERS ARE OFTEN GREETED BY A CARETAKER WITH A SHOTGUN WHO LIVES IN A NEARBY HOUSE. FOR HIS INVESTIGATIONS, DAVID ASKED THE LOCAL SHERIFF TO COME ALONG WITH HIS TEAM. BUT OTHERS HAVE VENTURED IN ON THEIR OWN. AND IT'S THEIR EYEWITNESS REPORTS THAT HAVE FUELED THE CEMETERY'S HAUNTED REPUTATION.

DAVID RODRIGUEZ: Somebody might see strange symbols. Another person could see something, like a woman in the trees, or something. Another person may just hear noises. Everybody's got a strange, different story at Ball Cemetery.

TY DUNCAN: As we pulled into the cemetery, I just had a really bad feeling, almost as though we had already been warned not to do this.

NARRATION:

TY DUNCAN, NOW A MIDDLE-AGED FATHER OF FOUR, WAS 19 WHEN HE AND HIS THREE FRIENDS VISITED THE CEMETERY IN 1995. WHAT HE EXPERIENCED THAT NIGHT HE WILL NEVER FORGET.

TY DUNCAN: So, there was Grant and his gal-friend, Cindy, and then there was Charlie and myself. We’re just kids driving back from Omaha and one of the guys mentioned, “Hey, have you guys heard about Ball Cemetery? You know, supposed to be haunted and spooky place so we should drive over and take a look on our way back.” Everybody else in the car said, “Yeah, let's go. Let's check it out.” As we got a little bit closer, we were probably 20 minutes out or so, and I just felt like this was not a good idea. So, I kind of said something to Grant. I said, “Look, this doesn't sit well with me. I don't think we should go.” And of course, I got razzed by everybody in the car. “Oh, you’re scared to go to the cemetery, chickening out.” And by this time, I was really feeling like this was a terrible idea. So, you know, we went. By the time we got there, it was probably just starting to get dark. Six, seven o'clock. It was fairly ominous when you look at the front of the graveyard. There's a, you know, kind of a circle parking area and opposite of that was kind of a tree line, and there was some bigger rocks piled up on one side. And I just got the feeling that just out of view, there was a woman standing there laughing at us.

TY DUNCAN, CONT’D: Almost a sinister feeling of, “I told you to stay away. I warned you. You shouldn't have come here.” As everybody piled out of the car, I was like, “You know, I'm just gonna stay here.” They’re like, “Oh, you’re chicken,” you know, “What's gonna happen?” And the more I thought about it, the less I wanted to stay in the car, not having anyone around me. So, I got out of the car, and I walked into the graveyard with everyone else. As you walk into the graveyard, there's a lot of cedar trees so it almost got darker when you walked in. Cindy and Charlie kind of walked to opposite ends of the graveyard. Grant and I, we were walking towards the very back of the cemetery, right down the middle. I don't recall what he said, but, you know, he was making fun of somebody's name on one of the stones, just making a crude joke about it. He laughed, and I laughed, but it really wasn't that funny.

TY DUNCAN, CONT’D: And at that point, is when things got kind of strange for me. I kept laughing, and at this point, it was almost like I stepped back outside of my body. I knew I was laughing, but it was no longer myself that was laughing. Grant said something like, “Are you okay?” And I remember kind of leaning into him and saying, “This is so funny. I'm going to show you how funny this is. Watch Cindy over there. It's about to happen.” He said, “what's about to happen?” And I said one word. “Drop.” From across the graveyard, Cindy let out this painful scream. At that point, Charlie came running from the other end of the graveyard and Grant looked back at me and he just got this wide-eyed look of terror. And he looks at me and he says, “What did you do?” And he ran off to help Cindy. I said, “Wait, where are you going? This is so much fun. This is funny. Where are you going? Come play with me.” Grant picked up Cindy off the ground and just trying to carry her to the car, pretty much. Half-carrying, half-dragging her towards the gate and Grant’s like, “Come on. Let's go. Let's get out of here. Let's go. What are you doing?” Charlie jumped in the car. Charlie was ready to go. He wasn't even, had no interest in being there anymore. At this point, I was walking from the back of the graveyard. I said, “Hey, where are you guys going? Don't leave. This is fun. This is a great game. Come laugh with me.” And I can't remember if it was Charlie or Grant, came in and grabbed me and, you know, all but stuffed me in the car, and we tore out of there.

TY DUNCAN, CONT’D: I really don't remember a lot about leaving. It's almost like when you wake up from a dream that was so vivid, that you're like, did that really just happen? But I believe it was probably close to that, you know, five or ten mile mark when I kind of, I don’t know, snapped out of it, if you will. I started asking questions. I had to ask Cindy what had happened. Basically, Cindy said, “Something felt like it kicked me in the stomach and I just, I doubled over in pain, fell down on the ground and, you know, I couldn't hardly even walk.” I don't remember much of the conversations that took place after that. It was almost like I was kind of in a daze after that for a little bit.

NARRATION:

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, TY DUNCAN HAS NO EXPLANATION FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM AT BALL CEMETERY. ALL HE KNOWS IS THAT SOME INEXPLICABLE FORCE TOOK HOLD OF HIM THAT NIGHT.

TY DUNCAN: At this point in my life, I’ve been a computer systems engineer for years, married, father of four. Even after all these years, you know, there's not many details that I don't remember, but it was definitely decision altering. Processing the events of that day in my mind that, you know, I wouldn't really say that it was a possession so much as maybe more like a channeling of something, someone. It was almost like the feeling that maybe the entity, or the person that was there, did not want us to be there. It's kind of odd, but you know, it's the only way I can really explain in my mind how that day happened. I don't think I would ever go back to Ball Cemetery. I absolutely think that place is haunted.

NARRATION:

PARANORMAL INVESTIGATOR DAVID RODRIGUEZ HAS HEARD STORIES SIMILAR TO TY'S FROM SEVERAL OTHER WITNESSES OVER THE YEARS. AND THE WOMAN THAT TY GLIMPSED IN THE CEMETERY LAUGHING AT THEM? SHE'S MADE MORE THAN ONE APPEARANCE.

DAVID RODRIGUEZ: When it comes to apparitions and things people have seen there, there's a woman named Mary Ingersoll Mumford, and you'll see her little gravestone there. It's a small stone. It says ‘Wife of John Mumford, Mary Mumford.’ She was born 1844, died in 1885, and most of the stuff that happens around her grave site, people feeling like she's tugging on their clothes, some people have heard a laughing, a woman laughing. So, people tend to tie in the ghost of this woman with Mary Mumford. They think it's her.

NARRATION:

OF THE DOZENS OF STORIES DAVID HAS HEARD ABOUT BALL CEMETERY, ONE OF THE MOST COMPELLING COMES FROM A LOCAL MAN NAMED TREY.

TREY: When I grew up, my house was about 15 minutes, I'd say, from Ball Cemetery. And everybody knows what Ball Cemetery is out here. My father-in-law, he has stories from there. My brother-in-law has stories from there. Pretty much anybody that's from anywhere in that area has weird creepy stories from there.

NARRATION:

ONE NIGHT, TREY AND A GROUP OF FRIENDS DECIDE TO CHECK OUT THE CEMETERY FOR THEMSELVES, CURIOUS TO SEE IF THE STORIES THEY'VE HEARD ARE TRUE. THEY PILE INTO A FEW CARS AND EVENTUALLY GET TO THE HALF MILE DIRT ROAD THAT LEADS TO THE ENTRANCE. AS THEY'RE ABOUT TO PASS THE HOUSE ON THE LEFT, HOME TO THE CARETAKER WITH A SHOTGUN, THEY SHUT OFF THEIR LIGHTS, SO NO ONE CAN SEE THEM.

TREY: When you drive in there, it's dark, like very dark. And so, when you get there at night, it is almost pitch black. We all got out of the car, walked in. We had to kind of sneak through the gates. One of the kids had, like, a giant spotlight kind of thing so we could see around, and the first thing I saw was that there was, like, these tombstones that were totally knocked over, like giant tombstones that look like they're just broken in half. We started walking around. One of the other guys that was with us decided, “Hey, let's go and try to call the spirits.” We all held hands, and he called the spirits. And we all let go of hands, thought, “Oh, you know, there's nothing weird about this, I guess.” And right as we said that, we started hearing this weird noise, and the guy with the spotlight started shining it all around. And over on the south side of the cemetery, there is a windmill, and it was, like, slowly spinning.

TREY, CONT'D: And everybody looked around and we're like, “we don't feel any wind or anything.” And as we're all sitting there still watching the spotlight on the windmill, it starts slowing down, and then it literally stops, and turns rotation and just slowly, like very slowly, starts going the other way. And at that point, everybody's, like, freaked out, started running out towards the front, running back to our cars. And when we got there, a couple people were like, “Oh, I'm bleeding.” The one guy that was with us, he had a cut going all the way down from, like, the bottom of his Achilles tendon all the way up, like, half up his calf. It was a very, very gnarly cut. And there was girls that had cuts on 'em, there was guys that had cuts on ‘em, and nobody knew how they got it.

NARRATION:

THIS WOULD NOT BE TREY'S LAST VISIT TO BALL CEMETERY. MONTHS LATER, HIS GIRLFRIEND REVEALS TO HIM THAT HER GRANDMOTHER HAS A BURIAL PLOT AT THE CEMETERY, AND THEY DECIDE TO INVESTIGATE.

TREY: We drive down and there is a Dodge Caliber that was sitting there, totally in the dark. So, we got kind of worried. We just stopped. We saw the car have its lights turned on, on the inside, and there was three guys sitting in the car. And so, we're like slowly cruising up there, roll down our window, say, “Hey, do you guys need any help?” and they're like, “don't know what happened. We just stopped to go walk into the cemetery and our car won't start.” Definitely was creepy. We're in a creepy cemetery. We drove all the way down there, to her grandma's house. It was, like, a 10-minute drive. My girlfriend got out, got the jumper cables, got back into the car, and we drove back and tried to go jump their car. It started up right away and we decided, you know, “you guys are probably good. We're gonna take off.” It was, like, midnight at the time and they're like, “Okay, well, is it okay, if we follow you just to make sure that we make it out?” And we're like, “Yeah, definitely.” We're driving out. When you drive out of Ball Cemetery, you have to go straight down. There is no way for you to go any other way except for straight to get out.

TREY, CONT'D: And so, they were following us. We had to turn our lights off when we go past the house. They did the same. We get back over the top, turn our lights back on, and we look back, and there is no car behind us. And we're like, “Oh, shoot, I hope they didn't, like, have their car stall out again,” or whatever. And so, we turned our lights back off, went in reverse, went all the way past that house again, back up the hill, and we stop and there is no car there anymore. They never came back out. We even sat there for a while. And we're like, “that's really creepy.” And we started getting that feeling of, like, that hot feeling, cold feeling, whatever. And we're like, “oh my gosh.” And so, I got in the car and I'm like, “where are they at?” It was, like, one of the creepiest things that, like, we both decided that they definitely had to be ghosts.

NARRATION:

AT THIS POINT, TREY’S EXPERIENCES HAVE CONVINCED HIM THAT THE LEGEND OF BALL CEMETERY IS ALL TOO REAL, BUT HIS FRIEND ZACK ISN'T BUYING IT. SO, TREY DECIDES TO MAKE HIM A BELIEVER. HE RETURNS TO THE CEMETERY WITH ZACK AND ANOTHER FRIEND, JAMES.

TREY: The next time that I went out to Ball Cemetery was the last time that I actually went to Ball Cemetery. So this one, I will say, was probably the creepiest. We drove in, right where the entrance to Ball Cemetery, like, the gates are, and we just sat there. And you could just feel like something was weird. And I said, “you're gonna hear something if we just roll down the windows and be quiet.” Right as I said that, we could hear a girl scream. That guy literally looked at me. He's like, “what was that?” I'm like, “that's what I'm saying, man. This place is haunted. It's not something to mess around with.” And I remember looking over, like, into the dark, and I just got the worst feeling possible. And I'm like, the creepiest feeling that something was, like, right there. Zack started getting a little creeped out and he's like, “okay, I don't like this either,” kind of a deal. And so, we all decided to go and take off. So, we drive all the way out. We drive to the gas station that's pretty close to where Ball Cemetery is. Parked the car on the side and as we come out, you can see symbols all over the front of his car.

TREY, CONT'D: There was a giant triangle across the front hood of his car and, like, my window that I had had a three-finger handprint with, like, a thumb, that were very long fingers, that were, like, embedded into the frost on the car and it literally looked just like a handprint from some weird, demonic creature. Zack had the same thing on the back and once he saw that, he freaked out. I mean, it was one of those things that we didn't talk the entire way driving back. I've looked up some of the symbol things. It is a demonic-y thing and it was a 15 out of 10 of scaredness after the symbols on the car. That was too much. I pretty much said I will never go back there again after that one.

NARRATION:

AS A CHILD, DAVID RODRIGUEZ HAD HIS OWN ENCOUNTERS WITH MYSTERIOUS ENTITIES. HIS EXPERIENCES INSPIRED HIM TO EVENTUALLY CREATE THE RESEARCH TEAM CALLED PRISM, WHICH INVESTIGATES AND DOCUMENTS PARANORMAL ACTIVITY. IN 2004, HE SET HIS SIGHTS ON BALL CEMETERY.

DAVID RODRIGUEZ: When I went there for the first time, I didn't know what to expect. Is this place really haunted? Are these tales true, you know? The cemetery at night, it changes, you know? I mean, it's a spooky looking cemetery in the daytime as well, but between people seeing apparitions of the man or hearing the woman laugh, or anything, but that only happens at night. I mean, the reason that paranormal investigators even investigate at night is because there's less sounds, noise pollution, let's say. Ghosts tend to be a sensitive energy. And so, at nighttime, it's just kind of when everything can kind of come out and make itself known.

DAVID RODRIGUEZ, CONT'D: What we do as paranormal investigators, when we go to a cemetery, is basically we're bringing all our gadgets with us. Personally, myself, I'm a gadget guy. So, I deal with EMF detectors. Those are, pretty much every paranormal investigator, that's their number one thing that they buy, the first piece of equipment they buy. And that's ‘electromagnetic field.’ Basically, someone would use that for the house to see if you have any energy fields, you know, electromagnetic fields around that could be dangerous for you. So, it's not really used to, like, when you turn on that thing, it's not a ghost meter, per se. But the thing that you're using that for is when a ghost comes into, let's say, a room, it will affect static electricity, EMF. It will affect barometric pressure. It affects, sometimes, temperature.

DAVID RODRIGUEZ, CONT'D: We will then place these meters. You want to place them away from you so your cell phone isn't near there, your camera isn’t near it. We kind of place things around a gravestone that you're trying to ask questions to, in this case, let's say Mary. We'd put the stuff around the grave site, and then walk back a little bit, so you're not next to those meters, and then we just start to ask questions while we're recording audio, and then we try to see if anything spikes. So, we're looking for little lights to be blinking, to give us verification that something is there with us, and what happens at this cemetery, you'd say, “Hi, Mary, are you here with us?” and then all of a sudden, the EMF meter is going to orange, which in that case would be kind of like a microwave being turned on. So that's a lot of EMF coming out of a gravestone.

DAVID RODRIGUEZ, CONT'D: In this case of Ball Cemetery, there's no electrical anything around there. So, there's no wiring underground. It’s remote. So, there should not be any EMF, or electromagnetic fields, going off. So, it has to be a response from something. Something must be happening. We would get a lot of those EMF responses on our gear. We got some strange EVPs, Electronic Voice Phenomena, strange voices, and then photographs. I personally got a few photographs of really strange, like, I mean, you've seen orbs on photos, but this is like an orb that takes up, like, a third of the photo, you know, like a big ball of light going through. We got strange shadows, videos of lights blinking, almost like, I don’t know, UFO-ish. That's a positive thing, because we know that something is there. It's paranormal. It's not normal.

DAVID RODRIGUEZ, CONT'D: So, what would make a cemetery haunted? That would be the history of the land, the people buried there, and sometimes the geographic location. In this case, you've got the Platte River runs just south of the cemetery. Running water tends to increase paranormal activity. It is a private, family-owned cemetery, you know, been there since the late 1800s. It's active, that place. You know, it's definitely an intelligent haunting. It's kind of like a guardian entity going on over there. Everything that tends to happen to people is a scary thing. It tries to scare them away. Why would that be? You get other hauntings at other places that it doesn't seem to be that way. It just kind of wants to make itself known. And in the case of Ball Cemetery, it's something telling you to get out of there. It doesn't want you there. It's like a protector, like something's guarding that cemetery. You can go to other cemeteries around the United States that look creepy, but they're not going to be haunted. It just happens to be that this one is, and I'm guessing it's the people that are buried there.

NARRATION:

WHATEVER IS HAUNTING BALL CEMETERY, TY DUNCAN IS NOT EAGER TO RETURN ANYTIME SOON.

TY DUNCAN: I'm not sorry that I went there, but I definitely would not advise anyone who feels like they may have had experiences or premonitions to go there. There was a number of things about my thinking and skepticism that changed after that. My thoughts and feelings about the paranormal and, you know, the possibilities of speaking with the deceased, or higher powers, or angels, demons, and all that. That day changed the way I perceive my inner feelings and perceptions about things, and people, and places. When I get a bad feeling, I listen to it.

NARRATOR:

AFTER MULTIPLE ENCOUNTERS BEHIND THOSE BLACK IRON GATES, TREY ALSO FEELS LIKE A CHANGED PERSON.

TREY: I was raised very religiously. Never were ghosts, or anything like that, supposed to be, like, a part of anything, you know, because they're not real. After all my experiences that I have had at Ball Cemetery, I have no other thought than ghosts are real. If you open your eyes to it, it is just right there.

NARRATION:

TO THIS DAY, THE STRANGE HAPPENINGS AT BALL CEMETERY DEFY EXPLANATION. YOU MAY BE TEMPTED TO INVESTIGATE FOR YOURSELF, BUT REMEMBER, BALL CEMETERY IS ON PRIVATELY OWNED LAND. TRESPASSERS ARE NOT WELCOME, SO DO NOT ATTEMPT TO VISIT BALL CEMETERY. IF YOU'VE EXPERIENCED A HAUNTING, OR KNOW OF A HAUNTED PLACE LIKE BALL CEMETERY, SUBMIT YOUR STORY AT [UNSOLVED.COM](http://unsolved.com/submit).

NEXT ON UNSOLVED MYSTERIES:

CHERYL DANIEL: I kept telling my brother and my family, I said, “they’re alive. I can feel them. They're alive.” And they were like, “well, you know, honey, no. They're not. You know, that's a mother's wishful thinking,” but I could feel that they were alive. I just didn't know where they were at.

NARRATION:

Unsolved Mysteries is a production of Cosgrove Meurer Productions and Cadence 13. It is executive produced by Terry Dunn Meurer and Chris Corcoran. Produced by Lloyd Lochridge, Christine Lenig, Courtney Ennis, and Paige Hymson. The Story Producer for this episode was Molly Ryan and it was edited by Steve Concetelli. From Cadence 13, editing, mixing and mastering by Chris Basil, Andy Jaskiewicz and Bill Schultz. Production support by Sean Cherry and Ian Mandt. Artwork and design is by Curt Courtenay. Publicity by Josefina Francis and Hillary Schupf. The original theme music was composed by Gary Malkin and Michael Boyd.

Thanks for listening to Episode 1 of Unsolved Mysteries.