**UNSOLVED MYSTERIES PODCAST |** **JAILHOUSE GHOSTS**

S1E24 Transcript

BRYAN MYERS: The first night that I went there was really cloudy and dark. The building itself just looks so intimidating. I don’t know how to explain it. You're in a jail at night. Who knows what's happened in there? It can be very, very creepy inside the jail.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: Creepy is a good word. You always have the feeling that someone’s watching you, that there's someone there.

NARRATION: IT’S THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT AT THE CHESTER COUNTY JAIL IN SOUTH CAROLINA. THE 1914 BUILDING HAS HELD SOME HARDENED CRIMINALS OVER THE YEARS, BUT ON THIS NIGHT, EVERYTHING IS EERILY QUIET. UNTIL SUDDENLY, A HAUNTING SOUND ECHOES THROUGH THE EMPTY HALLWAYS.  SOME LONELY INMATE IS TUNING HIS GUITAR, PREPARING TO STRUM A RAGTIME TUNE FROM THE 1920s. BUT THERE’S JUST ONE PROBLEM: THE JAIL’S LAST PRISONER TRANSFERRED OUT ALMOST 50 YEARS AGO.

I'M STEVE FRENCH, AND THIS IS UNSOLVED MYSTERIES: “JAILHOUSE GHOSTS.”

CHESTER, SOUTH CAROLINA IS A TINY TOWN ABOUT 10 MILES OFF THE INTERSTATE, NESTLED BETWEEN COTTON FIELDS AND TURKEY FARMS.  THE OLD JAIL SITS BEHIND THE COURT HOUSE. IT'S A STURDY, CONCRETE BLOCK BUILDING, WITH THE WORDS "1914 CHESTER COUNTY JAIL" ETCHED ABOVE BIG WINDOWS THAT ARE COVERED WITH BARS. THIS HISTORIC BUILDING IS WIDELY REGARDED AS ONE OF THE MOST HAUNTED LOCATIONS IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: The first day I went, I have to tell you, it was sort of scary to go in there by yourself because I could immediately feel the presence.

NARRATION: LIZ SMITH ANDERSON RUNS THE CHESTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY WHICH IS HOUSED IN THE OLD ABANDONED JAIL. SHE SAYS SHE'S BEEN A PSYCHIC HER WHOLE LIFE, SO WHEN SHE STARTED WORKING THERE ABOUT 12 YEARS AGO, GREETING THE RESIDENT GHOSTS CAME NATURALLY.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: I said, "Hello, everybody. Let's have a good time." You know, I introduced myself. I said, you know, "I can hear you if you need me to hear you. Otherwise, you do your thing. I'm going to do my thing. And, let's just have a good day." Since I've been working at the 1914 Jail, I have seen ghosts physically manifest. I have probably seen two and felt another four or five, or had interactions with them.

NARRATION: NOT LONG AFTER SETTLING INTO HER JOB, LIZ ENCOUNTERS THE SPIRIT OF A MAN WHO SHE BELIEVES WAS LOCKED UP IN THE JAIL FOR OVER 20 YEARS.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: The first time somebody told me to go downstairs and get something...  The minute I opened the door, I heard two men talking. I thought, "Okay.” I knew what I heard. I knew it was a ghost. I said, "Who are you?" And I heard, very plainly, "I'm the trustee." But even though I knew what it was, I still had to say to myself, "Okay, Liz, it's not the dead that can hurt you. It's the living." I sort of got the feeling like he was trying to intimidate me, and I just let him know that I wasn't going to be intimidated because I wasn't doing anything wrong.

NARRATION: LIZ LOOKS THROUGH OLD COURT RECORDS AND UNCOVERS THIS MAN'S SHOCKING HISTORY.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: He was convicted of murdering his wife and, because he had so many children, the state allowed him to stay in Chester so his kids could visit him. So, he was the trustee. The trustee was the person who went and got you and put you in a holding cell for court. He was a very big, imposing man. One prisoner said to me, "The day they turned me over to that man was the worst day of my life." The trustee is still there. He sort of watches over the place still. Sometimes he is so present that you can’t shake it. Normal, everyday people will say, "What is that?" You know? And then other times, he's nowhere to be found.

BRYAN MYERS: I'm not going to say he's a negative spirit or a bad person or anything, but apparently, he's pretty moody.

NARRATION: BRYAN MYERS, A PARANORMAL INVESTIGATOR FROM ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA REMEMBERS HIS FIRST VISIT TO THE JAIL. LIZ ANDERSON MADE IT VERY CLEAR HOW THE TRUSTEE NEEDS TO BE TREATED.

BRYAN MYERS: We've been told to not antagonize the trustee down there. Don't demand that he shows himself or anything like that, because one person had, apparently, had tried to do that.

NARRATION: ON ONE OCCASION, LIZ ALLOWED TWO VISITORS TO MEET THE SPIRITS THAT HAUNT THE JAIL, AND SHE SOON REGRETTED IT.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: This guy apparently was not satisfied with the level of response he was getting from the spirits, and he began threatening the inmates to, “show themselves or else.” And according to what he said, it went through him, picked him up off his feet. Apparently, the other guy who was down there witnessed this. It scared the heck out of him. I hear somebody scream like a banshee. I mean, like they're being murdered. The next thing I know, that steel door at the end of the hall is bursting open.

BRYAN MYERS: He ran straight up the stairs, straight out the front door, and never came back.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: He was petrified. After he ran out of the building, I went outside and I demanded that he go back inside and apologize because I knew what he'd done. I am psychic. I read energies really well. So, he refused. So, we shut the whole thing down that night and that very same night, I went downstairs by myself and sat in meditation and the trustee was just angry. And he was angry at me, also, for allowing it to happen. And I promised him that night that nothing like that would ever, ever happen again to him.

NARRATION: NOT ALL THE GHOSTS IN THE JAIL ARE AS BAD TEMPERED AS THE TRUSTEE.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: Billy, I call my friendly ghost. He's really helpful. He knows a lot about the building, and so he's helped me several times.

CHER LAMBETH: He's quite a celebrity there at the Chester County Jail.

NARRATION: CHER LAMBETH, AN INVESTIGATOR AND AUTHOR OF A BOOK ABOUT HAUNTED THEATERS, HAS ENCOUNTERED BILLY BEFORE.

CHER LAMBETH: People will quite often go up and visit Billy when they come to the museum. They'll bring him cigarettes. They’ll write little things, little notes for him there, leave little candles for him.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: This is my favorite Billy story. They filmed a movie there, a documentary called An Act of Terror. The site manager came looking for a jail, so we went upstairs, and she really liked this one side. And I said, "The doors don't work.” So, I'm standing next to the controls, and I hear Billy say to me, "Give it a try." So, I tried them, and they worked. They worked the whole time. I never knew those doors worked. I actually knew they didn't work. I'd tried every cell block. The doors worked like absolute butter. Perfectly.

CHER LAMBETH: One of the pieces of equipment that that we use is called an Ovulus. The idea behind the Ovulus is that it draws energy out of the air and turns it into words. And on that first investigation I was at, went to cell and I said, "Good evening, Mr. Billy. I wanted to introduce myself. My name is Cher, and I just wanted the permission to come into your cell." And immediately the Ovulus said, "Hello."

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: What I've come to believe about Billy is that he committed some type of sexual crime and was there for a number of years, got very hopeless at one point of ever getting out, and hung himself in his cell.

CHER LAMBETH: One theory behind hauntings is that ghosts stay in the places they're most familiar with and that could be as well. Perhaps Billy is there because he just got used to being there.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: Sometimes Billy can make you feel extremely sad because you can feel his hopelessness. And then other times, he's a jokester and, and helpful and kind. But yeah, if you go sit in his cell long enough, you can't help but feel sad. You feel it. It's the energy of it.

NARRATION: FOR YEARS, JEFF WILLOUGHBY SPENT MUCH OF HIS SPARE TIME SEARCHING FOR GHOSTS AND SPIRITS, BUT HAD NEVER BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE A REAL ENCOUNTER HIMSELF — UNTIL HIS FIRST NIGHT INVESTIGATING THE OLD CHESTER COUNTY JAIL.

JEFF WILLOUGHBY: We had just gotten there. The Curator had told us that whenever we leave or whenever we come back in, to always make sure that that front door to the museum is locked. She just wanted to make sure uninvited people would not be able to get in and interrupt us. And, I was the only person there, but I wasn't alone, as I thought I was, because there is a hallway just down from that main room where we were currently setting up and I saw someone cross from one room into the next. And I said, “Who’s down at the end of the hall?" And the curator just stared at me and smiled. She said, "Nobody. There's nobody down there." So, I go down there and sure enough, there’s nobody in that room. There is no other way out of that room. That's when I had the confirmation that I had just seen my first full-body apparition walking across the hallway, going from one room into the next. I knew it was female. She was wearing a dress, and the apparition was mostly gray in color.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: The Lady in Gray is probably the most frequently seen. Mostly what I see, when I see her, is I just catch the corner of her skirt and, like, her boot going into the room across the hall.

JEFF WILLOUGHBY: Liz had always seen the same apparition but only from the knees down. And so, for me to not only finally have an experience, but to have an experience where I see more of an apparition than someone who has been working there was just fantastic. I was over the moon.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: I always got the impression that it literally was an energy impression. That this woman had crossed that hallway so many times during her lifetime that it left that impression.

NARRATION: AT THE CHESTER COUNTY JAIL, YOU DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TO BE INSIDE TO SEE A GHOST. THERE’S ONE SPIRIT IN PARTICULAR WHO’S BEEN SEEN FROM OUTSIDE THE JAIL MORE THAN ONCE.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: I call him the jailer. I don't know who he is, but he's been seen so many times. The jail has huge, huge windows covered with bars. And the very top floor windows have no floor under them. I got a call at, like, two o'clock in the morning one night. And the people are yelling, "There's a man upstairs in the jail. He's walking right in front of those windows. We can all see him. We're all standing here looking at him. We're going to call the police." I told them all to go to bed. It was just a ghost. About six months ago, I guess, I got to work and there was a police officer standing on the steps, waiting for me, and he informed me that I could not go in the building because there was someone in there. On the side of the building, there's a parking lot. And he was sitting in his cop car. I guess he worked the night shift. And he was filling out paperwork, and he said, "I look up, and I see a man walking in front of the windows." And he got out of his car, and he watched the man. And he said, "And it looked like a sheriff," he said, "walk down the side of the building, across the front of the building, then back across the front of the building, and then he disappeared halfway down the side of the building." There is absolutely no floor underneath those top floor windows, and you'd have to walk through steel bars to walk the full length of the front of the building. So, I've never seen him. I've heard about him. I cannot tell you how many people have seen him.

TINA MCSWAIN: I don't really like the term psychic, but I do have abilities. My mother saw dead people, and I believe I inherited those abilities from her.

NARRATION: TINA MCSWAIN IS A LONG TIME CHARLOTTE RESIDENT WITH A CURIOSITY AND FASCINATION WITH GHOSTS. IT STARTED WITH HER FIRST SIGHTING IN 1989.

TINA MCSWAIN: I actually saw an apparition of a friend's grandmother at her home. She walked up toward me, got about maybe six feet from me. She was wearing a pink dress and she had the little gait from side to side, like an older person does when they walk. She turned around, took about three steps back from the direction she had come from, and then disappeared into thin air. And my friend she said, "Oh, you saw a little lady in a pink dress?" I was like, "Yes, that's exactly what I saw." She goes, "Oh, don't worry." She goes, "That's my grandmother. From time to time, she will come take a walk through the house." So that's how it all started for me.

NARRATION: TINA MCSWAIN’S INTEREST IN THE PARANORMAL INSPIRED HER TO CREATE AN INVESTIGATION GROUP CALLED CAPS, THE CHARLOTTE AREA PARANORMAL SOCIETY. TINA AND MEMBERS OF HER TEAM HAVE SPENT MANY NIGHTS IN THE CHESTER COUNTY JAIL.

TINA MCSWAIN: We absolutely respect the spirits. For the most part, these are people, and you don't go into someone's home and start immediately belittling or yelling or anything. You wouldn't do that to any other human. You would be more like, "Well, hello, my name's Tina. Nice to meet you. What's your name?" And we treat these spirits as people. We've run into the trustee. We've run into to, to Billy. Just recently, we had one of our team members, run into someone that she would call, like, a Dapper Judge.

NARRATION: CHER LAMBETH, ALSO A MEMBER OF CAPS, IS THE INVESTIGATOR WHO GAVE THE JUDGE HIS NAME.

CHER LAMBETH: I was talking with Liz, who is the curator there at the museum. I was like "Liz, you know, I don't know how true this is, but I get the impression of a very sharply dressed man from the '20s. Is there anybody like that that was here, connected to the jail, or had anything to do with the jail?" I said, "A very dapper dresser and I get the name Henry." And she said, "Yep, I know exactly who you're talking about." Judge Henry was apparently a judge that had been there, connected with the jail back in the 1920s, and she even went and was able to pull up a picture for me and uh, yeah, he definitely was a very dapper dressed man and apparently had been a judge there, connected with the prison.

TINA MCSWAIN: So that's a new entity that we've run into. There's also, on a landing as you're going down into the, the basement, ran into almost like a doctor that may have been coming to check on the prisoners or provide some sort of medical care for any sick or injured prisoners. And he seems to have faded away.

NARRATION: IN HER YEARS WORKING AT THE JAIL, LIZ SMITH ANDERSON BELIEVES SHE’S EITHER SEEN OR HEARD MOST OF THE SPIRITS THAT HAUNT THE JAIL.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: The guitar player is one of my favorites. I was there on my day off doing private research, and I hear somebody tuning a guitar, and I'm thinking, okay, now my mother ran a music school for years. I know what it sounds like to tune a guitar. I’m sitting there going, "Who the heck is in here tuning a guitar?" I mean, that's how loud it was. I'm also recognizing that these walls are a foot thick. You know, I thought at first maybe somebody was outside. So, I sat and listened for a few minutes, and I finally said, just halfway kidding around, "Well, why don't you play something now that you're tuned up, right?" Man, this guy broke out into some ragtime like an expert. I mean, whoever this ghost was, he can play guitar. He played the whole song, and that was it. I went back upstairs, and Gary, the director, was coming in the door, and he said something to the effect, you know, "You ever heard anything down there?" I said, "Like what? Like a guitar?" And he, his eyes got — and now, Gary is the most down-to-earth person you've ever met. He sort of believes in this stuff, but not really, you know. And he said, "You heard the guitar? Oh, my God. Thank God." He was so relieved that someone else had heard this.

NARRATION: LIZ BELIEVES THAT THE ABILITY TO SEE AND COMMUNICATE WITH GHOSTS IS ALL ABOUT ENERGY.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: Everything's energy. Every single thing is energy, and once you master reading the energies, it's quite easy to communicate.

NARRATION: WHEN HE'S NOT INVESTIGATING SPIRITS, JEFF WILLOUGHBY IS A SOFTWARE ENGINEER, GROUNDED IN SCIENCE, AND HE AGREES WITH LIZ ABOUT ENERGY.

JEFF WILLOUGHBY: You have all of this metal absorbing all of this emotional energy, and so it, it just seems... to me, it seems natural that any place of intense emotion is where you're likely to find the most activity.

NARRATION: ACCORDING TO PARANORMAL EXPERT TINA MCSWAIN, THE GHOSTLY ACTIVITY AT THE JAIL IS LIKELY A PRODUCT OF YEARS OF TRAUMA THAT THE INMATES EXPERIENCED THERE — DESPAIR, ANGER, AND OTHER FORMS OF EMOTIONAL ENERGY.

TINA MCSWAIN: The activity at the jail could stem from the fact that these people were incarcerated. It may be that, now that they have crossed over into the spirit realm, they still think they're behind bars and they can't leave.

NARRATION: INVESTIGATORS LIKE CHER LAMBETH AND JEFF WILLOUGHBY DO THEIR BEST TO REMAIN OBJECTIVE DURING THEIR INVESTIGATIONS.

CHER LAMBETH: We're probably the biggest bunch of skeptics that you'll meet.

TINA MCSWAIN: You're not going to be believed by anyone if you're trying to prove the existence, you know, of ghosts, unless you use the scientific method. Form a hypothesis. See if you could, you know, run experiments to repeat, you know, the outcome.

JEFF WILLOUGHBY: We have to make sure that we objectively collect evidence that is irrefutable.

CHER LAMBETH: We try to go in and, if there's a way we can debunk something, we will. We're definitely very thorough about that.

BRYAN MYERS: I am a true believer in the paranormal. I do believe it exists, but I don't automatically think just because I think that, you know, a ghost is there, that doesn't really prove anything. I want to document it the best I can. Get something on film, something on audio that we can't explain just to show other people that what I believe in is real.

JEFF WILLOUGHBY: The ultimate goal is to be objective and get real evidence that you can then present to people that makes them question and expand their own ways of thinking about the world at large.

CHER LAMBETH: I've experienced enough to convince me that ghost exist, but I don't necessarily try to convince other people. So, you know, certainly, when I experience something, I try to make sure that there's not a logical explanation for it. But every so often, things do happen that you just have to look at and go, "Okay, that may be something paranormal."

NARRATION: ONE QUESTION THAT JEFF WILLOUGHBY OFTEN ASKS HIMSELF IS, “HOW CAN I BE SURE, IN MY OWN MIND, THAT I’M NOT JUST IMAGINING THESE THINGS?”

JEFF WILLOUGHBY: Wrestling with your own imagination on an investigation is an ongoing struggle. For example, we're often investigating until one, sometimes, three, four in the morning, and when that's not your regular schedule, you get tired. And when you get tired, you start to see things that maybe aren't there, and you don't really know, at that point, if what you just saw really did happen, or are you just doing it to yourself? But if there isn't anything in your evidence review, then you have to question, "Okay, what time was it? Okay, yeah, that was pretty late. I was really tired. I was kind of drifting off here and there, so that was probably my imagination."

NARRATOR: ONE OF LIZ SMITH ANDERSON’S MOST MEMORABLE AND EMOTIONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH A GHOST HAPPENED ONE DAY WHEN SHE WAS ALL ALONE IN THE JAIL BASEMENT. SHE BELIEVES A GHOST SAVED HER LIFE.

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: I stupidly got up on a footstool. I had a fairly heavy box, and I twisted on the stool to put the box up above my head on a shelf, and I started falling over. As I was coming down, I distinctly felt two hands push my head forward. And when I landed on my side, on my right side, my head was right next to the leg of the table. Had I hit my head, I probably would have died down there. I broke my tibia from my kneecap down to my ankle, and back up in a V. Once I gathered my wits about me, I yelled, you know, "Help, help," screaming. No one's going to hear you. So, I drug myself to the edge of the cell door. And off in the corner was a stack of folding chairs. I was in so much pain. I was crying, and I finally yelled out, "Please, somebody help me!” And a chair fell over and slid towards me. I get choked up thinking about it because I would have never gotten out of there if they hadn't done this for me. I got the chair. And I opened it up, and I got myself standing on my one good leg, and I pushed it in front of me. I got to the staircase and I thought, "How am I going to throw this chair up a flight of stairs?" Right? Sure enough, I did it. And I could feel somebody going, "It's okay. You're going to make it. It's okay.” So, I thank the spirits of the 1914 Jail for that forever. That's why I'm so protective of them.

NARRATION: IF WHAT HAPPENED TO LIZ THAT DAY HAPPENED TO YOU, WOULD IT MAKE YOU A BELIEVER? JEFF WILLOUGHBY SAYS BELIEVING IN GHOSTS IS SIMPLY TOO SCARY FOR MOST PEOPLE.

JEFF WILLOUGHBY: There's a lot of people in the world that refuse to even entertain the idea that anything paranormal could exist, because doing so causes them to question their own reality and that can be extremely frightening for a lot of people.

BRYAN MYERS: I would tell a skeptic, "If you don't believe, try your best to be open-minded and see what happens."

LIZ SMITH ANDERSON: I would say my time at the 1914 Jail has only been confirmation for what I already knew. Ghosts are real. They do exist. Maybe not real on a third dimensional level, but certainly elsewhere.

NARRATION: IF YOU’VE HAD A GHOSTLY EXPERIENCE, OR KNOW OF A HAUNTED LOCATION, PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR STORY TO [UNSOLVED.COM.](http://unsolved.com/submit)

NEXT, ON UNSOLVED MYSTERIES...

CARLO BERTELLI: I'm thinking it was someone that maybe had been after him, or he owed somebody some money. He had mentioned what I had at my house. Could he have had some involvement or someone could have been mad at him, or after him? That's a possibility.

—

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, Paige Hymson and Paul Yates. The Story Producer for this episode is Caitlin Cutt, and it was edited by Christopher Buchanan.

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 24 of Unsolved Mysteries.