

How We Build Your Case

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 Sunday, 18 January 2009
 Last Updated Friday, 12 June 2009

PPI is very proud to be among a growing number of paranormal investigation groups that, like our parent organization, T.A.P.S., responds to claims of paranormal activity by attempting to disprove them. This should not be taken to mean that we do not believe what our clients tell us; rather, we feel it is our ethical responsibility to address our clients' fears and concerns with a rational approach and an objective eye. From our clients' point of view, the investigation seems like the most important part of the process because it is usually staged in the clients' home, but in reality it represents only a small fraction of the work we invest in a case before and afterward. We ask that you take some time to study the following overview of our procedures, which will explain how we prepare for your investigation and help you to set forth your expectations for the final case report.

Getting Started Once a request for an investigation has been submitted, a prelim form has been completed and a date for the investigation has been scheduled, PPI starts going to work researching public records, articles and databases. From this will emerge a basic historical backdrop to the case that may include biographical details of historically pertinent individuals, as well as details of events connected to the venue and reported in newspapers. Pertinent aspects of family background will be selected for further interview with the clients. Details of medical history and medications will receive follow-up research for drug side-effects, interactions and contraindications. Psychological factors are also flagged for expert evaluation.

These factors coalesce into a strategy for investigating the venue as PPI discusses experiments that might be conducted, recreations of phenomena that might be staged, lines of questioning that might be asked during EVP vigils, equipment that might be placed to showcase likely phenomena, theories that might be tested, and environmental data sets that might be collected. Extensive on-line correspondence and in-person planning meetings help us to decide these strategies in the weeks before the scheduled investigation. Team members are solicited based upon their availability and their expertise for the case. The Investigation Upon our arrival at your home, team leaders will talk with you privately and request a walkthrough of the premises, which will help us to make further decisions about equipment placement. Afterward, one or more of our team members may conduct a formal interview with the occupants. Not only does the formal interview lead to a useful assessment of the client's needs and wishes for the investigation, it will also give us the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and clarify details provided in the Prelim and questionnaires. While formal interviews are being conducted, Team Leaders will direct other team members and investigators in the setup of surveillance equipment and DVR units, stationary audio recording devices, and preliminary walkthroughs of the venue with the client to take note of important architectural or physical features (potentially high EMF sources, draft sources, sound resonators, etc.) and the locations of especial interest for the formal walkthrough. Since our objective is to determine ordinary causes for reported phenomena, the investigation will require in part that we attempt to recreate phenomena, test possible theories, look for environmental data like temperature changes, draft inlets, wiring issues, radio interference sources, and so on. This data will help us to refute or corroborate our investigators' personal experiences at the home as well as contradict or substantiate recorded evidence under scrutiny later on. Because we do not know the relevance of any of our data until all the evidence is reviewed, we do not share our experiences with the clients, interpret any phenomena that might seem to appear on our monitors, nor invite the clients to participate in the monitoring process. No evidence analysis is made during the investigation, and no conclusions should be offered. In fact, if anyone tries to convince you at the end of a single visit that your home is haunted or not haunted, you should be sternly skeptical.

Reviewing Evidence Evidence analysis and the report writing process can take months in some cases, depending on the complexity of the case. While we try to accelerate the process for cases we feel are extreme or hostile, in the majority of our cases we have found that a careful, honest and thorough review of the many, many hours of audio and video evidence gathered takes four to six weeks. Afterward, we stage a period of debate and discussion of the most compelling EVPs (Electronic Voice Phenomena), AVPs (Audible Voice Phenomena), video clips and personal experiences. We attempt to cross-reference evidence among multiple sources and analyze it using enhancement techniques that will not compromise the integrity of the original sources.

During this same period, we continue to research other facets of the case and posit alternative interpretations of them. For example, if any of the occupants have had a recent change of prescription eyewear, we will likely consider what peripheral vision anomalies this might incur and include this in the report. Or, if a discontinued medication has been listed, we will look into its potential long-term side-effects, find out how long it can remain part of the body chemistry, and recommend whether or not it could incur any perceptual anomalies that might be mistaken for paranormal experiences. Brain chemistry, physiology and psychology are consistently complex factors as well: if any family member is undergoing physiological change, such as stress, pregnancy, puberty or midlife transformation, it must be documented and considered as a potential influence. Household dynamics are also extremely important: if the chemistry between family members, spouses and partners, or even roommates poses any significant challenge, this must in good conscience be assessed as a possible influence on the case. Unfortunately, clients sometimes mistake our conscientious efforts to present alternative theories to mean we are blaming them for their own problems, or that we are questioning their ability to separate fact from fantasy. This could not be further from the truth. Rather, we are beholden to objectivity and committed to rational explanations before assenting to any paranormal cause for the clients' experiences. Not only does PPI's reputation stand on this commitment, the value of our investigation rests on it as well. Our

alternative theories and explanations should not be taken to mean we are trivializing our clients' concerns in any way. On the contrary, we hope to honor those claims with a thorough and even-handed report that anticipates those arguments that could be used to controvert our conclusions.

Coming to Conclusions When the report is complete, it will reveal one of several conclusions:

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"explained": enough evidence has been amassed to offer a rationale and ordinary explanation to the alleged paranormal experiences of the client; no follow-up investigation will be required;

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"not haunted": the investigation has not yielded sufficient or compelling enough evidence to suggest that a haunting is taking place; the Case Background may imply otherwise, but the eyewitness testimony of investigators and media evidence they collected during PPI's investigation produced no reliable results.

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"unexplained": insufficient evidence has been obtained to make a conclusion in denial of, or in support of, a haunting, though some degree of inexplicable activity might be conceded

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"inconclusive": sufficient evidence has been obtained, but analysis is inconclusive or disputed among the investigators; a conclusion, therefore, cannot be determined.

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"haunted": evidence is deemed sufficient and persuasive enough to support the probable conclusion that the client's experiences are of a focused paranormal nature. When we can close a case as "explained" it offers a happy ending for all involved, because it means that we can put the client's fears to rest and tell them how to correct the situation. And, when PPI strongly supports a conclusion of "haunted," it does so reliably and in the face of valid opposition. This conclusion, however, is our rarest one, and clients are sometimes disappointed that the outcome of our investigation did not completely corroborate their experiences or prove their claims. Our unwillingness to label a case "haunted" does not mean the client has failed to convince us. Rather, it means our own evidence has not convinced us. We may trust you to be sincere in your reports of paranormal activity, and we can use the details of your report to help us conduct our investigation, but our conclusions inevitably must rest in the strength of our own evidence because it is collected under carefully controlled circumstances and placed under the scrutiny of a more objective lens than that used by the client. Our evidence may prove too unreliable, too insubstantial, or too hotly contested among ourselves to permit us to say your house is haunted, even if our investigators have their own personal experiences while on investigation. We implore you not to take our verdict on your case personally, for it is a testament to how seriously we have taken your claims in the first place as well as how greatly we value the tools of critical thinking and scientific method in our investigative protocols.

What Happens When It's Over? When the investigation is concluded, we will offer a full report as well as a synopsis of our findings, followed by some basic recommendations ranging from practical fixes for high EMF sources to outside assistance for house blessings and other rituals. However, under no circumstances will PPI participate personally in these recommended activities. Unless our recommendation is a follow-up investigation to gather additional evidence so as to make a better determination, our involvement in your case officially ends once we have presented your with our report, our selected evidence, and our conclusions. This does not mean, however, that all contact between us need be at and end. If your conditions change and activity increases, if you require additional advice, or if you need a referral to other agencies related to our investigative services, or if you just want to let us know how you're doing since the investigation ended, we'd love to hear from you. Your good impression of us is extremely important, and we invite you to review our services and tell others how we did by visiting us on-line.