

# Ghost Squad

*Michael Danese*

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As the spooky music begins, the announcer's husky voice is heard over footage of supposedly haunted locations, "Tonight on *Ghost Squad*, our intrepid detectives of paranormal activity explore the site of a gruesome crime – the Scottsdale abortion house massacre! And you are invited to tag along...if you dare!"

*Ghost Squad* is the most popular of the paranormal exploring shows, and the credit goes to their likable cast. They try not to take it too seriously, even though they regularly gather some startling evidence.

Dr. Blake is their leader. He's in his late twenties, tall, muscular, with shaggy dark hair and an ever-present three-day-old stubble. His arms and legs are covered with tattoos of the famous Universal Studios monsters – Dracula, Frankenstein, The Mummy, The Wolfman, and others. He's a regular on the weekly tabloids, usually paired with the latest starlet.

Lori is the typical geek in the bunch. She's a small, muscular woman in her mid-twenties. She has brown hair in a bowl haircut, a diamond piercing in her nose, and an unbelievable knowledge of paranormal technology.

Buster handles the rest of the technology-related duties. He is about 280 pounds, six foot two, 26 years old, with big goofy glasses, frizzy brown hair, and beard. He is usually the first one scared, so they try to put him alone in the dark as much as possible. The fans *love* that!

Rounding out the crew is Jill. She plays the "reporter" role. A former cheerleader, she's also in her late twenties, tall, shapely, blue-eyed and blond. Her Texas twang seems to make her even more attractive, especially the fan-boy set.

At this location in rural Pennsylvania, they're going for a *big* score, the legendary abortion house murders. They're planning to make this their big "sweeps week" episode.

As the story goes, in the roaring twenties, sexual freedom had an awakening. Birth control was non-existent, so girls that found themselves "in a family way" had only a few choices. Some went off to convents to secretly have their babies, which were then put up for adoption. Some were married, as guys opted to *do the right thing*, while others simply had their children and were marked with the awful stigma of the time. And, as a last resort, there was abortion.

At this "hospital" located at the end of a dark, rural road, Doctor Clement relieved hundreds of girls from their pregnancies. He also amassed a small fortune. The going rate was two hundred dollars.

Abortion was a *dark* business. Sometimes he terminated a baby that was a lot further along than they thought and other times, well, mothers would also die. This was a risk they were willing to take, as another person to accompany the patient was always required. They said the other person was to comfort the girl and transport her home, but it was also to lay claim to the body if things *didn't* go well.

Doctor Clement had pits in the woods behind the house that were used to dispose of the results of his work. It's unthinkable, but his patients seldom asked about what happened to their babies. They were more interested in putting as much space as possible between them and the horror.

There were always whispers in the nearby towns about the hospital. It seemed that people that needed the services were able to find out about it, but the law and religious groups were never able to prosecute, or they simply looked the other way. All except for Pastor Nevin.

Pastor Nevin was a fire and brimstone preacher who lived by the book. He was in his mid-fifties, large and looming with a gray beard and no mustache. He wore a big black hat and cloak. Most of the children in the congregation feared him.

He heard the whispers and took an interest. Then, one of his flock came to see him. Molly was about 17, small and thin. She was the daughter of a local farmer whose family attended church every week. Molly explained about how she had sinned, and then in her weakness, she allowed Doctor Clement to murder her innocent baby. She told the willing and forgiving listener about how she was raped, and how they were "referred" to the hospital. She explained exactly where it was and how to get there. The Pastor hugged her and patted her head as he told her that she did the right thing in coming to him.

Pastor Nevin began to watch the house, at first from a distance, then closer. He watched as the cars arrived, the girls were brought in, and then he saw them leave. He also saw the pits out back where the dead babies were dumped. His blood boiled as he carefully planned his act of vengeance on behalf of The Lord.

He dressed in black, except for a blood-red scarf around his neck. He crept through the woods and stealthily came to the front door as the snow piled up in front of it. He slipped in and used a machete to kill the four nurses that he found in different parts of the house. As the screams of the dying nurses were heard by the others, they were ignored, because blood-curdling screams are normal in this dreadful place as they regularly pierced the nighttime silence. The entire time that he was delivering God's punishment he chanted prayers in Latin.

When he came face to face with Doctor Clement, he held the sharp blade to the doctor's throat and told him that this was for all of the lives that he had cut short for his thirty pieces of silver. Then he buried the blade into the doctor's throat.

Early the next year, overcome with guilt, he took his own life and left a note for his family asking forgiveness for the sins he committed in the name of The Lord. He described his rampage in detail and his family was both saddened and horrified by what they discovered, but that secret stayed in the family.

Locals often claimed that, on a still, clear night, the screams of the mothers and cries of the children could still be heard as the damned spirits roam the house. Over the years the mansion became an underground tourist destination, especially around Halloween.

This house was a primo find for the Ghost Squad! The locals relentlessly fought them. They didn't want their historical dirty laundry to be put on public display. Another local faction, members of Pastor Nevin's actual church, didn't want the deaths of the innocents to be exploited for entertainment purposes. They fought hard, but the dollars of the backing production company won out in the end, and a date was set for the campout.

The producers worked with their casts to line up interviews with the locals to help flesh out the story. Their task was more difficult than they expected, but eventually they found two sisters that were granddaughters of one of the murdered nurses, and another, a descendent of one of Dr.

Clement's patients. These three people were colorful enough to tell the story through interviews, while being expertly led by the producers.

The crew spent several days wiring the hospital with night vision cameras, audio recording devices, low level lighting, and a little set-decorating. The shoot day came too soon, and the cast assembled early in front of the hospital to run through their plan. They agreed that they would split up. Blake, Lori and Buster would each camp out in some of the nurse's rooms, while Jill would head for Dr. Clement's office

Evening fell and it was showtime!

As they entered the front door, they yelled out questions to the spirits.

"I would like to hear from you children that lost your lives here," pleaded Lori.

"Dr. Clement, do you feel any remorse for all of the lives that you took?" asked Blake as they slowly walked down a long, dark hallway.

They continued through the kitchen, "I would like to hear from you nurses; did you think you were doing the right thing?" asked Jill.

As they passed through a room filled with beds, probably a recovery room, Buster asked, "Whose job was it to dump the bodies? How did that make you feel?"

Soon they were in the operating room, and they all felt the presence of the unsettled dead. Blake yelled, "I know you are here, make yourself known to us!"

After a minute, a quiet voice was heard, "Did you hear that?" asked Lori.

They all heard it.

"Get out. Get out of this house *now!*" This time the voice was louder.

"Wow!" exclaimed Jill, "That was as clear as could be!"

"Why, are we not welcome here?" asked Blake. "We are looking for the truth – Your truth!"

"There is no truth, only pain, sin and sorrow! You must leave now, or you will be sorry!" said the faint voice.

"Are you Doctor Clement?" asked Jill.

"LEAVE *NOW!*" the voice commanded loud enough to rumble the house.

The four were all shaken. They've heard voices before; some were pretty clear, but *nothing* like this.

"I'm thinking that we should probably leave. We've heard enough, come on!" pleaded Buster.

"Stick to the plan!" said Jill. "This house has a lot to tell us, we gotta let it tell its story!"

Just then they heard the sound of a large door slamming, then the cries of a hundred children, almost as if they were surrounded by the spirits.

"I'm thinking that maybe Buster is right!" muttered Lori. "I've seen enough!"

"Come on, let's play this out," said Blake. "Let's go to the rooms and see what they want to tell us."

Reluctantly, they made their way to their assigned posts. They were all way out of their comfort zones. Buster was already holding back from throwing up.

Lori arrived in her nurse's room first. She moved to a corner and stood perfectly still, allowing her senses to work. A minute or two passed, but it seemed like hours. Then she thought that she

heard someone else in the room, or was it just her nerves? She slid on her night vision goggles and surveyed the room. She felt a cool breeze on her face. “We mean you no harm!” she whispered.

“I warned you, but now it is too late!” a low rumbling voice said.

“Too late for what?” asked Lori with a cracking voice.

Across the room she could clearly see the outline of a shadowed figure glowing green through her goggles. Her heart skipped a beat and she froze. “You win, I’m leaving now!” she whimpered as she headed towards the door.

“Too *late!*” the voice said as he pointed a powerful flashlight that blinded her, magnified many times by her night vision. She threw her hands in front of her face as she felt a large knife pierce her chest.

She fell in a heap, gasping in the dark.

“Lori – Lori – Come in Lori!” Buster said into his walkie-talkie.

The next several seconds were filled with a flurry of comments from the three of them.

“I think something happened to Lori!” exclaimed Blake.

“I’m heading to her room now!” said Buster.

As Buster left his room he walked directly into the path of the attacker. They met chest to chest and Buster flew backwards. The knife silenced him before he had a chance to warn the others. As he laid there bleeding, he could hear the voices of the others in his earpiece, and he knew he would hear them die.

“Jill – stay where you are, I’m on my way!” said Blake.

“Hurry Blake! Hurry! I think something happened to Buster too!” pleaded Jill.

Blake ran into the darkness. The avenger threw him into a wall. “I tried to stop you from coming here – but you *wouldn’t* listen!” he screamed.

Blake landed a well-placed punch to his jaw and he flew back.

He heard Jill crying in his earpiece as he tried to pull himself up. As he rose, the knife sliced his ribcage and he gasped, then fell helplessly.

The avenger made his way down the long hallway towards the doctor’s room.

“Run Jill...” was Blake’s last words before he succumbed to death. Jill buried herself into the corner of the room and waited. She screamed, “Why are you doing this?”

“You are only here to profit from the dead, to again poison this town with filth. I fought your lawyers and agents, but they won. I rigged the house to scare you off with amplifiers and recordings, but you still wouldn’t leave!” he added.

“No – that’s not true! We respect the spirits that died here, our story can help them rest in peace!” she said.

“Too late!” he said as he busted into the dark room and ran towards her voice.

Jill flipped on her flashlight and blinded him for an instant, then a single shot rang out, followed by the avenger falling to the ground. She was still trembling as she placed her pistol back into her jacket pocket. She looked at the surprised avenger, gasping and bleeding on the floor, dying here, as Dr. Clement did almost a century before him. Her heart was beating out of her chest and she was hyperventilating as she leaned on the wall for support.

As soon as she could, she made her way into the hall and was horrified to find the bodies of her murdered friends. She crept out the front door, just like Pastor Nevin did so many years before her. She called 911 and soon the area was flooded with police, helicopters, ambulances, and eventually the curious celebrity hunters looking for blood.

As the story unfolded, it was discovered that the avenger was the great, great grandson of Pastor Nevin. He was the leader of the group that steadfastly tried to block the show from telling the story. The locals were horrified about what happened. Once again, their little town was soaked in murder.

Even though all of the grisly details were caught on tape, the producers rightly decided not to air the show. In fact, with the cast gone and all of the negative publicity, the show was quickly canceled.

Several months later, the hospital was burned down, vandalism was suspected, but it was never really investigated. In fact, most of the townspeople were happy to see it go.

Jill eventually returned to public life, initially on the *Tonight Show* where she admitted that her Texas upbringing taught her that defending herself was her right. She said she was never really afraid when she was working on the show, but on this night, she was so thankful that she had her pistol handy. Her coolness in this situation eventually led to her successful career, first on the local news in Los Angeles, then to a network chair.

Every so often she was haunted by the faces of her friends and her victim's voice, claiming that she was *profiting from the dead*. Deep down she knew it was probably true.

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