

Cell Block A



CLEARINGS

*A wish to gain the energies on high
A wish to break any spell in disguise
Upon this word on this blessed day
There will be from now no other way*

*Pick up the pieces shattered by other
Worn to bits where their words stutter
Upon this oath on this glorious day
There will be from now no other way*

*Time is spent so be out of my door
Clear to the rafters and at the core
Upon this order on this ordained day
There will be from now no other way*

Heidi L Taylor

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Some places don't need you to believe in ghosts. They'll handle that part themselves.

On September 21, 2024, I spent the night inside the Missouri State Penitentiary in Jefferson City, Missouri, as part of an overnight paranormal investigation hosted by Haunted Soulz Paranormal. 9 PM to 5 AM.

My friend Dan Klein runs Haunted Soulz Paranormal — a Missouri-based team that hosts public overnight investigations at famously haunted locations — and he invited me to be part of the team for the night. I wasn't tucked off in a corner doing one-on-one readings; I was up in front of the room, running four spirit galleries in Cell Block A for large groups of people.



For those who've never been to one: a spirit gallery is a group reading. I'm up in front of the room, and spirits come through with messages for the people sitting out there. After entering the cell block, I had made the decision for "Spirit Safety" not to call in beings from outside of the Penitentiary walls. There was plenty of activity already taking place in the astral plane.



Nothing in that space was for me as a physic medium was quiet. Others may have felt the eerie quiet you only get in a decommissioned prison in the small hours of the morning. It was not an empty quiet space. It's crowded quiet — like a room full of people and inmates talking at the same time.

The thing about doing a spirit gallery in a place like Cell Block A is that you're not coaxing anyone out. Nearly two centuries of strong emotion are soaked into those walls — the fear, the anger, the grief, the boredom, all of it. You just open the door, so to speak, and see who walks through.

One of the night's best moments didn't even come from the galleries. At one point everybody heard footsteps running on the catwalks above us. When a whole roomful of people hears the same footsteps at the same time, you stop debating whether it happened.

After the second session, one of the ladies from the group came up to me and said she wanted to talk to her mom, who had recently passed. I told her I would since she was almost in tears since I had mentioned not calling in outside spirits into the cellblock.

So, I asked my spirit guides to go hunt her down — literally hunt her down, at a ghost hunt. They found her out in the car — in spirit form, of course — so we asked her to come on in.

And that's when the lady told me, in spirit form, that she did not believe in ghosts. This was the first time in decades speaking to spirits that I had ever heard those words of such. Just try and imagine the face I made.



We have mourning daughter begging to communicate with her mother and I hear that! Realizing that she was not joking with me and was serious about insisting ghosts aren't real. Getting back some composure I explained to her daughter what I was hearing and why I was trying not to laugh.

This was the funniest thing I have ever heard from the other side, and I have heard a lot of things from the other side.

Thankfully, I was able to get the mother spirit to speak for a couple minutes and get her daughter's questions cleared up — I then heard the mother spirit say, "I'm out of here," and she left.

The third session had its own surprise: a ghost sitting on a bench in one of the cells. A lady in the group was taking pictures, and she got photographs of him — I could see what he looked like. I never got copies of the film, which is a real bummer especially for the actual ghost hunting team.

As we are entering into the hollowed time of the pagan new year of Samhain, please keep in mind that the dead are exactly who they were in life. Crossing over doesn't hand out enlightenment like party favors. If someone was stubborn about the afterlife when they were breathing, they're going to be stubborn about

it when they're not. Personality survives.

Opinions survive. A sense of humor —
thankfully — survives.

That's the real lesson of Cell Block A. The veil gets thin or completely gone for some, especially in October. Places where so much living and dying occur. — and what's on the other side isn't a misty abstraction. It's people, its complicated, funny, contradictory people, some of whom still don't believe in ghosts even while being one.

If you get the chance to do an overnight investigation somewhere storied — a prison, an asylum, a battlefield — take it. Bring a notebook. Bring your sense of humor. And if a spirit tells you ghosts aren't real, believe them about everything except that.



When we finally walked out of there in the early morning hours groups of people had gotten what they came for in Cell Block A and the rest of the Penitentiary. Me, I got a gentleman ghost on a bench, footsteps on the catwalks overhead, and a mother who came in from the car just long enough to tell me she doesn't believe in ghosts. That's a night in Cell Block A — you never quite know who's going to show up, living or otherwise.

If you want that chance yourself, Haunted Soulz Paranormal runs public overnight investigations at famously haunted locations all year — you can book a ticket and investigate right alongside their team. Find them at [hauntsoulz.com](https://www.hauntsoulz.com).

— Heidi L Taylor



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