

Todd Slingerland - Charlotte Ghost Hunter
Interview: Ellen Gurley
photos: Austin Caine

My City Magazine's Ellen Gurley recently caught up with her friend, Charlotte Ghost Hunter, Todd Slingerland. He has been plagued with seizures, holding down a full time job and is being a parent and a husband. This is quite the juggling act but he's no clown.



When did your interest first become piqued with the paranormal?

I guess it started when I was young. I remember hiding under my parents' table watching Amityville Horror when I should have been sleeping. My parents live in Mint Hill and still do. Mint Hill was the first big gold rush on the east coast. Behind their house in the woods were some of the first gold mines in the area. As a teen my friends and I would explore the mines. There were at least fifteen different ones to go in and they went for miles underground. I remember there was one we would go into and you would hear sounds like miners working and talking in the distance. We would get to the sound and nothing would be there. One day we went down there. I looked back and saw a man standing in the mine with a light on his helmet. I yelled out to my friend who looked back and he was gone. Needless to say, I had never run home so fast in my life. After that my interest was sparked. The crazy thing is that I was in a car wreck when I was eighteen years old. The car I was in flipped over fifteen times. I was in the back seat with no seat belt. The cop said we all should have been dead. After that I started to notice things around me I had never noticed before; sounds, feelings and seeing things most people don't notice. Did this near death experience cause my senses to sharpen? I still often wonder.

What type of equipment do you use on an average investigation?

I love to use my Sony digital recorder, Sony night vision camcorder and IR lights to help see that light your eyes can't see in the dark. I use e-pods and rem pods to pick up energy spirits give off. One of my favorite tools is the PSB-7 spirit box. It scans white noise through radio waves at one millisecond each radio wave, which allows spirits to speak within

the white noise to get real time EVPs when asking questions. I know it sounds crazy, but I can tell you that it works. I have all kinds of equipment but the best is the body. I can just feel the areas sometimes. I can close my eyes and see visions and things that have happened and that leads me to the hot spots on a location.

What investigations were brought to you as a job; i.e. someone wanting to know if their home or property was haunted? Does that mean that you serve as a paranormal consultant?

I can't give names of the clients or their homes. That would betray trust. Most people worry that their neighbors, family or even their spouses would think they are crazy that they believe they have ghost in their home. But people are becoming more open about the whole paranormal thing and I hope in the future that we can change that even more. But I will say that Charlotte is more haunted than people think. I will tell you Myers Park, Dilworth, Cotswold, Huntersville, Concord and the NoDa areas are the most active places. There was a family I helped in Concord who lost their son in a car wreck. The mother had been seeing and feeling things around herself and in her home thinking it was her son trying to let them know he was ok. I went to her home and by using my PSB-7 spirit box and digital recorder I was able to communicate with him. I had her ask questions to which only she and he would know the answers. He came through, answering them like he was there sitting in the room with us. The dad was really skeptical about the whole thing, but after that night we all were in tears and they felt some kind of collective peace after all. So most of the time, I deal with unwanted ghosts, but I get that one case every now and again that deals with loved ones passed and I feel like I helped them overcome their pain. So yes, I believe every case I do helps the client understand something better or heal faster. So I would say, yes, I serve and as consultant for families I work with.

Which investigations came to you on your own hunch or your own personal interest?

I am a very big history buff; I always love to learn more about the Civil War, the Revolutionary War and the Indians, any chance I can get. But the place that I go to most often is the Ramah Church Cemetery in Huntersville. The way it (my relationship with this place) began was due to the fact that every time I would drive by the area, something was telling me to stop. Little is written about the people who settled there in the late 1700's, but there were a lot of tragic things that happened to the people in that area - small pox and other sicknesses killed off entire families who settled there. Some graves have mothers buried with their children in their arms or wives with their husbands who had perished fighting in the Civil War. With the work that I have done, I have been able to communicate with some spirits to tell their story so that the people in the area could remember what these people had to go through at that time. A number of graves have no names or headstones to tell who they were and I hope to continue getting them known for the history of the area. I will tell you, I have become emotionally connected with that place and feel honored that I was able to (maybe) help those souls move on now that their story has been heard. The other place that I favor the most is the site of the battle of Waxhaw, known as "the Bufford's Massacre", established on May 29th, 1780. An army led by Abraham Bufford was fighting Loyalist army led by Banastre Tarleton. The American commander refused to surrender and his men were attacked. Many threw down their arms to surrender. Bufford then attempted to surrender but was refused and the fighting continued against his unarmed men. Out of the four hundred men, about one hundred and thirteen were slain

outright and one hundred and fifty were so badly injured they could not be moved. About fifty-three prisoners were taken. After this battle the southern Americans started to rise up and join the fight against the British army. That changed the direction of the war in the south. When I was there doing EVPs on the mass grave site, I asked about what had happened to the men and if they fought there. I got responses saying they were murdered or that they were killed in a day's work. Plus there were many other intelligent responses that day. I also caught a soldier's face on the battlefield in a picture.

VIDEO : http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6wtJp9JX_A

Are you affiliated in any way to CAPS (Charlotte Area Paranormal Society with founder and director, Tina McSwain)? www.CharlotteAreaParanormal.org

When I first started in this field, I did everything solo and I will tell you now that going to haunted locations by yourself in the middle of the night does test your nerves. Then I heard of this group called the Ghost Tracker that meets every last Saturday of the month. This meet up group was put together by Tina McSwain of CAPS. I went to a meet up and met her. The funny thing is that after Tina listened to some of my audio catching a woman's name, I kept coming to meet ups and she asked me to join her team with CAPS. I am honored to be a part of such a great group of people. I have never met a team that is this close or that cares so much about helping people in need. So to answer this question, yes I am a team member of CAPS and am very proud to put on my CAPS T-shirt and help those who need it.

EVP : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYw99bEeQ1g>

Now I want to ask you about specific investigations. Tell me about the Robert Cleveland house on Parsonville Road in Western Wilkes County?

The Robert Cleveland cabin and slave house was built in 1779. He had thirteen children by his first wife Aley Mathis. In 1791

Aley had twins. Two weeks later on December 19th she and one of the twins died. A few years later Robert married Sallie Johnson and had four children with her. Robert Cleveland and his brother Benjamin played an active part in the Revolutionary War. In the battle of Kings Mountain, Benjamin, in particular, was significant in that he forced General Cornwallis to withdraw into South Carolina. The cabin is really old and neat. It's cool to walk the same floors of a house built in 1779. When I was in the cabin I felt the spirit of his first wife. I conducted a PSB-7 spirit box session in the main room. I asked about Mrs. Cleveland and got an EVP of a woman's voice. Then I asked for one of their names and the same woman's voice said Troy. In my research I found out they did have a son named Troy. Then we went to the slave house. As soon as we set foot in the slave house the energy was very heavy and felt dark. They were doing some remodeling of the slave house and I found writing on the walls which was a curse in voodoo. Jean (also from CAPS) was sitting on the floor and saw a dark shadow move behind me. So I asked the spirit if that was their shadow and I got an affirmative response. We could not stay in there for too long as the energy made me have a headache and I got stomach pains. Was this the curse that the slaves wrote over two hundred years ago still affecting those who visit?

THE SESSION : http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvmo6mH_xM

Tell us about the spirit box session on "Cowpens Battlefield" and the voices of soldiers?

Wow, what a amazing place to go and visit. Most people might just look and see a boring empty field, but this place is full of soldiers who lost their lives fighting for what they believed in. The battle of Cowpens took place on a very clear and cold morning on January 17th, 1781 led by the great commander Daniel Morgan against Tarleton's army. The battle was over in less than a hour. It was a complete victory for the Patriot force. The British losses were staggering: one hundred and ten dead, over two hundred wounded and upwards of five hundred were captured. Morgan lost only twelve and only sixty were wounded. When I arrived there, I started by closing my eyes and seeing the soldiers crying for help. I could hear guns and canons blasting. We have to remember the events in our history that ultimately led to us living free. I started where they began the fighting using my PSB-7 spirit box. I asked many questions about the fighting on the battlefield and got some amazing and intelligent answers. I asked the spirits to tell me a little about what had happened there and I got responses such as we were shot, there was an explosion and canons broke. It was unreal to me. Hopefully by communicating with these lost soldiers I am giving them a chance to say what happened to them that moved them on into the light. That is what pushes me to do this kind of work. This one is a must see.
CHECK IT OUT : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WL1Sbnr72GI>

Talk to us about hearing your name in the ghost box upon leaving Ramah Cemetary? How many sessions have you done there?

I'm telling you, every time I listen to that video it gives me chills to the core. There are a couple of things about that response that are so unreal to me. I had been going to that place for about six months before I got the EVP. I always start off by stating my name. I like to try to communicate every time I do an EVP session at any location, much like I am talking to the living. So I got out my car and walked to Dr. Weddington's grave site. I had been there many times before and I always got intelligent responses there. As soon as I walked up, I turned on my PSB-7 spirit box. I asked if the doctor was there. Not only did I get an affirmative but he called my name. My whole body was frozen. Every hair on my body was standing like the great, Redwood forest. When I asked for his name, he said that it was Calvin. So I looked up at the doctor's headstone and was stunned by the events that just took place. The doctor's full name is Calvin Weddington. This proves that spirits can learn our names and remember us, and to all the non-believers, that say this device is fake and doesn't work well, I give you this to wrap your mind around. I have been going to that cemetery regularly and I have had my name called three times, twice in that doctor's resting place. I can not count how many times I have visited there, but I take a part of that place with me every time I leave and it will be with me until the end of time.
LISTEN : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFlqTdUYdjQ>

Tell us about the Kings Mountain Battlefield and your experience there.

What a amazing place to visit. If you have never been there, you should take the time to go. So, on October 7th, 1780, there was a decisive battle between the Patriots and Loyalists in the southern campaign of the Revolutionary War. Patriots defeated the Loyalists, commanded by British Patrick Ferguson. The surprising victory over the British raised morale among the Patriots. With Ferguson dead and his militia destroyed, Cornwallis was forced to abandon plans to invade North Carolina and retreat to South Carolina. While I was walking the grounds I could literally feel eyes watching me from the wooded areas. Using the PSB-7 spirit box I heard a man ask for help. After hearing that, I asked again for a

name and a male voice said Ace Brook. I looked this up. There were some Brooks that fought in the battle.

GHOST BOX : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdbzGmOr2YI>

What is the 519 house and what happened there?

I had a paranormal team out west that contacted me saying that a woman named Lisa was having problems in her home here in Charlotte. They were too far away to help, so I called her and after she told me that she was too scared to stay in her own home (she had just moved in a week ago), I knew that I had to go see her. So I called Tina to help me out knowing we would need to cleanse the home of something that did not want the owner there. So before Tina arrived, I did some EVP sessions and a PSB-7 session and got some really intelligent voices. Plus I used Mel meter which reads electric magnetic energy. The readings in the house were very high - anywhere from 9.0 to 12.8 (and normal homes read around .02). During my session, I asked the spirits to tell me their names and they told me it was Eddie and Nancy Key. They told me they didn't like the new tenant and eluded to having followed her from her former residence. They used my name and told me that the house would never stay painted, which was funny as it pertained to a conversation I had with Lisa earlier about her decorating plans.

SEE IT : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ktgC8qyeJI>

Discuss, please, about the murder confession you received at the Stonewall Jackson correction center.

I will have to say that I rarely get spooked enough to be prompted to leave. But after the session I did there I felt that something bad was going to happen if I continued with my investigation. That place is like a college campus. It was a huge two hundred and ninety acre juvenile detention facility when it was opened in 1909. With all of the buildings abandoned now, I can tell you that that place was very much so alive with the dead that still roam the grounds there. Using the PSB-7 I asked if anyone wanted to speak with me and I heard Robert Stunt. The room I was in got really dark and I felt right then and there like I could not breathe; well, like I was being choked. I remind you, I was by myself. Shortly thereafter the spirit confesses to me that he killed a man named Jim with his bare hands.

WATCH : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRdu15GWuQ0>

What workshops or courses do you take to sharpen your skills.

I don't take any courses but I do research on the web, in the library and the best education (for me) is word-of-mouth (with the locals that I see in certain areas before I do a case). On every location I do my research. I really like to do that. And even after I investigate a place, I research again, so I can crosscheck the history or get names of what I might've caught. I like to have some info on the places I go to so I can know the right questions to ask. I think that is why I get so many great responses. I am asking the right ones.

You have a young daughter, has she had any paranormal experiences to date?

It's funny that you should ask that. About three months ago, I started having strange things happening in my apartment. My daughter would run to her room and stop dead in her tracks at her door way. And then she'd say that she was scared to go in there alone. As she put it to me, a bad men was in there and a woman she calls the witch. As the weeks went on, more activity started to happen. I heard a male's voice and sometimes a child moaning or crying. So I began to set recorders up in her room. I caught a very strange

voice daring me to listen their mystery. I set up an EVP (after hearing this) and I confronted the spirit and prompted him to leave. He expressed a distain in being threatened. One evening I started to set up my camcorder with night vision in her room and from the den to the hallway where her room is. The first night I caught a ball of energy manifest in the middle of her room and shoot out the door. The next night was the most activity I have ever seen in my life. I had my camcorder running and fell asleep on the couch. What woke me up was that I heard a man (like he was right next to my ear) say something I could not make out. So I looked up and there (standing over me) was a man's face staring at me. Half of his face was kind of glowing but it was transparent. And it vanished into (like) a cloud of very cold air and moved slowly back into the hallway. I looked at the video that was recording while I was sleeping and that's when I saw him there. A man was standing in the hallway, just staring at me. You can see his eyes, nose, and he has one of those beard and mustache combos that I call civil war. The same night (in our bedroom) he came back and started standing over me in bed. He was talking to me, but in whispers. Then the covers started moving; they started off slow and then with a force they were pulled off of the bed. After that night, I contacted Tina (of CAPS) and told her to come and cleanse my home (and make these three spirits move on). So far so good.

What was your favorite investigation (private home, cemetery, historical site) least favorite?

That is a tough one to answer because I love every place I have ever investigated. You don't have enough magazine space or I would tell your readers about every one of them. So I am going to answer one of each. The family I helped in Concord (the ones who had lost their son in a car wreck) is my favorite. They wanted to know he was safe and with them. Having his voice come through for them and helping them heal and knowing he is ok was very moving. In the Ramah Cemetery I have caught so much evidence from speaking with Civil War soldiers to hearing of family's been struck down with disease. Having my name called back on three separate times, disembodied voices, to shadow people moving. I suggest you just watch all the videos I have on you tube. Grab some popcorn and make a night of it. As far as historical sites go, my favorite would be all of the battlefields; Civil War, Revolutionary War - all of them. If I had to pick, I would have to pick Ramsour Mill Battlefield in Lincoln County. Getting all of those intelligent EVPs on the mass grave site was intense. The response on the battlefield that was a whole sentence long relates to the battle - that was great, you just don't get EVPs like that; the same voice saying twelve words over multiple radio waves - that just doesn't happen. My least favorite was my own home. Seeing my family being harassed and my daughter too scared to sleep in her own room was hard. But I did take some good out of it. Now when I'm helping others, I can understand a little more as I have been in their shoes.

Will you publish a book about your experiences?

I would love to I just need a ghost writer (hint hint). Plus I'd throw too many jokes in there. Until then I will just continue living the book in real time.

Contact Todd Slingerland if you need his services or have any questions at halfcabslinky@yahoo.com or 704.458.6326.