

The Ghost of the White Nun

**By
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People enjoy ghost stories for a number of reasons. For some it is the mild adrenaline rush of being slightly frightened. Adolescents especially engage in recounting these stories since it is usually done in groups and reinforces the cohesion of the group through sharing an often memorable experience together. Schools, universities, fraternities, sororities, and even companies strengthen their cultures through recounting ghost stories.

Ghost stories also help preserve the art of story telling. In our advanced technology age, the skill of active story telling in a group is slipping out of fashion. An entertaining creepy story can transport us away from the reality of strenuous daily life.

People connect with their lineage and neighborhood's history by recounting stories of the supernatural. In addition, these stories of the paranormal connect with the human desire to understand the idea of life after death. Ghost stories can also serve as an initiation for new members to a group.

Ramona Convent Secondary School here in Alhambra has its own ghost story. It concerns the Ghost of the White Nun.

Ramona Convent actually has a history longer than the incorporated City of Alhambra. The school was established in 1889 while Alhambra was incorporated in 1903. Ramona Convent Secondary School presents a college preparatory education for young women grades 7 – 12 and is located at 1701 W. Ramona Road. It is a past U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon School of Excellence and is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

As with so many of these stories, they seem to gain momentum and gather a following as time goes on. The Ghost of the White Nun has enjoyed some additions to its stature during recent years, especially in the last twelve months.

“After years of repetition,” says Sister Kathleen Callaway, President of Ramona Convent, “it (the story) took on an aura of truth.”

The legend goes that students have reported seeing the ghostly image of a nun dressed in white roaming around the campus, most notably in the library area. Sometimes a piano being played can be heard in one of the school buildings while no one is in the building.

Ramona Convent has an orientation program for incoming freshman each September. Although the orientation is heavily supervised with mentors and counselors, the legend of the White Nun is usually reinforced by her appearance at these orientations. Some suspect that upper class members are orchestrating the White Nun's appearance. On occasion the White Nun has been known to even stop and pose for pictures with the new members of the Ramona Convent student body.

September of 2010 was no different. One evening during orientation the White Nun made her appearance at the top of a hill in full view of a group of startled freshmen. Their reaction was predictable. Lots of excited chatter from the girls and a number of them yelled, "there's the nun."

Ramona Convent enjoys a close relationship with the neighboring residential community. And even though, "there's the nun", sounds innocent enough, nearby residents mistook this phrase from the students as, "there's a gun." Mistakenly hearing this, alarmed neighbors immediately called the Alhambra Police and repeated what they thought they had heard.

Alhambra Police quickly sent squad cars and scrambled the Alhambra Police helicopter with its search light to the school. The resulting confusion seemed to momentarily backup this White Nun business to the new freshmen. Order was quickly restored and the incoming class now had a pretty good story to pass on to students in the future.

"The Police Chief and I had a good laugh," says Sister Kathleen Callaway.

So Alhambra has its ghost stories like the legend of the White Nun. These stories serve to not only provide an element of entertainment, but they also initiate new members and help bring closeness to a group. And if you are ever at Ramona Convent and you feel your sixth sense telling you that the White Nun is around, it more likely is your sense of humor having some fun with you.

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