

The Ravenna, Ohio Photo

SPECIFICATIONS:

Date: May 2008

Location: Ravenna, Ohio

Photographer: Name withheld

Type Camera: Unknown

Other Information:
Location has a history of paranormal activity.



I frequently have people send me photos of what they believe to be spirits, most of which turn out to be easily explainable camera aberrations, misidentified objects, or hoaxes. Once in awhile, however, I get a photo that appears to be legitimate, one example of which I present here. Sent to me by a very nice lady from Ravenna, Ohio, the photo of the front of her home (I have cropped this image from a larger photo) and was taken by her 14-year old son in early May of 2008. Neither of them noticed the figure of what appears to be a young girl in some sort of blue outfit looking out the window (in lower left and in insert) until they downloaded it to their computer. The woman and her son were the only ones home (she has no other children) and they have no idea who the little girl might be. Notice in

particular that the face—and especially the mouth—appears to be somewhat distorted, as though the child has—or had—a deformity (or perhaps as a result of an incomplete manifestation?).

Ghost or hoax? Clearly not a camera anomaly nor a case of matrixing, nor can I find any evidence of photo manipulation, Photoshop tricks, etc. I spoke with the lady by phone afterwards and she struck me as being quite sincere and honest—as well as a little nervous—about the image, leading me to presume that this might well be a genuine “capture”. The woman tells me the home was built in 1930 and served for many years as a Methodist parsonage before her and her husband purchased it 14 years earlier. She also reports a history of paranormal activity in the home (lights switching on and off, cold spots,

mild poltergeist activity) but has never seen any manifestations. I’ve kept in touch with the woman over the years and she continues to report activity in the house, but no new manifestations.

This photo later generated a considerable amount of controversy when it was examined by noted parapsychologist Richard Wiseman and posted to his blog, where it generated many hundreds of comments—some of which were helpful with others bordering on the bizarre. Throughout it all, no one has yet been able to explain how the little girl got there or who she is. All-in-all, one of the most remarkable and perplexing spirit photos I’ve ever seen. *(Used with permission. All rights reserved.)*

**ANALYSIS CONTINUED
on NEXT PAGE.**



Since I first posted this picture a while back, it has stirred up quite a bit of controversy, mandating a more detailed follow-up.

Many investigators dismiss the face as a reflection, a smudge, or a hoax. Personally, I find neither of the first two explanations to be either particularly compelling nor scientifically sustainable and as for the third—a hoax—I discount that straight away, not because it would be impossible to do, but because I have corresponded with the woman a number of times since 2008 and am convinced she is sincere. Also, there is no evidence that the photo has been tampered with or the “face” inserted or otherwise “photoshopped” in place. (The woman didn’t even have an idea what Photo-shop was when I first mentioned it.)

As such, we are left with something of a dilemma here. If it wasn’t hoaxed and it can’t easily be explained away with the simplistic explanations so popular with skeptics, what is it? A ghost? Perhaps.

While we may not be able to prove anything either way, however, there are a few things we might do to at least acquire some useful information about the figure in the window. One local paranormal investigator suggested the face is too small to be a real child, which did get me thinking. If this figure in the window is a person, how big is it? Is it, as my friend

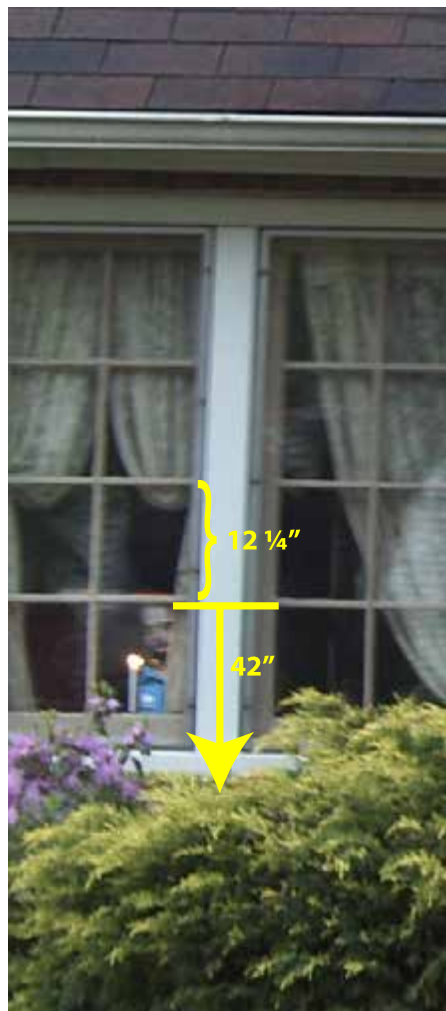
suggests, too small to be consistent with a real human being? (He estimated its height to be no more than two feet, which would be more consistent with an infant or toddler than a small child.) In an effort to find out, I’ve since contacted the lady in Ravenna and had her have her son take another picture of the house from the identical spot and with the same camera, as well as take measurements of the height of the window panes and the distance between the pane and the floor. I also asked that she have someone—in this case her husband—stand in the window for a size comparison so we can get some real data about the true size of the figure.

First, some measurements: each window pane is 12 ¼” in height and the distance from the top of the low-

est pane to the floor (which is the approximate height of the figure) is 42”. In the reshoot photo she sent me, her husband standing in the window is 67” tall. Below are close-ups of the two photos with measurements inserted.

In comparing the two photos side-by-side, we immediately get a better idea of just how tall the figure in the first photo really is. The husband in the second picture is two full window panes taller than the figure in the first photo, or about 25” taller. That means that the original estimate that the child is 42” tall would seem to be accurate. Additionally, 42” would be about the average height for a child between the age of five and six, which corresponds pretty closely to what we see in the window.

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So what does that prove? Not only that the figure is not unusually small, but that its height is perfectly consistent with what it should be if we are looking at the face of a five or six year old child.

My initial thought upon seeing the photo was that the figure appears to be older than that—around eight to ten years old. However, in comparing the face to that of a five-year old I found on the internet, I think five or six looks about right:

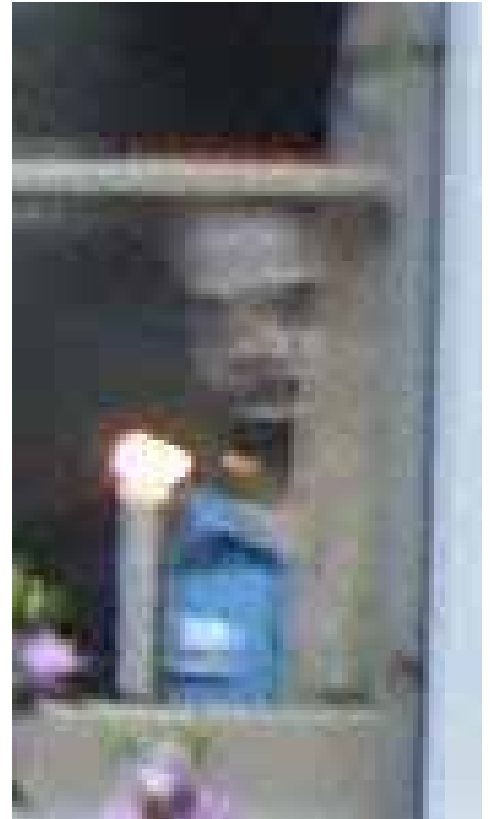


Some have also commented on the distortion in the face itself (which can be seen more clearly in this blow-up), claiming that the figure appears to have no neck and that its mouth looks “strange.” I noticed this myself when I first saw it and wondered what would cause such an effect. A couple of ideas occur to me: either it is a result of mild shutter shake (the tendency to slightly move the camera when clicking the shutter) or such details are simply lost in the shadows. Addition-

ally, the “child” could actually have a physical deformity (cleft lip, perhaps) that might account not only for the distortion in the lips, but the general air of timidity the figure exudes. It’s almost as if it is peeking out the window, much as one might imagine a child who possessed such a physical deformity would do—especially in a less enlightened age.

Another interesting thing about the figure is that it appears to be wearing some sort of uniform or a shirt with a name tag on it. (One guy even suggested it was a pocket protector!) One explanation that has been suggested by a few is that the blue “uniform” is actually something sitting on the window sill (a small blue bag with a store logo on it, perhaps) but I tend to discount that. First, the lady swears there was no such item in the window at the time and, secondly, it appears to be more a part of the figure than a separate object. The way it seems to form a perfect collar especially argues for, in my opinion, it not being a secondary element in the foreground. Of course, why a five-year-old child would be wearing a uniform (much less a name tag) remains a mystery, but I suspect it’s only such if we insist that it be a uniform. The distortion is such that it might simply be a blue collared shirt with a patch of out-of-focus embroidery work over one pocket.

So what is the final verdict? It’s really up to you and what you are comfortable believing. For those who adhere to a traditional scientific



stand-point and for whom post mortem existence--and with it such things as ghosts looking out a window--is an impossibility, it will always remain a strange reflection, a case of pareidolia, or a hoax. For those who believe that the human personality survives death, it may be a sad but very real example of a ghost caught in the act of observing a world it can no longer interact with. As for those who, like myself, believe that the universe contains far more secrets than it is willing to share, it will always remain a mystery.