HAUNTED HARRIS HALL

University officials tight-lipped about Harris Hall ghost tale, suspected nightly hauntings

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Every night, residents in Harris Hall at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette experience supernatural events that allegedly can be traced back to the tragic, unexpected death of a former UL Lafayette student.

At approximately 11:46 p.m. every evening, sounds from Harris Hall’s elevator system can be heard, giving students and residents who ride a feeling of a strange, unexplained presence, according to students interviewed.

According to myth passed down by students and faculty, back in the 1960s, a UL Lafayette student named “Lily” was involved in a major accident with a malfunctioning elevator, which detached from its safety mechanisms and fell uncontrollably, killing the young woman at the exact time it haunts people to this day: 11:46 p.m.

“You ride it to the third floor and it just starts dropping to the first floor for no apparent reason,” said a Harris Hall resident, who wished to remain anonymous and will be referred to as Ginny Rosewood. “It’s not as scary as people think it is.”

According to Rosewood and other residents, it drops every night.

True to her word, that’s exactly what happened. Starting on the third floor at 11:46 p.m. the elevator drops on its own, gradually creeping from the third floor to the first. As soon as the elevator reaches the bottom, a sizeable shake can be felt from inside, followed by a loud “BOOM” that can be heard only from the inside.

“When I first started working here, everybody said they had this girl that died and how the elevator drops at the same time,” said a UL Lafayette non-student, who wished to remain anonymous and will be referred to as Ashley Chapman. “I didn’t believe it until it happened.”

Chapman said students would ride the elevator mainly out of curiosity and were surprised when they experienced the same supernatural event like others.

“So they got on it and they would explain it to me, like, ‘Oh my god, it really shakes, it really drops,’ Chapman said.

Rosewood said, residents like to dare “Lily” when they ride the elevator, believing she’s not there until she is.

“Sometimes she likes to shake the elevator when it drops,” she said. “She likes to mess with people. Because if you say, ‘Oh I guess she’s not going to do it,’ then it drops immediately. So it’s kind of like she likes the suspense of all that.”

But as soon as the minute is up, things go back to normal, said another Harris Hall resident who wished to remain anonymous and will be referred to as Leslie Oliver.

“What’s creepy is that it doesn’t happen any time during the rest of the day, like none,” Oliver said. “It only happens at that particular time at night. And after it drops, the elevator is completely fine.”

Oliver said it sounds like the elevator is breaking, but as soon as it turns 11:47 p.m., everything is normal again.

But those who are afraid to ride the elevator shouldn’t worry. “Lilly,” according to residents and officials, is believed to be a friendly spirit with no ill intentions.

“On the night of the 2nd of September, I was here,” Chapman said. “She’s not trying to harm anybody.”

Not only do residents experience supernatural events when they ride the elevator, but some even said they’ve experienced them in their own rooms.

Believing “Lily” is just messing with the residents of Harris Hall, Rosewood said past experiences with her roommate brought her to that realization when she lost her earbuds and asked for help.

“And I was like, ‘Hey Lilly, can you help us find her earbuds?’” Rosewood said. “Within like 20 minutes, my roommate found her earbuds in her wallet, which she carries around with her and her keys are always in there.”

According to Rosewood, “Lily,” who died more than 50 years ago, might just be bored. “Think about it; you died, you’re eternally in college,” Rosewood said. “What else would you do but mess with college students?”

Stephen Williams, Rose Garden building manager, declined to comment after multiple attempts via phone, email and an in-person office visit to secure an interview.

Editor’s note: The sources in this story were granted anonymity because they feared repercussions from the university if they were identified.

continued on page 5