

# Another take on Haunted Houses...

I've always been a big fan of Halloween and Haunted Houses, so when our little theater started to look into doing something like this, I jumped at the chance. The very first "Haunted House" I went to was actually someone's house. Just for Halloween they would bring in a real casket, and the owner of the house was dressed as Dracula. The candy dish was placed on his chest. Every so often he would move to grab a kid. Sent you right through the roof. Of course you wanted to be that kid he moved on because his wife (a witch) would give you an extra candy bar.

Now on to other haunted houses and Halloween. Believe it or not, there are people who don't like haunted houses. For some it has everything to do with their religion. Now, as long as they aren't out there preventing my fun, my hat is off to these folks. To take a stand, because of their moral views, counter to the societal views is laudable. Others are simply frightened too much by them, and they don't enjoy it. Nothing wrong with that either.

There is a third group. They may or may not belong to either of the two other groups. People who have experienced a loss of someone close (spouse, sibling, parent) may not like the idea of having fun with death. While I've lost a brother and both parents, the loss of my wife made me see this more. The other deaths could be explained away (didn't help the grief, but the logic was there). My wife's death was something out of the blue. Never saw it coming. Generally her family had very long life spans. I could then see how people would be upset and troubled with the fundamental ideas behind Halloween and Haunted Houses. The gravestones, skeletons, zombies, ghouls and ghost can all bring up some troubling memories. I can see where that would really change a person's view on the whole

Halloween event. And that doesn't even go into the sight of seeing something in a Halloween display that reminds you of your loved one's death. That is very troubling.

So I guess because of this, I do draw a few lines. I don't like, and won't go to a haunted house based on a hospital. I don't like haunted houses with a lot of suicide themes. There are other things that can be just as scary that don't touch these areas. It just takes a bit of insight.

Of course, even after my wife's death, I couldn't completely give up on Halloween, it was one of her favorite holidays. I can have fond memories of past Halloweens by carrying on the celebration of the day in the future.

Happy Haunting...