

The Mystery Continues

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Gestaci Residence - 2005

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The Mystery at Gestaci Continues

Perhaps the most famous Michigan haunted house story comes from a sleepy town just south of Lake Michigan – Boyne City.

This story has gained attention and intrigue over the years because it is one of the few haunted house stories in the world that has never been solved, never been explained yet has continued to increase in seriousness over the years. Here are the facts:

In 1995, the Indiana-based Gestaci family purchased the home from a local property management company for a nominal fee. What they didn't know at the time was that the house had been on the market for just over 18 months after its previous owners had died a messy, and still unexplained, death over Easter Weekend.



The former owners, Conrad Johannsen and his family of three, were found in pieces when vacationers called the local authorities after seeing several wild animals including raccoons and two small bear cubs freely entering and exiting the home. When police investigated, they found the remains of the Johannsens spread throughout the house. And though it may have seemed plausible that the animals found within the house were responsible for the family's death, police it seems felt that a much greater, much more evil perpetrator may have gone undetected and disappeared into the night. The Charlevoix County Coroner lists cause of death for Bernard, 44, Lisa, 42 and children Amanda, 11 and Mozart, 10 as 'attack from wild animal – species undetermined'.

Shortly after acquiring the new home, the Gestaci's repeatedly reported experiencing an influx of attention from wild animals. Though no particular animals could be seen or named, reports to the Boyne police included sounds of 'beastlike snarling and growling' missing pets, an abundance of blood on the home's grounds and clawlike tears found in the exterior walls.

As many as seven reports were made, but authorities could never link these occurrences with a specific

animal or breed. Then, just nine months after moving in, the Gestaci's disappeared entirely leaving only a ransacked house and trails of blood leading into the nearby woods as evidence. The case is still open and, since the disappearance of the Gestaci's, the home has remained empty.

Today neighbors and tourists continue to report sounds of wild animal noises coming from *within* the home yet no investigation has ever corroborated the reports with actual animals. Instead, it seems as though Boyne City has added yet another haunted residence to it's list. But unlike other haunted houses, the problems of the Gestaci residence have never seemed to go away. Rather, in the recent years things seem to have gotten more serious. Consider the following:

In 2003, every home on Hillview Street reported a power outage while the Gestaci home glowed from every light inside the house being lit. The house had been vacant for more than 8 years.

In 2004, authorities were called out by neighbors on Christmas Eve to respond to what was described as 'sounds of animals feeding inside the house.' Following their investigation, authorities declined questioning. However, some of the details of what was found that night have found their way into the public eye via local press leaks.

"I was the crime reporter on call on Christmas Eve. There were animal carcasses everywhere and a fresh skull in the front atrium. I believe that skull to have come from a human," said Record-Eagle reporter Seth Rosen.

In 2005 resident skiers on Hillview St. reported losing five dogs in the same night. That same night, two doors down seven year old Timothy Weinhardt disappeared from his bunk in the middle of the night leaving behind only torn sheets and clumps of hair for investigators. His disappearance is also still a pending investigation.

Sheriff Rod Tillaway of Charlevoix County did issue this statement in a public press conference "The oddities at Gestaci Manor continue. This Christmas, we are left with the question of whether our ongoing investigation should continue to pursue human suspects or introduce the possibility that some sort of animal creatures may have a hand in the chain of bizarre occurrences. We recommend that neighbors and campers do not make efforts at exploring these happenings on their own and further recommend that all persons and pets in the immediate area stay in their residences after nightfall."



When asked if they would consider cult-style killings or pack wolves as possible perpetrators Tillaway seemed uncertain.

"We'll pursue all avenues – human, animal and supernatural. What people need to know is that they should call the police immediately if they observe anything strange or threatening," the sheriff added. "The last thing we need is more missing people."

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