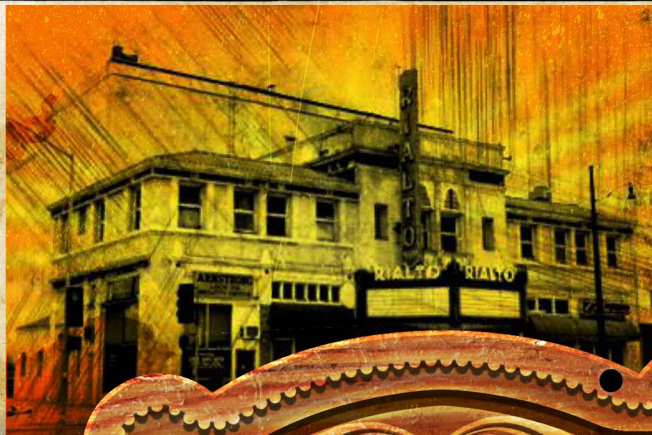




# REPORT

## RIALTO THEATER

INVESTIGATION



*South Pasadena  
California*

CA002

### SOUTHWEST GHOST HUNTERS ASSOCIATION



**SOLVED** | 2004

COMPLAINTS  
STANDARD

[WWW.SGHA.NET](http://WWW.SGHA.NET)





## Forward

The word “investigation” is defined as  
“a searching inquiry for ascertaining facts; detailed or careful examination.”

The key word here is “facts”. Do ghosts exist? No, it has not been proven.  
Therefore are no facts to investigate.

What we do have is the testimony of the witnesses and this is where an investigational process will work. Investigations are often viewed as a skeptical activity because the main goal is trying to determine what the witness actually saw. Is it explainable or not? This is done through critical thinking and an event replication process developed by SGHA. This is an important concept because what defines a haunting or ghost sighting is “Multiple witnesses reporting unusual phenomena over a period of time”. If these phenomena can be explained, the witness reports are no longer validating paranormal activity as a cause and thus there is no ghost or haunting. Additionally historical research may be done in an attempt to validate facts.

It is important to understand that the goal of an investigation is not to find evidence of the paranormal but to attempt to identify any natural or manmade causes of the reported phenomena

### Definition of Terms

**Investigation Status:** Unsolved investigations will have either an open or closed status. An investigation is given an “Open” status if:

The investigators were unable to replicate all of the witness events. Something significant remains that is still unsolved.

It is important to understand that an “open” investigation does not mean that the unsolved facts are paranormal in nature. It simply means that we have exhausted our resources and cannot solve the “open” items/events.



A “Closed” status indicates that there is insufficient data or confounding variables that prevents replication or identifying possible explanations. This often occurs when investigators do not have direct access to witnesses or some other environmental change have occurred that creates confounding variables.

## **Confidentiality Notice**

Many of the witnesses interviewed have wished to remain anonymous in exchange for presenting their accounts of paranormal experiences. We honor that request and thus witnesses will often be identified by aliases. Any coincidence between aliases and actual persons is unintentional.

## **Contents**

<b>Part 1: Location Information.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Part 2: Location History: .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Part 3: Witnesses.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Part 4: Reported Phenomena (General).....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Part 5: Hypotheses .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Part 7: Conclusion .....</b>	<b>7</b>



## **Part 1: Location Information**

**Rialto Theater**

**South Pasadena, CA.**

## **Part 2: Location History:**

The Rialto Theater was built in 1924 and opened Oct 17, 1925, by architect L.A. Smith, was designed in a Spanish Baroque w/ Egyptian touches. First movie was "What Happened to Jones?" The theater hosted live theater & Vaudville until a backstage fire in the 1930's which temporarily closed the theater. Management



gave us complete access to the entire theater from the projection booth and the now closed balcony to the old disused dressing rooms in the basement.

Before Landmark's parent company, Silver Cinemas, declared bankruptcy, plans were underway to

completely renovate the single screen decadence of the Rialto Theater. Located in South Pasadena on historic Route 66, the theater was to be split up in order to become a multiplex for art house film.

The Rialto is a classic and its most distinguishing feature may be the gargoyle that sits on high above the proscenium with read glowing eyes that illuminate even during film showings.

The back alley of the Rialto was used in the Robert Altman film The Player during the murder sequence. It may not be the grandest theater in the country, but it makes up in character what it lacks in opulence.





The Rialto seated around 1200 people. The Rialto was one of two theatres serving South Pasadena, the other one was the Ritz theatre (700 seats). Fox West Coast theatre s ran the Rialto for many years before Mann theatres ran it and sold it. The Rialto had a organ at one time but Mann sold it also.

### **Part 3: Witnesses**

This section identifies the witnesses to the reported activity.

*None. All the reported activity is from second or third hand sources.*

### **Part 4: Reported Phenomena (General)**

In the bathroom a girl slit her wrists and climbed up to the balcony and bled to death in the seats. It is also said that a man went crazy in the projector booth.

The doors to the stalls in the girl's bathroom shake. An apparition of an older man has been seen sitting in the seats. The older man has also been seen walking up and down the balcony stairs.

Another visitor reported the image of a dark figure gliding down off the stage, making his way toward the theater seats, before disappearing into the lobby.

### **Part 5: Hypotheses**

We could not locate any historical sources for the suicide or the incident that reportedly happened in the projector booth. Both contain elements that are common with myth building and have nothing to do with the actual phenomena contained in the stories.

Having no actual witnesses we chose to focus on the reports of the apparition. Once again, without interviewing the actual witnesses, and how they perceived



the phenomena, we are left with several possible hypotheses that could explain what they were seeing.

## 1. Dark Light

The first hypothesis we decided to test was the apparitions (moving shadows) were caused due to the light and dark adaptation of the human eye. If the light level changes by a relatively small amount, then the visual system compensates for the change almost immediately. However, if the light level changes by a lot, then the eye takes a long time to re-adjust. If you look at a very dark uniform field, there will be an afterimage, but it will appear lighter than the background. This is called a *positive afterimage*, and the theory is that the adapted retina is signaling a weak stimulus when no stimulus is present. This is often referred to with the term: *dark light*. Since the positive afterimages moves with your vision, it could easily explain the moving shadows.

## 2. Floaters

A floater is a tiny cluster of cells or fleck of protein lodged in the vitreous humor. This clear, stable gel, which looks like raw egg white, supports and fills the rear two-thirds of the eyeball. The vitreous provides a pathway for light coming into the eye through the lens. The vitreous connects to the retina, the patch of light-sensitive cells along the back of the eye that captures images and sends them to the brain via the optic nerve.

What you see isn't actually the floater itself, but the shadow it casts onto the retina. Floaters move as your eyes move. They appear to zoom away when you try to look directly at them, and drift slowly when your eyes stop moving.

To test these hypotheses we used our own investigators. Four were given a notebook and pen and after spending 15 minutes in the lighted area outside or in the lobby, they were asked to enter the theater and write down and observed phenomena that resembled moving shadows.

We discovered that the lighting of the theater was actually quite prone to producing dark light type effects. This was especially true on the stairs leading to the balcony and the rows in the middle of the theater. The effects were all



within 60 seconds of the change in lighting. The visual effects lasted longer (around 15 seconds) on the stairs.

## **Part 7: Conclusion**

All of the stories told to us are highly suggestive of myth building. The historical research does to support the claims presented in the stories of haunted activity.

The results of our tests strongly indicate that the reported apparitions are Entoptic phenomena.

**SOLVED**