



Paranormal Phenomenon: Ghosts, Spirits & Hauntings



Episode 21:

TOP 5 Haunted Places around the World

- Eastern State Penitentiary



TOP 5 Haunted Locations in the World

4. EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY PENNSYLVANIA, USA



Now a national historic site left in its grim and dilapidated state in the city of Philadelphia, the former prison – opened in 1829 – is considered **one of the most haunted places in the USA and in the world.**

It operated in a system of 'solitary confinement' whereby prisoners spent 23 hours in their cells, almost always completely isolated from other inmates and their families. Whenever an inmate was to leave his cell, a hood would be placed over his head. No communication between prisoners was allowed.



Before this kind of punishment system was abandoned in 1913, it drove many inmates to **insanity** and **suicide**.

The prison then operated as more of a regular prison until its **closure in 1970**, housing **notorious criminals** (some female) such as the infamous gangsters **Al Capone**.

Reports of **paranormal activity** at the prison dates back to as early as 1940 and increased significantly after its closure in 1971.

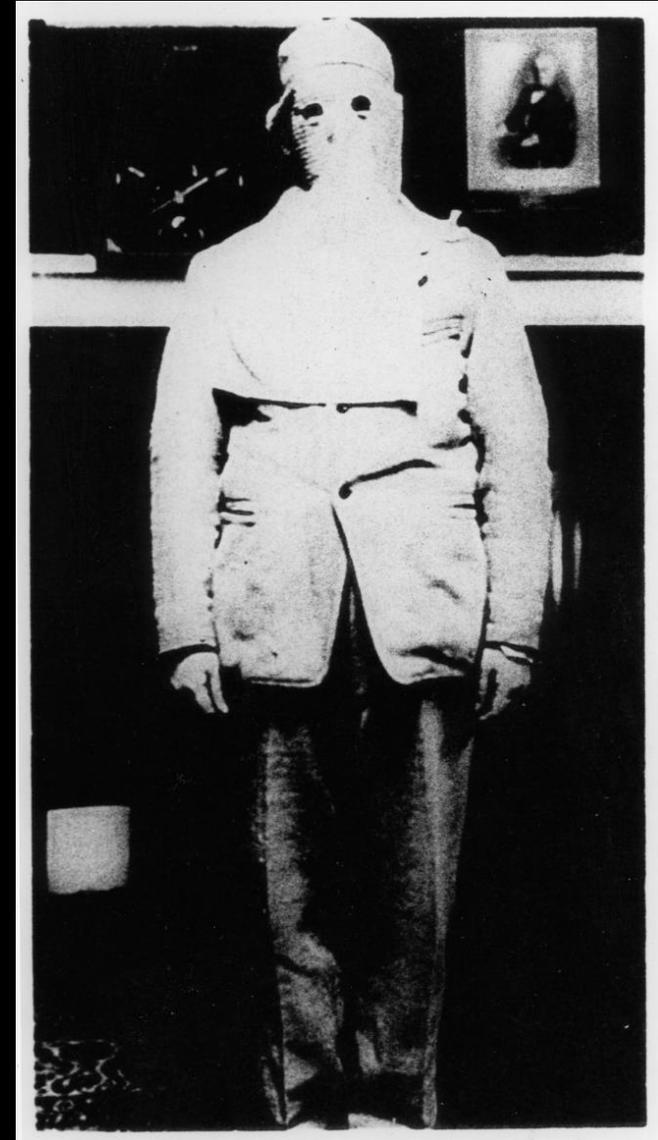
Acclaimed English writer **Charles Dickens** (author of *A Christmas Carol*, the famous ghost story) had a day-long visit to the prison in 1842 and wrote of its solitary confinement system:

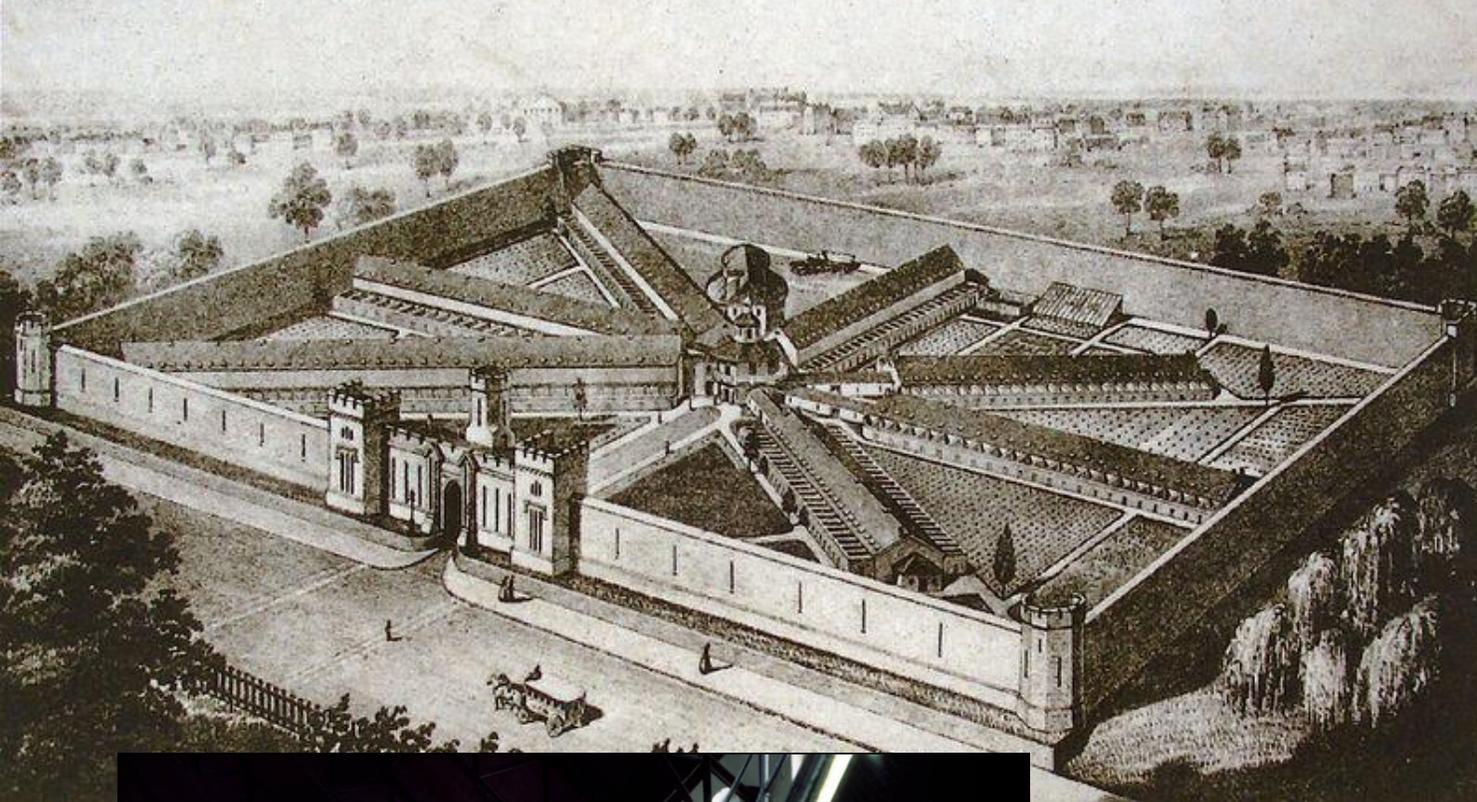
“...I believe it, in its effects, to be cruel and wrong.

...I am only the more convinced that there is a depth of terrible endurance in it which none but the sufferers themselves can fathom, and which no man has a right to inflict upon his fellow-creature.

I hold this slow, and daily, tempering with the mysteries of the brain to be immeasurably worse than any torture of the body.”

“Looking down these dreary passages, the dull repose and quiet that prevails is awful... Over the head and face of every prisoner who comes into this melancholy house, a black hood is drawn ... the curtain dropped between him and the living world... He is a man buried alive; to be dug out in the slow round of years.”



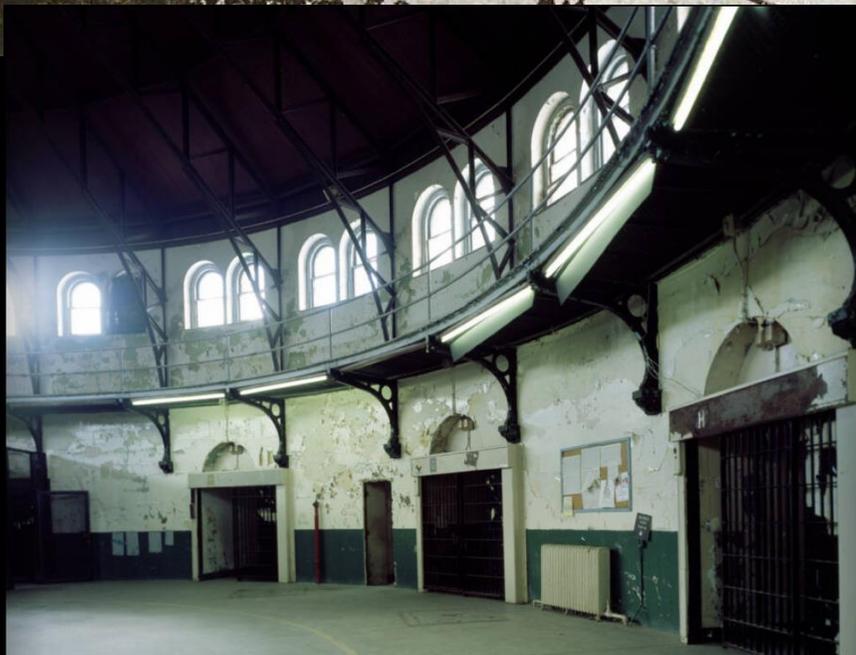


The prison was designed in **rows of cell blocks** attached to a central hub, similar to that of spokes on an old wagon wheel, initially with **seven in all**.

More cellblocks were added from 1877.

Cell Block 15 was Death Row.

During its 142 years of service as an active prison, 1,200 prisoners died, more than 50 committed suicide, and over a dozen were murdered by other inmates.





In 1929, the infamous mobster **Al Capone** spent about 8 months at the prison for weapons related charges. Most likely through fear and corruption, Capone was granted privileges other inmates could only dream of. He could make long distance calls from the warden's office. And his cell was comparatively quite luxurious to say the least:

Was Capone haunted there?

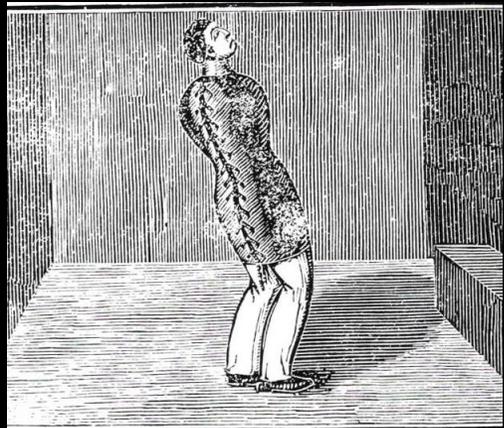
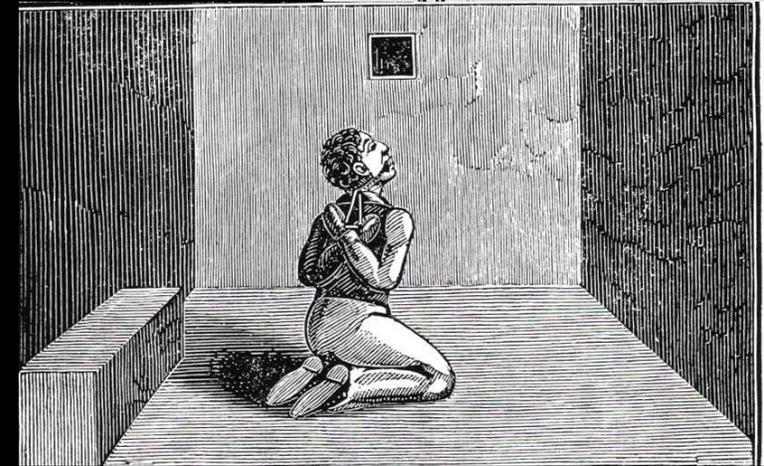
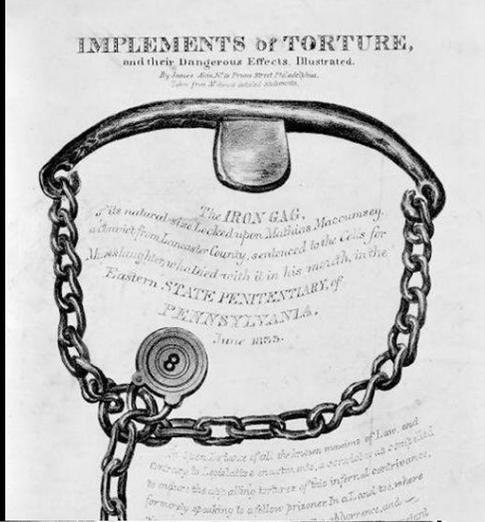
According to the *The New York Post*, Capone is said to have been "transformed into a weeping and terrified mess who would send out bloodcurdling screams at night, shouting for 'Jimmy' to 'leave me alone.'"



Punishments involved the following:

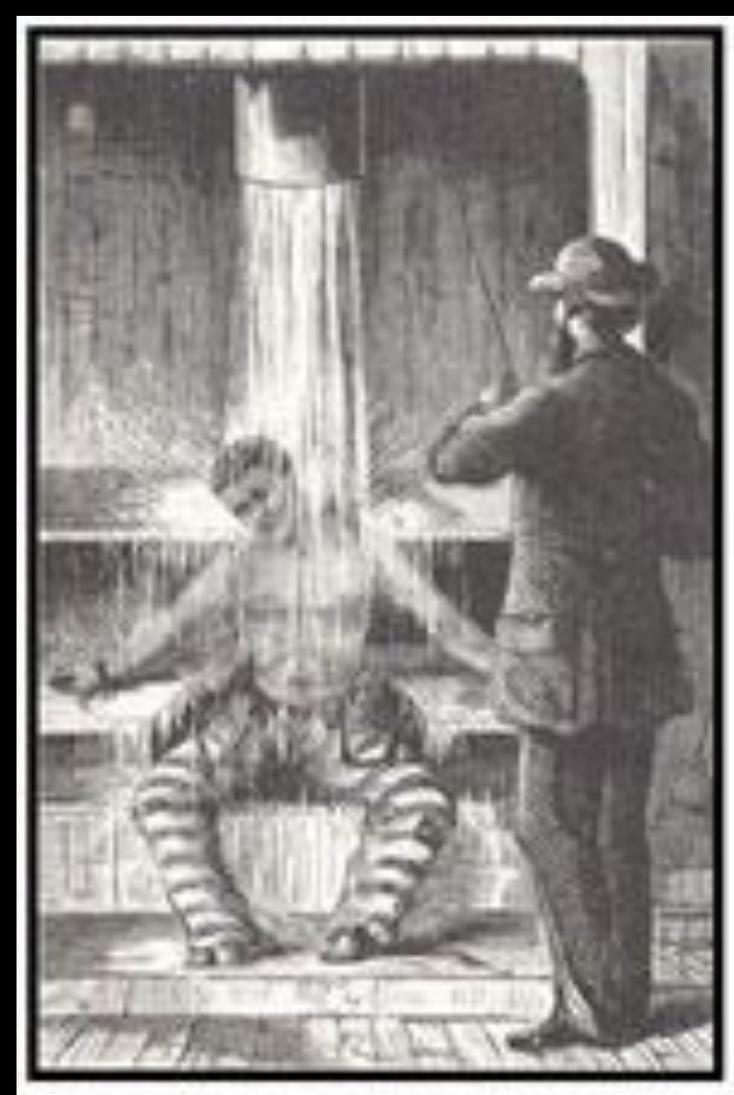
- **The Iron Gag:** was the most common and most feared, for the device was clamped onto the prisoner's tongue while his arms were crossed and chained behind his neck; any movement resulted in the gag tearing on the tongue causing extreme pain.

- **The Straitjacket:** Instead of being put to keep the inmate from harming himself or others they were bound very tightly in the jacket until they passed out from the lack of blood flow which would leave them numb for a long while afterwards.



Punishments involved the following:

- **The Water Bath:** it involved dunking or drenching an inmate in ice cold water and chaining him to the wall for the night; brutal guards also did this during winter months, so the water would freeze onto the inmate's skin.
- **The Mad Chair:** for long hours, the inmate would be chained and strapped into a chair so tightly they would be unable to move even a muscle; their bodies would become swollen due to lack of blood circulation, making them unable to walk or move for hours or days after being placed back in their cell



Which cellblocks have paranormal activity?



- **Cellblock 4:** footsteps, whispers, visions, ghostly faces, dark energies, cold air, black shadow figures, tormented faces appearing on the cell's walls, grabbing of visitors
- **Cellblock 6:** whispers, screams, laughter, shadowy figures seen sliding along and across the walls
- **Cellblock 12:** voices, whispers, cackling, prisoner apparitions, iron doors being opened



The **Eastern State Penitentiary** today is a popular tourist attraction, particularly for **paranormal enthusiasts** and **ghosts hunters**. They offer both day and night tours which attract countless visitors. Moreover, many **paranormal research groups** have conducted **investigations** at the notorious haunted prison amassing some pretty remarkable and stunning evidence of supernatural activity.