



Greystone Mansion Beverly Hills

By Bill Dougherty

In 1927 Los Angeles oil tycoon Edward Doheny and his second wife Carrie Estelle dedicated an enormous parcel of land in Beverly Hills to the couple's only surviving heir, Edward "Ned" Doheny and his wife Lucy. The Greystone Mansion, as it would be called due to its heavy and gothic use of grey slate, would almost immediately bring new meaning to the words "haunted mansion." Shrouded in controversy from its inception; critics felt \$3,166,780, a cost of roughly two hundred million in 2017, to build the home could be far better spent by the family on their countless philanthropic endeavors. However; since the Doheny family had given the city and state an unsurmountable amount of halls, parks and civic centers, they let the critics continue to babble – completing the mansion and its sprawling grounds in 1928.

Following the move to Greystone in 1928, the dreams of the Doheny's and their 5 children were cut short; but only temporarily. Ned was killed by his secretary Hugh Plunket in a downstairs guest room. The police were not summoned to the home for several hours. The murder weapon had been cleaned and the bodies moved, yet authorities quickly closed the murder/suicide case. The press and countless historians were not as willing to do so. Many claimed Mr. Plunkett did not suffer from the nervous disorder the entire staff of the mansion all seemed to offer in rehearsed unison. Others said that Mr. Plunkett and Ned Doheny were in fact lovers and that Lucy Doheny had pulled the trigger on them. Both men were buried just feet from each other in Forest Lawn Cemetery, leaving Ned Doheny out of the family plot at another resting place. Lucy Doheny quickly married financier Leigh Battson. Much to the surprise of her high society friends; the new Mrs. Battson continued to live, entertain lavishly and often remodel the stately home until 1954. The next year the Battsons sold the majority of the property, excluding the mansion, to Paul Trousdale. Today the opulent Trousdale Estates surround the home, which was purchased by the city of Beverly Hills and turned into a park and venue in 1971.

But things don't stop there. Since the untimely death of Ned Doheny and his secretary in 1929, several other and often unexplained deaths have taken place there. A maid's child plunged to its death while playing on the grand staircase in the 1930s and one of two married

servants died while quarreling on a kitchen staircase. The police were never contacted. In 1990 a Los Angeles gun deal gone wrong, deposited the victim and his BMW in the mansion's driveway. Just a few years later a man committed suicide in the gardens of the



Photo courtesy of the Friends of Greystone Society

home. The next year, two out-of-control trucks speeding down Loma Vista Drive on different days, left their victim's at the front gates. To date the mansion has claimed more lives than any home in Beverly Hills.

It's been said that at the end of her long life, Lucy Doheny Battson sat beautifully dressed in her exclusive Wilshire Boulevard penthouse in a wing back chair and clutching a rosary. She told her grandchildren and the help that she hoped to not be judged too harshly by

God. She never elaborated on her statement to anyone.

Today the mansion is a venue for movie making, weddings, cocktail receptions, auto races and black tie affairs. Yet any visitor to the property seems to have a chill of apprehension upon their arrival ... Volunteers of Friends of Greystone, the mansions preservation society, also say they prefer to come and go from the home all at once rather than linger individually. You get this picture?

