

GHOST BOX PREDICTIONS | SKEPTICAL MISSTEPS | DUSTIN PARI

THE

BENT SPOON

ISSUE 9



THE BENT SPOON

In the landscape of paranormal media, there are traditionally two unique, yet separate, brands. One geared toward the believers, and the other more skeptical in nature. The problem is that the true believers rarely, if ever, embrace a skeptical attitude or ask tough questions of their community; instead preferring to surround themselves with like-minded individuals that reinforce their own belief systems. And the skeptics, likewise, promote science and critical thinking largely to those already open to it, or who are active participants in the skeptical community. This results in an echo chamber effect, wherein the same ideas are bounced back and forth, guru-student relationships are inadvertently created, and neither side ends up learning much about the other.

Enter: The Bent Spoon.

The Bent Spoon is a skeptical magazine for the true believer. Within its pages you will find Q&A between those with opposing viewpoints, interviews with leading investigators and thinkers, as well as articles which will not only provide in-depth analysis, but also be critical of both believers and skeptics alike. Along with reviews, comic strips, and other lighter fare, The Bent Spoon hopes to foster an attitude of outreach, forming a middle ground where believers and skeptics can come together and have a conversation about the issues and questions we've all given thought to.

The Bent Spoon. Where extraordinary claims meet ordinary explanations.



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mythconceptions

WHAT WE KNOW THAT JUST AIN'T SO

jason korbus

A “mythconception” is a colloquialism that refers to commonly held knowledge that actually isn’t true. For instance, many are familiar with the idea that humans only use 10% of their brain. This factoid has been repeated for years, many times to support the idea that psychics are tapping into parts of their brain that the rest of us just cannot. But in reality we use our entire brain; just not all of it at once. Psychics, it seems, don’t have the ability to fact-check their claims.

The Bent Spoon would like to share at least one piece of “mythinformation” each month in this new regular feature. We aim to bring both a little extra variety to the pages, as well as make an effort to help us all realize that sometimes what we know just isn’t so.

Let’s begin.

In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue. Why? Well, among other things, he aimed to prove the world was round. At least, that’s what a lot of people believe.

When asked who discovered that the world was round instead of flat, Christopher Columbus is a very popular answer, right along with Galileo and Magellan. But it isn’t true. Famous philosophers and mathematicians, such as Pythagoras and Aristotle, had made observations to this effect long before Columbus was born. In fact, the knowledge that the world is round was well known long before even the time of Christ.

It seems the myth got started by one of America’s most famous storytellers: Washington Irving. Author of “Rip Van Winkle and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” Irving wrote a biographical account of the famed explorer called, “A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus,” published in 1828. According to historian Jeffrey Burton Russell, no one believed that medieval people thought the Earth was flat.

Quick! Which animal is considered to be “King of the Jungle”?

If you answered, “Lion,” of course you are right. But this piece of common knowledge is

actually wrong, and for a very simple reason. Do you know why?

Because lions don’t actually live in the jungle! In the wild, lions live on the savannah, in the sub-saharan region of Africa and Asia.

We hope you enjoyed this first segment on Mythconceptions. Feel free to take the stuff you have learned today and quiz your friends. In the meantime, stay tuned to future issues of The Bent Spoon to discover more popularly held pieces of misinformation.

A PATHETIC GRASP AT TRYING TO VALIDATE THE GHOST BOX



A Pathetic Grasp at Trying to Validate the Ghost Box

A couple weeks ago on Strange Frequencies Radio (Episode 178 – <http://strangefrequenciesradio.wordpress.com/2012/01/29/episode-179-we-talk-asscrack-of-the-paranormal-our-talk-with-dustin-pari-and-things-get-heated-with-our-guest-jenny-stewart/>), we interviewed paranormal enthusiast Jenny Stewart.

Jenny is the “founder” and the “director” of the Paranormal Research and Resource Society. Jenny is what I call a “ghost box jockey,” someone who thinks that dead people speak to her through broken radios, but hey, to each their own. I have written extensively on the topic of spirit communication through the ghost box and have performed many simple experiments to show that it is nothing more than damaged radio that continuously scans through the AM/FM frequencies. It is not a modified radio, no matter how much paranormal enthusiast say it is.

What Jenny Says Happened
During a ghost box session, Jenny claimed to receive a message that went like this, “burglary...break in....gunshot,” and when Jenny asked the box who was involved, the box responded with the name, “Scott.” Stew-

art explains that Scott was an individual who lived with the homeowner but was kicked out due to drug usage. So again, Jenny fires up the ghost box and asks how many will be involved in this burglary and she hears, “3 black males...female...” Intrigued, Jenny asked the box, “what will they take?” and she says the box responded, “3 dollars,” but assured us upon playback the box was really saying 300 dollars.

Jenny then informed us that in February of 2009, Scott was murdered in a home invasion with a shotgun, execution style. She also told us that they arrested 3 black males and a female and that the people who robbed the house did in fact steal 300 dollars in drugs. She also confirmed that there are newspaper clippings that do validate that Scott was indeed murdered. The articles also confirm the murder weapon as a shotgun and the 3 black males and female being arrested along with the robbery of 300 dollars in drugs.

The Challenge with which Jenny Never Followed Through
On Strange Frequencies Radio, Jenny agreed to the following challenge:

Send me all the raw audio from the ghost box.

Send me all the information she possesses on this individual’s murder.

The agreement was to let me do my own investigation and draw up my own conclusion on the events the broken radio “predicted.” After I came up with my conclusion, she would have me on her radio program to talk about the details that I found. After about 3 days of constantly asking Jenny if she sent the media, she finally responded with this: “Here is one of the crime stopper articles and David is getting the audio together.” Now it is 3 weeks later and I have never received any audio, I have only received one article that had no specific information pertaining to the case, http://www.thebaynet.com/news/index.cfm/fa/viewstory/story_ID/12106, and Jenny has since stopped responding to me through email... red flag? I would say so.

What Really Happened

In the early morning hours of February 10, 2009, four masked men barged in to the home of Timothy Scott Bryant. Bryant, along with 5 other individuals, were playing video games when the intruders busted through the door.

The intruders commanded ev-

everyone to get on the ground and demanded money and drugs. Bryant wouldn't comply, responding that there was nothing in the house. Some reports state that Bryant was pistol whipped; however all reports state that a rifle was placed to Bryant's head and a single shot left Scott dead. The burglars left the scene making way with an amount that totaled under \$500.

Let's Compare Details

Jenny says that the ghost box predicted Scott Bryant was shot with a shot gun...WRONG!

The reports say nothing about a shotgun ever being present. In fact, the reports specifically state Bryant was shot with a rifle.

And before someone can go about saying, "rifle – shotgun, same difference," no...wrong. A rifle and a shotgun are very different. A rifle has a grooved bore, it shoots a single projectile (called a bullet), it has front and rear sights, and it is designed for precise long distance shots. A shotgun on the other hand has a smooth bore, it shoots multiple projectiles (a buck shot and if it fires a single projectile it is called a slug, not a bullet), it only has front sights, and it is designed to shoot close range, moving targets.

Jenny said that the ghost box predicted that there were 3 black men and 1 female involved in the murder...WRONG! There were 5 individuals involved in the murder. The report specifically says, "William Curtis Rouse, Vigil Curvey, Antoine Dwayne Smith and Andrew

Redfield were the robbers. Smith and Redfield both took the stand, along with Amber Nichols, who admitted to helping plan the robbery and to waiting in the car as the four men broke into Bryant's home on Fennell Place."

Jenny says that the ghost box predicted that the robbers got away with \$300 dollars...

RIGHT and WRONG! A couple articles state that the intruders did get away with \$300, but they also got away with a gram of powdered cocaine, a CD, and a Bible. If we break the price down, the intruders really got away with about \$430. However this isn't the only reason why I consider this a miss. This addition about the 300 dollars is something new Jenny has been adding to her story. After researching this topic, it has been brought to my attention that in early interviews and comments, Jenny never mentions any money or the word 300. Read an example here: <http://www.theweirdusmessageboard.yuku.com/topic/3427#.TzXtWol5mc0> The only thing that I am willing to say that Jenny got absolutely right, although it wasn't predicted by the ghost box, was that Bryant was definitely killed execution style. However, execution style only means Bryant didn't have a way to protect or defend himself at the time.

Jenny Stewart on Animal Planet's, "A Haunted"

This so called "prediction" happened during an investigation that took place during an episode of Animal Planet's, "The

Haunted." If anyone is interested in listening to this "amazing" audio, it happens at about 4:13 in - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3QjfS89evR0&feature=related>

Personally, even being primed to hear what it is supposed to be saying, I hear nothing but fragmented words and radio static. Again, Jenny was supposed to send me the raw audio, she agreed live on my radio show that she would, but she never did. This was the best I could come up with.

****IMPORTANT NOTE**** Notice it doesn't mention a name, notice it doesn't mention money, notice it doesn't mention 300, and notice it doesn't mention gunshot. But to be fair, Jenny has said that the name Scott was edited out of the TV, however we have no raw audio to back this claim up.

Conclusion

I have to say I am not impressed at all with what Jenny says the ghost box predicted, because everything she said the ghost box said in relation to this murder was wrong. Another reason why I am not impressed, actually the main reason, is because Timothy Scott Bryant is dead. Let me explain the definition of a prediction. Simply put, a prediction is a statement made about the future. If the ghost box indeed made a predication, we have to ask why Bryant died. It should have been an easy thing to prevent if it were true. What we really have here is a simple case of subjective validation. The

ghost box says something, and then one day something happens and Jenny and her team tie it together to make it have meaning. To show you what I mean, here is a direct quote from Jenny in dealing with this same topic, “We had no way of knowing they were warnings until they happened and by the time we did it was too late.”

Now I have worked with a lot of paranormal researchers, but I would have to say that Ms. Stewart is probably the most unprofessional of them all. I say that for a few reasons; first and foremost, she never held up her end of the challenge which was to send me the raw audio of the ghost box; and second, when I was supposed to appear on her radio program she just ignored my confirmations. Not even giving someone the common courtesy of letting them know they are no longer “invited” on their show is beyond juvenile. It is the sort of thing that cowards do, but I would expect anything less of Jenny Stewart. She is just another classic example of a closed minded believer who pretends to be interested in the skeptical side of things, but really she is only looking to surround herself with people that will validate her findings.

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STANDARD DEVIATION



While I believe myself to have been careful in the process of creating and writing this magazine, with the intent of offering objective and open-minded views of the paranormal, I have come across a number of obstacles, which face every skeptic, that I thought I should address and I wish both fellow skeptics and believers to consider before making any judgements on any particular paranormal topic. First of which is presupposition and bias, which I believe stems directly from the arrogance of the individual, whichever side of the fence they may inhabit. This behaviour may, in fact, be unavoidable, for I struggle with it every time I look at a new UFO photo or the latest viral poltergeist video. My immediate, gut reaction is that it is fake. While I have trained myself not to act on this instinct, I feel that it can't

ever be suppressed. Without speaking for everyone else, I will simply say that it is MY nature. By simply looking at a photo or online video, I cannot truly make a valuable judgment without supportive evidence and unfortunately, that is hard to come by. While this, by no means, equates as anything close to acceptable proof of the paranormal, I cannot rightly dismiss its nature. I can only state that I don't know. This is a phrase that paranormal investigators should

become comfortable with. "I don't know." This brings me to my second point, which is jumping to a final conclusion prematurely. In other words, referring to a case as solved. Unfledged debunking is becoming a common sight in my circles and unfortunately, other people are running with the conclusions, copy/pasting more and more, until it's become the official solution. To illustrate, we have what appears to be a photograph of a



ghost. (If you are familiar with this photo, bear with me) Some may say that it's clearly photoshopped, others might claim that it's a case of pariedolia caused by a spider/ tent caterpillar's web or a plume of smoke, and others may very well believe that this is a genuine full- bodied apparition.

Now without the remaining photos from this set, any of the above explanations are as good as the next, though some are more likely than others, yet none of the above are correct, as seen below



These types of knee- jerk assumptions have become all too routine and they often result in vain dismissal, but does the end justify the means? Is a half- assed solution justified so long as you can cry “debunked” at the end of the day?

The fact of the matter is, with most cases, after- the- fact analysis is insufficient. Incidents of alleged paranormal activity occur in uncontrolled environments with innumerable variables to account for. The idea of ruling out the ordinary, thereby leaving the extraordinary doesn't logically work. To make a claim from either perspective is simply speculation without proper evidence to support that claim. Most cases will eventually have to boil down to what is “most likely” and mundane explanations will always trump supernatural ones. If you favor the supernatural solution, then the burden of proof lies on you to prove it and if we skeptics ask for conclusive proof then we owe it to the rest of the crowd to give the same.

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A black t-shirt with a white logo featuring a spoon and a circular emblem with a figure. The logo is positioned on the chest of the t-shirt. The background of the advertisement is black with a white spoon graphic on the right side.

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*You know what's
vaguely and
strangely erotic?
Feeding a woman a
marshmallow.*

Bobby Nelson and Jason Korbus interviewing Dustin Pari former cast member of Ghost Hunters and Ghost Hunters International.

BN: Bobby Nelson DP:
Dustin Pari J : Jason Korbus

BN: So hopefully we don't offend you.

DP: No worries, man. The only things that I don't like answering is just about personal things, things about my family.

BN: Oh yea, we won't go there.

DP: Field related stuff, field related stuff, whatever.

BN: Awesome.

J : Then the first question is simple enough. Just tell us about tonight's lecture and what you'll be talking about.

DP: (:28) What i kinda do is i try to break it down for the people because you get a mix of investigators and a lot of people that just...notariety because of the show and stuff. So I try to break down the field, though so just kind of simple groups of people can understand types of entities. I talk a little bit about equipment. I probably do, a lot of the time, talking alot about things that I believe in versus things I don't believe in, what I call a lot of 'made for tv' moments and such because I think there's a lot of stuff out there, information that's good but there's also a

lot of misinformation that leads people down a horrible path.

J : Let's talk about the types of entities then, because we probably met like maybe 5 years ago, started investigating on our own, and everything. The more we investigated, actually the more skeptical we became of what's actually out there, and is there. People talk about types of entities and everything, but then is there ever really any proof that these things are real? That's what we kind of have been looking for.

DP: (1:27) Yeah, I think what it comes down to is just the amount of time you spend in the field. You just kind of classify things as you know them. I don't think there's any hardcore "This is absolute truth and this cannot be possible." I think that's kind of the beauty of the field. If your'e really interested, then there's still a lot of things that we can learn. I think majority of the stuff that we see, seems to be what we refer to as a "residual nature". It just seems to be energy that's playing out, doesn't seem to be too interactive. I think that's a lot of what people come across. Unfortunately, most people think everything is demonic, possession, and all that stuff. I think that's probably what we definitely see the least amount of activity from.

BN: When you do investigations, what do you consider your techniques? Do you consider

them scientific?

DP: (2:09) I'm no scientist, man. I try to document things to show people what I experience. To me, it's more when I do my own personal investigations, unless I'm doing something for a specific client that wanted to see something, I don't do a heck of a lot of documentation. A lot of times, I just do things for my own purposes, to get my own experiences, and stuff. That's the majority of the way I do things. Pretty much, my Go To pieces of equipment right now are just having a full spectrum camera, camcorder and the real time EVP recorder. I don't go crazy setting up a ton of stuff. I'm just trying to help somebody out that thinks they're experiencing something. I just want to go and see what it is. That's about it.

BN: Now I know that you're a man of faith...

DP: Yes.

BN: I was wondering, do you consider that people should take the paranormal on faith? Say ghosts. Is that something that should be accepted by faith, since there's no positive evidence to prove that they do exist?

DP: (3:09) If we're using the term "Faith" there based on...not referring to a religious connotation...

BN: Sort of the same way. I

guess I'm using "Faith" as "A belief in something without logic", that has no logic to it.

DP: (3:25) I don't know. I guess I just have a problem with that, just based on the question, because I feel a lot of my religious beliefs do have a lot of logic, so I guess that's where I'm getting a little hung up. But I don't think people should just believe in spirit activity, because people tell them spirit activity is there. I feel bad when I see people that I know are kind of getting...the wool is being pulled over their eyes by people saying "Well, my flashlight went off, so there's a spirit here that wants this, that, or the other." Because I think that's the biggest bunch of nonsense going.

BN: But, just to bring it up, isn't that what they pretty much did on Ghost Hunters?

DP: (4:02) Not when I was there, brotha. Now when I see it, what I tell people is if that's what they want to do, God bless them. I wish them the best in their endeavors, but I don't think that's evidence of the paranormal at all. I did a lecture with Britt Griffith in Michigan. He's like "Oh, we're going to do Tech Talk and we're going to talk about flashlight technique." I'm like "Dude, you don't want to do flashlight technique with me." He's like "Why?" I'm like "Because I don't believe in it at all." So you take a flashlight, you loosen it just enough that

you can sit it in the front seat of your brand new car, and say "Hey is there a ghost here that wants pudding?" Eventually it's going to go off if you keep talking, especially when you have a tv show that can edit it however it wants to be edited. I'm not saying they're going out with the intention of trying to make things look fake, but I think that he talks about "You need to know your flashlight." No, it's an electron jump. It's just the way it works. I don't buy into it at all.

BN: You were talking about the equipment you use, you say you use the recording EVP. What do you mean by the "Real Time EVP"?

DP: (4:58) The Real Time EVP recorder. Basically, it just plays back on a delay, so you can listen as you ask a question and you can set it from five to fifteen seconds. So you hear yourself ask the question, you can hear if anything answers back in that time in between, which I think is kind of nice, because it gives you the chance to go forward from there.

BN: But as an audio engineer myself, there are a lot of natural and rational explanations of what these voices could be. I have a problem with people saying that they're possibly ghost voices, because where, at the very best, what people have is an anomalous voice. That's actually where it should stop. We have a

voice, we don't know where it came from. As a matter of fact, almost every single recorder, the directions inside say they must accept and give off all types of interference. So that would mean that straight radio signals, cell phone signals, any type of other signals could be the interference being picked up on it. So I have a problem with people using EVP. I actually don't think EVP is that convincing. That's just my opinion, but how do you feel about that, knowing that they have to take and accept the interference?

DP: (6:05) Absolutely, man. Even just microphones, by definition...because my degree was actually in video and radio production, so microphones by definition should not be recording things. People say "Oh, it's being imprinted on there", but technically, by definition, the way a microphone works, there needs to be something that's presented that's causing the reverberation. So it's very interesting. I don't think by itself, an EVP could ever be proof of a haunting. Like "Oh, we captured this, so this definitely means this." Sometimes it can be just coincidental. I've yet to hear many EVPs. I've heard a couple over the years. I have yet to hear many that, to me, by themselves, would be "Oh, this is definitely spirit activity."

BN: How do you make that leap, I guess, is what I'm asking.

DP: (6:50) Let's see, if you just get a straight name, if you just get a straight number, to me, it's...especially you see people, they'll use the radio boxes and stuff like that. You're scrolling through AM stations. Most of the time, there's sports on, so you're going to get a number, you're going to get a name eventually. If you start linking things together and you're trying to make something happen, then it's going to happen. So, to me, there needs to be something very convincing, like a very specific question that needs to be asked. What I try to tell people now is to take a more cerebral approach to do in the field. If you're going to sit down and do EVP work, you should know about your subject matter that's at hand, try to use things that they would want to talk about. Have questions that you can ask, specific questions that need a specific answer, not just throwing out "Can you tell us your name? Can you give us..." Stuff that, eventually, you could get something.

BN: Right. I guess my rebuttal to that would be "But psychologists will tell us that our brains are designed to make something out of nothing." So we could actually just be listening to static and hear "(inaudible sound)". Somebody will say "Oh, it said 'My name is Henry'."

DP: (7:52) They talk about audio matrix and things like that. Absolutely, man. Even our own vision, our own peripheral

vision, is made up by our brain, from what we know, and what we think should be there at that time. So yes, you need to really be clear and concise. It can't be "Oh, did you hear this? Did you hear this?" I used to hate that. You have to play things, amp it up, and amp it up. You're listening and listening. I'm like "I don't know what it says." Then they put it at the bottom of the screen what it's supposed to say.

BN: Yes, that's called "Priming."

DP: (8:18) Yes, yeah, exactly. That's what bothers me, is people come up to me and they want "Oh, I want to go to a psychic. Do you know a really good psychic I could go to?" I was like "If you go to a psychic and you're just looking, in your mind, you already know what you want to hear. You're going to hear it." You're going to pay these people whatever you're going to pay them, but in your mind, you know what you want to hear. They'll ask leading enough questions where you'll give just enough information, so that you can hear it. It's a lot of the human psyche.

J : I totally agree with that. I think that's maybe a lot of what the paranormal comes down to, is maybe expectations. We've had things we've done before. We've fed people nonsense stories. They went to a location, they come out, and they validated everything, the shadow person, and the touching of the

hand, or whatever. It makes you wonder then, how much of the paranormal is something that's actually physically touching you, or did someone really see a shadow person, or is it just that they go into a location that they've heard reports of activity, and what they're supposed to look for. Then they expected to encounter that, so they do. Is it a psychological thing working?

DP: (9:23) You can stand somebody in front of a closet space in a brand new home on land that never had any violent history, give them some story of "Oh, this happens in here." If you plant that seed in someone's brain, you put them in a situation, you take away sight, you make them uncomfortable, yes, there's a pretty good chance that they'll come out with a story. Most of the investigations and stuff I do, just for working with the UV stuff, I like to have low lighting, but I don't like to work in complete darkness. People expect that at events. They want to set that scene. They want that, because that's what they're used to seeing on television, but I prefer to work just with low lighting if I have to change it at all.

(10:00)

J: So I guess what's your thoughts on...because when the Ghost Hunters came out, it seemed like a lot of people got interested in doing their own investigations. I did as well. That's why I wanted to go out

and take my hobby outside from just reading and watching on television. I wanted to see if I could get the same kind of stuff outside. But a lot of people, just to speak bluntly, they're not as educated as you are about a lot of things. They haven't really read a whole lot, so they go out there and they're dealing with...they're not just going to public locations. They're going into people's homes and things like that. Do you think that the proliferation of how many ghost hunters and paranormal investigators there are out there working in the field, is this a hinderance in some manner of speaking, because there's so many people? There are so many people involved, and a lot of people are giving misinformation. They're playing the EVPs, they're telling their personal experiences, and then you get people, the homeowner, thinking "Oh, I've got crazy ghosts here."

DP: (11:00) Yes, everyone has got a demon in their house. Yes, it's definitely a double-edged sword. What I liked about the programs as a whole was the fact that it brought it kind of back to the fore front. You guys know, the feel of the history just comes and goes in these ways. Eventually some charlatan gets made out for doing something. Everyone throws the whole field away, says "It's all nonsense." In fact, there is some really cool stuff that happens within the field, but it's not as extravagant as stuff that gets the limelight.

I think there's a double-edged sword about the shows, because it did make it more comfortable for people to talk about it and to bring it up again, but unfortunately, like you said, a lot of people are going out and form groups. Their information is what they see on television shows. These shows are good for what they are. They can be informative, depending who's doing the investigation and what they're showing, but a lot of times, it's very just entertaining. For groups to go out, they run to people's homes, and say "Oh, you have this, this, and this, because I saw this", it can be really dangerous. Unfortunately, I definitely see a lot more misinformation that is being carried out from people that learn from things they see on television. Then I get people calling me, saying "Oh, I think I have this happening, because someone"... and it sounds like absolute nonsense. It's very frustrating.

BN: So do you think that people that watch these shows, should they be watching for educational purposes or should they just watch them strictly for entertainment purposes only?

DP: (12:18) That's a good question, man. I really think that you've got to be discerning. You can watch it to be entertained. If you want to take it as something to learn from, you've got to do it with a grain of salt. You've got to look at it and say "Okay, well, are these guys doing the

absolute best they can, scientifically, or spiritually", either way, "To try to prove the existence of some type of spirit activity in this home?" Or "this location?" Wherever they're doing. Regardless of what...I'm not talking specifically Ghost Hunters, TAPS, Ghost Adventures, whatever the show is. "Are they doing the best they can in an honest way? Are they ruling out every other thing?" Plus, the thing that you've always got to remember, too, is there is a production crew there. There are other people there. They used to say, "You've got to make sure you look for this, this, and this", but then you've got guys walking around with walkie-talkies and stuff backstage. These things will set off, depending on the band, they'll set off your K2 meter. I can't stand K2 Meters and stuff like that. To me, it's like more false positives, more false positives. Show me something hard core. Show me something real.

BN: What was the purpose that Ghost Hunters and Ghost Hunters International used EMF meters for?

DP: (13:27) When I first went on the show, it was to measure changes within the electromagnetic field. As you see on some of the shows now, it's like you have a K2 meter, it lights up, and "Well, it answered this question." What I tell people, like I tell in my lectures, these tools do what they're designed to do,

which is to measure fluctuations in that field. It's a leap of faith to say that this is definitely connected to spirit activity being present. One of the best books, and something I always recommend to people, one of the best books I've read about that was *Spook* by Mary Roach. One of the things she talks about is going where they do a study. They introduce you to high levels of EMF. Some people start to see things within the room and start freaking out. Now does that mean that the high EMF levels are allowing them to see it, or is it causing them to think they see these things happening? Either way, how can we just go into a room and say "Okay, we have this, it spiked up, so"... "This turned red, it answered our question. If you keep talking and talking, eventually it's going to light up. You're just asking leading questions. What I tell people to do is use it as...what I like to use it as a secondary piece of equipment. If you think you see something starting to appear and this thing starts to change at the same time, it lights up, or the EMF gauge starts to go off, cool. You've got two pieces of equipment that work together, rather than that one random thing that you think has to do with spirit activity.

BN: On the TV show, I know that the cast used the term "Fear cage" a lot, where it was a room that had extremely high EMF, but through research, science is pretty much at a consensus that

there is no type of a connection between EMF and humans, being that there's no such thing as EMF hypersensitivity. They've tested it with blind testing and somebody that thinks they're EMF hypersensitive can't tell the difference between going into a room with extremely high EMF, or just regular. One test that they did that I thought was brilliant was they had, on a college campus, they put up a cell phone tower. They started asking students how they felt. They got a wide range of different responses. Headaches, throwing up, losing hair.

J: People even said their cell phone reception...

BN: Yeah, their cell phone reception was better. The sort of butt end of that joke was "Wow, wonder how they're really going to feel when it gets turned on."

DP: Nice.

BN: So, being that there's no real correlation that science can have with EMF reader, or EMF fluctuations, and human beings, I'm wondering why we're still using them during ghost hunts. You don't ever go to the doctor, say that you're feeling nauseous, feeling headaches, you're starting to see things at home, and they say "Well, you'd better check your house for high EMF." They never say that, so I don't understand why ghost hunters, TV shows, and ghost hunters in general, have held onto this so long. Before it was

everyone wanted to detect ghosts with the fluctuation amount of ghosts. Then everybody starts saying "Well, no, that's not what we're using them for. They're not 'ghost finders'." Then they started saying that they're going to use them for high EMF. How do you feel about that, being that there's no evidence?

Part II – NEXT ISSUE!!!

NIGEL GOT IT WRONG



I had an interesting conversation with freelance journalist Nigel Kerner. For those who do not know who Mr. Kerner is, he has described himself as a man driven to expose the humbug and hypocrisy in modern scientific, religious, and social thinking. Nigel is also a man obsessed with the UFO enigma that plagues the lives of many people worldwide. This interest in the UFO phenomena has lead him to publish two books on the subject, *The Song of the Greys* and *Grey Aliens and the Harvesting of Souls*. I must admit, Nigel can deliver his message pretty powerfully. He talks with such enthusiasm and is so matter of fact about his topics that if you're not carefully listening, you may be convinced of some of the misinformation he is peddling.

First I must say, I don't jump on people for their personal beliefs. If Nigel wants to believe Grey aliens are coming to earth to harvest the souls of humans, hey, to each their own. However, I will not sit quietly when I hear things that I know are blatant lies or allow people to try to push misinformation as fact.

So when I heard Nigel say that science has confirmed the existence of tachyons, particles that move faster than light, and that Jacques Benveniste's work on water memory was vindicated by science after his death, I just couldn't keep quiet. In this article, I am going to quickly touch on tachyons and why Nigel was absolutely, 100% wrong in suggesting science has confirmed the

existence of FTL particles.

Particles and Faster than Light (FTL)

One of the major issues I had when talking with Nigel was that he claimed science has confirmed the existence of tachyons. Tachyons are a hypothetical particle that are always moving FTL. These particles have never been proven to exist and as a matter of fact, they are still said to not exist by both physicists and theoretical physicists. Why? Because if tachyons do exist it will violate causality, and physics 101 tells us that the cosmic speed limit is light speed.

Why would FTL particles violate causality? I must make this absolutely clear, I am no physicist, so don't just take my word; I urge anyone reading this article to take some time and do some research on this topic. With that being said, FTL causes a time paradox and the easiest example of this is called, "The Tachyon Telephone Paradox." My wife, Addie (A), and myself, Bobby (B), are moving at a relative velocity which is less than the speed of light to each other. Addie pulls out her new cell phone that allows her to send text messages FTL. Addie sends me a text message FTL and when I receive it, I send her a message back FTL. The result of this message transaction would be that Addie would receive my response before she sent her initial message. I would be sending messages back to Addie's past.

The way this works is that when you travel at the speed of light, time starts to slow down and if a message is traveling FTL it will end up surpassing light speed and send the message back in time, causing the paradox.

Now, being that we are talking about particles moving FTL, it would be fair to touch on the announcement that was made by OPERA (Oscillation Project with Emulsion-Racking Apparatus) researchers. In September of 2011, it was announced that they had detected neutrinos that appeared to travel FTL. OPERA researchers have insisted that other scientists scrutinize their work to find out if there was some kind of miscalculation or error that happened along the way; the ultimate goal is to have this experiment replicated.

This information is valuable, but I wanted to see what real physicists had to say about this topic. The

first individual I emailed was Professor Dan Hooper, who is a theoretical astrophysicist at Fermi National Accelerator Lab and Assistant Professor in the Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics at the University of Chicago. I asked a simple question:

"Professor Hooper,

My name is Bobby Nelson and not too long ago I interviewed you on Strange Frequencies Radio. The other day, I was interviewing an individual that claimed to be a scien-

tist, that didn't care for science...weird, I know. Anyway during this convo, he said science is now saying that there are particles that move FSL. I said I didn't think that that was an accurate statement, being that the cosmic speed limit is light speed. I know in September of last year there was a paper released about neutrinos possibly exceeding the speed of light, however I thought it was pretty much the understanding that this was a mistake made by the physicists. Am I wrong in this assumption? Hopefully you can help...thank you."

The response that I received was the answer I was expecting:

"Hi Bobby,

You basically have it right. There is an experiment (called OPERA) that claims to have measured neutrinos traveling faster than the speed of light, but most of my colleagues (including myself) suspect that this is mistaken. The problems that FSL travel would introduce are just too serious. That being said, other experiments are going to try to test this, and if they were to observe the same thing, we would all take it more seriously.

For now, I don't give too much thought to this possibility.

Dan"

The second email I sent (same email I sent to Professor Hooper, I just changed the name) went to quantum physicist Professor Mark Alford, and his response was this:

"There is a good write-up of this question on wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faster-than-light_neutrino_anomaly

The result remains unconfirmed, but

also unrefuted. The consensus among physicists is that we should wait and see if another experiment can see the same thing. Then we will start taking it really seriously."

As you can see, two physicists pretty much said the same thing different ways. Science has not confirmed that any particles have the ability to travel FTL. This idea of FTL isn't even being taken seriously until these experiments can be reproduced. A lot of physicists think these results were brought to the public a bit quickly, I think astro/theoretical physicist Lawrence Krauss said it best in an article about this topic in Scientific American (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=ftl-neutrinos>):

"It is an embarrassment as far as I am concerned. It was not unreasonable for the experimentalists to submit a paper with an unexplained result. But a press conference on a result, which is extremely unlikely to be correct, before the paper has been refereed, is very unfortunate—for CERN and for

science. Once it is shown to be wrong, everyone loses credibility. Neutrino experiments are hard, and systematic errors at the limit of resolution can be significant. Moreover, because the experiment appears to violate Lorentz invariance, which is at the heart of so much known physics, one should be skeptical. One should be additionally skeptical because observations of SN 1987A showed, as I wrote back in 1998, that neutrinos and photons travel at the same speed to one part in a billion, several orders of magnitude below the claimed effect. Now, the only way out of that is to have some energy-dependent effect, but all the ones that make sense don't wash here."

Like I said earlier, I don't care if people have crazy belief systems, people have the right to believe in whatever they want. However, when someone spews out nonfactual information as fact, I can only assume a couple of things; they have no idea what they are talking about or they are lying. I tried to correct Nigel many times on this matter and he didn't budge, but then I realized I was talking to an individual who claimed to hate science and at the same time claimed to be a scientist. I was talking to a man who told me not to trust science because the way science made advancements was by trying to prove itself wrong...yes, and? I still don't understand how Nigel thought that concept was bad. Anyway, Nigel was a decent man to talk to, however, he seemed to be someone who hates science and forms conspiracies when science doesn't validate his work, and praises it when it does...you can't have both Nigel.

OPEN FORUM

Not AS SEEN ON TV!

As my wife and I were watching some of the typical paranormal shows she said “Come on now, how often are these places really haunted? I mean even when they’re not haunted they say we had some strange experiences or we did get this EVP (which sounds like nothing) or look at this orb how it enters into so-and-so’s body, REALLY!!!” So she turns to me and says “you go into so many houses every day and how many have had activity?”

After some quick math and I excluded the house that both my wife and I saw the full-bodied apparition of our friend’s grandfather, since there was no question in our minds about that one. I figured out roughly 3,476 houses in the past six years alone. Spending as little as two hours up to easily seven hours in some homes. I’ve been told of deaths on some of my visits from new homes to hundred-year-old homes. I’ve been in normal looking homes and dark dreary hoarder homes. There was a home that I didn’t even suspect having activity, but saw a couple of strange shadows in a hallway and bedroom. I couldn’t rule out that it could’ve been just light and shadow play from someone or something passing by the side window even though I knew where the customer

was. To assume it was paranormal because I couldn’t explain it would have been irresponsible. I’ve even been in homes that look like they practiced satanic rituals and voodoo and only encountered two to three paranormal instances out of all these homes. You’re probably wondering how in the world could I have been in so many houses in six years. Well there are a few friends homes but the majority are work related. Being a technician for a well known company makes access to numerous homes easy.

I’ve designed a few custom light sensors, EMF,static/ion, vibration and visual EVP detectors as well as the Ghost Words app for Apple devices. So you can tell I’m no stranger to the paranormal field and always have my eyes and ears open for some kind of activity. Having gone as far as EVP sessions with no results and EMF checks in basements and such. I have definitely come across high EMF readings in some of these homes where I felt like I was being watched. There was even an instance of EMF so strong that any time I got near the source it felt like my brain and part of my body was vibrating. Could I have said this sense of vibration felt as if something entered or passed through me, sure but it wasn’t paranormal. Now having been in so many homes you would think that I had seen so many more paranormal instances than just two or three. I mean look at TV, practi-

cally every episode there’s something that happens they got some kind of evidence that suggests there may be a haunting.

Now I didn’t intend to explain why some of the claimed evidence of “ORBS” on some of the shows is complete foolishness nor why some of us start to believe these paranormal claims week after week, but it’s difficult not to. So I will leave you with some basic thoughts on orbs. When dust particles, lint and even some bugs pass close by a camera especially with an infrared light source pointed at them they will reflect the IR light. If a camera is focused on an object or person in the scene and the orb passes between the object and the camera the orb will take on more transparency and will become less visible which may appear like it’s entering into somebody. Once the dust/orb passes by that person it will become more visible again. I don’t care how many times these investigators say dust can’t fly upward or have what looks like a thought to its path. Try your own experiments in different areas with slight drafts, then you may actually understand how it could. Now I’ve only seen a few pieces of orb evidence that would lead me to believe that a particular orb was truly paranormal in nature and those pieces were actually shown to me by other investigators.

As far as EVP’s go, there are often many interpretations and

over-cleaning them with your software isn't always the best solution. Performing audio experiments with different scuff sounds against my recorder as well as different objects and with over-cleaning I was easily able to get sounds that resemble human speech. "GET OUT" was one of the easiest examples of over-cleaning a scuff where my thumb quickly rubbed up and down the recorder. So be careful not to let your desire to catch evidence in turn create evidence.

Now there's plenty of evidence that may actually be real on these para shows, but to compare the amount of locations and activity that these ghost hunters have seen compared to the amount of locations that I've been, well I'd say the results are drastically different. You might say their results are better because they go to locations which are known to be haunted. In turn I've also had numerous customers tell me their homes had activity with no signs while I was there and have been to some famous locations with no evidence.

So what does all of this lead me to believe? Some of the evidence seen on the shows might be misinterpreted, over exaggerated or maybe even fake. I'm not sure exactly but there are show ratings and the longevity of the shows almost depends on evidence. I guess I could even go the other route and assume these investigators have spirits following them to locations.

Well I can't say that there isn't some kind of paranormal activity out there because I have firsthand experience yet it's definitely Not As Seen On TV.

Chris DeMent
@Parachasers on twitter
Founder of Parachasers and creator of numerous paranormal devices.

I recommend you know your equipment and always question the evidence!

THE BENT SPOON

Here at The Bent Spoon we always appreciate feedback, whether it be criticisms, compliments or suggestions. The Bent Spoon also accepts article submissions but they do not necessarily have to be from a skeptical viewpoint. If you are a true believer and love to write, The Bent Spoon's new section titled "The Open Forum" may just be the place for you. With the intentions of keeping the dialogue open between true believers and skeptics, we feel "The Open Forum" might be the perfect opportunity to do so. It will show the believers viewpoint with at least one skeptical rebuttal.

Please send all inquiries and submissions to
TheBentSpoon@live.com

Thank you.

THE BENT SPOON

SOUPERNATURAL

BY JASON KORBUS



GHOST HUNTER CONTRADICTIONS

Recently, along with my friend and fellow co-host of Strange Frequencies Radio, Bobby Nelson, I had the pleasure of interviewing Jenny Stewart. Jenny is the founder of the Paranormal Research and Resource Society, and we had her on the show to discuss a few of her beliefs about the philosophy of ghost hunting, as well as her own research into spirit communication. While we disagreed on pretty much everything, the conversation was pleasant until close to the end, when Jenny began to raise her voice in objection to a line of questioning that pertained to a myriad of contradictions we were noticing. While those contradictions are certainly not unique to her, I thought a post about them might elucidate some of my thoughts on the frequency of which they appear in the ghost hunting community.

Early in the interview, I talked about how many paranormal investigators have things they don't like about their community, and asked her if there was anything in particular she found distasteful. She responded by saying that too many investigative team's websites are like trophy cases, indicating they appear more interested in fame than in helping anyone. I agreed, but I found it curious when, just moments later, she mentioned her

team appearing on Animal Planet's paranormal reality series, "The Haunted." She also talked about her excitement about possibly getting their own series on A&E about the team's ghost hunting activities. If she isn't interested in fame, she sure has a funny way of showing it.

Later, we began talking about her ghost box research. She is quite fond of it, believing that she has contacted entities that have given her team pertinent information on several cases. She even recounted a story where her ghost box divined the future; foretelling a murder, in fact (See Bobby Nelson's investigation into this claim in this issue). While she went to great lengths to testify to the usefulness of this particular technique, she also said she uses it only as a tool; not as evidence. How funny, then, that her team's website has a copious amount of ghost box sound files on their evidence pages. How can it be both not evidence and evidence at the same time?

Finally, we talked about her rationale for being in the paranormal community. While she does not consider herself a ghost hunter in the traditional sense, she does seek her own style of proof for the existence of ghosts and the paranormal. She also said that she isn't trying to

prove anything to anyone. However, she did get pretty angry with us when we wouldn't accept on her word that she captured the ghost of a baby in a photograph.

In my opinion, many ghost hunters get into the field because they want to prove the existence of ghosts. I know that was one of my reasons, and I've talked to many who say the same. But it is strange to hear someone say they aren't looking to prove ghosts but then, as Mrs. Stewart did, infer that we are basically denying reality unless we agreed she has captured the image of a spectral baby in a window. While Bobby told her it could be an example of pareidolia, I told her it was unfair to try and force our opinion when we had never seen the photograph in question.

Another thing Mrs. Stewart did is classic in the ghost hunting world. She appealed to the old "science can't explain everything" gambit. This basically is when a ghost hunter tries to cozy up and sound scientific, but when shown that their methods are anything but, say that what they are doing is outside of the realm of science. In Jenny's case, she said that "science isn't everything." But for someone who says they are not so fond of science, it is curious that so much on

her website looks to gain credibility by appearing scientific.

In her “Ghostbox Worldwide Experiment,” she has paired with a guy named Michael Esposito whose bio says he is a “specialized audio scientist in the area of Electronic Voice Phenomenon.” There is no such thing. His bio also states that the “paranormal is rooted in quantum mechanics.” It’s probably not. I know that because a real physicist told me. Not because a guy who makes up a fake scientific field wants it to be.

During our interview with her, Jenny also talked about soliciting the expertise of medical doctors for an experiment she hopes will prove that some people can hear “in different frequencies,” and apparently therefore unable to be challenged if others don’t hear what they do from the ghost box. When it comes to the paranormal, if at first you don’t succeed, just claim you have supernatural abilities.

But let’s get back to basics. This article is not about what is or is not proof of ghosts. I’ve made it clear before that I used to believe and have explained the reasons I no longer do. This isn’t even about whether or not people should go ghost hunting. I have nothing against it. I may not believe in ghosts, but even I enjoy creeping around allegedly haunted locations. No, this is about the lack of honesty and consistency I see among ghost hunters.

I’m sick of hearing ghost hunters say they aren’t in it for fame while simultaneously seeking out their own reality show. You have an ego; we all do, so at least be

honest. I host an internet radio show and, while I don’t want to be “famous,” I know a little something about wanting attention for what I do or say. If you so much as have a Facebook or Twitter page, you have to admit that you do as well.

I also don’t have time to listen while you tell me your team doesn’t use certain items as evidence, or how you aren’t trying to prove anything to anyone. I especially don’t want to hear it when what you are saying is demonstrably false, or while you are yelling in my ear about how right you are, like Mrs. Stewart did. And please, don’t tell me you don’t care about science backing up your claims while simultaneously attempting to gain credibility with scientists or other experts.

Now, to be fair, Jenny did end up writing to apologize a couple of days later. She said that she was tired and doesn’t understand why she got so angry. And that’s fine. It is not like I harbor any kind of grudge. Many people have written to me to express their surprise at Mrs. Stewart’s reaction to the questions we posed on the show. It surprised me too, but I also very much want to have her back on sometime to discuss the points we disagreed on. One thing I want Strange Frequencies Radio to be known for is how we go out of our way to invite guests on simply because they disagree with us. I continue to believe those types of conversations are important, particularly in the paranormal world. Mrs. Stewart apparently does not, however. She agreed to have my co-host Bobby Nelson on her radio program but then booked someone else at the last minute without so much as tell-

ing him (Again, see Bobby’s article in this issue). It seems she is now going out of her way to ignore any further contact with him or Strange Frequencies Radio.

Why are so many in the paranormal community so inconsistent? Do they really not recognize their own contradictions, or is it as I suspect at times, that they divert attention away from their true motivations in the presence of someone they perceive as an outsider? In other words, when they are around other people who believe as they do, will they still downplay the significance of their ghost box, or talk about how little they want attention or to prove anything? Somehow, I seriously doubt it.

Why? Because I’ve been there.

REFERENCES:

<http://www.prrsociety.org/home.html>

<http://goo.gl/k12ap>



REVIEWS

America's 60 Greatest Unsolved Mysteries & Crimes

I picked this DVD box set up at Barnes & Noble from the \$4.99 bargain rack. I think I got ripped off. Now, anytime I get a 7.5 hour collection for just a few bucks, I keep my expectations low. I assume it's going to be crap. But I at least hope it's going to be entertaining crap. This just isn't.

It covers everything from "Who murdered Natalee Holloway" to "JFK Murder Conspiracy," and touches on Bigfoot, Jimmy Hoffa, and a host of other "mysteries" in between. The main problem is, a lot of these so-called "unsolved mysteries" are not unsolved at all. I guess I'll give them a pass on the Holloway thing, but c'mon, the JFK solution is clear. Oswald did it, okay? Get over it. Also, do people really think Jim Morrison is still alive? Is there any serious doubt that John Wilkes Booth was killed shortly after he assassinated President Lincoln?

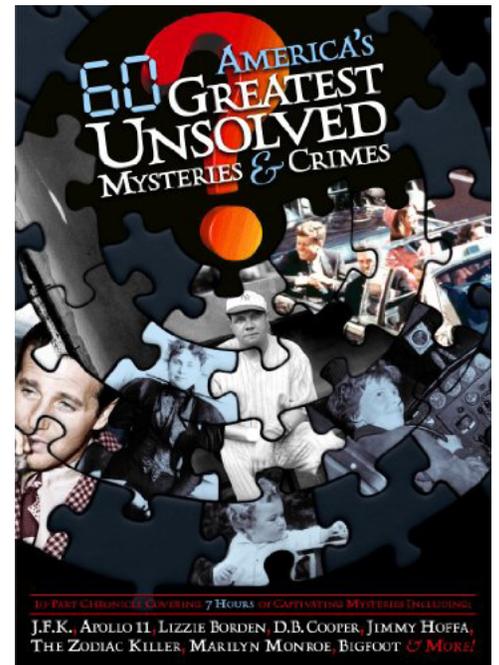
Apparently, some people think so. And by "some people," I mainly mean Troy Taylor, who appears sporadically throughout the video. Taylor is the founder of the American Ghost Society, and is known mostly for his books about ghost stories and investigations. He is the second major problem with this DVD. He apparently has yet to meet a conspiracy theory he isn't

willing to give at least some credibility to, and it's kind of disheartening. Not because I hold him up as any kind of serious scholar, but just because it makes him look even lamer and more desperate for camera time - and after appearing in a slew of Booth Brothers documentaries, I honestly didn't think that was possible. I'm pretty sure that the most dangerous place to be is not in one of the many locations Taylor swears are haunted. No, it's the empty space between Troy and a camera. I mean it. Get out of the way, or you will be bowled over.

I'm giving this DVD 2 bent spoons. One spoon because the subject matter is right up my alley, and another spoon because it does help kill time in bed before you fall asleep. But don't expect any serious investigation or even a well produced segment. Most of the stories are over within just a few minutes and, even if something does happen to catch your eye, it's done by the time it gets interesting.

Do yourself a favor and save your money. This one just isn't worth it, gang.

-Jason Korbus



THE BENT SPOON

Here at The Bent Spoon we always appreciate feedback, whether it be criticisms, compliments or suggestions. The Bent Spoon also accepts article submissions but they do not necessarily have to be from a skeptical viewpoint. If you are a true believer and love to write, The Bent Spoon's new section titled "The Open Forum" may just be the place for you. With the intentions of keeping the dialogue open between true believers and skeptics, we feel "The Open Forum" might be the perfect opportunity to do so. It will show the believers viewpoint with at least one skeptical rebuttal.

Please send all inquiries and submissions to
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Thank you.

THE
BENT SPOON

PAREIDOLIA OF THE MONTH

Pareidolia of the month goes to Sonia Chamberlain of Lake Havasu City in Arizona. Sonia was on a hike and was stunned when she stumbled upon a rock which she claims is the side profile of Jesus Christ, equipped with the crown of thorns. I personally think it looks more like Darth Vader, but that's just me.



PARANORMAL PEER REVIEW



WHEN YOU'RE SITTING IN THE DARK AND YOU ASK YOUR FRIEND IF THEY HEARD THAT.

BY NICK CALLIS AND JASON KORBUS

