

SELMA MANSION | SHERRY SHRINER | TOILET DRAINS

THE BENT SPOON



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

HEMISPHERES & TOILET DRAINS

Welcome back to The Bent Spoon's look at "mythconceptions;" that is, commonly held beliefs that are actually false. While I thoroughly enjoy reading new pieces of information that fit into this category, I get an even greater joy out of discovering something that I myself have long believed that is actually not true. Today's topic covers one such instance.

How many of you reading this have heard of the Coriolis force, or Coriolis effect? It's okay if you haven't. Up until a relatively short time ago I hadn't either. Though you may not recognize the scientific sounding names, you'll probably be familiar with the effect they are said to create.

First, a definition. The Coriolis force, according to the Oxford American Dictionary, is "an effect whereby a mass moving in a rotating system experiences a force (the Coriolis force) acting perpendicu-

lar to the direction of motion and to the axis of rotation." It continues, "On the earth, the effect tends to deflect moving objects to the right in the northern hemisphere and to the left in the southern..."

While this force is important in the formation of cyclonic weather systems, it is also pointed to as the cause for toilet and sink drains in the Southern Hemisphere draining clockwise, while drains in the Northern Hemisphere spiral counter-clockwise.

The problem? That is simply not true! It's a classic case of mythinformation. The truth is the Coriolis effect has nothing to do with how sinks and toilets drain because the direction water spirals down in sinks and toilets is determined not by gravitational pulls, what Hemisphere you happen to live on, or anything of the sort. Instead, it is determined by plain old ordinary structural conditions.

In their textbook, "The Atmosphere: An Introduction to Meteorology," authors Lutgens, Tarbuck, and Tasa (2006) write, "...a cyclone is more than 1000 kilometers in diameter and may exist for several days. By contrast, a typical sink is less than a meter in diameter and drains in a matter of seconds. On this scale, the Coriolis effect is miniscule." It's the shape and how level your sink, toilet, etc. is that causes the direction of the water drainage, not your position on the globe!

I thought about this myself and concluded that, if this is true, the sinks and toilets in my house might just drain differently from one another. If they did, the idea of water drainage being affected by the Coriolis force would be, well, flushed right down the drain.

So, that's exactly what I did and, wouldn't you know it, that is precisely what hap-

pened. I filled two sinks and flushed two toilets. While the toilets each flushed in a counter-clockwise spiral, the sinks did the exact opposite; draining in a clockwise manner. How foolish of me that, for years, I believed in the effect of the Hemispheres on our drains while concrete evidence to the contrary was there in front of me all along. I just never paid attention. But, at the same time, it was very satisfying to know the truth.

It is the moment of enlightenment that I had myself regarding this issue that I hope to bring to you with some of the “mythconceptions” I write about here from time to time. Maybe you’ll even be inspired to fill a couple drains and flush a few toilets to check it out for yourself. We’re all wrong about stuff here and there. We’re human. But knowing the truth is great. One of my favorite things in life are those simple moments of time where I stop and realize, “Everything I thought I knew was wrong...and it’s awesome!”

If you’re anything like me you’ll agree.

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WELL, IT ONLY TOOK A YEAR



BY
**BOBBY
NELSON**

In the very first issue of *The Bent Spoon*, we tackled the subject of the end of the world, which was to come May 21st, 2011. The man who made this prediction, Harold Camping of Family Radio, used horrible math equations he claimed were embedded in the Bible to produce this date.

You may have remembered seeing billboards that expressed people to “Cry mightily unto God!” or “He is coming again!” “God...commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” And my favorite, “The Bible guarantees it.”

Now, most people in the world never took this date seriously. In fact many people would actually talk about the dates Harold Camping had predicted before that never came to fruition; his most famous prediction prior to May 21, 2011 was 1994. He also made a false prediction that Christ would return before the year 2000. It is easy to see that this man is not a prophet of God, in fact by Biblical stan-

dards this man is a false prophet. The Bible (if you believe in it) states many times that no man can know when the end of the world will come. However, that didn't stop Camping and followers of Family Radio.

Leading up to May 21st, 2011, there were many news stories that honestly made me sad for individuals who put their faith in such nonsense. Stories of people who had quit their jobs to go on the road to prepare people for doomsday, people who spent their entire life savings and pensions on putting up May 21st billboards and making tracts to hand out to the public, and probably the most terrifying of all, a woman that slit the throats of her children to save them from having to live through the atrocities of what was going to happen on May 21st (thankfully the children didn't die).

So what exactly was going to happen? Well, Camping said that wherever you lived in the world, at 6pm a massive earthquake would happen. These earthquakes were dubbed by Camping as “the rolling earthquakes.” Harold claimed that they would first start at 6pm in New Zealand

and work or roll themselves around the world. Billions of people would watch helplessly in horror as the news and other media reported what was happening. The earthquakes would open up all the graves worldwide and force individuals that didn't die in the terrible supernatural disaster to live among the dead till October 21st, 2011, when the official end of the world would happen, meaning when God would destroy earth with fire. The true believers, the ones that followed Camping (he has said many times that if you didn't believe what he said you were doomed) had it made; they would instantly be called to live with God in heaven within a twinkling of an eye.

May 21st, 2011 finally came and many, like myself, threw end of the world parties to mock Harold Camping's false prediction. When 6pm came we booted and boozed. However, though we were having fun I couldn't help but wonder how the true believers felt, wasting their hard earned money and time on such nonsense. Even more, how was Harold Camping going to

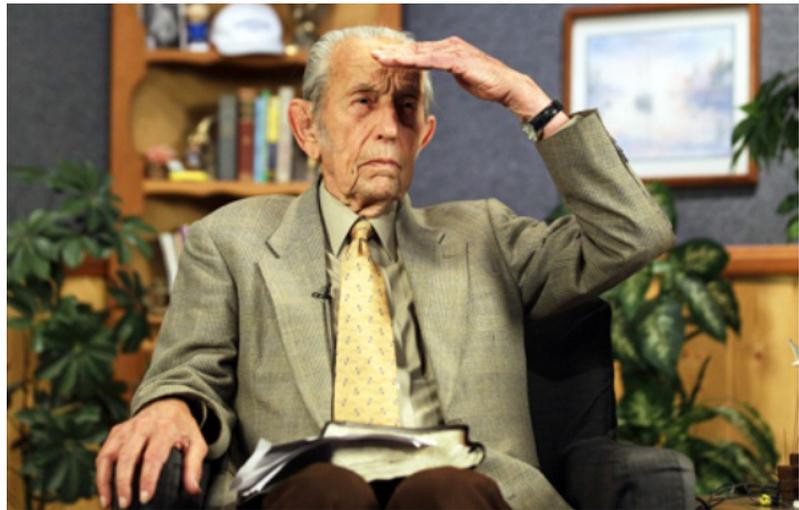
weasel out of this?

The whole weekend passed, May 21st and 22nd, and Camping had not spoken a word on this topic. Finally on May 23rd, Harold Camping had a press conference to explain what had gone wrong. First and foremost he offered no apology and explained that the rapture did in fact happen; only it was invisible and spiritual. He also explained that October 21st, 2011 would still mark the official end of the world. Soon after the press conference, Family Radio put up an official statement on their website which read:

“What really happened (on May 21) is that God accomplished exactly what He wanted to happen. That was to warn the whole world that on May 21 God’s salvation program would be finished on that day. For the next five months, except for the elect (the true believers), the whole world is under God’s final judgment. To accomplish this goal God withheld from the true believers the way in which two phrases were to be understood. Had He not done so, the world would never have been shaken in fear as it was.”

Associated Press contacted an individual by the name of Jeff Hopkins, a true follower of Camping, to see how he felt about everything that didn’t come to pass:

“I’ve been mocked and scoffed



and cursed at and I’ve been through a lot with this lighted sign on top of my car,” said Hopkins, 52, a former television producer who lives in Great River, New York. “I was doing what I’ve been instructed to do through the Bible, but now I’ve been stymied. It’s like getting slapped in the face.”

Though nothing physical happened on May 21st, Camping was adamant that the rapture did happen and that his followers would be in Heaven October 21st, 2011. I thought everyone would finally come around and say Harold was wrong, however that didn’t happen. Never underestimate the mind of a follower. Many people actually bought into the spiritual rapture and praised God that they would be taken home near the end of October. Many people actually thanked God, for not letting the rolling earthquakes happen and that this showed that he really answers prayer.

Harold Camping did, however,

say that he was done with erecting billboards, passing out tracts, and trying to convince people of doomsday. Since the spiritual rapture had indeed occurred, the doors to salvation were locked.

Well, just like May 21st, October 21st came and went with no supernatural events taking place. Very little was said by Camping about this failed prediction until recently. The cognitive dissonance and ego of Harold is astounding. Harold says, “We have learned the very painful lesson that all of creation is in God’s hands and He will end time in His time, not ours.” Harold also went on to say, “We humbly recognize that God may not tell His people the date when Christ will return, any more than He tells anyone the date they will die physically.” Camping also gives credit to those who quoted Bible passages that state no one can know the date of the end.

“But we now realize that those people who were calling our attention to the Bible’s statement

that 'of that day and hour knoweth no man' (Matthew 24:36 & Mark 13:32), were right in their understanding of those verses and Family Radio was wrong. Whether God will ever give us any indication of the date of His return is hidden in God's divine plan." Camping also admits that these predictions were bold, incorrect and sinful.

However, Camping doesn't stop there; he has to justify himself (as Camping always does) by saying, "The May 21 campaign was an astounding event if you think about its impact upon this world. There is no question that millions, if not billions of people heard for the first time the Bible's warning that Jesus Christ will return." And again by saying, "Even as God used sinful Balaam to accomplish His pur-

poses, so He used our sin to accomplish His purpose of making the whole world acquainted with the Bible."

So what Camping is doing is he is apologizing but at the same time saying, "not really because look at the good I did by doing this, I brought billions of people the message." Well Harold I have a few things to say, first of all that isn't an apology, it is nothing more than you being egotistical. You can't say, "sorry," then say, "but look at the good it did," that negates the "sorry" part of the apology. Also, your failed prediction isn't what upset people like myself, it was the manipulation. It was the way you played on peoples' fear and irrationality to get them to help promote your mindless garbage. It was the insensitive remarks you made when you were asked how you felt about

these people who were spending their money to support you, saying things like, "life goes on," and "I never asked anyone to spend any money on this campaign," though the Family Radio website had directions how a person could erect a May 21st billboard in their own city. And, yes, though you didn't make people spend their hard earned money, and these people have to take personal accountability in their own actions, you still played a huge role in this and if you really want to express your sorrow, reimburse these people the money they lost in supporting your campaign. If you did that, I may have it in me to at least consider you a human being.





Wakpominnee Bigfoot

I'm a Skeptic. Despite what many believers might tell you, Skeptics aren't always born with the particular state of mind that leads critical thought being applied towards one topic or another. Many of us started out as believers in pseudoscience or belief systems which do not have any substantive supporting evidence and later revised our beliefs as we accumulated enough evidence. In my case, I really believed in the existence of Bigfoot and I subscribed to many of the beliefs espoused by cryptozoology adherents. This is my own personal story about my involvement in an actual Bigfoot "event" which involved many of the characteristics associated with Sasquatch – rock throwing, tree shaking, and even a foot print. While I am a little embarrassed by my part in this whole thing, I think it's more important I share my story so that people can understand how anyone can get caught up in a "sighting".

I grew up in a Boy Scout household. That is to say, my father was a Boy Scout professional and where we lived was dependent upon his most recent promotion/position and our summers were spent living outside our own home. My father was also a summer camp director and as he needed to be on

site when camp was in session, we came with him. This was a lot of fun and my brothers and I spent many hours exploring, swimming, and driving our mother nuts in some controlled version of Lord of the Flies. As a result, I grew up liking the summer camp experience and that went throughout my Boy Scout experience. To this day, I love camping and I'm working to pass on this love to my daughter.

When I got older, I decided I wanted to be a camp counselor – but not just any counselor. I wanted to work in the Nature Lodge and so I became a counselor in training (C.I.T.), then a counselor, and ultimately the area director at a summer camp just outside the Adirondack Park in Upstate New York. My pay was terrible but my summers were a lot of fun and, occasionally, reminded me of the funnier episodes of M*A*S*H. In the interest of full disclosure, however, I parted ways with this summer camp after the summer when I posted a sign in the Nature Lodge which read "Censorship is Un-American" in response to the black-listing of various campfire songs by the camp director (who was following an unofficial but not actively discouraged movement which may have had its source on the National level – but I can't say

if that is true). That year was 1992 and while my difficulties with the Boy Scouts are interesting on their own, something more fascinating happened that summer.

As the Nature Area Director, I was responsible for a staff of two or three counselors, a C.I.T. or two, maintaining the lodge, organizing ecology projects, and teaching merit badge classes. One of these merit badge classes was Fish and Wildlife Management. The primary goal of this merit badge is to educate scouts in the ecological principles behind the management practices and policies used by governmental agencies and the like. One of the activities we took part in was making plaster casts of animals in our area and using these casts to identify the animal. The footprints could then be used to discuss the relative abundance of a particular species over another among other topics.

One morning before the rest of the camp was up, I took my Fish and Wildlife Management class out to a location on the opposite side of the camp's lake where I knew we would find a lot of animal activity because a well-used game trail crossed over the dirt road which circled much of the entire lake. I'll stop this part of the story here. I'll get back to it though. Don't worry.

The night before, I am told, the waterfront staff was out on their beach doing whatever they did down there when they heard what they thought were kids on the other side of the lake playing in the water. As it was their primary responsibility to know exactly who was in the water when they are allowed to be swimming and to keep anyone out when they aren't supposed to be, the waterfront crew was appropriately concerned. They had two options. Either they could hike around the lake to get to where they thought the scouts were or they could get in a row boat and be at the location within ten minutes. It, no doubt, took little thought and soon they were rowing their way out to the point where they thought the noises originated.

As soon as they got within a reasonable distance from the shore, the waterfront started yelling something to the effect of "We know you're out there! Come on out and we'll take you back to your campsites." When no reply was heard and nothing was seen with their flashlights, they upped the ante and threatened to tell the errant scout's scoutmaster (I guess implying they knew who these scouts were). Soon, though, they said things got weird.

They rowed in closer to shore and heard a loud splash near by. "It was like a large rock hitting the water," I was personally told by one of them after the event. "It sounded like a rock too big for someone to pick up," I was also informed. They shouted to shore that they had enough and that it was time to get in the boat. Another splash was heard nearby! And then, very

quickly, another! I was told they felt as if someone or something was throwing large rocks at them even though the rowboat was 12 to 15 feet off shore! None of the rocks were close enough that they felt its splash, or that they could even see the rock traveling through the air. They did see ripples on the surface though and they self-admittedly freaked out. Two of the staff members jumped out of the boat and swam all the way back to the waterfront on the other side of the lake while the third remaining staff member lost one of the oars and had to make it back in a less than auspicious manner. Think Benny Hill and you're probably not too far off base.

Now back to my part in this story. I honestly don't remember if I heard the story of the waterfront staff's adventure the night before I went out with my students. It has been too long but it is likely I had. It just so happened that the area where the "rock throwing" occurred was where I intended to take my class and I suppose that, if I had heard the story, I would have gone out there to see if something had really happened. At the time, I was skeptical but still a believer in Bigfoot and I suspect I thought there may have been some evidence I could find. Regardless, there was a rock outcrop on that side of the lake I wanted to examine (I was a Geology major at the time). There was an ancient quartz quarry in the camp and I hoped I might find some interesting quartz crystals.

We made our castings (mostly deer prints) and set about to looking for bear sign. I steered the class towards the outcrop. As it was just off the shoreline, I could look it

over while the class examined the game trail that ran down one side of it. Well, the outcrop didn't interest me. I didn't see any nice minerals what so ever.

Frustrated, I climbed up it to examine the forest floor for footprints in the leaf litter and duff. Contrary to what some people believe, it is possible for animals to leave footprints through the leaf litter on a forest floor. Certain conditions need to be present – like a soft enough soil – but it is possible. I hoped I could find something to show the class and I did – noticing some disturbances on the surface, I peeled and brushed back the leaves to reveal a what I thought was a Bigfoot print! At least, that's what my interpretation was at the time and excitement was in the air. We had made an amazing discovery! Comically, there was only one print and we only had enough plaster to fill about half of it. Undaunted, we mixed up our plaster and poured our cast. By this time, we had to return to camp for morning assembly and breakfast.

By the time breakfast was over, the entire camp knew about the footprint and I had been told the waterfront staff's story. Soon, the two were conflated to become separate parts of the same story – a Bigfoot had been foraging (or something similar) when it was startled by the waterfront staff. To intimidate them, it started tossing stones in their general direction (a characteristic often attributed to pissed off Sasquatch). My discovery of the footprint the very next morning only proved that this was what happened! By lunch time, a plan had been made that during siesta (down time for campers and staff)

an “expedition” of sorts would go to the site and look around while I recovered the cast. So, a large number of scoutmasters, staff, and campers rowed out to the outcrop and looked around. It really was quite an affair. Many people took pictures and the feeling was very hard to describe. I felt like I was opening King Tut’s tomb and I was some kind of an expert – despite all evidence to the contrary.

The furor and excitement soon died down, however, and everybody went back to their daily lives. I know some people started calling the area where this all happened “Ape Bay” but I don’t know if it is still referred to that way. It makes good creepy camp lore for a Scout camp all the same.

So, did we find evidence of Big-foot? Absolutely not. Although, at the time, I thought otherwise and would have told you so. I still even have the cast somewhere as a reminder. What happened then and why did I change my opinion? I think it is well worth examining and these lessons can be applied to just about any Bigfoot “sighting” out there.

There are three possible scenarios that could represent what happened. First, there was a Bigfoot like in the story I described above. Second, someone performed a hoax (jokes of this caliber are not unheard of in summer camps) or, third, entirely natural (i.e. non-Bigfoot) events are misinterpreted. Let’s examine the last two possibilities assuming the Bigfoot hypothesis is invalid as no evidence of the existence of Bigfoot has ever been found. By applying Occam’s razor, this possibility can be ruled out.

Could someone have performed a hoax? Certainly they could but I’d wonder why someone would want to go through all the trouble. The staff that summer really wasn’t into pranking each other. Moral wasn’t that good. Plus, sitting out in the woods, being bitten by mosquitoes waiting to hear the waterfront staff on the other side of the lake sounds like a really crappy time to me. Also, it takes about an hour to hike to this particular location so this “prank” may end up being an all night affair – and that was if the waterfront staff didn’t go out for the night! For these reasons, I find this explanation highly improbable.

So what might be the natural explanation? It’s really simple now that I look back upon the events of that day from this vantage point. The lake is not very large. In fact, it is rather small and is man made as the result of a damn on one end. It is spring fed and lacks any form of inlet. These quiet waters are surrounded by a mixed forest but closer to the shoreline, there is a lot of birch and other deciduous trees. As a result, the lake is a perfect environment for beavers and, as a matter of fact, there were two families on the lake that year – one on either end of the lake. I strongly suspect that the sound of “stones” hitting water that the waterfront staff reported was, in fact, beavers slapping their tails. For those of you who are unfamiliar with beaver behavior, they will slap their tails on the surface of the water when they are startled or feel threatened. Not only does it spook and distract a potential predator, it warns all the beavers in the area that something is wrong. Beavers are active at night and it is during this time

that they are rather busy eating and gnawing down trees – just the type of saplings that were present in the area of the “encounter”. Actually, there was plenty of signs of beaver activity in the immediate area the next morning as I distinctly recall pointing out their recent work to my class.

Alright, that explains the noises but why was the staff scared? Simple. They encountered something they couldn’t identify and they panicked. They may have had a buzz on (a definite no-no in the Boy Scout world) and this could have made things worse. Regardless, they fed off of each others fear and that caused them to behave the way they did.

What about the footprint? It wasn’t a footprint at all. Rather, it was probably an indentation of some sort that just happened to be beneath an area of disturbed leaves. What disturbed the leaves? Some animal but it certainly wasn’t Big-foot. This claim is supported by my observation that there was only one “footprint”. At the time, I attributed this to a wily animal that was selectively walking on rocks to conceal its presence (Bigfoot is smart don’t you know). This “theory” has been put forward by many “serious” cryptozoologists in the past. It’s nothing more than confirmation bias and special pleading all rolled up into a nice package. There was no Bigfoot there that night and there was no footprint, no track, nothing. If there was such a creature there, why didn’t we see any evidence of it on the muddy road itself or anywhere along the paths we traveled. After all, we did see signs of deer, bear, raccoons, beavers, numerous birds, and the like.

The final icing on this crazy cake is the “expedition” to the site. All I can attribute the attitude to that event is some sort of mass hysteria or mass delusion that I, along with the waterfront staff, directly fed. Everyone turned to me (the waterfront staff included) for an answer and, poof!, I was suddenly an authority! From that point on, I was arguing entirely from authority without any evidence. Had I the sense I do now, I would have probably come up with the beaver explanation that morning. You see, I slept in my program area in a tent and it was 20 or so feet away from the water’s edge. I listened to the beavers work and slap their tails all night long. Had I not gotten caught up in the excitement and, thereby, blinded myself to the rational explanation this whole embarrassing mess could have been avoided.

So there it is. The rational explanation to a Bigfoot “encounter”. The only Bigfoot there that night and the next morning was in our imaginations. We wanted there be an unexplained creature living in the woods. Maybe it was because we were having a crappy summer otherwise and we subconsciously wanted something to make the experience otherwise special. Whatever the reason, we fell for confirmation bias and mass hysteria spread it to a camp of impressionable scouts. Let this story be a lesson for the next time you read about a Bigfoot experience. Don’t look for the monster. Look at the people claiming to have seen it. What might be going on in their lives and how could they have misinterpreted otherwise normal phenomena?

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WHEN HARRIS MET ROGAN



BY
**JASON
KORBUS**

Joe Rogan is well-known for several unique and very different things. To many, he is a commentator for the UFC, where he displays his immense knowledge of mixed-martial arts to viewing audiences while analyzing various fights live on pay-per-view. Or, perhaps you are familiar with his stand-up comedy, which focuses a lot of attention on typical “bro” humor, with topics along the lines of alcohol, drugs and sex. While not much of a fan of his comedy myself, I do find him to be an intelligent and strongly opinionated person, which is exactly why it can be so difficult to comprehend that he is also an ardent conspiracy theorist.

Joe not only seems to believe that the moon landing was hoaxed and that Kennedy was assassinated by a cabal of unknowns, he has even given a certain amount of credibility to 9/11 Truther claims. He appeared on Rosie O’Donnell’s talk show and expressed the opinion that WTC 7 possibly collapsed at the wrong velocity and with insufficient structural damage to have been anything other than a controlled demolition. All of these popular conspiracy beliefs have been scientifically explained so

completely that it is no longer reasonable to continue to believe them, and yet he does indeed seem to believe them.

Much to my surprise, then, I saw recently that Joe Rogan would be interviewing Sam Harris on his popular video podcast, “The Joe Rogan Experience.” Harris, a New York Times best-selling author of books like “The End of Faith” and “The Moral Landscape,” as well as being perhaps the second most popular outspoken atheist next to Dawkins, seemed an odd choice to appear. From my admittedly limited experience with Rogan’s show, his normal guest list consists of either comedians or other minor celebrities who seem happy to nod and laugh in agreement while Joe pontificates recklessly.

The day before the program, Harris posted a tweet informing his followers that he would be on, and also asked for suggestions on what they should talk about. I responded by asking Harris to talk with Rogan about logical traps, and explain to Joe how to evaluate evidence to better determine whether an event is likely a conspiracy or not. It was my hope that Harris would be able to effectively circumvent

Rogan’s typical claptrap, and perhaps even engage him on a few salient points. I was glad to listen and find that Harris did exactly that.

It is common among conspiracy theorists to use “cascade logic.” The concept being that, if you find yourself with a lack of evidence to support your claim, simply say that more and more people are in on it, covering it up. But Harris explained that the more people involved in a conspiracy the harder it is to pull off without being found out. It is simply too difficult for a large number of human beings to keep their personal motivations aligned. Sometimes alternate agendas form during the process. Other times, people are too eager to blow the whistle or sell their story. It is also too difficult for a group of people to simply keep their mouths shut. They tell someone, and then that person tells another, and so on. “Loose lips sink ships,” so the saying goes.

“Why ascribe to a conspiracy what can be more easily explained as incompetence,” Harris said at one point during a discussion of the 9/11 attacks and the Iraq War. Rogan, while

discussing the possibility that 9/11 was a “false flag” operation designed to gear up American support for war, ran into a steam engine of logic. Harris reminded Rogan that there were much easier ways to get into the war without allowing over 3,000 of our citizens to be killed. Thinking back to those times, a number of sanctions and other limitations placed on Saddam Hussein were being ignored. He was even still firing on our military planes when they flew overhead. These examples alone provided plenty of pretense for military action. Hussein was not liked by the American people, and few seemed to have much problem with taking him out. So, while the conspiracy theory infers that our government conspired to murder its own citizens in an effort to steal Iraqi oil, the reality is we were caught with our pants down on 9/11. The Bush administration was simply incompetent. Our leadership was unprepared for the attack and seemingly intellectually incapable of understanding the difference between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. This doesn’t even mention that they didn’t fully comprehend the politically and religiously volatile situation they put our troops into.

Of course, conspiracy theories flourish in part because sometimes conspiracies do, in fact, occur. People conspire to cheat on their tax returns. Violent criminals conspire to rob banks.

And, yes, government officials conspire as well. But the same problem exists. The larger the conspiracy is in scope, the more difficult it is to keep it under wraps. As Sam Harris explained to Joe Rogan, President Clinton couldn’t even seem to keep a semen stained dress from Kenneth Starr. Why should we believe President Bush was able to orchestrate a multi-national false flag operation disguised as a terrorist attack?

I can’t say how much knowledge permeated Rogan’s head during this discussion, but I do believe some did. Rogan did seem to be genuinely impressed by much of what he had to say. Harris is an incredibly talented orator who has the ability to explain complicated concepts in understandable language, and his strong logic did seem to make some headway. It is also my observation that Rogan very much respects Harris’ intellect, as he seemed to defer to him much more than he would if it was a fellow comedian or one of the many stooges that appear on the program regularly. Perhaps that could have had something to do with it.

It should be noted that the conversation lasted nearly 3 hours. During that time, Rogan and Harris discussed a variety of things, from the concepts of free will and psychic phenomena to psychedelics and meditation. Even foreign policy made an appearance. Though the two did not always agree, they parted

on good terms with the intent to continue the discussion, as well as touch on other topics, at a later time. Because I think these types of conversations are important, I hope they do. I would definitely tune in.

NOTES:

Harris appeared on episode #192 of the Joe Rogan Experience. You can watch the video podcast here: <http://vimeo.com/38198059>

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

SELMA MANSION INVESTIGATION



BY
**KENNY
BIDDLE**

March 4th, 2012
Selma Manson - Norristown, Pa
Investigation of Door Closing/
Slamming Video

It started with a Facebook post, linked to a video entitled “Haunted Selma Mansion Evidence”. I was familiar with the Selma Mansion, having given two lectures at the site during a fund raising event held there in July of 2011. I clicked the link and watched the 43 second video. Honestly, what I saw resembled events I’ve seen just about every Spring, Summer and Fall for as far back as I can remember. However, this article is part of my investigation, so let’s break it down piece by piece.

Description of video(s)

There are two versions of this video, edited from the same footage. The first version I viewed was posted on YouTube by the Pennsylvania Underground Paranormal Society (<http://www.pupsteam.com/>). The second version can be viewed at the end of episode 15, season 2 of the Ghost Detectives internet program, which can also be found on YouTube at (<http://www.youtube.com/>

watch?v=OkkqcCfYMWI). Both versions of the video are from the same camera, and of the same viewpoint – a hallway looking into a bathroom, with a doorway seen to the right and an opening (to stairs leading down) to the left. A soda can and soccer ball are seen on the floor, between the bathroom and doorway to the right, yet not in the path of either doorway.

In the first version (posted by PUPS), the video starts at Time Stamp 10:21:43 on November 4, 2011. We can see that the bathroom door is open, but not completely (as in it is not pinned against the wall). It was approximately 60-70% in the open position. As we watch, the door begins to move back and forth slightly, and at 10:21:57 begins to close, stopping at about 30% open position (ending at Time Stamp 10:22:12). The video then jumps two hours ahead to Time Stamp 12:25:29, where we see that the door is now about 10% in the open position. We then see the door move quicker than previously, slamming against the doorframe. A few seconds later the video fades to black, ending at Time Stamp 12:25:38 (1).

In the second version (Ghost Detectives), the video begins at Time Stamp 12:25:05 with the door in the 10% open position, and slamming against the door frame. The clip fades to black at 12:25:40. The video resumes at 12:26:01 and we get to see a longer period after the door slam, witnessing that the door did not latch when it hit the doorframe (this part is not included in the P.U.P.S. posted version). The door can be seen opening up slightly, moving back and forth for a few seconds before the video ends at Time Stamp 12:26:39. The large movement of the door at the beginning of the P.U.P.S. posted version is absent. After the video fades to black, the statement “Every possible way to debunk this was attempted with no explanation found” is displayed onscreen (2)

While watching both versions of the video, some issues immediately came to mind;

- The videos are edited (obviously) to show short clips, which fits nicely at the end of an episode or to play on YouTube. The issue is that there are

two versions, each leaving out a part the other adds on. The only consistent part is the door slamming. Not only were the videos cut to fit a short video clip, but both skip ahead...over two hours in one version.

- Noises on both versions may indicate someone was in the house, even though it is stated that there was not. Traffic noise can be heard quite loudly in the background, but there are several obvious sounds that seem to be coming from inside the house. We simply have no confirmation that the house was actually empty, other than the word of those I spoke to (members of both teams involved). However, as I will demonstrate, they can be mistaken with their information (in addition to an event that happened while I was in the mansion with only my son, which I will also explain later).

- First impression was that this was simply air flow through the house, creating high/low pressures. There is nothing to confirm whether a window or door is open, or was opened, somewhere in the house. There is nothing set up (such as crepe paper, feather duster, etc.) to show if there was any air flow through the doorway.

- With no one (allegedly) in the house, there is absolutely no confirmation of the conditions inside the building at the time this video is taken. Any statements saying “there was no wind that day” or “there wasn’t any air flowing through the

house” are baseless.

- Why did they create two versions? The version used in the Ghost Detectives episode actually looks more like air flow than the version they supplied to the P.U.P.S. team – which had the more “dramatic” door movement, yet the Ghost Detectives billed the version they used as “the scariest evidence recorded at the Selma Mansion”.

If you haven’t already figured it out, my first impression of this video is that it was caused by air flow in the house. I’ve heard, and seen this phenomenon hundreds of times over the years – any time a window was left open, the bedroom or bathroom doors would move back and forth, and slam multiple times into the door frame or the wall. These videos simply showed me something I’ve been familiar with for as long as I can remember.

I posted a question on the YouTube page for the P.U.P.S. version under the Comments section, asking “Is it possible that this is due to air flow?” (1). I knew from my visit back in July (2011) that the windows in the mansion were in poor condition – broken, cracked, missing glass panes, and gaps between frames to which I could stick my finger through. The interior of the building had exposure to the outside, making air flow a very plausible explanation.

Steve Foersch from the P.U.P.S. group responded to

my post, and mentioned “Odd jobber Joe replaced all broken windows and draft is minimal.... Yes, there is air flow in the mansion from windows and vents. But to actually close that door takes much more force than your average draft” (1). As it turns out, it actually doesn’t. When you have a high pressure moving to a low pressure, the air being displaced is acting on the entire surface of the door, not just one part – such as with the table fan Foersch used to try and blow the door closed (2). Surprisingly little force is needed to close the door (5), but we’ll get more into this later on.

At the same time the above conversation was going on, I contacted Steve Barry of the Ghost Detectives, the team that filmed the episode at Selma Mansion and captured the video in question. I presented my “air flow” possibility to him as well. Barry mentioned a warp spot in the floor where the door stopped after the initial (bigger) movement of the door in the P.U.P.S. version of the video, adding “there was no breeze that day, no window opened, no draft in the house to cause it. You need force to push the door past that warpness in the floor”. I’ll address the “warpness” in a moment.

Barry also mentioned a soda can and soccer ball, which can be seen in the hallway in the video, commenting that “... neither moved, if there was a breeze they would have possibly moved too”. However, due to their placement, both items were

not in the path of air flow coming from either the bathroom or the bedroom off to the right of the camera view. Both items are blocked by the walls/door frames, so neither item would be affected by air flow.

During these two conversations, I was able to arrange a quick visit to the mansion. The P.U.P.S. team was hosting a ghost hunting fund-raiser, and my travels that night had me only about ten minutes away. After some text/posts (1) and a quick phone call to Mr. Foersch, I headed over. I was greeted by Lisa, P.U.P.S. team leader, and lead inside where Foersch was waiting for me on the 2nd floor. He escorted me to the 3rd floor, pointing out where the camera had been set up and showing me the bathroom door itself.

I found that the door moved quite freely back and forth on its hinges, with very little effort from me – actually using my “pinkie” finger to easily push it from full open to up against the door frame and back again. It did not require any increased force to move the door at any point in its travel, as Barry had, suggested when he stated “you need force to push the door past that wariness in the floor” (4). When compared to the bedroom doors, the bathroom door was noticeably lighter, as well. In order for the door to “latch”, it required considerably more force. Unless you turned the knob to latch it, you basically had to slam it hard to get it to latch... a byproduct of

an old, stiff latch system.

Originally this was an issue, when I had only viewed the P.U.P.S. version of the video which ended with the door slamming “shut”. While speaking with Foersch during this visit, he informed me that the version of the video used on the Ghost Detectives episode was different than the version they sent him. It is in this version we see that the door did not latch... because the door opens about 20 seconds after slamming against the doorframe (I’m still confused as to why this was left out of the P.U.P.S. version).

Since this was only a short visit (I had prior commitments), I asked to come back at a later date, which the PUPS team graciously agreed to.

The following day, I resumed my conversation with Barry of Ghost Detectives. I explained what I had found and observed, and also sent him a link to an article on Slamming Doors (5). The very detailed article explains Positive and Negative pressure areas within a house that causes an open door to “slam” due to a window being open. It also explains that it takes very little force to move the door, as the door closes and the “opening” for air flow decreases in size... pressure behind the door increases dramatically – causing that signature quick and hard slam.

After reading the article, Barry responded “Very interesting, but no windows were open and I don’t believe a small

draft would make a door shut... it would have to be a lot larger than a draft. I can’t go with this explanation because they’re talking about windows open. If it is a draft from a broken window, yes... a crack, no” (3). I couldn’t really argue the point too much, since I had not had a chance to look at all the windows and check for cracks, broken glass, etc. (the night of my quick visit, I was under a time constraints and simply couldn’t check the whole house). I do know that we’re not simply talking about a small “crack” – the window in the bathroom (seen in the video) had a gap between the top window and the window frame that I could stick my finger through (approx 5/8 of an inch), which ran the length of the window (30 inches). This is equal to a 1 7/8 (almost 2 inch) by 10 inch opening....not really that small.

Drafts in a building will create pressure differences throughout, called Positive (high) and Negative (low) pressures. Wind outside can produce changes that create both positive and negative pressures inside a building: As air is blown in (causing a Positive pressure) or sucked out (creating a Negative pressure). Common issues caused by pressure imbalances and improper air boundaries (not being sealed from the outside air) are doors slamming, noises, whistling and unusually hot or cold rooms. As air comes into the room, it creates a positive (high) pressure, which will always move to a negative (low)

pressure area...which means the air goes through a doorway to a hall or another room...to equalize the pressure within the building. As the air is displaced, it pushes on the door – acting on the entire surface of the door as the air flows around it, on all sides, to get out. This is what moves the door, and eventually slams it. However, if air is being sucked out through a window, creating a negative pressure, air flow is reversed and will act against the opposite side of the door...opening it. Of course, this information is based on a window being open, and both Foersch and Barry stated there were none. Keep reading...

In the Ghost Detectives episode, Foersch is shown using a table-top fan inside the room, in an attempt to recreate the event in the video and push the door closed. This simulation is not the same as air coming in from the outside, because it is not creating a positive pressure. The fan is simply moving around the air that is already in the room, it is not introducing more air (creating a positive pressure) or taking any away (negative pressure). In addition, the fan is only acting on part of the door, rather than the entire surface of the door. Less force is required when that force is acting on a larger surface, rather than on a smaller part.

Barry had also questioned “Why hasn’t this happened again and again if this draft flows through the house?” Well, we honestly have no idea

that it hasn’t. The Selma mansion is not under 24 hour surveillance, and constantly changing air pressures within the house (due to air flow from outside) can account for a door slamming against the door frame, yet opening back up – just as we see in the video in the Ghost Detectives. Yes, in the video the door is not seen opening completely to its starting position, but we do see it open back up because it did not latch. The videos are also clipped, and we don’t know if, say...two more hours later, the door opens up to where it started. This could be an event that happens over and over...but no one would be the wiser. Still, we don’t know for sure if there are any open windows. Time to see...

I had proposed an experiment that first required me to visit the mansion and take measurements of any openings at all the windows and doors; gaps between frames, cracks in frames or glass, etc. I arranged to meet with Foersch at the mansion on Sunday, February 19 2012. We chatted for a while as he showed me many of the improvements he and the volunteers have made over the last few months (which, by the way, they have done an incredible job on). As he explained they finally had running water at the sink in the kitchen, I noticed that the window in there, facing the back of the house, was broken up top...with a large opening to the outside. This was my first indication that the information “all broken

windows were replaced” was mistaken. The shutters outside were closed, but did not seal the leak in the least. Clear sky was visible through the gap of several inches at the top, while from the outside, we can see that the shutters are broken, with gaping holes at the bottom.

Foersch set up two video cameras focused on the bathroom door, while I began systematically searching each window and measuring openings. I was half-way through the 3rd floor when Foersch had to leave (for a personal appointment), but he allowed me to stay in the mansion and continue my work, a gesture that is uncommon (in my experience) from ghost hunting teams...yet really should be the norm.

I continued my measurement-taking for about 15 minutes, when my son (who was learning the ways of investigating) said “Dad, I hear someone walking on the stairs”. As I walked down from the 3rd floor, I was met by a gentleman walking up, who introduced himself as Russel, the President of the Norristown Preservation Society. He had come in because there had been an “overnight group” (ghost hunt) the night before, and he was checking to see if everything was in order, and turning off lights. I explained who I was and what I was doing (measuring windows).

Russell’s unexpected visit brought up an issue: the people involved in the video stated that no one was in the

house at the time, yet noises in the video elude to the contrary. Russell coming in the day after a ghost hunt to “check if everything was in order” opens up the possibility that he, or someone else, came in during the time the video cameras were recording. Russell made a comment that “there’s no need to check the 3rd floor, there’s no electricity up there”...a statement that adds to the possibility that he, or someone else could have come in, yet are not seen in the video because there was no need to turn off anything on the third floor. I would like to see the footage from the other cameras, one of which is seen in the video pointing down the servant’s staircase. They may offer clues as to whether someone was actually in the house at the time the video clips were shot.

After Russell was satisfied that everything was in order, he gave me a brief history tour of the house (which was nice), and then departed. I continued my work, finding a large 3 inch by 4 inch hole in the closet ceiling of the room to the right of the bathroom. The hole opens up to the attic, which had me climbing up there to take a look. There are two windows up there, at either end of the house. The circular one that faces the parking lot has a screen stapled to it, but no glass. It is completely open to the outside.

I moved on, finding that every window on the 3rd floor had at least a ½ wide hole or gap between windows and frames,

with a few spanning the full 30 inch length of the window. All of this, plus the broken window in the kitchen, offered plenty of opportunity for air flow through the mansion. So, I moved to the 2nd floor. I began sketching the layout while standing in the hallway, moving first to the bedroom located to the left, rear of the mansion.

My first sight was the window to the rear of the mansion; covered in dark green trash bag plastic, with two too-short shutters leaning against it. As I walked up to the window, I watched as the plastic moved in and out, with the air coming in the house...and being sucked out. I snapped a few photos, then lifted the shutters off (they were not attached, just leaning against the frame). The plastic was stapled down, so I made no attempt to remove it, but I didn’t have to – there was a large opening (3 to 4 inches wide) that ran from top to bottom on the right side. I was able to stick my hand through to touch the shutters outside. This window was mostly broken out, with most of the glass gone, which can be seen from the photos.

After this finding, I decided that further measurements were going to be a waste of time. There were clearly openings that allowed more than enough air flow through the house. I took a video walk-through of all three floors (minus the basement), packed up, locked up the mansion and headed home.

Conclusion

The bottom line is simple – the video shows a door being manipulated by air flow/pressure within the mansion, a phenomenon most of us have experienced over the years when the weather is nice outside. There is absolutely nothing to indicate there was any paranormal presence manipulating it, nor is it “scary” by any means. Rather, it is simply a case of misinterpreting the data.

We have a plenty of information that backs up the very plausible explanation of how changing air pressures can close, open and slam a door. The main argument from both teams was that “there were no open windows, and all broken windows had been replaced”. After gaining access to the mansion, I found that these statements were incorrect – there were broken windows on all four sides of the mansion, with openings much larger than a slightly “open” window. In addition, I have videos (9, 10), which I have uploaded to Youtube, showing the air flow coming in through the broken 2nd floor window. We have the key that makes this explanation not only plausible, but most probable.

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SOUPERNATURAL

BY JASON KORBUS



KIRK CAMERON'S DARK AGE THINKING

Homophobia has been in the news a lot lately. Republican presidential contenders such as Rick Santorum and Mitt Romney have each taken stances against homosexuality and gay marriage that have bothered many. And basketball star Jeremy Lin wears a wristband manufactured by Active Faith, a company with ties to Lake-wood Church and the anti-homosexual views of its pastor, Joel Osteen. It seems that, where negative sentiment about homosexuals is concerned, religion plays a vital role.

That pattern continued when Kirk Cameron appeared on Piers Morgan's CNN talk show Friday, March 2nd, to promote his documentary, "Monumental." Cameron has long been outspoken, both in his faith in the Christian concept of god, and his contention that being gay is sinful. So, once again, during the interview, the Dark Age thinking in his head poured out of his mouth.

When asked by Morgan his thoughts on gay marriage, Cameron first attempted to evade the question. But that is not really surprising. He must know, as do people like Joel Osteen, that when he discusses his anti-gay views in public, he is surely going to take criticism. They must also be aware that it causes a number of gay people a great deal of emotional distress - particularly those who are Christians themselves, or who have been shunned by their fundamentalist Christian family. Of course, that never

seems to prevent them from saying, "No comment," does it?

No. Instead, Cameron opened his yap and talked about how being gay is not only "unnatural," but also "destructive" to society. It is the kind of homophobic speech one has heard before; typical not only in its hatefulness, but for its lack of basis in any kind of factual reality.

Homosexuality occurs in a large variety of species in the natural world. At least 450 by some counts. Attention Kirk Cameron: that makes homosexuality natural. Please stop using your ridiculous and antiquated logic to justify your own homophobia. The idea that gay people exist may bother you, I really don't know. But taking this unsupportable and demonstrably untrue stance is futile.

Many are also interested in what history books he has been reading that teach homosexuality has led to the destruction of societies. The Bible he believes in as the word of god certainly isn't a history book. But then, nor does it even count homosexuality in violation of the Ten Commandments. So, even if God exists, He doesn't seem to have much of a problem with gay people. He just keeps on creating them. So then, which responsible history book shows how the presence of gay people caused society to crumble around them? Never happened, folks. And Cameron knows it. This, in my opinion, is nothing more than another

weak attempt to reconcile his own personal problems with the homosexuality in the world he sees as being diametrically opposed to his values.

Now, of course, Kirk Cameron has the right to his beliefs, and the right to speak his mind. But so, too, do people who find his beliefs disgusting. Cameron's supporters are angry at those knocking him because he is, as they say, "only an expressing an opinion." They say he has Freedom of Speech. He does, indeed. What he does not have, however, is a Freedom from Criticism.

Kirk Cameron and his supporters would be wise to learn the difference.

NOTES:

* A clip from Kirk Cameron's appearance on Piers Morgan Tonight - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xS4OqDvhprA>

THE M.O. OF LOREN COLEMAN



**BY
BOBBY
NELSON**

Osama Bin Laden's Death – How does it relate to cryptozoology? Oh, that's right, it doesn't!

What do the horrific, pedophilic events that took place at Penn State have to do with cryptozoology? Oh, that's right, NOTHING!

How did the tragic events on 9/11 have any significance in relation to cryptids? Again, nothing!

The recent school shooting in Ohio, which left a number of students dead; does this relate to cryptozoology? No, it really doesn't.

Who thinks that they do? Loren Coleman.

This isn't the first run in I have had with Loren Coleman; about 6 months ago I called Coleman out on using cheap tactics to get hits on his blog. Now, I have used words like "cheap" and "shameless" when calling out Loren and the only thing he and his supporters can do is criticize me on a semantics game, saying that these words are subjective, which may be true...but so is the title "debunk-

er" he throws in my direction every other week. So, let me use some clarification before I continue.

What did I mean when I said Loren Coleman uses cheap tactics? Well, if we consult the dictionary we can see that the word cheap is an adjective. An adjective that doesn't only mean low in price, but it also means dishonorable. I feel that what Loren Coleman does and how he uses serious media and news stories to spread his cryptid propaganda is highly dishonorable, or cheap.

So when I say dishonorable, what do I mean? Dishonorable - morally unacceptable and liable to make somebody lose the respect of others. This definition fits Coleman to a T. It is dishonorable to use the gruesome events of the Chardon High School Shootings that occurred in Ohio to talk about Melon Heads, which are mythological humanoid with small bodies and big spherical heads.

What did I mean when I said Loren is "shamelessly" plugging his book? It simply means that this act was done without shame, especially where others would feel shame. Yes, using the catastrophic events of 9/11 to promote a book on cryptozoology is a very shameful act and repulsive.

Now let me make it clear, I don't care what people believe in; whether it be Bigfoot or Sasquatch, Nessie or the Loch Ness Monster, Chupacabra or Texas blue dogs, I don't care. It



is not the content that I'm attacking; it is the circumstances used to help promote these cryptids, and the way Loren Coleman uses real breaking news to generate traffic to his website. Let me give you a few examples to clarify my points:

On May 1, 2011, the United States Navy Seals were successful in eliminating the terrorist, Osama Bin Laden. On May 2, 2011, Loren Coleman (the man who claims not to care about hits) writes a post called, "Was Bin Laden As Tall As Bigfoot?"

On November 5, 2011, Jerry Sandusky was arrested and charged with seven counts of involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, eight counts of corruption of minors, eight counts of endangering the welfare of a child, seven counts of indecent assault, and other offenses. On November 12, 2011, Loren Coleman wrote a post titled, "Nittany Lions," which he ties the events to cryptozoology because the Nittany Lion is Penn State University's mascot.

On February 27, 2012, in Chardon, Ohio, there was a tragic school shooting which sadly and tragically took the lives of a few students. On February 29, 2012, Coleman wrote a post titled, "Chardon and the Melon Heads." I probably shouldn't forget to mention that again in this post, Coleman SHAMELESSLY plugs another one of his books. Cheap and shameless;

if you have forgotten what those words mean, just reread the article.

Coleman isn't fooling anyone except his devout followers. Many people, not just skeptics and debunkers, find these acts distasteful and cheap. Just to show I am not using an anecdote, here is a small portion of a comment someone left on the article about Coleman comparing 9/11 to cryptozoology: "It just comes down to bad journalism, and a lack of the associated integrity.

Anyone who claims to be so open-minded should be able to take negative commentary along with the douchebags kissing his ass all day."

Another person named Jim said: "Loren also exploited tragedy during the Tucson Arizona shootings in the same way—nineteen shot and six killed.

<http://www.cryptomundo.com/cryptozoo-news/loughner/>

He censored my comments on that day explaining my disappointment as well. I posted this on the recent blog post as well... yet to be seen if they'll be published. I also have screenshots and email correspondence from Loren outlining his censorship and "explanation." Essentially, Loren Coleman would exploit his mother's obituary to sell a book. There now is a clear, provable pattern. Sad, very sad."

Wait a minute; did Jim say Loren exploited the tragedy of the Tucson, Arizona shootings? Surprise!!! Loren promoted another book in that article, as well.

I also agree with Jim when he says there is now a clear and provable pattern going on here and regardless of what Loren claims, these are cheap and shameful tactics used to generate traffic to the blog and to help sell a few more books. Loren, get yourself a little integrity. None of these major news events relate to cryptozoology in any way unless you forcefully make the pieces fit.

Your fans may love you, but I just see you as someone trying to grab a dime on the death and misfortunes of a few innocent people. It is a very foul thing to do.

BANAL COMMUNICATION



BY
NICHOLAS
CALLIS

Last month, I contacted... a prominent figure in the ghost hunting community after stumbling across his website. There were a number of claims made in the mission statement that piqued my interest, not only for their dubious nature, but their perfunctory usage on a large number of similar sites. I emailed the owner of the site, requesting a brief interview for publication in *The Bent Spoon* to which he agreed. “Honored” was the term he used. Seen below are the five questions I sent, intending to spark a larger dialog.

In your mission statement, your team is referred to as a “science based research group”. I’ve noticed that a good number of modern ghost hunting groups or paranormal investigators have dubbed themselves a scientific group, but when asked to explain, they typically claim that it merely means they don’t use psychics. Can you describe to us your investigative methods and how they follow the scientific method?

Your team employs quite the formidable arsenal of equipment, ranging from environmental monitoring devices, Tesla coils, and home-brew gadgets. What is the purpose of gathering any of this data? More specifically, if any anomalous data were recorded, what do you do with this information and how can you determine that it is in any way paranormal or even anomalous?

The well known Sherlock Holmes quote, “When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.” seems to be a common method among paranormal investigators. If you do practice this method, how do you feel that it is possible to overrule ALL possible explanations in what can only be considered an uncontrolled environment? Is this method not truly a thinly veiled argument from ignorance (i.e. the decided explanation is true because it has not yet been proven false) ?

In the research articles section of your website, you have a list of PDFs taken from physics text books and lecture slides covering topics like Faraday’s law, quantum mechanics, and electrodynamics. In what way do these pertain to your research and how have you managed to connect these natural phenomena to something that has no real documented properties or characteristics? Furthermore, if you have formed a hypothesis in regard to the relationship between these phenomena, how do you propose to design falsifiable and repeatable tests to confirm it

Could you define the term “pseudoskeptic” and differentiate it from what you believe is true skepticism?

Also, are you under the impression that the general population of the skeptical community is simply dismissive of paranormal claims or that they may just hold a higher standard of what is claimed to be evidence?

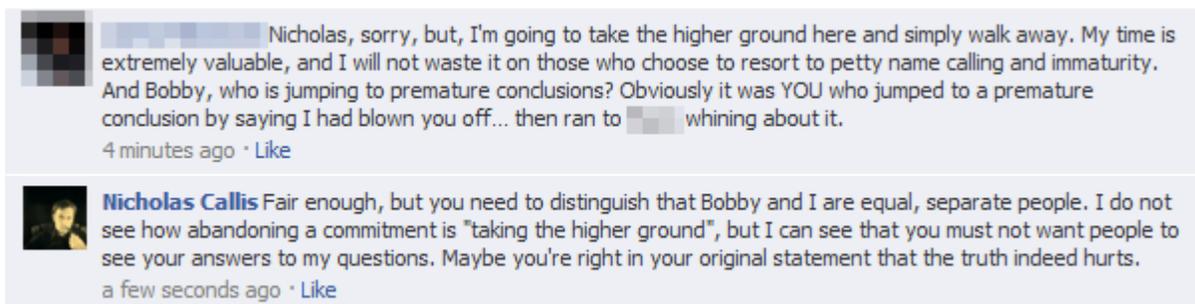
Typical, run of the mill “ghost hunter questions” that, possibly, could form an interesting discussion, if said “best- selling author/ researcher/ president and founder” could support his claims of “scientific- based data collection”. Perhaps I gave him too much credit at the time, because I was very eager to hear back from him. After two weeks past and no word, I wrote to him, asking if he was having trouble. He claimed that he hadn’t received the questions (oddly, given that all other emails arrived in his inbox without a problem.). Co-Founding partner, Bobby Nelson, predicted this situation, however, and recommended sending the questions from multiple emails. I took his advice and resent them from two personal accounts in addition to the official Bent Spoon address. I received confirmation this time, along with a brief explanation that it might take a few days for the response, as he was preparing for a presentation.

40 days later...

After no word from the interviewee I decided to check up with him on Facebook to see how he was coming along. I was surprised to receive quite a bit of animosity from him and his co- authoring partner, with claims of unprofessionalism and name- calling. He had also apparently sent the answers quite some time ago and insinuated that I was having “email issues”.

To give a bit of context; Bobby Nelson had emailed the partner of the paranormal investigator in question in the interim of my forty day wait, inquiring about the interview questions. Bobby had some familiarity with her, unlike my subject, and assumed the he could casually approach her. The result didn’t go as expected

Back to facebook. I explained to the two making accusations that Bobby and I are indeed, two separate people, to which I received an apology from the co-author just before I was blocked from her, hindering my ability to actually read it. The rest of the conversation was screen captured and is seen below: (I have left the name and pictures anonymous)



*my “truth hurts” comment is in reference to the original post, which stated; “Looks like I pissed someone else off today. the truth hurts, doesn’t it?”

 **Bobby Nelson** I don't remember seeing Nick doing any name calling here...did I miss something? Also, you never sent the interview nor responded to emails....wait let me guess, you didn't get them. It's ridiculous, we had to send you the interview questions from 3 email addresses just so you couldn't keep saying you didn't receive them. Don't agree to do something if you don't plan on doing it.
10 minutes ago via mobile · Like

 Your interview questions were received, completed, and sent back. You never had the courtesy to acknowledge receipt, and even if you did NOT receive them, never emailed to check on the status... you simply fired off a nastygram to [redacted]...You guys need to get your shit together. The right hand is obviously not talking to the left. I don't want to tell you how to run your business, but, I would offer that certainly could not be a sustaining business model.
5 minutes ago · Like

 **Nicholas Callis** As Bobby mentioned, I sent the questions from three separate email addresses after you CLAIMED not to receive them. None of the email accounts received a reply.This error could easily be straightened out by forwarding the original email. Of course, I can see why you'd refuse if you had something to hide
3 minutes ago · Like

 **Nicholas Callis** In fact, If you agree to forward the original email to me right now, I will not only promise you right here not to run the interview, but publish a public apology to you in the next issue.
a few seconds ago · Like

 What the hell would I have to hide? You questions were trite, pointed, and insulting to serious paranormal research. I actually had quite a bit of fun turning your lame questions around and making you look foolish for even asking them in the manner in which you choose.
about a minute ago · Like

 **Nicholas Callis** put your money where your mouth is then. That's a pretty bold claim, [redacted]
53 seconds ago · Like

As I was wondering to myself why he would have enjoyed making a fool of me and my questions if he had truly finished the interview long before any problems arose, the entire post was deleted and I was blocked from his page.

As a skeptic and writer for this magazine, I like to stress that I not only encourage, but enjoy hearing different perspectives and discussing the paranormal with believers. While this was a discouraging experience, I still intend to write to other paranormal investigators and I honestly hope that they continue to submit articles and engage with us at the Bent Spoon.

Anyone interested in contributing to The Bent Spoon, be it an article, comment, criticism, request, or even answering the questions from this interview can always feel free to contact us at thebentspoon@live.com or my personal email, nicholas.callis@gmail.com

in lieu of the interview mentioned in the previous article, we're running an old interview with Sherry Shriner, conducted and transcribed by Bobby Nelson

Bobby Nelson: Sherry this isn't the first time you and I have been engaged in conversation, but for the readers can you tell us about yourself, your message and what you aim to achieve?

Sherry Shriner: I was stood up by the Lord to be His mouthpiece on earth over 10 years ago (<http://www.sherryshriner.com>). Since then I've written two books, put up multiple websites and have 2 radio shows (<http://www.sherrytalkradio.com>) to reveal the truths He gives me to reveal. He has led me into deciphering Bible Codes (<http://www.hiddencodes.com>) and the Alien Agenda aspect of the NWO (<http://www.thewatcherfiles.com>) and how to fight against them and sabotage their plans through an ancient energy we call Orgone. This dimensional ether energy is also known as the 5th element and will destroy wicked and evil beings (aliens) ...it even crashes their UFOs. I have a website on it at <http://www.orgoneblasters.com> .

I am here to wake up an army and lead them into personal protection and even combat against Satan and his forces and strongholds in these last days. <http://www.tearingdownstrongholds.com> , <http://www.chemtrailagenda.com>

Bobby Nelson: The last time we spoke by phone on Strange Frequencies Radio we discussed the sudden death of birds, fish and cattle. You quoted scripture from Hosea 4:3 Because of this the land dries up, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea are swept away. Why is it easier for you to assume these incidents to be apocalyptic instead of having a natural cause?

Sherry Shriner: Mankind, and even Satan himself, have always just been tools of the Lord's Himself to fulfill His aims and goals on earth. All of the events happening today, even the NWO, were foretold thousands of years ago through the Biblical prophets. There isn't anything that happens here that isn't allowed or guided by the Most High Himself. Satan does a lot of wicked things here on earth, as does man, and the Most High allows it to test mankind. Everything follows a pre-determined path, we aren't left in the dark as to what Satan's plans are here on earth. It is our choice, however, as to whose side we are on, God's or Satan's.

Those who don't take a decisive stand belong to Satan's side on default. The devil claims them since God w rejects them as His. If you don't make a commitment to belong to the Most High, He will reject you.

Bobby Nelson: This is in reference to the last question. You know mass death in animals is rare but it does happen, for instance, 60,000 ducks suddenly died in the Baltic Sea in 1976, 1,000 Shearwater birds were found dead in the Bahamas in 2007 and in 2006 thousands of sea turtles were found floating dead in El Salvadore. Why were these events not considered apocalyptic?

Sherry Shriner: I think the mass global deaths happening all within the same time frame is what has sparked so much interest and fear as to the wonder of what's going on. The internet wasn't a communication medium in 1976 and the deaths of ocean life the past few years we're easily blown off by science with whatever excuses they gave. It's harder for them to control information now, especially

on a wider scale, when so many people are aware and waking up to their plans to implement a NWO using famine and the control of food and water to try and force people submit to it. The Alien plan for a NWO is based on 'cleansing' the earth...and that's the eventual elimination of all LIFE.

Bobby Nelson: Also wouldn't you think that if these animal deaths were prophetic in nature the numbers would be larger and not so localized? I mean 200 cows on one farm isn't that terrifying, nor is 5000 birds in Arkansas.

Sherry Shriner: Well put that with all the other deaths springing up everywhere in the same time frame and people have a reason to panic and wonder what's going on...

and it's part of what they would refer to as collateral damage..they test their chemical weapons on them...and/or their deaths are the result of Planet X coming in and changing the earth's magnetosphere...there's more than one reason...as always..for everything they do and allow to happen, or simply can't even prevent. There's several factions fighting for control over this NWO...so you're going to see multiple events and disasters started by one faction, and then others started by other factions...and then there's things none of the factions can control, such as earth changes and the affects of incoming planets and other objects toward earth.

Bobby Nelson: Let's move on to a different topic, you have a term you use for certain people in places of power, you call them lizards. Can you explain exactly what a lizard is?

Sherry Shriner: A lizard is a reptilian, a snake...Nahash is also a term used in Hebrew to describe this 'snake'. Our ancient history begins with such a snake in the Garden of Eden who seduced Eve.... (<http://www.serpentseedline.com>)

Satan is a lizard...a dragon...he shifts in various forms..as does those who serve him behind the scenes to control this world through governments and their military's. Today, many of our world leaders have been possessed and are controlled by these Reptilians who inhabit, possess, and control their human bodies. Shape-shifting, also known as morphing, is becoming more and more noticeable because people are waking up and catching these creatures lose their human forms and shift on TV itself.

Bobby Nelson: How do these lizards get to earth and how do they acquire such high ranking positions of power?

Sherry Shriner: For the most part they never left earth. They inhabit the earth via underground cities and DUMBS our governments build for them. They also have star ships and inhabit moons, planets, and star systems in space. "UFOs" are their means of travel back and forth to and from earth.

Bobby Nelson: Why is it that people perceive events one way and certain people like you see something totally different? What I mean is when I hear about the JFK assassination I think Oswald did the shooting, you think it was the driver of Kennedy's car. I see the WTC buildings fall due to the airplane explosions and the fire weakening the steel, you see that it was a demolition with explosives. I see President Obama, Jay-Z and other "famous" individuals as human, you see them as lizards. I see what I think to be flares in the sky and you see fallen angels. Why is this?

Sherry Shriner: Some people are just more open to search for what the truth really is...people who buy and believe the government sponsored lies and media without questioning them have their eyes and ears closed to what truth is. They don't want to believe they are lied to on a constant basis. You don't want to go against the 'norm' because you're comfortable with what that is. When you learn and see for yourself what and who controls our governments and media, you would see the lies coming from a 1,000 miles every time they open their mouths.

Bobby Nelson: I know you think certain people of power are after you; however they can't touch you because you are protected by the Christian God. What makes you believe that the God of the Bible is the Supreme Being and it's not the god of some other religion? The argument because my Bible says so, can't be used because other religious texts say the same thing about their god.

Sherry Shriner: It all goes back to Genesis 3:15 when the Most High pronounced judgment on Lucifer for his sin in the garden of Eden. Mankind would have to be redeemed...and Lucifer knew this...he created religions everywhere over the following years to try and mimic and sabotage God's plans to redeem mankind so that when He did through His Son Yahushua, mankind wouldn't believe it or recognize it for what it was or who HE was. There is only one Savior of Mankind, there is only one empty grave.

Bobby Nelson: A question back I brought up that I see flares in the sky and you see fallen angels. Can you talk about how you believe UFO's to be fallen angles? Also what is the difference between a Reptoid or Reptillian and a Lizard and are they associated with these fallen angels?

Sherry Shriner: Orgone crashes UFOs...Wilhelm Reich was the first to discover this and we perfected it. A lot of his work was destroyed by the government but copies of it can be purchased through the Wilhelm Reich museum. President Eisenhower befriended Reich and asked him to develop a weapon that could combat the increasing alien threat back then...Eisenhower wanted to fight against the aliens.. but then the aliens befriended him and made treaties with him. At that point, Eisenhower no longer had a use for Reich, and this is when the government began to harass him, throw him in prison on trumped up charges and destroyed all his work. Orgone is also a healing energy and Reich was able to heal people through his orgone generator box...and our government wanted to stop and destroy that as well. They're not in the healing business, there's no money to be made if people are healthy compared to the \$ billions that are made when they are dependent on pharmaceuticals and medical care.

Bobby Nelson: Now I know you do have a way if taking care of these creatures, you have talked in detail about Orgone blasters, what exactly is an Orgone blaster and what does it do?

Sherry Shriner: An Orgone blaster is comprised of 4 ingredients, fiberglass resin, copper coil, crystals and aluminum shavings. It creates a piezoelectric energy that produces this ancient ether energy, a living life force energy, also known as the 5th Element. This energy saturates the atmosphere, space, and even saturates other dimensions. With the Orgone being a living life force energy, the 'dead' (demons) can't stand it..the fallen can't stand it...it burns them and they can't breathe around it. According to the Bible Codes it is a very apocalyptic weapon in these last days as a defense and protection for people against alien and demonic beings.

We have also found that our Orgone will dissolve chemtrails and not allow them to stick in Orgone

saturated areas. It also defends against ELF attacks and even can defend against weather disasters such as tornadoes and hurricanes...they hit Orgoned areas and switch directions! It has 100 different uses, prevents night terrors, alien abductions and many other things as listed at <http://www.orgoneblasters.com>

Bobby Nelson: Is this Orgone water toxic to humans?

Sherry Shriner: No not at all. It's almost the same, if not the same, as Holy Water. Spray orgoned water on evil beings and it will burn them!! It's like an acid to them.

Bobby Nelson: Do you have any empirical evidence of these things such as lizards and that Orgone water works to kill them or is this all subjective?

Sherry Shriner: Well you can't bring the 4th dimension into our dimension (yet)..but those who can see and hear into the 4th dimension and even astral dimensions can confirm the power of Orgone. It does everything I say it does and as revealed in the Bible Codes.

In our dimension, if you wear an Orgone pendant in public places you'll immediately notice the stares and disdain from others because you are wearing it. People who are possessed by demons or soul scalped by the lizards and are near Orgone will break out in hives and boils, and become agitated and angry by the presence of this Orgone. I've heard from people whose neighbors moved out of their neighborhoods immediately after they had placed orgone around their properties. You'll see people become very hot and agitated when Orgone is around, such as Benny Hinn and Obama... hot flashes, agitated, loosening their ties, becoming angry, are typical characteristics of how they react.

Bobby Nelson: Last time we spoke by phone, we talked about an adventure I would love to partake in with you, which was going to Lima, Ohio where you discovered a base when giants are housed. I am curious as to how you found out about this base and how you know giants are living there?

Sherry Shriner: I saw that Lima, Ohio kept coming up in the Bible Codes and so I did further research on it which was then confirmed to me by a friend who knew of this base and was able to give me a general description of where it was.

Bobby Nelson: What do you plan to do once you get to Lima?

Sherry Shriner: Saturate it with Orgone Blasters and other Orgone devices that we have. They can't survive or thrive in Orgoned areas.

Bobby Nelson: Well Sherry, again I would like to thank you for your time and I hope to talk to you again soon.

Sherry Shriner: You're very welcome.

PAREIDOLIA OF THE MONTH



CT scan of a testicular mass comes from Dr. G. Roberts of the School of Medicine at Queens University, Kingston.

THE

BENT SPOON

