

THE
BENT SPOON

A stylized white spoon graphic where the bowl is a simple oval and the handle is a thin vertical line, positioned between the letters 'S' and 'P' in the word 'SPOON'.

one year anniversary

A large, bold black outline of a five-pointed star, centered on the left side of the page. The interior of the star is filled with the same red color as the background.

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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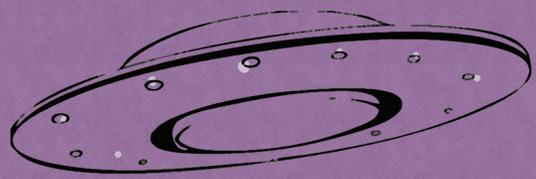
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PARANORMAL EYEWITNESS REPORTS



BY JASON KORBUS

SOUPERNATURAL

BY JASON KORBUS



In the world of paranormal investigation, strong evidence for the existence of ghosts, monsters, ET visitations and the like, is severely lacking. What is usually passed off as positive evidence; things like blurry photographs, grainy video, footprints and EVPs, have never and will never prove that these paranormal beings we seek are anything more than hoaxes, misperceptions, misidentifications, or even figments of our imaginations.

In the absence of strong evidence, however, we will always have stories. Eyewitness accounts of personal encounters with paranormal quarry are numerous among investigators. There are few paranormal teams or enthusiasts I've ever talked with who didn't have a story about a time they saw a ghost dart through a room, an inter-dimensional shadow being out of the corner of their eye, an alien spacecraft hover over their roof, or a Bigfoot duck behind some trees. If only they would have had their camera, they say!

But try explaining to them that,

while their eyewitness testimony is interesting and maybe even worthy of further investigation, by itself it isn't evidence of anything. Oh, the fuss many will raise! "I know what I saw" they'll exclaim. "You can't tell me I didn't see a ghost/chupacabra/alien spacecraft because you weren't there!"

And that's true. We weren't there. But we can say, without question, that their personal anecdote isn't data - in other words, it doesn't matter how many stories they have, their eyewitness account isn't proof. It's tough for many to believe, but eyewitness testimony is incredibly unreliable. So often in the paranormal community we are told that eyewitness testimony is the most important evidence there is. The problem is that human beings are notoriously awful at interpreting sensory information, particularly when it is a random or even scary occurrence, like seeing a ghost or monster might be.

One case in point, though not a paranormal event, was the recent

tragic death of Trayvon Martin. Regardless of where you come down on George Zimmerman's criminal culpability in his death, whether murder or self-defense, the multiple eyewitness accounts of the incident have an incredible amount of discrepancies among them. Reading them, it's tough to believe they are all describing the same circumstance.

For example, a man named John interviewed by a local Fox station says he saw Zimmerman, wearing a red jacket, on the ground and being beaten by Trayvon. But an unidentified witness spoke to CNN and reported the exact opposite. He says that he saw the bigger man, Zimmerman, was on top of the boy, Trayvon Martin.

A caller claimed he had seen the struggle, and that a man in a white T-shirt was the aggressor. The problem? Neither Zimmerman or Martin were wearing white T-shirts.

A woman named Mary Cutcher heard the gunshot and then called police, telling them she

saw a black man standing over another man. But the only black person she would have seen, Trayvon Martin, was just too dead to be standing over George Zimmerman at that point.

And what about that gunshot? Several witnesses reported hearing multiple shots. But police confiscated the weapon used by Zimmerman in the shooting and only one bullet was fired.

It's really quite incredible. The events of that day only happened one way. And though multiple people saw and heard the events unfold, many are telling vastly different stories. Why?

It's not that people are lying. What they saw and heard was emotionally jarring and they were taken by surprise. Things were happening faster than they could reasonably be expected to take it all in. Because of this, they misperceived or misinterpreted different elements of what was happening. And because our memories only get worse with time, we misremember and even confabulate details later. It's a very normal and very human reaction.

The same holds true for paranormal investigators and their experiences. Be it ghosts, monsters or UFOs, it's rare to have a group of people independently report seeing the same thing unless they've gotten together and influenced each other first. Usually, a group of strangers can't

even agree on the shape or color of the alien spacecraft. Or what a ghost on the EVP is supposed to be saying. Or...well, you get the idea.

Stories of personal experiences with what people call the paranormal can be intriguing. But they're just that - stories. They aren't good evidence by themselves. And they certainly aren't proof. And, much like the eyewitness accounts of the events surrounding Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman, there are just too many discrepancies.

Whether the investigation involves possible criminal activity or paranormal activity, our conclusions must be drawn in proportion to the evidence at hand. The blurry photographs and static-y audio recordings aren't going to prove that the laws of physics were suspended and that consciousness survives bodily death. Neither, it seems, are the stories.

WARNING Radio
with Bryan & Baxter



Live
Monday Nights
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THE WISDOM OF NOT UNDERSTANDING



BENJAMIN RADFORD

About two years ago during a conversation a friend of mine mentioned a movie she thought I'd really like. In fact it was a documentary, and as a fan of docs, I was eager to hear more about it. "You'd find it interesting," she said. "It's kind of about stuff you investigate. It's called *What the Bleep Do We Know!?* Have you heard of it?"

I had indeed heard of the film, a New Age-y jumble of pseudoscience and mysticism about supposed links between consciousness and quantum physics, produced by followers of J.Z. Knight, a woman who claims to dispense information from a 35,000-year-old ghost. In fact I had done my best to keep it from misinforming the public when it was first released, writing a few short skeptical pieces about it.

Not wanting to get into an argument with my friend, I just let the conversation trail off. But before I did, she made an interesting comment: "To be honest I didn't really understand a lot of it.... But you're really smart—you would get it."

She assumed that the reason she didn't understand the film's

information was because she had no background in science. I, on the other hand, did not understand the film precisely because I do have a strong background in science. When people don't understand something they are told, there are three possibilities or root causes:

1) Most commonly, the person assumes, as my friend did, that the problem lies with the listener. Her (quite reasonable) assumption was that the film was comprehensible, that if she didn't understand it, it was due to her limitations or lack of knowledge. This was a mainstream, feature-length documentary film with some famous people in it—including physicists. Surely these people would not appear on camera discussing self-evidently non-sensical ideas such as that thoughts can control reality.

2) Less often, the problem lies with the speaker's inability to effectively communicate—perhaps he or she does not share the same native language as the listener, is disorganized, or has a speech impediment for example. In this case the information and message may be correct and

clear, but communication does not occur because of a problem with the source.

3) Sometimes the problem lies not with the listener, nor with the speaker, but instead in the content. In this case, the reason that the listener doesn't understand what is being said is that what is being said makes little or no sense by any objective measure. This is insidious and difficult to detect because people do not like to challenge authority, especially in public and on a topic they are presumably trying to become educated about. The speaker is not talking gibberish; quite the opposite, he or she may be very eloquent. Furthermore, identifying nonsense often requires some basic understanding of the subject.

In my book *Media Mythmakers: How Journalists, Activists, and Advertisers Mislead Us* I discuss this phenomenon at length and refer to it as "the illusion of meaning." As children we are taught to assume that the words we hear and read have meaning and comprehensible content. When we hear information we don't understand, the common, default assumption is that we

just don't get it—not that the authoritative person we're listening to is speaking nonsense. Yet as we grow older, we are sometimes faced with “information” devoid of content—grammatically correct and often impressive words that are either patently untrue, self-contradictory, or simply meaningless.

Too often we are embarrassed to admit that we don't understand what we are told. We don't want to appear stupid to the speaker or others in the audience. But more people should ask questions, because other people may be just as confused but not want to speak up. There is no shame in not understanding something, and it's a good lesson to remember. Asking for clarification not only helps both the speaker and listener communicate more effectively, but is also a powerful tool in revealing bullshit.

Fuzzy thinking and fuzzy language often go hand in hand. Purveyors of pseudoscience usually use vague terms with unclear meanings and definitions. New Age healers, for example, use words and scientific-sounding phrases like “human energy field” and “vibrational frequency” without understanding (nor clearly explaining) what it is that they are talking about. This is a case where skeptics should be emboldened to raise their hands and ask, “I'm sorry, I don't understand what you're saying.... What vibrations are you talking about? What, exactly, is this ‘en-

ergy field’, and how can science detect it?”

The next time you hear something you don't understand, ask for clarification. You don't have to be apologetic about it, and the situation doesn't have to be confrontational. Those with science and facts and evidence on their side will be happy to explain what they mean. If the speaker cannot explain what he is talking about in plain language—or without resorting to other, even less clear terms and concepts—that's a warning sign that there's confusion on both ends of the line.



LOSING FAITH AN INTERVIEW WITH PETER BOGHOSSIAN AND MATT THORNTON



Is faith a reliable means of aligning your beliefs with the truth? Professor Peter Boghossian says it is not and, in fact, calls faith both a delusion and a cognitive sickness. Having watched his lecture, “Jesus, The Easter Bunny and Other Delusions: Just Say No!” we decided to ask him to share his thoughts with the readers of The Bent Spoon in an effort to further discussion about this important topic. He was kind enough to invite MMA coach and voice of reason Matt Thornton to participate as well.

What follows is the full text of our interview. We hope you’ll find it engaging.

Before we get started, Professor Boghossian, can you please give a brief introduction of yourself to readers who may not be familiar with your work?

I’m in the philosophy department at Portland State University (PSU). My specialty is critical thinking and reasoning. Here’s my PSU homepage: <http://pdx.edu/philosophy/peter-boghossian>

I’ve invited Matt Thornton to answer these questions with me: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matt_Thornton_%28martial_artist%29 Matt was a pioneer in reality-based martial arts training and remains a strong voice of reason.

Matt and I will be debating religious leaders at some point in the near future. This is a good opportunity for readers to understand our positions.

You have gotten a lot of publicity lately for speaking out against faith-based reasoning. Can you explain why you use words and phrases like “delusion” and “cognitive sickness” when talking about faith?

I’m being honest. When one sees faith claims as knowledge claims then it becomes clear that one of three things must be happening: 1) people are pretending to know things they do not know; 2) people are delusional; 3) people use a process to access information about the world (Jonas lived in the belly of a whale, Mohammad flew to heaven on a winged horse) and that process is inaccessible to me.

Have you gotten any backlash from your friends or colleagues due to your recent outspokenness on the topic of faith? How has religion affected the world negatively? In other words, what’s the harm?

There’s been considerable backlash from my colleagues—including formal complaints. I’ve not experienced any backlash from my friends.

When thinking about why people are upset with me, it’s really rather remarkable. I’m asking to people to do two things: 1) formulate their beliefs on the basis of evidence, and 2) stop pretending to know things they don’t

know. It's both amazing and tragic that this is considered controversial.

Let's re-phrase the second half of your question: How does superstition affect the world negatively, since religion is by definition superstition. It's an ongoing, global catastrophe.

Do you feel there is anything good about having faith, or believing in a personal god? If so, what?

What do you make of the people who say that it takes faith to be an atheist?

As I said in my May 6th lecture for the Humanists of Greater Portland, these terms need to be unpacked.

Let's define faith as, "Pretending to know things you don't know". Let's define atheist as, "A person who doesn't pretend to know things he doesn't know with regard to a creation of the universe". While somewhat clunky, after these substitutions the sentence becomes:

"I don't pretend to know things I don't know enough to be a person who doesn't pretend to know things he doesn't know with regard to a creation of the universe".

How do you feel about the position of agnosticism? Is it maybe an easy way of getting out of answering a question about one's belief system, or is it a justifiable position to hold?

Atheism is a statement of non-belief. Atheism is not a knowledge claim. The atheist thinks that there's insufficient evidence to warrant belief in a god. Atheists don't definitively claim there's no god.

Once this is clear, there really is no need for the term "agnostic". I'm not a Tooth Fairy agnostic. I'm a Tooth Fairy atheist.

One popular argument people use to justify faith is that, without God, the world would take a downward spiral into immorality and anarchy. How do you react to this?

I just spoke about this in a recent NEPA Freethought Society podcast. Morality exists despite religion, not because of it. The hijacking of morality by religious clerics is one of the greatest scams of history.

It's never been clear to me what the relationship is between a god and morality. What does God have to do with morality? If the universe was created by a being that we call "God," how does this necessitate that we should behave in certain ways? I just don't understand this move.

If one wants to claim that God is imbued with certain characteristics, like kindness and charity, then I want to know how someone knows this. Perhaps there was a being that created the universe but it doesn't care one iota what we do with ourselves. Again, the relationship between God and morality can't be accepted by fiat. Just as one can't accept by fiat that God created the universe and now it doesn't care about us.

Now if the claim is that there's no God, but that we should tell people there is so they'll act like reasonable human beings and not go on killing sprees, then this is another claim entirely. This is an empirical claim. It's also one that promotes lying, dishonesty, and insincerity. We're being asked to compromise our personal and intellectual integrity for the hope of some kind of social consequentialism. I'm not buying it.

Some who identify as having faith often say things like, “Atheists have faith as well. They have faith their family loves them, or that their wife won't cheat on them. And they have faith in science.” How do you respond to that type of argument?

Stating, “You have faith that your wife loves you,” does not do what the utterer thinks it will do. He thinks that this statement will show that even you, the “militant atheist,” has faith in some things—you just choose to have faith in different things. One person has faith in the promise of an afterlife, while another has faith in a worldly concern that you know to be true.

These claims are not parallel. One is an empirical claim about a living breathing person, the other is a claim about a make believe “spirit” being. It would be akin to comparing belief in horses to belief in unicorns.

Recent studies suggest that atheists are among society's most distrusted groups, comparable even to rapists in some circumstances. Why do you think being an atheist has such a negative stigma attached to it?

Ignorance.

Many people agree with what you are saying, but are afraid to “come out of the closet” as atheists themselves. Do you have any advice for someone who may be struggling with this decision?

Try living life authentically. Try having genuine, honest relationships with people. You'll probably lose some friends, but in all likelihood even your ex-friends will respect you. (It may also be interesting to learn what those lost relationships were based upon).

Being honest, epistemically humble, and not pretending to know things you don't know, are qualities that you should not be afraid of. These are virtues to which you should aspire.

Follow Peter on Twitter [@peterboghossian](#)

Follow Matt on Twitter [@aliveness_ape](#)

Join Peter's mailing list and learn about his upcoming public lectures and debates, from your mobile phone text “DELUSION” + your email address to 22333.

BRYAN & BAXTER



Investigating the investigators...

For years Bryan and Baxter have put out the fires started by unprofessional paranormal groups. More than once they've received 3am calls from terrified people who've been mistreated by other "investigators". These groups cause damage by using risky investigation practices and spreading dangerous beliefs. Finally, Bryan and Baxter decided to do something about it. They began

investigating the investigators to expose the harm they cause to the public. The pair exposes fake claims of space aliens, abduction victims, demonic possession, dangerous alternative medicine, and people who believe they can communicate with the dead. The results are hilarious, often dramatic and always entertaining.

Beyond the deception they uncover, Bryan and Baxter still encounter strange phenomena that they can't explain immediately. They've seen chairs move in an empty room, they've heard disembodied voices, and once Bryan was slapped by an unseen hand. Sometimes, the questions remain unanswered; at least for now...





BY MYRON GETMAN

Investigating the Olsen Champ Video

On May 21, 2009, someone calling themselves “Mookiebone” uploaded a video to YouTube which purported to show a “strange sighting” on Lake Champlain. The short video, shot just before sunrise, showed what at first appeared to resemble the silhouette of a large turtle swimming across a body of water. As you watch, it becomes apparent that the creature has a clear “body” and head and doesn’t appear to be an effective or smooth swimmer. After about 20 or 30 seconds, the creature appears to become startled and/or fatigued and submerges so that only its head and, presumably, its nose is above water. Towards the end of the video, the creature swims further away and submerges or disappears. The video then abruptly ends. What resulted was typical in the cryptozoological scene when something grabs hold -- a whole lot of armchair analysis and outright fabrication. Things were not helped by “Mookiebone” -- who was later identified as Eric Olsenii -- in that it does not appear he provided the entire video and almost certainly saw the animal he filmed get in and

out of the water.

However, this did not prevent Internet cryptozoology “experts” from promoting the video as being authentic footage of “Champ” on their sites and discussion forums. Buzz built up around the video and it even got regional, if not national, attention. Champ, if you are unfamiliar with the cryptid, is supposedly the Loch Ness-type creature that supposedly lives in Lake Champlain. People claim this critter has been seen all over the lake and the story has even been covered on such shows as “In Search of...”.

When I was younger, I thought I had seen Champ while visiting Fort Ticonderoga -- which is on the New York side of the lake. In actuality, what I had observed was a small, localized rogue wave or standing wave -- a waveform that is propagated across a body of water as the result of an out-of-sight boat passing by earlier, reflection, interference, or wind action. Having spent a fair amount of time on lakes and having been fooled by lake phenomena, I decided to take a look at the video

and proposed the hypothesis that what was filmed was a partially submerged log being transported by a subsurface current.

The summer of 2011, I was on the other side of Lake Champlain in Burlington, VT for a conference and I decided to take advantage of some free time between sessions to investigate the site of the Olsen video in order to see if I could get any useful information. My intention was to, hopefully, get scalar measurements with my thinking being I might be able to determine the size of the animal in the video. What I found, while not as accurate as I originally intended, is pretty damning to the belief the Olsen video shows Champ.

My first challenge was to find the location of the original video. The Olsen video lacks any glaringly obvious indicators to its location -- because what would be otherwise useful landmarks were concealed in silhouette -- but I wasn’t so easily discouraged. Armed with the local media reports stating Olsen was in Oakledge Park, I knew the

general area in which to look. The park, itself, is a wonderful little place located on the edge of downtown Burlington and its suburbs which includes a lot of swimming areas and an enormous tree house. Throughout the woods, there are old stone stairways and chimneys -- their Victorian-era summer cottages long gone -- providing a ghostly counterpoint to the lush green canopy and underbrush. As for the park's shoreline, I found out that the majority of it is steep blocky crags which are quite suitable if you're sunbathing. Many people were out with their towels and skimpy swimming suits trying to achieve their perfect tan. If you ever find yourself in Burlington, do yourself a favor and visit the park. It really is a beautiful spot. Essentially, my investigation started with me walking through the park, along the shoreline and through the forest, until I found the location the video was filmed. A pleasant way to spend an afternoon -- if I hadn't been suffering from both plantar fasciitis and gout at the time! All the same, I had a good limp while visiting the park.

The Olsen video was shot along Blanchard Beach which is a public swimming area for the people of Burlington. On one side of the beach is Oakledge Park, on the other side are private properties filled with large, New England-grey condominiums. A popular public bike path runs along the landward side where joggers, walkers, and bike

riders were constantly in motion. A nice sandy beach is available for swimming. Important to my investigation is the fact the swimming area has a very, very gradual slope -- on the order of a 5 degree decline by visual estimation. This gradual slope was possible because the swimming area was the sediment deposition zone in a shallow and sheltered bay. The particular day I was there was a rather hot one for Burlington and many people had decided to come out to swim and cool off and the sounds of splashing and laughing children filled the air.

In the Olsen video, buoys are observed. Having no reference points within the frame of the video, it is impossible to determine the depth of the water. I've observed online commentators using the buoys as relative scales of water depth and, therefore, indicators to the supposed size of the creature. However, when I was at Blanchard Beach there were multiple reference points. A lot of them! Based upon my direct observation of the children swimming and walking to the buoys and the fact they were congregating and standing around them, I made a visual estimate that the depth at the buoys is approximately 4 feet as the children were not treading water or hopping to keep their heads above water. They were standing and walking around with relative ease. This direct observation is contrary to some of the conjecture on the

Internet that the buoys were in 8 or more feet -- a completely unsupportable assertion.

The Olsen video abruptly ends and, to me, suggested the animal videoed got out of the water. This has been a problem for many who have seen the footage and some have suggested that the animal submerged. I was curious if that was possible. Fortunately, there were swimmers in that area and, based upon the swimmers and one dog (more on that soon), the depth in this region was visually estimated to be at most 2 feet. Consequently, it would be impossible for any large creature of any sort to submerge -- excepting, of course, the anaconda -- which isn't well known for its ability to overwinter north of, oh say, Florida. Regardless, aquatic and semi-aquatic snakes do not lift their heads out of the water like the creature seen in the Olsen video.

As I was sitting and taking notes, a wonderful coincidence occurred. A woman brought her dog out for a swim right in the general area where Olsen mysteriously stopped filming! As I watched and filmed, the dog went out with its owner and then turned around and swam back towards shore! Wouldn't you know it, the profile of the swimming dog was almost identical to that of the animal in the Olsen video!

My observations are pretty straight forward. First, Olsen

was filming in a very shallow public swimming area with a maximum depth portrayed in the video of approximately 4 feet. This would eliminate the possibility of a “brontosaurus-type” creature. Second, the area where Olsen stopped filming is very shallow and it is impossible any large creature could have submerged there. Third, my direct observation of the dog swimming in the same location and in the same fashion as that of the animal in the Olsen video indicates a swimming dog has the same profile as that of the animal Olsen filmed.

Contrary to my previous published position that a partially submerged log could explain the Olsen video, it is now my opinion that the animal Olsen filmed was, most likely, a large dog. If it was not a dog, it would have to be an animal about the size of a Great Dane or Irish Wolfhound which would rule out animals such as adult moose or otters. Furthermore, the high prevalence of dogs in the area and the ease of access to this location would make it highly likely that someone brought their dog out for a swim and Olsen simply videoed it. This contention is further supported by when Olsen started and stopped filming (or edited the video accordingly). We never get to see the animal enter or leave the water which would have eliminated the mystery of what Olsen had filmed. Whatever the creature was, it was heading towards shore. In

my video of the dog swimming, it can clearly be seen it shakes its head when it stops swimming. Having been on the location, I am convinced Olsen knew exactly what he was filming and may not have wanted floppy ears or a clear profile giving away the true identity of the animal. The low lighting conditions combined with poor quality camera-phone video further worked to obfuscate the animal.

Finally, why not a baby moose? It is a real possibility and some people have suggested this as being the possible culprit. Moose are superb swimmers and a relatively healthy population exists in Vermont. However, juvenile moose go no where without their mothers and, accepting the video does show a baby moose, it would have been, as most, around 3 weeks old (moose are born in May through June) and its mother should have been nearby preparing to trample and stomp a threat to her calf. So, if the creature is a juvenile moose, where is it’s mama and why would they be in Burlington? Definitely not for the shopping. Anyone whose been there knows there isn’t a single moose boutique, restaurant, or dance club in the entire town! Seriously, there isn’t reliable shelter for concealment. Moose are pretty reclusive creatures and things like barking dogs and traffic tend to spook them off. I accept there is the possibility of a baby moose being orphaned and heading into Burlington

but, to date, I haven’t been able to find any media reports of baby moose sightings in Burlington around the time Olsen claims to have taken the video. I’m confident a confused and disoriented moose calf would have drawn some attention in urban Burlington – assuming, of course, it didn’t drown in Lake Champlain. Based upon my observation of the film’s location and the woman with her dog, I believe a large swimming dog – because of their prevalence in the area – is the best explanation for the Olsen video followed by the possibility of an orphaned moose calf. Regardless, the Olsen video is definitely not proof of the existence of Champ.

- 1 The original video was posted at <http://youtu.be/YT49LQMxthg> but was later made private. A copy can be viewed at <http://youtu.be/gqFdryDRjn8>
- 2 <http://www.wptz.com/news/19643845/detail.html>
- 3 <http://www.themadskeptic.com/2009/06/new-champ-video.html>
- 4 <http://youtu.be/kXv7P-cleokc>
- 5 <https://picasaweb.google.com/baron.army/OlsenChampInvestigation#slideshow/5635359192976201506>
- # 6 <http://youtu.be/8-wf-54-ZKDY>

THOSE ARE SOME PRETTY FRANK ASSUMPTIONS



BY
**BOBBY
NELSON**

Recently, I was asked to be a guest on a radio program to give a skeptical view on paranormal claims. One of the topics we covered was the Ghost Box. For those that do not know what a Ghost Box is, it is a radio that is purposely broken... Ghost Box enthusiasts call it modifying... to enable the radio to continuously scan channels. As the broken radio scans up and down the bandwidth (the sweeping method), paranormalists will ask questions and listen to the fragmented words of DJ's, commercials, songs, talk radio, and static for answers from the beyond. Some paranormal enthusiasts swear by this method of communication, other investigators like myself say that this is nothing more than audio pareidolia and subjective validation. Most paranormalists create their own Ghost Boxes or purchase them already "modified" off of eBay or some other website that specializes in ghost gadgets. I have seen these devices go for up to \$2500; it is ridiculous on what some people will throw money away... but that is beside the point. There are hundreds of different ghost boxes, however the most coveted of these boxes is one called a Franks Box,

which was designed by Frank Sumption, the "father" of the ghost box. After listening to my interview, Frank decided to call me out publicly on my Facebook:

Skeptic is one thing, I'm very skeptical about haunted hot spots, but deny deny deny is another, and that shit gets you blocked. As if that matters.

Now, I actually have no idea what he is talking about, however before I could ask, someone called him out on his "skepticism" by saying, "Skeptical? You talk to broken radios."

Now, this may sound a bit harsh, but I believe in being blunt and getting right to the point... I also tend to agree with this individual 100%.

Hardly. They are redesigned, and reconstructed radios. That's thing, paranormal investigators and skeptics have one habit in common....they never ever check the facts, just keep puking up the same tired ass shit and passing it off as God's gospel truth.

This is exactly what I was talking about earlier, these ghost box enthusiasts seem to believe that opening up a radio and snipping wires and pins to cause it to function improperly is modifying or redesigning it... NO!

it is called breaking it. And no one seems to know what these unchecked facts are, I think it is a safe bet that Frank doesn't know either. He is just spewing nonsense, in his words he is just "puking up the same tired ass shit and passing it off as God's gospel truth."

Frank continues:

Y'all clueless about the theory behind the boxes, and the history of this method dating back to the very beginnings of radio. Easier just to swallow the pablum of lies you are fed by so called science.

First of all, I think it is Frank who is clueless about the history of this method dating back to the beginning of radios. That is because IT DIDN'T EXIST UNTIL FRANK INVENTED IT! Frank lives in a very self delusional world; he creates a device and honestly believes that there is history and validity to it, no matter how much evidence you show him that he is just simply wrong, he throws out ad hominem attacks and accusations. Frank cannot be swayed from his personal beliefs.

I noticed Frank was also ranting about me on his Facebook (at this point and time I hadn't responded to him on my personal

Facebook yet). He was going on a tangent that skeptics have no idea how to test the box, Frank explicitly stated that the box has to be done every day for at least a week for at least one hour a day to get positive results. He went on to say that the skeptics probably never even turn on the box. I finally responded, I simply said that I would be glad to test the box with an open mind. I, very nicely and respectfully, explained that I would test the box for one month for two hours a day and would report my findings openly and honestly. Frank wasn't having it, he just spewed out more accusations.

Yeah, with skeptics, testing involves all ways to make it not work. Like put it in a faraday cage, block all signals...re-tarded, since "the box" is simply s method if supplying the raw audio---bits of speech developed from sweep a radio across ut's tuning range. The entities use this raw audio to build voices. Illt fuctions as an analog version of EVPmaker. Sine you already know everything about spirit comunicstion and science, testing must irrelavant.. your mind us made up, the verdict already passed to Judge Randi.

I fell for that test bs claim once, and I seriously doubt Skepbitch even turned the box on. You science twits actije anyone interested in the so called paranormal are morons to be bullied by your so apparent supior intellects. Degrees!? Victims of the American dysfuntional education

system. If your smart cuz of a degree, maybe I should chug on over to The Wizard Of Oz, and get me a brain.

Y'all don't do any research, don't check any fact, do look at the history if this shit, just puff out your chests and deny deny deny deny deny deny. Oh yeah, and guess what!? I simply do not care some science dweeb thinks....they have lost all ability to do science, since all is known...

OK, so we have some things here that Frank obviously doesn't understand. First, of course when testing the box we are going to try and find ways to not make it work; we are testing a pretty extraordinary claim here. It is also what science does; it doesn't just look for reasons to confirm the claim. So using his example about placing a ghost box inside a working faraday cage and blocking all radio signals, if anomalous voices are still clear and coming out of the speaker it still wouldn't be proof of the dead talking; it would only mean that the voices are not transmitted through external and non-static electric fields, for example, radio frequencies. However, we would be able to move forward with more testing. The only problem is, when a ghost box is put inside of a working faraday cage ALL SIGNALS STOP!!! This means that the person using the box is hearing nothing more than fragments of speech that are coming through the radio frequencies. Ah, but Frank wea-

sels out of this by saying that the ghosts need the radio's audio in order to develop the speech. No, the correct statement is you need the radio's audio so you can give a nonexistent entity a voice. If the box produced positive results under rigorous testing, no scientist would deny its authenticity, but what Frank doesn't understand is that this is what science does. The scientific community is not a club of people who nod in agreement with one another. When a claim is made, people test it to see if results can be reproduced, they do this to prove it wrong or prove it valid – if it can't be proven, scientists go back to step one. Frank stays at his conclusion, science is wrong, complete ignorance on Franks part.

His claim about James Randi is not valid either. Yes, James Randi is sort of the poster child for the modern day skeptic movement, but most skeptics are free thinkers and don't rely on the approval of Randi or the JREF (James Randi Educational Foundation). However, if Frank could prove his claims that he created a device that can contact the dead and it passed proper controlled testing, Frank would win the \$1 Million Dollar Challenge.

Now when Frank mentions the SkepBitch he is talking about Dr. Karen Stollznaw, who wrote a brilliant piece about Frank and his broken radio and it was in just my style, blunt, to the point, and honest...everything Frank hates.

Frank goes on to talk about how he has been bullied by the science community and people with college degrees and superior intellect. I don't believe that at all, we are only telling Frank what he doesn't want to hear, that there is nothing to his ghost box. In the world of Frank Sumption that's an attack, we are calling him a liar, and that couldn't be further from the truth.

Again he makes false assumptions and accusations on what skeptics and scientists do. We do the research, we do the testing, and when the evidence doesn't hold up, we conclude that it doesn't do what the person is claiming it can do. We use science to give us the proper methodology to do these tests. Besides, this is a logical fallacy called shifting the burden of proof. It isn't up to the skeptics to disprove the claims of Frank Sumption, it is up to Frank Sumption to prove the claims he is making.

Another thing, I personally don't care if one has lost the ability to use/listen to reason or if they fail to understand the value that science has; that, quite frankly, isn't my problem. I am interested in what is true, not what Frank thinks is true.

I do this shit for my own curiosity. Does not matter what the self proclaimed brainiacs claim. One thing is certain, y'all just as honest and real as the rest if the so called paranormal.

This is perfectly alright, I also investigate paranormal claims

out of self curiosity, I am just interested in truth, not belief. Also, I don't know why Frank keeps saying we are self proclaimed "brainiacs," just another ad hominem. Frank can't argue his point, so he resorts to name calling, assumptions and accusations. I have always liked this quote by Christopher Hitchens, "I always think it's a sign of victory when they move on to the ad hominem."



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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.

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BENT SPOON

A Response to my Critics

by Jason Korbus

When I wrote a feature story in a recent issue of *The Bent Spoon* about the Shroud of Turin, I knew I would get some backlash. The question of its authenticity is largely an issue of faith with many people, and to even put forth the argument that it is likely a medieval forgery is enough to make many folks sore. To be fair, I did the best I could with compiling the scientific evidence, but there was much I didn't include. I also tried hard to provide a fair appraisal of some of the better arguments in favor of the Shroud's supernatural authenticity. I'll leave it to readers to provide criticism, but I expect the best criticism to be fair or at least insightful. Dan Porter's recent review of my article was neither.

In his post from January 31st, Mr. Porter says that, in writing the article, I show how little I know about the topic. There is certainly much I don't know. There is also much of what I do

know that I left out of the article. What are the things Mr. Porter feels I should know? He says I left out the numerous references to "such items" through history before 1353. But I am not interested in references to "such items." I am looking for references to what we now call the Shroud of Turin. References to the Shroud of Turin's existence back around the time of the Resurrection, for instance, would have been interesting. So what am I missing out on? Mr. Porter doesn't say. He does, however, write that my article was full of "cafeteria facts" and "inaccuracies." What are they? Again, Mr. Porter never says.

So who is Dan Porter? Dan writes a regularly updated blog on Wordpress where he posts commentary on many issues related to the Shroud of Turin. I've found Dan's site to be interesting reading from time to time. But I didn't use his site as a source for my article be-

cause he doesn't have much of a defensible stance on the Shroud, and the arguments he uses to justify them are often weak or based on quotes he has taken out of context.

Consider the first four sentences on his blog's description where Dan writes, "The Shroud of Turin may be the real burial cloth of Jesus. The carbon dating, once seemingly proving it was a medieval fake, is now widely thought of as suspect and meaningless. Even the famous Atheist Richard Dawkins admits it is controversial. Christopher Ramsey, the director of the Oxford Radiocarbon Laboratory, thinks more testing is needed."

Let's go one by one. "The Shroud of Turin may be the real burial cloth of Jesus." Yes, Dan. It may be. Pigs may fly. Cows may one day learn to speak English, too. A lot of things "may" be real or could one day happen. But they probably won't.

“The carbon dating, once seemingly proving it was a medieval fake, is now widely thought of as suspect and meaningless.” No. It really isn’t. Sure, there have been some questions raised. Further experimentation has been done, some of it even peer-reviewed. And there are those that believe the carbon dating was done on incorrect portions of the cloth. But widely thought of as suspect and meaningless? What poll did Dan Porter take or read where he found out the consensus among scientists now says that the carbon dating was meaningless? Dan never says. That’s because Dan probably made this up to justify his own belief.

Next, Dan writes that, “Even the famous Atheist Richard Dawkins admits it is controversial.” Well, of course it’s controversial! There isn’t much in the world of religion that isn’t controversial. But that’s just a classic red herring, isn’t it? A logical fallacy meant to turn attention away from the evidence. By using the word “controversial” in relation to the Shroud, Dawkins isn’t saying the science was controversial or that he now believes the Shroud is a supernatural artifact. Porter mined the quote to serve his own needs. Here is the actual quote Porter used and took out of context:

“The dating of the shroud remains controversial, but not for reasons that cast doubt on the

carbon-dating technique itself.”

Perhaps I am misunderstanding Porter’s reasons for including the Dawkins bit. If so, I apologize. But when I read that on his Shroud of Turin blog, it just rubs me the wrong way. It feels cheap.

Finally, Mr. Porter adds that “Christopher Ramsey, the director of the Oxford Radiocarbon Laboratory, thinks more testing is needed.” But that’s not quite what he said, either. It is true that he is all for continued research and further testing, but he also adds that he doesn’t feel carbon monoxide contamination could have had a significant effect on the dating of the Shroud. Ramsey writes that, “Carbon monoxide is only present in very low concentrations in the atmosphere. Carbon monoxide is not very reactive and would not be expected in normal circumstances to react with a long chain polymer like cellulose in linen. No contamination like this has been detected before, even on very old samples (up to the 50,000 year limit of radiocarbon) which would be much more severely affected.” My problem with Dan evoking the name of Christopher Ramsey is similar to my problem with the Dawkins quote earlier. It just feels like a cheap attempt to grab credibility for his belief in the Shroud when the evidence is lacking.

I respect Dan Porter, but I am sorry he didn’t get more out of

my article than what he did. I truly am interested in finding out the truth. In my opinion, the scientific evidence points largely in the direction of the Shroud being a medieval forgery. Dan seems to go in the opposite direction, however. As he writes on his blog, “Now, as someone who believes it is the real burial shroud of Jesus of Nazareth, I...realize that a leap of faith over unanswered questions is essential.”

Not for me, Dan. I agree there are unanswered questions. That’s typical when science tries to solve complex problems. But that is no good logical reason to take up the argument to ignorance that, just because I can’t explain it, I have to leap to the supernatural. I think, in the end, that’s why we’ll always disagree. I simply do not feel that same need.

FURTHER READING:

<http://thebentspoonmag.com/2012/01/30/its-a-miracle-issue-8-is-here/>

<http://shroudofturin.wordpress.com/2012/01/31/bent-spoon-article-on-the-shroud-of-turin/>

THE FAITH HOPE SHELL GAME



**BY
MATT
THORNTON**

The Associated Press recently announced that it is now accepting sentences that begin with the word ‘hopefully’.

To those of us who may not be grammar experts this may seem like an odd announcement to make, but my guess is that the majority of us, myself included until I read the story, probably didn’t know that the original and proper English usage of the word ‘hopefully’ operates much the same as the word ‘joyfully’ does.

“We rode in the car joyfully.”

“We went swimming in the ocean hopefully.”

Through American slang the common usage of the word ‘hopefully’ changed to mean ‘I hope’, as in, “hopefully it won’t rain today”. It became a desire rather than a description.

How many times have those of us within the skeptical community been assailed with one or another variation of the falsehood that goes something like this;

“You defined faith as ‘belief without evidence’, however, don’t we all use faith in one form or another?”

“Don’t you have ‘faith’ in science and reason?”

“Isn’t trusting reason itself a matter of faith?”

I have heard this bit of casuistry time and again from believers of all manner of superstition/religion/woo-woo. As I wrote in:

<http://thorntonsguerillablog.blogspot.com/2012/01/faith-based-reasoning.html>

equating faith based thinking to reason, rationality, or the scientific method is a fallacy, always.

Believers in superstition like to assume that everyone, at some point, needs some form of faith. In order to rationalize this assumption they play between what amounts to three fuzzy descriptions for the term ‘faith’. The first is to define faith as something akin to a positive attitude, as in, “have faith, you’ll do fine”.

The second is in my opinion technically the same, but takes a slightly different tone, and could easily be defined as wishful thinking, as in, “I have faith that tomorrow will be better than today.” Note carefully that in both definitions the word “faith” could easily be replaced with the word “hope”, and the meaning, context and sentence structure would require no modification.

The third use of the word faith is the problematic one. It is a claim to knowledge. For example someone says, “I know Jesus is the one true God”, and when asked to present evidence for this extraordinary claim they state, “It is a matter of faith”. Note that in this case the word ‘faith’ could not be replaced with a word like ‘hope’, or at the very least we can safely say that believers in superstition tend not to replace it with such a word.

Ask yourself the following, when was the last time you heard a Christian minister say anything like this, “We hope that Jesus is Lord and savior”?

When was the last time the Mormon Church declared, “We hope Joseph Smith actually did find golden tablets”?

When was the last time the Catholic Church stated: “We hope Jesus was born of a virgin”?

Have the Jehovah’s Witnesses ever said, “We hope 144,000 truly is the number of people elected to rule in heaven”?

Does the Dalai Lama say that he “hopes” he is the 13th reincarnation?

When was the last time a Mullah got up in the mosque and said that he “hoped” Allah was the one true

God?

All of the statements above could be said without any required dishonesty, and if religion came to mean hopes and desires, rather than claims to knowledge, then religious superstition in all its forms would be a lot less problematic for the planet; but religion by its very nature is dishonest. All religions, East and West, make claims to knowledge that we know they cannot possibly know. As such, the use of the word 'hope' doesn't enter into these sorts of assertions that these traditions make.

Here is the sneaky part, when non-believers use the word 'hope', believers want to be able to perform a slight of hand shell game and pretend that this too is a knowledge claim. As we can see from the examples above however, this simply isn't true. If I state, "I hope there is life after death" I am not pretending to know something I do not know, I am simply stating my own desire for how I wish reality to be. However, if, like a preacher I claim, "The soul survives death", then I am positing an affirmative rather than just a hope, I am pretending to know something I do not know, I am lying; and it is in these situations, when pressed for evidence for these outrageous assertions, that believers are forced to play the 'faith' card.

It may seem like I am painting a pretty devious picture of how believers handle argument, but I don't think it is always that simple. The conflating of faith and hope is nothing more than a confidence trick, one that most likely evolved as many things within religious traditions evolve, as a defense

mechanism against critical thinking and the questioning of dogma. To be clear, all manner of superstitions rely on this particular bit of chicanery, from traditional religions, to alternative medical quackery, to New Age sophistry; and believers in these faiths may not even know they are engaging in the artifice, or even understand that it is a form of deceit. In fact, they are probably just thoughtlessly repeating the mistake.

Speaking of solipsists, I had a run in with new age Guru Deepak Chopra where, when called on an outrageous faith claim he was making, he attempted to play the very same card. My twitter ID is `aliveness_ape`, here is the conversation:

`aliveness_ape`: until you produce some evidence that consciousness can exist absent the brain, the "cosmic" consciousness talk remains silly.

DeepakCopra: brain exists in consciousness not the other way around.

`aliveness_ape`: where is your evidence for that statement? Absent evidence for the brain existing 'in' consciousness, all you have is an irrational superstition.

DeepakCopra: where is your evidence that your mother loved you, or that you can feel joy?

`aliveness_ape`: you're comparing that for which we have lots of evidence, primate love for offspring, to something with no evidence-irrational. The idea that my mother probably loved me, is not a radical hypothesis. The idea that consciousness exists absent a brain,

is. Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. Produce some, or all you have is theology-superstition.

Deepak's follow up, none, I think we reached the end of his reasoning ability.

When I asked what evidence Deepak had for his extraordinary claim, had he answered, "I have no evidence, but I 'hope' it is true", I may not have had a disagreement with him. In truth, I find Deepak's own Vedantic leanings to be a far more pleasant hypothesis than I do the celestial dictatorship of a sky God.

However, that is not what Deepak said is it? In fact, that is not what any religious or superstitious person says or means when they play the faith card. By definition the introduction of the faith card by the person being asked to present evidence for their claim is an admission of defeat. It is the answer you give when you have no reason, and yet still pretend to know.

This brings me full circle to the point of my essay. The word 'faith' is only required when we are pretending to know something we do not actually know. And rather than a virtue, this is a very dangerous character flaw. In a rational world, not pretending to know things you do not know would be considered a moral advantage. After all, the alternative is lying.

This article originally appeared on Straight Blast Gym founder and MMA coach Matt Thornton's Guerilla Blog, located at <http://thorntonsguerillablog.blogspot.com>

DUSTIN PART 2 PARI

SELF PROCLAIMED
WRITER
PHILOSOPHER
& PARANORMAL
ROCKSTAR



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

BN: So, being that there's no real correlation that science can have with EMF meters, 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 and say that you're feeling nauseous, feeling headaches, and 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 on to this for so long. Before, it was everybody wanted to detect ghosts with it; a fluctuation meant a ghost. 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?

DP: The term "fear cage" gets thrown around like ridiculously. I get emails weekly from people, you know, "Oh, I think my home is like a fear cage, in my bedroom I measured the EMF levels," I get this stuff all the time from people. I've been in places that sometimes...this one case actually, in particular, that I did that was for the show, where the guy did have ridiculously high EMF levels, and I felt nauseous when I was in there. But he also had varnishing fumes everywhere. He had open cans of paint and wood

varnish. I mean, that's the stuff that'll make you nauseous, you know? So a lot of it, man, like you said about the cell phone tower thing, a lot of times it's what you put out there. It's what we were just talking about. Telling people that, "there's activity in this room, and there's going to be this that'll happen," and people will look for it and they look for it and they want to believe it so they'll go with it. I think it's dangerous, you know? It's something that, like I said, I use it as a building block because I think that if you do get two things that work together, not saying that the EMF is going to make you afraid, or whatever, but if you have something that's starting to come together and you have an EMF fluctuation at the same time; there's one case I did in Brazil that that happened and that we had documented, and I thought it was kind of cool because we had two things. Could it have been just a natural fluctuation at the same time, that it looked like something was starting to form? Sure. But at the time, I think it is much better than just having one and saying, "well, this is proof."

BN: Now let me ask you, and I mean this with no disrespect, but what qualifications do you guys have to even make that assumption?

DP: OK, if we could first just don't say, "you guys." I've been away from all those guys for two years!

BN: Sorry, sorry. Sorry about that.

DP: That's OK, I just want to make sure we're clear! Because when people read the interview or whatever, I haven't been with TAPS or Ghost Hunters groups in two years. Left on my own accord, not asked to leave, just left on my own.

BN: Has your life been better?

DP: (Laughs) I've enjoyed being home with my family a lot more.

BN: I'm sure you do, I'm sure you do.

DP: It's very nice.

BN: I've talked to Shannon before and she says going out of the country is insane.

DP: It's brutal, man. People think it's like a big vacation and it's just hard work. It's harder than it looks. Television makes it look like it's a big, rolling party. It kicks your butt and then cerebrally, mentally for me, rather, it's just so tough to be away from my wife and my kids. It's like, is all this worth it, the sacrifice and the strife? But, anyway, I'm sorry, I was getting away from your question. Like I tell everybody, I don't portray myself as a scientist. When I go out there and I do my spiritual lectures, and when I talk for the ministry, I tell people straight up, I'm not a great bible

scholar. I am just somebody that, I'm going out there, I'm looking into things honestly and I'm reporting things honestly. If I don't think there's anything there, then there's nothing there. I hate to say it because I don't want people to think I'm bad at what I do, but I tell people all the time, 95% of the investigations I take people on or they ask me to come check this out, there's usually nothing there, nothing that I can document, you know? And I am not going to tell people that there is something there just because they want it to be. I had a girl at this college campus just last October, she said, "You suck! If Zak Bagans was here, he would know we had a demon!" I said, "Whatever, if that's what you want to happen, then that's what you want to happen." I can only tell you if I see something or if I record something that I think is possible.

JK: He's way better at verbally abusing demons than you will ever be.

DP: Yeah. (laughs)

JK: I did want to ask, though, and it kind of ties in to what we've been talking about, what I would say about the paranormal community in general, it seems like there's a lot of fake expertise, I guess is the best way to put it.

DP: Oh yeah, this one is a specialist in this and...

JK: And they have a Board of Directors. And it's like, "There's five of you!" (laughs) I think you know what I mean, though.

DP: (laughs) Yeah, I do.

JK: And then I think that carries over into their home investigations, they're calling these ghost hunters in that they find on the internet. Usually, they do a quick Google search and they're bringing them into their home. They're looking at them as if they're, if not experts, at least they are trusting their opinion. And then the people come in and they say, "you know, the high EMF causes hallucinations," and things like that. And then you've got people thinking, "I'm hallucinating!" And you've got the people saying, "you know, you've got high EMF in here, you need to get your wiring rechecked," and then people are thinking, "now I've got to call an electrician!" Can you talk about that, I mean, obviously, you see that kind of problem?

DP: I agree with you, it's crazy. And you know, like I said, if people want to look into this field, look into it. I think it's worth looking into.

JK: Oh, I think it's totally rewarding for us.

DP: I think it's cool to have an understanding, to me, the reason I did the television shows

in the first place was because I thought it was a way to show people, spiritually, that maybe had a hard time finding their way, some proof of the afterlife. And then when I started to see the way things were going, the way people were responding to it, I thought, this isn't really going the way I wanted it to go. I think I do a lot better work on my own, and doing the lectures and everything. I'm still interested in doing television but different than what I did in the past, at least I'm trying to do things differently. But, it's funny, you talk to the people on the regular investigative teams, and they have "investigator-in-training" and then they have "co-lead investigator" and everybody's got a name that's spelled out of initials. Just be yourself, just look into the field honestly. If you really want to get into it, read books from people that did this work before the television boom happened.

JK: I remember when I asked KD Foreman on the show and she had six titles. She was, like, Director, Vice President, Researcher, it just went on, like six titles. I said, "How do you find time to get any sleep at night or to do anything else?" and she said, "Well, I don't have a job." I said, "Well, that explains it."

DP: Like I said, man, it's a double edged sword, it's cool because it got people out there looking into it, I think more, and I think the best part was it

got people talking about it more openly. But the sad part of it is that everybody's an expert, everybody's got a demon, and there's a lot of misinformation out there that I think does a lot more harm than good.

BN: I would say that the paranormal seems to be at a stalemate. Everything that people think that they are doing now that's new has been done since the 1800's. There has been no headway in the field. How do you feel about that?

DP: I'll tell you man, that's one of the things I talk about, too, like how I feel that this thing kind of comes and goes, you know, it ebbs and flows. We start like, OK, we are going to try and do this, try this different, and then it just kind of gets washed back. It's like watching the ocean pounding the shoreline. Two steps forward, two steps back, it's just back and forth. And what I honestly believe is that we're not meant to know all the answers. I just don't think we are. I think it's cool to look into, I think there are certain aspects where maybe some people can run into trouble if they don't do things properly, but I really think that we're not supposed to know everything that there is to know. I think the people who are out there parading around as if they know all the answers are really doing a great disservice to themselves, to the people that are listening to them, and to the field. But

you'll never hear me saying that I'm out there being a great scientist and that I'm the expert on this, that, or the other.

BN: Have you ever tried to bring science into it?

DP: Limited, man, limited. I don't have any qualifications to say that. My degree is in television and radio production. I know how to hook stuff up and I know how to make sure stuff is working, I know how to troubleshoot those pieces of equipment. I'm not carrying out blind studies and things like that. I try to rationalize in my own mind, to keep track of things I've done in the past, what has worked and what hasn't worked, just so I learn from my own mistakes. I try to look for patterns and stuff but...

BN: Have you ever tried looking at these double blind studies and different types of studies and peer reviews and all of those great scientific resources to some of the experiences that you've undergone? For instance, the EMF?

DP: I'll tell you, he one guy I looked into the most was about sleep paralysis versus night terrors, and such, because that's something that I struggled with for awhile. I wanted to know, what was the truth about this? And you look back even into the Arthurian legends and they talk about similar type things. But then, I talked to some people

who actually worked at a sleep clinic, because I worked in the medical field, as well. There are a lot of things that they can explain away. And it even ties into what a lot of people say about the paralysis when you can see very similar events with the grays, you know, the aliens holding them down in their beds and doing the experiments. It's the same, very similar things. That's something I did look into a little further because that's something that personally affected me and I was very curious about it.

BN: And what did you conclude?

DP: In that one, in particular?

BN: Yeah.

DP: I tell you, man, I really feel like it's more medically explainable than spiritually explainable. I've had it happen to me in the states, I've had it happen to me when I was abroad, traveling, and I've had some variations in it, where some of them seemed really more intense than other ones. But from what I've read from a medical standpoint, I can't find anything to refute it.

BN: Just before we came in, we were actually going over your book. There were a couple of things that I wanted to actually ask you that I felt were kind of...

DP: Which... which book?

JK: This is the first one, the, uh, what was it called? (To Bobby) You've got it in your pocket.

DP: The Complete Approach?

BN: I have it in my pocket, yes.

DP: Well, Barry and I wrote that one so there were some things that he felt very strongly about that he put in there and some things that I felt very strongly about that I put in there.

BN: Hopefully for you, and my respect for you, they're from Barry.

DP: I'll field them for you as best I can.

BN: One thing I have to bring up is ultraviolet acid on ghosts.

JK: That's how some people have interpreted it, anyway.

BN: Because it says manifestations, it doesn't say ghosts.

DP: Yeah, I believe that was Barry. Pretty much all of the full spectrum stuff, that was from Barry.

JK: Yes, we know he's a big fan of that stuff, we've interviewed him.

BN: Another one, I don't have it written down but I can recall it from memory, was that turkey and chicken can actually cause you to be more psychic.

DP: That was from Barry. He does all the metaphysical stuff, and I'm not trying to say that in a derogatory way.

BN: No, no, it's alright.

JK: I've written my last book with Barry so...(laughs)

BN: 50% of mental illnesses are demonic?

DP: That was also from Barry.

BN: Alright, well, you're off the hook on that one.

DP: Like I said, not throwing him under the bus or anything, that's what he believes.

BN: I'm not here to criticize anybody's belief.

DP: Yeah. No, that's from Barry, as well.

JK: I have a two part question. We've talked about the paranormal, we've talked about faith. First of all, I want you to talk a little bit about Patch Ministries before I let you go, and also, the second part of the question is talk about reactions you've gotten from other Christian about your background in paranormal investigation, because we've ran into...

DP: Oh, there's plenty of hate out there, sure...

BN: Suffer not a witch to live.

DP: ...for a religion founded on love and being non-judgmental. That's why I'm judging you and hating.

BN: How do you reconcile ghosts with the Christian beliefs?

DP: Here's what I tell people, because everyone always quotes the same things when they come forth. One of the things I believe very firmly is something I've been recently reading about in this book called, Ten Questions That are Changing the Face of Christianity, it's a really cool book. One of the things they talk about is not using the Bible as a constitution. You know? Using it as a conversation about God, because you know when you look back at the unfortunate times in America with slavery, people were using pieces of the Bible to make that justified. And same thing they do now, trying to bash homosexuals. Somebody asked me the other day, they said, "How you feel about homosexuals? How do you talk with them and work with them and not tell them about their sin?" Well, first off, anything that happens in this world happens between the person and God. There are things that happen between us that we need to set right, but if someone is acting in a way that they feel is natural to them and is out of love for them, I'm not somebody to judge them and I'm certainly not going to say that God is condemning them. I

personally don't judge people like that, I don't think that's appropriate. When people come to me though, they will cite the same kind of things, it basically comes down to the raising of the dead and relying on spirit communication. What I tell people is, when the Bible was written, it was inspired by God. Since then, it's been interpreted by men and it's been used by men, depending on what's going on, to gain footholds to further whatever agenda. Like, we've got an election going on now, every candidate out there believes that God has endorsed them, specifically.

JK: And have since dropped out.

BN: So do sports teams. And every country in the world. God is on their side.

DP: It is what it is. But, what I tell people is I don't worry about that kind of stuff, I don't work in necromancy, I don't try to raise the dead. One of the things that Jesus had commanded people to do in his name was to cast out demons. Also something I don't do! But I am familiar with the rite of exorcism and stuff, nothing I would ever try to do myself. If I ever really came across somebody, which I never have, but if I came across somebody that I really felt was undergoing something like that, that couldn't be explained from a medical standpoint as a mental problem, then I would refer them to somebody that could help them with

that stuff. There are references like that, to me, that make it OK to look into this field, but in a limited way. I don't ask EVP questions and look to psychics for guidance about how I should live my day to day life and how I should conduct myself in the future. I think that's one of the things that people really need to be aware of.

BN: Getting kind of close to the end here, so I want to ask you, hopefully what will be the hardest question of the night, and that is are you an open-minded person?

DP: That is a hard question. I'm not even sure what to say. I mean...

BN: Well, I haven't even gotten to the hard part.

DP: Am I an open-minded person? I'd like to think that I give everything...I try to be discerning, let's put it that way. I'm willing to listen, but not always to believe.

BN: What would it take for you to shed your belief systems? Everybody always asks me as a skeptic who doesn't believe, what would it take me to believe?

DP: Right.

BN: I'm tired of that question. So I flip it. What would it take for you to not believe anymore?

DP: Are you talking about Christianity? Or are you talking about...

BN: Tackle both real quick.

DP: No, I wouldn't give up my belief in either.

BN: You realize that's the very definition of being closed-minded.

DP: Ah, you are one tricky... (laughs) very well played, sir. Like I said, I try to be discerning and I try to listen, but it doesn't mean I'm going to always play ball.

BN: Alright. That was awesome. Thank you.

JK: Thanks, man.

BN: Nice talking to you guys.

CURING CANCER WITH A DISCO COFFIN



**BY
BRYAN
BONNER**

Imagine a product that can help you with mild physical or mental discomforts to sexual problems and even terminal cancer all caused by manmade electromagnetic fields.

This breakthrough technology is available from a man known to the world for his attempt to bring the City of Denver the worlds' first extraterrestrial affairs commission, Mr. Jeff Peckman. This is a project that he has been involved with and even created a site to sell the product. (www.reduceemf-stress.com previously www.world-peace-mart.com)

This line of products make claims that it has the ability to “create peaceful coherent environments, both indoors and outdoors that are protected from the hazards of man-made electromagnetic fields and radiation”.

The claim is that they have “solved” the problem with electromagnetic radiation by re-referencing the fields at the Unified Field level and bringing them back into harmony with nature. This transforms the life-damaging electromagnetic fields to life-supporting fields that are in harmony with human physiology as well as other life forms.

Several products are available for you to choose from;

1 – Metatron Person Harmonizer

A credit card sized plastic embedded with a digital chip charged with Metatron Technology

2 – Metatron Auto Harmonizer

A device for your car that plugs into the cigarette lighter outlet that transforms the chaotic electromagnetic fields into life-supporting fields.

The Metatron Personal Harmonizer (\$149) is meant to be carried by the person that it was intended to be used by to create a 10 ft bubble of coherent life-supporting Divine light around the person carrying the card. Any non-life supporting energy that enters the bubble is instantly transformed into coherent life-supporting energy. It cannot be given to another person successfully they must purchase their own.

Metatron Auto Harmonizer (\$89) is a device that plugs into your cars cigarette plug and transforms any non-life supporting energy that enters the bubble is instantly transformed into coherent life-supporting energy in the car.

They claim that the device will make you calmer when driving in heavy traffic, make children more behaved on trips, increase fuel economy and reduce wear and tear on vehicle parts. They say that this device is important because the vehicles electrical system creates chaotic magnetic fields and that the metal in the vehicle is a resonator, which attracts chaotic electromagnetic fields from any other source.

3 – Metatron Software

There are several different versions of Metatron Technology that “create a vortex that receives the Light of Peace from the Metatron Global Peace Grid. The computer then radiates this supporting light into the environment.”

So with all of these big claims what are the facts about the product?

The creator of the “Technology” is a Ron Hall who refers to himself as a “Divine Light Activator”. When asked about the Metatron Technology software package he claims that it is not a program in the traditional sense. He says that he has been given the ability to create the program using intention and that “it is not really a program”.

The creators of the “Technology” claim that; “there is mounting evidence these chaotic fields significantly contribute to a wide range of human, as well as animal maladies. These chaotic fields, not being in harmony with the human physiology, are implicated in everything from mild physical or emotional discomfort to terminal cancer”

Once the “software” has been installed on your computer there is a time needed for it to “mature” this period is 120 hours of computer operation. They claim that “If the computer is turned off during this time, there is no damage to the program, the maturation period is simply delayed by the amount of time that the computer was off. The maturation process will continue while the computer is in sleep mode. During the maturation period, a coherent grid is created in and around the intended Metatron conditioned space. Once the Metatron maturation process is complete (120 hours) the Metatron Technology will function even when the computer is off. The computer does need to be operating at least one hour per month to keep the Metatron

Program activated.”

There are many client testimonials that show how some of the customers are using the “software” in their work environment; “Wow!!! I love my Metatron person harmonizer. It has undeniably supported harmony and healing both for myself personally and also for the Hospice patients and families I work with professionally. As a social worker, Specifically circumstances of conflict, which arise in my Hospice work have been ‘defused’ and harmony established in a short period of time. Patients, family members and my Hospice colleagues have many times mentioned ‘how did that resolve so easily?’. Every work-day I notice the difference in support to my patients and families. Obstacles to peace and harmony just dissolve. It feels like magic. – Glenna Quigley, San Diego, CA”

“I got the Metatron loaded on my computer at school. Wow!!! It really has had the most wonderful and positive effects on me and the children in my class. I find that it is effortless to be calm, patient and loving with my children..... As you know there is a kindergarten boy in my classroom who has some emotional issues. When he first entered my classroom a few months ago, he was extremely disruptive and would not do any lessons. He would only color. I have seen a good deal of improvement because of Metatron Technology. – Janice Sloan, Littleton, CO

When Jeff Peckman started working with the software, he wanted it to automatically install like traditional software, however none of the people designing the software could create an installer. Jeff attempted to find someone to help get the software into an installer by placing an ad on a local on-line computer support group.

“Paid web site assistance needed immediately – Starting as soon as

9/15/07.

Cash and Free Stress-Reducing Software

Easy Computer Project – Immediate and Short Term

Task required: Customize a commercially available installer program to achieve a simple and quick download:

1. Installation program must create a new folder that will be placed on the Local C: Drive
2. Place selected (1-5) 40-60kb PDF file(s) into the new folder with minimal clicks and dialogue.
3. Display ‘download complete’ window with the options to exit, or return to the website.

Compensation: Negotiable and includes additional free stress-reducing software besides what is already available to the public. If you have Qsetup (windows only) installation software, this task will be very easy...

If interested in the project, contact Jeff by Sunday evening 9/16, 9pm Mountain time”

Eventually there was a Mac version of the software available, but they did not seem to be able to find a person who could create an installer. So with the Mac download the following instructions are included:

Metatron Program download instructions for Mac OS X

PLEASE! Read the download instruction carefully before downloading the Metatron Program/s. The download procedure for the Metatron Programs is unique. Printing these instructions prior to downloading is helpful.

1- Open the Applications folder on your Mac.

2- Create a folder, named Metatron Technology, in the Applications folder.

3 – Open the Metatron Technology folder and the e-mail, and adjust them so they are both visible on your desktop.

4 – DO NOT try to open the pdf file/s. They are password protected and need

not be opened.

5 – Drag the Metatron pdf file attachment from the e-mail and drop it into the Metatron Technology folder. The Metatron Programs will automatically activate as soon as they are put into the Metatron Technology folder. No further action is necessary.

The “Technology” is even adjustable “The Metatron Programs are programmed to automatically adjust to the comfort level of each individual in the conditioned environment, however this auto-adjustment can be overridden by any individual in the conditioned environment without affecting anyone else’s experience. To adjust the intensity of the coherence, visualize a dial in front of you. To increase the intensity visualize turning the dial clockwise, to reduce the intensity, visualize turning the dial counterclockwise.”

The claims of the “Technology” are easily testable, they even claim to have tested it to prove that the product works. But what is the truth behind the technology?

We let an electronics engineer examine the claims;

Under the first section “How does it work?”, he claims to have overcome Ohm’s law with these devices. If this is possible, all electronic formulas are incorrect and nothing out there can function in the presence of his devices. His claims for this equipment and software cover every part of the EMF spectrum up through the microwave bands, yet the test equipment that he lists are only usable up to 500mHz max. The main piece of test equipment (Norma-Goerz D6100 is only functional up to 400Hz. It is a device for measuring AC powered equipment at the line input level. I would be interested to know what he probes with the test probes listed in his test equipment. Nothing he has listed could be used for any measurement of computer output.

All of his 'charts' refer to audio signals. What does that have to do with EMF?

According to his literature, the harmonizer creates a 'bubble' of coherence from the EMF entering the area. This means that his device must re-radiate this re-organized EMF. Any device that radiates must be certified that it has been tested and approved for FCC part 15. This must be done by a recognized laboratory that is FCC approved.

Before installing software on your computer you should at least know the basic facts of what it is going to install, so we examined it to see what these people are putting on their computers.

1) Parameters: The install notes say "All parameters within the program have been set correctly for your computer." What does that mean, and how is this done?

To test what the install might change, we downloaded the installation program to two different computers, with different IP router addresses, so the server will think that it is two different users, in case it is true that it is customizing the .exe per user or computer.

These files do have differences, but those just define the directory differences between computers as to where the program has been installed, so the uninstall program can find them.

Conclusion: No changes are made to the .PDF files when they are installed on any computer.

2) Programs: The install notes say that this system runs some kind of program, but there doesn't seem to be any included (except an uninstall program). Does this software run a program?

The install notes say that this system runs some kind of program, but there doesn't seem to be any included (ex-

cept the uninstall program)

Does the software run a program?

No programs seem to have been installed, according to the install log. No new applications, or processes seemed to have been started.

Conclusion: Contrary to the documentation, the download contains no executables.

3) PDF: A 3mb, locked .pdf is included that they say is the key to this systems functionality. What is in this file?

A 3mb locked .pdf file (size depends on version) is included that they say is the key to the system's functionality. It is important for a user to know what they are downloading onto their computer – not only as a matter of security, stability, and functionality, but also to avoid any legal troubles.

Determine what is in the .pdf (MCP005MetatronCosmicPeaceProgram.pdf)

Once the file is unencrypted and opened, it is nothing more than a geometric pattern with the words "Metatron Cosmic Peace Program TM" under the image. The graphic and the wording vary depending on the version of the "software" that you are using.

Even if the image that is embedded in the locked .pdf file had some kind of magical power, it would not reside on the computer in the form of the image but that of an password encrypted bit of data. So any magical powers that it has would be lost.

There are several different versions (and prices) of the "Software" available depending on your needs.

Metatron Stress-free computer workstation (Free)

This software creates an 18 ft bubble of coherence around your computer. Metatron Stress-free travel computer - laptop version (Free)

Same as the regular free version but with the added bonus of reducing stress and fatigue of traveling.

Metatron Global peace program (Free)
A very subtle, very gentle, yet very powerful tool that allows for peace, already inherent in life on our planet to be more fully expressed globally.

Metatron Feminine power program (Free)
When downloaded it will connect with the Metatron Global Feminine power grid that was created on 11/11/10. It brings all of the qualities of the Feminine grid to the computer it is downloaded onto.

Metatron Heart Opening Program (Free)
When downloaded onto your computer it creates a field conducive to inviting, encouraging and allowing your heart to open. In testing this product we found that most peoples Hearts achieved 100% opening within days of downloading.

Metatron Ethical Governance Program (Free)
When downloaded onto your computer it connects with the Metatron Governance Planetary Grid, supports and radiates an ethical influence from your computer to all governments at every level throughout the world.

Metatron Stress-free Student Computer (Free)
Creates a 10 ft bubble of coherence around your computer

Metatron Peaceful Retirement Community (Free)
When downloaded it will engulf the intended retirement facility and resident/s with Divine coherence, increasing the peace, harmony, caring and efficiency throughout the facility.

A custom version is available for a nominal fee.

Metatron Community Coherence Program (Free)

The purpose is to bring coherence to every level and aspect of the Dartmouth Community.

Metatron-Mushaba Health & Longevity Program (Free)

This is a merging of the Metatron Technology with the Mushaba force. When downloaded it creates an environment in and around the person for whom it is designated that is conducive to healing at the level of the DNA and the centriole in each cell. The field also creates an environment that enhances what healing modality that is being employed. It is important to be aware that this program does not do the healing, but rather creates an environment conducive to healing, which enhances the healing process.

Metatron-Mushaba Health & Longevity Program Family (Free)

This is the same as the Metatron-Mushaba Program but intended for an entire family

Metatron Peaceful Home & Yard software (Free)

Conditions all EMFs from all sources in your home, including wiring, electrical appliances, electronic equipment, as well as EMFs entering your home from next door or across the country (microwaves etc.) Creates a soft comfortable life-supporting environment for humans, pets and plants. It also conditions all natural or man-made energies that enter your property, including geopathic stress.

Metatron Peaceful Apartment Software (Free)

Conditions all EMFs from all sources in your apartment.

Metatron Peaceful Mobile Home Software (Free)

Conditions all EMFs from all sources

in your mobile home.

Metatron Stress-free Motor Home Software (Free)

Conditions all EMFs from all sources in your motor home. Significantly reduces driving fatigue and road rage.

Metatron Stress-free Office Enviro Software Small (Free)

Conditions all EMFs from all sources in your small office for up to 10 people.

Metatron Stress-free Office Enviro Software Big (Call for quote)

Conditions all EMFs from all sources in your large business. Creates an environment that is conducive to cooperation among co-workers and improves both group and individual productivity.

Metatron Stress-free Small Biz (Free)

Conditions all EMFs from all sources in your small business. Creates an environment that is conducive to increased sales and reduced losses as well as a comfortable environment for customers and employees.

Metatron Stress-free Small Biz & Grounds (Free)

Conditions all EMFs from all sources in your small business. Supports successful business.

Metatron Stress-free Big Biz (Call for quote)

Conditions all EMFs from all sources in your big business. Can be created for any size business.

Metatron Big Biz & Grounds (Call for quote)

Conditions all EMFs from all sources in your big business and its property. Supports successful business.

Metatron Bountiful Farm Software (Free)

Creates an environment around and throughout the total acreage of the farm that is coherent, peaceful and

conducive to healthful products and intimately connected with and supported by Mother Earth. This program is also appropriate for home gardens.

During Jeff Peckmans campaign for the Denver Extraterrestrial Commission he even attempted to sell the product via articles he wrote promoting the Commission and offered it to the Denver Public Schools when he was promoting his "Safety through peace initiative"

The website is careful in using the following statement: "These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. The products and/or technologies listed are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, mitigate or prevent any disease", so at least they have a legal way out when the "technology" does nothing.

*All claims and quotes from www.reduceemfstress.com

PAREIDOLIA OF THE MONTH



Pareidolia of the month goes to Jennifer...This picture of an apple with an abnormal growth is supposed to resemble the crucifixion of Jesus Christ...I don't mean to sound gross, but all I see is something that resembles a cat butt.