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CONTENTS

UPCOMING MEETINGS

ATLANTA'S HOUSE OF BLOOD, by Rebecca Long

PSYCHICS' 1993 PREDICTIONS FIZZLED, by Robert Sheaffer, Bay Area Skeptics

B. PREMANAND, GURU BUSTER!, by Oscar Gunther and Brian Siano

INDIAN SKEPTICS REQUEST HELP: A Letter from B. Premanand

MORE ON PREMANAND'S EFFORTS, by Rebecca Long

UPCOMING CREATION/EVOLUTION DEBATE: BABINSKI VS. HOVIND

THE MARSUP' GARROU: Special Fiction Feature by Larry Johnson

OTHER SOURCES OF SKEPTICAL INFORMATION ON THE PARANORMAL

Georgia Skeptics is a non-profit local group which shares a common philosophy with the national organization CSICOP (Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal), and seeks to promote critical thinking and scientific inquiry as the most reliable means to gather knowledge of the world and universe. Like CSICOP, Georgia Skeptics encourages the investigation of paranormal and fringe-science claims from a responsible, scientific point of view, and helps disseminate the results of such inquiries.

Material from the Georgia Skeptic newsletter may be used by anyone, provided attribution is given to the author and the organization.

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Joining the Georgia Skeptics organization is encouraged because membership dues help us to disseminate the results of skeptical inquiries to the public and to hold educational events. Yearly dues are \$17.50 for individual memberships, \$21.00 for families,

and \$12.50 for full time students.

MEETINGS

JANUARY 16: DOYNE MICHIE ON PSEUDO-MINDREADERS

Doyne Michie, the magician who was such a hit at the 1993 Georgia Skeptics picnic, will present a program which promises to mystify, entertain, and ultimately inform those wishing a glimpse at the inside world of professional "mind readers."

MARCH 20: COMMUNICATING SKEPTICISM/BEYOND BELIEF

Rebecca Long, President of Georgia Skeptics, will discuss ways which you can help communicate skepticism to the local community. CSICOP's videotape Beyond Belief will also be shown. Narrated by mentalist Steve Shaw, this video presents skeptical information on such topics as firewalking, astrology, and UFOs.

WHERE/WHEN: Meetings of Georgia Skeptics are held at the Steak and Ale Restaurant on Northlake Parkway in NE Atlanta, beginning at 4:30 p.m. Dinner follows and is optional, but is encouraged to support the restaurant for providing meeting facilities.

ATLANTA'S HOUSE OF BLOOD

by Rebecca Long

"Minnie Clyde Winston, seventy-seven, stepped out of the bath at 1114 Fountain Drive, in southwest Atlanta, Georgia, on September 8, 1987, to find the floor oozing blood `like a sprinkler.' There was also blood in most of the rooms of the house. She and her husband, William, had lived in the six-room brick house for twenty-two years. They had no pets and the house was free from rats, mice, and cockroaches. The state crime lab revealed the blood was human, type O. Both Mr. and Mrs. Winston had blood type A."

With the above words in the 1990's edition of The Book of Lists, Atlanta gained notoriety as home to one of this decade's "15 Strangest Stories". I first came across the story of Atlanta's mysterious bleeding home in the book Unexplained Mysteries of the 20th Century, by Janet and Colin Bord. The Bords attributed the blood to a resident poltergeist.

When the House of Blood story originally hit the news, it created quite a sensation. An article in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution on September 9, 1987, stated that Mrs. Winston had discovered blood "coming out of the floors". Another

contemporaneous news report described this blood as spewing like a fountain. These descriptions, plus news reports that the police had ruled out the possibility of wrongdoing, caused many people to assume that supernatural forces must certainly be involved. Credulous inquiries about the house with the bleeding walls soon flooded local radio and television stations, as well as the offices of the Atlanta newspapers. Psychics even called to offer their assistance in ridding the house of blood. It wasn't long before the Winstons grew weary of all the publicity and commotion.

To investigate the bleeding walls story, several skeptics went to the Atlanta Police Department's Homicide Division to obtain more information. Dr. Joe Nickell, Larry Johnson, Rick Moen, and I discussed the case with Lt. H. Walker, who led the original investigation. We reviewed the actual police files, including color photographs of the scene which showed what appeared to be blood in various rooms of the Winston home. I subsequently obtained copies of several of the photographs through the Open Records Act.

Our discussions with Lt. Walker and our review of the police records confirmed that the substance was human blood, it was indeed type O whereas the Winstons were type A, and the police did rule out the possibility of any violent crime. However, Lt. Walker definitely did not subscribe to the poltergeist theory. It was his professional opinion that someone had deliberately splattered the blood around the house as a hoax.

According to Lt. Walker, family problems apparently existed which gave either the Winstons or their children a possible motive for perpetrating such a hoax. The Winstons conceivably had access to human blood because Mr. Winston was a kidney dialysis patient, leading some people to suggest that one or both of the Winstons might have hoaxed the blood in order to get more attention from their children. However, Lt. Walker stated that the Winstons' daughter worked in a hospital and also had access to human blood. Therefore it has also been hypothesized that the Winstons' children could have hoaxed the blood in order to have their parents legally declared incompetent for financial reasons. Because there had been no homicide, and to spare the Winston family possible additional embarrassment, the Atlanta Police opted not to further pursue the investigation.

Ironically, I had the opportunity to investigate another potential "Atlanta House of Blood" when I awoke one morning to find dozens of blood-red droplets running down the wall of my bedroom. Following a split-second of irrationality, during which I imagined some gruesome massacre of attic-dwelling rodents, I investigated the "blood" more closely. Unlike actual blood, which turns black after it has dried, this substance remained a deep orange-red. Later, a quick trip to my attic by Joe Nickell revealed that my bleeding walls were actually caused by resin from the rafters. The miracle has since repeated itself on every hot summer day that I don't run the air conditioning.

The coincidental and amusing occurrence of my own "bleeding walls" did provide some useful information. It gave me an opportunity to compare the blood patterns in the Winstons' home to the pattern made by a liquid which actually did come from inside a wall. The "blood" in my bedroom emerged through the paint on the wall, approximately eight inches below the ceiling, and left streaks about a foot long as it ran down until it dried (Figure 1). An intact droplet shape remained at the bottom of each streak. In contrast, the blood on the walls of the Winstons' home (Figure 2) showed a pattern of splashing outward from various points of contact, indicating that it did not emerge from within the walls but instead was splattered from some distance away.

To give the authors of *The Book of Lists* some credit, at least they included the Atlanta House of Blood in the list of "Strangest Stories" instead of in the next section, entitled "Strange Events". Perhaps readers will take a hint, and put the credibility of walls which ooze blood in proper perspective, when they read this companion claim from the list of "Strangest Stories":

Mrs. Felina de la Cruz, forty-five, a laundrywoman from Cabanatuan in the Philippines, claimed to have given birth to an eighteen-centimeter mudfish on October 13, 1990. She called it Angelique Jezebel and tried to bottle-feed it before skeptical journalists. Her husband, Romeo, said he heard the fish say "ik-ik" shortly after his wife delivered it, but admitted there were no outside witnesses. They planned to give it a Catholic baptism. Alas, Angelique Jezebel died the following January.

References:

- 1) Wallechinsky, David, and Amy Wallace, *The Book of Lists: The '90's Edition*, Little, Brown and Company, 1993.
- 2) Downey, Maureen, "Peach Buzz" column in *Atlanta Constitution*, October 20, 1993.
- 3) Bord, Janet and Colin, *Unexplained Mysteries of the 20th Century*, Contemporary Books, 1989.
- 4) Various Atlanta Journal/Constitution Articles, September 7-11, 1987.

PSYCHICS' 1993 PREDICTIONS FIZZLED

By Robert Sheaffer, Bay Area Skeptics
(Reprinted with Permission from BASIS, February 1994)

[Each year's end, much to the chagrin of the nation's best psychics, Bay Area Skeptics' inimitable former chair pulls out the

January tabloids. Psychics know people won't remember well after a few hours and not at all after a week. They thought they were safe after a whole year, but not with Sheaffer around. Sheaffer's annual calling-to-account gets widespread coverage, and it gets wider each year.]

An earthquake did not strike Las Vegas, causing a blizzard of cash. Bill and Hillary Clinton didn't separate. Major "earth changes" did not strike the West Coast, and Chevy Chase did not make a big "splash" with his new TV talk show. These were just a few of the many predictions that had been made for 1993 by famous "psychics," but were dead wrong, as chronicled by Bay Area Skeptics. At the end of each year, many well-known "psychics" issue predictions for the year to come. Twelve months later, they issue another set of predictions, conveniently forgetting those made the year before, which are always nearly 100% wrong.

Many of the "psychic" predictions made are so vague that it is impossible to say if they came true or not: for example, Jeane Dixon's prediction that Sally Jessy Raphael "will be strangely lonely this winter" (The Star, Jan 19, 1993) is not obviously true or false. Many other "predictions" involve things that happen every year, or else are not difficult to guess, such as earthquakes, continuing strife for the British Royal Family, or severe winter storms. Many supposed "predictions" simply state that the ongoing events and trends will continue, such as economic uncertainty, or conflict in the Middle East. Some predictions did not of course come true, especially those that were unspecific, or not at all difficult to guess: several "psychics" correctly predicted that the stock market would go up, or that terrorist attacks would occur somewhere. Significantly, not one prediction which was both specific and surprising came true.

Other supposed predictions are not really predictions at all, but are actually disclosures of little-known events already underway, such as movie productions, marriage plans, business ventures, or developing scandals. Because questionable claims of having made an amazing prediction are frequently made in the wake of major news stories, BAS only evaluates predictions that were published or broadcast before the events they claimed to foretell.

Massachusetts "psychic" Barbara Donchess predicted that President and Mrs. Clinton would separate, with Hillary and Chelsea going off to live at Camp David. She also predicted that Paula Abdul would ditch Emilio Estevez and elope with Arsenio Hall, then adopt six orphans from Somalia (National Enquirer, January 5, 1993). Southern California "psychic" Clarissa Bernhardt predicted that 14 American POWs from the Vietnam War would be released in Cambodia, and that Axl Rose of "Guns N' Roses" would marry Brooke Shields (National Enquirer, Jan. 5, 1993).

"Nostradamus expert" Peter Lorie claims to have discovered a hidden code in the verses of Nostradamus. Using this code, he predicted that "at 7:05 in the evening, on the 8th of May, 1993, there will

be one of the largest earthquakes ever to hit California." It was supposed to last eleven minutes, spreading "all the way up to the coast" along the San Andreas fault, resulting in "a major disaster on the American continent." Erika Cheetham, another supposed "Nostradamus expert," predicted that an earthquake of unprecedented magnitude would strike the West Coast on May 21, 1993 ("Sightings", Fox TV, January 8, 1993).

Chicago "psychic" Irene Hughes predicted that a powerful earthquake would strike the Las Vegas strip, toppling casinos and sending tourists scrambling after the blizzard of bills and coins scattered throughout the street. She also predicted that "Under Siege" star Steven Seagal would use his martial arts skills to subdue terrorists attempting to hijack an international flight (National Enquirer, January 5, 1993).

Jeane Dixon, who supposedly has "A Gift of Prophecy," predicted that "ice taken from the 5,000 year old ice man found recently in a glacier on the Australian-Italian border will support the Bible's version of creation" (The Star, Jan. 19, 1993). In the last few years Dixon has increasingly concentrated on predictions involving famous celebrities, which by their nature are more vague, and often are simply the consensus of insider gossip. However, even this caginess has not prevented embarrassing gaffes, such as her prediction that "No one will make more of a splash this year than Chevy Chase. Watch for fireworks on his new Fox talk show in July" (The Star, Feb. 16, 1993). Jay Leno, she warned, faced a difficult battle for ratings. As for Michael Jackson, he should worry about "a health or safety emergency" during the spring (The Star, January 19, 1993) rather than a major sex scandal during the fall. She correctly predicted that there would be "earthquake tremors in February" - earthquakes occur every day of the year - but neglected to say where they would occur, or how large they would be.

Hermosa Beach, California, astrologer Sean Morton predicted that the rare conjunction of Uranus and Neptune in Capricorn will cause "all hell to break loose in February" (Orange County Register, January 1, 1993). A series of major earthquakes would hit Palm Springs, San Diego, Mexico City, and volcanoes would erupt in Alaska, Washington, and Martinique. Large numbers of banks would close, and President Clinton would be hospitalized with injuries suffered in a car crash.

"Celebrity astrologer" and syndicated columnist Shelley von Strunckel, interviewed in late 1991 to give her predictions for "the Year Beyond the Year Beyond" (i.e. 1993), foresaw scientific breakthroughs - "perhaps a new planet or two, plus some innovative treatments for AIDS and some cancers now called incurable." She also predicted that "The world monetary system will be completely revamped. The way trading is done in the stock markets will change. Cash will disappear." Additionally, "the world will be destabilized until 1994" (Parade, Dec. 8, 1991); at present the world does not seem any more unstable than usual.

Astrologer Jeane Avery predicted that 1993 will "not be an easy" year primarily because of the Uranus-Neptune conjunction. The stock market will be in trouble during February and March. Major "earth changes" will occur around Seattle, or Utah, or Portland in May. She explains that "earth changes" might be floods, hurricanes, disastrous weather, or maybe earthquakes.

Arch Crawford, Wall Street astrologer, sees a stock market high late in April, then a "very devastating" May-June period, which may be another crash, "the worst I've seen in a long time." ("Sightings," Fox TV, January 8, 1993) In actuality, the stock market had an unusually trouble-free year in 1993. The west coast has few problems with earthquakes or weather, while the Midwest was devastated by unprecedented floods, which the stars somehow failed to foretell. Richard Nolle, another astrologer appearing on the same show, predicted a terrible year, the kind you will put on a T-shirt, "I survived 1993." A major earthquake would occur in the western U.S. probably around February 8, or March 6, or April 6, plus or minus 3 days. He predicted terrorist attacks around February 2, also in August and early October, but did not say where in the world these attacks would occur. There was a terrorist attack against the World Trade Center in New York on February 26, almost a month after the date specified, and there were none in August or October. His devastating earthquake likewise failed to occur.

Here in Northern California, "psychic astrologer" Terrie Brill predicted that President Clinton would be wounded in an assassination attempt. A vaccine would be found for AIDS, as well as a cure for all viruses. The middle East would be a "powder keg," and Saddam Hussein would start another war. Blue-chip stocks would go down, medical technology stocks would do well, and interest rates and inflation would rise (none of these are correct). Many of her predictions are impossibly vague, like "There will be more problems in Germany." Brill claims an accuracy of 99% for her world and economic forecasts (Press Release, Terrie Brill and Associates).

CHECK THE RECORD

Based on the continuing failure of the "psychics" to make accurate predictions over the years, the Bay Area Skeptics urges everyone - especially the media - to exercise some healthy skepticism when "psychics" and other purveyors of the paranormal make extraordinary claims or predictions. Anyone who swallows the "psychics'" claims year after year without checking the record is setting a bad example for students and for the public. BAS activists can help by showing these facts to the public.

LOOK WHAT THEY MISSED

It is important to note that no "psychic" succeeded in predicting the genuinely surprising news stories of 1993: The sensational charges of child abuse brought against Woody Allen and Michael

Jackson; the flaming suicide of the Branch Davidian cult near Waco, Texas; the sudden death of River Phoenix. These major news stories were so totally unexpected that someone would have had to be genuinely "psychic" to have predicted them twelve months ago! Given the sheer number of so-called "psychics" out there, one would expect that if even one of them were genuine, these things would have been correctly predicted; and since they were not, it suggests that all such claims of "psychic powers" are without foundation.

B. PREMANAND, GURU BUSTER!

by Oscar Gunther and Brian Siano

Satya Sai Baba walks onto a platform, standing next to an enormous urn. He explains that, as a god-man, he is able to produce any material out of thin air, in this case, food out of the urn. A man in the audience stands up and asks for a banana. The guru announces that a banana has been requested, reaches his hand into the urn and pulls out...a mango! Consternation. This has never happened before; could the gods be angry? The guru asks the man to repeat his request: a banana. Repeating the request to the urn, loudly and distinctly, he once again reaches in and retrieves...a coconut.

B. Premanand is at it again.

B. Premanand is India's top debunker, a Randi in chapals, kurta, and jogging sneakers. He has spent the last 40 years investigating miracles and, after witnessing 1,146 of them, he has yet to see one he can't duplicate through natural methods. As head of the Indian CSICOP, he leads an army of skeptics in ongoing investigations of India's many god-men. He has been jailed and beaten, his life has been threatened, and his car has been sabotaged. India's god-men wield great political power, and number high government officials (including Supreme Court justices) among their followers. Owing their authority to the gullibility of their uncritical disciples, the god-men have a vested interest in maintaining their aura of divinity. And B. Premanand has been steadily chipping away at their empires.

HOLY ASH, TONGUE SKEWERS AND LOTS OF FIRE

For instance, there is Sai Baba's miracle of ash, with which Premanand opened his lecture. The ash is light, grey, and smells thickly of sandalwood. Baba's followers collect it as their god-man seemingly produces a never-ending supply of it from his hand; sometimes they eat it, or rub the holiness into their skins.

Premanand did the same thing, giving a pinch of the stuff to each member of the audience; in India, where his lecture crowds sometimes reach from 25,000 to 50,000, he can still manage to produce more than enough ash. Then Premanand let us on the

secret: the ash is kept in a small ball in the crook of the thumb and forefinger, and it's made of sandalwood and baked cow dung. The reactions of some of the audience were appropriately colorful. (He and Sai Baba get it from the same store.)

Sai Baba's poor followers get ash. His more affluent followers get Rolex watches, diamond necklaces, and Parker pens, stamped "Made in U.S.A." Premanand recently filed suit in the Indian Supreme Court against Sai Baba under the Gold Control Act. The guru claims to create gold out of thin air, which is a violation of the statute that prohibits the private, unauthorized production of gold. In a landmark decision (which, incidentally, took three years and demonstrates the extent of the god-man's influence), the Court ruled that he actually materializes the gold as he claims.

Other miracles were presented and explained. A crystal bell, sans clapper, was made to ring on command. (Premanand had strapped a small bell to his armpit under his shirt.) He pushed a skewer through his tongue without any blood or pain, though the convenient tongue-shaped bend in the skewer hidden by his hand MIGHT have made things easier. Premanand held his arm in kerosene flame without any harm, and later he and DVS committee member Dr. Larry Weinstein ate a burning piece of camphor. The explanations for these are pretty simple: the flame isn't held in one place long enough to burn the skin, and one's exhaled breath has enough carbon dioxide in it to put the fire out before it burns. But it was Premanand's demonstration of eating glass that knocked the audience on its collective ear.

ON TOP OF THAT, GLASS-EATING!

Not in a million years would we have guessed just how Premanand did it. He took out a clear light bulb (not a frosted one, for reasons we shall soon see), wrapped it in a handkerchief, and smashed it on the table. He gave a piece of the glass to Larry Weinstein, so he could verify that it wasn't clear candy or anything but thin glass. Weinstein then placed the chip on Premanand's tongue. The sounds of Premanand's crunchy chewing filled the room, while audience members began to get decidedly uncomfortable. Premanand then swallowed a glass of water, pouring it into his mouth from a distance to show he wasn't simply spitting the unchewed glass into the water.

Then he gave his explanation. When one chews the glass, one must chew it VERY finely, into sand, and make sure that one has eaten something thick (like a banana, perhaps one from Sai Baba's magic urn) so that the sand doesn't settle in the stomach. In other words, Premanand really DID eat glass; and I'm sure I wasn't the only skeptic who was expecting a subtle and clever trick. (Kids, don't try this at home!)

But the lecture was more than a magic show. Premanand pointed out that the gurus we get in the States are the ones who couldn't

make it big in India. In fact, many were gurus Premanand had discredited years before. But they came to America, built up groups of followers (the richer or more famous, the better), and then returned to India in triumph.

It's hard not to think of Premanand as an inspiring figure. Considering the scale of his opposition, the recent wave of paranormalist belief in the United States pales by comparison.

He demonstrates that it's a noble task to keep frauds from flourishing, that it's the good fight and it can be fun too. And the magic urn? Members of the Indian CSICOP had climbed underneath the platform, evicted the guru's henchman who had been handing him food through corresponding holes in the platform and urn, and did their part in dismantling the god-man's reputation.

(The above article was reprinted from Grain of Salt, the newsletter of the Delaware Valley Skeptics, March 1989.)

INDIAN SKEPTICS REQUEST HELP: A LETTER FROM B. PREMANAND

B. Premanand
Convenor, Indian committee for scientific investigation of claims
of the paranormal
10 Chettipalayam Road
Podanur 641023
Tamilnadu - India
18 October 1993

Dear Friend,

We hope you are regularly receiving the copies of Indian Skeptic every month through CSICOP newsletter swap. We have so far posted to you issues up to October 1993.

You would have by now read about the six murders in the bedroom of Satya Sai Baba on June 6, 1993. As the Sai Baba with the collusion of the police has committed this crime, and as the State and Central Ministers and the President of India are inner circle members of the Sai Baba Mafia, on July 27, 1993, with great difficulty we have filed a writ petition in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh for an impartial enquiry into the murky happenings in Sai Baba's alleged abode of peace where his very near accomplices were murdered. The petition came up for admission on September 28, 1993. The government pleaders tried their best to refer the case to the full bench of the High Court where many such cases are pending the report of the judicial commission as to whether the courts have powers to order an impartial enquiry or a CBI enquiry. Mr. K. N. Balgopal, our advocate practicing in the Supreme Court of India at New Delhi, produced the recent judgment (in which he himself had argued the case for the petitioner in September 93) where the bench of the Supreme Court which included

the Chief Justice of India, stated that the Courts are supreme as far as the upholding of law, justice and Constitution are concerned, and when the State and the Central Government fails to uphold law, justice and the Constitution they have the powers to order an impartial enquiry into the allegations. After seeing the judgment, the Hon. Judge issued notices to the State and Central Government to file their counters within four weeks and posted the case for orders on November 4, 1993.

On September 26, 1993, at Hyderabad I would have been dead. After showing the video cassette to some of my friends in Hyderabad on Sai Baba wherein his miracle of producing a gold necklace was exposed I was returning back to my hotel sitting at the back seat of a motorcycle, at about 11:30 p.m. Our motorcycle was knocked off by another vehicle. Nothing happened except a few skin bruises, and I was alive to file the writ petition.

The three advocates, Mr. K. N. Balgopal from Delhi, and Mr. B. Tharakam and D. Vijay Kumar from Hyderabad, have taken up the work free. But we have to pay them their actual expenses. The air travel of Mr. Balgopal comes to Rs. 10,000 for every hearing (e.g. for the first visit, and the expenses). We are wondering how we will be able to send the air tickets for the 4th November hearing. The average income of our members is in between Rs. 10,000 to 20,000 per year!

We will be happy if you will share our expenses in the following ways:

1. By collecting annual subscriptions for Indian Skeptic from your willing members which is US \$12.00 or its equivalent in your currency.
2. By enlisting life subscribers for Indian Skeptic which is US \$150.00 or its equivalent in your currency.
3. By collecting even \$1 or more from each member.
4. By ordering for the press clippings on the murky happenings at Sai Baba's bedroom (about 300 clippings in English) at U.S. \$20.00.

MORE ON PREMANAND'S EFFORTS

By Rebecca Long

B. Premanand published the text of his petitioner's affidavit, challenging the dubious police investigation into the murders in Sai Baba's abode, in the November 1993 issue of Indian Skeptic. In this affidavit Premanand describes how Baba's network includes eminent national and international government figures, including India's President, Prime Minister, and Home Minister. These

dignitaries visit Baba's premises using an airstrip constructed by the government.

Premanand writes that the financial fortune Baba has amassed exceeds the amount involved in the Securities Scam which rocked the Parliament. Premanand also states that Sai Baba has been notorious for the death of numerous foreign nationals, including many women whose bodies bore marks of grievous torture, and that several boy students at the Baba's educational institutions have committed suicide after being sexually abused. Large quantities of dangerous explosive materials have been found on Baba's premises.

The information below, concerning the investigation into the murders in Sai Baba's abode, is condensed from B. Premanand's affidavit published in the November 1993 issue of Indian Skeptic.

- On June 6th, 1993, four assailants tried to enter Sai Baba's abode to deliver what was purported to be a telegram from another Godman. On being intercepted, a scuffle ensued which culminated in the assailants whipping out daggers and knives. Sai Baba was present and admonished the assailants. After activating a siren to alert the inmates, he quickly went to his bedroom through a secret passage and bolted the door.
- The police suppressed information and changed their story regarding the circumstances of their arrival on the scene. Most of the police are devotees of the Baba and have previously helped him cover up controversies of strange deaths and suicides involving foreign and Indian devotees.
- The local police, along with inmates of the Baba's compound, are trying to prevent an investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation.
- It is strange that the assailants were trying to gain entry to deliver a telegram when it is well known that both the sender and the Baba have access to telephones, telex, and fax machines.
- When police reached the compound, the place was teeming with inmates who had gathered in large numbers armed with sticks, bamboo and other things. The assailants are said to have panicked on seeing the policemen and climbed onto the first floor where they locked themselves in the Baba's chambers. In an attempt to nab the assailants, the police are said to have tried to make a forceful entry into the room where the assailants had locked themselves. It appears that the assailants attacked the police when they broke down the door, whereupon the police shot all the assailants despite the fact that they knew the assailants did not possess firearms. [Premanand contends that the police deliberately shot the assailants to destroy evidence, and are therefore responsible for man-slaughter unless their innocence is established.]

- The bodies of the Baba's four personal aides who were allegedly stabbed by the assailants were removed to a hospital run by Baba before the police arrived. Their bodies were not taken to the Government Hospital for post-mortem examination, and post mortem reports were never provided to their relatives.
- The police claim to have shot the assailants with pistols whereas reports declare that the wound marks on the bodies were made by a 303 rifle.
- The four assailants were among the most trusted lieutenants of the Baba. The incident appears to revolve around attempts by a section of the Baba's followers to gain control over his financial empire. It is possible that the assailants knew or saw something which could have exposed the Baba to the public.
- The State Home Minister at the time was a well-known devotee of Sai Baba and came out openly as the official spokesman in his defense. The police are not likely to act in any manner contrary to the dictates of the State Home Minister.

As Premanand writes in his affidavit, "It is high time the clandestine activities going on within the Ashram were revealed to the public. It is in the public interest to know the true picture behind the so-called pursuit for love and religion which the self-styled Godman preaches."

X FILES: THE LOST EPISODES

by Larry "Wake up America Before it's Too Late" Johnson

Late in November I was contacted via email by an individual who called himself Al B. Fox. I have since that time learned that Al Fox was a pseudonym, and that the individual was a highly placed executive for a communications and entertainment network which I shall leave un-named.

Al told me that he had stumbled upon a cover-up carried out by the U.S. government, top executives in his firm, the Tri-lateral Commission, Skull and Bones, and the U.S. Post Office. He was in fear for his life, but felt it his duty to leak his story so that the American public could take appropriate action before it's too late.

It seems that several episodes of a T.V. series known as the X-Files have been suppressed, and that these Lost Episodes were based on true incidents so terrifying, so unlikely, and so fundamentally stupid that the network and the government decided that the public was not yet ready for the revelations. Al Fox first became suspicious because, as we all know, nothing is too stupid for television.

After several weeks of negotiations, Al passed a few video-tape cartridges of these episodes to me, with indications that more would follow. I'm in the process writing synopses of the plots. It's a slow painstaking process, as anyone who's seen an episode of this subtle and complex drama can attest.

Below is my synopsis of the first episode, which is not for the faint of heart. I'll post more episodes as time and intense persecution and harassment by various government agencies and secret Cabals allows.

EPISODE 1: MARSUP' GARROU

A rash of garbage can topplings occurs in a series of small southern towns. At first the news only attracts local interest, but soon several FBI dumpsters are overturned, so the FBI is brought into the case. Scully is at first convinced that it's just "some sort of big animal", but after dropping a few cryptic hints, Mulder reveals that there may be more here than a bear out for a late night snack.

Investigating the most recent occurrence, the agents encounter an old denizen of the bayou named L. "Bon Tom" Roulet. Bon Tom warns Scully and Mulder to "Beware the Marsup' Garrou". Typically, Scully asks what the hell a Marsup' Garrou is supposed to be. Mulder explains that the Marsup' Garrou, otherwise known as the WerePossum, is a poor pathetic individual who turns into a huge Possum on the night of the full moon -- doomed to wander the night searching for garbage receptacles and dead livestock.

Scully, Mulder, and Bon Tom pursue the WerePossum into the woods, where a pair of eerie red eyes glares at them in the darkness. Scully narrowly misses being clawed and bitten by the creature, in which case she would have been turned into a WerePossum.

In the exciting finale, Bon Tom runs over the creature with a Jeep Cherokee equipped with a silver bumper, the only thing which will kill a Marsup' Garrou. The poor tortured beast slowly morphs into a human, albeit a somewhat flat one.

(End of Episode)

UPCOMING CREATION VS. EVOLUTION DEBATE

Tentatively scheduled for the evening of May 29, at the Pinecrest Baptist Church in Morrow, is a debate between theistic evolutionist Ed Babinski and young-earth creationist Kent Hovind.

In the August 1993 issue of The REALL News, David Bloomberg wrote the following about the underhanded tactics of Kent Hovind:

The Peoria Journal Star (June 25) had an article about Kent Hovind, an evangelist who is offering \$10,000 to anybody who can provide empirical evidence of the theory of evolution. But the key is "empirical" or based on experiment. In other words, he wants somebody to prove millions of years of natural selection and evolution in a laboratory, to his satisfaction.

Bradley University religion professor, Robert Fuller, is appalled with Hovind's challenge, saying, "No properly educated, reflective person could possibly dispute the fact of biological evolution. No credible professor of religion in the world has difficulty with the concept of evolution." But that's not the half of it.

It seems the Hovind is not being exactly straight with everybody. The article states that Hovind is scheduled to debate "paleontologist Steven (sic) Jay Gould, a Harvard University professor." Hovind goes on to state, "I suspect Gould will back out."

Hovind apparently has good reason to expect that Gould won't be there. Dr. Eugenie Scott, Executive Director of the National Center for Science Education, wrote to Gould and asked about Hovind. In his response, Gould says, "You really shouldn't believe everything you read ... I have never heard of the man and therefore cannot have agreed to anything with him." Gould went on to comment about "the obvious phony tactic of claiming that he challenged me to a debate when he didn't, and then claiming that I backed out when I didn't appear."

If Hovind is so sure of himself and his "theory", why does he need to mislead the public in such a manner?

OTHER SOURCES OF SKEPTICAL INFORMATION ON PARANORMAL CLAIMS

The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP)
P.O. Box 703
Buffalo, NY 14226-9973
1-800-634-1610

An international organization which encourages the critical investigation of paranormal and fringe-science claims from a responsible, scientific point of view. The Skeptical Inquirer is its quarterly journal, which contains well-researched articles, news highlights, and reader responses. Skeptical Briefs is its quarterly newsletter.

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1-800-421-0351 (24 hours)
Leading publisher of books investigating and critiquing paranormal and pseudoscientific claims. Free 50-page catalog upon request. Georgia Skeptics members receive a 20% discount on books ordered through the group.

Skeptics Society
2761 N. Marengo Ave.
Altadena, CA 91001
1-818-794-3119

Devoted to the investigation of extraordinary claims and revolutionary ideas. Promotes critical thinking, good science and rational skepticism. Skeptic is its quarterly journal.

The National Center for Science Education
P.O. Box 9477
Berkeley, CA 94709-0744
1-510-843-3393

Disseminates information on the creation vs. evolution controversy, with emphasis on attacks on science education by "creation science" proponents. Creation/Evolution is its biannual journal, and NCSE Reports is its quarterly newsletter.

National Council Against Health Fraud
P.O. Box 1276
Loma Linda, CA 92354
1-909-824-4690

A voluntary health agency whose mission is to help consumers protect themselves against dangerous and ineffective health products, services. Members receive a bimonthly newsletter which contains up-to-date and accurate information on current health marketplace issues and trends.

For a free sample issue of the NCAHF newsletter, and additional information on the organization, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Georgia Skeptics.

THE END