

## The Newsletter of The North Texas Skeptics



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## A note from the editor

By Pat Reeder

"The Third Eye" column will not appear this month, due to the fact that I already have three excellent, lengthy articles and an annoying sinus infection. Rest assured, there will be plenty of news to review next month, what with Washington suddenly offering up all sorts of explanations for UFO sightings, from flares over Phoenix to U-2s over Mayfield, USA. UFO proponents find this very suspicious (some of them also think the Mars landing is a hoax), which has actually caused some reporters to start calling them "skeptics," because they refuse to believe a rational explanation. This "unskeptical skeptic" trend is almost as annoying to me as the UFO nut who recently appeared on "Strange Universe" to declare that skeptics commit "intellectual violence" by trying to prove that people's UFO claims are mistakes or hoaxes. Funny, I would define "intellectual violence" as filling the airwaves with unsubstantiated, pseudoscientific horse droppings, then squealing like a stuck pig when somebody dares to investigate your ludicrous claims to see if there's an iota of truth to them. And as for real violence...but I digress.

The point of this diatribe is really to note that we are running the first part of a fictional piece this month, the 2nd part in September. It's something new which we probably won't do very often, but many times, fiction can make serious points more effectively than factual essays, and we think you'll agree that this story by Mike Combs does just that. We hope you enjoy this change of pace. I'll be back next month with more weirdness from the wide, wacky world of the media.

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## My Bible can beat up your Bible

by Danny Barnett

*A Study of the Debate over the King James Version of the Bible — (Part 2 in a four-part series on "A Theological Foundation for Paranoia")*

The first time I remember seeing a Bible when I was a child, I actually saw two Bibles side by side on my parents' bookshelf. One was the King James Version, which now has 66 books and is used by Protestants. The other was the Confraternity-Douay Version, which has 73 books and is used primarily by Roman Catholics. I perused both Bibles and

noticed a few differences between the two, but my mind was not sufficiently developed at that point to fully appreciate the differences. Since my parents were Baptists, they kept the KJV and eventually gave the Catholic Bible to a relative. Besides, they were used to the style of the KJV, and the church they used to attend used the KJV exclusively. Mom and Dad really didn't have anything against other versions of the Bible — there just wasn't any pressing need for them to switch.

On the other hand, there is a group of fundamentalist Christians who claim that the King James Version, also known as the Authorized Version, is the only legitimate Bible in the English language, and they claim that other translations are to be avoided at all costs. These Christians are often referred to as "KJV Only" Christians, but in this essay I will refer to such Christians as *Jamesites* in honor of James I of Great Britain, who ordered the creation of the KJV. There are so many Jamesites who have published books, pamphlets, and videotapes on their assertions that I cannot do justice to them all in such a short article, nor can I deal with all of their issues, so I'll focus on just a few individuals that I consider representative of the overall movement and cover a couple of the basic assertions of the "KJV Only" movement.

Let's start with Gail Riplinger, author of *New Age Bible Versions*, in which she claims that modern Bible translations are weakening traditional Christian doctrine as found in the King James Version by performing subtle alterations in the Biblical text. She also authored the book *Which Bible Is God's Word?* and a magazine called *Blind Guides* in which she answers some of her critics. The back cover of *New Age Bible Versions* spells it out for the reader: "This book is the result of an exhaustive six year collation of *new* bible versions, their underlying Greek manuscripts, editions, and editors. It objectively and methodically documents the hidden alliance between *new* versions and the New Age Movement's One World Religion." Charts and tables can be found all throughout *New Age Bible Versions*, comparing passages from the King James Version with passages from other Bibles such as the New International Version and the New American Standard Bible, detailing how an estimated 64,000 words (according to Riplinger) have been removed from the Bible by translators of newer versions. Riplinger's thesis is that the omission of these words changes many of the basic tenets of orthodox Christianity to such an extent that Christians who use these new Bibles are vulnerable to New Age teaching and thought.

Samuel Gipp, a Jamesite evangelist, has authored *An Understandable History of the Bible* and *The Answer Book* to explain his position on the King James Version. His praise for the KJV needs little embellishment, and also betrays a prejudice against the Roman Catholic Church that many Jamesites share:

There is no Bible that exalts Jesus Christ any higher than the Authorized Version. There is no Bible that has ever been blessed by God more than the Authorized Version. There is no Bible which is more hated by Satan and the Roman Catholic Church more than the Authorized Version. There is no Bible which is more clearly translated nor is any easier to read than the Authorized Version. There is no Bible which teaches doctrine more clearly than the Authorized Version.

D.A. Waite is the author of *Defending the King James Bible*, which contains various references to Scriptural differences between the KJV and modern versions, but also contains some history behind the translation of the KJV, the men involved in the translation, and the techniques used to translate the manuscripts. Waite remarks:

You can trust with confidence the KING JAMES BIBLE in the English language as the most accurate reflection of the original Hebrew and Greek text we have — and probably will have until the Lord returns in the Rapture of the Church. Read it! Study it! Memorize it! Understand it! Believe it! Practice it!

Gail Riplinger challenges the idea that a new version of the Bible is needed because of changes in the English language over time: "The *real* gap is one of distance between God and man, not a lapse between us and 'Father Time'...God tells us man's inability to understand the [KJV] bible has a number of causes, none of which is a limitation in his vocabulary. The bible is not difficult to understand — it is impossible — unless God's criteria are met." The use of a single Bible, according to Riplinger, would cut down on theological dissent: "When you have God and His Word as the authority, and one Bible...you have no division, okay? And God doesn't want division." She also infers the infallibility of the KJV by crediting an equally infallible God with bringing about its inception: "I believe God has given us the King James Bible, and that is the Bible for the English-speaking world, okay? And I sort of think He did it once, and He doesn't have to do anything over again; He does such a good job whenever He does it."

What if someone finds a contradiction in the KJV that they can't explain? Samuel Gipp replies, "You will have to accept the perfection of the Authorized Version by faith....God would rather we have faith in Him in the face of the unexplainable, as so many of the Old and New Testament saints have exhibited, than to have faith in our own human ability to 'find an answer' concerning difficult passages."

The history of the King James Version, however, seems to cast doubt on such statements. The KJV was first published in 1611 by Robert Barker, the royal printer. Olga S. Opfell, author of *The King James Bible Translators*, revealed that not only were there revisions to the KJV, but the first one was released in 1613, only two years after the first edition of the KJV was introduced. Opfell explained about the second edition:

This second edition is commonly known as the "Great She" Bible because of the corrected reading of Ruth 3:15, "and she went into the city." The *editio princeps*, correspondingly dubbed the "Great He" Bible, had read, "and he went into the city." Among other changes, the Great She corrected Exodus 14:10, where three whole lines were repeated, and Exodus 38:11, where it altered the Great He's "hoops" to "hooks."

James R. White, author of *The King James Only Controversy*, states that more errors were to be discovered in the new Bible:

One of the first errors entered the text as early as 1611, where, at Matthew 26:36, some AV Bibles had "Then cometh Judas," when it should read "Then cometh Jesus." Other intriguing errors included...the deletion of "no" from "no more sea" at Revelation 21:1, the unrighteous inheriting the kingdom at 1 Corinthians 6:9, "printers have persecuted" rather than "princes have persecuted" at Psalm 119:161, the use of "sin on more" rather than "sin no more" at John 5:14, the "parable of the Vinegar" rather than "Vineyard" at Luke 20, Phillip denying Jesus rather than Peter at Luke 22:34, the use of "lions" instead of "loins" at 1 Kings 8:19, the use of "the fishes shall stand" rather than "fishers" at Ezekiel 47:10, the switching of "wife" for "life" at Luke 14:26, and the switching of "camels" and "damsels" with reference to Rebekah at Genesis 24:61.

White claims that yet another revision was produced in 1612 and also makes references to revisions published in 1616, 1629, and 1638. The 1629 revision of the King James Version, according to Opfell, was published by the Cambridge University Press, which became Barker's chief competitor. This revision made various changes in printing, spelling, and punctuation, including altering the text of Romans 12:2 by changing "that good, that acceptable, and perfect, will of God" to "that good, *and* acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Barker, who was not at all eager for Cambridge to outdo him, released a new edition of the KJV in 1631, which became known as the "Wicked" Bible because the Seventh Commandment, which reads "Thou shalt not commit adultery," was accidentally changed to read "Thou shalt commit adultery." A stiff fine was imposed on Barker for his blunder.

White recorded that William Kilburne released a tract in 1659 claiming that 20,000 errors had crept into six different editions of the KJV that were published in the 1650s. In addition, Opfell stated that Thomas Paris of Trinity College released a 1762 edition of the KJV, which was followed by a 1769 version that was published by Benjamin Blayney of Oxford.

D.A. Waite, who is a *defender* of the KJV, presents a list of "Curious Editions of the Authorised Version" that includes the "Great He" Bible, the "Great She" Bible, and the "Wicked" Bible, along with an undated version known as the "Fool" Bible for rendering Psalm 14:1, "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God," as "The fool hath said in his heart there is a God." In all, Waite lists *twenty-three* different editions of the King James Version, each one earmarked with its own trademark error. Granted, some of these editions may have been published by independent publishers. However, White and Opfell point out that the earliest revisions to the King James text came out almost as soon as the *editio princeps* came off of the printing press — some of them coming from King James' own printer, Robert Barker! This tends to cast doubt on the idea that the King James Version is especially preserved by God. Thus, when Gipp admonishes that "You will have to accept the perfection of the Authorized Version by faith," he must have a tremendous amount of faith indeed!

Jamesites make frequent references to a text referred to as the *Textus Receptus*, also known as the Majority Text or the Received Text. This is the Greek New Testament that was utilized by the King James Bible, and Jamesites consider the

Textus Receptus to be the only authentic Greek New Testament. Riplinger, Gipp, and Waite make frequent mention of the Textus Receptus and how it faithfully preserves the original New Testament manuscripts — but only Waite goes into any detail as to how the Textus Receptus came about. He identifies Theodore Beza's 5th edition of the Greek New Testament, published in 1598, as the Textus Receptus.

So where did the Textus Receptus come from? Meet Desiderius Erasmus, a Dutch scholar who was eager to publish the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament. Cardinal Ximenes of Spain was trying to get another Greek text called the Complutensium Polyglot printed. Erasmus assembled his text in the city of Basel in 1515. According to Jonathan Underwood, author of *A History of the English Bible*, he wanted to beat Ximenes to the punch:

Thus, he hastily put it together from incomplete manuscripts available in his own city of Basel. Only one was not of the standardized form resulting from work done in the fourth century. This he used sparingly. None of his manuscripts contained the last six verses of Revelation; so he translated those verses into Greek from the Latin. His text was published in 1516, four years ahead of the Complutensium Polyglot.

James White noted that the first edition was such a rushed job that he had to get to work editing the second edition immediately:

It was so hastily printed that Erasmus himself said it was "precipitated rather than edited" and that it was "hurried out headlong." Since he was unwilling to wait for papal approval, he took a big gamble and dedicated his work to Pope Leo X, the same pope who excommunicated Martin Luther, hoping that the dedication would deflect any reprisals for his rushing his work to press. The gamble worked, and Erasmus had the first published Greek text on the market.

Underwood and White also recorded that another scholar, Robert Estienne (better known as Stephanus), published four editions of Erasmus' Greek New Testament between 1546 and 1551, and still another scholar named Theodore Beza, John Calvin's successor, published nine editions between 1565 and 1604. When the translators of the King James Version set down to work, Opfell made a list of the Bibles they referenced:

The six companies at Westminster, Cambridge, and Oxford possessed a treasury of English Bibles as well as a host of other translations — the Vulgate [a very old Catholic Bible in Latin], Erasmus, the Complutensian Polyglot, the Zurich Bible, Paganinus, Luther, Munster, Lefevre, Olivetan, Juda, Estienne, Castalio — that had aided their predecessors. They had access, of course, to Hebrew and Greek texts available in the Complutensian Polyglot, Erasmus, and Beza, who had published three editions of the Greek Testament (in 1559, 1565, and 1582).

The term *Textus Receptus* didn't even come around until 1633, when the Elzevir brothers published their second edition of the Greek New Testament — twelve years *after* the King James Version was printed.

A common strategy of the Jamesites is to use ad hominem attacks on the other guys. The term *ad hominem* is a Latin phrase that means "against the person," and is designed to destroy a person's argument by casting doubt on the person instead of the argument. Many of these attacks are directed against individuals such as Brooke Westcott and Fenton Hort, who worked on the Greek manuscripts that serve as the foundations for many modern Bibles. Riplinger also attacks Gerhard Kittel, who lived in Nazi Germany and edited the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* that has been consulted by NIV translators:

As Kittel was cranking out volume after volume of the lengthy *Theological Dictionary*, he was also taking a leadership role in the *Forschungsabteilung Judenfrage*, a Nazi organization and publication. Rudolf Hess...attended the opening ceremonies, which were followed by newspaper headlines pronouncing the organization as, "[T]he scientific weapon in the Nazi fight against the Jews." Kittel became the most frequent contributor to this journal, writing 6 of the 8 volumes, the last being cut short by the end of the war and Kittel's imprisonment for war crimes. (The same fate fell to his closing work on the *Theological Dictionary*.)

Kittel's pseudo-'science' and 'research' for this journal stooped to the ridiculous. For example, he would show ancient drawings of men with "large hooked noses" having sex with women who had small noses. These drawings, he purported "proved" scientifically that historically "inferior" Jewish men had attempted to mate with "superior" Aryan women in

order to improve their racial stock.

Riplinger seeks to discredit the *Theological Dictionary* as having been edited by an anti-Semite, but did Kittel's anti-Semitism affect the accuracy of the *Theological Dictionary*? Riplinger states that Kittel's racist beliefs "massaged the meanings in the *Theological Dictionary* and is manipulating a new generation of Christians, when they touch their new versions." It's a pity that Riplinger doesn't even bother to quote a single example of this happening. Maybe there isn't one. Ad hominem attacks aren't good enough to discredit the works of a racist all by themselves.

Here's another example of an ad hominem attack that shows exactly why they're useless. Consider the current plight of Ireland, where the Irish Republican Army has waged a guerrilla war to free Northern Ireland from British rule since the 1916 Rebellion. Irish historian Tim Pat Coogan wrote this commentary on the beginnings of the struggle:

The partition issue that helped to keep the I.R.A. alive for fifty years after 1916 dates back to the 'Plantation' begun under James I, in which six Ulster counties in northeastern Ireland were handed over to 'Undertakers' to be colonised by Protestants, mainly Scots Presbyterians. In other parts of Ireland land was also given over to 'Planters' but in the North tenants as well as landlords were dispossessed and the plantation was therefore most complete.

England had exercised some amount of influence over Ireland since 1170, but when James VI of Scotland successfully merged his kingdom with England and became James I of Great Britain, he rewarded some of his loyal subjects by stripping Irish landowners of their property and dispersing most of them through the southern portion of Ireland. Today, we would refer to this act as "ethnic cleansing." This Plantation, carried out with the blessing of King James, forced many innocent Irish families out of their ancestral homes and did much to ignite hostilities that are felt in Ireland to this day.

Does the fact that King James orchestrated the 'Plantation' mean that the Bible that bears his name is useless to Christians? Not at all. No more than Kittel's work with the Nazis invalidated the New International Version or any other version that references Kittel's *Theological Dictionary*. If it did, Riplinger, Gipp, and Waite would all be in big trouble.

As far as religious belief goes, faith in God is one thing, but faith in a particular Bible translation as being the only true and valid "Word of God" is something else entirely. It is worth noting that the Apostle Paul, who told the ancient Roman congregation that "The just shall live by faith," also exhorted the ancient church in Thessalonika to practice a little skepticism: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." If there is clear evidence that the King James Version is more faithful to the original manuscripts than other Bibles, then it should be taken into account. But has the "KJV Only" movement met the burden of proof that is now on their shoulders? Judging from the few examples I have covered, I think they need to work harder to prove their statements.

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## Condemned to repeat it

by Mike Combs

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Fiction (Part One of two parts)

More roughly than what was probably required, the Bailiff pushed the shackled defendant into the courtroom. The RV-Prosecutor was already seated, as was the Court-Astrologer.

The Psychic-Stenographer entered next, and sat down at her tiny desk. She looked disapprovingly at the older-style manual stenograph machine which sat in replacement of her computerized one. They had dug this relic out of storage when her well-used electronic machine had finally stopped working.

The repairman had done everything he could to fix her original machine before he hauled it away, including Therapeutic

Touch and crystal healing. The Psychic-Stenographer wasn't terribly surprised when the TT didn't bring a response (computers had never struck her as the type to respond to warm, human contact), but she had really held out hopes for the crystal amulet to do the trick. She seemed to remember reading long ago that something like a quartz crystal was the heart and guts of these ancient machines. Surely there would be some kind of simpatico. But nothing.

She had asked if they couldn't fix it the same way people fixed computers when they used to build them.

"No one has the knowledge to fix these old computerized systems like that anymore."

"Didn't they publish repair manuals at they same time they built these machines?" she had asked. "Surely at least a few of those manuals are still around."

"They are," was the reply. "But understanding them requires a very linear, reductionist mode of thinking. A mind-set far removed from our more modern, holistic means of understanding the universe."

Now the rest of the court personnel were filing into the courtroom, along with members of the gallery. At last, the Channeler-Judge strode in behind the bench, black robes billowing out behind him. The judge always seemed to be in a hurry.

The Channeler-Judge picked up his new brass gavel, (he had an embarrassing habit of breaking the wooden ones) and gave it one, smart rap.

"May we have the reading from the Court-Astrologer, please?"

The Court-Astrologer glanced over her charts once more, and then stood to address the courtroom.

"Venus is rising in Gemini, so there is probably an excellent chance of justice being well-served today. Jupiter influences may lead to a tendency towards leniency."

"Thank you," the judge replied.

"However, where personal-life decisions are concerned, sexual tensions could lead to quick..."

"Yes, thank you," the judge said irritably. "May we get on with this? Remote Viewer-Prosecutor, what are the charges, please?"

The RV-Prosecutor rose, and read from his papers.

"Jonathan Randall, you are hereby charged that on the night of April 10th, of the year 2053 New Age, you did willingly and knowingly participate in an abduction of and experimentation upon a certain Sarah Hamilton carried out by the Grays. You therefore stand accused of Conspiring with Grays."

"It's a lie!" shouted Jonathan, coming to his feet.

"Sit down," scolded the Channeler-Judge. "Oh, before we get any further; Bailiff, would you please accompany the bounty hunter to the clerk so he can get his payment, and be back to his duties while we sort this all out?"

The bounty hunter rose and said, "Thank you, your Honor." He then turned, and, with a flourish of his cape, departed with the bailiff. Bounty hunters were such eccentrics.

"RV-Prosecutor, call your first witness."

"Call Roger Hamilton to the stand."

The witness swore on "Out On a Limb", and sat in the witness stand.

"Where's the Court-Hypnotist?" the Channeler-Judge cried. "Let's get this witness in a trance as soon as possible, so that we can get to the truth of this matter."

"Here, your honor." The Court-Hypnotist was a small, slender man who didn't seem to match his deep, baritone voice. His low, resonant, New-England accented tones served him well in his profession.

The Court-Hypnotist waved a crystal amulet before the witness, murmuring softly, and soon the desired surrender of will was achieved. The RV-Prosecutor stepped over.

"Now Mr. Hamilton, if you would please, just tell us your story in your own words."

"Well, Sarah and I both have been getting abducted by the Grays something fierce for the last five years or so," Hamilton softly began. "At least one night a month they paralyze us, fly in through the walls, and take one or the other. Little guys with large heads, and enormous, black, almond-shaped eyes."

"I would like to bring it to the court's attention that this description is consistent with all other descriptions," the Prosecutor interjected.

"Duly noted. Proceed."

"Well, anyway, sometimes there are government men with them. One night last month I noticed one of them was my neighbor, Jonathan."

"Is that gentleman in the courtroom right now?"

Despite the fact that the eyewitness' eyes seemed closed, he pointed directly at the accused. Perhaps he was only squinting.

"Let the record show..."

"Yes, yes, yes," the Judge growled. "Get on with it."

The RV-Prosecutor turned back to the witness. "What happened next that night?"

"Ummm, they took us both that night. They levitated us out through the window..."

"Wait a minute!" Jonathan said. "Your windows don't open."

"Irrelevant," said the Prosecutor. "This court has already demonstrated that the Grays can pass through walls. Passing any human through a closed window could scarcely be beyond their abilities."

"Sustained."

Jonathan gripped his head, and went down to his elbows on the tabletop.

Hamilton continued his unconscious testimony. "That night they did the usual sperm and egg removals. But they also used three needles to put holes in my head."

The Prosecutor said, "I would like to draw the court's attention to the fact that there are three, evenly-spaced welts on Mr. Hamilton's upper forehead."

"FOR GOD'S SAKE! THEY'RE ZITS!!!" Jonathan cried.

"Mr. Randall, we would like to remind you that assistance from the accused is not desired," the Channeler-Judge admonished.

"They must have done something to Sarah's appendix that night. The next morning it had burst. She was so sick. We tried everything: Homeopathy, Aromatherapy, Accupuncture. Towards the end, I pulled our life savings, and had a Qi Gong specialist flown in from Beijing to adjust her meridian energies. But nothing anyone could do could save her. She died two weeks ago."

The witness was then awakened and dismissed. The Prosecutor walked over to the bench. "Your Honor, in addition to this testimony-evidence, I also have here sworn affidavits that crop circles appeared on the west side after the night in question."

"Excellent," the Judge said. "Hard, corroborating evidence is always helpful in cases like this." He fixed severe eyes on the accused. "Mr. Randall, Conspiring with Grays is a serious accusation. How do you plead?"

"Not guilty. Roger's just pissed off at me because my dog won't stay off of his yard. He's making up this whole thing about me being involved in any alien abductions."

"That will be for the court to decide," the Judge said. "Bring in the Court-Aura Reader!"

The Aura Reader walked around Jonathan, gazing at him fixedly. "There is a definite violet color to his aura," she reported. "This is classically associated with Extra-Terrestrials, or humans who were Extra-Terrestrials in past lives. It could be that, or it could be from long, close association with spacemen. It is possible that he is himself a Gray; many who live among us in human form have revealed themselves. In fact..."

She held her crystal pendant up in front of one eye, and squinted through it at him. "On other planes...his eyes do seem to sort of wrap around his head."

"In light of this new evidence, I would like to amend the charges to Conspiring with Grays, Possibly a Gray Himself," said the RV-Prosecutor.

"Very well," said the Judge.

"Can I ask you a question about these auras you see?" Jonathan asked.

"Defendant, you are not the one here to ask questions," said the Channeler-Judge.

"It's alright your Honor," said the Aura Reader. "I am always happy to educate anyone on the nature of the universe around us." She turned to Jonathan, smiling primly. "Ask away."

"These auras of yours, do you see them by reflected light, just like all other objects?"

"Well, first off, it's not my aura, it's your aura. But the answer to your question is no. Aura perception has nothing to do with external light. It is your own internal luminescence, seen not with the retinas, but with the soul."

"In that case, I suppose you can see everyone's aura even in the dark, right?" Jonathan asked pointedly.

The Court-Aura Reader's eyes shifted off to one side. "Errr... well, yes," she said, although it didn't look like her thoughts had ever been down this particular path before.

"Fine," he said. "Then turn out all the lights. I'll try to get away. If you can still see me, you can catch me, and we'll all know you're legit."

There was a bit of consternation in the gallery. The judge banged his gavel.

"Mr. Randall, this is little more than a rather transparent attempt to escape from the clutches...I'm sorry...from the hands of the Law!"

"Quite true, your Honor," the RV-Prosecutor agreed. "In addition, I would like to object on the grounds of Scientific

Methodology. Your Honor? Sir?"

The Channeler-Judge had his eyes closed, and was muttering to himself. First one eye, then the other opened.

"Sorry, just repeating my mantra. Sometimes I have to stop and re-center myself when dealing with thoroughly difficult people!" the Judge said, glaring at the defendant.

"Scientific Methodology," the Prosecutor repeated.

"Oh, yes, yes. Sustained."

Jonathan's fists clenched.

"Call in the Court-Diviner," cried the Judge.

An elderly man entered with a satchel. He began to pull out two wires bent into "L" shapes, stopped, and then apologized.

"Sorry. Wrong ones. These are the golf-ball finders, not the truth diviners."

"Could we move this along as quickly as possible?" the Judge asked.

The Court-Diviner had now pulled a second pair of wires out of his case which were indistinguishable from the first. He walked around the defendant's chair, holding the rods out. Like the needle of a compass, they unfailingly swerved toward Jonathan.

"Very definite signs of deception from the accused. Most certainly he is not telling us all the truth. Unless...," he stopped circling for a moment. "You don't happen to have gold fillings do you?"

"Yes, as a matter of fact," Jonathan replied.

"HmMMM. Well, still, I would say very definite indicators of gross deception."

"I think you're full of stuff," Jonathan informed him.

"You might be saying that," the Diviner responded confidently, putting his bent wires away, "But you're not thinking that."

"Stenographer, read back the defendant's last thoughts," the Judge ordered.

She raised the tape, and read from it. "Damn, the human's divining instruments see through my disguise."

Jonathan bolted up. "I never said that!"

"Mr. Randall, must we remind you that the Psychic-Stenographer's function is not to take down your words, but your innermost thoughts as you think them?"

"Well, how do we know she's a real psychic? Not everyone is. How do we know she's not just telling us she is? What are her qualifications?"

The stenographer shot him a withering stare. "I have been featured in eighteen magazine and newspaper articles, and on three different television specials in the last ten years alone."

"I'm perfectly satisfied with the Psychic-Stenographer's credentials," the Judge insisted. "Now please be seated!"

"Well, what about the Diviner's credentials?" Jonathan persisted. "Hey, let's do this: Let's put a black hood over his

head, and then spin him around twenty times. Then everyone in the court stand around him in circle. If he can..."

"Objection. Scientific Methodology," cried the Prosecutor.

Now the Channeler-Judge appeared to be addressing his mantra directly to his large, brass gavel. At any rate, he was staring intently at the handle, stroking it steadily with one finger, and silently mouthing the same one-syllable word again and again. When he belatedly realized another objection had been made, he stopped and quickly sustained it.

"Defendant, your suggestions invariably remind the bench of the kind of deterministic, objective, mono-reality thinking that was banned with the dawning of the new millennium," the Judge said sternly. "Now sit down!"

Jonathan collapsed down into his seat.

"This is a merciful court," the Channeler-Judge continued. "Therefore, we would like to give you one last chance for leniency. This court is willing to give you the benefit of a doubt that you only conspire with Grays, and are not actually a Gray yourself. If so, then you are no doubt part of the massive government conspiracy to keep the truth from the public. If you will confess this to the court, and hand over all classified documents and records in your possession concerning the truth about UFOs, we are prepared to go easy on you."

Jonathan spread his hands. "I have no information to give you."

"I would like to add Complicity in the Great Conspiracy to the charges at this time, your Honor," the RV-Prosecutor said.

"Done," said the Judge.

Jonathan buried his head in his arms, manacles clinking.

Suddenly, there seemed to be some kind of commotion out in the hallway. A loud argument was penetrating the doors. Then, there was silence, and the doors flew open. A woman in her twenties strode into the courtroom. Before the great doors swung shut, the Bailiff could be briefly seen, knees pointed together, arms crossed over his middle, and with a peculiar, strained expression on his face

*Ed. Note: The second part of Combs' story will appear in the September Skeptic.*