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## Re: Secrets of Deception TV Show on Crop Circles

From: John Ratcliff <[johnr@simutronics.com](mailto:johnr@simutronics.com)>  
Date: Tue, 2 Jun 1998 11:28:15 -0800

A quick rebuttal of some of the points made in your recent post.

[ See: <http://www.ufomind.com/misc/1998/jun/d01-001.shtml> ]

>>The producer's of NBC's recent documentary "Unmasked: Exploring the Secrets of Deception" are the latest in an endless series of 'mindless acts' plaguing the research scene. Instead of taking the time to carefully examine and weigh all evidence, they simply took the easy route and swallowed the claims of the hoaxer, - that crop formations are not the results of an unknown force but a clever human fraud. But then, would one expect a balanced view from a program entitled "...the Secrets of Deception"?

I would hardly classify the presentation of this show as taking the "easy route." Flying the group to New Zealand and setting up that photo shoot was far from easy. In fact I thought it was a fascinating public demonstration of the complexity and artistry of these crop circle makers.

(a) The documentary's main premise, - the ability of humans to create crop formations, has never been a point of contention.

This is not true. Early in the history of crop circle "research", many, many, crop circles presented as authentic and genuine articles were no more than than, simple circles. True there was a complexity in the weave and pattern of the crop, but simple circles they were. My copy of the glossy book "Circular Evidence" contains no examples of vast large and complex patterns, which came only after much media attention was drawn to this "mystery."

>>Anyone with a plank and a piece of string can do it!

We now know that only after crop circles makers have made public demonstrations as was shown on the NBC TV show. I, for one, was fascinated to see such a massive and complex pattern created by the group and found it highly informative.

>>What we do contest however are the unsubstantiated claims of a few hoaxers to having made nearly every single formation ever discovered (over 5000 at this point).

Do you mean 5,000 \*verified authentic\* circles, or 5,000 of all shapes, sizes and variety? And who says only a handful of crop circle makers were involved? This appears to be a popular activity for youth in that area.

By example, can you simply \*imagine\*, that well over 5,000 mailboxes in rural areas in the state of Missouri are "mysteriously" destroyed in the middle of the night by unknown forces? Well, this mystery is easily explained by the large population of bored and restless youth who take part in this rural activity.

Take a few teenagers from every high school and university in the all of England, overwhelm them with a cultural sensation, and all of the sudden the 5,000 number doesn't seem so absurd, especially in light of the many amateurish productions which populate the fields as youth learn their trade.

The circle makers admitted they knew nothing of diatonics and sacred numbers and made no effort to include these in their designs. How is it then that a great many formations show these? Dr. Gerald Hawking, an astronomer and mathematician, determined the chance of diatonic ratios he found in many formations were thousands to one. Diatonics relate to the ratios of musical scales to each other and are far more complex than what was suggested on the program.

Such statistical protestations have been used by many as supporting evidence for all sorts of claims, like the so called Face On Mars, for example. The simple fact is that creative designs need hardly be the sole province of alien intelligence, since human beings have been making some rather stunning works of art for millenium.

Besides the shortcomings of "Secrets of Deception", it is important also to consider the nature and motivation of the hoaxers. Although they like to portray themselves as fun-loving pranksters, they are not. These hoaxers are, first and foremost, vandals who sneak into unsuspecting farmer's fields under cover of darkness and, if we are to believe all their claims, have caused around a million dollars worth of damage over the years. Little wonder there is a price on their heads.

This is simply not correct. The motivations of people you term as "hoaxers" is absolutely no different than your own. They are looking to solve a mystery. First it was claimed that people couldn't make crop circles. This hypothesis was put to a test, and low and behold people did in fact make crop circles which were verified and validated as "the real thing" (i.e. not made by humans), by various crop circle researchers. As the complexity of formations grew, the claims kept getting raised, that again no human could create such large and complex formations in the dark of night. Again this hypothesis was put to the test and it failed, as large and complex formations were made by \*human\* crop circle makers in the dead of night, and these did in fact pass muster as "the real thing" by researchers.

And, lastly, these crop circle makers are investigating a slightly different mystery than you are. Their interest lies in the question "Why do people believe the things they do?" By "hoaxing", i.e. creating a phenomenon, like crop circles, lights in the sky, and then observing their effect on the human belief system they are pursuing their \*own\* mysteries.

I have heard reported that when a formation is made in a ripened field, it is harvested with no difficulty and no loss. Claims of millions of dollars in damages are questionable. On one point I do agree, and this is the issue of trespassing. In the United States anyone trespassing on a farmers land is only going to be met by dogs and a shotgun blast, that is if they are caught. On the flip side, farms are very large places and getting caught is not necessarily that large of a risk, as the same kids who were smashing mailboxes have been known to switch to cow tipping late at night.

Nor should they be accepted as artists expressing their talents in a unique manner. Anyone wishing to express their artistic talent in farm fields need only make a deal with the farmers and then charge admission to their works of art. Sneaking around at night like burglars and car thieves is unacceptable behavior.

Why would anyone choose to be a hoaxer, - a deceiver? The very nature of hoaxing means inflicting pain and embarrassment on others. British forensic psychologist Dr. Mike Berry says, "Most hoax offenders are lonely, inadequate people who crave attention, however negative, and who will pay little regard to the consequences of their actions. If you lead a boring life and feel you have no control over what happens to you, hoaxing is away of adding excitement in much the same way as joy-riding or drugs. It is also a very repeatable offense, which means you can go on getting a buzz from it until you are caught."

Clearly, we are not dealing with a savory element of society. While there

is little doubt they have varying talents of arguable limits, they contribute absolutely nothing to the field of research. Their very presence is an impediment. Let them cast their dark shadows elsewhere and allow us to continue on a level playing field. This dispute however, will likely continue for some time to come.

What I find most amusing about this last section of your argument is that absolutely every comment applies to the creators of "legitimate" crop circles as well. Presuming, for the sake of argument, that some non-human intelligence is behind these formations then they are guilty of every single transgression you apply to human "hoaxers". They come in the dead of night, trespass, destroy property, and play a massive mindf\*\*k on those who are held captivated by their graffiti.

It is a great curiosity why there is such a fascination over these intruders into our world, who confront us not with honesty, open dialogue, and an equal exchange among species, but instead steal in the dark of the night, trespass, destroy property, and communicate through occult symbolism which seems to be serving no purpose other than driving a segment of our society slowly mad...

John

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