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HOT GOSSIP UK - August '98

From: Georgina Bruni <georgina@easynet.co.uk>
 Date: Sat, 01 Aug 1998 17:14:31 +0100
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HOT GOSSIP UK MAGAZINE

The Hottest Gossip At The Coolest Site. www.hotgossip.co.uk

August 1998 Issue - Georgina=92s UFO Update Section

[via the Unexplained]

Tension At UK UFO Conferences

Conference Speakers at Quest/UFO Magazine Event

Ufologist=92s Retire From Public

Flying Lighthouses

FEATURE - Alternative 3, The Saga Lives On

Tension At UK UFO Conferences

Is it something in the air or what? Just as everyone was leaving the London conference organised by Quest/ British UFO Magazine, a very irate Irene Bott [President of the Staffordshire UFO Group] began screaming and shouting at Graham Birdsall's wife, Christine. I am all ears. It appears that Irene, who had been accompanying Nick Redfern, was complaining about the hotel accommodation. Nick had called me the day before; asking if they could stay at my place the following night as they had an appointment in London the next day. The conference speakers are normally checked into a quality hotel, but most likely, because of the holiday season and the fact that it was only a one day conference, the hotel wasn't as good as normal. I thought any minute now the girls were going to come to blows. It was most unlike Irene, although well known for being outspoken, I'd never seen her behave quite so dramatically as this. Thank goodness the two of them finally made friends. It was the end of a very long day for both organisers and speakers.

I didn't manage to attend the Hertford conference organised by Tony Spurrier. I mixed up my dates. Speakers included Michael Hesseman, Steven Greer and Nick Redfern.

Apparently there was an argument at this event too. This time, according to my source, sceptic, Rob Irvine and Michael Hesseman looked like coming to blows. I'm told that the argument got quite heated at one stage, albeit that it was over in no time. Rob was said to have pointed a finger at Michael=92s nose - well almost - and said.

"Never forget, I know you are a liar"

Michael walked off, but I hear they made it up, well at least they shook hands.....So what's going on?

Conference Speakers at Quest/UFO Magazine Event

I realise I'm late reporting on the Quest/UFO Magazine

conference in general, but I wasn't around last month. So here's the report anyway.

I really enjoyed Nick Redfern's talk, almost as much as I enjoyed the book. [see review] I also enjoyed the presentations of James Courant and A.J Gevaerd as I had never met either of them before.

Pilot and researcher, James Courant, was like a breath of fresh air. He's one of the rare researchers around who doesn't flaunt an ego. Shades of Michael Lindeman. Both are keen reporters on the media side of ufology. James gave a superb presentation which also featured some humorous parts - to what is usually a very serious subject. Of particular interest was his talk [along with slides] on some 5,000 year old Peruvian stones. Remarkably, there are 15,000 of these stones on display in Peru, and these strange relics are said to record the whole of life's history right up to the year 2007. One hopes that somewhere amongst the collection, are records of life after that time. Other highlights of his talk revolved around how the media had betrayed the UFO system. Along with myself, James is one of the few researchers who have interviewed Dr Michael Wolf, but I have never met him personally. It was interesting to see a piece of footage of Wolf, I had always imagined him to be much older looking, being as ill as he claims to be. But, he looked in good shape, and in fact, quite dishy! I asked James what he thought about Michael Wolf; did he believe he was credible.

"Absolutely, I can vouch that he worked at Area 51 and the Dulcie Base." Said James.

You can purchase James Courant's taped interview with Michael Wolf from the UFO magazine. E-mail them at:

106151.1150@compuserve.com

for details. It's a very interesting interview. If you require more details on Michael Wolf you can e-mail me for a copy of my interview. <georgina@easynet.co.uk> I hope the Birdsall's invite James Courant to the '99 annual conference.

I'm not going to go into detail about A.J. Gevaerd's presentation because the story of Brazil's Varginha has been well publicised. However, as one of Brazil's top researchers Gevaerd brought the case to life. Although a good 20 minutes over his time, and still going strong, no one appeared to be bored. It was all very fascinating. I asked A.J, who was sitting beside me during Courant's talk, if there was a US presence involved in the cover-up of this famous case. I wasn't at all surprised to hear that there was. It seems that no matter where in the world a major extraterrestrial situation arises - the US military is on the scene in no time. For more details on the Varginha case you should try an internet search - there's an enormous amount of material out there, but try searching out material by Gevaerd.

Graham Birdsall, one of the organisers and Editor of UFO Magazine, gave a brief sit down [back problems] talk about the Global UFO Update. He also showed some brilliant film footage which will be featured in a forthcoming TV documentary special.

Ufologist's Retire From Public

Ex policeman, and well known British Ufologist Tony Dodd, has retired from the UFO scene due to his wife's illness. She is suffering with heart problems and Tony wants to spend more time with her.

Another Ufologist to fade off the scene is Philip Mantle. Philip recently co authored a book with Michael Hesseman, about the Roswell case. He was also involved in the research of the Santilli Alien Autopsy film. Now that Santilli has admitted the 'Tent' footage was a hoax, albeit that it's alleged to have been done by another party, me thinks that Philip has had enough. It is disheartening. However, I'm sure he won't be gone for long, last I heard he was supposed to be co-authoring a book on the AA saga.

Flying Lighthouses

If you've read Nick Pope's column, you'll know that there's been an ongoing discussion in a certain Press forum between science writer, Ian Ridpath and myself. It's all to do with 'The Rendlesham Forest Case'. Ian is still trying desperately to flog his theories of what allegedly happened during December 1980 involving numerous US military personnel based at RAF Bentwaters/Woodbridge in Suffolk, UK. Witnesses claim they saw unusual lights in the sky and unidentified craft land in the forest next to the Woodbridge base.

Ian expects us to believe that the then Lt Col Charles Halt and several patrols, witnessed none other than the Orford lighthouse, the Shiplake beacon, a meteor and a cluster of stars which included Sirius. It's not easy to debate this case with a bunch of hard core journalists and a science writer who obviously thinks we're gullible enough to believe that lighthouses can fly! It is unfortunate that I haven't the time to continue the debate which lasted for several weeks. However, suffice to say that I couldn't convince the press that it was anything other than that which was proposed by Ian Ridpath. Interesting, considering it was the Broadsheets that consulted Ian Ridpath, and actually published his 'findings' way back in 1983/4. One wonders how Mr Ridpath could come up with so many [in my opinion] nonsense conclusions considering he didn't pick up the story until 3 years after it occurred, and at no time did he consult any of the actual witnesses, preferring to speak to a forester, who himself had not witnessed the events, and in fact had not visited the scene until several weeks afterwards.

During the debate, sceptic James Easton produced his case involving the alleged original witness statements. Easton will not have it that these were watered down versions. The real statements were given to the OSI.

When I mentioned to witness Jim Penniston that Ian Ridpath was still going on about the lighthouse, he advised me to disregard any comments like that, and answered.

"When researching Bentwaters, keep in mind we are not talking about lights in the sky."

FEATURE

Alternative 3, The Saga Lives On

Was this one of the most astounding and frightening conspiracies ever, or was it just a clever hoax ?

British scientists vanishing off the face of the earth. Astronauts' reports of strange craft they saw on the moon's surface. Social drop outs being abducted and used as slaves on an alien planet. Life on earth is doomed. A shocking international government conspiracy involving a plan to save only a chosen few individuals....

During the 1970s you could say that the United Kingdom suffered a great loss of brain power. The Brain Drain, a terminology used for the mass exodus of some of the best surgeons and scientists in the country, were being enticed with huge pay cheques to work in the United States. At the same time, small groups of environmentalists were just beginning to understand the problems facing the ozone layer, most of the general public were still unaware of the environmental issues yet to come, and very few people appeared to have heard of NASA's space shuttles.

The Story Breaks

At 9pm on Monday June 20th 1977 Anglia Television based in Norwich UK, put out an unusual one hour TV special. The programme was simultaneously transmitted to a number of other countries which included Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Greece, and Yugoslavia. The name of the Television programme was called Alternative 3. However, it wasn't just a lone off-TV special, as many have been led to believe, but the last in a series of science fact documentaries, called Science Report. It was for this reason that the programme would shock the world, and in the days to follow would rock the station's credibility. The one hour

programme informed viewers of a huge conspiracy involving the United States government and NASA. They showed a piece of film which was allegedly passed on to the programme=92s team by an insider from NASA HQ. The footage, which appeared to be authentic, featured a US astronaut landing on Mars, and saying "Boy, when they take the wraps off this, it'll be the biggest day in history. 22 May 1962, we're on Mars and we have life" But what really scared the public on that hot summer evening, was not the alleged Mars landing, but news that planet Earth was dying, and that =91social drop outs=92 were being abducted and shuttled off into space to serve as slaves on some alien planet. Viewers were told that life on Earth was doomed, and that there were only three alternatives available for survival. Alternative One - was to blow two holes in the ozone layer, but this, it was feared, would cause skin cancers. It would also involve a rule to stop polluting the planet immediately. Alternative Two was to begin digging underground cities for the elite few, the rest of civilisation would be left to fend for themselves on the dying surface. Alternative Three was to get the hell off the planet. Apparently the third alternative was already in operation, and the world=92s top scientists were being commissioned to assist in this 'above top secret' operation. But the narrator then tells us that many of these scientists were simply disappearing off the face of the earth.....

When the programme ended at 10pm, Anglia were besieged with calls from irate viewers demanding more information. Callers were told not to panic, that the programme was just a hoax, and a frightened public sighed with relief and went back to their armchairs to watch the remainder of the 10.00 clock news, followed by a light entertainment show. The next morning the national press confirmed that the programme was a hoax, and pointed out that the scientist Dr Carl Gerstien, who had tried to warn the world of the impending disaster, was none other than the well known actor Richard Marnier. The Times of London reported "Independent television companies last night received hundreds of protest calls after an Anglia programme, Alternative 3, gave alarming facts about changes in the earth=92s atmosphere. It was a hoax, originally intended for April 1st."

Anglia got a scolding and the public were relieved of their fears.

We know that the Alternative 3 programme was put together by a respectable team of science reporters who had a regular weekly slot titled Science Report. We know that it was an intelligent documentary series which reported on new scientific inventions, and we know that it was because of the teams' credibility that Alternative 3 was taken so seriously. The question is; why would a serious science investigative team who had a regular weekly documentary series - suddenly produce a hoax? Even taking into consideration that it was originally intended to be an April Fool hoax, it=92s hardly fitting for a team of their calibre to produce such a programme.

I remember having mixed reactions to the disturbing documentary, or drama, as it was later to be called. One theory that had crossed my mind at the time, and incidentally, I did see the programme, was that the science team were genuinely on to something, but that the witnesses were unwilling to take part in the documentary. Three months after the programme aired, I met a cameraman at a party in Berkshire, who claimed to have been part of the film crew. He told me outright that Alternative 3 was a hoax, and that they had used actors. He also said the crew were all joking about it at the time. Well, by now most people knew that actors had been used, but few knew that the film crew, or least one of them, had confirmed it was a hoax.

Alternative 3, The Book

By 1978 the story looked like dying a death, when suddenly Sphere Books published ALTERNATIVE 3, written by LESLIE WATKINS and DAVID AMBROSE. Those who were able to secure a copy, read with interest a story that was a follow-up of the television programme produced by Spectrum (not Sceptre as some believed) for Anglia Television. And so began The Alternative 3 Saga, and an attempt by thousands worldwide to uncover what they believed to be one of the world's biggest conspiracies.

I purchased the newly published paperback of Alternative 3 from a popular book store in Berkshire. There in the center of the

store was a huge display of the books, as was always the case when they had delivery of what they thought would be a best seller. I was so excited about the book that I immediately called a friend of mine, a collector of publications on the unexplained, who I knew had been interested in the television programme. The following day he phoned to tell me that the store didn't have the book, I was surprised, I thought it highly unlikely that they had sold all the copies. So I returned to the store to discover that the display had indeed disappeared, and there was no sign of the book anywhere in the store. I summoned the manager who admitted that he had been told to remove the stock from the shelves and return them to head office. I pushed him for more information, but all he would say was that it came from high up. It was this incident that prompted me to believe that there may be some truth to the story of Alternative 3 after all. Due to public demand the book was re-printed several times in the following years, and incidentally, it is still listed under World Affairs, and not as you might expect, fiction.

The publication was intriguing because some names and events were genuine, whilst others didn't exist. One name mentioned, was that of Otto Binder who was a member of the NASA space programme. In the book he's quoted as saying that NASA killed significant segments of conversation between mission control and Apollo 11, the spacecraft that took Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong to the Moon, and that those segments were deleted from the official record. It's interesting to note that Binder was also a science fiction writer. According to an alleged quote by Binder - when Aldrin spoke to mission control he said.

"These babies were huge, sir..enormous. Oh God, you wouldn't believe it! I'm telling you there are other spacecraft out there....lined up on the far side of the crater edge...they're on the Moon watching us."

Astronaut Edgar Mitchell, who is also named in the book, had previously described his feelings when looking at this world from the Moon.

"I went into a very deep pathos, a kind of anguish. That incredibly beautiful planet that was Earth....a place no bigger than my thumb was my home.. a blue and white jewel against a velvet black sky...was being killed off."

And on March 23, 1974, he was quoted in a London newspaper as saying.

"Society had only three ways in which to go and that the third was "the most viable, but most difficult alternative."

What was Mitchell trying to tell us more than 20 years ago, was he trying to warn us about Alternative 3?

The book also reported on animal mutilations, space shuttles, man made domes on the moon, the environmental problems, and disappearing scientists. All of which would later public knowledge. Inasmuch as astronomers were seeing and writing about unusual domes that had recently appeared on the moon's surface. NASA would announce news about the US space shuttles, governments would acknowledge the environmental issues, including the pollution of the ozone layer, and later we would learn of the many disappearances and horrible suicides surrounding British scientists.

A Letter From Leslie Watkins

The following is a letter from the author of Alternative 3, Leslie Watkins, it was placed in the public domain of the Internet in the VANGARD SCIENCES archives on October 28 1989.

A letter to Ms Dittrich from Windwords bookstore (address unknown).

Dear Ms. Dittrich

Thank you for your letter, which reached me today. Naturally, I am delighted by your interest in Alternative 3 and by the fact that you plan to sell it in the Windwords bookstore. I will certainly cooperate in any way I can.

The correct description of Alternative 3 was given to you by the representative from Penguin Books. The book is based on fact,

but uses that fact as a launchpad for a HIGH DIVE INTO FICTION.
In answer to your specific questions:

- 1) There is no astronaut named Grodin.
- 2) There is no Sceptre Television and the reported Benson is also fictional.=
- 3) There is no Dr. Gerstein.
- 4) Yes, a "documentary" was televised in June 1977 on Anglia Television, which went out to the entire national network in Britain. It was called Alternative 3 and was written by David Ambrose and produced by Christopher Miles (whose names were on the book for contractual reasons). This original TV version, which I EXPANDED IMMENSELY for the book, was ACTUALLY A HOAX which had been scheduled for transmission on April Fools' Day. Because of certain problems in finding the right network slot, the transmission was delayed.

The TV programme did cause a tremendous uproar because viewers refused to believe it was fiction. I initially took the view that the basic premise was so way-out, particularly the way I aimed to present it in the book, that no one would regard it as non-fiction. Immediately after publication, I realized I was totally wrong. In fact, the amazing mountains of letters from virtually all parts of the world including vast numbers from highly intelligent people in positions of responsibility-convincing me that I had ACCIDENTALLY trespassed into a range of top-secret truths.

Documentary evidence provided by many of these correspondents decided me to write a serious and COMPLETELY NON-FICTION sequel. Unfortunately, a chest containing the bulk of the letters was among the items which were mysteriously LOST IN TRANSIT some four years when I moved from London, England, to Sydney, Australia, before I moved on to settle in New Zealand. For some time after Alternative 3 was originally published, I have reason to suppose that my home telephone was being tapped and my contacts who were experienced in such matters were convinced that certain intelligence agencies considered that I probably knew too much.

So, summing up, the book is FICTION BASED ON FACT. But I now feel that I inadvertently got VERY CLOSE TO A SECRET TRUTH. I hope this is of some help to you and I look forward to hearing from you again.

With best wishes
Leslie Watkins

Anglia Television & The Actors

In the early 90s I called Anglia Television and spoke to a charming lady called Maureen who worked in the records dept. Maureen was very helpful and told me she still received at least one call a month about the programme, and that some people get really angry and can't accept it was a drama. She told of one student who flew all the way from the United States, and called from Heathrow airport to ask if he could see the film, and that he really got upset when refused. Maureen was a trainee back in 1977, and she remembers doing the paste-ups for the special, she worked on stills at the time. Maureen said they used actors in the drama and suggested I call the London PR office for permission to give the names and contact numbers of the actors. They gave permission and here are some of the actors who appeared in the TV special

| Actor | Role |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Shane Rimmer..... | Bob Grodin (astronaut) |
| Carole Hazell..... | Investigative Journalist |
| Gregory Munro..... | ? |
| Richard Marner..... | Dr Carl Gerstien(Professor) |
| Ivor Roberts..... | ? |
| Fibi Nicholas..... | Harry's Girl |
| David Baxt..... | Harry |
| Tim Brinton..... | Played Himself As A Presenter |

I spoke to Richard Marner=92s agent who assured me that Marner=92s

CV stated that he did actually do one days filming with the programme Alternative 3 on January 25th 1977. I Later called Richard Marner who confirmed it, and he remarked that it was the easiest job he'd ever done. He didn't do any filming in the studio, and apparently the crew had problems with Cambridge University because they filmed him on the steps without permission. He said he didn't even rehearse the lines and that it was all very rushed. Today Richard Marner is best known for his part as Colonel Yon Strohm in the British sitcom =91Allo Allo=92. I checked with Spotlight, a listing for actors and entertainers, and found that Shane Rimmer and Ivor Roberts were with Howells & Prior Agency. Shane Rimmer played the part of the fictitious astronaut, Bob Grodin. Rimmer is a well known science fiction and spy thriller writer who also does voice-overs and has acted in numerous popular films and television spy dramas, including a James Bond movie. He was also the famous voice of Captain Scot Tracy in Thunderbirds.

I understand that Tim Brinton, later became an Member of Parliament, and I discovered that the director of the programme, Christopher Miles, is the brother of actress Sara Miles. Maureen told me Alternative 3 was a hoax, Anna Dicki from the London office said it was a drama. Anglia PR lady, Veronica Clover told me it was an April Fool spoof and went out on April 1st. I argued that it didn't air on April 1st, she later checked, realised her mistake and kindly mailed me a photocopy of the original TV Times showing clearly that Alternative 3 aired on June 20th. Maureen doesn't remember any of the actors filming in the studio. What I found strange was that she didn't mention David Ambrose, but told me that Christopher Miles devised the original script. However in the book it clearly states that the TV film was devised by both David Ambrose and Christopher Miles. Leslie Watkins had no involvement with the television programme. In my research I have been unable to trace David Ambrose, the alleged writer of the TV programme. Leslie Watkins states, he only used Ambrose's name on the book as co-author for contractual reasons.

Who, and where is David Ambrose?

Fiction Based On Fact ?

So twenty years on, are we any the wiser? Are there any new clues as to the validity of the story or was it really the greatest hoax ever? Well, if it were a hoax, I would expect the hoaxers to be available for comment on their prolonged success. To sum it up, I agree with the author of the book, Leslie Watkins, I believe the story is fiction based on fact. But the question still remains: where did the fact originate ? In their research, did the science team stumble on above top secret information which had to be suppressed? In their enthusiasm, did they realise their scoop was too good to dismiss, and not being able to use the witnesses for the programme, did they pull in professional actors to play the part ? But then, I ask myself, why did they use well known actors, why not new faces? Or maybe David Ambrose, wherever he is, was just a conspiracy theorist with great ambitions!

And as a final note - The original and only can of film marked Alternative 3 mysteriously disappeared from Anglia's archives, and apparently it is the only film ever to go missing. But word has it that copies of the film have been distributed amongst several UFO researchers. Well at least they're in good hands!

Alternative 3 is published by Spere Books Ltd, a division of Macdonald & Co (Publishers) Ltd. # ISBN 0 7221 1126 6

=A9 Georgina Bruni 1998

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