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Location: [Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1998](#) -> [Aug](#) -> **Re: Why Migraines Don't Explain UFOs**

UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Why Migraines Don't Explain UFOs

From: "Jerome Clark" <jkclark@frontiernet.net>
Date: Thu, 06 Aug 98 11:15:19 PDT
Fwd Date: Thu, 06 Aug 1998 21:50:41 -0400
Subject: Re: Why Migraines Don't Explain UFOs

> Date: Thu, 06 Aug 1998 13:29:22 +0100
> To: updates@globalserve.net
> From: John Rimmer <j_rimmer@library.croydon.gov.uk>
> Subject: Why Migraines Don't Explain UFOs

> > From: Gre St. Pierre <StrmNut@aol.com>
> > Mon, 3 Aug 1998 02:39:12
> > Subject: Re: Why Migraines Don't Explain UFOs

> Jerome Clark asks what is my evidence for saying that witnesses
> start "adding little extras" like "I could see the windows",
> etc. Well for one, standing around on cold hillside on
> skywatches at Warminster, for instance where I have heard just
> such remarks, and from reading and hearing dozens of people who
> have see re-entering space debris or meteorites describing them
> as cylindrical objects with lights along them.

Only an insignificant minority of witnesses are in the high
state of expectancy that those "standing around on cold
hillsides on skywatches at Warminster" are or were. John doesn't
seem to grasp that the overwhelming majority of witnesses are
not expecting to see a UFO; in fact, the notion is just about
the last thing they're anticipating. That's why most practice
some variety of hypothesis-escalation. At a skywatch at
Warminster (or wherever) the process is reversed; the FIRST
thing somebody thinks of is a UFO. John's use of Warminster as
an example tells us much about the poverty of the PSH.

> Let's also be glad that Jerry Clark didn't go into police work.
> No doubt he would be prepared to accept the testimony of
> "individuals with high levels of civic responsibility" without
> question, and no doubt the jails would be bursting with even
> more miscarriages of justice than they are now. This of course
> is why Britain and the USA are blessed with a jury system which
> allows all reported and remembered versions of an event to be
> heard and judged, and come to a verdict which is "beyond
> reasonable doubt". I am just glad that most people in law
> enforcement do accept that uncorroborated eyewitness testimony
> is open to doubt and challenge.

John as usual misses the point and in the bargain phrases the
argument in cartoonish terms. Purely Speculative Hypothesizers
like to say that those of us who don't believe the human sensory
apparatus is routinely and predictably dysfunctional must
believe therefore that it never errs -- an argument just as
preposterous. We have juries -- and good investigators -- to
weigh evidence and to judge, based on a variety of relevant

factors, which testimony is more likely to be reliable than others. If we couldn't do that, human life would be even more chaotic than it already is, and probably we couldn't maintain anything like civilized order.

John, who clearly doesn't spend much time reading field reports by good investigators, doesn't understand that the best UFO researchers, like skilled investigators in all areas (from police to insurance to science), look into all of these matters conscientiously before coming to conclusions. PSHers, on the other hand, merely sit on their duffs and speculate freely about what psychological or cultural "needs" led some poor sap to be deluded into thinking he'd encountered something that doesn't exist in the Purely Speculative universe.

If John were a police officer and the concept of crime didn't exist in his particular PSH legal theory, God help all victims reporting same. John certainly wouldn't. I'm sure, though, that they'd hear all about the fallibility of testimony and about the "needs" that caused them to imagine somebody had robbed or assaulted them.

Jerry Clark

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