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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Mad Max: Beyond the Blunderdome

From: **Andy Roberts** <Brigantia@compuserve.com>
Date: Fri, 18 Jun 1999 04:46:12 -0400
Fwd Date: Fri, 18 Jun 1999 21:33:41 -0400
Subject: Re: Mad Max: Beyond the Blunderdome

>From: judith jaafar <judithjaafar@compuserve.com>
>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>Subject: Re: Mad Max: Beyond the Blunderdome - The truth is out!
>Date: 18 June 1999 00:35

Y'all,

Judith's now rare excursion onto a general email group was most interesting and I am, as you know, obliged by law to comment. Those easily bored should bugger off now.

>I will say only one thing, although I'm probably wasting my time.
>BUFORA has never at any time proclaimed that it endorsed Max's
>point of view, nor any other speaker invited to lecture to BUFORA,
>for that matter.

I don't think BUFORA (who *exactly* are BUFORA anyway?) endorsement of most of their speakers was at issue. The problem was that BUFORA were promoting (and make no mistake about it when you put a speaker on you are promoting them, disclaimers or no) a man who has been factually disproved on many counts and has lied and distorted information to suit his own ends. Proof of this was provided on many occasions and can most recently be seen in Dr Dave Clarke's refutation of points raised by Max at the lecture.

That's the problem.

Now if BUFORA Council (or the few whioch run it) can in all conscience stand by this promotion of a liar and self-publicist, not to mention one who openly admitted to bribing a witness with illegal drugs, then I think BUFORAs general policy is there for all to see. Council's inability to understand the principles here only serve to underline their impotence in ufology today.

As an aside here, during the 'discussions' which preceded Max's ground breaking, reality altering talk (only 35 lucky people received enlightenment here, society's loss I venture to suggest) there was much twaddle talked about 'free speech'. Isn't it thus ironic that Max was forbidden to mention any other UFO researchers by name in his lecture? Ahh well, by their dichotomiies thy shall know them.....

>There is an incredibly important point of principle involved
>here, one which, since I'm writing to intelligent recipients,
>I don't presume I need to elucidate. Contrary to what some seem
>to think about the BUFORA membership, they too are intelligent,
>perceptive people

Really? Some certainly are - others are completely barking, many

I have spoken to over the years have a slight grip on (if I dare use the word) 'reality'. Trying to pretend open membership UFO orgs comprise any form of intellectual elite is stretching the truth somewhat.

>and do not like being told to whom they can, or cannot, listen. Who
>will be blacklisted next ? Margaret Fry, a veteran British ufologist
>of some thirty years standing, because she happens to disagree with
>Andy Roberts' explanation of the Berwyn Mountain case?

Ok, seeing as I'm named I'll run with that. yes, I'd blacklist Margaret Fry. Why?

Firstly because of her racist statements - I'm sure we all work in companies who have and uphold an equal opportunities statement? Why doesn't BUFORA (and before you all get hot under the collar about it being an 'equal opportunity' for Max to speak you should take the time to understand what equal ops _really_ means) have one? If it did then someone who made claims such as Margaret did wouldn't even be allowed one of your sad little membership cards.

Secondly I would blacklist her because she is a crap researcher. OOO that nasty Andy Roberts how dare he say this about a little old lady. Listen carefully - I was criticising her *research* not *her*. Some facts - and they are facts because I have sat with Margaret and been told them by her:

- 1) Margaret has no coherent case file on the Berwyn case.
- 2) She does not tape interviews, preferring to reconstruct them from notes.
- 3) Two of the key witnesses to the Berwyn case were highly critical of her methods (I have their comments on tape for when they are needed). Pat Evans said she 'led her on' Huw Thomas said she started talking about bodies, crash retrievals etc *at the very start of her interview*. I could go on but you get the gist of it and I am not making this up. And that's the tame stuff.

BUFORA should not pander to people who cannot do their job. Just because someone has been interested in UFOs for a long time and has spoken to many witnesses *does not* make them a good researcher. It makes a mockery of the much-vaunted AI system and if I see certain researchers lauded as 'respected' in any more books and magazines I will gip. We stand or fall by what we can prove or disprove, not by the bonkersness of our theory or how old we are.

>Myself, because I dared to suggest that the Rendlesham Forest
>incident is anything but closed, contrary to the beliefs of
>the "experts" like Ian Ridpath who found it fitting to call me
>"an empty-minded airhead" without knowing anything about me,
>my research or my credentials?

Who would dare to stop you Judith! It would depend on what you were going to say and whether it was reasonable and backed up with evidence or not. BUFORA should peer review its speakers to see if they fill certain criteria, just basic stuff like having *checkable* evidence would do. Personally I think Rendlesham is a fantastic misperception case and as yet I have seen no evidence to the contrary.

>John Mack, a professor of psychiatry who presumably knows more
>about the workings of the human mind than anyone on this
>recipients' list,

That's a moot point Judith.

>and yet is convinced of non-human intervention? (unless of
>course he's spreading disinformation for his CIA masters!)

If he's got the evidence let him roll! I didn't know he worked for C &A!

>Jenny Randles, who had the courage to put pen to paper and
>write "Star Children", a little "off-the-wall" perhaps for some
>people's tastes?

As above, if she can back her theories up, why not?

>I understand fully, Jenny, your desire for this subject to be
>taken seriously, one that is shared by all committed
>researchers. But in our inordinate desire for our subject to
>be validated by the scientific and academic community we risk
>negating it as a truly astounding human experience (minus the
>knowns, the misperceptions, the man-made technology),
>something which is touching people's psyches, their
>consciousness, their visions of the future, their intellectual
>endeavours.

C'mon Judith that doesn't make it separate from the above,
merely a cultural interpretation of same - at least it does at
the moment in lieu of evidence to the contrary. The world and
what exists in it and within the human mind is a far more
interesting and exciting subject than any warped sci fi invented
by ufologists. Read my demolition of the Big Grey Man of Ben
McDhui in the latest Fortean Studies or Strange Daze - shows how
the natural can become the supernatural but yet still 'sexy'.

>Perhaps the close encounter experience cannot be subjected to
>scientific empiricism, may never be, no matter how far we
>advance. Maybe the reason we cannot find answers after 50yrs.
>is because we're asking the wrong questions

Why do people always say that when the answers look prosaic! ;-)

>- perhaps we need to take a side-step and look at the whole
>phenomenon from a different perspective, thereby leaving
>behind the clay-footed, unimaginative dinosaurs with which
>paranormal research is so heavily populated, hanging on for dear
>life to their god of science.

I just knew the keen blade of science was due for some stick
here! Just because something **appears** inexplicable doesn't mean
it isn't. If you take the above attitude Judith you are stuck in
the 17th century when people really believed in devils/fairies
etc. In retrospect it all now seems rather sad, the
psycho-social theories accounting for it all. When you are
living in the heart of something it's easy to get lost in the
hall of mirrors it presents. Take a step back, look at it from
the perspective of anomalous phenomena in previous centuries, it
all makes more sense. Hell, if you like your science imaginative
and philosophically tinged read Abram's Spell of the Sensuous.
Scientific explanations for 'anomalous' phenomena can be
enormous fun.

>If I may be pedantic here, science, we must always remember, is
>a Greek word "skientia", which simply means knowledge, with no
>mandatory recourse to physics, chemistry, biology or
>engineering. No scientific or philosophical breakthrough has
>ever been made without the gifts of courage and imagination,
>often at the great expense of the initiator.

But what was the Greek word rooted in? This really means little
other than you disagree with one interpretation of the word
science. Trying to imply martyrdom for ufologists bonkers ideas
is a bad idea too.

>This is why I feel slightly uncomfortable with your idea of
>placing so much importance on physicists and engineers and the
>like. Do we really need their approbation? Their co-operation,
>yes, but their control, no. A symposium of "experts" is fatally
>flawed. There are no experts, only opinions and vested
>interests.

All highly debatable and I want my breakfast.

>What about the percipients, the experiencers (as the Americans
>like to call them)? Do they not have a hugely significant role
>to play?

Yes, but not when they talk rubbish and we are so lulled by the
glamour of the 'other' that we fall prey to that most hideous of
ufological nonsense 'witness led investigation'. If people are
claiming something, for it to be acceptable it must be proven to
the satisfaction of the majority. Being part of a small, belief
led clique (which ufology is) and as such having delusions of
superiority (which many ufologists do, in lieu of having status
is the 'real' world) means nothing. It's tempting suggest that
without active ufology the experiences of the witnesses would be

described very differently indeed.

>Without them it would be like studying zoology without any
>animals, botany without any plants, physics without any
>energy.

But we don't interview the bloody plants do we? You seem to be advocating a type of 'shamanistic' interpretation of witness experience. That's fine but it doesn't mean doodly squat in the day to day world and from that point of view 'new age' thinking is never very far away. And that is a very bad thing indeed!

>I am put in mind of some of the greatest thinkers in history -
>Socrates, Copernicus, Galileo, Willhelm Reich (even), who were
>persecuted

Being persecuted didn't stop their ideas coming to fruition though, did it (well, perhaps with the exception of Reich's whose stuff sneaked out). Ufologists of the more bonkers persuasion *have not ever proved one single thing*, therefore I think it's safe to say they never will (oooo contentious).

>What has been happening recently in British ufology resonates
>uneasily with the antics of the early Catholic Church -
>silencing and extirpation of all unacceptable belief systems,
>the Gnostics, the Cathars, the Albigenses etc., and I'm not
>alluding in particular to Max Burns, but to the whole ethos of
>"control" and censoring material for the masses, or at least
>denigrating "unscientific" theories.

Turn the telescope round Judith! All we are asking for is that anyone who presents ideas should be subject to that most basic of principles - having at least some evidence. Not too much to ask surely, and as the witch I was burning only last night said, 'If only I'd shown my working out better'.

>Do we have the right to mock and deride those who are inclined
>to believe in non-human intelligences?

'Course we do! Why not? Again, read Abram to get another view of what a non-human intelligence means in relation to humans.

>The ETHers may well yet have the last laugh

I very much doubt it Judith - but neither of us can prove that. And it's well know that ETH's don't laugh anyway, they're too scared of the dark!

>Peter Brookesmith has made a plea for intellectual honesty, a
>laudable appeal (and I really mean that), but I am also
>making an equally heartfelt appeal for intellectual
>generosity. Retain one's views and opinions, but respect those
>of others. Wrong ideas will ultimately be exposed as such, in
>the natural order of things. Life is more profitably spent in
>enriching one's own life, than in destroying another's.

No problem with this - but when supposedly serious orgs such as BUFORA wish to promote the patently untrue, the liars and the deceivers - especially when they have been proved to be so we need afford them no respect whatsoever, and that goes for the organisation which seeks to promote them.

>In the word's of William James, "A great many people think
>they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their
>prejudices".

Ahh, William James - wasn't he a great advocate a of nitrous oxide, a wonderfully hallucinogenic gas which makes reality even more like silly putty?

New idea - BUFORA should be sponsored by a different drug advocate each year then at least you've got an excuse for promoting madness!

Happy Trails

Andy

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