

## Unusual People – Really?

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As paranormal investigators, we are sometimes contacted with some very, very unusual stories. In fact...not only are the stories sometimes outrageous...but, the individuals making the claims themselves are equally as odd.

I have been a “ghost hunter” since long before it was considered “cool.” Back before the onslaught of today’s paranormal-centric television shows and podcasts, initial contact was primarily made via phone call and/or personal visitation. Compared with emails, faxes, and voice mails, today’s contact methods are more “anonymous” than in years past.

As a result of this faceless anonymity, some folks who would have been hesitant previously to contact us are no longer reticent. Unfortunately, this had led to an increase in the number of bizarre contacts.

I could entertain you with story after incredulous story; however, I will only share a recent one, and provide you with what I believe may be the driving factor.

Just this morning I received an email from an individual which I would categorize in the “unusual” category. The first paragraph alone should immediately tell you the mindset of this person.

“I have a questions in your Paranormal Society. It is normal to a person to experiences paranormal's and mystery? I experienced Out of Body Experienced (OOBE), Astral Travel, Near Death Experienced (NDE) and experienced to travel in heaven in the Kingdom of God, in hell, in the world of the dead and alien planet. I also encountered angels, aliens, ufo's, faries, dwarfs, ghosts, spirit people, demons and other itentities. I have "third eye" that's the reason I see ghosts and other itentities. My mind is so powerful that I can make a rain and power to stopped the rain and calm the storm. And powers to drive away storms but not always happened.”

Spelling, grammar, syntax, and plain-old common sense aside...this email is but one example of the types of “crackpot” contacts which we sometimes receive.

As ARPAST is a 100% scientifically based and grounded organization (and this is very, very clearly stated throughout our website, mission statement, etc), what would possess an individual such as this to contact us? What could he possibly gain?

As we are all so painfully aware, our field is unfortunately rife with charlatans, tricksters, frauds, and flat out freaks. I should tell you the story of the guy who could talk to rocks (and they talked back to him) – however, I shall save that for another occasion. So... the real question is WHY do such seemingly IQ-challenged individuals contact paranormal research groups in droves?

I believe the answer is simple. Because we listen. Most of these people are almost certainly used to society rejecting their beliefs, ideas, and personas. Due to the supposedly objective, open nature of those of us in the paranormal community, we present ourselves with a big red bull's-eye. The fact that we have so many eccentrics of our own in this field is no less a deterrent, but tends to fuel the flames of "freakiness."

Until our field matures to the point where we are not automatically associated with fringe science and "rejects" of our own, we are doomed to repeat this very scenario. In the meantime, what do we do with these types of contacts? Since these individuals are looking for their own internal validation (or more likely attention), it would be better to direct them toward paranormal groups who focus less on scientific research and more on feeling or spirituality.

About the author:

Larry Flaxman is the founder and President of ARPAST ([www.arpast.org](http://www.arpast.org)) – the Arkansas Paranormal and Anomalous Studies Team, which is a member of the TAPS (The Atlantic Paranormal Society) family. He has been actively involved in paranormal research and investigation for over ten years, and melds his technical, scientific, and investigatory backgrounds together for no-nonsense, scientifically objective explanations regarding a variety of anomalous phenomena.

Larry has appeared in numerous newspaper, magazine, radio, and television interviews, and has authored several published articles regarding science and the paranormal. In addition to involvement with ARPAST, he serves as technical advisor to several paranormal investigation groups throughout the country.