

## The Grubbies Growl & Grumble-Part 2

Written by James Randi

Wednesday, 13 March 2013 09:00

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Following my [earlier attention to this forum](#), I am continuing a run-down of the “[Parapsychology and alternative medicine forum](#),” eight of which have been sifted through, here are the next six...

*Since the TESTS (there's not a single test) are created and agreed upon by both the applicant and JREF – yes, I think it's fair. There are many other games in town also. Many ways that even the MDC could be dealt with, with the help of a third party group – media would be a likely source that gets to publicize the event/effort. You can whine and complain all you want. It does not change the basic concept that there are many out there making wild paranormal claims that cannot support the claims they make under any kind of controlled conditions. There are also claims made out there that are impossible to detect one way or another without large statistical data pools – the MDC is not looking for or speaking of those kinds of claims.*

Okay, what's “not fair” about the MDC, I ask? The rules are carefully laid out, having been revised several times over the years with the input of legal advice to satisfy legitimate complaints, and yet I continue to hear this mantra. Is it “unfair” to require evidence rather than only claims? Should the JREF accept anecdotes as well, all the “Goldilocks & the Three Bears” material? Let's get a discussion going, folks! I can tell you, up front, that we answer both those questions with “No!” So just what is “not fair” here? Do I hear more crickets...?

We agree, there's no *one* test, but a plethora, each one different, unique, and deserving of specific consideration, which is gladly given, and both “sides” in the discussion, must agree – which happens frequently. The exceptions are those claims that are unclear or depend upon religious or other superstitious “laws.”

However, I disagree on this person's suggestion of using the media. That entity is a business, not a charity. It's kept alive by titillating its customers – the public – and they clamor for sensationalism, not facts. Yes, this is a harsh evaluation, but I've found it to be true. Many times now, I've met with producers who indicate interest in putting the MDC on TV. Those discussions always generate enthusiasm – until the marketing people ask when and how the million dollars will be awarded. The firm rule they have is, “Well, the prize has to be won!” No, it doesn't, unless it's been won legitimately – and the JREF insists that it would be, *if the evidence were produced*. The marketing powers don't want to hear that. If the prize isn't won, they say, there's no program... I hear, “Hey, we're not the Evening News!” And that's where it ends. We all go home.

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*Randi's behavior is reprehensible. Just the fact that some people still defend him, his organization and the MDC, makes such individuals look unscientific, bigoted and intellectually dishonest.*

Sigh... What's not to defend? I – and the JREF – don't need defending, all we're asking for is an earnest hearing, a consideration, and a close examination of the reality of the situation. Despite the expenditure of many, many, millions of dollars, the wasting of what could have been useful research funds and time and the careers of dedicated scientists, *there is still not one example of a paranormal, supernatural, or psychic power that can be pointed to...!*

Parapsychology is the *one*

scientific endeavor for which it can – and must – be said, there is no evidence. Hints, rumors, legends, all sorts of half-truths abound, and countless books, essays, speeches, courses, and lectures have titillated the public for generations, but it's still only a Sisyphean proposition. And my "behavior is reprehensible"? Get real. James Van Praagh is a fake, Uri Geller is a 4-trick magician, John Edward is a "cold reader," dragons and banshees are fictional. And Santa Claus is ashamed to be in their company, I suspect... Next...

*C'mon, P\_\_\_, admit it. At some point, you, too, must have been a Randi lover and quoted him to argue against something. We all live and learn. Think about all those poor uneducated skeptics out there still quoting Randi and his MDC. I still get 4-5 of them a week on YouTube leaving comments about how everyone is a cold reader and James Randi proved it. I have a standard response now I copy and paste. They usually stop posting after that.*

Well, it depends upon how you define "uneducated," to a great degree. Since I don't know how well informed you are, I can't help you there, but I encourage you to "live and learn" a bit more deeply than you presently have done. I see that the MDC is also a nuisance to you, and consider: the reason that those who have received your "standard response" may have stopped posting you might just be that they see how hopeless your case is...

*It's not the tests that are the problem, although I don't believe any well-balanced and intelligent Psychic or Medium would ever be able to come even remotely close to a mutual agreement with the JREF folks on what would be a "fair" test. The tests are designed to suck in the "love and light" airy fairy psychics that don't know anything about statistics and believe because they consider something a "hit" that the MDC will.*

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Nyet, nein, non, and other negative responses. To date, some 200+ claimants have mutually agreed with the JREF rules, and some of those have actually come forward to be tested. Whether these were all “love and light” folks, I don’t know, nor am I aware of their acquaintance with the science of statistics, but at least they had the courage of their convictions, and we thank them for that. But where are the “biggies” of the racket? Sylvia, are you still out there...? Moving right along...

*The real issue is the multitude of fine print within the MDC and all the waivers. The last thing I would ever do is sign over any rights I have to legal action against Randi and the JREF if he ever did a "Sheldrake dog telepathy" on me and lied and twisted the results. Imagine also signing over any rights to Randi to make public what he sees fit. The man is a proven liar and a fraud as it is. This is the biggest issue.... that and the fact I don't believe Randi would ever do a fair and proper test for the real claims of a psychic.... not the claims they tell everyone psychics have.*

While I regret that “fine print” offends you, let’s examine “all the waivers,” shall we? There are only three, so it won’t take long. The first two are under “CONDITIONS” of the MDC, and both are very much in favor of the claimant, making it easier to qualify for the MDC. The third is in the “RULES,” and was inserted there by our lawyers to protect the JREF against expected frivolous lawsuits brought by claimants. These have always been dismissed – as have those brought by the very litigious Uri Geller against me – but they cost the JREF legal fees, and take up our valuable time as well as assets. I’m sure this is understandable. As for the “Sheldrake dog telepathy” matter, that was invented years ago when a UK parapsychologist challenged the JREF concerning Jaytee, a dog whose owner thought he knew when she was on her way home, due to the fact that her residence surveillance camera showed the dog running about frantically as rush hour arrived, and all her neighbors were also coming home. The long-term video record showed the dog reacting to each and every passing car, delivery van, pedestrian, or other disturbing element that entered its vicinity, but the parapsychologist and owner had only considered those actions relevant during the “coming home” period, thus “data-selecting” – a common error by the inexperienced.

However, I assure the offended author of the complaint above that he/she would enjoy all legal rights should I break the law in regard to my actions in conducting any test, and within days of this notice, I intend to make a few small but important adjustments to the RULES that I find are needed.

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*This isn't my area of law – is there anything unusual about those terms you have a problem with? Are they not standard re: many types of promotions, be it TV or other contests? I'm also not sure how enforceable that kind of waiver is, or what it would apply to. I'm pretty sure it wouldn't apply to JREF not paying out. Probably focused more on things like someone getting injured during the test, in which case I'm also not sure how far it would go. Read Randi's TOC. It's there on the website. You don't have to be an expert in contract law to see where he crosses the line. The most glaring place where Randi departs is not allowing independent judging.*

If you're some variety of lawyer, I can assure you I wouldn't retain your services. First of all, where did the inane notion arise that the MDC is some sort of quiz show, or contest? It's a PRIZE, Dumbo! YOU invest nothing. YOU pay nothing. YOU just do your thing, whatever it is, and YOU collect the prize! We just won't pay YOU any expenses. We figure YOU should pay your own way, when there's a million-dollar carrot hanging there for the taking... Is it clear now?

Since you're obviously unaware of the basic facts of the MDC, I'll tell you what most others already know: no "judging" is required, because all tests are designed in such a way that the result is obvious. See? Example: if you say you can predict which teams will win a number of games, we mutually agree on how many games will be predicted so that your score would be significant, and you make your predictions. We don't need any judges to decide whether you did as you expected, you see, because the teams either won or lost, and YOU either won or lost. These are things called facts...

And "TOC" (?) can mean "terms of contract," "table of contents," "time of completion," or "Truth or Consequences." What does it mean to YOU, sir or madam, as the case may be...?

*It doesn't apply to the JREF not paying out. It applies to the JREF having the legal right to basically make you out to look like a complete fraud and suffer massive personal and financial damage as a result, and there is not a thing you can do about it as you signed over your rights for him to use the data as he sees fit. We already know he is aggressive against psychics and mediums and even scientists, going to extraordinary lengths to lie about their feats and studies, to convince the world that there is "Nothing going on here" and then being caught flat out fraudulently lying. Why would John Edward, James Van Praagh or anyone of any note ever put themselves in the hands of this con man?*

I can assure you that the JREF has never found it necessary to make anyone "look like a fraud and/or suffer massive personal and financial damage." If any of that happens, the claimants themselves arrange all that's needed, quite independently. Also, no one "signs over" any basic rights, they only agree not to damage the JREF. Did you go to the same law school as the

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previous commenter?

*Applicant agrees that all data (photographic, recorded, written, etc.) gathered as a result of the setup, the protocol, and the actual testing, may be used freely by the JREF.*

Yep, that's true. That's why we do these tests, to show applicants where they went wrong, were misinformed, or (perish the thought!) cheated... Remember, YOU put up nothing, WE put up a million bucks. Sounds like a good deal, to me. The next comment, simply an accusatory republishing of challenge rule #8, needs changing...

*When entering into this challenge, as far as this may be done by established legal statutes, the applicant surrenders any and all rights to legal action against Mr. Randi, and/or against any persons peripherally involved, and/or against the James Randi Educational Foundation. This applies to injury, and/or accident, and/or any other damage of a physical and/or emotional nature, and/or financial and/or professional loss, and/or damage of any kind. However, this rule in no way affects the awarding of the prize, once it is properly won in accord with the protocol.*

Oops! That was taken from a much earlier version of the MDC. [It presently reads](#) :

By accepting this Challenge, the Applicant waives any and all claims against James Randi, the JREF, the JREF's employees, officers, directors, and any other person. This waiver includes, but is not limited to, injury, accident, and damage of any kind, including damage and/or loss of a physical, emotional, financial, and/or professional nature. Notwithstanding anything else in this paragraph, should the Claimant pass the Formal Test, the Claimant does not waive any claims against the JREF that might be necessary to enforce payment of the Prize.

And as mentioned just recently, there have been some further changes – in favor of the applicants – dated February 22, 2013. Look 'em up...

Perhaps some time again, I'll look into this site and find some facts that need to be refined and errors that require correction. Stay tuned...