

Ken McLeod
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27 March 2007

TO: Mr Maurice Newman AC
CHAIRMAN OF THE ABC,
Board Secretariat, 14th floor,
700 Harris St, Ultimo, NSW 2007

Dear Mr Newman

RE: “PSYCHIC INVESTIGATORS” AND “THE SPIRIT OF THINGS”.

I refer to the recently concluded ABC TV series “Psychic Investigators,” and an earlier radio program Rachael Kohn’s “Spirit of Things,” broadcast 28 August 2005.

I write as an expert on Search And Rescue, (SAR), having worked in the industry for 30 years, searching for missing people, aircraft and vessels. I was a national Manager SAR, Secretary of the Australian SAR Conference, Editor of the Australian SAR Manual, Vice Chairman of a United Nations Standing committee on SAR, aviation representative at Standards Australia committees setting standards for survival equipment and signalling systems, and Australian representative at international conferences on SAR and SAR satellite systems. In my time in SAR, I worked closely with all Australian Police services and many international SAR and military authorities. I therefore feel comfortable with my claim to be a Search And Rescue expert, and expert generally in the field of searching for missing people.

Over those 30 years, I and my hundreds of colleagues had much experience with so-called “psychics”. We found that no psychic ever was any more than a nuisance. We found that:

- No “psychic” has ever solved a murder, located missing bodies, aircraft or boats.
- The urgings of “psychics” inhibits the work of Police and Search And Rescue organizations.
- The families of the missing are deeply traumatised by disappearances, unsolved murders and missing bodies, and psychics’ antics only add to the trauma and distress of bereaved. I once saw a family, on the advice of a so-called “psychic”, sell their home to fund a lengthy aerial search, with no result except their poverty.

Having dealt with many distressed families, and seen at first hand the damage that so-called “psychics” do, I was therefore greatly distressed when the ABC endorsed so-called psychics in “*The Spirit of Things*” and “*Psychic Investigators*.” No one who has ever dealt with these desperately grieving people would add to their trauma by endorsing any “psychic.”

It is clear that the bureaucrats in their comfortable offices who decided to run these programs have had no experience with the real world, and failed in their duty to the public and the Broadcasting Act to broadcast only quality well-researched programs. Their failure is made worse by the clear lack of any effort to check the claims made by those charlatans; by their wide-eyed gullibility which led to the cruelty inflicted on the bereaved.

Clearly, the ABC failed to ensure that these programs conformed to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983 Section 6 which says that the:

- “*Charter of the Corporation (1)The functions of the Corporation are: (a)to provide within Australia innovative and comprehensive broadcasting services of a high standard.....*”

and the ABC Code of Practice which says in Section 5:

“Factual Programs. 5.2 Every effort must be made to ensure that the factual content of such programs is accurate and in context and does not misrepresent viewpoints.

The ABC is a greatly respected organization, and these endorsements will only lift the credibility of “psychics” and cause more grief for the bereaved and difficulties for Police and rescue authorities. The ABC has done a great deal of damage here and owes the public an apology.

I therefore support Dr Alex Ritchie BSc PhD, who in an earlier letter to you, suggested that instead of presenting such rubbish such as ‘*Psychic Investigators*’, the ABC should commission a properly researched and authoritative documentary series called ‘***The Investigators***’. Such a series could cover topics such as ‘*Investigating Psychics*’, ‘*Investigating Homeopathy*’, ‘*Investigating Creationism (or Intelligent Design)*’, ‘*Investigating Alternative Medicine*’, ‘*Investigating Telepathy*’, *Investigating etc.*

I have enclosed some articles that were published in the “*Australian Skeptic*” magazine, which explain the value of psychics a little further and specifically criticize those ABC programs. You have an opportunity to make up for some of the damage that the ABC has done, to the public generally and to its own reputation, beginning with that apology.

Yours Sincerely



Ken McLeod