

# Skeptics Give Up and Run Away!

*“Amazing” Randi, the Million-Dollar Man, Runs... from the Billy Meier UFO Case!*

By Michael Horn

In an interesting turn of events a trio of famous professional skeptics and debunkers have turned tail and run away after being challenged to prove their accusations that the Billy Meier UFO case is fraudulent. The parties include well-known magician and debunker the “Amazing” Randi, Vaughn Rees, Projects Coordinator for CFI West in Los Angeles and Michael Shermer, science writer and skeptic.

It all began in February of 2001, when I met with Mr. Rees and showed him several of Mr. Meier’s 35mm photos of UFOs as well as several 8mm movie segments of these objects. Mr. Rees promptly declared that the material was simply an “easily duplicated hoax.” He accused Mr. Meier of faking the remarkable light effects displayed by one UFO on the film by “scratching it with a pin.” I then challenged Mr. Rees to duplicate one of Mr. Meier’s photos and one of his film segments. Mr. Rees accepted and stated that he would do it with the same kind of equipment, a 35mm camera and an 8mm movie camera.

Several months later, having received no items from Mr. Rees, I invited him to forgo the cameras and use computers, digital effects, Photo Shop... *any* technology that he had access to in order to produce the items. (I also suggested that, if he wanted to be sporting about it, Mr. Rees should use one hand since Mr. Meier only has one himself.) In February of 2003, at an expo in Los Angeles, Mr. Rees told me that he was waiting for a new photographic lab to be finished at CFI West so as to finally produce the photos. I reminded him that Mr. Meier never had any such lab and that, in a two-year period, Mr. Meier had taken literally *hundreds* of photos, some with up to *four* UFOs in them.

A few months prior to that I had written to Michael Shermer, who is also a contributor to Skeptic magazine, and presented information to him on the Meier case. Without any examination of the evidence Mr. Shermer offered a sweeping dismissal, claiming that he knew “little children” who could create great faked UFO photos.

Just recently, I wrote to Mr. “Amazing” himself, in hopes that there was something of substance to these skeptics instead of mere blustering and braggadocio. I challenged him to look at the Meier material, including the wide range of prophetically accurate information (such as Mr. Meier’s warning, in 1995, of the recent attack on Iraq), and debunk it if he could. (It should be noted that Randi is a famous debunker known for his supposed \$1,000,000 offer to anyone who can actually prove a paranormal claim.)

All Randi could offer was a comment about how a “child” could “see through the farce” and his own claims that Mr. Meier *never* published *any* prophetically accurate information! Not only was Randi, like Mr. Shermer, seeming to rely on children for expertise in this matter, he was, without knowing it, making Mr. Rees’ efforts look pathetically inept, coming up as less competent than a...child. Additionally, it was obvious that Randi, like Mr. Shermer, had absolutely no knowledge of Mr. Meier’s material and was dismissing it out of hand.

When I challenged him further, by emphasizing CFI West's failure to duplicate Mr. Meier's evidence, Randi's final response was even more "amazing". "So what value is duplication?" "CAN MR. MEIER PROVE HIS CASE? NO. Case closed."

I wondered if this was the kind of science Randi had in mind when he once stated, "Science is best defined as a careful, disciplined, logical search for knowledge about any and all aspects of the universe, obtained by examination of the best available evidence and always subject to correction and improvement upon discovery of better evidence. What's left is magic. And it doesn't work."

But, just when I thought it couldn't get any more bizarre, I received an email from a Mr. Andrew Harter, also an associate of Randi's. And just what did Mr. Harter have to add to the mix? "A back issue of Skeptic magazine has photos made by 10 year olds that are just as good as anything Mr. Meier ever made. There's your proof." Oh no, it was the children-as-special-effects-experts defense again (and further humiliation for Mr. Rees and CFI West!) Plus, while Mr. Harter's confidence was almost admirable, he hadn't sent even one photo from these anonymous, precocious, prepubescent prodigies to back it up.

I felt like I had just pulled the curtain away from the wizard(s). Suddenly, *I* was the skeptical debunker dealing with fringe type wackos who make wild claims and then *refuse* to provide any evidence to substantiate them!

It appears that the effect of the Billy Meier UFO case on the professional skeptics has been similar to pouring drain cleaner down a clogged pipe. At first you may get strange stuff boiling up and then some messy, smelly things get flushed away. Maybe, with these clowns and illusionists being shown for the posturing charlatans they are, the Billy Meier UFO case will finally be judged on its own significant merits and not by prejudiced, non-scientific, sectarian cults such as the "professional" skeptics.

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