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BIGFOOT

[A.K.A. ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN OF THE HIMALAYAS, MAPINGUARI (THE AMAZON), SASQUATCH, YOWIE (AUSTRALIA) AND YETI (ASIA)]

AN APELIKE CREATURE REPORTEDLY SIGHTED HUNDREDS OF TIMES AROUND THE WORLD SINCE THE MID-19TH CENTURY. THE CREATURE IS VARIOUSLY DESCRIBED AS STANDING 7-10 FT (2-3 M) TALL AND WEIGHING OVER 500 LB (225 KG), WITH FOOTPRINTS 17 IN. (43 CM) LONG. THE CREATURE IS BIG BUSINESS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST ALONG A STRETCH OF US-101 IN SOUTHERN HUMBOLDT COUNTY KNOWN AS THE REDWOOD HIGHWAY. NUMEROUS SHOPS LINE THE ROADWAY, EACH WITH ITS OWN BIGFOOT CHAINSAW-CARVED OUT OF MAJESTIC REDWOOD.

MOST SCIENTISTS DISCOUNT THE EXISTENCE OF BIGFOOT BECAUSE THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING BELIEF IN THE SURVIVAL OF A PREHISTORIC BIPEDAL APELIKE CREATURE OF SUCH DIMENSIONS IS SCANT. ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION IS GROVER S. KRANTZ (1931-2002), AN ANTHROPOLOGIST AT WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY. FOR NEARLY FORTY YEARS, KRANTZ ARGUED FOR THE PROBABLE EXISTENCE OF BIGFOOT, BUT WAS UNABLE TO CONVINCE THE MAJORITY OF SCIENTISTS. THE EVIDENCE FOR BIGFOOT’S EXISTENCE CONSISTS MAINLY OF TESTIMONY FROM BIGFOOT ENTHUSIASTS, FOOTPRINTS OF QUESTIONABLE ORIGIN, AND PICTURES THAT COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN OF APES OR HUMANS IN APE SUITS. THERE ARE NO BONES, NO SCAT, NO ARTIFACTS, NO DEAD BODIES, NO MOTHERS WITH BABIES, NO ADOLESCENTS, NO FUR, NO NOTHING. NOT THAT THERE AREN'T "SIGHTINGS" OF SUCH. THERE ARE "SIGHTINGS" GALORE. JUST CHECK THE BIGFOOT FIELD RESEARCHERS ORGANIZATION'S WEBSITE FOR AN UNCRITICAL LIST OF SIGHTINGS. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT ANY INDIVIDUAL OR COMMUNITY OF SUCH CREATURES DWELLS ANYWHERE NEAR ANY OF THE “SIGHTINGS.” IN SHORT, THE EVIDENCE POINTS MORE TOWARDS HOAXING AND DELUSION THAN REAL DISCOVERY. SOME BELIEVERS DISMISS ALL SUCH CRITICISM AND CLAIM THAT BIGFOOT EXISTS IN ANOTHER DIMENSION AND TRAVELS BY ASTRAL PROJECTION. SUCH CLAIMS REINFORCE THE SKEPTIC’S VIEW THAT THE BIGFOOT LEGEND IS A FUNCTION OF PASSIONATE FANS OF THE PARANORMAL, AIDED GREATLY BY THE MASS MEDIA’S EAGERNESS TO CATER TO SUCH ENTHUSIASM.

IN ADDITION TO THE EYEWITNESS TESTIMONIALS OF ENTHUSIASTIC FANS, THE BULK OF THE EVIDENCE PROVIDED BY PROPONENTS OF BIGFOOT CONSISTS OF FOOTPRINTS AND FILM. OF THE FEW FOOTPRINTS AVAILABLE FOR EXAMINATION IN PLASTER CASTS, THERE IS SUCH GREAT DISPARITY IN SHAPE AND CONFIGURATION THAT THE EVIDENCE “SUGGESTS MANY INDEPENDENT PRANKSTERS” (M. DENNETT, 1996).

PROBABLY THE MOST WELL-KNOWN EVIDENCE FOR BELIEF IN BIGFOOT’S EXISTENCE IS A FILM SHOT BY BIGFOOT HUNTERS ROGER PATTERSON AND BOB GIMLIN ON OCT 20, 1967, AT BLUFF CREEK IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA. THE FILM DEPICTS A WALKING APELIKE CREATURE WITH PENDULOUS AND HAIRY BREASTS. BELIEVERS ESTIMATE ITS HEIGHT AT BETWEEN 6' 6'' AND 7' 4'' AND ITS WEIGHT AT NEARLY ONE TON. NON-BELIEVERS MAKE MORE HUMAN-SIZED ESTIMATES AND CONSIDER THE "BEAST" TO BE A COSTUMED HOAXER. OVER THIRTY YEARS HAVE PASSED, YET NO CRYPTOZOOLOGIST HAS FOUND FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE CREATURE NEAR THE SITE EXCEPT FOR ONE ALLEGED FOOTPRINT.

THE NORTH AMERICAN SCIENCE INSTITUTE CLAIMS IT HAS SPENT OVER $100,000 TO PROVE THE FILM IS OF A GENUINE BIGFOOT. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO VETERAN HOLLYWOOD DIRECTOR JOHN LANDIS, “THAT FAMOUS PIECE OF FILM OF BIGFOOT WALKING IN THE WOODS THAT WAS TOUTED AS THE REAL THING WAS JUST A SUIT MADE BY JOHN CHAMBERS,” WHO HELPED CREATE THE APE SUITS IN PLANET OF THE APES (1968). HOWARD BERGER, OF HOLLYWOOD’S KNB EFFECTS GROUP, ALSO HAS CLAIMED THAT IT WAS COMMON KNOWLEDGE WITHIN THE FILM INDUSTRY THAT CHAMBERS WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR A HOAX THAT TURNED BIGFOOT INTO A WORLDWIDE CULT. ACCORDING TO MARK CHORVINSKY, CHAMBERS WAS ALSO INVOLVED IN ANOTHER BIGFOOT HOAX (THE SO-CALLED “BURBANK BIGFOOT”). ACCORDING TO LOREN COLEMAN, HOWEVER, CHAMBERS DENIED THE ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE PATTERSON HOAX IN AN INTERVIEW WITH BOBBIE SHORT AND CLAIMED THAT LANDIS HAD IN FACT STARTED THE RUMOR ABOUT HIM (I.E., CHAMBERS) MAKING THE SUIT. APPARENTLY, SHORT DID NOT ASK CHAMBERS ABOUT THE “BURBANK BIGFOOT” INCIDENT, NOR DID HE INTERVIEW LANDIS FOR HIS VERSION OF THE STORY (CHORVINSKY 1996). SHORT AND COLEMAN REMAIN CONVINCED THAT THE FILM IS NOT OF A MAN IN AN APE SUIT BUT IS FOOTAGE OF A GENUINE BIGFOOT. IN 2004, GREG LONG CLAIMED THAT THE BIGFOOT IN THE PATTERSON FILM IS INDEED A MAN IN A GORILLA SUIT, BUT THE MAN IS BOB HEIRONIMUS, A RETIRED PEPSI BOTTLER FROM YAKIMA, WASHINGTON, AND THE SUIT WAS MADE IN NORTH CAROLINA FOR PATTERSON BY A MAN NAMED PHILIP MORRIS. BOB GIMLIN, PATTERSON'S ASSOCIATE, ISSUED AN AMBIGUOUS STATEMENT THROUGH HIS LAWYER IN MINNEAPOLIS: "I'M AUTHORIZED TO TELL YOU THAT NOBODY WORE A GORILLA SUIT OR MONKEY SUIT AND THAT MR. GIMLIN'S POSITION IS THAT IT'S ABSOLUTELY FALSE AND UNTRUE." WHAT'S ABSOLUTELY FALSE AND UNTRUE?

ACCORDING TO DAVID J. DAEGLING AND DANIEL O. SCHMITT, “IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO EVALUATE THE IDENTITY OF THE FILM SUBJECT WITH ANY CONFIDENCE” (DAEGLING 1999). THEIR ARGUMENT CENTERS ON UNCERTAINTIES IN SUBJECT AND CAMERA POSITIONS, AND THE REPRODUCIBILITY OF THE COMPLIANT GAIT BY HUMANS MATCHING THE SPEED AND STRIDE OF THE FILM SUBJECT.

ACCORDING TO MICHAEL WALLACE, BIGFOOT IS A HOAX THAT WAS LAUNCHED IN AUGUST 1958 BY HIS FATHER RAY L. WALLACE (1918-2002), AN INVETERATE PRANKSTER. SHORTLY AFTER RAY’S DEATH, MICHAEL REVEALED THE DETAILS OF THE HOAX, WHICH WERE REPORTED WIDELY IN THE PRESS. RAY HAD A FRIEND CARVE HIM 16-INCH-LONG FEET THAT HE COULD STRAP ON AND MAKE PRINTS WITH. WALLACE OWNED A CONSTRUCTION COMPANY THAT BUILT LOGGING ROADS AT THE TIME AND HE SET THE PRINTS AROUND ONE OF HIS BULLDOZERS IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY. JERRY CREW, A BULLDOZER OPERATOR, REPORTED THE PRINTS AND THE HUMBOLDT TIMES RAN A FRONT-PAGE STORY ABOUT “BIGFOOT.” THE LEGEND WAS BORN. HOWEVER, A FORMER LOGGER, 71-YEAR-OLD JOHN AUMAN, CLAIMS WALLACE LEFT THE GIANT FOOTPRINTS TO SCARE AWAY THIEVES AND VANDALS WHO'D BEEN TARGETING HIS VEHICLES. HIS HOAXES DIDN'T BEGIN UNTIL AFTER HE'D SEEN WHAT A STIR HE'D CREATED.

OVER THE YEARS, RAY WALLACE PRODUCED BIGFOOT AUDIO RECORDINGS, FILMS, AND PHOTOGRAPHS. AT ONE TIME, HE EVEN PUT OUT A PRESS RELEASE OFFERING $1 MILLION FOR A BABY BIGFOOT. HE PUBLISHED ONE OF HIS PHOTOS AS A POSTER DEPICTING BIGFOOT HAVING LUNCH WITH OTHER ANIMALS. HE ALSO PUBLISHED PHOTOS AND FILMS OF BIGFEET EATING ELK, FROGS, AND CEREAL. MICHAEL WALLACE CLAIMS THAT HIS MOTHER TOLD HIM THAT SHE PARTICIPATED IN SOME OF THE PRANKS AND HAD BEEN PHOTOGRAPHED IN A BIGFOOT SUIT. CHORVINSKY CLAIMS THAT RAY TOLD HIM THAT THE PATTERSON FILM WAS A HOAX AND THAT HE HAD ALERTED PATTERSON OF THE SIGHTING AT BLUFF CREEK. ACCORDING TO CHORVINSKY, RAY KNEW WHO WAS IN THE PATTERSON SUIT, BUT SAID HE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT (YOUNG, BOB. 2002. “LOVABLE TRICKSTER CREATED A MONSTER WITH BIGFOOT HOAX,” THE SEATTLE TIMES, DECEMBER 5).

THE NEWS OF WALLACE’S 1958 HOAX DID NOT DAUNT BIGFOOT ENTHUSIASTS SUCH AS LOREN COLEMAN OR IDAHO STATE UNIVERSITY ANATOMY PROFESSOR DR. JEFF MELDRUM, WHO HAS CASTS OF 40 TO 50 BIG FOOTPRINTS. COLEMAN ASKS WHY IS THE TESTIMONY OF AN ADMITTED LIAR, NOW BEING FETED BY A SKEPTICAL MAGICIAN AS THE TRUTH, HAVING THE NEWSPAPERS BELIEVE IT ALL? THE MEDIA MIXING OF THE LIES AND RUMORS WITH A FEW FACTS IN THE WALLACE STORY IS PUSHING THIS ONE TO THE EDGE. THIS IS RAY WALLACE'S ULTIMATE HOAX AND BITTER SEED.

MELDRUM BELIEVES SUCH A LARGE NUMBER OF CASTS COULDN’T ALL BE HOAXES. THE SAME HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT THE LARGE NUMBER OF CROP CIRCLES, BUT IT APPEARS THAT HOAXERS ARE NOT DETERRED FROM THEIR ACTIVITIES BY THE BELIEF THAT THEIR NUMBERS ARE SMALL.

THE INTEREST IN BIGFOOT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SUCCINCTLY CAPTURED IN THE SAYING OF AN OLD SHERPA: THERE IS A YETI IN THE BACK OF EVERYONE’S MIND; ONLY THE BLESSED ARE NOT HAUNTED BY IT.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

2/21/09

DOUBTING DARWIN: DEBATE OVER THE MIND'S EVOLUTION

A CENTURY AND A HALF AFTER CHARLES DARWIN PUBLISHED HIS THEORY OF EVOLUTION, SOME STILL DOUBT ITS ABILITY TO EXPLAIN THE EMERGENCE OF HUMAN BEINGS AND OTHER FORMS OF LIFE.

THESE DAYS, SOME DARWIN SKEPTICS ARE FOCUSING ON THE HUMAN BRAIN. THEY SAY A HIGHER POWER MUST BE INVOLVED; OTHERWISE, HOW COULD A BUNCH OF CELLS PRODUCE SUCH COMPLICATED MENTAL PROCESSES AS CONSCIOUSNESS OR SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES? HOW COULD SOMETHING LIKE FREE WILL BE THE RESULT OF EVOLUTION?

WHILE DARWIN SKEPTICS HAVE HOMED IN ON THIS MIND-BRAIN PROBLEM, MOST BRAIN SCIENTISTS SAY THERE'S PLENTY OF EVIDENCE THAT MENTAL ACTIONS SUCH AS CONSCIOUSNESS HAVE EVOLVED ALONG WITH THE BRAIN.

STEVEN NOVELLA, A NEUROLOGIST AT YALE UNIVERSITY, STUDIES THE MIND-BRAIN CONNECTION. HIS WORK POINTS TO A MIND THAT DEPENDS ON THE BRAIN.

"IF YOU CHANGE THE BRAIN, YOU CHANGE THE MIND. IF YOU DAMAGE THE BRAIN, YOU DAMAGE THE MIND. IF YOU TURN OFF THE BRAIN, YOU TURN OFF THE MIND," HE SAYS.

"AND NOW WITH MORE SOPHISTICATED TOOLS, WHEN WE'RE LOOKING AT BRAIN FUNCTION WITH FUNCTIONAL MRI, FOR EXAMPLE, WE CAN SEE THAT BRAIN ACTIVITY PRECEDES MENTAL ACTIVITIES — AND THAT MAKES SENSE, BECAUSE CAUSES COME BEFORE THEIR EFFECTS."

THE EVIDENCE THAT THE BRAIN CAUSES THE MIND IS "OVERWHELMING," SAYS NOVELLA, BUT SCIENCE ISN'T EXACTLY SURE HOW. AND THERE'S A REAL DEBATE ABOUT HOW SCIENCE NEEDS TO FURTHER EXPLORE THAT QUESTION, HE SAYS.

BELIEF IN A DIVINE HAND

THIS IS WHERE THE DARWIN DOUBTERS COME IN. ONE OF THEM IS NEUROSURGEON MICHAEL EGNOR FROM THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, STONY BROOK.

"I'M A NEUROSURGEON. I REALIZE HOW CLOSELY THE MIND AND THE BRAIN ARE RELATED," EGNOR SAYS. "BUT THE QUESTION IS, IS THERE SOMETHING ELSE, IN ADDITION TO THE MATERIAL PROPERTIES OF THE BRAIN, THAT WE NEED TO INVOKE TO HAVE AN ADEQUATE EXPLANATION FOR THE MIND? AND I THINK THERE IS."

EGNOR SAYS THAT AN INTELLIGENT DESIGNER WAS INVOLVED IN PRODUCING NOT ONLY THE BRAIN BUT ALL LIVING THINGS AND CERTAIN FEATURES OF THE UNIVERSE. WITHOUT THIS DESIGNER, THE BRAIN WOULD BE JUST A MEAT COMPUTER MADE UP OF BRAIN CELLS, HE SAYS.

"THERE IS NOTHING ABOUT NEURONS THAT SCIENTIFICALLY WOULD LEAD YOU TO INFER CONSCIOUSNESS FROM THEM. THEY'RE MASSES OF GELATINOUS CARBON AND HYDROGEN AND NITROGEN AND OXYGEN, JUST LIKE OTHER KINDS OF FLESH. AND WHY WOULD FLESH HAVE FIRST-PERSON EXPERIENCE? SO, EVEN LOGICALLY, IT DOESN'T HANG TOGETHER."

DUELING BLOGS

EGNOR AND NOVELLA HAVE BEEN ARGUING ABOUT THE MIND-BRAIN DEBATE ON DUELING BLOGS FOR MONTHS NOW.

EGNOR WRITES FOR A BLOG CALLED EVOLUTION NEWS & VIEWS, HOSTED BY THE DISCOVERY INSTITUTE, A THINK TANK THAT'S THE HUB OF THE INTELLIGENT DESIGN MOVEMENT AND THAT REJECTS DARWINIAN EVOLUTION.

NOVELLA WRITES FOR A BLOG CALLED NEUROLOGICA, HOSTED BY THE NEW ENGLAND SKEPTICAL SOCIETY, AN ORGANIZATION HE CO-FOUNDED.

NEITHER HAS MUCH RESPECT FOR THE OTHER'S IDEAS.

"THE BRAIN USES ENERGY, IT CAN HOLD INFORMATION, IT CAN COMMUNICATE, IT CAN RECEIVE SENSORY INPUT. IT CAN EVEN ACTIVATE ITSELF AND CREATE A LOOP OF ONGOING ACTIVITY," NOVELLA SAYS IN RESPONSE TO EGNOR'S CONTENTION THAT BRAIN CELLS ALONE CAN'T CAUSE THE MIND.

THE BRAIN "CAN DO THINGS THAT CAN PLAUSIBLY CAUSE CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-AWARENESS, SO THE ARGUMENT REALLY JUST FALLS ON ITS FACE."

NOVELLA ALSO SAYS EGNOR IS REALLY A CREATIONIST WHO'S RECYCLING THE RELIGIOUS ARGUMENTS ONCE USED TO ATTACK EVOLUTION AND THE IDEA THAT NATURAL SELECTION COULD HAVE PRODUCED OUR GENETIC CODE.

EGNOR COUNTERS, "WHETHER IT'S THE DNA CODE OR THE MIND THAT UNDERSTANDS THE DNA CODE, BOTH REQUIRE AN EXPLANATION THAT TRANSCENDS WHAT WE KNOW OF MATTER."

AND HE SAYS HE'S NOT A CREATIONIST: "MY PERSONAL VIEW IS THAT WE HAVE SOULS AND THAT THEY'RE CREATED BY GOD. BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO HOLD THAT VIEW TO RECOGNIZE WHAT I THINK IS THE EVIDENCE THAT THE MIND IS NOT ENTIRELY MATERIAL."

BELIEFS IN ACTION

NOT SURPRISINGLY, EGNOR AND NOVELLA HAVE VERY DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE TERRI SCHIAVO CASE. SCHIAVO WAS THE WOMAN IN FLORIDA WHO HAD SEVERE BRAIN DAMAGE AND WAS TAKEN OFF LIFE SUPPORT AFTER A LEGAL BATTLE THAT LASTED SEVEN YEARS.

NOVELLA SAYS THE COURT WAS RIGHT TO ASSUME THAT SCHIAVO'S MIND WAS DETERMINED BY HER PHYSICAL BRAIN.

"SHE HAD SIGNIFICANT ENOUGH BRAIN DAMAGE THAT IT WAS INCOMPATIBLE WITH SOMEBODY BEING CONSCIOUS IN ANY SIGNIFICANT WAY. AND IT'S REASONABLE TO BASE MEDICAL DECISIONS ON THAT SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE," SAYS NOVELLA.

"IF YOU ALSO WANT TO BRING MORAL OR ETHICAL THINGS INTO THE PICTURE, THAT'S SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT. YOU KNOW, SCIENCE DOESN'T MAKE MORAL DECISIONS FOR US. IT JUST INFORMS OUR MORAL DECISIONS."

EGNOR SAYS THE COURT WAS WRONG BECAUSE THERE'S NO SCIENTIFIC TEST THAT CAN DETECT THE PRESENCE OF A MIND.

ALSO, ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS EVEN WHEN THE BRAIN STOPS WORKING, THE MIND CAN PERSIST, HE SAYS. THESE ANECDOTES USUALLY INVOLVE A PERSON WHO HAS NEARLY DIED.

"THE PERSON WAS ABLE TO HAVE MENTAL PROCESSES DURING A TIME WHEN THEY WERE IN CARDIAC ARREST, IN CARDIAC STANDSTILL, AND SOMETIMES EVEN ABSENT EEG WAVES," EGNOR SAYS. "SO I THINK THERE IS VERY REAL SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE THAT THE MIND IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES CAN EXIST WITHOUT A FUNCTIONING BRAIN."

DARWINIST BRAIN SCIENTISTS SAY IN THESE CASES THE BRAIN IS STILL FUNCTIONING, EVEN IF ITS ELECTRICAL SIGNALS ARE HARD TO DETECT.

FOR THE RECORD, EGNOR AND NOVELLA DO AGREE ABOUT ONE THING: THE OUTCOME OF THE MIND-BRAIN DEBATE WILL HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON EVERYTHING FROM WHAT STUDENTS LEARN IN HIGH SCHOOL TO HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE AT THE END OF LIFE.

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THE ARENA GOES ABROAD

GAYS KILLED IN BAGHDAD AS CLERICS URGE CLAMPDOWN

4/4/09

TWO GAY MEN WERE KILLED IN BAGHDAD'S SADR CITY SLUM, A LOCAL OFFICIAL SAID ON SATURDAY, AND POLICE SAID THEY HAD FOUND THE BODIES OF FOUR MORE AFTER CLERICS URGED A CRACKDOWN ON A PERCEIVED SPREAD OF HOMOSEXUALITY.

HOMOSEXUALITY IS PROHIBITED ALMOST EVERYWHERE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, BUT CONDITIONS HAVE BECOME ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS FOR GAYS AND LESBIANS IN IRAQ SINCE THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS MILITIAS AFTER U.S.-LED FORCES TOPPLED SADDAM HUSSEIN SIX YEARS AGO.

A SADR CITY OFFICIAL WHO DECLINED TO BE NAMED SAID, "TWO YOUNG MEN WERE KILLED ON THURSDAY. THEY WERE SEXUAL DEVIANTS. THEIR TRIBES KILLED THEM TO RESTORE THEIR FAMILY HONOR."

THE POLICE SOURCE WHO DECLINED TO BE NAMED SAID THE BODIES OF FOUR GAY MEN WERE UNEARTHED IN SADR CITY ON MARCH 25, EACH BEARING A SIGN READING "PERVERT" IN ARABIC ON THEIR CHESTS.

SERMONS CONDEMNING HOMOSEXUALITY WERE READ AT THE LAST TWO FRIDAY PRAYER GATHERINGS IN SADR CITY, A SPRAWLING BAGHDAD SLUM OF SOME 2 MILLION PEOPLE. THE SLUM IS A BASTION OF SUPPORT FOR FIERY SHI'ITE CLERIC MOQTADA AL-SADR AND HIS MEHDI ARMY MILITIA.

THE MEHDI ARMY HAS FROZEN ITS ACTIVITIES OVER THE LAST YEAR AND GOVERNMENT FORCES HAVE WRESTED CONTROL OF THE SLUM.

MANY YOUNG MEN WHO MIGHT HAVE CUT THEIR HAIR SHORT AND GROWN BEARDS WHEN RELIGIOUS GANGS CONTROLLED MUCH OF IRAQ NOW DRESS IN A MORE WESTERN STYLE AS GOVERNMENT FORCES TAKE BACK CONTROL.

SOME ARE NOW ACCUSED OF BEING GAY, AND RESIDENTS OF SADR CITY SAY AT LEAST ONE COFFEE SHOP HAS BECOME A GAY HANGOUT.

A MEMBER OF THE SLUM'S SADRIST OFFICE SAID THE MEHDI ARMY WAS NOT INVOLVED IN THE KILLINGS, BUT SAID HOMOSEXUALITY WAS NOW MORE WIDESPREAD SINCE THE MEHDI ARMY LOST CONTROL OF THE SLUM.

SAID THE OFFICE'S SHEIKH IBRAHIM AL-GHARAWI, A SHI'ITE CLERIC, "THIS (HOMOSEXUALITY) HAS SPREAD BECAUSE OF THE ABSENCE OF THE MEHDI ARMY, THE SPREAD OF SEXUAL FILMS AND SATELLITE TELEVISION AND A LACK OF GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE."

HOMOSEXUAL ACTS ARE PUNISHABLE BY UP TO SEVEN YEARS IN PRISON IN IRAQ. A GAY IRAQI MAN SAID ANY ALLEGED CRIMES SHOULD BE LEFT TO THE LAW TO DEAL WITH.

"IF THEY'VE COMMITTED A CRIME, THEN THERE IS THE LAW. KILLING IS A BIG SIN," HE SAID, GIVING HIS NAME AS LAITH.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

JAMES CLERK MAXWELL (1831-1879) 48 YEARS

HE WAS A SCOTTISH THEORETICAL PHYSICIST AND MATHEMATICIAN. HIS MOST SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT WAS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CLASSICAL ELECTROMAGNETIC THEORY, SYNTHESIZING ALL PREVIOUS UNRELATED OBSERVATIONS, EXPERIMENTS AND EQUATIONS OF ELECTRICITY, MAGNETISM AND EVEN OPTICS INTO A CONSISTENT THEORY. HIS SET OF EQUATIONS—MAXWELL'S EQUATIONS—DEMONSTRATED THAT ELECTRICITY, MAGNETISM AND EVEN LIGHT ARE ALL MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SAME PHENOMENON: THE ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELD. FROM THAT MOMENT ON, ALL OTHER CLASSICAL LAWS OR EQUATIONS OF THESE DISCIPLINES BECAME SIMPLIFIED CASES OF MAXWELL'S EQUATIONS. MAXWELL'S WORK IN ELECTROMAGNETISM HAS BEEN CALLED THE "SECOND GREAT UNIFICATION IN PHYSICS", AFTER THE FIRST ONE CARRIED OUT BY ISAAC NEWTON.

MAXWELL DEMONSTRATED THAT ELECTRIC AND MAGNETIC FIELDS TRAVEL THROUGH SPACE IN THE FORM OF WAVES, AND AT THE CONSTANT SPEED OF LIGHT. FINALLY, IN 1864 MAXWELL WROTE A DYNAMICAL THEORY OF THE ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELD WHERE HE FIRST PROPOSED THAT LIGHT WAS IN FACT UNDULATIONS IN THE SAME MEDIUM THAT IS THE CAUSE OF ELECTRIC AND MAGNETIC PHENOMENA. HIS WORK IN PRODUCING A UNIFIED MODEL OF ELECTROMAGNETISM IS CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE GREATEST ADVANCES IN PHYSICS.

MAXWELL ALSO DEVELOPED THE MAXWELL DISTRIBUTION, A STATISTICAL MEANS TO DESCRIBE ASPECTS OF THE KINETIC THEORY OF GASES. THESE TWO DISCOVERIES HELPED USHER IN THE ERA OF MODERN PHYSICS, LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE WORK IN SUCH FIELDS AS SPECIAL RELATIVITY AND QUANTUM MECHANICS. HE IS ALSO KNOWN FOR CREATING THE FIRST TRUE COLOUR PHOTOGRAPH IN 1861.

MAXWELL IS CONSIDERED BY MANY PHYSICISTS TO BE THE NINETEENTH CENTURY SCIENTIST WITH THE GREATEST INFLUENCE ON TWENTIETH CENTURY PHYSICS. HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SCIENCE ARE CONSIDERED BY MANY TO BE OF THE SAME MAGNITUDE AS THOSE OF NEWTON AND ALBERT EINSTEIN. IN 1931, ON THE CENTENNIAL OF MAXWELL'S BIRTHDAY, EINSTEIN HIMSELF DESCRIBED MAXWELL'S WORK AS THE "MOST PROFOUND AND THE MOST FRUITFUL THAT PHYSICS HAS EXPERIENCED SINCE THE TIME OF NEWTON." EINSTEIN KEPT A PHOTOGRAPH OF MAXWELL ON HIS STUDY WALL, ALONGSIDE PICTURES OF MICHAEL FARADAY AND NEWTON.

"THE ONLY LAWS OF MATTER ARE THOSE WHICH OUR MINDS MUST FABRICATE,

AND THE ONLY LAWS OF MIND ARE FABRICATED FOR IT BY MATTER."