

# Medium caught on video blames his 'spirit team' but won't allow us to question them

By The Editor



Gary Mannion says his 'spirit team' were responsible for his actions in a YouTube interview (titled: Gary answers your questions)

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WHEN we reported on Banyan Retreat's video exposure of Gary Mannion's "physical mediumship" I wrote in my Editorial that there were surely only two responses open to him: confessing to fraud and giving no further séances, or denying responsibility for what took place (PN July 2016).

As I suspected, despite the evidence and the expressions of disgust from around the world, particularly on social media, Mannion has now taken the second option. In essence, he is saying that his spirit team controlled him in order to protect him from the infrared filming.

After a few weeks of deliberating on the best way forward, he has elected to take part in a 46-minute question-and-answer session (believed to be a sitter, Michelle Lucey) which he has put on YouTube. Those interested in hearing what he has to say should search for "Gary answers your questions".

In a prelude, a confident-looking Mannion describes the session as "my attempt to answer some of the questions" that have arisen since the Banyan Retreat incident. He begins by denying he has ever used trickery in his work and he also confirms that he was not told the séance would be recorded. He adds that his agreement to provide physical mediumship states that the séance must not be recorded.

Describing the Banyan Retreat event as "a set-up", Mannion says he has no memory of what took place from the moment he was tied into his chair until he was untied at the end of the séance. He also says he completely trusts his spirit team: "they know why they do what they do".

The questioner puts it to Mannion that people present at the séance believed they were interacting with materialised spirit beings – "in short, they were deceived" – did he accept that?

Incredibly, Mannion responds: "I don't believe anyone was deceived... From what Spirit has said in a previous statement there was plenty that happened on that night that was not picked up on the

camera."

In effect, he seems to be alleging that his spirit helpers were treating the séance as an experiment to see what could be achieved under those conditions.

Clearly, the answers given by Mannion in the YouTube interview are meaningless since – if we take his explanation at face value – he was not consciously in the room or aware of what was happening whilst his spirit team used his entranced body to simulate physical phenomena.

I requested a response from Mannion via his Facebook immediately the Banyan Retreat posted the incriminating video. He promised to reply but I received nothing from him, yet he has recently complained that our reporting of the events is one-sided, biased and has "twisted" his words.

After viewing the YouTube question-and-answer session it became obvious that the only answers that would be of interest to our readers would be those provided by his spirit team, who Mannion claims were totally responsible for the séance that was videoed.

I therefore invited Mannion, who was visiting the UK, to hold a trance session at which *Psychic News* could ask his spirit helpers – we have to assume that they are actual beings and not as fake as the phenomena they produced – about why they did what they did on the night in question. I suggested that we videoed the session and made it publicly available so there could be no claim of bias or misrepresentation.

Having seen our more detailed reporting of the Banyan Retreat event and the reactions of various people who had previously sat with him (PN August 2016), Mannion declined to participate saying our



A still from the video of the fake séance which can be viewed in its entirety at [garyfiles.co.uk](http://garyfiles.co.uk)  
(Photo: Banyan Retreat)

report was “not fair journalism – it’s setting out to destroy me”. He added: “Why would I let you ask my team questions for you to twist what they say? I will pass the articles on to my lawyer and seek advice.”

Naturally, I’m disappointed not to have the opportunity to speak with Mannion’s spirit team, but here, for the record, are some of the questions I would have liked to put to them:

**Why, when you discovered that Banyan Retreat would be filming the séance with an infrared camera, did you not announce this to the sitters and explain that you would either have to cancel the event to protect your medium or to simulate the phenomena by using your medium to move objects and create the other effects that always occur at his séances?**

**Do you not understand that those who attended the session believed they would be seeing genuine phenomena and by faking it in the way you did you were guilty of deception?**

**Why, if your medium was in trance and unaware of what was going on, as he claims, did he need to feel his way around the circle and in and out of the tent he uses as a cabinet?**

**Why did you undress him and invite sitters to touch his body to create the impression that he was a materialised spirit being?**

**How were you able to release him from the cable ties when, apparently, the infrared camera prevented the production of genuine phenomena, such as the movement of trumpet and chairs, all of which are seen being produced by your medium on the video?**

**Clearly, the infrared camera made it**

**impossible for your medium to produce genuine ectoplasm. Instead, he is seen producing white material, putting it in his mouth, and pulling it out to different lengths in between having a red light put on so that the sitters could observe different amounts. Your medium must have been provided with that material before the séance and it must still have been on his person or hidden in the chair, after the session. Was he not suspicious? And how can you justify such trickery?**

Those who continue to support Mannion need to give serious consideration to the issues raised in these questions. But there’s more that they should know.

Mannion was in Australia when he first learned, on 13 May, that his Banyan Retreat séance had been filmed covertly. He turned to physical medium Scott Milligan for advice on Facebook. They had known each other for a couple of years and Mannion had helped Milligan with his website in its early days (it is now hosted and designed by Banyan Graphics).

In private messages, when he learned Milligan had seen the video clips online, Mannion wrote: “I \*\*\*\*ed up”. Milligan advised him to tell his partner, Adam, and his circle leader, Teresa Muzzlewhite. But Mannion responded: “I don’t want anyone else knowing,” adding, “No, they’ll make the whole thing worse.”

Milligan persisted, assuring Mannion that they would stand by him and give him strength if he confessed to them what had happened.

“I don’t want Adam and Teresa to know how \*\*\*\*ed up the whole situation is,” he replied, and then, after a couple more

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Why did you undress him and invite sitters to touch his body to create the impression that he was a materialised spirit being?

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exchanges Mannion adds: “He doesn’t need to know. I’m never gonna sit again so it’s something that never needs to come up”.

After learning of the video, Mannion originally gave an undertaking to Nic Whitham at Banyan Retreat that he would not hold further physical séances and it was only after hearing that he had broken that agreement and had held a physical séance in Australia that Whitham put the video online for all to see.

Scott Milligan is so annoyed that Mannion has now made a video denying any responsibility for the faked séance, placing responsibility for it on his spirit team, that he has made public those private messages I quoted earlier, during a live chat on his Facebook page.

Despite the controversy surrounding his “physical mediumship”, a statement on Mannion’s Facebook page (29 July) indicates that he intends to carry on giving séances.

“I will continue working my way and documenting and showing what the team will allow. If you don’t like my work you don’t have to come along. Any more hurtful comments will be deleted and you will be blocked...”

“This is not me trying to hide anything. I am simply fed up with all the bullying, harassment and being taken out of context.”

Unfortunately for Mannion, it’s difficult to take an infrared recording showing blatant fraud out of context and the more people who are made aware of that and the ensuing events the better. ■

# This case of fraud is a call to action

*Walter Meyer zu Erpen sheds light on a historical perspective to physical mediumship*

THE RECENT exposure of Gary Mannion, caught on video faking séance-room phenomena, is a call to action to all Spiritualists.

To begin, the policy by which the Arthur Findlay College requires mediums demonstrating physical mediumship on its premises to allow the use of infrared photography, should be universally adopted by Spiritualists.

Secondly, national Spiritualist organisations within the United Kingdom and elsewhere should initiate collaborative discussions to create and maintain a single online registry of individuals who have been caught perpetrating conscious, premeditated fraud.

Before continuing, I will mention that I am on record for my belief in some form of continued existence in an afterlife state and in genuine spirit communication, both through mediumship and unmediated.

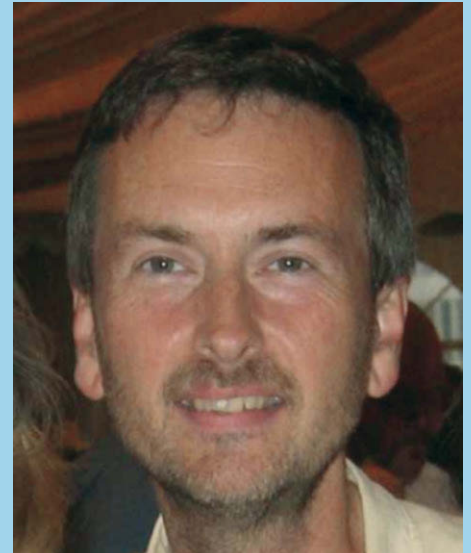
I also believe in psychokinetic movement of inanimate objects and the possibility of the paranormal production of ectoplasm. Having spent the past 25 years working on a historical study of séance-room experiments conducted between 1918 and 1944 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, I am convinced that the research by T. Glendenning Hamilton and his wife

Lillian, their family and associates, is the best-documented and most convincing case of genuine, repeated psychokinetic and ectoplasmic manifestations photographed in controlled circumstances.

Undoubtedly, some of the statements I make here will be upsetting to *Psychic News* readers. However, if an individual is caught faking séance-room phenomena on even a single occasion, then serious-minded Spiritualists and survival researchers need to discard the whole of that individual's "portfolio".

Notwithstanding recognised cases of "mixed mediumship", genuine and fake, such as the Italian medium Eusapia Palladino – who was largely believed to have had a genuine ability to move tables and other objects in controlled circumstances, but also known to resort to trickery when she could – Spiritualists cannot accept such behaviour as the norm [see "Observations" panel, Point 1].

The world is not what it was 100 years ago. No researcher today will have the patience to test repeatedly an individual who has been caught cheating and is not



Walter Meyer zu Erpen

willing to submit to infrared photography.

More importantly, such con artists cannot be allowed to continue to trade on sitters' gullibility and bilk them of their money. If we are to be taken seriously, Spiritualists need to be self-policing and to put out of business those who take advantage of grief-stricken individuals seeking solace through mediumship.

That's right, one strike and you're out! And you're on the list of con artists perpetrating séance-room fraud. If you're a genuine medium, then the way forward is simple – you allow the use of infrared photography at all séances to prove the physical effects that you claim are genuine [see "Observations" panel, Point 2].

In 1929, Mrs William Cannon, wife of a New York judge, used infrared photography to film a teleplasm emerging from the medium's mouth in the T.G. Hamilton experiments in Winnipeg. Though the movie film is not known to have survived, an image from one frame has.

Experiments that Dr Eugene Osty conducted in 1930 in Paris with the Polish medium Rudi Schneider suggest that an invisible psychic force was able to break infrared beams projected within the séance room, thereby setting off an alarm. Those documented instances of the use of infrared technology demonstrate that it will not inhibit genuine phenomena. And it is unlikely that invisible infrared rays will prove dangerous to genuine physical mediums.



Eusapia Palladino levitates a table in the presence of four researchers



## OBSERVATIONS

Of course, the technology is devastating to the egos and careers of con artists who fake séance-room phenomena. In 1960, psychical researcher Dr Andrija Puharich and Spiritualist Tom O'Neill wanted to document the reality of séance-room phenomena at Camp Chesterfield in Indiana. They obtained permission to photograph a séance, but apparently the circle leader did not understand the nature of infrared photography and the film exposed blatant fraud in the séance room.

Finally, there can be no room for nonsensical arguments about forgiveness because the medium was in trance and did not know what was going on – or that it was the spirit guide's fault.

I do not, for a moment, buy the argument that the entranced medium might have been acting under the control of his or her guide. Where do these crazy notions come from? What truly evolved spirit guide, intent on conveying Spiritualist philosophy or proving the reality of survival and spirit communication, would encourage his or her "medium" to cheat?

Entrancement by a spirit guide requires that a developing medium enter into a hypnotic state, usually through self-hypnosis. Professional stage hypnotists state clearly that entranced subjects will not do anything that runs counter to their moral compass [see "Observations" panel, Point 3].

Those who would argue that "the guide did it" need to re-examine their thinking. Though I don't even buy that those who fake séance-room phenomena are in a trance state, any "guiding influence" around an individual perpetrating séance-room fraud is more likely a secondary personality or imaginary ghost created by the medium and sitter group.

And cheating would need to be an acceptable activity to the entranced individual. In short, the alleged spirit guides of individuals who fake phenomena should be thrown out as well, without further examination. And falling back to "but the individual was a good healer" (Mannion began as a healer), well, aren't we grasping at straws by that point? How could one ever trust the healing ability or psychokinetic force of an individual whose moral compass is so misguided?

In conclusion, congratulations are in order for Nic Whitham and Steven Siu of the Banyan Retreat. Though it is unfortunate that one must sometimes resort to trickery to catch a cheat, they should have the support of Spiritualists everywhere for their exposure of Mannion. ■

*Walter Meyer zu Erpen invited medium and researcher Chris Connelly, who reported on the faked Banyan Retreat séance for PN (July 2016 issue), to comment on the opinions expressed in this article. He makes the following observations:*

**Point 1:** Medium Horace Leaf deals with the question of Eusapia Palladino's genuineness in his book *The Psychology & Development of Mediumship*. She was often caught faking phenomena, he writes, and yet at other times she submitted to the severest of tests. Investigator Hereward Carrington was on record as saying that 98 per cent of all physical phenomena were fraudulent. And yet, after testing Palladino, he declared: "Eusapia is genuine".

Special attention was paid to the medium's psychology, Leaf writes, "and the investigators were thus able to discover that when the medium attempted to cheat she was not always responsible for her actions. Just before the phenomena she would be seized with an irresistible impulse to produce them, and if not restrained would do so."

"'But if she is restrained,' says Mr Carrington, 'genuine phenomena will result – as we repeatedly ascertained'"

**Point 2:** You advocate the use of infrared cameras (I assume shortwave) for all séances and suggest that researchers and sitters alike should insist that such precautions against fraud should be in place. But you also express the view that "it is unlikely that invisible infrared rays will prove dangerous". If we cannot be sure infrared doesn't affect the medium, how can we expect mediums to submit themselves to such conditions?

There is a possible hypothesis (though weak) as to why ectoplasm may be affected by infrared and natural light, relating to the photon energy at a given frequency. Perhaps it is this energy that disrupts the phenomena?

Infrared (800nm = 1.5eV) photons have half the energy (Joules or eV) when compared with photons of natural light (700nm[red]-380nm[violet] = 1.8eV to 3.54eV, assuming a mix of frequencies). The difference in the energy is tiny, but still measurable with current technology, implying that if technology can measure the difference then it could be considered significant enough to



Chris Connelly

affect ectoplasm.

Infrared longwave (e.g., thermal), on the other hand, is different and considering every sitter, including the medium, will be emitting infrared longwave, and provided we can show careful consideration has been made to ensure any thermal camera does not emit any infrared shortwave or visible light (from LED indicators or possible LCD screens), then the reason for not using thermal cameras is really down to the wishes of the medium and the spirit team.

**Point 3:** There is definitely a moral dimension to séances that perhaps could be debated more, rather than focusing the debate on the authenticity of phenomena.

I'm interested in your statement that the medium enters a hypnotic state. I would certainly agree that there are discrete states of awareness (DSA) which are likened to hypnotic states, yet some of the preliminary work I've done comparing various DSA for differing techniques (trance, hypnosis, meditation, etc) suggests there are differences. ■

# 'We don't believe you,' say former circle leaders

*They challenge Gary Mannion's claim that his 'spirit team' faked the phenomena*

WE HAVE already given three of fraudulent medium Gary Mannion's circle leaders the opportunity to express their shock and anger on seeing the covertly filmed video of the "séance" he held at Banyan Retreat in May (PN July 2016).

He is claiming that his "spirit team" were responsible for entrancing him and then using his body to create the effects of genuine physical phenomena, including a full-form materialisation which the video shows to be a near-naked Mannion (pages 34-35).

*Psychic News* has now spoken again to these circle leaders, who have sat with him regularly, two of them for years, after they have had the opportunity to watch Mannion's YouTube Q&A session in which he maintains his spirit team were in control throughout.

Do they accept his claim?

No. They are unanimous in their responses which can be summed up in one sentence: "We don't believe you". Both Christine Parkin and Teresa Muzzlewhite are UK based, but Christine went to Australia with Gary to act as his circle leader for a while. Michael Mayo, who is US-based, also acted as circle leader in Australia for a short time.

Inge Crosson, his most recent circle leader in Australia, appears to accept the "spirit control" explanation.

The realisation that Mannion was producing "phenomena" fraudulently has been devastating for Teresa, who regarded Mannion not only as an incredible medium but also as a close friend. She still feels shell-shocked by the discovery and it has taken her two months before she felt strong enough to make her views public.

Here's what all three have to say:

## Teresa Muzzlewhite

It's been very hard for me. I feel that I've lost so much. If he would only admit he was faking it I'd find it easier to deal with.

I was present at the Banyan Retreat séance that was filmed. When Nic called me to say they had a video that showed Gary faking it, I didn't believe him. I was certain Gary was in the cabinet throughout. I nearly never went to see it and the only reason I went was to fight Gary's corner for him.

Before going to see it, however, I called Gary, who was in Germany at the time, and

told him there was a video of the séance. He replied, "Oh, I'm finished." I said, "No you're not Gary, because you're not a fake, are you?" He never responded.

When I viewed the video, it was horrendous. I watched it for two hours and I kept thinking, "This can't be happening". I saw it was well rehearsed. And what you see in the video has been going on for a couple of years, at least.

You can see Gary sticking something in his mouth and moving it around before the red light comes on for everyone to see the 'ectoplasm'. So I asked myself where he got that from, because he's usually searched before a séance. It's either hidden on him or in the chair he often used when holding physical demonstrations in the UK

I bought that old chair from a charity shop for about £15 and it is kept at my house. When I got back from seeing the video, I immediately checked the chair. When I unzipped the cushion I found inside a piece of very thin plastic material which looked suspiciously like the 'ectoplasm' I had seen. I showed it to a circle member and a very regular trusted sitter and they both agreed with me although, of course, I cannot say it is with 100 per cent certainty, unless it were tested' but it is suspicious. It is now kept somewhere very safe.

On his return from Germany I told Gary he needed to talk to me about the Banyan Retreat séance and I needed an explanation, something to help me understand what had happened, but he replied, "I'm not ready to talk about it". I didn't tell Gary or show him what I had found in the chair

Now he has had time to think about it, he's claiming that his spirit team were controlling him during the séance that was videoed. I don't believe that. If they are able to allow matter to pass through matter [his claim to explain how he was released from cable ties and later returned] then why did they have to unzip the tent cabinet to get him in and out?

Thinking back to other séances with him, we always heard the zip being opened before a spirit apparently appeared. Also, at his last séance at Brentwood, Essex,



Teresa Muzzlewhite

I could clearly see in the low light that his arm was out of the cable tie and was shaking the tent. At the end of the séance, when everyone had left the room, I told him what I had seen and said I couldn't understand what was happening.

His response was that he didn't know why Spirit would have done that and I should ask them. So at his next public demonstration I asked his guide, in a roundabout way, for an explanation of what I had seen and about which I was very unhappy.

I was told it was something Spirit was working on. I asked if I could tell anyone else about what I'd seen, he said, "No".

Another thing that struck me as strange at the time was that earlier this year Gary's 'spirit team' had asked me and Adam [his partner] to wear glow-in-the-dark shoelaces around our necks at the start of séances and later, during the proceedings, we were told to put them away.

When Adam asked why this was required he was told it was something that would be revealed at a later date. Adam always sat on one side of the cabinet and I sat on the other. I realise now that they could have been markers for Gary, particularly in new venues, so that he could get his bearings in the dark.

Gary recently came to my home to collect his belongings and he asked me about the "ectoplasm" I had found in the chair. I had not told him about it, but had

mentioned it to a couple of people and word had clearly got back to him. He said it was nothing to do with him and how did he know it wasn't a set up between Nic Whitham at Banyan, Scott Milligan, who has been very supportive of me, and myself.

I said, "I have spent the last four-and-a-half years of my life travelling around with you, putting my heart and soul into it for you, believing I was keeping you safe and alive, fighting your corner if need be, believing I was working with Spirit. Why would I want to lose all that?"

Sadly, I now have to ask myself the question: "Was this ever real and did he ever have an ability?" If I think hard about this, I have to say I believe that in the very early days before he gave public demonstrations, then yes he had ability, judging by what ex-home circle members have told me.

I met Gary on his first public demonstration and started sitting with him at his early demonstrations. But things changed after a short while and he must have started to create his own phenomena.

The video of Gary faking phenomena has obviously upset many people. If it really was his spirit team producing the results, why would they hurt so many people by doing this? That's not the Spirit I've known and loved.

I don't believe his explanation. And as much as this has rocked the spiritual community and caused me and probably others to question their faith and beliefs, I know that Nic and Steve [Banyan Retreat's co-owners] did the right thing for the Spirit world. I'm grateful to them for doing what they did. It had to happen.

Fraudulent mediumship and playing with people's emotions and grief is never acceptable ever, in any way, shape or form.



### Christine Parkin

I was initially shocked to see the Banyan Retreat video and I have now watched part of Gary's YouTube Q&As. The latter, I find too nauseating to endure in its entirety.

Gary, sitting in his public demonstration chair, in a darkened Wallacia séance room, displaying his all-too-familiar narcissistic tendencies, does not make for comfortable viewing.

His responses are garbled, repetitive and ludicrous.

I have challenged Gary on several occasions and found him to be evasive and unwilling to take responsibility for his actions. To deflect is to defend.

I know of several women who have stepped into Gary's life over the years, with whom he has shared his story of an abused childhood, dysfunctional family and, of course, his amazing spiritual experiences.

Sadly, we have all felt the need to nurture and support "the gifted one".

For the record, he has not contacted me since the video was released, neither is he

likely to. If only he would put his hands up, admit his deception and move on, then we could all learn from the experience.

The trouble is, there are still people out there who are supporting him and don't realise the despot they are dealing with.

### Michael Mayo

His claim that his "spirit team" used his body to produce the phenomena due to the use of infrared light changes nothing about my view of his mediumship.

He's been getting out of the chair since I checked it in November 2014 [in Australia] and there was no infrared that night.

How often does his "spirit team" get him out of that chair? It's just bogus. Anyone who has a genuine understanding of Spirit knows they would never work this way. Harmony and love are paramount to Spirit – they would not create all this upheaval and discord.

He's a fraud, he's been caught, and he needs to take responsibility. ■



(Photo: A. Will Design | Photography)

## 'He will never set foot in our church again'

WHEN Laraine Killarney, president of Stourbridge Spiritualist Church, West Midlands, learned from *Psychic News* at the beginning of August that a rumour was circulating that the church would continue to engage Gary Mannion for physical séances, she was outraged.

"That is totally untrue," she replied. "I can assure you Gary Mannion will *never* set foot in our church, ever again.

"Stourbridge hosted Gary Mannion several times, purely for psychic healing at the start. Once we knew his 'physical

mediumship' was proven to be a con, everything was cancelled and he will never be coming to our church again.

"We don't have any contact with him now. I don't want to know any con merchant at all, particularly one who has

done so much damage to Spiritualism."

It was at Stourbridge that SNU president Minister David Bruton experienced Mannion's "physical mediumship". His account of that event appeared in PN August 2016 issue.