

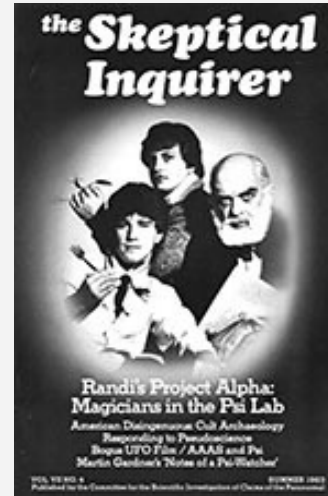


MAGIC OR MIRACLE

FMS1203S - GROUP 2
NABILAH-SOON GUAN-JING KAI



MASSIMO POLIDORO



Massimo Polidoro is an investigator of the paranormal, author, lecturer, and co-founder and head of CICAP, the Italian skeptics group. The results of Massimo's work have been published in various journals, including The Skeptical Inquirer (for which Massimo writes a bimonthly column, "Notes on a Strange World")

Skeptical Inquirer is a bimonthly American magazine published by the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (CSI)



READING THIS WEEK

SKEPTICAL INQUIRER

Polidoro, Massimo.

"Magic or miracle? A lesson worth remembering."

Skeptical Inquirer, Mar.-Apr. 2011



OUTLINE

- + INTRODUCTION
- + THE ALPHA BOYS' OBJECTIVE
- + NUZUM'S OBJECTIVE
- + IMICH'S STAND
- + CONCLUSION

ARE PSYCHICS REAL?





**CAN THEY REALLY
READ OUR MINDS?
OR ARE THEY JUST
PLAYING WITH
OUR MINDS?**

INTRODUCTION

- Read a brief article in the Journal of the Society for Psychical Research (JSPR)
- Written by parapsychologist Alexander Imich
- Title: “Joe A. Nuzum, A Little-Known Psychic”
- Describes Nuzum as being “of the D.D. Home class.”
- Victorian British medium Daniel D. Home; sometimes referred to as a superpsychic, was supposedly capable of moving objects, levitating, and producing all manner of supernatural phenomena at will.
- The article consisted of a long list of miracles that Nuzum appeared to have performed over the years.

MIRACLE OR JUST MAGIC?



The article had many flaws:

- The conditions under which these presumed miracles took place were not described in the article
- All of the “phenomena” described belonged to the classic conjurers’ and fakirs’ range
- It appeared that no magician was ever present at any of Nuzum’s demonstrations
- There was no reference to the fact that Nuzum himself was a magician.

THE ALPHA BOYS



BANACHEK
ONE OF THE ALPHA BOYS

**MAGIC OR
MIRACLE**

- Mentalist
- Real name of Steve Shaw
- Was one of the celebrated alumni of Project Alpha
- Young magicians fooled scientists into thinking they had extrasensory perception [ESP]
- Steve confirmed that he was a friend of Nuzum at the time of Project Alpha. They lived in the same town, had been friends for at least five years, and used to exchange tricks and ideas on magic.

NUZUM'S OBJECTIVE

- Nuzum had specialized in escapology at the time
- He was impressed by the press coverage that Steve had been able to gather while pretending to be a psychic, and he wanted to achieve the same result.
- Nuzum started to perform mentalism tricks, and with these he convinced psychiatrist Berthold Schwartz that he was a real psychic
- Used people for his own benefit
- Was not planning to expose his fraud

OBJECTIVE OF PROJECT ALPHA

- Project Alpha was designed to show how competent magicians can complete the same tasks as self-proclaimed psychics.
- Benachek entered the project knowing fully well that he was going to expose the fraud after achieving its objective
- They succeeded in fooling their scientists - managed to prove their point

**WITH A DIFFERENT OBJECTIVE
IN MIND, NUZUM HOWEVER
MANAGED TO ACHIEVE WHAT
WE WANTED.**

**IMICH FELL FOR HIS TRAP AND
WAS VERY CONVINCED.**

ALEXANDER IMICH'S STAND

- Polidoro pointed out this issue in the JSPR
- However, Imich remained certain of Nuzum's superpsychic ability
- “He took from my book-shelf a volume of Gray’s Anatomy and [he] opened it at page 354”
- Polidoro even pointed out a precaution to take (he would have made sure not to let Nuzum get anywhere near the book before the test) if Nuzum truly have superpsychic ability
- Imich however overlooked this and stayed rooted to his stand and belief.

CONCLUSION

- To conclude, according to Project Alpha, magicians can do what psychics can do. So are all psychics true ones?
- Nuzum may or may not have tricked the audience into believing the fraud. However, we can never tell until further precautionary measures have been taken.
- Don't be deceived too easily by these frauds, like Imich did! They might just be playing with your minds!

THANK YOU!

REFERENCES

- + READING; POLIDORO, MASSIMO. "MAGIC OR MIRACLE? A LESSON WORTH REMEMBERING." SKEPTICAL INQUIRER, MAR.-APR. 2011
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