

Secrets of the Ramtha School

By Tim Ventura, September 5th, 2005 (Revised by Mike Wright)

It's been over a year since my last visit to the Ramtha School of Enlightenment, but I'm sitting in the same seat that I used last July – uncomfortably positioned on a folding metal chair in the back of the enormous wooden auditorium. Once again, the auditorium is filled with students, and once again, I'm uncomfortably aware that I'm not one of them. Last year was strange enough, and this year promises to bring a new chapter to a story that has yet to be fully resolved...

I. Remote Viewing:

The auditorium itself remains unchanged: supported by massive crescent-shaped beams under a roof composed of aged cedar expansive enough to dwarf the 12-foot tall speaker cabinets surrounding a dimly lit stage. The walls are littered with scraps of notepaper covered with the scribbled results of student remote-viewing experiments, and the floor remains hidden by nearly 750 students sitting on pillows in preparation for an upcoming practice session for remote viewing.



Central Auditorium: The massive central RSE presentation area & auditorium.

Last year I spent several hours in this auditorium sandwiched between Colby Harper and Bruce Smith, listening to Nick Cook's presentation on the latest research in the field of Antigravity & Breakthrough Propulsion. This year's a bit different: a small paper notepad and a 6-pack of Crayola crayons are sitting on my lap, and I'm busy shifting my weight around so that they don't slide down my legs as I use both hands to snap photographs of the auditorium, students, and the eclectic décor lining the walls.

Colby and Bruce aren't here, but the school's provided me with a chaperone to ensure that I don't get lost on campus: James Flick, the boyfriend and life-partner of none other than JZ Knight herself,



James Flick: JZ Knight's life-partner, shown focusing for RV experiment #7.

sits next to me, diligently focusing his attention on the stage some 50 feet in front of us. His focus distracts me from the task of photographing the event and draws my attention to the stage itself, where a stout-looking middle-aged woman in a white pullover is getting the microphone ready to begin speaking. She begins quite abruptly, "OK, we're now going to begin remote viewing session number 7. Please focus and concentrate on an object in this box." James leans over to me and whispers, "C'mon Tim – you might as well give it a shot. Just write down what you see in your head."

James leans away from me to begin writing on his own notepad – I can't see what he's writing, but I'm too busy angling the camera for a couple of head shots to care anyways. Maybe he's taking notes about what I'm photographing ... and perhaps I should participate in this session, despite the fact that on the few occasions I've played around with psychic-tests in the past, my powers seem no better than the average man on the street. It's not that I don't believe in psychic-powers, just that I don't believe that I have them: at least not anymore. Sure, I can remember having a few clairvoyant dreams during my teenage years, but that's something that happens to nearly everyone, and predictably, at the ripe old age of 29 whatever powers I may have once had have declined into nothingness...

Remote viewing Session #7 is nearly over: in the time it's taken for my brief exchange with James and getting my head-shots, I've fallen behind the students sitting on the floor in front of me. From my vantage point, I can see them well enough to know that they're beginning to put their notepaper down and look up towards the woman on the stage – but without my glasses, my 20/100 vision prevents me from seeing any of the details. In fact, I'm feeling a bit nervous that sitting 50-feet from the stage, I can't even see the box that the woman claimed the remote-viewing sample was contained in. Is it a large white box? That's what I'd thought she'd been pointing to, but I know that it's just a wild guess...



Remote Viewing: A view of the stage during RV session #7 – a bunny rabbit.

After folding up my digital camera and fumbling for the notepaper, I realize that if I'm going to be a good sport about this remote viewing experiment, then I'd better write something down pretty rapidly – the woman on stage seems a bit restless, and I know that it means I don't have time to focus or concentrate like James seems to be intently doing beside me. I can't really see him, but he's pretty quiet and not moving very much, so my guess is that he's meditating on the object. Oh well – this is the price that I pay for distraction, or so I suppose. I quickly extract a shiny black crayon from the package on my lap, and begin to write.....time to wing it.

Most of the students in front of me had seemed to focus for quite a while before they began writing, but I don't feel any hesitation. I see a couple of images swimming around in my imagination – one of them is stack of flat, grey plates – like pieces of shale piled haphazardly on top of one another. I write, "small, grey plates" and move on. Then another, more compelling vision: out of nowhere I see a small, grey figurine – a bunny rabbit, with big grey feet and a potbelly like something from an Indian Buddha-doll. The potbelly is the part that strikes me the most, as well as the impression that it's not shiny: my vision seems to have a matte-finish to it, almost like the texture of play-doh, except grey in color. I don't feel entirely comfortable writing 'bunny rabbit' on my notepaper, so I just write about the potbelly, rapidly scribbling "round globe" in the hopes that maybe whatever the object in the container is may actually be round. Thankful to be done with this exercise, and more than a little ashamed at my complete lack of effort, I begin to reach for the camera before the woman's over-amplified voice crackles through the P.A. system.

The woman on stage isn't holding a box, but instead a small ceramic urn with a heavy-lid on top. I don't know who she is, but her poise and tone remind me of an auctioneer as she finally reveals what this mysterious remote-viewing test object really is. "OK everyone, we're finishing up remote

viewing session #7...did you all remember to concentrate?” She pauses for a second to lift the lid and extracts a tiny object. She says something else, but all I hear is, “bunny rabbit”. The telephoto lens on my camera, now in hand, tells the rest of the story: the woman is holding a small, pewter figurine of a pot-bellied bunny-rabbit....exactly what I saw.

“Hey James,” I excitedly begin, “you’re never going to believe this, but that’s what I saw...that was my first impression and it was correct.” I don’t have it written down, so I’m sure that he’s not going to buy it. James leans back over to me and says in a low voice, “That’s great, Tim – you know, they say that first impressions are usually the best, both in life and in remote-viewing.” So maybe James does believe me –and it begins to make sense as he shows me what he’s drawn on his previously hidden notepaper. In Crayola Brown, he’s completed a remarkably detailed sketch of a potbellied bunny-rabbit figurine...

Maybe James is correct about impressions, but I’m not sure: in this case, looking over at his card, my first impression at this moment is that it takes a remarkably self-secure man to feel comfortable wearing a soft-pink T-Shirt....

II. In The Beginning:

If you ever get the chance to visit the Ramtha School of Enlightenment, I’d highly recommend it. I’m not saying that as a student, because I’m not. Quite frankly, I don’t know what to believe, so I’ve chosen not to make a choice on the matter.

The Ramtha School of Enlightenment is a psychic & spirituality center located in the rural city of Yelm that’s dominated by a single personality – the legendary JZ Knight. The story is that back in the 1970’s, she began to recognize the spiritual presence of an ethereal being called “Ramtha”, which she later began to ‘channel’. Through the conduit of JZ Knight’s body, Ramtha began communicating with the public and eventually started teaching about the untapped powers of the human consciousness, which led to the gradual development of the “Ramtha School of Enlightenment”.



JZ Knight: An early publicity shot of the famous channeler for the spirit Ramtha.

I don’t know if Ramtha’s a real being, or perhaps merely a part of JZ Knight’s psyche – again, I’m not truly invested in finding out, since psychic anomalies really aren’t my thing. Simply put, I just don’t care....in fact, I wouldn’t have even known about the Ramtha School of Enlightenment if I hadn’t become friends with RSE student Bruce Smith in 2003. He was doing a story on Antigravity for The Golden Thread, which was the official magazine for RSE, and took the time to travel to Seattle to interview me and catch a quick demo of Lifters in action. Bruce was then kind enough to later facilitate my June 2004 trip to the school to see Jane’s Defense Weekly Editor Nick Cook speak on the topic of Antigravity and Breakthrough Propulsion, which was the first real exposure that I had to the RSE environment.

Most RSE students would tell you that Ramtha lived as a man 35,000 years ago, learned the secrets of immortality and then used his powers to transcend his physical body to once again re-appear and teach through JZ Knight. I'm not going to argue the belief, but I will argue the setup: from what I've seen, Ramtha does the speaking, but the real presence – and the real power – comes not from Ramtha, but from his usually overlooked counterpart, JZ Knight.

Born in 1946, JZ Knight traces her origins back to a rural family of migrant farm workers in Roswell, New Mexico – a family on the edge of poverty. Being one of eight children, she recounts having picked cotton with her mother as a child to help keep the family afloat, developing a work ethic that would later serve her as the single-mother of two children. Knight epitomizes the phrase, “You’ve come a long way, baby”.....

Fast forward a few decades, and Knight now sits at the head of a literal empire of spiritual books, cassettes, and conferences; living on an enormous estate that readily attests to the success of her force of will. My own mother and wife are strong women, so these are personality traits that I'm familiar with: no matter how powerful Ramtha may claim to be, let me assure that there's no force in the universe more powerful than a strong woman.



Spiritual Empire: A view of JZ Knight's house, situated on the RSE Yelm campus.

According to her biography, Knight didn't earn her fortune from channeling but instead by supporting a struggling software company whose shares soared when it finally went public in 1999 during the peak of the dot com bubble. I don't know the details of JZ Knight's fortune, but I do know that she's used it for the same thing that most wealthy people do: as a means for avoiding the critics. In her case, this means purchasing an old horse ranch in the 1980's and refurbishing it into the now modernized Ramtha School of Enlightenment – located on forty of acres of land in a secluded, pastoral setting in Yelm WA. Again, this isn't out of character for any celebrity: JZ Knight's a well-known figure in certain circles, and buying the ranch is a way to ensure she can host conferences without the nuisance of booking a large venue for the annual retreats, but yet remains able to hide from the paparazzi when she wants a bit of personal time.

Yelm.” Mike Wright, one of the staff at RSE, told me stories about why she's positioned herself in the location that she has – when she first bought the ranch, the local evangelicals used to camp outside it and picket her in the hopes that she'd leave. After being shot at, Knight built a 6-foot stucco wall around the perimeter and added a security staff to make sure the evangelicals and other

I mentioned critics, so perhaps I should elaborate: all public figures have enemies of one type or another, and Knight is no exception. She's well-known throughout Washington State – especially in the Puget Sound region – and if you ask one of the locals even as far north as Seattle, they're likely to respond with something like, “oh, you mean that cult out in

critics stayed on the right side of it. Despite a widespread belief that channeling isn't real, these evangelicals were firm supporters of the conviction that it's a valid phenomenon – their only concern was about exactly whom she was channeling.

I dealt with the cult issue in the 2004 article that I wrote about her organization, so I won't bore you with the details except to suggest that part of my learning experience was that the Ramtha School of Enlightenment is definitely not a cult. Nobody lives at the school, nobody 'donates' their money, and nobody's calling her "god-incarnate". If anything, RSE is more like a college campus, complete with a college bookstore selling a variety of print and multimedia training materials, and if anything, it's a far more tame environment than you'll find at the highly respected Evergreen State College, located a mere 20 miles away in Olympia.

Since I've already mentioned visiting the Ramtha School, I might as well tell you who gets in and why they show up. Taking into account the usual array of threats and critics, you can probably guess that not every Tom, Dick, and Harry who arrives at the front door gets a red-carpet welcome. The Ramtha School of Enlightenment has its own unique culture, and getting an invite is basically the same as any other college campus: you're either a student, staff, or a guest.



Tent City: Students can stay outdoors during the retreats.

For most RSE students, attending the school comes as a point of shared cultural-pride at two core events per year and several optional events such as the retreat I visited. There were two of these optional retreats this year, in part because of the increasing enrollment, which is now above 5,000 students worldwide. It's a way for people with shared interests & beliefs to meet and explore new ideas with their friends in an environment guaranteed to be safe from the kind of intellectual or spiritual discrimination that they might otherwise encounter by talking about Ramtha in their daily lives. Like any conference, these students arrive from a diverse number of locations around the globe, and set up tents on the campus' ample acreage to stay for about a week and participate in a plethora of activities designed to facilitate their psychic and spiritual growth.

Each of the retreats lasts 10 days, and involves a number of activities that I'll describe in more detail later. Students pay a conference fee to attend, which obviously helps the school pay the bills, pay the staff, and cover the production costs for the materials that they produce to sell online and in the



Hugs: Two RSE students sharing a hug outdoors.

bookstore. I doubt that they're strong arming the students for two reasons: first, from meeting and interacting with the students, none of them appear to be highly wealthy, and second, the 'take it or leave it' attitude of the school would really kill their enrollment if they bled people dry on attendance fees.

So the students show up, listen to Ramtha teach, participate in activities, and generally have a fun time interacting with one another. My impression is that everyone on campus during the retreat seems relaxed & comfortable in the environment. They set up stands to sell

food & drinks at pretty reasonable prices, and from the bit that I've eaten while on campus, it's actually pretty darned tasty stuff.

If you're still thinking "cult" at this point, you're probably on the wrong track. After a lot of thought, the best comparison that I can think of to describe the retreats I visited is a cross between the county fair and the annual California "Burning-Man" events that you see on TV.

While these retreats are mellow & fun to attend, you have to keep in mind that they're also pretty exclusive: maybe a bit like attending a celebrity ball. If you're not expected, you don't get in – period, so don't even bother. Only the fee-paying students get to stay for the entire event. In order to become a student, one must first attend a basic 8-day retreat which is open to the general public and introduces the philosophy and the experience of it firsthand.

III. Fact Checking the 2004 Article:

About two weeks prior to the event, I'd received an email from Jaime Leal-Anaya, and it had been about the article I'd written about the 2004 event where I'd watched Nick Cook speak about Antigravity. I'd written the article as a means to record what I'd considered to be an interesting event, and liked the final draft enough to publish it on American Antigravity. It wasn't meant to be part of my normal coverage though, and I'd tried to stay true to what I knew without doing too much background research, so I hadn't done much fact checking on it. Why should I? It's a piece about an experience – not about the details behind the experience. Thus, Jaime's email bothered me, because he was writing on behalf of JZ Knight.

You know, as a writer, I sometimes forget that people actually read the stuff that I produce...especially in the case of a spur-of-the-moment piece about a one-time event that I attended as a favor to Nick Cook. Apparently I was mistaken, though, because not only had a few people read my article, one of those people was JZ Knight. Jaime was writing me as her assistant with a few points that he wanted me to clarify, listed below:

- [JZ has never appeared in Channel 4's "Town Meeting" hosted by Ken Schram. Apparently what you saw that time was an impersonation of Ramtha by impostor Penny Torres-Rubin "Mafu".](#)
- [This does not mean that JZ Knight herself has not had to endure tremendous slanderous and offensive criticism from people and the media.](#)
- [To be precise, Ramtha has always said he lived as a human being 35,000 years ago, not 40,000. Guess a few thousand years in this kind of time-frame, does not matter too much!\(smile\)](#)
- [Tithing is not practiced at Ramtha's School... Students pay for the particular workshops, events or week-long retreats that they wish to participate in. The cost for these events follows the current standard market rate.](#)
- [The school campus bookstore at RSE actually contains between 3,200 and 3,500 current titles of which 50 are our own from JZ and Ramtha's teachings. We carry the latest titles on](#)

the following topics: Science & Physics; Brain, Mind and Consciousness; Psychology and Self-Help, Philosophy and Religion; History; Politics; The Paranormal; Health; Alchemy; Conspiracy and UFOs; Art Books; Home and Garden; Children's Books; and Fiction.

- The night you were here for Nick Cook's 2004 presentation, the bookstore was actually opened exclusively for students to purchase Nick's book, "The Hunt for Zero Point," so they could get him to sign it after his presentation.
- JZ wanted you to know that it was her who found Nick Cook's book first and recommended it and made it required reading for the entire school. It was also her who invited Nick to come to speak at the school also, and it was ultimately her who organized him to come here. JZ Knight was the one who initiated all of that, which she unfortunately had to miss to attend other personal matters at that time.
- (About the orb-drawings) This is not exactly correct. Most of those paper drawings are remote-views and sending-and-receiving which Mike Wright will explain more clearly to you and the physics behind it. (Am copying with this e-mail so he can follow-up with you on this)
- (About finding cards in the field): Again, Mike does a great job at explaining what this activity is about and the scientific explanation behind it.
- (About people showing up in the field with suitcases): Again, Mike will explain more clearly what this is about and what he meant by the 'suitcases'. (Lol)

Obviously, the list above is a pretty clear reason why writers normally do fact-checking, and my lame email excuses to Jaime fell a bit flat when I replied, "it was an experiential piece...fact checking would ruin the experience." I'd actually been a bit relieved that he hadn't called me on the use of gender in the 2004 article, because that seems to me to be a touchy subject at RSE.

The subject of gender is touchy because students of Ramtha believe that "the entity calling itself Ramtha" was an ancient human warrior who transcended his corporeal-self through focused will and spirituality to exist in the present in a transcendental state. Why's that confusing? To clarify, they claim that Ramtha is an ancient male warrior, channeling through JZ Knight's female body....and that makes writing about him/her/it pain in the butt.

So as you can guess, I started the email exchange with Jaime on an uneasy footing – nobody likes having their work corrected, and the larger concern was that maybe I'd blown some really important details, which in turn might have seriously annoyed JZ Knight. That's also the reason for my surprise when Jaime indicated that Knight had really liked the story, and had offered to invite me down to the upcoming August retreat.

IV. Through the Black Gate, Again:

I pulled up in front of the big black gate in front of the Ramtha School of Enlightenment on Friday, September 2nd. Just like the first time, it had involved an 80-mile trip south on Interstate-5, and another 20-miles east on Yelm-Highway to get there. This trip was a bit shorter for me, because I'd

been there last year: I didn't experience any of the foreboding uncertainty that I'd felt last year, although I was a little uneasy about why they'd asked me to come down.

The first time that you experience something, it's unique, but the second time means that it's a trend....and in this case, part of that trend became accidentally dialing a non-existent intercom extension on the code-panel for the gate before realizing that the intercom panel was located off to the left. I got it right on the second try, and at the prompting of a faceless security guard I told the flat steel panel in front of me that I was here to meet with Mike Wright...and that I was half an hour late.

Seconds after pulling into the only remaining parking space in the gravel-driveway at the front of the ranch, I opened the door to see Mike Wright walking towards the car with a big smile on his face. In addition to doing product development & legal work for the school, Mike's one of the most knowledgeable people that I've ever met on the subject of Quantum Information Theory, and I'd been corresponding with him to share leads & contacts throughout the year following my last visit.

Mike looked more relaxed than I'd remembered him being last year: probably because he only had one guest to chaperone today, instead of Nick Cook, Colby, and myself at last year's conference. Also, instead of the loose-fitting, sand-colored, business-casual attire I'd seen him in last year; he was wearing a simple light-blue T-shirt and a pair of blue jeans, which seemed to blend in pretty well in with the ranch building behind him.

I'd like to think that Mike's prompt entrance was from being eager to greet me after my not having been there for a year, but the reality is probably more pragmatic: security concerns about unescorted guests at the peak of an exclusive annual event. In any case, after grabbing my camera gear, I followed him towards the ranch.

At first I'd thought that Mike would swing me by his office, which is located midway down the long entrance to the ranch, but this time he veered right and I could see another figure walking towards me, with a big grin on his face.

James Flick is a tall, well-muscled man with thinning hair that would look equally at home in either a corporate office or an extreme-sports yuppie rock-climbing commercial. What struck me most about him was his attire: the cuff-bottomed khaki shorts that he was wearing fit the yuppie-sports image perfectly, but what seemed oddly out of place was the soft-pink T-shirt that he had on, complete with a bubble-lettered "Legacy" logo sitting over a rather effeminate star on the front of the shirt. I've owned a few pink button-up business shirts in the past, but never a pink T-shirt, and the teases



Mike Wright: RSE student and instructor. He presents Ramtha's model of physics.

that my wife used to make popped into mind, “it takes a really self-secure man to wear a pink shirt”. Fortunately, I thought better about saying that out loud...

After introducing himself, it became apparent from my blank stare that I had no clue who James Flick actually was. He must have realized this, as he then clarified, “I’m JZ Knight’s life-partner”. It was an interesting choice of words, and I began to realize that he probably has a much more difficult time with the multiple-gender terminology at the Ramtha School than I ever would. That’s OK...living in Seattle means that I’m used to some very broad concepts of how different people define their relationships, and despite the pink-shirt, James himself didn’t strike me as being the least bit effeminate...

V. Secrets of the Ramtha School:

However relaxed Mike Wright had appeared when I first saw him, he relaxed that much more when we met up with James, and from the comfortable exchanges between the two I could tell that they were good friends. Instead of heading for Mike’s office, James instead ushered us through a partially-open sliding door into his shop – a spacious wood shop complete with tools, materials, and a healthy coating of sawdust on the floor.

After a few minutes of conversation about what I’d been up to with American Antigravity, James invited us into a shiny, new Dodge pickup to drive us out to something that he called, “The Tank”.



James Flick: Shown here on scaffolding at ‘The Tank’ in front of the archery range.

Basically, the tank is an outdoor maze composed of several hundred tarpaulin-walled 8-foot metal frames that have been arranged into what RSE uses as a “psychic endurance test”. In essence, students are blindfolded and told to focus first on the entrance and then to center of the maze. They are given the better part of a day to use their focus to find a way to the center. It’s not a typical maze arrangement – it’s specifically designed to prevent the normal logical methods for getting around. It’s intended to develop the use of intuitive & psychic abilities to find the way, and as a consequence of this, RSE prevents any detailed photographs of its construction to prevent disrupting the students’ focus with preconceived notions of how it’s built.

Apparently this is one of the occasions that not being a student of RSE helped out: James offered to give me a tour of the tank, which is something that even Mike – being a student who does the exercise – hadn’t been allowed to see. I graciously accepted, and James told me that in order to get the tour, I’d only be allowed a single photograph of the maze – taken at a distance across the top – to prevent any of the students from getting preconceived notions of how it’s built.

If there were any remaining questions about James' masculinity, they were quickly put to rest as we ascended an aluminum ladder to walk on a series of planks strategically placed over the top of the tank. These were catwalks for the construction crews to use to facilitate planning of the structure, and they were shaky and unstable, sitting atop unsecured metal poles at 8-feet above the top of the structure.

James led me around the planking with the skill of a high-wire acrobat: jumping from one shaky plank to another with what appeared to be a practiced ease. He pointed out different unique aspects & features of the maze, which I won't go into details about here, and got me setup after walking down nearly 200 feet of planking to shoot my single photo of the tank – which, by the way, is the only one to ever be released in public. I managed to keep up with him over most of the cat walking, but remained nervous about the uneven footing: however, he seemed supremely confident walking around on it, and we eventually made it back down to the ground.



The Tank: A topside view of the secret RSE psychic & intuitive maze.

Despite feeling a bit shaken by the somewhat dangerous nature of the experience, I was glad to have the footage as I piled back into the pickup for our quarter-mile ride back to the wood-shop. Maybe their vehicle purchase was the result of some kind of Freudian-slip, but neither James nor Mike understood at first when I asked him about why he'd bought the Dodge...until I pointed to the steering wheel, which was emblazed with the classic symbol for any Dodge – a large, shiny Ram. By the time they'd finished laughing, we were back at the shop...

VI. Tim's Presentation on Antigravity:

Back into the wood-shop, James had an idea: after a quick talk with Mike, they decided that I'd be a good speaker for the student body, who were in between presentations in the central auditorium. It's the type of idea that sounds good on a whim, but I quite literally hadn't planned on speaking and hadn't prepared any notes. My weak protests seemed inadequate against their optimistic insistence, however, and we walked from the shop into the auditorium, where I first met the entire student body of RSE.

The stage that I stepped up onto was only elevated about a foot off the floor, and I was speaking in an auditorium containing over 750 RSE students who'd spent a good part of the day there already. I'd seen Nick speak on the same stage a year earlier, and I'd even given a recent public speech myself at the TeslaTech Conference, where I spoke to an audience of 600 attendees. TeslaTech was a bit different, though; all of those attendees had known what I would speak about in advance, and I'd had lots of prep work to get ready for it. Also, what I hadn't known about Nick Cook's presentation was that there's a sizeable delay from the school's public-address system, meaning that if you're not careful you'll end up listening to yourself speak, instead of actually speaking.

I started talking about the first that came to mind, which literally was "The Community of Mind". The concept was simple: we live in a society that abhors discrimination based on race, sex, age, or

religion, but if you're interested in anything else that the public isn't sure about, you're basically toast. This includes Antigravity & Free-Energy, and it also includes the Ramtha School of Enlightenment. That's the connection: it's the link that turns a diverse community of unique interests into a cohesive entity. Quite simply, we're all alike in our individuality, and we're all a bit annoyed at the blank stares people give us when we tell them about our interests.

Finally, we're all more than annoyed at the inability to put these skills & interests into any kind of conventional format: no matter how much you accomplish with research into psychic powers, Free-Energy, or Antigravity, you live with the knowledge that if anybody finds out you just may lose your job or worse as a result of it. It's discrimination, and it's wrong, and it's one of the common elements that makes us more powerful as an emerging community of "alternative science" than we would be as discrete "interest groups".

I finished my half-hour speech to no less than 3 standing ovations.....not because I'm a great speaker, but because these are topics that leave a black mark on people's souls, and every single person in the auditorium could identify with these issues. I also left them with the hope that as our community evolves and grows that we'll be able to find public acceptance



Tim on Stage: A focus on AG & alt-science, surrounded by lots of students & 'orbs'.

for alt-science on our own terms, and that positive change will emerge from this as a result. When I was done, the final applause went on long enough that they called me back onto stage to quiet everyone down.....they weren't applauding me, they were applauding themselves.

I didn't realize it at the time, but apparently the students weren't the only participants while I was speaking: the photos captured by RSE of the event were not only great to look at, they also showed that I was surrounded by 'Orbs' – complex balls of light, usually invisible to the naked eye, that Ramtha claims are ethereal entities from a number of different places & times that like to eavesdrop on events. Some may be spirits, and others may be something else entirely.

If this sounds a bit odd, then so be it: as it turns out, Orbs are a well-documented phenomenon that's escaped widespread publicity normally from criticism surrounding the photographic techniques used to capture. You may have heard about them on Coast to Coast AM – it's something that gets press on an occasional basis, but since different cameras capture them in slightly different ways, it's never received much attention outside of PSI/paranormal related circles. While this phenomenon isn't limited to the Ramtha School of Enlightenment, the photos certainly do reveal more of these Orbs than you're likely to see in most of orb-pictures circulating around the internet. Maybe they just feel at home here...



Orbs: A close-up view of the orb-like 'entities'.

The last thing that RSE would do is expose itself to unwarranted criticism by supporting a mistaken phenomenon, so they've conducted a thorough analysis of conventional explanations for what might cause the orbs: the bottom line is that after years of study, Ramtha's claim remains.

VII. Blindfolded Archery

Back in the wood shop, I began some casual filming of James' conversations with Mike. At one point a guest joined us, and the conversation turned from UFO's and past RSE-speakers to something more mundane: local politics....

"Our research shows that Wal-Mart works well in failing & economically-depressed communities," James said, "but Yelm is one of the fastest growing communities in the state, and putting a Wal-Mart in our town would devastate the local economy."

This conversation consumed the better part of the hour, with Mike and James making key points about traffic planning and urban devastation from the planned Wal-Mart that they're rallying against. I'd seen how this ruined small-businesses in my wife's hometown of Aberdeen, so I could easily agree with their concerns for Yelm.

After running through the diatribe of rants about local politics, Mike decided that it was time for me to try another of their disciplines: blindfolded archery.

The concept behind RSE's archery practice is to free the mind to focus on the target without relying on the eyes. I'd like to say that I was good at this, but I'd be lying – in fact, I didn't hit the target even once, and shot about 20 arrows. I also shot about 30 photos, many of which were of Mike conducting the same drill after I'd finished up my run. His shots were a little better, but then again, he's had lots of practice.



Office Politics: Worried conversation about Wal-Mart invading the Yelm economy.

The archery range is set to double the normal distance for Olympic archery, but the layout is pretty similar: targets mounted on stacks of hay bails, and after each round the students collect the spent arrows and used targets.

I did see a pretty decent success rate with some of the students, though. They'd put the blindfold on, raise the bow, draw back the string, and many of them manage to find their targets at a substantial distance away: a distance not considered practical even by athletes in professional competitions....and these students were doing it blindfolded.

After a good round of shooting arrows, a lecture from Mike on concentration, and his demonstration, I spent a minute shooting some photos instead of arrows while he collected both his and my arrows down the test range. I felt guilty about not helping, but before I knew it he'd returned with them, making me wonder if finding the arrows wasn't possibly another part of the psychic challenge involved. After a quick trip in the golf-cart to the nearby porta-potties, we were ready for lunch.

As I was a guest, Mike insisted on buying, but I wasn't hungry. However, as Mike was purchasing a burger from a very pleasant French-Canadian vendor in the refreshments area, the vendor insisted that I at least try a sample of his gravy-smothered fries: a secret recipe involving French fries, instant-gravy, and lots of melted mozzarella cheese....I still felt kind sick, but it was good to eat something, and it was a tasty thing to eat. I'd recommend it...

In fact, I'd really have to say that the food at the RSE summer retreats is really one of the school's best kept secrets. It's another point of pride for the students to cook food out behind the main conference hall, which they serve from conventional county-fair style open-faced tents, with parasols to sit and eat under. If you do manage to attend one of their events, bring your appetite, and bring cash – because like the commercial says, they don't take American Express. Unfortunately, they also don't take Visa or MasterCard, and on both of my trips down there I've forgotten this key point. Thus, Mike didn't buy my lunch, but I did hit him up for a Latte.

The cuisine at RSE is good because it's fresh, and each of the vendors wants to outdo the others with their best home-cooked secret recipes. The only reason that I dwell on this is that it's rare to see people put so much heart into cooking for complete strangers. Again, this is a mellow, friendly environment, and because of the global nature of the student body, there's always a pretty diverse menu selection to draw from. If you do get something to eat there, tell the vendor that I recommended them....after two wonderful free meals on consecutive years, it's the least that I can do.

VII. Ramtha Speaks (about Biology):



JZ Knight: A little bit Linda Evans, and a little bit rock 'n roll.

My story resolves itself with the appearance of Ramtha him/her/itself (whatever). This was the key point of the evening, and I was the only person in the 750-person auditorium that had never actually seen JZ Knight in the flesh before. Once again sitting in the folding chairs in the back, I leaned over to Mike Wright sitting next to me, who corrected me stating, "JZ isn't here – this is Ramtha." I wasn't totally convinced...

Earlier in the day, Mike had given me an information packet including the results of some physiological testing that had been done on JZ/Ramtha in 1997. The report, which is part of the official RSE



Blind Archery: Mike Wright shown warming up for a 2x distance shot blindfolded.

promotional-literature pamphlet, described a number of distinct physiological changes that occurred in JZ's body during the channeling process. These included a number of things, including brainwave patterns dropping into delta, galvanic skin-response, and a consistent heart-rate during channeling that hovers around 170 beats per minute, for sessions sometimes up to 8 hours in length. I'd asked him if it was physically challenging for JZ to channel Ramtha, and he replied, "It's the equivalent of running a marathon."

JZ looked tired, and she looked drawn. Her cheeks were red with exertion, and despite the energy in her voice, I could sense a physical exhaustion about her...she'd been channeling all week long. There was a part of me that wondered just how much her body could take: both Mike and James had mentioned her resting a lot, and I was busy wondering what her recovery time would be from tonight's session. Whether or not Ramtha is a real entity, physical bodies have distinct limits. Would she push herself into complete fatigue?

I'm sure that if she reads this I'll get reprimanded, but I'm going to stick with what I saw, and tell you as best I can in the terms that I feel comfortable using. Channeling or not, I saw JZ Knight's body on stage, moving at a frenetic pace to stir up the audience in anticipation of the night's events. Tired or not, whoever was driving her body was doing so at a rapid pace, and effectively managing a 750-person audience with professional grace at the same time. Maybe I can squeeze by with the term "JZR", as it reflects both JZ's body and Ramtha, whether real or imagined.



Center Stage: RSE's massive 12-foot speakers hung over the low-lying stage.

When JZR had first entered the auditorium, the music had come up, and it had been deafeningly loud, like something in a rock-concert. It was a fast, trancelike drumbeat – a bit reminiscent of the "Juno Reactor" music from the Matrix Trilogy, but it wasn't. I'd asked Mike if it actually was that band, but he screamed in my ear that it was a band called "Safri Duo". After a minute of JZR getting positioned on stage, this music finally shut down, leaving only a slight ringing in my ears.



Acknowledgements: Students receiving praise for a variety of psychic achievements.

First, JZR had each section of the audience stand in rows by their achievements – people who'd pierced the bull's-eye during blind-archery stood in line, while people who'd only hit the hay-bale stood in another. People were standing up and getting into lines from all over the audience, and the 3-camera crew began zooming in on bulls-eye targets. One, then another, and then more...too many to count. These students were getting pretty good.

After a few more minutes of listing off accomplishments and having people stand up by

sections, everyone then shared a drink of water and a prayer to the God within. Then they were seated.

I don't remember Ramtha's actual presentation. Mike commented on this, suggesting that part of the problem was that I'd missed the first 5 days of these presentations, and that he wouldn't expect it to make sense today. Thus, I really didn't bother focusing on what JZR was talking about, which seemed to involve both a focus on spiritual energy and how it related to DNA replication in the cell.

Back in school, I took college Biology 101 and passed it with an "A". My wife has a Bachelor's in Psychology, and during her college years I helped her study for some really advanced biology courses required for her degree. I have two Master's level textbooks sitting on the shelf downstairs, "Principles of Neural Science" and "Molecular Biology of the Gene"...and I've read them both.

What struck me about JZR's presentation was not that it was accurate, but that it was accurate up until the point that it completely lost me intellectually. Thus, if this was JZ Knight perpetrating a hoax of some type, she was planning to win it on the details level, and apparently giving out a PhD Biology dissertation at the same time. I'd gone from feeling intellectually superior to the students surrounding me to feeling like a complete moron in about 5 minutes, since all of the students were listening to her intently and taking notes, while JZR talked about 'focused intent' acting on RNA-replication in the endoplasmic reticulum.

After a while I gave up trying to follow her and decided to figure out who she reminded me of. You know, they say that JZ Knight looks like Linda Evans, but she actually reminded me more of Kim Basinger. Of course, I'm not a big Linda Evans fan, so I wouldn't really know the difference.



Biology Lesson: Over 750 students pack the auditorium for Ramtha's Friday lecture.

The channeling session lasted several hours – and I didn't get any of it on tape. I'd brought the wrong charger with me for my DVD handy-cam, and my batteries had run out in the middle of talking with Mike and James. Thus, you could make the case that I missed the best part, but I would suggest otherwise: having to watch a multi-hour lecture on advanced biology & quantum mechanics more than once would probably drive me completely insane in the process.

IX. Conclusion:

Having said goodbye to Mike and thanking the numerous people who came up to me after the event with congratulations about my presentation, I bundled my equipment into the car and began driving back up to Seattle, and home. I was and remain convinced that the Ramtha School of Enlightenment is an interesting organization, and Mike and I discussed my coming back down for an interview within the next week or two.

Only time will tell where RSE goes from here: it's driven by JZ's charismatic personality, but has become more than her will alone. It's now a growing entity of its own, and from what little I've seen, certainly has a more benign direction than a lot of other spirituality-centers or religious organizations that you might call its competitors.

I was and remain skeptical of JZ Knight's claim of channeling Ramtha. I'd hoped that her presentation might convince me, but it didn't – maybe this will change over time, and I've been a firm believer in keeping an open mind about a variety of possibilities, but I'm not holding my breath in the meantime.

In the final analysis, the most interesting secret of the Ramtha School of Enlightenment are the characters that you'll meet there. In a world of sameness, RSE becomes an island of difference, making it worth learning more about, even if you don't agree with everything they espouse. It's rare to find a culture of people with diverse backgrounds capable of coming together and accepting each other without the usual insecurities and conflict.

If there's a big lesson to be learned from Ramtha School of Enlightenment – if there's one big secret worth sharing – it's got to be a lesson about tolerance, which requires no special powers to practice, and no special meditation to achieve. If JZ Knight's spiritual empire leaves behind a legacy, then let it be that they showed the rest of us how to accept people from diverse backgrounds into a larger, continuously-evolving "community of mind".



RSE's Student Body: A diverse group gathers on stage for recognition during Ramtha's presentation.

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