

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Macro-PK, Real and Fraudulent

Stanley Krippner, in his review of *The Project Alpha Papers* and my *Companion to the Project Alpha Papers* in the Fall 2016 issue of this journal (Krippner 2016, Phillips 2015), comments on the break-in to our



laboratory one night by two young men, Mike Edwards and Steve Shaw, posing as gifted psychics. Krippner writes, “I would have sent the Alpha Boys packing following this blatantly unprofessional behavior.” But what unprofessional behavior? In their interactions with us, the two young men were unfailingly polite. During their break-in, they took care to leave the laboratory as they found it, except for some pieces of bent metal. Edwards has described how he scrubbed the wall to remove an incriminating footprint.

And, of course, they latched the window before leaving through the door.

We should remember, too, that professional behavior is not necessarily required of subjects in our experiments, only of the experimenters. If Jule and Molly Eisenbud, for example, had not tolerated behavior from Ted Serios that was far from professional, we would not now possess some of his most remarkable psychic photographs. And I would be surprised if the shamans whom Krippner has so often visited have always behaved with strict propriety.

Krippner appears to me to think, “Surely it was *obvious* that this was a break-in, that the two young men were frauds, and should be dealt with accordingly?” It was not so obvious to us. In a parallel investigation, unrelated to Project Alpha, the MacLab staff—primarily Mike McBeath and myself—were trying to replicate the astonishing claims of PK being made by the late Ed Cox, in connection with the SORRAT group in Rolla, Missouri. The effects occurred in a small basement room (the Isolation Room) in the house of John T. Richards and his wife, Elaine. Cox recorded these events with a remotely triggered movie camera, as they occurred within a locked transparent box (a so-called minilab). A detailed report of the SORRAT group and its phenomena has been published in this journal (Grattan-Guinness 1999); Grattan-Guinness never met Cox, though he comments on his work.

Note that the claimed effects took place when the Isolation Room was unoccupied, often at night. The parallel with the MacLab break-in is obvious.

If we tentatively accepted the Cox claims as legitimate, we had to regard the effects we saw after the break-in as possibly legitimate also. Cox's claims have been hotly disputed, and (as I describe in the *Companion*) a physics colleague told me at once after the break-in that he thought we were dealing with a pair of frauds. We nevertheless chose to treat both claims as possibly valid.

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### References Cited

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