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Jeffrey Epstein Highlights New Study on "Rewiring" Mosquitos

Scientists have worked for years on efforts to "rewire" mosquitos, efforts that have just recently yielded fruit—and won the attention of science activist and evolutionist, Jeffrey Epstein.

New York, New York, January 4, 2013—

For close to two years now, scientists Jay Parrish and Jeff Riffell have devoted themselves to what many might consider an unusual endeavor—seeking to “mislead” mosquitos by effectively “rewiring” their brains. The two biologists, working at the University of Washington, have spent months studying the olfactory system of the mosquito, seeking ways to rewrite the behavioral patterns of the bloodsucking insects. The efforts of these two scientists have recently won the attention of scientists from around the country—and from science philanthropists like Jeffrey Epstein.

~~The scientists have made plain the foundations of their research in evolutionary science. Citing the fact that olfactory instincts are thought to be the oldest of all sensory experiences, the researchers believe their studies to be crucial in better understanding the evolutionary instincts of the mosquito.~~

The initial ultimate-aim of the research is to determine which, of the 300 human body odors detected by mosquitos, is what ultimately causes the insect to prey on humankind. The implications of the study could prove anything but frivolous; in fact, it could be a major step forward in preventing the lethal diseases spread by the flying creatures. Once determining the most attractive odors, by setting up a series of odor traps, the scientists genetically silenced the odor receptors in those mosquitoes that gravitated to the most popular odors. Shutting down the correct odor receptors resulted in major behavioral changes in the mosquitoes. Some insects became distinctly lethargic and disoriented after their olfactory receptors were tampered with.

However, tThe scientists have made plain that the foundations of their research has also led to further understanding in evolutionary science: that evolution is not just through survival of a dominant trait but from actual learning or rewiring within an organism.. Citing the fact that olfactory instincts are thought to be the oldest of all sensory experiences, the researchers believe their studies to be crucial in better understanding the evolutionary instincts of the mosquito:revealing how the mosquitos use smells to learn and form memories. So far, their research

has revealed that despite tampering with the mosquitos' natural ability to find prey, they simply find another way. This means they are actively learning.

Jeffrey Epstein, a scientific philanthropist and vocal advocate of evolutionary research, ~~has~~ responded to the University of Washington study with a new statement to the press. "Evolution occurs rapidly at every level of biology, due to inadvertent survivors," Jeffrey Epstein notes. "The concept of evolution being driven by active learning within the organism, however, is an exciting new field of evolutionary research."

Jeffrey Epstein is no stranger to the support of evolutionary research. His Jeffrey Epstein VI Foundation established the Program for Evolutionary Dynamics at Harvard University in 2003 under the direction of biologist and mathematician, Martin Novak.

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~~Once the mosquito-enticing human odor is identified, the University of Washington researchers intend to set up scented traps, at locations across the planet. Then, they will capture mosquitos and analyze them for traces of various diseases, including the potentially deadly West Nile. Additionally, the research team believes it will be possible to develop mosquito traps for private use, which will allow individuals to be safe from mosquito attack, without having to wear any kind of insect repellent.~~

~~Furthermore, the scientists involved in the study are seeking to subdue certain olfactory sensors in mosquitos, which could potentially result in major behavioral changes for the insects.~~

ABOUT:

Jeffrey Epstein is a money manager and philanthropist whose passion is for investing in scientific inquiry and education, throughout the world. Through the work of his Jeffrey Epstein VI Foundation, he has made significant contributions to universities, hospitals, museums, laboratories, individual scientists and numerous charitable organizations. He is also the organizer of the Jeffrey Epstein Forum, an online avenue for the exchange and development of ideas related to science, technology, economics, and culture. In addition to founding the Jeffrey Epstein VI Foundation and the Program for Evolutionary Dynamics at Harvard University, Jeffrey Epstein is a former member of Rockefeller University, the New York Academy of Science, the Trilateral Commission, and the Council on Foreign Relations, and currently sits on the board of the Mind, Brain and Behavior Committee at Harvard University.

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