

From: "Al seckel"

To: "Kosslyn, Stephen" <[REDACTED]>

Cc: "Jeffrey Epstein" <jeevacation@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: Clearing some matters

Date: Sat, 27 Nov 2010 16:08:34 +0000

Thank you Stephen for writing back. I very much appreciate it, and have been a great admirer of your work over the years. I glad you did remember that we did collaborate briefly, and I do remember my interactions with Chris via both email and phone, as well as another post-doc I was working with in Shin's lab. We were going through tests, and Chris was very helpful in his suggestions (we also talked by phone), and our interaction was not so limited. Unfortunately, the Mclver nonsense brought the whole thing to a dead stop. Only at the time of our initial interaction, did I post something on about the study on on my Caltech web site (which is what brought it to the attention of Mclver, who then blasted your lab with letters calling me a felon, etc.), but that has been the only mention to my knowledge, and am happy to abide by your request not to refer to it any further. I am not interested in spreading anything that would be either untrue, misleading, or cause you consternation, or certainly to our mutual friend Jeff.

However, without mentioning anything to the outside world, I was interested in your opinions on this particular patient having just finished your book on spatial imagery. Through our testing, we were able to get a glimpse into what tasks were needed via spatial memory, and the combination of the total lack of an inner voice, made her a patient, whose only processing was beneath the level of conscious awareness. So, of course, this is very interesting, and why we brought it to your attention. We have not come across any other patient so far who has suffered both these conditions, and so severely, yet, was able to function somewhat. What you write is correct, she had a severe infant prenatal frontal lesions, and we saw it clearly on her scans.

What was interesting was her inability to have visual imagery during dreaming. Found this quite unusual. She had developed over the years various coping mechanisms to help her survive, but things like using a can opener, and understand functional objects, were very difficult for her. Learning dance moves were difficult, as she also couldn't store the moves, and it took concerted effort to get the moves down through muscular repetition. Would have like to take this further. As I said, she never knew that movies or television shows had plots. She would sit every day and watch "Law and Order" and I asked her what it was about, and she, "I am not sure, I think they are trying to solve a crime." That was all she could get out of it.... Similar reactions to reading passages in books, no logical comprehension, even those in her field. As she was a professor, she would grade based on "grammar and syntax," but not on content. She would parrot the words in the book, repeat them to the class, and have the class go back and forth. Interestingly, no one caught on. I was the first to really catch on to what was going on. As I said in an earlier email, both Rama and Sachs had not heard of such a patient before. I brought her to Rama who did some tests too.

On another note, while visiting the prehistoric caves in France, and observing the drawings, it occurred to me that this was proof that early man also had "a mind's eye," as they were able to "carry" these images mentally in their head to reproduce them.

Our patient, when asked to draw a cat, when the picture was removed, was unable to make anything coherent.

Thought it was interesting stuff. Good luck on your retirement, and I appreciate the response back.

Yours sincerely,

Al

From: "Kosslyn, Stephen" <[REDACTED]>
To: Al seckel <aseckel@yahoo.com>
Cc: Jeffrey Epstein <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sat, November 27, 2010 7:17:11 AM
Subject: Re: Clearing some matters

Greetings..

Thanks for the note. I vaguely recalled that you had had some interactions with Chris Chabris, who was a post-doc in my lab at the time. So I checked with Chris, and he said that you had contacted us about studying your girlfriend, who had an unusual neuro condition -- infant or perinatal frontal lesion. He said that you stopped communicating with him after a few weeks of discussing what we could do, and that was the end of it. Unless Chris has failed to remember an actual collaboration (and please do let me know if in fact he's wrong), I would appreciate your not telling people that you worked with me or with anybody in my lab.

I appreciate your offer to begin a dialog, but I've resigned at Harvard and am in the process of closing down my lab. Thus, I'm afraid that I'm not the one you should be talking to.

With best wishes,

s.

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Stephen M. Kosslyn
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John Lindsley Professor of Psychology
in Memory of William James
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On 26 Nov 2010, at 7:03 PM, Al seckel wrote:

Dear Professor Kosslyn,

It is my understanding and knowledge that you may have unwittingly been the recipient of some egregious emails about my character and academic status from a person by the name of Tom Mclver a few years back, which was settled in a full discovery libel and slander lawsuit that I had against this individual, who blanketed the academic community with various falsehoods about my academic status, ethical stature, and so on... I won this lawsuit, and the judge presiding stated that in his many years on the bench, "it was the worst and most pernicious case of libel and slander" that he had ever seen.

This come up in conversation, because, I am active in the field of cognitive neuroscience, specifically perception, and been a close colleague of Christof Koch's at Caltech for many years, as well as many of your own professorial colleagues at Harvard (former and present, Patrick Cavanagh, Ken Nakiyama, Margaret Livingston, Nancy Kanvisher, etc., as well as former post docs, including some

of yours, like Marc Gluck). Just today, I heard from our mutual friend Jeffrey Epstein that some of these falsehoods are still unfortunately floating.

We know from the discovery process in my trial against Mclver that you were the receipt of some of these emails, and we received copies of the correspondence. This occurred after I wrote you back around 2006 (I was officially and formally working in Christof's lab as well as Shin Shimojo's at that time). I enclose an attachment of my Caltech ID at the time. My interaction with you began because of my discovery of a very special and unique patient, who, after suffering a severe stroke at birth, had no visual mind's eye at all. She was unable to form either simple mental representations, such as a mental construction of either a point, a straight line, much less complex scenes, real or imagined. She was unable to make any sense of perspective drawings like the Necker cube or any perspective drawings, and impossible figures, didn't have any meaning for her whatsoever. Obviously, she had no ability to reconstruct 3D mental representations from 2D perspective drawings. She didn't know what a dream was. Didn't daydream, and was unable to perform simple memory tasks, etc. She could clearly recognize objects such as a giraffe, elephant, car, etc., but when asked to describe them, without the picture in front of her, you would get very strange responses, i.e. number of sides of a cube - 2; color of a giraffe - purple, and so on. Perspective visual illusions, such as the Shepard's table didn't work, she couldn't even discern that it was a table, but she led a life that was quite ordinary, and was even a college professor of philosophy, editing two philosophical journals.

She was quite articulate, although she also lacked any inner voice, so she had no internal dialogue either. What made this case interesting, was it was the first case that we seemed to come across where the person lacked any functioning at the level of awareness. Knowing your interest in spatial imagery, and being a fan of your work in this area, at the suggestion of Christof, we wrote to you. I have correspondence back and forth from you about this patient, and at the time, you seem quite interested, and felt it was a patient that you would like to work with us on. I was also working with another Caltech post-doc too. You handed me off to a post-doc in your lab, and we started corresponding, and thinking of some various tests. Also, noting the fact that both Rama and Oliver had never heard of such a patient before. This patient was interesting, because although she had certain functional abilities, she was clearly deficient in others. She did not know that movies or television shows had plots. She did not know that people could hear tunes in their head, or hear voices in her head, and so on. So, we wanted to set up some very interesting tests with your lab testing her abilities. I am writing this, because it might jar your memory of what was going on, and why we started to have serious emails back and forth. My email at that time was: [REDACTED]

Unfortunately, just as this was being started, you started receiving a host of correspondence from a crazy stalker by the name of Tom Mclver, who was an angry creationist UFO advocate, who did not like my fight against pseudoscience during the 80s, and became singularly obsessed with trying to destroy my life. You were unwittingly the receipt of some of these letters, as well as scores of my colleagues, and like many others, you withdrew, and our correspondence stopped. In the discovery process I saw the correspondence between you and Mclver.

Luckily, this was resolved in a lawsuit for libel and slander, which as I previously mentioned, I won.

Although this is one of life's unfortunate happenings, it is a shame, because I would have very much liked to have discussed and continued our exploration of that patient. As I found some remarkable things, constraints, etc., and it would be worthwhile to explore this further.

Jeffrey states that you are unfamiliar with my work. I have written many books on visual illusions, and my work is used throughout the field, and referenced quite extensively. It was my recollection we met at Harvard a number of years back when Christof and I came to visit and I gave some talks for Patrick and Ken lab's back in the 90s, but perhaps not everyone leaves an impression.

In any case, I would like to start this dialogue over again. If you need any references in the field on me or my work, just contact Christof Koch, Vilaymar Ramachandran (My daughter Elizabeth works with Rama in his lab, and has been authoring quite a number of papers with him), Patrick Cavanagh, Margaret Livingston, Ted Adelson, George Sperling, Irving Biederman, Donald Hoffman, Stuart Anstis, Nicholas Wade, etc., etc. You get the drift...

I am no longer at Caltech.

With kind regards,
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