

1. Kelvin Cruickshank – “Sold Fodder” – May 20th 2009

I went to a Kelvin Cruickshank show a while ago when he visited my town during his “Soul Food” tour. He was worse than I could have expected. The fun thing was that by an incredible chance, he actually picked on both my wife and I for ‘readings’. The following is an account of the day we were nearly lynched in Wanaka!

On the 12th May, 2009, Kelvin Cruickshank of ‘Sensing Murder’ fame came to Wanaka to wow the locals with a one night show in the local town hall. It sounded like an interesting night out for Coleen and I, and as it is often suggested that skeptics are close-minded and should go along to psychic demonstrations to see for themselves, we decided to go and be educated, one way or another.

When we entered the hall, we purposely headed for the middle to be less conspicuous. We were there to sit, listen and observe. We were surrounded by some two to three hundred people.

Kelvin Cruickshank came onto the stage to a round of applause. He started to relax himself and the audience with a few lame jokes. He came across as a nice cuddly young man that mothers would be happy to have as a son-in-law. Later, however, we were to see the other, darker side of Mr Cruickshank!

After about fifteen minutes of warming us up, he suddenly got into the real purpose of his visit. He gave a microphone to a woman in the front row; we could see her larger than life on a big screen on the stage. He then turned to the middle of the crowd, looked straight at my wife and asked for another microphone to be handed to ‘the woman in a red top’ (Coleen). She was mortified!

But then he seemed to ignore Coleen and carried on with the first woman in the front row. While he was doing this, he drew an upright line on a whiteboard and at the top of the line placed eight to ten stars. He then turned to the audience and stated that each of these stars represented a spirit, most of which related to Coleen. Going through our minds was that surely he must know who we were (known skeptics within small-town Wanaka) and must be setting us up for a big fall.

Again ignoring Coleen, he moved on to another woman in the front row, with less success than the mediocre reading of the first woman. He then talked to yet another woman in the front row and stated that someone in her life had suffered from a brain hemorrhage. The woman said no. Kelvin then turned to the woman next to her, and asked her the same question, saying that it must be coming from her and it was in her family; the response was again negative. Finally, in utter desperation, he asked *all fifteen people in the front row* if that illness was in their family. Absolute silence! What an embarrassing failure. How psychic did that sound? He gave up on the hemorrhage.

Before we went into the hall, my wife and I had discussed how we would react to any of his questions in the very unlikely event we were selected. Obviously, we were to respond honestly and to give him nothing else other than a 'yes' or 'no' in either words or body language.

At last, he turned to my wife. Coleen was now a head-and-shoulders picture on the big screen for all the audience to see. First, he asked Coleen if a woman's first name (we can't remember it now) meant anything to her. Coleen said 'No', He then added the surname of 'Stokes'. Again it meant absolutely nothing to her. While he was saying this, he dramatically wrote the names on the whiteboard. 'Your father has passed over' he said. This was news to Coleen as she had only talked to him a few days previously (would it be possible for us to sue him for creating unnecessary stress?). Where were all those stars coming from?

'You are the reader in the family' (what is that to do with connecting with spirits?) he stated. 'No' said Coleen, 'my husband is'. He ended up asking a total of four questions and not obtaining a single hit. 'Could you pass the microphone to the woman beside you?' Coleen breathed a sigh of relief. Curiously, during the whole evening, that was the only time he used the whiteboard. Why? What did he think he knew?

Kelvin asked the lady next to Coleen just one question- the same name that she had asked Coleen. The woman failed to recognise it as someone she knew. He then asked for the Mic to be passed over to ME! *'There must be a god up there'* I thought! Did Kelvin really know what a skeptic he was talking to? If he did, then was he savoring that moment also? There was an audible murmur from the crowd as some of them recognised me. Was a battle brewing?

His first question/statement was that my parents were dead. Looking at my white hair, he could obviously tell that they would be in their mid-nineties now, so that was a reasonably safe guess, rather than a psychic connection. He fired off two or three statements about my mother including that she had a hard side to her. This suggestion is furthest from the truth about my mum and has since been laughed at by others who knew her well. He then said that she had died before I could get back to see her. I stated that this was correct. (I suppose by now he would have heard my English accent and taken a guess that she died in England). He then stated that she had unfinished business with me. I said that I doubted that this was true. (I had only seen her a few months before; she knew she was dying then, so, no doubt expressed all that was needed). He wasn't getting very far with me so must have decided to give me away. However, before he could move on, I stated in a loud voice to him that apart from one of the guesses, he hadn't got much right! There was an audible gasp from around the hall.

'I think it is time for a break' he said, and unhappily stormed off the stage. Immediately, the woman beside Coleen leant in front of her and starting abusing me! 'Why did you come here if you don't believe, you're spoiling it for everyone else!' she spat. Then, in front of me another woman turned around and abused me too. I was astonished at the vehemence in their voices.

We lived through the short break with no more abuse. Kelvin came back onto the stage with applause from the audience. No smiles; he focused on me, 'I know who you are' he pouted. 'You are the person that has The Puzzle Place (actually 'Puzzling World'), well that is certainly one place I won't be going to'. A round of applause exploded from the

audience at this childish outburst. Somebody must have told him about me in the break. 'You have a challenge for \$100,000 that's like finding a needle in a haystack – why don't you just give it to charity? We have given \$26,000 to charity, I challenge you to do the same' he hissed. An even louder round of applause came from the audience, they were really getting into the mood and he was working on it. Then he mumbled something else then said 'you expect people to pay twenty thousand dollars to try this challenge'. This shows how he was muddling up the information he had; this \$20,000 challenge is by Tony Andrews, another *Sensing Murder* challenger, nothing to do with me. Actually, it is prize money, whether they succeed OR LOSE! I couldn't let this all go by, so with a strong voice I broadcast to the hall that some of the things he was saying were not completely true. Before I could say any more, I was shouted down by what seemed a roar from his adoring fans, it felt that a large *minority* of the audience were involved. I felt intimidated by such public aggression and half-expected to be thrown out! Kelvin continued to scowl but said no more-where had that cuddly young man gone?

Kelvin then 'interviewed' a couple more people but did not achieve many reasonable 'hits'. He then tried to find a person that owned a 'Suzuki Vitara'. A woman behind us owned up to having one. He stated it was parked in a lean-to against the house. With an enigmatic 'Mona Lisa' kind of smile she said 'no'. He asked her three more questions and got the same negative response and same smile. Maybe she was a fellow skeptic.

Finally, he turned to an elderly woman at the back of the hall, who happened to be wearing a red top. He played her like the master that he is supposed to be and she gave him all the help he could ever desire. For Kelvin's fans this was absolute proof that he had special powers. For him it was a great ending to finish off these one-to-one sessions. It was then that Coleen pointed out to me that whilst most of the audience were wearing wintry dull colours, there was only three women wearing a red top; one was Coleen and one was the last lady to be interviewed, or, whatever you call what he was doing. Could it be that one of Kelvin's 'spies' had mingled with the crowd before they entered the hall and picked out the woman in a distinctively red top with whom he set up a casual conversation and therefore found out some useful information? Could it be that Kelvin was given that information and was told to pick on a woman in red? Could it be that by an incredible piece of bad luck (for him) he picked the wrong woman in red, namely my skeptical wife - then worse luck to transfer his attentions to me, one of very few people in New Zealand that has a challenge to him and *Sensing Murder*?

Kelvin then asked for a few questions from the audience. The show drew to an end and was rounded off by an astonishing round of applause from the audience - were Coleen and I the only skeptical people in the audience? I doubt it; I just think they were safely keeping their mouths shut.

We saw it as just a farcical manipulative show, couldn't others see it too, or are we just typical 'closed-minded skeptics'? Why didn't the believers wonder why Kelvin not only got so much wrong, but also, wondered what happened to all the conveniently forgotten spirits that were marked on the white-board that wished to communicate with Coleen?

Soul Food? - more like Sold Fodder!