

InPresence 0069: Captain Rainbow to the Rescue with Jeffrey Mishlove

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(00:19) Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Today, I'd like to pay tribute to my good friend, William Jennings, an attorney from San Jose, California, who passed away about 2001-2002. He was a dear friend, and more than that to me, he was an angel. He rescued me at a time when I badly needed rescuing in one of the darkest phases of my life. Let me tell you this story because I find it very heartwarming.

(00:55) You see, one day I got a phone call out of the blue from a fellow who identified himself as Captain Rainbow. He said, "I'm Captain Rainbow and I've invented Captain Rainbow's laser visors. They use diffraction grating and when you wear these visors everything turns into a rainbow color and it activates all of your chakras and opens you up to all kinds of magic and I'm going to sell one to everybody in China." And I thought, well that's interesting, nice to meet you. He called me up because I was already at that time a personality known in the San Francisco Bay Area because I was doing radio programs and my book, *The Roots of Consciousness*, had already come out, the first edition. I came back home and told my wife Janelle about it. I said, "You know, I met this funny man. He's invented something he's going to sell to everyone in China. He calls himself Captain Rainbow." And you know what she said, bless her heart? My wife said, "Well, let's invite him for lunch." And so we did and Captain Rainbow became a good friend of mine.

(02:12) He was always a very hearty guy. He loved life to the fullest. He was a defense - well, I don't mean to say a defense attorney, no, just the opposite - he was a lawyer who prosecuted accidents. He specialized, as a matter of fact, in airplane crashes. I got to know him quite well. He had in his office a statue of Sancho Panza from the Don Quixote novel, Sancho Panza and Don Quixote tilting at windmills. He said, "That's what I do, I tilt at windmills. I'm willing to take on the impossible." Well, that was nice and I love the guy. He was a good friend.

(02:59) But one day, I was libeled. I think I've talked about it earlier. As I got to complete my doctoral degree in parapsychology, the enemies of parapsychology - they call themselves skeptics, but they're not skeptics, they're hostile enemies - and they were very threatened by the idea that a major university, Berkeley, was going to award a doctoral diploma in parapsychology. They tried very hard to put pressure on the university not to do it. After I was granted the degree, they put pressure on the university to revoke the degree. When that failed they arranged for an article to be published in

Psychology Today libeling me, claiming that I was basically incompetent and I probably didn't get the degree, but if I did get it, I surely didn't deserve it.

(03:57) I was mortified. I can tell you that the parapsychology community, not that I blame them, but they wanted to sit on the fence, wait and see, even though I had achieved a historical thing - the only doctoral diploma in parapsychology ever awarded by an accredited university. When I applied for membership that year in the Parapsychological Association, the membership was denied. My friends in parapsychology looked at me askance. I was mortified. My life went into a period, I guess I have to say, a period of darkness for five or six years. And well, *Psychology Today* magazine agreed to publish my rebuttal many months later in a tiny little column buried in the magazine.

(04:46) But one day, I was describing what had happened to my friend Bill Jennings and he said, "You know, you've got a libel suit here. You could sue them." He agreed to take the case on a contingency basis, which is, in a way it's kind of crazy, because libel suits are very, very difficult to pursue. In fact, let me just say this now, because I heard recently from a viewer who was talking about Hillary Clinton who was hated by those of you on the right. You know what I mean too - because she's a child molester, she's a murderer. Somebody posted a note, I deleted it, but called her, "killary clitoris." Now there's a lot... A Freudian would make a lot of that.

(05:33) But let me just say, this particular person said, "Well, so many people say she's a child molester and if she's not, how come she doesn't sue them for libel?" Well, I've been through a libel suit and I can tell you, if you're a public figure and you try to sue for libel, you have to prove malice of intent and that's a state of mind. Anybody who is being accused of malice in a libel suit can get away from it by simply saying, "Well, I thought it was true. No malicious intent, I'm just reporting what I believe to be the truth." So, that's why people like Hillary or any public figure never sue for libel. It's very, very rare to ever win a libel suit. There are a handful of cases. In my case, I prevailed in an out-of-court settlement after 6 years of agonizing over this libel suit. It's so difficult and the truth is, the very few cases that do win get overturned on appeal, typically.

(06:40) Anyhow, be that as it may, Bill Jennings took my case on and he was like a guardian angel. He had me working in his office with him on the case. In fact, I nearly qualified to become an attorney because if you were apprenticed to an attorney in the state of California in their office and put in the requisite number of hours, you're entitled to sit for the bar exam. I seriously considered doing that. And as I say, after 6 difficult years, we did prevail. At the time it was a small settlement, but Bill Jennings, very graciously, gave the whole thing to me, not only the settlement but his fee. He didn't charge it because I had done so much of the work on the lawsuit myself and was entitled to some payment for the time I put in. So he got nothing. Frankly, that small settlement back in 1986 enabled me to accumulate actually quite a bit of wealth because I was able to use it as the down payment on a house in California. So, I'm eternally grateful to this man and love him dearly and miss him a great deal.

(08:06) What is the lesson for you in this story? Well, if you are among those sad people out there who think that Hillary Clinton is an ultra criminal and a child molester, and the proof of it is that she doesn't sue for libel, all the right-wing bloggers who are repeating this garbage - maybe the lesson for you is to question yourself. Be a true skeptic, question your own certainties. But, there's a deeper lesson. The deeper lesson is this, "When has a guardian angel ever appeared in your life, somebody who was there for the purpose of rescuing you at the moment you most needed rescuing?" Now, because of Bill Jennings, I salvaged my reputation and was admitted to the Parapsychological Association. And, I've had a very happy career since then.

(09:04) But think about it, this man called me up on the phone, introduced himself as Captain Rainbow, inventor of Captain Rainbow's laser visor, planning to sell one to everyone in China, because he planned to meet with Deng Xiaoping, who was visiting the San Francisco Bay Area, as I recall. My wife, bless her heart, when I told her about this strange phone call, said, "Let's invite him for lunch." Would you have done that? Would you have welcomed a stranger like that, a wild and crazy and zany person like that over for lunch? It's one of the best decisions we ever made. Maybe in your lifetime you passed on such a decision or you had the opportunity and accepted the challenge that such a decision offered. Or, maybe in the future you will be presented with a person like Captain Rainbow in your life. When that happens, how will you respond? I'll leave you with that thought. And thank you for being with me. (10:16)

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