

Swallowing the Camel

Examining hoaxes, scams, controversies, rumours, schemes, bizarre ideas, bogus products, disinformation, misinformation, impractical jokes, literary fraud, and anything else that smells bad.

Sunday, October 03, 2010

Conspiracy Monday: Review of *Paul McCartney Really is Dead*

Mockumentary, or documentary based on a hoax?

The other day I watched a peculiar documentary titled *Paul McCartney Really Is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison*, directed by [Joel Gilbert](#).

Gilbert claims that on July 31, 2005, the office of [Highway 61 Entertainment](#) received a package with no return address, postmarked in London. It contained a mini cassette player and two mini cassettes. The tape cases were hand-labeled "The Last Testament of George Harrison". Supposedly, George Harrison recorded his own "final confession" in December 1999, as he recovered in hospital from an attack by deranged intruder Michael Abram. Silver says his studio spent five years trying to verify the tapes' authenticity, but three different "forensic tests" were inconclusive. Despite this setback, he assures us the documentary contains "startling new evidence" that could forever alter the history of rock and roll.

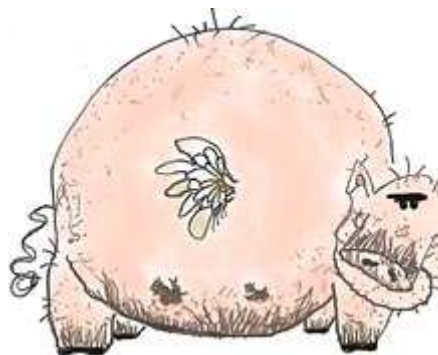
The film's [website](#) offers no further information. We're left to wonder why anyone possessing these recordings would ship them to an obscure production company, rather than a major daily or a TV network.

If you're like me, you would expect Silver to describe the methods used to analyze the tapes, the efforts to trace the source of the tapes, and whatnot. But you'll see nothing like that in this film. Instead, you get an hour and a half of an unconvincing George Harrison soundalike giving an alternative history of the Beatles that could easily be stitched together from decades-old conspiracy theories and anti-rock religious literature from the '70s and '80s. If you're at all familiar with the Paul is Dead/"Faul" rumours, you've seen everything this documentary has to offer. The only "new" thing is the somewhat entertaining way in which the material has been crafted into a goofy, cloak-and-dagger narrative.

The tape begins with "George Harrison" describing the knife attack that landed him in hospital. "I don't know why I was attacked," he says, "But I have my suspicions." He tells us that on December 1, 1980, Lennon phoned him to announce he was going public with the truth about Paul McCartney. A week later he was dead.

Two weeks before he was attacked, George said the same thing to "the man we know as Paul McCartney".

Our Mascot, Hans the Not-so-flying Pig



Still not airborne.

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