

Why a Hoax Does not Explain Sightings

Again the subject of a hoax or hoaxes has come up in regard to accounts of modern pterosaurs. There seems to be no end of refutations for the “hoax hypothesis,” as it has been called. Statistics from years of eyewitness sighting reports disprove any generalized hoax explanation, for the degree of certainty in descriptions of featherlessness (if “featherlessness” is a word) fly in the face of those skeptics who use the word “hoax.”

But that is not exactly the direction I wish to take at present. I say we need to look at some of the key eyewitnesses of modern pterosaurs, look into why they might or might not play a hoax. First, we look at the psychologist Brian Hennessy.

In 1971, perhaps before Hennessy had a degree in psychology, I don't know, he was on Bougainville Island, which is now part of the nation of Papua New Guinea. In his own words:

Our truck had stopped on our downward journey from the top of the range to the coast way below. The sound was amplified by the road-cutting into the mountain. That is, there was bare red/orange clay, rather than the surrounding jungle. I can't remember why our vehicle had stopped. Maybe we had to wait for another vehicle to pass us. I don't know. But I can still hear that slow flapping sound in the stillness of an early tropical morn, on the road from Panguna down to loloho on Bougainville Island in 1971.

When I looked up, trying to see what was making this sound, i saw a very unusual creature. Firstly, it was very big (wingspan at least 2 metres, probably more...possibly much , much more). I can't remember the exact distance estimate that

this creature was from me...let's say about 50 metres above.

It was black or dark brown. I had never seen anything like it before. It certainly looked prehistoric, in that it did not look like any other bird that I have seen before or since. Why prehistoric? Well, maybe my memory has been influenced by the intervening years, but I recall seeing this creature with a longish narrow tail...almost like a counterweight that a kangaroo has, although not as large.

The body seemed to be quite narrow. However, the head was disproportionately large compared to the body (no feathers in sight). The wingspan was large. The head had no 'normal' beak. Rather there seemed to be (and this is difficult to describe) a kind of beak that was indistinguishable from the head, and the head seemed to continue this 'point' at the back of the head.

I'll explain why I have brought up this particular sighting. When Hennessy reported his experience, in 2006, he was a professional psychologist. I believe that he still is. But why would he agree to have his real name be used in cryptozoology literature, if he was playing a hoax? It would likely come back to haunt him in his profession.

A skeptic might say that reporting a live pterosaur could come back to haunt you. But Hennessy did not say that he had observed a live pterosaur. He simply described it. He did not say that there could not have been any feather on that creature. He simply told us that he saw no sign of any feather. He was not trying to convince everybody that he had observed a modern pterosaur, but he was simply reported his observation. He was obviously not playing a hoax.

Second, we look at Paul Nation, a cryptozoologist-explorer, who explored in Papua New Guinea at least four times. If he had any desire to play a hoax, why has he said nothing about personally observing anything like any pterosaur? He tries to

let people know about the possibility of the existence of modern pterosaurs, so why has he not lied and said that he did see a pterosaur? Surely it is because he is honest and simply reports what eyewitnesses have told him and what he personally observed in distant flying lights. That brings us to the final point: Honest people do not play pterosaur hoaxes.

No Hoax With Pterosaur Sightings

*Evelyn Cheesman was a biologist who searched for insects and small animals in remote areas, including New Guinea, in the 1920's and 1930's. In fact, some of her discoveries put her name to some of those creatures, including *Lipinia cheesmanae*—a skink (lizard), and *Litoria cheesmani*—a treefrog.*

Cheesman's successes in biology are worthy of praise, but what about her observations of strange flying lights? They resemble the strange flying lights observed by Paul Nation, miles south of where Cheesman saw them. She was no cryptozoologist and was surely not playing a hoax when she wrote about her observations in her book *The Two Roads of Papua*.

Other eyewitnesses could be mentioned, but the point is that a generalized hoax hypothesis cannot touch all of the sighting reports, therefore any critic who wishes to be thorough must find some other explanation or admit the possibility of modern pterosaurs.