

Hidden Messages and the Bible Code

*"Hidden messages" can be found anywhere, provided the seeker
is willing and able to harvest the immense field of possibilities.
But do they mean anything?*

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Bible Code: The Book

A new book entitled *The Bible Code* (Drosnin 1997) came out last June and has occupied the bestseller lists since then. It is written by journalist Michael Drosnin, who claims that the Hebrew Bible contains a very complex code that reveals events that took place thousands of years after the Bible was written. Drosnin contends that some foretold events later happened exactly as predicted.

The book has been reviewed widely and has stimulated pieces in *Newsweek* and *Time*. Drosnin has also been making the rounds of the talk-show circuit, including the *Oprah Winfrey Show* in June. *Time* said that Warner has reportedly bought the movie rights (Van Biema 1997).

Drosnin's technique is heavily based on that of Eliyahu Rips of Hebrew University in Israel, who published an article entitled "Equidistant Letter Sequences in the Book of

Genesis" in the journal *Statistical Science* (Witztum, Rips, and Rosenberg 1994). Like Rips, Drosnin arranges the 304,805 Hebrew letters of the Bible into a large array. Spaces and punctuation marks are omitted, and words are run together one after another. A computer looks for matches to selected names or words by stepping to every n th letter in the array. One can go forward or backward; and for each value of "step distance," n , there are n different starting letters. Drosnin's match for "Yitzhak Rabin" had a step value n equal to 4,772.

Both Rips and Drosnin work with the original Hebrew characters, which are said to have been given by God to Moses one character at a time, with no spaces or punctuation, just as they appear in "the code." The code is considered to exist only in the Hebrew Bible and not in translations or any other books. The code concept, however, can be easily demonstrated with English characters. Consider the following verse from the *King James Version (KJV) of the Book of Genesis*:

31:28 And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing.

If you start at the R in "daughters," and skip over three letters to the O in "thou," and three more to the S in "hast," and so on, the hidden message "Roswell" is revealed! This message has a step value of 4, as shown in Figure 1.

G H T E R S T H O U H A S T N O W D O N E F O O L I S H L Y I N S

Figure 1. "Roswell" hidden in KJV Genesis 31:28.

When Drosnin finds a name or word match for a given step value n , he then rearranges the letters into a huge matrix (which he calls a "crossword puzzle"). The matrix is n letters wide, and inside this puzzle, the letters for the "hidden message" line up together vertically. (Sometimes, a slightly different procedure is used to make the hidden word run diagonally, every other row, and so forth.) The analyst or the computer can then look for more keyword-related "hits" around the given hidden word. Secondary matches can be picked off vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. Drosnin found the word "Dallas" (connected with keywords "President Kennedy") in one of his puzzles by starting at a D, and then picking the next letters by moving one space over to the right and three spaces down several times.

An example of such a matrix for the "Roswell" mention in KJV Genesis appears in Figure 2. The letters of "Roswell" now appear vertically at the center of the puzzle. The actual matrix of unique letters is only four characters wide here (dashed box), but I took the liberty of showing extra letters for context. A companion hidden message—"UFO"—is indicated within circle symbols. This "UFO" is itself a hidden message with a step value of 12. Drosnin accepts any such messages, even words running *horizontally* (i.e., the actual words of the Bible strung together). If either "Roswell" or "UFO" had been found encoded in the Hebrew Bible, Drosnin would not have hesitated to use words from the direct text as a "match" (for example, the words "thou hast now done foolishly.")

The unusual pairing of "Roswell" and "UFO" is shown in

S	A	N	D	M	Y	D	A	U	G	H	T	E	R	S	T	H	O	U	H	A	S	T	N	O	W	D	O	
M	Y	D	A	U	G	H	T	E	R	S	T	H	O	U	H	A	S	T	N	O	W	D	O	N	E	F	O	
U	G	H	T	E	R	S	T	H	O	U	H	A	S	T	N	O	W	D	O	N	E	F	O	O	L	I	S	
E	R	S	T	H	O	U	H	A	S	T	N	O	W	D	O	N	E	F	O	O	L	I	S	H	L	Y	I	
H	O	U	H	A	S	T	N	O	W	D	O	N	E	F	O	O	L	I	S	H	L	Y	I	N	S	O	D	
A	S	T	N	O	W	D	O	N	E	F	O	O	L	I	S	H	L	Y	I	N	S	O	D	O	I	N	G	
O	W	D	O	N	E	F	O	O	L	I	S	H	L	Y	I	N	S	O	D	O	I	N	G	I	T	I	S	
N	E	F	O	O	L	I	S	H	L	Y	I	N	S	O	D	O	I	N	G	I	T	I	S	I	N	T	H	
O	L	I	S	H	L	Y	I	N	S	O	D	O	I	N	G	I	T	I	S	I	N	T	H					
H	L	Y	I	N	S	O	D	O	I	N	G	I	T	I	S	I	N	T	H									

Figure 2. Matrix or "crossword puzzle" for "Roswell/UFO" hidden in KJV Genesis.

T E R S T H O U H A S T N O W D O N E F O O L I S H L Y I N S O D O

Figure 3. "Roswell" and "UFO" hidden in KJV Genesis 31:28.

linear form in Figure 3. This match is as stunning as any described in Drosnin's book—yet none claim that the Bible code would have translated gracefully over to the KJV Genesis.

Drosnin claims mathematical proof that "no human could have encoded the Bible in this way" (Drosnin 1997, 50–51). He says, "I do not know if it is God," but adds that the code proves "we are not alone."

Hidden Messages

Some believe that these "messages" in the Hebrew Bible are not just coincidence—they were put there deliberately by God. But if someone finds a hidden message in a book, a song played backwards, funny-looking Martian mesas, or some other object or thing, does that prove someone *else* put the message there *intentionally*? Or might the message exist only in the eyes of the beholder (and in those of his or her followers)? Does perception of meaning prove the message was deliberately created?

Most of the data cited in favor of the purported intelligent alien construction of the "Face on Mars" is based on mathematical relationships among various Martian structures and locations. For example, author Richard Hoagland finds the "Cydonian" ratio (the "face" lies on the Cydonia plains region of Mars), e/π , in the tangent of the face's latitude of 40.868 degrees north, in the ratios of angles of the D&M Pyramid, and in numerous other places (Hoagland 1992). Does that mean the "face" and "city" on Mars were "designed" for the express purpose of spreading that very message? Hoagland emphatically says, "Yes!" My inner skeptic says, "Not so fast!"

In my research into such phenomena, I have found numer-

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ous instances of Hoagland's Martian ratios on objects we know were not designed or built by aliens, such as the U.S. Capitol rotunda (Figure 4). Does that prove that Martians built this structure? Or is this phenomenon related mainly to the determination and skill of the person looking for a special message? Any special message?

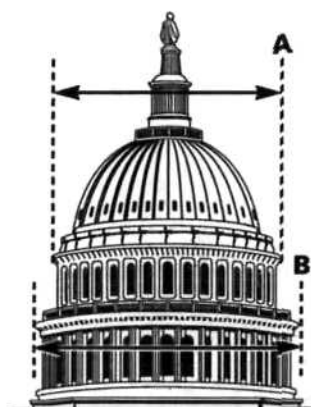


Figure 4. The "Martian" ratio $e/\pi = A/B$, hidden in the Capitol rotunda (precise measurements of A and B yield $A/B = 0.863$, while $e/\pi = 2.71828/3.14159 = 0.865$, an error of less than one half of one percent).

There are dozens of books about Nostradamus. In one (Hewitt and Lorie 1991), the authors find hidden predictions by scrambling the seer's quatrains (in French, no less), and then decoding according to an extremely complicated and mysterious formula. The back cover prominently displays one such unscrambled prediction: "1992—George Bush re-elected." (Wrong.) The authors should have known that it's much safer to find hidden predictions of events that have already happened.

Some critics of Drosnin say the journalist is just "data mining." Mathematician Brendan McKay of Australian National University and his colleagues searched Hebrew texts besides the Bible. They found fifty-nine words related to Chanukah in the Hebrew translation of *War and Peace*. But McKay doesn't think someone engineered this remarkable feat for his or anyone's benefit. Since then, McKay has responded to the following challenge Drosnin made in *Newsweek*: "When my critics find a message about the assassination of a prime minister encrypted in *Moby Dick*, I'll believe them" (Begley 1997). McKay found assassination "predictions" in *Moby Dick* for Indira Gandhi, Rene Moawad, Leon Trotsky, Rev. M. L. King, and Robert F. Kennedy (see <http://cs.anu.edu.au/~bdm/dilugim/moby.html>). Eliyahu Rips himself has denied Drosnin's implication that they worked together, and has said, "I do not support the book as it is or the conclusions it derives" (Van Biema 1997).

Hidden Names in KJV Genesis and Edwards v. Aguillard

I have very recently carried out a study on finding hidden names in both the KJV Genesis and the U.S. Supreme Court's 1987 ruling on *Edwards v. Aguillard* (a well-known ruling on creationism, hereafter referred to as simply *Edwards*). I used the same set of rules for both the KJV Genesis (about 150,000 characters) and *Edwards* (about 100,000 characters). I loaded a list of preselected names and let the computer search for each one in turn, for equidistant letter sequences with step distances from 2 to 1,000, and for every possible starting letter. I searched forward only.

One would expect that special biblical messages hidden in

the Hebrew Bible would simply not make it into the King James Version, much less into *Edwards*. And since the Hebrew alphabet doesn't include vowels, it should be much harder to find matches in the English texts, because an additional character match is required for each vowel.

Drosnin's control was the Hebrew text of *War and Peace*. Drosnin claims that when they searched for words (such as "comet," "Jupiter," etc.) in the Bible, they often found them there, but *not* in *War and Peace*.

I picked a set of names carefully. The list contained five names of four letters, five of five letters, five of six letters, five of seven letters, and five of either eight or nine letters. I was more whimsical in my choice of subjects and chose talk show hosts, scientists, and just plain folks as well as political or historical figures. I found *thousands* of hidden occurrences of these names in both Genesis and *Edwards*. The results appear in Table 1.

It is striking that tens of thousands of hidden occurrences were found for the twenty-five names submitted, for both Genesis and *Edwards*. More matches were found in the former, but it does have 50,000 more letters to work with. Another important observation is immediately apparent in Table 1—short names like "Leno" or "Reed" were found much more fre-

Length	Name	Genesis	Edwards
4 Letters	Deer	7440	3255
	Dole	2692	1349
	Leno	3353	2836
	Newt	2554	1026
	Reed	7340	3326
5 Letters	Gould	5	4
	Oprah	49	31
	Regis	51	71
	Rosie	202	341
	Sagan	107	62
6 Letters	Asimov	1	0
	Darwin	3	1
	Hitler	18	13
	Romero	6	1
	Stalin	15	10
7 Letters	Clinton	0	0
	Frazier	0	0
	Gardner	0	1
	Hillary	0	0
	Kennedy	0	0
8 or 9 Letters	Einstein	0	0
	Gingrich	0	0
	Churchill	0	0
	Letterman	0	0
	Matsumura	0	0
Sum		23836	12327

Table 1. Counts of hidden words found in KJV Genesis and *Edwards v. Aguillard*, at steps of 1,000 or less, forward only.

quently than long names like "Gingrich" or "Matsumura." ("Matsumura" is, of course, Molleen Matsumura of the National Center for Science Education, in Berkeley, and "Romero" is Albuquerque boxer Danny Romero). "Martin Gardner" was found hidden in *Edwards*, much as Gardner anticipated could happen in his discussion of gematria and the work of Rips and his colleagues (Gardner 1997).

The results are clear and compelling, and certainly not surprising. It is much easier to find short names than long names. There might be thousands of occurrences of the four-letter name "Rich," for example. But matching "Gingrich" is much harder, since few or none of the thousands of instances of "Rich" will be preceded by "Ging" at exactly the right step locations. But there are 2,554 hidden occurrences of "Newt" in KJV Genesis, so one could *imagine* that the Speaker of the House is certainly mentioned copiously.

There is, of course, another factor in the success of hidden word searches. Simply put, some letters are more common than others. Figures 5a and 5b give the relative frequencies for the letters in Genesis and *Edwards*.

The charts show that certain letters (such as A, D, E, H, I, N, O, R, S, and T) appear more often than others. Obviously, words made with these "hot" letters (such as "Reed," "Deer," "Stalin," or "Hitler") have a better chance of being found than words containing any "cool" letters like J or Q. "Rosie" had 202 Genesis matches, more than the 49 for "Oprah"—but "Oprah" contains a cool P. (I also searched for "Harpo," which is just "Oprah" backwards, and found 62 hits).

When I performed a separate search for "Roswell" in KJV Genesis, I only found one hidden match for this seven-letter word. But I found 5,812 matches for "UFO," 187 for "disk," 5 for "MOGUL," 4,798 for "NYU," 2 for "weather," 1,552 for "gear," 77 for "crash," 4 for "dummy," 295 for "alien," and 2 for "saucer." I couldn't find "Roswell" in *Edwards* at steps of 1,000 or less, but I did find most of the others, and in similar numbers.

How Unusual Are Paired Messages?

Drosnin and others sometimes admit that finding isolated hidden names or messages can be the product of random chance. But they claim that finding *linked* pairs or triples of names or words is so improbable that doing so proves the supernatural, divine, or alien origin of the "message." In Drosnin's words,

Consistently, the Bible code brings together interlocking words that reveal related information. With Bill Clinton, President. With the Moon landing, spaceship and Apollo 11. With Hitler, Nazi. With Kennedy, Dallas.

In experiment after experiment, the crossword puzzles were found only in the Bible. Not in *War and Peace*, not in any other book, and not in ten million computer-generated test cases. (Drosnin 1997, 26)

Perhaps there was a bug in Drosnin's computer program. Or perhaps he didn't really want to find hidden message pairs outside of the Hebrew Bible. All I know is that I was able to easily produce complex hidden messages in all the texts I worked with.

Genesis Letter Counts

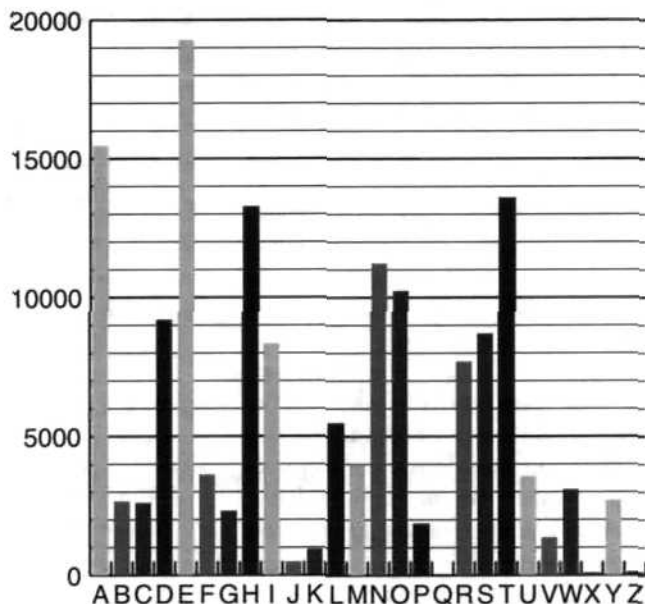


Figure 5a. Frequencies of letters of the alphabet in KJV Genesis.

Edwards v. Aguillard Letter Counts

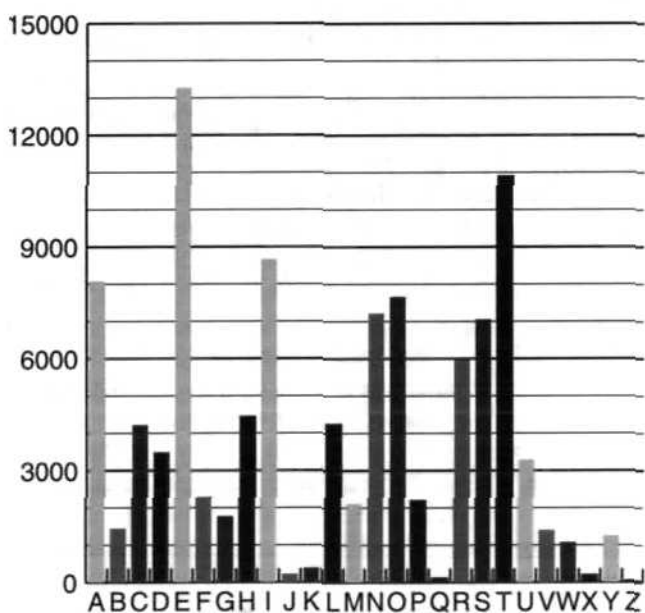


Figure 5b. Frequencies of letters of the alphabet in Edwards v. Aguillard.

I developed a computer program that takes various words already located as hidden codes (such as "Hitler" and "Nazi") and plays them against each other to find the best-linked pairs. The starting letters and equidistant steps provide all the necessary information, provided one learns how to manipulate it.

I then used this approach to develop the puzzles shown in Figure 6a (Genesis, step = 500) and Figure 6b (*Edwards*, step = 157), both with direct coded linkages of "Hitler" and "Nazi." These puzzles are striking counterexamples of

Drosnin's claims.

In response to Drosnin's challenge, I decided to look for "Hitler" and "Nazi" linked in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* as well. I found an English translation of the epic novel on the Internet, and downloaded the first twenty-four chapters of Book 1, giving me about 167,000 characters. By the time I got to steps of just 750, I already had found more than half a dozen excellent puzzle linkages of "Hitler" and "Nazi." The best appears in Figure 7: this entire puzzle text spans just five paragraphs of Chapter 2 of Book 1 of Tolstoy's novel.

Drosnin uses many methods to improve the odds of "impossible-by-chance" linkages. For one, he uses horizontal words taken directly from the original text. For example, when Drosnin found "Clinton" linked to "president," the word "president" was just the Hebrew word for "chief," taken from its actual context in the original Bible. Secondly, Drosnin found some hidden dates referring to the Hebrew calendar; for example, Gulf War activity on January 18, 1991, was found in the words "3rd Shevat." But, he found other dates referring to the Gregorian calendar, such as that of the Oklahoma City bombing, which was linked in the Bible by the hidden date "Day 19," and interpreted as a reference to both April 19, 1995, the date of the bombing, and April 19, 1993 (Waco). And finally, Drosnin takes full advantage of the eccentricities of the Hebrew language, in which words can be condensed and letters occasionally dropped.

My study generated several other examples that are just as spectacular, and just as unlikely (if not more so), than most of Drosnin's matches. Now, Drosnin and his colleagues would probably say that the "Roswell/UFO" connection in KJV Genesis was just a lucky break and couldn't happen again. But I found 5,812 hidden "UFO's" in Genesis, and dozens of these happen to be flying right around and *through* the hidden word "Roswell." As the puzzle step is changed, linked matches appear and disappear with astonishing frequency. Three such examples appear in Figure 8, for steps of 88, 589, and 753. Hoagland claims multiple discoveries of the same hidden message are indicative of "redundancy" used by the code-maker to assure us the message is real (Hoagland 1992). But all that is really happening here is that codes can be engineered—*made* to happen. You just have to know how to harvest the field of possibilities.

Figure 9 is another striking linkage I found in KJV Genesis, 42:18 through 45:21. Here, the name "Regis" appears at a step

COMEAFLOODTODESTROYALLFLESHANDTHEBOWSHALLBEINTHECLOUDANDIWN
 NANHEWASUNCOVEREDWITHINHISTENTANDHAMTHEFATHEROFCANAANSAT
 INTHE TENTS OF SHEM AND CANAANS SHALL BE HIS SERVANT AND NOAH LIVED AFTER
 IN THEIR NATIONS AND THE SONS OF HAM CUSH AND MI^ZRAIM AND PHUT AND CANAAN
 UDIM AND ANAMIM AND LE^HABIM AND NAPHTUHI AND PATHRUSIM AND CASLUH^IM
 IES AND IN THEIR NATIONS UNTIL SHEM ALSO THE FATHER OF ALL THE CHILDREN
 ONS OF JOKTAN AND^HHE IRDWELLING WAS FROM MESHAASTHOU GOEST UNTIL JOSEPH
 FOR STONE AND S^LIME HAD THEY FORMER AND THEY SAID GO TO LET US BUILD
 UPON THE FACE^E OF ALL THE EARTH AND THEY LEFT OFF TO BUILD THE CITY THERE
 LIVED THIRTY YEARS AND BEGATE BER AND SALAH LIVED AFTER HE BEGATE BER
 D AFTER HE BEGATE NAHORT TWO HUNDRED YEARS AND BEGATE SONS AND DAUGHTERS A

Figure 6a. Step matrix for Genesis, "Hitler/Nazi," step = 500.

UISIANADEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS IN
 EDINT^HE STATUTE ABOUT PERCENT OF LOUISIANASSUPERINTENDENTS
 INTENDENTS^I NTERPRETED CREATIONSCIENCE AS DEFINED BY THE ACT
 CHING THE VIEW THAT^H THE UNIVERSE WAS MADE BY A CREATOR IDATETHECO
 G THE INTENT OF THE LEGIS^LATURE CONTEMPORANEOUS TO THE PASSAGE O
 THAT FOUND STATE STATUTES TO BE^E UNCONSTITUTIONAL HAVE BEEN DIS
 ONNOR JOINS CONCURRING I WRITE SEPAR^RATELY TO NOTE CERTAIN^N ASPEC
 RETION ACCORDED STATE AND LOCAL SCHOOL OFFICIALS IN THESE SELECTI
 ERMINES WHETHER A PARTICULAR STATE ACTION VIOL^ATES THE ESTABLIS
 INVOLVING THE SENSITIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND R
 AR LEGISLATIVE PURPOSE LE MON V KURT^Z MANSUPRAATSEE COMMITTEE F
 THE ESTABLISHMENT CLAUSE I AT THE STARTING POINT IN EVERY CASE INV
 NCED TREATMENT FOR CREAT^IONSCIENCE AND EVOLUTIONSCIENCE ACTA
 TREATMENT TO CREATIONSCIENCE AND TO EVOLUTIONSCIENCE BALANCE

Figure 6b. Step matrix for *Edwards v. Aguillard*, "Hitler/Nazi," step = 157.

W I T H Q U I C K S H O R T S W A Y I N G S T E P S H E
 E S S A T D O W^N O N A S O F A N E A R T H E S I L V
 H E R S E L F A N D T O A L L A R O U N D H E R I H A V
 R B A G A N D A D D R E S S I N G A L L P R E S E N T M
 C K O N M E S H E^A D D E D T U R N I N G T O H E R H O
 P T I O N A N D J U S T S E E H O W B A D L Y I A M D R
 W A I S T E D L A C E T R I M M E D D A I N T Y G R A Y
 R E A S T S O Y E^Z T R A N Q U I L L E L I S E Y O U W
 N N A P A V L O V N A Y O U K N O W S A I D T H E P R I
 T U R N I N G T O A G E N E R A L M Y H U S B A N D I S
 L M E W H A T T H^I S W R E T C H E D W A R I S F O R S
 I T I N G F O R A N A N S W E R S H E T U R N E D T O S
 E L I G H T F U L W O M A N T H I S L I T T L E P R I N
 T H E N E X T A R R I V A L S W A S A S T O U T H E A V
 A C L E S T^H E L^T I^G H^T C O^L O R^E D B^R E E C H E S
 R O W N D R E S S C O A T T H I S S T O U T Y O U N G M
 L K N O W N G R A N D E E O F C A T H E R I N E S T I M

Figure 7. *War and Peace*, "Hitler/Nazi," puzzle step = 69, "Hitler" step = 3, "Nazi" step = 207.

T H E E A W A Y W I T H M I R T H A N D W I T H S O N G S W I T
 A U G H T E R S T H O U H A S T N O W D O N E F O O L I S H L Y
 R F A T H E R S P A K E U N T O M E Y E S T E R N I G H T S A Y
 N O W T H O U G H T H O U W O U L D E S T N E E D S B E G O N E
 A S T H O U S T O L E N M Y G O D S A N D J A C O B A N S W E

Figure 8a. Step matrix for Genesis, "Roswell/UFO," step = 88.

A L L T H E R I C H E S W H I C H G O D H A T H T A K E N F R O
 R E T H R E N W I T H H I M A N D P U R S U E D A F T E R H I M
 E R S T H O U H A S T N O W D O N E F O O L I S H L Y I N S O D
 E R V A N T S T E N T S B U T H E F O U N D T H E M N O T T H E
 E N T Y Y E A R S H A V E I B E E N W I T H T H E E T H Y E W E

Figure 8b. Step matrix for Genesis, "Roswell/UFO/UFO," step = 589.

K A N D S A I D U N T O T H E M I S E E Y O U R F A T H E R
 L T H A T L A B A N D O E T H U N T O T H E E I A M T H E G
 O L D H I M N O T T H A T H E F L E D S O H E F L E D W I T
 G H T E R S T H O U H A S T N O W D O N E F O O L I S H L Y
 H E D A L L T H E T E N T B U T F O U N D T H E M N O T A N

Figure 8c. Step Matrix for Genesis, "Roswell/UFO/IFO," step = 753.

U S A L I T T L E F O O D A N D J U D A H S P A K
 E R E D S U R E L Y N O W W E H A D R E T U R N E
 N D T H E M E N W E R E A F R A I D B E C A U S E
 R A N D T H E Y M A D E R E A D Y T H E P R E S E
 E E G Y P T I A N S M I G H T N O T E A T B R E A
 B Y I N D E E D H E D I V I N E T H Y E H A V E D
 R O U N D A N D J O S E P H S A I D U N T O T H E
 E S A I D U N T O M Y L O R D T H E L A D C A N N
 A N T S S H A L L B R I N G D O W N T H E G R A Y

Figure 9. Step matrix for Genesis, first "Regis" at step = 808, second "Regis" at step = 810 (puzzle step = 809).

distance of 808, but also at a step of 810, which makes a nice "X" pattern if the puzzle step is 809. (Perhaps someone should notify Regis Philbin and agents Mulder and Scully).

If you work at any given puzzle for a while, large numbers of unexpected names and words invariably turn up. Consider the puzzle of Figure 10. This text is a *contiguous* rendition of Genesis 41:38-46. This particular puzzle is easy for the reader to verify manually, since it has a relatively small step of 40. The puzzle itself is 41 characters wide, so the rightmost column is a repetition of the leftmost. I used the computer to find several diagonal messages here: "Deer," "Regis," "Nazi," "Leno," "Dole." Many vertical messages were simple enough to be found just by poring over the puzzle: for example, "Oprah," "here," "Leia," "Hale," "sent," "nude," "pure," "hate," "data," "Roe," "Reed," "Meg," "hood," "pins (snip)," "Deion," and "lone." "Newt" is in there too, but at an offbeat step that makes for a jilted arrangement. And then, there are all those horizontal words too!

I suspect that with diligence, one could find enough matches to make almost all of the characters in the puzzle parts

of hidden words. The puzzle below is literally dripping with additional hidden surprises. Rips himself appears in "spirit" read backwards. "Pour," "Alan," and "sash" run vertically. And diagonal messages of varying complexity lurk everywhere. Can you find the "apes" swinging between "data" and "Reed"? "Love" intersecting with "nude"? How about "Ares," "reel," "deft," "lion," "dogs," "pony," "hard," "diet," "trace," "card," "Poe," and "wart"? They are all in there—and more.

There are dozens of linked messages in the puzzle above. But how are we to know which words are linked by the secretive author? Is the "real" message "Nazi sent pure hate here," or is it "Deion pins nude Oprah?" All of these hits are authentic, encoded names that have lurked inside the text of the King James Version of Genesis for hundreds of years. But the whimsical combinations they appear in show that these surprises are simply lucky breaks, and not authentic messages from above.

What Are the Odds, Really?

Drosnin and his colleagues say that getting linked matches by coincidence is statistically impossible and cite the odds against such coincidences as more than 3,000 to 1 (and sometimes *much* more). Using numbers like these, the Bible code promoters try to convince their readers that the existence of God is now proven statistically *beyond the shadow of a doubt*, simply because they can find linked pairs like "Clinton" and "chief" in the same general area of the Bible.

But their core conclusions are based on severely flawed probability arguments. Drosnin's formulation of the improbability of the occurrence of linked pairs is implicitly based on the assumption that you have only one opportunity to get the match. But, with the help of the computer, Drosnin gets to take advantage of *billions* of opportunities.

Let's look at Drosnin's approach with a lottery analogy. The probability of winning a lottery with a single ticket is very small, and Drosnin says the probability of getting an improbable match (such as "Clinton" and "president") is also very small. But what happens if you buy more than one ticket?

In the New Mexico "Daily Millions" lottery, the odds of winning the \$1 million jackpot with just one ticket are about ten million to one against. With two tickets, the odds plummet, to about five million to one. If you buy one million tickets, your odds drop to only about ten to one against. And if you invest \$10 million in tickets, the odds become approximately two to one in your favor! Most people can't afford to buy millions of tickets. Those who *do* have that kind of money usually don't dump it on the lottery, because you almost always end up losing.

But in Drosnin's game, you don't have to win more than you lose. You don't even have to break even. All you need for success is to win *every once in a while*. And, you can have what amounts to millions of "free lottery tickets" simply by running a computer program, or poring over crossword-puzzle printouts. Drosnin routinely tests *billions* of letter sequences for matches to selected words or names, and goes to steps of many thousands. By using steps lower than 1,000 only, I limited myself to using

S S E R V A N T S C A N W E F I N D S U C H A O N E A S T H I S I S A M A N I N W
W H O M T H E S P I R I T O F G O D I S A N D P H A R A O H S A I D U N T O J O S
S E P H F O R A S M U C H A S G O D H A T H S H E W E D T H E E A L L T H I S T H
H E R E I S N O N E S O D I S C R E E T A N D W I S E A S T H O U A R T T H O U S
S H A L T B E O V E R M Y H O U S E A N D A C C O R D I N G U N T O T H Y W O R D
D S H A L L A L L M Y P E O P L E B E R U L E D O N L Y I N T H E T H R O N E W I
I L L I B E G R E A T E R T H A N T H O U A N D P H A R A O H S A I D U N T O J O
O S E P H S E E T H A V E S E T T H E O V E R A L L T H E L A N D O F E G Y P T
T A N D P H A R A O H T O O K O F F H I S R I N G F R O M H I S H A N D A N D P U
U T I T U P O N J O S E P H S H A N D A N D A R R A Y E D H I M I N V E S T U R E
E S O F F I N E L I N E N A N D P U T A G O L D C H A I N A B O U T H I S N E C K
K A N D H E M A D E H I M T O R I D E I N T H E S E C O N D C H A R I O T W H I C
C H E H A D A N D T H E Y C R I E D B E F O R E H I M B O W T H E K N E E A N D
D H E M A D E H I M R U L E R O V E R A L L T H E L A N D O F E G Y P T A N D P H
H A R A O H S A I D U N T O J O S E P H I A M P H A R A O H A N D W I T H O U T
T H E S H A L L N O M A N L I F E U P H I S H A N D O R F O O T I N A L L T H E
E L A N D O F E G Y P T A N D P H A R A O H C A L L E D J O S E P H S N A M E A
A P H N A T H P A A N E A H A N D H E G A V E H I M T O W I F E A S E N A T H T H
H E D A U G H T E R O F P O T I P H E R A H P R I E S T O F O N A N D J O S E P H
H W E N T O U T O V E R A L L T H E L A N D O F E G Y P T A N D J O S E P H W A S
S T H I R T Y Y E A R S O L D W H E N H E S T O O D B E F O R E P H A R A O H K I

Figure 10. Genesis 41:38-46, multiple matches, step = 40.

only about 3 percent of the potential of Genesis or *Edwards*. Brendan McKay (in personal communication) showed me how to find hidden words much more efficiently, and a search of KJV Genesis at all possible steps for my list of twenty-five names came up with over one million additional matches. These include six hits for "Clinton," fifteen for "Gardner," three for "Hillary" and "Einstein," and two for "Kennedy."

Conclusion

The promoters of hidden-message claims say, "How could such amazing coincidences be the product of random chance?"

I think the real question should be, "How could such coincidences *not* be the inevitable product of a huge sequence of trials on a large, essentially random database?"

Once I learned how to navigate in puzzle-space, finding "incredible" predictions became a routine affair. I found "comet," "Hale," and "Bopp" linked in KJV Genesis, along with "forty" and "died," which could be interpreted as an obvious reference to Heaven's Gate. I found "Trinity," "Los Alamos," "atom," and "bomb" encoded together in *Edwards*, in a section containing references to "security," "test," and "anti-fascist." And I found "Hitler" linked to "Nazi" dozens of times in several books. When I set out to engineer a "hidden code" link of "code" and "bogus" in KJV Genesis, I was able to produce sixty closely linked pairs. And every single one of these pairs could fit inside a reasonably sized puzzle.

The source of the mysterious "Bible code" has been revealed—it's *homo sapiens*.

Now somebody go tell Oprah.

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