

## To the Editor #1:

In reading the recent paper by Drinkwater et al. (2020), particularly the brief history of Electronic Voice Phenomenon (EVP) research, I noticed what seems to be a *Freudian slip* of a citation in the reference list. Raymond Bayless is indeed quite rightly cited as one of the first people to formally investigate EVP and publish a report on it within the correspondence section of the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* (Bayless, 1959). However, a duplicate of this reference is given with the name listed as 'Cass, R.'. This minor error provides an opportunity to inform readers of the place of 'Raymond Cass' in EVP history (a researcher based in the United Kingdom), who is less mentioned in the literature – and therefore less known about – than the work of Raymond Bayless.



Raymond Cass (1921-2001)

Raymond Cass had a couple of noteworthy relatives involved in the spiritualist movement. For example, in 1773 in North Yorkshire, his ancestor Molly Cass was persecuted as a medium and psychic. Raymond held interest in anomalous phenomena from an early age. In adult life, he joined a psychic society in Hull, where he later learned that one of the founders was also an ancestor of his by the name of Robert Cass. At a séance with Helen Duncan, held in 1938, it was predicted that Raymond Cass would develop 'voice mediumship' – although not specifically stated to be by instrumental means. It wasn't until release of the work by Raudive (1971) that Cass began to pursue his interests in practice and explore EVP further.

Cass had worked professionally as an audiologist, specialising in hearing aids, and was also interested in sound projection and detection. He began attempting to record anomalous sounds, raps, and voices by the late 1970s – which some have commented on as being the finest quality of EVPs produced. He'd admitted due to his own scepticism that he felt somewhat foolish at the prospect of talking

“to thin air” while carrying out recordings, but this was a method which apparently had worked well for Friedrich Jürgenson (1964). Not only had Cass recorded voices with clarity, but he became specifically interested in attempting to contact deceased researchers such as Raudive and claimed he had succeeded. Attempts at contacting deceased survival researchers is something not uncommon in psychical researcher history (e.g., Salter, 1958; Stevenson, 1976).

Cass claimed to have recorded thousands of voices. However, no publications on his research appeared in psychical research or parapsychology related journals, either by Cass or people commenting on his work. Cass did, however, contribute a detailed chapter on his work to a book by Harold Sherman (1981), with the chapter simply entitled ‘The Raymond Cass Report’. The report details his methods and transcripts of what he believed to be some of his best EVPs. Beyond this point in time, little can be found about Cass and his work within the literature. One would have hoped for the claims of EVPs of such clarity, obtained through rigorous methods, to have been examined in detail by others while casting a sceptical eye. Alas, no such report surfaced that I am aware of. However, in more recent times, websites and blogs have appeared dedicated to his life and work, including “The Raymond Cass Foundation.” These have not only offered example soundbites of Cass’s EVPs, but present the claim that they had been played worldwide at lectures and conferences, studied by various research groups, and observed by War Departments in the USA and the Ministry of Defence in the UK. It would be fair to say that Raymond Cass remains an important part – yet often overlooked enigma – of EVP history. His remaining files and tapes would be served well by dedicated EVP researchers and scholars giving them the attention they deserve to produce that much needed critique.

There have been numerous mentions throughout history of people developing methods to allegedly contact discarnate spirits. Although this topic has not been of strong interest to the *Journal of Parapsychology*, the first mentions of this within its pages began with a ‘letter to editor’ from Charles Ozanne (1945). This correspondence gave mention to Thomas Edison’s interview with *Scientific American*, where he proposed to build a device for the purpose of contacting the departed (Lescarboua, 1920). For a detailed discussion of EVP history, which includes Raymond Cass and others, I would draw readers’ attention to the chapter ‘A brief history of EVP research’ (Cooper & Parsons, 2015), found within the book *Paracoustics: Sound and the Paranormal* by the same authors. This book has also been reviewed within the *Journal of Parapsychology* (Leary, 2016).

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Weblink. [www.raymondscass.co.uk](http://www.raymondscass.co.uk)

Callum E. Cooper  
University of Northampton  
Waterside Campus, FHEA (LH301),  
Psychology Division  
Northampton, NN1 5PH, UK  
[callum.cooper@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:callum.cooper@northampton.ac.uk)