

Sheeple Chase
Episode 2 – “Episode 53: Spray It Ain’t So”

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**SFX: A TACKY, MYSTERY THEME, FULL OF SYNTH-Y
THERAMIN**

1. INT. TWO PRIVATE URBAN FLATS

CELIA and GEORGIE are recording remotely, badly. A dog pads
around at Georgie's feet.

GEORGIE

Hello, and welcome to another
episode of Sheeple Chase, the
podcast that sorts the CONS from
the CONspiracies. I'm Georgie
Barker-

CELIA

(slightly tired)

And I'm Celia Ripley. So, let's start
with the big news.

Beat

CELIA

(cont.)

How was Captain Barker's big
haircut? Did she have a good time?

GEORGIE

(overenthusiastic)

She was very brave.

CELIA

She looked quite cute in the *sixteen*
photos you sent me.

GEORGIE

Didn't she! And did you like the little
X-files bandana I got for her?

CELIA
(playfully tactful)
I like that you think your dog has a
favourite TV show.

GEORGIE
You can't prove she doesn't!
Anyway, how are you doing?

CELIA
(reflexively)
I'm fine.

Beat.

GEORGIE
(coaxing)
Uhuh.

CELIA
(Reluctantly)
I've... not been sleeping well lately.

GEORGIE
Brilliant! I mean, well, not for you.
But it does tie in well with our latest
sponsor.

FX: short tacky jingle to indicate the start of an ad.

GEORGIE
(groans unconvincingly)
Man, I need coffee!

CELIA
(flat, actually tired)
Were you up all night researching
conspiracy theories?

GEORGIE
No, I just can't fall asleep!

CELIA

You poor thing. You should treat yourself to a SleepTight mattress.

GEORGIE

A SleepTight mattress? Why?

CELIA

Because a SleepTight mattress uses state of the art foam technology and over 333 micro-springs to shape and set itself around your body, holding you in place all night long.

GEORGIE

Sounds too good to be true!

CELIA

Then you should take the SleepTight 90 night challenge: try it for 90 nights and if you're disappointed you can apply for get 10% back!

GEORGIE

Wow, they must really have faith in their product! That's my worries thoroughly debunked. I'm going to get a SleepTight mattress, right now!

FX: sleepy tinklies fade out.

CELIA

It's your turn to pick the topic so: which conspiracy are we unpicking today?

GEORGIE

Today, we're jetting off to the 90s on the trail of a real-

CELIA

Is it chemtrails?

GEORGIE

Yes, it's chemtrails: the claim that those clouds you see coming out the back of planes are full of chemicals being purposefully spread by secretive organisations for... reasons.

FX: excessive spooky sting

CELIA

OK. So why would anyone think there's something sinister going on?

GEORGIE

Well, lets start by talking about the difference between “chemtrails” and “contrails”. So, contrails are just frozen condensation following in the plane's wake after cold air combusts in a jet engine-

CELIA

Great, well, that seems pretty straightforward. Good episode! Tune in next week when-

GEORGIE

Ah! But while chemtrail believers do accept that contrails are a thing, they claim that chemtrails linger in place for much longer than contrails.

CELIA

Right. And that's convincing because, of course, clouds never last more than 5 minutes.

GEORGIE

Yeah, so like clouds, contrails behave differently in different conditions. Stuff like temperature,

altitude, humidity: it all affects how -
and even *if* - condensation forms and
disperses. But some people claim
that the thick type are always
followed by weird effects.

CELIA

Like what?

GEORGIE

Mm. Rain, mostly.

CELIA

Right. And we're sure these people
are seeing chemtrails and not just,
you know... clouds?

GEORGIE

Well, there's loads of pictures online
and some of the photos do have a lot
of contrails in them, like you'd have
to live on some sort of aviatory ley
line to have that many flight paths
criss-crossing over your head, and
this is assuming you can even see
whatever chemicals are said to be
spread...

CELIA

If chemtrails come down to "it's
theoretically possible something
invisible exists somewhere," then we
may as well be asking if Santa's
sleigh is spreading asbestos or
something! What do believers think
chemtrails are actually *for*? Who's
supposed to be spreading them?
And why?

GEORGIE

Well, there are loads of competing theories, but most people agree that chemtrails are either for: mind control, weather manipulation, biological warfare, weapons testing, population control, or combatting climate change.

CELIA

Well, that certainly narrows it down.

GEORGIE

Yeah, so let's start with the mind control theory, because it's probably the easiest to dismiss.

CELIA

Well, you would say that, given they're controlling your mind.

GEORGIE

The idea is that governments are spreading vaguely defined "mind control chemicals" to make the population more docile.

CELIA

And people think it works?

GEORGIE

Well, yes. Their theory is that only mind-controlling substances could get people to not notice the mind-controlling substances in the sky.

CELIA

I see.

GEORGIE

Yeah it's just not realistic. It would be so inefficient.

Beat.

CELIA

What?

GEORGIE

I'm just saying it would be a terrible way of spreading mind control chemicals. It's so wasteful and you don't have any way to properly monitor the effects...I just think there are better options.

CELIA

So how would you do it?

GEORGIE

Oh Water supply. Easy. Almost everyone uses tap water and it would be simple to add a few extra chemicals to reservoirs during disinfection. You could even target specific regions. And it would be greener than using all those planes.

CELIA

Oh well I'm so glad to hear you've considered the environmental impact.

GEORGIE

Trouble is, there aren't really any "mind control chemicals" that work like that. Even the CIA gave up after the whole MK-Ultra thing. Best they managed was maybe making a couple of people a bit more suggestible.

CELIA

So I can keep drinking tap water?

GEORGIE

Besides, you don't need chemicals to control people. That's what the economy's for!

CELIA

Plus, every social media platform's already basically a mind control device already.

GEORGIE

Very True.

CELIA

Georgie, you do realise you're on all of them, all the time right?

GEORGIE

Right, but I interact with random stuff to confuse the algorithm. My targeted ads think I'm a French grandpa who likes windsurfing and motorbike repair.

Anyway, moving onto the weather manipulation stuff, this is where the conspiracy started. In 1996, the US Air Force put out a report entitled *Owning the Weather in 2025*, which looked at how the US government could manipulate weather in the future and-

CELIA

-and is, to be fair, something a supervillain's research assistant would write.

GEORGIE

Yeah, nobody really noticed it till 1999 when Art Bell, who hosted *Coast to Coast AM* connected the

dots with online forums discussing contrails and then suddenly the theory was everywhere. Apparently, the US government got so many complaints about it.

CELIA

That must have been such a weird day to be on the US Air Force customer service hotline. Everyone accusing you of ruining Brad Washingtonson's picnic or whatever.

GEORGIE

Well, most of the more "serious" posters think it's either to combat - or even cause - climate change, depending on which one they think is worse.

CELIA

Well that's a bit of a stretch-

GEORGIE

(incredulous)

But governments *can* use aircraft to affect the climate. And they do!

CELIA

(sceptical)

I'm sorry, governments can control the weather?

GEORGIE

A bit yes! In 2008, the Chinese government wanted to make sure Beijing was nice and sunny for the Olympics, so they used "cloud seeding" to purposefully make it rain in a different city, and kind of...wring

**all the moisture out of the air before
it got to the sports.**

CELIA

Cloud seeding?

GEORGIE

**It's when you release chemicals -
usually some kind of salt - into the
air at high altitudes to cause ice
crystals to form at higher
temperatures than normal and make
clouds which then fall as rain, or
hail, or snow, or whatever.**

CELIA

**Okay even I can see how you could
mix that up with Chemtrails.**

GEORGIE

**Well if you like cloud seeding, you'll
love this: some climate scientists are
suggesting that we could use
contrails to help mitigate global
warming.**

CELIA

I'm sorry what?

GEORGIE

**Well basically because contrails are
essentially just clouds, if you get
enough of them in one spot, they
should have an insulating effect. So,
you could, in theory, control heat
build-up and dispersal around the
planet.**

CELIA

**OK, so planes could hypothetically
be used for some minor weather**

shenanigans. That hardly seems as bad as the whole mind-control thing.

GEORGIE

Well, you say that but silver iodide is one of the chemicals used for cloud-seeding and in extreme quantities, it can be carcinogenic. And turn your skin a bluey-grey colour.

CELIA

I'll admit cancer rain doesn't sound great. So have there been many unexplained cases of silvery skin?

GEORGIE

No. The amounts used for cloud seeding are super tiny.

CELIA

Right. So the weather stuff is A, fine and B, not what people are talking about when they're talking about chemtrails.

GEORGIE

Pretty much.

CELIA

So the mind control's nonsense, and the weather control stuff is doesn't scan either. Sound like this is pretty much done?

GEORGIE

Not quite. We still have one last stop on our flightpath but we'll get to it after a flying visit from our sponsor...

SFX: Buh-Dum-Tss

CELIA

Do we really need all these puns?

GEORGIE

Yes. Yes we do.

SFX: A gavel bangs, a bassy jazzy tune plays

GEORGIE

Gosh darn it, this well-known online auction site is so hard to use! I just want to make some quick cash but they won't let me sell this junk!

CELIA

Most ecommerce sites have ridiculous rules about what can and can't be sold, but the folks over at SoulTrader believe in the free market. That's why they've created the world's first dedicated online soul-selling marketplace.

SFX: Ghostly Gasps

Simply list the soul you wish to trade - rating its condition from brand-new to well-used - and let the bids roll in, and with SoulTrader's innovative blockchain-based register of ownership, you can be certain that each soul you buy is one in 8 billion.

SoulTrader: because a Faustian bargain is still a bargain!

SFX: cha-ching

CELIA

(aside)

Where do you find these sponsors?

GEORGIE

(aside)

There's a directory. The weirder ones pay more...

(back "on")

Anyway! We were about to cover the weirder side of airborne chemicals including our favourite: "messed up cases of verified chemical warfare!"

CELIA

I'm guessing you're talking stuff like Agent Orange?

GEORGIE

It was a chemical agent spread by aircraft...

CELIA

Sure but commercial flights are completely different. For chemtrails to be a thing you'd have to believe that pretty much every government and airline is working together on this. And no government is going to just let someone spray their citizens with-

GEORGIE

But they do! They do it themselves!

CELIA

What do you mean they do it themselves?

GEORGIE

The MoD has already admitted to doing this loads of times! In the Fluorescent Particle Trials, planes flew across the length of England, dropping Zinc Cadmium Sulphide

and in the Large Area Coverage Trials, MoD ships sprayed E.Coli all over Dorset. In the Sabotage Trials, they released a bunch of bacteria on the Northern Line-

CELIA

Wait what?!

GEORGIE

And this is just from one military base: Porton Down. They admitted it all in a report they gave to this Lib Dem MP, Norman Baker, way back in 2002.

CELIA

They're not still doing it, though. Are they?

GEORGIE

Let's just sat that when Porton Down was asked about that, they said "it's not our policy to comment on current research." So... yeah, it certainly sounds like there's some current research to not comment on.

CELIA

Well that's horrifying. And not in a fun conspiracy kind of way.

GEORGIE

Exactly. So I'm not saying chemtrails are real, I'm just saying, someone, somewhere is definitely getting sprayed! And it could be you! It could be any of us!

CELIA

And there's nothing we can do about it?

GEORGIE

**Sure there is! Just try not to breathe.
Or drink water. Or eat anything that
grows in the ground! You know,
basic stuff.**

CELIA

(laughs)

**Uhuh. Well despite these awful
revelations none of that stuff is
actual “chemtrails” is it?**

GEORGIE

**No. And there’s really no evidence
that commercial jets are deliberately
spreading stuff.**

CELIA

**Just classified military experiments
on the civilian population?**

GEROGIE

Exactly!

CELIA

**OK. Well I have to say I think you've
convinced me.**

GEORGIE

Really?!

CELIA

**Not about chemtrails, which are
clearly utter bollocks but the idea
that militaries are dumping
chemicals on people from the air for
sinister reasons? Absolutely.**

GEORGIE

**I’ll take that as a win! Wow! I'm
gonna award myself a certificate to**

**commemorate this momentous
achievement.**

CELIA

**Do I get a certificate for every time
I've convinced you a theory's fake?**

GEORGIE

**Steady on. Printer ink's expensive,
you know.**

CELIA

Damn.

GEORGIE

**Best I can manage is the drone I've
sent to spray caffeine through your
air vents to perk you up before
recordings.**

CELIA

Sounds great.

GEORGIE

**So got anything good planned this
weekend?**

CELIA

**This and that. But more importantly,
Are you excited about your big date?**

GEORGIE

**Not particularly. I've been checking
online and the odds of him being a
serial killer are shockingly high.**

CELIA

**Even if he is, I doubt he's going to
kill you in a Zizzi's.**

GEORGIE

He might!

CELIA

**Why do I feel like you're still holding
out for a certain famous YouTube
ghosthunter?**

GEORGIE

**I'm allowed to admire good
videography.**

CELIA

**Especially when its by Melanie King
right?**

GEORGIE

**I'm just saying she has soulful eyes,
she looks like she's seen terrible
things. In a good way.**

CELIA

(knowingly)

Right...

GEORGIE

(pressing on)

**Anyway I think that's all for this
week. As always, thanks for listening
and next time you take a flight,
maybe leave the E.Coli at home. The
British Army's got that covered.**

CELIA

Gross...

SFX: tacky theme tune.

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