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Science Public Relations *Falls Another Notch*



by Miles Mathis

Today [May 29, 2011], the science news [was led by a story](#) of a 22 year old undergraduate student in Australia who supposedly found the missing mass in the universe. We are told she solved one of the longest standing problems of physics during a holiday internship. This press release came with the glossy photo above.

The problem? It's all a publicity stunt. Her professor, the guy in blue stripes, admits in the article that, astrophysicists had known about the missing mass for the past two decades, but the technology needed to pinpoint its location had only become available in recent years.

Not only that, but the theory that some missing mass was in filaments between galaxies is also not new. Professor blue-stripe has been pushing this theory for some time, and he is not alone. Most physicists and astronomers accept that *some* missing mass is in the filaments, since the filaments cannot be massless. But the filaments cannot be the source of all the missing mass, or even a good part of it, since if they were, the filaments would contain about 95% of the mass of the universe (according to current theories). Yes, the amount of [missing mass is stupendous](#). It isn't 1 or 2%. According to current models, *most* of the mass of the universe is unaccounted for.

All this student did is help professor blue-stripe man some equipment that measured the energy coming from these filaments. This measurement confirmed that a sizeable amount of matter resided in these filaments. But the energy levels in no way confirmed that 95% of the mass of the universe was in these filaments. Even after this “discovery”, the mainstream will need to fill a big hole with some kind of dark matter, [dark matter we have not detected](#).

But beyond this question of the facts of the case, we may ask why professor blue-stripe has let his

student take all the credit? Because she is a young woman, and this is the age of the young woman. People don't want to read about another geeky young guy who has some theory. They want to read about young women breaking boundaries. They want to read about eight-year-old girls painting like Picasso or teenage girls ballooning around the world or something. They also like stories about animals: elephants playing Chopin or dolphins solving differential equations. But they have no interest in real science.

Everything now is a public relations ploy of one sort or another. It is a transparent and often pathetic bid for funding. Scientists never cared much about the truth, but modern scientists don't even give it a nod. They are only interested in their careers. They will say whatever they need to say and do whatever they need to do. That is why the hot girl on the left is in the picture. We don't even get her name or an explanation of what she has to do with the project. I suppose she is there just to dress up the undergraduate student, who someone thought wasn't quite photogenic enough. I suppose in a few years, someone will figure out to put the hot girl in a swimsuit, and maybe hire a male model to play the astrophysicist. I suggest someone like Sean Connery, someone older to lend this thing some fake gravity. Professor blue-stripe looks like he's still in highschool. People's minds are boggled by young girls; they aren't boggled by Doogie Houser.

I suggest that those responsible for science news combine the girl with the elephant or dolphin next time, to maximize exposure. What they really need is a [Jessica Lynch](#) type, a skinny blonde with a long neck and great teeth. The Pentagon knows how to manufacture a story, and astronomy should sit at the feet of the masters. Then they could install the telescope at the beach, in about three feet of clear blue water, maybe in the Virgin Islands. In between checks of the machines, Jessica could swim around in her bikini with the locals dolphins. The presence of the dolphins could be explained as something to do with magnetoception: protecting the instruments from stray photons or degaussing the seawater or something. It wouldn't have to make sense. Readers don't expect sense, as we see.

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