

Opposing Forces

By David Rolfe

Publicity is vital for any film and none more so than a film about the Shroud of Turin. Why? Because the first reaction that most broadly educated people have to the very mention of it is a knee-jerk one. *“Oh no, not that hoary old subject again. That was dead and buried years ago”*. Frankly, I cannot blame them. The dismissive way the C14 announcement was made was so authoritative and damning that anyone who had not studied the subject in detail for themselves takes that verdict at face value and any attempt to inspire them to reconsider faces an almost impossible task. I say “almost” because I am an optimist and believe *right* will, eventually, win against *wrong*. I have come to believe that statement can also be written using “*good*” and “*evil*” when it comes to the Shroud.

There can be no better reminder that evil exists in the world than the current situation in Ukraine. It only takes one person to inspire it. Putin in this case and Hitler before him. We can get some comfort from the fact that, ultimately, Hitler was defeated as, surely, Putin will, given time. He has stirred some powerful forces which are coalescing into something more powerful than he could have ever imagined.



David Sox

In contemplating the interview I am due to do this evening for Guy Powell’s blog I suddenly realised something that had never occurred to me before and could, possibly, explain everything about the current situation the Shroud finds itself in. Please bear with me as it involves entering territory way beyond the normal arguments for and against the Shroud. It revolves around the person depicted in the picture on the left, the Rev. David Sox. It also recognises that “Good” and “Evil” are countervailing forces.

It should be no surprise to a Christian that the forces of “Good” as represented by everything that Christ stood for are in an eternal conflict with “Evil”. That is the nature of our “Creation.” We see these opposing forces in action all around us. Evil, in the bible, is personified as Satan.

I got to know David Sox well in the 70’s when I finished my first film of the Shroud, *The Silent Witness*. He arrived at my office door in Soho one morning and I remember being struck by the captivating charm that exuded from him. You could not help but

like him. His gently tanned complexion was set off to perfection by the gleaming white of his teeth and his clerical collar. Here was “Goodness” personified. His seductive smile could light up a room. An easy, natural charm shone from every pore.

He arrived because *The Silent Witness* had just been released to some acclaim and put the Shroud of Turin well and truly on the map in the most positive way. Even that esteemed sceptical academic cleric, Dr. John Robinson, author of *Honest to God*, was singing its praises. Sox was, already, the General Secretary of the relatively nascent British Society for the Turin Shroud. To people like myself, he represented his enthusiasm as part of his religiosity and determination to see the Shroud validated. To this apparent end, and sometimes behind the scenes, he was hyperactive with whomever he could find to get closer to the Shroud itself.

Thanks to the work of Stephen E. Jones¹, a long-standing Shroud blogger in Perth, Australia, we have a much fuller understanding of his persona. We must have some sympathy for him as he was gay when it was still illegal. However, among the many individuals that stood between him and his goal it seems that there was plenty of opportunities for him to apply his charms to achieve his goals. His apparent enthusiasm for the Shroud was, in fact, a “front” employed to wheedle his way into the very heart of the general mission to fully understand the Shroud. We now know that, at some point, he launched his own secret mission to see the Shroud debunked whatever it might take. He succeeded probably beyond his own wildest dreams.

My successor, as editor of this Newsletter, Michael Kowalski, has done a brilliant analysis of the way that the C14 results were manipulated to create some semblance of scientific integrity. You will find this, too, on the BSTS website.

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¹ <https://bit.ly/3ughVS>