# Rainmaker Matt Ryan

Contributed by David S. Lewis

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Montana ’s farmers and ranchers pay close attention to the weather. During the growing season, rain, or lack of it, is always on their minds. So when the national Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) forecasted a drought for the state this past summer, with worse conditions for northeastern Montana, Phyllis and Jim Furman, who farm spring wheat near Glasgow, weren’t exactly delighted with the news.

Strangely, though, the whole northeast section of the state, in spite of NOAA’s forecast, experienced above average rainfall – unlike most of the rest of the state.

And the Furmans believe they know why.

With twenty other farmers and ranchers near Glasgow , they hired a rainmaker.

Phyllis was no stranger to the concept of rainmaking, having read Wilhelm Reich, the controversial scientist of the 40s and 50s. Reich, a close student as a young man of Sigmund Freud, had identified what he claimed was a mysterious energy in the human body, and later professed that that energy was present everywhere, in everything. He called it orgone energy, and later discovered the ability to make rain, some say, using the same principles of orgone energy.

With some knowledge of Reich’s discoveries, in 1990 the Furmans hired Matt Ryan and his colleague Jim DeMeo of the Orgone Biophysical Research Lab in Ashland , Oregon . Ryan and DeMeo traveled to Montana that year, but it was a hurried effort, Phyllis told the Pioneer. DeMeo had to leave for Paris . The two of them wouldn’t be able to complete the work. With the constraints in mind, the Furmans hired the duo anyway. And they made it rain, Phyllis says, only more of it fell further west in the dry lands of North Dakota .

That first effort, however imperfect, sold the Furmans on DeMeo and Ryan. And when a high pressure dome sat over the state in 1992, and again in 1993, they called Ryan. And he responded, both times.

And both times it rained.

They called Ryan again in 1998, and again it rained.

So when they heard that NOAA had forecasted a severe drought for northeastern Montana for the summer of 2000, they naturally turned to Matt Ryan once more. And naturally, Phyllis Furman told us, Ryan brought the rain.

The Evidence

In 1992 from May 23 through June 7, Ryan traveled the Northwest during severe and persistent drought conditions doing what he calls “rainmaking operations.” The areas Ryan worked at experienced average to above-average rainfall coincidental with his efforts, despite the encompassing drought, he told us. And Ryan claims that a “persistence effect” develops in the wake of his rainmaking, causing rainfall to occur for weeks and months afterward. Yet, due to eager financial resources, Ryan was not able to spend as much times as he would have liked making rain in ’92. “Had I been able to repeat the operations,” he told us, “we could have turned the whole Northwest around that summer.”

This year, 2000, Ryan worked on behalf of the Furmans and their group again, who paid him $10,000 to make rain, a sum Phyllis Furman considers small compared to the benefits. Ryan began on May 30 and completed his operations June 9. And unless we are to believe in extraordinary coincidences, considering NOAA’s drought forecast. Ryan seems, at least, to have been successful again. Crop and weather reports, provided by the Montana Agricultural Statistics Service, show above-average rainfall in the supposedly drought-stricken northeast region for the weeks immediately following Ryan’s “rainmaking operations.”

For the week ending June 10, 2000, the report states: “Precipitation around the state was generally light with the exception of areas in the northeast received 1.5 to 2 inches of rain during the week.” This, in an area that was supposed to experience more severe drought than the rest of the state. Statistics for the following week also show significantly higher rainfall in the northeast region, a trend that continued through July.

On Wednesday, June 14, the Great Falls Tribune reported, in a story about drought conditions in Montana : “Snowpack is all but gone from the mountains, spring rains are lacking, rivers and streams are running shallow, some reservoirs are already short of water, fire danger is rising, and crops and pastures are doing poorly . . .”

Peggy Stringer of the Montana Agricultural Statistics Service was then quoted as saying, “This is somber meeting of the Drought Advisory Committee . . .”

The Tribune then quotes Ken Mielke of the National Weather Service. “Statewide,” Mielke said, “ Glasgow (in the northeast region) is the only reporting station with above-normal precipitation.”

And by the end of July, out of 65 reporting station in Montana , only 13 reported average to above-average precipitation – 10 of those 13 stations were in the northeast region where Ryan had done his rainmaking. Sadly, the majority of the stations throughout the state reported significantly lower precipitation than the average, levels that correspond to crop failure.

Ryan claims he has a similar record of success from California to New York State . It’s not surprising that Phyllis Furman then, when asked if Ryan can make rain, says “Absolutely.”

What's Goig On?

Rainmaking is, of course, the stuff of legends and shamans. No one is supposed to be able to make rain, not in the world of modern materialistic science. DeMeo, an academic who tried to go mainstream with his weather work, was ultimately denied the opportunity to obtain validation from the scientific community even though he successfully proved out his master’s thesis on the subject. And Wilhelm Reich, considered very controversial by most of the scientific world, hardly lends credibility to the rainmaking craft, in the view of the scientific establishment.

But Phyllis Furman, along with Ryan, liken rainmaking to other natural phenomena, lightning and dowsing. Using long metal tubes and certain water sources (natural springs, for instance), Ryan says water in the earth can attract water in the air, the same way a charge in the ground attracts a charge in the sky, causing lightning. Then there’s the dowser, or water witcher, used commonly in Montana to discover underground water for wells, and even minerals for mining operations. Water produces energy currents, Furman explained, that the dowser detects, and those energy currents can be directed.

Ryan’s rainmaking method, while closely guarded, involves extremely simple technology, long pieces of metal pipe that are, as far as we can tell, inserted in water like antennae and directed in such a way, according to Ryan, that he can guide and direct streams of energy in the atmosphere that move weather patterns. This is, of course, scientifically unproven. It is, more accurately, so incredible to mechanistic scientists that it is brusquely dismissed along with Wilhelm Reich and theories about orgone energy.

Rainmaking, though, was hardly dismissed by another prominent proponent of the craft, a Chippewa Ojibwa named Sun Bear. Living near Spokane , Washington at the time, Sun Bear’s writings inspired Ryan to travel from his native New York to Washington state, and then, over many years, to take up rainmaking. Describing Sun Bear as a visionary mystic, Ryan says, “We were close . . . over time he became like my father, my brother and my friend.”

Within six months of meeting Sun Bear, Ryan met Jerome Eden in northern Idaho . Eden had studied with the original people around Wilhelm Reich and kept a rainmaking device called a “cloudbuster” in a meadow on his land. Ryan ended up spending four years with Eden , studying and replicating Reich’s scientific findings and learning and practicing the craft of “cloudbusting.”

It was through Sun Bear, though, that Ryan learned rainmaking as a mystic art. Sun Bear, Ryan says, was a rainmaker of the old school, born in 1929 and trained by Native American elders. But Sun Bear didn’t exactly “make rain” Ryan explains. It would be more accurate to say the rain followed him, that he could “call it.”

“He had rain medicine,” Ryan said, acquired through practiced attunement with the subtle forces of Nature.

And it was knowledge of these forces that brought Ryan to a deeper understanding, and to practicing rainmaking without man-made tools.

“I have a relationship with the weather,” Ryan said, calmly. “That’s what Sun Bear taught me . . . . One of the things conventional science always overlooks, one of the things we all overlook, is that we have gotten so far removed from Nature that we don’t even know what we’re missing. As far as the weather goes, well, it can heal us in a lot of different ways.”

Ryan then speaks of the forces of nature “that I realize I’m a part of, that move around and within us all the time.”

"When you get right down to it, we’re all built out of the earth, every molecule in our bodies – so by birthright we are intimately related to her, to all aspects of Nature. I’ve just increased that relationship by doing nothing more than paying attention to it, just like I pay attention to my friends or my co-workers or my wife.”

Ryan spoke of his communion with Nature as a living being, likening it to seeing faces in the clouds, then finding that those faces are looking back at him, communicating a conscious presence.

“If there’s one thing we’ve lost in our materialistic, scientific society, it’s the awareness of Nature . . . not just we being aware of Nature, but being aware that Nature is watching back.”

Te Jet Stream

To a rainmaker, rain is not simply water driven by wind; it is the precipitation of subtle energy, the same energy detected by dowsers.

“We now know that we can influence weather fronts, get them to move in patterns that they’re not in at the moment. It’s not so much that you can turn Arizona into a lush, tropical land overnight, but that if Montana, or the Northwest is in a drought, it’s in a drought for a number of reasons and one of them is because the jet stream, which steers all the weather around the planet, is either running too far north up into Canada, or too far south into California, for instance. So with respect to Montana in this season, the jet is out of its normal pattern.”

“The jet stream is an orgone energy stream moving around the planet. It has a tremendous amount of potential energy in it.”

Conventional scientists, Ryan says, as opposed to scientists like Reich, only talk about the jet steam in terms of wind – missing the inherent energetic phenomenon.

“They say winds result because the sun heats the earth unevenly, and so forth,” Ryan said. “And they’re partly right, of course. But there’s a tremendous amount of subtle energy associated with the jet streams that they’re not accounting for, or even aware of. Part of my craft is working with that, gently.”

Montana in Flames

By August of 2000, Montana was in flames, along with much of the West. Raging fires had already destroyed homes and forests hear Helena and in other parts of the state. The smoke from those fires, including blazes that threatened park County, choked the sky for weeks, dropping thin coating of ash clearly visible on car windshields in Livingston and Bozeman . Matt Ryan’s way is that he does not intervene unless asked, he told us. He does not solicit, and he considers his work “healing,” not a commercial enterprise. And so he did not intervene in Montana , nor anywhere else in the West, until a call came in from a physician, a former student of his in the Helena area, where the fire had singed the hillsides surrounding Canyon Ferry Lake , causing severe damage to houses and property.

And the Rains Came

In this case, Ryan did not travel to the area to bring relief. Instead, he worked with DeMeo from a remote site, influencing the Northwest’s weather patterns from his home in Mt. Shasta , California . Ryan began working August 6 and finished September 3 in a series of three operations.

In the meantime, federal officials stated that they did not expect the Montana wildfires to be out until the end of October or early November, when the cooler weather and fall rains begin. That assessment was based largely on forecasts and advice from the National Weather Service, which works closely with the forest service during wildfire season. No one expected rain early. It wasn’t supposed to happen, especially in the midst of the severe drought.

But the rains came to the Helena area at the end of August and in early September, contrary to the forecasts, and then spread out from there with snow following in mid September that virtually doused the last remnants of the fires.