

## Icke, David

David Icke (b. 1952) is a prolific writer and public speaker from the UK. His work combines popular millennialism and esoteric ideas with conspiracy narratives, making him arguably the most prominent example of *millennial conspiracism* or *conspirativity*. He is noteworthy for synthesising a vast array of rejected and stigmatised knowledge into an all-encompassing narrative, often coining terms which become part of the standard lexicon of contemporary conspiracism. His website, davidicke.com, has ranked consistently highly since c. 2000, and he regularly speaks to large audiences in cities around the world.

Icke began his career as a professional soccer player, but after developing rheumatoid arthritis aged 19, he moved into sports journalism, eventually working as a presenter for the BBC. He soon after moved into politics, joining the Green Party in 1988, and by 1990 was one of the party's most prominent figures. That year, he visited a spiritual healer for his arthritis, who began to channel an ascended Master. They made a number of prophecies, many of which portrayed Icke as a messianic figure. In 1991 he claims to have been contacted directly while in a stone circle in Peru. After resigning from the Green Party and being fired by the BBC, Icke went public, most famously with an interview on the *Wogan* show in which he was ridiculed by host and audience. He began giving public talks, although his audience was at this point small, and published six books by 1994.

The last of these, *The Robot's Rebellion* (1994), saw a move towards conspiracist themes and away from Theosophical language. Essentially, it argued that the New Age had not arrived as predicted due to the machinations of the Illuminati, portrayed as the "hidden hand" behind world history. It introduced the idea that the Illuminati are of extraterrestrial origin, which was to become his central theme for the next decade. This narrative reached its apogee with *The Biggest Secret* (1999), which infamously argued that the Illuminati are in fact reptilian extraterrestrials disguised as humans, including many political leaders and royal families. This idea proved divisive in the conspiracist milieu, but Icke's credibility improved dramatically following the 9/11 attacks in 2001. *Alice in Wonderland and the World Trade Centre Disaster* (2002) argued for a "false flag" attack – i.e., self-inflicted but blamed upon the enemy - in order to justify wars in the Middle East and restrictive laws at home, an interpretation which chimed with a bullish US conspiracism.

Following an ayahuasca trip in 2003, Icke's work took a Gurdjieffian turn, in which the reality humans experience is portrayed as a self-perpetuating construct Icke calls the *Time*

*Loop*. Essentially, humanity created a space within universal consciousness to escape its fear of the unknown, but gradually forgot that there was anything else. This self-actualising Matrix began to create more of the fear that fed its existence. The Gnostic overtones of this idea are even more marked in his post-2010 publications, which increasingly uses "archons" rather than "reptilian". After a failed attempt in 2014 to establish an independent TV station, *The People's Voice*, Icke's focus is again on public speaking events and writing.

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