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From The Editor

-- Wally Hartshorn

Welcome to another issue of The REALL News! Spring has finally arrived and warm weather is just around the corner (fingers crossed, knock on wood, various other assorted good-luck charms invoked). With the nicer weather, I'm hoping a few of the hold-outs among you will begin attending REALL meetings. This month's meeting would certainly be a good one to start with! (See the Chairman's Column for details.)

THIS IS YOUR LAST FREE ISSUE! [Doesn't apply to electronic version.]

Alas, some of you still haven't become members of REALL or even simply subscribers to The REALL News. If you want to change that, please copy or clip out the membership form at the bottom of page 7 [end of file for electronic version], fill it out, and mail it with your check to the address indicated. Better yet, bring it with you to the next REALL meeting!

This month's issue of The REALL News features "The Misconceptions of Evolution," by Ransom Traxler of the St. Louis Association for the Teaching of Evolution (SLATE). It was the basis for his lecture at a meeting of the Missouri Association for Creationism. I'm curious as to what kind of reception it received. Perhaps we can have Mr. Traxler as a speaker sometime and find out.

Our other feature article is "UFOs for Sale: An Evening with a UFO Cheerleader," by our own Bob Ladendorf and David Bloomberg. A few months ago they attended a local presentation by Bill Knell. As is pointed out in the article, it would take several issues of The REALL News to discuss all of the points made by Mr. Knell. (Luckily, I haven't been short of articles to this point, so that wasn't necessary!)

Lastly, I've decided that I really don't have the time to devote to this newsletter, so I won't be running for the position of editor when elections are held. For those of you who are wondering what you would need to be the editor, perhaps the most basic requirement is a computer with desktop publishing software and access to a laser printer. (Well, you could do things the old-fashioned way, pasting things up by hand, but computerized desktop publishing is far better.) I use PageStream on an Amiga, so if by some stroke of good coincidence the next editor also uses PageStream on an Amiga, let me know and I can provide you with the templates for the newsletter.

I've enjoyed editing The REALL News, but I'm simply too busy to continue. The May issue will presumably be my last, so I'll see you then!

From the Chairman

-- David Bloomberg
The Frustrations of Skepticism

Sometimes it can be so frustrating to be a skeptic, trying to educate people about the paranormal. Last month I found out that an acquaintance, I'll call her Ann, sent a letter to a local psychic about doing some readings. I started talking to her about it when somebody else walked in and joined the conversation (I'll call her Bea). I told them both a true story about how this particular "psychic" couldn't even see through a fake story a friend had told her about his family. Indeed, she made some predictions based on this story, never once even suggesting it wasn't true.

Bea immediately began making excuses for the psychic: "Maybe she was tired after a long day...Maybe the psychic had misinterpreted something..." etc. The explanations got so ridiculous that a third person sitting nearby said, "Bea, it sounds like you NEED to believe in this psychic."

Further discussion brought both Ann and Bea to agree that, yes, the really only remember the few "correct" predictions; yes, the more stories about "correct" predictions by the psychic are told, the more "accurate" she is said to be; yes, videotaping the psychic would probably show that she is quite often wrong and/or gives generic readings; no, she would probably not agree to be taped for just these reasons. It was also brought up that this same psychic had made several predictions for Ann years ago. Ann claimed she was right on the money. Yet another person walked up who pointed out that, in fact, one of the predictions claimed to be on the money was over a year off. Bea made more excuses, "Oh, she's always a year off, plus or minus." I pointed out that I could make predictions that were almost guaranteed to come through within that three- year timespan.

As this progressed, I thought, "Great! They understand the way these "psychics" work."

But maybe I was kidding myself. They still plan on going through with the readings. They will still continue to believe in her accuracy and do all the things we discussed.

Sometimes it can be so frustrating to be a skeptic, trying to educate people...and realizing that some just don't want to be educated. Announcements Special guest lecturer Detective Bruce Walstad (President of Professionals Against Confidence Crimes, magician, psychic- buster, author, etc.) will speak at our April 26 meeting! He will be speaking on a variety of subjects dealing with the supposed psychics he has encountered, and various con- games. He will also bring some of his books to sell, with special discounted prices for members. Tell your friends, tell your neighbors, tell your neighbors' friends! Board elections will be held at the May meeting (probably May 17). If you want to run, submit your name to an Organizing Committee member, or just show up at the meeting and speak up. Officers will be elected by the Board members either at a Board meeting immediately following or later that month, depending on everybody's availability. REALL's finalized Constitution is available to anybody who is interested. You can pick one up at a meeting, or, if you can't make a meeting, drop us a note and we'll send it to you. Late Breaking News! We received a news release dated March 25, 1993 from CSICOP which says, in part, "A federal court has imposed \$106,433.97 in sanctions against self-proclaimed psychic Uri Geller for his prosecution of a libel suit against the Committee for Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP). [These] represent the fees and costs incurred by CSICOP in defending the lawsuit through June 30, 1992. The court also authorized CSICOP to request reimbursement for the additional fees and costs incurred in defense of the litigation." For further information, come to the next REALL meeting!

The Misconceptions of Evolution

By Ransom R. Traxler

In spite of our technical society and our public school system, most people believe in many misconceptions about evolution. This is due, in part, to educators who wish to avoid controversy or who do not fully understand the subject

they teach. Furthermore, anti-evolutionists knowingly propagate these erroneous beliefs in their religious crusade against science. As a systematic biologist (in whose field organic evolution begins), I wish to correct a few of these myths. These statements are not just personal beliefs--they are facts and concepts supported by volumes of research and agreed upon by those scientists who are most knowledgeable about the subject.

Evolution is just a theory. Evolution is a valid scientific theory, just like electricity, gravity, atoms, light, cells, and disease-causing germs are valid scientific theories also. For example, we are taught that the earth orbits the sun; scientists call this the heliocentric theory. A theory in science is a highly-tested, verified and demonstrated explanation for observed facts, not "a guess or conjecture." To state that evolution is only a theory is the same as stating that gravity is only a theory. Knowing this, who would still wish to contest it by jumping off a building?

Evolution is not based on facts. There are facts and theories about evolution. The facts of evolution are that the earth is billions of years old and that the life on it has changed over that time. The fossil record is clear that life living today differs greatly from that living, say, 300 million years ago. In between we have a vast collection of fossils that, as one looks at younger and younger specimens, become more modern-looking. The theories of evolution are about what caused this metamorphosis. We know several mechanisms that can produce changes in organisms: natural selection, genetic drift, the founder effect, genetic recombination and mutations are just a few. The debates scientists have are about the mechanism of evolution, not the fact that it has occurred. Practicing scientists do not doubt evolution.

Darwin invented evolution. Would one say that Newton invented gravity or Einstein invented time? The evidence for evolution had been known by scientists for centuries. In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the early naturalists, who were also clergy, discovered that the earth was very old and that life was very different in the past. However, evolution was not generally accepted because no one knew how it was happening. In the nineteenth century Darwin was the first to propose a valid mechanism to explain what produced evolution. Since then his mechanism, natural selection, has been thoroughly tested and was rapidly accepted by scientists everywhere. Likewise, continental drift was thought of since Benjamin Franklin's time, but it was not until the 1960's that a valid mechanism, plate tectonics, was discovered. Today scientists accept it as they accept evolution. We now have several mechanisms that explain how evolution occurs, discovered by many scientists over the last century.

Evolution is caused by blind chance. In all aspects of evolution (cosmic, chemical and organic) natural laws and principles can explain what has occurred. These influences act as a controlling force that guides evolution to predictable outcomes. Cosmic evolution is governed by the laws of physics, not chance. Gravity and nuclear reactions cause the birth and death of stars and planets (we have witnessed these events with telescopes). Chemical evolution abides by the laws of molecular reactions which can produce complicated organic molecules naturally (we have witnessed this in the laboratory). Organic evolution is directed by biological principles such as natural selection and genetics, which again we have observed in the laboratory. The odds are, at the moment of conception, over 70,000,000,000,000 (70 million million) to one that your genes will not come together in the combination now in your body. However, you are here and it was all controlled by the principles of genetics. Natural forces and laws govern and direct evolution, not "blind chance."

Complex organisms, such as ourselves, must have been designed by a more complex, intelligent creator. This argument has been shown to be logically and scientifically false for at least a hundred years, yet it is still used by anti-evolutionists in their religious crusade. Logically for their argument to be true, two criteria must be adhered to:

One: everything as complex as a living organism must have been designed. No exceptions, or else we could be here not by design but by the natural process of evolution.

Two: everything as complex as a living organism must have a designer even more complex than it is. If this was not true, then we could have been designed by a less complex primate who, in turn was designed by a less complex mammal, and on and on to a primordial cell. This is a teleologic view of evolution.

Since the two conditions above must be true or the design argument fails miserably then who designed our more-complex-than-we-are-designer? And who, in turn, designed him? These two conditions require an infinite number of designers, each one more complex than the one he designed.

Scientifically, there is another choice instead of a designer or blind chance; evolution, which is guided by the laws and forces of nature. We have documented cases of changes produced by natural selection, which acts as a "designing force" to make organisms better suited to their environment. However, it is not as perfect as an omnipotent designer would be.

There are thousands of examples of poor design in nature. Many organisms use modified organs that barely suit their need; many organisms have vestigial parts that do not help them but could actually harm (wisdom teeth and appendix in us, hind limbs in whales and snakes, and much more). If this is the work of a designer, then it was a terrible job. We, with artificial selection (breeding) and genetic changes, are improving on some of the poor designs of nature.

Creationism is another scientific explanation. This is definitely not true. Creationism is a religious belief based on the Bible. Evolution is a scientific explanation based on observation, experimentation and objective evaluation. None of the vast store of scientific data we have supports a literal interpretation of the Book of Genesis. The small amount of "scientific" evidence propagated by "scientific creationists" has been investigated by the scientific community using the scientific method (just like evolution has been for over 150 years). Most of these claims were abandoned by scientists over two centuries ago because the data and experiments did not support them. The newest claims were found to be distortions and misrepresentations of firmly established data. Creationism is a religious belief and, as such, everyone is free to believe it or not; but as a scientific explanation, it has no support whatsoever in fact.

Creationism should be given equal time in the science class because so many people believe in it. Many people believe in astrology; should it be given time in an astronomy class? Or how about alchemy in a chemistry class? Numerology in a mathematics class? Atlantis and ancient astronauts in a history class? Flat-earth in a geography class? If some people believe that $6 \times 9 = 42$, should we give the students two multiplication tables and let them choose which one they will use? The science classroom is not where religious beliefs should be presented as fact for the student to accept or reject as he/she wants. Instead, the classroom is where the current knowledge in the field is presented to students to increase their understanding of that subject.

Evolution should not be taught because it is unimportant. Evolution is to biology as atoms are to chemistry. It is the unifying concept that connects genetics, anatomy, medical science, taxonomy and many others into a comprehensible framework. It is THE central idea of biology that ties together all its subparts. Evolutionary biology explains the distribution of life on this planet, tissue rejection in transplants, and how our body works. In other fields cosmic evolution is the center of astronomy (it tells us how the universe and stars function) and earth evolution is the basic concept of geology (it tells us how the earth came to be as it is today).

What would chemistry be like without atoms to explain how and why chemicals react as they do; or physics without the concept of energy being able to convert into different forms to explain how a steam engine works? What if a teacher felt that atoms or energy were unimportant and ignored them in his/her chemistry or physics class? Without the why and how explained by evolution, much of science becomes a meaningless collection of facts with no logical association or understanding.

Evolution should not be taught because it is contrary to some people's religious beliefs. First of all our government is religiously neutral according to our Constitution. Therefore, religion cannot be a factor in determining the curriculum. Secondly, the teacher has the obligation to present the students all the knowledge of the subject being taught based on their level of understanding. Any science teacher who fails to present evolution properly to the students betrays the trust placed in them by the public and acts in an unprofessional manner.

Evolution should not be taught because it promotes the religion of secular humanism. Evolution is a science and that is all it is. People are free to form whatever philosophies or religions they want based on whatever source they want. Some people have formed their belief system around old books variously translated through the years. Primitive people use a god or gods to explain ordinary occurrences in nature because that is the only way they can comprehend the world around them. Scientists of all religions accept evolution because it is the best scientific explanation we have not because of some religious reason. As a religiously-neutral science, it should be taught in the classroom.

Evolution is anti-God. Impossible, for science just like mathematics is neutral towards any religious belief. Science and

religion are two separate philosophies dealing with different realms. Religion deals with the supernatural and cannot be supported by experimentation--it must be accepted by faith alone. Science deals with the natural universe and its discoveries can be confirmed or disproved by experimentation--scientific ideas are accepted by the scientific community based on evidence. Evolution, as any science, can never say anything about the "Ultimate Cause" of the universe and our existence; these can only be answered by religion. Since these two philosophies deal with different realms, there is no basic conflict between them.

Evolutionists are atheists. Many scientists and science teachers are devoutly Christian or Jewish. Some of the great founders of evolutionary biology were strong theists. A few of us are atheists. This is because we are able to separate the two realms of our lives--the spiritual and the material. Since evolution does not deny the existence of a Supreme Being, one is free to hold whatever beliefs there are in one. Saying that "evolutionists are atheists" is just like saying "apple-lovers are orange-haters." One can like (or dislike) both apples and oranges.

Scientists believe in evolution as their religion since they do not believe in God. The religious beliefs of scientists are as varied as it is in any group of professional people. Unfortunately our secondary school textbooks and various media sources like to use the phrase "Scientists believe..." whenever they present evolution as if the scientists hold a unique religious belief. This is especially harmful when facts are presented, because it gives the student or layperson the idea that the facts are not supported by evidence and can be accepted as questionable. What would happen if a teacher were to say, "Mathematicians believe that $5 \times 6 = 30$ " or "Historians believe that we fought a civil war in the 1860's?" Instead of saying "Scientists believe in evolution" one should say "Scientists accept evolution based on the overwhelming objective evidence in its favor."

Evolution is "The Big Lie" that Satan tempted Eve with in the Garden of Eden. This may not sound like a scientific statement, but it is repeated frequently by the "scientific creationists." In fact one such group, the Institute for Creation Research, publishes a book entitled *The Lie: Evolution* with a large poster showing a serpent holding an apple marked EVOLUTION. These people state that scientists lie while they spread "The Truth." So then what is "The Truth?"

Creationists are the masters of prevarication. In their presentations they frequently make false statements about science and scientists; anyone familiar with biology or geology can spot them. Then why do they do it?

One reason could be that they are ignorant about science and, therefore, make many mistakes. However, they say that they are experts on evolution and have some degree in engineering or theology to prove it. A practicing scientist knows these statements are false and ridiculous; many of us have exposed them as such. Then why are they still frequently repeated?

The other possibility is that these anti-evolutionists know the statements are false, yet repeat them anyway. Many of the "scientific creationist" debaters make statements they cannot prove; in fact, many scientists have proved their claims as false and they have admitted their error. Yet in their next debate or presentation, they repeat these falsehoods unabatedly.

I can show anyone the scientific evidence to support what I said above. This is more than what "scientific creationists" can do. In this country anybody can hold whatever religious beliefs they want to; however, when they say that these beliefs are scientific and should be taught in public schools, they must produce evidence to support what they say. I have always found it amazing how many falsehoods and distortions are said by those spreading "The Truth."

There are many more misunderstandings about evolution which a quality science education will expose. Until such teaching becomes the standard, we scientists and educators need to reveal these myths for what they are--an attempt to mislead the public and discredit the scientists and teachers who have devoted their lives to increasing our knowledge of the universe solely for the purpose of converting students and the public to a specific religious belief system. -----
- [This article was the basis for Traxler's lecture before the Missouri Association for Creationism meeting in April, 1991. Ransom R. Traxler is the Director of the St. Louis Association for the Teaching of Evolution (SLATE), P.O. Box 462, O'Fallon, IL 62269-0462. This article reprinted with permission from the May/June 1991 issue of *The American Rationalist*. Permission to reprint this article must be obtained in writing from *The American Rationalist*, P.O. Box 994, St. Louis, MO 63188.]

Saucers for Sale: An Evening With A UFO Cheerleader

By Bob Ladendorf and David Bloomberg

[Bob Ladendorf and David Bloomberg attended the "U.F.O.s Around The World" slide show given by Bill Knell, of Island Skywatch, in December of last year. They videotaped the show, with Knell's permission; this is their evaluation of that lecture.]

Watching Bill Knell present his two-hour slide show history of UFOs is like sitting in on a major product sales presentation at a trade show: a lot of sales talk mixed with very little critical comment. A self-proclaimed "UFO Investigator," Knell showed up in Springfield, Illinois on December 14 to give his talk to several dozen interested individuals in a Holiday Inn room. This wasn't free, of course, but cost \$10 a head, plus he had publications and UFO-related tapes selling as high as \$30, including the discredited MJ-12 papers.

A large, soft-spoken middle-aged man with seemingly boundless energy as he unendingly discussed UFO matters, Knell seemed to be a nice man, one who indeed travels with his wife and children from place to place giving his slide show and displaying crudely made posters full of UFO clippings and tiny, handwritten copy that one must get down on knees to read (see photo). A sort of traveling salesman with his family in tow.

But what of his messages? What are the results of his investigations? Does he give a balanced history of UFOs? In his presentation, Knell sketched a number of claims, concluding they probably involved alien spacecraft and/or a huge conspiracy at the highest levels of the U.S. (and other countries') government. His evidence consisted largely of photographs, many of which were blurry, indistinct, and, in the least, inconclusive; videos of lit, unclear objects; eyewitness accounts; and personal testimony.

During his presentation, the room remained dark, and he seamlessly finished one topic and launched into the next one barely pausing for a breath and, consequently, discouraging any questions from the audience during the actual lecture. At the end, he took a few questions but continued his constant talking, effectively preventing any extended discussions or follow-up questions about his evidence.

Even briefly discussing all of Knell's claims and information would fill several newsletters. Luckily, much of that information has been investigated or debunked before. For example, Knell spent time dealing with the Nazca lines and von Daniken (which most mainstream UFO groups now totally disavow), the Bermuda Triangle, the "face" on Mars, the Roswell crash, etc.

In addition, it is simply impossible to check out much of the information presented, since it is often related as first- or second-hand accounts. He went here or there and talked to him or did that. Or, in other cases, he claims to have verifiable evidence for some obscure case or another, but won't show it to his audience because of his "fears" due to some conspiracy (see below for conspiracy details). A good example of this is the photo he claims to have which supposedly shows a car surrounded on all sides by trees. According to him, it was lifted by an alien craft and deposited in this strange position. Such a photo would seem to be excellent evidence, if it really did show that the car couldn't have gotten to that location by ordinary means. Alas, he says he is afraid to show it.

However, there are still plenty of points that can be checked. Some of them are made easier by Knell when he contradicts himself within the lecture. It is difficult to catch such contradictions at first listen due to his rapid-fire style, but they are certainly there.

For example, early in his talk, he discussed how the shape of UFOs has stayed very much the same throughout their history. He uses this to try to show consistency. Later, however, he discusses the wide variety of shapes, including saucers, cigars, triangles, etc., without mentioning the obvious discrepancy.

At other times, he made statements which, while not self-contradicting, are still easily shown to be bunk. He made one such statement when discussing a supposed secret room used by the government to store alien spacecraft. He said it was even hidden to "X-ray satellites, and believe me, there are such things." While this fits nicely into some of the

conspiracy theories he espouses (again, see below), it simply doesn't seem to be true. While there are likely "X-ray satellites", they are probably used for measuring X-rays originating in space. There would be little use for an X-ray satellite to scan the Earth, for several reasons. First, according to several meteorologists questioned by the authors, the atmosphere absorbs the vast majority of X-rays. Also, X-ray pictures are generally made by having some detector (usually film) BEHIND the target. While there are technologies that use scattered X-rays, they would not be the least bit useful for satellite photography. So the listener has only Mr. Knell's word against this evidence that any such thing exists.

An even better example of this was his discussion of the Carp, Canada, UFO case. REALL Organizing Committee Chairman David Bloomberg discussed some of this at the first REALL meeting, so only a brief summary will appear here. Basically, Knell claimed that he was sent the video of a UFO, the photo of the supposed alien (which looks more like a guy in a bad mask than anything else), and some Canadian government documents. Unfortunately for his case, this case was recently featured on both *Unsolved Mysteries* and *Sightings*, where a significantly different picture was drawn. Foremost among the differences is that the investigator interviewed on those shows, while saying the tape may show a "real" UFO (as opposed to a hoax), admitted that the photo of the alien and the government documents were almost certainly hoaxes. The documents, in particular, were full of misspellings, referred to a conspiracy dealing with China, aliens, Israel, and nuclear weapons, and was, overall, just a poor imitation of Canadian government documents. None of this was relayed by Knell. He flashed a slide of the documents on the screen briefly and told the audience that he had come into possession of them through a Freedom of Information request.

Other problems with his presentation of this case revolve around his story that he knows the alleged photographer ("Guardian"), and the description of the events that surrounded the making of the video. These things are all contradicted by several other UFO investigators who claim that they, not Knell, were contacted by Guardian. All in all, Knell's presentation of this case smacks of embellishment, at the very least. One is forced to wonder if the other information he presented is as accurate as this.

Another technique that Knell uses, which can be noticed by a careful listener, is the setting up and knocking down of "straw men". For example, referring to the two men in England who came forward a little while ago and admitted that they had made a number of crop circles, Knell says, "a couple of guys said, `Yeah, we made ALL the circles in England.'" (Emphasis added) He goes on to explain why they couldn't possibly have done so and concludes with, "I guess they're probably liars." Unfortunately for Mr. Knell, those men never claimed to have made ALL the circles. According to the Winter, 1992 *Skeptical Inquirer* (p. 148), the two men "claimed they had been responsible for MANY of the giant wheat-field patterns made over the years." (Emphasis added) Yes, he is correct in stating that they couldn't have made them all. But since they never claimed to, his argument amounts to nothing. He uses this type of technique several times throughout the lecture, especially when discussing items which have gotten the attention of skeptics in the past. His actions in knocking down straw men is only one indication that he may be more of a UFO cheerleader than an investigator.

The most consistent thread throughout Knell's lecture is the conspiracy. Of course, the government (and probably foreign governments too) is conspiring to keep secret the "fact" that we have been visited by (and captured) aliens. In order to keep this secret, they have obviously needed to do some strange things. For example, one guy who took some seemingly pretty good photos of UFOs in Gulf Breeze, Florida, was found to have apparently been hiding a model of the EXACT craft in his attic (he sold his house and the new residents found it). Knell implies that the FBI visited this man, stole construction material from him, crafted the model, and planted it in the attic.

Other parts of the conspiracy include his thoughts that the U.S. built the former Soviet Union's space shuttle (in order to help defend the world from a possible alien invasion), and government agencies have undertaken various alleged illegal activities. Of course, he doesn't leave out the infamous MJ-12 papers. These documents are alleged to support the idea that there is/was a secret government project dealing with UFOs. As mentioned earlier, he even sells copies of the papers, but no copies of the many articles debunking them, such as those written by Phil Klass (*SI*, Winter 1987-88; *SI*, Spring 1988; *SI*, Winter 1990). He also presented no information about the debunking in the lecture itself, even though he admitted in one-on-one questions after the lecture that they may very well be fake. What he did say in the lecture was that he doesn't know "if this is true. We don't know because the government denies these documents are real." As with other such theories, the government's denial only furthers the conspiracy, with little regard for the possibility that the

government denies that the documents are real for the simple reason that THEY AREN'T.

Finally, at the end of the presentation, Knell opened up the floor to questions. However, rather than answering many of them, if those answers might have brought out possible contradictions or evidence contrary to the information he had presented, he talked around the issue. For example, Bloomberg asked him, "I see several contradictions in many cases. Aliens fly here from many light years away, only to crash into a farmhouse. Some abductees have massive operations and come back without a mark, yet others have relatively minor 'surgery' done to them, and show huge scars to prove it. And some UFOs do their best to hide from anybody who might be watching, while at other times they fly around with all their lights on. How do you account for these?" Knell never answered the question. Instead, he said something about how humans simply can't understand the thinking process of aliens, because they are so different. He didn't give time for a followup, but jumped to the next question. Another person tried to ask a followup later, but Knell again avoided answering, earning a shaking head from that questioner.

Bill Knell claims to be a UFO investigator. An unbiased investigator is one who searches for the facts of an event and reports the results accurately and with measurable aspects of evidence, as in criminal investigations. "[Investigators] work throughout their investigation fully recognizing that even a minor contradiction or error may destroy confidence in their investigation." (Criminal Investigation, 2nd Edition, Weston and Wells, p. 1) However, Knell seems more inclined to shrug off contradictory evidence. In many cases, he certainly doesn't present it to his audience, even when he knows it exists. He claims to want people to make up their own minds based on all the evidence, but only gives half of the story. All these things make him seem less an investigator and more a UFO cheerleader or salesman.