



Selected articles from  
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## Turning the "Face on Mars" debate upside down

by Gary P. Posner

**[February 27, 2020: Any readers who have recently been unable to find Richard Hoagland's "enterprisemission.com" website should try adding an "s" in the URL (changing "mission" to "missions"), as I have done in this article's links. Per a January 23 post on his Facebook page, Hoagland "recently moved the site to a new hosting company and links have been broken." On the next line he adds that the site has now been "fixed," but that is not the case as of today's date. If he does "fix" his site before I then "refix" this article's links to it, try removing the "s" from the URL.]**

As recounted in last winter's TBS Report, [my article](#) in the Nov./Dec. 2000 [Skeptical Inquirer](#) was a hard-hitting look at Richard C. Hoagland, "The Face Behind the 'Face' on Mars." Hoagland's website soon posted [a rejoinder](#) accusing me of "blatant lies, distortions . . . Clintonian half-truths . . . propaganda and character assassination." But did they ever change their tune when [my follow-up column](#) appeared in the May/June 2001 *Skeptical Inquirer*.

In that column, which clarified and expanded upon a few points, I included several additional images of the "Face," among them an [artist's rendering](#) -- endorsed by Hoagland's website as the "properly processed and ortho-rectified version" -- that makes the "Face" appear symmetrical and extremely human. I also showed [a version](#) of NASA's 1998 photo -- with dark and light reversed to simulate an opposite sun angle -- which one can imagine resembling not a human face but a lion's head. (Both images were in last winter's TBS Report as well.)

Incredibly, just as the Hoagland forces falsely maligned my original article, they have mischaracterized my follow-up column as if I was now endorsing Hoagland's claim that the "Face" is man-made! Since this latest mischief is not posted on Hoagland's website, I wouldn't have known about it had I not received an e-mail on May 26 from someone who had heard part of the previous night's nationally broadcast [Coast to Coast A.M.](#) radio program, on which Hoagland had been a guest.

Before introducing Hoagland, host Art Bell told his vast audience,

Gary Posner of the *Skeptical Inquirer*, incredibly in his May/June 2001 article, said, quote, Some have remarked that this version -- a [1998] light-reversed Face on Mars photo -- does indeed look a bit more like a head, though that of a lion rather than a humanoid. The idea therefore, that Richard C. Hoagland should be ridiculed for stating that the new Face on Mars photo shows an eastern-side lion's head, is ridiculous. . . . And you don't frequently ever hear that from the *Skeptical Inquirer*. The concept that Richard should be ridiculed for what he said, according to the *Skeptical Inquirer*, is ridiculous. [[Listen to the audio \(MP3\)](#)]

Bell failed to say "end-quote" after "humanoid" and read the next sentence -- invented by him (or someone) out of whole cloth -- as if he was still quoting from my column. Further, he articulated the word "ridiculous" so slowly that, again, there can be no question of his intent to sound as if he was quoting me, which he was not. [[See the article](#) (pertinent passage circled)]

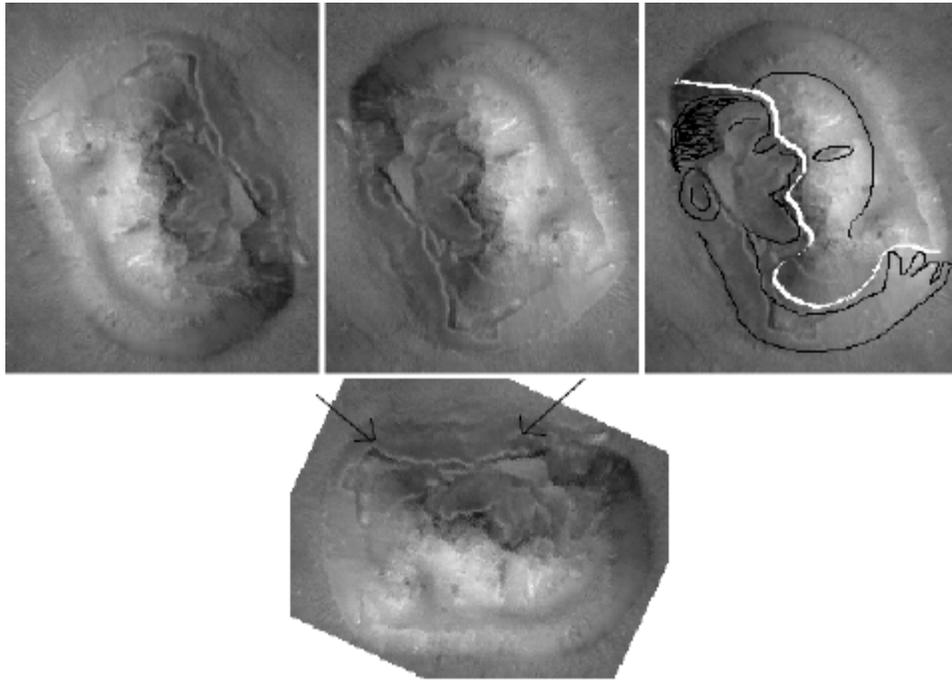
Shortly thereafter, Hoagland referred to my follow-up column as a "retraction" of my original "hit piece," and said this later in the show:

And the most amazing thing is Gary Posner's reaction. . . . For him to say I shouldn't be ridiculed for proposing this, I think, and the reason [*Skeptical Inquirer*] did the retraction is that they had an inside track from the political side -- not the NASA side, but the political side -- that there *is* a "Face" on Mars, it *does* have dual [humanoid-lion] imagery, and we're going to go there [with a manned mission] and find out what it means. [[Listen to the audio \(MP3\)](#)]

Hoagland now says that, for a decade, he has maintained that the left side of the "Face" is humanoid and the right side is a lion. If so, what about his endorsement of that "ortho-rectified," fully human image?

If Hoagland and friends can turn my words and meaning upside down, I figured I'd turn the "Face" upside down and see what I could see. Below (left) is NASA's latest view of the "Face," taken in April 2001 by the Mars Global Surveyor orbital craft. Turning it upside down (middle) revealed two figures (right), one unmistakably human. Whether the face on the right is a human fetus or an alien "gray," I can't be sure. But either way, the architect's message is profound!

And if you instead rotate the face 65 degrees counter-clockwise (beneath), you'll see, from slightly below chin level, a slumbering cat-monster with slit-like eyes!



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## Noreen Renier's "psychic" power endorsed in *USA Today*

by Gary P. Posner

The June 20 edition of *USA Today* featured, on page 1D, [an article](#) by Greg Barrett entitled, "Can the living talk to the dead? Psychics say they connect with the spirit world, but skeptics respond: 'Prove it.'"

The title sounded promisingly neutral. And indeed, interspersed among glowing claims by and about several "psychics" were skeptical comments from [James "The Amazing" Randi](#) and [CSICOP](#) chairman Paul Kurtz.

Further, a discussion about the CIA having spent \$20-million in taxpayers' money on psychic research between 1972 and 1995 ended with this line: "The government's conclusion: 'It was unpromising,' [CIA spokeswoman Anya] Guilsher says."

Randi was even given the last word, challenging "psychic" Laurie Campbell to come "Blow down my house." Randi was referring to the preceding comment, by a Campbell supporter, to the effect that if Randi were to ever "let anyone win [his \$1-million] prize . . . his house of cards would fall."

Thus, I was just a bit disappointed over how the writer referred to Florida "psychic detective" [Noreen Renier](#). The following, which appeared immediately after Anya Guilsher's comment, is the entirety of that coverage. His first three words seemingly reveal a personal belief in the reality of Renier's "psychic" power:

Never mind that in 1981 psychic Noreen Renier was lecturing on ESP at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Va., when she warned that President Reagan would soon receive an injury to his upper chest. Two months later, the name John Hinckley was notorious.

After investigators interrogated Renier and cleared her of any involvement in the assassination attempt, she says that they had one final question:

"Do you see any other danger for the president?"

She didn't.

As I documented in [my chapter](#) about Renier in the book *Psychic Sleuths*, Renier's comment at the FBI Academy has been vouched for by former FBI supervisory special agent Robert Ressler. But according to another source cited, Renier had made a series of off-base predictions two years earlier about President Jimmy Carter and Vice-President Walter Mondale. Does her comment about Reagan constitute reasonable evidence of genuine "psychic" power, or might it have been a fluke but extremely fortunate "hit"?

As for her follow-up government "interrogation," the writer apparently relies upon Renier's word ("she says") as documentation that it actually took place, as did the *New York Post* reporter whose article I cited in my chapter. And perhaps it did -- after all, that's a far cry from some of Renier's more far-fetched claims.

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## **Randi vs. Monti on Fox News Channel**

Noreen Renier isn't Florida's only "psychic detective." In fact, unlike Renier, [John Monti](#) resides in the Tampa Bay area. And on August 6, Monti and James Randi were Judith Regan's guests during a portion of her Fox News Channel weekend show. The topic: Chandra Levy's disappearance. When asked what happened to Levy and where she is, Monti replied, "My feeling is that she went over to the train station . . . and she went around a bowling alley, and then she went south from there. . . . A little [town by] the border of Virginia and Washington [with a "Q" sound] associated with [the town's name]."

Randi provided rationality about such "psychic" readings, and reiterated his foundation's \$1-million offer.

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## **Snippets**



According to a *TV Guide* article titled "Psychic Plotlines," a plethora of psi stuff will soon be infesting our television sets. Ballroom dance instructor cum psychic medium John Edward, who talks to deceased spirits on the Sci-Fi Channel, will have his show syndicated to "non-fiction" stations. Fellow dead-man-talking [James Van Praagh](#) is not only beating away syndication suitors with a stick -- in the frenzy to give him a show of his own -- but CBS is producing a TV miniseries about his life, starring Ted Danson. Another spirit-chatter, Char, is slated to hop on the gullibility gravy train courtesy of NBC. And internet astrologer Ferdie Pacheco, son of Muhammad Ali's "Fight Doctor" and a well-known Las Vegas showgirl, is developing a TV show. Edward warns that if his new competitors don't enter the game with his degree of "integrity and compassion," they just might "affect the entire field in a negative way." Horrors!

(*TV Guide*, June 16-22)

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Highlands County is certainly aptly named with respect to its current stance on fortunetellers. In its effort to protect the public, the County Commission has mandated that such practitioners post a \$50,000 surety bond before they will be permitted a license to practice. At a recent Commission meeting about this fee, the lawyer representing a Sebring seer lamented that although his client had the ability to predict how the debate would ultimately turn out, "She can't [afford to] do business right now." Further discussion of this matter was tabled until August 21. (I bet she knew that would happen!)

(*Tampa Tribune*, Aug. 9)

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## TBS in the Media

Gary Posner was quoted in a June 7 [feature article](#) on Florida "psychic detective" John Monti in the *Dallas Observer*. He was also interviewed in July for a *Ladies' Home Journal* article, scheduled for December, about medical studies purporting to demonstrate the healing power of distant prayer (a subject he will be speaking about in Atlanta at a Center For Inquiry conference in November).

Posner was also interviewed via phone on July 19 by Fox News Channel contributor Heather Nauert for her next-day report on "psychic detectives" (she had just spoken with Noreen Renier). And on July 25 a TV crew taped him for an appearance on a new Pax-TV series called *Forbidden Secrets*, which will debut this fall. The topic of this installment: Past-Life Regression therapy.

Posner also received an invitation to appear as a guest (via telephone) with Richard "Face on Mars" Hoagland on WPZZ-FM in Indianapolis. Though Posner accepted, host Bob Price informed him that he never received a reply from Hoagland, despite multiple attempts.

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