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Subject: AREA51 ML REVIEW: Richard Hall's final 'Reality Check' [on UFO Mag, USA]

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Subject: Richard Hall's final 'Reality Check' [on UFO Mag, USA]
From: Francisco Lopez <d005734c@dc.seflin.org>

Via: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
From: Steven Kaeser <steve@konsulting.com>

[I am forwarding this posting to the Project 1947 List with permission from Richard Hall.]

Richard Hall has sent along his last column submitted to UFO Magazine. He gave them the option of publishing it as a letter to the editor. They did not publish it, but instead left the readers with the impression that he was disappearing from their pages for no specific reason.

He has allowed us to post the column here.

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CALL ME A PURIST!

By Richard Hall

It has been my privilege to contribute a column ("The column formerly known as Reality Check") to this magazine for several years, and I am grateful to editor Vicki Cooper Ecker for this opportunity. Now, however, I have decided to resign and I feel that I owe the readers an explanation.

As I explained in a private communication, I am just old fashioned or simple minded enough to think that UFO Magazine should be about UFOs, not about all the other things it is increasingly about, such as the total domination of the June issue by Egyptian archeology. Leave borderline science (and sometimes beyond the fringe pseudoscience) for aficionados of same. Leave science fiction for a science fiction publication. Leave imaginative fiction...please!

To my way of thinking UFOs are a real, physical scientific mystery that have been swept under the carpet by the major institutions of our society. The failure of Government to acknowledge the problem in an open and positive way, and the failure of conventional news media to ferret out the

story through standard methods and investigative journalism, leaves a very confused public. When we, the advocates of a real mystery, mix in other oddball or offbeat ideas with UFOs and toss in fiction and imagination, it can only lead to further confusion.

There is a clearcut need for good investigative journalism, which Vicki and Don Ecker have demonstrated an aptitude for. But whatever economic imperatives or organizational biases are at work, UFO Magazine has drifted more and more toward subject matter that has little if anything to do with UFOs. The tone of the magazine has become uncomfortably close to anti-scientific or anti-establishment, often entertaining some pretty far-out notions in the process as if they were more accurate than present knowledge.

It won't do to simply say that mainline science or scholarship doesn't have all the answers, and that reasonable alternative explanations are being offered. Good "borderline science" (Fortean) research obviously is needed in many areas, and science needs to wake up to strong evidence of anomalies. But credible scholarship on the part of some contributing authors often is lacking. The disc-plane article in the May issue, for example, is simply bad history.

The speculations about alleged operational U.S. "flying saucer" craft are totally unsupported by any objective, documented evidence. The notion that the 1947 Arnold sighting and the 1950 McMinnville, Oregon, photographs (among other cases) could have been secret U.S. disc craft is, frankly, nonsense. In neither case did the UFO perform like conventional craft. Arnold's UFOs oscillated and flipped. The Oregon object hovered silently.

Beyond that, there is not an iota of evidence that any of the proposed aircraft ever became operational. Lots of patents and other "paper plans" for unusual aircraft exist, but not the actual craft itself. The AVRO "saucer" clearly never went beyond the air cushion machine stage. Also, the author's quaint notion that the 1955 Air Force photograph showed an actual craft in flight is laughable. The double image is a fake.

When this sort of blatant speculation is presented as if it were somehow superior to current knowledge, and slick "theories" (here and elsewhere) are advanced that far outstrip good evidence, sensible and scholarly people can only wince. Half-baked theories are a dime a dozen, and contaminate the UFO field on a regular basis.

Meanwhile, the relationship of many feature articles to the serious, factual UFO mystery ranges from tenuous to nonexistent. Already this year we have seen articles about a killer asteroid, the future mission of the Air Force, and human evolution. We have also seen Peter Gersten in a funny looking robe traipsing around in the desert in pursuit of an obvious hoax. We have seen issues devoted to fake photographs, even on how to fake photographs, up to and including a rehash of the now thoroughly discredited Billy Meier fakes.

To be sure, we have had some good reporting during this period, including the very fine February issue devoted largely to pilot sightings and the April issue with interesting material about UFOs and Russia. Here and

there some good news items have been reported, but seldom good quality feature articles on the primary topic: UFOs. A lot of good UFO research work is being done out there which is essentially ignored.

A bothersome fact is that we seldom see contributions by or about any of the mainline active ufologists or the many sane, grounded individual researchers who work mainly out of the limelight. In abduction research, people like Budd Hopkins, David Jacobs, Ray Fowler. Solid mainline researchers like Don Berliner, Rob Swiatek, Tom Deuley, Mark Rodeghier, Michael Swords. Worthy historical researchers like Barry Greenwood, Jan Aldrich, Loren Gross, Jerry Clark, Wendy Connors, and Michael Hall.

A fascination with the much contaminated Roswell case (even though I consider it valid at the core) hides the fact that there are many other so-called crash-retrieval cases well worth digging into. Innumerable impressive physical evidence cases. Major accomplishments in archival research that people need to know about. But, as I have repeatedly protested in my column, these things apparently are not "sexy" enough for the "spiritual questors" and other people who want final answers, now, if not yesterday. Imagination plays a supporting role in human endeavor, but it is not a valid substitute for grounded, scholarly research.

I deeply regret this drift toward some kind of least common denominator. The magazine could continue to play an important role by focusing on investigative journalism, case studies, sensible historical research, and news reporting. But that does not appear to be in the cards. Therefore, I cannot in good conscience continue to "play along" in hopes that UFO Magazine will evolve into the badly needed publication it could be. All the signs suggest otherwise.

And so I say, thanks for hearing me out. I will continue to fight for my principles and present my viewpoint elsewhere.

UFO UpDates - Toronto - updates@globalserve.net
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