



Aliens On Earth.com

Resources for those who are stranded here



Our Bookstore is **OPEN**

Over 5000 new & used titles, competitively priced!

Topics: [UFOs](#) - [Paranormal](#) - [Area 51](#) - [Ghosts](#) - [Fortean](#) - [Conspiracy](#) - [History](#) - [Biography](#) - [Psychology](#) - [Religion](#) - [Crime](#) - [Health](#) - [Geography](#) - [Maps](#) - [Science](#) - [Money](#) - [Language](#) - [Recreation](#) - [Technology](#) - [Fiction](#) - [Other](#) - [New](#)

Search... for keyword(s)

in Page Titles

Location: [Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1996](#) -> [Dec](#) -> Re: 'Fake' and 'Self-Proclaimed'

UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: 'Fake' and 'Self-Proclaimed'

From: Greg Sandow <GSANDOW@prodigy.net>
Date: Sun, 15 Dec 1996 21:40:04 -0500
Fwd Date: Mon, 16 Dec 1996 14:47:45 -0500
Subject: Re: 'Fake' and 'Self-Proclaimed'

Vince Johnson wrote:

> Hi Greg,
> I think you're automatically ascribing a pejorative meaning to the
> terms "self claimed" or "self proclaimed" that really isn't justified.
> An accusation of rape without any substantiating evidence is only an
> accusation -- not a verdict. To describe the claimant as a "rape
> victim" in the absence of *any* supporting evidence indicates a prima
> facie acceptance of the claim and reveals an endorsement of the
> claimant's tale.
> Jurisprudence, as well as science, just doesn't work that way.
> Accepting the fact that inexplicably weird things really do happen to
> people, we also know that people make stuff up for a variety of
> reasons. Use of the term "self-proclaimed" is just a qualifier to
> indicate that the claims have not been verified and/or the absence of
> any supporting evidence.
> Regards,
> Vince

Vince, I understand that the literal meaning of the words isn't pejorative.

I can only tell you how they're used in magazines and newspapers. In practice, phrases like "self-claimed" and, even more, "self-proclaimed" are used to underline the fact that the person involved is making unsubstantiated claims about him- or herself. For instance, when we talk about an "abductee," we understand, most of us, that these are people who think they've been abducted by aliens. We also understand that these abductions haven't been proved.

If we start talking about "self-claimed," we're underlining the fact that the abductions haven't been proved. This will usually have a slightly derisive effect, as if we were saying "these people who claim to be abducted, but hah! They can't prove it." That's what a political columnist would mean in referring to the "self-proclaimed Grand Vizier of the Ku Klux Klan." That translates as "this jerk who invented a phony title to inflate his position as head of a tiny, hateful band of idiots." If you read a reference to "Bill Clinton, a self-claimed moderate," you're probably reading a Republican commentator who still is harping on the charge that Clinton is really a liberal.

If I was still a senior editor at Entertainment Weekly, I could quickly survey my colleagues. This was not the kind of thing we ever argued

about, and my guess is that they'd have readily agreed that these terms are at least mildly critical, and that whenever a writer used one of them, we had to be careful that the critical or faintly demeaning tone was justified.

I've just finished a piece on UFOs for a national magazine. If I referred to "self-claimed abductees," I think I can guarantee (to use a word from John Powell's phrasebook!) that my editor would query it. He'd take the phrase as an indication that I thought abductions weren't real, and ask me why I had to insist on that so strongly.

>From the *American Heritage Dictionary*, 3d edition:

self-proclaimed: "so called by oneself; self-styled"

self-styled: "as characterized by oneself, often without right or justification."

>From the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*:

self-proclaimed: "proclaimed to be so by oneself, without authorization from another"

from Webster's New World Dictionary:

self-proclaimed: "so proclaimed or announced by oneself" (their example is the kind of usage I've been talking about: "a self-proclaimed ruler")

The other major dictionaries, the Merriam-Webster and the Random House Webster's, don't include these words. And yes, I'm a dictionary nut. I've got to laugh at myself, but I actually have all these (and a few more!) on my bookshelves...

Greg Sandow

Search for other documents to/from: [gsandow](#)

[[Next Message](#) | [Previous Message](#) | [This Day's Messages](#)]
[[This Month's Index](#) | [UFO UpDates Main Index](#) | [MUFON Ontario](#)]

UFO UpDates - Toronto - updates@globalserve.net

Operated by Errol Bruce-Knapp - ++ 416-696-0304

A Hand-Operated E-Mail Subscription Service for the Study of UFO Related Phenomena.

To subscribe please send your first and last name to updates@globalserve.net

Message submissions should be sent to the same address.

[[UFO Topics](#) | [People](#) | [Ufomind What's New](#) | [Ufomind Top Level](#)]

To find this message again in the future...

Link it to the appropriate [Ufologist](#) or [UFO Topic](#) page.

Archived as a public service by [Area 51 Research Center](#) which is not responsible for content.

Software by Glenn Campbell. Technical contact: webmaster@ufomind.com

Financial support for this web server is provided by the [Research Center Catalog](#).