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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: The Varginha 'Saga'

From: **Francisco Lopez** <d005734c@dc.seflin.org>
Date: Fri, 18 Apr 1997 03:04:59 -0400 (EDT)
Fwd Date: Fri, 18 Apr 1997 08:51:50 -0400
Subject: Re: The Varginha 'Saga'

From:UFOMiami@aol.com

THE END OF THE LINE

INTRODUCTION

The general reader is not prepared to understand that advanced degrees and letters after a name do not guarantee an exceptional level of wisdom, and that often enough active scholars lack two traits that are paramount in scientific debate: time to read carefully, and the ability to set aside their distorting preconceptions. As a result, the debates are dominated by mischaracterizations as if we were not able to argue about substance and reality, but instead prefer misunderstanding as the subject for invective. The focus shifts from the significant issues to irrelevant secondary considerations, and as the participants move away from the initial incident the picture becomes distorted and confusing; but very few of us pause to think who the winners are in this situation, and that perhaps we are being manipulated by the powers that be.

It is true that investigators in ufology are extremely busy individuals, as in many cases their research is added to a regular 40-hour week required to make a living. But this is not an excuse to glance over what their opponents have replied, or worse, as often happens in other scientific fields, show willingness to argue without having read it at all.

It is sometimes hard to cast preconceptions aside when they are based on ethnic or nationalistic considerations, but intellectual integrity requires the true scholar to humbly keep an open mind at all times, and allow the new facts to speak to him, even if the knowledge jeopardizes his pet theories. Science is not the patrimony of a certain country or group, but universal in scope and its objective is the advance of humankind.

In reply to our previous piece posted on INTERNET we have received from Mr. A. J. Gevaerd a new lengthy essay dated 6 April 1997. It is well written and unlike other amusing obscene letters originating from investigator Vitorio Pacaccini, the language used is civil and acceptable. However, the answer is NOT SATISFACTORY. Rather than to reply to his piece point-by-point (approach that not only would be repetitious but has also failed so far), we will attempt a new tack based on the beliefs mentioned above. But you must keep in mind that Americans are distinguished by a sardonic, wonderful insistence on the right to dissent, to object, and to raise hell when an attempt to intimidation is suspected.

We have written this letter in an attempt to close the gap that apparently separate us, and in the view that ufology does not recognize national frontiers. But the gap will not be closed unless you also make an effort. We are not your enemy, but your allies, and are interested only in discovering the truth, based on solid evidence, not in hearsay, unfounded

rumors and anecdotal narratives. How long do you think it will take those military witnesses that you have in videotape to recant their stories when the government starts to apply the pressure?

(As noted on the cover of UFO Magazine No. 17, this has already occurred). We are not pro-Benitez, nor anti-Brazilian. Is that so hard for you to understand? Parenthetically, as a result of Vitorio's venomous attacks, we have received innumerable letters of support, and have realized that there are in Brazil many serious researchers having the same objectives than ours....

THE NEGATIVE SIDE

(1) the general tone of your letter is patronizing, as evidenced by the repetition of the word "doctor", and by your reaction to the use of the word "saga" to describe what is going on. This was not utilized in a derogatory sense, but to enhance the role of the Brazilian investigators who not only are carrying a dialectic fight against nosy foreign researchers, but are also involved in a more dangerous game when trying to penetrate the censorship imposed by their own government.

(2) The emphasis seems to be that only the Brazilian investigators are in possession of all the facts, and hence only they are qualified to issue an opinion on the validity of the case. This strikes as a very nationalistic posture but at the same time is revealing: the information exists, but has not been released. The question is then, WHY NOT? Certainly, not because we didn't ask for it, not once, but many times. Specifically, we had asked about marks on the ground when the investigators first visited the site in January or February, 1996, and only just now we got your reply:

NO, WE NEVER MEASURED, PHOTOGRAPHED, SKETCHED ANY GROUND MARKS BECAUSE THERE WERE NOTHING THERE.

Two conclusions follow this statement:

- (I) no UFO landed there
- (ii) Benitez documented something else

This is exactly what we have been trying to tell you for months.

(3) In your present letter, Mr. Gevaerd, as in your previous one, you make a certain number of false assumptions, but for the sake of brevity we will mention only a few:

- (a) that on November 12, 1996, Benitez went to Varginha "for unknown purposes, secretly", adding: "he preferred to GO to the city anonymously, totally in silence"

Well, of course, we only have Benitez version, but when we talked with him our impression was that it was an impromptu trip, and that he didn't even know who his guides were. But now you come forward and tell us that: Mr. Anibal Albuquerque is a retired colonel from the same military Army installation from where the soldiers captured the ET", and that Tadeu Pinto Mendes is no more than a dilettante, an ignorant but enthusiastic youngster. This was not even hinted at in your first letter, and we found no reference to this matter in No.17 of UFO. The question is now: WHY DID THE BRAZILIAN INVESTIGATORS DECIDE TO WITHHOLD THE INFORMATION? Perhaps in fear of official retribution?. I am sure that you realize how this changed our perspective of the case, as it opens other options like the possibility that Benitez was taken to a site that had been doctored specifically for him. In short, he could have been setup. Since you are there, this is a question for you to answer.

As a starting point to collaborate, why don't you please send us the postal addresses of the retired colonel Albuquerque and Pinto Mendes, which we have been unable to obtain?

(b) "unlike you both, I am a very busy man who doesn't have time to spare in nonsense". What makes you think that we live in luxury, and spend our time in goading Brazilian investigators? And since when the pursuing of truth is nonsense? In the same paragraph, your advice us not to risk our reputation by defending biased opinions and wrong, inaccurate information you get from INTERNET. Really, my dear Gevaerd, you don't read well. For the umpteen time, our sources are Brazilian. Neither of us have done what you --without blinking an eye-- accuse us of doing. We were puzzled, and we only submitted questions, but when the answers were not forthcoming, we started to realize that Varginha was not what it seemed. And as you incompletely quoted Dr. Hynek'. "What you see is not what you get ", but the purpose of an ufologist is to get what you don't see.

(c) In several places you use the word extraterrestrial, when referring to the creatures captured in the Varginha area. This is NOT based an any

evidence available to you or to your Brazilian colleagues, and all you are doing is providing ammunition for the skeptics, whose main contention is that "les OVNI's n'existent pas". Usage of such terminology doesn't help the cause of ufology as a scientific discipline.

(d) And finally you gratuitously and offensively accuse us of "having been paid by Benitez to defend his weak and ridiculous findings". If you had been more careful in reading what we wrote you would be aware that we never supported the Spanish writer, and that if a misunderstanding occurred it was due to the reluctance of some Brazilian parties to provide some basic information. We think you owe us an apology for this paragraph.

THE POSITIVE SLIDE

In addition to adding the possibility that Benitez was duped, your letter provides valuable information about the crashing of "an strange aircraft" (your words) in the area. You indicate that you have a witness, a radar operator, and that neither him nor anybody else ever detected it coming up later.

This opens also a Pandora box, and we have asked in vain about the details of such crash, since obviously if you didn't find any debris or ground marks, it was because somebody cleaned up the site. And who could have done so? We both know the answer. It seems that there is also some question about the date, as we have seen Jan. 12 listed somewhere.

Your advice to us was that we should ask the right parties, and you offered to mail us the pertinent issues of the UFO Magazine. (we only have No. 17, March 1997) We are happy to accept your offer, as the material would be valuable and much appreciated. Here is a "safe" mailing address:

MIAMI UFO CENTER
P.O. Box 960771
Miami, FL. 33296, USA

As you certainly must know, Dr. Sanchez-Ocejo interest extends to the so improperly call "chupacabras", so we would be thankful for information about this topic. Our interest on Varginha started that way, and now that you have disposed of Benitez alleged evidence, he is out of picture for us, and as the UFO connection have disappeared, all seems to point out in the "chupacabras" direction. Before you jump again to the wrong assumptions and question our sources, we want to point out the main ones: (i) UFO MAGAZINE No. 17, and (ii) a lengthy videotape edited by John Carpenter, in which you appear personally, although the main presentation is by a very energetic Pacaccini. We have not seen there any evidence of extraterrestrial provenance. On the other hand, the descriptions of the captured animals are vivid, and the similarities with the so called "chupacabras" are remarkable.

Sincerely yours,
Dr. Willy Smith Dr. Virgilio Sanchez-Ocejo
UNICAT Project Miami UFO Center

April 17, 1997

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