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Location: [Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1997](#) -> [Sep](#) -> [Ufomind Policy on Use of Pseudonyms](#)

UFO UpDates Mailing List

Ufomind Policy on Use of Pseudonyms

From: campbell@ufomind.com (Glenn Campbell, Las Vegas)
Date: Mon, 1 Sep 1997 00:21:13 -0800
Fwd Date: Mon, 01 Sep 1997 12:09:42 -0400
Subject: Ufomind Policy on Use of Pseudonyms

On Aug. 28, on the UFO Updates Mailing List, Linda Cortile Writes:

>From: HONEYBE100@aol.com
>Date: Thu, 28 Aug 1997 21:57:32 -0400 (EDT)
>To: updates@globalserve.net
>Subject: Re: Question for Linda Cortile

>>Linda, I'd like to point out that the UFO Updates Archive (UFO Mind) >>site profiles you on their investigator page. Your page is listed as >>"Linda -----." So naturally people are going to use your real >>name. Ethics has nothing to do with it.

>Fancy meeting you here! <G> Thanks for alerting me as to the UFO >Updates (UFO Mind) site. I was unaware of their using my real name. >That's irresponsible on their part, as it would be for anyone else to >use my real identity. No...it isn't natural for people to go against >anyone's wishes, unless they're natural born butt-heads. Ethics has >EVERYTHING to do with it because the use of a pseudonym says >a lot. When I'm ready to use my real name, I will.

Perhaps I should clarify the Ufomind policy on the use of "real" names versus pseudonyms.

First, though, I must point out that the UFO UpDates Archive and the Ufomind People section are separate entities. Ufomind happens to host the archive but has no control over its content, and vice versa. Errol controls the mailing list, while I control the People section and the rest of the server. The decision to create a "Linda -----" page is mine alone. Right now, I don't recall where "-----" came from (and I am not too familiar with the -----/Cortile story, but here is my general policy...

The Ufomind People section lists people by their last name. I want to create a single stable address for each person, and pseudonyms confuse things. If Mr. Smith is also known as Mr. Jones, should it be...

www.ufomind.com/ufo/people/s/smith/ or
www.ufomind.com/ufo/people/j/jones/ ?

My rule is that I use a person's real name whenever it is a matter of "public record" -- e.g., when Mr. Jones has been identified as Mr. Smith in a published news story, in reliable documents on the web or in any other public forum.

I do not try to "expose" a person's identity if it is not already public knowledge, and I do not usually conduct an investigation to determine a person's real name; I simply perform a web search and search a few public references and see if the real name turns up.

I recognize that some sources may require anonymity, because their involvement in the UFO field may cause professional, personal or legal problems. This protection ends when you become a "public figure" in the UFO movement. If you just want to tell your story to a researcher and be done with it, and you use a pseudonym, then there is no reason that your real name should be published if you don't want it to be. If, however, you choose to appear on talk shows or do the lecture circuit, then you have stepped into public figure status. You also cross the line when you seek any personal or financial gain from your story.

There is some judgement involved on my part. If someone is making money from their story or there is any evidence of fraud, then I will more actively seek their real name. If someone is a quiet individual who tells his story and then goes back to private life, then I may choose not to print their real name even if I know it myself.

I faced my own dilemma with "Jarod 2" an acquaintance of mine who claims to have worked for a secret government UFO project and whose story I wrote about in the Desert Rat. I used a pseudonym for him not to protect him from the government but from the UFO nutcases, who were already camping out in front of his house (like "Ambassador Merlyn Merlin II" aka David Solomon, an especially annoying "alien" who was camping in his car in front of Jarod's home). Whenever someone tells a good UFO story, they are often subjected to unsolicited visitors and phone calls -- an annoying stream of UFO buffs who come to "ask questions" but end up doing most of the talking themselves.

In one of his many anti-Campbell tirades, Lazar supporter Gene Huff posted "Jarod 2 is Bill Uhouse" repeatedly on the newsgroups as a way of needling me. I chose to ignore this for a while, even though it was now on the net, because I felt that Uhouse had done nothing on his own to justify public figure status. I think I would have done the same with anyone else's private source, because the Huff message was purely vengeful and was not intended to serve any journalistic or research purpose.

However, Uhouse has also spoken at some UFO conferences and sells UFO-related merchandise (playing cards & T-shirts). This removes the "right of anonymity," so I have had to add a page on him under his own name.

Sometimes, I will add a page for someone under their alias and only later find out what their real name is. In this case, it is a judgement call whether I should keep the original URL or rename it. The important factor here is that I want to maintain a stable URL.

This database does not seek anyone's permission before creating a page on them, and it is in no way "authorized" by each person. We will create a page on any "public figure" in the UFO movement, and both supporters and opponents can post links to this page. Note that I supply only a minimum amount of information at the top of each page, and the person's "Role" should be a phrase that everyone agrees one. I publish city of residence when I have it, but I do not publish street addresses, phone numbers or email addresses. I try to walk a middle line between providing enough information and intruding unnecessarily into a person's privacy. For example, not printing a person's mailing and email addresses will not deter a serious researcher from finding them, but it will discourage junk mailers.

Pseudonyms do not aid the free exchange of information, because they allow a person to hide their past deceptions. Given the lack of physical evidence in this field, to evaluate any UFO claim you must evaluate the person who is making it, and pseudonyms hinder that process.

Here are a few other pseudonyms I have published without permission:

Valdemar Valerian and O.H. Krill are John Grace at <http://www.ufomind.com/ufo/people/g/grace/>

(He protested to me by phone and said I should not print his "birth name," but since his business derives from selling UFO documents at high prices -- which some contend are fraudulent -- and his military credentials are disputed, I chose to publish his identity anyway.)

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