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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Sherman J. Larsen and Ufology

From: Gary Alevy <galevy@pipeline.com>
Date: Mon, 21 Dec 1998 00:03:19 -0500
Fwd Date: Mon, 21 Dec 1998 14:13:46 -0500
Subject: Re: Sherman J. Larsen and Ufology

Hello again, gentle list folk!

This message will be in reply to the December 17th missive of Jan Aldrich but first I must make a few preliminary remarks.

We should always keep in mind the fact that to my critics on this list I am a ufological nobody making wild and totally unsubstantiated charges. Please read that sentence again, and compare it with what has been happening on this list for the last several days. That is, my wild and unsubstantiated charges have brought down a veritable hurricane of abuse, a level of response seemingly far, far above that deserved by wild and unsubstantiated charges. Why has this been? Well, as my private mail has shown, there is reason for the reaction of my critics and those list readers with experience in this field know that full well. That's why I'm writing my book.

So, let us consider Mr. Aldrich's December 17th comments. His remarks, which I will have to edit for space, will be preceded by a single arrow:

>It would be interesting to know just who this "reliable"
>source was.

No doubt it would and I could just provide that information to you for free. But in a long-established ufological tradition I am going to reserve that little tidbit for myself and perhaps the future readers of my book.

And anyway, Mr. Hall has the REAL files of NICAP, the ones Donald Keyhoe himself kept. . .in a safe, more on this file later.

>During the 1960s and 1970s I visited NICAP a number of
>times. I copied from the files and placed material in the
>files. Pretty much I was given free rein to look at
>whatever I pleased.

I think this rather says it all, does it not? That is, shall we say that the security of these files was, er, suspect during the 1960s and 1970s? I think that's a fair statement. Now, I ask you, if you were running NICAP (during the Keyhoe era) would you put your crown jewels into such a file? That is, there might be some pretty good material in there but, well, as for the very, very best -- that's going to be someplace else, isn't it! Donald Keyhoe himself noted that certain materials were segregated from the NICAP files. He also noted that these were so sensitive that they were kept in a safe.

Regarding NICAP files Donald Keyhoe had this to say in his Foreword to "Flying Saucers Top Secret" pp. 10-11.

"If that resistance continues to block open hearings, [at this time Keyhoe was trying to obtain Congressional hearings on UFO secrecy - GA.] it is hoped that this book will bring sufficient public support to end the secrecy on this vitally important subject. The following chapters include all the important evidence presented to individual congressmen and committee chairmen, including details of the behind-the-scenes battle against censorship.

As indicated in the text, the main points are backed by documentary evidence; this is available for inspection at the NICAP office in Washington, except for a few documents listed as confidential, which are certified as genuine by Board members and the Secretary of NICAP."

Elsewhere Keyhoe notes that The NICAP confidential files included among other things copies of intelligence report extracts. [Flying Saucers Top Secret pp. 272-3]

The following concerns my recent post about the NICAP files turned over to CUFOS by Mr. Larsen:

>After reading this post I called Richard Hall. . .who
>confirmed that there was not much government material.

My, my, how the wind does blow -- all the way to Washington! The Internet continues to amaze me, as does the fact that Mr. Hall has e-mail, something not widely known to readers of his column in UFO Magazine. As for the lack of government material in NICAP's files, the NUMBERS are not anywhere near as important as the CONTENT, something all good agents know from the cradle. That is, one would probably have had to pull only a very few items from that file to hugely vitiate its worth to someone like me.

And isn't it the fact that Mr. Hall has, in his basement I believe, Keyhoe's private files? I wonder what government documents were there at the time those files came into Mr. Hall's possession, hm? The reason I ask this is because in a recent UFO Magazine column Mr. Hall, who has been around ufology since the Eisenhower administration, produced a list of ufology's great unanswered questions. Shall we say that document security/reliability/chain of custody issues were not included in that list of questions. . .when in fact they are at the heart of the burning issues surrounding ufology today -- as many list members are now seeing for the first time!

Continuing with Mr. Aldrich, vis-a-vis NICAP's files:

>Not everything was salvaged, however. Most of the
>sighting files and significant correspondence were.

Once again, readers should note the lawyerly wording here, which is so in vogue these days - salvage. This really is an admission of leakage, loss or shall we say the disappearance of files that could well have included the BEST of the information.

Folks, it is a fact that conclusions based on those files are hardly situated on solid bedrock. Too many hands have been in the cookie jar for far too long. And to indicate that NICAP went public with everything it got in the government document line is, well, off the mark, as anyone who has actually done research knows. That is, quoting Mr. Hall through Mr. Aldrich:

>Mostly, if they got something that originated from the
>government, NICAP took it to the media.

This may have been true with some material but you have to realize that Keyhoe would have been out of business very soon if this was the actual policy followed with every document he was leaked. Mr. Aldrich would have us believe that Keyhoe was passing on intelligence report extracts to the media! As Keyhoe knew very well if you want to keep the flow coming you have to be discreet, very discreet, and keep much of this material in

your private files, and Keyhoe demonstrates just this in his book.

In conclusion, I quote Mr. Aldrich on Sherm Larsen:

>Sherm Larsen was a good organizer, a moderately good UFO
>investigator, and from his writings a rather naive person.

It's Interesting that although I was accused of besmirching Mr. Larsen's record I am not the only one doing so -- as anyone who reads Mr. Aldrich's comment above can see. I have stated that Mr. Larsen was a member of the Army Counterintelligence Corps (CIC), a fact not in dispute, and that he was a professional. I also stated that I admired the intelligence based analysis Larsen contributed to the ufological literature. Judging from his comments above Mr. Aldrich doesn't need my help in besmirching Mr. Larsen's record in the UFO arena, and is doing that well enough on his own.

I must particularly disagree with Mr. Aldrich characterizing Mr. Larsen's writings as "naive." Larsen was anything but that as his writings plainly show.

I wonder if Mr. Aldrich is REALLY familiar with any of them? It is a pity that Mr. Larsen's friend, Jerry Clark, didn't cite any of his work in his encyclopedia. It is also sad that Mr. Aldrich, himself a former Army intelligence officer, would criticize Mr. Larsen's work as "naive". This leads me to reflect on the following well known quotation:

"A man is known by his enemies."

Now, this is often true. Let's just say that I'm proud of mine. And let me add that there is one large advantage to an enemy and that is that he can never betray you -- because you have never given him your trust.

It's your friends that sell you down the river. Sherm who are your friends today?

Gary Alevy

P.S. Congratulations to Richard Hall on his fortieth anniversary in the field since joining NICAP.

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