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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: 'Self-Proclaimed Leaders Of Ufology'

From: Jerome Clark <jkclark@frontiernet.net>
Date: Thu, 29 Jul 99 11:51:47 PDT
Fwd Date: Fri, 30 Jul 1999 10:45:05 -0400
Subject: Re: 'Self-Proclaimed Leaders Of Ufology'

>From: Jerry Black <blackhole60@hotmail.com>
>To: updates@globalserve.net
>Subject: 'Self-Proclaimed Leaders Of Ufology'
>Date: Thu, 29 Jul 1999 07:02:01 PDT

Hi, Jerry,

>I would now like to refer to remarks you made about my comments
>concerning the "self-proclaimed leaders of ufology".

>You knew exactly what I meant, however I will explain that for
>you and to all the internet readers. The "self-proclaimed
>leaders of ufology" are those who appear most frequently on TV,
>or appear at most of the UFO symposiums throughout the country.
>In my opinion, you cannot go to any UFO symposium in the country
>without seeing one or sometimes three of these people at that
>particular symposium. So in my opinion, those "self-proclaimed
>leaders of ufology" are those that the general public listens to
>or hears most, whether it be on TV, radio or major symposia.
>These people would be: Stanton Friedman, Budd Hopkins, Kevin
>Randle, Linda Moulton Howe, Bruce Maccabee, Whitley Strieber and
>Walt Andrus (even though Walt Andrus does not appear on national
>television or radio frequently, he is a major figure in ufology,
>being the leader of one of largest UFO organizations in
>America).

Wrong, old boy, unless you can provide specific evidence -- I'm
talking quotes here, not broad, sweeping charges -- that any of
these individuals have declared themselves "leaders of
ufology." That's what "self-proclaimed" means. You're referring
to persons who, for one reason or another, for good or ill, are
prominent figures in this field. Whether they are "leaders" is
quite another issue, much less "self-proclaimed" ones.

If you want to criticize some well-known individual for his/her
views or behavior, fine. But it's bizarre to criticize persons
on the lame, unfair, and manifestly false grounds that they have
proclaimed themselves ufology's leaders. Reading this, I have
a hard time, to be honest, taking you seriously.

>The Whitley Strieber
>show Confirmation was produced with no intent to authenticate
>the Strieber claim of experiences with the visitors. Just
>because he has written a book and is a well-established author,
>they decided to do a special on TV using him as an executive
>producer. So the general public cannot rely on TV to give them
>the true answer to the cases that we see on TV and are written
>in books.

I'm confused. What does this have to do with ufology? This was

an entertainment television show conceived, financed, produced, written, filmed, and aired by a commercial company, not one of whose members would identify him- or herself as a ufologist. Which brings to mind another question: does Whitley Strieber consider himself a ufologist? I could be wrong, but I don't think he does.

>Therefore, the general public relies on the Mutual UFO Network,
>the Center for UFO Studies, and the "self-appointed leaders of
>ufology."

Once more, please cite -- again, I am asking for specific quotes -- who has appointed him- or herself a "leader" of ufology. I have been around this field probably longer than you have, and to the best of my recollection, I have never heard anyone call himself a "leader" of ufology. The closest thing I can imagine a "leader" to be is the head of a specific UFO group, which is hardly the same animal as all of ufology. In my limited experience of UFO groups (my only organizational affiliation has been with CUFOS), the heads are not "self-appointed" but elected by a board of directors. Thus, for example, Mark Rodeghier is not the "self-appointed leader" of CUFOS.

>In my opinion, neither of these aforementioned are
>doing their jobs at keeping the general public informed of which
>cases are credible and which cases do not deserve attention. I
>also do not think the Mutual UFO Network and the "self-appointed
>leaders of ufology" are doing a good, sound, scientific and
>objective job when they do investigate these cases.

If you are saying that the MUFON UFO Journal ought not to be running articles on alien skeletons, I'm with you, friend.

>As you stated, Mr. Jerome Clark, your organization does not have
>the time or money to really get into investigating current cases
>out there in ufology, besides the fact of putting your opinion
>of cases in your monthly journal. So I am not accusing you of
>not doing a good job of investigating current cases, because as
>you have told me: you are not doing "any" job of investigating
>current UFO cases. You are simply making small reports in your
>journal which are merely opinions.

Actually, not. IUR, which I'm sure you don't read or you wouldn't have typed the above nonsense, carries investigative pieces as well as insightful analytical overviews. For example, the current issue (available from J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies, 2457 West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659 -- thanks for the opportunity to put in the plug) carries a 14-page investigative review, by Bill Chalker (prominent, well-regarded Australian ufologist who has never to my knowledge proclaimed himself to be a "leader" of the field), of apparent biological evidence associated with an abduction case. The same issue carries two first-rate analytical essays by Mark Cashman ("Behavioral Classification System for UFO Occupants") and Thomas E. Bullard ("Abductions and Researcher Bias: How to Lose Your Way"). I happen to think we're putting out the best UFO magazine in America, and a lot of people agree, if we can credit the comments and letters we get from readers who appreciate our sober, balanced, informed approach.

>While your friendship with some of these "self-proclaimed
>leaders of ufology" may keep you from making certain remarks
>about their work, it certainly doesn't stop me. I will continue
>to keep making remarks that I feel is necessary as long as they
>continue to do the job they are doing at this particular time.

Before you get any more carried away on a tidal wave of self-righeousness, you need -- let me say it again -- to tell us when and where these individuals have proclaimed themselves "leaders of ufology."

>I, however, agree with you that there are many people out there
>who do a tremendous job who hardly get any ink, get no time on
>national radio or TV, but do a tremendous job in trying to help
>find the answer to the UFO phenomena. Some of those people are:
>Jenny Randles, Tom Dueley, Ray Fowler, Dan Wright, Tom Adams,
>Glenn Joyner, Mark Rodheigher, Rex Salisberry, and the list
>could go on and on. But these people, because of family or other
>responsibilities, do not have the time needed to allow
>themselves to be leaders in the field of ufology and attend the
>national symposia in the country, or to appear on national TV

>or radio. I wish that some of these people would do so.

Odd. Jenny Randles, whom I also admire, is quite well known, even outside ufology, in Britain for her many media appearances. Mark Rodeghier, who leads CUFOS, has appeared on a number of television programs, radio shows, and videos, and he is a regular at national symposia. In fact, he goes to, and speaks at, many more than I do. Tom Adams has not been active as a ufologist for years; his principal interest for a long time has been alleged mutilations of cattle. Tom Deuley is a ubiquitous presence on the UFO scene, deeply involved with MUFON and the Coalition, and I've run into Dan Wright on a number of occasions at conferences. Ray Fowler has written many books, toured to promote them, and been a guest on numerous UFO shows on TV and radio. Aside from noting the obvious inaccuracy of your characterization above, I am at a loss to grasp your point, unless it's that the above are good people and the other people are not.

>Finally, Mr. Clark, you have said that honorable men have come >down on both sides of the case in Gulf Breeze, Florida. I >certainly agree that all the gentlemen and ladies mentioned as >"self-proclaimed leaders of ufology" are likely honorable >people, some of whom have earned Ph.D.'s. All that means is that >honorable men and women, some of whom have Ph.D's, can at times >be lousy UFO investigators.

Like you, I have deep doubts about the core claims of the Gulf Breeze episode. On the other hand, I have much respect for Bruce Maccabee's intelligence, knowledge, and ability. If you want to argue photoanalysis with him, I'm afraid you're going to lose.

Again, if you want to criticize certain prominent ufologists for what you perceive to be their shortcomings, you have every right to do so. Nobody's perfect, God knows. Unfortunately, the criticisms you've given us so far seem irrelevant, self-serving, and even spurious. Or, as the Bard says, sound and fury, signifying nothing.

Jerry Clark

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