

Opinion



What if the professor is telling the truth?

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This week the focus of my work seems to be dealing with unexplainable phenomenon. For example: why, in last Friday's Spectrum, was my picture larger than the actual column which it was meant to accompany?

I mean, jeez, I opened up the paper to the opinion page and, as Harry Carey says, HOLY COW!, there I was, larger than life. I mean, I like to be recognized for my writing, not my picture. Besides, I have to look at myself in the mirror every morning, and that is quite enough, thank you.

I asked around the layout room and nobody seemed able to explain the incredible enlargement of my photograph. But then, most of us here at the Spectrum aren't able to explain much about anything more complex than tying our shoes so that we can get the knots out again when it is time to go to bed.

The other big-hitter in this unexplainable phenomenon week was the story of Professor John Salter Jr. of the University of North Dakota who claims that he and his son were abducted by aliens on March 20, 1988.

I can imagine how most of you reacted when you read the story — that is, of course, if you bother to read anything besides the comics and the humor column when you read this paper, and assuming that you can indeed read, a task of which a majority of college students in this day and age purport to be capable.

You chuckled and giggled and nudged your friend and said, "Can you believe this guy, man? He thinks one of those people was half human! What a nut!" And then you paged through this paper and found a column accompanied by, what I hope, is a normal column-accompanying size photograph of yours truly, and started reading again.

I am a professed cynic just like a lot of you, and I had trouble swallowing parts of the unbelievable tasting story which Professor Salter was serving.

I can go into the parts of the story which seem most unbelievable.

Like the presence of a larger

humanoid which was of "mixed blood." To believe that there was indeed a humanoid which was half human and half humanoid, you have to believe that there has been enough contact in the past with aliens for some human to become attached enough to take part in some sort of reproductive activity with them.

Incidentally, Professor Salter never mentioned what type of noticeable reproductive organs, if any, these "humanoids" sported. If they are like us, their close-fitting clothes should have at least given away the males of the race. But it is possible that there is no gender differentiation among these creatures.

Then there is the three-way DNA switch which MAY have occurred between the professor, his son, and the larger humanoid. I don't know about you, but I don't want anyone messing with MY DNA.

Then there are all the medical changes which the professor claims to have had. His fingernails and toenails are growing at two to three times the normal rate, he said. What, did he do before and after measurements?

He said he remained healthy even when members of his family were falling around him in the winter months. Maybe he just had a lucky winter.

He said he gouged himself with a chisel and *no blood flowed*. Have any of you been gouged with a chisel lately? I mean, even a small gouge makes blood spurt all over you, your clothing and the clothing of the people standing next to you. We're talking enough blood to make it impossible for you to go out into public for fear of being arrested as a mass murderer or something. One thing is for sure - when you gouge yourself with a chisel, blood will flow, and flow big.

Also, the fact that the professor hasn't been in for a physical examination since the encounter makes the story hard to believe.

Professor Salter gave several reasons for not going to see an "earthly physician," one of which was that the larger "humanoid" told him not to do so.

It would be much easier to

swallow the entire story even if a doctor only certified that the changes in Salter are unexplainable. Even the fact that Salter had gone in for an examination might lend credibility to the story, no matter what the findings.

Finally, there is the fact that Salter's son, John III, who was with the professor the entire time, is unable to verify the particulars of the story.

Yes, I can go into all the hard to believe parts of the story. And I can laugh at professor John Salter Jr., and say he is some kind of a nut.

But I don't believe this man is a nut.

Professor Salter, who prefers to be called simply John, has a master's degree in sociology from Arizona State University.

He was deeply involved in the civil rights movement in the deep south in the 1960s.

He is Chairman of the Indian Studies program at UND; obviously his colleagues don't believe he is a nut.

He speaks well, and communicates his ideas with the proficiency of a scholar.

I received a copy of his statement which recounted the entire incident. I can safely say that he is a good writer.

He is easy to talk to and makes you feel comfortable while you are talking to him - in other words, muy simpatico.

I enjoyed doing the interviews with Professor Salter more than any of the other interviews I have done in the last three years as a reporter for the Spectrum.

No, I don't believe this man is a nut. It is unfortunate that he is telling an "unbelievable" story, one which is close to impossible to verify. A parable from my youth comes to mind.

A great and wise man supposedly died and three days later rose from the dead. A follower of his, named Thomas, had to put his hands to the wounds on his master before he would believe that the master was in-

deed risen from the dead.

This is only a parable that for me makes a connection, which I hope it does for you.

We can't prove or disprove Professor John Salter Jr.'s story. We can only believe or disbelieve, and I leave that to you.

As for me, I think John is a credible source. I'm not too sure if I believe his story or not, and I'm not going to take a stand on the issue.

All I can say is this - we, the

human race, would be pretty egotistical to believe that we are the only living, thinking creatures in the universe. Who are we to say that there is no life out there? And if there is life, who are we to say that they would not contact Professor John Salter Jr., and communicate with him?

* Go ahead and chuckle and laugh and jab your friend in the ribs, but keep an open mind.

POLL

Q: Is there life on other planets? If so, what does it look like?

"Yes. They are strictly spiritual, they can't be seen."

Todd Busse
Senior
Architecture



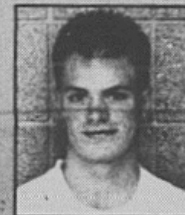
"Yes. They are green with antennae, and they have scales."

Sandy Flint
Senior
Interior Design



"No."

Doug Helland
Freshman
Architecture



"Yes. Have you seen some of the guys walking around here?"

Sarah Stolberg
Junior

