

Far Out, Professor

by Martin "Red" Fredricks

Originally published under the headline, "What if the professor is telling the truth," in the North Dakota State University student newspaper, The Spectrum, 1989

This week the focus of my work seems to be dealing with the unexplainable phenomenon. Take the case of Professor John Salter Jr. of the University of North Dakota, who claims 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 which a majority of college students in this day and age purport to be capable. You chuckled and giggled, nudged your friend and said, "Can you believe this guy, man? He thinks one of those aliens was half human! What a nut!"

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 parts of the story which seem most unbelievable.

Like the presence of a larger "humanoid" which was of "mixed blood." To believe there was indeed a humanoid that was half human and half humanoid, you have to believe 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 then, 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 or 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 gauged 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 murder 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 have been 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 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 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, and can safely say he is a good writer. He is easy to talk to and makes you feel comfortable while you are talking to him. I enjoyed doing the interviews with Professor Salter more than any of the other interviews I have done in the past 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 that 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 indeed risen from the dead. This is the only 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 we are the only living,

thinking creatures in the universe. Who are we to say there is no life out there? And if there is life, who are we to say they would not contact Professor John Salter Jr. and communicate with him?

Go ahead, chuckle and laugh and jab your friends in the ribs. But keep an open mind.