

Oct. 1, 1988

822 22nd St.  
Santa Monica, CA 90403

Al Seckel  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SKEPTICS

Dear Mr. Seckel:

This is in response to the letter from your lawyer dated June 1. 1988.

The accusations in your letter are completely false.

The criticisms I have made are demonstrably and factually true, or are legitimate and valid expressions or knowledgeable opinion (opinion which is shared by many other knowledgeable persons), or are clearly presented as statements from reliable first-hand sources whose accounts I have every reason to believe.

Your threat of a libel and slander lawsuit is thus utterly without merit.

I assure you that any such attempt to force me into silence will have precisely the opposite effect. If forced into court I will defend all my criticisms and opinions, and I will present masses of additional confirming evidence and detail. These criticisms, which I have thus far only communicated privately to a few individuals, will become a matter of public record.

To respond to your actual accusations: I have never accused you of plagiarism, anywhere, to anyone. I have merely said that many of your articles were unoriginal and were based almost entirely on secondary sources most of which you do not credit. The single quote of mine in your lawyer's letter is from a note I wrote to James Randi. I can defend the opinion expressed in that quote at great length and in great detail. Others can support and confirm it also.

I have nothing to hide; I welcome scrutiny of all my opinions and statements. I have copies of all my correspondence containing criticisms of you. I will be more than willing to make these public if compelled to do so to defend against groundless charges of libel and slander. I also have copies of various replies to this correspondence which support and enlarge upon my criticisms.

Almost all of the other accusations in your lawyer's letter refer to a January 1987 letter of mine. Your own letter in response to that letter of mine was radically different. It was conciliatory. You said that any criticism was moot at that point because you were about to relinquish leadership of SCS. I immediately replied to you that I would not send copies of my January 1987 letter to other people. In fact you did not relinquish leadership, nor did you honor other promises in your letter. Despite this, I did not circulate my January 1987 criticisms any further (except to two people who specifically requested it; other requests I declined). Since your reply to my letter indicated that the matter was dropped, your reliance on these previous criticisms is highly questionable, to say the least.

Most sincerely,

Tom McIver