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Dear Phil Klass,

Enclosed is the promised list of volunteers, some documentation and a few notes of explanation.

Of course I agree that CSICOP has neither the time or resources to deal with this mess-but I think it's important that it be discussed at least informally for the following reasons:

The paranormal community seems to have a pretty good handle on the situation-including which government institutions would be the most interested in alleged violations of law. They are unlikely to let it drop.

The skeptical community shouldn't be the last to know. Those who find themselves maneuvered into defending Seckel should be alerted to the fact that there may be substance to the charges.

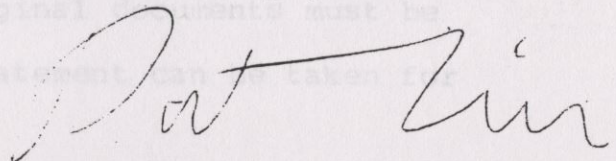
CSICOP should not seem to have a double standard when it comes to recognising misdeeds in its own ranks.

While CSICOP can not be expected to pass judgement on every local official suspected of misdeeds this situation should merit attention because of its size, scope and duration.

CSICOP is widely perceived as having promoted Seckel, probably because he was allowed to be held up as an example of how to run a local group and his general high profile. When the facts are known CSICOP might take some symbolic action to let it be known that it recognises a rotten apple when it finds one in its own barrel so people can have something to point to when challenged.

If the charges are true the scandal should be widely known so that Seckel will not be encouraged to assume positions of authority in the movement or be allowed to use its institutions for his own ends.

Respectfully yours,



Pat Linse
SCS Volunteer

I have highlighted Al Seckel's academic claims in the following documents.¹ These examples are from a few odds and ends I had left over after leaving SCS. I'm sure there are more.

Both Cornell² and Cal Tech³ will confirm by phone or in writing that these claims are false.

Seckel did spend years on the Cornell campus-what he did there is a matter of dispute. Two vividly contrasting transcripts have been reported. The first, revealed by clerks in the Cornell registrar's office indicated that he did not even successfully complete his first semester there.⁴ The second document to surface showed a brilliant fellowship winning scholar.⁵

I think that the Skeptical community needs to consider the possibility that the second transcript was created in response to the discovery of the first one.

It has been argued that Seckel's academic misrepresentation is "not an issue" because he did not hold a position for which there was a formal degree requirement. Even so he did violate the integrity of his office. There is an implicit understanding that critics ought not to engage in conduct they object to in others if they are to retain their credibility.

But there is a more important point to be made and its the reason I bothered to document this elaborate long standing hoax. The lesson here is that original documents must be checked. No document, record or statement can be taken for granted.

2-After the discovery of the first transcript Seckel had his records "frozen" so Cornell was not even allowed for a time to reveal that he held no degree there. Hearsay has it that the school has released several copies of his transcript to "undisclosed sources" because of "clearcut evidence of fraud". Cornell now informs callers that Seckel has no degree.
(a xerox of a mail inquiry follows this page.)

3- Joan Cable of the Cal Tec registrar's office remarked to me that Seckel was in their "Liar's Book"-a list reserved for those claiming false association with the insitution. (a xerox of a mail inquiry follows this page)

4- Both Suzy Shaw and Marilyn Blank were told that Seckel's Cornell transcript contained only four course listings, and a summer remedial course. Other remarks were made that indicated the grades were not all satisfactory. There was an odd argument going around during the which transcript is the real transcript debate that since Cornell clerks were not supposed to reveal so much information that indicated that they couldn't have.

5-Dan Meier has seen a copy of the second transcript. It seems to match a copy Elie Shneour referred to when he wrote Marilyn Blank to defend Seckel's academic reputation.

Other possible members could
It is easy to establish that SCS lost its non-profit status.

Any large library carries this Internal Revenue Reference book. SCS is no longer listed in it.¹

The California Secretary of State's Office will give to any member of the inquiring public, by phone or mail, a report on an organizations legal status.² Last week this office told me (again) that SCS lost its non-profit status as of Dec.1,1987.

The Franchise Tax Board will tell board memebers only the reason an organization lost its non-profit standing³ David Alexander, a former board member, told me that SCS lost its legal status for not filing a financial report.

Seckel has his own documentation that SCS is still in good standing with the tax authorities. He bamboozled at least one person down here with a tape recording purported to be a state bureaucrat testifying that all is well with SCS.

Documentation showing that SCS was soliciting funds as a tax exempt organization after its staus was revoked is easy to come by in organization publications.⁴

2. Office of the Secretary of State (916) 445-6371

For a free non-certified copy of a non-profit corporations status, or a certified copy (\$6.00) write:

Secretary of State (takes 3 to 8 weeks)
Corporate Division
1230 J St.
Sacramento, CA 95814

3. The Franchise Tax Board 1 (800) 352-5711

Franchise Tax Board (2 to 4 weeks)
PO Box 942857
Sacramento CA 94257

Other possible problem areas:

-SCS advertised its Laser as a bi-monthly and sold subscriptions rather than group memberships. Only two Lasers were published in the years after 1987. I have an undocumented complaint of a subscriber's check being cashed as late as the summer of 1990. Most of this was done through the mail, so I suppose somebody could go after SCS for mail fraud.

-SCS did not collect sales tax on thousands of dollars worth of merchandise that it sold.

- Many in the Skeptical movement became financially tied to Seckel through investing in his antique business.

Don Seckel (517) 247-1971
1800 W. 10th St.
Paradise, CA 95669
Suzanne Seckel (517) 227-4141
1430 N. 10th St.
Surburk, CA 95655

Controversy also surrounds the financial management of SCS.

On one hand there are reports of a set of books described as "accurate to the penny" and "showing no signs of financial wrongdoing". If the books are clean they should be made public to dispel suspicion.

On the other hand there are stories of unpaid creditors, failure to file financial reports, rubber checks, altered checks, mysterious loans, unaccounted for donations and general monetary chaos. If there is credence to these complaints CSICOP should be aware of it so that no member takes any damaging positions defending the undefendable or gives any impression of coverup or stonewalling.

I wish that I myself had the authority to access the hard evidence that I would need to resolve the issue for myself. This financial report-the only such report that I am aware of that was ever made public was contested-as I'm sure you all know-by Mark Plummer. He knew the \$9075.01 was not accurate because Prometheus had not been paid. Though I worked with the organization during the period covered by this report the finances were so secretive that I have no idea how accurate the rest of it is. It is puzzling that it does not show the organization as being in debt. In the post '87 period Seckels major explanation for why the organization was constantly broke was that it was paying back loans-sometimes amounting to tens of thousands of dollars. It was a period when most of the organizations activities were profitable. We should have been doing quite well.

Seckel basically ran the organization alone, but here are the few people who got involved in trying to help him out:

Molly Squire (818) 409-9165
active 85-86
now Mrs Hanson. did incorporation,
edited newsletter
654 1/2 West Lexington, Glendale CA
91203

David Alexander (213) 421-0220
board member, active 85-87
resigned 87, 2004 Palos Verdes Ave.
Long Beach CA 90815

David Newhall (714) 434-9652
"Volunteer of the Year '87"
410 W. Stevens Ave Apt. C
Santa Ana CA 92707

Pat Linse (818) 797-2869
active 86-89, artist
"Volunteer of the Year '88"
2059 N. Maiden Lane
Altadena CA 91001

Marylin Elank (213) 283-9773
active 87-89 "Volunteer of the
Year '89" public relations
812 N. Hidalgo Ave.
Alhambra CA 91801

Dan Meier (818) 791-7172
1806 Walworth
Pasadena CA 91104

Suzy Shaw (213) 227-4141
active 88-90
1430 Mc Farland
Eurbank CA 91505

David Newhall
Department of Information and Computer Science
University of California
Irvine CA 92717

April 30, 1991

Phil Klass
CSICOP

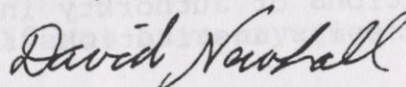
Dear Phil Klass,

I am a member of CSICOP and of the Southern California Skeptics, and have been for several years. I coordinated the volunteers for the 1987 CSICOP convention, and was voted Volunteer of the Year for that year. Because of my involvement with SCS, it is greatly disturbing to me that in the last few months a number of very serious accusations have surfaced about that organization's Executive Director, Al Seckel. The first of these I was made aware of was that contrary to Al's many claims, he does not hold any degree from Cornell University (let alone two!), and that he has never been enrolled at Caltech as a graduate student. Since then, a number of other accusations, including financial impropriety, have been brought forth.

Most of these accusations are not difficult to verify (I have letters out to the universities myself), and in view of the fact that they could be very damaging to the skeptical movement if true, I feel that the board of CSICOP should be made aware of their existence, and that some effort should be made to verify them. Certainly CSICOP is not responsible for Al's or anyone else's behavior; but if the claims of financial misconduct are true, then we in the skeptical movement should not stand behind Al or present him as being representative of the movement, at least until any problems are corrected.

I am deeply concerned about this and anxious that the accusations be examined openly and fairly.

Sincerely,



David Newhall

WELLS FARGO BANK

Monrovia Office
102 South Myrtle Avenue
Monrovia, CA 91016

November 13, 1991

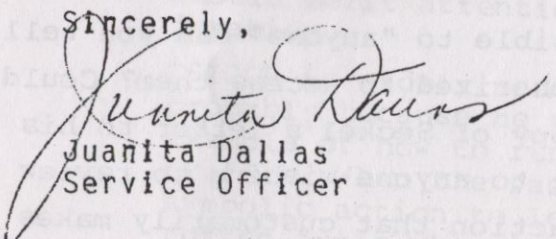
PAT LINSE
2059 N Maiden Lane
Altadena, Calif 91001

Dear Ms. Linse:

Ref: to Southern California Skeptics

Wells Fargo Bank is unable to release information on this account without a Court Order. (0931013833). We can only verify information that you have.

Sincerely,


Juanita Dallas
Service Officer