

FOCUS ON . . . JOHN A. KEEL  
"INFO Journal", October 1986  
By

Phyllis Benjamin

Despite his disclaimer that he is "not an authority on anything" the mind boggles and the typewriter quakes (perhaps shaken by the tulpas of any number of his strange creatures from time and space) at the prospect of condensing the weird and truly amazing life of this fascinating author who has suckled the imaginations of so many Forteaners.

Born March 25, 1930 and raised on a farm in Perryville, NY, John A. Keel (pen name Alva John Kiehle) has been a professional writer since the age of sixteen when he wrote a "column of alleged humor" (his words) for the Perry Herald. At seventeen, he took his first bite of the Big Apple (the City or the forbidden fruit—take your pick), and settled in New York City. He promptly became an associate editor of Poets of America, and two years later moved to the editorship of Limelight, a weekly newspaper. During these years he began to write radio dramas for Grand Central Station, First Nighter and others.

At the onset of the Korean War, the Armed Forces Network was lucky enough to snare Keel as Chief of Continuity and Production in Frankfurt, Germany. In 1952 he sent shivers up the spines of millions of Europeans when he wrote and produced a radio program about UFOs called "Things in the Sky." Keel's reputation soared when, in the same year, he thrilled listeners with his original Halloween broadcast from Frankenstein's castle. A year later he topped himself when he wrote and produced a broadcast from inside the Great Pyramid. He later returned to live for some time in Cairo. Subsequently, his delving into the mysteries and magicks of the Orient resulted in extensive travels throughout the Middle East and Asia, "becoming the last American to visit Tibet before the Chinese closed the borders." Readers of his riveting autobiography Jadoo (Hindi for magic), published when he was only twenty-seven, will remember that he became THE authority on the legendary Indian rope trick. John's publicity from that period includes a wonderful photo of him with a sand boa around his neck which he imported from India, along with several three-fanged cobras and a "two-headed snake."

Returning to the States after a sojourn in Paris

and Barcelona, he became Science Editor of Funk & Wagnall's encyclopedia, a syndicated newspaper columnist, head writer for the Merv Griffin Show and for countless television programs of the 1960s. He wrote 200 slapstick comedies for Trans Lux, authored several screenplays and worked on numerous situation comedies over the years.

Boggled yet, readers? Well, take a deep breath and learn that: in the 1960s and 70s his syndicated column appeared regularly in hundreds of major newspapers; he wrote a monthly column for Saga for many years; he received two honorary Ph.Ds for his work in herpetology and archeology; he found time to become an expert in 8mm sound filmmaking and to write a column for U.S. Camera; he invented many magic tricks that are highly regarded by professional magicians; and has acted as a consultant to various government agencies (HEW, the Library of Congress, etc.). Whew! All this from the man who inserted the words "abominable snowman" and "flying saucers" into the dictionary and thus into the consciousness of both the public and the scholarly community.

John Keel has also received many awards in the fields of radio, theater (he has written for the Broadway stage), and television (currently involved in products for the cable networks). Never one to leave an interesting stone unturned, the indefatigable John Keel has found the time to write countless articles for



worldwide publications and to author twelve books including: UFOs: Operation Trojan Horse (1970); Strange Creatures from Time and Space (1970); Our Haunted Planet (1971); The Mothman Prophecies (1975); and The Eighth Tower (1976). This is just a "taste" of the many aspects and talents of John Keel. Obviously, this article must be a tout written by an admirer of this esteemed Fortean. You bet it is!

To those of you who may be unfamiliar with his work, we're including a position statement kindly provided to us by John Keel.

### POSITION STATEMENT

"I abandoned the extraterrestrial hypothesis in 1967 when my own field investigations disclosed an astonishing overlap between psychic phenomena and UFOs. My findings were extremely unpopular at the time, but in the years since, most of the major European investigators, and many of the American scientists involved in the subject, have verified and accepted my conclusions."

"Basically, a large part of the UFO lore is subjective and many alleged UFO events are actually the products of a complex hallucinatory process, particularly in the contactee and CE III-type reports. The same process stimulated religious beliefs, fairy lore, and occult systems of belief in other centuries.

"A very small percentage of sightings (perhaps less than 2 percent) and events indicate that other strange, but natural, phenomena are often included, or absorbed, into the UFO data.

"While we cannot satisfactorily explain all UFO events in terms of present-day knowledge and technology, I feel that the ultimate solution will involve a complicated system of new physics related to theories of the space-time continuum. It is possible, even highly probable, that a subtle cosmological system of control has been in effect since the dawn of mankind and that UFOs are a part of that system."

"These objects and apparitions do not necessarily originate on other planets and may not even exist as permanent

constructions of matter. It is more likely that we see what we want to see and interpret such visions according to our contemporary beliefs. The problem can be reduced to a series of difficult philosophical questions and might be best explored by behavioral scientists and mathematicians."

Ignacio Darnaude ~~XXXX-XXXX~~  
C/ BENIDORM, 5 (E. C)  
41001 - SEVILLA - SPAIN)

### GRAIN RAIN

Evans, Colo (UPI)—It's one of the strangest mysteries ever in northern Colorado: Corn falling from the sky.

No one knows why.

Some residents in this small town north of Denver say they've seen golden kernels fall from the blue time and again in recent years. Occasionally, a sprinkling of pinto beans occurs as well, they say.

"I'd probably have a ton of it if I picked it all up," said Gary Bryan, who has witnessed the grain rain phenomenon numerous times since moving into the neighborhood four years ago.

Last week several residents and reporters said they saw corn falling and one of them then stalked the neighborhood in search of kids bearing slingshots or converted pea shooters or the like. The reporter found no one.

Other possible logical explanations also have been eliminated by residents. There are no farm fields near the area. It's a good five miles to the nearest grain elevator. No nearby military installation can be blamed for the abundance of kernels.

Still the corn peppers down.

Police Chief Richard Evans called it "a pretty cornfusing case."

The Milwaukee Journal, Sep 21, 1986, Cr: Brian Anderson, and the Sunday Star Ledger, Newark NJ, same date. Cr: Mrs. John Sommer.