

SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs



...even if in a court of law, eyewitness testimony is a high form of evidence, in the court of science, it is the lowest form of evidence you could possibly put forth.

Neil deGrasse Tyson (UFOs: Seeing is believing)

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Remember, it's only UFOs

Those are the sage words I received recently regarding some people who seem to think that UFOs are a life and death struggle. When one looks at UFOs in the grand scheme of things, they lose their significance. Recent events in Japan demonstrate what really is important. The power of the tsunami and the death toll overshadows quibbling over how people interpret various documents and sighting reports. One can only feel intense sorrow for the people of Japan and their great loss.

As tragic as this all was, there were individuals that chose to take advantage of the news coverage. They found various bits of debris, clouds, or whatever floating around in the videos and used them to promote UFOs. Yes, they are, by definition, "unidentifieds". However, in my opinion, these people used this tragedy to elevate their own personal interests. By linking their sensationalized UFO videos/blogs to the tsunami/earthquake, they made sure that google searches would get them noticed.

In UFO news, I noticed that the anniversary of the "Phoenix lights" came and went with barely a whimper. It seems to have been overshadowed by the Japan event.

What was a really slow few months with UFO news, took a big jump in April, when people "discovered" an old FBI document

that supposedly was a Roswell smoking gun. Many already know the story but I wrote about it anyway in the Roswell corner so everyone can follow some good links as well as some of the information I had on the matter.

On page 5-6, I discuss the infamous solar eclipse UFOs in 1991. I did this because I have received some recent e-mails declaring that this was a case of an alien spaceship appearing over a major city.

There are two new contributions this month. Martin Kottmeyer has an interesting piece about Hollywood and Jean-Michel Abrassart adds his point of view about UFOlogy and folklore. Both are excellent pieces that are well worth reading.

Speaking of Jean-Michel, I received an e-mail from Auguste Meessen, who felt that SUNlite was not being truthful. He has posted his rebuttal on his web site (<http://www.meessen.net/AMeessen/Ramillies.pdf>). In that rebuttal, he states he was presenting the "truth". I have a problem with anybody who like to use the word "truth" because usually it is that persons own biased interpretation of what they consider the "truth". This kind of language is often used by politicians and religious leaders. That being said, there have been some questions raised about the content. Roger Paquay responds in this issue and I added a few

Front Cover: A photograph of a waxing crescent moon. The moon can be a source of UFO reports and I mention how on pages 15-16

Left: Do these look familiar? Of course they do. They are the landing lights of an airplane shot using similar camera settings as those used in the Ramilles photograph. It was a 737 aircraft and it was pretty low on approach for landing. In my opinion, this image bears a resemblance to the Ramilles image.

comments about the Eupen explanations I mentioned briefly in SUNlite 2-6.

Despite Meessen's argument against Paquay's article, I still consider the images in question show lights that look a lot like airplane lights. I wonder how these photographs would fair if an independent group of scientists examined them? It is up to Mr. Meessen to provide a convincing argument that they could not be from an airplane. I did not see him do this in his article.

Abductology continues to revolve around Carol Rainey and Emma Woods. Their information is being ignored or shouted down by defenders of Budd Hopkins and David Jacobs. One has to wonder how long this will continue.

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The UFO disclosure countdown clock is at 11:30! Supposedly, this means disclosure is just around the corner. How long have UFOlogists been promising this great revelation? I seriously doubt that it is going to happen but would UFO proponents be willing to bet money on this occurring by a given date?

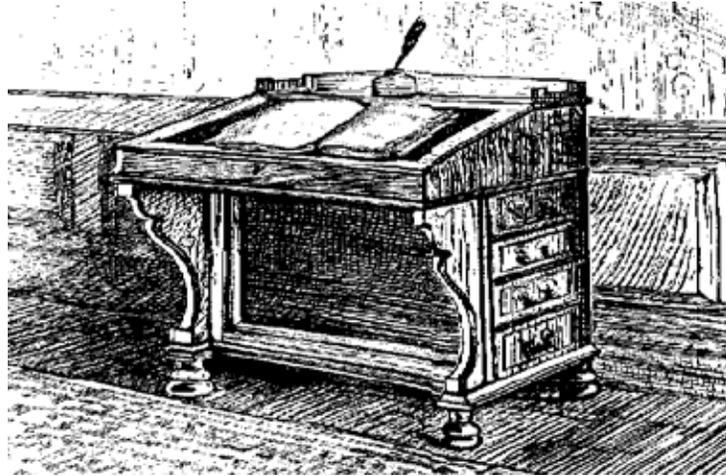
Rich Phillips then seemed shocked that the Russians would launch two rockets over several days! The first rocket launch was of a Russian Navigation satellite on February 26th from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome. The second, supposedly launched on March 1st, appears to have been a video from the Progress M03-M launch in October of 2009.

Speaking of disclosure, Dr. Clarke reports that the next wave of MOD files have been released. This is the real disclosure of UFO documents. The biggest news was the "mysterious" destruction of files from DI-55 for the years 1980-82. This is the Rendlesham time period so it immediately brought forth calls of conspiracy from people like John Burroughs. Dr. Clarke added in another posting that the files were destroyed about the same time as the files for the years 1967-1979, 1983. It seems the files were simply destroyed en masse. Dr. Clarke also notes that those files from the DI-55 that did survive were essentially duplicates of sighting reports made to "The UFO desk". This bit of information seems to indicate there really was nothing important in these files but I doubt it will satisfy conspiracy fanatics.

Abduction research continues to suffer from the Carol Rainey effect. Her first video revealed certain aspects of the Linda Cortile case, which caused a fire storm among UFOlogists. Rainey would then add another video documenting the saga of Linda Cortile and some of her outlandish claims. As before, it shows how gullible Budd Hopkins can be concerning what people tell him. The last installment she added had to do with how Budd Hopkins is interpreting the scribbles various abductees have been making for him. Watching Budd Hopkins fumbling through a box of drawings and saying he was trying to "stack the deck" in order to

Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



make them all look the same said a lot.

Between Carol Rainey and Emma Woods, abduction research appears to be splitting UFOlogy the same way the contactees did many years ago. Emma Woods became a four-letter word on UFO Updates as Errol Bruce-Knapp shut down any conversation on the subject. When Rainey suggested that Budd Hopkins should not be immune to criticism just because he is ill, Bruce-Knapp banned her as well and forbade mentioning her research.

Mrs. Rainey responded at www.paratopia.net (see the Rainey update for 25 April) with some rather interesting comments regarding John Velez (an abductee and personal friend of Budd Hopkins), who appears to have great influence on the running of UFO updates. After Bruce-Knapp issued his "ruling", he allowed Velez to post a "rebuttal" to Rainey (even though Velez stated it was not a rebuttal). One can only assume this was done so Mr. Velez could have the final word.

Peter Rogerson would counter with his own blog entry at Magonia that took some serious jabs at "abductology". He referred to what Hopkins and Jacobs have done is a form of "mental rape". Pe-

ter stated what seems to be the opinion of quite a few people. Hopkins' and Jacobs' research and the ethics surrounding it are the real issue. The research has produced nothing other than book sales and notoriety for the researchers. Goodness knows how many abductees have suffered because of their ham-handed approach towards them.

Magonia put up a disclosure poll after Kevin Randle had completed his. Kevin's original poll did not give the option to his readers if they thought there was anything to disclose at all. Magonia gave a far easier poll, which asked the question in three clear choices (UFO/ET disclosure will happen, it will never happen, and there was nothing to disclose). Kevin Randle then put up a new poll on his blog but added extra options. I voted on both that

there was nothing to disclose because I have yet to see any evidence that there is a cover-up. The Magonia poll resulted in about 60% saying there was nothing to disclose. Randle's poll, which had a larger sample (and included more UFO proponents) had about 30% stating that there was nothing to disclose. This probably says something about the readers of these blogs more than anything else.

A scientist claimed he found life in a meteorite, which became big news. The news appeared in something called "The journal of Cosmology", which, according to the bad astronomer, seems to have problems with checking the accuracy of their articles. Some microphotographs showed objects that looked like microbe fossils to the untrained eye but it seems that just because they look like fossilized microbes does not mean they are. This appears to be a case of a scientist trying to make a splash in the news rather than displaying the proper amount of skepticism regarding a claim that is "extraordinary".

NASA is establishing fireball monitoring stations in the eastern US. Right now they only have three stations but they hope to expand them. I wonder if they will report any UFOs they record?

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

The warming weather brought many northern residents out of their homes in the evening. As a result, there were a series of UFO reports and videos that looked suspiciously like stars scintillating.

A person flying a large kite with LEDs produced UFO reports in Vancouver, Washington. Another new source of UFOs.

Robert Hastings is still trying to downplay James Carlson's arguments. He refers to Carlson as "desperate" and then proceeds to basically repeat the same arguments over and over again. If he has nothing new to add, what is the point of writing these articles?

Richard Lang gave a highly informative description of what had transpired between MUFON and BAASS. It seems that it was a bungled job of financial accounting by MUFON. Based on what Lang states, poor oversight by the MUFON board of directors/leadership seems to be the major cause of this catastrophe.

Billy Cox seemed to have problems doing "real research". He could not access the file "DEFE 24/1948/1" from the National Archives web site. What Cox seems to have problems understanding was this file was available back in August of 2009 for free but after a certain time period elapsed, the Archives took it off the web with the comment that if you now wanted it, you would have to pay for it. Dr. David Clarke tried to explain it in the comments but Cox, who has problems doing "real research", wasn't going to listen. But Cox really doesn't have to pay for it. The file can be found at: <http://documents.theblackvault.com/documents/ufos/UK/defe-24-1948.pdf>. What this demonstrates is that Billy Cox seems to be more interested in hyping this perceived "cover-up".

If you want to read the old APRO bulletins, they are available at the Openminds web site. I am sure some may find them informative. Most of it is probably old news or out of date.

Sammy Hagar claims his mind was in contact with aliens. Apparently, he received an upload or they chose to download his thoughts. I wonder if the aliens

sing "I can't drive 55" when warping through the galaxy?

Kent Wien wrote a superb article about various "sightings" made by pilots. However, he was not talking about UFOs. Instead he mentions things like Rocket launches, meteors, aurorae, etc. Some of the video clips are pretty interesting.

Kentaro Mori wrote about the latest "best evidence" UFO photograph from Chile. Lucky for us, Leslie Kean and Richard Haines of NARCAP are involved. Reading Haines lengthy report can be mind-numbing as he does measurements without any real conclusions other than suggesting it is worthy of further study. He down plays the fact that the witnesses did not see the UFO during the photography session and it appeared in only one photograph of the many that were taken. When I first saw the image, it looked like an odd lens flare. However, Kentaro Mori presents a better potential explanation. The photograph was taken from inside a car and looks like an object inside the car may have been reflected off the window. There is even something that looks like stitching visible on the UFO.

Astrophysicist Adam Frank made the common observation made by skeptics of why UFOs need headlights in his "Headlights of the gods" blog entry. If aliens were trying to be covert in their study of earth, they are doing an awful job of it. Even we have the technology to monitor people without being seen.

Sky lanterns were again the source of UFO reports in Chicago. Frank Warren ran the initial report with the video as people being "stopped in their tracks" and the news reporters being "stumped". I am not surprised that these local reporters and observers were "stumped" but UFOlogists should recognize them pretty quickly or at least recognize them as a potential sources in these videos.

Meanwhile we are still reliving the STAR team member's encounter with an "alien". Despite having all sorts of electronic equipment and cameras, the UFO made them all inoperable when it appeared. One wonders why such mem-

bers are not smart enough to carry a good old fashioned manual SLR and film to prevent such "electromagnetic effects". When they encountered the alien entity, they were very scientific in their attempt to communicate. They ran away! Even if the alien ran away as well, why didn't they gather "trace" evidence? In fact, I don't see this "investigator" presenting one iota of actual evidence that can be verified. Instead, we are left with having to accept another wild story told by somebody with a preconceived belief that UFOs are probably alien spaceships. Is it any wonder that scientists can't take UFOlogy seriously?

John Harney wondered why skeptics aren't interested in the Shag Harbour case. It is not a matter of ignoring the case for me but just a matter of only having so much time in the day.

Reality Uncovered had an interesting blog entry regarding John Callahan's story about an FAA cover-up over the JAL UFO in 1986. Callahan claims that they were ordered to never mention the meeting occurred. However, Dr. Bruce Maccabee was there and wrote extensively about the case. Additionally, CIA analyst Ron Pandolfi was also there. Both state that Callahan's claims are false and it may have been Maccabee telling Callahan that he wanted to delay release of information that gave him the impression that there was a cover-up. RU tried to contact Callahan through Leslie Kean but she chose not to forward their information. Kean was made aware of the issue before her book was released but chose to ignore it and allow only Callahan's version to appear. Is this any surprise?

To top things off, we have the Alien body video from Siberia. The story goes that the creators of the body admits it is a fake and it involves a chicken body, some bread, some plasticine, and a little bit of paint. Just another video in a long line of UFO hoaxes.



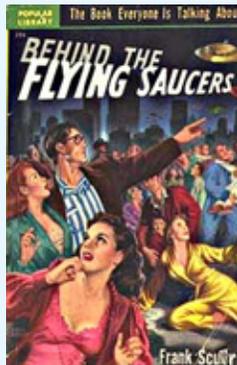
The Roswell Corner

Reinflating MOGUL

Nick Redfern recently wrote an article about project MOGUL that tried to show that there was a difference in response with suspected MOGUL debris and what happened at Roswell. However, his argument is false because he bases his argument on the myth that is Roswell and not what is known to have transpired. In the case of the debris found at Danforth, Illinois, an FBI agent went to investigate and obtained the debris. Redfern compares this with the overhanded response that the RAAF supposedly employed, where they cordoned off the area and threatened civilians. These are all stories that have never been proven to be true. There is no contemporary evidence that any cordon was established or that civilians were threatened. All we know is Jesse Marcel Sr. and Sheridan Cavitt went to the ranch and retrieved the debris from what they thought was a "flying disc". If it weren't for the press release, the whole story would have transpired just like the Danforth event. However, in the Roswell case, there is little evidence that anybody involved with the recovery suspected MOGUL was the source of the debris.

Smoking gun?

Some people have stumbled across an FBI memo dated March 22, 1950 that describes three UFOs being recovered in New Mexico. Somebody found the document on the FBI's web site and thought it was something new. Several blogs (like the one linked here) then began to repeat the "news". However, this memo is not news and has been available for everyone to read for several decades. The author of the memo is Guy Hottel and he goes on to describe that each saucer had three bodies in each craft. Roswell is never mentioned and these bloggers are trying to make a link. History has shown that this memo was actually linked to the infamous Aztec crashed UFO scam. However, there are those who claim this memo has nothing to do with Aztec because Scully's book appeared in September



1950 and had different details. This is just poor research because the Scully story was the "refined" version of events. The actual story had been circulating since 1949 by Silas Newton.

On January 6, 1950, the Wyan-dotte Echo of Kansas City carried the story as it was told to them. Other papers picked it up and printed similar versions such as the Atchinson daily globe of January 8, 1950 (written by Wes Izzard). The stories described two crashed discs with three-foot aliens inside. All were dead. In addition to the aliens, super strong metals were described and the idea that radar caused the craft to crash appeared.



Two months later, on March 8, there was a lecture by an "unknown" scientist at the University of Denver. According to the Greeley daily tribune (Greeley, Colorado), this "unknown scientist" reported



that three flying saucers from Venus had landed/crashed on earth and that the occupants were "midget-sized". The article in the paper went on to state that in two of the saucers the occupants were dead but in the third, the occupants got away. The "scientist" was Silas Newton. All of these stories being circulated were the genesis of the final story published by Scully.

Meanwhile, the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) was actually investigating the story. There are documents in the bluebook file describing how they interviewed the various players in this story. By late March, they pretty much gave up (with the implication they figured it was not important or it was a hoax) and stopped investigating. These are various links on the subject that are very informative.

<http://www.realityuncovered.net/blog/2009/02/play-it-again-scam/>

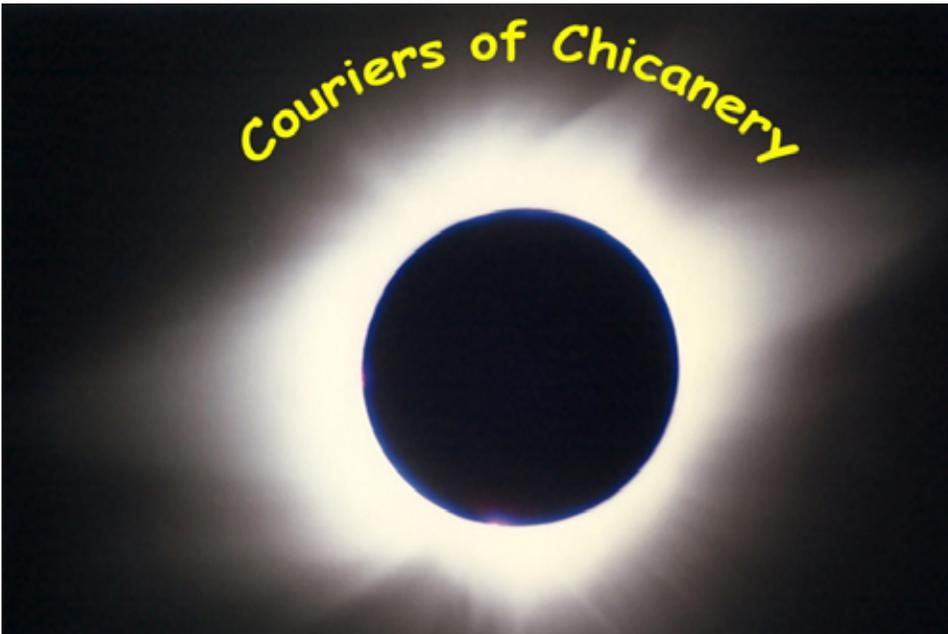
<http://www.nmsr.org/aztec.htm>

<http://www.nmsr.org/hottel.htm>

However, it was "Isaac Koi", who debunked it better than anybody else with his posting in the Above Top secret forum:

<http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/thread689049/pg1>

The bottom line with all of this is that this was not a smoking gun of any kind and it wasn't new. Those promoting it as such, should be ashamed.



In July of 1991, I experienced an astronomical event that was an incredible experience. For the first time in my life, I had seen a total solar eclipse. From Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, it was spectacular and worth every penny I spent to see it. Little did I know that over 700 miles to the southeast, the eclipse arrived with an "unexpected" companion.

Setting the astronomical stage



The July 1991 eclipse was a very long duration eclipse (over six minutes) that started over the big island in Hawaii and transited across the ocean to Mexico. It crossed the metropolis of Mexico city, where millions would enjoy the event. During totality, all sorts of astronomical objects were visible. The sun was almost overhead with the bright planets of Mer-

cury (magnitude 0), Jupiter (magnitude -1.8), and Venus (magnitude -4.4) in a line from the eclipsed sun in an eastward direction (see image below from the planetarium program "Stellarium"). Additionally, near Venus was the bright star Regulus (magnitude 1.3) and the planet Mars (magnitude 1.8).

Venus was prominently visible for anyone looking up. Many astronomers, including myself from Cabo San Lucas, reported seeing Venus well before totality began:

There are dozens of reports of people finding brilliant Venus a half hour and more before totality--not surprising, since the planet can be found in full daylight if one knows where to look." (Di Cicco 594)

During totality, I recall being able to see all the major stars in Orion (about magnitude +2). For people, who had no idea what to expect during totality, the sudden appearance of all these celestial objects might be confusing.

Video cameras

The rise of camcorder technology had begun to skyrocket in the late 1980s. A friend of mine and I had used one extensively during the 1988 opposition of Mars. The ones I saw in use were capable of recording bright stars of about magnitude



+2 without a telescope and fainter stars when coupled to a telescope (Jupiter's moons were favorite targets).

In Mexico City, there seemed to be a large number of people, who owned these devices. It was their recordings that would fuel wild speculation about alien visitors, who chose to appear during the eclipse.



What did the videos show?

Many of the witnesses noticed a bright object in the sky shortly before totality. They had no idea what it was and recorded it. It is important to note that the same object was visible all across the metropolitan area as well as towns dozens of miles away. This indicates the object was at a very high altitude. Several of the videos show the object was in the exact location one would expect for the planet Venus!



The top image shows the UFO but also shows an object right below the power lines. This is consistent with the positions of Venus and Jupiter. The lower image shows the object zoomed in with a nearby companion. This companion is the first magnitude star Regulus

These are only two images from all the

videos showing this object. Many of the other clips were edited to the point, one could not positively identify them against other celestial objects. Despite this, the apparent elevation angle and relation to the eclipsed sun, indicated most of them were probably Venus

To make it appear like a craft, the producers enlarge the image of the object to show that it is something exotic and not just a planet.



This image shows what appears to be a shadow underneath the object. However, one has to wonder how a shadow can appear during a solar eclipse, when the sun's light is blocked out by the moon. To produce a shadow, the UFO would have to have been out of the moon's shadow, which implies the UFO would have been extremely far away from the observers and not close as implied by all the supporters of this being something exotic. The truth of the matter is that this "shadow" is normal for the video camera's operation involving bright point sources against a dark sky. One can see the ef-



fect in the image at lower left from a video I took of the star Regulus reappearing from behind the moon in 1989. The moon's features do not exhibit this effect because they are not point sources and, instead are extended objects. There is a dark area around the star that looks like the "shadow" seen in the Mexico city UFO videos.

Really bad astronomy

Probably the greatest reason to doubt the idea that this was not Venus is that this eclipse was viewed by thousands of Amateur/Professional astronomers in Mexico city. Not once was there a mention of the UFO in *Sky and Telescope* or *Astronomy* magazine. No professional astronomical journals mentioned it either. If something new was in the sky that day, it would have been noticed. Arguing the astronomers were just looking at the eclipse and missed the interloper is pure nonsense. Astronomers don't just look through a telescope or camera lens during these events. A good example of this happened in 1948, when a comet was discovered during an eclipse.

During the eclipse, I made it a point of looking at the entire sky (noting the position of the various celestial objects and the constellations) even though I was also focused on photographing and observing the eclipse through binoculars and my telescope. If there had been a UFO present, I certainly would have noticed and I am certain that the thousands of astronomers in Mexico City would have as well. The reason it was not "noticed" as something exotic is because astronomers expected it to be there and knew its identity.

The Couriers

Watching "Messengers of Destiny" can be painful to anybody with a knowledge of Astronomy or Mexican history. Lee and Brit Elders twist and distort the history of the Mayans and Aztecs in order to come up with some new age nonsense about the arrival of an era of "cosmic awareness".



Not to be outdone by this kind of tomfoolery is UFO promoter, Jaimie Maussan. He is the biggest reason that this case has become a sensation for many Mexican UFOlogists. Mr. Maussan seems to be the most gullible news reporter I have ever seen and is a disgrace to his profession. A slightly skeptical approach by him could have solved it right away.

These three are not interested in determining the truth of the matter in this case. They are apparently just interested in self-promotion and selling DVDs. It is a shame that there are those that believe them as being honest researchers and accept these videos as being something other than the planet Venus.



Are we cosmically aware?

It has been two decades and the age of "cosmic awareness" has yet to occur. People still mistake balloons, stars, planets, and aircraft for exotic craft from elsewhere. The "couriers" message is simple. They desire people to remain ignorant of the universe around them in order to promote their own agenda.

Notes and references

1. Di Cicco, Dennis. "The Great Eclipse of 1991." *Sky and Telescope* December 1991: 589-595.

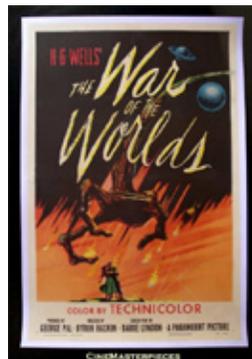
Ken Kasten's Secret History of Extraterrestrials (2010) is a compendium of ufo high strangeness gathered with an unfortunate knack for choosing and championing subjects that have been rejected by people who prefer rationality in their lives: MJ-12, Serpo, exopolitics, the hybrid program, 2012 apocalypses, etc. Some of his history drifts into the subject of science fiction films and their use to alternately undermine or prepare humanity for the reality of aliens visiting Earth. Compared to the rest of the book, his claims in this area are modest in their unlikelihood, but I caught myself mulling over them since I've some familiarity with this subject. There is convenient brevity to what he says and the problems I see can be sketched out with a minimum of tedium..

Kasten boosts the concept of what has become known among ufo buffs by the term The Acclimation Program – the government uses Hollywood to shape the public's knowledge and emotional response to the reality of aliens. The basic idea has been around for decades. Donald Keyhoe back in the 1950s suggested the government was trying to acclimate the public slowly before finally announcing the reality of ufos . Whole books now exist that push the idea. Kasten, predictably, picks the nuttiest one to praise:



Bruce Rux, in his book Hollywood vs. the Alien: The Motion Picture Industries Participation in UFO Disinformation, makes an excellent case for the likelihood that the intelligence agencies influenced Hollywood producers to make the aliens so monstrous and ridiculous that the public would cease to take the phenomena seriously. The ploy worked so well that even today you are likely to get a snicker if you bring up the subject of UFOs or extraterrestrials in any politically correct environment.

I've elsewhere already detailed a series of errors Rux made concerning The Day the Earth Stood Still and H.G. Wells's War of the Worlds that exemplify a pattern of shoddy research evident throughout his book.^{1,2} Kasten using the word excellent to describe this slop raised a red flag for me – Rux's book is impressive only in the absurd size of the conspiracy it posits. Incidentally, the index to Kasten's book gives the wrong page number for Rux's appearance.



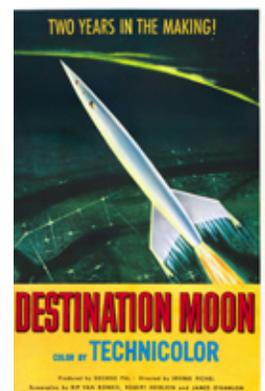
Kasten's history of SF films seems marginally better than Rux in terms of accuracy though the writing is confusing at times. He speaks of the initial group of SF films from Melies to the 1920s as "a hopeful beginning" that got lost and by WW2's end there was little to suggest "the glorious dreams of Verne, Wells, and Melies" was something humanity could aspire to.

The confusion arises from the fact that while Verne and Wells's books maybe had glorious aspects – that may be stretching things given there was a pessimistic strain running through Wells's writings – Melies film was closer to being comedic.

The important SF films of the 1920s & 30s were actually distinctly troubling in their tone. Metropolis is visually stunning, but

the working class is portrayed as almost zombie-like and dominated over by cruel elites. Aelita's Mars is artsy on the surface, but the protagonist throws away his blueprints and equations for space travel when the dream ends badly in a manipulated revolution. Just Imagine, the first SF musical, sees a future where eugenics decides who you will marry and finds a Mars that is primitive and tribal. Frankenstein, which straddles SF and horror, is a warning of the dangers attending science's quest for the secrets of life. Things to Come, a film with input by Wells, ends on a much quoted elegiac line about choosing to evolve beyond animals to take the universe, but it is delivered in the presence of a Luddite mob seeking to stop a manned flight to the Moon. The futures of the Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers serials find tyrannies in charge.

George Pal's Destination Moon kicks off the SF film boom of the 1950s and Kasten acclaims its moonscape as realistic and the moonlanding "remarkably predictive" of the real thing in 1969. In fact, the real moon turned out to be far dustier and the landscape more rolling. Historians note that while some astronomers had long before already determined the moon would not be as craggy as Chesley Bonestell's visuals portrayed it, the convention of a volcanic moon – present incidentally in



The Women in the Moon (1929) - had an adventurous appeal to it he couldn't shake off. Viewers maybe wouldn't buy a realistic portrayal because craggy lunar landscapes were too ingrained by contemporary habits of science illustration. The large sleek rocket that lands on the moon in the film is far different from the dumpy little LEM module of 1969. The concept of multi-stage rockets for moon journeys was some years away in 1950. In Destination Moon, the moon project is funded by a businessman. In reality, the cost would need a government's budget to fund it in the Sixties. The only more or less unexpected foreshadowing of reality is how Destination's moon rocket burns more fuel in finding a safer landing spot than originally planned. Critics prefer to regard the film as quaint nowadays.

Pal's later films fare better with today's sensibilities and his adaptation of War of the Worlds still makes genre best-film lists. Kasten admires Pal's films, praising them as visionary and filled with the ethos of man's destiny being among the stars. For him, they belong in a category separate from all the manipulative monster movies that filled theaters in that decade and robbed ufo belief of cultural seriousness.

Sylvia's reaction to the Martian in the farmhouse in War of the Worlds it should be noted puts a wrinkle in his vision-good/monsters-bad categories. Forbidden Planet, by a different director, would also be a hard SF classic to decide in a visionary versus venomous film face-off.

Kasten sees Gene Roddenberry's Star Trek as redefining the SF film genre. 2001 and Star Wars also served to redeem SF for the masses, providing inspiration and transcendence. Nobody should dispute these represented innovative and trend-setting sensibilities. Yet monster movies never went away - Alien and its franchise, Predator and its franchise, Species and its franchise, 1982's Thing remake, The Body Snatchers remakes, Independence Day. Drek has always outnumbered and outgunned the Trek stuff at the box office in every decade. What do such mixed messages say about any Ruxian large-scale Acclimation Program?

It looks relevant to also ask this question: What could movies and telefilms



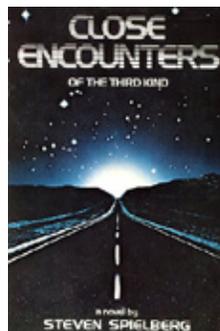
like The UFO Incident, Communions, Intruders, Fire in the Sky, Taken, and The 4th Kind say about acclimation when they push abduction mythology in wildly conflicting directions? Each

of them provably distort their source material and even misinform people at the level of fact. This behavior more distinctly suggest the presence of agenda than anything appearing in the blockbusters. The latter offer no pretense of adapting ufo narratives. Why don't such transgressions get those ufological spidey-senses tingling? Kasten mostly misses the issue, save to take note of Taken and Spielberg's role in helping guide its production.

Kasten, not surprisingly, thinks Spielberg is in on things:

By now most astute observers of the movie scene have long since concluded that Spielberg probably has an inside track with government agencies and is being used to present secret information relative to UFOs and ETs as entertainment. Many believe that the new government agenda relative to these subjects is "controlled public acclimation." Spielberg is probably willing to cooperate in this because he is in agreement with disclosure.

Kasten speculates that the climax of Close Encounters of the Third Kind was based in part on a prearranged alien landing that (allegedly) actually took place around Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico in April 1964 which Spielberg knew about because of that inside track he has to such classified information. The scene of the 12 astronauts lined up to enter the mothership is paralleled by the 12 astronauts that left earth in July 1965 to visit planet Serpo in the Zeta Reticuli system. Skeptics, reflecting on the chronology of the emergence



of the claims, think cause and effect is reversed.

Kasten is here relying on rumor and guesswork and shows no acquaintance of all that has been written about both Spielberg and the extant history of the film. Spielberg made a film called Firelight that premiered in Phoenix when he was 17 years old. It concerned a team of investigators that tracks down ufo sightings and finds that aliens from Altair are abducting people and placing them in a zoo on their home world. Aliens brainwash people into submission. Spielberg has stated it was based in part on ufo tales he heard living in Phoenix in 1957. Additionally, he freely proclaimed he was an avid consumer of all tv and filmwork involving science fiction and ufos.

It looks doubtful any intelligence agencies would prevail on a 17 year old to do ufo films when they had long-term established relationships to filmmakers like Disney who had better budgets and a solid audience base which could be used to educate a much larger population. Indeed there is unambiguous evidence Disney gave his facilities to help people initiate and build support for manned space programs to the Moon and - it was hoped - Mars. Chesley Bonestell's work in this effort is particularly well known.

Nobody disputes the Air Force tried to educate the public to the mundane character of ufos in order to minimize the possibility that Russians could use panic on the subject to confuse the work of intelligence agencies. The declassified Robertson Panel's papers can be waved around to put down any doubt on that point. By contrast, nobody has come forward with any declassified intelligence documents proving a relationship to Hollywood existed to sway public opinion about aliens.

A document asking directors to please make their aliens more monstrous and ridiculous to make the masses not take ufos seriously would be amazing at this point - and, need I say it? - laughably superfluous. Creative folks needed no encouragement to do what comes so naturally. Horror is the stuff of legends and has always existed. It would be nonsensical to blame all monstrous representation of aliens as a propagandizing ploy

since such things were already commonplace in the science fiction pulps of the 1920s-30s.. H.G.Wells made monstrous Martians exterminate humankind before the turn of the century in his classic War of the Worlds. Go back still further. Who, in Greek and Roman times, leaned on Lucian of Samosata (115-200 AD) to make his True History extraterrestrials ridiculous with lunarians all wearing artificial private parts, star wars fought with fantastic monsters, and that notoriously out there truth named Cloudcuckooland?³

The evolution of the screenplays leading up to Close Encounters has been described in detail in a book by Ray Morton. It involved several writers and multiple drafts. If there was any involvement of intelligence agents, it is not obvious when or how such input entered the process. The parameters of what should be in the story tended to be fluid and mainly concerned character and drama, not the specifics about how the aliens and ufos look or behave – matters that should have been locked in if education was a dominant concern. It is also known writers did research by digging up old copies of Life magazine and interviewing prominent ufo sighters. Such matters should be totally irrelevant if they had been given more authoritative sources of knowledge

Especially damning to the Acclimation thesis is the fact that Spielberg encountered resistance from the Air Force, the Army, and NASA and had to acquire things like army suits from costume shops. Such agencies typically are willing to supply directors with army equipment and supplies when a film is to their liking, ie. showing them as competent professionals protecting the nation from harm. Spielberg himself stated this:

I really found my faith when I heard that the Government was opposed to the film. If NASA took the time to write me a 20-page letter, then I knew there must be something happening. I had wanted cooperation from them, but when they read the script they got very angry and felt that it was a film that would be dangerous.⁴

They had seen the furor Jaws had caused on the nation's beaches and wanted no repeat with fear of ufos replacing fear of sharks.

Kasten quotes Spielberg on his reasons for making the Taken miniseries of 2002 as needing more than 2 hours to really present a history of alien abductions and he observes it was presented on the Sci-Fi channel with a publicity campaign that advocated the government should open its ufo files. The station's president opined that it was clear the government is hiding something. Though Kasten implies this shows Spielberg's involvement in acclimation efforts, there is a curious counter-revelation in the 2007 Ultimate DVD Edition of Close Encounters of the Third Kind.

There is an 'extra' where Spielberg does a monologue of his current thoughts about his famous blockbuster. He feels CE3K is the one film of his that has 'dated' the worst. It is most tied to the time he created it in and the one he has most grown out of. He sees how naïve it looks and he blames its optimism on his youth. The idea that Neary, a father, would leave his children, perhaps never to return, is something Spielberg, now a father himself, agrees finally with the critics who said it was a mistake. Neary looks irresponsible and too unfeeling. He also changed his mind on a larger point.

I had a real deep-rooted belief that we had been visited, and, in this century. I was a real sort-of UFO devotee in the 1970s and was really into the whole UFO phenomenon, from everything I was reading – so, it was something, for me, that was science. Now, I've revised my thinking. As I grew up, got a little older, and began to understand that, with all the video-cameras in the world today, why have ufo sightings diminished, when before the camcorder craze, ufo sightings were flourishing? So, I'm a little more skeptical now than I was in the Seventies when I made the picture. But I-I-I really believed it---⁵

Though Spielberg does not specifically reference the line, he is revisiting and enhancing a point made in CE3K's Air Force press conference scene. The Air Force spokesman argues that with all the cameras out there, we should have incontrovertible evidence on film by now. A newsman there retorts that he has never seen films of car crashes or plane crashes. That possibly sounded convincing in 1977, but anyone hearing this now can hardly be blind to the fact we now regularly see

films of plane crashes and car crashes on shows like Extra or Inside Edition, not to mention local shows where we often see news choppers tracking police chases that end badly and spectacularly.

The camcorder revolution has brought us many films of flares on balloons, shaky clips of distant planes, but 'true' close encounters remain as elusive as film subjects as they ever were. On May 18, 2008, Dateline offered an episode titled 10 Close Encounters Caught on Tape and what was striking is first, some were actually old photographs rather than tape and; second, they were generally not 'close' enough to show any detailed structure behind the blobs of light. Spielberg has good reason to be skeptical. Experience and common sense finally trumped any insider information he was exposed to. Taken was ultimately just a good story and a way to make money. CE3K and even Firelight had taught him there was a paying audience for ufos.

You think Hollywood cares about educating people about ufos? Get serious.

And who should we fairly blame for ufo-ology not being taken seriously? Studying the rest of Kasten's book will give you a good starting point for that problem.

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In SUNlite 2-6, I reported about the missile shutdown at FE Warren AFB in Wyoming. I pointed out that there were no UFOs reported near the base to the media, MUFON, or NUFORC for the date in question. Even after the missile shutdown was public knowledge, no reports surfaced. However, thanks to the dedicated “research” by Robert Hastings, UFOlogy can now link UFOs to this missile shutdown as well.

The reported cause

Before we go into the UFO quagmire, it is best to review what transpired. The USAF had sent an operations review board to determine the actual cause of the event and the findings of this report were described in a recent Air Force Times article.

On the morning of October 23rd at 1:35 am, the 319th missile squadron of the 90th missile wing had a complete shutdown of all their missiles for fifty-nine minutes. This squadron encompasses the Alpha through Echo flights located on the Nebraska-Wyoming border.

Initial news reports indicated there was some communication problems that caused the shutdown. According to the Air Force Times, the review board concluded the fault was a poorly seated circuit card:

A circuit card in a weapons-system processor knocked out of place by heat and vibration generated by regular operations caused the Oct. 23 disruption, according to an operations review board investigating the incident.



Locations for the five flights of the 319th missile squadron

The card had not been essentially locked into place after maintenance work had been done, but the weapons-system processor had worked for more than nine hours before the card came loose, according to a redacted copy of the board’s report, released Wednesday by Global Strike Command....

Thomas compared the communication to a BlackBerry constantly connected to its server to check for e-mails. The launch control centers are continuously checking and updating data including temperature, alert status and security situation for each missile...

“The system was still up, there were still queries pinging and occurring, but what was happening was like if your cell phone was breaking up; it was not ideal,” Thomas said shortly after the incident occurred. “The suspect launch control center was apparently trying to communicate on top of the other launch control centers trying to communicate.”

It appears that there is a reasonable cause for the loss of all the missiles. The Missiles forum (composed essentially of retired missileers) seem to question how the card got loose and thought somebody made a mistake. However, the bottom line is there was a known cause for the failure and one did not have to wonder if something outside the system caused it. Of course, this did not stop “UFOs and Nukes” pitchman, Robert Hastings.

Spam...Spam...Spam

Back in 2008, Robert Hastings attempted to push his ideas on the Bad Astronomy and Universe Today conspiracy theory forum. He seemed to think he could “educate” the skeptics in the forum about his research. What Hastings got were a lot of questions and counter arguments that he seemed reluctant to answer. Instead of answering the questions/arguments, he started posting excerpts from his book. Hastings was banned from that forum for spamming his book instead of defending his research.

Imagine my surprise, when I was looking at the missile forums and Hastings did the exact same thing in 2009. In an effort to “educate” these former missileers, he started posting multiple excerpts from

his book. After a couple of pages of this, the moderator issued a cease e-mail to Hastings, who promptly pouted about it publicly. The response by some of the members to this squelching of Hastings seems to be one of applause:

Until there is physical proof beyond the unsubstantiated fictional campfire stories you recite, I find the subject a waste of time²

Robert Hastings was never in Missiles may be we should have a vote of our members of removing his posting privileges. We were all professional and very good at what we did and do. Why should we tolerate this Forum being exploited by commercial interest that want to sell books and seminars. I think Mr. Hastings and his UFO mania need a good dose of the SAC "Sundown Policy" Moderators please Take Note.³

I'm with you brutha, I second your motion. I respect the man's views but in no way believe in them, or the paranoia and conspiracy theory that accompany them. Perhaps if there were some physical evidence to be offered instead of stories, hearsay evidence, and spooks on a radar screen that are being taken as fact... perhaps. But as it stands those posts are mildly interesting tidbits of science fiction having nothing to do with the intent of this forum. The man is entitled to his opinion, but I certainly don't appreciate the condescending manner in which he tells the forum members they are uninformed, uneducated, ignorant dumb asses if they don't agree with him. I got shit to do and reading his insults isn't it.⁴

This "bull in the china shop" approach of Hastings demonstrates his mind is made up concerning these events. He is not going to listen to anybody but himself or those that tell him what he wants to hear.

Beating the bushes

In my article, I stated:

My guess is that Hastings will try and find somebody who claims they saw a UFO nearby and then try to link the two events. He may even find somebody who claims they were on base and saw a UFO. It only takes an anonymous phone call to

get that ball rolling.

It took some time but now Hastings claims to have found the smoking gun. After publicly begging in the news media from the area for somebody to please tell him about every light in the sky they can not identify, he accumulated a database of UFO reports that he links to UFOs monitoring the ICBM sites. My guess is they are probably are just raw uninvestigated reports that may have reasonable explanations. He is apparently throwing a bunch of stuff against the wall hoping something sticks.

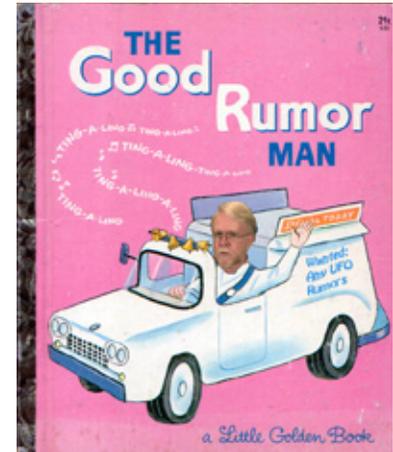
His claims that there was some sort of increased UFO activity just does not stand under scrutiny. In the unsolicited reports filed with MUFON and NUFORC, I counted all the reports filed from Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska for the September-March time frames starting in September 2007. If Hastings was correct, one should expect seeing a spike in the reports for 2010-2011 compared to other years.

	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11
Sept	3/22/6	2/24/4	2/29/7	1/28/3
Oct	1/20/14	6/26/2	1/16/3	1/14/6
Nov	1/12/6	2/18/8	1/38/1	0/12/9
Dec	1/16/2	2/19/3	0/12/0	3/12/1
Jan	2/24/0	3/19/3	0/17/1	1/11/2
Feb	0/17/2	3/23/5	0/6/3	2/8/3
Mar	1/8/1	0/16/0	0/6/3	0/12/2

Values are the total number of MUFON and NUFORC reports for the states of Wyoming/Colorado/Nebraska.

When you look at these numbers, there is no significant spike to indicate elevated UFO activity in the area. Most of the reports are about the same as in previous years. One could suggest there was a spike in the total number of reports for Colorado in September of 2010 (28 total reports from MUFON and NUFORC) but it is still one less than September of 2009 (29) and only slightly more than 2007 (22) and 2008 (24). Nebraska had its highest number of UFO reports for November in 2010 (9) but it is only one more than 2008 (8) and all the reports that identified their location were from the eastern part of the state far from the areas where the FE Warren AFB missile silos are located. The six reported in October were similar in that the locations reported were in the

eastern part of the state. Wyoming had a spike for December 2010 (3) but such a low number is not much different than 2008 (2) and 2007 (1). The lack of any increase in unsolicited UFO reports being filed indicates there was no increased activity and there is nothing to indicate UFOs were involved in the missile shutdown.



The good rumor man

Hastings leaves us with a teaser for his future expose' on the UFO caused missile shutdown:

I've learned that active duty Air Force personnel working at different locations in the missile field repeatedly sighted a "huge blimp" on October 23/24, 2010—the exact time-frame of the ICBM communications-disruption incident—which, according to my sources, lasted much longer than the 59-minute period the Air Force has acknowledged. These persons all emphatically say that the object was not a commercial dirigible, but much longer and narrower in shape, similar to a WWI German Zeppelin... I also have received credible reports that missile squadron commanders at F.E. Warren have sternly warned their personnel not to talk to journalists or UFO investigators about "the things they may or may not have seen" in the sky near the missile sites. Severe legal penalties were threatened for anyone who violated the mandated secrecy.⁵

Of course, this is all unsubstantiated rumor regarding what AF personnel supposedly saw. The "missile fields" for FE Warren are outside the confines of the base. Therefore, if military personnel saw the "dirigible", civilians should have seen

it as well in the neighboring towns and it should have appeared in the MUFON/NUFORC database. The lack of any such reports indicates these “dirigible” stories are unverifiable and could be misperceptions of some kind.

As for being “threatened”, all military personnel sign non-disclosure agreements prior to becoming exposed to classified information. One could easily conclude that these “threats” were reminders not to talk to outside agencies/the press about details regarding the shutdown. Anybody with a conspiracy mind-set, like Hastings, can twist these sort of things into threats most dire.

Don't forget to call 911

Larry Bryant did not want to miss out on the fun. He made a FOIA request to the city of Cheyenne, Wyoming Chief of police for all UFO reports filed in the fall of 2010! He commented that the response he received was that they had received no reports. If this is accurate, it is another indication that there was no increased UFO activity near the base. Why didn't Bryant just call Hastings for the information? Additionally, why did he contact Cheyenne, when the missile silos were to the east?

Highly doubtful

What we are seeing is Hastings attempting to create another UFO-Missile shutdown myth by “seeding” the region around the missile sites with ideas that can create imaginative stories. Through careful prompting of his witnesses, Hastings can manufacture a scenario that supports his preconceived idea about UFOs causing the shutdown.

Meanwhile, there is a perfectly valid explanation as to what happened. Perhaps Bryant and Hastings should file a FOIA about the operations review board's investigation into the incident instead of wasting everybody's time with frivolous requests to Cheyenne's chief of police or looking for mythical dirigibles hovering over silos.

Hastings plans to release some new article about this in the future. Based on what we have seen so far, I seriously doubt it will be very convincing. If he is

going to present unverifiable stories as his primary evidence, he will be preaching to the choir. Of course, it is the “choir” that lines his pockets and begs for him to speak at their UFO conferences. Meanwhile, skeptics will see this as another self-promotion gimmick by Hastings.

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More crashed debris claims

The latest crashed UFO saga comes from an obscure event that supposedly happened in September of 1977 at Fort Benning, Georgia. The star witness to this event is Command Sergeant Major (CSM) James Norton. He tells an interesting story about a live fire exercise late at night involving over a thousand soldiers, which also had the Secretary of the Army present. Suddenly, UFOs appeared and created a great disruption to the maneuvers. Norton was abducted and a UFO crashed with all the usual cover-up claims. He would later find a piece of the crashed UFO and hide it for over thirty years.

At the time of the incident we are told that Norton was an E-5 but his facebook page says he joined the army in 1977. You can't reach E-5 in less than a year in any US military unit. The article also states that he is presently stationed at Fort McClellan, Alabama. However, Fort McClellan was closed in 1999 and the only units there now are associated with the Alabama National Guard. The CSM for that unit is not James Norton. So what unit is he the CSM for? In his photograph of him being promoted to CSM, his BDUs have some patches that seem to imply he is part of the Alabama State Defense Force. This is



a state militia unit, which probably serves some useful purpose but it is not an official United States Military unit like the US Army, Army reserve, or National Guard.

Norton would later claim that MPs “detained” him at Fort Benning recently when he tried to go to the area where he had his 1977 encounter. He also claims that National Security Agency (NSA) is interested in talking to him, which prompted great concern in the UFO community. This all sounds ominous and seems to be typical for most of these alien debris claims. My guess is that the fragment(s) will never appear and this is the beginning of the usual explanation of the government covering it up.

One of the most astounding thing to me concerning UFO photographs and videos is why aren't they recorded from different locations and by multiple independent witnesses. The recent Jerusalem UFO case did appear to present this until it was revealed the case was probably a hoax. The question is, if UFOs were as numerous as we are led to believe, then there should be better evidence in the way of photographs and videos.

Best Evidence?

It is amusing to note how UFOlogy often refers to their best photographic and film/video evidence. When you ask about photographs that show actual "craft" (not just blurry lights), you rarely hear about recent imagery. The last time a series of photographs were released that was considered "best evidence" was the Ed Walters Gulf Breeze controversy. There are UFOlogists and a great number of skeptics who consider this case a hoax.

The cases most often presented as "best evidence" are the McMinnville and Trindade Island photographs. They are the major photographic cases presented in Jerome Clark's UFO Book and the McMinnville case was listed as a top ten in Paul Kimball's film "Best available evidence". Both sets of photographs come from the 1950s and both have been shown to have potential indicators for a hoax. UFOlogists have found ways to downplay these problems but the fact remains that these images are suspect.

Why does UFOlogy need to go back over fifty years to find their best evidence when it comes to photographs, films, or videos? Is there something wrong with UFOs today that they are not well photographed?

The time problem

One of the reasons given by some UFOlogists as to why UFOs are not well photographed is that the event is too quick and there is no time to get a camera. This seems rather odd since Allan Hendry's UFO handbook gives statistics from three sources (Claude Poher, Hendry, and Bluebook Special report 14), that most UFO reports that can not be explained have durations between ten

Those elusive "best evidence" UFO photographs and videos

seconds and ten minutes. The greatest number of these reports fall into the five minute range.

In the cases of Trindade and McMinnville, we see time durations of about 30 seconds and several minutes respectively. The Trents had enough time to go into the house and grab their camera!

The idea that the duration is too short appears to be invalid based on this information. These means there should be more good photographs, films, and videos.



Strike one

In the movie, Close encounters of the third kind, the statement was made that nobody had photographed car and airplane crashes but we know they happened. That was a statement made back in 1977 and not in 2011. Since that time, a lot has changed. Gone are the little 110/ brownie cameras that people broke out for their family photographs at planned events. Now people own 5 mega-pixel cameras installed in their own personal cell phones they carry with them everywhere. These cameras can even record video. The idea that you see a UFO and can not photograph it seems less likely to occur.

It does not take long to get the cell phone out and use it either. From the time of powering it up and activating the camera, it takes me between 5-10 seconds. If one adds another 10 seconds to

recognize the event is something unique and should be photographed, one can conclude that a UFO event more than 20 seconds long should be photographed by somebody with a cell phone.

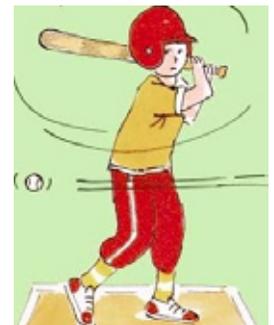
Recently, I noticed a KC-135 flying over Manchester. I quickly took out my smart phone and took this picture. One can even see the refueling probe fins near the tail of the aircraft. Had this been a UFO, I am sure the details would have been just as sharp and clear.



This wide spread availability of cameras means that it is more likely that UFOs can be photographed by more than one camera in different locations. This has yet to happen to the best of my knowledge.

Strike two

Even before the arrival of these cell phone cameras, the explosion of video cameras allowed for unusual events to be readily recorded. The Peekskill meteor, a brief and unusual event, was reportedly recorded by sixteen different video cameras! The most famous of these was a recording of the meteor during a Friday night football game.



In July of 2000, the Concorde airplane crash was recorded on video by a passing motorist. There are also two photographs taken independently of each other showing the airplane accident.



Topping this is the recording of the first plane that struck the world trade center. That was captured by a television crew documenting the lives of firemen. Two other films recorded the event but not as clearly.



As video technology improved and costs dropped, video and still cameras have begun to appear just about everywhere. Many police cars have cameras that record what happens in front of the car. Not only do they record arrests but they have been known to record brief and unannounced events like bright fireballs.



Security systems around various buildings and businesses which have recorded meteors and airplane crashes. The US airways flight 1549 was recorded by several security cameras as it plunged into the Hudson river.

Meanwhile, amateur/professional astronomers have systems for recording bright meteors running on a frequent basis.



All of this indicates that rare/brief events of spectacular nature are being recorded regularly but none of these systems have recorded any "true" UFOs that I am aware of. There must be a reason for this.

Strike three



I am a big sports fan. Between college and professional sports, there are dozens/hundreds/thousands of cameras present at these events. This does not even count the actual television broadcasts. Many use high quality optics that can record the individual seams on the balls being used. I watch almost every Red Sox game during the baseball season and it seems like just about anything that

occurs within camera range is shown. Football, Soccer, Cricket, automobile racing, Golf, and Tennis are sporting events that have dozens of professional cameras focusing in on the action, the crowds, and the surrounding area. Would they really be focused on the event if one of these massive flying triangles suddenly appeared? Not once, have I seen anybody claim that a UFO appeared over a major sporting event, where it was clearly recorded. Don't UFOs enjoy watching sporting events or does their lack of being seen/recorded say something about them?

Strikeout?

We can not say that these exotic craft do not exist based on the lack of good photographic evidence that show them clearly. However, I think we can state that the lack of such evidence demonstrates that these "craft", if they even exist, are extremely rare. They certainly are not visible in the quantities and sizes we are led to believe by the various UFO groups.

Back in SUNlite 2-4, I outlined a potential project to gather data on UFOs using equipment readily available. The challenge is still there for UFOlogy to do something more than being passive in their research. By looking at decades old cases as the cornerstones of their "best evidence", they are using old data that has very little value. UFOlogy seems to ignore the best way to get scientists interested is by obtaining data that can be gathered scientifically and evaluated.

The ball keeps coming down the plate for UFOlogy and they keep watching the ball go by without a serious swing. In this sense, one could say that UFOlogy is striking out.



How could the moon be a UFO? It does not seem to happen often but, under the right conditions, people can be fooled by the moon. I haven't seen any such cases in any of the MUFON/NUFORC databases but I did not look very hard. One needs to know when and where to look.

In my copy of the MUFON investigators field manual (3rd edition), Raymond Fowler states:

*A rising or setting red-hued moon is sometimes reported as a UFO, especially in its gibbous phase. Atmospheric refraction and light dispersion can cause the moon's shape to be distorted and unrecognizable to a frightened witness...The situation can become even more aggravated if the observer is viewing it through eyeglasses, windows, screens, curved windshields, etc. As in the case of stars and planets, viewing the moon on the horizon, or through clouds or fog, or from a moving vehicle can give the illusion of being chased by a huge glowing object.*¹

IFO University: The moon



The rising and setting moon can create interesting shapes. I recently saw a photograph on the web of a square shaped moon rising in Alaska. A temperature inversion had distorted the moon significantly. It is possible that somebody, who did not bother to look a few minutes later, might declare they saw a UFO simply because it did not look like the moon.

During the Michigan UFO flap of 1966, there was a photograph published in the media that supposedly showed UFOs



over the farm of Frank Mannor in Dexter. It is interesting to read that the photograph was a time exposure of ten minutes. A quick check of a planetarium program for the date and time in question reveals that the UFOs were, more than likely, Venus and the moon.

A setting moon can look really strange

to a person under the right conditions. The sequence above comes from some photographs I took of a setting crescent shows the reddish-yellow color and how the trees can hide portions of the disk giving it an odd shape. When it sets, it can appear to "rapidly disappear/move away" from the observer.

According to Allan Hendry, a similar scenario caused a group of police officers to chase the moon:

*In case 100 police officers in separate cars were convinced that the setting moon was moving away from them at fantastic speed "while setting on Main street" at 3:25 AM. The police sped up to 60MPH to chase it, but to no avail.*²

Hendry also points to a case, which did not require the moon to be setting or rising. In this case, a waitress and two other people reported a UFO that mysteriously disappeared after being visible for fifty minutes:

A waitress in California got home at 3:57 AM when she saw a saucer "twenty-five feet in diameter" with red, green, and blue flashing lights and a cloud haze around it.

This report had a lot of other provocative elements going for it:

- 1) The waitress called two more adult witnesses, who also filled out reports describing the saucer.
- 2) Two lights were seen next to the saucer that looked like stars but pulsed different colors like the object.
- 3) The saucer hovered stationary over a hospital for fifty minutes and then shot straight into the sky very rapidly. Surprisingly, the two "stars" disappeared at the same time.
- 4) A loud humming noise was heard throughout the observation. At the end, the hum got louder and changed into a high-pitched loud beeping sound just prior to the "rapid ascent"
- 5) The lights were seen dimming and brightening in the parking lot of the Grossmont Hospital over which the saucer hovered, "as if it were sucking energy from them."

6) Animal reactions included her parakeet screeching and her dogs howling and barking.

7) Physiological reactions were present here too; while watching the saucer the waitress felt as if she were in a trance and could hardly speak. She felt drained of energy and it was an effort to move around for the next forty minutes.

Sounds pretty good right? Attempts at identification and further corroboration were falling through. A local field investigator checked with the Miramar RAPCON and Gillespie field but no radar observation of anything unusual was noted. The local police department received no calls. The La Mesa police department claimed to have had two calls but sent no car. All police helicopters were down at the SD helicopter base at that time, and a check with the Grossmont Hospital personnel revealed that nothing unusual was noted at the "scene" of the drained power. Remembering that Mars and Jupiter were "scheduled" to be positioned very close to each other at that date, I checked my star charts and astronomy magazines to determine whether Mars and Jupiter could be that pair of stars seen next to the

saucer. Imagine my shock when I discovered not only the Mars-Jupiter pair in the direction and bearing provided by all of the witnesses, but a horizontally oriented crescent moon positioned exactly where they put the saucer right next to the "stars"! Searching through the reports of all the adult witnesses, I confirmed that none of them had reported seeing the moon at the same time as the object although they said it was "clear" out! Yet all of the witnesses put the direction and bearing of the "saucer" right where the moon should be. Also, they all agreed that its apparent size fell somewhere between "one half" and "two times" the moon's width.

Remarkable? Remember that the witnesses had described a cloud or haze around the moon. Obviously, that same haze was responsible for the brightening and dimming of the hospital parking lot lights a half mile away, the saucer's colors, and the eventual obscuring of the moon, Mars, and Jupiter resulting in the sudden disappearance. Now it is no longer surprising that Mars and Jupiter disappeared at the same time as the saucer... It must be concluded then that the other effects, such as the beeping noises and animal reactions, must be ascribed to other causes.³

Dr. Jill Tartar mentioned an experience where the moon, partially hidden by clouds, appeared as a UFO to her at one point. She did not file a UFO report simply because she took the time and effort to identify it. Dr. Tartar took a lot of grief from UFOlogists for this but are her observations really worthy of ridicule? Imagine how the police officers and the waitress responded when Hendry had to tell them they were fooled by the moon. I wonder if they stated, "I know what I saw and it wasn't the moon"?!?

Notes and references

1. Fowler, Raymond ed. Third edition MUFON Field Investigators manual Mutual UFO Network, INC. Seguin, Texas April 1983 p.62
2. Hendry, Allan. The UFO Investigators Handbook. London: Sphere Books Ltd. 1980. P. 45
3. *ibid.* p. 77-78

1979 Binary code

Recent revelations regarding Rendlesham has focused on the binary code that Jim Penniston claims he recorded in his notebook on December 27, 1980. Both Penniston and Burroughs imply that binary was not a familiar term in 1980. However, this is not exactly true. Any Trekkie will tell you that the movie "Star Trek: The Motion Picture" (released in 1979) mentions binary code. After "V-ger" reaches earth orbit, it begins broadcasting a signal. Spock reports to Kirk that it is "a simple binary code transmitted by carrier wave signal....radio." (See image below showing the 1's and 0's that appeared on his display).



This can be followed by another 1979 movie where "binary code" was presented to the viewer. In the movie "Alien", Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) decided to decode the signal the ship received. The instant she brought up the message on the computer console, we see....



Of course, the idea of touching an unknown black object and receiving a message of some kind is not that new is it?



You have to wonder where people get their ideas about their personal UFO stories.....

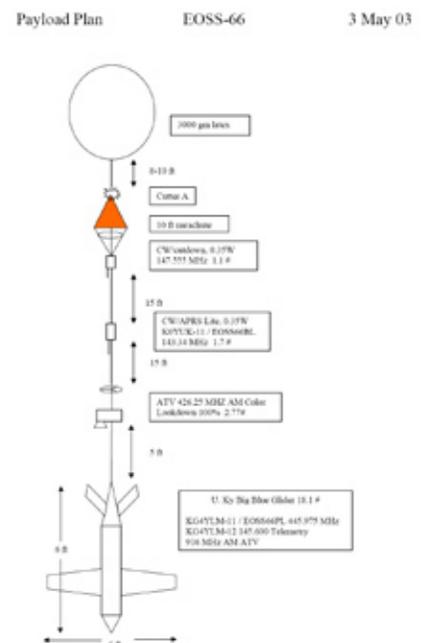
A new source of an old IFO friend



A popular IFO is our old friend the weather balloon. However, it isn't only weather observers who are launching these objects. There are amateurs using these weather balloons to reach the edge of space with cameras, radio transmitters, and other scientific equipment.

I stumbled across their web site called Amateur Radio High Altitude Radio Ballooning (<http://www.arhab.org/>). They have catalogued 147 balloon launches (as of March 27th) from places that are mostly western and Midwestern states. There are also locations in Canada, France, South Africa, and the UK.

While many do not employ the large research balloons that NASA uses in Texas and New Mexico, the configurations used by these groups are "interesting" to say the least. This configuration launched by "Edge of Space Sciences" in Colorado on May 3, 2003 (http://www.eoss.org/ansrecap/ar_100/recap66.htm), caught my eye and I would wonder how many people might consider seeing this in the sky as some form of disc with a cross?



The leading sociologist of the UFO phenomena in France at the moment is Pierre Lagrange, who has written several books on the topic over the years. He argues, in an article published in 2000, *Reprendre à zéro: Pour une approche irréductionniste des ovnis*, that sociology should adopt what he calls an irreductionist approach. To understand what he means by that, let's explain briefly what the opposite is: a reductionist approach, in the field of ufology, consists of trying to explain UFO cases with mundane explanations. In that sense, it reduces something that people believe is unknown to something that – at the end of the process - is known (an airplane, a helicopter, the moon, the planet Venus, Chinese lanterns, flares and so on). With that definition in mind, skeptical investigations are very often *reductionist*, even if I would prefer to simply say that skeptics try to explain cases instead of engaging in mystery mongering. Lagrange's irreductionist approach is very similar to what fortran researchers would advocate: don't enter the debate between skeptics and proponents, just pretend to be above it.

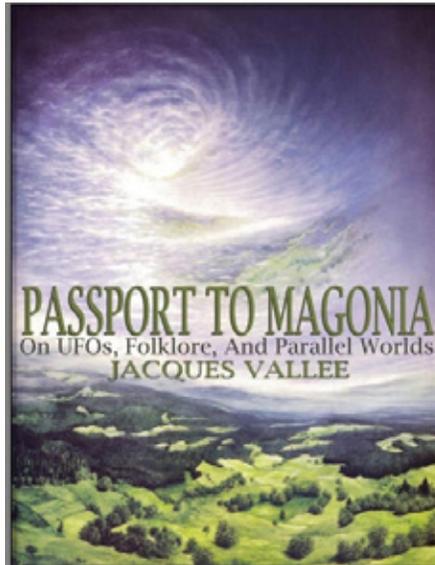
At the beginning of *Reprendre à zéro*, Pierre Lagrange states that sociologists should start all over again and adopt an irreductionist approach because they shouldn't be part of the ufological debate. On top of that, he claims that the ufoskeptical view, sometimes called in the literature the psychosocial hypothesis (PSH), doesn't explain any cases at all. He writes (our translation):

(...) my point is not that the PSH (psychosocial hypothesis) doesn't explain every single case, my point is to try to show that it doesn't explain any case at all.

I strongly disagree with this view, and I don't think that Pierre Lagrange succeeded in his project of disproving the PSH; even if he bases his own claim on a similar one made by Bertrand Méheust around the same time in his book *Retour sur l'Anomalie belge* in which he argues (not very convincingly) that the PSH fails to account for the Belgian UFO wave. I agree that sociologists shouldn't take an active part in the ufological debate, but it's simply a false dichotomy to claim that the only other alternative is Lagrange's irreductionist approach. There's in fact at least one other way I can think of, a

Ufology, a contemporary folklore?

By Jean-Michel Abrassart



position that has been taken by many researchers in human sciences for a long time: studying ufology as a folklore. By doing so, sociologists don't have to enter the deep waters of ufology and also don't have to adopt a postmodern, relativistic epistemology. Of course ufologists who advocate the extraterrestrial hypothesis are always very vocal against that position, but researchers in the human sciences shouldn't be bullied into being ashamed of taking such a stance.

I can see several reasons why we shouldn't adopt an irreductionist approach. The first one is epistemological in nature. Lagrange's view is grounded in the idea that the very concept of pseudo-science is useless. In his work, he argues that we should reject what he calls the *Grand Partage* (English: Big Rift) between sciences and pseudo-sciences, rational and irrational. He's highly critical of skeptics, and he never hesitates to bash rationalists if he has an opportunity to do it. According to postmodern thinking, because it's difficult - some would even say impossible - to distinguish between sciences, quasi-sciences, pseudo-sciences and non-sciences, then we should simply give up those distinctions. Philosophers have debated the demarcation issue for quite some time now, starting with Karl Popper's seminal work. But not all epistemologists are cognitive relativists, far from it! For example recently the biologist and

philosopher Massimo Pigliucci published a book titled: *Nonsense on Stilts: How to Tell Science from Bunk*. The bottom line is: even if it's difficult to have good criteria to distinguish sciences from pseudo-sciences, we should not throw out the baby with the bath water, and thus we should not reject the *Grand Partage*. We all know that astronomy and astrology are not on the same level when it comes to describing reality accurately, or that young-earth creationism and evolution theory are not just two cultural narratives. Everything is not on the same epistemic level.

Many scholars have criticized relativistic postmodern thinking. Let's mention Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont in *Fashionable Nonsense: Postmodern Intellectuals' Abuse of Science*. Even if postmodern thinkers like Pierre Lagrange claim to be above the crowd, above the debate between skeptics and proponents, in reality their irreductionist approach makes it very difficult – if not impossible - to criticize pseudo-sciences. This has been made acutely obvious when the infamous French astrologer Élisabeth Teissier was able to complete a PhD in sociology at the University Paris Descartes in 2001 under Michel Maffesoli's supervision. As Alan Sokal said it in his article, *Pseudo-science and Postmodernism: Antagonists or Fellow-Travelers?*, more often than not postmodern thinking is an ally of pseudo-sciences. The reason is that if truth doesn't exist, then falsehood doesn't exist either and thus, in the postmodernist worldview, it is not possible to criticize anything in a meaningful way.

In his book *Au fondement des sociétés humaines*, Maurice Godelier tells us that each culture distinguishes itself from others by replying to a finite list of questions. The object of anthropology as a field is to compare the way cultures answer those. One of those questions (actually the first one in Godelier's short list) is: what kind of relationship does that culture have between the visible and the invisible, the ancestors, the spirits, the gods? The UFO phenomena falls into that very category. It is one of the forms that has taken folklore in our techno-scientific cultures. Science has made it difficult to believe in the supernatural, but some kind of entity avoids that problem because cultures present them as being natural: on one side we have the cryptids (like the Loch

Ness monster, Big Foot, chupacabra and so on) and on the other we have extraterrestrials, our brothers from outer space. Jean-Bruno Renard, in his article *L'homme sauvage et l'extraterrestre : Deux figures de l'imaginaire évolutionniste*, points out that Big Foot and Little Grey are the two imaginary sides of human evolution: Big Foot is a cultural representation of what we were and Little Grey what we would become.

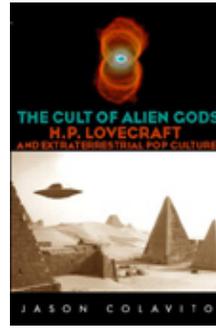
Jacques Vallée in *Passport to Magonia: From Folklore to Flying Saucers*, among others, has studied similarities between previous folklore's and UFOs. Those are often interpreted by ufologists as proving that extraterrestrials have been visiting the earth since the dawn of man, if not before. This idea is also present in the ancient astronaut theory, or neoevemerism. This way of looking at those similarities takes things backward: the UFO phenomenon is similar to those because it's a contemporary form of religiosity. Like people in antiquity would meet Greek gods, people today see humanoids in close encounters of the third kind - to use Josef Allen Hynek's classification. Contactees like George Adamski or Claude Vorilhon (aka Raël) saw the UFO phenomena for what it is, and tried to take advantage of it. When one starts to look at the UFO phenomena this way, one realizes that saucer cults are not at all an epiphenomenon, but at the very heart of what we're studying.

Besides the continuity with previous folklores, several scholars (like for example Bertrand Méheust in *Science-fiction et soucoupes volantes - Une réalité mythico-physique*) have shown that science-fiction predates the UFO phenomena in many ways. Firstly, you can find in pulps at the beginning of the 20th century many details that will only appear in testimonies a long time after that. Remember that the UFO phenomena starts only with Kenneth Arnold in June 1947! Secondly, theories now typical of ufology lore have been also conceived before by science-fiction writers. For example, the ancient astronaut theory is presented already in 1931 in H. P. Lovecraft's novel *At the Mountains of Madness*. You'll have to wait until 1960 for the first French edition of *The Morning of the Magicians* by Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier to see the same idea presented as speculation (and

no more weird fictions), introducing it to ufologists as a brand new theory (on this subject see Jason Colavito's book: *The Cult of Alien Gods: H.P. Lovecraft And Extraterrestrial Pop Culture*).

If you take into account the continuity with previous folklore and the anteriority of science-fiction, you have a strong case to consider the UFO phenomena as a contemporary form of religiosity. Of course, that is if you don't try to rationalize those paradoxes like ufologists often do. Practically, it means that you have to reject the classic ufological view that those anomalies are explained away by visitors from other worlds since ancient history and also the approach that consists in solving them by mixing extraterrestrial hypothesis with paranormal phenomena (as advocated for example by Bertrand Méheust in his book already mentioned above: *Science-fiction et soucoupes volantes*). As I said before, I fully acknowledge that considering the UFO phenomena as a contemporary folklore - and all the cultural manifestations centered around it as part of a contemporary form of religiosity - is very unpopular in ufology, and that extraterrestrial hypothesis proponents are very vocal against it. They often convoke moral arguments like *You don't respect witnesses!*, and so on and so forth. I must confess I'm utterly unconvinced by those. They obviously confuse value judgment with judgment about facts. Skeptics could be right from a scientific point of view, even if what proponents say is true - mainly that they are not nice people for arguing the way they do. From my perspective, tough ufologists who engage in mystery mongering are the ones who really don't respect witnesses, because they deserve real, science-based answers.

The view that UFO phenomena is a contemporary folklore is simply too rich to be left abandoned.



More tainted Trindade

Kentaro Mori sent me an e-mail and posted on UFO updates the latest news about current research on the Trindade photographs. Last issue, I mentioned how Barauna's nephew, Marcelo Ribero, claimed the photographs were a hoax. Now, Mori reveals they have found witnesses, who was supposedly on deck at the time of the photographs.

Like all testimony, one has to remember that it is anecdotal in nature. It can be considered just as reliable as the claims that an alien spaceship was seen. However, it has always been accepted that dozens (or in some cases -over a hundred) of sailors saw the UFO and were on deck at the time of the photographs. Edson Jansen Ferreira was part of the group that helped establish the Oceanographic post at Trindade, states that the number who reported seeing the UFO was only about 13-15 people. He also adds that he saw nothing. It is hard to believe that, if the photographs were not hoaxes, he would miss something that was so obvious as shown in the photographs. His failure to see anything is indicative that what was seen was not obvious or did not exist at all.

Kentaro would also point towards another witness, Jose Carlos Rigueira de Brito, who was aboard the ship and said that he recalls people saying they saw nothing. Alexandre Borges had interviewed him in January and Mr. de Brito added Dr. Ribero (the dentist) was a drunk and some members of the crew were pot smokers. This kind of rumor mongering does not put his testimony in a positive light. Still, his comments about nobody seeing anything need to be considered.

I find it highly unlikely this case will ever collapse unless some great revelation occurs. However, this is another bit of information that indicates that the case is not as solid as claimed by the proponents. With each new announcement that indicates things were not as originally reported, the possibility of the photographs being a hoax rises and the authenticity of the photographs drops.

Battle of LA photo exposed

Kentaro Mori sent me an e-mail alerting me to an article written by Scott Harrison of the LA times. Mr. Harrison had located the original negative used to create the image that had circulated in the news media at the time. However, his story revealed that the image was not quite an exact reproduction of the original negative.

Nothing but air

As I suspected, and suggested in SUNlite 3-1, the image had been retouched. According to Harrison, there were two negatives in the UCLA archives. One was the original and another was a copy negative obtained from a retouched print. It was this negative and the retouched print that has become part of the "Battle of LA" legend.

One of the things that is obvious in looking at the image is the focus was off. The points of AA bursts are circular and not pin-point. The second thing that is noteworthy is that the searchlights go beyond the convergence area the same way they do in the Life Magazine photograph (see my adjusted image below showing the beams going beyond the convergence), I showed in SUNlite 3-1. This demonstrates there probably is nothing of substance in the center of the beams. There is no giant spaceship and, it appears, the "Battle of LA" story is just another UFO myth.

Larry Harnisch wrote several articles for the LA Times in mid-march documenting the "Battle of LA" (1942 version not the movie) background. He also discussed the photograph presented by Scott Har-



ison. The image he presented above shows that there never was anything solid in the image (look closely at the center) but crisscrossing light beams and dots of light (which may have been AA bursts or some other possible source like water droplets on a window glass the photograph might have been taken through). For those who doubt it, I posted a second image with the brightness turned down showing the variations of the light in the center area (probably due to smoke). In my opinion, the possibility that this photograph showed a real craft plummeted with these revelations.

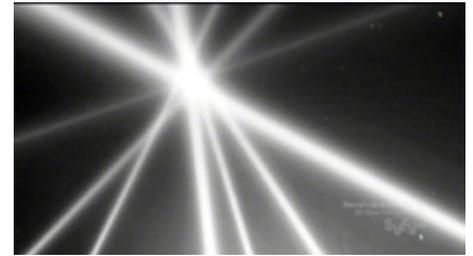
SYFY's substandard work

The Syfy channel's "Fact or Faked" performed a series of experiments in an attempt to salvage the case. Their first mistake was using the touched up photograph as their basis for comparison. Their second mistake was not doing the proper amount of research on the matter. They

stated that a majority of the shells fired were .50 caliber. One of their "experts" mentioned this but he was not correct. The actual documents written state that a majority of the shells fired that night were of the 3" variety. The documentation also states that 37mm shells, which are more powerful than .50 caliber Machine guns,

could not reach the target area of where the suspected craft were located. The confusion probably was because the 3" guns were referred to 3"-50 caliber guns (The 50 caliber is referencing the length of the gun barrel). The .50 caliber machine gun had a limited range of about 5000 feet and were best for low altitude aircraft and not the high altitude targets described in the reports.

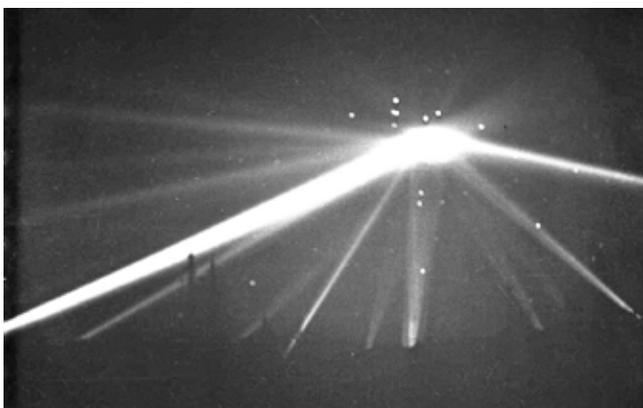
The show continued to compound its mistakes when they did not focus all of their beams at one point or put up any significant smoke as one might expect from a significant amount of AA bursts.



Their last mistake was their discussion about the weather balloon. They assumed the weather balloon was in the photograph, which it probably wasn't. Apparently, ignorant of the historical documents, they did not realize that the weather balloon had started the shooting but it was war nerves that caused everyone to keep shooting for many minutes after the balloon was gone. In a highly inaccurate demonstration, they shot down a stationary balloon from only 600 feet away with a .50 caliber machine gun and not a moving balloon from thousands of feet away. As a result, they concluded the balloon should have been shot down almost instantaneously and that there must have been a real craft at the center of the beams.

Case never closed

As the "Fact or Faked" show demonstrates, this case will never be closed for those who want to believe it was an actual craft in the center of the image. For the skeptics, the news about the photographs confirms what was suspected all along. There was no aircraft/spaceship and it was just war nerves.



Answer to “ The Belgian wave and the photos of Ramillies”

by Roger Paquay

Auguste Meessen wrote that he restored the truth because two ufo-skeptics distorted data concerning the beginning of the Belgian wave in 1989 and the observations made at Ramillies in 1990.

I completely disagree with this point of view and the whole text. I never distorted the data. I just think these data may have different interpretations and may conduct to different conclusions that these of A. Meessen. And I cannot accept the nasty and unjustified attacks on the sceptics that search for the truth.

On diverse occasions I have warned: “We will remark there is no intention to negate or to invalidate the testimonies of the witnesses neither to doubt their good faith. They have observed something they could not understand or explain. Nevertheless these testimonies contain elements that may have diverse interpretations. These interpretations must be explored and the conclusions they gave must be presented without these conclusion constitute an attack against the witnesses. One observation was done and we must look for the different ways and possibilities of interpretation”.

So I don't discredit the witnesses if I say they neglected one possibility.

In Ramillies the observers immediately concluded: “*the noise cannot be produced by a plane because it is too weak with a so close engine*” (VOB1 p 420). But they did not look for the other possibility: “*The noise is weak because the engine is more distant that what we thought*”. They also neglected the angular size of the object they said was so close, 300 to 500 m. If they had calculated it they would have seen that the object could not be seen entirely in the viewer but their data was that it occupied only one third of the viewer.

On Page 2, Mr. Meessen wrote:

The ET hypothesis requires that technically very advanced civilisations could have

emerged elsewhere in our universe... The possible existence of much older and more advanced civilisations than ours is thus a logical consequence of present day knowledge.

This is a plausible hypothesis but you cannot prove these civilisations exist. In other solar systems they also may be in the “stone age”.

The fact that we can make this hypothesis, and I think there must be life somewhere in our Universe, does not give a link to the ET hypothesis for these UFO reports. For the moment the existence of extraterrestrial life is plausible but you cannot find a link with the UFO observations. So UFO and extraterrestrial life constitute two separate hypotheses for the moment.

The fact that a journey in space at speed of 30000 km/s would need more than hundred years to arrive at a star like Vega (approximately 25 light years), one of the closest star in our sky, indicates a weak probability for ET to be visiting us..

Mr. Meessen is right when he states: “*The ET hypothesis, we have to prove or to disprove it*”

Misperceptions are not to place in the prone-fantasy personalities. People make errors because, for the majority, they don't have scientific background. They believe in horoscopes, numerologies, telekinesis, and clairvoyance and so on and thus are also pushed to believe or to interpret unusual observations as strange. It is necessary to remember that for many years people didn't see these aerial phenomena. But when the media invited people to look in the sky for strange objects, they saw strange objects.

Mr. Meessen states that people are not so suggestible but what percentage of the population believe in horoscopes, telekinesis, clairvoyance or numerology? More than 30%. It probably is similar when the media calls for observing strange objects.

Meessen refers to the Integral curve (VOB 2 p 360), but if you look at this curve and by the vertical point 0.5 you trace an horizontal line you have a point on the curve that correspond with March 1990. This data indicate that 50% of the observation took place in the four first months and that 15 supplementary months were needed to arrive at 100%. After the four first months the media was quasi-silent. So there was effectively a media influence.

You interrogated a witness who was particularly trustworthy since he had a technical education and high social responsibility in Eupen. I don't doubt the good faith of the witness but people, whatever is their rank in the society, high or weak, can misinterpret something they don't know. It is human.

Visual and acoustical observation at Ramillies:

Mr. Meessen says I attack this case by modifying the facts .

As first example he says I changed the location of the observation. But I just wrote what you could find and infer from VOB1 , p 419: “**He (the policeman) advised us to go and take position at a crossroad between Glimes and Perwez at the level of Petit-Rosière.**”

Now you indicate a different position between Grand-Rosière and Ramillies a few Km away from the Glime-Perwez crossroad and not close to Petit-Rosière.

This incoherence between the location given by P Ferryn in VOB1 p 419 and the actual location is not my fault but the result of fuzzy or incorrect data given in VOB 1. It is not I that changed something. Moreover we are discussing the picture, not the location.

Curved arch seen in the viewer

Mr. Meessen could see the same effect on the photomontage in my text!

He wrote: “*In spite of these facts I claimed the witnesses were biased to interpret this as ET object*”. How could Mr. Meessen interpret differently since they immediately said, “**This cannot be a plane because the noise is too weak at this short dis-**

tance" (VOB1 p420). But they never look for the other plausible hypothesis: "The noise is weak because the engine is more distant than we thought".

The witnesses say:

"It size was so impressive that it seemed to be comparable with that of a 747"

Meessen says I neglected the second drawing in VOB1, but this drawing does not show more details than the first.

My airplane hypothesis

Mr. Meessen attacked this because I used the diagonal angle in place of the horizontal one. This gives a little difference 2.7 in place of 2.43 to 2.29 he calculates. This is just a little difference that has no influence on the conclusion: **the angular width of the engine with an estimated dimension the same as a 747 (say by the witnesses, not by me) if it was situated between 300 to 500 m away from the witnesses is equal (for 500m) to the horizontal angular width of the lens and is superior (for 300 m) to the angular width of the lens.** The photographer indicates he saw it completely in a third of the horizontal viewer. So he would have seen that the object was at a more great distance, if he had calculated $60/300=0.2$ (angle = to 11.3°) and $60/500=0.12$ angle = 6.84° .

Auguste Meessen wrote the apparent diameter of the engine was 4 to 5 times larger than the apparent diameter of the Moon. I thank him for this comparison because this comparison gives me elements that reinforce my demonstration.

A plane the approximate size of a 747 (~60m) is seen in the sky with the same apparent diameter than the Moon, has distance of 7 km or 7000 m.

If the craft was 4 times larger than the moon the distance must be divided by 4:

$$7000/4 = 1750 \text{ m.}$$

If the craft was 5 times larger than the moon the distance must be divided by 5:

$$7000/5 = 1400 \text{ m.}$$

So we must deduce the object was at a

distance situated between 1400 m and 1750 m.

This result reinforces the value that can be found with the lens formula $i/o = d'/d$ where I is the measure of the image, o is the measure of the engine, d' = focal length (when d is great, $d' = f$ as Meessen indicates it) and d the distance between object and the lens.

As $I = 12 \text{ mm}$ (data from the witness), $o = 60 \text{ m}$ or 6000 mm (size estimate by the witness by comparison with 747) and $f = 300 \text{ mm}$ we can calculate $d = 300 * 60000/12 = 1500000 \text{ mm}$ or 1500 m . This value is just in the interval obtained by comparison with the moon and is similar to my other calculations.

Mr. Meessen then writes: "Mr Paquay **postulated** it had to be such a plane"

False. The comparison to a 747 came from the witnesses. It was just rational to see what this comparison implied. And the lens formula for an image of 12 mm with a focal length 300 mm gives a ratio $12/300 = 0.04$. The distance may not be known except if you use the size given by the witnesses.

It is the reason why I had indicated that a multitude of values could exist, from 12 m if the engine is at 300 m to 60 m if the engine is at 1500 m . So I did not choose one value but indicated other values could match.

But the comparison with the Moon made by Mr Meessen reinforces the 1500 m hypothesis.

It was not necessary to show the profile of the 747. This plane is well known by many people.

Mr. Meessen says this plane is very noisy especially when it is going up or changing direction.

But when it flies in straight line at cruising speed the noise can be heard only when it passes over your head and after being passed. It is what the witnesses said.

The altitude of 1500 m is perfectly compatible with a plane that is going to land at Zaventem Brussels airport because the witnesses were under the most im-

portant traffic lane to this airport.

The witnesses estimated the speed to 150 km/h. but this estimation is not possible on the sky without measuring it. Why didn't the witness give the duration of the observation or the duration of the flight above them? This data is missing. If the duration was 5 minutes the engine was first seen at about 60 km.

With the data obtained here the comparison with a plane is perfectly possible and can explain the whole observation. The only question that remains is: why are there only four points on the picture edited in VOB1?

The photographic documents

Underexposure cannot be excluded for the reasons I explained. When the elements are fixed, diaphragm open at maximum, speed fixed to 1/125 sec and sensitivity of the film 1600 ASA, there is only one intensity of light that can show up on the film. If the intensity is weaker you have underexposure and, if this underexposure is large, nothing shows on the film.

To contest this fact goes against all the rules of photography. The elements I indicate are the 3 elements that permit to have correct exposure for pictures and permit the digital cameras to function correctly with their automatisms.

Finally, Meessen shows the data and pictures I asked to P Ferryn and that where never furnished.

The size of the image is 4.2 mm , a third of what was expected.

Is the negative 9a p 14 the picture , because it is a picture of a plane. The anti-crash red light appears under the other lights and there are five clearly visible lights and not four. This red spot appears clearly on fig 10 (point H). Meessen says it is not centred but if you measure it is just centred between D and G. The inclination of the lights show the "object" was not parallel to the ground, so the points may seem not to be perfectly centred.

My assumptions

All the elements, distance, weak noise, and now the picture 9a and 10 that show a red light, are compatible with a plane. Meessen contests the underexposure but this underexposure is a reality unless you negate the laws of photography.

He says that planes at high altitude would have left visible points on 7 negatives. What sizes are these images. A plane of 60 m at 10000 m photographed with a 300 mm telephoto lens gives 1.8 mm object on the film. High altitude is to consider more than 8000 m in international aviation.

Sorry, but the object was between 1400 and 1750 m. And if the picture 9a shows the whole object it was farther away, at about 3500 m.

When a photographer will not show the picture there is necessarily a problem. Why refuse to show them? Because at high altitude the images are too small and cannot show details.

Meessen states the dark adapted human eye may see structural details and the positions lights. But these lights are not visible under all angles and this fact can be verified.

I never said the witnesses were lying but I did say they made an erroneous interpretation. Indeed, the human brain interprets, in many circumstances, distinct points as forming a complete line. This fact is well known. On the photomontage that was presented and on the picture of the last position that I presented you see a curved line formed by the lights of the plane photographed and this curved line is similar to the drawing of the witnesses.

How many minutes between the seeing of the yellowish light and the last observation? If it is 4 or 5 minutes the engine was at about 60 km, far away to be in condition to have refraction effects.

Explanation by means of IR light

This explanation is not needed because there is underexposure and that the distances are underevaluated.

Meessen has no direct evidence of an emission of IR light by the object and has presented convergent indirect evidence. But I don't found these evidences. Where are they?

Stop to think, you know better than I what is my level of knowledge. I know perfectly that glasses are transparent to IR lights from 700 nm to 2400 nm. My objection to the Herschel effect are not futile or naïve and have been asserted by other eminent scientists.

You show a picture, photo 9 a, that show five and not four well visible points and this picture was never erased by IR light. The existence of these five points proves that it was not erased and that it was not possible to see details.

In the text edited on Euroufonet and Sunlite there is no error in the use of optical laws. Your words are defamation. And the Ramillies picture is definitely not erased by Herschel effect.

Meessen said that I did not asked for the picture again but you indicate clearly that it is P Ferryn and Mr. Meessen that refused contacts because "my negative attitude did not favor further contacts". Meessen can not indicate what I must think or write.

Complementary photographic tests

Just look at the pictures of the object, the arch is clearly visible and this plane was at more than 1000 m.

The photos at Krainem were taken with planes at low altitude, only 800 m, but in Ramillies the aircraft would be at 1500 m or more. And nothing proves that in the dark and at a greater distance you could see the marks on the plane. It is never the case at night when planes taking off from Bierset - Liège airport fly behind my home at altitudes between 3000 to 5000 feet (900 m à 1500 m) data given by the control at Bierset.

Conclusions

I never distorted the facts as Auguste Meessen insinuates. I don't adapt the facts to my belief or preconception because I search without "a-priori". I never

treat the witnesses as liars or fools.

He states that the psychological hypothesis cannot account for the Belgian wave but the integral curve in VOB2 shows that after the four months where the media did continually speak or write on UFOS, there is a 50% of the distribution of the 19 months. So there was an evident effect of the media. Meessen had written in VOB 1 that at certain moments "at the silence of the medias correspond a silence of our phone"!!!

Meessen also wrote, "he don't want to accept facts that are contradictory to his conception or belief". This assertion is false: I examine the facts without a-priori. The use of the 747 is induced by the witnesses who compare the object to a 747. But you don't see that I indicated that other dimensions and distances could match so the 747 is one possibility among many others.

I will not change my conclusions: the object was at 1500 m and I demonstrated it in this text. The picture was not erased by IR light.

Mr. Meessen states the photographer did measure the angular dimension with the great circle in the lens. OK but he did not compare it with the other elements he had: size comparable to a 747 and distance 300 to 500 m. These elements are in contradiction with these conclusions.

Mr. Meessen also says that the setting at infinity was sufficient to get a sharp image. This does not prove anything: the setting at infinity always gives sharp images when distances are large compared to focal length, and 500 - 1500 m is big in regard of 300 mm. A 300mm lens set at infinity will give sharp image between 50 m to infinity and cannot be used to determine the distance of the object.

This last conclusion proves that Mr. Meessen continues to try to discredit sceptics. This way shows that his argument is weak, because otherwise it would not be necessary to discredit.

In SUNlite 2-6, I wrote an addendum to Jean-Michel Abrassart's article about the Belgium UFO wave, with the title, "The November 29, 1989 UFO over Eupen explained?" It presented potential explanations that have been offered in the past regarding this pivotal UFO event that signified the beginning of the Belgian UFO wave. In his rebuttal argument against Jean-Michel Abrassart and Roger Paquay, Auguste Meessen mentioned this addendum. He seemed to have problems with it and my use of the term "plausible". I consider anything is plausible as long as it has the potential for being a reasonable explanation. I certainly will consider earthly explanations far more plausible than ones that require alien spaceships or other exotic theories.

Mr. Meessen also missed the question mark I put at the end of the title indicating I was asking if this was the answer. I was not stating it was the answer. Another concern raised by him was that I did not include any references to his arguments. I am not sure why that was necessary since the ET interpretation of this sighting is presented in many places on the internet while very few places mention these potential explanations. My goal was to point people towards those resources so they can see all the information. In Mr. Meessen's article he gives links to his analysis of these events and why they are not valid explanations.

Policemen = 100% Reliability?

The impression I got from Mr. Meessen's writings is that he considers these two witnesses 100% reliable simply because of their profession (Police officers) and could not possibly be mistaken. In his [UFO Handbook](#), Allan Hendry points out that being police officers does not mean they are reliable observers. Many of his policemen often mistook stars for UFOs. Elizabeth Loftus mentioned in her article, "Eyewitnesses: Essential but unreliable" ([Psychology Today](#) February 1984), that research shows that police officers are no more reliable or accurate than the average person. Suggesting that their testimony alone rules out any potential explanation fails to be compelling based on what we know about eyewitness reliability.

Questions about the Eupen UFO explanations

No Choppers?

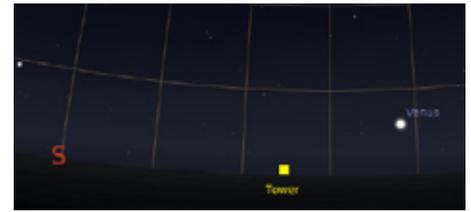
In discussing the helicopter explanation for the first part of this sighting, Meessen states that there were no helicopters in the area. This is based on what has been stated by General de Brouwer, who has publicly stated that a check was made for helicopter activity in the area and there was none. I am not sure how thorough their investigation was because no documentation is presented. I think it is important to point out that there have been several UFO cases (most recently the Stephenville event), where the response by the USAF was they had no aircraft in the area. However, further checking revealed that their initial statement was in error and there were aircraft present. This is why a demonstration on how thorough this check for helicopter activity is important in any attempt to falsify the helicopter explanation. Could it have been a helicopter? It seems unlikely if General de Brouwer is accurate but shouldn't the possibility be pursued to the point that all helicopters can be proven to not have been in the area?

The queen is dead!

The second half of the event observed by the police officers has been argued extensively over the years. The police officers observed a bright object for almost an hour over Lake Gileppe (between 1830-1923). Many have argued that they simply saw Venus. Auguste Meessen has argued against this by stating that Venus was not in the location of the sky described by the police officers and that their description of the UFO is not the kind of description one would expect from Venus. As a result, he has considered the Venus explanation is wrong and they saw a "real" UFO.

Long live the queen!

When Mr. Meessen states that Venus was in the wrong location of the sky, he is not stating that it was far away but is stating Venus was not pre-



cisely where the police officers said the UFO was located. They stated their UFO was directly over the Lake Gileppe tower. From their reported location this would be an azimuth of 205 degrees. Venus was at an azimuth of 215-225 degrees during the sighting (see image at above showing the position of Venus in relation to the tower at 1830 using Stellarium software). This azimuth argument seems to be weak since it is only a 10-20 degree difference. Wim Van Utrecht told me that when asked, the witnesses did not even mention seeing the bright planet Venus nearby, which was only two weeks from maximum brilliancy and an obvious object in the sky. Their observations of the UFO in reference to the tower has the potential for observational error that seems to have been dismissed by Mr. Meessen. It is also interesting to note that the UFO disappeared about the same time the planet Venus set!

The argument that the shape was different than the planet Venus or that beams were seen emanating from the sides of the UFO, ignores what we know about how people report Venus as a UFO. Such observations do not require any temperature inversion for an observer to perceive things that are not there. Venus was a bright point source against a dark sky and was very low in the sky. Look at case #37 in the Condon report. Police officers in that event state Venus was "football shaped" or in the shape of a "four leaf clover". During this same sighting, the planet Jupiter was described as being the shape of flat tin foil with a slight bend in it! Remember, these were observations made by different police officers, who, if you believe the arguments about them being reliable observers, could not have been mistaken.

Based on all of this information, it seems that the arguments that it could not be Venus are not convincing enough to eliminate it as a source of the sighting. Venus continues to remain a plausible explanation for what these officers saw over Lake Gileppe.

UFOs on the tube

Russian Roswell

The show's premise is that there is a secret underground facility called Zhitkur below the base of Kapustin Yar. This is where all the captured UFO parts are kept. Kapustin Yar is a base where the Soviet Union began testing their first rockets. One might be able to compare it to the early V-2 tests at White Sands.

The Russian Roswell is only briefly mentioned. Supposedly, on June 19, 1948 an air traffic controller saw strange object on radar screen. A MIG pilot happened to be airborne at the time and saw a cigar-shaped UFO. Despite being blinded by its brilliance he was able to engage the UFO in a dogfight for three minutes. Eventually he shot down the UFO with an air-to-air missile. The problem with the show's portrayal of these events is that the first MIG-15 was not part of the Soviet inventory until 1949 and the first Soviet air-to-air missile was the K-5. It is no surprise that it was not developed until 1951. The only kind of missile used at the time was unguided and it would be a shock that a UFO, which can turn on a dime, could be shot down by such a primitive device.

The show then digresses to how UFOs have been seen throughout Russian history. When I saw Bill Birnes, I knew this was going to be painful to watch. Of course, no UFO history is complete without taking the 1908 Tunguska event and turning it into a "mothership" explosion. It could take pages to refute a lot of what was stated but I think it is simple to say it was all garbage and highly distorted. At least Stanton Friedman conceded it was a natural event.

A Top Secret US document was shown as evidence of UFOs at Kapustin Yar. The program quickly pans down from the TOP SECRET stamp to the line which states, "An unidentified object is on each launch pad". The reason for the quick pan down is to avoid important information to put the statement in context. The document describes a KH-4 Corona satellite mission recording Kapustin Yar complex H. They were probably taken in 1962 or 63 and probably were rockets that could not be identified.

In another great leap of logic we are told that the United States was so worried about the Soviets learning about UFOs that one of the first U-2 flights flew over Kapustin Yar (it was actually the 15th USSR overflight mission). It is more likely that the flight had to do with seeing what stage the Soviet Union was at in their testing of rockets for delivering nuclear weapons. The program tries to spin the statements in declassified documents about "unidentified objects" as "strange unidentified areas" with the implication they must be UFOs. More than likely, they were just ordinary objects that the analysts could not identify. However, the program noticed that there were interesting "patterns" in the photographs. They ridiculously compared them to crop circles and pyramids. In reality, they were the standard layout for surface to air missile sites. The Radar control center was in the middle and the SAM sites encircling the center were interconnected with roads that took on a "star of David" pattern.

The funniest thing seen was Russian Roswell expert, Vladimir Ajaja using two copper rods to test the "ambient energy" that was present at another "crash site" from 1961. Like most dowsers his "science" of using two copper rods can not be taken seriously.

Finally, Marina Popovich and Lev Vyatkin described their dogfight experiences with UFOs, which they were ordered to shoot down to obtain alien technology. Vyatkin stated his airplane's wing glowed for a week until they cleaned it with ordinary Kerosene. The UFOs counterattacked and blew up Soviet rockets. The show presented a film showing the effects of one of these attacks. However, the film actually comes from a failed R-16 rocket launch on October 24, 1960. It is referred to as the Nedelin disaster after the Chief Marshall, who was in charge of the rocket testing. He was killed in the resultant explosion and no UFOs were involved.

If there was anything to this story, the program destroyed it by throwing a bunch of garbage on top of it. Don't waste your time watching this show.

Book Reviews

Buy it! (No UFO library should do without it)

The nature of light and color in the open air - M. Minnaert

While this is not a "UFO" book, it addresses some important aspects of visual perception that most UFO aficionados should be familiar with. It is very detailed and highly informative. Some of the items may be dated (it was written over 50 years ago) but it is a great resource anyway. All UFO libraries should have a copy.

Borrow it. (Worth checking out of library or borrowing from a friend)

The UFO Encyclopedia - Ronald Story

Last month I mentioned Jerome Clark's UFO book as an excellent resource. Story's 1980 version of his encyclopedia is an additional resource that is worth reading. However, I found it cluttered with a lot of useless information like what various people thought about the subject. It is a good item to borrow but I am not sure it is a book that is absolutely necessary for a UFO library.

Bin it! (Not worth the paper it is written upon - send to recycle bin)

Faded Giant - Robert Salas and James Klotz

When I purchased this book in a used book store, I was hoping for a well researched and informative discussion about the Malmstrom missile shutdowns. Instead, all I found was a book based mostly on Robert Salas' beliefs and exotic interpretations. His recent version of this story even contradicts some of the things written in this book. The book provides nothing that can not already be found by an internet search. Additionally, as James Carlson has demonstrated in his long article, there was a lot more information out there that Klotz and Salas chose not to research or present. Perhaps they did not want people to know the other side of the story and draw a conclusion that did not include UFOs.