

SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs



..the lights that baffled the gendarmes were identified as bright stars or planets, while a military study of the radar tapes revealed that at least one of the lock-ons (probably three) occurred when the F-16's radar mistakenly locked onto the second F-16. The others were almost certainly ground clutter resulting from refraction of the radar beams by irregularities in the atmosphere, causing surface objects such as cars to appear as airborne targets on the radar screen.

Wim Van Utrecht (The Belgium 1989-1990 UFO wave)



Cover: A Microsoft X image of an F-16 flying over Belgium on March 30/31, 1990. I know it is not a Belgian F-16A but it is adequate for my purposes.

Left: UFOlogists seem to be gathering together to storm the evil debunker's castle. They don't look happy. One wonders why they are so concerned about what debunkers say if their research was solid.

Have fun storming the castle!

Normally, I ignore some of the comments directed my way but a recent article that was written by Stanton Friedman deserves a response. Because he referred to me as "ignorant" and made some claims that were not quite accurate, I felt it necessary to write a rebuttal to his accusations and name-calling.

Over the past few months, I have received several private e-mails pointing out this article and other UFOlogical rants about what I have written. One individual referred to my journey to the "dark side" being complete when I received such public notice from prominent UFOlogists. Should I start signing my name "Darth debunker"?

Speaking of e-mails, I have no problem discussing various issues and sharing information with others even if a person chooses to remain nameless. However, when the exchange gets long and becomes full of accusations by somebody who does not have the courage to sign their name, I lose patience. I had to recently ask an individual to present their identification or stop bothering me in this manner. That was the last I heard

from them.

This issue has some articles by Roger Paquay and Marty Kottmeyer. Mr. Paquay's article compliments what I wrote about the Belgian F-16 interception case on March 30-31, 1990. Martin's extensive articles are interesting to say the least and covers the interesting idea of individuals ascending into UFOs like religious prophets from the bible.

The SUNlite index is now on the web. I basically gave two indices. One is by issue and the other is by topic. Hopefully, it will be helpful those looking for specific articles. I will try and keep it up to date. It is in PDF and html format.

Recently, I have received some feedback regarding SUNlite's layout. I started with the three column format because that is what the template for my software gave me. I liked the look so did not change it. However, the comment is that it is not very well suited for internet readers. Looking at it, I realize they are probably correct and in SUNlite 4-4, I will begin to use just one column per page.

Another idea put forward was that I should create a SUNlite blog. In my first issue, I mentioned this but I feared it would fail because I would not devote enough attention to it. With a regular newsletter, I have a deadline to meet and it forces me to produce regularly. It also gives me time to evaluate my initial drafts and attempt to be objective. A blog is an interesting idea but I just don't see it anytime in the near future.

Because of family commitments, the next issue of SUNlite (4-4 - July-August) will probably be out late. I expect it to be done between July 1 and the 15th.

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There recently were some interesting documents posted on the internet:

Isaac Koi recently posted Dr. Willy Smith's book, "Pilots and UFOs", on line.

The UFO Iconoclast(s) blog posted a link to an interview that Peter Gersten and Dr. Hynek did with Tom Snyder in the 80s.

Dr. Dil posted James Easton's "Resolving Rendlesham" article, which has been sorely missed from the internet.

Thanks to Steve Johnson, the two years of UFO data magazine (16 issues) is available for download.

I suggest the reader follow the links. They are all worth reading/viewing.

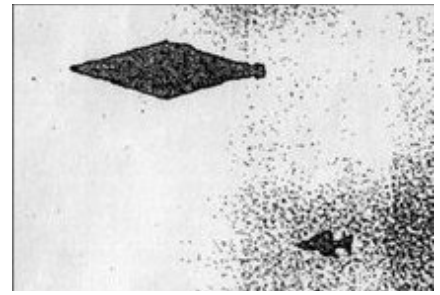
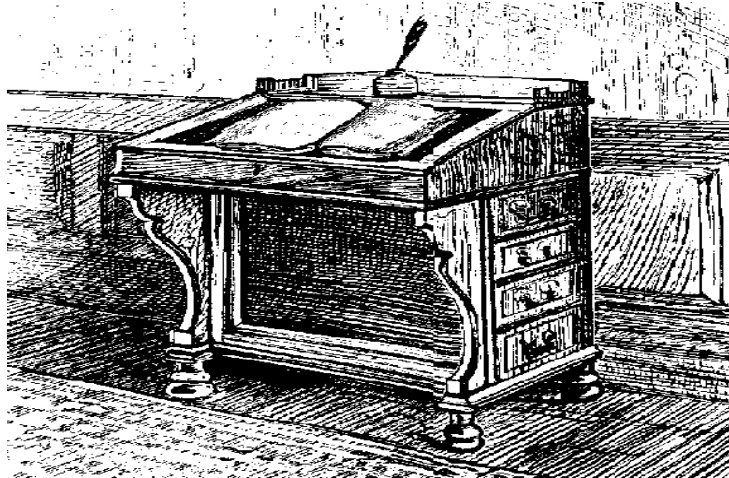
Robert Sheaffer documented the 21st international UFO congress from a skeptic's point of view (this link is for the first of five postings he made). It was interesting to say the least. Some of the speakers seem to have been sub-standard. The only "heavy hitter" was Dr. Bruce Maccabee but he backed out at the last minute. He was replaced by Stan Romanek. Boy....is that a downgrade.

Frank Warren promoted the Arizona UFO case with all sorts of one-sided stories and appeals for believing the witnesses to the event. Strangely missing in this wealth of witness reports are the ones that mattered. I did not see Mitch Stanley or the other witnesses who saw the lights as just a formation of lights mentioned. Apparently Frank Warren is practicing what Stanton Friedman refers to as a rule for debunkers, "What the public doesn't know, I am not going to tell them". I suggest readers interested in the Arizona 1997 case refer to my article in SUNlite 2-3.

The UFO Iconoclasts pointed towards recent new revelations regarding the Aztec UFO crash. This case seems to never go away. What was considered a hoax in the 1950s has gotten legs because of its bigger brother down in Roswell. Aztec is a good example of my belief that there

Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



safe but, instead, he allowed it to be taken down and then allow it to "disappear". I have heard this kind of story before. I remember telling my teacher that my dog ate my homework too. I pulled the thread on this one and decided to contact Dr. David Clarke to see what Mr. Pope was talking about. Dr. Clarke says there is a photocopy of the image in the British files (DFE-31-180 pages 37) and describes the whole affair at his blog. Apparently, the photographer is unknown

and he first submitted the photographs to the newspaper, "The Scottish Daily Record". They chose not to publish the images, which makes one wonder if they were as convincing as Pope suggests. IMO, based on the anonymous nature of the photographer and what the files indicate, it probably was nothing more than a hoax.

Once again, one of UFOlogy's "top ten UFO cases" has been put under the microscope. Lance Moody took on the Santa Barbara channel case and discovered that Blue Book's conclusion had some merit. Lance makes a pretty good argument that this was probably just an unusual cloud (possibly lenticular).

Another one of UFOlogy's "Top Ten" cases took a hit when Ian Ridpath and James Oberg began to ask questions about the Yukon UFO case of December 11, 1996. This case had the endorsement of Stanton Friedman and Michael Swords. Unfortunately, they seemed to have simply accepted the story as told by the principle investigators. The real investigation seems to have been done by Canadian satellite expert Ted Molzan. He discovered that at the time of the event (at least for the principle witnesses), a Russian rocket booster from Cosmos 2335 launched on 11 December, 1996

is not a single prominent UFO case that can be explained, to the satisfaction of all UFOlogists. There will always be the minority that will find some reason to reject an explanation, no matter how good, in order to promote the case as something extraordinary for personal gain.

Tim Hebert presented a recap of the Echo flight shutdown story that you won't ever read on Robert Hastings web site or those blogs that tend to promote his views. I guess it is easier to put your hands over your ears and eyes and proclaim that you are not listening/reading than to give serious consideration to another point of view.

In SUNlite 4-1, I mentioned an article by James McGaha and Joe Nickell, which indicated they had the solution to the Exeter UFO case. The article is now on line for reading. Martin Shough provided a rebuttal of this explanation on UFO Updates. Shough makes a reasonable argument why the McGaha/Nickell explanation is inadequate.

I think Nick Pope gets nuttier every time he appears some place. Now he claims that the smoking gun photograph of UFOlogy was hanging on his office wall for some time. He could easily have gotten a copy of it and placed it somewhere

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

was reentering the earth's atmosphere to the north of the witness' location. One of the witness sketches of the "big dipper" was very consistent with what Molczan had computed. This would not be the first time that a meteor or space debris has created these kinds of UFO reports. On page 36, I describe a meteor event that created a similar type of report.

George Michael wrote a book review for e-skeptic at the end of March that caused skeptics to question e-skeptic's skepticism. Michael gave a positive review of Leslie Kean's book. However, as pointed out by the rebuttal by Robert Sheaffer, Michael seemed to be unaware of all the explanations offered for her "unexplained cases" and the questionable reliability of some of her witnesses. This resulted in one more final exchange between the two on E-skeptic. I think Mr. Michael really did not research the background on this book as Sheaffer points out. I would like to point out that the Rendlesham witnesses have demonstrated that they are not reliable by changing their stories from what was actually recorded in 1980. They have denied reports they wrote and continue to find ways to get UFOlogists to ignore the evidence. Meanwhile, Ex-governor' Fife Symington's story is not consistent with what actually transpired that night as pointed out in SUNlite 3-5 (page 20). In another Kean top case, the Petit-Rechain image was revealed to be a hoax. The UFOlogists and Kean ignored the skeptics arguments in preference for the idea that it was an authentic photograph of an alien space-ship. Mr. Michael's lack of skepticism towards the claims being made and Leslie Kean's equally flawed approach in writing the book is the major issue in all of this.

Kevin Randle reports that the International UFO Reporter is no longer going to exist in print form. That really is not a shock. The last I heard, the Center for UFO Studies was being run out of their scientific director's, Mark Rodeghier, apartment. There just isn't the interest in their organization since just about everybody can read the stories on the internet anyway. It is a money thing and I am sure they will figure out how to run it as an on-line magazine they can charge people to access. It will save money on printing and

paper and make their organization more profitable (assuming they still charge the same amount). I wonder if they will put together a new version of their DVD that has a copy of all the issues. I don't have a copy of their current DVD yet (which goes to 2008) but I might want to wait to get the entire collection of IUR.

Along with the bug video that the Chilean Air Force that made news (see page), another video from Las Vegas, Nevada was also circulated that had a similar solution. Joe Capp made some production about it and used it as an example of how people don't look up and see UFOs. However, he ignores the possibility that people did look up and determined what they saw was something ordinary. Benjamin Radford states these were just birds or bats feeding on insects that were attracted by the bright spotlight on the Luxor Hotel. While Capp uses it as an example of why people always don't report UFOs, Radford makes the counterpoint that the reason they don't report them is because they know what they are.

Kentaro Mori posted a wonderful blog entry concerning Erick Von Daniken. I was amazed to see the video from NOVA's program about ancient astronauts from 1977. I remember reading/seeing all the books/TV programs/films from the 1970s concerning "The chariots of the gods". I was fascinated with the subject for about five to ten years. After reading more about it in the late 1970s/early 1980s I began to question the interpretations presented. I missed the NOVA program because of my early period in the navy really did not give me regular access to television. I wish I saw this program when it aired because it is very damaging and I would have changed my opinion much sooner. Mori's blog entry and the video should be required reading/viewing for all those who blindly accept the statements in the more recent Ancient aliens program on the History Channel.

Kentaro Mori also presented a posting about the infamous alien with the FBI/KGB men photograph. This has long been considered a hoax. Kentario found the source of the photograph and revealed

it came from a magazine that conducted an April Fool's joke. Mori points out that there are many obvious signs for the article being a prank. The photograph is a montage of several images with the alien being an image of a skater.

Robert Sheaffer exposed the claim of Phil Klass offering Steve Pierce a bribe as something of a folktale. Mr. Sheaffer obtained Klass' Travis Walton file from the American Philosophical Society and found the transcript of a phone conversation between Klass and Pierce on June 11, 1978. Mr. Pierce seems to tell a different story in 1978 than he does today. At that time, he refers to Walton as "ignorant" and "stupid". Of course, I am sure those supporting Pierce and Walton will now state that Klass purposefully altered the transcript in order to hide his effort to bribe Pierce.

There was an interesting debate between Gary Heseltine and Chris French concerning Rendlesham. Heseltine tried to spin the story the same way proponents have spun it for decades. French pretty much made Ridpath's argument, which is so sound that Rendlesham proponent Jenny Randles has accepted it as a good explanation of the event. Heseltine appeared to avoid talking about the actual witness statements written in 1980 and how the lighthouse rotation rate synchs up nicely with the airmen noting the light flashing at them on the tape. He also used the false claim that skeptics were talking about flying light-houses, which no skeptic ever stated.

Robert Hastings does not like anybody treading on his turf. Stephen Bassett apparently has issued a petition and press release regarding UFOs and Nukes. Hastings spends a great deal of effort pointing out Bassett's errors. He also points out his belief that the aliens in the spaceships that are tampering with our nuclear weapons are telling us to get rid of them. Is Hastings suggesting that the aliens would step in and stop an nuclear exchange if that was about to occur? Why didn't they just stop the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan or above ground testing if they were that interested in stopping nuclear weapons? Is it possible that Robert Hastings is simply allowing his personal beliefs to affect his interpretation of these reports?

The Roswell Corner

The missing Brazel interview

According to the latest news, Mack Brazel's audio interview with Walt Whitmore in 1947 has existed for many years with Dave Aaron. Unfortunately, Mr. Aaron allowed this recording, as well as hundreds of others, to sit in his girlfriend's garage. When she passed away, the city came in and had to clean it up because it was a health hazard. Apparently, there were lots of cats in the house. The recording apparently was destroyed. This all sounded a bit strange to me. Am I supposed to believe that this recording, which was thought lost to the world all these years, was sitting in a pile of tapes in this garage for all this time? Why didn't this UFOlogist get the tape and produce it for Roswell enthusiasts/investigators? He could have made a nice bit of coin selling it or he could have received some publicity. I can think of three scenarios regarding this tape:

1. The recording does not exist.
2. The recording exists but reflects the same story told by Brazel to the Roswell Daily Record.
3. The recording exists and it is the Roswell smoking gun where Brazel describes the bodies, the spaceship, and the cover-up.

I think one or two is most likely. #3 is highly unlikely because if the recording did contain this, it would not have resided in a garage all of these years. About a week after this news became public, Kevin Randle revealed that Don Schmitt interviewed Mr. Aaron to resolve the issue. Schmitt discovered that Aaron had it in his possession since 2003 and had sold copies of the recording to nine people. He also told Schmitt that he did not recall much of the recording but did remember how it opened. Schmitt recognized the words since they were from scene concerning the interview from the Showtime "Roswell" movie. In other words, it was not the real thing. So option one is applicable. The recording, as advertised (the actual interview and not a recreation), did not really exist.

The coming of the triangles

One of the most commonly promoted UFOs these days happens to be the massive triangular UFO. One wonders when they became the rage. Since 1947, the disc shape was most commonly reported by witnesses. Even today, most UFO reports are described as an ellipse, egg, or orb. These are dull and not often hyped by UFO promoters/groups. However, if somebody sees a massive V or triangle UFO, it gets quite the emphasis on blogs and in discussion groups. Why is this so?

As best I can tell, the "massive triangular UFOs" did not appear until the Hudson valley UFO events in the early 1980s. After that "wave" dissipated, they did not reappear in significant numbers of reports until the Belgium events of 1989-1992. Thanks to a few well publicized events, the triangular shaped objects became the signature shape for the Belgian UFO wave. The events of March 30-31, 1990 discussed in this issue were started by witnesses seeing points of light in the shape of a triangle and they assumed they saw the lights attached to one craft. Since that time, several UFO events were described as huge flying triangles. The 1997 Arizona 8PM event being the most popular.

Writing in the Condon report, Dr. William Hartmann coined the term "airship effect", which has the witnesses playing connect the dots with multiple light sources in order to construct a craft based on popular designs in the UFO literature. This effect has revealed itself in the past. Allan Hendry noted it when he was identifying UFO reports that involved ad planes.

...sketches that were done by the adver-

tising plane witnesses exhibited a "filling in" of structural information that was not actually present in the dark to their vision. The advertising plane IFOs serve here as a UFOlogical Rorschach blot. They show us that people in general want to "read in" a certain model flying saucer to what was only a row of sequentially flashing lights."

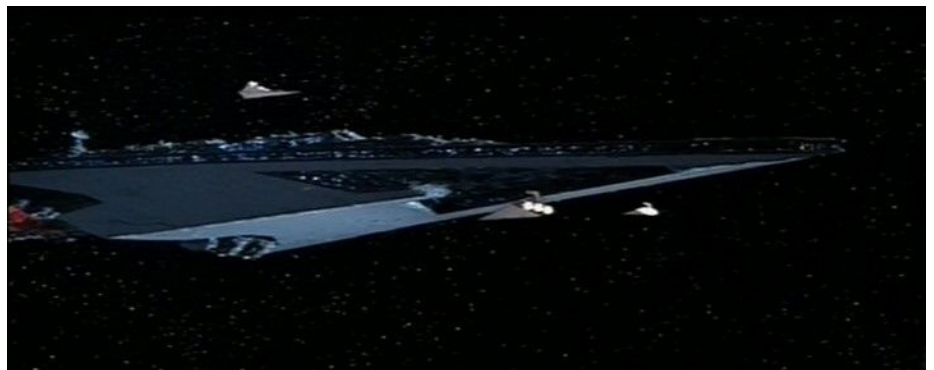
Once the idea that UFOs could be huge triangular shaped objects was established, it would not take much to create massive triangular objects out of the three light sources. After all, as long as they are not nearly in a straight line, three light sources will form the shape of a triangle.

If the concept that huge triangular UFOs exist in the UFO literature, why did they appear? I have some theories. Aircraft in formation at night are not something that occurs often. Additionally, some aircraft have unusual lighting that is misleading. When these aircraft pass over densely populated areas, they can produce reports that indicate a large triangle flying over. However, why weren't these types of large UFOs reported before the 1980s?

Is it any surprise that the coming of the huge triangles coincided with the same time period that produced the three very popular Star Wars movies where massive wedge-shaped star destroyers were used by the empire? It is something to consider.

Notes and references

1. Hendry, Allan. The UFO Investigators Handbook. London: Sphere Books Ltd. 1980. p. 91



March 30-31, 1990 - The Belgium F-16 UFO Chase

The Belgian UFO wave is often considered one of those landmark events in UFOlogy. SUNlite has published quite a few articles demonstrating that there are reasons to question the events as described. Even more damning was the recent revelation that the only good photograph taken of a Belgian Triangle was a hoax.

However, there is one part of the wave that has reached almost mythic proportions thanks to television shows like Unsolved Mysteries and books like Leslie Kean's UFOs: Generals, Pilots and Government Officials Go On the Record. This event is the March 30-31 attempted interception of UFOs by two Belgian Air Force F-16s. For some reason certain examinations of this event are ignored or omitted from these presentations. This is probably because these studies do not appear in English and are not widely known.

I intend to attempt to present the events of March 30-31 in a manner for everyone to understand what happened and, hopefully, demonstrate that the case is not as exotic as claimed by some of these presentations.



Visual sightings

Prior to March 30th, the Belgian Air Force (BAF) had come to an agreement that they would send fighters up to intercept UFOs if there were sightings that could be confirmed. They had already done so twice before March 30th but were unsuccessful in intercepting any UFOs.

On the night of March 30th, starting around 2300 local time, reports came in from a gendarme (Marechal des logis Alain Renkin) in the town of Ramilles. At

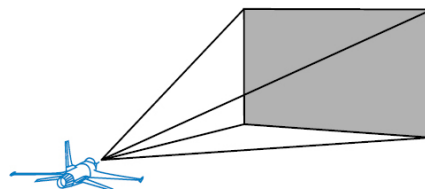
first it was a single luminous point in the western sky that changed color. Later, two other points were identified and they formed a triangle in the sky. According to Joel Mesnard:

The most luminous of the three points of light continued to withdraw slowly towards Gembloux. The upper point was visible towards Thorembais-Saint Trond (due west), while the third point was towards Chaumont-Gistoux (between NW and WNW).¹

Other patrols nearby now began to notice the lights in the same general locations of the sky. Mr Renkin also began to report another set of lights in the form of a triangle below the main triangle he first observed.

All of these reports precipitated the arrival of Captain Jaques Pinson, who was second-in-command of the Wavre Gendarmerie brigade. He confirmed the sightings. According to the reports, Pinson reported the lights to be like large stars only they were constantly changing colors.

Meanwhile, the radar at Glons began to pick up radar contacts in the area that were drifting slowly westward. These contacts were picked up by the Semmerzake radar. Because of the radar confirmation of the visual sightings, it was decided that the F-16s at Beauvechain be sent up to investigate the intruder.



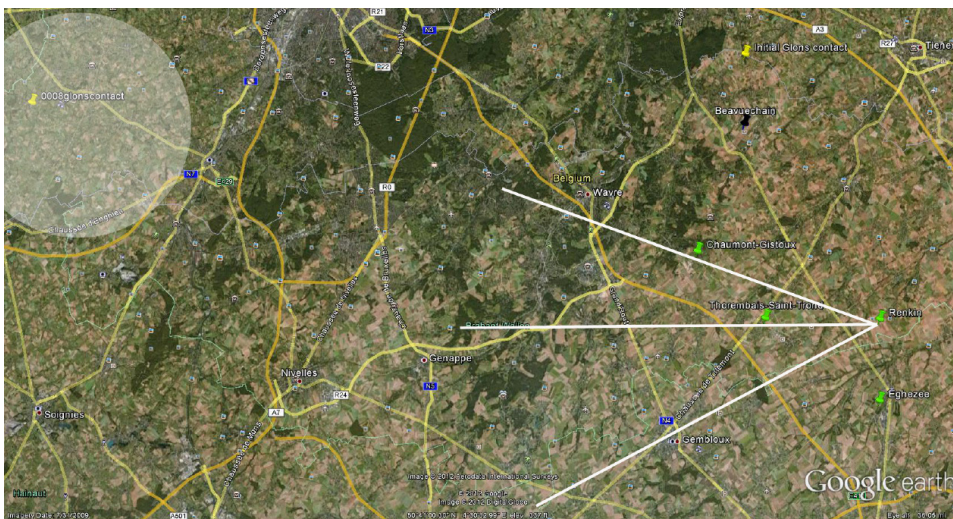
The F-16 radar

The F-16 was fitted with an AN/APG-66 pulse-doppler radar which is used to track airborne targets. The radar operates in several modes depending upon what the pilot requires. They would use the scan mode to locate targets and a target tracking mode to "lock-on" to the target. The scanning mode provides various beam widths in front of the aircraft. Based on the images of the display that have been presented, the beam width appeared to be set at its widest mode of 60 degrees.

The initial version of the radar used by the Belgian Air Force was eventually upgraded to a later version in 1992 because of several problems. One was a high number of false alarm returns that could not be corrected. While this problem did not play a significant role in the events that night, it has been suggested that one or more of the contacts registered may have been this type of return.

The F-16 interception

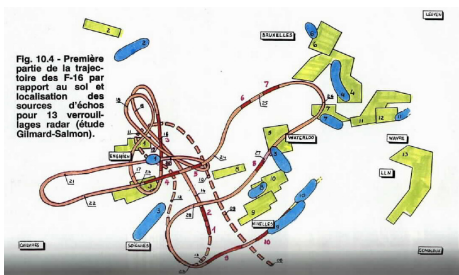
Shortly after midnight, the F-16s took off in an effort to intercept the UFOs. However, instead of heading towards Ramilles or north of their air base where the



The sighting lines for Mr. Renkin. To his NNW was Beauvechain Airbase where the F-16s came from. To the north of that was where the initial radar contact was reported. However, the F-16s were sent to the WSW of Brussels (large white area to the left) on their initial interception attempt.

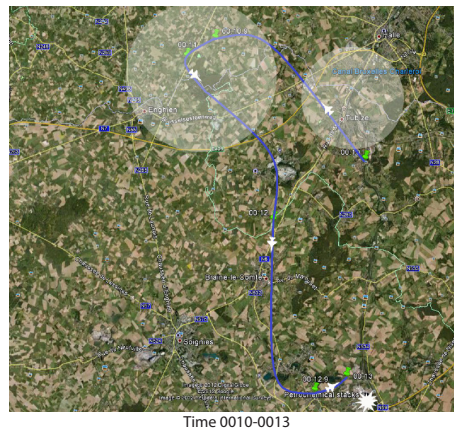
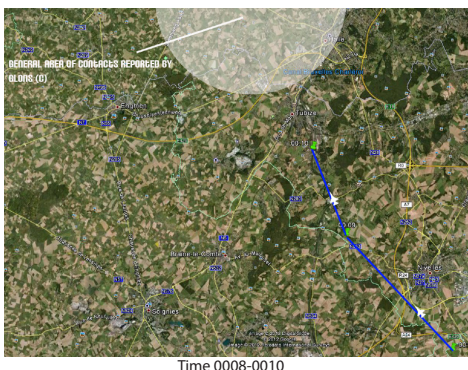
initial radar contact was detected, the F-16s were sent to the southwest of Brussels near the town of Soignies.

What transpired over the next forty minutes is hard to determine because the studies and radar data are not widely available. Professor Auguste Meessen has the data and presented some of it on his web site. Although it is in French, one can get the general idea of his article using translation software. It is too bad that the study performed by Salmon and Gilmard of the Belgian Royal Military Academy is not available. I attempted to obtain a copy from several people but it is apparently unavailable because it was a confidential report. However, in Meessen's discussion, we do have an image that comes from that report.



Some may find the map confusing but a bit of careful examination and comparison to the transcript that was also available can help make things a bit easier to understand. I hope to go through each leg of the F-16 flight.

I would like to point out that these aircraft and radar contact positions are all approximate based on the Salmon-Gilmard map and Meessen's plot. The ground radar contacts are based on the pilot-CRC transcript, which seems to have been part of the Lambrecht's report. The purpose is only to show the general locations, what the pilots were chasing, and what the ground radars were describing.

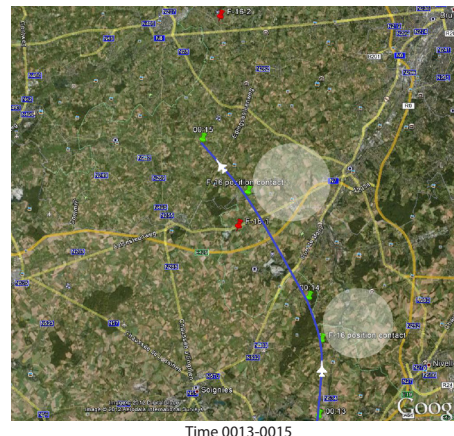


Time 0008 - 0010

As the F-16s flew into the area east of Soignies they were being directed towards a contact (white shaded circle in the image at lower left) that was in the vicinity of Enghien and Halle. The controller gave them directions to the contact, which was supposedly at 10,000 feet. The F-16s could not see or detect any craft.

Time 0010-0013

The F-16s, being directed by CRC, can not make any contact visually or with their radar despite flying over/near the contacts (white shaded areas). As the F-16s travel south, they obtained a visual contact but it was a bright flashing light on the ground (star symbol at bottom of image). About the same time, a contact is registering in the area of Tubize and Halle. The F-16s turn north again to find that target.



Time 0013-0015

At time 0013, the F-16s resumed their flight north to find the contacts registering on the ground radar. As the F-16 approached the area, it finally found a radar contact at 9000 feet flying at 310



knots (red markers). The contact would disappear quickly. Meanwhile, the intercept controller tried to get the F-16 to make a sharp turn because the F-16 flew past their contact (white shaded areas). While this contact was behind them, the F-16 radar caught a contact further away to the north (red marker).

Time 0015-0017

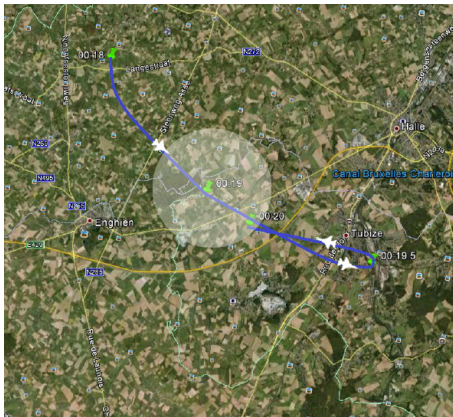
The F-16s turn around again to go after the contact reported by the controller near Nivelles that they had overshoot. The transcript is not very clear but control seems to have lost this contact and the F-16s travel south. They must have recorded a contact of some kind (red marker) because it is marked in the Salmon-Gilmard map but not recorded in the transcript. Control turned the F-16s around again to go back to another contact that was being seen in the same general area as the previous contacts.



Time 0017-0018

After being turned around, the F-16s fly by the latest contact without any indication they had seen it visually or on their radar. This results in another 180 degree turn. Sometime during this ma-

neuver, the jets see a civilian aircraft and wonder aloud if this might be what they were chasing. It appears that the F-16s are flying in circles looking for some very elusive contacts.



Time 0018-0020.

Time 0018-0020

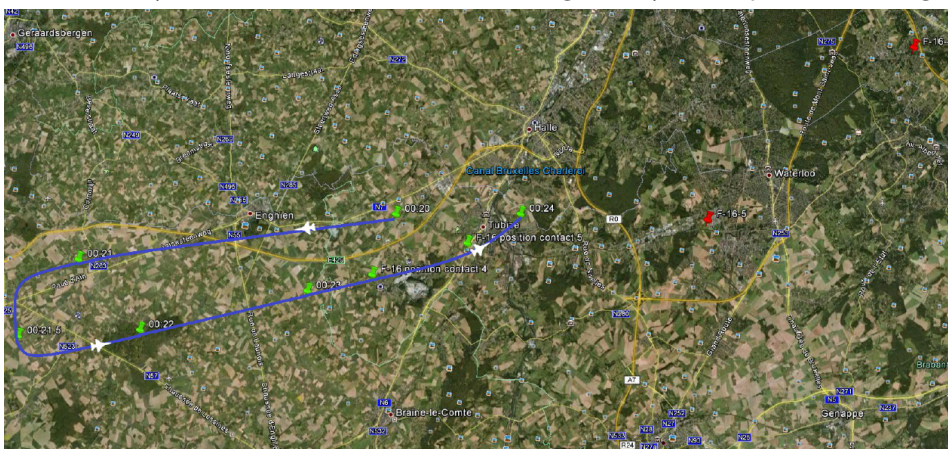
The F-16s now get a new contact (white shaded area) as they turn towards the southeast. Again, they fly by it without seeing anything or obtaining a radar contact. After flying past it, they are, again, asked to turn around towards the west.

Time 0020-0024

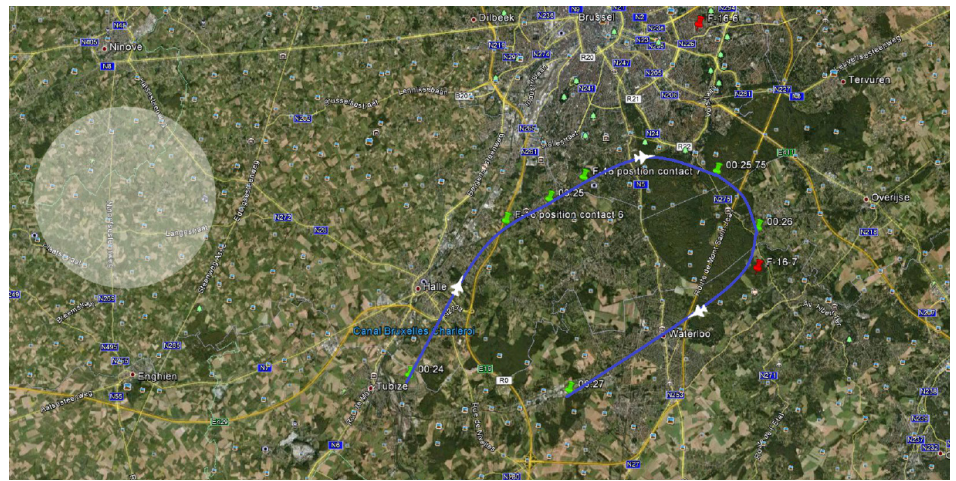
The jets fly west but have no contacts and the controller has nothing either. They turn around again and head east. As they head east, the F-16s get two contacts (red markers). One is described as "possible" by the pilot. Even though they obtain some contacts briefly, they fail to observe anything visually.

Time 0024-0027

The transcript never mentions any contacts by the F-16s but the Salmon-

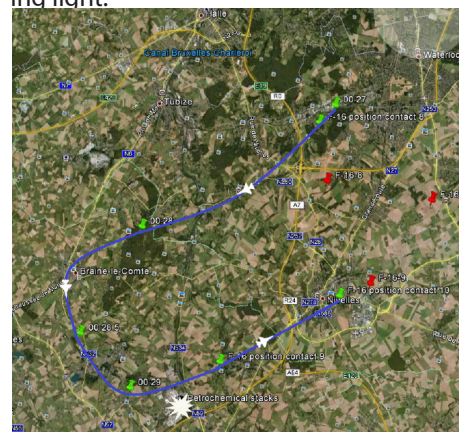


Time 0020-0024



Time 0024-0027

Gilmard map plots two during this period. They must have been brief contacts. The controlling station reported they did have a contact to the west (white shaded area), which prompted another turn around towards that direction. The pilot would report that this contact was "civilian traffic". As the planes head towards the southwest, they report seeing a flashing light.



Time 0027-0030

Time 0027-0030

This time period has the jets flying towards the southwest to investigate the light. They would pass over the light

(white star symbol) for a position fix. The report states that this turned out to be a smokestack with a flashing light. This is also the same flashing light seen at time 0013. After identifying the light, they turned towards the east again. Salmon and Gilmard register two contacts (red markers) but the pilots make no mention of them in the transcript. Around time 0030, intercept control informs the pilots they have a contact to the north-north-east (white shaded area).

Time 0030-0035

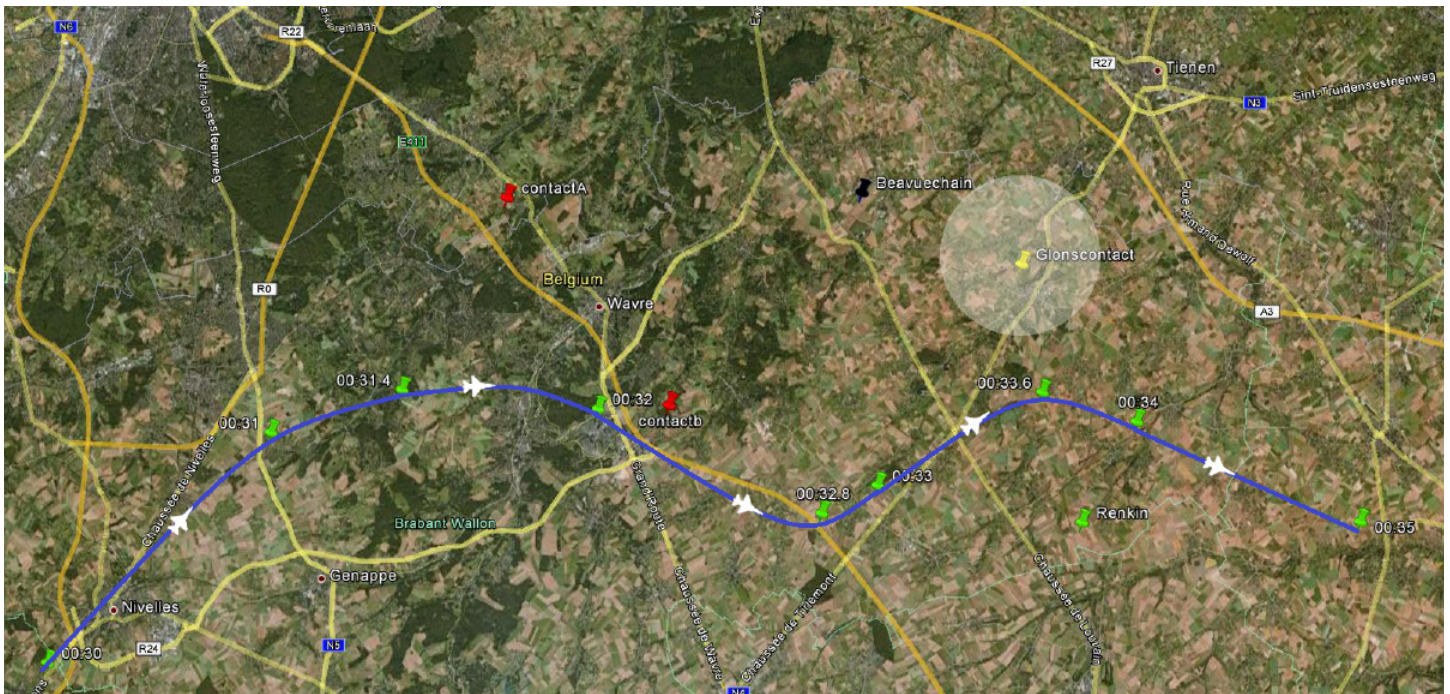
The map on page 8 is based on Auguste Meessen's track from his web site. The F-16s proceed eastward looking for the elusive UFOs. Glons gives one contact (shaded area) that seems to match several of the contacts reported by the F-16s (red markers). However, the contact eludes the F-16s and simply disappears.

Time 0035+

At this point The F-16s flight path is not clearly known. They maneuver about looking for contacts and, like the previous half-hour of flight operations, can never locate anything solid even though they do obtain some lock-ons.

The gendarmes were confused

During this time period, the F-16s are now flying in the area that visual observations were made. The Lambrecht's report states that the gendarmerie saw the F-16s fly right by their UFOs without noticing them. This implies that what they were reporting as UFOs were not visible to the pilots.



Time 0030-0035

Aftermath

In the summer of 1990, the Lambrechts report, written by the Air staff of the Belgian air force, was released describing what transpired that night and some conclusions. The report gave the impression that something was in the sky with the F-16s that night. It did note that the pilots failed to see anything visually. However, it also highlighted how reliable they considered the reports from gendarmes.

Over the years, the number of interceptions and "lock-ons" performed by the F-16s have become exaggerated. Many contacts were registered as noted in this article. However, it seems that while there were dozens of contacts observed by the F-16 radar, the actual number of lock-ons, according to the Lambrechts report, was just three.

Salmon-Gilmard

In 1992, Major Salmon and civil engineer Gilmard of the Belgian Royal Military Academy, released a study that analyzed the radar data. They concluded that on three occasions, the contact registered by one F-16 was the other F-16. They also felt that many of the contacts were nothing more than radar angels/false targets and ground clutter. At one point a contact was registered going into the ground indicating that it was some form of reflection. The F-16 radar data began to lose its luster. Despite this informative

study being completed, it is not widely published and rarely mentioned.

Auguste Meessen

Auguste Meessen, a proponent for UFO events being some form of exotic craft, added to the solution by writing a paper describing how "moist air cells/convection bubbles" were the cause of many of the radar echoes that night. Meessen traced the passage of these "moist air cells" using the radar data and demonstrated how they drifted in the same general direction of the winds that evening. This is something noted in the Lambrecht's report.

The elusive nature of the contacts the F-16s were ordered to pursue and the lack of any visual contacts indicates these were all probably caused by the atmospheric conditions that night. Meessen

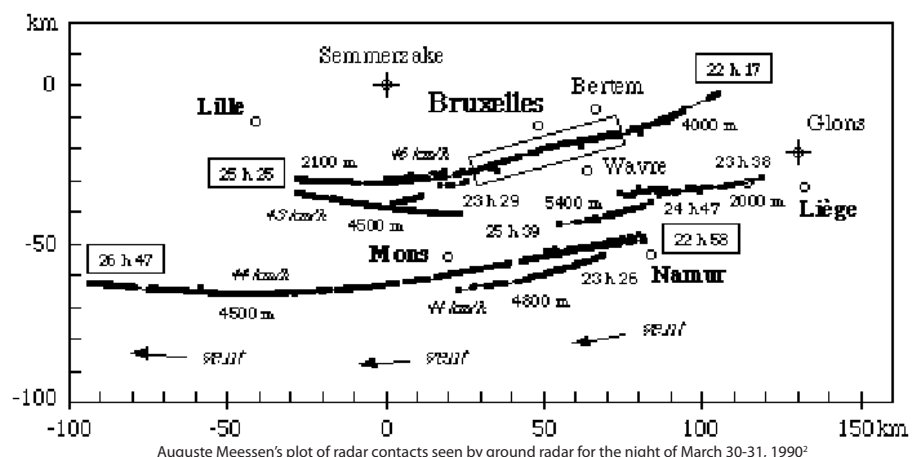
suggested that some of the sources of these "moist air cells" had to do with the industrial centers. He specifically mentioned how smoke stacks could create their own micro-climates, which might produce these convection bubbles.

Des masses d'air chaud, passant séparément les unes des autres entre les gendarmes et le ciel étoilé, devaient agir comme des lentilles.³

I translate this to read:

These moist air masses could come from factory chimneys or power plants.

It is interesting to note that the F-16s kept flying around the same general area for about fifteen minutes chasing contacts that the ground radar stated were present. All they had to show for it was a smoke stack with a bright flashing light



Auguste Meessen's plot of radar contacts seen by ground radar for the night of March 30-31, 1990²

This was not the only large smoke stack in the area. A quick view of Google earth revealed several smoke stacks and cooling towers in the area between Tubize and Brussels, which were just east (up-wind) of the area where the F-16s spent the first fifteen minutes of their search.

Professor Meessen also suggested that the police officers mistook stars as UFOs because of these unusual atmospheric conditions. He pointed towards the star Sirius as the prime suspect in his paper.

Along with a lengthy discussion of these moist air cells, Professor Meessen mentions one contact that he labeled as “unidentified” because it lacked a transponder signal. This contact flew a straight path between Brussels and Liege at an average speed of about 450-500 knots (<600 mph). The F-16s were never vectored towards it indicating that the radar operators probably knew what it was. There is reason to suspect that this was probably just an aircraft, which had a malfunctioning transponder or had turned it off for some reason.

Closing the book

The Belgian AF F-16 chase has become staple in the UFO literature as some form of extraordinary event when it really was not. For some reason, the work of Meessen and Salmon-Gilmard is little known, overlooked, ignored, or left out of the literature.

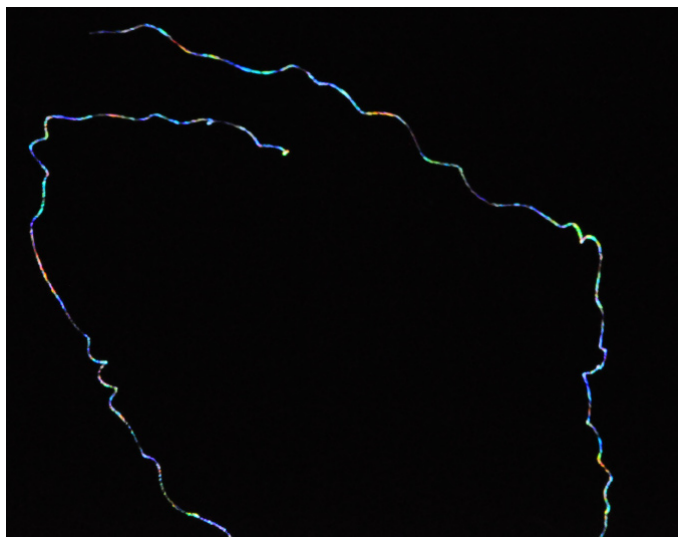
What this case really demonstrates is an application of Phil Klass’ UFOlogical principle #9:

Whenever a light is sighted in the night skies that is believed to be a UFO and this is reported to a radar operator, who is asked to search his scope for an unknown target, almost invariably an “unknown” target will be found. Conversely, if an unusual target is spotted on a radarscope at night that is suspected of being a UFO, an observer is dispatched or asked to search for a light in the night sky, almost invariably a visual sighting will be made.⁴

In this instance, the gendarmes mistook scintillating stars for UFOs and the radar operators, expecting to see a return corresponding to the visual sightings, found targets they normally would have ignored. Like these radar contacts, this UFO case is nothing more than a phantom, which disappears upon close examination.

Notes and references

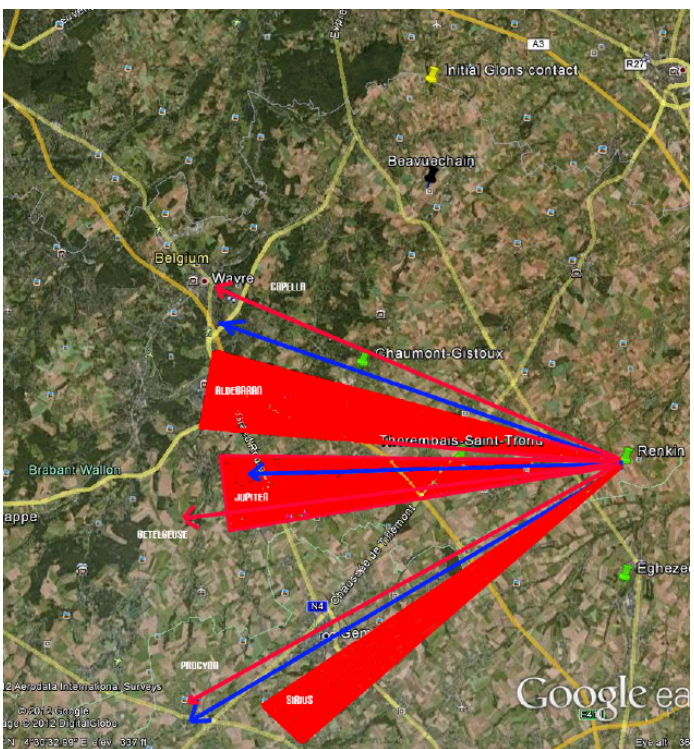
1. Mesnard, Joel. “Belgium haunted by huge triangular craft II.” Flying Saucer Review. Volume 35 Number 4 (December 1990). Available WWW: http://www.ignaciodarnaude.com/avistamientos_ovnis/Mesnard-Creighton,UFOs%201989,Belgium,FSR1990V35N2.pdf page 4.
2. Meessen, Auguste. DES ECHOS RADAR D’ORIGINE METEOROLOGIQUE. Available WWW: <http://home.nordnet.fr/~phuleux/deschos.htm>
3. ibid.
4. Klass, Philip. UFOs Explained. New York: Random House, 1974. p. 184



A handheld telephoto photograph of the star Sirius. This is part of a 5 second exposure where I purposefully moved the camera. The fluctuations and color changes are evident in the streak. These are the effects of scintillation, which commonly is misinterpreted by inexperienced observers as a UFO flashing lights at them.



The night sky on March 30, 1990 at 2330 local time. There were numerous bright stars and planets visible in the western sky, where the gendarmes saw their UFOs.



The sighting lines described by Mr. Renkin in Ramilles are marked in blue. The large red bands show the locations of stars and planets during the time period of observation. Additional star azimuths (red arrows) are shown as more potential visual sources. The location of Beavuechain air base and the first contact reported in the Lambrechts report.

Roger wrote this piece when I mentioned I was looking at the case. It may sound similar to the article I wrote, but it covers some areas that I did not bother to look into. - Tim

The evening of 30 March 1990 : Observations by the F16s

By Roger Paquay

This evening is described in SOBEPS VOB1 pages 173-186 and 363-395.

At about 23 H (11 pm) the gendarmes from Wavre, being at Ramillies see in the sky bright lights forming a big triangle and small triangles, eight lights. They take contact with the Belgian military radar center CRC from Glons. The CRC detected only one radar echo at 10000 feet. The decision to send the F16 was not decided at this moment.

Observations by the gendarmes

Later this night the gendarmes continue to see the lights changing various ways, white, yellow, green, or blue and red. These colours variations, a few seconds, were accompanied from variations of the brilliance.

The description made by the gendarmes from apparent move on fixed places, "jerky moves around a mean (medium) position" and the change in colours, much perceptible for the lights situated at 15° height then for those situated more than 40° above the horizon. This jerky move around a medium position on a black sky is due to the eyes movements of the observer. Indeed, the eye is constantly moving so the image of a fixed point form on different point of the retina. This give the impression of a move around a fixed point.

These light variations clearly identify stars in particular meteorological circumstances, clear sky with atmospheric turbulences and humidity of the air with fine veils of clouds invisible to naked eyes.

An astronomical software shows that, during the gendarmes observations, at SW could be seen bright stars with magnitude below 2., and descending to (-2,2) for Jupiter the brighter light in the sky this evening. Sirius was low on the horizon, Procyon, Rigel, Betelgeuse, Castor and Pollux, Capella.

You must note that three non-aligned points form always a triangle and, with



the stars on view it was a possibility to see different triangles.

Later in the evening the gendarmes say that when the F16 were passing in the vicinity of the light, the light seemed to change place and then come again at his initial place when the planes were far away from the light. This can be explained easily: An optical illusion appears when a plane seen by his lights passes close to a star. The stars seem to move so long the plane is between them or close to them. Then, when the plane goes away the stars seem to come again at their initial place. This sort of move is described by the gendarmes when the F16 were passing closer to the lights. It is the correct description of one very few known optical illusion. This illusion is explained when the witness look the plane as reference point. The apparent distance from star to the plane seem to decrease and to approach the reference point, then when the plane goes away the star seem to came at his initial point (point that never changed) because the star anew become the reference point.

Observations of the F16s

At 0h15, following the radar observation from Glons, an abnormal spot always at 10000 feet in the area of Wavre, two F16 take off from Beauvechain. They

could not observe something but they registered radar contact with abnormal data, supersonic speeds and big apparent accelerations. The radars of Glons and Semmerzaeke were only detecting the same spot at 10000 feet high when the gendarmes continued to describe bright objects placed in triangle. At the same time the F16 did detect nothing at the place indicated by the gendarmes.

At the end of May 1990 the Belgian air force send to the Sobeps that edit it the "Lambrechts report".

What can we learn from this report: "this evening the radar from Glons detected one contact. Two F16 were send in the area, they registered abnormal radar contact but did not see something. The gendarmes on ground could not take pictures. One registered contact by the F16 seems to show an acceleration of 22G. We will explain this later. No supersonic bang was heard by the gendarmes. Fantastic accelerations seemed to be detected; the speed of the "ufo" change from 280km/h to 1800 km/h in a few seconds and extremely quick vertical moves.

Following the wing meteo there was this evening temperature inversion close to the ground and at 3000 feet too. There was also violent wind, 50 to 60 knots, at 10000 feet. These atmospheric situation could probably explain these abnormal data.

Another radar property can also explain the abnormal data. We will detail this later.

A second spot radar is detected at 0h32 by Glons and Semmerzaeke, military radars, an engine that fly from the neighbourhood of Beauvechain in direction of Liege at about 900 km/h., but is not detected by the civilian radars from Bertem and Maastricht. Bertem is the Brussels airport radar and is very close from Wavre, so it is intriguing he did not detect something in his area. The spot disappear at 2000 m high at a position close from Bierset military airport near Liège

What is intriguing is that the f16 did not detect this engine and are not send to identify it. They were close to this engine. As Glons is part of the NADGE (Nato Air Defense Ground Environnement), his

mission is to detect all engines flying above Belgium and to identify them. If it is an enemy he must send the F16 to intercept it or to destroy it. This was not done. Why?

What must we retain from these observations: Apparently the F16 radars detected vertical moves with very high speed and enormous accelerations. Are these data linked to real moves or to atmospheric phenomenon or artefact from the radar? We will explain this in a paragraph on "Some data on the radar from the F 16".

Colonel De Brouwer (now retired as General), in the postface of the Sobepes book "Vague d'ovnis sur la Belgique", tome 1 do not exclude the possibility that unknown planes were in our sky. He also think of magnetic perturbations, we were effectively in a period of very intensive activity from the Sun, at the peak of the solar cycle. The solar activity was very intense the whole week before 30 March 1990 with a very high number of solar spots and ejection from intense charged particles.

We must remark that, whatever the radar technology, there always subsist a percentage of false detections and not explainable detections. The origin may be very various, noise from the apparatus, birds, clouds, water vapour in air, atmospheric inversion, separation between cold and warm front. Echoes from fixed obstacle can also give abnormal detection. Tropospheric and ionospheric reflections can also induce radar spots. And finally: for different types of radar, the elimination from echoes corresponding to fixed obstacles cannot be done totally.

Finally an internal report made by Colonel Salmon (major at this moment) and civil engineer Gilmard working for the "Center electronic of War" concluded that errors were made in interpreting the data: On the ten detections, three correspond to the second F16? The others are due to atmospheric inversions. The lights seen by the gendarmes were "stars".

Mister Meessen, the only who could see the Salmon -Gilmard report, recognized the meteorological phenomenon and their influence on the radars.

The pilots, when questioned on these radar detection say that frequently, when they fly at 30000 feet in a clear sky, they observe regularly spots corresponding to apparently vertical moves with very high speed and that correspond to "Nothing".

About the Lambrechts report

This report correspond to the night from 30 to 31 mars. He give the declarations from the gendarmes, the chronology from the radars contacts and the conversations between the pilots and the control tower on ground in Beauvechain. Then we find the length of the contacts and their transcription ;

See the table of contacts below.

We find a data indicating an acceleration of 22 G ($G = 9,81 \text{ m/s}^2$). At this moment the radar indicate a change in the speed from 150 knots to 560 knots in one second, the plane is turning while his altitude stays at 6000 feet. See table of contact data on page 12.

Knot or nautical mile correspond to 1852 m. is used in aviation as speed unit by anglo-saxons. I do convert it in km/h to use the motions laws in m/s.

150 knots = $150 \times 1,852 = 277,8 \text{ km/h} \Rightarrow 77,166 \text{ m/s}$

560 knots = $560 \times 1,852 = 1037,12 \text{ km/h} \Rightarrow 288,09 \text{ m/s}$

The motion law of uniformly accelerated move (In french MRUA) is used by the Lambrechts report to calculate the acceleration "a".

This law: $v = v_0 + a \cdot t$ gives: $288,09 = 77,166 + a \cdot 1$. (V = vitesse can be replaced for USA by S = speed).

So "a" = $210,92 \text{ m/s}^2$, thus 21,5 G.

We cannot accept this value as real because the distance covered by the "engine" is not calculated with the second law of motion, the distance law:

$$e = v_0 \cdot t + \frac{1}{2} a \cdot t^2$$

What distance would have been covered in one second with this acceleration. The answer is :

$$e = 77,166 \cdot 1 + \frac{1}{2} \cdot 210,92 \cdot 1^2 = 182,626 \text{ m.}$$

So in one second the engine **if it is real** could only cover 182,626 m. Why this distance was not calculated is not explained in the report.

You must know that the uniformly accelerated move laws are solutions from a system of two equations **that are not independent**.

$$v = v_0 + a \cdot t$$

$$e = v_0 \cdot t + \frac{1}{2} a \cdot t^2.$$

In these equation you have five variable and distinct data. If you know three you can calculate the two others:

v_0 (initial speed), v (final speed), a (acceleration), e (covered distance), t (length of time = duration).

If you have more than three variable, four in the case of the F16 you have different manner to calculate the fifth variable. But if the variables are not coherent you will find different results. In this case you cannot conclude. If the results give the same value to the different variable, then data are coherent and the result is correct.

In the case cited by the Lambrechts report this verification by the second law was not effective. We will demonstrate it. It is a very serious error in the use of the motions laws. So the fantastic acceleration indicated cannot be sure. Indeed if the data are not compatible the result will be erroneous.

If we consult the graph Fig 11 page 21 from the Meesen document "Analyse approfondie des mystérieux enregistrement radar des F16" (see next page), we see the speed passes from 150 knots to 560 knots and it is effectively a rectilinear vertical move, what justify the use of the two motions laws.

On the same fig 11 you see the altitude passes from 3000 to 7000 feet (**follow the red line I added on this figure**) If you know a foot, anglo saxon measure is 30,48 cm you can calculate the altitude changes from 914 m to 2133,6 m. the theoretical distance covered is thus 1219,6 m. But the distance that could be

Transcription des contacts

Troisième verrouillage

Nb Sec après Verr. Radar	Cap en Degrés	Vitesse Noeuds	Altitude Pieds
00	200	150	7000
01	200	150	7000
02	200	150	7000
03	200	150	7000
04	virage /200	150	6000 \ Accélération
05	serré \270	560	6000 / 22 g !!
06	270	560	6000
07	270	570	6000
08	270	560	7000
09	270	550	7000
10	210	560	9000
11	210	570	10000
12	210	560	11000
13	210	570	10000
14	270	770	7000
15	270	770	6000
16	270	780	6000
17	270	790	5000
18	290	1010	4000
19	290	1000	3000
20	290	990	2000
21	290	990	1000
22	300	990	0000
22.5	300	980	0000

Fin Verrouillage

Data from the Lambrecht's report

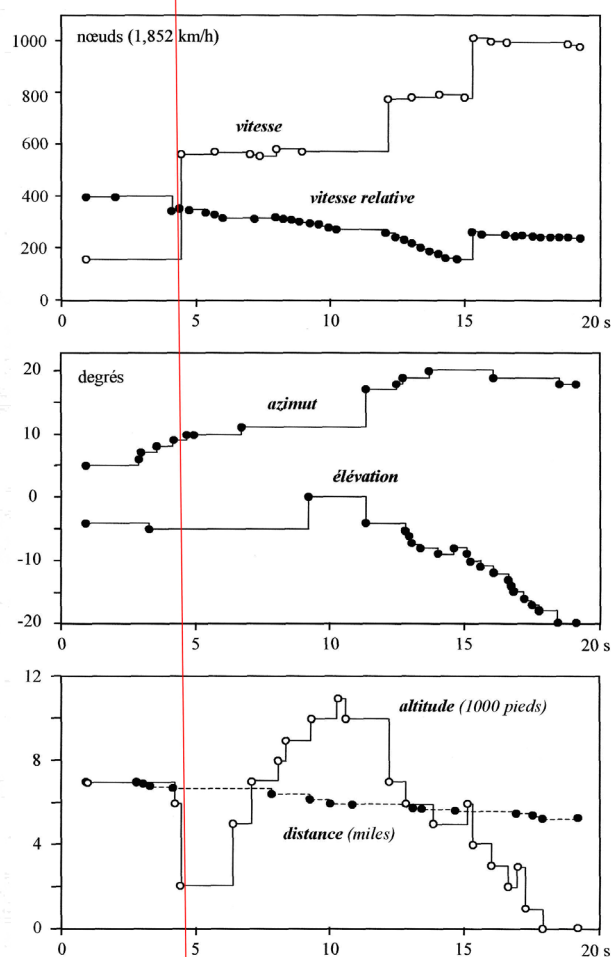


Figure 11 : Les valeurs des paramètres enregistrés pendant le troisième verrouillage.

fig 11 page 21 from Meessen text on www.meessen.net, « Analyse approfondie des mystérieux enregistrements radar des F16 »

calculated with the motions law is only 182,626 m.

This clearly demonstrate that the calculated acceleration 22 G **does not correspond to a real object but is an artefact from the radar.**

Follow the red line on this fig 11

We must remark this conclusion could have been found since the beginning if the laws had been correctly used.

We can also remark this figure shows another anomaly because at the end of the detection the speed would have been 1852 km/h at the altitude "ZERO" (Nul)

Vague Belge: Fantastic accelerations don't exist

The fantastic acceleration of 22 G is a false conclusion because one mistake has been done in the use of the motions laws.. What mistake is it?

The mistake is a bad use of the two formulas of rectilinear uniformly accelerated motion.

These laws, law of speed and law of distance are part of a two equations system with two unknown data.

There are five variable and distinct

data. If you know three, you can calculate the two others.

In the case here, we have four distinct data and the acceleration seems to be the only thing you must calculate. So they did do only this calculation.

There lies the difficulty and they get caught in a trap. **The calculated value must verify the second law of motion and this was not done.**

We shall do this verification with the second law.

$e = 77,166 * 1 + \frac{1}{2} * 210,92 * 1^2 = 182,626$ m. We are far from the fourth data, 1219,6

m.that can be found on the fig 11 from Meessen.

Conclusion:

The calculated acceleration do not verify the second law and therefore you must conclude the four data are incompatible and form a set of inconsistent data.

If the radar has a real contact it is evident the acceleration calculated with the law of speed will be coherent with the distance covered by the target.

This data is unknown and you cannot verify the coherence of the data. But if the data are incoherent it is impossible to say there was a contact.

This show to us that the radar data are inconsistent at this moment and you cannot say an engine was detected. You cannot conclude that there was a fantastic acceleration of 22 G. Thus there was no fantastic acceleration, no supersonic speed, and consequently no supersonic bang.

Then why did the radar give these incoherent data?

Since 1992 different explanation were given.

First, the Gilmard-Salmon report (*) concluded that three of the observations were the second F16, that the abnormal echoes were due to abnormal atmospheric conditions. The bright lights seen from ground were stars very bright this evening. For the only radar echo detected from ground you must know that the pilots did see nothing at this place.

Professor Meessen recognized in VOB2 (second book from Sobeps) that the abnormal echoes were due to meteorological circumstances from very long duration.

A third explanation based on the properties from pulse radar Doppler **can complete** and explain entirely the observations.

I found it in a theory book on radars "Radars, bases modernes" written by Michel Carpentier, engineer, general technical manager at "Thomson CSF". This book was edited by "Masson editions", Paris, in

1981. You must know that Thomson CSF is a specialist firm for radars and equipped many Belgian and European airport. This book was used by the radarists at Zaventem Brussels airport and I could read it.

Radar data

The pulse Doppler radar uses eight wave trains with 64 impulses at eight frequencies that are different each others from 100 hertz.

The observed phenomenon, echoes with very high speed, is a characteristic from the pulse Doppler radar and is related to his detection mode by correlation on quasi simultaneous impulses. They don't are related to a real object and have not any signification.

I have read and studied this book that is used as reference book in many airports.

In this book you find:

On the radar, a bright spot is a detected echo and the move from the bright spot at each contact characterizes the move from the object if it is a real one. But the place of the bright spot depends on the emitted frequency. So, when the radar emit short pulses on different frequencies to have a more precise detection you can observe this phenomena :

if the frequency change during the time needed to determine the radial speed you obtain spots with very high speeds. These spots don't correspond to a real object; they indicate the speed from the bright point move.

In the book, page 224, you find:

Lorsque le radar change de fréquence centrale d'émission pendant le temps nécessaire à la mesure de la vitesse radiale des cibles, on mesure surtout la vitesse avec laquelle le point brillant s'est déplacé pendant le même temps, vitesse qui peut être énorme .

Translation:

When the radar change his central frequency during the time needed to measure the radial speed of the target, you measure the speed with whom the bright point moved during the same time, speed

that can be very high.

This property explain the high speeds detected and the fantastic but not real accelerations because they don't correspond to a real object. The F16 pilot's recognize they often observe these spot during a few seconds but they don't care of them. They say these spots are generally vertical and at very high speed. This seems a very good explanation for the phenomena.

So we must conclude: from the calculations and from the radar properties that the fantastic accelerations are inexistent. They were announced because the verification of the data coherence was not done. These false results were published by the Medias without verification and used by ufologist to say that extraterrestrial engine were here with fantastic properties.

Another report from the Belgian air force does the same mistake. This report, the Lambrechts report, may be found on internet.

Every time a fantastic acceleration is announced, it is always the result by use of the first law, law of speed, without verification of the compatibility of the data with the distance covered. But these data are not independent as I explained.

The assertions of fantastic accelerations in these cases of bad use of the laws of motion are without foundation. With them fall down completely the assertions of extraterrestrial engines and the assertions of technologies in great advance on the terrestrial technologies. The extraterrestrial hypothesis falls down.

References

1. (*)Etude Gilmard-Salmon : « Analyse des observations, le radar F16 et résultats du modèle », rapport interne d'une étude effectuée au centre de guerre électronique sous la direction du colonel Salmon, mai 1991.
2. L'étude Gilmard-Salmon : VOB2 p 401
3. Tim Printy dans un article intitulé « Belgium 1990 : « A Case for Radar-

Visual UFOs » Signale que le radar du F16, AN/APG-66) a été upgradé en 1990 en la version AN/APG-66(V)2. Une des raisons invoquées était : « augmenter la performance opérationnelle, incluant une capacité de repérage accrue et un pourcentage de fausses alarmes réduit. Site : <http://home.comcast.net/~tprinty/UFO/Belg.htm>

4. VOB p225 à 229 ;
5. Le rapport Lambrechts sur : <http://www.ufoevidence.org/documents/doc408.htm> ou par Google, recherche avancée, Vague belge ; ovnis, nombreuses adresses et accès.
6. www.meessen.net, « Analyse approfondie des mystérieux enregistrements radar des F16 »

Nevertheless, it may help those who like calculations to understand why, when you have four data and that only three are needed to solve the problem, you must find the fourth data if the data are coherent. If the data are incoherent the four different manners to choose three inter four data to solve the problem conduct to solutions that are different each other. You never find in this case the fourth data.



In the last issue of SUNlite, I described a conjunction between Venus and Jupiter in mid-March that was probably going to generate some UFO reports. Like clockwork, these reports appeared in the MUFON and NUFORC databases.

Peter Davenport made a reasonable effort in identifying some of these UFO reports but he missed a few. He identified thirteen cases by my count but I also counted another five that probably were of the two planets.

The most interesting reports could be found in the MUFON database. The first report, from Indiana on March 10th, involved an automobile pursuit of the planets. The two friends in the vehicle discovered that no matter what they did, they could not catch up with these two objects.

Further west in Colorado, a witness noted the lights were in the western sky and one was closer than the other because it was brighter. The UFOs would eventually disappear around 9:45 PM. This is about the same time the two planets set for this location.

On March 11th, an individual in Michigan was driving to their third shift job. They saw the UFOs as they drove to work between 10:16 and 10:38 PM. The set time for the two planets at this location was about 10:40 PM CDT.

Another sighting on March 11th came from Arizona. This witness noticed that the four helicopters appeared to be flying around them in circles. They went inside

and when they came back out 10 minutes later, the UFOs were gone.

One witness, from California, reported going out to smoke a cigarette and noticed two bright lights on the night of March 11th. They made it clear that he felt the lights were too bright to be star and wondered if these were the same UFOs as the "Phoenix lights".

A Florida witness noticed Venus and Jupiter over a three day period (March 11-14). They also noted that the two objects changed position over a period of an hour and a half. Despite the obvious clues that this was an astronomical event, they concluded it was "unidentified".

A Pennsylvania witness on March 13th reported that they were horrified when they examined their photographs of the UFOs. They showed two squiggly lines in the western sky (twilight is receding) that were in the same position as Jupiter and Venus. I assume the witness was "horrified" because they showed the UFOs moving. However, the motion was not associated with the planets. It was associated with the camera, which the EXIF data indicates was a one-second exposure time.

The queen of UFOs and the king of the planets were the culprits in all of these cases. It is interesting to note that quite a few media outlets reported that Venus and Jupiter would be visible during this time period. I guess if it isn't on Facebook or twitter, people are not going to know what is going on in the sky. This won't be the last time this sort of thing happens.

Once upon a time, there was a king known as Ahab. Do not be confused; this guy was not into whaling, but rather ruled over Israel in Samaria for 22 years. Now, it came to pass that Ahab linked up with a princess of a neighboring kingdom whose peoples called themselves Zidonians. Despite the Z, they were not extraterrestrials; nor was the princess who we know as Jezebel. Jezebel and her people worshipped a god named Baal and, as husbands often do, he chose to please his wife by deferring to her in matters of religion. He set up an altar and grove to serve this Baal, and not in a tennis-y sense.

Now Ahab really must have known this was a bad idea. His bloodline had served God Almighty who was known quite unambiguously to be a jealous god and had proven it in quite sociopathic ways through many generations. His own father Omri was said to have been struck down by The Almighty One for his vanities. Even so, men fear women more than gods for eminently, imminently, and intimately practical reasons and one might have hoped any being must forgive any man such behavior, even kings. Ahab thought wrong.

Thus it came to pass that God sent his prophet Elijah the Tishbite to express his anger and to inform Ahab that henceforth and until further notice he should expect there would be no more rain in the land he ruled, nor even dew, and you can tell Baal to go jiggle himself and his little Jezebel too. Baal, a Phoenician god with priority and power over sky and weather issues, was intended to take personal affront at God Almighty muscling into his territory. Not waiting for a reply, Elijah left.

God directed Elijah to hide out along one of the tributaries of the river Jordan. Ravens brought Elijah bread and flesh to live on till the tributary dried up. When finally he needed water, he moved on to Zarephath. Despite the Z, this also is not an extraterrestrial world, but some long forgotten city in Zidon. There Elijah bumped into a widow who gathered sticks for a living. She did a double-take. Elijah was a hairy dude and she had put hairy dudes on her list of turn-ons or would have if Playboy had done center-folds back then. Playing matchmaker

It is Elijah the Tishbite! Fired Up by that ol' Hairy Baal-buster

by Martin Kottmeyer



and giving the ravens a break, God made sure she could feed Elijah by providing a supply of food that never spoiled and miraculously replenished itself. If she needed any more proof Elijah was a good man to have around, that doubt erased when the widow's son fell ill and Elijah's prayers to God caused a miraculous recovery. Lucky for all, this Zidonian MELF also was less than politically correct and regarded Tishbites as just taboo enough to be a turn on in this Phoenician enclave more beholden to Baals.

Time passes and the drought back in Israel stretches out to 3 years. Animals are dying, including all the king's horses and all the king's mules. The king is desperately sending people around to find grass and water to save what is left. Deciding finally Ahab must have some measure of his anger, God commands Elijah to return to Ahab. Upon confronting him, Ahab asks him if he is to blame for all this. Elijah, of course, points out he had only himself to blame. You know how God is

about these things. Just to underscore to Ahab who's the boss when it comes to sky-gods, Elijah proposes a bonus extra-credit test. Assemble Jezebel's team of Baal players on Mount Carmel. Sacrifice two bulls. Put wood around both and prepare them as you normally would any burnt offering. Have each side call their god to set the offerings on fire. Whichever god wins, you follow religiously.

This sounds not only fair, but a lot more science-y than that one-must-need-faith airy fairyness you usually hear believers bleat about. Everybody gathers up on the mount. The Baal-pray-ers go first. They dress the bull according to their secret copyright-still-pending recipe then start calling for Baal's fire. They call and call. This goes on for hours, but there is no answer. They cut themselves, spilling blood as was their custom. Doesn't help; still no answer. O Baal's...

Like a Middle Eastern Craig Ferguson, the Tishbite mocks them unmercifully. When Elijah's turn comes, he brings out 4 barrels of water, and, allegedly to rub in the fact there has been such a shortage, he begins to pour the water over the bull like he's a millionaire gourmet. He uses all the barrels till it flows in a surrounding trench. He calls on the Lord. Down comes a fire. Whoomph. The bull, the altar, the trench of water, explodes into flame. I should resist wanting to sound too modernly cynical or spill the beans like some masked-magician wannabe, but had I been present I might have been heard to wonder – hmm, are you sure that was water and not, say, a j'et-fool octane-boosted cooking liqueur?

This being a religious proceeding, not a testing lab; everybody fell on their faces, praising God for Elijah having brought such a high-end barbecue lighter to their lowly luau. Elijah then ordered that all the prophets following Baal be killed then and there. The audience thinks that is a swell way to settle the Baal-players' gambling debt and so they were taken to a river and, nope not baptized, slaughtered. All 450 of them. Whoa, bet they didn't realize that was part of the deal. But perhaps they should have since Jezebel had been killing off Elijah's co-prophets and revenge was okey-dokey in those pre-Buddhist days when the circle of violence was allegedly little un-

derstood or at least not understood as a problem anyone should feel bad about.

With the Baal-club sacked, God ordered up a feast and had Ahab join in to show there were no hard feelings. After due courses, Elijah announces he hears the sound of an abundance of rain. He goes before his altar and casts himself to the ground, face between his knees. He asks a servant to go to the mountain's edge and check the sea for a sign. At first, there is nothing. Could God still be angry? Keep trying. On the 7th try, a small cloud begins to rise up. That's more like it.

Elijah gets in his chariot. Job's done; gotta run. By the time he is down the mountain, the sky is filling with black clouds. Drought's over, big-time. Elijah hightails to Horeb, no dyslexic pun intended. It's not that he thinks Jezebel will feel hurt cut off from her Baal's support staff. He just knows women. He may know how to squeeze 450 of Baal's finest, but Jezebel? She's got leverage. When she learns what that Tishbite did to her retinue of Baal-bleaters she quite predictably swore bloody vengeance. Elijah runs 40 days and 40 nights, as they tended to measure trouble in those times, and he ends up cowering in a cave. He cowers so darkly he confesses to be having serious, even suicidal, doubts about being a zealot in God's name.

God, only pretending to be dumb we hope, asks, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" Censor looking down, we'll paraphrase his answer: You can't figure that out yourself? Jezebel wants me dead. God orders him out of the cave. God then does the Raiders of the Lost Ark / Close Encounters of the Third Kind thing for his spiritual uplift. God flies by: "a great and strong wind rent the mountain." Rocks break off and fall in the process. God sends an earthquake. God sends fire. Only when God speaks in a still small voice does Elijah feel free to move again. He wraps up his face, as desert folks do, and leaves. Destination: Damascus.

Elijah takes up with some tribes, like himself, who were not exactly Baal fans and starts to build a fighting force of thousands. Along the way he meets up with a plowman named Elisha who over the course of time grows up into being some sort of wizard's apprentice. The story

loses focus for a while with tribes battling tribes. As usual they overdo this in that part of the world, though you can't help being impressed when one day can see as many as 100,000 footmen falling.

Eventually the story winds its way back to Elijah finally standing before Ahab again. Ahab asks, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Elijah, redundantly by this point, declares, "Behold I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall (blah, blah - skip) for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger and made Israel to sin." And, oh, mustn't forget this: Dogs shall eat Jezebel's body. By prostituting himself to Jezebel and her wicked ways, by bowing down before foreign idols, none before him had angered the Lord God Almighty Jealous One nearly so much as Ahab.

God always was a bit of a drama-queen in these situations. He was repeating superlatives slung at earlier kings and, anyways, who can forget his snits involving the Deluge, Sodom & Gomorrah, Moses and the Golden Calf incident, testing Abraham, and on and on. Ahab in the teeth of the dilemma realizes the smart thing to do here is play submissive. He tears off his clothes, dons sack cloth, fasts, and spoke softly thereafter. It works, sort of.

And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite. Seest thou how Ahab humbleth before me? Because he humbleth before me, I will not bring evil in his days; but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

Does that sound a bit - what? - unresolved perhaps is the word I'm resisting -- What do I know? - not my kid, why care? Nor, though, am I anthropologist enough to feel relativism is an entirely appropriate response. I'm sure Ahab's son would be scrunching up his face feeling mightily annoyed at how unfair that sounds to him had he been on-stage. But he wasn't. Still, everybody but the author and Elijah must suspect Ahab's son eventually heard about this injustice through the grape-vine.

Thanks to Ahab's humbleshooting, peace broke out in the Middle East. That lasted three whole years. Ahab itches to go

to war, however, and Almighty One and Only encourages this mistake by sending a lying spirit among the prophets of the court to behave as yes-men. Ahab dies in battle. His son Ahaziah eventually takes over as king, delayed by an interim successor to the throne whose relevance to the Elijah story can be guessed by the fact we have deliberately forgotten his name.

Highly out of nowhere, the new King Ahaziah falls through a lattice on an upper story of the royal residence. The injury leads to a lingering illness and the king makes the unfortunate choice of thinking what his doggone momma would do instead of poppa in this situation. He calls for Baal-zebul. Zebul translates as Fly; ergo Fly-Baal. I'm not kidding, though the Biblical author might have been - some think he was punning off Baal-zebul which meant Baal the Prince. Either way, the name points to this as the local manifestation of Baal at the oracle in Ekron some miles away. Ahaziah sent messengers to him to get a prognosis on his condition.

On the advice of an angel of God - one must always delegate such things - Elijah suddenly pops up and stops the messengers. He asks them if their pitched trajectory means Ahab's son does not think God exists. God was keeping track on him for just this sort of strike to fulfill his promise to Ahab. Time's up for Jezebel's ringer. The king should just go ahead and die. The messengers return to the king telling him of their encounter with an anonymous hairy man girt in a girdle of leather who foretells his death. The camera zooms in on the king's face as a flash of recognition looms into his expression. I'll be damned - I mean been - "It is Elijah the Tishbite!"

The king orders a troop of fifty to find Elijah who has put out his shingle on a hill in the distance. The troop captain orders, "Come down." Elijah warns him he is a Man of God and will rain down fire if sufficiently annoyed. The captain advances. So stupid. Fire consumes the troop. A second troop of 50 is sent and fire burns them down as well. The captain of a third troop had been paying attention back when Ahab was in charge and knows the right thing to do. He kneels before Elijah and asks him pretty please to make a

housecall on the king. That's more like it. Elijah is escorted before the king and he confirmed that, yes, God is angry he chose Baal as his primary medical care provider. His claim for care is still rejected. Just die, son of Jezebel. And he does. You're out, Baal-boy. His reign was a mere two years and he left no heirs to boot. Bad luck for that bloodline, but Elijah gets credit for good predicting as Bible prophets usually do in stories like this.

Having completed his mission on Earth, or at least his plotline for the tale, people begin to sense the story is about to wrap up. Prophets at Beth-el ask Elisha, the wizard's apprentice, if he doesn't think the ending is coming and we should head for the parking lot. Elisha quickly shushes them. Maybe so, but sometimes it's worth staying around. Bible stories aren't always as downbeat and schmaltzy as Moses. Then everybody sees Elijah parting the waters of the river Jordan and only Elisha decides to stick around for the dénouement. They're thinking we have definitely seen this before. Elisha though gets rewarded for staying: a nice big Spielberg ending.

Behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha saw it and cried, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof."

Nice touch and so appropriate, Elijah was big with the fire spectacles. Afterwards, Elisha rips his clothes into 2 pieces, thinks sotto voce, "By the power of Moses – I Have the Power!" then parts the River Jordan exactly like his mentor. His prophet brothers are nudging each other - Look who's leading man in the next installment in the Moses franchise. Bet he gets a big bald head, right?

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Excusing the surfeit of self-indulgent flourishes and liberties, I hope this serves as a full and accessible adaptation of the Old Testament story of Elijah. I endeavored to capture primarily the structure of the relationships, special effect sequences, and motivations be they obvious or inscrutable. I've freely cherry-picked material from several Bibles and Bible commentaries that includes an em-

barrassingly/proudly dusty King James paperback. The intent was to spare readers the effort of slogging through less-than-lucid Biblical prose to get the essential shape, size, and character of the story. I should not have to spell out for skeptics why, even in the original, Elijah's story reads as a work of almost pure fiction. The characters doubtless are loosely based on real people, but it is more myth than legend and even less is there true history here. I don't feel there is the least point in taking it seriously as something that really happened, as ufologists are wont to jargon, in 'event-level reality.' And never mind you should spend time injecting ancient astronaut euhemerism here. Erich von Daniken took as his motto and method, "Myths are Eyewitness Accounts." Get a dictionary if you buy that. Beyond the rather shabby behavior of these theoretically 'advanced' beings, I reject aliens who would really use ravens to feed Elijah, part rivers, shake mountains, and play matchmaker.

The story of Elijah has been frequently mentioned in the ancient astronaut genre of ufology and even the most illiterate of ufo buffs will know this if only through brief exposure to the old 1972 Chariots of Gods documentary and various History Channel knock-offs of it. Most writers that speak of it are satisfied to give a quick wave to the whirlwind verse, even quote it. Several though spent enough time trying to read the story in the original Bible-ese and point to one or another of the other miracles in the story to try to add flesh to the extraterrestrial bones of dancing contentions. The healing and resurrection of the widow's son is a favored way to show the presence of advanced knowledge and is liked by those who prefer their aliens to be good and space-brotherly. The control of weather impresses the more paranoid fraction of ufology. The fire raining down from heaven reminded one 70s ufo buff of the napalm bombs that had lately rained down on Vietnam. Betty Andreasson singled out for comment how impressed she was that Elijah could "call for firepower from the sky upon occasion." Another buff felt it was scientific to suggest God's fly-by of the cave fit familiar ufo patterns. Barry Downing deployed Star Trek anti-gravity beams for parting waters in Exodus and realized he should mention Elijah and Elisha if he did that. Zecharia Sitchin in Di-

vine Encounters (1995) offers what must be the fullest re-telling of the tale, buying it all from the widow's never-ending, never-spoiling food supply to Elisha's inheriting super-powers. I'm not saying Sitchin explains it. In point of fact he is quite silent about how he euhemerizes the story, neither deploying technobabble to normalize the miracles nor providing higher reasoning rationale for the (seemingly?) immature and petty narcissism on display by the theoretically almighty alien.

Unsurprisingly, nobody notices, forget explains, that scene where the Almighty forgives the father, but promises evil will befall his son. See no evil, space-bro's. Nor does the success of the prophet's prediction concerning Ahaziah seem to bother ufologists who surely know by now that predictions involving the ufo phenomenon and its alleged messengers robustly fail, and universal-lawlessly so when it predicts something as important as a king's early death.

I feel I should also mention a freaky bit of trivia somehow missed by modern extraterrestrial euhemerists. When Greeks translated the story they were mildly puzzled about the expression Tishbite and assumed it referred to some place with a name like Tishbe that was somewhere in Gilead. Modern scholarship is pretty sure there was no place with the name Tishbe anywhere so far as they've been able determine. You're welcome, mystagogues; albeit the absence of a 'z' can be pointed to as not perfectly ideal.

Given the wide acceptance of Elijah's fiery whirlwind among ufo buffs and ancient astronaut writers, Aubeck and Vallee could hardly relegate it to their chapter on spurious tales in their book of inexplicable wonders. They put the story on their official chronology just after Akhenaten – entry #3. This would not merit attention or even interest, but for a topically familiar error. They title the entry Abduction of Elijah. Yet Elijah knew God was picking him up. Aubeck and Vallee even quote the relevant lines showing expectation: "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee." The presence of consent is confirmed when the pair cross the River Jordan's parted waters. One doesn't even need to decide if the parting was due to an anti-grav beam or merely wizardly psychokinesis. He approached

his launch site with full knowledge that he was leaving for heaven.

That said, Aubeck and Vallee did tell the story right otherwise and even provided some insightful comments. They add that Elijah was the only Old Testament prophet taken up to heaven while still alive. Jews await his return and set a goblet of wine out at Passover in reminder of this belief. It's a good thing to remember if a certain prophecy in the Book of Malachi is true: "Observe I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day when the proud and wicked shall burn as an oven, so I do not come and smite the earth with a curse." (condensing and paraphrasing chapter 4) They also point out Mormons believe Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith in 1836. It's probably okay if you suspect the Mormons made a mistake somewhere.

That title categorizing the case as abduction instead of contact, though.... It worried me that the same sort of mistake was happening as happened with Etana being somehow a classical abductee. It puzzled me mightily for a time – could it be a habit? – but it dawned on me that they didn't care about the presence or absence of consent, but the presence of a standard wonder of abduction mythology: miraculous ascension.

Ascension UFO-style



by Martin Kottmeyer

The image, I trust, is familiar to all consumers and followers of ufo culture. A human, tacitly an abductee, is seen in the air between a flying saucer and the ground and implicitly ascending within a beam of light that shines down from the alien craft. I am unsure if the image deserves to be called iconic, but it seems to appear frequently enough to ponder whether the designation is appropriate. Certainly no ufo buff could or would want to deny the image has become part of our general understanding of how aliens bring humans into their preferred place of business. We could cite chapter and verse from the writings of Budd Hopkins and fellow abduction advocates if we needed to be pedantic here, but, for the moment, the more interesting point is that artists and illustrators for the ufo milieu treat the image as part of our cultural vocabulary. Within days of starting to write about Elijah's 'abduction' I was flipping through a book catalog and found the image abstracted into a stick figure cartoon that was part of the advertisement for a 2012 calendar. I thought back to earlier in the year when I found myself admiring a version of the ufo ascension ray image in a set of pornographic comics collected by a fellow ufo researcher. I resist saying the image is ubiquitous since one should reserve that word for images of Grays or jokes about anal probes. Yet it does seem to have some quality of increasing visibility in the fog of contemporary culture.

For the purposes of this essay I am terming this image 'miraculous ascension.' In

part that is because I have not found any pre-existing term of general usage for it and this coinage captures the essential wonder that all involved are trying to evoke. This is something clearly outside of everyday working reality and violates our commonsense understanding of how organic bodies interact with gravity and light. Human beings do not float above the ground without wires, helicopters, jetpacks, or giant pterodactyls providing resistance against the force of gravity. If the person was in a car or plane one might plausibly theorize the saucer was using magnetic force to raise the metallic objects they were traveling in. But even that is actually outside conventionally experienced reality and essentially a wild extrapolation. Ascension of human bodies is quite properly termed miraculous since there is no way to justify it by physical law as taught in school or by common experiences.

It is – let's be clear – a very separate matter whether one can justify it by extrapolating possibilities available to technologies which will come online in our distant future, or, on distant worlds in the present, evolved to owning futuristic technology. Hopkins and Rainey proposed one might justify reports of miraculous ascension in abduction via diamagnetism. Organic molecules can sometimes be made to form magnetic fields when placed inside a strong enough magnetic field and provide lift with attracting fields. This has actually been done with frogs. A photo exists showing one levitated within a magnetic field. Skeptics are

obliged to wonder if this can be scaled up the necessary orders of magnitude safely. Would anyone dare to attempt to lift a human being via diamagnetism? Wouldn't there be dangerous stresses to internal organs from different organs having different forces of attraction? Could the brain and heart safely function with magnetic fields pulling neurotransmitters through synapses at odd angles and speeds? Wouldn't such fields accelerate naturally-occurring atmospheric ions into dangerously destructive radiation in even short exposure times? And what would unnaturally strong magnetic fields do to the metallic objects within or attached to humans – surgical pins, plates, meshes, teeth fillings and braces, ear-rings, piercings, hairpins, bracelets, necklaces, clothing buttons and zippers, coins? They would be pulled with forces that should tear the skin and tissues and create pressure bruising. And anything that managed to remain with the victim would certainly acquire an easily detectable remnant magnetism, thus spoiling the ideal of aliens conducting their secret operations with only the most ambiguous evidence of their existence.

One might create a field of lifting gravity by the use of compact matter like that found in dwarf stars or neutron stars, but this would inevitably pull up more than the human. Up goes anything not nailed down in the vicinity: cats, dogs, soda cans, tree limbs, bugs, loose dirt, water. What would be needed is a narrow directed stream of gravitons that can be manipulated and shut off at will. Even this would require ultradense matter moving at relativistic velocities and I doubt anyone (even Forward 1988) believes that is theoretically plausible or practical or safe or economical to even a Dyson-level civilization. Arthur Clarke (1972) admittedly had some optimism that anti-gravity might not be absolutely impossible, but he realized it would require a breakthrough utilizing concepts that don't have any current empirical basis like negative matter.

With it fully understood that I suspect no amount of advanced technology will pull off this particular magic trick, I want to explore the history of the image. This will not be a comprehensive assault on the problem. It would likely take years to follow all leads and close ambiguities and

gaps apparent to my eye. I invite readers to fill in the gaps with their own discoveries if dissatisfied by the sketchy nature of this account.

Let's start with the hopefully banal observation that miraculous ascension was not part of the ufo culture at its beginning in 1947, but started appearing some years later and then merely occasionally at first. The contactees, starting in the Fifties, mostly used pedestrian means to enter the saucers of the Space Brothers. They either simply stepped through a door (Orfeo Angelucci, Dan Fry); made a small step (George Adamski); moved onto a single moveable step with handrail (Truman Bethurum); walked up a ramp into an iris door (Howard Menger); walked up a ramp and stepped down into craft (Calvin Girvin); climbed up a ramp (Chief Frank Buckshot Standing Horse); walked up a stairway (Richard Miller); crept up a ladder (T. Lobsang Rampa) and, in one instance, drove a car up a ramp and parked inside the craft (Reinhold Schmidt).

Eddie Bullard's triplet of 'first abductions' – three cases that could not reasonably have influenced each other – each involved entrances that were prosaic to the level of vulgarness. Antonio Villas Boas was wrestled to the ground and dragged, kicking and struggling up a swaying narrow ladder. In the Salzburg abduction, the victim is paralyzed by a hand-held device and a plate is strapped to his chest which allows the abductor to pull him along with reduced gravity when the device is pointed his way. In the Hill abduction, Barney and Betty are sleepwalked from the car to a clearing where they take two steps up to a ramp and enter the saucer via a door on the side. Betty is curiously able to exhibit a degree of uncooperativeness. The absence of consistency speaks loudly and provides evidence that in the absence of models, the creative mind kicked in to fill the void of narrative need. Necessity was the mother of invention. The scale provided by hindsight and a history of experiencers exploring alternatives for better effects, judges the triplet as now obviously primitive. AVB's abduction looks uncivilized and clumsy. Salzburg's plate on the chest looks clumsy and cartoonish, literally like the inertron jump belts of Buck Rogers. Betty's comments on Barney's sleep-walking have the vulgar aura of na-

tives in early B-list zombie flicks and serials like *The Lost City* where voodoo and mad scientists routinely sapped the wills of non-whites to keep slaves and poor folks docile for their masters.

Analogously down-market measures were common in many subsequent early abductions. After facing a gun, Herb Schirmer consents to climb a ladder leading into a central opening in the bottom of a saucer that retracts with a zoop sound effect. In the daSilva abduction, the victim's legs are painfully paralyzed when a ray gun is fired at them and the abductors drag him while carrying him under the armpits. Charles Moody scuffles with some grays and hurts his back which the aliens partially heal by a rod-like device.

Even as late as the Gulf Breese abductions (1988), Ed Walters reported a brutal incident where he was encircled by a crowd of 10-20 shielded Grays with shock sticks who flit around him like jumping spiders. They physically struggle with him while he resists like an enraged bull. He throws sand at them and gets one in a stranglehold. He remarked it smelled of mildew. To distract him, they put an image in his mind of them taking his sister. He is rendered paralyzed and unconscious as the lead alien remarks "You are always like this."

As far as my research has been able to determine, the first appearance of miraculous ascension in ufo culture belongs to one of the lesser contactees named Dan Martin. He reportedly spoke at several ufo conventions in the Sixties and authored a short 17 pp. booklet printed by Saucerian Press titled *Seven Hours Aboard a Space Ship*. Undated, it has been reported in a separate source that it was written probably in 1957. It went through several printings.

As he tells it, one day there was a knock on his door and two ordinary-seeming people tell him they want to take him on a journey in a spaceship that will be interesting and helpful to him. He would be returned in 7 hours. If he was ready, they'd do it right then and there. He locks up his house, walks between the pair, and they grasp his arms above the elbow.

As soon as they took hold of my two arms, we went up; no time was lost. The sensa-

tion was just like going up in a fast elevator. It might scare you a little, or make you feel as if you were being turned wrong side out. This was the sensation I had. I looked down and could see the waters of the Rio Grande River flowing between the two cities. I knew that we were travelling fast, as the lights were rapidly becoming dimmer. I did not have any particular sensation of traveling at this time, only at the start. It was a matter of minutes until we were out of sight of the lights of the city and the river. I began to feel very cold and knew we were quite high.

As the cold became unbearable he sensed he was stopping. He looked up and saw an umbrella-like canopy about 35 or 50 feet in diameter, a scout craft. They were entering a clear tube in the center about 4 or 5 feet in diameter. A spiral shutter opens as they approach and closes after they enter it. An instant later a spiral shutter opens at the top of the tube and they pass into a room of the craft. It has a television screen, a panel, and a myriad of instruments, clocks, meters, gauges, knobs, levers. On the panel screen appeared stars with lines connecting some in geometric patterns. They stand around ten minutes as the craft's operators busy themselves with operating the instruments.

Eventually the scout ship ferries Dan to a Mothership 900 miles up. The ship's name is the Michiel. It is piloted by Mercurians and has been on duty around Earth for the past 6000 years. He is also told, "This ship has been instrumental in performing many of the so-called miracles of biblical and other ancient record, such as the taking away of one of our ancient Biblical characters, Enoch, by name." It helped produce Noah's Deluge, parted the Red Sea for Moses, created the Star of Bethlehem vision, and was used to build the Pyramid at Giza. When Winfield S. Brownell reprinted parts of Dan Martin's booklet for a collection of contactee writings in 1980, he commented that the method used in lifting Dan Martin to the ship could save millions of people in a worldwide emergency.

Given the Judeo-Christian apologetics of the tale, there is not much point in looking outside religion for the primary inspiration of this instance of ascension. While contactees clearly get priority for

introducing miraculous ascension to ufo culture; there are so many details discordant with later abduction imagery it seems certain Dan Martin's tale played no substantial role in shaping subsequent instances of ascension. Dan Martin's ascension lasted minutes and spanned miles and the tube with spiral shutters never repeats elsewhere in ufo history. The ship lacks Grays and it has excessive instrumentation which sounds overly 50s in character and needs tedious tending by the crew. The panel display having stars with interconnecting lines maybe parallels the Hill case in a curious way, but this should probably be dismissed as parallel invention serving parallel purposes.

A second contactee, Carl Anderson, in automatic writing dated February 25, 1957, was contemporaneously being told that thousands would be rescued from an upcoming cataclysmic event. "They will be levitated or lifted up, and taken aboard the craft you have chosen to call FLYING SAUCERS." But only if they are people with positive vibrations.

My research suggests the first abduction experience to involve miraculous ascension belongs to the Canadian case of David Seewaldt dated November 19, 1967. Seewaldt was a young boy at the time and the story he told is strikingly brief by current standards.

They put a beam on me... I was sort of in a trance. It pulled me up into the ship.

Inside the ship he is put on a table, wheeled through a computer room, undressed and studied by aliens. Though investigated promptly, Seewaldt's experience was not reported in the ufo literature until 1974 because the experience seemed to be merely a nightmare and of no innate credibility. Investigators only decided to write it up after reading of the 1973 Pascagoula abduction and finding a curious similarity between the two accounts. Seewaldt's description of the miraculous ascension is entirely quoted above and is so short and lacking in detail one could easily miss it if you skimmed the paper. The investigators make no comment about the detail either. They were mainly interested in the look of the abductors.

The 1973 Pascagoula abduction, though

lacking our defining image, needs to be partly described here. There is no miraculous ascension episode per se, but the alien dream kinetics look relevant. As Charles Hickson tells it, the entities that captured him floated above the ground and when they touched him, he felt lighter himself. Hickson's sensations on transport were confessed as paradoxical. He sensed he was moving forward, but he had no sensation of his feet walking or dragging on the ground, nor of the entities lifting him – "it's just a feeling I can't explain." Calvin Parker explicitly used the word floating to describe his feeling during his transport to the craft. They enter the craft through an opening on the side. While being examined by a crystal or mechanical eye, Charlie feels he is floating, suspended in the air without a table. The case was very high profile and cases of people being floating to and/or from crafts slightly above the ground would recur in several subsequent cases, notably the Pat Roach, Sandra Larson, Sara Shaw, and Betty Andreasson cases.

The next case possibly exhibiting miraculous ascension is the Dionisio Llanca case of October 28, 1973. Set in Argentina, Llanca was working on a tire when he was grabbed from his kneeling position and forced upright. Consciously, he remembers 2 men and a woman in yellow boots. One takes a sample of blood from his finger and he remembers fainting and nothing more. When regressed and under Pentathol additional details emerged that included reportedly:

Then he related how he was taken by the men of the party to an object above the trees beside Highway 3. He was transported to it "by means of a light."

It needs to be granted there is a degree of ambiguity here. This could be interpreted as actually teleportation involving dematerialization rather than vertical motion through the air. The Llanca case, we must point out, is regarded as a hoax by ufologists of Jerry Clark's generation these days. But this was not the situation in the 70s and accounts of Llanca appeared in places like Saga's Ufo Magazine.

The 'ultimate' abduction of Bill McGuire and Nora Johnson straddles the borderline of relevance. In regressions stretch-

ing from 1974 to '75, Nora reports that as a ufo approached their car she felt herself go numb then felt disoriented. In some incredible way she senses herself moving and simultaneously seeing a shadow of herself going up into the air. The investigator notes this seems like either an out-of-body-experience or astral travel, not physical transport. She finds herself drifting toward the ufo, see grasshopper aliens through the windows and slips into complete hysteria. Suddenly she recalls being inside the ufo, lying in a chair. Bill seems to experience a less ambiguous version of miraculous ascension. As the ufo approaches, he has "a tingly feeling, like something's not right." He experiences something pulling at him, trying to lift him. He has seat belts on. He has a sensation of panicking, then he feels himself floating. He looks down and can see the top of the car. When asked what is holding him, he indicates he doesn't know. He next senses being set down somewhere and next sitting inside the dome of the ufo. Though the presence of ascension is less ambiguous than Nora, the issue of the seat belt is never addressed. Did he unconsciously unfasten it and a physical ascension take place or did it remain fastened and, like Nora, it was a psychic or spirit-body-only ascension?

The January 4, 1975 Carlos Diaz abduction in Argentina seems more firmly within our defined boundaries. After leaving the Holy Protective Society where he waited on tables for a living, he went home by bus. Walking from the bus stop he crosses a railroad yard and sees a broken flash of light that blinds him. No clap of thunder follows however. Next he hears a humming sound comparable to rushing air. He feels himself pulled off the ground. Around 8 feet off the ground he blacks out. He awakes inside the craft and sees creatures with featureless round heads that even lack eyes. Their arms have grasping suckers. They pull at his hair, both on his head and chest. He faints again and awakes lying in the grass. This was featured in the Lorenzens' *Encounters with UFO Occupants* (1976) in a chapter collecting cases of floating entities and flying little men. Several are set in South America and provide a sort of corroborative background to the Diaz case, showing instances of levitational flight was not idiosyncratic to him alone. Diaz would offer photographs of ufos

in support of his claims, but they are regarded as fraudulent.

In a regression dated October 8, 1975, Brian Scott seems to report an ascension type event while approached by a disk with a strange light. He feels held in some sense.

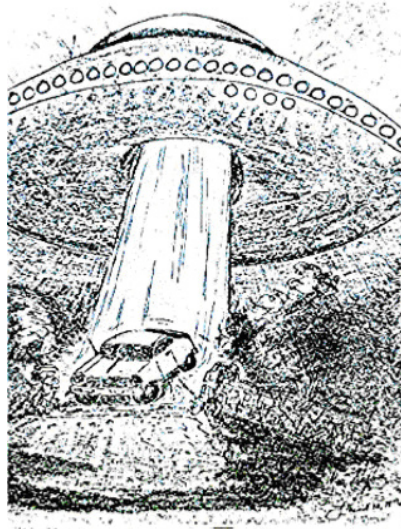
Can move but can't get away! Up--- up. Mountains behind us--- a room--- door opens.

In a *Saga Ufo* magazine article the scene is rendered in this fashion:

An enormous UFO appeared and glided silently toward him...There was tranquilizing beauty in the purple light sparking from beneath the object. In seconds the UFO was directly overhead, and apparently generated what Scott described as a "pulling sensation." The next thing he knew, he was inside the craft.

This is certainly suggestive of miraculous ascension, but the detailing is slight and less than ideal. We'd like to actually hear he is in the air and moving toward the UFO.(Gutilla & Frazier 1977) Alvin Lawson's investigation turned up evidence the case was a hoax.

The Liberty, Kentucky triple abduction is set in January 1976. Initially the experience involves three women seeing a ufo with a beam of light and then losing control of the car. As she tries to speed forward, it is dragged backwards over a cattle grate and into a farm. Missing time is experienced. Under hypnosis some

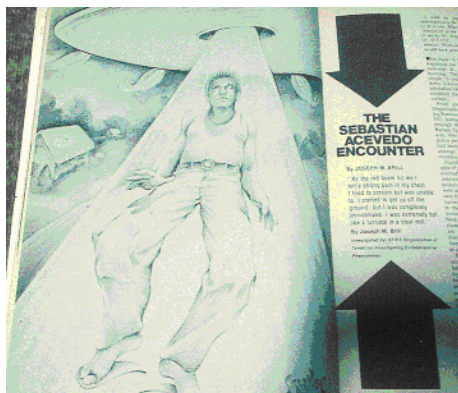


months later she remembers the car be-

ing sucked up into the ufo.

In a March 22, 1976 incident, Sara Shaw adds a variant that while she was initially floated towards the ufo like she moving on a conveyor belt, at a certain point she sees she is standing on a tilted beam of light then kind of walking up it while simultaneously it conveys her upward like an escalator. While this has an obvious similarity to the light bridge that Flash Gordon walks on at one point in the movie serial from 1936, the upward tilt is quite novel.

In the July 1976 issue of *Official UFO* we learn of the attempted abduction of Sebastian Acevedo in Tandil, Argentina on April 14, 1974. Acevedo is walking to work in the early morning hours when he sees a star coming down and a powerful illumination suddenly surrounds him. He turns around to see machine 2 meters in diameter and shooting flames from its edges positioning itself overhead. It emits a sound like a thousand welding machines. A trap door in the center opens up like the saloon doors in a western. A concentrated red light beam shines out and paralyzes him. It lifts him off the ground twice to an altitude of 30 to 40 centimeters as if trying to suck him in but failing in the attempt. The light beam ends sharply before reaching the ground, an effect certain ufologists dub 'solid light.' The heat given off by the machine feels like the ovens of a steel mill. The incident ends quickly having lasted mere seconds, certainly under a minute. A watchman at the nearby cheese factory rushes towards him, having been alarmed by the light and sound and fearing a transformer might have caught fire. The machine rose, made a turn like an aircraft, and followed power line cables some distance seeming to make contact and causing a flash at one point. Police were called and took him to a hospital where they diagnosed him as having a nervous crisis. Investigators subsequently learn that a high-voltage cable had fallen to the pavement where the ufo made contact and a fire had broken out in a transformer step-down substation. Officials blamed the down cable it on high winds. The *Official UFO* issue article is accompanied by an illustration which is the earliest magazine drawing of a miraculous ascension into an ufo I have found. It would not surprise me if earlier



July 1976 illustration

examples exist and I ask any reader who can provide any to let me know.

Watching Escape from Witch Mountain in 1975, Judy Kendall comes to the scene where a camper magically flies skyward and she suddenly has spontaneous recall of her own car having been floated skyward. In a regression in January 1977 she recalls driving along when the steering goes unresponsive she feels like she and the car are floating with the road suddenly gone and there is blackness around and beneath her. "I don't know where the road went." It is tacit there was no light beam associated with the lifting.

The May 1977 issue of Official Ufo features another early illustration of ascension, albeit the case it is based on does not actually warrant it. A person named Womack sees a thick beam of light slowly drop down from a ufo to a meadow. It seemed denser than light. He starts to run but then is hit by a red light. Next thing remembered is being inside a ufo. Womack does not specifically say anything about experiencing being in the air. The text is ambiguous since it is consistent with instant teleportation.



In 1978, a Disney flick appears called Cat from Outer Space which, though it fails to match up with our image, is kinetically interesting since there is a lot of levitation without light effects. The film includes a

scene of the alien cat levitating a motorcycle being driven by the scientist. It is provocatively reminiscent of E.T., but obviously beforehand. It is, admittedly, far less dramatic in several respects, notably the absence of John Williams scoring and less cinematic emphasis; i.e. no jump-cutting zoom-in, no silhouette against a full moon.

In March 1978, William Herrmann sees an ufo over the Ashley River. The light flips off and there is a blur of motion and suddenly it is 10-15 feet in front of him. A tubular blue-silver or aquamarine haze of light extends outwards and downwards from the bottom. His mind blurs as a humming sound envelopes him. He awakes on a table with 3 grays standing nearby. His memory improves at a later date to flesh out the moment of abduction as him being "pulled upwards in a tugging motion" and he remembers his hands reflexively going up to protect himself. He would lose consciousness soon after it started. In time he learns the process is called transference beaming by the aliens. There are a lot of problems with this case starting with physical evidence that looks almost silly – a poorly-molded lead ingot with crosses and the letters MAN scratched into it that the aliens call a gift, but admit is essentially worthless from a terrestrial perspective.

In regressions starting in April 1979, Philip Osborne finds himself rushing toward a ufo resembling a geodesic dome.

I was hurtling through space and... I just had the feeling I wanted to put the brakes on.

Hopkins would add that Osborne sensed he merged with the object through an open triangular panel and it actually took several sessions before Osborne could get over the disturbing sensation of headlong flight. Hopkins reported that the hypnotist preferred to regard the image as a metaphorical expression of feeling out of control. The scary rush to the saucer with things zooming by the abductee recalls a scene in the film God Told Me To (1975) of a woman abducted up and backwards towards a flying saucer in a surprising rush. The film's ascension is also nonclassic in the angle being non-vertical, there is no associated light beam, and the craft is not a saucer; re-

sembling Space 1999's Eagles, only larger. The kinetics of the case is ontologically the centermost problem and demands unbelief. By what sort of force is Osborne propelled to the craft and braked without slamming into the saucer wall with no talk of safety netting?

In a regression dated May 30, 1979. Lori Briggs initially sees creatures floating. *"It's their light... their light has lots of power."* She describes them elevate things with light. "It points its hands at things, lifting." The thought that this echoes the power of Uncle Martin in the 60s sitcom My Favorite Martian comes easily to one of my generation. All kids my age pretended to be able lift things by remote control in mimicry of him. More closely contemporaneous, in "The People" (1971) a teacher experiences telekinetic ascension several feet above the ground accompanied by an alien's hand glowing with light.

Lori experiences the alien lifting with this light. Her journey to an ufo happens too quickly to see the exterior of the ufo and she recalls being surrounded by light during the transport. This may count as pedantic, but let's also state the obvious: Actual light only exerts pressure in the direction it moves and light powerful enough to move humans via kinetic energy would also likely burn the skin severely.

On August 21, 1980, Megan Elliott is returning home from a short visit to her mother. Megan's daughter had been screaming due to a painful medical condition. Near Lake Fork Creek her radio acts up, automatically switching across stations, and the headlights start to die. A painfully loud electrical noise envelops the car and it is lifted up into a giant flying saucer bearing two rows of bright lights. This is a tractor beam situation and obviously parallels the 1976 Liberty, Kentucky and Judy Kendall cases.

Some major films in the early 80's could be said to have pulled levitation to the top shelf of the cultural tool-box. E.T. (1982) provided a magical moment where a boy is riding a bicycle and is lifted skyward to pass in front of the moon implicitly by E.T.'s magical power of will. No ufo ray involvement was implied. Cocon (1985) has aliens of a roughly gray form that levitate when in their light bod-

ies and a large boat filled with oldsters is vertically ascended into a giant saucer at the finale with a soft helical column of light. In the 1988 sequel **Cocoon 2: The Return**, we see a curious variation at the finale where the oldsters are transformed into balls of light and ascend up a beam of light in that state, presumably a method made possible by their prior association with the Antarean beings of light. The TV series **Greatest American Hero** (1981-3) does a twist on the **Superman** legend where alien super-powers like flight can be acquired through a suit, but the catch is that one needs an instruction book to understand it and this is immediately lost. The Mothership is seen to cast a vertical beam of light in the premiere episode and the title sequence of each episode thereafter.

On November 11, 1987 in Gulf Breeze, Florida Ed Walters purportedly sees and photographs a large craft rather like the mothership in **Greatest American Hero**. It pulls overhead and a blue beam of light lifts him four feet above the pavement, while simultaneously pictures of dogs are being flashed into his mind. The beam shuts off and he falls four feet to the pavement below. His wife drove up and could smell the cinnamon and ammonia odor left on her husband. They felt there was no doubt they had tried to abduct him. The photos appear in the local paper and the long saga of the Gulf Breeze controversy begins.

Two years later, on November 30, 1989, Dan & Richard are said to witness Linda Cortile / Napolitano in a full white night-

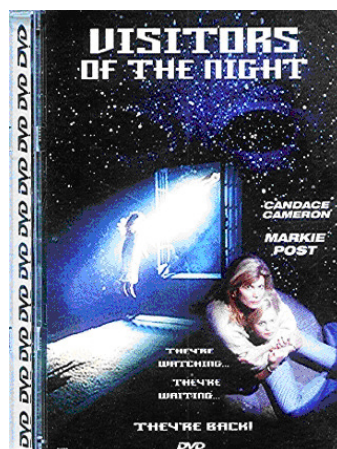


“floating in midair in a bright beam of whitish blue light, looking like an angel.” There are 3 grays escorting her. After entering through the bottom of the ufo it plunges into the river behind the Brooklyn Bridge. Her personal account describes the ascent as

feeling *“she levitated gently upward in the brilliant, bluish white beam that radiated from the bottom of the craft.”* In the regression she indicates awkwardness at the nightgown going over her head. Another major controversy ensues, the up-shot to skeptics being this was another probable hoax.

The Nineties is the decade of the **X-Files** (September 10, 1993 – May 19, 2002). In its 9 season run there were many episodes incorporating ufo mythology and conspiracy thought. In “Little Green Men” (September 16, 1994) we see Mulder’s sister was abducted in a levitating beam of light when they were children and this incident drives Mulder’s persistence in his ufo investigations. The abduction is done in Spielbergian fashion with a brilliant flood of light and a light seen through venetian blinds. Then we see Samantha laying in horizontal posture with long hair flowing down and the body moves forward through a window, not vertically, into a reddish-orange shaft of light shining inward from the side.

The pilot episode involves a boy who sees a light and is taken to ‘a testing place.’ We see him in the woods lighted from above surrounded a whirlwind of leaves, and a girl he carries with him is taken away between edits. It is consistent with flash teleportation. Poor Max Fenig in “Fallen Angel” (November 19, 1993) suffers seizures as we see him hanging several feet up in the air with a vertical blue white beam of light shining down on him. We don’t actually see him being lifted into a craft. He returns in “Tempus Fugit” and “Max” (March 16-23, 1997). “The Red and the Black” (March 18, 1998) features an ascension visualized in the closest to contemporary form with Cassandra Spender



(played by Veronica Cartwright) lifted up in a brilliant beam of light off a bridge.

The decade also saw **Visitors of the Night** (November 27, 1995) which was mostly a fictionalized adaptation of abductions in the Hopkins-Jacobs-Mack lineage. Promotional art for shows a girl in a blue-white light floating towards a window. A perhaps trivial landmark is achieved with A&E’s DVD box cover for a **Chariots of the Gods** knock-off in 1996 which uses miraculous ascension in its art while the contents has nothing inside to justify usage – a probable indication of marketing that uses the image as shorthand vocabulary to tell buyers this is a ufo product.



Another cultural landmark worth passing mention is when the Energizer Bunny experiences ascension into a flying saucer he helps jump-start in 2006, the repetition surely helped imprint miraculous ascension into virtual banality. Still



another cultural moment I feel worthy of comment is the marketing for the film Skyline (November 12, 2010) which features hundreds of humans experiencing ascension to a giant mothership as part of its campaign. It is a striking piece of art and seems the cinematic secular translation of the Rapture beloved by evangelists and brings us spiralling back to Dan Martin and Carl Anderson's efforts at religious syncretism. The film does not disappoint, we should add, featuring numerous extraordinary images, including an ascension of a man & woman giving each a final kiss before entering a mothership that seems to promise hell instead of heaven.

Within the culture of 'real' ufo abductions, after the Linda case, miraculous ascension approached being a kind of archetype, something that cases sporadically gravitated towards, but not necessarily arrived at with consistency. A fair percentage of abductees dispense with descriptions of transport from bed to exam table with the cinematic equivalents of jump-cuts or dissolves. Some give indications they are rendered unconscious to make transport simple. A few like Barbara Archer and Richard Boylan's subject 'Ron' report miraculous ascension that mimics Linda's report with no obvious disparities, though it might surprise you how few published examples have actually been given. Variants are easy to find. Will Parker, in David Jacobs' *Secret Life*, for example, describes vertical ascension with no material means of support into the bottom of a saucer. He mentions being able to see the ground, but can't see it or the interior of the saucer very well, because "...it's kind of dark." In John Mack's *Abduction* book, one subject, 'Arthur,' starts with a conscious memory of a brilliant light filling the sky and, under regression recalls being lifted through the roof of the car, but he adds the odd feature of something resembling a spiderweb doing the pulling and aliens warning him not to break it. And the saucer interior is like Fenway Park upside down.

The history of the image of miraculous ascension within the total ufo culture we can broadly complain is a messy affair with many ambiguities and a broad diversity of one-offs, i.e. things that partly match our defining image, but lack perfect consistency to the present preferred

form. In some degree it feels like the image evolved out of a population of competing ideas about how best to elicit the sense that aliens have a futuristic magical technology at their disposal after a period of confusion on how best to do it. At some level, an awareness must have set in among a certain fraction of claimants that the initial abductions had involved techniques that feel too mundane especially once fancier techniques showed up their literally pedestrian quality. Miraculous ascension is maybe winning the cultural battle, but it remains an uphill struggle.

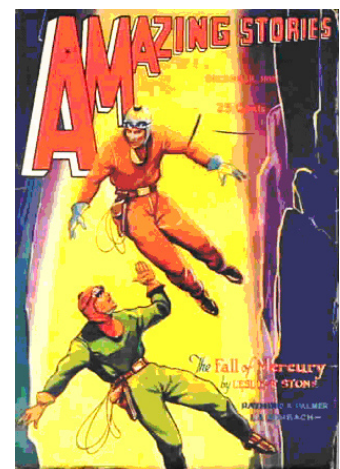
It can not be much of a surprise to any ufo buff with a psychosocial perspective that miraculous ascension was an idea employed by fictional aliens well before it appeared among the 'real' aliens of ufo culture. A perfect instance of this occurred in an episode of the cartoon series Ruff & Reddy on December 14, 1957.



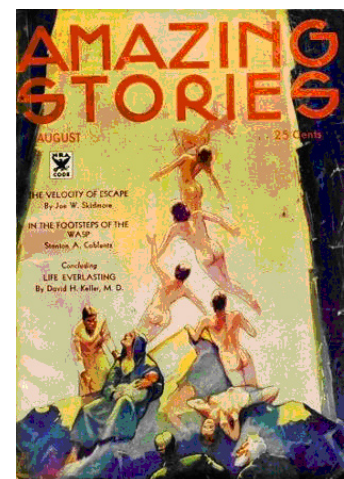
This image shows Reddy, the dog, being lifted up through the bottom of a flying saucer by a beam of solid light, i.e. one which poses a conical shape whose base moves visibly up and down instead of appearing instantly as normal light beams do. Ruff, the cat, is abducted shortly afterwards by the same method and together they are shanghaied to the metal world of Muni-Mula where they meet a big-headed alien who intends to invade earth with robot clones of the duo. It is, minimally, the earliest full expression of miraculous ascension imagery in tv or film media that I am aware of. Different aspects of this idea though appear earlier. In The Mysterians (1957) we see 2 women captured by 2 space-suited humans and we watch them ascending in pairs up to and through the bottom of a hovering flying saucer, which though very close to our image, is imperfect due to the ascension happening without the presence of a beam of light. The figures

are seen almost in silhouette and in darkness. This Island Earth (1953) contains a solid light lifting beam, but is employed on an airplane in mid-flight. Combined in Ruff & Reddy, this form of miraculous ascension feels distinctly new, at least to these mass media.

Science fiction, to be sure, had the basic idea decades earlier. It has been reported that Bertrand Meheust began his study of the science fiction parallels to ufo mythology when he stumbled upon a copy of the 1908 novel by Jean de la Hire The Lightning Wheel in his family's attic. He opened it and began reading how the central characters find themselves being lifted up by a ray into a flying disc that hums and glows with a halo of light. The similarity to stories he was reading about in ufo literature left him stunned. I've seen pulp covers from the 30's which also seem to fit the idea, though I confess I have not bothered to acquire copies to determine the exact context provided by the stories they illustrate.



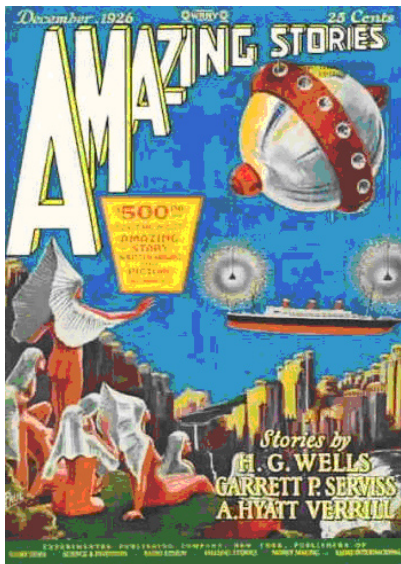
December 1936



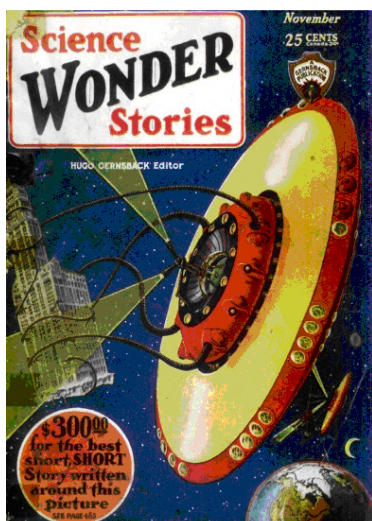
August 1934

All the various one-offs we have encountered in ufo tales – the tractor beams, alien telekinetic levitation, hand directed lifting rays, out-of-body astral travel, teleportation and dematerialization beams, etc. – have pulp precursors and parallels.

In March 1930 Edward E. Chappelow's "The Return of the Air Master" (*Air Wonder Stories*, March 1930) speaks of a "tractor ray" lifting machinery through a hole bored in the ceiling by a different ray. Images suggestive of lifting rays appeared on covers as early as December 1926. These two were drawn for picture contests to lure readers to submit stories and help fill the pages of Hugo Gernsback's new zines with fresh stories of technological wonder:



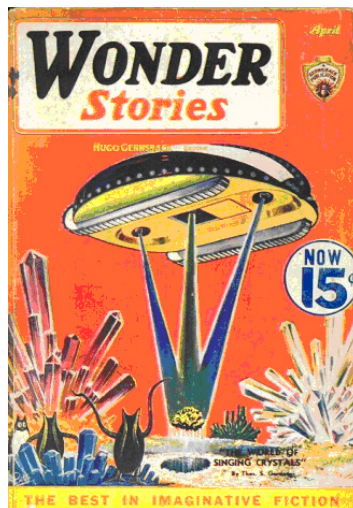
December 1926



This November 1929 cover for *Science Wonder* has drawn much comment over the years for being a classic saucer

with rays emitting from it. The structure yanked upward (obvious from the jagged bottom) was New York's Woolworth Building. The contest prompted tales like an expedition gathering monuments from an abandoned Earth.

This April 1936 cover illustrating "The World of Singing Crystals" is an interesting variant that hints at stability issues that might predictably exist with usage of only a single ray.



Entities that float above the ground, often via such forces as telekinetic levitation, can be found in illustrations for such stories as Nat Schachner and Arthur Leo Zagat's "In 20,000 A.D." (*Wonder Stories* September 1930). It is shows a large-brained figure floating over a populace in Earth's future.

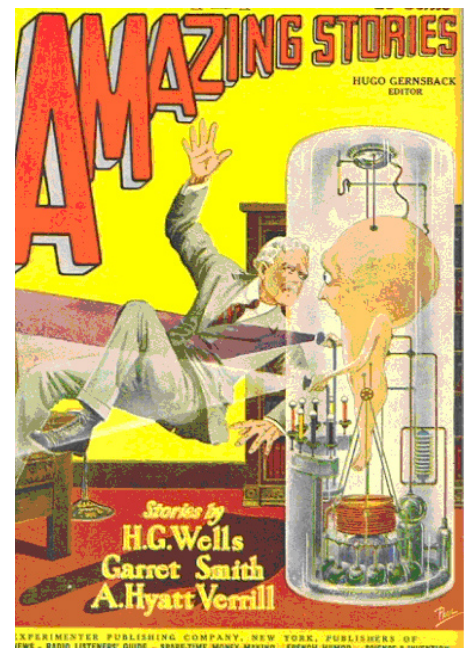


Clifford Simak's "The World of the Red Sun" (December 1931) similarly involves Earth's even more distant future when the sun has reached the red giant phase. We can even cite text that reads, "*Hang- ing in the air, suspended without visible means of support, was a gigantic brain, approximately two feet in diameter. A naked brain, with the convolutions exposed. It was a ghastly thing.*"



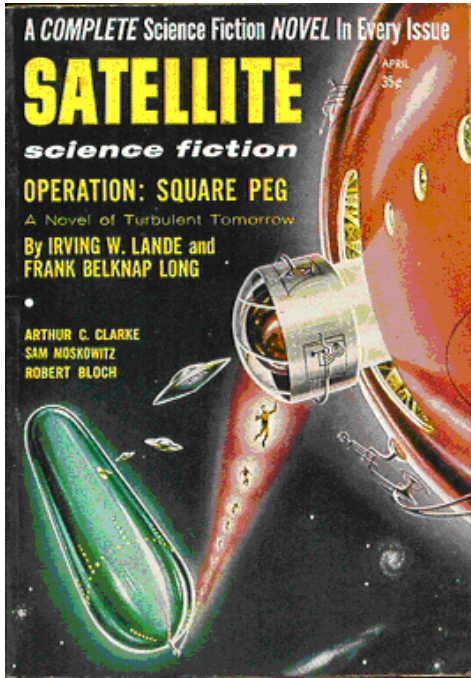
I have described in detail elsewhere tales like "The Invaders" (*Astounding*, June 1935) and "Consulate" (*Thrilling Wonder Stories* in 1948) where aliens display levitation of an unexplained sort. "Consulate" speaks of a green bulbous jelly alien on Mars in these curiously vague terms: "It didn't have any wings or jets or any other way of pushing itself along... It just happens to be flying."

Lori Briggs' directed lifting light has an obvious precursor in the cover to the November 1927 *Amazing Stories*. It illustrates Francis Flagg's "The Machine Man of Ardathia." The figure is time traveler from our far future who has de-evolved to the point it must live inside a cylinder and so must use rays to manipulate the external environment.

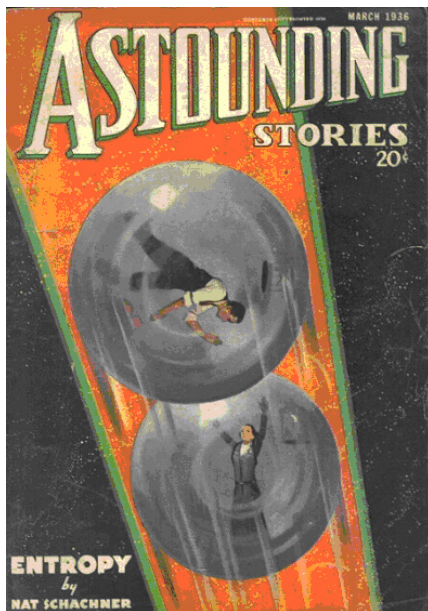


Out of the body astral travel was used by the narrator in Olaf Stapledon's *Star-Maker* (1937). While flipping through my pulp cover files I also discovered instances of what seem to be transport bubbles and was reminded that Betty Andreasson had spoken of falling backwards into one before moving in one alien environment

in Andreasson Affair, Phase 2. I seem to recall Glinda in The Wizard of Oz also moved around in such a bubble.



April 1957



April 1936

Teleportation and dematerialization we should brush off by reminding everyone of such high profile uses before appearing in abduction lore as Star Trek. One can cite Lost in Space for such things as solid-light matter transfer beams ("The Sky is Falling" November 17, 1965 / "Return from Outer Space" December 29, 1965) and beams that both pull a person backwards and then flash teleport him into a spaceship ("Invaders from the 5th Dimension" November 5, 1965).



Still, there are pulp precedents. The root category of 'matter transmission' was a staple of pulp era mad science and appears in dozens of stories. Usually it existed to get humans or aliens across interplanetary distances without all the business necessary to spaceships. Aliens send plans to build the transmitter and humans do it, often witlessly unaware of the downside risks, as in Edmond Hamilton's "Monsters of Mars" (Astounding Stories April 1931) when aliens use it to escape their dying world. As early as 1895, humans are going To Venus in 5 Seconds, accidentally relayed there when they reactivate Earth's pyramid matter transmitter network built by an ancient high civilization.

I am sure some ufo buffs will gladly point out all these pulpy precedents are, anyways, irrelevant if ancient astronaut authors are right about the gods of myth and legend being eyewitness accounts of extraterrestrials wielding magic-level technology. Miraculous ascension and levitation all appear in the Bible and other holy books stretching back to earliest times. Fiction could be feeding off of ancient fact.

These buffs could also point to Aubeck & Vallee for their strategic interest in regarding miraculous ascension as a feat that shows a robust constancy and association connecting both modern and ancient ufos. This gambit is foredoomed to failure if it is meant to impress skeptics. The modern and ancient cases seem to mutually undermine each other rather offer mutual support. The modern cases are evidentially poor. Dan Martin is overtly a contactee, one steeped in religious concerns, and offers a version whose details match up with nobody else. Seewaldt is a simple nightmare. Bill & Nora looks like a spiritual rather than materially real experience. Llanca, Diaz, and Scott seem like hoaxes even to serious ufologists.

The Herrmann, Gulf Breeze and the Linda cases are controversial at best and no self-respecting skeptic could call them worthy of belief.

Ancient cases of ascension are no better. Elijah is just fiction and implying fiery horses and chariots make a match to ufo imagery faces large doubts. The Ascension of Christ may be a central article of faith among the religious, but historians are bothered that two of the four Synoptic Gospels do not mention it and the two that do, place it in different geographic settings. There is also a bothersome wider context. The ascent of Jesus does not match up with Elijah; but it bears interesting similarities to contemporary legendry surrounding Apollonius (a magician and Greek contemporary) and a magician in the Mithras Liturgy. It also recalls abilities Egyptian magicians could acquire by conjuring up aerial spirits or the Lord of the Air. According to the Magical Papyrus of Paris, "When you die he will embalm your body as befits a god, and taking up your spirit will carry it up into the air with himself." This Lord of the Air could also carry you into the air while still living, bring down stars, bring fire, stop ships in mid-voyage, shake walls, endow invisibility, and dozens of less ufo-ey miracles. (Smith 1978)

Aubeck & Vallee make their best stab at trying to provide a material basis to ascension in a case they dug up that is set around 438 A.D. Constantinople. The city had just been devastated by an earthquake and people had abandoned the city. As Nicephorus Callistus, a 14th century chronicler reported, the people saw miracle "quite unexpected and beyond all credence filled them with admiration." Amidst a crowd gathered in the countryside, a child was taken up high into the air by a strong force, so high they lost sight of him. He came down and told no less an eminence than the Emperor, Patriarch Proclus, that he attended up there a great concert of the Angels hailing the Lord in their sacred canticles. The local bishop Acacius stated, "The population of the whole city saw it with their eyes." Baronius acclaimed this event deserved to be transmitted to the most remote posterity. The Greeks inscribed it into their ancient Menologue and read every year in their churches. Apparently realizing a 14th century source for 5th century nameless

miracle might raise eyebrows, Aubeck & Vallee add in a footnote that more contemporary sources exist in two letters to Peter Fullo by both Acacius and Pope Felix III (483-492 A.D.) They state that **most** details agree except the precise year and the eventual fate of the child.

Cruelly, I must point out that I no more believe this tale than I believe the Cheshire Cat once hovered in the air above a large crowd of observers and was even seen by royalty. The sight precipitated a dispute between King, Queen, and executioner because only the head of the cat was visible and the executioner complained you can't behead someone who has no body. Such must be true history as it was written down in black and white in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. I even saw illustrations made of the scene. Saying a crowd saw something is not the same as demonstrating a crowd of people saw it. Aubeck and Vallee are going to have to come up with far more than 2 (unseen nor reproduced) contemporary letters to elevate this above the appearance of being no more than pious fiction spun to buttress a faith challenged by adversity. To put the matter brusquely, air travellers and space travellers in modern times have been silent about finding angels singing canticles about the Lord in the breathable realms of the atmosphere accessible to material bodies. The three-storey universe of the Bible had been realized naïve since at least the times of Galileo. Indeed a poll of the heads of major Protestant Churches at the start of the space race asking "Will space explorers discover God and heaven?" found ALL predicted "No." Aubeck and Vallee's gullibility over such airy frothings of the faithful of the 5th century can only make ufo skeptics groan with disbelief.

Other instances of ascension collected by Aubeck & Vallee speak of a child star-god of Mars ascending with a great train of silk flowing silk behind him during China's reign of Hsiu [#31]; a King of Hungary (Stephen Istvan: 975-1038 A.D.) who claimed to lifted in the heavens by the hands of angels when he prayed – sometimes physically, sometimes spiritually; Mario Omodei (September 29, 1504) is lifted up and taken to a garden plot where a vision of Mary looking age 14 instructs that a temple should be dedicated to her; a woman executed as a witch

in 1557 Jacquemine Deickens consorted with the devil and claimed to fly to a crossroads where she met other witches every three or four weeks [#186: "flying contactee" not abductee say our ethno-semioticians; presumably defensively]; a Swiss farmer lifted in the air and dropped two weeks later in Milan, Italy stripped not only of clothes and saber, but every hair on his head and face and attributed to abducting fairies. [#202]

Somehow they missed Simon Magus, a magician said by some to be the first True Gnostic. After moralizing on the horrors of existence (like leprosy and the hideous metamorphoses of breasts with age), he was reported to have floated skywards "arms beating like fish gills," hair and beard streaming in the wind. The omission is curious given Aubeck and Vallee's desire to point to ancient wonders that had an impact on history. A sect thought by historians to be based on Simon's mission lasted more than twice as long as Akhenaten's sun-worshippers. Early church fathers were disturbed enough by his ideas to brand Simon 'the father of all heresies' in their sermons.

They also miss this compelling mass sighting of ascension collected by witch finder Martin del Rio for his massive Investigations Into Magic (1599-1600) said to have been one of the most influential guides for lawyers and other authorities throughout the 17th century in Western Europe.

In the town of Halle in the diocese of Utrecht, a wretched woman one day put her feet in a basin and then jumped out of it, saying, "Here I jump from the power of God into the power of the Devil." The Devil snatched her away and bore her up into the air in the sight of many people who were inside the house and out, carrying her over the tops of forests; and to this day no one has caught even a glimpse of her. Johann Caesarius has clearly shown this was done by magic arts. Certainly I should think that a word or deed of this kind would be a most compelling indication and one which would touch the suspect very closely.

Not to indulge too deeply in the game of dueling authorities, but this also sounds more historically impactful and better attested than Aubeck & Vallee's ascensions.

The implications are equally unpalatable to modern sensibilities where the Devil is as immaterial as God. It should be added that del Rio was sophisticated enough to admit that cases existed where witches said they had been transported by Satan through the air, but individuals had been watching them and saw the person merely fast asleep and motionless. What grows before us is a chaotic diversity that infests every detail in these stories apart from the single defining point of continuity which is the presence of ascension.

Magical ascension is less a proof of a robust and constant ufo phenomenon, than a proof that some things about dreams and visions tend to recur more than other things. Ascension possesses the quality of omnipotence of thought and violation of ontological rules that signals the realm of dream and fantasy. Magical flight is widely recognized as a common type of dream. Dream interpretation guides dating back to the earliest appearances of writing offer meanings to dreams of magical flight. Freud's famous book on dreams reports on the commonness of magical flight and notes interpreters even before himself thought there might be some sort of sexual explanation. Men, for example, commonly have erections during dreams of magical flight and tingling sensations are also often present in both males and females. I have no particular objection to this mode of explanation.

Another notion worth offering is that the brain typically shuts down all voluntary motor functions during dreams. This is a safety and survival measure since you obviously don't want the body walking and running and working and fighting with the brain in fantasy mode and unaware of where obstacles and other dangers might be. With no feedback from the body, the mind maybe defaults to treating the absence of limb movement and sensations from the feet as evidence the body is in flight. Though attractive, an obvious problem with this notion is that sensations of flying can be generated with psychedelics. The first studies with DMT in the 50s had one physician reporting "I feel exactly as if I were flying...I have the feeling this is above everything, above the earth." (Strassman, 2008) As he presumably was conscious and not sleeping, the brain would still have been receiv-

ing signals from the body. Yet DMT experiences also often have people losing control of the body and the presence of feelings of leaving the body so it is hard to judge whether the process that disconnects the body in dreams is or is not being interfered with by the drug.

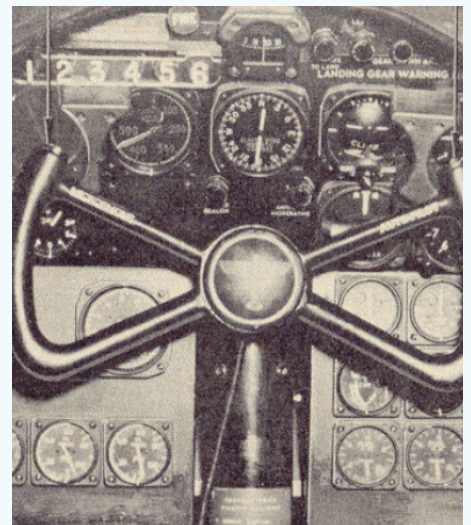
How best to explain the frequency of flight in dreams and other unrealities I am willing to regard as an unsolved mystery, but something that will certainly be resolved by neuroscience someday without resorting to magical forces and alien wills with strange designs on humanity. You can bet your Baals on it.

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RB-47 update

It is not anything really new but I would like to correct a comment I made in SUNlite 4-1 regarding pilots and magnetic bearings. In discussing this with a military pilot, he stated that the use of magnetic headings is common. I stated in my RB-47 articles that I thought it was unlikely he was following a specific line of latitude or using a magnetic heading. It seems, based on what I learned in my discussion, that it would not be unusual at all for Chase to pilot the craft using a magnetic heading. However, I still do not think it was likely the RB-47 was attempting to navigate along a specific line of latitude because the headings listed by Chase in his UFO report were identified by him as true and not magnetic. Additionally, the reports written in 1957 indicate that the flight was not along any line of latitude but navigating between two specific locations (Meridian and Waco). As I stated in SUNlite 4-1, I don't think anybody is every going to determine the exact path the RB-47 flew that morning without the navigator's log. All we know is the plane ended up somewhere south-east of Dallas when it decided to pursue the UFO.



Another empty water pistol?

In late February, news was released that earth-shattering evidence had surfaced that was going to prove, once and for all, that UFOs are actual unidentified craft operating under intelligent control. Did this evidence appear in a scientific journal? Was it announced by qualified scientists? Were all the world leaders informed? The answer to all three of these questions seems to have been “no”. Instead, a retired general, who heads an organization called the Comité de Estudios de Fenómenos Aéreos Anómalos (The Committee for the study of Anomalous Aerial Phenomena - CEFAA) revealed this news at a...sigh...UFO conference.

CEFAA

CEFAA is a sub group of Chile’s version of the Federal Aviation Administration. Believe it or not, the Chilean government (using their tax payer’s money) actually funds the research being done by CEFAA. CEFAA, like the privately funded American counterpart, NARCAP, uses the argument that they are trying to protect aircraft from collisions with Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP). Despite there being little evidence that UFOs/UAPs have actually caused any aircraft accidents, UFOlogists at CEFAA/NARCAP have managed to present this argument in order to get funding (either privately or from the government).

CEFAA was first created in the late 1990s but seemed to disappear from view around 2003. By 2009, they found some support and the organization was “reactivated”. Collecting a paycheck from the tax payers of Chile, retired General Ricardo Bermudez heads this group of UFO enthusiasts.

The videos

The news was announced in several forums that General Bermudez spoke at the conference and presented very important evidence. On February 28th, Billy Cox mentioned Bermudez appearance but did not mention the videos. Cox, would then write on the 2nd of March that Bermudez presented evidence of other incidents at the conference but still



One of the UFOs that was recorded at the air show. This is what skeptics have been dreading?

did not mention the videos.

The first appearance of the video was in article written on March 5th in the Open Minds blog by Antonio Huneeus. According to the article, General Bermudez stated that multiple videos were shot from multiple locations of UFOs during an air show at El Bosque on 4 November 2010. It was stated that astronomers and other skeptical scientists had analyzed the videos and used technology to measure the infrared signature of the UFO. Additionally, the Chilean Air Force analyzed the videos along with Dr. Bruce Maccabee and Dr. Richard Haines. We were told that all agreed that the object(s) were unidentified aerial phenomenon and that it was flying at high speeds through the camera’s field of view. Most importantly, it was noted that the UFOs were not visually seen by anyone during the air show. It was only after the show was complete that people, who shot the videos noticed these objects passing in front of or near the aircraft.

Wild Fire

I heard of the videos through the grapevine around March 12th about the same time the Huffington Post ran an article by Alejandro Rojas. A quick search of the internet revealed a clip that recorded during the UFO congress, which was very brief, and some frame grabs of the UFOs that appeared in Rojas’ article. I was not impressed and they looked like balloons,

bugs, or birds to me.

The next day, Leslie Kean and Ralph Blumenthal, published a more extensive article for the Huffington Post. Kean, who seems to believe just about anything UFO proponents tell her, took the ball and began to promote the case as *the case UFO skeptics have been dreading*.¹

It was revealed that there were seven videos taken from seven different locations and that the eight scientists examining the video determined that the object was flying at around 4000 mph. These scientists also determined that it was not a bird, plane, meteor, or any other known natural phenomena. Therefore, it was concluded the object was something really exotic. A better quality video was presented showing jets with the UFOs highlighted for the viewer.

Billy Cox would describe these UFOs as toying with the aircraft. He also stated that this “flying saucer” was “mocking” us. If they really wanted to “mock” us, they probably would have stood still for everyone to see and not flit about in an effort not to be seen. Cox seems to have drawn his conclusions but what were the skeptics saying?

Skeptic’s initial comments

Ian Boyle wrote the first skeptical article on the subject on March 15th in his Cosmic Log. Dr. Phil Plait was not that

convinced by the video because it only showed some small object that had to be pointed out to the viewer. Robert Sheaffer made a few joking comments about he was “shaking” but then added that the videos needed to be looked at closer. He predicted that an explanation would probably surface but it would not be accepted by those wanting it to remain unexplained. I was also quoted late in the article from my initial observations I had made after seeing the first video and articles that had been written.

I am very skeptical of this story the more I read it. There are no high-quality videos available, and the frame grabs/brief clips I have seen appear to be vague and indistinct. The idea they may be birds, insects or possibly a small Mylar balloon has crossed my mind but I can't tell much from the data at hand.

There are some big red flags for me:

1) This happened over a year ago and people are still working on analyzing this? If the evidence was truly that good, it would take a few months at best to come up with a reasonable analysis to demonstrate it was something not of this earth.

2) It is being leaked out to various UFO blogs instead of publishing in a scientific journal. If it were good evidence, that is where it would appear, and not the Huffington Post.

3) The videos are unavailable to be analyzed from outside sources. Perhaps they learned from the Mexican Air Force video debacle. Once the videos were revealed in sufficient length, many people identified the source of the images as being from oil wells in the gulf. A lot of people had egg on their face from that one. NARCAP was initially involved with that one, but then later stated they could not properly analyze the video because of the provenance being questionable or some excuse similar to that.

4) The videos have no provenance. We don't know what has been done to them since the day of the event.

Just my thoughts on this one. I can probably come up with a few more red flags, but I would rather wait for the report to appear or the raw videos to surface.

Meanwhile, I will hit my snooze button while the UFOlogists proclaim it the latest 'smoking gun.' So far all of these 'smoking guns' have turned out to be empty water pistols that have never fired a squirt.¹

I was criticized for comment number 2 suggesting that the report be published in a scientific journal because there is no such thing for UFOs. The reason I stated this was because peer review is something critical to this sort of thing. Qualified individuals who are independent of the analysis need to examine the work for errors and determine if the conclusions are justified. CEFAA is not independent and should not be the governing body that determines if the analysis was correct. There are journals associated with optics and photogrammetry that could apply in this situation.

Instead of a presentation in a scientific journal for this sort of analysis, the information was slowly dribbled out with bits and pieces here and there at a UFO conference and by pro-UFO writers meant to promote the results. At the time of my comment, no full report has been presented showing methodologies, results, and conclusions even though it has been suggested that such reports have been written. To date, the reports still have not seen the light of day and I seriously doubt that they ever will. Most scientists would laugh at such a method of presentation. However, this is UFOlogy, where cutting corners is allowed and it is all about the hype.

Additionally, we only saw edited videos, which is why I made the comments regarding points 3 and 4. This would become important later on, when some of the videos presented by Kean on her web site were of low quality and had slow frame rates, which would induce unwanted blur in the images.

Boyle's article took some heat from UFO proponents because he picked up the initial suggestion by some forums that these UFOs were nothing more than insects flying through the field of view. UFO Updates, which supposedly contains some of the best and brightest minds in UFOlogy, declared the comments made in the article were “Fatuous”. One can only assume that they were referring to the potential solutions and commentary.

It is interesting that most of the skeptics (including myself) wanted to see more of the videos and examine them further before drawing some conclusions. On the other hand, proponents appeared to be accepting what they were told by CEFAA without questioning it. This would be nothing new for the UFOlogical crowd. I saw similar comments during the Mexican Air Force FLIR video in 2004. UFOlogists have difficulty learning from their past mistakes.

The house of cards

Boyle's article brought me to the Above Top Secret forum, which was light years ahead of me in analysis of these video clips. I had to read through dozens of pages of exchanges to see how others had interpreted the videos. I thought about signing into the forum but decided I had little to offer that had not already been discussed. I also had some other distractions that would not allow me to devote 100% of my time to the discussion. So, I decided to monitor the exchanges and document what transpired. It is important to note that no prominent skeptics were involved and this forum deserves a great deal of the credit for what they discovered.

March 14th

The original post in the thread was made by SHINO pointing towards the videos. Almost immediately member GREY580 suggested it was a bug. This brought forth the comments by several members that bugs can not explain the fact that it was recorded by seven different videos from seven different locations. They also pointed out that it had been analyzed by scientists, who could tell if it was a bug or not.

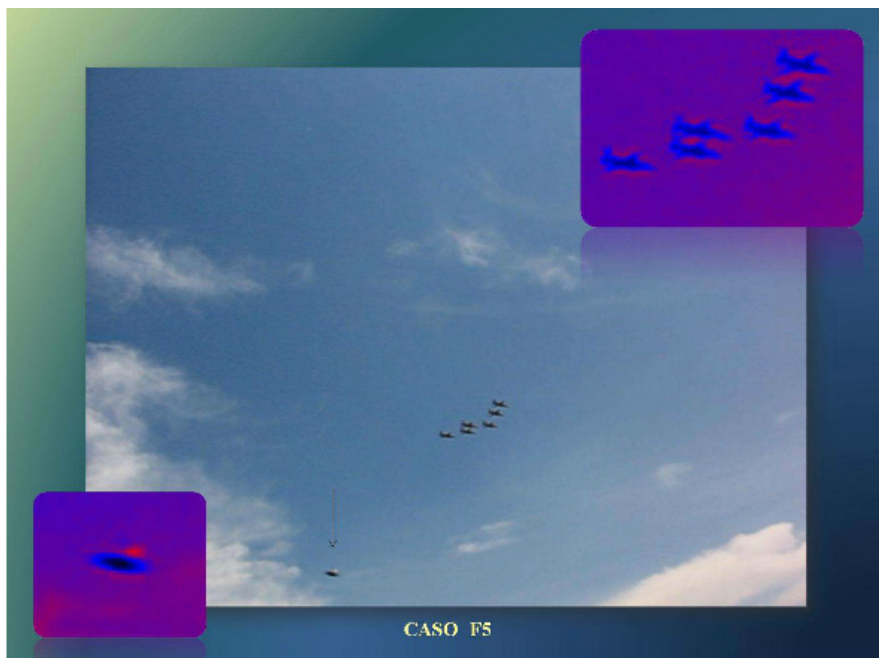
March 15th

Member GLONTRA pronounced this video as the “end game” and it was definitive proof of UFOs (aka alien spaceships). CHADWICKUS cautioned members and posted several examples of videos showing these types of UFOs, which were bugs. THEGUT also mirrored CHADWICKUS' comments concerning caution about all these videos, which nobody had seen. GLONTRA once again pointed out when all these videos were

presented, we would finally have “disclosure”. SAVEDONE noted the problem with nobody seeing the UFOs during the event, which indicated they may be bugs or birds. UFOGLOBE began to conclude that these were nothing more than bugs unless somebody could demonstrate otherwise. UFOGLOBE would then demolish the claim that an infrared analysis (which can’t be done with a standard video camera) showed the UFO emitting heat. THEGUT would note that the Astronomer Barrera, who was quoted, did not state they had eliminated bugs.

March 16th

At this point, the pro-argument was that analysis by experts ruled out mundane explanations and, even though nobody mentioned it, that should include bugs. On the other side of the coin, various individuals were stating they look like bugs. UFOGLOBE became the primary voice on this and would point out why the video does not show a bug because of motion blur, compression, and focus, which would make a bug appear disc shaped. As an example, UFOGLOBE posted a link of a video somebody shot of a toy quadcopter, which was attacked by a swarm of bees. The bees looked a lot like the videos in the El Bosque event. Analysis by UFOGlobe indicated the displacement of the object between frames would agree with the bug hypothesis. ELEVENAUGUST would point towards Dr. Dil’s blog entry concerning BLURFOs (Birds and bugs blurred into appearing as UFOs). He also posted numerous examples of his BLURFOs. There was a lot of arguing about how it would be impossible for all seven videos to record the same bug. However, UFOGLOBE (among others) would suggest that it is very possible that all 7 videos show bugs but not the exact same bug. This would give the impression they were the same object. Meanwhile, RSF77 noted that the video being presented was edited. He would note that there are several different videos linked together but the editing gave it the false impression it was one complete video of the same event. LACUNA would conclude that nothing could be resolved as long as the other six videos remained unavailable. JUSTWOKEUP would e-mail Kean asking about the videos. She asked for patience and promised great revelations soon. ORKOJOKER



According to CEFAA and Kean, this image was analyzed by Dr. Luis Barrera and that this shows the heat signature of the UFO and jets. One has to wonder why, in this image, the exhaust of the jets are blue (cold) and not red (hot) if this was an infrared image. Did the jets shut off their engines?

would post Kean’s March 16th Facebook comment where she proclaimed that real experts had analyzed the videos and would have figured out if they were bugs or not. She proclaimed those suggesting the bug hypothesis were “amateurs”, who should not question CEFAA’s experts (even though their reports have yet to be revealed). Kean also pointed out that some of the seven videos were shot with cell phones, which meant they were of low quality!

March 17th

People kept questioning if the six other videos even existed or that they really were not of good quality. UFOGLOBE began to question the Astronomer Luis Barrera’s qualifications for performing video analysis because of the “pseudo-scientific flim-flam” infrared image analysis. UFOGLOBE also suggested that this was all a scam by CEFAA to justify its existence.

March 18th

DRDIL was able to contact Dr. Barrera, who stated he was misquoted when they declared it an infrared analysis. One has to wonder where General Bermudez got this information? UFOGLOBE would respond that the analysis being described in all of the articles and at the UFO conference was amateurish and pointed out how they were just using various photoshop effects/tools to try and enhance

the image. DRDIL stated that Barrera was looking for changes in asymmetry in the images to look for wings beating. UFOGLOBE would point out several reasons why this would not detect insect wings (such as translucence of the wings, high beat rate of the wings, size of the wings, and proximity of the bugs to the camera introducing blur).

March 19th

On this date, the forum recognized the video presented by a person by the name of HOAXKILLER. It was HOAXKILLER’s efforts that began to seal he deal on the bug hypothesis. In HOAXKILLER’s original debunking video, he showed that one frame of the video that had been posted in the Huffington Post article showed the UFO in front of the hills but was not highlighted. Frames prior to this had been edited out. However, the frame showing the UFO in front of the hill put a fixed distance on the UFO and an upper limit on its size and speed. Prior to this it had been assumed that the UFO came from behind the hill. About the same time, three videos were posted on Kean’s web site. These three videos were described as the “best” videos of the event. They also confirmed the observations by the ATS group that the original video presented by CEFAA was a combination of several videos.

Even then, these “original” videos that

were “released”, only had a frame rate of 10 fps and 640X480 resolution. Most videos are shot at 24 fps, which means the videos are probably not the originals and there is data missing from them. One also must wonder why low quality videos were presented. Was there something that CEFAA was trying to hide?

CRIPMEISTER would then post a video from a 2010 air show in Chile of an F-22 raptor in flight. Buzzing by the raptor was one of the same type of UFOs recorded in the El Bosque video. If the UFOs were that numerous, it seems they would probably be bugs and not craft of any kind. CRIPMEISTER would add that CEFAA was coming off as incompetent and were trying to legitimize their existence.

March 20th

This was the day that the nails were beginning to be pounded into the coffin that was the UFO video. HOAXKILLER took the three videos from Kean’s web site and found the UFO in more frames. These frames had been edited out by CEFAA in their original presentation. HOAXKILLER discovered that the deleted frames showed the UFO transiting across the foreground of the airstrip. This was completely consistent with the bug hypothesis. Most of the proponents of the ET hypothesis kept falling back to the analysis by CEFAA and the multiple videos from multiple locations argument, which began to appear weak based on the evidence presented.

March 24th

The house of cards that was the ET Hypothesis finally collapsed when STIVER posted a new video debunking the case. He found a video taken of the El Bosque air show that apparently had not been analyzed by CEFAA. It showed some of the same events in the other videos. The UFO does not appear the way it does in the CEFAA videos. Instead many BLURFOs appear that look exactly like the CEFAA UFOs.

I only know what they tell me

Leslie Kean had taken a lot of heat from people concerning this video analysis. Had she not thrown out the gauntlet about this being a case skeptics were



The red path in this image is the path of the UFO as determined by CEFAA. The Blue extension at the bottom was Hoaxkiller’s discovery of the UFO as it flew in the foreground. Why did CEFAA’s experts miss this and why did the first video have the frames showing the blue path edited out?

dreading, she might have saved face. However, she started making promises like:

Have patience folks. More info will be presented soon. You can’t draw conclusions from looking at only one tape. And please remember, these images have been analyzed by experts in Chile. Didn’t I emphasize that enough in my Huffington Post story? They too thought the footage was a bug at first, until they collected the other tapes. It is an insult for you carry on about this being a bug, when obviously if you can figure that out so easily, the Chilean experts would have done the same.²

She also continued to make excuses:

As I did in my book, for the Chilean story I reported on what the authorities at the Chilean organization told me. These are authorities I trust, including a General and well known scientists. I presented the best video, and quoted their experts.³

It must be pointed out that she IS a journalist and she MUST stand by her work. If it is flawed, she must then look again and see if it is. If there are problems with what she wrote, she can then state it was a mistake. Instead, she basically states that she never bothers to examine anything closely and only repeats what these sources tell her. She accepts what they tell her at face value, which is a recipe for disaster when it comes to UFOlogy.

Hoping people will forget

When Kean finally did produce a response, several issues about CEFAA were mentioned. The first was CEFAA

was very busy awaiting for the analysis of the videos to be completed. They now had other photo analysts, who were unnamed, looking at the videos. CEFAA also announced that it was not going to release any more information until these analyses were complete. That may be what they said, but I think there may have been another motive. They dribbled out the information hoping people would blindly accept it instead of examining what they presented critically. Apparently, people like HOAXKILLER were more thorough than their experts, who may have been seeing only what they wanted to see. To avoid any more embarrassment, they chose not to reveal any reports or videos and hid behind a curtain of secrecy. Is this a case of “non-disclosure”? Isn’t CEFAA a government organization? If this were the USAF, the outcries of cover-up and FOIA requests would have been numerous and Kean would have been leading the charge. One has to wonder if Kean has a double standard for UFO organizations where they are allowed to keep secrets but the government is not.

As Dr. Dil put it in his blog, Kean and CEFAA seem to have problems describing their own research. What was considered a completed study in mid-March has now turned into an on-going study. What was considered the best video, is now considered inadequate for research by others. Instead of demanding that CEFAA come clean with their evidence, Kean resorts to blowing a lot of smoke, hoping that nobody will notice that her/CEFAA’s original claims do not stand up to scrutiny.

Kean also decided to talk to a bunch

entomologists to get their opinion. While she quotes several people, we really don't know how many entomologists were asked to comment. She easily could have asked dozens and only published the comments from those she selected. Kean states she presented them with the evidence from CEFAA. Missing in her presentation was the other side of the argument like the video of the quadcopter with the swarm of bees, the video not provided by CEFAA showing lots of UFOs in the area, and HOAXKILLER's very damning video analysis. Her summary of what her selected entomologists stated was it was *very probably not a bug*.

⁴ However, that is not what they really said. They all thought it was unlikely that it could be bugs but never stated that it was not a bug (one did but then changed their statement after discussing it with another person). We are not even sure if they had an experience looking at insects in videos like this. While one can respect their opinions about insects, that opinion did not falsify the bug hypothesis as Kean implied.

Because Kean has nothing more than what CEFAA originally told her, she keeps referring to those who upstaged the story as "amateurs" even though she does not know their qualifications! It is clear that these "amateurs" did a far better job and were more open with their analyses than CEFAA and Kean. Now Kean is simply "tap-dancing" hoping that nobody will notice that CEFAA never really published anything. With the revelations that the videos probably show bugs, I suspect CEFAA's reports will never be revealed.

UFO = alien spaceship?

UFOlogists are great at saying what UFOs can not be. However, they always try and walk the fine line in revealing what they believe. It is best to hint at what you want everyone to think it is and then have them draw the obvious conclusion. When a skeptic says it is unlikely the object is an alien spaceship, the proponent immediately denies ever stating this as if they are trying to keep an open mind. This was apparent when Billy Cox declared that Benjamin Radford was misrepresenting what Kean had written:

Wrote Radford in his Live Science blog: "Kean and others interpret it as a metallic interplanetary spacecraft." That isn't true. Neither Kean nor Blumenthal nor anyone in CEFAA stated that in the HuffPo article.⁵

Billy Cox is technically correct. They never said "metallic interplanetary spacecraft" but they did state that it was *dome-shaped, no visible means of propulsion, appears metallic, emits some form of energy, extraordinary machine, not man-made, Humans could not survive these speeds, and clearly under intelligent control*.⁶ Saying these things is essentially the same thing as stating *metallic interplanetary spacecraft*. Billy Cox, and all the others who make these kinds of comments, are just trying to trick people into thinking they are being objective when they really are not.

Failing to do it right

Missing from all of these analyses is the reason for having multiple vid-

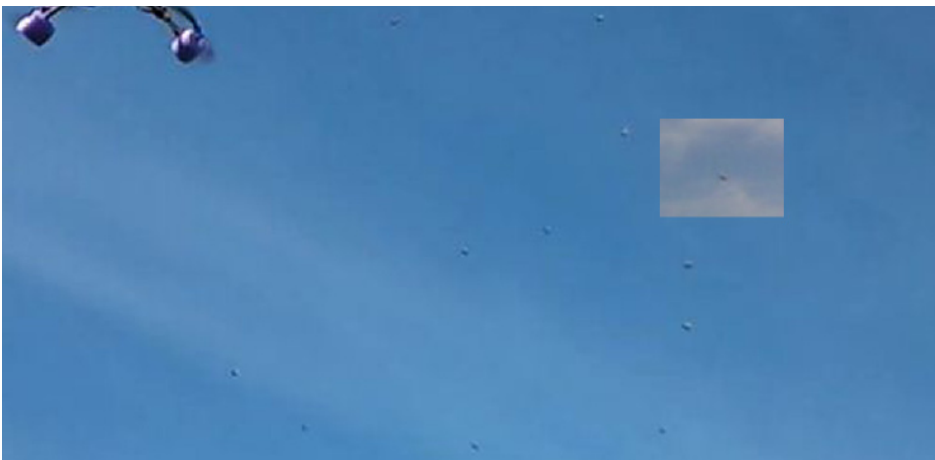
eos from multiple locations. When that is done, one can triangulate the position of the UFO and determine distance, size, speed, and altitude. In all of these wonderful revelations by Kean and Bermudez, there never was any mention of triangulation. That indicates to me that they could not perform this since the UFOs did not align properly. Either there was more than one UFO present or these UFOs were bugs. As a result, we get these analyses using photoshop filters to look for things that may or may not be resolvable.

As a crude exercise in triangulation of the data available, I used the frame that showed the UFO at a low enough angle with the F-16s and compared it to the video taken from the review stand area (which is at 30 FPS). As one can see in the image from google earth on page 34, the distance between the two videographers was about a half-mile and the F-16s were approaching the runway (the white star). This can be done assuming the aircraft were flying a path in line with the runway and by looking at the background hills for reference. As shown by the sight lines from the two locations, if the UFO were distant, as indicated by CEFAA, then the position of the UFO would have been to the right of the F-16s in the review stand video. When one views that part of the video, where the jets were in the same approximate position, we do not see any UFO cross behind or in front of the jets.

Since most of the data in this little exercise is guesswork using some assumptions, it is possible the reason the UFO is not visible is because of these assumptions. I only performed this exercise as a demonstration on how the use of multiple videos should have been used to prove the exotic nature of the UFOs. CEFAA apparently is unable to perform such an exercise from the videos, which means all of these videos are essentially worthless.

Rinse, lather, repeat?

Originally proclaimed as the video that would scare skeptics, this case rapidly unraveled into another embarrassment for UFOlogists once additional information became available. Like the Mexican AF FLIR video from 2004, the analyses that were reportedly performed



If Leslie Kean's hand-picked entomologists think the UFOs in the CEFAA slide shows probably aren't bugs, why is it that the bees in the video, Quadcopter attracts a swarm of bees, look so much like the UFOs in the CEFAA videos (see the small box for the UFO seen in the F-16 video for comparison)?

If Dr. Barrera was misquoted or misrepresented by Bermudez, CEFAA appears as a “Mickey Mouse” organization that is more interested in promoting UFOs than trying to scientifically analyze anything. When you can't get the facts right concerning the analysis that was performed, then the leader of this organization is either incompetent or purposefully misleading people. In either case, it demonstrates that CEFAA is a waste of the Chilean government's funds and is a failure as a scientific organization.

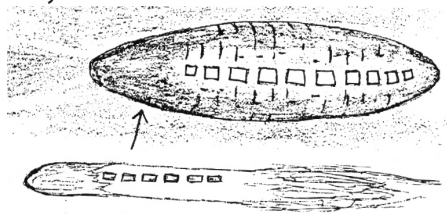
Notes and References

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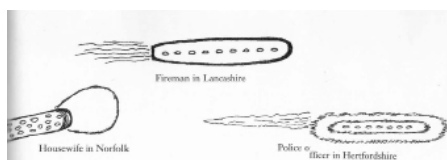
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While perusing through old issues of Flying Saucer review, I stumbled across an article by Dr. Berthold Eric Schwarz with the title of "UFOs: Delusion or Dilemma?" The same article appeared in the October 1968 issue of Medical Times. In that article was a case that had a sketch, which looked eerily familiar (see sketch to right).

For those who might not see what I am talking about perhaps these sketches will refresh their memories. They are sketches by witnesses, who saw the Zond IV re-entry.³



They are not alone. Jenny Randles put the following sketches together for her book "Danger in the air" revealing witnesses interpretation of the Cosmos 1068 re-entry on December 31, 1978.⁴



The UFO story

The description of events in Flying Saucer Review reads:

...at 8:15 p.m. on April 25, 1966, while driving with a friend, Charles Dayton, he noticed a "very awesome, huge, flaming body, which lit up a large area visible for a few seconds. It had a red flame with a green and yellow tail. The second view was of a dark object. The huge flames went out like turning off an electric bulb for a few seconds. There was a dim light in four port holes, and then all darkness. It looked like it was 250 ft. in front of us and 250 ft. up, and it could go at terrific speed. It was about 25 ft. in length and had a tail 35ft. long (see Fig. 3).

The contractor did not detect any odour, but he recalled how warm he felt. He noted that the automobile engine stalled and the lights went out. He soon started the engine again. "I never saw such a sight.

Did a meteor really stop a car?



Photograph of the April 25, 1966 fireball taken by Utica teenager Dana DeGeorge. ¹ It appeared in many of the papers and Life Magazine. Compare it to the sketch below of the UFO that stopped a car at the same time about 130 miles to the southwest in Towanda, PA. ²



I was amazed and flabbergasted." He and his friend were concerned the object would crash into the side of the mountain...⁵

This is quite an interesting story but the sketch is just too similar to the Zond IV and Cosmos 1068 sketches to be ignored so I decided to check the newspaper archives and bluebook files to see what I could find.



The source

It did not take much searching to find a source for the UFO. I am not sure how much research Dr. Schwarz performed but a cursory check of the media reports on April 26, 1966 indicated a bright fireball was visible all over the northeastern United States on April 25, 1966 around 8:15 PM.

The reports received for this fireball are most interesting. The duty officer at Stewart AFB reported they initially received reports that a plane had crashed, which is common in many fireball sightings. That description appeared in many of the papers. One individual even stated he saw two planes crash in mid-air. Another report to Stewart AFB had the witnesses describing as "funnel-shaped". In Rhode Island, a woman reported that she

called Quonset Point Naval base and they said they would send jets after it. Several reports mirrored the Towanda drawing by describing portholes in a larger craft. One woman called the newspaper demanding they do something because everyone at her location was frightened by the event!

The amusing thing about this is that many people were reported as being skeptical of the meteor explanation. This included a Utica teenager who managed to photograph the fireball. ⁶

"I don't really think it was a meteor," Dana said today, a little groggy from a near-sleepless night. "But I'm not qualified," Dana admitted, "I'm more inclined to think it was a UFO than a meteor."

Like so many first time witnesses to these events, they had no idea how bright and slow a fireball can be.

This meteor was widely photographed. The May 6th, 1966 edition of Life Magazine published many of them. From these photographs and films, a rough orbit was computed and published in the Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (1968 Vol 62 p. 55). The data indicates the object was a meteor and not re-entering space debris.

Is it just a coincidence that a bright UFO, that was described as a flaming object that lit up the area, was seen at the same time? It seems that this UFO and the fireball were one in the same. Why the ve-

hicle and lights went out is hard to determine but I doubt that the meteor did it. I can think of a couple of ways for a car to stop and the lights to go dim without the need of a UFO.

What is interesting is how this case was interpreted by UFOlogists. For some reason the fireball connection was ignored or missed.

Contamination?

Trying to see if there was more information about the case elsewhere, I discovered that there was a brief mention on NICAP's 1966 UFO chronology web page:

*Night. As their car engine and headlights failed and they felt heat, motorists saw a UFO with four portholes hovering about 350 feet away, flames shooting off of it.*⁷

Somehow the distance moved from 250 to 350 feet away and was hovering instead of moving at terrific speed. Of course, if it were "hovering", it probably would not be considered to be caused by a meteor. However, the Schwarz article never mentions any hovering so I pulled the string on the source for this entry.

This entry came from Mark Rodeghier's "UFO Reports Involving Vehicle Interference: A Catalogue and Data Analysis", which should be expected to be accurate. I found his catalogue and discovered the same errors in distance and "hovering" appearing in Rodeghier's document so one can not fault NICAP's chronology. Rodeghier cites as his source for this report as being from John Keel's book, "Operation Trojan Horse".

Now if I were an academic, I would think that I would make sure that Keel had his ducks in a row. Before opening Keel's book, I expected to see the same errors found in the Rodeghier document. I was shocked to see Keel describing something completely different:

On a highway near Towanda, Pennsylvania, Robert W. Martz and a friend saw the object scoot overhead. Simultaneously, their automobile engine stalled, and the headlights went out. Both men complained of feeling a wave of heat as they watched "a very awesome, huge flaming

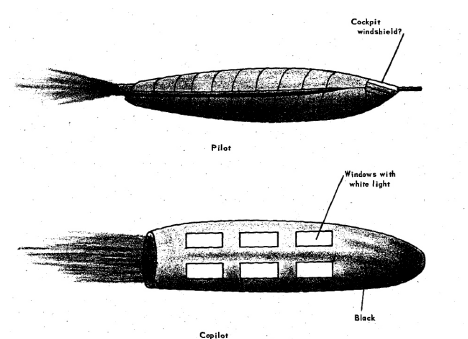
*body which lit up a large area, visible for a few seconds. Then the second view was of a dark object. The huge flames went out like turning off an electric bulb for a few seconds. There was a dim light in four portholes, and then all darkness. It looked like it was 250 feet in front of us and 250 feet up, and it could go at terrific speed.*⁸

This sounds a lot like the original story in Flying Saucer Review and there is no mention of the UFO "hovering". The fault lay in Rodeghier's interpretation of what was written. Even more interesting is that Keel was describing the event as being suspected as a bright fireball. Didn't Rodeghier bother to check this before putting it into a UFO database that others would cite as being thoroughly investigated? It seems that Dr. Rodeghier may not have researched this case very well.

If this one case was poorly researched, what does it say for all of his other cases? I am not stating that all in the database should be dismissed but it demonstrates that one should not blindly accept such cases and databases as being vetted just because it comes from one of UFOlogy's leading scientists.

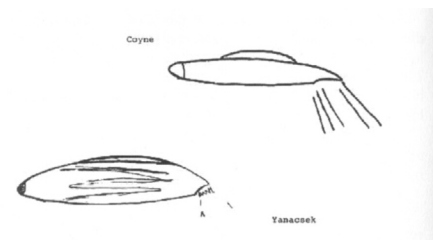
What does this mean?

Aside from the problem associated with these sources not performing due diligence in their research, what else does this case tell us? The obvious one comes from the sketches. Dr. Hartmann, writing in the Condon report, suggested the comparison between the Zond IV sketches/reports and that of the Chiles-Whitted sighting of 1947. If that was produced by a bright fireball, are there any others that might be on the list as potential fireballs?



Drawings by Chiles and Whitted of their UFO encounter in July 1948.⁹

Perhaps one can see similarities between these sketches and two sketches by the air crew in the Coyne helicopter-UFO encounter. Phil Klass suggested it was a bright fireball but that has been dismissed as a good explanation by UFOlogists for various reasons. The sketches are similar and makes one think twice about the fireball explanation.



Sketches by Coyne and Yanacsek of their UFO¹⁰

Fireballs and re-entries redux

Does this mean that ALL cigar-shaped UFOs are caused by meteors and re-entering space debris? Absolutely not but one has to give serious consideration for such an explanation when one sees such reports and drawings. The existence of all sky meteor networks/cameras becoming more widespread indicates that such reports should be readily solved. Older cases like Chiles-Whitted and Coyne are more difficult to solve. The time of those events were much later at night when the public is less likely to be out. Amateur astronomers do tend to fill the gap when they are out observing. However, if nobody was out observing that night, it would not exist in the records. Without a positive/negative report from experienced meteor observers, who were in a position to observe a fireball, one can only suggest the possibility that a meteor was the cause.

Notes and references

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POSTSCRIPT: It is interesting that I wrote this article about a month before the solution for the 1996 Yukon UFO event was published. In that case, space debris from the Cosmos 2335 rocket has been identified as re-entering over the area during the same time period as when the UFO was reported by a great number of the witnesses. One witness even gave a sketch that was a reasonable match for the calculated trajectory through the sky. Witnesses described "port holes" or "rows of lights" attached to a dark craft just like Zond IV and Cosmos 1068 (these are not the only cases). This demonstrates the importance of learning from past case histories and using them to look for potential sources of UFO reports.

Fireball = UFO crash

In mid-April, a story surfaced from Connecticut that a UFO had crashed into Bantam Lake near Litchfield, Connecticut. It had happened at 2AM on the 10th of April and was seen by two people. A person driving in Litchfield stated they saw a large object, "the size of a whale" go into the lake. A state trooper in nearby Warren, Ct. confirmed it by stating he saw a UFO go down in the direction of the lake. Firemen from the town of Morris cruised the lake looking for any debris from a crashed airplane but found nothing. As always, this mystery seems unsolved to the reporters.

For anybody that read the previous article and are familiar with how people mistake bright fireballs to be crashing aircraft (or UFOs), this story does not seem that mysterious. I checked the American Meteor Society's database for the date in question and, not surprisingly, saw the following reports on April 10th.

Time	Location	Begin Azimuth	End Azimuth
01:30	Staten Island, NY	0	0
01:42	Norwalk, Ct	206	146

The average magnitude of the two observations was -8, which is bright enough to cast shadows and light up the sky. The Norwalk, CT observer seemed to have made more accurate/precise observations, while the Staten Island observer gave generalities. The Norwalk observer had it go from SSW to SE at a downward angle. This is consistent with the observation of the state trooper who seems to have seen the meteor go in an ESE. The individual in Litchfield is harder to determine but they could have seen it from south to southwest depending on where in Litchfield they were located. Because they were further north the fireball would have disappeared much closer to the horizon than the Norwalk observer. It would have looked like the fireball had gone down "just beyond the trees" and into the lake. This type of misperception is not unheard of in bright fireball reports. In my opinion, this bright fireball is what the two witnesses near Litchfield probably saw.

"Experienced" amateur astronomer photographs UFO?

The National UFO Reporting Center's, Peter Davenport listed this report in his April UFO highlight cases. Amateur astronomer reports always intrigue me so I decided to take a look. The individual had photographed the Pleiades and Venus for **about two minutes using a 105mm lens and a fixed tripod**. During the photographs they did not notice anything but when they examined them on the computer, they saw a UFO ("an elongated oval of nebulosity") moving towards the upper left on each successive frame. They ruled out aircraft, satellites, and lens artifacts. The object did not appear in another photograph the individual took of Orion so they concluded the object was unidentified/exotic.

Any astrophotographer **with experience** would have recognized what was recorded. Telephotos are made up of many lenses that can cause internal reflections with bright point sources. In this case, the individual photographed an internal reflection of Venus. Venus' diurnal motion had it slowly drift to the lower right of the camera's field of view. The internal reflection would move in the opposite direction on each subsequent image (to the upper left). The reason the image of Orion did not show it was because the stars in that image were not bright enough to create this effect.

I would not consider this individual "experienced" if he could not figure out the source of the image. I have seen many images like this when using telephoto lenses. This image below shows Venus on April 29, 2012 using a 200mm telephoto lens. The same "elongated oval of nebulosity" is visible in my image. It is clear that Venus is producing this UFO in this image as well as the one in the NUFORC report.



Recently, Stanton Friedman wrote an article on [The UFO Chronicles blog](#), where he declared that I was an irrational, uninformed, ignorant debunker! This had a lot to do with him reading a four-year old article I wrote called "The UFO disclosure myth".

For some peculiar reason, Mr. Friedman took offense at my portrayal of his "cosmic Watergate" story. Of course, he uses the epithet of debunker to describe me. I don't mind being called a debunker because, according to the dictionary, it means that I am exposing false claims. However, Mr. Friedman uses it as an ad hominem. It is a UFOlogical insult meant to demonize an individual. This is nothing new for some UFOlogists and appears to be standard operating procedure (SOP) for Mr. Friedman. .



A broken record

I guess Mr. Friedman likes to repeat himself over and over again because his argument is pretty much the same thing he has been repeating for some time. It is almost as if that is all he has. These same old arguments are:

- Project Blue Book SR-14 is the final answer for everything involving UFO statistics. They prove UFOs are real and that a very significant percentage of UFO reports (over 20%) will remain unexplained even after investigation.
- No matter what anyone else says, certain MJ-12 documents are authentic. Mr. Friedman offers no real evidence to prove they are authentic other than his own belief and some flawed analysis by those who are not independent of the UFO commu-

Flying Saucer Fiziks II



nity. Skeptics are not the only ones who think the MJ-12 documents are frauds. Kevin Randle wrote a book about it and Jerome Clark referred to them as forgeries in the "hoaxes" section of his [UFO book](#).

- The NSA documents still prove there is a cover-up despite the fact that Klass demonstrated a great many of them, when declassified, demonstrated they had more to do with monitoring Soviet activities. Friedman's argument is that just because the documents don't show any real flying saucer cover-up doesn't mean the documents that are still marked up are not part of the cover-up. This is an argument from ignorance (nobody has conclusively proven that the documents do not involve a cover-up involving alien spaceships, therefore, there is a cover-up).

Sometimes, I think Stanton Friedman is more interested in playing to the crowd than actually performing research be-

yond what he believes. It is almost as if he stops further research once he arrives at the conclusion he desires. Isn't that one of his "rules for debunkers" - *Research by proclamation?*

20% vs 10%

Speaking of research by proclamation, Mr. Friedman takes exception with the following statement I make on my web site:

Even the most hardened UFOlogist (one who studies the phenomena), who believes that there is something behind these reports, will admit that at least nine out of ten cases are misperceptions and hoaxes. The values usually turn out to be more like 3-10% of the reports remaining unexplained.¹

In reply, Friedman claims that this is a "ridiculous proclamation". In response, he whips out some statistics that state the number is more like 20%. He cites three documents that supports this claim.

Special Report 14

In SUNlite 3-4, I discussed the problems with Project Blue Book's Special Report #14 (BBSR14). My main arguments were:

- The data, as stated by those conducting the study, was subjective. Any conclusions drawn from the data was going to be influenced by this subjectivity. Even those that were classified as "Excellent" UFO reports had cases with "Insufficient Information" (nine reports). How can a case be described as "Excellent" if it has "insufficient information"?
- Some of the cases were never actually investigated. They were simply reports written some time after the event and submitted for evaluation.
- The Battelle study did not perform on site investigations of these cases (something Friedman tries to imply). It was purely an exercise from the desk. They did the best they could with the information they had at their disposal but certain aspects of the cases might have been missed in determining a potential solution. In fact, the group re-evaluated the

434 unknowns and discovered that many of them did have potential explanations.

- Out of the final 12 cases that were determined to be the best, only five can be found in the list of Blue Book Unknowns. The remaining seven apparently were never submitted for investigation or were found to have probable explanations. One of these seven cases was the Chiles-Whitted sighting that Condon study concluded was probably just a bright meteor based on the results of the Zond IV sightings. If over 50% of the best cases had potential explanations or were never investigated in the first place, what does it say for the other 422 unknowns?

Friedman uses the Chi-Squared results to bolster his claim but Allan Hendry pointed out that such an analysis was based on factors that were subjective measurements which were inadequate.

Finally, Mr. Friedman attempts to pad his statistics by presenting numbers that best support his position. The "all sightings" category that Friedman cites included all the reports filed. However, there were two other categories determined by the Battelle group. The first category was the "unit sightings", which combined the reports received from additional observers to the same sighting from the same location. As a result, the "Unit sightings" reflected the actual number of individual UFO events. However, after analyzing all the reports, the Battelle study recognized that there were some reports made of the same event by independent observers at different locations. As a result, they created another category of "Object sightings". When conducting their analysis of the data, Battelle used the "object sightings" category and not the "all sightings" categories. Friedman apparently chooses the "All sightings" category because the percentages of unknowns (21.5%) is greater than the object sightings (19.7%).

The bottom line here is that Friedman has chosen to use statistics from BBSR14 that support his position but chooses not to inform his readers or audience "the rest of the story". Isn't this another one of Friedman's "rules of debunkers" - *What the public doesn't know, I am not going to*

tell them?

The 1964 NICAP report

To bolster his claim of high percentages of unknowns, Stanton Friedman cites the NICAP UFO briefing document. According to Friedman, 746 cases out of 4500 were listed as unexplained. However, the NICAP UFO briefing document I read states the following in the abstract:

During the process of selecting the most reliable and significant reports, emphasis was placed on the qualifications of the observer and on cases involving two or more observers. This resulted in 746 reports being selected, after consideration of over 5000 signed reports and many hundreds of reports from newspapers and other publications²

So where did he get 4500 reports when the abstract states they selected 746 reports out of **OVER 5000** (Plus the many hundreds of reports from other sources)?

The selection of these 746 cases does not seem to be based on anything more than the cases were "reliable" and "significant". It does not state that they were investigated and found "unexplained". To use them as a statistic of that kind is flawed.

I can point out other flaws with using this document as this kind of statistic. Looking at the 575 reports in section XI of the document, we discover:

1. Some of these cases were simply newspaper clippings. They were never investigated at all, which is the only reason they can be labeled "unknown".
2. 19 of the reports were radar sightings with no visual confirmation. They could easily have been simple radar "angels" of some kind. The only reason they are labeled unknown is because no data was available for investigation.
3. 15 cases predated World War II and another 15 were from World War II and pre-1947. None of these cases were ever investigated, which is why they are labeled "unknown".

4. Some cases had no date and were

told years after the event. They aren't even "unknown" and should be labeled "insufficient information".

5. Several of the cases have potential explanations offered or have been accepted as being explained. An example is the Mantell incident, which some UFOlogists have accepted as being just a skyhook balloon. If the cases listed contains IFOs, then there are probably other cases in the database that can be explained, which makes the final number of "unknowns" in the list invalid.

What this means is that using this database as a statistic proving that the percentage of unknowns was far greater than 10% is an awkward attempt to deceive people. Once again, Friedman has executed one of the "rules of debunkers" - *What the public doesn't know, I am not going to tell them!*

The Condon study

Mr. Friedman points out that 30% of the Condon Study's UFO investigations resulted in unexplained reports. It is important to note that some of these unexplained reports happened many years before the Colorado project even started and introduced memories of the witnesses that were subject to error. Explanations for these cases could not be determined simply because of the passage of time and lack of documentation. In the case of the Bentwater's 1956 incident, recent investigations by British UFO researchers revealed that certain aspects of the case were exaggerated. Investigation by Phil Klass (and documented in SUNlite 4-1) also presented a reasonable explanation for the RB-47 case. The Trent photographs appear to be a hoax and work by Robert Sheaffer resulted in the investigator to reverse his conclusion! Just because a case is unexplained does not meant there is no reasonable explanation

In other cases in the Condon report, potential explanations were presented but could not positively be made. This was pointed out by Dr. Donald Menzel in his book (co-authored with Ernest Taves), "The UFO Engima".

Finally, if we were to use Friedman's ver-

sion of BBSR14 statistics, we should add the Zond IV incident into the report as a case of 78 additional explained reports and not just one explained event! This would drop the number of unexplained cases significantly.

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) reviewed the Condon report and stated the following:

*The report recognizes that there remain UFO sightings that are not easily explained. The report does suggest, however, so many reasonable and possible directions in which an explanation may eventually be found, that there seems to be no reason to attribute them to an extraterrestrial source without evidence that is much more convincing. The report also shows how difficult it is to apply scientific methods to the occasional transient sightings with any chance of success.*³

The fact that reasonable explanations exist for some of these “unexplained” case have demonstrated that Condon and the NAS were correct. Friedman is overplaying his hand here. Science recognized it was not always possible to produce final explanations for all UFO reports but they did recognize that many of these unexplained reports had potential explanations that did not require the need for “flying saucers” as a source. Again, Friedman is not telling people the entire truth about what the report states.

My “ridiculous proclamation”

The reason I gave no source for my 90% IFO value was because I thought it was a generally accepted number (aka common knowledge) in UFO circles. Apparently, Mr. Friedman has a different opinion, so I had to go recheck what other UFO groups/UFOlogists stated to make sure I got my facts right.

I first looked at the standard AF numbers. Bluebook had a 5.6% unknown rate. Now I realize that the USAF numbers are not accepted by everyone so that value might be ignored. However, Dr. Hynek and the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) reevaluated the Bluebook numbers and they determined that the percentage of unknowns was 5.8%, which is not much more different than the USAF numbers. This falls between the 3-10% I originally

stated.

The next place I double checked were the two major UFO organizations in the United States. The Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) states the following:

*The majority of sightings generally prove to be misinterpretation of natural phenomena...or man-made objects...A smaller number of reports can not be investigated properly for various reasons-lack of pertinent details, for example, or inaccessibility of witnesses. **However, in any give number of UFO reports, about 5% to 10% are truly puzzling** - not only to the witness but also to those who investigate the reports and study the data. These cases are considered true UFO reports.* (my emphasis in bold)⁴

As best I can tell that means the IFO rate must be about 90-95%, which is consistent with what I stated. Is it possible the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) had a different value? That answer would be..... No:

*In reality, **well over 90 percent of all reported UFOs prove to be IFOs** - Identified Flying Objects - upon investigation. IFOs can be anything from distant airplane landing lights to the planet Venus, with ball lightning, weather balloons, and other astronomical and meteorological phenomena thrown in for good measure.* (my emphasis in bold)⁵

Once again, the IFO rate exceeds 90 per cent, just as I stated.

Maybe other UFOlogists have different values. The following has been stated by British UFOlogist Timothy Good, who is one of the more credulous personalities in UFOlogy:

*“We know that up to 90 per cent of all UFO reports can be explained in conventional terms. However, I would say millions of people worldwide have actually seen the real thing.”*⁶

A more conservative British UFOlogist is Jenny Randles, who has written:

*“If you don’t solve at least nine out of ten cases you are doing something wrong”*⁷

This implies that she feels that 10% value

is fairly accurate.

In the early 1980s, Dr. Hynek told Tom Snyder:

*It turns out that some 90% of the raw reports...we have a nationwide police network an 800 number that the police use and we get reports every night from police departments from different parts of the country...most of them are planets, twinkling stars.....The remaining 10%, those are the ones we go after....*⁸

I can also cite Allan Hendry’s own study that he documented in his UFO handbook. In that analysis of data, he determined a rate of “unknowns” of 8.6% (113 out of 1307). This falls within my values of 3-10%.

As for the bottom number of 3%, I based that value on Allan Hendry’s evaluation of his remaining 113 “unknowns”. He had broken them down into several categories noting that some of these cases were “near IFOs” or “problematic”. If these two categories are taken away, the number of “unknowns”, drops to 45 out of 1307 (3.4%).

I could list more sources but I think one gets the picture here. Are all of these UFOlogists “ridiculous” as well when they use the same value that I gave? Did they throw darts at a dartboard to come up with their values? Why is it that Mr. Friedman completely ignores what the majority of UFOlogists state? Is he “uninformed”, “ignorant”, or is he just trying to misinform people?

The rules for Friedman

In my opinion, Mr Friedman is violating several rules of debunkers here:

1. He does not tell the public that all of these UFO organizations state that roughly 10% of all UFO reports are unexplainable.
2. He chooses to ignore that fact for his own cherry picked values. His mind is made up.
3. He declares me to be ridiculous by ignoring all the information that is common knowledge showing that I am correct. He is attacking the per-

son, which is easy for somebody not interested in looking at all the facts.

4. He makes proclamations by using select numbers without researching other values to see if that data may be in error.

Stanton Friedman declares that only debunkers follow these rules but, as one can see, Stanton Friedman is probably one of the biggest violators. Is this what he calls a scientific approach to UFOs?

The narrow field of view myth

Mr. Friedman once again commits the same mistakes he claims that “debunkers” perform in their investigations. He proclaims that astronomers miss UFOs because most are looking through the narrow field of view of a telescope’s eyepiece while they are out observing. According to him, they set up their telescope and immediately begin peering into the eyepiece. They never look up or do anything else. Such a description is very inaccurate and is a comment made by an individual, who seems to have not bothered to look into this at all. He is just repeating what he has heard from other UFOlogists or what he believes to be the case. I addressed the “narrow field of view myth” in SUNlite 1-2 (page 13) but will reiterate it again here.

Mr. Friedman obviously has never been to an organized gathering of astronomers or even a public viewing party. Very few amateur astronomers are by themselves at observing sessions and, when together, they tend to notice quite a bit. With the increased number of observers in a given location, the less likely it will be that somebody will miss a transitory event. Every year, there are mass groupings of amateur astronomers under dark skies to observe the night sky. I have been to a few over the years and I have never heard of any alien spaceships being sighted during these events. Sure, people have seen unusual events (I have described many previously) but they all could be explained.

Additionally, some astronomers do not use telescopes. Meteor and satellite observers rely mostly on their eyesight. Others rely on binoculars for their observations. I can also point towards the re-

cent production of “all-sky” cameras and meteor networks. How many UFOs that defy explanation have these recorded? I am aware that some cameras have recorded anomalous lights but they seem to have potential explanations that do not involve alien spaceships. Certainly, one of these would record one of these large craft that witnesses report.

Finally, in his argument, Mr. Friedman seems to ignore his own BBSR14 statistics. He implies that UFO events are very brief, meaning, while the observer is looking through the eyepiece, he would miss it. However, BBSR14 statistics show that 47.6% of the “unknowns” had a duration of over a minute (this value does not include the 104 unknowns where no duration was given). The longer the UFO duration, the more likely it will be seen as the observer looks away from the eyepiece because of another BBSR14 statistic ignored by Friedman. The reported brightness for these Unknowns (when a value was given) indicated an object that was very bright (like the moon or reflection of the sun off a bright surface). Any bright object in a dark sky will draw an astronomer’s attention even if he is looking through the eyepiece because it will create shadows/reflections/illumination that will not be ignored. If Mr. Friedman doubts this, I suggest he go to any star party with a white flashlight and turn it on. Even the astronomers gazing through the eyepiece will respond in words that will not be kind.

Finally, Mr. Friedman ignores astronomers that have seen UFOs and identified them. My best example is Mitch Stanley. He was the young amateur astronomer, who in 1997, saw the Arizona UFO V-formation lights (not the 10PM event!) that passed over Arizona through his telescope. He identified them as planes in formation. I discussed Friedman’s dismissal of this explanation in SUNlite 1-3 (page 17). He was apparently ignorant of Stanley’s observations or did not want his readers to be aware of them. In either case he committed one of the sins he proclaims that “debunkers” always commit (research by proclamation or don’t tell the public).

What Friedman is doing here is making proclamations about astronomers without doing any research on the subject. Is this any surprise?

Stacking cow pies

In my article I stated that UFOlogy has made no progress and has not presented any significant data that shows UFO reports are caused by alien spaceships. Friedman fires back,

The question isn’t whether all UFOs are spaceships, but whether any are. Because most people are not 7’ tall doesn’t mean nobody is.⁹

This analogy is a poor one. There is evidence that people are 7 feet tall. However, he should have used a height of twenty feet. That is more in line with the theory that alien spaceships are visiting earth. Like UFOs being alien spaceships, there are no cases that people are twenty feet tall unless you believe in myths about giants.

As support for his claim that there are some UFO reports that were created by alien spaceships, he states that there are “thousands” of physical trace cases, “many” radar-visual cases, and “best abduction” cases that demonstrate there are alien spaceships operating in Earth’s atmosphere. How many of these “physical trace cases” have **been proven** to be Extraterrestrial in origin? How many radar-visual cases have **been proven** to be Extraterrestrial in origin? Has a single abduction case **been proven** to involve aliens? The answer to those questions is **NONE!** What he is doing is piling a whole bunch of unknown cases that don’t prove anything by themselves hoping that the sheer weight of inconclusive evidence will establish strong evidence. This is like multiplying 0 by a million. You still get “0”. However, I like Brian Dunning’s analogy better:

...you can stack cowpies as high as you want, but they won’t turn into a bar of gold. Good evidence is composed of good evidence, not lots of bad evidence.¹⁰

A debate challenge?

Friedman states he is going to expose my noisy negativism and would debate me anywhere. He adds that I am afraid to take him on in such a debate even though he never contacted me to know my answer. In fact, I don’t ever recall him contacting me once in the fifteen

years that I have had my web site on the internet. Is this another case of declaring something is true without any research?

To be honest, I see no reason to debate Mr. Friedman under the conditions he is familiar with. He apparently desires a public debate on a live radio or television setting, where he can grandstand for an audience that will believe him no matter what he states. If Stanton Friedman truly desires a serious debate, I suggest he set up the debate under formal rules and moderated by a panel independent of the UFO field. I also suggest it be confined to one specific case or just a few select cases and not generalities that are ambiguous or open to interpretation. Of course, I need to be compensated for my time and effort. If he so badly wants such a debate, it is up to him to plan and finance it. The ball is in his court.

Promoting proves nothing

Mr. Friedman wants everyone to accept his version that some UFOs are alien spaceships visiting earth. The truth of the matter is that he has failed to convince any scientific body outside of UFOlogy that this is true. Stanton Friedman can complain, demonize, sensationalize, and scream all he wants but he is just trying to divert attention away from this fact. He blames everyone from the US Government to "debunkers" like me for his failure. As Seth Shostak recently stated:

The fact is, if you're certain that our planet is hosting alien visitors, the way to gain acceptance for your point of view is to prove it, not insist that the problem lies with third parties. The blame game is a cop-out.¹

The evidence should speak for itself. Unfortunately, it is telling a story Stanton Friedman does not want people to hear.

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NASA Produces some UFO reports



One of the more obscure NASA launch locations is the Wallops Island flight facility on the eastern shore of the Delmar Peninsula. On March 27th, NASA launched what they called the "Anomalous transport rocket experiment" (ATREX) about 5AM local time. The experiment involved launching five different rockets into the upper atmosphere, 80 seconds apart, to different altitudes. When they reached their required altitude, they released trimethyl aluminum (TMA), which produced milky white clouds that could be used to evaluate the upper atmosphere. As always, these events are spectacular and were seen over a wide area from the Carolinas to New England. Despite being launched early in the morning, there were a few UFO reports in the MUFON database.

Two of the more accurate reports came from Wilmington, PA and Johnston, Rhode Island. Both observers were pretty accurate in their observations. However, two of the reports were tainted by the witness' excitement. The first of these was from Katonah, NY. This individual was driving south on 684 southbound, when they noticed two balls of light leaving clouds behind. The lights were reported moving erratically and performed some sort of "dance". They reported being "terrified" by the event. The observer in Newville, PA was the other report that was influenced by the witness' emotion. According to that report, the lights changed directions several times. The individual reported they were scared and rushed home.

I hope that MUFON investigators identify these reports for the witnesses. It is interesting that two of the four reports involved emotional reports that could be hard to explain if the investigators take the witnesses' description at face value and are unaware of the ATREX test.

UFOs on the tube

NASA: The Unexplained Files

The latest installment of UFO programs from the Science Channel was another unimpressive effort. A great number of important points were omitted, overlooked, or ignored for some of these cases, which misled the viewer that there were alien spaceships watching our efforts in space.

The show started with the "fireflies" around Friendship 7. Bruce Bleakley, the director of the Frontiers of Flight museum, stated that nobody ever was able to figure them out, which really is not correct. I thought it was always understood they were just ice particles around the capsule. Scott Carpenter, in the program "Spaceflight", stated he figured it out when he could bang on the capsule and see the particles come flying off the capsule. Eventually, Story Musgrave was presented and he stated they were probably ice particles. The show grudgingly admitted that "most experts" agree with this solution. Other than Bleakley, is there anybody else with a different answer?

The program then moved on to the Gemini missions. The Gemini 4 mission with McDivitt taking some film of an unidentified object was discussed at length. James Oberg suggested it may have been a classified payload. Nick Pope, who never met a UFO he did not like, got to stick his face into the program stating there was a discrepancy between what McDivitt says he saw and what NORAD said it was. There was some suggestion that the film he exposed had been stolen, doctored, or was missing. However, McDivitt would tell Dr. Roach of the Condon study that it probably was an unnamed satellite.

Gemini 7's "bogey" story was described next. Strangely, Frank Borman's statements about this were missing. Borman told a reporter for air and space magazine in 1998, that he was approached by "Unsolved Mysteries" for a description of this event. Borman responded he would love to come on the air and clear the mystery up and promptly told the producer that they were not UFOs but were simply the describing the booster or part of it. The producer declined having him on the

show.

Other mission "bogey" were mentioned. The Gemini 11 UFO was presented. Dr. Maccabee said it could not have been the Proton 3 rocket based on the orbital data. I did not see it mentioned but Oberg states that it was suggested by Brad Sparks that it probably was the space walk equipment package that had been jettisoned a few hours before.

The Apollo 11 UFO was brought up as well but that seems to be nothing more than an SLA panel from the S-IVB. Pete Conrad mentioned seeing something similar on his mission on Apollo 12 in the NOVA program "The case for the UFOs". This did not stop the producers from having Pope suggest that astronauts don't talk about UFOs because they are under orders from the government. Pete Conrad stated he was never told to lie about UFOs in the NOVA program.

The highly promoted Skylab 3 case was mentioned as well. The size was estimated at 100 meters by Dr. Maccabee based on the photographic images. One image shows a squiggle while the others show point sources. The squiggle was probably due to the vibration of the camera. Even at 1/250th of a second (the exposure time suggested in the program) some vibration can be induced. I am unimpressed by this UFO as it acted like space debris or a satellite.

The space shuttle videos were all mentioned. This gets to be a tired discussion back and forth between Dr. Kashner and James Oberg for the STS-48 video, which are probably nothing more than ice particles. The STS-75 tether, STS-80, and STS-115 videos were debunked by MUFON's Marc D'Antonio.

Overall the program tried to cram too much into one hour and the presentation was far too one-sided. I was surprised they included D'Antonio's debunking of some of the videos. The producers should have just focused on closely examining a few good cases instead of briefly discussing events that have reasonable explanations.

Book Reviews

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

UFO!: Danger in the air - Jenny Randles

This book came out in 1998 and covered some good ground. Her discussion of many cases involving aircraft and her recognition of problems with meteors, space debris re-entries, and false radar contacts was refreshing compared to most UFO books. While I disagree with some of her conclusions, I find the book well written and willing to explore possibilities other than the ET explanation.

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

Project SIGN Air Force documents 1948-1949 - edited by Richard Hall (FUFOR)

This is a great book if you want to look at all the project SIGN documents in one collection. I particularly enjoy reading the memos in late 1948, where Colonel McCoy was being pushed to resolve the issue from above and was sending all sorts of memos out asking the various agencies if they have any answers. Before the internet became populated with such documents, I found this a valuable resource. Now it collects dust on my shelf because I have electronic copies of all them from elsewhere.

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

The UFO conspiracy - Jenny Randles

I was disappointed in this book when I bought this book in a used book store about a decade ago. Randles spent the first section of the book trying to list the Mantell, Chiles-Whitted, and Gorman cases as "unexplained". It is interesting to also see her defend the Rendlesham forest case and compare the arguments she presented about the lighthouse with her more recent published opinions. The book was written in 1987 and is out of date. It offers very little other than a glimpse into her opinions at that time.