

SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs

We watch the skies seeking meaning. In the end, what we find is ourselves.

Curtis Peebles - Watch the skies

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Cover: A Minotaur 1 launch from Wallops Island, Virginia being visible from Manchester, NH on November 19, 2013. This kind of rocket launch produced a sighting report in February of 1960 that was entered as an "unidentified" in project Blue Book's files.

Left: The planets Venus and Jupiter as viewed in 2012. One of these planets probably played a role in the case I examine in the "UFO evidence: Under review" section.

Tick...Tock...Tick...Tock...

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As we start another year, we are, once again, awaiting the next great UFO announcement. Is it any surprise that the Roswell investigative team (formerly known as the dream team) is promising us some sort of great reveal this year regarding the mysterious slides of a dead alien body? We aren't told exactly when but Anthony Bragalia hinted it would be sometime this year. We will just have to watch the clock keep on ticking as they look for the "appropriate forum" to present their momentous discovery.

Meanwhile, Stephen Bassett shifted the date of shipping his DVD set to congress from October to January 2nd. There appears to be a funding problem and, in mid-December, he was only halfway to his monetary goal. Meanwhile, Bassett is scheduled for the Royal Caribbean Seminar at Sea in April to push his agenda further. One thing I have to credit Bassett with is that he is quite the salesman. The problem is that the product he is selling is very flawed. His supporters just don't recognize it.

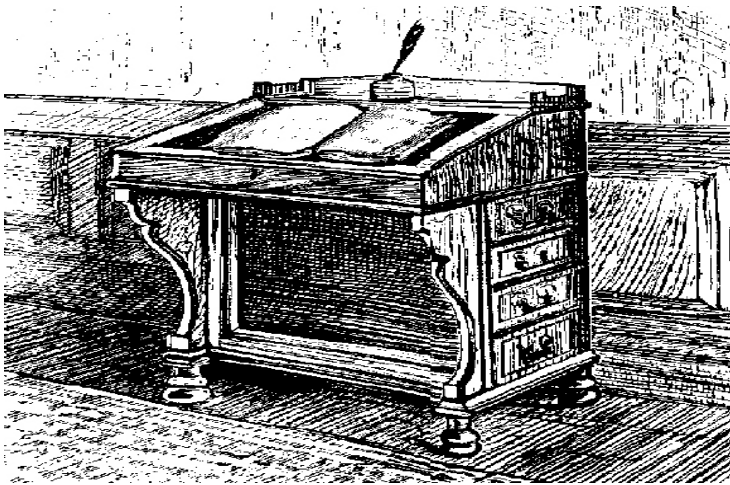
The clock is also ticking on John Podesta, who became a counselor for President Obama. Podesta has a reputation for being a UFO advocate and wrote the forward to Leslie Kean's book. Will his influence prompt the release of all the supposed top secret (and beyond top secret) UFO files that have been hidden from public view? After decades of failed promises by various UFO personalities, will Bassett's push on congress, Podesta's appointment, and the Roswell investigative team's upcoming revelation finally reward the UFO faithful? I don't think so. UFOlogists are notoriously long on promises but are always short on delivery. I don't expect much in the way of results but only time will tell.

On the other side of the coin, Ted Molczan e-mailed me about the my last UFO evidence under review column. He pointed out that the sightings from the southeastern United States had nothing to do with the Discoverer 14 re-entry, which did cause the sightings in Venezuela and Puerto Rico. This probably was a fireball meteor that was independent of the re-entry. Looking back at the Blue Book file, many of the southeastern US reports reported durations of a few seconds and not tens of seconds, indicating the source of those reports was meteoric in nature. Ted also informed me about a new UFO program that will appear on Discovery Channel Canada called "Close encounters". One of the sightings they plan on mentioning is the December 11, 1996 Yukon UFO. As the readers of SUNlite are keenly aware, Ted explained this as a Russian booster rocket re-entry some time ago. Ted, who lives in Canada, informs me that he was not contacted by the producers or anybody associated with the program. Looking at the trailer for the show, we see people like Nick Pope, Leslie Kean, Kevin Randle, and other UFO proponents but skeptics are missing. It seems that this show will be another UFO propaganda film, where skeptical explanations are not mentioned or adequately explained.

Lastly, the beginning of the new year has brought the end to the "UFO Updates mailing list". As I have stated previously, the format of the list had become outdated and people were migrating to other forums/blogs, where it was easier to respond. Errol Bruce-Knapp should be commended for his maintenance of the list over the years as well as recognizing that the list had become lifeless to the point of being extinct.

Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



Paul Kimball e-mailed me and pointed me towards his other blog where he has placed the article on Robert Sa-las. This blog also includes a piece about Roswell that got his Uncle Stan all fired up! Poor Mr. Friedman will never give up on Roswell, Aztec, or his belief that UFOs are alien spaceships. No matter how many lectures he gives or television appearances he makes, he will never prove his claims for as long as he lives. The Phil Klass curse will haunt Stanton Friedman to his grave.

I found the little tit-for-tat on the UFO Iconoclast(s) blog rather interesting. Gilles Fernandez posted an entry about how some of the airship sightings in California could be linked to a misperception of Venus (This posting has since been removed from the UFO Iconoclast(s) but Gilles kept it on his blog). This was followed by Rich Reynolds (RR) posting a commentary that implied that Gilles methodology was not scientific but basically skeptical propaganda. When Gilles

responded and asked why UFO proponents are not criticized the same way, RR specifically mentioned that Anthony Bragalia gets a free pass from him because he is "familiar with his technique". I find that funny because Bragalia rarely, if ever, lists any sources in his articles. He selectively quotes individuals, which results in highly misleading articles that are not accurate. Can one equate his works with "propaganda" as well?

Just a day later, RR posted a link to a web site that Bragalia recommended and RR referred to as "wonderful". I went to the link and within just a few minutes realized that it was nothing more than a hard core UFO proponent site. The site is full of the usual wild stories and videos you can find on various blogs and YouTube. There was one story about Comet ISON having a UFO in its coma! Didn't anybody learn the lessons from Comet Hale-Bopp and Chuck Shramek? A little examination of the image and others taken around the same time demonstrate that the "object" was nothing more than a star. This site was posting numerous stories about ISON being accompanied by unknown objects and behaving like it was some sort of spacecraft. I would not consider this site "wonderful". Instead, I would consider the site worthless and I "wonder" why anybody would consider this a reliable source of information.

Comet ISON sparked more UFO nonsense on another blog, where they played up photographs showing "wings" on the comet prior to perihelion. Astronomers were well aware of this and figured it had to do with fragmentation of the nucleus. This web site chose to indicate it had something to do with a photograph taken a few months ago (which was explained as three different exposures showing the motion of the comet and the telescope) and that this was an indication that the comet was an alien craft masquerading as a comet! I guess the aliens piloting this UFO were vaporized when they flew their space ship too close to the sun.

Thanks to some prodding by Isaac Koi, CSI now has the entire collection of the Skeptic's UFO Newsletter (SUN) by Phil Klass available for download. SUN was Phil's brainchild and is a resource that every UFO researcher should have in their inventory.

Isaac Koi hit another home run when he posted the entire set (12 different CD-ROMs) of audio recordings collected by Wendy Connors. I don't find many of these recordings very important but some are interesting and informative. I am sure other researchers will discover them to be useful in their pursuits.

The seventh anniversary of the Chicago O'Hare airport sighting was celebrated by a few sites. Xavier Ortega reported the event happened in the morning but it really was the evening. In my opinion, the fact that no photographs have ever surfaced indicates that none were ever taken or those that were taken showed something completely different than what was reported. Ortega believes that Dan Aykroyd has them. I find that hard to believe since Aykroyd is a promoter of these sort of things. They would have been presented by now if he had them and they showed something significant.

Curt Collins continues to look into the Cash-Landrum incident. He posted another article using documents from the Texas department of health (TDH). The TDH actually investigated the incident and their findings did not exactly agree with the story as told by UFOlogists. When the TDH asked John Schuessler (MUFON Investigator for and author of a book on the case) for the precise location of the incident, he was vague. However, he told a different story in his book and in television programs. In those instances, he knew exactly where the event occurred. He either was withholding information from the TDH, had later determined the exact location, or was lying about finding the exact location. The TDH could not find any residual radiation or any damage to the stretch of road (as defined by Schuessler) they examined. Whenever the TDH tried to contact Cash or Landrum, they gave only brief answers and then told them to contact Schuessler for further information. It appears that Schuessler gained Cash and Landrum's confidence

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

and inserted himself between them and any investigators. Was this an effort to keep the story consistent? Perhaps they were trying to make sure they did not say something that might be used against them in court. Whatever the reason, it is suspicious. The TDH apparently tried to get medical records of Cash-Landrum but there is no evidence they were able to do so.

Collins would post more on his blog. Among the many articles he posted, I thought these were the most informative:

The DAIG investigation into the helicopters.

The legend of the scorched road.

Betty Cash's medical records.

Schuessler's apparent fabrication (or gross error) that the moon had been visible when it had not even risen yet.

All of these articles revealed that the story about the Cash-Landrum UFO incident, as told by the UFOlogists, has some serious flaws that were overlooked or never mentioned. I applaud Collins for his work and he seems to have demonstrated that the case, as described in UFO lore, is not accurate. That does not mean that Cash and Landrum made everything up. It just means that the story has become exaggerated to the point that it is unlikely that it will ever be solved to everybody's satisfaction.

I have always been of the opinion that it is unlikely that so many military helicopters could have been airborne during the Christmas-New Year holiday stand down period that is common on almost every military base in the continental United States. To fly so many helicopters would require over a hundred individuals if we count air crew and support personnel. These military personnel would have been taken away from their families under unusual conditions. The personnel may not have talked about this activity publicly but between them and their families it would have been widely known. That information would eventually have become public knowledge by this time. The failure to identify where these helicopters came from, and who was flying them, continues to be a red flag regarding the credibility of this case.

Eventually, Curt had Wim van Utrecht an unpublished manuscript he had written and posted it on his blog. Wim suggested that the source of the sighting may have been a reflection of a chemical factory stack venting flames off a cloud of ice crystals. He gave several examples of these phenomenon that appeared to match the description of the UFO. While such an event would be common in colder weather climates and might appear as Cash described, I asked if this kind of effect could be seen as far south as Houston, Texas. Wim would put my objections to rest by showing that such phenomena had previously been seen in southern Texas. However, I am less likely to consider the possibility that this could have produced the physical effects described by Cash and Landrum. They seem to be too far away from the source of the flames to have been exposed in sufficient quantities to suffer the effects described.

Kevin Randle wrote about operation Moondust being mentioned in the Blue Book files. One of the incidents he mentioned was the September 15, 1960 sighting that I discussed in the "UFO Evidence under review" column in SUNlite 5-6. Readers will recall that Blue Book had incorrectly identified this as the remains from the "1960 epsilon vehicle" (Sputnik 4), which was launched by the Soviet Union. Bits and pieces of it fell to earth in late September and early October of 1960 but this specific event was probably caused by Discoverer 14. It appears that the USAF was monitoring Sputnik 4 and was interested in recovering bits and pieces of it that might reach the earth. This was why "Moondust" was probably mentioned in the files from the period in late September of 1960. It had nothing to do with alien spaceships crashing to earth.

Airplane contrails being misidentified as UFOs or bright fireballs continues to be a problem. Two were widely mentioned. The first was on November 20th in Oregon and the second was reported from Tokyo on December 25th UFOlogists sometimes pontificate that witnesses can not make such mistakes but the repetition of such report/videos/photographs indicates that, as most skeptics know, witnesses, no matter what their background/training, can make such mistakes. Why haven't UFO proponents/promoters learned from these mistakes so they don't keep presenting them as some sort of exotic event?

Chris Styles and Graham Simms are releasing a new book about the Shag Harbor event. After reading "Dark Object", and some of the wild stories within that book, I get the impression that this new book will be a Canadian version of "Witness to Roswell". A lot of unverifiable stories, that sound difficult to believe, being used to confirm the belief that something crashed into the water and was being monitored by the Canadian and US Navy. What is missing from their research are the names of the actual naval vessels that were involved. A single coast guard cutter that was known to have been at Shag Harbor is not the same thing as multiple warships monitoring a submerged UFO.

Kevin Randle spent two blog entries discussing the Tremonton films by Delbert Newhouse in 1952. While Kevin originally focused on the statements made a few years after the event by Newhouse that the objects looked like saucers, he had missed/ignored the original statements made to Blue Book that indicated he could not really discern much of a shape or size. I agree with what Dr. Hartmann wrote in the Condon report. He wrote that there was no evidence to indicate these objects were not birds and that they should be provisionally identified as such until somebody proves otherwise. So far, I have yet to see anybody falsify the bird explanation other than falling back to the weak argument that Newhouse and his family could not have been fooled by a flock of birds.

The Roswell Corner

Slides continue to generate rumors but no actual images....yet

Anthony Bragalia posted more about the infamous Roswell slide story. The funny thing about it is that Bragalia pretty much recounted the story told by "Anonymous" at Rich Reynolds blog. How the slides were found and reached the Roswell dream team is very similar to the way "Anonymous" stated on September 24th. To that story, Bragalia had previously commented that this was all "bogus information" and the story was full of holes.

Apparently, the information provided by "Anonymous" was not so bogus after all. About the only thing new that Bragalia enters in this recent entry is that he confirmed the name of the geologist as being Bernerd Ray but this had already been mentioned by others.

Bragalia speculates about Ray's travels throughout New Mexico and Texas but he does not provide a single bit of evidence that Ray was even near the town of Roswell in July 1947. About the only thing that can be confirmed is that Ray was the president of West Texas Geological Society in 1946 (see news clipping to right). However, this society was located in Midland, Texas and not Roswell, New Mexico. The only organized "field trip" by the society in mid-1947 occurred late in May of 1947. It went to various locations in Texas and the Carlsbad area in extreme southeastern New Mexico (see Abilene Texas report of May 18, 1947 to the right). There was no trip to the Roswell area, which supposedly fascinated Ray so much that he was there in July of 1947.

One would think that there would have been a large amount of personal records, which could be used to trace his whereabouts for the time frame in question. The lack of any information indicates there are no records or the records that do exist paint a different picture than what Bragalia has portrayed.

Another item Bragalia mentions in his article is that the West Texas Geological society led research teams into the state of New Mexico because, in 1946, there was no New Mexico Geological Society. What he did not tell the readers is that on April 12, 1947 (over two months before Roswell), 89 geologists met at the University of New Mexico to form the Geological Society of New Mexico. It seems that the West Texas Geological Society was not the only group of geologists exploring the New Mexican desert.

Bragalia's article mentioned that the Geology teams would always carry cameras and film. He specifically mentioned that Kodachrome would be a choice film for this kind of work. I find it unlikely that a team of geologists would use a slow speed slide film for their field work. Not only is the development of slides difficult, prints from slides are just as problematic. Black and white is far easier to work with, can be developed quickly, and produce prints of high quality. A simple dark room could be used for all this work instead of sending off the slides to Kodak for developing and waiting weeks for the results. Additionally, black and white negatives tend to have a better resolution than slide film. While Kodachrome is a very good film, it was better suited for photography using bright lighting.

Of course, we can't forget the provenance of these "slides". According to the story as presently told, they were put away in a special location without one note indicating why they were special or when/where they were taken. One would think that if they were so special, they would be marked and have a note of some kind stating their history. Instead, they mysteriously appeared and quickly found their way to Roswell investigators. We have no idea of when or where, these photographs were taken and, apparently, neither does the "dream team". They have been available for examination for over a year and they still have yet to produce anything to demonstrate these slides show what they claim! Until they can prove that the photographs were taken of an alien body from the Roswell crash, then this is all guesswork. One thing is certain. In order to give these slides credibility, the "dream team" (or whatever they want to call themselves), needs to have an expert, independent of the UFO field, actually examine the slides to determine if they were shot in the 1947 time frame. Having a UFO expert perform this task is not going to be very convincing to those outside the UFO community.

I would not be shocked (assuming the slides exist as described) if they might be a pho-

Bernard A. (Al) Ray, consulting geologist, was elected president of the West Texas Geological Society with W. M. (Bill) Rilebeck, district geologist for Gulf Oil Corporation, vice president and Charles A. Shaw, of the Ford Development corporation, geological staff, secretary-treasurer.

Geologists Plan 2-Day Field Trip In Carlsbad Area

Plans for a two-day field trip in West Texas and southeastern New Mexico, May 30-31, have been announced by the West Texas Geological society, which has headquarters at Midland.

According to J. J. Bailey, field trip general chairman, headquarters for the trip will be at Carlsbad, New Mexico, and purpose of the trip is to study the physical characteristics and stratigraphic relationships of reef structures of the Permian basin in the Guadalupe Mountains of southeastern New Mexico and Culberson county, Texas.

Included in the itinerary will be the highest point in Texas, Guadalupe Peak; El Captain, Salt Flat, Guadalupe Pass, Sitting Bull Falls, and the area adjacent to Carlsbad Caverns.

Invitation has been extended to members of the Abilene Geological society to participate in the trip, and several of the local group are expected to attend.

Plans for a one-day field trip over the lower Paleozoic rocks of the Wichita Mountains near Lawton, Okla., have been announced by the North Texas Geological Society of Wichita Falls. The trip is to leave Lawton at 8 a. m., May 24.

V. C. Perini, president of the Abilene Geological Society, has received detailed announcement of both trips.

tograph of a dead airman, who was disfigured/burned in an airplane crash. There were several military crashes in the New Mexico and Texas region in the late 1940s and early 1950s. I found ten incidents between 1946 and 1951:

1. 3/7/46 - B-29 crash near Los Lunas, NM. Ten fatalities.
2. 1/27/47 - B-29 crash Kirtland AFB. Twelve fatalities.
3. 8/12/48 - B-29 crash four miles south of RAAF. Thirteen fatalities
4. 5/16/49 - C-47 crash six miles northeast of RAAF. Six fatalities
5. 5/25/49 - B-29 crashes 35 miles NE of El Paso, Texas. One fatality
6. 9/15/49 - B-36 crashes into Lake Worth, Texas. Five fatalities.
7. 12/15/49 - B-29 crash 2 miles northwest of RAAF. Seven fatalities.
8. 4/11/50 - B-29 crash near Kirtland AFB involving nuclear weapons. Thirteen fatalities.
9. 1/11/51 - B-29 crash 10 miles southwest of Sequin, Texas. Six fatalities
10. 5/6/51 - B-36 crash at Kirtland AFB. Twenty-three fatalities

If these slides do show a deceased airman, I think it is important for the Roswell “dream team” to tread very carefully here. The 1997 USAF report felt that such behavior was loathsome:

Any attempt to misrepresent or capitalize on tragic incidents in which Air Force members died or were injured in service to their country significantly alters what would otherwise be viewed as simple misinterpretations or honest mistakes

If it was discovered that this is a disfigured body of a deceased soldier/airman, would they publicly apologize and admit their error or would they continue to promote it as a potential alien body?

In addition to a potential disfigured air man being the subject, we also have the possibility that it might have been a dead ape/chimpanzee used for testing at White Sands. The instant we are told that the subject in the slides appear to be humanoid, one begins to suspect these possibilities first before declaring the subject is an alien from another planet as Bragalia has done.

Until the slides are released, most of this is all speculation. Paul Kimball’s interpretation is probably correct in that this hoopla is all about drumming up interest for a potential payday of some kind. Bragalia hinted that this might be the case when he stated that we would have to wait until “next year” (2014) to see the slides. Does this mean a “big reveal” date is being, or has been, set?

General Nathan Twining confirms Roswell was an ET event.....sort of

Tony Bragalia continued to demonstrate that he is gullible enough to believe just about anything regarding Roswell as long as it confirms his belief that it was an alien spaceship crash. This time we are given a story by a woman, who visited General Twining’s son. According to her, Twining’s son stated his father gave him a deathbed confession about Roswell involving an ET crash. Of course, none of this is documented or recorded anywhere. Both of the Twinings failed to write this down in a journal or some other document to “clear their conscience” publicly for all to see. Instead, Twining’s son felt it was safe to tell some stranger he only knew for a short time period even though he appeared to fear repercussions from the evil government! According to Tom Carey, he had also talked to Twining Jr. and stated that he never repeated such a tale to him or Schmitt even though they specifically asked him. I find this all more in line with story telling and, unless one can talk to the primary source, the actual statements can be, and often are, diluted/distorted. Any one of the links in this chain could have misinterpreted what the other stated, fabricated the story, or exaggerated. This is another one of those Roswell hearsay stories that mean absolutely nothing without something more substantial to confirm it. Bragalia’s “research” is nothing more than repeating rumors as facts. Where have I heard that complaint before?

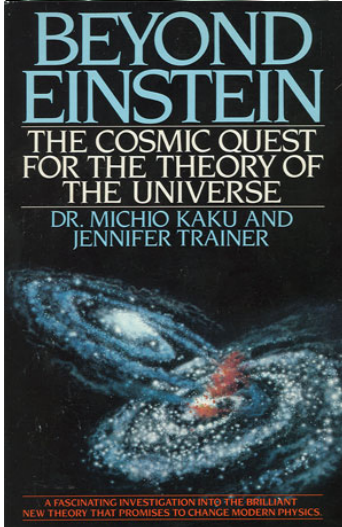
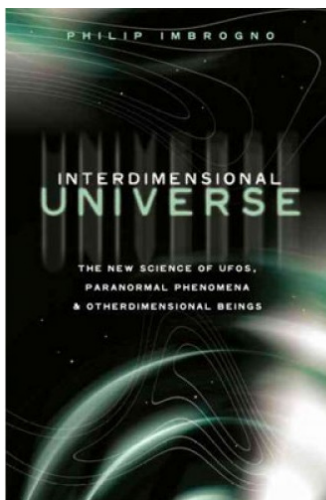
Another weak argument against MOGUL by Kevin Randle

After my lengthy rebuttal in SUNlite 5-5, Kevin Randle has altered his original argument about balloon launches not being allowed at night or under cloudy conditions. His new argument states that because the July balloon arrays were shorter, the CAA allowed them to launch them at night and under less than clear conditions. Even if a balloon flight was only one-third or one-fourth the size of a June flight it still offered a similar hazard to aircraft so this argument is not as compelling as he makes it appear. What Randle refuses to acknowledge is the one thing that significantly changed after the CAA rules were created for balloon launches in the northeast was the location for these launches. As I pointed out in SUNlite 5-5, it was probably the move to New Mexico, where the airways were not so congested and control of the flights were by a different subcommittee, that the rules were relaxed or ignored. Like his NOTAM argument, Randle’s claim that rules were relaxed between June and July is not supported by any documentation. He only makes this interpretation because he is trying to convince himself, and his audience, that he has falsified the MOGUL hypothesis. Speculation is not the same thing as hard evidence. Mr. Randle hasn’t proven anything.

Does Interdimensional Mean Anything?

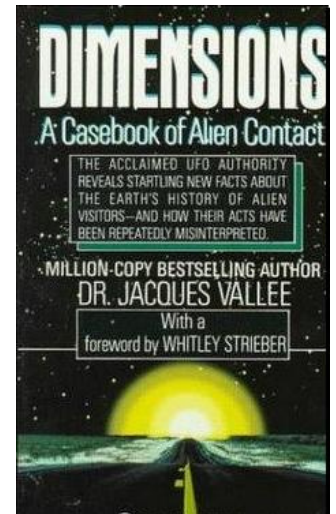
"I have heard of 'the fourth dimension,' but I am going to do myself some credit by not lugging in that particular way of showing that I don't know what I'm writing about." Charles Fort, Lo!

Ufos = Extraterrestrials is far and away the most popular concept in ufo literature. There is another concept that lurks in its shadow, less popular, harder to embrace, but probably familiar to most people who follow the subject. Ufos and or ufo entities are interdimensional, extradimensional, hyperdimensional, come from a fourth or fifth or higher dimension. This is proposed as an alternative to the ETH and is assumed to do away with a number of problems connected with it. The beings co-exist with us in the same place in space-time and so do not need to travel years and interstellar distances to reach us. Extraterrestrials would presumably need bases to operate from and these would certainly have been discovered by now if on Earth, near Earth, or on any other bodies in the solar system scanned by space probes. Places in higher dimensions would be perfectly hidden from us. Interdimensional beings and objects could appear and disappear as ufos sometimes are reported to do by simply turning a corner into un-seeable higher dimensions.



Ufo books have appeared in recent years bearing interdimensional in the title, the most notorious being Philip Imbrogno's *Interdimensional Universe: The New Science of UFOs, Paranormal Phenomena and Otherdimensional Beings* (2008). Jacques Vallee bears some responsibility for raising the concept to fuller consciousness by bringing out a book bearing the title of *Dimensions* in 1988. Though seemingly a minor event since the book was mostly stitched together from prior books, it included a conclusion that was inspired by Michio Kaku's 1987 work *Beyond Einstein* that spoke of superstring theory and its use of multiple dimensions. Vallee borrowed the language to express a new belief that *"the UFO phenomenon represents evidence for other dimensions beyond spacetime."* He explicitly juxtaposes it as a counterpoint to nuts'n'bolts spacecraft. Ufos *"cannot be understood apart from their psychic and symbolic reality... it is a spiritual system that acts on humans and uses humans."* (Vallee 1988, pp. 284-5) He would build on this language in *Revelations* (1992): *"The simple truth is this: if there is a form of life and consciousness that operates on properties of space-time we have not yet discovered, then it does not have to be extra-terrestrial. It could come from any place and any time, even from our own environment. It could certainly come from another solar system in our galaxy, or from another galaxy. But it could also coexist with us and remain undetected. The entities could be multi-dimensional beyond space-time itself. They could even be fractal beings. The Earth could be their home port."* Vallee's rhetoric is distinctly echoed by numerous writers and speakers in ufo culture thereafter. Dimensional language is additionally used by some experiencers disenchanted with ETH to express a feeling extraterrestrial concepts no longer do justice to the surreal, even indescribable, nature of what they have to deal with.

As an unbeliever, I initially liked this development. A primary object of concern has always been that the idea of extraterrestrial visitation is deeply problematic because the distances between the stars imposes significant limitations on what is believable in an extraterrestrial presence on our planet. Interdimensional is implicitly a fallback, face-saving, strategy that admits most of ufology has made a mistake in their speculations and interpretations. It avoids the monstrous taboo of saying their experiences are essentially unreal – we're still telling a vitally important truth and are not crazy. Fine. You will never get the concession of un-



reality.(Clark 2013) That remaining insistence on believing ufos are real and eternally-mysterious is something everyone WANTS to believe. That still partly troubles skeptics. Jung said it back in the Fifties, any news that ufos are not alien is censurably unwelcome. All skeptics feel a duty to play the contrarian when such an overwhelming emotional bias is present.

I started to wonder about that use of the word interdimensional. I had some awareness it was used by New Age or occult writers for the longest time and I also knew of its use in science fiction media. But beyond that, I wondered, does it really mean anything? Is there anything here beyond a simple obfuscation to avoid that taboo of saying ufos are not real? I've done some reading and thinking and I want to offer a meditation on the history and philosophy and maybe semantics of dimensional language in ufo rhetoric.

At its most basic, the term dimension is a mathematical abstraction. While we typically think of it in terms of directions in space -

right-left, up-down, near-far – it can refer to any quantity that varies and that can be treated graphically - past-future, light-heavy, dense-diffuse, bright-dark, hot-cold, smart-stupid, cheap-expensive, and on and on. Equations can treat many variables and one can mathematically treat variables graphed across many dimensions. The recognition that a person can do mathematics and geometries using more dimensions than one could actually visualize has existed since the time of Stifel (1486?-1567) who speaking in *Algebra of Rudolph* referred to going beyond the cube just as if there were more than three dimensions. It was mostly understood that this was purely a mathematical tool. John Wallis (1616-1703) referred to higher dimensions as a Monster in Nature, less plausible than a Chimera or Centaur, “nor can Fancies imagine how there should be a Fourth Local dimension beyond these Three.” (1685) Ozanam, similarly wrote in 1691, “it will only be imaginary because in nature we do not know of any quantity which has more than three dimensions.” Kant (1724-1804) would also affirm in Critique of Pure Reason, “no space has been found having more than 3 dimensions.”

Thinking about geometries where there is a fourth spatial dimension beyond right-left, up-down, near-far became respectable when Mobius began thinking about the topic more systematically in 1827, starting with the proposition that symmetrical three-dimensional figures could be made to coincide if rotated through a space of 4 dimensions. This higher synthetic geometry or hypergeometry became increasingly a subject of fascination in mathematical circles particularly in Germany and western Europe. By 1911 a bibliography of references to n-dimensions work ran to 1835 items. Felix Klein (1849 – 1925) is given some credit as helping in differentiating non-Euclidean geometries in his teaching program at University of Erlangen in 1872 and he is credited as inventing the Klein bottle, said to be the first geometrical figure that exists only in four-dimensional spaces. Klein’s *Encyclopedia of Pure and Applied Mathematics* (1895) proved very influential. Higher-dimensional thinking, particular Riemannian geometry, eventually came to have certain real-world applications in the development of relativity theory. Popularizations of hypergeometry by Henry Parker Manning (1859-1956) notably *Introductory Non-Euclidean Geometry and Geometry of Four Dimensions* – are known to have inspired writings of early science fiction pulp writers. Charles Howard Hinton also achieved some notoriety pushing for awareness of the 4th dimensions. His books included *A New Era of Thought* (1887), *The Fourth Dimension* (1904) and *A Victim of Higher Space* (1914). A delightful website archives Hinton’s educational efforts and contains a delightful warning by Scientific American’s math columnist Martin Gardner against delving too deeply into 4D thinking: http://www.academia.edu/1710283/Charles_Howard_Hinton_Pioneer_of_the_Fourth_Dimension He would know.

Writers of scientific romances were not likely to ignore these fascinating topics. The most lastingly famous is deservedly Edwin Abbott’s *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* (1884) It treated these higher dimensional concepts in an admirably faithful manner. Other popularizations used higher geometry to justify religion and mysticism. Everett Bleiler, the most important chronicler of early science fiction, has listed dozens of stories using dimensional concepts, but has noted that while some fraction like Abbott embraced hypergeometry in a spirit of ‘hard science’ literalism, more often it was used loosely for anything mysterious and colorful, or as an other-world separated by a permeable barrier from normal reality. In the hands of certain hacks it became more or less a hocus pocus word empty of any sensible relationship to the mathematical concepts that gave the words intellectual currency.

It is known that occultists embraced the concept of higher dimensions remarkably early. Henry More (1614-1687), a prolific philosopher, in *Enchiridion metaphysicum* (1671) suggested spirits have 4 dimensions. For this extended spirit he invented the curious neologism “essential spissitude.” The history of the use of dimensions in occult thought is a vast unmapped subject, but a useful touchstone can be provided with P. D. Ouspensky’s 1931 apologia *A New Model of the Universe* that appealed to not only the Fourth Dimension but even six and seven dimensions to account for all the miracles of the supernatural realm like dematerialization, out-of-the-body experiences, and astral beings. From various re-prints I’ve seen I take it to have been fairly well-regarded and it had the virtue of being more readable than many occult writings.

Theosophy connected the concept to extraterrestrial minds well before the start of the saucer era. In 1928 a woman known as Mary began channeling via automatic writing The Celestial Masters. They tell her humanity was spawned from Sirians who migrated here across interstellar space. The book that resulted speaks at an early point that “forth-dimensional activity” is a difficult concept and that is why it is difficult to understand spiritual concepts. We can quote some representative examples: “Death is itself but through into the Fourth Dimension.” “From time to time we can give you glimpses into (the Laws of Love) and into the Inner Meaning of the Fourth Dimension.” “Time meant nothing in the Dimension in which he existed.” The Sirians also show a Christian flavor in saying The Lord of Cavalry is in a Higher Dimension of Consciousness. The hopelessly unreadable resulting mishmash appeared in 1950 as William Pelley’s work *Star Guests*. Some see Pelley as influential on later contactee culture, however unlikely that may seem. Francis Swan, the channeller of Affa who famously was investigated by the CIA in the 50s, directly expresses awareness of Pelley, but in derisive tones of him being crankish and conceited. (Swan letter 1950s) I merely mention *Star Guests* as a sign that dimensional language has been a longstanding presence in extraterrestrial advocacy.

Meade Layne of the Borderland Sciences Research Foundation is arguably the first significant exponent of a 4th dimensional explanation of ufos. Layne saw a spaceship with flapping wings on the night of October 9, 1946 as Earth was passing through the tail of the Giacobini-Zinner comet. The “Kareeta” was made of balsa wood and a gravity-screening alloy and piloted by etheric beings who had been trying to get in touch with earth folks for years without success. A medium named Mark Probert made contact with beings on the other side during a series of ensuing séances. They outlined the details of their manner of conveyance. The salient bits refer to ufos as EMERGENTS that come from “a space-time frame of reference which is different from ours.” There is talk of vibratory rates, dematerialization and rarefactions through interspaces, densities of a sort not defined by normal physics, sensitivity to Earth’s magnetic field, and a statement that spaceships do not cross space but change locations by tuning into the vibrations of the destination along with an astute use of resonances.

A second work under Layne's name *The Flying Saucer Mystery and its Solution*, expands the occult vocabulary to include astral planes and lays the framework for later contactee backpedalling by allowing that saucers come from Etheria and that Venus and Mars support etheric civilizations in communication with chemical civilizations. After probes to Venus made the planet's hellish nature beyond dispute we began to hear contactees speak of this Venus in another dimension. As recently as 2004 one apologist for woolier ufo thought can find saying, "*When you go to any planet you have to tune to the right dimensional level to find anything significant... There is no life on Venus in the 3rd dimension. However on the 4th dimension, Venus is a well-populated, beautiful planet*" (Kephass 2004)

Layne's writings gained some favor among certain occultists. W. Gordon Allen used the elementals aspect.(Allen 1959) Importantly, John Keel overtly adopted and adapted Layne's notions in his theory of ultraterrestrials.(Keel 1976) Keel offered no explicit definition of the word that I know of, but ultraterrestrials were probably intended to be understood as ultraviolet light beings co-habiting Earth and driven to create illusions and revelatory enlightenment by a parapsychical-omnipotent disembodied intelligence. It emerges after he presents such concepts as "*the ufo phenomenon is primarily electromagnetic in origin.*" (Keel, p. 43) and "*Ultraviolet rays... they are tremendously important to the UFO phenomenon.*" (Keel, p. 47) Ufos are extradimensional objects existing at frequencies beyond the ultraviolet part of the spectrum and "when they stabilize within our dimensions they radiate energy." (p. 54) Altering color frequencies signified a "*UFO departure field.*" (p. 54) Their occupants are not made of normal substances.(p. 56.) Salvado Freixado was writing of "*interdimensional intelligences*" in a 1980 tract that had some fame in Spanish-speaking countries.

I feel it is only fair to comment that whatever their other faults in regard to the embrace of theosophy and resistances to abandon ether concepts in the post-Einstein era of science, the higher profile contactees of the 1950s showed notable restraint in regard to dimension concepts. It is hard to find the word in the writings of Adamski, Angelucci, Bethrum, Menger, and Williamson. [Menger uses the word, but the metaphysical concept is inadequately expressed.] That said, a certain percentage of lesser figures did use it. Reverend George King of the Aetherius Society, spoke of "*Spiritual radiations emanating from great beings inhabiting spheres of a higher vibratory octave and different dimensional framework from the one in which [mediums themselves] exist...*" (King 1961) Ernest Norman of Unarius had Venusians talking about life in infinite dimensions and how the "*Sun transmits energy from one dimension to another.*"(Norman 1956) In one interesting variant reported by John Keel, Orlon, a channel in the Ashtar tradition, speaks of saucers existing duodimensionally, penetrating 3rd and 4th dimensions simultaneously.(Keel 1976, p. 46)

There was virtually no talk of dimensions in the first generation of high profile ETH advocates like Keyhoe, Hall, McDonald, Lorenzen, Fuller, Hall, Michel, Binder, etc. Vallee's writings were also mostly devoid of the concept before 1988. Hynek admittedly was talking of interlocking universes as early as *Edge of Reality* (1975) and said this: "*There could other universes with different quantum rules or vibration rates if you want. Or our space-time could be a cross-section through a universe with many more dimensions.*" *Flying Saucer Review* was entertaining such heretical idea as early as Sixties. In the 1977 BBC documentary "*Out of This World*," Gordon Creighton states that 15 years earlier he had come to believe more than extraterrestrials are involved here, but "*other realities*" surrounding us or "*other dimensions if you like*" – *we don't really have the vocabulary for it. Eastern religions have always said many worlds exist all around us outside our visible reality. The facts that entities take blood, semen, and ova are part of the alarming nature of this phenomenon.*"(BBC 1977)

The broader culture provided a variety of markets for the idea. *The Outer Limits* educated people into finer points of dimension theory in an episode called "*The Borderland*" aired December 16, 1963. It showed one of the most vivid, albeit unlikely, aftereffects of dimensional travel when the mad scientist slaps down his hands and shows him having two right hands. Though delightful and dramatic, it is quite impossible as portrayed, i.e. the hand could not possibly survive the twist or be workable - there would be a break in musculature and bone. It is also curious that the testing is funded on the pretext that breaking into the 4th dimension would allow a millionaire contact with the dead. A spiritualist sabotages the effort from the affected competition with her personal business. Quite wacky if you back away from it, but it plays quite dramatically and I still marvel at the visual wonder of it all. It should also be noted the visuals include a separate alien landscape overlaying the protagonist's perception of normal reality.

"*Behold Eck*," a different *Outer Limits* episode, portrayed a cartoonish interdimensional being that had some rather amazing qualities. *The Twilight Zone*, *Lost in Space*, and the *StarTrek* franchise also posited interdimensional realms amid their varied stories. Amid the history of subsequent science fiction media the TV series *Threshold* (2005) gets the highest marks for the finest exploitation of interdimensional concepts on TV, positing the arrival of an interdimensional craft that rapidly changed shape over time. As recently as the blockbuster *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (May 22, 2008) dialogue about a saucer-based alien presence based in interdimensional rhetoric can be encountered. "*Are they from outer space?*" Answer: "*No, from the spaces between spaces*"

One surprising measure of the acceptability of the idea in the ufo marketplace of ideas comes in a mid-Seventies survey of 399 Saucerian Press consumers: 61% included The Fourth Dimension as an acceptable explanation for the origin of UFOs. For contrast we should note 70% regarded extraterrestrials as an explanation, while the Hollow Earth was acceptable for only 29% of that population. These numbers add up to over 100% of course because they are not mutually contradictory. Extraterrestrials can utilize interdimensional physics and some of the planets extraterrestrials come from could be located within other dimensions as Layne, one of Saucerian Press's authors, allowed. Stupple & Dashti express awareness this is a theosophical doctrine embraced by contactees to explain '*discrepant events*.' When saucers change colors and disappear, they go into another dimension. Why didn't astronauts see spacemen on the moon as contactees had? They vibrate on another level of existence. How could Venusians live on Venus when space probes showed it was too hellish for life? It is a Venus in another dimension. They suggest this explanation would gain in

acceptability in the future among both the scientific and mystic elements of Saucerian press audiences.(Stupple & Dashti 1975) For once, ufo writers got a prediction right.

Other signposts along the road: CUFOS's *Journal for UFO Studies*, ostensibly a peer venue for classier ufological research included a paper by Jon Beckjord exploring "*Dimensional Concepts in Relation to Ufos, Bigfoot, and the Loch Ness Monster*"(Beckjord 1983) Abductees would echo their contactee forebears in adherence to dimensional concepts. Among the Tujunga Canyon contacts, Lori Briggs would affirm that she thought her entities were from other dimensions co-existing with earth's sphere and "*part of the life of the earth.*" She thinks they are creating hybrids through transplants and transfers of essences, but not sexual breeding. This was also only one small part of the whole picture, the rest unknown or unstated.(Druffel & Rogo 1988) James Walden learned "*Interdimensional aliens are directing the evolution of humankind.*" He started life himself as a test-tube baby in another dimension. A reptilian interdimensional being also tells Walden he shares in the intelligence of the master race (Walden 1998) In one of the farewell videos of the Heaven Gate suicides, Darwin Johnson, member of the band Dharma Combat, allowed that the Hale-Bopp spaceship may be other than extraterrestrial. "*Call it another dimension; call it another reality, who knows?*"(Davis 1998) Such talk of dimensions cannot be found in the original metaphysical baggage of The Two's cult. Back in the Sixties Applewhite expected the aliens to literally take them to another planet.(Hewes & Steiger 1976)

Judy Carroll, an abductee of the Zetas, when asked if there was intelligent life in the solar system apart from earth, answers "*Yes, I believe so, but it's inter-dimensional.*"(Raynes 2011) Charis Melina Brown, a Starseed, confronted with the paradoxical qualities of abductions by a fellow searcher, is given the solution: "*a lot of what happens on ships is interdimensional.*" You are not literally in 3-D so your internal compass can flavor what you see and maybe you need to face your greatest fears before transitioning to the next level. She brings up the problem that while many people report horrible apocalyptic dreams, equally precognitive people see nothing. Then she realized "*Things happen in different dimensions all the time.*" Apocalypse can be happening right now in some realms, "*but not happening on our physical realm.*" Or happening in a different way as with the Japanese quake and tsunami.(Brown 2012) Dimensions have a very fluid rhetorical utility.

Jeff Ritzmann, of the Paratopia podcast series, is one of the more vocal abductees disenchanted with the ETH. In his experiences he has seen a being exiting from a fractal and communicated with a ghost alien bearing a shroud who talks about fractals and the Universe and even hands him fractals.(Ritzmann 2011) Vallee's revelations clearly found a disciple here.

All interesting in its way, but can science say anything about this? The Michelson-Morley experiment proved there was no ether and light was not a ripple in a spatial medium. There is no a priori reason to think light or any other energy would fail to propagate within a hypothetical 4th dimension, or, indeed any system of higher dimensions. However because of the conservation of energy any energy propagating into higher dimensions would cause energy to fall off much faster in the original 3-D space. If there was a 4th dimension, light would dim not in accordance of an inverse-square law, but an inverse-cube law. If there was also a 5th dimension it would dim even faster, according to an-inverse hypercube law. Add more dimensions, things become even worse.(Buchel & Freeman 1969) It has also been argued that the existence of more than 3 spatial dimensions would prohibit the existence of stable atoms and stable planetary orbits. The ability of electromagnetic radiation to be transmitted without distorting reverberation effects is further evidence for the absence of more than 3 spatial dimensions.

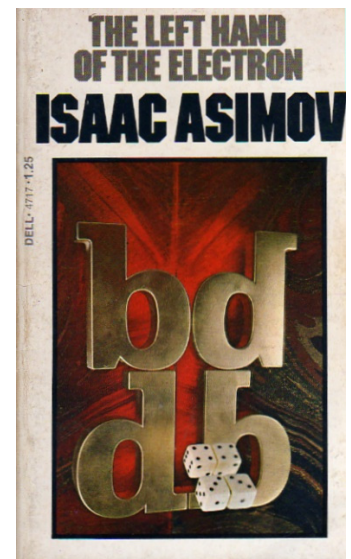
This assumes dimensional spaces more or less closely modeled on the 3 spaces we normally are able to move around in. String field dimensions are significantly different, but, we will temporarily play with the notion these first criticisms are irrelevant for idiosyncratically unknown reasons. We know from certain abduction cases that individuals are returned wearing the wrong clothing or wearing clothing the wrong side forward. We know aliens can do things sloppily. It may thus be within the realm of the thinkable that aliens might return a person hyperdimensionally flipped. They would become a mirror image of themselves. That would be impressive proof of interdimensional transport.

A more disturbing consequence, however, is that a person hyperdimensionally flipped would also be chemically inverted. All organic life on Earth is based on a system of right-handed sugars. Similarly, all naturally-occurring amino acids in all living tissue of whatever kind are left-handed. (Asimov 1972) A human composed of inverted chemistry would thus also be impressive proof of interdimensional transport. But it would also be quite deadly. Invert the handedness and the person could no longer assimilate the organic chemistry of Earth. Simply, they'd die of starvation or be poisoned by the inverted chemistry.

Pondering the matter leads to an even darker danger. If a 3-dimensional being is opened up to a hyperdimensional realm, wouldn't the molecules in fluid suspension suddenly be free to rotate randomly. Returned to 3-dimensional space, half the molecules would lock into the opposite-handedness. A person suffering such a fate would quickly die regardless of avoiding Earthly food.

It is also to be expected that any being that is inherently interdimensional had better have evolved a system of chemistry that is not locked into single-handed systems of biochemistry like that found on earth. Any cells brushed off, hair fallen away, organic detritus ought to be interesting stuff indeed.

Interdimensional transport and beings are thus potentially verifiable. It needs to be pointed out



though that reports of ufos and alien beings do not really jibe with mathematical intuitions of how a higher dimensional beings would actually appear. The relevant thought experiment is to remember Flatland. How would a human body look passing through a plane? There'd initially be shapes representing two footprints, then two circles gradually increasing till we meet the trunk, a system of circles would appear off of the side that merge into circles that gradually enlarge till they meet the torso at the shoulder, then a neck circle that jumps larger at the jaw and finally passing to a diminishing fuzzy edged circle. Imagine passing any earth animal through a plane and the complexity of the slice over time would be impressive. Nothing in ufo reports or entity experiences suggests a proper analogue to this. The cube intersecting with a 4-d hyper-creature should by all rights present an analogous confusion of evolving shapes. This alone suggests the theory has to be wrong in its purely mathematical form.

Now let's go back and remember that while the vocabulary of string field suggests the reality of extra spatial dimensions, those dimensions, as part of the theory are 'compactified,' rolled up in balls 33 orders of magnitude smaller than a centimeter.(NASA) Good luck squeezing those brainy Gray skulls into motherhips that would be roughly the size of a single neutrino.(Wikipedia)

I need to conclude with something perfectly phrased by a critic who reached the right stance before me: *"In all this confusion, the term 'interdimensional' is at best a metaphor for 'extremely strange'. Those who use it to denote something they think is somehow more plausible than 'interplanetary' risk making themselves look extremely foolish to posterity when the faddishness of 'interdimensional' finally shrinks and fades, or when perhaps something is more commonly known about what dimensions truly are. It's a bit of a sad joke, really — that one empty term is set up and against another empty term as symbolizing a counter-tradition, a counter-paradigm when both are based on confusion."*(Bobson 2012)

Hypergeometric Fun Fact

Hud Hudson argues that The Immaculate Conception is not impossible if hyperspace truly exists. A being in the 5th dimension could enter the vagina for the same reason a human can stick his finger in a circle that in Flatland looks impenetrable. All very well, but wouldn't an inter-dimensional cock at least stimulate the G-spot? Inquiring prudes still worry...

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Venus: The debunker's myth?

A recent posting by Kevin Randle on his blog, revealed that Brad Sparks has begun to question various "debunker's" attempts to use Venus as a source of UFO reports. He specifically made the accusation that Allan Hendry either created a hoax or was fooled into repeating a lie told by an FAA official.

Hoax, exaggeration, or true story?

Kevin Randle's blog entry, written by Brad Sparks, took issue with a quote that appears in Allan Hendry's UFO Handbook. On page 27 and 102, Hendry makes the following quote from an FAA official at the Detroit airport:

*Do you know how many times we've cleared Venus to land?*¹

Sparks says the answer to this question is "Zero" because Venus would never respond to any attempt to give clearance so it can never be "cleared to land". He also notes that there is no case number for this incident in Hendry's book so it was never really investigated.

I think Sparks is taking the quote far too literally in his commentary. It appears to have been a poor choice of words by the official or Hendry simply misquoted him. The statement seems to have been made in a joking manner to reflect the observation by Hendry that he was aware that Venus had been misidentified by air traffic controllers. Apparently, Sparks found no humor in it.

In the NOVA program, "The case for the UFOs", Hendry repeats this story with a slightly different description:

*I suppose my favorite Venus story was the time that I was working with Air Traffic Controllers at a large metropolitan airport here in the United States, who were expecting the arrival of a flight in the eastern sky during dawn hours. And...uh... when they caught sight of Venus out the control tower windows, they started radioing to the planet, "clearance to land!"*²

So, it really was not a matter of giving clearance but attempting to give clearance for Venus to land.

It wasn't just Hendry that was guilty of repeating this story. Dr. Hynek also made a similar statement. In an interview with Barb Martinec, which appeared in the La Grange Suburban Life Citizen on November 4, 1978, Hynek was quoted as giving the following statement:

*An air traffic controller told me 'You'd be surprised how many times we've given Venus permission to land, "he said."*³

Was he basing this on what Hendry told him or was he making the statement based on his personal experience? We don't know but it seems that Air Traffic Controllers confusing Venus with an approaching aircraft is something that both Hendry and Hynek believed had happened.

This image to the right shows Venus (top light) and an airplane landing light (bottom).



The 'airship' again

The "airship" was seen again last night. A GAZETTE reporter was fortunate enough to "see it" floating over the Mackay and Fair mountain about 6:30 last evening. It was a very bright light, throwing out rays as if from an electric search-light. It finally disappeared over the mountain, the same way as the other night. We give it as our opinion that the "airship" was the evening star Venus, now so brilliant in the southwestern heavens in early evening. The star, or "airship," is a magnificent sight and well worth seeing. The GAZETTE man takes no stock in the "airship" tale, and, while he may be mistaken, he is willing to stake his reputation as an astronomer that the "airship" is the evening star Venus.

Venus Scares Many

The unusual brightness of the planet Venus caused many excited telephone calls to Los Angeles police. The police department was kept busy explaining that Venus was not a Japanese plane.

Venus Mistaken for Balloon

SALAMAUA, New Guinea, Dec. 24.—When what appeared to be a huge balloon floating over the city, was sighted recently, a local resident chartered an airplane and armed with a shotgun started out to bring it down. At 13,000 feet,

LONDON MISTAKES JUPITER AND VENUS FOR ZEPPELINS

LONDON, Feb. 15.—Jupiter and Venus hoaxed many Londoners last evening who suspected those two planets of being Zeppelins. They were scarcely a degree apart and shone brilliantly in cloudless sky.

ANNAPOLIS, MD., Feb. 15.—Jupiter and Venus in close conjunction and an oddly shaped black cloud caused a resident of Kent island, just across the Chesapeake bay from Annapolis, to become so excited that he was certain he saw a Zeppelin or some other aerial war craft, and telephoned a warning to Captain Eberle, the superintendent of the naval academy.

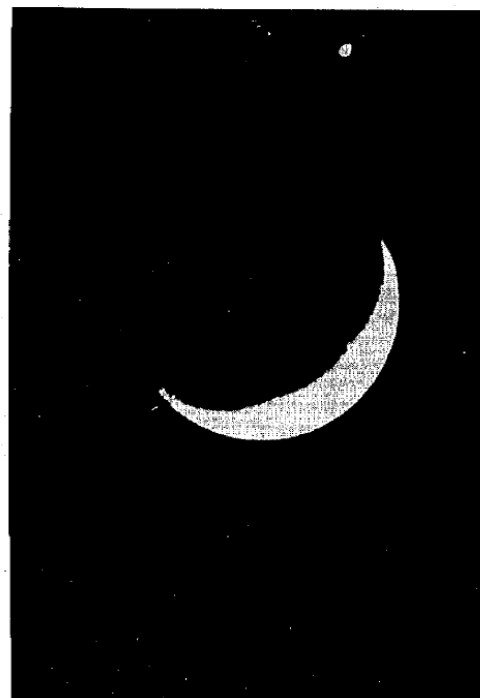
Venus to Blame for Jap Balloon Scares Over United States

SEATTLE, (UPI)—Venus is partially to blame for the rush of Jap balloon scares in the United States. At least, that's the belief of Seattle Meteorologist H. R. McQueen.

He says hundreds of Washington residents in the Seattle, Tacoma and Spokane area phoned authorities last night reporting a Jap balloon near the moon.

However, McQueen says it was only Venus making her appearance. He adds that like all women she's never punctual, but easily forgiven.

Venus has also been mistaken for a Jap balloon in other parts of the country. Residents of Arizona and Wisconsin recently reported Jap balloons in the air over each of the states. In each case, it turned out to be Venus.



(Tribune photo by Paul Moloney)

Not Apollo But Venus

NORAD Explains Sky's Bright Light

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — The North American Air Defense Command says that a bright light seen above the moon Sunday night posed no threat—it was the planet Venus.

"We've gotten calls from people saying they seen an 'airship' on H," a NORAD spokesman said. "It's not so and it's nothing to worry about."

The bright planet was seen by persons in several different parts of the country during the evening hours. In Arizona, some telephone callers feared the moon was breaking up or that an object was about to strike the moon. Others said they thought it was the Apollo 16 spacecraft.

In Cambridge, Mass., the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory's satellite tracking service had said that close proximity of Venus and Mars, as viewed from earth, would be visible Sunday near the moon.

The observatory said the phenomenon was the highlight of a week of celestial events where Venus, Saturn, Mars and a bright star cluster were within a few degrees of each other as viewed from earth, creating a single bright light in the skies.

Dr. Bart J. Bok, University of Arizona astronomer, noted that the moon and Venus line up 17 times a year but rarely are viewed together because this usually occurs during bright daylight or is visible only in remote areas of the earth.

Some examples of Venus being mistaken for something other than a celestial object. Going from top to bottom and left to right we see that Venus was mistaken for an airship¹, a Japanese plane at night², a high altitude balloon³, A Zeppelin⁴, Japanese Balloon Bombs⁵, and Apollo 16/a piece of the moon/or an object going to strike the moon⁶.

Sparks has suggested that because there are no specifics of these events, the case may be a hoax perpetrated by Hendry or the air traffic controller. The objective of this hoax was to humiliate UFO witnesses. I agree with Sparks that there are no specifics here and it is nothing more than an anecdotal claim. However, to draw the conclusion that this was some sort of hoax, without any evidence other than belief, is not looking at this objectively.

I find it hard to believe that Hendry, Hynek, or the unnamed Air Traffic Controller/FAA official were thinking of ways to humiliate UFO witnesses when they made this statement. It seems more likely that the individual was telling Hendry or Hynek that they sometimes did confuse Venus for the landing lights of an airplane.

A brief history of Venus misidentified

Venus started to play a role as a misidentified object starting with the advent of the aviation era (see newspaper clippings above). During the airship wave of 1897, there were several reports that were made that indicated Venus was a source. Witnesses, who heard about these "airships" in the news papers, went outside in the evening, looked up, and saw the planet prominent in the western evening sky. Like today, the "man in the street", was probably not aware of what was visible in the evening sky. When you look for an "airship" with an electric light and see a bright light in the sky, it was easy to draw the conclusion that Venus was the "airship" light. Venus does not explain all the airship sightings but there are too many coincidences to ignore the possibility that some of these sightings were of Venus.

During both World Wars, Venus was misidentified as a plane, balloon, or Zeppelin. Witnesses were more than willing to believe that Venus was a hostile aircraft of some kind. There are examples of ships and bomber crews attempting to shoot down Venus thinking it was some sort of enemy aircraft. Nervous airmen, sailors, and civilians, who were concerned about enemy aircraft saw the planet and determined it to be what they feared.

My first exposure to how Venus could be misidentified occurred shortly after I began to become involved in amateur astronomy.

On April 16, 1972, Apollo 16 had been launched and was on its way to the moon. That evening, Venus was close to the crescent moon. I remember seeing this and reading the papers the next day, where many people across the nation thought they had seen the Apollo 16 capsule on the way to the moon. Others thought it was something else. Like the examples involving the airship waves and World Wars, people saw what they wanted to see. Is it any surprise that people, who want to see UFOs are going to misidentify Venus as a UFO or, in the case of Hendry/Hynek’s anecdote, a potential aircraft lining up for a landing?

Venus as a UFO report generator

Sparks’ article seems to imply that whatever Hendry wrote about UFOs can not be trusted. This would include the fact that a great many of Hendry’s UFO cases were determined to be stars and planets. Venus being a UFO report generator is not just something that has been mentioned only by Hendry. I have found several prominent UFOlogists agree with this conclusion over the years based on their own personal experience.

- Jaques Vallee - *No single object has been misinterpreted as a ‘flying saucer’ more often than the planet Venus.*¹⁰
- Raymond Fowler - *The four brightest planets - Venus, Jupiter, Mars and Saturn - are also often reported as UFOs. Of these four, Venus is the chief culprit....*¹¹
- Frank Salisbury - *Many of the UFOs I have studied have turned out to be the planet Venus; other stars and planets have sometimes accounted for other UFOs.*¹²

It has been my opinion that when Venus is prominent in the evening sky a certain percentage of UFO reports are probably caused by it. However, is this just an opinion or is it a fact? Unfortunately, the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) and National UFO Reporting Center (NUFORC), who have UFO databases available on-line, do not list any conclusions to their investigations of these UFO reports. In order to see how often Venus was possibly reported as a UFO, I chose to examine these databases.



I went to the NUFORC and MUFON web sites to examine the reports between October 1 and 14, 2013. As an additional test, I examined the reports submitted to NUFORC between March 7 and 17th of 2012. During that time period, Jupiter and Venus were close together (see image above) and, in my opinion, should have generated a significant number of UFO reports that would be easy to identify. The results were interesting.

Database	Total number of reports sampled	Number of reports that were probably Venus	Percentage of UFO reports which are probably Venus
MUFON October 1-14 ¹³	224	18	8.0%
NUFORC October 1-14 ¹⁴	350	15	4.3%
NUFORC March 7-17 ¹⁵	204	19	9.3%

Many of these raw reports are missing additional data that could positively identify the source. I tried to take an objective approach in my numbers and I would like to point out that in my first pass of the NUFORC October 1-14 cases, I identified 35 potential Venus sightings. However, after closer examination of the sighting descriptions, I determined that only 15 were “probably Venus” (note: Probably means in my subjective opinion). Many of the others did not contain sufficient information to indicate Venus was the source or the descriptions indicated the report was not Venus.

As one final test, I decided to sample the ten day period from November 26 to December 5th using the NUFORC database¹⁶. During this time period, Venus was approaching greatest brilliancy. Out of 210 reports I examined, 19 were probably Venus. This is roughly

nine percent, indicating that the percentage of UFO reports generated by Venus is a function of when Venus is most prominent.

Larry Hatch's UFO database

Larry Hatch's database is a collection of raw UFO reports, which he has attempted to analyze for trends. One of his most interesting comparisons is his plot of the number of UFO sightings with the proximity of Venus to the Earth. Using a database of 16976 reports, we discover that when Venus was at superior and inferior conjunction with the sun, the number of UFO reports dropped significantly (679 and 633).¹⁷

Venus - Earth Heliocentric longitude	Number of UFO reports	Factor above inferior conjunction
-180	679	1.07
-165	773	1.22
-150	770	1.22
-135	705	1.11
-120	742	1.17
-105	721	1.14
-90	689	1.09
-75	638	1.01
-60	765	1.21
-45 (greatest evening elongation)	841	1.33
-30 (greatest brilliancy)	925	1.46
-15 (evening sky)	873	1.38
0 (inferior conjunction)	633	1.00
15 (morning sky)	693	1.09
30 (greatest brilliancy)	840	1.33
45 (greatest morning elongation)	780	1.23
60	558	0.88
75	477	0.75
90	508	0.80
105	485	0.77
120	563	0.89
135	798	1.26
150	886	1.40
165	634	1.00

Using these numbers, one could draw the conclusion that Venus appears to play a significant role in the number of UFO sightings when it is most prominent. The spikes of sightings around greatest brilliancy are significant and appear to agree with my ten day sample in late November/early December 2013.

Still the queen of UFOs

Based on what many UFO investigators seem to indicate, and what these raw numbers appear to reveal, Venus does appear to play a significant role in producing UFO reports. This does not mean that all UFO reports are produced by Venus. To suggest such is folly. It just means that Venus is something that has to be considered as a potential source when it is visible. There is little reason to reject Hendry's findings about Venus in his book. We can, and should, question the story about air traffic controllers attempting to clear Venus to land but, based on what we know about Venus and UFO reports, we should not consider it a hoax.

More importantly, to ignore Venus as a potential source in any UFO sighting, especially when the witness does not mention seeing it, is ignoring what is known about how witnesses often mistake Venus for something other than a celestial object. When a UFO report is generated, the first thing a UFO investigator should ask is, "Could it have been Venus?"

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The 701 club

Case 6663 Feb 27, 1960 Rome, New York

Don Berliner's list describes it as follows:

*Feb. 27, 1960; Rome AFB, New York. 6:27 p.m. Witnesses: control tower officer Capt. J. Huey and four other tower operators. One light trailing a white fan shape, made a mild descent for 3-4 minutes. 5:55 p.m.*¹

The Blue Book record card gives the following description:

*Round object size of large head of a pin at arm's length passed in front of star Cirus (sic). Elevation 20 deg Azimuth at 170 deg. Moved to 150 deg at disappearance behind cloud bank. Looked like white fan trailing.*²

The duration was listed as 3-4 minutes and the direction of travel is listed as "West".

Blue Book investigation

There seems to be confusion on the part of Blue Book in their investigation. The record card says the motion was to the west but the direction describing on the record card indicates an eastward motion (azimuth 170 to 150). This is confirmed in the UFO analysis sheet where the direction of motion was SSE. They dismissed aircraft (too slow), Satellites (wrong direction - even though they got the direction of motion wrong), balloon (wind heading at right angles to the object), and a mirage (too distant an object and motion too constant). The UFO analysis sheet suggested a possible refraction of the star Canopus, which isn't even visible from this far north.³

The message traffic also corrected another error on the record card. While the record card stated the fan trailing the UFO was white, the UFO analysis sheet stated it was "...white with an orange or red fan shaped streamer behind...".⁴

Blue Book was stumped. However, as we will discover, their investigation was inadequate. There was a vital clue that was readily available to them if they had simply read the papers.

The explanation

Had Blue Book's investigator's simply looked at some news papers for the date in question or contacted NASA, they would have been quick to label the sighting as "Identified".

On February 27, 1960, NASA launched, from Wallops island, a 100-foot diameter test of the Echo balloon satellite. The tests from Wallops Island were referred to as "Shotput" tests. This one was launched to an altitude of over 200 miles and was to test the inflation of the balloon and see if it was possible to reflect radio transmissions off of it. The launch was announced ahead of time with the Associated Press (AP) stating it would be visible from a distance of 500 miles or more in good weather.⁵

According to the Astronautix web site, the time of the launch was 2320 GMT (Zulu).⁶ This is 6:20 PM EST, just seven minutes prior to time recorded for the sighting. This coincidence hinted that it might have been the source of the sighting.

The question remains, could this launch have been visible from Rome, New York, about 400 miles from Wallops Island? The press release prior to launch suggested it was possible but was this the case. Many of the press reports after the test indicated it was visible from most of the east coast. One news report stated it was even visible from Canada!

*It was visible as far north as Montreal as it hung in the clear evening sky, reflecting the rays of the setting sun, already below the horizon at sea level. Druval Airport at Montreal reported many telephone calls from residents who sighted it. Switchboards were jammed at New York, Stanford, Conn. and other cities as ground viewers called to report a "star-like glowing object" or a white light trailed by rocket smoke.*⁷

The Lowell, Massachusetts newspaper contained a local story where residents called the local authorities about a strange sighting in the sky that night. The test was obvious to casual observers in the area. Lowell had a better viewing angle of the launch but was

Officials to Try Sphere Launch

WASHINGTON, Feb. 25 (AP) — Another attempt will be made Friday evening to launch a 100-foot-diameter inflatable sphere from Wallops Island, Va., to an altitude of 250 miles.

THE SPHERE, which would be visible for more than 500 miles in good weather, is a forerunner of the lightweight "balloon" satellites planned for future use as radio communications relay stations.

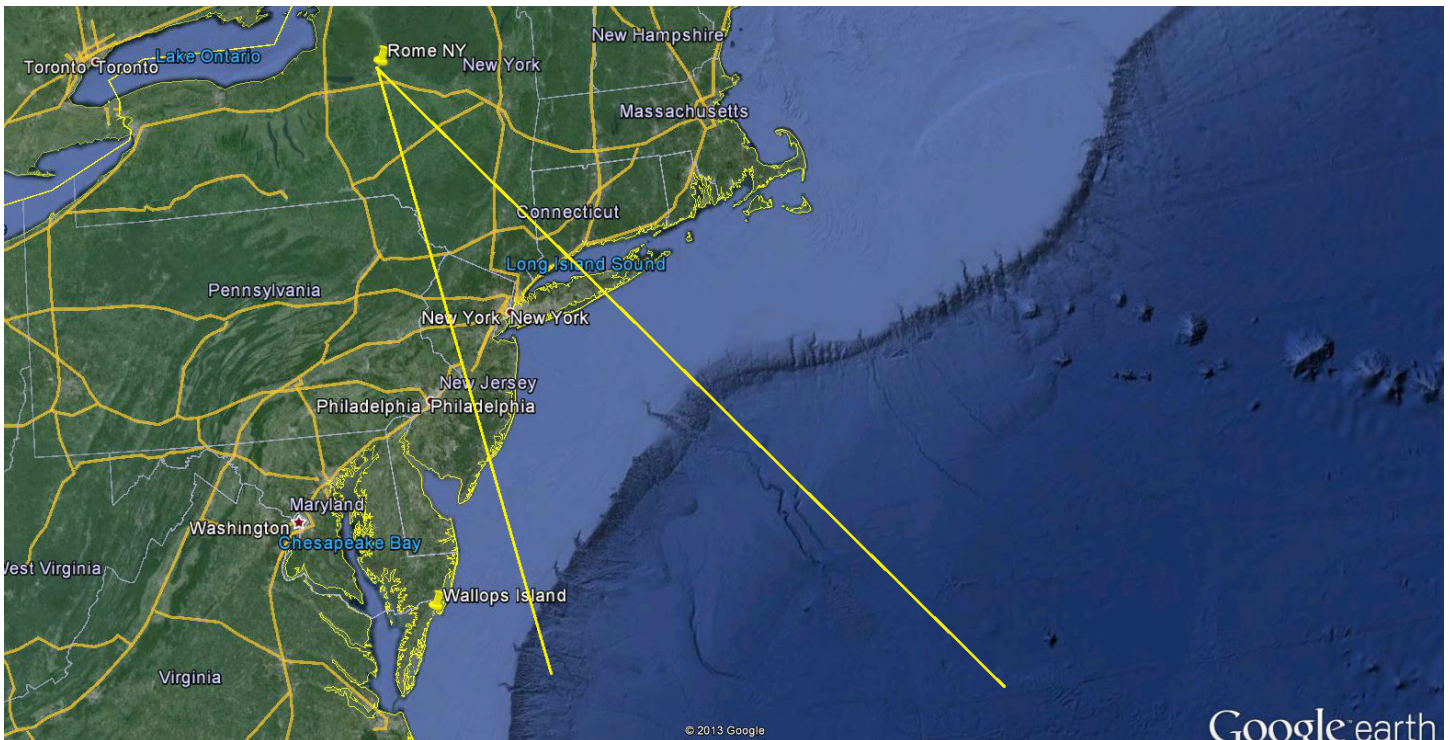
at the same approximate distance as Rome, New York.

LOWELL — Greater Lowell residents deluged police and fire department switchboards and The Sun with telephone calls last night concerning a bright object in the sky which turned out to be a balloon released by the National Aeronautics and Space Agency from Wallops Island, Va.

The NASA announced the 100-foot "radio mirror" balloon was fired into space at 6:20 p. m. to test the ejection and inflation of the sphere, which was folded into a 26-inch container. The 'test' was similar to the ones conducted Oct. 28 and Jan. 16, when the balloon was visible along the eastern seaboard.

Residents in the Lowell area reported seeing the object, bearing a red hue and trailed by a bright flash as it sped across the sky.⁸

So it was visible from these locations far to the north of Wallops island. If one looks at the azimuths listed in the Blue Book file for the sighting, we see that they line up correctly with the trajectory of the rocket launch/satellite test launched eastward from Wallops Island.



What about the red "hue" or "fan shaped streamer" reported by the witnesses? Recall that this is a preliminary test of the, soon to be launched, Echo satellite. The previous two tests had problems with the sphere. On the initial launch, the balloon had exploded after inflating. The test had used water to inflate the balloon and it was believed that there had been a leaky container for the water and it had not filled slowly but rapidly. The water had boiled explosively, bursting the balloon. In order to help identify problems with the balloon, it was decided to add a red fluorescent powder to help identify any tears that might occur. The February 27, 1960 launch did have such a tear in the balloon and it produced a display for observers on the ground to see. Despite the tear, the balloon still acted well enough to be used by Bell labs to transmit a voice message from New Jersey to Massachusetts.⁹

Blue Book classified another sighting of the test incorrectly

It is interesting to note that there is another Blue Book sighting from Vermont on the same date around the same time (2328Z). The sighting was towards 170 degrees and it moved towards the east just like the Rome, New York sighting. It was incorrectly identified as an airplane afterburner since there was a nearby air base.¹⁰ Again, Blue Book missed the most important clues (date, time, direction) that could correctly identify this case.

As was the case in most Blue Book investigations, the degree of effort put into the identifying a cause was usually determined by the officers at the individual commands. Blue Book was far too undermanned to conduct its own investigations and, as a result, mis-identifications like this occurred. However, there was nothing sinister behind these failed identifications. It was more of an apathetic approach to these reports by the investigating officers.

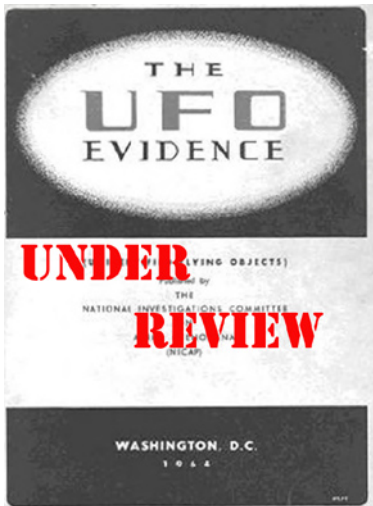
Case closed?

There seems to be every reason to conclude that this UFO sighting was caused by the Echo Shotput test from Wallops island. The times are correct, the direction of observation is correct, and it was possible to see the test from Rome, New York. This one should be considered "IDENTIFIED" and removed from the list of Blue Book "UNKNOWN".

I want to thank Herb Taylor for pointing me towards this case. I had originally overlooked it until he noticed that the UFO report sounded a lot like a familiar IFO and asked me to look at it. Herb's instincts proved correct and the case should now be considered "closed".

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The UFO evidence lists this issue's case as:

February 11, 1953 - Tunis-Tripoli USAF transport paced by UFO. [III]'

Section III is not very informative. According to the NICAP document, a C-119 crew saw a UFO approach the plane, fall back, and then pace the plane for a "long period". Their source is from "USAF Intelligence reports".

Since the source of the information came from the USAF, it appears a trip to the Blue Book files might be more helpful than the NICAP document.

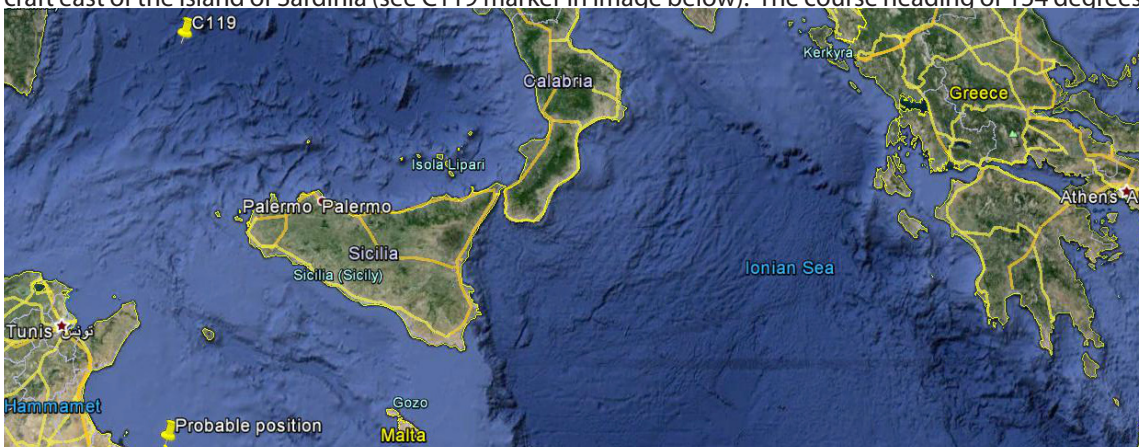


Blue Book file sheds "some light" on the subject

The Blue book file on the case had more information as they included the actual report with some details. These details are²:

1. The time of the event was 2045Z
2. The plane's altitude was 7500 feet.
3. The plane was on a heading of 154. It is not stated if this was magnetic or true (the magnetic declination for Tunis was about +2 degrees).
4. True air speed was 170 knots.
5. Position of the aircraft was 39 degree 40 minutes north and 11 degrees 30 minutes east when the object was first seen.
6. The UFO was seen off of the right wing of the aircraft (starboard side).
7. Six aircrew saw the UFO and described it as a "very bright light with halo of diffused light encircling obj."
8. According to the air crew, the object was observed to "rise and descend" and "approach and retreat".
9. The longest duration of observation was 55 minutes.
10. Four of the air crew was positive it was not a star. The other two did not give a conclusion.
11. There was some light scud clouds in the area at the time of observation.

There are some issues with this report. The position of the aircraft is somewhat confusing. The longitude given was 11 degrees west and 30 minutes east. I took the liberty of assuming this was actually 11 degrees 30 minutes east since 11 degrees 30 minutes west is at a position west of the strait of Gibraltar. More confusing is the latitude of 39 degrees 40 minutes north. This position puts the aircraft east of the island of Sardinia (see C119 marker in image below). The course heading of 154 degrees would not send the aircraft



towards Tripoli. The latitude may be in error and it probably was 35 or 36 degrees and 40 minutes north (Probable position marker in the image). For the most part, it really does not matter if this position is correct. The most important aspect is the heading and the position of the UFO relative to the aircraft.

More confusing is that we don't know if the time given was the start or the end of the sighting. If it ended at 2045Z, we could give a better identification of the potential source. However, if it started at 2045Z, then the event would have ended around 2140Z.

Venus or.....?

Blue Book decided that the pilots and air crew mistook the planet Venus for this UFO.

*Since the sighting seemed to be astronomical in nature, Project Blue Book submitted it to its contract astronomer, standard operating procedure in such cases. It was determined that Venus was probably responsible for this observation in that it appears at an approximate 200 degree azimuth in Libya on this date, and under fair weather conditions would appear very bright. The fact that it remained almost stationary and was observed for a long period of time would support this conclusion.*³

I can understand how Hynek might have chosen Venus but I am not sure where they got the azimuth of 200 degrees. Ninety degrees from 154 is 244 degrees.

The planet Venus is a commonly mistaken object for a UFO and it does appear to exhibit the characteristics mentioned by the air crew. The C119 aircraft was a propeller driven plane that was flying at an altitude where they were exposed to the weather. The plane probably bounced around a bit giving the impression of an object that was still to "rise and descend". The approaching and retreating of a celestial object is also not unheard of especially when there are clouds that would interfere with the object's brightness. It's brightening and dimming would make it appear to come forward and descend. Finally, the "pacing" of the aircraft would be what one would expect. As long as the plane flew on a consistent course, the celestial object would appear to be in the same location relative to the aircraft (see image below of Jupiter off the starboard wing of an airliner).



The big question is, "Was Venus in the proper position to produce this report"? The answer to that one is made difficult by the time given. Venus was at an azimuth of about 276 degrees at 2030Z (see image below left). However, it was at an altitude of one degree and set around 2040Z, five minutes before the sighting either ended or started. If the 2045Z time was the end of the sighting, it is still possible that Venus might have been responsible. This would assume that the time reported was slightly in error or that atmospheric refraction/altitude of the aircraft allowed Venus to be seen for slightly longer before it set for the air crew.



However, if the beginning of the sighting was 2045Z, Venus was probably not the culprit. Instead there was another candidate that was visible in the same general direction. As one can see in the image above, the planet Jupiter was at an azimuth of 264 degrees and elevation of 30 degrees at 2045Z. It moved to an azimuth of 274 degrees and 19 degrees elevation at 2140Z (see above right). Assuming the plane's listed position was in error and the probable position was further south, the plane would be nearing the land-

ing phase of its flight at 2140Z. The crew would have shifted their heading to line up for landing. Wheelus AFB (now Mitiga International Airport), has the main runway going from WNW to ESE. Assuming the plane took up a heading to the east to line up with the runway, Jupiter would have disappeared behind the aircraft. It also may have disappeared into those scud clouds described in the report as the plane descended. In any case, Jupiter would cease to become an object of interest to the air crew and would have seemed to have stopped its apparent pursuit of the aircraft.



The heading of the aircraft and the relative location of the UFO to that heading indicates they were looking west, where Venus and Jupiter were located. As one can see in the diagram above, viewing from the side window towards the right wing, is at a relative bearing from the front of the aircraft of about 110 to 120 degrees. This corresponds to an azimuth of around 270 degrees if the plane was on a true heading of 154 degrees towards Tripoli. This appears to indicate that the culprit was Venus or Jupiter.

Solved?

There seems to be good reason to suspect that this UFO was either Venus or Jupiter. It is too bad that Blue Book did not inquire to gain more specific information to work with such as the beginning/end time of the sighting. Hynek seemed to be confident it was Venus so he may have inquired about this detail and it was not recorded in the file. In either case, both would have fit the description given by the air crew as both would appear to be pacing the plane off the starboard side of the aircraft. The fact that Jupiter or Venus was never mentioned by the crew tends to increase the probability that this was the source. It is very likely that this UFO was Venus or Jupiter and it should be removed from the "Best Evidence" listing.

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UFOs on the tube

Unsealed: Alien files - The top 10 alien encounters

The instant, I saw the title where the term "Alien" was used instead of UFO, I knew that this was going to be torture to watch. The cast of the talking heads included Bill Birnes (UFO Hunters), Steve Murillo (MUFON LA), Lee Speigal (Huffington Post), Nick Pope, and John Greenewald Jr. (Black Vault). Speigal and Birnes appear to have been interviewed via a video chat system. It looked like they were being recorded off a computer monitor and gave the impression of a cheap production.

The top 10 encounters contained some of the staples of UFOlogy but I disagreed with the way most were presented. Number ten was the flight 19 disappearance. There is plenty of evidence to indicate this was a case of pilot error. This did not stop Bill Birnes from declaring it the largest alien abduction of all time! The ninth case was the Battle of LA. Lee Speigal stated that it seemed unlikely that the greatest military force in the world could not shoot down a weather balloon. I think Speigal needs to read some real history about the forces in place at the time and how this whole thing started. They were not the most well trained group of anti-aircraft batteries and the balloon only got people started firing into the sky. The rest was a case of nervous gunners firing at flak bursts, flares, and empty sky. I debunked this case in SUNlite 3-1. The Solway spaceman took 8th place. There is no evidence that the spaceman even existed other than in a photograph. The photographer never noticed him.

Surprisingly, Roswell was only seventh on the list. John Greenewald stated that not many people know the true facts about the case. He is correct but his interpretation of facts and mine differ greatly. What facts we do know about Roswell are often ignored or dismissed with a wave of the hand by Roswell proponents. For instance, Bill Birnes tried to prop up the case with the Guy Hottel memo. Just about everybody but Birnes seems to know that this had nothing to do with Roswell but the show tried to make it seem this was the case.

Number six involved a crash of an unidentified object on a Russian hillside on January 29, 1986. Supposedly the debris was made of rare earth elements. Steve Murillo stated that these exhibited anti-gravity properties. The show states this debris is kept in a secure location in....Las Vegas! The fifth case on the list was the Zamora incident but the show distorted his description of the craft. While he described it as an egg shape, the show insisted it was disc shaped. The program also stated the object passed over his head when it departed. This is not what transpired since the UFO departed away from him. One would think they could get these facts right.

Case four was the Phoenix lights. John Greenewald stated the flare explanation did not add up because his FOIA response stated no planes from Luke AFB were airborne to drop flares. This is true but Greenewald needs to tell everyone that the planes responsible for the flare drop came from Tuscon and not Luke AFB. See SUNlite 2-3 for the rest of the story. The third case involved Travis Walton, which has been hotly debated over the years. It is simply his word that he was aboard a UFO. All we know for sure is he mysteriously disappeared for a few days under unusual circumstances.

I was not surprised to see Jim Penniston appear for the second best case. According to the program, it was John Burroughs, who recognized the ones and zeros as a binary signal when Penniston showed him his magic notebook. I have discussed this case at length in the past and there is good reason to question their stories.

The final case was an incident involving a hotel manager who stated some Men in Black appeared in his hotel lobby after he reported a sighting of a flying triangle in 2008. Birnes and Pope stated they had no eyebrows, did not blink, and one person thought they could read their mind! Luckily the show was only thirty minutes long. Even that was a waste of my time.

Buy it, borrow it, or bin it

Roswell Revisted by Kevin Randle

I was browsing on my Kindle app to see what books might be worth reading and decided to read this inexpensive e-book by Randle to see what he had to add to the Roswell story that was new. The book begins by recounting most of the usual information and arguments that Randle had published previously. Most of what he presents is based on his interviews with various individuals over the years. Something I have previously mentioned in SUNlite is that Roswell authors love to tell the stories recounted by witnesses but won't tell you much about the negative response from others. It would be interesting to know what percentage of the witnesses interviewed actually "confirm" the event was an alien spaceship.

While Mr. Randle is willing to believe those that talk about an alien spaceship crash, he seems to be less willing to accept the statements by people who say that nothing transpired. He even implied that the pilots and bombardiers of the 509th lied to Kent Jeffrey because they were ordered to do so. Isn't it possible these pilots might be telling the truth and that the alien spaceship witnesses might be lying/exaggerating?

The most informative part of the book had to do with his discussion of the Ramey memo. Something that was never widely announced were the results of a Fund for UFO research analysis on the Ramey memo by independent labs. While James Houran and Randle did publish their study involving unbiased readers to the document, the follow-up analysis appears to have not been widely circulated. Randle reports that they concluded that it was impossible to accurately read the memo. Didn't David Rudiak criticize the USAF for making a similar statement in their 1994 report on Roswell?

As an aside, I noticed that, like in the book Crash: When UFOs fall from the sky, Randle refers to me as "Tom" Printy. I guess this is what I get for being skeptical of the case. Clearly, I am on the wrong side of the fence.

Despite this negative review, I feel that it is worth the 99 cents to download it. If it were any more expensive, I would not have wasted my time or money.