

# Feedback

## We won't be fooled again

Sidgwick and Jackson, enterprising publishers who foisted on an ungrateful world *The Sirius Mystery* (a rambling account of alleged contact between the ancient Egyptians and folk from nearby star Sirius), has done it again. We reproduce here the picture that is included, poster big, in its latest epic, *The UFO Phenomenon* by Johannes von Buttlar.

The picture is not captioned, except to say that it was taken by the astronauts on board Gemini 7 in 1965. A reasonable reader, given the title of the book, might be forgiven for assuming that the two white blobs at the bottom of the picture are real UFOs.

Alas, no. Sidgwick and Jackson has fallen for one of the

best-known hoax pictures in ufology. As James Oberg (winner of the *New Scientist/Cutty Sark* UFO essay contest) pointed out way back in 1976, the original photograph—NASA catalogue number S65-63722—shows the nose of the Gemini capsule silhouetted against the Earth. The UFOs are reflections of sunlight from two bits of hardware on the outside of the craft. An unknown forger retouched the photo to make the spacecraft's nose blend into the dark background of the Earth, leaving the two reflections suspended mysteriously in space.

Oberg commented: "It is the desperation of some outsider trying to manufacture counterfeit 'astronaut UFO' evidence, an activity which should not



be necessary if the 'real' UFO evidence were as persuasive as many think." Better luck next time. □