

# Extraordinary claim calls for proof that's equally outstanding

Editor, The Times:

When I picked up my Tuesday evening Times (Jan. 6) and read the headline "We are not alone," I had to double check to see if a supermarket tabloid had been delivered by mistake.

There are no cases (of UFOs) that are simultaneously very reliable (reported independently by a large number of witnesses) and very exotic (not explicable in terms of reasonably postulated phenomena). I am aware of no reliable reports of strange machines landing and taking off.

There are abundant examples of cases where seemingly reliable witnesses mistook military aerial refueling, rocket staging sequences and rocket-propellant venting as UFO sightings.

Our own government has investigated UFOs. They dropped their investigation as fruitless. Cover-up? Recent history has shown that the government is not having much success keeping its secrets to itself. It could hardly hope to succeed in keeping a lid on a cover-up of this nature.

Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof. If I said I have a goat in my back yard that's one thing, but if I said I have a unicorn . . .

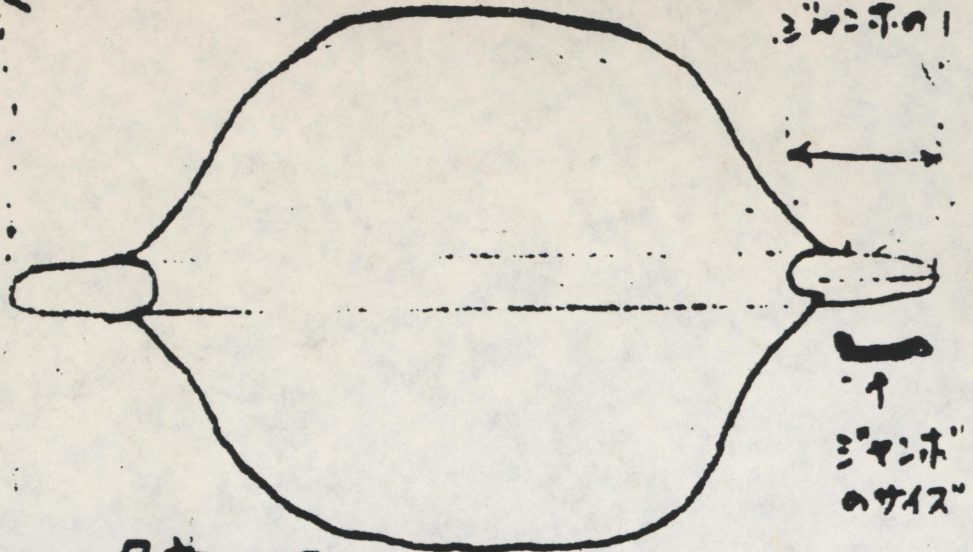
— Martin Haight, Seattle

## How come the story faded?

I have a question regarding the mass media. Why is there such news-media overkill in some areas and relative abstinence in others?

Don't get me wrong. I'm as eager as the next person to read and hear about and see the top news of the day. If the news consists of doctors, diagrams, diagnoses, and endless discussions of the president's colon and prostate problems, so be it. If I'm expected to be fascinated for days about the contents of an athlete's urine, I'll go along. Countless pictures of Oliver North's distressed face when he painfully but manfully invokes the Fifth Amendment keep me apprised of what's going on in Washington, D.C., and I appreciate it.

But what or who is it that determines which subjects the media is going to jump on and beat to death and which subjects deserve little or no attention? It seems to me that a news story of great magnitude is being ignored right now by the mass media of the United States. This is the story that appeared in The Seattle Times on Dec. 31, 1986, about the Japan



どの角度から見ても我々に見えるライトの  
向隅は同じであった。どの角度から  
左右のライトは見えた。

United Press International, 1986  
Japan Air Lines pilot Kenjyu Terauchi drew this sketch of the largest flying object he saw over Alaska last month. Is the press paying too much attention — or not enough?

Air Lines cargo jet crew which sighted a very large walnut-shaped flying object over northeastern Alaska on Nov. 17, 1986. It was described and sketched by the pilot, Kenjyu Terauchi, as being at least twice as large as an aircraft carrier in diameter. It was accompanied by two smaller craft. All the craft were lighted, and they flew with the Japan Air jet for 400 miles. The FAA flight controllers involved saw evidence of the UFO sighting on radar. There was no available explanation of the incident.

Frankly, I expected the public to be immediately inundated by the news media with a myriad of details and interviews of all involved, including pictures of pilot Terauchi, his children, his neighbors, his distant relatives, plus his opinions on everything imaginable, and reruns of all the UFO sightings since UFO sightings first landed in the news. Instead, there has been minimal coverage. I am puzzled that the news media virtually ignore a story that could possibly have the greatest impact on our civilization since history as we know it began. If the press is being denied access to this story, then the facts of such denial should be reported.

Perhaps by the time you receive my letter, the news media will have gotten off the ground and the public will be better informed on this subject. If things go as usual, we may well be up to our goggles in the story. Meanwhile, back to learning about Vanna turning those tiles. And how about somebody giving us another story on the trials and tribulations of Oklahoma's Brian Bosworth?

— Joan H. McPherson, Coupeville

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