

## 'To the moon!': What Gleason saw

Editor, *The Journal*:

Not too many of us realize the historic (and ironic) coincidence in the passing on June 24 of one of America's legendary entertainers.

When he was making history with his charm, wit and comic insight, Jackie Gleason also was making intellectual history, albeit behind the scenes.

He was known to have possessed an extensive library on the controversy about unidentified flying objects. He even subscribed for some UFO-oriented periodicals — including "Just Cause," the quarterly newsletter of Citizens Against UFO Secrecy.

But Gleason's ultimate place in history might evolve posthumously — from an event revealed several years ago by his second wife.

She chose to set down details of it in her unpublished memoirs, some of which she shared with a nationally circulated tabloid.

According to her account, Gleason had come home one night in 1973 visibly disturbed and eager to unburden himself. What he had seen earlier in the day, he told her, not only confirmed his position that the UFO problem merits serious attention; it also confirmed that our government has been concealing

the reality that some UFOs are somebody else's spacecraft.

Gleason, as his wife's story goes, had just returned from a visit to Homestead Air Force Base, Fla., where, as was prearranged by his friend former President Richard M. Nixon, he was treated to a tour of a secret repository of the recovered remains of several UFOs.

Armed with that sketchy account, I sent a freedom-of-information request to Homestead to gain access to all official records pertaining to the repository and to Gleason's visit. Word came back, of course, that there are no such records — and that the base historian has no record of any visit there by Gleason.

While waiting for a response to the FOIA request, I sent a draft affidavit to Gleason, asking that he execute it as part of the body of evidence being gathered in a

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forthcoming FOIA lawsuit to compel the government's release of all records about UFO crash-retrievals.

Though I never heard from Gleason, I did learn that he had been approached by a third party in the film industry. At this confrontation, Gleason chose neither to confirm nor deny the story, saying that he'd prefer not to discuss it at all.

The way I see it, Gleason easily could have set the record straight in a reply to my proposal or in an explanation to the inquisitive film-industry representative. If the story was a fabrication or misinterpretation on the part of his wife, he now had every opportunity to say so. That he chose not to merely deepens the mystery.

To resolve the issue from another angle, I sent one of my "UFO-coverup whistleblower" advertisements to the Homestead AFB base

newspaper. The ad solicited the testimony/evidence of anyone who could shed more light on Gleason's story.

But Homestead's public affairs officer denounced the ad and prohibited its publication. That censorship figured in the recent lawsuit of Bryant vs. Weinberger, et al., which, on April 15, resulted in a consent judgment barring the military from further interfering with my ad submissions.

Because of that interference, the public has incurred a setback in resolving the Gleason story — for had he seen another published reference to the case, he might possibly have declared, "All right, enough! Here's the lowdown on what did, and did not, happen."

Gleason's death on June 24 denied him not just the chance to clarify his role in the Ultimate Secret — but also the chance to take part in the 40th anniversary of the modern era of unidentified flying objects.

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