

Secret Encounter Revealed Reagan Saw UFO While Flying — And Ordered His Pilot to Follow It

Ronald Reagan saw a UFO during an airplane flight while he was governor of California — and ordered his pilot to follow the mysterious object as it streaked and zigzagged across the night sky.

The phenomenal close encounter happened in 1974, and left Reagan so interested in UFOs that he researched the history of UFO sightings going back centuries!

There's a brief mention of Reagan's sighting in the new book "Landslide: The Unmaking of the President" — and now The ENQUIRER has uncovered the full, fascinating story in interviews with his former personal pilot and others in the know.

Veteran pilot Bill Paynter, who's still flying at 72, revealed:

"I was the pilot of the plane when we saw the UFO. Also on board were Gov. Reagan and a couple of his security people. We were flying in a Cessna Citation. It was maybe 9 or 10 o'clock at night.

"We were near Bakersfield when Gov. Reagan and the others called my attention to a big light flying a bit behind my plane.

"It appeared to be several hundred yards away. It was a fairly steady light until it began to accelerate, then it appeared to elongate.

"Then the light took off. It went up at a 45-degree angle — at a high rate of speed. Everyone on the plane was surprised.

"Gov. Reagan expressed amazement. I told the others I didn't know what it was."

The mysterious object definitely wasn't just another airplane, Paynter told The ENQUIRER.

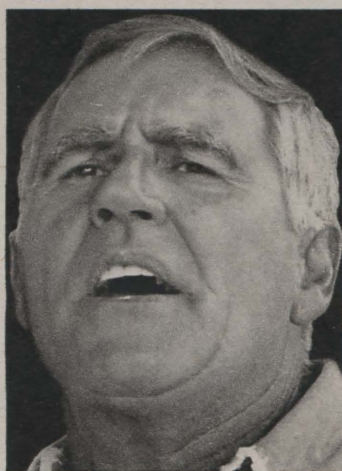
"The UFO went from a normal cruise speed to a fantastic speed instantly. If you give an airplane power it will accelerate — but not like a hot rod, and that's what this was like."

Reagan himself described the sighting one week later to Norman C. Miller, then Washington Bureau chief for the Wall Street Journal, according to Doyle McManus, coauthor of "Landslide."

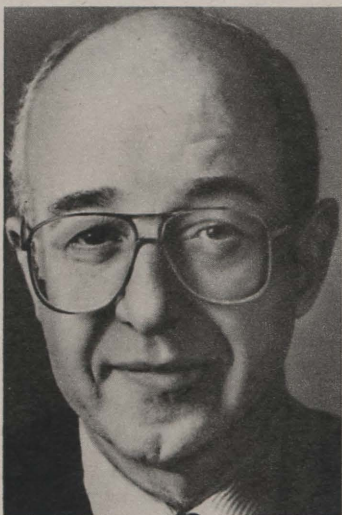
McManus says Miller told him that during a flight with Reagan from Los Angeles to Sacramento, Reagan gazed

'We followed it several minutes. It was a bright white light . . . and all of a sudden to our utter amazement it went straight up into the heavens.'

— Ronald Reagan



PILOT Bill Paynter says Reagan was amazed by the UFO sighting.

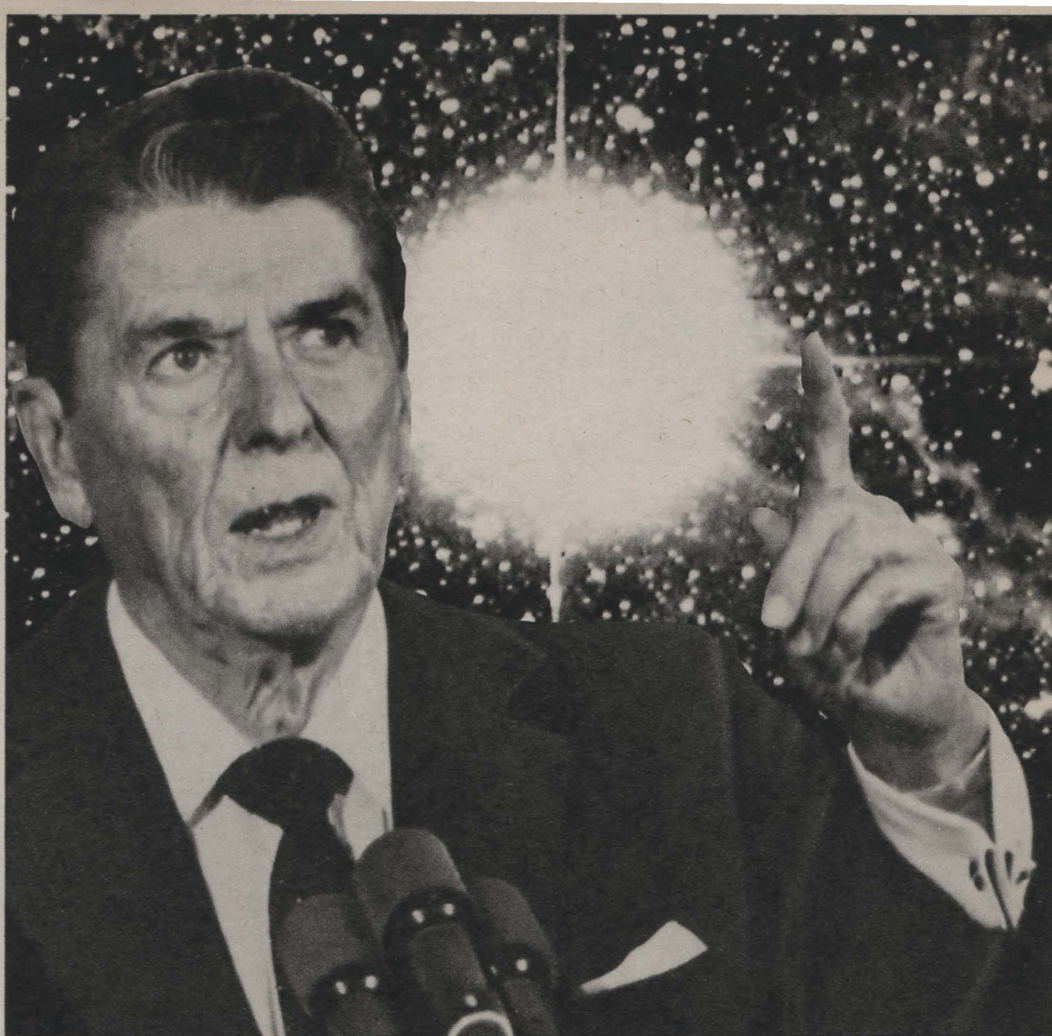


NEWSMAN Norman C. Miller says Reagan told him about the sighting.

out the window and suddenly said to Miller:

"I was in a plane last week when I looked out the window and saw this white light. It was zigzagging around.

"I went up to the pilot and said, 'Have you ever seen



CLOSE ENCOUNTER: Ronald Reagan while flying at night in 1974. After the saw a bright UFO in the California skies sighting, he and Nancy researched UFOs.

anything like that?' He was shocked and he said, 'Nope.'

"And I said to him: 'Let's follow it!'

"We followed it several minutes. It was a bright white light. We followed it to Bakersfield, and all of a sudden to our utter amazement it went straight up into the heavens. When I got off the plane, I told Nancy all about it. And we read up on the long history of UFOs. You know, even the Egyptians referred to UFOs in their hieroglyphics!"

As Reagan was telling Miller about his sighting, "he was constantly pointing out the window and gesticulating about how the object went straight up in the air," author McManus disclosed.

McManus said Miller told him: "I sat there with my mouth wide open at what I was hearing. Then I said to Reagan: 'Are you telling me, Governor, that you believe in UFOs?'

"When I asked him that question, a look of horror came over him. It suddenly dawned on him what he was saying, the implications, and that he was talking to a reporter. He snapped back to reality and said, 'Let's just say that on the subject of UFOs I'm an agnostic (neither a believer nor a nonbeliever).'"

Miller, now national editor

of the Los Angeles Times, confirmed Reagan had told him about seeing a UFO.

"I didn't report the conversation at the time," he said. "I was writing a column at the Wall Street Journal then, and I could never figure out how to get a whole column out of it.

"Reagan didn't go into detail about the research he and his wife had done, because it was at that point that I asked him if he believed in UFOs and he clammed up."

In fact, Reagan had been a believer in UFOs for years before he actually saw one, according to Los Angeles Times reporter Bill Boyarsky.

The newsman said that in 1965, while he was covering

Reagan's campaign for governor, they were riding through a California valley one night when the subject of flying saucers came up.

"It was a beautiful night," Boyarsky remembered. "We were looking up at the stars in the sky, and Reagan told me he believed in flying saucers. He said he had a friend who'd actually seen one."

Pilot Paynter, who now owns a freight airline in Sacramento, said he and Reagan talked about their 1974 sighting "from time to time" after the night it happened.

"But we didn't file a report on the object because for a long time they considered you a nut if you saw a UFO."

**— ALAN BRAHAM SMITH
and KEN POTTER**

Look What's Happened Since You Last Read The Enquirer

LAST WEEK American thrill-seekers splashed and paddled their way through 38,000 white water raft trips. Ten years ago, Americans took only 480 trips a week.

LAST WEEK five more people sued the U.S. Air Force for damages caused by sonic booms — shock waves caused by jets breaking the sound barrier. Based on past

results, the Air Force will pay up on three of those claims.

LAST WEEK American industry used 135 million bolts and large screws to hold things together — that's more than 13,000 a minute. According to one study, about 30 percent of them — or some 40 million — were defective.