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Former Arizona Governor's Close Encounter With UFO

By ABC News 
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March 30, 2007 — -- For six years, Fife Symington was governor of Arizona, a state in America on Earth.

He now says that while he was governor, he had a brush with something not from America or from this planet.

"It was absolutely breathtaking," Symington said. "I mean when I saw it, I said this is definitely a UFO. I have never seen anything like this in my life."

It was an event that is now the stuff of legend, called the Phoenix Lights. There was video taken in 1997 of those mysterious lights flying in formation in the Arizona night sky, and was witnessed by thousands.

"It was moving real slow, and I went in and jokingly said to my wife, 'We have a UFO coming over,'" Bob Nelson, a Phoenix eyewitness, said.

Another witness Thomas Chavez said what he saw that night was "definitely not an aircraft -- an aircraft as we know it."

Symington recently described his sighting of the Phoenix Lights as "a geometric form with extremely bright lights on the leading edge."

That's a different story than Symington gave when he was governor, when he held a fake news conference to present the source of the glowing lights: his chief of staff in a Martian costume.

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"This goes to show that you guys are entirely too serious," Symington laughed at the news conference.

Symington now says that he was just trying to keep everyone calm.

"What I was trying to do was have fun and make a spoof, and stop all the public hysteria that was going on at the time," he said.

There have been reports of other strange sightings in the sky recently, some that are explainable, some that are not.

In Washington in the fall, a fireball lit up the sky. The government said it was the sun reflecting off a plane. In January, mysterious streaks in the Midwest turned out to be a falling Russian rocket.

The Air Force claimed that the famed Phoenix Lights were nothing more than flares that had been dropped by military aircraft during training exercises.

"There is simply no evidence that a spacecraft from another world has ever visited the Earth, none," said James McGaha, an astronomer and retired U.S. Air Force pilot.

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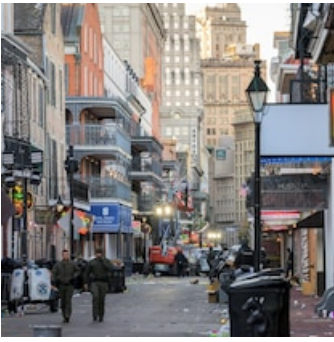
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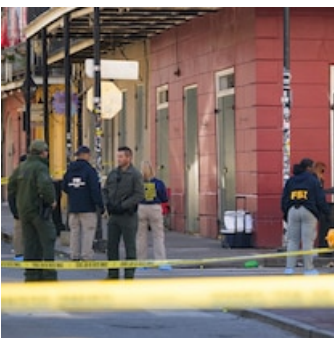
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