

Apollo 14 Astronaut Edgar Mitchell. Credit: NASA

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This story has been spreading like wildfire across the internet, as well as other news sources, which is not surprising given the topic. In a radio interview in the UK, and in a subsequent article in the [Daily Register](#), former Apollo astronaut Edgar Mitchell said he believes there is life on other planets. OK, that's not much of a bombshell. But then he went on to say that [aliens](#) have visited Earth, and our governments have been covering it up. That was the shocker. Mitchell said he was "privileged enough to be in on the fact that we've been visited on this planet and the U.F.O. phenomena is real." While he didn't offer any real facts or say that he has actually seen aliens, he said big organizations will soon be offering full disclosure. NASA officials responded to Mitchell's comments fairly politely with this comment: "NASA does not track UFOs. NASA is not involved in any sort of cover up about alien life on this planet or anywhere in the universe. Dr. Mitchell is a great American, but we do not share his opinions on this issue."

Mitchell was a member of Apollo 14, and was the sixth man to walk on the moon. While he didn't offer any real proof of his claims, he does seemingly have credentials. However, he alone among the Apollo astronauts makes these types of claims, and has been saying things like this for quite some time. He said on the way home from the moon he had a "transformational, transcendental experience." After his flight he started the Institute of Noetic Sciences, which "conducts and sponsors leading-edge research into the potentials and powers of consciousness."

There was another interesting statement by Mitchell during this interview: "There's more nonsense out there about this than there is real knowledge."

Of course, the UFO folks have glommed onto these latest statements by Mitchell, but here's what some of the more reputable news sites have been saying:

[New York Times Blog](#): "While Mr. Mitchell, 77, is certainly entitled to his own views on the issue, the rest of us may need to wait for something more convincing."

[Huffington Post](#): "Mitchell, a member of the Apollo 14 team, has long held these beliefs despite the fact that he himself has never seen neither an alien or a U.F.O."

[NASA Watch's Keith Cowing](#): "I assume you have proof to back up your extraterrestrial conspiracy mongering, Ed."

Robert Pearlman, the editor of [CollectSpace](#), wrote the following on an online forum:

Based on the nine minute call, it (a) doesn't seem to be anything tremendously different from prior comments and writings by Dr. Mitchell, and (b) he isn't actually claiming first-hand knowledge but rather repeating what he was told by others. It is no secret that Dr. Mitchell's Noetic Science Institute attracts those that believe in extraterrestrials and that he has attended numerous conferences where they have been on the agenda for discussion, thus what he says here is of little surprise (and some might argue, consequence).

Irene Klotz from Discovery interviewed Mitchell after his UK radio interview and here's an

excerpt:

Irene Klotz: I wanted to ask you if there was anything about the radio interview you did that was different from what you've said in the past.

Edgar Mitchell: No, there's nothing different. Several of (the reports of the interview) that I've seen come around have some flaws in them. Some of the reports pushed it or spun it incorrectly. NASA had nothing to do with anything I've done. I wasn't briefed by NASA. There haven't been any sightings as a result of my flight service there, so if that part of it comes out on anything you've seen it is just totally wrong.

In this Discovery interview, and in previous interviews, Mitchell has not offered any definite proof of his claims, and said he's only been "told by people who were utterly sworn to secrecy" about alien visits to Earth. Mitchell grew up in Roswell, New Mexico.

All in all, unless Mitchell can offer definitive proof, his claims will have to be put in the same class as anyone else that makes similar claims, despite his background. Even with the prevalence of cameras and video cameras among the general public and with an abundance of investigative news reporters out there (all wanting to break the news story of the millennium) still, no one has been able to produce credible proof of aliens visiting Earth.

As the Bad Astronomer Phil Plait has said repeatedly, the people constantly looking at the skies, professional and amateur astronomers, have made no claims of UFO's or aliens visiting Earth. They know what they are looking at in the sky.

For a dose of reality, please see Phil's take on UFO's.

 **ASTRONOMY**

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