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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 11, 1977

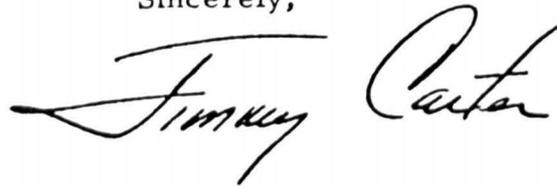
To Chairman Clement Zablocki

This is in response to your letter of February 25, 1977.

It is my understanding that pursuant to Section 662 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, my predecessor delegated responsibilities for reporting to the appropriate committees of Congress to the Director of Central Intelligence. I intend to follow the same procedure.

I have, therefore, asked Admiral Turner to meet with you and some other members of the Committee concerning the questions you posed as well as the broader issues raised in recent stories in the press about CIA activities. As you know, I am particularly troubled by the proliferation of information about sensitive intelligence matters and feel that steps must be taken within both the Executive and Legislative branches to limit the exposure of such information consistent, of course, with appropriate oversight.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Chairman Clement J. ^xZablocki
Committee on International Relations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

11 p 2

60

sensitive intelligence matter 7703112240



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From: DRudiak@aol.com
 Date: Tue, 10 Apr 2001 19:19:37 EDT
 To: SQQUISHY@altavista.com
 Subject: Re: Carter UFO Sighting

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In a message dated 01-04-08 17:12:18 EDT, you write:

- > Subj: Carter UFO Sighting
- > Date: 01-04-08 17:12:18 EDT
- > From: SQQUISHY@ALTAVISTA.COM
- > To: DRudiak@aol.com
- >
- > David
- >
- > I am still working on the Presidents and am writing up a section on
- > President carter's UFO sighting.
- > In response to Sheaffer's Venus theory you wrote a response on UFO Updates.
- > In that response you mentioned that you had a program that would be able to
- > tell where Venus was on the night in question.
- > Can you teil from your program how long Venus would be visible after 7:15
- > before it passed over the horizon? The sky was clear and Carter said that
- it
- > disappeared after 10 minutes.
- > I am sure Venus would have been visible for a hour to an hour and a half
- and
- > would have been brighter as time went on.
- > I would not have disappeared after 10 minutes in a clear sky as claimed by
- > Carter.
- > Hope you can help by determining how long Venus should have been visible.
- >
- > Thanks
- > Grant

Below is a section of my Updates post of May 25, 1998.
This was based on the date supposedly being Jan 6, 1969 (though Carter's UFO report originally placed it in Oct. 1969) and the time being 7:15 to 7:30 pm.

Rechecking with a second planetarium program, I notice I don't get the same values. According to the second program, Venus did not set until about 8:35 p.m. (not 9:20 as indicated by the other program) and was only 12-14 degrees above the horizon (not 21 to 24 deg). On the other hand, this lower elevation angle would further the discrepancy between the UFO elevation (which Carter placed on 30 degrees) and the actual elevation of Venus at that time.

(That's a problem with these planetarium programs -- they don't always agree with each other.)

In any case, Venus obviously did not set for at least another hour or more.

David Rudiak

There are many details in this report that don't sound anything like Venus:

1. Venus never appears to be the "size of the moon" or "slightly smaller than the apparent size of the moon."
2. Venus doesn't loom dramatically in size as described by Carter.
3. Venus doesn't disappear by seeming to move into the distance. At the reported time of the sighting, Venus would have remained well-elevated and visible in the sky. It would not have disappeared. In fact, it didn't set until about 9:20. You can't have it both ways, with Venus supposedly being brilliantly bright and otherwise highly visible (to supposedly account for the report), yet supposedly disappearing as well.

Lesser discrepancies are:

1. Venus was in the southwestern, not western sky (between 237 and 240 degrees azimuth, not 270).
2. If the time was correct, the elevation was between 21 and 24 degrees, not 30 degrees.
3. According to my planetarium programs, Venus wasn't even at its brightest on this date, much less an "unusually bright light." Carter's report said that the "10-12 men all watched it. Brightness attracted us." None of these people had ever seen Venus in the sky before?

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Stephen Bassett "Dark Matter" 07/26/2000
alien zoo website

Guess what? Two new players just entered stage left. Let's take a look.

Daniel Sheehan is one of the leading social activists of our time. He has three Harvard degrees; founded the Christic Institute, an interfaith center for law and national policy; was legal counsel on the Karen Silkwood, Iran/Contra, Pentagon Papers, and Watergate Burglary Cases, and numerous other landmark issues, represented Dr. John Mack during the Harvard Medical School inquiry; has raised millions of dollars for legal activism; is known throughout the world; and currently heads the Strategic Initiative to Identify the New Paradigm, one of six major projects spun out from the Gorbachev Foundation.

In 1977, while General Counsel to the United States Jesuit Office of Social Ministry in Washington, DC, he served as a Special Consultant to the United States Library of Congress Congressional Research Office Project on Extraterrestrial Intelligence, ordered by President Jimmy Carter. Dr. Sheehan was given access not only to the classified portions of the United States Air Force's "Project Blue Book" files but to the confidential report prepared for the Science & Technology Committee of the United States Congress by the Library of Congress Congressional Research Office. During this assignment he saw extraordinary evidence for the ET hypothesis.

On the July 6, 2000 radio broadcast (still archived) of Coast to Coast AM with Mike Siegel, Dan Sheehan committed himself and the prestige of the Christic Institute to ending the government UFO/ET cover-up. The interested public should expect more news of this extremely important development over the coming months.

Now, don't you just know the boys down at MJ-12 central, or whatever they call themselves these days, are just thrilled to hear about this?

Alfred Webre is a Fulbright Scholar, graduate of Yale University, Yale Law School with a JD degree, and the University of Texas. He has been an environmental lawyer, a futurist at the Stanford Research Institute (SRI), professor (Yale University and the University of Texas), author, and social activist. Webre has been a non-governmental delegate to the United Nations and a delegate to the Texas Democratic Convention.

In 1977, while at the Stanford Research Institute, Alfred Webre also worked on the Carter study of extraterrestrial intelligence. The study was to have been undertaken jointly by the National Science Foundation and the Center for the Study of Social Policy at SRI where the author was a futurist and principal investigator. In his new book, *Exopolitics*, he claims that the 1977-78 Carter White House study was secretly suppressed at the behest of Pentagon officials, led by the SRI liaison with the Pentagon.

Carter on
SRI
study?

Dr. Webre will be participating in the new initiative previously mentioned.

The entrance of these exceptional men into the disclosure movement will have several points of impact, one of which being the reopening of the facts surrounding the Carter study. The parallels to the Clinton presidency as relates to the UFO/ET question are eerie.

Carter arrived in Washington as an outsider and governor of a southern state. Very early in his administration he showed unilateral interest in the UFO/ET issue. He made inquiries, started a research study and requested information from several agencies. He was generally stonewalled.

In fact, when he approached the NASA administrator, Fletcher, to involve NASA in the study, his request was rejected. When he approached the CIA Director, he was told to look elsewhere. That director, George H. W. Bush.

The study was closed down early and an inconsequential report authored by Marcia Smith was published.

Carter then came under attack from several directions. These attacks were often of a personal nature. He was called a liar. Attempts were made to connect him to a financial scandal. His family members, particularly his brother, were ridiculed in the press. His Ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young, was

putell

driven out of office.

Jimmy Carter essentially never spoke of the UFO/ET issue again and was voted out of office. A legend has grown up around the last days of the 1980 election. It is called the "October Surprise". Authors have claimed a deal was struck with the Ayatollah Khomeini to withhold the American hostages until the republican candidate was elected. The man allegedly leading the negotiation of that deal, George H. W. Bush, the former CIA Director and Vice President elect.

After William Clinton, a flawed man to be sure, showed formal, unilateral interest in the UFO/ET question: he came under attack as no other president in history. While the effort to limit him to one term failed, he has been humiliated and marginalized as he completes his tenure. The republican seeking to replace him in the White House, George W. Bush, son of George H. W. Bush.

Allow me to put forward a theory for your consideration. Some presidents are allowed to know the particulars of the UFO/ET reality and some are not. Jimmy Carter and William Clinton were not invited to the party. In fact, it was supposed to be George H. W. Bush's party. He lost, but his son is slated to take his place as the disclosure president. The selection of former Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney is in line with that agenda.

The idea that some elected presidents are not briefed on issues of massive importance because certain insiders, perhaps composed of members of the other party, don't wish them to be briefed, is not acceptable. It is illegal, it is dangerous, and it is part of that "dark matter" you need to embrace, if you want to make sense of the last 50 years of history.

Both political parties view Jimmy Carter as one of the greatest ex-presidents in this or any time. He has risen above politics in his post-presidential life and garners great respect worldwide.

The presence of extraterrestrials in our world is bipartisan and affects everyone, everywhere. Maybe the last great act of Jimmy Carter's life is to step into the disclosure arena himself and bring the process to all the people. At this point he is just about the only person left anyone would trust. Jimmy, come on downnnnnnn.

08/06/00 10:43 - Gov. George W. Bush Discusses UFOs posted by unidentified humanoid
Gov. George W. Bush recently discussed UFOs, and his comments were reported on CNN. In addition, the space web site NASA Watch is now reporting Gov. Bush's remarks and is calling the statements "Gov. Bush's New Space Policy about UFO's". This NASA Watch article also has a link to the original CNN UFO story.

<http://www.nasawatch.com/index.html>

08/02/00 01:12 - Re: Be wary of Sheehan posted by stevebassett

Nobody pursues a 30-year career of political/legal advocacy for some of the most controversial issues in the nation without alienating a host of people.

There are no perfect people anywhere in this field and never will be. For the UFO/ET issue to be resolved in favor of the public's interest, we have to have the involvement of people who know how to get things done.

Dan Sheehan is the man who Teddy Roosevelt talked of being "in the arena" - my kind of man. Set a goal, move ahead, do the right thing, and know well you cannot and never will please everyone. It will be for history to judge

<http://www.x-ppac.org>

07/31/00 03:44 - *Be Wary of Sheehan, Please!!!* posted by unidentified humanoid

Stephen, I was very excited to hear the show with Sheehan on the 6th of July. I am a political progressive, and fully support many of the past activities of The Christic Institute, and know they have done a lot of incredible work. However, I have also been in touch with some people in progressive media, who are completely non-plussed by Sheehan. It seems he has made some less-than selfless decisions and done some things in the past that have greatly alienated many very well-respected people he has worked with. I have even been told that he could potentially do more harm than good to the subject. All this is just to say, please be very careful and take a good look at his past activities before jumping headlong into any projects with him. If what I had been told had merely been a disagreement over politics I wouldn't have been very concerned. But this comes from people who share very similar political views, and would be thought to be supportive of his work. That fact makes me take serious notice. I agree, his involvement at first seemed almost too good to be true. It seems possible that may be the case, much to my great disappointment.

Bob Pratt
4623 Holly Lake Dr.
Lake Worth, Fl.
33463

April 24, 2001

Dear Bob,

I am writing about an incident in that occurred during the Carter administration, and which you played some role in. The incident that I am interested in is the famous 1976 article done by the Enquirer, regarding Jimmy Carter and his UFO sighting. I have enclosed some documents from the Carter files which I found during a recent visit to the Carter library. These will give you some idea of what material I have been working with.

Could you clear up the following questions I have.

- I understand that you have stated that Carter didn't quite say what he was quoted to have said. Could you clarify what the actual series of events were that lead to the June 8, 1976 article?
- In April 1978, a year after Carter took office, and almost two years following the Enquire article, over 30 photos were taken of 9000 letters that were in the office of Frank Moore.(head of the Congressional Liaison Office) The claim made with the photos was that they were letters from the public related to an article published in the National Enquirer. As the famous June 1976 article seems to far back to have caused such an influx of mail in 1978, my question is - Did the National Enquire ever do another article on Carter and UFOs in the time period of the photos?
- There is from the enclosed material an indication that you were pursuing the White House on UFOs. Did you ever come to any conclusion about what was going on? I ask this in light of the recent disclosures by Alfred Webre and Daniel Sheehan that Carter was asking for studies by the Congressional Research Office and SRI.

I have enclosed the transcript of a recent question that I put to Dick Cheney. It hasn't made many waves, so you may not have seen it.

I hope you can help. If it is more convenient you can respond by e-mail. My address is gcameron@ms.umanitoba.ca.

Thanks

Grant Cameron
649 Silverstone Ave.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2V8



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From: "Elaine Douglass" <edouglass@lasal.net>
Date: Thu, 30 Nov 2000 15:07:50 -0700
To: "Grant Cameron" <sqquishy@altavista.com>
Subject: Msg to Grant

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Received: from elainedo [207.170.238.198] by lasal.net (SMTPD32-5.05) id A00667402A2; Thu, 30 Nov 2000 15:09:10 -0700
 from mail.lasal.net (HELO lasal.net) (207.170.238.10) by smtp.c012.sfo.cp.net (209.228.13.221) with SMTP; 30 Nov 2000 14:08:25 -0800
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X-Priority: 3
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Hi Grant

A few years ago I questioned Jimmy Carter about UFOs on a radio call in show. You can probably get the tape of that. I was National Public Radio, the Diane Reams or Reems show. Ask to buy the tape of her show with Jimmy Carter, but ONLY if it includes the listener call-in portion.

Elaine

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Cameron,

I showed the photo and WHCA number to Stanhope in audiovisual, but he couldn't identify any of the people for certain, except Frank Moore. He thought the big guy might possibly be Richard Hardin, the president's Assistant for Information Management (he computerized the White House mail). The blond woman he recognized as a White House secretary but did not know her name. The man with glasses he thought might be a postal official.

Carolyn recognized the young guy with the mustache but said he was just a summer intern.

Albert

>>> <squishy@altavista.com> 05/23/01 06:57PM
>>>

> Message-Id:

Albert

The photo number is

C5377-5A

It was taken April 26,78, and is listed in NARA as a photo of 9,000 letters received by the White House.

Your photo people reproduced it for me, so I assume it is a WH photo.

> Grant,

> Carolyn asked me to try to answer you.

She says the guy in the middle of the photo is Frank Moore and the one on the far left she thinks might be Bill Cagle. The others she didn't know.

> Is this a WHCA (official white house staff photo) or one that they snapped themselves?

Do you know the date? if it is a WHCA photo, sometimes we have a guide as to who's in the picture.

> Albert Nason

Carter discusses Mid East, UFOs at town hall meeting

By Mary Palmer

Staff Writer

Student Government Association President Jonathan Freimann called him a man of "peace, health and of principle," and William M. Dooley, the spirit of Emory, hailed him as one of history's great world leaders. For the 16th time in as many years, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter addressed the student body Wednesday night at the Carter Town Hall Meeting.

After a few words from Dooley, Emory's master of mischief and timeless delegate of the students, Carter introduced himself to first-time listeners. Following a joke told by University President William M. Chace about Northerners and grits, Carter told his own version.

"A Northerner goes into a bar in Georgia and asks for a martini. The bartender says, 'Do you want a regular or a special?' The man responded, 'What's the difference?' And the bartender says, 'A special is without grits.'"

Fulfilling an annual tradition, Carter proceeded to explain the Carter Center and invite students to be a part of it.

"It is an institution that is just as much yours as is everything on campus at Emory," he said.

Carter said in the Center's 15 years, it has grown to deal with the topics of "peace, freedom, democracy, human resources, environmental policy and the elimination of human suffering."

Carter said the Center brings people together to focus on curing disease and negotiating peace rather than turning to warfare. Through the Carter Center, people are sent into other, less fortunate parts of the world that other organizations are unable to reach.

"Everything we do is in your name," Carter said to the students.

The former Georgia governor then devoted his time to answering students' questions, or, as he put it, "tak[ing] his life in [the students'] hands."

Vice President and Dean for Campus Life Frances Lucas-Tauchar read questions students had written before the meeting.

The first questioner asked how the media affected Carter's personal life. Though the media has recently come under fire due to the possible involvement of paparazzi photographers in the death of Britain's Princess Diana, Carter assured the audience that the press was beneficial to the presidency.

Said Carter, "Everyone with a public life depends on publicity from the news corps, when it is in control and favorable to our cause," but any negative press is perceived as "erroneous and ill-

advised."

One College freshman asked about a possible government cover-up of information about alien life.

Carter said he was not aware of any, but recounted an experience he had with a UFO. He said it appeared in the western sky before hovering above the tree line where this saucer changed from white to blue to red. Carter strongly emphasized the "U" in UFO, but said, "I don't think there were any aliens on board."

Addressing issues "closer to home," Carter condemned the American people for being stingy, saying for every \$20 donated to foreign aid by a Scandinavian country, the U.S. donated \$1. Also, he said most of the nation's foreign aid does not go to humanitarian causes, but instead to purchase weapons.

In response to a question regarding the nation's globalized business, Carter predicted that unless America reaches out to South American countries and other places around the world, the United States will be left out of the globalizing economy. Carter said the country must eliminate localized trade in order to stay on top.

One student asked about immigrants in southern California who are unable to receive basic education.

"I think that's a disgrace," Carter said. He talked about how hard the immigrants work, saying they are the only people willing to do some of those jobs, so education should be granted to them.

In relation to the high Jewish population at Emory, one student said the recent unrest in the Middle East had a major impact on campus. He asked Carter, who has been a major player in the development of peace in that region, about what the U.S. could do about the faltering peace process.

Carter referred to his term in the White House as well as the Camp David Accords and other peace treaties with which he was involved. He said, though, in the past few years peace agreements had not been as fervent. Carter reasoned that foreign leaders such as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, were not holding true to past commitments. He recommended that the peace process return to the Oslo accords and as a jumping off point for furthering negotiations.

In closing, Carter told the audience he wanted history to remember him as an advocate for peace and human rights. He said he has used the White House as a stepping stone to other ambitions of serving his country.

<http://www.emory.edu/EmoryWire/Archive/091997iss1.html#anchor1906280>

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter Visits for 16th Annual Carter Town Hall

Former U.S. President and Emory University Distinguished Professor Jimmy Carter conducted his 16th annual Carter Town Hall meeting for approximately 1,800 Emory students and staff on Sept. 17 in the Woodruff P.E. Center.

Questions, selected at random from a tumbler, ranged from the light-hearted---"were there any alien cover-ups during your administration?"---to the philosophical. A Candler student asked how Carter reconciled the use of military force with his religious beliefs, and two College freshmen wondered how Carter felt about barring immigrant children from school in California ("I think that's a disgrace"), and the elimination of affirmative action in higher education ("Many students come from schools where their teachers came out of a system that was not separate but equal, but separate and grossly inadequate...).

Asked what he would do if he were president today, Carter said he would reform "disgusting and embarrassing" campaign finance laws, use the country's responsibility as the sole remaining superpower to champion human rights world-wide, and work for peace in the Middle East. As always, Emory students responded enthusiastically to the former president's visit. Sophomores Renita Rathinam and Camillia Lui, enjoyed the questions, particularly those dealing with affirmative action. "The questions were good because this is such a diverse student body. I felt the topics reflected that," said Rathinam.

The event was covered by media representatives from The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Christian Science Monitor, Associated Press and Reuters, among others.

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Trudeau, Truth, and UFOconsequences

by Larry W. Bryant

Under the category "Suspicious" in the 1987 edition of "The Harper's Index Book," the editors of America's oldest monthly magazine observe: "Percentage of Americans who believe files are being kept on them for unknown reasons: 67."

As one of those favored Amerikans (the "k" signifying the gap between the dossier-ed citizen and the non-dossier-ed one), I share the paper-chase company of such "subjects" as (writers) Jack Woodford and Pearl S. Buck and (public figures) John Lennon and retired Army Lt. Gen. Arthur G. Trudeau -- all of whom, for whatever reason, managed to inspire the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation to add their names to its vast list of spied-upon citizens.

Why would F.B.I. officials choose to compile a 121-page dossier on Korea war hero Trudeau? Part of the answer lies in the outspokenness of Trudeau himself, and the other part will remain subject to speculation, inasmuch as the Bureau has chosen not to release 14 pages.

Most of the package -- which came to me via a recent freedom-of-information request -- pertains to Trudeau's passionate conviction that post-war America was being threatened by rampant

That last issue -- which a 1958 "Bufiles" memo reports as, "He frequently became involved in jurisdictional disputes with CIA" -- dovetails with protege Corso's own distrust of CIA intentions and machinations, as published in the latter's expose memoir "The Day After Roswell."

The "Roswell" in question happens not to be Roswell, Ga., but the other town by the same name -- in New Mexico, site of the now-cosmically famous crash-landing of one (or two) occupied flying saucers in July 1947.

How does the Trudeau legacy fit in with Roswell? Simply that he happened to be Corso's mentor when the latter was serving as an R&D officer at the Pentagon in the early sixties. In that capacity, according to his memoirs, Corso received orders from the general to proceed with the surreptitious farming out of Roswellian crash debris to such defense industry giants as Bell Laboratories and the IBM Corporation, so that they could harvest this alien technology into the wondrous items we take for granted today -- from transistors and computer chips to night-vision goggles and fiber-optic cable. The Trudeau-Corso conspiracy, on the one hand, to reap the technological advantages offered by the Army's small

government/defense industry circles. Pressed by his would-be bosom buddy J. Edgar Hoover to provide hard evidence of such a claim, Trudeau -- then head of Army research and development at the Pentagon -- got caught with his security pants down. One 1960 F.B.I. memo relayed a Convair Astronautics characterization of him as "an outspoken individual who has spoken repeatedly through the country as an alarmist and taken to making unsubstantiated, wild statements." Curiously, that same profile would apply to Trudeau's right-hand R&D man, the late Lt. Col. (Ret.) Philip J. Corso, author of the 1997 book "The Day After Roswell." Corso's F.B.I. dossier -- released to me a few months ago -- amounts to about 50 pages. More on that later.

The remainder of the Trudeau dossier deals with such matters as his alerting the Bureau's Washington Field Office to a rumored effort to smuggle, via Canada, certain weapons into the United States for the purpose of arming Black Muslim militants; his providing the Bureau a list of suspected subversives who, in his view, should undergo regular F.B.I. scrutiny; his being recruited as an F.B.I. "contact" by the Pittsburgh Field Office during his tenure as an executive of Gulf Research and Development Company; his first wife's having received an anonymous telephone threat against him and the late Sen. Barry Goldwater; his (marginally successful) effort to get director Hoover to share with him certain insider information on the extent of Communist-led industrial espionage; and his unexpected removal, in 1955, from his position as the Army's assistant chief of staff for intelligence -- allegedly for his having criticized the Central Intelligence Agency's perceived move to monopolize the intelligence field.

portion of the crashed saucer(s) while, on the other hand, to keep at bay both the prying eyes of UFO-info-hungry citizens and the snooping noses of CIA bloater ranks higher in interest than any similarly themed SF novel ever could.

Alas, neither gentleman's dossier contains one whit of UFO-related revelation. This may be due to their agreement, early on, not to create a paper trail by which historians (or those bothersome folks at CIA headquarters) could trace their clandestine (if not illegal) back-engineering of confiscated alien technology. Good job, guys: you've taken part of the Ultimate Secret to your graves (you, Art, in 1991 at the age of 88; and you, Phil, in 1998 at the age of 83).

Now: could it be that somewhere in those sundry deleted dossier pages lies the smoking gun of the Cosmic Watergate? If so, perhaps the F.B.I. counterintelligence hunters-and-gatherers might like to add this article to MY dossier -- you know, the one they started building on me back in the sixties when I was sending probing UFO-related queries to various law-enforcement and military intelligence agencies. But, watch out, Mr. Director! For you see, you might be facing some competition from that ubiquitous CIA octopus, if you can judge by this quote from a 1973 CIA memo reflecting the Agency's testiness about its being associated with UFO research: "...[deleted], in their telephone conversation, suggested that we had not heard the last from Mr. Bryant."

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Carter

>From: John Maynard <jmaynard33@yahoo.com>
>Reply-To: UFOFacts@yahoogroups.com
>To: UFOFacts@yahoogroups.com
>Subject: Re: [UFOFacts] Carter and UFO's
>Date: Mon, 15 Apr 2002 09:10:51 -0700 (PDT)
>
>
>--- jimschilder <schilder20@hotmail.com> wrote:
> > It is said that former president Carter asked former
> > CIA boss George
> > Bush sr about the information that was available on
> > UFO's, and that
> > Bush refused to do so. One of the sources of this
> > story is Daniel
> > Sheehan, who as an attorney worked with the New York
> > Times on the
> > Pentagon Papers.
> > "In 1977, I was contacted by the director of the
> > Science and
> > Technology Division of the Congressional Research
> > Service. She
> > informed me that President Carter had held a meeting
> > with the
> > director of the CIA, George Bush sr, and demanded
> > that he [Bush] turn
> > over to the President the classified information
> > about UFOs and the
> > information that was in the possession of the US
> > intelligence
> > community concerning the existence of ET
> > intelligence. This
> > information was refused to the President of the
> > United States by the
> > director of the CIA. The DCI [Director of Central
> > Intelligence]
> > suspected that the president was preparing to reveal
> > this information
> > to the American public."
> > My question: does anyone know if there are other
> > (better) sources?
> > I mean, this came from someone at the CRS. Got the
> > director the story
> > from a first hand witness, or was it maybe a rumor
> > on the Hill? Can
> > we expect a congressional agency to know all about
> > confidential
> > exchanges between a president and a secret service?
> >
> > Jim Schilder
> >
>Jim,
>
>Sorry for the delay, have been away for the past few
>days.
>
>As regards Carter, if Daniel Sheehan said it, you can
>believe it. Also, I was there at that time and from
>what I remember when President Carter made the request
>through 3 channels after his rebuff from the military;
>Secret Service, to intelligence service channels,
>Congressional (Intelligence Committee), and NSC, to
>the CIA direct. A single response was made through the
>CIA and the reply said, NO! in simplist of terms that

>anyone could understand. The subject was never
>broached again by President Carter or his staff.
>Although, I have met with President Carter several
>times since that time, through his "Habitat for
>Humanities", I can say that his interest is still
>there, but because of the rebuff he will never make
>any further statements publically on this subject, but
>will discuss his personal experience and has done so.
>It is a matter of record.

>
>John

>
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U.S. Defense

On August 17 President Carter vetoed the annual defense bill because it authorized construction of an additional giant nuclear aircraft carrier which would have cost \$2 billion. Carter earlier had derailed the B-1 bomber project, which many members of Congress had favored. Initially, the House refused to accept the veto, but subsequently, by a vote of 234-182, agreed to stop all funds which had previously been allocated for two B-1 test models. Carter also ruled out current production of the neutron bomb, hoping his decision would make a Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty with Russia more palatable.

In a major address at Wake Forest University on St. Patrick's Day, Carter warned the Soviet Union that the U.S. would match Soviet defense spending and military force levels—with or without a new SALT agreement. Despite strong differences among congressmen, the long negotiations for a new SALT pact appeared to be nearing successful completion as the year ended.



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From: "Albert Nason" <albert.nason@nara.gov>
 Date: Fri, 25 May 2001 09:21:04 -0400
 To: <sqquishy@altavista.com>
 Subject: latest on Picture Inquiry

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Cameron,
 I showed the photo and WHCA number to Stanhope in audiovisual, but he couldn't identify any of the people for certain, except Frank Moore. He thought the big guy might possibly be Richard Hardin, the president's Assistant for Information Management (he computerized the White House mail). The blond woman he recognized as a White House secretary but did not know her name. The man with glasses he thought might be a postal official. Carolyn recognized the young guy with the mustache but said he was just a summer intern.
 Albert

>>> <sqquishy@altavista.com> 05/23/01 06:57PM >>>

> Message-Id:

Albert
 The photo number is
 C5377-5A

It was taken April 26, 78, and is listed in NARA as a photo of 9,000 letters received by the White House.
 Your photo people reproduced it for me, so I assume it is a WH photo.

- > Grant,
- > Carolyn asked me to try to answer you. She says the guy in the middle of the photo is Frank Moore and the one on the far left she thinks might be Bill Cagle. The others she didn't know.
- > Is this a WHCA (official white house staff photo) or one that they snapped themselves? Do you know the date? if it is a WHCA photo, sometimes we have a guide as to who's in the picture.
- > Albert Nason
- > J Carter Library

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Former President Carter Details Psychic Encounter



From *Parascope* 1990 #11, p. 10

The federal government's own intelligence agencies are not the only ones who report a growing number of sightings of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) in the United States. In fact, the number of sightings has increased in recent years.

A number of sightings of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) have been reported in recent years. In fact, the number of sightings has increased in recent years. In fact, the number of sightings has increased in recent years. In fact, the number of sightings has increased in recent years.

While speaking before a group of college students, Carter was asked if he knew about the existence of a secret government program to track a campaign promise to decrease the U.S. government's use of UFOs, but never followed through on that pledge, and did not

explain his lapse while in office.)

"I never knew of any instance where it was proven that any sort of vehicle had come from outer space to our country and either lived here or left," said Carter, who was President from 1977 to 1981. He did, however, admit that U.S. military and security agencies conduct active investigations and prepare monthly reports of UFOs.

He went on to discuss an incident in which a "special U.S. plane," presumably a spy plane, had crashed, and a frantic effort to locate the plane resulted in reports that the U.S. knew the plane had crashed in Zaire, Africa, but no one knew exactly where.

Satellite searches yielded no trace of the plane's wreckage, and as an apparent last ditch effort to locate it, the Central Intelligence Agency called in a clairvoyant woman who claimed to have psychic powers.

"I have to say that without my knowledge, the head of the CIA asked her to locate it," Carter said. "She went into a trance. And while she was in the trance, she gave some latitude and longitude figures. We focused our satellite cameras on that point, and the plane was there."

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Psychic helped locate downed U.S. plane, ex-president says

Reuter

ATLANTA -- Would the United States recruit a psychic to help find a secret government plane that had disappeared without a trace over a foreign country?

That may sound like a question best left to the fans of television shows like *The X Files* and *Unsolved Mysteries*. But according to former president Jimmy Carter, not only did it happen, but the psychic succeeded where U.S. spy satellites had failed.

Carter, who served in the White House from 1977 to 1981, told a group of students this week about "a special U.S. plane" that went down somewhere in Zaire during his presidency.

A sweep of the African terrain by American spy satellites failed to locate any sign of the wreckage. So, Carter said, the Central Intelligence Agency turned to a woman in California who was reputed to have psychic powers.

"I have to say that without my knowledge, the head of the CIA asked her to come in," the 70-year-old former president recalled.

"She went into a trance. And while she was in the trance, she gave some latitude and longitude figures. We focused our satellite cameras on that point and the plane was there."

Carter made the disclosure after two students asked if he was aware of any government evidence pointing to the existence of extraterrestrials.

While he said U.S. military and security agencies actively investigate reports of Unidentified Flying Objects, the former president added: "I never knew of any instance where it was proven that any sort of vehicle had come from outer space to our country and either lived here or left."

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Comments? Criticism? Story ideas? [Talk to us.](#)

From: "Albert Nason" <albert.nason@nara.gov>
Date: Fri, 24 May 2002 09:37:26 -0400
To: <presidentialufo@canada.com>
Subject: Re: Uri Geller

Grant,
Nope. I checked the computer read-out of everyone who phoned or physically met Pres. Carter. Christine Geller of the Southern Baptist Convention, Henry Geller of the Dept of Commerce, and Rabbi Norman Geller of Auburn, Maine, were the only Gellers to see Carter in those years.
Carter probably shook thousands of hands on his inaugural day, but again no record of Uri. You might check Uri's speaking schedule to see if he was even in the USA on Jan.20-22.
Albert Nason
Archivist, Jimmy Carter Library

>>> <presidentialufo@canada.com> 05/20/02 11:47PM >>>
Albert

The psychic Uri Geller has claimed a number of meetings and associations with Jimmy Carter while president.

Could you check if the record shows any meetings etc.

Most importantly, is there a photo of the two shaking hands on inauguration day?

This all related to the remote viewing program which Carter supported. I questioned "Skip" Atwater who ran the program about whether Carter was briefed on remote viewing. All he would say is that he knew the answer to the question.

Thanks

Grant Cameron

The Presidents UFO Story
www.presidentialufo.com

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PRESIDENT CARTER SPEAKS OUT

**President Carter's
interest and concern
with the universe,
and it's
phenomena, stems
from the
time he saw a
UFO when he was
Governor of Georgia**



President Jimmy Carter

On September 5, 1977, when the spacecraft Voyager I was launched, its destination was the far reaches of the galaxy, its mission was to explore three planets. Fifteen days later, Voyager 2 was launched on the same mission—to fly by the galaxies outer planets, encountering Saturn in 1981 and Uranus in 1986.

On March 13, it was announced that the planet Jupiter, the first of the three to be probed, was encountered on schedule.

Discovered were the first active volcanoes (outside the earth's) in the solar system, on Io, one of Jupiter's major moons; its highly sensitive and ultra-sophisticated equipment disclosed that volcanic ash and dust are shooting out of Io's six active volcanoes at speeds more that 1,000 miles per hour.

The knowledge being gleaned by the spacecraft probes as they conduct a scientifically detailed investigation of our neighboring planets, will be of enormous significance.

This thought was prominent in the minds of scientists and world leaders everywhere as news of the probe reached home.

One of the messages placed on board both spacecraft as they left earth veering into the unknown

nearly two years ago, was one by President Jimmy Carter, himself interested in the enigma of outer space:

"This is a present from a small distant world. A token of our sounds, our science, our images, our music our thoughts and our feeling. We are attempting to survive our time so that we may live in yours. We hope, someday, having solved the problems we face, to join a community of galactic civilization, and; we send our good will to a vast and awesome universe..."

Carter's interest and concern with outer space and the phenomena it presents stems from the time he was Governor of his home state of Georgia, when he saw a UFO.

His sighting took place in October, 1969. A member of the Lion's Club, Mr. Carter had been waiting with others outside the club's headquarters for their 7:30 meeting to begin.

Describing the UFO, Jimmy Carter added that it appeared "blueish at first—then reddish—but not solid."

At the time, he told the International UFO Bureau in Oklahoma City that the UFO "came close, moved away, came close again, and then moved away. It appeared as bright as the moon."

The UFO was visible for an estimated ten to twelve minutes during which time it changed shape and color. The UFO made no sound and was sharply outlined. The press, in publicizing the incident, said it was "a big, shining light in the shape of a flying saucer hovering overhead."

The incident was mentioned on the Paul Harvey national radio program, and newspapers across the southern portion of the United States headlined it as one of the biggest UFO sightings in history. The object was estimated to be "maybe 300 to 1000 yards away."

Towards the end of 1978, President Carter had asked NASA to take a bigger interest in UFO while they probe the unknown universe. □

"Man fears what he does not understand"

Handwritten initials

*Sarah
send
J*

HAYDEN C. HEWES
DIRECTOR
JOEL GARCIA
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AL CRAWFORD
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International UFO Bureau, Inc.

*Sent
9-20-73*

In Conjunction With Canadian UFO Report Magazine
INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
P. O. BOX 1281
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73101
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

REPLY REFER TO: UFO

September 14, 1973

Honorable Jimmy Carter
Governor of Georgia
Atlanta, GA

Dear Governor Carter:

For the past 17 years the International UFO Bureau, Inc. has researched the subject of unidentified flying objects, commonly called and known the world over as 'flying saucers'.

Needless to say we are deeply interested in the recent sightings in and around Georgia and for this reason have several 'field investigators' in the area at this time.

Reports have reached our office that you have observed the objects and I am wondering if you would be kind enough to supply us with the details of your experience ?

I have enclosed one of our sighting forms and will welcome any additional statements or illustrations that you care to offer.

Feel free to ask any questions you may have and if the Bureau can be of service to you or your office feel free to contact us. Until then, I remain....

Yours In Research,
INTERNATIONAL UFO BUREAU, Inc.

Hayden C. Hewes
Hayden C. Hewes
Director IUFOB

(GPH)

UFO.¹ I reached Mr. Hewes by telephone at his home in Oklahoma City, and it was he who provided the first significant lead. When brief press reports appeared during the big UFO flap of 1973 to the effect that then-Governor Carter had previously spotted a UFO, the International UFO Bureau mailed a UFO sighting report form to Carter at the State Capitol in Atlanta. Carter apparently filled out the form in some haste, his handwritten replies being brief and not easily legible. He then mailed it back to Oklahoma. Mr. Hewes was kind enough to lend me a photographic transparency of the 1973 report in Carter's own handwriting (plate 1).

As I suspected, the event did not occur in Thomaston. Carter's account named Leary, Georgia, a very small town in the southwest corner of the state. Mr. Carter did not specify the exact date of the incident, but he estimated it to have been in October, 1969, and not in 1973 as the *National Enquirer* had reported. The time of the sighting was given as 7:15 PM, a time apparently known because Carter was "outside waiting for a meeting to begin at 7:30 PM." (The *Enquirer* story places the incident *after* the meeting.) The object was "bluish at first—then reddish," it "seemed to move toward us from a distance, stop, move partially away, return then depart." It appeared to be in the west, at about 30° elevation. Mr. Carter states that "10 members of Leary, Ga., Lions Club" also witnessed the object, but he fails to list any of their names or addresses, as requested. Not all questions were answered.

Describing the angular size of the object, Governor Carter judged it to be "about same as moon maybe a little smaller [*sic*]. Varied from brighter/larger than planet to apparent size of moon . . . at one time, as bright as moon." When given the option of requesting anonymity, Carter boldly checked the box declaring "You may use my name."

Having determined the correct locale of the sighting, it would be necessary to learn the exact date before it would be possible to attempt to identify the object. I sent off a letter addressed to the director of the Leary Lions Club, seeking additional information. The letter was returned to me unopened; across the envelope, someone had written, "No Lions Club active." Information on this case was not going to come easily!

Since the Lions Club angle appeared to be getting nowhere, I decided to begin by simply calling *somebody* in the town of Leary. Presumably Leary would be typical of an old-fashioned American town, where almost everyone would know everyone else. It was. I began with the mayor's office. The woman who answered the telephone was friendly and helpful, as were all the Leary residents I eventually spoke with. She did remember the day that Mr. Carter came to Leary, but could not remember exactly when that was or what night of the week the Lions Club meetings might have been. And she had not heard *anything* about a sighting of a UFO on that occasion.

She suggested that I might contact Marshall Jordan, owner of Jordan's store, for further information. Mr. Jordan explained to me that the Lions

Club in Leary had not been active for a number of years; the former leader of the club, Frank Lunsford, is now deceased. Mr. Jordan likewise remembered Jimmy Carter's visit to Leary, although he had been unable to attend the Lions Club meeting that night. He did not know exactly when this was. And no, he had not heard about any UFO being sighted the night Jimmy Carter was in town.

Mr. Jordan suggested I call Fred Hart, another former member of the now-defunct club. Mr. Hart recalled that the meetings were on Monday nights, but he, too, was unable to determine the exact date of Carter's visit. As an officer, Mr. Hart had kept some Lions Club records in his house that might have revealed the exact date of the sighting, but unfortunately the records were destroyed in a fire. Did he recall anything about a UFO sighting during Carter's visit? He did not, he began to say; he and Carter had driven all over town, spending the afternoon together, but he didn't remember seeing anything. I pointed out that the sighting was supposed to have occurred during the evening, just before the meeting. This jogged his memory: "It seems like there was a little—like a blue light or something or other in the sky that night [pause] like some kind of weather balloon they send out or something . . . it had been pretty far back in my mind!" Here at last was the first lead in Leary! Mr. Hart, however, was not exactly overwhelmed by the sighting, as Mr. Carter appears to have been; indeed, he barely recalled the incident at all. He did not believe the object to be anything out of the ordinary. (By contrast, Jimmy Carter told the *Atlanta Constitution* that after the UFO sighting he immediately went to a tape recorder and dictated a description of what he remembered as a "very remarkable sight."²)

At Mr. Hart's suggestion, I telephoned Stanley Shepard, owner of the Shepard Oil Company. By now news of my interest in the incident had spread all over town; it seemed that the Carter UFO sighting had become the favorite topic of discussion over the cracker barrel. Like the others, Mr. Shepard remembered Jimmy Carter's visit to Leary, though he did not know when it was, and he did *not* recall anything about a UFO sighting. The Lions Club, he explained, used to hold its meetings at the town swimming pool. Mr. Shepard generously offered to borrow a key to the now-abandoned swimming pool building and examine the club records left in storage there. (The Leary investigation certainly helped this Yankee to understand the meaning of "southern hospitality.")

When I called Mr. Shepard back, he explained that the files were in a state of total disarray. He found a few club records, but none for 1969. Numerous other calls turned up few leads. The only Leary newspaper, the *Calhoun County Courier*, did not keep any issues going back as far as 1969. Jack Perryman and Herman Balliet, also former members, were unable to add any more details.

Meanwhile, suspecting that the object might be a balloon, I attempted to determine the source of any balloon that might have been sighted in Leary

during October of 1969. Astronomical objects were ruled out because no brilliant planets were visible in the western sky that month after sunset. Nor was the bright star Arcturus a likely explanation, even though it was well placed, because the sky would have been far too bright for Arcturus to be easily visible at 7:15 PM.

However, balloons at sunset can be a striking sight, high in the atmosphere in direct sunlight after the sun has set for ground observers. Unfortunately, I was unable to pinpoint any balloon launches that might have been visible from Leary. While this does not prove that no balloons would have been visible, it does not allow us to state with any certainty that the object was a balloon. There is no central registry of balloon launches; one must attempt to contact every possible balloon launch site. Since some balloons can cross a continent or an ocean, it is impossible to eliminate all possible sources for balloon launches.

I contacted three of the major research balloon-launching facilities in the United States, but none of them had any balloons over Georgia during October 1969. It is possible that balloons may have been launched from other places, but tracking them down would be a nearly impossible task.

Smaller weather balloons must also be taken into account. These balloons at launch are about three feet in diameter and expand as they ascend to approximately 30,000 feet altitude to test the winds. But there are no regular weather-balloon launch sites within a hundred miles of Leary. However, I learned through a most improbable accident—telephoning a science professor at a local Georgia college when a certain student just happened to be in his office—that in 1969 the Navy was operating a now-defunct air station in Albany, Georgia, just twenty-five miles from Leary. This airfield regularly sent up lighted balloons to test the winds. (Since the solution to a UFO case can often depend upon stumbling across information of this nature, it is not surprising that so many UFO incidents appear to have no solution.)

However, I found that Navy balloons apparently do *not* provide the solution to the Carter UFO sighting. The standard balloon launch times for weather readings are 0 hours and 12 hours Greenwich Mean Time, and weather observers with whom I have spoken say that these times are fairly strictly observed; only rarely does a balloon go up more than a few minutes early or late. Occasionally additional balloons are launched at 6 hours and 18 hours GMT. But the Carter UFO sighting (assuming it was in October) corresponded to 23:15 GMT. Unless a balloon were launched an hour or more ahead of schedule, it would not have been visible in Leary at that time.

Mrs. Frank Lunsford is the elderly widow of the man who was described as the “backbone” of the Lions Club in Leary. She did indeed recall the night Carter came to Leary, but did not know the date and did not recall any UFO being sighted. The club meetings were always on Tuesday nights, she recalled. The Leary Lions Club had disbanded, she said, just a few weeks after her husband’s death (a statement with which all Lions Club members

seemed to agree). Mrs. Lunsford said that while she had no letters or other documents that might contain the date of Carter’s visit, she knew that it was just a matter of weeks before her husband’s death. When did Mr. Lunsford pass away? “February 17, 1969,” she replied immediately. *If what Mrs. Lunsford told me was correct, the sighting could not possibly have taken place in October 1969 as Carter had stated.* Her recollections suggested that the incident took place in either January or February of 1969.

Judge Peggy Cowart at the county courthouse suggested that I might call Mrs. Schramm, a reporter for the *Calhoun County Courier* who lives in nearby Edison. While Mrs. Schramm was unable to add anything new, her husband, a leading member of the still-active Lions Club in Edison, put me in touch with Mr. Charles Mask, long-time secretary of the Edison chapter, who is a veritable repository of accurate information concerning Lions Club activities. He pinpointed Carter’s term as district governor of the Club—ending in June 1969—which also appeared to rule out October 1969 as the correct date. Looking in a back issue of the Official Directory of the Lions Club International, he ascertained that the Leary Club had met on the first and third Mondays of each month, at 7:30 PM. Most important of all, Mr. Mask was able to refer me to the place where all Lions Club records are permanently stored: the Lions International Headquarters in Oakbrook, Illinois. I had assumed all along that local club records would be stored locally, or not at all. But Mr. Mask pointed out that Carter, as district governor, was required to turn in a visitation report for each local club he visited, and these reports might still be available.

After thanking Mr. Mask, I dialed the Lions Club International Headquarters, where I was put in contact with Mr. Al Webb. When I called back the following day, he had found the long-sought information: a copy of Jimmy Carter’s district governor visitation report for his trip to Leary. It bore the date of Monday, January 6, 1969. Mrs. Lunsford was right: Carter’s visit had indeed occurred just six weeks before her husband’s death. Carter did not make any mention of a UFO sighting in his Lions Club report.

Al Webb explained that it was only through a fortunate accident that this report was preserved, since normally all such records are destroyed after about seven years. But seven years after Jimmy Carter’s term as district governor, he was a candidate for president of the United States. Fortunately, the Lions Club employee handling the matter recognized that a collection of papers written by a man who might soon be president might have historical value, so he preserved the file. Had this employee not been so alert, it is highly improbable that any solution to the Carter UFO sighting could ever have been found.

The actual date of Carter’s speech in Leary, January 6, 1969, was nine months earlier than Mr. Carter’s recollection had placed it. This not only

invalidated all of the research I had done looking for balloon launches, but totally changed the positions of all astronomical objects. When I computed the positions of the planets during the month of January, I found that *Venus was a conspicuous evening star, nearing its maximum brilliance.* Venus was to be found in the west-southwest at 7:15 PM, at about 25° elevation, *in virtually the exact position that Carter reported his UFO.* When I obtained the weather records from the nearby Albany airfield, they revealed that the weather was cold and clear, although a few scattered clouds were present that evening. In fact, the morning of the day of the sighting saw the coldest temperature readings of the entire winter. It is in crisp, cold, transparent air such as this that planets and stars seem especially large and brilliant.

Mr. Carter is in good company in misinterpreting Venus as a UFO. No other single object is responsible for so many UFO sightings. Every time Venus reaches its peak brilliance in the evening sky, hundreds of such "UFO sightings" are made. No other celestial object except the sun and moon ever achieves such brilliance. Indeed, Venus is so brilliant that it can often be seen before the sun has set, or even in full daylight, if one knows exactly where to look. On several occasions I have gone outside at noontime to see if Venus would be visible without optical aid; every time that the sky was clear enough (and that planet was near its peak brilliance), I was able to discern it plainly, after determining exactly where to look. Plate 2 shows Venus and the moon seen together at noontime, captured by a modest telephoto lens, without the aid of any filters or special processing. Even the ardent UFO believer Jacques Vallee has written: "No single object has been misinterpreted as a 'flying saucer' more often than the planet Venus. The study of these mistakes proves quite instructive, for it shows beyond all possible dispute the limitations of sensory perception and the weakness of accounts relating shapes and motions of point sources or objects with small apparent diameters."³

During World War II, many rounds of ammunition were wasted firing at Venus, believing it to be an enemy aircraft. U.S. bomber crews over Japan reported that they were being "followed" by a "ball of fire," which they believed to be an airplane attempting to shine a searchlight on them for the benefit of Japanese gunners. This "aircraft" was, of course, the planet Venus. Yet for weeks these experienced flight crews continued to mistake that brilliant yet distant planet for a new enemy weapon.⁴

Nor is Jimmy Carter the only political figure to mistake a bright planet for a UFO. In October 1973, Governor John Gilligan of Ohio reported that he and his wife had observed a UFO while driving back from a weekend trip. The object was said to have "a vertical beam of light, amber colored," and it was observed to remain in the south-southeast. Governor Gilligan's UFO coincides with the position of the planet Mars, which was especially brilliant that month due to its close proximity to Earth.

It is most instructive to note the many false leads and faulty recollections that often make the solution to a UFO sighting difficult to obtain. Mr. Carter recalled the date as being nine months later than it actually was. If it had not been possible to correct this error by referring to written records, the solution to the sighting would never have been found. The press had widely misreported both the time and the location of the incident and the circumstances of the sighting as well. Witnesses' memories of the incident deteriorated with time, and spurious "facts" began to creep in, such as a widespread mistake recalling the night of the week on which the meetings were held.

Carter's recollection that the object "came close, then moved away" does not, of course, describe the actual motions of the planet Venus. Such statements, however, are commonly encountered in descriptions of bright planets reported as UFOs; they show the fallacy of according too much weight to unsubstantiated subjective impressions. Venus is not as bright as the moon, nor is its angular size as great as that of the moon, as Carter also reported. (In virtually every instance, the inaccuracy tends to make the object seem more brilliant and more mysterious.) Mr. Carter's distance estimate, which had the object hovering from 300 to 1,000 yards away, is thus thirty million miles or so short of the actual distance to Venus. One can only speculate how many other "close encounters" actually involve distant airplane lights, or far more distant celestial objects. Plainly, not every nocturnal object that is judged to be close to the observer is in fact nearby.

What would have been the outcome of this investigation if the records of Carter's Lions Club visitation had not been preserved at Lions International? What if Jimmy Carter had not filed a UFO report in 1973? What if the object had in fact been a balloon, but that I remained unaware of the now-defunct Navy airfield in nearby Albany, or if the object were a big "Skyhook" balloon launched by some research facility that is no longer launching balloons and whose records are unavailable? In each of these quite plausible scenarios, the correct explanation of the incident could never have been established. When viewed with this in mind, it is not at all surprising that there remain some UFO sightings for which explanations have not yet been conclusively established. Indeed, the amazing thing is that, despite all the difficulties, such a large number *have* been satisfactorily explained.

Allan Hendry, managing editor of the Center for UFO Studies' *International UFO Reporter*, who is certainly no UFO debunker, has remarked on "the thin veil that can exist between UFOs and IFOs" (identified flying objects). Investigating a UFO reported in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 1977, Hendry was unable to suggest any reasonable explanation. However, by a lucky accident he was referred to a local office of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which had sent up a lighted balloon to make pollution readings. Hendry remarks, "If I hadn't the sheer luck of being put in touch with the EPA, do you think I would have contrived a solution like

"illuminated balloon on a half-mile of string?" Would anyone have believed him if he had?

I confess to having oversimplified my investigation of the Jimmy Carter UFO, for I did not include the many telephone interviews that led nowhere. It takes just a few minutes to report a UFO sighting, yet it may take months to find the solution. If Carter had not been a candidate for president, no one would have invested the time and money required to obtain the solution to his UFO sighting. It would have remained forever in the column of "unexplained" UFO reports, which are said to constitute the "evidence" for UFOs. If a similar amount of time and effort were invested in other "unexplained" cases, how many of them would still be without explanation at the close of the investigation?

Yet despite the fact that my solution to the Carter UFO incident appeared in publications with nationwide circulation as early as 1977, UFO proponents continue to exploit this case. Numerous radio and television commentators continue to uncritically repeat "Jimmy Carter has seen a UFO." A 1978 "completely factual" documentary sound-recording directed by the well-known UFO researcher Dr. J. Allen Hynek trumpets the Carter UFO sighting without even a hint that the incident has been fully solved. The Carter UFO incident provides us with a litmus test for evaluating the reliability of UFO authors and researchers; anyone who continues to uncritically state that Jimmy Carter has seen a UFO has in effect warned the listener that little or no effort has been made to get the facts straight.

NOTES

1. Hayden C. Hewes, "I Have Seen a UFO! Admits Jimmy Carter," *Argosy UFO*, November 1976, p. 8.

2. *Atlanta Constitution*, September 14, 1973, p. 1D.

3. Jacques and Janine Vallee, *Challenge to Science* (Chicago: Regnery, 1966), p. 110.

4. Philip J. Klass, *UFOs Explained* (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 90.

5. Center for UFO Studies, *International UFO Reporter* 2, no. 4 (April 1977):8.

6. See *International UFO Reporter* 4, no. 3 (September/October 1979):19.

3

THE UFO MOVEMENT: GALILEOS, HATFIELDS, AND McCOYS

Scientific is the sixty-four-dollar word in UFOlogy today. Every investigator, every group, pays homage to the name of science, and each claims to be working toward making the study of UFOs a respectable scientific field. These people harbor little doubt that the "science" of "UFOlogy" will someday take its supposedly rightful place alongside geology and biology.

Such claims of lofty intention would, however, carry more weight with the outside observer if the "science" of UFOlogy were slowly converging toward some generally accepted hypothesis about UFOs, or at least assembling a body of unambiguous data. But instead of converging, the various factions that make up the UFO movement appear to be growing steadily farther apart, through feuds and schisms. Indeed, the more UFOs are studied, the less there is upon which the various groups can agree.

The term "UFO movement" is increasingly used today, even by UFO buffs themselves, and the term is not inappropriate. Like the women's movement, the antiwar movement, and other social movements that have sprouted on the American scene in recent years the UFO movement is composed of people who zealously pursue a common goal: the recognition of the "reality" of UFOs by society at large, and by scientists in particular. Perhaps the best comparison might be made with one of the many small religious movements now gaining in popularity, because, although there is little else that the subsets of the UFO movement agree upon, all are firmly convinced that *when* (not *if*) the full truth about UFOs becomes known, it not only will revolutionize science but will also enrich our everyday lives beyond our wildest dreams.

The present-day UFO movement can be broadly divided into two major factions: those who believe that UFOs are nuts-and-bolts spacecraft built by

sighting (chapter 2). In April of 1977, one of their aviation/science reporters chanced upon the fact that I was deeply involved in researching the facts of that incident. He telephoned me asking if it was indeed true that the president had once reported seeing a UFO. I replied that it was, and proceeded to cite references for information about the incident. I pointed out, however, that this was not news, the story having already appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Atlanta Constitution*, the tabloid *National Enquirer*, and various UFO publications. I suggested, however, if he would delay a few days in reporting this non-news event of eight years earlier, I might well have a *real* news story for him—the solution of the incident—since I was at that moment closing in on some documents that would almost certainly reveal the precise date of the incident (which Carter could not recall). The reporter replied that he could not afford to wait on such a hot news item, since he feared that some other paper or reporter would “scoop” him. He followed all my leads and prepared a story, which appeared on the front page of the *Washington Post* of April 30, 1977. It revealed practically nothing about the Carter UFO that had not been published somewhere before.

Just a few days later, I called the reporter back. I now had the solution to the Jimmy Carter UFO sighting. This *was* news, having never been published anywhere. But his response was that he had just run a story on that subject and hence could not insert another one a few days later, even if it did resolve the “mystery.” Out of a sense of obligation, I felt, more than any positive enthusiasm, he accepted my findings. They were eventually published, but buried in the *Post*'s Washington gossip column of May 9, 1977, which ran just one and a half column inches. The front-page story ten days earlier had occupied ten times that amount of space, even though it had no real news to report. If the prestigious *Washington Post* had been seriously interested in reporting the news, instead of just titillating its readers in the manner of tabloids, its ratio of coverage would have been reversed.

Nor is the equally celebrated *New York Times* any more immune from inaccurate and sensationalized UFO reporting. Page 23 of the January 14, 1979, issue of the *Times* carried a column with the heading “CIA Papers Detail UFO Surveillance.” The staunchly pro-UFO group, Ground Saucer Watch, had for some time been petitioning the CIA under the freedom-of-information act, expecting to obtain shocking evidence of a government cover-up of UFO evidence. What they obtained was remarkably unimpressive: a few new UFO reports, a lot of newspaper clippings, correspondence from UFO buffs, and miscellaneous interoffice memos signifying little. Nonetheless, the *New York Times* was persuaded to run a totally uncritical story that seems to have been based upon taking one of GSW's press hand-outs at face value. GSW's William Spaulding is quoted repeating “crashed saucer” rumors and asserting that “the government has been lying to us all these years.”

The *Times* carried the story without a hint of critical investigation of Spaulding's claims. Spaulding states: “After reviewing the documents,

Ground Saucer Watch believes that U.F.O.'s do exist, they are real, the U.S. government has been totally untruthful and the cover-up is massive.” There is nothing in the article to suggest that the CIA or any other government agency was contacted for comment on this potentially earth-shaking story, that any UFO skeptics were interviewed to give their interpretation of these papers, or that the reporter had actually *seen* any of these documents beyond the few that Spaulding chose to quote. A small-town weekly, or even a high-school newspaper, could have reported the story at least as well.

The story in the *Baltimore Sun* on February 5, 1979, was equally uncritical. The piece was headlined “Files Indicate U.S. Is Not Telling All It Knows About UFO's.” There is no evidence to suggest that this reporter either submitted GSW's Spaulding to any difficult or penetrating questions, contacted anyone with a differing viewpoint, or viewed any of the documents other than those Spaulding had selected. Journalistic reputations are not built upon stories like these.

While these “revelations” were being reported widely and uncritically by the media, Philip J. Klass, who had filed a matching freedom-of-information request, was carefully perusing the more than nine hundred pages of documents. Although he received the same pages that GSW and others did, his interpretation of them was radically different. For example, Klass found a memo dated July 3, 1953, stating plainly that henceforth the UFO investigation (which had been pursued sporadically for several years) “will be considered as inactive.” There is nothing in subsequent years to suggest that any CIA UFO program has been reactivated. Neither Spaulding, Zechel, nor any other UFO proponent reported this “smoking gun” memo, nor did the *New York Times*, the *Baltimore Sun*, or any other “serious” newspaper dig beyond the surface to discover it.

Another memo, dated August 8, 1955, recommends that, since there have been no significant developments in UFOs in several years, “the [UFO] project be terminated and the files thereof be placed in dead storage.” No enterprising young investigative journalist or UFO proponent seems to have discovered this fact either. Klass notes that the CIA's collection of UFO reports, clippings, and correspondence, which GSW claims constitutes a “massive” cover-up, amounts to *less than one page of UFO-related material per week*. Several prestigious newspapers somehow failed to notice this fact. Klass prepared a press release under the auspices of CSICOP, refuting the wild charges of proof of a CIA cover-up, and sent it to major newspapers and wire services in the United States. The *New York Times* found it unfit to print, as did every other newspaper it reached. Wild and unfounded claims of a massive UFO cover-up are news, it seems. Reasoned refutations of such claims are not. This incident reveals no real difference between “respected” newspapers and the *National Enquirer* when it comes to UFO reporting.

Nor were any lessons learned from this incident. On October 14, 1979, the *New York Times Magazine* ran a feature story titled “U.F.O. Files:

2

CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE FIRST KIND: JIMMY CARTER

Contrary to what some people believe, not everyone who files a UFO report is obscure and unreliable. UFOs have been reported by people in all walks of life. More often than not, the supposed UFO witness seems to be a sober and sensible individual and does not appear to be suffering from any mental derangement. Sometimes he or she is a person of high standing in the community. Scientists, engineers, military and commercial pilots, as well as policemen, are among those who have reported seeing UFOs. One cannot say that all these people are lying or that they all suffered from some temporary aberration. Their narratives appear to be as sincere as human testimony can possibly be, and it is indeed difficult to listen to them without feeling a powerful emotional urge to believe what they are saying.

No one seriously questions these facts. But the important question to be answered is: Do these reports by seemingly reliable persons establish the real existence of UFOs, or do they rather serve as a warning that even the most sober and reliable persons can be led astray by unconscious errors in perception? To attempt to resolve the question, let us examine the UFO sighting reported by a well-known man from Georgia. Ten other people are said to have joined him in experiencing a Close Encounter of the First Kind—that is, one in which the UFO reportedly comes within a few hundred yards of the witness.

By June of 1976, Jimmy Carter of Georgia was the undisputed front-runner for the Democratic Party's nomination for president. In its issue of June 8, the supermarket tabloid *National Enquirer* carried the headline "Jimmy Carter: The Night I Saw a UFO." It was with this story that my investigation began. The article is based upon an extremely brief interview with Mr. Carter, who said, "I am convinced that UFOs exist because I have

seen one . . . It was a very peculiar aberration, but about twenty people saw it . . . It was the darndest thing I've ever seen. It was big, it was very bright, it changed colors and it was about the size of the moon. We watched it for ten minutes, but none of us could figure out what it was." The sighting took place in Thomaston, Georgia, according to the *Enquirer*, in 1973 following a late-evening speech Mr. Carter gave to the local Lions Club.

The *Enquirer* goes on to quote Mr. W. Asbury Stembridge, of Macon, Georgia, who not only had reportedly discussed the sighting with Mr. Carter but had also supposedly said, "My wife Charlotte saw the same UFO." While the Carter family was of course not willing to discuss the sighting, even if they could be reached, I did reach Mr. and Mrs. Stembridge by telephone, only to learn that the statements attributed to them were not at all accurate. Mrs. Stembridge explained in exasperation that she had told the *Enquirer* reporter "over and over" about the details of her own reported UFO sighting (which occurred when Mr. Carter was *not* present) but that they proceeded to write her up as a corroborating witness nonetheless. Mr. Stembridge happened to remark that, while Carter had only briefly mentioned the UFO incident to him years before, "my recollection doesn't put him in Thomaston at all" on the night of the sighting.

Milton Jones, a Columbus, Georgia, attorney, was quoted in the *Enquirer* story saying, "I vividly remember Jimmy telling me about spotting the UFO." But when I reached Mr. Jones by telephone, he too remarked on the inaccuracy of the *Enquirer* account; he had told the reporter that his recollection of the UFO discussion was not at all "vivid" but quite vague. Carter had once mentioned the incident in his presence, several years before, but Mr. Jones was unable to recall any specifics about it. When I mentioned that the *Enquirer* account placed the incident at a Lions Club speech in Thomaston, Mr. Jones replied, "The speech to the Lions Club rings a bell, but Thomaston very definitely does not ring a bell." He seemed to recall that it had been somewhere "down in south Georgia."

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THE UFO VERDICT

EXAMINING THE EVIDENCE



ROBERT SHEAFFER

P Prometheus Books
Buffalo, New York 14215

To Kenneth
whose birth delayed this book at least
six months – and who made
me not even care!

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2

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UFO.¹ I reached Mr. Hewes by telephone at his home in Oklahoma City, and it was he who provided the first significant lead. When brief press reports appeared during the big UFO flap of 1973 to the effect that then-Governor Carter had previously spotted a UFO, the International UFO Bureau mailed a UFO sighting report form to Carter at the State Capitol in Atlanta. Carter apparently filled out the form in some haste, his handwritten replies being brief and not easily legible. He then mailed it back to Oklahoma. Mr. Hewes was kind enough to lend me a photographic transparency of the 1973 report in Carter's own handwriting (plate 1).

As I suspected, the event did not occur in Thomaston. Carter's account named Leary, Georgia, a very small town in the southwest corner of the state. Mr. Carter did not specify the exact date of the incident, but he estimated it to have been in October, 1969, and not in 1973 as the *National Enquirer* had reported. The time of the sighting was given as 7:15 PM, a time apparently known because Carter was "outside waiting for a meeting to begin at 7:30 PM." (The *Enquirer* story places the incident *after* the meeting.) The object was "bluish at first—then reddish," it "seemed to move toward us from a distance, stop, move partially away, return then depart." It appeared to be in the west, at about 30° elevation. Mr. Carter states that "10 members of Leary, Ga., Lions Club" also witnessed the object, but he fails to list any of their names or addresses, as requested. Not all questions were answered.

Describing the angular size of the object, Governor Carter judged it to be "about same as moon maybe a little smaller [*sic*]. Varied from brighter/larger than planet to apparent size of moon . . . at one time, as bright as moon." When given the option of requesting anonymity, Carter boldly checked the box declaring "You may use my name."

Having determined the correct locale of the sighting, it would be necessary to learn the exact date before it would be possible to attempt to identify the object. I sent off a letter addressed to the director of the Leary Lions Club, seeking additional information. The letter was returned to me unopened; across the envelope, someone had written, "No Lions Club active." Information on this case was not going to come easily!

Since the Lions Club angle appeared to be getting nowhere, I decided to begin by simply calling *somebody* in the town of Leary. Presumably Leary would be typical of an old-fashioned American town, where almost everyone would know everyone else. It was. I began with the mayor's office. The woman who answered the telephone was friendly and helpful, as were all the Leary residents I eventually spoke with. She did remember the day that Mr. Carter came to Leary, but could not remember exactly when that was or what night of the week the Lions Club meetings might have been. And she had not heard *anything* about a sighting of a UFO on that occasion.

She suggested that I might contact Marshall Jordan, owner of Jordan's for further information. Mr. Jordan explained to me that the Lions

Club in Leary had not been active for a number of years; the former leader of the club, Frank Lunsford, is now deceased. Mr. Jordan likewise remembered Jimmy Carter's visit to Leary, although he had been unable to attend the Lions Club meeting that night. He did not know exactly what this was. And no, he had not heard about any UFO being sighted the night Jimmy Carter was in town.

Mr. Jordan suggested I call Fred Hart, another former member of the now-defunct club. Mr. Hart recalled that the meetings were Mondays nights, but he, too, was unable to determine the exact date of Carter's visit. As an officer, Mr. Hart had kept some Lions Club records in his house that might have revealed the exact date of the sighting, but unfortunately the records were destroyed in a fire. Did he recall anything about a UFO sighting during Carter's visit? He did not, he began to say; he and Carter had driven all over town, spending the afternoon together, but he didn't remember seeing anything. I pointed out that the sighting was supposed to have occurred during the evening, just before the meeting. This jogged his memory: "It seems like there was a little—like a blue light or something or other in the sky that night [pause] like some kind of weather balloon they send out or something . . . it had been pretty far back in my mind!" Here at last was the first lead in Leary! Mr. Hart, however, was not exactly overwhelmed by the sighting, as Mr. Carter appears to have been; indeed, he barely recalled the incident at all. He did not believe the object to be anything out of the ordinary. (By contrast, Jimmy Carter told the *Atlanta Constitution* that after the UFO sighting he immediately went to a tape recorder and dictated a description of what he remembered as a "very remarkable sight."²)

At Mr. Hart's suggestion, I telephoned Stanley Shepard, owner of the Shepard Oil Company. By now news of my interest in the incident had spread all over town; it seemed that the Carter UFO sighting had become the favorite topic of discussion over the cracker barrel. Like the others, Mr. Shepard remembered Jimmy Carter's visit to Leary, though he did not know when it was, and he did *not* recall anything about a UFO sighting. The Lions Club, he explained, used to hold its meetings at the town swimming pool. Mr. Shepard generously offered to borrow a key to the now-abandoned swimming pool building and examine the club records left in storage there. (The Leary investigation certainly helped this Yankee to understand the meaning of "southern hospitality.")

When I called Mr. Shepard back, he explained that the files were in a state of total disarray. He found a few club records, but none for 1969. Numerous other calls turned up few leads. The only Leary newspaper, the *Calhoun County Courier*, did not keep any issues going back as far as 1969. Jack Perryman and Herman Balliet, also former members, were unable to add any more details.

Meanwhile, suspecting that the object might be a balloon, I attempted to

during October of 1969. Astronomical objects were ruled out because no brilliant planets were visible in the western sky that month after sunset. Nor was the bright star Arcturus a likely explanation, even though it was well placed, because the sky would have been far too bright for Arcturus to be easily visible at 7:15 PM.

However, balloons at sunset can be a striking sight, high in the atmosphere in direct sunlight after the sun has set for ground observers. Unfortunately, I was unable to pinpoint any balloon launches that might have been visible from Leary. While this does not prove that no balloons would have been visible, it does not allow us to state with any certainty that the object was a balloon. There is no central registry of balloon launches; one must attempt to contact every possible balloon launch site. Since some balloons can cross a continent or an ocean, it is impossible to eliminate all possible sources for balloon launches.

I contacted three of the major research balloon-launching facilities in the United States, but none of them had any balloons over Georgia during October 1969. It is possible that balloons may have been launched from other places, but tracking them down would be a nearly impossible task.

Smaller weather balloons must also be taken into account. These balloons at launch are about three feet in diameter and expand as they ascend to approximately 30,000 feet altitude to test the winds. But there are no regular weather-balloon launch sites within a hundred miles of Leary. However, I learned through a most improbable accident — telephoning a science professor at a local Georgia college when a certain student just happened to be in his office — that in 1969 the Navy was operating a now-defunct air station in Albany, Georgia, just twenty-five miles from Leary. This airfield regularly sent up lighted balloons to test the winds. (Since the solution to a UFO case can often depend upon stumbling across information of this nature, it is not surprising that so many UFO incidents appear to have no solution.)

However, I found that Navy balloons apparently do *not* provide the solution to the Carter UFO sighting. The standard balloon launch times for weather readings are 0 hours and 12 hours Greenwich Mean Time, and weather observers with whom I have spoken say that these times are fairly strictly observed; only rarely does a balloon go up more than a few minutes early or late. Occasionally additional balloons are launched at 6 hours and 18 hours GMT. But the Carter UFO sighting (assuming it was in October) corresponded to 23:15 GMT. Unless a balloon were launched an hour or more ahead of schedule, it would not have been visible in Leary at that time.

Mrs. Frank Lunsford is the elderly widow of the man who was described as the “backbone” of the Lions Club in Leary. She did indeed recall the night Carter came to Leary, but did not know the date and did not recall any UFO being sighted. The club meetings were always on Tuesday nights, she recalled. The Leary Lions Club had disbanded, she said, just a few weeks after her husband’s death (a statement with which all Lions Club members

seemed to agree). Mrs. Lunsford said that while she had no letters or other documents that might contain the date of Carter’s visit, she knew that it was just a matter of weeks before her husband’s death. When did Mr. Lunsford pass away? “February 17, 1969,” she replied immediately. *If what Mrs. Lunsford told me was correct, the sighting could not possibly have taken place in October 1969 as Carter had stated.* Her recollections suggested that the incident took place in either January or February of 1969.

Judge Peggy Cowart at the county courthouse suggested that I might call Mrs. Schramm, a reporter for the *Calhoun County Courier* who lives in nearby Edison. While Mrs. Schramm was unable to add anything new, her husband, a leading member of the still-active Lions Club in Edison, put me in touch with Mr. Charles Mask, long-time secretary of the Edison chapter, who is a veritable repository of accurate information concerning Lions Club activities. He pinpointed Carter’s term as district governor of the Club — ending in June 1969 — which also appeared to rule out October 1969 as the correct date. Looking in a back issue of the Official Directory of the Lions Club International, he ascertained that the Leary Club had met on the first and third Mondays of each month, at 7:30 PM. Most important of all, Mr. Mask was able to refer me to the place where all Lions Club records are permanently stored: the Lions International Headquarters in Oakbrook, Illinois. I had assumed all along that local club records would be stored locally, or not at all. But Mr. Mask pointed out that Carter, as district governor, was required to turn in a visitation report for each local club he visited, and these reports might still be available.

After thanking Mr. Mask, I dialed the Lions Club International Headquarters, where I was put in contact with Mr. Al Webb. When I called back the following day, he had found the long-sought information: a copy of Jimmy Carter’s district governor visitation report for his trip to Leary. It bore the date of Monday, January 6, 1969. Mrs. Lunsford was right: Carter’s visit had indeed occurred just six weeks before her husband’s death. Carter did not make any mention of a UFO sighting in his Lions Club report.

Al Webb explained that it was only through a fortunate accident that this report was preserved, since normally all such records are destroyed after about seven years. But seven years after Jimmy Carter’s term as district governor, he was a candidate for president of the United States. Fortunately, the Lions Club employee handling the matter recognized that a collection of papers written by a man who might soon be president might have historical value, so he preserved the file. Had this employee not been so alert, it is highly improbable that any solution to the Carter UFO sighting could ever have been found.

The actual date of Carter’s speech in Leary, January 6, 1969, was nine months earlier than Mr. Carter’s recollection had placed it. This not only

invalidated all of the research I had done looking for balloon launches, but totally changed the positions of all astronomical objects. When I computed the positions of the planets during the month of January, I found that *Venus was a conspicuous evening star, nearing its maximum brilliance.* Venus was to be found in the west-southwest at 7:15 PM, at about 25° elevation, *in virtually the exact position that Carter reported his UFO.* When I obtained the weather records from the nearby Albany airfield, they revealed that the weather was cold and clear, although a few scattered clouds were present that evening. In fact, the morning of the day of the sighting saw the coldest temperature readings of the entire winter. It is in crisp, cold, transparent air such as this that planets and stars seem especially large and brilliant.

Mr. Carter is in good company in misinterpreting Venus as a UFO. No other single object is responsible for so many UFO sightings. Every time Venus reaches its peak brilliance in the evening sky, hundreds of such "UFO sightings" are made. No other celestial object except the sun and moon ever achieves such brilliance. Indeed, Venus is so brilliant that it can often be seen before the sun has set, or even in full daylight, if one knows exactly where to look. On several occasions I have gone outside at noontime to see if Venus would be visible without optical aid; every time that the sky was clear enough (and that planet was near its peak brilliance), I was able to discern it plainly, after determining exactly where to look. Plate 2 shows Venus and the moon seen together at noontime, captured by a modest telephoto lens, without the aid of any filters or special processing. Even the ardent UFO believer Jacques Vallee has written: "No single object has been misinterpreted as a 'flying saucer' more often than the planet Venus. The study of these mistakes proves quite instructive, for it shows beyond all possible dispute the limitations of sensory perception and the weakness of accounts relating shapes and motions of point sources or objects with small apparent diameters."³

During World War II, many rounds of ammunition were wasted firing at Venus, believing it to be an enemy aircraft. U.S. bomber crews over Japan reported that they were being "followed" by a "ball of fire," which they believed to be an airplane attempting to shine a searchlight on them for the benefit of Japanese gunners. This "aircraft" was, of course, the planet Venus. Yet for weeks these experienced flight crews continued to mistake that brilliant yet distant planet for a new enemy weapon.⁴

Nor is Jimmy Carter the only political figure to mistake a bright planet for a UFO. In October 1973, Governor John Gilligan of Ohio reported that he and his wife had observed a UFO while driving back from a weekend trip. The object was said to have "a vertical beam of light, amber colored," and it was observed to remain in the south-southeast. Governor Gilligan's UFO coincides with the position of the planet Mars, which was especially

It is most instructive to note the many false leads and faulty recollections that often make the solution to a UFO sighting difficult to obtain. Mr. Carter recalled the date as being nine months later than it actually was. If it had not been possible to correct this error by referring to written records, the solution to the sighting would never have been found. The press had widely misreported both the time and the location of the incident and the circumstances of the sighting as well. Witnesses' memories of the incident deteriorated with time, and spurious "facts" began to creep in, such as a widespread mistake recalling the night of the week on which the meetings were held.

Carter's recollection that the object "came close, then moved away" does not, of course, describe the actual motions of the planet Venus. Such statements, however, are commonly encountered in descriptions of bright planets reported as UFOs; they show the fallacy of according too much weight to unsubstantiated subjective impressions. Venus is not as bright as the moon, nor is its angular size as great as that of the moon, as Carter also reported. (In virtually every instance, the inaccuracy tends to make the object seem more brilliant and more mysterious.) Mr. Carter's distance estimate, which had the object hovering from 300 to 1,000 yards away, is thus thirty million miles or so short of the actual distance to Venus. One can only speculate how many other "close encounters" actually involve distant airplane lights, or far more distant celestial objects. Plainly, not every nocturnal object that is judged to be close to the observer is in fact nearby.

What would have been the outcome of this investigation if the records of Carter's Lions Club visitation had not been preserved at Lions International? What if Jimmy Carter had not filed a UFO report in 1973? What if the object had in fact been a balloon, but that I remained unaware of the now-defunct Navy airfield in nearby Albany, or if the object were a big "Skyhook" balloon launched by some research facility that is no longer launching balloons and whose records are unavailable? In each of these quite plausible scenarios, the correct explanation of the incident could never have been established. When viewed with this in mind, it is not at all surprising that there remain some UFO sightings for which explanations have not yet been conclusively established. Indeed, the amazing thing is that, despite all the difficulties, such a large number *have* been satisfactorily explained.

Allan Hendry, managing editor of the Center for UFO Studies' *International UFO Reporter*, who is certainly no UFO debunker, has remarked on "the thin veil that can exist between UFOs and IFOs" (identified flying objects). Investigating a UFO reported in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 1977, Hendry was unable to suggest any reasonable explanation. However, by a lucky accident he was referred to a local office of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which had sent up a lighted balloon to make pollution readings. Hendry remarks, "If I hadn't the sheer luck of being put in touch with the EPA do you think I would have seen..."

‘illuminated balloon on a half-mile of string?’” Would anyone have believed him if he had?

I confess to having oversimplified my investigation of the Jimmy Carter UFO, for I did not include the many telephone interviews that led nowhere. It takes just a few minutes to report a UFO sighting, yet it may take months to find the solution. If Carter had not been a candidate for president, no one would have invested the time and money required to obtain the solution to his UFO sighting. It would have remained forever in the column of “unexplained” UFO reports, which are said to constitute the “evidence” for UFOs. If a similar amount of time and effort were invested in other “unexplained” cases, how many of them would still be without explanation at the close of the investigation?

Yet despite the fact that my solution to the Carter UFO incident appeared in publications with nationwide circulation as early as 1977, UFO proponents continue to exploit this case. Numerous radio and television commentators continue to uncritically repeat “Jimmy Carter has seen a UFO.” A 1978 “completely factual” documentary sound-recording directed by the well-known UFO researcher Dr. J. Allen Hynek trumpets the Carter UFO sighting without even a hint that the incident has been fully solved. The Carter UFO incident provides us with a litmus test for evaluating the reliability of UFO authors and researchers; anyone who continues to uncritically state that Jimmy Carter has seen a UFO has in effect warned the listener that little or no effort has been made to get the facts straight.

NOTES

1. Hayden C. Hewes, “‘I Have Seen a UFO!’ Admits Jimmy Carter,” *Argosy UFO*, November 1976, p. 8.
2. *Atlanta Constitution*, September 14, 1973, p. 1D.
3. Jacques and Janine Vallee, *Challenge to Science* (Chicago: Regnery, 1966), p. 110.
4. Philip J. Klass, *UFOs Explained* (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 90.
5. Center for UFO Studies, *International UFO Reporter* 2, no. 4 (April 1977):8.
6. See *International UFO Reporter* 4, no. 3 (September/October 1979):19.

3

THE UFO MOVEMENT: GALILEOS, HATFIELDS, AND McCOYS

Scientific is the sixty-four-dollar word in UFOlogy today. Every investigator, every group, pays homage to the name of science, and each claims to be working toward making the study of UFOs a respectable scientific field. These people harbor little doubt that the “science” of “UFOlogy” will someday take its supposedly rightful place alongside geology and biology.

Such claims of lofty intention would, however, carry more weight with the outside observer if the “science” of UFOlogy were slowly converging toward some generally accepted hypothesis about UFOs, or at least assembling a body of unambiguous data. But instead of converging, the various factions that make up the UFO movement appear to be growing steadily farther apart, through feuds and schisms. Indeed, the more UFOs are studied, the less there is upon which the various groups can agree.

The term “UFO movement” is increasingly used today, even by UFO buffs themselves, and the term is not inappropriate. Like the women’s movement, the antiwar movement, and other social movements that have sprouted on the American scene in recent years the UFO movement is composed of people who zealously pursue a common goal: the recognition of the “reality” of UFOs by society at large, and by scientists in particular. Perhaps the best comparison might be made with one of the many small religious movements now gaining in popularity, because, although there is little else that the subjects of the UFO movement agree upon, all are firmly convinced that *when* (not *if*) the full truth about UFOs becomes known, it not only will revolutionize science but will also enrich our everyday lives beyond our wildest dreams.

The present-day UFO movement can be broadly divided into two major factions: those who believe that UFOs are nuts-and-bolts spacecraft built b

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON AERIAL PHENOMENA (NICAP)®

3535 University Blvd West
Kensington, Maryland 20795

301-949-1267

REPORT ON UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT(S)

This form includes questions asked by the United States Air Force and by other Armed Forces' investigating agencies, and additional questions to which answers are needed for full evaluation by NICAP.

After all the information has been fully studied, the conclusion of our Evaluation Panel will be published by NICAP in its regularly issued magazine or in another publication. Please try to answer as many questions as possible. Should you need additional room, please use another sheet of paper. Please print or typewrite. Your assistance is of great value and is genuinely appreciated. Thank you.

1. Name Jimmy Carter Place of Employment _____
 Address State Capital Atlanta Occupation Governor
 Date of Birth _____
 Education Graduate
 Special Training Nuclear Physics
 Military Service U.S. Navy
 Telephone (404) 656-1776

2. Date of Observation October 1969 Time AM PM 7:15 Time Zone EST

3. Locality of Observation Leary, Georgia

4. How long did you see the object? _____ Hours 10-12 Minutes _____ Seconds

5. Please describe weather conditions and the type of sky; i.e., bright daylight, nighttime, dusk, etc. Shortly after dark.

6. Position of the Sun or Moon in relation to the object and to you. Not in sight.

7. If seen at night, twilight, or dawn, were the stars or moon visible? Stars.

8. Were there more than one object? No. If so, please tell how many, and draw a sketch of what you saw, indicating direction of movement, if any.

9. Please describe the object(s) in detail. For instance, did it (they) appear solid, or only as a source of light; was it revolving, etc.? Please use additional sheets of paper, if necessary.

10. Was the object(s) brighter than the background of the sky? Yes.

11. If so, compare the brightness with the Sun, Moon, headlights, etc. At one time, as bright as the moon.

12. Did the object(s) - (Please elaborate, if you can give details.)
 a. Appear to stand still at any time? yes
 b. Suddenly speed up and rush away at any time?
 c. Break up into parts or explode?
 d. Give off smoke?
 e. Leave any visible trail?
 f. Do anything?
 g. Change brightness? yes
 h. Change shape? size
 i. Change color? yes

Seemed to move toward us from a distance, stopped-moved partially away—returned, then departed, Bluish at first, then reddish, luminous, not solid.

13. Did object(s) at any time pass in front of, or behind of, anything? If so, please elaborate giving distance, size, etc, if possible. NO.

14. Was there any wind? no. If so, please give direction and speed.

15. Did you observe the object(s) through an optical instrument or other aid, windshield, windows and, storm window, screaming, etc? What? no.

16. Did the object(s) have any sound? no What kind? How loud?

17. Please tell if the object(s) was (were) -
 a. Fuzzy or blurred. b. Like a bright star. c. Sharply outlined. X

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REPORT ON UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT(S)

This form includes questions asked by the United States Air Force and by other Armed Forces' investigating agencies, and additional questions to which answers are needed for full evaluation by NICAP.

After all the information has been fully studied, the conclusion of our Evaluation Panel will be published by NICAP in its regularly issued magazine or in another publication. Please try to answer as many questions as possible. Should you need additional forms, please use another sheet of paper. Please print or typewrite. Your assistance is of great value and is genuinely appreciated. Thank you.

1. Name Jimmy Carter Place of Employment _____

Address State Capitol Atlanta Occupation Governor

Telephone (404) 656-1776 Date of birth _____ Education Graduate

Special Training Nuclear Physics Military Service U.S. Navy

2. Date of Observation October 1969 Time AM PM Time Zone EST

3. Locality of Observation Leary, Georgia

4. How long did you see the object? _____ Hours 10-12 Minutes _____ Seconds _____

5. Please describe weather conditions and the type of sky; i.e., bright daylight, nighttime, dusk, etc. Shortly after dark.

6. Position of the Sun or Moon in relation to the object and to you. Not in sight.

7. If seen at night, twilight, or dawn, were the stars or moon visible? Stars.

8. Were there more than one object? No. If so, please tell how many, and draw a sketch of what you saw, indicating direction of movement, if any.

9. Please describe the object(s) in detail. For instance, did it (they) appear solid, or only as a source of light; was it revolving, etc.? Please use additional sheets of paper, if necessary.

10. Was the object(s) brighter than the background of the sky? Yes.

11. If so, compare the brightness with the Sun, Moon, headlights, etc. At one time, as bright as the moon.

12. Did the object(s) — (Please elaborate, if you can give details.)

a. Appear to stand still at any time? <u>yes</u>	f. Do anything?
b. Suddenly speed up and rush away at any time?	g. Change brightness? <u>yes</u>
c. Break up into parts or explode?	h. Change shape? <u>size</u>
d. Give off smoke?	i. Change color? <u>yes</u>
e. Leave any visible trail?	

Seemed to move toward us from a distance, stopped—moved partially away—returned, then departed. Bluish at first, then reddish, luminous, not solid.

13. Did object(s) at any time pass in front of, or behind of, anything? If so, please elaborate giving distance, size, etc., if possible. NO.

14. Was there any wind? no. If so, please give direction and speed.

15. Did you observe the object(s) through an optical instrument or other aid, windshield, windup pane, storm window, screening, etc? What? NO.

16. Did the object(s) have any sound? no What kind? _____ How loud? _____

17. Please tell if the object(s) was (were) —

a. Fuzzy or blurred.	b. Like a bright star.	c. Sharply outlined. <u>X</u>
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The totally unofficial A-Team electronic mail newsletter

Administrivia: Nicole Pellegrini

DATE: May 22, 1995

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VOLUME: 1

Carter's sighting

Schultz's curiosity about matters extraterrestrial deepened as he began to notice what he calls "a pattern of belief" displayed by those who are antagonistic toward the field. To help illustrate this point, he places a cassette player on the table between us and replays the excerpt from a 1980 broadcast of the Michael Jackson radio talk show. The guest is former president Jimmy Carter, who, in a gripping account, vividly and explicitly recalls a UFO he and others had seen over southern Georgia years earlier. "What it was, I have no idea," Carter says in closing.

"It's a very typical UFO sighting," says Schultz, clicking off the recorder. "Carter said it changed color and, in the physical report, described it as being about the size of the moon. And he saw it with about twenty-five other people. Now, (radio host) Michael Jackson has an extraordinary ego. He can remember names, dates, places and phone conversations from callers years ago, and very specifically."

Here's why that's important: About six months later, according to Schultz, Carl Sagan appeared on the show to plug a new book. "A caller wanted to know about the existence of extraterrestrial life and UFOs, and Sagan gave his typical [Schultz imitates the astronomer's distinctive delivery] 'Well, these things are never seen by more than two or three people at a time, and there's never any corroboration by radar triangulation.' And Michel Jackson chimes--this is a paraphrase-- 'Why is it that the only people who ever see these things are off-duty, half-drunk policemen on the banks of the Mississippi and single mothers coming home from the Pillsbury bake-off?' and I thought to myself, You pigmy! just six months earlier Jackson had heard the president of the goddamn United States--a man he reveres!--say that, along with fellow witnesses, he had seen a UFO.

"Now, Jackson could remember a caller three years ago calling about some event in Nicaragua. But *this* information could not be calculated, couldn't be stored, because it did not comport with his predetermined belief as to what was what in the world."

Going back even farther, there are other blatant instances of witnesses pilloried by the media, says Schultz--citing television journalist Mike Wallace's grilling of Major Donald Keyhoe. Wallace took Keyhoe to task over four Air Force documents described by Keyhoe, informing him that the Air Force steadfastly denied they existed. Then, according to Schultz, Wallace attempted to get Keyhoe to praise astronomer Donald Menzel, a well-known debunker.

"Keyhoe's stock dropped," Schultz says. "He was made to look like a liar on television." Today, he adds--thanks to the Freedom of Information Act--the documents have been obtained.

Exactly as described

"They are **exactly** as Keyhoe described them. I think these should be sent off to Wallace, who kept saying to Keyhoe, 'Why would the Air Force lie to you? Why would they lie to us?' Now he should be saying, 'Why was I utilized by the Air Force to lie to the American Public?' That's the question."

Schultz believes that military personnel who were active during the intense burst of UFO activity from 1947 to 1952 and wanted to come clean about what they saw were suppressed by the government. "They did everything they could to ridicule them," he says. "We even have the document which states that this was going to be the government's tool--debunking and ridiculing. So they implemented that policy, and it has been successful to this day--to the point where you can't get someone like Michael Jackson to remember, after just six months, an incident involving the president of the United States."

Carter also did a LIVE interview
with Los Angeles talk show
host Michael Jackson (obviously no relation to the pop singer). The
interview was pretty much the original story that has appeared
elsewhere.

Sean Casteel does a very good job of transcribing tapes and is very
reasonable in his rates.

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International UFO Bureau

In Conjunction With Canadian UFO Report Magazine

P. O. Box 1281

SIGHTING
FORM
A - UFO REPORTS

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73103

1. NAME *Jimmy Carter* PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT
 ADDRESS *State Capitol* OCCUPATION *Governor*
Atlanta EDUCATION *Georgia Co.*
 TELEPHONE *404-656 1776* SPECIAL TRAINING *Structural Physics*
 MILITARY SERVICE *US Navy*
2. DATE OF OBSERVATION *Oct 1969* TIME AM PM TIME ZONE
7:15 EST
3. LOCALITY OF OBSERVATION *Leary, Georgia*
4. HOW LONG DID YOU SEE THE OBJECT? HOURS 10-12 MINUTES SECONDS
5. PLEASE DESCRIBE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND THE TYPE OF SKY; I.E., BRIGHT DAYLIGHT, NIGHTTIME, DUSK, ETC. *Shortly after dark*
6. POSITION OF THE SUN OR MOON IN RELATION TO THE OBJECT AND TO YOU. *Not in sight*
7. IF SEEN AT NIGHT, TWILIGHT, OR DAWN, WERE THE STARS OR MOON VISIBLE? *Stars*
8. WERE THERE MORE THAN ONE OBJECT? *no* IF SO, PLEASE TELL HOW MANY, AND DRAW A SKETCH OF WHAT YOU SAW, INDICATING DIRECTION OF MOVEMENT, IF ANY.
9. PLEASE DESCRIBE THE OBJECT(S) IN DETAIL. FOR INSTANCE, DID IT (THEY) APPEAR SOLID, OR ONLY AS A SOURCE OF LIGHT; WAS IT REVOLVING, ETC? PLEASE USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS OF PAPER, IF NECESSARY.
10. WAS THE OBJECT(S) BRIGHTER THAN THE BACKGROUND OF THE SKY? *yes*
11. IF SO, COMPARE THE BRIGHTNESS WITH THE SUN, MOON, HEADLIGHTS, ETC. *at one time bright as moon*
12. DID THE OBJECT(S) -- (PLEASE ELABORATE, IF YOU CAN GIVE DETAILS.)
 A. APPEAR TO STAND STILL AT ANY TIME? *yes*
 B. SUDDENLY SPEED UP AND RUSH AWAY AT ANY TIME? *Seemed to move toward us from a distance stop, move partially away return, then depart.*
 C. BREAK UP INTO PARTS OR EXPLODE?
 D. GIVE OFF SMOKE?
 E. LEAVE ANY VISIBLE TRAIL?
 F. DROP ANYTHING?
 G. CHANGE BRIGHTNESS? *yes*
 H. CHANGE SHAPE? *size*
 I. CHANGE COLOR? *yes*
flashed at first - then reddish - luminous - not solid -
13. DID THE OBJECT(S) AT ANY TIME PASS IN FRONT OF, OR BEHIND OF, ANYTHING? IF SO PLEASE ELABORATE GIVING DISTANCE, SIZE, ETC, IF POSSIBLE. *no*
14. WAS THERE ANY WIND? *No* IF SO, PLEASE GIVE DIRECTION AND SPEED. 
15. DID YOU OBSERVE THE OBJECT(S) THROUGH AN OPTICAL INSTRUMENT OR OTHER AID, WINDSHIELD, WINDOWPANE, STORM WINDOW, SCREENING, ETC? *no* WHAT?
16. DID THE OBJECT(S) HAVE ANY SOUND? *no* WHAT KIND? HOW LOUD?
17. PLEASE TELL IF THE OBJECT(S) WAS (WERE) --
 A. FUZZY OR BLURRED.
 B. LIKE A BRIGHT STAR.
 C. SHARPLY OUTLINED.

18. WAS THE OBJECT -- NOTICE
 A. SELF-LUMINOUS? PLEASE DRAW, TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY, A SKETCH OF THE OBJECT(S), INCLUDING ALL DETAILS. YOU MAY USE EXTRA SHEET.
 B. DULL FINISH?
 C. REFLECTING?
 D. TRANSPARENT?
19. DID THE OBJECT(S) RISE OR FALL WHILE IN MOTION? *Came close, moved away, came close, then moved away*
20. TELL THE APPARENT SIZE OF THE OBJECT(S) WHEN COMPARED WITH THE FOLLOWING HELD AT ARM'S LENGTH:
 A. PINHEAD
 B. PEA
 C. DIME
 D. NICKEL
 E. HALF DOLLAR
 F. SILVER DOLLAR
 G. ORANGE
 H. GRAPEFRUIT
 I. LARGER
 OR, IF EASIER, GIVE APPARENT SIZE IN INCHES ON A RULER HELD AT ARM'S LENGTH. *About same as means maybe a little smaller than from bright flash*
21. HOW DID YOU HAPPEN TO NOTICE THE OBJECT(S)? *10 or 12 men all watched it - brightness & started to blink/flash*
22. WHERE WERE YOU AND WHAT WERE YOU DOING AT THE TIME? *Out doors waiting for a meeting to begin at 7:30 am*
23. HOW DID THE OBJECT(S) DISAPPEAR FROM VIEW? *Disappeared to distance then disappeared*
24. COMPARE THE SPEED OF THE OBJECT(S) WITH A PISTON OR JET AIRCRAFT AT THE SAME APPARENT ALTITUDE. *Not sufficient*
25. WERE THERE ANY CONVENTIONAL AIRCRAFT IN THE LOCATION AT THE TIME OR IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS? IF SO, PLEASE ELABORATE. *Yes*
26. PLEASE ESTIMATE THE DISTANCE OF THE OBJECT(S). *Difficult - Maybe 300 to 1000 yards*
27. WHAT WAS THE ELEVATION OF THE OBJECT(S) IN THE SKY? *About 30° above horizon*
28. NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF OTHER WITNESSES, IF ANY. *10 witnesses L. P. ... Co.*
29. PLEASE DRAW A MAP OF THE LOCALITY OF THE OBSERVATION SHOWING NORTH; YOUR POSITION; THE DIRECTION FROM WHICH THE OBJECT(S) APPEARED AND DISAPPEARED FROM VIEW; THE DIRECTION OF ITS COURSE OVER THE AREA; PRAIRIES, TOWNS, VILLAGES, RAILROADS, AND OTHER LANDMARKS WITHIN A MILE. PLEASE USE EXTRA SHEET FOR MAP AND ATTACH TO FORM. *Appeared from West - about 300 yds*
30. IS THERE AN AIRPORT, MILITARY, GOVERNMENTAL, OR RESEARCH INSTALLATION IN THE AREA? *Yes*
31. HAVE YOU SEEN OTHER OBJECTS OF AN UNIDENTIFIED NATURE? IF SO, PLEASE DESCRIBE THESE OBSERVATIONS, USING A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER. *Yes*
32. PLEASE ENCLOSE PHOTOGRAPHS, MOTION PICTURES, NEWS CLIPPINGS, NOTES OF RADIO OR TELEVISION PROGRAMS (INCLUDE TIME, STATION AND DATE, IF POSSIBLE) REGARDING THIS OR SIMILAR OBSERVATIONS, OR ANY OTHER BACKGROUND MATERIAL. WE WILL RETURN THE MATERIAL TO YOU.
33. WERE YOU INTERROGATED BY AIR FORCE INVESTIGATORS? BY ANY OTHER FEDERAL, STATE COUNTY, OR LOCAL OFFICIALS? IF SO, PLEASE STATE THE NAME AND RANK OR TITLE OF THE AGENT, HIS OFFICE, AND DETAILS AS TO WHERE AND WHEN THE QUESTIONING TOOK PLACE. *Yes*
- WERE YOU ASKED OR TOLD NOT TO REVEAL OR DISCUSS THE INCIDENT? IF SO, WERE ANY REASONS OR OFFICIAL ORDERS MENTIONED? PLEASE ELABORATE CAREFULLY. *Yes*
34. WE SHOULD LIKE PERMISSION TO QUOTE YOUR NAME IN CONNECTION WITH THIS REPORT. THIS ACTION WILL ENCOURAGE OTHER RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS TO REPORT SIMILAR OBSERVATIONS TO THE IUFOR. HOWEVER, IF YOU PREFER, WE WILL KEEP YOUR NAME CONFIDENTIAL. PLEASE NOTE YOUR CHOICE BY CHECKING THE PROPER STATEMENT BELOW. IN ANY CASE, PLEASE FILL IN ALL PARTS OF THE FORM, FOR OUR OWN CONFIDENTIAL FILES. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.
- YOU MAY USE MY NAME. () PLEASE KEEP MY NAME CONFIDENTIAL. ()
35. DATE OF FILLING OUT THIS REPORT: *6/10/73* SIGNATURE: *[Signature]*

UFO spotter Carter fights for probe on flying saucer

By ROGER LANGLEY

JIMMY CARTER, who reported sighting a flying saucer eight years ago, is having difficulty persuading his aides to release top-secret data on UFOs.

During the Presidential campaign, Carter promised to release declassified government files on UFOs. But the man he's named to head the project seems reluctant to carry out the job.

In addition, the Carter staff's charge of composition of campaign promises — called Promises in Progress — does not even mention Carter's UFO statements.

"I'm not particularly interested in UFOs," said Carter's new science adviser, Dr. Frank Press.

He told THE STAR, "I'm the President's assistant, and I'll work on anything he tells me to work on. But I can't take on every problem that comes in here."

Since moving into the Oval Office, Carter has made no public statement about UFOs.

A White House spokesman said that does not mean Carter has lost interest in the subject, or that Promises in Progress is an exhaustive list of all the campaign

pledges he intends to work on. "This is a matter of priority," one aide said. "We have other promises to keep as well, and we have to decide which to do first. We do intend to honor our commitment."

It was on September 18, 1952, that Carter, then Governor of Georgia, reported seeing a UFO. He filed the report with the National Investigative Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP).

Carter revealed in the report how he spotted a UFO while waiting for a meeting to start in Larry, Ga., one October night in 1958. He described the object he saw as sharply outlined, self-luminous, "about the same size as the moon, maybe a little smaller."

Last June, while campaigning for the Presidency, Carter said: "If I become President, I'll make every piece of information this country has about UFO sightings available to the public and the scientists."

That pledge was warmly received by UFO believers. For

years, the government has publicly belittled and disregarded UFO reports, while maintaining secret files on them. Retired Marine Major Donald Keyhoe, a NICAP director and author of five UFO books, said

"There is no doubt in my mind that the U.S. government has covered up the UFO question because it has proof positive that the UFOs are coming from alien planets and to afraid the public, like most people, if told the truth."

Dr. Allen Hynek, an astronomer and one-time consultant to an Air Force study of UFOs called Project Blue Book, said

"I know that everything Project Blue Book had was not released to the public and I have a feeling that Blue Book didn't get every-



The President had a word about UFOs during the campaign.

thing that the government had, but I can't prove it.

"I really wish government would get on top of this. I'd like to see a great deal of us can get some information."

Jack Smith, a UFO researcher, said: "I know that everything Project Blue Book had was not released to the public and I have a feeling that Blue Book didn't get every-

What the President saw glowing in sky

Jimmy Carter
Harry Lederman
John Edgar Hoover
Director, FBI
Washington, D.C.
July 1959

THE STAR has uncovered two documents which reveal Jimmy Carter's pre-election interest in UFOs. The first is the signed report he gave to the National Investigative Committee on Aerial Phenomena on Sept. 18, 1952 (part of which appears above).

The second (see below) is a letter he sent less than a month later to NICAP investigator Harry Lederman. In the NICAP report, Carter describes a UFO sighting which took place in October, 1958. "It was shortly after dark and stars were visible," he wrote. "Ten or 12 men all watched it. (The) brightness attracted us."

"(It) seemed to move toward us then, partially away, then return. (It) departed. (It was) bluish, then reddish. (It was) luminous — not solid. (It) moved to a distance then disappeared."

Carter also wrote that the UFO made no noise, but was visible from a distance of about 200 to 1,000 yards for 10 to 15 minutes.

Carter wrote Lederman later, after the investigator asked him if he had taped any comments at the time of the sighting.

"Unfortunately, I do not have the taped comments," Carter wrote. "I will fill out the form as soon as I can find a few minutes."

As a footnote, he added: "A form was already filled out by me."

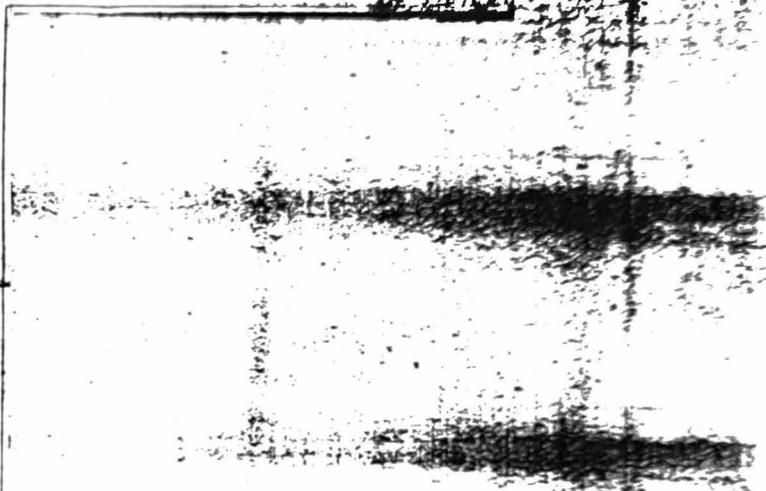
Lederman told THE STAR "I don't know why there was a time lag between the sighting and the filing of his report. I suspect someone heard about it and asked him to file a report and he did. It didn't make any difference to him that he was Governor when he filed his report."

Unfortunately, I do not have the taped comments on the UFO sighting. I will fill out the form and return it to you under separate cover, as soon as I can find a few minutes.

Please let me know when I can be of additional service to you.

Sincerely,
Jimmy Carter
 Jimmy Carter

11. I have one about 1958 and by me



A2 Sunday, May 21, 1995 ****

The Atlanta Journal / The Atlanta Constitution

Q&A on the News

Do you have a question about the news — local, national or international? **Collin Bessonette** will try to get an answer for you. **Call 222-2002** on a Touch-Tone phone and follow the instructions. **On Access Atlanta**, the AJC's online service, jump: Q&A to ask a question or read hundreds of recent Q&A answers.

Q: I remember that when Jimmy Carter was running for president, he said he had seen a UFO. As I recall, he said that if he became president, he would tell everyone about it. But I've never seen or heard anything since. What's the story?

— Louise Edmondson, Senoia

A: An episode involving a Carter "sighting" — of sorts — can be found in the thin paperback "Jimmy: The Candidacy of Carter," by Fred McMorrow. A copy is in the Georgia Department of Archives and History. Archives staffer Alice James tracked it down.

The book, published in 1976, recounted a time when Carter's press secretary, Jody Powell, was talking to reporters. One of them asked Powell about a report in another book that said Carter had "revealed" a UFO sighting before he became governor of Georgia.

Powell's response: "I do remember Jimmy saying that he did, in fact, see a strange light or object at night in the sky which did not appear to

be a star or plane or anything he could explain. If that's your definition of an unidentified flying object, then I suppose that's correct." Powell added: "I don't think it's had any great impact on him. . . . I would venture to say he probably has seen stranger and more unexplainable things than that just during his time in government."

President Jimmy Carter's Sighting of a UFO - Carter's Sighting

President Jimmy Carter's Sighting of a UFO (and Rosalynn's of a Ghost)

President Carter's "UFO" Is Identified as the Planet Venus

by Robert Sheaffer

(published in *The Humanist* magazine, July-August, 1977, p.46)

President Jimmy Carter's widely-reported "UFO sighting," which he made public while Governor of Georgia, was in fact a misidentification of the planet Venus. Several errors of identification within Mr. Carter's report demonstrate that the eyewitness testimony of even a future president of the United States cannot be taken at face value when investigating UFO sightings.

The incident occurred in Leary, Georgia, about forty miles from Plains, on the evening of January 6, 1969. Mr. Carter was the local district governor of the Lion's Club, and had come to Leary to boost the local chapter. While standing outdoors at approximately 7:15 pm, waiting for the Lion's Club meeting to begin, Mr. Carter reported seeing a single "self-luminous" object, "as bright as the moon," which reportedly approached and then receded several times. Mr. Carter reports that his "UFO" was in the western sky, at about 30 degrees elevation. This almost perfectly matches the known position of Venus, which was in the west-southwest at an altitude of 25 degrees. Weather records show that the sky was clear at the time of the sighting.

No other object generates as many UFO reports as the planet Venus. Venus is not as bright as the moon, nor does it actually approach the viewer, or change size and brightness, but descriptions like these are typical of misidentifications of a bright planet. Every time Venus reaches its maximum brilliance in the evening sky, hundreds of "UFO sightings" of this type are made. At the time of the Carter UFO sighting, Venus was a brilliant evening star, nearly one hundred times brighter than a first-magnitude star.

Mr. Carter is in good company in misidentifying Venus as a UFO. Many highly trained and responsible persons, including airplane pilots, scientists, policemen, and military personnel, have made the same mistake. During World War II, U.S. aircraft tried to shoot down Venus on numerous occasions, believing it to be an enemy aircraft. In October of 1973, Ohio Governor John Gilligan made headlines by reportedly sighting a UFO. Governor Gilligan's "UFO" turned out to be a misidentification of the planet Mars.

My investigation revealed that many of the details published concerning this incident were widely misreported. These errors significantly hindered the investigation. The location of the sighting has been widely misreported as Thomaston, Georgia, and the year as 1973. In his handwritten UFO sighting report, mailed to the International UFO Bureau in Oklahoma City, Mr. Carter incorrectly recalled the date as sometime in October 1969. However, official records from the Lion's Club International headquarters in Oakbrook, Illinois, give the date of Carter's Leary Lion's Club speech as January 6 of that year. Attempts to determine the date by interviewing numerous Leary residents had been unsuccessful. Mr. Carter made no mention of any "UFO sighting" in his report filed with the Lion's Club.

Although Carter reports that "ten members" of the Leary Lion's Club also witnessed the event, attempts to locate ten other witnesses proved fruitless. No one else seems to have paid much attention to the "UFO." While most Leary residents interviewed did recall Mr. Carter's visit, even those who attended the meeting generally had no recollection or knowledge of any unidentified object being sighted. The only Leary resident who recalled the incident at all was Fred Hart, 1969 president of the Leary Lions Club, who faintly recalled standing outside with Carter watching a light in the sky. Mr. Hart believed that the object might have been a "weather balloon," and said that the incident did not leave much of an impression on him. He believes the "UFO" to have been some ordinary object and agrees that it might have been a bright planet.

Robert Sheaffer is a member of the UFO Subcommittee of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal.

President Jimmy Carter's

of a

Learyites leery of Carter's encounter

No one recalls 1970 UFO spotting

by Tom Tiede (Newspaper Enterprise Association) Mt. Pleasant (Texas) Daily Tribune, Feb. 2, 1978

Leary, Ga (NEA) - Jimmy Carter had a close encounter of a highly suspicious kind here in 1970. He was a political hopeful then, making a speech at the local Lions Club, and he says he spotted an unidentified flying object 30 degrees above the horizon. He also says 10 to 12 others saw it with him.

As it happens, however, there is no one in Leary who remembers sighting a UFO in company with the future president. Carter insists that the object's brightness attracted a crowd, but it appears it only attracted him. Not one resident recalls anything unusual about that particular January evening.

The townsfolk are mildly amused by the inconsistency of the matter. They have in fact been chuckling ever since last year when the media carried belated news of the Carter encounter. Some think that Carter actually viewed the town's silver water tower; from a distance it can look a bit odd.

But whatever Carter saw, he apparently saw it alone. Mayor Stanley Shepard says he has talked with everyone who might have attended the Lions Club meeting on the night in question, "and nobody remembers anything about flying saucers." People recall that Carter's speech was dull - but as for spaceships, no....

Carter Once Saw a UFO on 'Very Sober Occasion'

(Atlanta Constitution, Sept. 14, 1973, p. 1D)

by Howell Raines, Constitution Staff Writer

DUBLIN- Gov. Jimmy Carter doesn't scoff at people who report UFO sightings, because he saw one himself about three years ago. And, Carter quipped, "it was on a very sober occasion."

Carter said he saw a blue, disc-shaped object during a campaign stop in Leary, a South Georgia town in the same general area where numerous UFOs have been reported recently.

The object came into view as Carter and several members of the Leary Lions Club stood outside the hall where Carter was to speak. All the members of the group observed the object for about five to ten minutes, Carter said. He immediately went to a tape recorder and dictated a description of what he remembers as "a very remarkable sight."

"It was about 30 degrees above the horizon and looked about as large as the moon. It got smaller and changed to a reddish color and then got larger again," Carter recalled.

Carter speculated that the UFO "was probably an electronic occurrence of some sort," rather than a visitation from outer space. At any rate, the governor said, "it was obviously there, and obviously unidentified."

Carter recounted the experience during a stop here on his statewide listening tour.

on Jimmy Carter's UFO Report:

(from *The UFO Verdict* by Robert Sheaffer, chapter 2:)

...Three Georgians who had known Jimmy Carter for years told me they doubted that the sighting occurred in Thomaston. My investigation had reached a standstill: I now had no remaining thread to pursue.

I began making inquiries of various UFO researchers, looking for someone who might be able to provide some facts on the case. Finally, someone suggested that I contact Hayden Hewes, director of the International UFO Bureau, who had written a brief piece on the Carter sighting for *Argosy UFO* [Nov., 1976]. I reached Mr. Hewes by telephone at his home in Oklahoma City, and it was he who provided the first significant lead. When brief press reports appeared during the big UFO flap of 1973 to the effect that Governor Carter had previously spotted a UFO, the International UFO Bureau mailed a UFO sighting report to Carter at the State Capitol in Atlanta. Carter apparently filled out the form in some haste, his handwritten replies brief and not easily legible. He then mailed it back to Oklahoma. Mr. Hewes was kind enough to lend me a photographic transparency of the 1973 report in Carter's own handwriting (plate 1).

[Hewes sent a copy of Carter's report to me in a letter dated Nov. 20, 1976. I made my own copies, and return his copy to him. Sometime later, I was contacted by Jack Acuff of NICAP, a now-defunct major UFO organization, asking for a copy of it. I sent one to him, and the Carter sighting report was reprinted in the Feb., 1977 issue of the *NICAP UFO Investigator*, as if were a NICAP form that Carter had filled out. The information it contains, however, was unchanged. MUFON now claims to have Carter's UFO report. However, all these documents (dated Sept. 18, 1973) are simply typed copies of the handwritten form that Carter sent to the International UFO Bureau, having been "ripped off" from Hayden Hewes.]

Carter
Sighting
JFO
Updates

Thank you Dave for the detailed breakdown of Carter's sighting and clarifying his qualifications. Further to what you have related below, I might add that my information suggests that in his early years in the navy, before subs, **he was in cruisers or destroyers and stood watches as a navigation officer, taking star shots with a sextant etc.** For this reason as well I've never been able to buy the Venus explanation. I've found that too many times, in their haste prove how discriminating they are, "ufologists" blow off sightings reports simply because Venus is present in the sky at the time. This is like saying that suspect "A" did not do a bank robbery despite 7 witnesses saying he did, because Jack the Ripper was in the bank at the same time, so it had to be him, even though the MO doesn't match.

I suggest to you and others that the reason the others did not remember it is that they were not qualified enough to be discriminating. To Carter this object might have been far enough outside his own point of references that he was immediately taken with it. Many of us have multiple witness cases where maybe one out of three thought the sighting really remarkable but only because that one witness had greater knowledge of what should, or should not be in the sky at the time.

I'm really quite amazed that the investigators in the area did not do a better job of looking into this sighting both at the time, and some of the heavyweights did not review it years later considering the position that Carter rose too. Ufology is always looking for credible witnesses.

How about a US President. If time has proven anything, Carter has been probably one of the most honorable of all of the presidential line. I think he deserves better than that tired old standby explanation- "Venus".

Don

Correct. Carter had a degree in nuclear physics and served as an officer on US nuclear submarines. I suspect he had also seen Venus a few times down on the peanut farm.

Venus?! Did Jerry Clark say Venus? There are many details in this report that don't sound anything like Venus:

1. **Venus never appears to be the "size of the moon" or "slightly**

smaller than the apparent size of the moon."

2. Venus doesn't loom dramatically in size as described by Carter.

3. Venus doesn't disappear by seeming to move into the distance. At the reported time of the sighting, Venus would have remained well-elevated and visible in the sky. It would not have disappeared. In fact, it didn't set until about 9:20. You can't have it both ways, with Venus supposedly being brilliantly bright and otherwise highly visible (to supposedly account for the report), yet supposedly disappearing as well.

Lesser discrepancies are:

1. Venus was in the southwestern, not western sky (between 237 and 240 degrees azimuth, not 270).

2. If the time was correct, the elevation was between 21 and 24 degrees, not 30 degrees.

3. According to my planetarium programs, Venus wasn't even at its brightest on this date, much less an "unusually bright light." Carter's report said that the "10-12 men all watched it. Brightness attracted us." None of these people had never seen Venus in the sky before?

>frequently mistaken for a UFO in
>part because of an optical illusion which causes stationary
>objects to appear to move back and forth.

What Jerry Clark is describing is the autokinetic effect, but this does nothing to explain the Carter report. The autokinetic effect has an isolated point of light in a dark background appearing to move erratically. It occurs when there is a lack of surrounding visual cues.

But what Carter described was something that seemed to dramatically change in size and/or distance. Or as his UFO report described it, "came close, moved away, came close, moved away," changed in size from "brighter/larger than planet to apparent size of moon," and eventually seemed to move to the distance and disappear.

Furthermore, the very fact that Carter compared the thing's

apparent size and brightness to visible planets, such as Venus (Saturn was also visible), suggests that he wasn't confusing it with Venus. He felt this thing was both brighter and larger even when it was at its SMALLEST.

Now there are only two visual physiological things I can think of that might cause a virtual point of light like Venus to appear to change in size like that. One is a disruption of the central visual brain, in which the person loses their ability to maintain size constancy. Objects seem to be constantly changing in size.

There are a few extremely rare cases of organic brain damage causing this (such as in a small stroke), and perhaps some hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD can cause this as well. Jimmy Carter dropping acid? I think we can safely rule this explanation out.

The other would be very extreme fluctuations in the focus of the eye. I could imagine this happening with somebody who was falling down drunk. But Carter was not intoxicated. Except for maybe an occasional Billy Beer or glass of wine, he was a teetotaler, if anything. Furthermore Carter was about 45 at the time. He didn't have a whole lot of accommodation (focusing ability) left (as people in their mid to late 40's can attest). So it becomes very questionable whether Carter, even if straining mightily, could have defocussed Venus into a blur that appeared to be about the size of the moon.

Frankly, a better case for Venus probably could be made by dusting off one of Menzel's old standbys -- the atmospheric lens.

But darn, even if you buy that, it still doesn't explain how Venus could seem to move off into the distance and permanently disappear when it was still up there for another two hours.

In any case, forget autokinesis. There is no way it could have anything to do with it. Autokinesis has to do with perceived lateral motion, NOT perceived changes in size, distance, or brightness.

- > Indeed, the only real
- > investigation of the incident, conducted by debunker Robert
- > Sheaffer, established Venus' presence in the section of the sky
- > Carter was observing.

As we all know, Venus is visible in the evening or early morning most of the year, making it a convenient debunking explanation

for just about everything (e.g., Sheaffer also used it to "explain" the 1966 Portage County high-speed police chase). Just because Venus is up there in the general vicinity doesn't mean it automatically explains a case. In the Carter report (or Portage County), it certainly does not.

>In common with an earlier reporter (Tiede, >1978), Sheaffer found that the other witnesses scarcely >remembered the incident (Sheaffer, 1981).

Just because the others didn't care doesn't mean the incident wasn't worthy of note or anomalous. Certainly Carter went out of his way to later file a UFO report and pursue the matter of UFOs when he became President a few years later.

It would be interesting to know how the other witnesses remembered it.

David Rudiak

I'm a little surprised to read such a vigorous defense of such a nothing case as Jimmy Carter's report, but to each his own. Nonetheless, a few observations:

(1) I am surprised that so little -- actually, nothing -- is being made here of the testimonies of the other witnesses, who seem universally to have been sure they had seen nothing out of the ordinary. Offhand I can't think of another instance generally held to be of a true UFO sighting where this is the case. This consideration alone should make Carter's testimony suspicious. If the witness had not been a future President, absolutely nobody would have paid attention to the sighting, and we certainly would not be discussing it here.

(2) Misidentifications and misobservations far more spectacular than those to which Carter apparently fell victim are well known in the UFO literature, for example the Mantell and Gorman incidents of 1948, in both of which those making the mistake (in the Mantell case fatally) were pilots and "trained observers."

(3) Sheaffer's account of his investigation of the story appears in Chapter 2 of his *The UFO Verdict* (1981). I strongly disagree with Sheaffer's analyses of other, stronger cases, but in this instance he had a weak target, and his solution is almost surely the same one an investigator less hostile to UFOs would have come

to.

(4) If you need a sighting by a U.S. President, Ronald Reagan's is far more interesting, though much less known.

Cheers,

Jerry Clark

Jimmy Carter's UFO Sighting

Nominated five times for the Nobel Peace Prize, Jimmy Carter was one of the most sincere explorers of UFO information while president. Though he made little public headway, his personal beliefs spiked when he had his own sighting in 1969, while still governor of Georgia. Reprint of Carter's NICAP report form.

Jimmy Carter's comments about his UFO sighting have been widely reported in the media. During his election campaign of 1976 he told the following to reporters: "It was the darndest thing I've ever seen. It was big, it was very bright, it changed colors and it was about the size of the moon. We watched it for ten minutes, but none of us could figure out what it was. One thing's for sure, I'll never make fun of people who say they've seen unidentified objects in the sky. If I become President, I'll make every piece of information this country has about UFO sightings available to the public and the scientists."

Following is the form Jimmy Carter filed with NICAP on September 18, 1973. Only the questions that were responded to are listed. Carter's responses are in quotation marks.

1. Name: "Jimmy Carter"
Address: "State Capitol Atlanta"
Occupation: "Governor"
2. Date of Observation: "October 1969"
3. Location of Observation: "Leary, Georgia"
4. How long did you see the object?:
"10-12 minutes."
5. Please describe weather conditions and the type of sky; i.e., bright daylight, nighttime, dusk, etc.:
"Shortly after dark."
6. Position of the Sun or Moon in relation to the object and to you: "Not in sight."
7. If seen at night, twilight, or dawn, were the stars or moon visible?: "Stars."
8. Were there more than one object?: "No."
10. Was the object(s) brighter than the background of the sky?: "Yes."
11. If so, compare the brightness with the Sun, Moon, headlights, etc.:
"At one time, as bright as the moon."
12. Did the object(s):
 - a. Appear to stand still at any time?: "Yes."
 - g. Change brightness?: "Yes."
 - h. Change shape?: "Yes."
 - l. Change color?: "Yes."

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON AERIAL PHENOMENA (NICAP) ©
3535 University Blvd. West
Kensington, Maryland 20798

301-948-1287 Exhibit # 7

REPORT ON UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT(S)

This form includes questions asked by the United States Air Force and by other Armed Forces' investigating agencies and additional questions to which answers are needed for full evaluation by NICAP. After all the information has been fully studied, the conclusions of our Evaluation Panel will be published by NICAP in its regularly issued magazine or in another publication. Please try to answer as many questions as possible. Should you need additional room, please use another sheet of paper. Please print or type clearly. Your assistance is of great value and is genuinely appreciated. Thank you.

1. Name: Jimmy Carter	Place of Employment: Governor			
Address: State Capitol Atlanta	Occupation: Governor			
Telephone: (404) 656-1776	Date of Birth: _____			
	Education: Graduate Nuclear Physics U.S. Navy			
	Special Training: _____			
	Military Service: _____			
2. Date of Observation: October 1969	Time: AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7:15			
	Time Zone: EST			
3. Location of Observation: Leary, Georgia				
4. How long did you see the object? _____ Hours _____ Minutes _____ Seconds				
5. Please describe weather conditions and the type of sky, i.e., bright daylight, nighttime, dusk, etc.	Shortly after dark.			
6. Position of the Sun or Moon in relation to the object and to you:	Not in sight.			
7. If seen at night, twilight, or dawn, were the stars or moon visible? Stars.				
8. Were there more than one object? No.	If so, please tell how many and draw a sketch of what you saw indicating direction of movement, if any.			
9. Please describe the object(s) in detail. For instance, did it (they) appear solid, or only as a source of light; was it revolving, etc.? Please use additional sheets of paper, if necessary.				
10. Was the object(s) brighter than the background of the sky? Yes.				
11. If so, compare the brightness with the Sun, Moon, headlights, etc. At one time, as bright as the moon.				
12. Did the object(s) - (Please elaborate, if you can give details.)				
a. Appear to stand still at any time? YES	f. Drop anything? _____			
b. Suddenly speed up and rush away at any time? _____	g. Change brightness? YES			
c. Break up into parts or explode? _____	h. Change shape? size			
d. Give off smoke? _____	i. Change color? YES			
e. Leave any visible trail? _____				
Seemed to move toward us from a distance, stopped-moved partially away - returned, then departed. Bluish at first, then reddish, luminous, not solid.				
13. Did the object(s) at any time pass in front of, or behind of, anything? If so, please elaborate giving distance, size, etc., if possible. NO.				
14. Was there any wind? NO.	If so, please give direction and speed.			
15. Did you observe the object(s) through an optical instrument or other aid, windshield, windowpane, storm window, screening, etc.? What? NO.				
16. Did the object(s) have any sound? NO	What kind? _____ How loud? _____			
17. Please tell if the object(s) was (were) -				
a. Fuzzy or blurred.	b. Like a bright star.	c. Sharply outlined. X		
18. Was the object -	a. Self-luminous? X	b. Dull flash? _____	c. Reflecting? _____	d. Transparent? _____

Carter's NICAP report form

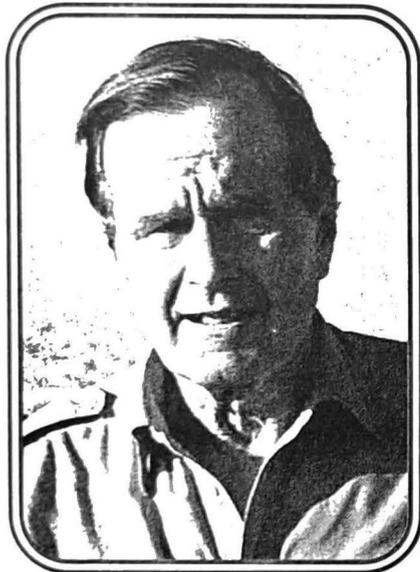
13. Did object(s) at any time pass in front of, or behind of anything? If so, please elaborate giving distance, size, etc, if possible: "No."
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17. Please tell if the object(s) was (were):
c. Sharply outlined: "Yes."
18. Was the object:
b. Self-luminous?: "Yes."
19. Did the object(s) rise or fall while in motion?: "Came close, moved away, came close and then moved away."
20. Or, if easier, give apparent size in inches on a ruler held at arm's length:
"About the same as moon, maybe a little smaller. Varied from brighter/larger than planet to apparent size of moon."
21. How did you happen to notice the object(s)?:



DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

was covertly hustled to Holloman Air Force Base, where he met with tall aliens disembarking from a landed saucer, according to one of the more sensational and patently uncorroborated rumors limping around the UFO circuit.

EISENHOWER, BUSH LIBRARIES



GEORGE BUSH's White House residency was preceded by a one-year tenure as Director of Central Intelligence, the top post at the Central Intelligence Agency. If nothing else, that window of time—Jan. 1976 to Jan. 1977—allowed him official access to some of the CIA's UFO papers.

"10-12 men all watched it. Brightness attracted us."

22. Where were you and what were you doing at the time?: **"Outdoors waiting for a meeting to begin at 7:30 pm."**
23. How did the object(s) disappear from view?: **"Moved to distance then disappeared."**
26. Please estimate the distance of the object(s): **"Difficult. Maybe 300-1000 yards."**
27. What was the elevation of the object(s) in the sky?: **"About 30 degrees above horizon."**
28. Names and addresses of other witnesses, if any: **"Ten members of Leary Georgia Lions Club."**
31. Please draw a map of the locality of the observation showing North; your position; the direction from which the object(s) appeared and disappeared from view; the direction of its course over the area; roads, towns, villages, railroads, and other landmarks within a mile: **"Appeared from west about 30 degrees up."**
32. Is there an airport, military, governmental, or research installation in the area?: **"No." 🍄**



RICHARD NIXON's pal Jackie Gleason was supposedly shown alien corpses during a very special, deathly secret field trip arranged by what might possibly be America's most conflicted presidential personality thus far.



TRUMAN, ROOSEVELT LIBRARIES

HARRY TRUMAN's controversial signature adorns an important memo in the MJ-12 series. As the President who ushered in the national security state—acting coincidentally with the Roswell events—he probably rates as the President forced to hold the UFO hot potato during its longest and most sizzling 20th century moment.

Will the new president somehow turn on to the UFO scene? Stay tuned.



FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT *was on watch as President during the pre-Arnold flap that threw many fighter pilots off balance as World War II was just coming to an end. Dubbed "foo fighters," the strange lights that dogged military aircraft have never been satisfactorily explained.*



Executive Department

Atlanta 30334

October 12, 1973

Jimmy Carter
GOVERNOR

Joseph W. Powell, Jr.
NEWS SECRETARY

Mr. Harry Lederman NICAP R.I.
1583 Nantahalla Court, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

Dear Mr. Lederman:

I deeply sympathize with your position on the World Congress Center. This is an example of the most difficult type of situation I face -- a choice between the good of honest and decent individuals and the welfare of the State as a whole. I cannot see my responsibility in any other way than to the State as a whole.

I hope you understand that I have no preference about the site. It would suit me fine to see a World Congress Center constructed at the Omni site, or any other, with private funds. Failing that, I will continue to support construction with public funds.

Unfortunately, I do not have the taped comments on the UFO sighting. I will fill out the form and return it to you under separate cover, as soon as I can find a few minutes.

Please let me know when I can be of additional service to you.

Sincerely,


Jimmy Carter

JC/jpc

*P.S. A form was already filled
out by me - J*

President Jimmy Carter's Sighting of a UFO (and Rosalynn's of a Ghost)

President Carter's "UFO" Is Identified as the Planet Venus

by Robert Sheaffer

(published in *The Humanist* magazine, July-August, 1977, p.46)

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The incident occurred in Leary, Georgia, about forty miles from Plains, on the evening of January 6, 1969. Mr. Carter was the local district governor of the Lion's Club, and had come to Leary to boost the local chapter. While standing outdoors at approximately 7:15 pm, waiting for the Lion's Club meeting to begin, Mr. Carter reported seeing a single "self-luminous" object, "as bright as the moon," which reportedly approached and then receded several times. Mr. Carter reports that his "UFO" was in the western sky, at about 30 degrees elevation. This almost perfectly matches the known position of Venus, which was in the west-southwest at an altitude of 25 degrees. Weather records show that the sky was clear at the time of the sighting.

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Mr. Carter is in good company in misidentifying Venus as a UFO. Many highly trained and responsible persons, including airplane pilots, scientists, policemen, and military personnel, have made the same mistake. During World War II, U.S. aircraft tried to shoot down Venus on numerous occasions, believing it to be an enemy aircraft. In October of 1973, Ohio Governor John Gilligan made headlines by reportedly sighting a UFO. Governor Gilligan's "UFO" turned out to be a misidentification of the planet Mars.

My investigation revealed that many of the details published concerning this incident were widely misreported. These errors significantly hindered the investigation. The location of the sighting has been widely misreported as Thomaston, Georgia, and the year as 1973. In his handwritten UFO sighting report, mailed to the International UFO Bureau in Oklahoma City, Mr. Carter incorrectly recalled the date as sometime in October 1969. However, official records from the Lion's Club International headquarters in Oakbrook, Illinois, give the date of Carter's Leary Lion's Club speech as January 6 of that year. Attempts to determine the date by interviewing numerous Leary residents had been unsuccessful. Mr. Carter made no mention of any "UFO sighting" in his report filed with the Lion's Club.

Although Carter reports that "ten members" of the Leary Lion's Club also witnessed the event, attempts to locate ten other witnesses proved fruitless. No one else seems to have paid much attention to the "UFO." While most Leary residents interviewed did recall Mr. Carter's visit, even those who attended the meeting generally had no recollection or knowledge of any unidentified object being sighted. The only Leary resident who recalled the incident at all was Fred Hart, 1969 president of the Leary Lions Club, who faintly recalled standing outside with Carter watching a light in the sky. Mr. Hart believed that the object might have been a "weather balloon," and said that the incident did not leave much of an impression on him. He believes the "UFO" to have been some ordinary object and agrees that it might have been a bright planet.

Robert Sheaffer is a member of the UFO Subcommittee of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal.

Learyites leery of Carter's encounter

No one recalls 1970 UFO spotting

**by Tom Tiede (Newspaper Enterprise Association)
Mt. Pleasant (Texas) Daily Tribune, Feb. 2, 1978**

Leary, Ga (NEA) - Jimmy Carter had a close encounter of a highly suspicious kind here in 1970. He was a political hopeful then, making a speech at the local Lions Club, and he says he spotted an unidentified flying object 30 degrees above the horizon. He also says 10 to 12 others saw it with him.

As it happens, however, there is no one in Leary who remembers sighting a UFO in company with the future president. Carter insists that the object's brightness attracted a crowd, but it appears it only attracted him. Not one resident recalls anything unusual about that particular January evening.

The townsfolk are mildly amused by the inconsistency of the matter. They have in fact been chuckling ever since last year when the media carried belated news of the Carter encounter. Some think that Carter actually viewed the town's silver water tower; from a distance it can look a bit odd.

But whatever Carter saw, he apparently saw it alone. Mayor Stanley Shepard says he has talked with everyone who might have attended the Lions Club meeting on the night in question, "and nobody remembers anything about flying saucers." People recall that Carter's speech was dull - but as for spaceships, no....

Carter Once Saw a UFO on 'Very Sober Occasion'

(Atlanta Constitution, Sept. 14, 1973, p. 1D)

by Howell Raines, Constitution Staff Writer

DUBLIN- Gov. Jimmy Carter doesn't scoff at people who report UFO sightings, because he saw one himself about three years ago. And, Carter quipped, "it was on a very sober occasion."

Carter said he saw a blue, disc-shaped object during a campaign stop in Leary, a South Georgia town in the same general area where numerous UFOs have been reported recently.

The object came into view as Carter and several members of the Leary Lions Club stood outside the hall where Carter was to speak. All the members of the group observed the object for about five to ten minutes, Carter said. He immediately went to a tape recorder and dictated a description of what he remembers as "a very remarkable sight."

"It was about 30 degrees above the horizon and looked about as large as the moon. It got smaller and changed to a reddish color and then got larger again," Carter recalled.

Carter speculated that the UFO "was probably an electronic occurrence of some sort," rather than a visitation from outer space. At any rate, the governor said, "it was obviously there, and obviously unidentified."

Carter recounted the experience during a stop here on his statewide listening tour.

on Jimmy Carter's UFO Report:

(from *The UFO Verdict* by Robert Sheaffer, chapter 2:)

...Three Georgians who had known Jimmy Carter for years told me they doubted that the sighting occurred in Thomaston. My investigation had reached a standstill: I now had no remaining thread to pursue.

I began making inquiries of various UFO researchers, looking for someone who might be able to provide some facts on the case. Finally, someone suggested that I contact Hayden Hewes, director of the International UFO Bureau, who had written a brief piece on the Carter sighting for *Argosy UFO* [Nov., 1976]. I reached Mr. Hewes by telephone at his home in Oklahoma City, and it was he who provided the first significant lead. When brief press reports appeared during the big UFO flap of 1973 to the effect that Governor Carter had previously spotted a UFO, the International UFO Bureau mailed a UFO sighting report to Carter at the State Capitol in Atlanta. Carter apparently filled out the form in some haste, his handwritten replies brief and not easily legible. He then mailed it back to Oklahoma. Mr. Hewes was kind enough to lend me a photographic transparency of the 1973 report in Carter's own handwriting (plate 1).

[Hewes sent a copy of Carter's report to me in a letter dated Nov. 20, 1976. I made my own copies, and return his copy to him. Sometime later, I was contacted by Jack Acuff of NICAP, a now-defunct major UFO organization, asking for a copy of it. I sent one to him, and the Carter sighting report was reprinted in the Feb., 1977 issue of the *NICAP UFO Investigator*, as if were a NICAP form that Carter had filled out. The information it contains, however, was unchanged. MUFON now claims to have Carter's UFO report.

However, all these documents (dated Sept. 18, 1973) are simply typed copies of the handwritten form that Carter sent to the International UFO Bureau, having been "ripped off" from Hayden Hewes.]

Gov. Carter's Wife: Jimmy and I Lived in a Haunted House for Five Years

by Shelley Ross

(*The National Enquirer* [tabloid], April 27, 1976)

Presidential candidate Jimmy Carter and his wife once lived in a haunted house in Georgia - complete with eerie noises, flashing lights and a mysterious secret room hidden beneath a fireplace.

The old Southern home the Carters rented for five years, 1954-59, just outside the town of Plains, Ga., has been the subject of ghostly legends since the time of the Civil War, Mrs. Rosalynn Carter told the ENQUIRER.

Legends say the house was taken over by Union soldiers, that some of them were killed there, and that their spirits still roam through the house.

"I knew that the house was haunted ever since I was a little girl, because I grew up in the town," Mrs. Carter said. "I used to go all the way through the woods to avoid walking close to it. When I did go near it, I saw flashing lights in the attic when there was nobody in the house." Before she and her husband moved in, Mrs. Carter said, she had heard stories about a spooky bedroom where bedcovers flew mysteriously off the bed.

"I was too frightened to find out what would happen to me, so I made the bedroom into a living room," she said. "I just didn't dare sleep in that room."

"I never saw any ghosts - I don't believe in them - but I heard something in the attic every night that sent shivers up my spine. Those eerie noises gave me goosebumps."

"One day while my son was playing he found two loose bricks in the attic fireplace," Mrs. Carter continued. "When he picked up the bricks, he discovered a room beneath the fireplace, four feet deep and six feet wide. There was nothing in the room but a chair."

She speculated that possibly some of the Yankee soldiers hid in the room, giving rise to the ghostly legends.

Mrs. Carter recalled that the man who rented the house before the Carters moved in, Dr. Thad Wise, told her he had often seen a little white dog walk to the porch of the house. "But every time the doctor would try to pet it, he told me, the dog would disappear," Mrs. Carter said.

Another former resident, Mrs. Jeana Pantall, said she and her husband were asleep when something suddenly yanked the bedcovers off her - twice in the same night. "But I couldn't see anyone," she said.

The present occupant, Mrs. Bertha Hewitt, says she often hears light switches clicking on and off after she goes to bed. "And I heard that one man who slept in the haunted bedroom got picked up out of his bed, set on the floor, and then put back in bed again."

Added Mrs. Carter: "It's a house you can fear, but love at the same time, because of its beauty."

(photo caption: "Secret door leading to underground room discovered by Rosalynn Carter's son, is shown by the house's present occupant, Mrs. Bertha Hewitt.")

ROSALYNN CARTER'S HAUNTED HOUSE

by Cliff Linedecker

(The Examiner [tabloid], May 3, 1983)

Former President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter lived with a terrifying ghost years before moving into the White House.

Their once magnificent antebellum home in Plains, Georgia was haunted by the eerie spectre of a sobbing woman in a white dress and a mysterious phantom dog.

Built in 1850, the old wood frame plantation-style building was already the legendary haunt of ghosts and fearsome creatures of the night when Jimmy and his wife-to-be, Rosalynn Smith, were growing up in Plains.

"When I was a little girl, my best friend was Jimmy's sister Ruth," Rosalynn recalled.

"We had to pass the haunted house to visit each other. We were about 11, and so afraid of the house that we took the long way around."

Amazingly, years later after Rosalynn had married her best friend's brother, the young couple had moved into the scary house.

From 1956 to 1960 they raised their three sons in the spook-filled home.

Almost immediately after they moved in, the mysterious forces lurking in the house reminded the new occupants that they were not alone.

Mrs. Carter said that one night they were startled by the sound of a loud crash coming from the front room.

"We waited a bit, then the whole family trooped in together, thinking a window had fallen shut. But the window was still wide open," she shuddered.

Inez Laster, who worked in the house as a cook during the early 1950s, also learned first hand of the menacing supernatural presences that haunted the scary room.

"Things would happen in that room," she whispered. "I could hear knocking on the door. Then it would open and shut and I'd hear walking. I'd see a woman with a long white dress coming from the cemetery."

"Sometimes I'd hear her walking on the attic stairs," the cook confided.

Mrs. Carter also recalled stories she heard of a tiny, silent, white dog which was said to appear on the front steps. It always suddenly vanished when someone reached down to pat it.

One of the most puzzling mysteries of the brooding old plantation house a small secret space squeezed between the attic and the haunted living room. The Carter boys discovered it one day as they were playing and noticed a loose brick in the hearth. They found that there was just room enough for about three men to hide.

Could it be that the little room holds the solution to the hidden secrets of the mystery phantoms that stalk the old house?

(Photo caption: "Ex-First Lady Rosalynn Carter inspects secret space above the hearth in attic of wood framed haunted house (top) in Plains, Georgia." The photo shows a woman who certainly appears to be Rosalynn Carter, bending down and inspecting a hole in the floor before a hearth.)

[I wrote to Mrs. Carter asking if she would either confirm or deny this story. I received no reply. - RS].

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But as they drove toward the UFO, it seemed to move away at the same speed so that no matter how fast they drove the UFO seemed to maintain the same separation. When they stopped the car, the woman said, the UFO also seemed to stop, that is, to hover. When the couple finally gave up and headed home, the woman said, the UFO turned and followed them, always maintaining the same separation distance. The next night, she reported, they again set out in the car to see if the UFO would return, which it did around 9:00 P.M. in the east, and the seemingly mysterious events of the previous night were repeated.

Beyond any doubt this UFO was the planet Mars, which then was at its closest, and brightest, proximity to earth (until the year 1986) and which rose in the east around 9:00 P.M. Once the woman and her husband began to suspect that the bright object was a UFO, the stage was set for self-delusion. No matter how fast or far they drove toward the bright light in the sky, it would appear to be the same size and brightness, that is, they would seem to be getting no closer to the object. Their logical deduction—if the light really was a UFO—was that the object was “pacing” them. When the car accelerated, clearly the UFO must have done the same. When the car stopped, the UFO must also have stopped and hovered. If this seems hard to accept, it should be noted that there have been many such reported incidents, some involving law-enforcement officers, who report chasing or being chased by a UFO that turns out to be Venus, Mars, or another bright celestial body.*

Even experienced pilots sometimes have difficulty in identifying a bright celestial body. For example, Dr. J. Allen Hynek wrote an article at a time when he was a UFO skeptic and a consultant to the USAF Project Blue Book. Published in April 1953, in *Journal of the Optical Society of America*, the article contains the following observation:

And another sighting—in Northern Michigan—on July 29 of last year, a pilot chased a brilliant multicolored object close to the horizon, and due north. He flew at 21,000 feet, followed the object for over a half-hour but could not gain on it. Radar operator [in the aircraft] reported contact with the object for about thirty seconds. And ground control interceptor station reported blips too [on its radar]. In this case, it seems certain that our harried pilot was pursuing [the star] Capella! Capella was at lower culmination, that is, at the lowest point of its swing around the pole just skirting the horizon. I have seen it at that position myself in Canada, and can vouch for the fact that its blue, yellow and red twinkling can be spectacular.

In respect to Dr. Hynek's mention of radar blips, one of the ten UFOlogical Principles developed in *UFOs Explained* is: “Whenever a light is sighted in the night skies that is believed to be a UFO and this is reported to

*For other such incidents, see my *UFOs Explained*, Chapter 9.

a radar operator, who is asked to search his scope for an unknown target, almost invariably an ‘unknown’ target will be found . . .” (See Appendix A for these ten UFOlogical Principles.)

In the late spring of 1945, during the closing phase of World War II, Air Force flight crews flying B-29 night missions against Japan, from bases in the central Pacific, began to report that they were being followed by unknown aircraft equipped with a powerful searchlight. The B-29 crews suspected that the “searchlight aircraft” were designed to illuminate the B-29s so that Japanese interceptors could see and attack them. But, curiously, there were no interceptor attacks against the USAF bombers. Some B-29 gunners tried to shoot down the “searchlight aircraft,” but without success. After several weeks of crew interrogation, intelligence officers noted that the “searchlight aircraft” always was reported to be on the right side of the B-29s as they approached Japan, that is, to the east, and on the return flight the mysterious craft always were off to the left, also to the east. This proved to be the vital clue, and the mysterious “searchlight aircraft” was promptly identified as the planet Venus, which was especially bright at the time.

Even an engineer trained in celestial navigation at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, who later would become president of the United States, can mistake a bright celestial body for a UFO. The incident occurred around 7:15 P.M. on January 6, 1969, shortly before a man named Jimmy Carter was to speak to the Lion's Club of Leary, Georgia. Carter did not make a formal report on the sighting until the fall of 1973, when the nation was experiencing a major “UFO flap.” When Carter reported the incident to a UFO organization, he described the object as being “self-luminous” and “as bright as the moon.” He said the UFO was hovering in the western sky at an elevation angle he estimated to be around 30 degrees.

The Carter sighting was painstakingly investigated by Robert Sheaffer*, whose job was made more difficult because Carter had erred by nearly nine months in trying to recall the date of his sighting. Sheaffer established the correct date from official Lion's Club International headquarters records and talked with Fred Hart, who had been president of the Leary chapter at the time. Hart, who was standing alongside Carter at the time of his UFO sighting, told Sheaffer he was not impressed with the UFO and was inclined to believe it might be a weather balloon or other prosaic object. Armed with the correct date, Sheaffer, who had studied astronomy at Northwestern University, checked astronomical tables for that date and time. He found that a very bright Venus was in the western sky at nearly a 30-degree elevation angle, just where Carter had reported seeing the UFO.

*Sheaffer, vice-chairman of the UFO Subcommittee of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, describes the incident in greater detail in *The UFO Verdict: Examining the Evidence* (Prometheus Books, 1981), Chapter 2.

Eyewitness Unreliability

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, who has spent more than thirty years in the field of UFOlogy and is considered by some—including many in the news media—to be the world's leading expert on the subject, claimed for many years that no useful insights could be gained from the study of UFO reports that proved to be IFOs (identified flying objects). For example, during congressional testimony on July 20, 1968*, Hynek said:

I did not [as a USAF consultant]—and still do not—concern myself with reports which arise from obvious misidentifications by witnesses who are not aware of the many things in the sky today which have a simple, natural explanation. These have little scientific value, except perhaps to a sociologist or an ophthalmologist; it matters not whether 100 or 100,000 people fail to identify an artificial satellite or a high-altitude balloon.

I have long disagreed—strongly. UFO reports that prove to be IFOs show that intelligent people, including pilots, scientists, and law-enforcement officers, unwittingly embellish their accounts with inaccurate details and seeming cause-effects that are really unrelated. It follows logically that similar inaccuracies in other UFO reports may prevent their explanations. The problem is summarized in UFOlogical Principle 2, developed in *UFOs Explained*:

Despite the intrinsic limitations of human perception when exposed to brief, unexpected and unusual events, some details recalled by the observer may be reasonably accurate. The problem facing the UFO investigator is to try to distinguish between those details that are accurate and those that are grossly

*This was a one-day "UFO Symposium" sponsored by Congressman J. Edward Roush (Dem—Ind.), at which not a single experienced UFO skeptic was invited to testify.

inaccurate. This may be impossible until the true identity of the UFO can be determined, so that in some cases this poses an insoluble problem.

In late 1976, a young man named Allan Hendry came to work for Hynek's Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) as the managing editor of its publication, *International UFO Reporter*, and as the organization's full-time and principal UFO investigator. Hendry was a commercial artist and a recent graduate of the University of Michigan, where he had minored in astronomy, and thus had some training in scientific methodology. Although Hendry was a neophyte as a UFO investigator, he proved a fast learner.

For example, in a feature story published in July 1977 of *International UFO Reporter (IUR)*, Hendry acknowledged the difficulty of sorting out IFOs from "true UFOs." He noted that people typically describe a UFO as being a domed disk, even when subsequent investigation reveals that what they saw was an advertising airplane or a bright celestial body. Hendry noted that such grossly distorted descriptions do not come from "an isolated fringe group, either. It obscures the objective judgement . . . of all of those typical, ordinary individuals, young and old, of all occupations, that are reporting these IFOs as UFOs, and are reporting them poorly," that is, inaccurately.

In the June 1978 issue of *IUR* Hendry returned to this crucial issue in an article entitled: "The Case For IFO Study: A Recent Example." After recalling his previous article that discussed "the problem of distorted observations," Hendry noted not only that "non-existent details" are reported but also that "false cause-and-effect assumptions about IFOs' motion and special effects" are reported by witnesses. Hendry commented that "it is obvious that any such exaggerated 'data' helps to disfigure the IFO's true identity and render identification more difficult. Deeper than this, however, are the implications — and portents — for those descriptions which we are forced to accept at face value . . . the true UFO reports for which we have no identifiable source." Clearly Hendry had learned more about the real UFO problem in less than two years than Hynek had in three decades.

Hendry illustrated the problem by describing a series of UFO sightings that had been reported to the Aurora, Illinois, police on the night of April 29, 1978, starting about 10:30 p.m. Hendry interviewed one couple involved, whom he referred to as "Mr. and Mrs. S.," who had reported a close-encounter with the UFO. Each of them drew sketches of the UFO and both showed the familiar disk-shaped object with a dome. The woman reported the UFO "was twirling like a carnival ride." Both witnesses agreed that the UFO was as large "as a football field," that is 300 feet in length, and reported that it was flying at treetop level when it passed over their car. When Hendry informed the couple that other witnesses had reported the same UFO to be only 25 feet in size, the couple "theorized that they may have viewed a 'mothership.'" The couple reported that the UFO had disappeared

"in the blink of an eye" as it headed east. Because the couple said they heard no noise from the UFO they were certain it could not possibly have been an aircraft. After arriving home, Mr. S. went to a neighbor's house to report the UFO incident and in his eagerness "he tore the door off its latch and hinges," Hendry reported. The neighbor informed Mr. S. that the television set in his house had blanked out for two minutes, which Mr. S. attributed to the UFO.

Because Hendry had for two years received UFO reports from the Chicago area that turned out to have been triggered by an advertising airplane, he called Ad Airlines of Chicago. A company official told him that their airplane had indeed been flying in the vicinity of Aurora at the time of the rash of UFO reports on April 29. Hendry noted in his article that he had investigated some 300 UFO reports that turned out to have been generated by advertising planes and that in 91 percent of these incidents the witnesses reported that "no sound could be heard." Hendry suggested that this might be due to the slow speed at which advertising aircraft fly, so that their messages can be read more easily. This slow speed might also explain why observers often reported that the UFO seemed to hover in one spot. The two-minute outage of the neighbor's TV set had an equally prosaic explanation — a malfunction of the TV station's transmitter.

Hendry commented on the

. . . distorted observations regarding "domed discs," "treetop heights," gigantic size estimates, claims of being deliberately followed in cars, false assumptions that the ad plane's sign [lights] turning-off equated to the "UFO" rushing away faster than the eye could follow, the causality attempted between the UFO and the TV interference, and most of all, the wholly unwarranted emotional reactions exhibited by the witnesses and the immediately, nearly universal conclusion that the ad plane was from outer space . . . The key issue here is NOT that the sighting was "only an ad plane," because such a "solution" cannot in itself account for the independent witnesses' behavior and inaccuracies. I do not see this IFO as the "garbage" to be weeded out while the "real" UFOs are retained as "data," when there is a wealth of data present here about UFOlogy's old bugaboo: the reliability [that is, unreliability] of human testimony.

This was a remarkably wise and candid commentary that challenged Hynek's oft-stated position that IFOs should be discarded and ignored. Three months later, in the September 1978 issue of *IUR*, Hynek announced an important change in policy:

For nearly two years we have, largely in the person of Allan Hendry . . . spent a great deal of effort and time . . . and money . . . in carefully checking every current report that came to our attention . . . If the stimulus for a report was evaluated as an advertising plane . . . we got it straight from the ad

C

CARTER SIGHTING

As they stood outside waiting for a Lions Club meeting to start, Gov. Jimmy Carter and 10 residents of Leary, Georgia, noticed an unusually bright light at about 30 degrees' elevation in the western sky. Carter was to recall it appeared slightly smaller than the apparent size of the moon. It "came close, moved away, came close, then moved away," he reported. He estimated it to be "maybe 300-1000 yards" away. It "moved to [a] distance[,] then disappeared" ("Jimmy Carter's," 1977). The sighting took place on January 6, 1969, between approximately 7:15 and 7:30 P.M.

Except for this sketchily rendered last detail, the object sounds very much like Venus, frequently mistaken for a UFO in part because of an optical illusion which causes stationary astronomical bodies to appear to move back and forth. Indeed, the only real investigation of the incident, conducted by debunker Robert Sheaffer, established Venus' presence in the section of the sky Carter was observing. In common with an earlier reporter, Tom Tiede (Tiede, 1978), Sheaffer found that the other witnesses scarcely remembered the incident (Sheaffer, 1981).

The story surfaced in a Dublin, Georgia, newspaper in September 1973. Carter told a reporter he attributed the phenomenon to an "electrical occurrence of some sort" (Helms, 1977). The sighting attracted much wider attention when Carter ran as Democratic candidate for President in 1976. The tabloid *National Enquirer* ran a sensationalistic account, placing the incident in Thomaston, Georgia, in 1973 and misquoting witnesses in an effort to dramatize a not very exciting episode (Balfour, 1976; Sheaffer, *op. cit.*). Carter contributed to some of the confusion himself, placing the incident in October, rather than January,

1969 when he filled out a sighting-report form for the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena ("Jimmy Carter's," *op. cit.*). The correct date, which when found made possible a certain identification of the object, came to light in the course of Sheaffer's inquiries.

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CISCO GROVE CE3

On the afternoon of Saturday, September 5, 1964, astronomer Victor W. Killick took a phone call from a woman he did not know. She said the *Sacramento Union* had referred her to him. As head of the Astronomical Observatory of Sacramento, Killick was used to hearing from strangers with questions about things they had seen in the sky. At first the call did not seem to be anything out of the ordinary. The woman said her son-in-law had observed some unusual lights the

say they've seen UFOs," Carter said at a Southern Governors Conference a few years later. "I've seen one myself."

[memories about Carter and share your own](#)

Meet the Fox Mulder of Silicon Valley

Though an insignificant news tidbit back then, Carter's sighting may have encouraged other people to step forward. You could hardly say he started a trend, but he set a precedent. And recently, several prominent people, including two astronauts and a renowned CEO, have said they, too, are believers.

Two weeks ago, Silicon Valley legend Joe Firmage quit his job as the CEO of USWeb/CKS, a \$2 billion company that employs nearly 2,000 people. The reason: He's had contact with extraterrestrials and wants to expose the government conspiracy to conceal a 1947 space crash in Roswell, N.M.

"I'm not praying for a spacecraft to come pick me up," says Firmage, who calls himself the "Fox Mulder of Silicon Valley."

"I'm just saying there is good, rational, left-brain evidence of things out there."

Firmage said his priorities shifted 15 months ago, after an encounter at his Los Gatos, Calif., home with a "remarkable being" clothed in brilliant white light.

"I don't call them aliens," he says. "I call them teachers."

He says it's necessary to quit his high-paying job because of the "public relations complications" it might cause his company. He plans to write a book and is posting his findings on his Web site.

Astronauts Say Truth Is Out There

The CIA closed the Colorado Project, the last comprehensive government UFO probe, in the late 1960s, after a government panel concluded "further extensive study of UFOs probably cannot be justified in the expectation that science will be advanced."

But astronauts Edgar Mitchell and Gordon Cooper say that new investigations are warranted in *UFOs: 50 Years of Denial?*, a documentary set to air March 3 on The Learning Channel.

"The evidence points to the fact that Roswell

was a real incident and that indeed an alien craft did crash and that material was recovered from that crash site," says Mitchell, who became the sixth man on the moon in the Apollo 14 mission.

Mitchell doesn't say he's seen a UFO. But he says he's met with high-ranking military officers who admitted involvement with alien technology and hardware.

Cooper told a U.N. committee recently, "Every day in the U.S.A., our radar instruments capture objects of form and composition unknown to us." In the documentary, Cooper speculates that public skepticism toward UFOs will shift dramatically.

Pictures of flying saucers strike a dramatic image. But documentary filmmaker James Fox says it will take the testimony of credible witnesses like these to change public opinion and force the government's hand.

"As a rule, I steer clear of pictures and video footage of UFOs," he says. "If it's too good, people think it's a fake, and if it's not good people think it's a fake."

Mom, Dad, I've Seen a UFO

Coming out of the closet — at least in the UFO sense — is no easy task.

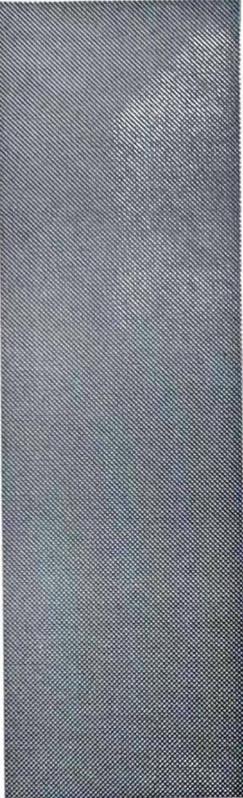
"Most people who claim to see UFOs lead sad lives. They get laughed at by colleagues and family. They become outcasts," says Nick Pope, who was the British Ministry of Defense's investigator in charge of UFO sightings from 1991 to 1994.

"I've seen a lot of marriages end in divorce because one partner is embarrassed that the other tells everyone he's seen a UFO."

Pope has interviewed thousands of people who claim to have had paranormal experiences. "I can't say I have proof these people really saw what they claim to have seen. But I believe a lot of them were telling the truth. Many of them are credible. And some of them have bizarre scars on their body that no doctor can explain."

Pope notes a phenomenon that many of the people he's interviewed have developed spontaneous skills in music, painting, and poetry. "It can be a life-transforming event. Whatever happened to these people," he says, "it somehow comes out."

It's hard to say how Carter was affected by his



close encounter. In recent years, Carter has become a prolific writer and peace activist. But the former president has never really spoken of the impact of those mysterious red and green lights all those years ago.

Yet while he was on the campaign trail, he tried to use it to his advantage. "A light appeared and disappeared in the sky," he told a *Washington Post* reporter in 1975. "It got brighter and brighter ... I have no idea what it was ... I think it was a light beckoning me to run in the California primary."

Carter

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panic. Oh, yes, all you connoisseurs of irony, Skylab's re-entry did indeed kill people—the same way voodoo does.

Our media—and I mean the mainstream media, even the most respected ones, not just supermarket tabloids—cried wolf, callously and with reckless disregard of the consequences. That is pseudoscience, by any definition of the term I know. A few of us realized it—those who could (and *did*) perform the 60 seconds or so of simple arithmetic needed to evaluate the true magnitude of the "danger" (a tiny percentage, to be sure). *What do we do now when the media report other alleged dangers that happen to be outside our field of expertise?* I'm an astronomer, not a nuclear engineer; can anyone out there tell me what I *should* think about Three Mile Island? All I know, after Skylab, is that I can't trust my friendly local paper to tell me the truth. And I find that least funny of all.

Jim Loudon
Staff Astronomer, Exhibit
Museum
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Need for exposé

I do congratulate you and persons associated with you on the fine honesty and balanced presentation in the SKEPTICAL INQUIRER, which I subscribe to and gladly have been recommending to others.

As a professor in a community college, I see on every hand the utter need for continuous exposure of "rackets and swindles, which would include cult practices already in the public record, so that students can be armed with the kind of critical sense which would better prepare them to evaluate cult recruitment tactics." I'm quoting an editorial in the August-September 1980 issue of *The Advisor*, published by the American Family Foundation.

At the same time, as a churchman

(United Church of Christ) I do appreciate that you do not attack our ordinary churches and synagogues, which constructively serve local communities and hold families together. But frauds, occult hoaxes, psychic con-artists, and "religious" exploiters must continue to be exposed.

I, and others, am working hard to warn students about psychic deceptions, to inform them about destructive cults, and to help get victims of both these traps away from those who are damaging them.

Wallace Winchell
Manchester, Conn.

The Jimmy Carter UFO

I am writing to protest a reference by astronomer John Kenny (in his review, *SI*, Summer 1980, pp. 53-54) in which Jimmy Carter's UFO sighting and the New Zealand UFO film of December 31, 1978, are referred to as "well-explained sightings." This is a tactic that smacks of propaganda techniques used in brain-washing, and it is also a type of technique that cheap sensationalist UFO magazines unfortunately use. Such methods do not belong in a scientific journal. By saying that certain sightings are "well-explained," the unknowing reader assumes that this is fact.

The truth is that both sightings are far from being well explained at all, although attempts at explanation have been made. The Carter sighting was alleged by Bob Sheaffer to have been caused by the planet Venus ("The Queen of UFOs") because it was in the sky at the time (*Humanist*, July 1977). Sheaffer ignores the fact that Carter had seven years of sea duty behind him, in which as a line officer he often had to navigate by using Venus and other planets and stars. Carter also took celestial navigation and astronomy at Annapolis, and graduated in the top 60 of a class of more than 800 cadets. It is hardly likely that Carter would misread

an old familiar planet for a UFO. Sheaffer also ignores conveniently that Carter reported that the UFO was as "bright as the moon," which is considerably brighter than Venus, and that the object "approached and receded several times." Amazingly, Sheaffer refutes this statement by saying that Venus doesn't do that sort of thing! Obviously, if the object *did* that sort of thing, then it wasn't Venus.

We can never know what really happened back in 1969 in Georgia, but until someone can interview Mr. Carter about the event, I would suggest that it is better described as unexplained.

Jon Beckjord
Seattle, Wash.

Robert Sheaffer replies:

If witnesses were infallible recording instruments, Mr. Beckjord's charges would be well founded. But he seems unaware of the volume of scientific analyses documenting unreliability of unsubstantiated human eyewitness testimony. (See Robert Buckhout, "Eyewitness Testimony," Scientific American, December 1974; Elizabeth F. Loftus, "The Malleability of Human Memory," American Scientist, May/June 1979.) The classic case of misperception in the recent UFO literature is in Allan Hendry's excellent The UFO Handbook (Doubleday, 1979), which describes an alleged "close encounter" UFO case in Aurora, Illinois, that had many mystifying but nonexistent properties ascribed to it—it turned out to be an advertising aircraft. No one who carefully studies Hendry's book or Klass's UFOs Explained can afterward take unsubstantiated testimony at face value, as Beckjord does. I note that Beckjord fails to mention that many UFO proponents agree with me that the Carter UFO sighting is a very poor one and that another Georgian standing with Carter was, as my Humanist piece makes clear, quite unimpressed with the light they saw in the sky.

Cosmic Watergate

Stanton Friedman [*SI*, Fall 1980] sharply criticizes my article in your Spring 1980 issue because it quoted from an article in the *Oakland Tribune* that was based on an interview with Friedman. Friedman charges that "the original *Oakland Tribune* article . . . was almost completely inaccurate."

On July 27, in response to Friedman's charge, I wrote to him to ask whether he had ever written to the *Oakland Tribune* to protest the alleged inaccuracies. Friedman never replied, but on September 5 we met in Washington at a press conference sponsored by the Fund for UFO Research, where Friedman repeated his charges of a "Cosmic Watergate" coverup of UFOs by the U.S. government (the same phrase used in the *Oakland Tribune* article).

Friedman told me that he had not bothered to write to the *Oakland Tribune* to protest the alleged gross errors in its article. The reason he had not done so, Friedman explained, was that he had written a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* that had not been published, "so why should I write to the *Oakland Tribune!*"

Philip J. Klass
Washington, D.C.

Creationism and the courts

I read with empathetic pain Laurie R. Godfrey's article in the Fall 1979 issue entitled "Science and Evolution in the Public Eye." The concept of biological evolution is certainly one of the major accomplishments of the human intellect, and any schoolchild denied a fairly thorough and accurate introduction to the concept and its current status has not been properly educated. On the other hand, the primitive creation myths espoused by various religions have no place whatever in the science courses in our public schools.

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Did Jimmy Carter really see a UFO?

Dear Cecil:

Didn't Jimmy Carter once claim he had seen a UFO? Was he all by himself, or did other people see it too? Has there been any subsequent investigation? Was it a "real" UFO, or did Jimmy get snookered by swamp gas? --Rhoda A., Baltimore

Dear Rhoda:

Two guesses, kiddo. In a report filed with the Center for UFO Studies in Evanston, Illinois, Carter claimed to have seen his UFO in October, 1969, when he was running (unsuccessfully, at that point) for governor of Georgia. Being a shrewd politician even then, he didn't file his report until September, 1973 (hell, look what happened to Eagleton).

It was around 7:15, shortly after dark, when Carter and a group of about 10 or 12 people spotted the alleged UFO over the countryside near Leary, Georgia. The object stood still in the sky for a period of ten or twelve minutes, slowly changing its color, size, and brightness, and then gradually retreated into the distance, disappearing from view. Carter estimated that the object, at its closest, was some 300 to 1,000 yards away.

Later research, however, has cast grave doubts on the Big Peanut's credibility. Robert Sheaffer, a volunteer researcher for the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, reported in an issue of Zetetic magazine that what Carter actually saw on that fateful October eve was not a flying saucer, but the planet Venus, a notorious trickster in these matters.

Nor was the fateful eve in October--apparently, during the four year gap between the incident and Carter's report, the President confused his dates. By checking the files of the Lion's Club chapter that Carter was scheduled to address that evening, Sheaffer discovered that that actual date was January 6, 1969--a night on which the planet would be sitting in precisely the spot where Carter saw his spaceship.

"Either an extraterrestrial space vehicle was covering up Venus," Sheaffer concludes drily, "or Mr. Carter was looking at the planet."

--CECIL ADAMS

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<p>Location: Mothership -> UFO -> Updates -> 1998 -> May -> Re: Pres. Carter</p>	

UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Pres. Carter

From: DRudiak <DRudiak@aol.com> [David Rudiak]
 Date: Mon, 25 May 1998 01:55:52 EDT
 Fwd Date: Mon, 25 May 1998 03:08:22 -0400
 Subject: Re: Pres. Carter

> Date: Sat, 23 May 1998 09:52:58 +0100
 > From: Don Ledger <dledger@istar.ca>
 > To: updates@globalserve.net
 > Subject: Re: UFO UpDate: Re: Pres. Carter

> > To: "UFO UpDates - Toronto" <updates@globalserve.net>
 > > From: "Jerome Clark" <jkclark@frontiernet.net>
 > > Subject: Re: UFO UpDate: Filer's Files #20
 > > Date: Fri, 22 May 98 10:30:09 PDT

> > Re your remark that no serious ufologist disputes that Carter saw Venus.
 >> I wonder about that. I remember writing his sighting off as well,
 >> but then some time afterward wondered if I might have been hasty
 >> in light of his education and naval experience [which for the
 >> life of me I can't recall, but remember at the time as being
 >> impressive]. Was Carter not a scientist of some sort, physicist
 >> perhaps. He was not only a peanut farmer.

Correct. Carter had a degree in nuclear physics and served as an officer on US nuclear submarines. I suspect he had also seen Venus a few times down on the peanut farm.

>From: "Jerome Clark" <jkclark@frontiernet.net>
 >Date: Sat, 23 May 98 11:24:41 PDT
 >Fwd Date: Sat, 23 May 1998 21:45:48 -0400
 >Subject: Re: Filer's Files #20

>Here is my entry "Carter Sighting" in The UFO Encyclopedia:
 >2nd Ed., p. 174:

>As they stood outside waiting for a Lions Club meeting to start,
 >Gov. Jimmy Carter and 10 residents of Leary, Georgia, noticed an
 >unusually bright light at about 30 degrees' elevation in the
 >western sky. Carter was to recall it appeared slightly smaller
 >than the apparent size of the moon., It "came close, moved away,

>came close, then moved away," he reported. He estimated it to be
>"maybe 300-1000 yards" away. It "moved to [a] distance[,] then
>disappeared" ("Jimmy Carter's," 1977). The sighting took place on
>January 6, 1969, between approximately 7:15 and 7:30 p.m.

>Except for this sketchily rendered last detail, this object
>sounds very much like Venus,

Venus?! Did Jerry Clark say Venus? There are many details in this report that don't sound anything like Venus:

1. Venus never appears to be the "size of the moon" or "slightly smaller than the apparent size of the moon."
2. Venus doesn't loom dramatically in size as described by Carter.
3. Venus doesn't disappear by seeming to move into the distance. At the reported time of the sighting, Venus would have remained well-elevated and visible in the sky. It would not have disappeared. In fact, it didn't set until about 9:20. You can't have it both ways, with Venus supposedly being brilliantly bright and otherwise highly visible (to supposedly account for the report), yet supposedly disappearing as well.

Lesser discrepancies are:

1. Venus was in the southwestern, not western sky (between 237 and 240 degrees azimuth, not 270).
2. If the time was correct, the elevation was between 21 and 24 degrees, not 30 degrees.
3. According to my planetarium programs, Venus wasn't even at its brightest on this date, much less an "unusually bright light." Carter's report said that the "10-12 men all watched it. Brightness attracted us." None of these people had never seen Venus in the sky before?

>frequently mistaken for a UFO in
>part because of an optical illusion which causes stationary
>objects to appear to move back and forth.

What Jerry Clark is describing is the autokinetic effect, but this does nothing to explain the Carter report. The autokinetic effect has an isolated point of light in a dark background appearing to move erratically. It occurs when there is a lack of surrounding visual cues.

But what Carter described was something that seemed to dramatically change in size and/or distance. Or as his UFO report described it, "came close, moved away, came close, moved away," changed in size from "brighter/larger than planet to apparent size of moon," and eventually seemed to move to the distance and disappear.

Furthermore, the very fact that Carter compared the thing's apparent size and brightness to visible planets, such as Venus (Saturn was also visible), suggests that he wasn't confusing it with Venus. He felt this thing was both brighter and larger even when it was at its SMALLEST.

Now there are only two visual physiological things I can think of that might cause a virtual point of light like Venus to appear to change in size like that. One is a disruption of the central

visual brain, in which the person loses their ability to maintain size constancy. Objects seem to be constantly changing in size.

There are a few extremely rare cases of organic brain damage causing this (such as in a small stroke), and perhaps some hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD can cause this as well. Jimmy Carter dropping acid? I think we can safely rule this explanation out.

The other would be very extreme fluctuations in the focus of the eye. I could imagine this happening with somebody who was falling down drunk. But Carter was not intoxicated. Except for maybe an occasional Billy Beer or glass of wine, he was a teetotaler, if anything. Furthermore Carter was about 45 at the time. He didn't have a whole lot of accommodation (focusing ability) left (as people in their mid to late 40's can attest). So it becomes very questionable whether Carter, even if straining mightily, could have defocussed Venus into a blur that appeared to be about the size of the moon.

Frankly, a better case for Venus probably could be made by dusting off one of Menzel's old standbys -- the atmospheric lens.

But darn, even if you buy that, it still doesn't explain how Venus could seem to move off into the distance and permanently disappear when it was still up there for another two hours.

In any case, forget autokinesis. There is no way it could have anything to do with it. Autokinesis has to do with perceived lateral motion, NOT perceived changes in size, distance, or brightness.

> Indeed, the only real
> investigation of the incident, conducted by debunker Robert
> Sheaffer, established Venus' presence in the section of the sky
> Carter was observing.

As we all know, Venus is visible in the evening or early morning most of the year, making it a convenient debunking explanation for just about everything (e.g., Sheaffer also used it to "explain" the 1966 Portage County high-speed police chase). Just because Venus is up there in the general vicinity doesn't mean it automatically explains a case. In the Carter report (or Portage County), it certainly does not.

>In common with an earlier reporter (Tiede,
>1978), Sheaffer found that the other witnesses scarcely
>remembered the incident (Sheaffer, 1981).

Just because the others didn't care doesn't mean the incident wasn't worthy of note or anomalous. Certainly Carter went out of his way to later file a UFO report and pursue the matter of UFOs when he became President a few years later.

It would be interesting to know how the other witnesses remembered it.

David Rudiak

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