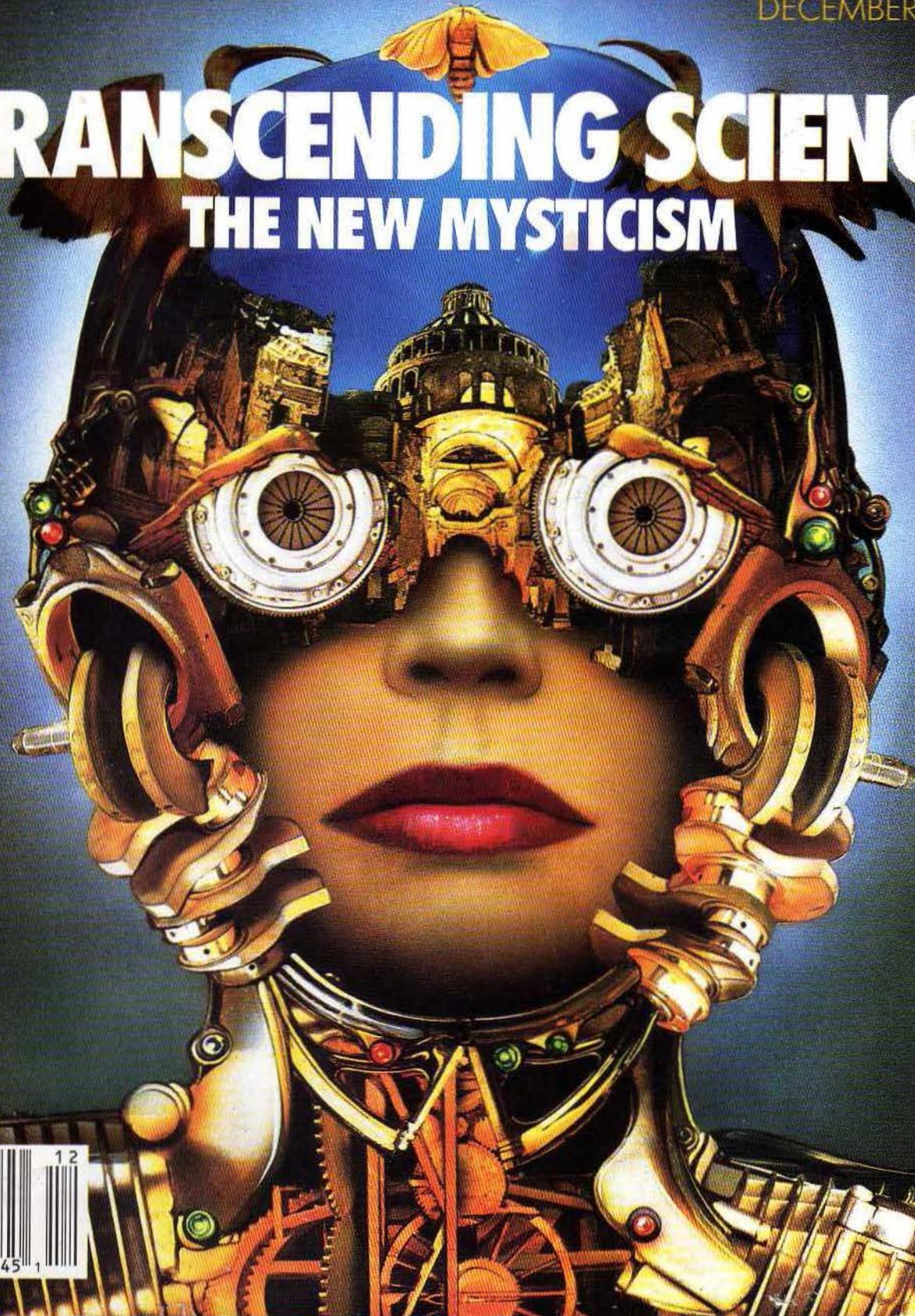


# OMNI

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## TRANSCENDING SCIENCE THE NEW MYSTICISM



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NASA stands  
ready to respond to any bona fide  
physical evidence of  
UFOs presented by credible sources.

## ANTI MATTER

Question: Which government agency investigates physical evidence from UFOs? Answer: NASA.

"We stand ready to respond to any bona fide physical evidence from credible sources," says David Williamson, NASA's special assistant for policy integration and its point man on UFOs. That has been the policy, but NASA has not been terribly busy at it. In fact, they have analyzed only a few items, all of which proved to be as ordinary as the bottom of a cola bottle; one item sent in turned out to be just that.

"We never found anything nonterrestrial," says Williamson, "anything that was so extraordinarily different, or anything unavailable on Earth."

NASA got involved in the UFO business in 1977, when Frank Press, the science adviser to President Carter, asked the agency to take over all the UFO mail pouring in to the White House. Press also wondered whether NASA shouldn't investigate any new findings on the subject since the last official investigation in 1969.

Richard Henry, now a professor of astronomy at Johns Hopkins University, has recently provided a behind-the-scenes look at just how NASA handled this sensitive request. Henry knows, because back then he worked in the Office of Space Science, the NASA branch that made the decision. Henry recalls that it was David Williamson, assistant for special projects, who eventually drafted the NASA reply to Frank Press's request.

In an early memo Williamson had weighed NASA's options: If NASA refused there would be charges of a cover-



## UFO UPDATE

up. But any NASA commitment to some review of the phenomenon, Williamson realized, would not satisfy the believers if the results were negative or the critics if the results were positive. Besides, such a task might place considerable demands on NASA manpower and finances. The final proposal: NASA would not "establish a research activity in this area," yet it would analyze any hard evidence on UFOs offered to it.

Is NASA's ambivalent attitude part of an organized cover-up? Henry doesn't think so. "I think it's just that officials at NASA had

other, more important things to do," he says. Williamson explains the reason behind the final decision this way: "NASA didn't try to figure out whether UFOs *should* be studied," he says, "but whether they *could* be studied at all." NASA decided that they could not. But if physical evidence comes in from credible people, then it should be NASA's responsibility to look it over. "There must be someplace," Williamson explains, "where an analysis of such material can be trusted."

Williamson's knowledge and open-mindedness on the subject puzzle people. It turns out, however, that back in the winter of 1952-53, Williamson, while on night guard duty at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, saw a white light cross his line of sight, stop, and then suddenly zip away, "almost like in a cartoon." He was later grilled on his sighting by "intelligence types." One admitted that radar had picked up the same object. And to this day, Williamson says, the sighting is listed as "unidentified."—PATRICK HUYGHE