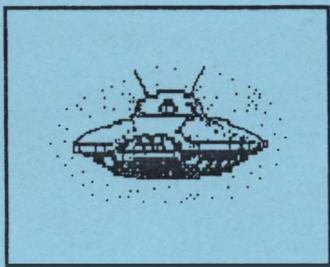


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PEGASUS



Surrey Investigation Group into Aerial Phenomena

PEGASUS

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MARTIAN ENIGMAS

Interest in the red planet has long been a stimulus for terrestrial speculation concerning its past, and will be further increased by the recent announcement from scientists at the Open University that there exists an icebound sea of frozen water beneath the surface in the equatorial region of Mars. It has long been thought that the contours of many surface features of the planet show unmistakable signs of having been shaped by water flows, but no one could explain where the water had gone: now we know.

The NASA pictures of the Martian surface show the relatively featureless plains of the lowland north hemisphere, but in the south there are heavily cratered highlands which could in the past have been the source of ancient rivers flowing into an equatorial sea.

It may not, however, be only water that went underground. If there is any evidence of ancient subterranean dwellings, then MARSIS, the Mars Advanced Radar for Subsurface and Ionosphere Soundings on Mars Express may well make some interesting discoveries in the northern lowlands from its deployment there in March 2005.

G.M.**HIGH STRANGENESS IN BRAZIL**

Extracted from "UFOs and Humanity" by SIGAP's Gordon Millington

It is often the case that the full significance of an incident can be appreciated only in retrospect. The case about to be described did at the time seem puzzling and incomprehensible, hard to credit because of its apparent lack of any meaning that seemed to make sense. It is the first properly investigated and recorded abduction, and unlike many subsequent, took place entirely in our familiar space-time continuum, using methods, such as the application of physical force, which were entirely earth-normal. One can now see that the ufonauts, who took care to present themselves as sufficiently similar to earthmen to inspire credibility without also evoking fear, wanted the incident to be seen in a particular way -- namely, as a scientific investigation by extraterrestrials, something really rather interesting and certainly in no way threatening. It was particularly important that no one should perceive it as the opening move of a gambit that could lead eventually into an attack on the very essence of humanity.

The ideal UFO report is produced when an experienced, well qualified and respected investigator interviews an intelligent, cooperative and credible witness. On February 28th 1958 all these conditions were abundantly fulfilled when Dr. Olavo Fontes recorded the testimony of Senor Antonio Villas-Boas concerning his abduction in full consciousness by a UFO crew the previous October. Yet so incredible did the young farmer's story seem that the ufologist was unwilling to publish it, knowing it would certainly be dismissed by almost everyone as just another fantasy from a crazy contactee.

There was, however, nothing crazy about Dr. Fontes who, until his death in 1968, was unquestionably the doyen of UFO research in South America and also Professor of Medicine at Brazil's National School of Medicine, as head of its gastro-enterological section. Though he believed UFOs to be extraterrestrial craft with occupants either hostile or coldly indifferent to mankind, his report is totally factual and without bias, being mainly a precise transcription of the words of the witness as elicited by the interviewer. All references following are to the complete document as translated by Irene Granchi and published by Coral and Jim Lorenzen (1967).

The bare facts of the abduction are well known to ufologists, but some significant details perhaps less so. Antonio's story is that while ploughing by tractor on his farm near Sao Francisco de Salles on the night of October 14th 1957 he and his brother were buzzed some twenty times by a brilliantly lit UFO, which returned the following evening when the witness was ploughing alone and landed in his field. A group of four ufonauts forcibly abducted him aboard their craft, stripped him, took some of his blood and presented him with a naked

female with whom he had intercourse. He was then given a brief conducted tour of the outside of the craft and allowed to return to his field to watch the UFO take off. Such a summary, which contemporary tabloids might well have presented, does little justice to a story which gains credibility from the wealth of detail recalled by the witness, from his personality and character, which emerge as the account proceeds, and from corroboration available by comparison with subsequent UFO events. Indeed, before we can begin to weigh his testimony we need first to assess the witness himself, which we can do to a great extent from the report of his own words and actions.

"I am single and a healthy man," he told Dr. Fontes, whose medical examination confirmed the latter statement. "I work hard, though I also find time to follow a correspondence course, studying whenever I have the time for it." (He later qualified and practised as an attorney). "It was a sacrifice for me to come to Rio, for I should not have left the farm, where my presence is needed. But I feel it is my duty to come here and relate the strange happenings in which I became involved..." He goes on to give a precise account of the UFO's appearance and landing manoeuvres, but then characteristically adds: "Of course, the majority of the details I am describing now were only observed by me later. At the first moment, I felt very nervous and upset at seeing so many things happen all at the same time."

Unlike Dr. Fontes, we have the advantage of being able to examine the Villas-Boas story in the light of later abduction reports by witnesses who certainly had never heard details of previous cases, and it is most often the correspondences between apparently minor details that lend credence to each. For instance, Antonio tried to escape his abductors on his tractor but the engine cut out and the lights inexplicably died also. The tractor was petrol driven and the ability of UFOs to affect electrical ignition systems is now common knowledge. If his tractor had been diesel-engined, he might have escaped. On his return he found everything in order, except that the battery lead had been disconnected. "Those were really sharp-witted people," he observed admiringly. "There was nothing that had escaped their notice."

He complained, like many later abductees, of the cold inside the UFO, noticeably below the night temperature outside, while an inscription "in bright-red lettering ... seemed to stick out about two inches from the door" and made the witness possibly the first abductee to encounter three-dimensional laser effects, but certainly not the last. The ufonauts wore overalls which he thought "must have been a kind of uniform, for all the members of the crew wore a red badge the size of a pineapple slice on their chests and sometimes it reflected a shiny light." Antonio also described how the door of the craft opened in a rather unusual fashion and, on October 14th 1954 in Ceres, 300 miles from the Boas farm, two coffee company employees had encountered a UFO whose door had opened in exactly the same way to reveal seven apparently normal humans of rather small stature, each with a glowing red badge on his chest. One of the

coffee workers, though he heard no sounds, had a strange feeling that the ufonauts were talking to him, saying they were on a peaceful mission. They, however, were not wearing the strange helmets used by the abductors of Villas-Boas, which resembled some form of breathing apparatus.

Antonio, however, received no telepathic messages and denied that he had been in any way subject to mental influences by his captors, whose audible communications among themselves he described as a series of animal-like growls. The woman had growled too, during intercourse. Though many abductees have found their situation understandably terrifying, Villas-Boas stoutly maintained that he had felt no fear.

"I wasn't really feeling afraid," he said. "I am not afraid of any man.... I believe that in a free-for-all fight I could face any single one of them on an equal basis... All they got from me was by the fist."

Whether the witness is simply keeping up a macho image expected in his culture is very much an open question, for he certainly did keep a very cool head during his ordeal or he would never have been able to make such detailed observations. Dr. Fontes remarked of him: "No noticeable tendency towards mysticism or superstition was observed either. The man did not think the crew were angels, supermen or demons. He believed them to be human beings such as we are, only coming from other countries or some other planet", and concluded that "...Senor Villas-Boas is an extremely intelligent man. His power of reasoning is surprisingly logical for a man bred in the country and nearly illiterate, for he has only primary schooling." Boas had also a justifiable pride in his own integrity, for when it was suggested to him that if his story was published many people would consider him either crazy or a fraud, he answered: "Those who accuse me of being a liar or crazy I would challenge to come to my home and find out who I am. They would soon find out that I am known as a normal and honourable man."

I make no apology for dwelling at some length on the character of the witness, for not only is it typical of many who have made credible reports of abductions, but it is obviously crucial to the validity of any inferences we may seek to draw from a case. Villas-Boas, as Dr. Fontes observed, had an excellent visual memory, and the detailed accounts this enabled him to provide never faltered under the skilled questioning of his interrogator, who soon came to trust his honesty. Though the integrity of a witness is of course a pre-requisite to acceptance of his testimony, it can only assure us that he is telling the truth as he saw it. The possibility that he was mistaken or misled cannot be avoided, which is why every effort to find corroboration is worth while. This particular case, however, has a unique importance insofar as it is the first adequately investigated abduction and one in which an almost total recall was obtained without recourse to hypnosis. It also has a number of particularly thought-provoking features.

One of these concerns space and another -- time. Four distinct rooms are mentioned in the account, though the UFO may also have contained others. No precise dimensions are, of course, available either for the exterior or the interior of the craft, but in this account as in some others one receives the impression that, like the Tardis of the celebrated Dr. Who, UFOs may often be larger inside than out. I will defer until later any further consideration of this topological paradox, being content at present merely to remark upon it. The second point refers to what may have been a clock, which Antonio tried unsuccessfully to steal while the crew were talking, or rather growling, among themselves. He describes the episode as follows:

"I came to notice on the table, near the men, a square box with a glass lid that covered a clocklike face, like that of an alarm clock. There was a hand on it and a black mark that corresponded to our 6 o'clock. Other markings of the same kind were to be seen where our 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock stand, but where the 12 o'clock stands it was different. There were four little black marks, one beside the other. I can't understand what they stood for, but that's how they were. At first I thought the thing was a kind of clock, for now and then one of the men looked at it. It can't have been, though, for I kept watch for some time and at no time did I notice the hand moving, which it would have done had it been a clock, for time was passing."

Perhaps it was, but at what rate? When he got back to his tractor, Antonio was surprised to find that he had spent four and a quarter hours on what he called 'the airship'. The phenomenon of 'missing time' is now quite commonly associated with abductions and suggests that UFO time may move at different rates from terrestrial time. This would not have occurred either to investigator or abductee in 1957, so that the record of the clock that had apparently stopped only assumes significance in the light of subsequent reports.

After his experience the witness suffered a number of unpleasant but fortunately temporary clinical symptoms suggestive of exposure to some form of radiation. Dr. Fontes also records that "... for about a month he was overcome by excessive sleepiness. Even during the day he often dozed off, and it even happened when he was chatting with someone ... It was enough for him to sit or stand still for a short time for him unwittingly to drop off to sleep." This also is perhaps the first recorded instance of a post-abduction syndrome which was to be experienced by others too. For instance, another farmer, Maurice Masse of Valensole, France, underwent what was almost certainly an abduction experience in July 1965 and subsequently found it difficult to stay awake even for four hours at a time. Like Villas-Boas, Masse was a man well respected in his community, a former Resistance fighter regarded as absolutely trustworthy by the police captain who conducted an initial investigation (Vallée 1988). If time passes more quickly aboard some UFOs, then the abductee must of necessity be living at a faster rate. This may place a strain on the metabolism which has to be compensated for later, hence the need for additional sleep. We

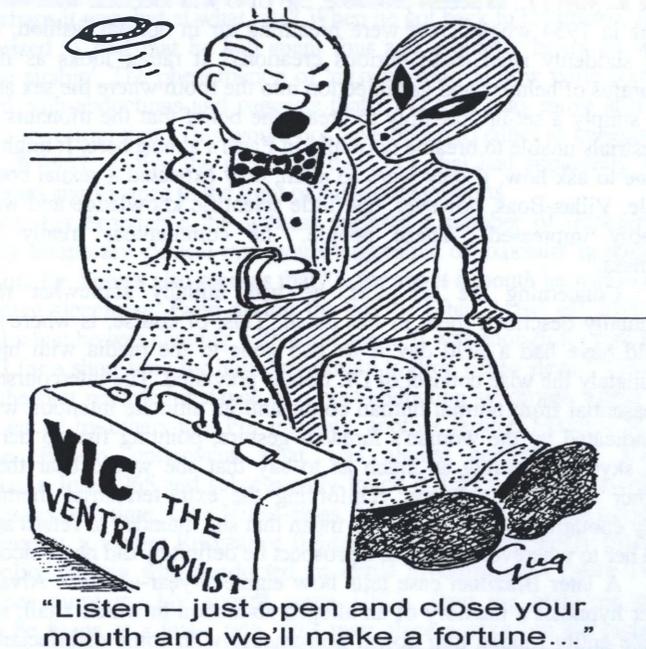
have rather better evidence of an equally stressful effect from the purely terrestrial timepiece of a Corporal Valdes of the Chilean army, who on 25 April 1977 left his patrol to investigate a landed UFO at 3.50 a.m. and reappeared fifteen minutes later, walking as if in a trance and muttering: "You do not know who we are or where we come from, but I tell you we shall return." He then fell into a deep sleep beside the camp fire and his comrades noted with astonishment that he had several days' growth of beard. His watch had stopped at 4.30 a.m. but the date on the digital indicator was April 30th - five whole days later (Randles 1988).

Villas-Boas stated that aboard the UFO he encountered five men and one woman, though this was not necessarily the entire crew, for he knew of at least one room he did not enter. The interior lighting he described as excellent, so that he had no difficulty in observing. The men were physically strong and rather below average height, though the helmets they wore increased their apparent height by several inches. The top of the helmet contained a space which might have been filled by some device connected with breathing and since there were three pipes leading from the helmet into their clothes, Antonio supposed that this upper part perhaps held a filter, for if it had contained a gas generator, why should three pipes lead away from it? Yet, if it was a filter, why should it need three airways? If, as seems probable, the UFO was identical with the one seen at Ceres in 1954 whose crew were breathing air in normal fashion, why should they suddenly need these curious creations? It rather looks as if the whole apparatus of helmets and gas injection into the room where the sex acts occurred was simply a set-up, possibly to create the belief that the ufonauts were extra-terrestrials unable to breathe normally in Earth's atmosphere. It might then occur to one to ask how, if they were so alien, they expected a sexual coupling to be fertile. Villas-Boas, however, had little scientific knowledge and was therefore suitably impressed. "These people," he commented, "really knew their business."

Concerning the sex acts, he was initially somewhat reticent, but eventually described them in full detail. This, of course, is where the tabloids would have had a field day if he had gone to the media with his story, but fortunately the wise counsel of Dr. Fontes prevailed. The intercourse differed in no essential from normal human coitus and its ultimate intention was meant to be indicated by the woman's farewell gesture, pointing first to her uterus and then skywards, surely as much as to say that she would bear their child on another world, thus further reinforcing the extra-terrestrial theme. Antonio, oddly enough, took her gesture to mean that she intended to return and take him with her to wherever she lived, a prospect he definitely did not welcome.

A later Brazilian case tells how eighteen-year-old Jose Alvaro revealed under hypnosis a memory of an alleged abduction in which a tall, silver-haired female entity rubbed him down, presumably with some disinfectant similar to that used on Antonio, and forced him to have sex with her. His mother claimed

to have had a premonitory dream in which she was told that her unmarried son would soon father a child to be born on another world (Randles 1988). The Villas-Boas case was the precursor of many reports in which either sexual congress or genetic engineering were invoked to support the idea of contact with extraterrestrials and ufonauts are said frequently to have claimed such origins. Not that we therefore have to believe them. Indeed, the idea that there is such a degree of genetic compatibility between humanity and the ufonauts calls in question just how alien the supposed aliens actually are. If the abductors of Villas-Boas were of the stock of the ancient astronauts, then of course they would not have expected any problems with genetic incompatibility. The bible story of Genesis, based as it is on the even older Akkadian and Sumerian records, tells how the 'sons of god' had fruitful intercourse with the daughters of men in the days before the Flood. Of course some of the entities seen visiting us in UFOs certainly are extremely alien, but most do not go in for sex games and are perhaps only passing through our particular part of the space-time continuum. On the other hand, perhaps they are all totally alien and seen by humans only in whatever way they choose to present themselves.



ALIENS: WHY THEY ARE HERE

By Bryan Appleyard

REVIEWED BY MARK HENDERSON OF THE TIMES ONLINE

Scribner, £15.99; 336pp ISBN 0 743 25685 9

It is an unfortunate law of ufology that the potential audience grows in inverse proportion to credibility and intellectual rigour. Rational explanations for strange phenomena, alas, never sell as well as the *X-Files*. The principal market for alien investigations has always been those who want to believe rather than to understand. Such people do not much enjoy having their misconceptions debunked.

By this token, Bryan Appleyard's *Aliens: Why They Are Here* will probably do well. This cultural history of little green men and their anal probes purports to be an "intellectual *tour de force*" that makes sense of the modern obsession with extraterrestrials. It certainly covers plenty of ground: virtually every celebrated sighting and abduction is here, along with an exhaustive survey of the science fiction. But it is largely devoid of the sceptical analysis without which such an enterprise cannot work. There is little to discomfit its likely readers.

Appleyard starts from the premise that, whether or not aliens have visited us, they represent a genuine, important cultural phenomenon that begs to be better understood. This is reasonable enough: delusional beliefs have furnished psychologists and philosophers with plenty of useful insights into the human condition.

Aliens, both fictional inventions and those that people claim to have encountered, often reiterate similar themes. Human beings are a failed race, selfish, aggressive creatures bent on destroying the unique planet with which they have been blessed. Alien discourse seems to reflect our deepest concerns, and Appleyard is most interesting when musing on what this might reveal. Our fascination with visitors from other worlds is rooted in malaise about mankind's place in the Universe and the meaning of consciousness in a post-religious age. Figures such as the replicants of *Blade Runner* and Gort, from *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, might be alien in origin, but the problems they highlight are distinctly human.

Where Appleyard sticks to interpreting inventions, he is on solid ground. The trouble is, he does not accept that *ET* is entirely invented. "This book is about fictional creation and real experience and, on the credibility of the latter, it passes no judgment," he writes. This is a

critical weakness that undermines the intellectual foundations of his project.

Without passing judgment on what is true and what is imagined, it is impossible to reach meaningful conclusions about the significance of the alien phenomenon. Appleyard tells us again and again that as people genuinely believe they have encountered aliens, this makes their experiences culturally "real". To ask whether they literally happened, he thinks, misses their point. But this will not do. A delusion, honestly believed, is still a delusion. We can certainly ask interesting questions about what generated the delusion, and about the cultural and social influences that gave it a particular form. But these questions are very different from the ones we would want to ask of someone who had actually been beamed aboard a UFO.

This leads to constant irritation. We are told, for example, that Dr Roger K. Leir, a Californian podiatrist, has acquired a collection of alien devices implanted into those who have been abducted. Has he really? Erich von Däniken, who believes human beings were created by aliens mating with primates between 100,000 and 40,000 years ago, "cannot be refuted any more than Darwin could be". Is the recent discovery of *Homo sapiens* fossils from 195,000 years ago not sufficient proof? Appleyard's refusal to evaluate outlandish claims just makes him look foolish. The danger of too open a mind, it is often said, is that your brain can fall out.

He acknowledges the psychosocial explanation for alien sightings and abductions, but refuses to engage with it. These experiences are generally "recovered" under deep hypnosis, a technique that psychologists such as Elizabeth Loftus have exposed as virtually worthless for providing reliable evidence. Appleyard, indeed, has himself been hypnotised into "remembering" an alien apparition that he accepts was probably not there. But he will not go with the simple explanation to which the evidence leads: that aliens are a culturally-specific manifestation of perceptual errors to which the human mind is prone. Occam's razor is not in his toolbox.

A wealth of sceptical literature is essentially ignored, and with it many of the most convincing explanations for what the believers think they have seen. A quick glance at his bibliography makes this plain. There is no mention of Michael Shermer, the psychologist who has drawn compelling analogies between alien abductions and medieval witch crazes and angelic apparitions. The only look-in for the great Carl Sagan comes through the Robert Zemeckis film version of his sci-fi novel *Contact*. Stephen Webb's brilliant *Where is Everybody?*, which attempts to answer the celebrated question posed by Enrico Fermi about the existence of other advanced civilisations, is also passed

over. He does cite the most indefatigable debunker of UFOs, Philip Klass, but always with a sneer. The overwhelming impression is that Appleyard has done only the homework that suits his purpose.

Instead, we get a sympathetic treatment of the theories of the late John Mack, a psychologist who thought that those abducted by aliens were on to something. Mack argued, and Appleyard agrees, that alien experiences are products of a "third realm" that naturalistic science cannot handle. His belief that "we are connected beyond the Earth at a cosmic level" is quoted approvingly. "Scientism" — Appleyard likes this pejorative term for seeking rational explanations of strange phenomena — impedes understanding of what Mack calls "beings, creatures, spirits, gods . . . that have through the millennia been intimately involved with human existence".

The problem with this New Age mush is that rational inquiry works. Our knowledge may be incomplete, but science builds it cumulatively, providing ever better approximations of the truth. Newton improved on Aristotle, and Einstein on Newton, and Einstein will not be the last word. But this does not mean, as Appleyard states, that "goblins and Greys with huge black eyes... remain as real as quantum theory or the second law of thermodynamics". The latter provides predictions of the world that stack up when confronted with data. The evidence for the former is pure anecdote.

A cultural history of aliens that accepts this, and that tries to explain why so many people who do not appear mentally ill believe they have seen things they have not, would be an interesting project. But Appleyard has not taken it on. He has instead chosen to write an anti-Enlightenment diatribe that is profoundly unsatisfying.

THE EARLIEST CROP CIRCLE?

The earliest known crop circle, known as the "Mowing Devil," is shown on this woodcut from Hertfordshire, England, 1678. The inscription on the woodcut is as follows:

"Being a True Relation of a Farmer, who Bargaining with a Poor Mower, about the Cutting down Three Half Acres of Oats: upon the Mower's asking too much, the Farmer swore That the Devil should Mow it rather than He. And so it fell out, that very Night, the Crop of Oat shew'd as if it had been all of a flame: but next Morning appear'd so neatly mow'd by the Devil or some Infernal Spirit, that no Mortal

Man was able to do the like. Also, How the said Oats ly now in the Field, and the Owner has not Power to fetch them away.

Licensed, August 22nd, 1678

The Mowing - Devil :

Or, Strange NEWS out of

Hartford - shire.

Being a True Relation of a Farmer, who Bargaining
with a Poor Mower, about the Cutting down Three Half
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Source: http://www.hemelonline.com/local_history/mowing_devil.html

IS ANYONE OUT THERE? LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS COULD CHANGE GOD DEBATE

Finding life on other planets could change the God debate forever

By Carrie A. Moore, Deseret Morning News

"Spirit finds Peace."

From a spiritual perspective, that statement sums up what most religions hope to help their adherents to accomplish.

But this week there is a tangible reality in the statement that raises spiritual questions in a place where few now seek answers about evolution and Creation — questions that have puzzled holy men and heathens for most of human history.

"Spirit finds Peace" is the headline of a story in Tuesday's online edition of Astrobiology Magazine [www.astrobio.net] and refers to one of two Martian rovers, dubbed "Spirit," locating "an unusual fragmented rock called Peace (that) appears to have been cemented by some action" which the NASA rover has yet to fully analyze.

"If the sulphate-rich interior (of the rock) represents Epsom salts, or magnesium sulphates, then the discovery may hint at a percolating water history near the Columbia Hills" on the surface of Mars.

And if you find water on another planet, you may well find indications of life — at least in some form recognizable to Earthlings.

Such a finding would not only open a vast array of new endeavour and research for scientists, but many believe it would widen the religious debate — particularly in the Judaeo-Christian tradition — over God's role in the formation of life not only on Earth but throughout the cosmos.

While visions of little green men and UFOs often follow the suggestion of life on other planets, most scientists working in the emerging field of astrobiology — the search for the beginning of life on Earth and in space — believe that the prospect of finding evidence of simple life forms, such as microbes, on other worlds is not only possible, but probable, even within their lifetimes.

So confident are they about the potential for finding life elsewhere that NASA astrobiologists have held discussions about the social implications of their work.

"Whether the first confirmed detection (of life) is fossilized or alive, microbial or intelligent, it is extremely important for us to be highly knowledgeable about likely reactions," reads a statement on a NASA's Ames Research Center website.

"We would be foolish and negligent if we did not study such reactions well ahead of time and make state-of-the-art preparations for major discoveries. Carefully prepared plans should be in place very soon," says the statement from a 1999 conference, "because evidence of extraterrestrial life could be found at any time."

Such a finding "may stimulate a worldwide resurgence in religious activity," they wrote, adding that "some of the needs of humanity as a whole may require the kind of non-scientific solutions provided by religion."

Among those actively looking for such life are researchers at the University of Arizona in Tucson, who are the recipients of a three-year grant from the Templeton Foundation to host a series of research lectures on "Astrobiology and the Sacred: Implications of Life Beyond Earth."

Nick Woolf, professor of astronomy at the University of Arizona, said he can't imagine any of the processes that go on routinely in nature "working without some continuous maintenance of what is sometimes called the laws of physics, sometimes called Mother Nature, and sometimes called God."

"Something has to keep this consistency that we have in the universe, and if anything, I find it rather odd that people who tend most to think there is a God also tend to think that maybe he doesn't understand what he's doing" in that they believe he is "accessible to the whims of individuals who ask for what they want."

What does make sense to him is a divine force that "is involved in the continuous working of all that is around me — one that knows and has organized everything, has set it up at the start to be just right and to stay that way."

Asked if he expects to have help finding life on other worlds through praying to God, he replies, "That's not what I'm expecting."

Yet he believes it is "highly probable that life has evolved elsewhere." He's particularly intrigued by planets recently discovered beyond our solar system — the first in 1995, and more than 140 others since. Based on sheer statistical likelihood among the billions of planets projected to exist in the universe, many astrobiologists believe they will eventually find other Earth-like planets orbiting at a comfortable distance around stars much like our sun.

Examining the natural processes at work on Earth, they believe some form of life could be "produced by the same inexorable rules working from the beginning" here, Woolf said. "If it can happen once, it presumably can happen again. There's a very good reason for looking."

Woolf and his colleagues have reasons beyond mere personal interest for considering the religious aspects of the search for life on

other worlds. In 1993, officials from the Vatican Observatory — located in or near Rome since 1891 to observe the heavens — completed construction of the Vatican Advanced Technology Telescope on Mount Graham, Arizona, in cooperation with University of Arizona astronomers at the Steward Observatory.

It was the first of a planned collaborative project that will see the construction of some of the world's most sophisticated telescopes there. A plaque dedicating the first device reads, in part: "May whoever searches here night and day the far reaches of space use it joyfully with the help of God."

Vatican astronomers spend several months each year working in Arizona and publish their research results in international journals. Jesuit George Coyne is director of the Vatican Observatory and believes it's "madness" to think humans are alone in the universe.

Though he was travelling this week and unavailable for comment, he told the Milan newspaper *Corriere della Sera* in 2002 that "the more we study the stars the more we become aware of our own ignorance," insisting there is not necessarily a conflict between the biblical accounts of Creation and those championed by scientists.

Coyne spends part of the year at the Vatican's astrophysical research centre at Castelgandolfo near Rome, which houses a rare collection of antique books by Copernicus, Galileo, Newton and Kepler in addition to a unique meteorite collection being studied for clues to the early history of the solar system.

Woolf, who is also director of the NASA Astrobiology Institute's Tucson node, says one of the most difficult challenges astrobiologists face in moving their work forward is communicating with scientists in other disciplines. Different terminology and ways of thinking make some uneasy with a topic that treads close to religion for many.

"We're working on a range of activities including things that try to reach into the minds of people in other areas."

Lecture topics on "Astrobiology and the Sacred" this year will include a minority view within astrobiology that life will not be found outside our solar system, a new study on teaching evolution, and views of life from a Buddhist monk and a Jewish rabbi.

Upcoming

ABC Television will air a report next week dealing with questions about whether intelligent life from other worlds has visited Earth. "UFOs — Seeing is Believing," is the topic of a two-hour Primetime special report by Peter Jennings to air Thursday, Feb. 24, at 7 p.m. Mountain time. Jennings conducted more than 150 interviews for the report, including scientists leading the search for life beyond Earth.

OFFICIAL RETICENCE

By W.B. Smith

Source: <http://www.presidentialufo.com/official.htm>

I am often asked if I can give an answer to the official reticence in the matter of flying saucers. I am afraid that there is no single reason, only a combination of circumstances, each contributing in their own way to a situation which would be ludicrous if it were really not so pathetic.

The current interest in flying saucers dates from the Kenneth Arnold sight in 1947. At the time the gentlemen of the press seized upon the item and it was featured far and wide throughout the world, with far more emphasis on its news value than its significance. This was followed by reports of many more sightings and a style was set. Soon everyone was stylist and on the band wagon; jokes and cartoons were created and published and the whole matter lost what little perspective it had and arrived at the public consciousness completely out of context and misrepresented. Consequently, it became practically impossible for a casual enquirer to sort out the facts from the fictions, legends and speculations which mushroomed up and became the "literature" of the subject. After foundering a while in the morass most people just gave up and relied for their opinions on some authority.

To most people the government is the final authority, but they seldom realize that government is made up of a large number of people who are experts in their own fields, but very much laymen in other fields. If, within government, there is no bureau within which a new situation will fit neatly, it is entirely homeless unless and until a suitable bureau can be created. But the creation of a government bureau requires a definite act by the government, and the voting and expenditure of public funds, which in turn has to be justified publicly. Consequently, when a situation develops such as the advent of flying saucers, it is unfair to expect an early answer from government. The best that a government can do under such circumstances is to make use of a "back door" arrangement with which we are all familiar, namely, the "classified project." But even this is a gamble, in that it is predicated on the project yielding positive results with the answers all tied up in a neat little bundle, otherwise the project flops and slips into oblivion.

The United States tried this latter approach but it backfired, through a unique series of circumstances which I shall try to outline. Although I was in no way involved with the United States flying saucer investigations, I do

know how these projects work and how they fit into the overall structure, so I feel my analysis is valid.

Any project starts out with its initial directive or terms of reference, from which it evolves its strategy, and then works out suitable tactics. Since flying saucers were obviously in the domain of the Air Force, and the vast publicity accorded them resulted in a deluge of inquiries and demand for an explanation of what was going on in the skies, the obvious course was for the Air Force to set up a project with a directive to look at this new situation and try to get them off the hook. With this sort of directive the strategy was, of course, to gather actual sighting data and then rationalize it as far as possible. Since it was obviously convenient to classify the project, the tactics at once developed into a one-way pipe line, with all sorts of information going in, and nothing coming out. This of course made many people unhappy and suspicious, which fact was seized upon, publicized, magnified, and built up into a sinister plot to keep the public in ignorance.

Within the Air Force, as in any other large established organization, Parkinson's Law has been at work for some time and we find lots of chiefs but not too many Indians. Every job, large or small, is invariably delegated through many levels of responsibility until it finally arrives at the low man on the totem pole who does the work. Consequently, the only people who are entirely familiar with the job is the low man on the totem pole and his supervisor.

From time to time progress reports are prepared and started along their long and tedious way up the ladder, and since each successive level is progressively more remote from the actual work, each level strikes out of the report those references which to him seem inappropriate, and at long last a thoroughly emasculated version arrives at the desk of the individual who started the whole thing off in the first place. If any information on the subject is to be released, it is almost invariably based on this mutilated version and not on the work as actually done at the working level.

This situation is further aggravated by the fact that personnel at the various levels have a habit of changing and successive reports receive different treatment, so that the corresponding "edited" versions arriving at the top level are often are often inconsistent and contradictory. In the case of the flying saucer projects we have seen all these factors at work with a vengeance.

The question may well, and probably will be asked: Are the top brass unaware of the situation, and if they know about it, why don't they fix it? The answer is very simple; they do know, but to fix it would mean bypassing the hierarchy and the destruction of a highly satisfactory system. The system

breaks down only when it tries to cope with an entirely alien situation, which happens rarely, otherwise it works effectively and efficiently. The trouble is that the flying saucer situation is definitely alien.

It may be well to remember that initially there may have been some legitimate fear of the saucers, but this fear did not last long. It soon became apparent that these objects did not constitute any particular menace to humanity and there was practically nothing which could be done about it if they did. They came and went as they pleased with little or no apparent concern whether we saw them or not. They were in complete control and we were merely casual observers. Consequently, to the Air Force, since they constituted no apparent threat to national security, they were reduced to a mere nuisance value, and that nuisance was to be rid of the whole thing. But there was no one else to carry the ball, and the Air Force was stuck with it.

Unfortunately, since the classified projects were largely aimed at "explaining away" these things, a certain position had to be taken by the Air Force, and having just painted themselves into a corner, they now must wait until the paint dries. What solid information did come out of these projects was most disturbing indeed, striking at the very root of our conventional science. But there wasn't enough of this information on which to base any substantial reform in scientific thinking; just enough to produce an uneasy feeling that all is not well. So, naturally, the least said about it the better, until more was known. One can't just come out and say that the velocity of light is not a universal constant, or that Newton's laws don't always work, or that gravity isn't the primary force after all.

Officialdom is fidgeting in their chairs hoping for some sort of scientific, mathematical or experimental breakthrough which will tie together the loose ends and explain away the whole flying saucer business without having to go beyond the bounds of conventional science. In other words, the status quo is more important than new knowledge. Meanwhile, since they do not have enough answers for the questions which are now being raised, they most certainly aren't going to invite a deluge of further questions that would lead to their admitting anything.

There is one more facet that I would like to deal with. Many people have wondered why the politicians have not picked up the ball, but the answer lies in the concert of politics itself. Politicians have two interests in life; first to win an election, and second, to do as good a job as possible of representing their constituency. Neither of these could be considered as embracing flying saucer investigations. True, a member of the House may ask questions about flying saucers, suggest that something might be done about their study, or

even introduce a bill to take definite action, but without strong public support the result is only so much more wordage in the official record. Furthermore, because of the type of publicity from which the whole flying saucer subject has suffered, politicians, who are naturally very sensitive to public reaction, are reluctant to stick their necks out.

In light of the foregoing reasoning I feel that we need not expect any significant statement with respect to flying saucers by any government agency. The nearest we can come to getting an official statement is from a few sincere researchers in the government service who, themselves, are satisfied of their findings and willing to risk the censure of their colleagues and the prestige of their positions. More often than not these people must wait until they retire from government service before they feel free to make any statement at all.

In conclusion I would like to draw an analogy with the story of a man who was accused in court of stealing chickens. The farmer, his son and the hired man had all testified that they had seen the man steal the chickens, but when the judge asked him what he had to say for himself he just grinned and said, "Sir, I can produce twice as many people who didn't see me steal those chickens!" I am afraid that this is typical of the thinking of many people.

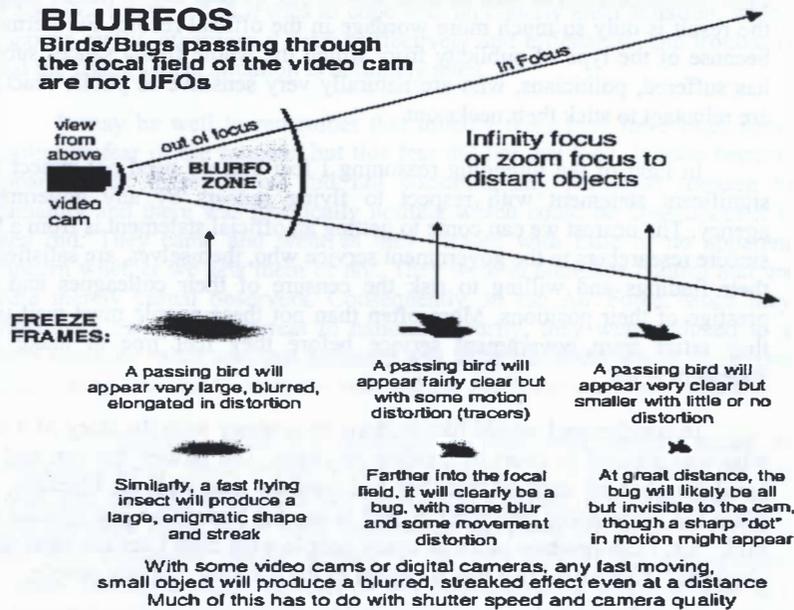
BLURFOs Are Not UFOs

By James Neff, 2-19-4, Source: Rense.com

We have a real problem. Lately, anything that streaks across a digital camera lens or video cam is being hailed as a flying saucer or UFO photo. These blurry, distorted images are not flying saucers, space craft, black ops aerial phenomena, motherships or scout craft. They are, in fact, bugs and birds which are passing quickly by the video camera within the range of focal inability that I like to call the BLURFO ZONE. Just about anything zipping through this zone (i.e. close to the camera when it is set on infinity focus or zoomed to focus on distant objects) is transformed into blips, blobs, disc-shaped smears and streaks. The tiniest of insects will appear to be a massive, dark object leaving quite a tracer (lingering smeared elements of itself on the tape) when in freeze frame. And therein lies the rub -- freeze frames! Freeze frame on the video tape is *not* the same as a frame of film. The illustrations below will hopefully help people wrap their skulls around this distortion problem and end once and for all the cavalcade of BLURFOs.

BLURFOS

Birds/Bugs passing through the focal field of the video cam are not UFOs



Why The Elongated Distortion?

Video tape is nothing like film. A freeze frame on video is not the same as a true "frame" of film. Video tape crosses the recording/playback head inside the video cam (or VCR) at a slight angle allowing only a small swatch of the magnetic tape to touch the head.

This swatch of tape is what you see, converted to a digital image. The swatch of tape represents a swatch of recorded TIME. It is NOT a "frame" or "picture" at all, but a composite of several microseconds of time captured and converted to a digital image. So, fast moving objects often appear streaked, elongated, distorted and blurry because the tape is showing you a swatch of microseconds and something in motion leaves more data across the swatch which has to be interpolated into an inaccurate image.

In Motion Videotape Displays Lengths Of Time As Visual Data



The Situation Is Even Worse When The Object Is Not In Focal Range

In many cases, watching the full video in frame by frame mode, one will clearly see that the object being freeze framed has movement before and after the chosen moment which is lifted from the video and regarded as a "shot." Movement or distortion which clearly shows it is not a UFO, but a bird or bug passing through the "BLURFO" zone. Here is where intellectual dishonesty plays a big part in submitted "UFO" freeze frames. Presenting a video tape freeze frame is simply not the same as a frame of film, or a "shot". It is, in reality, an act of selective editing on the part of the camera man. One can freeze frame a myriad of moving objects, blurred and distorted, and hand pick the one most like a "UFO"

MEDIA CONTROL AND THE PRESIDENTS' INTEREST IN UFOLOGY

By Dennis G. Balthaser

Source: <http://www.truthseekeratroswell.com/ed101801.html>

When doing radio or TV interviews and lectures, I am frequently questioned about the cover-up of the Roswell Incident and other related topics. The general public has a hard time accepting the statements I make from time to time, that the news media is controlled to some degree by the government, and that the President of the United States is not totally informed about the UFO situation.

If I'm incorrect about the media, why don't we hear or read more about UFOs from them? There are several lists on the internet that report sightings from around the world on a weekly basis, but that information very seldom receives any coverage in national or local newspapers, radio or TV broadcasts. When it is reported, invariably the reporter makes light of it rather than reporting it seriously, which does nothing to advance the knowledge of the average person about this topic.

There are of course exceptions to this in radio, with shows such as Art Bell, Jeff Rense, Jerry Pippin and several other local broadcasts around the country. As a researcher, I'm thankful that they exist to give us researchers an opportunity to share our knowledge and information at least with a small percentage of the public.

I feel strongly that some information, as it pertains to our national defence, is justified in being kept undercover, such as our approach to dealing with bin Laden, in response to the terrorist attack against the United States on September 11, 2001. With news coverage being what it is today, there are certain things that we don't need to broadcast to the world. Past history has proven that secrets can be kept and the news media can be prevented from going public with the information.

In the 1940s the development of the atomic bomb right here in New Mexico had over 50,000 people involved and the public knew nothing about it for almost 10 years. The Stealth fighter (F-117) was basically not made public until the Gulf War in the 90's, but the development and testing of that aircraft goes back more than 25 years. World-wide, UFOs are reported daily and the impact they could have on our future

is of vital importance, so I have to assume that we are not being told everything about their existence, since the major news media hardly ever report anything on the subject of UFOs. It has been reported that UFOs are the second most popular posting on the Internet, meaning there is a large interest in this subject, but the media continue to ignore it, or as I believe, are perhaps told to ignore it.

As to the Presidents of the United States not being totally informed about the UFO situation, I maintain that the President is a temporary employee and by law only allowed to be in office for two terms or 8 years. Basically I don't think the President can be trusted with all the information that certain individuals in our government possess about the subject of UFOs, because of term limits of the President and the fact that he doesn't possess the security clearance apparently related to the subject of UFOs. Some have indicated over the years that the security of the UFO situation was rated higher than the security for the development of nuclear bombs.

Most, if not all, of the Presidents since Harry Truman have publicly had an interest in the subject of UFOs, but for one reason or another have not been able to obtain the information they desired on the subject. If they are unable to obtain the information as President of the United States, why not? We all know the President is somewhat limited in his ability to get things done, due to the check-and-balance system set up by our forefathers in establishing our government in the first place, and that still is the best governmental system in the world. It is my strong belief however, that there are others within our government who have the information on UFOs, and who will not share that with anyone outside of their group, including the President of the United States.

I will share some comments and statements with you, that as a researcher I have been able to obtain over the past few years in regard to our recent Presidents' involvement and interest in UFOs. You can decide what to believe.

Many rumours have circulated, since 1947, that President Harry Truman was involved with the Majestic 12 group that allegedly had a written policy for dealing with UFOs. The authenticity of those documents however, is still being investigated and researched. On July 10, 1947, (days after the Roswell Incident), Truman was asked if he had ever seen a flying saucer. His response was: "only in the newspapers." A reporter then asked Truman if there was "any

explanation of them." Truman again responded, "Only the explanations I have seen in the newspapers."

Many of us believe that Truman advised Dwight D. ("Ike") Eisenhower about the UFO situation when he succeeded Truman as President. (Remember that Eisenhower was a five-star General during his military career also). In December 1954, "Ike" was asked about a "flap" of UFO sightings in Europe, and if the U.S. authorities suspected that something extraterrestrial was involved. He responded that nothing had come to him, verbally or in written form. He further stated that the last time anyone had talked to him about the subject, it had been from a man whom he trusted in the Air Force, who said it was, as far as he knew, completely inaccurate to believe that they came from any other planet or otherwise.

As a side note, I believe that there have only been three letters on the subject of UFOs signed by Presidents after entering the White House.

- 1) Letter from Lyndon B. Johnson (while Vice President) to a researcher in Canada, directing him to NASA for analysis of a UFO photo.
- 2) Letter from President Richard Nixon to a young girl, commenting on her theory as to where UFOs come from.
- 3) Letter from Ex-President Gerald Ford to a researcher, telling him that he was unable to get any answers to the UFO question as a Congressman, Vice President, or President.

President John F. Kennedy was supposedly asked: "What do you think about UFOs?" by one of the stewards aboard Air Force One, to which he replied: "I'd like to tell the public about the alien situation, but my hands are tied." If in fact Kennedy knew anything about the UFO situation, that knowledge was forever silenced in Dallas, Texas November 22, 1963.

Ronald Reagan obviously had an obsession with the UFO phenomenon, and made several comments in various speeches. Reagan in fact had several sightings himself while governor of California. One of his most famous comments came when he was attending the Geneva summit with Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in November 1985, when he supposedly stated that "if the people of the world were to find out that there was some alien life form that was going to attack the earth, then that knowledge would unite all

the peoples of the world." He referred to his comments with Gorbachev at Fallston High School in Maryland a month later. The most famous Reagan comment, I believe, occurred as he was addressing the Forty-second general assembly of the United Nations on September 21, 1987, when he said in part: "Perhaps we need some outside, universal threat to make us recognize the common bond. I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world. And yet I ask -- is not an alien force already among us?"

President George H. Bush had been Reagan's Vice President, and previously for a year, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency under then President Ford. He might have had access to UFO information in those positions. In March 1988, while still Vice President and on the campaign trail in Arkansas, he was approached by a UFO investigator and asked, "Will you tell the people the truth about UFOs?" Bush replied, "Yeah -- if we can find it, what it is. We are really interested."

President Jimmy Carter is on public record as having seen and reported (two reports) a UFO in Georgia, while governor in January 1969. I have heard that in 1977-78 Pentagon officials secretly suppressed a White House study into Extraterrestrial Communications during the Carter presidential years. In 1976, at the Southern Governor's Conference, Carter stated, "I don't laugh at people any more when they say they saw a UFO. I've seen one myself." He added, "If I become President, I'll make every piece of information that this country has about UFO sightings available to the public." Whether forgotten or reconsidered in the White House, he never did.

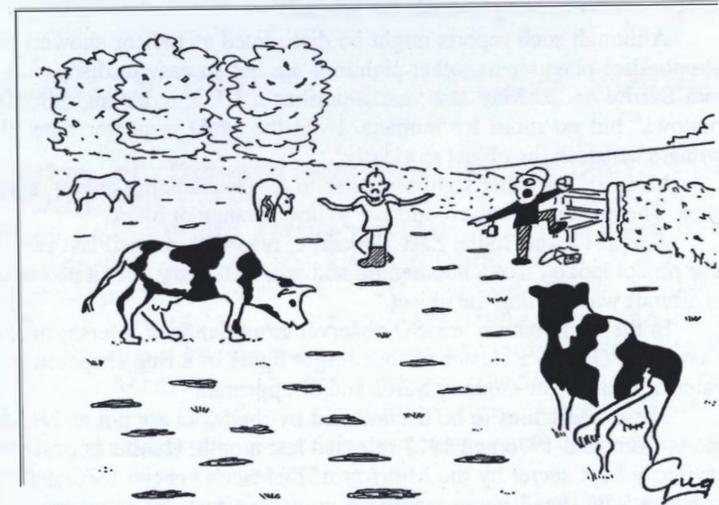
The late television and film star Jackie Gleason was an avid collector of UFO literature and golfing partner of President Richard Nixon. Gleason's widow claims that President Nixon took Gleason to Homestead Air Force Base, where he saw six or eight mangled remains, in what looked like glass-topped freezers located in an inner chamber, of one of the structures at the base. Nixon supposedly also pointed out what he said was the wreckage from a flying saucer, enclosed in several large cases.

President Clinton kept a copy of Schmitt and Randle's book *UFO Crash at Roswell* on a shelf in his private study. During a trip to Belfast, Northern Ireland, he read a letter from a thirteen-year-old boy named Ryan, dealing with the crash in Roswell in 1947. He answered the boy

by saying: "No, as far as I know, an alien spacecraft did not crash in Roswell, New Mexico in 1947. And, Ryan, if the United States Air Force did recover alien bodies, they didn't tell me about it either, and I want to know." While president, Clinton asked long-time associate and Assistant Attorney General Webster Hubbell, "to find the answers to two questions for him: One -- who killed JFK, and two -- are there UFOs?" Hubbell in his book *Friends in High Places* says: "Clinton was dead serious." Hubbell said: "he had looked into both, but Clinton wasn't satisfied with the answers."

That brings us to our current President, George W. Bush. Bush was questioned about the UFO situation and stated that his Vice President Dick Cheney would be the man to know about this subject, having been former Secretary of Defense. I personally will not hold my breath for any disclosure by the former Secretary of Defense.

There are many other comments by the men that have held the highest office in this country over the years, but again, it is my belief that, whatever they might know, we will probably never learn from them. It appears evident to me that the President does have some information on the subject and that several have definitely had an interest in the topic, but researchers and the public will have to obtain the information from other sources than the media and our Presidents.



"No - I said investigate *crop* circles!"

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE:

Declassified reports of UFO sightings reveal 88 sightings last year

BY ROBERT VERKAIK, Legal Affairs Correspondent, The Independent, 3rd February 2005

Details of Britain's most recent UFO sightings are revealed in previously secret documents disclosed to The Independent.

The files, released under the Freedom of Information Act, show that, last year, the Ministry of Defence's UFO unit received 88 reports from military staff and members of the public worried about unexplained objects in our skies.

The classified files help to complete a picture of the scale of UFO sightings first revealed by this paper last month. These updated "X-files" show the most recent observations were made on 15 January this year following two separate reports from Chatteris, Cambridgeshire, and Whitstable, Kent. The reports refer to "strange lights seen in the sky".

Other sightings give more detail. A report from Devizes in Wiltshire on 24 September last year records an object that: "Looked like a big ball of fire coming down from the sky with a tail and sparks coming off the end of it." Another, from Somerset the week before, states: "The object looked like a great bright light and was really intense, like a ball of fire coming down from the sky, rapidly moving towards the ground."

Although such reports might be discounted as meteor showers or other astronomical phenomena, other sightings are not so easy to dismiss. A report from Surrey on 20 May last year describes a UFO as having "grooves and windows" but no room for humans. Even the MoD inspector notes that the "witness had seen the object so clearly".

Many of the other sightings refer to UFOs changing colour, speed and shape. The most common colours are yellow, orange or black.

A report from Goole, East Yorkshire, recorded in April last year, noted: "The object looked like a boomerang and was stationary over a power station. An aircraft was circling the object."

In the same month, a UFO observer from Seaforth, Merseyside, noted: "I saw a UFO with a cluster of four bright lights in a ring shape on it. Three beams of white light shone upwards and disappeared."

These latest files to be declassified by the MoD are not as complete as reports from mid-1976 and 1977 released last month. Hundreds of documents previously kept secret by the Ministry of Defence's special UFO department, known as S4F, detail many reports of a possible visit by extraterrestrial life-forms. One is made by an RAF pilot and two NCOs at RAF Boulmer, Northumberland.

In July 1977 Flt-Lt A. M. Wood reported "bright objects hanging over the sea". The MoD document adds that the RAF officer said the closest object was "luminous, round and four to five times larger than a Whirlwind helicopter". The UFOs were reported to be three miles out to sea at a height of about 5,000ft.

The officer, whose report is supported by Cpl Torrington and Sgt Graham, said: "The objects separated. Then one went west of the other, as it manoeuvred it changed shape to become body-shaped with projections like arms and legs." The report describes Flt-Lt Wood as "reliable and sober".

That account was deemed so sensitive to the national interest that the MoD had delayed its release for an extra three years. But under the Freedom of Information Act, which came into force on 1 January, the file has been declassified.



LETTERS

Members who wish to express any opinions, ideas or comments are invited to write to Pegasus at the address on page 2. We reserve the right to edit any submission. Ed.

NEWS IN BRIEF/ SIGHTINGS ROUNDUP

Ministry of Defence says Life Forms May Exist - LONDON, Feb 3 (AFP) - Undaunted by the lack of evidence, officials at the British defence ministry are refusing to rule out the existence of alien life forms visiting Earth, the Financial Times reported Thursday. It quoted from a hitherto confidential letter by an official acknowledging the ministry recorded accounts of people claiming to have seen alien life in Britain. According to the letter, obtained under recent legislation on freedom of information, such reports are collected "solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance." While admitting that "only a handful of reports in recent years have warranted further investigation and none revealed any evidence of a threat," it went on say the ministry was "totally

open-minded" about the hypothesis of alien life. Two weeks ago an anonymous caller reported seeing "strange lights" above Kent, southeast England, while another claimed to have seen a flying saucer sailing above Stoke, central England. The defence ministry said such calls were only a fraction of the thousands it has recorded.

Peter Jennings ABC News Explores UFOs- Tom Carey Roswell Researcher writes, Regarding Peter Jennings "reporting" on Roswell, it was indeed regrettable. When he used the word "myth" five times in his first five sentences, it sort of let the viewer know where he was heading [into deep doo doo]. What we have here is a man who knows nothing about the case decreeing it to be a myth based upon no evidence at all, while ignoring a mountain of evidence to the contrary that a UFO was at the heart of the Roswell matter. To the ignorant, ill-informed, agenda-driven or just plain lazy, the Mogul Balloon Hypothesis sounds plausible, but under close scrutiny it disintegrates and evaporates like a desert sneeze as an answer for the 1947 Roswell events.

Don Schmitt and I spent a week in Roswell-Corona with Peter Jennings's ABC crew trying to educate them about the case, show them around and set them up with witnesses to be interviewed for the show [e.g., pro-Roswell astronaut Edgar Mitchell was in town at the time], but the ABC crew would have none of it. We even had to talk them into going to the crash site to see for themselves, so little was their interest. Their minds to us seemed to be already made up. On the evening that Don, Stan Friedman and I spoke to a standing room only audience at the UFO Museum about the latest findings, the ABC crew wasn't interested and chose instead to cover a parade featuring goofy costumes made to resemble aliens. I believe the correct phraseology for Peter Jennings Reporting is, "The joke's on us."

Thanks to Tom Carey Huntingdon Valley, PA

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The views expressed in Pegasus are those of the articles' authors and are not necessarily those of the editor, or of SIGAP.

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