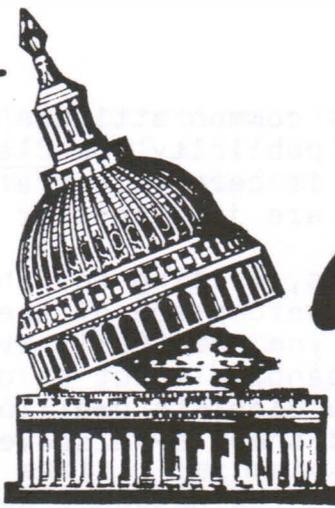


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Citizens Against UFO Secrecy

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EDITORIAL

Just Cause has been significantly delayed due to the editor's work schedule, which has not allowed me to do anything much related to UFO research for many months. This trend may continue off and on in the future, so there might be lapses in the newsletter's regularity from time to time. I am sorry about this but it is unavoidable unless a financial wizard wants to pay me full-time to do research into UFO history. Hint!

Because the summer was so full of interesting events, this issue will be more commentary-oriented than usual. "Interesting," however, doesn't necessarily translate into something positive because, pretty much as anticipated, the events were largely dumb, stupid and foolish. It was a poor way to celebrate what is generally an interesting topic: the investigation of unexplained phenomena in our skies. You disagree? Read on.

MAY 1997

The prelude to the fiftieth anniversary of UFOs was well under way. A new book, "Beyond the Wild Blue: A History of the Air Force, 1947-1997" by Walter Boyne, appeared. It does not deal with UFOs, but in the process of publicizing the book, the author was driven crazy by UFO cover-up/Roswell queries. Such questions were only secondary to those about the Lt. Kelly Flinn sexual affair that enormously embarrassed the Air Force. According to the Portland (Me.) Press-Herald, 5-31, "Sadly, the distractions of Flinn and flying saucers will likely obscure the great achievements of the Air Force this past half century."

On May 20, another widely-publicized wire story echoed a similar sentiment. A live show on the C-SPAN cable TV network lamented the fact that during an interview of ten cosmonauts and astronauts aboard the Russian space station "Mir," which at the time was experiencing some of its reknown problems, live phone calls from the public asked the Mir occupants about sex in space and UFOs.

Both of these examples verify an old media idea put forth many years ago in an article in TV Guide that the surest way for a TV program to score ratings points during a ratings sweeps period (usually twice a year) is to schedule sex and UFOs. Implied in this is that both topics appeal to a lowest common denominator in public attention that is easy

to exploit. It also reflects a common attitude that I had noticed amongst media interviewers when doing publicity for Clear Intent years back in that while on camera fairness is carefully crafted and displayed, but when the cameras are off UFOs are just another "nut" topic, not very well respected by journalists.

Columnist Dale McFeatters, writing for the Scripps Howard News Service, referred to a "daffy percentage of the population" believing that aliens visit the Earth (Lynn, Ma. Daily Evening Item, 5-22). "Gullible weirdos" and "UFO nuts" were bandied about as descriptive terms during the columnist's outrage over UFOlogists dwelling upon nonsense rather than real science such as that shown by discoveries from the Hubble Space Telescope.

Some remnant fallout from the Heaven's Gate suicides continued in May, which likely contributed to the bad attitude the media displayed towards UFOs. One cartoon in the Sacramento, Ca. Comic Press News (5-97) depicted UFO cultists lined up to board a space ship, each having a flip-top head and each dutifully removing their brains and depositing them in a garbage can near the base of the stairs leading into the ship as they boarded.

While within the community of UFO adherents there are seen many levels of seriousness and silliness, to those outside such a community

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

July 4 1997

BENSON'S VIEW

Steve Benson
271-8035



there is hardly a distinction perceived. The actions of some can be devastating to the reputations of all. It is seen that a UFOlogist is either a nut or a potential nut if obvious symptoms are not displayed immediately.

JUNE

What should have been a well-orchestrated celebration of UFOlogy's anniversary got off to a very bad start. The Day After Roswell, a book by Philip Corso, a retired army intelligence officer, purported to reveal inside secrets of the Roswell crash and subsequent exploitation of the space ship's hardware for earthly technological advancement. Writing the forward to the book was South Carolina Senator Strom Thurman, Chairman of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, praising Corso as being a person of integrity.

UFO researchers eagerly awaited release of the book as it would appear to be a ringing endorsement of the reality of Roswell, especially with Thurman's support. However, on June 6, Senator Thurman publicly retracted his forward, saying that Corso never informed him of the UFO material in the book. He was led to believe that the book was an autobiography of Corso's military career. Thurman staffers said Corso's son told them that the book did not much resemble the proposal given to Thurman for review.

One cannot see this as any more than a deliberate deception by Corso to sell books. It should have been a credibility destroyer, but in today's world controversy overrides credibility. Outrageousness for many is a pleasant distraction from the perceived boredom of reality. Corso's book sold very well, even making the New York Times best seller list. The Thurman controversy likely brought attention to the book that it otherwise would not have had.

How easily the public could be molded, shaped and manipulated to willingly do the bidding of those wishing to separate them from their money. To those who refuse to do the dirty deeds that contemporary UFOlogy requires to define financial reward, you have your integrity, very little attention, a few thanks and that's about it!

If one can tell a correct story based upon fact and behave ethically, there is nothing wrong with compensation for time and effort. But sticking to this proposition has always been a problem in UFO research. Dramas have always outdone, outsold documentaries in the theater. UFO research is no different. Many subjects pass from a "golden age," when something is new, different and has appeal for its own sake, to a "business age," when people have an understanding of the topic, tire of the novelty and try to figure out how to capitalize on it. Clearly, UFOlogy has passed into a business phase when now large scale merchandizing of the flying saucer has begun. No, you say? Others see it differently:

- "Roswell Profits from UFO Fixation." (Springfield, Ma. Sunday Republican, 6-15-97)
- "Roswell Braces for Tourist Invasion 50 Years After Alien Crash." (Brattleboro, Vt. Reformer, 6-18-97)
- "Here, Jobs Ride on UFO (in Roswell)." (Lowell, Ma. Sun, 6-18-97)
- "Roswell Going for UFO Gold." (Arizona Star, Tucson, 6-27-97)

Among others. The commercialization of UFOs was firmly established in the summer of 1997.

Then came the Air Force report on June 24th.

THE AIR FORCE REPORT ON ROSWELL CONTINUED

This summer UFOs received more press than at any time since 1973. Organization memberships may go up briefly and launch the "careers" of an untold number of new UFOlogists. It was also one of the most substanceless waves ever, for the coverage focused upon primarily one event - the Roswell UFO accident - managing to completely divert attention away from the rest of the 1947 wave (Arnold, etc.). Roswell did generate one notable event however; the Air Force's "Roswell Report: Case Closed," their "final" dismissal of UFOs for all time (I will call it "Roswell 2" for convenience).

While the first Air Force report on Roswell in 1994 (Roswell 1) dealt with the origin of the reported debris found, which were parts of a formerly classified "Project Mogul" balloon train (see Just Cause, 12-94 and 3-95), this new document addresses the issue of reported alien bodies found, invoking a number of seemingly disconnected earthbound explanations to account for varying details given by "eyewitnesses." Roswell 2 does not supercede Roswell 1, as some of the press has indicated, but supplements it with additional details not in the first report.

The core of the Air Force "bodies" explanation is that anthropomorphic dummies, generally resembling human beings, but without the fine detail, were viewed after they had descended from high altitude in air drop experiments over the southwest during the 1950s. Many of the experiments involved the testing of parachutes for potential bailouts

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from aircraft at high altitudes as man was relentlessly pushing himself even higher towards eventual space travel. The dummies, according to the Air Force, were seen on the ground by people who much later reported these incidents as having been connected to the July 1947 Roswell accident, despite the fact that the dummy drops did not begin until 1953. How could events at least six years after the original circumstance be misremembered as happening in 1947? The Air Force's response was that all of the memories of bodies at Roswell surfaced in the late 1970s and after, at least three decades after the fact. Aside from anecdotal testimony, no one has been able to document reports of alien bodies with either news reports, photos, letters, diary entries or government documents at all. Since such was the case, the Air Force argued that because some of the existing testimony correlates very well with a variety of dummy observations and activities revolving around two accidents later in the 1950s (an air crash involving multiple deaths and a balloon accident involving serious injuries), the body stories are better explained as these earthly documented incidents as opposed to an undocumented extraterrestrial landing.

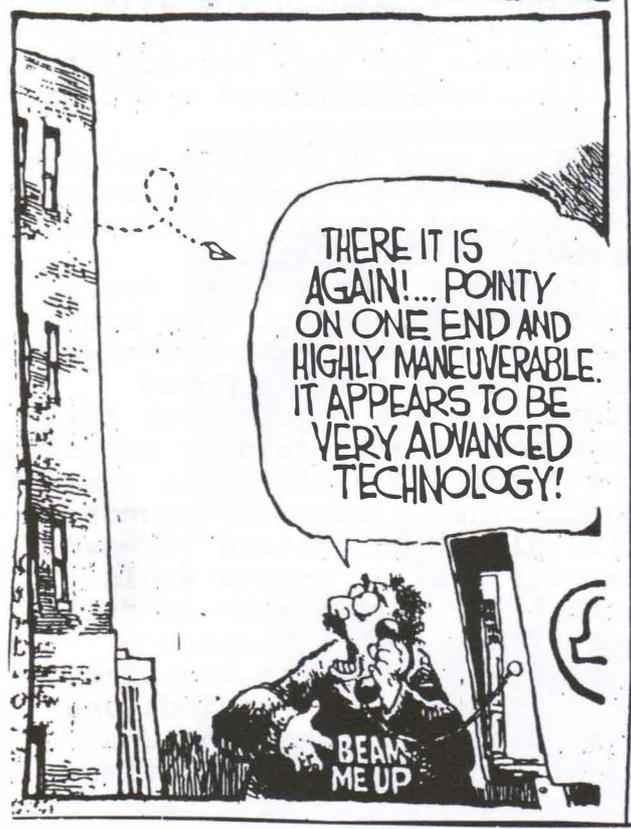
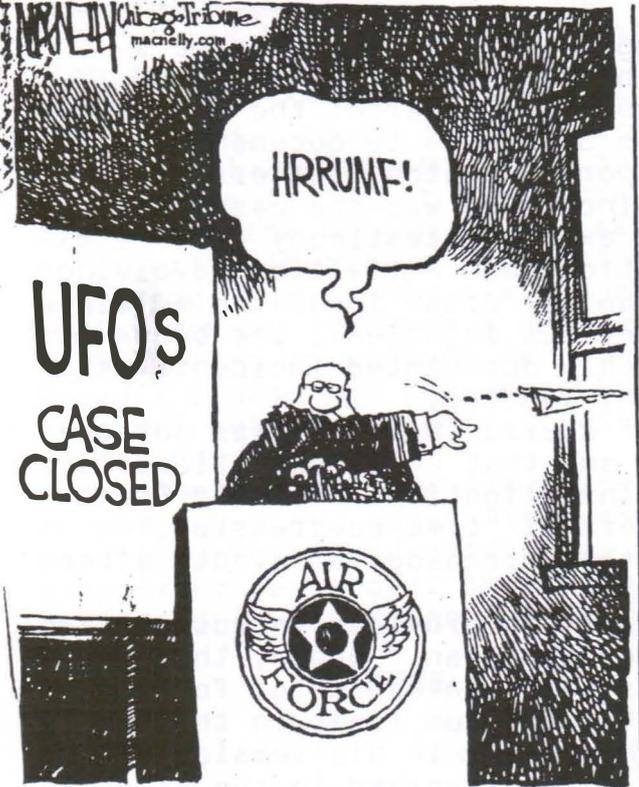
The witnesses favoring ETs insist of course that this was not the case, that they did see extraterrestrials and that their assertions should be enough to initiate large-scale investigations. The Air Force insists that they were the victims of a sort of "time compression," in which people are prone to misremember the chronology of events after a long period of time.

A sharp example of witness memory fault is provided in Roswell 2's section 2.1, "The Missing Nurse and the Pediatrician," where, through incredible detective work, the Air Force's chief investigator for Roswell 2, Captain James McAndrew, demonstrated serious flaws in the memory of mortician Glenn Dennis regarding key characters in his version of the story. People that Dennis had recalled as being involved in the alien body recovery were in fact not involved and were not even at Roswell at the time. Some were at the base later in the 1950s and they physically matched very well Dennis's description of them. None confirmed a UFO or aliens at the base.

Roswell 2 is not the piece of garbage that many UFOlogists believe it to be. Much of the condemnation occurred before the report was even seen and was largely based upon press summaries and the Air Force press conference announcing the release of the report on June 24th.

The press conference was a story in itself, a poorly-done, over-cooked affair that, amazingly, did more to offset the report than promote it. At one point, when asked how Roswell witnesses could confuse events of 1953 and 1947 (regarding the dummy drops), the Air Force spokesman, Colonel John Haynes, said he did not know but just that the dates were mixed up. Coming as it did before the report could be digested by the press and without the context of the report to explain his comment in a rapid-fire question and answer session, Haynes's response sounded lame and evasive, as if the Air Force really didn't understand its own explanation. Coupled with the fact that, superficially, people would find it hard to imagine confusing extraterrestrial aliens with so-called "crash test dummies," the press treated the affair with a mixture of skepticism and comedy, though at the same time not accepting the idea that aliens landed at Roswell. The press conference almost reminds one of the press conference given in 1966, responding to a series of UFO sightings in Michigan. The Air Force's scientific advisor at the time, Dr. J. Allen Hynek, suggested that a possible explanation was "swamp gas," which to this day stands as the comedic stereotype of Air Force UFO debunking. "Crash Test Dummy" has now replaced "Swamp Gas!"

Miami (FL)
Herald
July 1, 1997



Is the idea of confusing a test dummy for an extraterrestrial unreasonable? Crash test dummies have been made a comical promotion by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in a highly successful ad campaign. One would think that an intelligent person could tell the difference between an inanimate dummy and an alien. This assumes of course that the alien is real, which is not assured. We are left with choosing an explanation which is reality-assured, i.e. the dummies are real and could have served as the stimulus for the mistaken interpretations of them as extraterrestrials, or an explanation which is not reality-assured. Proponents have been unable to prove aliens at all, in fact what evidence has been offered is woefully inadequate, and such acceptance amounts to an unreasonable belief that such was the case. To offset any doubts about Roswell being an example of extraterrestrial visitation, aliens would have to be proven.

One dummy drop, reported on page 36 of Roswell 2, was of such impact that it caused a woman living near Roswell at the time to become hysterical, believing that the dummy was a real dead body.

Would it be such a stretch to think that someone could metamorphize the memory of seeing a dummy into the memory of an "alien" over thirty years later, with plenty of suggestibility as was displayed during the last twenty years over Roswell UFOs and aliens? Any credible UFO investigator in the subject for a long time can reel off examples of nothings being turned into somethings. I was witness several times to Venus being turned into a structured space ship by witnesses with whom I stood and watched the same thing.

Remember that after July 9, 1947 the Roswell incident was not an issue until 1978. The reason for the resurgence that year was Jesse Marcel surfacing on February 20 after being located by Stanton Friedman. And as said previously in this journal (Just Cause, March 1995, pg. 3), this happened shortly after national coverage of a NASA story that quoted their assistant for special projects as saying, "Give me one little green man, not a theory or emmory of one, and we can have a multimillion dollar program."

Where is the Roswell-as-alien evidence pre-dating NASA's late 1977 announcement?

Trying to debunk what has become almost mythological is, as the Air Force should have learned long ago, a virtually futile task. Flying saucers have evolved into a modern legend and will not go away. The more bizarre particulars of the phenomena, as irrational as they are, are as resilient to debunking attempts as asbestos is to fire, despite the facts. The Air Force found the handling of the UFO phenomena so difficult, from a public relations sense, during their 21-year Project Blue Book investigation that ending the project was the only option. One officer who had handled the release of the Condon report for the Pentagon, called the Air Force effort then "the most monumental military foul-up since the Battle of the Bulge." This officer, David Shea, authored a dissertation in 1972 analyzing the Air Force's PR fiasco and suggested better ways to do things (The UFO Phenomena: A Study in Public Relations, Masters Thesis, University of Denver, 1972). Obviously, based upon the Air Force's performance at the June 1997 press conference, they forgot more than they learned.

Nevertheless, Roswell 2 has a great deal of value contained within it, little known facts about the history of Air Force high altitude experiments which I found fascinating. The suspicions about Roswell testimony, which Just Cause has long echoed, sometimes in desperation for saving the credibility of UFO research, are carefully assembled and have significant impact when studied in full.

JULY

With Roswell 2's release, the focus of attention shifted to reaction to the report and to the festivities at Roswell itself. As it turned out, virtually all attention was paid to Roswell, ignoring the fact that there were thousands of other reports during the summer of 1947. Reporting of Roswell in 1947 in effect largely ended the 1947 wave as sighting activity tailed off sharply from July 10th on.

Given the fact that the extraterrestrial Roswell, as we know it now, was a manifestation of the late 1970s, it might be more appropriate if the Roswell incident celebration were to be held in July 2028, the fiftieth anniversary of the Roswell/ET connection.

The celebration itself was a bizarre commercial affair. Much of the coverage aimed at the city of Roswell's exploitation of the ET interest, which consequently inflicted a significant popular culture impact upon America. "UFO Glow Pops," alien stuffed dolls, alien pinatas, T-shirts, alien bolo ties, ET cups and mugs, fake test tube ET fetuses "you can own yourself," alien underwear (glow-in-the-dark of course) and an "Alien Artificial Insemination Kit" were offered, along with an "Alien Autopsy Game" where the player tries to remove plastic alien body parts without killing the "patient."

UFOs and aliens became the "pet rocks" of the 1990s, firmly entrenched in the public psyche at whatever the cost to reason and respectability. The Scranton, Pa. Tribune (7-4) said factions of loyal followers have materialized around "top" UFO writers like Stanton Friedman, Kevin Randle, Donald Schmitt and Karl Pflock, stalking them like celebrities, looking for autographs or opinions on their own theories. The article added that UFOlogists devote enormous time and effort belittling, ridiculing and deriding each others' findings.

More headlines:

"Space Cadets Descend Upon UFO Festival." (Boston Herald, 7-7)

"Ranch Where Aliens 'Died' is Blessed as a Sacred Site."
(Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Voice, 7-6)

"Ongoing UFO Craze is Complete, Absolute Bunk." (Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Times-Leader, 7-6)

"Satan is Behind ETs, Pastor Says." (quoting a Roswell pastor) (Pittsburgh, Pa. Post-Gazette, 7-6)

"UFO Witnesses Keep Psychologists Busy." (Middlesex News, Framingham, Ma., 7-4)

The Arizona Republic (Phoenix) of 7-8, lamented the fact that at Roswell many persons paid no mind to the landing on Mars of the Pathfinder space probe, expressing complete disinterest in the history-making event. The Republic labeled such as "a sensation-addicted public, flitting from one improbable junk science-fiction incident to another." One prominent name, Richard Hoagland of "Face on Mars" fame, felt that the Pathfinder mission was a hoax (Republic, 7-5). Evidence for this? None was presented. Who cares, just saying it is enough to draw attention. This is the way UFOlogy functions. How about another theory: the growth of professional wrestling is evidence of an ET invasion. Why? What normal human being would look and act like that? Just recently I saw one huge, bizarre-looking character threaten the much smaller, human looking opponent by telling him he was going to send the little man to the moon. Undoubtedly, the big entity was an ET from a lunar base! This is a good theory, based upon eyewitness testimony. I don't need proof!

The only dramatic Roswell revelation occurred somewhat earlier in the summer: a prominent Roswell advocate became a skeptic. Kent Jeffrey, a commercial airline pilot who launched the "Roswell Declaration" project to force the government to admit what it is covering up about the crash, changed his mind and revealed his results in the June issue of the MUFON Journal. "It did not happen, period," he said. The editor of the MUFON journal agreed. Dennis Stacy, quoted in an article by Key Davidson (Biddeford, Me. Journal-Tribune, 6-28) said, "There was no extraterrestrial vehicle recovered. If there had been, then the history of the world would have been significantly different." Stacy is now the ex-editor of the Journal, having resigned on the heels of a large number of complaints about publishing the Jeffrey revelation.

DISCUSSION

If one takes all of this together, it seems pretty clear that UFO research has morphed into some weird creature, unrecognizable from anything resembling scientific inquiry. Devotion to belief has far outweighed the desire to find answers through common sense and investigation, coming dangerously close to being cult-like in nature. I can think of almost nothing being done right in the public arena for the sake of making UFO research serious. Even resistance to such trends has become practically futile.

This is not a new opinion for this editor. I have documented colossal misconduct in this newsletter, hoping that somehow things would change. It continues to deteriorate. It also gives me no great pleasure to say these things. I've spent over thirty years in this subject and don't want to see it wasted. So therefore I will tell it like it is.

In the next couple of years, I expect to be publicly out of UFO research. My energies will focus on private research into the early years of the subject, with a few serious individuals. The UFO craze is only as strong as the pillars upon which it is based, so we shall see how strong these pillars are. Continued discussion of Summer 97 will be in the next issue.