

## The Newsletter of The North Texas Skeptics



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## THE THIRD EYE

### News and Commentary From the Weird World of the Media

By Pat Reeder

Okay, I take it back. Last month, I said that if aliens landed tomorrow and confirmed their existence, my reaction would not be a shattered belief system, but rather great excitement, awe and curiosity. Well, just four weeks have passed, but those weeks have been so cram-packed with 'round-the-clock media ballyhoo over the 50th anniversary of the Roswell Non-Incident — from TV news features to magazine articles to a whole week's worth of "Roswell" drum-beating on the Sci-Fi Channel — that I have now changed my mind. Today, if aliens knocked on my front door, my reaction would likely be more like this:

"You AGAIN?! God, I am so sick of you bulbous-headed publicity hogs! You're on TV more than Princess Di, Pamela Lee, and the Kennedy family, put together! I feel sorry for any planet that stands between you and a camera! Well, your fifteen minutes are up! Now, get your stupid saucer off my lawn before I call the Men In Black, and you'd better not have left a crop circle in my ivy!"

Sorry for the outburst, but as I write this, we are at the midpoint of a weeklong Roswell Chamber of Commerce-induced P.R. orgasm, and I haven't been so burned out on a single news subject since the last election. And June had started out so promisingly, with *Time* magazine's cover story on Roswell, which did what so few such features do: It went all the way back to the beginning, from the minute the (obvious) balloon crashed in 1947 (yielding, by discoverer Mac Brazel's own original estimate, less than five pounds of debris), then showed how locals never gave it a second thought until the 1970s, when a lot of alien embellishments started getting added to the story, mostly thanks to Stanton Friedman. At that point, the local Babbitts realized that the crash might not have yielded a flying saucer, but it certainly uncovered a goldmine. Let other towns have their lizard races and cow chip-throwing contests: Roswell had a dubious crashed UFO to promote, perhaps piloted by a race of lizards! And at that point, the cow chips really started to fly.

*Time* also ran an excellent article by Bruce Handy, which examined some people's psychological urge to believe in murky conspiracies based on secondhand tales with no evidence, and drew the same parallels between UFOlogy and religion to which I alluded here last month (*The Dallas Morning News* also covered some of the same territory in a

special "Alien" Today section of a recent Sunday edition). I foolishly hoped that all this long-awaited media scrutiny and skepticism would finally hammer a few nails into Roswell's overexposed, childsize coffin.

Apparently, the Air Force had the same misplaced optimism, since they entitled their own new, exhaustively detailed investigation, "The Roswell Report: Case Closed." The author claimed he was given full access to all files, including Top Secret files, and found no evidence whatsoever of a flying saucer crash at Roswell in 1947. He did reveal information about previously unknown test flights and high-altitude parachute tests involving crash dummies, which could account for some of the sightings of "alien bodies" in the desert. But I'm sure you've read about all that and hardly need me to recap it. What you do need me for is to answer some of the charges made against the report by the UFO True Believers. So here goes:

- "Only a year or so ago, you claimed that what crashed was a Mogul spy balloon, and now, you're changing your story!"

Well...no. This report contains new information about later experiments in the same area, but the Air Force still claims the 1947 crash was a Mogul spy balloon. As Bill Maher asked on "Politically Incorrect," what are the odds that a strange thing would fall from the sky right next to an Air Force base specifically built there to shoot strange things into the sky?

- "You expect us to believe that someone could mistake a crash test dummy for an alien?! They don't even look the same!"

You're right: how could anyone mistake a hairless, gray-skinned, big-headed, dark-eyed, earless, slit-mouthed dummy for a hairless, gray-skinned, big-headed, dark-eyed, earless, slit-mouthed dead alien? It is to laugh! Ha-Ha!

- "Besides, these dummies were dropped in the early 1950s, and the Roswell crash was in 1947! Explain that gaping time discrepancy!"

Better yet, how about if UFO proponents explain the gaping time discrepancy between 1947, when Mac Brazel recovered the debris without ever, as far as I know, claiming to have seen any "dead aliens," and the 1970s, when all those "alien body" stories really got circulating? Hmmmmmm?

But of course, like *Time* magazine and the Pentagon, I'm just wasting ink with all this pesky rationality. The people who believe in the Roswell yarn are only made all the more moist and tingly by official government denials and mainstream media debunkings. Besides, Roswell is like a bad pork chop: the longer you chew on it, the bigger it seems to get. Not only can proponents now add *Time* magazine to the list of conspirators, but there is always some new element popping up to add to the brew. And the UFO crowd barely had time to dismiss the *Time* and Pentagon reports before they had a new messiah to hail. It was Phil Corso and his book, *The Day After Roswell*.

*Dateline NBC* had the first interview with Corso, a former government official who claims to have taken "a torch" (apparently, those government-issue *X-Files* flashlights are a recent innovation), pried open a crate (and by the way, where was security when all this was happening?), and seen an alien floating in formaldehyde. He also claims that every modern invention from the transistor to lasers to fiber optics was reverse-engineered from the crashed Roswell UFO (remember, before it crashed we didn't even have flashlights) and that the Reagan-era "Star Wars" program was actually designed to ward off hostile space aliens, which it did (tell it to all those abductees and the entire city of Phoenix, Phil!).

Being a spoilsport, I have to point out that his story, while fascinating in its Lewis Carroll-meets-George Orwell kind of way, also has holes you could drive a military truck carrying a flying saucer through. To begin with, work had been underway on the transistor at Bell Labs for years before the alleged 1947 UFO crash (You know what this means: another UFO must've crashed in the 1930s!). The slow and painstaking development of all of the inventions Corso mentions is well documented (if you don't believe it was a slow evolutionary process, I have a 286 computer in my closet that I'd like to sell you), and most of the people who worked on them are still alive to deny that they figured them out by staring at gizmos from Neptune (although if Corso had claimed Bill Gates was an alien, that I might've believed).

Also, as Tom Mahood points out in his review (search it up on the Internet, another Martian invention), the science in Corso's book is just dreadful. He misstates how stealth technology works, claims UFOs ride "in an electromagnetic

wave," which is nonsense right out of 1950's pulp fiction, describes lasers being used for navigational and communications purposes which would be highly inefficient if not impossible, misstates the phrase for which "laser" is an acronym, and on and on. Mahood bluntly concluded that he could go on indefinitely, but he was running out of synonyms for "B.S." And I haven't even mentioned the Foreword, allegedly hoodwinked out of Sen. Strom Thurmond by showing him a 19-page treatment that painted the book as a patriotic memoir about great American military leaders, with no mention of UFOs whatsoever. Or Corso's emphatic claim that he considered sharing this information with a famous mathematician in 1961, even though the mathematician had died in 1957. Or about Corso ending his interview with NBC with an oblique reference to all the other things he could tell them someday about the adventures he'd had with his time machine, which I'm guessing was reverse-engineered from a cuckoo clock.

What is ironic about all this Roswell/Corso hoopla is that while it annoys skeptics like me, it is even more irritating to some of the more serious-minded UFO proponents. Many of them, such as Kent Jeffrey, have gradually come to believe the Roswell Incident is nothing more than a red herring that has started to stink in all that desert heat. They are also expressing fears that Corso's book smells like another "Alien Autopsy" debacle: A wildly profitable media splash followed by a wave of debunking and ridicule that will make everyone remotely connected to the subject look like a dope. For this, they have my sympathy. I certainly wouldn't want to be judged by the crowd of losers I hang out with (just kidding, guys!) And so, we've decided to give them a break and show that not all non-CSICOP UFO researchers are necessarily charlatans and yahoos. We're doing this by running Karl Pflock's response to Stanton Friedman in this issue. Please feel free to copy and distribute it far and wide.

Personally, I think the only space age device to come out of the Roswell crash is the giant tourist magnet that the Chamber of Commerce has developed, and boy, is it pulling in the loose nuts! Thousands of tourists have traveled countless miles to spend a boiling hot July in the middle of nowhere with absolutely no scenery except a dent in the gravel that might or might not have been made by something or other in 1947 (you can bet that if there ever were space aliens in Roswell, they weren't there on a sightseeing trip). And they are snapping up every tacky souvenir imaginable: UFO T-shirts, alien dolls, neckties, coffee mugs, quilts — one local waitress said you could paint an alien on a rock and sell it to these people — all while consuming mass quantities of flying saucer flapjacks and UFO cookies, washed down with Alien Star coffee or perhaps a few of the Roswell Inn's "Alien Margaritas." Drink too many and you, too, might crash, then wake up with an alien face tattoo from Romero's Tattoos (offering special discounts for aliens!) If this is the image we present to interstellar visitors, the Earth is well on its way to becoming known as the Rock City of planets.

I could go on forever with this Roswell stuff, but as we established long ago, I'm SICK OF IT!! Nevertheless, I'll leave you with one last tidbit: A couple of days from now, Chris Wyatt, producer of a "documentary" called *UFOs, Above And Beyond*, will appear in Roswell to unveil a small piece of metal which he claims came from the UFO crash and could not have been made on Earth. This is not the first such claim. One of the UFO museums in Roswell used to exhibit a triangular piece of metal, until one day when a jewelry maker came in and recognized it as his own handiwork, made of layered silver and gold. The museum refused to believe him or take it off display until an Albuquerque newspaper investigated and confirmed the jeweler's story. The museum then claimed that this just proved their rigorous verification system worked, which was, of course, laughably ludicrous.

Anyway, James Randi has already offered a \$1.1 million prize if a group of independent metallurgists confirms that Wyatt's shrapnel is not of this earth. I have a feeling Randi's money is as safe as it's ever been, which is a good thing since he's also offering a \$1 million reward to any practitioner of "therapeutic touch" who can prove that he really can detect an "energy field" around a human body by waving his hands.

Frankly, if I had \$1 million, I'd offer it to the Amazing Randi, provided he would just wave his hands and make all this Roswell puffery disappear.

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## Confidential Memo

TO: Editors of "The Skeptic" DATE: 10 Jun 97  
FROM: Joe Voelkering VIA: MOOFON (see "remarks")  
RE: Appended message from "mi"

REMARKS: MOOFON = Mutual Odd-ball Observers of Flying Objects Network

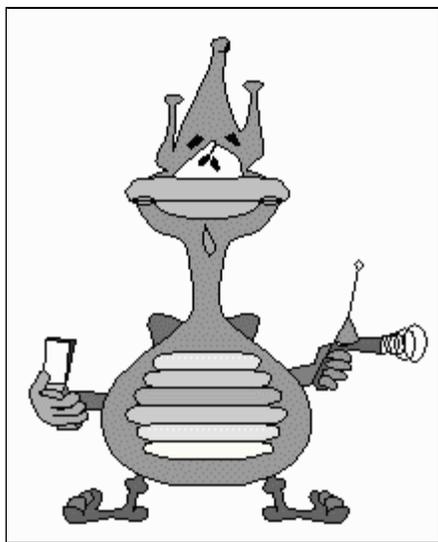
The epistle that follows was on a diskette that I found in my dog's food bowl — INSIDE HIS DOGHOUSE — with instructions to transfer it into a subdirectory I've dedicated primarily to NTS (and other folks that still have most of their marbles).

The dog was NOT in the doghouse, by the way. I found him cowering under a bush in a distant corner of the back yard — during a very cold drizzle. I also found "Nike" (NOT Bruno Magli) footprints to/from his doghouse and the fence. Further, I had to get the dog a new doghouse and a new food bowl, as well — since he refused to go anywhere near the old ones.

Thus, I suggest appending a VERY LARGE disclaimer — noting that it MAY be satire — so NTS doesn't get a whole flock of calls from "National Enquirer," "Hard Copy," "Jenny Jones," "Jerry Springer," "Sally Jessy Fruitcake" CBS, FOX, NBC — and other, similar, "'tabloid' news media." Anyhow, here it is:

•••••

Let me introduce myself. For starters, I am "mi" — a name I call myself. I'm the adopted nephew of both "do" and "ti." As that sage, Jeff Foxworthy, has noted: The way folks like "do" and "ti" get their quirky views is that they've imitated most of the world's "royalty" — and developed family trees that DO NOT "FORK" — which is why I'm [THANKFULLY, just an ADOPTED] nephew of both.



A little known fact is that "do" and "ti" share a common/mutual brother — and, also, a common/mutual half-sister — who were joined in a common-law marriage for a number of years (which is not really all that common). I am their adopted son (which should NOT be confused with the "drop of golden SUN" that's part of "re's" ancestry.)

I am also "El Segundo Grande" of the largest group of remaining members of the "Heaven's Gate" group. Our "Head Honcho" is "la" — who uses a number of different earthly containers — including ones that go by the names "Shirley MacLaine" and (when the "MacLaine" container is not handy) "Demi Moore."

According to David Letterman, the "Shirley MacLaine" container spends a very high percentage of its weekends at its time-share condo on Pluto (or maybe the condo's on Goofy — I forget). In any case, the "Demi Moore" container is generally utilized a lot on weekends.

[Note by JV: Reportedly, "la" has proposed switching from the present "earthly containers" to "earthly zip-lock bags" — to make all "transitions" much easier. (I thank "DUH" for discovering this somewhat obscure fact. — JV) Also, when in the "Shirley MacLaine" and "Demi Moore" containers, "la" apparently prefers to have her name pronounced as "laye"

— instead of the usual "lah."

Further, the chap claiming to be member "#40" — who calls himself "REO" and stayed behind to present the tapes — prefers to call his "container" a "vehicle." I guess that might be expected from a character that picks the name of a truck, though. Apparently "REO" was his third choice, however — since there already was a "Mak" and "do" wouldn't let him use "Peterbuilt."]

Regretfully, "do" really blew it with that Hale-Bopp comet deal. The REAL, AUTHENTIC "sign" is the yet-to-be-revealed HALE BOGGS comet. As some may recall, the (then) Speaker of the House of Representatives (supposedly) simply VANISHED — along with a chartered airplane piloted by Don Jonz — in Alaska some years ago. Jonz had just written his first (and only) article for "Flying" magazine. In it, he noted that the fear most pilots experience when flying in icing conditions was, in his professional opinion, "a crock."

So, with the Boggs/Jonz incident, we have: 1) A pilot who can (more-or less, by his own admission) fly "the box the airplane came in" (and, in the alternative, [as some have suggested], fly using merely his ego, alone — or, at the very least, use his "hot pilot" image to melt whatever in-flight icing he encounters); 2) One of the largest search and rescue efforts ever performed by the Air Force, and; 3) ABSOLUTELY NOTHING published as to the whereabouts of Boggs, Jonz or the airplane.

The ALLEGED LACK of evidence STRONGLY suggests: 1) Some type of a UFO abduction; 2) A government "cover-up"; 3) A parallel "media" cover-up — since well known newswoman Cokie Roberts is Boggs' daughter, and; 4) The high probability of an international conspiracy — in that KAL Flight 007 departed from the VERY SAME AIRPORT a number of years later on its final, fatal flight.

Now: It's EXTREMELY well known among conspiracy/cover-up investigators that the simple LACK of objective, tangible evidence is — in fact — THE BEST evidence ITSELF that such acts of conspiracy and/or cover-ups are present. (Need I say any more?)

However, to validate our contentions, we retained the well-known MOOFologist Budd Hopkins — to "reconstruct" the Boggs/Jonz flight, etc. He found the following: 1) Jonz encountered icing conditions so severe that even HE couldn't keep the airplane from looking like a "flying Popsicle"; 2) Despite the fact that Popsicles don't fly very well, Jonz was able to land on the snow covered ice of Lake Riki (AKA: "Rikki Lake") without incurring any injury to either himself or Boggs; 3) Boggs and Jonz were then "beamed-up" from the surface of the frozen lake-bed by a UFO "shuttle" from a "Mother Starship," and; 4) When the empty Popsicle-shaped "ice aircraft" was discovered by the Air Force, it was removed by a "black helicopter" — and melted down into an alloy that was subsequently used in the minting of "Susan B. Anthony" dollars.

(Note that item #4 clears up the "dollars and quarters" enigma. Again, "do" really screwed up. Jonz wants his airplane back — merely as a "keepsake." Thus, asks those aborting their "earthly containers" to bring at least a minimum number of the "S.B.A." QUARTER-SIZED DOLLAR COINS — so that he can reverse the alloying process and reconstruct it.)

Therefore, we believe the Hale BOGGS comet DOES exist — but that its present position is being withheld from all but a few current "insiders." We also believe a "Mother Starship" — which will transport us to some "Level Above Human" — is behind the Hale BOGGS comet, commanded by (now, Starship) Captain Don Jonz, and flown by Pontius [the] Pilate [Pilot].

Thus, we've made all of the appropriate preparations to "abort our earthly containers" (including the zip-lock bag versions) — and, when the "shuttles" from the Boggs/Jonz "Mother Starship" arrive to "beam us up," WE'LL BE READY!



Note by JV: With the recent "cloning" discoveries, I wonder if there's any way to "dupe" Jonz. If so, the obviously

logical thing to do would be to persuade the current "Speaker..." to fly around Alaska on a fact-finding trip with "Jonz II" — and then "mi," "la," et al could wait for the NEWT GINGRICH comet (which should have a WHOLE FLEET of "Mother Starships" behind it).

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## Seriously, Though

The "Heaven's Gate" incident has prompted a huge number of tongue-in-cheek comments — including the author's observation that it may be the best example of Darwinian evolutionary theory he's ever seen. (It certainly removed a bunch of whackos from the "gene pool," didn't it?)

At the same time, it points out the hazards of uncritical thinking. Like the "What's the harm in believing that astrology works?" attitude, we frequently see a similar attitude regarding alien UFOs.

(I say "ALIEN UFOs," primarily because I've seen an extremely large number of flying objects that APPEARED to be aircraft — and SOUNDED like aircraft — right down to the point where I would give you excellent "Vegas" odds on the make and model, etc. However, in many cases I could not ACTUALLY VERIFY that they really were, in fact, aircraft — because it was dark, etc. Thus, I have to admit they TECHNICALLY were "Unidentified Flying Objects" — albeit, ones that I personally FELT were, FAR BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT, merely some type of an aircraft. [As I noted during a TV news interview one time, if they WERE alien UFOs, it certainly was very nice of the aliens to comply with all of the FAA/military aircraft lighting standards!])

In any case, regarding "Heaven's Gate," one can almost hear James Randi saying "When you begin to accept pseudoscientific claims — and start basing decisions on declarations by the fakes and the frauds, the cheats and the charlatans — you not only turn over your money to them; you're well on the way to turning over your entire life to them."

With the members of the "Heaven's Gate" cult, that appears to be exactly what happened: Their unquestioning belief in alien UFOs ended up being fatal.

Regretfully, that "terminal" level of credulity need not be one's own — as vividly demonstrated by the Oklahoma City bombing. Reportedly, McVeigh viewed a video titled "Waco - The Big Lie" at least 50 — and possibly more than 100 — times. Among other things the producers claimed that the "feds" started the fire using a "flame-thrower mounted on a military-type tank" — and included segments of some [very carefully edited] news-video, claiming that it was the "proof."

At least two NTS members reviewed the "...The Big Lie" for a local professor who was hired as an expert witness for the Waco litigation. In general, we found that it was a rather poorly done "cut-and-splice" presentation that was obviously edited to "show how the ATF & FBI 'murdered' Koresh and his followers. More specifically, we were able to locate unedited copies of the original TV video that contained the alleged "flame-throwing tank" scene — and discovered it was merely a "combat engineering vehicle" carrying a number of building panes that had fallen on a relatively flat area of its upper front.

McVeigh appears to have believed the allegations cited in "...The Big Lie," however — and that credulity cost the lives of many people that probably never even saw that video. — J.V.

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## What's New

by Bob Park

*Editor's note: What's New is distributed by Bob Park of the American Physical Society. What's New is available through the APS URL: <http://aps.org/>*

## **EMF: THEY SAY IT'S NOT OVER TILL IT'S OVER — WELL, IT'S OVER.**

A long-awaited National Cancer Institute epidemiological study of residential exposure to magnetic fields and acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) in children (WN 8 June 90) was published this week in The New England Journal of Medicine. It was a reported link between EMF and ALL that started the trouble 18 years ago. A NRC report in October (WN 1 Nov 96) left the door open just a crack — the NCI study slams it shut. The exhaustive, seven-year study concludes that if there is any link at all, it's far too weak to be concerned about. The APS completed its own review two years ago, concluding that "the diversion of resources to eliminate an unsubstantiated threat" is "incommensurate with the risks, if any" (WN 5 May 95). The controversy, which began with a sloppy epidemiological study in Denver in 1979, turned into full-scale public paranoia after professional fear-monger Paul Brodeur wrote a series of New Yorker articles (WN 25 Aug 89). A New England Journal of Medicine editorial sums it up: "...hundreds of millions of dollars have gone into studies that never had much promise of finding a way to prevent the tragedy of cancer in children. ... It is time to stop wasting our research resources." Past time.

## **COLD FUSION: IT'S BACK! AND NOW IT NEUTRALIZES RADIOACTIVITY.**

It was a stern test of my dedication. I had been assured that, because of its importance, the story would be in the first hour of Good Morning America on ABC. Alas, it was bumped by a story about the Loch Ness monster popping up in a lake in Turkey, so I sat through nearly two hours of cheerful goo to get to the big payoff: James Patterson was back with his cold fusion cell (WN 9 Feb 96). Well, nobody says "cold fusion anymore; now it's "low-energy nuclear reactions, "and it doesn't just produce heat these days, it "neutralizes" radioactivity. Just crank it up and watch the Geiger counter reading drop. ABC science editor Michael Guillen says this is "attracting big-name scientists like Norm Olson." I located Dr. Olson at Battelle Pacific Northwest Labs. He cleared up a lot of my confusion; you see, the Patterson cell allows hydrogen or deuterium to fuse with radioactive nuclei, transmuting them to stable isotopes. Pretty neat, huh? He's very optimistic about its potential for eliminating nuclear waste. So goodbye Yucca Mountain. Michael Guillen, who is a physicist, did not return my calls. I'm not upset, he must be very busy.

**THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY (Note: Opinions are the author's and are not necessarily shared by the APS, but they should be.)**

Comments or Questions? Email [webmaster@aps.org](mailto:webmaster@aps.org) The American Physical Society