



# ORBITER

*The New England Aerial Phenomena Report*

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## CONFERENCE UPDATE

The 25th Annual National UFO Conference will be held on Saturday, Sept. 17, 1988 at the Days Inn, Cleveland, Ohio. For more information, please call 800-325-2525. Featured speakers for the Silver Anniversary will be Antonio Huneus, James W. Moseley, William L. Moore, Lawrence W. Blazey, Edward M. Biebel, Jr., Rick R. Hilberg, Allan J. Manak, and Robert S. Easley. Additional speakers are being lined up.

During the weekend of March 25-26, there will be a unique UFO conference in Eureka Springs, AR, at the Inn of the Ozarks. Bill Pitts, and Ed Mazur will host this conference, and have released the names of the following speakers: Air Force Major Dewey Fournet, (Bluebook's liaison officer in the Pentagon); Al Chop (a civilian on the Air Force Press Desk); Airman First Class Max Futch (who took over Project Bluebook after Ruppelt left the service); Jennie Zeidman (who is knowledgeable about Dr. Hynek's associations with Projects Grudge and Blue Book, and who assisted him with the formation of the Center for UFO Studies) Curtis Fuller (of Eate magazine). For further information, call 501-452-3708.

## RADIO-TV LOG

Feb. 24, Channel 9 (Manchester, NH) - The Geraldo Rivera show featured Phil Imbrogno, Chris Clark and Jim Spiser discussing the Hudson Valley sightings.

## Commentary

### COVER-UP/DEBUNKING PROGRAM by Jim Melesciuc

The evidence seems overwhelming that a conspiracy exists on the part of the government with the intention of keeping the general public from learning the truth about UFO's.

In Jan. 1953, Dewey Fournet, Ed Ruppelt and Al Chop had concocted a plan to give the American public the facts about UFO's. When they were ready to hold a press conference the CIA stepped in. Chop told Major Keyhoe and the others "They killed the whole program. We've been ordered to work up a national debunking campaign by planting articles in magazines and arranging broadcasts to make UFO reports sound like poppycock." Ruppelt told Keyhoe that they had even been instructed to ridicule witnesses when plausible explanations of UFO sightings were not readily available. Hence the birth of the joint cover-up/debunking program in America.

From that day on sincere witnesses to a UFO event who are placed in a situation by chance rather than choice were to be treated like criminals by Big Brother and the debunking cult. We know of Olden Moore's account of being whisked away to Andrews AFB shortly after his highly publicized sighting in Montville, Ohio in Nov. 1957. There he was questioned repeatedly over a three day period. On July 28, 1978 CAUS member Robert Todd was visited by the FBI at his home. The agents wanted to obtain information on Todd's sources about a statement he received in reference to a Cuban MIG-12/UFO encounter in March 1967. Aside from Olden Moore's harrassment and Robert Todd's intimidation, how many others received the Big Brother stronghold and obviously became reluctant to talk or cooperate with an investigation. Time and time again there has been repetitive reports of investigation being hampered, confiscation or editing film, soil samples suddenly missing from labs, etc. Unusual telephone behavior has also been noted. Ray Fowler became suspicious of unusual telephone behavior and had a telephone company employee look into it. The telephone company discovered that Ray's phone line was connected to a tap off. This tap-off would enable any party to listen in on his phone

without detection. This type of hook-up would also alert the monitoring party whenever Ray would lift up his receiver. The tap-off could also explain strange clicks and busy signals when nobody is using the phone. (ref: R. Fowler: Casebook of a UFO Investigator)

The cover-up/debunking program has also been aimed at UFO groups. After all, didn't several mysterious persons manage to fit themselves into NICAP structure? APRO was another group that came under gov't surveillance. (ref. B. Greenwood, L. Fawcett, Clear Intent)

A CIA memo dated 26 April 1976 proposes how the government has officers and personnel within the agency who are monitoring the UFO phenomena and that the CIA should keep in touch with reporting channels and keep the agency informed. In other words it suggests that there is continuous surveillance of civilian UFO organizations. There could not be a more efficient way to discourage, discredit and alter public opinion than through infiltration of a major UFO organization. Agents could be in place in major positions within a UFO organization. If the organization became too prominent or efficient, the agent or agents could throw a monkey wrench into the works and ruin the credibility and reputation of that group or individuals and bring on the ridicule factor.

Seasoned ufologists throughout the modern era of this subject have more than once had a run-in with mysterious (gov't) men. Even Hynek and Imbrogno were shadowed by an over interested NSA agent during their investigation of the Hudson Valley sightings. (ref. J.A. Hynek, P. Imbrogno, Night Siege)

CAUS uncovered bits of disturbing factors on the alleged authenticity of the documents. The MJ12 backers should be concerned. It is my speculation that those promoting the infamous papers have been duped by a gov't smoke screen in order to distract them from learning the truth. The ongoing gov't cover-up/debunking program is still in full swing since January 1953.

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Journal of Meteorology 2/78

MINIATURE BALL LIGHTNING

The two ladies were sitting at table about 8 p.m., with the window open. It was raining heavily at the time, and there was no wind. Stormy clouds were about, but it was not unusually hot. Thunder and lightning at the same time were afterwards reported from London—a distance of, say, 50 miles—but there was no thunderstorm at Eastbourne. There had been no rain during the few preceding days. As one of the ladies took up a knife to cut bread the ball of light was seen to flash past the knife (without touching it) on to the table, travelling a distance of about 9 inches at an average height of 3 inches from the table, but moving towards the latter.

When the ball touched the tablecloth, it 'went out with a spitting sound', leaving no mark or trace of any sort. Until it touched the cloth there was no sound, and the whole thing was over in such a 'flash of time' that it was impossible to say how fast the ball travelled. There seems to have been an impression that the ball came from the direction of the open window, but it was only under dependable observation during its 9-inch path from the bread-knife to the table cloth.

As to the appearance of the ball itself, it was 'about the size of a pea, the light encircling it being about the size of a golf ball. The light was white and intensely bright, like electricity'. 'Too dazzling to see through'. A. P. Chattock, *Nature*, 109, 106, 1922).

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The longest winter in the solar system is 21 years long and occurs on the south polar regions of Uranus. The temperature then is estimated to be minus 362 degrees Fahrenheit.



THE LATENT ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE - A COMPOSITE MODEL  
By Joe Nyman

As a principal or secondary participant in the investigation of more than thirty close encounter claims, the author has heard a number of recurring themes in encounter relations that seem to indicate a consistent pattern.

It is the purpose of this paper to use these consistencies in the establishment of a model experience to be called the Latent Encounter Experience (more commonly known as an "abduction" and to elaborate on its stages. The model (Table 1) will be heuristic in the sense that it will suggest certain tests that may serve to modify the model itself.

First, a word about terminology - the word "abduction" has, in the writer's opinion, become distended and misshapen after so many months of nurture at the bosoms of the media. Indeed, as we all know, one debunker with no apparent understanding of the claims or claimants, has focused on the point that these "abductions", having not been reported to the FBI, can't be taken seriously. Totally ignored is the fact that the vast majority of percipients have little or no immediate recollection of their experience, and have enormous difficulties in later articulation (see the Table 3 summary of difficulties that typically must be overcome, in part or in total, by the percipient).

"Abduction", of course, carries the notion of unwillingness and by implication the notion of complete post-event memory. The writer's study of encounter claims, images, and memories, indicates that the former is not always the case and the latter hardly ever the case. Use of the term "latent encounter", while having the disadvantage of implying an experience, has the advantage of being neutral enough to deter the sensationally inclined and sidestep meaningless arguments.

To be most objective, since indisputable verification is lacking, an even more neutral term would probably be better - on the order of "latent encounter imagery", implying something hidden, something met, and mental associations linking the two. For convenience the author will use "Latent Encounter", or "LE".

Although some of the information used to prepare this model has come from the percipients' conscious memory, most has been collected as the result of having claimants attempt to relive an unresolved experience. The setting used has been one in which the concerned individuals have been initially given suggestions causing them to relax, focus their attention and memory on the unresolved experience, and then form a chain of associations to the unresolved experience which might contribute to its resolution.

After ten years of work with individuals whose statements have been incorporated into this model, the writer has gained some insight into their motivations and willingness to expose themselves and their lives to scrutiny and possible ridicule. In all cases but one (almost certainly a hoax) their major motives were judged to be:

- a) fear for their own sanity, although the great majority, were functioning well in life.
- b) need to have an unresolved, puzzling experience explained.

Table 2 supplies an indication to the reader of how a number of percipients have reached the point of active investigation.

With the above in mind, let's move forward to the proposed model and its stages.

Table 1 is a summary representation of the eight stages of the model. Associated with each stage number is a short descriptive characteristic.

TABLE 1

## THE LATENT ENCOUNTER CYCLE

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Characterized by Memory or Image</u>
1	Anxious anticipation of something unknown (forewarning).
2	Transition of consciousness from normal awake state. The transition is mostly from fear and terror to immediate calmness and acquiescence.
3	Psycho-physical imposition and interaction.
4	Overlay of positive feelings, reassurance. A sense of source and purpose given.
5	Transition of consciousness to normal waking. An aftersense of fear/pleasure/happiness, lingers.
6	Rapid forgetfulness of most or all memory of experience.
7	Marker stage: what little is remembered is remembered as an incongruity, with unresolved conscious memories, repetitive dreams.
8	Cycle repetition at very specific ages.

Let's now amplify each of these stages based on the author's investigations.

## Stage 1

The percipient experiences a subtle urge or prompting, as if originating from within, to:

- a) be in a certain time,
- b) expect something strangely familiar but yet unknown.

This forewarning is usually accompanied by anxiety with no apparent source.

## Stage 2

At the required place and time, the percipient experiences an unusual phenomenon followed by a transition in awareness such that the individual proceeds from a state of normal wakefulness with its concomitant functions of volition, emotion, and memory to a state characterized by calmness, acquiescence, and limited mobility (what the author calls the CA state). There are consistent physical and mental effects described by a number of percipients in this stage that the author will not elaborate on here.

## Stage 3

This is the stage about which books are written and movies made. Rich with bizarre imagery, and emotion filled, this stage is the most difficult for the percipient to relive. It is replete with images of mental communication, and involuntary submission to physical procedures.

This is the stage of the "table", the "scar", the "needle", the "machine", the "probe", etc. This is the stage of the "ova", and the "sperm", and the "baby"!

## Stage 4

The physical procedures have been completed. The percipient is ready to return, but not before a positive bias is mentally imposed to be the lasting emotional remnant of the experience. This "veneuering" can be a multi-part process involving "recognition", "explanation", and "understanding". It can also include the projection of "love", the "guided tour", and the "life review". It is conducted by that entity who has the "special relationship" with the percipient. The nature of that relationship is beyond the scope of this paper.

## Stage 5

In the case of an LE intersecting normal waking activity the transition from CA state to normal can be, to use Budd Hopkin's perfectly descriptive term, seamless. It seems as if there has been no intervening experience. Yet there remains an afterimage resulting from the emotional veneer imposed in Stage 4, a cover story to explain anything unusual or inconsistent resulting from the encounter itself. The afterimage includes a feeling of prohibition against discussing or remembering any aspect of the experience. This last extends to members of groups that have

just shared an experience. The result; no exchange, no discussion, "no happening"!

LE's proceeding from bedroom intrusions end by returning the awakened sleeper to a state of sleep. The resulting morning memory is one of unease or nightmare.

#### Stage 6

Within minutes of the Stage 5 waking transition, most, if not all, conscious memory of the encounter has become latent in memory. As fleeting as a dream trace, the LE imagery is locked away and superceded by routine or sleep. Generally, the CA state leads back into the percipient's pre-encounter situation.

#### Stage 7

In most cases, and despite the positive veneering, an anxiety provoking fragment remains. Sometimes it is painted by memory to conform to an image the percipient finds more portable and less threatening, other times it is a nameless fear or feeling of something unresolved, an experience that the mind returns to over and over again without conscious resolution. More generally, this signal in conscious memory, or marker memory, as the author likes to call it, is an incongruous image, accompanied by a nameless anxiety that appears to have no conscious resolution, and which forces itself to mind repetitively. This is the point from which investigations begin.

#### Stage 8

Continuing work has now made it clear that the individual LE is only one of a sequence of such experiences that take place at specific intervals in an individual's life. It is far from a random process! What has come very sharply into focus is that at least a portion of these specific intervals occur at ages that can be directly related to the formation and maturation of the human sexual function! At this time it is probably not wise to publish these ages as a check to further case work.

The interval between LE's is punctuated by claims of two types of exotic phenomena, one of which manifests objectively, but rarely, and the other of which is purely subjective and seemingly continuous. The objective phenomenon manifests mostly in telekinetic effects, while the purely subjective can be described as "consciousness monitoring" in which the percipients feel themselves to be "observed" and directed. The latter, subjective awareness is often characterized by shifts in interest and life direction.

The author feels that, initially, Stage 7 provides the suggestion for an interesting test. Two groups, one of which is identified as having marker memories, the other of which is identified as having none, can be subject to identical association inducing procedures. The marker memory group would be expected to have significantly more images relating to this model than the non marker memory group. The design of an experiment with this end in mind is planned shortly.

A study proposal is now in preparation by a well known psychologist to survey percipient transformative effects. This is expected to reflect directly on Stage 8 concepts.

The author would be pleased to hear from others suggesting other tests and experiments.

#### TABLE 2

##### Indications of the LE Cycle in the Percipient

- |    |                          |   |
|----|--------------------------|---|
| 1. | Fuzzlement               | The percipient has been puzzled or upset by his/her marker experience(s) for months or years. |
| 2. | Puzzle Solving<br>Action | The percipient has attempted to resolve the incongruity without success.                      |
| 3. | Decision                 | The percipient has reached the point of needing to resolve the incongruity.                   |
| 4. | Readiness                | The percipient is willing to come forward to find out what happened.                          |

TABLE 3

## Difficulties in Bringing the LE to Memory

1. The percipient feels that if one admits to the experience it is an admission of one's own insanity.
2. If the percipient has enough conviction and strength of character to know that one is not insane, there is always the feeling that others may not be so kind.
3. The percipient wants to repress the trauma and helplessness of the experience.
4. The percipient has difficulty in remembering something that took place in another state of awareness, much like the difficulty in remembering dreams.
5. The percipient has a feeling of prohibition - one shouldn't remember!

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## Police probe UFO 'attack' on the Nullarbor

CR: VUFORS

By INNES WILLOX,  
chief police reporter

South Australian and Western Australian police are treating as serious a reported sighting yesterday of a UFO on the Nullarbor Plain by a middle-aged woman and her three adult sons.

The woman reported to Ceduna police that, on the Western Australian side of the border, an object had tracked their car for about 10 minutes at 5.30 am before hovering over it and lifting it from the ground. She said the car had been shaken violently before being dropped back to the road facing the opposite direction.

Sergeant Jim Furnell of Ceduna police said tyre marks on the Eyre Highway, 40 km from Mundrabilla, showed that "something occurred out there". He said the car had a dented roof and was covered both inside and outside by a film of ash.

South Australian major crime squad detectives, who were in Ceduna overnight, have taken the ash to Adelaide for analysis.

The woman, Fay Knowles, of



The Nullarbor Plain — UFO country?

the Perth suburb of Midland, and her sons, Patrick, 24, Shaun, 21, and Wayne, 18, told police they had been driving to Melbourne when, to the west, they saw an orange object that resembled an egg in an egg cup.

They said that when their Ford Telstar was picked up, their voices had been distorted and they "spoke in slow motion". They also said there had been

interference on the car radio and that the car had been dropped to the road with enough force to burst a tyre.

Police said the family claimed that they had scrambled from the car to hide in the scrub and wait for the object to disappear. They then replaced the tyre, leaving the punctured one and the jack behind, before driving to Ceduna.

A truck driver heading to Perth is believed to have told the media he saw the incident.

Sergeant Furnell said police spoke to the family for about two-and-a-half hours. "They were particularly shaken up. After talking with them, we have no reason to doubt them. There is no doubt something did occur out there. We are taking it seriously that something did occur."

He said the family had "indicated that they thought UFOs were a figment of the imagination. They don't think so now".

Perth police, who returned to the scene of the incident later yesterday to recover the tyre and jack, said it appeared that the family had entered the scrub at the place they claimed.

A police spokesman said a man had claimed yesterday that a UFO had picked up his car on the same stretch of road about five years ago, but had decided not to report it then because he felt "silly".

The family refused to speak to 'The Age' at Ceduna last night.

THE AGE, Thursday 21 January 1988

*Melbourne*

### Q. I heard that something important is to happen on Mars soon. Do you know what it is?

A. This year Mars will make its closest approach to Earth in 17 years, giving amateur astronomers an exceptional opportunity to see details of the planet's ever-changing features, including clouds and polar ice caps, this summer and fall. Because Mars will be higher in the sky than during its last close approach in 1971, Alan MacRobert of Sky and Telescope says this year will actually be the best time to observe Mars since 1956.

This year, when Mars is closest on the night of Sept. 21, it will appear about one-sixtieth the size of the full moon. Although Mars is tricky to observe, with some practice even a small telescope can be used to see many details.

Sci-Tech invites readers to send science questions to *How and Why*. Call 929-2050 or write: *How and Why*, Sci-Tech, The Boston Globe, Boston, MA 02107. Selected questions of general interest will be answered each week. The column cannot address requests for medical advice, and unpublished questions cannot be answered individually.

### Stargazers' imbalance

Most of the world's major astronomical installations are located in the northern hemisphere, even though most points of astronomical interest are located in the southern sky, The World Almanac reports. The recent installation of three telescopes in South America and Australia will help to correct the imbalance, though.

# Flying Saucers I Have Known

by J. ALLEN HYNEK

Chairman, Department of Astronomy, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

*For many years the Air Force has received a continual flow of reports which describe strange flying objects. Serving as a consultant to the Air Force, the author studied Unidentified Flying Object Reports to determine their possible scientific significance.*

A TRAVELER who has spent many years in a strange country, with a unique opportunity to observe, is under some obligation to describe the natives. Though it may seem odd to my colleagues in astronomy and to my readers, although I hope the two are not mutually exclusive, I have served as civilian consultant to the Air Force on and off for the past dozen years or so in their analysis of flying saucers or, more technically, UFO's—Unidentified Flying Objects. I have had a unique opportunity to observe.

Flying Saucers have by no means died out, as was once confidently expected. There has been, rather, a continuous flow over the past years of reports from military personnel and civilians alike of sightings, almost always in the sky, for which they could find no simple explanation. Indeed, there are more reports per year now than there were in the early years of the "flying saucer era". What is even more disturbing is the espousal, by a growing body of mystically inclined, pseudo-religious groups, of flying saucers, whose existence they uncritically and without question accept, as the instruments by which higher intelligences are attempting to communicate with mankind and set things right in this topsy-turvy world.

It causes us little concern that all during history strange sights in the sky have been frequently reported. For in those days comets and meteors, and dark thunder clouds and moaning

winds were all manifestations, so it was said on good authority, of the world of holy and profane spirits, hidden to all save the eyes of saints and sorcerers, respectively.

## Increase in UFO Reports

But this is 1963! How is it that unexplained reports of lights, oddly maneuvering craft and of assorted apparitions have been coming to the Air Force at the rate of better than one a day over the past fifteen years? When flying saucers first hit the headlines in 1947, the whole thing could easily be dismissed as a bizarre but temporary fad, a sort of post-war hula-hoop or twist craze. But 15 years later, there are more UFO reports per year rather than less! True, the daily press no longer carries such reports, except perhaps as filler, because monotonously repeated items do not constitute news. But it is just this repetition that is of potential scientific interest.

Further, for every puzzling report that reaches official Air Force attention there are many that do not. In "keeping up with the literature", books that appear from time to time and the magazines and news letters issued by the many avid "saucer groups" in this and other countries, I find many otherwise unreported cases. And these are all the more interesting because there is generally no pretense of critical reporting in these media.

As an example, the January-February issue, 1963, of "Flying Saucer Review" published in London and now in its ninth year, contains five

pages of saucer sightings, none of which have been reported to the U.S. Air Force, though some may have been reported to the British Air Ministry, the official recipient of British flying saucer reports.

As an index of the level of interest and activity in this odd area, the same issue contains an announcement of the recent inauguration (September 1962, not 1947) of the British UFO Association, formed "to coordinate the activities of the number of British societies devoted to the study of the flying saucer enigma".

But despite the absence of evidence, and in the face of the great improbability of visitors from space in the light of our present knowledge of the structure of the universe, UFO reports continue. For this reason alone I have felt that there should be some scientific "monitoring of the noise level" over the years. Is the pattern of reports changing? Is their geographical distribution, their content, or the type of people who make them, changing in any way? Is there anything of possible scientific value, either to the physical sciences or to psychology or sociology, hidden in the long series of reports? Some of the reports almost certainly have described ball lightning, a little understood phenomenon, and other unusual atmospheric phenomena. And we must remember that less than two centuries ago there was no place in science for meteorites — "stones that fell from the sky". Such stories were regarded as old wives' tales: how could a stone fall from the sky?

## UFO Report Procedure

In military parlance, an unidentified flying object is any craft or contrivance whose origin and mission is not immediately discernable. A ballistic missile, an unannounced satellite, a new type of aircraft flying unannounced over U.S. territory is, generally, at first a UFO. As such the Air Force must determine as quickly as possible its nature and intent. This is why, under Air Force Regulation 200-2, military personnel are required to report any flying object which they themselves cannot immediately identify. Misidentifications by military personnel, and more likely, by well meaning civilians, represent "noise" as against the "signal"—unidentified objects in the purely military sense. As is well known, if the "signal to noise ratio" is low, the signal may be lost in the noise, and that is why the noise level must be monitored.

People, even military personnel, in general, are not trained observers, and they rarely have the benefit of scientific instruments — even a camera — with which to measure, say, angular velocity, spectral composition of lights, or the simple trajectory of the object in question. Each report is, rather, a sort of jig saw puzzle, in which many pieces are missing. Often only a reasonable surmise can be made as to what the stimulus was that gave rise to the report. In these cases the case is listed as "insufficient information" or "possible" or "probable" when finally evaluated.

In a few instances there are many witnesses who all more or less submit identical reports. Now, either this is gross collusion or everyone was honestly but remarkably misled by the original visual stimulus, or the group did see something truly unusual. In the reported French wave of flying saucers in 1954, for instance, often dozens of people, sometimes separated by several miles, were reported to have seen the same strange event. One French scientist dismissed some of these spectacular reports (please note:

reports, not events) as a matter of mass hallucination. It seems to me that this is a point not to be lightly dismissed, for certainly, if this were the case, a study of the circumstances under which many people can be "mass-hallucinated" to see a UFO should in itself be of great scientific value to a psychologist or a sociologist, if not as much to a physical scientist.

## UFO's International Prevalence

Although we tend to think of flying saucers as peculiarly American, they are international in scope. England has had more reported sightings, per square mile of territory, than has the United States. France has had its share, not only sporadically, but also in one apparently major wave in the fall of 1954. Brazil, Spain, Italy, Australia, Canada and even several Iron Curtain countries have also been the sources of reports. Reports! A flying saucer is, as we have already indicated, in the last analysis, a report. One might well define a flying saucer as "any aerial sighting or phenomenon which remains unexplained long enough for someone to report it."

What kind of people report UFO's at this late date, more than fifteen years after UFO's came into the limelight? Since there are generally better than 500 officially reported cases a year, and on the average, three witnesses are concerned in each report, about one out of every seventy thousand people in the United States (about the attendance at a major sporting event) reports a UFO to the Air Force.

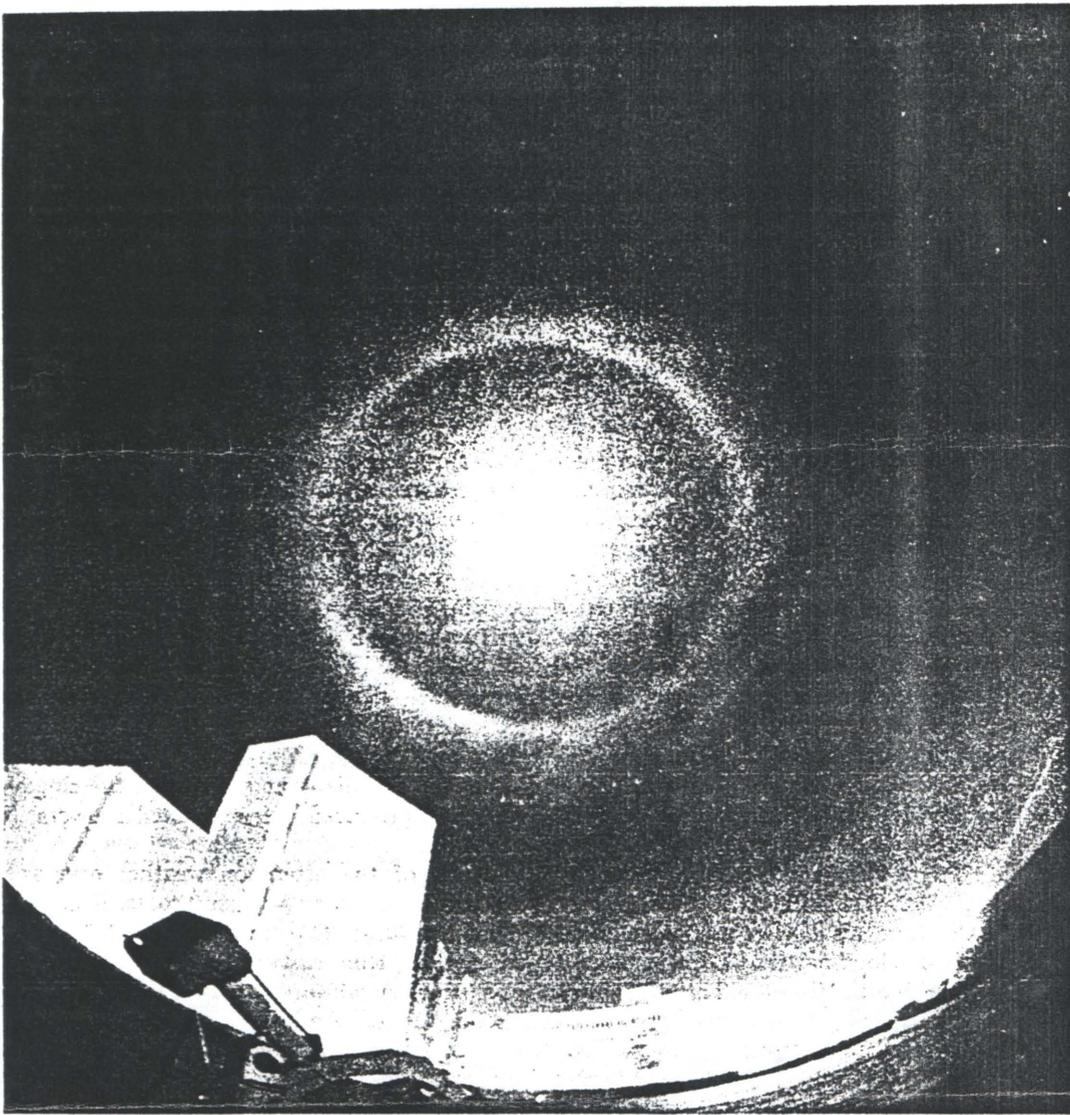
The surprising thing is that the level of intelligence of the observers and reporters of UFO's is certainly at least average, and in many cases, decidedly above average. In some cases, embarrassingly above average.

If there can be said to be a typical reporter of UFO's it would be something like the following: an honest, sincere and generally reliable person, who has made his report with some diffidence, and often after some delay. A typical report might include the statement that "I didn't want to make

a report for fear of being considered odd, but my friends think I should report it to the government because it might be something important".

Fortunately, in most cases, no long investigation is required. Our accumulated experience over the years allows us to spot the probable cause of a sighting in most cases, if the basic information is sufficient. Often, however, there is not enough information on which to base even an intelligent guess. Such cases are carried in the files under "Insufficient Information". Then there are many cases in which, although much more information would have been desirable, it is nonetheless possible to say, in effect, "on the basis of the data on hand, there is no compelling evidence to believe that the subject of the report was other than . . . a conventional aircraft seen under unusual conditions, or a high altitude scientific balloon, or migrating birds, or an extremely bright meteor, etc." The great majority of reports can, with a high probability, be ascribed to misidentifications of familiar objects seen under unusual or unexpected conditions.

The loyal opposition, the many "saucer clubs" and other critics of the Air Force in this respect, are generally willing to admit such solutions, but their interest turns to the relative handfuls of "unknowns". They would argue, and with some logic, that if there were visits from other planets, it is unlikely that many genuine visits would occur each year, and that two or three bona fide visits could easily be swamped out by the welter of "counterfeit" reports. We have purposely examined the "unknowns" in this light, and find that although some cases are truly puzzling, the reports are so varied in content, so lacking in pattern, and so varied in circumstance that they emphatically do not suggest, in body, that their origin is extraterrestrial. Some are worthy of close scientific attention as of possible interest to meteorology, atmospheric physics and geophysics — and to psychology!



### Paraselenic Circle Over Tucson

D. O. STALEY, *The University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona*

On the evening of 14 November 1975 a paraselenic circle appeared over Tucson, Arizona. A reflection phenomenon requiring ice crystals with vertical faces, the paraselenic circle is observed with far less frequency than halo phenomena. The occurrence caused considerable consternation, particularly among the many astronomical observers around Tucson who routinely observe the night sky.

Since the circle is produced by reflection, it is white. It is the counterpart of the parhelic circle, and passes through the moon parallel to the horizon, having its center directly overhead. Its size therefore increases with zenith angle of the moon. In the present example, the circle was complete, with intensity com-

parable in places along the circle to that of the 22° halo, which was also present. In fact, the geometry of this occurrence is nearly identical with that shown schematically by Humphreys (1964, p. 540) for a parhelic circle and 22° halo.

#### Acknowledgment

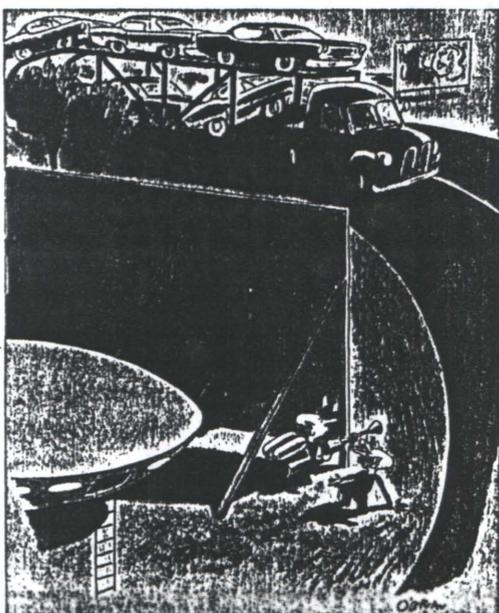
The photograph was taken at 2050 MST 14 November 1975 by staff at the Grace Flandrau Planetarium on the University of Arizona campus.

#### Reference

Humphreys, W. J., 1964: *Physics of the Air*, 3rd ed., Dover, NY, 676 pp.

October 1976

WEATHERWISE



"Let's wait for the next one  
This one's a mother."

### SPARKLING RAIN

Rain which on touching the ground crackles and emits electric sparks is a very uncommon but not unknown phenomenon. An instance of the kind was recently reported from Cordova, in Spain, by an electrical engineer who witnessed the occurrence. The weather had been warm and undisturbed by wind, and soon after dark the sky became overcast by clouds. At about 8 o'clock there came a flash of lightning, followed by great drops of electrical rain, each one of which, on touching the ground, walls, or trees, gave a faint crack, and emitted a spark of light. The phenomenon continued for several seconds, and apparently ceased as soon as the atmosphere was saturated with moisture. (*Met. Mag.*, 27, 171, 1892).

Now you know!

Just 1 square inch of the sun's surface shines with the intensity of 300,000 candles.