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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Philosophy of Science and UFOs

From: "Steven J. Powell" <sjpowell@access.digex.net>
Date: Tue, 28 Jan 1997 12:24:09 -0500
Fwd Date: Fri, 31 Jan 1997 15:35:14 -0500
Subject: Re: Philosophy of Science and UFOs

>Date: Mon, 27 Jan 1997 07:10:02 -0500
>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>From: "Jerry Cohen" <rjcohen@li.net>
>Subject: Re: UFO UpDate: Re: Philosophy of Science and UFOs

>>>Observers or reporters, same thing.snip....

>>>JC: Not if you read what Dr. Hynek said. I was just trying to
>>>point out that many excellent observers do not report their
>>>sightings. Some of those observers are quite well trained.

>>Oops, I missed that point. Yes, I think so too.

>JC: Also, if that one "smoking gun" case was found and the ridicule
>reduced sufficiently concerning the topic, I believe you would eventually
>see a number of other cases surface from some of those "technically
>trained" people that never reported them at the time of their occurrence.
>What data set would they fall into and how would you handle those?

Being a highly trained and experienced nitpicker I have a sort of small problem with the possibility of including me-too data, or in other words post-dated data. I much prefer original data. But, nonetheless, this would/should be considered right along with our other best data.

We do know from experience that some large percentage (unknown and unguessable by me) of sightings don't get reported, and the general sociocultural climate surrounding the UFO phenomenon is probably to blame for that. Folks investigating current and even old cases almost always run across people with a sighting that happened N-years ago.

Even though I don't like the odds of accidentally including me-too data what's the real difference between someone saying they saw this-n-that two days ago versus two decades ago? Careful interviewing techniques to attempt to detect fraud and/or embellishment still apply.

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