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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Scientists: UFOs Warrant Study

From: Jim Deardorff <deardorj@proaxis.com>
Date: Wed, 1 Jul 1998 22:55:02 -0700 (PDT)
Fwd Date: Thu, 02 Jul 1998 19:41:58 -0400
Subject: Re: Scientists: UFOs Warrant Study

>Date: Wed, 1 Jul 1998 07:54:03 -0400
>From: bruce maccabee <brumac@compuserve.com>
>Subject: UFO UpDate: Re: Scientists: UFOs Warrant Study
>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>

>>Date: Mon, 29 Jun 1998 17:58:59 -0700 (PDT)
>>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>>From: Jim Deardorff <deardorj@proaxis.com>
>>Subject: Re: UFO UpDate: Scientists: UFOs Warrant Study

>As I read the full report in the Journal of Scientific
>Exploration my emotions ranged from surprise/shock to anger to
>disappointment. Have we learned nothing in 30 years since the
>Condom report? (intentional) This looked to me like deja vue
>all over again... especially in comparison to the 1953 Robertson
>Panel where several scientists - a Nobel guy included - decided
>that all sightings could be explained and then recommended
>debunking... (CIA sponsored, by the way).

Hi Bruce,

I guess what we're "celebrating" is that the panel report received a fairly favorable press coverage, and also that now, after 30 years of advances in astronomy, the ETH will seem less implausible to the outside scientist.

>[...]
>However, I would argue that there is "physical evidence." I
>presume that the presenters were not aware of the Project
>Twinkle movies of May 1950 when cinetheodolite cameras at the
>White Sands proving Range obtained film and triangulation of
>objects flying over the area. Triangulation and film analysis
>showed 30 ft diameter, flying rapidly at about 150,000 ft. Look,
>skeptics, we didn't have anything that flew that high in 1950
>(and precious little now). Film was analyzed by experts. Film
>was lost by "experts". We know of its existence through the
>records of Project Blue Book. So... the film was lost...no
>physical evidence? Also, physical scientists are going to have
>to come to grips with the FACT that you can't take the easy way
>out and reject sightings simply because they consist only of
>witness testimony. In some cases the witness testimony is
>EXTREMELY compelling and furthermore involves descriptions of
>phenomena that remain unexplainable after analysis.... and some
>of these cases point toward Other Intelligences. (Uh oh,
>banishment to UFO Hell again!)

But keep in mind the saying that Sagan followers kept mouthing:
The more bizarre the phenomenon, the more convincing its
supporting evidence must be to be convincing (or however it was

worded). Thus the scientist who thinks that the status quo of human thinking will persist forever will demand 99.9999% certainty in all the evidence of a case before conceding its reality, if it involves non-understood phenomena. That saying of Sagan (though not original with him, as I recall) is the negative skeptic's salvation. He won't worry about there being large numbers of other cases up in the 99% level, though a decent scientist should.

But with a case of multiple events, you could perhaps treat them all together without the skeptic insisting that each sighting or photo occasion be treated as if it were the only one. How about with Gulf Breeze and Ed Walters? You could estimate the odds that Ed could have hoaxed pictures taken on one occasion and not have slipped up in some irrefutable way; then the same for a different occasion with different lighting conditions, etc., and so on, including photos of identical or similar craft by other people in Gulf Breeze, and including Ed's photo of the UFO with its shadow moving along rapidly. You've already sort of done this, qualitatively. Most of these instances would have required different means of hoaxing, all with large probability of being unsuccessful. So the odds that Ed could have done it successfully would be the product of a large number of small fractions. You might come up with 10**-20 or less odds of success overall for Ed as a hoaxer. By rights, this kind of analysis should be extended to the masses of other sightings of UFOs. But even after the resulting odds that it's not a genuine unknown phenomenon have dropped below 10**-100, the negative skeptic will cling to the infinitesimal odds that it *was* a hoax! But it might convince some true skeptics.

Jim Deardorff
Web Page: <http://www.proaxis.com/~deardorj/index.htm>

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