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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Summation re J. Carter's Sighting & Comments

From: "Jerry Cohen" <rjcohen@li.net>
Date: Fri, 29 May 1998 22:49:45 -0400
Fwd Date: Sat, 30 May 1998 03:46:56 -0400
Subject: Summation re J. Carter's Sighting & Comments

Summation re: Jimmy Carter's sighting & additional comments

Regarding the correspondence that began as Filer's Files #20

>From: "Jerome Clark" <jkclark@frontiernet.net>
>Date: Fri, 22 May 98 10:30:09 PDT
>Fwd Date: Sat, 23 May 1998 08:31:27 -0400
>Subject: Re: Filer's Files #20

where Jerome said:

"As no serious ufologist disputes, Carter saw Venus, not a UFO.",

and having carefully read and reread the information presented by David Rudiak, Don Ledger & Robert Gates in regards to same, I find myself in basic agreement with the latter three gentlemen.

With all the information given by all parties concerned, the "Venus" explanation doesn't really lock it down tightly for me either. By virtue of this, one can conclude either that David, Don, Robert & Jerry (Cohen) are "non-serious ufologists" or we can conclude that Jerome's original sentence may need "some minor adjustment."

The "Venus" explanation in this instance definitely tends to remind me of some of those old Blue Book "get the public off our back" explanations that under really close scrutiny wound up being reclassified as "unidentified."

Don wrote:

> > Date: Sat, 23 May 1998 09:52:58 +0100
> > From: Don Ledger <dledger@istar.ca>
> > To: updates@globalserve.net
> > Subject: Re: UFO UpDate: Re: Pres. Carter

> >> Was Carter not a scientist of some sort, physicist
> >> perhaps. He was not only a peanut farmer.

and David answered:

> Correct. Carter had a degree in nuclear physics and served as an
> officer on US nuclear submarines. I suspect he had also seen
> Venus a few times down on the peanut farm.

Jerome wrote:

> >From: "Jerome Clark" <jkclark@frontiernet.net>

> >Date: Sat, 23 May 98 11:24:41 PDT
> >Fwd Date: Sat, 23 May 1998 21:45:48 -0400
> >Subject: Re: Filer's Files #20

> >Here is my entry "Carter Sighting" in The UFO Encyclopedia:
> >2nd Ed., p. 174:

> >As they stood outside waiting for a Lions Club meeting to start,
> >Gov. Jimmy Carter and 10 residents of Leary, Georgia, noticed an
> >unusually bright light at about 30 degrees' elevation in the
> >western sky. Carter was to recall it appeared slightly smaller
> >than the apparent size of the moon., It "came close, moved away,
> >came close, then moved away," he reported. He estimated it to be
> >"maybe 300-1000 yards" away. It "moved to [a] distance[,] then
> >disappeared" ("Jimmy Carter's," 1977). The sighting took place on
> >January 6, 1969, between approximately 7:15 and 7:30 p.m.

> >Except for this sketchily rendered last detail, this object
> >sounds very much like Venus,

and then he saidsnip....

"I do confess it's hard for me to understand why anyone would get worked up about this monumentally unimpressive sighting, which didn't have any impact even on the other witnesses -- which certainly has not been the case in multiply witnessed observations of REAL UFOs."

JC: Several things here.

1) It obviously wasn't "monumentally unimpressive" to Jimmy Carter, highly political public figure of his time, who thought enough of it to report it, possibly jeopardizing his own political standing & reputation with the other "normal" politicians of the world who never witnessed one of these things for themselves.

2) It is not "monumentally unimpressive" to a minimum of four researchers who, after examining the "Venus" explanation, find it lacking as a totally credible explanation for what Carter saw, because, as David Rudiak pointed out:

. . . .

From: DRudiak <DRudiak@aol.com> [David Rudiak]
Date: Mon, 25 May 1998 01:55:52 EDT
Fwd Date: Mon, 25 May 1998 03:08:22 -0400
Subject: Re: Pres. Carter

- a) Venus never appears to be the "size of the moon" or "slightly smaller than the apparent size of the moon."
- b) Venus doesn't loom dramatically in size as described by Carter.
- c) Venus doesn't disappear by seeming to move into the distance. At the reported time of the sighting, Venus would have remained well-elevated and visible in the sky. It would not have disappeared. It fact, it didn't set until about 9:20. You can't have it both ways, with Venus supposedly being brilliantly bright and otherwise highly visible (to supposedly account for the report), yet supposedly disappearing as well.

Lesser discrepancies are:

- a) Venus was in the southwestern, not western sky (between 237 and 240 degrees azimuth, not 270).
- b) If the time was correct, the elevation was between 21 and 24 degrees, not 30 degrees.
- c) According to my planetarium programs, Venus wasn't even at its brightest on this date, much less an "unusually bright light." Carter's report said that the "10-12 men all watched it. Brightness attracted us." None of these people had never seen Venus in the sky before?"

. . . .

JC: For these reasons alone, many readers should be able to realize the "Venus" explanation is "proposed" but certainly not

written in stone. Therefore, at least some, if not many of those same readers might consider it premature to dismiss any sighting when that proposed explanation doesn't completely fit the description given by the claimant.

3) In using the words "multiply witnessed REAL UFOs," Jerome, who I respect greatly, seems to be implying that singularly witnessed UFOs are, by converse definition, UNREAL; therefore Jimmy Carter's sighting wasn't real since the impact on the other case witnesses was minimal and Jimmy Carter was thereby, in effect, a "singular witness." However, to imply that his sighting wasn't "real" because he was the only one affected by it doesn't make the UFO he saw "less real."

I do have some personal empathy with Jimmy Carter's report since I found myself in a similar position with my own two sightings many years ago, unfortunately, with even less witnesses to back me up. I excerpted most of the following from a letter I had written to Kal Korff, May of last year, from some correspondence we had together.

Regarding my own sighting in 1967:

My sighting was of a silent, rotating lighted craft at helicopter height and lasted for 3-5 minutes. I had a second sighting one month later which I eventually forced myself to discount because I was in a car by myself, on my way to an evening job, and had no other witness.

As to the first: My wife had passed her comprehensive teaching exam and we were going out to dinner. We were happy, nothing else was on my mind except going out to celebrate. I went to take out what little garbage we had that night, before leaving for our celebration dinner, when "whack," it came in overhead. (Except there was no "whack.")

At first glance, I first thought it was an airplane with its engines sparking. I turned away to put down the garbage pail and all of a sudden realized I didn't hear the sound of the engines from the plane which should have been passing directly overhead at the angle it was coming in. (It was fairly low. I normally can easily hear planes an awful lot higher. I am a respected musician/teacher with really excellent ears.)

When it first hovered, I remember it having a mist around it that eventually cleared; Also when it hovered, it exhibited the "typical" falling leaf motion mentioned back then..also .. its lights were rotating. I cupped my ears and aimed them right toward it and all I could hear was a super-faint, light sort of "peal of static electricity." It was around for at least 3 minutes; generally over 2-3 neighbor's houses.

At that point, it completely blew my mind because there was absolutely no doubt what I was looking at. It was a definite craft and fairly large. (Way too large to be up there with virtually no sound) Things raced through my mind: I asked myself if it was a balloon, dirigible, kite, helicopter (actually didn't have to do that... no sound), model "anything" ... and nothing fit. I'd never seen anything like it before or since. (It wasn't a dirigible or blimp of any type because the movement was totally wrong and I could always hear the motor on any blimp I ever observed and focused my ears on. It was, for the most part, quiet in our area at the time of the sighting; i.e. no competing noise.)

This next part gets to the point I am trying to make by mentioning all this: I ran into the house to get my wife and finally got her to come out to take a look. (We didn't own a camera back then.) She is not into mechanical things or electrical equipment & won't touch a computer. This "craft" was up there doing its silent thing with a "controlled" movement (i.e. it wasn't just floating,) and I went through a whole series of questions with her; i.e. was it any of the above things previously mentioned in the last paragraph. When I was finished and got a "no" to everything I asked, and we were staring at it together, I asked her; "Hon., do you think we could be looking at a UFO." Her reply to me was; "It can't be. There are no such things."

To her, it couldn't exist. For her, this was a "non-event" and remained that way, diminished to nothingness in her memory over

the years, to my extreme frustration. (I was incredibly angry about it for years.) Yet I on the other hand, absolutely without the least bit of doubt, knew what I was looking at. It didn't fit anything I knew about aeronautics or aerodynamics.

So, just because Jimmy Carter was the only one "impressed" by what he saw (and I too would be curious to see all the interviews), it certainly is not fair to deny what he says simply because we "think" he could have made a mistake. What if he didn't? What if all his training in nuclear physics and as a military observer actually made him more likely to identify what he saw than the other lesser-trained individuals around him? What if they didn't have the background or interest to ask themselves the same questions he asked himself when he saw it? (Don Ledger said this a bit more neatly than I but, I guess I need to say it my way too.)

Now all you skeptics who are out there thinking to yourselves "he can't prove any of this," you are absolutely right...and that's why I usually don't talk in depth about my own two sightings years ago. But I will tell you this, I have never been more positive about anything in my entire life. I am not a person who is quick to come to conclusions which have other rational answers. I tortured myself over this for years and refused to let it go. I wanted an answer and neither the Air Force or the Condon Committee gave it to me. I read the whole Condon report because of it and had my eye on every article, documentary, etc. I ever saw after that, looking for some solution to my dilemma & frustration.

BTW, it was still light out during my sighting, so I hadn't just seen a "light" in the sky. I had just gotten out of the Air Force the year before and had some fairly close contact with various types of airplanes. I was in the air getting ready to land at, I believe it was Homestead AFB, Florida when Kennedy was shot and watched the B-52's going up into the air. Does this make me an expert on aircraft? No.

But it is more than thirty years later and I still have never seen an aircraft or discovered any in research, etc. that comes even close to resembling what I saw that late afternoon. (And I never stopped looking and trying to figure out anything else it might have possibly been.) No, I don't have a problem with the sizes of objects I see.

When I look at something for a minimum of 2-3 minutes in the light, I can tell what it is. (my depth perception test for my driver's license was normal.)

So when someone writes a book, essay, whatever, and gives all these generalized reasons that someone could have made a mistake because other people make mistakes or, they weren't familiar with all the existing phenomena up there or, some people have a problem with their depth perception or someone else does a study with helmets, whatever, to say people hallucinate I say hogwash; it's the cheater's way out. Case details are where it's at. Either satisfy them in a reasonable manner or just simply say to yourself, "This case is still unidentified"

I've always been interested in science, bought a telescope and went out with my son when he was younger, to observe the constellations, shooting stars, look for satellites in orbit, etc. I got him interested in computers (and he's extremely successful today) because I was interested. I enjoy science fiction but I'm not an "X-Files" fan. I do know fiction from fact. I'm a college graduate and I don't have a driving desire to have contact with extraterrestrials. But, what I saw back then said unequivocally to me that, just possibly, some of the people that claim they have had contact in this regard could be telling the truth. It is why I never stopped researching this over the years.

So, as a plea to others out there trying to decide for yourselves where this whole thing is at, please just try to be a little more critical of proposed explanations that don't really fit claimants' descriptions. I can't emphasize more strongly that you or all of us may possibly be missing perhaps the most important thing to ever happen to human race.

Sincerely,
Jerry Cohen

Author: Oberg/Cooper rebuttals

Website: <http://www.li.net/~rjcohen/>
UFOMind: <http://www.ufomind.com/ufo/people/c/cohen/>

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