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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes

From: Dennis Stacy <dstacy@texas.net>
Date: Fri, 11 Jun 1999 00:47:07 -0500
Fwd Date: Fri, 11 Jun 1999 15:30:35 -0400
Subject: Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes

>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>From: Jerome Clark <jkclark@frontiernet.net>
>Subject: Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes
>Date: Wed, 09 Jun 99 19:38:05 PDT

>>Date: Tue, 08 Jun 1999 18:17:16 -0500
>>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>>From: Dennis Stacy <dstacy@texas.net>
>>Subject: Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes

<snip>

>>No, logic such as this simply means that when you're dealing
>>with an anecdotal account the only fact you have is the anecdote
>>itself. Which anecdote may or may not be true in particular, or
>>may reflect varying degrees of subjectivity and misperception in
>>general.

>>The only evidence we have for Arnold's sighting is Arnold's
>>account of same.

>Not true. There's also the Fred M. Johnson's corroborating
>sighting.

>C'mon, Dennis.

<Huge snip already replied to.>

>Jerry Clark

C'mon, Jerry,

Corroborative by what standards of corroboration?

You leave the misleading impression that Johnson saw the exact
same thing that Arnold did at the exact same time, and in the
exact same place -- more or less -- thereby confirming and/or
corroborating Arnold's original account.

Yet your own account of the Johnson sighting, based on a letter
he wrote the Air Force two months after the fact (UFO
Encyclopedia, Vol. I, p. 141), is full of qualifiers ("they
may...he could well have seen," etc.). So which is it?

To support Johnson's credibility, you'll want to no doubt quote
the following from the FBI file as established fact:

"Fred Johnson...reported without consulting any records..."
Qualifier: there is no way the interviewing FBI agent could have determined whether this was absolute fact or not. Obviously, he is simply reporting Johnson's claim that he hadn't consulted any records, made moot, in the event, by Johnson's later admission in the same interview that he had "noted an article in the local paper...and communicated with the Army for the sole purpose of attempting to add credence to the story furnished by the man in Boise [i.e., Arnold]."

In the end this is not too fine a philosophical point. The account has to be distinguished from the fact itself. To assume that they are one and the same, that is, that Arnold's perception and/or interpretation of what he saw is the actual fact itself, and nothing but (no other interpretations permitted), is ludicrous.

Regardless of whether Arnold, or Johnson, or both, were right or wrong, there is no excuse for confusing or mistaking an account of a phenomenon with the phenomenon itself. The two are separate phenomena and forever will be.

That was my point: Rudiak and Maccabee can mathematically analyze Arnold's account until hell freezes over. But it doesn't necessarily tell us that much, if anything, about the purported phenomenon itself.

Moreover, ufology is replete with cautionary tales. Mark Cashman, who I greatly respect, recently revealed in IUR that the 1965 (?) Beaver, Pennsylvania, photos were unaltered fakes. Until that time, however, he had the photo(s) on his web page, subject to all sorts of luminosity analysis and other "corroborative" evidence. The only problem, in the end, was that the original account didn't match up with the phenomenon. In fact, there was no phenomenon.

For another instructive story, read physicist Irwin Wieder's account of the discovery that the infamous 1966 Willamette Pass, Oregon, photo was also a patent hoax. Why did it take so long to explain same? Because, as Wieder so bravely admitted, given the witness's confirmed credentials, he was perfectly contented to remain on automatic pilot, what he referred to as "a pure belief mode." Again, the account and the (non-existent in this case) phenomenon weren't exactly a one-to-one match up, because, again, there was no stimulating phenomenon.

Does this mean, ipso facto, that Arnold is in the same league? Of course not. Does it mean that he could be? I'll leave that up to you to decide.

By the same token, there's no compelling reason, granted Clark's exalted UFO theology (in which witnesses are never confused about anything, but always spot on), to argue that Arnold shouldn't ascend to ufological sainthood post haste. Hey, the guy was only human.

Or did I misread my scripture?

Dennis

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