

Faux Facts, UFOs and the Hollywood Dream Factory

"Battle: Los Angeles" marketing technique latest example of truth-flavored news
November 6, 2010

Visit "[Battle: Los Angeles](#)" online and you'll see that it's a contemporary movie based, in part, on an event that really did take place in 1942, the so-called "Battle of Los Angeles." Of particular interest is the site's "eyewitness testimony" tab where a "professor" talks about a study he did of American military personnel who he believes had battlefield encounters with "aliens observing how we fight."

It's a perfect example of a marketing device that Hollywood now wields with impunity, and one we hope consumers are learning to recognize ... the faux fact.

Professor Anonymous

The video's end titles state that the professor died in 2010 of unknown causes and that his family asked that his name be withheld. The inference we're supposed to make, of course, is that he was killed by minions of the military-industrial complex.

Thing is – and this may be exculpatory – none of the "eyewitness testimony" videos ring quite true. To me. But I've worked in both the marketing and entertainment industries, so I have to wonder whether I sometimes pick up on things that most viewers miss. Are the subtle invitations to suspend disbelief generally perceptible (and creative license granted thereby), or am I a canary in the coal mine?

What mercifully little I've seen of reality television also seems rehearsed to me. I ask myself whether fans of these shows ever stop to consider how fragile a thing authenticity is and how a camera crew hovering inches away is certain to upset it. Are reality show fans like wrestling fans? Do they participate knowingly in the ruse that they pretend to defend as part of the ruse itself?

Not Nome, not now, not ever

The "Battle" website reminds me of how "[The Fourth Kind](#)" was promoted last year as a quasi-documentary about an actual psychotherapist's study of actual patients in an actual Alaska town. The therapist determines that her patients aren't hallucinating, rather they're recalling under hypnosis extremely traumatic encounters with extraterrestrials. Her name is given as Abigail Tyler and the town is identified as Nome.

Advance publicity for the movie stated as apparent fact that Nome citizens had been disappearing mysteriously for many years prior to Tyler's arrival there. Disappearing and *staying* disappeared.

As it turns out, however, there is no Abigail Tyler, nor have Nome citizens been disappearing. In fact, Nome officials raised some stink about what effect unfounded rumors of mysterious disappearances might have had on their local economy.

The footage in the movie that was purported to be actual videotape of Tyler's therapy sessions turned out to be just more studio work. More faux fact. The studio caught some weak heat for "false advertising," but I suspect that the marketing department spent

more time celebrating than suffering and that potential litigants were not-so-tactfully reminded that *it was just a movie*.

Hall of mirrors

So caveat emptor, right? And how many times do we need to be reminded that Hollywood is a *dream* factory, not the Ministry of Truth?

Still, I've yet to find my peace with such sophisticated storytelling techniques, probably because I hold the average consumer in such low esteem. (Sorry, average consumer person.) My gut tells me that plenty of people are drinking the Kool-Aid.

That's infotainment.

Go to the "Fourth Kind" site today, click the window at the bottom of the page labeled "The First Kind" and you'll see actual UFO witness testimony – *real* testimony culled from *real* UFO documentaries. Ponder that for a moment, regardless of where you stand on the existence or non-existence of UFOs ... actual testimony used to advertise whole-cloth fiction that's represented as being based on real events. Events that never took place.

What a hall of mirrors!

There was a time, or I think there was a time, when "based on a true story" meant basically that ... based on a true story. Not so today.

And lest you think that I'm overthinking this, I submit for your consideration recent reports, widely circulated among politicians, pundits and members of the press, that Barack Obama's nine-day trip to India will cost American taxpayers upwards of \$2 billion.

That became for many, and for many will remain, reality. Where did it come from? Where did it take us? Will anybody but the cranks complain?

Denver Rejects E.T. Affairs Commission

Jeff Peckman's *EXTRA* Campaign crashes in the night
November 3, 2010

Think of Denver, Colorado and what comes to mind? The Rockies? The Broncos? Coors beer? How about the world's first government-sanctioned extraterrestrial-affairs commission?

That's what the Mile High City might have brought into existence November 2 had Denver voters approved Initiative 300, brainchild of Jeff Peckman's *EXTRA* Campaign.

By a nearly five to one margin, however, Denver told E.T. not to go home, but to go the *hell* home. There will be no Extraterrestrial Affairs Commission in Denver any time soon.

After his ballot petition was deemed insufficient by the Denver Elections Division in September 2009, Peckman resubmitted it in November 2009 and the petition was approved. Initially scheduled to be included in the August 10, 2010 primary election ballot, Peckman's initiative later was placed on the November 2, 2010 midterm election ballot. Approximately 4,000 signatures had to be collected and verified for the ballot

initiative to be accepted by the Elections Division. Peckman has said that he collected more than twice that number.

Whether Peckman will reload for 2012 remains to be seen.

Peckman arrived on the national stage in 2008, making appearances on David Letterman's show and elsewhere, after he held a press conference during which he claimed to have in his possession an amateur video of an extraterrestrial standing at a Nebraska man's window.

Rhode Island Innkeeper Keeps the Light On for UFO Researchers, Abductees

Victorian landmark provides annual retreat from ufology's fringe and fray
October 30, 2010

Just beneath the gaudy surface of the UFO phenomenon, obscured by the tabloids and the for-profit channelers, the fake photos and the fight club mentality that dominate so much of the ufological landscape, lies a layer of painstaking research and painful testimony.

Most of the people who operate at this level do so very quietly. For them, far from being a source of easy income, speaking openly about UFOs courts social and financial disaster.

Nevertheless, some are drawn in by professional interests, others by simple curiosity. Still others, particularly the ones who call themselves abductees, would like nothing better than to find a prosaic explanation for what they say is happening to them.

Safe house

For 15 years, a Rhode Island innkeeper has been reaching out to members of the UFO community who seek to avoid, rather than invite, the limelight. Once each summer, she closes her eight-bedroom Victorian waterfront property to the general public and hosts an informal, invitation-only gathering of researchers and abductees in equal number. Four days, no fees, no agenda.

And no press.

When representatives of the late Peter Jennings asked for access to the gathering, they were refused, she says. "Too many of the attendees had been burned by the media."

She agreed to be interviewed by Technorati, in fact, only on the condition that her name, the name of her inn and the name of her city be withheld.

"Believe me, it's not a club that anybody wants to belong to," she says, making a clear distinction between her guests and the for-profit world of what investigative journalist Paola Harris derides as "retail ufology."

At 76, the innkeeper no longer worries about public opinion for her own sake, but says that she does worry about the effect that unwanted exposure might have on her attendees.

"I've reached the point that I really don't care what the neighbors say," she says. "There's a core group that comes back each year. Friends have been made out of this. That's what it's all about. These (attendees) have had experience being ridiculed. They say this is a place where they can relax for the first time ever and talk."

Some of the attendees are well-known UFO researchers. Harvard psychiatrist John Mack, for example, attended until his death in 2004. Elsewhere on the guest list are an Australian psychologist and a Massachusetts astrophysicist, as well as abductees from Scotland, England, Manhattan and Vermont. Profiles kept any lower would be subterranean.

"I'm not even sure that some of these people tell their wives and families that they're coming," the innkeeper says.

"I knew it was real."

Her interest doesn't arise from personal experience with UFOs, but from decades of interaction with people who have had such experience, as well as those who try to parse the evidence they offer.

"In 1948, I was 14," she recalls. "My father was a liaison with the Navy to Congress. He came home and said, 'These things hover and take off at incredible speed.' I put that in the back of my head and didn't think much more about it."

Years later, she was given a book by Major Donald Keyhoe, author of the seminal work, *Flying Saucers Are Real*, among others, and then in 1993 began attending UFO conferences on a regular basis.

"I knew it was real," she says.

Not so her children.

"When my grandchildren were young, my children disallowed me from discussing (UFOs) with them."

But her grandchildren developed a fascination for the topic anyway, and the innkeeper's fascination for it has never flagged.

"My friends and neighbors know that I have this interest. In the past, they'd change the subject when it came up. Now, since A&E & the History Channel air (UFO programming), it's easier."

Easier, but not easy. Especially for the attendees.

"They suffer rejection, hostility, loss of job, loss of marriage, relationships. It isn't fame and fortune. You get depression, physical ailments. It's happening all over the world."

The method in her madness

It may seem self-contradictory that a woman so careful to protect the identities of her publicity-shy guests should be talking with the media at all, even with name withheld. But her motivation seems to arise, in part, from a sense of compassion for the abductees.

"I feel for these people," the innkeeper says. "They suffer not only the horror of having it happen to them, but the ridicule afterward. Who do you tell? The more it's out in the public and people are talking about it, the less stress for the people who've had experiences with extraterrestrials."

It's a bit quixotic, this one-woman campaign to improve the quality of public discourse on a topic so far outside mainstream media's comfort zone. By her own count, seven out of ten people she tries to engage in conversation about UFOs would rather talk about something else.

But the innkeeper keeps on keeping on.

"If you get the word out," she says, "then maybe these people won't have to think they're crazy."

We wish her well with that.

People's Daily and UFOs: Every Day They Write the Book

People's Daily continues to impress with its thorough, professional coverage of a topic that still makes American media giggle like little girls

October 22, 2010

This week, *People's Daily* published [a story about a photo](#) taken October 14 in Kunming, China. The photographer, a man named Dong Rong, accidentally captured an image of what appears to be a UFO while taking timed exposures of the Kunming skyline at night.

The photo is mundane, a "light in the sky" at best.

But *People's Daily*, as *Pimp* readers know, is the official news organ of the Communist Party in China, so while the photo may be no great shakes, the story *about* the photo is remarkable by Western standards for the matter-of-fact conclusion it draws about Rong's photograph.

"The two objects were very clearly seen in the picture," the reporter writes, "indicating they were stationary at that time, so it is very likely that they are UFOs."

The possibility that the image could have been caused by searchlights is introduced and discarded elsewhere in the story. Lens type, camera model and the precise time of night that the photograph was taken are noted, as is the number of exposures made. UFO photos taken previously in the area are mentioned and a local UFO researcher, Zhang Yifang, is quoted.

"If there were more pictures," Zhang says, "the direction and speed of the flying objects (could) be determined."

It's a style of reporting – thorough, respectful, unbiased - all too rarely applied to UFO news in the West.

Fair and balanced, the *People's Daily* way

In an [August 13](#) article titled "Expert: Most UFO incidents have reasonable explanations," *People's Daily* writes "The public should treat these kinds of events with a scientific attitude, independent judgment and rational analysis. It is better to objectively record various phenomena through taking photos and videos. Some events will be easy to explain if there is sufficient image data."

The August 13 article goes on to say, "China currently has no official professional investigation agency for UFOs. Therefore, it is necessary to ask professional research agencies to investigate UFO events to eliminate people's doubts and fears. Some registered professional associations have been concerned with UFO phenomena for a long time and they possess certain observational knowledge and analysis and are more professional. In fact, most UFO events can be explained by rational reason through systematic investigation and comprehensive analysis."

This properly skeptical approach to the phenomenon is exactly what America's mainstream media has yet to master. Rather than imply that Rong might have been drinking or that Yifang might be biased, *People's Daily* asked reasonable questions and reported the answers.

Moreover, when an "official professional investigation agency" does express an opinion that some UFOs are intelligently controlled spacecraft from other worlds, *People's Daily* reports that, too. Without spin.

In an [article published August 23](#) of this year, *People's Daily* reported that Chinese Academy of Sciences astronomer Wang Sichao "believes extraterrestrial beings do exist and their UFOs have the ability to visit our earth."

Sichao's comments were reported as news and allowed to stand or fall on their own merit. Sound familiar? (Hint: If you live in America, it probably doesn't.)

We invite Western readers to spend an hour researching UFO coverage at *People's Daily*. We invite them to consider the depth and breadth of the coverage there, as well as the absence of "attitude," and to contrast this with how the topic most commonly is handled here.

Consider also the absence of boilerplate counterpoint from freelance debunkers like James McGaha and Bill Nye, the Science Guy.

Technorati has asked *People's Daily* to discuss with us their philosophy of reporting UFO news. We hope that they respond and, if they do, we hope that American media representatives will put down their juice boxes long enough to read what the Chinese have to say.

October Already an Auspicious Month for UFO Disclosure Advocates

Mainstream scientific community, United Nations consider implications of contact with extraterrestrial intelligence

October 20, 2010

Despite the [October 13 Qinling Mountain UFO hoax](#) and the concurrent [NYC party balloon UFO flap](#), October already is shaping up to be an auspicious month for advocates of UFO disclosure.

The oldest scientific society in the world, Britain's Royal Society, held its second conference of the year exploring the implications of the extraterrestrial hypothesis, and

Mazlan Othman, Director of the United Nations' Office for Outer Space Affairs, reasoned publicly that, if it became necessary for the human race to engage in diplomatic talks with representatives of an extraterrestrial civilization, her office would be the most logical candidate for the job.

As reported by *The Guardian* on September 26, Othman said, "When we do (make contact), we should have in place a coordinated response that takes into account all the sensitivities related to the subject. The UN is a ready-made mechanism for such coordination."

It became a matter of some debate the extent to which the U.N. has worked out its "coordinated response," likewise the subtext (if any) of Mazlan's comments, but the fact remains that Mazlan is a U.N. official and she did say that "we should have in place a coordinated response."

Blind(-siding mainstream media) with science

The Royal Society's interest in the topic, on the other hand, is clear.

Following up its January 2010 conference, *The detection of extra-terrestrial life and the consequences for science and society*, the Royal Society hosted *Towards a scientific and societal agenda on extra-terrestrial life* October 4-5.

Writing for MSNBC, UFO researcher Nick Pope, who attended the October conference at the Kavli Centre in Buckinghamshire, said, "I had to remind myself that I was at the Royal Society, not a sci-fi convention."

Pope, perhaps ufology's most circumspect spokesperson, also cleared up the confusion about Mazlan Othman, reporting that "Othman made it clear (speaking at the Royal Society conference) that the story (about her appointment by the U.N. as 'alien ambassador') was false and derived from a mistaken interpretation of the point she did make – that is, that her U.N. office and the U.N. Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, or COPUOS, might be appropriate forums for managing the global response to the discovery of extraterrestrial life."

Questions unasked, unanswered

Last month's *UFOs and nukes press conference* continues to reverberate in the mainstream media. Denver's *Extraterrestrial Affairs Commission* ballot initiative vote next month likely will be covered (in some fashion or other) just as extensively.

This month's Royal Society conference and Othman's declaration of a need for "coordinated response" are unambiguous examples of serious people taking a serious topic seriously. One wonders how much longer and what further incentive it will take for a member of the White House Press Corps to ask Press Secretary Robert Gibbs a serious question about the UFO phenomenon ... and receive a serious answer.

Qinling UFO Rumor False Says People's Daily

No UFO, no villages abducted

October 18, 2010

As we hoped it would, *People's Daily* has weighed in on the rumor that entire villages were abducted by aliens in the Qinling Mountain region of China on October 13.

According to *People's Daily*, "when reporters went to Xianyang to learn more about the horrible event, they found the claims could not be further from the truth. Those so-called UFOs were just rays of some spotlights that are located at Yintai Square of Xianyang City."

The rumor began when "a netizen named Zhang Lixing changed his Internet signature to 'Strange thing happened at the foot of Qin Ling Mountain.'" Several pass-alongs later, "strange thing" had morphed into UFO sightings, disappearing villages, military intervention and stampeding snakes.

Because *People's Daily* has a track record of reporting, rather than explaining away, UFO-related news, we consider the Case of the Disappearing Villages closed.

UFO Rumor Mill In Overdrive: E.T. Embarks On Large-Scale Relocation Initiative

Did UFOs cause entire villages to disappear in China's Qinling Mountains? Doubtful.

October 16, 2010

According to *extremely* unconfirmed sources, entire villages were made to disappear by UFOs in China's Qinling Mountains during the wee hours of Wednesday, October 13. Whether this means inhabitants-only or inhabitants-in-situ is not clear.

Yes, we hate these wild-ass rumors. In fact, *Pimp* just published [a piece decrying them](#) and the horses they ride in on.

But we're passing *this* rumor along for three reasons: 1.) We think it's too big, fat and juicy to ignore; 2.) We think it's too big, fat and juicy to be believed (and therefore *won't* be believed by most reasonable people); and 3.) Rumor mongering increases traffic to this site.

So please understand that we're relying on readers to quell the irrational exuberance that our hypocrisy is bound to inspire and wait. Wait a couple of weeks, in fact. And if *People's Daily* hasn't reported the rumor as news by the end of the month, we urge readers to consider it a prank and move on.

That said, here's the story, as best we can cobble it together ...

- A short [video has been posted at Youku.com](#) that shows what appears to be a huge, pulsing blue light at the edge of a populated area at night. It's sort of creepy, but hardly mind-blowing. Is it the Qinling Mountain UFO? We don't know. The captions are in a language we don't read.
- Loose (and very likely poor) translations of Chinese blog posts and Chinese tabloid reports claim that, at 4 a.m. on October 13, entire villages began to disappear in China's Qinling Mountains.

- These disappearances reportedly coincided with UFO activity.
 - The video is purported to be of the purported UFO activity.
 - Large numbers of troops, it is said, have blocked access to where the villages were or are or where the inhabitants of said villages used to be, or something.
 - Snakes have fled the scene.
 - Technorati readers are expected to click lots of banner ads as they exit this article.
-

Crying Wolf: The Manhattan UFO

And UFO enthusiasts wonder why they aren't taken seriously
October 15, 2010

The flurry of UFO sighting reports caused by a [flock of party balloons gliding over Manhattan](#) on Wednesday would seem to justify the pop culture stereotype of ufologist as tinfoil beanie-wearing nut.

While some will suggest that coverage of these obviously baseless reports is an example of mainstream media's campaign to discredit legitimate research, others might counter that the fault lies mainly with ufology itself.

ICAR (International Community for Alien Research) International Director Joe Montaldo, in a [recent radio broadcast](#), complained bitterly about the absence of any system of credentialing or regulating the people who represent themselves as experts in the field. We might add to Montaldo's list of complaints a lack of editorial oversight, and offer as an example his broadcast's title: *UFO Undercover Guest 1st hour joe Montaldo shakes the ufo guys to there eyes rattle sec hour taking about alien abduction criteria.*

Ufology is overflowing with such gaffes and, as Montaldo correctly points out, there is no central authority empowered to correct them. There's no way for anyone unfamiliar with the field to know who, if anyone, to take seriously.

It's a hard sell - a very hard sell, indeed - to convince anybody predisposed to poo-poo the phenomenon that, beneath the cheesy graphics, the bad grammar, the "experiencers" crying for attention (and medication), the "experts" hawking T-shirts and the web sites gobbling up and spewing out every half-baked rumor and theory that comes their way ... there's a core of evidence that deserves scientific study and careful media attention.

No, I mean it. Really. What's so funny?

Redefining Consensus Reality: American Media's Coverage of UFOs

ABC reaches back with both hands, finds ass, but still gets scooped by Technorati
October 7, 2010

It's Paradigm Research Group (PRG) executive director Steve Bassett's job to be optimistic about "the ongoing collapse of the truth embargo on formal acknowledgment of an extraterrestrial presence engaging the human race."

That's how he put it in his September 30 PRG press release, a reference, in part, to the widespread and uncharacteristically sober mainstream media coverage of Robert Hastings and Robert Sala's September 27 press conference at the National Press Building in Washington, DC.

In case you missed [Technorati's coverage of it](#), the press conference was held to focus media attention on decades of UFO interference with U.S. military nuclear weapons installations. UFO researcher Robert Hastings and former U.S. Air Force Captain Robert Salas organized the conference, which included presentations made by seven former USAF personnel.

Roughly two dozen media representatives attended the press conference, which [CNN streamed live](#).

Like Bassett, we've been pleased with our heretofore UFO-phobic media's straightforward coverage of the press conference, and visitors to PRG's [media coverage index](#) will correctly infer that a thaw does seem to be in progress.

Every day, somewhere in the United States, a newspaper or television station files a UFO story of some kind and, judging from PRG's index, such reports are increasing in frequency and integrity.

Signs of sobriety

Ten days prior to the press conference, several domestic media outlets picked up [The Guardian's \(UK\) report](#) that Vatican astronomer Guy Consolmagno had stated that he'd be willing to baptize an extraterrestrial if asked to do so.

Leslie Kean's new book [UFO: Generals, Pilots and Government Officials Go On the Record](#), published in August, earned a slot on the *New York Times* best seller list while Kean herself made the rounds of the talkshow circuit.

When Rich Dolan and Bryce Zabel's book, [A.D. After Disclosure](#) hits the stands this month, we expect it to garner considerable media attention, particularly in light of the popularity of NBC's new [disclosure-related series, The Event](#).

A best-selling non-fiction book, non-news-of-the-weird reportage, and a well-attended press conference. Encouraging signs.

Signs of simplicity

Still, we've yet to see the fourth estate embrace ufology with the discipline it deserves, which is why, in the U.S. at least, their coverage retains an atmosphere of paper-training the puppy. Too many accidents and too much encouragement necessary for minimum compliance.

Where, for example, is the long-form reportage of the Vatican's well-documented interest in UFOs? Wouldn't the Consolmagno story have been a good opportunity to footnote Msgr. Corrado Balducci's 2005 X-Conference keynote address?

But we need look no further than ABC's October 5 "coverage" (and I use the term very loosely) of the September 11 UFO-related shutdown of Baotou Airport in China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region for evidence of absence among America's media.

China's People's Daily reported the Baotou shutdown on September 13. Technorati reported it eight days later. Fully two weeks after *that*, *ABC jumped on the bandwagon* with what it called a "fresh report" of a UFO.

Fresh?

Even as it published its "fresh" report of month-old news, ABC failed to mention that Baotou was the third UFO-related *airport shutdown* in China in three months. That fact was perhaps included in their reference to the "eighth time since June that UFOs have been reported in China," but readers unfamiliar with the story could not possibly have made the proper connection.

Is this the best that ABC can do? A month late and missing a major piece of information?

And we can't help wondering how ABC feels about being scooped by Technorati. *Way* scooped.

Reality check

Consider this: If seven retired Air Force personnel were to hold a press conference in Washington to report that suspected Soviet agents had interfered with America's military nuclear installations during the Cold War, it would be top-of-the-fold news from coast to coast. Investigative reporters would be blowing up their best sources' cell phones.

Because the alleged culprits were UFOs, however, coverage of the press conference began and ended with the conference itself. The *reasons* for holding the conference remain uninvestigated and that, in a nutshell, is the problem. It was as if the concept of followup questions had yet to be invented.

As much as we'd like to praise our media for their incremental progress, we take exception to Bassett's enthusiasm about the "ongoing collapse of the truth embargo."

Hairline cracks perhaps, but ongoing collapse not so much.

And as for ABC, we have only this to say: Bad dog. No treat for you.

At National Press Building Today: UFO Interference With Nukes

National Press Building hosts military witnesses to UFO interference with U.S. nuclear installations

September 27, 2010

A press conference was held today at the National Press Building in Washington, DC to focus media attention on decades of UFO interference with U.S. military nuclear weapons installations.

UFO researcher Robert Hastings and former U.S. Air Force Captain Robert Salas organized the conference, which included presentations made by seven former USAF personnel.

Roughly two dozen media representatives attended the press conference, which *CNN streamed live*.

According to Hastings, more than 100 former or retired U.S. Air Force personnel have testified to "ongoing UFO surveillance of, and occasional interference with, our nuclear weapons."

Salas, as we reported *back in July*, has had first-hand experience with such incursions.

On the morning of March 16, 1967, then Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander (DMCCC) Robert Salas was on duty inside Malstrom AFB's subterranean Oscar-Flight Launch Control Center (LCC) capsule near Roy, Montana when he received a call from a "clearly frightened" topside security officer reporting that a UFO was hovering over the front gate. Alarms sounded moments later as, one after another, up to eight Minuteman missiles went into "no-go" (inoperable) condition.

Paradigm Research Group (PRG) executive director Stephen Bassett, who attended today's conference, said that "what should happen now is for members of the political press to direct specific questions regarding this testimony at the press spokespersons for the Department and Defense, U.S. Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency and expect answers from Secretaries Robert Gates, Michael Donley and Leon Panetta."

"At least that is what is supposed to happen if the political media in Washington, DC are not under government- or self-imposed restraints."

Previous UFO-related conferences held at the National Press Building have been organized by such ufology notables as Stephen Bassett, Disclosure Project director Dr. Steven Greer, *journalist Leslie Kean* and filmmaker Jamie Fox. Their witness panels have included high-ranking military and government officials, politicians and pilots from around the world.

Chinese Media To U.S. Regarding UFO Coverage: Grow A Pair

Photography students in Pingyao photograph UFO and China's newspaper of record is all over it.

September 25, 2010

China's *People's Daily Online*, the official news agency of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in China (CPC), *is reporting* that two students photographed a UFO above the city of Pingyao September 22 while taking nightscape photos during the 10th Pingyao International Photography Festival.

Over a 40-minute period, the students snapped roughly 200 pictures of the UFO, which they described as "a sphere with two flickering columns on its two sides," but which could not be seen with the naked eye.

The only published image, shown here, does not impress. Grainy and indistinct, it's typical of the vast majority of UFO photos.

But the real story isn't the photo. It's *People's Daily's* persistent willingness to report UFO sightings without flip comment, specious hypothesis, de rigueur debunker counterpoint, or meteorological speculation.

The *People's Daily* headline is straightforward: "UFO photographed over ancient Chinese city." Not "Purported UFO..." Not even "Suspected UFO..."

There's no reference to Little Green Men and no evidence of any invitation extended to air traffic controllers, military spokespeople or government officials to make official non-statements.

It's just so ... so ... *Un-American*.

If two students attending a photography festival in the United States were to tell the local media that they'd photographed a UFO, it's a virtual certainty that they'd be either ignored or made a laughing stock. Substance abuse, at a minimum, would be assumed and implied.

So why does China handle the topic so differently?

And why don't we?

Maybe it's because, when you get right down to it, we really do know everything worth knowing.

Previous China UFO coverage at Technorati

- [Third UFO-Related Airport Shutdown In China This Year](#) (September 21, 2010) - *Baotou Airport reroutes flights for almost an hour after UFO detected in vicinity*
- [More UFO Love For China, This Time In Zhejiang Province](#) (September 6, 2010) - *Haining City television reporters capture distant UFO on camera*
- [Chinese astronomer claims some UFOs are of extraterrestrial origin](#) (August 27, 2010) - *Respected member of Chinese scientific community makes no bones about the existence of UFOs*
- [Time magazine debunks China UFOs, ignores obvious questions](#) (August 23, 2010) - *Time explains China UFOs as private airplanes flying without flight plans*
- [China's second mass UFO sighting in two weeks](#) (July 21, 2010) - *Lantern-like objects hover over Chongqing's Shaping Park*
- [UFOs cause flight delays in China](#) (July 12, 2010) - *Xiaoshan Airport in Zhejiang Province shut down for several hours*

"The Event": NBC Premieres UFO Disclosure Series

Next Monday, series to lay its extraterrestrial cards on the table
September 21, 2010

The first episode of NBC's *The Event* wrapped up last night as a hijacked commercial airliner was seconds from crashing into the president's Florida compound.

Then the airliner vanished. Poof. Assassination attempt thwarted.

President Martinez (Blair Underwood) had been about to hold a press conference at which he was going to make an announcement. We assume that the announcement had to do with the true nature of the 97 prisoners being held at a secret prison in Alaska. We further assume that the prisoners are extraterrestrial.

Hence the announcement.

Hence the opposition to the announcement.

Hence the assassination attempt.

The sudden disappearance of the airliner moments before impact leads us to believe that, while the forces opposed to the announcement may be powerful, the forces in favor of it are considerably moreso.

What *The Event* is has yet to be revealed, though advance publicity for the series has gone to some pains to eliminate possibilities ... it isn't the hijacking or the assassination attempt ... it isn't the murder of the airline captain's wife or the kidnapping of his daughter. Odds are that it isn't even the announcement (yet to occur) that the U.S. military has been running a Club Med for extraterrestrials in Alaska.

Is it something transformational, in the vein of Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End*? Or is it an extinction-level event?

And when will Hal Holbrook's character be introduced?

Maybe that's the event ... Mark Twain returns triumphant as a Plejarian warlord.

Third UFO-Related Airport Shutdown In China This Year

Baotou Airport reroutes flights for almost an hour after UFO detected in vicinity
September 21, 2010

China's *People's Daily Online* is reporting that Hohhot Air Traffic Management Bureau instruments detected an unidentified flying object (UFO) approximately 25 miles east of Baotou, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region at 8 p.m. on September 11.

As a result, traffic was halted at Baotou Airport between 9:14 and 10 p.m. Three inbound flights from Beijing and Shanghai were instructed to circle the airport awaiting clearance to land and two flights (Air China Flight 1107 from Beijing and Juneyao Airlines Flight 1137 from Shanghai) were rerouted to other airports.

"(Baotou Airport) received a notice from the Hohhot Air Traffic Management Bureau about the appearance of a UFO. To guarantee security, the aircraft heading for the airport had to land at secondary airports. Otherwise, it may have led to collisions," said a Baotou Airport spokeswoman.

Once again, the official mouthpiece of the Communist Party of China is using the term "UFO" without apology. Translators responsible for preparing the English language version of the newspaper's site can't be unaware of the term's implications in the West,

however technically accurate it may be to describe an airborne object that defies identification as a UFO, so we applaud them for their sober coverage.

It's difficult to imagine newspapers of record in the United States dealing as straightforwardly with the topic and as comfortably with the term as *People's Daily* does.

Previous China UFO coverage at Technorati

- [More UFO Love For China, This Time In Zhejiang Province](#) (September 6, 2010) - *Haining City television reporters capture distant UFO on camera*
- [Chinese astronomer claims some UFOs are of extraterrestrial origin](#) (August 27, 2010) - *Respected member of Chinese scientific community makes no bones about the existence of UFOs*
- [Time magazine debunks China UFOs, ignores obvious questions](#) (August 23, 2010) - *Time explains away China UFOs as private airplanes flying without flight plans*
- [China's second mass UFO sighting in two weeks](#) (July 21, 2010) - *Lantern-like objects hover over Chongqing's Shaping Park*
- [UFOs cause flight delays in China](#) (July 12, 2010) - *Xiaoshan Airport in Zhejiang Province shut down for several hours*

NBC's *The Event* Dramatizes UFO Disclosure

Is Hollywood foreshadowing a major announcement?

September 20, 2010

SPOILER ALERT: *If you love surprises and plan to watch NBC's "The Event," which premieres September 20, avert your eyes.*

On Monday, September 20, NBC will launch a new dramatic series, *The Event*. In it, Blair Underwood stars as what X-Conference organizer Steve Bassett would call "the disclosure president:" that Commander-in-Chief to whom it falls to announce to the world that our planet is being engaged by extraterrestrial intelligence.

Subsequent episodes will address the fallout of the President's announcement.

Rumor has it (in ufology circles, anyway) that *The Event* is the latest in a long line of infotainments designed to raise the curtain ever-so-slowly on truths that many will find too terrible to contemplate. We're being acclimatized, in other words, to minimize the number of suicides, riots, business failures and bedwettings that are expected to occur when our government reverses its 60-plus-year-old policy of deflection and denial.

UFO historian Richard Dolan's book, *A.D. After UFO Disclosure*, will be released October 11, timed perfectly to ride the wave of interest in such matters likely to be generated by *The Event*. It's co-authored by former CNN correspondent, now Hollywood screenwriter, Bryce Zabel.

Is it coincidence that a Hollywood screenwriter has co-authored a book that will be released within weeks of the premiere of a network series that fictionalizes his rather esoteric topic?

Perhaps, but no matter.

Whatever the backstory, whatever the motives of the producers or publishers, the fact remains that concepts are being introduced into the mainstream that, once digested, will make it easier for journalists to investigate, for scientists to study and for average Joes to discuss open-mindedly the topic of UFOs.

We're not holding our breath for disclosure or unambiguous contact, nor are we especially worried about 2012, but we are encouraged to see the era of the Little Green Man drawing to a close.

Member of Russian Parliament Calls for Center For UFO Studies

Kirsan Ilyumzhinov leaving parliament, but not leaving UFOs
September 14, 2010

We last reported on Russian Minister of Parliament (MP) Kirsan Ilyumzhinov in May of this year when he confirmed during an interview with Russian television presenter Vladimir Pozner that he had been abducted from his Moscow apartment by extraterrestrials on April 18, 1997.

Now he's calling for long-term, formal, scientific investigation of UFOs.

At a press conference held September 8 in Elista, capital of the Russian republic of Kalmykia which he represents, Ilyumzhinov called for the establishment of a center for UFO studies in Russia. That announcement all but overshadowed his concurrent announcement (and the stated reason for the press conference) that he will not seek reelection to Parliament.

A self-made millionaire, Ilyumzhinov staged a religious revival in Kalmykia where he funded construction of the largest Buddhist temple in greater Europe. Kalmykia is the only region in Europe where Buddhism is the dominant religion.

He also spearheaded construction of the massive and growing complex of buildings known as *City Chess*, which was constructed specifically for the 33rd Chess Olympiad in 1998.

Since 1993, Ilyumzhinov has served five terms as Kalmykia's representative to the Russian Parliament and, since 1995, has served as president of the World Chess Federation (FIDE - Federation Internationales des Echecs).

According to *The Moscow News*, Ilyumzhinov's September 8 press conference was dominated more by questions about UFOs than politics or chess.

He rolled with it.

"In many countries that I visit, there are laboratories that investigate UFOs and make contact," Ilyumzhinov said, adding that he's discussed extraterrestrials with foreign dignitaries, including heads of state.

Judging from Ilyumzhinov's success in business and politics, it seems more likely than not that his center for UFO studies will become reality. He has yet to indicate where the center might be built, though, so we're hoping that his list of possible locations includes the Russian Embassy at 2650 Wisconsin Avenue in Washington, DC.

For our Russian-speaking readers ...

- Watch the Vladimir Pozner television interview [on YouTube](#).
- Read the Russian language coverage of Ilyumzhinov's September 8 press conference at [GZT.ru](#)

More UFO Love For China, This Time In Zhejiang Province

People's Daily covering UFOs in China as serious news
September 6, 2010

[People's Daily Online](#) is reporting that a UFO was visible "for at least three hours" above Haiyan County of Zhejiang Province August 31.

Among the witnesses were two local Haiyan television station reporters. When a second object appeared above the first and began moving toward Haining City, the reporters followed it by car, taking "relatively clear pictures" of it from their position in the object's flight path.

(Frustratingly, none of these pictures accompanied the *People's Daily* article.)

Described as flying "not at a high altitude" and being "much larger and brighter than stars around it," the object reportedly changed shape from round to rectangular. The photos said to have been taken by the reporters show "a round object that had shiny blue lights, and several other flickering objects" around it.

The *People's Daily* report appeared less than two weeks after its [August 23 account](#) of Chinese Academy of Sciences astronomer Wang Sichao's announcement that UFOs have been observed by Chinese astronomers in the Earth's atmosphere.

As with the Sichao story, it's significant that the official news agency of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, *People's Daily*, is: a.) covering the Zhejiang Province sighting at all, and b.) doing so without the slightest indication of dismissal or disapproval.

It's also of interest that neither *People's Daily* story references theories floated recently in the West that Chinese UFOs are either misidentified military missiles or misidentified private airplanes. Nor do they address the implied credulity of denizens of the second largest economy in the world.

Previous China UFO coverage at Technorati

- [Chinese astronomer claims some UFOs are of extraterrestrial origin](#) (August 27, 2010) - *Respected member of Chinese scientific community makes no bones about the existence of UFOs*
- [Time magazine debunks China UFOs, ignores obvious questions](#) (August 23, 2010) - *Time explains away China UFOs as private airplanes flying without flight plans*
- [China's second mass UFO sighting in two weeks](#) (July 21, 2010) - *Lantern-like objects hover over Changqing's Shaping Park*
- [UFOs cause flight delays in China](#) (July 12, 2010) - *Xiaoshan Airport in Zeijiang Province shut down for several hours*

Black Triangle Crashes Near Fresno, California

Some suspect UFO was, in fact, super-secret TR-3B aircraft
August 30, 2010

According to reports, a Central Valley California family driving home late in the evening on Saturday, August 21 called MUFON State Section Director Jeffrey Gonzalez's 24-hour hotline to report that a "triangle-shaped craft" had made a "hard landing" onto the side of a mountain outside Fresno, CA.

The mountain is near a facility run by the 144th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard Base (ANGB) of Fresno.

While taking the hotline report from a male witness, Gonzales says he overheard a female voice in the background saying, "It's trying to take off, it's trying to lift!"

Unmarked vehicles arrived at the site shortly after the hard landing, but MUFON investigators were unable to get near the landing site because the area is inaccessible from public roadways.

What appeared to be an arc welding light was seen at the crash site during the evening and, the next morning, scorch marks were seen on the mountain, as well as a "stingray-shaped" craft near an abandoned shack used by military utility teams. The craft is now gone.

Gonzales shot video of the area, including the craft, and intends to make the video available as soon as it has been processed. At the time of this writing, however, a search of the MUFON website returned no hits for the August 21 Fresno crash.

Some have speculated that what crashed into the mountain near Fresno was a super-secret nuclear-powered aircraft, the TR-3B, code named "Astra" and rumored to have been in operation since the mid-90s. There is some debate about whether the TR-3B is itself a military disinformation scheme intended to obscure the many triangular UFO sighting reports filed each year.

Bassett Launches Exopolitics World Network Cities Initiative

PRG founder Stephen Bassett announces new exopolitical initiative
August 27, 2010

Paradigm Researched Group (PRG) director Stephen Bassett has announced a new initiative designed to encourage the formation of 1,000 exopolitical groups around the world. The [Exopolitics World Network](#) (EWN) Cities Initiative seeks to establish one portal web site per country to serve as a source of information about exopolitical developments in that country and build connections among nations as part of what Bassett describes as "a growing international truth movement."

According to Bassett, "exopolitics is a developing field of study addressing the totality of the historical, social and political implications of extraterrestrial related phenomena.

"The most important exopolitical issue at present is the disclosure movement, an international effort to bring about formal acknowledgment by world governments of an extraterrestrial presence engaging the human race."

The Cities Initiative is a grassroots effort in which anyone hosting a regular meeting to discuss and engage exopolitical matters can register their group with the EWN.

Added Bassett, "the government imposed truth embargo regarding an extraterrestrial engagement of the planet is falling apart. It is important for people to start talking to each other about this unfolding reality and begin preparing for the post-Disclosure world.

For more information, contact PRG at 202-215-8344 or prg@paradigmresearchgroup.org.

Leslie Kean to Stephen Colbert: More UFO Investigation Needed

Leslie Kean appears on The Colbert Report to discuss new UFO book
August 27, 2010

Investigative journalist Leslie Kean made the case for more serious investigation of the UFO phenomenon recently during an August 23 appearance on [The Colbert Report](#) to promote her just-published book, [UFOs: Generals, Pilots and Government Officials Go On the Record](#).

Kean, who is director of [The Coalition for Freedom of Information](#), says her sources propose that "the extraterrestrial hypothesis is actually a rational and logical explanation" for five percent of UFO sightings.

The widely-publicized 2006 [Chicago O'Hare UFO sighting](#), which is discussed in Kean's book, was one focus of the Colbert interview.

When Colbert asked why he hadn't heard about the O'Hare sighting, Kean replied, "Maybe you weren't reading the news, because it was reported on the front page of *The Chicago Tribune* and on their website and it got more hits, that story, than any story they'd ever published before.

"It was a big story at the time, but the problem is, it passes. What we're calling for in this book is we want more investigation done ... We want the U.S. government to respond."

Chinese Astronomer Claims Some UFOs Are Of Extraterrestrial Origin

Purple Hills Observatory professor says objects demonstrate anti-gravity capabilities
August 27, 2010

A veteran Chinese planetary astronomer has announced his conclusion that some UFOs are of extraterrestrial origin.

Professor Wang Sichao, of the Purple Mountain Observatory (Zijinshan Astronomical Observatory in Nanjing, China) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, delivered a speech on August 23 in the city of Guangzhou, during which he stated that some UFOs appear to be extraterrestrial spacecraft that demonstrate anti-gravity capability and may be engaged in research activities.

This follows *China Daily's* August 2 report that Sichao has predicted that UFOs might appear in 2011 or 2012. His prediction, made on the Yangcheng Evening News, referenced "the possible existence of 2.5 billion planets with possible civilization and advanced technology in the Milky Way Galaxy, among which the earth and its civilization are merely at a primary evolution stage."

In September 2009, scientists at the Purple Mountain Observatory reported that they'd filmed a UFO for 40 minutes during the July 22 solar eclipse. Observatory director Ji Hai-sheng said, "Currently manpower is being organized to deal with this data, complete the data analysis and reveal the scientific results and this will take at least one year's time to finalize."

During his August 23 speech in Guangzhou, Sichao stated that UFOs have been observed by astronomers traveling as fast as 80 percent of the speed of light at distances of between 150 and 1,500 km from Earth.

"If they are friendly to us," Sichao said, "we can promote the human beings' civilization through exchange and cooperation with them. If they are not, as long as we prepared for their invasion, we can beat them back on their weaknesses."

This outlook is at variance with theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking's prediction earlier this year that mankind likely would suffer from any contact with extraterrestrial civilizations.

Is Great Wall of UFO Secrecy crumbling in China?

It's notable that Sichao's statements were published in China's *People's Daily*, because that newspaper is the official news agency of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Internet talkshow host Kevin Smith called the *People's Daily* coverage of Sichao's statements "earth-shaking."

"By China reporting in the *People's Daily* on the statements of *their* astronomer at *their* observatory," Smith said during his August 26 broadcast, "and by doing so without ridicule, without refuting, without making any kind of negative remarks ... I think that means disclosure. That is a government scientist stepping forward, apparently with the blessings of the government."

Exopolitical activist Michael Salla writes, "This suggests that Wang has tacit official approval to disseminate his views to the media, and for the Chinese media to report on his conclusions, thereby generating an exopolitics debate between scientists over the motivations of extraterrestrial life."

Two mass UFO sightings in China gained international attention this year. On July 7, Xiaoshan Airport in Hangzhou rerouted traffic for several hours after detecting a UFO. Then, on July 15, "four lantern-like objects forming a diamond shape" reportedly hovered over Chongqing's Shaping park for over an hour.

Time magazine has theorized that recent UFO sightings in China may be attributed to misidentification of private planes flying without flight plans. Others have attributed at least one of the sightings to malfunctioning military missiles.

Sichao has suggested that the Xiaoshan UFO might have been a "special purpose aircraft" of terrestrial origin, but he dismisses both the private airplane and missile explanations.

Former BBC Economics Editor Weighs In On Bentwaters UFO

Economist Evan Davis tries his hand at UFO research
August 23, 2010

Former BBC economics editor Evan Davis has published [an article at BBC.co.uk debunking](#) the 1980 Rendlesham Forest (UK) UFO close encounter reported by U.S. military personnel stationed at nearby RAF Bentwaters.

If you aren't familiar with the Bentwaters UFO incident, here's a primer:

In 1980, RAF Bentwaters in Suffolk, England was jointly operated by the RAF and the 81st Tactical Fighter Wing of the USAF. It was the largest tactical fighter wing in the Air Force.

Former Bentwaters Deputy Base Commander Col. Charles Halt, now retired, [has stated repeatedly](#) that, in December of 1980, he witnessed a "blinking" UFO moving through nearby Rendlesham Forest. Other personnel under Halt's command who were deployed to investigate have testified that they approached a craft and examined it for 45 minutes.

Tree limbs had been broken off during the craft's descent and radiation readings taken at the landing site were well above normal background. Plaster casts were made of landing gear impressions left in the ground. A recording of radio chatter (mp3) taped by Halt (and transcribed here) during the encounter is now part of the public record, as are sketches of markings on the craft.

The Bentwaters incident took place over two nights. Multiple objects observed by multiple witnesses variously hovered, changed shape and color, cast down beams of light and traveled away at "impossible" speeds. When the show was over, nobody asked for a refund.

Quoth the BBC's Former Economics Editor

Fast forward 30 years and the BBC posts Davis' article dismissing all testimony given to date. Rather than interviewing *any* of the witnesses, he says, "Nothing could persuade me that extra-terrestrials are hovering above us ... There is no evidence you could cite that would make me change my mind."

He goes on to describe his fact-finding mission to Rendlesham, a late-night trip to the forest during which he observed stars in the sky and a lighthouse five miles distant and declares the whole UFO business a misunderstanding.

"What I found in the forest on Monday night was not evidence of a UFO," Davis writes, "but evidence of how easy it is for the imagination to play tricks."

Quoth the Former Head of the MOD

The late Admiral Lord Hill-Norton, former head of the British Ministry of Defense (MOD), did the homework that Davis should have done and arrived at a very different conclusion. In a videotaped interview, Hill-Norton said this:

I know a good bit about the Bentwaters incident. I've interviewed a number of the people who took part in it, and what I have decided after careful thought is that there are only two explanations for what happened that night in Suffolk. The first is ... that it actually happened as Colonel Halt reported. The other explanation is that it didn't. In that case, one is bound to assume that Colonel Halt and all his men were hallucinating. My position is perfectly clear — either of those explanations is of the utmost defense interest.

Granted, Davis' article is arguably commentary, not news or analysis, but it's curious that the BBC published it without so much as an editor's note referencing Hill-Norton's or Halt's statements ... or the author's odd, verging on angry, intransigence about a topic so far flung from his area of expertise.

Time Magazine Debunks China UFOs, Ignores Obvious Questions

Were recent UFO sightings over Hangzhou and Chongqing only "off the grid" private planes?

August 23, 2010

Last month, Technorati relayed reports of two mass UFO sightings that took place in China. On July 7, [Xiaoshan Airport in Hangzhou](#) rerouted traffic for several hours after detecting a UFO. Then, on July 15, "four lantern-like objects forming a diamond shape" hovered over Chongqing's Shaping park for over an hour.

Proposed explanations for the sightings have ranged from helicopters to errant military missiles but, to date, no official explanation has been advanced. Now *Time* magazine's Chengcheng Jiang has weighed in with a new theory: private planes.

In an [article dated August 16](#), Jiang observes that China's airspace, though tightly controlled by the government, is routinely violated by wealthy pilots who prefer to fly "off the grid," not filing flight plans. These unauthorized flights are known as *hei fei*, or black flights.

This month, China hosted its first Jet Expo, catering to China's burgeoning wealthy class (1,900 billionaires last year).

Fines for flying illegally in China start at 10,000 renminbi (approx. \$1,500 US), while flight path application fees start at 50,000 renminbi. These figures, coupled with the complicated and time-consuming application process and the perception that the Chinese government is trying to loosen its control over airspace, have taken a toll on compliance.

According to Jiang, "experts quickly determined that ... the (Hangzhou UFO) was identified as most likely being (a private plane)."

Unanswered questions

- Since it's certain that credentials would be demanded of anyone expressing an opposing opinion on the matter, why aren't Jiang's experts identified?
- If it's now common in China for private pilots to fly without filing flight plans, why would a major airport reroute traffic for three hours in response to a suspected *hei fei*? (And just how slowly *do* Chinese pilots move through the air?)
- Why would a private pilot violating "tightly controlled" airspace tempt fate by remaining airborne for between one (Chongqing) and three (Hangzhou) hours over heavily populated areas?
- Why hasn't the Chinese government offered an official explanation for the sightings, especially considering how "quickly determined" the cause of the sightings was by "experts?"
- What kind of private plane looks to people on the ground like "four lantern-like objects" (Chongqing) that hover, forming a diamond shape, for an hour over a public park?
- What kind of missile (one proposed explanation for the Chongqing sighting), military or otherwise, hovers in the air for an hour?

- What kind of drugs are the people of China doing these days?
- Are those drugs available in the United States?

We're glad to know that China's civilian pilots are losing their fear of legal consequences. We're also glad to know that China is in the market for airplanes, many of which will be built in the United States. All to the good.

We're concerned, however, about the unwarranted skittishness of China's air traffic control community, likewise the 'tardation of China's pedestrian community, unable as they are to perceive shapes, sizes, quantities and passage of time.

Brazilian Air Force Decrees UFO Disclosure

Brazilian Air Force Chief releases UFO files, decrees that all future reports to be made public

August 13, 2010

Brazilian Air Force Commander, Lieutenant-General Juniti Saito has signed a decree calling for military and civilian pilots and air traffic controllers in Brazil to report to the Aerospace Defense Command any experiences they have with unidentified flying objects. They are to include with their reports any photos, videos or other material proof they may have.

In a statement released to the newspaper *O Dia*, the Brazilian Air Force (FAB – Força Aerea Brasileira) said that it "does not have the specialized structure needed to carry out scientific investigations on these aerial phenomena and will only register the events."

London's [Daily Telegraph](#) reports that a military air controller in Rio has said that "respectable witnesses have previously recounted experiences with UFOs."

"There are reports by ministers and even a president who saw a UFO," he said.

According to [The Huffington Post](#), a Brazilian Air Force spokesman has said that the air force has decades of UFO archives, but until now there has been no official policy regarding what to do with the material.

Information released by the decree, which was published August 10, will be catalogued at the Air Force's Historic Documentation Center in Rio de Janeiro state. There, it will be made available to the general public.

The Brazilian Air Force is the largest air force in Latin America, with more than 800 aircraft and 50,000 personnel.

UFOs: Generals, Pilots And Officials Go On The Record

Journalist Leslie Kean's exhaustively researched work chronicles recent best evidence of UFOs

August 10, 2010

An Iranian military jet is disabled over Tehran by a brilliant UFO. In Belgium, F-16s are scrambled to intercept another UFO seen by hundreds of witnesses. A 30-minute encounter between yet another UFO and a commercial passenger jet flying over Alaska is documented by the FAA's Chief of Accidents and Investigations.

Veteran journalist Leslie Kean's just-released book "UFOs - Generals, Pilots and Government Officials Go On The Record" is, in the words of former CNN science correspondent Miles O'Brien, "not about beliefs, but about facts ... the most accurate, most credible reports on UFOs you will ever find."

Physicist Michio Kaku calls it "a serious and thoughtful book ... bound to set the gold standard for UFO research.

Find out more about the author and her book [here](#). To buy it, click [here](#).

Declassified Documents: Churchill Suppressed UFO Evidence

Winston Churchill "feared panic" if information got out, sealed files for 50 years. Give the man a cigar.

August 6, 2010

According to [London's Daily Telegraph](#), Ministry of Defense documents recently released by the National Archive reveal that the grandson of one of Winston Churchill's personal bodyguards accused Churchill of ordering a cover-up of a WWII encounter between a UFO and a Royal Air Force bomber.

[The Independent](#) quotes Churchill as saying in the documents, "This event should be immediately classified since it would create mass panic amongst the general population and destroy one's belief in the Church."

The declassified documents describe the bomber's return flight after a reconnaissance mission during which it was approached and tracked by a metallic arrow-shaped UFO that "appeared to hover noiselessly relative to the aircraft."

The grandson, a physicist whose name was redacted from the documents, filed the report in 1999 saying that "the object very suddenly disappeared, leaving no trace of its earlier presence."

The decision to suppress accounts of the encounter reportedly was made by Churchill after meeting with Dwight D. Eisenhower. It has long been rumored that Eisenhower actually met with extraterrestrials during his term as president.

While the grandson's accusation of a Churchill cover-up is anecdotal, [The Independent](#) does remind us that "in July 1952, after a spate of reports in Britain and the US, (Churchill) wrote to the Air Ministry saying: 'What does all this stuff about flying saucers amount to? What can it mean? What is the truth?' Unknown to Churchill, intelligence chiefs had formed [The Flying Saucer Working Party](#) in 1950 to investigate the reports, with the blessing of Lord Mountbatten, who thought the UFOs were alien craft."

Massive UFO Reported At Malaysian Resort

Police unable to corroborate initial witness reports of blue disk hovering over South China Sea

July 31, 2010

According to Malaysian English language daily [The Star](#), a large, blue disk may have been seen hovering within sight of [Tuaran Beach Resort](#) near Kota Kinabalu, capital city of the Malaysian state of Sabah on the South China Sea.

The daytime sighting, which took place July 18 and lasted only a few minutes, seems to have generated only one photo, albeit a rather impressive one, reportedly because the cell phones of most of the hotel's guests and staff who tried to photograph the object "went dead."

Temporary interference with electronic devices, including cars, is a common component of UFO close encounter reports. Also common are claims that some people present during a sighting were "switched off" at the moment of contact so that they remember nothing about it afterward.

The Kota Kinabalu sighting was first reported by the Malaysian tabloid [Harian Metro](#), which interviewed at least two witnesses, both in their late 20s. They described the object as first appearing to be blue, then green, then disappearing suddenly.

One witness, Donny Benedict, was quoted as saying, "It's strange that it did not make any noise like a normal aircraft."

Unfortunately, according to a July 23 article published by the [Borneo Post](#), DSP Suhaimi Wiro, Tuaran District Police Chief, said that subsequent police interviews with staff and nearby villagers turned up no one who knew anything about the UFO sighting.

"We do not know what is the intention of the photographer," Wiro said, "but the picture seems to be very scenic." The intention of the Tuaran police, according to Wiro, is not to investigate the matter further.

Terrestrial explanations for the sighting range from a lenticular cloud (shown here) to light reflections, but the fact that the one photo available of the alleged sighting looks rather like an advertisement for the resort, coupled with the fact that a police investigation turned up *not one* witness among resort staff, makes this a less than compelling case at first blush.

Notwithstanding the appearance of more photos, testimony or evidence, our guess is that the photo being distributed most likely depicts a close encounter of the marketing kind, rather than anything involving extraterrestrials.

Commercial Airline Pilot Says UFOs Are Real

Technorati talks with Jim Courant about his life as a pilot and a believer

July 30, 2010

With nearly 30,000 flight hours under his belt, Jim Courant's qualifications as a major passenger airline captain are solid. So is his conviction that the UFO phenomenon is real.

"I got the proof that I was after," Courant says. "That's the part I won't discuss. But obviously something has kept me in this, taking the chances I've taken."

The nature of the proof that he found isn't all that Courant won't discuss. Concerned about professional repercussions, he declines to confirm the name of his airline. Nor will he reveal the identities of some high level officials who he says have confirmed the extraterrestrial presence in conversations with him.

There are a few names that he will drop, however.

Astronaut Gordon Cooper, whose own [unambiguous UFO encounter](#) is a matter of public record, was a friend of Courant's. He's also traded stories with astronaut Edgar Mitchell, whose [2009 statement at the National Press Building](#) calling for the U.S. government to come clean on the topic of UFOs garnered such fleeting media attention.

The short shrift Mitchell received in the press gives Courant little cause for optimism that future media events will turn the tide.

Media obscura

"A national hero and the sixth man to walk on the moon says that your government and others have been in contact with ETs for 67 years. That's an incredible statement. It was buried on page seven the next day in the *NY Post*. Then Rush Limbaugh got in on the act."

Courant's frustration with the trickle-down effect of what X-Conference organizer Steve Bassett calls the "truth embargo" is obvious when he's asked to comment on the effectiveness of the disclosure movement.

"I'd like to say that Steve is getting somewhere with what he's trying to do," Courant says. "But the internet is the new sheriff in town. There's so much B.S. that it's made it tough for people to know what to believe."

Saying that he's ready to unload his 5,000-volume library of UFO books, Courant talks with the road-weary circumspection of someone who's told his story countless times, and who's taken a few hits for the telling.

"It's ruined my social life," says Courant, who is divorced and lives in the Carolinas.

According to Courant, it's not unheard of for cockpit personnel to turn in pilots who express an interest in UFOs. This can trigger everything from psych tests to what are called "line checks" (in-flight performance evaluations) which, if they go badly, can result in dismissal. The best way to avoid trouble, Courant says, is to steer clear of the topic while in uniform and, even when out of uniform, never to mention your employer's name in any context that involves UFOs.

But Courant, now 59, continues to fly, despite his active involvement in UFO research. He's spoken on the topic as far afield as China and Brazil and, closer to home, in Gaithersburg, MD where he participated in the 2005 X-Conference "Seen from Above" pilots' panel.

Courant was invited in 1992 by an NBC affiliate in Raleigh, North Carolina to host "New Perspective," a live daily television show focusing on topics similar to those popularized by NBC's "Unsolved Mysteries" series, for which he'd served as a consultant.

"We did 534 shows, covering many aspects of the UFO subject," Courant says. He traveled extensively taping interviews for the show which he co-hosted with a woman he'll identify only as "Dea," explaining that she now prefers to maintain a low profile.

Quest for knowledge in the avalanche of lies

Asked about his own UFO sightings, Courant says that he's had three, the most notable of which occurred in 1995 while he was flying from New Mexico to Los Angeles.

"My co-pilot wouldn't talk about it afterward," he says, describing a large, oval-shaped, blue-green object that approached from the left, then shot up at a 45-degree angle in a bright flash of light.

But Courant acknowledges that expert testimony is no match for what he says Gordon Cooper referred to as the "huge avalanche of lies" obstructing disclosure.

Google "Jim Courant" and you'll find, among other things, a \$20 DVD titled "Jim Courant Presents UFO Perspective," which Courant says he's never seen and did not authorize. Search for him on YouTube and you'll find excerpts from an interview he did with black ops scientist and alleged contactee Dr. Michael Wolfe, which Courant says was posted without permission.

"I've taken a lot of heat for that," he says, lamenting the ill effects of information age technology, even as it raises public awareness (and acceptance) of UFOs.

"It's sad that between your astronauts and your trained pilots, there's still the put-down factor. I've learned from 20 years that you've got the real deal people, and the people who are in it for the ego and to make some money and fame."

"For me," Courant says, "it's ended up being a quest for knowledge."

Obama Introduces UFO Hacker McKinnon To The Audacity of Hope

Barack Obama indicates that compromise may be possible in Gary McKinnon's extradition proceedings

July 21, 2010

[The Daily Telegraph](#) reported today that Barack Obama has indicated that a compromise may be reached in the U.S. government's long-standing extradition proceedings against British computer hacker Gary McKinnon.

McKinnon, who suffers from Asperger's Syndrome, has admitted to breaking into U.S. military computers in 2001 while searching for evidence that the U.S. government is withholding information about UFOs and associated extraterrestrial propulsion technologies.

British Prime Minister David Cameron raised McKinnon's case during a July 20 meeting with Obama in Washington and later told the BBC that a compromise might entail McKinnon serving part of his sentence on British soil.

Speaking at a news conference with Cameron, Obama said, "I trust that this will get resolved in a way that underscores the seriousness of the issue, but also underscores the fact that we work together and we can find an appropriate solution."

Explaining that it would be inappropriate for him to influence ongoing legal discussions, however, Obama said that he would not get personally involved with the case.

The U.S. government has claimed that McKinnon caused \$5K damage to each of the computers he accessed, an amount that happens to be the threshold to trigger extradition according to the controversial extradition treaty signed by the U.S. and Great Britain in 2003.

This coincidence has not escaped the attention of McKinnon's army of vocal supporters in the U.K., nor has the asymmetrical terms of the treaty which some argue give the United States Patriot Act-like authority to bypass the British legal system in its pursuit of British citizens.

The U.S. is claiming over \$700,000 in damages. If convicted here, McKinnon could face up to 60 years in prison.

The Register reports that Janis Sharp, McKinnon's mother, said in a Twitter update, "I'm amazed and over the moon that David Cameron has discussed Gary's case with Obama & there's hope."

As quoted in *The Guardian*, McKinnon's lawyer, Karen Todner, said, "We're very pleased that David Cameron has raised this and had a face-to-face discussion about Gary. Obama has used the term 'an appropriate solution' and the appropriate solution is that he stands trial in the UK."

X-Conference organizer Stephen Bassett has stated repeatedly his belief that the U.S. will never bring McKinnon to trial. Doing so, he's argued, would require the prosecution to confront allegations of secrecy regarding UFOs, a topic the U.S. government typically avoids.

China's Second Mass UFO Sighting In Two Weeks

Chongqing witnesses report "lantern-shaped" hovering objects

July 21, 2010

Shanghai Daily is reporting that a mass UFO sighting has taken place in the Chinese city of Chongqing, less than two weeks after another UFO sighting disrupted airline travel in Hangzhou.

On July 15, multiple witnesses reported "four lantern-like objects forming a diamond shape that hovered over Chongqing's Shaping Park for over an hour."

This follows the July 7 sighting of "a twinkling object" which shut down Hangzhou's Xioshan Airport for nearly an hour when first spotted over the city. Subsequent requests from UFO investigators to obtain radar images from Xioshan Airport were refused. The

explanation given by airport officials, according to *Shanghai Daily*, was that "radar caught nothing."

According to the *The Huffington Post*, the state-run Xinhua News Agency has quoted a Chinese air traffic control official as saying that, as of July 16, "no conclusion has yet been drawn (about the Xioshan Airport sighting)," but *China Daily* reported on July 10 that "a source with knowledge of the matter" said that the object "had a military connection."

Although UFO sighting reports are relatively rare in China, this is at least the second time that a sighting has occurred in Chongqing. *China's Global Times* reported on August 26, 2009 that a "twinkling, V-like object" was sighted over the Beibei district of Chongqing on the evening of August 23. According to the report, "flashing lights of red, blue, green, yellow and white emanated from it, attracting hundreds of passersby."

According to *CNN*, MIT weapons analyst Geoffrey Forden believes that many of the images of the recent China UFOs were created using Photoshop. Those not faked, Forden says, most likely are of a DF-21 missile headed for the Gobi desert.

It is hoped that Chinese officials, who are still investigating the sightings, will avail themselves of Forden's expertise. Meanwhile we add the Chinese DF-21 to our growing list of military pyrotechnic achievements. That list also includes the Russian Bulava (December 9, 2009 Norway spiral) and the American SpaceX Falcon 9/Dragon ([June 4, 2010 Australia semi-spiral](#)).

Yahoo News Gets Crop Circle Story Half-Right

Scientific crop circle investigations not addressed by British pensioners' 1991 for-profit confession

July 21, 2010

Yahoo News is feeding readers a link to a [new video](#) it calls "The elaborate hoax behind crop circles." The link points to a slideshow of aerial crop circle photography that purports to put the entire phenomenon to rest in under two minutes.

"It's been known since 1991," the video explains, "that crop formations are man-made when the original pranksters, Doug Bower and Dave Chorley, confessed to creating hundreds of circles."

The video does not, however, address the work of investigators, like Nancy Talbott of [BLT Research](#), who continue to study the phenomenon and who've documented crop circle characteristics that cannot be accounted for by men walking through wheat fields with boards strapped to their feet. Those characteristics include:

- Abnormal enlargement of cell wall pits in the bract tissue of crop circle plants
- Lateral and longitudinal enlargement, and bending and stretching of plant stem nodes in crop circle plants
- Stunting and malformation of seeds in crop circle plants
- Crystal growth in crop circle soil that, under laboratory conditions, could be achieved only at temperatures that would incinerate all plant matter

- Magnetic anomalies inside crop circles.

While the crop circle phenomenon is one of the “muddier” topics in ufology, it is by no means the closed book that Yahoo News claims. In addition to Talbott’s ongoing work and that of others, the Deputy Director of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), Lachezar Filipov, was actively studying the formations as recently as last year.

Yahoo News also neglects to point out that Bower and Chorley were paid rather handsomely for their admission by the British tabloid, *Today*, and were unable to account for crop formations that had been reported years prior to their alleged hoax activities. In subsequent public appearances and during debates, they also strayed somewhat from their original story.

The question, as in all of ufology, is not whether any examples of the phenomenon are man-made. Without the slightest doubt, the vast majority of them are. The question ufology asks is whether there exist any crop formations that *can’t* be explained. *That’s* the question, contrary to what Yahoo News would have readers believe, that has yet to be answered.

Penn & Teller UFO Episode of Bullshit Meets Or Exceeds Expectations

Technorati’s UFO feature writer reminds himself that he’s a self-righteous dweeb
July 18, 2010

My Technorati editor, Bradford Schmidt, asked me if I was going to watch the Area 51 episode of Penn & Teller: Bullshit!, sort of implying that I *should* watch it, UFOs being my area of expertise and all. So I did.

And now I’m writing about it.

First of all, a confession: Before watching this week’s broadcast, I’d never seen a Penn & Teller act in its entirety. I’d caught snippets here and there over the years, but never paid much attention to them.

I did, however, watch Bullshit/Area 51 from stem to stern, and I did pay close attention, and my main impression was that Penn Jillette ... can I say this? ... just isn’t very funny. I mean, no funnier than the fat guy at the end of the bar who drinks too much and laughs like a foghorn, the one whose wife, as he puts it, is “a f**cking bitch.”

Like fish in a barrel

Bullshit’s UFO exposé focused on Area 51, a military testing facility in the Nevada desert made infamous by decades of speculation that it’s a place where captured alien technology is hidden.

Unfortunately, Area 51 has received so much attention from the fringe, and the fringe has received so much attention from the press, that the signal to noise ratio there has gone completely to hell, ufologically speaking. The serious UFO researchers who do

involve themselves with Area 51 as a field of study or speculation are either very brave or very foolish. My money is on the latter.

So when you combine this particular topic, in all its gaudy tabloid splendor, with three self-described “UFO hunters” (which is *never* a good sign), what you get is ... well, you get Penn & Teller: Bullshit! Area 51.

As I predicted in my [preview article](#) about the episode, it was a no-guts hatchet job. Bombastic voice-overs, goofy camera angles, f-bombs falling like rain. (Fans of P&T will no doubt ask, “Your point being?”)

A friend who read the preview article tells me that I need to chill, and, reading back over it, I’ll admit that I do come across like a bit of a self-righteous dweeb. Which I basically am, so whatever.

My friend also reminded me that Penn & Teller do what they do for laughs. They’re comedians. Why shouldn’t they take the path of least resistance? Low road, high road, what difference does it make? Comedy is *slipping* on a banana peel, not picking it up and taking it home to the compost jar in your kitchen.

And maybe that *is* the point after all ... Bullshit *isn’t* news or commentary. It *isn’t* research or analysis or even satire. It’s comedy. Not the brand of comedy I prefer, but obviously *somebody’s* preference, otherwise it wouldn’t be on Showtime.

And I do need to chill, it’s true. Because nobody takes Penn & Teller seriously, anyway. Do they?

NUFORC Director Takes Scientific Approach To Study Of UFOs

Biotech entrepreneur wants media, public to wake up and smell the coffee ... or at least the saucer

July 16, 2010

One might ask why Peter Davenport, after 16 years at the helm of the National UFO Reporting Center (NUFORC) and thousands of UFO sighting reports (and countless crank calls) into his tenure, persists in such a decidedly not-for-profit, largely thankless enterprise.

Technorati put that question to Davenport and got a healthy dose of good old fashioned professorial fury in reply.

“We’re dealing with the most significant scientific question that has ever confronted man,” says Davenport, whose C.V. includes degrees in Russian, genetics, biochemistry and international business from Stanford and the University of Washington.

“Are we alone, or are we not? From my point of view, the clear and resounding answer is that we’re not. If I were to stop what I’m doing, it would contribute to the government’s apparent desire to keep the American people in the dark.”

Davenport’s passion is shared by many in the field, though his credentials set him apart from most. A former Russian translator, flight instructor, college instructor and fisheries

observer aboard Soviet fishing vessels, he founded and later cashed out of BioSyn, a 300-employee biotechnology company based in Seattle, before assuming the NUFORC directorship in 1994.

He now runs NUFORC's 24/7 hotline and database out of his home, a two-bedroom apartment in Washington state roughly seven miles from the decommissioned Minuteman missile facility he owns and may one day occupy.

Or maybe not.

"I'm not quite the hermit that I thought I was when I purchased the site," Davenport says. "It's quite remote."

The scientific approach

Throughout Technorati's one-hour interview, two things were made abundantly clear. The first is that Peter Davenport is, above all else, a scientist. He declines to speculate about anything, including people's motives or any fact that he can't verify. The other is that Davenport is exasperated with the consistent failure of journalists, scientists, and government officials to come to proper grips with the evidence that pours into NUFORC on a daily basis.

"When I look at the events in Washington, DC and across this nation, I get profoundly alarmed," Davenport says. "It's almost as if it's a government that has no interest in serving the American people. I used to live in the Soviet Union as a Russian translator. What we routinely laughed about 31 years ago is now happening in the United States."

Another issue that has caused Davenport considerable consternation is the lack of interest in a method he's proposed for proving, once and for all, that American airspace is teeming with solid objects capable of maneuvers that would liquify any terrestrial occupant subject to the laws of physics as currently understood.

"I'm flabbergasted that nobody proposed this before I did," Davenport says. The method he proposes, as outlined in [a paper posted to the NUFORC web site](#), is passive radar.

Passive radar's passive reception

"The concept hit me before Martin Luther King weekend in 1995. I thought, 'Oh my God, we can detect UFOs with existing equipment. This isn't pie in the sky.'"

Davenport estimates that his idea, which involves detection of existing FM signals reflected from moving targets, would cost roughly \$750,000 to implement.

"I got a call from a senior official in the CIA congratulating me on the paper. He said that a good portion of his career had been dedicated to building clandestine radar systems using so-called passive radar."

Congratulations are not a form of payment accepted at the hardware store, however, and funding thus far has been difficult - nay, impossible - to come by.

"I've been tearing my hair out," Davenport says. "We could end the UFO debate right now, but everybody goes back to sleep. I've been to (aerospace billionaire and MUFON "Star Team" patron) Bob Bigelow on two occasions. He got very excited, but I've yet to

receive a penny. I've done everything in my power, except jumping off a high building or bridge, to try to fund this thing."

Yet Davenport keeps plugging away, frequently irritated, occasionally snubbed, but undeterred over the long haul. Even when running for public office, which he's done twice without success, he makes no bones about what he considers to be the biggest issue of all.

"I wear my scientific interests on my sleeve and I point out to people that we're dealing with the ultimate scientific question. This is an abiding interest to me and it should be an interest to everyone on this planet."

Those to whom it is of interest, according to Davenport, include "people with positions of considerable responsibility" within the government, some of whom he says have told him point-blank that UFOs "are what they appear to be, namely very sophisticated craft under intelligent control."

"It's time to awaken people from their Ichabod Crane-like slumber," Davenport says. "It's the craziest thing I've ever seen."

And that, coming from a man in Davenport's line of work, is saying a great deal.

Penn & Teller To Pinch A Fragrant Loaf With Upcoming UFO Episode Of "Bullshit"

Popular comedians taking the lower colon road most travelled by "swamp gas" enthusiasts
July 15, 2010

Unless the advance publicity for Penn & Teller's next episode of *Penn & Teller: Bullshit!* is a big-time bait-and-switch, viewers might want to have plenty of air freshener on hand for the broadcast. Visit their [Showtime page](#) and you'll see a clip from their interview with Pat Travis, proprietress of [The Little A'Le'Inn](#), a UFO-themed motel in Rachel, Nevada near Area 51.

Referring to Travis' motel, Penn says, "That's just stupid, but I like it," then, "Pat, you don't believe in all this alien stuff, do you?" then, "These Rachelites know which dimension their alien toast is buttered in."

In ufology, the term "swamp gas" refers to any specious explanation offered to deflect, rather than engage, the extraterrestrial hypothesis. U.S. Air Force Project Blue Book consultant Dr. Allen J. Hynek made the term famous when he rather sheepishly offered it as the explanation for a series of sightings in Michigan in 1966. Once relieved of his Air Force indentures, Hynek founded the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) and published extensively (sans effluvium) on the topic, but that term - "swamp gas" - haunted him to the end of the days.

It seems fitting to invoke Hynek's memory as Penn & Teller count down to airtime. We wait with bated breath for their no-guts, low-brow hatchet job, one altogether unworthy of the thinking man's shtick they purport to wield.

Sadly, indications are that they'll kiss skeptic butt, just as so many have done before them, inhaling deeply of the swampy vapors issuing therefrom ... and they'll invite you to do the same.

As for me and my house, we're waiting to exhale.

UFOs Shut Down Nuclear Weapons Sites Says Former Air Force Officer

Ex-military witnesses to speak at National Press Club in September
July 14, 2010

Despite the U.S. military's insistence that UFOs ceased to be of any scientific or national security interest after publication of the Condon Report in 1968, nuclear missile installations around the world have been a frequent target of UFO activity and, in some cases, otherwise inexplicable shut-downs.

This is a fact verified by both government documents obtained through FOIA requests, as well as eyewitness testimony.

One such incident occurred at Malstrom AFB, home of the 341st Missile Wing in central Montana. On the morning of March 16, 1967, Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander (DMCCC) Robert Salas was on duty inside Malstrom's subterranean Oscar-Flight Launch Control Center (LCC) capsule near Roy, Montana when he received a call from a "clearly frightened" topside security officer reporting that a UFO was hovering over the front gate.

Alarms sounded moments later as, one after another, up to eight Minuteman missiles went into "no-go" (inoperable) condition.

On September 27 of this year, Robert Salas, together with UFO researcher Robert Hastings, will host a [press conference](#) at the National Press Club addressing the issue of UFO interference with nuclear missile facilities over the years.

This interference, widely-known and well-documented, is glaringly inconsistent with the U.S. military's repeated statements that it has no interest in UFOs. According to Hastings, more than 100 former U.S. Air Force nuclear weapons installation personnel have come forward with information that contradicts the military's no-see-um stance.

The September Salas-Hastings press conference will present testimony from one dozen former Air Force personnel and is attempting to raise \$15,000 to cover conference expenses. Those wishing to help underwrite the cost of the conference may do so by clicking [here](#).

Paola Harris on UFOs, Europe and Mario Borghezio

Technorati talks with journalist Paola Harris about things extraterrestrial
July 13, 2010

Technorati contacted Italian-American investigative journalist Paola Harris to get her take on Italian MEP Mario Borghezio's July 7 press conference calling on EU member nations to declassify their UFO files and establish a center for study of apparent alien activity on our planet. (See our [July 10 article](#) for more information about the press conference.)

Harris, whose list of published works includes two books on exopolitics, is a frequent presenter at UFO conferences and a familiar name to students of the UFO phenomenon. She does not hold Borghezio in high regard.

You've got to look at the integrity (of Borghezio)," Harris says, "He's a neo-fascist and he's done violent things in the past."

No doubt.

A prominent member of the ultra-conservative Lega Nord (Northern League) political party, Borghezio was found guilty of arson in 2005 after setting fire to the sleeping pallets of immigrants living under a bridge in Turin. At the other end of the emotional spectrum, he has described the experience of speaking at political rallies as "almost an orgasm."

"On the exopolitics forum, there's been quite a bit of discussion about this," Harris says, referring to Borghezio's association with the disclosure movement. "There's the camp that looks at integrity as being part of disclosure. There's a real division in the exopolitical community."

Exopolitics concerns the creation or influence of government policy toward extraterrestrial phenomena and extraterrestrial beings. Denver activist Jeff Peckman's ballot initiative, covered in a [recent Technorati feature](#), is exopolitical in nature.

The Weaponization of Space

Harris believes that Borghezio's motives for calling for UFO disclosure are three-fold. Other than normal curiosity about the phenomenon, which would be the first motive, Harris says that Borghezio simply wants attention. Judging from his comments about the erotic benefits of public speaking, one is inclined to agree with her.

Harris speculates that his third motive may be more insidious, however.

"(Borghezio) is the kind of guy who could create an argument for shooting (UFOs) out of the sky because they're an enemy," Harris said. She points out that this militaristic approach to the phenomenon was predicted by Werner von Braun.

Dr. Carol Rosin, spokesperson for von Braun during the last years of his life, [has testified](#) that von Braun predicted that the weaponization of space ultimately would be justified as defense against alien invasion. According to Rosin, von Braun said that "the last card is the alien card ... and all of it is a lie."

In distancing herself from Borghezio, Harris also parts ways with those in the disclosure movement who are less discriminating about the celebrity endorsement trophies they choose to display on their mantle.

"I don't quote (Borghezio) on my website," she says. "There's nothing about (his public statements) that suggests galactic diplomacy."

Exopolitics in Europe ... “absolutely normal”

While Borghezio’s flamboyant behavior might raise as many eyebrows in Europe as it does here, his demands for UFO disclosure are no cause for concern in Italy. Asked how Italy’s mainstream media handles the topic of UFOs, Harris says that it’s handled “as something absolutely normal.”

“In Italy, the Campeche (Mexico) story was reported in its entirety. They also compared it to the phenomenon in Hessdalen (Norway). The announcers were familiar enough with the phenomenon to make that comparison.”

Strange lights have been observed over [Hessdalen](#) for many years. The Campeche incident occurred in March of 2004, when Mexican Air Force Merlin C-26A aircraft patrolling local airspace for drug smugglers recorded [infrared footage](#) of several UFOs. That footage was released by the military to Mexican journalist Jaime Maussan and, to this day, remains unexplained.

Harris says that, while the Italian government doesn’t have a stated position on UFOs, the Italian Air Force makes no secret of its interest in the topic.

“At two UFO conferences that I attended (in Italy), a functionary of the Italian Air Force, in uniform, stood up and described how the air force categorizes UFOs, even describing one or two cases.”

Sober, sophisticated coverage of the study of UFOs by America’s mainstream media is rare and, since publication of the Condon Report in 1968, the American military’s stance on the issue has been consistently “don’t ask, don’t tell.”

“When I lived in Italy,” Harris says, “I personally funded John Mack, Travis Walton, Ryan Wood, Linda Moulton Howe (and others) to come over to speak to the Italian people. The Italian people really appreciated it. My conferences were symposia. No T-shirts, gadgets or retail ufology. You come back to the U.S., it’s one big commercial venture.”

Unfortunately, it’s what Harris describes as “retail ufology” that grabs the headlines here on Terra Americana, while the work of journalists and researchers less interested in selling swag goes unnoticed. For a dose of quintessentially ignorant American arrogance on the topic of UFOs, readers are invited to tune in to Penn & Teller’s upcoming [episode of “Bullshit!”](#)

At least, when we show our big, fat Yankee asses, we have the good taste to do it in HD.

UFO Causes Flight Delays In China

Old arms race energies being diverted to aerial light shows by U.S., Russia and China
July 12, 2010

[China Daily](#) reports that Xiaoshan Airport (Hangzhou, capital of East China’s Zhejiang province) rerouted both inbound and outbound air traffic for several hours after detecting a UFO around 9 p.m. on July 7. A source “with knowledge of the matter” reportedly told [China Daily](#) that the source of the UFO had been determined, but that the information could not yet be released. A military connection is suspected.

Judging from photographs taken of the Hangzhou UFO, Technorati assumes that it was a failed attempt to reproduce the spiral light display technology demonstrated by Russian military engineers over Norway and, to a noticeably lesser extent, by the U.S. military over Australia, [as we reported last month](#).

Italian MEP Calls for UFO Disclosure

Mario Borghezio holds press conference says EU member nations’ X-files should be unlocked

July 10, 2010

Speaking at a July 7 press conference in the European Union parliament building in Strasbourg, Italian euro-deputy Mario Borghezio presented a written declaration calling for declassification of all EU member states’ documents relating to UFOs.

No stranger to controversy, the flamboyant Borghezio is a prominent member of the conservative Lega Nord (Northern League) political party. According to an [EUObserver.com article](#), Borghezio held a press conference in Brussels last month accusing the Bilderberg Group of “secretly running the world.”

The Bilderberg Group is an invitation-only gathering of roughly 130 international movers and shakers, held each year in the Netherlands and closed to the public. The list of past attendees includes Bill and Hillary Clinton, Tony Blair, Microsoft founder Bill Gates and SC Governor Mark Sanford.

EUObserver.com also reports that, in 2005, Borghezio was found guilty of arson after setting fire to the sleeping pallets of immigrants living under a bridge in Turin.

[The Epoch Times](#) reported that as of July 8, 31 members of the 736-member European Parliament had pledged support for Borghezio’s proposal, which was submitted on June 14.

“Many members of the scientific community have been looking into the issue of UFOs and have denounced the systematic covering up of information on the subject,” Borghezio said in the proposed resolution.

Borghezio pointed out that the 33rd General Assembly of the United Nations officially recognized the existence of UFOs in 1978. When Grenada Prime Minister and U.N. disclosure advocate Sir Eric Gairy was overthrown in Grenada in 1979, however, that particular branch of the disclosure movement withered and died.

“I think that, under the principle of transparency, the EU member states have a duty to make public and available to all scientific data on the UFOs which today are partially or wholly withheld,” Borghezio said.

U.S. readers may be surprised to discover how active and open some members of the European community have been in addressing the topic of UFOs. Britain’s Ministry of Defense has released thousands of pages of UFO-related documents in recent years.

The French COMETA report, published in 1999, was a landmark event in that it was prepared by former high-level military and government officials. Other countries also have responded to grassroots pressure by officially acknowledging both the reality of the phenomenon and ongoing efforts to investigate it.

Read the brief text of Borghezio's June 14 proposed declaration on Scribd [here](#).

Independence Day UFO Sightings Flood NUFORC Hotline

"Seemingly serious-minded individuals" saying night skies lit up with UFO activity July 4 July 10, 2010

Many of the UFO reports made each year end up inside a decommissioned nuclear missile complex in the scrubland of Lincoln County in eastern Washington state. That's where [NUFORC](#) (National UFO Reporting Center) director Peter Davenport has lived and worked for the last four years.

Because Davenport's 24/7 hotline receives so many reports each year, it's notable when he flags a sighting or group of sightings for special attention. That, according to this July 6 NUFORC posting, is what's happening to many of the sighting reports received July 4:

Over the last 48 hours, NUFORC has received almost 100 similar reports of very peculiar events, which have been witnessed across the U. S. and Canada on July 4th, and perhaps on July 3rd, as well. The sightings are a phenomenon for which we have no ready explanation. Many of the reports from both days have been submitted by seemingly serious-minded individuals, many of whom apparently witnessed the events with multiple other witnesses present.

After announcing the wave of sightings on July 6 on Coast-to-Coast, a nationally syndicated radio program hosted by George Noory, NUFORC received almost 100 additional reports, many involving multiple witnesses across the U.S. and Canada.

According to Davenport, the reports "are similar, in that the witnesses have described seeing strange red, orange, or yellow 'fireballs,' which have been seen either to hover in the night sky or to streak overhead, sometimes individually, and on some occasions in clusters. In some instances, the objects were observed against a clear, cloudless sky, and in other cases they were observed below solid cloud cover or in broken overcast conditions.

"Our strong opinion is that the objects seen cannot be easily ascribed to any prosaic event of terrestrial origin that we have been able to identify."

A [Stanford alumnus](#) with graduate degrees in genetics and biochemistry from the University of Washington, Davenport is the former president of BioSyn, a Seattle-area biotechnology company. He cashed out of BioSyn in 1994 with what the Seattle Times called "a small fortune" and that same year assumed the reigns of NUFORC, which he funds out-of-pocket.

Founded in 1974, NUFORC is known internationally as one of the world's most comprehensive UFO databases. Reports to NUFORC may be made anonymously either [online](#) or, if the sighting occurred within the last week, by phone at 206.722.3000.

Photo of Ray Davenport by Ray-Paul Nielsen, Brier, WA

Gulf Oil Disaster Drifting into UFO Airwaves

Proponents of UFO disclosure say Gulf oil spill makes immediate release of alien technology mandatory

June 29, 2010

UFO Paranormal Radio Network talk show host Angelia Joiner has devoted her last two broadcasts of the Joiner Report entirely to the Gulf oil disaster, first interviewing documentary filmmaker James Fox, then interviewing scientist Richard C. Hoagland who once served as science advisor to Walter Cronkite.

Joiner is the former Stephenville (Texas) Empire-Tribune reporter who broke the widely publicized "Stephenville Lights" story in 2008. She now speaks at ufology conventions and hosts a weekly radio show that focuses on the topic that made her famous: UFOs.

Joiner is one of several UFO/paranormal reporters and personalities who are being distracted from their customary beats by the ever-worsening spill. Terms like "extinction event" are pressurizing the paranormal airwaves like the gigantic methane bubble that Hoagland says BP's errant rig has caused to form in the Earth's upper crust. According to Hoagland, a frequent guest on Coast to Coast AM, that bubble already is causing a bulge in the ocean floor and, if released, would trigger tsunamis (yes, plural) that would devastate the entire Gulf coast.

Speaking on the [June 18 edition of The Joiner Report](#), Hoagland advocated the nuclear option. As he describes it, this would involve detonating one-kiloton neutron bombs (big heat, small boom) inside the relief wells now being drilled on either side of the damaged Deepwater Horizon well. Doing so, he says, would form an impermeable glass plug hundreds of feet across, capping the leak and relieving the pressure responsible for the methane bulge.

But while Hoagland and Joiner discussed the nuclear option, disclosure lobbyist Stephen Bassett and *Exopolitics Journal* editor Michael Salla speak freely about the extraterrestrial option. Both men (and they're by no means alone) believe that the technology to clean up the spill and end worldwide dependence on fossil fuels is being suppressed by people determined to keep making money the old-fashioned way ... by punching miles-deep holes in ground, regardless of the long or short-term environmental costs incurred.

Writing in the July issue of *Exopolitics Journal*, Salla said, "As we make the transition from a Type 0 civilization based on fossil fuels, into a Type 1 global civilization using new energy technologies, we need to consult with and learn from extraterrestrial civilizations that have traveled the road before us. We simply need to open ourselves to radical new ways of thinking about how advanced technologies and extraterrestrial life can assist our planetary transition through crises such as the Gulf oil spill."

In a [press release](#) dated June 4, Stephen Bassett echoed Salla's remarks by asking three rather succinct questions:

1. Does the United States Government have in its possession vehicles of extraterrestrial origin?
2. If "yes", has the United States Government for decades been studying the energy and propulsion physics of such vehicles?
3. If "yes", when will this technology be available to address the growing challenges facing the planet and the human race?

Put these questions to anyone who both accepts the reality of the extraterrestrial presence and dismisses the idea that whoever's running the greatest show on Earth has our best interests at heart, and the answers you'll get will be as follows:

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. When Hell freezes over. (Or after the lower half of our continent has been decimated by the most cataclysmic case of flatulence in modern history. And God forbid [anybody lights a match.](#))

Denver Green Lights UFO Ballot Initiative for November Election

Jeff Peckman's EXTRA Campaign succeeds in putting UFO disclosure question to the voters
June 21

This November, voters in Denver will decide whether to create a seven-member Extraterrestrial Affairs Commission "to help ensure the health, safety, and cultural awareness of Denver residents and visitors in relation to potential encounters or interactions with extraterrestrial intelligent beings or their vehicles."

First reviewed by Denver City Council in April 2009, the E.T. [ballot initiative](#) is the work of Jeff Peckman's EXTRA campaign. [The campaign's web site](#) explains the need for a Commission in terms familiar to students of the UFO disclosure movement:

"If our Federal Government continually refuses to openly and honestly deal with this matter ... we need to handle it at a more accessible and accountable level of government. We need grassroots efforts to restore our faith and trust in our systems."

After his ballot petition was deemed insufficient by the [Denver Elections Division](#) in September 2009, Peckman resubmitted it in November 2009 and the petition was approved. Initially scheduled to be included in the August 10, 2010 primary election ballot, Peckman's initiative now will be voted on November 2, 2010.

Peckman arrived on the national stage in 2008, making appearances on [David Letterman's show](#) and elsewhere, after he held a press conference during which he claimed to have in his possession an amateur video of an extraterrestrial standing at a Nebraska man's window.

According to Peckman, the Extraterrestrial Affairs Commission will be funded with gifts and grants. No public money will be used. Approximately 4,000 signatures had to be collected and verified for the ballot initiative to be accepted by the Elections Division. Peckman says he collected more than twice that number.

Peckman's efforts are part of a broader movement advocating disclosure of information about the extraterrestrial presence that many believe is being suppressed by what former president Eisenhower referred to as the "military industrial complex." If established, the Commission will serve as a governmental platform that disclosure advocates can use to demand release of that information.

In an [open letter to President Obama](#) written earlier this year, Peckman pointed out that "public opinion polls conducted for the last 10-20 years have shown that a large majority of those polled believe that we are not alone in the universe."

This November, we'll find out if a simple majority of Denver voters believe that the Mile High City should become the first city in the United States to form a government commission devoted to the study and dissemination of information related to the extraterrestrial hypothesis.

UFO Reader Feedback: the Good, the Bad and the Highly Strange

(And what the heck is a "golden phenomenon," anyway?)
June 18, 2010

At one end of the Technorati feedback spectrum are Stanton Friedman (who stopped by [this article](#) to advertise his new book) and NARCAP scientist Ted Roe (who stopped by [this article](#) to offer a semantic distinction between UFO's and UAP's). At the other end of the spectrum is the effervescent, if linguistically challenged, reader who wrote, *"if people saw what they may have saw i dont think their making storys or lies up about UFO OR Sauce Squash or thee LOCK NESS MONSTER."*

(If you've already figured out that Sauce Squash = Sasquatch, go to the head of thee CLASS.)

Then there's the email that arrived yesterday from a woman identifying herself as "Bulgarian journalist" Anna Kaltseva. She wanted me to know about a "unique experiment" led in 2009 by "the phenomenon Mariana Vezneva."

The phenomenon? There are people in the world who refer to themselves as "the phenomenon?"

[An attachment](#) to Kaltseva's email chronicles what she calls a "mental-pictogram dialogue experiment" in which a team of 14 Bulgarian scientists posed questions to extraterrestrials and received their answers in the form of crop circles. Vezneva's role as leader of the experiment was to transmit the scientists' questions to the extraterrestrials telepathically and then to interpret the crop circle replies that followed.

Google Mariana Vezneva and you'll find [a site](#) where the experiment, as well as her "phenomenon" credentials are laid out in fine fashion. According to Vezneva's site, she is "a phenomenon (and) holder of the phenomenon's award (which is) "the statuette Golden Phenomenon."

And who hasn't heard of the Golden Phenomenon award? I mean, really?

Google Anna Kaltseva and you'll find a [Facebook page](#), a [LinkedIn page](#) and a [Twitter page](#). The LinkedIn page says that she's an editor living in Bulgaria. End of transmission. The Twitter page says this: "I am Bulgarian woman and I am happy join with you!" The most recent tweet there: "I am earning and enjoying with (followed by a link to a read-articles-in-your-spare-time-for-money site called Readbud)." (And yes, the Bulgarian journalist's oft-repeated tweet really is spelled "enjoying.")

I called internet talk show host Kevin Smith, whose show specializes in the paranormal and who worked in eastern Europe as an international police officer, to ask if it didn't seem to him like Vezneva and Kaltseva come across like a mid-century psychic and her promoter and he agreed that they do give that impression. He'd also received Kaltseva's description of the "mental-pictogram" experiment.

Ufology has a long history of flamboyant self-promoters whose hype drowns out the work of less flamboyant researchers. How sincere Vezneva and Kaltseva are is impossible to determine at this distance, but I think it's safe to say that neither one of them is doing anything to improve the credibility of their cause.

Another Spiral UFO Appears: This Time Over Australia

Skeptics say Russia, SpaceX responsible for unprecedented light shows nearly 6 months apart

June 7, 2010

Almost exactly six months after the ufology switchboard lit up like a Christmas tree over the now famous "Norway spiral," a similar phenomenon has been observed in Australia.

The [spiral](#) (shown here) that appeared in the pre-dawn sky over Norway December 9, 2009 defied explanation, but theories about its origin ranged from the fantastic (a star gate) to the mundane (malfunctioning Russian missile).

Norway's top astronomer, Knut Jorgen Roed Odegaard, said it was unlike anything he'd ever seen before. He did allow, however, that the spiral might have been a malfunctioning (or "adjusting," as Geoffrey Whyatt of the Sydney Observatory put it) Bulava missile launched from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome in Russia.

The fact that Russia denied launching any defective missiles that morning did nothing to diminish mainstream acceptance of this as the most plausible explanation.

Even Norwegian Space Centre Chief Scientist Erik Tandberg, who said he'd been "totally amazed" by the spiral, thought it most likely that a missile was responsible for the two-minute light show.

And there the matter rested until [Australia's 7 News](#) reported that another spiral had appeared June 4 over Australia. Once again, a missile was blamed.

The alleged culprit: a Falcon 9/Dragon rocket launched by SpaceX from Cape Canaveral one hour prior to the spiral sighting.

But Doug Moffett of [UFO Research NSW](#) (New South Wales) is unconvinced.

In [an interview with Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) (ABC), Moffett said, "Firstly, the time of the launch was 18.45 GMT, which translates to 4.45am EST. The duration of the flight was nine minutes 38 seconds. This is a full hour before the reported sightings."

Discover magazine's Phil Plait writes in his [Bad Astronomy column](#), however, that the *second stage* of the Falcon 9 rocket would have sailed over Australia at the exact time of the UFO sightings. It was spinning, he said, and it was emitting a "water-sprinkler spiral pattern (of gas) in the sky."

Plait says that the Norway spiral also was "positively identified as a Russian missile."

So it would seem that we've entered a new era of missile technology, one byproduct of which is the occasional spiral light show. If future demonstrations could be timed to coincide with national holidays, that would be ideal.

Technorati's UFO Coverage Cited In Foreign Press

Bulgaria, Romania, Italy and U.K. reading Pimp My Reality

June 7, 2010

It goes around it comes around.

Our recent coverage of Bulgarian scientist Lachezar Filipov's announcement that the Bulgarian Academy of Science was in direct communication with extraterrestrials is being covered by the foreign press. In some cases, the same sources we cited in our coverage now are citing us.

Sofia, Bulgaria news agency Novinite used our [May 20 article](#) about Filipov as the basis for its [May 23 article](#). Romania's *Jurnalul Național* quoted our [May 24 article](#) about Filipov in its [article dated May 25](#). So did Romania's *Atom News*. English ufologist and conspiracy author David Icke posted our Filipov coverage to [his blog](#) and Italy's [UFOonline.com](#) covered us, too.

Unfortunately, other than recycling news reports published since November 2009 when the story first broke in Bulgaria, nothing new has appeared about Filipov in months ... not here and not abroad. If you have any credible information about Filipov's current disposition, let us know.

Bassett Taking UFO Disclosure Message to Australia

X-Conference organizer Stephen Bassett departs June 22 for 35-day speaking tour of Australia

June 2, 2010

X-Conference organizer and Paradigm Research Group (PRG) executive director Stephen Bassett has announced that he will leave June 22 for a 35-day speaking tour of Australia to include twelve stops in eleven cities. The principal sponsor of the tour is the Nexus Conference, produced by [Nexus Magazine](#) on July 24-26.

According to a June 1 press release issued by PRG, “advocacy for a political resolution to the UFO/ET issue, which began to coalesce in the United States in the mid 1990’s, has now become an international ‘Disclosure Movement’ seeking to end an official embargo of the truth regarding an extraterrestrial presence engaging the human race.”

In 2006, Australia joined the list of countries that have been releasing government-held UFO files into the public domain. That list now includes France, Britain, Denmark and Canada.

Paradigm Research Group was founded in 1996 exclusively for the purpose of ending what Bassett calls the UFO “truth embargo,” and was the first organization to register with the United States Congress to lobby on behalf of the UFO/ET disclosure movement. PRG’s political action committee, X-PPAC, is the first PAC to address the UFO/ET issue.

In 2004, PRG produced the first X-Conference centered on what is known as “exopolitics,” the politics surrounding the UFO/ET phenomenon. The sixth X-Conference was held May 7-9, 2010 at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. In 2008, PRG founded the Exopolitics World Network (EWN) and Exopolitics United States Network (EUSN) to help facilitate the expansion of the disclosure movement. [Exopolitics Australia](#) is a member of EWN.

On the upcoming tour, Bassett says he “hopes to gain a greater understanding of how Australians view the UFO/ET issue and the disclosure process.” He will brief various groups on the status of the disclosure movement and will seek new support for PRG’s advocacy initiatives.

Bassett’s tour schedule is as follows: Perth (June 24-27), Adelaide (June 27-30), Canberra (June 30-July 5), Wollongong (July 5-9), Sydney (July 9-12), Melbourne (July 12-14), Auckland, NZ (July 14-17) (developing), Long Jetty/Newcastle (July 17-19), Byron Bay (July 19-21), Brisbane (July 21-23), Twin Waters (July 23-26), Brisbane (July 26-29).

More information about the tour schedule including contacts can be found [here](#).

Researcher Grant Cameron Talks McElroy, Research, and Credibility in Ufology

Technorati talks with Canadian UFO researcher Grant Cameron about life inside the black hole of credibility

May 29, 2010

Canadian UFO researcher Grant Cameron runs the web site [Presidential UFO](#), where he makes the case that various presidential administrations have shown either interest in, or some involvement with, UFO phenomena.

He’s also responsible for obtaining the 1,000-page stack of documents requested under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) that X-Conference organizer Stephen Bassett says “completely confirm” that billionaire Laurance Rockefeller met with both Bill and Hillary Clinton to discuss ending the United States government’s UFO “truth embargo.”

I called Cameron recently to ask him about Henry W. McElroy, Jr. That’s the NH state legislator [I wrote about recently](#), who appears in a [YouTube video](#) dated May 8 in which he claims to have seen an official government “briefing document” that referred to a planned meeting between former President Eisenhower and extraterrestrials.

“I was very impressed with (McElroy) when I first saw (the video),” Cameron says. “I just thought it was a fascinating story and I said let’s get it up.”

But at the time that Cameron posted a link to the video at Presidential UFO, he hadn’t vetted it and he offered no disclaimer indicating that the identity of the man in the video had yet to be verified.

Asked to comment on his hastiness, Cameron allowed, “Yes, I should have (posted a disclaimer).”

A photocopy of McElroy’s listing in the Handbook of New Hampshire Elected Officials was later obtained by Technorati and the face in the photocopy matches the face in the video. It’s McElroy, alright.

So why did one of ufology’s premiere investigators fail to vet the video before implicitly embracing it?

He played a hunch, it seems.

“I thought it was legitimate because he wasn’t adding any color to it,” Cameron says. “He wasn’t making a big deal of it.”

Going nowhere

Let’s say that McElroy’s sanity and veracity could be established beyond any reasonable doubt. What would that mean?

“Even if he did see something, it means nothing,” Cameron says. “It goes nowhere. There’s nothing to confirm it at all.”

Cameron also says that, to his knowledge, only one UFO researcher has attempted to contact McElroy in the two weeks that have passed since the video was posted. And even that researcher, Larry Bryant, didn’t actually speak with McElroy. He was intercepted by an intermediary who acted as go-between and the upshot of their conversation was that McElroy has nothing further to say.

But there are other factors at play in ufology’s failure to pursue the McElroy story further. One of them is lack of resources. Another is what’s often referred to as “the giggle factor.”

No time or money, and questions about credibility

“It’s not ufology’s fault,” Cameron says. “We don’t have the time or money. Unless you’re 60 Minutes. They’d be at (McElroy’s) door ... and they wouldn’t take ‘no’ for an answer.”

There’s also the constant drain on personal and professional credibility.

“You lose credibility for being in the field. I think what people feel is that inadequacy. If you’re in ufology, you always have this chip on your shoulder.”

Cameron is also concerned about ufology’s vulnerability to the lure of celebrity endorsements, high profile people who claim to have had sightings or close encounter experiences.

“I think (investigators) should be spending their time with high-level people who know something,” Cameron says.

One such person he mentions is CIA scientist Dr. Ronald Pandolfi.

But even Pandolfi, in some ufology circles, is considered to be one of the CIA’s masters of disinformation and this, in turn, has cast doubt on UFO researcher (NICAP, MUFON, FUFOR) and physicist Dr. Bruce Maccabee, who communicated with Pandolfi for a time.

And so it goes. Dead ends, limited resources, infighting, rumors of disinformation and conspiracy, credibility always in question.

It’s little wonder mainstream reporters run like hell from ufology stories and, when one catches up to them, the best they can manage is a few smirking questions about “little green men.”

“That might be why people are interested in my site,” Cameron says, “because it’s the president. To us, it’s significant.”

Watch an Exopolitics Denmark interview with Cameron [here](#).

Brits May Hand UFO Hacker to Uncle Sam on a Silver Saucer

Gary McKinnon's fate suddenly uncertain only days after seeming reprieve

May 27, 2010

U.K. computer hacker Gary McKinnon's legion of vocal supporters rejoiced last week when British Home Secretary Theresa May **announced** that she was putting the brakes on U.S. efforts to extradite him.

This week, however, they're furious over Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg's assertion that his government, in effect, has to do whatever our government tells it to do.

Accused of breaking into NASA and U.S. Army computers in 2001 and 2002, the 44-year-old McKinnon could face up to 60 years in prison if convicted in this country. He says that he was looking for – and found – evidence of extraterrestrial activity on planet Earth. The jury's still out on that one, but McKinnon's lawyers argue that extraditing their client, who suffers from Asperger Syndrome, would constitute a breach of his human rights. Moreover, seven years into his extradition tug-of-war with the United States, McKinnon has become suicidal.

Human rights issues notwithstanding, *London's Daily Mail* reported May 26 that Deputy Prime Minister Clegg believes that it “may not be within (his) Government’s power” to fight extradition.

Think about that.

Can you imagine the Vice President of the United States trying to convince us that our government is *powerless* against extradition proceedings being brought against one of our citizens by another country? Because that's exactly how Clegg is describing his country's relationship with the United States. The term “prison bitch” comes to mind.

Charges filed against McKinnon allege that he caused roughly \$700,000 in damages to NASA and U.S. Army computers. That's all. About what you'd pay for a Bentley sedan. No lives were lost, no launch codes compromised.

When Clegg was running for office in July 2009, he said that it was “completely within (former Home Secretary Alan Johnson's) power to enact amendments ... which would allow Gary McKinnon to be tried (in the U.K.)” Now that he's Deputy Prime Minister, however, he's saying that he doesn't think that *anybody* in the British government has the power to do so.

His excuse? “It's legally very complex.”

You'll have to do better than that, Mr. Clegg. And somebody on this side of the pond needs to offer a more convincing explanation for all the fuss than \$700,000 in damages.

What did Gary McKinnon see?

Are Extraterrestrials Wreaking Havoc On the Range?

Who's killing the cows? Some say aliens, others say anything but.

May 26, 2010

Colorado ufologist **Chuck Zukowski** is in the news again. On May 20, Denver, Colorado television station KDVR aired a special called “Rocky Mountain Mysteries,” one segment of which focuses on a case Zukowski investigated last year in Westin, Colorado.

Zukowski has appeared on numerous radio and television programs over the years, speaking as a recognized authority on the phenomenon known as “cattle mutilation” or, more generally, “animal mutilation.” If you don't know anything about Zukowski's particular field of study, consider yourself lucky ... and prepare to be grossed out ...*(really: this gets a bit graphic, so consider yourselves warned - ed.)*

For decades, farmers and cattle ranchers around the world have been reporting to authorities that parties unknown have been culling their herds in a manner most grisly. Cattle and other domestic animals (horses, goats and so on), healthy one day, turn up dead the next, their eyes removed, rectums cored, reproductive organs amputated and udders snipped with surgical precision.

This is the “mutilation” part of the moniker, be it cattle or otherwise.

In some cases, even the largest of these poor beasts appear to have been dropped from great heights, breaking tree branches as they've fallen to the ground. Their carcasses have been exsanguinated (drained of blood) and no blood or tracks of any kind – animal, mechanical or human – can be found at the scene of the crime.

Yet police avoid these cases, despite the fact that ranchers whose livestock are killed in this way suffer huge financial losses. Because there's no evidence of human involvement, police have nothing to go on.

Ufologists argue that extraterrestrials are responsible for animal mutilation. Experts on the other side of the fence say that predators and insects are to blame, maybe even the military. Ranchers say that predators and insects are incapable of causing the kind of damage being done.

I cast my vote for the military. They're capable of anything.

Red Star Films has produced an excellent documentary on the phenomenon. Watch it [here](#).

(Or, if you prefer, watch [Magical Trevor disappear cows more humanely here](#).)

British UFO Hacker's Extradition On Hold

New Home Secretary Theresa May intercedes on Gary McKinnon's behalf
May 25, 2010

Question: In his [May 8 speech at Eisenhower Library](#) in Abilene, Kansas, which government agency did Defense Secretary Robert Gates say is "ripe for scrutiny" and will need to overcome "steep institutional and political challenges" in order to keep its overspending in check?

Answer: The Pentagon

Question: What government agency alleges that, between 2001 and 2002, "an [unemployed computer administrator](#)" living in London named Gary McKinnon used a 56k modem and commonly available software (RemotelyAnywhere) to hack U.S. Army and NASA computers in the United States causing \$700,000 in damages?

Answer: The Pentagon

Question: Is the Pentagon's estimate of damages reliable?

Answer: See first question.

For the better part of a decade, the United States government has been trying to extradite burgeoning British folk hero Gary McKinnon to the US where, if convicted, he could face up to 60 years in prison.

As for McKinnon, he says he was only looking for evidence of UFO's.

And that he found it.

According to McKinnon's legal defense team, however, seven years of legal wrangling has made McKinnon suicidal and, for that reason alone, he should not be extradited. Yet a succession of five British home secretaries have refused to challenge the 2003 extradition treaty that's being invoked to compel McKinnon's transfer to U.S. soil.

Times, they are a-changin'

Enter new British Home Secretary Theresa May.

According to a [May 20 report published in The Guardian](#), May has "agreed to an adjournment of a judicial review that was supposed to start within days." In legal terms, this means that McKinnon's previously imminent departure for the Land of the Free has been put on indefinite hold.

The [London Telegraph reports](#) that Britain's new coalition government also intends to conduct a comprehensive review of the extradition treaty itself, a savvy political move in a country where McKinnon's case has become a cause célèbre.

Visit the [Free Gary McKinnon website](#) and you'll read this, among many, many other things:

"The unjust treatment of British citizens (and others) when facing the might of the US Military "justice" system, which practices detention without trial in Guantanamo Bay and elsewhere, and stands accused of making use of torture by allied regimes ("extraordinary rendition") is an ongoing scandal."

What McKinnon saw

One might reasonably wonder why our government would spend seven years trying to extradite a British citizen accused of causing \$700,000 in alleged damages. Surely, they've long since passed the point of diminishing returns. Many believe that the explanation lies in what McKinnon says he saw.

In a June [2006 interview with Wired magazine](#), McKinnon said he executed the hack because he "knew that governments suppressed anti-gravity, UFO-related technologies, free energy or what they call zero-point energy."

Among his discoveries, he says, were what he believes is a satellite photo of a UFO, along with an Excel spreadsheet titled "Non-Terrestrial Officers." He said he also found "information about ship-to-ship transfers."

Interesting, but not exactly the holy grail of ufology, and McKinnon himself admitted that he might have been looking at nothing more than war game materials. "It's hard to know for certain," he said.

On the other hand, if that's all it was, why the seven-year extradition campaign? Methinks the Pentagon doth protest too much.

Eisenhower, the E.T.'s and Henry W. McElroy, Jr.

Retired New Hampshire legislator says he saw official documents confirming E.T. presence, Eisenhower briefing

May 25, 2010

Fresh from the state that brought us [Betty and Barney Hill](#), we now have a low-res YouTube video dated May 7 that shows a man identified as retired New Hampshire State Representative Henry W. McElroy Jr. reading a rather eyebrow-raising written statement.

He claims to have seen, while in office, a government document confirming the existence of "benevolent" extraterrestrials on planet Earth. More to the point, he says that the document also confirmed that efforts had been made to set up a meeting between said extraterrestrials and then President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

This breathes new life of sorts into the [decades-old rumor](#) that Eisenhower met with extraterrestrials at Edwards Air Force Base in 1954. (Another Ike-E.T. meeting is rumored to have taken place at [Holloman AFB in 1955](#).)

Unable to find a single photograph of McElroy online to compare to the face in the video, I telephoned the New Hampshire State Archive and, a few days later, received a photocopy of McElroy's listing in the 2003-04 edition of *The Handbook of New Hampshire Elected Officials*. It included the photo of McElroy shown here.

Satisfied that the man in the video was, indeed, McElroy, I located his home telephone number and was about to call him when I found out that UFO researcher Larry Bryant had beaten me to the punch.

Speaking on the May 21 edition of The (Angelia) [Joiner Report](#), Bryant said that he'd asked McElroy six questions, not directly, but through an intermediary by phone. This intermediary indicated to Bryant that she was the person who'd encouraged McElroy to make the YouTube video.

McElroy's answers to Bryant's questions, which he describes as being rather "cagey," amounted to this:

He's 100% confident that the document he saw was real, but doesn't recall whether it bore any security classification markings. He has nothing more to say on the subject, isn't interested in being interviewed and isn't going to help anybody verify the authenticity of the alleged briefing document. Moreover, if asked, he would *not* be willing to testify before a congressional committee.

But wait a minute. Did anybody *else* see the document? Did anybody think to make a *copy* of it? And how did a freshman state legislator come to possess, however briefly, such an explosive (and, one would think, incredibly well-guarded) piece of paper?

These questions and others may never be answered, but one thing seems certain. Henry W. McElroy Jr.'s documentary film career is off to a terrible start.

Bulgarian UFO Redux - Filipov Plot Thickens

Talkshow host Kevin Smith claims London Telegraph's coverage of Filipov story is flawed
May 24, 2010

Paranormal talk show host Kevin Smith contacted me yesterday to take issue with one of the sources I cited in my story about Bulgarian Academy of Science (BAS) [Deputy Director Lachezar Filipov](#). It may seem a small thing to casual observers, but Smith broke, and pretty much owns, this story in the United States, so I'm going to give him equal time. In my article, I cited a report published November 26, 2009 in [London's Telegraph](#). According to that report, Filipov's team of scientists was "analysing 150 crop circles from around the world, which they believe answer" 30 questions they'd posed to extraterrestrials.

Smith contends that the crop circle reference was fabricated by the *Telegraph*. His proof of the fabrication is a story published November 23, 2009 by the [Sofia Echo](#) in which no reference to crop circles is made.

According to the *Echo*, "It was even claimed that some alien species were present during a media statement in which they had answered more than 30 questions put forward by Bulgarian Academy of Science (BAS) personnel."

Quite a difference.

I agree with Smith's concern that the subsequent *Telegraph* article omitted what would seem to be the most remarkable aspect of the story – that extraterrestrials personally answered questions posed by BAS personnel.

[Another article](#), however, also dated November 23 and also Bulgarian (Sofia news agency *Novinite*), *does* refer to crop circles, but fails to mention the question-answer session. So as far as I'm concerned, the jury remains out on whether Filipov's team has any interest in crop circles. It isn't as if the two scenarios (crop circle study and alien interview) are mutually exclusive.

But forget the crop circles.

Or actually, remember the crop circles and riddle me this:

Why, immediately after telling Smith by phone that he felt it was his "duty" to grant an interview about the extraterrestrial encounter, did Filipov stop accepting calls? Why was [this email](#), partially discounting the Bulgarian press reports, sent that same day (November 23) from Filipov's account to a number of researchers, including Smith? And why, when he resurfaced ten days later, did an apparently sleep-deprived Filipov tell a television reporter that, if he answered questions about the encounter, he'd be killed?

Smith's theory is that the Bulgarian KGB (Darzhavna Sigurnost) "handled" Filipov, altered press accounts of the alien encounter and was responsible for the email sent from Filipov's account, and I'm inclined to believe him.

Smith's four-part YouTube report on the case begins [here](#).

UFO Researchers Eat Their Own Kind

Fight club mentality inhibits serious study of UFO phenomenon
May 24, 2010

Yesterday, while researching a story for Technorati, I clicked through to the ufology blog authored by Paul Kimball. My heart sank as I absorbed [the proceedings there](#). Here's an excerpt from my contribution:

Reading this thread, I'm reminded of what I consider to be ufology's biggest Achilles' heel – bigger even than the limelight-hogging crackpots, bigger than mainstream media's default "offbeat news" approach to the phenomenon and bigger than whatever sway the military-industrial complex may be holding overall. It's simply this: We eat our own. Rather than instruct, we eviscerate.

Articulate, well-informed, confrontational, a lawyer by training, Kimball deals with visitors to his blog as I imagine he might deal with hostile witnesses, and this, I'm sorry to say, sets a tone. And I'm sorry to say it not because I disapprove of lively discourse; a

spirited exchange of ideas can be an energizing, productive exercise if the folks involved leave their nunchucks at the bar.

Rather, I was disheartened by Kimball's blog because pro forma punking is altogether too common among UFO researchers at every level. So are head-butting, tire-slashing, bitch-slapping and nut-kicking.

The page I visited yesterday read like a fight club transcript. Visitors were calling each other "idiot" and "lame ass" and "jackass" and my feeble attempt to lower the temperature of the room was met with dismissal.

"Yes, yes, all very good to get along, but..." Kimball replied, adding, "he's lucky that ridicule is the only thing he's getting."

(sigh)

Fortunately, there does exist in the field a contingent of researchers who are as even-tempered as they are credible and articulate. George Knapp, Angelia Joiner, Richard Dolan, Leslie Kean and David Jacobs are just a few names that leap immediately to mind.

Others have simply gone 'round the bend, making their contributions increasingly suspect. And I agree that it's best that they retire.

I do not, however, agree that they should retire to Hell, there to spend eternity choking on their own swollen tongues.

Bulgarian Scientist Claims Alien Contact, Falls Silent

Lachezar Filipov withdraws from world stage after incredible announcement
May 20, 2010

I received an email today updating me on the strange case of Lachezar Filipov.

On November 26, 2009, London's *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mail* reported that Filipov, deputy director of the Space Research Institute (NASA equivalent) of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, had announced that, "aliens are currently all around us, and are watching us all the time." He claimed that he and a team of BAS scientists had interviewed several aliens (by means not disclosed) and that the answers to their questions were encoded in crop circle formations. According to the Telegraph, BAS issued a report on these communications, but I've yet to find it online.

A Phoenix-based paranormal talk radio host named Kevin Smith says he contacted Filipov by phone shortly after the articles were published and Filipov agreed to be interviewed, saying it was his "duty" to make his team's discoveries public.

Then, Smith says, the good doctor stopped answering his cell phone. Days of radio silence passed before a Croatian news team was allowed to interview Filipov in the lobby of the Academy of Sciences building in Sofia, but the 19-minute interview was not used because, according to the news team, Filipov was "intoxicated."

Smith says he obtained a copy of the interview video, which included many close-ups of Filipov's face, and, in Smith's opinion, Filipov was suffering from sleep deprivation. A

former international policeman, Smith says that Filipov showed no signs of HGN (Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus), which always accompanies alcohol intoxication. He also points out that sleep deprivation is a favorite tool of the gone-but-still-active Darzhavna Sigurnost, or Bulgarian KGB.

So what happened? Did the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences establish a dialogue with extraterrestrials? Did its deputy director then go rogue, announcing to the media that this communication had occurred? And did the Bulgarian KGB, in an attempt to discredit him, then "prepare" the deputy director for his interview with a Croatia news team?

Hallucination is another possibility, of course. As are substance abuse and outright deceit. As to the last possibility, the questions arise: "who's deceiving whom? And why?" The Telegraph refers to recent "heated debate" over "the role, feasibility, and reform of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences," so maybe Filipov's announcement was only a bizarre and deeply misguided publicity stunt.

The email that I received from Smith today confirmed that he had viewed "the entire 19-minute video of the interview attempt by a Croatian TV news crew after Filipov had been handled for about 10 days."

"That video," Smith said, "has never been released by them, but it is most instructive. The reporter asks over and over if the aliens are in communication with us and Filipov finally says, 'That is the information that if I tell you, they will kill me.'"

Make of it what you will.

Member of Russian Parliament Claims He Was Abducted By Aliens

Politician and Chess Mogul Kirsan Ilyumzhinov Confirms Accounts of His Wild Ride
May 20, 2010

His name is Kirsan Ilyumzhinov. Since 1995, he's served as [president of the World Chess Federation](#) (FIDE – Federation Internationale des Echecs), which made household names of such chess legends as Boris Spassky, Bobby Fischer and Garry Kasparov. Since 1993, Ilyumzhinov also has served as a member of the Russian Parliament – an "MP," as they say – representing Kalmykia, Russia's only Buddhist republic. And since 1997, he's claimed to have been abducted by aliens.

A self-made millionaire, he [staged a religious revival](#) in Kalmykia where he funded construction of the largest Buddhist temple in greater Europe. He also spearheaded construction of the massive and growing complex of buildings known as [City Chess](#).

Located in a suburb of Kalista, Kalmykia's capital, City Chess was constructed specifically for the 33rd Chess Olympiad in 1998. It continues to expand, a bold and controversial economic development gamble in a region suffering severe economic hardship.

So what is one to make of Ilyumzhinov's [ongoing claims](#), the most recent during an [April 26 interview](#) with television host Vladimir Pozner on Russia's Channel One, that he was abducted by aliens from his Moscow apartment in 1997?

Ilyumzhinov says he was taken to another star system by "people like us." He also says that he believes that chess itself "comes from space."

His theories about the origins of chess, however, like *The Independent's* [2007 intimation](#) that Ilyumzhinov had the editor of an opposition newspaper murdered in 1998, aren't nearly as interesting as the mere fact that *he's making such statements to begin with*.

One doesn't advance or maintain one's elected positions within either the Russian parliament or the World Chess Federation by claiming to have been abducted by aliens.

The best explanation I can offer is that Ilyumzhinov believes what he's saying and doesn't give a damn about what anyone thinks of his claims. After all, he's independently wealthy and, I would imagine, so deeply embedded in the Russian political machine that nothing short of a tactical nuke could ever dislodge him.

Is he crazy? Could be, I suppose, but if so, he's one of the most highly functional crazies on the planet.

2010 X-Conference Organizer Calls for Formal Acknowledgement of Extraterrestrial Presence

Despite the media's reluctance to engage the issue, Stephen Bassett says disclosure is an "absolute guaranteed certainty"

May 17, 2010

The X-Conference, an annual "disclosure movement" conclave presented by Washington lobbyist Stephen Bassett's Paradigm Research Group, concluded May 10 as expected: with a call for the Obama administration to make "formal acknowledgment to the American people of the extraterrestrial presence engaging the human race."

For the first time since its inception in 2004, the three-day- X-Conference was held entirely at the National Press Building. It's arguably the most sober of all major UFO-related conferences and conventions held regularly in the United States.

Presenters at previous X-Conferences have included such unlikely "truth embargo" opponents as [Apollo astronaut Edgar Mitchell](#), Vatican prelate Msgr. [Corrado Balducci](#) and former FAA Division Chief of Accidents, Evaluations and Investigations [John J. Callahan](#), as well as commercial and military airline pilots, government and military officials and scientists from around the world.

"It is the nature of government today, that the more difficult and important the issue is, the more intransigent the government gets," Bassett said. He then went on to say that he knows "for a fact that there are a number of contactees in the Congress."

A "contactee" is a person who has had direct contact, up close and personal, with an extraterrestrial. Abductees are a subset of this category.

As far-fetched as Bassett's claim may seem, there's no shortage of high-ranking government and military officials who've gone on record with their own unambiguous close encounter experiences. [Astronaut Gordon Cooper](#) is one. Former [Arizona Governor Fife Symington](#) is another. Even [Jimmy Carter](#) felt strongly enough about a sighting he had while governor of Georgia to promise during his presidential campaign that, if elected, he'd get to the bottom of the UFO enigma. Although accounts of his efforts to do so vary, no findings were made public.

Bassett says the tide is turning.

The Clinton connection

"We believe the national security structures want to go forward (with disclosure)," Bassett said. "Therefore, if the president makes the effort, it will happen. It's a non-trivial matter that (John Podesta), after having served for four years as the chief of staff to President Bill Clinton, called for the release of these files."

Podesta, who now heads the [Center for American Progress](#), was co-head of the Obama transition team. On two occasions, Podesta has urged disclosure in [speeches delivered at the National Press Building](#).

Midway through his introductory remarks at the May 10 press briefing, Bassett held up a 1,000-page stack of documents that he said had been obtained from the Clinton White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) through FOIA requests filed by Canadian researcher Grant Cameron.

The documents, according to Bassett, "completely confirm" that billionaire Laurance Rockefeller met with both Bill and Hillary Clinton as part of what has come to be known as the "Rockefeller Initiative." That initiative is widely believed to have been Rockefeller's attempt to bring about disclosure during the Clinton administration.

It's worth noting that in his memoir *Friends In High Places*, former Clinton White House staffer Webster Hubbell writes that he was asked by Bill Clinton to investigate possible government involvement with off-world intelligences. According to Hubbell, his efforts yielded no results.

The sound of silence

"Every effort to get a response from the White House or the White House Correspondents Association has been rebuffed," Bassett said. "They have nothing to say."

Case in point: This July 24, 2009 [C-SPAN clip](#) shows Obama White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs being asked by a caller from Seattle about the Obama administration's silence on the issue. "I take your question seriously," Gibbs says. "I have not been briefed on the existence of UFOs." He then changes the subject.

It seems unlikely, however, that the press secretary had not been briefed on the *letter writing campaign* begun by Bassett begun two months earlier (June 1, 2009), which Bassett said resulted in the delivery of thousands of letters to the White House Correspondents Association urging the press corps to start asking serious questions about the UFO phenomenon.

Announcing that he will hold a second conference at the Press Building October 22-24 dealing exclusively with human-alien contact, Bassett said that it's an "absolute guaranteed certainty" that disclosure will occur.

The only uncertainty, he said, is whether government officials will "conduct themselves in an appropriate and proactive way, or will (be) chased down the street by a horde of reporters ... screaming questions at their backs as they flee the truth."

seriously what he calls "the alien presence" and he'll ask the current administration to release its UFO files into the public domain.

It's a drum he's been banging for 13 years with only marginal success. Stay tuned.

Hawking Says Aliens Likely, Media Scoffs ... Again

No matter the stature or credentials of the witness, mainstream media turns a deaf ear to reports of extraterrestrial presence on Earth

May 10, 2010

British astrophysicist Stephen Hawking's [recent statement](#) that the outcome of human contact with extraterrestrials "would be much as when Christopher Columbus first landed in America" has mainstream media reporters clutching their pearls.

The [Christian Science Monitor](#) ran a photo of the sitcom alien puppet Alf with its coverage of Hawking's comments, and NBC Nightly News anchor Brian Williams wrapped up his [30-second news brief](#) with this: "Make a note. He indicates we should stay away from them at all costs."

Yes, Brian, and if we happen to touch one, we'll be sure to wash our hands.

Why the reflexively dismissive treatment of matters ufological? Why the nervous chuckles and flip commentary, regardless of the credibility or credentials of the people involved?

In 2007, former two-term Republican governor Fife Symington told CNN's Gary Tuchman that he'd been among the thousands who, in 1997, witnessed what's come to be known as The Phoenix Lights. "In your gut, you could just tell it was other-worldly," Symington said, "Unless the defense department proves otherwise, it was probably some form of alien spacecraft."

In 2008, astronaut Dr. Edgar Mitchell told Kerrang (U.K.) radio host Nick Margerrison that "[the UFO phenomenon is real](#)," an assertion he said was backed by Pentagon sources.

But Tuchman concluded his piece about Symington with, "It's as much a mystery today as it was a decade ago" and let the matter go at that. No further investigation. And when CNN invited Mitchell to discuss his statements on [Larry King Live](#), it paired the sixth man to walk on the moon with none other than children's television personality Bill Nye the Science Guy.

No less curious than the Fourth Estate's lack of investigative moxy is Hawking's failure to call for the scientific equivalent of a full court press. Here's a man who's spent most of his professional life expanding our view of the universe now advising us to avert our eyes if the view gets too interesting. WTF?

On Monday, May 10, Washington lobbyist Stephen Bassett will hold a press conference at the National Press Building. He'll use the conference to pressure the media to take