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YORKSHIRE UFO SOCIETY

PROJECT RED BOOK

(Vol 3 #2, August 1999)



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YUFOS



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To re-print articles in this magazine please enquire at the above address, that means me, Dave. I'm sure to say "yes", but it is nice to ask first, y'know?

The articles and views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor, YUFOS members, or Indrid Cold

"Grown-ups don't believe you, right? Well I do. We both know there are real monsters. But there are also real heroes, that fight monsters. And that's me."

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANDY ROBERTS

Andy Roberts has been involved in the UFO phenomenon for 17 years, and has been a vocal and often controversial critic of much of what he finds. A one-time player with BUFORA, and co-editor of its magazine UFO Times, he was later one of the founding members of its anti-thesis, the IUN (Independent UFO Network), which is now undergoing a major 'revival'. Andy is the author of numerous books and articles on UFOs, folklore and the paranormal, including "Phantoms of the Sky" with David Clarke. He has made various TV appearances, and scares the so-called 'UFO community' silly with his acidic Armchair Ufologist newsletter.

After joining us as a guest at our recent Jenny Randles lecture, Andy Roberts kindly gave up some of his time to take part in an interview with YUFOS editor, chairman and general dogs-body Dave Baker.

Beware all ye who enter here, and may the Lord have mercy on your souls...

DB: *Hi Andy, thanks for joining us. Not the most original of questions to begin with, but how did you get involved in ufology?*

ANDY: Slowly! I bought a glossy news-stand UFO publication on holiday in Scarborough during the 1967 wave and became fascinated in that obsessive way children do. Then during the 1970s I had a bit of a hippie phase and was into UFOs and all manner of strange phenomena. During this time I also experimented with powerful psychedelics¹ which taught me a great deal about the inner and outer worlds, the nature of reality and perception. The call of the weird had bitten me hard and I started to read all I could, but as yet I was still a passive consumer. By 1983 I was a 'house-husband' whilst my wife slaved to keep me in the manner to which I was accustomed, and looking for a hobby to dissipate the strain of looking after a two year old. As luck would have it I came across Jenny Randles' 'UFOs A British Viewpoint' which rekindled my passion for ufology, I got involved with the West Yorkshire UFO Group and it's been downhill ever since.

Jenny Randles, Dr.Dave Clarke and yourself are writing a book together called "The UFOs That Never Were". What cases have you contributed to the book?

I've submitted chapters on the Berwyn Mountain case, the Cracoe photographic case and co-edited a chapter with Dave on the Alex Birch case. Besides those I have also done nine short pieces on classic cases which have now been solved. And, if I may blow my own

trumpet, it's a damn fine book which will have EThers frothing at the mouth. The title's crap though - it wasn't my choice.

You mentioned the Berwyn Mountains case...Do you have any updates since you spoke for YUFOS earlier in the year?

Strange you should ask that - Nick Redfern has just 'phoned and given me a contact who, he says, knows much about the alleged military presence on the mountain that night. Other than that, no, no new developments. But I'm hoping when the book is published some new witnesses - for whatever interpretation of the case- may come forward.

Do you think Berwyn is typical of many of the 'classics' of ufology, or do you think there are still some "unexplained" cases out there?

I wouldn't say that Berwyn is 100% solved - just that my analysis is the best synthesis of the evidence so far. I am open to new evidence and would happily eat my words if something came forward which argued strongly for another interpretation. To get back to the question - yes, there are still *some* unexplained cases but the 'classics' are dropping like flies; Roswell, Rendlesham are all but dead in the water, and now even Socorro looks shaky. What's more there are few new 'good' cases coming along - and by good I mean well documented and witnessed. The UFO 'community' thrives more on belief and rumour than ever with a small hard core of people generating the literature and a huge mass of consumers blindly consuming. I think these days the criteria for any researcher to say their case is 'unexplained' should have to be the submission of their case report (and how many

¹ *Andy Roberts is a trained professional who knows what he is doing. Just say "No", kids.- DB.*

of *them* do you see these days?) to several independent ufologists for some form of consensus opinion. But it will never happen because most people who have a 'big' case are jealous of letting anyone see the details in case they solve it or poach it, thus reducing the chance of fame/money for themselves. It's sad, but that's how I see it working.

Andy, I like to think of you as The Sceptic's Sceptic, but if you are such a sceptic, what keeps you so interested and so actively involved in ufology? Why not just 'switch off' the channel and leave the others to it?

To quote Jim Morrison 'no-one gets out of here alive!' Ufology's a bit like that where you've been involved for so long. I was out between '92-'95 when I gave it a rest to pursue some avenues of musical interest, but came back when the Alien Abduction nonsense appeared to cast mass hypnosis over many ufologists. Why? Because above all it's enormous fun! The process by which stories arise and spread, fascinates me. To be able to be involved at first hand in the biggest myth humanity has ever known is a fantastic opportunity – UFOs are just such a potent symbol and belief in them as of ET origin is now so labyrinthine and deeply embedded within western culture all we can do is hang on and enjoy it. And if you don't fall for literalism it's one hell of a ride! I see ufological cases as problems to be solved not dissimilar to Zen koans. You start with what seems like an insoluble problem which is outside all areas of human knowledge and which seems to defy thought

(this incidentally is the point where people become polarised into 'believers' or 'debunkers' - thus missing the point entirely). But by applying one's brain to the problem, constantly thinking about it, sifting the evidence, going over and over the minutiae of it you frequently come to a major breakthrough. *That's* what makes it all worthwhile, that moment of insight into the perceptions of witnesses or the meaning behind a document. When you've solved a case you know a little bit more about the world and what it means to be human. And besides all that bollocks ufology is enormous fun and I've had some of my best times in life so far in ufology and I've met some really nice people (you know who you are). Conversely I've met people who I rate somewhere well below pond life in the food chain and who, if I had the power to do so, would be immediately be visited with a chronic and permanent genital itch.

Dave Clarke, Jenny Randles and yourself are obviously 'on the same page' with so many things, but is there anything about this phenomenon which you passionately argue about?

Dave and I argue quite often, in a Reeves and Mortimer type way. Not so much about particular theories or cases but about what constitutes evidence and proof, research methodologies and whether Nick Redfern's books are any good! Mind you, for years Dave thought Rendlesham was a strong case, but I've chipped away at him and now he's more sceptical than me! For a young lad in the subject he's doing quite well and I reckon he'll go far. Jenny and I rarely argue, I wouldn't get a word in edgeways!

You are an ardent supporter of the theory of Earth-Lights being responsible for many UFO reports. Rarely though, is this hypothesis presented in TV documentaries or in UFO magazines and there are many people who do not even fully understand the science. Can you enlighten us? (no pun intended)

I don't pretend to be a scientist but briefly the theory is that rocks under immense geological pressure create a charge which escapes into the atmosphere and is seen as flashes, sheets, balls of light or other lightforms. This isn't just idle speculation, scientists have filmed them in action during earthquakes and it has also been reproduced in laboratory conditions. Paul Devereux has done sterling work in the field in Australia ??? filming the real thing. Earthlights exist and are yet another example of just how strange our planet can be - they may also affect consciousness and be responsible for 'entity' reports, and also affect electrical equipment, possibly making them responsible for 'car stop' cases. However, I am far less convinced now about the relevance Earthlights has to mainstream ufology than I was a few years ago.

You are a regular contributor to the excellent Fortean Times. What other areas of 'The Paranormal' interest you, and is there anything there that you consider 'unexplainable' at the moment?

Fortean Times isn't as good as it used to be! And nothing is 'unexplainable', we just don't have the right information, attitude or luck to be able to explain the things as yet. I'm interested in many aspects of the

paranormal and have written and researched phenomena including legends attached to 'Celtic' stone heads' 'Screaming skull' legends; the Big Grey Man of Ben Macdhui; foo fighters; lots of folklore and so on.

Which five books in your collection would you consider indispensable to the ufologist?

In no particular order;

* *The UFO Handbook* by Allen Hendry - now sadly out of print but *the* work on UFO investigation and one which will open your eyes about the limitless possibilities of misperception.

* *Phantoms of the Sky* by Andy Roberts and Dave Clarke - also out of print but an excellent overview of the subject from a historical point of view.

* *The UFO Encyclopaedia* by Jerome Clark - an immense two volume work written by someone who knows the subject inside out.

* *UFOs & Ufology* by Paul Devereux & Peter Brookesmith - fantastic overview by erudite students of all things weird.

* *Borderlands* by Mike Dash, a fortcan book written by a fortean who understands the interconnectedness of all phenomena and the human mind.

We have been attempting to fathom the UFO mystery for more than fifty years now, yet in many ways we appear to have learned nothing. Why do you think this is?

I don't agree Dave - I think we *have* learned an enormous amount, but that people ignore what we have learned. We know for instance that only a tiny proportion of cases remain unexplained after in-depth work has been done on them. We know that there is no such thing as a 'credible witness' and that *all* witnesses can be fooled by prosaic phenomena. We know that the UFO phenomena is a developing one, that it changes as the times change - compare 1952's ufology with ours - completely different! This to me suggests that a large portion of the subject is psycho-social in nature and revolves around what humans believe, individually and collectively - about their perceptions, thus taking it into the realms of folklore and mythology.

In my experience few ufologists stay very long in the subject. This is because they come to the subject with preconceived ideas such as they

believe UFOs are ET craft or that UFOs are all in the imagination - when it becomes patently obvious that neither of these is the case and they might have to use their brains...many people just vanish. They will either drop out of the subject altogether (usually the highly sceptical people) or go on to some other area of 'new-age' interest where they don't have to trouble themselves with 'evidence' and 'proof' (the ET believers). The fact is the UFO mystery is solved every time a case is solved but people fail to learn these lessons or to apply them to other cases. The mystery is essentially a human one.

Who in ufology/fortean would you travel to the other side of the world to see lecture?

Nobody.

And who would you not cross the street to see? And of course, why?

Ahh, so many. Any of the crop-circle goons, who are really just sad little children playing around. I really admire the many hoaxers who perpetuate this mystery. Most of the abductionists because they have no idea the damage they may be doing in promulgating their nonsense. Sadly I suspect that many so-called 'researchers' in these two categories are mere cynical manipulators of people and are only in the subject for the money and/or the power. These people need to grow up.

One of my favourite TV programmes is 'Have I Got News For You', mainly for it's biting attacks on those who deserve it... In your irregular newsletter The Armchair Ufologist, you perform a similar 'service' to the ufological community, but whereas Merton, Deayton and Hislop take a dig, you take a spade, dig a grave and bury your targets. Are you merely having fun, or is there a serious message behind your comments?

Sure is. I started TAU because over the years in ufology I have heard such a lot of rumour, back-biting and general evilness. Of course, in public ufologists are always trying to pretend they are a hard working single minded community - complete nonsense, most of them hate each other, few of them do any real research and they would stab you in the back for ten pence as soon as look at you. If you want 'community' join the Women's Institute not ufology! So I decided to reveal the machinery which makes the whole thing run.

So now I just keep my eyes and ears open and report what I see. Nothing in the *Armchair Ufologist* is made up - it's all true - actually it's worse than I write it. The funniest thing about TAU is people love it until they actually appear in it! So yes, there is a serious message and that is - don't pretend, don't try to be someone you aren't, don't bullshit, don't piss people about, don't have secrets, because TAU will know! Many of the people in ufology today are idiots - fact. Many should seek psychiatric help before it is too late. Ufology as John Keel rightly said in *Operation Trojan Horse* is a dangerous game and I've seen it completely destroy people mentally, spoil friendships and marriages, empty bank balances and obsess minds. Like the guy on *The Fast Show* might say; 'Ufology? Hardest game in the world, ufology!'

Have these sometimes controversial views or comments ever got you into trouble?

Yes. I was once attacked by Graham Birdsall over the Cracoe case when him and his hench-ufologists came to my house to dispute the proof we had. I told him to f**k off and he lunged at me. Luckily my wife threw him out (she's 5ft!). Harry Harris, of Suem, Grabbit and Run, has threatened to take legal action against me at least twice, simply because I took the piss out of the Alan Godfrey case. Mind you, didn't he get done for shooting a neighbour's cat last year? Of course, I'm not worthy to wipe the muzzle of his gun, so I apologised immediately, in best Monty Python stylee. A guy called Gerry Baynard who was once on Clive Anderson's TV show talking about aliens tried to sue me because I took the piss out of his appearance - nothing came of it because he was a big jesse. It must have cost him a fortune in solicitors letters. And, of course, Max Burns (patron saint of BUFORA) has threatened legal action several times because I would insist on revealing that he is currently on serious drug dealing charges and that he told me he'd bribed a key witness in the Sheffield case with marijuana. Needless to say I didn't receive a letter from his solicitor. Matthew Williams tried to bribe me from pointing out this fact by threatening to send a video of me smoking dope to the Police (why Sting would have been interested I'll never know), and, for some reason, Jenny Randles! What a der-brain. There are loads more! My theory has always been that if people are physically attacking you or threatening legal action you must be touching the right nerves, so it's never bothered me. Physical violence I welcome because there are

several ufologists I'd like to beat bloody and senseless and legal action is pointless 'cos I ain't got no money to sue for. And in any case both of those responses are abject cowardice by people too intellectually stupid to defend their argument by debate. But hey, come and have a go if you think you're hard enough!

Okay, here's a chance for you to let rip... what are your comments on the following...

MJ-12...

Obviously hoaxed but at the time they gave the people what they wanted, ie 'proof' of Roswell. It shows just how gullible some ufologists are if they are prepared to accept the veracity of documents which aren't even original, have no certain provenance and merely feed back rumour into the loop. I'd like to know who hoaxed them though - isn't it strange that Tim Good was the first person to announce he had them? A document is no more proof than a photograph is and less so as documents are almost always out of context.

"The X-Files"...

Can't get excited really, not really a sci-fi fan and much prefer *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale*. *The X-Files* is nothing like the real world of investigation in any case. Both Duchovny and Anderson can't act for toffee either and Gillian Anderson is a bit of a woofier.² Having said that the best episode by miles is 'Jose Chung's From Outer Space', which I really enjoyed, and which says something about ufology.

Quest International...

They've been called The Brothers Grimm, the Birdsæd Sisters, and far worse names, but they've stuck to their guns and risen from tatty small circulation UFO newsletter publication to tatty large scale circulation glossy magazine. I agree with little they have ever said or written and think anyone who buys their magazine has more money than sense. Having said that I buy it and I think if you want to know what is going on in the subject you have to. I'm sure they are laughing all the way to the bank! Mind you, have you ever noticed that Mark Ian Birdsall's initials are M.I.B.? Spooky or what?

² *You Cad, Roberts!*

The Kenneth Arnold sighting 'that started it all'

This is great! Arnold did not see flying saucers, or anything even vaguely saucer shaped yet within days saucers were being seen. Proof of a myth in action if ever there was one. Arnold himself believed they were military planes or a new form of insect life. He also had been writing fiction for *Amazing Stories* about seeing flying objects around Mt Rainier two years earlier. The whole Arnold phenomenon is a psycho-social ufologists dream – no there are various theories bandied around that he saw pelicans, geese or meteors and the US saucerian faithful are doing their nut about it. It's like questioning the virgin birth. Personally I think Arnold did see birds of some sort - don't start wittering about relative distances and speeds and angles etc because if you study Arnold's many reports he changed his mind several times about all those so he is really quite an unreliable witness. All ufologists should mediate on 'Why Kenneth Arnold', at least once a week.

Gulf Breeze...

Obviously a hoax from the beginning. If any of you believed it then you're suckers! Some people still do believe it - and they are suckers too. The best thing about it is that Bruce Maccabee, who is some kind of high up optical physicist in the US supports it - which are far as I'm concerned trashes the veracity of any other cases he puts his support behind. And before anyone says 'what about all those videos I've seen of UFOs at Gulf Breeze' - pah! Watch 'em closely - they are clearly small balloons, you can see the burning medium melt, drop off and flare out, which of course elicits ooohs and aaahs from the saucer suckers who think they are seeing something unusual.

George Adamski...

You can't really dislike Adamski and the other contactees. These guys lived their lives almost as performance art, some of them may have even believed it, some made some money and I'm sure they all got laid. And if they made people happy, well that's fine by me. What irks me is when ufologists start using these flaky accounts to justify their own theories.

The Amazing Randi...

One of my main men - a sceptic with attitude! It's just a pity he can't get the money to take

Uri Geller on head to head in a law suit because he *knows* Geller is a fake but Geller is a bully who uses his wealth to protect himself from sceptics. I saw Geller close up in Bradford a couple of years ago and yeah, he bent metal, but I've seen Randi and many others do far more impressive things - and they admit to it being hoaxed ergo, as far as I'm concerned, they are all hoaxers. Or to put it another way, if bending spoons is the limit of paranormal power we should forget about it entirely.

John Keel...

Keel was an early hero of mine. All his books are worth reading, notably *Visitors from Space* and especially *Operation Trojan Horse*. They are packed full of snippets of information and his writing style is fabulous. But don't take him too seriously or literally, he's having fun with phenomena and perception in the same way as Fort did. We (The IUN) were the people who managed to get him to give his one and only lecture in the UK and I got to meet and interview him in 1992. I wasn't impressed I'm afraid and I suppose it's never a good idea to meet one's heroes. Every ufologist should read the opening few pages to *Visitors From Space* - it tells you much about the witness process.

Remote Viewing...

As you asked that question Dave I sensed you were lounging in your little red frogman's suit, sipping a G & T, flicking bogies into your fishtank. What do *you* think I think! Complete, absolute and unadulterated nonsense. If people *can* remote view why aren't they doing it to a) help mankind by pinpointing murders/atrocities etc or b) seeing what horses have won/which lottery numbers have come up and retiring. Complete bullshit!

Ufology in the USA...

Wasn't that a Springsteen track? Ufology in the USA is massively interesting and infuriating by turns. There are a handful of very good researchers out there but generally they are plagued by a sort of 'git them wagons in a circle Martha' mentality when in reality they have little evidence for anything other than the fecundity of their own psyches. Of course they are all so enmeshed in it that they can't see the wood for the trees. Endless entertainment, especially seeing how irate Jerry Clark gets on UFO updates!

Timothy Good

I'm sure his mum loves him. *Above Top Secret* was and is a useful book for researchers if you cut through Good's belief system. Other than that the word 'barking' springs to mind, and I qualify this by saying he firmly believes that he has met aliens in the flesh, on one occasion in a restaurant (see his *George Adamski: The Untold Story*), plus he believes in every other kind of saucer bonkersness known to man.

You earlier mentioned the 'Cracoe' case. For the uninitiated, what was it all about...briefly!

Briefly? Ok. 1981 two police officers see amazing light form 'hovering' against a rock at Cracoe near Skipton. They watch for an hour describing the light (two miles distant and seen between 11-12 am) as 'blinding'. Photos are taken. YUFOS³ and the Birdsalls found their empire on this case, sell loads of magazines and case files, argue vehemently with anyone who suggests it may not be as Graham Birdsall called it 'a structured craft of unknown origin'. It is also linked to other UFO sightings in the area and YUFOS produce witnesses who claim to have seen it flying. We investigated the case and replicated the photograph in 1987, proving it to be a complicated light reflection. YUFOS at first refuse to accept this (see question above) but eventually Philip Mantle leaves YUFOS because of it and eventually they quietly concede it is explained. But that's the **very** simple version - read it in the book!

Andy, what happened at BUFORA?

As simply as I can: BUFORA is basically an old boy's club run by the same few sad people now for over twenty years. They do absolutely nothing, contribute nothing to ufology and have the cheek to take over 20 pounds per year from their members. A few years ago a number of us realised this was just a scam and started to spread the word - it's all just a big scam kiddies. My advice to anyone in BUFORA is leave now before they fleece you further, and to anyone thinking of joining - just think of the worst toothache you've ever had, there, you've gone off the idea now haven't you. Formal UFO groups are just an excuse for hierarchy and power struggles, individuality is always stifled by the people who do the least - as Bobby Dylan said, 'Don't follow leaders' (he

³ The 'Original' Yorkshire UFO Society founded by the Birdsall brothers. Nothing AT ALL to do with us.

qualified that with 'Watch the parking meters' - which in Sheffield is sage advice!). The best UFO research is **always** done by small groups or individuals.

Tell YUFOS readers a little about the IUN, and what are your hopes for it's new directions?

The IUN was born in 1987 by myself, Rod Haworth, Dave Clarke, Martin Dagless, Philip Mantle and Stuart Smith. It went underground 1992. Between those years we published thirty odd issue of *UFO Brigantia* (the best UFO magazine ever), numerous in-depth case reports started the large scale UFO conference business in the UK, brought Keel, Vallee, Hopkins, Friedman, Moore, Howe, Bullard and many more famous ufologists to this country for the first time, and generally had loads of fun. The IUN is whatever anyone wants to make of it, it's an anti-organisation, there only as a vehicle for anyone who wishes to use or abuse it. If you are aware of the Dungeons & Dragons classification you'd appreciate that the IUN is Chaotic Good. My hopes for the IUN are that it will run before it can walk, speak before it can talk and not eat with a fork.

In all your 17 years dealing in the murky world of UFOs, what has given you the most satisfaction?

Lawdy! I know, the glow of knowledge on a young child's face as they leave an IUN lecture - Nah, I've got satisfaction from ufology in many ways but there are two moments which stand out, both connected with cases:

* The moment I saw the 'Cracoe UFO' for myself and realised it was all over for those who believed it was a 'structured craft of unknown origin'. I'm still laughing about that one!

* The moment at the British Geological Survey archives in Edinburgh when I found the documentation which placed the poachers and police in the same spot at the same time, which was exactly what witness Pat Evans was looking at. Enlightenment!

Thankyou for listening!

And thanks for taking part Andy. Good luck for the future, good health and keep those knives sharp...it keeps us ALL on our toes...

An analysis of the STS-48 Footage "Streaks" & SDI Technology

By Iain M. McCafferty

I'm sure that just about everyone in YUFOS has seen the STS-48 footage taken by the space shuttle Discovery, and know that NASA's "ice particle" explanation of the objects seen in the footage is about as plausible as saying they're weather balloons. It's fair to say that the "ice particles" are actually intelligently controlled craft, and can certainly be classified as UFO's, especially the one that makes a right angled turn just after the bright flash at the lower left hand corner of the picture. Dr Jack Kasher's excellent (though rather technical) video proves conclusively that the UFO's seen in the footage are definitely not ice crystals using several different proofs, which I won't go over, as I believe Dr Kasher has definitely proved beyond doubt that these objects are actually spacecraft of some sort, and I wouldn't presume to second guess his work. (He's a damn sight smarter than I am!)

Whenever these UFO's are of terrestrial or alien origin is open to question. However, perhaps the most interesting feature of the footage is the aforementioned flash of light seen before the UFO manoeuvres, and the streak of light that passes through the picture close to the flight path of the UFO before it changes course. If you watch the footage carefully, you can actually see two streaks, one directed at the single UFO in the centre to top left of the picture, and another streak directed at the group of two or three objects in the lower right of the picture. Both streaks are quite clearly aimed at the groups of UFOs, which take evasive action to avoid them. It has been theorised before that these streaks seen in the footage are weapons of some sort, which are either being tested, or being used in anger against the UFOs seen in the footage. The streaks are also known to have originated from Pine Gap, an NSA (The US's National Security Agency) field station in Australia, with a security level equivalent to that of Area 51. A department of the NSA may well have been involved with the SDI program, and this would support the theory that the streaks of light in the footage are the "footprint" of some weapon being used, but what type of weapon could they be?

In March 1983, US President Ronald Reagan launched the SDI, the Strategic Defence Initiative, more commonly known as the Star Wars Program. The SDI program was reduced in it's scope during the early 1990's, following the break-up of the old Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, but it is very likely that Military scientists have continued research in this area subsequently. The SDI program was mainly concerned with developing weapons to be used in space to defend the United States against a Soviet nuclear missile attack. Several different theoretical weapons systems were designed, and subsequently developed to investigate their practicality. The systems that are known to have been taken to the prototype stage were; laser weapons, X-ray lasers, Electromagnetic launchers (EML's, commonly known as rail guns), Kinetic Energy Weapons, and particle beams (plasma weaponry).

So many weapons systems were investigated because the SDI program envisaged a layered (multi-stage) defence against Soviet ICBM's, with laser weapons (both space-based and ground-based) being the first line of defence (being a tried and tested technology) and other weapons systems providing an extra defence against attack, the idea being that if one weapon proved to be ineffective, you had at least another system to provide defence. Could one of these SDI weapons possibly be the cause of the streaks in the STS-48 footage? In the rest of this article, I will give you an overview of each of these weapons systems, and give you my opinion of whenever they could have caused the streaks in the footage.

I'm sure that just about everyone is familiar with lasers, since they are so common now in the everyday world. Low powered lasers read the barcodes on your weekly shopping, and play the music off your CD's. However, for weapons purposes, lasers need to be of a power of at least 50 watts. Whereas this is of less power than your average light bulb, because all of the light from a laser is coherent (of the same frequency and amplitude) opposed to the incoherent light (random frequencies and amplitudes) that you get from a light bulb, just 4 watts of laser light will vaporise a hole

through an inch of plate steel. This would normally be enough to destroy an ICBM, but because of the dispersive effects of the atmosphere, the power output of a ground based laser (in the USA) would need to be substantially higher than 4 watts to be effective against a missile up to 3000 miles away during its launch phase over the Soviet Union. (In case you're wondering how a laser could shoot around a horizon, when lasers travel in straight lines, the SDI program proposed the use of space-based "fighting mirrors" to engage targets beyond the line of sight of the ground-based laser, increasing the time available to eliminate all the incoming missiles.)

I've mentioned before in my articles about UFO propulsion about how horribly inefficient lasers are in terms of power conversion. For example, the laser in your average A-level physics lab has something like a 1000 watt input to a 50 milliwatt output, which was the main reason lasers never made it into space. It would be extremely difficult to put a conventional power source large enough for a laser weapon into orbit, as it would need a vast supply of fuel to power the laser. Of course, you could use a nuclear fission reactor, as it is relatively compact, and efficient, compared to standard power sources, but the USA put a moratorium on using nuclear power in space during the 1970's, as its safety was questioned. So it is unlikely that even a ground based laser caused the streaks seen in the footage, if not for the reasons mentioned above, than for the simple fact that lasers (because of the coherent nature of their light) can only be viewed from end on. The streaks in the STS-48 footage were viewed from side on, and laser beams can only be viewed from side on if the beam illuminates particulate matter (such as dust).

If you know your physics, you could of course say that a laser of high enough energy caused the air molecules in the way of the beam to ionise (become electrically charged) and causing the glowing streaks. To shoot this one down in flames, I would say that although the streaks were travelling very fast, they were nowhere near as fast as the speed of light. Not only that, an ionisation discharge is too short to have caused such long-lived streaks in the footage. The energy required by laser weapons is so large that they could only be fired in very short pulses of less than a tenth of a second, to reduce the power used per pulse, and to maximise the power output of the pulse. (Wattage is a function of time, the shorter the time you can release energy in, the higher the

wattage) The laser pulse would be so short, and would pass through the picture so quickly, that it would never be seen other than a brief flash. Remember that the UFO is observed to be reacting to the flash in the picture, a second or two before the streaks appear. If that flash had been the discharge of a ground-based laser, the UFO would not have had the time to manoeuvre clear. Light travels at 186,000 miles per second, and the UFO was in an orbit of no more than 400 miles altitude. My assumption for this figure is that the space shuttle routinely operates at orbital altitudes between 400 and 600 miles, and the object seemed to be at a lower altitude than the camera taking the footage.

I think we can safely eliminate laser weapons from the list of suspects. The next defendant I also believe is innocent of the charge of causing the streaks, X. Ray Laser Esquire. The X-ray laser is a sub-species of the animal above. Instead of converting energy from a power source into light in the visible spectrum, it instead uses X-rays for its destructive power. X-rays can penetrate most forms of matter, and are energetic enough to cause damage right down to the molecular level. The SDI program called for thermonuclear devices to be put into satellites fitted with waveguides (steering mechanisms for electro-magnetic waves: A road underpass is a waveguide, they're just about the right size to cause destructive interference in radio waves. This is why your car radio always cuts out when you drive under one) so that in the event of an ICBM attack, the waveguides would provide an aiming mechanism for the vast amount of X-rays released when the bomb was detonated.

Now, X-rays are totally invisible to the naked eye, and can only cause luminescence in certain types of material. like photographic film, so this alone rules this class of weapon out as the cause of the streaks. Additionally, I kind of think someone would've noticed if someone had detonated a nuclear bomb in the Australian outback. Incidentally, the X-ray laser program in SDI was abandoned due to a treaty that banned the deployment of nuclear weapons in space in the early 1980's.

The Electro-Magnetic Launcher weapon, or rail gun is a more likely candidate to be the cause of the streaks. I believe that the streaks in the STS-48 footage are most likely to be caused by a particulate object, rather than by an energy discharge. The physics of rail guns are well understood, as the particle accelerator at CERN in Geneva is the world's biggest rail

gun, and has been in use for years. Rail guns come in two classes, linear accelerators, and cyclotrons. The accelerator at CERN is a cyclotron. Both classes work using the same method, but the forms of the accelerators are different.

A rail gun uses powerful electromagnets to accelerate a projectile like a bullet. A rail gun would need to produce a muzzle velocity of approximately 20 kilometres per second for a 5kg projectile to disable an ICBM (which probably weighs around 30 or 40 tons). As you might expect, a linear accelerator is exactly that: linear. The electromagnets are arranged one after the other in a line, with the object to be accelerated at one end, and the muzzle of the rail gun at the other. Linear accelerators aren't very efficient, and impractical for weapons purposes. The largest linear accelerator is based at Stanford University in America, and is over one kilometre long, which just about makes it useful enough for particle physics experiments, where sub-atomic particles are accelerated to a substantial fraction of the speed of light. This is roughly comparable to what would be needed to fulfil the criteria above. That would be a pretty large satellite!

A cyclotron on the other hand, can be quite compact, as small as two metres in diameter. The electromagnets are arranged in a circle, which gives you an effectively infinite accelerator length. Arranging the electromagnets in a circle allows you to accelerate your projectile as many times as you like around the cyclotron, until it achieves the desired velocity. You can then direct the projectile out of a small linear accelerator attached to the cyclotron, which forms the muzzle. The magnets of the cyclotron thus form a "P" shape. This configuration is ideal for use in a satellite, as the long side of the "P" can form the length axis of the satellite, and breath of the satellite can be varied according to the size of the cyclotron. Gyroscope assemblies (also known as reaction wheels) can be fitted into the empty volume between the cyclotron circle and the length of the barrel, allowing you to point the barrel of the rail gun at any incoming targets, in much the same way that the Hubble Space Telescope uses reaction wheels to point itself at different stars in the sky.

As far as is known, Electro-Magnetic Launcher systems are still being developed for defence purposes, in both space-based and ground-based roles. Ground-based EML's would be

less effective than space-based ones, since the projectiles would be subject to atmospheric friction. However, basing an EML on the ground would make it far easier to develop the extra power required to counter-act this effect.

Whenever a projectile from a rail gun was the cause of the streaks in the STS-48 footage is another question entirely, though. We can only speculate on the effects that a rail gun projectile would cause when passing through the atmosphere, because if such systems do exist, they wouldn't test them in front of everybody's eyes for everyone to see. However, I do believe that an EML projectile could be the cause of the streaks, and here are my reasons why.

A ground-launched EML projectile would be subject to atmospheric friction. Upon re-entry to the Earth's atmosphere, certain parts of the Space Shuttle (the leading aerodynamic edges, such as the nose and front parts of the wings) are subject to heating of temperatures up to 1600 Celsius from atmospheric friction, at speeds of between 4-8 kilometres per second. An EML projectile would most likely be made from titanium (which would need to be electrically charged before launch, as titanium is not ferrous, and would not be subject to acceleration in a magnetic field otherwise), or a titanium-steel alloy, and if it were still to be within the effective velocity range for weapons purposes of around 20 kilometres per second when it reached orbit, with a 5kg projectile mass, the initial launching conditions would probably need to be at least an initial muzzle velocity of 60-80 kilometres per second, with a projectile mass of 7-10kg.

Travelling at these initial speeds, the projectile would be susceptible to substantial mass loss due to vaporisation from atmospheric friction, which would leave a trail behind the projectile similar to the tail of a comet. This could very well be the cause of the streaks in the footage, though I am uncertain where the initial flash a second or so before the appearance to the two streaks could fit into this theory. The acceleration of a projectile by magnetic means would not produce such a large discharge of light to be seen from orbit, let alone virtually mask a large portion of the Earth's surface as seen from orbit. So, onto the next possible cause.

When you first view the STS-48 footage, virtually everyone's first impression of the streaks is that they've been caused by rockets, or missiles of some kind. It's a natural

assumption, since Mankind has only ever gotten into space by the usage of rocketry. It's also an incorrect assumption when you study the footage. The UFO's are seen reacting to a flash from the Earth's surface a second or so before the streaks appear, which has been interpreted as the flash being the initiation of a weapon's launch directed at the UFO's, and the streaks being the "footprint" of the weapons themselves.

Earlier in the article, I estimated that the UFO's orbital altitude was no higher than 400 miles, which is approximately 650 kilometres. This being the case, we can rule out any form of Surface-To-Air Missile system, since the SAM system with the highest altitude envelope is a Russian system, designed to engage SR-71 and U-2 spy craft, with a maximum altitude range of 70,000 feet. Not only that, if the flash seen just before the streaks appear was indeed the indication of a missile launch, the rocket in question would need to have an inhumanly high velocity to cover those 650 kilometres in a single second. Taking a standing start from the Earth's surface and Earth's gravity into account, the missile would need to have had a terminal velocity of the order of 1200 kilometres per second (or greater!) to have covered such a distance in a single second. 1200 kilometres per second is over 10 times the Earth's escape velocity! Given that even the most powerful of rocket launch vehicles (the Saturn Five and the Russian Energia among them) have topped out at a maximum achievable velocity somewhere near 20 kilometres per second, I think we can safely rule out rocket based weapons systems, even the aircraft launched Kinetic Energy Weapons systems developed in the SDI program such as the MHV. MHV stands for Miniature Homing Vehicle, a kinetic energy weapon designed to destroy Soviet reconnaissance satellites, and was also known as the ASAT (Anti-Satellite) programme. Unlike a conventional missile system, the MHV was launched on a ballistic trajectory by an aircraft like the F-15 Eagle, and boosted into orbit by its own rocket motor to intercept the orbit of a Soviet spy satellite, and intercept it on a collision course, using its own kinetic energy to destroy the target. (The MHV, like all kinetic energy weapons, have no explosive warhead) Even a system like the MHV cannot account for the streaks in the STS-48 footage, even if the camera caught the weapon in its boost phase, when its rocket engine was firing. The chemical rocket systems currently in use today are simply not fast enough to account for the speed of the streaks in the footage.

In addition, the mean speeds that the streaks have in the footage mentioned above would also seem to rule out the EML as a possible cause of the streaks. An average projectile speed of nearly 1200 kilometres per second almost certainly rules out the possibility of using a conventional projectile weapons system, no matter how advanced. This brings us to our final possibility from the SDI programme for the cause of the streaks, particle beam weapons.

The term "particle beam" is in itself a bit misleading, as they are actually plasma weapons. A particle beam weapon would not actually employ a beam, but a short pulse of highly ionised (electrically charged) gas accelerated via a similar mechanism to the EML to a velocity of a significant fraction of the speed of light. Particle beams were the most advanced weapons systems to be developed within the SDI program. Rather than using a directed energy beam or conventional projectile to do the damage on a targeted ICBM, particle beams use a combination of both. By using a plasma pulse, the mass of the actual gas in the weapon discharge would be fairly small, less than one kilogram, to allow the plasma bolt to be accelerated to very high speeds, giving it significant momentum to cause damage like a kinetic energy weapon. However, you also get the added bonus of the bolt being highly electrically charged. This would cause ionisation damage to the electrical control systems of an ICBM, or another target that employed electronic technology, which would disable the target if the impact of the plasma bolt did not destroy it.

Plasma weapons are certainly within the performance range of the streaks in the STS-48 footage, both fast enough to cover the distance from the Earth's surface to an orbit of over 400 miles in a second or less, and possess the electrical properties to account for the streaking effect seen during their passage through the camera's field of view. A small ball of ionised gas passing quickly through a non-ionised gas (such as the atmosphere) will leave a trail of partially ionised gas behind it as it passes, which may account for the glowing streaks seen in the footage. Additionally, the initial discharge of a plasma weapon may account for the flash seen in the footage a second or so before the appearance of the streaks themselves, especially if the plasma bolts had to pass through a cloud layer before coming into view of the camera on the Space Shuttle.

For these reasons, I believe that a plasma pulse weapon is the most likely cause of the streaks seen in the STS-48 footage, as I don't believe that there is any reasonable natural phenomenon that can adequately explain the cause of the streaks. During his recent presentation at YUFOS on the Berwyn Mountains case, I asked Andy Roberts for his opinion on the origin of the streaks on the STS-48 footage, and he suggested "sprites".

For those of you you've never heard of them, sprites are plasma phenomenon associated with thunderstorms. According to Mr. Roberts, there was a thunderstorm in the area of the where the footage was taken at the time, and if you watch the extended footage from Dr Kasher's video of his analysis, this is confirmed by several flashes from the Earth's limb during the several minutes that the UFO's are in view, that can only be consistent from a those of a thunderstorm.

However, video footage of thunderstorms is routinely taken from Space Shuttle missions, and indeed, may have been the impetus for the recording of this particular footage, and I have seen sprites from several different pieces of Space Shuttle video footage. The streaks in the STS-48 footage are not consistent with the sprites I have seen in other STS mission footage. Sprites as the equivalent of plasma water splashes. When a lightning strike occurs, a sprite appears immediately in a similar form to a drop of water falling into a static pool of standing water, leaping up from the top of the cloud. There are three things that are inconsistent with this description to the appearance of the streaks in the footage. Firstly, the streaks are of the form of a single linear pulse, rather than the water-splash appearance of a sprite. Secondly, there is significant delay between the flash of light and the appearance of the streaks, a second or more, which is inconsistent with the nature of sprites. Finally, sprites are very short lived, and rarely last longer than half a second. The streaks in the STS-48 footage take more than a second to pass through the field of view of the camera, so that would seem to rule out sprites of the source of the streaks in the footage. As a disclaimer, I must add that sprites are poorly understood, and have not been studied extensively, so perhaps the streaks might have been a freak sprite occurrence.

Having said that, though, I feel compelled to add that why would a UFO be so anxious to avoid the after-effects of a lightning strike? Surely an intelligence sufficient to build a craft

to traverse the vastness of space between star systems wouldn't be concerned about the effects upon it by a simple atmospheric phenomenon? Why react so violently and quickly to a ground-based flash of light if it wasn't an attack of some sort? Caution, perhaps, but I'll leave you to draw your own conclusions. For my money, the SDI programme became much more advanced than generally known, and the most plausible explanation of the streaks in the STS-48 footage is a plasma pulse weapon.

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See you there!

THE OUTER LIMITS

By Nick Cook

(from *The Sunday Mail (Brisbane)* 1.8.99)

In America, money is no object when it comes to defence. But when \$35 billion goes missing and strange things appear in the sky, questions must be answered. Aviation expert and sceptic NICK COOK followed a trail from Washington to Nevada and ended up asking: Is it a bird? Is it a spy-plane? Or is it a UFO?

AS A defence journalist working in Britain, you know when you're getting dangerously close to something the Ministry of Defence would really rather remained under wraps, because you'll almost certainly get a call from the Ministry's D-Notice Committee telling you so before you rush to print.

The D-Notice system is a fairly gentlemanly affair and relies on a certain amount of goodwill on both sides.

Chances are, a retired rear admiral or air vice-marshal will gently pull you aside and explain patiently how your story will endanger national security, or the lives of serving British military personnel, or both. The system is voluntary, but it lets you know where you stand before things get heavy and unpleasant under the Official Secrets Act.

The essential point is that you're in no doubt where the line is - and you step beyond it at your peril.

Cross the Atlantic and it's a very different story. In the United States, deeply secret defence programs are protected under a regime known as the "special access" system. Special access programs - SAPS, to use the jargon - - are graded white, grey and black, according to their degree of sensitivity.

White programs are relatively straightforward, usually involving hardware and technology which might be ultra-sophisticated, but which in essence has nothing secret about it.

Grey programs usually relate to a non-sensitive platform, such as an aircraft or a ship, whose innards the Pentagon wants to protect from scrutiny.

But the third category, the black program, is in a league all of its own, because it is an "unacknowledged" project. This means someone, somewhere has deemed that its very existence must not be revealed or admitted to.

The lore of the "black world" has it that there are certain military projects from which even the President is excluded because he does not have the "need to know".

When you enter the black world, it can be a pretty mind-bending experience. Three years ago, I was granted a rare interview with Jack Gordon, the head of the Lockheed Martin "Skunk Works", at the company's top-secret facility on the edge of the high desert in Palmdale, California. The Skunk Works, named after the foul-smelling chemicals used in the construction of its first secret aircraft back in the '40s, has built just about every black plane that's ever been acknowledged, and clearly a whole lot that haven't.

While we chatted, Gordon let slip that he had worked on 15 "real flying aircraft" in his career, adding hastily that he could only talk about 12 of them.

When pressed on the missing three, he skilfully moved the subject along.

When the interview concluded, I was escorted back through the tight security of the windowless building and out into the bright California sunshine. On the way, however, I'd seen a diagram on a wall that proudly charted the lineage of every Skunk Works plane since the first one,

America's first operational jet fighter built in 1944.

Past the U-2 that secretly overflew Itussia between 1956 and 1960, past the SR-71 Blackbird, the fastest plane ever built, and today's F-117A Stealth Fighter, there was something called "Astra".

Astra was depicted as a sleek-looking beast, but more importantly, it was right at the top of the family tree.

The thing is, officially, the Skunk Works has built nothing since an unmanned, somewhat sedate-looking spy-plane called DarkStar that had rolled out of the factory the previous year. When I showed interest in Astra, I was given the black world equivalent of the bum's rush: a shrug of the shoulders and a polite reminder that the interview was over.

Three weeks later, and only after persistent questioning, I was told that the depiction on the chart was a mistake and that Astra was really a high-speed airliner project that had been studied in the '70s and very quickly cancelled.

My first reaction in the face of such obfuscation was to laugh.

But the ling effects of the black world are subtle and insidious. Occasionally, in the small hours of a sleepless night, I wonder whether I didn't just imagine the whole thing.

It is this fine line between fact and fiction, as well as dream and reality, that defines the character of the black world and gives it its ethereal shape. Unsurprisingly, it has given rise to a whole host of conspiracy theories over the years, ranging from Pentagon mind-control experiments to alien cadavers stored in freezers at secret locations across the country.

While there seems to be no end of people, many of them weaned on '90s X-Files culture, who accept these yarns at face value, the US defence and intelligence community is not beyond putting its own spin on them from time to time. Two years ago, the CIA admitted that it had encouraged reports of flying saucers in the '50s and '60s to obscure flight trials of its then top-secret U-2 and Blackbird spy-planes.

The overall effect is undoubtedly the desired one: when you enter this environment, you step into a looking-glass world where down is up. As aviation editor of Jane's Defence Weekly, a large part of my brief has been to report on the cutting edge of Pentagon defence technology. In *Billion Dollar Secret*, a documentary shot last year for British television, (*Channel 5, a month or so ago - DB*) - I wanted to take this one step further - to see to what degree the UFO myth was rooted in very real black world technology.

The result was an east-west journey from Washington DC to a top-secret US Air Force base in Nevada that probably owes as much to Hunter S. Thompson as it does to Mulder and Scully.

My journey began in Washington because although entry points into the black world labyrinth are few and far between, here - as is the case almost everywhere in the world - money can open doors.

In a bizarre contradiction that is so often a characteristic of the deeply classified environment, the most secret thing about it - the cash that is its lifeblood - is calculable thanks to good ol' American government accounting procedures.

Every year, the Pentagon submits its fiscal request to Congress in the form of several budget books that itemise just about every nut and bolt of defence equipment the armed forces are likely to need over the coming 12 months.

When you add up all the line items, however, the total does not match the grand total of the overall budget request, which today hovers around \$270 billion. Subtract the total for the line items from the grand total and you find a discrepancy of around \$35 billion. It is this sum that makes up the black budget and, to put the figures into perspective, it almost exactly equates to the total British defence budget.

During the Cold War, there were few dissenting voices on Capitol Hill over the rationale for the black budget, but lately more have been making themselves heard. This is in part because the size of the black budget, as a proportion of an overall defence budget that has been shrinking in real terms for more than 10 years, has been increasing under the Clinton administration.

One of the more vociferous campaigners against black-budget secrecy has been Congressman Dana Rohrabacher, Republican chair of the House science committee's influential space and aeronautics sub-committee.

Rohrabacher's beef is that a vast number of American tax dollars are being spent on commercial aerospace projects - especially in the space field - that already have a direct, but hidden, equivalent in the black world.

"If we have a functioning technology in a black program, we should not be spending billions of dollars on a similar program that's visible to the public," Rohrabacher says. A likely example of this duplication, he maintains, is the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's X-33 program. The X-33 is a demonstrator vehicle being built by Lockheed Martin for a satellite launcher that will take off like a rocket and land like a plane.

If it works as advertised, its operating costs will be a fraction of the Space Shuttle's, which it is due to replace.

Last year, Rohrabacher wrote to Clinton requesting that the administration declassify secret projects that perpetuate this overlap in spending. The project which overlaps with the X-33, he believes, is "Aurora", a black program of mythical proportions to a hard-core of "watchers" who scour budget books, as well as the skies, for evidence of top-secret defence projects.

Aurora is perceived to be a "family" of very fast high-flying aircraft, the most sophisticated of which can effectively fly through space in the same way that the X-33 is designed to. It was first spotted in 1987 as a mysterious line-item, consuming several billion dollars in that year alone, in the reconnaissance section of the air force's budget request. Several people claim to have seen it since the late '80s, the best apparent sighting coming from a trained Royal Observer Corps "spotter" who saw a huge wedge-shaped aircraft over-flying the North Sea oil-rig on which he was working in 1989.

If Aurora exists - and Congressman Rohrabacher is fairly sure it does - it can most likely cross the Atlantic in something under 45 minutes. As yet, Rohrabacher has had no response to his letter to Clinton and, if history is anything to go by, he may have a long wait.

The trail now led west, to the vast expanses of Nevada and the mythical nexus of black world aerospace development - the US Air Force's Groom Lake testing facility, otherwise known as Area 51.

For the past 45 years, Area 51 has been a test centre for top-secret aircraft such as the U-2, the Blackbird and the Stealth Fighter. In more recent times, it has also become a mecca for

UFO watchers convinced the US Government is testing captured alien spacecraft there.

One of the first individuals I met on the road to Area 51 was Bob Widmer, am former head of design at General Dynamics Convair, now in his 80s. Late in the '50s, Widmer worked on an extraordinary spy-plane design for the CIA that was code-named "Fish". In the end, Fish lost out to its rival, Lockheed's Blackbird, but for a reason that has never been altogether explained, the details of Widmer's design remain top-secret, long after the Blackbird fleet was consigned to air museums across America.

Could it be that Fish, whose general characteristics sound resoundingly familiar today, was actually a secret prototype for the Aurora?

We may never know. Widmer was forced to burn almost all the plans for Fish and was told by the CIA to take the details of the project to his grave. And few Americans have ever disclosed their black world activities.

Area 51 is encased within a closed-off piece of government land the size of Switzerland, so gazing into it is impossible unless you're prepared to scale some of the peaks on public land - the nearest of which is about 40km away - that give a restricted view on to its desolate runway, scattered hangars and buildings. Occasionally, watchers see something strange hovering over the base, but Groom Lake, which is 160km north of Las Vegas in the midst of the desert, is the kind of place where you see what you want to see; where one man's UFO is another man's Stealth Bomber.

From pieces of the puzzle painstakingly gathered by black world investigators such as Alaskan Mark Farmer, for whom the study of classified programs is an all-consuming hobby, we know enough about the real-world activities of Groom Lake not to have to credit extra terrestrials for what happens there.

"They do business differently at Area 51," Farmer says, speaking from his vantage-point near the base. "Out here we enjoy all the rights and privileges of citizens under the US constitution. But if you pass that borderline, all that ends."

There is substantial evidence that the US Air Force has tested something like Aurora at Area

51 in recent years and that it is now working on a new generation of stealth aircraft there. Stealth technology was originally developed late in the '70s as a means of shielding aircraft from radar, but it is now moving into a whole new realm of sophistication. Before he retired last year the US Air Force's head of acquisition, Lt-Gen George Muellner confirmed they were experimenting with technology to make aircraft invisible to the human eye.

One method is to coat them with a "smart skin", not dissimilar to the liquid-crystal displays used in laptop computers, that would mimic the plane's background, chameleon-style. From above, the aircraft would blend into the ground or the sea; from below, it would take on the same colour as the sky, making it all but disappear into the ether.

Muellner justifies the need for black programs on the grounds it is still a dangerous world, despite the demise of the Soviet Union.

"The technologies that are developed in the black world need to be continued to be matured, and when the time is right brought forward in the form of weapons systems to maintain our technological edge," he says.

The Pentagon, unlike other national defence institutions, has never been constrained by what scientists say is technologically possible or impossible - and it has the resources to turn its dreams into reality.

Given Area 51's recently acquired infamy (thanks to its starring role in the blockbuster movie *Independence Day*) it is likely that America's most sensitive military technologies are now being tested at some even more discreet location deep within the closed-off Nevada complex.

If the truth is out there, it's probably way too distant now for anyone to tell whether it's a flying saucer or their tax-dollars out for a spin.

FORUM

I recently received a letter from a long-time member of the Yorkshire UFO Society, and was asked if I would include it for printing.

I am more than glad to comply, especially as I hope it can kick off a regular and enthusiastic response from all of our readers. Instead of just sitting and reading the various articles in YUFOS magazine, either nodding your head in smug amusement, or tearing your hair out in abject rage, put pen to paper- (or preferably finger to computer keyboard) and voice your opinion. Vent your spleen! Let off steam! Put the cat amongst the pigeons!

In other words, let's start a heated debate, as Mrs. Merton would say.

So, hoping that this whet the appetite,

"DARK MOON"

Dear Dave,

Like millions of others around the world in 1969, I watched in awe at the scenes depicted on TV which showed Neil Armstrong & Co. walking on the moon - or did they?

Earlier this year I read 'Dark Moon - Apollo and the Whistleblowers', by Mary Bennett and David Percy. The book casts doubts (to say the least) as to whether the scenes we all watched in 1969 were really taking place on the moon.

It leads us into the area of how much and for how long Joe Soap (and Jayne Public !) can be lied to about such important and dramatic events.

I wondered how many other readers were familiar with the contents of the above book?

Eileen Fletcher

Certainly a controversial topic...any comments, people? The floor is, as they say, open!

Book Review

by Mark P Martin

The Uninvited

by Nick Pope,
Pocket Books (Simon &
Schuster), £6.99

I have actually had a copy of *The Uninvited* in my possession for about eight or ten months, and to say that it's been "well thumbed" would be quite an understatement. It is completely dog eared and bedraggled, some pages are falling out, the covers creased, many of the pages have got their corners turned down and I've thoroughly vandalised the text with underlining and notes in red biro.

This three hundred and sixteen-page paperback is in this regrettable condition because it is one of the books that I consistently reach for time and again.

If someone put me on the spot and told me that I had to summarise this book in a nutshell I would have to say that it was *readable*, in fact it is *immensely readable*.

I may be getting a bit ahead of myself here. I've told you that I'm impressed with the book, but I've not bothered to tell you what it's actually about! Well folks, it's about the Alien Abduction phenomena. Most YUFOS members are undoubtedly aware of this disturbing issue and it's various related aspects. However I'm aware that our little group has recently taken a few new recruits on board, who may not be as well informed as some of the society's long standing members. So, rather than alienate (sorry bad pun) you new fellows from the rest of the article I'll briefly outline the nature of *the alien abduction phenomenon*.

Many people from around the world have reported experiences during which they seem to be "taken" into what is usually (but not always) described as an operating theatre type environment. Most researchers tend to assume that this is on board an extraterrestrial spacecraft. The "abductee" is then subjected to a series of medical type tests and procedures, administered by entities that are generally

considered to be alien beings. These entities are commonly referred to as "The Greys." Many different, independent witnesses have described the physical appearance of these creatures. Substantial lengths of time and geographical distance separate these people, but their descriptions are often remarkably similar. They are two and a half to four and a half feet (0.8 to 1.4 meters) tall, with very thin bodies, disproportionately large pear or egg shaped heads, a slit for a mouth, a small flat nose, and their most striking feature, very large, black, almond shaped eyes.

These abduction encounters frequently take place during "missing time." That is to say a period of time that the witness can not account for and has no conscious memory of. Notice that I said *conscious* memory. In an attempt to get to the truth abduction researchers sometimes resort to hypnotic regression to extract the *un-conscious* memory of these periods of missing time. It is while under hypnosis that the stories come out.

Mr Pope's handling of the hypnotic regression issue impresses me. Some researchers, such as Budd Hopkins and other American members of the UFO fraternity use hypnosis extensively, while people such as Jenny Randles are much more cautious about it's use pointing at that it is possible for the witness to be "guided" towards false recollections. Nick does a good job of weighing up both sides of the argument and comes to what I think is a sensible well balanced conclusion. He thinks that hypnosis is a useful tool when administered by qualified professionals (*not* untrained Ufologists.) He does not think it is an infallible be-all-and-end-all and thoroughly explains its shortcomings.

Returning to my actual assessment of "The Uninvited". Most books on this particular subject are from American authors, this is one of a very small number that is by a British writer and examines the situation from a mainly British point of view.

The book starts with a look at the phenomena from an historical perspective. Parallels are drawn to ancient traditions and legends of abductions by fairies (Chapter one is entitled "The Little People".) Nick points out a series of striking similarities between these old folk tales and the modern phenomena.

Of the 16 chapters in the book there is only one that I am not particularly taken with - Chapter 2, "The Space People". It is an account of the activities and claims of the

notorious "Contactee's" of the (mainly) 1950's. I've made references to and given my opinions of these amusing but unconvincing people in a couple of previous issues of the YUFOS Magazine, so I won't bother going over that old ground again.

In chapter eight Nick addresses the abduction issue from his own unique point of view. If you did not already know, Mr Pope is an employee of the Ministry of Defence. In his first book "Open Skies Closed Minds" he disagreed with his employers over the issue of the "Defence significance" of UFOs. The MoD's official line is that UFOs are of no defence significance, but Nick takes a decidedly opposing point of view. His arguments are similar regarding the Abduction phenomena; i.e. that Government should take an interest because it is their citizens (whom they are duty bound to protect) who are being violated.

Part two of the book is predominantly taken up with accounts of various witness's experiences. Some of these tales can be rather disturbing and really push at the boundaries of the readers belief system. As far as I am aware this is the first time that this material has appeared in print. I will not go into the details of any of the cases, but urge anyone who is sufficiently curious to get a copy of the book - it really is interesting stuff.

One of the accounts given is that of "Peter". Some of you will be aware that is recent months controversy has raged over the true identity of Peter. I will discuss this matter further at the end of the review.

An aspect of the abduction phenomena that I am particularly interested in is the connection with psychic phenomena. I'm happy to say that this thought provoking link is adequately covered.

A theme that runs throughout the book is the question of whether Abduction encounters are, an either positive or negative experience for the witness. Examples of a couple of people who think it is positive are introduced in Chapter thirteen. Vaunda is a self proclaimed Abductee who with the support of her friend Chris* was able to make remote telepathic

* *This gentleman's full name is Christopher Martin. He claims that he is able to induce appearances of UFOs by a system of meditation. I am currently trying to get in touch with Chris with an aim to meeting him, and hopefully photographing objects.MPM*

contact with extraterrestrials, (as I've said before some of the material in this book really does challenge the belief system.)

Various explanations for the witness's testimony are explored in the penultimate chapter, again I will not go into detail, if you want to know more get the book, but I will tell you that *fourteen* possible solutions are resoundingly thrashed out. Until I read the book I was only aware of about five or six different theories that had been proposed.

In conclusion I would like to repeat my initial point that this tome is very readable. I certainly recommend that any one with any sort of interest in the Alien Abduction Phenomena spend a few pounds and buy a copy.

Nick Pope and the "Peter" Controversy

by Mark P.Martin

Over the past few months speculation has been rife within Ufological circles over the true identity of the witness whose experiences Nick Pope describes in chapter twelve of his book "The Uninvited".

Some Ufologists have been asserting that the man to whom Nick gave the pseudonym "Peter" is infact Nick himself and that he is describing his own encounter with the unknown.

Nick has come under pressure to "spill the beans" and reveal the true identity of "Peter" of at least to say whether or not it is himself. An example of such criticism came from the highly respected and experienced paranormal writer and researcher Jenny Randles. While being interviewed in the YUFOS Magazine she was asked for her opinion of Mr Pope and she replied that he was a "Nice man, whose knowledge of UFOs is limited and who was an MoD Patsy and doesn't yet know it. But his decision not to come clean on the Florida tollbooth story perturbs me, as he has a duty to play fair with his readers and is not doing so here."

Jenny is obviously entitled to her opinions, and I will always be happy to carefully listen to them. Other Ufologists have also expressed similar opinions.

While writing my review of "The Uninvited" I wrote to Nick Pope and invited him to respond to this "Flak" through the pages of the YUFOS magazine. I, however, was not holding my breath in anticipation of a reply. I reasoned that it would probably be impractical for him to do so, considering all the time that must be taken up by his career at the MoD, UFO research and writing, and interviews for TV, Radio and the print media. I thought that he would simply be too busy.

Perhaps then you can imagine how pleasantly surprised I was to receive a letter from him within four days, and I am now delighted to be able to pass Nick Pope's own words directly on to you:

"With regard to chapter 12 of "The Uninvited", I am well aware of the various rumours surrounding the true identity of the character I refer to as Peter. It has been my long-standing policy neither to confirm nor deny stories on this issue that continue to circulate in the fringes of Ufology. No Ufologist who wishes to be taken seriously would dream of speculating on the identity of a close encounter witness who did not want their name made public, and most Ufologists are well aware that witnesses are not likely to speak out if they perceive that confidences will be betrayed. I am surprised and disappointed that a small number of Ufologists continue to bend or break witness confidentiality. While I appreciate their desire to generate publicity for themselves, they do Ufology a disservice. Their lack of professionalism will inevitably discourage those people who believe they've had bizarre experiences from coming forward, and those of us who carry out serious research and investigation will lose out."

Mr N G Pope, 27th July 1999

I for one, concur - absolutely. A few months ago I interviewed a person who had experienced missing time there was no confirmation of abduction, but details of the case strongly suggest this. There will be a write up for YUFOS in the near future. I wish you could have all heard the fear and uncertainty in that persons voice.

When talking of abductees we are speaking of human beings that have had experiences that are almost beyond the imagination. Experiences that are potentially traumatic, terrifying and life altering. This is an *immensely* serious situation. Any investigating

Ufologist's first thought must always be for the well being of the witness, I don't think I'm exaggerating when I say that if the aforementioned investigator loses sight of this priority then they could end up ruining someone's life

EDITOR'S NOTE

As stressed in the Contents page at the front of *YUFOS magazine*, articles and opinions voiced in our little mag do not necessarily reflect those of the editor (*dat's me!*), YUFOS members or blah blah blah. However, conflicting opinions and ideas are incorporated into YUFOS magazine in order to promote rational debate, intellectual stimulation, and to get people fighting.

As Jenny Randles and at least some of the ufologists referred to in Nick's letter actually read YUFOS magazine, the forum is now open for their response and the gloves are, as they say, off.

Comments please, and the best entry will win a prize.⁴

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 14th September, 1999
7:00 pm- 10:00pm

THE THREE CRANES
Queen Street
Sheffield City Centre

NEXT ISSUE

SHEFFIELD SAUCERS pt 4
An Idiot's Guide to UFO-spotting (pt 2)

⁴ First prize is a ticket to a Bernard Manning gig.
^{2nd} prize is two tickets to....oh forget it. DB

NEW UK PEAK DISTRICT AIRCRASH MYSTERY

Submitted by DAVE CLARKE

Date: Wed, 14 Jul 1999

A FRESH "mystery aircrash" scenario unfolded today as police and search and rescue teams scoured the Peak District Moors after reports of a plane disaster.

Two helicopters, more than one hundred Mountain Rescue Team staff, police and dog teams spent more than six hours searching moors after two people reported hearing a plane in trouble on Tuesday (July 13, 1999).

One of the witnesses - an airline pilot - reported hearing what he thought was a light aircraft in difficulties and another heard an bang like an explosion in the air at 5pm.

They said the mystery aircraft appeared to be travelling from Chapel across the High Peaks eastwards towards Mam Tor mountain and the Hope Valley during heavy cloud.

Search and rescue teams from Edale, Buxton and Kinder searched the 2,000 foot ridge of Mam Tor and Hollins Cross in driving rain with sniffer dogs in the early hours.

Checks were carried out with glider clubs in the area, and with Manchester airport which reported no planes missing or distress calls received. The search was called off in the early hours of Wednesday morning after more than 25 square miles of moor had been searched without finding any trace of the aircraft.

Today police and Mountain Rescue leaders added the mystery to their growing file of mystery aircrash reports from the same region of the Peak District. At one stage during the search Manchester Airport alerted the RAF's Distress and Diversion Cell at West Drayton Command Centre who used their sophisticated equipment to search for radio signals.

Air Traffic Controllers at Manchester said they had not received any distress calls or picked up anything unusual on radar.

But a senior ATC admitted the reports came from a region within a short distance of the

approach to Ringway's terminal 214 above Whaley Bridge. A spokesman said the radar tapes for the period had been retained and a decision was to be taken whether to reconstruct the incident on radar.

"We received a report from Derbyshire police that a member of the public had reported an aircraft accident and we passed details to the RAF West Drayton," he said.

"The Distress and Diversion Cell have a number of facilities available to them including the ability to locate missing aircraft and are the body responsible for following up reports of this kind."

But Peak District Mountain Rescue Team Leader Mike France - who co-ordinated the search operation - revealed the Hope Valley region lay on a radar "blackspot" for Manchester.

He said: "We received several reports via the police describing an aircraft in difficulties and we had to take it seriously because these were independent witnesses.

"If there had have been a light plane downed on the moors we could have had been two and 20 casualties so we brought in more than one hundred volunteers to search.

"At one stage we had both the Derbyshire and South Yorkshire Police helicopters airborne but the weather was so bad most of the search had to be done from the ground.

"The search went on for more than six hours but we found nothing and there were no reports of missing aircraft.

"We remain on standby to go out again if any other evidence comes to hand, for example if a private pilot comes forward and says it was his plane."

A spokesman for Buxton Police said the report was just the latest of a series of sightings of

phantom planes from the Hope Valley-Derwent Dams area.

"We receive three or four of these kinds of sightings every year, including sightings of a phantom bomber in the Derwent Dams area.

"We have to respond to each one individually and on its own merits. Usually if it is a light plane which has crashed it can be located relatively quickly.

"But in this case we have carried out a fairly comprehensive search and are fairly satisfied that nothing has crashed.

"The witnesses were sincere in their reports but we have drawn a blank. It could have been anything, including a light plane whose engine misfired, or a bang caused by a thunderclap or an explosion in a quarry as the weather conditions were right for that last night."

A Manchester Airport spokesman said: "Pilots of light civil aircraft do not have to file a flight plan if on and individual flight in unrestricted airspace.

"There are many private airstrips in use and there is nothing to stop a pilot taking off and landing without informing air traffic control.

"Unless they enter controlled airspace they would not need to notify us and it is quite possible this explains what has happened."

EDITOR'S NOTE

Of course, this story only adds credence- as if it was needed- to what Dave Clarke has been saying for months about The Howden Moor Incident... The UFO Crash That Never Was- as YUFOS readers know only too well.

Jenny Randles responded when this story hit the internet that these sort of reports, sightings, or mis-sightings if you will, are common in the peak and virtually everywhere around Manchester Airport.

Unless of course, another RAF / NATO Tornado jet has been blasted out of the skies by an ET-black triangle. And covered up by the authorities. And anyone who disagrees is obviously employed by the CIA, DOE, MJ-12, MI6, NSA, The Bilderberg's, Mossad, FEMA,

The Masons, The Hellfire Club, SPECTRE, THRUSH, or Montgomery Burns. I know I am.