

**OK, fine, but if buying into some of the snake oil that's on offer, it should at least come with a Health Warning.**

Like the majority of the American people, I believe in the reality of UFOs and that a significant proportion of the strange unidentified objects that are seen in the skies over this country and in other parts of the world are something of a truly mysterious nature. That is, maybe, of extraterrestrial or interdimensional origin, rather than all just secret military aircraft, drones, misidentifications, natural phenomena, hoaxes, etc. However, between this initial cautious position of mine and the widespread belief that UFOs are definitely extraterrestrial spacecraft piloted by small gray aliens (with either a hostile agenda, or perhaps a benign one, towards the inhabitants of planet Earth?), there is one mighty leap of faith involved.

The UFO True Believers have made that leap and many feel totally certain of the alien presence here. We should all look carefully at the evidence on which their beliefs are based and whether the widespread alien myths of today have any sound basis in fact. Some people have rather vague ET

beliefs which are based on the general concept of creatures from other planets that has been presented to us in Hollywood movies and in comic books and science fiction over the years. Others with a more definite interest in the subject listen to Coast-to-Coast AM radio and suchlike, read UFO books and magazines, visit certain well publicized websites dealing with such matters, and attend UFO conferences that are held all over America.

So far, so good, but here comes a word of warning. A very significant proportion of the material that has been presented via the above media is without doubt fiction, fabrication, fantasy and falsehood. That would be all very well if these stories of alien contact and the like were presented with some kind of warning but most often they are not. Perhaps a health warning, like that found on cigarette packs, along the following lines, would be in order: *Many claims of alien contact, UFO photographs, video footage and stories that are presented here contain fiction, fantasy, and faked material. Consumption of too much of this and belief in it may lead in some cases to paranoia, gullibility, loosening of one's grip on reality, and irrational behavior.*

Before howls of protest arise at my suggestion, I should point out that there are also many honest, serious researchers in the UFO field for whom I have nothing but admiration. The trouble, especially for those who are new to the subject, is that it's not always easy to distinguish between the honest researchers and those people who should definitely not be believed. Just because a person making a fantastical claim of alien contact is plausible, well-educated (sometimes with a science degree, Ph.D., or similar), likeable, and a polished presenter, that doesn't necessarily mean that he or she is telling the truth. As with con men and con women, the reverse is often true.

There are quite a few UFO celebrities who have come forward with claims of alien contact over the last sixty odd years. During the 1950s and 1960s these were mostly "contactees" who told stories of their meetings with extra-terrestrials in flying saucers and of their trips to other planets either in our solar system or in other star systems. There have been more than 50 of these and their extraordinary claims are mostly just fantasy and science fiction.

To improve on their claims of alien contact some of the better known contactees, such as George Adamski and Billy Meier and others, produced dubious photographs purporting to show flying saucers and sometimes blurred images of their extraterrestrial friends. These alleged ETs almost

always had human form since it's easier to serve up a photo of an unknown person and then claim it is an alien. Photos of "aliens" that are totally unlike humans are much more difficult to make look convincing and I know of none that is considered by any serious researcher to be "the real thing".

At this stage I believe that it is useful to list some cases of alleged ET contact that serious UFO researchers have firmly consigned to what I call the "7F Basket". The "7F" signifies falsehood, fiction, fantasy, fraud, fakery, folklore and flapdoodle.

Here are ten examples of well known cases that can be firmly consigned to the 7F Basket of ufology:-

- (1) Contactee George Adamski and his tales of flying saucers in which he flew to Venus and round the moon. Likewise other 1950s/60s "contactees".
- (2) The Billy Meier megahoax featuring "beamships", contact with ETs from the Pleiades, hundreds of faked photos of UFOs, Semjase, etc., etc.
- (3) Bob Lazar's 1989 claims of back-engineering flying saucers acquired by the US military at "S-4" (Area 51) & aliens' use of Element 115 propulsion.
- (4) Ray Santilli's "Alien Autopsy" scam of 1995. Footage of an alleged autopsy carried out on a dead alien was fraudulent and faked in the UK.
- (5) Robert Dean's false claims re "The Assessment" document at SHAPE (1964). This never existed. Also tales of an alien battle with US forces, etc.
- (6) Linda Cortile's ongoing alien abduction soap opera in NYC (1990s) was concocted by her and fed bit-by-bit to abduction researcher Budd Hopkins.
- (7) Ed Walters' 1987 UFO photos at Gulf Breeze, FL, and his alleged alien contact story. (This led to a UFO flap there where people *did* see UFOs)
- (8) Whitley Strieber's "Communion –A True Story" (1987). This abduction tale is, without doubt, horror fiction that took place solely in Whitley's head.
- (9) The "CARET drones" (from 2007) Internet hoax created by "Isaac". Supposed ET technology but actually bicycle parts and many faked photos.

(10) “The Other Roswell” story of a 1955 UFO crash near Del Rio, TX, by Robert Willingham. His claim is undoubtedly fantasy presented as fact.

That’s just ten cases for the 7F basket but it’s probably only the tip of the iceberg. OK, some of you will say, we know that many of these are false cases but it doesn’t mean that there aren’t *any* genuine cases of alien contact. No, it doesn’t, but my complaint is that some researchers, magazine editors, MUFON writers and some UFO conference organizers go on promoting these fraudulent cases as if they were genuine. Again and again, as if nothing had changed, and without any “health warning”: these are just UFO myths!

I noted the difference between cases where we have only the word of the contactee or experiencer and cases where other evidence is offered such as photographs. Unfortunately such photos almost invariably prove to have been faked. With Billy Meier’s “Wedding Cake” UFO photos one could

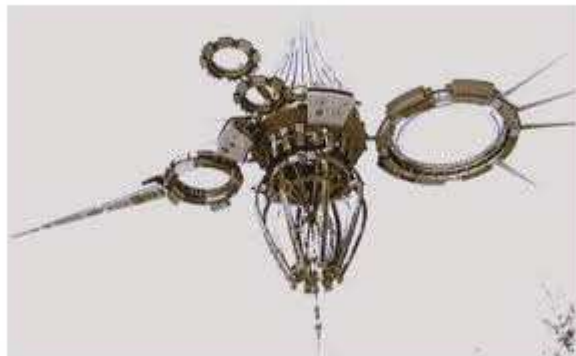


clearly discern that the UFO base was constructed using a garbage can lid of a type which is common in Switzerland (see F1). Similarly, with Isaac’s “CARET drones” --presented as genuine “self-activating machines” using ET technology by both Linda Moulton Howe and Whitley Strieber-- it can

be seen that some of the CARET drone components are recognizable as bicycle parts (see F2 below). In addition to that, an article soon to be published in the MUFON Journal will show that fractal analysis of the CARET photos proves them to be fakes without a shadow of doubt.

So strong is the almost religious desire to believe among the UFO True Believers that sometimes they will concede there is a bit of fakery involved but insist that the story as a whole must be true. That's been the case with Adamski, with the Meier hoax, and for quite some time with Santilli's "Alien Autopsy" fraud. Even as these cases start to unravel and the stories were being altered to counter any proof of fakery, some true believers would hang on to their belief regardless. To my way of thinking, once some part of an alien contact story, or its supposed photographic evidence, is shown to involve deception, then the likely conclusion is that it is all deception.

Another aspect of beliefs held so fervently by UFO True Believers is that the same people may also tend to embrace wild conspiracy theories. Of course many of the alien contact stories are heavily bound up in conspiracy theory and anyone (like me) who questions the truth of such claims has



**Faked photo of hovering "CARET drone"**

sometimes been accused of being a government disinformation agent bent on suppressing "the truth". That ridiculous idea is just about as crazy as the well known conspiracy theory which claims that 9/11 was engineered by the "sinister Bush/Cheney/CIA/NSA clique" and that the high-rise buildings in New York destroyed on 9/11, were actually primed in advance with thermite charges by government agents. According to this mad scenario, it was that which caused their collapse and destruction, rather than the airplanes hijacked by al Qaeda terrorists and flown into the WTC towers.

If one pauses for a moment to consider just how absurd some of these beliefs are, one could probably be justified in saying that the paranoia so much in evidence here is potentially a mental health problem. Conspiracy theories -- whether it be 9/11 or the JFK assassination, or the alleged murder of

Princess Diana-- seem in recent times to supplement the beliefs of the more extreme UFO True Believers. Some conspiracy theories like this are served up at UFO conferences just as if they were a natural extension of the UFO subject.

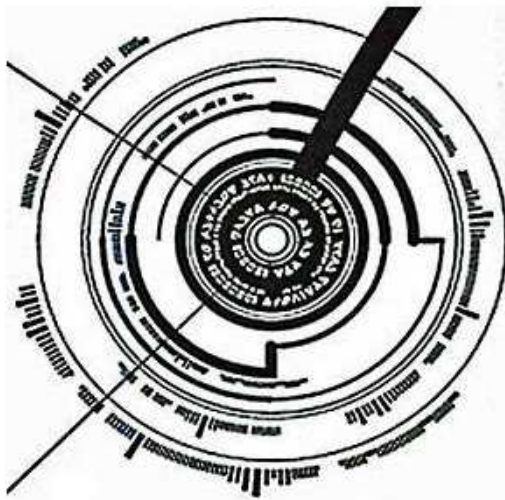
And, besides conspiracies, we can include a number of other mysterious things that some people have tried to link with the UFO phenomenon: cattle mutilations and crop circles, to name but two. There are of course some persuasive arguments to link such phenomena to UFOs but equally one should be aware that, in the case of crop circles, fakers and hoaxers are aware of it and sometimes tailor their productions accordingly. Many crop circle formations in Britain have been designed and laid down by their human creators over the last 20 years specifically to appeal to the UFO beliefs of certain prominent researchers. In particular, the “Pi” crop circle formation of 2008 encoded that mathematical constant accurately to nine decimal places with a view to entrapping any researcher with a numerical problem solving ability. As anticipated, some naïve researchers immediately claimed that the crop circle must be of ET origin, or, at any rate, not the work of humans. (Considerate of aliens to use decimal notation, wasn't it?)



The three makers of the Pi crop circle include a friend of mine, ‘Raven’, whom I’ve known well for about 20 years. One of his colleagues in making this formation was ‘JayBird’ who has been one of the most prolific British circle-makers since 1990. I studied the crop circle phenomenon in the UK for several years and I can categorically say that the Pi circle and the vast

majority, if not all, crop circles there in recent years are of human origin and are *not* made by ETs, UFOs, or even “self-activating machines” built in a secret lab in Palo Alto, CA, using ET technology (see F2 and F3 below).

To compound the CARET drones hoax deception, the invisible Internet “Isaac”, who has never actually shown himself in person, incorporated the ‘Pi’ crop circle design in one of his alleged Top Secret CARET laboratory documents and supplied it via the Internet to Linda Moulton Howe. She evidently believes that all this CARET stuff is genuine ET technology. Once more the dangled carrot was eagerly accepted. I should point out that Raven and JayBird are not in collusion with Isaac and maybe the latter should pay them some royalties for his imitation of their magnificent Pi circle symbol.



“CARET drawing of extra-terrestrial technology ...”



Spectacular field art by JayBird, Raven and one other (Wiltshire, UK, 6/1/2008)

Similarly perhaps, Open Minds TV, who now use the Pi crop circle symbol as a logo for their Open Minds magazine?

For those who ask why shouldn't one believe the various claims made in the ten false cases which I cited above, I would ask whether for instance they believe the Nigerian gentleman who is always sending me and others e-mails promising to pay \$50,000,000 into one's bank account –details of which he requests are sent to him in advance. Or the wonderful e-mail which arrives out of the blue telling you that you are the Winner of the UK Lotto draw in Johannesburg, South Africa, and you are approved to collect \$2,500,000.00 if you apply for it (the catch, which becomes apparent later, is that there is a processing fee of several thousand \$ which must be paid in advance). I suppose there are people who believe these scams are genuine and there are also people who are determined to believe in the great hoaxes of ufology.

But surely, I'm asked, what possible reason would X or Y, say, have for making these false claims of alien contact? Sadly, the motives for making a false claim most often boil down to the simple business of making money. Billy Meier had quite a business going selling lovely color photos and books of photos of his alleged Pleiadean beamships hovering over the Swiss hills. He also sold recordings of the strange noises these supposedly made. Not only was there money in it but he became the prophet or leader of a group of disciples who believed in his tales of alien contact and supposed Pleiadean philosophy. Other UFO "contactees", like Rael, have formed cults or sects and some have published best-selling books that have netted considerable sums. Admittedly not all make money from their claims of alien contact but that's usually not for want of trying! And, of course, I must admit there may be some who do genuinely believe in what they perceive happened to them.

When it comes to the 7F basket and the many false tales of alien contact, we should distinguish between the originators of the false claims and those who shamelessly promote them despite knowing that evidence has been faked and the stories are largely untrue. The latter are very much like the snake oil salesmen of the American West a hundred years ago and more. The product has changed, of course, but tales of alien contact, flights to other planets, ET crop circles, and "self-activating machines" are just as marketable as snake oil once was. The new product finds a wide audience via TV and radio, the internet, magazines, and websites that offer such fantasies dressed up as fact.

I don't really care what people choose to believe as regards the "alien presence" and claims of alien contact. It is for each individual to decide what the truth is and which researchers are to be trusted. The broad church of American ufology today embraces some honest researchers and also quite a few prominent figures who might be politely accused of selling snake oil. Anyone who doubts this disillusioned assessment of US ufology should read the article *Twenty Years in the UFO Fog* (see F4) by Don Ecker who, with his wife Vicki, spent many years producing UFO Magazine. He writes:

*In the last few years the one troubling thing with UFOs and UFO research has been the incredible lack of critical thinking exhibited by researchers that should know better and the public that doesn't know better. For many years I've heard people within the field grouse that the debunkers and skeptics are ruining research but who are they kidding? Some of the "cases" in recent years that people have touted make me cringe. Stories recently covered in UFO Magazine like Project Serpo that have not one iota or shred of proof*



*and read like the worst case of BAD science fiction ... but people WANT TO BELIEVE.*

That brings us back to the X-Files picture at the beginning of this article (which happens to feature one of Billie Meier's fake UFOs). Don Ecker is a good judge of character and he understands the extent to which the UFO subject has been taken over by charlatans selling snake oil. If you read his article you'll find the names of quite a few of them such as Bill Cooper, Marshall Applewhite, John Lear, Dr Courtney Brown, Lee Shargel, Ed Dames, Mel Noel, etc., etc.

“Does it matter?” some of you may ask. Yes, it does since, like Don Ecker, I consider this is a genuine and legitimate subject of study and that UFOs must come from somewhere. The falsehood, fiction, fantasy, fraud, fakery, folklore and flapdoodle that have swamped the subject for so long devalue the work of honest UFO researchers. More often than not the press treats the subject with amusement or derision, and it is understandable why orthodox scientists steer well clear. Continued belief in false cases of alien contact only impedes the search for a true understanding of the UFO phenomenon.

*George Wingfield*, May 2012.

Footnotes: Internet Links to referenced material.

F1

<http://www.thebiggestsecret.org/home/index.php/articles/ufo-et/meier-hoax/60-meier-hoax/82-meier-mega-hoax-mega-con>

also:

<http://www.thebiggestsecret.org/home/index.php/articles/ufo-et/meier-hoax/60-meier-hoax/76-meier-smoking-gun>

F2 <http://www.bikebob.org/Carrots&CropCircles.html>

F3 <http://www.dronehoax.com>

F4 <http://www.ufowatchdog.com/20+YEARS+IN+THE+UFO+FOG.pdf>

For Wingfield's further article: *Ten Myths of US Ufology* see “theufobook” website and go to webpage: <http://theufobook.wordpress.com/2011/12/>