

Citizens fight gov't cover-up of It's government's turn to 'put up or shut up'

By Larry W. Bryant

A year ago, at a UFO research symposium sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., a vocal anti-UFO writer exhorted the audience's pro-UFO contingent to put up or shut up.

What he meant was that he's tired of hearing that the UFO subject deserves serious attention on the part of the government. He feels that the intellectual noise pollution on the part of UFO advocates who refuse to bear the burden of proof is a disservice to science and to sanity. He wants them to submit their case to binding arbitration, as it were. If they can't produce convincing (to him) evidence in a reasonable period of time — say, 12 months from the date of the Smithsonian event — then they ought to agree to abandon their cause.

Aside from the simplistic slant of the critic's proposal — it's impractical for the meager resources of privately funded UFO research to be focused on a single aspect of such a broad issue — the critic misses the point, for the verdict is already in. Over the past several years of its evolution, the verdict reached its high point this July with the 12th annual symposium of the Mutual UFO Network, held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Effort to suppress reality

One of the featured speakers was New York attorney Peter A. Gersten, active in pursuing official UFO documentation via the U.S. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The symposium's theme — "UFOs: The Hidden Evidence" — was epitomized by Gersten's presentation. Marching through a chronicle of documentation thus far released through FOIA litigation, Gersten left no doubt in the audience's mind that this emerging body of testimony reveals a systematic effort by the Federal Government to suppress its hard-core evidence of UFO reality.

Indeed, mused Gersten, if the testimony were the substance of a criminal law case, the defendant (i.e., the government) would be in deep trouble. Proof to a lawyer need not be the same as proof demanded by a physical scientist.

Where does Gersten come from here? Right now he's pondering the recent Federal appeals court decision in an FOIA case involving the UFO-related records of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency — records whose very existence was denied by the Agency before advent of the Act. The court's decision in favor of the Agency is important not only to UFO-oriented citizens; if let to stand, it will strengthen CIA efforts to achieve full exemption from provisions of the Act.

Another suit for vital UFO documentation is also pending at the appeals level. The defendant: none other than the supersecret National Security Agency, which declines to release some 135 documents on the grounds that to do so would jeopardize national security. The NSA position contradicts the earlier, formal government pronouncement that the

(Right) Copy of the letter sent by then Congressman Gerald Ford to L. Mendel Rivers, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, recommending an official government investigation of UFO phenomena. After becoming president following President Nixon's resignation, however, he fell suddenly silent on the issue. (Facing page) This letter was sent by former astronaut L. Gordon Cooper to Grenada's ambassador to the United Nations expressing his support of a U.N. body to research UFOs.

reported UFOs pose no threat to the nation's security. Oral arguments in the appeal are scheduled for October 28th at the U.S. Courthouse in Washington, D.C.

Informants urged to talk

In the meantime, Gersten is asking all reluctant participants in the 34-year-old

"UFO coverup" to come forward with the final facts and figures. Of course, this isn't as easy as it seems — given the intelligence community's hold on its members' past/present/future conduct, as guaranteed by their oaths of secrecy. But here's one way to get around that hold, for the purpose of the public's "right to know."

If you're a present or former principal in the coverup, merely write to President Reagan with the request that he free you from your secrecy oath as regards your hard-core UFO knowledge. Specify in your letter that no reply from him will be

taken as a go-ahead to tell all. If the government means what it says about the declassified status of official UFO-related records, then you need fear no reprisal. Send a copy of your letter to us (anonymously if you prefer), along with whatever reply you receive, and we'll discreetly proceed from there.

Help us let "the evidence speak for itself."

The address is Citizens Against UFO Secrecy, P.O. Box 4743, Arlington, Va. 22204.

Larry Bryant is administrator of Citizens Against UFO Secrecy (CAUS).

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
OFFICE OF THE MINORITY LEADER,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D.C., March 28, 1966.

Representative L. MENDEL RIVERS,
Chairman, Armed Services Committee,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR CHAIRMAN RIVERS: No doubt you have noted the recent flurry of newspaper stories about unidentified flying objects (UFO's). I have taken special interest in these accounts because many of the latest reported sightings have been in my home State of Michigan.

The Air Force sent a consultant, Astrophysicist Dr. J. Allen Hynek of Northwestern University, to Michigan to investigate the various reports; and he dismissed all of them as the product of college student pranks or swamp gas or an impression created by the rising crescent moon and the planet Venus. I do not agree that all of these reports can be or should be so easily explained away.

Because I think there may be substance to some of these reports and because I believe the American people are entitled to a more thorough explanation than has been given them by the Air Force to date, I am proposing that either the Science and Astronautics Committee or the Armed Services Committee of the House schedule hearings on the subject of UFO's and invite testimony from both the executive branch of the Government and some of the persons who claim to have seen UFO's.

I enclose material which I think will be helpful to you in assessing the advisability of an investigation of UFO's.

May I first call to your attention a column by Roscoe Drummond, published last Sunday in which Mr. Drummond says, "Maybe all of these reported sightings are whimsical, imaginary or unreal; but we need a more credible and detached appraisal of the evidence than we are getting."

Mr. Drummond goes on to state, "We need to get all the data drawn together in one place and examined far more objectively than anyone has done so far. A stable public opinion will come from a trustworthy look at the evidence, not from belittling it."

"The time has come for the President or Congress to name an objective and respected panel to investigate, appraise, and report on all present and future evidence about what is going on."

I agree fully with Mr. Drummond's statements. I also suggest you scan the enclosed series of six articles by Bulkley Griffin of the Griffin-Larrabee News Bureau here. In the last of his articles, published last January, Mr. Griffin says, "A main conclusion can be briefly stated. It is that the Air Force is misleading the public by its continuing campaign to produce and maintain belief that all sightings can be explained away as misidentification of familiar objects, such as balloons, stars, and aircraft."

I have just today received a number of telegrams urging a congressional investigation of UFO's. One is from retired Air Force Col. Harold R. Brown, Ardmore, Tenn., who says, "I have seen UFO. Will be available to testify."

Another, from Mrs. Elyse M. Davis, Eugene, Oreg., reads, "I out of 10 people want truth of UFO's. Press your investigation to the fullest."

Ronald Collier of Los Angeles, who identifies himself as "a scientist from MIT," urges that you "do everything in your power to make Air Force Project Blue Book (the Air Force name for its study and verdicts on UFO reports) known to the people." Are we to assume that everyone who says he has seen UFO's is an unreliable witness?

A UPI story out of Ann Arbor, Mich., dated March 21, 1966, states that "at least 40 persons, including 12 policemen, said today that they saw a strange flying object guarded by 4 sister ships land in a swamp near here Sunday night."

Matt Surrall of Station WJL, Detroit, cites an eye witness account of a recent UFO sighting by Emile Grenier of Ann Arbor, an aeronautical engineer employed by Ford Motor Co. He points out that an aeronautical engineer can hardly be considered an untrustworthy witness.

In the firm belief that the American public deserves a better explanation than that thus far given by the Air Force, I strongly recommend that there be a committee investigation of the UFO phenomena.

I think we owe it to the people to establish credibility regarding UFO's and to provide the greatest possible enlightenment on this subject.

Kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,

GERALD R. FORD, Member of Congress.

Enclosures.