

DR. JAMES E. McDONALD SPEAKS ON THE PLASMA-UFO THEORY:

On October 19, 1966, McDonald, speaking before the Washington D.C. chapter of the American Meteorological Society, sought to discredit the Plasma-UFO theory with the following statement:

"Nobody has found atmospheric field strengths anywhere near breakdown values more than miles from a good active thunderstorm, and when I say miles I'm really being very generous."

During the subsequent question-and-answer period, I challenged this statement by citing a number of reports of "clear-air lightning" from several respected meteorological journals.

McDonald then responded: "Mr. Klass points out that there have been cases of clear air lightning and these have been puzzling, and yes I've heard of those, it's true, and my flat statement that lightning does not occur without a thunderstorm needs that kind of a qualification." (Transcript from tape recording made during the talk.)

On April 22, 1967, in a talk before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington, McDonald again tried to discredit the Plasma-UFO theory:

"Ball lightning, to be sure, is a very poorly understood atmospheric phenomenon. But if there are any workers in atmospheric electricity who hold, as does Klass, that ball lightning can be generated without the presence of intensely active thunderstorms, I have failed to uncover such viewpoints in a recent extensive review that I have carried out on the ball lightning problem, thanks to Klass' prodding."

McDonald failed to tell his audience that it was six months earlier, long before his "extensive review" of ball lightning, that he had rejected out-of-hand the Plasma-UFO theory.

Later, when I contacted a number of ball lightning specialists, I found only one who said he had discussed my theory with McDonald. That scientist was Dr. Martin Uman of the Westinghouse Research Laboratories in Pittsburgh, a former associate of McDonald at the University of Arizona.

On Sept. 6, 1967, Dr. Uman wrote me that he had discussed my ideas with McDonald in several telephone conversations. While Dr. Uman did not endorse my theory, saying he felt that additional evidence was needed, he said: "I also believe that lightning and ball lightning may occur outside intensely active thunderstorms."

Yet on April 22, 1967, after talking with Dr. Uman, McDonald said: "But if there are any workers in atmospheric electricity who hold, as does Klass, that ball lightning can be generated without the presence of intensely active thunderstorms, I have failed to uncover such viewpoints..."

On March 12, 1968, McDonald and I were members of a panel at a UFO symposium in Montreal, sponsored by the Canadian Aeronautics and Space Institute. In the written copy of his speech which McDonald handed out in Montreal, he made a remarkable concession:

"I agree with Klass that, buried in all of the reports labelled 'UFO' may well be some natural plasmoids. I concede that our present ignorance of ball lightning is such that there may be something like it that forms independently of thunderstorms (the long-mysterious 'earthquake lights' might be a case in point.)"

When McDonald returned to Tucson, he expanded his remarks and published a 40-page printed paper which he and NICAP have distributed nation-wide.

BUT IN THIS REVISED PAPER, McDONALD HAS DELETED COMPLETELY HIS EARLIER STATEMENT "I agree with Klass that, buried in all of the reports labelled 'UFO' may well be some natural plasmoids. I concede that our present ignorance of ball lightning is such that there may be something like it that forms independently of thunderstorms (the long-mysterious 'earthquake lights' might be a case in point.)"

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(5/14/68)

"HE WHO DOES NOT BELLOW THE TRUTH WHEN HE KNOWS THE TRUTH MAKES HIMSELF THE ACCOMPLICE OF LIARS AND FORGERS"

... Charles Peguy

WHICH DR. JAMES E. McDONALD CAN WE BELIEVE?

When Dr. James E. McDonald talks on the subject of UFOs, he flatly denies that atmospheric physics or freak atmospheric electrical phenomena might have any important role in the UFO mystery.

During the past two years, McDonald has repeatedly stated in public that he has been working "full time" or "essentially full time" on UFO investigations. Yet during this same period he has been under contract with the Office of Naval Research to conduct research in atmospheric physics.

When McDonald visited Australia in the summer of 1967, at Office of Naval Research expense, he devoted much, if not most, of his time there in interviewing persons who had reported UFO sightings and in giving lectures on UFOs.

On Dec. 5, 1967, the Office of Naval Research wrote to the University of Arizona to clarify whether McDonald had been spending its atmospheric physics research funds for his UFO studies. ONR received no denial. Instead, it received the following confirmation and explanation:

"... a great deal of information is to be gained on atmospheric optics, radar propagation and atmospheric electricity from a careful study of reported UFO sightings."

McDonald's UFO investigations during his ONR-sponsored trip to Australia were described as follows:

"Interviews with a number of witnesses of unusual atmospheric phenomena having possible bearing on optical and electrical processes..."

These statements indicate that McDonald has discovered a remarkable new research technique which has been overlooked by hundreds of atmospheric physicists. It should be expected that McDonald would quickly report and document this important discovery in scientific journals for the benefit of fellow scientists.

It has now been nearly a year since McDonald made his ONR-funded trip to Australia. Why has McDonald failed to publish the results of his important discovery that "a great deal of information is to be gained on atmospheric optics, radar propagation and atmospheric electricity from a careful study of reported UFO sightings" ?

If the explanation given to the Office of Naval Research is true, how can McDonald repeatedly deny the possibility that freak atmospheric phenomena may have an important role in the UFO mystery?

Philip J. Klass
Washington D.C.
July 23, 1968

"Mathematics is the most exact science and its conclusions are capable of absolute proof. But this is so only because mathematics does not attempt to draw absolute conclusions. All mathematical truths are relative, conditional."

.... Charles P. Steinmetz

DR. JAMES E. McDONALD'S "MATHEMATICAL PROOF":

In 1933, Lord Rutherford, one of the greatest experimental physicists of his day and the "father" of nuclear physics, said his calculations showed that "the energy produced by breaking down of the atom is a very poor kind of thing. Anyone who expects a source of power from the transformation of these atoms is talking moonshine."

Within 12 years, the United States had exploded the first atomic bomb, and Rutherford's calculations.

In any new scientific area where basic knowledge and understanding is meager, it is risky to leap to dogmatic conclusions on the basis of simplified mathematics which may not accurately represent the complex physical processes involved.

Dr. James E. McDonald admits that ball lightning type plasmas are "puzzling and far from understood." He concedes that "it can be stated unequivocally that, in 1968, students of atmospheric electricity have not yet succeeded in developing an adequate theoretical understanding of the baffling phenomena." (From printed version of his talk to the Canadian Aeronautics and Space Institute in Montreal on March 12, 1968.)

Despite this admission, McDonald proceeds to claim he has proved mathematically that such plasmas "could not be drawn through the atmosphere at a pace of even a very slow walk by Coulomb (electrical) interactions (with an airplane) which Klass invokes to fit his hypothesis of plasma-UFOs, hence his ideas on plasma-UFOs pacing aircraft are quantitatively untenable." McDonald boasts that even when he grants the most favorable possible conditions, his mathematics proves that such a plasma could not be pulled along by an aircraft at speeds faster than NINE MILES PER HOUR.

How then does McDonald explain the report in a respected French journal of meteorology which tells of a ball lightning type plasma which was seen to follow alongside an aircraft flying at approximately 300 miles per hour -- more than 30 times the maximum possible speed permitted by McDonald's mathematics?

Since this plasma was only slightly larger than a tennis ball, I presume that McDonald will resist the temptation to suggest that it really was an extra-terrestrial spaceship! (This is his explanation for the World War II "Foo Fighters" whose size was reported to be only 5-6 ft. in diameter.)

According to the report in La Meteorologie (Oct.-Dec., 1952), the incident occurred around 1 p.m. local time on Nov. 23, 1948, while a TWA Constellation was flying at approximately 11,000 ft. altitude over the Adriatic enroute to Cairo. The report was written by M. Baratoux, himself a pilot, who was riding as a passenger near the rear of the cabin. Baratoux was sitting in an aisle seat while his friend, also an eye-witness, was at the window seat. The weather was cloudy and had become a bit squally.

Then suddenly, according to Baratoux, "I felt something like a thump under the cabin, just a few meters ahead of us. The very first thought that came to my mind was: 'It's as if we ran over a dog.' Then, hearing something rubbing under the cabin, my second thought was: 'It's like a piece of wood rubbing along the underside of an anchored boat in a current.'"

Baratoux stopped eating his lunch and looked out the window. To his surprise he saw "loom up from under the cabin a yellow ball of fire, slightly orange, a little larger than a tennis ball, encircled by a gray deep-violet layer 2-3 cm. thick with a short tail, giving a spiral aspect that indicated rotation. It was going at about the same speed as the plane." The plasma was about one foot from the side of the cabin, he estimated.

Baratoux said the glowing plasma "was dragged along by the plane" for perhaps a couple seconds and then it exploded, giving off streamers and a loud report. "It all happened as if some force had glued this ball to the plane, which the wind then painfully tore away," he concluded.

Whether the plasma ball was created by a static discharge from one of the aircraft antennas mounted on the underside of the aircraft, or was generated in the clouds and attracted to the aircraft will never be known. Its lifetime was considerably less than some reported observations of "Foo Fighters" and UFOs. However, I have proposed that Plasma-UFOs are created by electric discharge from the aircraft wingtips into the vortices left in the wake of the wingtips. The vortex motion, I believe, can explain the larger size and greater longevity of Plasma-UFOs.

Assuming that Baratoux is correct in estimating the duration of the sighting at 1-2 seconds, the aircraft traveled approximately 400-800 ft. during this interval, while the plasma tagged along.

McDonald's lack of caution in leaping to dogmatic conclusions is surprising for he himself pointed out that the noted astronomer Simon Newcomb made such a fatal error just after the turn of the century. Speaking to the United Aircraft Research Laboratories on Jan. 26, 1968, McDonald told of Newcomb's article which allegedly proved that heavier-than-air flight by man was simply out of the question.

Only a few weeks later, the Wright Brothers took to the air at Kitty Hawk and flew in the face of Newcomb's proof.

The chance observation on Nov. 23, 1948, by an experienced French pilot (as well as numerous World War II "Foo Fighter" reports) clearly suggests that ball lightning type plasmas can fly in the face of McDonald's proof.

Philip J. Klass
Washington D.C.
(5/21/68)

"A MAN WHO IS ALWAYS READY TO BELIEVE WHAT IS TOLD HIM WILL NEVER DO WELL."

.... Petronius

DR. JAMES E. McDONALD'S "SEEMINGLY CREDIBLE WITNESSES":

The UFO cases which McDonald selects to convince his audiences that UFOs are extra-terrestrial spaceships should certainly be cases which he himself has investigated and/or which he is sure are not hoaxes or misidentifications. McDonald likes to describe the reports he selects as coming from "credible witnesses" or from "seemingly credible witnesses."

How good is McDonald's record in assessing the credibility of persons making UFO reports? How good is his record in spotting hoaxes?

On Oct. 19, 1966, McDonald spoke in Washington D.C. to the local chapter of the American Meteorological Society. He said: "I've been working on the (UFO) problem in a low-powered, extra-curricular way for about 10 years in Arizona... Starting last April, started spending more time and by May it was full time." With this experience, McDonald should have developed considerable skill in spotting UFO hoaxes. But consider three of the cases which McDonald selected to impress his Oct. 19 audience:

1. Ft. Belvoir case, involving a series of six photos which purport to show a UFO shaped like a giant "Hoola Hoop" which appears to envelope itself in a self-generated cloud. McDonald said he had interviewed the ex-GI who had taken the photos. Despite obvious inconsistencies in the photos and in the man's story, McDonald expressed no reservations about their authenticity on Oct. 19, 1966.

Does McDonald still accept the Ft. Belvoir photos and story as authentic? He has dropped this case from his "speaking inventory." Has McDonald finally learned that the "UFO" is merely a smoke-ring?

2. Santa Ana, Calif., case, based on a series of four photos taken by a traffic engineer which show a UFO that resembles a straw-hat. This case also was personally investigated by McDonald. Despite obvious inconsistencies in the photos and in the man's story, McDonald expressed no reservations about the authenticity of this case on Oct. 19, 1966.

Does McDonald still accept the Santa Ana UFO photos as authentic? This case also has been dropped from McDonald's "speaking inventory" and he no longer uses the photos in his talks. On Jan. 29, 1968, following his talk to the Naval Ordnance Laboratory in Washington, McDonald was specifically asked about the Santa Ana photos. He admitted he now has some doubts about their authenticity.

3. Socorro, N.M., case, considered by some to be one of the most convincing UFO cases on record because of indentations in the sand allegedly made by the UFO, was another one which McDonald discussed on Oct. 19. In a telephone conversation with him the next day, he reconfirmed his unqualified acceptance of this report as authentic.

Does McDonald still accept the Socorro case as authentic? This impressive case also has disappeared from McDonald's "speaking inventory". Perhaps his present views have been influenced by new facts on the case which were turned up by my own on-the-spot investigation and publication of these facts in the spring of 1968?

Has McDonald become more cautious, more expert in selecting "credible" UFO cases?

The Sept. 26, 1967, issue of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported on McDonald's talk before Westinghouse scientists. According to the newspaper account:

☐ "He (McDonald) told about cases, which he said he had personally investigated, in which large trucks had apparently been picked up and moved short distances in the presence of UFOs."

If these reports are true, they provide impressive evidence in support of McDonald's extra-terrestrial hypothesis. One should expect McDonald to describe these cases in every subsequent talk.

Yet less than six months later, McDonald failed to even mention these impressive "truck-moving UFO cases" when he spoke in Montreal to the Canadian Aeronautics and Space Institute on March 12, 1968. Why did these cases disappear from McDonald's speaking inventory of "credible UFO cases" ??

But here is one of the ten UFO cases which McDonald did select for his Montreal paper. It involved two college-age boys living in Kansas City who claim that on Aug. 12, 1961, while driving in an open-top convertible, they saw a giant UFO which was hovering only 50-100 ft. off the ground a few blocks away. The boys said they drove up almost directly underneath the UFO and observed it for several minutes before it departed, according to McDonald's account.

McDonald said: "I have recently interviewed both of these witnesses." The Air Force had interviewed the boys immediately after the incident. McDonald admits there are major discrepancies between what the boys told him and what the USAF report says the boys told its investigator.

For example, according to the USAF report, the boys said the UFO was the size of "a football field." But in talking to McDonald they said it was only 100 ft. long. According to the USAF report, the boys described the UFO as resembling a "sled with running boards." They now deny having said this. But now the two boys can not agree between themselves as to the UFO shape. One claims it was disc-shaped; the other says it was like a rounded cylinder, according to McDonald.

Another discrepancy involves the flight profile that the UFO allegedly took when it departed. McDonald admits that during his recent talks with the two young men, "the precise climb-out path was recalled somewhat differently by the two witnesses."

How long will it be before McDonald decides to abandon this Kansas City case from his inventory of "credible" UFO reports?

Why does McDonald have so much difficulty in finding UFO cases from "seemingly credible witnesses" which can stand the test of time?

Philip J. Klass
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(5/27/68)

DOES DR. JAMES E. McDONALD REALLY SPEAK WITH AUTHORITY?

Let's examine his record. On Oct. 19, 1966, McDonald flatly denied the possibility of clear-air lightning discharges during his talk before the Washington D.C. chapter of the American Meteorological Society. Here are his exact words, transcribed from a tape recording of his talk:

"NOBODY HAS FOUND ATMOSPHERIC FIELD STRENGTHS ANYWHERE NEAR BREAKDOWN VALUES MORE THAN MILES FROM A GOOD ACTIVE THUNDERSTORM, AND WHEN I SAY MILES I'M REALLY BEING VERY GENEROUS."

During the subsequent question-and-answer period, I challenged this statement and the following references were among those cited to dispute McDonald's unqualified statement:

"Lightning From Clear Sky" by H.F. Gisborne. Monthly Weather Review, Vol. 56, No. 3, p. 108.

"A Lightning Stroke Far From the Thunderstorm Cloud" by Z.A. McCaughan. Monthly Weather Review, Vol. 54, No. 8, p. 344.

"Lightning From A Clear Sky" by F. Myers. Monthly Weather Review, Vol. 59 No. 1, p. 39.

"Lightning Without Clouds" by D. Baskin. Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, Vol. 33, No. 8, p. 348.

McDonald responded as follows: "Mr. Klass points out that there have been cases of clear air lightning and these have been puzzling, and yes I've heard of those, it's true, and my flat statement that lightning does not occur without a thunderstorm needs that kind of qualification."

IF McDONALD ALREADY KNEW OF SUCH CASES, AS HE ADMITTED, WHY HAD HE FLATLY DENIED THE POSSIBILITY OF CLEAR AIR LIGHTNING ONLY A FEW MINUTES EARLIER?

When I recounted this incident briefly in my book ("UFOs--Identified", p. 90), I intentionally avoided the full incriminating details of his admission and merely wrote: "McDonald quietly acknowledged that his statement might have been too sweeping and not entirely accurate."

McDonald has publicly stated that he has read my book "four or five times." He had never publicly questioned the accuracy of my account of the above incident until Sunday evening, May 5, 1968. On that date, during my appearance on the Bill Fields Show on TV station KPLR, McDonald was brought into the discussion by long-distance telephone from his home in Tucson.

Now, McDonald flatly denied his Oct. 19, 1966 admission:

OVER

Here is the verbatim transcript of our exchange, obtained from the KPLR recording of the program:

Klass: "Do you deny any of those statements that I just read....?"

McDonald: "Let's start from the beginning. I never admitted, of course, that field intensities approaching dielectric breakdown strength occur more than a mile from a thunderstorm. That's really quite absurd. You suggested it in your book and you have just stated that I admitted you were right. You are quite incorrect on that point."

Klass: "I have a tape recording as to what you said Dr. McDonald and I'll be happy to let you hear it any time you're interested."

McDonald: "Yes, well, you'll find if you listen to it carefully that I admitted no such thing."

When I returned to Washington, I followed McDonald's advice and once again listened to the tape and transcribed this portion of it. Here is what McDonald had said on Oct. 19, 1966:

"MR. KASS POINTS OUT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN CASES OF CLEAR AIR LIGHTNING AND THESE HAVE BEEN PUZZLING, AND YES I'VE HEARD OF THOSE, IT'S TRUE, AND MY FLAT STATEMENT THAT LIGHTNING DOES NOT OCCUR WITHOUT THUNDERSTORMS NEEDS THAT KIND OF QUALIFICATION."

This is curious: On Oct. 19, 1966, when I challenged McDonald, he admitted that he had indeed heard of clear air lightning cases. But on May 5, 1968, he flatly denied having made any such admission and claimed that lightning could not occur "more than a mile from a thunderstorm."

On page 187 of my book (which he claims to have read four or five times) I quoted just such a case from the March 1928 issue of the Monthly Weather Review where two forest rangers reported that they "saw a flash of lightning strike the ground...about 15 miles from them. This flash was followed by four others within the next few minutes...The phenomenon was most peculiar because all of these strikes descended almost vertically, apparently out of a blue sky, the nearest clouds being about 15 and 25 miles, respectively, from the area struck."

Despite this and similar reports, McDonald now claims that lightning strokes can never occur "more than a mile from a thunderstorm."

DOES McDONALD REALLY SPEAK WITH THE VOICE OF AUTHORITY WHEN HE TALKS ABOUT ATMOSPHERIC ELECTRICITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UFO MYSTERY??

"...HE WHO PERMITS HIMSELF TO TELL A LIE ONCE, FINDS IT MUCH EASIER TO DO IT A SECOND TIME AND THIRD TIME, TILL AT LENGTH IT BECOMES HABITUAL."

Philip J. Klass
Washington D.C.
(6/11/68)

... Thomas Jefferson

DR. JAMES E. McDONALD'S "FABRICATED, MACHINE-LIKE" UFOs:

McDonald claims that "the types of UFO reports that are most intriguing, and point most directly to an extra-terrestrial hypothesis, are close-range sightings of machine-like objects of unconventional nature and unconventional performance characteristics seen at low altitudes, and sometimes even on the ground...coming from credible witnesses..." (Speech before American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Los Angeles, March 26, 1968.)

McDonald speaks of "many reports from apparently quite credible witnesses in which the object seen is entirely too much like a fabricated product of technology (i.e. machine-like) to warrant an explanation, say, in terms of some poorly understood plasma phenomena." (Speech to United Aircraft Research Laboratories, Hartford, Conn., Jan. 26, 1968.)

"...the type of UFO reports that are provocative are not mere balls of luminosity, but structured objects described by seemingly quite credible witnesses as resembling machines of some type." (Speech to the Canadian Aeronautics and Space Institute, Montreal, March 12, 1968.)

Despite what McDonald claims are "many reports," he admitted in Montreal that "when hoax photos or dubious photos are excluded, one seems to have left a dismayingly small number of good UFO photos after 20 years of UFO sightings."

During the past 20 years, many dozens of daylight UFO photos which purport to show a "machine-like" object have been submitted to the USAF, to NICAP and to the news media. IS THERE EVEN ONE SUCH PHOTO ON WHICH McDONALD IS PREPARED TO STAKE HIS EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL HYPOTHESIS?

If McDonald can not endorse even one daylight photo of a "machine-like UFO," how can he be so credulous as to accept verbal reports of "machine-like UFOs." After all, it requires much less effort to fabricate a hoax UFO report than to make a hoax UFO photo of a "machine-like UFO."

If the Earth has been visited by hundreds or thousands of spacecraft from other worlds, how does McDonald explain the fact that --

NOT ONE out of nearly 400,000 photographs of man-made objects in space, taken by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory global network of Baker-Nunn cameras has ever shown a "machine-like UFO?"

NOT ONE out of more than 50,000 photos taken by our lunar landing and lunar orbiting spacecraft has ever shown a "machine-like UFO" either on the lunar surface or in flight near the moon?

NOT ONE out of several hundred photos taken from space by American astronauts has ever shown a "machine-like UFO?"

NOT ONE out of tens of thousands of pictures taken of the earth from space by our military reconnaissance satellites has ever shown a "machine-like UFO?"

NOT ONE out of millions of aerial photos taken by military reconnaissance aircraft or civil aerial survey airplanes has ever shown a "machine-like UFO?"

NOT ONE out of more than 1,000,000 photos taken from space by our Tiros meteorological satellites has ever shown a "machine-like UFO?" (Admittedly, the resolution of the Tiros cameras is not sufficient to see tiny UFOs near the earth's surface, but UFOs up to 800 ft. in length have been reported by NICAP, and considerably smaller size craft should be visible if they happened to be at altitudes of several hundred miles.)

One of McDonald's favorite UFO reports, which he says provides "really impressive" evidence for the existence of "machine-like UFOs," is one involving an experienced pilot. Both McDonald and I heard the pilot, and his passenger, describe the incident at the American Society of Newspaper Editors convention in Washington D.C. on April 22, 1967. I recorded the talks in their entirety on my tape recorder.

Here is how McDonald typically describes the pilot's UFO encounter (from printed version of his Jan. 26, 1968, talk to United Aircraft Research Laboratories.)

"On the afternoon of May 21, 1968, we were told, Mr. William C. Powell and Miss Muriel McClave were flying in a Luscombe over Willow Grove, Pa., at about 4,500 feet altitude, with 15-mile visibility. Powell, the pilot, has 18,000 hours to his flying record (USCAF, AAF, NIM and executive transport work currently.) After a flight of Navy jets climbed out under his wing from Willow Grove Naval Air Station, Powell spotted an object closing on the jets from their rear. Noting (the) absence of a vertical tail-fin, he watched it approach on seeming collision course at their level, until it passed their (own) starboard wing at a distance Powell put at perhaps 100 yards. Powell said: 'It was just like looking at a Cadillac.' The object, no Cadillac, was described by both as a domed disc, of diameter 30-40 feet, with a bright white dome on a red discoid base."

This is all of Powell's story that McDonald chooses to tell his audiences.

I have made a verbatim transcript of my tape recording of Powell's talk, and of Miss McClave's brief comments. I can not find any statement in which Powell says "It was just like looking at a Cadillac," or anything similar. Nor can I find any place where either party gave an estimate of the UFO size.

But far more important are the DETAILS WHICH POWELL DID REPORT AND WHICH McDONALD DOES NOT MENTION. Remember that this 18,000 hour pilot was looking for mechanical details to help him identify what he at first thought was another aircraft, and that the object was seen in broad daylight at a distance of only 300 feet, by the pilot's estimate.

YET NEITHER POWELL NOR MISS McCLAVE REPORTED SEEING ANY "MACHINE-LIKE" DETAILS. Powell said: "It was all, all very well defined, very clear. The part above was a 'Dayglow red,' a very brilliant red. The raised dome was a brilliant white. We could not see any portholes or anything but a solid object, no lines on it, except these two colors. At the time it passed us, it appeared to be cruising at about the speed of another light aircraft."

McDonald conveniently omits the most remarkable observation of the entire encounter. Powell said:

"Miss McClave, she actually could see it disappear. It never got out of her vision, until it all of a sudden disappeared."

HOW CAN A "MACHINE-LIKE" SPACECRAFT, EVEN AN EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL ONE, DISAPPEAR "ALL OF A SUDDEN" — LIKE AN APPARITION ?

This is a UFO case which McDonald has publicly stated provides "really impressive" evidence of "machine-like" craft from another world!

Philip J. Klass
Washington D.C.
(6/25/68)

Dr. James E. McDonald charges that for 20 years the world's scientific community has ignored UFOs -- "the greatest scientific problem of our times" -- because scientists have been misled by ill-based assurances from the U.S. Air Force.

McDonald says the problem demands the attention of "the world's really outstanding scientists... not second-raters such as myself who will never be capable of plumbing the depths of so complex a problem." (From talk to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 22, 1967, in Washington D.C.)

Nearly two years ago, McDonald launched an all-out crusade to give the real facts to the scientific community. If the evidence which had so quickly convinced McDonald that UFOs are spaceships from another world were presented to scientists, they too should be convinced.

McDonald is an articulate speaker and writer and has conducted his evangelical campaign at a frenzied pace, as he reported to ASNE on April 22: "I have given 10 talks this week in Washington...I've been at the Office of Naval Research, Naval Research Laboratory, the Pentagon twice...I've talked to National Academy people, National Science Foundation and to other persons whose influence on the problem, I believe, will quickly show up but whose affiliations I'm not free to discuss with you." McDonald appraised his progress this way: "I'm glad to be able to say to you that scientific and official concern is beginning to change."

McDonald has given his UFO lectures to scientists throughout the U.S. and as far away as Australia, during his trip there on Navy business. A partial listing of organizations to which he has spoken includes: The National Space Council, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Naval Ordnance Laboratory, Westinghouse Research and Development Center, United Aircraft Research Laboratories, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, the Canadian Aeronautics and Space Institute, the American Meteorological Society and the United Nations Outer Space Affairs Group, in addition to those which McDonald cited to ASNE.

Many of the scientists who have heard McDonald's UFO lectures are themselves directly or indirectly involved in the U.S. space program, which should make the prospect of extra-terrestrial visitors especially exciting. The long list of government laboratories and government contractor laboratories which have heard McDonald clearly indicates that there has been no government or USAF attempt to suppress his views.

What has been the collective response of these thousands of scientists? Have they been convinced that UFOs are extra-terrestrial spaceships by the best evidence that McDonald can muster?

McDonald summed up the results of his long crusade this way in a talk in Washington on June 3, 1968: "I have met with little response." He continued: "There is now little hope of getting the problem under top-level scientific scrutiny until a science-oriented Congressional committee holds a searching inquiry into the entire UFO problem."

The traditional scientific approach to convincing the scientific community had failed McDonald. Now Congress must intervene.

Is the scientific community really so blind that it cannot recognize "the greatest scientific problem of our times," or is the evidence for extra-terrestrial visitors really so weak?

Philip J. Klass
(7/1/68)

DR. JAMES E. McDONALD SUGGESTS: A MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR UFO INVESTIGATION

On Jan. 26, 1968, Dr. James E. McDonald spoke on UFOs to the United Aircraft Research Laboratories in East Hartford, Conn. During the question-and-answer period, he was asked to outline the type of UFO investigation that he would recommend, in view of his criticism of the then existing University of Colorado UFO study. When McDonald later published this talk, he included an addendum which outlined his suggestions.

McDonald called for a program which would begin with an international scientific study of UFOs, at a cost of "a few tens of millions of dollars."

As this initial phase neared completion, "certain follow-on efforts would probably be undertaken...the deployment on a global basis of an adequate network of new UFO sensors...new electromagnetic sensing devices should be conceived and deployed...Much of the initial design discussions aimed at (this global UFO sensor network) could and should begin soon after (the international study efforts) are set in motion, possibly sooner," according to McDonald.

How much will it cost to develop, build and operate this global network of UFO sensors that McDonald recommends?

According to McDonald's own estimate, it will cost "billions of U.S. dollars per year."

"Ultimately, if we are indeed under some form of extraterrestrial surveillance, global expenditures at the level of billions of U.S. dollars per year would become a small price to pay for clarification of such a profoundly important issue," according to McDonald.

But if UFOs are explainable as hoaxes, misidentifications and freak atmospheric phenomena, McDonald's proposed multi-billion dollar per year program will become history's most ridiculous and expensive boondoggle!

Philip J. Klass
Washington D.C.
July 19, 1968

Dr. James E. McDonald has repeatedly and bitterly attacked the U.S. Air Force for its handling of the UFO problem. This is not McDonald's first attack on the USAF, as the following item from the June 2, 1960, issue of the Tucson Daily Citizen shows:

AF Dealing In Half Truths, Prof. McDonald Charges

Evasion and half truths in the ICBM missile location controversy were charged today to the Air Force by Dr. James E. McDonald, University of Arizona physicist heading the Committee Against Ringing Tucson with Titans.

McDonald denounced as deceptive the Air Force statement issued yesterday through Sen. Carl Hayden which explained that launching pads are put near existing bases to save money and that population centers are likely missile targets in event of war.

"The one key word, 'fallout,' is not mentioned anywhere in this Air Force statement," said McDonald, "although our entire protest concerns fallout hazards to Tucsonians who would be trapped within a ring of H-bombed Titan bases."

McDonald declared the Air

Force was "internally inconsistent" in predicting in one point that American cities would be missile targets and, in another point, inferring that the Russians would fire mostly at U. S. military bases to wipe out possible retaliation.

He quoted Sen. Barry Goldwater as saying bombers at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base would "be useless by 1962" as refutation to the Air Force statement that, "by virtue of its manned bomber mission, (D-M) is in all probability a primary target."

"It would seem to follow," McDonald declared, "that by about 1962, Tucson's only important attack danger will reside in the Titans themselves and not in the air base itself."

The Air Force contention that setting the bases farther out from D-M would "contribute relatively minor additional blast, thermal and prompt radiation effects" on Tucson was described by McDonald as stopping "short of the full truth."

"Its net implication is entirely false and objectionably deceptive," he asserted.

"Whoever wrote that statement only gave three of the four main effects of nuclear weapons, omitting the greatest killing factor of them all—radioactive fallout.

"Prompt radiation must not be confused with local fallout," he warned. "Multimegaton surface bursts at the Titan sites will lay down lethal blankets of gamma-emitting debris for tens of thousands of square miles downwind of the sites. The mere 20-mile displacement from Tucson will mean nothing, if it is a 20-mile displacement to south, west or north.

"The Tucsonian who may fear this half truth without clearly

realizing what is meant by "prompt radiation" may ask with us whether Sen. Hayden has not been given a subtly deceptive statement to pass on to Arizonans."

McDonald challenged the Air Force economy position by figures indicating Tucson's two Titan squadrons will cost \$600 million.

"Why, then," he asked, "can't we spend perhaps \$20 million for permanently useful roads (to far-off sites) which would permit location of the Titans on the safer downwind side of Tucson?"

McDonald lost his first battle with the U.S. Air Force only six years before he launched his second attack.

DR. JAMES E. McDONALD'S CHANGING STANDARDS OF CREDIBILITY:

On Oct. 17, 1966, during my first conversation with Dr. James E. McDonald, I asked whether, after his 10 years of UFO investigations, he accepted reports in which people claim to have "seen little men." McDonald replied: "I don't think there are any well-substantiated accounts of this and I'm very dubious."

Two days later, McDonald spoke in Washington to the local chapter of the American Meteorological Society and described the famous Socorro, N.M. UFO case. But he failed to mention a seemingly important detail -- that the lone witness claimed to have seen two figures in white coveralls.

The next day, in a telephone conversation with McDonald, I asked how he could accept the Socorro report without reservation in view of his statement of three days earlier that he did not accept any reports in which "creatures" were reported in or near the object. McDonald replied: "The occupant cases, as they are called, are a great big complicated mess. You asked me this and I replied that I don't regard any of this as credible. Now you point out here is a case (Socorro), and if you're getting down to that kind of fine print...."

On Jan. 26, 1968, McDonald spoke to the United Aircraft Research Laboratories in Hartford, Conn. In the published version of this talk, he said: "I am deeply puzzled by the large number of 'occupant' reports of which I now have knowledge. I make no present judgment, however, as to their significance."

Only three days later, when McDonald spoke in Washington to the Naval Ordnance Laboratory, a member of the audience asked if he believed reports in which it was claimed that creatures had been seen in or near the UFO.

Here is McDonald's verbatim reply (from a tape recording): "Uh, uh, there is evidence pointing in this direction, uh, yes, I, uh, usually don't volunteer to discuss this part of the problem in an audience of physical scientists for obvious reasons. The evidence is, uh, weak, but not, uh, absent. Uh, there are reports, uh, that people of seemingly fair credibility have seen, uh, figures ...But let me dash back to safety. My position on that is that I distrust much of the evidence...so it is more (word indistinct) I have found not to talk about this, and I wish I hadn't."

On July 29, 1968, when McDonald appeared as a panelist at a "UFO Symposium" sponsored by Congressman J. Edward Roush of the House Science and Astronautics Committee, he distributed a prepared statement which included these comments on UFO "creature" reports:

"An extremely unusual category of cases, those involving reports of humanoid occupants of landed UFOs...I have tended to skirt such cases on tactical grounds; the reports are bizarre...For the record, I should have to state that my interviewing results dispose me toward acceptance of the existence of humanoid occupants in some UFOs...my efforts over the past two years being aimed at arousing a new degree of scientific interest among my colleagues in the physical sciences, have led me to play down even the little that I do know about occupant sightings. One or two early attempts to touch upon that point within the time limits of a one-hour colloquium taught me that one loses more than he gains in speaking briefly about UFO occupants...But occupants there seem to be, and contact (with them) of a limited sort may well have occurred..."

Philip J. Klass
Washington D.C.
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