

MEMO

JAN 9, 1970

PHILIP J. KLASS

Dear Ol:



Here's copy of original USAF release for your files.

The LIFE editor was interested enough in your UFO hoaxes to take them along with him, along with the Trent material and other stuff.

Never know how much, or how little, they will end up using. I asked that you be paid some reasonable fee if they used your pix.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Philip Klass". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "K".

*Aviation Week
& Space Technology*

McGraw-Hill, Inc., 425 Natl. Press Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20004

MEMO

PHILIP J. KLASS



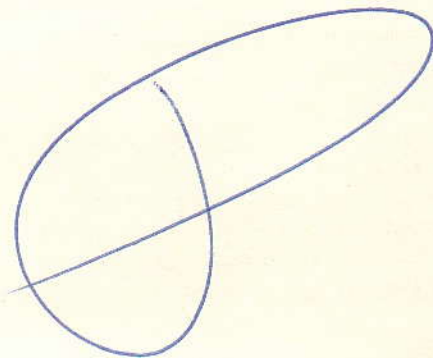
Bob:

It's not too early to think of a summer job... and get our feelers out by spring.

One possibility is the Zenith radio lab--no defense business.

Another is Chicago Aerial Industries (Now Bourns/CAI) is one of the Chicago suburbs. They make photo recon cameras for military and civil use. Think that it might be more interesting for you (if they have any openings) if you are willing to consider same.

Let me know by time I return from Europe on or about Feb. 15 or shortly thereafter.



NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

March 31, 1970

Copies to all
Plasmarians.

Greetings, Gentlemen!

As we all know, the Smithsonian Institute operates the Smithsonian Prairie Network. This is a series of 16 cameras in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and South Dakota that are specially set up to watch for meteors. Each station covers the entire sky except for a small area around the zenith, and they photograph all night every night.

Specially designed periodic shutters cut into the exposure, making it possible to determine angular velocity and deceleration of the meteors.

On January 3, 1970, a fireball brighter than the moon fell over northeastern Oklahoma, at 8:14 PM CST. It caused sonic booms that were heard all the way from Tulsa to Tahlequah, a distance of 60 miles. From a study of the photographs taken of the meteor, its trajectory was computed. Only 800 meters from the predicted spot, a 22 pound meteorite was discovered, near the small town of Lost City, Oklahoma.

In Czechoslovakia on April 7, 1959, a similar bright meteor was photographed by 11 cameras, and its trajectory was computed.

The Prairie Network has been in continuous operation since 1965. Why have none of its cameras tracked any of the bright UFO'S that have been reported in this time? The cameras work splendidly in detecting actual objects in our atmosphere such as meteors (and notice that this meteor left a sonic boom). Why haven't any UFO landing spots been found in the same way that meteors have been followed down?

COULD THE REPORTED UFO'S BE LESS
REAL THAN THESE STONY METEORITES?

THE PRAIRIE
METEORITE



August 10, 1970

Dear Bob:

A quickie response to your last card, for I am weary from my writing, and tomorrow is my day at the office. (Think I wrote you that I got a month's leave of absence, but I go into the office one day each week to go thru my mail.)

Glad my pessimistic appraisal on UFO book market did not discourage you. I really think that the sort of book you have in mind SHOULD do well in perhaps 10 years--when all but the real die-hards have given up ship and the public would then be interested to know how/why so many people could have believed the ETI fable. * Especially interesting, how could otherwise respected scientists like McDonald, Hynek, and a number of others delude themselves so badly.

Am delighted to hear that you are considering a possible career in science/technical writing, for I think (1) you would be good at it and (2) would enjoy it and (3) would feel you were helping to serve your fellow man and make the world a little better place.

Suggestion: Don't worry about taking a lot of courses in journalism, although perhaps a basic course would be good, and look good on your record.

Far more important, try to get a job with the University daily newspaper--as their science writer, or asst. science writer, or if nothing else, as a flunky #covering the botanical gardens. But do get some experience. It is sort of like digging ditches--looks easy if you've never tried it--and it isn't really difficult--but there are a few tricks of the trade that need to be learned.

Then, by next summer you might be ready and qualified to seek a job with AAAS on their respected Science Magazine.

Important: wander into a used book store and see if you can find copy of a small book entitled: Art of Plain Talk, by Dr. Rudolph Flesch. (He also has turned out others, building on basic concepts, but the first one is best and less adulterated.) You'll learn the import of keeping your sentence structure short, simple; using simple anglo-saxon words--except for special situations where you need to use a long, complex sentence, or where a short word won't do. Might strike you as simplistic--and as you mature as a writer you will deviate from his injunctions--but in general it is as good a basic text on writing as you can find, in my opinion.

I think you will find astronomy too restrictive, with insufficient involvement with people and politics to suit your personality. Science writing can be fascinating, especially if you have a natural instinctive bent for instructing and teaching--which I think you have.

So much for now.

Regards



Bob: The following was received from Phil. The original was signed but did not reproduce on my machine. My reply is typed on the bottom of Phil's letter. D.A.

Nov. 16, 1970

Dear David:

A very hasty reply to your question. The reason the USAF has a public information officer for UFOs--who devotes about 0.0000001% of his time to such matters, is that the USAF still gets inquiries.

Without a designated person to respond, such queries, letters, etc. would necessarily have to go unanswered.

Most recent request, for example, from a British UFOlogist--he would like to obtain a copy of the USAF file on the Socorro case. The reply: It will cost \$176 (or some such) to duplicate the file and photos--if you are interested, please send check to Maxwell AFB, Ala., etc.

Or some youngster writes in and asks where can he send a UFO picture he has taken? Or, where can he write to NICAP, or APROT?

But I can assure you that Major Dave Shea does not spend more than a tiny fraction of his time on UFO matters.

Oh yes, one more duty. If you, or I, wanted to go to Maxwell AFB to read/look over USAF Blue Book files on UFO reports--and we write to the Defense Dept., or the USAF, the letter is routed to Major Shea who handles the request.

Because the Blue Book files are located in the USAF archives room which contains classified material, they have to get a security check on API persons requesting access to the archives room.

My new book is almost finished...then once again I can start to live again.

Hope all is reasonably well with you.

*** Phil

**** Original letter was signed by Phil

Dear Phil:

O.K. I am willing to accept the general idea. But, if Major Dave Shea spends only 10⁻⁷ percent of his time (one ten millionth) on UFO matters, what is he doing with the rest of his time? Could not an average office secretary do the job? Does it really take a Major to tell a youngster where to send his artifacts? Why are UFO files kept with classified material? If UFO's are a 'dead horse' the files belong in a glue works or fertilizer plant and it should not require a high ranking Major to keep an eye on the heap. Well, the whole thing is beyond me. I would like to meet the Major some day. He should have a lot to say.

kindest regards, David Ashkin

PHILIP J. KLASS
360 "N" STREET, S. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20024

November 26, 1970

Dear Frank: (Please route on to 03, 04)

A quick response inre your investigation of the Brown Mountain Lights before taking off for Colonial Williamsburg for a couple days of much needed relaxation.

If you had mentioned your plans to visit the site, I should have sent you the enclosed copy (RETURN AFTER ROUTING TO 03, 04) of the original investigation report by George Mansfield--whihh I very briefly abstracted in my brief paper on the subject.

While I commend you for initiative, a "low-level, partial investigation" of the type you conducted by interviewing one witness is of questionable value in solving a complex mystery of this sort. I am inclined to place little credence in Rose's testimony. Even if we assume that ALL of the wild statements attributed to him in the Argosy article are the figment of the author's imagination, you must recognize that if the Brown Mountain Lights (BML) are simply explained as refractive effects, then Rose becomes a "nobody" and he forfeits all of the excitement of being a local expert and getting the chance to talk to exciting visitors from Flemington, N.J. etc. etc. etc.

Now if you will study the report by Mansfield, and his map, you will see that he conducted a rather well instrumented and detailed investigation--and he included several of the local natives who were most experienced in seeing BML. While it is possible that BML involve TWO different phenomena, certainly one of them is the refractive effect, in my opinion. To sort out one phenomenon from another (assuming there are two) is a much more complex task than to spot a single phenomenon, you will agree. We should need a rather extensive team with two-way walkie-talkies, surveying instruments (which I don't really know how to operate), perhaps a helicopter or two, if we were to attempt such an investigation.

Now here is my schedule for the coming 8 months:

- Dec. 16 to Jan. 3: Business trip to mid-west & one week skiing in Colorado.
- Jan. 15-18: Working with Random House Editor on my book before it goes to printer.
- Jan. 22--Feb. 15: Ski vacation in Switzerland.
- Feb. 15- Mar. 7: Back in U.S., clearing up Av Week work, going over galley proof for new book, preparing for business trip to Europe.
- Mar. 7--Apr. 7: Business trip to Europe.
- April 7-May 15: Writing up special report for special issue based on trip.
- May 15-May 30: Clearing up several months accumulated work at office; reading page proof of new book
- May 30: - June 7: Trip to Paris Air Show.
- June 7: Start catching up on long-accumulated work since Dec. at office.

OVER



July: New book is published. Involved in radio appearances, promotion, etc.

So, probably around August or September of next year, if all goes well, I might have a little free time. If book goes well, it might be closer to October.

FORGET IT!



So I have a rather rugged year ahead of me and cannot now commit myself to a BML trip--even if I were convinced that one were justified on the basis of your talks with Rose.

"WAS YOU DER CHARLIE?"

But let us see.

PLEASE HANDLE ENCLOSEDC REPORT WITH CARE AS IT IS ONLY COPY I HAVE. You are welcome to make a copy, if you can pull it off.



04:

Did you get the book I sent you from Colonial
Williamsburg? Did you decide to write to the AIAA?
Know you're busy. Write when you can.

pjk



December 14, 1970

Dear David: (ASHKEN)
From an international viewpoint, we had 2-3 times as many ICBMs as the Soviets many times more Polaris submarines, and the nations generally recognized the Soviets maintain its defenses vis a vis the Soviet Union. today the Soviets have more ICBMs

It is a few minutes past midnight and I just returned from a Board Meeting of Temple Micah, which unanimously approved the proposed joint sharing of the building of St. Augustine and which this Sunday must be submitted to the Congregation. A few changes need to be negotiated. Then I took down my tape recorder sound system which I had brought over from our Temple Micah Showcase where we sell objects d'arte (paintings, ceramics, etc.) by local artists as a fund raising venture.

This will be brief because when I finish I must update my new book manuscript with some important new information just obtained from a knowledgeable source. Some of these other problems mentioned above to be far more demanding of my energies.

I note you continue to state as fact something that I am almost positive is falsehood--that NASA is interested in UFOs. I again challenge you to write to NASA Headquarters and find out if this is true, as APRO alleges, or false as I claim.

I confess that I am disturbed by your Dec. 11 letter in which you say that I wrote a few items and published one book. Then you gave up the ghost. Let me say that that brief summary sums up THREE YEARS OF MY LIFE, in which I DEVOTED EVERY SPARE MOMENT, WORKING UNTIL past midnight every nite--foregoing practically all relaxation (such as TV, movies, shows, books, etc.) to answer letters from UFO believers; to research cases such as South Hill, and the Omaha Fireball (Rogers, Nebraska case), Monroe County Michigan, to write up reports, to analyze some of the spurious claims of McDonald and publish my white papers. I have four I file drawers full of carbon copies of my letters--to hundreds, or more accurately several thousand persons who wrote--from school boys to a few in mental institutions.

Now, fortunately, this is a free land (Thank Heavens) and you are free to choose IF at any point in my UFO studies & research I had come across even a SINGLE CASE which prompted me to believe that ETI were involved, I should have quit my job if necessary to pursue the matter. But in fact, my numerous investigations and growing familiarity with the careless, unscientific investigations of McDonald, Hynke, APRO, NICAP increasingly has shaken my confidence in the results of their investigations and I no longer put as much stock in even NICAP's reports/investigations as I once did.

When I went to Socorro, that case had been called the most crucial in the entire history of the UFO movement by no less an authority than Hynke. He had been there twice, and found the case "unexplainable"--and clearly, he said, not a hoax. I felt that if the case was as good, and solid, as Hynke and others claimed--perhaps this was the big one--that it might even end up in Aviation Week. But after two days, and a little follow-up investigation, it was apparent that this BEST OF ALL UFO cases (by Hynke & McDonald's appraisals) was indeed a hoax. But still I continued my investigations.

Now as I have earlier written, if some of the hard-to-explain UFO reports, like young Ted Kiepura's, involve freak atmospheric electrical phenomena--I must wait for increased basic scientific knowledge of plasmas and ball lightning. Many more able scientists than I have tried to devise theories to explain ball lightning, and have had to wait for more scientific knowledge. If some ancient cave man had sought to explain lightning itself, he could have cogitated his entire life away on the subject--yet the state of scientific knowledge in prehistoric times was such that his lifetime of thought would have really yielded no great insight into the basic nature of lightning.

So I feel no apology is needed to explain why I have decided against continuing to devote every spare moment of my life outside my office to further studies of the atmospheric electrical phenomena, especially when there are more pressing problems, in my opinion. When I first got interested in UFOs, the Vietnam war was not the issue--it is today; there was no widespread drug addiction among high school kids; nor radical student

bombings; the pollution problems were not as well recognized, etc. etc.

December 14, 1970

From an international viewpoint, we had 2-3 times as many ICBMs as the Soviets, many times more Polaris submarines, and the nation generally recognized the need to maintain its defenses vis a vis the Soviet Union. Today the Soviets have more ICBMs than we have, they are pulling abreast in Polaris submarines; they have developed killer satellites (apparently), giving them the capability of depriving us of our reconnaissance satellite capability of they so desire--and yet much of the nation seems complacent; Most of our young people have not studied their history of the 1950s, and many of the older ones have forgotten, how precarious relations were when the Soviets seemed to have a sharp edge in ICBMs. Hence these folks are simply not prepared for what may happen when the Soviets again regain preeminence in strategic weapons.

Some of these latter items are the object of my new book, and I consider this and the other problems mentioned above to be far more demanding of my energies.

After three years in which I certainly spent more hours per week in UFO research, reading, investigations and debate that I spent at my regular job, in which I answered every letter received personally--except one from a man in an institution who described how a flying saucer landed on the edge of his bed--and I didn't quite know how to respond--I feel I owe the UFO question, and movement, no more of my energies.

I resisted your suggestion that I form an "organization," for as Parkinson's Law, and others have pointed out, an organization once formed tends to perpetuate itself long after the original need for its founding has disappeared. I resisted also because I simply did not have the time. One can exist with 3-4 hours sleep, night after night, week after week, month after month--only for so long.

Now, fortunately, this is a free land (Thank Heavens)--and you are free to choose and pursue your hobbies, such hobbies as interest you. But I ask you: After all of your many years of study--on the subject--are you any more certain, do you see any more clearly the answer to the riddle? If not, is there any reason to believe that if you spend another 25, or 125 years, that the answer will become more clear?

The answer to what UFOs are, in my opinion, is the following: UFO Reports involve misidentifications of familiar objects, seen under unusual conditions; or unfamiliar objects; freak atmospheric electrical phenomena, and hoaxes. In the latter category I include both "malicious" and "innocent." Recent short item in the paper reported that a chap in England, as a gag, placed an adv in the paper in which he claimed to have mated a dog and a cat and to have produced off-spring, and offered them for sale just to see what people's reactions would be. When people started to call, to try to buy the "dog-kits"--he felt it difficult to reveal it was all a hoax and went out and got some mongrel dogs which he tried to pass off--but finally admitted it was a hoax. In my opinion, this explains a number of UFO reports.

So UFO Reports are MANY THINGS. And if you look for a single answer, it as if you insisted on finding a SINGLE EXPLANATION for all human disease and ailments. If you insist on a single answer--then "Evil Spirits" is as good an answer as any. Yet how ridiculous an answer. Yet it becomes the only possible answer simply by one insisting that he must have a SINGLE answer to the question of what causes disease.

Reference Hynek's contribution to the satellite tracking system--I do not know from first-hand experience how to evaluate it. I DO know from a lifetime of experience that sometimes one man does the work and another gets the credit. But let us grant Hynek a commendable job in this early endeavor. This is not the issue. Hynek's work as a UFO investigator is not ~~MARK~~ scientific or professional ~~XXXX~~ as I have documented in my UFOs, N-Rays & Pathological Science paper. Charles Lindberg was a helluva good pilot in