



## POLICE NIGHTMARE

*Continued from Front Page*

NICAP has run many articles concerning police reports of UFO activity because officers are trained observers and have learned to act rationally in situations. It cannot be disputed that ex-chief Jeff Greenhaw had a devastating experience that night in 1973. It must also be remembered that it happened at a time when all of the United States was alerted to UFOs. Was the event real or just a cruel hoax which may have nearly ruined a man's life? No one can know for sure, but most of the townspeople have their opinions and feel strongly about what happened to a man they once described as good natured, likeable, and rational. Perhaps pranksters will think twice before pulling such a stunt again, for as Marion Webb puts it, "If it were a hoax, the perpetrators may wish to express sadistic pride in their accomplishments."

## The Von Daniken Controversy . . .

**Editor's Note:** The UFO subject may overlap with many other fields. It is apparent from letters and phone calls received by NICAP that Erick Von Daniken has stimulated interest among NICAP members concerning his theories on extraterrestrial visitation during ancient times. The pages of the *UFO Investigator* are usually devoted to articles dealing directly with UFOs, or background information relating to UFOs. However, there are times when general interest is high concerning a subject which may or may not relate to UFOs, and because of this interest we feel that this article deserves inclusion on these pages.

Mr. Robert Sheaffer submitted the following article to NICAP for publication in our newsletter. It is being presented herein without NICAP comment on either Mr. Von Daniken's or Mr. Sheaffer's theories. We would be pleased to print a rebuttal to Mr. Sheaffer's article, if one is received. Whether or not you agree or disagree with Mr. Sheaffer, we are sure you will admit that he has presented data worth considering.

## ERICH VON DANIKEN'S CHARIOTS OF THE GODS

# SCIENCE OR CHARLATANISM?

by Robert Sheaffer

Was God an ancient astronaut? Do centuries-old legends of gods and heroes tell of space travellers who came to earth from distant parts of the Cosmos? Are some of the ruins of antiquity remnants of great airfields, the favored landing sites of extraterrestrial craft?

"Yes!," writes Erich Von Daniken in his runaway bestselling book, *Chariots of the Gods?* This phenomenally successful book is now in its forty-fourth printing, with over four million copies currently in print. Von Daniken's sequels to this book, *Gods From Outer Space* and *The Gold of the Gods* are also selling well, as are flocks of imitations.

The popularity of such a sensational theory should not be surprising. Immanuel Velikovsky created a similar stir almost twenty-five years ago with the publication of his *Worlds in Collision*, suggesting that the present state of the solar system can be explained by a series of spectacular catyclisms among the planets. It has been over twenty-seven years since "flying saucers" burst into the public's awareness, and UFOs still continue to generate excitement and controversy. Sensational hypotheses such as these generate such levels of interest that they tend to become self-sustaining, quite apart from the question of whether they are true.

Established science has always shied away from such remarkable claims. "It took courage to write this book, and it will take courage to read it," says Von Daniken. "Even if a reactionary army tries to dam up this new intellectual flood, a new world must be conquered in the teeth of all the unteachable in the name of truth and reality." (Presumably the reader here is expected to shout, "Right on!") Does science avoid Von Daniken because it is afraid to face up to the truth? Let's examine some of his many claims, to see if they are serious scientific theories, or mere humbug.

On page 9, Von Daniken serves up a "basic rocket equation," derived by one Professor Akeret, purporting to show how time slows down for space travellers who zip along at velocities near the speed of light. This is an important consequence of Einstein's theory of relativity. Yet a quick glance at this "rocket equation" shows that it isn't an equation at all! Every equation is a mathematical statement of the equality of two quantities:

this equals that. But his "equation" contains no equal sign, and hence it cannot be a real equation; it must be intended as window dressing, since it serves no legitimate mathematical purpose. Yet that is not the only absurdity in this non-equation. A term in the denominator is multiplied by a very strange constant! ONE! Did Professor Akeret think that multiplication by one was a necessary step in his calculations? Von Daniken himself must have known better, as even schoolchildren learn that any number times one equals itself! There are, of course, many legitimate equations which deal with this aspect of the relativity of time. Why then has Von Daniken selected such an obvious humbug to support his "scientific" claims?

What is the history of our earth-moon system? "... a satellite was captured by the earth. As it was pulled toward the earth it slowed down the speed of the earth's revolutions. It finally disintegrated and was replaced by the moon." (p. 19)

Proof of this theory, he writes, can be found in the symbols on the Great Idol in the Old Temple at Tiahuanaco, one of his favorite archeological Wonders. Supposedly this message, dating back 27,000 years, tells of how this satellite emeritus made 425 revolutions around the earth a year, which was then only 288 days.

If the earth formerly circled the sun every 288 days, Kepler's third law implies that the earth must have been at that time much closer to the sun, almost where Venus is now. Are we expected to believe that during the great Ice Ages the earth was some twenty million miles closer to the sun than it is today? On the other hand, if the year remained unchanged but each day is shorter, we are faced with another difficulty: since the year is now 365 days, the earth's rotation is faster than in 25,000 B.C., not slower as Von Daniken claims. How could a satellite slowly spiraling earthward pull both earth and satellite farther away from the sun? Where are the fragments of this disintegrated moon, and where did our current moon come from? Von Daniken gives no answers.

On ancient Egyptian astronomy: "... why a Sirius calendar? ... If Sirius appeared on the horizon at dawn at the same time as the Nile flood, it was pure coincidence. . . this very interest in Sirius

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seems rather peculiar because seen from Memphis, Sirius can be observed only in the early dawn just above the horizon when the Nile floods begin." (p. 64-65)

Reader, beware—we're dealing with one who knows the art of deception! Sirius, he neglects to mention, is the brightest star in the sky. His claim that Sirius was hardly visible at all to the Egyptians is simply false. Sirius, in fact, is visible from anywhere on earth except the extreme North Polar region, and observers in Egypt see that star higher in the sky than we do here in the northern United States, where it dominates the sky on crisp winter evenings.

There is no dark mystery behind the development of the Sirius-based calendar in Egypt. The priests there noticed a simple regularity: each year, when that brilliant star first became visible in the morning sky, the Nile flood began. Does this not prove that the Egyptians had contact with a race of space travellers?

On the mysteries of the great Pyramid of Cheops: "Is it coincidence that the area of the base of the pyramid divided by twice its height gives the celebrated figure  $\pi=3.14159$ ?" (p. 77)

Here our slippery trickster has made a claim which is easy enough to understand, but its refutation requires a higher level of mathematical sophistication—which is all the better for letting the deception go unnoticed! Without going into too much detail, let us observe that the famous number Pi ( $\pi$ ) is what is called a *dimensionless constant*: it is a pure number, with which no units of measure are associated. However, the ratio of an area to height is *not* dimensionless, hence such a ratio cannot yield Pi. By choosing our units carefully, we can obtain the number 3.14159, but the ratio will not really be Pi, which is independent of any units of measure. If we measure the same pyramid, Von Daniken style, in inches, feet, and yards, we will obtain three different ratios. Choose your own units, and the ratio can be made to equal any number at all! Von Daniken writes that the pyramid of Cheops "has inspired hundreds of crazy and untenable theories". Not satisfied with this collection, he has given us one more.

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*Due to the length of this article, the remaining portion will be continued in the November issue of the UFO Investigator.*

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## NEW YORK MAN UNKNOWNLY RECORDS UFO ON FILM

Bernard C. Brody, a general contractor from New York, recently visited his daughter and son-in-law in California. Like most vacationers, he recorded his trip on film, this time with an eight millimeter movie camera. On a drive from San Diego to Las Vegas, Nevada, Mr. Brody photographed scenery along the way. Upon returning to New York, he had the film developed and was quite surprised to see bright, dislike objects streaking across it. Mr. Brody's son slowed down the film, looked at it frame by frame while discussing it with his brother-in-law, and then contacted NICAP.

NICAP's regional investigator Diana Russell viewed the film and found a cattle scene which was followed by approximately twelve frames showing two bright, silvery discs moving rapidly from east to west across the film. They appeared to come out from behind one hill and move upwards, banking slightly for a turn before disappearing. They also seemed to travel much faster than a normal aircraft. Mr. Brody commented that he was using a long distance lens for the scenery.

It is unusual for a witness to film a "UFO" without seeing what he is filming. Most such cases are found to be explained as lens flairs, film defects, camera light leaks, etc. However, NICAP will investigate further.

## HOVERING OBJECT SHINES SPOTLIGHT ON POLICE CAR

Two Kingston, New York, policemen were making a routine check at 1:00 AM on July 9, when one officer noticed hovering lights. Alerting his partner, the patrol man attempted to get a better look by illuminating the area with a spotlight. At this time, the UFO turned a bright beam on the patrol car and sped off toward the Hudson River.

"It seemed as if they acknowledged our signal. It had a few lights—red and green—and something like a white haze underneath," reported one of the men.

The sighting lasted two to three minutes. Both officers stated they were at first reluctant to report the incident, but were convinced what they had seen was not natural. "If it were a plane and it was that close, I would have known it was a plane," each stated and denied the possibility of a balloon.

## NEVADA SIGHTING

On July 1, 1974, NICAP's regional investigator, Ed Dickman, contacted a witness who had reported seeing an object at approximately 10:00 p.m. on that same evening. The witness claimed that the object appeared to be first yellow in color and then changed to a brilliant green. She stated to Mr. Dickman that the UFO appeared to come straight down from the sky and land somewhere in the Carson Valley region of Nevada. Mr. Dickman revealed to the witness that he too had witnessed an object of the same description at approximately the same time but in Reno, which is about 30 miles away.

As the object was on its descent, it seemed to illuminate the area with a very bright glow. While conducting the interview, the witness kept repeating how tremendously large the object seemed to be. She claimed that she had never seen any craft that size.

On July 2, 1974, Mr. Dickman contacted another person who had claimed to have seen three very large objects land across the street from her house on October 28, 1973.

The reason for the delay in reporting this incident was due to the fact that Mrs. Imogene Proctor has been all these months unsuccessfully trying to find the proper authorities to give her report to. Evidently, the police in the area gave no credence to her testimony nor did they help her to locate someone to investigate. Mr. Dickman sent NICAP a tape of his interviews with Mrs. Proctor and is still presently trying to obtain more information pertaining to this incident.

In the early a.m. on October 28, Mrs. Proctor was having difficulty sleeping and went to the window to find to her amazement 3 very large saucer shaped objects hovering across the street. She claimed that a "ground crew" of approximately 10 to 12 figures were milling around the area wearing "cube type" uniforms. There were no features or extremities in view, but they seemed to have a dull glow about them and working in a systematic way as though trying to examine the area. Mrs. Proctor opened the window to listen for any sound that might be coming from the objects. A very interesting and perplexing point regarding this was that there were no night sounds

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cluded. NBC has no knowledge of any forthcoming government announcement, nor does NICAP.

Carr stated during the previously mentioned radio show with NICAP's President Jack Acuff that his information came from a biologist and the Air Force officer who flew the spacecraft to WPAFB. During his session at the symposium, he stated that his verification came from three sources, one being a biologist and the second a retired security guard at WPAFB. Carr never mentioned the third source. Certainly, the third source could be the Air Force pilot, but why not include such a valuable witness? Carr refused to give the names of any contacts.

The validity of hearsay evidence might best be summarized by Mr. Acuff's comments on the radio program with Robert Carr, when he recounted a personal discussion he had at a social function with one of the most creditable of all witnesses, an astronaut. By the very nature of his selection and training, an astronaut should be honest, clear-thinking, and capable of reporting factually. The astronaut firmly believes that he has the power to communicate with ghosts. Whether he is right or not, there certainly is not sufficient evidence for NICAP's President to announce to the news media that he has proof of ghost communication.

One last word concerning the analysis of rumors—if all else fails, try logic. It is almost inconceivable that the United States Government could have taken a UFO into their possession for a period of twenty-five years without making an all out and probably successful effort to analyze its means of propulsion and incorporate such a power plant in our present day aircraft.

## THE VON DANIKEN CONTROVERSY—

*Continued from October Issue*

### SCIENCE or CHARLATANISM?

*by Robert Shaeffer*

*The following is the conclusion of the submitted article by Robert Shaeffer from the October issue of the UFO INVESTIGATOR. As previously stated, NICAP has printed the article without comment on either Mr. Von Daniken's or Mr. Shaeffer's theories. If a rebuttal is received, we will be pleased to publish it.*

More evidence of the ancient Visitors: "The Mayas were intelligent; they had a highly developed culture. They left behind not only a fabulous calendar but also incredible calculations. They knew the Venusian year of 584 days..." (p. 55)

This statement is true—almost. He conveniently forgets to tell us that this 584 day period is not the true Venusian year, which is 225 days. Instead it is the apparent Venusian cycle as seen by an *earth-based observer*, which is precisely what we should expect the ancient Mayas to record by simply counting days, without any extraterrestrial insight. On the other hand, if they had recorded the true Venusian year of 225 days, which implies a knowledge of the Copernican (sun-centered) system of astronomy, that would have been a bit more remarkable.

In these few short pages I have scarcely begun a list of the inaccuracies and half-truths to be found in *Chariots of the Gods?* But a thousand-page refutation of a hundred-page book would hardly make good reading. Sensationalist theories have always attracted more readers than refutations of the same.

Enough of Von Daniken's claims have, however, been examined to reveal his method of operations: to dazzle the reader with a skillful blend of half-truths (as well as quarter and eighth-truths, too). Looking into his past, (Ref: New York Times Book Review), we should not be too surprised to find that his rather broad criterion of truthfulness has, at times, brought him into conflict with the law. A court in his native Switzerland found Von Daniken guilty of embezzlement, forgery, and fraud, sentencing him to three and a half years in prison. While operating a Swiss hotel, it seems he fraudulently obtained money by misrepresenting his financial assets, this experience in deception later proving invaluable in his literary career. It was during this stay as a guest of the Swiss government that he wrote his second book, *Gods From Outer Space*, now also a best seller.

Once a liar, however, does not infallibly prove him always a liar. However much this charlatanism may hurt one's credibility, it never destroys it completely. (The followers of famous psychics such as Palladino and Uri Geller are never shaken when their leader is caught cheating: they only cheat on *bad* days!) Von Daniken's theories of Ancient UFO contactees are indeed no more implausible than their latter-day counterparts. In fact, we have in support of these theories one bona fide, highly reliable eyewitness who saw these creatures disembark, and

who can now describe it: none other than Erich Von Daniken himself! In an exclusive interview with the National Enquirer, Von Daniken tells of his experiences in Point Aleph, "a sort of fourth dimension" where time doesn't exist. He revealed how he can now leave his body at will, transcending all concepts of space and time. "I know that astronauts visited the earth in ancient times", he confides, because "I was there when the astronauts arrived. And I know they'll be back." Unfortunately for us, he can't say exactly when, since "time doesn't exist in Point Aleph."

"I even know what will happen after death". We're all ears. "I will become part of this huge never-to-be-destroyed ball of energy that keeps and remembers every last tiny thing that has ever happened on this planet. Everybody will join me there eventually and at least they'll know then that I was right". Save a place for me right in the middle of that big old ball, Erich, because I'm going to be one of the hardest to convince.

### REFERENCES:

*Chariots of the Gods?* is currently published by Bantam Books, New York. Page numbers refer to Bantam edition.

*Erich Von Daniken's Genesis*, New York Sunday Times Book Review, March 31, 1974

*National Enquirer*, March 17, 1974

## International Advisory

HIGH RIVER, ALBERTA, CANADA—August 22, 1974. A family on a campout observed a UFO in the evening sky while star gazing with binoculars. Gordon Parker reports that he and his family watched the object for an hour. During this time it would change from an odd star shape in a still position to a snake-like form which would dart up and down. It appeared closer than the stars and varied in color from green, red, silver, and turquoise. No noise could be heard.