

Psychic Vibrations



Gulf Breeze Flap Fades, But Still Entertains

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The frenzied wave of supposed UFO photos and sightings in Gulf Breeze, Florida, touted as "the most astounding multiple sighting of UFOs in U.S. history," continues to fascinate and to entertain, even as it sinks slowly into the sunset. When we last left prime UFO-spotter Ed Walters (*SI*, Winter 1991:135), he was grappling with the fact that a model UFO had been discovered in his former home and with a neighborhood youth's confession that he had helped Ed fake some of the photos. Since then, things have gotten worse.

In the wake of these embarrassing disclosures, MUFON, the largest surviving UFO group (which has always taken a staunch pro-Walters line), asked two of its most respected investigators, Rex and Carol Salisbury, to take another look into the case. At one time MUFON's hierarchy expressed the highest degree of confidence in the Salisberrys' investigative skills and presented them a special award at last year's MUFON conference for outstanding investigations. But when the two reported their findings that Ed Walters was "adept at trick photography" and had faked the photos, MUFON suddenly lost all confidence—not in Walters, of course, but in the Salisberrys—and tossed them out of the organization and

disavowed their report. Carol Salisbury writes that the local MUFON group "is out to lynch us, and the hierarchy is goading them on."



Nonetheless, local hotels, restaurants, and travel agents are doing all they can to cash in on the UFOria. The director of tourism for the Pensacola Area Chamber of Commerce called the situation in Gulf Breeze "very, very positive" and said UFO tour groups are being arranged. A local travel agent adds that UFO-seeking tourists have "brought in a lot of money to Gulf Breeze merchants when they desperately needed it." But six Gulf Breeze visitors last year most certainly did *not* benefit from their UFO pilgrimage. Last July, six American soldiers with top-secret clearances went AWOL from their Military Intelligence Brigade in Germany and mysteriously turned up in Gulf Breeze. Arrested by local police, they were taken into military custody at Ft. Benning, Georgia. Newspaper reports suggested that the six were members of a "Rapture" or "end-of-the-world" cult that believed that "Jesus Christ was an astronaut." They were reported to have come to Gulf Breeze to "hunt down the Antichrist." Conflicting accounts were published about the motivation for this incident, and several news organizations received a bizarre letter—it looked as though it had been produced on a teletype—demanding that the U.S. Army "Free the Gulf Breeze Six." Whatever the reason, charges were soon dropped against the soldiers, who were released and then discharged.

If press reports were correct about Walters receiving a \$200,000 advance for his recent book, the publisher isn't likely to recoup that investment; and if Walters was paid \$450,000, as was reported, for the rights to a television miniseries, nobody seems to be rushing to produce it. Walters was not even successful in his attempt to use his recent fame as a springboard into local politics; running for a seat on the Gulf Breeze City Commission, he came in

dead last. Even veteran saucerer James Moseley, who until recently professed being impressed by Walters's apparent sincerity, now concedes "it looks more and more likely that the Walters story is a hoax." Thus the three-ring flying-saucer circus in Gulf Breeze seems to be slowly winding down. Fear not: it does not spell the end of saucerdom. Before long, more astonishing UFO photos will be taken somewhere else by some other enterprising soul, and the UFO show will once again swing into high gear, with a fresh new cast.

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Apparently Satanists are not the only ones with sneaky messages that can be heard by playing their recordings backward. According to an aide for Rhode Island Senator Claiborne Pell, backward masking of a secret code word was detected in speeches about the Persian Gulf crisis given by President Bush, Secretary of State James Baker, and Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney. The Associated Press reported last October 20 that C. B. Scott Jones, a member of Pell's staff who specializes in "paranormal" developments, wrote to Secretary Cheney claiming that when the three officials' statements about Iraq were played backwards, they appeared to contain the code word "Simone." Jones explained that a group of psychologists he has been working with has been playing speeches backward, and that "Simone" is "a word that we have never seen in a speech reversal." A Pentagon spokesman denied that any code words were in the speeches, backward or forward. Senator Pell at first allowed that while the idea "sounds wacky, there may be some merit to it." But not long afterward, the Senator—who was in the middle of a re-election campaign—reprimanded Jones, who has served as his

staff specialist in parapsychology for six years. Pell easily won re-election nonetheless.

In other developments from the Persian Gulf, Cindy Adams reported in the *New York Post* on January 21 that a Japanese politician told her that "mutual interest in extraterrestrials" was responsible for Iraq freeing 74 Japanese hostages. Koko Satch of Japan's Democratic Liberal party confirmed that "this was negotiated by mentioning [Saddam] Hussein's recognition of an outer space civilization." Japanese Prime Minister Kaifu sent word to Iraq that "all the people on Earth are the same from the point of view of the space people in the UFOs. . . . We must create an environment in which every nation can discuss UFO problems regardless of their national interest." Whether or not this was the key that sprang the captives, Adams cannot say, but the Japanese hostages *were* released.

Finally, as if the conflict in the Persian Gulf were not already worrisome enough, "a fervor has been building among millions of evangelical Christians nationwide" to the effect that the war in the Middle East represents the final battle of Armageddon, in fulfillment of biblical prophecy. A story from the *Los Angeles Times* news service (February 8) reported that many pastors are addressing this issue with their congregations, "mostly calmly." In a poll taken a week after the fighting started, the Gallup organization asked a sample of the public whether this battle represents the final "Armageddon." Fifteen percent



said that it did, 74 percent said that it did not, and the rest were not sure. In a ten-week period from December to February, an apocalyptic work by John F. Walvoord titled *Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East Crisis* sold an astounding 600,000 copies. While the End Times may indeed have started, if by the time you are reading this the Rapture is not already robustly underway, you can be reassured that the war in the Middle East is just another of the many conflicts that have punctuated human history, and that history itself still has a good many years to run. ■