

7-28-83

Dear Dr. Posner:

Phil Klass referred me to you. I write a column Critic's Corner for the MUFON Journal, and I've been looking into the Cash-Landrum case. My primary source of information is the bound collection of xeroxes of virtually everything published on the case, put together by John Schuessler.

My initial working hypothesis is that (1) the principals in the case seem authentic, (2) what they tangled with was some ~~sort~~ sort of Fort/Corliss/Persinger rare natural event, but (3) there's something very dubious about those helicopters. Klass and I differ on degree of probability; he seems to see the case as 90-100% probability of hoax, while I put the hoax probability as perhaps 20-25%.

A few questions that perhaps you could help me on:

1. I wonder whether the "radiation" business isn't a side-issue, and these people suffered some sort ~~of~~ of damage, whether from radiation or not.

2. The principals "sound" authentic to me, and I'm inclined to consider their credibility as something that should be checked as a matter of course, but as not a high ~~priority~~ priority in this case. In any case, what's the theory of why these people would create a hoax? What advantage would spinning such a story be to them? What alternate scenario could be suggested for this event?

I would be interested in your material and findings in this case.

Best,



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Mr. Robert Wanderer
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Dear Mr. Wanderer,

Thank you for your letter of July 28 regarding the Cash/Landrum "UFO radiation" case.

I assume that you have read my letter in the April issue of the MUFON UFO Journal. Using only the data contained within Paul Stowe's article, and Dr. Rank's review, I demonstrated the implausibility of the radiation hypothesis. Perhaps this is why you now wonder if some other sort of "damage" may have been incurred by the principals in this case.

There is only a limited number of possible types of "damage" that a distant object can inflict upon a subject:

- 1) Physical contact
- 2) Chemical/poison
- 3) Molecular disruption (laser beam, etc.)
- 4) Sound/shock waves
- 5) Electromagnetic radiation
- 6) Heat
- 7) Psychological
- 8) Others? (I cannot think of any)

The principals describe no physical contact with the object or any projectile from the object. They describe no irritating gas/liquid being expelled by the object. They describe no "beam" being focused upon them. They describe no sound loud enough to perforate their eardrums or inflict other damage from shock waves. They do describe being subjected to significant heat. They claim to have suffered classic symptoms of radiation sickness.

I have not had access to the medical records, so I do not know for certain what (if any) "damage" has been documented. I have inferred from Dr. Rank's comments that there were no documented blood dyscrasias. This being the case, even if the principals were indeed subjected to electromagnetic radiation in the form of ionizing radiation, the dosage was insufficient to account for the reported symptoms being touted as evidence of radiation sickness.

As far as I know, there were no bumps or bruises to indicate physical contact. There were no chemical burns described, or any positive blood/urine toxicology studies. There were no areas of skin "disruption" to suggest "beam" damage. There were no perforated ear-

drums or singed hairs.

There was reported eye irritation, but apparently this was not serious enough for a medical doctor (ophthalmologist) to be consulted. FATE Magazine (May '82, p. 22-23) reported that an optometrist "treated Mrs. Landrum for red puffy eyes". The same issue reported that Betty was treated at Parkway Hospital for what sound like second degree facial burns. On THAT'S INCREDIBLE (April 1, 1982) a photo was shown of Betty, with a number of round, sunburn-type lesions on her limbs. All of these findings could be explained by UV light exposure (a sunlamp would do), without invoking any extraordinary phenomena.

If there was a UFO sighting as reported, the principals may have incurred psychological trauma. A psychiatrist should be able to determine whether or not this is so, and whether or not some of their reported infirmities are/were psychophysiological in nature. Dr. Leo Sprinkle's brand of regressive hypnosis, as demonstrated on THAT'S INCREDIBLE, is of no value in answering these questions, or in determining fact from fantasy.

You suggest that the helicopter aspect of the case is "very dubious". Why would witnesses to a "rare natural event" (your "working hypothesis") add this dubious feature to an otherwise true (and fantastic enough) story? I cannot imagine why, unless the helicopter embellishment was concocted not by the principals, but by one of the Ufologists early in the investigation. Or perhaps the thought was first suggested to them without their knowledge during an inept hypnosis session.

Regardless of the above speculations, if the helicopter aspect of this case is "very dubious", and, as I suggest, the medical aspects are equally so, what evidence remains to convince a scientific investigator that a genuine "UFO" event actually occurred? I am aware of none, and agree with Phil Klass that this case is almost certainly a hoax.

Regarding possible motives for a hoax, I would suggest that you pursue this further with Phil. As you know, Phil excels at uncovering just this sort of information, as in the Travis Walton, Trent, Delphos, Pascagoula, and other cases.

I can think of only a few possible motives for perpetrating a hoax of this nature. Perhaps a rather unlikely one is the celebrity that Betty, in particular, has attained. Certainly this case will live forever in UFO lore.

A more likely motive might be financial reward. Perhaps one of the principals had a pre-existing medical condition (whether or not medical attention had been sought previously), but purchased health insurance only after its discovery. Creating a "UFO radiation" encounter might allow one to claim that any subsequently diagnosed


medical conditions date from the "UFO" encounter rather than from some time prior to the purchase of insurance. And by implicating the U.S. government (via the helicopters), one might argue that this pre-existing medical condition was caused by an experimental, radiation-emitting governmental device, possibly rendering the U.S. treasury responsible for reimbursing the principals for medical costs, mental anguish, and punitive damages.

Phil Klass has on numerous occasions attempted to obtain from John Schuessler some basic information relating to the health of the principals prior to their "UFO" encounter. Phil and I both suspect that one or more of them may have had a pre-existing medical problem that they now plan to sue the Government for having caused. Phil seems to feel that Schuessler has been less than forthcoming with this information.

In summary, I find no compelling evidence to dissuade me from my skepticism of UFO reality in general, and Cash/Landrum in particular. The sketchy medical evidence that I am aware of is, in my opinion (as an internist, not a radiologist) not compatible with ionizing radiation, or any other imaginable type of UFO-related "injury". If one divests this case of the dubious medical and helicopter components, one is left with little if any substance. The principals' legal action against the U.S. government leads me to suspect that this case is a hoax, contrived for financial gain.

I remain open-minded, and await any evidence to substantiate the reality of the C/L story. But I believe that polygraph examinations of the principals would establish that this case is indeed a hoax, and once again I urge MUFON to encourage the principals to undergo such examinations. Should they happen to pass, I would urge that the medical records be made available to skeptical researchers such as myself, in order to assist in determining whether or not the principals suffered any medical effects from their "UFO" encounter.

Sincerely,



Gary F. Posner, M.D.

Copies to:

Klass
Mosley
Sennett
Neal
Schuessler
Sheaffer