

## MARGINALIA

(Author's note: I was sent the enclosed document anonymously, The document itself, a photocopy, is government-speak, blank to the point of unreadability. But the notes scribbled in the margins are intriguing.)

### *Title page:*

United States General Accounting Office  
GAO report to the Honorable William X. Lambie,  
House of representatives  
June 1998  
GOVERNMENT RECORDS  
Results of a Search for Records Concerning  
the 1983 Explosion near Cross Fork, Nevada  
SUMMARY ONLY  
GAO/NSRAF-96-244

### *Cover note:*

From: United States General Accounting Office, Washington, DC  
20548 National Security and International Affairs Division. June 24,  
1998.  
To: The Honorable William X Lambie, House of Representatives.

Dear Mr. Lambie:

After fifteen years, speculation continues on the truth of the large explosion which is alleged to have taken place at a covert US military research facility in Nevada.

Some observers speculate that the explosion was the destruction of a conventional rocket; others that it was caused by the crash of an aircraft, perhaps of an extraterrestrial nature; others that agencies of the government have been engaged in a misinformation campaign to conceal some deeper truth, such as a *successful* launch of some space vehicle; others that this was the demolition of covert military facility.

In its 1984 official report and since, the Air Force has denied the reality of the explosion.

Concerned that the Department of Defense may not have provided you with all available information on the incident, you asked us to determine any government records concerning the incident we examined a wide range of classified and unclassified documents dating from 1965 through the 1980's. The full scope and methodology of our work are detailed in the full report...

Sir:

I read your counterfactual "novel." About NASA going on to Mars in the 1980's, instead of shutting everything down after Apollo? What a crock.

Counterfactuality does not serve the needs of the *truth*. But now at last, the truth is starting to come out. And the truth is, *people have been to Mars*.

They are walking around among us right now. And nobody knows about it.

Of course much of the data returned by the old Mars probes has always been kept from the public. These include:

- 1) Grainy photographs of what could be structures on the surface taken by the space probe Mariner 4 in 1964.
- 2) Mysterious surface glimpses through the global dust storm encountered on the planet by Mariner 9 in 1971.

3) The strange readings from the Viking landers of 1976, which found a supposedly sterile Martian surface.

And of course the Mars observer of 1992 was deliberately destroyed. (The jury is out on the Russian Mars 96. Maybe that really was a screw-up.)

Only a handful of people know that the US General Accounting Office - that's Congress's investigative arm - recently published *this*, the results of a search for records concerning the Cross Fork, Nevada incident, generally thought to be at the centre of the Mars cover-up. *Search* meaning forced through by white-hat Congressman Bill Lambie, who's as sick of cover-ups as anyone. *Published* meaning hurried out and buried. I owe my copy to [illegible].

Here's how I started this.

I got an e-mail from a Janet [illegible] of Albuquerque. She sais she had met a hooker from Reno in the 1970's. This lady had worked at a cathouse close to Cross Fork, Nevada. And she told Janet there had been an awful lot of ex-NASA engineers in town at that time. And one night two NASA guys talked too much.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, WASHINGTON DC 20506. APRIL 18, 1997.  
MEMORANDUM FOR MR JOHN E PROCTOR, DIRECTOR-IN-CHARGE, NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES,  
GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE.  
SUBJECT: Request for records.

I am responding your apeil 2, 1997 request for information or NSC records related to the supposed explosion near Cross Fork, Nevada in October 1983.

The NSC has no records or information related to the incident.

For information about any government records that may document the explosion in Nevada, we suggest you contact the National Archives, Textual Reference Division, 8601 Adelphi Rd, College Park, Maryland 20740.

-Albert D Steele, Executive Secretary

There were four categories of key staff involved in the Mars cover-up:

- 1) top level managment, including CIA, FBI and DIA operatives
- 2) interface personnel
- 3) technical personnel
- 3) the astronauts

Only recruiting thr astronauts would have posed any challenge. These were, after all, brave and dedicated men.

Secrecy would not have been a major problem, even for such a gigantic enterprise. There were precedents. More than three hundred thousand people were directly involved in the building of an atomic bomb in 1942-5, and no significant information reached the public. And besides America had been sliding towards a police state for years (wire-taps, surveillance of civilians) and it was a simple matter to apply these cloak-and-dagger methods and precedents to the Mars program.

(I was e-mailed with the news that someone had called into a talk show in Phoenix, Arizona, and claimed to be the man who had run the security operation for NASA during that period, He claimed that four astronauts died in missions that were squelched by NASA. And he said he had the truth about Apollo 13. Never heard from again. Probably a flake.)

The entire Mars program was run out of Southern Nevada, at a (so-called) atomic test station

called the Nevada test site: a thousand square miles of Nevada desert.

Why there?

It is an area of hills, mountain peaks, desert valleys draining into dry lake beds. The lunar-like terrain is a warren of dark tunnels and secret facilities. You'd spot a car miles away from its dust cloud; anybody else walking would be the only moving objects in the landscape. And who would go there? Even by 1970 it had reputation as a forbidden region, soaked in radioactivity.

The most likely sites of the USAF Mars facility are those least used by the AEC, notably Yucca Flat and Camp Desert Rock, aka area 22.

Here's another good reason: Vegas - just sixty miles to the south-east.

Those astronauts weren't children, and they weren't shrinking violets. The clerks and secretaries for the Mars control centre were babes recruited from Las Vegas casinos, which added to the general appeal of the place.

Executive office of the President, Office of Science and Technology Policy, Washington DC 20500. April 20, 1997.  
Mr John E Proctor, Director-in-Charge, National Security Issues, General Accounting Office.

Dear Mr Proctor:

In response to your recent query of April 2, 1997.

The office of Science and Technology policy reviewed its records concerning the "Nevada Incident." OSTP has no direct knowledge of what occurred in Nevada and no records, except for the information I received from the Air Force. I look forward to receiving the GAO report.

Sincerely, Joseph V Ververk, Director

At cross fork, Nevada, I found that hooker.

And through her I found a guy called Tad Jones.

Tad Jones claimed to have been a minor worker, in the early 1970's, on a covert government nuclear rocket program, This program continued after the shut-down of the public-domain NERVA program, following Nixon's (supposed) decision not to go to Mars.

Jones, and other workers, were bribed and threatened to keep them quiet about their work on the program. Jones lost his job in 1972, I gather for personal reasons. Now, more than two decades later, radiation injuries were killing him.

The thing of it is, Tad Jones told me he once met a man who told *him* he had been to Mars.

He was called Elliot Becker, and at the time he was an Air Force colonel, and he made the mistake of getting too drunk one night.

Under false pretences, which I won't go into here, I got to meet Elliott Becker himself. He is now a senior Air Force officer. He is aged around 60, and he suffers from premature-aging symptoms; atrophied muscles, osteoporosis.

He threw me out fast. But not so fast I didn't manage to notice some oddities. For instance at one point Becker let go of a glass in mid-air and looked startled when it fell.

This sort of thing happened to the Skylab astronauts and Mir cosmonauts, conditioned to long periods in zero G. Furthermore his illnesses are consistent with the proposal that Becker endured a long-duration spaceflight in the early 1980s.

But he was not on any spaceflight made public.

So where the hell did he go?

I only met Tad Jones the once.

I wasn't so surprised. Ageing, poor, stricken by pain, Jones was becoming less discreet. I don't

know how he died. His old radiation injuries must have baffled the coroners.

Of course he could have been lying through his teeth about the whole thing. But if so, where did he get his injuries?

US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington DC 20535, April 22, 1997.  
Mr John E Proctor, Director-in-Charge, National Security Issues, General Accounting Office.

Dear Mr Proctor:

This is in response to a letter dated April 2, 1997, from Simon J Holusha, Director, Administration of Justice Issues, General Accounting Office, to Kathryn G Keyworth, Inspector in Charge, Office of Public and Congressional Affairs, FBI, regarding government records concerning the large-scale explosion near Cross Fork, Nevada in October 1983 (Code 91183).

A search of FBI indices has determined that all FBI data concerning the incident has been processed under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and is available for review in our FOIA Reading Room. If your staff wished to review the material, please call Margaret Feeley, a member of my staff, at least 48 hours in advance of the desired appointment.

Sincerely yours,

Eric G Dower, Supervisory Special Agent, Office of Public and Congressional Affairs

The truth about Mars, at least, is now obvious.

The space probes did not observe any evidence of an inhabited Mars because it was deliberately concealed. The Mariner 9 dust storm was no coincidence! - it was thrown up to conceal hasty efforts *by the planet's inhabitants* to fake a moonlike landscape. And the surface was sterilized by neutron bombs before the Vikings could land, and the Mars Observer was shot out of the sky...

We didn't go back to Mars for twenty years. And by the time we got there, with Pathfinder and the rest, there was nothing to see. Of course not. The Martians had completed their mock-up.

And nobody told us about all this. We worship secrecy in this country.

Get this: last year the US government produced 6,300,00 "classified" documents. The least restricted bear the stamp "FOUO", "For Official Use Only." The next category - the first technically classified - are "Confidential." After that comes "Secret," and some of them are "NATO secret", meaning they can be shared with NATO nations. Then comes "Top Secret" and "NATO Top Secret."

Above "Top Secret" there is "SCI" - "Sensitive Compartmented Information," open to still fewer individuals. And there is some information that you can only see if you are on a BIGOT list - if you have your own specific code word.

And then there are qualifies like "NOFORN" - no foreigners to see - and "NOCONTRACT" - no contractors, "WNINTEL" - "Warning Notice - Intelligence Sources or Methods Involved", "ORCON" - "Originator Controls Further Dissemination."

What's the cost of all this secrecy? When does secrecy increase military strength, and when does it weaken security?

We should be told.

...Or is that classified too??

The space probe evidence, naturally, was covered up. I should be used now to our natural disposition for secrecy. But over an issue as immense as this, it utterly dismays me.

That's why I fight on.

(Teletype uncovered during review of FOIA materials:)  
FBI DALLAS 10-20-1983 4-28 PM  
DIRECTOR AND SAC, CINCINNATI URGENT  
NEVADA EXPLOSION, INFORMATION CONCERNING  
(blanked)

TELEPHONICALLY ADVISED THIS OFFICE THAT (blanked) SATELLITE OBSERVED DEBRIS AND DESTRUCTION AT (blanked) TELEPHONIC CONVERSATION BETWEEN THIS OFFICE AND (blanked) FAILED TO BEAR OUT BELIEF PHOTOGRAPHS AND NEGATIVES BEING TRANSPORTED TO THIS OFFICE BECAUSE OF NATIONAL INTEREST IN THE CASE AND FACT THAT NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY ASSOCIATED PRESS AND OTHERS ATTEMPTING TO BREAK STORY OF EXPLOSION AND/OR AIRCRAFT CRASH TODAY NO FURTHER INVESTIGATION BEING CONDUCTED  
END.

Here's the story, as best as I can reconstruct it.

In 1971 - armed with space probes information about a secretive, advanced and possibly hostile civilization on Mars - President Nixon ordered preparation to begin for covert missions to Mars, manned and otherwise. These were to include the possibility of launching a pre-emptive nuclear attack against the planet. The project was under the command of the USAF, and would use Apollo moonrocket technology with nuclear rocket stages.

(And *that*, sir author, is the truth about Nixon's decision on going to Mars after Apollo. He didn't decide we wouldn't go. He decided we would - but the program would be run by the USAF, not NASA, and it would be run in secret. Even the publicly declared Apollo follow-on program, the Space Shuttle, had a military flavour and had a role in the defence of Earth against the Martians, which I've yet to determine.)

Elliot Becker trained as an astronaut in the 1960s. In 1971 his death was faked in a T-38 airplane accident, and he was assigned to the secret man-to-Mars program.

But Nixon fell, and the project was abandoned, the Nevada launch complex and the space hardware mothballed. Elliott was moved into senior Air Force positions, with a central responsibility for maintaining the integrity of a Mars program cover-up.

In 1981, things changed.

By now, the additional Viking data was in hand. President Reagan ordered the mounting of a secret manned flyby scouting mission to Mars, under the command of the USAF, using what was left of the 1970s-era Saturn technology. This limited-objectives mission was achievable relatively easily. Meanwhile Reagan revived preparations for a nuclear attack on Mars.

The flyby mission was launched in 1982 from the secret Nevada base. It carried two men, and it would pass by Mars on the planet's night side.

The funding was covered as an SDI project. But when SDI funding came under scrutiny, and Reagan's attention moved on to other issues, the project was again abandoned. I guess the logic was that the Martians didn't after all pose an immediate threat. This time the Nevada launch complex was destroyed.

And that's the truth behind the 1983 explosion out in the desert.

...But Elliott Becker go to fly his mission.

Inspector General, Department of Defense, 400 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, Virginia 22202-2684, April 29, 1997.  
Mr John E Proctor, Director-in-Charge, National Security Issues.  
General Accounting Office.

Dear Mr Proctor:

The Department of the Air Force July 1984 report is the DoD response to questions posed in your April 2 letter related to GAO C 91165. If you have any questions, please contact my action officer, Janet Fromkin, at 703-604-7846. If she is not available please contact Ms Frances Douhet at 703-604-7543.

Sincerely

Richard S Dupuy, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for GAO Report Analysis.

Tad Jones told me that in 1981 he heard a rumour that the program he had worked was being revived. But nobody was hiring in Cross Fork.

Tad Jones was kind of a bitter man. So he got himself and off-road vehicle and went hunting.

The nuclear rocket site is on no map. Jones had to break through wire fences and skirt mine fields (he told me). Then he found himself in an area of high radioactivity (he'd taken along counters).

He approached the centre of the site.

And there he found the white needle-shape of a nuclear-tipped Saturn V rocket, assembled in secret, standing on a rusty gantry out there in the desert. Hell of a thing. He showed me the photograph.

Jones said that after the demolition the site was seeded with radioactive waste. He said it would be impossible to return to the now-lethal site, and the evidence is lost.

But the program lasted long enough to send Elliot Becker to Mars.

He and his crewmate used Apollo-class spacecraft, enduring the year-long journey in an adapted Skylab habitation module.

Think of it. Becker must have watched Earth and Moon recede like twin stars, every moment travelling further than any human before him. I wonder what he imagined he would find at journey's end.

Central Intelligence Agency, Washington DC 20505.

May 22 1997.

Mr John E Proctor, Director-in-Charge, National Security Issues, General Accounting Office.

Dear Mr Proctor:

In a letter dated 15 April 1997, this agency advised you that it would conduct a comprehensive record search to aid in the completion of your investigation of an explosion in Nevada, October 1983. In accordance with your request we have searched all of our databases. The search did not yield any documents related to either of these terms other than the report returned by our field worker Frederic K Durant in 1983, which remains classified. Therefore this Agency has no information relevant to your investigation.

Sincerely, Nora Franck, Executive Director.

It goes to prove there is hope. Even the most gigantic fraud and cover-up, no matter what the investment of time and money, is going to flake at the edges after a couple of decades.

Look, you can verify most of this stuff from the public records for yourself, as I'm trying to do. Right? And I'd welcome it if you did and let me know. I mean, it was *our* hundred billion dollars.

I have an instinct to blow a hole through every veil of secrecy I come across. But aside from the principle, I just want to know, I mean, here we have two guys who went all the way to Mars, for God's sake, and they've never been allowed to tell their stories.

I'll go to my grae wondering what Elliot Becker saw. Just cold, lonely emptiness? Or perhaps glimpses of structures, lights in the ochre desert on the dark side of Mars?

*We grope for truth, and make our progress slow.*

William Davenant, 1606-1668

(Author's note: I guess it's fairly obvious why I was the target of this particular hoax. And my correspondent is right about our culture's excessive fondness for secrecy, as this stonewalling document itself demonstrates, as long as secrecy remains, rumours about what is being hidden are going to flourish.

(But like all good hoaxes, this one is rooted in enough fact to make it at least remotely plausible - for there *are* a few oddities in the story of human involvement with Mars.

(Before the first space probes, Mars was thought to be Earth-like. Many expert telescope observers were convinced they had seen networks of canals, swathes of vegetation. The Mariner 4 flyby probe of 1964, however, glimpsed a Moon-like world with a thin atmosphere, and craters where the earth-bound observers thought they saw canals. In 1971 the Mariner 9 orbiter really did find a global dust storm obscuring the surface. And later, the Viking landers found a surface not just lifeless, but apparently sterilized, perhaps by solar radiation. The US Mars Observer did fail as it reached Mars.

(And there were proposals, mooted in the 1960s, for manned flybys of Mars, an interim program to follow Apollo. The flyby *would* have passed the planet's dark side...)

United States General Accounting Office.

Summary to GAO report GAO/NSRAF-96-244 addressed to the Hon. W.X. Lambie.

Cover Note (concluded):

...Our search of government records was complicated by the fact that some records we wanted to review were missing and there was not always an explanation. Further, the records management regulations for the retention and disposition of records were unclear or changing during the period we reviewed.

We conducted our review from March 1997 to May 1998 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please call me on (202) 512-7858.

Sincerely yours,

John E Proctor, Director-in-Charge,  
National Security Issues.

...ends