

## HOPKINS, JACOBS AND CLARK ATTACK CRITICS WHO QUESTION LINDA'S "BEAM-ME-UP-SCOTTY" ABDUCTION TALE:

UFO-abduction guru Budd Hopkins, his principal deputy David Jacobs, and Jerry Clark, editor of the Hynek Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) publication International UFO Reporter (IUR) have harshly attacked three pro-UFOlogists whose 25-page report challenges the UFO-abduction story of Linda Napolitano, the Manhattan housewife who claims that in late 1989 she was beamed through a plate glass window of her 12th floor apartment and up into a giant UFO. The first public report on the case, which Hopkins characterizes as the "most important" of the century, was published in SUN #17 (Sept. 1992), based on Hopkins' presentation at the MUFON conference last July in Albuquerque. Linda also appeared to answer questions.

Victims of the harsh, largely ad hominem attack in the latest (March/April) issue of IUR are Joseph J. Stefula, former MUFON State Director for New Jersey; Richard Butler, a long-time UFOlogist who suspects that he himself may be a UFO-abduction victim; and George P. Hansen, a parapsychologist who recently had become interested in UFO-abductions. Also criticized for questioning Linda's tale was SUN's editor, whom Hopkins characterizes as being "as open-minded as the late Ayatollah."

Although Clark devoted roughly 14 out of the 22 editorial pages to criticism of Stefula/Butler/Hansen (S/B/H), he opted not to publish even an abbreviated version of the S/B/H paper to enable IUR readers to assess the validity of the bitter criticism voiced by Hopkins, Jacobs and Clark himself in his IUR editorial. However, Clark did publish two brief articles, totaling about 3 pages, which offered readers a skeptical view of the Linda case. One by psychologist Donald A. Johnson, a member of the CUFOS Board, carried the headline: "Why the Linda Case is a Hoax." The other, by Dr. Willy Smith--a physicist and long-time pro-UFOlogist--showed that details reportedly seen from the Brooklyn Bridge by an alleged independent witness (whose identity has never been revealed) could not possibly be discernable at that distance.

In Hopkins' IUR article he charges: "Two of these men claim that they harbored serious doubts about the case before they passed them on to such dubious personages as Philip Klass and James Moseley [editor of Saucer Smear newsletter] and shortly thereafter circulated an article attacking the credibility of Linda Cortile [pseudonym for Napolitano]...At no time did they inform me of these doubts before they made them public, nor did they ask me if there were logical answers to what they referred to as troubling questions. As I will demonstrate, there are clear reasons for their devious and shockingly unprofessional behavior." [Emphasis added.] Based on this false account of what had transpired, Hopkins thus sets the stage to justify his vitriolic ad hominem attacks on his three critics.

**HERE ARE THE FACTS:** Butler first met Linda at one of the "abductee support group" meetings held at Hopkins' home which Butler attended because he suspects that he himself is an abductee. Because of Butler's doubts about Linda's tale, he invited Stefula to join him at one of the group meetings in the fall of 1991. On Jan. 28, 1992 Linda asked Stefula and Butler to meet with her privately in New York City and they did so on Feb. 1. During that meeting Linda described her alleged abduction off the streets of Manhattan in broad daylight on two occasions by "Rich" and "Dan," two alleged "security agents" who allegedly had witnessed Linda's "Beam-me-up-Scotty" abduction in late 1989. On one of these occasions, Linda claimed that "Dan" had tried to drown her. Hopkins' only contact with "Dan" and "Rich" is via letters and tape recordings he has received. Only Linda has had the privilege of meeting them.

Stefula attended the MUFON conference in Albuquerque where Hopkins spoke and Linda made her first public appearance to answer questions. Stefula noted some significant discrepancies in Linda's story compared with what she had told him and Butler only five months earlier. During a brief intermission, Stefula began to discuss these discrepancies with another skeptical attendee sitting next to him. Quite by chance, SUN's editor was sitting in front of Stefula and asked if I might join in. He posed no objection. At some point, we introduced ourselves and exchanged business cards. I told Stefula I would contact him later, as I did, and at my request he provided Butler's phone number. AT NO TIME DID STEFULA OR BUTLER ENCOURAGE ME TO PUBLICIZE THEIR VIEWS.

On Aug. 28, 1992, I called and talked with Butler who told me that he had spoken with Hopkins on three occasions and that he and Stefula had sent Hopkins a list of 10 questionable claims in Linda's story. "We proposed to meet with him, face-to-face to discuss these issues." But Hopkins flatly refused, Butler told me. Finally, Hopkins agreed to meet with Stefula and Butler on Oct. 3, and also invited Linda, her family, and many of Hopkins' supporters to be present. These included David Jacobs, Jerry Clark, and Walter Andrus, MUFON's international director, CUFOS Board member Donald A. Johnson, and George P. Hansen. [See SUN #18/Nov. 1992] It would be more than three months later (Jan. 8, 1993) before S/B/H would issue their 25-page report.

RECALL HOPKINS' CLAIM IN IUR: "AT NO TIME DID THEY INFORM ME OF THESE DOUBTS BEFORE THEY MADE THEM PUBLIC."

In IUR, Hopkins charges: "From the very first these men have had to shift their ground again and again as they discovered that much of their information and many of their assumptions were dead wrong. Instead of apologizing for publishing often egregious errors, they have simply moved on to new, equally uncertain claims and assumptions. They have, among other things, said the following: that Linda Cortile is a former actress; [SUN NOTE: No such statement is made in the S/B/H report.] that I believe that the two agents in the case, Richard and Dan, work for the Secret Service; [SUN NOTE: No such statement appears in the S/B/H report.]...that the two agents reported feeling a strong vibration at the time of the sighting; [SUN NOTE: The S/B/H report attributes that claim to Linda.] and that both subsequently suffered nervous breakdowns." [SUN NOTE: No such statement appeared in the S/B/H report.]

Even if the S/B/H report had said that agents Dan and Richard had suffered nervous breakdowns, S/B/H could cite Hopkins' own account given in Albuquerque. For example, Hopkins said: "One of the men, Dan, suffered a major nervous breakdown." And Hopkins read portions of a letter, allegedly from Dan, which said that Rich "had to take a leave of absence because this thing [seeing Linda's abduction] had more or less destroyed him...Rich has a blown-up balloon of a man which he puts in his bed every night and he sleeps in the other room." [SUN COMMENT: Rich, allegedly a security agent, believed the ETs were so dum-dum that they would abduct a "blown-up balloon of a man." If ETs are so easily fooled, certainly they would discover their goof when they tried to extract sperm and they'd come back for Rich.]

In the IUR article, Hopkins says S/B/H "also claim Linda's son was abducted two months before her Nov. 30, 1989, abduction and that she neglected to tell me of this until months later," which Hopkins says is not true. [The S/B/H report makes no mention of this.] However, here's what Hopkins said at the MUFON meeting in Albuquerque: "This is only a recent discovery of mine, but even before the Nov. 30 incident, Linda's youngest son--who was about six years old at the time--had told his mother in great panic that he wakened up and there were little men there and they had taken him out of the window."

After listing a few more such items, Hopkins said: "Not one single statement in the long list above is true. Not one...I can assure the reader that the items I've chosen to quote above are selected virtually at random; there are many, many others--lies, misconceptions, and false information--but the list I've given is already too long."

Hopkins' "random" selection failed to include any of the more telling criticism found in the S/B/H report. For example, if a giant glowing UFO was hovering over Linda's apartment building on the night of Nov. 30, 1989, and was bright enough to (allegedly) attract the attention of the Dan and Rich, and a woman crossing the Brooklyn Bridge, there should have been many other witnesses. In Hopkins MUFON talk, he described how he set about to find other witnesses: "Linda suggested that we put up some notices around the neighborhood. We took 100 leaflets with a big UFO on it, and Linda and her sons put them up along the Brooklyn Bridge. We didn't hear from anybody yet but I hope we will."

Stefula, Butler and Hansen used another approach when they visited New York on Sept. 19, 1992. Inasmuch as Linda lived in a very large apartment complex close to public housing with an around-the-clock security force patrolling the complex, S/B/H decided to interview the supervisor of the security force to ask if any of its guards had seen the giant UFO hovering overhead, or if any of the residents had reported the incident. The answer was NO. Later, when they attended the Oct. 3 meeting, they asked Hopkins if he had thought to check the security guards at Linda's apartment. Hopkins had not.

### So Much For Substantive Issues, Now On to Ad Hominems:

Having briefly discussed what Hopkins considered to be the substantive issues, he then focused the bulk of his article in trying to discredit Stefula, Butler and Hansen. He said that "apart from their attack on the Linda Cortile case, none of them, to my knowledge, has ever published anything in the field of UFO research. None has addressed a major conference, and none appears to be working cooperatively within an established UFO organization. Stefula and Butler were evidently active for a while in New Jersey's Mutual UFO Network chapter, but no one I've talked with has ever heard of George Hansen as a UFO researcher."

Hopkins said that he had known Butler for several years and "had something of a personal friendship" with him. He added: "I have no reason to doubt that he has, indeed, undergone UFO abductions..." But he accuses Butler of "profound naivete, insensitivity, and illogic." Stefula, who was a Chief Warrant Officer in the Army and did criminal investigation work, is characterized by Hopkins as a "stupid gumshoe" because of questions he asked when he attended one of the support-group meetings. Hopkins snidely comments that it "is unfortunate that neither of these two former enlisted men had the advantage of an enriching higher education." In fact, Stefula has a Masters Degree in Administration of Criminal Justice from the Fort Benning Branch of Troy State University.

Hopkins characterizes Hansen as the "strangest member of the New Jersey trio. In my brief meetings with him, certain personal characteristics were immediately obvious. First of all, George is the epitome of the fanatic college debater who will use any tactic to win, no matter what the human cost...Hansen [is] master of the smarmy innuendo..." Hopkins concluded his lengthy attack as follows: "I have a final message for the New Jersey trio, and though it has several parts, it is really quite simple. Civility, gentleman, is not out of date; in fact, it is essential for any kind of productive rational dialogue. As a long-time researcher in this field, I have had, and still have, disagreements with various colleagues. A disagreement, however, is not a declaration of war, and if any of the three of you wants to be welcomed back into the grace of collegiality, civility is your passport."

### HARVARD PSYCHIATRIST ENDORSES LINDA'S TRUTHFULNESS:

Dr. John E. Mack, professor of psychiatry at Harvard and one of Hopkins' "disciples," after having interviewed Linda, offers the following assessment in his IUR article: "The idea that this sincere and honest woman could be involved in an elaborate hoax is so absurd as to force attention upon the motivation of those making such a bizarre claim...She is clinically, characterologically, humanly--use whatever language you like--incapable of such deception..." **ISUN**

COMMENT: Isn't that what Samson said about Delilah?]

**AN INTERVIEW WITH THE 'QUEEN-BEE OF ABDUCTEES':**

A lengthy interview with Linda Napolitano, published in the Spring and Summer issues of the MUFON-NYC NEWSLETTER, provides useful insights into the woman whom SUN earlier characterized as the "Queen-Bee of Abductees." Linda explained that she had bought Budd Hopkins book "Intruders" in 1988, because she thought it was a "mystery story. There was nothing UFO about the book." Apparently Linda decided to spend \$17.95 for the book without even scanning the blurb on the inside jacket which began: "In September of 1983, UFO Investigator Budd Hopkins received a letter from Kathie Davis, a letter that would trigger a two-and-a-half year investigation into certain extraordinary events...Ultimately, it would provide the most significant evidence to date that not only are the reports of abduction of humans by aliens true but that there is a specific and profoundly disturbing purpose behind such abductions." Following are a few excerpts from the interview conducted by Sal Amendola:

\* "Between 6 and 8 years of age, while eating cookies in the bedroom of our apartment in the old neighborhood, a light came over the rooftop across the way [and] caught my eye. I thought, 'Casper the Ghost.' He was lit up in Christmas-colored lights of red and green. Now, some years later, under hypnosis by Budd Hopkins, and through adult eyes, I described a huge 'toy' top surrounded in red and green lights. A UFO....Yes, my parents were also survivors of similar or other strange phenomena, although they never knew what it was all about. They were never believers of the unnatural, but we had our home blessed by a priest on a regular basis. It didn't help."

\* (In response to a question about the woman on the Brooklyn Bridge who allegedly witnessed Linda's abduction): "Everything she said matched everything that Dan and Richard reported..." [SUN COMMENT: According to Hopkins' report in Albuquerque, Rich and Dan "watched the figures go up into the UFO...very quickly the UFO moved down towards them, crossed over the FDR Drive and, in their recollection, plunged into the East River." But according to the woman on the Brooklyn Bridge, the UFO "went over the Brooklyn Bridge.]"

\* (In response to a question about being abducted by Rich and Dan): "In April of '91, I was forced into their car and interrogated for about three hours. Almost all the questions revolved around the incident they saw in November '89. Some of the questions related to me personally, like Who are you? Who do you work for? etc....When I threatened to report them, they became angry and replied that the interrogation was legal, that the November 1989 incident had to do with National Security....In October of 1991, I was brought to what looked like a summer home on the seashore, by Dan. He had a nervous collapse. I'd never seen anything like it, and it scared the ever-living poop out of me. Dan dunked my head into the water two or three times. Yes, I was scared I was going to be drowned, but if that was what he wanted to do, he would have succeeded. Richard arrived and intervened...Richard, Budd and I became friends after that. AND NOW WE DON'T HEAR FROM EITHER RICHARD OR DAN ANYMORE." (Emphasis added.)

\* (In response to a question as to why she did not report the two abductions to the authorities): "And make myself look ridiculous?" Amendola responded: "But you were endangered...or seemed to be, at least in the beginning." Linda replied: "Yes, but who would I report it to? The police? What would I tell them? That two detectives (or security agents, or whatever) were making me feel threatened? They'd ask me why...And what if Richard and Dan were government agents? What kind of response would I get then?...Well, I wouldn't want to go head-to-head with any government agency."

(In response to a question about Linda's notoriety that resulted from her appearance at the MUFON conference) "I went to Albuquerque to observe a UFO conference, not to be a speaker.... I was swept to the podium when it was learned that I was there....How would you like it if you were swept up in a spur-of-the-moment and everybody started violating your wish for privacy." [SUN COMMENT: Early in Hopkins' talk he said Linda "is going to be here to speak although she's not aware of exactly what she's going to be asked." Judging from the very attractive dress and make-up Linda was wearing, her trip to the podium did not appear to be unexpected.]

At one point in the interview Amendola asked: "What do you think about the fact that the trio [Stefula/Butler/Hansen] went straight to Phil Klass with their..." Linda interrupted to say: "Oh! He's so cute, don't you think? I'd just love to pinch his cheeks." The surprised Amendola asked: "Who? Klass?" Linda replied: "Yes! He calls me 'Queen Bee of Abductees.' Isn't that sweet?" Amendola responded: "Uh-huh -- I mean, no seriously. What do you think about them going to Klass?" Linda replied: "You're judged by the company you keep. Lie down with dogs, wake up with fleas." [SUN COMMENT: Cute, sweet fleas.]

## Hopkins To Present Linda Case Update At MUFON Conference:

How much "new evidence" will Budd Hopkins reveal in his paper, "A Linda Cortile Case Update," at the upcoming MUFON conference in Richmond, July 2-4? Hopkins' usual response to skeptical criticism is that his critics have had access to only a small part of the evidence in his possession. For example, in Hopkins' IUR article he wrote that Stefula/Butler/Hansen "have talked with none of the witnesses whose accounts corroborate those of the Cortile family. They have viewed none of the four extremely important video tapes, nor have they seen any of the relevant physical evidence. They are familiar with only the one complete audio cassette tape that I have made public; they have not heard of any of the more than two dozen others generated by my investigation. Of the 13 witness letters and six signed statements in this case, they are familiar with only the four letters published so far."

The IUR article by CUFOS Board member Donald A. Johnson said he is aware that Hopkins and Jacobs "believe they have in their possession much more persuasive evidence that would lend much greater credence to Linda's story. A couple of Hopkins' inner-circle members have informed me of what that evidence is, and I am not impressed." (Emphasis supplied.)

SUN BELIEVES that the time has come for Hopkins to make public a lot more of this "new evidence" so that its credibility can be assessed by others, including skeptical critics. Such action by Hopkins will allay suspicion that he is withholding evidence for use in his planned book on the Linda case--evidence no more impressive that what he has already reported.

SUN BELIEVES that it is time for Hopkins to report on the results of his efforts to obtain confirmation from Javier Perez de Cuellar, who was Secretary General of the United Nations at the time of the incident, that de Cuellar was with Rich and Dan and observed Linda's abduction as claimed by Rich and Dan. During Hopkins' MUFON talk in Albuquerque, he said "We know the identity of the Third Man. I've received a letter from him, signed The Third Man. I've been able to check on his identity in another way. It is clear beyond a shadow of a doubt." Hopkins has had more than a year to contact de Cuellar for confirmation.

At the meeting which Hopkins convened last Oct. 3, sharp controversy was sparked by George Hansen's suggestion that the two alleged abductions of Linda by "Rich" and "Dan," and the latter's attempt to drown Linda, should be reported to the FBI. At the MUFON conference in Albuquerque, Hopkins said he had been "pushing Linda" to report the incidents, but she refused. As Hansen phrased it in a four-page White Paper which he wrote after the Oct. 3 meeting, "If federal agents have engaged in kidnapping and attempted murder, they should be brought to justice. At risk is not only the safety of Linda but also that of the general public." In an effort to resolve this controversial issue at the Oct. 3 meeting, CUFOS's Jerry Clark proposed that Stefula/Butler/Hansen agree to a six-month moratorium to provide time for Hopkins to continue his own investigation. [For more details, See SUN #18/Nov. 1992]

Clark's six-month moratorium expired in early April. Hopefully, Hopkins will report what his investigation turned up during this period to determine if Linda's tale of abduction by Government agents is true. Although Linda is the only "UFO-abductee" (known to SUN) who has made such claims, it will be interesting to learn if Hopkins, Jacobs and Mack have taken steps to alert their many other "abductees" to the potential threat.

**MACK SEES ET ABDUCTORS AS BENIGN CREATURES WITH ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS:**

**Dr. John Mack**, Harvard psychiatrist, not only accepts reality of UFO-abduction claims but apparently also accepts the once popular, now discredited, "Ancient Astronaut" claims of Erik von Daniken. An article published in the April 2 edition of the Northwest Arkansas Times, based on an interview with Mack, included the following: *Mack said visits by aliens have been documented through history, from carvings on the walls of ancient pyramids through early writings. But the wave we've been going through since the 1940s is different, he said. Many more abductions appear to have occurred since the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, Mack said.*

*During the abductions most people report being shown "films" of environmental disasters on earth, he said. "I think it's because we're destroying the earth," said Mack, adding that destroying our atmosphere may affect the cosmos as well. The newspaper article was prompted by Mack's then upcoming lecture at the Ozark UFO Conference.*

*Mack's view of UFO-abductions as a spiritually uplifting experience resembles the philosophy of Leo Sprinkle--a pioneer in the field--but is at odds with the malevolent ET view promoted by Hopkins and Jacobs. [See SUN #21/May 1992] For example, an article on UFO-abductions published in the July/August 1993 issue of Common Boundary magazine quotes Jacobs as saying that UFO-abductions "are not benign in any way, shape or form." The article continues: "Jacobs claims the visions of nuclear and ecological disaster are the aliens way of testing our emotions, like scientists manipulating lab rats. He notes that the small percentage of abductees who put a spiritual spin on the experience are all patients of Mack's, implying that Mack--and not the aliens--is responsible for the spiritual interpretations and ecological awareness of the patients." (Emphasis supplied)*

*"Mack admits that may be partially true. 'There is a kind of relationship between a therapist and patient where you're co-creating,' he says. 'But I've never pointed them in any one direction.' To him, abductions serve as 'a kind of cosmic correction' that will work to push us up another rung on the evolutionary ladder," according to the article.*

**ET's (apparently) believe we Earthlings should go to church.** According to the article, Sarah, a 36-year old "abductee" who has been seeking help from Mack for almost three years, reports that "about a year ago, I started getting a lot of messages to go to church....The first Sunday, I was sitting there thinking, 'Why am I here?' All of a sudden I heard in my right ear 'This is right'...." [SUN NOTE: If you are not sure whether the voice you hear is that of your conscience or an ET, remember this Rule of Thumb: If the RIGHT ear hears the voice, it's an ET. If the LEFT ear hears the voice, it's your conscience. If BOTH ears hear the voice, it's probably your spouse.]

**COULD THERE BE TWO BASICALLY DIFFERENT TYPES OF ETs?:**

**Perhaps there are two fundamentally different types of ETs performing abductions: malevolent ETs (METs) and benign ETs (BETs) If performed by the METs, before the victims are returned they are programmed to seek help from Hopkins or Jacobs. If the BETs are the abductors, they program their victims to contact Sprinkle or Mack. SUN's theory could be checked if Mack and Hopkins were to exchange subjects, to assess whether the abduction scenario changes or remains fixed.**

Perhaps the time will come when therapists who treat "abductees" (ABDUCTAPISTS) will have a special listing section in the telephone yellow pages. And their names will be followed by "MET" or "BET" to assist victims in locating the correct type.

**It will be interesting to see whether Mack discusses his philosophical differences with the Hopkins/Jacobs camp when he also speaks at the upcoming MUFON conference in Richmond, with Hopkins likely to be in the audience.**

## PENTAGON LABELS MJ-12 PAPERS A FORGERY:

Nearly six years after William L. Moore, Stanton T. Friedman and Jaime Shandera released the famous "Top Secret/Eyes Only" MJ-12 papers, which seemingly showed the U.S. Government had recovered two crashed saucers from New Mexico, the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force has officially designated and stamped them: "NOT AN OFFICIAL USAF DOCUMENT, NOT CLASSIFIED, SUSPECTED FORGERY OR BOGUS DOCUMENT." The same stamp has been applied to other bogus documents, referred to as "Aquarius" and "Snowbird," which began to circulate even before MJ-12 was released.

The reason it took so long is because only the agency which originates a classified document has the authority to declassify it. Because the documents had not originated with the Defense Dept., the CIA, NSA or the National Security Council, none of these agencies felt it had the authority to act, or sufficient interest. Finally, Col. Richard L. Weaver, Deputy for Security and Investigative Programs in the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, decided to bite the MJ-12 bullet and buy an appropriate rubber stamp. When UFO magazine contacted Moore for his reactions, he reportedly responded: "Since the MJ-12 documents are not Air Force, Colonel Weaver cannot label the documents as forgeries."

SUN would like to nominate Col. Weaver to receive the USAF's Medal for Outstanding Bravery and Valor Under Deadly Fire.

## SHORT SHRIFT:

\* Walt Andrus, MUFON's international director, has strongly endorsed the Linda Napolitano case, after meeting Linda at the Oct. 3 meeting in New York. Writing in the April issue of the MUFON UFO Journal, Andrus said: "After nearly 30 years in the UFO field, I have developed a sensitivity to recognizing witnesses who are prevaricating or fabricating a story. I am convinced that Linda is telling the truth as she knows it....I predict that continued investigation of reports from additional witnesses and public disclosures by the known witnesses will confirm that the Linda case is indeed 'The Case of the Century.'" Andrus' article harshly criticized the 25-page S/B/H report. (Hopkins heads MUFON's UFO Abduction Study Group.)

Andrus earlier gave his equally enthusiastic endorsement of the Ed Walters/Gulf Breeze UFO-photo case as "one of the most important UFO cases in the past 40 years." Andrus added: "A successful businessman and civic citizen was probably selected for this ultimate disclosure so that the events and evidence would be...accepted by the scientific community as factual and not easily ignored as an obvious hoax. Ed was apparently chosen and programmed to fulfill a role in the ultimate disclosures by the intelligences controlling the UFOs." Budd Hopkins believes the Linda abduction also was staged by the ETs to make their presence known.

\* The Red-light UFO (RUFO) which used to visit Gulf Breeze once or twice every week for a couple of years seems to have lost interest and has rarely appeared during the past year. One unconfirmed theory is that the RUFO got tired of trying to find Ed Walters' new house. When Ed resided at his old house on Silverthorn Drive, the UFO visited him often, hovering over his back yard, as evidenced by his numerous UFO photos. When Ed moved to a new house in 1989, the UFO knew he had moved because it never returned to his old house, according to Mr./Mrs. Robert Menzer who became the new occupants. But the UFO never visited Ed's new home. Instead, the RUFO flew over nearby waters where it could be seen by local and visiting UFO enthusiasts. After two years, the RUFO apparently tired of wasting time looking for Ed.

If the RUFO was a balloon-borne road flare--as some TV video and eye-witness reports suggest--the alternative explanation is that the hoaxer(s) tired of having to devote so many hours to continuing the prank. During a recent Saturday night visit by SUN's editor, the waterside park that used to attract so many would-be UFO viewers was deserted.

**POLICE OFFICERS DESCRIBE "DOGFIGHT" WITH A UFO:**

This was the headline in the March 4 edition of the Louisville (Ky) Courier-Journal for a story which began: "Two Jefferson County air unit police officers--described by their lieutenant as 'solid guys'--swear they had a two minute dogfight with a UFO during a routine helicopter patrol Friday night....Officer Mike Smith, in his squad car below...confirmed the UFO shot three fireballs into the air and then disappeared....The UFO--a glowing pear-shaped object about the size of a basketball--literally flew circles around the helicopter, even though the fliers say they were moving at speeds approaching 100 mph. In one blinding moment when both craft were hurtling toward each other, the UFO shot three baseball-size fireballs out of its middle, all three officers said. The fireballs fizzled into nothing." (Emphasis supplied)

The article said the police helicopter crew members, Kenny Graham and Kenny Downs, had been dispatched to investigate a reported break-in. "As they circled, Graham saw something that looked like a small fire off to his left. Dozens of bonfires had been lit around the county that night by revelers delighting in the new snowfall. But Graham soon decided it wasn't a fire. Downs shined his 1.5 million-candlepower spotlight on the object, which began to drift back and forth like a balloon as the light washed over it. Then it gradually floated up to the helicopter's elevation, about 500 feet, where it hovered for a few seconds. 'Then it took off at a speed I've never seen before' said Graham, an experienced pilot. The object made two huge counter-clockwise loops and finally approached the helicopter's rear. Graham, afraid the object would ram his tail rotor, pushed his speed above 100 mph. The UFO shot past them and instantly climbed hundreds of feet in the air." (Emphasis supplied.) The follow-on story in the next day's edition of the newspaper said that "WHAS-TV reported last night that a Jefferson County couple say that they had sent up a small hot-air balloon--made of a dry cleaning bag and birthday candles--in the area at the time and that they saw the helicopter."

**'CLAIM THAT BALLOON WAS 'UFO' IS FULL OF HOT AIR, OFFICER SAYS'** was the headline on the next story to appear in the Courier-Journal, on March 6. The article began: "Like a cat chasing its tail, Jefferson County police officers who thought they spotted a UFO on Feb. 26 were actually pushing around a tiny hot-air balloon with the prop wash from their helicopter, a Buechel man claims. But officer Kenny Downs said that was no homemade balloon he saw that night. 'There's no way,' Downs said yesterday. 'I don't think six candles and a plastic bag'--like the Buechel man's balloon--'can fly at the speeds we flew.' The article explained that Scott Heacock wanted to show his wife how far his hot-air balloons could fly--balloons made from a plastic garment bag, two balsa wood sticks and powered by 12 birthday candles. The article included a photo showing Heacock and his wife with one of their balloons.

On the night of Feb. 26, shortly after Heacock's wife came home around 11 p.m., they launched a hot-air balloon. "Just as it cleared the trees, the county police helicopter flew into the area and began circling, Heacock said....'I'm positive that's what (the officers) saw,' Heacock said. As for the fireballs the officers said flew out of the middle of the UFO, Heacock said the candles on his balloons often sputter. Or the plastic might have caught fire and dripped down in three big flames. 'I believe in UFOs,' Heacock said, 'but I believe most of the phenomena people see (are) explainable.'"

The tabloid Weekly World News featured the incident in its May 4 edition. It's front cover carried the headline: "UFO FIRES ON LOUISVILLE, KY. POLICE CHOPPER: 2 COPS SURVIVE MOST AMAZING ENCOUNTER OF 1993." [SUN thanks subscriber Thomas J. Wheeler of Louisville for supplying the newspaper clippings.]

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**SKEPTICS UFO NEWSLETTER (SUN) IS PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY. SUBSCRIPTION RATE (SIX ISSUES) IS \$15 FOR U.S./CANADA. OVERSEAS RATE (AIRMAIL) IS \$20/YEAR. (Please make check/money order payable to Philip J. Klass.**