

MAIL BAG

Travis Walton replies

Dear Mr. Bowen,—I read your article *The Snowflake Story: a Commentary* in the February issue of FSR. Although your treatment of the material you had was quite fair, I'm afraid you've been the victim of some false reportings. Some of these result from mistakes made by newsmen, but the majority of the false statements come from Bill Spaulding of GSW.

Mr. Spaulding gave the same impressions to MUFON's *Skylook* magazine, and as many newspapers as would hear him. This was done in keeping with his promise printed in the papers which said; "We're gonna blow this whole thing out today!" which he made after being miffed when APRO took over investigation of the case. He has tried to carry out his threat to destroy the credibility of this case but has succeeded only in hurting his own credibility, for in the words of Dr. J. Allen Hynek of the Center for UFO Studies: "I guess I sent the wrong man in on this one." It was Dr. Hynek, not the police, who sent for Spaulding because Spaulding was closer, being in Arizona.

I'm enclosing comments on the articles in *Skylook*, and a new clipping, because to clear up the misunderstandings GSW has created would require covering that same ground anyway.

In your article you asked: "Is Duane Smith Travis's brother?" Dwayne Smith is not my brother but Duane Walton is. My brother Duane was not at work with us at the time of the encounter, but was 180 miles away in Phoenix where he shoes horses for a living.

My brother Duane was very angry at the men who ran and left me lying on the ground that November 5th. I myself have no hard feelings about that. It's quite understandable now, after seeing the awesome power demonstrated by that blue beam, those men would flee. Any attempts at heroics would possibly have only resulted in a similar fate for those who thought I had been killed and was beyond help anyway. I can't say I would have done any differently faced with apparent hostility from intelligences far superior to our own.

Sirius Mystery (continued from page 25)

field. But the relatively lightweight stories which have recently been written, and the heavyweight technologies which have been developed in the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. during the past 25 years have prepared the public mind for accepting something previously

Correspondence is invited from our readers, but they are asked to keep their letters short. Unless letters give the sender's full name and address (not necessarily for publication) they cannot be considered. The Editor would like to remind correspondents that it is not always possible to acknowledge every letter personally, so he takes this opportunity of thanking all who write to him.

All of us would prefer to imagine ourselves as more gallant, but I think that fleeing was their only sensible choice under those circumstances.

I had my own share of fear and was scared into returning to the truck by the sudden sound of the saucer, but I was quickly prevented from doing so by that ray. Perhaps my curious approach was foolhardy but for all concerned I can only say, what's been done is done.

I haven't read one account of this that was totally correct but maybe these letters will help correct some misconceptions. The first APRO Bulletin on the case had some minor errors but the new one should clear everything up. Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,
Travis C. Walton
Box 1072, Snowflake, Arizona,
85937, U.S.A.
April 12, 1976

Charles Bowen comments ...

Travis Walton's neatly typed letter arrived a few days before I was due to leave for America to attend the Chicago conference of Dr. Hynek's Center for UFO Studies. FSR Vol.22 No.1 had been pushed forward in preparation at that time, so the letter has had to await this issue for publication. We do not have sufficient space to print the comments on the Skylook article but, in fairness, I will extract one relevant observation from the copy of a letter (which could have been typed on the same machine as Travis Walton's letter) sent by Mr. Michael H. Rogers to Mr. Dwight Connelly, Editor of Skylook, on April 11, 1976:—

"In your report from GSW, Spaulding says Travis's mother showed no emotion during her son's disappearance. However, I find in the February issue of *Flying Saucer Review* Spaulding says that she told him, crying, that her son was 'with God in a UFO.' What is the matter with this man? Neither of his conflicting statements is true. I know Mrs. Walton was terribly upset, as I was the one who first broke the news to

her that night. After a few days of fruitless search she realised Travis had to be on the UFO but she did not say he was 'with God in a UFO.' "

I presume the Michael M. Rogers who wrote the letter is the man who was crew boss of the logging team when Travis is said to have encountered the UFO. It now remains to conclude this item with a re-printing of the news cutting which Travis sent me, an article in the "Phoenix Gazette" of March 23, 1976:—

"There is 'no substantiation in fact' for the hoax accusations brought against a young Snowflake man who claims to have been abducted by an unidentified flying object last fall, according to the nation's leading authority on UFOs.

"Dr. J. Allen Hynek, a Northwestern University astronomer and head of the Center for UFO Studies, said today he had interviewed Travis Walton and believes he is 'not hoaxing.'

"He has been made the subject of a lot of unnecessary and unfounded accusations,' Hynek said. 'There seems to be little support for the accusations made against him.'

"The professor who has interviewed hundreds of UFO witnesses since he began studying the phenomenon in 1948, said Walton had successfully completed a polygraph test of his story three weeks ago.

"Walton, 22, disappeared for five days in early November after he and six logging companions reportedly sighted a UFO on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest near Heber. When he reappeared, he claimed he had been taken aboard the craft, examined and held captive.

"After the incident, observers claimed the entire event was a hoax, or that Walton had been hallucinating on drugs. Navajo County police authorities suggested the idea had originated with a television show which was aired shortly before the incident.

"Hynek today cast doubts on all those stories.

"He noted nighttime temperatures in the Heber area at the time hovered around 8 degrees, and loggers in the area agree there are 'grave doubts' a

undreamed of about the initiation of civilisation on this planet. It is to be hoped, therefore, that FSR readers will not be slow to study the work of this bright young man, Robert Temple, who is likely to be of great significance in years to come.