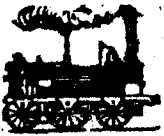


UCU



The Role of the Media In The Politics Of Disclosure



Discovery is the end process of the scientific method. In an ideal world, it would not be political. Three generations of Americans have passed through and now coexist in the greatest age of discovery in history. The

sum of human knowledge doubles in but a few years. We revel in the fruits of these discoveries and take them to be our heritage. We create and trust institutions to carry out this process and pay them handsomely to do so. We expect science to be pursued openly and fairly. Often it is.

And often it is not. Huge portions of science and technology were "secretized" by the military industrial complex to service the prosecution of the Cold War. More portions were kept secret by businesses protecting their commercial interests. So now, much of science is hidden from us—only to turn up when and if it is considered appropriate for it to be disclosed. The act of disclosure is almost always political.

The greatest scientific discovery in history, the existence of non-human, intelligent life forms with interstellar propulsion technology, has been hidden from the general citizenry for over 50 years. The justification for this has varied from decade to decade and the methodology has at times violated the laws and the Constitution of the nation.

For disclosure to take place on the public's terms, the grassroots investigative efforts of the last half-century must marry up to institutional action with political initiative presiding over the wedding. If we are to regain our trust

in societal structures which have failed us, those same structures must be part of the process of correction. Right now, the most critical of these is the media.

A Quick Look at the Overall Record

Someday, in the aftermath of disclosure of the extraterrestrial presence, there is certain to be an intense assessment of how our formal institutions, the ones we have spent 224 years and billions of dollars perfecting, acquitted themselves. The military and civilian agencies will be severely criticized, but a host of reasons will be brought forward in their support. National security, the Cold War, the specific circumstances in 1947 at the beginning of the cover-up and fear of destabilization will be considered as acceptable justification by many. Of particular interest will be the actions of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

However, NASA will be able to point to its obligations to the Department of Defense and intelligence community under the 1958 Space Act, and claim a damned-if-we-came-forward-damned-if-we-didn't dilemma.

As for the elected officials in Congress, their near complete failure of independent initiative will be laid to the campaign finance demands of the modern "politics of money" and the fear of alienating funding sources. This paralysis translates into a Seinfeldian "politics of nothing," with Congress awash in petty, personal bickering, and all major social/political change hostage to vanity and loathing.

The university system and the research structures it contains will be targeted for some of the heaviest rebuke. While the very essence of science is a continuing exploration of new perspectives

Like hi-rise towers above the city, mainstream media and the university system fail to connect with the basics.

on nature and the universe, it is equally about finding and keeping grant money and protecting reputations. Scientists were largely defenseless against the government-driven disinformation campaigns that created the infamous "laugh curtain." The department heads, university presidents and individual scientists will invoke those realities in explaining their failure to show any public interest in the unfolding extraterrestrial phenomena.

The institutions of politics, religion and science have indeed dropped the ball. But another in particular has failed spectacularly. This institution has violated every fundamental precept upon which it is founded. It has gone against a host of self-interests—money, prizes, huge increases in customer base—and rammed its head into the sand.

The role of the news media in our society is much more than story coverage. The fourth estate is an essential part of the check-and-balance system created by the Constitution. News media are the eyes and ears of the public. Sometimes they are its voice. They are paid to tell us what the public institutions are doing and to convey our concerns to those same institutions in the form of commentary.

For the best part of 50 years, when the biggest story of all time and the seminal event in human history phoned in, the "fourth estate" was screening its calls. For those who attempted to make those calls, the voice mail menu was easy to understand: "This is your favorite, mainstream news desk.

If you have any information about the President's personal life, press one and a reporter will be with you immediately. If you have any information regarding UFOs and other extraterrestrial phenomena, press two and leave a message. We might get back to you when and if we stop laughing."

Every top-tier news venue in this country has been approached countless times by citizens and researchers with events and evidence relating to extraterrestrial phenomena. These editors have not done their job, and in this instance have abrogated their mandate to report and investigate a most critical matter impacting our society.

The New Media Structure

As we begin the 21st century, the circumstances of coverage have changed. While the most respected news organizations such as *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post* and ABC/NBC/CBS/CNN news television still steadfastly refuse to properly investigate extraterrestrial phenomena and the process of disclosure, there has been an

explosion of alternative media to fill the vacuum created by their absence.

To the surprise of no one, a multi-tiered news/media structure has evolved simultaneously with the most important technological innovation in history—the Internet. The acceptance of this structure by the general public has meant that any news story, regardless of its controversy or inconvenience to established authority, has a point of entry into the national news marketplace.

It has become commonplace for particularly controversial news stories to break in with lower-tier media and then progress upward when always nervous, higher-tier editors are forced to follow up or lose story position. This was certainly the case with extraterrestrial-related phenomena during the last decade.

Examples abound. The "Phoenix Lights" event in April of 1997 was one of the most spectacular UFO sightings in American history. The top-tier media wanted nothing to do with it, and might have ignored it completely had it not been for the candid comments and queries by Phoenix Councilwoman Frances

Barwood, which drew renewed attention as a political story. However, it was the second-tier *USA Today* that came forward with an excellent piece on the event by Richard Price.

By now, 50-million-plus cable television subscribers have figured out that the third-tier TLC and Discovery Channels (Discovery Communications, Inc.), Arts and Entertainment Channel (A&E), and the History Channel have established a library of UFO/ET documentaries which they are airing and re-airing. New ones are being added and will appear later this year.

The "Face on Mars/Cydonia" story, which has now been covered by every tier level at one time or another, was first introduced to the larger public in tier-six and tier-seven tabloids.

Are Journalists Finally Getting It?

Such trends notwithstanding, it still takes courage for any journalist to address the extraterrestrial phenomenon subject matter—the higher up the tier structure the greater the courage. While their number is not commensurate with the magnitude of the story, reporters, with the support of some editors, are slowly stepping up to the plate. They deserve to be recognized. Examples would include Paul Hoversten (formerly of) and Richard Price of *USA Today*, Billy Cox of *Florida Today*, and Julia Duin of *The Washington Times*.

Meanwhile, as America's editors ponder whether to get their act together, can a breakthrough from one