

# FORMER ARIZONA GOVERNOR NOW ADMITS SEEING UFO

## FIFE SYMINGTON DECIDES TO SET RECORD STRAIGHT TEN YEARS AFTER FAMED "PHOENIX LIGHTS" INCIDENT

By Leslie Kean

Ten years after the Arizona UFO incident known as the "Phoenix Lights," former Arizona Republican Governor Fife Symington, III, now says that he himself was a witness to one of the strange unidentified flying objects, even though he originally did not say so publicly.

"It was enormous and inexplicable," he said in an exclusive interview from his home in Phoenix. "Who knows where it came from? A lot of people saw it, and I saw it too."

On March 13, 1997, during Symington's second term as Governor, thousands saw multiple triangular and V-shaped craft, gliding slowly and silently across the sky for half an hour beginning at approximately 8:15 pm. Awestruck witnesses, throughout the state, estimated that the eerie, lighted vehicles were bigger than many football fields, up to a mile long.

Arizona Senator John McCain, a friend of Symington's who the former Governor describes as "open-minded," acknowledged at a 2000 press conference that lights were seen over Arizona. "That has never been fully explained. But I have to tell you that I do not have any evidence whatsoever of aliens or UFOs," he said.

The evidence for a possible UFO, which simply means something in the sky that can't be identified, lies in the fact that countless witnesses reported seeing low, gigantic, technological flying machines that blocked out the stars - not merely lights. Now the former Governor attests to that.

Symington says he saw a large triangular "craft of unknown origin" with lights, moving slowly. "It was dramatic. And it couldn't have been flares because it was too symmetrical," he says. "It had a geometric outline, a constant shape."

The sightings of the objects that evening are sometimes confused with the row of lights that appeared at about 10 pm, near Phoenix, and have been shown repeatedly on television news. These later lights were probably flares. People witnessed the objects at around 8:30 because they were outside on that pleasant, cloudless night watching the Hale-Bopp Comet.

Symington was known for ridiculing the incident at a spoof press conference, so his statement marks a dramatic turnaround. He wants to make amends to his constituents and set the record straight.

On the morning of June 19, 1997, when pressure was building from frustrated citizens who wanted answers, the Governor announced on television that he was ordering a full investigation and would make "all the necessary inquiries. We're going to get to the bottom of this. We're going to find out if it was a UFO," he said in a serious tone.

Later that same afternoon, Symington suddenly called a press conference and told viewers that he had found the source behind the Phoenix Lights. His chief-of-staff, Jay Heiler, was escorted in by public safety police officers while handcuffed, wearing a large rubber mask and dressed as a space alien. The Governor presented the costumed extraterrestrial as the “guilty party.” While laughter filled the room, he joked that “this just goes to show that you guys are entirely too serious.”

“It was an insult to the intelligence of the witnesses,” Barwood recalls. “The message to Arizona citizens was that reporting this was stupid.”

“If I had to do it all over again I probably would have handled it differently,” Symington explains. He says that the state of Arizona was “on the brink of hysteria” about the UFO sighting when he called the press conference, and the frenzy was building. “I wanted them to lighten up and calm down, so I introduced a little levity. But I never felt that the overall situation was a matter of ridicule,” he says.

The former Governor, a cousin of the late Missouri Senator Stuart Symington, states that the incident remains open and unsolved, and should be officially investigated. The US Government has never acknowledged that something was in the sky that night.

Phoenix city councilwoman Frances Barwood was the only elected official to launch a public investigation in 1997, but she received no information from any level of government. Barwood spoke with over seven hundred witnesses, including police, pilots and former military, who provided very similar descriptions. “The government never interviewed even one witness,” she says.

Symington also attempted to find an explanation. He called the Commander at Luke Air Force Base, the General in charge of the National Guard, and the head of the Department of Public Safety in 1997. None of these officials had answers, and they were “perplexed,” he says.

In 2000, the Department of Defense maintained that it could not find any information about the triangular object, in response to a court-ordered search requested by a U.S. District court in Phoenix, as part of a class action suit filed by witnesses.

“How could they possibly not know about these huge craft flying low over major population centers? That’s inconceivable, but it’s also frightening,” Barwood commented.

Symington’s announcement is bolstered by the fact that similar flying objects have been documented by the governments of England and Belgium.

On March 30, 1990, the Belgian Air Force sent two F-16s armed with missiles to intercept a black triangular UFO displaying bright lights on its underside. The object could accelerate or dive at tremendous speeds, starting from a stationary position, as recorded on radar. It flew at the speed of sound without making a sonic boom.

The Belgian Ministry of Defense released all its data on the UFO to the press, after eliminating American stealth aircraft and all other possible explanations.

On the night of March 30, 1993, three years later to the day, a vast triangular-shaped craft, also capable of rapidly accelerating in seconds from a virtual hover, was seen by over a hundred witnesses in England, including police officers and military personnel. The British Ministry of Defense stated that “none of the usual explanations put forward to explain UFO sightings seem applicable” and concluded that the evidence showed that “an unidentified object (or objects) of unknown origin was operating over the UK.”

According to an April 1993 MOD document, the agency sent a letter to the US Embassy which was “disseminated to all ‘interested Agencies’ in the US” to find out whether the March UFO could have been attributable to some US prototype such as the Aurora.

“The answer I got back was extraordinary,” reports Nick Pope, the MOD official who investigated the 1993 sighting. “The Americans had been having their own sightings of these large, triangular-shaped UFOs and wanted to know if the RAF might have such a craft.”

This statement, four years before the display over Arizona, contradicts the 2000 claim by the US DOD that the department had no information at all about the triangles. To this day, US officials continue to keep the lid on the Phoenix Lights and other well-documented American sightings of mysterious giant triangles.

“I wish that government entities would stop trying to shut down these investigations by putting out some flakey story,” says Symington, a long-time pilot, drawing an analogy to the November sighting of a hovering disc by many aviation witnesses at O’Hare airport, which the FAA explained away as a “weather phenomenon.”

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**Leslie Kean** is an investigative journalist whose articles have appeared in numerous newspapers and magazines around the world such as the *Boston Globe*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Providence Journal*, *Sacramento Bee*, *Atlanta-Journal Constitution*, *Newark Star Ledger*, *The Nation* magazine, *International Herald Tribune*, *Globe and Mail*, *the Sydney Morning Herald*, *the Bangkok Post*, *the Kyoto Journal*, and the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*. Her stories have been syndicated through Knight-Ridder Tribune, Scripps-Howard, New York Times Wire Service, Pacific News Service and the National Publishers Association. She is the co-founder of the Washington-based Coalition for Freedom of Information.