

## **President Nixon**

### **37th President**

**January 20, 1969 - August 9, 1974**

I was there to welcome the astronauts home... When I talked with them through the window of their quarantine chamber, it was hard to contain my enthusiasm or my awe at the thought that the three men on the other side of the glass had just returned from the moon. I said impulsively, "This is the greatest week in the history of the world since Creation." **President Nixon's reaction to the return of the first men to walk on the moon.**

The Nixon administration was one that was cut short by scandal and resignation. There was the resignation of Vice-President Agnew which led to Senator Gerald Ford becoming Vice-President, and then Watergate and the eventual resignation of Richard Nixon.

Even though the Nixon Presidency was short and rocky, a number of UFO stories and related space developments did take place. Nixon, for example, was the President who was able to take credit for an achievement dreamed of and initiated by President Kennedy. He presided over the landing of the first men on the moon in July 1969. Nixon described the Apollo 11 mission as the "greatest week in the history of the world since Creation," a statement that brought criticism from his close friend Billy Graham.

Nixon was also the President who announced the development of the space shuttle in 1972. He also announced a program for the manned exploration of Mars and a program to explore Saturn.

Nixon was the President in office when one of the biggest events in UFO history occurred. In December 1969, during Nixon's first year in office, the USAF closed down Project Blue Book, thus ending the official involvement of the United States government in the investigation of the

phenomena.

According to some writers of the time such as Major Donald Keyhoe, who was watching the activities of the Air Force very closely, the Air Force had tried desperately to have the Condon report filed prior to President Nixon taking office. The reason for this urgency relates back to the 1950's when Richard Nixon sat on the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

One of the people appearing before Nixon and his colleagues on the Committee was Dr. Edward Condon. There were sharp exchanges between Nixon and Condon about some of Condon's activities. As a result Condon's security clearance had been challenged. There was from that time on a great bitterness between Condon and Nixon.

Most of America had forgotten the decades long feud between the two men, but the Air Force hadn't. Once Nixon won the Republican nomination for President, the USAF began to pressure Condon to finish up the UFO study.

The Air Force figured that if Condon's UFO report was not filed before Nixon took office, Nixon might again challenge Condon. This led to a situation where the new President might oppose the UFO study simply because it was Dr. Condon who was heading it. This might in turn lead to Nixon holding up the report until the project was thoroughly investigated, or worse yet publicly rejecting its conclusions. According to Major Keyhoe, "the AF had put hard pressure on Colorado University (which was hosting the report) to rush the report through, so it could be released before the election. But it was impossible to make the deadline."

When Nixon did win the election the AF reviewers could only hope that Nixon would be too busy after the inauguration with things like the war in Vietnam to look at the UFO situation. Also, opposition ridicule surrounding the subject would make any early check-up on flying saucers unlikely. They were right. Nixon never did openly challenge Condon's conclusion, and stayed completely quiet about the UFO situation, as had all the President's before him.

The Air Force, in releasing its Colorado University Report, realized that there might be charges of "whitewash." They therefore sent the CU Report to the National Academy of Sciences for their review. The NAS panel's approval would help reduce public criticism.

The AF got the blessing of the National Academy of Science, but they did receive criticism from a second scientific organization, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA). Their report stated that 30 per cent (30 of 90 sightings) considered in their review of the Colorado University report were unexplained. They also made light of the fact that many of Dr. Condon's analysts had differing conclusions about what the study showed.

Where Dr. Condon had stated "nothing had been learned," the Institute stated that the large percentage of unexplained sightings in the study was justification for continuing the investigation. The subcommittee stated there was:

*no basis for his (Condon's) prediction that nothing of scientific value will come of further studies...it is difficult to ignore the small residue of well documented but unexplained cases which form the hard core of the UFO controversy...a phenomena with such a high ratio of unexplained cases should arouse sufficient scientific curiosity to continue its study.*

The criticism of the Condon report led the American Association for the Advancement of Science to hold a symposium on UFOs, to be held at their December 1969 annual meeting. Fearing that the whole report would unravel Dr. Condon approached the White House for help. Knowing he would get no help from President Nixon, he approached Vice-President Agnew in an attempt to stop the discussion that was about to take place at the AAAS annual meeting. Condon asked Spiro Agnew to use his influence to cancel the symposium. Vice-President Agnew however refused to become involved. The discussion took place within the AAAS, but nothing occurred to alter in any way how UFOs were dealt with inside the White House, or any other place for that matter.

## **Nixon's Interest and Involvement**

On December 9, 1969 Major Colman VonKeviczky, head of the International Galactic Spacecraft UFO Research and Analytic network (ICUFON) submitted a proposal to President Nixon requesting that the United States government send a representative to a World Congress for the International Consideration of Non-Terrestrial Spacecraft Operation. President Nixon's Secretary of the Air Force, Robert C. Seamans Jr. replied stating on behalf of the President " There is no evidence that UFOs are extraterrestrial."

## **Jackie Gleason, Richard Nixon, and the Florida Aliens**

In February 1973 President Richard Nixon took a trip to Florida. On February 19, 1973, according to White House Records, the President met on the 18th green at the Inverness Golf and Country Club with Jackie Gleason. He had come to help to open a charity golf tournament run by Gleason. If some rumored stories are to be believed, Nixon also came to Florida in 1973 to show Jackie Gleason bodies that were not from this planet.

Gleason was considered one of the foremost television comedians of the 20th century producing the Jackie Gleason Show for almost 20 years, and playing the character of Ralph Kramden on the top rated Honeymooners TV show in the mid 50's. He appeared in 21 movies, and produced 20 music albums from 1953 to 1969.

Jackie Gleason and President Nixon had a number of things in common and became good friends. Gleason was a strong supporter of the Republican party. Gleason lived in Florida, and Nixon had a compound on Biscayne Bay only miles away. In addition to being avid golfers, both had high regard for the FBI. Nixon had in April 1937 applied to become an agent with the FBI, and Gleason worked for the FBI as an official "contact" for the Special Agent in Charge (SAC) in Miami where he lived for the last twenty years of his life.

One of the other things they had in common, according to Gleason, was a large collection of UFO books. Both were fascinated by the subject.

Gleason had long been a fan of UFOs. He was a subscriber to the newsletter of the group Just Cause (Citizens Against UFO Secrecy). Gleason had a collection of 1700 books on parapsychology, UFOs, and the unknown. These were donated to the University of Miami by his third wife when he passed away in 1987. Gleason had even built a house in Peekskill, N.Y. which he called "The Mother ship." Gleason had architects built everything in the round like a flying saucer. Most of his furniture was round, and the garage, called the "Scout Ship" was also round, like a flying saucer.

Biographer William A. Henry 111 in his book "The Life and Legend of Jackie Gleason"

described his view of Jackie Gleason's interest in the unknown:

*"Jackie Gleason had a lifelong fascination with the supernatural. Everything that Shirley MacLean was to explore in her exotic life and best-selling book had already been explored by Gleason...He would spend small fortunes on everything from financing psychic research to buying a sealed box said to contain actual ectoplasm, the spirit of life itself. He would contact everyone from back-alley charlatans to serious researchers like J.B. Rhine of Duke University and, disdaining the elitism of the scholarly apparatus, would treat them all much the same way.*

*Gleason was a frequent insomniac. He would stay up high the night reading (or rereading) some of the hundreds of (UFO and paranormal phenomena) volumes in his library."*

Gleason did not see a UFO till later in his life when he was living in Florida. In 1955 at the high of his popularity with the American people he stated during a magazine interview.

*I have never seen a flying saucer anywhere personally but have read published flying saucer literature. Most of this literature is ridiculous, but amongst the trash there are some undeniable points that can not be refuted even by the United States Government.*

Gleason let the public know that he was interested in UFOs, but he was very secretive about how strong his belief was. While living in New York he invited Sheila MacRae for a visit to his saucer shaped home in Peeksville. MacRae replaced Audrey Meadows as the "Honeymooners" Alice Kramden when Jackie Gleason moved his TV shows to Florida in the sixties. There he showed her his massive collection of books on spiritualism, the occult, and UFOs. " I'm kind of a nut on the subject, " he told Sheila "Hey, maybe 'nut' isn't the right word, eh? Think of the fun the columnists and the writers for TV Guide would have if they got a load of all this, hunh?"

There were a few people who Jackie trusted who he would discuss the subject with. One of these people was Bob Considine. Jackie Gleason's publicist James Bacon, in his book "How Sweet it Is: The Jackie Gleason Story," described how Gleason was "always arguing" about UFOs with Bob Considine, columnist for the New York Journal-American. These UFO debates took place in Gleason's favorite watering hole - Toots Shor's Restaurant and Bar in New York City.

Gleason would tell Considine how small UFOs had been seen by both sides during World War 11, and that four Presidents of the United States had told him about these UFOs. Considine didn't believe Gleason until one day General Rosie O'Donnell, then head of the Strategic Air Force, over heard the two arguing. He came up and said to Considine, 'Jackie's right.'

According to Gleason's second wife, Beverly McKittrick, Gleason apparently had done more than talk and golf with his friend Richard Nixon while in Florida. McKittrick stated that one night Gleason had returned home very shaken. It was during the Nixon February 1973 visit to Florida. She related that President Nixon had taken Jackie to a heavily secured area at Homestead Air Force Base where he had viewed the remains of small aliens in a top secret repository. McKittrick related this story in an unpublished manuscript of Gleason called "The Great One."

Larry Bryant, the editor of Just Cause, the newsletter Gleason had a subscription to, filed a Freedom of Information Act Request with Homestead Air Force Base. Bryant requested documentation on the top secret repository and Gleason's visit there to see the alien bodies. The Air Force Base replied that " no such records existed." Bryant also sent an advertisement to the Homestead Air Force Base Newspaper soliciting information anyone on the base could provide about the alien bodies or Jackie Gleason's visit to see them. The public affairs officer at Homestead denounced the Bryant advertisement and "forbade its publication."

At the same time Bryant wrote Gleason providing him with a draft affidavit. He asked Gleason to execute the affidavit so it could be used as part of a growing accumulation of evidence Bryant was collecting in preparation for taking the government to court to release all information on alien crash retrievals. Gleason did not reply.

About the same time as Bryant was approaching Gleason to provide an affidavit about his experience at Homestead, Gleason was approached by the film industry about the rumored story. Bryant recounted the story;

*"Though I never did hear from Gleason," said Bryant, " I did learn that he had been contacted by a third party in the film industry. At this confrontation, Gleason chose to neither confirm nor deny the story, saying that he would prefer not to discuss it all . The way I see it Gleason easily could have set the record straight in reply to my proposal or in an explanation to the inquisitive film-industry representative. If the story was a fabrication or misinterpretation on the part of his*

*wife, he now had every opportunity to say so. That he chose not to merely deepens the mystery."*

Shortly before his death in 1987, one story says Gleason did finally confirm the story about seeing the bodies at Homestead. The person who Jackie Gleason told the story to was Larry Warren who a member of the Air Force Security Police at RAF Bentwaters. Bentwaters was one of two bases in England where in late December 1980, three days of bizarre UFO incidents took place. Many US airmen stationed at the base were involved in sightings, radar trackings, pictures, and videos.

Larry Warren had been involved in events on the second night of sightings. He saw an object land in a clearing of the forest, and along with a number of other airmen saw three being come out of the craft. The case became known as the Rendlesham Forest Case, and was considered by many to be "the most significant military - UFO incident in the history of Great Britain."

Larry Warren's encounter with Jackie Gleason occurred in May 1986, shortly before Gleason death in June 1987. CNN and HBO had been running stories on the 1980 Rendleham Forest case. "Through mutual friends who knew members of his family," recounted Warren, " I was told that Gleason would like to talk to me privately in his home in Westchester County, and so the meeting was set for a Saturday when we would both have time to relax." Timothy Green Beckley, a New York City author, produced an excellent account of the meeting between the two men:

*After being formally introduced, the two men ventured into Gleason's recreation room complete with pool table and full-size bar. "There were hundreds of UFO books all over the place," Warren explains, "but Jackie was quick to tell me that this was only a tiny portion of his entire collection, which was housed in his home in Florida." For the rest of the day, UFO researcher and UFO witness exchanged information.*

*"Gleason seemed to be very well informed on the subject," Larry says, "as he knew the smallest detail about most cases and showed me copies of the book "Clear Intent" that had just been published, as well as a copy of "Sky Crash", a British book about Bentwaters that was published, actually, before all the details of this case were made public. I remember Gleason telling me about his own sightings of several discs in Florida and how he thought there were undersea UFOs bases out in the Bermuda Triangle."*

*But it wasn't till after Warren had downed a few beers and Gleason had had a number of drinks-"his favorite, Rob Roys"-that conversation really got down to brass tacks. "At some point, Gleason turned to me and said, 'I want to tell you something very amazing that will probably come out some day anyway. We've got em!' 'Got what', I wanted to know? 'Aliens!' Gleason sputtered, catching his breath."*

*According to Warren, Jackie proceeded to tell him the intriguing set of circumstances that led him to the stunning conclusion that extraterrestrials have arrived on our cosmic shores. "It was back when Nixon was in office that something truly amazing happened to me," Gleason explained. "We were close golfing buddies and had been out on the golf course all day when somewhere around the 15th hole, the subject of UFOs came up. Not many people know this," Gleason told Warren, "but the President shares my interest in this matter and has a large collection of books in his home on UFOs just like I do. For some reason, however, he never really took me into his confidence about what he personally knew to be true... one of the reasons being that he was usually surrounded by so many aids and advisers."*

*Later that night, matters changed radically, when Richard Nixon showed up at Gleason's house around midnight. "He was all alone for a change. There were no secret service agents with him or anyone else. I said, 'Mr. President, what are you doing here?' and he said he wanted to take me someplace and show me something." Gleason got into the President's private car and they sped off into the darkness - their destination being Homestead Air Force Base.*

*"I remember we got to the gate and this young MP came up to the car to look to see inside and his jaw seemed to drop a foot when he saw who was behind the wheel. He just sort of pointed and we headed off." Warren says that later Gleason found out that the secret service was going absolutely crazy trying to find out where Nixon was. "We drove to the very far end of the base in a segregated area," Gleason went on, "finally stopping near a well-guarded building. The security police saw us coming and just sort of moved back as we passed them and entered the structure.*

*There were a number of labs we passed through first before we entered a section where Nixon pointed out what he said was the wreckage from a flying saucer, enclosed in several large cases." Gleason noted his initial reaction was that this was all a joke brought on by their earlier conversation on the golf course. But it wasn't, as Gleason soon learned. "Next, we went into an inner chamber and there were six or eight of what looked like glass-topped Coke freezers. Inside them were the mangled remains of what I took to be children. Then - upon closer*

*examination - I saw that some of the other figures looked quite old. Most of them were terribly mangled as if they had been in an accident."*

*According to Larry Warren's testimony (regarding Gleason's lengthy conversation about UFOs and space visitors), "I forget whether he said they had three or four fingers on each hand, but they definitely were not human...of this he was most certain!" For three weeks following his trip with Nixon to Homestead Air Force Base, the world famous entertainer couldn't sleep and couldn't eat. "Jackie told me that he was very traumatized by all of this.*

*He just couldn't understand why our government wouldn't tell the public all they knew about UFOs and space visitors. He said he even drank more heavily than usual until he could regain some of his composure and come back down to everyday reality." Larry Warren is convinced that Gleason wasn't lying to him. "You could tell that he was very sincere - he took the whole affair very seriously, and I could tell that he wanted to get the matter off his chest, and this was why he was telling me all of this." And as far as Larry Warren was concerned, the Great One's personal testimony only added extra credibility to his own first hand experience with aliens while he was in the service.*

*"Jackie felt just like I do that the government needs to 'come clean,' and tell us all it knows about space visitors. It time they stopped lying to the public and release all the evidence they have. When they do, then we'll all be able to see the same things the late Jackie Gleason did!"*

The obvious question that has been asked about this incident is how Nixon, the most protected man in the world, was able to get away from his secret service detail, get a car, and head off to Homestead with Jackie Gleason. The story seems at first totally impossible.

The Director of the Secret Service under President Clinton, Lewis Merletti, claimed that the idea of a President escaping his secret service agents only happens in the movies. In response to a question by reporter Joan London about the possibility of the President escaping his protection to go out and secretly do something Merletti claimed, " all Hollywood, there's no sneaking out. It has never happened."

Marty Venker, a Secret Service agent who worked with Merletti under Presidents Ford and Carter, however, tells a different story. In his book *Confessions of an Ex-Secret Service Agent*

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tells that not only can the President disappear, but it has happened. Venker stated that in the exact year of the Homestead incident with Gleason, 1973, Nixon had tried to cut his secret service protection. Venker also stated that it was not uncommon for Nixon to try to elude his secret service detail. The agents working on the Nixon Presidential detail had been warned about it.

Venker even recounted one occasion when Nixon was able to ditch his secret service guards while at his California compound:

"Nixon always felt that he was overprotected. He felt that he couldn't pick his nose without some agent taking notes. In 1973, he tried to cut his detail by a third. 'I don't like it and my family doesn't like it.' he said."

"I'd be warned of the lengths Nixon would go to elude us. One time he snuck out of the San Clemente compound. His valet, Manolo Sanchez, drove past the agents in a car with Nixon stretched out in the back seat under a blanket. Nixon just wanted to go to a restaurant. But some reporters saw him and phoned the house. They wanted to know was Nixon was up to. The secret service told them, he's not at any restaurant, he's here at home. But then the agents found he was gone they chased him down."

Nixon was very familiar with Homestead Air Force Base which was only minutes from his Biscayne Bay compound. Every time Nixon flew south to his "Southern White House" Air Force One would land at Homestead. In Nixon's first term as President he traveled to his Key Biscayne compound 55 times and spent 118 nights there.

Gleason, on the other hand, lived in nearby Miami, and owned his own golf course, the Inverrary Country Club nearby in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

There is no proof that Nixon escorted Jackie Gleason to view alien bodies at Homestead, but everything checked out indicates it could very well have happened. It would have been very easy in terms of distance for the Gleason/Nixon alien event to have occurred.

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This author wrote Gleason's third wife when Jackie Gleason died to ask for her assistance in clarifying the story. She wrote back one simple hand-written line, "So sorry we can not be of any help to you."

### **Nixon's Phone Call**

Of all the UFO stories told about President Nixon, perhaps the strangest tale is one told by Michael Hervey in his book "UFOs: The American Scene."

The incident began when a Sherry Eckhardt in Oklahoma City was talking on the phone to her mother. During their conversation a voice saying "This is Norad Tinker UNG Two. Red Alert."

Mrs. Eckhardt called her husband who listened on the phone. He reported that there were conversations between Air Force Bases in Texas, New Mexico, California, and the North American Air Defense Command headquarters in Cheyenne Mountain, Colorado. Figuring someone was playing around, Mr. Eckhardt hung up the phone.

Mrs. Eckhardt phoned her mother again only to find out that the strange conversation was still taking place. The Eckhardt's and the mother reported that the subject of the conversations seemed to be the tracking of two flights of UFOs. One group approaching Houston and the other Los Angeles.

The conversation reported a jet scrambling being ordered, and a reminder that this was not a test, but a Red Alert. The voice on the other end then stated, "Hold the line for the President."

Moments later a voice sounding very much like President Nixon came on the phone and stated "This is probably the most unusual phone call I'll ever make."

The White House denied that the President had been involved stating the President had been in seclusion working on his State of the Union address. The department of Defense and Norad

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also issued denials. Holloman Air Force Base, where the scrambled jets originated from refused to say anything.

The story was left to be told as another unsubstantiated account of a President dealing with the UFO situation.

## **Vice-President Spiro Agnew**

Spiro Agnew served as Vice-president under Richard Nixon. Like Vice-presidents before him one of his tasks was outer space. Agnew served as Chair of the 1969 Space Task Group that was set up to develop long range plans for NASA following the Apollo moon program.

The recommendations Agnew's committee made included building a space station, a space shuttle, a lunar base, and a mission to Mars. When these recommendations were placed in front of Nixon he rejected all except the building of the space shuttle.

It is rare for a President to get publicly involved in UFO's. It is even more rare to find a Vice-President getting publicly involved. President Nixon's Vice-President Spiro Agnew did, however, have a brief but direct involvement in the UFO debate of the early 70's. His views expressed about UFOs were not positive.

Agnew had taken issue with Senator Ted Kennedy who had quoted Dr. James McDonald who had opposed the development of the SST because it would reduce the ozone layer and thus increase the possible cases of skin cancer. Dr. McDonald was also a strong proponent of ending government secrecy on UFO's.

Agnew speaking in front of a convention of printers in New York attacked both Dr. McDonald and UFO's. He objected to Senator Kennedy quoting McDonald's support against the SST as the physicist " had also declared that the electric power failures in New York City were caused by aircraft from outer space, otherwise known as flying saucers."