

Dr. Story Musgrave

Email from Jim Oberg // Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2009 5:00 PM

Subject: Oberg's solution to your STS-80 'UFO' video

Dear Story --

...it was great seeing you in Florida, and the Baykonur leg was fantastic...

Here's a piece of 'old business' -- the kinds of questions that keep coming up about 'dancing dots' on PLB videos on night passes (and at sunrise) over the years. One spectacular sequence was shown to you on a TV program, they ambushed you without providing context such as illumination conditions and even crew activities, and you answered graciously and candidly but were never given the keys to the full explanation (probably their intent from the beginning).

I wrote up a technical assessment of the video (and of a number of other famous 'UFO videos') showing they were nearby sunlit debris looking 'unearthly' (like you'd expect away from Earth). I'm linking to it below, for your use, and I'd hope you could give me your appraisal of how close I came to fully explaining it.

There are hundreds of thousands of kids out there seeing youtube videos of UFOs buzzing space shuttle missions. It's not just the UFO buffs anymore, it's much more widespread and it's impacting the attitudes of a lot of pro-space young people. I want to get more rational, prosaic explanations onto my website to offer a counter to this silliness. Can you help with quotable encouragement and other insights?

Thanks!

From: "Story Musgrave" To: <jameseoberg@

Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2009 8:15 PM

Hello Jim:

What a magnificent dissection and analysis, you made a huge effort. The rational folks will love it, the believers will continue to believe. I shall get a paragraph out for the world as somehow I am at times a centerpoint for the space evidence. My stance of course is that life is on trillions of planets, some of it is advanced enough to be doing star travel but my interpretation of the evidence for visitation is that there is no evidence, that is none by anybody. See ya,

story

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From: [Thomas Jones](#) Sent: Monday, June 22, 2009 12:50 PM

Subject: Re: Oberg's solution to the STS-80 'UFO' video

Dear Jim,

Your essay on explaining the "unexplained" STS-80 particle motions (thought by some video enthusiasts to be UFO sightings) is "dead on." You've taken the time to dissect a beautiful scene from Columbia in 1996 and patiently analyze what we crewmembers took for granted: that ice and exhaust particles falling along with the orbiter sometimes drift across the TV field of view, and then get propelled away by thruster pulses. Nothing exotic, but beautiful to watch from the grand windows of the space shuttle. Story Musgrave and I spent many an orbit watching the stars, the Milky Way, the air glow, meteors burning up below us, lightning, and moon-lit clouds, and were amazed at the spectacle of it all. Truly mesmerizing -- and completely explainable in every regard.