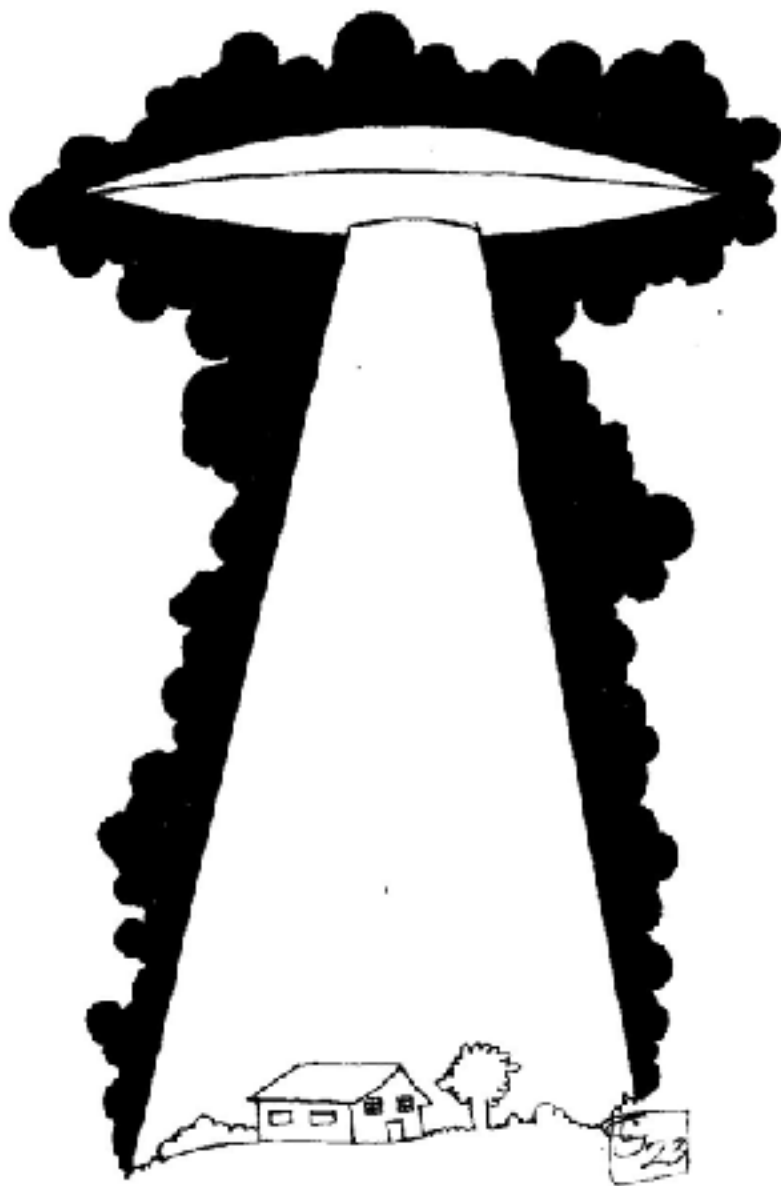


# ***Claims Department 60***



OK, I'm back at it.

I've got a lot of thoughts in my head, so this time, with that AMAZING Espana Sheriff cover and a bunch of other wonderful pieces, so I'm just gonna talk about UFOs.

I've done an entire issue about UFOs in the past, but I've spent a lot of time lately digging in some more and finding that I'm fascinated not only the the idea that we're being visited, but what it is people who encounter what they think of as UFOs encounter both in and out of the encounter itself. While I was digging into that, I found a story that I am truly wrapped-up in and now I'm going to tell you the story.

Other news - Drink Tank took a hiatus, largely because I got busy, and Journey Planet is about to go through our annual 5 issues in two months sprint. I've got my work cut out for me!!!

Still very much feeling Doug Berry's death. His memorial is in a couple of weeks, and man, I'm not ready. A memorial is a place to be all sorts of sad, all at once. I hate celebrations of life, always have. I'm staying the night at the hotel with JP, a few tablets and laptops, and a whole bunch of tissues.

The kids and I have been enjoying collecting sports cards. And TikTok. The two together are a lot of fun!!!



# **Gordon Cooper**

## **Astronaut & Witness**

Gordon Cooper was an astronaut. One of the first. In fact, he was pre-Apollo, which is like being First Fandom, but then not going to the first WorldCon.

He also saw UFOs.

Now, in general, Cooper was a thrill seeker. He was into boat racing, and was even gonna do 24 Hours at Daytona, but NASA told him to knock it off. While all that is cool, the fact that he spoke up about UFOs is way more awesome.

His UFO experiences are a subject of debate among both UFO enthusiasts and skeptics. Cooper reported several encounters with unidentified flying objects during his time in the U.S. Air Force and as a NASA astronaut. These experiences have added a layer of complexity to the broader discussion of UFOs and extraterrestrial phenomena.

They also made him look kinda dumb at the time, which might have kept him off the Moon. Well, that and how he was kinda one of those thrill junkies who wasn't big on studying, which apparently is a big thing for 1960s astronauts.

OK, so one of the incidents involving Gordon Cooper was during his Mercury-Atlas 9 trip in 1963. Cooper reported seeing something that appeared to be pacing his spacecraft. He described it as "a glowing, greenish object...slightly tapered to a point" which he observed for a total of 22 minutes. Sounds like a classic cigar-shaped UFO-brand spaceship, don't it. He was unable to communicate with ground control about the sighting due to the security of the mission. His encounter is considered one of the more significant UFO sightings by an astronaut.

Though it's far from the only one.

This wasn't Cooper's only sighting, though, and the other ones took place before and after his spaceflight career. He claimed to have witnessed a saucer-like object landing on a dry lakebed during his time as a military pilot. He also mentioned multiple other sightings of UFOs during his lifetime.

Gordon Cooper's UFO experiences can be seen a bunch of ways.

Gordo was a respected astronaut with a successful career, and his accounts are generally considered credible. Until we got soft-disclosure, his sightings were the closest we got to an 'official' sighting. His training and discipline as an astronaut make it less likely that he would misidentify something normal. Skeptics argue that even credible individuals can experience optical illusions or misinterpret natural phenomena.

Of course, the kind of concrete evidence that would definitively prove the existence of extraterrestrial craft ain't there, but what would qualify? The absence of photographs or video footage, particularly during his spaceflight, leaves room for skepticism. There's the thought that Cooper's inability to report the UFO sighting during his Mercury-Atlas 9 mission was due to government cover-ups and secrecy regarding UFOs. This leads to questions about whether other astronauts may have had similar experiences but were unable to speak about them. There were a couple of sightings during the Apollo missions, notably Buzz Aldrin, though he walked it back later.

If we accept his sightings as genuine, that should raise questions about the nature of UFOs and the possibility of extraterrestrial life, right? These incidents contribute to ongoing debates about the existence of intelligent life beyond Earth and the potential for contact. It would make sense that an early astronaut would be one of those to get early sightings. Think of a reservoir and the fish. The early fishermen are gonna be the ones that see the waters full of fishies, but as we continue to bug 'em, they're gonna scatter, stay out of sight. Of course, you gotta reverse things in this metaphor...

So, Gordon Cooper's UFO experiences are a subject of debate. His credibility as an astronaut lends weight to his accounts, and his observations during his spaceflight are awesome, but the lack of concrete evidence and the secrecy surrounding some of these incidents mean that they remain a matter of contention. Cooper's experiences have had people talking about UFOs and the search for extraterrestrial intelligence since the moment he started talking.

