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## Symington confirms he saw UFO 10 years ago

By LESLIE KEAN  
Special to the Courier

Ten years after the "Phoenix Lights" UFO incident, former Arizona Gov. Fife Symington, III, now says he saw an unidentified object that night, even though he originally did not say so publicly.

"It was enormous and inexplicable," he said in an exclusive interview from 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 a vast triangular and V-shaped object, gliding slowly and silently across the Arizona sky. Witnesses throughout the state estimated that the eerie, lighted objects were bigger than many football fields, as much as a mile long.

Sen. John McCain, a friend of Symington's whom the former Republican governor describes as "open-minded," acknowledged the Arizona lights at a 2000 press conference.

"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 no one can identify, lies in the fact that countless witnesses reported seeing low, gigantic, technological flying machines that blocked out the stars - not merely lights.

Symington says he saw a large triangular "craft of unknown origin" with lights. "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."

People sometimes confuse the sightings of the objects at around 8:30 that evening with the row of lights videotaped at 10 p.m. and shown repeatedly on television news. These later lights most likely were flares, according to video analysts. People who saw the earlier objects were outside watching the Hale-Bopp Comet, and saw something entirely different.

Symington's latest statement marks a turnaround. He is famous for spoofing the incident at a 1997 news conference, where he introduced a handcuffed member of his staff in an alien costume as the culprit responsible for the Phoenix Lights. Symington now wants to set the record straight.

He explains that Arizona was "on the brink of hysteria" about the UFO sighting at the time, and the frenzy was building.

"I wanted people 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 says the incident remains unsolved, and deserves an official investigation. The U.S. government has never acknowledged that something was in the sky that night.

Former Phoenix city councilwoman Frances Barwood, now living in the Prescott area, was the only elected official to launch a public investigation in 1997, but she said people stonewalled her at every turn. Barwood spoke with more than 700 witnesses. "The government never interviewed even one," she says.

Symington 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 to request an explanation. None of them had answers, and they, too, were "perplexed," he says.

In 2000, the U.S. Department of Defense maintained that it could not find any information about the triangular object, in response to a search ordered by a U.S. District court in Phoenix on behalf of witnesses.

Bolstering Symington's announcement is independent documentation of similar unidentified flying triangles in the early 1990s by the Belgian Air Force and the British Ministry of Defense. Both called the objects genuine unknowns, and not U.S. aircraft.

More information is available at [www.freedomofinfo.org](http://www.freedomofinfo.org).

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The Associated Press/Scott Troyanos --- Arizona Gov. Fife Symington pulls a mask off of aide Jay Heller, dressed up as an alien, during a late afternoon news conference at the state capitol in downtown Phoenix Thursday June 19, 1997. Symington, earlier in the day, said he would order the Arizona Department of Public Safety to look into the mysterious lights seen over Phoenix, but later insisted he was joking.



### Related Links:

- [Leslie Kean's Web site](#)
- [Click here to see video of Symington's interview](#)

### Reader Comments

Posted: Saturday, July 10, 2010

Article comment by: **Cookie Monster**

I saw a similar thing in malmoe,sweden. I saw 7 big red lights flying at about twice as fast as an airplane without making any sound, they didnt fly in any form, they just came from the same direction. I was wondering what it was cuz ive never seen something fly so fast without making a noise, i thought thatit could be a stealth plane but i dont think sweden got one and whats the point with a stealth plane if it glows like that.. And an airplane flies at around 300-400km/h it should have hit the speed of sound so where is the sonic boom? So no matter how much i think about it i cant seem to figure out what it was

Posted: Saturday, May 17, 2008

Article comment by: **Dan**

I believe that the UFO's exists!

Posted: Monday, May 05, 2008

Article comment by: **midi**

These unexplainable lights have been coming to South Moutain for many centuries according to my grandfather, who has lived there his whole life.

Posted: Friday, March 23, 2007

Article comment by: **Mark Nelson**

It's about time somebody pointed out the difference between the sighting that came over downtown Phoenix from the sighting out west of Phoenix. I believe the sighting west of Phoenix to be flares but what flew over my house was not.

Posted: Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Article comment by: **bill ortega**

saw the same thing about the same time in el paso tx you might find something w/ the police dept because I called 911 and the operator claimed she was receiving many calls about some lights in the sky they were very similar to the ones shown tonite on tv my neighbor lady also witnessed these lights we stood outside looking up at the lights together

Posted: Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Article comment by: **kitty courts**

I once saw circular lights over the atachafalya basin roadway in October and it went from one large light to three small lighted orbs, there have been too many sightings of unexplained lights in the sky for it not to be some truth behind it, maybe we are their creation

Posted: Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Article comment by: **Elizabeth Ashe**

I saw something that sounds just like you describe in Wilmington CA. In 2002. Everyone thinks I have surely lost it! But I know what I saw!Do you have any pictures? Elizabeth Ahe

Posted: Sunday, March 18, 2007

Article comment by: **Tom Levine**

This will most definitely help shed new light on the 1997 Phoenix Lights phenomenon. That said, Credibility will be an issue in any analysis of Governor Symington's testimony. He essentially led what many feel is the debunking investigation of the Phoenix lights, back in 1997, so any turnaround on this issue should be scrutinized. He also was embroiled in a 7 year battle with the federal government with felony allegations of extortion and bank fraud. He was convicted on felony charges in 1997, which was later overturned on appeal in 1999, followed by a full presidential pardon in 2001. That said, we are talking about the former Governor of the great state of Arizona.

Posted: Sunday, March 18, 2007

Article comment by: **Steve Hammons**

Two recent articles related to this topic may be of interest: Phoenix Lights incident anniversary sparks 'Eyewitness 2007 - You Are Not Alone' conference Steve Hammons American Chronicle March 13, 2007 <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/viewArticle.asp?articleID=22064> - - - More strange lights and craft over Phoenix and Arizona sighted Steve Hammons American Chronicle February 7, 2007 <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/viewArticle.asp?articleID=20385>

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