

The following editorial is reprinted from JUST CAUSE #17, the quarterly newsletter of Citizens Against UFO Secrecy.

At a time when public awareness of the UFO phenomenon is at a very high level, we note a disturbing situation. Serious controversy has developed in connection with the Gulf Breeze, Florida UFO photo case, a controversy which threatens the integrity of our subject (see recent issues of the MUFON UFO Journal and CUFOS Bulletin for details.)

One may debate the merits or demerits of a sighting, this is what investigation and discussion of casework is all about. What has clearly developed here however is an exercise in character assassination, with MUFON and Gulf Breeze supporters on one side and CUFOS and Gulf Breeze critics on the other side. Unfortunately the verbal muggings going on and their aftermath will hurt us all. UFO study will continue to be perceived as a fragmented, disorganized political boxing ring where those of differing opinions slug it out to see who can blacken the other's eyes.

Our position is that the burden of proof is on the Gulf Breeze supporters to prove their case, something we feel has not been done yet at this writing (8/23). It is entirely reasonable and necessary to raise critical questions and put a case through a ringer of tough scrutiny before it deserves the label "UFO." The questions posed by the Center for UFO Studies are serious, legitimate, and have not been adequately answered by the MUFON side of the fence. We are most dismayed at the removal of Robert Boyd, MUFON's State Director for Alabama and a former

investigator and current critic of Gulf Breeze, from his directorship by MUFON's International Director, Walt Andrus. The reason given, alleged violations of MUFON's Field Manual, will undoubtedly be interpreted instead as retaliation for being vocally against what MUFON has now endorsed as authentic (see MUFON UFO Journal, August 1988). At the same time we've noted statements earlier in the year by Gulf Breeze proponents which were outrageously biased, yet no punishment seems to have been meted out at all.

The consequences of the current debate are clear. If an organization makes a policy decision to support a bizarre incident, or series of incidents, as authentic and then proceeds to attack all criticism, every question MUST be answered, not ignored; otherwise, the organization's support must be considered "lightweight" and without firm scientific foundation. The organization then becomes vulnerable to credibility questions and its hard-earned influence fades quickly into obscurity.

We would like to see total and amiable cooperation between all organizations researching UFOs. It is obvious though that with four decades of experience behind us this will be nearly impossible. We can only hope that UFOs will be explained ultimately, despite the petty bickerings of those who embrace the subject the most.

We support a recent statement by CUFOS, The CUFOS Position on the Gulf Breeze Case [CUFOS.GB] and look for a quick resolution to this very serious problem.

