

# If UFOs are real, why hasn't somebody found one of their ashtrays?

**Anthony J. Marolda**

The UFO era began in 1947 with the first widespread reports of strange objects in the sky. As the number of reports grew, the U.S. Air Force launched an investigation. In fact, between 1947 and 1969, the Air Force has had several projects to study the phenomena, starting with Project Sign and ending with Project Blue Book.

The final report for Project Blue Book had two major conclusions. "There has been no evidence submitted to, or discovered by the Air Force, that sightings categorized as 'unidentified' represent technological developments or principles beyond the range of present-day scientific knowledge." And "there has been no evidence indicating the sightings categorized as 'unidentified' are extraterrestrial vehicles."

In short, Project Blue Book claimed to have solved the UFO mystery once and for all by chalking it up to natural phenomenon. As a result of these public statements, the reporting or studying of UFOs was officially stigmatized. Professional observers such as pilots and radar operators feared to report their sightings. And certainly scientists avoided the topic. This remained the case for more than 50 years.

But on June 25, all of that changed. In a mandated report to Congress, the Pentagon finally, and reluctantly, admitted that UFOs, or Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAPs) as they now call them, are real and that they have no idea what they are, where they are from, or what their intentions are. This has spawned a new, widespread interest among the public, Congress and the scientific community to study the phenomena and determine once and for all what these objects are and

where they are from.

On July 30, 2021, about one month after the Pentagon UAP Report was issued, professor Avi Loeb, a longtime member of the Astronomy Department of Harvard University, announced the formation of the Galileo Project. It is a privately funded research endeavor to search for evidence of extraterrestrial technological artifacts (e.g. an alien ashtray). The idea is to bring systematic, scientific technology and research methods to bear in the investigation of UFOs and other phenomena that may have originated from an extraterrestrial intelligence.

Professor Loeb is joined in the project by a group of scientists and engineers who represent some of the top academic institutions in the world. They include faculty members from Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Berkley and Cambridge in the UK, as well as universities in Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland and Israel. Having such a prestigious group work on the study of UFOs would have been unthinkable before the Pentagon UAP Report.

Loeb believes that the best way to identify the nature of UAPs is to move away from relying on politicians or military personnel. Instead, professional scientists need to employ sophisticated scientific instruments and research methods to examine the phenomena in a completely transparent manner. They will only depend on the data they collect with their own technologies. This has never been done in any past investigation.

Loeb first became interested in this subject because of an astronomical event that occurred a few years ago. It had to do with the visitation of an unusual entity to our solar system.

In October of 2017, an astronomer, Robert Weryk, utilizing the Pan-STARRS

telescope at the Haleakala Observatory in Hawaii, noticed a very strange and unusual object during his observations. He named it "Oumuamua," which, in the Hawaiian language, means "scout" or "messenger."

Weryk and his associates noticed from the object's trajectory that, unlike most asteroids and comets, it originated from interstellar space. In fact, it had a number of other unusual characteristics. For example, the astronomers inferred from its reflection of the sun's light, as the object was spinning along its path, that its shape was more elongated, or flattened, than any known object from our solar system.

Another intriguing observation involved the path it followed around the solar system. The astronomers had calculated the expected trajectory using the sun's gravitational force alone. But when they monitored its course, the object deviated from that path. Such a shift could be caused by the "rocket effect" that would be expected from "cometary" outgassing. But there was no cometary tail observed around Oumuamua, so outgassing could not be the cause. It had to be some other, unusual force.

These observations caused Professor Loeb to propose in a paper that was published in a professional journal of astronomy that the object could be an alien probe. He also discussed it in a later book he wrote on the object, "Extraterrestrial."

He said in his article, "Oumuamua might be a defunct technological debris of equipment (from an alien civilization) that is not operational anymore." He theorized, "One possibility is that the object is a light-sail floating in interstellar space... A light-sail is a sail pushed forward as it reflects light...." In fact, this was

Loeb's explanation for why Oumuamua accelerated out of our solar system without having any cometary outgassing.

The Galileo Project has three main areas of research. First, it will obtain high-resolution, multi-detector, UAP Images in order to discover their nature. The scientists will search for UAPs with a network of mid-sized, high-resolution telescopes and detector arrays with suitable cameras and computer systems, distributed in select locations. As far as we know neither the U.S. Air Force, nor anyone else, has ever undertaken such an investigation before.

The second objective of the Galileo Project will be to use existing astronomical surveys to discover and monitor similar interstellar visitors to our solar system. The scientists also want to work with people like Elon Musk and his SpaceX company to have a launch-ready space mission that can go out to "meet" an interstellar visitor in order to image and study it.

Third, they want to search for potential satellites, one meter in diameter or smaller, that they believe may be in orbit around the Earth and that were placed there by an extraterrestrial civilization in order to monitor Earth. The scientists believe that they can find such objects, if they exist, using land-based telescopes equipped with advanced AI, fast-filtering methods.

This endeavor is exciting since it represents the first attempt by the science community to use our best resources and knowledge to study the UFO phenomena. It is a privately funded, completely transparent effort that will be closely watched by everyone. After more than fifty years, we may finally get some answers.

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