

On 6/10/ 2014, David Orbell wrote:

Ref: "Skip" the question or leave!

Dear David Phillips and Jason Joiner,

Without prejudice

On Sunday 21st of September 2014, I arrived at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole Hotel where I have previously been a resident with the intent to spend the day at the Autographica show. I purchased the early bird admission ticket and additionally two lectures by men credited with orbiting the Moon in 1969 and 1971.

Thomas P. Stafford, renowned Apollo 10 commander would lecture first. The second discourse was by the Command Module pilot of Apollo 15, Alfred M. Worden.

As part of my research into the history of the Apollo project I had pre-written three technical questions and, as is the custom at Autographica, anticipated conversing during the day with the celebrated astronauts. I looked forward to clarifying my queries. Subsequent events dictated that only one question with identical content would be submitted to each astronaut.

At 2.15pm approximately one hour after the completion of the second lecture I was confronted by a Mr Richard Austin of Protegimus Security Ltd., and advised that he had been ordered by the organiser to remove me from the event and hotel. The organisers Mr David Phillips and/or Mr Jason Joiner had informed Mr Austin untruthfully that I had "been rude to an astronaut."

Autographica's Definition of "rudeness".

Alfred Worden's lecture was delivered in a lightweight happy-go-lucky manner. He cited that he didn't really see the necessity to remember the numerical statistics of Apollo as he reserved this for his compatriots such as Thomas Stafford. A major part of his talk was devoted to eulogising the Gemini space program. In contrast he referred to Apollo in an almost dismissive and cursory manner, going so far as to state that "Without Gemini, Apollo would have been a disaster."

Mr Worden also dismissed NASA's involvement in calculating his Earth re-entry trajectory claiming outright credit for the calculation and execution of this manoeuvre. This new witness statement contrasts with Apollo Mission Control at 288 hours, 55 minutes – Apollo flight Journal. http://history.nasa.gov/ap15fj/25day13_splashdown.htm

Mr Worden also stated that Apollo 15 effected passive thermal control by rotating "every two minutes" in the 'Barbecue' flight mode. Following his lecture Mr Worden offered questions and answers in the manner customary at Autographica. I raised my hand and Mr Worden authorised me to state my question. A lady steward walked towards me and placed a microphone in my hand, which turned out to be inactive. "Did you use the skip re-entry technique when re-entering the earth's atmosphere," I inquired politely citing one of my pre-written questions.

(Skip re-entry is a re-entry technique involving one or more successive 'skips' off the atmosphere to achieve greater entry range or to slow the spacecraft before final entry, which helps to dissipate the huge amount of heat that is usually generated on faster descents. Guidance of a skip trajectory can be tricky due to trajectory sensitivity. The Apollo Skip Guidance was engineered, but never utilized in a manned mission. More recent work relies on advances in computing technology to compute a trajectory on board the vehicle) Wikipedia.

Mr Worden paused and then responded in the negative quoting the six and a half degree straight-in approach as recorded in NASA's historic record.

He waited for my response and I concluded my dialogue clarifying that "my question was prompted by a quote from Christopher Kraft in 2009 as follows":

"The heat shield requirements would be too great. So what we did was get them into the atmosphere, skip it out to kill off some of the velocity, and then bring it back in again. That made the total heat pulse on the heat shield of the spacecraft considerably lower."

Christopher Kraft, *Popular Mechanics* "Apollo 11 Mission: No Margin for Error" 30 June 2009.

Immediately a member of the audience lurched forward and loudly issued an instruction to Alfred Worden not to answer my question. Pointing at me he shouted "He is a conspiracy theorist!" Ignoring the ill-informed interjection Mr Worden focused on my eyes, his jocular

manner visually evaporating as he launched into one of the most amazing statements ever delivered by an Apollo astronaut at a public event:

"Chris Craft is a bad guy. If we could feed him to a bomb, we would."

Stewards abruptly ushered Mr Worden from the hall squandering the opportunity for the audiences elucidation as to the cause of Alfred Worden's momentous animosity towards NASA legend, Christopher C. Kraft, Jr.

"Thank you dear." The smiling lady steward uttered as she retrieved the microphone. Her politeness indicating that she and her fellow stewards took no exception to my question and delivery of Christopher Kraft's statement.

Following the first lecture the interloping audience member had asked me to explain the question as first put to Tom Stafford. I allowed him to read my pre-written note and asked him if this assisted in his understanding. He replied reproachfully that he did but "didn't like where this was going!"

Fortuitously at the preceding lecture Tom Stafford raised no objections as I asked the question for the first time that day. Stafford Initially appeared pensive with regard to the skip re-entry procedure, briefly side tracking the issue by detouring into an unrelated subject. Returning him to my question I quoted Christopher Kraft's statement which had the effect of inducing a more subdued inflection in Mr Stafford's voice as he reiterated his use of the conventional re-entry anecdote. Earlier, he had highlighted Apollo 10 as being credited with the all-time re-entry speed record. This has been quoted in the Guinness Book of World records as being 28,547 statute miles per hour.

"Could i visit your desk to discuss the Kraft quote," I requested. Mr Stafford nodded his tacit approval in a gesture lacking conviction.

At approximately 2.15 pm a gentleman approached me and proceeded to remove my wristband entry ticket. Introducing himself as Mr Richard Austin from Protegimus Security Ltd., he explained that the organiser had advised him that I "had been rude to an astronaut" and he had been instructed to remove me from Autographica and the Hilton Metropole

hotel. I stated that this was an untrue proposition and therefore was likely to be an act of slander. I requested to meet the organiser. Mr Austin stated his instructions were to prevent any such encounter.

I informed Mr Austin that articles I had purchased at the show had been left for safe keeping at the stand of a major exhibitor, David Bryant's 'Space Station' and therefore I would need to visit his exhibit. Mr Austin accompanied me and I duly retrieved my belongings prior to being escorted to the venues exit.

As a result of my forced departure any conversation at the respective desks of Mr Stafford or Worden was rendered impossible. The sole exchange of dialogue being that as recorded in the lecture hall.

In view of your allegation that I was 'rude to an astronaut' and your consequential use of what in fact is unfortunately slander to remove me from the venue I would draw your attention to the wording used in my address to Tom Stafford and Alfred Worden. This is highlighted in capital letters in the proceeding paragraphs.

It is manifestly evident that 'rudeness' was non-existent in my short question and recital of Mr Kraft's quotation. I have always displayed a respectful and cordial demeanour when conversing with the many personalities I have encountered at Autographica during the years of my attendances.

I have commented favourably regarding Autographica whilst visiting as a guest at Airbus Defence and Space (formerly Astrium) in Stevenage. Additionally I have discussed technical matters that relate to the history of the Apollo program with members of this organisation. I regularly attend the University of Cambridge Institute of Astronomy public lectures and have had in-depth discussions with senior members of NASA during their visits to these events. It would be illogical and detrimental to my research to effect or display any act of rudeness to guest speakers or any other person.

I am fully aware of the necessity for you to maintain professional and amiable relationships with your contracted guests. Likewise I have always maintained a scrupulous code of conduct in business and professional activities. Unfortunately your defamatory allegations, which circulated at the show have subsequently been repeated on Internet

sites and have caused me great concern as to the effect upon my name and reputation.

I would respectfully request that you re-read the question and quotation (in the proceeding paragraphs) as submitted to the two Apollo astronauts. I trust you may feel obliged to reconsider your misguided actions and offer an unconditional apology for your untrue allegation. It is possible that your behaviour may have been orchestrated by disinformation initiated by the third party audience member unrelated to the astronauts.

Alternatively, should a complaint have originated from either Mr Stafford or Mr Worden I would be happy to clarify with your assistance my question to the offended party. Opportunely my additional two questions could be submitted at the same time.

Mr Phillips and Mr Joiner, I trust it is now obvious to you that if my question, derived from a quotation from Christopher Kraft, defines me as a 'rude conspiracy theorist' deserving censoring then Mr Kraft would likely endure the same censorship and expulsion should he ever visit an Autographica event.

Given the ludicrous nature of this hypothesis I would request that you oblige me with the following;

1. Undertake not to make any further defamatory statements concerning myself.
2. That you offer a correction, retraction and apology for the aforementioned disinformation.

I would be obliged for your response within 14 days. We are left only to marvel at the candour of the astronauts and to ascertain, through research, the origin of Christopher Kraft's apprehension regarding the fragility of the Apollo heat shield.

Yours sincerely,

David Orbell