

# **Is There Life in Outer Space?**

**John Henry Carrozza**

## Is There Life in Outer Space? Case File #L22-B

By John Henry Carrozza

Felix Leibowitz was a weatherman, and a damn good one. He had been reading weather reports on the air at WZZZ in New York since the end of the war, and still insists the Nazis could have won with a really good feta cheese quiche. His co-workers described him as being in his mid to upper sixties with an occasional gust of wind from the northeast. Though he usually put up a cold front, they recounted that he only rained on weekends, and never more than a couple of inches. He received his degree in meteorology from the Svelding Institute for Primitive Studies, and later an honorary Doctorate of Political Epistemology from Yale University, even though he thinks the Cold War was an Eskimo coup.

These credentials obviously rank Mr. Leibowitz as a man of solid character and Ptolemaic credibility, and it is with these fortitudes in hand that the following story was relayed by him to the Princeton U.F.O. Research Institute and therefore examined with high regard.

“I had been working late one evening last August, due to a pile up of charts and barometer readings, which I had to burn in order to find my desk. As I recall, a peculiar eminence on my radar screen led me to predict twenty-seven inches of snow for the following morning. Little did I know that the eminence would soon play an important part in my exciting evening activities.

“Upon leaving the station, via the stairs which lead down to the lobby of the building – or up from the lobby, depending upon which way one is going – I exited through the front door and made my way along the sidewalk to Melderman’s Café and Pop-up Book Store, where I had eaten every evening after work for the past twenty-two years, with the exception of 1972, when had Mr. Melderman experimented by turning the place into a discotheque and musk ox farm, which failed miserably.

“I ordered the usual three eggs (one poached, one fried, and one painted orange and set on fire), a side of bacon (boneless), a fresh coffee (with day-old cream and a tiny umbrella), and a pop-up version of Nietzsche’s *Beyond*

*Good and Evil.* Afterward, I walked home to my little farmhouse on the Upper East Side and continued an ongoing chess game (then in its twelfth week) with Nellie, my pet gorse bush and spiritual guru. Just as she had taken my bishop with a brilliant feign move (she cast her voice to the mailbox, imitating Grover Cleveland, and when I turned to look, she snatched up my black bishop and painted it white), a bright light appeared in the sky and descended to the ground on the other side of the house. At first, I thought it was a meteor, but – as I am, in fact, a meteorologist – I decided learnedly that it could not have been any such thing, as I distinctly heard it to be humming “Irresistible You,” which meteors never do, except during Chanukah.

“I excused myself from the game in order to have a look around the back, but not before moving my pawn to a spot just behind the water trough, where I planned to use it for a surprise attack on Nellie’s queen several moves hence.

“When I arrived in the backyard, I noticed nothing unusual, save for a dimly lit hot dog stand adjacent to the patio, which I would not have given another moment’s notice were it not for a sign that read “Hot Dogs: Five Cents,” which seemed too good to be true. I approached the stand with curiosity.

“Behind the counter stood a figure about five-and-a-half feet tall, wearing a red and white-striped suit and a paper hat. He looked rather like my cousin Bernie, except for his green, scaly skin, two dozen eyes, and tentacles.

“I ordered a hot dog with extra mustard, and he insisted that I have relish with that. I said no, that I was allergic to relish, as it caused me to break out in daffodils and call my mother collect. But he went on, saying that this was no ordinary relish, and in fact wasn’t relish at all, but borscht with food coloring. I gave in, but, searching my pockets, could not find a nickel, and he was reluctant to break a five. Finally we reached a deal upon a Neil Sadaka record I had velcroed inside my jacket and a half acre outside of Buffalo, and I took a bite of the frank.

“The last thing I remember was placing a wager on the Syracuse/Boston College game, and when I woke up I was strapped to a table in a strange room, surrounded by alien creatures and U.S. senators, mostly Republicans. I had all kinds of electrodes taped to my forehead, and they turned the table into a position that would have made Trendlenberg vomit, then began flashing pairs of images before me and asking which would be seated quicker at Sardi’s. I had no trouble between Gerald ford and a bundle of parsley (a trick question – obviously, they would be seated together), but when they showed me Mussolini and my aunt Hildegarde, I went into convulsions.

“Afterwards, they took me dancing and to a fancy dinner at some Italian restaurant in Cleveland and made me pick up the tab. Then, they left me in an abandoned warehouse with an eggplant named Louie, and for six months I could only sit on a mailbox on the corner of Dabney and 23<sup>rd</sup> and recite Anna Karenina to an imaginary goldfish in Latin.”

After reviewing the story as recalled by Mr. Leibowitz with painstaking scrutiny, the Committee for Extraterrestrial Affairs, with the aid of a judge and the defendant’s aunt, Hildegarde Fuhrerbottle, had Mr. Leibowitz committed to the Music City Mental Institution in Lespatuk, India.

Although a small investigation ensued, the case was closed after police arrested a vendor in Minneapolis for selling hot dogs with borscht, and who confessed after listening to seventy-five hours of country music that he was, in fact, a Republican.