

Some Notorious 'Anomalous' Shuttle Events

By Jim Oberg

Special to *space.com*

posted: 07:34 pm ET

13 December 1999

http://www.space.com/sciencefiction/phenomena/shuttle_ufos_examples_991213.html

For prominent examples of the types of normal "anomalous" space images that NASA space shuttles have recorded, interested observers may wish to familiarize themselves with the video taken by the following shuttle missions.

STS 41-D (1984) has views of the meter-long "space icicle" that had to be knocked loose from the shuttle's water dump port. The footage also shows a deployed payload firing its engine, a bright glare that crosses from the earth background into space. Because of a common video focusing problem, even the stars appear as tiny donuts, though the rocket flies through the easily-recognizable constellation Orion.

STS 39 (1991) has terrific views of thrusters firing as observed from a deployed platform with its own television camera. Other video shows the orbital maneuvering engine starting and stopping.

STS 48 (1991) has good views of snowflakes spraying out of a leaking nozzle, with a few actual bouncing back and drifting around the camera.

STS 63 (1995) was the first rendezvous with the Mir space station, almost cancelled due to a leaky thruster that forms a space blizzard on camera. There's another view with Mir in the distance just at sunrise when a storm of nearby particles appear, including some which "pop up" against a star background right in the middle of the screen as they emerge from the shuttle's shadow. Fast-moving particles leave a streak because of the latency of the camera optics. NASA erroneously called these streaks "meteors."

STS 75 (1996) has great views of the broken tether that led to the loss of a satellite, but the weirdest sequence shows a cloud of ice crystals floating ahead of and below the shuttle in the dark, flickering randomly in the moonlight.