

2832 St. George Street, Apt. 6
Los Angeles, California 90027
June 10, 1974

Mr. Victor Clarke, Jr.
Jet Propulsion Laboratory
California Institute of Technology
4800 Oak Grove Drive
Pasadena, California 91103

Dear Mr. Clarke:

I have before me a paper on the historical development of gravity assisted interplanetary trajectories written by Professor Norris Hetherington of the University of Kansas. On page 7 of this paper, Hetherington states that you assigned me the task of finding a mathematical solution to round trip and multiplanet trajectories, and he cites you as the source of this information. Since you know that you never assigned me to work on round trip trajectories in 1961 (much less multiplanet trajectories), I have decided to reveal the true circumstances behind this development, including the substance of many meetings we had over the years that, until now, I had been willing to forget. I have decided to take this course of action to discourage the publication of this paper, which contains gross distortions of truth and to give you the option to stop the propagation of these distortions. (On page 88 of the March 1971 issue of Spaceflight, published by the British Interplanetary Society, there is an article by P. J. Parker concerning grand tour missions. Based upon information he acknowledges in the article as being supplied by JPL, he writes: "Both missions would use the application and principle of gravity assisted trajectories for spaceflight as proposed by Victor C. Clarke, Jr.")

I want to impress upon you the seriousness with which I view the situation and that I would regard the publication of Hetherington's paper--or any other historical paper containing similar basic untruths traceable to you--as a point of no return. It would give me no alternative but to take the issue into court in the form of a heavy law suit. I have, in fact, already consulted a lawyer. The action would involve possibly the AIAA and definitely JPL and you personally.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Minovitch

MAM:lmt
Enclosures
cc:

William Pickering
C. R. Gates
Walker E. Giberson
Harold J. Gordon
Norriss Hetherington
William Melbourne
Tom Hamilton
James Dunne

Harry Lass
William Sjogren
R. B. Phillips
G. L. Wenger
Roul Roth
Rhoads Stephenson
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Elliott Cutting
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