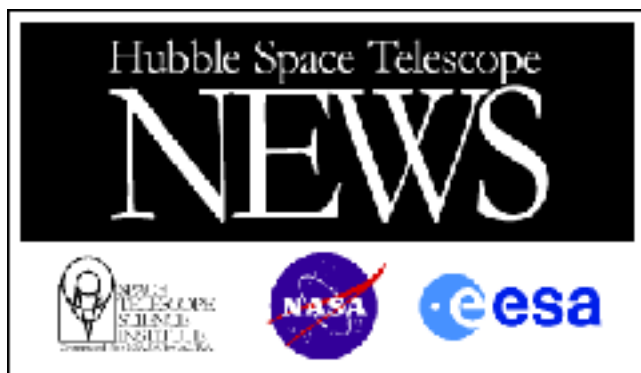


Galaxy NGC 1316
Hubble Space Telescope • WFPC2

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Hubble Finds More Evidence of Galactic Cannibalism

This beautiful, eerie silhouette of dark dust clouds against the glowing nucleus of the elliptical galaxy NGC 1316 may represent the aftermath of a 100 million year old cosmic collision between the elliptical and a smaller companion galaxy.

A number of faint objects are scattered across the image, including both reddish galaxies in the distant background and bluer, point-like star clusters orbiting NGC 1316. These clusters, relatively loosely-knit swarms containing a few thousand stars each, are smaller and fainter than those found in other elliptical galaxies. These clusters are too old to have been created in the collision whose dusty debris we see today, and too young to have been torn apart by galactic tidal forces. The clusters may have been born in the course of a still earlier collision, or belonged to the galaxy which most recently fell victim to NGC 1316.

The picture was taken in April of 1996 with the Wide Field Planetary Camera 2. The color rendition was constructed using separate images taken in blue and red light. NGC 1316 is located 53 million light-years away in the constellation Fornax. The field of view shown is about 12,000 light-years across.

Credit: Carl Grillmair (California Institute of Technology) and NASA

Editor's Note - Image files, photo caption and press release text are available on-line at:
<http://opposite.stsci.edu/pubinfo/pr/1999/06>

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