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I WOULD SWEAR ON THE BIBLE AN  
TAKE A LIE DETECTOR TEST.

YOURS TRULY  
MR. JERRY BETTERS

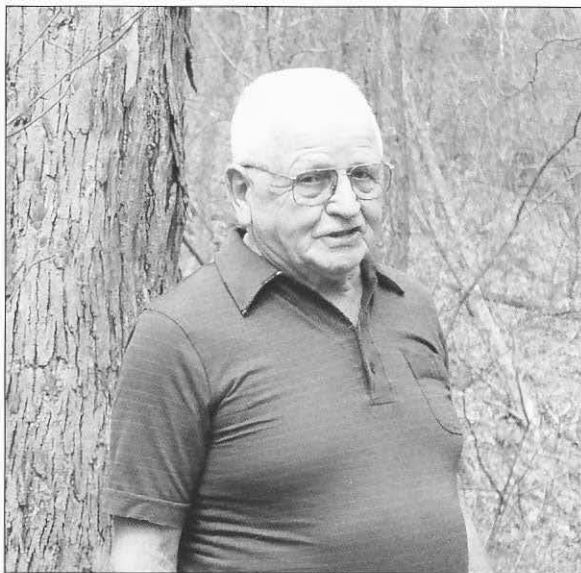
*Jerry Better*

Material Seal  
Kermit D. Buckner, Notary Public  
Pottsville, Pennsylvania County  
My Commission Expires Nov. 11, 2008  
Pottsville, Pennsylvania Association of Notaries

Pch. PA. 15224 Attachment



Artist's conception (above) by Charles Hanna of the object that crashed near Kecksburg, Pennsylvania, December 9, 1965. Statement of jazz musician Jerry Better (left), who was ordered at gunpoint to leave the area after he and his friends saw a large acorn-shaped object on the back of an Army flatbed truck the night of the alleged UFO crash.



Nearby resident Bill Bulebush saw the object descend and located it before the military arrived.



John Podesta, White House chief of staff under President Clinton, backs the Kecksburg initiative.

## FORTY YEARS OF SECRECY: NASA, THE MILITARY, AND THE 1965 KECKSBURG CRASH

**INTERNATIONAL  
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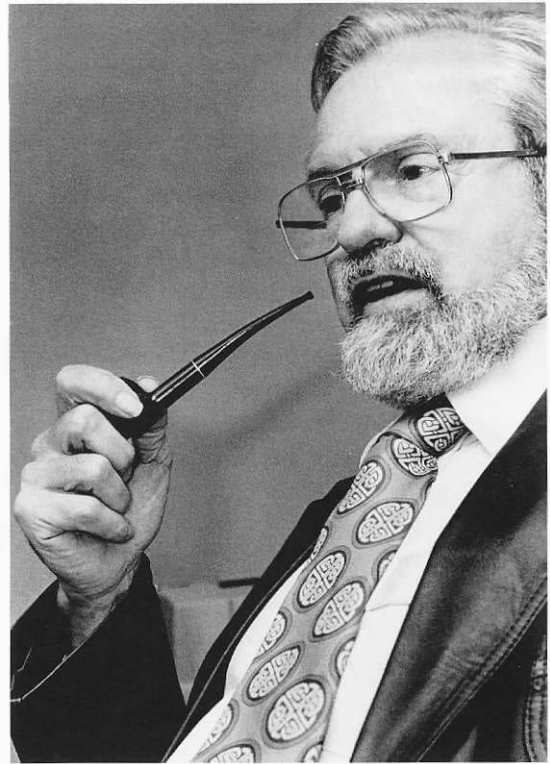
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# FORTY YEARS OF SECRECY: NASA, THE MILITARY, AND THE 1965 KECKSBURG CRASH

BY LESLIE KEAN

This December marks the 40th anniversary of one of the most thoroughly researched and intriguing crash/retrieval cases in America. Despite a top-notch investigation spanning more than three decades and world-wide attention in recent years from a new campaign probing the case, the Kecksburg, Pennsylvania, UFO crash of 1965 remains unsolved, due mainly to the stubborn silence of American government agencies.

Unlike the Roswell crash, this case has been relatively uncontaminated by commercialism and the popular media. It does not feature bodies found at the scene; it involves an atypical object, suggesting a range of explanations; and it includes many living witnesses. The central witnesses remain unknown to most people interested in UFOs, and none of them have benefited from coming forward. Also in contrast to the Roswell case, the dramatic military response to the crash was reported by television, radio, and newspapers as it developed, and was witnessed by hundreds of people who descended on the tiny town from miles around. Unfortunately, no high-level Army, Air Force, or intelligence personnel involved with the Kecksburg retrieval have come forward in any way that can be of use to the case, as they did for the Roswell case many years after it occurred.

The sheer volume of witness and local news reports show that on December 9, 1965, an object landed near the village of Kecksburg, Pennsylvania, about 40 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, after being observed as a fireball in the sky across several U.S. states and Canada. Some Pennsylvania residents saw the object moving slowly in the sky; others saw smoke and brilliant bluish-white lights like an electric arc when it first crashed. Five witnesses eventually provided independent, corroborated descriptions of the object and its exact location in the woods. Dozens of others—including



*Leslie Kean is an investigative journalist who has published pieces related to the UFO subject for the Boston Globe and the Providence Journal, and through wide distribution by the New York Times and Knight Ridder-Tribune wire services.*



*Headlines from the  
Greensburg Tribune-Review,  
December 10, 1965.*

firefighters, newspaper reporters, and a radio news director at radio station WHJB (who was on the scene taping interviews)—describe the large military and police presence at the impact site and the cordoning off of the area. Observers provided detailed descriptions of an object being transported out on a flatbed truck. Many witnesses have signed statements for investigator Stan Gordon of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, who has been working on the case for over three decades. (See his website at [www.stangordon.com](http://www.stangordon.com).)

To this day, no one knows what triggered the interest of the U.S. military, or why the Army was so intent on hiding the object that it threatened civilians with weapons. The subsequent Air Force denial that anything at all came down is even more perplexing, and has led to heated speculation. In the ensuing 40 years, members of the once tightly knit community in rural Pennsylvania have been torn apart by the continuing unanswered questions about what happened. As American citizens, they have not been granted the information due them by law under the Freedom of Information Act. This case addresses issues that go beyond the question of determining the origin of the strange object that—as indicated by so many accounts—was recovered by our government that night.

However, two exciting breakthroughs occurred in 2003 that have moved the investigation forward many steps: a scientist's discovery of physical evidence showing that something crashed through the trees in 1965 at the location designated by witnesses; and the elimination of the possibility that the object was a Russian satellite or any man-made object at all, according to the world's leading authority on space systems. These two developments demolish the two preferred explanations used by the skeptics—that the object was either a meteor (the Air Force explanation) or a Russian satellite—and heighten the mystery by further reducing



*The full CFI team, including Larry Landsman (far left), Lee Helfrich (second from left), and Stan Gordon (far right), at a Washington, D.C., press conference in October 2003.*

possible conventional explanations.

These breakthroughs occurred after the Sci Fi Channel launched its historic "UFO Advocacy Initiative" in which, for a few years, unprecedented resources were applied to the investigation of a UFO case. As an independent journalist, I was asked by Larry Landsman, Sci Fi's director of special projects, to spearhead an effort seeking new government records on a well-documented American UFO case that included the retrieval of physical evidence. The Kecksburg incident satisfied these and other criteria used to select a case, and the Washington law firm Lobel, Novins & Lamont came on board to assist with FOIA appeals and lawsuits, if they should become necessary. "This was, and still is, a freedom of information story," says Landsman. "Many witnesses say something occurred that night, and so we provided our support to those investigating."

In addition, a private investigator who formerly worked for the congressional General Accounting Office and an independent archival research firm joined the team, expanding the scope of the investigation beyond FOIA. Working with the Washington public relations firm PodestaMattoon, the core group undertaking this project called itself the Coalition for Freedom of Information (CFI), for which I was appointed director of investigations. See our website at [www.freedomofinfo.org](http://www.freedomofinfo.org).

The CFI Kecksburg initiative won the support of Washington insider John Podesta, President Clinton's former chief of staff and member of the 1997 Moynihan Commission on Protecting and Reducing Government Secrecy, who at the time was a law professor at Georgetown University and now heads the Center for American Progress. Podesta was instrumental in the declassification of 800 million pages of documents during the Clinton administration and is an outspoken critic of unnecessary government secrecy. "This initiative will help keep the pressure on," he explained.

"I think it's time to open the books on questions that have remained in the dark, on the question of government investigations of UFOs," Podesta told the media at CFI's first press conference launching the Kecksburg initiative in October 2002. "It's time to find out what the truth really is that's out there. We ought to do it because it's right; we

ought to do it because the American people quite frankly can handle the truth; and we ought to do it because it's the law."

"Clinton Aide Slams Pentagon's UFO Secrecy" was the headline on the CNN story that day. "The new initiative is not setting out to prove the existence of aliens. Rather the group wants to legitimize the scientific investigation of unexplained aerial phenomena," CNN reported. "Podesta was one of numerous political and media heavyweights on hand in Washington, D.C., to announce a new group to gain access to secret government records about UFOs."

## "UFO FALLS NEAR KECKSBURG"

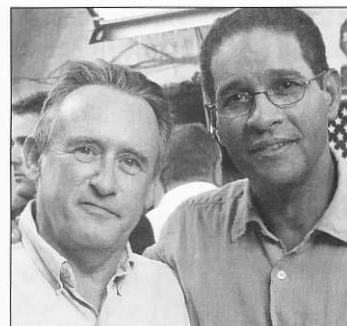
The CFI campaign could not have proceeded without the solid base of meticulous work on the Kecksburg case performed by researcher Stan Gordon for close to 40 years.

Gordon's curiosity was piqued when, as a teenager in nearby Greensburg, he spent the evening of December 9, 1965, glued to the radio and television as events unfolded. He heard reports that something crashed in the woods near the tiny village of Kecksburg at approximately 4:45 p.m. that evening, after being seen over a number of other states and Canada. "Many persons in the Greensburg area saw the phenomena. State police say there is a fire in the Kecksburg area. They are investigating," said the 9 o'clock news on KDKA radio in Pittsburgh.

On his black-and-white TV, Gordon watched the local news and occasional special bulletins that broke into regular programming to state that the military had arrived on the scene and that the area was cordoned off. A search was underway to locate the object.

"Unidentified Flying Object Falls near Kecksburg, Army Ropes off Area" exclaimed the front-page headline on the *Greensburg Tribune-Review* the next morning. The article said that "the area where the object landed was immediately sealed off on the order of U.S. Army and State Police officials, reportedly in anticipation of a close inspection of whatever may have fallen." U.S. Army engineers and scientists were brought in. "Excitement caused by the apparent landing produced a massive traffic jam," as hundreds drove to the site from surrounding areas.

*Tribune-Review* reporter Robert Gatty interviewed an eight-year-old boy who saw the object fall into the woods, and his mother, Mrs. Arnold Kalp, who saw blue smoke rising and



*Tribune-Review reporter Robert Gatty (left) with news anchor Bryant Gumbel, host of the Sci Fi Channel documentary on Kecksburg.*

alerted the authorities. Gatty's December 10 story, headlined "Unidentified Flying Object Report Touches off Probe near Kecksburg," recounts that he was denied access to the site, by order of the Army.

Gatty's stories were quickly superseded by reports in numerous late-edition papers with the headlines "Searchers Fail to Find Object" and "Fireball a Meteor, Astronomer Explains." Reports said that 25 state policemen and members of Army and Air Force searched a 75-acre area until 2 a.m. and found nothing. The Air Force explained the incident as "a meteor or meteors," adding that "there has been no evidence of space debris . . . and all aircraft and missiles have been accounted for."

In a recent interview, Gatty said that his editor sent him out that night to cover "the story of the century," and that he is convinced something did indeed come down in the Kecksburg woods. "The Army appeared to be protecting something," he wrote in a 2003 statement for a CFI press conference. "At this point in time, nearly 40 years later, what possibly could be the reason for continuing this cover-up?"



*Mabel Mazza*

Reporter John Murphy, news director for local radio station WHJB, made it down to the site before the authorities arrived, in response to a flood of calls from alarmed citizens to the station. His former wife Bonnie Mislagle (Murphy died in 1969) and WHJB office manager Mabel Mazza both later reported that Murphy had photographed the object.

"He got down there before the police, before any of the armed forces were there," said Mislagle. "He called me and told me he'd gotten pictures of it, but some of the film had been confiscated. But he'd gotten one roll through."

Mazza says she saw one picture. "It was very dark and it was with a lot of trees around and everything. And I don't know how far away from the site he was. But I did see a picture of a sort of a cone-like thing. It's the only time I ever saw it," she said.

In the weeks that followed, Murphy became obsessed with the case and developed a radio documentary called "Object in the Woods" that included interviews conducted that night. One day, he received an unexpected visit from authorities in plain clothes. WHJB employee Linda Foschia recalls that some of Murphy's tapes were confiscated; no one knows what happened to the photographs. A week after this visit, which left him at first very agitated and then uncharacteristically despondent and depressed, Murphy aired a censored version of the original documentary. Some interviewees had requested he remove them from the broadcast due to fears of getting in trouble with the police and the Army. Murphy explained on the air. (The sudden fear of these previously forthcoming sources,

initially excited by the mysterious event as was Murphy, raises the possibility that they too were visited by intimidating officials.)

After airing the documentary, Murphy clammed up and would no longer talk about what had initially been the story of his lifetime, according to his wife. Yet Murphy had no idea how important his special documentary report would become to investigators years later, providing an intriguing, first-hand window into the drama as it unfolded. The resolute reporter did everything he possibly could to probe and document the story. In the beginning of the piece, for example, he provides the crucial fact that "the control tower at the Greater Pittsburgh Airport definitely confirmed the fact that there was an object in the sky at that time, 13 minutes before 5."

"Object in the Woods" chronicles Murphy's movements and encounters throughout the evening in great detail. At 8:30 p.m., after arriving on the scene at Kecksburg, he saw State Police Fire Marshal Carl Metz and another investigator go into the woods with a Geiger counter and flashlight, returning up the hill 16 minutes later. While Metz headed for his car, Murphy stopped him where no one else could hear and asked if he had found anything. "He looked puzzled for a second and said, I'm not sure," Murphy says in the broadcast. Murphy then decided to ask the question in a different way. "After you make your report to the captain, do you think you or the captain, perhaps, may have something to tell me? And he [Metz] said, 'You better get your information from the Army.'" Sounding a bit stunned by this statement, Murphy makes the point that it was "very unusual" for the fire marshal, examining a fire "in almost a clear blue sky," to turn him over to the United States Army, indicating that something there in the woods "showed some significance of military value."

A little later, at the Greensburg State Police barracks, Murphy reports that he saw members of the army and the air force there in uniform, along with Carl Metz. The captain told him that he had an official statement for the record: the state police had conducted a thorough search and "there was nothing whatsoever in the woods." Murphy called this in to WHJB headquarters for broadcast during the station's ongoing news coverage of unfolding events. When Metz and others then got ready to leave the barracks and return to the wooded area a second time, Metz told Murphy that he could go with the group to the location.

While Murphy waited in his car to follow the caravan of vehicles heading to Kecksburg, a state police officer came from the barracks and approached him. "We got something out there," the officer told the radio news director, only moments after the release of the official statement to the contrary. "It's blue and it's pulsating and there's a light on it," he said, adding that the military wanted to go see this pulsating light. Murphy notes that this report matched earlier eyewitness descriptions of blue lights emanating from the woods right after the object landed and that, in fact, several people said they saw a light. "I myself did not see any

Stan Gordon



*Photos of damaged trees near the crash location which were used by scientists in 2003 to locate the site and conduct a forensic investigation revealing new, physical evidence.*

particular light that I could have definitely said was the light everybody was referring to," he adds.

When they finally arrived back at the scene of the crash, Metz firmly forbade Murphy to accompany them into the woods, and, despite Murphy's pleading for permission based on his earlier invitation, Metz offered no explanation for the sudden change.

## THE WITNESSES

During the following decades, Stan Gordon, interviewing countless people with varying levels of involvement, became increasingly unable to accept the official explanation that what was seen in the sky was a meteor, and that nothing at all came down. For example, Pennsylvania residents saw the object moving slowly and making turns, as if under intelligent control. Randy Overly told Gordon that the object passed about 200 feet over his head and stayed level, maintaining the same height the whole time, moving about as fast as a single-engine plane. The acorn-shaped, brownish object made a hissing sound as it spewed greenish fire from its rear, which terrified the young Overly and his friend.

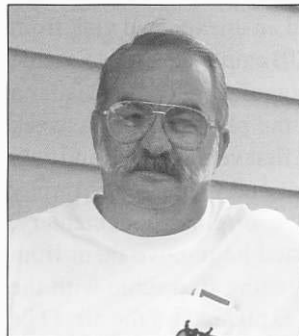
Bill Bulebush said he was working on his car in nearby Mammoth when he saw the object hesitate and make a turn before descending into the woods. He and other observers saw the object go down slowly, as if controlled.

Hundreds of people, along with the media, witnessed different aspects of the extensive military and state police presence in the area that night. Fireman Bob Bitner saw a small convoy of military trucks going into the ravine and coming out later, and was refused permission to go into the woods himself. From his nearby upstairs bedroom window,

young John Hays watched a spectacle of flashlights, cars, and trucks going into the woods while military officials gathered in his living room downstairs, talking in small groups and using his parents' telephone. These are just a few of the many independent reports Gordon acquired following the event, all in great detail.

Later that night, witnesses saw an object transported out of the area at great speed on the back of a military flatbed tractor-trailer truck. "Not only did we see the flatbed going up empty, we saw the flatbed coming down—loaded," reports Mike Slater, who said that Army officials asked him to provide false directions to people looking for the crash site. Sometimes these officials pointed guns at civilians when they were too close to the barricades.

Jazz musician Jerry Betters said he was harshly ordered at gunpoint to leave the area after he and his friends caught a glimpse of an acorn-shaped object, "a little bigger than a Volkswagen," on the back of an Army flatbed truck as it struggled up through a field. For some reason, it was not fully covered. "I could see this hieroglyphic stuff all on the back," Betters said. "I would swear on the Bible and take a lie detector test," he wrote in a notarized statement with a drawing, for one of CFI's FOIA requests to the Army.



*James Romansky*



*Bob Bitner*

Firefighter James Romansky saw the flatbed truck speeding down the hill in a military convoy, past the Kecksburg firehouse. “I and many others could see the object and its shape under the tarpaulin. There is no meteorite in the world that looks like that,” Romansky said in a recent interview.

Romansky, one of the very first to see the object on the ground before the military arrived, has been a crucial witness, providing a detailed description from a few feet away. He said he saw a bronze-colored, acorn-shaped object with no windows, doors, or seams, partially buried in a gully. It was about 10–12 feet tall, large enough for a man to stand up in, and 8–12 feet in diameter. Romansky said he saw strange symbols that looked like Egyptian hieroglyphics on the back, or “bumper area” of the acorn. He stayed on the scene with a group of firemen until ordered to leave by two men in trench coats followed by uniformed military.

In August 1987, Romansky was the first witness to take Gordon to the impact site, which turned out to be the same area where Gordon had previously photographed damaged trees. Six months later, John Hayes escorted Gordon to the same location, where as a boy he had seen the disturbed area around the wash the morning after the object was removed. In 1988, Gordon received a tip that Bulebush had also approached the object at close range. After providing Gordon with a detailed description, Bulebush went into the woods to find the location from a different entry point than that used by Romansky. He found a particular tree that he remembered, and pointed to the exact same spot in the streambed that Romansky and Hayes had previously identified.

The most extraordinary part of this story is that Romansky, Hayes, and Bulebush independently took Gordon to the same location, without having ever discussed the case among themselves, and each had no idea what the other had said to Gordon. The descriptions of the object provided by Romansky and Bulebush (who had never even met at the time) were extremely similar. Since then, three additional people have reported to Gordon that they too saw the object before it was removed from the ground, although they are not willing to go public.

State Police Fire Marshal Carl Metz, whom John Murphy witnessed going into the wooded impact area twice that evening, apparently saw something extraordinary but kept the information close to his chest until his death in 1989. Former Pennsylvania State Trooper Bob Koveleskie, who was working in eastern Pennsylvania that night, says that he asked Metz shortly after the event what had happened, and Metz replied that he was sworn to secrecy by the Army and couldn’t discuss it. Years later, former Greensburg Police Dispatcher Howard Burns reported in a videotaped interview with Gordon that Metz took part in a group discussion at the Greensburg police station in the early 1980s. Burns says that Metz told the group that he was one of the first at the Kecksburg impact area and initially thought he had come upon a crashed aircraft due to the tree damage. According to Burns, Metz reported that when he saw the object close up,

“it was like no object he had ever seen before” and he was ordered not to talk about it. Burns says Metz wasn’t revealing everything he knew by keeping the details secret. He wouldn’t say what it was—only that it was like nothing he had ever seen before. Both Koveleskie and Burns told Gordon on tape that Metz was highly respected, honest and had great integrity, and that they would believe anything he said.

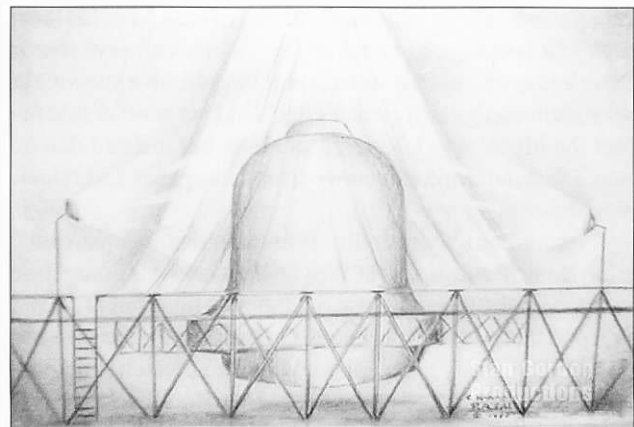
In April 2005, Gordon interviewed another retired police officer with an extensive and distinguished law enforcement background who verified that he also spoke to Metz, a good friend at the time, within a day or two of the incident. Metz told him that he had seen the object in the woods.

“Multitudes of people had some association with this incident,” says Gordon. “Most do not accept the government’s explanation.” If this were simply a meteor, then these witnesses to the acorn-shaped object—in the sky, on the ground, and on the flatbed truck—are either lying or suffering from some kind of mass hallucination. Neither possibility seems plausible.

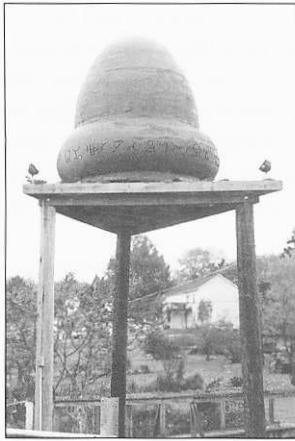
In the 1980s, investigators obtained copies of the Air Force Project Blue Book file on the case. A handwritten memo stated that a “three man team” was sent out from Oakdale, Pennsylvania, “to investigate and pick up an object that started a fire.” The files say that members of the 662nd Radar Squadron searched until 2 a.m. and *found nothing*.

Maxwell Air Force Base sent CFI the December 1965 Historical Record of the 662nd Radar Squadron based in Oakdale—the same document released to Stan Gordon years earlier—that provided the relevant names. The squadron had a liaison officer with Project Blue Book, and it was from the Oakdale base, about 50 miles from Kecksburg, that the “three man team” was sent to search for the object. One officer, James Cashman, later called Blue Book headquarters from Oakdale to report that nothing was found, according to the Blue Book files, although he was not one of those sent out on the search.

Our private investigator was able to locate Cashman



*Sketch by Charles Hanna of the Kecksburg object seen in a building at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, based on an eyewitness account.*



*A model of the object that sits behind the Kecksburg Volunteer Fire Department, made for the Unsolved Mysteries TV series in 1990. According to James Romansky, the back, or bumper end (bottom of the acorn), is too wide in proportion to the rest.*

and three other key personnel from the 662nd, and Gordon interviewed a fifth in 1991. Only one of these, a lieutenant whom I will not name to respect his privacy, said he actually went out to search for the object that night. This officer said he did not observe any Army presence in the area, any excess civilian activity, or the large spotlights in the woods observed by witnesses and reporter John Murphy. This seems impossible if he was anywhere near the correct location and directly contradicts press reports about the large military presence and civilian crowds. He said he and three other members of the 662nd searched the woods with flashlights and found nothing.

It is revealing that puzzling discrepancies exist among key points of the various accounts, as well as between aspects of the statements of these officers and reports from both the media and Project Blue Book. For example, the lieutenant who searched the woods said there were four in his search team; another officer told us that he had driven with the team to a nearby barrack while two from Oakdale conducted the search with a state trooper. (This could have been the “three man team” referred to by Blue Book, although Blue Book said that the three were all from Oakdale.) Another officer told me there was no search at all, and that the reports coming in to the Oakdale base concerned only an object in the sky and not an object on the ground. He remembers very well the high volume of calls from the local area and speaking to some of the callers, and says that if there had been a search, he definitely would have known. He was adamant that there wasn’t one. And yet another told me that the object was a Russian satellite, but insisted that he made that determination only from newspaper and television reports.

According to Project Blue Book records, Cashman called Blue Book headquarters at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base twice from the Oakdale base, including a final call at 2 a.m., to report that nothing was found. Oddly, Cashman says he has no memory of any event, phone calls, or heightened activity at that time. He stated that he was the Blue Book liaison officer (as stated in the Blue Book files), as opposed to the lieutenant who told me *he* was the Blue Book officer.

We are not certain whether these contradictory and

sometimes confusing reports are simply a question of jumbled memories after all these years, or if other factors are at play. Is it possible that this small group was taken to a different location from the one that was cordoned off by the Army, and that they searched the wrong site? If this did occur, was the state trooper who took the Air Force team to the wrong site instructed by someone to do so? If so, the officers are honestly reporting that nothing was found. Would it therefore have been possible—since Project Blue Book did not have access to cases higher than a secret clearance—that Blue Book actually never knew about an object retrieved from another location by the Army?

On the other hand, Murphy reports seeing what appeared to be members of the 662nd Radar Squadron at the edge of the woods after leaving the police barracks where he had first encountered them. If the lieutenant was one of these men, he could not possibly have missed the surrounding military and civilian activity. Were these officers perhaps sworn not to reveal what happened for national security reasons, and thus their cover stories have differences? We don’t know, and we won’t know until the government releases the records.

After the Air Force search for the object was completed, the lieutenant who searched prepared a handwritten investigation report as required by Air Force regulations, which was then typewritten by an administrative specialist (the same person who told me he believed the object was a Russian satellite, oddly enough). For reasons unknown, this report, which documented the unsuccessful search for the object, was not included with the Blue Book case files on the Kecksburg incident at the National Archives. “It was an inconclusive report that it could have been a meteorite,” the former lieutenant, now 62, told me in a 2003 telephone interview. He provided CFI’s attorney with a signed affidavit regarding his writing and filing of this report, and we submitted the affidavit to the Air Force requesting a copy of this crucial document. “Because the investigation was under Project Blue Book, a copy of my report would have eventually been forwarded to the Project Blue Book headquarters, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base,” he wrote in the affidavit. So far, no response has been forthcoming to this request.

## WHAT WAS—OR WASN’T—THE OBJECT?

“Based on the accounts of the many eyewitnesses whom I have interviewed, I am convinced that an object did fall from the sky and apparently was removed by the military,” said Stan Gordon. “Many have asked me what I believe the object was, and my reply still is ‘I don’t know.’ As I have stated in the past, the most likely possibilities are (1) a highly advanced man-made space probe with some controlled-reentry capability, (2) a secret military or government experiment, (3) an extraterrestrial spacecraft.”

In looking at item (1) above, many have proposed that the object may have been some kind of Soviet satellite or debris that was secretly hidden away during the cold war.



The leading contender, argued mainly by space consultant James Oberg, has been Cosmos 96, a failed Russian Venera probe that the U.S. Space Command reported reentered the earth's atmosphere over Canada at 3:18 a.m. the same day—far from Kecksburg and more than 13 hours earlier.

In 2003, I conducted a series of decisive interviews exploring this question with Nicholas L. Johnson, chief scientist for orbital debris at the NASA Johnson Space Center, who is recognized internationally as the leading authority on orbital debris and foreign space systems. Among many other works, Johnson authored the book *Handbook of Soviet Lunar and Planetary Exploration* (American Astronautical Society, 1979), in which he wrote about Cosmos 96 and related spacecraft.

At my request, Johnson examined the orbital data for Cosmos 96 and was able to calculate when it would have passed over Pennsylvania if it had continued in orbit that day (which means disregarding the U.S. Space Command information). That time, when it would have traveled from north to south, was approximately 6:20 a.m. "I can tell you categorically that there is no way that any debris from Cosmos 96 could have landed in Pennsylvania anywhere around 4:45 p.m.," Johnson told me. "That's an absolute. Orbital mechanics is very strict." One part of Cosmos 96 could not have stayed in orbit until 4:45 p.m. after the object came apart hours earlier in Canada, as some had speculated.

In an April 2005 email to Towers Productions during its production of a documentary for the History Channel, Johnson summarized his investigation as follows:

In response to a request by Ms. Kean, I researched the NASA Orbital Debris Program Office data files for tracking data (aka two-line element sets from the U.S. Space Surveillance Network) on Cosmos 96 (U.S. Catalog Number 01742); however, no data for that object were found. I later contacted Air Force Space Command and received historical tracking data for Cosmos 96. Using these data and an Air Force Space Command



*A drawing of the Soviet space capsule from Cosmos 96, about three feet in diameter, which reentered the atmosphere 13 hours before the Kecksburg incident.*

software package, I was able to reconstruct the possible flight path (groundtrack) of Cosmos 96 on 9 December 1965. I sent to Ms. Kean on 10 October [2003] an email containing two graphics depicting the only possible southbound pass of Cosmos 96 on 9 December 1965, if it had not already reentered the atmosphere. No part of Cosmos 96 could have landed in Pennsylvania in the local afternoon of 9 December 1965.

Even more intriguing than the fact that the Kecksburg object could *not* have been any part of Cosmos 96 is that Johnson stated that Cosmos 96 was the only catalogued object to reenter on December 9, and that *no other man-made object from any country came down that day*. He explained that anything not catalogued would have been so small that it would not have survived reentry, and anything larger would have been detected. "I cannot absolutely confirm that it was not some completely unreported event, but the chances of that are virtually nil," Johnson said. "You can't launch something without somebody seeing it. By 1965 the U.S. and Soviets were both reporting their launches."

The possibility of a U.S. reconnaissance satellite dropping a large film canister for recovery on that day has also been ruled out. These capsules were dropped following secret missions over the Soviet Union, and Johnson said that sometimes they fell where they weren't supposed to. The CIA recently declassified data on the reconnaissance flights, and by checking launch and retrieval times, Johnson determined that there was no secret mission that could have led to an inadvertent reentry of a capsule on that day. "This was the only other thing I could think of that could have fallen out of space and was man-made," he said.

Before consulting Johnson, I had spoken with Phillip S. Clark of London's Molniya Space Consultancy by telephone in the U.K. Another renowned expert who studied the Soviet and Chinese space programs for more than 20 years, Clark also eliminated Cosmos 96 as a possibility, based simply on the comparison with the many eyewitness reports providing almost identical descriptions of the object. The Cosmos capsule was only three feet in diameter—much smaller than the object reported by Kecksburg witnesses. Clark also pointed out that the Cosmos capsule could not have made turns or descended slowly at an angle, since it would have been propelled only by the pull of gravity towards earth, and it most likely would have created a crater upon impact. The letters CCCP (Russian for USSR) which appear prominently on the body of Cosmos capsule would have been easily recognized by the witnesses, if the letters had not burned off upon reentry.

In 1965, unlike today, the U.S. government did not have the technical means of detecting natural bodies, such as a meteor, suddenly coming into the earth's atmosphere, so NORAD space surveillance radar could not detect meteors. Therefore, unfortunately, we do not have tracking data that can tell us anything about the 1965 fireball shooting across

*(continued on page 28)*

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# AS GREAT AN ENIGMA AS THE UFOs THEMSELVES

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

**W**e've been in the UFO research business for a long time now, and probably all of us who read *IUR* are convinced that this statement is true: "A large number of witnesses have observed apparently technological devices in the skies that have occasionally landed on the ground and are in no way explainable by mundane natural or current human technology." When I'm asked the naïve, misleading, and rather stupid question, "Do you believe in UFOs?" I say that I won't bother responding to that, but if you want to ask me if I believe in something like the statement above, I say "No, I don't believe that. I *know* it to be true."

I know it to be true because there are so many cases in which the quality and humility of the witnesses, the details observed, the convincing contexts of the sightings, the surprises in the "little things" reported, and the absence of other embellishments when those would be so easy to add, produce a powerful and undeniable set of narratives that are simply and overwhelmingly inexplicable.

Meditating on this while browsing through three terrific resources for the UFO scholar (Loren Gross's series titled *UFOs: A History*; Tom Tulien's oral history project videotapes; and the personal files of James McDonald), the enigma of the title of this article crystallized for me. Why hasn't this problem—that apparently technological objects have graced our skies—been dispensed with long ago? The question of whether there really are UFOs should have been set aside as a no-brainer almost as soon as the phenomenon began flapping in 1947.

For some of those first individuals who seriously tried to study it, it was. For George Garrett in July 1947 in the Pentagon, the disks were real. For Howard "Mac" McCoy at Wright-Patterson AFB in the summer of 1947, the same was true. For those in Project Sign, likewise, and Dewey Fournet, at the Pentagon's UFO intelligence desk—to say nothing of Donald Keyhoe, Coral Lorenzen, Isabel Davis, and on and on. But in 2005 a debate still exists, and we are generally on the losing side as portrayed by media, academia, and the government. Pat answers to this enigma are not very cogent. This isn't a simple cover-up or the Robertson Panel.

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*Michael D. Swords is professor emeritus of the Environmental Institute, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.*

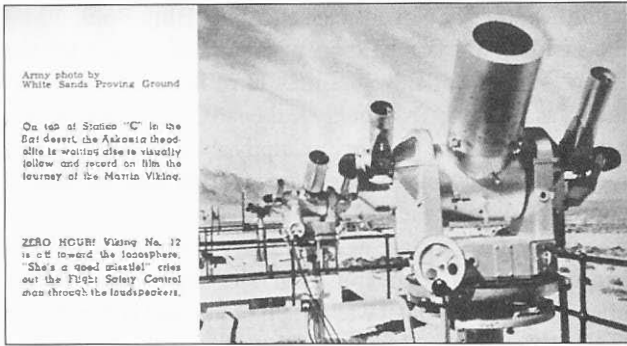
At a Center for UFO Studies board meeting, Jerry Clark said to me that as of the early summer of 1952, this matter should have been settled once and for all. He was, in part, thinking of the Nash-Fortenberry incident. I agreed. In fact, I thought that it should have been settled even earlier. (Note that neither Jerry nor I were adding Roswell into this equation. Why? Speaking for myself, Roswell could well have been managed uniquely; that is, buried in a level of secrecy and cloaked handling where almost no one was privy to any of the details. It was not only secret to the public, but was also closed to the general intelligence community. As such, it would remain in a perpetual gray area, whether you believed in it or not. But regular cases, like Nash-Fortenberry, were completely out of the can, in the open, and could not be rationally denied.)

Previous to Nash-Fortenberry, one recalls the General Mills balloon cases of Charles Moore, Commander Robert McLaughlin, J. J. Kaliszewski, among others. Those incidents should have ended the debate as well, given the caliber of the witnesses, back in the late 1940s. And even, on reflection, so should the Kenneth Arnold case and a few others of that time, such as Captain E. J. Smith. These should have ended the matter in July 1947 and, as we've seen with Garrett and McCoy, they did. So why is the matter still debated, and the question not answered, in 2005?

## THE EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE FILM

What inspired this hair-puller was the May 3, 1957, Edwards AFB case, first noticed by Max Miller in his *Saucers* magazine, then pursued, as usual, by James McDonald and then immortalized in print and video by Loren Gross and Tom Tulien. Perhaps *IUR* readers are familiar with the case, but I'll bet many of you are not. It is another powerhouse case, another debate-ender, in my view. Here's how it went:

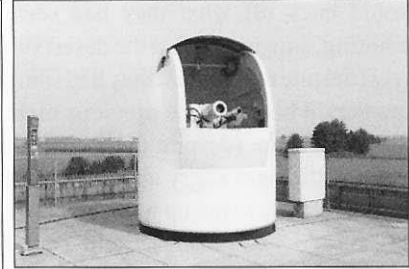
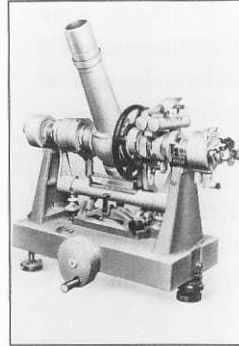
On the morning of May 3, 1957, the supervisor of civilian camera operators at Edwards AFB in California's Mojave Desert, Frank E. Baker, sent the standard two-man crews out to their Askania tracking telescopes for their 8–5 shifts. A normal day for the teams would be photographing airplanes on speed runs to accurately measure their velocities, or to film a dummy bomb drop, or perhaps even the U-2 high-altitude spyplane. Previously the telescopes were



Army photo by White Sands Proving Ground

On top of Station "C" in the Bad desert, the Askania theodolite is waiting also to visually follow and record on film the journey of the Martin Viking.

ZERO HOUR! Viking No. 12 is off toward the ionosphere. "She's a good missile!" cries out the Flight Safety Control man through the loudspeakers.



Various types of Askania tracking telescopes in use by the U.S. military.

calibrated by focusing on stars, and sometimes even by balloons deliberately launched for this purpose. The operators were familiar with all types of aerial technologies.

The master station for the telescope crews was 1 1/2 miles outside the main area of Edwards, and the five telescope installations a little further into the surrounding desert. The crews drove out to their positions. Veterans James Bittick and Jack Gettys were in their pickup expecting a normal day. As they approached their station, they saw an object in the sky, shining brightly. It was, initially, at about 45° elevation and seemed to be hovering. Gettys, who was very interested in UFOs, immediately stated that they had a UFO on their hands.

The crew had to get permission from Baker before trying to photograph the object. So they called in, began readying the scope, loaded the film (as they would have done regardless to begin the day), and waited for the OK.

This interlude lasted for a few minutes while they worked at the scope and snuck peeks at the hovering object. Gettys, who looked through the side-mounted spotting scope, said that the base of object had a circular appearance when high in the sky. Bittick apparently didn't look at it through the spotting scope until it was lower in the sky, as he remembered only the side view.

The go-ahead from Baker came in time, and they began filming, each viewing the object through the spotting scopes

while the film rolled at a rapid pace (probably eight frames per second, as Bittick recounted to McDonald 10 years later). They shot about 100 feet and stopped. When they started filming, the object began to move away from its estimated distance of one mile. When they quit filming, it was about five miles distant, and its motion had been fast and steady with no wobbling.

What they saw was a disk-shaped object (a "cigar" from the side) with a low dome on top. Gettys felt the edges were more rounded, while Bittick thought them more pointed. The dome had little ports around it, perhaps five or six, and the device was spinning. It was shiny metallic in appearance, but whether it was gold in color or silver with the golden morning sunlight glinting off it was not obvious. Gettys thought it was definitely gold-colored. Guessing at its size, he thought it was "parking lot sized," about 100 feet in diameter. At no time did the men hear any engine sound from the UFO.



Gettys's memory of the UFO (10 years later)



Bittick's memory of the UFO (40+ years later)



Baker's memory of the UFO (10 years later), with hazy edges

AIR FORCE STUDIES PHOTOS

## Cameras Track Flying Object Over Desert

Camera studies of an unidentified flying object photographed at Edwards Air Force Base last Friday are being analyzed by the Air Technical Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, O. The Times learned yesterday.

Spokesmen at the secret desert test center north of Los Angeles would say only that the object was spotted by two civilian photo theodolite operators.

They tracked the object and took pictures with the

specialized camera equipment. Films and information were dispatched immediately to the intelligence center.

Unofficial reports said the object appeared round, that it caught the morning sun and that it moved but not at any great speed. There were no estimates as to its size or altitude.

Edwards officers would not hazard a guess as to what the object was, although one said it could have been a weather balloon.

"This desert air does crazy things," he added.

## AF Studying Saucer Photo?

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif., May 10 (INS).—Officers at Edwards Air Force Base today were studying films made of a purported "unidentified flying object" seen over the base.

The object was photographed by two civilian technicians who used special equipment to track and record it.

Unofficial sources said the object appeared circular and glinted brightly in the morning sun when observed last Friday. However, intelligence officers at Edwards base, a hush-hush air force test center, would say almost nothing of the incident.

Left, Los Angeles Times, May 9, 1957; right, New York Journal-American, May 10, 1957.

would back off what they had seen. The officers were insulting, suggesting that the desert sun does things to one's eyes (despite the fact that they had film), and wondering how late they'd been out the previous night or how long they'd been in the sun (despite the incident occurring at about 8 a.m.). Bittick got angry enough to turn to Frank Baker and ask: "Do I have to put up with this crap?" Reflecting back on this 49-odd years later, he told Tom Tulien, "It's a funny thing how they try to cover up what they know, and use a stupid answer for it."

The stupid answer was a balloon. Both men knew that it wasn't a balloon. Not only did they have the evidence of their eyes checked against the years of experience with the tracking telescope, but also there was the film itself. A friend of theirs who worked at Edwards knew the fellow who developed the Askania films. He got the guy to clip off a strip that he ultimately gave to Bittick (who kept it for several years then burned it because he shouldn't have had it in the first place). Other clips from the film apparently got to Baker as well. The film showed a cigar shape with a bump on top. (A few prints from the film are in the Blue Book files, but they seem to be more distant examples and are little more than light blobs. See them in Brad Steiger's 1976 paperback, *Project Blue Book*.) Baker later said that he saw closer photos that definitely showed what Bittick and Gettys claimed.

And, what about the balloon? Well, there *was* a balloon released from Edwards at about 7:40 a.m. on May 3. It was very well tracked. Lt. Col. Raymond Klein, the deputy chief of staff for operations at Edwards, compared it to what the observers saw and where they were located, and wrote: "Based on the above track made and the location of the observers at the time of the sighting [all known quantities], the weather balloon released at Edwards could not have been the unidentified object reported."

Jim McDonald rechecked the data and confirmed

Klein's analysis. Nevertheless, Project Blue Book wrote the incident off as a balloon with total disregard for the facts. Someone at Edwards may have been UFO-sympathetic, as the story was quickly leaked to California newspapers. The Air Force was very unhappy about this. The horse, thereby, was let out of the barn enough that we didn't entirely lose this case.

Well, there we are again: Expert, multiple witnesses and hundreds of frames of film. The deputy of staff for operations knows that it was not a balloon, and is thereby an unidentified physical object in the air near the base—just like Kaliszewski, Moore, and McLaughlin knew the same after their sightings. But, somehow, USAF intelligence refuses to know. And it can't be just Project Blue Book and an understaffed and not-a-little-incompetent project officer there. This information is passing through other offices as well, including Air Defense Command, the Air Force offices at the Pentagon, very probably the Office of Naval Research, and/or the Office of Naval Intelligence, and our friends in the CIA. And people inside these organizations are hearing about these expert-witness cases, here and there, in at least a constant trickle, if not a flow. Doesn't anyone have any memory? Doesn't an accumulation of anomalies build up in anyone's mind? Why doesn't this stuff stick anywhere? Of course, it sticks with us, but we obviously don't count.

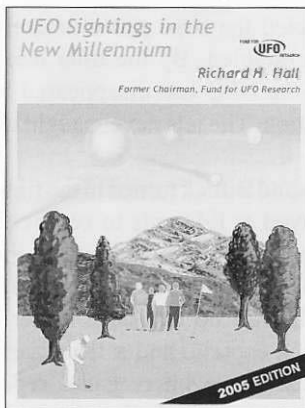
## AN EXPLANATION, PLEASE?

The explanation for this rather astounding selective amnesia is something that I'd very much like someone to clearly elucidate for me. What is it about an organization like USAF Intelligence, or the Pentagon, or the CIA, or a fuzzy concept like "the media" that allows something of this potential importance and clear evidence to be constantly fuzzed out of existence, despite incidents that just *can't* be so discarded? A colossal example: How can the General Mills balloon cases of the late 1940s and early 1950s not even be presented at the CIA's Robertson Panel in January 1953? My eyeballs start revolving independently in my skull if I think too long about that! If the most undeniable expert witness, multiple witness, device-recorded incidents are not even resident enough in the consciousnesses of Ruppelt, Fournet, or Hynek to bother to sell them to Robertson, what explains that?

I've bored my colleagues at CUFOS for several years with the statement that ufology is not a field of study because it never establishes anything. It has no real history, no foundation of "givens." This is despite Nash-Fortenberry, Father Gill, Lawrence Coyne, and the General Mills and Edwards AFB boys. But why aren't these "givens"? They are, for any intellectually honest student of the phenomenon, certainly "undeniables." But they don't stick together and they don't allow ufology to "stick" in the consciousness of the government, military, and academy. Please educate me on this, dear readers. ♦

### UFO SIGHTINGS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

This revised edition of Richard Hall's monograph on 21st-century UFO sightings is now available from CUFOS. This is a report for those who like to read about



sightings, showing that UFOs are still around and doing amazing things. Witnesses are seeing all the classic types of UFOs reported over the years, and there is a special section on large triangular objects. Send a check for \$12.00 (\$15.00 if you reside outside the U.S.) to CUFOS, 2457 W. Peterson, Chicago, IL 60659.

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# VENUSIAN DREAMS

BY JEROME CLARK

Only slightly smaller than the earth and once called its sister world, Venus is the second planet from the sun. Often likened to hell, it is no place you would want to live or even visit. Its dense atmosphere, shrouding the entire planet under a cloud cover and consisting of 96% carbon dioxide and a minute amount of water vapor, traps surface heat in a fierce greenhouse effect. The average temperature is a tropical 840° F.—blistering enough to melt lead. The atmosphere also produces surface pressure 90 times what we experience on earth, unless we happen to be standing on the ocean floor at a depth of 3000 feet. It rains droplets of sulfuric acid. The presence of sulfur-dioxide concentrations may imply ongoing volcanic activity.

This scientific description of the Morning Star and the Evening Star, as earthlings have called this bright and beautiful presence (which the ancients thought were two separate celestial bodies) in our heavens, would not have been possible if not for space probes and technical advances in astronomy in the mid- to latter 20th century. Before that, it was possible to imagine just about anything about Venus, including the beings and creatures that lived on it, and human beings did precisely that.

## THE DREAMS OF THE SCIENTISTS

Among the most notable of the early speculators was the philosopher Immanuel Kant (right) (1724–1804). In *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (1755) he outlined the astronomically and logically dubious hypothesis that distance from the sun determines the intelligence level of a world's inhabitants; thus, the people who live on Mercury are the stupidest, and Venusians are only dimly brighter. Kant and his contemporaries knew nothing of



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*Jerome Clark, co-editor of IUR, is author of the multi-volume UFO Encyclopedia (1990–1998) and other works. His latest book, Unnatural Phenomena, published by ABC-CLIO in 2005, examines the Fortean landscape of 19th- and early 20th-century America.*

Uranus and Neptune, not discovered until the following century, or Pluto, not until 1930, so in the Kantian cosmic scheme of things, the smartness of the people of Jupiter (fifth in the solar system) was exceeded only by that of Saturn (the sixth and, to mid-18th-century knowledge, the last).

On the other hand, to Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657–1757), author of a widely read 1686 book on life on other worlds, Venusians are “little black people, scorched with the Sun, witty, full of Fire, very Amorous.” In the generally comparable imagining of Jacques Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1737–1814), Venusians live in a paradisaical, pastoral realm. The mountain people are shepherds, while “the others, on the shores of their fertile islands, give themselves over to dancing, to feasts, divert themselves with songs, or compete for prizes in swimming, like the happy islanders of Tahiti.”

An observer in 1743 reported seeing “ashen light”—mysterious illumination—on Venus’ dark side. Since then other astronomers have described the phenomenon, still not conclusively explained though generally thought to be the consequence of electricity in the atmosphere. To German astronomer Franz von Paula Gruithuisen (right) (1774–1852), however, the phenomenon could be explained as light given off by “general festivals of fire” in which the Venusians periodically participate, corresponding with “changes in government” or perhaps to religious celebrations. This and other luminous anomalies led French inventor Charles Cros (1842–1888) to wonder if Venusians were trying to signal the earth and to propose ways of sending signals back.



Using earthly population-density figures as a guide, Scottish clergyman and amateur scientist Thomas Dick (1774–1857) startlingly pegged the Venusian population at a densely packed 53,500,000,000. Popular science journalist Richard Proctor (1837–1888) wrote in *Other Worlds Than Ours* (1870), “On the whole, the evidence we have points very strongly to Venus as the abode of living creatures not unlike the inhabitants of earth.”

Because the clouds covering the planet rendered telescopic observation of its surface impossible, much about Venus remained unknown even in the first half of the 20th

century. Thus, the sorts of speculation in which even mainstream astronomers sometimes engaged look outlandish in retrospect, more science fiction than science.

For example, in common with his French colleague Edmond Perrier (1844–1921) and others, Harvard University astronomer William H. Pickering (1858–1938)—incidentally an ally of Percival Lowell in the Mars canal controversy—argued that Venus is a tropical planet teeming with water and humid swamps, harboring giant reptiles of the sort that roamed the earth during the age of dinosaurs. “As to the question of intelligent life,” he added in a 1911 interview with a *Boston Post* reporter, “the question is still open.” Around the same time another then-prominent astronomer, Thomas Jefferson Jackson See (1866–1962), of the U.S. Naval Observatory at Mare Island, California, declared the issue of intelligent Venusian life a settled one, based on his years of observation.

Beginning in the 1920s, a handful of astronomical investigators were collecting more realistic data that suggested, first, fierce surface temperatures and then (in 1932) the absence of oxygen and water vapor, plus an abundance of carbon dioxide in Venus’ atmosphere. This sparked an inevitable skepticism about life, even vegetable life, among scientists who were paying attention.

Others, however, acted as if oblivious to the new developments, treating the planet as it had always been depicted: as a warmer earth. In 1922 Salt Lake City meteorologist Alfred Rordame, speaking before the American Meteorological Society, argued that spectroscopic findings which appeared to show no oxygen or water vapor could not be trusted; in reality, he contended, the “spectroscope is incapable of penetration below these clouds around Venus, as the light is reflected from the upper surface of them. The bulk of whatever oxygen and water vapor exists must be beneath this veil in the stormy atmosphere nearer the planet.” That same year Charles G. Abbot (1872–1973) of the Smithsonian Institution remarked that Venus is the only nonearthly planet likely to harbor intelligent life because it has, he claimed, both “water vapor and water clouds.” As late as 1946, Abbot fantasized about radio communication with Venusians “brought up completely separate [from earthlings], having their own systems of government, social usages, religions, and surrounded by vegetation and animals entirely related to any here on earth.”

In his best-selling *Astronomy* (1935) astronomer/clergyman (and, in subsequent decades, creationist hero) Arthur M. Harding (1884–1947) wrote, “No one would imagine for an instant that after the Creator had constructed this magnificent solar system . . . He would have neglected our little globe to be the abode of life and overlooked its twin sister and neighbor, Venus. Surely there must be some forms of life on Venus that are not so very different from what we find on the earth. The objection has been raised that Venus is too near the sun to have life on it. It is true that Venus is a little warmer than the earth, but this is no barrier. We have life at the tropics and also life at the poles.”

Still, no one had glimpsed Venus’ surface, so those inclined to do so continued to imagine everything from a massive dust bowl to lush vegetation to a planet-encircling ocean. Writing in *The Universe We Live In* (1951), John Robinson revived the venerable vision of Venus—most prominently put forth more than three decades earlier by Swedish chemist and Nobel laureate Svante Arrhenius (1859–1927)—as a place like “the far-off Carboniferous Period of the earth’s geological history” with “seas and swamps and the steamy, heavily carbonated atmosphere. . . . Venus has every appearance of being a world something like our world hundreds of millions of years ago.”

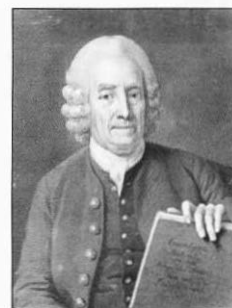
Donald H. Menzel (1901–1976), of the Harvard Observatory, had a reputation as a fierce debunker of UFO reports, but he was also a wildly imaginative theorist about Venus, in one instance in the same book (*Flying Saucers*, 1953). He envisioned “warm seas” in which life forms of all kind, from the microscopic to large invertebrates and vertebrates, flourish. “It is somewhat interesting to note that, had we ourselves developed on Venus instead of on the earth,” he reflected, “it is not at all unlikely that we might have developed into a race of mermaids and mermen.” On the other hand, in the same decade Soviet astronomer Gavriil A. Tikhov (1875–1960) pictured Venus as a world of glimmering, ray-emitting flowers. In a December 1959 presentation to the year-old National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the California Institute of Technology’s Harrison Brown (1917–1986) spoke of a Venus of mostly seas, harboring jellyfish-like creatures.

From February 1961 and through the next two decades, the United States and the Soviet Union launched a series of space probes. Some sailed near the planet, others entered its atmosphere, and a few successfully landed on its surface. The discoveries ended all talk that intelligent Venusians, or even life forms larger than microbes, populate that world.

## THE OCCULTISTS’ VENUS

In his 50th year the Swedish scientist Emanuel Swedenborg (right) (1688–1772), the author already (in the words of one biographer) of “160 works and [founder of] six new sciences,” began experiencing mystical visions which occupied him the rest of his life. Among other spiritual adventures he traveled to the moon and all the planets known in the eighteenth century. All of these bodies, he reported in *Earths in Our Solar System* (1758), are populated by intelligent beings, sometimes by more than one kind.

Venusians, he wrote, “are of two kinds; some are gentle and benevolent, others wild, cruel and of gigantic stature. The latter rob and plunder, and live by this means; the former have so great a degree of greatness and kindness that they are always beloved by the good; thus they of ten see the



Lord appear in their own form on their earth." The bad guys not only robbed their victims but ate them.

Another influential mystic who spoke with certainty of Venusians was Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (right) (1831–1891), founder of Theosophy. Blavatsky, with Swedenborg one of the most important figures in the history of Western occultism, proposed an enormously complex cosmic order and alternative history, including "Lords of the Flame" on Venus. Blavatsky had not much to say about them, perhaps because she had so much else to invent.



It was Martians, not Venusians, whom people of the 19th century were more likely to claim they had met or heard from. Martians either communicated through mediums or, as dubious late-century newspaper accounts alleged, flew, sometimes landing, airships (see my "Conversations with Martians," *IUR* 29, no. 3, pp. 19–23). For the most part, Venusians existed only as abstract possibilities, not as entities one might encounter.

In the 20th century, Guy Warren Ballard (right) (1878–1939) set a dubious precedent for a later generation of claimants to extraterrestrial contact (by the early 1950s being called "contactees"). Ballard was a man with a checkered past and little claim to personal accomplishment until in the last decade of his life he came forth with bizarre and escalating claims about his interactions with Ascended Masters, commencing with a 1930 visit to California's Mount Shasta (whose interior, mystical legend has it, harbors survivors of the lost Pacific continent Lemuria).



As he told the story in *Unveiled Mysteries* (pseudonymously bylined "Godfré Ray King," 1934), Ballard—well versed in Theosophical and other occult writings—had decided to take a day off from his job as a mining engineer to investigate the alleged presence of a supernatural group of deities called the Brotherhood of Mount Shasta. He was taking a drink at a mountain stream when a young-looking stranger approached to pour a creamy liquid into Ballard's cup. Ballard drank it without question. The substance had an "electrical vivifying effect in my mind and body," he would report.

Soon the mysterious figure introduced himself as Saint Germain, an Ascended Master, and proved it by supernatural demonstrations. Ballard had been chosen, he said, to be the Messenger of the Masters. With his wife Edna (1886–1971) he went on to form the I AM Religious Activity ("AM" standing for Ascended Master), an intensely controversial group, formed in Chicago and later moved to Los Angeles, the Ballards's home base, in 1932. ("I AM" also is an allusion to *Exodus* 3:14, where God says to Moses, "I am who I am." In the Ballards's Theosophy-based theology—Saint Germain is borrowed from Blavatsky—Ascended

Masters are former humans who used the divine energy of God's light that exists in each of us to ascend to God's level.) The group, albeit diminished, survives to the present, even after Edna's death in 1971 and son Donald's retirement from the movement in 1957. Guy Ballard died on December 29, 1939.

In the 1930s the Ballards roamed the nation with what amounted to a mediumistic road show, producing extravagant pageants, thrilling followers with communications from Saint Germain and others, and enraging others who saw them, with some justice, as charlatans and fascists. The Ballards had both been enthusiasts of American Nazi William Dudley Pelley (right) (1890–1965). In the wake of an out-of-body encounter with Ascended Masters which he detailed in a widely read 1929 magazine article, Pelley had assembled a paramilitary army of pro-Hitler, anti-Semitic lowlifes known as Silver Shirts because they wore, well, silver shirts in their faux-German uniforms. When the Ballards broke with Pelley to form their own organization, they borrowed many of Pelley's political precepts and ambitions but—whatever their other intellectual, philosophical, and moral failings—did not traffic in anti-Semitism.



Among the otherworldly entities Guy Ballard interacted with were Venusians. He first met them in Saint Germain's company when the two attended (in out-of-body states) a convention of Masters in their gold-laden retreat beneath the Grand Tetons in Wyoming. Twelve of them—men and women—showed up for the confab, appearing suddenly in a blaze of light. They were beautiful, golden-haired, and violet-blue-eyed, all in all looking very much like the Venusians who would become standard issue in tales of the saucer-contactee era. They entertained the assembled mystical masters with a violin and harp concert. Perhaps not coincidentally, in consensus reality Edna Ballard was a harpist.

Venusians were enlisted into the Ballards's unending crusade against the sinister forces, including press critics and disenchanted former I AM followers (one of whom remarked dryly that the couple had a "well-defined persecution complex"), who sought to frustrate Guy and Edna's struggle to bring humans to divine light and ascension. A regular communicant in their mediumistic demonstrations was the "Tall Master from Venus," a Lord of the Flame. To rapturous crowds the Tall Master, speaking through Guy, praised Guy and Edna as "the most precious Beings on the face of this earth today." Another Venusian, Sanat Kumara, grumpily scolded the faithful, "The greatest mistake of mankind today is to think that they must have physical contact in order to express love." The Ballards and their otherworldly associates forbade all forms of sexual expression, even hand-holding and kissing.

Many prophets, even ones who claim experiences of a fantastic and outlandish nature, are sincere visionaries, and

some aren't. More than a few observers think that the Ballards consciously and deliberately concocted an elaborate hornswaggle, its particulars cobbled together from Blavatsky and other sources. A particularly prominent influence is the occult novel *A Dweller on Two Planets*, by "Phylos the Tibetan" (right, the supposed channeler of the contents to automatic writer Frederick Spencer Oliver [1866–1899], composed in the mid-1880s but unpublished until 1905). It is certainly the model—Ballard barely changes the language—for many of Ballard's adventures with the Masters. (Oliver's hero Walter Pierson is taken to Venus whose inhabitants have, it turns out, "splendid physiques . . . graceful and perfect [in] every line.")



A second, Will L. Garver's 1894 mystical novel *The Brother of the Third Degree*, features as a leading character the Comte de St. Germain. The Comte de St. Germain was an actual historical figure, an 18th-century dabbler in the mystic arts and a notorious charlatan who hinted that he was immortal in the most literal sense. Voltaire famously sneered that the attention-obsessed count was "the man who never dies."

In the March/April 1961 issue of England's *Flying Saucer Review*, W. R. Drake deduced exactly who St. Germain really was:

Viewed in our flying saucer context, the appearances and disappearance across the centuries of this fantastic man with phenomenal talents and inexhaustible wealth, without origin or social background, which so baffled his contemporaries, become suddenly illumined in one startling wondrous revelation. Is it not plausible to suggest that Count St. Germain was a missionary from Space, an avatar from Venus with remarkable powers, who throughout the ages has selflessly descended to Earth to direct Man's evolution, and who periodically returns to direct Man's evolution, and who periodically returns to Venus in spaceships to recuperate? His extraordinary longevity may be normal for that lovely planet, the source of his diamonds; his spiritual ideals and nobility of life, acknowledged by all witnesses, testifying to a civilization there far transcending our own.

## VENUSIANS AND FLYING SAUCERS

In a little-noticed story published in a Washington newspaper, *Centralia Daily Chronicle*, on April 1, 1950, an elderly man related his recent meeting just days before with the crew of a Venusian spacecraft. It was not an April Fool's Day joke. Kenneth Arnold (whose June 24, 1947, sighting over Mount Rainier brought flying saucers into public consciousness) and his wife Doris interviewed the claimant, an elderly retired railroad worker named Samuel Eaton Thompson, soon afterwards and taped his account.

Thompson, a poorly educated, unsophisticated man, was returning from a visit to relatives when he pulled over to take a break in a wooded area between Morton and Mineral, Washington. As he walked into the trees, he came upon a clearing in which a large globe-shaped structure hovered just above the ground. He noticed several strikingly beautiful children playing on steps which led from a door on the side of the craft. They had a deeply tanned appearance, with long blond hair which came all the way to their waists. They were naked. Soon similar-appearing adults came to the door and watched him, apparently uneasy about his intentions. Thompson managed to persuade them that he meant no harm.

He ended up, he said, spending some 40 hours (including one overnight) in their company over the next two days, interrupted only by a quick trip home for a camera (which recorded nothing except a bright glow as if from overexposure). The Venusians were innocents who seemed to have stepped out of an interplanetary Garden of Eden, without sin, shame, or eventechnological knowledge; all they knew about their ship was its four buttons took one up or down or to earth from Venus or the reverse. The Venusians had come to spread peace and good will, though they had not received it from earthlings, whose aircraft had shot at their ship. All planets of the solar system are inhabited, the Venusians told him, but only Martians are more warlike than the people of our world. Thompson's companions consumed only nuts, vegetables, and fruits, and their exemplary dietary habits kept them from ever suffering illness; they died only of old age. They lived not by intellect but by instinct, yet "they're really smarter than we think they are. They've got a gift that is so much greater than ours that there is no comparison." According to them, Jesus Christ will return in A.D. 10,000.

The Arnolds did not believe Thompson had a literal physical encounter. Kenneth Arnold, who considered much of the story absurd to the point of comedy, thought it was something like a vivid dream or hallucination. They did not doubt, however, that Thompson believed every word he was saying. Anyone who hears the tape-recorded interview is likely to agree. It is hard to overstate Thompson's naivete, evinced, for example, in his struggle to describe concepts (vegetarianism, reincarnation, and sun signs) for which he lacked a vocabulary.

After the newspaper article and the Arnolds's interview (the contents of which were not released until three decades later), Thompson disappeared from history, his vision—arguably literal as much as metaphorical—of Venusian visitors casting no shadow on the saucer tall tales that would surface in the next few years. Unlike Thompson's, the Venusians of the contactee movement would be technologically sophisticated and scientifically advanced.

No evidence indicates that George Adamski (right) (1891–1965) ever heard of Thompson, but as a longtime figure





on the California occult scene he knew of Blavatsky and was conversant in Theosophy, and he may or may not have known the Ballards personally. What is certain is that the golden-haired, peace-loving, long-winded Venusians he claimed to know personally had been heard of before, but this time there was the additional element of flying saucers, heretofore unmentioned even in mystical literature dealing specifically with interplanetary intelligences. The UFO controversy that erupted in the summer of 1947 and continues uninterrupted to the present changed forever the landscape of alternative realities; from then on, no talk of people from other worlds could fail to mention the nuts-and-bolts vehicles in which they arrived.

Adamski came to modest public visibility in the 1930s as a kind of low-rent guru, founder of the Royal Order of Tibet and the teacher of a doctrine he called "Universal Progressive Christianity." Known to his followers as "professor," he set up a tiny observatory, with a 15-inch telescope, on the southern slope of Mount Palomar, causing him to be mistaken—or perhaps that was the intention—as a professional astronomer from the Palomar Observatory a few miles away. His emergence on the international scene awaited the saucer craze, however. By 1949 he was adding juicy items about official cover-ups of UFO flights from "the other side of the moon" and about secret government knowledge that all planets are inhabited. That same year he published a didactic novel, *Pioneers of Space*, which previewed interplanetary tales sometimes much like those he would soon peddle as actual events.

In 1950 and 1951, in *Fate*, a digest popular among enthusiasts of the paranormal, Adamski published pictures of alleged spaceships. The photographs stirred considerable interest, but nothing compared to what would happen in late 1952—November 20, specifically—when Adamski, accompanied by six "witnesses," watched a saucer land in the California desert near Desert Center; alone, he went on to speak with its occupant, the Venusian Orthon (right). Orthon's essential message was that earthlings' warring ways were generating concern throughout the solar system.



That was only the start. There were other photographs, other contacts with Venusians, Martians, and Saturnians, a trip into space and around the moon, and finally (and unacceptably to his followers) voyages to Venus and then Saturn. He reported most of this in three books, in pamphlets, in private conversations, on lecture platforms around the world. To some he was "earth's cosmic ambassador," and to others he was a shameless con man. He did not get rich, but he did get famous in a way. Soon enough a small army of contactees joined him in friendship and solidarity with Venusians.

Initially, Adamski had to be contented with pictures of the Venusian surface. In his remarkably tedious *Inside the*

*Space Ships* (1955) he recounts his travels in "Scouts" from Venus and Saturn and conversations—whole pages of droning (all of it inexplicably transcribed verbatim) by assorted spacemen. In the last chapter he boards a Venusian craft one August day in 1954 to meet with, among others, Orthon, who—using laserlike images—shows him scenes from Venus. "I saw magnificent mountains . . . some not very different from those of Earth," Adamski wrote. "Some were thickly timbered and I saw water running in streams and cascades down the mountainsides." Orthon noted that Venus has a system of canals which link the planet's seven oceans and many lakes. (In the science-fictional *Pioneers of Space* the "Venetians" tell the narrator that they have "nine oceans, many lakes and rivers, majestic, towering mountains.") Adamski also saw cities consisting of dome-shaped buildings and houses "radiating in prismatic colors that gave the impression of a revitalizing force. . . . The people I saw on the streets of these cities seemed to be going about their business in much the same manner as Earth folk, except for the absence of rush and worry so noticeable with us." Cylinder-shaped cars glided just above the ground. (*Pioneers*: "Venetian" cars "seem to be gliding right over the surface of the ground.")

He also observed an ocean and a beach, animals and flowers. The clouds surrounding the planet, Orthon explained, are a "filter system" counteracting "the destructive rays which otherwise would enter its atmosphere." That is why the average Venusian lives a thousand earth years.

In his last four years Adamski's claims grew even more outlandish, if that is imaginable, so extreme that even those who had swallowed in their entirety all the previous yarns started to suspect that he was now making up stories. Either that, or the CIA was setting him up. Or maybe it was evil space people; after all, Adamski *had* acknowledged that lately a "new set of boys" had come onto the scene, replacing the beloved and always trustworthy Orthon and associates. In 1961, in any event, Adamski reported that he finally got to make the trip to Venus. After a 12-hour flight the ship landed on the surface. Its earthly passenger wandered about for five hours before boarding the Venus-California express for the return trip.

Naturally, this was all exhausting. Adamski felt fatigued after a short walk, but that was not just because of his tiring travel schedule. It also had something to do with the atmospheric pressure, which was comparable to what one might encounter "at the altitude and in a comparable location with Mexico City." He noted that "80% of the planet is covered with water. The cloud cover that does not permit us to see the surface of Venus is caused by constant evaporation of moisture. This permits a large tropical area where fruits and vegetables are plentiful."

Though many contactees have told tales of adventures with Venusians, only a relatively small number have claimed actual visits to Venus. None have had much, if anything, of interest to say about it, though one anonymous American wrote to the *Australian Saucer Record* in 1961 to state that

his space friends denied Adamski's contacts; Venusians do not exist, they said, and to prove it they flew the writer to Venus, where he saw a swampy planet with oceans and jungles. "The reason there is no human life on Venus is that a human being could only live for a few days on that planet," he said. "Everything grows very fast and dies fast."

Another Venusian traveler, who reported the more typical paradisaical, inhabited world, was 1950s contact claimant Buck Nelson (right). An Ozark farmer, Nelson attracted even more ridicule than most with his stories—always related in a kind of backwoods English—which fused a naïve homoeroticism (beautiful Venusian men who shed their clothing for reasons that never manage to make sense) with racist notions (a Venus segregated by skin color) and laughable swindles (the marketing of packets of Venusian dog hair).



The more obscure John Langdon Watts interacted with Venusians, who, he learned, live to 2,500 of our years because, like Thompson's friends, they eat good vegetarian food. They are here, he wrote in the 1970s, to prepare us for a planet-wide cataclysm that will occasion massive damage in the seminal year 2000. He took up residence for a time on Venus, living in a domed city with a female resident, Mara. From his earthly home in Florida, he published books detailing cosmetic and diet tips he had picked up from the lovely Mara.

The Englishman George King (right) zipped to Venus in his astral body, arriving in the Valley of the Sun at the Temple of Solace. A guide named Patana took him to another temple, from which spiritual vibrations were beamed into the brain of every Venusian. For his part King experienced "a supreme, pulsating, scintillating, living brilliance which knew me more completely than I had ever known myself." King subsequently moved to Los Angeles, where he continued to channel assorted space communications. His Aetherius Society—named after his principal contact, a Venusian—is one of the most successful and long-lasting of the contactee sects. King himself died in 1997.



Another astral visitor, Allen Noonan (whom a cosmic voice had asked to be "Savior of the World"; he assented), noticed architectural marvels which somehow escaped the attention of other pilgrims to earth's sister planet. "There is a city on Venus that would be called the New Jerusalem if it were here," he told journalist Lloyd Mallan. "The cities of our own planet are obsolete. On Venus there is most striking city. The City of Spirals. It has no streets. Everything is built of beautiful spirals. The people and the traffic move around on elegant spirals."

## A NIGHTMARE OF VENUSIANS

The contactees' Venusians have been a tediously virtuous lot, with very, very rare exception. The unsettling stories told by a Swedish man known only as Helge, whose apparent sincerity in the face of his highly improbable testimony puzzled some observers, including investigator Håkan Blomqvist, are perhaps the sole exception. Helge's alleged adventures are hard to read as either literal truth or deliberate fiction, but whatever their ultimate ontological nature, they are undeniably more interesting—quite a lot more interesting—than the competition in the ET-contact section. Like Thompson's tale, it leads one to reflect that things are neither true nor false. The story is long and complex, and what follows necessarily skips over a great deal of detail to get to the core.

Born in 1913, Helge (not his real name), a rock blaster by profession, lived with his wife Anna in Uddevalla, near Göteborg. He is said to have been an atheist and an open scoffer at UFO reports, though he did believe he possessed a talent for telepathy. In the late autumn of 1965 kidney stones were causing him discomfort, and he was to undergo an operation on December 10. On impulse he abruptly left the house with his dog and took a walk along a nearby frozen lake.

Something disturbed the dog, which began running in circles and acting up. Helge put the animal on a leash, and then he heard a whirring sound above him. Looking up, he spotted a disc-shaped object with a translucent surface through which he could glimpse moving figures. The UFO descended until it was a few feet above the ice. A tube came out of the bottom, and through it four humanlike entities floated as if on an invisible elevator. Once outside, they approached him. They were one older man, two younger men, and a woman, all covered in a transparent overall which revealed their nude, unblemished bodies. Entirely hairless, they had big dark, slightly slanted eyes and perfect teeth. Their ears were pointed, the openings inside so big that Helge thought he could see inside their heads. On their wrists each wore a broad dark bracelet with a yellow button on it. The men were thick-necked and built like wrestlers.

Over the next hour the beings communicated with Helge via drawings in the snow. They were curious about such earthly activities as hunting and dancing, and at one point the oldest of the group retrieved a cylinder-shaped device from the ship, gliding it along Helge's back. Helge felt a warm sensation, then a cessation of the pain from his kidney stones. The four then returned to their craft, which took off at a dizzying rate of speed.

The next day, when Helge was X-rayed prior to his operation, medical personnel were puzzled to discover that his physical problem had been cured. Not long afterwards a Stockholm ufologist interviewed him about his encounter.

In August 1966 Helge had a second contact. Again drawn outside by some mysterious instinct, he again observed the UFO hovering above the lake. This time, how-

*(continued on page 26)*

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# DOTY AND THE BODY SNATCHERS

BY ROBERT DURANT

Greg Bishop, *Project Beta: The Story of Paul Bennewitz, National Security, and the Creation of a Modern UFO Myth*. New York: Paraview, 2005.

The late Peter Jennings sneeringly dismissed Roswell as a "myth" on his two-hour ABC network UFO show in February 2005. How often have we ufologists impotently squirmed as the mainstream brushes us off as purveyors of myth and fairytales?

Let me adopt the mainstream mindset for a moment. I will tell you a myth, a fairytale.

Once upon a time, an alien was held captive by the U.S. government for many years at a secret location in the Southwest. The ET was telepathic, transferred technology to us, and managed to salvage from his crashed saucer a device that showed the past and future history of this and other planets. Regardless of the viewer's native language, the information was conveyed in that language. That is, a Russian heard Russian, and an American heard English. The alien liked Tibetan music and savored strawberry ice cream. Through the captive alien's intervention, diplomatic relations were initiated between the U.S. and his race. Eventually, a treaty was signed, allowing the aliens free reign to carry out experiments on this planet. Pursuant to the treaty, large numbers of aliens moved to another location in the southwest U.S., specifically, a huge facility under Archuleta Mesa north of Dulce, New Mexico. But things went sour when it was discovered that the aliens had been abducting humans and had vats full of human body parts in their lair. Our military forces attacked the aliens, and eventually prevailed, but only after massive casualties on both sides.

Readers of *IUR* are not likely to believe any of this. Probably only some will have heard these stories. But they are taken as gospel by multitudes who follow the UFO controversy not from the pages of serious books and journals, but from Coast to Coast AM and similar radio talk shows.

And it would come as a shock not just to UFO specialists, but to the general public as well, to learn that these

stories were concocted by the U.S. government and inserted into the UFO community and thus into the public domain by the U.S. government. Your tax money was put to work on a disinformation project that achieved amazing success.

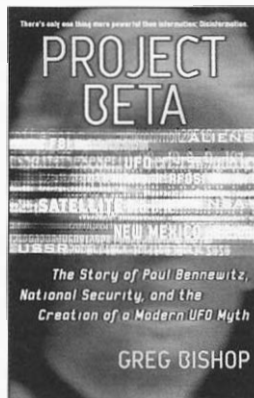
This was a serious project, carried out systematically over a period of at least five years, and used as its primary modality "disinforming" a number of key figures, including ufologist William Moore, journalist Linda Howe, and of special importance to this discussion, an Albuquerque UFO enthusiast named Paul Bennewitz.

## PAUL BENNEWITZ

*Project Beta* recounts the harrowing story of the central figure in this drama, Paul Bennewitz. Unlike the aliens in underground bases scenario, this part is all true. But it is so nearly impossible to imagine as true that I am forced to begin by saying that "Once upon a time" there lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in a fairly fancy house in a fairly fancy neighborhood, a man named Paul Bennewitz. And he was a successful businessman, married with two children, and an entrepreneur who started and ran Thunder Scientific, a firm selling humidity-sensing devices to various clients, including the military. He was studying for his doctorate in physics when the business suddenly became so successful that he quit school to devote full time to it.

Bennewitz had two hobbies. He flew light airplanes as a private pilot, which is expensive but neither controversial nor dangerous. His other hobby was UFOs. This turned out to be disastrous, leading to the near-collapse of his business, which was saved only when his sons were forced to take over, and the total collapse of his mental health culminating with three months in a psychiatric facility. Paul Bennewitz died a broken man.

His house was located near the fence separating Kirtland Air Force Base from the city of Albuquerque, and afforded a view deep into the military facility. It was around 1979 that he began to see strange lights flying in that vicinity. In a mannertypical of his skills and scientist's mentality, he took still and motion picture photographs of the lights. Eventually, he accumulated 6,000 feet of movie film. At about the same time, he began detecting unusual radio signals, and he custom-built special electronic equipment to enhance and record these signals.



## STRANGE LIGHTS

Strange lights and strange electronic pulses—his UFO obsession came into play, connecting the dots. The lights plus the radio signals equaled alien spacecraft. Or so he speculated, but Bennewitz took the logical and responsible step, and called Kirtland, eventually explaining the data he had collected to Major Ernest Edwards, commander of the security police contingent at the base. Edwards passed the problem on to the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI), the unit responsible for counterintelligence.

As a consequence, Bennewitz was invited to the base for a meeting. A group of about 20 military and civilian officials heard his presentation, including the movies, still photos and the recorded radio signals.

Soon thereafter, OSI decided that they had to know more about this gentleman. From that point forward, Bennewitz was treated as if he were a Russian spy. He had mounted an extremely efficient data-gathering program including photography and detection of electromagnetic signals. Was he sending that data to Moscow? Or was he innocent, but were real spies intercepting his data? Could his network of UFO and cattle-mutilation enthusiasts harbor Soviet spies?

So far, so good, with Bennewitz and the Air Force acting responsibly.

But at this point a critical decision was made by OSI. Regardless of what they discovered about Bennewitz's status as a Russian agent, they would treat him as if he were one, or as if his information could be intercepted by a spy. (No hint of malign intent or connections was ever found.)

The alternative was to take Bennewitz aside, thank him for his diligence, but simply say that the lights and the signals were "ours." And please, Sir, turn off your radios and cameras, because your data could fall into the wrong hands. Why this second option was not taken remains a profound mystery.

## DOTY GETS A JOB

The plan was to feed Bennewitz "disinformation," meaning false information mixed with true information. He would then communicate the lies to others, and eventually the KGB might waste valuable resources trying to confirm the lies, or even get reckless enough in their quest to be caught in the act of spying.

Author Greg Bishop tells us that no plausible explanation for the strange lights has been forthcoming. But his sources attributed the anomalous radio signals to a top-secret project at Kirtland that concerned attempts to neutralize Russian "spy satellites" by beaming specially coded transmissions at them. Ironically, we were trying to "disinform" the Russian satellites.

OSI assigned the Bennewitz job to a sergeant named Richard C. Doty, on his first assignment with OSI, fresh from counterintelligence school. Doty began by befriending

Bennewitz, establishing a social bond, emphasizing his Air Force "intelligence insider" connections and special knowledge about UFOs. With Bennewitz entranced, Doty began to relate the preposterous "aliens in underground bases" lie concocted by OSI officials, which they continued to tell him in increasingly grisly elaborations until he was institutionalized and no longer available to listen.

Apparently, Bennewitz died in the firm belief that the lights he photographed were ET craft landing at Kirtland in cooperation with the U.S. government, and the radio signals were communications between the ET fleet and Air Force officials.

## USEFUL IDIOTS

As Doty fed the stories, and Bennewitz evangelized, spreading them far and wide, the lies were enthusiastically received by multitudes, mainly listeners to the very popular Art Bell and similar talk radio programs. It seems that in the intelligence profession people like Bennewitz are known dismissively as "useful idiots." This idiot proved exceptionally useful, and spawned a generation of equally useful idiots.

Eventually, personalities such as John Lear and William Cooper took these tales to new heights. Always the information was attributed to "highly placed sources in the intelligence community." But the real fountainhead was an otherwise nondescript junior sergeant, Richard Doty.

Soon after going to work on Bennewitz, Doty met and recruited mainstream ufologist William Moore, who had already been approached by the Defense Intelligence Agency. Moore was coauthor of the first book on Roswell and was an officer of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), based in Arizona. Doty's offer to Moore was simple: Go to work for us, and we will let you in on what the government really knows about UFOs.

Moore accepted the offer, and immediately began passing to Doty all he knew about other ufologists, as well as giving him access to the APRO files, and even going so far as to recruit APRO's secretary to provide instant notice of new developments to Moore, so that he could better serve Doty. Several years later, Moore found himself, innocently or otherwise, in the midst of a major UFO controversy, when a roll of film was received by his colleague Jaime Shandera. The film showed the MJ-12 documents, a briefing allegedly prepared for President Eisenhower describing UFO crash retrievals, stamped with top-secret security classification caveats.

In 1989, apparently having gotten the short end of this Faustian deal, Moore stunned the UFO community in a speech in which he told the details of his association with Doty and other intelligence community characters. Of particular interest here is that Moore admits that they knew Bennewitz was psychologically marginal to begin with and steadily deteriorating under pressure of the unremitting disinformation from Doty. Further, Moore said that Doty

and others had surreptitiously entered Bennewitz's house and rearranged the furniture in the living room as a deliberate ploy to further destabilize him.

Doty says his efforts to befriend Bennewitz had a very practical basis, in that if he invited him (Doty) and other intelligence operatives into his house, they could proceed without a search warrant. But elsewhere, Doty admits to what Moore claims, surreptitious entry into the Bennewitz house in the absence of Bennewitz and without permission.

Linda Howe is an Emmy-winning TV journalist and writer, and producer of three documentaries for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) about international child survival efforts, but she is best known to the UFO community for her books and television documentaries about the cattle mutilation controversy.

Howe produced a TV show about cattle mutilations that caught the eyes of the spooks, and Doty, having had such success with Bennewitz and then Moore, was tasked with disinforming her. Inviting Howe to his OSI office on the grounds of Kirtland AFB, Doty said that the Air Force was ready to disclose UFO secrets to the public, and wanted to use her as the conduit. She would be provided with motion-picture film of an alien craft landing at an Air Force base, of the aliens disembarking, and of a short conference between the aliens and government officials.

Then Doty gave Howe a document to read, but warned she could not make notes or keep it. Her recollection of the text is that it was much like the "MJ-12 Eisenhower Briefing" which reached the public much later. On the basis of these representations, and the seemingly official circumstances in which they were made, Howe approached HBO with a proposal for a UFO special. Naturally, HBO was enthusiastic. But of course Howe never got the film, and eventually gave up, correctly concluding that she had been deceived.

Howe has written extensively about this affair. Doty categorically denied the meeting ever took place, even in the face of an affidavit from Howe, and a challenge to Doty that he swear to his version. In a recent radio interview, Doty recounted the story, admitting the truth of Howe's account, and said by way of explanation that the plan was to dissuade Howe from making any UFO-related television shows! Obviously, the affair did no good for Howe's reputation as a journalist. But it did nothing to take Howe's attention off UFOs. In fact, Doty conceded the Howe project had to be counted as one of his few failures.

Richard Doty enlisted in the Air Force fresh out of high school, spent nine years as a military policeman, and then shifted to OSI. After his service at Kirtland, he was sent to an OSI office in Germany, where things went sour. Various versions have made the rounds, but it is almost certain that Doty was dismissed from OSI "for cause," and shipped back to Kirtland, where he ignominiously finished his Air Force career in the services field, reportedly in charge of the mess hall.

After retiring with 20 years of service, he was employed

as a New Mexico state trooper. With regard to recent employment, he claimed to be an investigator for the Albuquerque District Attorney, and then that he was an attorney. But the New Mexico bar has no record of a Richard C. Doty.

Philip Klass focused his attention on Doty and persuaded the FBI to look into his activities, apparently in connection with the MJ-12 document. The existence of an official program of disinformation aimed at ufologists does not sit well with Klass, the premier spokesman for the position that UFOs are bunk. But if Klass found anything showing that the Bennewitz affair was carried out without sanction and authority, he never published it.

## **DOTY'S COVER-UP LIVE ON ART BELL**

On February 27, 2005, Doty appeared as a guest on the Art Bell Coast to Coast radio program. This was his first public appearance, and Greg Bishop was on the air with him. The following are fragments from the program, which will give a flavor for what you will find in *Project Beta*, but these come directly from Doty.

[*Referring to the initial approach to Bennewitz*] "So we became very, very good friends, which is one thing you do in counterintelligence. You become friends with a person, you start abetting him. Yeah, and then eventually, you start feeding him information. And what we did was convinced him that what he was picking up wasn't anything classified from the base, but in fact it probably was of alien origin."

[*Bennewitz flew his private airplane to observe and photograph Archuleta Mesa, where Doty had said the alien base was situated. And Doty is able to gather other resources to enhance the illusion.*] "Paul was a pilot, he would fly up there, and he would photograph things. And he was convinced that the things that he was photographing was actually an alien base. So, what we did was we went ahead, fortified his thought by putting a fence up there around certain things, bringing in some helicopters from Fort Carson, Colorado, Army helicopters, which by the way, they were using that area as a training base, also. We had a couple of black helicopters."

[*Of interest perhaps to those with knowledge of the law is Doty's explanation of the utility of the disinformation campaign as a way around the "rules."*] "It was easier, it's easier for us to have done it that way than to get a warrant, search warrant, and a seizure warrant, seize all his property, seize his equipment. You know, what would that do? It would cause a lot of publicity. And the wrong type of publicity the base wanted."

[*Though he was the primary agent working on Bennewitz, Doty was only one of a team involved in the broader disinformation campaign, which ranged far from Kirtland.*] "Well, it just wasn't me. It was a team, I mean, I couldn't have done this all myself." [*And then referring to Linda Howe.*] "Well we, Linda was invited to Kirtland Air Force Base, and I was the primary agent. There were two other agents involved in it, not just me, but there's two others."

[*Art Bell challenges Doty: "I followed orders, but those orders never came down intentionally ordering me to lie to somebody."*] "Well, I didn't, I do feel the way you do, now, Art. I do, I really do. Then, I didn't. I mean, I didn't, I was a 28, 29-year-old. I didn't think of it that way. I was, it was an order, and it was an operation, and we were doing what we were told to do."

[*Doty is indoctrinated in UFO "facts" in preparation for his assignment to UFO disinformation projects.*] "They took me into a room and, at Air Force Special Security Office. There was a colonel and a civilian. There was two of us in there at that time to be briefed. They sat us down, and they gave us a slide presentation of, a short slide presentation of what we were going to get, and some other things. And then they showed us film, a 16-millimeter film, classified, coded word classified, which started, and it was a narration of Roswell. I mean this, what we were watching there was the actual film of the recovery operation in Roswell."

[*Doty meets William Moore.*] "I was tasked with, Bill Moore was recruited by another person within Defense Intelligence Agency, to provide, as a disinformation, he was recruited as an asset. That's what within the intelligence community they call a spy, a person that's working for you is an asset. And, Bill came to New Mexico, and I was tasked with contacting Bill after he had a, I think he did a radio clip on a talk show."

[*Art Bell asks: "How many of these big-time ufologists, names we would know, so to speak, have been approached by people who were in your line of work?"*] "I think probably a good number of prominent ufologists were approached at one time or the other. Some of them took the bait, some of them said, screw you, walked away."

[*On why the government continues to cover up the alien presence.*] "A lot of the disinformation is to protect technology. There's some things that we got from them, from the visitors that we're trying to protect. And that has to be safeguarded. And I agree with that. But I don't agree that just the mere fact that we were visited should be held up."

## PAID TO LIE

Doty presents us with a concrete example of the paradox, "Everything I say is a lie." He was paid to lie, trained in the art of lying, and rewarded for his success in lying.

There is little doubt that Doty is less than perfectly truthful about the events in Germany that affected his military career. And he seems uneasy with his status on the lower rungs of the educational and military rank hierarchies. Several times in *Project Beta* we find him boasting about having lunch in the Officer's Club. Early during the Art Bell interview we heard this exchange: Bell: "You were officer rank, by the way?" Doty: [*pause*] "I was a Special Agent, yes."

I think it entirely possible that the introductory briefing Doty received was itself phony. It included details about the

Yellow Book and the Red Book, presented to Doty as complete manuals describing the aliens and their culture, as well as film clips of the Roswell cleanup and the captured alien. At the risk of stating the obvious, headquarters would want to have its minions believing that story. It would insure the Dotys did their jobs with great zeal. And it is so full of preposterous details that the emergence of a whistle-blower like Doty would be insignificant. Who would believe him?

Great care must be exercised to distinguish between his account of the disinformation campaigns on the one hand, and his apparent belief in the substantive content of the disinformation he conveyed. There is ample external verification for the stories of disinformation campaigns against Bennewitz and Howe, per Doty's accounts in *Project Beta* and on the Art Bell program. But there is no external data supporting the Yellow Book scenarios.

In sum, the post-Air Force Doty is probably being honest. Almost.

Doty says his ultimate supervisor at OSI Headquarters was Colonel Barry Hennessey. When a colleague of mine asked Hennessey about Doty, Hennessey denounced him. But one must ask, where was Hennessey when he could have court-martialed Doty? Another supervisor was Colonel Richard Weaver, chief of counterintelligence during much of the Bennewitz period. Yes, this is the same Richard Weaver appointed by the Secretary of the Air Force to "investigate" the Roswell Incident.

An acquaintance of mine who spent a career as an intelligence official, and who has followed the UFO controversy with great interest and is well versed in the Bennewitz affair, was kind enough to offer me his opinion of Doty. I asked about Doty's credibility, but also commented on the questions raised by the existence of formal disinformation programs in the UFO field. He replied, "In fact, the only persons I have ever known to doubt Mr. Doty are persons not in government, and who don't know him." And in a general comment on the UFO problem, he stated, "My personal view on the entire area, come to after 30 years of analysis, is that the subject in its entirety is not a proper one for public discussion. To the extent the core story is true, it is legally protected by legitimate clearances and safeguards."

## FAILED OPPORTUNITIES

Much of what I have recounted so far appears in *Project Beta*, but the reader could do almost as well by consulting Jerome Clark's *The UFO Encyclopedia*, in the section he whimsically calls "The Dark Side." Unfortunately, author Greg Bishop has missed multiple opportunities to make this a significant book with broad appeal far beyond the UFO and conspiracy readerships. The subtitle of the book is "The story of Paul Bennewitz, National Security, and the Creation of a Modern UFO Myth." Three major topics, three golden opportunities to educate and fascinate the reader, but Bishop is never up to the task.

We learn next to nothing about Bennewitz the man, his

personality and how he changed over the years since the pivotal first encounter with Doty. Surely he had friends and business associates who could have fleshed it out. With a full social life and a thriving business at the outset, his decline could not have gone unnoticed.

Moore and Doty were the primary sources for this book. Bishop says he regularly lunches with Moore, and that he interviewed Doty at length over a long period. These men spent much time with Bennewitz and must have anecdotes to share that shed light on Bennewitz the human being, beyond Bennewitz the useful idiot that emerges monochromatically from the pages of *Project Beta*. Even stripped of the UFO context, the story of Paul Bennewitz is high drama, or would be at the hands of nearly any other author. Here he appears merely weird and wooden.

Bishop knows very little about ufology and his contempt for the field is evident throughout. That serious people take UFOs seriously seems to have escaped him. Thus any and all engaged in the field are painted as marginal characters. This ignorance infects the entire enterprise embarked upon by Bishop, which is to tell the story of systematic government lying about UFOs to one man, Paul Bennewitz.

Because he does not take UFOs seriously, Bishop fails to consider the broader issues. The book could have and should have dealt with the Bennewitz case as merely one in a long series of analogous operations, stretching at least as far back as the 1970s. In this way he could have fulfilled the promised exploration of "national security and the creation of a modern UFO myth."

## BEFORE AND BEYOND BENNEWITZ

In addition to the instances of disinformation listed previously, it is useful to consider other cases in which individuals were approached by intelligence officers with supposed inside information about UFOs. Here is a partial list:

1972—Movie producers Robert Emenegger and Allan Sandler were approached by Air Force officials and asked to cooperate in a documentary in which the government would reveal the reality of ET craft. The producers met at the Pentagon with Colonel William Coleman and Colonel George Weinbrenner, who told about various saucer crashes, and showed film of captive aliens, survivors of a crash. A year later, the producers were invited to Norton Air Force Base, where they were told by the head of OSI at the base and Paul Shartle, chief of the audiovisual program, that film of the aliens would be made available for the planned documentary. Soon thereafter, the offer was rescinded, and the Air Force rebuffed further inquiries from the puzzled producers. In 1988 Shartle said he was told by the Air Force that the film in question was "theatrical footage for a training film."

Early 1980s—Colonel William Coleman again contacted Robert Emenegger, this time renewing the offer of film and other proof of the ET nature of UFOs, but only if Emenegger could convince ufologists Jacques Vallee and

J. Allen Hynek to get involved. Coleman was retired from the Air Force when he made this contact. Hynek, and then Vallee, visited Norton AFB, where they were briefed by Brigadier General Glenn E. Miller, deputy director of the Defense Audiovisual Agency (DAVA), and the director, Major General Robert Scott. According to Vallee, the briefing by these senior officers sounded like the rantings of a contactee. Neither Vallee nor Hynek wanted any part of this obvious fraud.

1986—AF Captain Robert Collins, an associate of Richard Doty, contacted ufologist Leonard Stringfield, specialist in crash stories. Collins offered documents and an introduction to Lieutenant Colonel Ernie Kellerstraus, who claims a wealth of "insider" information. Stringfield doesn't bite, so Collins moves on to Dr. Bruce Macabee, who does engage in lengthy contact with Kellerstraus, the thrust of which is Collins-Doty UFO history.

1987—UFO and stealth aircraft hobbyist Lee Graham was employed as an aerospace technician when he was approached by Bill Moore and given copies of the MJ-12 documents. Afraid he might lose his clearance and thus his job, Graham took the documents to his supervisors, requesting an investigation. Moore was untouched, but the Defense Investigative Service grilled Graham! Later, he was visited at work by FBI agent William Hurley, in company with Major General Michael Kerby. Both praised Graham for his work in disseminating the MJ-12 papers to the public. Kerby told him details of the stealth fighter that were still secret. A mystified and still frightened Graham cut off contact with Moore.

1987—Whitley Strieber received a provocative letter that included a telephone number. When he called, he was told, "We are in a war here, and you're on the front line," along with details about the alien invaders. Strieber hired a private detective, who traced the telephone number and mail drop to a Defense Department exchange in Colorado.

1988—Stringfield is suddenly and simultaneously contacted by no less than 10 "informants," all of whom have crashed saucer stories to tell.

1988—A television special titled "UFO Cover-up Live" is aired. Richard Doty and Robert Collins appear on camera, though with faces and voices distorted, giving the public the "truth" about the aliens in captivity, etc. The program is remembered mainly for the straight-faced claim that the aliens living in captivity like strawberry ice cream and Tibetan music.

Late 1980s—John Lear emerges with essentially the same story fed to Bennewitz, but with more grisly elaborations. He insists that his source is "a highly placed intelligence official." People who know Lear attest to his honesty and common sense in all areas other than UFOs.

Late 1980s—Film producer Robert Emenegger is approached again, and this time he is promised a meeting with a live alien.

1989—British ufologist and author Timothy Good is approached by the Ringling Brothers Circus with an offer to produce a traveling UFO display. Good was assured that

NASA and other government agencies would support the project. It came to nothing.

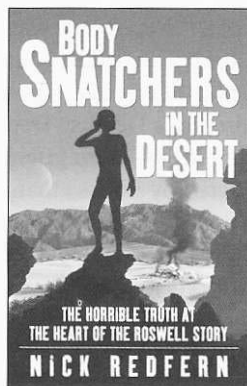
1989—Veteran *New York Times* journalist Howard Blum was preparing a book about the Walker family spy case when in the course of interviewing a senior NSA official he was given a strange tip. Although the tip had nothing to do with the Walker case, Blum was told that a high-level group within the intelligence community was studying the UFO problem, and that apparently they favored the ET explanation. Blum's book *Out There* recounts his trip through this UFO (and disinformation) never-never land. Doty is prominently mentioned in the book.

1995—Jenny Randles and several other British ufologists are told of the Alien Autopsy film and then watch a presentation of the film. It causes a sensation until serious questions are asked about its provenance. But television programs continue to show stills of the "alien" when introducing UFO programming.

1996—Ufologist Nick Redfern is approached by a British civil servant, beginning a series of referrals to other "sources" who combine to build a case for an alternative to an ET Roswell. In the new version, all is explained by nuclear experiments, Japanese super-balloons, and horrid experiments on human subjects.

Nick Redfern, *Body Snatchers in the Desert: The Horrible Truth at the Heart of the Roswell Story*. New York: Paraview, 2005. \$14.00.

I will admit that when I first read *Body Snatchers* I thought Redfern had written a novel. Just flesh out the characters, add some sex and violence, and voila! And then he decided there was a bigger market in nonfiction Roswell. But Redfern is a known quantity in ufology, the author of a series of good books in the field. The alternative, which I think is almost certainly the true state of affairs, is that he is the latest victim of the relentless program to disinform ufology. When the book is read with this in mind, it becomes coherent, even humorous.



## THE REAL ROSWELL INCIDENT

In Redfern's words,

Forget flying saucers. Roswell had nothing to do with the crash of an extraterrestrial space vehicle. The truth is much darker and far more disturbing and has been covered up for more than half a century.

What happened, in short, is this: in May 1947, an experimental aircraft that was born out of the revolutionary aviation research of the Horten brothers of Germany was test-flown from White Sands, New

Mexico. The flight was part of a larger project begun in 1946 to examine the feasibility of both constructing and flying a nuclear powered aircraft. On board the vehicle were a number of physically handicapped people who had been found in the remnants of the Japanese military's Unit 731 laboratories and who were used in this dark and disturbing experiment—the purpose of which was to try to better understand the effects of nuclear-powered flights on an aircrew. The experiment ended in disaster when the aircraft crash-landed at White Sands, killing some of the crew.

Two months later, in early July 1947, a second and similar vehicle was, once again, flown from White Sands. In this particular instance, the aircraft was affixed to a huge balloon array that was based upon advanced Fugo balloon designs developed in the closing stages of World War II by Japanese forces. The aircraft was piloted by a crew of Japanese personnel who had been specifically trained for the task and crashed near the Foster Ranch. . . .

Judging from the uproar on Internet chat sites (for example, [www.virtuallystrange.net/ufo/updates/](http://www.virtuallystrange.net/ufo/updates/)), Redfern is being taken very seriously. Those who have been critical of the ET hypothesis for Roswell, and who now admit the deficiencies of the Mogul explanation, have rushed to embrace the new revelations.

## OPERATION PAPERCLIP

Operation Paperclip was the codename under which the U.S. intelligence and military services extracted approximately 500 scientists from Germany, during and after the final stages of World War II. Most of these were involved in the V-1 and V-2 rocket projects. The scientists and their families were spirited into the U.S. in great secrecy and without State Department approval. Some aspects of Paperclip remain classified, although there is a large literature on this fascinating episode.

Redfern claims that there was an analogous Japanese Paperclip project, comprised of two elements, (1) biological warfare and, (2) long-range manned balloon technology. Experts in both areas, whose hands were as bloody as those of the Nazi Paperclip crowd, were secretly brought to the United States and employed in research projects.

## RICE-PAPER CLIP

The Japanese operated a truly hideous biological warfare laboratory using human subjects. This was known to the Allies and the project's files remaining upon capitulation were sent back to the U.S. At least a few of the project personnel were questioned at length in Japan. There is ample documentation of the existence of the project, the specific activities it encompassed, and the interrogation of the few principals who were found. A considerable litera-



ture produced by American and Soviet investigators is available on the Japanese Army's Unit 731. However, there is no documentation offered by Redfern for the pivotal claim that the U.S. imported Unit 731 personnel and put them to work, à la Paperclip.

Similarly, there was a Japanese long-range balloon project, but it consisted of primitive rice-paper balloons carrying several small incendiary bombs. These were the Fugo balloons, 32 feet in diameter, lofted into the stratosphere where they were pushed eastward toward North America by the prevailing jet streams. Over 9,000 were launched, with an estimated 300 arriving on this side of the Pacific Ocean, landing all the way from Alaska to Mexico, but few making it over the mountain ranges, and with almost no damage inflicted. As a military weapon, Fugo has to be one of the least effective on record. But apparently it will live forever as a prop in the search for explanations of UFO reports.

In Redfern's version, the Fugo designers were not hapless dead-enders, but brilliant engineers ready to launch "a huge balloon array that was based upon advanced Fugo balloon designs developed in the closing stages of World War II." But he provides absolutely no documentation even for the claim that they were designing such a device, much less that they were ready to launch one. Unlike Bill Moore, who proffered as documentation for his MJ-12 disinformation photocopies of the MJ-12 briefing document, Redfern leaves us bereft of even questionable documentation!

And this array really had to be huge, because if we credit Redfern, it was to have a crew of four, and would fly in the stratosphere just like the Fugo. Thus it would need oxygen and heat to keep the crew alive during the two or three-day flight. They would have no more control of the flight path than did the Fugos, so their deadly freight of microbes might be wasted on an Alaskan glacier or Mexican desert. The practical difficulties with this proposed balloon are such that it strikes me as ridiculous. Even in recent years, with modern technology available, manned balloons flying long distances are a very tricky proposition, one in which the rare success makes headlines.

## DOCUMENTATION?

But what really sinks Redfern is that, once again on a pivotal claim, he has absolutely no documentation. What he offers us is a single 1945 American newspaper article! The article quotes a Japanese military source in what is obviously desperate bravado, probably propaganda designed to lift domestic spirits by invoking a super-weapon.

The insertion of nuclear power and radiation experiments into the story is puzzling, and similarly flawed. The well-documented efforts to create nuclear propulsion came much later than 1947, there is no record of such experiments in the White Sands area, and what scientists wanted to know about the effects of radiation on humans was found without resorting to flying test subjects seated near radiation sources

in an aircraft. Again, the studies of radiation on humans are the subject of extensive documentation, most of it commentary on the lamentable amorality of the researchers, but there for all to study. Redfern's version is not part of the record.

And finally, there is the matter of the "revolutionary aviation research of the Horten brothers of Germany." Redfern devotes an entire chapter (Hitler's Disks) to the Nazi super-weapons, a standard explanation for UFOs with its own fairly extensive literature, all of it based on rumors, none of it based on fact. The Horten brothers developed several models of flying wings, a design that never found significant practical application until years later. They were failed experimenters in their native Germany and later in England immediately after the war, where their "revolutionary" research was studied and found wanting. On the general topic of Hitler's Disks and so on, one should ask why, as the Red Army bore down on Berlin and the Americans formed a wall to the west, the German hierarchy did not deploy any of these purportedly revolutionary flying machines?

The flying wing, Redfern insists, was attached to the huge balloon, and was meant to be a means to glide to safety after spraying the Reds with deadly microbes or plutonium dust. The contraption got hit by lightning, got entangled, and crashed, ending the research program, but of course launching the Roswell Incident.

As a veteran of 36 years as a pilot with the U.S. Navy and two major airlines, including a stint as manager of flight engineering for one of the airlines, I have developed a feel for what a practical flying device can and can not be. The balloon-wing combination fails the common-sense test. Furthermore, there are sources of true expertise on the history of aviation that Redfern could have consulted, such as the Experimental Aircraft Association and the Smithsonian Institution. I will defer to experts like these to judge the fundamental feasibility of the Redfern balloon-wing and whether anything like it ever existed.

## SOURCES?

By far the most interesting aspect of *Body Snatchers* are the sources for the Redfern scenario. As we have seen, he has nothing in the way of the documentation that would satisfy even the flexible standards of ufology, much less those of a historian. But he has a great wealth of help from voluble "insiders" who believe it is high time the real story of Roswell was told. They are quoted throughout the book without the slightest wink or nod.

Redfern: "From 1996 to 2004, I spoke with a number of military and intelligence whistle-blowers, all of whom related to me the details of a series of shocking post-World War II experiments undertaken on American soil." Here they are, with what little we are told about them by way of biographical information. (Before proceeding, it might be instructive to return to and review the short history of disinformation projects in the section titled "Before and

(continued on page 31)

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## VENUSIANS—continued from page 18

ever, the older man stood outside in mid-air, and he spoke, but his words were not coordinated with his lips; they seemed to emanate from the ship moments after the mouth movement. Helge was given a metal plate and instructed to wear it always. The being instructed him to go to the Bahamas (and specifically to the Bahamian island of Little Exuma) as their representative. Helge declined on the grounds that he could not speak English, was uneducated, and had a wife to care for. All to no avail—he was told that he had no choice in the matter.

Afterwards, Helge buried the plate, a small rectangle made of an aluminum-like material, about three inches wide by two inches thick, with three rows of symbols on one side. The following March, leaving it behind, he and Anna nonetheless went to the Bahamas to live. On the flight there, they noticed 14 men who, because of their black dress, they assumed were Catholic priests. The “priests,” however, were nowhere in sight when everyone else left the airliner. Beyond that curious little incident, nothing of significance happened. Too embarrassed to return to their hometown, Helge and Anna moved south of Stockholm to an apartment arranged for them by a small UFO group which knew something about his experience. A wealthy member of the club offered to finance further trips to the Bahamas.

Helge drove to Uddevalla and dug up the plate. Heading back to Stockholm, he stopped at a gas station where an oddly dressed old man, sporting black slouch hat and black cape, approached and asked if he could accompany him. Helge agreed to take him. On the way the stranger revealed himself to be one of the “priests” on the flight, identifying himself as Father Rapas (“Ra Paz” in one account). He worked for the “overlords,” as he called them, who had contacted Helge earlier. He directed Helge to return to the Bahamas and to bring along the plate this time. Rapas took over the driving, and Helge dozed off. When he awoke, the car was parked near its destination, and the driver was gone.

The couple stayed at a hotel in Nassau as 1967 turned into 1968. This time Helge was taken alone in a boat with two others to a small Bahamian island. Through an opening they entered a mountain, and inside it they found themselves in an extraterrestrial base where they observed several kinds of entities, including giants, dwarfs, and hermaphrodites. From then on, however, Helge would deal with the sorts of Venusians who occupy more typical contactee literature: beautiful and golden-haired.

Helge came back with orders to found a group to be called the New Generation, which was to attract young people to work for peace and justice. The core was the small UFO group that had formed around Helge, who showed its members what he alleged was a letter from Rapas. Its language was blunt to the point of rudeness: “We detest you. That is why we believe in the youth; they are the only ones whose hands are not soiled with the blood of others. . . . Your catchword shall be: Freedom from violence—from hun-

ger—we are all brothers and sisters. . . . You who have supported [Helge] shall not be forgotten; you shall reap a hundredfold, but if someone hurts him or his devoted wife, I say, they shall be revenged sevenfold.” Rapas also produced a list of 65 rules members were obliged to follow—or else. Helge himself was to stay in the background.

The New Generation fell apart within months. Its members, unenthusiastic from the start, felt anxious about the threats, and the group’s wealthy benefactor expressed displeasure at being asked for large sums of money whose purpose was never explained to him. The New Generation did generate some coverage in the Swedish press, but its origins in space-contact claims were kept secret. Following the movement’s collapse, Helge withdrew into seclusion and cut off ties with nearly everyone.

His adventures continued, and he traveled to the Bahamas and to Mexico doing the work of the spacemen (there were no women involved past the first incident in 1965). Sometimes he flew in spacecraft. He met other humans, including an American who was murdered soon afterwards; the space people explained that the man had either been a CIA agent or leaked information about their whereabouts to the agency. Helge hated and feared the overlords, characterizing his association with them a “hell.” He was afraid to cut himself off from them because he was sure they would kill him if he did. The overlords lacked any sense of compassion; whatever their verbal assertions to the contrary, their actions showed they cared nothing about human suffering, even if it was occurring right in front of them. Helge felt like no more than an animal when he was around them. They never slept, as far as he could tell, and they lived on no more than liquid sustenance. They were either ignorant or disingenuous; when asked a question, they would not respond immediately but come back up with a vague answer 24 hours later. Helge came to suspect that they harbored sinister intentions on the human race, perhaps planning to infiltrate the population until they could take over.

At one point, noting that contactees such as Adamski and Howard Menger, who purportedly worked with good space people, also spoke of evil aliens who opposed them, Helge said he had fallen in with the wrong group. He died of a heart attack on October 23, 1977, at the age of 64.

The Swedish ufologist Håkan Blomqvist spoke with Helge only once, in 1973, and the phone conversation was brief. Helge said little more than that he was forbidden to talk about his experience. Over a period of years, Blomqvist pieced it together from informants who knew Helge. After the contactee’s death he was able to track down the Stockholm doctor who had treated him between 1968 and 1972. The physician saw no evidence that Helge suffered from any mental disorder; yet he spoke from time to time of his dealings with extraterrestrials. Most of all, the doctor had the impression of a badly frightened individual.

Blomqvist interviewed Helge’s widow Anna in June 1984. “Like her former husband,” the investigator wrote, “she is very down to earth and practical. She confirmed almost all

the details of the contact and added several interesting pieces of information. What startled me somewhat was her almost total lack of interest in the subject of UFOs.”

She recalled that her first meeting with an ostensible spaceman was during the third trip to the Bahamas. Insisting that he was supposed to meet one of his contacts there, Helge led her to a Nassau disco. There she encountered a short, peculiar-looking man with hypnotic eyes. At one point the stranger produced a photograph which he said depicted his family who lived on Venus (or maybe it was Saturn; Anna was not sure about the precise planet of residence). After that Anna stayed home while her husband traveled alone to the islands. He sometimes would be gone as long as a month, returning with a deep tan. The spacemen frequently came to the couple’s place in Sweden, however, and she witnessed—at least peripherally—some of their interactions with Helge.

After years of monitoring developments to the best of his ability, Blomqvist was inclined to the view that everyone was sincere and that something very strange had indeed taken place. On the other hand, he confessed, “sometimes I get a feeling of unreality, like reading a science fiction novel.” More specifically, Helge’s tale has the resonance of a tale written by the late Argentine fantasist Jorge Luis Borges.

It also is consistent with a notion argued in the writings of the controversial occult journalist John A. Keel (b. 1930). In Keel’s judgment Venusians and other ostensible space people exist as extraordinary entities but are not who they say they are. Beneath their friendly extraterrestrial exter-

iors, they are sinister “ultraterrestrials”—demons by another name—from an invisible realm Keel calls the “Super-spectrum,” known in traditional mystical lore as the astral or etheric world. In *UFOs: Operation Trojan Horse* (1970) he puts it this way:

Suppose a strange metallic disk covered with flashing colored lights settled in *your* backyard and a tall man in a one-piece silver space suit got out. Suppose he looked unlike any man you had ever seen before, and when you asked him where was he was from, he replied, “I am from Venus.” Would you argue with him? Chances are you would accept his word for it. . . . Buried within the context of all the contactees’ messages there are clues to an even more complex threat. A direct threat to us. . . . The endless descriptions of peaceful far-off worlds and shining cities of glass are only subterfuges.

Even those taking a more benign view of Venusians have been forced to bow to the reality that the planet cannot possibly support intelligent life. While Venusians no longer comprise the leading extraterrestrial faction in contact claims, they still make the rounds, almost always these days as channeling spirit entities rather than as physical saucer pilots. Contactees and their followers now say that the “Venus” of Adamski and his successors was and is a sort of parallel-universe—or higher-vibrational—counterpart to the planet of our lower-vibrational place on the vibrational scale. The moral of the story is that astronomical discoveries can’t kill Venusians, but they can render them invisible. ♦

## Philip J. Klass, 1919–2005

Philip J. Klass, aviation journalist and UFO debunker, died in a nursing home in Cocoa, Florida, on August 9, 2005. Cause of death, according to press reports, was prostate cancer. He had moved to Merritt Island, Florida, in 2003 after residing in Washington, D.C., for more than half a century.

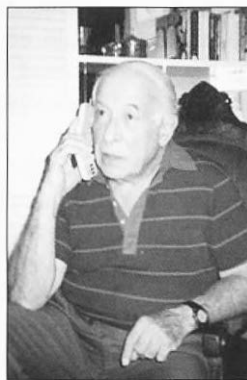
Klass rose to prominence on the UFO scene with an article in the August 22, 1966, issue of *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, of which he was an editor. Klass theorized that UFOs are indeed extraordinary phenomena: a form of plasma (electrified air), some of whose manifestations are so dramatic that science has yet to document or understand them. He expanded this idea into a full-length book, *UFOs Explained* (1968). The theory was dismissed as scientifically unsustainable—pseudoscientific, to put it bluntly—by atmospheric physicists, including the University of Arizona’s James E. McDonald and, later, a panel assembled by the Condon Committee.

The approach that Klass would bring to his UFO work became evident early on, after UFO proponent McDonald’s debunking of Klass’s plasma theory (which Klass refused to

disavow, though he ceased to discuss it publicly ever after). He devoted the next 18 months to an effort to cause McDonald trouble and embarrassment, going so far as to pressure the Office of Naval Research to cancel a contract with McDonald

for a scientific project unrelated to UFOs. Klass also launched, and distributed as widely as possible, a series of white papers, heavily italicized, intended to raise questions about McDonald’s personal integrity—a method he would employ against other antagonists in later years, none more so than abductee Travis Walton.

With *UFOs – Explained* (1974) Klass introduced the style for which he would be best known: seeking to account for puzzling reports with explanations presented as prosaic, buttressed with accusations that witnesses were lying or exaggerating in the interest of financial gain or public attention. Other books in that vein followed. Klass became a hero to the emerging debunking movement and was a founding member in the 1970s of the influential Committee for the Scientific Explanation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP). Not all fellow skeptics were taken with his approach, and some were publicly or privately



critical of what they viewed as his excesses, including a penchant for lacerating personal attacks on those who too firmly dissented from Klassian dicta.

I met Klass on a few occasions, the first of them at his condominium in Washington in September 1980, and found him a hard man to like, and not because we disagreed about UFOs. He simply struck me as a man not overflowing in social graces. Still, we corresponded at great length between the late 1970s and the early 1990s, when Klass angrily terminated the exchange.

I once wrote a comprehensive survey of his methods ("Klass vs. the 'UFO Promoters,'" *Fate*, February 1981). Even then, it seemed to some observers that ufology had been transformed into Klass's personal Satan; in some of his polemical excesses, he appeared to view ufologists as something like the personification of evil, once even depicting them as *de facto* allies of the Soviet Union because, like the Communists, UFO proponents judged some U.S. government pronouncements to be dubiously credible.

As I remarked in the *Fate* profile, "Klass never has missed an opportunity to portray himself as the martyr, the outcast whose sole interest is in finding and perpetuating Truth... while 'UFO promoters'—he can no longer bring himself to call them UFO proponents—cynically exploit public credulity and ignore his reasonable explanations of cases." In a sense Klass was less a UFO antagonist than a demonologist.

Some excitable UFO proponents returned the favor, with dark hints or overheated charges that he was actually a CIA agent tasked to cover up the reality of extraterrestrial visitation. Klass, of course, was no such thing. If anything, he suffered from too much sincerity. More sober ufologists provided point-by-point refutations of his explanations for prominent cases. But as with all crusaders, Klass barely noticed. Facts were not ends in themselves, only a means to a larger end, and if they did not serve, they were discarded.

He attracted an audience of those who, if they knew nothing else about UFOs, know they are nonsense, and they had Klass to speak for them. For years he published a newsletter which catered to UFOphobes and to those who like their sentences italicized, underlined, set in bold type, and ending in exclamation points—sometimes all at the same time. Though Klass more and more came across as a self-parodist, he was—and doubtless will remain—the hero of a movement of true-believing disbelievers. To the more open-minded, however, he will serve as the personification of the fanatic: one who, having lost sight of his objective, redoubles his efforts. —*Jerome Clark*

### FUND FOR UFO RESEARCH

As a partner with CUFOS in the UFO Research Coalition, the Fund for UFO Research has long been engaged in the support of scientific research and education. Tax-deductible contributions can be sent to: Fund for UFO Research, P.O. Box 277, Mt. Rainier, MD 20712.

### KECKSBURG—continued from page 9

four states before entering the Pennsylvania skies; we have to rely on witness reports and amateur photographs for this part of the object's journey.

In order to address whether the object was a secret military or government experiment, we need a greater understanding of the technology our government possessed in 1965. Could the military have created devices with the capabilities that this object demonstrated? If this is something so secret that there is no accessible paper trail, there may not be any way to definitively answer this question, no matter how far-fetched the possibility becomes.

The more we learn about the Kecksburg case, the fewer the options become to explain the mysterious object, making the case all the more compelling. As Peter Sturrock, emeritus professor of applied physics at Stanford University, says: "In principle, we can prove a hypothesis not only by finding strong evidence in its favor, but also by finding strong evidence against every other possibility."

### STONEWALLING AND THE NASA LAWSUIT

CFi's initial round of requests under the Freedom of Information Act, sent in January 2003, targeted over a dozen federal and state agencies for information on various aspects of the Kecksburg incident. In most cases, we received a "no records" response or were referred to other agencies.

NASA was unique, however, in that it denied us records that we knew were in the agency's possession as recently as eight years ago when materials were released to other investigators. We had asked NASA for documents on four specific items which we knew they had, including the "Fragology Files" from 1962 to 1967, described as "reports of space objects' recovery, [and] analysis of fragments to determine national ownership and vehicle origin."

In 1995, NASA sent Gordon a "records transmittal and receipt" listing the fragology files by name. However, he could not view the content of the files because NASA claimed that they had been missing since 1987. This was questionable, since the first list that Gordon received had a handwritten notation saying that the files were at the Federal Records Center in 1994. A subsequent copy of this same document released by NASA had the "1994" notation removed, when NASA informed CFi that the files were missing.

The list of fragology files includes the name "Richard M. Schulherr" as custodian of these files during the time of the Kecksburg incident. Schulherr, a NASA engineer, also served as NASA representative for Project Moondust in the 1960s, as indicated by a Moondust report signed by Schulherr and released through FOIA. Thus, along with the fragology files, we requested records on NASA employee Schulherr and on Project Moondust in general.

The highly secret Project Moondust would have very likely been involved with the Kecksburg retrieval if the

event occurred as witnesses report. According to an official 1961 Air Force Intelligence memo, classified at the time, Project Moondust's function was "to locate, recover, and deliver descended foreign space vehicles." The memo also states that the same Air Force Air Intelligence Squadron responsible for Moondust, which had field units stationed throughout the U.S., was responsible for the "investigation of reliably reported unidentified flying objects within the United States." It goes on to say that these functions involve "employment of qualified field intelligence personnel on a quick reaction basis to recover or perform field exploitation of unidentified flying objects, or known Soviet/Bloc aerospace vehicles, weapons systems, and/or residual components of such equipment."

Since we already had a document confirming that Schulherr was indeed on NASA's staff in the 1960s, a "no records" response to this request, among others, pointed to a "no effort" non-search on the part of NASA's FOIA office.

The appeal to NASA's rebuff, filed on behalf of CFI by Lobel, Novins & Lamont in May 2003, included five exhibits demonstrating that the agency had previously released the requested information, including documents on Project Moondust and Cosmos 96 which we had also requested, and that Schulherr did indeed work for NASA.

Among the exhibits was an intriguing news article about Schulherr's activities in 1968, when he "flashed fancy government credentials" and required the person in possession of a mysterious cone-shaped object found in the North Carolina woods to release it for testing in Washington. The reporter states that Schulherr was "a staff engineer" with NASA. In his letter about the analysis of the object—determined to be junk from a metal refining operation—Schulherr explains that the object was tested since "potentially it could have been a fragment of space hardware, a meteorite, or terrestrial material of uncommon shape." This illustrates his role at NASA only three years after the Kecksburg incident, particularly of interest since two witnesses reported seeing clearly identified NASA officials on the scene. (Unfortunately, we found out that Schulherr is deceased, and his family members declined to speak with us.)

In June, NASA granted CFI's appeal and remanded the request back to its FOIA office for a new search, at which time it committed to undertake responsive searches on an "expedited basis."

Since no response was provided, despite this promise, and after waiting a total of 10 months for information pertinent to the Kecksburg case, CFI announced its intent to file a lawsuit at a Washington press conference in October 2003. As had occurred the year before at our first press conference, this event was widely covered by national and international media, including Reuters. A piece on the national television channel MSNBC opened by stating, "You know stories in small towns often tend to take on a life of their own. . . . Well now the Sci Fi Channel is trying to get to the bottom of it all, going so far as to join a lawsuit against the government to reveal what it knows."

"I think it's fair to say that we have truly entered the realm of science fiction in Washington, D.C.," commented John Podesta at this second press conference, "when it's fair game to disclose the identity of a clandestine CIA agent [reference to Valerie Plame] but not the records of an unexplained crash in Kecksburg, Pennsylvania, that occurred 38 years ago."

Within hours of the press conference, NASA informed our attorney, Lee Helfrich, that the agency would release 36 pages of documents immediately, an apparent attempt to thwart legal action. However, the material proved to be useless and unresponsive. The lawsuit, in which I am the plaintiff, was filed in Washington, D.C., on December 9, 2003, the 38th anniversary of the Kecksburg incident. "I'm hopeful that our lawsuit will be successful because NASA has given us a great record to show that it's recalcitrant and acting in bad faith," Helfrich said.

As of this writing, the court is still considering the case. Helfrich summarizes the status of the case as follows:

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia denied NASA's request for a ruling that its search for records was adequate, but gave the agency another opportunity to make its case. NASA took the court up on its offer and filed new affidavits of agency officials, under penalty of perjury, to support its claim that the FOIA search was exhaustive. Kean immediately filed papers with the court highlighting that NASA's new affidavits contained factual representations that were flatly contrary to the facts relied upon by NASA in support of its original motion. The court is now considering this new round of information.

The lawsuit against NASA could be the first of several against government agencies, including the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, and the Department of Defense, which continue to stonewall efforts to obtain records on the Kecksburg incident under the Freedom of Information Act.

Another amazing example of recalcitrance occurred when we sent a second request to the U.S. Army following its initial unwillingness to take action. We provided the Army with newspaper articles that clearly state the Army was on the scene, along with excerpts from a detailed radio broadcast revealing the same. We included signed witness statements of encounters with Army personnel, some stating that soldiers pointed weapons at civilians, and descriptions of clearly marked Army vehicles. Reporter Robert Gatty's account stated that he saw 10 or more Army personnel preventing people and reporters from entering the area where the object was believed to have landed, and that he questioned some of them.

We documented all of this for the Army, but it made no difference. Helfrich points out that the Army regulation on specificity advises the public to provide "descriptive information" that "is event related and includes the circumstances that resulted in the record being created or the date and circumstances surrounding the event the record cov-

ers." CFI's information established the participation of the Army, including military personnel from the U.S. Army Support Detachment in Oakdale, in a publicly acknowledged investigation of a landed object on December 9, 1965, at 4:45 p.m. near the town of Kecksburg. Even so, the Army FOIA office told CFI that we had not described what we wanted with sufficient specificity to enable it even to begin a FOIA search!

Throughout this process, the archival research firm History Associates conducted extensive searches at federal records centers and other government and military repositories outside the Washington, D.C., area. Files at some of these locations are not publicly available and can only be examined through permission of the agency that created them, which of course makes access difficult, and in some cases they may be classified. History Associates was able to provide us with specific accession numbers for files in various repositories that we then presented to NASA and the Army. These other facilities may contain the requested documents that FOIA offices have not been able to locate, but the process of acquiring them is laborious and costly, if it's possible at all.

To this day, no government agency other than the Air Force (in Project Blue Book) has even acknowledged that anything took place on December 9, 1965, in Kecksburg, let alone released any relevant information about the incident.

## THE SMOKING GUN

Perhaps the most important breakthrough since I became involved in the case took place back in the Kecksburg woods, at the crash site that Romansky and Bulebush had independently shown to Stan Gordon years earlier. In the spring of 2003, the Sci Fi Channel brought geomorphologist and geoarcheologist J. Steven Kite and Professor of Forestry Ray R. Hicks, both of West Virginia University, to the site.

Kite conducted an investigation with two archeologists from the Department of Geology and Geography to search for "physical evidence of landscape disturbance or artifacts that might be associated with the 1965 event," supplemented by a magnetometer and radiation survey.

Kite did not find any relevant surface disturbance or artifacts associated with the incident and could offer no confirmation that anything exceptional occurred at the site in 1965. "The evidence was either so meager as to be easily overlooked, or was subsequently obliterated or obscured by natural or artificial processes," he stated. He noted that the methods of his team "would have been sufficient to discern any digging, bulldozing, or burial done to 'cover-up' the evidence of the 1965 event. In fact, a cover-up would be easier for trained geomorphologists to identify than the evidence of a low-energy impact event." Gordon and others have noted that since the object landed in a stream bed with water running through it intermittently, erosion would make detection of soil disturbance extremely difficult after all these years. In any case, Kite pointed out that no past event

can be ruled out based on negative evidence.

However, Kite went on to make another important observation based on his study. "The obvious lack of widespread destruction from the 1965 impact allows one possible explanation to be eliminated as a cause of the December 1965 observations: high-velocity impact by a large, intact satellite or meteorite. At least one account related an object 'about the size of a Volkswagon' being hauled away from the site during the night after the event. If such an object, especially a dense meteorite, impacted the earth at high velocity, the impact would have created havoc for the surrounding forest vegetation and left a pronounced impact crater." He notes that the vegetation and landscape he studied "record neither such a high-velocity impact nor the major reclamation effort that would be required to cover up the evidence of such an event."

Ray Hicks, on the other hand, made a significant discovery through his study of the trees, providing solid physical evidence that something came down. With the help of witness John Hayes, who lived next to the location in 1965 and observed tree damage at the time, Hicks was able to find the damaged trees which matched photographs of large broken branches taken by Gordon at the same location in the mid-1980s. The falling object is believed to have made this damage.

"I utilized the photographs as a primary source of information and based on the tree species, as recognized from the photos and the crown architecture, I was able to find the exact trees pictured in one photograph," Hicks explained in a written statement.

He presented his findings following the airing of a November 2003 Sci Fi Channel documentary making the new discoveries public for the first time. He writes:

The trees were approximately 70 years of age, which would make them approximately 40 years old in 1965. The growth pattern was determined for the trees by observing the width of annual rings. One of the trees in the photo was a black cherry which had its top broken out (presumably after being struck by the object). Unfortunately this tree was now hollow from decay that was probably a result of the wound. This made it impossible to look at the growth rings of this tree. But an adjacent undamaged black walnut tree, also pictured in the photo, did display a slight increase in growth for a few years following 1965. This would be consistent with the fact that the adjacent black cherry tree was broken in 1965, since it would provide additional growing space for the undamaged walnut tree.

Hicks attempted to reconstruct the most likely trajectory path of the object using plastic flagging. He states:

One of the trees (a white ash) along this path displayed a forked and crooked stem at a height that would be consistent with the assumed trajectory. We obtained an increment core from the tree and again looked at the growth pattern of the rings. There was a dramatic

reduction in growth of this tree that appeared to begin in 1967 or 1968 and lasted for about 20 years. If I missed one or two rings in the count, it would put the year of reduced growth at 1966. This would be consistent with this tree being damaged in 1965. An adjacent ash of similar age and size, but outside the assumed trajectory was cored and it did not display the dramatic growth reduction of the ash that was in the path. This would suggest that the reason for the dramatic growth reduction of the tree in the path was not due to a climatic event, such as drought, but was probably due to some specific injury to the tree.

Standing in the woods at the time, and speaking to the producers of the documentary, Steven Kite spontaneously commented on the significance of his colleague's discovery. "The damage that Ray [Hicks] identified formed a pattern. It formed a clear trajectory. It is a reasonable trajectory from some of the other observations that were made. And the real nice thing about it, it has a date to it: 1965. And since there is obvious, visible damage, that is a smoking gun so to speak, as to what caused the decrease in growth of that individual tree."

The Air Force stance that nothing came down is now even more untenable. Trees do not tell tall tales or engage in group hallucinations. The saying has it that we often can't see the forest for the trees, but in this case, it's the trees that show us the true nature of the forest.

What was the importance of the object that caused the military to rapidly respond to the tiny village of Kecksburg? Who authorized soldiers to brandish weapons at local citizens approaching the landing site? For how long will the citizens of Pennsylvania be denied information that is rightly theirs under American law? We still don't have the answers to these and many other questions, despite the four decades that have passed. The U.S. government may never reveal the true identity of the Kecksburg object, but the investigation has been well worth the effort—and it's not over yet. ♦

### EX-MINISTER SPEAKS AT UFO CON

Paul Hellyer, Canadian Minister of National Defence from 1963 to 1968, announced in September that he believes UFOs are extraterrestrial visitors and that some governments—the United States at least—know all about it and are covering up. He also believes American scientists have re-engineered alien wreckage from the UFO crash at Roswell, N. Mex., in 1947 to produce modern technical marvels.

Hellyer spoke September 25 at a conference sponsored by MUFON Central Canada and held on the University of Toronto campus. He described a UFO sighting he had while camping out with his wife and some friends: "A bright light appeared in the sky and appeared to zig and zag across the horizon." He added that he started taking the issue much more seriously after watching ABC-TV's UFO special with Peter Jennings in February 2005.

### DOTY—continued from page 25

Beyond Bennewitz." The parallels with Redfern's encounters with his sources are obvious and depressing.)

Redfern was first approached in London by a man with British Home Office credentials who claimed to be a UFO buff and who gave him the broad outlines of the Japanese Paperclip Roswell tale. But there was no follow-up, and Redfern forgot about it until five years later, when he was approached by . . . The Black Widow.

"Because she does not want her identity revealed, for reasons that will shortly become apparent, I will refer to her as the Black Widow. From the mid-1940s to the early 1950s, she had been assigned to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Tennessee, and she said she had firsthand knowledge of the Roswell mystery that I 'might find interesting.'" She approached him after a speaking engagement in Los Angeles in 2001: "Those bodies—the Roswell bodies—they weren't aliens," she said quietly. "The government could care less about stories about alien bodies found at Roswell—except to hide the truth. Those bodies were Japanese people."

The widow has some of the picture, but not all. Mostly, she is an expert on radiation experiments at Oak Ridge circa 1947, but drops important clues throughout the book as the story develops. Somehow, she picked up a great deal at the Oak Ridge water cooler, especially that there were three classified balloon flights at White Sands in May, June, and July 1947, and that at least two were disasters.

The Black Widow soon sends friends, such as "Bill Salter," described as "a former employee of the Psychological Strategy Board" seconded to Oak Ridge to do counterintelligence work. Salter has much to add to the Widow's story.

And then we meet "Al Barker," who worked with the Army's Psychological Warfare Center. Here is what Barker has to say: ". . . if the Soviets uncovered the truth about the Nazi and Japanese links to the 'high altitude idiocy' at White Sands and elsewhere, this would have caused major repercussions between the United States and its allies in the postwar world. Hence the cover story put out by the Psychological Strategy Board and, later, by the Army's Psychological Warfare Center that the bodies were from a crashed UFO in case the Soviets, the press, UFO researchers, and America's allies came snooping." (Never mind that nobody thought Roswell was ET until 1978, and the public didn't hear about that until 1980. This tiny fact demolishes the credibility of Barker's story.)

And then there is the main informer, "the Colonel," a man who buttonholed Redfern at the Henderson, Nevada, UFO conference in 2003. "Having spent fifteen years operating deep within the heart of American intelligence, the Colonel claims that in 1969, while working with the Defense Intelligence Agency, he read a top-secret document that, as far as he is concerned, laid to rest the tales about flying saucers and alien bodies recovered from the desert of New Mexico in the summer of 1947 and told the true story about the Roswell events." And further, not exactly to our surprise,

we learn that "Like Al Barker, Bill Salter, and the Black Widow, however, the Colonel maintains that the Roswell and other 1947 events were given a 'crashed UFO cover' to hide research that was linked with classified high-altitude balloon experiments and the Nuclear Energy for Propulsion of Aircraft project." (But per my remark above, this cover did not exist.)

All of Redfern's informants have done their homework. The Colonel is certainly well-read on Roswell. But what emerges is a mass of slightly twisted interpretation of the Roswell data, always presented so that the nonexpert would find it persuasive, and always supporting the Redfern Japanese super-balloon scenario. Thus the truly mysterious "memory metal" reported by witnesses becomes merely the balloon's polyethylene-plus-metal coating, though this has been drop-kicked by researchers who saw the section in the Air Force's Project Mogul report that discussed the unfortunate fragility of polyethylene.

## THE PENTAGON PAPERS EXAMPLE

When challenged to supply the real names and backgrounds of his informants, Redfern protests that his publisher's attorneys forbid such disclosure. Though that strains credulity, at the very least, each "source" should provide an explanation why, especially at their advanced age, they refuse to go public.

In 1971, military analyst Daniel Ellsberg gave the *New York Times* 7,000 pages photocopied from top secret Defense Department documents. These papers documented U.S. involvement in Vietnam from 1945 through 1968 and showed that senior government officials, including the President, had systematically lied to the American public about Vietnam. Ellsberg became the object of an FBI manhunt and was charged with 12 felony counts after he gave himself up, but his case was dismissed in 1973 on the grounds of governmental misconduct against him.

The point is, Ellsberg remained a free man, even having admitted perpetrating a security violation hugely damaging to the executive branch, and in fact became a hero in many quarters, today holding a prestigious teaching position. When evaluating Redfern's sources one must ask, what are they saying that would result in any retribution at all, 60 years after the fact? And why don't they go to the *New York Times* with their story, instead of planting it in the quarantined intellectual ghetto of ufology? Ellsberg did not take the Pentagon Papers to Jane Fonda or some minor anti-Vietnam War group. (And of course the same goes equally for the rest of the disinformers, from the MJ-12 hoaxers, to the Alien Autopsy hoaxers, to the "we have a film of aliens landing at Holloman AFB" hoaxers.)

## FBI AND MJ-12

There is valuable information in the book about disinformation. His chapter detailing the FBI's dealings

with the MJ-12 documents is must reading. Here he points out that the FBI confronted OSI about the documents, and quotes an FBI Headquarters message to the Dallas Field Office: "The Office of Special Investigations, U.S. Air Force, advised on November 30, 1988, that the document was fabricated. Copies of that document have been distributed to various parts of the United States. The document is completely bogus."

However, Redfern follows this by saying he was told by an OSI agent that they had no records pertaining to MJ-12 or any investigation of the documents. Redfern thinks this is impossible and asks indignantly, "How was AFOSI able to determine that the papers were faked if no investigation on their part was undertaken?" Redfern is either inert to the obvious, or playing a game with the reader. Nick, OSI did not need to investigate anything. They are the ones who faked the MJ-12 documents. When pinned down by an exasperated FBI, they spilled the beans. Of course they lied to you, because they have been lying to your kind for the last 30 years.

A colleague pointed out to me the strange pattern in which major UFO disinformation is first released in England, and only then in the U.S., and he thinks this may have something to do with the law concerning the scope of intelligence agency fiddling with American citizens. In addition to Redfern's introduction to the "real" Roswell story by a British Home Office man, Jenny Randles and others in England first heard details of the infamous Alien Autopsy film. The MJ-12 documents were first released by British ufologist Timothy Good, who apparently received them before Jaime Shandera got them in his U.S. mailbox.

Some group within the intelligence community deeply cares about hiding Roswell. They cared enough to orchestrate the 1993 investigation concluding that it was a Mogul balloon array, plus crash dummies. Now they care enough to mount this truly elaborate fraud, further blowing smoke in the eyes of the press, the legislature, and the public. If the reader will understand that this is the genesis and guiding principle of *Body Snatchers in the Desert*, he will be richly rewarded for the small price of the book.

And he will little wonder that Peter Jennings so easily dismissed Roswell as a myth. ♦

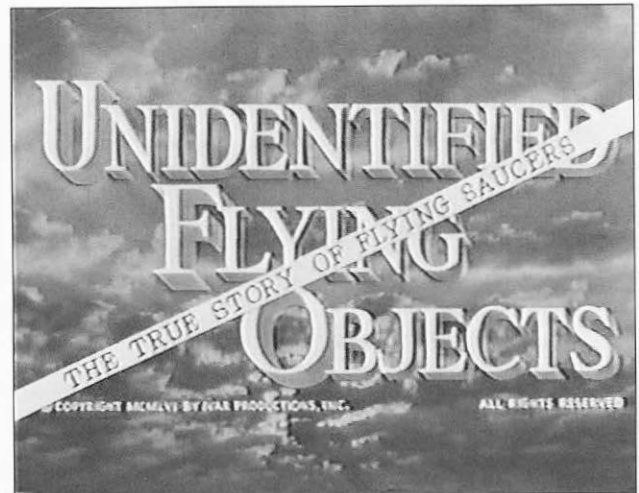
### SPHERICAL UFOS IN ARIZONA

At 10:30 a.m. on September 17, 2005, eyewitness D.W. was at his home on 31st Avenue in Peoria, Arizona, when he saw something strange approaching from the east. "Looking east, I could see a bright object in the sky," he reported. "The orb was shiny. Seven other objects appeared around it. They stayed in the same spot for about 15 minutes and then moved to the left quickly, to face north. They moved left to right and right to left, almost hitting each other, and then got higher until they were all out of sight. . . . There was no sound at all, and they were above the (other conventional) aircraft."—UFO Roundup, September 28, [www.ufoinfo.com/roundup/](http://www.ufoinfo.com/roundup/).





Los Angeles reporter Tom Towers as USAF press officer Al Chop.



Headlines reporting the 1948 Mantell crash.



American Airlines pilot Willis T. Sperry talks about his 1950 sighting.



## UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS: THE MOVIE (1956)

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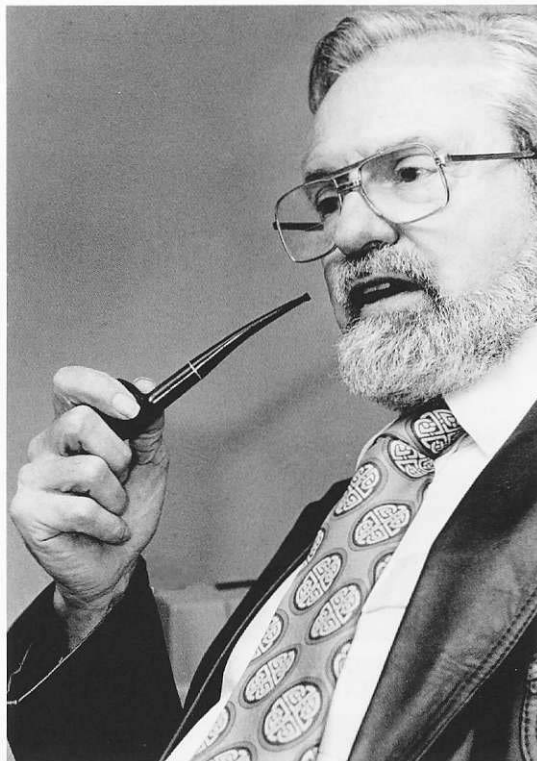
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# UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS, ACCIDENTAL EPIC

BY ROBERT BARROW

The science-fiction film *This Island Earth*, released in 1955, was one of the 1950s SF and horror movies inspired in large part by the fear of nuclear war. Such films from the period ranged from the worthwhile to the goofy. *This Island Earth* holds up well enough over the years, though its troublesome on-board spaceship mutant now seems more annoying than scary—something that could have been easily disposed of with a dime-store flyswatter.

According to promotional material from Universal International Pictures, this expensive movie took 2½ years to complete. One can speculate, therefore, that its production was just getting off the ground in 1952, a banner year for the sheer number of UFO sighting reports.

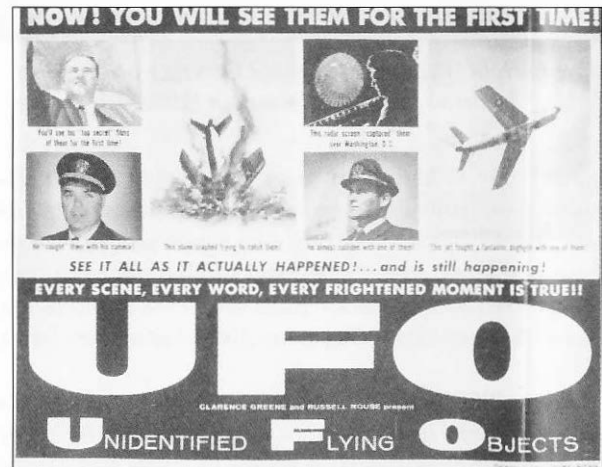
Somewhere around late 1953 or early 1954, as *This Island Earth* was in the final stages of production, while other studios not nearly so influential as Universal International were still turning out monster movies in dizzying succession, plans for another kind of motion picture were in the works—an upstart whose very concept seemed bizarre. This was to be a motion picture about flying saucers, but not the saucers of *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers* (1956, with apologies to Maj. Donald Keyhoe's book *Flying Saucers from Outer Space*, upon which this SF thriller was very loosely based) or *Invasion of the Saucer Men* (1957).

The idea contrived by motion picture producer Clarence Greene, who was deeply intrigued by the UFO phenomenon in the wake of his own sighting, involved making not a fiction film about UFOs, but a documentary based upon the U.S. government's investigation of some important UFO incidents of the era. As Greene began assembling his production crew, his writer, director, and the rest, he also brought together a remarkable group of individuals who knew about the government's UFO investigations. Greene intended to tell the story as accurately as he could get it.

Among them was Al Chop, whose job on the Pentagon's



Robert Barrow (left, in the Air Force in 1970) began researching UFOs as a teenager in 1963. His articles and book reviews appeared in *The A.P.R.O. Bulletin*, *Pursuit*, *Argosy* UFO, *True Flying Saucers & UFOs*, *Official UFO*, and newspapers and magazines.

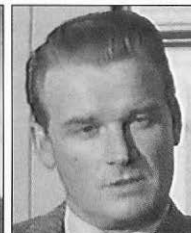


press desk in the early 1950s converted him from UFO skeptic to proponent based upon the numerous credible reports he encountered. The documentary, in fact, would focus mostly on Chop's official involvement with the UFO project. The "actor" chosen to play Chop in the movie, suggested by Chop himself, was Tom Towers, a writer for the old *Los Angeles Examiner*. Towers, who occasionally wrote about UFOs in his aviation columns, knew Chop through mutual business connections. Greene also was acquainted with Towers and thought him an excellent choice.

Greene's movie would be notable for its lack of name actors, though a few would be recognizable today to the committed film buff (Les Tremayne, Harry Morgan, and Olan Soule). The bigger casting story, however, concerned



The real Al Chop



Tom Towers as Al Chop

the prominent names who worked behind the scenes. In addition to Chop, these included no less than former Air Force Capt. Edward J. Ruppelt, the most famous chief of Project Blue Book; USAF Major Dewey J.

Fournet, former UFO project monitor; and radar expert Wendell Swanson, noteworthy for the construction of an elaborate U.S. radar installation in Okinawa. Swanson, in fact, did have an on-screen role in the movie, and while he

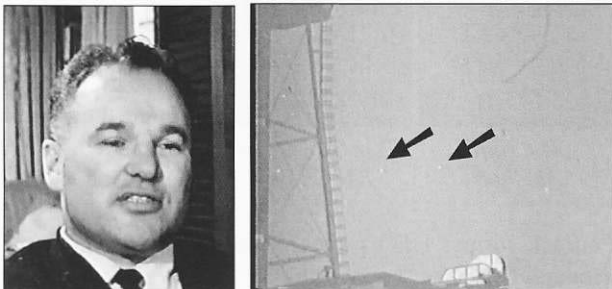


Left to right: Producer Clarence Greene, radar expert Wendell Swanson, and USAF Captain Edward J. Ruppelt.

claimed only to harbor an “open mind” about UFOs, the viewer soon gains the impression that Swanson knew far more about UFOs on radar than he would publicly admit. These men would guide Greene and staff through every page of script to ensure authentic representations of the investigations with which they were personally and intimately familiar.<sup>1</sup>

The UFO incidents destined to be portrayed in the production were impressive for their time. The 1947 Kenneth Arnold case would be the starter, followed by the tragic death of Kentucky Air National Guard pilot Capt. Thomas Mantell in 1948 while chasing a supposed UFO.<sup>2</sup> Another 1948 case, involving Lieut. George Gorman’s supposed dogfight over Fargo, North Dakota, with a possible UFO, was woven into the storyline.<sup>3</sup> A January 1951 incident in which a DC-3 taking off from the Sioux City, Iowa, airport swerved to avoid a collision with a mysterious light was also featured, perhaps because a military intelligence colonel observed the phenomenon with other passengers before the thing zoomed up and disappeared. A jewel of the production would be an external airport interview with American Airlines pilot Capt. Willis T. Sperry, whose personal account of his dramatic encounter with a UFO during a flight in 1950 would leave the audience spellbound.

But the best was yet to come. With the assistance of his advisors, Greene procured the still-unexplained and famous Montana UFO film of two objects photographed by businessman Nicholas Mariana, as well as the Utah movie of



Nicholas Mariana and one frame of the film he took of two UFOs at Great Falls, Montana, August 15, 1950.

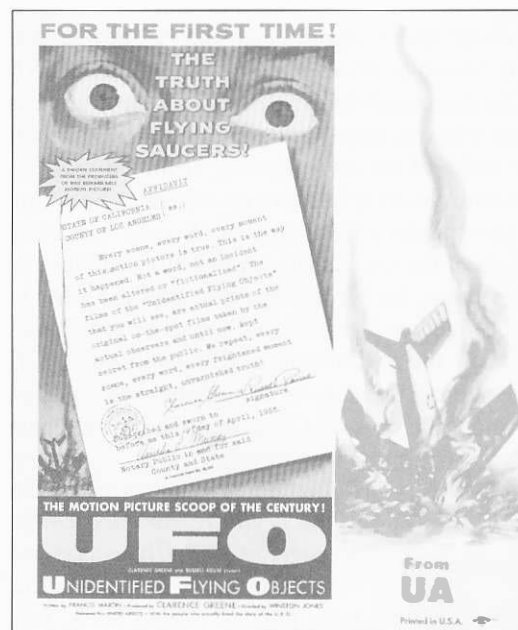
multiple objects taken by Navy chief photographer Delbert Newhouse. Though Greene decided to film his documentary in black and white, the two UFO movies were included in their original color, strangely reminiscent of the dramatic and emotional switch to color from black and white in *The Wizard of Oz*. Eventually it would come to light that both UFO films, analyzed by the military, were apparently missing the best frames when returned to their owners, and therefore Greene’s motion picture documentary would also lack the best frames. This information was not imparted in the production.

Appropriately, the climax of this Clarence Greene–Russell Rouse (his partner) production would be a dramatization of the July 1952 UFO encounters over Washington, D.C.

## THE IMPACT

And so it was, in May 1956, that the Greene–Rouse feature-length UFO documentary distributed by United Artists was liberally splashed upon the nation’s, and then the world’s, theater screens. Action-packed posters blazing in red and yellow boldly announced its title as *Unidentified Flying Objects*, or simply as *U.F.O.*

Reviewer response proved generally quite favorable, but the audience—always the most faithful critics, fair or not, because they shell out the money for admission—found *U.F.O.* less than compelling, and the film initially lost a considerable sum at the box office. UFO researcher Max B. Miller summed up the situation expertly, having attended the movie’s premiere at the Fox Wilshire Theater in Los Angeles: “When I saw this film the second time at that showing the objective was not to see the picture again, but rather to check attendance and audience reaction. This was



Sworn statement of authenticity from the movie’s producers.



Actors playing Dewey Fournet (left) and Ed Ruppelt.

probably for the best, too. For while I was thoroughly enthusiastic after viewing *U.F.O.* the first time, I found the second time quite a let-down. . . . The movie isn't, on the whole, particularly interesting. The pace is slow, the action stiff."<sup>4</sup>

Ufologist Ted Bloecher saw things a little differently, though it must be stressed that Miller's review was positive about the movie. "A somewhat slim storyline," judged Bloecher. However: "The producers have wisely refrained from trying to duplicate the visual appearance of UFOs in any of the cases they refer to. . . . By avoiding facsimiles of the objects in question, they have made two heretofore secret Mariana and Newhouse films showing actual UFOs in flight considerably more forceful and conspicuous."<sup>5</sup>

Bloecher was more sympathetic than some reviewers to the action's being "low-keyed throughout" and the fact that non-actors were used so extensively (most were Los Angeles law-enforcement officers). He also took note of the extensive "padding" scenes and instances of forms being filled out, sometimes laboriously, and of the frequent newspaper visuals with the word "saucers."

Significant members of the cast felt that *U.F.O.* needed more drama and less narration. Towers readily admitted "a little of the Hollywood touch" would have helped. Obviously, though, Greene had found himself driven from the start to focus upon the documentary aspect, rather than the high dramatic effects exhibited in his earlier movies, such as *New York Confidential*, *The Thief*, and *The Well*. Ultimately, the issue here may have been that Greene was as new to what he attempted with *U.F.O.* as the audience was when it searched for familiar film ploys that simply weren't in evidence. Possibly, many in the audience may not have entertained even a clue about the definition of "documentary" when they purchased admission tickets.

*U.F.O.* went all out to sacrifice drama for accuracy—to which this writer can attest, because in the 1970s when Towers loaned me his copy of the script (proudly stored for years behind his living room sofa, he confessed), I found it sprinkled with handwritten annotations and minor changes, apparently created just prior to various screen shots in the interest of a factual portrayal. But there was one little (actually a blatant) alteration I at first missed in Greene's creation: At the point in the movie when the April 7, 1952, issue of *Life* magazine hits the newsstands, suggesting that UFOs may harbor extraterrestrial visitors, the cover photo



Marilyn Monroe appeared on the real *Life* magazine cover of April 7, 1952, while President Truman was substituted for the movie (right).

showing President Truman is a false one; the real issue's covershows actress Marilyn Monroe. We can assume either that Truman's photo was implemented to express the sobriety of the UFO issue in the fifties (Truman was president during the Washington, D.C., sightings that proved so important to the movie) or that for professional reasons United Artists didn't want attention paid to Monroe, who may have been under contract with a competing studio.

My first encounter with *U.F.O.* occurred in the early 1960s when it aired on local afternoon TV, and subsequently on a couple of late-late programs. I had seen many a science-fiction thriller as a kid, but had never heard of Greene's film. One suspects it didn't take long after theatrical release before its relegation to late-late TV movie shows around the country. When home videotapes of movies first became available commercially, evidently *U.F.O.* saw a brief videotape release via a company unknown, since there were video search companies actively seeking and selling it. The video then went into hibernation until 2000, when MGM Home Video released its version, only to pull it from the market two or three years ago. While some UFO researchers have anticipated a DVD release, that hasn't happened yet commercially. The movie has popped up on cable TV over the years and



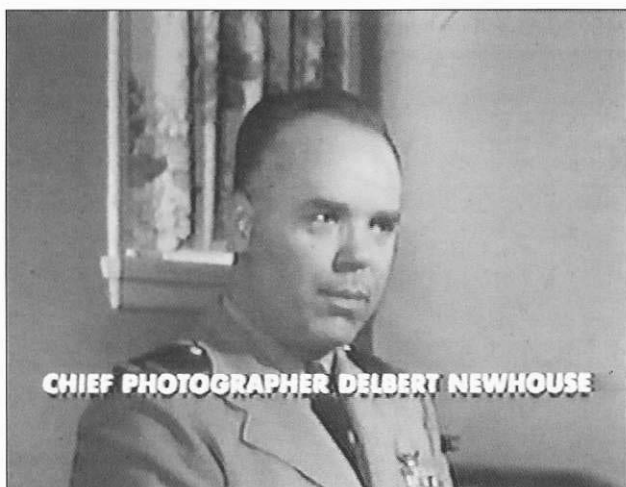
Tom Towers as Al Chop awakens to disturbing news about saucers over Washington in July 1952.



*The 1956 film documents the saucermania of the era.*



*Gen. John A. Samford tells the press on July 29, 1952, that the Washington sightings and radar targets were caused by temperature inversions.*



*Warrant Officer Delbert C. Newhouse describes how he took a color film of a UFO near Tremonton, Utah, on July 2, 1952.*

probably continues to do so sporadically.<sup>6</sup>

*U.F.O.* has quietly endured over the decades. Perhaps not all of the UFO reports depicted remain unidentified, but there are enough that do—the Montana and Utah films, the Washington National Airport encounters, for example. Yet Greene, certainly no newcomer to movie-making by the time he tackled UFOs, stubbornly stayed the course and chose narration over spine-tingling special effects, leaving the unseen up to the audience to conjure. Remarkable still was his use of only about 92 minutes of film to educate his audience proficiently about the early status of the official UFO investigation—the most open, honest, and brief window of government UFO information disclosure America ever experienced. The very moment when the government seemed poised to tell us about the saucers was a special one indeed.

Thirty years have elapsed since I first wrote about *U.F.O.*. Many of the fine people involved with production, most of whom would be in their late 80s and 90s by now, have passed on, including Capt. Sperry, Towers, and Greene himself. Greene's only response to my written questions in the 1970s consisted of less than a page of agonizingly curt answers. Many years went by before I realized how bitter he must have been about the lack of audience response to *U.F.O.*

My hope, as 2006 takes off for parts unknown, is that this 50-year-old documentary gains lasting respect both as an essential piece of UFO research history and as a unique chunk of American history. The Library of Congress, the American Film Institute, *somebody*, needs to give *U.F.O.* tender loving care, make sure it's preserved and protected forever, and reissued as a DVD so that generations to come can experience the serious side of UFO history—with two great color films of UFOs as a bonus.

## NOTES

1. I erred seriously when I wrote a version of this article 30 years ago, insisting that Capt. Ruppelt played his own role, which he clearly did not. My access to Ruppelt photos at the time was limited, but thanks to researcher Wendy Connors and her 2000 book (with Michael Hall) *Captain Edward J. Ruppelt: Summer of the Saucers 1952*, I now realize all of Ruppelt's work was behind the scenes.

2. Researchers, especially Kevin D. Randle, conducted lengthy and seemingly conclusive investigations that indicate Mantell died while chasing a secret military balloon known as the Skyhook.

3. Again, a balloon may be the culprit and not a UFO. See Jerome Clark, *Strange Skies: Pilot Encounters with UFOs* (New York: Citadel, 2003), pp. 66–68.

4. Quoting from "World's First Documentary," *Flying Saucers*, June 1957.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Thanks to Barry Greenwood, who long ago provided me with additional information about the movie, and also to Gary Mangiacopra, whose research into *U.F.O.* continues. ♦

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# WE KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

Once upon a time it was simple. Col. George Garrett could sit at his desk in the Pentagon and envision the disks racing across Kenneth Arnold's line of sight and say: "Advanced aerial technology."

Alfred Loedding could imagine a spaceliner passing Chiles and Whitted's plane and superimpose Ludwig Prandtl's mathematics upon the case and say: "Advanced aerial technology."

Charles Moore and his theodolite, J. J. Kaliszewski in his balloon project chase plane, and Nash and Fortenberry in their TWA airliner could all say "Advanced aerial technology" about their sightings. Nuts and bolts. Metallic, strangely designed, aerodynamic vehicles. Extraterrestrial. Simple as that.

But things wouldn't stay so simple or well behaved. Noninertial motions and hovering that defied gravity soon appeared in sightings. Well, said the "can-do" minds of the engineers, all right, we'll be able to do it someday. What about reports with traces on the ground, electromagnetic effects, or paralysis? Yes, okay, very advanced indeed. And then instant disappearance, shape-changing and dividing, even mind-reading. Uh-oh.

Perhaps the UFOs were never so well behaved as Col. Garrett and Al Loedding pictured them. Surely we had our nonsense filters up and operating back then. Certain cases never made the files. In his later years, Aimé Michel said that the most shameful thing about his career as an investigator was that he just couldn't swallow some of the weirder stuff, and so ignored it. NICAP was certainly guilty of that. Today's Roswell enthusiasts still tend to want to carve the stranger part of the phenomenon away, and there are members of what might be called ufology's right wing who have troubles even with Roswell. Nuts and bolts, nice, well-behaved aerial technology: *That's a real comfort zone.*

I have nothing against this perspective. In fact, I believe that it's a good solid start in dealing with UFOs. So, at the beginning of everything, Garrett, Loedding, Moore, and Nash were correct. But much more appears to be real about UFOs as well.

One of the particular weird ideas that began creeping into researchers' minds was that many cases were instances of "display" by the phenomenon. It was, and is, an odd thought. Display to a witness seems much too subjective and dangerous to really credit. Coincidences happen all the time. We—who are essentially egocentric—often attribute causal linkages and personal significance to things that accidentally cross our path. With thousands of UFO incidents, certainly some rather spectacular coincidences are bound to have happened. And the mind is a wonder at creating syntheses and patterns out of nothing.

But still, some of these coincidences are very hard to dismiss. "Display" seems an operative word, although "performance" might be even more descriptive. The remainder of this article is about one, to me, very impressive form of display.

## ALIGNMENT

All display or performance involves alignment, special geometric relationships between objects, environmental parameters, and the observers. These relationships create in the observer's mind the stage upon which the performance takes place. ("It was dead center as I looked out my window.") Time and timing also play a factor in the performance. ("Just as I looked, the object emerged from behind the hillside.") Because there are so many cases where the object was not initially dead center, nor appeared right on cue from stage left, it is usually pretty easy for us to shrug that element off. And I agree. We need to stay rational about this sort of claim. But I would like to present a subset of these cases that involve astronomical alignments that I feel is more difficult to wave off. I'd be interested in whether you agree.

Every category should probably have at least one anchor case, such as Levelland for vehicle interference, or Boianai (Father Gill) for CE3s. My choice for the alignment anchor occurred in 1955. The case record (a letter) originally went to Ted Bloecher at CSI-New York, and then to NICAP, and finally on to the CUFOS archives. I am going to leave names out because you can rarely find any indication in the old files as to whether the witness approved of public mention.

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*Michael D. Swords is professor emeritus of the Environmental Institute, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.*

The letter-writer was a prominent engineer working for a big New York city company, an expert in aircraft technology and electronics. And he was an avid amateur astronomer. There were four other witnesses, all interested in amateur astronomy, one of whom was also expert in aircraft.

As a bit of background, a year previously the writer had observed a peculiar fireball, which he reported—for what it was worth—to a Maj. Geyer at Mitchell AFB in Hempstead, New York. The major thanked him for his interest but said that what would be more valuable to the Air Force would be for the writer to urge amateur astronomers to report *any* unusual aerial phenomenon when it occurred. Geyer said, "Anything that flies is our business, even a lame canary." As the writer went on to say to Bloecher, "What follows is the only phenomenon our local group has noted in several hundred hours of astronomical observing."

The sighting occurred at Lake Ronkonkoma on Long Island, between 8:30 and 9:30 p.m. on July 29, 1955. The viewing conditions were excellent and the Moon was two-thirds full. First and second magnitude stars were easily visible and the planet Saturn was prominent.

The UFO initially appeared to the five observers as a "2nd magnitude star" in the vicinity of Saturn. The observers watched, either with naked eyes or binoculars, as the star navigated a "perfect circle (of an apparent diameter of 1") around Saturn." It then followed this looping performance by heading east until it got to the Moon, where it executed a half-circle pass, and then just disappeared.

Then the object reappeared 120° away and moved horizontally until taking an abrupt turn vertically. It disappeared again at about 70° above the horizon. Then it reappeared in a straight dive-like descent until reacquiring its original 30-degree elevation (see Figure 1). It proceeded horizontally again, made an abrupt angular shift again downwards and was lost in the trees. If it were at typical airliner height its speed would have been about three times that of a commercial flight. Through the binoculars the object looked spherical and yellowish, at least in its central area.

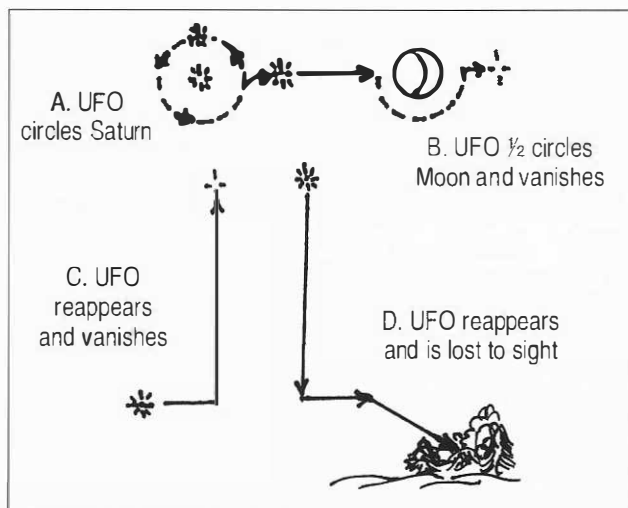


Figure 1.

The witness passed the report on to Bloecher (and presumably to Mitchell AFB) in an amazingly cool, understated way. One wonders how much he cogitated on the ramifications of what he was retelling.

It may be belaboring the obvious, but in order for our five witnesses to see the UFO maneuvering in relation to Saturn and then the Moon as described, they (*almost* certainly, as this depends upon the distance of the UFO) had to be in an extremely privileged viewing position. In the exaggerated cartoon of Figure 2, our observer at B can see the apparent circling of Saturn and the Moon from his location, and observers A and C could too *if the UFO were at astronomical distance* itself. But the closer the UFO is to the observer, the more exclusive such a viewing position becomes, until, at the near extreme in distance of, say, a firefly 10 feet away, only one person could see the circling geometry no matter how close the people tried to cram together. The actual UFO was somewhere between lunar and firefly distance, of course. It seemed similar to an airplane in a size (it did grow larger in the 7x50 binoculars used, though not greatly so), and the amateur astronomers judged it to be probably around normal aircraft altitude. But however large you want to draw an error bar on their estimate, the circle on earth from which you could see the traverse of Saturn and the Moon was pretty small. The UFO seemed to have aligned itself to perform specifically for them. And *that* would mean that it had to know where they were.

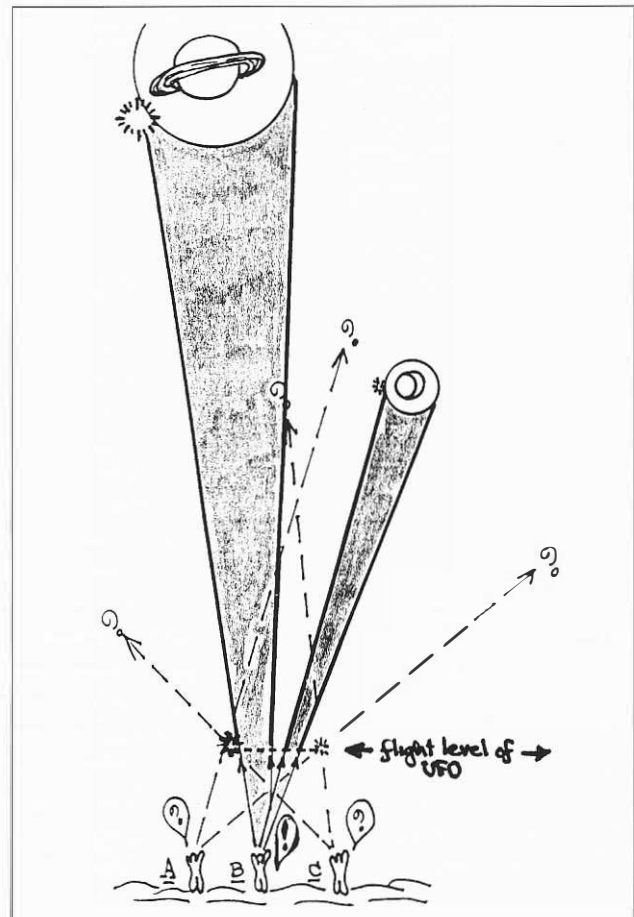


Figure 2.



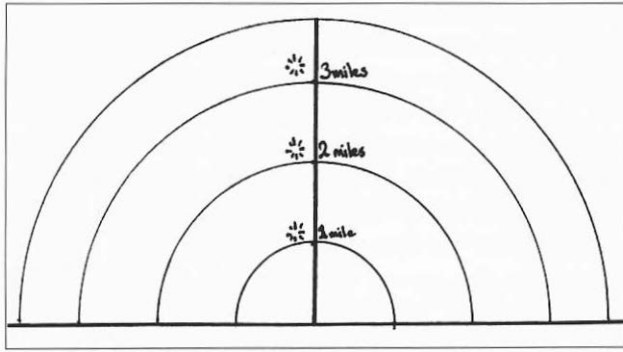


Figure 3.

Just for fun, how tight would that privileged viewing position have to be? If we take the witness guesses seriously, how wide would the area on the ground have to be if the object made a circle of  $1^\circ$  diameter? We can take a stab at it if we want to guess the object's distance (see Figure 3).

If the UFO were a mile high, that would translate into a dome of sky about 16,000 feet in circumference on which it was located; that one degree would then be about 90 feet. In other words, that is the diameter of the circle in which it would be moving as it seemed to circle Saturn. If two miles high, then 180 feet. Ten miles, 900 feet. To simplify the rest of this discussion, let's just assume that it was a mile high. This would mean that the person in the perfect viewing position would be standing, looking up at the image of Saturn in the center of this imaginary circle, while the UFO banked in a 90-foot turn around its circumference. You can imagine a narrow cone from the observer's eye toward Saturn which widens to 90 feet by the time it gets to the height of the UFO.

If you reverse the positions and invert the cone, from the UFO back to the Earth's surface, we get an area of privileged viewing, the same 90-foot diameter circle (Figure 4). But the *real* area of privileged viewing is only the area within which any observer would see the UFO *somewhere* within  $1^\circ$  of

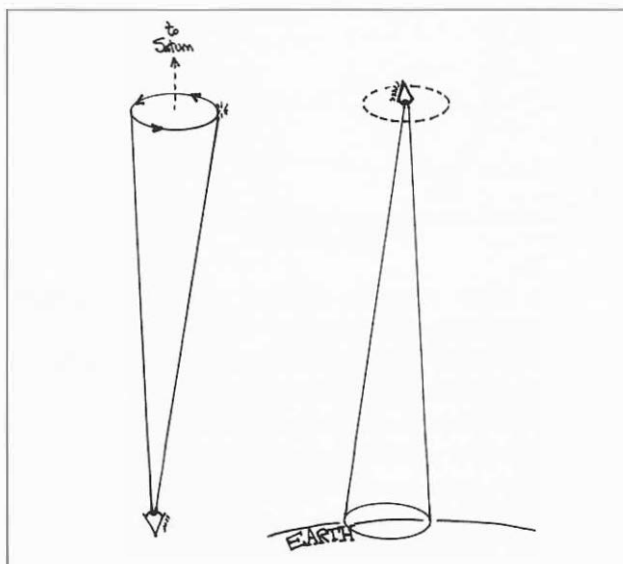


Figure 4.

Saturn. For instance, standing near the edge of the area one would see the circling UFO run right across or eclipse Saturn at some point in its cycle. So, in order to see the UFO make a "perfect circle" of about  $1^\circ$  around Saturn, and have all five people see it that way, they would have to be in a much smaller area than the 90-foot circle.

In my opinion, for the observers to feel that the object circled Saturn perfectly and then perfectly half-circled the Moon, the apparent shift in image (i.e., the position of Saturn or the Moon out of dead center, relatively speaking) had to be *very small* from one observer to the next. I believe that if you walk more than 20% of the distance from the ideal viewing center toward the edge of the 90-foot circle, the apparent circling of the planet and Moon begins to look distinctly lopsided (see Figure 5). So, if you will humor me,

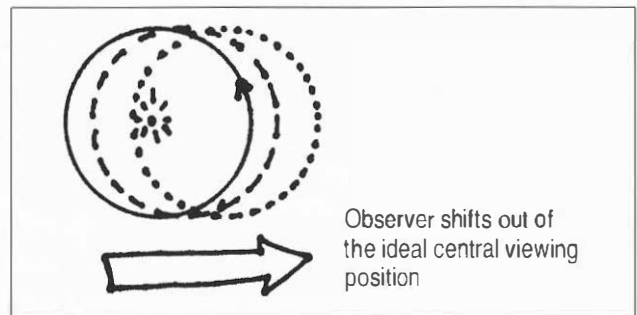


Figure 5.

let's say that the *actual* privileged viewing area for the group was only 20% of the greater diameter or less, which is only 18 feet or fewer. That is a reasonable sized area for five folks to be milling around in on a common activity that evening, but, more importantly, it is a very precise spot on this old planet. If the UFO were two miles high, then double it; three miles, triple it, and so forth.

Even then, it seems a very precise thing to be cruising along three miles above the ground and knowing that a group of people for whom you are about to put on a show are within a small circle below you. And speaking of precise, the UFO then had to move in a precise small circle, at altitude, aligned with Saturn and the Moon. Try that in a plane or even a helicopter.

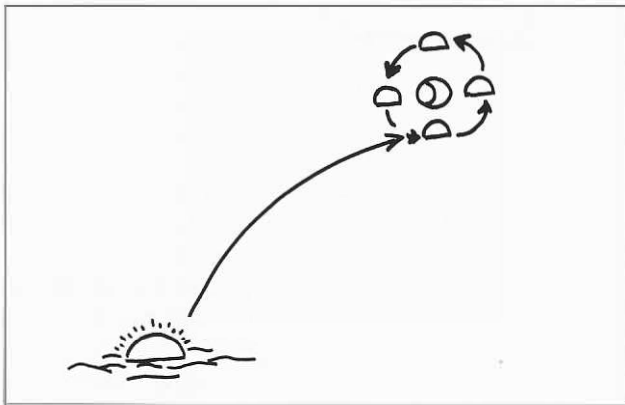
## OTHER ALIGNMENT CASES

Hopefully, the first case—the anchor case—has persuaded you that something of this alignment nature actually *does* occur, and that is interesting in its implications. The case seems very sound: five witnesses, high-quality observers of the skies, and elaborate well-reported detail, with movement around two astronomical objects. What more can we ask for other than an ET flight manual with the flight plan? So, if we're somewhat comfortable with this case category, here are a few more of these cases, in brief.

*Case Two.* NICAP received a letter in 1967 addressed to Maj. Keyhoe. In either August or September of the

previous year, two men were returning from bowling in the middle of the afternoon in Norwood, Massachusetts. The Moon was visible at about three-quarter phase in the sky. Both glanced up and saw a group of six or seven disk-shaped objects moving horizontally toward the Moon. When the objects reached a position just below the Moon they looped it in an upward, back, and onward motion, then continued on their way.

*Case Three:* Frank Salisbury reports on a case from the UFO-filled Uintah Valley that occurred in 1967. The key element of circling is somewhat garbled in his 1974 book *The Utah UFO Display*, so I'm going to relate what he said clearly at the *Fate International UFO Conference*, held in 1977. On October 14, 1967, a father and son were returning from a fishing trip when they noticed an odd "burning" object parked in the desert. They stopped, got out of their car, and watched. The object lifted off immediately, looking like a half-moon in shape and size (in the air). It then went right over to the real Moon, visible in the sky, and flew a loop around it, keeping its flat side down. It then flew across the Moon's face and left to the northwest. As Salisbury said then, "It was responding to their being there." And it got the geometry precisely right.



*Case Three.*

*Case Four:* The Air Force had less tolerance for this geometric nonsense. A case from Seattle, Washington, on August 12, 1965, was sent to the Air Force. The observer said that a solid star-like object was seen, first circling the Moon, after which it then left for the horizon. The USAF trashed it with the explanation of "overactive imagination."

*Case Five:* One night in the spring of 1961, Mother Nature was doing what comes naturally, and a young couple was parking outside of Millville, New Jersey. Despite having other things on his mind, the young man could not help being distracted by the antics of a large glowing "meteor" that was dancing around the sky. It was stopping, darting, reversing, and so he finally gave in and called his partner's attention to this insensitive intruder, and they watched together. At one point in its performance, the meteor raced directly at a star, abruptly stopped, drew a neat right-angled, half-

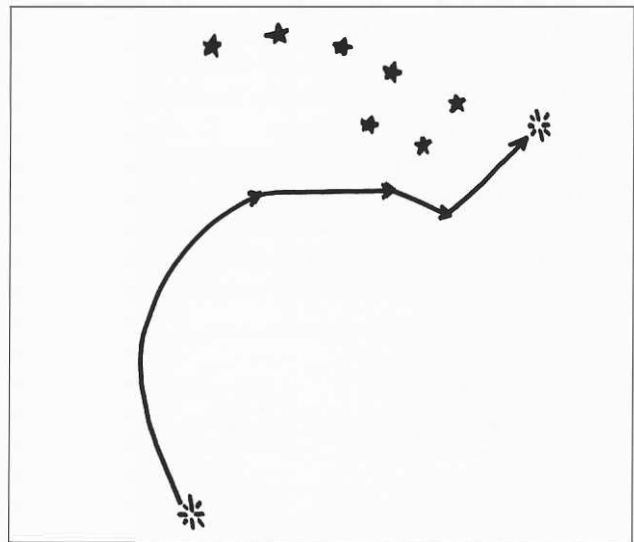


box around it, and went racing on. Finally, it grew tired of its dance and boomed away across the sky in about five seconds. What the couple did next is not part of the record.

*Case Six:* On October 21, 1966, three junior high school kids were standing at one end of their street in Amsterdam, New York, when they noticed a star-like light to the right of the Moon. The star proceeded to draw a right-angle step around the Moon, and continue northward, where it joined two other objects. The three objects began to form 90° angles, equilateral triangles, and other geometrical figures. Two of the friends went home to get binoculars, and while they were away the sky show stopped. The objects remained to be viewed in binoculars, but did little else. The UFOs looked spherical with some sort of lighted, colored areas that rotated. The kids then got bored and went home.



*Case Seven:* On October 31, 1966, an observer in Gloucester, Massachusetts, saw a particularly bright star in the southwestern part of the sky. The star refused to behave and began to move in a pretty arc until it got below the Big Dipper. At that point it seemed to pace along under the Dipper, and after reaching the bucket end it dropped a bit, and then took a course approximately parallel to the front of the constellation. This one's a bit more of a stretch than the others, I agree, but I include it for consideration.



*Case Seven.*

*Case Eight:* Just after the peak of the big Michigan Swamp Gas flap in 1966 (Dexter was March 20, Hillsdale was March 21), my current hometown of Kalamazoo had its own series of UFO sightings. (I moved to town in 1971, so was a little late for the show.) These occurred pretty consistently night after night in the latter days of March, ending about April 4. In the middle of this, a wire story reported that students at Western Michigan University had seen a star-like object, which looked football-shaped in binoculars, moving in geometric angles around two bright stars, until it



shot straight up and disappeared. Hmmm. WMU students, eh? I taught them for 30 years. The date? April 1 . . . don't know about this one. But a policeman agreed that he watched it, too.

*Case Nine:* This is a Timmerman Files case. Sometime in August of about 1967, in Wapakoneta, Ohio, a man was returning to his mother's home at two in the morning. He saw

### ANOTHER TYPE OF UFO DISPLAY

Recently, by fortuitous coincidence, CUFOS received an older sighting report that is similar to the reports that Michael Swords writes about. The account comes from Mrs. Dianne Vezza, of Marietta, Ohio, who said we could use her name because "I am at an age now where I feel I should report what I saw so many years ago." We appreciate her candor.

The object she saw, along with two companions, was not a true UFO display using astronomical objects for alignment. However, it was certainly a geometrical display by the UFOs that probably could only have been seen from a limited area. For that reason, we reproduce it here, in a paraphrased description from the perspective of Mrs. Vezza.

#### *The sighting*

"We were three teen girls sitting on the grass in a backyard in Marietta, Ohio, in 1954 or 1955. It was a warm summer evening. We were laughing and talking when we saw a light like a star moving at an unbelievable speed in the sky. I remember the star coming to a dead stop. Then two other 'stars' sped in and also came to a dead stop. They formed a triangle in the sky—a perfect triangle!

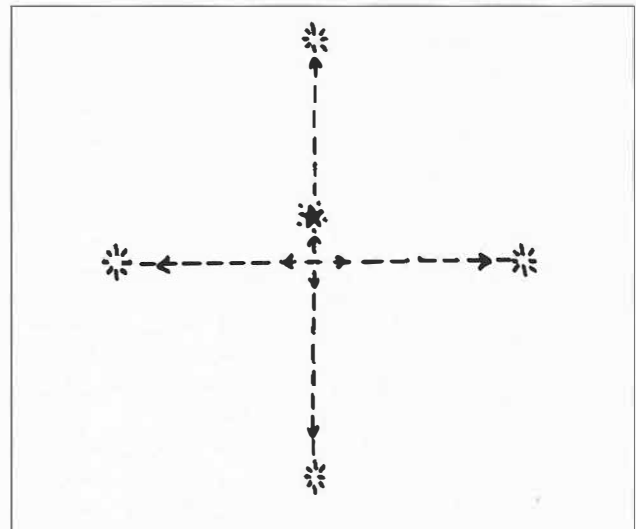
"Almost immediately, an oval shape appeared that seemed to be an object of some sort. The (star-like) lights disappeared, and they were replaced by three of these oval objects in the triangular formation. They then began a light display, with brilliant wildly colored lights that continued for a few beautiful seconds. Then the brilliant lights went out and the UFOs beamed (each one) a bright white light to the center of the triangle. The beams met at the center for a few seconds, and then went out.

"Now the ovals disappeared and the star-like lights returned. Then, each star sped away into the sky in a different direction, faster than any plane is capable of, then or now. We never heard any sound during the whole incident, which lasted less than a minute.

"We had been conversing beforehand, but afterwards, no one said a sentence. One girl ran for the telephone to call the police.

"For years none of us spoke of what we had seen, believing our friends and families would think we were crazy. Finally, I got up the courage to mention it to the other two gals at a class reunion, and we all recalled the experience."

a strangely bright star to the left of Polaris where no such thing should be. As he watched, the star grew a little brighter and began to move. It went directly beneath Polaris and then continued to the right. It repeated this in reverse, and then went under Polaris and stopped. The star then migrated north and south of the Pole Star, tracing out the other elements of a large cross. It did this rapidly several times. Then it came back below Polaris and just sat there. Then it would begin again. As it was getting close to 5 a.m., the witness decided to stop watching. At that, the star went up to Polaris and shot away to the left till it disappeared.



*Case Nine.*

These cases are a few in the alignment category. If you've looked at lots of cases you know of many more. Those reported here are the result of an almost random happenstance of my receiving a cluster of them in a much larger pile of "odd UFO behavior" cases sent by Frank John Reid of CUFOS (for which I thank him).

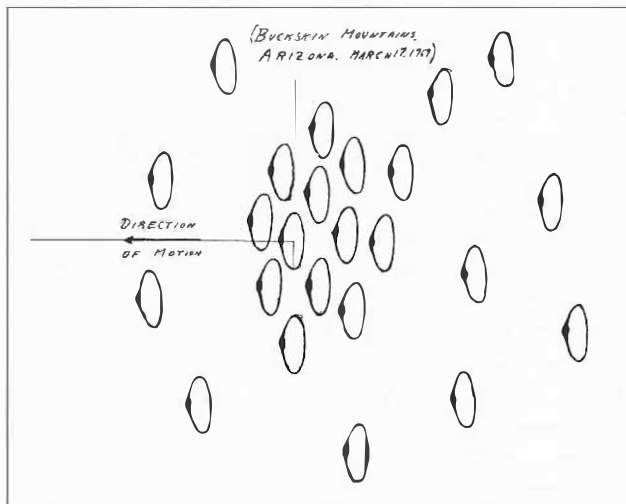
### WHY DID I LOOK JUST THEN?

The last part of this article will briefly address the other part of these cases. It's all well and good for some weird object to put on an act, but the observer has to cooperate, doesn't he? How many times, though, have you read about the witness exclaiming, "For some reason I had the impulse to look up . . . or go outside . . . or turn around." Not to belabor something that is pretty well known, I'll just give you one such incident (which is *not* an alignment case in the sense of this article but does make the point).

On March 17, 1969, two pilots were flying a small private plane between Phoenix and Lake Havasu, Arizona. As is typical in a small plane, the pilots were slightly restricted in their ability to move about in their seats and had their seatbelts fastened. To their view forward and to the sides, nothing was going on. The pilot in the right seat suddenly had an urge to loosen his seatbelt, rise up, and look

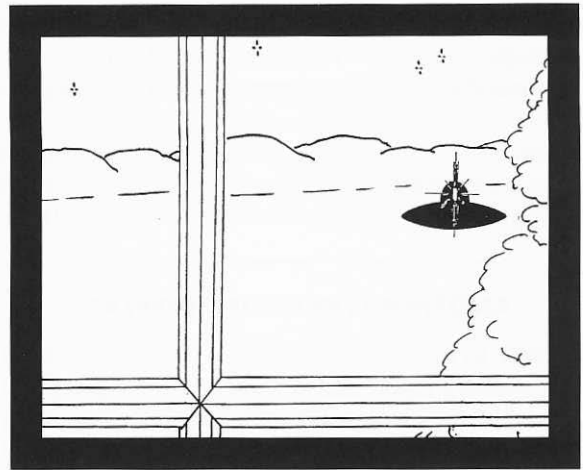
over his partner to the left. He still has no idea why he did this. Upon doing so, he spotted a whole fleet (perhaps as many as two dozen) of objects flying very low and in a rough formation. In a period of about 20 seconds, the two men watched the fleet pass well below their aircraft and beyond. They would never have noticed this cluster of UFOs had one of them not acted upon his mysterious urge to raise up and look across and down from the plane.

The UFOs were oval disks of a flat white color. There seemed to be a black blur around the edges of each object. There was a hint of a "blister" near the front. Their speed was about 300 to 400 mph. The only maneuvers they made were pitch and roll, which all the objects made instantly in perfect unison. This is a case that was checked out by Dr. James McDonald in his usual thorough manner.



So why did the pilot look when he did? Why do we? It reminded me of an aspect of my own UFO observation in (about) August 1959. My brother and I were listening to a report of a UFO live on radio station WCHS (I think that was the station) out of Charleston, West Virginia. Tom and I were sitting in our home (around dusk) and Hugh McPherson, a UFO-loving deejay, was allowing an off-duty station engineer to describe a UFO that he was viewing at the time. The report was coming over the beeper phone.

We'd gone out to look but saw nothing. (St. Albans, our town, was about 17 miles downriver from Charleston, and the engineer was further yet.) We went back in and after a while, the engineer, who was giving us the impression that the UFO was getting further away from him downriver, said that the object had begun moving rapidly to his left. Tom and I decided not to bother to go outside again but just walk to the north end of the house and look out. Our house was a long ranch and we had several feet to walk on its long axis. As I approached the door to that last bedroom, the hair prickled on the back of my neck and (I'm not going to swear to this next bit because it's so subjective, but . . .) it was as if a little voice said: "Hurry." For whatever reason, I ran the last steps to the end window and threw up the window shade. There—immediately on cue stage right—the UFO, a nice little



domed-disk with revolving top, appeared to cruise quietly across the window, tree to tree.

For years, I've held on to my objective view of that thing, and charged the side issues off to coincidence. But, reading so many other resonating cases, you have to wonder.

So what's it all about? Perhaps events like these and the alignment cases could be coincidence. Or it could be rare breakthroughs of a bit of clairvoyance in a normally non-psychic guy like me. Or, maybe, the UFO scriptwriters not only want to put on their plays but want the audience to be seated on time. The alignments seem to indicate that, if they want to, "they know exactly where you live." The occasional urges to be specifically somewhere and looking specifically some place at a certain time may reveal that the dramatists can tap into our consciousness at a distance as well.

All that should be plenty to give the UFO researcher pause. All that available information. All that manipulative ability. All that control. It is a far cry from Col. Mack McCoy at Wright-Patterson in the Project Sign days, when the UFOs were just flying metal disks operated by ET fly-boys just a little ahead of us. Many of our research colleagues still want them to be that simple. I would, too. It would give me more confidence in figuring this thing out without depending upon nibbles of handouts from a bunch of inscrutable dramatists who refuse to ever reveal the plot in which we play our roles. ✦

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# SELENITES

BY JEROME CLARK

At least 4.5 billion years old, the moon is generally thought to have been formed out of debris from the young earth's collision with a slightly smaller celestial body, perhaps about the size of Mars. Its mean distance from the earth is 238,000 miles, and it is 2,160 miles in diameter. A flurry of meteoritic impacts and, later, volcanic activity shaped the bulk of its surface features between 4 and 2.5 billion years ago. Since then, the moon has remained essentially stable except for the now much rarer encounter with meteorite or comet.

Speculation about lunar life, including proto-science fiction literature on the subject, goes back to the ancients, who observed the moon's face and discerned what they inferred to be oceans, land masses, and vegetation. In the late middle ages, after telescopes were directed toward the moon, the debate did not end; if anything, it intensified. In 1638 the clergyman and amateur scientist John Wilkins (1614–1672) wrote in his book *The Discovery of a World in the Moone*:

That those spots and brighter parts which by our sight might be distinguished in the Moon, do show the difference between the Sea and Land of that other World. . . .

The spots represent the Sea, and the bright parts Land. . . .

That there are high mountains, deep valleys, and spacious plains in the body of the Moon. . . .

That there is an atmosphere, or an orb of gross vaporous air, immediately encompassing the body of the Moon. . . .

That it is probable there may be inhabitants in this other World, but of what kind they are is uncertain.

Though many educated and influential men of his time agreed with the premise, others scoffed. The Italian astronomer and lunar mapmaker Giovanni Riccioli (1598–1671)

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*Jerome Clark, co-editor of IUR, is author, most recently, of Unnatural Phenomena (ABC-CLIO, 2005). This is the last of three articles about the lore of intelligent life on earth's closest planetary neighbors. Previous pieces in the series were "Conversations with Martians" (IUR 29:3) and "Venusian Dreams" (IUR 30:1).*

stated flatly, "No man dwells on the moon," and held that the moon is dry, dead, and inhospitable to life. On the other hand, Riccioli's contemporary Johannes Hevelius (1611–1687), a Polish astronomer and cartographer of the moon, argued for oceans and "selenites," as he called the beings who he believed lived on the land areas or continents.

A number of moon-life advocates came from a more or less explicitly theological premise which embraced—sometimes demanded—the presence of intelligent entities on all worlds, not necessarily excluding asteroids and comets. In the words of James Ferguson (1710–1776), the Scottish autodidact and popular writer on astronomy, God created "an inconceivable number of suns, systems, and Worlds, dispersed through boundless space. . . . From what we know of our own System, it may be reasonably concluded that all the rest are with equal wisdom contrived, situated, and provided with accommodations for rational inhabitants. . . . ten thousand times ten thousand Worlds . . . peopled with myriads of intelligent beings, formed for endless progression in perfection and felicity." In a multivolume biblical commentary published between 1817 and 1825, the Methodist clergyman Adam Clarke infers from Old Testament references that there "is scarcely any doubt remaining in the philosophical world, that the moon is a *habitable globe*. . . . All the *planets* and their *satellites* . . . are inhabited; for matter seems only to exist for the sake of intelligent beings."

Among the greatest astronomers, honored for his discovery of Uranus in 1781, often thought of as a model empiricist, Sir William Herschel (1738–1822) is less known for his obsessive interest in intelligent extraterrestrial life in the solar system and beyond. In the assessment of historian of science Michael J. Crowe, who examined many of Herschel's unpublished papers, "pluralism was a core component in Herschel's research program and as such influenced many of his astronomical endeavors." Herschel believed that life existed on the moon; he also thought—first certainly, then less so—that he had observed evidence of it through his telescope.

In the mid-1770s Herschel turned his telescope to the lunar surface and began writing journal entries in which he



Sir William Herschel

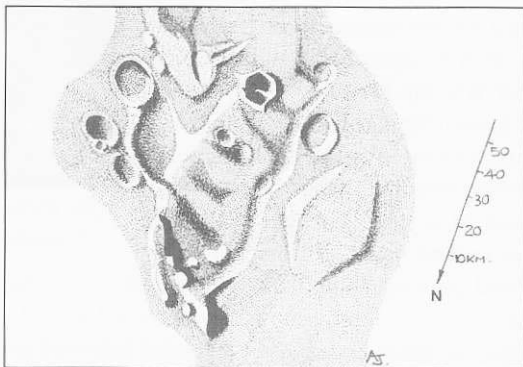
detailed sightings of immense trees, forests, and pastures. By 1778 he was seeing “circuses”—circular formations—which in his estimation represented cities, towns, and villages. Through 1783, after which his attentions were attracted elsewhere, canals, roads, and patches of vegetation caught his eye, or at least his imagination. None of this appeared in any of his published work, however, probably because in time Herschel grew more sensitive to the limitations of the telescopes of his time and entertained doubts about what he had, in fact, seen. Telescopes had played “many tricks” on him, he confided to a friend, and it was only after considerable experience that he felt confident of accurate observations through them. From then on, when he talked of extraterrestrials, he made no claim to eyewitness validation of his own.



Franz von  
Gruithuisen

Less restrained, the German astronomer Franz von Paula Gruithuisen (1774–1852) got so carried away that even colleagues sympathetic to the idea of a populated moon recoiled. In an 1824 paper boldly titled “Discovery of Many Distinct Traces of Lunar Inhabitants, Especially of One of Their Colossal Buildings,” he argued (in part one) for vegetation, which he said he had seen, and for animals (in part two). He did not claim to have observed the latter but to have discerned the paths they left in their migrations: the animals travel “from 50 northern latitude up to 37 or possibly 47 southern latitude.” Gruithuisen reserved the most sensational revelations for the third part, where he outlined observations of lunar structures: walls, forts, roads, cities. A structure with a starlike shape was surely a “temple,” he judged, and an indication that the people of the moon are religious.

Colleagues such as Carl Friedrich Gauss (Göttingen Observatory) and Joseph Johann von Littrow (Vienna Observatory) thought that Gruithuisen’s imagination was running away with him, but—even if more cautious in



Gruithuisen’s lunar city structure, drawn by British astronomer Andrew Johnson from an observation on May 10, 1992. From Gerald North, *Observing the Moon* (Cambridge University, 2000).

stating so publicly—they took the idea of lunar intelligences seriously, even proposing methods with which to communicate with them. Another Gruithuisen critic, Bremen astronomer Wilhelm Olbers, judged the presence both of vegetation and of sentient entities on the moon to be “very probable.”

Many (albeit not all) astronomers agreed, enough to inspire a notorious series of pieces in the *New York Sun* published between August 25 and 31, 1835, and written—as revealed subsequently—by Richard Adams Locke (1800–1871). The first story bore this headline:

## GREAT ASTRONOMICAL DISCOVERIES

Lately Made

By Sir John Herschel, LL.D, F.R.S., &c  
At the Cape of Good Hope

Sir John Herschel, a real-life astronomer (1792–1871) and the son of Sir William, was actually conducting telescopic observations from the Cape of Good Hope at the time—he was there from 1833 to 1838—which in an age of slow-moving international communication ensured no speedy rebuttal. Locke credited Sir John with a telescope of such power that it could pick



Sir John Herschel



Richard  
Adams Locke

up objects on the lunar surface as little as 18 inches long. The astronomer saw animals, one like a goat with a horn, the other a rolling, spherical-shaped amphibian, then bipeds with both human and bat features (he was even able to observe them in conversation with one another), and, finally, a superior species of man-bats “of infinitely greater personal beauty” and angelic aura.



Lunar animals allegedly discovered by Sir John Herschel.

The press of the time noted and circulated the stories, and some leading newspapers expressed full confidence in their veracity. Credulity was rampant, according to the celebrated critic and fantasist Edgar Allan Poe

(1809–1849). “Not one person in ten discredited it,” he wrote with something between amusement and outrage, “and (strangest point of all!) the doubters were chiefly those who doubted without being able to say why—the ignorant, those uninformed in astronomy, people who would not believe because the thing was so novel, so entirely “out of the usual way.””

As the story spun out of control, Locke quietly put the word out that he had written it and that it wasn't, in point of fact, true. After that, denunciations were ringing as resoundingly as endorsements had been just days before. In a mostly ignored and forgotten public statement a few years later, Locke was to insist that he had not meant to fool anyone, that his purposes were satirical. In other words, he had simply poked fun at exotic, unfounded speculations about the moon's inhabitants and at popular gullibility. In any event, Locke's tales were destined to be called ever after the "moon hoax." Ironically, Sir John Herschel, the real one, was later to champion (in an 1858 book) the likelihood of "animal or vegetable life" on the far side of the moon.

Camille Flammarion (1842–1925), the French scientist, popular author, and "leading advocate of extreme pluralism" (in the words of modern astrobiological chronicler David Darling), dismissed those who argued that with no atmosphere the moon could not sustain life; they possessed, he sniffed, all the reasoning powers of "a fish." To the contrary, he insisted in an 1877 work, changes on its surface visible from earth may be "due to the vegetable kingdom or even the animal kingdom, or—who knows?—to some living formations which are neither vegetable nor animal." Interpretations like these were far from universally embraced—many astronomers by now deemed them nonsensical, and those who thought otherwise found themselves more and more on the defensive—but they were surprisingly persistent.



*Camille Flammarion*

For example, in 1902 American astronomer William Henry Pickering (1858–1938), an outspoken proponent of alleged Martian canals then at the center of a furious international scientific controversy which seems inexplicable from this distance, reported changes in the lunar landscape—best explained, he wrote in *Century* magazine, as evidence of an atmosphere containing water vapor. If there was water vapor, then surely there could be vegetable life, at least. He acknowledged, however, that intelligent beings living under lunar conditions would be unimaginable and unworthy of consideration. Then he apparently changed his mind. He had been seeing lunar "canals"—which he first attributed to strips of vegetation—for more than a decade when he confided to his older, more conservative brother, Harvard College Observatory director Edward Charles Pickering, "I have seen everything practically except the selenites themselves running round with spades to turn off the water into other canals."



*W. H. Pickering*

William Pickering voiced no such assertions in any

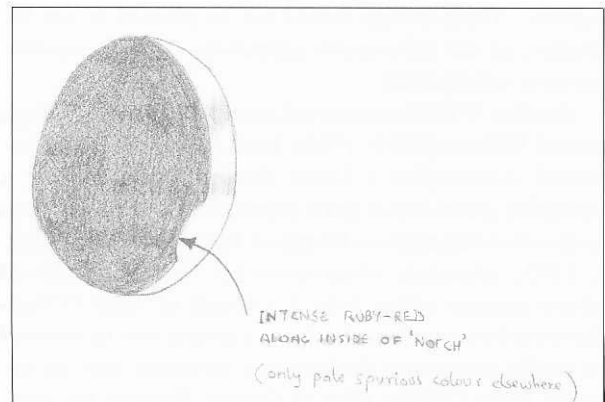
public forum, but in the mid-1920s he did theorize that changes heretofore laid to seasonal changes in vegetation now evinced the migrations of vast insect swarms or—he also thought possible—migrations of seal-like animals. He remained an advocate of lunar life well past his retirement as astronomer and was writing about it almost up to his death. No scientist of any repute since then has associated him- or herself with any comparable notions.

## MYSTIC MOON

Naturally, not just scientists have had their say about who may abide on earth's satellite. The Swedish scientist-turned-spiritual pilgrim Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) visited the moon in a visionary or out-of-body state, returning to relate that its inhabitants are "as small as children of six years old, their voice proceeds from the stomach, and they creep about."

In 1837 Joseph Smith (1805–1844), founder of the Church of the Latter Day Saints (otherwise known as Mormonism), is alleged to have given a blessing, or perhaps merely expressed a personal opinion, in which he pronounced—as Oliver B. Huntington, who heard it, would recall, paraphrasing Smith's words—"The moon [is] inhabited by men and women the same as on this earth, and . . . they [live] for a greater age than we do—that they live generally to near the age of 1,000 years." The men, averaging a height of six feet, wear clothing in the "Quaker style." Mormon apologists have furiously disputed Huntington's account, but the views attributed to Smith of a moon inhabited by intelligent, humanlike beings reflected widely shared popular, and even scientific, opinion of the time, and if true, they hardly make him any more misguided than many of his fellow citizens.

Speculations about intelligences on the moon would get new life after World War II, when sightings of puzzling sky objects ignited widespread interest in flying saucers and eventually theories about alien bases. Transient lunar phenomena (TLPs), as they are called, have played a significant role in all of this as well. TLPs consist of unexplained



*Visual anomaly (TLP) recorded by astronomer Gerald North in the crater Aristarchus, May 30, 1985.*

changes in the lunar surface, sometimes including unusual lights, shadows, and moving objects. Though some astronomers sought to explain such occurrences as mere optical illusions, others regard them as genuine anomalies and over time have prevailed. In December 2005 geophysicist Gary Olhoeft, citing recent NASA research, stated, "It may be that TLPs are caused by sunlight reflecting off rising plumes of electrostatically lofted lunar dust." It is also certain, however, that Olhoeft's will not be the final word on the subject.

TLPs—not called that until the mid-20th century—interested Charles Fort (1874–1932), the famous chronicler of unexplained physical phenomena and pre-UFO-era theorist of extraterrestrial visitation. Fort, who had an unquenchable sense of humor, noted observations of changing geometric shapes in the crater Linné and remarked wryly:

Astronomers have thought of trying to communicate with Mars or the moon by means of great geometric constructions placed conspicuously, but there is nothing so attractive to attention as change, and a formation that would appear and disappear would enhance the geometric with the dynamic. That the units of the changing compositions that covered Linné were the lunarians themselves—that Linné was terraced—hosts of the inhabitants of the moon standing upon ridges of their Cheops of the Serene Sea, some of them dressed in white and standing in a border, and some of them dressed in black, centering upon the apex, or the dark material of the apex left clear for the contrast, all of them unified in a hope of conveying an impression of the geometric, as the product of design, and distinguishable from the topographic, to the shining god [earth] that makes the stars of their heaven marginal.

Less mirthful notions show up in 1950s UFO books, such as *Flying Saucers on the Attack* (1954; *Flying Saucers on the Moon* in its original British edition) by Harold Tom Wilkins (1891–1960), where it is stated as simple fact that "the moon . . . long has been a stopover for what we call flying saucers." Wilkins predicted that the first astronauts to land there would find "massive portals" leading to "great sublunar tunnels" housing "beings of other unknown worlds in space." These beings would not be pleased to see the intruders, as the subsequent unleashing of their superior firepower would attest.

Another Wilkins, respected amateur astronomer Hugh Percival Wilkins (1896–1960), head of the British Astronomical Association's Lunar Section, would make a remarkable claim which gave impetus to UFO-based theories about intelligences on the moon. Its genesis was in a July 29, 1953, telescopic observation by *New York Herald Tribune* science editor John J. O'Neill of what O'Neill believed to be an immense bridge—a natural one, he stressed in a public statement—linking two mountain tops on the western Mare Crisium (Sea of Crises). Because his four-inch refracting telescope was a relatively modest instrument, he wrote Wilkins, who worked with a larger instrument, to

ask him to examine the designated region. On the evening of August 26, when a doubtful Wilkins scrutinized the site, he was surprised to see—or at least think he saw—the bridge. Sadly, O'Neill died before he received Wilkins's letter of confirmation.

That, however, did not end the matter. On December 23, interviewed on British radio, Wilkins stated flatly, "Now this is a real bridge. Its span is about 20 miles from one side to the other, and it's probably at least 5000 feet or so from the surface beneath." He went on, "It looks artificial. It's almost incredible that such a thing could have been formed in the first instance, or if it *was* formed, could have lasted during the ages in which the moon has been in existence. You would have expected it either to be disintegrated by temperature variations or by meteor impact. . . . It looks almost like an engineering job. . . . Yes, it is most extraordinary." On June 17, 1954, visiting southern California, Wilkins studied Mare Crisium with the 100-inch reflecting telescope at Mount Wilson Observatory and sighted the bridge again.

But other amateur astronomers were seeing something different, namely the effects of light from a low sun upon this particular part of the lunar landscape. Subsequent viewing, for example from the Lunar Orbiter in the 1960s, has conclusively established that no such object, whether natural phenomenon or engineered structure, exists. But at the time, even in the face of ridicule which soon led him to resign from the BAA, Wilkins stuck to his conviction.

Donald E. Keyhoe (1897–1988), a retired Marine Corps major and the most famous UFO proponent of his time, reported the observations of O'Neill and Wilkins (the latter of whom harbored heretical UFO sympathies), along with others of (more genuinely anomalous) TLPs, and from them spun some fanciful theories. In his book *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy* (1955) he wondered if an intelligent lunar race, a few centuries ahead of its counterpart on earth, grew alarmed as it became apparent that earthlings would soon bring their bombs, wars, and violent ways to the moon; consequently, they launched observational vehicles—UFOs—to monitor terrestrial activity. Or maybe the "moon race have been enslaved and forced to build the space base for outsiders. . . . It was even possible that a strong moon race, perhaps with unknown weapons, could have overwhelmed the space visitors might be in control. As to which was the right answer, I could only speculate. But the evidence of *some* intelligent race on the moon seemed undeniable."

There was also Morris Ketchum Jessup (1900–1959). Jessup had an educational background in astronomy and experience as a working scientist. He did undergraduate and graduate work at the



Donald Keyhoe



M. K. Jessup



University of Michigan. In the late 1920s he and associates from the university set up a large refracting telescope in South Africa, employing it to discover many double stars. Jessup never finished the work necessary for a Ph.D. (though in later years he was often identified as “Dr. Jessup”), and he left astronomy to pursue his own archaeological interests in Mexico and Peru. When flying saucers came along, Jessup would write four books, distinguished both because one (*The Case for the UFO*, 1955) was the first to use the new phrase “UFO” in the title and also because they contained some strikingly original, if unconvincing, ruminations on the nature and origin of UFO intelligences.

In *The Expanding Case for the UFO* (1957) archaeological artifacts meet lunar anomalies (authentic and otherwise) and wed in a shotgun marriage uniting free-wheeling guesswork to staggering silliness. In general outline, if not in specific detail, it anticipates the “ancient-astronaut” craze generated by Erich (*Chariots of the Gods?*) von Däniken and his imitators in the 1970s. Jessup stated, “There are ‘little people’ in African and New Guinea jungles today. They have been written about, photographed, measured and studied. But *nobody* knows their origin or ancestry. They are, perhaps, one of the ‘erratics’ of ethnology. Were these people, these isolated tribes, ‘planted’ in the tropical African jungle from UFO [sic] thousands of years ago? Did UFO [sic] land, or crash, and establish racial germs or colonies?”

After noting the occurrence of TLPs over the centuries, he proceeds to decree it arguably possible that these pygmies either arrived originally from the moon or colonized it from here, having developed an advanced technology based on levitation and antigravity. “We have reason to believe,” he wrote, “that space flight may have been in existence for 70,000 to 100,000 years, [and] there is reason to believe that space flight derives from a time in the pre-cataclysmic era which developed a first wave of civilization. . . . If we do, indeed, have ‘little people’ within the UFO [sic], as reported by observers of varying responsibility, then we may assume that the Pygmies, at some remote epoch, developed a civilization which discovered the principle of gravitation and put it to work.” They reside on the earth, the moon, and in giant spacecraft located in space between the two in a zone of gravitational neutrality.

No one endorsed or expanded on Jessup’s moon-connected superpygmies, but some UFO and esoteric literature continued—up to the present—to explore the connection between the moon and extraterrestrials based there. The *NICAP Bulletin* for January 1959, reporting the observation of domelike objects on the moon, wondered if these were “possibly structures built by unknown space travelers.” Writing in England’s *Flying Saucer Review* (January/February 1960), W. Raymond Drake advanced the notion that the moon’s surface appears as it does because long ago the lunarians devastated it in a nuclear conflict, either with each other or with hostile invaders. Surviving lunarians crawled into “deep caverns with air and water,” and it is from there

that they dispatch saucers earthward. As it happens, the moon is not quite what it appears to be. “Our belt of atmosphere hundreds of miles thick may have some of the properties of a giant lens, which magnifies the Moon to twenty times its real size,” according to Drake. In Ray Palmer’s *Flying Saucers* magazine, Guy J. Cyr, a Catholic priest, imagined a moon awash in life and oceans and, of course, spaceships, and Robert W. Russel conjured up lunarians residing in great numbers under crater floors.

As pictures of the lunar surface proliferated, from improved photographic and telescopic technology on earth and from shots taken from spacecraft near or on the moon, enthusiasts pored over them in search of alien artifacts. A hoax published in a September 1969 issue of the now-defunct supermarket tabloid *National Bulletin*, which concocted the story in its editorial office and gave it a bogus byline, purported to show censored transcripts of communications between NASA’s Mission Control and the Apollo 11 moon landing (the first) on July 20, 1969. The discussion concerned sightings of extraterrestrial spacecraft in the astronauts’ vicinity. In the mid-1970s, in the pulp newsstand magazine *Saga’s UFO Report*, Joseph Goodavage contributed sensationalistic material, cited in most subsequent writings on the subject, supposedly demonstrating evidence of lunar extraterrestrial activity.

Books by Don Wilson (*Our Mysterious Spaceship Moon*, 1975, and *Secrets of Our Spaceship Moon*, 1979), Jean Sardy (*The Moon: Outpost of the Gods*, 1975), and George H. Leonard (*Somebody Else Is on the Moon*, 1976) put forth variations on the theme of moon-as-ET-colony-and-launching-pad, drawing their inspiration largely from creative interpretations of ambiguous photographic images. Wilson championed an especially outlandish allegation, namely that the moon itself is a hollow spacecraft. “The greatest UFO in our skies is there for everyone to see,” he proclaimed, possibly with tongue in cheek.

Fred Steckling of the George Adamski Foundation was responsible for another notable book in the genre. In *We Discovered Alien Bases on the Moon* (1982) he sought to prove that the contactee’s claims of an extraterrestrial presence there (see below) were not, as critics thought, absurd fiction. The book sparked a devastating refutation by well-informed amateur astronomer and moon-watcher Francis G. Graham, head of the Pennsylvania Selenological Society. Graham’s monograph opens with these wry words:

Fred Steckling believes the US moon program discovered aliens on the moon, and the lunar program is continuing under great secrecy, in order to establish contact with the UFOs; further, some people in the government have in fact duplicated a crashed UFO . . . and are using that for transport to the moon. It is not clear [to] which George Pal movie Mr. Steckling has been tuning his cosmic Interrossiter, but it is certainly not tuned to reality, if one compares his book to the main body of scientific knowledge as a yardstick of what

constitutes his view of the reality of the moon.

But perhaps conventional lunar science is wrong and Mr. Steckling is right. What evidence does he produce? Mr. Steckling shows 150 photos and drawings. One of these, of himself, we can believe. The remaining 149 demand critical appraisal. Of those 149, 15 are of Earth UFOs, postage stamps, and pond water.

## TRAVELERS' TALES

"As my space friends had promised, they took me on my first trip to the moon the second week of August, 1956," New Jersey sign painter and contactee Howard Menger relates matter-of-factly in the first sentence of a chapter of his *From Outer Space to You* (1959). The trip, however, ended disappointingly. Menger and his friends, both space people and earthlings, orbited the moon but did not land on it. Through a screen he saw dome-shaped structures.



Howard Menger

Fortunately, Menger got a return trip the next month, and this time he was permitted to step onto the surface—with a camera yet. In his book, one photograph, showing a saucer approaching a dome, notes, "The author was permitted to take only a few photographs," but was still keeping several under wraps, while others "did not come out well." He reported, "For some reason I was never allowed to take photographs of surface detail, people, their mechanical installations and the like." Sadly, the result was that none of the published photographs looks like anything that could not have been produced on a kitchen table. One critic observed at the time, "These

photos are so evidently faked that it is almost foolish to even criticize them."

Unlike other contactees Menger did not aver that the lunar landscape is livable (though he does give the moon an atmosphere which, of course, more prosaic astronomical doctrine does not afford it), but that the space people from other planets (primarily Venus) who reside there live inside the domes. He and hundreds of other earthlings from an assortment of nations were led on a guided tour which took them from dome to dome. "All of us were shown musical instruments, samples of art and architecture, and other interesting things," Menger vaguely recalled. Going on even less helpfully, if that's conceivable, he added, "In fact [sic] one building was like an interplanetary world's fair, with each planet represented by some sort of contribution in art, technology and so on."

If anything, contactee Buck Nelson, an Ozarks farmer who may fairly be characterized as an unlettered hillbilly, had even fewer details about his lunar adventure, which took place nearly a year and a half before Menger's, in April 1955. Nelson's principal contact was Little Bucky, an earthling expatriate who now considered Venus home.

Little Bucky and two extraterrestrial associates (one the oddly monikered "Bob Solomon") showed up at midnight on April 24 to fulfill a promise to take Buck Nelson into space. In return, as Nelson would write, "I would tell about it to the world." Buck held up his share of the bargain, writing and peddling a not fully literate booklet with the to-the-point title *My Trip to Mars, the Moon, and Venus* (1956).

What the world learned was that after a stopover on Mars, where he and his dog Teddy, who accompanied him

(continued on page 26)

## JUST FOR FUN

In a previous "Just for Fun" (*IUR* 29:4, pp. 20–21) you were asked some trivia questions associated with some serious individuals involved with the UFO story. This time we'll give equal time to our congenial lunatics, the old-time contactees. Link the statements in the right-hand column to the contactee listed in the left-hand column. Answers are on page 26.—*Michael D. Swords.*

### Contactees:

1. George Adamski
2. Orfeo M. Angelucci
3. Truman Bethurum
4. Woody Derenberger
5. Daniel W. Fry
6. Howard Menger
7. Buck Nelson
8. Reinhold O. Schmidt
9. George W. Van Tassell
10. George Hunt Williamson

### Statements:

- A. Explored secret Mayan caves with Joseph Manson Valentine of Bermuda Triangle fame.
- B. Claimed to be a distant part of the royal family of Serbia.
- C. Was married to Hollywood starlet Jennifer Holt.
- D. Was Most Reverend Bishop of the Syro-Chaldean Archdiocese of North America.
- E. Was one of the last people to see Morris Jessup alive.
- F. Wrote an unperformed "Broadway play" giving his answer to the Secret of the Grail.
- G. Was an initiated member of the Chippewa Indian tribe.
- H. Was a member of the Knights of Malta.
- I. Was falsely accused of murdering his first wife in Peru.
- J. Was an illustrator and advertising copywriter for Celoltex.

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# ABDUCTED BY HER BELIEFS

BY MARK RODEGHIER

Susan Clancy, *Abducted: How People Come to Believe They Were Kidnapped by Aliens*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 2005. \$22.95.

Social scientists, chiefly psychologists, have been examining the abduction phenomenon—really just abductees—for more than a decade. They began this work in the early 1990s after abductions became a subject of popular culture and media interest, and hence reached the attention of academics. Essentially all this research began with the assumption that abductions are not real and must have some other cause unrelated to aliens or other external forces.

These supposed causes are quite diverse, including such things as fantasy proneness, masochism, sleep paralysis, hypnagogic and hypnopompic imagery, investigators and therapists who unwittingly plant abduction memories in the minds of abductees, and the meaning that abduction beliefs provide as a substitute for religion. This list is not quite exhaustive, but you get the point. While social scientists all agreed that abductions were not real, they differed greatly on their causes.

Why are these theories so varied? Have psychologists agreed, by now, on a primary cause for abduction accounts? If not, why?

Those questions bring us to the most recent addition to this literature on the abduction phenomenon, the book *Abducted* by former Harvard postdoc Susan Clancy. It is, like all books on abductions (whether by UFO investigators or skeptics), written for the general public, not a specialized audience. Clancy bases the book on her own research on abductees, most of which was done with her mentor, Richard McNally, plus her own speculations on the meaning of abductions to those who have the experience.

The book is designed, as its subtitle tells us, to explain “how people come to believe they were kidnapped by aliens.” Ultimately, the book fails in its primary goal, revealing more about the beliefs of Clancy and other psychologists than the abductees. Yet the book does make a contribution to the debate about abductions, though not one that Clancy readily recognizes.

Clancy writes in a breezy style, and even though you

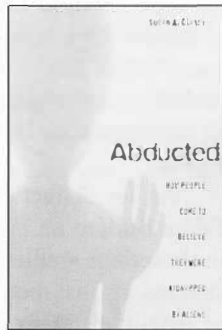
may often disagree with her conclusions, the book is easy to read and keeps your attention. She is not above telling disparaging stories about herself, and from these, and some rather injudicious comments scattered throughout the text, it seems fair to characterize her as someone who “shoots from the hip.” For example, consider this statement: “Ten years from now, believing in aliens and in their presence among us will perhaps become as common as believing in God.” There are so many problems with this that I hardly know where to begin a critique. It makes for a memorable quote, but it is a rather meaningless statement, and not one (I’d lay big money) likely to come true in 10 years, however you interpret it.

There are both small and large things wrong with Clancy’s argument and even her use of the UFO literature and discussion of specific cases. I won’t belabor these failings in this review; a few instances will suffice. But I want to also be fair and point out what Clancy got right, two things in particular. Clancy, unlike almost every skeptical social scientist who has studied abductees, engaged in lengthy conversations with her subjects prior to their enrollment in her studies. As a consequence, she did learn some things about people who self-identify as possible abductees.

First, she came to realize that most people who contact UFO and abduction investigators and think they might be abductees don’t meet any reasonable definition of that category. Second, she understands these people are trying to make sense of odd and anomalous experiences they have had, and that they find the abduction experience offers them a ready-made cultural script that “explains” their own life’s oddities. (“Alien-abduction beliefs reflect attempts to explain odd, unusual, and perplexing experiences.”)

The sane and sensible abduction investigators I know are well familiar with the common experience of being contacted by someone who saw odd lights, has unexplained bruises, had a vivid dream about UFOs and aliens, or feels uneasy when reading books by Budd Hopkins or David Jacobs, and thinks that he or she might be an abductee. But the majority of this group has no experience of an actual abduction event, and most won’t after further discussions, or even an investigation. In other words, for whatever reason (and I return to this below), many people who think they might be abductees simply are not (and fortunate for them).

Clancy soon recognized the existence of this type of



abduction claimant and struggled to understand why some individuals would turn to the abduction phenomenon as an explanation. Unlike other social scientists who tend to promote one primary cause, Clancy is sensible enough to recognize that there are several pathways that eventually wind to roughly the same spot. As she writes in the conclusion, "I am arguing that alien-abduction memories are best understood as resulting from a blend of fantasy-proneness, memory distortion, culturally available scripts, sleep hallucinations, and scientific illiteracy, aided and abetted by the suggestions and reinforcement of hypnotherapy."

We can quibble with the details, but the idea that abduction beliefs are multicausal is a good one. *Some* people who think they are abductees have that belief for a complex of reasons, probably something close to what Clancy lists in this quote. Note that, like most skeptics now, there is no talk of mental illness or impaired functioning among abductees, although Clancy does see evidence of schizotypy—magical thinking and perceptual aberration—among her abductee sample. Abductees may be odd, but they are not abnormal.

Clancy, though, did something odd herself, caused not just by her skepticism, but also by her own beliefs. She *knows* that abductions aren't real, but she wanted to study abductees. How can you find an abductee if there are no independent, objective criteria to use to classify people into that group? Oh, the answer turns out to be easy: Anyone who says they are an abductee, or might be an abductee, or could be an abductee, gets counted as an "abductee." Is this as misguided as it sounds? Basically, yes, with one caveat.

Science is all about, at its most basic level, defining what you are studying rigorously so that you and your colleagues actually know what your research is all about. Social scientists often have a tough time at this because the social world is inherently messy and imprecise, with loose boundaries. Still, you have to try. However, almost all social scientists (and some ufologists) who have studied abductees have not been very precise in their definition of an abductee. This might all seem just nit picking: Get on with it man, isn't it obvious who is and isn't an abductee!

Well, yes it is, if we are talking about someone who remembers floating through their window into a UFO, where they undergo various procedures, are shown hybrid babies, and then taken back to their house. But no it isn't, if we instead are faced with someone who woke up with odd bruises one morning and on that basis thinks that abduction is the likely explanation.

Clancy is interested in the process by which one becomes an abductee, and says, correctly, that for most it comes about slowly, in fits and starts. Even if she believes that both examples above count as abductees, you'd want to separate them into different groups to see how they might differ on a whole variety of traits, and to better be able to study what Clancy might term (not her language) "early" and "late" stage abductees (the former just have weird unexplained experiences; the latter have more vivid memo-

ries and are sure they are abductees). In fact, only about 10% of her sample was confident they had been abducted (though even this is left imprecise).

So Clancy's abductee definition lets in just about anyone, and it guarantees that she is going to get a sample with people who are a bit odd (else why would little evidence convince them they might be abductees). But she doesn't come to grips with this obvious influence on her work.

Clancy is not impressed, as some might be, by either those persons who recall their abductions without hypnosis, or by the purported consistency of abduction stories themselves. As for hypnosis, she writes that people can recover memories without it; in fact, she also predicts, "if you're not a believer [in abductions] already (at least to some extent), you're not going to acquire memories of alien abductions." That's a strong statement, and one it would seem has already been disconfirmed by several cases where the witness had no prior belief in UFOs, let alone abductions, yet had an abduction-type experience. But . . . you are playing a fool's game with Clancy here. If such a witness goes to visit an abduction investigator, that would be *prima facie* proof that he had some belief in abductions—else why visit the investigator?

As for abduction consistency, although not quoting Eddie Bullard on this (she pointedly neglects citations to those serious studies appearing in the UFO literature), she first asserts that there is little consistency and that all sorts of details differ from case to case, including the aliens' appearance, what they wear, the type of examination, messages, and so forth. While there is some truth to this, she admits that the general plot is roughly the same, but says that all of this "existed in movies and TV before people ever reported" abductions.

It is with statements like this that Clancy's work begins to leave the rails, as she wanders away from things she has studied to rank speculation about the beliefs and motivations of abductees. Here are two examples:

Aliens are entirely and extremely human, the imaginative creations of people with ordinary emotional needs and desires. We don't want to be alone. We feel helpless and vulnerable much of the time. We want to believe there's something bigger and better than us out there. And we want to believe that whatever it is cares about us, or at least is paying attention to us. That they want us (sexually or otherwise). That we're special. Being abducted by aliens is a culturally shaped manifestation of a universal human need. . . .

The common features of the alien-abduction stories—the elements of the basic plot—are not evidence of validity. They are evidence that these stories have been contrived out of shared cultural knowledge and shared psychological fears, needs, hopes, and limitations.

I suppose I don't need to tell you that she didn't study  
*(continued on page 26)*

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# BODY SNATCHERS: AN EXCHANGE

BY NICK REDFERN

WITH A REPLY BY ROBERT J. DURANT

I have just read Robert Durant's review article "Doty and the Body Snatchers," published in the 30:1 issue of *IUR*, whose subject is Greg Bishop's book *Project Beta* and my *Body Snatchers in the Desert* (both published by Paraview, 2005).

Durant begins by sensibly ditching the notion that I initially wrote *Body Snatchers* as a novel and then "decided there was a bigger market in nonfiction Roswell." He suggests instead that I am "the latest victim of the relentless program to disinform ufology." Indeed, I would stress that I do not give a damn about UFO fiction, and I have no interest in writing UFO fiction (there is enough of that in ufology already). The size of a market is of zero concern to me when it comes to determining what I write about or what I don't write about. I write books on UFOs to inform interested parties about information I have uncovered; nothing more, nothing less. People can take it or leave it.

Durant claims that my book created an "uproar" on the UFO Updates site and on other newsgroups. In fact, the alleged uproar was largely limited to a couple of posts per day from Brad Sparks, with various other comments and observations made by Gildas Bourdais, Ed Gerhman, Don Ledger, and Rich Reynolds. Reynolds isn't particularly an advocate of the ideas proposed in *Body Snatchers*, but he is open-minded to aspects of the theory and has privately provided me with reams of data (including a lot of Navy-based data and other material from the 1940s); some of these data relate to "hybrid" balloon-based vehicles similar to those described to me as I researched the book.

Sparks and Bourdais have both argued that the persons I interviewed sought to deceive me with disinformation. However, regular posts from—predominantly—two sources who disagree with the book, coupled with only a limited degree of comment from other subscribers, hardly comprises an "uproar."

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*Nick Redfern is a British-born freelance journalist who currently lives in Texas. He has written books on cryptozoology and ufology, the most recent being Body Snatchers in the Desert (Paraview, 2005). Robert J. Durant is a former airline pilot who has studied UFOs since the 1950s.*

Durant goes on to outline the basic premise of the book: that, in a situation mirroring the shameful and Faustian postwar Operation Paperclip, Japanese balloon experts were secretly brought to the United States to continue their research into balloons that were far more advanced than their World War II Fugo devices, and that it was the crash of one such balloon—albeit one designed to carry aloft a flying-wing aircraft—that sparked the legend of the UFO crash at Roswell.

Durant complains that I provided no documentation to support this scenario beyond a single newspaper article. This is absurd. First, if any of the people I had interviewed were able to provide me with Holy Grail-level documentation that utterly confirmed the theory, I would have been highly suspicious of the apparent ease with which they had acquired such seemingly classified material.

Many researchers salivate at the very mention of MJ-12 and the many and assorted documents that have surfaced on the subject. Very few of those same researchers actually give thought to how the ostensible whistleblowers who provided the documents actually got them past security. What were my sources supposed to do: Steal the documents from a vault, then shove them down their trousers and march out the front door? And all just in case they happened to meet someone like me 35 to 50 years later to whom they decided to tell all?

I am underwhelmed by claimants who parade photocopies of "leaked" Top Secret documents that purport to detail extraordinary revelations about crashed UFOs, alien autopsies, and reverse engineering. I am far more intrigued by individuals who relate an account to me and who produce for me their driver's licenses, their credit cards, and tax-related documents (among other papers) that demonstrate they are who they say they are.

And are we also supposed to believe that such documentation would be declassified and surface at an official level? Don't be naïve. Not even the Air Force or the General Accounting Office could find a damned thing of any significance during their excursions into the murky waters of Roswell, and the outgoing records from Roswell from 1946 to 1949 are inexplicably missing. Whatever happened at Roswell, someone carefully and successfully ensured (and

perhaps still does ensure—that's a moot point, however) that the paper trail was stone cold long before half of us were even born.

And before we leave this topic: I have read enough of Durant's work to know that he is a strong advocate of the idea that something truly anomalous occurred in the New Mexico desert in 1947. But if—to use Durant's logic—the story provided to me lacks credibility because the only documentation that I have is a newspaper clipping, he would do well to remember that no official documentation has ever surfaced in support of the idea that anything anomalous crashed at Roswell. If this is a problem, it is a problem for those on both sides of the issue.

On the issue of nuclear-powered aircraft and Roswell, Durant writes, "The insertion of nuclear-power and radiation experiments into the story is puzzling . . . The well-documented efforts to create nuclear propulsion came much later than 1947."

That seems to imply that my sources had said that efforts to create nuclear-powered aircraft were deeply underway in 1947. They did not. Everybody I interviewed told me that there was no nuclear-powered aircraft as such in 1947, but that there *was* a desire to try to determine—with the limited technology that existed at the time—how a crew might be affected by prolonged, nuclear-powered flight, or a reactor, and the like. Bear in mind, too, the crucial consideration that the Nuclear Energy for Propulsion of Aircraft (NEPA) program began in 1946. Here are four quotes from the interviews (my italics):

1. "The thought was to someday build an aircraft that would fly very high and for an extreme amount of time. But how will [the crew] be affected? And if we can really do all this—and even though it might be years and probably decades ahead—can we develop a unique type of nuclear aircraft and engine that can fly very high and if necessary stay up there for an extreme period of time?"

2. "[A]lthough the plans were to build nuclear aircraft that would fly very high, we weren't in a position to build anything like that back then, as this was a long ways ahead, and so they worked with simulations. . . ."

3. "There is no nuclear engine back then—none at all. But there is a need for a simulation of a nuclear flight. . . ."

4. "That was just too advanced—Buck Rogers—and years away."

In other words, none of the interviewees disputed the historical fact that fully functioning nuclear-powered aircraft were a thing of the far future rather than the present of 1947. They were unanimous in the view, however, that rudimentary research had been undertaken and that this involved dubious human experimentation.

Heck, even the *officially declassified* NEPA files of 1948 (only one year after Roswell) talk about NEPA's *on-going* plans to try to secure permission to use American prisoners in their "tests" in an attempt to make an "accurate prediction" of the "biological changes resulting from known levels of radiation exposure."

I might also point out that Colonel Gasser—"the principal army technician" at the NEPA project at Oak Ridge—is cited in FBI documents of 1949 (included in the book) as having stated that "flying discs have long been a theoretical possibility . . . scientists have for many years, been attempting to develop this type of aircraft. Some experimentation has been done even in the United States, but insofar as is known in the United States, at the present time, there have never been any practical developments. . . ." According to the FBI, Gasser also stated that "there is only one possible fuel which could be utilized which is in accord with present theory, and that is the utilization of atomic energy."

That a source such as Gasser—directly tied to NEPA—should have been aware that the U.S. had actually been attempting to build saucers prior to 1949 is surely intriguing. Moreover, the observation that nothing of a practical nature had been developed from this "experimentation" ties in *exactly* with the testimony provided by my informants—that nearly all of the experiments undertaken had ended in disaster or failure.

Durant also disputes allegations made to me that the work of the Horten brothers of Germany was tied in with the story. But he neglects to mention that not just my interviewees linked UFOs and the Hortens: A USAF document of January 3, 1952, from Brig. Gen. W. M. Garland, to Gen. John A. Samford, Air Force director of intelligence (also in the book), observes, "[I]t is to be noted that certain developments by the Germans, *particularly the Horten wing* [my italics], jet propulsion, and refueling, combined with their extensive employment of V-1 and V-2 weapons during World War II, lend credence to the possibility that the flying objects may be of German and Russian origin."

How curious that none other than the USAF director of intelligence was positing a link between UFOs and particularly the work of the Horten brothers. Was Garland's remark concerning the Russians and Horten vehicles in a UFO context possibly borne out of a knowledge that the Americans had dabbled in something similar a few years previously?

Durant goes on to assert, "The balloon-wing combination fails the common-sense test." So what? No one I interviewed claimed that the operation to launch a huge balloon array with a detachable glider fixed below it as a hybrid-style device *was* straightforward or indeed feasible at all. In fact, if you credit the testimony in the book, then the attempt to launch just such a device was demonstrably *not* feasible and *was* an unmitigated disaster from beginning to end. And we know that because the damned thing crashed on what was possibly the first attempt to fly it. Indeed, the source identified in the book as the "Colonel" said bluntly, "This was just one of many strange projects. Some got canceled—as this one was in late 1947." A comparable "dipshit" comment is made, too, concerning the experimentation.

In other words, my sources concur with Durant that this was not finally seen as a viable area for practical flight; it

was canceled barely months later. And when Durant additionally criticizes the “fundamental feasibility” of the project, those who have not read the book could be forgiven for thinking that my informants were suggesting this was a wonderful project that saw the balloon array lift the aircraft majestically into the air without problem. The Colonel in particular held, however, that the huge, unwieldy mess was a disaster. In fact, none of the informants had anything especially positive to say about the various experiments.

But military planners often come up with bizarre ideas that fail to work. A classic example can be found in formerly classified World War II German documentation, relating how the finest minds in German aviation came up with the bright idea to fly a V-weapon low across the ocean, while it towed an explosives-packed boat in the water. The V-device would then be radio-controlled toward an enemy battleship; it would line up the towboat with the battleship, detach its tow rope, and soar into the skies while the towboat and its cargo of explosives slammed at high speed into the side of the ship, blowing up and sinking ship and crew.

Now, this has nothing to do with Roswell. But it is a classic example in which leading military minds conjure up a bizarre project (and furthermore combine two different devices hybrid-style) that almost certainly—due to logistics—would not have functioned as planned. Indeed, it *was* canceled—due to perceived difficulties. But the important fact is that this didn’t prevent the German military from undertaking research before the operation was canceled due to it ultimately not being seen as viable. The same can apply to any nation.

## QUESTIONED SOURCES

Durant turns his attention to the sources of the testimony. Referring to one interviewee who worked for the Psychological Strategy Board (Bill Salter), Durant refers to him as “Bill Salter.” The use of quotation marks implies that this is a faked name or an alias. It is not. The man’s formal name is William Salter.

Commenting on a source in the book who worked at Oak Ridge and whose testimony is presented under the guise of the “Black Widow,” Durant contends, “Salter has much to add to the Widow’s story.” What is particularly odd, however, is that Salter does not add much to the story; hardly anything, in fact. I have no inkling where Durant got the idea that Salter added “much” to the story, but he certainly doesn’t get it from my book. *Body Snatchers in the Desert* is 248 pages in length, and Salter’s account takes up only half of page 90 and all of page 91. And that’s it: one and a half pages out of the book’s 248. Salter stressed that he knew nothing firsthand and saw nothing firsthand; all of his information came from a former employee of the Central Intelligence Group and “an old friend from the Department of Energy.”

Actually, and somewhat ironically, it is the fact that Salter—by his own admission—knew nothing firsthand and

saw nothing firsthand that lends credibility to his account. He was not trying to spin some elaborate tale of disinformation with every avenue carefully covered, and he did not claim to have anything substantial beyond what he was told. This is not the path followed by the experienced disinformation expert who weaves a solid story to divert a person into a carefully controlled environment. But it *is exactly* what we would expect to see and hear from someone who is recalling a specific, personal memory from more than half a century ago and stating something to the effect that “I know nothing personally, but this is what I was told—take it or leave it.”

Durant then turns to Al Barker—or as Durant prefers it, “Al Barker.” Again, there is nothing obfuscated about his name, beyond the fact that he prefers to be called Al rather than Albert (unless, as I have stated both privately and publicly, someone is going to the extent of creating bogus driving licenses and credit cards for a bunch of old guys in their 80s, with the intent of then having them show this material to me. I will concede, however, that the so-called Falcon did have a faked credit card—under the name Stephen V. Ayres). Durant takes issue with the claim made by Barker that U.S. psychological-warfare planners, in an attempt to hide the truth about Roswell, put out a cover story that Roswell was alien and that alien bodies were recovered. Durant states that “nobody thought Roswell was ET until 1978, and the public didn’t hear about that until 1980.”

Durant makes one fatal error: His “nobody thought Roswell was ET until 1978” is relevant only to the UFO-research community—as it certainly is the case that Roswell was barely mentioned post-1947 in a UFO context until 1978 (though Frank Edwards does refer to it in his 1966 bestseller *Flying Saucers—Serious Business*). But none of us in UFO research can be 100% sure what the Russians thought about Roswell 50 years ago, nor can we say with certainty what the American response was to the Russians sticking their noses in. Creating faked documents to emphasize the “ET crash” angle would have been an ideal diversionary tactic.

But Durant makes an even bigger and more critical blunder. Remember that he dismissed Barker’s claims about cover stories being put out decades ago by the Psychological Strategy Board and Army psychological-warfare planners because “nobody thought Roswell was ET until 1978.” But in the interview, Barker did not mention Roswell. What Barker actually said—and was careful to underscore—was that psychological-warfare planners put out bogus crashed UFO stories to hide the collective truth about “the high altitude idiocy at White Sands and elsewhere” (of which the specific “Roswell Incident” was only a part). Barker does *not* specifically refer to cover stories put out about Roswell; he says only that crashed UFO accounts were disseminated to hide a collective series of six or seven experiments undertaken in the desert of New Mexico in the summer of 1947.

Why is this important? Here’s why: If Barker had said bogus “crashed UFO” stories were circulated specifically

about Roswell in the 1940s and 1950s, there would indeed be a legitimate reason to question his version of events. But, again, Barker does not do this; he asserts only that faked UFO stories were circulated to hide the “idiocy” of 1947.

And, sure enough, an examination of UFO data demonstrates that a plethora of faked UFO tales *did* begin to enter the public domain from the late 1940s onwards—the most notorious being the tales fed to Frank Scully by Silas Newton and Leo GeBauer. While many dismiss the material provided to Scully as merely the embroidered tales of a pair of con men, as some researchers will be aware (from the research of Karl Pflock), Newton—according to his private journal—was visited by two men who supposedly represented a highly secret government entity that, incredibly, wanted him to keep telling his yarn about a UFO crash at Aztec, New Mexico, in 1948, even though they were aware that it was a spurious tale.

Now, we could dismiss Newton’s claim if it stood alone, but it does not. There are other examples where bogus crashed UFO tales were disseminated in broadly the same time frame. Take, for example, the alleged UFO crash on Spitzbergen (owned by Norway) in 1952. The National Security Agency has declassified an English-language translation of a Russian news article (titled *Flying Saucers? They’re A Myth!*, and written on March 12, 1968, by Villen Lyustiberg, science editor of the Novosti Press Agency) on UFOs. While other American agencies have also made copies of this document available, the NSA’s version differs slightly: in the section of the article that deals with Spitzbergen, someone within the official world circled it with the word “Plant.” The relevant document can be downloaded in PDF format from the NSA’s website.

And moving on further: In 1955, the late journalist Dorothy Kilgallen was allegedly approached by a British government source who claimed knowledge of a crashed UFO. The idea that a senior British government person would reveal such presumably classified material in such a cavalier fashion defies belief. If the tale was bogus, however, and the intent was to disseminate it for other purposes, then things become clearer. Indeed, I have been quietly digging into Kilgallen’s activities for a long time now and have learned that U.S. intelligence—in the early to mid-1950s—grew concerned that insider sources were feeding snippets of classified intelligence data to Kilgallen. What better way to smoke out those sources than to feed Kilgallen harmless false anecdotes about crashed UFOs, then monitor her and see whom she asked on the inside for confirmatory data on the crash, and then quietly arrest those same people without any real secrets being compromised?

I also need to stress the official world’s definition of psychological warfare (italics mine): “The planned use of propaganda and other psychological actions having the primary purpose of *influencing the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of hostile foreign groups in such a way as to support the achievement of national objectives.*”

It is notable that one of chief recommendations of the

lengthy August 1949 Technical Report of the investigative UFO operation Project Grudge was that “*Psychological Warfare Division and other governmental agencies interested in psychological warfare be informed of the results of this study.*” The italics are mine. In other words, even before the 1940s were over, the U.S. government had realized that the UFO subject could be used for psychological-warfare reasons—which is what all the sources I interviewed told me had occurred.

Durant questions the credibility of the Colonel’s claim that the Roswell events—and, indeed, the other New Mexican events of 1947—were hidden behind a crashed-UFO smokescreen. But again, the Colonel does *not* state that cover stories specifically about Roswell were put out at the time, only that crashed UFO stories were circulated which, again, as I have demonstrated above, did happen, as per Aztec, Spitzbergen, and others.

## ENTER THE S&S LAWYERS

Noting my remark that the Simon & Schuster legal department insisted on certain name changes, Durant scoffs that this “strains credulity.” First, let me note that of the eight books I have written (six in print, two pending), *Body Snatchers* is the only one that necessitated lengthy exchanges with a publisher’s legal people on a matter like this.

True, the names of the Colonel and the Black Widow *were* changed; as was the name of the Colonel’s superior to “my source,” and to “him.” This was because—as S&S legal staff know—I spoke with the Colonel’s superior who declined to speak on the record to me, even though he knew the Colonel was speaking out; as a result, I was told (not asked, but *told*) by S&S’s legal people that the name of the Colonel’s boss had to be removed from the manuscript as well.

Similarly, the references in Chapter 8, “The British Connection,” to Mr. T and Mr. D are not mine. My original manuscript contained their names. Again, these are further name obfuscations made at a legal level by S&S after deep consultation on certain issues, not all of which were directly related to the UFO angle. I don’t care if Durant thinks that this “strains credulity.”

Durant insists that my sources should explain why they are not willing to go public. Well, Salter and Barker *have* gone public. They are speaking out under their real names and in a published book that can be purchased all across the United States and the United Kingdom in bookstores and elsewhere on the Internet. As far as I can tell, that equates with speaking out publicly. Durant also asks: Why are they not talking to the *New York Times*? That is their decision. I cannot speak for them, and nor do I know the answer. Did any anti-UFO crash types demand back in 1978, when Maj. Jesse Marcel’s identity was obfuscated as “Major J.M.,” that to prove his credibility he needed to head at full speed for the offices of the *New York Times*?

Many apparent disinformation operations focused on UFO-crash claims, as Durant notes, first surfaced in the



U.K. He rightly mentions both the MJ-12 documents (which first came to public light in Timothy Good's 1987 British book *Above Top Secret*) and the alien-autopsy film, provided to a British man, Ray Santilli. There is also the seldom-discussed story about how, in late 1986, Jenny Randles was approached by a former British Army source who claimed to have access to voluminous U.S.-originated documentation on crashed UFOs, dead aliens, and the usual litany. But the important point is that all of this (and arguably the approaches made to Robert Emenecker, Linda Moulton Howe, Leonard H. Stringfield, the William L. Moore-Falcon episode) reinforces the ET angle.

Will someone please explain this to me: If at the heart of Roswell and the UFO mystery lies something of extraterrestrial origins and it needs to be so desperately hidden, then why do these alleged insiders such as Randles's source, the suppliers of the alien autopsy film, and the mailers of the MJ-12 documents have such easy access to the material?

Proponents invariably respond that it's a way of "preparing the public for the truth." If that's the case, "they" have been "preparing" the public for decades by telling tall tales to the UFO community, dangling the ET carrot, and then reeling it in. All of this positively reeks of manipulation; and not only that: Such action ensures that the same UFO-research community is under control and is misled into wasting much of its time running down dead-end streets.

Now, why would the government want to provide tantalizing data on such issues to researchers and ensure they endlessly and fruitlessly chase such tales? Could it perhaps be to act as a smokescreen for something far darker and controversial—like medical experimentation undertaken on human beings, somewhat akin to the radiation experiments of the 1940s onwards? And that, if exposed, might also open a Pandora's box on the way in which the UFO subject has been used as a tool of disinformation to hide a whole range of other controversies—perhaps including cattle mutilations? On this latter point, I encourage people to read Colm Kelleher's book *Brain Trust*. You'll never munch on cow burgers again.

Now, people could say that the same thing has happened with me and that I was fed disinformation. As Durant knows, I have *never, ever* dismissed this possibility, and I have said so publicly on UFO Updates and elsewhere. But my main argument against that possibility is this: In the post-Mogul, post-crash-test-dummy era, Roswell was stalemated. There were no new books on the subject; a lot of the mainstream media had bought into Mogul (albeit less so with regard to the dummies—truly the strangest UFO-related report ever to surface from the official world), and many people were focusing on other aspects of ufology.

On top of that, more than 20 individuals, privately or publicly, are talking about their knowledge of the human-experimentation aspect of Roswell.

With all that in mind, if Roswell is a secret (regardless of what lies at its heart) that has to be protected at all costs and continued interest in which is to be discouraged, why

would the government stir the pot again by having a group of old folks come forward and unleash the beast of New Mexico on us once again?

Researchers who take issue with the testimony and evidence I presented are trying to follow more ET-suggestive leads. I have no problem with their doing so, of course. We all want to establish the truth about Roswell. My point is this, however: Because the material presented to me is so controversial and so uncongenial to the UFO interpretation, it has had the effect of galvanizing extraterrestrial hypothesizers to dig into the UFO side of Roswell even more firmly. And I come back to my main point: If Roswell was ET and had to be hidden, why put out a story that is going to make people (proponents, skeptics, and agnostics alike) poke into business that—from the perspective of the official world—is none of theirs?

### ROBERT J. DURANT RESPONDS:

I am pleased to learn from Nick Redfern that "[M]ore than 20 individuals, privately or publicly, are talking about their knowledge of the human-experimentation aspect of Roswell." And presumably we will see their detailed recollections in the journals of the many branches of history which will be shaken by these revolutionary revelations.

Career psychological-warfare (disinformation) operatives William Salter and Albert Barker have achieved celebrity only in the pages of *Body Snatchers*, and seem not yet to have made it to Google, much less the *New York Times*. They and their 20-odd colleagues must be hiding in fear of the heavy hand of the Simon & Schuster legal department. Drat!

If the government used a "crashed spaceship" story to cover the Japanese-Roswell Event, it escaped the American public. A Gallup Poll taken in August 1948 asking about "flying saucers" revealed that the ET explanation for the saucers was believed by so few respondents that it was not even listed. The cover for Roswell was a weather balloon and its radartarget, and that remained the cover for either 31 years or 46 years, depending on whether you subscribe to the ET or Mogul interpretation.

Invoking Norway (!) in 1946 (!) doesn't help, because those "ghost rockets" were commonly believed to be Soviet devices. Like Roswell, the ET hypothesis for the rockets appeared long after, and in ufological circles, not in the contemporary mass media. The Frank Scully hoax came much too late, and was much too lame, to have any impact supporting the Redfern disinformation scenario.

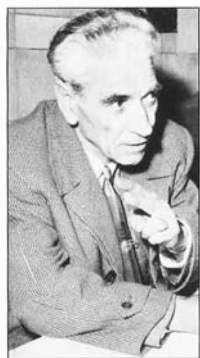
Roswell, whether it was a spacecraft or a Mogul array or a Redfern array, had a public life measured in hours, and remained a non-story until Moore and Berlitz opened the grave 31 years later. The record shows unbroken, relentless efforts by the government to neutralize the idea that flying saucers were a real phenomenon.

In other words, the historical record on this point is exactly opposite to that espoused by Redfern's sources. ♦

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## SELENITES—continued from page 18

on the epic voyage (Little Bucky's dog Big Bo was there, too), had a good meal and met some nice folks, the ship zipped him off to the moon for another excellent meal and a good rest. On the moon Nelson saw a "building." Some lunar "children played with several sized dogs. They rode Big Bo like a pony." Then Bucky and band were off to Venus.



George Adamski

While aboard a mothership from Saturn on April 22, 1953, contactee and space traveler George Adamski (who had first come to public attention with photographs, allegedly taken through his telescope, of flying saucers near the moon) conversed with the pilot, an individual named Zuhl. In his *Inside the Space Ships* (1955) Adamski does not mention tape-recording the exchange, but perhaps he had a spectacular memory; at any rate, he quotes the Saturnian's words about the moon:

The side of the Moon which you can see from your planet is quite comparable to your desert areas on Earth. It is hot, as your scientists correctly claim, but its temperature is not so extreme as they think. And while the side which you do not see is colder, neither is it as cold as they believe. It is strange how people of Earth accept statements from those they look up to as men of learning without questioning the limitations of that knowledge.

There is a beautiful strip or section around the center of the Moon in which vegetation, trees and animals thrive, and in which people live in comfort. Even you of Earth could live on that part of the Moon....

Many of your scientists have expressed the idea that the Moon is a dead body. If this were true ... it long ago would have vanished from space through disintegration. No! It is very much alive and supports a life which includes people. We ourselves have a large laboratory just beyond the rim of the Moon, out of sight of Earth, in the temperate and cooler section of that body.

Shortly thereafter, Adamski got a look for himself through a viewing instrument aboard the craft. He spotted a small growth of vegetation and, more dramatically, a small animal. "It was four-legged and furry," he wrote, "but its speed prevented me from identifying it." Adamski does not explain how he would have been able to "identify" a moon animal.

## THE CONTACTEES' MOON

On a website devoted to contactee lore, longtime English saucerian Jimmy Goddard summarizes the moon as envisioned in the claims of space communicants:

The Moon has a substantial atmosphere—6 pounds per square inch in its lowest elevations. . . . [It] has a much higher gravity than has been theorized—a value greater than 50% of Earth's. . . . [It] has water and known vegetation. . . . There are large variations in environment, between the side that always faces the Earth, and the far side that only can be seen from lunar orbit. (*This is only because the Moon is not a true sphere but is bulged on the side facing Earth, causing this side to be in effect higher altitude land. While, as Adamski admitted, this is a hostile desert area for the most part, people can live there if they undergo suitable decompression*) [italics in original]. . . . The Moon is occupied by space people. There are artificial bases on the front side, and more natural bases on the far side. The evidence has been photographed and verified.

In an October 10, 1952, automatic-writing communication to a contactee group in Prescott, Arizona, two Uranus residents reported that besides the known earth moon, there is a "dark moon" which the "magnetic field" renders invisible to terrestrial observers. Moreover, "your first Moon is not as far away as you think. . . . [It] has an atmosphere and water. . . . There are even inhabitants on the Moon! We have many bases of interplanetary nature there, too."

Sadly, not so. As Giovanni Riccioli knew as long ago as the 17th century, the moon is dead. So, too, are the dreams humans dreamed as they rambled the lunar landscapes of what turned out to be no more than their imaginations. This line from an old English lyric folk song (which Lord Byron later incorporated into a famous poem) says it all:

*We'll go no more a-roving  
By the light of the moon.* ♦

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## ANSWERS TO JUST FOR FUN

All statements are about George Hunt Williamson! A true renaissance man of oddball and offbeat behavior.

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## ABDUCTED—continued from page 20

our "fears" or "needs" or "hopes," at least not in any objective sense, as to how they relate to abductions.

She goes on in this vein for several pages, suggesting at several points that abduction stories are a type of substitute for religion and religious beliefs as they provide meaning for the abductees' lives. Well, if you are going to go for it, you might as well not hold back.

One finishes this book with the thought that although only a little has been learned about abductees and their beliefs, quite a lot has been revealed about what some academics believe about abductees. ♦

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## LETTER

### PLANET OF THE COGS

*To the editor:*

Like my respected friend Michael Swords ("As Great an Enigma as the UFOs Themselves," *IUR* 30:1), I've also been pondering—though with respect to a quite different topic—why facts are ignored when their implications are unwanted. Here are some possible explanations.

People ignore facts when their implications are unwished. That's a fact.

Mike, you and I are very unrepresentative of the wider society. People who take UFOs seriously (or Nessies, or psychic phenomena) and who actually want to get to the truth about them are very unrepresentative of the wider society. Most kids seem to lose their curiosity soon after adolescence. Most people want to fit in.

It's easy for us to forget that when we've spent our lives doing science and teaching science and interacting with young people who are seemingly—and unusually!—interested in finding out how the world works.

It's easy to assume that everyone else is also curious and believes that facts should be placed before wishes and prejudices. But that's not the fact of the matter. Least of all is this true when the people involved are bureaucrats. No doubt one finds within bureaucracies the occasional maverick, such as David Graham in the FDA, who naively imagines that the bureaucracies are populated by cogs, not by independently minded people. Every cog does its job, and no cog has the job of making waves, of coming up with something unprecedented. I think that's all the more so in military bureaucracies, even given that a few generals exert some individual initiative once they are safely high enough in the hierarchy.

Every conceivable explanation for actual UFOs is in some way disturbing. None seems to offer any ready path to making money. So, in whose interest is it, to insist that there's a mystery that needs to be looked into? It won't lead to a salary raise or a promotion, and it won't lead to a research grant. You can only make trouble for yourself, and people who populate bureaucracies tend to be people who try to avoid making trouble for themselves. So, they do what they can to ignore unpleasant facts.

*Henry Bauer  
Blacksburg, Virginia*

*Michael Swords replies:*

Alas, I'm afraid it must be so.

Of all my scholarly friends, I have found Henry Bauer to be the one most uniformly sensible and enlightening. But still, as Henry says, a life spent teaching imbues one with the naïve hope that people will actually care about truths, and integrate them into new syntheses that enrich their lives. I believe, from my old history of science days, that there have been eras much more likely than others to accept expansions

of the paradigm, and even "tolerance of wild possibilities," than others. Such eras are characterized by a mysterious (romantic even) attitude that pervades science, but also the arts, music, literature, and even social thought as well. Some say such periods ended when the world went very fast and global, and we will never see them again. Both creative productive leaps *and* arrogant nonsense abound in such eras, but the value of the creative box-bursting always outweighed the unsupportable garbage. And . . . at least things were fun. Whatever the "Truth," we certainly don't live in such an age now. So, I am reduced to being "abnormal" and, you know, sometimes that's not too bad. ♦

### EUROPEAN UFOLOGY ORGANIZES

During the weekend of October 14–15, 2005, I was invited to deliver a speech at the First Encounters of European Ufologists conference in Châlons-en-Champagne, France. At the same time, I attended a closed-door EuroUFO meeting that had been set up for the occasion. EuroUFO is a network of some 50 researchers launched in 1998 by Edoardo Russo.

Twenty-three investigators from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland participated in the colloquium meetings during the two days, and a resolution was drafted by a few of us and released to the press.

At the European level, we found there is a need to improve and reinforce cooperation among organizations and individuals who approach ufology from a rational perspective. By building an inventory of ongoing research projects we will keep track of *who is doing what*.

We must survey and safeguard the existing archives and resources of UFO researchers to find out *who has what* and preserve endangered collections.

We must provide encouragement and assistance to any scientific research on anomalous aerospace phenomena that can be carried out by universities or the government.

We must explore research models that allow a merging of national or topical catalogs of UFO reports currently in existence.

We must expand the current network to incorporate a larger database and create an Internet portal for showing and sharing information on UFO projects and results.

Basically, the new EuroUfoNet is a virtual space that offers opportunities for discussion, data exchange, and information. With no ideological restriction other than the practice of scientific ufology, members can have differing approaches and beliefs. With the minimum requirement a willingness to share data and cooperate, we expect that the resulting broader network of UFO students will produce a critical mass needed to push certain common projects.

For European UFO researchers and groups there will be true advantages to belong to EuroUfoNet, both now and in the future. We believe this is a first big step in the right direction.—*Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos*. ♦

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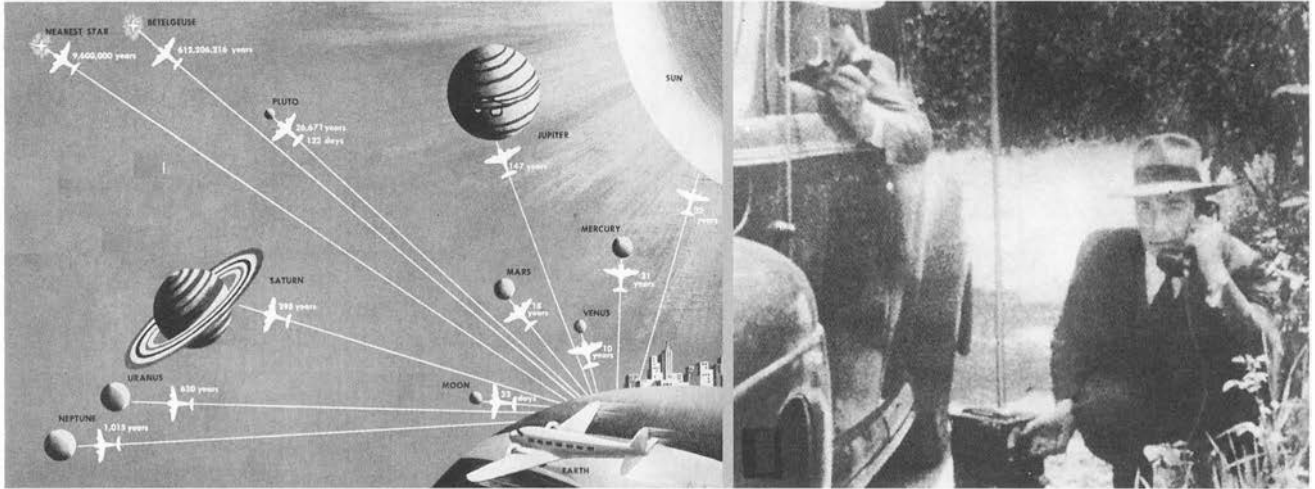
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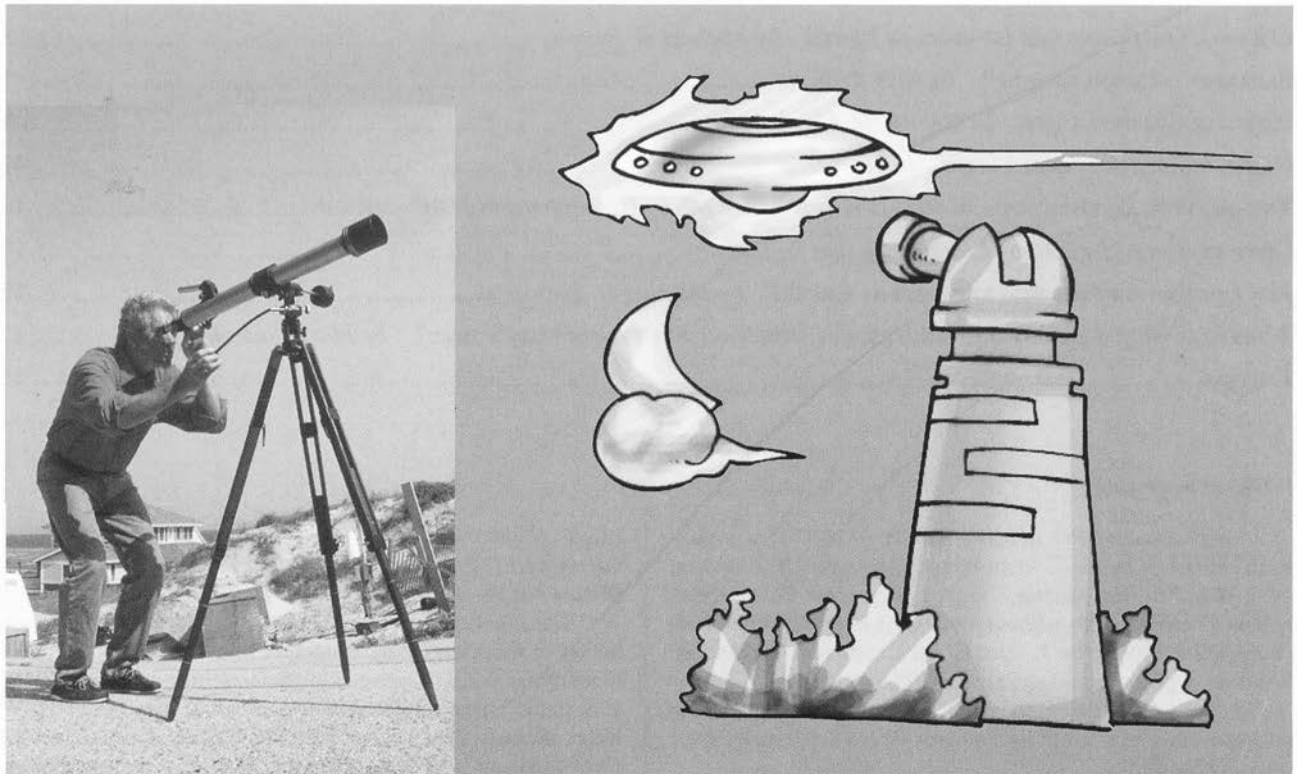
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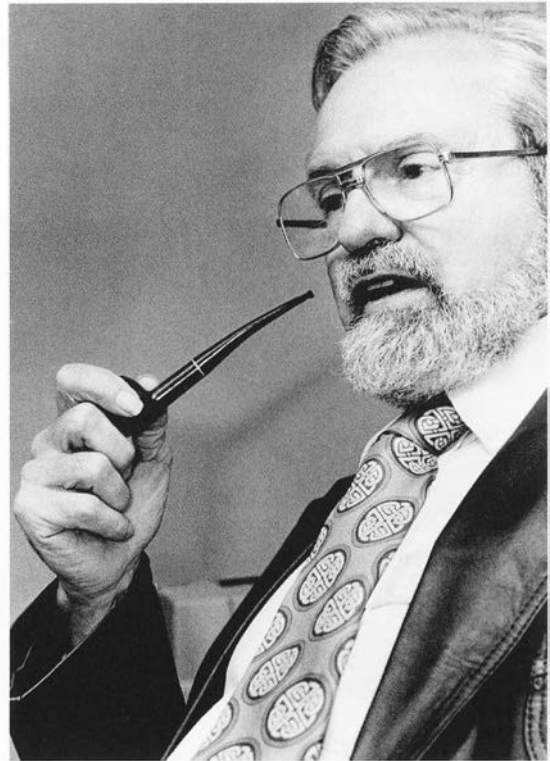
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# COLONEL ODELL AND THE INVASION OF EARTH

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

It was early in 1953. Donald Keyhoe was nearing the end of half a year of amazing cooperation from U.S. Air Force Pentagon insiders with him on the problem of UFOs. But the UFO-sympathetic military UFO officer, Maj. Dewey Fournet, had just retired, and his colleague, the UFO-friendly information desk official, Al Chop, was also about to leave that post. Unknown to Keyhoe, the CIA's Robertson Panel had recently completed its business, and the internal Pentagon war over how to handle UFO information properly had been decided in favor of debunking and ridicule.

Of course, the Robertson Panel decision didn't immediately sweep through all the services, or even the intelligence officers at the Pentagon. There is plenty of evidence that many of them were in disagreement with the new attitudes and policies. One of these officers appears to have been Col. William C. Odell.

In one of Keyhoe's last meetings with Chop, he was handed an article prepared by Odell for publication in the popular press. Its title was provocative: "Planet Earth—Host to Extraterrestrial Life." Chop gave it to Keyhoe with the background that many persons on his side of the Pentagon UFO war were not backing down and that they felt more information should be made available to the public. Keyhoe scanned the pages of the article. It was all about civilizations crossing space in search of new planets to live on once their own was failing for some reason. Keyhoe's mind was boggled. What was *this*? Why an Air Force colonel in intelligence? How did this get released?

Chop calmly told him that the Air Force could not refuse an officer's freedom to present personal opinions on matters that were not defined as issues of national security. Odell could write about anything he wanted to, but he couldn't use his Air Force affiliation, as that could cause too much confusion (and so his affiliation could not be listed if the article was published). Keyhoe was still reeling. He protested that newsmen would see right through that in seconds. Chop merely replied, "Security review passed it. That's all I know." He then asked Keyhoe to show the draft to his editors, at *True* or anywhere else he wished. Obviously, Odell had asked Chop to handle it this way.

---

*Michael D. Swords is professor emeritus of the Environmental Institute, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.*

Keyhoe showed the article to the editors at *True* (actually chief editor Ken Purdy was away, and John DuBarry stood in for him), but everyone was nervous about it, sensing something odd was going on in the Pentagon and not wanting to run the piece without Odell's rank and position. So the article never ran, and Keyhoe only mentioned its contents briefly, within much commentary on the larger social context, at the end of his blockbuster book, *Flying Saucers from Outer Space* (1953).

Although Keyhoe didn't make a copy of the article before he gave it back to Chop, he did make notes, which makes it possible for me to attempt to reconstruct Odell's original words. To do so, I'm going to use this approach:

1. Take the points that Keyhoe outlined in his four pages of notes in the order that they come.
2. Make understandable sentences out of the fragmented parts and correct typos.
3. Add some bridge commentary of my own to give the article some readable flow, without adding any unintended comments. I'll identify my words by using brackets.
4. Add some explanatory notes when I intuit that the text needs it. These will also be in brackets.

So, let's give it a try. Here's my best shot at Odell's article.

## PLANET EARTH: HOST TO EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE

When we look up at the skies on a clear night, the unaided human eye can see at most about 5,000 points of light in the heavens. [But our universe is much vaster than that. Some of these points of light are galaxies, and countless more are visible with the aid of a telescope.] In each complete galaxy there are approximately 40 million unseen stars for each one visible to the eye.

In our age, man is near to venturing out into our solar system, and beyond it into our galaxy. [This endeavor may well be of great importance to us]. In some distant time, if man *doesn't* travel in space, the race on Earth will perish, either because the planet has cooled into a permanent ice age, or is consumed in the last violent moments of the Sun.

In these circumstances, the only answer for an ad-

vanced civilization to survive would be: Exodus. [But where would we go?]

For ourselves, "life as we know it," or for a type of life form very near our own, we must have certain environmental conditions in an approximate range of temperature, oxygen density, water availability, and atmospheric pressure. [Our solar system doesn't hold much promise in these regards.]

## NEARBY LIFE FORMS

Our own Moon varies in temperature from  $-150^{\circ}\text{C}$ . to  $100^{\circ}\text{C}$ . [More accurately, it varies from  $-233^{\circ}\text{C}$ . to  $123^{\circ}\text{C}$ ., with a mean of  $-23^{\circ}\text{C}$ .] It lacks atmosphere and so heat from the Sun is not retained. When the Sun sets on the lunar surface, a drop of  $200^{\circ}\text{C}$ . is common. With a complete lack of water and atmosphere, and extremely variable temperatures, there is probably little hope for the sustaining of any human form of life.

On Mars, the temperature band [range] would permit life on the lower end of the Earth's scale. [Temperatures on Mars range from  $-140^{\circ}\text{C}$ . to  $20^{\circ}\text{C}$ ., with a mean of  $-63^{\circ}\text{C}$ .] Humans could live there under artificial conditions. But there are only traces of oxygen [0.13%], an atmospheric pressure that is very small [less than one-tenth of the Earth's], and a feeble gravity [about one-third of Earth's]. Whatever oxygen may be produced by low forms of plant life and isn't used by them is lost to space because of the low gravitational pull. There are "snow caps" at the Martian poles. These are probably carbon dioxide snow.

As to Venus, the temperature falls from a hot  $100^{\circ}\text{C}$ . in the lower layers of the atmosphere to about  $-25^{\circ}\text{C}$ . in the outermost stratum. [We now know the mean surface temperature of Venus is  $464^{\circ}\text{C}$ ., and the temperature at its cloud tops is approximately  $-45^{\circ}\text{C}$ .] The Venusian atmosphere is dense, at least twice that of Earth's. [Atmospheric pressure at the surface is about 90 times that of Earth.] It apparently lacks oxygen and may also lack water. [Oxygen has not been detected, but there is about 0.002% water vapor, with 96.5% of the atmosphere carbon dioxide.] Some liquid matter is present. [The only liquid is lava.] The planet is perpetually surrounded by great depths of clouds. Life could exist there, and may have to breathe gases other than oxygen.

Though not necessarily speaking of Venus, some scientists have speculated that life on other planets might breathe fluorine, chlorine, ammonia, or hydrogen fluoride, rather than our earth-based mixture where plants take in carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen. If an advanced civilization could have developed on the surface of Venus, their progress could have been retarded as, perhaps, the dense, foggy atmosphere would preclude astronomy.

[As for the other planets, prospects for a haven for advanced life are poorer yet.] At Mercury, the temperature ranges far beyond our scale for life: much too hot on one side, and much too cold on the other. The other five planets are deep in a cold temperature range unsuitable for life.

Jupiter has a constant  $-130^{\circ}\text{C}$ . temperature. It is a tremendous planet, completely enveloped in the wrong type of atmosphere for human life. Saturn, like Jupiter, is extremely cold, with a temperature remaining at  $-150^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Uranus is buried under a frigid blanket of  $-170^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Neptune and Pluto stay around  $-200^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The asteroids, so numerous that they are not all named, are too small to create life. Their gravities are so minute that they cannot retain any atmosphere. If all of this is so, then Man must ultimately look to the stars for his haven.

In our solar system, one of the nine planets has intelligent life. If this ratio holds elsewhere, there would be many havens in our galaxy. The same conditions that created Earth must have occurred elsewhere. New suns and new worlds are still being created. Some suitable orbiting planets in other solar systems may be older, some younger. And, even if other life would not be found in our own galaxy, it is probable elsewhere. There is almost a mathematical certainty that somewhere in space, Earth has a twin.

Earth's twin will not be an identical one, in the sense of its being born at the same time, but rather in the sense that conditions for life have developed there and that life is present and evolving. In fact, our Earth could be one of a family of life-supporting planets in the Universe. Some of our sister planets, capable of sustaining life, would be older than ours. Others would be younger. There may be enough of this breed of planet that one could see life forms developing through all the stages that occurred here. Some planets may be on the doorstep of human development. Others may be further along, as we are today. Still others will be much older, so much further advanced that they are on the verge of exodus from their planet, as it approaches that stage of its inevitable destruction. These beings may have attained space travel. They may have already explored their own stellar system. They may overcome the technical and practical restrictions and are preparing for the abandonment of their planet. They may be seeking a younger, more suitable planet on which to live and perpetuate their race.

[An aside: Judging by the arrows and lines he scratched on the above paragraph, Keyhoe was wowed by it.]

There are some races in the Universe that will never have the opportunity to meet each other. Some races will die through wars on their planet, through lack of technological development, or through interplanetary wars within their own stellar system.

For all we know, planets may be the rule rather than the exception. Recent observations of the binary stars 61 Cygni [11.4 light years distant] and 70 Ophiuchi [16.6 light years away] have indicated that nonluminous bodies of almost planetary size are associated with both stars. There may be planets orbiting about the score or so stars that lie within a dozen light years of our own sun. At this time, modern telescopes are incapable of differentiating planets from their mother suns, as, in comparison, they are much too small and their reflected light is much too dim to be seen by even our most powerful telescopes.



---

[Odell is referring in the above paragraph to events in 1942–1943 when astronomers announced that careful examination of a long record of observations of these two star systems had indicated the presence of a dark planetary body tugging gravitationally at the outer of the two stars in the systems. This claim was considered reasonable through the 1940s and 1950s and was a foundation stone of a new acceptance by astronomers of the idea that planets were probably common. Military writers, though not referring to these two systems, spoke of extraterrestrial planets in both the Project Sign and Saucer reports. Odell seems well read on these matters.]

## EXTRATERRESTRIALS AMONG US?

We wonder how other races would ever come to know that intelligent life existed on Earth. Recent reports of unusual phenomena in our atmosphere [UFOs] have reopened the suspicion that travelers from outer space may be reconnoitering Earth. Numerous men of scientific background have flatly opened their technical reputations to censure by stating that these uncommon sightings are of extraterrestrial origin. These include engineers and scientists from all fields and all nations.

[An amazingly strong and enthusiastic statement by an Air Force officer at the Pentagon. He could have been referring to the Navy balloon project wizards, like Charles B. Moore, Cmdr. Robert McLaughlin, J. J. Kaliszewski, and others; or to the Project Sign boys; or to Prof. Hermann Oberth, who was just making his views known in Germany—and he was probably influenced by all of them, and more.]

Granted that super intelligences on a planet in another solar system have mastered the problems of interstellar travel and are looking for a suitable planet for a second home, why would Earth be singled out from other planets in space for reconnaissance? [Keyhoc was also impressed by this paragraph and put it in the book.]

Some believe that the explosion of an atomic bomb on this planet could be noticed from outer space. This is doubtful. Such an explosion might be seen from the Moon, or maybe from somewhat greater distances if Earth was under observation at that precise moment. But to be seen on a planet light years away seems remote. Such an event from astronomical distances might draw no more attention than phenomena associated with sunspots or a large meteor hitting a planet. One would need tremendous telescopes to notice such an event.

But, for some years, electromagnetic emanations from outside our atmosphere have been received by radios here on the surface. Some refer to this as “cosmic static.” These emanations originate from somewhere in space. I do not raise this as support for a theory of extraterrestrial races (though it may lend weight to such a theory), but to point out the ability of space to transmit radiant energy. Most of our own radio waves are trapped and reflected by atmospheric

layers high above Earth. But some do escape our atmosphere with less interference. Not long ago, we transmitted radar signals to and received echoes back from the Moon. [This was Project Diana, conducted on January 10, 1946.] The ether of space is a carrier of energy. It is always waiting to transmit such waves with the speed of light.

Radio transmissions of fairly high energy have been coming from stations on Earth for perhaps 20 years. Throughout the past generation, therefore, these transmissions have left this planet and sped through space with the speed of light. By now they could have been intercepted by powerful and delicate devices in the hands of an advanced race on a distant planet. If we, with our relatively amateurish attempts at technology, know principles of electronic detection and transfixing, then such an advanced race would as well. They would have no difficulty in detecting our transmissions, monitoring them, and locating their source in space.

If the so-called “flying saucers” are craft of extraterrestrial origin whose engineers are capable of monitoring radio transmissions and undertaking space travel, why would they have ventured near to our planet only during the last five years? In addition to this question, are there solar systems near enough to receive, decipher, and elect to investigate our transmissions at their source? It may well be so.

To make interstellar travel practical, it must be at tremendous speed, approaching the speed of light. Granting this, the location of the investigating race in outer space must be no more than 10 or 12 light years away (the distance which gives our signal 10 or so years to reach them, then perhaps two years for monitoring, deciphering, and study, and another 10 years for space travel to reach us). So, given 20 (or so) years, the super-intelligent race should be located within a locus of points not greater than  $10 \pm 2$  light years distant.

It has already been mentioned that 61 Cygni and 70 Ophiuchi are in this sphere. [Despite the current progress in extrasolar planet detection, no bodies have been detected around these two stars.] There are 15 other suns within 12 light years of our own. [Actually, 20 are now known within that distance.] Each one of these stars is bigger or brighter than the Sun. This might lead to the idea that such a star might support a planetary system equal to or greater than our own. From any of these, an outer space race could have received our radiant signals and have had time to respond with an exploration as described.

It does seem strange that 90% of these sightings occur in the Western Hemisphere, and most of these in the United States. It is difficult to believe that an interstellar space expedition would ignore the remaining land area of the globe. Our planet, because of its thick atmosphere and amount of water vapor, is always screened from outside observation by large patches of cloud. Only over arid regions or deserts does the vapor screen dissipate and leave a clear view of large areas of the Earth’s surface. Of those, the vast stretches of the Sahara and Gobi deserts have extra-sparse habitation. The nomads there have little education.

The arid areas of the American Southwest are little different in climate but are populated by modern intellectual men. Such a region would speak well for a possible point of contact with Earth Man. [Hmmm... where did that Roswell thing occur, again?]

One might also reason that an advanced extraterrestrial race, upon a thorough study of our radio transmissions, might become attracted by the humanitarian aspect of Americanism. [Oh for the innocent idealism of the 50s, eh?] That ideology might be said to more closely approach the way of life on a higher plane. But [such an analysis] takes more than a pinch of salt.

This, however, leads to a kindred thought: A study of our beamed radio transmissions over a period of years might cause extraterrestrial intelligences to elect to survey our planet rather than abruptly descend upon it. This study of countless broadcasts might cause another race to wonder if Earth is a suitable place to visit after all. They might come to believe that their search should continue elsewhere, hoping to find other races in the Universe, whose way of life more closely dovetails with their own, rather than the barbaric existence evident on Earth.

Thus ends Keyhoe's notes and my attempt to reconstruct Odell's essay. Now some commentary on the essay.

Donald Keyhoe was exceptionally boggled by this essay, and even more so by the simple fact that it had gotten past the Pentagon's censors. He dedicated the climactic chapter-and-a-half of his book to ruminations about the hypothesis of extraterrestrial colonization and to the puzzlement over what the heck was going on in the Pentagon. Keyhoe's intuition (which he had expressed many times in both *The Flying Saucers are Real* and *Flying Saucers from Outer Space*) that a deep and even violently emotional division existed inside USAF intelligence was true. Colonel Odell's article was just one spectacular example of a high-ranking officer who took UFOs and the extraterrestrial hypothesis very seriously. The fact that the piece passed USAF security review is surely another example of that seriousness (everyone in the "UFO chain" from Al Chop to Maj. Dewey Fournet to Col. William Adams to Col. Weldon Smith were strongly pro-UFO and would have openly countenanced Odell's views). The timing of the article, just after the CIA panel had angered the pro-UFO wing with its bully policy of ridiculing the subject, plus the quashing of the release of the Tremonton, Utah, film, may well have been seen by the pro-UFO wing as part of a last ditch effort to head off the new policy.

I'm still with Keyhoe here, though. I'm still amazed that the essay snuck out. What that says to me is that the opinion of many of my UFO colleagues, that the intelligence community was so sharp and organized that it could manage anything at any level of detail so slickly, is just bunk. If something could be held very tightly among just a few hands, OK, maybe. But something like UFOs, no way. The subject was too big and the Pentagon too massive to keep

worms from crawling out of their designated cans at regular intervals. Odell's worm got out, but scared and uncertain editors let it crawl back in, and the rest of us never saw it.

Keyhoe and his friend Jim Riordan, a retired military pilot, did see it, and neither of them liked the visions that the essay brought to their minds. Both of them insisted to one another that extraterrestrial invasion was not what was being set up by this UFO survey of Earth that seemed to be going on. But, irritatingly the idea embedded in Odell's piece nagged. Riordan finally said, "It's still a hellish idea. Even though I don't believe it, I wish that I hadn't heard it." They actually *had* already heard it, though, in another form:

No one would have believed, in the last years of the nineteenth century, that human affairs were being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their affairs they were scrutinized and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. With infinite complacency men went to and fro over this globe about their little affairs, serene in their assurance of their empire over matter. It is possible that the infusoria under the microscope do the same. No one gave a thought to the older worlds of space as sources of human danger, or thought of them only to dismiss the idea of life upon them as impossible or improbable. It is curious to recall some of the mental habits of those departed days. At most, terrestrial men fancied there might be other men upon Mars, perhaps inferior to themselves and ready to welcome a missionary enterprise. Yet, across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us. And early in the twentieth century came the great disillusionment.

As Riordan and Keyhoe grimaced over Odell's essay in early 1953, Hollywood's release of *The War of the Worlds*, based on H. G. Wells's 1898 novel, was only weeks away. ♦

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# PARANOIA OR SURVEILLANCE?

BY NICK REDFERN

When details of the National Security Agency's (NSA) domestic surveillance program surfaced late in 2005, a storm of protest and controversy followed. But such spying activity is nothing new. Coincidentally, as the world's media were reporting the story about the NSA, I was putting the final touches to my latest book, *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies: UFOs and Government Surveillance*. That book addresses the issue of official, widespread surveillance of American and British citizens who are, or were, engaged in UFO research. In Britain, in several instances, that surveillance was directly linked to the activities of the British equivalent of the NSA—the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), situated in the city of Cheltenham.

In 1997, in my first book, *A Covert Agenda: The British Government's UFO Top Secrets Exposed*, I documented the collection and study of UFO data by staff at GCHQ. Though GCHQ has consistently denied having any links to the UFO subject, the trail of evidence strongly suggests otherwise.

Established one year after the Allied victory over Nazi Germany in the Second World War, GCHQ supplies British agencies and departments, civilian and military, with Signals Intelligence-based data. This is in accordance with the mandate of the British government's Joint Intelligence Committee, the function of which is to produce a weekly survey on various aspects of intelligence operations for senior sources within officialdom. This survey is called the Red Book.

GCHQ is known to obtain much of its Signal Intelligence material from intercepted overseas communications. For this purpose, it controls the Composite Signals Organization, which operates from locations both within the borders of Britain and abroad. In 1947, the governments of a number of nations—specifically the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia—signed the UKUSA Agreement, designed to

allow the aforementioned nations access to a variety of Signals Intelligence data for mutual use.

It is also a matter of official record that GCHQ's collection and study of Signals Intelligence data is undertaken hand-in-glove with the NSA. From declassified Freedom of Information Act releases, we know that NSA's headquarters at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, holds files of Signal Intelligence-derived UFO data. Given that fact, it seems most unlikely that elements of GCHQ would never be exposed to similar material.

But can we prove as much? Yes. Not only that: The one case that more than any other demonstrates direct interest in the UFO puzzle on the part of GCHQ also reveals widespread official surveillance of the prime investigator of the case, a man named Robin Cole.

By the mid-1990s, Cole, a lifelong Cheltenham resident who was at the time the head of a UFO research group named Circular Forum, had cultivated a number of sources who worked at GCHQ and had guardedly provided him with a wealth of data on UFOs. These included information on radar-visual encounters reported by Royal Air Force personnel in the early 1950s; evidence that GCHQ studied gun-camera footage of UFOs taken by British military pilots in the late 1950s; the fact that GCHQ's library held a large number of published books on UFOs; and revelations to the effect that, as late as 1996, GCHQ analysts were still monitoring UFO encounters when they involved the military.

One particular GCHQ department implicated in UFO investigations, Cole learned, was known as the Oakley Installation, which is home to two impressive structures the staff has nicknamed the Pleasure Dome and the Barn. Both were constructed with the benefit of a multimillion-pound budget.

According to Cole, "The Pleasure Dome has acquired its nickname because the higher your status, the higher up you work inside the building, thus giving the employee a more panoramic view across Cheltenham and creating a nicer environment to work in. The Barn covers sixteen and a half thousand square feet and comprises two floors on the south and three on the north. This contains so many computers that a special chiller unit was built to keep them all cool. Both sites are as big underground as they are above ground, as far as square working footage is concerned, with enough

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room at the [nearby] Benhall site—known to the employees as the Funny Farm—that lorries can be driven in to unload equipment and supplies, thus allowing both to remain in complete operation should war break out.”

In 1997, Cole wrote a detailed, privately published report on his discoveries, titled “GCHQ and the UFO Cover-Up.” Shortly after its appearance Cole was interviewed on a British television news program, something that set a strange series of events in motion. As Cole described the situation:

“Just after my report was published, I was interviewed with regard to its contents by Central Television. They picked up on it straight away and did a damned good piece which was shown on both the evening and late-night shows. Well, the following morning the phone rang. ‘Mr. Cole?’ said a voice. . . . ‘This is Detective Sergeant Tim Camp from Cheltenham CID [Criminal Investigation Department of the British Police Force]. Can we come and have a chat with you, please?’

“Well, I was obviously a bit stunned, as it’s not every day that you get a call from CID, and I said, ‘Yes. But why exactly?’ ‘Oh, nothing to worry about, Mr. Cole,’ they said. ‘We’d like to ask you one or two questions.’ I said, ‘Anything specific?’ Camp replied, ‘What do you know about a group called Truth-Seekers?’”

Truth-Seekers was the brainchild of a British UFO investigator named Matthew Williams, who published a conspiracy-oriented magazine, *Truth-Seekers’ Review*, from the mid-to-late 1990s, and who was also investigated by elements of British Intelligence from the mid-1990s onwards, as *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies* reveals.

“Well,” continued Cole, “I wondered what they wanted and just said, ‘Okay, I know about Truth-Seekers.’ They replied, ‘That’ll do for us; can we come and have a chat?’ I said, ‘Yeah, sure. When would you like to come?’ ‘Can we come now?’

“As it happened,” Cole elaborated, “I wasn’t doing much, so it wasn’t really a problem. But then it dawned on me: I’d only got their word for it that they were who they claimed to be. Well, I have a friend named Trish who works at Police Headquarters in the Incident Room. I called her and explained what had happened and asked if she could get over to my flat to check this guy out when he arrived. In the meantime, I surreptitiously set up a tape recorder in my living room, so that when D. S. Camp arrived, I could get the entire conversation down on tape. Well, then, of course, he and a colleague arrived.

“I opened the door, but the two guys didn’t give their names; instead they just came in and sat down. I said, ‘Sorry, you are . . .?’ ‘Detective Sergeant Tim Camp.’ His colleague stayed silent. ‘As you know, Mr. Cole,’ he said, ‘we’d just like to ask you one or two questions about Truth-Seekers and what you know about them. It’s nothing to worry about; we were just concerned that they might be a front for an IRA group and we have to check these things out.’

“We chatted about Matthew . . . and then they got

around to me. ‘What do you do? Who do you work for? What’s your interest in the UFO phenomenon?’ I told them, they seemed satisfied, and got up to leave. But just at that point, Trish arrived, and it turned out that she did know them; so they were legitimate police officers.”

But official interest in Robin Cole was far from over, however.

“On the following day, I telephoned Cheltenham CID and asked to speak with D. S. Camp—I just wanted to make sure that I hadn’t said anything which was going to get Matthew into hot water. When I asked for Detective Sergeant Tim Camp by name, the guy in CID said, ‘We don’t have a Detective Sergeant by that name working here.’

“At that point, I heard the guy say to one of his colleagues, ‘Who the hell’s Detective Sergeant Tim Camp?’ I could hear mumbling and then this chap came back on the line, ‘Detective Sergeant Camp isn’t with CID; he’s with Special Branch.’

“Eventually, I got through to his colleague—D. S. Camp wasn’t available—and he basically said, ‘Don’t worry, Mr. Cole, we’ve got all the information that we wanted to know.’ This got me thinking. Why is Cheltenham Police’s Special Branch interested in [Matthew Williams’s] UFO investigations group which, at the time, was based in South Wales? It didn’t add up. Well, I now have a strong feeling that Special Branch were using Matthew as a front to check me out—to see if I had Nazi banners on the wall or anarchy signs on the front door.

“The reason I say this is because, just recently, I learned of a radio presenter in the north of England who was interested in doing a piece on GCHQ and asked people with knowledge to contact him. Lo and behold, the next day, Special Branch was around to question him. So, I find this all a little too coincidental. And it does suggest a direct link between (a) UFOs; (b) GCHQ; and (c) Special Branch.”

The Metropolitan Police Special Irish Branch was formed in March 1883, initially as a small section of the CID of the Metropolitan Police. Its purpose was to combat, on a national basis, the then-ongoing Irish campaign of terrorism on the British mainland. Subsequently, the term “Irish” was dropped from the branch’s title, because over time it took on responsibility for countering a wider range of extremist and terrorist activity.

Currently, Special Branch gathers, collates, analyzes, and exploits intelligence on violent political extremists. It initiates, develops, and conducts intelligence operations against terrorists; disseminates intelligence for operational use to law enforcement agencies at local, national, and international levels; and provides armed personal protection for Ministers of State, Foreign VIPs, and other persons if it is believed they are potential terrorist targets.

In addition Special Branch polices the ports within the London area to detect terrorist or criminal suspects while traveling into or out of the country, assists other government agencies to counter threats to the security of the United Kingdom from public disorder, the proliferation of weapons

of mass destruction (nuclear, biological, or chemical), investigates espionage by foreign powers, subversion of the democratic process, terrorism by Irish or International groups, and sabotage of the infrastructure of the UK.

In mid-2000, I contacted Cheltenham Police to inquire about the visit made to Cole's home by elements of Special Branch to discuss the activities of both Cole and Williams. Several days later, I received a telephone call from police at Cheltenham informing me that the only comment that Detective Sergeant Tim Camp of Special Branch would make to me was "no comment."

As fascinating as Cole's revelations were, still further evidence existed to show that his attempts to blow the lid off the secret UFO world of GCHQ attracted the keen attention of the Security and Intelligence services. Intriguingly, it appears from Cole's revelations that the official surveillance of his activities commenced months prior to the publication of his report in 1997. In other words, from the very day that he began looking into what GCHQ knew about UFOs, his every move was being watched and scrutinized. One such example was truly eye-opening. It took place in March 1997. Cole told me:

"I had just got home after a Sunday night out. I had some stuff to dump in my office and didn't switch the light on. I put the things down and just glanced out of the window. Well, outside my window there's a streetlight and beneath this was a white van. At first I just registered that the van seemed out of place. You know what it's like: You tend to recognize the various cars and vehicles in your own street. But then I thought: Well, it wasn't there when I came in 10 minutes ago. Why is it outside my flat under the streetlight? As I looked at it, I noticed that on top of the van were these two, weird, silver domes one behind the other—as if they

were a part of the roof, built in. I thought that was odd, particularly when it occurred to me that where they were parked was also right next to the telephone junction box.

"At that point, I grabbed my camera and put the light on in the office. But as I did that, the van suddenly started up and went quickly down the road. Well, a couple of weeks later, the van turned up again. This time, I ran down the steps outside my flat and dashed into the road; and again the van started up and shot off. But it was enough for me to get details of the van's registration and make, which was a Bedford. Then I set about trying to trace the van.

"It so happens that I got a friend, a retired police officer, to pass the details on to a serving officer who put the details through the police computer. Well, a few days passed. But on getting home one evening, I found a few messages on my answer-phone from [the retired police officer] in a very excited state. As it was about 11 o'clock at night, I thought: It's too late to phone him now; I'll give him a call tomorrow. I went to bed, but at 12:15, the phone rang; it was him.

"He said: 'That vehicle—you were right to be suspicious about it. The registration regarding who actually owns it is blocked, but the address that it's registered to is a Ministry of Defense post office box in Wiltshire.' This was heavy stuff. But I've not seen the van since. But this was real proof that I was under some sort of surveillance."

Indeed, it was, and the case of Robin Cole is but one example of surveillance of UFO researchers. As *On the Trail of the Saucer Spies* demonstrates, there are countless other such examples that span the 1940s to the present day. In fact, the evidence I have uncovered suggests that we may be faced with the extraordinary fact that deep surveillance of the UFO research community is the norm, not the exception. ♦

## PALOMAR GARDENS CAFÉ

This is the famed restaurant, formerly owned by Alice K. Wells on Palomar Mountain north of San Diego, California, where contactee George Adamski worked as a cook and met frequently with his followers. It was here in the late 1940s and early 1950s that Adamski set up his small telescope and allegedly took photos of dozens of UFOs.

I had long suspected there might be a postcard that showed the café, and it turns out there are at least two—this one, and another showing the few tables inside. In fact, the man visible in the window to the right of the front door looks very much like Adamski himself, although I can't verify it.

Wells, who died in 1980, also owned the adjoining land where a few cabins stood, one of which Adamski lived in. Although the café is long gone, the location where it stood is now occupied by the Oak Knoll Campground, operated from 1999 to 2005 by Larry Read and Elizabeth Norris. The property is currently for sale, so if you have \$1.5 million to invest in a ufologically significant campground,



now's your chance. See [www.palomarproperties.com/out/ouoakknoll/index.html](http://www.palomarproperties.com/out/ouoakknoll/index.html).

The site is located near the intersection of state highway 76 and South Grade Road (formerly known as Highway to the Stars), a winding route with hairpin turns that leads to Palomar Observatory. —George M. Eberhart

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# CLOUD CIGARS: A FURTHER LOOK

BY HERBERT S. TAYLOR

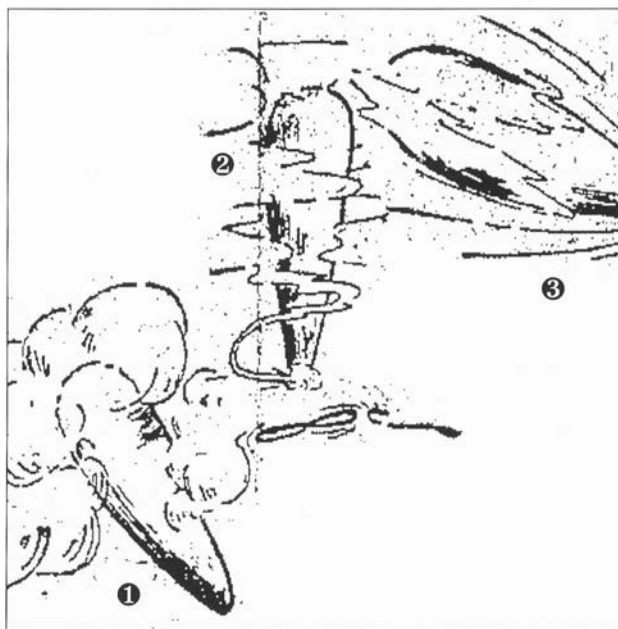
Cloud cigars can be deservedly regarded as one of the most important aspects of the UFO phenomenon, one that will be central to obtaining any meaningful answers as to what this enduring mystery is all about. Despite their relative small numbers in comparison to other UFO categories, cloud cigars are often dramatic and spectacular sightings that are very difficult to attribute to mundane causes. They have several features that set them apart from other UFO cases. These include the observation of multiple objects, including the cigar-shaped UFO itself, as well as other smaller UFOs that often are ejected from it; an odd cloud or haze that often masks the central UFO; the large number of witnesses to the event; and a high percentage of daylight cases. Putting all of these together shows how distinctive cloud-cigar incidents are and why they deservedly occupy their own category in the UFO phenomenon.

There is no better place to begin a detailed examination of these cases than with a comprehensive account of an extraordinary report that occurred during the French wave of late summer and early fall of 1954. (It was mentioned only briefly in "Satellite Objects and Cloud Cigars," in *IUR*, 29:1, Spring 2004.) Note that the following account is taken verbatim from Aimé Michel's book on the French wave, *Flying Saucers and the Straight Line Mystery* (1958), which many people today have not read:

The phenomenon was observed again just three weeks after Vernon on Tuesday, September 14, 1954. This time the spectacle took place in full daylight and was observed by hundreds of witnesses scattered through half a dozen villages in the department of Vendée, about 250 miles southwest of Paris. Nevertheless only one local newspaper mentioned it and this sighting is completely unknown except in the region where it happened. The witnesses were mostly farmers, and a few priests and schoolteachers. A reader in a nearby village heard of the matter and wrote to me, and thanks to that

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*Herbert S. Taylor has long been active in serious UFO research and has a deep and abiding interest that goes back more than half a century. He lives in Oceanside, New York.*

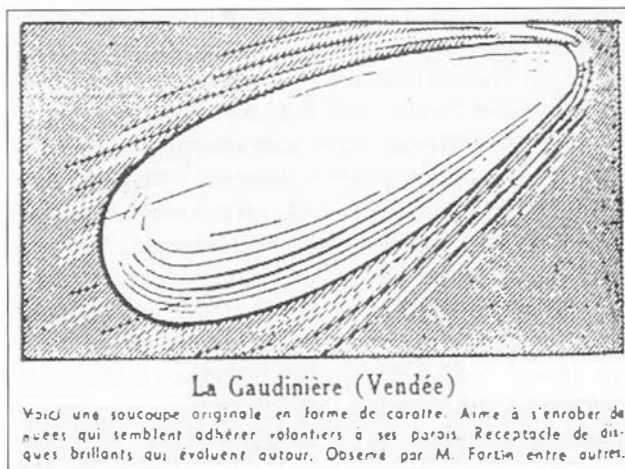


*Illustration from France-Dimanche showing Georges Fortin's observation: In (1), a cloud looking like a carrot emerged from the other clouds. In (2), a trail of white smoke jetted out from the base of the cloud, then a brilliant disc emerged, maneuvered, and reentered the cloud, which (3) then rose up and disappeared.*

reader and his letter an investigation was made. (How many extraordinary sightings must be still unknown for want of such good luck!)

One witness was Georges Fortin, then 34 years old, who operates a farm at a place called La Gabellière, near St-Prouant, a little village of 300 inhabitants. He reports:

"It was about five in the afternoon. I was working in the fields with my men when all at once, emerging from the thick layer of clouds that looked like a storm coming up, we saw a sort of luminous blue-violet mist, of a regular shape something like a cigar or carrot. Actually, the object came out of the layer of clouds in an almost horizontal position, slightly tilted toward the ground and pointing forward (like a submerging submarine).



*Another view of the Vendée object from France-Dimanche.*

"This luminous cloud appeared rigid. Whenever it moved (and its movements had no connection with the movement of the clouds themselves) it did so all of a piece, as if it actually were some gigantic machine surrounded by mists. It came down rather fast from the ceiling of clouds to an altitude which we thought was perhaps a half mile above us. Then it stopped, and the point rose quickly until the object was in a vertical position, where it became motionless.

"During this time the dark clouds went on scudding across the sky, dimly lighted from underneath by the violet luminosity of the object. It was an extraordinary sight, and we watched it intently. All over the countryside other farmers had also dropped their tools and were staring up at the sky like us.

"All at once (by now we had been watching for several minutes) white smoke exactly like a vapor trail came from the lower end of the cloud. At first it pointed toward the ground, as if spun from an invisible shuttle falling free, then it gradually slowed down while turning around, and finally rose up to describe around the vertical object an ascending spiral which wound it up in its coils. While the rear of the trail was dissolving rapidly in the air, carried off by the wind, the beginning got sharper and finer all the time, as if it were gradually drying up at its source, but without any slowing down of the unseen object that was continually spinning it into the air.

"It thus went on up, turning around, up to the very top of the vertical object, and then started to come down again, turning in the other direction. Only then, after the smoke trail had vanished entirely, could we see the object that was 'sowing' it, a little metallic disk shining like a mirror and reflecting, in its rapid movements, flashes of light from the huge vertical object.

"The little disk almost immediately stopped turning around the luminous cloud and went down toward the ground again, this time moving away. For quite a few minutes we could see it flying low over the valley,

darting here and there at great speed, sometimes speeding up, then stopping for a few seconds, then going on again. In this manner it flew in every direction over the region between St-Prouant and Sigournais, villages about four miles apart. Finally, when it was almost a mile from the vertical object, it made a final dash toward it at headlong speed, and disappeared like a shooting star into the lower part where it had first come out. Perhaps a minute later, the 'carrot' leaned over as it began to move, accelerated, and disappeared into the clouds in the distance, having resumed its original horizontal position, point forward. The whole thing had lasted about half an hour."

Standing next to M. Fortin was his farm hand, Louis Grellier, 36 years old, also from La Gabellière. Questioned separately, he gave an identical account, with further details about the gyrations of the disk.

Mme. Pizou, a 67-year-old-widow, of St-Prouant, was working in a cabbage field about a mile away from MM. Fortin and Grellier.

"My attention was first attracted about five o'clock," she said, "by the arrival of a strange carrot-shaped cloud that seemed to have detached itself from the ceiling of clouds that were moving fast, carried by the wind. It came near us, pointed downward, and then straightened up. It looked to me as if another, smaller cloud then formed above the carrot, making a kind of hat for it.

"Then white smoke came out like a thread from the base of the vertical carrot and began to draw designs all around it. Then the trail went away toward the valley, where trees hid whatever happened next; I was told that a disk came out of the trail, but I cannot say that I saw it, because from where I stood the treetops reached almost to the base of the vertical cloud. In my opinion it was not a real cloud, for it stayed motionless and kept its shape while other clouds were gliding away very fast above it, toward the horizon.

"Finally, when I had been watching for about half an hour, it moved down into a horizontal position again, and went away rapidly in the direction toward which it was slanted."

With Mme. Pizou were a daughter and a farm hand, who confirmed the old lady's story in every detail; the object's maneuvers, the complicated designs drawn by the trail, the duration of the affair.

At the same time ten or twelve people were in the streets and farmyards of St-Prouant. All saw the same sight the arrival of the horizontal "cloud," its rising to a vertical position, the smoke trail, the fantastic lines it drew, and its winding around. But these witnesses in the village could not see what took place close to the ground any more than Mme. Pizou could, because of buildings and trees.

Other farmers in the fields and villages in the river valley or between St-Prouant and Sigournais all gave accounts that confirmed one another and the stories of

the first witnesses. Some of them saw the cigar leaning toward them, others saw it slant toward the right or to the left, according to where they were. We may mention M. Daniel Bornufart [another source says Bonifait—HT], an electrician who was at La Gabellière at five p.m.; M. Tissot at La Legerie, and several others working with him; finally many farmers at La Libaudière, Chassay, Le Coudrais, La Godinière, and elsewhere in all, several hundred witnesses.” [Michel mentions the Nantes newspaper *La Résistance de l’Ouest* of September 20, 1954, but not the national weekly newspaper *France-Dimanche*, which also carried some drawings as well.]

Clearly a remarkable observation involving hundreds of witnesses! What can be said about it? Critics might attempt an explanation in terms of some type of meteorological or atmospheric manifestation. However, I defy them to point out anything in the standard textbooks on meteorology or atmospheric physics that can come even remotely close to providing a prosaic answer to account for what was seen that day, including any attempt to invoke a tornado or something similar as a possible answer. Not only does the testimony of the many witnesses preclude any such proffered explanation from being taken seriously, but the meteorologists were definite on the point that there was no tornado anywhere in France on September 14. Whatever it was that was seen in the skies of the French Department of Vendée more than half a century ago remains a baffling mystery to this day.

## MORE REPORTS FOR THE RECORD

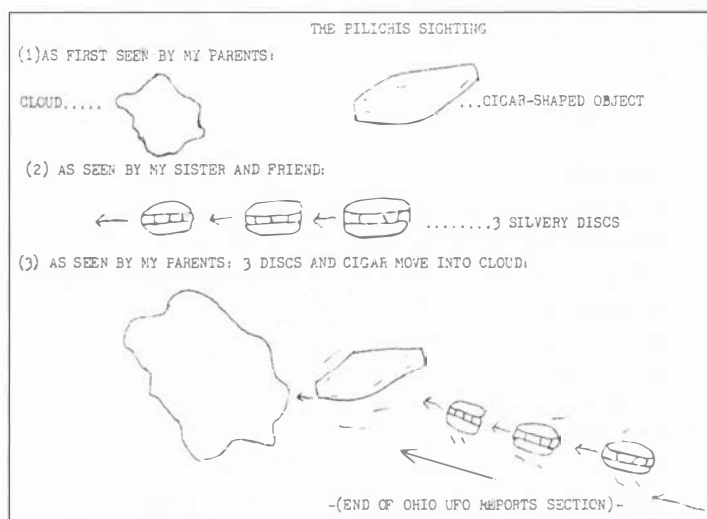
Cloud cigar reports have been with us almost from the beginning of the modern UFO era in 1947, and they continue today. In this section I present a representative sampling of these cases spanning almost 50 years.

**July 18 or 19, 1952, Pouilly-en-Auxois (Côte d’Or Department), France, 6:00 p.m.** Residents of Pouilly and Venarey-les-Laumes saw a “spindle, having neither wings nor protuberances, emitting a brief, strong, winking light at regular intervals, and giving rise to a very thick white smoke that rapidly dispersed.” The object was described as about 30 meters long, in a vertical position, and accompanied by a loud rumbling noise. (Jacques Vallee, *Anatomy of a Phenomenon*, 1965.)

**September 6, 1967, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent, England, approx. 9:50 p.m.** Witnesses first noticed a vertical sausage-shaped cloud in the eastern sky that seemed to have a light behind it, which flashed at irregular intervals over a period of about 20 seconds. Then a bright, glowing orange, oval-shaped object came from the cloud and flashed at a “fantastic speed” across the sky in a southeasterly direction, doing this in about three seconds. The light in the cloud glowed again for about 10 seconds, and then stopped. Object [presumably the orange oval—HT] was as big as a

football held at arm’s length and sharply outlined. It disappeared over rooftops of houses. Scattered cloud and dull moonlight. (Roger H. Stanway and Anthony R. Pace, *Flying Saucer Report, UFOs: Unidentified, Undeniable*, 1968.)

**July 1970, Rome, Ohio, mid-afternoon.** Witnesses were John and Mary Pilichis, daughter Bonnie, and her friend. Stated their son Dennis, “My father was cutting grass on our property and my mother was busy putting all the freshly-cut grass into big sacks. My father happened to look up, and there not too high in the sky was a *huge* cigar-shaped object, about the size of an imported smoking cigar held at arm’s length. He called my mother’s attention to it, and they both just stood there watching this thing as it sent the rays of the sun off its body.



“In the meantime, my sister Bonnie and her friend were at a swimming pool about one-half mile from our parents and they saw 3 silvery disc-shaped objects flying end-to-end toward our home. My sister began waving and yelling to my parents who were now seeing the discs coming in on the cigar too, but they didn’t hear her. As the discs got close to the ‘cigar,’ this object and the 3 discs then went inline front to back into a huge peculiar cloud nearby (one of the few clouds in the sky at that time). My parents waited 3 or 4 minutes thinking the UFOs would re-emerge from the cloud, but as they watched, the cloud began to ‘break apart’—as Mom said, ‘... as if a tornado was ripping it apart.’ The cloud disintegrated and there were no UFOs; perhaps they had already left the cloud in a manner that those on the ground couldn’t see.” (*Ohio UFO Reporter*, Sept.-Nov. 1971, double issue 5-6.)

**February 12, 1981, Flagstaff, Arizona, night.** “The craft was cigar-shaped looking, kind of like a large blimp. Was at night, white looking, with veins of some sort on the outside of the craft, dark in color, around the craft. There was a very small white object at one end of the blimp. After about two minutes, the small bright round object took off from the main body of the craft. It took off at a very high rate of speed and disappeared in the sky. The blimp object lost its light and disappeared into a kind of fog type look, and



drifted away. At least 25 to 30 people saw this event happen on the interstate freeway that night.” (National UFO Reporting Center.)

**May 22, 1996, Tasmania, Australia, approx. 3:30 p.m.** A motorist on the West Tamar Highway near Brady’s Lookout noticed an upright, vapor-like trail to the north towards the Georgetown area. The trail changed into an upright, bronze-colored cigar shape which somehow just disappeared in front of the witness’s eyes. (*TUFOIC Newsletter*, no. 79.)

**May 29, 1996, Launceston, Tasmania, Australia, approx. 1:00 p.m.** A vertical, misty-type cloud was seen against the clear blue sky. It appeared to form into a vertical upright cylinder which seemed to have a long hole. The witness and a friend who had observed the object looked away for a second, only to find that the object had disappeared in that brief time. (*TUFOIC Newsletter*, no. 79.)

**July 21, 1998, Napoleon, Ohio, 11:19 p.m.** “The main object appeared in the sky suddenly. It was the size of a small trailer. It emitted a dense fog around it, and we never saw the real craft. It stayed stationary for seven minutes, and then branched out from the front and seemed to ‘grow.’ Five smaller craft were seen circling the main craft as if to protect it. The large craft seemed to dissolve and disappear. For several minutes later the small craft still circled.” (National UFO Reporting Center.)

**October 10, 1999, Lewiston, Michigan, 11:45 p.m.** “I was looking out our bedroom window watching the sky and saw this object through the haze. It was crystal clear last night, that’s why I really noticed this ‘haze.’ It was oval shaped with white lights that would get very bright and then get very dim, like a very slow pulsing light. What really got me was all the other little ‘lights’ flying around it. I asked my husband to look at it, and he couldn’t figure out what it was either. It was stationary and all these other little lights were buzzing around it. It reminded both of us of moths flying around a light bulb. There was no set pattern to their flight, and it looked like some of them flew into this thing. We watched it for about 45 minutes and it didn’t do anything else, so we went to sleep as we have to get up early, and it was almost 12:45 a.m. I got up a few hours later and looked to see if it was still there, and it was gone. No haze, no lights, nothing. I guess what really made us notice this thing was because of the haze that surrounded it. There was no other haze around, and neither one of us had ever seen anything that looked like that. Sure would like to know what it was.” (National UFO Reporting Center.)

**October 29, 1999, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 5:45 p.m.** “I was on my way to drop the kids off at church when I saw something out of the corner of my eye. It looked like something falling out of the sky smoking. Nothing was visible. We never saw anything come out. It looked like a contrail after it fully appeared. I dropped them off and went back home. I immediately told my husband to come out on the back porch to see if he could tell me what it was that I saw. He looked and he said it is a cloud, but it was not

moving like the other clouds. I told him that at first I thought it was a meteorite. We then decided it was some sort of contrail, but there was no aircraft in sight. We continued to watch, and he saw a nickel colored object fly out of it. I didn’t see it at first, then I kept watching, and I saw it fly back into it. Then a few seconds later it shot back out and flew all around this contrail or whatever it was. Then it disappeared for a few minutes. We kept watching, and it flew back out and disappeared. We never saw it again. I was scared by this. I don’t know what it was, neither did my husband. It started out as some sort of weird contrail, and then it became stationary. Then this nickel-colored object flew all around and in and out of it for about 15 minutes. Very weird. When this object was flying you could hear no sound, or see any contrail coming out of it. I don’t know what it was. I have never seen anything like it. . . . Also about an hour after we saw this we heard jets flying, we looked out and they were headed in the same direction as to where we saw the ‘thing,’ for lack of a better word. I would not have thought that strange until they went back several times, like they were doing a grid search. That’s about it.” (National UFO Reporting Center.)

## SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It should be evident by now that cloud cigar cases have a distinctive and narrow set of recurrent patterns. (Also, see my two other *IUR* articles, 29:1 and 29:4, on cloud cigars and satellite object cases). These patterns have been established and are durable, and the importance of this finding cannot be stressed enough. Whatever the nature of what has been seen globally and through the years, witnesses have described it in relatively similar terms. And, it is important to note that when people think of “flying saucers,” the concept of cloud cigars is certainly *not* what comes to mind. Even today, with all the information available on UFOs, cloud cigar sightings remain virtually unknown to the media and public. This gives us more confidence in the reports, and makes it unlikely that witnesses are fabricating these reports. Further, the usual gamut of explanations that account for the large majority of raw UFO reports do not apply to cloud cigars in any conceivable manner. They pose an enormous challenge to science, as, of course, does the whole of the UFO phenomenon. What will it take for the scientific community to awaken from their long slumber and come to the same obvious conclusion? How much longer must we wait? ♦

### ARCHIVES FOR UFO RESEARCH

The Archives for UFO Research in Sweden has for many years done a splendid job of collecting UFO literature worldwide. AFU has even been able to obtain an intern recently to help them arrange their files, and they have a lot of fun baking alien cakes. Check out their website at [www.afu.info/projects.htm](http://www.afu.info/projects.htm).

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# THE AMATEUR ASTRONOMER AND THE UFO PHENOMENON

BY GERT HERB AND J. ALLEN HYNEK

*Editor's Note:* This article was originally included in the Fall 1980 issue of the *CUFOS Bulletin*, a newsletter that the Center published for several years. We are reprinting the article in *IUR* for several reasons. Many current readers of *IUR* have never seen this article, or any issues of the *CUFOS Bulletin* for that matter. Most importantly, the article presents results from an intriguing research project that has been mostly forgotten by today's ufologists and the UFO-interested public.

Gert Herb was an amateur astronomer who lived in the Chicago area. He became a volunteer at the Center in the 1970s, and he eventually proposed that the Center survey amateur astronomers to determine their attitudes about the UFO phenomenon and the number and types of any UFO sightings they may have had. Herb hoped the survey would be a companion to the one that Peter A. Sturrock carried out among professional astronomers (*Report on a Survey of the Membership of the American Astronomical Society Concerning the UFO Problem*, Stanford University Institute for Plasma Research, January 1977).

Given today's attitudes toward UFO organizations and the UFO phenomenon in general, it is rather inconceivable that amateur astronomy groups would give permission for a survey of their members about UFOs. Times were very different in the 1970s. The study of UFOs, while not quite respectable, was attracting serious scientific attention, and it wasn't completely crazy or goofy to be studying UFOs.

Thus, with the Center's support, Herb gained the cooperation of three groups and mailed questionnaires to all their members.

Although Sturrock's survey is often and correctly cited as important evidence that scientists—at least astronomers—supported UFO study and have even seen things in the sky they could not identify, Herb's survey is in some ways more significant. As the authors note, amateur astronomers are usually more familiar with the sky, especially with the naked eye, than professionals. The latter group may look outside for a break from an observing session, but professional observers spend their time working with a telescope, taking measurements and photos, and not using the telescope for visual observations. Amateur observers routinely scan the sky and normally (at least back in the 1970s) do much of their work visually.

Consequently, UFO sightings by amateurs should be more frequent than those by professionals, and amateurs might even be better able to find an explanation for odd things seen in the sky. And whether they are more frequent or not, UFO sightings by amateur astronomers should be more trustworthy and believable than those from the public at large. That is the key point to take from this article.

We will add commentary in brackets to the article where appropriate to highlight various points or to add perspective from today to Herb's findings.

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**M**any of our readers are acquainted with the Sturrock Report, the survey of the views of professional astronomers on UFOs, particularly with reference to whether they felt UFOs are worthy of scientific investigation, and to any UFO experiences they themselves might have had. Of 2,611 questionnaires mailed out, 1,356 were returned (52%). In answer to the question whether UFOs were worthy of scientific attention, only 20% of the respondents expressed a definite negative attitude (17% "probably not" and 3% "certainly not"), the remaining 80% being favorably inclined, 23% saying "certainly," the others "probably." Still, this was nearly eight times as many as said "certainly not." In response to the question of personal UFO sightings, 62,

or 4% of the professional respondents, reported that they had observed events or objects they failed to identify, 16 of these being daylight sightings.

The question naturally arises, if this was the response among professional astronomers, what might be the response from the larger population of amateur astronomers, especially as regards the question of personal sightings. After all, contrary to popular opinion, professional astronomers spend little time in the actual observation of the open skies, being extremely mission-oriented in examining very restricted fields through large telescopes, while amateur astronomers spend their time in a much wider survey of the skies. Further, professional astronomical observation is almost entirely done with instruments rather than with the

eyes, concentrating again on minute portions of the sky. It has been estimated, for instance, that if the world's largest telescope were used every night of the year, it would take several hundred years to cover the entire sky and accomplish the type of detailed observations done with such instruments. The amateur astronomer, on the other hand, often scans the entire sky available to him several times a night.

Further still, serious amateur astronomers are often much more familiar with the appearance of the night sky than professional astronomers (as odd as that may seem), to whom each star is merely a number in a catalogue. Then again, they have available easily maneuverable or mobile optical equipment, suitable for resolving short-lived aerial phenomena, whereas their professional counterparts are constrained by large and unwieldy instruments. Too, they are more widely distributed geographically than their counterparts.

Thus amateurs should be able to spot unusual occurrences as well as to weed out, because of their training and experience, sky phenomena that often puzzle the public and lead to spurious UFO reports—meteors, planets, twinkling stars, and even advertising planes.

All of these factors made it quite natural to query amateur astronomers about their possible experiences with very unusual sky events, and one of us (Herb) was the one who proposed that this be done, and who undertook to do it.

Fortunately, almost all amateur astronomers are affiliated with one or more organizations devoted to their hobby. These organizations are the Astronomical League, the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers (ALPO), the International Occultation Timing Association (IOTA), and the American Association of Variable Star Observers (AAVSO).

Herb approached all four organizations, with the full support of the CUFOS scientific director (Hynek), and that of the Center, asking for cooperation in this venture. Only the AAVSO refused to cooperate (hardly a tribute to an open-minded, scientific attitude), but the Astronomical League, which publishes the magazine *The Reflector*, kindly sent our questionnaire to their subscriber list of some 7,800 persons. However, only 1,622 (21%) responded. Somehow, one would have wished astronomers to have done better! [Actually, since the survey was sent by bulk mail, this is a surprisingly good response and suggests interest in the UFO subject.]

The two smaller organizations, ALPO and IOTA, with a total membership of 726, were polled as a single population. Though small, these groups are comprised of people devoted to more specialized aspects of amateur astronomy requiring special skills and often more specialized astronomical equipment, as well as dedicated motivation.

However, only 505 members received questionnaires, as was determined by a follow-up that was possible in this case. Since bulk mailing was used, this may have accounted for the 221 members who stated they had not received questionnaires. This may also explain why the response

from the Astronomical League members was relatively poor, if bulk mailing had also been used. Of the 505 members receiving questionnaires, however, 290, or 57% responded! [Yes, this is a fantastic response rate, given the circumstances.]

Our main concern in this venture was to determine whether the amateur-astronomer population as a whole contained members who had had a UFO experience of some sort. Herb had been disturbed by Arthur C. Clarke's statement in his book *Promise of Space* (Harper and Row, 1968) that amateur astronomers have not reported UFOs. (Maybe no one asked them before!) He also asked them whether they believed UFOs "probably or certainly exist," "possibly exist," or "probably or certainly do not exist."

Although 67% of all the amateurs felt that UFOs certainly, probably, or possibly exist, responses to this question cannot be given the same weight as the question, "Have you ever observed an object which resisted your most exhaustive efforts at identification?" This is not the same as the question, "Have you ever seen a UFO?" The latter, and the earlier question about belief in UFOs, depends largely on what one's definition of a UFO is. Is it a visitor from outer space, a natural phenomenon, a man-made device, or what? The question as to whether they could or could not identify an object is direct and unambiguous.

Let us therefore go directly to the results of that question. Mr. Clarke, take notice: Of the total of 1,805 respondents from all organizations, 427 said "Yes" to that question! That's nearly one-quarter of the respondents (24%) [and verifying the supposition that amateurs would see more unidentified phenomenon than professionals]. However, that overall result deserves closer analysis. Were all the observers of the same proficiency? How much observing experience had they had? How did the reported sightings differ: Were they all faint lights in the night sky, were there some daytime sightings, were there sightings of high strangeness? Were any of them observed or photographed through a telescope? How many binocular observations were made?

## OBSERVING PROFICIENCY AND REPORTS

As to proficiency, Herb established a proficiency scale in which the following factors were considered: Did the astronomer keep regular observing records? Did he or she follow a structured personal observing program? Did he or she work in cooperation with a national organization such as ALPO, AAVSO, etc.? How long had this person been an amateur astronomer?

Herb then selected, on the basis of replies to these questions, 261 "senior" observers who had rated highest on the above criteria. Most of these, as might be expected, came from the ranks of ALPO and IOTA members.

Now, Mr. Clarke, really take notice! The senior observers, all of whom are thoroughly familiar with the night skies, reported 74 objects "which resisted most exhaustive efforts

at identification.” [This is a greater percentage, more than 28%, than the sighting frequency by all observers.]

Well, what sort of objects? Herb subdivided all reports received into five classes, according to their trajectories and apparent angular sizes. These divisions bear some resemblance to both the UFOCAT classifications and the six classifications originally proposed by one of us (Hynek). The classifications are:

*Class Definition*

- 0 Point source in uniform motion
- 1 Extended source in uniform motion
- 2 Point source in erratic motion
- 3 Extended source in erratic motion
- 4 Object observed at short enough distance as to leave no doubt in observer’s mind that something strange was observed

Classes 1, 3, and 4 are clearly of great interest. An extended object in either uniform or erratic motion is of interest because it is most unlikely that a meteor or a high-flying plane would fool trained observers: They are all too familiar with them. Further, almost all observers have binoculars handy, and they were generally used. Even a point source in erratic motion can be of considerable interest. Class 4 is, of course, the most interesting of all; that four such cases were reported by the selected senior observers is noteworthy.

## 66 UNKNOWNNS SEEN THROUGH A TELESCOPE

With so many amateur astronomers reporting observations that resisted attempts at explanation, one immediately asks, “How many observations were made with the astronomer’s telescope or binoculars, presumed handy at all times?” Sixty-six out of 427 observations of all sorts were made through a telescope, generally after the object was spotted first by eye. Forty additional objects were observed by binoculars alone. Thus, nearly a quarter of the puzzling observations were made with optical aids!

Herb next singled out cases of high strangeness; i.e., cases of sources in erratic motion and the “close encounter” cases. Fourteen of these were observed through a telescope and 17 through binoculars.

## SEVEN OBJECTS PHOTOGRAPHED

Seven objects were photographed: Three were of point sources; one was of an extended object, somewhat egg-shaped, and was taken through a telescope; one object had six photographs taken of it in quick succession (this was of an object which transited across Saturn like a little moon); another photo was of two symmetrical cloud-like objects moving in unison. This last was a photo of a “cloud” that moved rapidly at irregular intervals, moving toward and away from the sun in 15° arcs, more or less along the ecliptic

(the cloud itself was 25° long). As is the case with most UFO photographs, they remain unexplained and very puzzling, but prove nothing positive. The whole field of ufology has yet to produce one good photograph of a strange object at close range.

We properly point out two considerations in assessing these startling results from the amateurs. (It was thought at the start that the questionnaires might even show that amateur astronomers never saw anything strange in the course of their observations, and that perhaps Mr. Clarke would be proved correct. None of us expected such a harvest of unknowns.) There is a strong possibility that those who had made a sighting would very probably be more apt to fill out the questionnaire and return it than the nonsighters. They certainly ought to have been more motivated. If, therefore, one counts all persons polled, and not only those who responded, we get a minimum of about 5.2% UFO sighters, as against 23.7% when we consider all respondents (427/1,805). The “true” percentage is thus somewhere between these two limits, but even if only 5% of all amateur astronomers made valid sightings of truly unusual objects, this would still be of great significance. [By comparison, if we make the same calculation for professional astronomers in the Sturrock survey, the sighting rate drops to 2.4%, which is still impressive. In contrast, the sighting rate among the general public is somewhere between 5 and 10%, depending on which survey result we use.]

It is interesting that no amateur astronomer reported a close encounter of the third kind, that is, with creatures peering out of portholes or standing by their craft on the ground. With peer pressure being what it is, it is likely that had such a case actually been observed, it might well have not been reported!

Herb is now preparing a compendium of what was actually reported in each case. When completed, it will be available for examination at the Center; it is hoped that funds will become available to publish the catalogue and a more extended report. [Regrettably, Herb never completed a final report of the survey results.]

Finally, we conclude this report with a word of caution. Amateur astronomers are no less subject to psychological aberrations than the general public; their increased competence in distinguishing between known and unknown phenomena need not necessarily be matched by a desire for disinterested judgment. Thus the results of this survey should not be accepted as evidence for the existence of UFOs. Here we run into the ever-troublesome matter of the definition of a UFO. We believe that the survey amply demonstrates that even amateur astronomers, surely more capable than the general public in identifying objects in the night sky, come across things in the sky that defy explanation. If we remember that the “U” in UFO simply means “unidentified,” then the survey does prove that amateur astronomers report UFOs, quite contrary to Arthur C. Clarke’s contention. But then, that gentleman falls into the

*(continued on page 24)*

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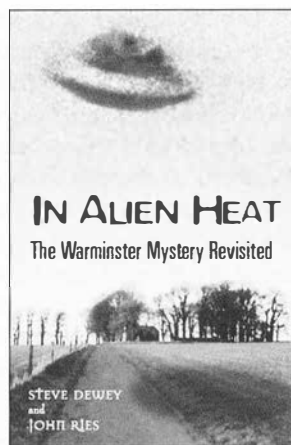
# BOOK REVIEWS

*In Alien Heat: The Warminster Mystery Revisited*, by Steve Dewey and John Ries. San Antonio: Anomalist Books, 2006. 322 p. \$17.95.

A passionately energetic, uncritically minded, and mystically inclined small-town journalist begins to publicize local reports of nocturnal lights and other oddities. He has ties to an urban tabloid which further circulates the claims, promoting the notion that the community is uniquely attractive to otherworldly visitors. Curiosity seekers, occultists, drug-addled hippies, and a few ufologists arrive to participate in sky watches, during which some mistake ordinary phenomena, natural (astronomical bodies) and artificial (satellites and airplanes), for extraordinary things. Hoaxers and practical jokers take advantage of the situation. The journalist goes on to claim interactions with pure-hearted space people, who spout the usual drivel, and writes some inane books. In due course the affair runs its predictable course and is recalled, if by practically nobody, with amusement or embarrassment.

Sound like a book you can hardly wait to read? Well, maybe a novel—preferably a literary, not a science-fiction, exercise—could make something of such unsurprising and unpromising material. As nonfiction, possibly an extended journal article on an obscure moment in popular imagination would do. In response to underwhelming demand, however, Steve Dewey and John Ries have produced more than 300 pages' worth of *In Alien Heat: The Warminster Mystery Revisited*. Nobody will accuse it of being a page-turner. Well, at any rate nobody short of British skeptic David Clarke, who spares no hyperbole or enthusiasm in a quote on the back cover ("fresh . . . fascinating . . . should be read by everyone who wants to know 'the truth' behind the UFO mystery"). Suffice it to say that other readers, slogging through a book that sometimes feels more like 600 pages, will have no trouble sparing both hyperbole and enthusiasm.

What is a "Warminster mystery"? I have heard of it because I was reading England's *Flying Saucer Review* in



the latter 1960s, when that magazine—largely owing, I learn in this book, to the half-mad Gordon Creighton's excitation (which never took much to ignite, in any event)—gave it coverage, some of it silly and gullible, some of it appropriately skeptical. Till now, the only book on the subject to appear in the United States was the widely unread *UFO Prophecy*, published three decades ago on a tiny imprint owned by contactee/New Age entrepreneur Timothy Green Beckley. Dewey and Ries won't recognize that name, but it will tell American readers all they need to know about how seriously ufologists here took the matter.

Warminster is a touristy sort of place, located in Wiltshire to the rural southwest of London. Over a decade, but most actively around approximately the end of the 1960s and the very early 1970s, local journalist Arthur Shuttlewood, not a ufologist as such but a saucer buff on his way to his true calling as a contactee, stirred the UFO pot. And it happened while Dewey and Ries were growing up there. If not for that accident of birth and geography, this largely pointless, spottily interesting book would not exist, I'm sure. For all their loathing of ufology and ufologists, even they can't bring themselves to declare Warminster a momentous moment in UFO history. These days it is barely a glimmer even in the collective memory of saucerians.

"Saucerians," by the way, is a phrase that never appears in the book. In a charitable interpretation, that is because the authors—whose grasp of the nuances of the UFO controversy and its personalities is close to nonexistent—have never heard of it. It is, however, a useful way of separating, as the religious-studies scholar J. Gordon Melton observed many years ago, those focused on unidentified phenomena whose nature is undetermined and can only be speculated about from those who hold that the phenomena are identified and known, specifically as spacecraft piloted by friendly, godlike extraterrestrials. The former are ufologists, who (in varying degrees of intellectual sophistication) are empiricists, and the latter are saucerians, who harbor what amounts to a religious sensibility.

Supremely confident that UFOs are nonsense, the authors choose not to take note of such inconvenient distinctions. To them ufologists, nearly to a man and woman, are idiots who have "no references to the real world," are "members of the New Age," believe Queen Elizabeth has a secret identity as a reptilian alien, and subscribe to a "techno-

religion.” UFO evidence consists in its entirety of “photographs and videos of dubious quality.” Hoaxes are “fundamental to ufology,” and UFOs are either (to fantasy-prone ufologists) alien spaceships or (to those who reside in the real world with the authors) just a bunch of unrecognized IFOs. Close encounters otherwise unexplainable are hallucinations. Not only that, but Carl Sagan, whom Dewey and Ries cite frequently on questions related to psychological anomalies, is the final word on altered states of consciousness, and the true authorities on UFOs are somebody named John T. Sladek, who years ago wrote a Martin Gardner-style debunking opus, and somebody else named Christopher Evans, who did the same.

Where Warminster is concerned, the authors allow as how they couldn't be bothered actually to interview anybody who participated in the affair. Consequently, they've done no more than assemble a body of contemporary writings and appended jeering commentary. In other words, this is neither the approach taken by the classic close-up study of an ongoing saucerian episode, *When Prophecy Fails* (1956)—which I've always thought of as a comic novel masked as a sociological tract—nor a serious effort to reconstruct what happened from the actual memories and testimonies of those who were there. Retrospective accounts have their obvious limitations, but surely it is worthwhile to know what the supposed witnesses think today. (From decades-old testimony, I once learned, for instance, the truth about an alleged historical UFO incident and the social circumstances that gave rise to it.) Actually, one suspects that participants' views, in addition to whatever else they might bring to the discussion, would simply have been more *interesting* than the authors'.

There are also the odd anachronisms. When was the last time, to cite one example, that you heard someone call a wave a “flap”? Dewey and Ries seem not to have left the ufological sensibility of the 1950s (which perhaps explains, too, their weird obsession with extraterrestrial spacecraft). They also labor under the curious misapprehension that John Keel and Jacques Vallee must be skeptics because they reject extraterrestrial spacecraft as one explanation for UFO reports. In reality, Keel and Vallee abandoned the ETH for far more scientifically improbable notions based in occultism and, in Vallee's case, conspiracy theory. One suspects, though, that for Dewey and Ries, all that counted in this context was the cynical maxim that the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

Unlike *Prophecy*, *In Alien Heat* is neither terribly enlightening nor terribly entertaining, except in the unlikely event that you demand no more than boilerplate in your analysis. One sometimes has the sense that the authors did no more than cram the contents of a few debunking books into a random-word generator and preserve the results between covers. I guess that's how debunkers get to “the truth' behind the UFO mystery” these days. It *is* easier than actual intellectual effort, and who wants to think too hard anyway? —*Jerome Clark*

*Majic Eyes Only*, by Ryan S. Wood. Redwood City, Calif.: The author, 2005. 328p. \$30.00.

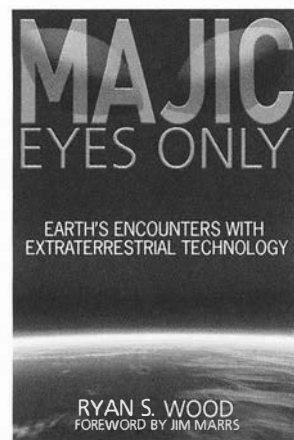
Although *Majic Eyes Only* is subtitled “Earth's Encounters with Extraterrestrial Technology” and contains a long list of possible crashes or retrievals of alien technology, it is also an argument for the reality of the Majestic-12 (MJ-12 or Majic) documents. It is clearly a book written by a believer and written for believers, which is not necessarily a bad thing.

For those who don't know, the original MJ-12 documents were delivered into the hands of Jaime Shandera, a Hollywood producer, and William J. Moore, a writer and UFO researcher. The documents were discovered on a roll of undeveloped 35mm film sent to Shandera, apparently from Albuquerque, New Mexico, in the early to mid-1980s. These original documents were an alleged 1952 briefing for president-elect Dwight Eisenhower and a letter on White House stationery authorizing the creation of MJ-12 by President Harry Truman. Moore and Shandera also located in the National Archives, they claimed, a memo from one government official to another that mentioned MJ-12. Later, additional documents would be received by a host of other researchers.

But rather than worry about this and to point out that the arguments for and against MJ-12 have appeared in many magazine articles and books (including *Top Secret/Majic* by Stanton Friedman and my 2002 book *Case MJ-12: The True Story Behind the Government's UFO Conspiracies*, for those interested in pursuing this), I'll deal mainly with the list of crash retrievals and debris recovery detailed in *Majic Eyes Only*.

Wood has selected the cases from the long lists that have been produced by others, including the late Leonard Stringfield. He begins with the crash of an airship in Aurora, Texas, in 1897 and ends with the event on the Isle of Lewis, Scotland, in late 1996. In between are cases that are solid, solidly investigated, cases that are weak and solidly investigated, and some that haven't been investigated at all. Some are only single-witness cases. Others are based on documents that suggest something unusual and possibly extraterrestrial happened that resulted in the recovery of alien material.

The first case reviewed is, in this context, one of the most disturbing, at least to this reviewer. Wood rates the Aurora, Texas, crash as high, meaning it has an “authenticity level of 80 to 100%.” Wood defines this as “. . . virtually all of the available investigative channels and ideas have been pursued, and with each test the case or document has shown to be authentic or nearly problem free. At this level, multiple witnesses are present that have seen the crash or aftermath,



or read a document in an 'official' capacity. . . . Physical evidence is available; for example, rocks to test, scarred trees, photographs or direct ET materials. . . . all indicate the highest level of authenticity. At least several researchers are in substantial agreement about the core evidence of the case, often for many years."

Yet, with the Aurora, Texas, crash, we have none of those things. The eyewitness testimony, taken in the early 1970s, is at best contradictory with these witnesses telling one researcher one thing and another something else. The physical evidence, gathered in the 1970s, can't be linked to the airship crash and is therefore irrelevant. And the documentation available, in the form of newspaper articles, does nothing to prove the case. In fact, according to Jerome Clark in the second edition of his *UFO Encyclopedia*, "Wise County historian Etta Pegues looked into the story. . . . Among the old-timers she interviewed was Mrs. Robbie Hanson, who declared, 'It was a hoax. I was in school that day and nothing happened.'"

Taking it further, Clark noted, "Moreover, Pegues wrote, if the Aurora story had been factual rather than fiction Cliff D. Cates would have included it in his *Pioneer History of Wise County* which he published in 1907. . . . Also, if it had been true, Harold R. Bost would have included it in his *Saga of Aurora*."

If nothing else, these facts should impact on the overall rating of the case, moving it from high to, at best, medium and probably to medium low.

There are other such problems. Cases that have been thought of as hoaxes for decades have new life here including the Maury Island case of June 1947, the Plains of San Agustin crash of July 1947, and the Aztec, New Mexico, case of 1948.

One of the footnotes in the section on the Plains of San Agustin is troubling to me. The information about Roscoe Wilmeth, who supposedly heard about the crash and the bodies and even talked of a "bodies site," was attributed to me in *A History of UFO Crashes*.

While that information is accurate, it is not the whole picture. Robert Drake gave the information about Wilmeth to Stan Friedman. Friedman tried to contact Wilmeth, but was never able to do so. Wilmeth died before Friedman could interview him. So the information about the bodies from Drake comes second hand, at best.

Worse still, there is no corroboration for Drake's tales. He said that he was riding back to Albuquerque with three other men after he had learned of the crash out on the Plains from a cowboy on a ranch where they had stopped. According to Drake, originally, they all discussed the crash on their way back to Albuquerque. Interviewed separately by Tom Carey, each denied the conversations had taken place. It means that Drake's testimony is unsupported by any independent fact and does nothing to corroborate the crash on the Plains. In fact, and worse still, it is contradicted by those men Drake said would be able to confirm his account.

For a case level as medium high, or 60 to 80% authentic,

Wood defines it such "that a considerable amount of investigation has been completed. Witnesses are present, stories appear genuine, a few anachronisms may be present but have reasonable explanations. Forensic testing, if possible, has been partially completed, and there are strong signs of case validity. . . ."

Fair enough. But, what about the Santa Rosa, New Mexico, case of the spring or winter of 1963? It is single-witness, there are no corroborating witnesses or documents, and it is somewhat preposterous on the face of it. Yet, it is labeled as medium-high. Wood does not seem to apply his rating system evenly and consistently.

At least with the Indiantown Gap case from the winter of 1969, Wood admits that it is single-witness, stating, "The only known source to this crash retrieval incident comes from Sergeant 1st Class Clifford Stone."

Stone claimed that the craft was "wedge-shaped" and that there were bodies found. Stone said that he was told to take readings with a Geiger counter and as he did, he realized that he was seeing something that was not from Earth.

Wood rates the case as needing more research, but in reality, there is but a single witness and that witness, Stone, has been caught in embellishments in other stories he has told.

But even with these criticisms, it should be noted that Wood has done a real service here. As Stringfield did before him, Wood has provided some interesting information on incidents in which it is possible that alien artifacts, or the remains of interstellar craft, have been recovered. He provides the elements of the case, commenting on the value of the specific case, and giving the sources of the information. Stringfield's hope had been to learn more about a report through the publication of the information. Wood seems to have a similar goal in mind.

These listings, all 75 of them, are the heart of the book. But wrapped around them are the arguments for the existence of the Majestic-12. Nearly all UFO researchers agree that if there were an alien spaceship that crashed near Roswell, then a committee like MJ-12 would have been created to exploit it. The question has always been if MJ-12 was that committee, or if it was the creation of UFO researchers to fill in gaps in their knowledge.

In a chapter called, "The Authenticity of the Special Operations Manual," contributed by Robert Wood (father of the author and longtime ufologist), there is an explanation of the manual. This was a document apparently created as a guide for those who are responsible for the crash retrievals. A document which then leaked into the UFO community a number of years ago.

Robert Wood listed a number of objections that opponents have made over the years. One of those objections was that there had been no document control number. Wood, working with Don Berliner who received the original film with the manual on it, found that one of the documents

(continued on page 24)

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# FUN AND GAMES IN THE DESERT NEAR LAS CRUCES

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

**T**here is an uninteresting Project Blue Book record card that reads "25 Jan 54. Las Cruces, New Mexico. Blob of light which changed brightness. Was astronomical (Meteor)." That description doesn't sound promising or warrant further review.

But turn the page. There you will find a cover envelope stating that Clyde Tombaugh brought the case to the project. Hmm. The best astronomical observer of his day, a man who could recognize meteors in his sleep, thought that a simple write-off meteor was worth sending to the UFO project? What would prompt him to do so?

Now Tombaugh wasn't the observer (although he had at least one UFO sighting, also in Las Cruces in 1949, and he also saw the famous green fireballs in New Mexico). The witnesses were two guys who worked with Tombaugh. Someone (perhaps Tombaugh) convinced one of the observers to write up the report, which then follows in the case file.

The reporter (last name Schaldach, but we'll call him Observer 1) was a civilian employee in the Technical Service Unit at White Sands Proving Grounds. The service he provided was camera monitoring of missile launches, so he was no random Joe who just happened to see a meteor in the sky. He was a graduate of Columbia University, had worked as an astronomer at the Lowell Observatory (no, astronomers never see UFOs), and was a temporary faculty member for the University of Chicago at the Yerkes Observatory. A meteor . . . hmmm again. Something doesn't fit again.

## THE SIGHTING

It was 10 o'clock in the evening when he was setting up his ballistic camera to monitor the missile. Seventeen miles southeast of him the second witness (Observer 2) was doing the same thing (see diagram on the next page). The night was

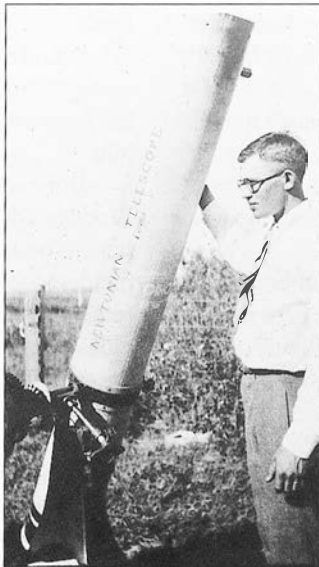
relatively clear and they were looking at the stars to see if the clarity was sufficient to calibrate their instruments.

Observer 1 saw the moving light in the northeast, Observer 2 in the north-northwest. For Observer 1, the light moved in a shallow arc from the northeast to the southeast. From the view of Observer 2, it was from the north-northwest to approximately east. The light was star-like, a "yellow-white radiation curve," similar to the stellar classification G0 (on the Harvard scale; this is close to the Sun's classification as G2). The light was visible to Observer 1 for about 6 seconds and it pulsed at about 1½-second intervals. Its relative brightness varied from less than magnitude 6 to greater than -1 (for comparison, magnitude 6 is barely visible to the naked eye while the upper value is characteristic of a bright planet such as Jupiter). The two observers communicated to one another by intercom and compared notes.

Their comparison allowed them to make a rough calculation of the light's distance and speed. Even given 25% slop in their esti-

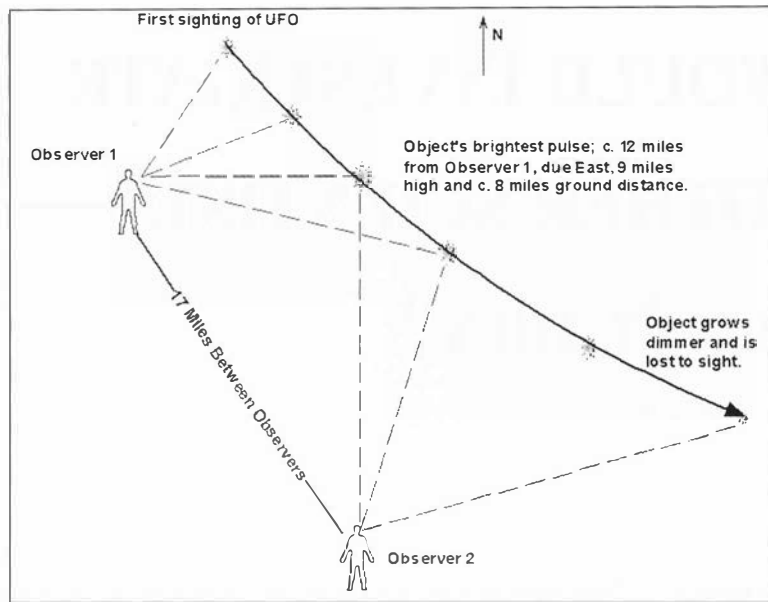
mates, the report turned in by Observer 1 concluded that the object was about 12 miles away at the time of its brightest pulse [and thereby about 9 miles high, in a rough calculation by this author, not the observers]. The velocity was 12,000 mph. Putting in error bars, the object was  $12 \pm 3$  miles distant and moving at  $12,000 \pm 3,000$  mph. This was a good faith try at obtaining what Ed Ruppelt always wanted for Blue Book: triangulated data.

Tombaugh would naturally have learned about this case since he lived in Las Cruces and would have been interested in everything unusual sailing around in the heavens. When Observer 1 told him that he was absolutely certain that this was no kind of meteor, which he states emphatically *twice* in the Air Force report form, Tombaugh would be pretty certain that we had a UFO on our hands. After all, these were trained observers, with one being an astronomer. Moreover,



Clyde Tombaugh





meteors don't appear visible at a low altitude without putting on a much more extensive light show, as Tombaugh knew. As Observer 1 stated in his concluding remark on the form, "I have observed many thousands of meteors and can definitely state that this object was not any kind of meteor."

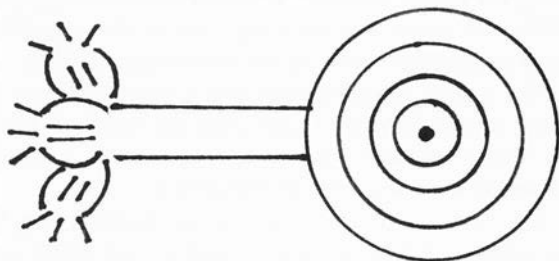
So, how on the great green Earth could the record card state, "Was astronomical (Meteor)?" You old hands at ufology already know, don't you? On that same envelope which mentioned that the case came from Clyde Tombaugh was penciled in: "Hold for return to Dr. Hynek." Allen, you were a very bad boy indeed in 1954, and I don't care if the Robertson Panel *was* just one year earlier.

## WAIT, THERE'S MORE

But, maybe the Las Cruces story wasn't quite over. You can be the judge of this next story.

There is no case report on the material which follows, but there are newspaper clippings which give a feeling that *some* report must have been completed, somewhere, for some agency.

In the *El Paso Times* of February 7-9, 1954, three short news stories appeared. Two married women (Mrs. Weiss and Mrs. Sanders) who enjoyed rock-hounding were on one of their "girls-day-out" excursions to a place called Kilbourne Hole, about 25 miles west of Las Cruces. There, on more than one of these trips in the latter half of January, they came



upon peculiar tracks in the desert sand. There were more than two dozen of these marks, apparently strung out in a "series."

The marks were peculiar, to say the least. Concentric circles cut into the ground with a raised center point, an "arm" extending from the circles terminated by marks made by three or four claw-like "hands." The circles were described as "perfect," and varied between 1½ to 3 feet in diameter for the largest one. Circles seen on one trip were wind-eroded on another, but a new set appeared fresh on a third visit.

Mrs. Weiss was moved to tell the newspaper, while Mrs. Sanders reported to White Sands. The two investigators from White Sands went out with the ladies and saw the marks themselves. It was reported that the tracks just suddenly began and suddenly stopped with no other markings of any sort leading to them or away. The White Sands guys, Caption Ross Orcutt and

Henry Herman (described as a CID agent), went back to the base without comment. The ladies were left with the impression that these were the marks of "some alien object."

My overactive imagination wonders if there was not someone at White Sands who knew that something unexplained was making marks in the desert near Las Cruces in late January 1954, and that on the evening of the 27th, two camera scientists had seen an odd pulsing "non-meteor" flying at 12,000 mph going east. All, probably, very uncomfortable for the old paradigm, and, maybe, too, for national security. Still, as we've seen, J. Allen Hynek most likely had the answer. Everyone now: Breathe deeply and relax.

*Editor's note:* Too late for these observers, Hynek considered this case to be a good one, and he had it on his "10" list of unexplained observations by astronomers, according to Richard Hall. Allen was not averse to changing his mind, for better or worse. ♦

## IS OUR SUN A BINARY STAR?

The Binary Research Institute has found that orbital characteristics of the trans-Neptunian planetoid 90377 Sedna demonstrate the possibility that our sun might be part of a binary star system. Sedna, first detected in 2003 by Cal Tech astronomer Michael Brown, provides what could be indirect physical evidence of a solar companion. Matching the recent findings by Brown, showing that Sedna moves in a highly unusual elliptical orbit, Walter Cruttenden at BRI has determined that Sedna moves in resonance with previously published orbital data for a hypothetical companion star. In the May 2006 issue of *Discover*, Brown stated: "Sedna shouldn't be there. There's no way to put Sedna where it is. It never comes close enough to be affected by the sun, but it never goes far enough away from the sun to be affected by other stars." —Binary Research Institute, April 24.

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# SCIENTISTS WOULD INVESTIGATE SIGHTINGS BY OTHER SCIENTISTS— WOULDN'T THEY?

BY MARK RODEGHIER

Over the years, one of the common contentions of UFO skeptics is that, if UFOs really appeared as frequently as public sightings imply, then science would already know about UFOs. The simple reasoning is that UFOs appearing so often would have been detected many times over by various scientific instruments, but since UFOs have seemingly not been detected by scientific gear or various monitoring systems, then there must be nothing to the phenomenon.

There are various approaches to refute this argument. We can point to radar detections, theodolite observations, or even sightings by scientists themselves. There is plenty of this type of evidence to demonstrate that scientists do see and record UFOs.

There is, though, another way to deal with this skeptical claim. Science makes amazing advances literally every day, and so we can easily forget how little is known about the world around us. Astronomers and physicists are growing ever more confident in their knowledge of the development of the cosmos from the moments after the Big Bang until today, including the recent discovery of the mysterious dark energy. Meanwhile, biological scientists learn more and more about the human genome and how our bodies function, leading to mind-boggling advances in medicine. The pace and scope of scientific knowledge is impressive on all fronts.

But how much do we really know about phenomena that we observe every day or that affect us directly? Oftentimes not much, according to Robert B. Laughlin, Nobel Prize winner in physics, and professor at Stanford University. He has written the fascinating book, *A Different Universe: Reinventing Physics from the Bottom Down* (2005, Basic Books), which argues that the world is dominated by emergent properties (such as the properties of a solid, which are different than those of its individual atoms and molecules).

*Mark Rodeghier is scientific director of the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies.*

There are things we observe but which we still can't calculate or even predict. Thus, as Laughlin notes, "Ordinary water ice displays, at last count . . . eleven distinct crystalline phases, not one of which was correctly predicted from first principles."

Laughlin's point is that things that we know to be true by simple observation may have profound and deep theoretical underpinnings that are not obvious or a consequence of other well-known physical laws, or of the properties of their constituents. He describes in his book why physicists often reject theories based on emergent properties for philosophical and social reasons (background training, existing research agendas, etc.), not for solid scientific motives.

Scientists are often prone to ignore both theories and data that they don't believe could occur or think are very unlikely because they contradict other well-established data and theories. This is generally a good strategy, but the approach fails when something important goes unrecognized and thus unstudied. And that is the fate suffered by UFO sightings, even from scientists.

## INDIAN SCIENTISTS SEE UFO

As some of you may have read, on September 27, 2004, a group of Indian scientists from the Indian Space Research Organization saw a strange object in the Samudra Tapu glacier region in Himachal Pradesh state. The team of glaciologists and geologists were on a week-long expedition to study the glacier and were camped at an elevation of about 17,000 feet. Early that morning, one of the expedition porters spotted the object on top of a mountain ridge.

The object floated/moved just a few feet from the ground, approaching the camp along the mountain slope. Both senior scientist Anil V. Kulkarni and a coworker grabbed cameras and took several photos.

The object was small and oblong, mostly white, between three and four feet high. It had an odd shape, with

appendages and a cylindrical head with two balloon-type attachments. It eventually came within 50 meters of the scientists, hovered motionless for a few seconds, and then started a steep ascent. It rose high into the sky, hovering and appearing as only a white dot in the bright sunlight.

The photographs demonstrate beyond doubt that the scientists saw something that morning, and that they accurately reported what was observed. As geologist Rajesh Kalia said, "It didn't look like a man-made object."

The scientists, being cautious and believing that what they saw had to be man-made, contacted various institutes to check about balloon launches, and also to see whether the object could have been an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), many of which are used by the military. However, there are no balloons that match the shape of the object (and its behavior was not exactly balloon-like), and there are no known UAVs that match the object's shape, either. The object moved against the wind, making a balloon explanation even more improbable.

It is possible, of course, that the object was a super-sophisticated UAV being flown by the U.S. military that got off track. The sighting location is in the far northwest of India, and although it is not hard by the border with Pakistan, it isn't that distant. It is also near Kashmir, the site of much fighting between Pakistan and Indian, along with terrorism from separatist movements. But the object didn't have the aerodynamic shape of a UAV, and it wasn't making any noise from an engine.

As of this writing, the object remains unidentified, despite the best efforts of the expedition's scientists, who would like to know what they saw.

## A FAILURE OF SCIENCE?

Outside of the expedition members and their immediate colleagues, it is fair to say that worldwide scientific interest in this intriguing sighting has been, well, nonexistent. Kulkarni has not been invited to present a paper about the sighting at a scientific meeting, new expeditions have not been planned to observe the object again, photoanalysts have not been clamoring for the original negatives to do image enhancement, and intensive efforts have not been underway to find the terrestrial object that might have been the cause of the report.

Here we have a UFO sighting, in daylight, by scientists. The object was photographed at a range that makes this a close encounter case. The witness descriptions are consistent. Although there is no physical evidence itself, the case otherwise would seem to be the type that we dream about, but it has aroused zero enthusiasm.

Admittedly, the sighting was not published in a peer-reviewed journal. (How could it be?) The object was not large, nor disc-shaped or triangular. It didn't zip away at incredible speeds, or disappear instantly. Nor were there unusual physical effects on any equipment, or the witnesses. And certainly no sign of life was seen in the small object. So

the object, whatever it was, doesn't exactly cry out for an extraterrestrial explanation.

But by any reasonable definition, the object is a UFO, and the report does demand *some* explanation, which doesn't seem too probable at this point. So if this sighting doesn't get scientists interested, are we doomed to never attract the serious attention of the scientific community?

The short answer is: Yes, we just might be doomed, unless things change drastically with the phenomenon. But is this a failure of science? Or to put it differently, why should science be interested in this sighting? When the question is posed that way, it might seem that the answer is obvious: to learn something new about the world. Looking at it from another angle, though, reveals the practical hurdles the study of UFOs faces among academics and professionals.

We shouldn't speak of science in the abstract, but of scientists. And we shouldn't refer abstractly to scientists, but to scientists in specific fields. So let's list a few: biochemistry, geology, psychology, environmental sciences, zoology, astronomy, mathematics, and anthropology. Then ask yourself: What would be intriguing about this sighting to someone in one of these fields? What about this sighting would be worth studying because it might lead to an advance in one of these fields?

Put that way, the answer becomes instantly obvious. There isn't anything about the encounter—the object or its behavior—that has direct links to any of these subjects, and most any other one that we could name. Studying this report will probably not advance the research program in these fields. This is certainly true if the object was an exotic UAV; if it were something even more exotic (an alien craft?), it still wouldn't contribute unless we could get our hands on the device itself, or the intelligences behind it (exoanthropology, anyone?).

Certainly, academics or professionals in one of these fields may be intrigued by the sighting and want to study it. But if so, they won't be doing it to advance their fields (and definitely not their careers!). They will be investigating it because of the intrinsic fascination of UFO reports and what may be revealed about the universe or other intelligences. That's absolutely good motivation, but it's not discipline-specific incentive. And therein lies the rub. If scientists don't have a professional reason to investigate a report, it's a little hard to blame them for not investigating it.

None of this is meant to absolve certain scientists, such as Donald Menzel, Carl Sagan, or Edward Condon, of their share of guilt in ignorantly and willfully dismissing UFO sightings and UFO investigations as a waste of time. If a scientist does look at the UFO evidence but then not treat it honestly, we can feel cheated, and we are all the poorer, including science. And there have been equally intriguing sightings by scientists that have been ignored that *do* more strongly suggest ETI as a source.

Nevertheless, we shouldn't be disappointed or surprised when scientists don't leap to the study of the UFO

phenomenon from their labs and computers. People need incentives to break away from their routines. Somewhat amazingly, UFO sightings, even by fellow scientists, don't give the average scientist an incentive to work professionally on the problem.

So just what *would* cause a scientist to study UFOs? It's the same thing that gets many members of the public excited about UFOs—having their own sighting. Even then, there's no guarantee that someone will take action, but it's usually the best predictor of continuing interest, if nothing else. ♦

## ASTRONOMERS—continued from page 16

same trap that the general public does: that UFOs can mean only one thing—visitors from remote regions of space. If we hold, as we do at the Center, that a UFO phenomenon exists, then certainly the amateur astronomers have observed the UFO phenomenon, and by no means necessarily craft from outer space.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It is worth mentioning that CUFOS and other UFO groups continue to receive UFO sightings from amateur astronomers. A summary of recent sightings by these observers would be a welcome addition to the UFO literature and strong evidence that unexplained things are indeed observed in the skies. ♦

### GRASSROOTS UFOS: CASE REPORTS FROM THE TIMMERMAN FILES

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## BOOK REVIEWS—continued from page 19

photographed had been so difficult to read that Berliner had not made a copy of it. When it was printed, here, according to Wood, was the document control page. This was a point that argued for authenticity.

Another objection was that the manual, dated 1954, mentioned Area 51, but Area 51 didn't exist in 1954. Wood said that his research showed that the beginning of the facility was in 1951. Okay, as far as it goes, but there is no evidence that the term, Area 51, was in use in 1954. This is a push, as they say in Nevada. Neither side has an advantage.

Wood, in his argument for authenticity, wrote, "All these claims of fakery have led me to create a summary list of phony claims of fakery. . . ." He implies that just because the government says they are fake documents doesn't make it so. That archives can't locate them doesn't mean they don't exist.

And I would have to agree with these points. Just because the government says they are faked doesn't make it so. And if the documents were as highly classified as alleged, it's not surprising that they aren't located by document searches. They simply wouldn't be filed in locations that are open to public scrutiny.

But there is one point that Wood makes that doesn't work. He puts the statement, "There is no provenance," on his list of phony claims of fakery. Sorry, the lack of provenance on the manual for the MJ-12 documents, all of the documents, is a real problem. In all the searching that has been done, no one has located a document that refers to, is part of, or suggests in anyway that a committee named MJ-12 has ever existed. This simply does not wash.

However, this book does pretty much what it set out to do. It provides a perspective of the MJ-12 documents and why both Robert and Ryan Wood believe the documents to be authentic. It addresses the claims that there is no physical evidence by enumerating nearly a hundred cases of claimed recovery of some sort of debris or material. Granted, many of them are fairly weak, but then, only one has to be authentic for the case to be made.

Yes, I disagree with some of the ratings and the value of some of the cases, but then, those ratings are subjective. Some information that the Woods find persuasive, I find less than convincing. Some information I find persuasive, they find less than convincing. When dealing with this subject, that isn't all that surprising.

For those who are interested in completing a library of UFO books, this is a necessity. It gives a look at MJ-12, the recovery of alien artifacts, and an overview, though limited, of this state of research.

But it must be remembered that the book was written by a true believer and there are points when I believe the standards for accepting evidence should have been higher. But we can say that in many UFO cases and about many UFO books. —Kevin D. Randle ♦

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## LETTERS

### KECKSBURG CONTROVERSY

*To the editor:*

In Leslie Kean's article about Kecksburg ("Forty Years of Secrecy: NASA, the Military, and the 1965 Kecksburg Crash," *IUR* 30:1), she boasts that in 2003 there were "two exciting developments" which "demolish" the two skeptical explanations: a meteor or a Soviet satellite.

The satellite explanation, specifically Cosmos 96, has actually been a central explanation offered by the promoters of a mysterious crash recovery, such as Stan Gordon, since the 1980s. It's strange that this failed explanation has suddenly been declared a "preferred explanation" of the skeptics.

As for the meteor explanation, Kean never discussed it at all, except to dismiss without explanation the "amateur photographs," some of which were taken by a professional Michigan newspaper photographer, and the many 1965 eyewitness reports.

Most curious is her dismissing, without discussion, the explanation of astronomers who analyzed photographs, eyewitness reports, and a seismometer recording, published four decades ago in a peer-reviewed science journal.

Kean uses nothing more than the claimed eyewitness accounts decades later of tree damage seen in the dark at a site a half mile from the real search on another farm, but published by mistake in a local newspaper. For decades, as "new" witnesses surfaced with their strange accounts, this remained the only published location for the event. Furthermore, if you pick two trees, of course you get a "path" between them. But how many other trees were examined for damage in this heavily eroded, reforested area?

Kean ignored a lot in her article. Like Kecksburg mystery mongers before her, she makes much of an excited 1965 radio report by the late John Murphy, but curiously ignores the part where he said the only military people he actually saw at the site were in the back seat of a police car. These were obviously the three USAF men mentioned in the Project Blue Book file in the National Archives.

Also, Kean doesn't inform her readers of another tidbit John Murphy reported in the program, which was rebroadcast on WJM radio on the 1995 anniversary of the incident. He reported that the military present were from the "Army 662nd Radar Squadron." So, a week after the incident Murphy was still confused about the true identity of the military unit involved. This Air Force unit was located on the Army facility at Oakdale. Confusion about this is why, in 1965 and later, some people think the Army was there.

Kean disingenuously says that her investigation has established that personnel from this Army facility were present, but doesn't inform her readers that this is where the USAF 662nd Squadron radar site was located. She prefers instead to promote a continued mystery about Army "stubbornness" because they can't come up with non-existent

documents.

Of course, as Kean writes, John Murphy thought he saw "Army" and "Air Force" uniforms at the police barracks back in Greensburg. He probably couldn't tell the difference between the winter blues worn by the Lieutenant and the OD fatigues, festooned with Air Defense patches, worn by the EMs. The details of the report that this newsman made, in his own lifetime, support the official version of events.

The most interesting revelation in Kean's article was that her group's investigation managed to locate several members of the USAF 662nd Radar Squadron who participated in the event of that night. Guess what they reported? Their 40-year-old memories also support the official version.

Until the long-published photographs are discussed for the support or refutation they offer to the a crash theory, the real Kecksburg crashed saucer cover-up of pictures and documents proving the true nature of the December 9, 1965, fireball will continue.

Readers shouldn't get too excited about these new developments, as they don't really offer anything new. The old farmers out there still chuckle when they talk about "Murphy's UFO": the burning pile of brush at the Norvelt Golf Course construction site, where the intrepid newsman first thought he had his "War of the Worlds."

*Robert R. Young  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania*

*The author responds:*

Anyone familiar with the basic strategy of UFO debunkers is aware that their first rule is to deny any evidence that contradicts their position. In the Kecksburg case, scores of people, including representatives of the press, attest to the presence of military personnel at the search location, and a number of witnesses describe standing within a few feet of the object, half embedded in a gully. Nevertheless, amateur astronomer Robert Young is so smitten with his belief that the incident was merely a meteor flyover that he is forced to insist that every witness who recalls details not matching this scenario is either wrong, unreliable or lying. When Young was asked for his opinion by *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter Ralph Vigoda in 2000, he explained away the entire Kecksburg case as nothing more than "urban rumor." A rumor, even though scores of witnesses have given independent, first-hand testimony to what they saw? And the incident occurred in a remote, rural location. It appears that Young is not always careful about his choice of words.

Mr. Young is entitled to defend the Air Force position if he wants, but I would be interested to know how many of the key Kecksburg witnesses he has personally interviewed, if any. Has he spoken to Robert Gatty and Ernie Hoffman, reporters who were on the scene and were clearly capable of determining the Army presence? Or to Jerry Betters, Bill Bulebush, or James Romansky, whose independent reports

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of close encounters with the object on the ground corroborate each others' descriptions?

For many years, Young has doled out all manner of distortions and factual inaccuracies about the Kecksburg case to defend his one-pointed opinion. Take this rather amusing statement, for example, as reported in the same *Philadelphia Inquirer* piece:

“And to those who say the object floated, slowed down or changed direction, there’s this explanation: People were watching the bright vapor trail, which was likely buffeted by winds.”

This defies logic when one examines the detailed descriptions by witnesses, such as Randy Overly of the acorn-shaped object a few hundred feet above the ground. The many others from Westmoreland County who reported the incident described either a fireball, or a physical object, sometimes with a fiery tail. The notion of “vapor buffeted by the wind” as an explanation for the object’s turns rivals any number of the more absurd explanations offered by desperate debunkers over the years.

Another example can be found at the beginning of Young’s letter, where he declares that the Cosmos 96 argument was not used by skeptics, but was promoted by Stan Gordon (who has been investigating the case for 40 years). Young must be aware that the leading skeptic on the Kecksburg case, James Oberg, has actually been the loudest voice claiming that it was either the Cosmos 96 capsule or other debris from the failed Soviet probe that landed in Kecksburg. Oberg has been interviewed for numerous documentaries stating that this is what the witnesses saw—case closed. (Recently, however, it seems Oberg’s position has changed due to Nicholas Johnson’s findings; see more below.) Gordon, on the other hand, simply offered this explanation as one of many possibilities in an unsolved case.

These nit-picky, often irrelevant misstatements are characteristic of Young’s repeated diatribes debunking the Kecksburg case. (His convoluted statement that I have used only accounts of “tree damage seen in the dark” one-half mile from the “real search” to determine the location is another example; we know where the correct site is due to three witnesses, unknown to each other, who escorted Stan Gordon there independently, as described in my piece. The tree damage was observed in broad daylight the day after the incident by witness John Hayes, and was photographed by Gordon years later.)

What’s important to address here is the bottom line. There are three basic positions that have been put forward to explain the Kecksburg incident: (1) A meteor, meaning that nothing came down; (2) a man-made object so sensitive that its retrieval was covered up; (3) an object of unknown origin retrieved by the military and also covered up.

The first option, which Young believes to be true, requires that its proponents dismiss out of hand the testimony of dozens of eyewitnesses and some media coverage. My *IUR* article went into detail about the credibility of the Kecksburg witnesses and the large number of corroborating

reports. However, in working with Stan Gordon for the last few years, I have learned that the *majority* of the witnesses he has spoken with over four decades have not gone public, and that there is actually a great deal more information in support of options two and three than Young or anyone else is aware of, some of it from highly sensitive sources. This is a statement I don’t like to make because promises of confidentiality preclude its verification. Young’s assertions, however, beg the question.

As waves of witnesses came forward at different times, Gordon was careful to withhold certain details about the case to use as checks for witness authenticity. There is absolutely no way that any serious investigator can dismiss the abundance of evidence showing the likelihood that *something* did indeed come down in Kecksburg on December 9, 1965.

Nonetheless, thousands in four states did see a brilliant fireball minutes before anything happened in Kecksburg. At the time this was assumed to be a meteor, yet today scientists disagree as to the nature of that fireball, and how it actually behaved.

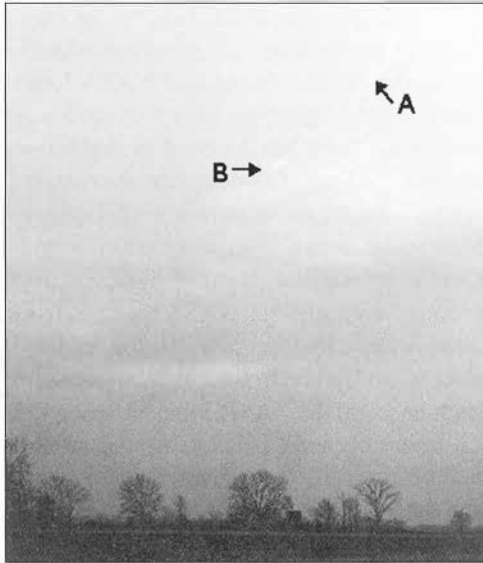
Over the years, Young’s argument has hinged on a 1967 paper by astronomers Von Del Chamberlain and David J. Krause published in the *Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada*. “The Fireball of December 9, 1965—Part I” provides the authors’ calculation of the trajectory of the fireball, which they state was a meteor.

In the paper, Chamberlain and Krause used triangulation of two photographs, taken a few miles apart in Michigan, to purportedly show that the trajectory for the fireball was such that it would have been at a right angle to a trajectory bringing the object into the Kecksburg area. The astronomers collected 66 standardized forms completed by eyewitnesses, including the accounts of the two photographers. Based on these reports, they estimated the event lasted only about four seconds and resulted in the explosion of the meteorite over the western end of Lake Erie near Detroit. (Interestingly, the authors note, “several observers reported that some material apparently continued beyond, along the original trajectory.”) The paper stated that the event occurred at 4:43 p.m. EST, based on nearby seismographic records of a shock wave produced by the fireball.

Although this study includes three interesting images of the fireball’s smoke trail, Young does not seem to be aware of the meticulous work of scientist David Rudiak exposing the problems plaguing the study. Rudiak provided a brief summary of his findings for me in a recent email (greater detail and helpful illustrations are on his website, [www.roswellproof.com/Keckburg\\_triangulation\\_error.html](http://www.roswellproof.com/Keckburg_triangulation_error.html)).

1. The *JRASC* article assumes absolute precision in measuring triangulation angles to two “points” in the fireball trail. This is unscientific methodology, as there is always some error in any measurement, and there is no error analysis in the article.

2. The two triangulation “points” should actually be large, fuzzy areas with boundaries determined by the possible



*One photo from the JRASC paper used to triangulate the trajectory of the December 9, 1965, fireball. The photo was taken about 20 miles north of Detroit and shows the smoke trail just after the fireball disappeared following an explosion, shown by the puff of smoke at Point B.*

measurement errors. Instead of one line between two precise points, the paper should have presented a broad range of possible trajectories within the range of these error regions.

3. Small angle errors in determining directions to the two smoke trail points of only  $\pm 0.6^\circ$  (or  $1.2^\circ$  overall) would be sufficient to change the trajectory by nearly  $90^\circ$  from the one suggested, allowing for a trajectory towards Kecksburg.

4. Errors are *easy* to make when measuring in the field. Sources of such potential errors could have been: getting compass directions slightly wrong; not precisely locating one or both photo locations to within inches (smoke trail directions can only be determined relative to nearby objects, such as trees, so precise location of photo sites is vital); a small scaling error in one or both photos; trail drift due to wind, since the two photos were taken half a minute to a minute apart, shifting the smoke trail points between photos and thus changing the apparent trajectory. (In fact, scrutiny of the three included photos shows clear evidence of such high winds.)

5. That the trajectory is likely in error is strongly supported by the photos themselves, clearly showing that the smoke trail gets thinner over time. The most likely explanation is that the object was moving sharply *away* from the camera rather than sideways, as stated in the article. (If it were actually sideways, the trail should remain constant in overall thickness since the distance to the camera would remain unchanged.) Estimating the thinning of the trail results in a trajectory at least towards Kecksburg or even more to the southeast.

6. This away-from-camera trajectory also results in a calculated angle of descent that is gradual (much like an airliner coming in for a landing) rather than the steep ( $52^\circ$ ) calculated descent angle of the article. This gradual descent

is also consistent with a Kecksburg landing over 200 miles away.

7. The Pittsburgh Airport time of 4:47 p.m. for the fireball (vs. about 4:43 p.m. in Detroit) calls into question the meteor fireball explanation. This would be too slow for a meteor, which should have traveled the distance in less than a minute.

In addition, sonic boom reports from western Pennsylvania, phoned in to various agencies, confirm the presence of the fireball over that state.

What was this fireball, which looked like a meteor, and what was its relationship to events in Kecksburg? Could there have been two separate events, a meteor and something else unrelated that came down in Kecksburg? Or could the fireball have sent off something—just before it exploded in the “puff” captured on film—that ended up grounded in Kecksburg? Or, did the fireball itself, being something other than a meteor, make a gradual descent into Kecksburg? This is part of the mystery that we will probably never solve, unless the U.S. government comes clean about the case.

What we *do know*, according to Stan Gordon’s interviews with many people in local communities who saw a fiery slow-moving object, is the very specific trajectory of something unusual descending over Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. Beginning at about 4:47 p.m., a luminous object was first seen over the greater Pittsburgh area as news media and police phones were inundated with sighting reports. (Or was this simply those pesky vapor trails buffeted by the winds?) The brilliant object then moved towards the southeast and passed over Greensburg, made a turn to the south, and headed towards the Laurelville area. After making another turn, it traveled northeast towards Kecksburg, where it turned again and descended into the woods. The news media reported that the Army and State Police cordoned off the area where the object was believed to have landed. “Nothing that happened earlier in four other states will change these facts,” Gordon points out.

New information is coming to light all the time about the Kecksburg event. Recently, Gordon obtained a newspaper article from the *Mount Pleasant Journal* published on December 17, 1965, eight days after the incident. Despite reporting that the state police captain said that nothing was found and “we’re satisfied it was meteor,” the headline reads, “Mystery Surrounds Area’s Fallen Object—Many Questions Still Unanswered.” The story states, “seven area residents reported seeing a smoldering object crash to the earth.” It goes on to say that Army personnel were supposedly among those sealing off the roads in the area, where up to 400 “curious onlookers” had gathered. “Why have U.S. Army officials hastened to the scene issued no statement on the results of their search? And why, with reported sightings from many other areas, were so many officials concentrated on the search here?” queries the article.

This story also notes, as has been confirmed by other sources, that the search for the object continued the following day (Friday). If it was determined early that morning, as

the Air Force stated, that nothing came down and this was only a meteor, why did the search continue? "By Friday evening, the area had been thoroughly scoured by police, military authorities, scientists with Geiger counters and other volunteers," the story states.

Young writes that the "most interesting revelation" of my story was the reports of several members of the Air Force 662nd Radar Squadron who were involved with events that night. Young states that these reports support the official position that nothing came down. Indeed, one lieutenant did say that he searched for the object and found nothing. However, in the same interview, he also contradicted what we know about the circumstances at the site from numerous news reports describing the extensive military and police presence, the cordoning off of the area, and the many civilians descending on the location. As I mentioned in my article, this lieutenant said there was no military or police presence on the roads or in the area, and no excess civilian activity. The latter observation is simply impossible, and raises numerous interesting questions that I explored in my story.

Young may delight in the fact that this man said nothing was found, but he has chosen to disregard the rest of his interview, which involved puzzling inconsistencies with the facts, and therefore calls into question the reliability of the lieutenant's story. The lieutenant's official written report about his search was for some reason not included with the Project Blue Book files, and has not yet been released by the Air Force, despite my specific requests for it accompanied by an affidavit from the lieutenant.

Other discrepancies exist in the various rather convoluted stories reported to me by the 662nd officers: In one case, an officer said that he's positive no search was conducted at all, and yet another officer told me he's convinced that the object was a Russian satellite. Both of these statements actually *contradict* the official version, rather than support it, as Young claims. Young has chosen to select from these accounts one part of one story that fits his predetermined belief that the incident involved only a meteor, while ignoring everything else. This selectivity is to be expected—picking the evidence to suit his position and ignoring the rest is the name of the game.

And Young's interest in this set of witness interviews raises another question: He has chosen to accept *contradictory* reports of a few former Air Force officers with "40-year-old memories," while rejecting dozens of *corroborating* reports from other independent witnesses. Does this make sense?

One final note: The official position that Young so staunchly defends has recently been challenged not by a mere journalist or UFO investigator, but by a U.S. government agency. NASA, which reportedly had a role in the incident but has not provided information about the case through the Freedom of Information Act, is now contradicting the Air Force findings. Unexpectedly, last December, NASA spokesperson David Steitz told the Associated Press that "the object appeared to be a Russian satellite that re-

entered the atmosphere and broke up. NASA experts studied fragments from the object but records of what they found were lost in the 1990s." Steitz said NASA looked at the fragments and boxed them up, only to misplace all related documentation. (Steitz has declined to explain where this information came from if no documentation exists, despite my repeated requests for an answer to that question.)

So, to make things even more complicated for Mr. Young and everyone else, we now have one government agency contradicting another. NASA headquarters in Washington says it was a Russian satellite; the Air Force says it was a meteor; and to add to the chaos, space debris expert Nicholas Johnson of the NASA Johnson Space Center says it couldn't possibly have been a Russian satellite or any man-made object at all, for that matter. And eyewitnesses on the scene say it was a strange acorn-shaped craft with illegible symbols on the outside. Which was it?

I have no idea why Young is on a mission to ridicule a large portion of the evidence on this case, without any regard to the accuracy of his statements in doing so, and why he so fanatically sticks to his particular belief about the incident. In the meantime, the fact is that we still have a real mystery on our hands, still unsolved and still under investigation.

*Leslie Kean*

## DOCUMENTARY MEMORIES

*To the editor:*

I thoroughly enjoyed the Robert Barrow article on the movie: *Unidentified Flying Objects*, which I am fortunate enough to own. My lifelong interest in UFOs was probably born when I was a 10-year-old youngster and my mother took me to see this long-ignored movie. I can still remember the sense of awe and wonder that I experienced as I gazed upon the huge movie screen above me, totally enveloped by the introductory opening title: *Unidentified Flying Objects: The True Story of Flying Saucers* (shown in the upper right-hand corner of the last *IUR* cover). It absolutely captured the attention of that 10-year-old kid, who is now almost 60, and still fascinated by the subject of UFOs, and still entertained by this grand old black-and-white flick. My thanks to Robert Barrow!

*Peter Resta  
Arnold, Maryland*

## LOOKING FOR ARNOLD

*To the editor:*

I am trying to trace the daughter of the late Kenneth Arnold. I hope to make the definitive documentary on the late Kenneth Arnold and cement his rightful place in ufological history. His daughter is Kim Arnold Purvis.

If you know where I can contact Kim Purvis, or know of anyone who might be able to help me locate her, I would be grateful. Please write to me: Philip Mantle, 49 East Leigh Drive, Tingley, Near Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF3 1PF England. E-mail: philip@mantle8353.fsworldco.uk.

*Philip Mantle*



## THE BRITISH MoD STUDY: PROJECT CONDIGN

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**Unidentified Aerial Phenomena in the UK Air Defence Region: Executive Summary**

SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM - No. 55/2/00

DEFENCE INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS STAFF

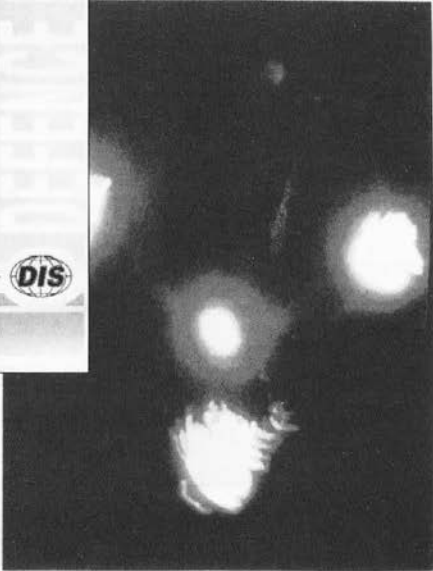
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AN EXAMPLE UAP FORMATION OF THE TRIANGULAR TYPE

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TYPE	DURATION	SIZE	MOTION	SOUND		
or Bead (joined or) Lightning	Seconds to Minutes	Small	0 to Fast	Yes		
Through Mist	Seconds to Minutes	Small	Nil	Nil		
Drop	Minutes	Large	Nil	Nil		
raft / Helo <sup>12</sup>	Seconds-Minutes	A/C Size	0 to Fast	Wind Dependent		
ing and Slender in or Body	Minutes	Large	0 to Slow	"		
ip (No Wings)	Minutes	Large	0 to Slow	"		
ipie Lights						
l (Reflective Helium) seen as solar formation	Seconds-Minutes	Smaller Flocks	0 to Slow	No		
ion / Scud <sup>13</sup>	Minutes	Small and Large	0 to Slow	No		
blight <sup>14</sup>	Seconds-Minutes	Small	0 to Slow	No		
ip <sup>15</sup>	Seconds-Minutes	Small	0 to Fast	No		
	Minutes-Hours	Small	Nil	No		
	Hours	Large	Nil	No		
L	Night	Moon	Hours	Large	Nil	No
M	Night	Meteor (often with tail)	Seconds-Minutes	Small	Very Fast	No
N	Night	Space Junk (Re-entry)	Seconds	Small	Very Fast	No
P	Night	Satellite	Minutes	Small	Slow	No
Q	Day/Dark	Mirage	Minutes	Small	Slow	No
R	Night	Earthlights (e.g. Nitrogen Hexamides <sup>17</sup> Methane Combustion over Marbles	Seconds-Hours	Small <sup>18</sup>	Slow	No

Notes:

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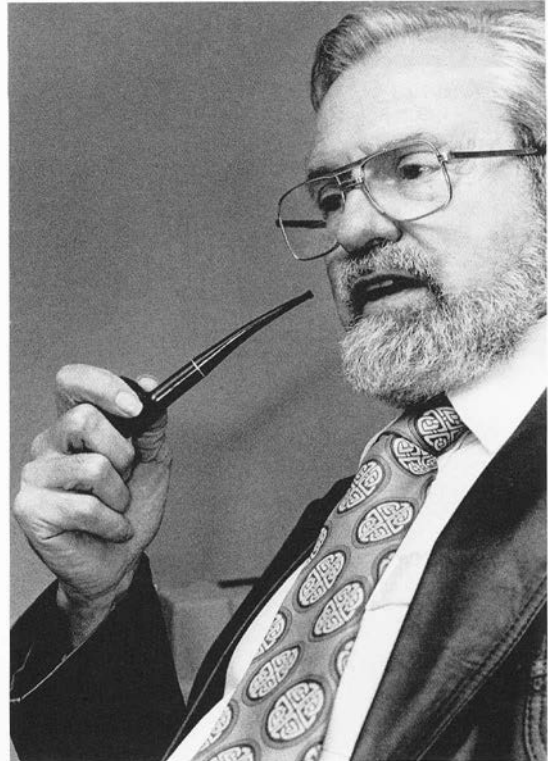
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# THE BRITISH MoD STUDY: PROJECT CONDIGN

BY DAVID CLARKE AND GARY ANTHONY

**Condign**, *adj.* Severe and well deserved (usually of punishment).  
—*Concise Oxford Dictionary*

**E**arly in May 2006 we revealed to the world's media the existence of a secret study of UFOs, codenamed "Condign," commissioned by the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD). The discovery of the study's four-volume report, completed in February 2000, was the culmination of almost 18 months of investigative research involving a team of Britain's most experienced UFO researchers.<sup>1</sup>

The story made news headlines around the world, but the superficial nature of the coverage can be summarized by the headline of the London *Sunday Times*, May 7, 2006: "Sorry ET—you're just a puff of plasma." At our press conference, held the following day in London, it quickly became apparent that the news media were happy to base their coverage of the MoD study upon the contents of the Executive Summary alone. Few journalists had the time to scrutinize the 465 pages of the main body of the report when the full contents were released on the MoD website shortly after our announcement.

The reaction of ufologists was equally superficial, with dismissive cries of whitewash, garbage, and disinformation widely disseminated across the internet, even before the complete text was available. Unfortunately, in the clamor to express an opinion and take a position, a number of commentators overlooked the historical significance of the discovery and its more interesting contents and findings.

The key finding from the perspective of ufology is expressed in the introduction to the study, where the report's author states that it is an indisputable fact that some UFOs, or UAPs (Unidentified Aerial Phenomena) as they are described throughout the report, *are generated by an unknown phenomenon*. As British skeptic John Rimmer commented, "Isn't this what ufologists have been wanting to

hear [from official studies] for years?"<sup>2</sup>

That may well be the case, but it seems the negative reaction was mainly because the report's author concluded there is no evidence this "phenomenon" has an extraterrestrial source. He attributes the residue of unexplained incidents to "natural, but relatively rare phenomena." Some of these are well known, if little understood, such as ball lightning. Others, such as atmospheric plasmas, "are still barely understood" and the report makes it clear that "the conditions and method of formation of the electrically-charged plasmas and the scientific rationale for sustaining them for significant periods is incomplete and not fully understood."

Nevertheless, this finding and additional speculation concerning the possible effects of plasma-related magnetic and electric fields on humans became the focus of all the subsequent media and ufological discussion. However flawed these findings may be, the fact that a study of this magnitude was commissioned by the UK government as recently as 1996 must be significant. During the course of the study, the British government continued to maintain, in public at least, that they had no interest in UFOs. Indeed, they insisted on a number of occasions, both in parliamentary answers and in statements issued to the media, that they had never carried out any detailed examination of the phenomenon.

The fact that the report was commissioned at all raises a number of questions. At face value the study was commissioned to determine, once and for all, if the UFO phenomenon posed any form of threat to UK national security. The main outcome, as would be expected, was to support the MoD's policy—which has remained consistent for more than half a century—that UFOs, whatever their origin, were "of no defence significance."

Why then, after years of playing down UFOs, did the MoD decide at this late stage to commission a study, however incomplete or inadequate, into the phenomenon? And if there was nothing to hide, why was the study carried out in great secrecy and only uncovered as a result of our sleuthing using Britain's new Freedom of Information legislation?

This article will attempt to answer some of these questions. We first summarize the nature of the MoD's interest in UFOs. We will then explain in detail how we came to learn of the report's existence and how we obtained it, drawing

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*David Clarke is a senior lecturer in journalism at Sheffield Hallam University, UK, where he teaches research techniques and use of the Freedom of Information Act legislation. Gary Anthony is an amateur astronomer from Yorkshire who has been interested in the UFO phenomenon for 20 years.*

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upon original MoD documentation released to us under the FOIA. Finally, we will look at the contents of the report itself, the sources used by the author, and the scientific credibility of the conclusions and recommendations.

## THE MoD, FOIA, AND UFOs

The very existence of the UK MoD report would have remained a secret if our team had not persisted in efforts over a number of years to gain access to official records on UFOs withheld from the public under Britain's stifling secrecy laws. Before the millennium, the UK government's interest in UFOs had remained obscured by the shadow of the more extensive and highly public USAF Project Blue Book. Before the publication of the Colorado University study (the "Condon Report") brought the USAF's public responsibility for UFO reports to an end in 1969, British Air Ministry policy on the subject was heavily influenced by the USAF and CIA.

For decades, few details of the Air Ministry's own interest in UFOs emerged into the public domain. This was partly because of a decision taken as early as 1952 or 1953 to play down the subject. The fact that the Air Ministry, which became part of an expanded Ministry of Defence in 1964, maintained an office in Whitehall that dealt with UFO reports as part of a range of other duties has been public knowledge for decades. What has remained a mystery was the extent of the MoD's investigations and research. For years, letters from civilian UFO researchers to Whitehall went unanswered or were stonewalled, and even MPs found it difficult to discover anything substantive about the Ministry's policy on the subject.

This situation did not arise because of a "conspiracy of silence" concerning UFOs in particular. For much of the Cold War, Britain's secrecy laws covered every single aspect of the Whitehall machinery. Before the mid-1990s, the Public Records Act, which kept all official papers secret for a minimum of 30 years, and the Official Secrets Act, which prevents military and civil servants from speaking in public on any topic, ensured nothing significant could leak out of the MoD machine.

As a result, before 1994 it was virtually impossible to obtain access to any UK government files until 30 years after action on them was finalized. However, under an initiative pioneered under the Major administration a limited right of access to government documents was introduced. This allowed researchers to gain access to a certain amount of material previously withheld. It was the proactive use of this legislation that allowed us to obtain early release of MoD files on the Rendlesham Forest incident and the report by the Flying Saucer Working Party during 2001–2002.<sup>3</sup>

Since 2005, researchers have had a new weapon to help them access official information. The Freedom of Information Act has brought to light masses of information held by official agencies on UFOs and other unexplained phenomena. And it was through careful use of the FOI that we uncovered the existence of the MoD study and obtained a

full copy after lengthy negotiations with the department concerned.

## ON THE TRAIL OF CONDIGN

The existence of the study emerged from extensive contacts we have had with desk staff at the Directorate of Air Staff since 2000. DAS is the MoD secretariat currently responsible for UFOs and is often referred to as "the UFO desk." It is the most recent incarnation of the various secretariats that have, since at least 1954, dealt with administrative tasks in support of the RAF. One of these is to act as the MoD's focal point for UFO inquiries from the public, the press, and Members of Parliament. Since the 1950s this responsibility has been held by a number of different branches, including S6 (Air), S4 (Air), DS8, and Sec(AS), the latter being the name it used in 1991–1994 when Nick Pope was employed as a desk officer there. Sec(AS) finally became DAS in yet another Whitehall reshuffle late in the year 2000.

For many years, MoD has insisted that this secretariat was the single and only branch with responsibility for UFO reports, a task that took up only a fraction of its time. It is certainly true that DAS and its predecessors acted as a public focal point at MoD for UFO matters. However, inside the confines of Whitehall, DAS was just one of a number of more specialist MoD branches whose job it was to assess any defense or intelligence implications of UFO sightings at a much higher level of security clearance. The most secretive and shadowy of these branches is the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) whose space weapons section, DI55, has been responsible for assessing the "scientific and technical" aspects of UFO reports since 1967. The fact that DI55 played a role in the study of UFOs did not emerge publicly until 1986 when a standard MoD UFO report form that contained an internal distribution list was released (Figure 1). Such lists were normally edited from forms released to the public, but in this case a clerical error revealed the true extent of the ministry's involvement.

In July 2001, we asked DAS if DI55 continued to keep records or files on UFOs. The answer was: "As part of the MoD's assessment of aerial sightings, [UFO] reports were copied [by the Air Staff Secretariat] . . . to [a branch of] the Directorate of Intelligence Scientific and Technical (DIST). Towards the end of 2000, DIST decided that these reports were of no defence interest and should no longer be sent to them. The branch still retains files containing reports received up to 4 December 2000."

Following up this intriguing response, we asked the MoD to clarify the current position and were told that for more than 30 years UFO reports had been routinely copied to DI55 "in case they contained any information of value relating to their primary role of analysing the performance and threat of foreign weapons systems, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programmes and emerging technologies." However, towards the end of 2000 they had decided these reports were "no longer valuable" and should

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ANNEX B

MODCIS (RAF10)

ANNEX A TO  
SOP 502

101

REPORT OF AN UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT

1. Date, Time & Duration of Sighting 262050 Local Apr 93 several minutes

---

2. Description of Object (No of objects, size, shape, colour, brightness) Like a puff of cloud, then circular, very light with a red light flashing (note - crossing from right to left)

---

3. Location, indoor/outdoor, stationary/moving Outside

---

4. How observed (naked eye, binoculars, other optical device, still or moving) naked eye

---

5. Direction in which object first seen (A landmark may be more useful than a badly estimated bearing) Going from Wimbledon towards Roehampton

---

6. Angle of Sight (Estimated heights are unreliable) Not known

---

7. Distance (By reference to a known landmark) None estimated

---

8. Movements (Changes in 5,6 & 7 may be of more use than estimates of course and speed) Seemed to be about the speed of an aircraft

---

9. Met conditions during observations (Moving clouds, haze, mist etc) Clear sky

---

10. Nearby objects (Telephone lines, high voltage lines, reservoir, lake or dam, swamp or marsh, river, high buildings, tall chimneys, steeples, spires, TV or radio masts, airfields, generating plant, factories, pits or other sites with floodlights or night lighting) Nothing of note

---

11. To whom reported (Police, military, press etc) AFDO

---

12. Name & Address of Informant  
XXXXXXXXXX  
  
XXXX XXXXX just off Wimbledon Common

S. 40

UNCLASSIFIED  
UK EYES ONLY  
UK RESTRICTED  
SECRET

Page B-1

Fig. 1. Standard UAP report form used by the Air Ministry and MoD.

UNCLASSIFIED  
SECRET  
UK RESTRICTED  
UK EYES ONLY

13. Background of Informant that may be volunteered  
Sensible, was partially mollified by the Airship Ford Mondeo

14. Other Witnesses

15. Date, Time of Receipt (in AFOR)  
261955Z Apr 93

16. Any Unusual Meteorological Conditions

17. Remarks

Would have believed the Airship Ford Mondeo but for the fact that we were told it was operating in the Ilford/Romford area. May we have a Telephone No for the operators of the airship so that we may check its operating area? That would be very helpful.

XXXXXXXX S.40

Date: 26 Apr 93

RO2  
Duty Operations Officer  
Air Force Operations

Distribution:

Sec(AS)2, Room ~~XXX~~ Main Building  
AEW/~~XX~~, Room ~~XXX~~ Main Building  
DI 55, Room ~~XXX~~ Metropole Building  
File D/AFOPS/2/5/1

not relevant

NB. Please note that the format of this form accords with Civpol formats

TO ALL AFDOS: PLEASE USE THIS AS A MASTER COPY AND IMMEDIATELY ON OPENING USE THE "SAVE AS " FUNCTION TO MAKE A COPY FOR THE ACTUAL REPORT! SORRY BUT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO PUT THIS REMARK AT THE START OF THE REPORT, AS IF TRIED ALL THE BLOCK SETTINGS ARE DESTROYED!!!

UNCLASSIFIED  
UK EYES ONLY  
UK RESTRICTED  
SECRET

Page B-2

Fig. 1 (continued). UAP report form.

no longer be sent to them.

This decision was a surprising one. In effect it marked the end of the Defence Intelligence Staff's involvement in UFO matters. Their interest could be traced all the way back to the deliberations of the Flying Saucer Working Party and the report they produced which was used to brief Prime Minister Winston Churchill following the Washington, D.C., UFO flap in 1952. What possibly could have happened in 2000 to lead them to decide the phenomenon was of no further defense interest?

As we puzzled over this question, we agreed such a final policy decision must have been based on a study of some kind. So early in 2005 we decided to use the UK's newly arrived Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), to request copies of correspondence between DI55 and the civilian "UFO desk" from the relevant period, circa 1997–2000.

We were already aware from other released material that a "policy review" on UFOs had been carried out by the MoD in January 1997. This led us to suspect that whatever had caused DI55 to abandon UFO work may be revealed in the correspondence generated by this review. As a result, in August 2005 a number of MoD documents were released under the FOIA. These dated back to 1993 and included a copy of a minute dated December 4, 2000, that announced the completion of the DI55 study (Figure 2). The security classification of this document was "Secret," with the caveat "UK Eyes Only," but even this information was withheld until release on appeal early in 2006 (see Appendix B).

In many ways these background documents were more interesting than the contents of the report itself. They revealed how since the 1960s UFO reports received by the MoD had been routinely copied to a range of specialist branches. In addition to Sec(AS) or DAS—the supposed "focal point"—all reports were copied to DI55 and various RAF units dealing with air defense and radar. It was these specialist branches that were responsible for making further inquiries into cases deemed to be of defense interest.

These documents reveal a significant fact which is crucial to any critical evaluation of the credibility of the report's conclusions. This is the lack of any in-depth investigations carried out by the MoD. After 1967, when the last field investigations were carried out into UFO reports, none of these branches were allowed to follow up reported sightings or interview witnesses. This procedure, which would appear to be essential for any serious appraisal of the phenomenon, was strictly ruled out as it was deemed to contradict public statements that MoD had no interest in the subject. Indeed, one document notes that for a period of more than 20 years, due to pressure on staff resources, UFO reports copied to DI55 had been simply glanced at, then filed away.

The basic source material utilized by the report's author was, therefore, limited to a standard report form that had been used by the Air Ministry and MoD since at least 1953 (Figure 1, pp. 5–6). In Volume 1 of the Condign report he writes:

In the 1950s, the then Air Ministry produced a "minimum format," one page, "UFO" reporting procedure for both public and military reporting of the phenomena. This procedure has remained unchanged and all event analysis in this report is based on an analysis of a voluminous paper database, which spans about 25 years. Further, it is not within the remit of the department to pursue witnesses to elicit any further information beyond that which they have provided to the MoD on the standard form. This information source has many inadequacies—and much of the initial work concentrated on the conversion of this material into computer database format.

What also emerges from the report is that neither DI55 or any other MoD branch had carried out any study, other than a basic numerical listing, of the thousands of reports they had received since the 1950s. Even worse, record-keeping was so poor that desk officers were unaware of work carried out on the subject in the past in all but the vaguest terms. Large collections of sighting reports and correspondence, including intelligence reports, had been routinely destroyed at five-year intervals until 1967 as they were deemed to be of "transient interest." As a result, relevant papers, such as that by the Flying Saucer Working Party, had been "lost" in the defense archives for decades. Ironically, the six-page report summarizing the Working Party's findings was not discovered in MoD archives until 2001 as a direct result of our requests, almost a year after the Condign report's author had completed his study!

This level of interdepartmental ignorance is highlighted by a Sec(AS) file note from 1995 that sums up the MoD's knowledge of its own work on UFOs as follows: "Essentially, we don't do research into the phenomena; we haven't done any; we only would if there were some good reason for doing so—i.e., evidence of a threat. It remains the case that no threat has been discerned which has been attributed to an unidentified flying object."

Several attempts had been made pre-1996 to pressure the MoD into carrying out a study of UFOs. The most significant occurred during the UFO flap of 1967–1968, which saw a substantial increase in the number of reports received by Whitehall. As a result, the Ministry found itself particularly vulnerable to pressure from the press, from MPs and Peers of the Realm, many of them encouraged by ufologists. The idea for a study at this stage was abandoned when the negative conclusions of the Colorado University team, commissioned by the USAF, were published in 1969. The MoD was then able to claim that the U.S. investigation supported their informal conclusion that UFO reports did not represent a defense threat. They argued that any British study was likely to duplicate the USAF findings and would therefore constitute a waste of public money.

Unlike the USAF, however, in 1970 the MoD decided to continue to receive UFO reports but would not commit any resources to investigate them unless a threat to UK

defenses was identified. Almost two decades later in 1986, under great secrecy, staff in a scientific support branch, Science 3(RAF), drew up a plan to produce a computerized database of the thousands of UFO reports they had on file. They felt this could help other branches categorize sightings and answer queries from the public. This proposal was supported by DI55. But when news of the plan leaked to Sec(AS) in February 1988, officials were furious and demanded that all work on the database stop. A handwritten note from the head of Sec(AS) found in policy documents released in 2005 reads: "... spoke to [Science 3] explaining that this could be very embarrassing for us and urging caution. It is exactly what we (and Ministers) have been saying for years we do not do, and could not justify!"

As a result of this intervention, the DI55 officer backed down and sent a memo to the Director General of Scientific and Technical Intelligence (DGSTI) on March 11, 1988, which read, "I understand that when Sec(AS) heard about the study, they decreed that all work should cease as it was in contravention of Ministerial statements to the effect that UFOs did not pose a threat to the UK, and that resources would not be diverted from more important work to investigate UFO incidents."

Fortunately, the impetus to produce a database of cases that could form the basis for a definitive study did not end with this shameful episode. Curiously, it was DI55 who continued to champion the cause for a fully funded study of UFOs in the face of continued attempts by the UFO desk—Sec(AS)—to place obstacles in its path. On June 1, 1993, the DI55 desk officer wrote to his new opposite number in Sec(AS)2a, Nick Pope, who was already noted as being more sympathetic to the subject than his predecessors: "You may be interested to hear that at long last I have had some funds allocated for serious UFO research. The study will include a review of our data, the construction of a database, a detailed review of specified incidents and recommendations for the future. . . . Needless to say we do not want this broadcast and it is for your information only."

Of interest here is the original intention to include within the context of a fully funded study "a detailed review of specified incidents." This seemingly fundamental requirement was removed from the Terms of Reference at a later stage, apparently for financial reasons. A follow-up minute from DI55 to Sec(AS), dated October 18, 1993, underlines their determination to undertake the study: "A cursory glance at [our] files indicates that over the years a large amount of data has been accumulated. We have never therefore established if UAP's exist and, if they do, whether or not they pose a defence threat to the UK. Some recent events, and a cursory examination of the files indicate that the topic may be worthy of a short study."

In short, by the mid-1990s with public interest in UFOs running at an all-time high, DI55 felt the MoD was particularly vulnerable if closely questioned on their standard line that UFOs were of no defense significance. They believed it would be difficult to sustain this position if they were forced

to admit that no study had ever been carried out. In a 1997 internal exchange concerning the nature of DI55's interest in UAPs, this dilemma is summarized as follows: "The lack of evidence to date in DIS on the extraterrestrial hypothesis has to reflect the fact that we have not carried out any analysis."

This concern is in effect the genesis of the decision to commission the Condign study. In support of the idea of a UK study, a DI official added: "I am aware, through intelligence sources, that Russia believes that such phenomena exist and has a small team studying them. I am also aware that an informal group exists in the US intelligence community and it is possible that this reflects a more formal organisation. . . . It is difficult to meet our remit of advising on possible threat implications since we have never studied the topic of UAPs."

However, despite its initial optimism DI55 said it could not afford to divert any of its desk officers to examine UFO files "to determine whether we should apply any significant effort to the matter." They went on to propose the employment of an outside contractor—a person "well known to DI55"—who could be offered the task as an extension on an existing defense contract. This would, they said, avoid having to put the project out to tender which "would potentially expose the study to too wide an audience . . . since a potential exists for political embarrassment."

DI55 attached a draft copy of the proposed contract for the UFO study which specified the employment of "a degree level engineer, with a [technical intelligence?] background, to prepare an Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) database." Even at this early stage the project hit a familiar obstacle—cuts in defense funding—and the initiative did not go ahead. DI55 made two further attempts in 1995 to gain approval for funding, but the timing clashed with the onset of a Defence Study deemed more important than UFOs, and the project was shelved yet again.

## THE CONDIGN REPORT

After three years of prevarication, on December 11, 1996, DI55 finally wrote to their favored contractor asking him to initiate a computerized database of their UFO records. He was given complete access to the department's UFO records, which included 22 files dating back to the mid-1970s. The database, they stipulated, should include at the minimum,

- an event number for each incident
- details of location(s) including any potential military or economic targets
- times and dates
- witness details
- categorization of the event (e.g., aircraft/space junk/hoax/unidentified)
- any possible explanation, such as military exercises.

This contract (NNR2/366) formed the "Terms of Reference" for the UAP project, which was included as an



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appendix to the final report. At this stage DI55 warned the contractor, “because of the sensitivity of this activity it most [sic] be conducted on a strict need-to-know basis at SECRET UK EYES B level. The activity will be known as PROJECT CONDIGN.”

Much speculation has surrounded the meaning of “Con-dign,” with connections made to the USAF project Sign and the University of Colorado Condon report. One definition of Con-dign, cited earlier in this article, refers to a punishment well deserved. This may be a reference to the MoD’s attitude to the “UFO problem,” as they described it. Publicly they insist that Con-dign, as in the case with other codenames for MoD projects, was a randomly generated word and any connections with Condon are “purely coincidental.”

The identity of the contractor who carried out the study and produced the report remains unknown. The MoD say his identity, or that of the company he worked for, cannot be revealed under an exemption to the FOIA which protects the details of defense contractors. This exemption is currently the subject of an appeal to the Information Commissioner who has the power to order the MoD to reveal information if he decides the release of the information is in the public interest.

The documents released by the MoD do provide a limited insight into the background of the report’s author, whom we henceforth designate “Mr. X.” They reveal he has a background in the RAF and technical intelligence and had been called upon by the MoD to offer expert advice on UFO reports on a number of occasions in the past. He may also have had a personal experience of his own, which he revealed when discussing the standard MoD UFO questionnaire that he says was “invented” in the 1950s, adding: “I know because I filled one in myself after a sortie when flying in the RAF at the time.”

In the same memo, addressed to M. J. Fuller at Sec(AS) and dated January 22, 1997, Mr. X emphasized that he wished to keep “a low profile,” writing to Sec(AS) as follows: “as [deleted] one could imagine the embarrassment to [deleted] if my activities were media knowledge—especially as they would undoubtedly soon link these with my other known activities on . . . and probably connect my long-standing involvement with DI55—which we also wish to avoid.”

It was only as a result of this correspondence between Fuller and Mr. X early in 1997 that Sec(AS) first learned that DI55 was now working on a detailed study of the contents of its UFO archive. This revelation came at precisely the time when Sec(AS) had embarked upon a review of its UFO policy. The review itself was a result of the mounting workload generated during 1996–1997 by inquiries from the media and public following a number of high-profile UFO stories. The review was aimed at clarifying the MoD’s role in UFO matters and reducing its workload on the subject. As a result, from May 1997 Sec(AS) agreed to continue copying reports to DI55 and to Air Defence staff. However, only those which Sec(AS) judged to be well documented, corroborated, and timely

would be passed to specialist staffs in the future.

These documents reveal much about the compartmental mindset that operates within the MoD, where it is quite possible for one department to be unaware of work being carried out by another at a higher security level. They also give the lie to claims that the civilian UFO desk was the focal point for what Nick Pope has described as “the British Government’s UFO Project.” The newly released documents provide unambiguous evidence that, since 1995, Sec(AS) (renamed DAS in 2000), were out of the loop and were not involved at any stage in the study or production of the report.

According to the DIST minute of December 4, 2000, announcing completion of the study (Figure 2, pp. 10–11), only the Director General (Research and Technology) along with DI55 and DI51 received copies of all four volumes. The UK Air Defence Ground Environment (UKADGE) received the Executive Summary and Volume 3, which contains “sensitive” material related to the limitations of UK radar in the detection of UAPs.” Summaries of the UAP report were sent to the Deputy Chief of Defence Intelligence (DCDI), to the Inspectorate of Flight Safety (RAF), and to HQ MATO (Military Air Traffic Organisation, RAF Uxbridge).

The DIST minute revealed that DI55 had concluded sighting reports provided nothing of value in its assessment of “threat weapons systems.” As a result, the department had decided to “carry out no further work on the subject [of UAPs]” and added, “while most of the report is classified at only RESTRICTED UKEO [see Appendix B] we hardly need remind addressees of the media interest and consequently the sensitivity of the report. Please protect accordingly, and discuss the report only with those who have a need to know.”

Sec(AS)—renamed DAS in 2001—was conspicuous by its absence from this privileged distribution list. Presumably this was because someone at a higher level in the pecking order felt they had no “need to know.” This decision may well be a direct result of the activities of the former Sec(AS) desk officer Nick Pope, who had gone public with his pro-UFO beliefs in 1996, a period that coincided with the doubling of the workload for the UFO desk staff.

We asked DAS staff how, if they were not included in the distribution of the report, they learned of DIST’s decision. The reply, dated November 23, 2005, stated: “[We] have searched our UFO Policy file for the period and there is no document specifically concerning this issue. [We] can therefore only assume that we were informed by telephone.”

So much for claims that Sec(AS) was the central focal point for all UFO matters within the Ministry of Defence!

## UAPs IN THE UK AIR DEFENCE REGION

The report’s Executive Summary opens with this unequivocal statement: “That [UFOs] exist is indisputable. Credited with the ability to hover, land, take-off, accelerate to excep-

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ENCLOSURE  
26

LOOSE MINUTE

D/DIST/14/10 196/473

4 December 2000

DCDI  
DG(R&T)  
ADGE  
IFS(RAF) (FS ATC)  
HQ MATO (OPS (LF) 1)  
AD/DI51

Copy to: AD/DI55

UNIDENTIFIED AERIAL PHENOMENA (UAP) – DI55 REPORT

1. The DIS has received copies of UAP sighting reports from Sec(AS) for about 30 years. Until recently these have been filed with only a cursory look at the contents by DI55 to discover whether anything of intelligence value could be determined. However, it was obvious that any value from the sighting data could only be derived by carrying out a Study of a significant sample of the reports. Consequently, over the past 2 years DI55, under low priority tasking, has compiled a database of information taken from reports received between 1987 and 1997, and has carried out an analysis based on data statistics. A report is now available. With the exception of DG(R&T), who receives the full report, other addressees are being provided with the Executive Summary only, which details the main findings of the Study. Should you require the full report, or parts of it, contact details are given on page 3 of the Summary.

2. The main conclusion of the Study is that the sighting reports provide nothing of value to the DIS in our assessment of threat weapon systems. Taken together with other evidence, we believe that many of the sightings can be explained as: mis-reporting of man-made vehicles; natural but not unusual phenomena, and natural but relatively rare and not completely understood phenomena. It is for these reasons that we have taken the decision to do no further work on the subject and will no longer receive copies of sighting reports.

3. In addition to this major conclusion, however, the study produced subsidiary findings which will be of interest to addressees. The potential explanations of UAP sightings, the characteristics of natural atmospheric phenomena and the consequences of sightings from aircraft will be of interest to those responsible for flight safety. Similarly the characteristics of some of the phenomena with respect to their detection on UKADR systems will be of interest to both the ADGE and flight safety staff. Finally, DG(R&T) will be interested in those phenomena associated with plasma formations, which have potential applications to novel weapon technology.

4. Although we intend to carry out no further work on the subject, we would value any comments you may wish to make on the report. Please direct such comments to AD/DI55. Finally, while most of the report is classified at only RESTRICTED UKEO, we hardly need remind addressees of the media interest in this subject and consequently the sensitivity of the report. Please protect this subject

UNCLASSIFIED  
SECRET UK EYES ONLY

Fig. 2. DIST minute of December 4, 2000, announcing Condign Report.

UNCLASSIFIED  
SECRET UK EYES ONLY

accordingly, and discuss the report only with those who have a need to know.

5.40 XXXXXXXX  
XXXXXX  
DIST  
XXXXXXXXXX

Enclosure:

DCDI, IFS(RAF), HQ MATO, - Executive Summary  
UKADGE - Executive Summary and Volume 3  
DGR&T, ADI/55, ADI/51 - Executive Summary and Volumes 1,2 and 3

Fig. 2 (continued). DIST minute of December 4, 2000, announcing Condign Report.

tional velocities and vanish, they can reportedly alter their direction of flight suddenly and clearly can exhibit aerodynamic characteristics well beyond those of any known aircraft or missile—either manned or unmanned.”

Throughout the report, Mr. X refers to UFOs as UAPs or Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (see Appendix A for an explanation) and says that, while they most definitely exist, “there is no evidence that any UAP, seen in the UKADR [Air Defence Region] are incursions by air objects of any intelligent (extra-terrestrial or foreign) origin, or that they represent any hostile intent.”

Significantly, drawing upon his access to the contents of the DI55 UFO archive, the author adds: “No artefacts of unknown or unexplained origin have been reported or handed to the UK authorities, despite thousands of UAP reports. There are no SIGINT, ELINT or radiation measurements and little useful video or still IMINT.” SIGINT is signals intelligence, ELINT is electronics intelligence, and IMINT is imagery intelligence.

The study does not attempt to investigate any specific UAP incidents in depth. This disappointing outcome is a direct result of the decision to reduce the “terms of reference” from the original 1993 proposal, which as we have seen did include “a detailed review of specified incidents” within its remit.

## THE UAP DATABASE

Mr. X single-handedly input basic data from various time periods covering approximately 25 years into a Microsoft Access computer database. One of these periods spanned 10 years from 1987 to 1997. This span, along with two clusters from 1988 and 1996, were then statistically analyzed, along with the subsequent writing of the substantial 465-page

report, all in just over three years. We requested a processed electronic copy of the Condign UAP database, but the MoD informed us that as it was surplus to requirements it was destroyed shortly after the study ended. However, from Volume 1, Annex D, it’s possible to see what this database looked like. Whether it could or should be reconstructed from MoD records, to follow the train of study, is arguable for important points hereafter.

When eyewitness data is utilized in scientific experiments it is usually obtained by face-to-face interview or other qualitative methods. (The latter is also utilized effectively in law enforcement.) These offer the interviewer other non-leading opportunities to ask the witness to clear up ambiguities, observe traits, and clarify details without many naturally indistinct phrases hindering the process. Some of these could not be picked up on the telephone and therefore subsequent errors arise.

The very quality of data used as the basis of the Condign study is therefore questionable. If a skilled researcher had been employed to follow up samples of reports from the archive, or even to gain a perspective on their reliability, this might have improved its credibility as a source. However, in a statistical analysis involving thousands of reports, without such qualitative sampling, false representations will emerge and these logically will lead to false conclusions. The value of any statistical conclusion or scientific examination rests initially upon how carefully the data were acquired, their quality, and who is doing the research. To be fair to the author, he does at least mention the limitations of statistical analysis in Volume 1, Chapter 3, page 3. Based on the inadequacies of the raw data used in the Condign study, poor data in means poor data out, hence equally poor science.

Volume 1, Chapter 1, page 2 states: “Only UAP in the UK Air Defence Region is used in database analysis, al-

though the support of authoritative scientific reference sources world-wide has been made to come to a considered decision as to the most likely causes of the phenomenon." In the preface appears the following: "... a rational scientific examination of the phenomena—based only on the raw material—UKADR incident reports."

In the words of Isaac Koi, a commentator on Condign, "If an analysis is to be performed then it should be performed competently." Therefore, the question might not only be whether the raw material is sufficient for the task, but was Mr. X qualified to undertake detailed analysis of this type? In his introduction to Volume 1 of the study, the author says, "every effort has been made to take a wide systems approach, to avoid over-focusing on single events." And he adds, "There has been neither intention of debunking the extraterrestrial lobby or of taking the opposite view—except based on hard scientific evidence."

Nevertheless, a mere 15 pages later, the extraterrestrial hypothesis is dismissed after data emerged that correlated UAPs with natural phenomena. As a result, the study concludes that an ET origin for the residue of unidentified report is "very unlikely," and the author adds: "Defence intelligence interests will not [be] furthered by continued investigations which focus on potential extra-terrestrial sources."

One of the most serious flaws in the report is that in some places the basis on which Mr. X accepts some and rejects other evidence is not apparent from the content presented. We have identified numerous assertions made without reference to evidence or any form of logic. To list those here would be beyond the scope of this article, but it is sufficient to note that there appears to be a large amount of speculation presented in the report as fact.

Volume 2 of the report is a hefty document entitled "Information on Associated Natural and Man-Made Phenomena." It contains 25 working papers touching upon a variety of important influences upon the UAP data. The categories include:

1. UAP effects on humans, electrical/electronic equipments and objects
2. Ball and bead lightning
3. Potential reasons for higher densities of UAP sightings
4. Afterimages as a result of flashes of light
5. Detection of UAPs by radar
6. Exotic technologies
7. Sightline rules of flying objects and meteorites
8. Rarity of UAP sound reports
9. Black and other aircraft programs as UAP events
10. Ley lines, earthlights, and UK faultlines
11. Collected imagery and classification of UAP shapes
12. Earth's magnetic field in the UKADR
13. Visual meteorological and other natural phenomena
14. Meteorological balloons

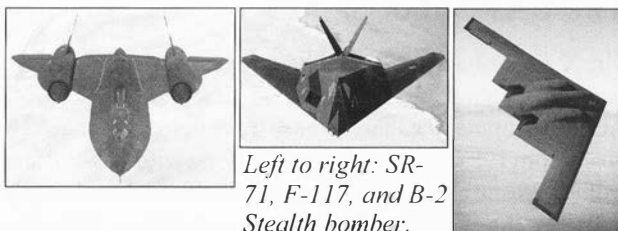
15. Airships and hot-air balloons
16. Sunspot, aurora, and seismic correlations
17. Visual observation of satellites
18. Projected shapes/shadows, fluorescence, and luminescence
19. Charged dust aerosols
20. Optical mirages
21. Ionospheric plasma
22. Artifacts
23. Linked vortex rings
24. Sprites, elves, and blue jets
25. Overview of magnetic-field effects on humans

Most of the alleged scientific sources mentioned form the basis of the working papers in Volume 2, and it is precisely these that represent likely causes for UAPs and related phenomena. None of these phenomena are unknown to science. In fact, probably a number of readers might confidently agree that all of the above *might* be responsible for proportions of initially reported UFO sightings that have been explained as misperceptions of man-made and natural phenomena. The question remains: Do the working papers cover all possibilities and could their attendant phenomena and circumstance be responsible for *all* UAPs or UFOs and related phenomena? The simple answer is no. We believe there is room for other possibilities. Essentially Condign doesn't consider or mention all possible causes of UAP or UFO sightings. We'll leave the reader to fill in any blanks.

More extraordinarily, in order to reach conclusions, as far as we know this "scientific" examination was completed without undertaking any consultation with scientists in the relevant fields connected with the working papers. Nor do we have reason to suppose this report was externally sent out for scientific scrutiny. The secrecy factor is very pertinent here and demonstrates how and why most of this exercise was ineffective.

## BLACK PROJECTS

One important category of influence listed in Volume 2 of Condign is black aircraft programs. Working Paper 9, classified as "NATO Restricted," opens with the statement, "It is acknowledged that some UAP reports can be attributed to covert aircraft programmes—in which unusual air vehicles may be seen, either at the experimental stage or in service." The paper proceeds to describe a number of black project shapes that it says are "frequently reported as UAPs." Those illustrated include both UAVs and three manned U.S. projects: the 2,000-mph SR-71



Left to right: SR-71, F-117, and B-2 Stealth bomber.

Blackbird, the F-117, and B-2 Stealth bomber. A 14-line description of Program 2 and a 10-line description of Program 3 have both been withheld under Section 27 of the FOIA on the grounds that it was supplied in confidence by “another nation.” This exemption is justified on the grounds that “release . . . is likely to prejudice the future exchange of such information and may also damage the UK’s relationship with that nation.”

In addition, the names of both black programs have been withheld along with two photographs that accompany the text. However, in Working Paper 6 (“Exotic Technologies”) appears the line, “The projected (USAF) priority plan is to produce unpiloted air-breathing aircraft with a Mach 8-12 capability and transatmospheric vehicles . . . as well as highly supersonic vehicles at Mach 4 to 6.”

This intriguing reference has led a number of British media outlets, including BBC *Newsnight* and the London *Guardian*, to speculate that one of the withheld photographs might be a picture of the infamous Aurora. There has been much speculation about the existence and capabilities of this supposed hypersonic black project since the early 1990s. While the U.S. authorities have denied such an aircraft exists, sightings of unusual aircraft shapes have added to rumors that a secret aircraft exists that is capable of flying at up to Mach 8. In summary, Mr. X notes that from “certain viewing aspects . . . these vehicles may be described as ‘saucer like’—hence they are not ignored by observers—as more conventional and familiar aircraft shapes would be.”

## PLASMAS, PLASMOIDS, AND EM EFFECTS

The study found that while it could rule out aliens and hostile foreign aircraft, it could not fully account for some of the stranger UAP events. These reports, many of which are made by credible witnesses, “are almost certainly attributable to physical, electrical and magnetic phenomena in the atmosphere, mesosphere and ionosphere” created by “more than one set of weather and electrically charged conditions.”

Mr. X goes even further by drawing upon the controversial research and conclusions of research carried out at Laurentian University by Michael Persinger. He finds merit in the theory that plasmas or earthlights may explain a range of close-encounter and even “alien abduction” experiences. The report says that on rare occasions plasmas can cause responses in the temporal-lobe area of the human brain, leading observers to suffer extended memory retention and repeat experiences. This, the report’s author believes, may be “a key factor in influencing the more extreme reports . . . [that] are clearly believed by the victims.”

We should stress that we do not accept these speculations as being scientifically valid explanations of the close-encounter experience. Though EM and other cortex stimulation effects on humans may provide clues towards the origin of some aspects of alleged abduction phenomena elements, we are not aware that any plasmas or “transients”

such as those described by Persinger have ever been detected or measured in the environment, nor do we know of any stimuli present in the environment capable of producing all such reported effects.

There is a limited but growing body of research into various alleged environmental EM and other pollution effects on humans, animals, and plants covering a number of manmade and other natural emission sources. However, these require investigation in long-term studies in order that data can be established and some real scientific consensus to develop. Until then, this field will remain curious and controversial, replete with boastful and biased commentary from its extremes.

A limited Google search on the influence of microwave mobile phone, relay, and transmitter pollution effects on humans reveals the polarized nature of discourse on the controversy. On one side are companies who promote the emission or transmission technology. They claim it is perfectly safe and there is no evidence that any humans have been harmed by exposure. On the other extreme are people who claim they or their children have developed everything from electrohypersensitivity to leukemia as a result of proximity to ground waves from microwave relay masts (in rare cases, either individually or in consortium, litigation is involved).

Unfortunately, scientific groundwork that is independent and unbiased is rare or difficult to locate. Often it is impossible to establish the objective facts when so much material is lost in an electronic fog. The best we can say is yes, radiation affects people, but no one really knows yet exactly to what extent, or who may be more or less sensitive.

Besides noctilucent clouds and auroral displays that may explain some UFOs, there are other dusty plasmas in the Earth environment that may cause rare types of visual luminescent phenomena that can be reported as UFOs. However, until proper scientific detection and measurement occur these explanations must remain only hypothetical. As mentioned in the report, ball lightning produced in a laboratory is just one example of one such unproven possibility.

Since the report was released we have approached more than 40 scientists from different nationalities and across a range of disciplines to obtain expert comment and opinion on the findings of the Condign study. Approximately two-thirds were plasma physicists. Many are unwilling to be publicly associated with the topic in any shape or form. Here we have a perfect example of the shyness often ascribed to scientists in the past when they are asked to contribute a critique of a so-called scientific assessment of UFOs. However, on a positive note, and despite requests for anonymity we have been provided with comments, useful references, and suggestions. The process is ongoing and we intend to persist in our efforts to involve pertinently qualified scientists in a comprehensive review of all the Condign documents.

(continued on page 29)

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# THE CORE PHENOMENON AND THE SECONDARY PHENOMENON

BY JEROME CLARK

If UFO sightings existed in a vacuum—in other words, without competing, comparably peculiar claims littered profusely throughout the long history of human testimony—the hypothesis that extraterrestrial visitors have found their way to earth in the past century or two would be far easier to advance. Actually, once contrary debunking counterexplanations had been disposed of, it would be all but unavoidable.

Things, of course, are nowhere that simple. The world has always burst at its seams with weird stuff which appears to challenge officially sanctioned knowledge. Ufology (not to mention CUFOS) came to be because after World War II flying saucers sounded like a signal—maybe a very distinct signal—newly beamed from the constant background static of extraordinary claims. To most of those who took the reports seriously, that “distinct signal” was thought to herald the sudden presence of intruders from interplanetary or interstellar space.

To those who didn't take the reports seriously, the saucers were irksomely familiar, just the usual tiresome nonsense in fresh, irritatingly invigorated iteration. The particular form that ridicule adapted spoke to an issue that would bedevil ufologists to this day. The first accounts of saucer sightings had barely rolled off the presses before scoffers were linking saucers to monsters, fairies, ghosts, and other fringe phenomena that all serious persons knew to be too fantastic and absurd to consider. Readily identifiable as the hoary practice known as guilt by association—and later institutionalized by professional anomaly bashers such as Martin Gardner, author of the hugely influential *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science* (New York: Dover, 1957), which places UFOs in the company of various outlandish heresies and swindles—the derision was predictable, in some ways empty, but not entirely meaningless.

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*Jerome Clark, an editor of IUR, is author of the multivolume UFO Encyclopedia (1990–1998), Unnatural Phenomena (2005), and other books.*

The first great modern anomalist, Charles Fort (1874–1932), was also the first writer to propose a comprehensive theory of interplanetary visitation. Fort forged that theory out of more than reports of aerial oddities, though (as we all know) he was *the* pioneer, creating ufology nearly three decades before culture embraced the concept of alien flying objects. His own restless reading of yellowed newspapers and scientific journals had informed him that strange shapes in the atmosphere and beyond were not the sole weirdness infesting the world.

Rather than present his findings as samples of random oddities, he incorporated them—his often tongue-in-check prose masking genuine conviction—into a vision of extraterrestrial wayfarers engaged in all kinds of baffling activities: dropping organic and inorganic substances out of the blue, seeding the earth with mysterious archaeological artifacts, causing persons and vessels to vanish, and—not incidentally—all the while being mistaken for ghosts, demons, gods, fairies, and ocean-going saurians.

As press accounts from early July 1947 record, Forteans—aware that flying saucers were not quite the novel phenomenon naïve journalists, witnesses, and the public generally thought them to be—immediately connected the objects with the otherworldly visitors Fort had written about. By temperament Forteans tended to be mystery-mongers and heterodox thinkers. Unlike, say, Project Sign personnel, they did not judge the extraterrestrial possibility to owe just to UFO sightings, nor did they think that such sightings were the only odd things happening on the planet.

The first magazine to feature saucer material in virtually every issue, *Fate* (whose initial issue saw print less than a year after Arnold's encounter), also covered Fortean and psychic occurrences and engaged in freewheeling occult-tinged speculation. It covered N. Meade Layne and his San Diego-based Borderline Sciences Research Associates, which propounded the esoteric doctrine of etheric realms to which all manner of anomalous appearances, including “ether ships” (UFOs),



Charles Fort

could be traced. Most readers probably read *Fate*'s contents indiscriminately, in the implicit assumption that one "true mystery" is as good as another.

Not all early ufologists agreed. If they had, there would have been no entity named "ufology." Many ufologists devoted their entire (or at least published) attention to UFOs, looking back at Fort for historical perspective on aerial-phenomena reports. Virtually alone of his 1950s contemporaries, on the other hand, M. K. Jessup addressed Fortean anomalies directly and, like Fort, incorporated them into an eccentric—less charitably: crank—theory of UFO visitation.<sup>1</sup> Jessup insidiously conceived of sky falls as the consequence of spills or drops from saucer hydroponics tanks, and his ruminations about the relationship of archaeological artifacts and mysterious disappearances to UFOs were no more richly inspired.

In the 1960s, all-encompassing paranormal speculations challenged the ETH. There were two strains: John Keel's (and subsequently Gordon Creighton's) crude demonology and Jacques Vallee's more elegant effort to incorporate UFO experiences into broader, older traditions of supernatural belief and experience. Whatever their other differences, both approaches implicitly assumed that UFOs are not a discrete phenomenon, just one aspect of a multifaceted generating mechanism. A disciple of Layne and Trevor James Constable, Keel identified that mechanism as the etheric realm (which he renamed the "superspectrum"), populated by fierce and treacherous forces. Vallee called the mechanism the "control system" and left it more or less at that. In later years theorists such as Janet and Colin Bord, Patrick Harpur, Kenneth Ring, Peter Rojcewicz, and Michael Grosso put forth their own variations on these themes.

In due course more conservative, ETH-oriented ufologists pushed back, arguing that paranormal theories amounted to little more than magical thinking which could only relegate ufology even further to the fringes. Moreover, such theories failed to address such hard-core evidence as instrumented observations, radar/visuals, and landing traces. These critics insisted that only concentrated scientific attention to incidents of this kind could resolve the UFO question, citing, for example, the Trans-en-Provence case with its impressively documented anomalous effects apparently tied to an unknown, advanced technology. The debate fostered a strange alliance as debunkers and paranormalists joined forces to decree that the ETH is a priori impossible, the plaything of fools and credophiles. Though this was and is an argument of dubious merit, it does underscore the curious emotionality of some anti-ETH polemicists.

## EVENTS AND THEIR EXPERIENTIAL CORRELATES

If a comprehensive ETH, one that embraces everything from radar-tracked daylight discs and laboratory-documented physical traces on one side to hairy bipeds and even more esoteric entities on the other, seems a tall order, perhaps it

may be wise to think of a "core phenomenon" and a "secondary phenomenon." The former is the "traditional" UFO phenomenon, which is to say the thing, commencing with the CE2/radar-visual and all such imply, that runs in an ostensibly straight line from the Arnold era to the present, the phenomenon that—as far as we can judge from the limited evidence available to us (in good part because of science's neglect of eminently investigable data)—comprises structured craft with extraordinary performance characteristics and humanlike and humanoid crews. (Whether the latter are abducting human beings in the many thousands is another matter, one we shall not take up here.)

The core phenomenon is an *event* phenomenon, the secondary phenomenon an *experience* one. In other words, the former is something that can be, or potentially can be, shown to have happened in consensus reality. ("Potentially" in this context means, for instance, alleged landing traces which await proper scrutiny in the laboratory.) In the latter category, encounters and observations are experientially real—in other words, have the resonance of the genuinely perceived and lived—but are otherwise unprovable.

Experience anomalies are open-ended. Almost anything can be "seen," though cultural traditions play a large, in some ways determining, role in shaping their particular content. In experience, individuals perceive supernatural or at least unlikely entities like fairies, merbeings, angels, gods, and monsters. Credibility of these "observations" depends on witness sincerity (and sanity, obviously) and on the specific circumstances of the incident. It goes without saying that something unusual perceived up close in broad daylight is more likely to be genuinely anomalous than something glimpsed ambiguously in the distance at night.

Let us be clear here: These are not hallucinations by any conventional definition. These encounters are truly, profoundly mysterious, and their cause or stimulus is unknown (thus the only conventionalist option is to ascribe them all to misperception, lies, and mental disorders sometimes invented on the spot for the purpose). Yet, to all available appearances, sincere witnesses and good viewing conditions that enhance confidence in the anomalousness of the observation do not translate into anything that transcends testimony and memory.<sup>2</sup> We barely have a vocabulary with which to discuss such matters, though perhaps "visionary" comes closest, even if it is merely descriptive and not, as some presume, explanatory.

Experience anomalies, protean in nature, are variable, changing over time and geography. In transitional historical and cultural periods, they may fuse motifs in curious ways. One dramatic episode from the early 20th century melds at least three elements.

The incident allegedly took place—contemporary press accounts are vague about the date—sometime in June 1907. "Near the Dikeman springs," somewhere in Tennessee (the story was first published in the *Nashville Tennessean*), one Walter Stephenson was resting on a log after an exhausting hunt with his hounds. His eye fell upon a speck—a kite, he

judged—toward the eastern horizon. He looked away but soon heard a whirring sound which caused him to see that the object, now almost directly overhead, was no kite but a “huge balloon . . . of a pattern he had never in his life before seen.” As it circled overhead a few times, eerily lovely music could be heard emanating from it. Soon the airship landed, and “strange people” stepped out of the car, “which was closely curtained with a substance that fairly glistened in the sunshine that burst through the obscuring clouds.” The ship’s occupants—the published account implies that their faces were covered without stating so directly—walked to the spring and knelt there as if in prayer for a minute or so.

Stephenson watched them from a short distance. When their apparent worship ritual was over, he asked the strangers who they were and why they were here. One of the crew lifted a veil, revealing the “benign face of a lady,” who asked him—in German—if he had prayed. “Instantly,” the press account reports, “all were aboard, the airship rose, circled about for a minute or more, and was gone in a westerly direction. Mr. Stephenson states that the incident left an impression upon him that he can never forget, and while he knows that it was some human invention, it looked and the music sounded more like that of angels than of mortals.”

If experience anomalies adapt themselves to a culture’s idea of supernatural or extraordinary encounters, this one conjures up divine entities (angels and even, by one reading, the Blessed Virgin Mary), secret airship pilots, and—looking forward—UFOs in the modern sense.<sup>3</sup> Notions of extraordinary encounters in some instances may also, of course, have as their inspiration the sorts of real, this-world encounters whose contents are sufficiently exotic and enigmatic as to border on the fantastical.

Though poorly understood, ball lightning is a no longer disputed physical occurrence, but it has its correlates in the liminal zone of anomalous experience. The sociologist James McClenon has noted that an “effect that occurred during an electrical storm would be termed ‘ball lightning.’ . . . Other cases with the exact same appearance but occurring in other circumstances would be called UFOs, psychic lights, or will-o’-the-wisps.” In such contexts balls of light may act purposefully, as if endowed with intelligence and able to perform fantastic feats such as (in the testimony of one individual McClenon interviewed) the opening of and passing through locked windows.<sup>4</sup>

Ball lightning was once as outré, and for some of the same reasons, as UFOs and cryptozoological entities such as Sasquatch. The “core phenomenon” of ball lightning is known even as it spins off secondary, profoundly anomalous experiential phenomena. Could one day UFOs—the products of an advanced technology created (one presumes) in other solar systems—and Sasquatch—a race of (biological) hominids, the product of evolutionary processes, cousins to humankind, and intelligent enough to conceal themselves in the vast wilderness of the Pacific Northwest—be documented and accepted as this-world phenomena, spinning off their own secondary correlates in the form of bizarre high-

strangeness experiences (with UFOs, abductions, men in black, and beyond; with Sasquatch, paranormal bipeds in Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Missouri, and just about everywhere else)?

The answer is, obviously, that we don’t know. Still, the separation of some classes of anomalies into two superficially alike but in fact unrelated ontological categories may prove inescapable.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Jessup was an early proponent of what would be called “ancient astronauts” as Erich Von Däniken rose to prominence nearly two decades later. In Jessup’s unique reading, however, the ancient astronauts were earthborn pygmies who developed a supertechnology, prominently including levitation, and traveled into space. Currently, they reside in a giant space station in the “gravity neutral” zone between the earth and the moon, though they also maintain lunar bases on the latter. As far as I can determine, Jessup persuaded precisely nobody that any of this is true.

2. That is true even when—in exceedingly rare circumstances—fully funded scientific resources are brought to bear on high-strangeness phenomena, as Colm A. Kelleher and George Knapp report in their very interesting *Hunt for the Skinwalker* (2005). A remote ranch in northeastern Utah was reportedly the site of appearances by UFOs, weird structures, enigmatic lights, bizarre animals, invisible entities, and more. Scientists and researchers witnessed some of these things themselves, but attempts to document the appearances instrumentally proved fruitless. The project ended, as it began, with strange anecdotes.

3. For other examples of early UFOs-in-the-making, see my “Enigma Variations: Proto-UFOs and Other Strangeness,” *IUR* 28:2 (2003).

4. *Deviant Science: The Case of Parapsychology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984): 60–63. ♦

### SCHUESSLER RETIRES AS MUFON HEAD

After serving two three-year terms as international director of the Mutual UFO Network, John Schuessler will retire effective November 1. He announced his retirement at the annual MUFON business board meeting in July. Schuessler’s statement appears on the MUFON website: “Finally, after thorough deliberation, the board concluded that my successor should be James Carrion of Bellvue, Colorado. This decision was made by examining the needs of MUFON, where our strategic plan was aiming to take the organization in the future and how well James’s background matched the MUFON needs.” Kristen Kennington will take over the office operations. As of November 1, the address will be: Mutual UFO Network, P.O. Box 279, Bellvue, CO 80512-0279; (970) 221-1836; fax (970) 221-1209.



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# TOM TOWERS: THE OTHER AL CHOP

BY ROBERT BARROW

**T**om Towers (died approx. 1991), once a popular Los Angeles newspaper writer who also starred in one major motion picture and eventually became an executive assistant at what is now LAX Airport, served as an Army Air Force intelligence officer during WW II.

A few years after the war, the former AAF Captain Towers landed a reporter's job at the old *Los Angeles Examiner*, a position he held from 1947 to 1959. In addition to general reporting, Towers also wrote frequently about aviation as a senior member of the Aviation Writers Association, and perhaps his interest in flying related to his single shot at an acting career.

The United Artists movie *Unidentified Flying Objects*, also known simply as *UFO*, appeared in theaters throughout the United States, England, and other countries in May 1956 (see *IUR* 30:2). This Clarence Greene–Russell Rouse production, a documentary, accurately recreated the early days of the official U.S. government UFO investigation in the late 1940s and early 1950s. However, as plans were underway for filming in 1955, a lead actor was needed to play the key role of Albert M. Chop, once chief of the Air Force's press section, who gradually changed from ardent skeptic to believing that UFOs were real, with intelligence behind their control.

For Greene and Rouse, their choice of Towers to play the role of Al Chop may have been predictable. Earlier, a publicity agent for a small Hollywood film company, Popkin Productions, had noticed Towers in the *Examiner* city room and thought him an excellent choice for the producers' film *The Well*, in which he could play the important role of a deputy sheriff. Unfortunately for Towers, his reluctant city editor didn't feel he could approve a leave of absence requiring several weeks, and the conflict of vacation schedules at the newspaper would further scuttle a chance at acting.

Months later, however, opportunity came knocking when plans for *UFO* emerged. Al Chop already knew

Towers through their roles in writing and public relations, respectively, and Chop recommended Towers for the role. After a few meetings with the producers and his editors at the *Examiner*, a three-week leave was allowed so Towers could make the movie.

Towers eventually left the newspaper in 1959 on a year's leave of absence to establish the Los Angeles Sound Abatement Coordinating Committee at Los Angeles International Airport. The committee convened to deal with community protests caused by jet-engine noise, a rapidly growing problem as the jet age began to flourish commercially. His leave was extended every six months until January 1962 when the *Examiner* ceased publication. Towers soon gained employment with the Los Angeles Department of Airports that July and remained there into at least the late 1970s (and perhaps the 1980s), becoming executive assistant.

His newspaper career, far beyond his acting stint, seemed fascinating in itself. Towers recalled in the 1970s: "At the start of my newspaper career with the *Examiner* I worked as a general assignment reporter. I covered many major crime stories, some of which were identified with the rise and fall of local Mafia-type gangsters.

"At the start of the Korean War, I was assigned to write a weekly aviation column entitled *Aviation News*. I was given this task because of my World War II background in the Air Force . . . and later as a group public information officer," he related. Towers's title became aviation editor and he kept the position when the newspaper's regular aviation editor was dispatched to Korea to cover training and war operations. After Korea, the editor returned, but Towers kept the Sunday column assignment, writing airline and general aviation stories, plus aerospace pieces about missiles.

"When the jet age started in January 1959, I wrote several critical aviation columns about jet noise, and I suspect this is why I was hired away from the *Examiner* and asked to set up the Sound Abatement Coordinating Committee at International Airport," he explained.

Towers no longer wrote for any publications ("No time"), but hoped to develop story ideas about the airport. He recalled the newspaper business fondly: "I broke into the newspaper business after World War II as editor/reporter

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*Robert Barrow began researching UFOs as a teenager in 1963. His articles and book reviews appeared in The A.P.R.O. Bulletin, Pursuit, Argosy UFO, True Flying Saucers & UFOs, Official UFO, and newspapers and magazines.*

for a weekly newspaper in Big Bear Lake, California, where I gained some notoriety by writing a story that broke up the revival of the Ku Klux Klan in southern California.”

When this interview was conducted in the late 1970s, Towers was acting as executive assistant to the general manager of the Los Angeles Department of Airports (then known as #1 World Way), and also served as legislative liaison to the city council, where he appeared before various committees on matters pertaining to the department’s oversight of three airports—International Airport, Van Nuys Airport, and the Ontario International Airport. He also monitored aviation/airport legislation coming before the state legislature at Sacramento, remaining current on bills and offering testimony on the department’s behalf.

In the early 1950s, Towers never suspected that the major movie role in *UFO* was headed his way, a performance destined to be seen all over the world. The documentary played in European movie houses with subtitles, Towers recalled, “and a friend with United Airlines saw the film while visiting in some little town in Greece.”

“At the outset,” he continued, “I had no particular views on UFOs, but I was elated and pleased to be selected to play the lead role.” Production costs were low budget all the way, under \$200,000, he believed, and he furnished almost his entire wardrobe. He provided his own auto for highway scenes, with filming accomplished under strict security to prevent competing studios from stealing ideas and rushing their own UFO movies into theaters. Towers humorously recalled that he had his own dressing room—a men’s room.

He held no opinion about UFOs at that time, “but as a

newsman, I was interested in the sightings, as reported by reputable observers.”

“But,” he cautioned, “I had no time or patience for those who attempted to capitalize on the phenomenon, such as the crowd that gathered at Giant Rock in San Bernardino County, California, and tried to sell the media and public on UFO gimmickry and quackery.” Reflecting upon events portrayed in *UFO*, Towers felt them legitimate and reported by trustworthy observers: “And I still feel that qualified UFO observers, such as FAA traffic controllers and airline pilots, must be believed. If one cannot believe a qualified air traffic controller or a qualified airline pilot,” he asks, “who can you believe?”

By the 1970s, Towers confessed reading about UFO sightings with interest but had no involvement with the subject, although he observed that when UFO stories appeared on the news, his movie seemed to show up with increased frequency on TV outlets. Numerous aviation contacts kept him informed of movie airings on TV: “Recently, Channel 11 in L.A. showed *UFO* at 6:00 p.m.—not bad for a film that, nowadays, seems to find existence only in the late evening hours.” Around the same time, an American Airlines pilot friend informed him that Channel 5 in New York City also presented the movie. “When the film was active in theaters I was often stopped on the street by strangers and asked to comment. Today, friends and acquaintances bring up the subject as a matter of light conversation . . . always in a light vein.” As a writer, Towers had numerous conversations with people who maintained an avid UFO interest.



Still RG-32

This scene from “Unidentified Flying Objects” (*UFO*), a recreation of a true incident, portrays Pentagon Press Specialist Al Chop (Tom Towers) with U. S. Airforce Intelligence Officers as they watch top secret photos of flying saucers in this United Artists release coming to the Theatre on . . . . .

Mat 34

Publicity photo from the original 1956 United Artists press book, with Tom Towers’s name spelled correctly. Towers is at far left.

Following the release of *UFO*, no further motion picture offers pursued Towers, though he believes that if the film had achieved the success it missed he might have attempted a film and TV career. In fact, *UFO* producer Clarence Greene told him he should have stayed in the business because TV needed actors for police shows and the like.

Despite the documentary status of the movie, there were many Hollywood touches involved throughout production. Towers thoughtfully related an anecdote familiar to the industry:

“At the former *Hollywood Citizen News*, we shot a remote scene in the paper’s city room or thereabouts. I had suggested to one of the minor players that he do the scene this way or that . . . of course, this is the director’s job, not mine. But I felt that as an active newsman, I knew a bit about how reporters move and act inside a newspaper city room.

“The director (Winston Jones) said nothing at that time, but later told me this story: Famed director John Ford was

once making a movie and some actor told another actor how to play a scene. Ford said nothing, but after the luncheon break he did not come back to the set. All hands were standing around, waiting to get direction. Money was being wasted at a great pace.

"The producers went into a rage and someone finally found Ford in some remote part of the set. When asked why production had not started after the luncheon break, Ford told the producers that he felt he wasn't needed anymore since actor \_\_\_\_\_ had taken over his work as a director. Of course, this problem was corrected forthwith and Ford went back to work as the film's director.

"Needless to say," Towers continued, "I got the point and from that moment I ceased to offer any advice to anyone as to how to play a scene."

Shooting time for Towers's scenes took about three weeks, Monday through Friday, except Greene and Rouse did send the lead actor on a weekend trip to Washington, D.C., for some exterior shots at the Pentagon.

In his portrayal of Al Chop, Towers viewed the famous Montana and Utah UFO films, and the objects reminded him of bouncing tennis balls. "However," he added, "I had no reason to doubt the veracity or the reliability of those who took the films. I think the fact that they did not remind anyone of 'flying saucers' might have been somewhat of an upsetting factor for some UFO buffs."

A highlight of his participation in the motion picture was Towers's opportunity to meet former Project Blue Book chief Edward J. Ruppelt. "Ed Ruppelt impressed me as a very kind man and one who was totally objective and truthful in his UFO work," remembered Towers. "I did not know him very well, but on the few occasions we did talk, he impressed me as a reliable person. All my meetings with Ruppelt were in conjunction with the making of 'UFO.' I did not meet him prior to this."

Two decades after the movie's production, Towers's interests included his airport position and fitness activities such as golf, tennis, and bowling, his only contact with UFOs being what he read in newspapers or watched on TV. Occasionally, he noted, technical publications crossing his desk mentioned UFOs. But back in the 1950s, Towers was involved with UFOs in other ways after Clarence Greene's documentary film saw release.

A copy of the *Examiner* dated January 20, 1957, features his *Aviation News* column and carries a story headlined, "About Saucers and Sen. Russell's Letter." The letter was dated January 17, 1956, and was sent to Towers by Georgia Senator Richard B. Russell Jr. (1897–1971), chairman of the Committee on Armed Services. Towers had requested information concerning a UFO sighting Russell reportedly made in Europe (see *IUR* 25:1). After learning of the incident from a reliable Pentagon source, Towers wanted permission to break the story in his column. The senator's reply dashed Towers's hopes to print the sighting, as evidenced in a portion of Russell's response: "I received your letter but I have discussed this matter with the affected

agencies of the Government, and they are of the opinion that it is not wise to publicize this matter at this time."

Maybe he didn't get the story he desired, but Towers retaliated by raising further questions about UFOs and government secrecy, accomplished simply by printing Sen. Russell's letter.

Nor did Towers remain dormant throughout the steady procession of UFO lectures and meetings pervading Los Angeles in the 1950s. At a meeting held at Baces Hall on August 8, 1957, he personally introduced famous broadcaster Frank Edwards to an audience of 500, and there was at least one gathering hosted by UFO writer Max B. Miller attended by Towers, perhaps in conjunction with the movie.

Until the mid-1970s, Towers was hounded by one annoying regret: Hardly any publications spelled his name correctly, listing him perpetually as Tom Powers. Complicating matters, there *was already* a Hollywood actor named Tom Powers. *TV Guide* and the *Los Angeles Times* were among the guilty parties, but were hardly alone in the error. As this writer was contacting *TV Guide* to plea for a correction (successfully), Towers was writing United Artists for an explanation. Apparently, replied they, the original UA press book for *UFO* misspelled Towers as "Powers" on one page, and for years a publicity paper circulated by the studio listed his name with a P.

Tom Towers never saw a UFO ("No sightings that would qualify as UFOs"), but that isn't to suggest the UFO subject didn't cross his mind in later years: "When a missile is fired at Vandenberg Air Force Base on the California coast, and the contrails spread out over the western sky, I often think about UFOs," he admitted. "But that's as far as it goes."

*Editor's note:* Much of the information in this article was provided to writer Robert Barrow via personal communication with Towers in the 1970s. ♦

## THE STORY

(Not for Publication)

When Albert Chop (Tom Powers) first reported to work on the Public Information office desk of Air Material Command, he was skeptical about "this flying saucer business" despite the reports of sightings and the death of Captain Mantell in 1948, while chasing a flying saucer.

Later, after Chop had been transferred to the Press Section in the Pentagon, he learned from Major Dewey Fournet of Air Force Intelligence that they had actual motion pictures of UFO's. These pictures, together with those taken earlier by a business man on vacation were classified as "Not balloons, not aircraft and not birds—but 'Unknowns'."

When, in 1952 the Unknowns moved in over Washington, D.C., and Chop together with radar experts saw them on the radar screen, and intercepter jets made visual contact, his skepticism disappeared. He was further impressed when General Samford stated that there were "Credible Observers of Relatively Incredible Things."

From then on the only questions in Chop's mind was What are they? and Where do they come from?

Running Time: 92 minutes

*The 1956 UA press book spells Towers's name wrong in the plot summary.*

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# STRANGE DAYS

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

In this article, I explore some suspicious activities that led to George Hunt Williamson (GHW) meeting with George Adamski for the famous Desert Center encounter with Orthon the Venusian. My intent is to suggest that some outside meddling may have been involved with all this, although that can't be *proven*.

Some years ago, UFO bookseller extraordinaire Bob Girard acquired the Williamson papers. Mark Rodeghier, Jerome Clark, and I felt that although Williamson was a contactee, he was second only to Adamski in his impact on the field, and was perhaps more interesting (and certainly far more creative). Therefore, his papers were worth preserving and making available, per CUFOS policy. Accordingly, I paid Girard's asking price, and I now maintain the GHW files. Any responsible researcher is welcome to study them.



*George Hunt Williamson*

The files reveal Williamson as an extremely unusual and nearly indescribable character. I'd start by saying he was a high-energy dreamer, and go on with naïve, fun-loving, adventuresome, risk-taking, hyperactive, and a three-impossible-things-before-breakfast kind of guy, permeated with a very thin borderline between fantasy and reality. But he was also intelligent and creative, with the memory of a supercomputer, and living in a model of reality that was way too large for his, or my, sanity. So to say GHW is "interesting" is the least of it.

Williamson became famous because he was the most cited witness to Adamski's blockbuster Orthon claim—the footprints in the desert sand with extraterrestrial symbols on them, and all of that. He then went on to pour literature (including six books) and lectures into the UFO stewpot for the remainder of the 1950s. How Williamson ended up meeting Adamski for the big UFO encounter is what I will try to unravel. To me, it reeks of a setup of some type,

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masterminded by very earthly forces.

One caution: When Bob Girard sold me the files, he had separately sold off a valuable part of them—the file folders specifically labeled "George Adamski." This, as much as I honor Bob and what he has done for the field, is probably tragic. It almost certainly has created a hole of terrible significance for the understanding of the two Georges. Because the buyer of the files demands anonymity, this cannot be remedied by the simple solution of photocopying the documents. If, by any chance, the buyer/collector is reading this, you would be doing a great service to scholars of Adamski and contactees if you'd be willing to have the material duplicated for the GHW collection. But, that said, fragments of these materials are scattered about in other files that did make it to Kalamazoo, and I will attempt to put the pieces together for you here.



*Orthon the Venusian*

## BEFORE ORTHON

The Orthon event occurred on November 20, 1952. We need to drop into the life of Williamson about one year earlier to begin our story. In the winter of 1951, GHW was just getting into flying saucers. He hadn't yet become overly interested in them. His mind was swirling with anthropological and spiritual concepts, often immersed in what he *really* loved—American Indian lore and culture. It was in pursuit of the latter, and aided by his convictions that involved in all this was the intrusion of the profoundly spiritual, that he left the University of Arizona (probably flunking out after a couple of years, plus some time at two other schools), and bolted for Chippewa country in Minnesota. In doing so, he left his wife Betty (who *did* graduate so far as I can tell) doing more formal field work in Arizona (with the Hopi or Navaho, or both).

George began hearing tales from the Chippewa that sounded to him a bit like UFO stories, but involving spiritual agents from beyond. He considered himself a channeling medium, so spirits from beyond were fine with him. Then, synchronistically, he read, of all things, Donald Keyhoe's

*The Flying Saucers are Real* (Fawcett, 1950). Well, that did it. GHW was now wild for UFOs. And, to him, UFOs were obviously tied in somehow to Indian lore, Spiritualism, and the wisdom to guide humanity.

In the spring of 1952, he returned to Prescott, Arizona, near his parent's home and the Yavapai Indian Reservation. Betty joined him, also fired up about Indian lore, spirits, and UFOs, and they read all they could grab on the subject and made local contacts with similarly interested persons. Somehow they heard about a Winslow, Arizona, resident named Alfred C. Bailey, who was said to have the same suite of interests, though with more of an emphasis on the anthropological and ufological, and less on the spiritual. They tried to correspond with Bailey in June 1952, but he didn't respond right away. Two months later he did get in touch, and Alfred and his wife agreed to meet at GHW's home in Prescott (a not insignificant drive). The meeting was a pretty odd first encounter.

The Williamsons were in their mid- to early twenties, and the Baileys much older (probably in their forties or thereabouts). Al Bailey introduced himself as a conductor for the Santa Fe railroad with an interest in chiropractic, ancient wisdom, and other strangematters. Betty Bailey was the reticent member of the foursome and actually uncomfortable at some points in the get-together.

After much talk of UFOs and ancient civilizations, and a good dinner, our boy George suggested some after-dinner party games with a homemade Ouija board. Betty seems not to have taken very well to that, but Al jumped in with George. It appears to have been a two-man game with a recorder (probably Betty Williamson). The men would lightly place their fingers on a clear, upturned water glass, and it would slide around the board, stopping at letters or numbers and delivering its message from beyond. Although George describes this as a party game, everyone should realize that he never thought of any such "communication" unseriously. It was *all* big stuff to him.

George reports on this August 2 Ouija communication at some length in his and Bailey's book, *The Saucers Speak!* (New Age, 1954). In order for the glass to move around the board, either Williamson or Bailey had to push it—I'll leave it to you to decide whether they do it by their own devices or whether some outer-space intelligences are doing it for them (my views on this should shortly be clear). They have a long, probably wearying session, which sounds suspiciously like rock 'n' roll GHW—all manner of esoteric

jazz, anthropological ancient-culture references, stoppages to define what GHW already knows, and allusions to bell-shaped saucers. (George Adamski had already written about these in "I Photographed Space Ships," *Fate*, July 1951, pp. 64–74.) Near the end of the messages, "someone" breaks in and suggests they stop for a while and get some food. (I

believe that Bailey was hungry.) Williamson, with his unlimited capacity for self-deception, takes this last message in stride as a demonstration of how wonderfully human and humorous the intelligences are.

When they return from the food break, GHW is ready for another Ouija session. This is his medium, after all; Bailey has had only the first lesson about the "game." But right off the bat something very un-George comes through: the suggestion that this Ouija board thing isn't very efficient and that they should try to make their contacts via radio. "We can reach you in this manner," say the intelligences. This (radio) is definitely *not* George's game. The evening's messages go on in a GHW manner, but at the end he has no way to pursue the suggestion. Unsurprisingly (to me), Bailey says he'll look into it, and after the Baileys returned to Winslow, he does.

There are a few further Ouija sessions (GHW admits in the files that not all the Ouija nor the radio transcripts were put in the book), and these consist largely of astronomical baloney. George also used methods of automatic writing and what we now would call "channeling" in these contacts, alternating between one method and another. He also did Ouija sessions himself, rapidly moving around a large board from letter to letter. This explains how many of the messages could be so lengthy.

Meanwhile, Bailey reports that someone "high up" in the Santa Fe Railroad Company has told him that he knows of a case where a ham radio operator has received messages from space intelligences. This person also said that he could recommend a local ham, Lyman Streeter, to try to do the same for them. Whether Bailey had this talk with the unnamed person is your guess; whether this fellow worked for Santa Fe is also your guess. In any case, our boy George is sitting at home in Prescott fiddling with upturned water glasses, while Bailey is getting a radioman.

The last Ouija session prior to radio taking over (August 17) was more vintage Williamson: rather childish elements of ridiculously named space entities from Pluto and Uranus, salted with esoteric historical references and warnings about the H-bomb. They are told to boil water to help the reception, but this doesn't work. They turn on the radio, but that doesn't work either. At the very end of the session, the name of the radio operator arranged by Bailey plus the "send" and "receive" frequencies for Streeter's test run are transmitted (receive at 400 kilocycles, transmit at 40 meters). Hmm . . . I wonder who was pushing the glass then?

## RADIO DAYS

So, the radio sessions begin—*without* Williamson. He's still in Prescott while Bailey and Streeter fire up in Winslow. Betty Bailey wasn't involved, either. You can read some of the transcripts of these radio sessions in the book. They contain a Williamsonian frame to them but certain other key things come through. The two men report that early in the



game they received GHW's main guy, "Zo," but right afterwards "Affa" took over as the big boy on the outer space block. GHW was mystified. He'd never heard of Affa.

George can't wait to get to Winslow, and when he does, Streeter begins receiving outer-space messages nearly every evening from late August to early September, and then more sparsely across the remainder of September, ending on October 5. In the first session Williamson attended, on August 23, the messages were sculpted largely in his mode, but with a bit more technical tilt to them, as well as one new message: "We want to land and you can be of help to us. Will you?" This was followed the next day with the message, "We want to be sure of everything before we land. Look for others to help our landing."

It is important to emphasize that Streeter was picking up *some* type of message, in a variant of Morse code no less. There were several witnesses to this beyond the Williamsons and Baileys. That these messages came from aliens I do not find believable, but someone was sending messages for Williamson and the others. That is the real mystery here.

At 9:30 p.m. on August 25, Streeter suddenly told everyone to look for a dark spot in the sky. After searching in the dark sky for a while, GHW was convinced that he and everyone else had seen a dark object near the horizon. "The dark spot in the sky was Affa," the radio said. Then, GHW said that they saw a blue light somewhere else, as requested, which was presumably his contact, Zo. As GHW noted, "Now we knew for sure that we were in contact with men from outer space!" (There is no doubt in my mind that it is GHW who writes the majority of the copy in *The Saucers Speak!* He is the master of the exclamation point.)

Near the end of August, Streeter told everyone that he had just done something tricky with the frequencies that no earthbound ham radio hoaxer could have coped with—switching from 40 meters to 160 meters in his transmissions with no warning. Yet the senders (the intelligences) handled the trick immediately. This proved, said Streeter, that this was no hoax. But what this actually proves, unless we believe in space intelligences sending messages to GHW and group, is that Streeter had to be in on the whole thing and that this little event was prearranged.

GHW, of course, was thrilled. During all this period, the Baileys and Williamsons were constantly discussing UFOs and esoterica with, doubtless, George dominating the airtime, as he usually did. He was a world-class spotlight seeker. Transmitting what GHW said in these many discussions to the framework of the received radio messages wouldn't have been very difficult, and, rather than being suspicious, our boy would have lapped it up as validation of his otherwise-attained inner knowledge.

In another telling incident, one evening an unexpected visitor of a skeptical nature showed up at Streeter's radio shack. No extraterrestrial messages were able to get through that evening. Hmm. . . .

Much gobblety-gook spewed forth from late August through early September, and the Williamsons returned

only sporadically from then on. The next session was September 11, and it included this: "I hope we might have a landing soon. . . . If we can arrange a landing do not fear impostors. You can be sure it will be us." Later in the evening another contact: "We must make landing contact soon. . . . you may go your own way if you wish, but you know what we have told you. If you believe us, you will act accordingly." Other, almost threatening-sounding imprecations to be strong and "undertake what lies just ahead of you" fill this transcript.

Williamson had gotten the message, literally. He writes, "Since our space friends talked of landing so often, we decided to have a picnic in the mountains and perhaps they would land for us" (about September 28). The radio said "good idea" to this. Much weird commentary spewed over the radio on the 27th, and Williamson was wild with delight. However, the great event was not to be. For some reason, Streeter was the only one who knew exactly where "they" were supposed to land (for utterly unbelievable reasons—a sort of psychic paranoia). Also, a foolish driving error ruined their chances ("We had missed the chance of a lifetime!") So they went back to Streeter's home and ate their lunch. The radio then began sending sinister-sounding messages about the radio being dangerous, a man coming, and Streeter having a deep secret.

Williamson was confused by all of that, but shortly decided that the man coming was going to be an outer-space man. The deep secret may well have been that Streeter had previously been interested in UFOs and had attempted contact in 1950. One day shortly after that, he had gone into a type of trance and wouldn't or couldn't speak for eight days. He had amnesia about those eight days when he recovered; but strangely, after the contacts by radio started, Streeter suddenly remembered what had occurred. He had "left his earthly body" and gone elsewhere where he was told to rapidly "complete his task upon the Earth planet." Hmm again.

Essentially nothing came in via radio after this visit and the missed landing on September 28.

## ADAMSKI AND GHW

However, Williamson and the book left out several things that occurred. The most intriguing of these (to me) is how all this led them to Adamski. In the following quote, "IS" is GHW's shorthand for the space intelligences who've contacted him via channeling, Ouija, and radio.

"The IS did tell us that it was very important that we go over to meet Adamski. Little more than that, for it was by radiotelegraphy (all of that is *NOT* in *TSS!*), and 'Board.' IS said nothing about this authenticity—but did stress the fact we should see him, for it was part of a 'chain of events' that was necessary!!"

So, as we slip into October 1952, Williamson and Bailey have been challenged by the now-silent radio to go and seek out Adamski. And one of them already had.

Al and Betty Bailey, during the events reported above, decided to travel to California to see the Professor of Palomar Mountain. Here's Adamski's report of that encounter and a subsequent one with both couples:



George Adamski

It was late in August 1952 that Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Bailey of Winslow, Arizona, first came to Palomar Gardens and asked to talk with me privately. I had never heard of them prior to that time. During the conversation, they told me about Dr. and Mrs. George H. Williamson, of Prescott, Arizona. These four people were as interested in the flying saucers as I. They had read everything available on the subject. They, too, had seen these strange objects flash through the skies, sometimes low, sometimes high. And they, too, had made trips to a number of desert places in the hope of seeing one land. Then they heard about me and the Baileys drove up to see me and tell me some of their experiences.

Later, the Baileys and Williamsons came up together. After spending several days at Palomar Gardens as our guests, they asked me to telephone them before my next attempt to establish a contact. During their stay we had met a great deal and had become better acquainted and they wanted to be with me if things could be so arranged.

The Williamsons left Palomar Gardens feeling that they had lived up to their obligations received from the space people by radio. If Adamski came through, they would assist the space people in their first landing, as had been requested.

During the visit to Adamski, GHW impressed him with his knowledge and fervor, and Adamski impressed GHW with his "authority." He did this by channeling.

I only witnessed channeling by Adamski on a few occasions, but I can tell you that I was very impressed. He changed completely, even physically, as he spoke. You knew a very intelligent being was communicating.

The Adamski channeling session [several days] before the November 20 meeting was one of the most inspiring and beautiful I have ever heard! Nothing given during that session contradicts anything Adamski ever said. Whatever George A. was, he was most definitely NOT a liar!

As an aside, Adamski refers to GHW in *Flying Saucers Have Landed* (British Book Centre, 1953) as "Dr." Williamson, and an Air Force veteran with all sorts of experience about planes, but this is largely bunk. Williamson's Air Force career was real but ridiculously brief and confined largely to writing and news; his Ph.D.

didn't arrive until many years later from an outfit—Avon University—that was the academic sponsor of his Mayan Pyramid thesis in the early 1960s . . . not as bad as distance-learning doctorates, but not a lot better. What GHW was doing to give people the impression that he had a doctorate, I don't know. He signs his name on the Adamski affidavit with "Sc.D.," which, because he's the biggest bull-inflator imaginable, probably means that he considers himself as having a science degree—which he almost got at Arizona, but blew off the last requirements.

The Williamsons and Baileys went back to Arizona and waited. On November 18, Adamski called GHW. A contact of some kind would happen in the California desert. Could they meet him in Blythe, California, in two days? Williamson said yes. He contacted Bailey, who agreed, as well. The two couples headed toward Blythe, and Adamski, with Alice Wells and Lucy McGinnis, came from Palomar. They rendezvoused at the town of Blythe for breakfast.

Williamson had maps out trying to figure where they should go next. Adamski looked at the options and said he wanted to go outside, alone, and think about it. He came back in and announced that he was heading back toward Desert Center, which he had passed on his seven-hour drive from Palomar. The group got into their cars and drove west. At Desert Center they turned on to the Parker Highway and drove until Adamski stopped them. They milled around, Adamski reaching out for his intuitions. He and Bailey walked off for a while on their own. They returned and broke out the packed lunch. Food and picture taking ensued, and then GHW thought he saw a UFO. Bailey chimed in that he thought so, too. Then Lucy McGinnis agreed. Pictures of the UFO were somehow botched, but everyone was now thrilled and inspired.

Adamski suddenly asked to be driven down the road, but the rest were to stay. McGinnis drove, and Bailey, of all people, jumped in, too. Adamski saw what he wanted to and told the others to go back and fetch everyone else, while he took off on foot—to the meeting with Orthon. He told McGinnis to give him an hour before bringing the others back, and Adamski claimed that both McGinnis and Bailey saw a big UFO in the sky as they drove off.

The rest is history. Everybody attests to seeing footprints on the ground. Everybody allegedly attests (this is not nearly so clear) to seeing the departing light of Orthon's spaceship. (GHW goes to his death asserting this to be true.) Bailey and he suggest reporting this to the Phoenix newspaper on the way home, and Adamski says yes, do it. And thus the blockbuster story of the early days of UFOs is cemented into legend.

## THE AFTERMATH AND SOME SPECULATION

Adamski, of course, goes on to tremendous fame—the undeniable contactee in the desert. Williamson is hyperkinetically wild for all of this now, the ultimate adventure of humanity.

Streeter had his own sighting of a large, cigar-shaped object over Winslow, along with five other witnesses, on December 21, 1952. More ominously, Streeter had received a visit from a government agent of some kind (GHW was certain it must be the CIA), who said that the government had him dead to rights because he was in communication with unlicensed operators (see sidebar). The agent explained that the government was planning a vast educational program about flying saucers, and that Streeter could help himself by joining the “other fifteen ‘ham’ operators and cooperate with us.” Otherwise, he would suffer consequences.

Streeter then dies a premature death in the spring of 1955 (I suggest nothing conspiratorial about that!).

And Bailey? Well, he does write the book with Williamson that is published in 1954 (it was probably already written in 1953). And he is still hanging around the scene long enough to be interviewed by James Moseley, of

all people, in December 1953 (about the Adamski encounter, not the radio messages). But he doesn't stay active, and his contacts with Williamson soon diminish, despite his alleged intense interest in the subject.

Williamson, late in life, finally takes a breath and scratches his head about this. What happened to Al, anyway? When they got back to Arizona, there was an exchange or two, and then: “the Baileys . . . not a word from them since 1953, not even a rumor—Alice [Wells] confirms this as well—she's heard nothing.”

George then spins off into a typical Williamsonian interlude where he wonders why both the wives were named Betty, and he, Adamski, and Van Tassel were named George. “Coincidence? What does it mean, if anything?” It was a question that he might have better asked about Al Bailey's involvement and disappearance, I'd suggest. Or about Streeter.

### **SOME LINGERING HAM RADIO MYSTERIES**

*by Mark Rodeghier*

There are many peculiarities about the signals received by Lyman Streeter for George Hunt Williamson and Alfred Bailey, beyond the simple fact that signals were indeed received from someone, somewhere.

Ham radio operators, then and now, just can't talk to any station you happen to hear on the air. Stations have to be licensed by their respective governments and they are required to identify themselves. If a station doesn't identify itself with a standard prefix, communications should cease.

One could, of course, argue that the first extraterrestrial contacts by humanity should be exempt from this regulation. However, A.D. Middleton, who visited Streeter after the events described in the article, and who was a highly respected ham, took this restriction seriously. On April 9, 1955, he wrote to the Federal Communications Commission, Amateur Division, and requested guidance for situations where amateurs were “transmitting within our authorized bands but receiving on frequencies outside the bands . . . [in the context of transmissions from UFOs].” As explained below, this was exactly Streeter's situation.

For what it's worth, the reply from the FCC, on April 27, stated in part, “Within the limitations of Section 12.101 [the rules governing amateur radio service], amateurs may communicate with stations which transmit on frequencies outside the amateur frequency bands.” This is a typical bureaucratic response, as it doesn't exactly answer Middleton's question. It essentially states that you can do whatever isn't forbidden by the regulations, which implies that the regulations still apply, even to extraterrestrial communications (you can read more about this in Williamson's book *UFOs Confidential*, Essene Press, 1958, written with John McCoy).

Continuing on with the mystery of the signals, most of

the messages from Affa, et al., were received on 405 or 450 kilocycles. This is very odd. Standard ham radio equipment of that era would not receive transmissions in that range. It would have been possible for Streeter to modify his equipment to receive those frequencies, but there is no mention that he did by Williamson. Further, that frequency range was often used to transmit signals for radio aids to navigation, so transmitting in that band would be a definite no-no.

Furthermore, AM radios in those days used a superheterodyne receiver, which improved the performance of these devices. The receivers use an internal “intermediate frequency” of 455 kilocycles, and strong transmissions around 450 kilocycles would therefore have interfered with regular radio reception of those living near Streeter, if not other more distant locales.

So why would someone planning this elaborate hoax choose these particular frequencies for transmission? For one, essentially no hams would be listening on these frequencies, so the chance of others detecting your signals would be very small. Second, because of the superheterodyne issue, low power would be used, which would make it even less likely that others would detect the transmissions. With low power being used, the transmitting equipment would have to be nearby, in line-of-sight to Streeter's antenna (which could still be many miles, depending on the antenna being used, or very nearby, to really play it safe).

There are other loose ends, because even though Streeter was transmitting on 40 or 80 meters, both of which are within the normal ham range, he certainly wasn't using a normal call sign for the “station” he was contacting. If other hams overheard his transmissions, what would they have thought, or done? We just don't know, but there is no evidence that anyone did.



Why have I laid out all this unprovable stuff about an early set of spectacular (and influential) claims? Because all my historical muddling about in the 1949–1954 era gives me the feeling that something stinks vis-à-vis contactees, Frank Scully and company, and the extremely effective damage they did to responsible study of the UFO phenomenon. Isn't it just a little too convenient that the Scully-Aztec crash story showed up as early as it did to fog over any investigation of crash claims? Isn't it just handy that Adamski, Truman Bethurum, Williamson, and Giant Rock rose up so spectacularly to wall off UFO study from serious people in academia and media? Isn't it a little intriguing that almost all of this "serious infection" festers out of the same origin point? (Case in point. One day following the Desert Center contact, GHW was back visiting Adamski. There was a party in the Hollywood area at the house of a businessman. While the businessman held an outsized piece of paper steady, GHW went hyperactive and drew Solex-Mal space language all over it, in a trance. The businessman was Gene Dorsey, friend of Adamski, Scully, Silas Newton, and who knows who else?)

And, if you were in the intelligence community and you had the job of shushing the saucers, what would you do? Would Scully and Newton be useful to you? Karl Pflock unearthed Silas Newton's old diary, where he says that agents told him to keep up the hoax. Would contactees meeting spiritually advanced beings in the desert, spouting a ridiculous astronomy and physics, be useful to you? The Giant Rock convention annually destroyed any credit that Keyhoe or the Lorenzens might have built up through the 1950s.

And how would you operate? How would you encourage naïve, enthusiastic, useful dupes, or persons a bit light in the ethics department, to promulgate incredible and even laughable images of who's behind the saucers? One glance at contactee Buck Nelson is, unfortunately, enough to send the academics home (see his pamphlet *My Trip to Mars, the Moon, and Venus*). Would you, in the intelligence community, care about what sort of messages were able to be freely transmitted (on *any* subject) by ham radio operators? Would you, for security reasons in this period, want to keep some control over these independent hams? Would you have not only your monitors, but also your agents, here and there, in the ham network? Might you have plans whereby you could actively apply their expertise?

Streeter and Bailey came into Williamson's life from nowhere. Bailey said some mysterious higher-up had told him that signals from space beings had already been received, and to go and employ Streeter for this purpose. Streeter later said that a government agent had told him that all this was being monitored and he must now stop. "Luckily," they had just gotten the message to seek out Adamski.

In January 1955, after *The Saucers Speak!* was published, a highly placed ham, A. D. [Alois David] Middleton (call letters W5CA, a leader for the region including New Mexico and Texas), located Streeter (despite his being

anonymous), and came from New Mexico to Winslow to meet him. He said that he had heard of other outer-space contacts, particularly one from Canada. Middleton wrote GHW then and said that he was convinced that the signals were okay. He also wrote Keyhoe and said that he was convinced that the GHW-Streeter signals were a hoax, but that he would be happy to offer the services of the ham network to Keyhoe for anything the major wished. Middleton then joined GHW's Telonic Research Institute to try to resurrect the phenomenon of signals from space, and in a year was making T. Townsend Brown a similar offer for the new NICAP. Middleton was a Sandia engineer. Maybe this means something, maybe not.

What all this stuff *really* amounts to, I don't know. My intuitions say that a bunch of this is just too pat not to have had some design. And I know my own devious mind. If I had the resources and the task of quieting the saucers, I'd have not only welcomed a Scully, but I would have been out there nurturing several other useful dupes (useful idiots, Lenin called them) in the expectation that, out of a dozen or two, I'd likely get a couple of spectacular successes. GHW was an intelligence agency's dream—an exciting, creative public dynamo with almost no ability to distinguish fantasy from reality if you could just salt a little concrete experience into his visionary world. I think that this is probably what happened. I think this because I don't believe that Affa and Zo were coming over Streeter's radio with their ridiculous-but-Williamson-attuned astronomy. So, I deduce that someone else was elaborately setting him up. And, as this led so smoothly to Adamski and the Big One, I further deduce that the setup was not by amateurs.

Still, maybe I'm wrong—I *have* been many times. Perhaps amateurs played games with GHW and a lot of the rest was just accident. Or, maybe Affa and Zo are better buddies with Orthon than I suspect. ♦

### UFO OVER AUCKLAND

Mystery surrounds an apparent unidentified flying object seen in the skies above Auckland, New Zealand's Viaduct Basin. The *Auckland Sunday News* has obtained footage of the object, spotted flying at speed over the waterfront in broad daylight.

Both the Civil Aviation Authority and the Ministry of Defence have been unable to identify it. The photograph, taken in October 2005 by well-known photographer Richard Simpson, shows an object above the industrial tank farm in the mid-morning sun.

Sue Hansen of UFOCUS New Zealand and air traffic controller Graeme Opie both think it is not a bird. "I think it's definitely not an aeroplane and it doesn't look like it's been faked," she said. "It does have some characteristics of a disc shape." Hansen said the shadowing around the object was of greatest interest. "The only thing that may explain it is ionized air around the craft."—*Auckland Sunday News*, July 16.

# WHERE ARE THE CLOSE ENCOUNTERS?

BY MARK RODEGHIER

Those of us who follow the ebb and flow of raw UFO reports, whether to MUFON or CUFOS, or to well-known websites, including the National UFO Reporting Center, have come to recognize the drop in close encounter cases. Whether it is physical trace events or a good old fashioned CE3 with the sighting of a humanoid, these cases seem much less frequent nowadays.

The latest report from Chris Rutkowski's Canadian UFO Survey ([survey.canadianuforeport.com](http://survey.canadianuforeport.com)) confirms this trend. Figure 1 shows the number of reports received each year across Canada. For whatever reason, reports in general have greatly increased in this decade, although the total dropped a bit in 2005. There are far more UFOs reported now than in the 1990s in Canada. The same is generally true for the United States, although perhaps with not as great an increase since 2000.

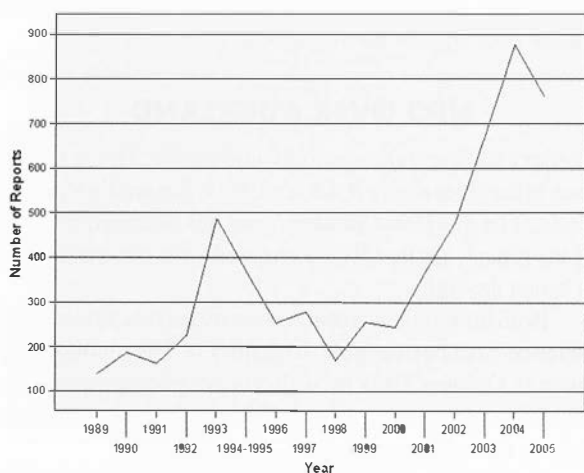


Figure 1. Number of reports.

What about close encounters? Have they followed the same trend? Figure 2 provides the answer.

The number of reports is much smaller—only about 4%

of reports are close encounters over the 17-year period in Canada—so there are larger relative swings from year to year. But close encounters generally do increase, beginning in the current decade, although not to the higher levels of the 1990s.

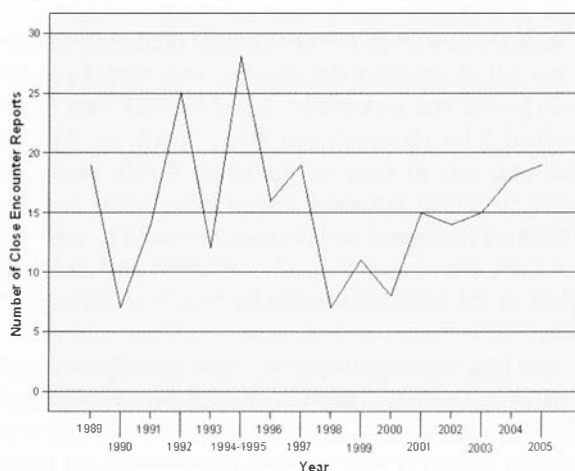


Figure 2. Number of close encounter reports.

But is this the whole story? I'd suggest not. I and colleagues have noticed that close encounters are not as common, compared to other cases. To investigate this, we need to look at the percentage of all sightings that are close encounters.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of all reports that are close encounters, by year. It is immediately evident that our sense of the data has been correct. There has been a fairly steady drop in the percentage of close encounters since the first year of the Canadian survey in 1989. Close encounters now comprise only about 2 percent of all reports.

What does it all mean? Are UFOs reluctant to come near to witnesses? Do they no longer land? Since witnesses generally can't seek out a UFO close encounter, it would seem that influences beyond witness behavior would be underlying this trend. Still, if witnesses were now more likely to report distant events of lights in the sky, but less likely to report close encounters, we would see the same pattern. But I can't easily imagine why that disparity would be true.

Mark Rodeghier is scientific director of the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies.

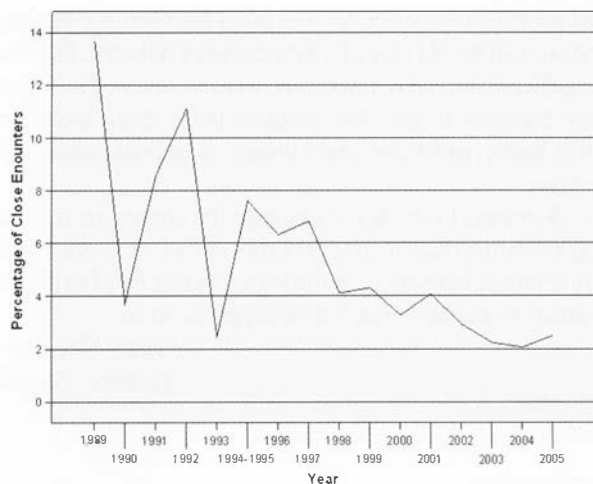


Figure 3. Percentage of close encounters.

This pattern is further evidence that the characteristics of the UFO phenomenon are not fixed and immutable. The appearance and behavior of the phenomenon has changed quite a bit over time (e.g., from disks to triangles), and this change is one of the latest examples. It would certainly be interesting to see data for other countries to see if this trend holds more broadly. ♦

### UFO RESEARCH QUEENSLAND

UFO Research Queensland is a voluntary, nonprofit association established in 1956 to receive, research, and record sightings. It is located in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, and is holding its 50th anniversary conference on September 30–October 1. Check out their website at [www.uforq.asn.au](http://www.uforq.asn.au).

## LETTERS

### CLOUDS AND SATELLITE OBJECTS

To the editor:

I read Herbert Taylor's recent article ("Cloud Cigars: A Further Look," *IUR* 30:3), and then went back and reread his two earlier *IUR* articles ("Satellite Objects and Cloud Cigars," 29:1, and "Mystery Clouds and the UFO Connection," 29:4). First, let me say that my efforts in ufology have been through the lens of animal reactions (or not) during UFO events. Because animal reactions are associated with UFO events that are estimated to be within 200 feet of witnesses, and almost never more than 500 feet away, I don't have a lot of experience evaluating distant UFO events, which most of his sightings are. On the other hand, because I do Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) migration studies with my husband (involving hours of sky watching, i.e., cloud watching, storm watching, aircraft watching, and a few seconds of nighthawk watching), I have some feeling for clouds and how they look and what they do. That's my background, just so you can see where I'm coming from.

First, a few words about the second article on mystery clouds/UFOs. This aspect of his studies strikes me as weak. I have seen natural cloud events that bear great similarity to almost all of the daytime cloud events. Also, my experience indicates when many witnesses see something they decide is strange, they will link anything else they observe to the strangeness in a very uncritical way.

Having watched clouds form from nothing and dissipate to nothing; shadows within clouds giving very strange effects only understood with high-power binoculars put on the situation; balloons in clouds (once hundreds of small black balloons moving into clouds—no question, could see strings with binoculars); aircraft leaving and departing two nearby airports, then flying in and out of clouds with

interesting lighting conditions, I think it would be very hard to critically investigate or draw conclusions about these cloud/UFO associations. I'm not saying there could not be valid cloud/UFO connections in there somewhere, but I don't see how you would get at it among all the noise. Not much hard information in these events. So I would have very high criteria for including any of these.

Turning attention to cloud cigars and satellite objects—this is much more interesting in that you are actually getting some consistency in behavior and appearance between sightings (rare event in my opinion and to be valued). The vertical/horizontal orientations and repositioning, the clouds formed at ends, the small objects being released, similarity in their fall from the larger object, and then small objects moving out to "survey" the area (loosely speaking), and the long durations are all interesting clues. The multiple witnesses add strength, and I found the September 1954 sighting in France interesting in its complexity.

I think some weeks ago I saw a reference in an email to tornadoes as an explanation, which doesn't fit as tornadoes are associated with dynamic, fast-moving weather events. Years ago, I once saw little funnel clouds attempting to descend from a front roaring into D.C., and they were constantly changing as the front ripped through and no one would ever think "carrot" or "cigar." They would think funnel cloud trying to descend.

So I have little to suggest in terms of explanations. I would encourage Taylor to continue his cloud cigar/satellite object study. I think this kind of focused study is very worthwhile. I think hard-nosed investigation of current sighting events is an important area for ufology, but I seem to be somewhat isolated in that opinion—hence my recent loss of enthusiasm.

I know after my animal reaction study was published, I

had this naive hope that I would get some current sightings and direct contact with witnesses or perhaps questions or feedback from investigators. Some serious, current investigation was the next logical step needed to move ahead. Other than one interesting sighting referred by Peter Davenport [from his National UFO Reporting Center], it has not happened. I suspect Taylor shares some of the same frustrations.

Finally, as though this email is not long enough, after all the critical things I said about the cloud/UFO relationship, I will tell you about something that happened to me. I recorded it in my field notebook when it happened, but to this day I don't know what to make out of it.

August 9, 1999, at 2:20 p.m., was a spectacular day in Washington, D.C. I was on the Beltway on a wildlife rescue run approaching the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, just south of Reagan National Airport. Looking toward the Potomac River, I noticed in a clear blue, cloudless sky one single white cloud, about 40 degrees above the ESE horizon. The cloud seemed odd to me. It looked like a dense cigar with a slight hump appearance on top. A passenger jet was turning, banking, to land at the airport, and I remember thinking, I'd like to be on that aircraft and take a look at that cloud. The apparent length of the cloud and very low-flying aircraft were the same, but the cloud appeared to have twice the mass of the aircraft and was located beyond it.

All of this happened over several seconds. At that point, I had to glance back to switch to the exit lane of the Beltway for Route 1, and when I looked back a split second later the cloud was gone. I kept looking for it on the exit ramp, and after I was on Route 1—nothing, not a cloud in the sky and absolutely nothing that obstructed my view of the sky.

The weather was a great fall-type day that we get now and then in August. From the nearby airport readings I got these weather conditions: 82°F, 31% relative humidity, dew point 54 degrees, wind NNE 9–11 mph, ceiling unlimited and reportedly scattered clouds at 35,000 feet, though the cloud described was the only one in my view of the sky.

If I were to present a mundane explanation, it would be

that there is a coal-fired power plant between my position and the airport. If a slug of steam had been released, the wind would have moved it downriver, where I saw it. The dry air may dissipate it fast. The problem is the thing looked so solid, heavy, and dense, and it disappeared in an instant with no trace.

Anyway, I can only encourage the continued study of cigar/satellite objects. It is probably one of the more worthwhile things happening in ufology. If I can be of help with weather or the sky data, I'd be happy to do so.

Joan Woodward  
Fairfax, Virginia

## RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME

*To the editor:*

In "We Know Where You Live" (*IUR* 30:2), Michael Swords poses the question, "Why did I look just then?" I've asked myself the same question many times in regard to my July 6, 1947, sighting at our ranch near Encampment, Wyoming. See Richard Hall, ed., *The UFO Evidence* (NICAP, 1964), p. 55.

On that sunny afternoon, my brother and I and a family friend were discussing the wave of "flying saucer" sightings, headline news at the time—were they real or was it mass hysteria?—when my brother pointed to a hawk circling over the meadow. "Look, there's one now," he joked. I saw the hawk, but for some reason I then looked straight up and saw a silver-gray oval, very much like those illustrated on page 12 of that issue of *IUR*. I excitedly pointed it out to the other two, and they quickly spotted it, and we watched, awestruck, as it dwindled to a mere speck, then vanished in the distance. It was on a northerly heading and did not appear to change course, speed or altitude during the 2 to 3 minutes it was visible.

Why did I look just then? I don't know. But if I had not looked up at that precise moment, I never would have seen it.

David Kenney  
Palos Verdes Estates, California

## ALIEN "ABDUCTION," RESCUE, PROPOSAL A FIRST FOR MUSEUM

To match his love, Ross Savedra's proposal had to be out of this world. After one of the silver-suited alien extras in the Roswell UFO Museum's alien autopsy exhibit "abducted" 23-year-old Ariane Ash, Savedra, 32, made his way through the crowd, fought two figures in silver suits and rubber masks, and wrestled his girlfriend to safety.

Savedra pulled Ash to the center of the crowded room, fumbled quickly in his left pocket, and dropped to his knees. His voice choked with emotion, he told Ash she was his passion and asked if she would be his wife. The two embraced in a cloud of shiny, colored confetti thrown by onlookers. Tourists who had been tipped off, family members, and the rubber-masked, bulbous, purple-eyed aliens—Ash's brother-in-law and stepfather—all applauded. "By

the way, everyone, she said yes," noted Julie Shuster, the museum's director, on the sound system.

Savedra, born and raised in Roswell, picked the UFO Museum as the place where he would ask for Ash's hand because of its "uniqueness," he said. Although the museum hosted a wedding three years ago, Savedra made history with his proposal.

"Being from Roswell, he thought, what a perfect place," Shuster said earlier. Perfect—and original.

"He's the first person in the world who gets to propose here," Shuster said.

"She's always calling me her alien man," Savedra said of his fiancée, as they exchanged nervous glances and caresses.—*Roswell (N. Mex.) Daily Record, July 17.*



## METEORIC DUSTY PLASMAS

Meteoric dusty plasmas certainly exist, but whether they can be charged or otherwise visually incandesce beyond their initial entry into the atmosphere is debatable. Certainly dusty plasmas can interfere with radio and are made more turbulent by bombardment with high-frequency emissions (HF). What is not explained is how these could cause someone to undergo a “close encounter.” After all, most plasma phenomena described occur in the upper portions of the Earth’s atmosphere. What about plasmas and UAP effects in the lower atmosphere?

## UAP-METEOR CORRELATION

The Condign report claims to have established a correlation between meteor-shower peak dates and UAP activity (see Figure 3, but note the dates for peak meteor-shower activity in the associated table are incorrect). This supposition is a strong point in one of Mr. X’s arguments, a correlation between possible meteoric dust-generated plasmas accounting for UAP reports. It is not disputed that meteors produce plasma when they enter the atmosphere, and their microscopic debris contributes to atmospheric dusty plasmas.

However, since the MoD has not been careful in collecting the eyewitness information, there is no way to filter out possible direct observation of meteoric phenomena as probable misperceptions. In fact, there is a more logical assertion that can be made. Any such correlation may be due to direct misperception. (Note previous comments concerning the information recorded on the standard report form and the fact that Mr. X was unable to recheck facts.)

Mr. X places too much trust in the public being able to report meteoric phenomena accurately. Suffice it to say that although many people can recognize meteoric phenomena

there is still a significant proportion who can’t, and it is these who occasionally file UFO reports.

We can state this quite confidently, drawing comparisons with data from the BUFORA Astronomical Reference Point (ARP). The ARP continually received UFO reports from all over the UK in the period covered by Condign. The data demonstrates the fluctuating fraction of yearly UFO reports that were actually produced by direct observations of meteors, satisfactorily determined by rechecking information with witnesses.

Guess what? These too show a similar correlation to meteor-shower peak dates.

## DUSTY PLASMAS

Much new scientific research is being conducted into the subject of dusty plasmas. For example, in relation to atmospheric plasmas, the European Incoherent Scatter (EISCAT) Scientific Association in northern Scandinavia bombards the atmosphere in the polar regions with HF and then studies the resultant plasma turbulence. The European Cluster II spacecraft was also tasked to investigate plasma phenomena and the Earth’s magnetosphere. The more we observe Earth with spaceborne remote-sensing and optical equipment covering the full range of the radiation spectrum, the more unusual, rare, and as yet undiscovered visual atmospheric phenomena yield to detection and study. One example is the observation of three types of transient optical phenomena at high altitudes above thunderstorms. These are now fully integrated into the scientific nomenclature as sprites, elves, and blue jets (see Working Paper 24 in Volume 2 of the Condign report).

## UAPS ON RADAR

Working Paper 5 in Volume 2 and Chapter 1 in Volume 3 deal with the technical capabilities of UK air defense radar within the context of UAPs. A number of specific incidents are alluded to with insufficient information to allow detailed scrutiny. Mr. X implies there have been very few trackings of UAPs/UFOs on UK air defense radar within the period covered by the study (1987–1997). He cites one occasion when “a triangular (visual) formation was tracked on radar with an acceleration from 100 to 980kts in two seconds and an altitude change from 7000 to 30000ft in 1 second.” Unfortunately, this appears to refer to an incident during the Belgian wave of 1990, so it falls outside the UK coverage of the study he himself set out in his Terms of Reference.

A key finding from Mr. X’s sur-

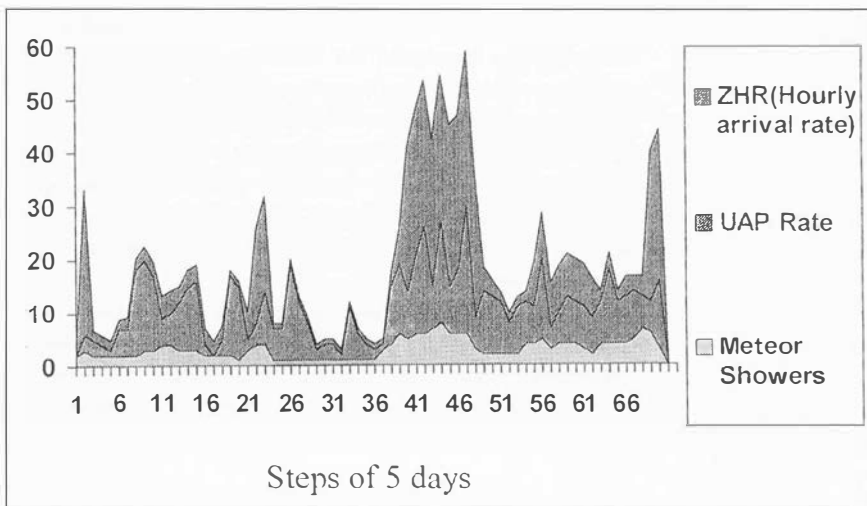


Fig. 3. Correlation of number of meteor-shower types and meteor entry rate with UAP reports, 1996.

vey of DI55's report archive is that "there is a significant absence of radar plots/tracks on UAPs" in the UKADGE when contrasted with the numerous visual reports made to MoD. He considers a number of possible explanations, three of which have been deleted for reasons of security, and concludes: "Clearly, some UAP response to radar is variable, otherwise all radars would see all the objects which entered their respective coverage zones all the time." The implication is that the radar wavefront of a UAP target is not consistent with a solid craft but may be consistent with atmospheric phenomena, such as a dusty plasma. This leads him to speculate that variability in radar detection "may be due to aspect or orientation, material composition or both." Hence, "if UAPs are plasmas, their intensity would probably be diminishing as their physical life decays," which might explain the variability in radar detections both by air defense and civil air traffic radars.

As we expected, the sections dealing with radar have had large sections deleted under exemption Section 26 of the FOIA. According to the author, these sections "contain performance values of the UKADR radars [and] radar performance is directly relevant to whether UAPs can enter and leave UK airspace and whether they constitute a threat." As a result, the MoD decided the release of this information "could be of significant value to the planning of an attack on the UK, including from terrorism." These exemptions are currently the subject of appeal.

## HAZARDS TO AIRCRAFT

Although the Condign report concludes there is no evidence that solid craft exist which are unidentified and could pose a collision hazard, Chapter 2 of Volume 3 examines seven unexplained fatal accidents involving RAF aircraft. It also scrutinizes seven unexplained air-miss incidents reported by civilian aircrews "where the identity of one of the conflicting objects is never explained." Just one of these incidents involved a simultaneous radar trace of a unidentified target. All seven air-miss events were reported between 1988 and 1996 and were investigated by the Joint CAA and MoD Airprox Section (JAS). The study states that, while there is no evidence for any fatal accident resulting from a collision with a UAP in the UK, fatalities have occurred in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere.

UAPs are deemed to pose little or no danger to aircraft (a risk assessed as being lower than bird strikes), unless violent maneuvers are undertaken to either intercept or avoid them. It adds that "despite . . . hundreds of reports of low altitude UAP activity, there is no firm evidence in the available reports that a RAF crew has ever encountered or evaded a low altitude UAP event" or that any RAF aircraft has been involved in an interception involving this type of phenomenon.

Nevertheless, Mr. X makes a number of "subsidiary recommendations" resulting from the findings of this section of the report. He feels the air-miss database for higher

altitude reports (up to 20,000 feet) is lacking data because of reluctance on the part of airline crews to make formal UAP reports. Here again the "bad press" which UFOs receive in the media and via the activities of ufologists is blamed, as Mr. X observes: "There is evidence that [crews] are seeing far more than they are reporting for fear of ridicule or the potential effect on company business."

He recommends that military and civilian aircrews should be advised that "no attempt should be made to outmanoeuvre a UAP during interception" and civilian aircrews "should be advised not to manoeuvre, other than to place the object astern, if possible."

We made a follow-up request in May 2006 for evidence of action taken as a direct result of these recommendations. The MoD confirmed the findings had been sent to the Directorate of Air Operations (DAO) who would have been responsible for further dissemination to the Civil Aviation Authority and RAF. However, it said "no further correspondence regarding the 'subsidiary recommendations' have been found on the accessible files for the period in question."

## UAP WORK IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Volume 3 of the report refers to research and studies carried out in a number of foreign nations into UAPs, atmospheric plasmas, and their potential military applications. This short chapter includes sections on the former Soviet Union, China, Spain, the United States, and Canada. Despite claims of an international UFO coverup, the author notes "there is no intelligence exchange or collaboration of any sort on the topic of 'UFOs'" between the UK and foreign governments.

## CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, we have found the Condign report is replete with errors and reads like an intelligence report rather than a scientific memorandum. Knee-jerk dismissals of the documents as a "whitewash" and mishandling by the media have only slightly hampered our attempts to reveal the actual meaning and context of these documents. The research we have presented so far on our website and elsewhere refute all ignorant and idle guesses, and leave no doubt in our minds that Condign—whatever its flaws—is an important document in the history of ufology. This should be apparent to anyone who spends sufficient time delving into these matters for themselves.

If the report is a whitewash and the MoD really knows "the truth" about UFOs, this poses an interesting question. If evidence of an ET presence on Earth had been established, why would the MoD need to commission a three-year study—carried out in secret—to tell them what they already knew?

As this article has demonstrated, the internal documents show the study was commissioned after a long battle against internal prejudice in the MoD over three decades,

many years before Britain had a Freedom of Information Act on its statute books. Unless all these internal documents are fakes or deliberate plants, claims by conspiracy theorists that the report was produced specifically for public consumption can be confidently dismissed as nonsense.

The contents of the report suggest the MoD actually knows very little about UFOs and even that some civilian ufologists know far more. Its main recommendation (implemented in December 2000) is that “it should no longer be a requirement for DI55 to monitor UAP reports as they do not demonstrably provide information useful to Defence Intelligence.”

This coalesces into its main *raison d’être*, to remove the sensitive Defence Intelligence section of the MoD from the unwelcome publicity it had received as a result of its involvement in the UFO business. This hidden agenda may well explain the restricted distribution of the report and why the public “UFO desk,” Sec(AS), were kept out of the “need to know” loop.

Unlike Edward Condon, who had a team, Condign was the product of one man (Mr. X), working with inadequate data and a tight budget. He was not authorized to interview witnesses or speak to scientists. Under these circumstances, it seems he did the best he could, and although his report is unscientific there are some resourceful aspects to the outcome. The study also works well as an example of how not to scientifically study UFOs. The limited remit of Mr. X’s aim is underlined by the TORS (Terms of Reference) in Annex A of Volume 1—“to determine the potential value, if any, of UAP sighting reports to defence intelligence.”

Despite its many and varied flaws and false suppositions, we have to accept that the Condign report is likely to be the most detailed attempt by the Ministry of Defence to assess this multifaceted phenomenon for many years to come.

Again, this raises another question. If DI55 are no longer interested in UAPs or UFOs, why do they still maintain an open file on the subject, as we have established using the FOI? The clue that could explain this continuing interest is found in the Executive Summary: “The conditions for the initial formation and sustaining of . . . buoyant charged masses . . . are not completely understood. . . nevertheless, the underlying physics may have some military application in the future in the form of active visual, radar and IR decoys and passive electromagnetic spectrum energy absorbers.” The recommendation is that “further investigation should be [made] into the applicability of various characteristics of plasmas in novel military applications.”

Many other unanswered questions remain. There are background details to uncover, more documents to request, and the identity of the author to pursue. These avenues could all provide missing information to complete the jigsaw.

Despite claiming from the outset that he was working from raw data and had made a conscious effort to avoid

influence from the media or the UFO industry, ultimately Mr. X was unable to escape the pervasive influence of ufology on popular culture. On our first reading of his report, we were quite surprised to find his conclusions *do indeed show* such influences drawn from his literature search, particularly the works of Paul Devereux and Jenny Randles.<sup>4</sup> These influences make Mr. X’s quote at the beginning of Volume 1 (“prejudice will take you further from the truth than ignorance”) sound rather ironic!

On this note we shall conclude with a final message both directed to ufologists and the author of Condign: “Prejudice *will* take you further from the truth than ignorance.”

## RESOURCES

The latest news on UK FOIA releases along with extensive commentary on the Condign report can be found at our website, [www.uk-ufo.org/condign/](http://www.uk-ufo.org/condign/).

All four volumes of the report can be downloaded in pdf format from the UK Ministry of Defence FOIA website at [www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/FreedomOfInformation/PublicationScheme/SearchPublicationScheme/UnidentifiedAerialPhenomenauapInTheUkAirDefenceRegion.htm](http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/FreedomOfInformation/PublicationScheme/SearchPublicationScheme/UnidentifiedAerialPhenomenauapInTheUkAirDefenceRegion.htm).

David Clarke and Andy Roberts, *Out of the Shadows: UFOs, the Establishment, and the Official Cover-up* (London: Piatkus, 2002), is a detailed analysis of the MoD’s interest in UFOs from World War II to the present.

Recent papers and research on atmospheric plasmas include:

EISCAT, [www.eiscat.com/about.html](http://www.eiscat.com/about.html).

Cluster spacecraft, [clusterlaunch.esa.int/science-e/www/area/index.cfm?fareaid=8](http://clusterlaunch.esa.int/science-e/www/area/index.cfm?fareaid=8).

New Microscopic Properties of Magnetic Reconnection Derived by Cluster, May 19, 2006, [clusterlaunch.esa.int/science-e/www/object/index.cfm?fobjectid=39246](http://clusterlaunch.esa.int/science-e/www/object/index.cfm?fobjectid=39246).

Research Activities of the Dusty Plasma Group, [debye.colorado.edu/research.html](http://debye.colorado.edu/research.html).

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The team of researchers who uncovered the Condign report and associated documents included David Clarke, Gary Anthony, Joe McGonagle, and Andy Roberts.

2. *Magonia* 92 (June 2006): 2, 11.

3. Facsimiles of the Flying Saucer Working Party and Rendlesham files can be found at the two websites listed in Resources.

4. Photocopied maps and graphics from two identifiable books appear in Volume 2 of the report. They are (a) Paul Devereux, with David Clarke, Andy Roberts, and Paul McCartney, *Earthlights Revelation* (London: Blandford, 1989), in Working Paper 18; and (b) Jenny Randles, *UFOs and How to See Them* (London: Anaya, 1992), in Working Paper 3.

## APPENDIX A: UAPs

The acronym UAP is used both in the title and throughout the main body of the study commissioned by MoD. The Defence Intelligence Staff has long regarded the acronym UFO as discredited, because of the connotation that objects or craft of extraterrestrial origin have been observed. This idea is endemic both in the media and popular culture. It becomes apparent that UFOs and ufologists have such a negative press that it was impossible for any branch or individual within the MoD to commission studies of the material they hold. Attempts to do so were stymied because of the perception that any work on UFOs would be seen as “a waste of public money” particularly during the 1980s when the defense budget was pruned to the bone. The creation of an alternative, more definitive, term—UAP (unidentified aerial phenomena)—to describe the residue of inexplicable incidents was the solution. By the early 1990s, UAP was frequently used by the British defense intelligence staff while their civilian colleagues in Sec(AS) continued to use UFO.

However, UAP (pronounced “whap”) was not new, because the phrase “aerial phenomena” has been in use by the RAF since at least 1952. While UAP appears in DIS documents as early as 1962, shortly afterwards ufologists began to adopt an alternative version of the term. UAP, with the meaning “unidentified atmospheric phenomenon,” was coined by UFO investigator/writer Jenny Randles in her discussions with J. Allen Hynek during the late 1970s. Jenny recalls that “we talked about his classification scheme and how I felt it needed to be updated. I argued that UAP was a better term to use in order to interest scientists because it presumed less and was more accurately descriptive than UFO, which, both by its use of the word object and by years of presumed application now inferred a material craft, usually a spacecraft, in many people’s minds.”

## APPENDIX B: UK SECURITY CLASSIFICATIONS

The MoD has stated publicly on many occasions over the past 40 years that the topic of UFOs was not classified. The material released both at the National Archives and under the FOIA suggests, however, that on occasions when UFO reports impinged upon other areas that were covered by security—for example, the capabilities of defense radars—they could become subject to the Official Secrets Act (OSA). For example, an Air Ministry document from 1960 states clearly: “The Press are never to be given information about unusual radar sightings. . . . unauthorised disclosures of this type will be viewed as offences under the Official Secrets Act.”

In the UK there are two levels of security classification for official documents: secret and top secret. The UAP Study of 2000 was classified at the lower level of “Secret/UK Eyes Only.” However, in 1998 the MoD released a

group of UFO documents classified at the higher level of top secret at the National Archives. These are the minutes of the DSI/JTIC committee, 1950–1951, which established the Flying Saucer Working Party at the height of the Cold War. The FSWP report itself was classified “Secret/Discreet” and both sets of documents dismissed all reports received to date (1951) as optical illusions, misperceptions of man-made and natural phenomena, and hoaxes.

In the House of Lords, on January 25, 2001, the late Lord Hill-Norton asked MoD “what is the highest classification that has been applied to any MoD document concerning UFOs.” The reply was, “A limited search through available files has identified a number of documents graded Secret. The overall classification of the documents was not dictated by details of specific sightings of ‘UFOs.’” Hill-Norton followed up his question with another on May 3, asking “why the UFO documents referred to were classified secret; whether these documents had any caveats attached to them; and what was the reason for any such caveats.” The answer was, “One document was classified ‘Secret’ with a ‘UK Eyes Only’ caveat because it contained information about the UK air defence ground environment that could be of significant value to hostile or potentially hostile states. Associated correspondence was given the same classification. Generally, however, notifications of and correspondence on the subject of ‘UFO’ sightings are unclassified.” ♦

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