

**FLYING SAUCERS:**

**TOP SECRET**

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*G. P. Putnam's Sons New York*

*To Robert Wilson Gardner*

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Published simultaneously in the Dominion  
of Canada by Longmans, Green & Company, Toronto.

*Manufactured in the United States of America*

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## Foreword

*National Investigations Committee  
on Aerial Phenomena,  
1536 Connecticut Avenue,  
Washington 6, D.C.  
February 3, 1960*

Today, as we prepare to explore outer space, our leading astronomers agree that millions of other worlds must exist, and that some may have civilizations farther advanced than our own. In 1959, the United States Government accepted this belief, setting up an official station to listen for possible messages from nearby solar systems.

There is now full proof—despite strong efforts to hide the fact—that the earth is under close observation by one or more of these advanced worlds. Since the explosion of the first A-bomb, hundreds of officially verified reports, by pilots and other technically trained observers, have proved that intelligently controlled machines, superior to any earth-made craft, are systematically exploring our planet.

First called “flying saucers,” then officially labeled UFOs—Unidentified Flying Objects—by the United States Air Force, these strange machines have been seen in increasing numbers, in direct proportion to our atomic-bomb tests and the launching of artificial satellites and space probes.

Publicly, the official attitude is still one of debunking the “saucers” and explaining away sightings—a policy made possible by military secrecy orders. But behind the scenes, a far different attitude exists, as shown by the evidence in this book. Further proof, just received, is shown by the offi-

cial instructions of the Air Force Inspector General to Operations and Training commands. On December 24, 1959, under the heading, *UFOS SERIOUS BUSINESS*, the Inspector General gave these directions regarding UFO reports:

"Unidentified flying objects—sometimes treated lightly by the press and referred to as "flying saucers"—must be rapidly and accurately identified as serious USAF business . . ." <sup>1</sup>

The main concern of the Air Force, stated the Inspector General, is whether the object is a threat to the defense of the United States, and secondly, whether it contributes to technical or scientific knowledge. Adding that UFO reports will tend to increase, the Inspector General then instructed Air Force bases to designate investigation officers, each one supplied with a Geiger counter, a camera, binoculars and other equipment. The public, concluded the Inspector General, should be given realistic explanations.

So far, there is no indication of any change in the official debunking policy. It was this policy which led to creation of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena over three years ago. A private organization, with members in the armed forces, Government agencies and many professions and trades, NICAP was created to learn the facts about UFOs and to make them public.

In a majority vote, the NICAP Board of Governors has publicly confirmed Air Force censorship and withholding of UFO reports, a policy declared to be inherently dangerous. In order to end the secrecy, NICAP has repeatedly urged that open Congressional hearings be held. An increasing number of congressmen now favor such hearings, but there is still powerful resistance.

If that resistance continues to block open hearings, it is hoped that this book will bring sufficient public support to end the secrecy on this vitally important subject. The following chapters include all the important evidence presented to individual congressmen and committee chairmen, including details of the behind-the-scenes battle against censorship.

<sup>1</sup> Number 26, Volume XI; see facsimile at the end of this book.

As indicated in the text, the main points are backed by documentary evidence; this is available for inspection at the NICAP office in Washington, except for a few documents listed as confidential, which are certified as genuine by Board members and the Secretary of NICAP.

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to all the NICAP members in the fifty states and foreign countries who have backed our investigation by contributing reports, evaluations, technical opinions and financial support. It is impossible to name the hundreds who have been outstanding in their services, but I am especially indebted to Mr. Richard H. Hall and Miss Elizabeth A. Kendall of the NICAP staff; Mr. Don Neill, Miss Ruth Heisey, Mr. Richard Lechoux, Washington member-volunteers; Miss Miriam Brookman, president of our New York City affiliate, and Mr. Arthur Campbell, president of the Kansas City affiliate.

NICAP advisers not named in the text, but who also contributed valuable services, include astronomer Kenneth Steinmetz, Professor Robert L. Hall, Warrant Officer D. C. Newhouse, First Officer W. R. Peters, Pan American Airlines, Mr. Wilbert B. Smith, former chief of the Canadian UFO project, and Mr. Patrick Lucey, President, Society of American Engineers.

In addition I wish to thank Mr. John DuBarry, Miss Isabel Davis, Mr. Lex Mebane and Mr. Ted Bloecher, of the New York Civilian Saucer Intelligence, and the many others who supplied valuable aid in the fight against unwarranted censorship.

We welcome any new information or assistance that will help in speeding a public Congressional investigation. Though we urge that sources release their names, we shall, if specifically requested, withhold names and identifying details.

DONALD E. KEYHOE  
Major, U.S. Marine Corps, Ret.  
Director of NICAP

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## CHAPTER I

# Encounter Above the Atlantic

The Navy sighting was dynamite.

It was early in '59 when I learned of this hidden report—a startling encounter with a UFO (Unidentified Flying Object). The lead came in a brief message from Admiral Delmer S. Fahrney, former Navy missile chief, whom I had known for years:

Captain James Taylor, USN, Ret., has an important UFO sighting made by a naval pilot and his crew. Call him at Spacetrionics, Inc., in Washington, District 7-9481.

That night, when Captain Taylor gave me this dramatic Navy report, I could see why it had never been released to the public. Later, Admiral Fahrney and I met at the Army-Navy Club and discussed the details. Fahrney knew, as I

did, of other hidden UFO cases—some of them highly significant. But this one stood out in importance.

It had happened in 1956.

Cruising at 19,000 feet, a Navy R7V-2 transport—a four-engine Super-Constellation—was flying west across the Atlantic Ocean. The next stop was Gander, Newfoundland. Final destination, Naval Air Station, Patuxent, Maryland.

The night was clear, visibility unlimited.

In the senior pilot's seat, Commander George Benton was checking the dim-lit instruments.<sup>1</sup> At thirty-four, Benton had a decade of Navy flying behind him. He had made the Atlantic crossing more than two hundred times.

Back in the cabin were two extra Navy air crews, en route home from foreign duty. Most of these men were asleep. Including Benton's regular and relief crews, there were nearly thirty airmen—pilots, navigators and flight engineers—aboard the Constellation.

As Commander Benton finished his cockpit check, he glanced out at the stars. Then he leaned forward, puzzled. A few minutes before, the sea below had been dark. Now there was a cluster of lights, like a village, about twenty-five miles ahead.

Benton looked over at his co-pilot, Lieutenant Peter J. Mooney.

"What do you make of those lights?"

Mooney peered down, startled.

"Looks like a small town!"

"That's what I thought." Benton quickly called the navigator, Lieutenant Alfred C. Erdman. "We must be way off course. There's land down there."

"It can't be land." Erdman hurried forward from his map table. "That last star sight shows—"

He broke off, staring down at the clustered lights.

"Well?" said Benton.

<sup>1</sup> Since the commander and most of his crew are still on active duty, names have been changed.

"They must be ships," said Erdman. "Maybe a rendezvous for some special operation."

"They don't look like ships," said Benton. He called Radioman John Wiggins. No word of any unusual ship movements, Wiggins reported. And no signals from the location of the lights. If they were ships, they were keeping radio silence.

"Wake up those other crews," Benton told Erdman. "Maybe somebody can dope it out."

In a few moments, two or three airmen crowded into the cockpit. Benton cut off the automatic pilot, banked to give them and the men in the cabin a better view.

As the transport began to circle, the strange lights abruptly dimmed. Then several colored rings appeared, began to spread out. One, Benton noticed, seemed to be growing in size.

Behind him, someone gave an exclamation. Benton took another look. That luminous ring wasn't on the surface—it was something rushing up toward the transport.

"What the devil is it?" said Mooney.

"Don't know," muttered Benton. He rolled the Constellation out of its turn to start a full-power climb. Then he saw it was useless. The luminous ring could catch them in seconds.

The glow, he now saw, came from the rim of some large, round object. It reached their altitude, swiftly took shape as a giant disc-shaped machine.

Dwarfing the Constellation, it raced in toward them.

"It's going to hit us!" said Erdman.

Benton had known normal fear, but this was nightmare. Numbed, he waited for the crash.

Suddenly the giant disc tilted. Its speed sharply reduced, it angled on past the port wing.

The commander let out his breath. He looked at Mooney's white face, saw the others' stunned expressions. Watching out the port window, he cautiously started to bank. He stopped as he saw the disc.

It had swung around, was drawing abreast, pacing them at about one hundred yards. For a moment he had a clear glimpse of the monster.

Its sheer bulk was amazing; its diameter was three to four times the Constellation's wing span. At least thirty feet thick at the center, it was like a gigantic dish inverted on top of another. Seen at this distance, the glow along the rim was blurred and uneven. Whether it was an electrical effect, a series of jet exhausts or light from openings in the rim, Benton could not tell. But the glow was bright enough to show the disc's curving surface, giving a hint of dully reflecting metal.

Though Benton saw no signs of life, he had a feeling they were being observed. Fighting an impulse to dive away, he held to a straight course. Gradually, the strange machine pulled ahead. Tilting its massive shape upward, it quickly accelerated and was lost against the stars.

Commander Benton reached for his microphone, called Gander Airport and identified himself.

"You show any other traffic out here?" he asked the tower.

"We had something on the scope near you," Gander told him. "But we couldn't get an answer."

"We saw it," Benton said grimly. "It was no aircraft."

He gave the tower a concise report, and back at Gander teletype messages were rushed to the U.S. Air Defense Command, the Commanding Officer, Eastern Sea Frontier, the Director of Air Force Intelligence and the Air Technical Intelligence Center.

When the Constellation landed at Gander, Air Force Intelligence officers met the transport. From the start, it was plain they accepted the giant-disc sighting as fact. For two hours, Benton and the rest were carefully interrogated, separately and together: *How close did the object come? What was its size . . . estimated rate of climb . . . any electrical interference noted . . . what happened to the other luminous rings?*

From the answers to scores of questions, the majority opinion emerged. The flying disc was between 350 and 400

feet in diameter, and apparently metallic. No interference with ignition noted; instruments not observed and radio not operating during this brief period. Time for the giant disc to climb to the transport's altitude, between five and eight seconds, indicated speed between 1,400 and 2,200 knots; the disc had accelerated above this speed on departure.

Not all the men in the cabin had seen the luminous rings. Of those who had, most were watching the huge disc approach and did not see the "rings" disappear. If they, too, were flying discs, in a rendezvous as some suggested, they apparently had raced off while the other one was checking on the Constellation.

At one point, an Intelligence captain asked Benton if he had seen any indication of life aboard the disc.

"No, but it was intelligently controlled, that's certain." Benton looked at him closely. "That size, it would hardly be remote-controlled, would it?"

"I couldn't say," replied the Air Force man. Nor would he tell what the Gander Airport radar had shown about the disc's speed and maneuvers.

"What's behind all this?" demanded Mooney. "Up to now, I believed the Air Force. You people say there aren't any flying saucers—"

"Sorry, I can't answer any questions," said the captain.

"Why not? After a scare like that, we've got a right to know what's going on."

The Intelligence officer shook his head. "I can't answer any questions," he repeated.

As quickly as possible, Intelligence reports with full details were flashed to the four Defense commanders already notified, with an extra message for the Director of Naval Intelligence.

After the Constellation reached Patuxent, the air crews were interviewed again, by a Navy order. Each man made a written report, with his opinion of what he had seen.

Five days later, Commander Benton had a phone call from a scientist in a high government agency. "I'm informed you had a close-up UFO sighting. I'd like to see you."

Benton checked, found the man was cleared by the Navy. Next day, the scientist appeared, showed his credentials, listened intently to Benton's report. Then he unlocked a dispatch case and took out some photographs.

"Was it like any of these?"

At the third picture, Benton stopped him.

"That's it!" He looked sharply at the scientist. "Somebody must know the answers, if you've got photographs of the things."

The other man took the pictures.

"I'm sorry, Commander." He closed his dispatch case and left.

At the time when I learned of this case, I had served for two years as Director of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena. In '56, NICAP had been organized as a private, nonprofit organization to determine the facts about UFOs. By January of '59, its membership covered all forty-nine (now fifty) states and thirty foreign countries, excluding the USSR.

Since early in 1957, NICAP's policies and operations had been guided by a Board of Governors including Vice-Admiral R. H. Hillenkoetter, former Director of the super-secret Central Intelligence Agency; Dr. Earl Douglass, religious writer and columnist; Major Dewey Fournet, former Pentagon monitor of the Air Force UFO project; Mr. J. B. Hartranft, president of the 82,000-member Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association; Colonel R. B. Emerson, U.S. Army Reserve; Mr. Frank Edwards, veteran TV and radio commentator; Professor Charles A. Maney, physicist, Defiance University; Reverend Albert Baller, Robbins Memorial Church, Greenfield, Massachusetts; Rear Admiral H. B. Knowles, USN, Ret.; Dr. Marcus Bach, educator, author and lecturer, University of Iowa; and Reverend Leon C. Le Van, New Jerusalem Christian Church, Pittsburgh. (Except for Reverend Le Van, this is the present Board.)

During its two years of active investigation, NICAP had acquired special advisers including rocket and space experts, aeronautical engineers, flight surgeons, astronomers, elec-

tronics experts, military, commercial and private pilots, and specialists in many other related fields.

Among our regular members were congressmen, government officials, newsmen, doctors, lawyers—a cross section of many professions and trades.

By this time, our UFO-reporting network covered most of the globe. Besides our regular channels, we had important inside sources, in the armed forces and elsewhere. Without violating security, they had given us leads to crucial UFO information kept from the press.

Since we had established, without any doubt, that the UFOs were neither secret United States or USSR devices, the Board and most of our members believed the censorship wrong. By now, NICAP's policy was well known: To end the secrecy, and to determine what the UFOs were, where they came from, and why they were operating in our skies. By concentrating on facts, we had tried to offset the frauds and ridiculous claims which had helped to mislead the public.

But in spite of our efforts, and a mass of documented new evidence, the censorship had been tightened. We were redoubling our efforts, with the help of several congressmen, when I learned of the giant flying disc encountered above the Atlantic.

In the first part of '57, Admiral Fahrney had been chairman of the NICAP Board, spearheading our first battle against secrecy, and he quickly recognized the value of this startling Navy case.

"If NICAP ever gets Congressional hearings," he said, "the testimony of those air crews would surprise a lot of people."

"It would jolt the whole country," I said. "But Air Force Headquarters is going all out to block hearings. We have a letter to Senator Byrd that proves it."

"How'd you get a copy?"

"Senator Byrd gave it to a NICAP member—the signed original. It's on Secretary of the Air Force letterhead."

"I'd like to see that! Who signed it?"

"Major General W. P. Fisher. He's the Director of Legislative Liaison, represents Secretary Douglas on Capitol Hill. He even denied facts Air Force Intelligence has already admitted."<sup>2</sup>

"Probably he's just carrying out orders," said Fahrney. "He may not believe in the policy any more than we do."

"Sure, I know. If I were in his place, I'd be trying to stop NICAP, too. It must be a tough job, having to keep denying the UFOs are real, knowing it could blow wide open at any time."

Fahrney nodded. "Especially if Congress held hearings."

"Well, as you know, several congressmen are NICAP members, and now others are looking into the censorship. Senator Goldwater came right out and said the flying saucers are real and the Air Force is clamming up. He should know—he's an Air Force Reserve colonel, and he flies jets."

"Any other senators on record?"

"Yes, Saltonstall, Hennings and Smathers—they wrote NICAP or some of our members. Also about twenty representatives—Osmers, Frelingheusen, Ayres, Moeller, Ashley, Baumhart. . . ."

The admiral raised his eyebrows. "It begins to look like action."

"It's still a battle," I said. "But if we do get hearings, it's almost sure to break the censorship. This Navy case alone should do it, if they let those air crews talk."

The day after I saw Admiral Fahrney I went into the NICAP office, at 1536 Connecticut Avenue, and opened a special file containing official statements on UFO secrecy.

On January 22, 1958, more than a year after Air Force Intelligence had questioned Commander Benton and the Navy air crews, I had appeared on the *Armstrong Circle Theater* program, "UFO—Enigma of the Skies." Because the Air Force had drastically censored my script, I tried to reveal a Senate committee's inquiries into UFO secrecy. But the

<sup>2</sup>Original in NICAP files. All documents referred to in footnotes, except confidential reports, are available for inspection.

producer, evidently fearing Air Force reactions, quickly cut me off the air. Only minutes later, Air Force Assistant Secretary Richard E. Horner appeared before the cameras and flatly denied any censorship of the subject.

Realizing he must have known of the giant disc encountered by the Navy men, since all such reports reach top levels, I took out the Air Force-approved script, given to me by the *Armstrong Theater*, and checked Horner's exact words:

"During recent years, there has been a mistaken belief that the Air Force has been hiding from the public information concerning unidentified flying objects. Nothing could be further from the truth. And I do not qualify this in any way. . . . There is no evidence at hand that objects popularly known as 'flying saucers' actually exist."

Less than twenty-four hours later, in an unguarded moment, the Air Force censorship was fully admitted by the PIO (Public Information Officer) at Langley Air Force Base. Evidently unaware of Horner's broadcast, Captain Gregory H. Oldenburgh sent an official statement to NICAP member Larry W. Bryant, Warwick, Virginia:

The public dissemination of data on unidentified flying objects is contrary to Air Force policy and regulations . . . specifically, Air Force Regulation 200-2.<sup>3</sup>

In the folder with Captain Oldenburgh's signed letter was a NICAP file copy of AFR 200-2. Two sections had been marked by one of our staff:

Section B-9: In response to local inquiries resulting from any UFO reported in the vicinity of an Air Force base, information regarding a sighting may be released to the press or the general public by the commander of the Air Force base concerned only if it has been *positively identified as a familiar or known object*. [Air Force italics.]

The other marked paragraph was a key to actual Air Force beliefs about UFOs:

<sup>3</sup>Original in NICAP files.



Section A-3: Since the possibility cannot be ignored that UFOs reported may be hostile or new foreign air vehicles of unconventional design, it is imperative that sightings be reported rapidly, factually, and as completely as possible.<sup>4</sup>

Knowing this, and all the other proof on record, I had wondered how Horner dared make such a public denial. Undoubtedly, he was under strong compulsion, if not direct orders, to keep the UFO story from the American people.

Since then, proof of the secrecy had mounted. One of the frankest admissions had come from the Acting Commandant of the Coast Guard, Rear Admiral J. A. Hirshfield. I got out his letter and was comparing it with Horner's statement when my phone rang.

The call came from Lou Corbin, news director of WFBR in Baltimore. A World War II lieutenant colonel in the Army, Corbin was now a NICAP special adviser. He himself had seen a UFO, and since then he had verified other sightings, reporting them in his newscasts.

"I'll talk fast—I'm six minutes from air time," Corbin told me. "First item. Don't name those two Baltimore test pilots—the ones that the UFO chased."

"Why, what happened?"

"They've been shut up, their company has defense contracts. Now, second item. I just got an advance copy of a new Civil Defense order. It tells all CD members to report UFOs directly to the nearest Air Force base, by phone. It's certainly revealing, an official order to report something that officially doesn't exist."<sup>5</sup>

"Will the Air Force give Civil Defense any answers?"

"Not a chance. It's a one-way deal. Now I'd like to tie this to that Army directive about keeping UFO reports from the public."

"They turned us down—it's classified."

<sup>4</sup> Copy at NICAP. AFR 200-2 may be secured by writing Air Force Headquarters, the Pentagon, Washington 25, D.C.

<sup>5</sup> On file at NICAP.

"Then I'll use that. Give me the high spots."

I quickly summed it up. Three weeks before, we had obtained a copy of the official Daily Bulletin put out by the U.S. Continental Army Command at Fort Monroe. Dated December 29, 1958, it warned USCONARC personnel to follow an Intelligence directive issued on May 27, 1958, in confidential reporting of UFOs.<sup>6</sup>

"We asked for a copy," I said. "Here's the answer: 'Security regulations prohibit sending a copy of the USCONARC Intelligence Directive dated May 27, 1958.'"<sup>7</sup>

"Who signed it?"

"A Headquarters colonel—Lawrence J. M. Mulhall."

"Okay, I'm going to blast this runaround," said Corbin. "It'll be on the air in three minutes."

He hung up, and I looked back at the Coast Guard letter. On August 4, 1958, Acting Commandant Hirshfield had answered our request for an important visual-and-radar UFO report by the Coast Guard Cutter *Sebago*. This official report, said the admiral, had been forwarded to the "designated agency in the Department of Defense." Then he added:

Federal law prohibits the release of official files concerning such cases to other than specified channels. I therefore find it necessary to refuse your request for this information.<sup>8</sup>

The Coast Guard refusal had not surprised me. With Air Force Headquarters in charge of the UFO investigation, they—or whoever controlled the policy—had managed to impose the secrecy provisions on most government agencies. In the case of the Coast Guard, the Federal Aviation Agency and the Civil Aeronautics Board, secrecy was secured under a Joint Chiefs of Staff order, JANAP 146; invoking the Espionage Law, this provided heavy penalties for revealing UFO reports.<sup>9</sup> So far as I knew, the Navy was the only gov-

<sup>6</sup> On file at NICAP.

<sup>7</sup> On file at NICAP.

<sup>8</sup> On file at NICAP.

<sup>9</sup> On file at NICAP.

ernment department without a secrecy directive, and even without this, few sightings were made public.

So overwhelming was the censorship proof that in August, 1958, the NICAP Board of Governors had publicly protested this secrecy.

"From evidence in NICAP's possession," said the Board, "it is clear that the Air Force has withheld and is still withholding information—including sighting reports—on the subject of unidentified flying objects."

This was unanimously approved by all Board members. To the first statement, a majority had added this warning:

"We believe this policy to be dangerous since it makes it possible for the Soviet Government to claim ownership of UFOs (or flying saucers). Such a false claim might create a serious situation in this country."

Immediately, sharp contradictions had been made by the Air Force. As questions began to be asked on Capitol Hill, the Air Force denials increased, from top levels on down to the hundreds of PIOs in the United States and on foreign duty.

Against all this, a Congressional disclosure of the hidden evidence would hit like an H-bomb. But even with the increased support on Capitol Hill, we had no illusions as to what was ahead. The Air Force would use all its power to keep the truth hidden. With Air Force and Army members muzzled, the battle was on to stop Navy leaks and silence airline pilots. As press reports of sightings dwindled, it almost seemed they had won.

Then came the break—a headlined airline sighting and a veteran airline captain who gamely stood up to the Air Force.

With familiar ridicule tactics, the censors moved in to crush him.

It was a fight they would not soon forget.

## CHAPTER II

### The Killian Case

The DC-6 was an hour out of Newark when the captain first saw the UFOs.

It was February 24, 1959; the time, 8:20 P.M.

Until then, the trip had been routine. The nonstop Detroit flight, American Airlines 713, had departed from Newark on schedule. In command was a four-million-miler, Captain Peter W. Killian, fifteen years on the airlines. Riding the co-pilot's right-hand seat was First Officer John Dee.

By 8:15, the two stewardesses, Edna LeGate and Beverly Pingree, had finished serving dinner to the thirty-five passengers aboard. The flight was then over Pennsylvania, the roar of its four engines subdued to a drone in the airliner's sound-proofed cabin.

At 8:19, the plane passed over Bradford; altitude 8,500

feet, air speed 350. Scattered clouds, more than 3,000 feet below, occasionally hid the ground. But on all sides and above the plane the sky was perfectly clear.

Suddenly, Captain Killian noticed three brilliant lights. They were south of the plane, higher, and in a precise line.<sup>1</sup> For an instant, he thought he was seeing Orion. Then he sat up quickly. These were not stars. They were powerful lights on moving objects.

He could see Orion, higher up in the sky. In contrast, the strange flying objects were huge—not only larger, but brighter. Their color, too, was different, an intense yellowish white.

Abruptly, one flying object left the formation. As it came toward the plane, Killian prepared for a hasty turn. But it slowed, some distance away, apparently observing the DC-6.

Killian knew now it was a UFO—some unknown machine, under intelligent control. He could not be sure, but it seemed at least triple the size of the plane.

As swiftly as it had approached, the UFO rejoined the formation. Not until then did Killian tell First Officer Dee about the objects. While Dee watched them, Killian cut in the intercom. It seemed wiser to warn the passengers; in case the mysterious machines came closer, there would be less chance of panic. He made a calm announcement, then had the cabin lights turned out for a better view of the UFOs.

A few moments later, Stewardess LeGate came into the cockpit.

"Captain, one of the passengers is scared. I'm afraid he'll upset the others."

"Send him up here," said Killian.

When the passenger appeared, Killian could see he was frightened.

"There's no sign of danger, sir," Killian told him. "I think they're just looking us over. If they were hostile, they'd have done something about it long before this."

<sup>1</sup> Details confirmed in NICAP interviews with Captain Killian. Published report on file.

"Thanks, Captain"—the man looked nervously out at the lights—"I never believed flying saucers were real."

He went back.

"You can't blame him for being jittery," said Dee. "I'll bet some of the others—"

He stopped. One of the UFOs was moving toward them again.

"We'll hold course," Killian said. "I think it's just pacing us."

This time the machine seemed to come closer. Though the glow was not blinding, Killian could not see behind it. But he knew that whoever controlled the UFO must be watching them intently. It was not a comfortable feeling. He was relieved when the object raced back to join the others.

On a sudden hunch, he put out a radio call, asking if other airline flights could see the UFOs. In seconds, an answer came from an American Airlines captain flying north of Erie.

"We've been watching the formation for ten minutes," he reported. "I'll give you their bearing—you can figure their approximate speed."

When he finished, another American captain called in. His flight was near Toledo, and he had sighted the UFOs after hearing Killian's alert.

Before Killian landed, he sent a UFO report to American Airlines at Detroit. He intended to keep the story quiet, but an aviation expert aboard—Mr. N. D. Puncas, manager of a Curtiss Wright plant—tipped off the Detroit papers.

"I saw these three objects in a clear sky," he told reporters. "They were round, and in precise formation. I've never seen anything like it."

Since the news had broken, an American Airlines executive told Killian to give out his report. Press wires quickly carried the story around the country.

Next morning, a Detroit member of NICAP called my home, near Alexandria, Virginia, and gave me the main de-

tails. I rang up the office, got our associate editor, Richard Hall. He told me an Akron member had just wired a similiar report.

"Three United Airlines crews saw that formation, too," said Hall. "Captain A. D. Yates gave it out when he landed at Akron last night, and Flight Engineer L. E. Baney confirmed it. Flights 937 and 321 agreed the things weren't any known aircraft."

When the Air Force Press Desk refused to comment on the Killian story, I called a Washington news correspondent, a man with good sources in most government departments. In 1952, he had tipped me off to the famous Utah pictures—a color movie of a UFO formation, taken by a Navy photographer. To protect him and his news contacts, I'll call him Henry Brennard.

When I reached him, he had already seen the Killian story. I told him about the United Airlines confirmation.

"Six airline crews!" said Brennard. "It's really building up."

"Could you find out what the Air Force is going to say? If there's a cover-up, and we could tell certain congressmen—"

"Who you working with now?" Brennard cut in.

I told him, then added, "Also, we've promised the names of key witnesses and proof of the censorship to the Senate Preparedness Committee."

"Meaning Senator Lyndon Johnson."

"Yes. Nothing definite yet, but his staff's looking into it."

"Okay, I'll see what I can do."

When I reached the office, Hall was talking on the phone. A lean, red-haired, laconic New Englander, an honor graduate of Tulane University, he had served two years in the Air Force. Since then, he had accumulated a large file of verified UFO evidence, and eight months as NICAP's associate editor had rounded out his knowledge.

"That was Lex Mebane," Hall said as he hung up. "He'll interview Killian when he gets back to New York." Mebane, a NICAP member and an officer of Civilian Saucer Intel-

ligence, New York, often had checked reports for us.

Hall gave me the Akron telegram. I noted the United flight numbers, then dialed the Federal Aviation Agency (formerly the CAA). An FAA press official told me, after hedging at first, that they would not investigate.

"Why not?" I asked. "It was on a Federal airway. FAA is supposed to safeguard airline passengers."

"FAA's responsibility ends when a UFO report is forwarded to the Air Force. Beyond that, no comment."

"You're not concerned about possible danger to passengers?"

"I didn't say that. But anyway, the Air Force has proved such things don't exist."

That evening I heard from Brennard.

"They're worried about Lyndon Johnson—afraid he might order hearings before they can knock down these airline reports. They can't figure any plausible answer, and they don't dare get rough with Killian—at least until they're sure those other pilots won't talk."

"I'm positive they'd back Killian," I said, "unless the Air Force puts pressure on their companies."

"Which they're probably doing right now," said Brennard.

It was not until Friday that the Air Force acted to neutralize the Killian story. Brennard had gotten the word, but I couldn't believe his source had it right until I heard the newscast:

"The Air Force tonight explained that airline pilots who reported flying saucers last Tuesday actually were seeing stars through broken clouds. Officers at the Air Technical Intelligence Center said . . ."

I turned off the radio.

It was preposterous. The sky had been cloudless; Captain Killian, First Officer Dee, the other airline crews and the Curtiss Wright man all were on record. And both Orion and the UFOs had been seen simultaneously, as Mebane's interview had confirmed.

Apparently, the censors hoped Killian would keep silent

to avoid more direct ridicule. It might have worked, if they had not overplayed their hand.

On the day after the sighting, the influential New York *Herald Tribune* had asked for an explanation. Not content with the Orion answer, an Air Force spokesman had released an attack on all flying-saucer witnesses.

Some observers were sarcastically labeled as persons "who can't remember anything when they sober up next day." All the others, the spokesman implied, were either deluded, incompetent, or liars.

To many who later wrote NICAP, it seemed that Captain Killian had been purposely grouped with drunks, to discredit his testimony.

When I finally got Killian on the phone I could sense a controlled anger.

"I never drink before or during a flight," he said flatly. "The Air Force knows it's a strict airline rule."

"What do you think of the Orion answer?"

"It's not true," said Captain Killian. "In the first place, the clouds were 3,500 feet *below* us. Second, we saw the UFOs and Orion at the same time, repeatedly. Even if there had been broken clouds, no experienced airline pilot would be deceived like that."

"Would you tell all this to a Congressional committee?" I asked him.

"I certainly would!"

After I explained NICAP's purpose, Captain Killian agreed to meet me in New York on March 27. Before we finished, I asked about a statement the *Herald Tribune* said he had made:

"I am sure there are people on other planets who have solved the problem of space travel. I sincerely believe their vehicles are coming close to the earth."

"Is that correct?" I asked.

"Yes," said Killian, "that is what I believe."

The anonymous spokesman's attack, combined with the Orion explanation, brought a quick reaction. At NICAP,

a flood of mail, telegrams and calls protested the Air Force treatment of Killian. On Long Island, between trips, Killian was besieged with requests for press and radio interviews. In one statement taped by Paul Parker, of WIP, Philadelphia, he bluntly denounced the Air Force tactics.

The Orion answer, he said, had been put out by a Pentagon group without ever hearing the evidence. Not a single Air Force representative had questioned him or Dee or the other American crews.

At that time American Airlines appeared to be backing his fight. The *Flagship*, the line's magazine, published a full report of his sighting, and a copy was sent to the Air Force.

By coincidence, a Navy statement helped to boost public interest in UFOs. On March 11, Rear Admiral George Dufek advised the public not to discount the reality of flying saucers.

"Some of the supposed meteor explosions in our atmosphere," he said, "might be saucers from Venus or other planets, driven by intelligent creatures. I think it is very stupid for human beings to think no one else in the universe is as intelligent as we are."

By the middle of March, the censors knew they were in trouble. Not only was sympathy building up for Killian, but the Orion story was being called an outright phony by many who had followed the case.

On March 19, Air Force Headquarters came to a hard decision.

The Orion explanation would have to be killed.

Next day, at a Pentagon press conference, this answer was officially retracted. Then a new explanation was released:

The "mysterious objects" seen by Captain Killian and other pilots had proved to be nothing but B-47 bombers refueling in flight from a KC-97 tanker.

Whether the reporters believed it or not, most of their papers ran the story straight. A few used it to get laughs; Killian was quoted as saying he'd been chased by a "saucer with little green men."

Even before this, the ridicule had spread to Captain Kil-

lian's family. When the tanker story came out, his smoldering anger flamed.

"First they said I'd been drinking!" he told reporters. "Then I was seeing stars through clouds. Now they jump to another contradictory story.

"I don't care what the Air Force says! I know exactly what B-47's look like refueling. I know the KC-97 tanker, the number of lights it has. The objects I saw were at least three times the size of any tanker or bomber we have. They could travel at 2,000 miles an hour. And they were *not* conventional aircraft!"

Killian's hot retort was printed in New York and Long Island papers, and word swiftly reached the Pentagon. One PIO, I learned later, was about to blast back when the censors stopped him. The Air Force grimly kept silent.

Four days after this, as I was preparing material for the discussion in New York, Lou Corbin called.

"I have a Maryland congressman—Representative Sam Friedel—all set to hop onto this Killian business."

"Does the Air Force know he's working with you?"

"I don't know. He's not afraid of them, if that's what you mean. Are you going to see Captain Killian on Friday?"

"Yes, he's coming into New York."

"See if he'll come down to Washington and meet Congressman Friedel. I think Friedel will ask Senator Goldwater and some others to listen to Killian's story. It might work into a red-hot press conference."

When I flew to New York on the 27th, Corbin had arranged to tape a preliminary interview with Representative Friedel. He was to phone me afterward.

I checked into my hotel and called Killian's home. His wife answered. Then the blow fell.

"Captain Killian has been silenced by the Air Force," Mrs. Killian told me. "He's under strict orders. He can't meet you or talk with anyone about what he saw."

Then she told me how it had happened.

The demand that Killian be muzzled, after his blast at

the Air Force, had been relayed through American Airlines. It was a clear violation of the pilot's civil rights, as well as the airline's. What arguments or pressure had been used, Mrs. Killian did not know. But a private citizen, in peacetime, had been summarily silenced.

An hour or so later, Lou Corbin phoned.

"I suddenly had the idea of getting Killian on this tape with Representative Friedel. I called—and his wife said the Air Force had shut him up!"

"I know. She told me, too."

"Well, whoever ordered it may get a jolt! Friedel says he'll guarantee Killian his 'day in court' if he has to start a Congressional investigation."

"Can we quote that?"

"Absolutely. It's on the tape."

"Is Representative Friedel writing Killian?"

"No, Killian has to make the first move."

"He won't do it, Lou."

"But, good heavens, a congressman—"

"If a committee subpoenaed him, he'd have to talk, but he won't dare disobey that order. He'd lose his job."

"Say, do you suppose they found out about Friedel? This could've been rushed through to stop Killian from meeting any congressmen."

"It's possible. But I think they'd have shut him up, anyway, after he lit into them."

When Killian was muzzled, I thought the censors would be satisfied. But there still was a danger, as Henry Brennard pointed out when I returned to Washington:

"Killian is on record that he knew exactly what night refueling looks like. He even gave reporters the number of lights on a KC-97's belly. So how could he have been fooled? That's what a lot of people would like to know—and they're asking questions."

As disbelief in the Air Force answer mounted, the censors took a final, incredible step.

"You won't believe this," Brennard said when he told me.

"They've put out a statement Killian is supposed to have made on the night of the sighting. The Air Force claims American Airlines gave it to them. Here it is:

" 'Having never seen night refueling of jets by a tanker, I suppose that could be what we saw.' "<sup>2</sup>

"Henry, that's absolutely untrue! I talked with Captain Killian myself, and he described night refueling—"

"Well, they've fixed him now. But it's almost unbelievable—to silence a man like Killian and then call him a liar, when he can't defend himself. I wonder what kind of thinking is back of a trick like that."

It was the first time Brennard had shown such concern over the censorship, though other newsmen I knew had been increasingly disturbed. Even some congressmen were seriously worried, suspecting that something frightening lay behind the official secrecy. One, I recalled, was Representative Ralph J. Scott. He had revealed his uneasiness in writing a NICAP member:

I quite agree with you that the general public should be allowed information thus far known about Flying Objects, except of course in the case where they might become unduly alarmed or panicked by such a revelation. I am sure you can readily understand and appreciate the seriousness of such a reaction.

If the information could be presented to the American public in such a way as to appeal to reason and not to emotion, I think it would be a good thing.<sup>3</sup>

But could the facts be presented without causing panic? Would an appeal to reason work?

There was no easy answer. To evaluate the grounds for fear, one would have to know the main points of the whole flying-saucer story, especially the important items NICAP had learned since '56:

The hushed-up Captain Ryan case, involving three government agencies . . . the truth behind the November '57

<sup>2</sup> Signed Air Force statement in NICAP files.

<sup>3</sup> Original in NICAP files.

crisis, and why an Air Force major general had warned his command not to talk . . . the refusal of ATIC (Air Technical Intelligence Center) to explain its earlier admission about pilots firing on UFOs . . . and the strange script on "saucers" for closed-circuit use at Lackland Air Force Base.

There were scores of other revealing developments, all of them documented. Perhaps the most serious of all was an extract from an Intelligence report—the startling opinions of an Air Force pilot and his crew, after a peculiar encounter.

Somewhere in this hidden information were the clues to the UFO riddle and the causes of censorship.

The search for the truth, by NICAP, had begun in early '57.

It had been a sobering, sometimes incredible two years.

## CHAPTER III

### Round One

The need for a national UFO investigations group, free from any official control, was apparent long before NICAP was created.

In 1953, Mr. A. M. Sonnabend, president of the Hotel Corporation of America, wrote me suggesting just such a group. (Mr. Sonnabend later became a NICAP Board member.) Leaders in other fields agreed, but problems delayed the organization until the fall of 1956.

By then it was clear that no lone-wolf investigator could hope to crack the secrecy wall. In my own case, even with unusual sources, I had made mistakes which a staff would have caught. I knew now it would take a determined group to untangle the facts from the maze of official contradictions.

Even a sketchy review, year by year, showed how the truth had been obscured:

#### 1944-1945

In the winter of 1944-45, hundreds of Allied airmen had encountered flying discs and spheres—nicknamed “foo-fighters”—over Nazi-occupied Europe. In one case, a B-24 bomber was followed by a formation of fifteen discs. Crews at first feared they were new Nazi weapons. But there was no attack, though UFOs paced Allied planes on bomb runs, in power dives and even in forced landings.

Later, B-29 crews met similar objects on bombing runs to Japan. After the war, our Intelligence found that the Nazis and Japs also were puzzled, thinking the UFOs an Allied invention, purpose unknown. Publicly, the sightings were blamed on “pilot fatigue” and delusions. But the Intelligence report never was released.

#### 1946

The “foo-fighter” riddle was kept alive by scattered sightings over Europe, at sea, and over the United States. Official reports were suppressed; one, for example, described the flight of a large rocket-shaped ship over Florida’s east coast, as seen by Captain Jack E. Puckett, Army Air Corps, on August 1, 1956.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1947

Hundreds of high-speed, fast-maneuvering discs and rocket-type machines were sighted all over the world. In the United States, over two hundred were reported by Air Force, Navy and airline pilots, by missile experts, airport tower operators and other trained observers.

On June 27, the Air Force stated, “We have no idea what they are.” Seriously concerned, they ordered their pilots to

<sup>1</sup> Details in Chapter VII.



down a UFO for examination, by shooting, or by ramming and bailing out.

On July 5, Air Force Headquarters told the press: "The 'saucers' are hallucinations; no investigation is needed." That same day, at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, senior officers said: "The Air Force is making a serious investigation."

On September 23, ATIC drew up a secret conclusion that the "flying saucers" were real.<sup>2</sup> Publicly, after the UFOs' speed made attempts to catch them futile, the Air Force stated: "We are completely mystified."

## 1948

On January 8, the Air Force admitted that Captain Thomas Mantell, World War II ace, had been killed while pursuing a flying saucer. It set up a secret investigative unit called Project Sign, later Project Grudge, then Project Blue Book. This included astronomers, missile engineers, radar experts, analysts and other specialists, besides pilots and Intelligence officers.

After the Mantell tragedy, the interplanetary answer was bolstered by an Eastern Air Lines encounter with a double-decked rocket ship on an airway near Montgomery, Alabama. The project sent a top-secret evaluation to the Pentagon, concluding that the UFOs were spaceships from another planet. (The existence of this document, later declassified and burned, was confirmed in 1956 by Captain Edward J. Ruppelt, former chief of Project Blue Book. Additional proof has been received by the NICAP Board.)

## 1949

General Hoyt Vandenburg, Air Force Chief of Staff, refused to accept the spaceship conclusion, warning project officers of the effect on the public. The policy was changed to

<sup>2</sup> Confirmed by Captain Edward J. Ruppelt, former chief of Project Blue Book.

one of explaining away sightings. In December, the project was declared closed, then all sightings were labeled mistakes, hallucinations or hoaxes. But an Intelligence summary, apparently released by error, made public this suggestion about possible space-race observations of our world:

Such a civilization might observe that on earth we now have atomic bombs and are fast developing rockets. In view of the past history of mankind they should be alarmed. We should therefore expect at this time above all to behold such visitations.

This document, which also revealed the "explaining-away" policy, was examined by a few newsmen at the Pentagon. Several copies were made before the summary was withdrawn from the press.

## 1950

Again, hundreds of global UFO sightings were reported by veteran pilots and other trained observers. Example: The February 22nd visual-and-radar tracking of two maneuvering discs at Key West Naval Air Station. In March, the Pentagon cleared an article by Commander R. B. McLaughlin, USN, then in charge of Navy guided-missile tests at White Sands. Commander McLaughlin disclosed several UFO sightings, one of an object tracked at 18,000 m.p.h. He also stated his belief that the objects were spaceships, probably from Mars. (Captain McLaughlin is now a NICAP adviser.) Following the Air Force debunking policy, Colonel Harold E. Watson, then Chief of ATIC, publicly insisted:

"Behind nearly every report tracked down stands a crackpot, a religious crank, a publicity hound or a malicious practical joker."

## 1951

The UFO project was fully reactivated, after new, serious concern at Air Force Headquarters. This was partly caused

by impressive military sightings, including a filmed encounter at White Sands. Publicly, the Air Force still denied the existence of flying saucers.

## 1952

This year saw the greatest number of verified UFO sightings ever recorded. Stated an ATIC colonel: "These people are not crackpots; they are seeing something." Air Force Secretary Finletter added: "There are flying-saucers sightings the Air Force is unable to explain." Captain Ruppelt, at Project Blue Book, told the press: "The flying saucers haven't struck yet. But that doesn't mean they are not a potential threat."

Shortly after this, the Air Force again ordered its pilots to fire on UFOs. When this became public, protests caused the order to be revoked. To calm hysteria over the nationwide sightings, the Air Force held a debunking press conference. But behind the scenes the massed evidence led to a plan for releasing UFO information, including the Utah formation pictures.

## 1953

In January, leading scientists secretly weighed the evidence at the Pentagon, at the instigation of the Central Intelligence Agency. The plan to inform the public was disapproved, reportedly because of CIA pressure. (This was after Admiral Hillenkoetter served as CIA Director.) Censorship was tightened, but leaks continued. In November, the Air Force was seriously worried by the loss of an F-89 jet and its two-man crew. An official statement from Truax Air Force Base said the jet was followed by radar until it merged with an object over Lake Superior. The object was not identified, nor was any trace of the jet or its crew ever found.

## 1954

As Mars approached the earth, UFO sightings quickly increased here and abroad, as in previous Mars oppositions. Marine Corps jet pilots reported meeting a UFO squadron near Dallas. A British airliner crew encountered a mother ship and six smaller UFOs. As the censorship cracked, the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Nathan Twining, publicly stated: "There is no proof these things are real, but if there is a civilization on Mars that far ahead of us I don't think we have anything to worry about."

## 1955

In April, Air Force jets fired on a UFO circling a weather balloon near Rockford, Illinois.<sup>3</sup> But renewed censorship kept most sightings from the press. On October 8, General Douglas MacArthur was quoted in *The New York Times* as saying world nations would have to unite against enemies from outer space. He refused any further explanation. Soon afterward, the Air Force issued a new debunking report, Project Blue Book Report 14. It was immediately denounced by Captain Ruppelt as a revival of a "worthless" evaluation he had discarded when he was project chief in 1953. (Report 14 is still quoted by Air Force Headquarters as proving all its claims.)

By September 1956, the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena had been formally established. This first step was taken by a small group headed by Mr. Townsend Brown. Though I did not then join the staff, I helped to secure Board members.

Thus far in '56, continued UFO operations and censorship had shown the increasing need for an open, national investigation. The most serious incident occurred one night in January when Colonel Lee Merkel, Commander of the Ken-

<sup>3</sup> Signed report and press account in NICAP files.

tucky Air National Guard, was killed in a crash. He was reported to have been pursuing a strange flying object just before the disaster.

On through '56, the saucers' reconnaissance continued. But NICAP was not yet equipped to investigate. Few people had heard of it, and support was slow in coming. By the end of the year, it seemed to be doomed.

In mid-January of '57, Mr. Brown resigned. When the Board of Governors met to decide NICAP's fate, I was present as an observer. The situation seemed to be hopeless, but the Board members were tougher than I'd expected. Even Reverend Albert Baller, the quietest man in the group, stood up and stubbornly insisted that NICAP had to go on.

"If we end it," he said, "the truth will be buried deeper than ever. The Air Force will say we gave up because we found the saucers didn't exist."

Professor Charles A. Maney, a big, kindly physicist from Defiance University, nodded agreement.

"NICAP is needed. Let's give it another chance."

As a new start, Admiral Fahrney was elected chairman of the Board. It was a good choice; Fahrney was a fighter, as well as a pilot and missile expert. For years, he'd had to battle Navy skeptics before his program for pilotless weapons was accepted. Now widely known as "the father of guided missiles," he had the confidence of many experts on rockets and space-travel planning.

After Fahrney was named chairman, the Board offered me the job of directing NICAP.

The most pressing need was pinpointed by Colonel Robert B. Emerson, a decorated veteran of World War II. Colonel Emerson was director of the Command and General Staff Department, 4157th U.S. Army Reserve School. He was also a physicist, and after a scientific evaluation of UFO evidence, in his testing laboratories at Baton Rouge, he had been convinced the flying saucers were some kind of superior machine, source unknown.

"We'll never get going," said Emerson, "until we let the public know what NICAP's trying to do. We need members

in every state, a reporting and investigating network. I'd say our first job is to get out a nationwide news story. Lay the facts on the line."

"Yes," said Fahrney, "but some newspapers ridicule everything connected with flying saucers."

"They won't if you make a statement, as Board chairman. There's one danger, though. We should try to avoid a fight with the Air Force."

"I don't intend to blast the Air Force," replied Fahrney. "I'm sure many of them don't like the policy."

Next morning, he met the wire-service men and local reporters. In a statement devoid of fireworks, he cited three main points:

1. Reliable reports, by pilots and other trained observers, indicated that unidentified objects—apparently controlled—were navigating in our skies.

2. These unknown flying objects maneuvered at high speed, sometimes changing positions in formation—added evidence of intelligent control.

3. Neither the United States nor Russia could, at this time, match the speeds and accelerations of these objects, as reported by pilots and radar observers.

The reporters were plainly impressed; it was the first time a leading American missile expert had backed the UFO reports.

"But why was NICAP set up when the Air Force already is investigating?" asked one wire-service man.

Many observers, Fahrney told him, had stopped reporting UFOs to the Air Force because of frustration over the policy.

"That is," he explained, "all information going in, and none coming out."

"Then your organization will give out whatever you learn?"

"Yes," said Fahrney, "after a careful evaluation, we'll release our findings to the public."

By evening, most American newscasters were featuring the story. By morning, it was on front pages, here and abroad. In many American papers Fahrney's report had unexpected

support from a noted astronomer—Dr. Clyde W. Tombaugh, discoverer of the planet Pluto.

Several years before, Dr. Tombaugh had reported a UFO which moved at terrific speed. But recently he had been silent, perhaps because of an official assignment. For two years he had headed the armed forces' search for unknown natural satellites, and any UFO statement might have been misconstrued. But now, apparently inspired by Fahrney's forthright declaration, he revealed a later sighting, with a strong hint that he thought the UFOs were spaceships:

These things, which do appear to be directed, are unlike any other phenomena I ever observed. . . . Other stars in our galaxy may have hundreds of thousands of inhabitable worlds. Races on these worlds may have been able to utilize the tremendous amounts of power required to bridge the space between the stars.

Some time after this I learned that the Tombaugh story was partly responsible for the continued Air Force silence. Taking on Fahrney was risky enough, because of his prestige. To belittle the former chief of their satellite search would double the danger. Both men had friends in high scientific circles. Some of this group, as the Air Force was aware, had seen UFOs and knew the truth. If sufficiently provoked, they might reveal their sightings to the press. The censors kept silent, hoping the public interest would soon subside.

But Fahrney had kindled a fire that could not be put out.

Within twenty-four hours, NICAP was swamped with mail, telegrams and long-distance calls, many bringing hidden reports.

One early letter, from professional writer Emile Shurmacker, revealed an attempt by *This Week* magazine to uncover the truth. In 1956, Editor-in-Chief William Nichols had assigned Shurmacker to this project and had asked Air Force assistance. But ATIC had bluntly refused. Nichols had fought all the way to the top, only to be told by high Air Force officials that nothing could be released.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Original letter in NICAP files.

As might have been expected, several important hidden sightings came from Navy men, especially officers who had known Admiral Fahrney. One report, withheld for five years, came from John C. Williams, a former Navy pilot, now an oil operator in Texas. After graduating from Annapolis, Williams had flown for ten years in the Navy, going up to the rank of lieutenant commander.

"I believe the wraps should be taken off information regarding UFOs," Williams told us. Then he gave us his sighting, which had happened in June 1952, near Tombstone, Arizona.<sup>5</sup>

"The day was hot and clear, except for scattered clouds," Williams reported. "It was about 6:30 P.M., and the sun was still fairly high. My wife and one of our guests were watching the sunset reflections on Cochise's Hide-Out, north across the valley, when they sighted a strange object flying toward Tombstone from the direction of Tucson.

"My wife called the rest of us and we were amazed to see this huge, circular object in level flight somewhere between 20,000 and 30,000 feet." (This estimate is based on the height of the clouds.)

Suddenly, Williams said, the UFO stopped in mid-flight. It hovered, oscillating or tilting from side to side for several moments. Then it reversed its direction and retraced its course.

"Two times, it repeated this performance," Williams told NICAP. "There was no noise whatever. We saw no lights nor any evidence of a jet stream or exhaust."

As the object hovered, Williams and his guests could distinctly see the shape of the strange machine.

"It looked like two saucers, one inverted on top of the other," Williams described it. "I estimated the diameter to be at least three hundred feet—though it could have been greater, depending on the altitude.

"It left at a slight climbing angle," said Williams. "Its speed was unbelievable. It headed northwest toward Tucson,

<sup>5</sup>Signed report in NICAP files.

diminishing to a tiny speck and then vanishing, in about four seconds."

The former Navy pilot's opinion, based on this sighting and evidence he had heard, was that the flying saucers are controlled, apparently metallic, machines from outer space:

"I don't know where they come from, but I have the feeling we are being observed and studied by these outer-space beings."

In the weeks after Admiral Fahrney's press story, our UFO-reporting network grew rapidly. Hundreds of interested citizens, members and nonmembers of NICAP, offered to report and investigate local sightings.

Among these volunteers were seventeen pilots, three astronomers, a former Air Force Intelligence captain, and the head of a private detective agency. One pilot was a woman who had served in the WASPS. Within a short time, we had added radar experts, meteorologists, airport-tower operators, flight surgeons and various other specialists.

Some members, especially those nationally known, asked us not to release their names. But others, then and in months to come, ignored possible ridicule—members like Dr. Carl Jung, Senator Goldwater, Gloria Swanson and cartoonist Ted Key. Many members released their names with certified sightings, like Jack Foster, editor of the *Rocky Mountain Daily News*, in Denver:

"I saw three objects after dark, near the foothills south of Denver. Their color was a bright orange. The three spheres moved parallel to the horizon on a southern course. This also was reported to our office by a number of people."

Sometimes, our confidential members gave us more valuable information than they could if their names were public. One of these was a National Airlines captain.

"One night several years ago," he reported, "my crew and I saw a 'saucer' at fairly close range. We were flying north from Miami to Washington. It was late and the cabin lights were dimmed when this UFO angled down on our right. We could see it was round from the faint glow around it.

"It was coming in pretty fast, and instinctively I cut off our lights and nosed down, to pull away. But the thing came right after us, and I realized a collision was more likely with a dark plane. So I snapped all the lights on. The 'saucer' shot up and climbed out of sight. I don't know why it came after us—or why it raced off when the lights came on."

The captain agreed to serve as a special adviser and to report any new UFO sightings, if we kept his appointment confidential.

Other airline pilots, already on record, openly joined our panel of advisers. The first was Captain William B. Nash, of Pan American Airways. In 1952, near Norfolk, Captain Nash and his co-pilot had seen a formation of thick one-hundred-foot discs maneuver beneath their airliner, then veer off at high speed. (Later, an Air Force Intelligence officer told me this was one of the most important sightings on record.)

Besides the scores of UFO reports, this first period brought us important tips. One, involving the Army Signal Corps, came early in February, from a New York chemical engineer.

"Here's an official copy of a new Army order," he wrote me. "Ft. Monmouth rushed it through after Admiral Fahrney asked for sighting reports."

The order, Number 30-13, was dated January 31, 1957, and signed by Colonel Charles L. Olin, Chief of Staff. Headed SIGHTINGS OF UNCONVENTIONAL AIRCRAFT, it contained the following provisions:

Persons involved in sightings will not discuss or disseminate such information to persons or agencies other than their superior officer(s) and other personnel authorized by the Acting Chief of Staff, G-2, this headquarters. [G-2 is the designation for Army Intelligence.]

(On May 10, 1957, after two NICAP protests, Ft. Monmouth told the Committee that the January 31st order had been changed, with the censorship provision deleted. A copy of the new order was enclosed to prove this. However, a later

Department of the Army order reimposed secrecy restrictions on August 6, 1957.)

The day after the New York letter arrived I saw Henry Brennard at his office and showed him the Ft. Monmouth order.

"I'm not surprised," he said. "Probably the Air Force asked them to put it out. I was going to phone you that they've reminded all commanders about AFR-200. You haven't gotten any Air Force sightings, have you—I mean, since this Fahrney deal?"

"Well, the Air Defense Command asked if we wanted reports," I said.

"You're kidding!"

"No, it was real—an ADC letter asking if we wanted recent UFO reports from Ground Observer Corps spotters. Somebody obviously mistook NICAP for a new official agency."

"Why didn't you say sure, come across with the reports?"

"We did, a little more formally. No answer. Did you learn anything else?"

Brennard shook his head. "No, but your Committee is the first big threat to the censorship. You people watch your step—you could get booby-trapped."

I thought of Brennard's warning when a new tip came in, from a man I'd known for years. Almost every lead he'd given me had worked out. He had been in the Air Force himself, at a missile test center, and he still had close friends on active duty.

This time he was relaying new information about an Air Force plane accident in 1956. It had been a strange case, and I'd always been suspicious of the final explanation.

The accident had involved a C-131-D, the Air Force name for the two-engine Convair airliner. On the night of July 22, 1956, this Air Force plane was cruising at 16,000 feet, near Pixley, California. The pilot, Major Mervin M. Stenvers, was a veteran with thousands of hours.

Suddenly there was a crashing impact, as if something had

struck the tail. The Convair went into a steep dive. For several thousand feet Major Stenvers fought the controls, then he finally got the nose up.

After a cautious emergency landing, at Bakersfield, Stenvers and the crew climbed out and looked at the tail. It was badly battered, and it seemed a miracle they hadn't crashed.

The news story, with pictures of the crumpled tail surfaces, quoted a senior Air Force officer at Bakersfield:

"Evidently something hit the plane from above. We don't know yet what it was."<sup>6</sup>

Meantime, it developed that a flying saucer had been reported near Fresno a few hours before the accident. Witnesses described it as oval-shaped, like a tilted disc. It had a greenish light at the rear, possibly the glow of an exhaust. Inevitably, the UFO story began to be linked with the mystery collision.

But these rumors had barely started when the Air Force acted to spike them. Metal fatigue, they said, had weakened the tail surfaces. When the tail gave way, the Air Force explained, the failure was so violent it misled Major Stenvers and the crew into thinking something had hit the plane.

Having flown in many Convairs, I found this hard to accept. During the years they had flown the airways, with millions of passengers, there had been no such failures. To make certain, I checked with the Civil Aeronautics Board. No Convair tail-surface failure was on record, the CAB told me; it was incredible that such a thing could happen except in violent turbulence. And the C-131-D had been flying smoothly, on a straight course.

In sending me the new details, my informant had confidentially identified the Air Force pilot who gave him the facts. Then he had added:

Don't let the details get out as to where "X" is stationed, or anything that would put the finger on him.

The special report followed:

\* Press accounts on file at NICAP.

"X" was at Edwards Air Force Base when the investigating team there worked on the C-131 crash. . . . Major Stenvers, the pilot of the C-131, said he saw a UFO before they were struck. Before this, "X" didn't believe in UFOs. He has now changed his mind.<sup>7</sup>

Until now, I had never doubted this source. Frequently he had denounced hoaxers who confused the UFO issue. But Brennard's warning brought a faint, nagging doubt to my mind. Could this news have been planted to get NICAP to publish the claim and then have Stenvers deny it? It didn't seem likely; the Air Force couldn't know the story would be relayed to me, unless my informant had switched sides, and that I couldn't believe.

Besides this, the Air Force had already been criticized for its "metal fatigue" explanation. A number of aeronautical engineers, airline pilots and metallurgists had refused to accept it. An Air Force denial of a NICAP claim would only focus new attention on their hasty explanation.

But though logic indicated the story was genuine, I marked it for a follow-up.

If this story proved true—if a UFO had hit the plane—it would lead to a fateful question.

Had the Convair been struck by accident—or was it the deliberate act of beings from some other world?

<sup>7</sup> Existence of this letter certified by NICAP Secretary Richard Hall and Board member Frank Edwards.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Hoax

On March 9, 1957, a new and sensational UFO report added to the public confusion about flying saucers. It also gave us our first chance for a behind-the-scenes investigation of an important case.

About 6 A.M. I was awakened by a telephone call. It came from a NICAP member in Washington, an official in a Government aviation agency.

"My office just phoned," he said. "They told me a Pan American DC-6 nearly collided with a 'saucer' three hours ago. The Civil Aeronautics Board got a preliminary flash and a follow-up from Miami Air Traffic Control."

"Where did it happen?"

"Off Florida, on the New York-San Juan run. Here are the main points in the CAB flash: 'Douglas 6A PAA Flight 257

to avoid unidentified object traveling east to west, pilot took violent evasive action. Object appeared to have a brilliant greenish-white center with an outer ring which reflected the glow from the center.

"First impression was jet afterglow followed by spotlight. Above description fits with what seven other flights also saw which were within a range of 250 to 300 miles. . . . Miami ATC reports no missile activity. . . . Original reports of possible jet activity discounted." That's it, Don. I'll mail you a copy."

"You think the story will break?"

"It's bound to. Some passengers were hurt and the captain radioed San Juan to have ambulances at the airport."

As quickly as possible, NICAP members interviewed the Pan American pilots and also some of the passengers. Several important details had been missed by the papers.

It was just before midnight on March 8 when Flight 257 took off from Idlewild International Airport, on Long Island. Because of a storm center over the Atlantic, Captain Matthew Van Winkle flew west of his usual course.

At 3:33 A.M., the DC-6 was at 70 degrees, 40 minutes west longitude, 30 degrees north latitude—approximately abeam of Jacksonville. First Officer D. W. Taylor had gone back into the cabin when a bright light abruptly appeared to the right of the plane.

For a split second, Captain Van Winkle thought it was the spotlight of a jet interceptor. Since he was off the regular flight path, a jet pilot might be checking the plane's identity. But he swiftly dismissed the idea. The light was too bright, and it had a sharply defined edge, like a shiny rim reflecting the glow.

The strange object seemed to be headed toward the plane, on a collision course. Captain Van Winkle hauled back on the controls, overriding the automatic pilot. The DC-6 zoomed steeply, climbing 1,500 feet before he could get the nose down. Most of the passengers, belts unfastened, were

<sup>1</sup> Official copy on file at NICAP.

thrown from their seats. Hand baggage, coats and parcels flew through the air.

As Van Winkle got the DC-6 under control, the radio came alive with excited reports from other Pan American pilots on the San Juan run. The first was Captain Edward Perry; he too had seen the unknown object. Then Captain Robert Wyland called in. The UFO, he said, had a reddish rear-section which dropped off and fell like a flare.

Two hours before, Captain Kenneth G. Brosdal told Van Winkle, he had seen another mystery object, just like the one Wyland had described. It appeared as if a fiery rear-section had dropped away from the main part. Until now, he had kept still to avoid ridicule.

Since the Wyland and Brosdal reports paralleled the description of a rocket booster, the object Van Winkle saw was at first suspected of being a United States missile which had gone astray. But even before all the evidence was known to us, we had ruled out this answer.

Very few cases were on record where missiles had gone so far out of control; almost always, missiles in trouble were destroyed by remote control. The odds against two missiles going astray in the same area, at about the same time, were astronomical. Also, Florida missile launchings always were monitored by the press. As a final point, the official CAB flash had said there was no missile activity.

Inevitably, some papers suggested the UFO had been a large meteor. But Van Winkle told NICAP the object had moved *below* the horizon, which would cancel that answer. Having seen thousands of meteors, he was positive he had sighted an unknown object, though it was farther than he had believed at first. Most of the other pilots agreed.

On the night of the Pan American sighting there had been two other UFO encounters, one by a DC-3 crew flying near Houston, Texas, the other by a pilot at Baudette, Minnesota.

In the Texas case, the report came from Victor Hancock, pilot of a company-executive plane. Between Beaumont and



Houston, he and co-pilot Guy Miller had seen a strange machine with three brilliant lights. It had stopped in mid-air, then had flown under and around them.

"It was at least the size of the DC-3," said Hancock. "We tried to follow it, but it was faster and it just played around with us."

At Baudette, the sighting had been made on the ground, by a pilot with 2,000 flying hours. The object he saw was circular, from fifteen to eighteen feet in diameter. Moving upwind, its odd glow shone on the snow-covered ground. It was so low that it seemed to suck the loose snow up under it as it passed.

Though both sightings had interesting details, the Pan American story drew more attention, because of the injured passengers.

By federal law, the CAB had to investigate this airline accident. With the aid of outside scientists, it began a thorough check.

Without waiting for the scientists' opinion, the Air Force quickly gave an answer to the press:

The "mystery object" seen by the Pan American crews was only a shooting star.

The Air Force gave no hint that Van Winkle and other pilots had rejected this explanation.

Weeks later, the CAB told me the case was still unsolved. Their astronomer consultants had found no proof of a shooting star or fireball. But our attempts to publicize this failed. By then, most of the press had printed the Air Force answer.

Not long after this, I made an odd discovery. During a visit to Cincinnati, for a lecture and television appearances, I met a former Air Force Intelligence man, Leonard H. Stringfield. Now an advertising executive, he had made a careful study of UFOs, and we had often exchanged confidential information.

After my talk, Stringfield drove me to the airport.

"Something's been worrying me," he said. "This is off the

record, for now. I'm working secretly with the Columbus Air Filter Center."<sup>2</sup>

"You're what?" I exclaimed.

"I know it sounds peculiar. But I've got an official hookup with the Center—the Air Force pays the phone bill. I'm coded as Post 3-0-Blue, for reporting any UFO sightings I get."

"But you've hit the Air Force policy as hard as anyone. I don't get it."

Stringfield slowed for a traffic light.

"I know, but they don't seem to mind. These Filter Center officers are dead serious about getting 'saucer' reports. I've had some publicity, and people often call me if they see a UFO."

"And the Air Force came to you?"

Stringfield nodded. "They asked if I'd help, confidentially. Then they gave me this special hookup. They want sightings relayed immediately—even if it's 3 A.M. Several times, they've scrambled jets when I reported."

"Ever give you any answers?"

"No. I tried, but no luck." Stringfield hesitated. "I've a hunch they'd give a lot to get NICAP's reports—if you'd do it privately."

I looked at him sharply. "They ever hint that?"

"No, but they're so serious about mine—and I know NICAP must be getting some terrific sightings."

"We are. But I don't think the Board would agree to any confidential deal. It could be a way to sew us up."

"They haven't tried it on me. In fact, they even had me give a UFO talk to some Air Force Reserve officers here. There were two active-duty officers on the platform with me. I criticized the censorship as usual—but no squawks."

I shook my head. "There's something queer about this."

"It bothers me, too. But I'm just about convinced it's on the level. They seem terribly anxious to get all the authentic

<sup>2</sup> Later confirmed in report "Post 3-0-Blue." For details, write L. H. Stringfield, 7017 Britton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio.

reports they can—without publicity. It certainly shows up those Pentagon claims that 'saucers' don't exist."

Stringfield's words came back to me, a week later, when Brigadier General Arno Leuhman, Director of Air Force Information, told the press that flying saucers were a dead issue.

"Our Intelligence checks out everything," he said. "The funny reflections you see at night, the lights from the rear end of jets, the meteorological balloons, everything including the hoaxes. There's no valid evidence that there are flying saucers."

By this time—it was mid-April—we had decided on our publications for members. Detailed reports would be covered in the *UFO Investigator*. This would be supplemented by special news bulletins, labeled confidential when necessary.

Early in May we recruited our first associate editor—Mr. Lee Munsick, son of a Morristown, New Jersey, banker. Then in his early twenties, Munsick had worked on a newspaper; he also had had some experience in broadcasting.

During this time he had investigated and reported on the UFO situation, and this had led to his forming a New Jersey group interested in the subject. Tall, dark-haired, with penetrating black eyes, Munsick was outspoken in his opinions—especially about the cultists whose wild flying-saucer claims had hampered serious research.

We were working to close the first issue of the *UFO Investigator* when evidence came in proving an official cover-up. The first tip had come in April; this was the final confirmation.

The sighting had occurred in California, on March 23. That evening, thousands of citizens in the Greater Los Angeles area observed a strange flying object. About midnight, Air Force witnesses at Oxnard Air Force Base also sighted a UFO—a large, round device flashing a brilliant red light.

An F-89 jet was already in the air, and the Oxnard tower told the pilot to intercept the UFO, if possible. At this time, the same—or a similar glowing object—was seen hovering near one of the Oxnard runways. The witnesses were three

Ventura County deputy sheriffs—Dick McKendry, John Murphy and Robert Corshaw. As the UFO climbed up, maneuvering swiftly about the area, it was also seen by two policemen from Port Hueneme. Both the police and sheriff reports were relayed to the Oxnard tower.

Next morning, Colonel E. F. Carey, Jr., the base commander, brushed aside all this evidence. The F-89 crew, he said, had neither seen an object nor caught it on their radar, nor had the base radar shown anything unusual.

In Los Angeles, another Air Force spokesman said the witnesses probably were misled by a lighted weather balloon. This answer already had been ruled out by the Pasadena Air Filter Center, after a check of balloon launchings. Besides this, no balloon could explain the high speed and maneuvers reported.

But the press quickly dropped the story. NICAP members in California, seeking further details, had run into the usual secrecy; even the Ventura County sheriff refused to release his deputies' reports after the Air Force took control. This was the situation in late April, when a member sent us new information, given him by a CAA control-tower operator at a large California airport.

Through a West Coast member in the CAA, we made a private check. We found that the operator named was attached to the CAA tower group as claimed and that he had been on duty on the night of the sightings. Luckily there had been no CIRVIS report, requiring secrecy under JANAP-146. (CIRVIS stands for "Communications Instructions for Reporting Vital Intelligence Sightings.")

With this established, the CAA tower operator's report took on real significance. (His signed statement later was certified by seven Board members.<sup>9</sup> To protect his identity he was called "Operator 1.")

It was 11:50 P.M., the night of the Oxnard sightings, when Operator 1 saw the first strange blip on the tower radarscope.

"It was moving much faster than anything I'd ever seen," his report stated. "About forty miles away, it came to an

<sup>9</sup> Certification statements by Board members in NICAP files.

abrupt stop and reversed course, all within a period of about three seconds."

Five minutes later, Operator 1 reported, two more unknown objects appeared, also traveling at tremendous speed. He quickly called on the other operators to help him track the UFOs.

"We had time to clock their speed—30 miles in 30 seconds," he told us. "This figures out to 3,600 miles an hour. A minute or so later, a fourth target appeared in the same area. It went off the scope at 3,600 m.p.h."

In regard to the UFO reported at Oxnard Air Force Base, Operator 1 stated:

"This sighting was at the same time as our radar sightings—11:50 to midnight."

The bearings and distances proved that at least one of the four UFOs tracked was directly over Oxnard Air Force Base. Since these figures would immediately indicate the municipal airport where Operator 1 was stationed, we deleted them from NICAP's published report.

After receiving the first tip, we had written Colonel Carey and asked for the Oxnard report. In answer, the Oxnard adjutant sent us an official letterhead carbon of his letter forwarding our request to the 4602d Intelligence Squadron. This organization, he said, had investigated the UFOs.

In turn, the 4602d adjutant, Major John D. Taylor, Jr., wrote us that the report could be released only by Air Force Headquarters. Our request had been forwarded to the Pentagon.

Though Operator 1 had implied we could use his report, I asked for written permission. His answer came as Munsick and I were working on the Oxnard story.

"Did he okay it?" Munsick asked.

"Not only that, he says we can name him."

"He certainly has guts. You going to do it?"

"I don't know. We don't want to ruin him."

I reached for the phone and called Charles Planck, the chief of press information for the CAA. I had known him for years.

"Charley, I have a hypothetical question," I began.

"Shoot," said Planck.

"Suppose a CAA tower operator sees or tracks a UFO while he's on duty. No CIRVIS report is made, so there's no question of military security."

"Go on."

"Now suppose he tells an outsider and gives him a signed report. Then the story comes out, with his name. Would he be in hot water with the CAA?"

"Scalding, most likely. You'd better tell this hypothetical lad."

I cradled the phone and told Munsick what Planck had said.

"So the name's out," he said. "Of course, it weakens the story. If the Air Force hears of it, they'll probably say we faked it."

"How about this? We'll send the Board photostats of the signed report. They can certify it as genuine."

"Good, that makes it even better. And just for the record, why not ask Air Force Headquarters for the official Oxnard report? You can quote that Kelly statement."

By coincidence, we had just received an official letter which Major General Joe W. Kelly, Air Force Director of Legislative Liaison in '57, had sent to Representative Lee Metcalf of Montana. As the Secretary's spokesman, Kelly had answered a question from Metcalf about UFO censorship.

In his reply, General Kelly denied that pilots were muzzled or that UFO reports were kept from the press. The letter was dated April 8, 1957.

*Answers are provided on any unidentified flying objects which have attracted national attention, Kelly stated.<sup>4</sup>*

"This Oxnard case was nationally reported," said Munsick, "and as editor of NICAP publications you're a member of the press."

"I'll try it, Lee. And while we're at it, let's ask for some other key cases."

To save time, the request was wired to General Kelly. Cit-

<sup>4</sup>Signed original in NICAP files.

ing his letter to Representative Metcalf, I asked his assurance that all witnesses, including Service pilots, were free to make their UFO sightings public. Then I asked for five cases, including the Oxnard report.

That night I gave an address to the Society of Automotive Engineers. Afterward, I saw Henry Brennard talking with a reporter. I got him aside and told him about the telegram.

"I'll try to get a line on Kelly's reaction," he promised.

Next day, he called me from the Pentagon.

"They're pretty much upset. I got that from a colonel in the Secretary's office. They never dreamed you'd see the letter to Metcalf."

"Any idea what they'll do?"

"Probably sit on it—that's the safest thing."

Brennard was right; no answer ever was received. But two days after the wire was sent, the Air Force launched an attack on NICAP. Released by an unnamed spokesman, the statement ridiculed the Committee as an "upstart organization." Insisting the Air Force had explained all but three per cent of the sightings, the spokesman accused NICAP of denouncing the Air Force just to keep its members interested.<sup>5</sup>

"Well, there's Kelly's answer," said Munsick, when we saw the syndicated story.

"Kelly may not be the spokesman," I replied. "Even if he is, he's just doing his job. Don't let it worry you."

Next morning, Frank Edwards phoned. "If you want to hit back, I'll put it on the air. Though it might be smarter to ignore it."

"You're right. Instead of blasting back, some of the Board think we should offer Secretary Douglas our co-operation in preparing the public."

"I doubt he'll consider that," said Edwards. "But I'll send you my ideas."

As finally worked out, the offer included an eight-point plan:

1. NICAP promised the Air Force a regular department

<sup>5</sup> Press accounts in NICAP files.

in the *UFO Investigator*, in which they could explain the official position.

2. We agreed to urge witnesses who sent us confidential reports to submit them also to the Air Force, if restrictions were dropped.

3. The NICAP Board and Panel of Advisers would examine the UFO cases listed as solved by the Air Force. If they agreed, NICAP would endorse the answers publicly.

4. We offered a permanent Air Force-NICAP liaison, to clear up misunderstandings, establish facts and report results to the public.

5. NICAP agreed to co-operate in exposing frauds linked with the UFOs, since the Air Force said it was not in a position to do so.

6. We suggested that NICAP help prepare the public for whatever conclusion might be officially disclosed later.

7. We offered to evaluate the documented Air Force conclusions about UFOs.

8. We agreed not to release any NICAP opinions on the Air Force material until such opinions had been delivered to the Air Force.

Summing up, the Board stated the belief that the American people had a right to know the facts.

By the time this was ready for the printer, seven Board members had signed this statement about the CAA radar evidence in the Oxnard case:

I certify I have seen the signed reports dated April 22 and May 18, 1957, describing the radar tracking of four UFOs at speeds up to 3,600 miles per hour.

Members signing were Colonel Emerson, Professor Maney, Mr. Edwards, Admiral Knowles, Reverend Baller, Dr. Douglass and Reverend LeVan.

The complete Oxnard story, including the CAA report, was marked for page one of the *Investigator*. Other reports to the members covered the Van Winkle case, the sighting by former Navy pilot Williams and numerous additional items, including:

A statement from Henry J. Taylor, new Ambassador to Switzerland, that the flying saucers were a serious problem—a retraction of his earlier claim, in news broadcasts, that they were secret United States weapons.

Most of the copy had gone to the printer, and Munsick and I were working on recent sightings when our office manager, Mrs. R. H. Campbell, brought us a special air-mail letter.

"This photostat looks important," she said. "You might want to get it into this issue."

The letter was from a NICAP member on the staff of a West Coast television station. He had worked hard to promote the Committee, and he also had made up an investigating team in his area.

Munsick was scanning the photostat as I glanced at the letter.

"These items are hot!" he said. "But why didn't we ever see them? They're AP wire stories."

"K— says they came in on his station's radio wire and then were killed."

There were three news items, double-spaced, in capital letters, and condensed in typical Associated Press radio-wire style.

The first two stories were datelined at Miami.

AP47

(MIAMI, FLORIDA)—RADIO AND TELEVISION SERVICES IN MIAMI WERE MYSTERIOUSLY DISRUPTED SHORTLY AFTER 8 THIS MORNING. SWITCHBOARDS AT LOCAL STATIONS WERE FLOODED WITH CALLS REPORTING A STRONG INTERFERENCE ON BOTH RADIO AND TELEVISION. WALTER M. KOESSLER, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF WGBS-TV IN MIAMI, HAS ASKED THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION TO MAKE AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION.

BS1045PES 10

API03

(MIAMI, FLORIDA)—RESIDENTS OF THE SEMINOLE INDIAN RESERVATION IN THE FLORIDA EVERGLADES REPORT THE CRASH OF A FLAMING OBJECT IN THE SWAMP APPROXIMATELY 10 MILES SOUTHEAST OF THERE EARLY THIS MORNING. THE OBJECT WAS ESTIMATED TO HAVE BEEN ABOUT 500 FEET ABOVE THE GROUND AS IT PASSED OVERHEAD AT A HIGH RATE OF SPEED PRIOR TO THE CRASH. CIVIL AERONAUTICS AUTHORITY OFFICIALS INDICATE NO REPORT OF A MISSING AIRCRAFT UP TO THIS TIME. THE AIR FORCE IS SENDING AN INVESTIGATING TEAM INTO THE AREA, BUT DECLINED FURTHER COMMENT AT THIS TIME.

BS210PES 10

The third story was datelined at Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

AP231

(FT. LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA)—WM. POCATEE, A SEMINOLE INDIAN, IS REPORTED TO BE IN CRITICAL CONDITION AT THE FT. LAUDERDALE ARMY HOSPITAL AS A RESULT OF RADIATION BURNS. ACCORDING TO POCATEE, HE WAS HUNTING THIS MORNING NEAR THE MIAMI CANAL 15 MILES WEST OF HERE WHEN SOMETHING GLOWING AS THOUGH IT WERE ON FIRE FLOATED OUT OF THE SKY AND EXPLODED NEAR HIM.

BS430PES 10

The three items appeared to add up to an important story. It seemed plain that a glowing UFO had streaked out of the sky near Miami, its propulsion system interfering with station broadcasts, and then had exploded in the Everglades, causing the injuries reported.

"It's a miracle this didn't leak out," I said to Munsick.

"Did K—— say who ordered it killed?"

"No, we'll have to get that."

"The AP could have rushed a strong kill order just after the stories went on the wires."

"Maybe they were told to. Okay, let's get onto it. We'll run these AP stories on a full page—"

"You mean this issue?" Munsick said dubiously.

"Yes. Any last-minute details can be squeezed in."

"But there isn't enough time for a real job."

"We'll do a quick follow-up in a special bulletin. Call the AP here and see if they'll admit—no, tell them we heard they killed these stories. I'll be calling Frank Kratokvil at the FCC."

Kratokvil was assistant chief of monitoring, and I had worked with him before. But this time I drew a blank.

"We don't have those records here," he said. "I can check tomorrow with our Miami office."

"Thanks, but we have an adviser down there who can do it."

I scribbled out a message for Captain Bill Nash, asking him to check the Miami FCC office and WGBS-TV. Knowing he might be on a flight, I duplicated the request in a message to Norman Bean, Director of Engineering Development at WTVJ in Miami. Bean, a NICAP member and later an adviser, had helped us before.

Munsick put down his phone after calling the Associated Press.

"Runaround. They said the Miami office might know."

"All right, send them a copy of these stories, special airmail. I'll do the same for the Army Hospital in Fort Lauderdale."

Next day, while waiting for the answers, we tried both the CAA and the Air Force Press Desk. As we expected, they denied any knowledge of the incidents.

The printer was waiting, but the day passed with no word. That night K—— called me at my home. The stories, he said, had come through the AP ticker at his station. One of the station staff told him a kill order had followed immedi-

ately, and that the local AP office had phoned to be sure it was carried out.

By noon next day I was faced with a decision. We still had no word from Miami. Should we go ahead with what we had, or pull the story? Munsick and I were debating the answer when the first message from Miami arrived.

It was from William R. Needs, chief engineer of WGBS-TV:

I HAVE NO INFORMATION ON ANY INTERFERENCE. WE DID NOT REQUEST ANY CHECK BY THE FCC.

"He'd have to deny it," I told Munsick, "if the story was officially hushed up."

The next answer came from the AP chief in Miami, Mr. Noland Norgaard:

A SEARCH OF OUR FILES FAILS TO DISCLOSE ANY NEWS STORIES ORIGINATING IN FLORIDA WHICH COULD HAVE FORMED THE BASIS FOR THE PURPORTED DISPATCHES WHICH WERE SUBMITTED TO YOU AS EXHIBITS FROM THE AP RADIO WIRE. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF YOU WOULD IDENTIFY THE MEMBER WHO SUPPLIED THESE PHOTOSTATS TO YOU.

"We'll have to add these denials to the story," said Munsick.

"Yes, but now it's doubly important to nail down the facts." The third message was from Norman Bean:

OUR OWN LOG FOR THAT DATE SHOWS NOTHING UNUSUAL. ALSO, WGBS-TV WAS NOT EVEN ON THE AIR AT THAT TIME.

Then came the blockbuster.

There was no Army hospital in Fort Lauderdale.

Munsick and I stared at each other.

"Well, *that's* no cover-up," said Munsick. "You can't hide a hospital."

I looked down at the faked bulletins pasted in the dummy.

"Booby trap," I muttered.

"But why would K—— do it? He's worked like a dog to help—or do you think that was a build-up?"

"No, K—— is on the level. Somebody's tricked him."

When I phoned K——, he was stunned.

"But how could they be faked? They came right out of the AP ticker."

"Just the same, it was a hoax."

"I'm going to get to the bottom of this," K—— said grimly.

That evening he called back. He had gone to the local AP office and shown them the faked wire stories. They looked genuine, the AP told him, and they could have come out of the ticker. An experienced man could have planted the faked dispatches.

Next, K—— had checked on the staff member who told him the story. He found that the man was a former Signal Corps engineer familiar with teletype systems. When K—— confronted him, he finally admitted faking the bulletins. But he refused to give any motive, and he stubbornly denied anyone else was involved.

"Was the AP sore about this?" I asked.

"They didn't like it. They wanted the man's name, but I didn't tell them."

"If you told your station manager, what would happen?"

"This man probably would lose his job. You want me to?"

"Not yet, anyway. Did he know you'd been sending us UFO reports?"

"Yes, he knew."

"Did he know we were near our deadline?"

"Not from me. I didn't even know it."

"Okay, don't worry about this. We caught it in time."

When I saw Munsick next morning I passed on K——'s report.

"You think the man was put up to it?"

"Looks like it. He wouldn't risk trouble with the AP, maybe losing his job, without a serious reason. Whoever planned it must have known we were near our deadline. If we had plenty of time, we'd certainly find out it was a trick. But this way, we might fall for it, trusting K—— to be right."

Munsick nodded thoughtfully. "It does look as if somebody tried to wreck NICAP. I wonder who?"

"Well, I'm sure it wasn't anything official. But it must've been someone who believes in the silence policy and thinks we should be put out of business."

Munsick looked morosely at the pasted-up dummy. "It would have worked, too, if we'd gone ahead. We'd be accused of making up the whole thing."

"Or of being so dumb we'd swallow anything. The papers would have laughed us to death."

Munsick started to pull the faked dispatches out of the dummy, but I stopped him.

"I'm going to run them with a headline, This Was a Hoax. Just a reminder not to be stupid."

"Maybe you're right. It's a lesson for members who might—"

"Not members. Me."

Munsick laughed. But it wasn't funny. I'd come too close to falling into the trap.

## CHAPTER V

# The Captain Ruppelt Record

The McClellan committee tip came in soon after the press-wire hoax. But this, I knew, was no fake.

It was a sultry July day, with heat from Connecticut Avenue and the rumble of underpass traffic pouring in through our office windows. Lee Munsick and I were checking a UFO item for the *I've Got a Secret* program when my extension buzzer sounded.

Samuel Borzilleri, NICAP's lawyer, was on the line.

"I have some good news," he told me. "The Senate Subcommittee on Investigations is considering open hearings on UFOs. They want NICAP's help and I told them to call you."

"Sam, that's a real break!" I said.

"Let's hope so. Now in case you didn't know, this is part of the Government Operations Committee. Senator McClellan is chairman of both. The subcommittee chief investigator, Jack S. Healey, is going to phone you this week. So have your material ready."

By afternoon Munsick and I had the evidence assembled, except for recent sightings. It made an impressive pile of documents: the secrecy orders, official letters and statements showing the cover-up, summaries of verified sightings by hundreds of trained observers and a list of key witnesses, all tied together by a NICAP analysis.

"That should do it," I said. "We've got enough surprise witnesses and big sightings—" I stopped short.

"What is it?" asked Munsick.

"Suppose you were a lawyer in a big trial. How'd you like a sneak preview of the other side's case?"

Munsick stared. "You think the subcommittee will hand all this over to the Air Force?"

"No, but they're bound to ask them questions based on this evidence. And those Air Force censors aren't dumb."

"No, they'd dope out what we're holding. Probably they'd give the subcommittee the usual debunking answers and kill off the hearings."

"Even if they didn't, they'd still have the drop on us. They could contact the main witnesses and tell them the Air Force had solved their sightings. At the hearings, the Air Force would be first on the stand. They could lead off with our top cases and say they'd explained them as meteors, balloons and so on."

"Yes, and they might even release all that to the press before the hearings. It would make the witnesses look like fools, and some might refuse to testify."

"Maybe. But others might get mad enough to blow the whole thing wide open. And we've solid proof to back them up. But even so, there's no sense in tipping our hand."

"What are you going to do?" asked Munsick, as I turned to the phone.



"Get advice from some Board members. I don't want anyone saying we didn't play fair with Congress."

The first call was to Vice-Admiral Hillenkoetter, a man well acquainted with official Washington. As Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, he had operated at high levels, from the White House to Capitol Hill. And from our Annapolis days, I remembered he was not easily pushed around.

"I knew it was getting hot," the admiral said, when I gave him the news. "And this is the only way we'll break it, through Congress."

"There's a hitch." I told him the problem.

"Don't use your best cases," Hillenkoetter said promptly. "Just give them a good, strong sample of the evidence. There's nothing wrong in reserving something for the hearings."

The next call was to Frank Edwards, who for years had held down a Washington hot spot on the Mutual network. He fully agreed with Hillenkoetter.

"Sit on all the big stuff until the last possible minute," he said, "especially the Service cases where pilots could easily be muzzled."

As a final check, I called J. B. Hartranft, influential president of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. I knew he was a veteran of Congressional hearings; in defense of private pilots' rights he had won the support of many on the Hill.

Hartranft agreed with the others. "But I'd frankly tell the subcommittee we're reserving strong evidence for the hearings. We'll be in a lot better position."

Following the Board members' advice, I selected a good sample of NICAP's evidence, then locked up the rest.

"That's a lot better," I told Munsick. "Now what about recent sightings?"

"I've pulled the cards on the best ones. There's one I'm doubtful about—the McGuire case."

I reread the detailed report. On June 7, 1957, a mysterious

formation flying off the Atlantic Coast had been picked up by Air Defense radar stations. From the radar blips, it appeared that over one hundred aircraft were speeding toward this country.

The reports electrified the Air Defense Command. The ADC plotters knew the positions of every United States formation in the air. None was over the Atlantic. A Soviet attack seemed impossible; there had been no word from the Distant Early Warning posts, the picket ships, subs and patrol planes.

There was one possible explanation: A formation of unknown machines, unidentified flying objects, had just descended from a great height into range of our radar stations.

Within seconds, ADC had ordered a continental alert. Two minutes later, jets were streaking up from McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. Heading out to sea, they swiftly climbed out of sight.

An hour passed. By this time, word of the alert had leaked out. Reluctantly, the Air Force made a public admission: Three squadrons from McGuire Air Force Base had been sent to intercept "an unusual number of temporarily unidentified aircraft."

When the jets returned, questions poured in from the press. What had the pilots seen? Was the formation hostile? Had there been an attack?

Silence. At McGuire, queries were referred to ADC Headquarters. ADC refused to answer. At the Pentagon, the Air Force stood on its first release—jets had gone to check on temporarily unidentified aircraft. Were the unknowns *ever* identified? No answer.

In the next few days, reports linked UFOs with the alert. Near McGuire, an attack story began to circulate—a report that jets had tried to force down a "saucer" before the formation raced up out of sight.

"That last is just rumor," I commented. "The Air Force radar report does sound like UFOs, but there's no proof. Hold it for more information."

"One other item—the Westover case."

"It's not verified either, though I think it's true. We can ask Ruppelt about it when we see him in New York."

As Captain Ruppelt had been head of Project Blue Book, we had recommended that he appear on the *I've Got a Secret* program, with four other men linked with the UFO problem.

"You still going to ask him to join the Board of Governors?" asked Munsick.

"If he'll help buck the secrecy, yes."

I knew what Munsick was thinking. Ruppelt's public disclosures about the Air Force investigation had jolted the silence group. Now that he was an engineer with Northrop Aircraft, which had Air Force contracts, there was a fear he might be pressured into keeping quiet.

Two days later, on the plane to New York, I thought over that situation. Ruppelt, a World War II bombardier, had been recalled to active duty in 1950. For almost three years, as chief of Project Blue Book at Dayton, he had co-ordinated all UFO reports and investigated many cases, under direction of the commander of ATIC.

From personal experience I knew Ruppelt believed in fair play. Twice he had defended me against Air Force attacks, though he then barely knew me. In one case he gave me written confirmation that ATIC had cleared numerous Intelligence reports for me, after an Air Force colonel had publicly denied it.

After going on inactive duty, Ruppelt asked my advice about writing a report on the Air Force investigation.

"I wouldn't do a book," he wrote me, "unless I told the truth exactly as it happened, and believe me this would not follow the Air Force party line."<sup>1</sup>

He had kept his word, disclosing startling facts the censors had kept from the public. If he were to be called before a Congressional committee, certain key questions were sure to be asked. The answers, I knew, would be explosive, for

<sup>1</sup> Signed letter in NICAP files.

Ruppelt was already on record, and any variation from his published statements of fact—because of Air Force pressure—would certainly backfire.

To estimate the impact of Ruppelt's appearance at a hearing, I had listed fourteen questions a Congressional committee was certain to ask him, with the exact answers he had already stated:

Q. Were you ever told to hide the truth from the public?

A. Yes. I was continually being told to "tell them about the sighting reports we've solved—don't mention the unknowns." (Page 89, Captain Ruppelt's published "Report on Unidentified Flying Objects.")

Q. Do you mean the Air Force policy was to explain away the sightings, regardless of the facts?

A. After the Air Force order of February 11, 1949, which renamed the project as "Grudge," everything was evaluated on the premise that UFOs couldn't exist. No matter what you see or hear, don't believe it (page 87).

Q. Does that policy exist now?

A. There have been definite indications that there is a movement afoot to get Project Blue Book to swing back to the old Project Grudge philosophy of analyzing UFO reports—to write them all off, regardless (p. 315). Some good reports have come in and the Air Force is sitting on them (p. 312).

Q. Have any experienced Air Force investigators opposed this policy?

A. Yes. Some were "purged" because they had refused to change their original opinions about UFOs (p. 87).

Q. Do you personally consider any UFO reports as serious evidence?

A. Yes. Many reports are made by experienced pilots and radar operators, scientists, and other people who know what they're looking at. These reports were thoroughly investigated and they're still unknowns (p. 314).

In a full answer to this question, Ruppelt could cite scores of *unsolved* reports he had listed, from official records: de-

tailed visual, radar and photographic evidence from Service and airline pilots, White Sands missile trackers, airport-tower operators, Weather Bureau observers, balloon experts and other technically trained persons. The photographic evidence would include gun-camera and other motion-picture films showing UFOs moving at speeds far beyond any our planes had achieved.

Q. Did the Air Force ever conclude that the UFOs are real?

A. Yes, in a confidential letter ATIC told the commanding general of the then Army Air Forces that the "reported phenomena were real." This letter was sent by ATIC on Sept. 23, 1947. The only problem that confronted the people at ATIC was, "Were the UFOs of Russian or interplanetary origin?" (pages 31-32).

Q. Do you know of any high Air Force officers or Project scientists who accepted the second explanation?

A. One group in Intelligence circles thought the UFOs were interplanetary spaceships. They ranged down from generals and top-grade scientists (p. 84). And "maybe they're interplanetary"—with the "maybe" bordering on "they are"—was the personal opinion of several very high-ranking officers in the Pentagon, so high that their personal opinion was almost policy (pages 177-8).

Q. Didn't any of these people attempt to tell the public their conclusions?

A. There were two factions. One believed the spaceship answer but felt we should clamp down on information until we had all the answers. Another group favored giving more facts to the public, including the best cases, the unsolved movies of UFOs, and the Air Force conclusions. A press showing of the "Tremonton" UFO movie—which the Navy analysts said showed unknown objects under intelligent control—was planned early in '53 (pages 202-3; 286-90; 294; 297).

Q. What happened to this plan?

A. A new publicity policy went into effect—don't say anything (p. 315).

Q. Are we to understand that the Air Force has officially—that is, publicly—explained away UFO sightings which they actually were seriously investigating?

A. In 1952, the press was led to believe the famous Washington Airport radar-visual sightings were only weather phenomena. Actually, they're still carried as unknowns. The press conference did take the pressure off Project Blue Book—but behind the scenes it was only the signal for an all-out drive to find out more about the UFOs (pages 211-26; 229).

Q. The Air Force insists that its Special Blue Book Report 14 is proof that UFOs don't exist. What do you think of this?

A. That report was a shock to me. I was the one that had the IBM system tried out. It didn't prove a thing, and I had written it off as worthless before I left the Project. . . . Also, this report was drawn up in 1953, yet the Air Force released it as the latest hot dope in October, 1955. (Statement by Captain Ruppelt to Mr. Max Miller, for *Saucers* magazine; copy at NICAP, confirmed by Ruppelt.)

Q. If the "flying saucers" are real, do you personally believe they could be interplanetary?

A. If they are real there is no other alternative, staggering as the implications may be. (Statement in *True* magazine, April, 1954.)

Q. Has there ever been any official conclusion as to what the UFOs are?

A. In 1948 ATIC sent the Air Force Commanding General an Estimate of the Situation. It was a black-cover document, stamped TOP SECRET (p. 62).

Q. What was the ATIC conclusion?

A. That the UFOs were interplanetary (p. 62).<sup>a</sup>

Besides these answers, other significant Ruppelt statements were on record in his letters to me. If he were called by a Congressional committee, other Air Force officers who knew of the cover-up were almost sure to be summoned. As long as

<sup>a</sup>This was based on the ATIC analysis of unexplainable reports from scientists, pilots and other trained observers.

this threat to the secrecy existed, attempts to discredit or silence Ruppelt would continue. So far, they hadn't worked.

When I got to the CBS theater Garry Moore was rehearsing with five men who shared a common "secret"—each had seen a UFO. The five were:

Captain C. S. Chiles and Captain J. B. Whitted, Eastern Air Lines, who had encountered a mysterious double-decked rocket ship over Alabama. Mr. Nicholas Mariana, ball-park owner, who had filmed the daylight passage of two round devices at Great Falls, Montana. Mr. Ralph Mayher, TV-newsreel cameraman, who during Marine Corps service had photographed a UFO at Miami. Mr. Carl Hart, owner of a still picture of a formation called the "Lubbock Lights."

All but Mayher's sighting were listed as unsolved by ATIC. Mayher's movie film had been turned over to ATIC by Naval Intelligence, but the Air Force had refused to release it or explain the sighting.

Captain Ruppelt, a stocky, blue-eyed man with close-cropped hair, was watching in the wings. After rehearsal, he came over to where Munsick and I stood behind the cameras.

"I just got the first *UFO Investigator*," he said. "NICAP's doing a good job."

I thanked him, then asked about the Westover case. The report had come through a Board member; though he didn't guarantee it, the details had come from a specialist at Westover Air Force Base, and they appeared to be genuine.\*

The date was March 26, 1956. At 9:17 P.M., according to the report, a strange radar blip suddenly appeared on Westover tower scopes. Jets were quickly scrambled, then vectored toward the circling UFO.

Flying the lead interceptor, Captain E—— closed in on a large round object, near enough to illuminate it with his landing lights. The strange machine appeared to be 100 to 150 feet in diameter, and 8 to 12 feet thick at the center. The pilot noted a green fluorescent glow around the outer edge.

\*Existence of this report certified by Frank Edwards, Richard Hall and Reverend Albert Baller.

As he tried to get closer, the weirdly glowing disc climbed steeply, then disappeared in the night, at 30,000 feet.

The report named a tower operator and radioman, besides the jet pilot. There was no mention of camera-gun photos, but securing such pictures when possible is standard procedure.

"If the object was caught by the jet's lights," I said, "this captain could have got a good camera shot."

"I hadn't heard that report," answered Ruppelt, "but it could be true. I do know they have some new UFO movies. They told me at Dayton they had one a lot hotter than the Utah pictures."

"Any details?"

"No, they wouldn't let me see the film. They're tightening up."

"Ed—" I paused. "There's a rumor the Air Force is pressuring you through your employer."

"It's not true. Would I be here if it was?"

"Not likely." Then I told him about the McClellan committee. "You'd probably be called to testify."

"Well, I'd certainly stand on everything I've said. That's all I could do."

That night, after the panel guessed the "secret," Ruppelt came before the cameras. Then the five witnesses briefly described their sightings.

"Do you believe they really saw something?" Garry Moore asked Ruppelt.

"Yes, I do." Ruppelt summed up the UFO problem, with a statement that 20 per cent of the sightings were unsolved when he was on the project.

After the program Lee Munsick and I waited for Ruppelt, and I asked him if he would join our Board. Recalling his recent heart attack, I added: "We won't load you with work, Ed. We mainly want your advice, and your help in our fight against censorship."

"All right," he said, "I'll do it. I consider it an honor."

The day after I returned to Washington, Mr. Healey

phoned. After making an appointment, I called Henry Brennard.

"We're getting a break on the Hill," I said.

"You mean the McClellan committee?"

"How'd you know?" I demanded.

"Joe Kelly's office knows about it, and it's gotten around. After all, he is the Secretary's man on Capitol Hill."

Brennard's information made me a little uneasy. Looking at the material for the first interview, I wondered how much General Kelly would learn from the subcommittee.

Then I thought of the evidence we had kept back. With all that proof we couldn't fail. There might be setbacks, but sooner or later the censorship dike had to crack.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Inquiry Begins

Next day, in Room 350 of the Senate Office Building, I met Chief Investigator Healey. He was a solidly built man, about thirty-seven, with a ruddy and shrewdly pleasant face.

"Before we go ahead," he told me, "we need a formal complaint. Does NICAP definitely charge the Air Force with hiding UFO information?"

"Yes—Air Force Headquarters. Many people in the Air Force are against the secrecy. I think the policy is set higher up."

"But the Air Force is the agency we have to question." Healey reached for a pad. "Exactly what does NICAP claim they have hidden?"

"I'd like to clear up one point first. If the question comes up, we made this complaint at the committee's request. That is, you approached us first."

Healey nodded.

"All right, here's the complaint," I said. "By secrecy orders and pressure, Air Force Headquarters has muzzled hundreds of pilots and other UFO witnesses. They've blamed a private pilot named Kenneth Arnold for starting the saucer scare in '47—and the press for keeping it alive. To make this stick, they've denied all the official sightings in World War II. They know the UFOs are real, and to cover up they've misled the press, the public—even congressmen."

"That's a pretty strong statement," said Healey.

"There's more to it. At first, Air Force pilots were told to force down UFOs for examination. Later, the order was changed—don't fire unless a UFO is hostile. But Air Force pilots still try to intercept these objects, by Air Defense orders. There have been hundreds of chases. Pilots have been lost, planes have crashed or disappeared. Maybe these were accidents, but the Air Force should tell what it knows."

Healey looked a little startled.

"Will your Board back this?"

"Most of them already are on record. And we can prove every point."

"All right, let's take this one: When did the Air Force deny the early reports?"

I took some files from my briefcase. "That's in Project Blue Book Report 14, put out on October 25, 1955. Here it is, page 4, paragraph 2:

"Sightings alleged to have occurred prior to 1947 were not considered [for evaluation] since they were not reported to official sources until after public interest in 'flying saucers' had been stimulated by the popular press."<sup>1</sup>

The chief investigator scanned the paragraph. "And NICAP rejects this official statement?"

"It's just not true. During World War II, hundreds of Allied pilots and crewmen reported strange flying objects

<sup>1</sup> Photostat of official statement in NICAP files.

—they were called 'foo-fighters' then. Here's an official sighting by Captain Alvah M. Reida, a B-29 commander attached to an Army Air Corps bombing group in Ceylon."

The report was dated August 10, 1944. On this night, Captain Reida's B-29 was one of fifty bombers attacking a huge gas-cracking plant at Palembang, Sumatra. His co-pilot was Lieutenant Ney M. Fowler. After their bomb run, Reida and his crew released photo-flash bombs. Dodging searchlights and anti-aircraft fire, they took motion pictures of the blazing target.

As they headed back, an oval-shaped machine appeared suddenly off the right wing. It had a blue-green exhaust, and the oval surface glowed with a pulsating light. Taking it for a new Jap device, pacing them for anti-aircraft fire, Captain Reida hastily banked. For ten minutes he climbed, turned, and dived, but the strange object matched every move. Finally, it climbed straight up and vanished.

At Ceylon, Captain Reida reported the chase. But the Intelligence officers had no answer, and later they found the Japs had no such machine. (Recently, Reida suggested to NICAP that the UFO was an outer-space device investigating the glare from the flash bombs and the burning gas plant.)<sup>2</sup>

"We have other cases like this that were officially recorded," I told Healey. "One crewman said it was 'as if some uncanny intelligence was watching us.' Maybe you can get the 8th Air Force investigation report; it's never been released."

"No explanation at all?" Healey said, surprised.

"In '49, an Air Force PIO told me it was just pilot fatigue."

"Meaning they had hallucinations?" exclaimed Healey.

"So he claimed. But he couldn't explain how hundreds had the same delusion. Or why they were kept on combat duty if their minds were slipping."

Healey shook his head, looked back at his notes. "Secrecy orders?"

<sup>2</sup> Signed report and letter in NICAP files.

"Air Force Regulation 200-2 and JANAP 146. Army has an order, but we haven't the number yet."

"Firing on UFOs?"

During the first stages, I told him, this was admitted to me by Major Jere Boggs, USAF Intelligence, at the Pentagon. A special press conference had been set up for me in the office of Brigadier General Sory Smith, then Director of Air Force Information. Besides General Smith and Boggs, two PIO's had been present—Major Jesse Stay and Mr. Jack Shea.

"Also," I told Healey, "Captain Ruppelt confirmed one firing case in his published report."

"I didn't know there was any firing," Healey commented. "What about pilots lost chasing UFOs?"

Quoting the Air Force report, I told him about the death of Captain Thomas Mantell, January 7, 1948. Radioing the tower at Godman Air Force Base, Kentucky, Captain Mantell had said the object he was chasing was tremendous in size and appeared to be metallic. Minutes later, his F-51 fighter broke up over Frankfort.

In the second case, Air Force ground radarmen had seen the blips of a UFO and a pursuing F-89 merge over Lake Superior. Both the pilot and radar officer wore life jackets and had inflatable rubber boats, but no trace of the men or their plane ever was found, though the area was searched for days.

"There are also reports of near collisions," I said, "including one Air Force pilot's claim of a head-on attack."

"Where was that?"

"Laredo Air Force Base, in Texas, the night of December 4, 1952. The UFO came so close the pilot cut off his lights and dived. That report was officially declassified for me in January 1953, when the Air Force was planning to release UFO films and some of their unsolved cases.<sup>3</sup> Later the plan was canceled—I heard the CIA forced it."

The chief investigator sat back, with a disturbed look.

<sup>3</sup> Air Force letter and list of cleared UFO reports in NICAP files.

"This is all new to me. I thought the Air Force records showed that most reports came from unreliable sources, or people not trained to recognize things in the sky."

I dug out a list of UFO witnesses.

"Do these people sound unreliable, or incompetent? Colonel D. J. Blakeslee, Wing Commander, USAF; Mrs. Clare Booth Luce; former Secretary of the Navy Dan Kimball; Colonel Charles Scarborough, USMC; Dr. Clyde Tombaugh; Captain Willis Sperry, American Airlines; Commander M. B. Taylor, guided missile expert under Admiral Fahrney . . ."

"All those people reported UFOs?" Healey said incredulously.

I handed him the list. "You'll find officers and technicians in all the armed forces, captains on United Airlines, Eastern, TWA, National—all major United States lines and several foreign. Also CAA tower and radar operators, White Sands rocket experts, scientists, astronomers; and besides all the technically trained people there are hundreds smart enough to be successful lawyers, doctors, businessmen—"

"All this can be proved?" Healey interrupted.

"You can see the records. And here's a point the Air Force has never explained: Not one of those pilots has been grounded for reporting a UFO. The airline men are still carrying passengers; the Air Force pilots are still flying million-dollar jets. Also, the CAA radar operators are still guiding airliners into airports, with thousands of lives in their hands week after week—the same men the Air Force ridiculed because they tracked flying saucers."

The chief investigator thoughtfully studied the list of names.

"What did Secretary Kimball report?"

"In the spring of '52, he and Admiral Arthur Radford were on a Pacific tour, in separate Navy aircraft. Both planes were buzzed by two UFOs. When Secretary Kimball came back, he told the Office of Naval Research to start a special investigation. Both Kimball and Admiral Calvin Bolster,

Chief of ONR, told me this personally. The Air Force squawked and ONR stopped its official check-up, but I think they still have important evidence."

Healey made a notation.

"This Commander Taylor, the missile expert—what did he see?"

I gave him the main points from Taylor's signed report.<sup>4</sup> On July 3, 1949, Commander Taylor and two hundred others, including veteran pilots, watched a disc-shaped, metallic-looking object maneuver over Longview, Washington. All the pilots agreed with Taylor that it was unlike any known aircraft or missile.

"Captain Willis Sperry?"

"That was in 1950. Captain Sperry had just taken off from Washington Airport, in a DC-6 airliner, when he and the crew saw an object racing along the airway toward them. Suddenly it stopped in mid-air.

"Then it circled them at terrific speed and streaked off toward the Atlantic. Sperry and the crew said it was fantastic."<sup>5</sup>

At random, Healey picked two more names. The first was William L. Bucher, manager of Reamtown Products, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. On December 5, 1955, Mr. Bucher was aboard a United airliner, over Iowa, when a UFO formation approached the plane, pacing it for several minutes.<sup>6</sup> The next case involved Captain William J. Hull, a Capital Airlines veteran, and his co-pilot, First Officer Peter McIntosh. On November 14, 1956, a strange flying object had dived in front of their four-engine Viscount. Stopping abruptly, it had put on an amazing show, climbing, diving, circling just ahead of the plane—possibly to demonstrate its superior performance.<sup>7</sup>

"The important point," I said, "is that practically all of these are still unexplained."

<sup>4</sup> Report in NICAP files.

<sup>5</sup> Described by Captain Sperry in documentary film, *U.F.O.* Press accounts at NICAP.

<sup>6</sup> Signed report at NICAP.

<sup>7</sup> Report given to CSI, New York, in NICAP files.

A puzzled expression came into Healey's face.

"But the Air Force—how many sightings are on record?"

"They admit 5,700. I think it's a lot higher."

"Assume it's 5,700." Healey figured on his pad. "They say just 3 per cent are unsolved—that's only 171 cases. Your list must run into hundreds."

"Yes, and we have still more. Mr. Healey, it is an official Air Force policy to explain away sightings." I showed him Captain Ruppelt's statement. "And it's absolutely proved by the Project Grudge report."

"What was that?" Healey asked.

"A confidential report the Air Force declassified and rushed out in December of '49, after *True* magazine and I reported the saucers were interplanetary. It must have been a mistake, letting out the case summaries. Later, the report was recalled, but by then *True* had copies; so did I and several newsmen."

"You have a copy here?"

I brought out a folder. "This is the sighting section, Cases 1 to 244. Here's a typical example, Case 144, the report by Captain C. S. Chiles and First Officer J. B. Whitted, Eastern Air Lines."

Since Healey had not heard of this, I gave him the basic points. On July 23, 1948, an Eastern Air Lines DC-3 took off from Houston en route to Boston. Captain Chiles, in command, had 8,500 flying hours; during the war he had been a lieutenant colonel in the Air Transport Command. Whitted, who later made captain, also was a veteran; he had flown B-29's.

At 2:45 A.M., on the 24th, the DC-3 was twenty miles west of Montgomery, Alabama, flying in bright moonlight. Suddenly a rocket-shaped craft, brilliantly lighted, came racing along the airway.

"It flashed toward us at terrific speed," Chiles said later. "I veered to the left. It veered sharply, too, and passed about seven hundred feet to the right. It was about one hundred feet long, cigar-shaped, and wingless. It was twice the diameter of a B-29."



As the strange machine went by, both pilots saw it was double-decked, with two rows of windows or ports. Protruding from the nose was something like a radar pole.

"A glow like a blue fluorescent light shone from inside," said Captain Chiles. Though he could see no occupants, he had no doubt the mystery ship was intelligently controlled. "Just as it went by," he reported, "the pilot pulled up as if he had seen the DC-3 and wanted to avoid us. There was a tremendous burst of flame from the rear. It zoomed into the clouds, its jet wash rocking our DC-3."

Chiles estimated the UFO's speed at five hundred to seven hundred miles an hour. Both he and Whitted agreed the exhaust was a red-orange flame, thirty to fifty feet long.

Passage of the strange object was observed by the only passenger who was awake—Clarence L. McKelvie, assistant managing editor of the American Education Press. In that swift glimpse, McKelvie saw no details, but a crew chief at Robins Air Force Base, Macon, Georgia, confirmed that a huge wingless craft matching the pilots' description had rushed across the base that same night.

Just three days before, a similar double-decked rocket ship had been reported over The Hague. With these two sightings to stimulate them, Air Force teams made a thorough investigation. After screening 225 military and civilian flight schedules, they announced that no conventional aircraft had been involved in the Chiles-Whitted case. In a surprising statement, the Air Force also said the mystery ship was within the bounds of aerodynamic laws:

Application of the Prandtl theory of lift indicated that a fuselage of the dimensions reported by Chiles and Whitted could support a load comparable to the weight of an aircraft of this size, flying at speeds in the subsonic range.<sup>8</sup>

"That's an interesting report," Healey commented. "But you said the Air Force tried to explain it away."

"Yes, in 1949." I read him the lead paragraph of the Project Grudge statement:

<sup>8</sup> Air Force press report, April 27, 1949, at NICAP.

"There is no astronomical explanation, if we accept the report at face value. But the sheer improbability of the facts as stated, particularly in the absence of any known aircraft in the vicinity, makes it necessary to see whether any other explanation, even though far-fetched, can be considered."<sup>9</sup>

"After that," I told Healey, "they tried to make it appear the UFO had been a meteor, and the pilots just imagined the rows of windows, the radar pole and the exhaust. Major Boggs—the spokesman I mentioned—gave that answer to the press. Later on, the Air Force admitted the UFO was unexplained."

Going down the Project list, I cited other examples:

Case I. Muroc Air Force Base, July 8, 1947. Fast-moving, maneuvering discs sighted by Air Force Pilots. After the Project failed to find an answer, AMC (Air Matériel Command, then in charge) publicly explained the UFOs as research balloons—which obviously are incapable of three-hundred-mile speed and the "tight circles" reported.

Case 10. United Airline crew report of UFO formation, July 4, 1947. First conclusion, by Project Grudge: No logical explanation. Public answer by AMC: Optical illusions.

Case 19. Dayton, October 20, 1947; report of two cigar-shaped UFOs. Project statement: Impossible to draw definite conclusions. Extremely unlikely they were fireballs, but "if one were to stretch the description to its very limits and make allowances for untrained observers, he could say the cigarlike shape might have been an illusion caused by rapid motion. . . . This investigator does not prefer that interpretation, and it should be resorted to only if all other possible explanations fail." *Officially labeled as answered.*

Case 77. South Brookville, Maine, July 3, 1947. UFO estimated one hundred feet in diameter, high speed, reported by astronomer. Calling it an "unusually well-supported incident," the Project had no answer. AMC public explanation: birds or insects.

Case 139. Osborn, Ohio, July 8, 1948. Fast-moving UFOs reported. Project suggestions: "Could it be rapidly scudding

<sup>9</sup> Copy of Project Grudge Report with Cases 1 to 244 on file at NICAP.

clouds periodically obscuring the setting moon, or detached auroral streamers, or floodlights or searchlights playing on the sky?" *Labeled as answered.*

Case 146. San Acacia, New Mexico, July 17, 1948. UFO formation reported. Project suggestions: "a. balloons at much lesser distance than estimated; b. aircraft in formation; or c. birds." *Labeled as answered.*

Case 162. Hamel, Minnesota, August 11, 1948. UFO reported at low altitude by two children. Project comment: "Is it known whether children have normal vision?" *Labeled as answered.*

Case 176. Castro's Ranch, California, September 23, 1948. Two UFOs moving at high speed. Project: "Maybe exploded fireball, or weather box-kite, maybe UAL plane." AMC public statement: "Aircraft or balloons." (Air Weather Service had denied the balloon possibility in its report to AMC.) *Labeled as answered.*

I paused and glanced at the chief investigator. "I won't try to cover them all, but if you have time for two or three more—"

"Go ahead," Healey said quickly. "We want the evidence."

"Here's one where they knock down one of their own pilots," I said. "It's case 181. On October 14, 1948, this Air Force pilot was flying near Dayton when a UFO formation raced by him. The Project said he must've flown through a cluster of balloons or birds. The Air Weather Service said they weren't balloons, and the pilot insisted he'd have recognized birds—he was flying a slow prop-plane. But they called it 'answered' anyway."

In Case 207, another Air Force pilot's report also had been brushed off. On the night of November 18, 1948, Lieutenant H. G. Combs, piloting an AT-6, had encountered a strange round object above Andrews Air Force Base. Combs chased the weird device for ten minutes, but it evaded every move he made. When he tried to catch it in his landing lights, the UFO whirled off to the east and vanished. When the story leaked out, the Air Force told the press the "object" was posi-

tively identified as a cluster of cosmic-ray research balloons. But after the Air Weather Service ruled out the balloon answer, the case was listed as "unknown," though no correction ever was given to the press.

"Out of those 244 cases," I concluded, "more than half the answers are admittedly sheer speculation. Most of the others are deliberately fitted answers. You can see that for yourself."

Healey gave me a keen glance. "You believe they still have that policy?"

"It's even worse now. Back in '53, Project Blue Book scientists and Intelligence officers admitted that a lot of cases simply couldn't be explained. They evaluated 3,801 cases, from 1947 to the end of '52. Here's the answer—Table A-1, Special Report 14."

The chief investigator looked blankly at the Air Force tabulation.

"Unknown, 689—21.5 per cent.<sup>10</sup> And all those are still unsolved?"

"That's correct. They have given up trying to explain them. Air Force Headquarters will admit it if you pin them down."

"Then how do they dare claim all but 3 per cent are solved?"

"They don't. You were misled like the press. The Air Force said they were currently explaining all but 3 per cent—that is, in recent weeks. Most newspapers took it to mean 3 per cent of the total. Maybe the Air Force didn't intend it that way, but they've never bothered to correct the mistake."

A telephone call interrupted us. When Healey finished talking, he motioned toward the witness list.

"You say NICAP has other reports?"

"Yes, we're processing about a hundred more. Besides those, we have confidential reports."

"Confidential?" Healey said quickly.

"Some are from Service men on active duty. They're not breaking security—we won't accept classified information.

<sup>10</sup> Photostat of Table A-1 and other main sections of Special Report 14 on file at NICAP.

But these usually are hidden cases, and the sources could get into trouble. Other off-the-record reports have been given to us by people who are afraid ridicule would hurt their professional standing—some are well known.”

The chief investigator hesitated. “Can you give me a general idea, without the names?”

I thought for a moment. “One is a Navy pilot’s report of a UFO chase. Several Board members have certified his signed statement. If you guarantee to protect him, he’d probably agree to testify.”

“That would be up to Senator McClellan,” said Healey.

“Another case,” I said, “involves a well-known scientist and his laboratory staff. He and Admiral Fahrney are close friends, and Fahrney has been trying to get him to speak out. If you hold hearings, he might appear.”

“With Fahrney’s guided-missile experience,” said Healey, “his opinions about UFOs should be valuable. I read his press statement.”

“He’s been a big help. He had to give up the chairman’s job—too much other work. He’s writing the official Navy history of missiles, and he’s also Secretary of the Franklin Institute. It took courage to come out publicly about UFOs. A few columnists distorted what he said—even made cracks about little green men. But Fahrney’s still a NICAP member, and he’s serious about the need for an investigation.”

Healey glanced over the list of Board members. “Do they all agree on the secrecy angle?”

“Yes, and some are pretty outspoken, like Admiral Knowles. When he joined the Board, he said, ‘I shall resign if it appears at any time that your group is being used to cover up for the top brass.’”

The chief investigator’s eyebrows went up. “No question as to where he stands.”

“No, and he spells it out: ‘There is a great need to break through the official Washington brush-off and get the truth home to the people. . . . There seems to be a great fear among the powers that be that the American people will

panic if told the truth. How little they know and understand their countrymen.’”

I could see that the admiral’s blunt words had impressed Healey.

“Have any Board members seen a flying saucer?” he inquired.

“Yes, Reverend Albert Baller.” I showed him the condensed report in the *UFO Investigator*.

In February, 1952, Reverend Baller had sighted a V formation of three bright, silvery discs or spheres, moving over Greenfield, Massachusetts.

“They moved slowly to the zenith,” Reverend Baller stated. “Then they changed formation and raced away at high speed. It was dramatic proof that what many persons had been reporting was true, despite statements to the contrary.”<sup>11</sup>

“Coming from a minister,” said Healey, “that’s very interesting.”

“Two of our advisers also have seen UFOs. Captain Chiles—you have his story—and Captain W. B. Nash, Pan American Airways. On July 15, 1952, Captain Nash and his co-pilot sighted eight hundred-foot discs under their airliner, near Norfolk.”

“Are sightings still going on?”

“Yes, we’ve had over thirty this last month.” I showed Healey a few cases from the log:

June 13, 1957, Omaha, Nebraska. Source: C.O., Civil Air Patrol Squadron. Strange flying object dived steeply, leveled off at two hundred feet; estimated speed, 1,500 m.p.h. The UFO then shot up vertically, disappeared.

June 18, Jackson, Mississippi. Source: Colonel Henry Carlock, U.S. Army Reserve, now professor of Physics, Mississippi College. Unknown flying object with three ports, traveling east to west, observed through 100-power telescope.

June 18. Location, 150 miles off Pacific coast. Source: Captain C. G. Wertz of Matson Line freighter. Captain

<sup>11</sup> Complete report in NICAP files.

Wertz and crew observed three UFOs in V formation, described as "resembling small moons diffusing a cold white light."

To show that the UFO surveillance was worldwide, I added several foreign reports, including two from Brazil.

July 4. Source: Captain Delgado of R.E.A.L. Airlines. Circular object, with ports intermittently lighted, paced Captain Delgado's airliner from Campos almost to Vittoria, at times maneuvering ahead of the plane. Confirmed by co-pilot, radio operator, stewardess and ten passengers.

July 7. Source: Captain Saul Martin, C.O. airliner between Belo Horizonte and Rio. Disc-shaped object, glowing orange-red, maneuvered around plane, alarming some passengers.

"Also," I told Healey, "we have several reports by Moon-watch teams. But they're off-the-record, at least for now."

Healey looked at the documents on his desk.

"Frankly, I didn't expect so much evidence. Of course, you know the committee has to hear both sides, before a decision."

"How much of this will you show to the Air Force?"

"We'll just ask questions based on what you've given me. NICAP won't be mentioned."

Remembering what Brennard had said, I knew that wouldn't mean much.

"I hope your committee has better luck than some other congressmen," I said. "Maybe you'd like these eleven questions I asked Senator Byrd to submit to the Air Force."

I read two questions as a sample:

"If the flying saucers are imaginary, why do armed Air Defense Command jets continue to chase these UFOs, by standing orders? Why does the Air Force continue to spend taxpayers' money in a global investigation of flying saucers by hundreds of Intelligence officers, the 4602d Intelligence Squadron and by top-ranking scientists and consultants under secret Air Force contract?"

"That should be helpful," said Healey. "I'd like both the questions and the Air Force answers."

"There aren't any answers."

"What? They refused to answer Senator Byrd?"

"They wrote him, but never answered a single question—just insisted the UFOs weren't real. Here's the letter, signed by General Kelly."

The chief investigator read it carefully.<sup>12</sup>

"Have you talked with other senators about this subject?"

"Two—Senator Homer Capehart and Senator Barry Goldwater."

A month before, I told Healey, I had spent an hour in Capehart's office, listening to a taped "contactee" claim—the rambling tale of a man who claimed spacemen had flown him to the moon and Venus.

"Surely Senator Capehart didn't believe that?" exclaimed Healey.

"No. I don't know why he listened to it. I told him he should have let us give him some facts, instead of that drivel."

Healey smiled. "And Senator Goldwater?"

"We had a serious talk. He knows pilots who have seen UFOs and he believes their reports. As you probably know, he's an Air Force Reserve colonel. But he's not sold on the secrecy. If you hold hearings, he might produce some of those witnesses he knows."

"I'll remember that."

I looked at the clock. We had been talking more than three hours. I closed my briefcase and stood up.

"Just a minute," said Healey. "We missed the point about the hundreds of jet chases."

I reopened the briefcase. "That was confirmed in a press conference by Major General John A. Samford, Director of Air Force Intelligence, July 29, 1952. Here's his statement, from the official transcript."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> General Kelly's letter and the eleven questions submitted through Senator Byrd on file at NICAP.

<sup>13</sup> Official copy of transcript at NICAP.

After Healey read the paragraph, I added, "I'm glad you remembered that. Here's a letter I meant to show you. It's from General Kelly to Representative Lee Metcalf. This is the important part:

"'Air Force interceptors still pursue unidentified flying objects as a matter of security to this country and to determine the technical aspects involved. To date, the flying objects have imposed no threat to the security of the United States and its possessions.'" <sup>14</sup>

It was as close as Healey had come to looking astonished.

"General Kelly wrote that?"

I showed him the signed letter.

"How'd you get this?"

"Congressman Metcalf gave it to a NICAP member—Jerome Sigler. I'm sure Kelly never expected that, but why he even told Metcalf I can't imagine. It's a plain admission that the Air Force knows the saucers are real. If not, they wouldn't worry about any possible danger to the United States. Also, how on earth could they determine technical aspects of something that doesn't exist?"

Healey silently shook his head.

"For some time," I said, "we've known the Air Force's actual opinion. In 1948, after Mantell's death and Captain Chiles' report, the Air Technical Intelligence Center drew up a top-secret estimate. It was later burned, but Captain Ruppelt revealed the conclusion—"

"What was it?" Healey cut in.

"Interplanetary spaceships."

"Spaceships? But—if that were true, why would the Air Force deny it all this time?"

"That's a question we hope your committee can make them answer—what are they hiding from the American people?"

<sup>14</sup> Signed original in NICAP files.

## CHAPTER VII

### Frame-up

Less than a week after the Healey interview, Captain Ruppelt wrote me and reversed his agreement to join the NICAP Board.

"He must've been pressured," I told Munsick. "Remember how he was all for it in New York?"

We were still discussing Ruppelt's action when an Air Force letter arrived, rejecting NICAP's eight-point offer of co-operation.<sup>1</sup>

"Well, we expected that," said Munsick. "And we can still try the Secretary of Defense."

But a series of unusual developments held this up. The first one came on July 23. It was after midnight when a Trans-World Airlines official called my home.

<sup>1</sup> Signed original at NICAP.

"Sorry to get you out of bed, but here's something you may want to check while it's hot. About forty minutes ago an unidentified object came head-on at one of our Constellations. The captain had to dive under the thing to miss it."

"Did he get a good look?"

"I don't have the details yet. The reason I called was so you could buzz one of your CAA contacts before they're shut up."

Half an hour later I had the main points, confirmed afterward by a copy of the CAA's "Unscheduled Landing Report" in this case.<sup>2</sup>

At 10:15 P.M., Central Time, TWA Flight 21 was at 18,000 feet, over Amarillo, Texas. The pilot in command was Captain G. M. Schemel. Visibility was fifteen miles plus—plenty of margin for sighting other aircraft.

Abruptly, a fast-moving object with red and green lights loomed up half a mile ahead. Its sudden appearance, in view of the fifteen-mile visibility, was almost unbelievable.

For a second, Schemel thought they would pass safely. But the strange machine turned swiftly, came straight toward the Constellation. Just in time, Captain Schemel nosed down. The unknown craft shot overhead and was gone.

After landing injured passengers at Amarillo, Schemel and his co-pilot were questioned by CAA officials. Neither man could describe the strange object; it had moved too fast.

"I have no idea what it was," Schemel said.

That it was another airplane seemed impossible. These conditions would have to be met:

The pilot had not filed a flight plan. (The CAA found that the nearest recorded aircraft was forty-five miles distant.) He was flying with lights off, or his plane would have been seen sooner. After turning on his lights, he tried to crash the Constellation—or at least made no effort to avoid a fatal collision.

Flying a busy airway without lights would not only be dangerous, it could cost the pilot his license. And with the

<sup>2</sup> In NICAP files.

clearly lighted airliner in his path, anyone in his right mind would try to veer away. Besides this, the unknown object's speed seemed to rule out ordinary aircraft.

But a UFO flying at fantastic speed could have appeared to loom up suddenly, a short distance away. The near-collision, however, remained an open question.

For the next twenty-four hours, this was a front-page story. Then "unidentified aircraft" began to replace the "mystery object" in press accounts. (No plane ever was found to have been involved, though Civil Aeronautics Board investigators checked plane departures over a wide area.)

With the mystery explained away, the story was about to be buried when a government missile expert revived it. The expert was Nathan Wagner, missile safety chief at White Sands. After discussing airways near-collisions which caused injuries, he told the press his entire family had seen a "flying saucer" the day after the Constellation's close escape.

"I don't want to start a scare," he said, "but it is a reasonable position to take that such a craft might have been involved in the accidents."

Our first report on this came from Lou Corbin.

"Also," he added, "Dr. Clyde Tombaugh just made a statement: 'The phenomena observed by the airline pilots may be related to the question of space travel.' He doesn't mention the question of hostility."

"It could have been a remote-control failure, Lou."

"Even if was a robot," said Corbin, "it could have been guided to hit the airliner."

"We have about thirty near-collision reports," I answered.

"But only half are officially recorded. After we verify or rule out the others, we may have a clue to the answer."

"Let's hope it's the right one," Corbin said soberly.

The next development came early in August.

One afternoon a Washington friend of our office manager sent us a photostat—a copy of an Air Force letter. A month before, he had written General Nathan Twining, Chairman

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and asked him some pointed questions. (Twining formerly was Chief of Staff of the Air Force.)

Ordinarily, such a letter would be relayed to Air Force Headquarters. For some reason it had been sent to ATIC, and apparently a direct answer had been ordered.

"This is terrific," Munsick said when he brought me the photostat. "ATIC admits that Air Force pilots have fired on UFOs—or what they thought were UFOs."

A quick look showed the letter was genuine. It was on the official stationery of ATIC, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. Dated July 12, 1957, it was signed by Captain Wallace W. Elwood, Assistant Adjutant.<sup>3</sup>

Munsick pointed out the key paragraph. I read it twice.

"Lee, that's the strangest admission they've ever made." I read the rest of the letter, reached for the phone. "I'm going to call Captain Elwood. Be ready to come on your extension and take notes."

When I reached Elwood, I delayed giving him my name for fear he might hang up.

"Captain, you answered a letter for General Twining which says, quote, 'Air Force pilots have officially reported firing on flying objects.' . . . Before we make this public, we'd like to have the details."

"Who is this?" Elwood said quickly.

I told him. There was a prolonged silence, and I went on.

"Your letter said the pilots fired on, quote: 'flying objects they could not identify but which were later determined to be conventional objects.' What were they? Why didn't the pilots recognize them before they fired?"

"Now wait," protested Elwood. "I'm only the Assistant Adjutant."

"But you signed the letter. How does ATIC know the objects were conventional? Did the pilots shoot them down—"

"I never said that! They didn't shoot down anything."

"Then if the flying objects got away the pilots still must

<sup>3</sup> Photostat in NICAP files.

not have identified them. How does ATIC know they were conventional—and what kind of objects—"

Captain Elwood hurriedly stopped me.

"I don't have all the answers. I'll have to transfer you—Operator! Give this call to Captain Gregory, Project Blue Book."

When Captain Gregory came on, I told him Elwood had transferred me. "I'm checking on a letter he answered for General Twining, on July 12. It says Air Force pilots have fired on UFOs—"

"What?" said Gregory. "Are you sure?"

"I have a copy right here." Then I told him who I was.

"But you're not supposed—I'm not allowed—hold on, maybe Mr. Hieatt . . ." Gregory's voice faded as he covered the mouthpiece. After a long delay, a new voice took over.

"Hieatt speaking." (Later we learned this was Theodore Hieatt, Deputy Chief of Intelligence at ATIC, one of the few civilians to hold such a post.)

"I presume you've been briefed, Mr. Hieatt. It's clear the Air Force pilots thought those objects were hostile."

"Why?" Hieatt asked crisply.

"Captain Elwood's letter states: 'The orders to pilots are to fire on an unidentified object only if it commits an act which is hostile, menacing, or constituting a danger to the United States.'"

"That is correct."

"Then the pilots must have been convinced those UFOs were either menacing them, or were a danger to this country. Otherwise, they wouldn't have fired."

I waited. Mr. Hieatt didn't answer.

"To commit menacing acts," I said, "the objects would have to be guided, directly or by remote control. Who controlled them during these attacks?"

But Mr. Hieatt wasn't an Intelligence expert for nothing.

"I haven't seen the letter. I don't know the facts. I'll check and call you back."

The phone clicked.

Munsick brought me his notes. "Well, Hieatt had enough warning to be on guard. But those two captains—I never saw anybody pass the buck so fast."

"Probably Elwood only signed the letter. And Gregory sounded as if he'd never heard of it."

"I don't see how Hieatt can brush this off," said Munsick. "That was an official ATIC answer for General Twining."

"I can't see any loophole, either. Only two kinds of conventional flying objects could be menacing—planes and missiles. There's been no Russian attack. And if Air Force pilots had mistakenly fired on any of our planes or missiles, it would've raised the devil. They couldn't have kept it from leaking out."

Munsick shook his head.

"It's a queer deal. Whoever prepared that letter will be lucky if he isn't busted to private."

The day ended with no word from ATIC.

Next morning, I was wondering if Hieatt had decided silence was safer, when my administrative assistant, Mrs. Bessie M. Clark, brought me two reports.

"They're Air Force cases," she said. "They both look important, though one dates back to 1946."

I glanced at the other report, a Far East Air Force case, then turned back to the '46 sighting. It had been sent to us by Captain Jack E. Puckett, a 1946 Army Air Corps pilot. A photostat of his service record showed he had served as an instructor on four-engine bombers, and had flown combat missions in Europe. In 1945-46, he was on the staff of General Elwood Quesada, serving as Assistant Chief of Flying Safety, Tactical Air Command, Langley Field.

Captain Puckett's encounter had been on August 1, 1946.<sup>4</sup> Flying a twin-engine C-47, he was on a scheduled flight from Langley to MacDill Field, Florida. The C-47 was at 4,000 feet, about thirty miles from Tampa, when he saw a bright object to the southeast. From its fiery trail and swift motion,

<sup>4</sup> Signed report in NICAP files.

Captain Puckett for an instant thought it was an early-evening meteor descending. Then he saw that the object was racing toward them, in horizontal flight.

"My co-pilot, Lieutenant Henry F. Glass, and my engineer both observed the object at the same time," said Puckett's report. "It continued toward us on a collision course, at our exact altitude. At about 1,000 yards, it veered to cross our path. We observed it to be a long, cylindrical shape approximately twice the size of a B-29 bomber, with luminous port-holes."

The unknown machine, Captain Puckett stated, was apparently propelled by a rocket-type power, for it trailed a stream of fire approximately one-half its length.

"We continued to observe this object," reported Captain Puckett, "until it disappeared over the horizon. I estimate that our observation lasted from two and one-half to three minutes, during which time it must have traveled 75 to 100 miles.

"A complete report was given to the Base Operations Section of MacDill Field upon landing."

By the time I finished, Munsick was waiting to ask me about another matter. I told him about the C-47 encounter.

"That's more proof," he said, "that the Air Force had official UFO reports before Arnold's sighting in '47."

"This other case looks really hot," I said. "It's an Air Intelligence Information Report, from Laughton."

(Since this source is still a member of Air Force Intelligence, I have changed his name. His true name is known by Lee Munsick, Richard Hall and several Board members.)

Early in '57, Laughton had joined NICAP. Twice since then he had sent us valuable information which, though not officially classified, was unknown to the public. At first, I had suspected an Air Force trick, but careful checking had proved his reports correct.

This latest report,<sup>5</sup> despite the dry military language, had a strong impact.

<sup>5</sup> Certification of this report by Board members on file at NICAP.



AF FORM 112  
FAR EAST

AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

(U) UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT REPORT

FAR EAST

—February 1957

Captain ——— and

Captain ———

AFR 200-2

DI———

—December 1956 B-2

Debriefing

"On — December 1956," the report began, "two USAF jet pilots were practicing ground radar positioned intercepts on each other in the vicinity of ———."

During one run, the report went on, the intercepting pilot picked up a strange radar blip from an unknown object in the sky. From the blip's size—one-eighth of an inch high and three-eighths of an inch wide—the UFO was estimated at least as large as a B-29 four-engine bomber. Radar showed it to be twenty miles away, 30 degrees to the pilot's left.

"Pilot called the GCI (Ground Control Intercept) site . . . received permission to determine the nature of the source of the radar return," the report stated.

As he headed toward the UFO, the jet's instruments showed he was closing at a speed of six to seven hundred knots. (Approximately 720 to 840 m.p.h.) At eight miles, a round object appeared exactly where radar showed it. Later calculations indicated it was at least 200 feet in diameter, probably nearer 350.

By this time, stated the Intelligence report, the jet's radar had locked onto the UFO and was automatically guiding the plane toward the object. Suddenly the radar was jammed by a strong interference. Using anti-jam procedure, the pilot switched frequency. For ten seconds this eliminated the mysterious interference pulses, then they began again. But the pulsations were not strong enough to break the radar lock-on, and the jet held to its course.

"The jet closed to within five nautical miles of the object and could not close further," the Air Force report stated. "When the pilot was closest to the unidentified object, it appeared to make a shallow left turn. It had the appearance of being circular on the bottom."

After this, the UFO speeded up so swiftly that the jet's radar could not get an accurate reading. The report gave an estimate by the pilot:

"The object was moving up and away at from 1,500 to 1,800 knots." (Approximately 1,800 to 2,160 m.p.h.) Stressing the pilot's flying experience, the Intelligence report quoted him as saying he "would doubt the possibility of such an occurrence if it hadn't actually happened to him."

Details of the investigation showed how seriously the sighting was regarded. Immediately after the pilot reported the UFO and landed, his jet was tested by another Air Force pilot. All equipment, including radar, operated correctly. The aircraft was then checked by ground personnel; again, all items were satisfactory, according to the report.

Before the investigation ended, the plane had been rechecked and the pilot had been repeatedly quizzed by top-level officers in the Far East Air Force Command. This was emphasized by the final section of the report, entitled "Comments of the interrogation officers," which read:

"Operation, maintenance and Intelligence personnel of the ——— Squadron, ——— Wing and ——— Air Division were of great assistance in the UFOB investigation. [Under AFR 200-2, UFOB is sometimes used in place of UFO.] Written statements from the above organizations verifying information in this report are on file in the DI——— office."

I handed the report to Munsick.

"That case would startle a lot of people. And it builds up proof of the censorship."

Munsick had almost finished the report when a call came in from Mr. Heatt. I signaled for him to listen in as the Intelligence man began.

"Major Keyhoe? I've reviewed that situation. The objects the pilots fired on were foo-fighters."

"*Foo-fighters?* But the Air Force claims the *foo-fighters* were only illusions from war nerves."

"The pilots fired on *foo-fighters*," Hieatt said patiently, "and *foo-fighters* are conventional objects."

"How on earth can an illusion be a conventional object? Do you mean those pilots just imagined they saw hostile objects?"

"The pilots fired on *foo-fighters*, and *foo-fighters* are conventional objects."

The calm reiteration was infuriating. I had an impulse to spring the Far East report on him, but I realized it would be wasted ammunition. And Hieatt, like the others, was only obeying orders.

"In the future," he said when I thanked him, "address your questions to the Chief of Staff, at the Pentagon."

Munsick was half-amused, half-indignant, at Hieatt's answer.

"Firing at illusions—that's ridiculous! It makes fools out of their own pilots."

"That's nothing new."

I glanced at the Far East report. Playing a sudden hunch, I called the Capitol and gave Healey the main points, along with the Puckett case. He seemed genuinely impressed.

"You understand," he said, "I have to ask the Air Force about these reports."

"That's all right. Frankly, I'd like to hear what they say."

"I'll let you know."

The call had surprised Munsick. "I thought we'd hold those big cases for the hearings."

"The subcommittee hasn't decided there will be hearings. This could tip the scales."

Munsick looked dubious. "But the Air Force will just deny the reports, and that won't convince—"

"I don't think they'll risk absolute denials. Puckett and Glass could show them up if they were subpoenaed. And the censors won't know how much more we have on the Far East case. My guess is they'll stall for time. They can say

they're searching for the old MacDill records and checking with the Far East Command."

"In the Puckett case, that sounds logical. But I thought the Pentagon had duplicates of all UFO reports since '47."

"That's just it. Air Force Headquarters could put their hands on this Far East report in two minutes. But I'm pretty sure Healey doesn't know that, unless he's studied AFR 200 carefully."

"You going to tell him?"

"Not yet. It's better if he sees for himself how the cover-up works."

When two weeks passed with no word, I asked Healey about the two cases. He told me the Air Force was still checking. He didn't sound suspicious, so I delayed mentioning the duplicate files.

During September I flew to Boston for a talk to an engineering and professional group. After I returned, I had a call from *Night Beat*, the television program Mike Wallace had made famous with his sharp interviews. For one week the program was to originate in Washington, and the producer asked me to appear for a half-hour UFO discussion with John Wingate, who had replaced Wallace.

Two days before the interview, Henry Brennard asked to see me privately.

"I've something to tell you. You may be in for trouble."

We met for lunch at the Du Pont Plaza, a block from my office.

"The Air Force has worked up a blast at you," Brennard told me. "I got it from a PIO friend."

"What kind of blast?"

"He didn't tell me the details. I asked if there was any new dope on UFOs, and he said a special press release was coming out. He said somebody upstairs must be really sore at you and NICAP."

I told him about the call to ATIC and the Puckett and Far East reports.

"That must be it," said Brennard. "You've put them on the spot with the McClellan committee, and it could snowball. They'll probably try to wreck NICAP by discrediting you personally."

"But how?"

"I don't know. But you'd better look back and see if you've left them an opening. This press release is set for A.M. release day after tomorrow."

"The 27th? That's the day after I'm on *Night Beat*."

We looked at each other. Then Brennard shook his head.

"No, Wingate can be rough, but he's fair. And a network show like that wouldn't go for a rigged attack."

It wasn't until later that the thought came to me: They might not know it was rigged.

The night of the program I was ready for barbed questions, but Wingate was surprisingly mild. I had a feeling he was holding back, but the interview went on without even one hot argument. I had unconsciously relaxed when Wingate came to the censorship question. I told him the Air Force was hiding the truth, keeping UFO reports secret.

Then Wingate pounced.

"This afternoon, the Air Force gave *Night Beat* an official statement on your claims! Here it is:

"They say that as Director of NICAP you have been given all the information in the hands of the United States Air Force. And that any claim to the contrary is absolutely untrue!"

It was such an outright falsehood I was dumfounded. Suddenly conscious of the camera, I thought of the millions getting a close-up of the man the Air Force had branded a liar. For an instant, I was about to strike back with an angry denial.

Then I remembered.

"Mr. Wingate, the Air Force claims to have solved over 5,000 sightings." I turned and pawed through the documents I'd brought—thanks to Brennard's warning. "NICAP asked Secretary Douglas to let us see those solved reports. Will you put the camera on this?"

Surprised, Wingate quickly agreed.

"Here's the Air Force answer." I held up the rejection letter from the Secretary's office. "As you see, it reads:

"We must decline your offer to review and publish the Air Force reports on this subject."

Wingate looked astonished.

"You mean the Air Force lied to *Night Beat*?"

"Let's say they gave you a false statement."

When we went off the air, Wingate got me aside.

"I can't understand it. Why did they tell us that, when you already had the letter?"

"It could have been a snafu—right hand not knowing what the left was doing. Or maybe someone figured our proof would be too late to do much good."

"It's lucky you had the letter with you," Wingate said.

But it wasn't luck. If it hadn't been for Brennard the trick would have worked.

The *Night Beat* program killed the planned press release immediately, but the censors were out on a longer limb than I knew. Our discovery of this was more than another good break—it was a coincidence so incredible that no fiction writer would dare to use it.

Next day, I received an air-mail letter from Captain W. B. Nash. It enclosed a photostat of a communication from Vice-Admiral John M. Hoskins, Director of Declassification at the Pentagon. Nash had asked why the Air Force UFO reports could not be released to NICAP, as requested. In reply, Hoskins had forwarded a statement given him by the Air Force:

The National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena is not a Government agency but a civilian organization interested in air phenomena. As Director of this committee, Major Donald E. Keyhoe, Marine Corps, Retired, has already received all the information in the hands of the United States Air Force, and the Air Force position in regard to unidentified flying objects or popularly termed flying saucers. However, he persists in claiming that the United

States Air Force is withholding information on this subject. Nothing could be further from the truth.<sup>6</sup>

I called Munsick, showed him the letter.

"What're you grinning about?" he asked. "I don't think it's very funny."

"That letter's like striking gold. It happens that John Hoskins and I are old buddies—we were in the same battalion at Annapolis."

"Hoskins—wasn't he the hero of that aircraft-carrier battle—the skipper who had one leg shot off?"

"That's right. And knowing John, I think this is going to be interesting."

I got the admiral on the phone. After a few words about the earlier days, I mentioned his letter to Nash.

"Don, that wasn't any slam at you," he said. "I had to ask the Air Force for an answer, since that wasn't in my jurisdiction. I just passed on their statement. Don't let it worry you."

"But the Air Force turned us down—we never got those reports."

"What's that?" demanded Hoskins. "You mean the Air Force gave me a false statement?"

"Absolutely false. I can send you the rejection letter from the Secretary's office."

"Well, I don't like being used! I'm certainly going to tell them."

"I thought you'd want to know," I said.

"Quote me to the Air Force!" boomed Hoskins. "Use this as a lever to get those reports."

Following his suggestion, the Board sent a letter to General Thomas D. White, Air Force Chief of Staff, asking for the UFO reports they said we had received. But meantime a new discovery had forced even stronger action.

The false claim, we found, had been circulated on Capitol Hill. Proof of this came when Representative Peter Frelingheusen, New Jersey, sent Munsick an Air Force letter with

<sup>6</sup> Thermofax copy on file at NICAP; also letters from Admiral Hoskins to Major Keyhoe, explaining the Air Force handling of this statement.

the identical statement given to Admiral Hoskins. Written on the Secretary's Office letterhead, it was signed by Colonel V. J. Adduci "for and in the absence of Major General Joe W. Kelly."

Until then, we had made no attempt to release the true story to the press. But now it was not a question of attacking the Air Force. It was self-defense, for NICAP as well as myself.

On the advice of Frank Edwards, Henry Brennard and a Washington wire-service man, we planned a series of press releases, beginning with the Far East case and leading up to the false claim, with the Frelingheusen and Hoskins letters as proof.

"It'll not only vindicate NICAP and you," said Edwards, "but it'll wake up the public and probably clinch the hearings."

On October 1, the United Press carried the Far East story all over the country. Queries poured into the Pentagon about the huge UFO the Air Force jet had chased. But Healey was still being told that the Air Force had not found the answer. Unable to issue the usual denial, the Press Desk resorted to a terse "No comment."

Two days later, our next news story hit—a factual account of the sighting by Captain Hull of Capital Airlines. Public interest was steadily building up. The final release, the documented exposé, was due on October 5.

Then the biggest story in years exploded all over the world—the launching of Sputnik I, first artificial satellite. Everything else was forgotten and the exposé story was dead.

## CHAPTER VIII

# November Crisis

The great "flap" of 1957 began on November 2.

For days, all over the globe, UFOs by the hundreds descended into our atmosphere, several coming close to the earth. Within forty-eight hours the censorship wall was breached, as dramatic reports by trained observers hit the front pages. In the fight to regain control, some Air Force officials even repudiated their own men. And still the reports poured in.

But on October 31, when I met Mr. Healey again, there was barely a hint of those tense days to come. Sputnik I had set the stage. Two or three "saucers" already had approached the orbiting Russian satellite, according to reports we received from Moonwatch spotters. But we had no sign their curiosity—or concern—would lead to a mass surveillance, a

close-range search of the planet from which the satellite was fired.

It was two o'clock when I went into Room 350 at the Senate Office Building. Mr. Healey was as courteous as ever, but I knew something had happened.

"I may as well tell you," he said, "the Air Force has made a strong attempt to disprove your claims."

He went down a list of cases the Air Force had tried to explain away.

"Did they give you the detailed reports and proof of their explanations?" I asked.

"No, but they insist Special Report 14 covers everything. They say it proves flying saucers don't exist."

"But Ruppelt said those IBM tests were worthless. Remember he admitted the cover-up?"

"They said they held up a few crackpot reports that might have frightened people, though there was nothing to them."

"Mr. Healey, has the Air Force given you those four hidden documents?"

"No, but I'm to get a summary of the January 1953 conclusions, after that Pentagon conference."

"Why only a summary?"

"Well, it's a classified document, and it's CIA, not the Air Force. They told me the Central Intelligence Agency arranged that; it was an evaluation by several leading scientists."

"Then we were right! The CIA does control the investigation."

Healey made no answer.

"Have they given you that Far East report?" I inquired.

"No, the Far East Command is still investigating. Naturally, it takes time."

"They're stalling. They could have given you an absolute yes or no in a few minutes." At Healey's startled look, I showed him Section C in AFR 200-2 covering the duplicate reports. "Also, the Director of Intelligence gets the written follow-ups; they let me see some at the Pentagon when they were planning to tell the public."

The chief investigator looked disturbed. "It's hard to believe they would—maybe that one case was out of the files."

"Then they could've teletyped ATIC, or radioed the Far East Command and had an answer in a few hours. No, Mr. Healey, the Air Force is sitting on that report to keep from admitting it's true. If that jet chase hadn't happened, they'd have denied it immediately to make you distrust NICAP."

As Healey read the communications order, I got out the Hoskins and Frelingheusen letters and the Air Force rejection of our request for reports. Then I told him about the *Night Beat* incident.

"This changes everything," Healey said decisively. "Before, it was a stalemate. Now we start all over."

As far as our records show, Mr. Odis Echols was the first American to report a UFO during the big flap. At 8 P.M. on November 2, Mr. Echols, owner of Station KCLV at Clovis, New Mexico, saw a strange, glowing object speeding southwest.

Soon afterward, Ground Observer Corps spotters at Midland, Texas, sighted another UFO—logged as a "large unidentified object with a bluish glow." At 11:20 P.M., CAA tower operators Calvin Harris and Sandy McKean—on duty at Amarillo Airport—saw the same, or a similar blue UFO moving through the sky. Though McKean called it "spectacular," this case might not have been widely known but for what followed.

It began near Levelland, Texas, on Highway 116. The cases described were confirmed for NICAP by Sheriff Weir Clem and NICAP member James Lee, exactly as they were reported to the Air Force.

Just before midnight, truck driver Pedro Saucedo was driving toward town with a passenger, Joe Salav, when a huge torpedo-shaped machine descended toward the highway. It had a bluish-green glow, and it appeared 150 to 200 feet long.

As the mysterious craft came closer, the car lights dimmed, then the engine sputtered and died. Saucedo jumped out

and dived under the truck. As Salav watched from the cab, the strange machine settled close to the road. Whether it landed, or was hovering just off the ground, Salav could not tell—the blue-green light was too bright.

For two or three minutes the UFO remained there. Then it quickly lifted, its glow changing to red as it climbed.

Shaken, Saucedo got back into his truck. The lights and ignition now worked correctly. He drove into Levelland, told the sheriff his story, with Salav as a witness.

At first, Sheriff Clem was incredulous. But in the next hour he learned of four other cases where lights had been dimmed and engines stopped by the object's low approach. Among the witnesses were trucker Ronald Martin, F. B. Williams, Wallace Scott, Newell Wright, Milton Namkin, Constable Lloyd Bollen of Anton, Texas, and James D. Long, of Waco.

While Sheriff Clem was checking one report, he and Deputy Pat McCulloch saw the UFO's weird glow as the machine passed above the highway. This also was seen by Patrolmen Lee Hargrove and Floyd Gavin, following in separate cars.

It was then 1:30 A.M.

The second landing came at White Sands. At 3 A.M., a large round device, obviously under intelligent control, slowly descended toward the north tip of the White Sands rocket-proving grounds. From below, two military policemen in a jeep—Corporal Glenn H. Roy and Pfc. James Wilbanks—watched the UFO's cautious descent.

"It came down very slowly to about fifty yards," Corporal Roy later told Army Intelligence officers. "It stayed there three minutes, giving off a brilliant reddish-orange light. Then it came to the ground fairly fast. It looked like a completely controlled landing."

The UFO, Roy and Wilbanks said, was about seventy-five to one hundred yards in circumference. After a few moments on the ground, it took off and rapidly climbed out of sight. Both MP's told the Intelligence officers they believed it was a controlled machine from outer space.<sup>1</sup>

In the predawn darkness, other flying objects caused alerts

<sup>1</sup>MP's statements released by the Army.

from coast to coast. But Air Defense pilots, ordered to intercept the UFOs, were swiftly outmaneuvered by the mysterious machines.

After daylight, sightings temporarily fell off; apparently most of the surveillance was made from higher altitudes. But reports of single UFOs, by military and private observers, came in throughout the day. At Springfield, Illinois, and Calgary, Alberta, motorists reported their engines stalled by low-flying objects. At Deming, New Mexico, a UFO the size of the Levelland machine was seen by two men—Robert Toby, GOC observer and radio-station owner, and CBS-TV cameraman Russell B. Day. By night, the unknown objects were being seen all over the country.

Hours before this, teletype reports from Army, Navy and Air Force bases had reached the Pentagon, also ATIC and the Air Defense Command at Colorado Springs. At least two had already leaked—the “blue UFO” sighting by the Amarillo tower men, and the GOC case at Midland.

As the reports increased, worried ADC officers remembered the '52 tension, when massed sightings caused rumors of a flying-saucer invasion. And the later teletypes did nothing to reassure them.

At 8 P.M., Mountain Standard Time, a second disturbing encounter occurred near White Sands. At a camp north of the proving ground, another Army jeep patrol—SP3 Forest R. Oakes and another SP3 named Barlow—sighted a strange machine hovering fifty feet from the ground. In their official report,<sup>2</sup> the men said it was two hundred to three hundred feet long, shaped like a thick projectile. It had a bright glow. After a short interval, they reported, it took off, climbing at a forty-five-degree angle, and disappeared.

Before Sunday ended, two more sightings by expert observers increased ADC's concern. At 10:55 P.M., Technical Sergeant Jack Waddell, a control-tower operator at Dyess Air Force Base, saw an oddly lighted UFO flying close to a highway.

At 11:53, the CAA tower at Amarillo logged a report from

\* Released by the camp C.O., Lieutenant Miles Penney.

a Navy test pilot. Apparently a UFO was making a close observation of the Navy plane. Though it showed no sign of hostility, it maneuvered around the aircraft, its glow alternately dimming and growing brighter as it climbed and dived.

By morning, Air Force Headquarters was in a quandary. The Levelland report, backed by five Texas law officers, was a front-page story, and hundreds of newscasters were building it up. Pushing it for second place was a police report from Elmwood Park, near Chicago. At 3:12 A.M., two Elmwood Park officers and a fireman had sighted a glowing orange-red object about two hundred feet long. It was hovering less than three hundred feet from the ground. One officer quickly radioed the police station, and the dispatcher, Daniel de Giovanni, hurried outside. He could plainly see the unknown machine, low and eerily motionless in the sky.

As the police in the squad car turned their spotlight up toward the UFO, its beam and their headlights dimmed. The hovering craft quickly began to move, disappearing in a few seconds.

Besides these published cases, several new official reports had leaked, and the press was clamoring for answers. That afternoon, Brennard called from a booth in the Pentagon and gave me a brief rundown on the Air Force dilemma.

“The Press Desk boys are sweating it out, waiting for word from ‘upstairs,’” Brennard told me. “It’s the leaks that hurt—they were griping about Army and Navy loud-mouths until they found out Air Force pilots had yakked, too, about a sighting near Selma, Alabama.”

“If this keeps up,” I said, “they’ll be in a jam.”

“And they know it. Well, I’ve got to get back. They’ve hauled out a ‘fact sheet’—must’ve had it on ice for just such a spot—and they’re waiting an okay to shoot it.”

If the Levelland encounter had been an isolated case, the censors could have killed it with ridicule. But with all the trained observers now on record it wasn’t safe. Yet something had to be done in a hurry. Too many newspapers were taking the reports seriously.

Most Air Force leaks could be plugged, with a hard-boiled message to base commanders. Pressure could be increased on the Army, Navy, the CAA and the airlines. All this could be done behind the scenes—and was done, as events later proved—but for the press there was only one solution, short of telling the truth:

A high-level Air Force debunking, minus—temporarily, at least—the usual ridicule.

The decision was made about midafternoon. At Alamogordo, New Mexico, a delayed-action bomb already was set to blow the plan sky-high. But the censors had no hint of that.

Later that day one of our part-time staff members, Miss Elizabeth Kendall, brought up a question which had worried me for some time.

“What if the UFOs land, ready to make contact?” she said. “Does the Air Force—or anybody—have a plan ready?”

“They’ve never admitted it,” I answered, “but they must have some idea of what to do.”

“But what good is that, if the public doesn’t know?” said Miss Kendall. “Right now, most people are unprepared. What will happen if the Air Force has to admit the ‘saucers’ are real?”

“Depends on how it’s done. If they had to do it now, in all this excitement, it’d probably scare some people. But they wouldn’t be in that spot if they’d leveled with the public from the start.”

Just after I reached home, Brennard phoned me the main points of the Air Force “fact sheet,” which was headed, *Air Force’s 10-Year Study of Unidentified Flying Objects*.<sup>3</sup>

“First,” said Brennard, “it denies that the ‘saucers’ exist. It says evaluations are made by open-minded scientists and engineers. Then it names things the Air Force says witnesses mistook for UFOs:

“ ‘Balloons, airplanes, vapor trails, jet afterburners, stars, planets, meteors, comets. . . . Venus, Mars, Jupiter seen

<sup>3</sup> Defense Department press release 1083-57.

through haze, fog or moving clouds, reflections, searchlights, birds, kites, blimps, clouds—”

Brennard paused for breath. “—sundogs, spurious radar indications, hoaxes, fireworks displays, flares, fireballs, ice crystals, bolides, etc.’ Then they give this example: ‘Large Canadian geese flying low over a city at night, with street lights reflecting from their bodies—’ Don, how dumb do they think people are?”

“You should see the full list. But I thought they’d try something new.”

“They did—this is wonderful. Remember in ’55 they listed unsolved sightings at 3 per cent? Well, for ’56 this shows 778 sightings, with 2.2 per cent unknowns. It sounded very scientific—real precision stuff—until a reporter got out a pencil and figured 2.2 per cent of 778.

“ ‘Well, fine,’ he said. ‘Only 17 3/25 unsolved. What’s 3/25 of a sighting?’ ”

Brennard roared.

“They’re lucky they could change it in time,” I said.

“They couldn’t! The wire services and networks already had copies.”

“They can call it a typing error.”

“Not a chance. It’s got *fourteen* of those phony percentages. For the first half of ’55, the percentages work out to 74 4/5 balloons, 79 99/100 airplanes, 54 9/10 hoaxes, searchlights and birds, with 5 7/10 unsolved sightings. And 1956 is just as bad—202 7/25 balloons . . . 204 3/5 stars, meteors and other astronomical answers, 191 2/5 airplanes, etc. They wind it up claiming 98.1 per cent solved out of 250 cases, first half of ’57. That’s 245 1/4 cases they claim they’ve explained, leaving 4 3/4 sightings unsolved.”

“This is unbelievable,” I said. “They must’ve grabbed those percentages out of the air. Why on earth didn’t somebody check them?”

“Big rush—usual snafu. But they’d be fools to correct it now; everybody’d see what they tried to pull. And they still may get away with it. How many people double-check statistics?”



"But when your papers expose it—"

"That's out," Brennard said glumly. "I called my boss, and he's afraid it'd make the Pentagon sore and jeopardize our news sources. He says to let somebody else hit it first."

But not one newspaper called attention to the ridiculous Air Force figures. They were immediately caught by Civilian Saucer Intelligence, in New York, and by Frank Edwards and other NICAP members. But all attempts at a national press story failed.

(These incredible Air Force statistics remain on official record. As of January 21, 1960, they were still being quoted to Congressmen, the press and the public by Air Force Headquarters.)

The Alamogordo case broke on the night of November 4. About 10:30 p.m., a disturbing teletype message was flashed to the Pentagon from the Air Force Missile Development Center, Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico. A Missile Center engineer, James Stokes, had just broadcast a dramatic UFO report over Station KALG, in Alamogordo.

That afternoon, the engineer revealed, an enormous, oval-shaped object had suddenly appeared above the Sacramento Mountains, coming toward Highway 54. As it approached, his car radio failed, then his engine stalled. Other cars, in front and behind him, similarly were stalled by some electromagnetic effect from the giant UFO.

"It was at least five hundred feet long," Stokes declared. "As it passed over, I felt a wave of heat. Then the object made a 45-degree turn, toward Organ Pass."

The UFO's speed, the missile engineer estimated, was between 1,500 and 2,500 m.p.h. He declined to say on the air what he thought the object was.

"I just hope we're ready for whatever it is," he said solemnly.

The message from Holloman Air Force Base hit the censors hard. Such a report by a Missile Center engineer would be difficult to explain away, and the press wires already had picked up the broadcast.

Next morning, the Stokes report and the Air Force "fact sheet" fought a front-page battle, with three unco-ordinated Air Force statements adding to the confusion:

The Pentagon: "We are making a serious investigation of the Levelland case. We don't investigate all reports."

ATIC: "We investigate all reports. We never know when one may turn up something new."

ADC: "One published saucer report sets off a rash of sightings."

At NICAP, between attempts to phone Stokes, I had a call from Sam Gordon, science editor of the *Washington Daily News*:

"Somebody high up in the Coast Guard must believe the 'saucers' are real. They held a special press conference at their New Orleans office and released a sighting by the Coast Guard cutter *Sebago*. The cutter was cruising in the Gulf of Mexico. This wire story is a radio report from the C.O., Commander C. H. Waring."

At 5:10 that morning (November 5), veteran radarmen on the *Sebago* had picked up a strange flying object. According to Commander Waring, the UFO had raced around the cutter for ten minutes. Tracking it constantly, the radarmen had seen it stop in mid-air, then accelerate swiftly. At one point, its speed was almost 1,000 m.p.h.

At 5:21, the mystery craft, brightly glowing, was seen by four men on deck: Lieutenant Donald Schaefer, Ensign Wayne Schottley, Quartermaster Kenneth Smith and Seaman Radioman Thomas Kirk. The UFO was then moving horizontally at very high speed.

The last radar contact, Commander Waring said, showed the unknown object heading toward Louisiana. It had then flown 175 miles, in seventeen minutes.

To the Air Force, this published official report was a hammer blow. The Coast Guard was highly respected by the public, and its technicians and officers were as well trained as any in the armed forces. This was one time when a quick brush-off could be dangerous.

Avoiding comment, the Air Force told the press the

Sebago's report had not been received. This may have been true, though JANAP 146, binding on the Coast Guard, orders the swiftest possible transmission of UFO reports by teletype, radio or telephone.<sup>4</sup>

Lack of Air Force ridicule in the Coast Guard and Stokes cases temporarily offset their debunking campaign. Noting the serious press treatment, many citizens were encouraged to report their own observations. By the evening of November 5, NICAP had logged scores of new, verified sightings:

*Beaumont, Texas.* A maneuvering UFO seen by Police Captain Clyde C. Rush, five of his officers and reporter Paul Smith. *Spoooner, Wisconsin.* A fast, oval-shaped object; witnesses, newspaper editor William Stewart, an Episcopal minister, three other residents. *Atlanta, Georgia.* A huge UFO seen by three city firemen. *Ottawa, Canada.* A rocket-shaped device witnessed by physics professor Jacques Hebert, Ottawa University. *Chicago.* An oval-shaped UFO sighted by sheriff's deputies, police sergeant. *Barahona, Dominican Republic,* disc-shaped UFOs seen by hundreds. *Houston, Texas,* visual sighting by well-known citizens, with reports of car-radio and ignition interference.

In the growing excitement, some Servicemen, evidently thinking the lid had blown off, made their sightings public. Two important breaks on November 5 were phoned to me that night by a NICAP member in Los Angeles:

"Here's the first report. It was put out by Major Louis F. Baker, C.O. of the Air Force Weather Observation Station, Long Beach Airport."

At 3:50 P.M., Major Baker told the press, he had seen six "saucer-shaped objects" appear suddenly over the airport. Two other Air Force weather experts and ten additional armed forces personnel also had observed the UFOs.

"They were circular, and shiny like spun aluminum," said Major Baker. "They changed course instantaneously, without the loss of speed which planes have in a dogfight."

As Baker and the others watched, the formation of discs

<sup>4</sup>On August 4, 1958, the Coast Guard wrote NICAP that this sighting had been reported as required by law.

circled swiftly near the base of a cloud bank. Determining the distance to the cloud base—about 7,000 feet—Major Baker was able to make an accurate estimate of the UFOs' size. They were larger, he reported, than an Air Force C-47—a twin-engine transport.

"The other sighting is still going on," the Los Angeles member told me. "It's out at the Naval Air Station, Los Alamitos. I just heard a newscast—UFOs have been circling over there almost an hour."

(Later that night, this was confirmed for the press by Navy witnesses at the base, including Lieutenant Richard Spencer, a jet pilot, and Louis D. Mitchell, a control-tower operator.)

"It's really building up!" said the Los Angeles man. "The way they're spilling reports, the Air Force must be ready to bust it wide open."

After he hung up I could still feel his excitement. But I couldn't believe a policy change was that near, though the pressure obviously was mounting.

But the Air Force didn't get all the jolts that night. Minutes after the California message, a radio announcer phoned me from Kearney, Nebraska.

"We're about to put a local 'saucer' report on the air, and we'd like NICAP's opinion. A man named Reinholdt Schmidt claims a spaceship with engine trouble landed near the Platte River a few hours ago. Schmidt says the crew—two men, two women—invited him inside while they made repairs."

I had a sinking feeling, knowing what this story could do. Of course, meeting a space crew wasn't impossible; we knew there had been brief landings. But all of the "contact" claims we'd examined—tales of long talks with spacemen, being flown to the moon, Mars, Venus or Saturn—appeared to be dreams, delusions or frauds.

"Schmidt says they were friendly," the announcer went on, "but they wouldn't tell where they came from. After he got out, he says, the ship climbed up out of sight. He's the only witness. What do you think?"

"We'd have to question Schmidt and examine the area be-

fore we could answer that. But please put this in your broadcast: So far, NICAP hasn't found proof of a single 'contact claim.'

If the Kearney announcer could have seen ahead, Schmidt's story probably would have died that night. Months later, Schmidt publicly claimed four new contacts. Once, he said, he was taken aboard a spaceship—with his car—for a trip to the North Pole. Before returning him to California, he reported, the spaceship descended and traveled for miles under the arctic ice.

But Schmidt's first claim was less fantastic, and by next morning it was on the front pages. Then it was discovered he had a prison record, and Kearney authorities locked him up for a mental test.

This was a godsend to the censors, as many papers switched back to tongue-in-cheek treatment of flying-saucer reports. But the full impact was delayed. Some editors and newscasters knew the Air Force denials weren't true; they themselves had seen UFOs.

At St. Petersburg, Florida, observers of a UFO seen in daylight included WSUN news director Paul Hayes and sportswriter Eddie Ervin, St. Petersburg *Independent*. Both had been strong skeptics.

At Decatur, Michigan, a strange flying object had been seen by hundreds, including Waldron Stewart, editor of the *Adrian Telegram*, Decatur Police Chief Donald Miller, and Eaton County deputy sheriffs.

On through November 6 and 7, published sightings continued, though some had been filed before the Schmidt story broke. Curiously, three were Air Force leaks.

One was at Edwards Air Force Base, California. About 7:30 P.M., November 6, Air Force MP's in widely separated areas sighted a mysterious object flying low over the secret test center. The leak came when Air Force officers asked Lancaster and Palmdale county sheriffs to watch for a glowing round object.

That same day, GOC observers at Dansville, New York,

flushed a UFO report to the Air Force Filter Center at Buffalo. For some unknown reason, it was released to the press by Filter Sergeant George Hatch. The GOC observers, he said, were fully experienced in identifying aerial objects. Then he added:

"They said the object appeared to be made of highly polished metal, or was glowing very brightly." A message, Hatch said, had been flashed to the Air Defense Command. But ADC refused to comment on reports that jets had tried to force the UFO down.

The most encouraging news in this tug-of-war came in a call from Frank Edwards, at Indianapolis.

"Don, you won't believe this! The chief Air Force PIO at Los Angeles—Colonel Dean Hess—just revealed he's asked Secretary Douglas to open up with the truth about UFOs."

"That's amazing, if he really did."

"It's true, all right. My source in L.A. just read me a press interview. Colonel Hess says the Pentagon is greatly concerned, and it's plain he's worried, too. He said he phoned the Secretary's office and asked for a thorough investigation. Here's the hot part, quote: 'I have asked for a thorough investigation so the public may know the real nature of these objects. I'm not going to be satisfied with one of these routine inquiries. I am sure the American people would be receptive to information as to whether these objects are of terrestrial or celestial origin.' Unquote."<sup>6</sup>

"I can't believe it," I said. "When the censors hear that, he'll think the whole Pentagon fell on him."

"They may get a surprise," said Edwards. "Hess is a former minister and a Korean ace. A man like that could be another Billy Mitchell and wake people up to the truth."

"I just hope he can stand up under the pressure."

"We'll soon know. Now, besides that I've got two brand-new reports. Tonight, two Illinois state troopers—Calvin Showers and John Matulis—tried to chase a flying object near Danville. It was moving at high speed. When they tried

<sup>6</sup> Official statement in Los Angeles newspapers on file at NICAP.

to call their station, the radio was dead. It came back when the UFO was gone. This report is backed by State Police Lieutenant John Henry, chief of the Urbana District.

"Captain Irving Kravitz, TWA, reported the other UFO when he landed at Chicago. He said they'd encountered something strange, moving faster than any jet, over Nebraska. The CAA and the Air Force have the details."

"Maybe that Kearney story won't stop reports, after all," I said hopefully.

"It's not that alone—it's partly that stuff Menzel keeps putting out. [In 1952, Dr. Donald Menzel, head of astronomy at Harvard, tried to explain away UFOs as meteors, reflections and other natural phenomena. But ATIC, in an official statement, told me they not only did not accept his answers but that he had not even examined their evidence. The AF chief consultant on UFOs, Dr. Allen J. Hynek, stated: "He does not present a systematic study . . . raises more questions than answers . . . not a serious treatise, but entertainingly written."] You saw how Menzel explained the Level-land case?" Edwards went on.

"Yes—as a mirage."

"And he said it scared the drivers, so each of the cars stalled 'because of a nervous foot on the accelerator.'"

"But he didn't explain the radios fading and headlights going out."

"Just nervous hands," Edwards said ironically. "You know how scary those Texans are."

In a broadcast next day, Edwards bluntly exposed the fallacies in Menzel's theories. And he was not alone. In a sharp editorial, the Columbus *Evening Dispatch* labeled Menzel as the "chief hatchetman and knocker-down of UFO reports." Citing his "closed-mind dogmatism," it said his claims were a tipoff to the fact that official investigators were baffled.

In California, Captain Ruppelt fired another blast at the astronomer. Describing costly Project Blue Book experiments, he said Menzel's mirage answer was absolutely ruled out.

"There is sufficient evidence of flying saucer existence to

warrant further investigation," he told reporters. He also revealed that the project had received electrical interference reports when he was its chief, then urged the Air Force to "stop playing mum."

Just after I heard this, word came that Colonel Hess was to be interviewed on a Los Angeles television program. Hoping for a real break, I waited for word from the Coast. Then a Los Angeles member phoned the bad news to our office:

"Colonel Hess looked beaten—they must've given him hell. All he did was recite the Air Force line. And here's something else. Remember Lieutenant Spencer, the Navy pilot at Los Alamitos? He had agreed to go on the TV show *You Asked For It*. Now he's been ordered to drop it and shut up. He's been quoted as saying the directive probably applies to all the armed forces."

But this was only one of the steps taken to help make the blackout complete. Every day, new attempts were made to convince the Pentagon press corps that the entire UFO subject was nonsense. By the end of November 7, as more witnesses were given the "humor" treatment, public reports were almost down to zero.

To some NICAP members, it seemed the silence group had won. But this was only a lull in November's seesaw fight.

The biggest battle was yet to come.

## CHAPTER IX

# Checkmate

For twenty-four hours, the Air Force stayed on top of the seesaw. Then the balance began to shift.

Again, flying-saucer reports appeared in many papers. At first, they were mainly foreign sightings.

In South Africa, UFOs had appeared three times since November 1. At Johannesburg, two flying discs had been seen, one maneuvering swiftly while the other hovered over the city. A South African Air Force jet pilot climbed to 45,000 feet, but the hovering machine was out of range.

At 3 A.M. on November 8, four Australian government astronomers at Mt. Stromlo Observatory had seen a strange, luminous object traverse the sky.

"It is the first time," said Dr. A. R. Hogg, the assistant director, "that the observatory has sighted what might be called

an unidentified flying object. What it was remains an open question."

Stating that it was too slow for a meteor, and was neither Sputnik I nor II, Dr. Hogg said the unknown object might be circling the earth like an artificial satellite.

Further refuting U.S. Air Force claims that no professional astronomer had ever seen a UFO, staff members of the French National Observatory reported sighting a mysterious flying object which seemed to be intelligently controlled.

One significant American report, which showed the Air Force's continued concern, came from Captain Truman Gile, a veteran on Eastern Air Lines. At 9:15 A.M., November 9, Captain Gile and his crew saw a large UFO hovering over Lafayette Airport, in Louisiana. Gile told reporters he had never seen anything like it—and never wanted to again. He added:

"The Air Defense Command in Baton Rouge was on the phone, waiting for our report, when we landed there."

In releasing their sightings, several well-qualified observers openly rejected the Air Force explanations. One was Edward L. Cramer, assistant chief engineer at a Bell Aircraft plant, who had seen a strange machine over Buffalo.

"These objects do not fit in with our knowledge of mechanics or electronics," he declared. "They are nothing created on this earth—they're definitely from outer space."

Late on Sunday night, November 10, Frank Edwards phoned to report a sighting at Hammond, Indiana. Just after 7 P.M., hundreds of citizens saw a rocket-shaped machine race overhead. After a futile police-car chase, Captain Dennis Becky reported that a loud beeping sound had blocked radio reception. He also disclosed that many people had noticed radio and television failure as the UFO passed over the city.

"That'll be a hard case to knock down," said Edwards. "By the way, did you hear Dr. La Paz on Mutual tonight?"

(Dr. Lincoln La Paz, director of the Institute of Meteoritics, University of New Mexico, had long been a student of UFO reports.)

"What did he say?" I asked.

"Well, you know he first called the Levelland and Stokes UFOs nothing but fireballs. Tonight he reversed himself. He said from all the evidence now they could not possibly be explained as fireballs or other celestial phenomena."

"That's curious—I wonder how much he knows."

"No telling," said Edwards. "There's one thing that worries me. Have you heard anything about a new order to fire on the 'saucers'?"

"Only the usual rumors."

"I've been told that jets fired on a UFO over Illinois last Wednesday night."

"Did they hit it?"

"No. This man said the jets first tried to force the UFO down, to see how it worked and what kind of crew it had."

"It could have been remote-controlled," I said. "Even so, firing on it doesn't seem smart. I hope it's not true."

A day or two later, I was reminded of the firing story when I saw Charley Planck at the CAA. One of our hidden cases involved a spectacular encounter over Pennsylvania, by four airline crews. I had the names of one crew, and though it was a slim hope I asked Planck if the CAA could identify the others. But he told me that JANAP 146 still kept them silent.

As I got up to go, Planck stopped me.

"Don, I always thought the term 'UFO' meant a flying saucer."

"It does. Captain Ruppelt got the Air Force to adopt it as an official substitute. He's put that on record."

"Then what's the idea of this new Air Force statement about shooting at UFOs?"

"I haven't seen it."

"It just came out." Planck read me the newspaper item: "Any object detected and not identified could be called an Unidentified Flying Object, not, of course, meaning a flying saucer, as no such thing has ever been sighted by the Air Defense Command. When, and if, a UFO is not identified it would be forced to land and, if it would not, or showed hos-

tile acts or intent, it would be intercepted or destroyed.' " Planck put down the paper. "Now why did they put that out?"

"I don't know, Charley. But I can show you the Air Force instructions for reporting UFOs, in AFR 200-2, that emphasize 'UFO' doesn't mean any conventional object. And the same for the Navy official instructions."<sup>1</sup>

"Well, that makes it more puzzling than ever," said Planck.

I read the news item again. "Maybe some reporter heard that jets are firing on UFOs, and they had to say something—even at the risk of a backfire."

"You think they're firing on the 'saucers' again?"

"Two or three pilots might get excited and cut loose. It wouldn't have to be a new order."

"If there is a new firing order, somebody must be crazy." Planck paused. "Or else something's going on we don't even suspect."

When I returned to the office, after seeing Planck, I put in a long-distance call to a key witness in one of our hidden cases.

"I've an idea for speeding up action on the Hill," I told him. "If I can get several other people to release their confidential reports, in a joint statement, will you go along?"

"I don't know," he demurred. "Even though the ridicule has died down a little, it could flare up overnight."

"You and the rest of this group could end the ridicule," I argued. "The impact of your names, combined with those reports, would be terrific."

"Well, see whom else you can get. You can tell them my name and give them my report, strictly off-the-record. Then if you get enough, and I know in advance who they are and can see their statements, I'll probably go in with them."

"Good, I'll go after the others and let you know."

By November 14, we had three definite commitments. Sev-

<sup>1</sup> PRNC Directive, 3802.1, Code 03, 23 July, 1954. References: OPNAV NOTICE 3802, 26 September, 1952; JANAP 146 (C); Air Force Letter 200-5, 29 April, 1952; COMEASTSEAFRON INSTRUCTION 3802.2. Official copy in NICAP files.

eral other important witnesses had made conditional agreements, like the first man I had approached. All that remained was to compress the sightings and joint statement into a press release and get it approved. I was convinced it would lead to a breakthrough.

That evening I was working at home, drafting the story, when the phone in my study rang. I answered, hoping it would be another key witness, and Lou Corbin's angry voice exploded in my ear.

"Well, they've done it again! Of all the idiotic explanations—"

"What are you talking about?"

"This new Air Force brush-off. It just came over our wires. They picked out five recent sightings and then tore them down. They called the Stokes report a hoax inspired by the Levelland case. Then they made fools out of the Coast Guardsmen—"

"How?"

"Said the *Sebago* radarmen got confused—mistook ordinary plane blips for a UFO."

"What about the men on deck who actually saw the thing?"

"Oh, they steered clear of that—didn't mention it."

"Lou, the Coast Guard will never stand for that."

"Unless they've been shut up. And listen to this. In the White Sands cases, they even changed the witnesses from MP's in jeeps to plane crews circling the area. Then they say the UFOs these crews reported were only astronomical effects. . . ."

I looked down grimly at the press-release draft. But the Air Force couldn't have known; it was only a bad-luck coincidence.

"Hello," said Corbin. "Are you still on?"

"Yes. Go ahead."

"The Levelland explanation is the most outlandish of all. The Air Force says that the huge UFO was, quote: 'A natural electrical phenomenon called ball lightning or St. Elmo's fire.'"

"But that's crazy—they're two entirely different things.

Ball lightning's never been reported over a few inches in diameter. And St. Elmo's fire is a kind of static electricity that sometimes gathers around ships' masts and—"

"I know—it takes a solid object to cause it. It doesn't go floating around by itself."

"Or landing and taking off from highways."

"But that's not the worst of it. Here's how they explain the stalled cars, quote: 'Soaked ignition systems might have been caused by the weather producing the St. Elmo's fire.' Now I ask you, what dried the ignition systems so they started up right after the UFO left?"

"And what about the headlights, and the radio trouble? Rainy weather wouldn't cause that."

"No. And most of the other interference, like the police-car cases, happened in dry weather. But the Air Force kept mum on all that."

"No mention of the CAA or Navy cases?" I asked.

"Not a word. And they kept quiet about Major Blake. But they listed that Kearney 'contact' story—said the source was unreliable."

"Most people didn't believe that, anyway. It must've been dragged in to make the other witnesses look bad."

"That's obvious," said Corbin. "This whole Air Force release implies anybody reporting a UFO is incompetent, deluded, or a liar."

"Lou, I can't believe the papers will swallow this."

"Oh, they'll print it—most of them. But plenty of reporters won't believe it, and they'll still be looking for the truth."

Next day, the Air Force explanations made headlines in most newspapers. By ten o'clock, witnesses in two hidden cases had withdrawn permission to use their names. A third, an airline captain, called me that noon.

"This Air Force story is a plain warning that anybody else who speaks up will get the same treatment. So if you use that sighting, keep my name out of it."

"All right, Captain."

"Okay, I'm knuckling under to the Air Force," he said

gruffly. "I'm sorry, but I've got a family and my job to think about."

That evening, still hoping for a way to offset the Air Force claims, I showed our drafted press-release confidentially to a friend in United Press.

"Right now, no wire service would buck that Air Force statement," he said. "That is, unless you had iron-clad proof that the explanations were false—and the Air Force knew it."

Though the chance of that wasn't encouraging, Corbin and I quickly went to work.

In the Coast Guard case, I found that Headquarters officers were fuming at the slur on the *Sebago* observers. No one would admit the Coast Guard had been muzzled, but Headquarters' refusal to comment, after their press conference on the sighting, made the silencing obvious. In confidence, one Coast Guard captain told me:

"If those officers and radarmen had been that stupid, we'd have yanked them off duty in a hurry. And Commander Waring would have been in trouble for officially backing the reports."

"Are those men still on duty?" I asked.

"What do you think?" was all he would say. But months later I secured an official answer. On September 15, 1958, Vice-Admiral Alfred C. Richmond, Coast Guard Commandant, wrote me at NICAP:

No administrative action has been taken affecting any of the officers or enlisted men on board the Coast Guard cutter *Sebago* in connection with the report of the vital intelligence sighting to which you refer.<sup>2</sup>

But in November, 1957, the enforced Coast Guard silence was mistaken for acceptance of the Air Force claim—a picture of confusion and incompetence on the *Sebago*.

While Corbin checked into the Stokes and White Sands cases I phoned Sheriff Clem at Levelland. The sheriff emphatically rejected the electrical-phenomenon answer.

\* Signed original in NICAP files.

"Any effect like that would have been seen over a wider area," he said. "There would have been dozens—probably hundreds—of cases where ignition and headlights failed."

Instead, he said, the failures had happened in only a small area near Levelland, where the UFO was sighted.

"And there weren't any soaked wires, either. Those engines started up as soon as that thing left."

In the Stokes case, Corbin uncovered a surprise with the aid of Paul Parker, WIP, Philadelphia, with whom he often co-operated. But when Corbin called me, I thought at first he'd drawn a blank.

"I couldn't locate Stokes," he began. "They said they didn't know exactly where he was—"

"He must've left some address when they fired him."

"Fired him? Get this—he's on an important Air Force project somewhere and can't be disturbed!"

"But they branded him a hoaxer. How do they dare keep him on?"

"I don't think they dare let him loose, for fear he'll talk."

"How'd you get this?"

"After they stalled me—said Stokes wasn't available—I suggested to Paul Parker that he phone Colonel McCurdy, the senior PIO, and ask if Stokes was being kept incommunicado. Remember McCurdy was the one who first said he had no reason to doubt Stokes' report?"

"I remember. What happened?"

"McCurdy tried to duck the question, but he finally had to tell Paul that Stokes was still on the payroll. Paul asked how come, if the Air Force thought he was a hoaxer. McCurdy said that Stokes was still a good engineer, and making a fake UFO report didn't make him less reliable on missile projects. Isn't that amazing?"<sup>3</sup>

"It looks as if Stokes was offered a deal: Keep quiet, don't

\* On August 14, 1958, the Missile Development Center answered a NICAP inquiry and officially admitted that Stokes not only had been retained on the project but had been promoted. The reasons given by Lieutenant Colonel McCurdy were repeated in the letter. The Air Force letter also stated that Stokes would make no statement about his UFO report. Signed original in NICAP files.



deny the hoax story, and we'll take care of you—talk, and you're through in missile work. I'm not saying it's true, but if the press got this, somebody would hit that angle."

Corbin hesitated. "Think we should spill it to the papers?"

"Lou, I don't think so. The Missile Center would be forced to fire him, probably with such a blast that nobody'd ever believe a word he said. He might have trouble getting a job."

"Well, we don't want to put him on the spot. We can keep an eye on it, though. If they ever let him go, he might be a surprise witness on Capitol Hill."

In the White Sands cases, Corbin and Parker had secured official answers to both the jeep-patrol sightings.

"In the first case," said Corbin, "the two MP's reported a controlled landing and take-off of an object seventy-five to one hundred yards in diameter."

"I remember."

"That, says the Air Force, was the planet Venus."

"What?"

"I know. How the devil could they imagine a star was some huge object landing near them?"

"It's ridiculous," I said.<sup>4</sup>

"Well, listen to this one. In that second case, the MP's saw an object they said was two hundred to three hundred feet long. They said it hovered fifty feet above the ground."

"And then took off at a sharp angle."

"That, says the Air Force, was the moon!"

"Why, that's even crazier than the other. Nobody in his right mind would believe that answer."

"It's an insult to the public, as well as those MP's. But you know, picking those five cases to knock down was a shrewd move. In the Coast Guard, Stokes and White Sands sightings, the Air Force evidently figured they could muzzle the witnesses. They could brush off the Levelland people as not

<sup>4</sup> Following a lead from Civilian Saucer Intelligence, New York, we later found that Venus was not visible at 3 A.M., when this landing was reported.

technically trained. And almost everyone agreed the Kearney story was silly, so Schmidt's howls wouldn't matter."

I thought it over for a moment. "This should help us with the McClellan committee, even if we don't have actual proof those answers were rigged."

Corbin was surprised. "You don't think we've lost out there?"

"I don't think so. They've seen enough evidence of the cover-up not to take this Air Force explanation seriously. I'm going to give them the inside story on these November sightings."

"Well, count on me! I'll watch for a chance to help break it."

After preparing a confidential NICAP bulletin for members, I began a detailed report for the *UFO Investigator*, with a copy for the McClellan subcommittee. It was well under way when I received a letter from Major General Joe W. Kelly. It was an official answer to my protest about the false claim.

Your inquiries mention a misunderstanding or error on the part of the Air Force in not turning over unidentified flying object case files to your organization for review. I assure you the Air Force never intended to turn over "Official Use Only" files to your organization.<sup>5</sup>

Incredulous, I read it over. It completely refuted the Air Force claim, with no hint of an apology for what to me had been a slanderous accusation.

My first hot impulse was to call General Kelly. Then I remembered that practically all Air Force letters on UFOs were prepared by the official spokesman, Major Lawrence J. Tacker. Several letters signed by Kelly had been duplicates of earlier Tacker statements.

When I phoned Tacker he broke in before I could finish.

"I'm not going to comment on that letter! But I'll tell you

<sup>5</sup> Signed original in NICAP files.

this. We're getting tired of NICAP's charges that we've silenced witnesses."

"It's true and you know it. Air Force pilots aren't allowed to talk, and some airline captains have been pressured—"

"That's a lie! No pilots have ever been muzzled."

"What about AFR 200-2, and JANAP 146?"

"I haven't time for any discussion," said Tacker. "If you have any questions, put them in writing."

As he slammed down the phone, I thought: Maybe I'd snarl, too, if I had a tough job like that.

That afternoon, I had an appointment with Gloria Swanson, who was in Washington for two days. She was a NICAP member, and she made no secret of her belief in the flying saucers. We met in her suite at the Statler. After covering the November crisis, I showed her the Air Force case explanations.

"But with so many expert witnesses," she said, "how can the Air Force believe the saucers are imaginary?"

"I don't think they believe that. Apparently they're afraid to tell the public the truth."

Gloria looked at me thoughtfully. "Don't let this fight with the Air Force stop everything else."

"I don't like it, either. But it seems the only way to end the secrecy."

"All right, but meantime how about more information on the UFOs themselves? Haven't these recent sightings given NICAP more clues?"

I nodded. "There's new proof that the UFOs have some kind of force-field—"

"No, no. I mean clues about the beings who control them, where they come from, why they're here. For years, I've believed there are other worlds—some undoubtedly far ahead of us. The saucers—or rather whoever operates them—could tell us so much. It's tantalizing to be so near the answers and still not know."

"It may take actual contact, at least communications, before we begin to know all that. But you're right, I've let that

part get sidetracked. Tomorrow we'll dig into those November reports for any new leads."

"Good." Gloria smiled. "I hope you don't mind my saying what I did. I'm sure all NICAP members are against the censorship, too. But the main interest—at least to me—is the fascination of those other worlds. I think most people feel the same."

As I went out to the elevators, I felt a tinge of the old excitement. Before NICAP, it was the lure of the UFO mystery, the hope of finding a link with other worlds, that had kept me going. But that had been obscured in the fight against secrecy.

The battle still had to go on. In the end, it might be the only way to get the truth. But meantime I could make sure no clues had been overlooked.

## CHAPTER X

# From a Nearby World

Two weeks after my talk with Gloria Swanson, a full report on the November sightings was ready for NICAP members. There was no time for detailed opinions from the Board or our special advisers. But before sending the copy to the printer, I called Henry Brennard and explained I was looking for new clues.

"I need somebody with a fresh viewpoint," I said. "How about helping on this preliminary analysis?"

"Okay, I'll be the guinea pig," said Brennard. "Knowing all that UFO background might come in handy."

The first item we discussed that night was the landings at Levelland and White Sands.

"I don't recall any 'saucers' that size," said Brennard. "Could that be a new type?"

"It's possible. Oval or egg-shaped UFOs have been reported before, but usually much higher."

"Has one ever come that low?"

"Yes, a smaller one."

I got out the Air Force record.<sup>1</sup> At 5:35 A.M., August 25, 1952, an oval-shaped object about seventy-five feet long was seen hovering ten feet above a field near Pittsburg, Kansas. What appeared to be a humanlike figure was visible in the blue-lighted nose section. As the observer got out of his car to approach closer, the UFO began a vertical ascent.

"Investigation of the area soon afterward," said the Air Force report, "showed some evidence of vegetation being blown around. . . . Reliability of the observer is considered good."

Brennard looked surprised. "Now why did they back him up? They usually belittle 'saucer' witnesses."

"Just one of the strange contradictions you run into," I said. "Here's another one. On November 13, a disc-shaped object exploded over the State Hospital at Crownsville, Maryland. One burned piece of metal fell on the grounds. An Army Intelligence team from Fort Meade rushed in, roped off the spot and checked it with Geiger counters—"

"How'd you hear about this?" Brennard broke in.

"Lou Corbin found out, and Fort Meade confirmed it. They told him the metal was turned over to Air Research and Development, at Baltimore. Then an ARD colonel named Coleman told Corbin it had been flown out to ATIC. Coleman said he had no idea what the metal was."

"Any word from ATIC?"

"No. The Deputy Chief of Intelligence, Theodore Heatt, denied ever hearing of it."

"Do you think they have any other fragments, or maybe bigger pieces of 'saucers'?"

"They must have, judging from the AFR-200 instructions for handling UFO material. Here, I'll show you."

<sup>1</sup> Case XII (Serial 3601.), page 89, Project Blue Book Special Report No. 14, 5 May 1955. Photostats at NICAP.

Brennard scanned the paragraphs I indicated in Section 19:<sup>2</sup>

Reporting Physical Evidence. Report promptly the existence of physical evidence (photographic or material):

b. *Material.* Each Air Force echelon receiving suspected or actual UFO material will safeguard it in a manner to prevent any defacing or alterations which might reduce its value for intelligence examination and analysis.

Brennard's eyebrows went up. "That's quite an admission. It certainly doesn't jibe with their claim that the 'saucers' are delusions."

"Neither does the order about photographs." I pointed to paragraph "A-3," which emphasized the need for details to aid in plotting and in estimating distances, apparent size and nature of the UFO, probable velocity and movements.

Among the details listed were the type and make of camera, lens and film, lens opening and shutter speed used, filters if any, and the exact angles of the camera with respect to the ground and true north.

"Also," I said, "this directs that photos of radarscopes showing UFOs should be classified. That's probably because the radar plots prove the 'saucers' can maneuver and fly faster than anything we have."

"Yes, those pictures would be a dead giveaway." Brennard glanced back at the Crownsville report. "Any other UFO explosions?"

"Yes, several. One of the best documented cases happened in New Zealand."

I brought him the file. On February 6, 1955, a rocket-shaped UFO was seen by hundreds of New Zealand citizens. It was first sighted over South Island, then farmers at Inchbonnie saw it race inland. It was climbing steeply toward the Southern Alps, moving at tremendous speed, when it suddenly exploded. The blast was seen and felt over a wide area. No wreckage was recovered, as the rough terrain made a careful search impossible. Because of the object's ma-

<sup>2</sup> Official copy in NICAP files.

neuvers, a sharp turn at low altitude and the climb toward the mountain tops, any exploding-meteor answer was ruled out.

"So they do have accidents, after all," said Brennard.

"Looks like it. Power trouble—sudden failure of a gravity-field—could be the cause. Or it could be deliberate where the smaller UFOs are involved."

Brennard looked puzzled. "Why deliberate?"

"Well, you know how we blow up a rocket with a 'destruct' radio signal if it goes out of control—"

"Oh, you mean somebody on a mother ship might blow up an unmanned 'saucer' to keep us from finding out how it operates?"

"Yes. Anyway, UFO explosions might explain some of those strange 'sky quakes.' We know of some that weren't sonic booms; no jets were near enough."

Brennard motioned to the Crownsville report. "Did Fort Meade give any hint that the metal was radioactive?"

"No. But some UFOs definitely have been—Ruppelt let that out in his report. And radiation was found in one of these November cases. Here's a statement by Kenneth Locke, Civil Defense Director of Geauga County, Ohio."

On the night of November 7, a citizen named Olden Moore reported that he had seen a "saucer" landing near Montville, Ohio. Apparently the machine took off in a short time, after Moore hurriedly left the area. Next day, the ground was checked with Geiger counters by Civil Defense Director Locke. The radiation he found was far above normal. Also, Locke had found that a car parked half a mile away was radioactive, though the count was lower. The owner, Mrs. Mildred Wenzel, told Locke her TV reception was blurred the night before, but this could have been just a coincidence.

"Even if the UFOs aren't hostile," said Brennard, "those things could be deadly."

"We have a few unconfirmed reports of radiation burns. One that sounds genuine was investigated by the *Terre Haute Tribune* and the *Sullivan, Indiana Times*."

On November 6, several Hoosiers in Sullivan and at a farm near Merom reported two brightly lit UFOs. The Merom witnesses stated that one strange craft hovered about 1,000 feet above them, beaming a light toward the ground. Next day, René Gilham, who had seen it longer than the others, developed burns on his face. He was treated by Dr. Joseph Dukes, then taken to Mary Sherman Hospital in Sullivan.

"Nobody was allowed to see him," I said, "and the doctors and nurses wouldn't talk to the press. The *Terre Haute Tribune* implied that 'military authorities' were in on it."

"That does look odd," replied Brennard. "But at a thousand feet—how close has anyone come to a 'saucer' without any bad effects?"

"Within one hundred feet. We got the report through Professor Tom Burns Haber of Ohio State University. The sighting was made by his brother-in-law, Bruce Stevenson—he owns a big, modern farm near Circleville, Ohio."

I showed Brennard the report. In the early hours of February 1, 1948—three weeks after Captain Mantell was killed in chasing a UFO—Mr. Stevenson was about to check on some sows in his farrowing house. As he left his house he saw a saucer-shaped craft hovering above the farm buildings. It was about sixty feet in diameter, ten to twelve feet thick, and it looked metallic. In the center was a dome through which shone a blinding orange light.

From the machine's tilted position, it appeared that someone inside the dome was curious about the bluish-green glow from the farrowing-house windows. After a moment, the craft moved into a level position, then it passed over another farm building and was hidden from view. Before it disappeared, the light in the dome changed to a dim amber, but Stevenson was unable to see inside.

"And no ill effects at all?" asked Brennard. "Then it must've been a different type, or else they can control the radiation. It sounds as if it might have been beamed in that Gilham case."

"Possibly. One thing we do know for certain—some UFOs

have a force-field that interferes with electrical equipment."

Brennard went through the stack of reports. One, delayed in reaching us, had a statement by Patrolman John Boucher at Kodiak, Alaska.

About 10 P.M. on November 4, 1957, a round device, glowing red, whizzed out of the east. As it passed over Kodiak it was seen by several persons, including Boucher, who was in his police car.

"The area around me suddenly lit up as if someone had turned on field lights," he told Navy Headquarters in Kodiak. "This object skimmed about fifty feet over a school. I attempted to radio police headquarters, but there was interference. It was a steady dit-dit-dit that went on about two minutes. Jan Bueckers, the guard at the jail, heard it, too."

Brennard glanced up. "Many reports like these before the November flap?"

"Dozens, here and abroad. We just got one report dating back to 1949. Look for the Bushnell case, at the bottom of the file."

At Tulsa, Oklahoma, Mr. Don Bushnell, plant superintendent of Southwestern Porcelain Steel Corporation, had revealed a startling experience with a UFO. It was the fall of '49, and he and his wife were on vacation, driving through New Mexico.

"This was at night," Bushnell stated, "and we were on a straight highway when suddenly this thing dropped down into my headlights. It was fifty or sixty feet across, rounded on top. It came right at us, about four feet off the ground, really traveling.

"I jammed my foot on the brake, scared to death. My wife was screaming. I thought we were goners, sure. About twenty feet in front of the car, the thing lifted a little and just cleared the top as it went over. The radio was playing music, but when the thing went over the car the music cut out and there was just a roar of static. Then the music came back. I stopped the car and got out but I couldn't see any more sign of the thing."

Brennard soberly shook his head. "I don't like that."

"In some cases, drivers have gone into the ditch, afraid they'd be hit."

"But why would a 'saucer' come that close?"

"Maybe to get a close-up picture—I don't know. Sometimes other effects are reported, when UFOs come down low and pace cars. There was one case at Williston, Florida, early in November 1955. When a UFO hovered just above a police car, one officer felt as if his arms and legs had gone to sleep—a queer, tingling sensation. Also his clothes felt hot, he said. A number of witnesses have reported that. And you remember the July '54 case, when two Air Force pilots bailed out of a jet when the cockpit suddenly got hot as fire. They were getting close to a UFO. . . ."

Brennard nodded. "The Walesville case; the jet crashed and killed some people."

"There's no indication the UFO deliberately caused that heat. From other pilots' reports, it must be a force-field effect."

Brennard gave me a curious look. "I notice you don't say anything about whoever controls these things."

"We just don't know. William Lear recently said—you know who he is?"

"Head of a big electronics company."

"With defense and space contracts. Anyway, Lear has seen at least one 'saucer,' and now he says they may be 'intelligence-gathering devices' from some world 10,000 years or so ahead of us."

"Meaning all the UFOs are robots?" Brennard demanded.

"No. Somebody has to direct them, probably from a carrier or mother ship. But a lot could be unmanned. We ourselves already have remote-control rockets, automatic cameras and telemetering equipment—"

"Well, maybe some smaller UFOs are robots," admitted Brennard. "Sure, we'll use robot 'probes' to get pictures of Mars and Venus. But we'll follow up with a firsthand look. If the UFO operators are like us, they will, too. What else could those big 'saucers' be for?"

"Some people—one of them is W. B. Smith, who headed the Canadian UFO project—say they might be super-robots, surveying us by remote control."

Brennard snorted. "That's fantastic."

"Well, take the SAGE defense system. It's a semi-automatic ground computer that can add up enemy aircraft reports, figure where the attack's coming, and scramble interceptors right on course. Some jets have an automatic control that takes them to the target, fires their rockets or guns, then puts the planes into a breakaway turn."

Brennard made an impatient gesture. "I know all that, but—"

"According to our space planners, we'll have big ships in fifty to a hundred years with robot equipment to handle the take-off, to navigate, launch and retrieve observer units—even survey a whole planet. They'll get atmospheric samples, check magnetic fields, take photographs and make maps—the works. After that, we'll decide if it's safe, or worth while, to land."

Brennard shook a cigarette from his pack.

"Maybe so. But let's get back to the UFO beings. With all the dope NICAP's collected, haven't you some idea?"

"We've had a dozen descriptions—nine-foot monsters, little demons with claws, big handsome spacemen, beautiful space girls—"

I saw Brennard grin. "Now you're making sense."

"The trouble is," I said, "those reports sound like dreams, or hoaxes. We know most of them are."

There was a little silence. Brennard flicked his lighter closed.

"Scientists used to say no planet race could resemble us. But they've been swinging around lately."

"All I've come up with is their possible characteristics. If they're like us in their thinking, then coming here shows they're courageous—and smart, or they couldn't master space travel. To be surveying the earth they must be either curious, or worried about what we're up to." I shrugged. "I'm

just guessing. They might be different even in their thinking."

Brennard hesitated. "One thing I don't get. If even a few 'saucers' are manned, why haven't the operators ever gotten out after one of those landings? Or do you think they have?"

"Maybe, without being seen. And it's just possible one or two of the saner 'creature' reports could be true. I don't mean those wild yarns—we know a few witnesses who haven't talked publicly, apparently reputable people."

"What did they see?"

I gave him the details. The witnesses thought they saw humanlike figures, as in the Pittsburg, Kansas, case; one of the figures was reported briefly exploring the grounds of a suburban estate. But since it was night, with shrubs and trees between the witnesses and the low-hovering UFO, there was a chance for honest mistakes.

"Until we have absolute proof," I said, "NICAP can't accept any of those reports. But there should be meetings eventually, unless conditions make it impossible."

Brennard looked at me inquiringly.

"Well, for instance," I said, "our atmosphere might be deadly to them. Or they might be afraid of earth diseases like—"

The siren of a passing ambulance drowned me out. Brennard glanced out the window, turned back.

"That's an idea. Some of our diseases might be unknown to them. Without a natural immunity, they might die like flies."

"Or they could have trouble adjusting to the earth's gravity," I suggested. "If we knew what their planet's like—assuming there's only one race observing us—it would be a big help."

"There's no way of knowing that. They could come from anywhere, even another galaxy."

"No, they've almost got to come from some nearby world."

"Who says so?" demanded Brennard. "Several space experts have predicted we'll eventually travel at nearly the

speed of light. And according to Einstein, that means time would just about stand still."

"Yes, that's the time-dilatation theory. Most scientists now accept it."

Brennard leaned back in his chair. "Then why couldn't UFOs come from a far-off galaxy in a very short time?"

"With some revolutionary propulsion system, they could. But they could never go back to their own world."

Brennard's stubborn look returned. "Why not? If they could navigate out, they could navigate back."

"Yes, but they'd never find the world they left behind."

I went over to a file case and brought back the July 1952 *Journal of the British Interplanetary Society*. It contained a detailed explanation of time dilatation by Dr. L. R. Shepherd, one of England's leading scientists and at that time the Society's technical director.

"Read that marked section," I told Brennard. "Then you'll see what I mean."

After a mathematical explanation, based on Einstein's theory of special relativity, Dr. Shepherd illustrated time dilatation with a calculated round trip to Procyon, 10.4 light years from the earth.

During this trip by space traveler X, an observer called Y remained on earth to record the elapsed normal time. For this voyage, Dr. Shepherd used a spaceship velocity of .990c (c is the speed of light). In this specific case, the time recorded on the spaceship by X was one-seventh of the time which Y saw elapse on earth.

As a result of time dilatation the round trip, as measured by X, took only three years. But to Y and others on earth, X's return came twenty-one years after his departure. Unfortunately, as Dr. Shepherd emphasized, all of X's family and friends would be eighteen years older than he was—an inescapable factor in any such space flights. On longer trips, with speed even closer to that of light, time on the spaceship would shrink even more.

"It would be possible," Dr. Shepherd concluded, "for a

man to circumnavigate the universe within the space of a lifetime. But on his return he would probably find a dead planet—with everyone he had known gone for millions of centuries."

"That's an awful thought!" said Brennard. "But you're right—if the UFOs came from another galaxy they could never go back home."

"Let's work it out for a shorter distance, say a star system about a hundred light years away. Suppose a government on one of the star's planets sends out spaceships to look for other worlds. Some of them find our solar system and discover the earth is inhabited. What happens if they go back to report?"

Brennard reached for a pad, then stopped.

"That's easy. They'd make two trips, each one equal to one hundred light years in distance. If they traveled at close to the speed of light, they'd hardly notice any passage of time. But they'd find their world nearly two hundred years older."

"And they'd find strangers, assuming a life span like ours. Except for the records, the inhabitants wouldn't remember there was such an expedition."

"Wait a second," said Brennard. "Why couldn't they radio back when they found the earth was inhabited? No, that wouldn't work. Even if they radioed immediately, their world would already have lived one hundred years. And the time for the message—does time dilatation apply to radio waves?"

I hesitated, trying to recall references to this point.

"I don't think so. I believe it applies only to objects moving at such speeds. If so, then it would take another hundred years for the message to reach their world. By that time, the space explorers here would have died—still assuming a life span like ours. Of course, they could have landed on one of our planets, or a planet of some nearby star, and set up a base."

Brennard thought about it, shook his head.

"It gets even more complicated. In a hundred years, there'd be time for several generations to grow up, even before the radio message got back to the parent world."

"Then another hundred before a new space expedition could arrive, assuming the parent world's government hadn't changed its policy about space explorations."

"This sounds just plain crazy!" exclaimed Brennard. "If top scientists didn't accept it—even so, it's still fantastic."

I put away the British journal.

"A few scientists believe we can exceed the speed of light. Then the UFOs could come from anywhere. But most of them agree with Einstein."

Brennard glanced around at the office wall. "If you had a star map—I wonder what the nearest ones are."

"We have a list."

"I'd like to see it. You know, the saucer operators could be descended from a race thousands of light years away. The parent world could send out explorers, never expecting to hear from them again. The first group could find a suitable planet, build up a new world, then send out another expedition. It could go on for centuries. Or there may be explorers from several worlds, going at it separately, taking short jumps so they could still keep in touch with home base."

I handed Brennard the star list. "Well, some of our space planners already are talking about trips outside our solar system. But I'm afraid it won't be in our lifetime."

"It's an odd feeling," said Brennard, "to think there's another world fairly near us. What's the closest star?"

"Alpha Centauri, 4.29 light years away. It may have planets revolving around it. But the light they'd reflect would be so feeble our telescopes wouldn't pick it up."

As Brennard looked over the list, I glanced up past the Connecticut Avenue rooftops, thinking of those unknown civilizations. What would they be like?

Beyond doubt, there would be worlds and cities with strange beauty, beyond our imagination . . . perhaps a world lighted by thirty moons, surpassing Jupiter's twelve . . . one with rainbow-sky effects more lovely than Saturn's rings. Somewhere there would be beings so far advanced, in wisdom and understanding, that we would seem like primitives. But also, there could be worlds that were harsh



and forbidding, with creatures that no one on earth would ever care to meet.

Perhaps those who controlled the UFOs knew many of the answers. They might be descended, as Brennard had said, from an ancient race in the Universe, with a knowledge of most of its secrets. Or they might be late-comers in space travel, aggressive, pushing their way to expand their colonies.

Brennard said something, and I turned around.

"A round trip to Alpha Centauri wouldn't be any problem, at near the speed of light. In fact, at that speed the 'saucers' could come from any of a dozen star systems and still keep in communication with their own worlds. It could be Cygni 61, or Wolf 359, maybe Sirius—but you'd think they'd set up a base as close to us as possible, even if they can get back to their own world."

"Probably they have," I said. "And it could have been done a long time ago, on one of our planets."

"You mean Mars?"

"Not necessarily, though it's the most likely because of the increase in UFO sightings every time it's near us. Of course, the UFOs don't have to come from outside our solar system. A space-traveling civilization may have evolved on Mars. The Air Force made some interesting suggestions about a possible Martian world in their first public report on 'saucers.'"

The Air Force suggestions, dated April 27, 1949, had been released at the Pentagon. I showed Brennard our official copy:

Mars, however, appears to be relatively desolate and inhospitable, so that a Martian race would be more occupied with survival than we are on Earth. . . . Intelligent beings, if they do exist there, may have protected themselves by scientific control of physical conditions. This might have been done, scientists speculate, by the construction of homes and cities underground. . . . The other possibilities exist, of course, that evolution may have developed a being who can withstand the rigors of the Martian climate, or that the race—if it ever did exist—has perished.

Brennard laid down the mimeographed release.

"If the original Martian race did die out, it would be easier for some other race to build its kind of civilization there, or at least a space base."

"That's true. While we're on this, take a look at what they said about Venus."

I indicated the Venus paragraphs:

The possibility of intelligent life also existing on the planet Venus is not considered completely unreasonable by astronomers. The atmosphere of Venus consists mostly of carbon dioxide with deep clouds of formaldehyde droplets, and there seems to be little or no water. [Since then, leading scientists have decided there is water on Venus.] Yet scientists concede that living organisms might develop in chemical environments which are strange to us.

"You know, this is damned frustrating!" Brennard turned back to the November report. "Here's all that evidence. Add it to the summary of sightings since 1944, and you've got hundreds of verified reports by expert observers. To see all this, and then to be blocked from knowing what it's about—"

"Now you know what NICAP is up against," I said.

"Why can't the major world governments pool their information and then tell what they've learned?"

"Why not put that in your papers?" I asked.

Brennard made a wry face. "You know why." He glanced at the clock, pushed back his chair.

"Wait a minute," I said. "Did you see any new angle?"

Brennard shook his head. "Not about the UFOs themselves. I go along with you. It looks as if Sputnik I caused all that sudden check-up on the earth. But you didn't indicate the motives for the whole thing."

I put the November report back in a folder. "That's anybody's guess. We've listed everything from a plan for peaceful contact with us to an outright attack, though I don't think it's the latter."

"Well, all those sightings prove one thing. The 'saucers' aren't United States or Soviet secret weapons. We've barely

started in space. Nobody on earth has been operating fleets of spaceships all those years."

As Brennard put on his topcoat he added, "One thing, the Air Force can't be investigating all the sightings carefully. That Levelland sheriff's report shows the Air Force investigator spent hardly any time there."

"You're right, Henry; I think they're just pretending to investigate—except in cases with brand-new angles—because they already have full proof the UFOs are real."

Brennard gestured toward the November report.

"Well, there's a blue print of their tactics—every evasion, those crazy statistics, the silly explanations. It's on the record and they can't get around it."

"I'm convinced it's the CIA that sets the policy. I suppose they think people should be kept from worrying, until it's certain there's nothing to worry about."

"Sure—Big Papa," growled Brennard. "Personally, I don't want anybody—or any government agency—deciding what's safe for me to know."

"You and Jim McAshan. He's one of our founder members—also a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force Reserve. Jim just blasted the censorship in a news interview at Knoxville."

"I wish I could blast it, too." Brennard paused at the door. "Sorry we couldn't pin down more about the 'saucers' and what they're up to."

Later, as I drove home, I realized the evaluation had not been useless. Though we knew nothing more about the UFO operators, one thing had crystallized. Even if they originally came from a distant world, their present home or base could not be beyond our reach. When we began traveling in space—perhaps before—we would surely meet.

Some day, in one way or another, our lives would be linked together.

## CHAPTER XI

# The Armstrong Theater Battle

For ten days, NICAP concentrated on the search for new clues, after the evaluation with Brennard. It was a relief from the November struggle. But a call I received from New York cut it short:

"This is Irve Tunick, calling for the *Armstrong Circle Theater*. We're going to do a UFO discussion and we'd like NICAP's advice."

I managed to hide my surprise.

"You can count on our help," I said.

"Fine. We'd like you to appear on the program. So far, we have Captain Ruppelt, also Captain C. S. Chiles—he's going to describe that 1948 sighting. For the negative, we may get Dr. Menzel—"

"Have you asked the Air Force?"

"Yes. No success yet, but we'll keep trying."

I couldn't believe the Air Force would consent to any wide-open UFO discussion. But several days later Tunick phoned that they had agreed.

"It's set for January 22. I'll give you the details after the holidays. Have a good Christmas."

The Air Force co-operation disturbed me. Why, after the intensive November debunking, would they expose themselves to a barrage of questions—especially from NICAP? There must be something I didn't know.

The answer, when I learned it, was simple.

"No ad lib," Tunick told me. "They agreed only if they could put on their part separately and see your script. Of course, you can see theirs, too."

"I didn't think they'd risk being questioned."

"It's still a good setup," argued Tunick. "First, Doug Edwards gives a neutral roundup. Then Ken Arnold and Captain Chiles report their sightings. The Air Force man is next, then you, Ruppelt and Menzel, with a final one-minute statement by some top Air Force official."

"How much time do I have?"

"Seven minutes."

"How much for the Air Force and Menzel?"

"Well—about twenty-five minutes."

"You call that a fair deal?" I demanded. "If I'd known it wasn't a panel discussion I'd have insisted on equal time."

"Don, it's too late now. But you can cram a lot into seven minutes."

"Are you using that UFO formation film—the Utah pictures?"

"No. The Air Force said they were only sea gulls."

"That's not true. Air Force and Navy experts tried for six months to explain those UFOs. Their conclusion was 'Unknown Objects,' and the Navy group said the UFOs appeared to be under intelligent control."

"But if we run the film, the Air Force will call them sea gulls."

"You told me this wasn't a censored program."

"It's not. But we can't buck them on those pictures."

In my script, I alternated key cases, tightly compressed, with contradictory Air Force claims. The latter included three points from Special Report 14:

Page 93, Air Force claim: With only twelve detailed descriptions in reports by about 4,000 people, it is impossible to make even a rough model of a "flying saucer."

NICAP answer, quoting the Air Force Project Grudge statement, December 30, 1949: "The most numerous reports indicate daytime observations of metallic disclike objects roughly in diameter ten times their thickness." With these details, accurate models of discs could be—and had been—made.

Page 4, Air Force claim: Sightings prior to 1947 were not reported to official sources.

NICAP answer: The citing of numerous official World War II reports, like that of Captain Reida, and postwar reports like that of Captain Jack Puckett.<sup>1</sup>

Answering the Report 14 brush-off of radar tracking, I cited a January 1953 statement given to me by ATIC: "In 35 per cent of all radar tracking of UFOs, radar reports were confirmed visually by maneuvering objects or lights. Speeds indicated, from zero (hovering) to fantastic figures. In 60 per cent of the cases there was only one UFO; in the rest, there were several, some in formation."

Combined with stated opinions of Senator Goldwater, rocket expert Hermann Oberth, William Lear and other authorities, the high point of the script was the hidden Air Force conclusion that the UFOs were interplanetary space-ships.

Except for minor editing, I expected this to be final. But when the *Armstrong Theater* revision arrived, I had a shock. All the important items were missing. I immediately phoned Tunick.

"We had to cut it," he said. "It was too long."

<sup>1</sup>Detailed in Chapter VII.

"It took just seven minutes, talking rapidly. Irve, I won't go ahead unless those main points are put back."

After an argument, Tunick gave in. "All right, phone me the changes Sunday night, so we'll be ready for rehearsals."

When I reached the loftlike rehearsal hall in New York, on Monday afternoon, Tunick told me the new script was being mimeographed.

"By the way, Ruppelt has backed out. Also, Eastern Air Lines made Captain Chiles cancel."

"That sounds like Air Force pressure."

"I don't know." Tunick turned as Doug Edwards began rehearsals with the Air Force representative, a dark-haired, middle-aged officer with a big mustache. "That's Lieutenant Colonel Spencer Whedon. He's from ATIC."

I moved closer. In the tragic Mantell case, Whedon explained the UFO as "probably" a big research balloon. He made no mention of the key point in the April 1949 Air Force report: That Captain Mantell's wing man had searched the sky for one hundred miles after his leader's crash—and had seen no balloon.<sup>2</sup>

Following up, Colonel Whedon quoted the Air Force figure of 1.9 per cent for unsolved reports, with no hint that this actually meant 4 3/4 unexplained cases. Then for six minutes he concentrated on wild "contactee" claims NICAP already had disavowed, showing art cards of a "bearded spaceman," and UFO hoax pictures faked from a lampshade, a hat and a copper ball. It was a systematic debunking job.

Just before Whedon finished, a messenger brought my script. I took a quick look.

"Irve, this isn't the right copy. Those changes aren't—"

"We'll get those afterward. Doug's waiting to rehearse you—just read it for timing."

"Okay, but those changes have got to go in."

As I read my lines, I saw Whedon listening. Only one vital point had been inserted, covering the hidden conclusions:

"There is an official policy, believed in the best interests

<sup>2</sup> Official copy of release in NICAP files.

of the people, not to confirm the existence of UFOs until all answers are known.

"Captain Edward J. Ruppelt, former chief of Project Blue Book, has confirmed the existence of four important documents that should be noted. In 1948, in a 'Top Secret' estimate, ATIC concluded the UFOs were interplanetary spaceships. In 1952, an Air Force Intelligence analysis of UFO maneuvers brought the same conclusion . . . interplanetary. In January, 1953, a report by a panel of top scientists at the Pentagon reached this conclusion: There is strong circumstantial evidence, but no concrete proof that UFOs are spaceships. They recommended intensifying the investigation and telling the American people all the facts." (The other document, the 1947 ATIC conclusion that the UFOs were real, had been deleted by Tunick, since the 1948 document covered this.)

As I finished this section, Whedon hurriedly went over to Producer Robert Costello. When the rehearsal was over, Tunick drew me to one side.

"Don, we can't use that statement about hidden documents."

I stared at him. "Then the Air Force is censoring this program!"

"No, but they deny there ever were any such conclusions. If we let you say it, they'll stand up and deny it."

"Let them. Their own former Project chief confirmed it, and NICAP has other proof."

Tunick emphatically shook his head. "They say they'll call the source a liar. We can't have any row on the program."

"What about the other points cut out of my script? The secrecy orders, those Report 14 items, and the phony percentages?"

Tunick looked at me wearily; he had been up until 4 A.M. taking down the revisions I phoned him.

"Don, don't blame me, but we had to promise the Air Force there'd be no personalities."

"Personalities? These are official statements, already on record!"

"I know, but—"

"How about the Far East sighting—and that CAA radar report on tracking UFOs at 3,600 miles an hour?"

"Unless you name the sources, the Air Force will claim you made them up."

"I'm not going to put those men on the spot. But I'll show both you and Costello the signed reports, in confidence." As Tunick remained silent, I went on a little grimly, "If that won't do, then how can the Air Force object to cases they officially cleared for me in 1953?"

Tunick gave me an odd look; evidently he had not thought of this angle. I explained quickly:

"The first—and it was in the script—is the Gulf of Mexico B-29 case, where radar showed a mother ship taking small machines aboard; the UFOs also were seen by the crew. Second, the Haneda Air Force Base case, in Japan; four Air Force tower operators saw a UFO at close range, and also watched a jet chasing it. Third, the Washington Airport sightings. They're all cleared, all officially labeled as unsolved."

Tunick's face had an unhappy look; I knew he was under pressure.

"Even if the cases were cleared," he said, "the Air Force will try to refute them now. We'd never get a final script."

"What it comes down to," I said, "is that I can't put on any strong evidence against the Air Force claims."

"That's not it," Tunick protested.

"All right, Irve, here are six items you agreed to: Statements by Senator Goldwater, Oberth and Lear, plus three cases not even involving the Air Force.

"The first case is a daytime 1954 sighting by Captain Don Holland, U.S. Marine Corps—a report backed by Major General William Manly. Holland saw a UFO come straight down over a missile range, obviously watching a shot. When he tried to close in for gun-camera pictures, it streaked back up out of sight.

"The second was a daytime near-collision reported by Lieutenant J. R. Salandin, Royal Air Force. He said the UFO

was metallic-looking, like two saucers pressed together, with a dome on top.

"The third is another foreign case—no United States Air Force angle to it. In November, 1954, a Brazilian airliner crew and passengers saw nineteen discs—about one hundred feet in diameter—streak past the plane. It caused a panic, and several people were hurt." I looked squarely at Tunick. "Well, how about it, Irve?"

Tunick silently shook his head.

"You agreed to all this on the phone," I insisted. "What happened?"

"Nothing. It's just too much to cover—"

"With Ruppelt out, I have four more minutes. That's more than enough, so what's the real reason?"

"Don, I'm sorry. It's just too late."

I could see it was useless. The Air Force evidently had laid down strict conditions which gave them complete control. Since the *Armstrong Circle Theater* had accepted this control, Tunick had no alternative. I tried to hide my bitterness as he crossed off the hidden-documents paragraph in my script.<sup>a</sup>

"You understand," he said, "you can't make any reference to this."

"What if I don't agree?"

"Then you can't appear. It's not my decision—the Armstrong Company won't stand for an open battle with the Air Force."

For a moment, I was on the point of walking out, taking the censored script to the newspapers. But it might seem a petty squabble, unless Tunick and Costello confirmed the Air Force pressure. And I couldn't count on that.

Over Tunick's shoulder I saw Ken Arnold watching me. From his expression, I knew he had heard our conversation. I glanced past him toward Whedon and Costello. Was it possible the Air Force had planned this ultimatum, hoping I'd quit rather than back down? If I did, they would have the whole show to themselves. They might make it seem we had

<sup>a</sup> Censored script page on file at NICAP.

had no real evidence, and knowing it I had lost my nerve and ducked out.

I turned back to Tunick.

"I'll stay," I said curtly. "I'm not blaming you, Irve—but it's outright censorship and you know it."

As Tunick went to tell Whedon, Ken Arnold came up to me.

"I heard the whole thing, and it's a raw deal. I'm having trouble, too; they won't let me make any changes."

For the next two days, as *TV Guide* and the radio columns announced the *Armstrong Theater's* "balanced presentation of the UFO problem," I doggedly went through the rehearsals. I felt no resentment toward Costello, or William Corrigan, the director. They plainly knew what had happened, and they tried to improve the delivery of my enfeebled script. But nothing could make up for all the suppressed evidence.

On Wednesday morning, I met Arnold in our hotel lobby. He told me he was quitting the program.

"You'd better quit, too. The way it's rigged, the Air Force will make you look like a fool."

When I got to the CBS theater, I told Costello.

"That leaves a vacant spot," I said. "Let me see if I can get Admiral Hillenkoetter to fill in with a NICAP Board statement. His office is in New York."

"No, everything's on the teleprompter," said Costello. "I'll have Irve go on and quote Arnold's statement."

That night, as I watched Colonel Whedon's performance, I could guess the impact on the millions who were tuned in. Without a hint of the censored evidence, why shouldn't they accept the official claims?

During the commercial before Act Three, I took my place at a table near Doug Edwards. As I waited, I thought of the censored script, a few yards away in my open dispatch bag. What would happen if I held that crossed-out page up to the camera? It could be done with a few quick words:

"The Air Force ordered this cut from my script—their secret conclusion that the 'flying saucers' are spaceships! This

whole program has been censored to hide the truth from the public."

But I couldn't do it. I had promised Tunick.

Just before the director's signal, Doug Edwards leaned over toward me.

"Now get in there and fight!"

But even a fiery delivery couldn't have put life into the skeleton of my story.

For several minutes, I forced myself to read the lines on the teleprompter. But as the yellow strip slowly unreeled, all the frustration of the past three days suddenly boiled over. I stopped, looked straight into the camera:

"And now I'm going to reveal something that has never been disclosed before. . . ."

Back in the control room, as I learned later, there was instant bedlam. Caught without warning, Costello had to make a lightning decision. Should he cut the show off the air—or silence me and try to save it? Swiftly, he ordered my microphone switched off.

But the camera was still on me. Unaware that I had been silenced, I went on:

"For the last six months, we have been working with a Congressional committee investigating official secrecy about UFOs. If all the evidence we have given this committee is made public in open hearings . . ."

Abruptly, the cameraman began to rack the teleprompter tape up and down, in a frantic signal for me to stop. Still not certain I was off the air, I finished the sentence:

". . . it will absolutely prove that the UFOs are real machines under intelligent control."

Since Doug Edwards' mike was on, some listeners caught the last words by turning up their volume controls. But the majority did not, and within minutes CBS switchboards all over the country were swamped with complaints. Why had the sound been cut off? What were the final words?

In that one impulsive act, I seemed to have offset the Air Force claims more than anything I had said on the program. Inevitably, many believed the Air Force had ordered the cut-

off, and Secretary Horner's denial of secrecy, a few minutes later, had a hollow sound.

But in spite of this, I quickly regretted the action, as Producer Costello struggled to defend himself.

"I had to do it," he told the press. "Nobody knew what he was going to say."

In the midst of this, a call for me came through from J. B. Hartranft in Washington:

"I saw you, and it's plain you were cut off. What's going on?"

I explained about the censored script.

"Well, stand by your guns," said Hartranft. "Don't let them push you around."

In the next few moments, I thought of exploding the whole story. For now I knew that the New York papers and press-wires, knowing the nationwide interest, would run my statement about the deleted paragraph and probably my claim of Air Force pressure. Ken Arnold would gladly back me up, and it could have led to the long-hoped-for showdown.

But it would have put Costello and Tunick squarely on the spot, whether they admitted or denied the orders from the Air Force. And knowing they, too, were victims of official pressure, I reluctantly gave up the idea.

To clear Costello, I gave him a statement that he had had no alternative when I deviated from the script.

But nothing could stop the effect of the cutoff. Millions now were convinced that the Air Force was hiding the facts.

After returning to Washington, I had full proof of the Air Force control of this program. Answering a NICAP member's complaint, the CBS Director of Editing, Herbert A. Carlborg, made this surprising admission:

This program had been carefully cleared for security reasons. Therefore, it was the responsibility of this network to insure performance that was in accordance with predetermined security standards. Any indication that there would be a deviation from the script might lead to a statement that neither this network nor the individuals on the program were

authorized to release. As a consequence, public interest was served by the action taken in deleting the audio on Major Keyhoe's speech at a point where he apparently was about to deviate.<sup>4</sup>

Now it was out in the open. Both CBS and the *Armstrong Theater* staff must have been warned by the Air Force: Don't permit any startling NICAP revelations, even if they have proof.

The CBS statement raised one question the Air Force never answered.

If there was nothing secret about UFOs, why did the program have to be cleared for security?

Months later, I realized what the Air Force feared—that NICAP had proof of what lay behind the secrecy.

But at that time I only suspected.

<sup>4</sup>Signed original in NICAP files.

## CHAPTER XII

# The Airliner Chase

For days after the Armstrong program, letters swamped NICAP, asking for the facts. Knowing that congressmen would be hearing from constituents, I phoned Mr. Healey to ask what effect this had had.

"I watched the program," he said. "When your voice faded, was that an accident or were the news reports right?"

"I was cut off—I ad-libbed because I was censored. But I didn't name the committee, and I hope it hasn't caused you trouble."

"No, though we are getting queries relayed by various congressmen. What's this about being censored?"

"I was planning to give you the details, along with the November sightings report—it's almost in shape."

"All right, just give me a call."

On the day before our meeting there was an unexpected development. That morning, a registered package arrived from a NICAP member—an experienced UFO investigator.

For months, we had been probing into a 1956 mystery. And now, if the contents of this package lived up to expectations, we had proof of a startling cover-up. But I had to make sure there was no mistake. Slipping the package into my briefcase, I left the office.

When I returned, I knew this evidence was indisputable. If it were revealed in an open Congressional hearing, the effect would be sensational.

I started to lock up the package, then paused. Why not disclose this to Healey at our meeting? It should remove any last doubts of the censorship. For now all the facts were nailed down, every step documented, in this almost incredible story.

The action had begun on a starless night, April 8, 1956.

It was 9 P.M. when American Airlines Flight 775 took off from New York, bound for Buffalo by way of Albany, Syracuse and Rochester. At 10:20, the twin-engine Convair cleared Albany Airport, with Captain Raymond E. Ryan, forty-three-year-old veteran, at the airliner's controls.

With gear up and flaps retracted, Ryan banked to the left, to pick up the course to Syracuse. Suddenly a peculiar fluorescent glow appeared on his right.

"That's an awfully bright light," he told First Officer William Neff. As Neff peered out on his side, Ryan watched the light warily. It couldn't be a plane's landing light—it was too brilliant, almost blinding. Something strange seemed to be hovering over Schenectady.

Both pilots watched, puzzled, as the Convair drew abreast. Captain Ryan started to veer away, to keep a safe distance. Instantly the strange object whirled through a ninety-degree turn, then shot ahead of them. In those seconds, Ryan estimated, it had accelerated to about nine hundred miles an hour. He knew then it was no jet.



After a few moments, the UFO quickly decelerated to the airliner's speed, then gradually dropped back. As it slowed, its brilliant glow faded out. Afraid of hitting the mystery machine in the dark, Ryan quickly switched on the Convair's landing lights.

Just before the powerful beams lanced ahead, the UFO's glow returned, with an orange tinge. It was obviously pacing the plane, though keeping well ahead.

Worried about this stranger on the airway, Captain Ryan radioed Griffiss Air Force Base, near Rome, New York. When he reported the UFO, the Griffiss tower immediately told him to cut off his landing lights. After he complied, Griffiss called back.

"Now we can see an orange object near you. Our radar isn't on, but we're going to scramble two jets. Keep on watching the object and report what you see."

By this time, Stewardess Phyllis Reynolds had come into the cockpit and had seen the unknown machine. To avoid frightening the passengers, Ryan told her not to mention the UFO. Since it was dead ahead, it could not be seen from the cabin.

For several minutes, Ryan kept up a running report on the unknown craft. Then the Griffiss tower took over control of the Convair. As the startled pilots listened, Griffiss told them to change their course and follow the UFO.

Under Civil Aeronautics regulations, there was no authority for military control of an airliner. Any deviation from an officially approved course would be the captain's responsibility, to be fully explained to the CAA and his company. But this was an Air Force order with a note of urgency, and Captain Ryan obeyed. Turning away from Syracuse, he followed the unknown machine. It was now heading northwest across New York State, its speed still reduced, as if to let the Convair follow.

As the minutes passed, Ryan's uneasiness increased. The jets might arrive at any moment. Probably they would radio the plane, then close in alongside to line up on the UFO. Should he warn the passengers? Some undoubtedly would be

alarmed, but if they weren't warned the jets' sudden appearance might give them a far worse scare.

Torn between the two choices, Ryan decided to wait until the jets called him. But now the Convair was miles off course, and his contact with Griffiss was fading.

Up ahead, where the lights of Oswego ended, Captain Ryan could see the dark expanse of Lake Ontario. The UFO began to pick up speed, forcing another choice on Ryan—to open his throttles or lose the strange machine.

The Convair roared over Oswego, and the shoreline passed beneath. The UFO, moving faster and faster, was headed up toward Canada.

Abruptly, Ryan made up his mind. Air Force order or not, he would not take that risk with passengers' lives. He banked, swung back toward Syracuse.

On the return flight, Ryan and Neff puzzled over the missing Air Force interceptors. With their high speed, the jets had had ample time to catch up with the Convair. Perhaps they had caught up, at a higher altitude, and had sighted the UFO without any help. But if so, why hadn't they tried to intercept it, as Griffiss had said they would do?

Could the jet pilots have had orders for a secret attack on the 'saucer'? In that case, they might have waited until the Convair turned back and the mysterious craft was well out over Lake Ontario.

Perhaps the CAA tower operators at Syracuse would know the answer. When contact had been lost with Griffiss, the Syracuse tower had relayed Ryan's messages, and he knew they would monitor all the Convair-Griffiss communications.

But when he called Syracuse, the CAA men told him they had no word on the jets. The UFO, he learned, had been sighted by CAA tower operators at Albany and Watertown. But none of them knew what had happened to the interceptors, and the Griffiss tower now was silent.

Under the usual Air Force procedure, the Convair crew would immediately have been warned not to reveal this chase. The CAA men were no problem; they were automatically silenced by JANAP 146. But Ryan had made no CIR-

VIS report, which would have been under security. To remedy this, he and Neff ordinarily would have been told not to talk.

What caused this Air Force slip-up has never been explained. Perhaps some emergency at Griffiss took all their attention that night. Whatever the cause, the pilots were muzzled too late.

When Flight 775 landed at Buffalo, the airport tower staff and American Airlines' operations men already knew the story. Following normal procedure, Ryan had radioed his report before landing.

In some way, the Buffalo *Evening News* learned of the UFO chase, either through a leak at the airport or from monitoring the airline frequency. Later, a reporter reached Ryan and secured the main details, and on April 10 the newspaper ran the story.

According to this published interview, Captain Ryan disclosed the UFO encounter, the jet scramble, and the Air Force order to follow the unknown device. Ryan was quoted as abandoning pursuit about five miles beyond Oswego:

"The object was heading northwest, over the lake toward Canada. I knew I couldn't catch it or keep up with it."

Stressing Ryan's twenty-three years as a pilot, the *Evening News* emphasized his knowledge of meteors and sky phenomena. The captain, the newspaper said, had ruled out any such explanation.

"This was absolutely real," Ryan was quoted. "I'm convinced there was something fantastic up there."

When I first heard this story, in April of '56, I expected a hasty Air Force debunking—probably a claim that Ryan had misunderstood the Griffiss tower. Instead, there was silence. But I knew Ryan's public disclosures must have caused consternation, and later events brought full proof.

The Air Force had good reason for dismay. If the Buffalo newspaper story received national publicity they could be in serious trouble. To avoid blame, American Airlines and the CAA probably would feel impelled to charge the Air Force

with unwarranted control of the Convair—possibly endangering passengers' lives. Even if they could be kept quiet, Senator "Mike" Monroney, tough-minded chairman of the Senate Civil Aviation Committee, almost certainly would order an investigation. Any such action would bring a flood of complaints from America's air travelers.

Even if Ryan could be forced to retract his story, it would be a dangerous gamble. Too many CAA men knew of the Griffiss order; if called to Capitol Hill they would have to confirm it—unless stopped by some high-level order. And that would only increase the suspicion that something ominous had been hidden.

Fortunately for the censors, the Buffalo press report did not get wide attention. After a few days, when there was no eruption from Congress or the public, the Air Force could breathe easier. With good luck, the story would soon be forgotten. All that remained was to make sure Ryan and Neff did not revive it.

Soon after the incident, I tried to learn more of the facts. As I expected, the Air Force refused to comment. When Ryan also was silent, I was not surprised—I assumed he was swamped with mail. But when the CAA denied ever hearing of the case, I knew the lid had been slammed down.

Recalling the old adage about closing a barn door after a horse was stolen, I wondered about this belated censorship. Was it due merely to fear of delayed public reaction—or was there something bigger behind this curtain of silence?

After I became Director of NICAP, I remembered the Ryan case. On April 5, 1957, a courteous request for added details was mailed to Captain Ryan. Mentioning his story in the Buffalo *Evening News*, I promised we would not reveal any new information without his consent.

Though Ryan later admitted to his chief pilot, H. L. Clark, that he had heard from me, no answer ever was received. Attempts to reach Ryan by telephone also were futile.

It was just after my first NICAP letter to Ryan when Lee Munsick joined the staff as associate editor. He agreed we should try to get the inside story.

"You say the Air Force refused to comment?"

"Yes, on the phone. We can try a written request."

In a telegram to General Joe Kelly, on May 15, I asked for the Ryan report. No answer was received. After ten days, I called Planck at the CAA and asked his help.

"I'll ask the Air Carrier Safety Division to look into this," Planck told me. "And I promise I'll keep after it."

Three months later, his prodding finally paid off. On August 23, we received an official copy of the CAA investigation report. It contained a statement from Ryan, a blunt denial of his published interview:

I did not deviate from course at any time. I did sight an object and it was witnessed.<sup>1</sup>

When I showed this to Munsick he was incredulous.

"But he's on record! How does he dare deny it?"

"He must've been forced to. There's something powerful behind this. Nothing else could explain such a gamble."

"What do you mean?"

"If the news story is true—and no reputable paper would fake those direct quotations—then this is a false statement. Unless he was under heavy pressure, no airline captain would risk his license, lying to the CAA."

"You think the airline had him deny it, to avoid publicity?"

"No, they'd already had publicity. And a trick like this could blow up in their faces. Think of the spot they'd be in if Ryan refused and then told the Air Line Pilots Association. ALPA would report them to the CAA and tell the press. In the end, American could be fined for ordering a false report, and they'd be in a real mess."

Munsick read Ryan's statement again. "But the airline must know this is false."

"Undoubtedly. I think they're also under heavy pressure."

"Meaning the Air Force?"

I hesitated. "I don't know, Lee. It might go even higher. It would take someone with real power, I should think, to scare American and Ryan into taking this chance."

<sup>1</sup> CAA statement with Captain Ryan's denial in NICAP files.

"What could be the reason?"

"I wish I knew. Anyway, Ryan's denial is an official record now, and maybe we can do something about it. We'll start with the CAA Administrator, Ernie Pyle."

Mr. Pyle, we found, was out of town, but next day Munsick and I met with his executive assistant, Mr. Preble Staver. I showed him Ryan's statements in the Buffalo *Evening News* story.

"We can't accept newspaper stories as evidence," announced Staver. "Captain Ryan denies he deviated, and his chief pilot endorses it. We accept their statements."

"Did Ryan deny that interview?" asked Munsick.

"We didn't ask him."

"Why not?" I said.

Staver brushed it aside. "That's none of the CAA's business."

"All right." I stood up. "But I wonder if Senator Monroney will agree. When he sees this story, he may think you should have made Ryan explain."

"Wait a minute," said Staver. "There's no need to take this to the Hill."

"Why not? NICAP would like to know whether the senator approves of the CAA's letting airliners chase UFOs."

"But we didn't let him chase—" Staver stopped. "Look, this really should be Civil Aeronautics Board business. Make a formal complaint—"

"But this was a formal complaint to the CAA."

"Well, no. We considered it an informal request."

"Very well," I said, "we'll make it formal, in writing. And thanks for the CAB suggestion."

Several times before, the CAB safety bureau had helped me out. But when I mentioned the Ryan case I thought they seemed uneasy. Finally, they agreed to investigate.

Later that day Munsick asked if I thought the newspaper story could be wrong.

"It's hard to believe Ryan would deny an actual interview," he said. "Maybe some reporter took the sighting and built it up."

"That was a front-page story, and Ryan lives in a Buffalo suburb. He couldn't help but see the mistakes, and he'd have demanded a retraction. So would American Airlines—maybe even the Air Force. No, I'm sure it's straight—but we'll nail it down."

Calling the Buffalo *Evening News*, I explained the situation to Lenord Kreuger, assistant city editor.

"That's odd," he said. "I can't understand Ryan's denying it. One of our best men interviewed him. I remember the whole thing."

"And Ryan never asked for any correction?"

"Not a word, from Ryan or his company."

"If it came to a showdown, then the *News* could produce the reporter—"

"Major," Kreuger said emphatically, "the *News* will back that story one hundred per cent!"

On August 26, Editor Kreuger sent me written confirmation that the story was genuine.<sup>2</sup> That same day, I called Frank Bronton, Washington public relations man for American Airlines. I told him I suspected that both Ryan and the company were under pressure.

"If they've been forced into this, we want them to know we're trying to expose it."

"I'll tell the New York office," said Bronton.

Two days later we had an answer.

"The New York office knows all about the case," Bronton informed me. "They say American Airlines will have no comment."

For a month, the CAA and CAB investigations dragged on. In late September we were promised written reports, but the first, from the CAB, did not arrive for another month. Dated October 24, 1957, signed by Vice-Chairman Chan Gurney, it summed up the safety bureau's findings:<sup>3</sup>

Captain Ryan stated most emphatically that he did not deviate from his prescribed course, nor was he requested to do so.

<sup>2</sup> Signed original in NICAP files.

<sup>3</sup> Letter signed by Chairman Gurney in NICAP files.

Scheduled time for American Airlines Flight 775 (the one involved in this incident) between Albany and Syracuse is 49 minutes; elapsed log time for that flight on April 8, 1956, was 48 minutes. Since it is obvious that this schedule could not have been maintained had the flight deviated from its prescribed course, as reported by the Buffalo *Evening News* on April 10, 1956, and since safety does not appear to have derogated, further investigation into the matter by the Board is not considered warranted.

#### *Elapsed log time.*

That meant the CAB investigators actually had been shown a flight-log entry indicating a forty-eight-minute flight to Syracuse. If the Ryan interview was true, there was only one answer.

The Convair's flight log had been deliberately falsified.

If true, this was new proof of a desperate determination to hide what had happened. For the flight log would be subject to a demand for expert analysis in a Congressional hearing.

But there was more to Chairman Gurney's report. In answer to NICAP questions, he stated:

The Board does not approve the use of passenger-carrying airliners to chase unidentified flying objects, nor does it approve of deviations from established airline courses for the purpose of chasing unidentified flying objects.

Concluding, Chairman Gurney said the Board had found no reason to question Captain Ryan further, nor to question the CAA personnel at Albany, Syracuse and Buffalo.

When I finished the letter, I called Mr. L. M. Tanguay at the CAB safety bureau. He had helped me on other occasions.

"Did your investigators ask Ryan to explain the story in the *Evening News*?" I inquired.

"No," he replied. "I think the Board considers that a private matter between Ryan and the newspaper."

It was exactly what Preble Staver, the CAA official, had told us. Evidently, investigators for both agencies had been told to avoid this danger area.

While I was waiting for the CAA report, I wrote American

Airlines president, C. R. Smith, renewing our request for an explanation. The reply was signed by Vice-President Willis Player:

I find that Captain Ryan states unequivocally that he did sight an object. He also states unequivocally that he did not chase it. His flight time between Syracuse and Albany confirms that statement.<sup>4</sup>

So now, American Airlines was committed, if this proved a conspiracy of silence. The Air Force, Ryan, the CAB and the airline. . . . Stone by stone, they had erected a barrier of secrecy. Only one was yet to come, from the CAA. And on November 27, after again requesting a written reply, we received their official report. Signed by Director Roy Keeley, Office of Flight Operations and Airworthiness, it accepted Captain Ryan's denial. Commenting on the newspaper story, Director Keeley added:

The accuracy of the newspaper account of this incident is a matter which we feel we have no obligation to determine.<sup>5</sup>

The high wall was complete, apparently impenetrable. Somewhere, I still stubbornly believed, there had to be a weak spot. But not a single crack showed now.

Reluctantly, I gathered up all the Ryan case documents to put them in an inactive file. One of the last was an October 30th letter from Editor Kreuger of the Buffalo *Evening News*. I read the final line: "We stand behind the story as published."

What was the truth? Would it remain one of the unanswered riddles in the UFO mystery?

Despite the evidence, it seemed likely then. There was no hint that a small registered package could some day crash through the censorship wall as if it had been a bomb.

<sup>4</sup> Signed original in NICAP files.

<sup>5</sup> Signed original in NICAP files.

## CHAPTER XIII

### "Abandon That Course!"

When the package arrived, I knew at once what it was. Three weeks before, we had learned startling news through a member of NICAP.

Before Ryan and Neff were muzzled, they had made a television report on the Convair-UFO chase.

At first, I refused to believe it. How could Ryan—and all the others involved—dare deny the story if thousands had heard it in Buffalo and had seen the pilots report the chase?

Then, as proof of the telecast was found, I began to see how it might have happened. The television interview had been announced—we had a photostat of the newspaper item. Forcing the pilots to cancel their appearance, after their advertised interview, would have aroused curiosity about the

belated censorship. It could have been the spark to set off a real explosion.

Since the program was not on a network, it might have seemed wiser to let the two men appear—and pray the story didn't spread. Afterward the two pilots could be swiftly silenced, along with the CAA and airline officials who knew the facts. With ordinary luck, the story would soon be forgotten. And but for NICAP it probably would have stayed buried.

Regardless of the original reasons, the telecast had been made. And to me this was the loophole, the break in the wall.

But my elation soon subsided. Knowing of the broadcast and proving it were far different things. An inquiry to Station WBEN-TC, sent by Lou Corbin without mentioning NICAP, met with silence. So did a direct letter from our office. When I called Frank Kratokvil at the FCC, he was unable to help.

"There's no law requiring a station to tell you," he said. "And therefore the FCC can't get into it."

"Possibly they made a kinescope," I said. "If we could get a copy of the film, with the sound track—"

"Local shows don't often make kinescopes," Kratokvil pointed out. "They run into money."

"If we could prove such a broadcast," I said, "would we be free to quote from it?"

"They couldn't stop you," Kratokvil answered. "It's in the public domain."

That seemed little comfort then, but within ten days it became vitally important. Miraculously, we found that the Ryan-Neff interview had been taped. And by good fortune, the tape had been made by a NICAP member—Mr. Neal M. Palmer, 276 Olympic Avenue, Buffalo. Only three or four people, all NICAP members, knew of its existence.

After the tape recording arrived, I arranged to hear it privately before making a transcript. The interview had occurred on a WBEN-TV program known as *Meet the Millers*. It began at 2:30 p.m., April 16, 1956. Besides Cap-

tain Ryan and First Officer Neff, the Millers had a third guest—Mr. Bruce Foster, a Bell Aircraft Company engineer, who took part in the UFO discussion.<sup>1</sup>

(Because of the length of the program, discussions of jet scrambles, fuel problems and other minor items have been omitted, but all statements bearing on the UFO chase are included in this report.)

In starting the interview with Captain Ryan, Mr. Miller suggested that this would show "what it takes to prove to the Air Force there is such a thing as a UFO." Then Captain Ryan came on:

CAPTAIN RYAN: It happened a week ago last night, on a flight out of New York for Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo. . . .

We saw it just as we took off [from Albany]. . . . It was a very bright light. It seemed large, fluorescent.

MR. MILLER: What did you think it was?

CAPTAIN RYAN: Well, it made us curious. In two or three miles it was off our wingtip. We turned . . . it took off at terrific speed.

FIRST OFFICER NEFF: It made a ninety-degree arc to the west.

MR. MILLER: How fast, do you estimate?

CAPTAIN RYAN: Initial speed, eight hundred to a thousand miles—much faster than a jet. The light went out momentarily.

We had a load of passengers aboard, and something was on our course up ahead. It had us worried. . . .

FIRST OFFICER NEFF: Then this orange light came on—it changed color.

CAPTAIN RYAN: We watched . . . it amazed us. We called Griffiss Air Force Base. Their radar wasn't on—"

MR. BRUCE FOSTER: I thought they had it on all the time.

After a brief discussion of this, Captain Ryan went on:

CAPTAIN RYAN: They asked us to keep it sighted. We kept checking our location, and we told them where we were. I had turned on all the lights, and they asked us to turn them off.

<sup>1</sup>Tape of the Ryan-Neff interview, and transcript of the tape are in NICAP's possession.

[The landing lights would have blinded the Air Force observers.] Then they could see us and the object near us.

They asked if the object we could see was orange in color. We said it was. They told us, "We have a definite silhouette in sight, south of the field."

MR. MILLER: Those were observers who were in the tower?

CAPTAIN RYAN: Yes, and Albany saw it after we first called in. Two in the tower looked to the west and saw it—one Air Force observer and one CAA.

MR. MILLER: Was it moving?

CAPTAIN RYAN: Oh, yes.

Then he returned to the communications with Griffiss Air Force Base.

CAPTAIN RYAN: They asked us our next point of landing and to identify the aircraft. I told them Syracuse and identified the flight number. Then they told us: "Abandon that next landing temporarily. Maintain your course and altitude. We're sending two jets to intercept the object."

After a mention of jet-fuel problems, Ryan continued:

CAPTAIN RYAN: We trailed it as far as Oswego, which is right on the shoreline of Lake Ontario. We'd passed up a landing at Syracuse, and we weren't sure we could hold the passengers up any longer. . . .

FIRST OFFICER NEFF: Of course, we didn't advise them.

MRS. MILLER: What happened? Did you just fly away?

CAPTAIN RYAN: Well, we had called Griffiss and asked them to change to emergency frequency because we couldn't read them on 18.5. . . . We figured the interceptors were going to operate on that frequency and talk to us . . . then come alongside and take off from where we were, on our heading.

FIRST OFFICER NEFF: We had called them and they said they were "about off." Then in about eight minutes we couldn't work them any longer.

CAPTAIN RYAN: We called the Syracuse tower and they said they would relay word to Griffiss back and forth. Then ten to twelve minutes passed and still the jets hadn't come. . . . I

don't know where they were. After it [the UFO] got over the water . . . it was to the northwest . . . it got out of sight very fast. I just don't know what happened to the jets!

MR. MILLER: You've had phone calls on this?

CAPTAIN RYAN: Yes, and a number of letters.

MR. BRUCE FOSTER: What they saw is about the same as a majority of others have seen in the past few years. Didn't someone in the Air Force say your experience—what you saw—compared very definitely to other reports?"

CAPTAIN RYAN: That's right—that's what they said. . . . If it's not a government project, something of our own, we should find out what it is.

After all the insistent denials, the sound of Ryan's voice describing the UFO chase had an electrifying effect. I could imagine the results if the recording were played to an unprepared Congressional committee.

We had been right all the time—Captain Ryan had told the exact truth in the *Evening News* interview.

But who had contrived this elaborate deception?

Not Captain Raymond Ryan, acting on his own. He would have no reason to make a false denial, or falsify a flight log, at the risk of his career. Not American Airlines acting alone; they, too, would be in serious trouble if exposed, and there had been no public criticism to cause such an action.

Nor would the Federal aviation investigators help to hide the UFO chase unless ordered by high authority, much higher than the Air Force. It could be the Central Intelligence Agency, or the National Security Council, but what could explain such a strange conspiracy?

At first glance, the obvious reasons seemed enough without any hidden motive. Publicizing the UFO chase, even this late, could build up serious reactions. For Ryan had shown the dangers.

In the dark, the Convair could have hit the strange object it was pursuing. Or one of the Air Force interceptors might have collided with the airliner. There already had been such collisions, and in daylight. At night, bringing two fast jets

alongside could have led to disaster. To non-pilots, the risk would seem even greater than it was.

During attempted intercepts, jet fighters' guns are charged and rockets are set for firing. If the pilots had tried to down a swiftly maneuvering UFO, they might accidentally have hit the airliner. Or they could have come close enough, with tracers or rockets, to cause a panic.

Besides these, there was another possible hazard. If the UFO had reacted violently to such an attack, it might have included the Convair as a target.

If the Ryan story were played up, the Air Force could be accused of deliberately exposing the Convair passengers and crew to any of these dangers.

Strong reasons for silence—but after a long second look they weren't enough. For what if the Ryan story broke, in spite of everything? Then the news reports would be ten times worse—the enforced denials, the falsified flight log, the apparent pressure on federal agencies, and all the rest of the cover-up. The headlines could make it a national scandal, and nothing then would stop a stern Congressional probe.

It would have been far safer—unless some tremendous secret had to be hidden—to be ready for a calm admission. If pushed into it, the Air Force could call the Convair chase a stupid error by the Griffiss tower, an isolated mistake that would never be repeated. The UFO itself could be called a mirage, a star, an unrecognized aircraft or one of the other stock answers. Ryan and Neff would know it wasn't true, but the resulting ridicule would soon shut them up.

But instead of this easier way, a dangerous gamble had been taken. What hidden development or discovery could justify such a risk?

It had to be something directly linked with UFOs. I could think of three possibilities, none with any proof.

1. The censors feared the Ryan disclosures would lead to an end of their pretense, forcing them to reveal some sobering knowledge about the "saucers."

2. Something serious could have happened on that April night, something unknown to Ryan and Neff, which drove

the censors to this determined secrecy. It might be linked with the missing jets.

3. There might have been other airliner-UFO chases which public discussion of the Ryan report could uncover—perhaps a hidden case of near-disaster. Or—though the chance was remote—such a chase might be linked with one of the unexplained crashes of the past few years.

Whatever the answer, this tape recording was an important clue. I had seen Senator McClellan in action with reluctant witnesses, and I couldn't believe that Ryan, American Airlines official, or federal aviation investigators would refuse to talk. Unless, of course, they were silenced by high-level orders. And that in itself would be a sensational story.

Before I went to the Senate Office Building, I decided to give Healey the facts but to withhold the tape for the present. When we met, I waited to hear his report. Healey told me he still had no word on the Far East case, nor had they tried to explain the false claim given to *Night Beat*, to Representative Frelingheusen and to Admiral Hoskins.

"The Air Force," Healey said, "now claims that the *Armstrong Theater* program proved there are no such things as flying saucers. They say it answers all the main points we gave them—that is, the NICAP evidence, though we didn't use NICAP's name. But you say the Armstrong program was censored?"

"All the important evidence was blocked." I showed him the list of cases and the crossed-out script passage. "I can see it's hard for you to believe the Air Force would do this, but perhaps this will convince you."

Starting with the *Buffalo Evening News* account, I showed him all the documents in the Ryan case. He seemed increasingly impressed, but when he reached the CAA and CAB reports he shook his head.

"These investigations seem conclusive. There couldn't have been anything to that newspaper story."

"It was absolutely true, Mr. Healey. And we can prove it."



Then I told him about the tape. Healey looked incredulous.

"But that would mean all these signed statements—" He paused, gave me a searching glance. "You've actually heard this tape? The pilots admit they chased the object to Lake Ontario?"

"Yes—by *Air Force orders*. We'll produce the tape and a complete transcript at public hearings. But if you, or Senator McClellan, would like to hear it before then, I'll be glad to arrange it. You might want to get Ryan and Neff down here for some private questions."

Healey gazed thoughtfully at the notes he had taken.

"Last summer, you told me NICAP's aims—why you wanted public hearings. Nothing has changed that?"

"No. NICAP believes the Air Force should tell the public what it has learned—*no matter what it is*."

As I was leaving the office, I saw Mr. Healey sit down again at his desk, soberly reading his notes.

The Ryan evidence should clinch it, I thought. Surely no one could read that record of deception and not be convinced.

## CHAPTER XIV

### The New Search

Soon after my conference with Mr. Healey, there was a new development in a UFO case which had been reported confidentially some time before. As soon as I heard, I phoned Henry Brennard.

"I have some interesting news. Do you have a luncheon date?"

"Yes, but I can break it. What's up?"

"I want to show you a drawing. It's certified by four Rock-etyne Company engineers."

"UFOs?" Brennard said quickly.

"Yes."

"Is this under wraps?"

"It was. We just had an okay to use it. I'd like to have your ideas."

"All right, let's make it the Occidental, at twelve."

I cradled the phone, glanced back at the sketch on my desk. On the reverse side was a summary report signed by all four engineers.<sup>1</sup> A detailed account, signed by their spokesman, Harold R. Lamb, Jr., was clipped to the drawing.

The Rocketdyne engineers' encounter had occurred on November 11, 1957, near the height of the mass sightings. Though I had seen this evidence early in '58, I could still feel its impact.

Shortly before the sighting, Lamb and the other engineers had left the Rocketdyne plant in the Santa Susanna mountains of California. All four were in one car, driving toward Canoga Park.

At 4:30 P.M. they reached a point overlooking the San Fernando Valley. It was about 2,000 feet above sea level. The sun was behind them, with visibility unlimited.

Suddenly three strange objects flashed out of the northeast sky. One was oval-shaped, at least the size of a four-engine airliner. It shone like polished stainless steel, except for an orange glow beneath—apparently a reflection of the sun. Above the oval-shaped UFO were two smaller, disc-shaped objects.

Holding a precise formation, the unknown machines shot across the valley. When first seen they were at about 10,000 feet, climbing steeply. Within a few seconds they reached 30,000 feet, then swiftly disappeared.

After the engineers' first amazement, they compared notes: No exhaust trails; no sound; positions in formation were held exactly, as if by intelligent control.

For three days, the rocket engineers discussed the factors involved, until they agreed on a joint summary to accompany a sketch of the UFOs. It read:

CANOGA PARK, CALIF.  
11-15-57

The painting on the opposite face of this card is a reasonable reproduction of objects seen by the undersigned on the afternoon of November 11, 1957, at approximately 4:20 P.M., while driving from Rocketdyne's Santa Susanna Facility.

<sup>1</sup> The sketch and summary are reproduced at the end of this book.

The objects were traveling in a general southwesterly direction across the San Fernando Valley when sighted. Estimated speed, 5,000 m.p.h. Estimated altitude, 10,000 feet, climbing to 30,000 feet.

(Signed) JOEL M. CASTLEBERRY  
TY H. TAYANA  
STEED TYSON  
HAROLD R. LAMB, JR.

Though this did not show how the sighting had affected the group, Lamb left no doubt of his reaction:

It was an astonishing sight. I've seen supersonic jets, but these were many times faster. It seems fantastic that something so large could travel so fast [in our atmosphere] but I can now say I have seen it happen.

Like many former skeptics jolted by a dramatic UFO encounter, Lamb abruptly lost his belief in Air Force denials. Concluding his report, he stated:

You can now put me on the list of people who are convinced that flying saucers are real. *What are these UFOs and where do they come from?*

"You're right, this is really hot." Brennard took another look at the sketch. "It'll be hard to ridicule—those four engineers should know what they saw, in broad daylight."

"You think the press-wires will run it—the sketch and the signed report?"

"If they don't they're crazy. I'll certainly push it with my chief. Incidentally, this should speed up things on the Hill."

"They may announce hearings any day," I said. I told him about the Ryan case.

"No wonder NICAP's got the Air Force worried. It'd be terrific if you could break the Ryan story now, with a transcript of the tape."

"I told Healey we'd hold it for the hearings."

"Well, anyway, get this one set. It should hit with a bang."

When I returned to the office, I ordered photostats of the Rocketdyne sketch and reports. But next morning a New York call changed the plan.

Earlier in February, Mike Wallace had phoned, asking me to go on his televised network program.

"You can say what you wish," he told me. "I guarantee you won't be cut off."

After I agreed, the interview was postponed. But now a new time had been set—10 P.M. on March 8. By then, I thought, Senator McClellan would have announced hearings. If he hadn't, it might help to delay the Rocketdyne evidence and reveal it on the Wallace program.

When I told Brennard, he agreed. "Should be a double break—the press will probably come after you for copies of the report and the drawing. Leave me a set of photostats, so I won't get scooped."

Having watched Mike Wallace's interviews, I knew they could be rough. But Frank Edwards, a veteran of television as well as radio, advised me to hold my temper.

"Ordinarily, I'd say go ahead and slug it out. But this isn't any ordinary subject. You've won a lot of support by calmly sticking to facts. Take that same line with Wallace."

"But if he starts needling—"

"Just laugh at him. If you get sarcastic, too, you'll lose the audience's sympathy—even if you come out on top."

On the night of March 8, Wallace and I met just before air time. His greeting surprised me.

"I'm pretty well convinced," he said, "that there's something to this business."

As we started onto the set, he saw the Rocketdyne sketch I was carrying.

"What's that?"

I told him. Wallace eyed the drawing, read the report, then shook his head.

"We can't show that."

"Why not?" I demanded.

"Not enough time."

"You said I wouldn't be censored."

"It's not that. I have too many questions—"

The producer interrupted us; it was thirty seconds to air time. Wallace laid the sketch at one side, climbed onto his stool. I sat down, determined to make an issue of the inci-

dent. Then I recalled Edwards' warning. Even if I retrieved the sketch, Wallace could refuse to order a close-up, or he might turn it into a joke. Reluctantly, I gave up the idea.

On the air, Wallace gave no hint of a private belief in UFOs. When I cited factual evidence and showed the censored page from the Armstrong script, he came back with a new denial of secrecy by Assistant Secretary Horner.

"The Air Force," Wallace said, "has given us very convincing evidence that it is largely—I'll say 99.44 per cent—a hoax."

"You mean all those pilots, missile trackers and tower operators are liars?" I demanded.

Apparently realizing the libel danger, Wallace hastily backed down.

"No, no, no! Thank you for correcting me. Let's just say misinformation."

When I mentioned a Senate subcommittee inquiry, Wallace broke in:

"The Air Force told us the subcommittee members have already talked with them and they show no interest in any hearings."

Remembering the long interviews, the mass of evidence submitted at the committee's request, I bluntly told Wallace the statement was false.

Next day, I started to call Healey, in case he had not seen the program. But I decided to wait until I could show him the Rocketdyne evidence, before releasing it to the press.

My return to Washington was delayed several days. When I arrived at the NICAP office, my administrative assistant, Mrs. Clark, gloomily came over to my desk.

"Bad news," she said. She handed me two letters from the McClellan subcommittee to NICAP members who had written about UFO hearings. Incredulously, I read the marked paragraphs:

This committee has held several interviews on the subject of unidentified flying objects. . . . No public hearings are planned or contemplated. . . . The subcommittee does not intend to investigate the United States Air Force.

The letters were signed by Donald O'Donnell, acting chief counsel. I read them three times before the shock wore off.

"But it doesn't make sense, asking for all of NICAP's information and then—" I stopped, seeing Mrs. Clark's expression. "No, it wasn't a trick to get our evidence for the Air Force. Senator McClellan wouldn't stand for that."

"Well, how could they ignore all that proof?"

"They couldn't. They've given in under pressure, obviously."

"Strange they didn't tell us directly," said Mrs. Clark.

"Yes, it is." I dialed Capitol Hill. When I got Mr. Healey he confirmed O'Donnell's statement. I had a feeling that it had been a sudden decision, surprising him, too. Since it was now out of his hands, it was useless to argue.

In the next few days, Board members helped to put this setback in proper perspective.

"What counts," said Admiral Hillenkoetter, "is that NICAP is still operating. Losing one battle isn't fatal."

Hartranft, together with Professor Maney and Reverend Baller, advised digging for new evidence and then trying new groups in Congress—the armed service or space committees of either the House or the Senate. It was decided not to give the Ryan case to Senator Monroney now, as I'd suggested; his committee could probe the airline-safety angle, but might not have jurisdiction over the entire UFO problem.

"And I'd save that Rocketdyne report for a better time," Frank Edwards advised me. "Why not lay off the Air Force for a while and go after every other possible source?"

"We've already tried the main government departments."

"Try again, try different officials. Go after anybody you can think of. I know NICAP's shorthanded, but some of the Washington members would be glad to help with the letters. Rush out two or three hundred—you're bound to strike pay dirt."

That day, the new search began. At first, most official replies were evasions, but even these helped to build up the picture:

*Department of Justice.* Refused to answer our query re-

garding any legal basis for silencing civilians who sight UFOs.

*National Security Council.* Denied it set the UFO secrecy policy, but refused to state whether it was involved in the UFO investigation.

*Central Intelligence Agency.* Refused to confirm or deny that the CIA controlled the investigation and imposed secrecy. Refused to admit that the CIA arranged a confidential evaluation of UFO reports by noted scientists, in 1953, at the Pentagon.

*U. S. Army.* Refused to release its directives for reporting of UFOs by Army personnel.

But as our probe widened, new information outweighed the refusals. In one red-letter day, there were three important developments.

The first, new proof of the cover-up, came from Representative William H. Ayres, in a letter to NICAP member Melvin V. Knopp, West Ridgefield, Ohio:

Congressional investigations have been held, and are still being held on the problem of unidentified flying objects. . . . Since most of the material presented to the Committees is classified, the hearings are never printed. When conclusions are reached, they will be released if possible.<sup>2</sup>

The second development was a surprising disclosure from rocket expert Hermann Oberth, then on a secret project at the Army missile base, Huntsville, Alabama. I was reading his strange letter when Lou Corbin called me from Baltimore.

"I've got a report that'll knock your hat off! The source is a former Navy pilot, and he's now in a defense industry." Corbin named the pilot and his company. "But you can't identify him. I had to promise that before he'd talk."

"I understand."

"Okay. Well, this happened in '53. Everyone in his squadron was muzzled—"

"Hold it, Lou! Are you alone?"

<sup>2</sup> Signed original in NICAP files.

"No—WFBR newsroom. But—"

"Was this a carrier-based squadron?"

"Yes."

"Did Air Force Intelligence come in on it?"

"Yes. You know this case?"

"I think so. Have you told anyone there the rest of it?"

"No, but don't worry about that."

"If it's what I think, the fewer that know the better. Wait a minute."

I unlocked a special file, took out a folder marked *Navy Squadron Case, reported by Commander —, January 19, 1957*. Then I read the summary to Corbin.

"Well, I'll be—it's identical!" he exclaimed.

"That's one of our top hidden cases," I said. "A Navy commander came in here and reported it after Admiral Fahrney was made chairman of the Board. We've been trying to run down some of the squadron pilots. Do you think this one would put his report in writing, confidentially? With the names of the others?"

"What for?"

"So the Board could certify it, after we get some of the other pilots to report."

"I'll try," said Corbin. "Anyway, I'll sign a statement on it."

"Thanks, Lou. This is one of our lucky days. Hermann Oberth is a NICAP member, and he just wrote me—he's pretty sure he knows where the 'saucers' come from."

"Where—Mars?"

"No, he mentions a star outside our solar system, several light years away. He says they come from a planet of this star, and another."<sup>3</sup>

"Another? Does he mean the second one is a planet of the same star, or a different one?"

"I think he means planets of the same star."

"Either way, then races from two worlds could be co-operating, or checking on us separately. Does he mention that?"

"No," I said, "but he says some of the space travelers went

<sup>3</sup> Signed original in NICAP files.

back in 1955 to report on our civilization and get new orders."

"He must be in on secret information!" said Corbin.

"Oberth wouldn't violate security, but he must've picked up UFO information down at Huntsville, in private discussions. He mentions some evaluations—doesn't say whose—and he says that later he'll reveal the research methods the space beings are using, the results—and their intentions toward the earth."

"Their intentions?" exclaimed Corbin. "This is maddening. I'd give my right arm for an exclusive interview, if he really knows the answers."

During this general search, more hidden cases were uncovered, and some of the witnesses were persuaded to make the reports public. Several of these sightings, we found, had been officially reported before 1947, again disproving Air Force denials.

In one case, details were given to me by a veteran Air Force pilot, Major William D. Leet, holder of the Distinguished Flying Cross, four Air Medals and five other decorations for combat service in Europe and Korea. A quiet, competent-looking man, Leet came to see me not long after leaving the Air Force to practice law in Lexington, Kentucky.

"I know what you're up against," he said, after showing me his Air Force service records. "This explaining away of UFO reports has gone on a long time—since 1944, to my personal knowledge."

"You saw a UFO in '44?"

Major Leet nodded. "I was a bomber pilot—B-17's—in the 15th Air Force Fifth Wing, Second Bomb Group. One night in December we were on a lone-wolf mission. Near Klagenfurt, Austria, the crew and I sighted a disc-shaped object pacing us. When I turned or climbed, it did the same thing. It followed us all the way to the Adriatic, matching our speed and keeping the same interval, before it left us."<sup>4</sup>

"Did you report this?" I asked.

<sup>4</sup> Signed report in NICAP files.

"Oh, certainly. The Intelligence officer who debriefed us thought then it was a new type of German fighter, but he couldn't explain why it hadn't fired on us. Anyway, I knew that disc was no aircraft—not any kind we knew."

Since then, Leet said, he had had two other sightings, both during Air Force service. The latest had been in 1957, when he and his crew saw a group of strange objects flying at high speed.

"But the most significant, to me," he said, "was a sighting over Japan, in 1952. My crew and I saw a large disc, between two hundred and two hundred and fifty feet in diameter. Before we could get close to it, the thing accelerated and went out of sight in seconds."

"You reported this, too?"

"Yes, and we were interrogated by Intelligence." Leet smiled dryly. "All questions—no answers."

"How much do you think the Strategic Air Command knows?" I inquired.

"Well, they've had a lot of scrambles because of objects they couldn't identify, sometimes whole formations."

"Yes, that was in an official statement they gave United Press. But I'm positive that SAC controllers now can identify UFOs, at least part of the time."

"From radar, you mean?" said Leet.

"Yes, by their speeds and maneuvers; they're faster than any earth-made aircraft. We know of one case where picket ships and airborne radar tracked a large formation approaching the Pacific Coast. Then West Coast ground radar got them, too. If it had been a Soviet sneak attack, SAC would have scrambled bombers instantly. But General Power was in 'The Hole' and he had them sit tight."<sup>6</sup>

Leet started to speak, then saw I hadn't finished.

"The formation," I said, "came on toward the Coast. If they'd been Red bombers, they could've fanned out and hit the missile and aircraft plants—all the defense industries and big cities. The formation was in striking range when it

<sup>6</sup> General Thomas Power is the SAC commander. "The Hole" is the underground SAC command center in Nebraska.

pulled up out of the radar beams and went off the scopes, just as those UFOs did at Washington Airport, in '52."

Leet slowly nodded. "Then General Power must have known these were UFOs, too. If he'd had the slightest doubt, he'd never have waited."

"That was some time ago," I said. "So by now all SAC controllers must know the 'saucers' characteristics. And the Navy knows them, too; here's a case that proves it."

I read Leet a file-card summary:

"December 11, 1955. About 9 P.M. fast-maneuvering round object, glowing orange-red, reported by two airliner crews, numerous ground witnesses, along Atlantic Coast near Jacksonville, Florida. Two Navy jet pilots on night practice were vectored toward UFO by JAX Naval Air Station tower. When jets tried to close, UFO shot up to 30,000 feet, then dived back, circling and buzzing the jets. JAX officers and tower controllers saw action on scopes, confirmed that jets were helpless against unknown object. Full report sent to Air Force."<sup>6</sup>

"Air Defense has had many chases like that," commented Leet.

"Yes, but the Air Force seems more cautious now. I mean about ordering pilots to close in. Look at this."

I showed him another summary card:

Source, NICAP member Robert Akers, former Air Force pilot, now senior engineer, a California electronics company. Flying Cessna private plane, sighted unidentified round object near Edwards Air Force Base. Saw contrails of two jets and heard one pilot report the UFO to Edwards tower. Tower answered: "Investigate object at your discretion." Pilot later told tower the UFO was too high to reach.<sup>7</sup>

"I'm glad the Air Force is being more careful," said Leet. "As long as the UFOs aren't hostile, there's no sense in risking pilots' lives, making it look as if we're trying to attack them."

<sup>6</sup> Report relayed by Captain W. J. Hull, Capital Airlines, and summarized on *Long John* program, WOR, March 9, 1958.

<sup>7</sup> Signed report in NICAP files.

He looked around for the clock, stood up and held out his hand.

"I'm joining NICAP, and I'll do what I can to help. I think it's bad policy to hide the truth about UFOs."

Though I had tried to avoid any Air Force entanglements in this period, one was forced on me. I told Frank Edwards about it the following day.

"Remember you said to lay off the Air Force?"

"Yes. Why?"

"One of our members, Barbara Uhlman of Grand Rapids, wrote them and asked if my book *Flying Saucers from Outer Space* contained official Air Force releases. Major Tacker denied it."

"Why, that's an out-and-out—" Edwards broke off. "I didn't mean you should take anything like that. I'll blast that one myself."

"Let's wait. I sent Tacker's letter to Senator Byrd, with proof that ATIC cleared forty-one Intelligence reports for me."

"If that doesn't work, let me know," said Edwards.

Some time later, during a telephone conference, I told him the results.

"Senator Byrd turned the matter over to the Senate Armed Services Committee. They must've put the heat on Tacker. Here's what he wrote Miss Uhlman, with copies to Senator Byrd and me:

"I was referring to complete verbatim news releases. The word releases as used in letter of 8 January 1958 did not refer to actual unidentified flying object case sightings and evaluations which the Air Force did furnish Major Keyhoe and which he used in his book." <sup>8</sup>

"What an alibi!" said Edwards.

"Tacker doesn't make policy decisions; probably someone higher up told him to deny it at first."

"Well, whoever did it was out to discredit you and NICAP. I'll still blast it, if you say so."

\* Official correspondence in NICAP files.

"No, but here's one you can hit. When Max Miller asked the Air Force for UFO movie shots, to use in a documentary film, they denied they had any.<sup>9</sup> He sent us the official letters."

"But they've already admitted having copies of the UFO-formation film Newhouse took in Utah, also the Montana movies and several others."

"I know that. But here's the pay-off. They offered Miller some pictures of objects *mistaken* for UFOs, provided he'd submit his script and wouldn't try to show that UFOs are real."

Edwards chuckled. "Well, that's laying it on the line—help us debunk the 'saucers' or no dice."

Before he hung up, he asked about recent sightings. I gave him a rundown on reports by pilots, tower operators at Miami and Twin-Cities airports, Civil Defense and GOC officials, a former Air Force navigator, police in several states and—surprisingly—a nun in a southern city.<sup>10</sup>

"Of course," I said, "you know about the Tucson case and Senator Goldwater. It was in the papers."

After a daytime UFO sighting at Tucson, Arizona, the Air Force first stated no fighters were in the area. Later, it had reversed itself, trying to explain the UFO as an unrecognized F-102 interceptor. It was then that Arizona's Senator Barry Goldwater had publicly declared: "The flying saucers are real." Adding his now well-publicized comment that the Air Force "clammed up" when asked about UFOs, Senator Goldwater also revealed that two former Air Force "buddies"—presently airline captains—had seen "saucers" flying alongside their planes.

"I'll bet the censors sizzled," said Edwards, "when Goldwater told the press the Air Force was covering up."

"And for once they didn't dare talk back."

"Well, hardly. It wouldn't be very smart to call a United States senator a liar—especially one who's an Air Force colonel and could prove what he says."

<sup>9</sup> Max Miller was then editor of *Saucers* magazine. All the official letters are in NICAP files.

<sup>10</sup> Sighting reports available at NICAP.

## CHAPTER XV

# Signals from Space

It was during this seemingly aimless search, in the spring of '58, when I got the tip about General Nathan Twining.

I had just returned home one evening, after a talk in Philadelphia, when the phone in my study rang.

"That's probably Lou Corbin," my wife said. "He's been trying to get you. I told him you'd be home about this time."

Corbin's voice had a note of excitement.

"I have a lead for you. Do you know General ——?" He named a famous World War II leader.

"We've exchanged letters," I said. "I knew he was interested in the UFO subject."

"Well, he's dead serious now. I saw him today. He's a close friend of General Nathan Twining, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Remember in '54, Twining made that peculiar statement about the 'saucers' and Mars?"

"Yes. He didn't actually say the 'saucers' were real, but he said if they came from Mars, and there was a civilization that far ahead of us, he didn't think we had anything to worry about."

"He's plenty worried now, this general says."

"He told you Twining was worried about UFOs?" I asked.

"About what to tell the public. Maybe he'd talk with you. NICAP could help in preparing people."

"If I wrote him, he'd pass it on to Air Force Headquarters. He's still an Air Force man."

"Maybe as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs he sees it differently now. Why not ask for an interview, off the record if necessary?"

"All right, I'll try it."

In my letter, after explaining NICAP's operations, I added one question on impulse: Has communication ever been established with a UFO?

Before, this query had met only silence or evasion. But on May 7, a surprising answer came. As soon as I read it, I phoned Corbin.

"I just heard from General Twining's exec—Colonel John Sherrill."

"Did you get the interview?"

"No, he says Twining's tied up with hearings. But listen to this—it's an answer to a question I asked:

"'No effective means have been developed for the establishment of communication by radio or otherwise with unknown aerial objects. The technical obstacles involved in such an endeavor, I am sure, are quite obvious to you.'"<sup>1</sup>

"Technical obstacles!" said Corbin. "That sounds as if they've been trying to do it and they ran into trouble."

"That's what I thought. And 'no effective means, by radio

<sup>1</sup> Signed original in NICAP files.



or otherwise,' could mean they've tried every logical way. Of course, this isn't proof."

"No, but you don't talk about technical difficulties unless you're convinced there are intelligent beings to communicate with."

"That's right."

"Since General Twining didn't pass the buck, he must not go for the Air Force cover-up."

"Maybe we're jumping to conclusions, Lou. But it does look as if this represents the general's ideas."

Later that week I showed Colonel Sherrill's letter to NICAP Adviser Albert L. Cochran. An electronics engineer and a former Navy radio specialist, Cochran worked for a company with defense and space contracts. Several times, he had given me leads to important UFO sightings.

"If they actually have tried to communicate with UFOs," said Cochran, "they might mask it as tests of new space equipment."

"Do you know of any strange messages—not under security?"

"Several times the minitrack system has caught signals that couldn't be identified with any known satellite. Also, ham operators have reported strange messages. Have you asked the FCC about that?"

I nodded. "Frank Kratokvil—assistant chief of monitoring—said he didn't know about any space messages. But he'd probably have to say that, anyway. I'd asked him about the report by Dr. John Kraus—you know that one?"

Cochran thought for a moment. "The radio astronomer who made a report on Venus?"

"That's the one. He's Director of Ohio State University's observatory. Back in '53, he said he picked up signals from Venus that resembled telegraph code."

"I thought he just reported radio 'noise,'" said Cochran.

"No, I'll show you his statement—the Associated Press had an interview with him, before he stopped talking."

Cochran read the report, a verbatim copy of the Associated Press story as it went on their wires:

AP 110

VENUS (SUBS PREVIOUS)

(COLUMBUS, OHIO)—AN AMERICAN ASTRONOMER THINKS THERE COULD BE A RADIO TELEGRAPH TRANSMITTING STATION ON THE PLANET VENUS. THE DIRECTOR OF OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY'S RADIO OBSERVATORY IN COLUMBUS—DR. JOHN D. KRAUS—REPORTS HE HAS PICKED UP SIGNALS THAT RESEMBLE RADIO TELEGRAPHY IN MANY WAYS. HE SAYS NUMEROUS OBSERVATIONS HAVE CONVINCED HIM THE SIGNALS DEFINITELY COME FROM VENUS.

EARLIER THIS MONTH, DR. KRAUS REPORTED THAT RADIO SIGNALS RESEMBLING STATIC FROM TERRESTRIAL THUNDERSTORMS WERE RECEIVED FROM VENUS—SOMETIMES CALLED EARTH'S "TWIN." . . . BUT TODAY HE SAYS THAT THE NEW SIGNALS ARE DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT. AS HE PUTS IT, THIS TYPE OF RADIO EMISSION HAS "MANY CHARACTERISTICS OF SIGNALS FROM A TERRESTRIAL RADIO TELEGRAPHY TRANSMITTING STATION."

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"He must have been absolutely certain," said Cochran, "or he wouldn't risk his professional standing with that news story. You say he shut up later?"

"Yes. It may be only coincidence, but the Air Force's chief UFO consultant—Dr. Allen Hynek—also is at Ohio State. He could have asked Kraus to stop talking."

Cochran considered the astronomer's statement for a moment.

"Even if there is a transmitter on Venus, it doesn't prove there's a Venusian race. A space race from somewhere else could have set up a base there—or maybe just space-navigation beacons."

"That beacon idea also could explain this Bureau of Standards report on signals from Jupiter."

Cochran read the Bureau's summary of observations at its station in Boulder, Colorado. For two years powerful signals from Jupiter had been recorded, their force of transmission equal to an H-bomb in energy. Their source had been accurately located in the mysterious "Red Spot" area.

According to the Bureau report, the signals were received alternately on 18 and 20 megacycles. Usually they occurred in a series lasting several minutes, followed by silence, then another series. Signals never came simultaneously on the 18 and 20 megacycle bands, but in distinctly separate periods. Though the Bureau scientists stated there must be some natural cause, they had found no explanation for the oddly precise signals.<sup>2</sup>

"If there is intelligence back of it," I ventured, "the beacon answer might fit. They could be automatic, like the robots we're planning to land on the moon. Of course it's possible there are creatures on Jupiter, but they'd be a lot different from us."

Cochran put the report back in its folder.

"With that terrific gravity pull, they'd have to be. You and I would be squashed flat if we were suddenly put on Jupiter." He paused for a second. "What about visual signals by UFOs—formations, for instance? Haven't they duplicated ours sometimes?"

"Yes, and it could have been done so we'd realize they're intelligent beings. They've flown V's, T's, echelons, circles, a series of squares, in diamond formation—and sometimes on radar they've seemed to form in letters like *N* or *U*, or *Z*. In 1954, the British War Office reported a UFO formation that came over at noon, in the same place, for five or six days; each time, they formed the same letters."

"What about light signals?" asked Cochran. "Haven't several pilots come across UFOs that blinked their lights, as if they were signaling?"

"We have a few reports. One is from a NICAP member, Gene Miller. I'll show you the record."

Formerly an Air Force instructor, now manager of the air-

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Standards report in NICAP files.

port at Banning, California, Miller was flying with a passenger when a UFO came toward them, showing a bright light. At first, Miller took it for an airliner with one landing light on. He blinked his lights to make sure the pilot saw him. The UFO's light blinked twice. When it came closer, and Miller saw it was not an aircraft, he quickly blinked three times. The strange craft answered with three blinks, then stopped and reversed its course.

Cochran shook his head. "I don't understand why all American pilots—or pilots all around the world—haven't been ordered to do that when they see a UFO. A standard signal could be worked up—"

"It's been suggested, along with a dozen other plans," I told him. "Another idea is to broadcast a message in several languages, listen for an answer, then repeat. Some people want to lay out huge symbols on the ground, and others want to have symbol messages ready—like Willy Ley's idea in case we find intelligent beings on Mars."

Cochran looked surprised. "I thought Ley didn't believe in 'saucers.' Doesn't he always call them bunk?"

"He didn't in '53, when he was on *Author Meets the Critics* with Frank Edwards and me. He admitted there were sightings he couldn't explain, and after the program he told Edwards and his wife he was baffled. And he's on record with this Mars communication plan; he thinks we should be ready for any intelligent race we meet on Mars."<sup>3</sup>

Before Cochran left, I showed him the latest communications plan we had received, from a pilot member of NICAP. An isolated landing field, with a combined radio and light signaling system, was to be laid out in some barren part of the Southwest. In the hope of luring a UFO into landing, or hovering low enough for easy signaling, a large replica of a flying disc was to be erected on the ground and kept floodlighted at night.

"It could work," Cochran said dubiously, "but they might think it was a trick. An official plan would be better. Didn't

<sup>3</sup> Article by Willy Ley in the book *Mysteries of Other Worlds Revealed*, Fawcett Publishing Company, 1950.

the Air Force hint at one in '52, when they were giving you UFO reports?"

"No, they said any such attempt would be an admission they knew the 'saucers' were real."

Cochran glanced at the letter from Colonel Sherrill.

"I still can't fathom that. If only they'd given us a little more of a hint."

Near the end of the general probe, a delayed UFO report from Denmark revived a project we had started, on a small scale, in 1957.

On April 11, 1958, a Danish fighter pilot had sighted a formation of flying discs near Skyrdsrup, Jutland. When he tried to race in for a better glimpse, the UFOs accelerated and left him behind. After he landed, his commanding officer broadcast an appeal for Danish citizens to report any strange flying objects they saw.

In the spring of 1957, we had asked several governments for UFO reports and official conclusions. England had admitted official censorship. Other countries had told us, directly or through their embassies, that sightings were officially investigated. But none would release reports or conclusions, and we had sidetracked the project.

When I saw the Denmark report, I wondered if other countries now would be more helpful. It might be worth while to revive the plan for a poll.

Beginning with larger nations, we gradually extended our questions to most of the foreign countries. Some remained silent; others replied by mail, or through their embassies or legations.

In the more technically advanced nations, UFO operations followed the pattern in the United States: close approaches to aircraft, surveillance of rocket-launching bases, special attention to atomic-energy centers, and general inspection of inhabited areas.

In less advanced countries, where there was no danger of aircraft or missile attacks, low-altitude observations were more often reported. Sightings by natives of Borneo, the Fi-

jis, the Bahamas and other such islands brought out a significant point. In most cases, the native witnesses had never heard of "flying saucers." Yet their descriptions, when they recovered from their fright, were identical with flying-disc reports around the world.

Even in May of '58, it was obvious—as the complete poll later proved—that more foreign governments were following the United States policy of restricting UFO information. In this country, censorship and ridicule had continued to reduce the number of sightings publicly reported. But this was partly offset as NICAP members began to release long-hidden reports, and to persuade other witnesses to do the same.

One report came from a well-known Baltimore astronomer, Dr. James C. Bartlett, Jr., author of numerous scientific articles in astronomical journals.

From 1952 to 1957, Dr. Bartlett had four sightings during his almost nightly observations of our solar system and distant stars.<sup>4</sup>

"Before the first, I was a skeptic," he told me in releasing his reports. "I accepted Menzel's explanations, and I'm afraid I ridiculed UFO believers as much as anyone. Even after I knew the UFOs were real, I kept still. I thought they must be some secret United States development, until my later sightings and a study of other reports showed this was incorrect. This and other evidence convinced me these craft were of unknown origin."

His first sighting, Dr. Bartlett said, was on August 5, 1952. He was making a daylight observation of Venus when two disc-shaped objects passed to the south of Baltimore, then turned east. Shortly afterward, he saw two more discs overhead. Their center portions appeared to be slightly raised, like the domed UFOs frequently described.

On September 6, 1954, Dr. Bartlett sighted four glowing objects in line formation. When an airliner approached, the UFOs changed formation and climbed, then re-formed in line.

<sup>4</sup>Signed reports in NICAP files.

"It was a precise and highly controlled performance," said Dr. Bartlett.

Another sighting, of a far-distant object, occurred during an observation of Jupiter, on July 12, 1957. Though this UFO was more interesting, scientifically, to the astronomer, his 1953 report seemed to me the most dramatic.

One night in September, four large lights appeared as Dr. Bartlett was observing a transit of the star Fomalhaut.

"At first, I saw them with the naked eye," he reported. "Then I immediately observed them through seven-power binoculars. The lights moved slowly. I saw that they came from the noses of two enormous craft which more than filled the binoculars. I observed a cabin in the nose and ports on the sides of the hulls in each craft."

The huge machines, Dr. Bartlett stated, were either cigar-shaped or cylindrical.

Not long after he gave me these sightings, Dr. Bartlett agreed to serve as a NICAP adviser.

"This is my opinion," he said. "UFOs do exist. They are some type of mechanism, controlled craft, origin unknown."

Beyond this, he added, he had reached no definite conclusion. But he agreed that the interplanetary answer was logical and should be fully explored.

Another hidden report, by a Lutheran minister and his wife, recalled an earlier fear—that religion might be seriously affected if the UFOs were proved to be spaceships.

As far back as 1950 I had been told this was one reason for Air Force secrecy. But the religious leaders on our Board—Dr. Douglass, Reverend Baller and Reverend LeVan—believed that only a small percentage of people would feel such an impact. Apparently, most of our members agreed. But we still pursued the question whenever the opportunity offered, as in this minister's report.

On the evening of November 5, 1955, Reverend Kenneth R. Hoffmann and his wife were driving toward Cleveland Airport when they sighted bright lights in the sky. As the minister stopped the car, he saw that the cluster of lights was attached to a large, oval-shaped object.

"It was like two saucers," Reverend Hoffmann's report stated. (Possibly a fore-shortened disc type.) "The uppermost was inverted and resting on the edges of the lower one."<sup>5</sup>

The UFO appeared to be metallic, and about one hundred feet in diameter. An intense white light shone from eight ports, or windows, visible on the perimeter.

"The beams came down at an angle," said Reverend Hoffmann, "and the light rays were so bright that we could see the air dust in them."

After hovering for a few moments, the strange machine moved westward and disappeared.

Astonished, and realizing the implications of what they had seen, Reverend Hoffmann and his wife discussed the question of making a public report. They decided to keep silent, for fear of ridicule. But in 1958, after seeing published accounts by other responsible citizens, they had agreed to give NICAP their report.

When I met the Hoffmanns, during a visit to Cleveland, I asked if the UFO sighting had affected their religious beliefs.

"You mean as evidence of other worlds?" asked Mrs. Hoffmann. "No, it has made no difference to me."

"Nor to me," said Reverend Hoffmann. "I can accept the existence of other planets with intelligent beings. Why should we question God's power to create other worlds in the Universe?"

<sup>5</sup> Signed report in NICAP files.

## CHAPTER XVI

# The Lost Civilization

Since the refusal of hearings by the McClellan committee, we had covered all but one of the government departments likely to know about UFOs. Contrary to my expectations, this last interview provided the biggest surprise of all.

By this time—early June of '58—Richard Hall had joined us as associate editor. (He later became Secretary of NICAP.) Though I already knew of his Air Force service, and his connections with serious UFO investigators, here and abroad, his wide knowledge of the subject surprised me more than once.

While going over information received since February, I told him of our efforts to check all possible leads.

"Sometimes," I said, "I felt like the man who mounted his horse and rode off in all directions."

Hall gave me a dry smile. "It seems to have paid off."

"Yes, but there's only one main source left—the Navy. I thought we'd gotten what we could there, but last week one of my Naval Academy classmates told me to see Captain John Brent.<sup>1</sup> He said Brent was a pilot, but was now working on rockets and space plans. It seems he's opposed to UFO secrecy. This classmate said Brent wouldn't violate security, but he might give me some good background material. What that means, I don't know."

At 4:20 P.M. the next day, as I waited in Brent's outer office, a tall, sandy-haired commander strode in. He gave me a quick glance, went inside and closed the door. At 4:35, when the captain's secretary had gone, a solidly built four-striper came out.

"I'm Captain Brent. Sorry to keep you waiting." As we went in he closed the door. "This is Commander Larsen."<sup>2</sup>

Larsen and I shook hands. Captain Brent motioned toward a chair.

"Now," he said formally, "what can I do for you?"

It wasn't what I'd expected. He seemed to be coolly on guard, and the commander, I suspected, was there as a witness who could swear nothing vital was discussed.

"I was told you were interested in UFOs." I named my classmate, wondering if he had been misled.

"Any specific angles?" asked Captain Brent.

"We've had reports," I said, "of UFOs observing rocket launchings at Cape Canaveral. And another report, from a missile technician at a different base, said they'd had to hold up launchings several times because of UFO interference."<sup>3</sup>

The captain's eyes flicked toward Larsen, then back.

"Who gave you the Canaveral reports?"

"I'm sorry, Captain. We can't disclose that."

"Without witnesses' names, reports don't carry much weight."

"I think they're genuine. But they were given us off-the-record."

<sup>1</sup> As requested, I have changed the name.

<sup>2</sup> Name changed to protect the officer's identity.

<sup>3</sup> Report relayed by Civilian Saucer Intelligence, New York.

Captain Brent stopped to light a cigarette, and the tall commander took up the questioning.

"Is Admiral Fahrney still a NICAP member?"

I said he was. "He had to give up the job of Board chairman, but he's still helping us."

"Do you have any other Navy members?"

"At least thirty. Admiral H. B. Knowles is a Board member. Then there's Captain K. C. McIntosh, Admiral Eddie Ewen, Commander John R. Rowland . . . I could give you a list, except for a few who want their memberships kept confidential."

"With that many Navy members," interposed the captain, "you've probably been given some Navy UFO reports?"

I looked from him to Larsen. I was sure my classmate wasn't in on any trick, but could these men be privately helping the Air Force—trying to learn what NICAP had?

"Yes, we have Navy reports," I said carefully. "We've used two in reports to members.<sup>4</sup> But the best ones are confidential."

The two officers looked at each other.

"You can tell us off the record," said Commander Larsen.

I shook my head. Captain Brent leaned forward.

"Well, can you give us one of these reports without names?"

I started to refuse, then I thought of the Navy squadron story. In that case, there were so many witnesses no one would be pinpointed. Leaving out the date and location, I described the encounter. As I finished, the two men again exchanged glances. The commander nodded, and Captain Brent turned back to me.

"I hope you won't mind," he said apologetically. "We were told you wouldn't reveal anything given you in confidence, but we had to be sure you wouldn't fall into a trap."

I swallowed my brief resentment.

"It's all right. I don't blame you, knowing the tricks that have been tried on me."

<sup>4</sup>Reports by Commander Taylor and former Lieutenant Commander Williams, in Chapter VI.

"We knew all about that squadron case," said Larsen. "It was in 1953, and the commander who told you and Fahrney also gave you a report on his encounter over Virginia."

Both officers laughed as they saw my expression.

"Shall we show him the log?" said Commander Larsen.

Captain Brent hesitated. "We'd better get the admiral's approval first, although I'm sure he'll okay it."

"Then the Navy keeps its own UFO report file?" I asked.

Brent shook his head. "Not a complete one. This is a record Commander Larsen and I are keeping, with the admiral's consent—just so we'll know how many important Navy sightings go into the 'sink.'"

"The sink?"

Captain Brent smiled ironically. "Our name for Project Blue Book. We have to give all Navy and Marine Corps sighting reports to the Air Force. Then the lid goes down. If we ask for conclusions, they won't answer. In a few cases, they've even insisted they never heard of certain Navy reports—sightings we reviewed, right in this office. So we know your claims are true."

The captain reached into a drawer and took out several NICAP bulletins.

"We've kept an eye on NICAP for the last year—these came through a member of yours, one of our engineers. We agree with the Board of Governors—the secrecy is wrong, and it could cause panic."

Larsen pointed to our report on the Far East jet chase.

"If we give you cases from our log, you'll have to treat them as you did this, without names."

Captain Brent added, "Understand, no violation of security is involved. Though the pressure is increasing, the Navy Department hasn't accepted Air Force authority to muzzle Navy witnesses. It's a peculiar situation—here, I'll give you an example."

One night in 195—, he said, a Navy transport had a close encounter with a large flying disc. The plane was approaching its station when the UFO, visible by its orange-red glow, loomed up ahead.

"It was coming at supersonic speed—well over Mach 1," said Captain Brent. "The pilot dived under it, but he and his crew had a bad scare."

After the plane landed, a report had been flashed to the Air Force. Then in line with this Naval air station's policy the executive officer had told the pilot and his crew to keep quiet. Many station and ship commanders, Captain Brent explained, had adopted the same procedure.

"But there's no Navy directive compelling this," he emphasized. "Commander Larsen and I saw that report; technically we're free to give it to the press. But it would cause a row, and the Secretary of Defense—or someone higher—might plug this last loophole. As it is, we're free to talk if we wish."

Larsen nodded. "And there are others, even in the Air Force, who agree with us—that people should be told as much as is known."

"Why do you think the UFOs are watching us?" I asked.

"They may be afraid we'll cause trouble out in space," said Larsen. "And they'd have reason to worry, if they were dealing with Soviet space fleets."

"Have you ever thought," Captain Brent asked me quietly, "that the earth might be a colony started by another world?"

I looked at him, startled. "I've heard it suggested, but—do you actually believe it?"

"I'm certain of this much," replied Brent. "A race far more technically advanced than we are today was on earth thousands of years ago."

He swung around to a cabinet, took out a folder. "The Hydrographic Office of the Navy has verified an ancient chart—it's called the Piri Reis map—that goes back more than 5,000 years. It's so accurate only one thing could explain it—a worldwide aerial survey."<sup>5</sup>

"That's almost incredible!" I said.

"The Hydrographic Office experts couldn't believe it, ei-

<sup>5</sup> Confirmed, and Piri Reis map revealed, at a forum held by Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

ther, at first. But they not only proved the map genuine, it's been used to correct errors in some present-day maps."

Commander Larsen leaned forward. "Tell him about the seismic soundings."

"All right." The captain turned back to me. "The Director of Weston Observatory of Boston College is a top seismologist—Reverend Daniel Linehan, Society of Jesuits. He's so good that the Navy got him to help in the Antarctic, to find where there was land under the ice. The coast lines they found were identical with those on the Piri Reis map. So the map surveys would have to have been made centuries ago, before the land was buried by that deep ice."

"Father Linehan revealed this on a Georgetown University Forum, as proof that this map is genuine. The forum transcript also contains statements by the Hydrographic Office engineer in charge of the evaluation of the map—Mr. M. I. Walters. Other significant points were made by A. H. Mallery, a retired sea captain—he's the man who persuaded the Navy to examine the Piri Reis map, after he realized how important the old chart was."

So far, Captain Brent told me, only part of the complete Piri Reis map had been found, a section covering the coasts of South America, Africa and a portion of Antarctica. He showed me a copy of the ancient chart, then read the main points of the transcript.<sup>6</sup>

Early in the sixteenth century, Admiral Piri Reis, Turkish Navy, had acquired a map used by Columbus. Combining it with Greek maps dating back to Alexander the Great, he compiled a world chart in 1513.

In 1953, a Turkish naval officer sent the Piri Reis map to the Chief Engineer of the United States Navy Hydrographic Office. To evaluate it, the Chief Engineer asked the aid of Captain Mallery, an authority on old maps, who had previously worked with him. After a long study, Mallery discovered the projection method used. Confirming this and other technical points, the Navy cartographers came to these conclusions:

<sup>6</sup> Georgetown University copy of transcript in NICAP files.

1. Columbus had a map, on his historic voyage to America, which showed the coasts of Yucatan, Guatemala, South America to the Straits of Magellan and a large part of the Antarctic coast.

2. The original maps went back at least 5,000 years, and some data shown went back even farther. Part of the land areas shown had been buried under ice for twenty centuries or more.

3. Only highly trained survey teams and cartographers could have produced charts of such "amazing accuracy." Their operations must have covered the entire earth.

"We don't know how they could do it so accurately without the airplane," Captain Mallery summed it up.

Captain Brent put down the transcript.

"Mallery was right. They couldn't have done it without some type of flying machine. And there are other indications of a highly advanced technology thousands of years before Christ."

"But couldn't there have been an advanced earth race?" I inquired. "Archaeologists have found evidence of other lost civilizations."

"Yes, but no trace of factories, laboratories or fuel plants. It would have taken a huge industry to build and maintain such an air fleet. But spaceships from another world wouldn't require any of that—they'd bring what they needed, just as we intend to do in our own space explorations.

"For the first stages, our men will live aboard their ships, after landing on the moon and Mars. This unknown space race could have done the same thing, and from that point we've worked out several possible developments."

Using the Piri Reis map evaluations, Captain Brent and Larsen had assumed spaceship landings at least 10,000 years ago. Before deciding on a colony, said Brent, the unknown explorers undoubtedly would have tested our atmosphere, gravity and other living conditions, to make sure their race could adjust to life on earth.

If overpopulation on their own planet had led them to plan a large-scale migration, they would plan a civilization

like their own, as far as possible. Technically trained groups would be brought in first, then basic equipment, just as we plan for our own space colonies. Following this, emigrants from their own world would be ferried to earth in huge spaceships.

"That's simple logic," said Captain Brent. "Our own planners expect giant spaceships, for this same purpose, within a century or two."

"Yes," I said, "but if this had happened there'd surely be signs of advanced construction—different and better than anything we have today."

Captain Brent agreed. "That's why we think something must have stopped them during the early stages. Possibly it was disaster on their own planet—accidental nuclear explosions, or an epidemic, or interplanetary war. Even if their world survived, the earth colony might be almost forgotten as they rebuilt. It could be centuries before their descendants got around to checking up."

Meantime, Captain Brent continued, descendants of the first colony on earth would have developed on entirely different lines. When the spaceships failed to return, the colony members would be concerned mainly with survival. Lacking machines and other technical equipment, they would be forced into a primitive life, their advanced civilization but an unhappy memory. To later generations, struggling for existence, the link with another world would seem only a myth—if thought of at all.

"And the net result," concluded Brent, "would be the same if the first group was deliberately abandoned here."

"Abandoned?" I said. "But why should they be?"

"To get rid of undesirables."

"That's an ugly thought."

"I don't mean criminals necessarily," replied the captain. "Though turning a planet into a Devil's Island isn't impossible."

Commander Larsen grimaced. "Being banished like that—most people would prefer a death sentence."

"Yes," said Brent, "and the threat alone could be quite



effective. But I was thinking more of exile, like Napoleon on St. Helena. And you yourself suggested they might be captives from another world, remember?"

Larsen nodded, turned to me. "If they were so different from their captors, gruesome to look at, or extremely dangerous in some way—well, putting them on another planet would be an easy answer. That's assuming outright killing was banned. But all this is just a possibility. More likely, the colony wasn't cut off on purpose."

"Even if your colony idea is right," I said, "there's no proof, is there, that UFOs come from the world that started it?"

"No proof," Larsen assented, and the captain agreed.

But the odds, Brent added, gave a slight edge to that answer, in his opinion, though he admitted some other space race could have discovered us in a general exploration, or after hearing our radio transmissions and following them to the source. Perhaps two or more worlds were watching us, he said, and if they had conflicting motives it might explain delays in attempting contact.

"But I hope the parent-world idea is right," Brent said. "Theoretically, we should be able to accept intelligent beings whose bodies were quite different. Actually, it could be an impassable barrier—we'd probably recoil from each other. But if the UFO beings are from an earth colony's parent world, we'd be essentially the same kind of creatures. We'd have a much better chance of understanding each other, in spite of the long time gap."

Before I left, Captain Brent told me they would help NICAP when they could within security limits.

"And about the Canaveral reports," he said, "I've heard of sightings there. I know of no proof that UFOs have caused any rocket malfunctions. But since we ourselves can destroy our rockets by radio signals, it would not be impossible for UFOs to do the same."

In the doorway, I paused for one last question. "Do you think the UFOs are dangerous?"

"I don't know," Brent said slowly. After a moment he thoughtfully added, "Maybe they haven't decided."

As I went out to the parking lot, I thought of another angle to the colony theory.

What effect would this have upon religion?

At first, it appeared to deny the Biblical story of man's creation. But the landing of spaceships on an already inhabited world would pose no such problem, and the space race still could have played a vital part in our civilization.

Ten thousand years ago, spaceships could have landed with no opposition. The primitive tribes then on earth would have been awed, probably frightened into hiding. (In some ancient records, handed down for centuries, there are references to flying vehicles, though usually they are ridiculed or ignored.) After the colony had been cut off from its own world, or deserted, it could have kept on growing, its descendants gradually mingling with earth races as the story of their origin was forgotten.

But even this favorable possibility, as opposed to the thought of space outcasts, added to the UFO problem. More and more, I realized the difficulties of preparing the public. The most peaceful contact, even with beings like ourselves, would have a tremendous impact, raising a hundred questions.

Why wasn't the CIA, or whatever agency was in control, already at work on a program of preparation?

Some months before, I had been startled by an Air Force request for NICAP assistance. I had hoped it would lead to our helping to prepare for a public admission, but only silence had followed. I had almost forgotten when, only days after my Navy visit, the strange affair at Lackland Field suddenly was revived.

## CHAPTER XVII

# Riddle at Lackland Field

It was in June of '58 when the Lackland Field mystery reached its puzzling climax.

Five months before, a strange request had been sent to me, written on official letterhead of Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. It was signed by Robert C. Balsey, director of Lackland closed-circuit programs.

"This is a formal request," Balsey wrote, "to use information and quotations from your book, *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy*, for closed-circuit broadcast at Lackland Air Force Base. I will send you a copy of the script for approval before it is used."<sup>1</sup>

It was incredible. With all the strict censorship, why should any Air Force base endorse a book which exposed the

<sup>1</sup> Signed original in NICAP files.

conspiracy of silence? If they wished to ridicule it, I could understand. With closed circuits, however, they would have no reason to tell me or show me the script.

But for the Air Force letterhead, I would have dismissed it as a hoax. And it still could be a gag by someone using a fictitious name. If I answered, some Lackland PIO might label it a joke, then give the story to the press. It would get a good laugh—NICAP's director being so naïve as to take the letter seriously.

Expecting to draw a blank, I made a private check. But Balsey was just what he claimed, a producer of Lackland closed-circuit programs.

It left me more puzzled than ever. Balsey had implied a serious presentation, one showing evidence that the UFOs were spaceships. Then I recalled an earlier report given me by an Air Force contact. At the Air Institute, he said, some officers had been told confidentially that the flying saucers were interplanetary. He had no proof, and I doubted it more as time went on. Still, it could have been done unofficially, by one or two Air Force instructors.

However, at Lackland, even closed-circuit "broadcasts" would have to be officially approved by someone in the command. And why would anyone defy Headquarters policy with a program proving UFO reality? I could think of only one possibility. It might be an official test, with a captive audience under military control, to gauge public reaction if the truth were admitted.

But that wouldn't explain why I had been told.

Still suspecting a hidden angle, I agreed to the Lackland request. After three months with no answer, I wrote Balsey again, though by now I was sure the project was dead—if it ever had been started.

Next day, by coincidence, we had another hint of unusual interest in UFOs by some Air Force men at Lackland. On May 16, the Chief of Education Planning—Major Warren Akin—publicly suggested that the saucers were space machines.

"Space visitors may already have been here," he told the San Antonio Junior Chamber of Commerce.<sup>2</sup>

Apparently, Major Akin was silenced immediately after press reports of his statements. I had hoped to learn something from him about the proposed closed-circuit program. But a telegram and letters proved futile. Now positive that the lid was down at Lackland, I gave up hope of hearing from Balsey again.

But one month later he sent an official reply, explaining that the closed-circuit station, officially renamed KLRH, Lackland Air Force Base, had undergone major changes which had postponed their plans. Then he added:

Please excuse the long delay concerning the broadcast of the UFO script entitled "Look to the Skies," which is based on your book entitled, *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy*. Rehearsals will get underway immediately."

When I saw the enclosure I was amazed. It was a seventeen-page Air Force script, to be broadcast first on the Lackland Air Force Base Hospital closed circuit, and taped simultaneously for post release. It had been approved by the Assistant Adjutant of the hospital.

"More information is being added from the Lackland Office of Public Information," Balsey informed me, "and Lieutenant Wycoff, a base PIO, will appear on the program." (Later, this officer was identified by Balsey as Lieutenant Edward Wycoff, USAF.) "The broadcasting date is being held in suspense pending your reply."<sup>3</sup>

With increasing astonishment, I went through the script. Besides fully accepting the main disclosures in my book, this officially approved document added even stronger conclusions in explaining Air Force secrecy.

Preceding the book material, there was an Air Force explanation: "What you are about to hear is based on documented fact."

<sup>2</sup> Press account in NICAP files.

<sup>3</sup> Approved Air Force script in NICAP's possession, also accompanying official Lackland Air Force Base letter.

After a reference to AFR 200-2, which stressed that unsolved UFO sightings are kept from the public, the Air Force statement continued: "The question now is not 'IF' but 'WHY' and 'WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?'"

After comparing refusals to accept UFO reality with earlier refusals to accept the possibility of telephones, automobiles, aircraft and television, the script led into excerpts from *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy* with this unqualified endorsement:

"All sightings mentioned are authenticated as described in the broadcast."

With this official confirmation, the Air Force script cited one of the most disturbing cases ever to leak out—the mysterious loss of an F-89 interceptor during a UFO pursuit:

"It was the evening of November 23, 1953," the script stated, "and wintry darkness had settled over Michigan. At an isolated radar station, Air Defense operators were watching their scope in a routine guard against possible enemy attack. . . ."

With full details, this official report then showed how the Air Force radar operators had picked up the blip of an unknown object over the Soo Locks. Since this was a restricted area, an F-89 jet from Kinross Air Force Base in Michigan was immediately sent to investigate. At the controls was Lieutenant Felix Moncla, Jr. In the rear cockpit was Lieutenant R. R. Wilson, the radar observer.

"The UFO, flying as fast as a jet airliner, was heading toward Lake Superior," the Air Force script continued. "At over 500 m.p.h. the F-89 raced after it, out across Whitefish Bay. Nine minutes ticked by. Slowly the jet cut down the gap. By now, Wilson should have spotted their quarry on the fighter's short-range radar. . . ."

Then the closed-circuit documentary, in a dramatic statement, revealed the sudden merging of the UFO's blip with that of the F-89, as seen by Air Force ground radarmen. Quoting a stunned radar officer, it went on:

"It seems incredible, but the blip apparently just swal-

lowed our F-89.' . . . No trace was ever found of the missing men, the F-89 or the UFO."

In quick succession, the script disclosed official Air Force confirmation of the F-89's disappearance, by Lieutenant Robert C. White of the Air Force Press Desk; then a Truax Air Force Base statement to the Associated Press:

"The plane was followed by radar until it merged with an object 70 miles off Keweenaw Point in upper Michigan. Kinross Air Force Base spokesmen said the missing plane was equipped with two rubber rafts and that each officer wore a life jacket." (The Associated Press news item, headed *JET, TWO ABOARD, VANISHES OVER LAKE SUPERIOR*, appeared in an early edition of the Chicago *Tribune*, but was deleted from later issues.)<sup>4</sup>

Continuing with the F-89 case, the Lackland script candidly showed an Air Force attempt to explain away the UFO as a Canadian DC-3 airliner which had strayed off course. It also included a statement that the Canadian pilots denied this. This was followed by an evaluation proving that a DC-3, with an average cruising speed of 165 m.p.h. and a maximum of about 215, could not possibly have been the UFO tracked at over 500 m.p.h.

After a look at the rest of the script, I decided to try it on Associate Editor Richard Hall. A typically quiet New Englander, he seldom showed much emotion. But he sat up quickly when I told him the script had been cleared by the Air Force.

"That's peculiar, letting us see such a script."

"The whole thing is odd. Both the Office of Public Information at Lackland and the hospital adjutant's office would know Air Force regulations—especially the policy about UFOs. So I can't believe they'd risk approving that script on their own. It must've been okayed higher up."

"Any idea why?"

"It could be a private test to see how people will react to the facts. This will be 'broadcast' first on a closed-circuit hospital network—to patients, nurses and doctors. Probably

<sup>4</sup> Photostats of *Tribune* news item in NICAP files.

most of them have heard the Air Force denials that flying saucers exist. This surprise program should show their natural reactions."

Hall thoughtfully filled his pipe. "They might get a bad one, leading off with that F-89 disappearance. Remember that recent scare in Lisbon when they rebroadcast the 'Invasion from Mars' story?"

"Yes, but this could be deliberate. They may have chosen one of the worst cases so they could see the shock effects."

"That might be rough on some of the patients," said Hall.

"Probably the sicker ones won't be allowed to hear it. Of course, I may be wrong about the test idea. But do you see any other practical answer?"

Slowly, Hall shook his head. "No, they wouldn't be exposing the UFO cover-up just for amusement. It's hardly light entertainment. But I can't understand why they told you and let you see the script."

"Neither can I. Let's go over the whole thing and see if there's any hint."

Whether or not this was a deliberate audience-reaction test, the Air Force treatment continued on a sober note. Steadily, it piled up proof that the flying saucers were outer-space machines. Halfway through, the script repeated the opening statement: "All accounts given on this program are authenticated fact." Then it launched into the details of a jet chase in 1954. I read:

"At 8:30 P.M. on August 28, 1954, a formation of fifteen flying saucers approached Oklahoma City. Picked up by radar, the strange machines were spotted from Tinker Air Force Base. Within seconds, by standing orders of the Air Defense Command, a flight of jets was dispatched.

"Under AFR 200-2, emergency teletype messages were flashed to ADC Headquarters, to ATIC and the Pentagon. At the same time, warning alerts were phoned to Will Rogers Airport, the Oklahoma State Police and to GOC (Ground Observer Corps) posts in a radius of 200 miles.

"Meanwhile, in precision triangular formation, the fifteen

saucers had raced over the edge of the city. The jets, guns set to fire, hurtled after them at full power. Abruptly the formation broke and, changing into a semicircle, the saucers speeded up and vanished into the west."

Emphasizing that the UFO surveillance was global, the Air Force approved script stated: "Since the fall of 1954, secret investigations have been made in twenty-one countries, including England, France, Italy, Brazil, Venezuela and South Africa. . . ."

Then, once again, fear of the UFOs was dramatized.

"On the night of November 21, 1954, a Brazilian airliner was bound for Rio de Janeiro. Flying at 8,000 feet, the plane was over the Paraiba River when a strange glow suddenly appeared ahead. In a moment, a weird formation of nineteen round machines took shape—each machine more than one hundred feet in diameter. Glowing like hot metal, the mysterious craft approached at supersonic speed. Before the pilot could move his controls, the saucers were flashing past and beneath his wings.

"As several machines streaked by the cabin, the thirteen passengers stampeded. One woman, screaming, ran into the pilots' compartment. Another passenger, battling a crewman, tried to reach the main exit. But the frightened passengers finally were subdued, and the plane landed safely. The Brazilian Air Force is badly worried. The Government wants all countries to pool their secret UFO information so that each country will know what it's up against."

Hall looked over at me as I paused. "It's hard to realize that this is the Air Force talking. Do they use any more 'scare' reports?"

"There's one with a hint that jets fired on a UFO. But first they go into the secrecy orders. It's amazing, how they admit the cover-up. Listen to this. . . ."

I read the Air Force script comment on JANAP 146:

"This order is backed by threats of fines and imprisonment and applies to military, naval and airlines pilots mak-

ing reports on UFOs. It also muzzles all members of the Defense Department, the CAA, the Civil Aeronautics Board and any other agency involved with CIRVIS reports. [CIRVIS: Communications Instructions for Reporting Vital Intelligence Sightings.] Even a private citizen could be prosecuted for disclosing a saucer sighting if in some way he had learned the details from a CIRVIS message."

As I turned a page, I showed Hall the next paragraph:

JANAP 146 and AFR 200-2 are official proof of the black-out on UFO reports by the Federal Government, indicating that the United States of America is very much concerned with the flying saucers and also in spite of denials that the Air Force has kept information from the public.

"That's almost unbelievable," said Hall. "Just think what you could do with this."

"That's just the start. This will really jolt you:

"But because of the prolonged secrecy and censorship imposed by the United States Air Force on all authentic UFO information and the flippant attitude of the general public concerning the possibility of life on other planets, the American people had not been prepared for an admission about space visitors.

"And so the Silence Group was now forced by their own policy to continue with the elaborate and detailed censorship which had been thrown around the real facts. Now it was not a question of how to keep it from the public, but how to let the public know in such a way that panic, fear and mass hysteria would not result and cause an economic crisis."

After this momentous admission, the script cited the official Air Force brush-off on the *Armstrong Circle Theater* program.

"I wish Colonel Whedon were here," I told Hall. "I'd like to watch him reading this."

Going back to official UFO sightings, the script described a formation of six flying discs seen over Port Townsend, Washington, May 1, 1954:

"Glowing a bright yellow, the round machines circled in echelon. Sheriff Peter J. Naughton, who first observed the discs, phoned to Payne Air Force Base near Tacoma. Minutes later he received an urgent call from Payne Field operations.

"'Ground all planes at Port Townsend! Interceptors are coming in with live ammunition.'

"For at least two years there had been a standing order that pilots could not fire on UFOs unless the saucers proved hostile. Jet pilots would not be preparing to fire rockets at reflections or hallucinations. Few people ever learned of this significant affair."

Then, leading back to the question, "Where do they come from?" the Air Force-approved script gave the answer which all the censors had hotly and repeatedly denied:

"The most logical explanation is that the saucers are interplanetary. This is the ONLY answer which meets all the known criteria."

In the last part of the Air Force script, Mars was suggested as one probable source for the UFOs. After describing the strange flares or explosions reported on Mars, the script discussed the network of "canals" mapped by Percival Lowell, and his dramatic announcement that Mars was inhabited, although a dying planet. Then came this significant paragraph:

"Presumably the Martians would be feverishly hunting around for other planets to which they could migrate. Earth was the closest, most suitable neighbor. Along with this came the clinching announcement by Colonel William C. Odell, Air Force Intelligence. Colonel Odell indicated that the flying saucers came from a dying planet, and that the unknown space race was carefully surveying the earth to see if it was suitable for a new home."

As I came to the last page, I glanced at Hall. His pipe had gone out while he listened.

"What a surprise the public would get," he said, "if this

were a regular broadcast. That script completely reverses all the Air Force claims."

"This last section is even stronger. Here are their own conclusions, summed up separately from mine."

I read Hall the main points:

"The earth and its inhabitants are at this very moment under careful study by living intelligences far surpassing our own. . . . Evidence indicates that they come from Mars.

"They have undoubtedly examined our atmospheric conditions, our terrain, our vegetable and animal life . . . in fact, all things which might in any way help them in their eventual progress."

I stopped, pointed to a paragraph I had previously underlined.

"This is the hottest sentence. It could blow everything wide open."

Then I read it aloud:

"Acting in the best interest of the public of the United States of America, the Federal Government in conjunction with the U.S. Air Force has carefully concealed information which was thought to be of danger, because of the impending possibility of hysteria and panic which could result in an economic collapse and dissipation of our social structure."

"That's a powerful statement," commented Hall.

"Yes. And you're right, it would cause a sensation if the Air Force openly broadcast this script."

"But that part about economic collapse—did you ever mention that angle?"

"No, and they may have purposely exaggerated it, if this is really an audience-reaction test. And that's still the most logical explanation. They'll be springing the program on people in all stages of health, mental as well as physical. A few doctors could be told in advance—anyway, the psychiatrists, so they could note the effects."

Hall nodded. "Also, they might want to screen out the most serious mental cases."

"There's no doubt this could be a valuable guide in planning to tell the public. But I keep coming back to why they let me know."

"Could they be trying to sew us up? Could they warn you that the Air Force conclusions are classified, once you approve the script?"

I thought for a moment. "Yes, that might be it. They could send back a copy stamped 'Secret' or 'Confidential,' and we couldn't ever quote a word of it. They might even use it as a means of muzzling NICAP on all the important angles; at least they might try it. But how do they know I won't give the script to the press right now, before they could classify it?"

"Are you going to?" Hall asked.

"No, if the Air Force actually is preparing to tell the public, we'll help them work it."

"I wonder," Hall said slowly, "if this could be a mistake—that we weren't meant to know. That is, the higher echelons didn't intend it."

"I don't think so—it would have to be a terrible snafu for Balsey to misunderstand that badly. But it is possible that some group at Lackland wants us to know, maybe so we could break it if the Air Force backs down. But they'd be taking a fearful risk."

Hall picked up the script, glanced at the list of Air Force men scheduled to be on the program.

"What's this?" He pointed to a line at the bottom of page one. "It says the program was broadcast on March 2, on the Lackland Hospital Radio Network."

"I saw that. Probably they were scheduled for March 2 and had to change the date, and Balsey just didn't bother correcting this script. Of course, if this already has been tried out, then somebody definitely is tipping us off."

"What are you going to do?"

"Give them an okay, then see what happens."

When I wired an approval of the script, I expected to hear in a week or two. But six months passed, and queries to Bal-

sey went unanswered. Finally, after being prodded by registered mail, he replied.

It was a strange, revealing letter.

After I approved the script, Balsey said, a battle had started at Lackland Air Force Base. The fight to block the UFO program had gone on for weeks. Then Balsey stated:

Rehearsals were begun several times. But due to reductions in personnel I was repeatedly forced to postpone the broadcast. At last the hospital executive officer, Colonel Kenneth B. Johnson, closed the radio station altogether. The few remaining personnel were reassigned. Lieutenant Edward Wycoff [the PIO who asked to appear on the program] was transferred to another base. KLRH is being dismantled.<sup>5</sup>

I showed the letter to Hall.

"Some powerful group must've been fighting for the program," I said. "Otherwise, it simply would have been canceled and the station would have gone ahead with routine productions. Apparently the opposition wasn't strong enough for that—they used the trick of transferring Balsey's staff members to keep postponing."

"And it looks as if the group fighting for it wasn't completely licked," said Hall. "Otherwise, the station wouldn't have been ordered dismantled."

"Yes, somebody wasn't taking any chances."

"But there wasn't any hint of a fight when Balsey sent us the script."

"I've a hunch that's what set it off," I said. "Someone at a high level must have agreed to an audience-reaction test, expecting it to be kept quiet. When he, or one of the group, found we had the script it could have given him a bad scare. Or else the opposition found out and started the battle."

Hall glanced at Balsey's letter.

"Is it possible they did put on the test but told Balsey to say it was killed?"

"Yes, it's possible. If they didn't, they'd be smart to start

<sup>5</sup> Original in NICAP files.

over at another base, and make sure this time it was kept secret."

"Are you going to release the story now?"

I hesitated. "It's a temptation, but maybe we'd better show it privately down on the Hill. It might help convince a few more congressmen that we need public hearings. But this time we'll try to make certain the Air Force doesn't know what we're doing."

"Of course," said Hall, "they already know we have the script. But it will take some explaining when they're finally faced with it."

"That's right, Dick. Nothing can change that officially approved admission—that they're hiding the truth from the public."

## CHAPTER XVIII

# The Warnings

Though we were not aware, in the last half of '58, of the prolonged battle over the Lackland script, we noticed several puzzling Air Force actions linked at least partly with NICAP.

The first surprise came in June, soon after the Lackland script arrived. One morning a call came in from a city near a large Air Force research base.

"This is Captain G——, Air Force Reserve. I'm on inactive, just finished a tour of duty here. I've something to tell you, if I can see you in Washington."

The following Saturday, we met at the office. Captain G—— was in civilian clothes, a tall, slender, serious-faced man about thirty. He seemed a trifle nervous as he showed me his credentials.



"The Air Force wouldn't like this, even though I'm on inactive. So don't use my name with this information."

"If it's classified," I said quickly, "I don't want to hear it."

"No, it's not. But it's been kept from the public. This may seem odd from an Air Force man, but I agree with NICAP—secrecy about UFOs is a bad mistake."

Then he gave me three sighting reports. Two we already had, though I didn't tell him. The other was a chase by two Air Force jets.

"One pilot almost rammed this saucer," said Captain G—. "It was about one hundred feet in diameter, with what looked like a control dome. It cut in front of one jet. The pilot thought it was going to attack so he let go with his rockets. The UFO went straight up out of sight; apparently it wasn't hurt. Sorry I can't identify the pilot—names are classified."

"Yes, I know."

"But that's not why I came here—you must have plenty of hot reports." The captain hesitated, then blurted out, "I happen to know the Air Force is going to ask you for certain UFO information. Think it over carefully before you decide."

So this was the answer, I thought; they were worried about the Lackland script. I waited for G— to go on.

The captain flushed. "I guess it looks suspicious, but this is on the level. I wanted to warn you that NICAP could be in trouble. You must have something that has upset the Pentagon."

"Who told you this, Captain?"

"Well, it's an Air Force source who feels as I do."

"And the Air Force thinks we have some important document?" I said deliberately.

"Document?" said G—. "I don't know what it is. I thought perhaps it was a big sighting."

"We do have some confidential reports from Service pilots."

"Confidential?" exclaimed G—. "That's bad! They

could get NICAP—and those pilots, too—for violating security."

"I meant the sources are confidential. The reports are unclassified but hidden from the public—just like the ones you gave me."

The captain's face cleared. "I should have known you wouldn't run afoul of security, with all the military men in NICAP. But I was afraid of an attempt to discredit you."

"It wouldn't be the first time. Thanks for coming all this way to warn us."

"You don't think Captain G— was a plant?" asked Hall.

"I have a feeling he was playing it straight, but I may be wrong. They could have picked a good actor."

"Thinking you'd talk about those key cases?"

"Or hoping I'd open up about the Lackland script, so they'd know what we intend to do."

"What do you think of that warning?"

"If this was a trick, it was probably meant to worry us. If he's on the level, then he may have heard some rumor. I don't believe they'll ask us for anything."

But two days later an Air Force request arrived.<sup>1</sup>

"They want our top cases!" I told Hall. "Act or not, Captain G— had it right."

"How did they know what to ask for?" said Hall.

"They don't name specific reports. They want the ones I mentioned to General Twining. I said we had cases proving that some UFOs are machines under intelligent control."

"But they already have proof themselves—hundreds of pilots' reports."

"Sure, they're after our hidden cases. They say they'll have ATIC evaluate them. That means they'll try to figure out brush-off answers, then claim they've disproved all NICAP's best evidence. Meantime, they'd try to silence all the Service witnesses."

Hall relit his pipe. "What are you going to do?"

<sup>1</sup> Signed Air Force letter in NICAP files.

"Tell the Board, first. I know they'll agree we're honor bound to say no.<sup>2</sup> The Air Force knew we'd refuse; obviously they did this so they could say we didn't have the evidence."

"What shall we say if the press asks why we refused?"

"We'll tell them the truth—the witnesses know they'd be officially ridiculed. Later, we can release some of the main cases without names, certified by the Board. But we'll hold up on that as long as there's a chance to use them in hearings."

While we were waiting for the Board members' opinions, the Air Force repeated its request. But after NICAP's written refusal there was only silence. For some unknown reason, the expected attack did not come.

By mid-July, published UFO reports hit a new low as the censorship steadily tightened. But hard-working NICAP members kept the secrecy issue alive by securing official statements against the Air Force policy:

Representative Thomas Ludlow Ashley: "I share your concern over the secrecy that continues to shroud our intelligence activities on this subject."<sup>3</sup>

Civil Defense Director of Cleveland, John J. Pokorny: "As Civil Defense Director, I have more than a passing interest in reports of unidentified flying objects. . . . I am of the opinion that the Federal Government should remove the cloak of secrecy surrounding UFOs."<sup>4</sup>

Civil Defense Director Kenneth E. Locke, Lake County, Ohio: "It appears quite evident that the entire UFO field has gone beyond the scope and capabilities of the Armed Forces and Pentagon officials. I believe that the Armed Forces are withholding UFO information that should be released to the public."<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, unexpected support came from French Air Force General L. M. Chassin, NATO Co-ordinator for

<sup>2</sup>The Board voted unanimously to refuse the reports.

<sup>3</sup>Statement on file at NICAP.

<sup>4</sup>Statement on file at NICAP.

<sup>5</sup>Statement on file at NICAP.

European Air Defense. Commenting on new evidence that many UFOs operated by "Orthoteny" (in straight lines, as in mapping operations) General Chassin stated that "the objects are intelligently directed," and he added that the UFO phenomenon might determine our future.<sup>6</sup>

But it took a worldwide news story, quoting Dr. Carl Jung, famous Swiss analyst, to bring the UFOs back to front pages.

On July 31, Lou Corbin phoned me from Baltimore.

"Did you know Dr. Carl Jung was releasing a UFO evaluation?"

"No. He's a NICAP member, but—"

"It just hit the wires. He says the UFOs are real and show signs of intelligent guidance."

"Lou, this is real news!"

"It jarred the Air Force. I just called Major Tacker. He said the Air Force has never denied the possibility—they just have to have proof."

After Corbin hung up I told Hall about the Jung statement.

"That should shake a lot of skeptics," he said.

By evening, it was a front-page story. But our elation was short-lived, for a new dispatch followed, saying Dr. Jung had been misquoted. To clear it up, I rushed off an air-mail letter to Zurich. Dr. Jung's answer proved both stories incorrect.

In the first press story, a hypothetical discussion by Dr. Jung had been misconstrued as a definite conclusion. But his letter made it clear he did not rule out the interplanetary explanation.<sup>7</sup>

KUSNACHT-ZURICH

SEESTRASS 228

16.8.58

DEAR MAJOR KEYHOE:

Thank you very much for your kind letter. I have read all you have written concerning UFOs and I am a subscriber

<sup>6</sup>Foreword to *Flying Saucers and the Straight-Line Mystery*, by Aime Michel.

<sup>7</sup>Signed original in NICAP files.

to the NICAP Bulletin. I am grateful for all the courageous things you have done in elucidating the thorny problem of UFO-reality. . . .

My special preoccupation does neither preclude the physical reality of the UFOs nor their extraterrestrial origin, nor the purposefulness of their behavior, etc. But I do not possess sufficient evidence which would enable me to draw definite conclusions. The evidence available to me however is convincing enough to arouse a fervent interest. I follow with my greatest sympathy your exploits and your endeavors to establish the truth about the UFOs. . . .

If it is true that the A.A.F. [American Air Force] or the government withholds tell-taling facts, then one can only say that this is the most unpsychological and stupid policy one could invent. Nothing helps rumors and panics more than ignorance. It is self-evident that the public ought to be told the truth, because ultimately it will nevertheless come to the daylight. There can hardly be any greater shock than the H-bomb and yet anybody knows of it without fainting.

I remain, dear Major,

Yours

(signed) C. G. JUNG

"He's dead right about the policy," I told Hall. "It's caused hysteria dozens of times, here and abroad."

In the United States, a recent panic had occurred at West Point, Mississippi, where alarmed villagers gathered to repel invasion after a weather balloon was mistaken for a "flying saucer." Some of the crowd were armed with shot-guns; others carried clubs, pitchforks and makeshift weapons.

"I've read a number of cases," Hall commented, "but that Sheneman affair is one of the best examples of an average family's reaction."

We had received the Sheneman report through the efforts of two NICAP members after they verified the facts.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Signed report in NICAP files.

The incident had happened on the first of August, 1955. Shortly after 9 P.M., Mr. W. M. Sheneman, owner of a radio and television store in Willoughby, Ohio, drove up to his home on Chardon Road. As he got out of his car he saw a large circular object, with a red light on the front rim, come down rapidly over a nearby field.

At about eight hundred feet, the machine stopped, and two beams of light shot down. As the glow illuminated the ground, Sheneman saw several windows around the edge of the hovering disc.<sup>9</sup>

"At this point," Sheneman reported, "I became badly frightened and ran back toward the house. I was so scared I ran past my car, parked with the motor running. I felt the occupants of the object were following me. As I ran up the drive it was right overhead, moving in the same direction I was running.

"My wife met me at the back door and said, 'Turn the outside lights on before it hits the house.' I said, 'Hell, no, turn them off and maybe it will miss it.' Our two children were terrified and quickly got under the dining-room table to hide."

After a minute, the Shenemans fearfully ventured a look from the back porch. By now, the disc's lights were turned off.

"Dorothy and I stood there and stared up at it," Sheneman stated. It was a huge dark shape, he said, hovering less than two hundred feet above the ground. "It must have been between eighty and a hundred feet in diameter. It was so large it extended over the major portion of our house, the breezeway and beyond the attached garage. I never heard any noise, but Dorothy insists she heard a faint, soft humming."

Abruptly, the strange machine moved over a wooded area nearby. The Shenemans saw a dome on top, lit up by a white glow from inside. Then the disc raced away, leaving them badly shaken.

<sup>9</sup> See report by Reverend and Mrs. Hoffmann, Chapter XV.

In 1956, Sheneman revealed the story to friends. One of them sent a report to ATIC, and later, during a conference at the Intelligence Center, three Cleveland investigators urged a personal investigation.

One night, an ATIC major visited the Shenemans, questioned them closely, then told them they had seen a test of a Canadian Avro vertical-lift device developed for the United States Air Force. To back up his claim, the Intelligence officer showed the Shenemans a glossy print supposed to depict the Avro machine in flight.<sup>10</sup> Actually, this was only an artist's conception of what the device would look like, since not even a mock-up had been built at that time. (The first model was not completed until 1959 and it is still being tested as of January 1960.)

For three hours, the Air Force major tried to persuade Sheneman and his wife to sign an admission that this was what they had seen. But they both refused, as their signed report to NICAP shows.

"That was a strange thing," I said to Hall. "Obviously, he was hoping to shut them up; after they signed, he could say it was a confidential matter. But why drag in the Avro, when that answer could be easily disproved? Even if one had existed then, it couldn't explain what they saw. If an Avro hovered like that, its jets would make a terrific racket, besides all the glare from the exhausts. And its expected top speed is nowhere near that of the UFOs."

Hall shook his head. "It wasn't smart, but ATIC probably gambled, thinking the Shenemans would sign. If they were kept from talking after that, no one would be likely to tell them the machine wasn't built. I suppose ATIC thought the artist's sketch would fool them. It does look a little like a photograph. But why did they try so hard to hush up this particular case?"

I thought back. "Sheneman says this Air Force major arrived in December of '56. About then, the Air Force had gotten things pretty quiet. But behind the scenes it was building up again—that was the month of the Far East jet chase, for

<sup>10</sup> Official copy of this sketch, released October 25, 1955, in NICAP files.

one thing. They may have been afraid the Sheneman case would start new leaks, if it got into the papers."

Even after Congress adjourned in 1958, we kept up our drive for hearings. But more than once, talking with congressmen still in Washington, I noted a new restraint. Finally a veteran representative gave me the explanation.

"The Air Force is right on your heels. Practically every time you see or write a congressman, General Fisher gets busy. [Major General W. P. Fisher had replaced General Kelly as Director of Legislative Liaison.] Here's what Fisher wrote me when I asked about UFO hearings:

"The Air Force feels that public hearings would merely give dignity to the subject out of all proportion to which it is entitled. The sensation seekers and the publishers of scientific fiction would profit most from such hearings." <sup>11</sup>

The congressman gave me a keen look. "NICAP's in a big fight—big-league. Don't let up for a second. Keep boring in with facts, facts, more facts, and you'll break this open."

Next day, at the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, I told President Hartranft what the congressman had said.

"I knew the pressure was on," he said. "Anti-UFO publicity has been increasing—this editorial is an example." He read me a news clipping:

"Here it is summer and nobody's bothered to see flying saucers. But then no Loch Ness monster has been reported, either. Saucers usually are seen in the silly season, the hot weather. There's nothing you can't see if you look long enough, even a two-headed calf."

"That's mild compared with some," I said. "One columnist said it was all mumbo-jumbo put over by crackpots. Another said it was all a delusion by cultists who call mirages Unidentified Flying Objects."

Hartranft looked incredulous. "But everyone knew that's the official Air Force term for 'flying saucers.' He couldn't have investigated very much."

<sup>11</sup> Identical paragraph in Air Force letters to Senator Byrd, and others in Congress; signed originals in NICAP files.

"No. But some of these people do know better. Take Willy Ley, the space-travel writer. He once admitted the UFO sightings baffled him. Now he says it's all bunk. He's made three public statements that just won't stand up: That 'saucers' don't operate intelligently; that there's never been a trace on the ground where UFOs were reported touching; and that Mantell never radioed an Air Force tower that he saw a metallic-looking UFO."<sup>12</sup>

"But that last is on record," put in Hartranft.

"It's in the official Air Force summary of April 1949. And Civil Defense confirmed the UFO marks and radioactivity in that Ohio landing last November. As for the intelligent operation, all the pilots and radarmen who have reported UFOs make it plain they were intelligently controlled."

"Can't we straighten out those things in the papers?" Hartranft asked.

"We're working on it with NICAP releases. Columnist George Todt is hitting back, and of course Corbin and Frank Edwards. But it's a big job. I know there's an official debunking campaign, but it's not easy to prove it for the newspapers."

In the following months, anti-UFO stories steadily increased. Some UFO explanations were so silly they defeated their purpose: "The shadow of a plane scared observers. . . . A blow on the eyeball caused witnesses to see stars, which they construed as flying discs. . . . Most reports come from newsboys, excitable old ladies and other unreliable sources. . . ."

This last, by a science editor, ruffled Hall's usual calm.

"I'd like to put him on our files, and see how many unrelia- bles he could find!"

For a while, we still seemed to lose ground, then NICAP's "facts, facts, more facts" system began to show results. Within a month we had won new support in Congress, and several newsmen who had scoffed were now making serious inquiries.

<sup>12</sup> By-line article in the Philadelphia *Bulletin*.

"I think we're finally rolling," Hall said one day.

That night the lightning struck.

About 10:30, Brennard called me at home.

"Have you gone nuts—taking in that guy A——?" He named a "contactee" widely known for fantastic claims, including tales of flights with Venusian spacemen.

"What are you talking about?" I demanded. "He's not in NICAP."

"Well, he flashed a membership card on a TV show in Los Angeles."

"What?"

"He claims you sent it personally—made him an honorary member."

"Henry, that's the first I ever heard of this. He must have a fake card."

"The Air Force captain who told me says it's real. One of their PIO's in Los Angeles saw the program. The close-up showed a regular NICAP card, with your printed signature." Brennard hesitated. "Could anybody in your office have sent it without letting you know?"

"No, that's impos- sible—" I stopped short. "I can't believe it, but I'll find out in a hurry."

"You'd better work fast. This is a big break for the Air Force censors. They can use it to kill off NICAP."

I fired a telegram to the contactee, denying he was a NICAP member and warning him not to repeat the claim. Then early next morning I hurried into the office. When I checked the membership files I had a double shock.

Not only was A—— listed as an honorary member, but six other widely known contactees!

In the uproar that followed, one employee resigned after revealing a disagreement with NICAP's policy about contactees. But this did not reduce the danger of a ruinous press story.

From the start, the contactees had been a headache. Since there was always a possibility that such a claim was true, at least that space beings had been seen during brief landings, we could not issue a blanket denial. So far, not even the

most conservative "contact" claim, involving communication by word, gestures or otherwise, had been accepted by NICAP as proved. And most of the other claims were ridiculous—tales of marrying Venusian women, visits to Mars, Venus, Saturn and the moon. Some stories were obvious frauds, others unfortunate delusions.

If the press, prompted by the Air Force, ran a story implying NICAP acceptance of wild contact claims, it could cost us our hard-won support in Congress and alienate most of the public, possibly many of our members.

As quickly as possible, telegrams were rushed to all the involved contactees, voiding the membership cards. When I phoned the press wires, they agreed to run NICAP's explanation if the story came out. But the tension remained until Brennard called that afternoon.

"It's okay—you blocked it. But it was close."

A few days later I dropped into Brennard's office to thank him personally for the warning.

"Don't let your guard down," he said. "They're still hitting at NICAP and debunking the 'saucers.'"

"Yes, but there have been some odd contradictions lately. Last month—August 24—a Captain H. C. Cowan at Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, told reporters, 'We have to discredit UFO reports just about one hundred per cent.' It's clear he was referring to the revised AFR 200 order: 'All Air Force activities must reduce the unexplained percentages to the minimum.'"<sup>13</sup>

"That order shouldn't surprise you," said Brennard.

"That's not the point. Remember that UFO chase at Ellsworth Air Force Base in '53—the one Ruppelt let out in his 1956 book?"

"Yes. One jet pilot got scared and asked to break off the chase."<sup>14</sup>

"Ruppelt said that case upset a lot of Air Force people; they couldn't get around the facts. Well, a NICAP member recently wrote the Air Force about it. I'd have bet a hundred

<sup>13</sup> Captain Cowan's press statement in NICAP files.

<sup>14</sup> Pages 303-6, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*.

to one they'd deny it, or just not answer. But Major Tacker not only confirmed it, he said they had gun-camera pictures and radarscope photos showing the object."<sup>15</sup>

"But why?" exclaimed Brennard. "For months, he's gone all out to prove the 'saucers' aren't real."

"It beats me. No one outside the Air Force knew those pictures existed. Yet Tacker—the official UFO spokesman—puts it on record in a signed statement. And that's not all. They've let several recent Air Force sightings get into the papers.

"On the night of September 22, some people at Briceville, Tennessee, saw an enormous UFO. Next day, the PIO at the Briceville Air Force radar station confirmed the sighting for an Oak Ridge newspaper. He said a radar officer had gone outside and had seen this huge round object, the size of a silver dollar at arm's length. The newspaper asked if the Air Force was still investigating 'saucer' sightings, and the PIO said 'They sure are.' He gave the impression the Air Force was really serious."<sup>16</sup>

"Queer," said Brennard. "Maybe they're changing the policy."

But this idea was quickly disproved.

On October 7, the Army unexpectedly revealed a sighting the Air Force had kept secret for ten days. About 5 A.M., September 29, Army missile men had reported seeing a mysterious object land, then take off, near their Nike base at Derwood, Maryland. A helicopter searched for the landing spot as both Army and Air Force Intelligence officers began an investigation. Evidently the Air Force had feared the story might break, for a new debunking release immediately followed the Army news story.

But this time the censors ran into trouble.

That same day, by coincidence, an exposé of the cover-up, by veteran Washington correspondent Bulkley Griffin, appeared in his chain of newspapers. Some time before, the Air Force had invited him to visit ATIC, presumably expecting

<sup>15</sup> Air Force letter in NICAP files.

<sup>16</sup> *The Oak Ridger*, September 23, 1958.

his articles to follow the official line. But Griffin already knew most of the facts, and the Air Force claims backfired.

Spotlighting the debunking campaign, Griffin revealed an Air Force letter received by Representative Carl Vinson, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. It contained this candid admission:

We are attempting to get articles placed in the public magazines with large circulation, and both Arthur Godfrey and Dave Garroway have agreed to assist us in our program to put the UFO subject in its proper perspective.<sup>17</sup>

After this, Mr. Griffin, in a dispassionate style more deadly than any blast, revealed these facts:

1. At Dayton, ATIC had admitted 815 unsolved reports—12 per cent of the total 6,736 on file.
2. Misleading statements about three major cases had been made by ATIC. Apparently trying to convince Griffin that the rocket ship reported by Captain Chiles was an illusion, ATIC had publicly stated: "No disturbance was felt, nor was there any wash or mechanical disturbance when the object passed." This denied the official Air Force admission of a "jet wash" disturbance in this case, as stated April 27, 1949.

In the 1952 Washington Airport case, where CAA tower operators and several pilots saw the objects as they were simultaneously tracked by radar, ATIC told Griffin: "A careful search of the sky was made immediately. Nothing was seen."

In the Levelland, Texas, case, Griffin saw an ATIC report stating, "The most reliable witness was in an auto whose electrical system had been stopped, and who observed the object four to five minutes." But in 1957, the Air Force had claimed there were only vague reports, with the sighting lasting only a few seconds.

3. Military pilot sightings are withheld from the public, also sightings over secret installations, atomic energy centers and the White House.

4. The Air Force is fighting any Congressional probe.

<sup>17</sup> Copies of Mr. Griffin's articles in NICAP files.

"A poverty of information is bad enough," concluded Mr. Griffin, "but misleading the public is far worse. . . . The commonly heard answer is that the Air Force fears panic if it tells all it knows about flying saucers. To one who knows the Washington official mind, with its flagrant underestimation of the intelligence of our citizens, this cannot be dismissed."

Within twenty-four hours, reporters who knew Griffin as a stickler for facts were pressing the Air Force for an answer to the Nike report. An official explanation was hurriedly released through Major William Lookadoo, PIO at Bolling Air Force Base, near Washington.

Power company welders, stated Major Lookadoo, had been working on high transmission lines near the Nike site at Derwood, and the flash of their welding torches had misled the missile men. (It was not explained how such flashes could appear like an object landing and taking off.)

As soon as I heard this, I phoned the Potomac Electric Power Company, which operates in the area concerned. An official named N. E. Otto took the call.

"That story is nonsense," he said. "Our crews weren't even working at that hour, and I told the Air Force that yesterday. You can check with Andrews Air Force Base, in Maryland. An Intelligence captain called me from there."

He gave me the officer's extension number, and I phoned Andrews Field. When I told the Intelligence captain what Mr. Otto had said there was a long silence. Then:

"I refer you to Major Lawrence J. Tacker, Air Force Headquarters."

"This concerns you directly, Captain. Mr. Otto said he told you the welding answer was impossible and—"

"I refer you to Major Lawrence J. Tacker—"

"Then you're prohibited from talking?"

"That's correct," the captain answered.

I thanked him and hung up. Evidently my query was swiftly relayed to the Pentagon, for a new answer was immediately given out: The Nike men had been deceived by a floodlight on a barn.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Air Force statement to *Newsweek* in NICAP files.

But when a NICAP subcommittee, headed by Hall, interviewed the Nike witnesses at the site, only a deserted old building was visible. On checking it, the subcommittee found it was not even wired for electricity. The Nike men stuck to their report, backed by the officer in charge.

If Griffin's exposé had been nationally published, it might have crippled the censorship. As it was, his articles in New England papers caused many Americans to reject the Air Force answers.

For the next two months, the censors moved warily, but we had proof that the debunking campaign was not ended. In one news story, based on a Pentagon interview, the reporter stated that Air Force officers were privately denouncing all UFO investigation groups. And I knew, from several sources, that NICAP was the main target.

## CHAPTER XIX

### Tug-of-War

In the early spring of '59, Admiral Hillenkoetter and I met at the New York Yacht Club to discuss NICAP plans and strategy.

"Any recent change in the secrecy?" the admiral asked.

"It's tighter than ever," I said. "The Air Force suddenly realized we'd gotten proof of the censorship from other government departments. They plugged that in a hurry; now most agencies forward our queries to the Pentagon."

"I'm surprised they didn't wake up sooner," said Hillenkoetter.

"They're also worried about new Air Force leaks. Tacker sent us a sharp letter; he said to stop writing other groups and members of the Air Force, to confine our questions to his



office.<sup>1</sup> We ignored it; there's no law against writing people in the Services—but only a few Air Force members now dare to answer.”

“We'll have to do something to speed things up,” the admiral said firmly. “Aren't we getting closer to Congressional hearings?”

“We're gaining, but it's too slow. The Air Force is fighting every inch of the way. One congressman”—I gave Hillenkoetter the name—“told us three scientists had privately reported UFO sightings to him. He said he knew the truth was being hidden, but when he tried to pin down the Air Force he got the usual letter from General Fisher saying that hearings would only benefit the 'sensation seekers and science fiction publishers.'”

“That's ridiculous,” said Hillenkoetter, “and most congressmen probably know it. One of these days, the Air Force may get a surprise.”

During the last of April, Frank Edwards passed on an interesting tip which later proved true. We had met at the Indianapolis Airport, as I was returning from an address to the Kokomo Engineering Society.

“Do you remember that Air Force statement by Major General Donald Keirn?” Edwards asked me.

“I certainly do. He said we'll probably get messages from space beings before we meet.”<sup>2</sup>

“Well, I've been tipped off that the Government already has set up a listening project, trying to pick up signals from some planet.”

“Any idea which one?”

“No. It could be in our solar system or outside. My source couldn't find out.”

“If it's true, and they're finally taking some positive action, that's the best news in months.”

The loud-speakers announced my flight. Edwards looked at his watch.

<sup>1</sup> Signed original in NICAP files.

<sup>2</sup> Official discussion by General Keirn in NICAP files.

“You've got twenty minutes. Tell me what you think of that C-118 crash.”

On the night of April 1, an Air Force C-118—military version of the DC-6 airliner—had crashed in flames near Tacoma, Washington. A few moments before, the pilot had frantically radioed his base:

WE HAVE HIT SOMETHING—  
OR SOMETHING HAS HIT US!

That same night, Colonel Robert Booth, commander of the 1705th Training Group, told the press there evidently had been a mid-air collision. Later the Air Force claimed the pilot had flown too low, for some unknown reason, and had hit the top of a ridge.

But published reports by reputable witnesses showed that at least one UFO had been in the area just before the disaster, and suspicion grew that it had been involved.

“All we know,” I said to Edwards, “is that those UFO reports seem genuine. And with all the precision altimeters on a C-118, there's no reason why a pilot shouldn't know he's that low. It looks as if there was a collision, then after that the plane hit the ridge as the pilot tried to keep control. But that's not proof, of course. And if a UFO did collide with the plane, it could have been accidental. If a radar-responder device on a 'saucer' went wrong, it might cause the UFO to home on the nearest object, instead of veering away.”

“This is one time,” said Edwards, “when I hope the Air Force explanation is right. Incidentally, speaking of radar, we've had several cases around Indiana that indicate the UFOs are trying to come in low, under the radar beams, so they won't be picked up.”

“That's a new angle,” I replied. “If they are, it might explain the increase in low-altitude sightings. I thought it might indicate some plan for landings.”

As we went out to the gate, Edwards asked about progress on Capitol Hill.

“It's rough, Frank—a regular tug-of-war. We were getting ahead, lining up more congressmen who don't like the

secrecy. But then the Air Force concentrated on committee chairmen. Representative Vinson wrote one NICAP member that the Armed Services Committee had to accept the official statements on UFOs.<sup>3</sup>

"That's strange," said Edwards. "Vinson's been plenty tough with the Defense Department on other things. I wonder if they convinced him the UFOs aren't real—or that he should help hide something they've discovered."

Since the first of '59, verified reports had continued to show constant UFO operations, in the United States and abroad. In this country, most reports came from qualified observers, as our log showed. Among these witnesses were:

Private pilot William Nova, Rochester, New York; former Air Force control-tower operator Gordon Higgins; United States officials and radar operators, Panama Canal Zone; Royal Canadian Air Force observers, Montreal; two Scandinavian airline pilots (the same night as the Killian case); London Airport tower operators; Captain H. Dunker and crew, Pan American Airlines—a report on a UFO which maneuvered in front of their airliner; the same day, a report by a tower operator in Costa Rica; two Northern Consolidated Airlines pilots in Alaska (interrogated by Air Force Intelligence); County Civil Defense Director Henry J. Fikes, Watertown, New York; a Federal Aviation Agency tower operator, and the captain and first officer of the Liberian steamship *Ore Regent*.

Though these and other authentic reports were locally published, they drew no attention in official Washington. But on July 11, a front-page story brought the UFOs back into prominence.

For the second time in '59, a group of airline crews had encountered a UFO—this time over the Pacific Ocean. The most detailed report came from veteran Pan-American Airlines Captain George Wilson, and his first officer, Richard Lorenzen. (Both later gave NICAP signed reports.)

Piloting a DC-7 airliner bound for Honolulu from San

<sup>3</sup> Signed original in NICAP files.

Francisco, Captain Wilson suddenly observed a cluster of lights heading toward the plane at fantastic speed.

For a few moments, it appeared they might collide with the DC-7. Then the mysterious lights made a sharp right turn, vanishing in seconds.

Still shaken by the experience, Captain Wilson afterward reported:

"It was something I've never seen before. It could have been one very large object with bright center lights and small ones surrounding, or separate objects. The lights came toward us faster than anything I've ever known. Then the formation—or the object—made a sharp right turn. The speed was inconceivable for any vehicle we know of. After the turn, it disappeared to the south."

From the time the UFO was sighted until it vanished, about ten seconds had elapsed.

"I never believed those flying objects existed," Captain Wilson said. "But I'm a believer now!"

The mystery lights also were seen by the crews of two other Pan American Airlines planes, a Canadian-Pacific airliner, a Slick Airways cargo plane and an Air Force B-50. Captain Lloyd Moffat, pilot of the Canadian-Pacific flight, told newsmen:

"You can take it from me—they were there! I never saw anything like it in my life."

In a report to NICAP, First Officer Lorenzen said that two Air Force majors had questioned them after they landed at Honolulu. Some of the other airline crews also were interrogated by Air Force Intelligence.

When this story broke, several newspapers printed serious comments. The Cleveland *Plain Dealer* stated:

Too many experienced pilots have seen strange things in the sky to uphold any contention that they just imagined things.

For two days, no Air Force explanation appeared.

"Probably they remember the Killian fiasco," I told Hall.

"They're not rushing out some answer they'll have to take back."

But next day a call from Corbin gave us a different picture.

"I just learned," he said, "that the Air Force is privately telling congressmen those air crews saw a meteor."

"That's impossible," I said. "Meteors don't stay in sight that long or make turns like the one Wilson described. Besides, Wilson and Moffat both insisted it was something they'd never seen before. And airline captains have seen meteors of all kinds, by the hundreds."

"I knew it was bunk," said Corbin. "By the way, if you talk with any congressmen, you might give them this statement by John Denike, space development chief at Martin Aircraft. He said flatly the flying saucers are real—I just taped it. He knows a lot more but he can't talk."

To offset the Air Force backstage tactics, Hall and I set to work on a news story exposing misleading answers given to congressmen.

"This Senator Keating case is a perfect example," I said. "It should make a good lead."

Shortly before, at the request of our New York NICAP Affiliate, Senator Kenneth B. Keating had asked the Air Force about the 1952 Washington Airport sightings. In answer, General W. P. Fisher evaded mention of the visual reports, stating the UFOs were only radar blips caused by weather conditions. Not only was this contrary to fact, it denied earlier official admissions that objects were seen and the case was unsolved.

Following this, we exposed the Killian case censorship and others about which legislators had been misinformed. Wind-ing up, we added a sample of Congressional statements given to NICAP or to individual members. Among those favoring the release of UFO information, if our security would not be endangered, were Senator Saltonstall and Representatives Baumhart, Fascall, Friedel, Hiestand, McCulloch and Ralph J. Scott. Besides Senator Goldwater's statement that the "saucers" were real, there were other strong opinions:

Senator Glenn Beall: "The UFOs could be spaceships from Venus or another planet."

Senator Thomas C. Hennings, Jr., Chairman of the Judiciary Committee: "This subject concerns everyone. I am bringing your letter to the attention of the Committee on Aeronautical and Space Sciences, with the request that full consideration be given to the possibility of public hearings."

Senator Stuart Symington (former Air Force Secretary): "Some observed objects are not explained; a new evaluation would be in the public interest." (Senator Symington, too, urged a careful study by the Senate Space Committee.)

Representative Walter Moeller: "I have confidence the American people would be able to take such information without hysteria. Fear of the unknown is always greater than fear of the known."

When the news story was ready, I showed it to Brennard.

"It's a powerful piece," he said. "And I hate to say it—but it's too late."

"Too late? I'll give you ten to one the wire services will run it complete."

"Sure they will. But it's too late in the session. If this built up pressure for hearings in '59, the Air Force would stall for a date near the end of the session. Then they'd parade some high rank, call it all bunk—dragging it out as long as possible. They'd grab the headlines and hang on until NICAP didn't have time enough to put on a real case. Then Congress would adjourn, leaving the Air Force on top. You'd have a tough time getting the hearings reopened."

"If enough congressmen got behind it, we might get a break," I said stubbornly.

"Don't take my word for it," said Brennard. "Ask someone on the Hill."

Within a few hours, I found that Brennard was right.

"You don't have enough support yet to ram it through," one congressman told me. "Get everything in shape for next year and keep on lining up more backing."

In another conference, one representative promised to ar-

range a private meeting in his office for interested congressmen.

"You people can brief them," he said, "and then we'll advise you how to proceed."

Reluctantly, we gave up the plan for an early breakthrough.

Two days later, the Air Force officially announced the "meteor" answer in the Pacific case. Whether the air crews had been silenced we never knew. But we saw no answer in the press from the airmen involved, though William D. Leet, the former Air Force major, blasted the secrecy in a public address at Lexington.

By October, our "Case for Congress" included significant statements by other former Air Force men:

Lieutenant Colonel Richard T. Headrick, radar-bombing expert who devised the World War II attack on the Ploesti oilfields: "Saucers exist (I saw two). They were intelligently flown or operated (evasive tactics, formation flight, hovering). They were mechanisms, not United States weapons, nor Russian. I presume they are extraterrestrial."

Sergeant James H. Sawyer, now a Chicago advertising executive, who edited an Air Force base newspaper: "Many airmen asked for more UFO information; I received strict orders there would be no discussion. I am convinced the unexplained UFOs are guided by advanced, intelligent beings. I believe the censorship is a grave error."

Sergeant Oliver Dean, NICAP member who in 1958 was grilled by two officers at Kirtland Air Force Base about his personal UFO investigations: "I was warned, 'If you continue this, Sergeant Dean, be careful; it can get you into serious trouble.'"

Another item for Congress cited Air Force censorship of a television film on UFOs, prepared by Allied TV Film Corporation. In this film, Dr. Peter Riedel, German-born rocket expert now with a United States company, stated his belief that the UFOs are probably interplanetary. After Air Force objections, this sequence was cut out.

It was October 6 when we first heard of the mystery satellite. The report, relayed by Corbin, came from a Baltimore electronics expert.

"We can't name him," said Corbin, "but it's straight. Some unknown machine is orbiting the earth. He has top-level contacts at NASA [National Aeronautical and Space Agency]. They told him they've heard the strange signals, too—they've been trying for a month to figure them out."

Nine days after this, the satellite story had other confirmation, in a United Press dispatch from Paris. For several weeks, stated a noted French astronomer, observatories in Europe had been recording signals from some mysterious object in orbit.

"That might explain the recent jump in sightings," suggested Hall.

The increase, starting in August, had included several important cases. On August 18, two strangely maneuvering objects were sighted by the crew of an Eastern Air Lines plane en route from Raleigh to Detroit. When the co-pilot radioed Willow Run Airport, the tower answered: "We've been watching the objects. We have no idea what they are."

On September 6, a large flying disc was reported to have hovered near the ground at Wallingford, Kentucky. As it started a swift climb, the witness said, a burst of flame shot downward, leaving a brown ring on the ground. Agents of the FBI and the Air Force quickly investigated, taking soil samples for analysis.<sup>4</sup>

Two weeks later, in Oregon, a swift-moving UFO was tracked for over an hour by Air Force radar. Descending near Redmond, it hovered at a low altitude, its glow lighting up the trees. When four Air Force jets tried to close in, the UFO shot upward, disappearing in clouds at 14,000 feet. Immediately afterward, the area was checked for radioactivity by order of the Federal Aviation Agency, which was closely co-operating with the Air Force.

<sup>4</sup>This case was investigated also by William D. Leet; signed report in NICAP files.

(In January, 1960, Major Tacker wrote NICAP regarding this case and denied that radar had tracked the object, which he said was believed to be a balloon. In complete contradiction of this, the Federal Aviation Agency, in a signed statement to NICAP, said the UFO was tracked by GCI radar as it maneuvered between 6,000 and 54,000 feet. "GCI" is the abbreviation for Ground Control Intercept, and GCI radar stations are an integral part of the Air Force.)<sup>6</sup>

On October 6, over Arkansas, another flying disc was encountered by Lieutenant E. L. Barksdale, Tennessee Air National Guard pilot. Flying a T-33 jet, Barksdale tried to photograph the strange machine but he was quickly outdistanced. The UFO also was seen by airport-tower operators.

By mid-November, there had been numerous reports of UFOs "buzzing" cars. On November 3, one case involved several North Carolina motorists. After an encounter near Statesville, R. L. James told police:

"I stopped six times. Each time, the thing stopped, too, and hovered over my car. I don't mind telling you I was scared to death."

Among the foreign cases was a delayed report involving a Brazilian Air Force B-26 bomber. On July 14, the B-26 hastily landed at Pampula Airport, just after the tower observed a hovering UFO. Explaining that the unknown machine had followed him for an hour, the frightened pilot asked permission to take off without lights, though his bomber was fully armed.

"I wonder what's behind these close passes," I said to Hall. "I'm afraid it will build up the fear angle. Even before this, there were cases where drivers reported they were forced off the roads."

"So far, in this phase, nobody's been hurt," said Hall. "And about the increase, I noticed the Air Force is trying to debunk reports with that ice story."

The semi-official magazine *Air Force*, after an unexpected admission that the UFO mystery was unsolved, had printed

<sup>6</sup> Signed originals of the Air Force and Federal Aviation Agency letters in NICAP files.

an engineer's theory that some UFOs might be pieces of ice from comets, smoothed and rounded by atmospheric friction.

"In most cases, that couldn't possibly fit," I pointed out. "How could pieces of ice circle around planes and fly formation, shifting from echelon to V's or T's? Or take the Captain Chiles case—how could a piece of ice look like a double-decked rocket ship with a fifty-foot exhaust?"

"And the Mantell case," added Hall. "No piece of ice could hover over Godman Field for an hour, then start climbing when Mantell went after it. Nobody who had read the main UFO reports would even consider that answer."

"Yes, but to people who don't know the facts it may not seem so silly. That's why the Air Force got it published."

(In January, 1960, in one more puzzling reversal, Major Tacker wrote NICAP that the Air Force did not accept the comet-ice theory. He gave no explanation for the magazine's strong endorsement of this explanation.)

It was in late fall when we heard of Project Ozma. Hall gave me the news when I arrived at the office one morning.

"There's a new radio astronomy observatory, at Green Bank, West Virginia. About January 1, they're going to start listening for signals from other planets."

"That is a break! Was this release tied to UFOs?"

"No, but—here, I'll read you the notes I took from the newscast."

The announcement had been made by Dr. Otto Struve, director of the new observatory, which was to be operated by several universities for the National Science Foundation. Stating that more advanced beings on other planets might be trying to communicate with us, Dr. Struve said there were several nearby stars with luminosities and lifetimes similar to our sun. Such suns, he explained, could have planets which would support life like that on earth. Using an eighty-five-foot parabolic reflector and new, highly sensitive receivers, this "Project Ozma" search, headed by Dr. Frank Drake, would concentrate on stars within fifteen light years of the earth.

"Dr. Struve said Drake had been working on it for nine months," Hall said. "So Frank Edwards' tip was right."

He read on: "Early in 1960, the reflector antenna will be pointed at the stars Tau Ceti and—"

"Tau Ceti?" I exclaimed. "That's the one Oberth named!"

"Oberth told you the UFOs came from Tau Ceti?"

"From a planet of Tau Ceti and 'one other,' which he didn't name. I'll show you his letter."

"This says Tau Ceti and Epsilon Eridani. They're about eleven light years away. I was wondering why they picked them, with other stars so much nearer. But if Oberth is right about Tau Ceti . . ."

"He was pretty positive about it. And now it looks as if the National Science Foundation is in on the secret. That's a government agency, you know."

Hall looked thoughtful. "But why did they let it out like this, with the Air Force still debunking the 'saucers'?"

"I don't know. Maybe there's a difference of opinion higher up, and somebody's insisting on this first step to prepare the public. One thing is certain: Dr. Struve didn't break this without permission."

Immediately after this, there was another complication which added to the puzzle. Since the spring of '59, we had heard increasing rumors that Captain Ruppelt, under tremendous pressure, would revise the ending of his 1956 book, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*. According to the wilder rumors, he was being forced—or strongly persuaded—to make a rightabout face, ridiculing all UFO witnesses and believers.

Earlier, I would have denounced the stories, but now I had serious doubts. For in 1958 Ruppelt had written a NICAP member an amazing letter:

I have visited Project Blue Book since 1953 and am now convinced that the reports of UFOs are nothing more than reports of balloons, aircraft, astronomical phenomena, etc. I don't believe they are anything from outer space.

Incredulous, I had reread the startling disclosures in his book, and then his positive statement in a letter to me:

I wouldn't do a book if I didn't tell the truth exactly as it happened, and believe me this would not follow the Air Force party line.

But now, his new statement—this *was* the Air Force party line!

Checking other Ruppelt letters, I found this paragraph, answering my request for a statement to NICAP's members:

I honestly don't know what to say. The entire UFO situation is such a mess of compounded confusion—a mess which I sincerely hope NICAP can straighten out. You can certainly count on me at some future date.

That future date came, in the summer of '59, when Ruppelt phoned me from California.

"I'm bringing my book up to date. What's the latest dope on NICAP?"

I gave him the details, then asked: "Where are you getting your recent UFO cases, Ed? You wrote me you were completely out of the UFO investigation."

"Oh, the Air Force is giving me full co-operation," Ruppelt answered.

"Then you must be taking the Air Force line."

"No, no," Ruppelt said quickly. "Just the same middle-of-the-road attitude—that there's evidence on both sides and I just don't know."

But he sounded nervous, and when I mentioned the letter he had written the NICAP member he changed the subject and ended the call.

Hoping to give him an out, if he had given in to the pressure, I wrote him an open letter listing all the key points where he was on record: His exposure of the Air Force cover-up, the secret conclusions, the unexplained, dramatic

cases. A copy, printed in a NICAP bulletin, was sent to Air Force Headquarters.

But the months had gone by, with no word from Ruppelt.

During the fall, Frank Edwards had returned to Washington and the Mutual Network. One day in December he phoned me.

"I've just read an advance copy of Ruppelt's revised book—he rewrote the last three chapters. It's absolutely incredible. Now he sneers at people he formerly labeled expert witnesses. He plays up the wildest contact stories—completely backs the Air Force policy line."

"Poor Ed," I said. "I wonder what they did, to make him do this."

"The writing doesn't even sound like him," said Edwards. "And he takes sarcastic cracks at serious investigators, especially NICAP and you."

"That shows he was forced into it, Frank. I remember how he felt honored to be invited to join the Board—he put it in a letter."

There was a little silence.

"This makes me good and mad!" Edwards erupted. "It's a terrible thing to make a man ridicule his own published words. He must feel awful, knowing people will be comparing what he first wrote with this preposterous about-face."

"Well, even that can't erase the big points, the things he exposed in '56—the explaining-away system, and the secret conclusion in 1948 that the UFOs were spaceships."

"Of course, the Air Force will soft-pedal that part and show the new ending to congressmen. It's obvious that's why they did this—they hope it'll steer enough congressmen away from demanding hearings."

"I know one thing that'll offset it! We'll put the A-list sightings in the 'Case for Congress.'"

"But those are the top confidential reports! How can we do it, without the witnesses' permission?"

"We'll leave out items that would identify them. But the main part—the action—will be in there. You and Hall can

certify the reports tomorrow—those that the Board hasn't already approved."

"Good!" said Edwards. "And if Congress doesn't act this time, we can give those cases to the press. One way or another, it'll end the cover-up."

## CHAPTER XX

# The Hidden Reports

*The Navy Korean Case.* Certified by the following NICAP Board members: Reverend Albert Baller, Dr. Earl Douglass, Mr. Frank Edwards, Colonel R. B. Emerson, Professor Charles A. Maney, and Rear Admiral H. B. Knowles.

It was a night in '51. Under lowering clouds, a United States task force of fourteen ships was cruising near Korea. Down in the Combat Information Center of a CVE-class carrier, intercept officers and radarmen were keeping a routine watch.

Suddenly a strange blip appeared on the CIC radarscopes. Some unknown machine, larger than carrier aircraft, was circling the fleet.

In minutes, Navy interceptors were boring up into the clouds that hid the intruder. At first, the CIC men had

thought it was some new Red aircraft spotting the fleet by radar. But an hour passed with neither an attack or message to bring enemy bombers. Even before this the CIC men knew, from the object's speed and maneuvers, it had to be a UFO.

As the hours went on, fresh pilots replaced the first group. Again and again, flying by instruments in the misty dark, they risked collision for a look at the unknown craft. But the UFO stayed deep in the clouds.

Down in the CIC, puzzled intercept men watched the mysterious "target." What could explain the hours of circling up in the overcast? Could "they" see through those tight-packed clouds, by some unknown device—or a different kind of vision? What was behind this long surveillance—curiosity, or something more ominous?

Near the end of the seventh hour, another squadron was launched. Abruptly, the UFO stopped circling. As the tense CIC men watched, it swung in behind the nearest Navy plane.

"Target joining up on wingman!" the lead pilot reported.

"Close in for visual on target!" ordered the CIC, fearing an attack on the wingman.

Though the clouds made it almost hopeless, the leading pilot turned. Swiftly, the UFO speeded up, leaving the plane behind. In less than ten minutes, the radarscopes showed, it was two hundred miles away.

The signed report later certified by Board members was given to NICAP by one of the pilots involved, now a lieutenant commander on duty in this country. The unknown machine, officially logged as a UFO, was tracked by radar operators on all fourteen ships. Its long surveillance of the task force remained a mystery.

*The Scientists' Report.* Basic facts given to Admiral Delmer S. Fahrney by the leading scientist (a NICAP member) with the provision that the men involved would not be identified.

In the summer of 1952, during the great increase in UFO



operations, a large rocket-shaped machine was sighted from the research laboratory of Dr. "James King," a well-known American scientist. (The name has been changed.) When he was notified, Dr. King assembled his staff, which included other distinguished scientists and engineers.

Since it was daylight, the slowly maneuvering craft was plainly visible and the scientists had time to make sketches and take accurate notes.

After careful analysis, Dr. King came to this conclusion: The machine they observed could not be earth-made; it must be a spaceship from some other world.

Though Dr. King is a NICAP member and a close friend of Admiral Fahrney, he has refrained from making this report public. After one request, Fahrney wrote me: "— has never ventured to reply on the spaceship sighting, though he has been punctilious on all other correspondence."

*The Air Force Jet and Radar Case, 1958.* Signed report by an Air Force member of NICAP, certified by Frank Edwards and Secretary Richard Hall.

In the early fall of '58, two swiftly maneuvering UFOs were picked up by Air Force radarmen at a southwest base. Two jets were scrambled to intercept the strange machines.

As the first pilot tried to close, he saw one disc-shaped object go straight up at fantastic speed. Back at the base, this also was recorded by the radar plotters—the UFO had shot up out of the radar beam in a split second.

After his target streaked skyward, Pilot No. 1 searched the sky and saw the UFO swiftly descending. Reversing his course, he again tried to get in gun-camera range. But as before, his quarry flashed up out of sight.

Following these futile efforts, Pilot No. 1 turned back to aid his companion, who was having a similar difficulty with the other UFO. Several moments later, Pilot No. 1 looked back and saw the first mystery machine again trailing him. Determined not to lose it this time, he whipped around at near-blackout speed. But before he finished the turn, the flying disc was miles above him in another vertical climb.

Back at the base, ground radar registered this UFO's third evasion and a similar escape of the other disc from Pilot No. 2.

Helpless against the unknown machines, so obviously under superintelligent control, the frustrated pilots gave up and returned to their base. Their report, like descriptions of many other UFO-jet chases, was withheld from the public.

*The Commander's UFO Encounter.* Detailed sighting reported by Admiral Fahrney at NICAP, in January 1957. The source, Commander "Tom Wayne," is a pilot and a missile expert. (Name changed, as in all confidential reports.) A decorated veteran of World War II who had served under Fahrney, he asked that he not be identified, though he believed the censorship wrong.

In 1955, while stationed in Washington, Commander Wayne made periodic flights from the Naval Air Station at Anacostia. One afternoon, while flying over Virginia, he had an uneasy feeling like the sixth sense some pilots develop in wartime.

Commander Wayne looked up at the clouds, a thousand feet above. He saw nothing. He glanced quickly over his shoulder, then froze.

About seventy-five yards away, a huge flying disc was pacing him.

Until that instant, Wayne had never accepted the flying-saucer reports. He sat stunned, watching the disc as it floated along off his wing.

As described in hundreds of reports, the UFO was like two saucers, one inverted on the other. Apparently metallic, it was about one hundred feet in diameter, thick at the center, with a domed top through which shone an amber light.

Commander Wayne felt a prickling at his scalp. He was sure that someone—something—was observing him closely. But he could not see behind the amber glow.

For a few moments, primitive fear of the unknown kept

Wayne from moving. Then, overcoming the urge to escape, he tried to ease in for a better look.

Instantly, the big disc tilted upward. Accelerating at an unbelievable speed, it went up through the clouds, leaving the gray mists swirling behind it.

*The Far East Case.* Although this dramatic jet chase of a giant flying disc was released to the press by NICAP in 1957, as detailed in Chapter VII, it is classed as a hidden report in the Case for Congress, since Air Force Headquarters has withheld it from the public. Signed report by a member of Air Force Intelligence, certified by Secretary Richard Hall and Board Member Frank Edwards.

*The Navy Squadron Case.* First reported to Admiral Fahrney at NICAP, in January 1957. Identical report given to NICAP Adviser Lou Corbin, in 1958, by one of the squadron pilots and with no knowledge of the previous report; also confirmed by the Navy officers quoted in Chapter XV.

One day in 1953, a squadron of Navy AD-3's, carrier-based, was practicing offshore combat maneuvers. As the planes reformed, an enormous rocket-shaped machine swooped down over them. Swiftly decelerating to their speed, it leveled off a thousand feet above the squadron, obviously for close observation.

The squadron commander, after his first astonishment, radioed a hasty order. Quickly the pilots spread out, followed him as he climbed at full throttle toward the giant spaceship.

The huge craft turned sharply, its tail pointed away from the zooming planes. Then with a tremendous burst of power it shot into the sky, vanishing in seconds.

When the squadron landed, a report was flashed to the Air Force. Three Air Force Intelligence officers, headed by a colonel, were flown to the carrier, where the AD-3 crew were still being questioned.

Though he had no authority on the ship, the colonel immediately took charge. For three hours, he and his aides

grilled the Navy men. Then, without even consulting the carrier captain, he issued a harsh warning:

"You men are to forget what you saw today! You're not to discuss it with anyone—not even among yourselves!"

In 1957, the officer who gave Fahrney this report ended with a quiet statement:

"There never was any Navy order backing up that Air Force colonel. I've kept still until now, but you and NICAP are right—the facts *are* being hidden, and I believe the secrecy is unwise."

Later, the same belief was stated by Lieutenant —, the former squadron pilot who gave his report to Corbin.

"If the other pilots would go along," he said, "I'd join in a public report."

Besides these main hidden cases, NICAP members had relayed dozens of confidential reports, like these typical examples:

The Air Force radar report of a gigantic UFO tracked at thousands of miles an hour, in 1954. Confirmed for Reverend Baller by an Air Force tower operator.

The domed flying disc that hovered near a Coast Guard cutter in 1958. Source: A retired Navy commander.

The circling UFO which beamed a bright light against Air Force jets in a midnight chase near Greenville Air Force Base. Reported to NICAP by an Air Force pilot.

The "saucer" that chased two jet test pilots from Baltimore to Newark, and the low-hovering UFO that stalled a Baltimore banker's car, frightening his wife. Both cases reported confidentially to Adviser Lou Corbin.

After summing up the evidence, we decided to end the Case for Congress with the NICAP Board and Advisers' conclusions. Some answers had not come in, but the majority opinion—to be released for the first time—was unequivocal:

*The UFOs—the flying saucers—were intelligently controlled machines from outer space.*

Joining in this opinion were six Board members and nine Special Advisers.

Board members: Dr. Marcus Bach, Reverend Albert Baller, Mr. Frank Edwards, Colonel R. B. Emerson, Rear Admiral H. B. Knowles, Professor Charles A. Maney.

Special Advisers: Norman Bean, director of engineering, WTVJ, Miami; Albert M. Chop, former Air Force public information officer on UFOs; A. L. Cochran, electronics expert; Samuel Freeman, former Air Force major, pilot, flying-service operator; Frank Halstead, astronomer, former curator, Darling Observatory; Dr. Leslie Kaeburn, chief of bio-electronics, University of Southern California; Professor N. N. Kohanowski, geologist, University of North Dakota; Captain R. B. McLaughlin, Navy missile expert, and Captain W. B. Nash, Pan American Airlines.

Added together, NICAP's evidence and the majority conclusions made a case we felt sure would impress many members of Congress. But there was one hidden document which worried me—a startling extract from an Air Force Intelligence report. Though it was unclassified, not a hint of the facts had reached the public. Our source, a NICAP member serving in Air Force Intelligence, had sent us other important information—all unclassified—in the past two years. But this disclosure was the most far-reaching of all.

After preparing the material for Congress, I told Hall I had left out this crucial report.

"You're afraid of the effect on congressmen?" Hall asked.

"Well, it probably will upset some of them. But I was thinking mainly of the impact on the public."

Hall looked surprised. "You mean we should keep it hidden?"

"No, we'd be as bad as the Air Force censors. I just wonder if we shouldn't hold this up until people have absorbed the other evidence."

"Why don't you talk it over with Frank Edwards?"

"That's an idea. From all the audience mail he gets, he's pretty good at figuring public reactions."

When I got Edwards on the phone, I told him we had a problem.

"Can you come in any time this week?" I said.

"I'm free Saturday afternoon. Why, what's up?"

"I want to show you an important Air Force sighting."

But it was more than just a sighting. If we had judged it correctly, this report was the long-sought answer to the question of Air Force secrecy.

## CHAPTER XXI

### The Key

Saturday afternoon, before Edwards arrived at the office, I read over his answers to the latest Board questionnaire. Like most Board members, he believed there was no actual proof of hostility. In regard to Air Force secrecy, his opinion had partly changed. The main reason for censorship now, he thought, was to hide intensive efforts to duplicate the "saucers."

It was after two when Edwards appeared—a big man, easy-going, with a round, good-natured face that hadn't changed much in the ten years I'd known him.

"From the way you talked," he said, "that Air Force report must be serious."

"It is," I said. "But I want to show you something else first."

As a test, I had worked up a list of crashes, mid-air collisions, head-on passes and other disturbing reports that had been linked with UFOs. Included were opinions that could be taken as an indication of danger: The belief of General Douglas MacArthur, as quoted in *The New York Times*, October 8, 1955, that all nations might have to combine against attacks from other planets; a suggestion by General James M. Gavin that we are likely to encounter beings inimical to the earth's existence; and an Air Force officer's explanation of a refusal to join in a Baltimore TV discussion of UFOs: "The Air Force doesn't want to scare the American people."

It was the first time Edwards had seen all this evidence in such concentrated form.

"Good Lord, this isn't a true picture!" he exclaimed. "If you released this to the press—"

"I just wanted to get your reaction. Do you feel any different about the UFOs now?"

Edwards put down the summary.

"No. Those incidents are only a fraction of all the thousands of cases. Usually, the 'saucers' avoid our planes. The collisions could be accidents; we have hundreds ourselves, every year."

"That's right."

"And in all these years, there's been no sign of an attack on the world." Edwards paused. "But if I didn't know the rest of the story, this list would give me the jitters."

"Me, too." I reached for a letter lying under a paperweight. "Remember the Stokes case? He was stationed at the Air Force Missile Development Center near Alamogordo, and right after that they put out an official warning about UFO reports. They threatened disciplinary action, even against civilian employees, if there were any more leaks."<sup>1</sup>

Edwards nodded. "Coral Lorenzen exposed that one." (Mrs. Lorenzen, former secretary to an Air Force colonel at the Center, is Director of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization, 1712 Van Court, Alamogordo, New Mexico.)

<sup>1</sup> Copy of order in NICAP files.

"That wasn't a routine crackdown, Frank. They were afraid of panic."

"The Center admitted that?" exclaimed Edwards.

"Here's their letter. That order was approved by the Center commander, Major General L. I. Davis. They say it was put out—here's the sentence—'so that we might get control of a situation which could very easily have gotten out of hand and possibly created a panic in the neighboring community.'"<sup>2</sup>

Edwards leaned over, read the statement.

"Why on earth did they put it on record—especially with NICAP?"

"I don't know. It surprised me, too."

"Sounds to me as if this general just got excited after the Stokes case and went off half-cocked. Oh, I know the Air Force used to think the public would stampede at the idea of space visitors. But people have had years to get used to it. And with all this talk about other worlds, they should be prepared if they're ever going to be."

I glanced at his questionnaire. "Then you still think your answer is the main reason for secrecy?"

Edwards sat back. "Yes, I do. Maybe a few like this General Davis worry about hysteria, but—just what are you driving at?"

"I'm convinced the Air Force is more scared of panic than ever."

"But why should the Air Force fear panic now? People don't get hysterical unless they think they're actually in danger. And I—" Edwards broke off, stared at me. "You don't mean you have *proof* the Air Force is scared?"

"I'm afraid so, Frank." I opened a drawer, took out the Intelligence report extract. "This is the sighting I mentioned. Maybe it's not what it seemed. But the final statement is what jolts you."

The action, reported by the crew of an Air Force multi-

<sup>2</sup> Signed original in NICAP files.

engine transport, had occurred over the Pacific, somewhere between Hawaii and Japan.<sup>3</sup>

It was night, and the plane was in routine flight, with Captain — at the controls. (Since names are classified, they had been inked out in the report.)

With a sudden, blinding flash, something exploded near the transport. To the startled pilot, it was like an anti-aircraft shell, except that the burst was a brilliant blue-green.

As the strange glow faded, the radarman hastily reported to the captain: Some unknown flying object was maneuvering out in the night.

Hurriedly, Captain — fired a red-green challenge flare. As it shot upward, he and the crew gazed out, searching the darkness.

After an interval, a red light streaked across the sky, like an answering flare. But the tautly watching men could see nothing else. Below, there was no sign of a vessel from which a shell or a flare could have come.

Again, the radar operator reported a maneuvering UFO. Then for the second time something exploded to one side of the plane.

As the blue-green luminescence died out, Captain — quickly ordered a check of the transport. So far, there was no damage. He gazed out again into the darkness. Was someone trying to hit them—or was this some kind of warning?

There was still no sign of a machine which could have launched the exploding objects. Was it possible that those radar-tracked UFOs were unmanned devices, exploded near the plane by remote control?

Once more, a red flare made an arc above the unarmed transport. Then the radarscope went blank. Though the alarmed crew kept watch on through the night, there were no more mysterious explosions.

As I finished the sighting section, Edwards soberly shook his head.

<sup>3</sup> Signed report in NICAP confidential file, certified as genuine by Board member Frank Edwards and NICAP Secretary Richard Hall.

"Even if it wasn't an attack, a thing like that would frighten anybody. What did the Air Force think? Were you able to find out?"

"That's the bad part, Frank. This Intelligence summary says the captain was convinced they were 'shot at.' But that's not the worst. It says: 'The entire crew, including Captain —, were aware of incidents in which multi-engined Air Force transports have disappeared while flying between—'"

"Wait," said Edwards. "Is that the word the Air Force actually used—'disappeared'?"

"I'm quoting the exact statement. Here, read the last part."

I watched Edwards' face as he scanned the final paragraph. I knew that disturbing revelation by heart: The entire crew suspected that their startling experience "was related to the previous disappearances" of other unarmed Air Force transports.

Edwards slowly put down the report.

"Those disappearances—where did you say they were?"

"The names are inked out, but one has five letters and another one four. It could be Japan and Wake, or somewhere between Japan and Guam. My guess is it's the latter. Our records show several unsolved crashes and missing planes in that area—Navy as well as Air Force."

Edwards was silent for a moment.

"Yes, I remember the news bulletins. But there's no proof UFOs were involved."

"True, but you'd have a hard time convincing that Air Force crew. And if they knew about those missing planes, you can bet hundreds of other Air Force crews did, too. Even if they didn't suspect UFOs before, they certainly must now."

Reluctantly, Edwards agreed. "Yes, the story of those 'explosions' could set off a scare."

"And I think it's gone all the way to the top."

"Maybe you're right. Even if just a few top brass are convinced, it could explain the censorship."

Edwards reread the report, then laid it on my desk.

"I'll admit it looks bad at first, but I think they're jumping to conclusions. The UFOs can fly rings around our fastest jets, and a slow transport would be a sitting duck if they really wanted to hit it. So they must have had some other purpose." Edwards eyed me whimsically. "You think I'm a Pollyanna?"

"No. They may just have been looking the plane over. Those blue-green 'explosions' could be something like our photoflash bombs. And the red flares could be signals between UFOs. Or there could be some answer nobody's thought of."

"It's Air Force Headquarters' own fault," said Edwards, "if their pilots are scared. All these years of secrecy, it's bound to cause rumors. They won't even tell most base commanders what they know."

I nodded. "The last time I saw Earl Douglas [NICAP Board member] he said the Air Force probably felt they had to consider the UFOs hostile until proved otherwise."

Edwards snorted. "It's a stupid policy. If they'd stop chasing the 'saucers' they might find out they're friendly. At least we'd have a chance to learn more about them."

"I wonder, Frank, if we haven't been missing the most important point of all."

"What's that?"

"How much the UFO operators know about us."

"They've been observing us a long time. They should know plenty."

"I used to say that, too. But I've been thinking it over. They may not understand us at all. Figure it out from our own space plans."

In the next twenty years or sooner, I told him, we expect manned spaceships to be circling Mars or Venus. If we found Mars inhabited, for example, we would have to know something about the race before risking a landing. If Martian aircraft fired on our exploring ships, chasing them year after year, our crews would have to learn what they could by telescope, or by means of robot television-scanners.

"You're forgetting the broadcast angle," interrupted Edwards. "You once said you believed the UFOs probably were tuning in on our radio and TV programs."

"I still think an advanced race could do that. And if there were Martian broadcasts, our space crews probably could pick them up. But what if their speech sounds were completely different? Even if they resembled ours, it could be a tough problem, figuring out such a strange language."

Edwards considered for a moment. "Yes, and the UFO race could have had the same trouble here. It might explain the lack of communication."

"The question is, how much could they learn about us without understanding even one language? It could make a big difference."

"All right, let's analyze it. Take the visual angle first, then assume they can make out at least one language."

I got two large poster cards from the storeroom, marked ONE VISUAL OBSERVATIONS ONLY, and the other EVIDENCE FROM BROADCASTS.

"Now, how far back should we go?" said Edwards.

Ignoring the Piri Reis map implications of long-ago observations, we settled on the year 1760. For at least two centuries there had been authentic reports of discs and rocket-shaped flying objects by sea captains, astronomers and government officials, beginning with sightings in Europe.

"How much detail do we expect to see with a telescope on a spaceship?" asked Edwards. "I mean if we were observing other planets."

I checked the space-plans file. According to a Defense Department statement, a new type of telescope using a forty-inch lens could clearly outline a two-foot object on earth from a spaceship five hundred miles out.

"Probably the UFOs can do much better," Edwards commented. "But even with our kind of equipment, as low as they've flown they could see just about everything on earth. That is, everything not under cover."

He stood up, went over to a window and looked out medi-

tatively at the sky. "In 1760, the UFO operators would see Europe as the most progressive area, with America just getting started . . ."

For an hour, we built up the picture: The days of sailing ships, of colonies and empires . . . the American Revolution, the frontier period, as the Indians were pushed back . . . the appearance of the steamboat, trains, the first aircraft . . . on up to World War II and the first A-bomb, Korea, the space rockets and satellites.

When we finished the first chart, Edwards picked it up and scrutinized it.

"See what stands out most?" he said.

"Our advances since World War II?"

"The wars! In the last two hundred years, the UFOs would have seen wars all over the globe. Everything from bows and arrows up to atomic warfare. That alone could give them a hell of a poor idea of mankind."

"You're right. We must look like barbarians, even though today we're technically civilized."

Edwards put down the chart. "They could see battles easily. It would be harder to interpret smaller things—ordinary events in people's lives."

"Let's hope they've gotten a better idea since we began broadcasting—especially with television. Remember the Project Ozma director—Dr. Drake? He said transmitted pictures might be the universal language."

"Sounds logical. And even before TV, there were drive-in movies they could see."

"Yes, and there are several cases of UFOs hovering not far from drive-in theaters."

Edwards nodded. "Also they could watch the screens with telescopes from higher up."

"Between movies and television," I said, "they could learn a lot."

Edwards grinned ironically. "Sure—gang fights, shooting westerns, murder mysteries—"

"It's not all bad. They'd see good plays, some of the better

comedies, scenes in churches, hospitals—things showing we're not all savages. If Dr. Drake's idea is correct, space explorers might have experts along to interpret pictures."

"They'd have to be pretty smart to make sense out of some programs." Edwards reached for the other chart. "Let's work out the possibilities if they've learned at least one language."

Since we can tape both radio and television programs, he went on, a technically advanced space race probably could do the same. Experts on a mother ship, or back on their own planet, might study hundreds, even thousands of recordings, matching frequently used words with the action pictured.

"Like 'open the door,' or 'sit down,'" Edwards suggested. "With enough material, they might identify cars, telephones, planes and so on. There's enough on TV now to cover everything from a newborn baby on up—home life, schools, jobs, making love—even funerals."

"But to understand verbs—sentences—might take years."

Edwards shrugged. "They've been here for years. Maybe they only partly understand. Or they might be trying several languages, to get a fair picture. Let's assume they now have a fair knowledge of English. What's the most likely impression they could have of us—the United States?"

As we added it up, the most obvious feature was the "cold war" between Russia and the United States and its allies, with increasing tension gripping most of the earth. Then a panoramic picture of America, its relatively high standard of living, its earnest efforts to avoid a real war. . . . Through American eyes, the UFO observers would see the rest of the world, the continual, localized struggles, part of the battle between East and West.

"I'll say one thing," remarked Edwards, "no space race would consider migrating here—unless they live on a dying planet, as that Air Force Intelligence colonel, Odell, suggested."

"The greatest danger is our broadcasts about space operations," I said. "There have been some pretty wild statements."

I showed Edwards several examples from our files:

Suggestions for bombing the moon and Mars . . . a scientist's plan to improve the earth's climate by using H-bombs to change other planets' orbits . . . research for a death-ray to destroy objects hundreds of miles out in space . . . military plans for spaceship fleets . . . space-doctors' ideas for creating odd breeds of space explorers, gas-breathers, water-breathers with gills . . . mention of earth diseases that might start epidemics on other planets.

Worst of all, in their probable reaction on a listening space race, were the broadcast plans for colonizing space:

Dr. Kraft Ehrlicke, chief space consultant at Convair: "The solar system, as much of the universe as man can reach, are man's rightful field of activity. It is up to us to spread life."

Dr. James B. Edson, Director, Army Research and Development: "Once Mars has colonies independent of the earth, then if the earth is destroyed man can carry on in this reserve world."

Major Patrick Powers, Army research missile expert: "There may be life on other cosmic bodies that would resent our intrusion on the moon and move to force us off. To be prepared for this, our spaceships will have to be armed."

There were other statements picturing man's conquest of space with no thought of other worlds' rights. Only a few statements could be considered reassuring:

Bishop G. Bromley Oxam, of Washington: "In 175 years, we will come to know the thinking, the cultures, the dreams, the problems and the limitations of the people who populate the great planets of the universe."

Andrew G. Haley, noted space-law advocate and former president of the American Rocket Society: "We must recognize the rights of other worlds. . . . No landings until we are invited. . . . We must not endanger other races in space."

But these few were drowned out by the talk of giant colonies, even beyond our solar system. In one discussion, quoted on the air, Professor Harold Lasswell of Yale University outlined possible ways to get control of an inhabited planet—for example, by setting one group against another.



"Imagine how that would hit you, if you were listening in on a spaceship," I said to Edwards.

"Well, if the Soviet beats us to it," he answered, "a peaceful space race might have something to worry about—especially if they'd learned about the slave camps in Siberia."

"Or if they'd heard Lasswell's suggestion about bringing back live spacemen as specimens."

Edwards gave me an odd glance.

"That might be a short-cut to our learning another race's language. I wonder if the idea ever occurred to the UFO operators."

"Meaning the disappearances? It might possibly explain some, if they weren't just accidents."

Edwards gazed out somberly into the graying January sky.

"But it wouldn't mean they were hostile, if they were only trying to bridge the language gap." Then he turned back, with a little grimace. "Even so, it gives you a chill to think of it."

"Of course, as you said, the disappearances may have no UFO link at all."

After a moment, Edwards turned back to the charts. I saw him glance down our list of possible motives: Neutral exploration . . . a plan for friendly contact with another inhabited planet . . . a hope of peaceful migration . . . concern over our space plans.

"No question they could block us from space travel," he muttered. "At the very least, they could destroy our space industries, the launching bases—"

"They could probably wipe us out," I said. "We can do that ourselves, and they may have worse things than H-bombs or germ warfare and poison gas. But judging from the lack of attack, all these years, this may be an advanced race that has outlawed war."

"I hope so," Edwards said fervently. "But if they have a really bad picture of us—" He paused. "We skipped one point. What do you suppose they think if they hear the Air Force denials that UFOs are real?"

I thought it over. "They'd almost certainly think it was a

trick. They've done everything possible—flown formations, circled planes—to prove the 'saucers' are intelligently controlled machines. And with jets chasing and firing at them, they'd never believe that people could think they're delusions."

"What do you think they'll do," Edwards said slowly, "if they decide to block us?"

"Try to use persuasion, if they can get through to us. If not, they might wait until our first ship lands on the moon, then send the crew back with a warning— Give up any aggressive space plans or be blocked permanently."

Edwards solemnly shook his head. "This worries me, Don. The odds are they don't have a good picture of us—and it could be very bad."

"I know that."

"It's too big a gamble, hoping they're against war. There's only one answer—to communicate with them, and fast!"

"You mean the Government?"

"Absolutely! How do we know the UFOs aren't nearing some final decision?"

"But that letter from Twining's exec indicates the Air Force has tried to communicate—"

"I mean an all-out drive! All the government scientific agencies and our top scientists could get to work on a plan. They could rush a project like Ozma, to transmit messages—not just listen."

"It couldn't be kept under cover—"

Edwards made an impatient gesture.

"Forget the censors. Once Congress sees how urgent it is, they'll take control. First of all, they should stop our jets from chasing the 'saucers.' Then the message project, with radio and light signals twenty-four hours a day—maybe even invisible light. We should try every possible way to convince the UFOs we'll drop any idea of invading other worlds. And if we start it, most other countries will join in, after they realize how serious it could be."

Together, Edwards and I worked out a tentative plan, subject to approval of the Board. First, we would give our strong-

est evidence privately to congressmen known to be serious about the UFO situation. If resistance, from any source, threatened too long a delay, the information would be released to the press, in two or three sections, to help speed up action.

"Wouldn't it be terrific," said Edwards, "if we made connections and found they'd been waiting for a chance to contact us—that there was no reason at all for fear?"

"Frank, that could be the greatest adventure of all time! And think of the things we might learn from a more advanced race. About health, for one thing. Dr. Drake said if he established communication with an advanced world he'd ask how to lick cancer and heart disease—and how they managed to live without wars."

For a moment Edwards was silent, a faraway look on his face.

"Just imagine learning what another world was like," he said finally. "They'd know things we've never dreamed of."

I started to lock up the Pacific sighting report. Edwards glanced at it.

"I wouldn't release that to the public without building up to it," he said. "Millions of people have believed all the misleading cover-up stories. Finding out the 'saucers' are real may shock some of them."

"Yes, and even without that report some may think the Air Force has been hiding a terrible danger—something so bad the public couldn't take it."

"I don't believe it's true." Edwards looked at his watch and stood up. "But even if there were something pretty bad, no government agency has the right to keep it hidden."

"Besides," I added, "nothing is absolutely hopeless. Telling the public would force a crash program for a defense—and it might well succeed."

Edwards moved his head in agreement. "Like the A-bomb. Some top Defense people said it was impossible—but our scientists produced it in a hurry. Under pressure, they might produce another miracle."

I hesitated. "Of course, some people—a few have told me they'd rather not know if there's any real danger."

Edwards gave me a level glance. "How do you feel?"

I looked down at the list of possible motives.

"No matter what it is, Frank, I want to know what they're hiding."

"So do I." Edwards paused at the door. "Get that plan to the rest of the Board as soon as you can. Let's not wait for a crisis."

It was early evening when I started home, driving the usual route past the White House, down Fifteenth, with the marquee of Keith's Theater blazing on my left.

A traffic light stopped me beside the Treasury, and I looked up F Street, watching the Saturday night crowds.

None of them, I thought, would be concerned with more than their own familiar world. Yet each one, all the millions on earth, stood on the threshold of something strange and tremendous. Inevitable as the rising sun, it would change the lives of all, for good or bad, irrevocably.

How it would happen, when it would come, there was still no way of knowing. But one thing was certain, beyond all doubt.

The world would never be the same.

## Epilogue

If you believe the UFO censorship policy is wrong, after weighing the evidence NICAP has secured, I hope you will urge your congressmen to insist on public hearings.

If you have new information on UFO sightings or other phases of the problem which would help to end the secrecy, we shall appreciate your forwarding it to the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, 1536 Connecticut Avenue, Washington 6, D.C.

It is my earnest hope that there will prove to be no danger behind the UFO surveillance of our world. But as long as such a possibility remains, the facts should be frankly revealed.

The public has a right to know—and to be prepared for whatever is to come.

## OPERATIONS



## & TRAINING

### UFO'S SERIOUS BUSINESS

Unidentified flying objects - sometimes treated lightly by the press and referred to as "flying saucers" - must be rapidly and accurately identified as serious USAF business in the 21. As AFR 200-2 points out, the Air Force concern with these sightings is threefold: First of all, is the object a threat to the defense of the U.S.? Secondly, does it contribute to technical or scientific knowledge? And then there's the inherent USAF responsibility to explain to the American people through public-information media what is going on in their skies.

The phenomena or actual objects comprising UFO's will tend to increase, with the public more aware of goings on in space but still inclined to some apprehension. Technical and defense considerations will continue to exist in this era.

Published about three months ago, AFR 200-2 outlines necessary orderly, qualified reporting as well as public-information procedures. This lowers the base should stand today, with practices judged at least satisfactory by commander and inspector:

- Responsibility for handling UFO's should rest with either intelligence, operations, the Provost Marshal or the Information Officer - in that order of preference, dictated by limits of the base organization;
- A specific officer should be designated as responsible;
- He should have experience in investigative techniques and also, if possible, scientific or technical background;
- He should have authority to obtain the assistance of specialists on the base;
- He should be equipped with binoculars, camera, Geiger counter, magnifying glass and have a source for containers in which to store samples.

What is required is that every UFO sighting be investigated and reported to the Air Technical Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson AFB and that explanation to the public be realistic and knowledgeable. Normally that explanation will be made only by the USAF Information Office. It all adds up to part of the job of being experts in our own domain.



CANON PACE, CALIF.  
11-15-59

THE PICTURE ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE  
OF THIS CARD IS A REASONABLY ACCURATE  
REPRODUCTION OF OBJECTS SEEN BY THE  
UNDER-SIGNED ON THE AFTERNOON OF  
NOVEMBER 11, 1959 AT APPROXIMATELY 4:10 P.M.,  
WHILE DRIVING FROM ROCKETBYNE'S SANTA  
SUSANNA FACILITY, THE OBJECTS WERE  
TRAVELING IN A GENERAL SOUTH-WESTERLY  
DIRECTION ACROSS THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY  
WHEN SIGHTED. ESTIMATED SPEED - 5000 M.P.H.  
ESTIMATED ALTITUDE - 10000 FT. CLIMBING TO 30000 FT.

J. M. Eastling  
J. W. Taylor  
J. Paul Taylor  
H. R. [unclear]

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