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A SURVEY OF PRESS COVERAGE OF
UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS,
1947--1966

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HERBERT J. STRENTZ

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PREFACE

For more than 20 years, newsmen, some scientists, the Air Force and others have investigated reports of flying saucers around the nation --and around the globe--with varying degrees of cooperation and, generally, little success.

Reports of saucers have continued unabated despite periodic Air Force press releases and news items which have dismissed the discs as figments of the imagination, hoaxes or mis-identifications of known objects.

A recent argument against the existence of flying saucers was the Fall 1968 report of the University of Colorado Unidentified Flying Objects Project. The two-year Colorado study, financed by the Department of Defense, concluded:

. . .nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge. Careful consideration of the record. . .leads us to conclude that further extensive study of UFOs probably cannot be justified in the expectation that science will be advanced thereby. 1

This conclusion was based primarily on research by physical scientists, and it probably is still too soon to determine what impact, if any, the Colorado findings will have upon UFO reports.

The director of the Colorado project, physicist Dr. Edward U. Condon, also wrote:

. . .we conclude that a content analysis of press and television coverage of UFOs might yield data of interest to both the social scientist and communications specialist. 2

This dissertation in journalism and public affairs, in part supported by the UFO Project at Boulder, Colo., was one effort to analyze press coverage of UFO reports. Research for the dissertation had begun, however, before the Boulder Project was organized in October 1966. There had seemed to be at least three reasons to undertake a study of press coverage of UFOs:

1. One purpose of any scientific study is to generate information. The press-UFO field lacked any organized or trustworthy body of literature. In fact, it seemed that the absence of such material posed problems for newsmen trying to cover UFO reports.

2. There was widespread public interest in UFOs. In the spring of 1966, a national Gallup Poll indicated that 5 million Americans claimed to have seen flying saucers. Further, 96 per cent of those polled had heard or read something about UFOs, one of the highest awareness scores in the history of the Gallup Poll.

3. There had been considerable criticism of news coverage of UFOs, both from those who blamed the press for creating the UFO phenomenon and from those who said the press had been negligent in its coverage. For example, Dr. Philip Morrison, a physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said of the UFO phenomenon:

It is a social phenomenon of journalism and television. If you look in the newspapers and journals of a hundred or a hundred and twenty years ago, you'll see the same thing. . .they're much more frequent now. . . 3

In an interview July 28, 1968, Dr. J. Allen Hynek was asked for a brief summary of his opinion of press coverage of UFOs. Hynek was a consultant to the Air Force on UFOs and director of the Lindheimer Astronomical Research Center at Northwestern University. He said the one word he thought best described press coverage of UFOs was "opportunistic." Press coverage, he said, had not been consistent or thorough. Newspapermen, he said, generally turned their attention to UFOs when they saw a need for some humorous news items. "The prejudgment of UFOs as nonsense," Hynek said, "is a factor in much of the coverage."

Dr. James E. McDonald, a physicist at the University of Arizona, has studied the UFO phenomenon intensively. In an August 1967 interview, he said American journalists, in large part, were not hard workers and did not seek out and faithfully report the facts. He elaborated on this point in a letter, August 11, 1967:

. . . I am of course not satisfied with press coverage of UFOs . . . I refer . . . to the failure on the part of the press to do what I would like to call 'investigative reporting' into this matter. With the dozens and dozens of cases that have occurred in every state in recent years, one would think that newspapers would have had the initiative to do a little digging on their own part to try to find out what was going on. . . In addition to their sins of omission, the papers have, in my opinion, made a number of sins of commission. These center around their propensity to poke fun and to twist in feature-story humor the seriously reported sightings that many citizens have made. . .

Given these criticisms and the need for information about press coverage of UFOs, it was decided that this dissertation would have two purposes. One was to collect a unified body of data--qualitative and quantitative--to help the reader understand the UFO phenomenon and press coverage of UFOs; the second was to analyze critically UFO news coverage to determine what role(s) the press had played in the UFO phenomenon and what judgments could be made about the nature of press

performance. Was the UFO phenomenon created by the press, as Dr. Morrison and others had charged, or were the comments of Dr. Hynek and Dr. McDonald more accurate assessments of press coverage.

To answer these and other questions, it was decided to gather data pertinent to a survey of press coverage of UFOs from 1947 through 1966.

The term "press coverage", as used in this dissertation, refers primarily to coverage of UFOs as found in daily newspapers and wire service reports. Coverage of UFOs by weekly newspapers, magazines and the broadcast media is discussed when relevant to the purposes of this study.

The survey of a 20-year period was preferred over a detailed study of coverage during one or two years—or during one or two UFO reports—for several reasons: to understand coverage of a UFO report in 1957 or 1964, it often was helpful to understand what had happened in preceding years; the survey approach was better suited to the purposes of the dissertation; interests of the UFO Project at the University of Colorado, a partial sponsor of this study, favored the survey approach.

Systems of content analysis and other methodology used in this dissertation are explained as the relevant data are presented.

Research was aided considerably by the author's appointment as a research associate to the University of Colorado UFO Project in the spring of 1967. The appointment included two months of summer work with the project and visits to the Boulder, Colo., office in November 1967 and August 1968. Also helpful were independent study in astronomy under Dr. Hynek at Northwestern University and the frequent oppor-

tunities to discuss UFOs and press coverage with Dr. Hynek and William Powers, his assistant.

Others whose cooperation and assistance was appreciated include Dr. Edward U. Condon, Robert J. Low, Dr. Franklin Roach, Dr. Norman Levine, Dr. David Saunders, Dr. Aldora Lee, Dr. Roy Craig, Dr. Gerald M. Rothberg, Dan Culberson, Daniel S. Gillmor and Mrs. Betty Dodd, all of the Colorado Project; Dr. Curtis D. MacDougall and Dr. Albert A. Sutton of the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University; Dr. James E. McDonald; Curtis Fuller, publisher of FATE magazine; Lt. Col. Hector Quintanilla of the United States Air Force; the University of Kentucky Computing Center, Dr. Lewis Donohew of the University of Kentucky, and my wife, Joan.

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CHAPTER I

UFOS, UAOS, AOP—SOME NAMES AND A DEFINITION

The starting date of the unidentified flying object (UFO) or "flying saucer" phenomenon in the United States commonly has been accepted as June 24, 1947. That was not the date the first "saucer" or UFO was seen;¹ it was the date the name "flying saucer" was first applied by the press to puzzling things seen in the sky.

The tendency to equate the origin of the phenomenon with the origin of the name, or the origin of press coverage, was supported by Army Air Force and Air Force investigations which officially ignored reports of objects seen before 1947 . . .

since they were not reported to official sources until after public interest in flying saucers had been stimulated by the popular press.²

The "flying saucer" label was first used in connection with the report of Kenneth Arnold, a Boise, Ida., businessman and private pilot, who said he saw nine peculiar aircraft flying near Mt. Rainier on June 24, 1947. He described their motion as that of a "saucer skipping across water."³

Those words led some newsmen to call the objects "saucer-like"; and, judging from a sketch that Arnold made for Air Force investigators, "saucer-like" seemed an accurate description.

A study of news clippings of June 25 and June 26, 1947, suggested that the name "flying saucers" was not created by any particular reporter but rather was the product of headline writers. Reporters then, it seemed, incorporated that descriptive title into their stories.

Perhaps because of its economy in headline space, the word "disk" also was used widely to describe the objects seen in the skies of America in June and July 1947. "Flying saucer" or simply "saucer" became the most popular title, however, perhaps because it seemed to be a name created exclusively for the new phenomenon.

As linguist Roger Brown wrote, if there is a new object or item without a specific name attached to it "the man who discovers the lack considers it his first civilizing duty to create one".⁴

While "flying saucer" has been in wide use since 1947, the term "unidentified flying object", or its abbreviation UFO, appears to have come into wide use only since about 1956 or 1957.

Edward J. Ruppelt, who directed the Air Force flying saucer inquiry from early 1951 to the fall of 1953, claimed credit for coining the name unidentified flying object:

UFO is the official term that I created to replace the words "flying saucers."⁵

He did not say why the term was created, but it did lend itself to a more pronounceable abbreviation (You-Foe) than did the title "flying saucer."

In a review of Air Force microfilm of UFO reports, however, the term "unidentified flying object" was found on reporting forms used in 1948—three years before Ruppelt became involved with flying saucers. And, an Air Force 1954 regulation on unidentified flying objects used the abbreviation UFOB.

The first newspaper reference this study found to "unidentified flying object" was the use of the full name in a headline in The Tucson, Ariz., Morning Star of February 2, 1950. The headline was "Unidentified Flying Object Seen Here", but neither the name nor abbreviation, UFO, was used in the story.

Ruppelt's 1956 book, The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, became one of the authoritative works on UFOs and helped popularize the "UFO" label.

Study of UFO news items suggested that the first widespread press use of the words "unidentified flying object" and "UFO" was in connection with the March 9, 1957 report of

Captain Matthew A. VanWinkle. He was a Pan American pilot who reported seeing an unidentified object while flying over the Southeastern United States; he said that he took evasive maneuvers to avoid collision.

The development of UFO and flying saucer terminology was reflected in The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature. From 1947 to 1949, one looking up "flying saucer" was directed to "illusions and hallucinations;" from 1949 to 1951, those directions remained and ones directing the reader to also check "jet aircraft," and "research balloons" were added; articles were listed under "flying saucers" for the first time in the 1951-1953 volume, perhaps because of a wave of sightings over Washington, D. C., in 1952; the term UFO was entered in 1957, with directions to see "flying saucers."

The most recent change, in January 1967, suggested that "flying saucers" had both a serious and a silly side. Under the general "flying saucer" listing was a sub-category, "Anecdotes, facetiae (witty or humorous writings), satire, etc."

While the names "unidentified flying object" and "flying saucer" often have been used interchangeably, there has been controversy over the use of the names. There also has been a tendency to use the words "flying saucer" when speaking facetiously of the phenomenon and the word "UFO" when speaking

soberly. In feature articles, for example, newsmen often seem to refer to witnesses as "saucer-eyed" or suggest that one sees 'flying saucers' when he is "in his cups."

Organizations and individuals interested in the phenomenon have coined their own names to describe the phenomenon as they perceive it. Consequently, in addition to controversy over the names "saucers" or UFO, there have been such titles as unconventional aerial objects (UAOs), unlicensed air vehicles (UAVs), anomalistic observational phenomena (AOP) and others.

Dr. Donald Menzel, former head of the Harvard College Observatory and a critic of those who believe flying saucers are real, has said the Air Force made a mistake by calling saucers UFOs:

They are 'unidentified' flying objects only because of mistaken identity. In fact, they are often not even objects. This is why I prefer the name, 'flying saucers' rather than UFO, which implies that they are material or tangible⁶

Maj. (USMC Ret.) Donald E. Keyhoe, director of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), the nation's largest private UFO organization, disagreed with Menzel:

I hate the name 'flying saucers'. No saucers ever flew. Actually, they are unidentified flying objects and if we knew what they were we would call them by their correct name.⁷

Philip Daly, senior science producer for British Broadcasting Company Television, said in a November 13, 1967, interview, that the distinction between "flying saucers" and UFOs was very real to him. Daly was in the United States preparing a BBC documentary on UFOs when interviewed.

He said that until the term UFO became popular in Britain, the topic did not draw any serious consideration, and that the BBC would permit him to do a documentary on UFOs, but not on flying saucers.

The distinction, in part, was based on the fact that, to Daly, flying saucers were related to those people who talked of meeting creatures from outer-space and going for rides on spaceships, while UFOs were related to study of the aerial phenomenon.

The Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), one of the oldest UFO organizations and the largest international one, prefers neither "saucers" nor "UFOs." It used the term unconventional aerial object (UAO).

APRO discourages the use of UFOs . . . The distinction is made by members that a UFO can be anything that the viewer himself does not understand while a UAO is something that cannot be explained by any conventional means. 8

NICAP and APRO also appear to dislike the "saucer" label because, they say, not all UFOs are saucer-shaped. NICAP, for example, has classified UFOs into at least 10 categories with 14 shapes. Half of them, or less, would qualify as saucer-shaped. Others are cylindrical, spherical, saturn-shaped, like World War I helmets or like a point source--a point with no apparent size.⁹

John A. Keel, who has written many articles for flying saucer magazines, has recommended that UFOs be renamed UAVs (Unlicensed Air Vehicles). Such a change, he believes, would make the public more willing to recognize the reality of the phenomenon. While UFOs may be linked with outerspace, he reasoned, UAVs would be recognized as objects operating within our atmosphere and therefore meriting study since they should be subject to national laws concerning the licensing and operation of aircraft:

This is a concept which can be more easily grasped by a public not equipped with the imagination necessary to accept the more obscure thesis that "space ships are flitting around our skies."¹⁰

At a Congressional hearing on July 29, 1968, Dr. Robert M. L. Baker Jr., senior scientist with the Computer Sciences Corporation of El Segundo, Calif., and a member of

the engineering faculty at the University of California at Los Angeles, told why he preferred the name "anomalous observational phenomena:"

I call it AOP.

From the data that I have reviewed and analyzed since 1954, it is my belief that there does exist substantial evidence that an unexplained phenomenon--or phenomena--is present in the environs of the earth, but that it may not be 'flying,' may not always be 'unidentified,' and, perhaps, may not even be substantive 'objects'. . . 11

While some of those involved in the study of the UFO phenomenon have preferred to use other names--for the reasons discussed here--news coverage and public usage, in general, have been limited to use of the words "flying saucer" and "unidentified flying object."

Those names were used interchangeably in this study. Such use was consistent with the material under study and avoided difficulties that might have occurred by using terms that seemed more connotative than denotative in nature.

For the purposes of this study, a "flying saucer" may be defined as it was by the UFO Project at the University of Colorado:

. . . the stimulus for a report made by one or more individuals of something seen in the sky (or an object thought to be capable of flight but seen when landed on the earth) which the observer could not identify as having an ordinary natural origin, and which seemed to him sufficiently puzzling that he undertook to make a report of it to police, government officials, to the press or perhaps to a representative of a private organization dedicated to the study of such objects.¹²

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Air Force consultant on UFOs and director of the Lindheimer Astronomical Research Center at Northwestern University, criticized the Colorado definition as too broad for a scientific inquiry. The definition, he argued, would include simple mis-identifications of Venus, weather balloons, airplanes, etc. He suggested this definition:

A UFO is a report. . .the contents of which are puzzling not only to the observer but to others who have the technical training the observer may lack. 13

Hynek's definition may be the better one for the purposes of scientific study of UFOs, but for the analysis of press coverage the Colorado definition was preferred. Many of the UFOs reported in the press, after all, were mis-identifications of natural or man-made objects.

Summary

Having found a supposedly new phenomenon with no name, the press popularized the words "flying saucers" as a name for strange objects in the sky. That name remained in use throughout the period of this study, 1947-1966, and another term, unidentified flying object or UFO, emerged in the 1950s.

Other names have been used by groups and individuals to more clearly define what they mean when they discuss "flying saucers."

The UFO definition applicable to this study was broad enough to include simple mis-identifications of known objects as well as reports of objects which puzzled men with technical training. Both types of UFOs appeared in the news coverage.

CHAPTER II

THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

Public Awareness

On August 19, 1947, a Gallup Poll published in many American newspapers reported that 90 per cent of the public had heard about the flying discs which first had been reported over the northwestern part of the nation in late June of that year.

The report of the poll noted:

As a test of the public's knowledge about current events this looms very large indeed and places the saucers on par with Orson Welles' "Invasion from Mars," the Loch Ness Monster and Tom Thumb Golf.

As an indication of how the saucer story spread, it need only be pointed out that at the same time only half the people had heard about the Marshall Plan and only 61 per cent had heard about the Taft-Hartley Labor Bill.¹

The reference to the Taft-Hartley measure was interesting because on June 24, 1947--the date used most often to mark the start of the flying saucer era--the lead story in many newspapers was that the U.S. Senate, by a vote of 68-25, had overturned President Truman's veto of the Taft-Hartley Act.

In August 1947 opinions were mixed as to what the saucers might be. In answer to the questions, "What do you think the saucers are?," one-third of the respondents said they did not know or did not answer; 29 per cent attributed the discs to imagination or illusions; 15 per cent thought they were an American secret weapon; 10 per cent thought they were hoaxes. One per cent thought the discs were of Russian origin

Nineteen years later, on May 8, 1966, another Gallup Poll indicated that at least 96 per cent of those polled had heard or read something about flying saucers. The report added:

In terms of the public's awareness of other incidents or events, this figure is extraordinarily high. In fact, this awareness score is one of the highest in the 30-year history of the Gallup Poll. 2

The 1966 poll asked respondents whether they thought the discs were something real or imaginary: 48 per cent said the discs were probably real; 31 per cent said they were imaginary; 22 per cent offered no opinion.

The two Gallup Polls were relevant to this study because (1) they bracketed the period under consideration, 1947-1966, and (2) they indicated there was immediate and continued widespread awareness of flying saucers.

A third relevant poll was conducted in February-March 1968 by ORC Caravan Surveys, Inc., of Princeton, N.J., under contract with the Unidentified Flying Object Project at the University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo. The Boulder poll supported the findings of the Gallup surveys and provided additional information for this study. In the Boulder poll only 2 per cent, or approximately 50 of 2,500 respondents, had not heard of UFOs.

In a true-false section of the poll, 24 per cent of the adult respondents answered "true" to the statement "Some flying saucers have tried to communicate with us;" 40 per cent answered "true" to the statement "People have seen space ships that did not come from this planet;" 55 per cent answered "true" to "All UFO reports can be explained as well understood happenings or as hoaxes."

At my request, the survey also sought information on (1) when respondents had first heard or read about UFOs and (2) where they had heard or read most often about UFOs. Such information, it was thought, would suggest what role the press had played in creating public awareness of UFOs.

The source of information named most often was newspapers; second was television; third was magazines, and fourth was radio.

Responses for five periods of awareness are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT UFOS

First heard about UFOs	Source of Information				Total
	Newspaper	TV	Magazine	Radio	
Within past 2 years	138	129	50	53	370
Within 3-5 years	325	208	121	106	760
Within 6-10 years	361	233	140	141	875
Within 11-15 years	174	99	99	54	415
16 years ago or longer . .	128	48	56	40	272
Total	1126	717	455	394	2692

As indicated by the table, respondents for all periods named newspapers most often as their most frequent source of information. Considering only the four media categories, references to newspapers accounted for 42 per cent of the total responses, television 27 per cent, magazines 17 per cent, and radio 14 per cent.

Extent of Press Coverage

The high degree of public awareness of UFOs and the reported reliance upon newspapers as the most frequent source of information suggested that coverage of the phenomenon by the press had been well-read, or extensive, or, perhaps, both.

The 1947, 1966 and 1968 polls on public awareness of UFOs indicated that the audiences of the news media did read or listen to reports dealing with UFOs. For example, in the 1968 Boulder poll, only 250 respondents--or 8 per cent--said they got their information about UFOs most frequently from non-media sources. The most frequent non-media sources were reported to be friends (208), personal experience (14), private UFO organizations (3), and other (25). In these instances, however, perhaps many of the sources were simply intermediaries between news accounts of UFOs and the members of the non-reading, non-viewing public. Even if not, the 1968 poll still indicated that more than 90 per cent of the respondents got most of their information about UFOs from the mass media, particularly from newspapers.

While the polls may have suggested that news accounts of UFOs were well read, the polls did not suggest how extensive news coverage had been. There were, however, at least five indices which pointed to widespread press attention to the UFO phenomenon:

1. An upper limit on the number of UFO reports appearing in the press may be set by the number of UFOs reportedly seen by Americans. Table 2 shows the frequency of UFO reports recorded by the Air Force for the years 1947 through 1966, a total of 11,160.

TABLE 2
UFO REPORTS RECORDED BY AIR FORCE

YEAR	REPORTS	YEAR	REPORTS
1947	122	1957	1,006
1948	156	1958	627
1949	186	1959	390
1950	210	1960	557
1951	169	1961	591
1952	1,501	1962	474
1953	509	1963	399
1954	487	1964	562
1955	545	1965	887
1956	670	1966	1,112

3

The Air Force figure of 11,160 refers only to those reports made to the Air Force. The Gallup Poll of 1966, however, said, "More than 5 million Americans claim to have seen something they believed to be a 'flying saucer'."

The Gallup figure was based on the fact that 5 per cent of their national sample of 1,575 adult Americans answered "yes" to the question:

Have you, yourself, ever seen anything you thought was a flying saucer?

The 1968 Boulder poll found that 3 per cent of the 2,050 adult respondents answered "yes" to the question:

Have you, yourself, ever seen a UFO?

The difference between the two polls may be attributed, in part, to the fact that the Boulder poll was the more specific, asking if the person had seen a UFO, while the Gallup measurement

asked if the respondent had seen anything he thought was a saucer. Both polls, however, indicated that the news media had a pool of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of UFO sightings from which to draw material for UFO stories, and were not limited to the 11,000 or so recorded by the Air Force.

2. Differences between the number of UFO reports recorded by the Air Force and those reported in the press were evident in a study of 1947 reports conducted by Ted Bloecher, a New York businessman and private saucer researcher. Bloecher, in business travels around the nation, visited about 140 newspapers in 90 cities and studied their 1947 editions. For the months of June and July 1947, he found about 850 newspaper reports of separate UFO sightings.⁴ As indicated by Table 2, the Air Force listed 122 reports for all of 1947. Bloecher's sample of 8 per cent of the nation's daily newspapers suggested that several thousand UFO items were printed in the America press during the summer of 1947. His findings were discussed in Report on the UFO Wave of 1947, published privately.

3. Captain Edward J. Ruppelt, who directed an Air Force UFO inquiry from March 1951 to September 1953, reported extensive press coverage of the phenomenon in his book, The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects:

During a six-month period in 1952 alone, 148 of the nation's leading newspapers carried a total of over 16,000 items about UFOs. ⁵

Ruppelt did not explain how he arrived at this estimate or what newspapers were included in his 148. I received from the Air Force 32 rolls of microfilm which recorded UFO press clippings from April through September 1952. That would be a period of six months, but the number of filmed clippings exceeds 30,000, including the same wire service stories published in several or more newspapers. That total--which is not exhaustive--would be almost 20 items apiece for every daily newspaper in the United States.

The Air Force receipt of UFO press clippings was curtailed, Ruppelt said, because there was not enough room in which to store the boxes of clippings, nor was there enough time in which to sort through them.

4. A press clipping file kept by a saucer researcher in Seattle, Wash., Mrs. June Larson, listed approximately 7,600 unduplicated local and wire service UFO clippings from hundreds of newspapers across the nation for the years 1961 through 1966. If duplicated clippings--the same stories appearing in more than one newspaper--were included in the collection, the number probably would increase several times over 7,600. The Larson collection included clips from two peak periods of UFO activity, July-August 1965 and March-April 1966. Unduplicated clippings from those four months numbered 2,625, about one-third of the total for the 72 months.

5. A smaller collection of clippings was kept by the weekly tabloid, The ENQUIRER, which reported February 19, 1967:

Intrigued by continuous reports of flying saucers, mysterious flashing lights and other strange aerial phenomena, The ENQUIRER decided four months ago to keep a log of such sightings reported in local newspapers throughout the United States.

The results were astounding.

From Alaska to Maine and back again to Hawaii, there were 504 published reports, an average of more than 31 each week, of Unidentified Flying Objects. How many went unreported, or how many were seen in the rest of the world, there is no way of knowing.

The ENQUIRER, which is published in New York but has nationwide circulation, told its readers that it checked every daily and weekly newspaper in the United States to uncover the "astounding" record of UFO reports. Yet, figures from the Larson collection alone indicated that The ENQUIRER's astounding find may have underestimated the extent of press coverage of UFOs.

For example, for the last four months of 1966, the number of unduplicated clippings in the nationwide Larson collection totaled 667. The ENQUIRER record of 504 for four months in late 1966 or late 1966 and early 1967 also was exceeded by the one-month Larson totals for March (687) and April (555) 1966.

Given these signs of widespread press attention to UFOs, this study sought two additional measurements of coverage in a poll of newspapers and an analysis of wire service coverage, both financed by the UFO Project at the University of Colorado.

The sample for the poll of daily newspapers was drawn from the 1967 Editor & Publisher Yearbook. From a page and position chosen at random, every ninth newspaper was selected until working back to the starting point. To include competitive newspapers in the same city, such papers were included every other time one appeared as the ninth number. In this fashion, 191 daily newspapers were chosen; 15 other newspapers were selected because of their national prominence or to provide increased representation to one or another area of the country. There was no mail follow-up after questionnaires were mailed to the

1

newspapers on July 3, 1967.

Returns were coded from 100 newspapers: 92 of them were in the random sample. (A list of these newspapers and a copy of the questionnaire are in the appendix). Data from the added newspapers and the random sample questionnaires returned too late to be included in the coding did not appear to differ from that found in the analysis of the returns from the 92 papers.

Circulation and geographic characteristics of the 92 newspapers which returned questionnaires were similar to those of the entire sample. Consequently, the responses analyzed were believed to be representative of the nation's daily press. The returned questionnaires represented 5.2 per cent of the daily newspapers in the nation.

Most of the data from the questionnaires will be discussed in Chapter iii. Of interest here are the answers received when newsmen were asked to estimate the number of local UFO reports normally covered by their newspapers.

The responses showed that newsmen from the 92 papers estimated that their papers would print 95 UFO stories, approximately one apiece, about every three months. On an annual basis that would be about four for each paper or about 7,000 UFO items for all the daily newspapers in the nation. This estimate requires further discussion.

1. The 7,000 figure was less than the press coverage given to UFOs in 1952 and 1947.

2. The nature of the tabulation--multiplying some responses by at least four to calculate the number of items for one year--may have exaggerated original overestimates by the newsmen. The 7,000 figure, for example, did not seem consistent with press clippings

from the Larson collection which numbered 687 for 1961, 499 for 1962, 319 for 1963 and 761 for 1964. Perhaps newsmen thought they reported more UFOs than they did in fact.

3. Points 1 and 2 document the problem of trying to establish an "average figure" for annual press coverage of UFOs. The phenomenon appeared to be marked by periods of either large numbers of reported sightings or periods of relatively few reports. Hence, the 7,000 figure was too low to reflect press coverage of UFOs during peak periods and too high to reflect coverage during the relatively quiet years. Perhaps the 7,000 figure was, after all, as good an average as might be hoped for; it may be sufficient to recognize that press coverage of UFOs has been extensive even if this study cannot specify an annual average of UFO news items.

More precise data were available on wire service coverage of the UFO phenomenon, particularly from the Associated Press. The AP library in New York City, which was visited for three days in March 1968, has records on national news coverage dating back more than 20 years. Available there were data on UFO stories which had been sent on the AP national wire since June 1947.

The national wire, or "A" wire, is the primary news wire of the AP. Under control of the AP headquarters in New York City, the national wire carries news stories of national or international interest. Primarily larger circulation newspapers tend to subscribe to the "A" wire. Stories on that wire, however, generally also are sent on regional wires to smaller newspapers which receive all their AP news--international, national, sports, business, etc.--on one teletype. The placement of a story on the "A" wire means there will

be wide distribution of the story, including to the smaller newspapers which would receive the story on another wire.

The AP library in New York kept no data on regional or state coverage of UFOs. United Press International files dated back only two years and were not consulted, on the advice of UPI.

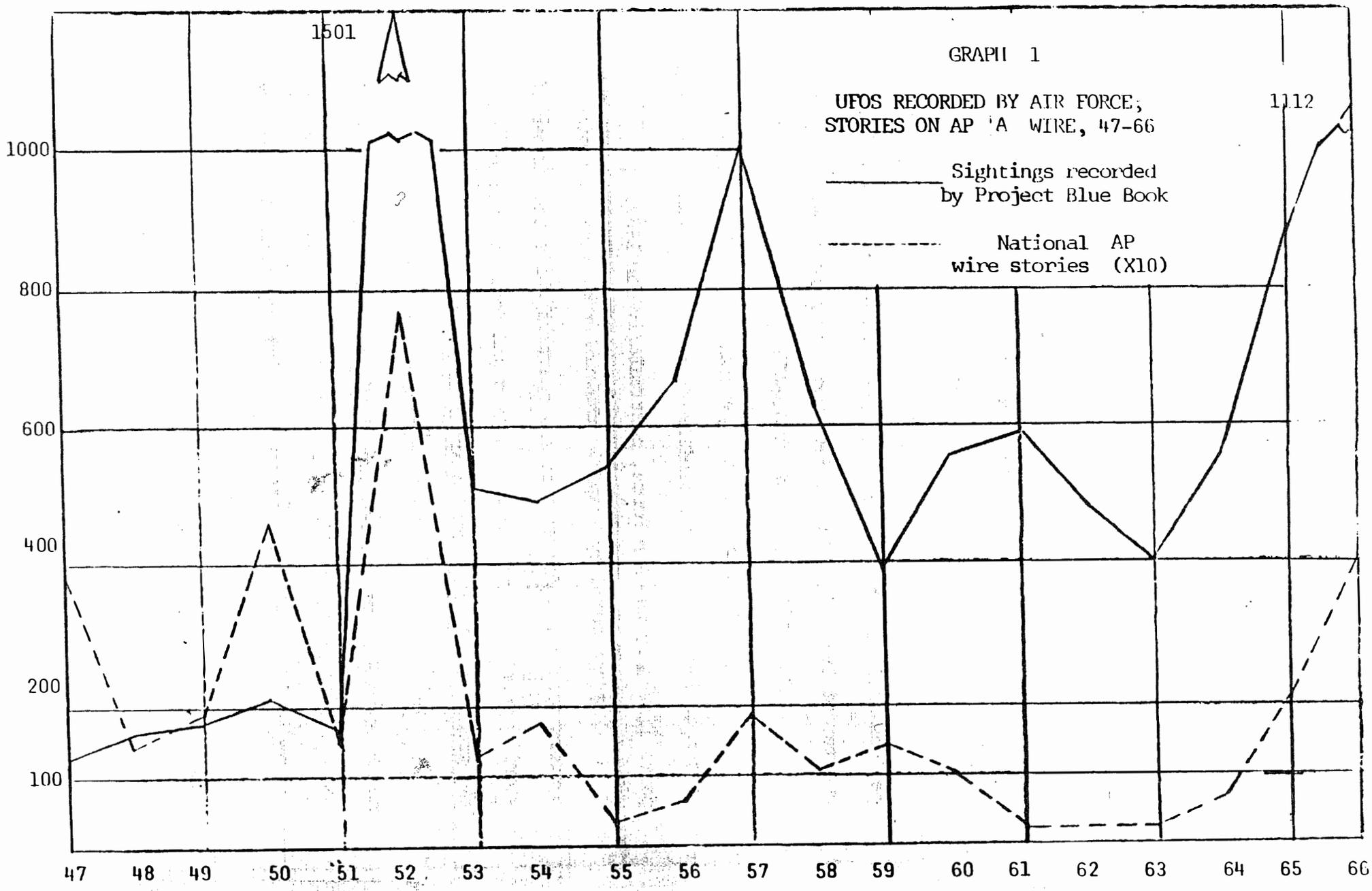
Table 3 shows the number of UFO stories sent on the national, or "A", wire of the Associated Press during the years 1947 through 1966. The total number of stories shown is 374.

TABLE 3
ASSOCIATED PRESS UFO STORIES

Year	Number of Stories	Year	Number of Stories
1947	38	1957	19
1948	12	1958	11
1949	19	1959	14
1950	46	1960	10
1951	15	1961	2
1952	77	1962	2
1953	12	1963	2
1954	18	1964	6
1955	3	1965	22
1956	6	1966	40

The fluctuating nature of the AP coverage may be obvious upon inspection. The top four years, 1947, 1950, 1952 and 1966, accounted for 201 stories, or 53 per cent of the 20-year total. In peak periods within these years, six months accounted for 126 stories, one third of the 20-year total. The peak months were July 1947, 31 stories; March-April 1950, 23; July-August 1952, 52, and March 1966, 20.

Trends in coverage may be made clearer in the graphs on pages 21 and 23. Graph 1 is a year-by-year picture of the UFO reports recorded by the Air Force and UFO stories on the AP "A" wire. (AP totals were multiplied by a factor of 10 to register on the graph).



Graph 2 on page 23 provides a more detailed look at the years 1961 through 1966. Shown on this graph are quarterly figures for (1) Air Force Project Blue Book records of UFO reports, (2) AP national wire stories, and (3) unduplicated local and wire service clippings in the Larson collection. Air Force data are shown by the solid line; AP figures by the broken line; Larson quarterly totals by the dotted line. (The AP totals were multiplied by a factor of 15 to register on this graph).

Again evident are peak periods of press coverage akin to peak periods indicated by Air Force records, particularly for the third quarter of 1965 (July-August-September) and the first and second quarters of 1966 (January-February-March and April-May-June).

Also evident is that the general trend of clippings from the Larson collection appeared similar to the general trend of UFO reports listed by the Air Force, particularly for 1962.

As indicated by Graph 2, the number of local clippings borders around 150 for most of the quarters while the number of AP stories drops to zero for 10 quarters and does not exceed two (30 on the graph) until the second quarter of 1964.

In fact, during the 72 months covered by Graph 2, there were no AP national wire stories for 46 of the months and only one story a month for 17 of the remaining 26 months. This suggested that local coverage of UFO reports continued unaided by national wire service attention and that wire service attention may have been far more irregular than that given to UFOs on the local level.

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GRAPH 2

UFOS RECORDED BY BLUE BOOK; AP 'A' WIRE STORIES;
LARSON COLLECTION WIRE SERVICE AND LOCAL
UFO STORIES--BY QUARTER, 1961-1966

1620

900

UFOS recorded by Blue Book

AP UFO stories (X15)

Local and wire service UFO items from Larson collection

750

600

450

300

150

90

30

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

1961

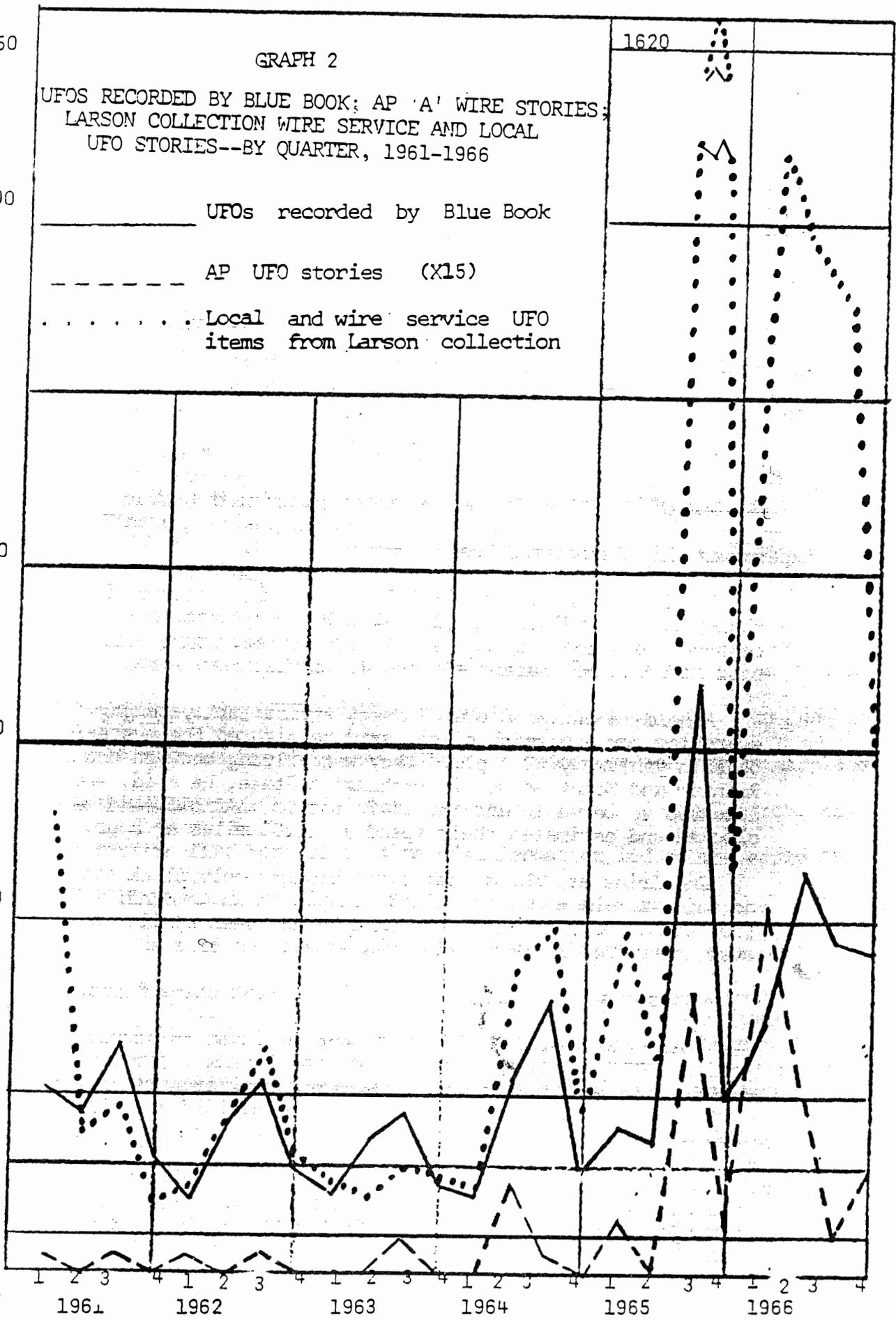
1962

1963

1964

1965

1966



A Review of Press Coverage

To elaborate upon the lines and dots of Graphs 1 and 2 and to provide background for material to be presented in following chapters, it will be necessary to review some high points of press coverage of UFOs in the remaining pages of this chapter. The brief survey will focus upon press attention to the UFO phenomenon. Air Force involvement will be discussed in detail in Chapters v and vi.

The Early Years

One of the first UFO accounts to be printed in American newspapers was this Associated Press report:

PENDLETON, Ore., June 25 (AP)--Nine bright saucer-like objects flying at 'incredible' speed at 10,000 feet altitude were reported here today by Kenneth Arnold, Boise, Idaho, pilot who said he could not hazard a guess as to what they were.

Arnold, a United States Forest Service employe engaged in searching for a missing plane, said he sighted the mysterious objects yesterday at 3 p.m. They were flying between Mount Rainier and Mount Adams, in Washington State, he said, and appeared to weave in and out of formation. Arnold said he clocked and estimated their speed at 1,200 miles an hour.

Inquiries at Yakima last night brought only blank stares, he said, but he added he talked today with an unidentified man from Utah, south of here, who said he had seen similar objects over the mountains near Ukiah yesterday.

'It seems impossible,' Arnold said, 'but there it is.'

Then came so-called "follow" stories, that is stories filed by wire service reporters to include recent developments in a changing story or simply to rewrite a story getting good play in newspapers served by the wire service.

An Associated Press story from Pendleton, Ore., with a June 26, 1947, date carried this lead:

Army and CAA spokesmen expressed skepticism over a report of nine mysterious objects--big as airplanes--whizzing over Western Washington at 1,200 miles an hour.

The story recounted Arnold's experience and quoted military and CAA sources who doubted the Boise pilot's story.

The United Press sent this follow story:

PENDLETON, Ore., June 27 (UP)--Kenneth Arnold said Friday (June 27) he would like to get on one of his 1,200-mile-an-hour 'Flying Saucers' and escape from the furore caused by his story of mysterious aircraft flashing over Southern Washington.

The story quoted Arnold as saying:

Half the people I see look at me as a combination of Einstein, Flash Gordon and Screwball. . .

Less than a week before, however, the 32-year-old Arnold had only been the operator of his own fire control supply company, known as the Great Western Fire Control Supply. He flew his own plane on business trips and was flying from Chenalis to Yakima, Wash., on June 24 when he delayed his trip for an hour to join a search for an airplane believed down near Mt. Rainier. Perhaps his role in the search, his interest in fire control or some misinformation led to the early AP dispatch identifying him as a Forest Service employe.

He said he saw the nine mysterious objects at 3 p.m. and then continued on to Yakima. In his report to the Air Force, Arnold said:

. . .When I landed at the Yakima, Washington, airport, I described what I had seen to my very good friend, Al Baxter, who listened patiently and was very courteous but in a joking way did not believe me.

I did not accurately measure the distance between these two mountains (Mt. Adams and Mt. Rainier) until I landed at Pendleton, Oregon, that same day where I told a number of pilot friends of mine what I had observed and they did not scoff or laugh but suggested that they might be guided missiles or something new.

. . .The news that I had observed these spread very rapidly and before the night was over I was receiving telephone calls from all parts of the world; and, to date, I have not received one telephone call or one letter of scoffing or disbelief. The only disbelief I know of was what was printed in the papers.

He comment further on what he thought was the seriousness of his report and implied that the nation's military may have known more than it was saying:

. . .I look at this whole ordeal as not something funny as some people have made it out to be. To me it is mighty serious and since I evidently did observe something that at least Mr. John Doe on the street corner or Pete Andrews on the ranch has never heard about, is no reason that it does not exist (sic). Even though I openly invited an investigation by the Army and the FBI as to the authenticity of my story or a mental or a physical examination as to my capabilities, I have received no interest from these two important protective forces of our country; I will go so far as to assume that any report I gave to the United and Associated Press and over the radio on two different occasions which apparently set the nation buzzing, if our military intelligence was not aware of what I observed, they would be the very first people that I could expect as visitors (sic).

With the door apparently opened by the Arnold report, other puzzled citizens told of objects they had seen prior to June 24, 1947, and new accounts followed attention to Arnold's sighting:

KANSAS CITY, June 26, (AP)--Nine shiny objects flying at a high rate of speed, such as described by a Boise, Idaho, pilot, were reported by W.I. Davenport, a carpenter, to have been sighted here yesterday. . .

OKLAHOMA CITY, June 26 (AP)--Don't sell those strange flying objects reported whizzing over Western Washington short until the reports are all in--a flyer claimed today he saw one flash over Oklahoma City.

Local newspaper accounts, similar to these wire service ones, appeared in many newspapers across the nation in late June. Ted Bloecher's 1947 study found 79 UFO news items reported in 25 states from June 25 through June 30. ⁶ Yet the peak of 1947 saucer reports and news coverage did not occur until more than 10 days after Arnold's sighting. The peak came over the Fourth of July weekend.

The Chicago Daily News, for example, on July 3 printed a one-paragraph Associated Press story to the effect that the Air Force was dropping its "disc inquiry because a preliminary study unveiled nothing to warrant further study;" July 4 the paper was not published; July 5 there was an eight-column headline, "17 States Sight 'Flying Discs'."

The Chicago Tribune June 26 carried a one-column headline story about the Arnold sighting; The Tribune did not carry another saucer story until July 6. On July 6 and 7, the paper carried eight-column, page one headlines on the rash of saucer sightings.

The New York Times did not print a "flying saucer" story until July 4, and that first story was that the Army Air Force was "dropping" its disc inquiry. The St. Louis Post Dispatch and The Louisville Courier-Journal carried no saucer stories until just before the July 4 weekend, when local sightings made news. After July 4, however, the saucer stories apparently became more difficult to bypass.

On July 3, both the Associated Press and United Press reported that the flying discs had been reported in about 10 states; on July 8, the Associated Press reported that discs had been reported in 40 states.

Bloecker found a similar trend. By checking newspapers in most states, he found that from June 24 through July 2 there were at least 145 UFO reports in 29 states. While that suggested a saucer wave greater than the one reported by the wire services, it was far less than the number of sightings he uncovered for the July 4-7 period. For those four days, Bloecker reported he found at least 481 reports.

By the 8th, Bloecher's records show, saucers had been reported in every state except Georgia and West Virginia.⁷

The impetus for the weekend rash of sightings appeared to come from the Northwest. There were three reports which were covered by both AP and UP and which are discussed in almost any review of flying saucers.

(1) The night of July 4, the pilot, first officer, and a stewardess on a United Air Lines flight from Boise to Seattle, reported seeing two groups of flying saucers. Before takeoff, it was reported someone had asked the pilot, Captain E.J. Smith, if he had seen any flying saucers. His prophetic and quotable response: "I'll believe them when I see them."

(2) That afternoon at Twin Falls Park, near Twin Falls, Idaho, a crowd of picnickers growing from seven, and then 20, to about 60, reported seeing upwards of 20 discs flying about and across the sky.

(3) The same day, in Lake City, a suburb of Seattle, a Coast Guard press information agent took a photograph of a disc-like object first sighted by his neighbors. The Air Force said Yeoman Frank Ryman had photographed a weather balloon.

These major reports, and several others, apparently provided the broad coattails which brought hundreds of reports into public print. Public interest in the saucers was evident in news accounts.

The Detroit Times of July 7, a Monday, reported:

...whether it was because of a sudden invasion of the discs or just the power of suggestion offered by the first stories of the flying discs here, The Detroit Times was flooded with calls Saturday from Detroiters who had seen the discs...

At the peak of the calls Saturday evening, approximately 500 persons called to report discs in a two-hour period.

The same day, July 7, The San Francisco Chronicle reported:

A radio announcement that discs were flying over Lewistown, Idaho, yesterday sent hundreds into their yards for a look. Weatherman Louis Krezak said the objects were moving eastward with the prevailing wind and probably were weed seeds. Three air transport pilots agreed.

The New York Sun of July 7 told of new saucer sightings east of the Mississippi and quoted Essex County psychologist Dr. M.W. Openchowski for an explanation of the reports:

All you need to do is to rub your eyes very hard and look up at a bright sky.

When a strange thing is reported seen it is likely to be reported seen again and again. It is a trait of human nature that people like to be in the know and to participate in observing the unusual.

Perhaps typical of accounts in smaller newspapers was this story from The Anniston, Ala., Star of July 8:

Anniston joined the constantly growing list of cities in which the mysterious 'flying saucers' have been observed with a report from Fain Cole, who today told The Star that he saw one of the discs several days ago.

The 'flying saucer' was also seen by Mr. Cole's daughter, Mrs. Joyce Backus.

Mr. Cole said today that he had mentioned the strange object to several friends but had thought nothing more about it until reading of the nationwide mystery of the 'flying saucer' in yesterday's Star. . .

By midweek, however, reports of flying saucers had dwindled. Press interest lagged, perhaps because the widely reported "capture" of a flying disc at an air base in New Mexico turned out to be only the hasty mis-identification of crumpled tinfoil from a high-altitude weather device.

Reflecting decreasing interest in the saucers, Newsweek magazine sought to write an early finis to the saucer phenomenon in its issue of July 21:

Where the flying saucers had gone, no one knew last week and few cared. Saucer-eyed scientists blamed the whirling phenomena on (1) optical illusions followed by (2) mass suggestion. As quickly as they had arrived, the saucers disappeared into the limbo of all good hot-weather headlines.

While reports of saucers did not disappear completely, the intensity and national nature of the 1947 wave were not matched or surpassed until the summer of 1952. In the five-year interim, occasional press and public interest focused upon individual reports of saucer sightings or upon speculation as to the nature of the objects.

For example, during 1948 there occurred three saucer incidents which drew wire-service attention, are regularly listed in histories of the saucer phenomenon and yet stirred none of the national hysteria which Dr. Openchowski had discussed.

The three incidents all involved pilots:

(1) National Guard Captain Thomas F. Mantell was killed January 7, 1948, when his F-51 crashed while he was trying to identify an object "metallic and of tremendous size" sighted over Godman Field near Fort Knox, Ky.; the Air Force said Mantell blacked out from lack of oxygen at 20,000 feet and suffocated before his plane crashed.

(2) On the morning of July 24, 1948, two Eastern Airlines DC3 pilots, Clarence Chiles and John B. Whitted, on a flight from Houston, Texas, to Atlanta, Ga., reported seeing a rocket-shaped airship with square portholes while over Montgomery, Ala.

(3) The night of October 1, a national guard pilot, Lieutenant George Gorman reporting flying over Fargo, N.D., for 27 minutes, trying to identify a six- to eight-inch lighted object that darted about the skies and, at times, rushed toward his plane. News accounts told of Gorman's "dogfight" with the object, which the Air Force later

identified as a light-carrying weather balloon.

In 1949, reports of flying saucers seemed relatively scarce in newspapers, but the year did end with saucer interest aroused by a magazine article. In what its editors said was "the most interesting and the most important true story we have ever published," True magazine of January 1950 announced "The Flying Saucers Are Real." The article, by Major (USMC Ret.) Donald E. Keyhoe, declared:

For the past 175 years, the planet Earth has been under systematic close-range examination by living, intelligent observers from another planet.

As evidence, Keyhoe cited many of the reports mentioned on the preceding pages.

The article was one of three magazine stories that stirred newspaper interest in flying saucers in early 1950. The other two were a March True article by Commander Robert B. McLaughlin, USN, about an April 1949 saucer sighting at White Sands, N.M., Proving Grounds, and an April 7 story in U.S. News and World Report.

U.S. News said the United States had built the first flying saucer in 1942 and reports of saucers were, in fact, sightings of a revolutionary Navy aircraft, the XF5U or "flying pancake." Columnist David Lawrence reported the same thing in his syndicated newspaper column, naming U.S. News as his source but neglecting to mention that he was also the publisher of the magazine.

In March, two airline pilots also had said they thought flying saucers were secret aircraft. They told their story to the United Press and it was printed in The Houston Post March '22 under the two-column headline, "Saucers Called Secret/ Craft By Airline Pilots." Under the headline was this editor's note:

The flying saucers keep coming despite the Air Force's repeated denials that such fanciful aircraft exist. But two veteran Chicago and Southern Air Lines pilots swear they saw one in the clear sky over Arkansas Monday night (March 20, 1950). Right after they dictated the following story they were interviewed by Air Force intelligence officers.

The byline was "by Capt. Jack Adams and First Officer G.W. Anderson, as told to United Press."

MEMPHIS, Tenn., March 21--We firmly believe the flying saucer we saw over Arkansas Monday night was a secret experimental aircraft--not a visitor from outerspace.

We have been fooled by meteors before and we are certain this was no meteor. It was an aircraft in controlled flight, traveling at a terrific speed. It was not a jet plane. . .

Adams and Anderson described the object as a bright light flying about 1,000 feet from them at a speed of 500 to 600 miles an hour

They concluded:

We'd read about flying saucers and were skeptical as most people. But when you see something like that, what can you do but believe your eyes?

U.S. News and the pilots drew support from Robert Ruark in his syndicated column of April 12. He wrote:

I wish here and now to go on record. I believe that there are flying saucers. I believe they are aircraft containing life. I believe that very soon a solution of them will be offered to the public. My hunch is that they are ours. . .

ABC commentator Henry J. Taylor broadcast the "saucers-are-ours" story and wrote a "Good News About Flying Saucers" article for the July 1950 Reader's Digest. (Seven years later, when nominated by President Eisenhower to be ambassador to Switzerland, Taylor told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that about 8 or 10 per cent of flying saucer reports should be taken seriously).
8.

The "flying pancake" and "saucers-are-ours" explanations were discounted, however, in April stories filed by the wire services.

One story, in The Chicago Daily News of April 4, 1950, was:

WASHINGTON, AP--The Navy says, in regard to the latest flying saucer report:

--It has not developed any pancake-shaped jet planes and it is not experimenting with any saucer-shaped missiles.

In fact, the department reported. . .the nearest thing to a flying saucer it ever developed has not flown since 1947.

The "nearest thing," the Navy said, was an experimental plane which became the XF5U. The Navy added, however, that a full-scale model of the XF5U never got off the ground.

Lawrence sought the final word in the controversy in a column of April 17. He told of military research and concluded:

For officials to explain all the different experiments would be to disclose military secrets. That is the principal reason why the Defense Department has called a halt on investigating the different (saucer) reports.

One thing government officials are ready to say positively --the flying objects being seen by the public are not from another planet or foreign country. They are what the experts call 'conventional' aircraft and, in due time, the public will learn what they mean to future warfare. 9

In March 1950, the month before the XF5U controversy, wire service and newspaper reports focused on two bizarre stories about little men who supposedly piloted the flying saucers.

One, printed in a Los Angeles newspaper and sent nationwide by the wire services, was dubbed "Dimmick's gimmick." Ray. L. Dimmick, a California businessman, told of finding a 23-inch body in the wreckage of a saucer on a Mexican mountainside. When his account was published, Dimmick reconsidered and said it was two other men, not he, who had come upon the dead saucer pilot.

The other story began in a Denver University classroom where a guest speaker said that saucers carrying crews of 30-inch

men had landed in the United States and the Air Force was hiding them. The speaker, a Denver oilman named Silas M. Newton, said his story was supported by a scientist whom he called "Dr. Gee." Their story was carried by the wire services, including the AP national wire, and provided material for a book, Behind The Flying Saucers, written by Frank Scully, a columnist for Variety and a friend of Newton's.

"Dr. Gee" was identified as Leo Ge Bauer when he and Newton were arrested in October 1952 for bilking a rancher out of \$34,000-- money spent on a machine they said could find oil and water underground. 10

While "Dr. Gee," "Dimmick's Gimmick," and the "Flying Pancake" and their like occasionally drew attention away from less exotic saucer reports, the reports did continue through 1950 and, less frequently, through 1951--setting the stage for 1952. That year the Air Force would record almost twice as many saucer reports as it had received in the previous five years.

Saucers Over Washington

Of the 1,501 reports of flying saucers recorded by the Air Force during 1952, 862 came during the months of July and August; 11 of the 77 saucer stories sent on the AP national wire in 1952, 52 were sent during July and August; of the 32 rolls of microfilm this study had on 1952 press clippings, July and August clippings accounted for 25 of the rolls and parts of five others.

The high incidence of saucer reports and news coverage during July and August 1952 has been attributed, in part, to the fact that unidentified returns, or "blips," were seen on radar screens scanning the sky over Washington, D.C., on the weekends of July 19-20 and

July 26-27. At the same time, ground observers and aircraft crews reported seeing unidentified lights over the capital.

Yet not counting July and August, the number of recorded Air Force reports for the other 10 months of 1952 almost matched the total number of reports recorded for the previous five years--639 to 843. So saucers were reported during months other than July and August.

On Friday, January 4, for example, The Watsonville, Calif., Register-Pajaronian printed a story with a somewhat prophetic lead:

Flying saucers are with us again.

Watsonville police, Monterey County sheriffs deputies and witnesses from here to Greenfield (about 50 miles) sighted a weird cigar-shaped object rushing through the sky at about 5 a.m. Friday. . .

Four days later, across the nation, Newsday reported that police in Babylon Town, Long Island, had seen flying saucers. There also were signs of saucer consciousness in the Midwest and Southwest. In East St. Louis, Ill., on February 15, a weather balloon, which had broken loose from moorings at an air base in Ohio, caused a spate of "flying saucer" telephone calls to police and news media. On February 20, The Santa Fe New Mexican reported:

It could be that a number of New Mexicans saw flying saucers yesterday. On the other hand, they may have seen some of the weather balloons sent aloft from White Sands Proving Ground.

The "either-or" theme continued through the story.

In February and March there were magazine and wire service accounts of saucer reports made by military pilots fighting in Korea. And, in April, Life magazine printed an article which, with Keyhoe's 1950 True article became a classic in saucer literature.

The April 7 Life magazine article, by H.B. Darrach Jr. and Robert Ginna, was "Have We Visitors From Space?" Above the story was a secondary headline, "The Air Force is now ready to concede that many saucer and fireball sightings still defy explanation; here LIFE offers some scientific evidence that there is a real case for interplanetary flying saucers."

Basically, the article said that the Air Force maintained a constant study of unidentified aerial objects and invited citizens to report sightings of flying saucers. Ten such sightings were discussed by Darrach and Ginna, leading to this conclusion.

. . .the real depths of the saucer mystery bemuse penetration, as the night sky swallows up a flashlight beam. What of the other shapes? Why do the things make no sound? What power urges them at such terrible speeds through the sky? Who, or what, is aboard? Where do they come from? Why are they here? What are the intentions of the beings who control them?

Before these awesome questions, science--and mankind--can yet only halt in wonder. Answers may come in a generation--or tomorrow. Somewhere in the dark skies may be those who know.

Public interest was stirred by the article. Another story, written by Ginna and printed in Life June 9, said the April account "provoked a tremendous barrage of letters. . .an unprecedented response from readers. . ." who told of their sightings or offered explanations of the phenomenon.

Although mail to Life and to the Air Force did increase as a measureable result of the April article, there appeared to be no immediate and dramatic increase in the number of saucers reported in local newspapers or by the wire services.

The log of UFO stories on the AP national wire, for example, listed three for April. One, April 3, was based on the Life article

another, April 4, printed an Air Force confirmation that, as stated in Life, the military was still interested in UFOs. The third, April 15, was based on a report of flying saucers in Canada.

In May, there were two UFO-related stories. One, May 11, reported that an object seen over Seattle, Wash., was probably a meteor; the other, May 17, said astronomer Otto Struve doubted saucers came from Mars or Russia.

In June there were no AP national , or "A" , wire stories on saucers; in July there were 22 national stories and countless ones sent on state and regional wires. The first national account, July 15, was of a saucer report which became a classic in flying saucer lore, the sighting of several discs over Chesapeake Bay by two Pan American Airlines pilots, William B. Nash and William Fortenberry.

Other sightings and UFO stories followed. Excerpts from twelve will be presented below because (1) this seemed to be one of the best ways to show a reader what happened during a wave of saucer sightings and (2) the excerpts may suggest to the reader what was happening just before unidentified objects were reported over the nation's capital.

DAYTON, Ohio, July 18 (UP)--An Air Force spokesman said today some 60 reports of flying saucers have been received during the past two weeks, but he could give no reason for the sudden increase.

Capt. E.J. Ruppelt of the Air Technical Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base said reports of phantom activity in the sky were pouring into his office at an unprecedented rate.

"People are seeing unidentified objects in the sky at a rate almost double last year," Ruppelt said. "We've had about 60 reports in the last two weeks alone. . . ."

*

From The Riverside, Calif., Press, July 18:

INDIO--An Indio woman, participating in the twenty four hour alert for ground observers today told of spotting 'two shiny discs.'

'If they weren't flying saucers, I don't know what they were,' Mrs. Pauline Watts, Indio supervisor of ground observers, reported.

Mrs. Watts said she saw the discs through a pair of field glasses while watching a pair of B36's at 2:45 p.m. Monday (July 14). . .

*

CHICAGO, July 18 (UP)--A veteran airline pilot reported seeing four flying objects moving at a terrific speed over Denver, Colo., last night.

Capt. Paul L. Carpenter of American Airlines said that he and his crew spotted the objects after a flight ahead of them radioed to be on the lookout. . .

He estimated their altitude at about 25,000 to 30,000 feet and said he thought they were traveling at about 3,000 miles an hour. . .

*

From The Minot, N.D., News & Optic Register, July 19:

Flying saucers over Minot?

Nobody here is using that phrase, but several persons have seen what they term "strange objects" in the night sky. . .

*

From The Wheeling, W.Va., Intelligencer, July 19:

Those flying saucers are back again!

Mrs. Jess Jarrell of 1313 Lind Street reported last night that she and her daughter sighted a weird, roaring, whirling, flat object in the sky yesterday afternoon. . .

*

ALBUQUERQUE, July 19 (AP)--Call them saucers if you like, but Southwestern skies are being flooded with luminous objects, Dr. Lincoln LaPaz reported today.

By whatever name you call them--flying saucers, guided missiles, space ships--they act strangely, LaPaz, University of New Mexico fireball expert explained.

What are they? LaPaz said he would like to know. . .

*

DAYTON, Ohio, July 19 (AP)--A spokesman at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base says the Air Force still has no explanation for 15 per cent of the approximate 1,000 flying saucer reports it has received.

The Dayton Journal-Herald quoted the officer as saying jet fighters equipped with radar have been scrambling into the sky seeking the unidentified objects but have been unable to make contact with any 'saucer' . . .

Capt. E.J. Ruppelt, 'saucer' project officer of the Air Technical Intelligence Center, said, 'We are firmly convinced the persons making these reports actually see something in the skies' . . .

*

RICHMOND, Va., July 19 (AP)--Newspaper offices were flooded with calls and the city's police switchboard lit up like a July 4 firecracker.

Everyone told the same story--of huge flying saucers flitting about in the sky.

One man estimated they were traveling at 25,000 miles an hour. Another said they were flying in formation.

Police investigated and found the cause of it all to be the beams from two giant searchlights.

*

From The Chicago Daily News, July 19:

Flying saucers are real says Lt. Col. Edwin H. Weig, executive officer of the Illinois Wing of the Civil Air Patrol.

Lt. Col. Weig said he believes the objects are not natural objects and that he saw one a week ago over Lincolnwood. . .

*

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)--Authorities today were investigating reports of flying saucers in this area.

The reports came yesterday (July 18) from Bernard Thomann of the suburban town of Tonawanda, who told police he saw eight objects flying about 6,000 feet off the ground and a single 'round, silver object which looked very much like a flying saucer.'

*

From The Warren, Ohio, Tribune-Chronicle, July 19:

SALEM--Unexplained objects resembling descriptions of flying saucers were seen to the north of Salem Thursday night. Walter Bak of Benton Road was the first to notice the whitish flying objects between 10 p.m. and midnight.

*

From The Elgin, Ill., Review-News, July 19:

A 'mysterious and unidentified object' in the skies over Elgin was spotted and charted last night by three persons who were on duty at the Ground Observers post atop the city hall. . .

About 24 hours after unidentified objects had been reported over the Elgin, Ill., city hall, unidentified objects were reported over Washington, D.C., including the restricted air corridor around the White House. The major UFO reports covered by the press were those of the night of July 19, 1952, and the morning of July 20, a Saturday and a Sunday, and those of the nights of July 26 and 27.

Late the night of the 19th, an air traffic controller at the CAA's Washington Air Routing and Traffic Control Center (ARTC) called for the senior controller, Harry C. Barnes, and showed him seven targets on a radar scope. From that time, 11:40 p.m., until 5:30 a.m. on the 20th, Barnes and other controllers puzzled over those seven and several other radar blips which were not caused by any scheduled flights. The radar scopes were checked by technicians and recalibrated; the unidentified blips kept appearing.

The controllers asked Capt. S.C. Pierman, a Capital Airlines pilot of 17 years experience, to look--upon takeoff--in the area where the ARTC radar showed mysterious blips. He looked and saw unidentified lights; the control tower at Washington National Airport reported returns on its radar, coinciding with those on the ARTC scopes; in addition to Capt. Pierman's report there were other air-visual and ground-visual reports of unidentified lights and lighted objects over Washington.

Barnes had been with the CAA for nine years, the last five working on radar traffic control. His unsuccessful efforts to get Air Force planes to try to identify the unidentified returns will be discussed in Chapter vi. Of interest here is an article Barnes wrote for the Newspaper Enterprise Association, a news-feature syndi-

cate. Published July 29, the article by Barnes noted:

. . .There is no other conclusion I can reach but that for six hours on the morning of July 20 there were at least 10 unidentified objects moving above Washington. They were not ordinary aircraft. I could tell that by their movement on the scope.

I can safely deduce that they performed gyrations which no known aircraft could perform. By this I mean that our scope showed that they could make right angle turns and complete reversals of flight.

Nor, in my opinion, could any natural phenomena such as shooting stars, electrical disturbances or clouds account for these spots on our radar.

Wire service accounts added the Washington, D.C., reports to the top of the list of other UFO sightings reported across the nation:

WASHINGTON, July 21 (AP)--The Air Force today investigated reports that several flying saucers had been spotted by radar virtually in its own backyard on the outskirts of the nation's capital.

Not only were UFOs seen on radar--indicating actual substance instead of mere light--but two airline pilots. . .saw eerie lights fitting the general description of flying saucers the same night. . .

WASHINGTON, July 21 (UP)--The Air Force contributed to the rash of flying saucer speculation today by disclosing strange aerial objects have been picked up on radar near the capital area.

The Air Force said radar operators at National Airport reported tracking eight unidentified objects on their screens about midnight last Saturday. . .

The pattern was about the same the next weekend. Unidentified blips appeared on radar scopes, again; unidentified lights were seen. A major change was that Air Force F-94 jet interceptors responded to the reports. Some F-94 pilots saw the lights and chased but could not appear to overtake them. Some F-94s reportedly made brief radar lock-ons with the unidentified objects--meaning their automatic gun-sights had locked-on to a target--but then apparently lost them.

Excerpts from three wire service stories indicated what happened the weekend of July 26 and 27 and the days soon afterward:

WASHINGTON, July 27 (UP)--Mysterious objects streaked through the Washington skies early today at such speeds that 550-mile-an-hour jet planes could not catch them, the Air Force reported.

'We don't know what they are,' an Air Force spokesman said. 'We have no concrete evidence that they are flying saucers. Conversely, we have no concrete evidence they are not flying saucers.'

The Civil Aeronautics Administration's air route traffic control center first picked up the mysterious objects on its radar screens. It said as many as 12 of the unidentified objects appeared on the radar scopes.

It was the second such visit to the Washington area in a week by unidentified objects. . .

WASHINGTON, July 28 (INS)--The Air Force revealed today that jet pilots have been placed on a 24-hour nationwide 'alert' against 'flying saucers' with orders to 'shoot them down' if they refuse to land.

It was learned that pilots have gone aloft on several occasions in an effort to shoot the mysterious objects to the ground, but never came close enough to use their guns.

The Air Force refused to confirm this, but Lt. Col. Moncel Monts, Air Force information officer, stated:

'The jet pilots are, and have been, under orders to investigate unidentified objects and to shoot them down, if they can't talk them down'. . .

WASHINGTON, July 30 (UP)--The Air Force offered today a combination of summer heat waves and optical and radar illusions as a plausible explanation of the latest flurry of 'flying saucers.'

Intelligence officers ridiculed the notion that the mysterious objects in the sky hail from other planets or Russia--or pose a menace to the United States.

They were confident that. . .new scientific investigations. . . would explain away the objects as 'physical phenomena' such as mirages. And, maybe, cure the nation of sauceritis.

As for the flocks of objects sighted by radar over Washington in the past 10 days, Maj. Gen. John A. Samford, Air Force director of intelligence, told a news conference yesterday that 'my own

mind is satisfied they resulted from temperature inversion' . . .

The "temperature inversion" solution to the Washington UFO reports received wide coverage in the press and has remained as the Air Force's answer to the blips seen on radar by Barnes and other air traffic controllers.

A temperature inversion occurs when, instead of the temperature decreasing as altitude increases, there is an inversion--a mass of warm air overlaying a mass of cold air. Such inversions may cause spurious returns or deflect radar beams so that, although the radar appears to be showing objects in the sky, it is actually reporting ground objects such as automobiles or buildings. High water vapor content in the air also may produce spurious returns or anomalous propagation--which radar operators sometimes call "angels."

The tricks which temperature inversions may play on radar screens have been widely recognized. What often has been disputed--with regard to the UFO phenomenon--has been (1) the degree to which experienced radar operators could distinguish between "angels" and real targets and (2) whether temperature inversions did in fact exist when Air Force investigators said inversions caused UFOs to register on radar screens.

A study published by the Civil Aeronautics Administration in ¹³ May 1953 concluded that temperature inversions did exist over Washington during the summer of 1952, sufficient to cause spurious radar returns.

The temperature inversion explanation, however, could not be applied in blanket fashion to the thousands of other flying saucer reports printed in daily newspapers during 1952. UFO news items--

such as those listed on pages 37-39--continued to be published after General Samford's explanation of the Washington reports.

And, during the rest of the early 1950s and early 1960s, similar accounts of UFO sightings continued to be reported in the nation's newspapers. From 1953 through 1966, there appeared to be only three peak periods of press attention to flying saucers, November 1957, August 1965 and March 1966. This chapter will conclude with a brief review of each of those periods.

November 1957--Levelland

On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched the Earth's first artificial satellite. A month later, November 3, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik II, carrying the dog Laika. At the time of the first Sputnik there was no dramatic increase in reports of UFOs to the Air Force or of coverage of UFOs in the press. The second launch coincided with the start of the biggest wave of reports since 1952.

While the launches may have turned millions of eyes skyward, the Air Force blamed news media--not the satellites--for the increase in reports of flying saucers. Records at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, headquarters of the Air Force UFO inquiry, cited news coverage of flying saucer reports at Levelland, Texas, as the primary cause of the November 1957 wave:

This case triggered off more than 300 similarly described reports within a six day period because of the nationwide publicity and sensationalism given by the press, radio and TV. . .

The Levelland case actually consisted of several reports the night of November 2 and the morning of November 3 of elliptical

flying objects, with accompanying electromagnetic effects blamed for many automobile engine failures.

Wire service accounts of the UFO reports apparently received wide attention. The Levelland Daily Sun-News of November 5, 1957, reported, under the headline "Entire World Asks Answer:"

A somewhat dazed Levelland--thrown into the glaring spotlight of globe-girdling publicity by a handful of witnesses--pinched itself Tuesday morning to see if it were true and tried to grow used to its new role as 'space capital of the world.'

Repeated sightings of a 200-foot long, egg-shaped ball of fire which moved at great speed and gripped the imagination of the world because it reportedly killed the motors and knocked out the lights of nearby automobiles put Levelland 'on the map' as it perhaps has never been done before.

The Levelland 'whatnik' out-sputniked Russia's second satellite and turned Hockley County Sheriff Weir Clem into the nation's most popular news source, as he added credibility to the sightings by repeating time and time again how he personally saw the blinding light of the strange phenomenon and interviewed others who saw the object also.

Telephone lines hummed as newspaper, radio and television reporters called to get the story direct from the sheriff and witnesses who saw the object.

Chief operator Mrs. Willis D. Goode at the local telephone office reported that incoming calls had doubled as a result of the sighting here. . .

From outside Levelland, other UFO reports on November 4 and 5 seemed to substantiate the Levelland reports:

WHITE SANDS PROVING GROUNDS, N.M. Nov. 4 (UP)--Two separate military patrols reported today they had seen an unidentified flying object near the spot where the first atomic bomb was exploded in 1945.

The description offered by the two patrols fits the one offered by persons who said they saw a flying object near Levelland, Texas, yesterday. . .

NEW ORLEANS, La., Nov. 5 (AP)--The Coast Guard cutter Sebago reported sighting and unidentified flying object over the Gulf of Mexico at 5:21 a.m. CST today. The object seen for about

three seconds resembled a brilliant planet moving at tremendous speed, the report said.

Coast Guard headquarters in New Orleans received a radio message about the sighting. . .

The message said the object had been tracked on the Sebago's radar screen for 11 minutes before the visual contact and for 16 minutes afterward. During these periods, the object darted off the screen every few minutes, but soon returned. . .

Many other reports of UFOs followed from across the nation throughout the first week of November as the press temporarily popularized the term "Whatnik" as a UFO counterpart to Russia's Sputnik. Of the 11 UFO stories sent on the AP national wire during that month, nine were sent between November 3 and 6.

Table 4 shows the number of UFO reports recorded by the Air Force in November 1957, on a daily basis. The distribution of the 349 November reports showed a pattern of peak activity early in the month. The high number of reports for November 6 may have resulted, in part, from an evening auroral display which was visible down to the Southern United States.

TABLE 4

UFO REPORTS RECORDED BY AIR FORCE
IN NOVEMBER 1957, ON A DAILY BASIS

Nov 1 - 5	Nov 11 - 9	Nov 21 - 4
Nov 2 - 5	Nov 12 - 17	Nov 22 - 3
Nov 3 - 6	Nov 13 - 6	Nov 23 - 8
Nov 4 - 14	Nov 14 - 9	Nov 24 - 3
Nov 5 - 47	Nov 15 - 6	Nov 25 - 10
Nov 6 - 61	Nov 16 - 7	Nov 26 - 16
Nov 7 - 21	Nov 17 - 5	Nov 27 - 7
Nov 8 - 8	Nov 18 - 3	Nov 28 - 0
Nov 9 - 27	Nov 19 - 8	Nov 29 - 4
Nov 10 - 15	Nov 20 - 8	Nov 30 - 7

In time, the Air Force attributed the Levelland sightings to a weather phenomenon known as ball lightning, the White Sands reports

to mis-identification of the setting moon and Venus, and the Sebago report to a meteor and spurious radar returns. In totals for 1957, however, the Air Force listed only six UFO reports as satellites.

August 1965--Air Force Credibility

During 1965, the Air Force recorded 887 reports of UFOs, the highest annual total since the 1,006 of 1957. August, with 262 reports, was the peak month of 1965 as sightings were reported predominantly in the states of Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas.

The number of UFO reports is of secondary importance here, however. Of primary importance is that August 1965 marked one of the few times there was relatively widespread press questioning--if not criticism--of the Air Force UFO inquiry.

In dispute was an Air Force explanation of UFO reports in early August. News accounts of UFO sightings in Texas and Oklahoma carried the announcement that the Air Force said the sightings were "astronomical in nature." The Associated Press, United Press International, and other news agencies on August 3 quoted an Air Force spokesman in Washington, D.C. as saying:

The objects observed may have been the planet Jupiter or the stars Rigel, Capella, Betelgeuse or Aldebaran which were visible at the time of the reported sightings. The azimuth and elevation of the sightings supports this preliminary conclusion.

The AP and UPI, however, that same day also carried strong arguments against the Air Force explanation. The Air Force theory was questioned by Professor Walter Webb, chief lecturer at the Hayden Planetarium in Boston, and Dr. Robert Risser, director of the Oklahoma Science and Art Foundation in Oklahoma City.

Risser declared:

This is as far from the truth as you can get. Somebody has made a mistake. These stars and planets are on the opposite side of the earth from Oklahoma at this time of the year.

Risser and Webb were correct. It was impossible for Jupiter and those stars named by the Air Force to have caused the UFO sightings in Texas and Oklahoma. The printed Air Force explanation could have been disproved by consulting an elementary text on the stars and planets.

In the summer of 1968, Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Northwestern University astronomer and Air Force UFO consultant, was asked how such a blatant error could have occurred. He answered that he had been in Canada during August 1965 and the Air Force had not asked him for any explanation of the sightings. The faulty explanation had not been made known to him before its release.

Lt. Col. Hector Quintanilla, director of Project Blue Book, said in a July 1968 interview that there had been a mixup on August 2, 1965, the day the explanation was released:

August 1965 was unfortunate. We had a news release for sightings in Wyoming and Montana between 2 and 4 a.m. It was released the same day as the sightings in Oklahoma. The newspapers had a field day--it was partly our fault. We should have explained that the release was only for Montana and Wyoming. But it was handled by PR people out of Washington.

When the error was uncovered, another release was issued, but the Air Force "explanation of the explanation" received little coverage in the press. A review of August 1965 clippings indicated newspapers either printed only the first--and inaccurate--release as explaining the sightings, or printed stories with that explanation and the Risser-Webb rebuttal.

The "field day" to which Lt. Col. Quintanilla referred included coverage given to the critical comments made by Risser and Webb and such headlines as a five-column one, published over a UFO story in The Napa, Calif., Register of August 3 "Should UFO Observers Believe Their Eyes--Or The Air Force?"

In an August 15 column in The Atlanta Journal, John Keasler wrote:

I am getting a little worried about the Air Force's image when it comes to explaining flying saucers--it has gotten to where the Air Force stands around with its thumb in its mouth unable to think up good ad-libs.

That thing the other day when Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Kansas got on the phone, jumping up and down in excitement and babbling about flying saucers, was the living end--the Air Force said. Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Kansas were doubtless seeing the planet Jupiter (flying in diamond formation).

This is not going to get it, Air Force spokesmen. Particularly after that bad hole in the script. It was pointed out that Jupiter wasn't even in the vicinity. . .

The pressure of saucer-explaining obviously is getting these Air Force cats down...I don't even know how many writers the Air Force has, but after that bit last week, they need a vacation...

The Air Force UFO inquiry also was questioned in an August 10 editorial in a small daily newspaper, The Alameda, Calif., Times-Star, circulation 8,927:

. . .Just how the Air Force spokesmen were able to tell that the hundreds of reports of UFOs from an area about as large as Free Europe were faulty--and especially how they were able to do it within 24 hours of the time the reports came in--ought to rank as one of the most remarkable examples of lightning-like mass diagnosis of all time.

That is, it ought to, if the Air Force spokesmen were correct.

However, it now appears that--as countless thousands of well-informed persons have suspected for years now--the Air Force spokesmen were wrong.

By the fall, however, the Air Force had settled on an explanation of the reports in Kansas, Oklahoma, and other states. Inquiries about the sightings received this form letter response from the Air Force Office of Information:

This is in reply to your request for information on the recent UFO sightings in the Mid-West.

A study of the reports indicates that the sightings were due to a temperature inversion which caused astronomical bodies to appear to change colors and move when viewed through layers of the atmosphere.

The Aquarid (Delta) meteor shower which occurred from 26 July through 6 August of this year was also probably responsible for some of the sightings.

There was one report of an object which was picked up on radar. This object was stationary for 40 minutes which would indicate that it was a reflection from a ground object.

March 1966--"Swamp Gas"

For March 1966, the Air Force received 158 reports of UFOs, 104 less than the 262 received in August 1965. Yet press coverage of UFOs in March exceeded that of August. And, criticisms of the Air Force UFO inquiry became commonplace in news articles, editorial cartoons and comic strips as the press and public reacted to the explanation that UFOs reported in Michigan were probably "swamp gas."

Air Force consultant Dr. J. Allen Hynek and officials of the UFO Project at the University of Colorado said often that the furore over the swamp gas explanation led to the creation of the UFO Project in late 1966.

The explanation dealt only with UFOs reported in two Southern Michigan cities, Dexter, a few miles northwest of Ann Arbor, and Hillsdale, about 60 miles southwest of Dexter and Ann Arbor.

Although UFOs had been reported in the area since early March, the first sighting to attract wide public notice was that of March 20 on the farm of Frank Mannor, near Dexter.

Many afternoon newspapers of March 21 printed this story:

ANN ARBOR, Mich (UPI)--At least 40 persons saw an unidentified flying object land in a swamp near here Sunday night, police said Monday (March 21). Twelve witnesses were policemen.

Two sheriff's deputies said they saw eerie blinking lights--apparently on a flying object--rise above the trees, then dip.

Another policeman said he and other officers saw a formation of four or five flying objects. One passed right over his car, he said.

A farmer and his son (Frank and Ronald Mannor) said they approached within 500 yards of the object. It took off with a sound like that of a ricocheting bullet, they said. . .

The report from the Mannor farm was followed the next night (March 21) by a report from Hillsdale, Mich.:

HILLSDALE, Mich. (UPI)--A county civil defense director and 87 coeds said today they watched an eerie, hovering flying object settle in a swampy hollow near a college dormitory last night (the 21st).

William Van Horn, 41, Hillsdale County civil defense director for 10 years, said he watched the unidentified object through binoculars for three hours.

It was the second straight night a large number of witnesses reported seeing weird flying objects in southern Michigan. . .

By March 22, Democratic Representative Weston Vivian of Ann Arbor had said he would ask the Defense Department and the Air Force to investigate the UFO reports, and the Air Force had announced that it was sending Dr. Hynek to Dexter and Hillsdale.

While there were scores of reports of UFOs in Southern Michigan and more across the nation, Dr. Hynek focused on the Dexter and Hillsdale reports.

After three days of investigation, he reported on his findings Friday, March 25, at the largest news conference in the history of the Detroit Press Club.

Because his explanation became so controversial, the full text of his statement is presented in the appendix of this study.

A key portion of the statement was:

Other scientists have pointed out to me that in swamps the formation of H_2S (hydrogen sulfide) and CH_4 (Methane) from rotting vegetation is common. These could be ignited by the spontaneous burning of the Phosphine, PH_3 .

It would seem to me that the association of the sightings with swamps, in these particular cases, is more than coincidence . . . This (the reports of lights) could have been due to the release of variable quantities of marsh gas.

The disappearance of the light when people got close with flashlights or car lights would indicate that the glow seemed bright only to dark-adapted eyes. The night was dark--there was no moon. The Hillsdale girls kept their rooms dark in order to see the lights in the swamp.

I emphasize in conclusion that I cannot prove in a Court of Law that this is the full explanation of these sightings. It appears very likely, however, that the combination of the conditions of this particular winter, an unusually mild one in this area, and the particular weather conditions that night--there was little wind at either location--were such as to have produced this unusual and puzzling display.

Press and public reactions to the "swamp gas" theory were prompt, wide-ranging and generally hostile. In none of the hundreds of Dexter-Hillsdale news items reviewed by this study was it reported that a witness to the sightings agreed with Dr. Hynek's suggestion. To the contrary, the Mannor family, police involved, Van Horn and the Hillsdale women students all rejected the "swamp gas" answer--even though that answer had been suggested in a few newspaper columns before Hynek offered it.

Press attention to UFOs appeared to increase after "swamp gas" was available as an angle to include in news reports of flying saucers. For example, prior to the news conference, the Associated Press had sent four stories on Dexter-Hillsdale on its national wire. In the five days after the news conference, 15 stories were sent on the national wire. Further, in an analysis of how the Chicago and Detroit daily newspapers covered the Dexter-Hillsdale story, it was found that the six papers had 588 column inches of UFO stories during the four days before Hynek's press conference and 843 column inches of such stories in the four days after the conference, including a Sunday when The Chicago Daily News was not published.

The "post-swamp gas" stories told of disagreement with Hynek's hypothesis, news sightings of flying saucers and hoaxes staged by students at the California Institute of Technology and Valparaiso University.

Included in the news stories was a request by Republican House of Representatives leader Gerald Ford of Michigan for a Congressional hearing. Minority leader Ford requested the hearing in a March 28 letter to Representative L. Mendel Rivers, chairman of the Armed Services Committee. In part, Ford wrote:

No doubt you have noted the recent flurry of newspaper stories about unidentified flying objects (UFOs). I have taken special interest in these accounts because many of the latest reported sightings have been in my home state of Michigan.

The Air Force sent a consultant, Astrophysicist Dr. J. Allen Hynek of Northwestern University to investigate the various reports; and he dismissed all of them as the product of college student pranks or swamp gas or an impression created by the rising crescent moon and the planet Venus. I do not agree that all of these reports can or should be so easily explained. . .

In the firm belief that the American public deserves a better explanation than that thus far given by the Air Force, I strongly recommend that there be a committee investigation of the UFO phenomenon.

I think we owe it to the people to establish credibility regarding UFOs and to produce the greatest possible enlightenment on this subject. . .

The Armed Services Committee discussed UFOs at a meeting April 5, 1966, less than two weeks after Hynek's news conference.

At the hearing, Secretary of the Air Force Harold Brown and then-Major Quintanilla reviewed the Air Force UFO program, calling it "objective," "thorough," and open-minded. Criticism of the Air Force program was limited primarily to that found in newspaper clippings submitted by Representative Ford.

In his testimony, Dr. Hynek suggested that a panel of scientists be appointed to conduct an independent study of UFOs and the Air Force UFO data. The proposal was neither new nor novel; Hynek and other Air Force consultants had made similar proposals before and, periodically, the Air Force did call upon scientific panels for a review of the UFO phenomenon.

In the spring of 1966, however, pressures apparently were strong for a new and more highly powered scientific review of UFOs. By May, it was reported that the Air Force would hire scientists to join in the flying saucer investigation; in October, it was announced that the Department of Defense had contracted with the University of Colorado to conduct a \$300,000 study of the phenomenon, under the direction of Dr. Edward U. Condon, noted physicist and former head of the National Bureau of Standards.

The award of that contract served as a terminal point for the flying saucer era covered by this study--essentially from the

first flying saucer story in 1947 to the furore over "swamp gas." The following chapters will provide details about the nature of the press coverage during these years.

Summary

Public awareness of flying saucers has been quite high since the phenomenon began in 1947: the awareness, in large part, has been attributable to extensive newspaper coverage of UFO reports. Public opinion polls in 1966 and 1968 indicated that more than 40 per cent of the public believed that flying saucers were real objects.

While June 24, 1947, generally has been accepted as the date news coverage first focused upon flying saucers, it appeared from a review of the 1947 coverage that the phenomenon was not widely recognized by the press until the July 4 weekend of 1947.

During the 1947-66 period, national coverage of UFOs appeared to be sporadic, with peak periods of coverage coming during 1947, 1952, 1957, 1965 and 1966. Coverage on the local level, however, appeared to be relatively continuous.

CHAPTER III

THREE STUDIES OF PRESS COVERAGE OF UFOS

In research on the nature of press coverage of UFOs, three independent analyses were conducted, in addition to extensive but more informal case study and anecdotal approaches. The three analyses were: (1) the mail questionnaire survey of newspapermen introduced in the preceding chapter; (2) a limited content analysis of 1,000 local newspaper clippings selected from the Larson collection for the years 1961 through 1966; and (3) a more detailed analysis of 511 local and wire service clippings from the years 1947 through 1966, selected primarily from clippings compiled by the Air Force and the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP).

The findings of these three studies will be discussed at length--but not in their entirety--in this chapter.

Questionnaire Findings

As explained in Chapter ii, the July 1967 responses from 32 daily newspapers across the nation showed that news staff members estimated their papers would print a total of approximately 95 local UFO reports in three months' time. During the same period, the

responses indicated that the newspapers would receive, but would not publish, 151 other local reports of UFOs.

Table 5 shows the distribution of UFO reports received and used on the basis of the circulation of the respondents' newspapers.

TABLE 5
UFO REPORTS RECEIVED AND USED
ON BASIS OF CIRCULATION

Circulation	Number of Papers	Reports Used	Reports Not Used	Totals
Less than 20,000	50	42	33	75
20,000 - 80,000	30	34	44	78
More than 80,000	12	19	74	93
Totals	92	95	151	246

As shown by the table, the tendency was for respondents from papers with lower circulations to estimate that their newspapers would publish most of the UFO reports they received; respondents from papers with higher circulations estimated that, while their newspapers might print more UFO reports, they would print news items about less than half of the reports received.

On a percentage basis, newspapers with circulations below 20,000 were estimated to print 56 per cent of the reports received; newspapers with circulations between 20- and 80,000, 44 per cent; newspapers with circulations greater than 80,000, 20 per cent.

In reading the table, it should be remembered that the median daily newspaper circulation in the nation is less than 10,000. Consequently, the table would seem to indicate that most daily newspapers in the nation publish the majority of UFO reports they receive.

One interpretation of the apparent relationship between circulation and use of UFO reports may be that the UFO reports were treated as local news, not unlike minor traffic accidents or silver anniversaries. That is, there may have been more of them in the larger cities, but they were less likely to appear there in print.

Twelve respondents said their newspapers generally published every UFO report received. Of the 12, seven were in the low circulation category, below 20,000; four were in the middle range, 20- to 80,000, and one was in the high circulation group, more than 80,000.

While estimates of UFO reports received and used appeared to differ according to circulation, the reasons given for printing or not printing reports of UFOs generally appeared to be the same, regardless of circulation size. On the questionnaire, several possible reasons were listed for printing or not printing UFO reports. The reasons were compiled on the basis of professional experience, consultation with newsmen and advice from researchers on the staff of the UFO Project at the University of Colorado.

Respondents were asked to mark "those items considered the most frequent conditions under which your newspapers covers local UFO reports" and "those items considered the most frequent reasons for not covering local UFO reports."

Table 6 shows the answers respondents gave as to their reasons for printing or not printing reports of UFOs. The answers are in two categories, for newspapers with circulations less than 20,000 and for newspapers with circulations greater than 20,000.

TABLE 6

REASONS FOR PRINTING, NOT PRINTING REPORTS
OF UFOS, BY CIRCULATION SIZE

Reasons for Printing	Circulation		Total (N=92)
	Below 20,000 (N=50)	Above 20,000 (N=42)	
There is a need for a 'bright' or 'freak' short news item	5	2	7
The explanation of the UFO can be provided with the report	8	10	18
There are a number of witnesses to the reported sighting	22	27	49
Competitive news agencies are covering the local reports	2	1	3
There are a number of local reports of different sightings	17	13	30
Official sources (police, weather bureau, Air Force, etc.) tend to corroborate the report	12	14	26
Non-official witnesses to the sighting seem trustworthy	21	14	35
There are wire service reports of sightings elsewhere	13	10	23
Reasons for Not Printing			
There is insufficient news space.	1	0	1
The story is held for developments which do not materialize.	6	5	11
There is an insufficient number of witnesses	8	14	22
There is no coverage by competitive news agencies	1	1	2
There is no known responsible news source	8	10	18
Official sources (police, weather bureau, Air Force, etc.) tend to discredit the reports	5	9	14
There is general mistrust of the subject matter	4	7	11
The report appears to be an isolated case	3	12	15
The report is from a known unreliable source	7	6	13

As indicated by Table 6, the three most frequent reasons for printing reports of UFOs were the number of witnesses involved (49), their perceived trustworthiness (35), and the number of local reports (30). The three most frequent reasons for not printing reports of UFOs were an insufficient number of witnesses (22), the absence of a known responsible news source (18), and the fact that the report appeared to be an isolated case (15).

Reliance upon official news sources, such as policemen, the Air Force and the weather bureau, was the fourth most frequent response in both reasons for printing and not printing reports of UFOs.

The least mentioned reasons for printing UFO reports were that competitive news agencies were covering such reports (3) or there was a need for a "bright" short news item (7). Least mentioned reasons for not printing a story about a UFO were insufficient news space (1) and absence of competitive coverage (2).

There appeared to be a degree of consistency in the reasons given for printing or not printing reports of UFO sightings. In both instances, the primary criteria were shown to be the number and credibility of witnesses and the number of reports received by the newspaper.

Responses also indicated that decisions on whether to print a UFO report generally were made independent of such factors as what competitive news agencies were doing, amount of news space available, or the need for a "bright" short news item.

There appeared to be a tendency for newsmen who listed "number of witnesses" as a reason for printing a report of a UFO also to list "insufficient number of witnesses" as a reason for not printing a

report. And, those who said reports of UFOs were published because official sources corroborated the reports also tended to say that reports were not published when official sources discredited them.

As shown in Table 6, reasons for printing reports of UFOs did not appear to differ markedly on the basis of circulation. There did appear to be differences, however, with regard to reasons for not printing reports.

Respondents from the larger newspapers tended more often to say their newspapers did not print reports of UFOs because (1) there were not enough witnesses, (2) official sources discredited the reports, and (3) the reports were isolated cases.

Summary

The questionnaire data indicated (1) that newspapers with larger circulations were reported to be more selective than smaller papers in printing UFO reports, (2) that the main criteria in deciding whether to print a UFO report were said to be the number of witnesses or the number of sightings involved, and (3) that respondents from larger newspapers reported their papers tended more often not to print UFO reports because there were not enough witnesses, official sources were skeptical, or the reports were considered isolated cases.

Content Analysis Findings--1961-1966

To focus upon journalistic practices in news coverage of UFO reports--and not solely upon journalistic opinions of the coverage--two content analysis projects were conducted. The first, the simpler of the two, will be discussed in this section.

The scope of the first analysis was limited to answering three basic questions: (1) Who were the sources of information and witnesses of UFOs quoted or mentioned in newspaper accounts of UFOs? (2) What was the nature of the news accounts of UFO reports, particularly with regard to the number of different UFO sightings found in individual news items? (3) How did the findings of (1) and (2) appear to differ during periods of low, medium and high press coverage of UFOs?

The analysis was based on clippings obtained by the Boulder UFO Project from the extensive collection of Mrs. June Larson of Seattle, Wash. While clippings held by Mrs. Larson dated from the early 1950s, her subscriptions to clipping services had been effective only since late 1960. Consequently, this analysis was limited to the years 1961 through 1966.

Mrs. Larson provided a frequency distribution of the number of newspaper clippings she held for each month during the six-year period. From this distribution, the low, median and high months for press clippings were selected for each year, a total of 18 months and approximately 3,000 local and wire service clippings.

TABLE 7

CLIPPINGS RECEIVED FROM LARSON
COLLECTION, 1961-1966

Months	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	Totals
High	Jan 200	Aug 67	Jan 41	May 151	Aug 1118	Mar 663	2,240
Medn	Apr 48	Jan 38	Aug 28	Nov 65	Mar 115	Jul 215	509
Low	Oct 14	Mar 16	May 10	Jan 12	Jun 35	Feb 58	145
Totals	262	121	79	228	1268	936	2,894

For ease in computing percentages, it was decided to base the content analysis on 1,000 local newspaper items. The selection of items was weighted in favor of the low and median months to avoid

having more than 75 per cent of the sample clippings taken from high months. The percentage of clippings from low months was increased from 5 per cent in the Larson clippings to 8 per cent in the analysis; the percentage of clippings from median months was increased from 18 per cent to about 30 per cent; the percentage of clippings in the high months was reduced from 77 per cent in the Larson clippings to about 60 per cent in the analysis.

The percentage of clippings sampled for each year, however, remained about the same as the percentage found in the overall collection, as shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8

PER CENT OF CLIPPINGS IN LARSON
COLLECTION, IN SAMPLE

	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	Total
Per cent of total	9.4	4.1	2.8	9.8	37.4	36.5	100
Per cent of sample	9.1	4.2	2.7	7.9	43.8	32.3	100

Differences between the characteristics of the sample and characteristics of the clippings in the Larson collection arose because the former was composed entirely of local newspaper clippings while the latter included wire service items.

Every local news item was drawn from the low and median months and every third local item from the high months until there were 1,000 clippings in the sample. The totals were 82 from the low months, 317 from the median months, and 601 from the high months.

The items were analyzed as to (1) sources of information, or UFO witnesses mentioned in each item, and (2) the number of UFO reports contained in each item.

Based on a review of UFO news items and consultation with newsmen and scientists at the University of Colorado UFO Project, nine occupational categories were devised for classifying persons mentioned in UFO stories: (1) newsmen or news agencies, that is reporters for newspapers or broadcast media or news agencies named as providing information about a UFO report; (2) UFO investigators, specifically those aligned with the Air Force Project Blue Book or Dr. Hynek, the Air Force consultant on UFOs; (3) UFO organizations, persons affiliated with organizations such as the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) or the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO); (4) those whose occupations regularly dealt with aerial phenomena, pilots, balloonists, FAA or CAA air traffic control employees, radar and control tower operators, etc.; (5) scientists and technicians, including astronomers, meteorologists, physicists, chemists and others in the physical and life sciences, and psychologists, sociologists and others in the behavioral sciences; (6) those employed in law enforcement or security occupations such as city, county and state police, civil defense officials, members of the Ground Observers Corps and security guards; (7) elected or appointed public officials and military officers not included in any of the above; (8) individuals identified by name and/or occupation and hometown but not classifiable under any of the above, and (9) anonymous sources or witnesses including those who refused to be identified or were identified only as "a man," "a motorist," "two teen-agers," etc.

A tenth category was added to record the number of stories in which there was no reference to any one who could be classified under categories (1) through (7).

Every story then was analyzed as to whether a particular occupational group or agency was or was not mentioned at least once.

The stories also were analyzed as to the nature of the UFO reported. The classification was five-fold: (1) the story dealt with one specific UFO report; (2) there was more than one report, but details as to the place and time of sighting were given for each report mentioned; (3) the story included either (1) or (2) but also included general references to other reports of UFOs; (4) the news item dealt primarily with general and current reports of UFOs and not with specific reports, and (5) the item include a review or historical discussion of the UFO phenomenon.

Data on sources of information and witnesses and the nature of the UFO reported were recorded by month and by year of publication. The findings are shown on a frequency and percentage basis in Tables 9 through 12.

TABLE 9

NUMBER OF REFERENCES TO OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES
IN UFO NEWS ITEMS, BY MONTHS AND YEARS

	MONTHS									T O T A L	
	L	M	H	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Sources/Witnesses In UFO News Items	O	E	I	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	T
	W	N	H	1	2	3	4	5	6		L
NEWSMEN: Reporters, broadcasters, media	16	37	96	9	4	3	11	71	51	149	
UFO INVESTIGATORS: Hynek, Air Force	3	32	127	12	7	1	12	80	50	162	
UFO ORGANIZATIONS: NICAP, APRO others	16	46	50	15	7	2	13	40	35	112	
AERIAL PHENOMENA: Pilots, FAA, radar	15	42	115	20	7	5	18	65	57	172	
TECHNICIANS, SCIENTISTS:	11	37	92	15	3	3	15	63	41	140	
ELECTED-APPOINTED OFFICIALS; MILITARY:	5	19	73	4	4	4	9	40	35	112	
LAW ENFORCEMENT- SECURITY:	20	75	250	33	11	4	33	123	141	345	
INDIVIDUALS not in- cluded in above	32	170	341	54	20	20	46	200	203	543	
ANONYMOUS	23	101	185	25	14	13	28	103	126	309	
ITEM INCLUDED NONE IN GROUPS 1-7	15	85	110	22	10	10	17	74	77	210	

TABLE 10

PER CENT OF NEWS ITEMS WITH REFERENCES TO
OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES; BY MONTHS; YEARS

	MONTHS			YEARS				T		
	M	H	1	1	1	1	1	O		
	L	E	I	9	9	9	9	9	T	
Sources/Witnesses In UFO News Items	O	D	G	6	6	6	6	6	A	
	W	N	H	1	2	3	4	5	6	L
NEWSMEN: Reporters, broadcasters, media	19.5	11.6	16	9.5	9.7	10.7	11.2	18.9	14	14.9
UFO INVESTIGATORS: Hynek, Air Force	3.6	10	21	12.7	17	3.5	12.2	21.3	13.7	16.2
UFO ORGANIZATIONS: NICAP, APRO others	19.5	14.5	8.3	15.9	17	7	13.2	10.7	9.6	11.2
AERIAL PHENOMENA: Pilots, FAA, radar	18.2	13.2	19	21.2	17	17.8	18.3	17.3	15.6	17.2
TECHNICIANS, SCIENTISTS:	12.8	11.6	15.2	15.9	7.3	10.7	15.3	16.8	11.2	14
ELECTED-APPOINTED OFFICIALS; MILITARY:	6	5.9	12.1	4.2	9.7	14.3	9.1	10.7	9.8	9.7
LAW ENFORCEMENT- SECURITY:	24.4	23.6	41.5	34.9	26.8	14.3	33.6	32.8	38.6	34.5
INDIVIDUALS not in- cluded in above	37	53.5	56.6	57.2	48.8	70.4	46.8	53.4	55.6	54.3
ANONYMOUS	28	31.8	30.7	26.5	34	46.4	28.5	27.5	34.5	30.9
ITEM INCLUDED NONE IN GROUPS 1-7	18.2	27	18.3	23.2	24.4	35.7	17.3	19.7	21.1	21

TABLE 11

NATURE OF UFO REPORTS IN NEWS ITEMS, BY NUMBER

	MONTHS			YEARS				T		
	M	H	1	1	1	1	1	O		
	L	E	I	9	9	9	9	9	T	
Nature of UFO Report	O	D	G	6	6	6	6	6	A	
	W	N	H	1	2	3	4	5	6	L
One specific report	38	201	234	62	28	25	62	130	166	473
More than one spe- cific; all specific	6	13	28	5	2	0	3	21	16	47
Either of above with reference to others	2	23	162	4	0	1	10	89	83	187
Focus is on general, current UFO reports	9	19	67	7	7	0	2	39	40	95
Discussion or review of UFO phenomenon	27	61	110	16	4	2	21	95	60	198
Items in sample	82	317	601	91	41	28	98	374	365	1000

TABLE 12

NATURE OF UFO REPORTS IN NEWS ITEMS, BY PER CENT

Nature of UFO Report	L	M	H	I	I	I	I	I	I	T
	9	E	I	9	9	9	9	9	9	O
	6	D	G	6	6	6	6	6	6	T,
	1	N	H	1	2	3	4	5	6	L
One specific report	46.3	63.3	38.8	65.7	68.3	89.5	63.2	34.7	45.5	47.3
More than one specific; all specific	7.3	4.1	4.6	5.3	4.8	0	3	5.6	4.4	4.7
Either of above with reference to others	2.4	7.2	26.9	4.2	0	3.5	10.2	23.7	22.6	18.7
Focus is on general, current UFO reports	11	5.9	11.1	7.4	17	0	2	10.4	11	9.5
Discussion or review of UFO phenomenon	32.8	19.2	18.3	16.8	9.6	7	21.3	25.3	16.4	19.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Summary

1. Who were the sources of information and witnesses of UFOs quoted or mentioned in the newspaper accounts?

Of the first seven occupational categories, the most frequently mentioned or quoted in the items analyzed was that of law enforcement and security. Police, civil defense officials or security guards were mentioned in 345, or about 35 per cent, of all stories--twice as often as the next highest "official" source--with the most frequent references being to policemen.

Total references to the other six categories were aerial phenomena, 172 (17 per cent); UFO investigators, 162; newsmen, 149; technicians and scientists, 140; UFO organizations, 112, and elected or appointed officials and military officers, 97. Individuals not classifiable in any of these categories were mentioned or quoted in 543 (54 per cent) of the stories, and anonymous sources provided the

61

information in 309 stories.

In 210 or 21 per cent of the stories there was no reference to any individual or agency classifiable under the occupational categories 1-7. In these cases, the news item appeared to be based entirely on the fact that an individual or an anonymous source had said he had seen a UFO. To emphasize the point, there was no mention that the report had been forwarded to any agency, including the police, and there was no indication that the newspaper reporter had conferred with the weather bureau, airport, police or some similar agency to corroborate the report. No exact count was kept, but many of the 210 stories were based solely on the testimony of children, many as young as 10 or 11.

No record was kept of the circulation of the newspapers which published the 210 stories, but it appeared that most of the items had been printed in smaller newspapers, those with circulations below 20- or 25,000. (This impression proved to be strongly supported by data from the second content analysis project).

2. How did references to sources of information and witnesses of UFOs vary when analyzed on the basis of low, median and high periods of press attention to UFOs?

References to Air Force UFO investigators, infrequent during the low and median periods of coverage, increased markedly during high periods of coverage, appearing in 21 per cent or 127 of the 601 stories published during the six high months. This supported statements that Lt. Col. Hector Quintanilla, director of the Air Force UFO inquiry, had made to officials of the Boulder UFO Project and also in a July 1968 interview. He said Blue Book activity was

1

3. What was the nature of UFO news accounts, particularly with regard to the number of different UFO sightings found in individual news items?

The analysis indicated that about 47 per cent, 473, of the news items dealt with one specific UFO report. That is there may have been more than one witness, but the story dealt exclusively with one UFO incident. This finding may be contradictory to the newsmen's opinion that a major criterion for reporting a UFO was the number of local sightings. In other categories, 47 stories were based on more than one specific report; 187 stories dealt with specific reports but included general references to other sightings; 95 focused primarily on current reports, and 198 included a discussion or review of UFOs and the UFO phenomenon.

4. How did accounts vary when analyzed on the basis of low, median and high periods of press attention to UFOs?

The only clear trend was that during periods of high coverage there were fewer reports of single specific sightings and far more news items which listed one or more specific sightings and referred to other UFO reports across the state, region or nation. This may reflect an impact of wire service coverage upon stories written locally.

Content Analysis Findings 1947-66

While the analysis of the 1961-66 clippings from the Larson collection provided some information about press coverage of UFOs, a more detailed review was desired. Such a review was made possible with the purchase of a Library of Congress microfilm copy of a 1947-66

determined, in large part, by press coverage of UFO reports.

References to members of private UFO organizations, such as NICAP and APRO, appeared to decrease during high periods of coverage. Many press references, during low and median periods of coverage, were to UFO activists making speeches, being interviewed or seeking information about UFO reports. Such speeches and interviews did not appear to be printed during high periods of coverage.

References to police appeared to increase markedly during high periods of coverage. Such references were found in 250, or more than 40 per cent, of the 600 items printed during the six high months, and about one-third of the time the references were to police listed as having seen UFOs.

The proportion of news items with no references to any of the 1-7 categories was the same during high periods of coverage as during low, about 18 per cent. During the median months, however, the figure was 27 per cent. That increase may be attributable to the fact that during the median months there was a high percentage of stories based upon one specific UFO report, and such stories seemed to have relatively fewer references to "official" sources; 1963, for example, was a high year for reports of one specific UFO and also a high year, percentage-wise, for stories lacking references to any "official" source.

In the year-by-year analysis, the relatively low number of entries in most occupational categories, particularly for the years 1961 through 1964, prevented any conclusions as to apparent trends. Generally, the coverage did not appear to vary significantly on a year-by-year basis.

press clipping collection kept by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). Also, the University of Kentucky Computer Center granted computer time and other essential services.

The new content analysis drew from the approximately 10,000 clippings in the NICAP collection, from the approximately 30,000 1952 clippings on Air Force microfilm and from private collections of clippings, including the Larson collection. The private collections were needed because the NICAP collection had relatively few clippings for the years 1947, 1948, 1949 and the early 1960s. The clippings for the late 1940s were augmented by news items picked randomly from Ted Bloecher's Report on the UFO Wave of 1947 and from other clippings taken from FATE magazine files and public libraries.

2

From the NICAP collection, every 20th clipping from the years 1950 through 1964 and every 40th clipping for 1965 and 1966 were analyzed. From the Air Force 1952 collection, five microfilm reels were selected as representative of the April-September period and approximately every 40th item was analyzed until data had been recorded on 100 items. The NICAP collection had provided only 12 clippings on 1952.

After the analysis of the NICAP collection was completed, it was found that the years 1961, 1962 and 1963 were represented by a total of six clippings--these were supplemented by 30 wire service and local clippings drawn at random from the Larson collection.

The total sample of 511 clippings comprised 326 from the NICAP collection, 110 from Air Force microfilm of 1947, 1948 and 1952 clippings, 30 from the Larson collection, 29 from Bloecher's book and 16 from other sources.

3

The instructions for coding data from these clippings are presented in the appendix, as is a test conducted on the accuracy and consistency of the coding. Discussed on the following pages are findings of the analysis, including instructions for coding when needed to explain the data.

The purposes of the analysis were set forth as:

To describe the manner in which UFO reports were presented in United States daily newspapers for the years 1947-1966, to determine what characteristics were common to the newspapers and to the accounts of UFOs and to discover what correlations there may have been between the nature of the newspapers and the nature of the accounts of UFOs.

Every clipping was classified in one of five four-year categories and in one of two ten-year categories. Table 13 shows the number and percentage of clippings in each period. Also presented, although not used in the analysis, is the year-by-year distribution of the 511 clippings.

TABLE 13

1947-66 SAMPLE CLIPPINGS; BY PERIOD, BY YEAR

Period	Clippings	Per Cent	Year	Clippings	Year	Clippings
1947-1956	261	51.2	1947	62	1957	41
1957-1966	249	48.8	1948	8	1958	22
			1949	5	1959	14
1947-1950	104	20.4	1950	29	1960	22
1951-1954	128	25.0	1951	3	1961	11
1955-1958	92	18.0	1952	112	1962	15
1959-1962	62	12.1	1953	5	1963	10
1963-1966	125	24.5	1954	8	1964	20
			1955	8	1965	35
			1956	21	1966	60

A record also was kept of the region of the country in which the newspaper which published the news item was situated. The regions used were those set by the Bureau of the Census and suggested in Data Processing by Kenneth Janda (Northwestern University Press, 1965).

For the sake of comparison with the number of UFO clippings from each region, the number of daily newspapers in each region was obtained from The Ayer Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals for 1957, the middle year of the study. The regions, the number of clippings from each region and the per cent of the total number of clippings are shown in Table 14. Also shown is the rank order for each region on the basis of UFO news items in the sample and the number of daily newspapers.

TABLE 14

NUMBER AND RANK OF NEWS ITEMS
AND NEWSPAPERS, BY REGION

Region	Clippings	Per Cent	UFO Rank	Ayer Rank
New England	19	3.7	8	7
Mid Atlantic	81	15.9	2	3
East North Central	133	26.0	1	1
West North Central	33	6.5	6	4
South	77	15.1	4	2
Border	33	6.5	6	6
Mountain	56	11.0	5	8
West	79	15.5	3	5

The number of UFO clippings selected from each region generally appeared to be in accord with the number of daily papers published within the region. There were two apparent exceptions: (1) the high concentration of clippings from the East North Central region, the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin, and (2) the indication that newspapers in the Mountain region of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming seemed to print more UFO items than would be expected on the basis of the number of daily newspapers in the region.

One reason for the concentration of reports in the East North Central region--apart from the number of newspapers there or a bias in the sample--may simply have been that UFO reports had been frequent

in the region. The same may have been true for the Mountain states. Or, there may have been a reciprocal relationship in which the number of UFO reports appeared to be relatively high because of press attention to the phenomenon. In either event, in a privately published 1964 book, The UFO Evidence, Richard Hall, then acting director of NICAP, wrote that the five states with the highest frequency of UFO reports appeared to be California (West region), Ohio and Illinois (both East North Central), New Mexico (Mountain), and Florida (South).

The content analysis also sought information on the times of publication of newspapers in the sample and their circulations. Data were taken from the Editor & Publisher Yearbook for the year in which the news item was published.

The times of publication of newspapers in the sample were similar to those of newspapers in general. Most, 334, or 65 per cent, were published in the afternoon; 160, or 31 per cent, were published in the morning, and a few, 17, were listed as morning and afternoon publications.

Circulation classifications were established after the entire sample had been drawn and other data recorded. As equal a distribution as possible was sought for circulation categories. The circulation variables which were established are shown in Table 15.

The sample drawn from NICAP and Air Force clipping collections appeared to be biased in favor of the larger-circulation newspapers, those with daily circulations in excess of 20- or 25,000. Nonetheless, the sample did include enough news items from the smaller newspapers to permit analysis of UFO coverage with circulation as a major variable.

TABLE 15
NEWSPAPER CIRCULATIONS IN 1947-66 SAMPLE

Circulation Categories	Number of Papers	Per Cent of Total
Less than 40,000	270	52.8
More than 40,000	241	47.2
Less than 20,000	188	36.8
20,000 to 100,000	150	29.4
More than 100,000	173	33.9
Less than 10,000	118	23.1
10,000 to 25,000	92	18.0
25,000 to 60,000	103	20.2
60,000 to 200,000	99	19.4
More than 200,000	99	19.4

Apart from the region, time of publication and circulation, no other characteristics for analysis were recorded for newspapers. Competitive status was not included as a variable because the questionnaire responses and the first content analysis indicated that competitive status was not an important factor in coverage of UFOs.

Background data were sought, however, on the news item as to dateline, the news agency involved, byline and the nature of UFO(s) reported.

Datelines were classified in one of five ways: (1) there was no dateline and/or the story apparently was of local origin; (2) the dateline was of another city or area within the state; (3) the dateline was of another state within the same region or of a state not within the region but bordering the state in which the newspaper was published; (4) the dateline was of national nature in that it was of another state not within the same region and not a border state, or there was no dateline but the story appeared to be of out-of-state origin, such as a general wire service story; (5) the dateline was of

another nation.

This information, it was planned, would provide an index as to whether newspapers tended to print more local than non-local reports. The findings are shown in Table 16.

TABLE 16
NEWS ITEM DATELINES, 1947-66

<u>Dateline</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Local	301	58.9
Within state	76	14.9
Within region-border	36	7.0
National	94	18.4
International	4	.8

The majority of stories within the sample were ones written and published within the city or immediate area or immediate area of the newspaper of publication. National stories were a distant second in frequency; state stories were third, and those from bordering states or states within the same region as the paper of publication were fourth. This finding may support points made in Chapter ii--that local coverage of UFOs may continue unprompted by wire service attention to the phenomenon, and that local coverage may also provide a pool of reports from which wire service reporters can draw material for stories.

Information was sought as to the news agency producing a story of a UFO report. The classification was sevenfold: (1) the item was written or appeared to be written by an employee of the paper of publication, (2-5) the item carried the name or logotype of the Associated Press, United Press, International News Service or United Press International, (6) the item was produced by a combination of any of the above or (7) by a news service other than those above.

TABLE 17

AGENCIES PRODUCING UFO NEWS ITEMS, 1947-66

News Agency	Number	Per Cent
Paper of publication	335	65.6
Associated Press	82	16.0
United Press	55	10.7
International News Service	10	2.0
United Press International	8	1.6
Any combination of above	16	3.1
Other	5	1.0

As would be expected from the information about datelines, most UFO news items in the sample were produced by the paper of publication. The Associated Press was the second leading source. Considering that the AP was the biggest wire service in the nation, there did not appear to be any strong relationships between one particular wire service and the coverage of UFO reports. As is shown by the table, the percentage of United Press International stories was considerably lower than the percentages of UP and INS stories prior to the 1958 merger of those two news services. However, the representation of all non-local stories was quite low during the last two periods of the sample, the post-merger years, 1959-1962 and 1963-1966. During those periods, the papers of publication produced, respectively, 90 and 80 per cent of the news items analyzed.

To a degree, therefore, the findings supported the use of Associated Press national wire service coverage in the preceding chapter as an index to wire service coverage in general.

It was decided that information about bylines might provide clues as to who the reporters were who covered reports of UFO sightings or wrote news items about the phenomenon. The findings on bylines are shown in Table 18.

TABLE 18
 BYLINES ON UFO NEWS ITEMS, 1947-66

Byline	Number	Per Cent
There was no byline	440	89.2
Reporter's name was given	41	8.3
By science or aviation writer or editor	3	.6
"As told to" reporter by UFO witness	3	.6
News reporter had seen UFO	6	1.2

Obviously, the vast majority of the stories were straight news accounts of UFO reports, carrying no bylines. In only three of the stories was the writer identified as a science or aviation writer, editor or reporter. This may be explained, in part, by the fact that--except for larger newspapers--most papers may not have a reporter with the title of science writer or science editor. In interviews, two men who did hold such titles expressed their opinions about coverage of UFOs.

In a telephone interview, Walter Sullivan, science editor of The New York Times, said:

The episodes (of UFO sightings) are so elusive. They do not occur when someone having to earn a living can bother with them. When they break, they generally have to be covered by general newsmen. 4

Sullivan said he thought most of the "more solid papers" have ignored UFOs, at least from the amount of space given to such stories. Emphasis on UFOs as breaking news and news of short duration, he said, appears to have kept science writers out of the picture.

In another interview, Arthur Snider, science editor of The Chicago Daily News, said interest in UFOs "was legitimate in the '40s and early '50s," but he doubted that interests of science writers could be supported now, "after 20 years of no evidence." He continued:

I don't believe science writers can or properly should tackle the UFO problem, partly because what's been said just about covers everything. . .there is difficulty in getting solid footing for science approach stories. . .the studies that have been scientifically oriented appear to be negative about the phenomenon. 5

Snider pointed out that there were more tangible topics such as heart transplants, cancer research, space technology, etc., competing for the attention of science writers.

The observation that most UFO reports were covered as breaking stories was supported in the content analysis of 1961-66 clippings with regard to the number of UFO incidents included in each item. That analysis found that about 47 per cent of the 1,000 stories dealt with single, specific UFO reports.

A similar analysis was conducted for the 500 clippings selected from 1947-66. Similar to the first study, there were these categories for classifying news items:

(1) The item dealt with or mentioned only one specific UFO report as best determined by time, date, location and description. There may have been more than one witness, perhaps scores, but the object(s) reported was the same or was said to be so.

(2) The item dealt with or mentioned more than one specific UFO report, but all reports were detailed with regard to location and date, description or identity of those involved.

(3) The item dealt with or mentioned specific report(s) as in (1) or (2) but also included reference(s) to other general UFO reports occurring elsewhere or previously seen in the current area of reports.

(4) There may or may not have been reports listed or mentioned by date location or description; but the item dealt primarily with general current reports of people seeing or reporting UFOs.

There was a revision in the fifth category--that dealing with historical review or discussion of the UFO phenomenon--which should be explained before the data are presented.

In the 1961-66 study, category (5) included stories which were (a) solely historical reviews of the phenomenon, (b) discussions about the controversy surrounding UFO reports, or (c) current reports of UFO sightings which included aspects of (a) or (b). In the 1947-66 analysis, the historical-discussion category was limited to only those stories which strongly emphasized the historical or controversial aspects of the phenomenon. If stories were based on specific or specific and general reports of UFOs and also included references to the history of the phenomenon, the stories were classified in categories (1), (2), (3) or (4) and not in (5) as in the previous study. The revision resulted in a change in the percentage of category (5) stories from 19.8 per cent in the 1961-66 study to 6.1 per cent in the 1947-66 analysis. However, it was thought the revised system more clearly reflected the reason the news item was published in the first place.

The findings of the 1947-66 analysis are shown in Table 19.

TABLE 19

NATURE OF UFO REPORT, 1947-66

Categories	Number	Per Cent
One specific incident	304	59.6
All specific	53	10.4
Specific-general	105	20.6
General and current	17	3.3
Historical	31	6.1

The findings again showed heavy emphasis upon the one specific UFO report as the basis for a news item.

A relevant factor not yet discussed is the number of witnesses to the UFO report. How many witnesses to UFOs were reported in news items? How many news items were based on the word of just one person?

In the questionnaire responses, newsmen said they thought the number of witnesses was an important factor in deciding whether to print a news item about a UFO report. Was their opinion supported by coverage afforded UFOs in fact?

Every one of the 1947-66 items was analyzed as to the number of witnesses included in the item. The unit of analysis was the newspaper item and not the UFO report. That is, if the news item contained three separate reports of UFOs, each with one witness, then the number recorded was three. While "lumping" witnesses together in this fashion may have made the data less concise, it did provide a picture of the number of UFO witnesses listed in each news item and, in addition, a clear picture still could be drawn of the number of witnesses mentioned in individual reports since there was a high percentage of such reports, 59.6, in the overall sample.

The total number of witnesses in each item was classified in one of six ways.

TABLE 20

NUMBER OF UFO WITNESSES IN NEWS ITEMS, 1947-66

Number of witnesses	Number of news items	Per Cent
None reported	41	8.0
One	68	13.3
Two to five	135	26.5
Six to ten	112	22.0
More than 10, dozens	78	15.3
Scores, hundreds	76	15.0

As indicated, in 41 items there was no calculation of the number of witnesses. In many cases, these items were historical accounts or discussions about the UFO phenomenon with no reference to witnesses. Or the items may simply have been news accounts which said "flying saucers were reported over the area last night" but made no

reference to the number of witnesses.

About 40 per cent of the items referred to a total of from one to five witnesses; 30 per cent referred to totals of more than 10 witnesses.

Table 21 shows the number of witnesses with regard to the category of the UFO story.

TABLE 21

NUMBER OF WITNESSES, BY NATURE OF STORY

Total Witnesses	Category Of UFO Story					Total
	One Specific	All Specific	Specific -General	General -Current	Historical	
None	4	0	0	11	26	41
One	59	3	5	1	0	68
Two-five	100	20	14	0	1	135
Six-ten	62	20	28	1	1	112
Dozens	41	7	30	0	0	78
Scores	38	3	28	4	3	76
Total	304	53	105	17	31	510

The table shows that, in 159 of the 304 items dealing with one specific UFO report, the number of witnesses was five or fewer--generally fewer it appeared--and in 59 of the cases only one witness was mentioned. So many UFO stories were published with a relatively low number of witnesses to the reported sighting.

Table 21 also indicates, predictably, that as the number of UFO reports included in each story increased from "one specific" report to "specific and general" reports, there was a relative increase in the number of witnesses referred to in the news item.

One item in the table which may require explanation is that in 79 cases the number of witnesses listed for one specific report was more than 10, in many cases scores or hundreds. Such cases included reports of one object--sometimes identified as a weather balloon or

meteor--seen over a wide area.

In addition to concern with the number of witnesses, the analysis also focused on the background of the sources of information and witnesses referred to in news stories, classifying them into occupational categories similar to those of the 1961-66 analysis.

Descriptions of the categories are given in detail in the appendix. Generally, they followed the categories used in the 1961-66 study: Air Force UFO investigators, members of private UFO organizations, occupations related to aerial phenomena, scientists-technicians, public officials and military officers, policemen, newsmen, and a category for those not included in any of the preceding.

The ninth category, anonymous, was different than the one used in the 1961-66 study. In that study, an entry was made in the anonymous category each time there was a reference to an individual who declined to be identified or was identified only as "a man," "a motorist," "a high school senior," etc. In the 1947-66 analysis, however, an entry was made in the anonymous category only when the individual was the only witness or source of information mentioned or refused to give his name but was quoted any way. Thus, if one witness to a UFO sighting was identified and another, to the same sighting, was not identified, no entry would be made in the anonymous category.

The reasoning was that in reports of UFOs with several witnesses it would have been difficult or impractical for the newsmen to identify every witness and, in identifying at least one, the reporter or news agency had provided information to help the reader judge the credibility of the report.

In the 1947-66 analysis, a distinction was drawn between sources of information who did not see the UFO reported (Sources) and sources of information who said they saw the UFO (Witnesses). The 1961-66 study was based only on whether the occupational category was represented in the news item and not whether the individual was a source of information or a witness.

The 1947-66 analysis also attempted to classify the statements attributed to sources and witnesses as to whether the statements were supportive of or hostile to the theory that flying saucers were real. Such a classification, it was thought, would provide only an index as to the nature of information presented in news items about UFOs. The classifications, it was recognized, could not provide information about the impact of the articles upon readers' opinions of UFOs.

Statements in the news items were coded on a 1-to-5 scale. Detailed directions on coding are presented in the appendix. Comments were classified under the occupational categories generally in one of three ways:

(1) Those comments considered to support, advocate or endorse the interpretation that UFOs or flying saucers are real objects, possibly extraterrestrial, or at least not understandable in terms of present technology or known weaponry.

(3) Those comments considered neither supportive of nor antagonistic to the comments in (1), but primarily neutral or narrative in dealing with the UFO phenomenon in general or a report in particular. That is, comments like something may be seen when people say they see UFOs, but it is not known what; police received or investigated UFO reports; pilots looked for UFOs in the area in which they had been reported, but saw nothing—if objects had been there they had left.

(5) Those comments considered to be opposed to, critical of, or hostile toward the interpretations offered under (1) or those comments which interpret the UFO phenomenon as resulting from the misinterpretation of known objects, i.e., the UFO reported was Venus, an airplane, a searchlight, a hoax, etc.

Only one response was coded under each occupational category-- even if more than one member of the category was quoted or the one quoted made several comments. The procedure for coding was: (1) as explained above; (2) if comments were both supportive and neutral; (3) as explained above, or including both supportive and hostile comments; (4) both neutral and hostile as explained above, and (5) hostile.

Classifications were made for comments attributed to sources and witnesses in each of the 511 items in the 1947-66 sample. Table 22 shows the total number of classifications made for sources and witnesses along a continuum from (1) supporting the theory that flying saucers are real to (5) opposing such a theory.

TABLE 22

COMMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO SOURCES AND
WITNESSES IN UFO NEWS ITEMS

	Classifications					Total	Means
	1	2	3	4	5		
Sources	23	14	376	86	131	630	3.46
Witnesses	364	72	229	30	19	714	1.97
Total	387	86	605	116	150	1344	

The table shows a fairly even distribution between the total number of classifications made for sources, 630, and the total made for witnesses, 714, suggesting that the news coverage, too, was balanced in this regard. Also indicated was that comments attributed to sources generally opposed the theory that flying saucers were from

outerspace or were some form of new weaponry--the mean source comment was 3.46--and that comments attributed to witnesses, perhaps predictably, generally supported such theories. The mean witness comment was 1.97. Comments from information sources who did not see UFOs also generally tended to be "neutral or narrative" in nature and were classified as (3).

Table 23 shows an analysis of the comments by occupational categories. The table shows (1) the number of items in which the occupational category was referred to as a source of information or as a witness, (2) the per cent of items in which the occupational category was referred to as a source or witness, and (3) the mean value of all comments attributed to sources and witnesses within each occupational category.

TABLE 23

MEAN, COMMENT, NUMBER AND PER CENT OF REFERENCES
TO SOURCES AND WITNESSES IN UFO NEWS ITEMS

Occupational Category	Sources			Witnesses			Totals
	No. of items	% of total	Mean comment	No. of items	% of total	Mean comment	
UFO INVESTIGATORS: Hynek, Air Force	79	15.5	3.94	None	None	None	79
UFO ORGANIZATIONS: NICAP, APRO others	15	2.9	1.93	3	.6	1.00	18
AERIAL PHENOMENA: Pilots, FAA, radar	122	23.9	3.45	100	19.6	2.11	222
TECHNICIANS, SCIENTISTS:	107	20.9	4.02	19	3.7	2.42	126
ELECTED-APPOINTED OFFICIALS; MILITARY:	68	13.3	3.22	18	3.5	1.72	86
NEWSMEN: Reporters, broadcasters, media	85	16.6	3.15	28	5.7	2.29	113
LAW ENFORCEMENT- SECURITY:	113	22.1	3.14	88	17.2	1.81	201
INDIVIDUALS not in- cluded in above	31	6.0	3.51	363	71.0	1.90	394
ANONYMOUS	10	2.0	3.60	95	18.6	2.06	105
TOTALS	630		3.46	714		1.97	1344

There appeared to be at least five observations which could be made on the basis of the data in Table 23.

(1) All occupational categories--with the exception of individuals and anonymous--appeared in news items more often as sources of information than as witnesses to UFO sightings.

(2) For all categories, the mean witness comment was lower than the mean source comment, indicating that the witnesses tended to be more convinced of the reality of flying saucers.

(3) The most skeptical occupational category among both sources and witnesses was that of scientists-technicians.

(4) Those appearing to be "most convinced" among UFO witnesses were public officials and military officers and policemen. The former category consisted primarily of locally elected and appointed officials appearing in only 18 items.

(5) By far, the most frequent witness to a UFO report, as found in the news items, was an individual not classifiable under any of the relatively specific occupational categories.

Major differences between the 1947-66 analysis and the 1961-66 analysis appeared to be the higher percentage of "individual" witnesses recorded from the 1947-66 sample--71 per cent to 54 per cent--and the accompanying decrease in references to members of UFO organizations such as NICAP and APRO--from 11 per cent to 3 per cent. The differences may have been attributable to the fact that the 1947-66 items consisted primarily of reports of UFO sightings while the 1961-66 clippings provided more general coverage of the UFO phenomenon, including stories about touring speakers. Also, the 1961-66 analysis was based only on local news items, while the 1947-66 analysis was

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based on local and wire service coverage.

Similarities between both analyses of UFO news items were (1) despite differing percentages, the most frequent reference in both studies was to those in the "individual" category, and (2) the most frequent references to those in the more specific occupational categories were to those in occupations related to law enforcement and aerial phenomena.

Further, in the 1961-66 analysis it was found that in 21 per cent of the news items there was no reference to any individual or agency classified under the specific occupational categories. In these cases, the news items appeared to be based solely upon the report that an individual or an anonymous source said he had seen a UFO. In the 1947-66 study, a count was made of the number of items in which the only reference was to an "individual" or "anonymous" witness.

It was found that in 111, or 21.9 per cent of the 511 items, the source for all information appeared to be the "individuals" or anonymous persons who said they had seen UFOs. That is, in the 111 items, there was no reference to local police, weathermen, the Air Force, or other sources as providing information to corroborate, discredit or elaborate upon the flying saucer report received and printed by the newspaper or wire service. And, as noted in Table 23, in 18.6 per cent or 95 of the 511 items at least one of the UFO reports was attributed only to an anonymous source.

An analysis of the 111 source-lacking items indicated that, as suspected in the previous study, most of the items lacking reference to any substantive source or agency were printed in the smaller circulation newspapers.

TABLE 24

CIRCULATION OF NEWSPAPERS PRINTING
SOURCE-LACKING NEWS ITEMS

Circulation category	Number of items	Per cent of total items in category
Less than 20,000	63	33.5
20,000-100,000	28	18.6
More than 100,000	20	11.5
All newspapers	111	21.9

As shown by the table, as circulation increased the proportion and number of source-lacking items decreased significantly. In newspapers with circulations under 20,000, one-third of the news items referred only to "individuals" or anonymous sources who said they had seen UFOs. In newspapers with circulations over 100,000, such limited sources appeared in 11 per cent of the items analyzed.

Few of the 111 source-lacking items could be attributed to a news agency other than the paper of publication. That is, the items generally consisted of local UFO reports written by newsmen working for the paper(s) of publication. Percentagewise, 68 per cent of the 111 items--and 76 per cent of the 63 in the low circulation category--were stories about local UFO reports; 77 per cent of the 111 items--and 79 per cent of those in the low circulation category--appeared to be written by employees of the papers of publication. The absence of any substantive sources in UFO news items, therefore, was traceable to local news coverage of primarily local events.

A broader analysis of sources and witnesses appearing in UFO news items was conducted by combining the nine occupational categories into three groups with respect to their roles in the UFO phenomenon.

The first classification comprised so-called "expert" sources

and witnesses whose occupations, assignments or avocations presumed familiarity with the UFO phenomenon or aerial phenomena, or suggested they were competent to comment upon the scientific aspects of the UFO phenomenon. Members of the "expert" category were Air Force UFO investigators, members of UFO organizations, scientists and technicians and those classified in occupations related to aerial phenomena. (Of the 366 total references to sources and witnesses in the "expert" category, only 18 were to members of UFO organizations).

The second category comprised "semi-expert" witnesses and sources whose occupations, assignments or avocations may have resulted in occasional contact with UFOs or aerial phenomena in general. In this category were public officials, military officers not listed as "expert," newsmen and policemen.

The third category comprised references to "individual" and anonymous sources and witnesses. It was called "inexpert" because there was no indication the subject should be classified in either of the first two categories or had any particular competence to comment upon or be involved with UFOs.

Table 25 shows the frequency with which each of the three classifications was represented in the 511 news items in the role of either source or witness.

TABLE 25

EXPERT-INEXPERT AS SOURCES AND WITNESSES
IN UFO NEWS ITEMS, 1947-66

	Expert	Semi-expert	Inexpert	Total
Source	249	209	38	496
Witness	117	115	426	658
Total	366	324	464	1154

As indicated by the table, the "expert" and "semi-expert" classifications tended to be found most often as "sources" of information about UFOs. The "inexpert" classification, however, was found most often--by far--among witnesses to UFO sightings.

Other information about the appearance of sources and witnesses in UFO news items was found in analyses of the periods covered by the sample, the nature of the news items and the circulations of the newspapers.

Some pertinent findings were:

1. Data on sources of information and witnesses of UFOs were analyzed on the basis of years covered by the survey. It generally was found that references to "expert" witnesses tended to decrease from the first to the fifth period while references to "inexpert" witnesses tended to increase.

A marked exception to the decreasing trend for references to "expert" witnesses was the 1959-1962 period. It was not clear why. That period, however, as shown by Graphs 1 and 2 in Chapter ii, appeared to be the lowest in press attention to UFOs. The period also was the smallest in the sample, with 62 items, and was supplemented with clippings drawn from the Larson collection.

Table 26 shows the percentage of stories which included references to "expert" and "inexpert" witnesses for each of the five periods surveyed.

TABLE 26

EXPERT-INEXPERT AS WITNESSES, BY PERIOD

Witness	47-50	51-54	55-58	59-62	63-66
Expert	35.5	22.6	19.5	30.6	11.2
Inexpert	78.8	71.0	88.0	88.7	93.6

It was found that references to "inexpert" witnesses exceeded references to "expert" ones for each of the five periods--with the least difference between the two in 1947-50 and the greatest difference in 1963-66.

Such references also were analyzed for stories with apparently local datelines and for stories with non-local datelines, that is datelines from other cities and other states. It was found that stories with non-local datelines included more references to "expert" witnesses than stories of local origin. For both types of stories, however, the percentage of references to "expert" witnesses generally decreased during the years covered by the survey.

TABLE 27

ITEMS REFERRING TO EXPERT WITNESSES;
BY DATELINE, BY PERIOD

Dateline	% of items referring to "expert" witnesses					Total
	47-50	51-54	55-58	59-62	63-66	
Local	26.0	15.3	15.1	32.0	10.6	18.3
Non-local	43.1	27.6	30.7	25.0	13.1	29.5

A similar analysis was made for references to "inexpert" witnesses. It was found that, generally, the non-local items included relatively fewer references to "inexpert" witnesses. For both local and non-local items, however, the percentage of such witnesses appeared to increase during the period under study.

TABLE 28

ITEMS REFERRING TO INEXPERT WITNESSES;
BY DATELINE, BY PERIOD

Dateline	% of items referring to inexpert witness					Total
	47-50	51-54	55-58	59-62	63-66	
Local	89.0	80.7	87.8	90.0	96.5	90
Non-local	70.6	64.4	88.4	83.3	86.8	74.3

2. In related analyses, it was found that news items written locally carried more references to "inexpert" witnesses and fewer references to "expert" witnesses than those items written by a non-local news agency, such as the Associated Press or United Press International. It also was found that "expert" sources and witnesses tended to be included more often in news items about general reports of UFO sightings than in items dealing with single or specific reports.

Tables 29 and 30 show (1) the per cent of references to "expert" and "inexpert" witnesses by local and non-local news agencies, and (2) the per cent of references to "expert" witnesses and sources as found in news accounts dealing with specific and general reports of UFOs.

TABLE 29

REFERENCES TO EXPERT, INEXPERT
WITNESSES, BY NEWS AGENCY

News agency	Per cent of items with references to:	
	Expert witness	Inexpert witness
Local	16.4	90.3
Non-local	34.6	70.4

TABLE 30

REFERENCES TO EXPERT WITNESSES, SOURCES,
BY NATURE OF UFO REPORT

Nature of UFO report	Per cent of items with references to:	
	Expert witness	Expert source
Single-specific	19.6	40.9
General sightings	30.7	66.7

3. When sources of information and references to witnesses were analyzed on the basis of newspaper circulation, it was found that references to witnesses in the "expert" categories tended to increase

as circulation did. It was also found that, as circulation increased, newspapers tended to print fewer UFO reports of local and state origin and more of regional or national nature. And, as circulation increased, the number of witnesses mentioned in news items tended to increase. These tendencies are shown in Tables 31, 32 and 33.

TABLE 31

REFERENCES TO EXPERT SOURCES AND
WITNESSES, BY CIRCULATION

Circulation	Per cent of items with references to:	
	Expert source	Expert witness
Less than 20,000	37.8	13.8
20,000-100,000	54.0	18.7
More than 100,000	56.1	36.4

TABLE 32

NATURE OF DATELINE, BY CIRCULATION

Circulation	Nature of dateline (percentage)	
	Local	Non-local
Less than 20,000	122 (64.9)	66 (35.1)
20,000-100,000	91 (60.7)	59 (39.3)
More than 100,000	88 (50.9)	85 (49.1)

TABLE 33

NUMBER OF UFO WITNESSES, BY CIRCULATION

Circulation	Number and per cent* of news items referring to 1-5 or 6 or more witnesses	
	one to five	six or more
Less than 20,000	89 (47.3)	84 (44.3)
20,000-100,000	59 (39.3)	80 (53.3)
More than 100,000	55 (31.8)	103 (59.5)

* Percentage total for circulation size is less than 100 because items listing "no witnesses" were omitted.

Chapter Summary

Many of the details presented and the questions raised in this chapter will be reviewed and discussed at greater length in the rest of the text. It remains for this summary to review major findings of the three studies; to suggest where the studies differed, and to suggest where they were similar.

Major Findings

The questionnaire survey of newspapermen indicated they thought that, from the standpoint of circulation, the larger newspapers were more selective and restrained in publishing UFO reports. The main criterion for printing UFO reports, for all sizes of newspapers, was said to be the number of witnesses or the number of reports involved. The larger newspapers, however, were said more often to tend not to print UFO reports because there was an insufficient number of witnesses, official sources were skeptical of the report, or the UFO sighting was considered to be an isolated case.

The content analysis of the 1,000 Larson clippings indicated that the most common UFO news item dealt with one specific UFO report. The most frequently mentioned occupational groups in UFO items were those related to the fields of law enforcement and aerial phenomena. References to these occupational groups, however, were exceeded by references to individuals not classifiable in any particular group and other "anonymous" sources. It was found that 21 per cent of the news items appeared to be based entirely upon the testimony of some "individual" or "anonymous" witness who said he had seen a UFO, and the

items included no references to any other news source or agency. It appeared that such "source-lacking" items were printed most often in smaller circulation newspapers.

The more comprehensive analysis of the 1947-66 period provided descriptive data presented in Tables 14 through 33. Generally, the analysis suggested that most UFO news items tended to be reports of one specific UFO sighting, printed in the local newspaper and written by employees of that paper; in 40 per cent of all items, the number of witnesses was five or fewer; the most frequently mentioned occupational categories in the news accounts were those of law enforcement and aerial phenomena; "individual" witnesses to UFO reports, however, appeared in 71 per cent of the news items. An analysis of comments attributed to sources of information and UFO witnesses indicated that the witnesses tended to be more convinced of the reality of flying saucers and that the most skeptical occupational category for both sources and witnesses was that of scientists and technicians. In 21.9 per cent of the 511 news items, the only news source mentioned was an "individual" or anonymous person who said he had seen a UFO. Reliance upon so-called "expert" witnesses and sources appeared to vary directly with newspaper circulation. References to "expert" witnesses were relatively more common during the early years of press coverage; references to "inexpert" witnesses relatively more common during the later years of the study.

Differences

The questionnaire responses which said newspapers decided whether to print UFO reports on the basis of the number of witnesses

or number of reports involved appeared to be contradicted by the content analysis findings that most UFO news items were based on single incidents and that in 40 per cent of the cases the items mentioned five or fewer witnesses.

Similarities

The questionnaire and the two content analysis studies suggested that press coverage of UFOs, by and large, consisted primarily of local newspaper coverage of local UFO reports, with occasional peak periods of widespread news coverage involving wire services and other news agencies. The chief sources of information for such news accounts appeared to be "individual" and anonymous persons not classifiable under any of the seven specific occupational categories. Within those specific categories, the most frequent references were to occupations or avocations related to law enforcement or aerial phenomena.

The questionnaire respondents said that larger newspapers tended to rely more often than smaller newspapers upon official sources --such as the Air Force, police or weatherman--in deciding whether to publish a UFO report. This was supported by content analysis findings that "expert" and "semi-expert" sources were mentioned more frequently in news items from the larger newspapers.

In both content analyses, it was found that about 21 per cent of the news items referred only to anonymous or "individual" persons with no references to other sources. Such items were found primarily among lower circulation newspapers, as shown by Table 24. Such a tendency may have occurred because the lower circulation newspapers

knew or trusted individual news sources more so than larger circulation newspapers, or the smaller newspapers simply may have been more anxious to print UFO items as local news--a tendency suggested by the questionnaire responses.

CHAPTER IV

ADDITIONAL DATA ON PRESS COVERAGE OF UFOS

Introduction

The charts and tables and much of the discussion in the preceding chapter presented a relatively quantitative description of press coverage of UFOs. While perhaps answering some questions about the nature and extent of such coverage, the data may have left some questions unanswered or raised others.

For example, while information was presented on the occupations of UFO witnesses, as reported by the press, no points of comparison were provided. Were the witnesses found in the news items representative of the population at large? How did the occupations of witnesses found in the press compare with occupations of UFO witnesses as recorded by the Air Force? What reasons might there be for similarities or differences uncovered by such comparisons?

Also, the analyses in the preceding chapter did not deal with some of the psychological aspects of UFO reports, for instance, with stories of contacts with extraterrestrial beings. One reason for this omission was that the Air Force and NICAP press clipping collections

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consisted primarily of straight news stories of UFO sightings. Another, and related reason, was that stories dealing with reports of extra-terrestrial contacts made up only a small portion of the news coverage in general. Nonetheless, there may be questions about the coverage afforded the more bizarre aspects of the UFO phenomenon.

Further, the analyses did not provide information regarding reasons why some individuals may report UFOs and others, the majority, may not. Information on these points, including data collected in a public opinion poll conducted by the University of Colorado UFO Project, will be presented in this chapter.

Three basic questions to be considered in this chapter, then, are: (1) How do the occupations of UFO witnesses as reported in the press compare to occupations of witnesses found in Air Force reports and in the population in general? (2) What general observations may be made about the more bizarre psychological aspects of the UFO phenomenon and attendant press coverage? (3) What appear to be some of the reasons an individual will or will not report seeing what he thinks was a flying saucer?

Occupational Backgrounds of UFO Witnesses

In the content analyses of UFO news items discussed in the preceding chapter, certain tendencies were observed as to the occupations of the UFO witnesses and sources of information mentioned in news stories. The most frequent references to UFO witnesses were to individuals in occupational categories classified as "inexpert." Under the "expert" and "semi-expert" classifications, the most frequent references were to individuals in the occupational categories of aerial

phenomena and law enforcement-security.

To determine whether there were any differences between occupations of UFO witnesses reported in the press and those of witnesses found in Air Force reports, the occupations of witnesses identified in 256 Air Force reports were analyzed. The Air Force reports were drawn from those made to Project Blue Book over a six-year period, 1961-66. The months sampled--three from each year--were the same 18 months as those in the sample of the Larson press clipping collection. An effort was made to sample every fourth report in the monthly files. In some cases, not all reports were included in the monthly file, and some reports which were included contained no information about the witnesses.

Table 34 shows the months included in the analysis of Air Force UFO reports, the number of reports Project Blue Book received during each month, and the number of reports analyzed as to the occupation(s) of witness(es) involved. The occupations of witnesses were classified into the nine occupational categories used in the analyses of newspaper items, as explained in the preceding chapter.

For two reasons, it was not appropriate to compare the findings of the Air Force analysis directly against the analysis of the 1,000 news items in the Larson collection. First, the analysis of the Larson clippings did not distinguish between witnesses to UFO sightings and sources of information who did not

TABLE 34

AIR FORCE UFO REPORTS		
Years	Air Force Reports	
	Rec'vd	Analyzed
1961	119	33
Jan	47	15
Oct	41	10
Apr	31	8
1962	99	23
Aug	52	12
Jan	26	6
Mar	21	5
1963	92	23
Aug	52	13
May	23	6
Jan	17	4
1964	153	36
May	83	19
Nov	51	12
Jan	19	5
1965	338	82
Aug	262	64
Mar	43	10
Jun	33	8
1966	280	59
Mar	158	34
Jul	101	20
Feb	21	5
Total	1081	256

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see UFOs--they were combined in a broad category of "news sources". Second, while the Air Force sample consisted entirely of reports of single UFO incidents, only 54 per cent of the Larson clippings dealt with single incidents and the data from these--by nature of the recording process--could not be extracted for comparison against the Air Force reports.

In the more detailed 1947-66 analysis, however, a distinction was drawn between witnesses and sources of information appearing in news items. Also, the 304 items dealing with single UFO incidents could be analyzed independently of the 207 dealing with more than one incident or none at all. About 40 per cent of the 304 items were published during the general time period covered by the Air Force analysis.

In comparing the occupational categories of UFO witnesses found in news items and in Air Force files, it was decided also to determine the representation of the categories in the nation in general. The 1960 census of the civilian labor force listed 68 million workers in 297 detailed occupations. The number of workers and occupations were classified into appropriate occupational categories.

In addition to the census reports, the U.S. Statistical Abstract provided data on the number of active military officers in 1960 and the number of licensed pilots in the nation. Military officers were included in the occupational category of "elected-appointed officials and military officers" and pilots were included in the category of "aerial phenomena."

Table 35 shows the nine occupational categories included in the analysis of press clippings and Air Force UFO reports. The percentage

figures show the representation of each category (1) in news items in the 1947-66 sample; (2) in Air Force UFO reports; and (3) in the 1960 census.

TABLE 35

OCCUPATIONS OF UFO WITNESSES IN NEWS ITEMS AND
AIR FORCE REPORTS; OCCUPATIONS IN 1960 CENSUS

Occupational Category	Per cent of items in which named as a UFO witness*		Representation of category in census of 1960
	News Reports	Air Force Reports	
UFO INVESTIGATORS:			
Hynek, Air Force	0.00	0.00	Not applicable
UFO ORGANIZATIONS:			
NICAP, APRO others	0.32	1.00	Not applicable
AERIAL PHENOMENA:			
Pilots, FAA, radar	15.78	15.2	0.84
TECHNICIANS,			
SCIENTISTS:	2.63	5.5	1.13
ELECTED-APPOINTED			
OFFICIALS; MILITARY	1.64	5.5	1.26
NEWSMEN: Reporters, broadcasters, media			
	4.6	2.7	.17
LAW ENFORCEMENT-SECURITY:			
	13.81	9.0	1.01
INDIVIDUALS not included in above			
	74.34	75.0	96.4
ANONYMOUS:			
	18.75	1.0	Not applicable
TOTAL NUMBER IN SAMPLE:			
	304	256	

* Percentages total more than 100 because more than one category may be found in UFO reports with several witnesses.

The data in the table seemed to support at least six general observations:

1. According to the 1960 census, 96 per cent of the nation's work force would have been classified in the "individuals" category; that may explain why the largest occupational category of UFO witnesses, as found in the press and Air Force reports, was that of individuals not included in any of the more specific categories.

2. Occupational groups such as aerial phenomena and law enforcement-security seemed to relatively small in the population at large. It seemed predictable, however, that such groups should be represented more frequently among UFO witnesses--as was the case-- simply because the nature of their occupations appeared likely to bring them into contact with the phenomenon.

3. Press accounts contained more references to anonymous UFO witnesses than did the Air Force files--18 per cent to 1 per cent. This seemed predictable for two reasons: (1) local Air Force bases were unlikely to forward to Project Blue Book reports from anonymous telephone callers, but such reports did appear in the press often, and (2) the Air Force could promise a UFO witness a degree of anonymity and still record his name in Air Force files, while the press could not promise anonymity and record the name in its news columns.

4. In the news items and in the Air Force reports, the frequency of references to the categories of aerial phenomena and individuals seemed approximately the same. The Air Force reports, however, did seem to include relatively more references to military pilots.

5. The news items appeared to contain more references to UFO witnesses in the categories of newsmen and law enforcement.

6. The Air Force files appeared to contain more references than the news items to the occupational categories of technicians-scientists and public officials-military. Those in the latter category appeared in UFO news items with about the same frequency as they did in the population at large, 1.64 per cent to 1.26 per cent. The difference

between Air Force and press references to public officials and military officers seem to arise primarily from the fact that Air Force files contained far more references to military officers who had reported UFOs.

The comparison of Air Force and press data included analysis of the number of witnesses recorded for each of the 256 Air Force cases and for each of the 304 single-incident UFO news items.

TABLE 36

NUMBER OF WITNESSES IN NEWS ITEMS,
AIR FORCE UFO REPORTS

Number of witnesses	Per cent of cases	
	News items	Air Force
One	19.7	57.8
Two-to-five	33.3	34.0
Six-to-ten	20.7	2.7
More than ten	13.7	5.5
Scores, 100s	12.7	-

As indicated by the table, the majority of UFO cases for both news items and the Air Force had five or fewer witnesses. The Air Force cases in particular tended to have a low number of witnesses. The relatively high percentage of newspaper items with more than 10 or scores of witnesses was attributable, in part, to the inclusion of news items about UFOs--many later identified as meteors or weather balloons--seen across several states but still constituting a single UFO incident.

The Air Force data were for the years 1961 through 1966. In research of Air Force files, this study also found an analysis of UFO reports, by number of witnesses, for the year 1960. Although the numbers of witnesses were recorded in slightly different categories

for 1960, the majority of sightings were one-witness incidents and more than 70 per cent of the reports had fewer than four witnesses.

TABLE 37

NUMBER OF WITNESSES IN AIR FORCE REPORTS: 1960

Number of Witnesses	Per cent of 1960 cases
One	51.5
Two	15.4
Three	4.9
Four or more	28.0

Cults and Contactees

One aspect of press coverage of UFOs untouched by analysis of occupational categories and numbers of UFO witnesses was coverage of the fringe element popularly referred to as the "kooks." That label generally has been applied to UFO witnesses or participants in the UFO phenomenon who seem motivated primarily by psychological problems or needs.

From the standpoint of numbers alone, the fringe element appears to be a relatively minor aspect of the UFO phenomenon. For example, from 1957 through 1966, the Air Force classified only 241, or 3.6 per cent, of the 6,605 UFO reports it received as resulting from hoaxes, hallucinations or psychological causes. The two largest UFO organizations, APRO and NICAP, appear to maintain large memberships without seeking support from fringe elements. NICAP occasionally announces that it has dropped from membership, or refused membership to, a "contactee," someone who claims to have had contact with an extra-terrestrial being.

Since coverage of flying saucers began, the press occasionally has focused upon the bizarre elements of the phenomenon. Examples of

such coverage would include that given to the "Dr. Gee" story of March 1950, discussed in Chapter ii, and the nationwide coverage given in November 1957 to Reinholdt Schmidt, who said he conversed with German-speaking occupants of a flying saucer which landed near Kearney, Neb. Schmidt was held for a few days in a Nebraska state hospital. Four years later, in 1961, he was convicted of grand theft by an Alameda County, California, Superior Court jury. Schmidt had been charged with duping a woman into investing \$5,000 in a worthless mining claim which, he said, had been pointed out to him by crew members of a flying saucer from Saturn. In the trial, Schmidt also said two Southern California women had given him \$25,000 to produce a film based on his Kearney, Neb., experience.

Stories about extraterrestrial life were printed in the press before the onset of UFOs and the stories told by Schmidt, "Dr. Gee," and others. A classic series of articles in this category was the August 1835 moon hoax series published in The New York Sun. Helen MacGill Hughes, in her book, News and the Human Interest Story, said the articles about the discovery of man-bat inhabitants of the moon helped assure the financial success of The Sun in particular and the penny press in general. Her book was published in 1940, but her comments on human interest stories were pertinent to coverage of UFOs. She wrote (p. 185):

. . .The moon hoax represented the new use of the newspaper as something to amuse. It follows that if fabrication is more entertaining than unadorned fact, then fabrication--to a certain point--becomes good copy. And this story, as it happened, turned out to be one of those narratives that fascinates all sorts of people. It may be taken as typical of newspaper stories that have human interest because they deal with curiosities and mysteries of everyday life that everyone has speculated on at one time or another. They are common and familiar, and yet they are the focus

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of unanswered questions. The common interest in these things-- in this planet and the solar system, life, disease, and death and every sort of natural phenomenon--is registered in popular literature from the primitive ballads on monstrous births and celestial signs and wonders. . .to the Hearst scientific Sunday articles on "When the Sabre-Toothed Tiger Roamed North America." The same interest accounts for the longevity of ghost stories and tales about the sea serpent. The moon hoax is thus one of many stories which may be said to define a universal interest in the half-explained, the unknown, the uncontrollable. A host of superstitions and magical interpretations survive today and pass currently in conversation, and as long as people find them interesting enough to perpetuate them in talk they are good copy. . .

In a May 1968 interview, James McCartney, city editor of The Chicago Daily News, commented upon "good copy" aspects of news about flying saucers and related stories. He said that stories about flying saucers might not be printed because newspapers believe there is "something to" the phenomenon but rather would be printed because "it may be interesting to readers" that there are people who think flying saucers are real. For example, he said, his newspaper had printed a photograph and a story about a woman who claimed to receive radio signals when she set her hair in metal curlers. The News printed the story, McCartney said, not because it was thought the woman actually received the signals but because it was interesting she thought she did. He said:

Most of what is in the paper comes from irrational people, but becomes rational because it filters through rational reporters and copy editors and maybe a rational editor, if you've got one. . . flying saucers, like other stories, involve people and tell a great deal about the nature of the times and the people. The fact that they do believe in them may be sufficient (reason), or interesting aspect for a news story.

McCartney agreed, however, that many newspaper readers would interpret a news story about a flying saucer report as stating that "flying saucers are real" rather than stating "here is a fellow who says he saw a flying saucer." McCartney added, however:

You dignify a great many things in the paper unintentionally; but you can't catch them. . . Hell yes, of course people can't read newspapers (properly). But if we start going along these lines we might as well close the papers. We have editors that can't read newspapers.

Some psychologists and sociologists have focused more upon the people who tell saucer stories than upon the stories themselves. H. Taylor Buckner, who taught social psychology at the University of California at Berkeley, wrote about flying saucer club members in a May/June 1966 article in Trans-action, "Flying Saucers Are For People."

He wrote:

The most important single fact about the flying saucer clubs I have had contact with is that they were organized by people who were already functioning within the occult social world. One particular club which I have followed for several years, and whose records I have been able to examine is typical. Its organizer was a late-middle-aged lady whose formal education had ended with the fourth grade. . . She was familiar with all of the other major occult philosophies. When she decided that the new field of flying saucers was of more than passing interest. . . she decided to start a club. . .

She rented a small hall for the first meeting, and immediately ran into difficulty. The owner objects to having 'flying saucer' on his bulletin board. The name was changed to 'Space-Craft Club.' She then mailed out postcards 'to her friends.' Her friends, of course, were people she knew from her contacts in the world of occult seekers. . .

After three years of attending saucer club meetings and conventions, Buckner said he reached these conclusions about club members:

The members are old. The average age is probably around 65 and there are very few people under 50. Most of the members, perhaps 90 per cent of the regulars, are women. . .

Most of the members seem to be widowed or single. . .

The socio-economic status of the members seems to be in the upper-working class and lower-middle class with, perhaps, a greater dispersion downward than upward.

The formal education level of most members is quite low. Consequently, although they spend all their time learning and they consider themselves 'students,' they do not learn things in an ordered and disciplined way, but build up chunks of disconnected knowledge which they cannot bring to bear on a problem, and which they cannot systematize.

The physical health of the audience appears to be bad, even worse than would be accounted for by the high average age. . .

By any conventional definition, the mental health level of the audience is quite low. . .1

The aged, lonely, under-educated and ill individuals described by Buckner might find in UFO club memberships, or other occult activities, the recognition, prestige, worth and authority they are unable to achieve in more socially acceptable pursuits. Some of the prestige and authority supposedly available to members of UFO clubs can be seen in a statement from a membership application for the National Investigations Committee on Unidentified Flying Objects (NICUFO), an organization directed by Dr. Frank Stranges:

As a member of the National Investigations Committee on UFOs, you are hereby authorized to represent us on all matters pertaining to UFO investigation. You may gather information, question witnesses and collect all available data to send to this office. You are also requested to cooperate fully with the Air Force, Police and Fire Departments as well as with the Press. All bona-fide reports will be analyzed and filed for presentation to the proper governmental Committee when such convenes. Every report is handled with utmost respect and confidence. You will receive an identification card as well as an annual subscription to my Confidential letter. This letter will keep you current on UFO activities. Please forward all available news press clippings, etc. from your area when UFOs make news. Encourage your friends to likewise join this Committee.

At least two books provide further material about the link which Buckner drew between flying saucer clubs and occult activities in general. One, When Prophecy Fails by Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken and Stanley Schachter, was a study of a group which predicted the destruction of the world in the wake of their rescue by "guardians"

aboard flying saucers. The other book, The Doomsday Cult by John Lofland, was based upon a group which predicted a "New Age" to follow a time of accidents and disasters in the 1960s.

In When Prophecy Fails, the authors suggested that clear cut, disconfirming evidence in the prophecies of the believers--rather than lessening belief--may result in deepened conviction. For example, the group, led by a woman called Marian Kreech, assembled at times to await rescue by the "guardians." Despite the prophecies of their imminent arrival and impending global destruction, the "guardians" and their flying saucers never appeared. The disappointed cult members, however, interpreted the non-appearances as "tests of faith" or as a signs that their faithfulness had caused God to change His plans about destroying the world at the prophesied time.

After one such episode, the authors quoted Mrs. Kreech as telling the other believers:

. . .we don't have to understand everything. The plan has never gone astray. We don't know what the plan is, but it has never gone astray. 2

In The Doomsday Cult, Lofland observed that there was an interchange of memberships between the Divine Precepts cult which he studied and flying saucer clubs.

He suggested, too, that members of the Divine Precepts cult could interpret almost any news item to support their doctrine that a time of turmoil was at hand and would be followed by the "New Age." If there were news of disasters, accidents or international conflict, these were signs that the end was near. If, on the other hand, such items were absent from the day's news, this would be interpreted as a sign that God was pleased with the work of the cult members and had

granted a temporary reprieve to show His pleasure.

There may be similarities between the nature of these interpretations and interpretations of UFO news items. For example, if it were reported that the Air Force had no solution to a UFO sighting, then the news item could be interpreted as providing evidence that flying saucers were real. And, if it were reported that the Air Force had explained the UFO report as resulting from the mis-identification of a meteor or airplane, then the news item could be interpreted as providing evidence that there was a conspiracy to hide the real truth about flying saucers. In either instance, the news media would be providing only supportive evidence for believers in flying saucers.

In both the Festinger and Lofland studies, members of the cults were recruited on a personal, face-to-face basis. News items and media advertising were virtually useless in recruiting new members.

Another indication of the link between flying saucer clubs and the occult world would seem to be the success of FATE magazine. In an interview in May 1968, Curtis Fuller, a founder and the publisher of FATE, stated flatly that stories about flying saucers made FATE a success in the late 1940s. In fact, he said, the interest in the new phenomenon of flying discs was one reason the magazine was started. However, 20 years later, he said, the magazine would be successful and would maintain its 125,000 monthly circulation without flying saucer stories. The magazine is subtitled "True Stories of the Strange and Unknoww" and contents often include stories about ESP, poltergeists and witchcraft. Advertisements include the sale of dowsing instruments, ouija boards, crystal balls and varied guides to the use of psychic powers.

The magazine's editorial policy on flying saucers has been relatively conservative. Fuller said both believers in flying saucers and their critics have been guilty of formulating hypotheses and then seeking evidence to support them. His belief was that some reports of flying saucers probably result from sightings of unknown or not understood phenomena--but extraterrestrial objects are not necessarily involved.

Asked to characterize the readers of FATE, Fuller said his magazine "caters to the rebel, the man against the establishment." Many people were interested or engaged in the saucer phenomenon, Fuller said, not because they wanted to make money but because they thought the establishment was keeping information from them or working against them. He said one of his motivating forces was that articles in FATE were often ridiculed by the scientific community.

While stating that FATE catered to the "rebel," Fuller also said he did receive "an awful lot" of mail from apparently emotionally and mentally disturbed people.

The link between flying saucer clubs and occult activities, as discussed by Buckner, has been one of the reasons given for the existence of the flying saucer phenomenon. Another has been a supposed relationship between interest in science fiction and flying saucers. The latter argument sometimes posits a relationship between post-war interest in science fiction and the onset of the flying saucer era.

However, unlike the relationship between saucers and the occult world, the saucer-science fiction relationship was not supported in a review of science fiction literature and in other research.

In his doctoral thesis in sociology at Northwestern University, Walter Hirsch analyzed American science fiction from 1926 through 1950. As a mass medium, he said, science fiction was generally said to have started in 1926 when Hugo Gernsback founded Amazing Stories. Based upon the number of science fiction publications, Hirsch said the years of peak interest in such writing seemed to be 1949 through 1953 or 1954.⁶

About flying saucers, Hirsch wrote:

We have no way of knowing to what degree science fiction is influencing contemporary concern with 'flying saucers' and similar phenomena. . . .

It is our impression that the editors of the 'better' science fiction magazines have maintained a rather skeptical attitude toward unverified apparitions in their editorials, i.e., they have treated them as legitimate fiction rather than facts. 7

In one of the detailed reviews of science fiction literature, The Science Fiction Handbook, L. Sprague DeCamp said science fiction in general seemed to reflect rather than cause social trends and events. Writing in 1953, he noted, "The flying saucer craze has been worked to death in the last few years."

Interest in science fiction in the United States received great impetus from the Orson Welles' "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast in October 1938, DeCamp said. He noted:

In the 12 months that began in the autumn of 1938, science fiction burst upon the consciousness of the people of the United States. 8

The writings of DeCamp and Hirsch suggested that the relationship between science fiction and flying saucers was primarily that saucers provided a topic for science fiction writers, who had found a market in the United States before the onset of flying saucers in 1947

and who apparently reached a peak in popularity not during 1947 but a few years afterward.

One pitfall of discussing the relationship of flying saucers to the occult or to interest in science fiction--as on the preceding pages--is that one may begin to operate on an "all-or-none" principle. That is, one may begin to seek the cause of UFO reports or the reason for press coverage. UFO reports, however, appear to result from varying stimuli. For example, there appear to be qualitative and quantitative differences between UFO reports from airline pilots, UFO reports from citizens who looked for flying saucers after reading the evening paper and UFO reports from those who also reported contact with an extraterrestrial being.

The press coverage reviewed for this study appeared to have recognized some of these differences in the nature of UFO reports. There have been news reports of the Wisconsin man who in April 1961 said he received three pancakes from flying saucer creatures in exchange for filling their water jug; of the retired Florida man who told of having his photograph taken by a robot from a flying saucer in March 1965, of the Upstate New York farmer who in May 1964 said he gave creatures from a flying saucer a bag of fertilizer to go along with soil samples they had taken from his land. But stories such as these appear to have been set apart from other, less bizarre UFO reports.

The contactee stories seldom--if ever--included references to other, non-contactee UFO reports.

Instead, the contactee stories often seemed to be printed when no other UFO sightings had been reported. Or, if other sightings had been reported in the press, the contactee story and the UFO news items

would be carried as separate news stories. Apparently, given a bizarre story about contact with creatures from outerspace, newsmen were not likely to combine it with less exotic reports of puzzling lights in the sky; and, given reports of puzzling lights or shapes in the sky, newsmen were not likely to introduce the far-out element of extraterrestrial creatures.

In practice then--whether by accident or design--newsmen appeared to have distinguished those aspects of the UFO phenomenon related to flying saucer clubs and cults and those aspects of the phenomenon involving people puzzled by lights or objects they had seen in the sky.

The apparent distinction in news coverage seemed in accord with a statement by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Air Force consultant on UFOs, printed in the October 21, 1966 issue of Science. Hynek said that many UFOs merited scientific study and that:

. . . Only a negligible handful of reports submitted to the Air Force are from 'true believers', the same who attend UFO conventions and who are members of 'gee-whiz' groups. It has been my experience that quite generally the truly puzzling reports come from people who have not given much or any thought to UFOs. 9

Reasons for Reporting, Not Reporting UFOs

Data from a public opinion poll conducted for the UFO Project at the University of Colorado provided some answers to the third question posed in the introduction to this chapter: What appear to be some of the reasons an individual will or will not report seeing what he thinks was a flying saucer?

The author assisted Dr. David Saunders and Dr. Aldora Lee of the UFO Project in devising public opinion poll questions about why indi-

viduals would or would not report seeing a UFO.

As noted in Chapter ii, about 3 per cent of 1500 adult respondents in the Boulder Poll said they had seen UFOs. Of these 45 witnesses, however, only seven said they had reported their experience to someone or some agency other than family or close friends. The remaining 38--85 per cent of the witnesses--told no one, except possibly family or friends.

This apparent reluctance of UFO witnesses to report sightings was in marked contrast to what non-witnesses said they would do if they saw UFOs. Of the non-witnesses, only 16 per cent said they would not report a UFO if they saw one.

The 84 per cent, or 1,382 non-witnesses, who said they would report a UFO--if they saw one--gave two major reasons for their predicted action. About half said they would report seeing the UFO because they would want to find out what it was, and 36 per cent said they would report it because strange objects should be reported.

The differences between what UFO witnesses said they did and what non-witnesses said they would do--if they saw UFOs--might have been attributable to at least one of three factors: (1) the low number of witnesses may have biased the sample; (2) what an individual does in a situation in fact may vary from what he says he would do in a hypothetical case; (3) participants in a public opinion poll may give what they consider the "appropriate" rather than the "honest" response, in this case saying UFOs should be reported.

Before further consideration of why some UFOs are reported, it may be helpful to consider why most of them are not.

From a list of nine possible reasons for not reporting a UFO, respondents were asked to indicate those reasons which influenced their decision not to report and also to indicate the one reason which they thought influenced them the most.

Table 38 shows the nine reasons for not reporting a UFO. Responses are shown for both witnesses who did not report their experiences, except possibly to family or friends, and for non-witnesses who said they would not report a UFO, if they saw one. The reasons given for not reporting UFOs total more than 100 per cent because respondents may have listed more than one reason as influencing them; the "most important reasons" total less than 100 per cent because responses which listed more than one "most important" reason were not included in the table.

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As shown by the table, the reasons given for non-reporting by both witnesses and non-witnesses were similar. For both, the most frequently named reason for not reporting and the most important reason were that the UFO was something normal--a man-made or natural object--that looked odd for one reason or another.

For both witnesses and non-witnesses, the second ranking reason for not reporting a UFO was fear of ridicule--19 per cent for the witnesses and 20 per cent for non-witnesses. Most of the remaining reasons for not reporting dealt with not knowing whom to report to, not knowing UFOs should be reported, or thinking that authorities could not or would not do anything about the report.

The major response--that the UFO probably would be something normal seen in a funny way--is supported by almost all UFO research. The Air Force claims to have identified all but a small percentage of

TABLE 38

REASONS FOR NOT REPORTING UFOS

Reasons for not reporting a UFO to anyone other than family or friends	Witnesses		Non-Witnesses	
	Reasons for Decision	Most Important Reason	Reasons for Decision	Most Important Reason
Did/Would not want to take the time; might mean time lost from work.	0	0	7%	1%
Afraid of ridicule; people would think I was a nut or crazy.	28%	19%	38%	20%
Thought it was a private matter.	26%	8%	12%	4%
Authorities could not do anything about it.	19%	4%	21%	7%
Authorities would not want to be bothered about it.	23%	6%	16%	4%
Was/Would be too confused or upset to notify them.	4%	0	9%	3%
Did not know how to notify them or that they should be notified.	26%	10%	22%	4%
Did/Would not know to whom to report it.	13%	6%	31%	12%
It was/would be something normal that just looked funny for one reason or another	58%	40%	63%	43%
Total	197%	92%	219%	98%
N	35	34	219	196

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UFOS as resulting from mis-identifications of man-made or natural phenomena; and, even scientists who say that UFOs merit scientific inquiry--Dr. Hynek and Dr. James McDonald of the University of Arizona, for example--frequently acknowledge that most UFO reports are mis-identifications of known objects.

The second major response--that of fear of ridicule--can be illustrated in at least two ways: (1) in comments from individuals who

reported seeing a UFO and later said they regretted doing so; (2) in comments from individuals who saw UFOs but did not report them.

One UFO witness who later said he regretted his experience was Frank Mannor of Dexter, Mich. Mannor and his son reported seeing a UFO in March 1966 and their report led to the UFO episode which was climaxed by the Air Force "swamp gas" explanation. On the CBS Reports program, "UFO: Friend, Foe or Fantasy," May 10, 1966, Mannor complained:

Well, you can look at here. Beer bottles thrown. Look at my (broken) windshield. What would you think if somebody was throwing beer bottles at your house, standing out in the middle of the road screaming 'you nut, you fanatic,' and all that? What would you think?

During the excitement over UFOs in Michigan, Mannor and his family had been taunted by the curious and besieged by newsmen. A CBS reporter asked him: "Are you sorry now that you did tell people what you saw?"

Yes, I am. I am sorry because--not that it's not the truth, but it's just the idea of the reaction of the people. They think you're a nut; to tell you the truth, that's just what they figure you are. And I'm not going to take it no more. I don't want nobody down in here. I just--leave me alone. And if the thing lands right here, right there by that pump, I'd never say a word. And he got out and talked to me, I wouldn't tell nobody. That's just the way I feel. I'm bitter and disgusted in the whole matter, and if--if people's gonna act like that, I hope one lands right in Ann Arbor, right in the middle of Detroit.

In October 1958, two men in their mid-20s reported seeing a UFO hovering near a bridge north of Baltimore, Md. That case became known as the Loch Raven Dam sighting. One of the witnesses, Phillip Small of Reistertown, Md., told the Air Force that when he and Alvin Cohen tried to report the UFO to the Ground Observer Corps by telephone "the guy just said 'Aww come on now'," and--when they persisted--hung up.

Small told the Air Force investigators:

I am sorry I saw it. I wish I hadn't seen it. I'd rather not be going through all this interrogation. I did see something. . . I hoped what I did see would add to the national interest or national information that would maybe help understand these things a little better. . .

In April 1964, one of the more puzzling UFO reports was made when state policeman Lonnie Zamora of Socorro, N.M., said he saw an egg-shaped craft take off from the desert outside Socorro. According to news accounts, Zamora also said he had seen two silver-suited men enter the craft, but he later denied that part of his story. The evidence of his sighting included some burned bushes and impressions supposedly made by landing gear. The sighting was not explained, and the Air Force investigators said it did not appear to be a hoax and Zamora had reported what he thought he had seen.

On the first anniversary of the sighting, April 24, 1965, The El Paso, Texas, Times interviewed Zamora and quoted him:

'I wanted to keep it to myself,' Zamora said. 'But Chavez (another state policeman whom Zamora had called to the scene) made me report it. But if something like this should ever happen again, I'll know what to do.'

The distressed experienced by Mannor, Small, Zamora and others may have keep other UFO witnesses from reporting sightings to the news media, Air Force or police. Three such instances of non-reports will be discussed on the following three pages, not as evidence that flying saucers are real, but to suggest that fear of ridicule does keep some UFO reports "hidden."

The first case was a summertime sighting in Pennsylvania about 10 years ago, in the late 1950s. The incident was disclosed by the witnesses' daughter, a secretary with CBS in Chicago. Responding to a

request for more information, her father wrote this account of the UFO sighting:

In brief, I was lying in bed at about 2:30 a.m., unable to sleep. A door was open for circulation, facing the street, directly opposite the bedroom door. I happened to glance out and I was transfixed to see a dark gray dirigible-shaped object about eight feet long and possibly two and a half feet in diameter glide silently up the street. It was about eighteen feet from the ground. Opposite the door is a street light. The object circled, under perfect control, three times beneath the street light. It then continued its westward course. At the point where it circled beneath the street light it was about fifty feet from me.

I assumed that my wife was asleep, but she said to me as the object disappeared to the West, 'Did you see that?' Her perception of it exactly coincided with mine.

The object emitted no light or glow of any kind, nor was any sound produced. I did not think to look for a means of propulsion. I was so startled that at first I assumed it to be a giant toy, a child's dirigible, something on the order of the Goodyear blimp, but a bit more slender. It then occurred to me that it could not be, because it proceeded in a straight line, made three perfect circles, and then continued in a straight line, obviously steered and not drifting. Further, this is a very small rural mountain town and I had not seen or heard of such a spectacular and expensive plaything in the community. For that matter, I had children of my own at the time and I had seen nothing like it . . . in department stories in other cities. Finally, it was ludicrous to assume that a child would be out at night, in total darkness, at 2:30 a.m., manipulating by any means an eight-foot blimp.

I have about 50,000 rhododendrons which I grow for genetic research in a six-acre woodland near my residence. The morning after the sighting I went out to my hybridizing and trial grounds and found scattered here and there clumps of narrow, thin metallic ribbons. The best description would be that they somewhat resembled the aluminum foil 'icicles' used to decorate Christmas trees, but with a different sheen. I brought some of them into the house and the next day a friend from Pittsburgh took them home with him. He later reported that he had asked that they be analyzed--at Mellon Institute or one of the Pittsburgh universities, I just do not remember. The report came back that they did not yield to the usual methods of analysis.

There is really nothing more to tell about the incident.

My wife and I did not mention the matter to anyone outside the family, nor do we wish to do so now. . . We did not

contact any news media because we thought others would consider us demented, and in any case we are not publicity seekers.

The second case was a daytime UFO sighting, at about noon, and was reported to NICAP by a man with technological background. He was the chief engineer of a Connecticut corporation. His report was found in the files of the UFO Project at Boulder and he was contacted because his report said he did not want the news media to be told of his experience. His report said, in part:

As I was observing the cloud formation, facing west. . .I noticed a bright, silvery, wingless object traveling North to South at approximately 500 mph and 3,000 feet elevation and about one mile away. I immediately picked it up with my binoculars (7X50) and followed its straight line course for approximately seven seconds, at which time it went behind a single cloud which covered about 30 degrees of sky from my vantage point. . .it never appeared at the other side. The cloud was by itself and the entire periphery was in view at all times.

In an interview, he said he did not call any local news agency:

I have seen (UFO) articles completely distorted. Not on purpose, but because only excerpts were taken from them and people get the wrong impression. Besides, my parents are in their 70s and I don't want to bother them with the phone calls that usually follow a report of a UFO.

In newspapers, you get phone calls from screwballs, or from people who think you're a crackpot for seeing a UFO. . .

I am familiar with people who had suffered ridicule or other problems because of news accounts of UFOs. I've called some people for information--after I got interested in UFOs--but they wouldn't talk with me because they had been bothered so much.

The third and final case to be discussed here was found in Air Force files during a visit to Project Blue Book in July 1968. The report told of an April 7, 1950, UFO sighting by four air traffic controllers at Logan International Airport in Boston. The men, who were in the control tower, said they saw an unidentified object of

"definite mass," but the Air Force explained their sighting as resulting from a temperature inversion. One controller told about the reaction to the 10 minute sighting, which occurred at about 10 p.m.:

For obvious reasons, no formal report of this incident was made to any source. With so many reports rampant developing from irresponsible or hysterical sources, one hesitates to solicit ridicule. But, in view of the close similarity of what I witnessed and what has been seen by others elsewhere, I feel it incumbent to submit this report in spite of that risk.

While reluctance to report UFOs may, in part, be attributable to Air Force and press skepticism of the phenomenon, the fear of ridicule seemed to exist independent of such skepticism. In his review of the 1947 wave of UFO reports, Report on the UFO Wave of 1947, Ted Bloecher presented news stories about flying saucer witnesses who were reluctant to tell of their experiences before the phenomenon came to national attention.

In the introduction to Bloecher's study, physicist Dr. James E. McDonald of the University of Arizona wrote:

. . . Bloecher's material shows. . . that even before any Air Force pronouncements, before any press-reported scientific scoffing in early July 1947, witnesses were exhibiting quite definite reluctance to report openly something they have seen with their own eyes when it flies in the face of familiar experience. . . this reluctance predates official and journalistic fun-poking concerning 'flying saucers'. Science has built into our population a very definite resistance towards acceptance of the odd and unusual, the bewildering and inexplicable. Exceptions there are, needless to say, but the bulk of the populace tends to be quite close-mouthed about observations or unexplainable phenomena. This disposition was quickly and powerfully enhanced by official scoffing, by scientific pronouncements made ex cathedra by the end of the first week of July 1947 and since repeated over and over. 12

McDonald argued that faith in, or fear of, the pronouncements of science apparently made many UFO witnesses reluctant to report their experiences.

(Other scientists, however, have argued that it was ignorance of science--not fear--that played a major role in the UFO phenomenon. During my work with the UFO Project at Colorado, Dr. Edward U. Condon, the director, and astronomer Dr. Franklin Roach often said the existence of the UFO phenomenon was, in part, an indictment of science education. Individuals believed in UFOs on the basis of very questionable evidence, they said, and many UFO reports resulted from stimuli--such as planets and stars--which even an elementary science education should teach a student to identify. Part of the disagreement between McDonald and Condon and Roach may stem from the fact that McDonald wrote about the reluctance of UFO witnesses to report, while Condon and Roach spoke about the willingness of others to report and to believe in UFOs).

In the analysis of the 511 news items selected from Air Force and NICAP files, an effort was made to determine to what extent news coverage of UFOs might discourage an individual from reporting what he thought was a "flying saucer." Every news item from 1947 through 1966 was checked to see if it contained one or more of four factors which might reasonably be expected to make a reader hesitant about reporting a UFO. An item was considered to contain statements that might discourage a person from reporting a UFO if it:

- a. suggested that persons who see or report UFOs could be considered gullible, untrustworthy, drunk, unstable or have other characteristics that may make them fit subjects for ridicule;
- b. mentioned physical, personal or property damage a person suffered after making public a report of a UFO;
- c. included or referred to comments that an individual once having seen a UFO said that, if he had it to do over again, he would never report a UFO;

or d. mentioned person(s) refusing to be identified as having made a UFO report.

Of the 511 news items, 94, or 18.4 per cent, included one or more of the four statements. Analysis against other variables showed that "discouragement factors" appeared in news items at about a rate of 17 to 20 per cent regardless of the circulation of the newspaper of publication, the year of publication, the region of the country in which the paper was published, the time of publication of the paper, the nature of the dateline, or the number of witnesses. The "discouragement" variable appeared to be one of the most consistent of all the variables analyzed.

Inclusion of the discouragement factors in news items varied markedly in only one instance--when analyzed on the basis of the number of UFO reports in the news item. It was found that such factors appeared twice as often in general or wrap-up reports of UFO sightings than in news items comprising only specific reports of UFOs. Discouragement factors were found in 14 per cent, 50 of 358, of the items dealing with specific UFO sightings and in 28.7 per cent, 44 of 153, of the items dealing with general or historical accounts of UFOs or the UFO phenomenon.

No analysis was made of the number or nature of such UFO news headlines as "Silly Season Is Here," "Earthlings Dish Up Some Saucer Stories," etc., except to note that such headlines appeared occasionally and would be categorized under what McDonald termed "journalistic fun-poking."

Also classifiable as "fun-poking" would be references to the "little green men" who supposedly are flying saucer pilots. In the press and elsewhere, the question often has been asked, "Why are they

(creatures associated with saucers) always green?"

The answer may be found in such headlines as "Are Those Little Green Men Back?!" "Welcome Back, You Little Green Men," "No Little Green Men Yet," or "Green Men 'Invading' Again." Little green men also have been mentioned at the end of UFO stories in which there are no references to creatures. Then, the reference is "No one said he saw any little green men."

At an extreme, even when the creatures seen were described as silver or nickle-plated—as in Hopkinsville, Ky., in August 1955—they have been called green by the press.

The green color seemed more the preference of reporters than of UFO witnesses.

References to green creatures from outerspace have not been limited to the flying saucer era. Perhaps because that color complexion is not found on earth, it has been used to describe extraterrestrial life. For example, Edgar Rice Burroughs, in his 1917 book, A Princess of Mars, described Martians as 15-foot-tall, green and having four arms.

The first reference this study found to green men and flying saucers was a July 9, 1947, column by Associated Press writer Hal Boyle. Boyle wrote of a fanciful flying saucer trip he took with a green Martian named Balmiston, "Balmy" for short.

In addition to the fear of ridicule or fun-poking indicated by the Boulder opinion poll--and illustrated by the comments of UFO observers and contents of UFO news items--at least three other factors appeared to determine whether an individual would report a UFO if he saw one. One, the knowledge that the UFO probably was something normal seen in an unusual way, was discussed previously. The other

two would be (1) whether the individual knew that UFOs should be reported and knew to whom to report, and (2) whether the individual thought anything could or would be done if he did make a report.

This study uncovered no data on what proportion of the population knew that the Air Force had an agency, Project Blue Book, for receiving UFO reports. From reading UFO news items and talking with reporters, it was apparent that many newsmen did not know there was such an agency as Blue Book.

Such lack of information did not seem limited to newsmen. For example, the Gallup Poll of 1966 estimated that 5 million adult Americans said they had seen UFOs. Yet, for the years 1947 through 1966, the Air Force reported receiving a total of 11,260 UFO reports.

In addition, in the Boulder poll, respondents were given a list of agencies which might receive UFO reports and were asked which agencies they would report to. Police were mentioned in 56 per cent of the responses; the Air Force in 15 per cent, newspapers in 10 per cent, and radio stations in 9. Apparently, even when it was listed as an agency to which UFOs could be reported, less than one in six respondents said they would report UFOs to the Air Force.

Included in a category of people who might not know that UFOs could or should be reported to the Air Force, or any agency for that matter, would be that segment of the population which had never heard of UFOs.

In the 1968 Boulder poll, conducted 21 years after the first report of a flying saucer in the nation's press, about 2 per cent of the respondents said they had never heard of UFOs or flying saucers.

Background on the 2 per cent was provided in data received from the Boulder UFO Project but not included in the project's final report, Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects. Weighted data from the opinion poll indicated that 51 of the 2493 respondents had never heard of flying saucers or UFOs. Sixteen were men and 35 were women. In ages, they were somewhat older than the overall sample: two were 18 or 19; three were between 20 and 29; six were from 30 to 39; ten from 40 to 49; nine, 50 to 59; four, 60 to 69; fourteen, 70-79; two, 80-89, and one over 90.

Eighteen had less than an eighth grade schooling; 10 said they had completed the eighth grade; 14 had attended high school; five had graduated from high school; one attended college and one said he held a graduate degree. Eleven reported a family income under \$2,000 a year; 11 also said their family incomes were between \$2,000 and \$3,000; nine were from families with annual incomes between \$3,000 and \$5,000; seven from \$6,000 to \$7,000; seven from \$7,000 to \$10,000, and two from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Of the 51, 17 lived in rural areas with populations under 2,500; seven in areas with populations from 2,500 to 25,000; five in not-urban areas of 25,000 to 50,000 or in urbanized areas of 50,000 to 100,000; seven in urbanized areas of 100,000 to 500,000; four in areas of 500,000 to a million residents, and 11 in areas of a million residents or more.

Although cross correlations between these variables were not available, the median characteristics showed that an individual who said he never had heard about UFOs or flying saucers was 50 to 59 years old; had only an eighth grade education, was from a family with an

income between \$3,000 and \$4,000 a year and lived in a rural area of 25,000 to 50,000 population or an urban area with a population of 50,000 to 100,000.

Although press coverage of UFOs has been extensive, 21 of the 51 who said they had never heard of UFOs said they read a newspaper daily; four said they read newspapers five to six days a week; six said they read papers two to four days a week; two said one day a week; two others said less than one day a week, and 16 said they hardly ever read a newspaper.

The majority of citizens, however, have heard about UFOs and may know to what agencies a UFO should be reported. Still there may be obstacles to the actual reporting. Two non-flying saucer studies were pertinent to this point.

One, "Crime Victims, and the Police," was written by Phillip H. Ennis in Trans-action magazine of June 1967. Ennis, a senior study director at the National Opinion Research Center, directed a study for the President's Crime Commission. One of his conclusions was that in the 2,077 crimes uncovered in an opinion survey police were notified only about half the time; 49 per cent of the victims of crimes had notified the police. The 2,077 crimes ranged from murder to "victimizing incidents typically treated as private matters." Ennis wrote:

. . .two points are clear. First there is strong resistance to invoking the law enforcement process even in matters that are clearly criminal. Second, there is considerable skepticism as to the effectiveness of police action. 13

The second study was "The 'Phantom Anesthetist' of Mattoon" and was reported by Donald M. Johnson in the April 1945 issue of The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology. The study was based on

events in Mattoon, Ill., in September 1944 when rumors of a "phantom anesthetist"--who supposedly felled his victims with a mysterious gas--led to hysteria and reports from about 25 persons who claimed they were victims of the phantom and exhibited such symptoms as "nausea and vomiting, palpitations, paralysis of the legs, and dryness of the mouth and throat." After several days of such excitement, there was a decline in the number of "phantom" reports made to the police--particularly after the "victims" were said to be victims of hysteria or their own imaginations. But there also developed a sharp decline--in fact an absence--in the number of routine prowler calls made to the police department. Johnson wrote:

. . .The only plausible explanation is that the lack of 'prowler' calls results from the development of contra-suggestibility. After hearing of the 'phantom anesthetist' and then of 'imagination' and 'hysteria,' the people who ordinarily would have called the police when they heard a suspicious noise became critical and inhibited their 'imagination.'

. . .It is proper to say that the wave of suggestibility in Mattoon left a wave of contra-suggestibility in its wake. Objective records document this generalization. 14

The Ennis and Johnson studies suggested two reasons why UFOs might not be reported. In the case of the former study, because the witness might be dubious about the worthwhileness of making a report; and, in the case of the latter study, because previous reports may have been ridiculed or easily explained.

Presented below are just three cases in which the reception accorded UFO witnesses may have made them or their acquaintances less willing to make such reports again.

David Rorvik, a reporter for Time magazine, saw a UFO in August 1965 while a reporter for The Billings, Mont., Gazette. Before join-

ing Time, he was a graduate student at Columbia University where he wrote a major paper on UFOs. In that paper, he wrote:

One doesn't ask to see an unidentified flying object. Yet, the voice on the other end of the line clearly accused me of bringing this all on myself. 'It's your problem' was the indictment in that indignant tone. 'We are not in the flying saucer business,' the weatherman said. I asked if I might talk to the meteorologist who had been on duty during the sightings the night before. 'Yes, you could talk to him, but it wouldn't do any good. He is not a flying saucer believer. Anyway, I can tell you he didn't see anything last night and if he had it would have been a weather balloon or a star or something scientifically explainable. . .'

Next I called the local Air Force detachment--then in the process of being converted to a full-scale dispersal base. 'I don't know anything about that', the airman who answered the phone said. 'Hold on. . .'. An assortment of dial tones, clicks and snatches of conversation followed. '. . .another guy wants to know about flying saucers. . .switch it to Riley?. . .Hell, I don't know. . .'. And then the phone went dead. I called back. After some more switchboard gymnastics, an unidentified voice cut in. 'The captain handles this stuff. You'll have to talk to him.' I was agreeable. But it turned out the captain was out of town that week. 15

Rorvik appeared more patient than the wife of an Air Force officer who telephoned Port Hueneme Air Force Base in California to report a UFO the night of March 22, 1957. The officer of the day told of her experience in a report found in Project Blue Book files:

. . .I did joke with her for a few minutes as to what she had been drinking. She became most indignant. . .I explained to her how temperature inversions can cause reflections and weird optical effects, and the conversation was terminated.

This particular UFO report was investigated and determined to have resulted from lights on a barn near the air base. The next case involved officials of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, the management arm of the bigger daily newspapers. The case was never investigated although it was reported to The New York Daily News and the Air Force. Dr. James McDonald told of the ANPA

sighting in an April 1967 address before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. The ANPA personnel were interviewed for this study in New York in March 1968.

Several ANPA executives and employees said that on November 22, 1966, they watched for several minutes from their 17th floor offices on 750 Third Avenue, New York, as a UFO of rectangular shape and aluminum color tipped and swayed as it appeared to hover over the United Nations Secretariat building. The object was first seen from a small office by William Leick, publications manager, William Giery, editor of the ANPA Bulletin, and Donald McVay, ANPA assistant to the general manager. The three said they called to others and went outside to the terrace to watch the object with Fred LaSalle, an administrator, and secretaries Connie Romano and Adrienne Rosen and other employees. The day was sunny and clear; the sky was blue.

The group watched until the object rose and moved out of sight to the east or southeast. LaSalle telephoned the Daily News to learn if any one else had reported the object. The newsman there suggested a call to the Air Force. LaSalle telephoned the Air Force and was asked if the ANPA employees would cooperate in an interview; he said yes. LaSalle said that, in both telephone calls, he gave the details of the sighting. The newsman bypassed the story; the Air Force investigator never came. Leick said he doubted he would ever report another UFO.

(Related to a reluctance to report UFOs may be the distrust or lack-of-access one felt toward agencies which receive UFO reports--for example toward the police or the press. The detailed study of this problem was beyond the scope of this dissertation. It should be noted,

however, that few, if any, UFO reports printed in the press, or recorded elsewhere, seemed to come from Negroes. The Boulder public opinion poll reported that 3 per cent of the white respondents said they had seen UFOs, but only 1 of 245--or four-tenths of 1 per cent--of the Negro respondents said they had seen UFOs.

(The differences in reporting may have resulted from sampling errors, occupational and residential differences between the races, reluctance to report UFOs to "the man," or other sociological or psychological factors.

(The Boulder poll found no statistically significant differences
16
between the races on opinions about UFOs).

Even if UFOs were reported to some official agencies--despite the fear of ridicule and other barriers discussed in this chapter--the press still may not have had access to the reports. For example, Air Force regulations order local Air Force Bases not to release information on unexplained UFOs, except to note that the investigation is continuing. Names of witnesses are not released by the Air Force, even if the UFO is explained, on the ground that publicity may subject the witness to ridicule or nuisance telephone calls.

In addition to the Air Force regulations, organizational guidelines--the written and unwritten patterns of behavior one learns in any occupation--also may have worked against reporting of UFOs to the mass media.

In two separate interviews, R.A. Ebright of American Airlines, chairman of the Allied Pilots Association in Chicago, and a regional manager for United Air Lines told about the reluctance of airline pilots to report UFOs.

Ebright, in an April 1968 interview, said that, while the Federal Aviation Agency had forms for reports of unconventional or unidentified aircraft, such reports probably would not reach the press.

He said:

Very few pilots would take it upon themselves to call a newspaper and tell what they saw. They aren't bred this way. They are more cautious. . .

We would not go directly to the news media. We would handle things like this through the company so as not to bring discredit upon the company--not that this would.

Ebright added, in 1955 when he joined American Airlines after four years as a Marine Corps pilot:

I was with a captain who saw something strange out his window. It was daylight but I didn't see the object even though I was in the cockpit with him. I asked him if he was going to report it and he said, 'Hell, no! I'm not going to report it. They'll think I'm nuts.'

In June 1968, the United Air Lines official, who asked not to be identified, said there "was a strong tendency for pilots not to report if they see a UFO of any type."

By opening their mouths they may subject themselves to three weeks of homework, filling out forms and meeting with boards. It is more trouble than it is worth.

At first he said a pilot who reported a UFO might be "held up to ridicule" by other pilots, but then he said "ridicule" was not really what he had meant:

Just a lot of kidding and barbed remarks. The whole gamut of jest.

As to whether a pilot might report a UFO to the press, he said:

No pilot talks about anything to the outside world without first feeding his information into management. . . there is no corporate policy against pilots talking with news media about UFOs . . . If I received a request from the news media to talk with a pilot, it would depend on whether the pilot was willing to talk with the news media. It would be an individual matter.

Given the reasons for not reporting UFOs--the fact that the witness may reason that the object was probably something normal, the fear of ridicule, mistrust or ignorance of whom to report to, or restrictive regulations--questions may arise about which reports do reach the news media and why some people report UFOs.

The UFO Project at Boulder suggested that UFOs were reported for two major reasons: (1) the witness would want to know what the object was, and (2) the witness thought that strange objects should be reported. These were the primary responses from 1,382 non-witnesses who, in the Boulder public opinion poll, said they would report UFOs if they saw them and from 94 witnesses selected from the project's files.

Table 39 indicates the major reason given by non-witnesses for saying they would report a UFO, and the major reasons given by witnesses who did report a UFO.

TABLE 39

REASONS FOR REPORTING A UFO

Reasons for reporting a UFO	P e r c e n t a g e s	
	Opinion poll	UFO witnesses
I would want to know what it was	49	29
Because strange objects should be reported	36	43
I would be worried about it	7	6
Because other people have seen UFOs	-	2
It is the best way to convince people that UFOs exist	4	11
Other	3	31
Total	100	122
N	1,382	94

Not listed among the "reasons for reporting a UFO," however, was what might have been an important reason: The fact that barriers to reporting a UFO may be lower at one time than at another; obstacles to reporting a UFO need not have been consistently high or prohibitive.

There may have been occasions when the UFO sighted was so strange in appearance to the witness that it could not be considered "probably something normal," and consequently he would report it; there may have been times when it became relatively widely known that UFOs could or should be reported to certain agencies (Dr. Henry Quarantelli, co-director of the Disaster Research Center at Ohio State University, in a talk at the University of Colorado UFO Project in December 1966, suggested that in areas where UFO reports were frequent a sub-culture might develop in which citizens were acquainted with UFO sightings, reporting procedures, etc.); or there may have been times when the individual who reported a UFO would not be ridiculed, but may even have been sought after by the news media and considered to have achieved a degree of status in the eyes of friends and acquaintances.

Concepts from the sociology of deviance seemed relevant to the apparent change in the behavior of some UFO witnesses--from reluctance to willingness to report flying saucers.

The ridicule often experienced by UFO witnesses--as discussed in this chapter--suggested that the act of seeing and reporting a flying saucer may have been considered abnormal, or deviant, behavior.

As sociologist Howard S. Becker explained:

. . .deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender.' The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied: deviant behavior is behavior that people so label. 18

Kai T. Erickson expressed a similar view:

. . .Deviance is not a property inherent in certain forms of behavior; it is a property conferred upon these forms by the audiences which directly or indirectly witness them. 19

When UFO reports were frequent and drew the attention of the mass media, the "audiences"--the press, the Air Force and the public-at-large--may have been less able, or less willing, to apply the "deviant" label to the act of seeing and reporting a flying saucer. This may be one more way in which barriers against reporting UFOs occasionally have been lowered.

A study of news coverage and UFO sightings which occurred during waves of UFO reports suggested that the "lowering of barriers" was a major factor in creating and sustaining a wave of UFO reports. Based on a study of the UFO waves of June-July 1947, July 1952, November 1957, August 1965 and March 1966, a summary was developed of the events comprising a wave of UFO reports. The summary was applied to none of the UFO waves in particular, but to all of them in general:

When local, regional or national interest in UFOs has been aroused, it generally has been because some catalytic agent encouraged interaction by the elements of a UFO wave--the people, the press, UFOs and the Air Force. In some instances, there may have been a series of sightings over several days which the news media were aware of but played down, ignored or did not connect until there occurred one or more sightings which included a large number of witnesses or other "newsworthy" circumstances. The second, third or Nth UFO report was interpreted as confirming the preceding ones--just as, at the end of a UFO wave, nonsensical reports have been interpreted as disconfirming preceding ones.

Given such preliminary coverage, there appears to be heightened sensitivity to other UFO reports. Because many local news agencies regularly receive UFO reports--as indicated in the preceding chapter--a "warehouse" of reports often has been available, waiting to be tapped.

The leads from five news stories printed during the August 1965 wave illustrated the role of the press in apparently seeking out UFO reports and thereby possibly encouraging more reports:

Edmond got well into the saucer watching action over the weekend with several sightings of UFOs being reported here. (Edmond, Okla., Sun)

Lyons and Rice County have not been left out of the invasion of Kansas by Unidentified Flying Objects, judging from the weird lights seen in the sky yesterday evening. (Lyons, Kan., Daily News)

Not to be left out, Rock County residents reported UFOs over Laverne Friday night. (Laverne, Minn., Star-Herald)

Thanks to _____ Longmont is not left out in the cold in the recent wave of 'flying saucer' reports which have come in from Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Nebraska and the Denver area. (Longmont, Colo., Times)

With all the recent flying saucer activity, it is a bit depressing to note that there have been no sightings spectacular or otherwise in the Salinas Valley for some time. (Salinas Californian)

UFO news judgment standards during UFO waves appear to drop and, partly for the sake of covering new developments, the press prints flying saucer accounts which in non-wave times have been ignored. ²⁰

Because of the number of reports recorded during a UFO wave, investigations have been incapable of reviewing all of them. Attention has focused on the first or the major sightings. A simplified version of the end of a UFO wave would include these elements: there is published a report of the percentage of UFOs previously investigated and explained by the Air Force; the current wave has produced no

tangible evidence that "flying saucers" are real; there is an Air Force explanation of the major current sighting(s); those who reported the UFOs reject the explanation; there is, for various reasons, including the factors mentioned in this paragraph, lessening of interest in UFOs on the part of virtually all concerned.

This summary of what appears to have occurred during UFO waves seems contradictory to the Boulder Project findings on "reasons for reporting a UFO." In Table 39, the least number of responses were made to the reason "because other people have seen UFOs." Yet, the reports from "other people" do appear to support a UFO wave and encourage additional reports. And, as suggested in the preceding chapter, newsmen said one of the criteria for printing a UFO news item was the number of witnesses or the number of current UFO reports.

The difference may be that, in the opinion poll, the respondents were placed in a hypothetical situation in which it was not stated that other reports were occurring. And, in the Boulder Project files, most of the cases were of single UFO reports not occurring during a UFO wave. Consequently, the category referring to other reports may have been somewhat irrelevant.

Earlier in this chapter, a distinction was drawn between UFO reports from members of flying saucer clubs and reports from puzzled citizens. Perhaps a distinction should also be drawn between isolated UFO reports and those occurring during a wave.

Summary

The occupational backgrounds of UFO witnesses found in news accounts did not vary markedly from the occupational backgrounds of

witnesses found in Air Force files or from the occupational backgrounds of the population at large, except in predictable areas. For example, the Air Force accounts appeared to contain more UFO reports from military officers while the news accounts appeared to contain more UFO reports from policemen.

One apparent distinction, however, was that the news accounts appeared to contain relatively fewer UFO reports, than the Air Force, from witnesses in the scientist-technician occupational category. One explanation for this tendency may be that individuals in such occupations knew of channels other than the mass media through which to make their reports known to the Air Force. Also, the Air Force could grant the scientist-technicians a degree of anonymity not available from the press.

While flying saucer cults may draw the occasional attention of the press, it appeared incorrect to suggest that the cults and contactees represented the major, or even a major, part of the UFO phenomenon. For example, in his study, "Flying Saucers Are For People," H. Taylor Buckner described the typical flying saucer club member as old and lonely. Yet in the population at large, almost the opposite seemed true. The Boulder public opinion poll found that belief in flying saucers decreased as the age of respondents increased.

Reasons for not reporting UFOs appeared to be that (1) the witness reasoned that the UFO was probably something normal seen in an unusual way and (2) the witness feared ridicule if he made public a report of his experience. Other factors preventing witnesses from making UFO reports included lack of knowledge as to whom to report and belief that nothing could or would be done about the report.

Reasons for reporting UFOs were said to be (1) the desire to find out what the object was, and (2) the belief that strange objects should be reported. It was also suggested that the number of UFO reports would increase when barriers against reporting were lowered by sympathetic news coverage and public interest in the phenomenon.

CHAPTER V

THE AIR FORCE AND UFOS--HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Introduction

To fully analyze news coverage of an event or series of events, it often is necessary to review the roles played by major news sources in the events under study. Previous chapters have discussed the background of and comments made by various UFO news sources and UFO witnesses. This and the next chapter will focus upon the major official news source, the United States Air Force, and its UFO Projects, including Projects Sign, Grudge and Blue Book.

An effort will be made to avoid presenting material that has been discussed elsewhere.¹ This chapter will be limited to a brief review of the Air Force involvement with UFOs as that involvement is related to understanding press coverage of the UFO phenomenon.

To begin with, the official Air Force position on UFOs has been:

. . . (1) no unidentified flying object reported, investigated, and evaluated by the Air Force has ever given any indication of threat to our national security; (2) there has been no evidence submitted to or discovered by the Air Force that sightings categorized as UNIDENTIFIED represent technological developments or principles beyond the range of present-day scientific knowledge; and (3) there has been no evidence indicating that sightings categorized as UNIDENTIFIED are extra-terrestrial vehicles.

The Air Force will continue to investigate all sightings of unusual aerial phenomena over the US which are reported to it. The services of qualified scientists and technicians will continue to be used to investigate and analyze these reports, and periodic reports and news releases will be made. . .

The Air Force takes no stand on whether or not extraterrestrial life could or does exist. Many scientists believe that it is entirely possible that the universe contains life on planets other than our own. No evidence yet exists that there is other life. The Air Force continues to extend an invitation to anyone who feels that he possesses evidence of extraterrestrial vehicles operating within the earth's space envelope to submit his evidence for analysis. . .

These conclusions were presented in Project Blue Book 1968, a brief summary and discussion of the Air Force UFO investigations from 1947 through 1967. The conclusions, however, were not new; they could be found in reports dating from the late 1940s. They also could be found in Department of Defense press releases which periodically report on Air Force UFO investigations.

Some History

On June 24, 1947, pilot Kenneth Arnold reported that he saw a chain of "saucer-like" objects flying between Mt. Rainier and Mt. Adams in the Cascade Mountains of Washington. While the "saucer" description had previously been applied to strange things seen in the sky, ² the press popularized the "flying saucers" seen by Arnold and that label was applied to subsequent reports of sightings.

Army Air Force interest in strange objects in the sky preceded the Arnold sighting, however. During World War II, both Allied and German pilots reported seeing bright balls of light, some disc-shaped, that darted around their airplanes. Some Allied pilots dubbed the objects "foo fighters." While each side may have thought the "foo fighters" were secret devices belonging to the enemy, a more ³ accepted explanation was that they were a form of St. Elmo's fire. (The name of the patron saint of sailors, St. Elmo, was applied to

the glow, or corona, which hovered over a ship's mast during a thunderstorm. The "fire" is a blue-white glow sometimes lasting several minutes and caused by the breakdown and discharge of an electrical field.)

After the war, in 1946, the Army Air Force joined in the European investigation of "ghost rockets" reported over Sweden almost daily in July and August of that year. American military interest apparently was spurred by the theory that the objects may have been missiles test-fired from a Soviet rocket test area at Peenemunde in Russian-occupied Germany. (It was in Peenemunde that Nazi scientists developed the V-2 rocket.) Russia, however, denied any link with the "ghost rockets" which supposedly were traced on radar and seen by credible witnesses.

Reports on the objects were carried in the American press. The New York Times Index for 1946 listed about 16 stories on the objects, including one on October 11 which said that about 80 per cent of the "ghost rockets" were natural celestial phenomena.

Dr. Donald H. Menzel of the Harvard College Observatory has suggested that interest in the 1946 reports may have triggered an over-reaction by the Army Air Force when "saucers" were reported in June 1947.

Capt. Edward J. Ruppelt, who directed the Air Force UFO inquiry from March 1951 through September 1953, wrote, however, that the Air Force did not react immediately to "saucer" reports. In his book; The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, he wrote:

According to old hands at ATIC (the Air Technical Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base), the first sighting that really made the Air Force take a deep interest in

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UFOs occurred on July 8 at Muroc Air Base (now Edwards AFB), the supersecret Air Force test center in the Mojave Desert of California. 5

That day a test pilot on the flight strip, several other officers and airmen, and a crew of technicians observed silver colored unidentified objects in the sky.

The early UFO investigations were conducted by members of Army Air Force Intelligence. Ruppelt explained:

At first there was no co-ordinated effort to collect data on the UFO reports. Leads would come from radio reports or newspaper items (emphasis added). Military intelligence agencies outside of ATIC were hesitant to investigate on their own initiative because. . .they lacked specific orders. When no orders were forthcoming, they took this to mean that the military had no interest in the UFOs. 6

There were few public statements made by the military about the new phenomenon. On July 8, 1947 a United Press wire service story quoted Gen. H.H. (Hap) Arnold, chief of the Army Air Force during World War II, as saying the discs "could be a development of United States scientists not yet perfected." Or, Gen. Arnold thought the objects might be foreign aircraft out of control or "just plain fighting planes." A month later, another UP story quoted Lt. Col. Donald L. Springer, intelligence officer of the Fourth Air Force, based near San Rafael, Calif:

There is not sufficient evidence nor testimony available to conclude whether the reports of the so-called flying discs in the Tacoma (Wash.) area or any other area have any basis of fact. In view of this, Fourth Air Force will pursue this particular investigation no further.

Of Springer's statement and similar ones, Ruppelt wrote:

The 'experts', in their stories of saucer lore, have said that these brush-offs of the UFO sightings were intentional smoke screens to cover the facts by adding confusion. This is not true; it was merely a lack of coordination. But had the

Air Force tried to throw up a screen of confusion, they couldn't have done a better job. 7

Efforts to end the "lack of coordination," of which Ruppelt wrote, began late in the summer of 1947, shortly before the United States Air Force was established as a separate branch of the Armed Forces. (On September 26, 1947, General Carl Spatz officially became the first Air Force Chief of Staff).

In the chain of command, the Air Technical Intelligence Center (ATIC)--which investigated reports of flying saucers--was under the Air Materiel Command (AMC) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio.

The commander of the AMC was Lt. Gen. Nathan F. Twining. Apparently responding to a request for information, Twining wrote to the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces on September 23, 1947, explaining that the "so-called 'Flying Discs'" had been discussed. . .

in a conference between personnel from the Air Institute of Technology, Intelligence T-2, Office, Chief of Engineering Division, and the Aircraft Power Plant and Propeller Laboratories of Engineering Division T-3.

A review of data available on the "flying discs," Twining wrote, had led to these opinions:

a. The phenomenon reported is something real and not visionary or fictitious.

b. There are objects approximating the shape of a disc, or such appreciable size as to appear to be as large as man-made aircraft.

c. There is a possibility that some of the incidents may be caused by natural phenomena, such as meteors.

d. The reported operating characteristics such as extreme rates of climb, maneuverability (particularly in roll), and action which must be considered evasive when sighted or contacted by friendly aircraft and radar, lend belief to the possibility

that some of the objects are controlled either manually, automatically or remotely.

e. The apparent common description of the objects is as follows:

- (1) Metallic or light reflecting surface.
- (2) Absence of trail, except in a few instances when the object apparently was operating under high performance conditions.
- (3) Circular or elliptical in shape, flat on bottom and domed on top.
- (4) Several reports of well kept formation flights varying from three to nine objects.
- (5) Normally no associated sound, except in three instances a substantial rumbling roar was noted.
- (6) Level flight speeds normally above 300 knots are estimated.

These and other factors, including the possibility that "some foreign nation has a form of propulsion possibly nuclear," led Twining to recommend that:

Headquarters, Army Air Forces issue a directive assigning a priority, security classification and Code Name for a detailed study of this matter to include the preparation of complete sets of all available and pertinent data. . .

Awaiting such a specific directive AMC will continue the investigation within its current resources in order to more closely define the nature of the phenomenon. . .8

Three months later, on December 22, 1947, the director of intelligence for the Air Force concurred with the AMC recommendations.⁹ On December 30, 1947, Major General L.C. Craigie, director of Air Force Research and Development, wrote to the commanding general of the AMC, stating that a project to investigate the discs should be established.

Craigie's letter, written "BY COMMAND OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF," stated:

It is Air Force policy not to ignore reports of sightings and phenomena in the atmosphere but to recognize that part of its mission is to collect, collate, evaluate and act on information of this nature.

In implementing this policy, it is desired that the Air Materiel Command set up a project whose purpose is to collect, collate, evaluate and distribute to interested government agencies and contractors all information concerning sightings and phenomena in the atmosphere which can be construed to be of concern to the national security. . .

It is suggested that the activities of the project include the preparation and distribution of an initial report. . .and that subsequent reports be issued on a quarterly basis. Supplementary reports should be issued at more frequent intervals should the need for same be indicated. The Project is assigned priority 2A, with a security classification of 'restricted' and Code Name of 'SIGN'. . .10

1. Project Sign--which commonly was called "Project Saucer"--
 3 was the code name used for the Air Force UFO inquiry from its inception, January 22, 1948, to February 11, 1949; the name then was changed to Project Grudge, reportedly because the classified name of Sign had been compromised. Grudge was the project name from February 11, 1949 until March 1952, when the name was changed to the one still in use, Project Blue Book. Ruppelt, who was directing the UFO inquiry at the time, explained the second change:

By March 1952, Project Grudge was no longer just a project within a group; we had become a separate organization, with the formal title of the Aerial Phenomena Group. Soon after this step-up in the chain of command the project code name was changed to Blue Book. The word "Grudge" was no longer applicable. 11

Table 40 shows the names and ranks of men who have directed the Air Force UFO inquiry.

TABLE 40

DIRECTORS OF AIR FORCE UFO INQUIRY

Rank and Name	Dates of Assignment
Capt. Robert R. Sneider	October 1948-March 1951
Capt. Edward J. Ruppelt	March 1951-September 1953
Lt. Robert M. Olsson	September 1953-March 1954
Capt. Charles A. Hardin	March 1954-April 1956
Capt. George T. Gregory	April 1956-October 1958
Maj. Robert J. Friend	October 1958-August 1963
Maj. Lt. Col. Hector Quintanilla . .	August 1963-

The nature of the UFO inquiry in the late 1940s and early 1950s was reflected in the periodic reports issued as suggested in General Craigie's letter of December 30, 1947. The first report issued under Project Sign was Technical Report No. F-TR-2274-IA, UNIDENTIFIED AERIAL OBJECTS PROJECT "SIGN." The ATIC report was released to military and governmental agencies in February 1949, but because of Project Sign's classified status, the report was kept under a secret classification until October 1961. (Under Department of Defense directives, such data were declassified after 12 years).

Conclusions and recommendations in the Project Sign report included:

CONCLUSIONS

No definite and conclusive evidence is yet available that would prove or disprove the existence of these unidentified objects as real aircraft of unknown and unconventional configuration. It is unlikely that positive proof of their existence will be obtained without examination of the remains of crashed objects. Proof of non-existence is equally impossible to obtain unless a reasonable and convincing explanation is determined for each incident.

. . . Explanations of some of the incidents revealed the existence of simple and easily understandable causes, so that there is the possibility that enough incidents can be solved to eliminate or greatly reduce the mystery associated with these occurrences.

Evaluation of reports of unidentified objects is a necessary activity of military intelligence agencies. Such sightings are inevitable, and under wartime conditions rapid and convincing solutions of such occurrences are necessary to maintain morale of military and civilian personnel. In this respect it is considered that the establishment of procedures and training of personnel is in itself worth the effort expended on this project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Further activity on this project should be carried on at the minimum level necessary to record, summarize, and evaluate the data received on future reports and to complete the specialized

investigations now in progress. When and if a sufficient number of incidents are solved to indicate that these sightings do not represent a threat to the security of the nation, the assignment of a special project status to the activity could be terminated. Future investigations of reports would then be handled on a routine basis like any other intelligence work. . .

The "Sign" Report was based upon investigation of 172 UFO reports; the report on Project Grudge, completed in August 1949, covered 244 reports, the 172 of Sign and 72 additional ones. The Grudge conclusions were more specific:

CONCLUSIONS

1. Evaluation of reports of UFOs to date demonstrate that these flying objects constitute no direct threat to the national security of the United States.

2. Reports of UFOs are the result of:

- a. Misinterpretation of various conventional objects
- b. a mild form of mass hysteria or "war nerves"
- c. individuals who fabricate such reports to perpetuate a hoax or seek publicity, i.e. deliberate falsifications
- d. psychopathological persons.

3. Planned release of unusual aerial objects coupled with the release of related psychological propaganda could cause mass hysteria. . . employment of these methods by or against an enemy would yield similar results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

. . .it is. . .(also) recommended that Conclusions 1 and 2 of this report with sufficient supporting data, be declassified and made public in the form of an official press release. This action would aid in dispelling public apprehension, often directly attributable to the sensationalistic reporting of many of these incidents by the press and radio. (Emphasis added)

The recommendations of Projects Sign and Grudge apparently led to a press release issued by the Department of Defense Office of Public Information on December 27, 1949. At that time, True magazine, in its January 1950 issue, had published an article by Donald E. Keyhoe, "The Flying Saucers Are Real." One conclusion of the article was that:

For the past 175 years, the planet Earth has been under systematic close-range examination by living, intelligent observers from another planet (who come in flying saucers).

Perhaps the Keyhce article spurred Department of Defense compliance with the Grudge recommendation for "an official press release" to disspell "public apprehension."

The headline of the December 27 release was: AIR FORCE DISCONTINUES FLYING SAUCER PROJECT. The entire text of the release, No. 629-49, with emphasis added:

The Air Force has discontinued its special project investigating and evaluating reported "flying saucers" on the basis that there is no evidence the reports are not the results of natural phenomena. Discontinuance of the project, which was carried out by the Air Force, was concurred in (by) the Departments of the Army and the Navy.

The Air Force said that all evidence and analyses indicate that the reports of unidentified flying objects are the result of:

- (1) Misinterpretation of various conventional objects.
- (2) A mild form of mass hysteria.
- (3) Or hoaxes.

The project was established two years ago at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, Headquarters of the Air Force's Air Materiel Command. Since January 1948 some 375 incidents have been reported and investigated. Assisting special investigators were scientific consultants from universities and from other governmental agencies.

The Air Force said that continuance of the project is unwarranted since additional incidents now are simply confirming findings already reached.

The release was quoted extensively in an Associated Press story from Washington, D.C. on December 28, 1949. The first two paragraphs of that story:

Washington (AP)--The Air Force said Tuesday night that two years of investigation have convinced it that flying saucers are just jokes, mass hysteria or misunderstandings of natural phenomena.

It ended a special project to investigate reports about alleged sightings of saucers. The project was set up in January 1948.

An editorial in The Chicago Daily News of January 3, 1950 drew a link between the Keyhoe article and the Air Force announcement. The editorial, "Fly Away, Saucers" began:

Despite the statements of an "expert" (Keyhoe) the Air Force's investigation has convinced them that the 'flying saucers', which seemed to populate the heavens for a while, are a delusion.

They are, concludes the Air Forces after investigating 375 reports, either deliberate hoaxes, hallucinations, or birds, stars and weather balloons. This is easier to believe than that they are space vehicles from another planet, that decided not to land.

The "expert" who thinks otherwise--in a pulp magazine--has the imposing title of 'former information chief for the aeronautics branch of the U.S. Commerce Department'. In governmental parlance, that usually means head press agent. . .

The December 27 Department of Defense press release did not make it clear that the Air Force had not discontinued investigation of UFOs. The Air Force had, as the release stated, discontinued the special project--as recommended in the Project Sign report. UFO investigations continued by the ATTIC.

The distinction was clarified in a Department of Defense Release of April 3, 1952. This release, too, may have been prompted in part by a magazine article. For Life magazine's April 7, 1952 issue--on the stands around April 1--carried a lengthy article which asked "Have We Visitors From Space?" The article, written by H.B. Darrach Jr. and Robert Ginna, recounted several sightings of UFOs and told of Air Force interest in the phenomenon.

The April 3 Department of Defense release was headed "IN ANSWER TO INQUIRIES:" and said:

The Air Force has not discontinued the study of unidentified flying objects (popularly known as 'flying saucers'). It is true that this study has changed from a special project to a general function. This means that the Air Force placed the evaluation of these sightings in normal staff channels.

Every attempt is made to investigate sightings reported to the Air Force. In most cases these sightings proved to be weather balloons and natural phenomena. There remain, however, a number of reported sightings that cannot be thus explained, and as long as this is true, the Air Force will continue to study the problem. . .

The public should not interpret these continued efforts to mean that new evaluations have been made or that new conclusions have been reached. This is not the case. Detailed reports and particularly photographs from people who have sighted unusual aerial manifestations will be welcome. Reports may be submitted to the nearest USAF installation and to be of value should contain as much detail as possible.

The statements that most UFOs were "weather balloons and natural phenomena" and that the Air Force would continue its investigation "as long as" there were unexplained sightings provided a concise summary of the Air Force UFO Program.

The Nature of the Air Force UFO Inquiry

The formal Air Force UFO inquiry always has been conducted from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. At Wright-Patterson, UFO investigators have available to them the scientific personnel and technical equipment which support the work of the ATIC (Air Technical Intelligence Center), in recent years renamed as the FTD (Foreign Technology Division).

Continuity for the UFO investigation also has been provided by record keeping procedures established in the early 1950s by Air Force investigators and civilian consultants to the UFO projects. The categories for classifying UFO reports have remained relatively

fixed since then.

Identified, or explained, reports were those "for which sufficient specific information has been accumulated and evaluated to permit a positive identification or explanation of the object."¹³

Identified reports were those categorized as airplanes, balloons, astronomical bodies, satellites or "other."

The "other" category included UFOs explained as missiles, reflections, mirages, birds, kites, hoaxes, flares, etc.

A UFO report could also be classified as insufficient data or unidentified.

Reports categorized as insufficient data are those for which one or more elements of information, essential for evaluation, are missing. Some examples are the omission of the duration of the sighting, date, time, location, position in the sky, weather conditions and the manner of appearance or disappearance. If . . . there is an indication the sighting may be of security, scientific, technical, or public interest value, the Project Blue Book Office conducts an additional investigation and every attempt is made to obtain the information necessary for identification. However, in some instances, essential information is requested from the observer and is never received; therefore, no further action can be taken.

. . . A sighting is considered unidentified when a report apparently contains all pertinent data necessary to suggest a valid hypothesis concerning the cause or explanation of the report, but the description of the object or its motion cannot be correlated with any known object or phenomenon. 14

While the center for the UFO inquiry and the rules for classifying reports of UFOs have changed little or not at all during most of the Air Force-UFO history, there have been changes in other procedures and policies.

The nature of some changes has been reflected in Air Force Regulations pertaining to UFOs. Air Force Regulations, sent from headquarters in Washington to all Air Force bases, spell out the pro-

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cedures to follow in all Air Force business. The basic regulations dealing with UFOs have been AFR 200-2, first issued as Air Force Letter (AFL) 200-5 in April 1952, and AFR 80-17, issued in September 1966.

In an Air Force document, Status Report No. 7. Project Blue Book, 31 May 1952, Ruppelt said the issuance of the UFO regulations was a major improvement in the UFO inquiry. In essence, what the regulations did was to change the gathering of UFO data from strictly an intelligence function, directed from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, to an Air Force-wide concern.

Several editions of AFR 200-2 have been distributed by the Department of the Air Force in Washington to all Air Force bases. The UFO regulations include the AFL of April 1952 and AFRs of August 1953, August 1954, February 1958, September 1959, July 1962, and September 1966.

Changes made by the Air Force in emphasis and conduct of the UFO inquiry were evident in a review of three of the regulations-- AFR 200-2 issued August 12, 1954; AFR 200-2 issued September 14, 1959, and AFR 80-17 issued September 19, 1966.

These three regulations were selected for review because they met the criteria of (1) availability and (2) issuance at time intervals sufficient to indicate major changes in the inquiry--if any occurred.

The August 1954 regulation stated:

Air Force interest in unidentified flying objects is twofold: First as a possible threat to the security of the United States and its forces, and secondly, to determine technical aspects involved.

a. . .To date, the flying objects reported have imposed no threat to the security of the United States. . .However, the possibility that now air vehicles, hostile aircraft' or missiles may first be regarded as flying objects by the initial observer is real. This requires that sightings be reported rapidly and as completely as information permits.

b. . .Analysis thus far has failed to provide a satisfactory explanation for a number of sightings reported. . .(and) the Air Force must be informed on experimentation and development of new air vehicles.

The regulation said responsibility for reporting sightings of UFOs rested with commanders of Air Force activities, responsibility for investigation rested with the Air Defense Command and responsibility for analysis rested with the ATTIC.

The regulation noted that the Air Defense command had, "in the 4602d Air Intelligence Service Squadron (AISS), the capability to investigate these (UFO) reports." All Air Force activities were advised to establish liaison with the nearest element of the AISS.

The role of the 4602d in the UFO inquiry was introduced with this regulation and apparently resulted from the work of Capt. Ruppelt as director of Project Blue Book. The 4602d was a new unit within the Air Defense Command, and Ruppelt saw the unit as an answer to manpower problems he had in investigating UFOs.

. . .when I'd asked for more people, all I got was a polite 'So Sorry.' So, I did the next best thing and tried to find some organization already in being which could and would help us.

He found the 4602d whose primary function was to interrogate captured enemy airmen during wartime.

. . .in peacetime all that they can do is participate in simulated problems. Investigating UFO reports would supplement these problems and add a factor of realism that would be invaluable in their training. The 4602d had field teams spread out all over the United States and these teams could travel anywhere. . .on a minute's notice. 15

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The role of the AISS in the UFO inquiry was short-lived, however. The unit was phased out in 1956, and responsibility for investigating reports of UFOs reverted to Project Blue Book and individual Air Bases.

Most of the 3½-page 1954 regulation is devoted to routine information on procedures to follow in a UFO investigation--such as checking with aircraft control and warning units, the weather bureau or local astronomers--and factors to include in a UFO report--time and date of sighting, observers, etc.

Only one paragraph, the last one, dealt with release of information to the mass media and the public. This is the paragraph, with emphasis added:

Release of Facts. Headquarters USAF will release summaries of evaluated data which will inform the public on this subject. In response to local inquiries, it is permissible to inform news media representatives on UFOB's when the object is positively identified as a familiar object. . . .except that the following type of data warrants protection and should not be revealed: Names of principles, intercept and investigation procedures, and classified radar data. For those objects which are not explainable, only the fact that ATIC will analyze the data is worthy of release, due to the many unknowns involved.

So, newsmen asking local Air Bases for information about UFO reports would receive details on the sightings only if the objects had been "positively identified." Otherwise, the only available information would be that the ATIC would analyse the data. This facet of Air Force-UFO procedures has remained virtually unchanged throughout the UFO inquiry.

In fact, the regulation issued in September 1959 was more specific about information which could be released only by the ATIC or the Office of Information Services and not at the local level.

While the 1954 regulation included one paragraph on release of information, the 1959 regulation contained a five-paragraph section on "Public Relations, Information, Contacts and Releases."

The orders for release of information included:

. . . All information or releases concerning UFO's, regardless of origin or nature, will be released to the public or unofficial persons or organizations by the Office of Information Services, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force. . .

Exceptions. 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. . . concerned only if it has been positively identified as a familiar or known object. (Emphasis theirs). . . If the sighting is unexplainable or difficult to identify, because of insufficient information or inconsistencies, the only statement to be released is the fact that the sighting is being investigated and information regarding it will be released at a later date. If investigative action has been completed, the fact that the results of the investigation will be submitted to the ATIC for review and analysis may be released. . .

Another paragraph stated that "every effort will be made" to disassociate the Air Force from unofficial information released by "newsmen, writers, publishers, or private individuals."

The final paragraph of the section:

Contacts. Private individuals or organizations requesting Air Force interviews, briefing, lectures, or private discussions on UFO's will be referred to the Office of Information Services, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force. Air Force personnel, other than those of the Office of Information Services, will not contact private individuals on UFO cases nor will they discuss their operations and functions with unauthorized persons unless so directed. . .

In addition to the increased emphasis given public relations, another difference in the 1959 Regulation was that it said the Air Force interest in UFOs was three-fold, not two-fold as in 1954.

The 1954 objectives of air defense and gathering technical and scientific data were restated. The third objective was the

"reduction of percentage of UFO 'Unidentifieds'." The order read:

Air Force activities must reduce the percentage of unidentifieds to the minimum. Analysis thus far has provided explanation for all but a few of the sightings reported. These unexplained sightings are carried statistically as unidentifieds. If more immediate, detailed objective data on the unknowns had been available, probably these too could have been explained. However. . . (due to human factors in the reports). . . it is improbable that all of the unidentifieds can be eliminated.

The order that "the percentage of unidentifieds" be reduced to a minimum was listed in the August 1953 AFR 200-2, but not in the 1954 regulation, although it may be implied in the objectives of securing the nation's air defense and conducting technical analyses.

Responsibility for investigating UFOs--given to the Air Defense Command and the 4602d AISS in 1954--was placed with Air Base commanders in the 1959 Regulation:

The commander of the Air Force base nearest the location of the reported UFO sighting will conduct all investigative action necessary to submit a complete initial report of a UFO sighting. Every effort will be made to resolve the sighting in the initial investigation.

As in 1954, the 1959 regulation included procedures and guidelines to follow in preparing a report of a UFO sighting. In 1959, however, there appeared to be added concern with public relations:

All Air Force activities will conduct UFO investigations to the extent necessary for their required reporting action. . . However, investigations should not be carried beyond this point, unless. . . the preparing officer believes the magnitude (intelligence significance or public relations) of the case warrants full scale investigation. . .

The more detailed instructions, the emphasis on public relations and the release of information, and concern with what not to report under the UFO regulation (flying objects known to be aircraft), made the 1959 regulation twice as long as its 1954 predecessor.

The 1966 Regulation was five pages long, compared to the three-and-a-half of 1954 and the seven of 1959. The change in numbers of the Regulation from 200-2 to 80-17 meant that in previous years the UFO regulation was published under the heading of "INTELLIGENCE"; but in 1966 it was published under the heading of "Research and Development." The name change came about because the ATIC (Air Technical Intelligence Center) had been changed to the FTD (Foreign Technology Division).

In 1966, the objectives of the UFO inquiry were again presented as two-fold, with the third objective of identification presented as necessary to fulfill the first two objectives:

Air Force interest in UFOs is two-fold: to determine if the UFO is a possible threat to the United States and to use the scientific data gained from the study of UFO reports. To attain these objectives, it is necessary to explain or identify the stimulus which cause the observer to report his observation as an unidentified flying object.

Drawing distinction between a two-fold or three-fold Air Force objective may be splitting hairs. However, in another area, the 1966 regulation did advance a major change in the conduct of the UFO inquiry with regard to responsibilities for investigations. The regulation ordered:

Each commander of an Air Force base will provide a UFO investigative capacity. . . (and) If possible, an individual selected as a UFO investigator should have a scientific or technical background and experience as an investigator.

The order meant that instead of just investigating UFO reports when they were forwarded to an Air Force base, each base commander would have to appoint a UFO officer, an individual with the fixed responsibility of handling UFO investigations or inquiries if and

when there was a report of a UFO sighting or there was an inquiry related to the phenomenon. Since the regulation did not provide additional manpower or funds for the UFO investigative capacity," the UFO officer had to come from the base personnel and work with funds already provided for related missions.

Project Blue Book at Dayton, Ohio, still played the major role in investigations, however. The regulation noted:

FTD at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, independently or with the help of pertinent Air Force activities, may conduct any other investigation to conclude its analysis or findings. . .

In a July 17, 1968 interview, the director of Project Blue Book, Lt. Col. Hector Quintanilla said that having specified men responsible for handling UFO reports might improve investigatory procedures. The UFO officers, he said, include enlisted men, non-commissioned officers and those holding commissions, as well. "Because some bases are much smaller than others," he said, "a staff sergeant might have the same job (of investigating UFOs) as a major at another base."

Commenting about the UFO officers in general, Quintanilla said:

Morale varies depending upon the situations. Some take the job seriously and do a good job. Most don't like it because it means extra work for them (in addition to their fulltime duty assignments). . . We usually try to draw officers with physical science degrees or experience in navigation.

The regulation provided the general directions for preparing and submitting reports of UFO sightings. There was, however, the added injunction: "Do NOT solicit reports." That is, the UFO officers were to deal only with reports received by the air base and

not seek out other reports or investigate those reported in the news media.

As noted previously, Capt. Edward Ruppelt said the early UFO inquiry found leads about UFO reports in the news media. However, the practice of not soliciting, or hunting for UFO reports apparently was in effect before the "Do NOT solicit" order was formalized in Regulation 80-17.

Quintanilla explained:

My god, if I were to follow up all the pictures in magazines that's all I'd be doing. People don't realize how much it costs. If you were to follow all this I'd need a staff of 50 people to track all this down. (The staff in Blue Book headquarters, excluding secretaries, comprises Quintanilla, a lieutenant and a non-commissioned officer)

If I'm investigating a sighting, I might ask the police or newspaper if other sightings had been reported. . .but I'd never go door to door asking if others (in the area) saw the object. That's more dangerous than peddling.

For those reports which were investigated, Regulation 80-17 said the FTD (Foreign Technology Division) would:

Analyze and evaluate all information and evidence reported to bases on those UFOs which are not identified at the base level. (And) Use other Government agencies, private industrial companies and contractor personnel to assist in analyzing and evaluating UFO reports, as necessary.

Scientific Resources and Special Reports

A July 21, 1960 Department of Defense News Release, No. 812-60, pictured the resources available to UFO investigators in another way:

From time to time the Air Force has been asked the cost of conducting the UFO program. It is impossible to estimate the exact amount of funds expended by the Air Force in investigating reported sightings of unidentified flying objects because in addition to the entire facilities of the Aerospace Technical Intelligence Center, the entire facilities of the nation's scien-

tific and technical community are at the disposal of the evaluators, and the degree of use varies with each case. Also, investigation in the field can involve individual Air Force base personnel and special investigative units and again, in these instances the amount of time expended and the number of personnel assigned to a specific sighting will vary with each case.

If that 1960 description of the UFO inquiry gave one the impression that the "nation's scientific and technical community" was at the beck and call of UFO investigators--waiting to turn its attention to the UFO problem at a moment's notice--the impression was wrong.

While the technical facilities at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base were recognized as excellent, Quintanilla acknowledged that UFO evidence took its turn. As an example, he said, if photo analysis were working on material from Viet Nam, well, that would have priority over photos of UFOs. Further, while lie detectors and facilities for psychological analyses were available at Wright-Patterson and Air Force hospitals, Quintanilla never requested a UFO observer to submit to such tests. He implied that the United States Air Force would not want to be in the position of providing evidence that a U.S. citizen is untrustworthy. In fact, Quintanilla said, one of the functions the press had served was to apply pressure to UFO observers and to expose hoaxes.

As for costs of the UFO inquiry, Quintanilla estimated it cost "\$72,000 to \$85,000 a year just to run this small office" at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Travel and other Blue Book expenses would be additional. Since UFO investigation is not budgeted as a distinct item at other Air Bases, it was, as the July 1960 Department of Defense press release suggested, difficult to estimate the cost

of the UFO inquiry to American taxpayers.

The Air Force had, of course, contracted with the University of Colorado to conduct what turned out to be a two-year study of the UFO problem; and the cost to the Department of Defense was approximately \$500,000.

On an individual basis, Dr. J. Allen Hynek, now director of the Lindheimer Astronomical Research Center and head of the Astronomy Department at Northwestern University, signed his first contract as a consultant to the Air Force UFO inquiry in 1948, when he was an assistant professor at Ohio State University.

At the start, Hynek was a consultant only on astronomical phenomena, but he later became THE scientific consultant to the UFO inquiry. He did not serve as consultant in any form in a period from 1950 to 1951 when, he said, "it was hush-hush" and the Air Force seemed to have decided there was nothing to the phenomenon. Hynek returned as consultant after there were reports of UFOs over Washington, D.C., in 1952. A contract signed in 1968 set his fees at \$10 an hour for a maximum of 500 hours during the year.

As a scientific consultant, Hynek occasionally investigates UFO reports in the field and periodically--about once a month--visits Project Blue Book to review UFO reports and comment upon their explanations. In separate interviews both Hynek and Lt. Col. Quintanilla acknowledged they differed at times as to the adequacy of Air Force explanations of specific UFO reports. When differences occurred, Quintanilla would make the final decision as to whether or not an explanation that the UFO was an airplane, satellite or weather bal-

loon was satisfactory. Generally, Quintanilla said, he would find the explanations to be adequate.

Other scientists, who had served the Air Force in related capacities, participated with Hynek in analyzing UFO reports that led to the conclusions advanced by Projects Sign and Grudge. These scientists, whose work was conducted in the late 1940s, included Dr. George E. Valley Jr., a nuclear physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Dr. James E. Lipp, an aeronautical engineer and division head for the RAND Corporation, and Dr. Irving Langmuir, 1932 Nobel Prize Winner for work in surface chemistry and a physical chemist for the General Electric Company.

Other scientists and private corporations have played major roles in the UFO inquiry. Three of their reports will be reviewed below because (1) the reports are relevant to a discussion of whether there has been a "UFO coverup" by the Air Force, and/or (2) the reports helped shape the nature of the Air Force UFO inquiry.

The three reports are (1) Special Report No. 14, (2) the January 1953 report of the Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects, and (3) the March 1966 Special Report of the USAF Scientific Advisory Board Ad Hoc Committee to Review Project Blue Book.

Report No. 14 was the first of the three to be started and-- while not the first to be completed--the first to be publicly released (in May 1955). Report No. 14, or as it is also called "Project 14," apparently was so named because it followed the 12 Project Blue Book Status Reports issued when Ruppelt directed the UFO inquiry.

Those reports, generally, were monthly summaries of Blue Book activities, not of the scope of Report No. 14. That Report No. 14 was not called "Report No. 13" apparently was evidence of a military form of triskaidekaphobia.

The first Air Force reference to the report was printed in Status Report No. 6, April 30, 1952:

The contractual agreements with (censored) for furnishing aid in conducting this project have been finalized.

The name of the midwestern, private research corporation which conducted Project 14 has been kept secret at the request of the company, apparently because it feared the link with flying saucers might harm its "image." Its report was based on analyses of approximately 4,000 reports of UFOs recorded by the Air Force from June 1947 through 1952.

Characteristics of the UFO reports were presented in 240 tables which covered such areas as "Evaluation (explanation) of All Sightings by Years," evaluation of sightings by months, by reliability of observers, by number of objects reported, by duration of sighting, by shape, color or speed of object, by geographic region of sighting or by the strategic nature of the area in which a UFO was reported. Statistical tests (Chi Square) were applied to the data to determine whether there were significant differences between characteristics of Unknown UFOs and those identified. The tests were inconclusive. As stated in Report No. 14, p. 70:

The results of these (Chi square) tests are inconclusive since they neither confirm nor deny that the UNKNOWNNS are primarily unidentified KNOWNNS, although they do indicate that relatively few of the UNKNOWNNS are actually astronomical phenomena.

The summary of the 316-page report offered these conclusions:

All available data were included in this study. . . On the basis of this study it is believed that all the unidentified aerial objects could have been explained if more complete observational data had been available. . . .

Therefore, on the basis of this evaluation of the information, it is considered to be highly improbable that reports of unidentified aerial objects examined in this study represent observations of technological developments outside of the range of present-day scientific knowledge. It is emphasized that there has been a complete lack of any valid evidence of physical matter in any case of a reported unidentified aerial object.

The unnamed research corporation said its conclusions were based on "A critical examination of the distributions of important characteristics of sightings," "an intensive study of the sightings evaluated as UNKNOWN," and "An intensive study aimed at finding a verified example of a 'flying saucer' or at deriving a verified model or models of 'flying saucers'." 16

In addition to reinforcing the conclusions reached by the Projects Sign and Grudge studies, the Project 14 research also led to revisions in the Air Force UFO inquiry. The project helped devise questionnaires for observers of UFOs and, apparently, played a role in the revision of AFR 200-2 in August 1954 (From page viii of the report):

As the study of current cases progressed, it became increasingly obvious that if reporting and investigating procedures could be further improved, the percentages of those cases which contained insufficient information and those remaining unexplained would be greatly reduced. The key to a higher percentage of solutions appeared to be in rapid "on the spot" investigations by trained personnel. On the basis of this, a revised program was established by AF Reg. 200-2. . . 12 August 1954.

This new program. . . provided primarily that the 4602d Air Intelligence Service Squadron (Air Defense Command) would carry out all field investigations. . . After treatment by the 4602d Aiss, all information is supplied to the Air Technical Intelli-

gence Center for final evaluation. This cooperative program has resulted, since 1 January 1955, in reducing the insufficient information cases to 7% and the unknown cases to 3% of the totals. . .

Questions about the validity of Project 14 findings have focused upon the statistical procedures used by the research organization. Dr. David Saunders, a University of Colorado psychologist and computer expert for the Boulder UFO Project, wrote of Project 14:

. . .This \$100,000, taxpayer-financed report. . .purports to be a sophisticated statistical treatment of all the data in the files up through late 1952, a period when the Air Force was still getting much interesting input. The report contains more than 200 tables filled with numbers. It also makes use of an elementary statistic known as chi-square to lend credence to its primary argument (that flying saucers did not exist). I was impressed by the fact that not even the formula used for calculating chi-square was correct. And with remarkable regularity, whoever did these statistics combined the categories so as to minimize his chances of finding anything significant. . .It was even more of a disappointment to learn that all of the IBM cards coded for this special study. . .had been thrown away. The card deck could at least have provided a check list of early sightings. 17

One characteristic of UFO reports that was not included in any of the Project 14 analyses was that of "maneuverability," the aerial maneuvers the reported UFOs performed.

The Project 14 researchers explained:

. . .at the time that the maneuver factor was determined to be critical, it was physically impracticable to make the required definitions and re-evaluate the original data. Therefore, no code for maneuver has been included in the CODES (the coding system used for reports), CARD BIBLE (the work sheet), or IBM cards. 18

Hence, the motion of an aerial object--that factor which may have set the object apart from aircraft, balloons or astronomical phenomena and made it unknown in the eyes of the observer--was not one of the characteristics included in Project 14's "critical" and "intensive" analyses.

The omission of the maneuverability factor was mentioned in the conclusions of Report No. 14. The logic was that, if the factor had been included, perhaps more UNKNOWNs would have been determined to be KNOWNs:

. . .a combination of factors, principally the reported maneuvers of the objects, and the unavailability of supplemental data such as aircraft flight plans or balloon-launching records, resulted in the failure to identify as KNOWNs most of the reports of objects classified as UNKNOWNs.

The report of Project 14 was the product of three years of research and was 316 pages long. Yet Project 14 has not received the attention accorded the January 1953 report of the Scientific Advisory Panel on UFOs, also known as the "Robertson Panel." The Robertson report was 28 pages long--after declassification and censorship--and was based on a four-day review and discussion of eight cases in detail and 15 others on a briefing basis.

One controversial aspect of the Robertson Report--that of the involvement of the Central Intelligence Agency in the UFO inquiry--has been discussed at length in The Saturday Review, Sept. 3, 1966, pp. 45-50, and also in the writings of Dr. James McDonald, senior physicist in the Institute of Atmospheric Physics, University of Arizona, Tucson.

The chairman of the panel was Dr. H.P. Robertson, theoretical physicist at the California Institute of Technology. Other panel members who met from January 14-17, 1953 were Luis W. Alvarez of the University of California, Lloyd V. Berkner of Associated Universities Inc., S. A. Goudsmit of Brookhaven National Laboratories and Thornton Page of Johns Hopkins University. Dr. McDonald, who read the Robert-

son report before it was "sanitized" (in military terms) said the CIA representatives listed in the unedited version were a Dr. H. Marshall Chadwell, Ralph L. Clark and Philip G. Strong.

Dr. McDonald---in a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors on April 22, 1967--told how he was allowed to review the entire panel report on June 6, 1966; but when he returned to Project Blue Book offices on June 20 and requested a Xerox copy:

The copy was prepared for me, but not given to me because a superior officer suggested that since 'another agency' was involved, they'd have to check before releasing it to me. I reminded them that I already had extensive notes on it. . .I was assured that their check was perfunctory and that I would be sent the copy in a week or two.

In fact, I never received it. The 'other agency', the Central Intelligence Agency, ruled that this document did not come under the '12-year (declassification) rule' and reclassified it. Although a so-called 'sanitized version' was later released, the full document remains undisclosed.

The CIA is mentioned only indirectly in the declassified version of the panel's report. Also deleted, McDonald said, was a CIA recommendation:

. . .for a systematic 'debunking of the flying saucers,' to use the actual language of the document. And the stated objective of the 'debunking' was to 'reduce public interest in flying saucers.' 19

Another scientist who reviewed both the classified and declassified versions of the Robertson Report was Dr. J. Allen Hynek, scientific consultant to Project Blue Book. In a visit to the UFO Project at the University of Colorado on Nov. 11, 1966, Hynek told the project of his comparison of the two copies:

I made it a point. . .to see how the 'sanitized' version differed from the other, and it doesn't differ very much. There is very little difference. . .

In fact, the "sanitized" report does include references to "debunking" flying saucers within the context of a two-fold educational program. One aim of the program would be training military and Ground Observer Corps personnel "in proper recognition of unusually illuminated objects. . ." As for the other aim:

The 'debunking' aim would result in reduction in public interest in 'flying saucers' which today evokes a strong psychological reaction. This education could be accomplished by mass media such as television, motion pictures and popular articles. . . Such a program should tend to reduce the current gullibility of the public and consequently their susceptibility to clever hostile propaganda. . .

Neither "debunking" nor the CIA was mentioned by name in the panel's declassified conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions and recommendations will be quoted extensively below because they are brief and because they are important in understanding the role of the Air Force and the press in the UFO inquiry:

As a result of its considerations, the Panel concludes:

a. That the evidence presented on Unidentified Flying Objects shows no indication that these phenomena constitute a direct physical threat to the national security.

We firmly believe that there is no residuum of cases which indicates phenomena which are attributable to foreign artifacts capable of hostile acts, and that there is no evidence that the scientific concepts.

The Panel further concludes:

a. That the continued emphasis on the reporting of these phenomena does, in these parlous times, result in a threat to the orderly functioning of the protective organs of the body politic.

We cite as examples of the clogging of channels of communication by irrelevant reports, the danger of being led by continued false alarms to ignore real indications of hostile action, and the cultivation of a morbid national psychology in which skillful hostile propaganda could induce hysterical behavior and harmful distrust of duly constituted authority.

In order most effectively to strengthen the national facilities for the timely recognition and the appropriate handling of true indications of hostile action, and to minimize the concomitant dangers alluded to above, the Panel recommends:

a. That the national security agencies take immediate steps to strip the Unidentified Flying Objects of the special status they have been given and the aura of mystery they have unfortunately acquired;

b. That the national security agencies institute policies on intelligence, training and public education designed to prepare the material defenses and the morale of the country to recognize most promptly and to react most effectively to true indications of hostile intent or action . . .

Thus, in part, the Robertson report was similar to that of Report No. 14 and the Grudge and Sign Reports in that the scientists reported they found no evidence of the existence of "flying saucers"-- hostile or friendly objects, possibly of extraterrestrial origin and representing technological advances beyond present scientific knowledge.

A difference between the Robertson report and the others, however, was the former's pointed call for the "debunking" of flying saucers--prompted by concern with "the current gullibility of the public and consequently their susceptibility to clever hostile propaganda. . ."

The panel also expressed fears that unofficial UFO investigating groups might be used for subversive purposes, perhaps a sign of the times, the early 1950s:

The panel took cognizance of the existence of such groups as the 'Civilian Flying Saucer Investigators' (Los Angeles) and the 'Aerial Phenomena Research Organization' (Wisconsin). It was believed that such organizations should be watched because of their potentially great influence on mass thinking if widespread sightings should occur. The apparent irresponsibility and the possible use of such groups for subversive purposes should be kept in mind.

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(Perhaps aware of this concern, APRO--the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization--required applicants for membership to sign statements, swearing that they had no Communistic sympathies).
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While the Robertson Panel apparently made no specific recommendations as to the operations of Project Blue Book in particular, the impact of the panel upon the Air Force UFO inquiry was considerable.

Dr. Hynek, who was an associate member of the panel, said:

The Robertson report immediately became the main justification of the Air Force position--there is nothing to worry about--and it so remains to this day. I was not asked to sign the report, but I would not have signed if I had been asked. I felt that the question was more complicated than the panel believed. . . The men took just four days to make a judgment upon a perplexing subject that I had studied for more than five years without being able to solve to my satisfaction. 21

Dr. McDonald, who has studied the UFO phenomenon perhaps more intensively than even Hynek, commented:

. . . I regard this four-day session of the Robertson Panel as a pivotal point in UFO history. For instead of a recommendation that the problem be taken out of Air Force hands (on grounds of non-hostility of the UFOs) and turned over to some scientific agency for adequate study, there was a most regrettable. . . recommendation made. . .

That recommendation, McDonald said, was the CIA-sponsored one to debunk "saucers" to reduce public interest in the phenomenon.

The declassified Robertson Panel report contained no detailed directions as to what form an "educational and debunking" program should take. The panel did discuss, however, the possibilities of employing such individuals and organizations as Arthur Godfrey, Dr. Hadley Cantril, who studied public reaction to the Orson Welles "War of the Worlds" broadcast in 1938, The Jam Handy Co., which made World War II training films, and Walt Disney Inc. The panel

also said some "expansion of the ATIC effort would be required" although "it was believed inappropriate to state exactly how large a Table of Organization would be required."

Research for this dissertation found no evidence of any "educational and debunking" program utilizing the mass media or resources such as those mentioned in the above paragraph. As noted in the discussion of Air Force regulations, a revision in Air Force Regulation 200-2, issued a few months after the work of the Robertson Panel, ordered that "the percentage of unidentifieds must be reduced to a minimum." That order appears to be in accordance with the conclusions and recommendations of the Robertson Panel.

While the Robertson Panel met in 1953, the declassification of its report came 13 years later. That was 11 years after Project No. 14 was released; and it was about three months after the February 3, 1966 meeting of the USAF Scientific Advisory Board ad hoc Committee to Review Project Blue Book.

The February panel was summoned by Maj. Gen. E.B. LeBailly, Director of the Air Force Office of Information. In a memorandum dated 28 September 1965, he noted that the Air Force had been investigating UFOs since 1948, that the program was a worthwhile one and that many UFO reports which could not be explained came "from intelligent and technically well qualified individuals whose integrity cannot be doubted. . ."

Accordingly, it is requested that a working scientific panel composed of both physical and social scientists be organized to review Project Blue Book--its resources, methods, and findings--and to advise the Air Force as to any improvements that should be made in the program in order to carry out the Air Force's assigned responsibility.

The panel chairman was physicist Dr. Brian O'Brien. Panel members included two psychologists, Dr. Launor F. Carter and Dr. Jesse Orlansky; two electrical engineers, Dr. Richard Porter and Dr. Willis H. Ware, and astronomer and exo-biologist Dr. Carl Sagan.

They reviewed reports of previous Air Force scientific panels with "particular attention. . . given to the report of the Robertson panel. . ."; they were briefed by personnel of the Foreign Technology Division at Wright Patterson Air Force Base; they reviewed case histories of UFO sightings. They reported:

The committee concluded that in the 19 years since the first UFO was sighted there has been no evidence that UFOs are a threat to our national security. Having arrived at this conclusion the committee then turned its attention to considering how the Air Force should handle the scientific aspects of the UFO problem. Unavoidably these are also related to Air Force public relations (emphasis added), a subject on which the committee is not expert. Thus the recommendations which follow are made simply from the scientific point of view.

The committee then restated its conclusion that UFOs represented no threat to the national security, but. . .

Nevertheless, there is always the possibility that analysis of new sightings may provide some additions to scientific knowledge of value to the Air Force. Moreover, some of the case records (at) which the committee looked that were listed as 'identified' were sightings where the evidence collected was too meager or too indefinite to permit positive listing in the identified category. (emphasis added) Because of this, the committee recommends that the present program be strengthened to provide opportunity for scientific investigation of selected sightings in more detail and depth than has been possible to date.

To strengthen the UFO inquiry, the committee made three recommendations: (1) that contracts be negotiated with a few universities, selected partly on a geographic basis, to provide prompt and detailed investigations of UFO reports; (2) that at each Air Force Systems Command base an officer be designated to work with the university

team for that area; and (3) that a university or non-profit organization be selected to coordinate the work of the university teams, and serve as liaison between the teams and Project Blue Book

The recommendations were implemented to the extent that (1) as stated in AFR 80-17, all Air Force Bases were ordered Air Force headquarters to provide a UFO investigative capacity, and (2) in the fall of 1966, the Department of Defense contracted with the University of Colorado to conduct a separate and scientific inquiry of the UFO phenomenon.

This, then, was the situation at the time this study was concluded: Project Blue Book was still directing the Air Force UFO inquiry; each air base had a UFO officer; the University of Colorado was conducting a supplementary UFO investigation.

Year-In, Year-Out--The Statistics

Throughout the period of special reports, such as those of Project 14, the Robertson Panel and the 1966 study, the Air Force had continued receiving and classifying reports of UFOs. In fact, the special reports and Department of Defense press releases regularly cited Air Force statistics to support conclusions that UFOs represented no threat to the national security, and that all UFOs could be identified as natural or man-made phenomena --if sufficient data had been available. By the end of 1967, for example, Project Blue Book could report that, of the 12,097 cases it had received in the preceding 20½ years, only 697, or about 5 per cent, were classified as unknown. If one considered the UFOs reported since 1953, then

there would be only 3 per cent unknown, or 304 of 9,753 reports.

These statistics were based on individual case reports on file at Project Blue Book offices at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. A sample of the Project 10073 Record Card used for recording the UFO data is shown below:

PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD

1. DATE	2. LOCATION		12. CONCLUSIONS <input type="checkbox"/> Was Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Was Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Aircraft
3. DATE-TIME GROUP Local _____ GMT _____	4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION <input type="checkbox"/> Ground-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Ground-Radar <input type="checkbox"/> Air-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Air-Intercept Radar		
5. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	6. SOURCE		<input type="checkbox"/> Was Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient Data for Eval <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION	8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS	9. COURSE	
10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING		11. COMMENTS	

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As indicated by the card, the case records permitted Blue Book staff members to express varying degrees of confidence in the explanations of UFO reports. Under item 12, a UFO report could be classified as (1) was, probably or possibly Balloon, (2) was, probably, possibly Aircraft, etc.

There were no set rules for distinguishing between, say, Aircraft, probably Aircraft or possibly Aircraft. A review of thousands of UFO cases, however, indicated the "probably-possibly" labels resulted under one or more of four conditions: (1) The object, although not definitely identified, exhibited characteristics of an aircraft, balloon or astronomical phenomenon either by description, time in sight or maneuvers performed; (2) someone said the object or another one in the same area resembled a balloon, aircraft, or planet, star or meteor; (3) in the opinion of the investigator there was no hard evidence conflicting with the possibility that the UFO might have been a natural or man-made object; (4) if the UFO were not called probably or possibly something else, it would have to be called Unknown.

The system of qualified classifications was understandable in light of the enigmatic nature of the UFO phenomenon. However, when the individual case statistics were summarized and reported in press releases or other Air Force documents, there was no mention of the qualifying labels, probably or possibly. Instead, the publicly released categories have been simply Aircraft, Astronomical, Balloon, Other, Insufficient Data or Unknown, as defined on p. 155. In reading thousands of relevant newspaper clippings and most of the Department of Defense press releases on UFOs, this study never found reference to the probably or possibly labels. Publicly, degrees of doubt did not exist.

The problem was underscored in an Oct. 6, 1958 Department of Defense press release summarizing UFOs investigated from July 1,

1957 through July 31, 1958. The release, No. 986-58, announced, "More than 84 per cent of the reported UFO sightings were definitely established (emphasis added) as natural phenomena. . . or man-made objects." Not only had the qualifying labels been deleted from the statistics, but reports previously considered only "possibly" explained were reported among those "definitely established"--not because of further investigations, but because of bookkeeping procedures.

In the July 1968 interview, Lt. Col. Quintanilla acknowledged that the words "definitely established" were misleading. He defended the general procedure, however, and asked, "Where else would you put it (the probably-possibly explanation)? Too many categories would make the report too cumbersome and might lead to too many questions (if the probably-possibly labels were continued year after year)."

One question that needed to be answered, however, was how many qualified explanations had been transformed into established explanations through the summarizing process. The answer would provide information about news media use of publicity release statistics and about Air Force investigatory procedures.

To answer the question, explanations found in individual case reports for a sample of months were matched against statistics for the same months as reported in year-end summaries and press releases. The case reports and summaries were available through research at Wright-Patterson AFB and through study under Dr. Hynek at Northwestern University.

A monthly sample was drawn from every other year, beginning with 1948, the first full year of the Air Force inquiry. Three

months were selected from each even-numbered year, 1948 through 1966-- one month from January, February or March, one month from May, June or July, and one from October, November or December. The sample was reduced from 30 to 29 months because only a few individual cards were available for the 30th month, November 1966.

For the 29 months, 1,034 cards were examined. The number of sightings recorded by Blue Book for the same months was 1,117. So, cards were available for more than 90 per cent of the reports recorded during the sample months. The 1,034 cards represented 9 per cent of all UFO reports recorded by the Air Force from 1948 through 1966--11,038.

While the 10073 cards were revised in September 1963, the form shown on p. 178 was in use throughout the study period. With four minor exceptions, the only quantitative use made of each card was to record the "conclusion" checked under item 12:

1. In a few early (circa 1950) cases, meteor sightings had been recorded as Other and not as Astronomical as they later were. In these cases, the meteor conclusions were recorded as Astronomical.

2. When a carbon copy of the 10073 form was used and the classifying mark on the copy fell between two categories--between possibly and probably or between probably and was--the more definite category, probably or was, was the one recorded.

3. Perhaps because the Other conclusion had to be written in, the 10073 form did not include a probably or possibly Other option. However, many of the written conclusions under Other were qualified as probably or possibly a flare, a bird, etc. Consequently, a

"Prob/Poss Other" category was added to the analysis to classify such qualified conclusions and those termed only "psychological." The latter term was considered too vague to warrant placement in an "established" category.

4. For 1948, 10073 cards were not available for each UFO report. Information about the classification of these reports was provided by other Air Force data. As is evident in Table 41, the 1948 results did not bias the findings toward disparity between the individual cards and the summaries.

In the analysis, a "solved" case was one in which there was no overt evidence of doubt about an explanation. The "solved" explanations on the 10073 cards were those marked as was Balloon, Astronomical, or Aircraft or was Other; the "solved" explanations in the summaries were Balloon, Aircraft, Astronomical or Other.

An "unsolved" or "doubtful" case was one in which there was overt evidence of some doubt about the explanation. Insufficient Data and Unknown categories were "unsolved"--in both individual stimuli were. The probably and possibly conclusions on individual cards were "unsolved" because the explanations were qualified.

Project Blue Book routinely considered Insufficient Data and probably or possibly cases as "solved" in that there were no further investigations and the reports were categorized. It is suggested here, however, that solving a UFO report may consist of more than having a category in which the report can be filed.

In fact, it did not seem consistent to equate the probably and possibly qualified explanations with the Air Force definition of

identified cases:

. . . those for which sufficient specific information has been accumulated and evaluated to permit a positive identification or explanation of the object.

Also, there was a precedent in that Report No. 14--financed by the Air Force--distinguished between "certain" and "doubtful" explanations of UFO reports.

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Before presenting the findings of the analysis, a note of caution should be given. Air Force statistics on UFOs changed frequently because new sightings were reported for past years, two or three old sightings may have been combined into one report because of time and location considerations, and periodic revisions may have resulted from staff changeover. Consequently, the individual card totals for five months--October 1950, May 1954, July 1958, May 1960 and February 1962--exceeded the summary totals for the same months, but only by a difference of one (1) case in each instance.

Summaries reported here may differ from summaries reported elsewhere and surely will differ from summaries reported in the future. However, random checks between the summaries in this report and those found elsewhere uncovered only minor differences of one (1) or two (2) cases for some months.

So while the Air Force statistical data may not be amenable to rigorous statistical analysis, the data are amenable to the analysis conducted here--matching the "unsolved" against the "solved" conclusions.

As shown in Table 41, the analysis of summarized reports found that 270, or 24 per cent, of the 1,117 UFO reports were "un-

solved." From the individual cards, however, analysis showed that 528, or 51 per cent, of 1034 cases were "unsolved."

Thus, by simply advancing the probably, possibly cases to "established" status, the bookkeeping improved the Blue Book investigatory capacity by reducing the number of "unsolved" cases from 51 to 24 per cent. Further, by emphasizing only the Unknown cases, Department of Defense press releases focused upon "unsolved" cases not of 51 or 24 per cent but of "less than 2 per cent" (Oct. 6, 1958), "less than 1 per cent" (Jan. 22, 1959) and "2.09 per cent" (July 15, 1959).

As indicated by the far right column of the table, the upgrading of probably and possibly conclusions to was status would change the number of balloon explanations from 55 solved and 52 unsolved to 107 solved; the number of aircraft explanations from 67 solved and 93 unsolved to 160 solved; the number of astronomical from 225 solved and 106 unsolved to 331 solved. The solved:unsolved ratios were predictable since it was expected that the firmest conclusions would be the astronomical ones--stars and planets may be easier to identify and do stay in one place longer than errant balloons, unscheduled airplanes and other sometime UFCs.

The finding that 51 per cent of the individual cases were considered unsolved should be understood as a minimal estimate. It was based solely upon conclusions checked on the 10073 form. In many cases, the wording on a card or in a report clearly indicated that a was or "solved" solution

was suspect. A more sophisticated methodology, drawing finer lines between "solved" and "unsolved" cases, would find at least 60 per cent of the cases "unsolved."

If one applies the findings of this study to the over-all Blue Book records, the impact of "upgrading" UFO reports becomes

Note: Pages 184 and 185 of the original manuscript have been re-typed due to heavy revision by the author (Publisher's Note).

apparent:

Analysis of the summarized reports showed that 24 per cent of the cases were "unsolved." Similar data from the years 1953 through 1966 ²³ indicate that 1889 (or 21 per cent) of 8,762 cases were unsolved, that is were Insufficient Data or Unknown. (The 24 per cent figure for the 1948-66 sample was not out of line then, particularly since data from Project 14 and elsewhere report that the number of unsolved cases from 1948 through 1952 was much higher than in later years). If applied to the 1953 through 1966 figures, the findings of this study indicate that the number of unsolved cases should not be 1,889 (21 per cent) but should be more than 4,350 (more than 50 per cent).

Blue Book performance has been enhanced by its bookkeeping system. Probably and possibly explanations of UFO reports--at the outset defensible and realistic--were advanced to "definitely established" status simply as a function of time. Perhaps many Unknowns were listed as distant possibilities to begin with and then advanced to known status within the year.

The analysis does raise questions about press performance, particularly about the acceptance and use of questionable Department of Defense statistics. Since newsmen frequently visited Blue Book and had access to virtually all the information reported here, it is noteworthy that there has been no noticeable reference in the press to the probably, possibly procedures outline here. Perhaps the upgrading-through-time procedure was encouraged by the acceptance of the statistics by the press.

Summary

Throughout its history, the United States Air Force has investigated reports of flying saucers. Based on its explanations of thousands of reports, scientific studies and special UFO projects, the Air Force has concluded: (1) that UFOs do not constitute a threat to the national security; (2) that UFOs do not represent advanced technological developments; (3) that there is no evidence UFOs are extraterrestrial vehicles.

Air Force interest in UFOs developed because of Air Force air defense responsibilities and the opinion, in 1947, that UFOs might be real, and possibly threatening, objects. Interest in UFOs continued--despite the conclusions stated above--because of the Air Force's mission of air defense and, judging from Air Force Regulations, concern with public relations.

Analysis of Air Force UFO records suggested that the proficiency of Project Blue Book was enhanced by a record-keeping system which systematically advanced doubtful or dubious explanations of UFOs to "known" status.

Criticism of the Air Force UFO inquiry included a statement from a 1966 scientific advisory board which noted:

. . .some of the case records. . .that were listed as 'identified' were sightings where the evidence collected was too meager or too indefinite to permit positive listing in the identified category. . .

CHAPTER VI

THE AIR FORCE AND UFOS--A CONSPIRACY?

In a discussion about the Air Force involvement in the UFO phenomenon in particular, or about the existence of flying saucers in general, the "conspiracy" question often arises. In broad terms, that question is "Does some agency in the government hide the truth about flying saucers from the public?". Two agencies often mentioned in connection with the alleged cover-up are the Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

There appears to be widespread public belief that at least part of the UFO investigation is cloaked in secrecy. In a public opinion poll conducted by the University of Colorado UFO Project, 69 per cent of the adult and 73 per cent of the teen-age respondents agreed with this statement:

A government agency maintains a Top Secret file of UFO reports that are deliberately withheld from the public.

And, 63 per cent of the adults and 69 per cent of the teenagers disagreed with this statement:

There is no government secrecy about UFOs.

In this chapter, a limited discussion of the conspiracy question will be presented (1) to complete the review of the Air Force

UFO program begun in the preceding chapter and (2) to present findings relevant to the conspiracy question and attendant press coverage. Because much material already has been published about the alleged "UFO conspiracy," the discussion will be limited to only four brief examples of conspiracy theories, three summaries of charges made against the Air Force, some Air Force responses to the charges and, at greater length, the findings of this study.

Some Conspiracy Theories

Part of the "evidence" of the existence of flying saucers includes theories that various conspiracies are at work to hide the truth about saucers from the public. In its simplest form the argument is that evidence about the reality of flying saucers has not come to light--not because saucers do not exist--but because the evidence is being hidden by one agency or another.

Frank Edwards, author of some best selling books on flying saucers and one-time commentator for the Mutual Broadcasting System said news coverage of UFOs was involved in the cover-up. At a meeting of the Civilian Saucer Intelligence of New York, April 29, 1956, Edwards was asked "How is the government able to keep saucer sightings quiet?" His response:

There are only three press services and they are all dependent on the Pentagon and other government agencies for their big stories, so it's very easy to bribe them into silence or enlist their cooperation. Anyone who gets out of line won't get any more scoops.

Edwards died June 27, 1967, before he could be interviewed for this study.

The Air Force and other branches of the military also have been accused of censorship of UFO news. In a legal case mentioned in the magazine Flying Saucers, December 1967, a civilian employee of the Army sued a list of officials from Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara down to a colonel at Fort Eustis, Va., for refusing him permission to publish an article critical of an Air Force UFO investigation.

The civilian, Larry Bryant of Newport News, Va., reviewed and edited Army instruction manuals at Fort Eustis. In late 1965, he wrote an article about an Air Force UFO investigation at Langley Air Force Base, Va. Since he thought the subject matter dealt with the military, Bryant submitted the manuscript for review and clearance under Army Regulation 360-5, a regulation covering manuscripts written by Army employees.

In November 1965, according to his law suit, Bryant heard from John L. Mantle of the Office for the Freedom of Information, Department of the Army, that clearance had been denied:

Your manuscript, 'The UFO Cover-Up at Langley Air Force Base,' is returned without action since it is critical of a sister service and therefore cannot be cleared on the ground of propriety (AR360-5), (Para 6). In addition, the subject matter as worded in your terms, is highly controversial and the Chief of Staff has recently reiterated his statement. . . that controversial subjects are not to be discussed in public.

When Bryant resubmitted his article for clearance through other channels in June 1966, clearance was again denied. Roger Delaney, deputy director, security review, Department of Defense, advised Bryant the article was not cleared because:

The article is biased and may tend to encourage unfounded speculation and controversy. Mr. Bryant's statements are not

supported by the overwhelming factual data and statistical evidence contained in USAF Project Blue Book, and are contrary to the authoritative views of the Department of Defense.

Publication of this article by Mr. Bryant would be in violation of Section 201 (c) (b) of Executive Order 11222, May 8, 1965, which is quoted in part as follows:

'201 (c) It is the intent of this section that employees avoid any action, whether or not specifically prohibited by subsection (a) which might result in or create the appearance of--

'(b) affecting adversely the confidence of the public in the integrity of the government.

Bryant, who had been a member of the board of directors of the Richmond, Va., chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, filed suit in Federal District Court in Washington, D.C. With the aid of the Washington ACLU office, Bryant sought a court order for the clearance of his article on the ground it:

. . . does not contain or disclose any information or material of a secret or classified nature, nor any other information the publication of which would impair government or military security.

Bryant's complaint also alleged that his military and defense department superiors had harassed him and threatened to deny him promotions, fire him or revoke his security clearance.¹

Bryant's article was cleared for publication--apparently by Defense Department security-review officials--on May 26, 1967, a week after his suit was filed.

His article, "The UFO Cover-Up at Langley Air Force Base," was published in the June 1968 issue of Flying Saucers. The article was critical of the Air Force explanation of a UFO reported near Langley AFB in January 1965. It reviewed correspondence between Bryant, U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia and the Air Force, all dealing with Bryant's inability to get satisfactory answers

to his questions about the UFO report. For example, while the Air Force said the UFO was, in fact, a helicopter, it would not or could not tell Bryant the names of the aircraft's crew.

The article concluded:

. . . To the veteran private ufologist, it seems that somewhere along the line the Air Force has reached a definite conclusion as to the origin and purpose of UFOs, and that the primary objective of Project Blue Book is to keep this conclusion secret. . . there is more art--public-relations art--than science in the operation of Project Blue Book. Coupled with the incontrovertible evidence of the Federal Government's UFO news management programs, the lack of science should be enough to persuade any discerning Congressional committee to hold open hearings on the subject. The fact that extensive hearings have not been held convinces me that ufology remains the hottest off-the-record story on Capitol Hill.

For Bryant, the difficulties in getting this relatively mild criticism of the Air Force published may have only confirmed his suspicions of a cover-up and news management.

One of the more sinister theories of a UFO conspiracy has been that advanced by John A. Keel, who received an award at the New York 1967 Congress of Scientific Ufologists for "outstanding contribution to UFOlogical Research during 1966." Keel has written about Men in Black (MIB), dark skinned men with apparently Oriental features and dark clothing who, he says, seem to harass UFO witnesses--even when the witnesses had not reported their sightings to any official agency or a newspaper.

Keel wrote in the April 1968 issue of FATE magazine:

If the Men In Black do not represent our government--and I believe that they do not--then they must come from some other secretive group or organization directly related to the UFOs. And they are successfully infiltrating our cities and villages on a large scale. When an innocent citizen accidentally learns of their presence their representatives zero in on him or her, perhaps to prepare the way to silence the witness at some point

in the future. They photograph the person's home and family. In many cases, they also tap the witness' telephone and inexplicably, even tamper with their mail. . . .

Perhaps all of this sounds like a bad plot from The Invaders TV series but it seems to be very real. Experience and many in-depth interviews with bewildered people all over this country have convinced me that this (the MIB) is part of the elusive 'secret' behind the 'flying saucers.' And perhaps only a small part at that. It has been kept from you not by the Air Force or government but by the entities behind the UFO phenomenon itself.

As suggested by Keel, theories about a UFO conspiracy were not limited to implicating only the Air Force or the CIA. In fact, in the last of the four examples, it will be shown that even the largest private UFO organization, the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), has been charged with conspiring to hide the truth about flying saucers.

The charge was made in the June 1965 issue of Saucer News, a publication of the Saucers and Unexplained Celestial Events Research Society (SAUCERS), founded in 1954. The editor of Saucer News, James W. Moseley, and the director of NICAP, Maj. (USMA Ret.) Donald E. Keyhoe have disagreed often; SAUCERS tends to emphasize--and NICAP to ignore--the more sensational UFO stories, including those which mention beings from outer space.

In Moseley's June 1965 issue it was charged that NICAP and Keyhoe served the Air Force and the government as "a safety valve so that no genuine public pressure on behalf of more and better UFO information has a chance to build up. . . ."

The article said that NICAP's demands for Congressional hearings on UFOs were a ruse because at such hearings evidence presented by UFO researchers would be countered strongly by hostile comment

from the scientific community. The pressures for Congressional hearings, the article said, served only to dissipate public displeasure with the Air Force and to divert public attention from other UFO issues. Keyhoe, in short, was working for the Air Force.

The four examples--the Edwards, Bryant, Keel and Keyhoe cases-- although reviewed briefly, do indicate how open-ended a discussion of the UFO conspiracy could be. Yet, every case, in some way, is relevant to a discussion of what generally is considered to be "the" UFO conspiracy--"the Air Force coverup."

Three Criticisms Of The Air Force

The NICAP criticism of the Air Force was summarized in that organization's 1964 publication, The UFO Evidence, p. 105.

NICAP contends that the Air Force has practiced an intolerable degree of secrecy and withholding of information in its public policies on the UFO subject and refuses to allow an independent evaluation of its data. There are two general schools of thought on the reasons for this secrecy:

(1) That the Air Force has obtained significant proof of UFO reality, and is withholding its evidence until the public can be psychologically prepared under a program guided by some higher agency.

(2) That the withholding of information is not because of any special knowledge on the subject but results more or less unconsciously from red tape, lack of continuity to the UFO project, differences of opinion within the Air Force, etc.

In either case, the secretive public information policies are symptomatic of the general governmental secrecy which has mushroomed since World War II, and must be viewed in that context. . . .

The stand of another private UFO organization, the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), vis a vis the Air Force, was stated in The APRO Bulletin of January 1961:

It has come to our attention that APRO has from time to time been described as one of the UFO 'clubs' which insists that there is an official Air Force conspiracy to withhold conclusions concerning the extraterrestrial nature of UFOs from the public. . .

What we do maintain is this: That many Air Force conclusions concerning individual UFO cases are not justified on the basis of available evidence. . .

Air Force officialdom is dedicated to the proposition that all 'unknowns' could be explained as conventional phenomena if enough information were available. It does not require a great deal of erudition to perceive that this attitude (which is the guiding philosophy of the USAF program) begs the question . . .

In The APRO Bulletin of May-June 1965, however, it was suggested that, if Air Force censorship did exist, there was a logical reason for it--news of outerspace visitors, in an almost literal sense, might be too "earthshaking":

. . .Can any of us really imagine an official agency of the U.S. Government admitting to the people of the U.S. that we are being visited by extraterrestrial entities who come and go freely, whose craft make our best aircraft look like kiddy cars in comparison, and AGAINST WHOM WE HAVE NO DEFENSE IF THEY SHOULD BE HOSTILE? (Emphasis theirs).

Some might say that we have a right to know, that everyone should be told, in order to avoid 'accidents.' There would probably be more 'accidents' as a result of knowledge which the general public is neither ready for or able to assimilate, than there have been or would be from accidental personal contact with UFO occupants.

We so often hear it said that 'the AF' or 'the government' is censoring news of UFO. . .Either the initiator of such ideas does little thinking about the philosophical aspect of extraterrestrial visitors or he himself is predispositioned against a deep look at UFO research and the possible impact of UFOs themselves on earth societies. . .

The "conspiracy" hypothesis also was discussed at the April 1967 meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington, D.C. The editors heard Dr. James E. McDonald, senior physicist in the Institute of Atmospheric Physics at the University of

Arizona, report on his research of the UFO phenomenon. In part of his discussion of the "conspiracy" hypothesis, he stated:

I do not believe, as some UFO investigators, that the CIA or still higher security groups 'know all about the UFOs', know that they are of extraterrestrial origin, and are concealing this from both the public and science. Rather I have seen a large amount of evidence, much of it compelling in its nature, that leads me to reject the grand cover-up hypothesis. I believe it is instead a grand foulup (emphasis his), accomplished by people of very limited scientific competence, confronted by a messy and rather uncomfortable problem. (What air force officer, American, British, Russian, or Chinese, would care to admit that in his country's airspace there are maneuvering objects of unknown nature far exceeding in performance characteristics anything his friends are flying!) I have told Air Force personnel quite directly that I think it's a foulup, not a coverup, and until I see new evidence to the contrary I shall subscribe to this view.

The Air Force Response

The official Air Force response to criticisms of its UFO inquiry can be summarized relatively easily because the response has been essentially unchanged since the early 1950s. In part, the response consists of conclusions reached by the Air Force in the course of its UFO investigations. Those conclusions, as stated in the preceding chapter, are basically threefold: (1) UFOs do not represent a threat to the national security; (2) UFOs do not represent technological developments beyond the range of current scientific knowledge; (3) there has been no evidence that UFOs are extraterrestrial vehicles.

The UFO investigation was supported by Secretary of the Air Force Harold Brown on April 5, 1966, when he told the House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services:

. . .let me assure you that the Air Force is both objective and thorough in its treatment of all reports of unusual aerial

objects over the United States. . .

In evaluating these sightings, the Air Force has used carefully selected and highly qualified scientists, technicians, and consultants. These personnel have utilized the finest Air Force laboratories, test centers, scientific instrumentation, and technical equipment for this purpose.

. . .the Air Force will continue to investigate such phenomena with an open mind and with the finest technical equipment available.

The Air Force UFO inquiry also was supported by General Thomas D. White, who was chief of staff of the Air Force in 1960 when he wrote:

By an Act of Congress the United States Air Force is charged with the Air Defense of the United States. Rapid identification of anything that flies is an important part of air defense. Thus the Air Force initiated and continues the unidentified flying object program. Under this program all unidentified flying object sightings are investigated in meticulous detail by Air Force personnel and qualified scientific consultants. So far, not a single bit of material evidence of the existence of spaceships has been found.

General White's comment was the foreword to a book, Flying Saucers and the U.S. Air Force written by Lt. Col. Lawrence J. Tacker, chief of the magazine and book branch, Office of Information, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force. In chapter 7, "The Official Air Force Position," Lt. Col. Tacker denied allegations that Air Force had ever reached the conclusion that flying saucers were real. He further wrote:

An additional charge against the Air Force is that it is afraid to tell the public the truth concerning flying saucers because of the national hysteria and panic which will result. This is, of course, a ridiculous argument because the same groups hurling these charges and allegations against the Air Force are continually telling the public the same thing they want the Air Force to say and there is no resulting panic. The real truth of the matter is that the public itself trusts our government and our Air Force and does not believe that space people are visiting our planet. . .

The official Air Force position can be summed up in a few words. In its attempt to put the UFO subject in proper perspective it appears that the Air Force cannot compete with the science fiction writer in satisfying the desires of those people who wish to believe in spaceships. The Air Force believes that the investigation of the UFO phenomena is in responsible hands and that an adequate, thorough and honest program is being conducted.

The Air Force has a tremendous task in defending this country against weapons systems which we know actually exist and are in the hands of our potential enemies. To divert more men and money away from this most serious mission into a greatly enlarged program for the investigation (of) and defense against UFOs, about which we have been unable to discover one iota of tangible scientific evidence would seriously jeopardize the security of this country against a known proven threat. . .

Was There A Coverup? Was There A Foulup?

Has there been an Air Force conspiracy to keep the truth about flying saucers from the public as some of the conspiracy theories suggest? Has the Air Force been guilty of a foulup instead of a coverup as Dr. McDonald charged, or has the Air Force UFO inquiry been as forthright and as thorough as stated by Colonel Tacker, Secretary Brown, General White and others?

In attempting to answer these questions and in comparing the answers against those reported in the press, it was decided not to follow a strictly case-study methodology in which several "conspiracy cases might have been selected and re-investigated to determine whether there was evidence of a conspiracy. Such an approach was rejected for two major reasons: (1) it was not thought that the time, effort and expense required for such study would be merited by the results which were likely to be inconclusive and limited; (2) work with the Boulder UFO Project had shown there were many difficulties inherent in trying to reconstruct UFO cases more than

several months old.²

It was decided instead that, in all research, this study would be alert to any information relevant to the conspiracy and competence questions. After two years of research, it was thought, there would be sufficient data--possibly including case studies--to make some judgments about (1) the adequacy of the Air Force UFO program, (2) the question of whether there had been a conspiracy and (3) the nature of relevant press coverage. This general approach was favored because, for one thing, research activities and interests provided access to individuals, organizations and files bearing information pertinent to the conspiracy and competence questions.

For example, after research began in the Spring and Summer of 1966, I still had one year to serve in the Air Force Reserve as a public information specialist. That year was spent on reserve duty--at least one day a month and two weeks during the summer--in the public information office at Edwards Air Force Base in Central California. The Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards tested experimental planes such as the X-15 and the XB-70 and the so-called wingless lifting bodies, designed to enable astronauts to re-enter the earth's atmosphere from an orbiting space ship. Edwards Air Force Base, formerly Muroc Air Force Base, also had been the scene of several flying saucer reports dating back to July 1947. Work in the public information office provided background on Air Force public information regulations and procedures which proved helpful in research.

For instance, this study found a clipping from The Sunday

Newark (N.J.) Star-Ledger of January 18, 1959 in which the reporter, John Lester, wrote about the Air Force UFO inquiry. He suggested that the Air Force knew far more than it was telling about UFOs. As part of his evidence he wrote about accidents linked with UFO reports:

. . . The F-94 from Griffith Air Force Base, New York, crashed in Walesville, N.Y., June 30, 1954 killing four persons and seriously injuring one. Both pilot and radarman, whose names are unavailable, explained they bailed out when an intense heat enveloped their plane as it closed in on the target.

The statement that the names of the "pilot and radar man were unavailable was puzzling because Air Force Regulations order wide and immediate disclosure of information in any accident involving civilians.

The pilot was Lieutenant William E. Akins, 24, of Dutton, Va., and the radar observer was Lieutenant Henry F. Coudon, 26, of Perryville, Md., as reported by the wire services and as I found printed in the New York Times of July 3, 1954. (The accident was July 2, not June 30 as Lester had written.)

News accounts of the accident also reported that Akins and Coudon were returning from the identification of an off-course airplane and not "closing in on the target," when their cockpit overheated and they bailed out.

This, then, was one case study in "conspiracy" that appeared to be relatively simple to resolve although Lester never responded to mailed inquiries for information from him.

During work with the University of Colorado UFO Project, I had access to all the files and other data within the Project Offices

in Woodbury Hall on the Colorado campus. I had my own key to the building and to the offices and worked uninterrupted at night often during the Summer of 1967 and during brief visits to the Project in November 1967 and August 1968. During studies at Northwestern University in the 1967-1968 school year, Dr. J. Allen Hynek permitted me access to his files on UFO reports.

In investigation of the conspiracy-competence questions, I could also draw upon five years of professional experience as a newspaper and wire service reporter. While I never did cover a UFO sighting as a news reporter, the news training was helpful in my gathering of data dealing with the charges of conspiracy and censorship.

In summary, most of the research on the conspiracy-competence questions was conducted in the form of "in-depth" reporting and in the role of the "participant-observer." Findings will be summarized in two sometimes overlapping steps, first presenting information obtained from interviews with newsmen and reviews of press clippings and, secondly, from information obtained from Air Force sources.

Press Data

At least one direct way to gather information about any UFO conspiracy involving the press was to ask newsmen whether they had encountered any pressures to censor UFO news. It was recognized, however, that such an approach would be inconclusive. As James McCartney, city editor of The Chicago Daily News, said in a May 1968 interview:

I assume in my line of work that it is completely possible and conceivable that the government could suppress anything and might for any God damn reason.

Nonetheless, the questionnaire survey of newspapers across the nation provided an opportunity to raise the censorship question. Newspapermen were asked to respond to this statement about press coverage of UFOs:

The press has been schooled by the Air Force and other agencies to play down or ignore UFO reports.

The 86 responses to the statement included many one word items such as "hogwash," "Nonsense," "Ridiculous," "Nuts," and "Bolognaey." Other respondents generally rejected the statement, but acknowledged that news sources may influence how a story is reported. Listed below are 10 representative responses, all received in July 1967:

Earl Zarbin, night city editor, The Arizona Republic, Phoenix:

This statement is inaccurate. Neither the Air Force nor anyone else has schooled the editors of this newspaper; though the editors, individually, may have been influenced by the various (UFO) accounts published over the years. I can speak only for myself when I say that I neither deny the possibility nor do I affirm the existence of flying saucers.

Ben Kent, city editor, The Charlottesville, Va., Daily Progress:

Speaking for the local press, this is absolutely ridiculous. I cannot speak for wire services or larger newspapers, although my experience as a newsman leads me to believe that any effort to suppress news is met by news media with an even firmer resolution to see that this news is printed.

Robert M. White II, editor and publisher, The Mexico, Mo., Evening Ledger, and past president Sigma Delta Chi, professional journalism fraternity:

I think most editors will say that (the charge of censorship) isn't true and it's not very significant anyway. On all unverified stories newspapers are accused of either playing up or playing down the story, depending whose ox is being gored.

Joseph S. Jennings, executive editor, The Elizabeth, N.J.

Daily Journal:

Qualified agreement. No direct approach made by such agencies, but their position has been well publicized and must be considered.

James R. Bittermann, reporter, Waukegan, Ill., News-Sun:

. . . I've personally covered a majority of the reports and in no instance were they influenced by a governmental agency other than routine corroboration or discrediting by airport controllers or other observers.

Scott E. Smith, assistant national editor, The Washington, D.C.

Star:

Untrue, unfair to the press. However, I'm convinced the Air Force would like to be able to do this. (emphasis his.)

Lewis Cope, science writer, The Minneapolis Tribune:

This is not nearly as important a factor as the general skepticism in the scientific community.

Beverly Orndorff, science writer, The Richmond, Va., Times-

Dispatch:

Not true, although 'official' skepticism can often have the effect of causing the press to play down a number of reports.

James P. Moran, managing editor, Dodge City, Kan., Daily

Globe:

We have been schooled by no agency or military service and don't know of any such schooling anywhere. We don't get many UFO reports and are highly skeptical of those we do, just of our own nature.

David Lore, education "and part-time UFO" reporter, The Columbus, Ohio, Dispatch:

The press has a tendency to rely on official sources for much of its news. As a result, during the early history of such sightings, official skepticism was transmitted through the press. In recent years, however, one is more likely to read skepticism of the official source rather than the sighting in this paper and most others.

In the course of this study, a list was compiled of approximately 50 newspaper and wire service reporters who had seen UFOs. In none of their stories about the sightings, nor in interviews with ten of them, was there any mention of Air Force pressures to "play down" or censor the UFO report. Nor, for that matter, was there any reference to John Keel's Men In Black (MIB).

In an interview of July 27, 1967, John Snyder, city editor of The Denver Post--not among the newsmen listed as having seen a UFO--said he was skeptical of the Air Force's UFO program. He said he had no specific reasons to doubt the Air Force's credibility but was skeptical of "military psychology" in general:

Maybe military psychology is the same in the Air Force as in the Army. I mean in keeping material from the public. There's a 'screw-em' attitude. The military doesn't tell you answers even to simple questions just because they don't think they have to or don't want to.

Snyder said he thought some UFO reports may have been reports of secret aircraft or other advanced weaponry but "even if they were you'd have trouble finding out."

In New York City, in March 1968, Palmer Williams of CBS was interviewed. He had been the executive producer of the CBS Reports program, "UFO: Friend, Foe or Fantasy," broadcast over the CBS network on May 10, 1966.

Williams was asked what cooperation he had received from the Air Force in preparing the program and what general impressions he or his staff had formed about the UFO Project. He answered that CBS had dealt with the Air Force and Department of Defense on many other matters. He said that, on the UFO topic, there was "a sort of grudging cooperation at first, mostly from the Defense Department, because of fears a popularized television program would create a wave of UFO sightings. He added, however:

Once we started asking questions about Blue Book and NORAD (North American Air Defense Command) and they saw our intent was serious--they could see our intent was to knock this story down, that it (flying saucers) was a popular myth--then, they began cooperating in better fashion.

Williams said conversations with CBS producers and writers Joseph Wershba and Jack Beck gave him the impression that UFOs "were handled in sort of an off-hand manner" by the Air Force:

Blue Book was like a public relations arm of the Air Force, an answering service or just a mail drop for material about UFOs. . .the Air Force didn't have their first rate minds dealing with the problem.

The CBS program was narrated by Walter Cronkite and was aired about five weeks after the "swamp gas" solution had been announced for the UFO reports in Dexter and Hillsdale, Mich. The program included no criticism of the Air Force UFO inquiry.

The Air Force program was questioned, however, in articles written by Mort Young of The New York Journal-American soon after the "swamp gas" issue was raised. On March 26, 1966 he wrote:

Civilian astrophysicist Dr. H. Allen Hynek threatened to quit after 18 years of heading the Air Force UFO project, because the official explanation of this week's UFO sightings was forced on him, according to a source close to the investigation.

The Air Force report was leaked unofficially at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base while Dr. Hynek and his 100 assistants were still in the midst of their investigation.

Dr. Hynek was said to have made his threat at the height of an argument with an Air Force public relations officers (sic) who told him what the result of his investigation was to be.

Nevertheless, Dr. Hynek, a Northwestern University professor, repeated the explanations yesterday afternoon at the Detroit Press club.

He said that what a farmer, his family and nine policemen saw early this week was nothing but a luminous cloud of swamp gas. . . .

This news report of a possible coverup in the Air Force UFO investigation, it was thought, was possible to verify. There were obvious errors in the news story in addition to the mistake in Hynek's name, calling him H. Allen instead of J. Allen. (The same error had appeared in Young's story of the preceding day.) Hynek was not the "head" of the UFO project but only a consultant to it; the reference to 100 assistants was unclear because Hynek conducted the investigation singlehandedly. The major issue remained, however: Was Hynek forced into the explanation and told to perform at the press conference?

In his published comments, Hynek seemed to suggest that the press conference in Detroit was not his idea:

. . . I got a message from the Air Force: There would be a press conference and I would issue a statement about the cause of the sightings. It did me no good to protest to say that as yet I had no real idea what had caused the reported sightings in the swamps. I was to have a press conference, ready or not.

Searching for a justifiable explanation of the sightings, I remembered a phone call from a botanist at the University of Michigan, who called to my attention the phenomenon of burning 'swamp gas.' . . . After learning more about swamp gas from other Michigan scientists, I decided that it was a 'possible' explana-

tion that I would offer to the reporters. 3

In his report on file at Project Blue Book offices at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, Hynek wrote (p. 19):

I wish that a press conference had not been necessary, or, if necessary, that it had been handled more expertly and adroitly. I have little to say that is complimentary about the public relations office at Selfridge Field (near Detroit). . . it displayed no knowledge of how a press conference should be handled.

The entire matter of a full dress press conference was most distasteful to me because I would rather present carefully weighed and consistent evidence and conclusions with due time allowed, to a body of scientific colleagues than be subject at a moment's notice to a roaring pack of newshounds whose chief interest appears to be in getting a quick story. . .

During a visit to Project Blue Book offices in July 1968, I asked Lt. Col. Hector Quintanilla, Blue Book director, whether Hynek had been ordered into the press conference. To the contrary, he replied that Dr. Hynek had requested a news conference or news release "to get the press off his back." Normally, Quintanilla said, news releases were issued only through the Pentagon, but, he said, he received permission from the Office of Information in Washington for Hynek to issue a news release "because it was Hynek."

Mrs. Marilyn Stancombe, Quintanilla's secretary, was a party to the telephone conversation between Quintanilla and Hynek. She, too, said that Hynek said a news release was needed to lessen pressures from newsmen.

As Hynek wrote in his report to Project Blue Book:

. . . since the interest and excitement generated in these cases was mounting to a fever pitch, it seemed expedient, in fact mandatory, to hold a press conference and make a progress report. Until the evening before I was to make such a statement I was still puzzled as to a natural explanation for even the consistent sightings. . .

In summary, no evidence was found that--as suggested in Young's story--the swamp gas answer was invented by the Air Force. Hynek credited University of Michigan faculty with introducing him to that possibility, and the swamp gas answer was also suggested in the press before Hynek advanced the theory at the press conference. References to "marsh gas" were found in a column in The Detroit News on March 23, 1966 and in Chicago's American on March 24. The press conference was March 25.

The charge that Hynek was forced into the press conference also was challenged by Quintanilla and by Hynek's comments that newsmen had interfered with his investigation by badgering witnesses and that there was a need to lessen such pressures, perhaps by issuing what was intended to be "a progress report."

Young's story of March 26 also said the "swamp gas" answer "was leaked unofficially" at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base before Hynek's press conference. It was, in fact, known what Hynek's explanation would be before he appeared at the press conference.

But, Howard Fields, a United Press International reporter, who covered the Dexter-Hillsdale UFO reports, said that Hynek's explanation was released in advance--not by the Air Force-- but by a secretary-telephone operator at Selfridge AFB.

Fields was interviewed in April 1968. When the subject of the "leak" came up, he explained that a reporter at the UPI bureau in Detroit had called Selfridge AFB an hour or more before the press conference was scheduled to begin. Perhaps by luck, the reporter found himself talking with the woman who had typed the text of

Hynek's statement. Either she did not know she was not supposed to release the information, or the reporter was very resourceful, Fields said. Either way, she did tell the UPI newsman the essence of Hynek's explanation, and a story was filed on the UPI wire.

While the "swamp gas" episode ranked among the modern classic UFO cases, there did occur in 1947 a UFO case which must be included in any discussion of an Air Force conspiracy. Known as "the Maury Island case," it was important because it involved: (1) Kenneth Arnold, who had made the original flying saucer report on June 24, 1947; (2) Capt. E.J. Smith, a United Air Lines pilot whose UFO sighting of July 4, 1947, received wide press coverage; (3) Ray Palmer, a publisher of adventure stories who gave flying saucers wide publicity, and (4) Army Air Force Captain William L. Davidson and Lieutenant Frank Brown of Hamilton Air Force Base, Calif., who were killed when their plane crashed after they had been to Maury Island, near Tacoma, Wash., to investigate a report of the disintegration of a flying saucer.

The essence of the Maury Island case can be summarized from accounts found in Ruppelt's The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, Air Force files, newspaper clippings and a book by Arnold and Palmer, The Coming of the Saucers:

Harold Dahl and Fred Crisman of the Tacoma area had reported that on June 21, 1947, Dahl was steering his boat along the east bay of Maury Island when he saw six flying saucers in the sky. One saucer, he said, disintegrated, showering his boat with fragments; Crisman said he saw a disc on the next day; Ray Palmer heard of the

reports and offered Arnold \$200 to investigate. In late July, Arnold went to Tacoma and, after talking with Dahl and Crisman, telephoned E. J. Smith who was in Seattle at the time, and also called Lieutenant Brown at Hamilton AFB. Smith, Brown and Captain Davidson all came to Tacoma. Davidson and Brown took some of the saucer "fragments" with them and were killed when their B-25 crashed on its return trip to Hamilton AFB the morning of August 1.

The crash of the B-25 near Kelso, Wash., added one note of strangeness to the Maury Island cases. Newsmen in Tacoma also reported receiving phone calls from anonymous persons who told about the meetings between Arnold, Smith, Crisman, Dahl, Davidson and Brown. Arnold, in The Coming of The Saucers, wrote of other Maury Island incidents that puzzled him.

Newspaper stories in The Tacoma Times, Portland, Ore. Journal, Chicago Times and other papers and a United Press story written in Tacoma suggested there was a conspiracy afoot. A story by Paul Lantz in the Tacoma Times of August 2, 1947, was typical:

The mystery of the 'Flying Saucers' soared into prominence again Saturday when The Tacoma Times was informed that the crash Friday of an army plane at Kelso may have been caused by sabotage.

The Times' informant, in a series of mysterious phone calls, reported that the ship had been sabotaged 'or shot down' to prevent shipment of flying disk fragments to Hamilton Fields, Cal.; for analysis.

The disk parts were said by the informant to be those from one of the mysterious platters which plunged to earth on Maury Island recently.

Lending substance to the caller's story is the fact that 12 hours before the army released official identification, he correctly identified the dead in the crash to be Capt. William L. Davidson, pilot, and First Lt. Frank M. Brown.

At the same time he informed The Times, Kenneth Arnold, Boise businessman who first sighted the flying saucers, and United Airlines Capt. E.J. Smith, who also sighted them, were in secret conference in Room 502 of the Hotel Winthrop. A check confirmed the information, but neither Smith nor Arnold would disclose the nature of the conference nor the reason for their being in Tacoma.

According to the anonymous caller, platter fragments were loaded aboard a B-25 at McChord field Friday for shipment to the California field. Half an hour after the takeoff, the plane crashed near Kelso, Wash. Two enlisted men Master Sgt. Elmer L. Taff and Technician Fourth Grade Woodrow D. Matthews parachuted to safety.

At McChord field, an intelligence officer confirmed the mystery caller's report that the ill-fated craft had been carrying 'classified material.' . . .

The theory of sabotage was borne out by the statement of the two crash survivors that one of the engines burst into flames and that regular fire apparatus installed in the engine for such emergencies failed to function. . .

An anonymous caller told Ted Morello, the United Press reporter in Tacoma, that the B-25 was shot down by a 20mm cannon.

4

The sabotage theory remained popular despite Air Force reports that Crisman and Dahl had admitted their story was a hoax, that the "disc fragments" were slag from a nearby foundry and that the B-25 crashed after an exhaust stack burned out on the left engine, causing a fire in the left wing.

Until a visit to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in July 1968, this study had not uncovered any news item referring to the Maury Island case as a hoax. An Air Force summary of the case, however, included this note:

. . . the Associated Press wireman at Tacoma interviewed Dahl concerning his disc sighting. In the course of the interview, Dahl's wife stated that the whole thing was a fantasy. Dahl at this time admitted the whole thing was a hoax.

A more detailed Air Force report identified the AP newsman

as Ernie Vogel and said:

. . .Vogel stated that he had never, in his experience, had such pressure brought upon him to release a news story and that he repeatedly advised the Boise Statesman that the story of seeing the flying discs by Dahl and Crisman was a complete fabrication and should be in no way carried as a news story and refused to furnish any information regarding these reports.

Elmer Vogel--the name Ernie was an error--was working in the public relations office of Boeing Aircraft in Seattle, Wash., when he was interviewed by telephone in April 1969.

His recall of the 1947 incident seemed prompt:

It was an outright fraud. . .Yes, there was a considerable amount of pressure for a story. . .it was a falsification, a fabrication, a fraud. . .I went out to visit one of them (Dahl) and we sidled out on to the back porch. . .His wife came out with a butcher knife and I thought she was after me, but she waved it under his nose and said 'I'm tired of being embarrassed by your lies. Tell this man the truth.'

Vogel said Dahl then admitted the Maury Island story was a hoax, and "I got ahold of the other guy (Crisman) and he admitted it, too."

There was intense pressure on him from newspapers for a story about the Maury Island mystery, Vogel said. He recalled that he did write a story about the admitted hoax but, to his knowledge, the story was not widely used.

Vogel said newspapers seemed to prefer the interesting story about conspiracy and sabotage to the accurate story about the hoax.

Of those involved in the Maury Island episode, Ray Palmer apparently maintained the deepest interest in flying saucers. He published science fiction magazines and books and was the publisher of Flying Saucers magazine which printed Larry Bryant's article on the "coverup" at Langley Air Force Base.

With Curtis Fuller, Palmer began publishing the pocket-sized magazine FATE in 1948. One of the feature stories in the first issue was "I Did See The Flying Disks!" by Kenneth Arnold.

The two men had worked for the same Chicago-based publishing company and started FATE, Fuller said, because they had wanted to stay in Chicago and the company was moving to New York. In a May 1968 interview, Fuller said the monthly circulation of the magazine was 125,000. FATE had started as a quarterly and, Fuller said, owed its success to stories about flying saucers.

Differences between Fuller and Palmer, apparently including Palmer's involvement in the Maury Island episode, caused Palmer to leave FATE and move his publishing business to Amherst, Wisc.

Fuller has written about flying saucers throughout the 20-year period covered by this survey. His articles have been printed in the Magazine Flying as well as in FATE. He said that in all his years of writing about UFOs he had never been approached by anyone connected with the Air Force, Federal Bureau of Investigation or other governmental agency seeking to censor UFO news.

Fuller, then, like the more-than-100 newsmen interviewed in person and by mail, reported no firsthand experience with Air Force censorship of UFO news. Nor, for that matter, have newsmen written much about conspiracy and censorship charges.

Except in a few cases, such as those discussed on the preceding pages, almost no references to "conspiracies" were found in the thousands of UFO press clippings read in the course of this study.

In fact, as stated in the previous chapter, newsmen generally have given non-hostile coverage to Air Force reports about UFO sightings. Air Force statements about the conclusions of UFO investigations--especially those supported by statistics--appear to receive widespread press coverage. As noted in the previous chapter, this study never found a news item which distinguished between the "probable," "possible" or "known" explanations of flying saucer reports which were all included under the "known" category in UFO statistics released by the Department of Defense.

While press coverage of the Air Force UFO program generally has been non-hostile, it also has been relatively infrequent. As found in the content analysis studies discussed in chapter , the typical UFO story was not about an Air Force UFO investigation, but about some private citizen who said he had seen a flying saucer. In both content analyses, involving a total of more than 1,500 newspaper items, references to Air Force UFO investigators were found in about 15 per cent, or roughly one out of seven, of the items. So while the Air Force UFO program has been discussed widely in what might be called the specialized saucer press, it has not been covered frequently by daily newspapers.

This study found only one series of articles based entirely on the Air Force UFO inquiry. The six-part series was printed in The Portland, Me., Evening Express, among other newspapers, from January 17 through January 22, 1966. The articles were written by Bulkley Griffin, executive editor of the Evening Express Washington, D.C., bureau. The series was based largely on Air Force investigation

of UFOs reported in the Southwestern United States in August 1965 and in Exeter, N.H., in September 1965. In the sixth article, Griffin concluded:

A main conclusion can be briefly stated. It is that the Air Force is misleading the public by its continuing campaign to produce and maintain belief that all sightings can be explained away as misidentifications of familiar objects; such as balloons, stars and aircraft.

The logical assumption, backed by much circumstantial, evidence, is that the Air Force is deliberately misleading the public. . .

Another chief conclusion is this: no energetic and thorough effort to investigate the unidentified flying object phenomenon is being made by the Air Force or ever had been made by it. . .

Griffin based his conclusion upon his finding that Air Force explanations of UFO reports--especially in August 1965--seemed inconsistent with what the witnesses said they had seen. In his stories, he did not elaborate on why the Air Force might be "deliberately misleading the public." Almost in contradiction to the charge of deception, Griffin acknowledged that the lack of any tangible evidence of flying saucers was "a mighty strong argument" against their existence.

Griffin died before he could be interviewed for this study. He had visited the Project Blue Book offices for two days in October 1965.

Air Force Data

Data on the Air Force role in the UFO phenomenon came from many sources in the course of almost three years of research. To facilitate discussion of the findings, the material will be presented

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within the context of six questions asked of Lt. Col. Quintanilla in interviews of July 17 and 18, 1968.

The questions are phrased as they were in the interview and, therefore, are more informal than those found in questionnaires, for example.

1. Does the Air Force want to handle the UFO inquiry? Is the nature of the inquiry, as you see it, primarily investigative, explanatory or both?

Quintanilla responded:

Originally, the Air Force sincerely felt there was some significance to the flying discs. Now the feeling is not the same as it was 15 or 20 years ago. Because of the early concern, responsibility fell upon the intelligence community. Now the primary concern is different, it's viewed as a public relations problem.

We're trying to convince the public that 'Big Brother' is looking out for you. . .that we're taking care of our air defense responsibilities.

Quintanilla said it would be correct to view the primary goal of Blue Book as Air Defense and not UFO investigation. Blue Book was oriented toward Air Defense, he said, and included UFOs under that heading.

He added:

We don't investigate too much. . .Our primary responsibility is to collect data and then check the subjective material to see what the stimulus might be. . .We're not an investigative force. . . that's up to the Department of Justice, the OSI (Office of Special Investigations) and the FBI. We collect data. It's a misnomer to think we investigate.

Because Quintanilla's comments seemed contradictory to the statement by General Thomas D. White that "all unidentified flying object sightings are investigated in meticulous detail," Quintanilla was asked about his statement that it was a "misnomer" to say Blue

Book investigated UFO reports.

In a letter of August 30, 1968, he wrote:

With regards to my statement that I feel that we are more or less a collecting agency--that statement, of course, is mine and I feel that way because we have no power whatsoever, to investigate the people themselves. Therefore, in this respect, we cannot really complete the cycle of the circumstances surrounding the sighting with regard to the individual's emotional state and personal background. Without this information, in the records, I feel that we cannot really investigate the sighting in its entirety.

It's true that we contact everybody we can with regards to trying to identify the stimulus which caused the observer to report a UFO sighting to the Air Force, however, this is not really investigating, this is checking details. We do use scientific disciplines to evaluate the information which is submitted to the Air Force, however, this is an after the fact evaluation. As you well know, once the sighting has taken place the stimulus is gone and we are unable to reproduce the circumstances, emotions, or the stimulus of that particular observation. We have only subjective statements made by the witnesses to work with. We check out the details as best we can but we are not empowered to check the individual's background. . . Collection is part of the investigative process and we accept the data as fact, however, we seldom really complete the cycle. We have a witness, but no corpse. I'm not trying to play down the investigation process, but you don't really do much investigating when you check out satellite observations in definite quadrants of the sky, astronomical observations, moving lights, weather balloons, etc.

To Lt. Col. Quintanilla, then, Project Blue Book was primarily a data-collecting, public relations agency which existed because citizens expected the Air Force to be able to explain strange objects they had seen in the sky.

When I had ended my reserve duty at Edwards Air Force Base in California, I made it known that I would be investigating UFOs with the University of Colorado Project. Col. James Smith, the director of information at Edwards, commented: "Strentz is going to work on LeBailly's problem. Maj. Gen. E.B. LeBailly was director of information for the Air Force. Col. Smith, like Quintanilla,

viewed UFOs as an information problem not as an intelligence or Air Defense problem.

2. What real limits exist as to what the Air Force or Blue Book can and cannot do in the scope of UFO investigations or data collecting?

The only "limit" Quintanilla would list was that investigations or data collecting were limited to the continental United States. There were at least two reasons for this, he said. One, the Air Force Air Defense responsibilities were limited to the United States; and two, the State Department and foreign countries might object if the Air Force began investigating UFO reports overseas.

He said that, while Blue Book had available to it Air Force resources for medical and psychological testing, he had never asked a UFO witness to submit to such tests or to a lie detector test. Quintanilla suggested it would probably cause trouble on the Congressional level for the Air Force to test private citizens as to their medical and mental stability.

As noted in the Chapter V a 1960 Air Force Press release stated:

. . .the entire facilities of the Aerospace Technical Intelligence Center, the entire facilities of the nation's scientific and technical community are at the disposal of (UFO) evaluators.

Some of the scientific studies conducted for the Air Force were discussed in the preceding chapter. As Quintanilla noted, however, there are practical and political limits on what use can be made of facilities of the FTD and the scientific and technical community.

There appeared also to be limits of "red tape." During the wave of sightings over Washington, D.C., in July 1952, Edward J.

Ruppelt was director of Project Blue Book.

He had flown from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, on July 21 to investigate the UFO reports and had planned to work all day and all night if necessary. Despite all the resources of the Air Force and the scientific and technical community, however, he could not get a staff car for transportation around Washington. He told of the episode in his book, The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, and part of the story is reprinted here to suggest that Project Blue Book suffered from red tape just as any other military operation might:

. . . I called the transportation section at the Pentagon to get a staff car but it took me only seconds to find out that the regulations said no staff cars except for senior colonels or generals. . . I went down to the finance office--could I rent a car and charge it as travel expense? No--city buses are available. But I didn't know the bus system and it would take me hours to get to all the places I had to visit, I pleaded. You can take a cab if you want to pay for it out of your per diem was the answer. Nine dollars a day per diem and I should pay for a hotel room, meals and taxi fares all over the District of Columbia. Besides, the lady in finance told me, my travel orders to Washington covered only a visit to the Pentagon. In addition, she said, I was supposed to be on my way back to Dayton right now, and if I didn't go through all of the red tape of getting the orders amended I couldn't collect any per diem and technically I'd be AWOL. I couldn't talk to the finance officer, the lady informed me, because he always left at 4:30 to avoid the traffic and it was now exactly five o'clock and she was quitting.

At five-one I decided that if saucers were buzzing Pennsylvania Avenue in formation I couldn't care less. . . I was through. . . I caught the next airliner to Dayton. 5

In research on the Washington 1952 sightings, another incident that raised questions about the Air Force UFO inquiry was uncovered.

As mentioned previously, UFOs were reported over Washington, D.C., late the night of July 19 and the morning of July 20. Harry G. Barnes and several other air traffic controllers for the Civil

Aeronautics Administration said radar returns indicated that unidentified aircraft were flying in restricted corridors over the capital. In conversations with personnel at Andrews Air Force Base and Bolling Air Force Base, however, Barnes apparently could not get the Air Force to send up aircraft to investigate the UFOs.

He discussed the problems in a lengthy letter on file at Project Blue Book in Dayton, Ohio. In the letter, the terms "Thorndyke" and "Smoke Ring" apparently were references to the air bases, or units or men at the bases. Again the situation about which Barnes wrote was that CAA employees reported unidentified aircraft over Washington and wanted the Air Force to do something:

The impression received from Thorndyke was to the effect that more information was needed to order an intercept. I told them our equipment was giving us good readings so we would be able to do any vectoring that might be necessary but they seemed to be leaving it all up to Smoke Ring. As time wore on (commercial) pilot reports were received--P807 saw seven of the objects between Washington and Martinsburg variously described as lights that moved very rapidly, up and down and horizontally as well as hovering in one position and SP610 saw one come in with him from around Herndon and follow him to within four miles of touchdown. This was substantiated by Tower and Center Radar.

. . . We reached the point where we wondered just how much of this could go on and for how long before something could be done about it. I contacted Smoke Ring finally about 300 est (3 a.m.). They were doing nothing about it so I asked if it was possible for something like this to happen, even though we gave them all this information, without anything being done about it. The man who was supposed to be in charge and to whom I had been talking, said he guessed so. Then another voice came on who identified himself as the Combat Officer and said that all the information was being forwarded to higher authority and would not discuss it any further. I insisted that I wanted to know if it was being forwarded tonight and he said yes, but would not give me any hint as to what was being done about all these things flying around Washington. He tried to assure me that something was being done about it. I asked, too, how he was getting his information. He said they would get it from Thorndyke and ADW. We were then told by ADW that they had no way of forwarding it to them. Smoke Ring then said they were not

really concerned about it anyway, that somebody else was supposed to handle it.

It would be extremely difficult to write this so that it is in a logical sequence due to the confusion that seems to have existed throughout the whole affair. . .

When similar UFOs were reported over Washington a week later, Air Force aircraft did investigate but reported no contacts.

The Ruppelt and Barnes episodes seemed to suggest that, at least in the early 50s, the Air Force UFO inquiry was not as high powered as one might be led to believe on the basis of the press release which told how UFO investigators had access to all the resources of the military, scientific and technological communities.

3. What function does Blue Book serve that could not or should not be handled by NORAD (North American Air Defense with headquarters in Colorado Springs)?

Quintanilla's answer was short and to the point:

None. None whatsoever. NORAD can perform all the tasks and do so more timely.

The apparent logic behind Quintanilla's answer was that the mission of NORAD is the rapid identification, and destruction if necessary, of any unidentified aircraft, missile or other flying object. While the NORAD response capability must be measured in terms of seconds, Project Blue Book generally investigates UFO reports that are days, weeks or months old. If it is to be determined whether UFOs constitute a threat to the nation's security then it seems that the task should be in the hands of NORAD, rather than in the hands of Quintanilla's small staff in one office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

Quintanilla acknowledged that, by the time his office receives

a UFO report, the UFO can be considered to have posed no threat simply because nothing happened. His staff of one other officer, an enlisted man and two secretaries, he said, was sufficient for the day to day operation of the office and could be expanded during a wave of UFO reports.

Quintanilla said that, to his knowledge, during his five years as Blue Book director, his office had never received a UFO report from NORAD even though NORAD was covered by the same Air Force Regulation which requires all commands to forward UFO reports to Blue Book. It may seem absurd for NORAD to forward reports of UFOs it cannot explain to Quintanilla's one-room office, but that is what the regulation, AFR 80-17, requires.

Occasionally, there are news stories which report that NORAD, in fulfilling its air defense responsibilities, has never detected a flying saucer or UFO. One such story was printed in The Chicago Tribune of August 18, 1967, under the one column headline "NORAD: No/ Saucers Fly/ in the Sky!"

Colorado Springs, Aug. 17--North American air defense command officially said today that no flying saucers, no extra-terrestrial space ships, and no 'unfriendly objects' have ever been identified by air forces over the United States or Canada.

Answering a recurring inquiry about the official air force stands on UFOs (unidentified flying objects) the command from its mountain fastness here replied:

'There have been thousands of reports of UFOs from the widest variety of sources over the years--but so far as the command is aware, it never has been shown anything but natural atmospheric or astronomical phenomena or airborne objects--birds, insects, hardware--seen under unusual circumstances or misinterpreted.'

. . .The command is not concerned with transitory or illusory 'sightings' often reported as UFOs and usually the result of a misunderstanding by the sighters.

While NORAD was not concerned with UFOs, it did have a somewhat similar classification called UCTs, short for UnCorrelated Targets. UCTs, briefly, are returns recorded by NORAD radar surveillance systems but ignored because their speeds or trajectories are presumed to identify them as birds, small private aircraft, anomalous propagation, etc. UCTs are presumed to pose no threat and therefore can be disregarded by NORAD in its continuous search for hostile or unknown aircraft or missiles.

UCTs were discussed July 29, 1968 at a "Symposium on Unidentified Flying Objects" held by the House Committee on Science and Astronautics in Washington, D.C.

One of the scientists testifying at the symposium, Dr. James McDonald said:

The question is raised often, why aren't UFOs tracked? The point one is struck with in studying each of these (defense or detection) systems in turn is large degree of selectivity necessarily built into them. . .

It has to be kept well in mind that even systems like SAGE when they were developed necessarily had to have programmed into them certain speed limits both lower and upper, certain safe requirements like if the target was on an outbound path it could be ignored. In almost every monitoring system you set up, whether for defense or scientific purposes, if you don't want to be snowed with data, you intentionally built selectivity in, and then you do not see what you are not looking for.

Consequently, this point is important, that despite our many sensing and monitoring systems, the fact that they don't repeatedly turn up what appear to be similar to UFOs, whatever we define those to be, is not quite as conclusive as it might seem. . .

Dr. Carl Sagan, department of astronomy, Cornell University, told the Congressmen:

Apparently what is now happening is that the Air Force surveillance radar is throwing away the data that is of relevance for this (UFO) inquiry. In other words, if it sees

something that is not on a ballistic trajectory, or not in orbit, it ignores it, it throws it in the garbage.

Dr. Hynek, the Air Force scientific consultant on UFOs, added:

I would just like to concur in what Dr. Sagan has said. I understand there are several hundred UCTs a month. . .which, since they do not follow ballistic trajectory, they are tossed out. 6

The UCT reports were not forwarded to Project Blue Book since they were not considered to be UFOs.

4. What rules of thumb provide for classification of reports of UFO sightings?

Quintanilla answered:

We have certain characteristics for sightings. . .characteristics for astronomical reports, aircraft, balloons. If any of these (UFO reports) have characteristics that fall into such categories, the plausible answer is that it (the UFO) was that. If it has all the characteristics of an aircraft, or whatever, that's it. . .yet you cannot name the pilot who was flying the particular aircraft.

Sometimes there is a thin line in classifying a UFO, but if it falls in the category, it's in the category. You can quibble. Hell yes, anyone can quibble. . .You could spend \$50,000 on each investigation if you wanted to. But I cut them off when I think we've got the answer.

Quintanilla said if his office received a UFO report, he would mail the witness an Air Force form 164, a UFO report form. If the form were not returned, he said, he might mail another as a followup, but he would not send a third. Sometimes, he said, an individual completing the form recognizes that what he saw was actually an airplane, star, etc.

As noted in the previous chapter, classification of many UFO reports also occurred as a function of time. Reports first termed "possibly" or "probably" an aircraft would be advanced to simply "aircraft" as year's end.

The UFO reports which receive the most attention, Quintanilla said, are those involving a large number of people or having certain security or scientific interests, possibly including the finding of a satellite fragment. Investigations also may result from political or newspaper pressures.

A letter or a phone call from a UFO witness to his Congressman probably would lead to a UFO investigation, Quintanilla said. Air Force headquarters in Washington is sensitive to political pressures, and a UFO investigation was one of the things a Congressman could demand on behalf of his constituent without fear of antagonizing another voter or another lawmaker. Quintanilla said, "I never realized how much power Congressmen had until I took this job."

News coverage may focus public attention upon a UFO report so that the Air Force will conduct an investigation even though the sighting never has been officially reported to an Air Force base as regulations require. An example of this was the Dexter-Hillsdale, Mich., case. Telephone logs at Project Blue Book indicated that, at first, inquiries from news media all received the answer that Blue Book was not investigating because the reports had not been officially made to the Air Force. In a matter of a day, public and press pressures apparently forced Blue Book into the case.

The Air Force explanations or classifications of UFO reports --such as the swamp gas solution for Dexter and Hillsdale--have resulted in considerable criticism of the Air Force UFO inquiry. Examples of supposedly erroneous explanations can be found in any book whose thesis is 'flying saucers are real.' In such books, two

theories generally are suggested to account for the faulty explanations: (1) the Air Force is hiding the truth about flying saucers, or (2) as McDonald would charge, the explanations result from a foulup, not a coverup.

A third reason for controversy over Air Force classification of UFO reports may be the reluctance of witnesses to accept a natural explanation for what they consider to be an unnatural event. In investigating of UFO reports, this study encountered two cases which illustrate this point:

(1) With two other members of the UFO Project at the University of Colorado, I investigated UFO reports in Harrisburg, Pa., in early July 1967. During one night, we were with a crowd that had gathered near an open field which had been recognized as "the place to go" to see a flying saucer. In the course of the nightwatch, one could see the lights of an airplace approaching the Harrisburg Airport. A woman in the crowd pointed and shouted, "You can't tell me that's an airplane." It soon became obvious that it was.

(2) With William Powers, Northwestern University assistant to Dr. J. Allen Hynek, I investigated the UFO report of a family near Waussau, Wisc., in the summer of 1968. Their nighttime report of an apparently low-flying, lighted object, accompanied by a siren-type sound, was puzzling. But our inquiry was hampered by the fact that the family members had discussed the sighting often with one another and with outsiders, including a member of a UFO organization. The father had been given a book about UFOs and in it he had found a picture of a "flying saucer" which he said looked like the one he

had seen. The photograph in the book was of a lenticular cloud. Although he did not notice it at the time of the sighting, the father later recalled that the lights in the house appeared to dim soon before the object appeared. He had read about UFO-linked power failures. It appeared that the family might have accepted a natural explanation of their report the day after the sighting, but not the week afterward.

But, even recognizing these tendencies to dispute a natural explanation of a flying saucer report, this study found several cases in which the Air Force methodology, if not the explanation itself, was open to question. Four such cases will be reviewed to illustrate reasons why some people think the Air Force has been guilty of a foulup, if not a coverup. All the cases are from Air Force files.

CASE 1.--On January 25, 1954, near Las Cruces, N.M., a technician with the ordnance corps of the White Sands Proving Grounds said he saw a point source--a point of light with no apparent size--moving across the horizon at about 50 degrees. He was preparing a camera station for a missile shot, he said, and "was looking up at the stars to see if they were suitable for a ballistic camera star calibration." Unknown to him at the time, another technician, 17 miles south of him also saw the object streak across the sky. In his report to the Air Force the first witness wrote:

. . .I can point out that it most definitely was not a meteor (his emphasis). Under special training, in addition to my college work may be listed five years experience in astronomy and astronomical observing, including work at Lowell Observatory, and as a faculty member of the University of Chicago, in the department of astronomy at Yerkes (Observatory). I have observed many

thousands of meteors and can definitely state that this object was not any type of meteor.

The Air Force classified the report as "Astronomical-Meteor."

CASE 2.--On February 16, 1966, a navy enlisted man and a 21-year-old woman reported seeing two UFOs near the Brunswick, Me., Naval Air Station.

The two claimed to have seen one UFO, which changed in colors from red to blue-green to "light salmon," and said they followed it to a landing point where they watched it for 30 to 45 minutes from a distance of about three miles. They also said another UFO appeared to circle and land between them and the first one. The navyman and the woman said they were looking to the east as they watched the UFOs.

The Air Force report said the second UFO was probably an airplane although there was not enough data "to make an evaluation as such." The first UFO was classified as the planet Jupiter. But for that explanation to apply, the witnesses had to be confused about their directions and could not have been looking to the east. The report said:

. . .it is my opinion that the observer(s) was evidently confused in direction and was looking to the west rather than the east (and therefore saw Jupiter).

To compound the problem, the investigator was wrong and his explanation had to be edited so that "west" was crossed out and "south" was written in, getting the direction to agree with Jupiter's position in the sky. There was no indication the witnesses had been asked whether they might have been wrong about the direction. The first UFO was classified as "Astronomical-Jupiter."

CASE 3.--UFO reports near Loring Air Force Base, Me., on October 22 and 23, 1959 were classified as a weather balloon with a leak and "insufficient data." It was not clear how there could have been "insufficient data" available when the report consisted of at least eight separate sightings involving civilians, military personnel, city and military police, radar returns and reports of one or two objects flying over Presque Isle, Me., and emitting red light rays toward the ground. Burlington AFB sent two F-102s aloft to investigate; Loring AFB "scrambled" jets, too. Yet there was, according to the report, "insufficient data" for a classification.

CASE 4.--On July 19, 1956, Michael D. Savage, 15, of San Bernardino, Calif., told the Air Force he was lying on the grass taking pictures with his new camera when a saucer-shaped object passed in view. Only one picture was taken by Michael, who said the object was silver gray or metallic in color and was first observed approximately 600 yards away. The photo was analyzed by the Aerospace Technical Intelligence Center which reported that analysis. . .

finds shadows across (the) object which (would be) unusual for an object almost one quarter of a mile away. Also, all objects in picture are clear, sharp and in focus except the object which is very blurred and very near camera lens. . . on basis of the focal length of the lens the object (as described by Savage) would be 200 feet in diameter.

In view of forgoing, the opinion of this center is that the photograph strongly suggests a hoax and is typical of the many it receives, resulting in a considerable waste of government time, money and manpower. . .

The "hoax" classification appeared warranted. The photograph did show a definite object, but it was dark and blurred although clearly disc shaped.

The first explanation of the photograph, however, did not mention the possibility of a hoax. Rather the UFO was explained as the result of a "temperature inversion"--a warm air mass overlaying a cold air mass--which often distorts astronomical bodies or deflects radar waves. Such inversions generally occur at altitudes of at least a few thousand feet.

The officer who prepared the first report, Major John M. Ahlstrom of the 27th Air Defense division headquarters, wrote:

It is the opinion of the preparing officer that the temperature inversion which was recorded at Los Angeles could have moved to the area of the sighting for a possible optical phenomenon solution to this sighting.

While temperature inversions are found by the Air Force to account for many UFO reports--Washington D.C. in 1952 for example--such an explanation for the Savage photograph was incomprehensible if Ahlstrom had seen the picture and certainly questionable if he had not. To account for the object on the photograph, the temperature inversion was moved 60 or 70 miles from Los Angeles to San Bernardino to somehow manufacture an image as real as an automobile on the negative of Savage's film.

The photo analysis report noted:

. . . 'temperature inversion' cannot be remotely considered as creating the . . . object.

The Ahlstrom explanation, although rejected by the Air Force itself, was presented here to suggest there may be some ground to the charge that the Air Force overuses and misuses some terms and explanations as solutions to UFO sightings.

For example, in March 1957, Dr. Hymek explained a puzzling

UFO reported by Pan American Pilot Capt. Matthew A. Van Winkle as a "bolide," which means a fireball--a bright meteor--which explodes and makes a sound. "Bolides," Hynes said, "are rarely encountered," but the word sometimes is used as a synonym for meteor. Prior to March, this study had not found the term "bolide" in any UFO explanations. After Hynes used it, the term was found in several Air Force explanations, none of which came from Hynes.

5. Can Quintanilla state unequivocally that Blue Book is not a "cover" for another agency investigating UFOs?

He answered:

Yes, I can state so unequivocally. . .By golly, I've been on the program for five years, going on six, and the only ones I've heard from have been the commander (of the Foreign Technology Division) and the scientific adviser (Hynes) who have chewed my fanny out (in disputes over some UFO cases). . .There's no other agency involved.

I get my money and manpower from the Air Force Systems Command and information from SAFOI (Secretary of the Air Force Office of Information).

I can't understand why others are supposed to be visited by the Men In Black but I'm not.

Quintanilla said he had heard two reports that might be used by some to support John Keel's theory about the Men In Black. In one instance, Quintanilla said, "some guy passed himself off as me during a UFO investigation." In another, "some guy, probably from NICAP, passed himself off as a government agent" collecting information about UFOs. But these, he said, were the only two incidents he could recall.

6. Does the Air Force ever request silence on the part of UFO witnesses?

Quintanilla replied:

Negative. . . We never request silence. This is a fallacy perpetrated by those interested in UFO books and that stuff. . . I never have heard of any request for silence, but it's hard to say about other investigators in the field. . . we try to leave people alone. . . we don't pressure.

One of the devices often listed as an instrument by which the Air Force enforces silence upon UFO observers is JANAP (Joint Army Navy Air Publication) 146. This regulation established procedures for "the reporting of information of vital importance to the security of the United States and Canada."

The list of sightings to be reported by civilian and military personnel under JANAP 146 includes:

- (a) Hostile or unidentified single aircraft or formations of aircraft which appear to be directed against the United States or Canada or their forces.
- (b) Missiles
- (c) Unidentified flying objects.
- (d) Hostile or unidentified submarines
- (e) Hostile or unidentified group or groups of military surface vessels.
- (f) Individual surface vessels, submarines, or aircraft of unconventional design or engaged in suspicious activity or observed in a location or in a course which may be interpreted as constituting a threat to the United States or Canada or their forces. . .
- (g) Any unexplained or unusual activity which may indicate a possible attack against or through Canada or the United States. . .

The security section of the regulation, which supposedly had been the "gag" on UFO observers, says, in part:

. . . any person who makes an unauthorized transmission or disclosure of such a report may be liable to prosecution under Title 18 of the US Code, Chapter 37, or the Canadian Official Secrets Act of 1939, as amended. . .

Quintanilla commented:

As far as I know, JANAP 146 has never been applied to a UFO case. It includes reference to UFOs but isn't intended for them. . . It's a communication act. It doesn't spell out UFOs. People are going to 'nit pick' on these things as much as possible.

This study found no instance in which JANAP 146 was applied.

Further, it would seem to be a clumsy manner in which to enforce silence since the legal action required would leave a record of the censorship or punishment.

In reading Air Force microfilm on cases dating from 1947 and in other research, this study found only three direct references to efforts to restrict public comment about UFOs.

In November or December, 1948, the month was not clear on the microfilm, Col. H.M. McCoy, chief of the intelligence department of the Air Material Command, wrote to the agent in charge of the Office of Special Investigations at McChord Field, Tacoma, Wash., about a UFO sighting there. McCoy wrote:

Personnel concerned should be advised of the confidential nature of this investigation. All publicity should be avoided.

On December 13, 1948, Dr. Lincoln LaPaz, director of the Institute of Meteoritics at the University of New Mexico, wrote to the Air Force regarding difficulties he thought he was having in making the public aware of green fireballs appearing over the Southwest. In a letter to Lt. Col. Doyle Rees of the Office of Special Investigations, LaPaz wrote:

It is recommended that the Institute of Meteoritics be given official authorization to make public in newspapers and over radio networks requests for observations of 'fireballs.' Such authorization would seem to be necessary since requests of the nature alluded to, transmitted through Dr. Ward Fenley, director of the University of New Mexico news bureau, to newspapers throughout New Mexico, in connection with the Las Vegas incident of 1020PM, on the night of 5 December 1948, were not published, apparently because of pressure from other agencies also investigating this occurrence.

In November and December of 1953, Dr. Hynek wrote at least three letters, asking witnesses to a UFO sighting near Bismarck, N.D.,

not to talk about their experiences. The letters were sent to an Air Force pilot on November 7, to a woman witness on November 20, and to an Air Force sergeant on December 4.

In the letters, Hynek wrote that silence was necessary to avoid newspaper publicity which might hamper a "dispassionate investigation" and to help assure that investigators would receive an independent and unmodified report from each witness.

Col. McCoy's 1948 letter, ordering that "all publicity should be avoided" in a UFO case near Tacoma, Wash., did not appear to be conspiratorial in nature. Current Air Force Regulations, as noted in the previous chapter, allow local Air bases to give out information only on UFO reports which have been identified as resulting from natural or man-made objects. All other information must be released by SAFOI in Washington.

If, as Dr. LaPaz suggested, there had been pressure to not release information about the "green fireballs," the effort failed. Reports of the "green fireballs" of 1948 have been widely discussed and appear in most of the UFO literature.

Dr. Hynek's requests for silence appeared to have been motivated by a desire to conduct a methodical, uninterrupted investigation, rather than by a conspiracy to hide "the truth about flying saucers." The former interpretation seemed warranted by the fact that Hynek had published UFO articles including references to the Bismarck case.⁷

The search for evidence of enforced silence--turning up incidents such as those discussed above--may be based on a faulty assump-

tion that there was a reason for the enforced silence or censorship to exist in the first place, i.e. that flying saucers were real. This study found no convincing evidence of that.

On the other hand, there appeared to be evidence that the Air Force--to its satisfaction--did establish a direct link between news coverage of UFOs and UFO reports. Given such a correlation and the fact that the Air Force would want to eliminate or reduce the number of UFO reports, then it would follow that one way to reduce the number of reports would be to discourage news coverage.

Graph 3 is a copy of a graph prepared by Project Blue Book in February 1953 to show a relationship between news attention to UFOs and frequency of UFO reports. Although the nature of the graph seems too elementary to support any direct correlation between news coverage and UFO reports, such correlation was claimed in Department of Defense releases.

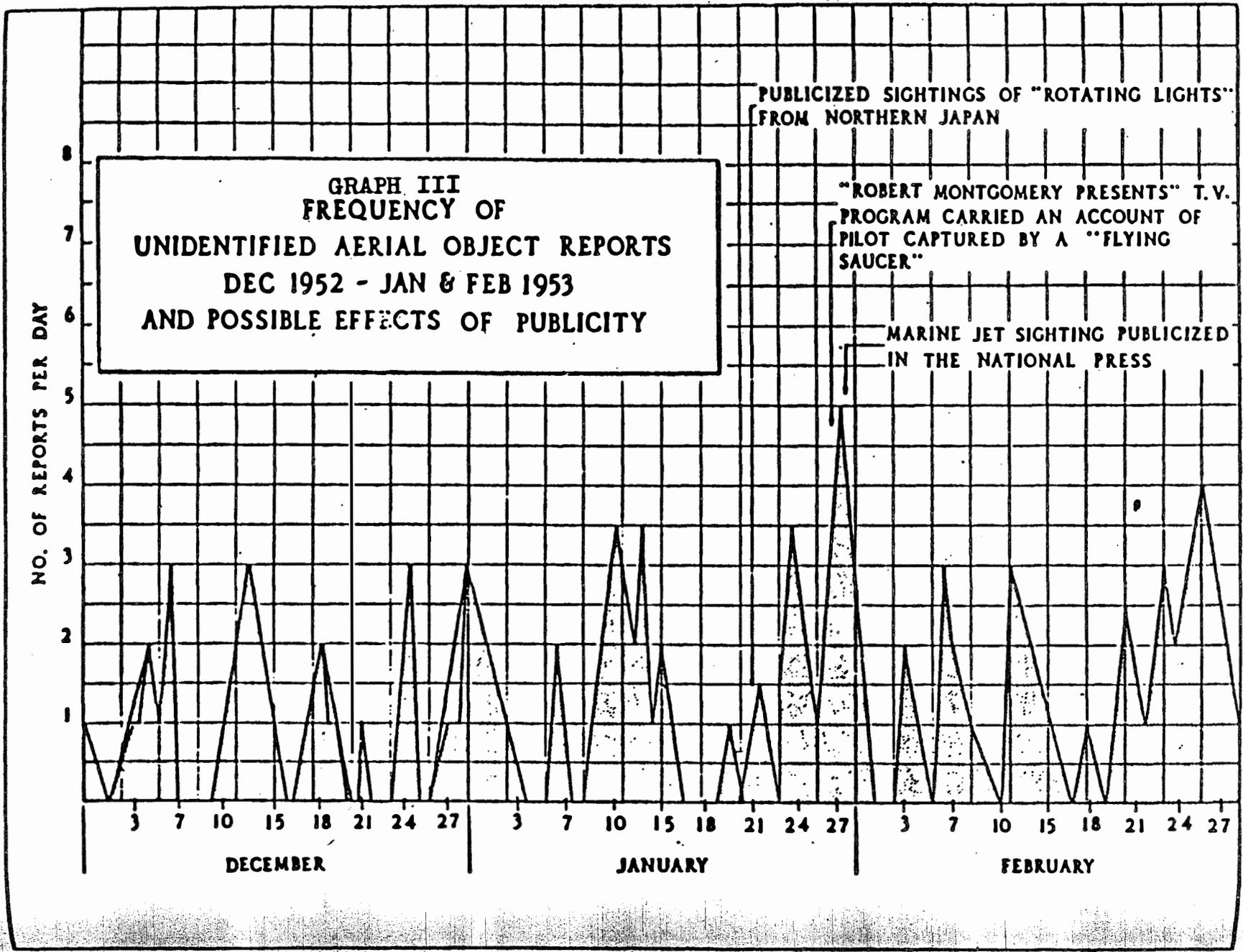
A department of Defense "FACT SHEET" released in December 1953 referred to the February 1953 graph.

In addition, a recent study has shown a direct correlation between the number of sightings reported and the publicity given to 'saucers' by the nation's press.

The exact words, including "a recent study," were in a Department of Defense release issued in October 1964 and titled, "U.S. Air Force Summary of Events and Information Concerning the Unidentified Flying Object Program."

References to links between news coverage and frequency of UFO reports were also found in Air Force accounts of such UFO sightings as those in Levelland, Texas in November 1957, Socorro, N.M., in

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April 1964, and Long Island, N.Y., in October 1966.

These Air Force findings are not presented here to demonstrate there is a relationship between news coverage and frequency of UFO reports. Rather, it is suggested that any programs or regulations which may minimize news coverage of UFOs may result from causes other than efforts to hide the fact that "flying saucers are real."

Summary

Despite a number of charges to the contrary, this study found no evidence that there was a conspiracy to hide from the public the fact that flying saucers were real.

It was suggested that restrictions on information about UFOs were more likely to result from Air Force belief that news coverage created flying saucer reports than from any desire to mislead or trick the public.

This study did find evidence to dispute official statements which described the Air Force UFO inquiry as "meticulous," "thorough," or "objective." Nonetheless, press coverage of the Air Force UFO inquiry generally was found to be uncritical, if not favorable.

It was suggested that the primary function of the Air Force UFO Project was public relations, and that any other duty it performed, or was supposed to perform, could be discharged more adequately by the North American Air Defense Command.

CHAPTER VII

NEWSMEN'S COMMENTS--AS REPORTERS, AS WITNESSES

In the preceding chapter, part of the discussion as to whether an Air Force conspiracy existed to "hide the truth about flying saucers" included responses newsmen had made to the statement:

The press has been schooled by the Air Force and other agencies to 'play down' or ignore UFO reports.

In general, newsmen replied: (1) there had been no such pressure to "play down" UFO reports; (2) if there had been such pressure newsmen would have been more likely to print UFO stories, and (3) nonetheless, the position of official news sources must be considered and may influence any news coverage.

The statement about "schooling" was one of four listed in the survey questionnaire mailed under the auspices of the UFO Project at the University of Colorado. The questionnaire was intended, in part, to gather data about newsmen's opinions of UFOs and UFO press coverage. Additional information was obtained from reports of newsmen who said they had seen UFOs and from interviews with non-witness newsmen.

The information from the questionnaire and other sources will be reviewed in this chapter because newsmen's comments may be helpful

in understanding why UFO coverage has taken the form that it has.

Questionnaire Responses

The four questionnaire statements to which newsmen were asked to respond were these:

1. The press has been schooled by the Air Force and other agencies to 'play down' or ignore UFO reports.
2. Press coverage discourages people from reporting sightings for fear of publicity and ridicule.
3. It is impossible to conduct a scientific inquiry into a UFO sighting because the press badgers witnesses or sensationalizes the sighting, hampering objective inquiries.
4. Many waves of UFO sightings are encouraged and maintained by news coverage.

These four statements were considered to be among the major criticisms of press coverage as found in the reading of UFO reports and in discussions with newsmen, scientists and others involved in the UFO phenomenon.

To help assess questionnaire responses to these criticisms, the responses were coded along a scale of from one to five, ranging from strong agreement with the criticism to strong disagreement.

Instructions for coding the responses were:

(1) Agrees strongly--Not only notes that the criticism is correct but that it is a pressing fault. Response suggests strong feeling because of length, or use of epithets, slang or other strongly affirmative language.

(2) Agrees--An answer of 'Yes,' 'Correct,' or 'True,' or similar indication that this appears to be the case more often than not.

(3) Sees both sides--Criticism may be valid at some time and not so at another. Possibly it is true, but on the other hand it may not be.

(4) Disagrees--An answer of 'No,' 'Incorrect,' or 'False,' or similar indication that the criticism is generally unfounded.

(5) Disagrees strongly--Not only notes that the criticism is incorrect but indicates strong displeasure or irritation that such comment is even made. Response suggests strong feelings through length or use of epithets, slang or other strongly negative language.

A mean response was calculated for all responses to each statement.

The mean response to statement 1., about Air Force "schooling," was 4.03, indicating relatively strong disagreement. Of the 92 newsmen who returned questionnaires, 86 had responded to statement 1. No responses were coded as (1), strongly agreeing with the statement; seven responses were coded as (2) agreement; six were coded as (3) sees both sides; 50 were coded as (4) disagreement and 23 as (5) strong disagreement.

Ten representative responses were presented in the preceding chapter and will not be duplicated here.

To statement 2., about press coverage inducing fear of ridicule, the mean response was 3.15, indicating a relatively neutral or a balanced overall response. The latter was the case; of the 85 newsmen who responded to this statement, two agreed strongly, 28 agreed, 15 were coded as seeing both sides, 35 disagreed and 5 disagreed strongly.

Here were nine representative responses to statement 2.

Where one person reports a sighting, this might be true. We have experienced isolated instances of persons reporting sightings but refusing to give their names. When more than one person reports the same UFO, however, the sheer weight of numbers discourages ridicule.--John Snyder, City Editor, The Denver Post.

We don't ridicule persons who report sightings; neither do

we editorially comment on them. UFO sightings are carried by us as eyewitness reports, with no conclusions offered.--Don James, City Editor, The Wichita Falls, Tex., Record News.

Often people want to get 'in' on the reporting. A valid account of such a sighting from a witness is not discouraged. In many instances, a local editor will know the source and be able to determine whether the witness is creditable.--W.W. Harris, editor, The Jacksonville, Ill., Journal.

This may very well be true. Several witnesses with whom I've talked have, in fact, been subjected to friendly kidding about such sightings--including two sheriff's deputies and a prominent businessman. For this reason, many people may decide not to make a report because 'no one would believe me any way.'--John Eagen, staff writer, The Napa, Calif., Register.

. . .we have made no attempt to poke fun at anyone in our very few reports--just tried to tell what someone said he saw. But they may feel others, friends or acquaintances, might do so because of something in the paper. We do not feel much responsibility for such a feeling.--Jim Moran, managing editor, The Dodge City, Kan., Daily Globe.

(The statement is) False in my opinion. I have never found that the public at large refrains from doing things for fear of appearing ridiculous.--Eugene R. Miller, managing editor, The Ansonia, Conn., Sentinel.

People are leery. One report published by us was from three anonymous sources--relayed to us by a Catholic priest. . .--R.H. Dodsley, city editor, The Sioux City, Iowa, Journal.

From my experience locally, I believe the newspaper readers, rather than the newspaper, are responsible for ridicule. We handle all stories of area UFO sightings without comment or color, but there was plenty of comment and color by the readers.--Harold F. Brown, managing editor, The Malone, N.Y. Evening Telegram.

While there is some evidence of this, the trend seems to be leaning the other way because so many persons of unimpeachable character have come forward to report UFOs. Quite often when one person comes forward, a number of persons will follow up to substantiate the statements. . .indicating there is still some reluctance to be the first to report an incidence because of fear of ridicule.--Ben Kent, city editor, The Daily Progress, Charlottesville, Va.

To statement 3., about press coverage hampering a scientific inquiry of UFOs, the mean response was 4.13, the strongest disagree-

ment expressed with any of the four statements.

Of the 78 who responded to this criticism, seven were coded as "seeing both sides," 54 as disagreeing and 17 as disagreeing strongly. None agreed with the criticism.

Here were seven representative responses to the charge that news coverage has hampered scientific inquiry of UFOs:

The press has the basic responsibility of being objective, but its critics tend to use the phrase 'scientific' to blast the press. Anti and Pro-UFO persons tend to say the press badgers or sensationalizes depending on how complete affirmation or dismissal is.—Samuel V. Kennedy III, assistant editor, The Auburn, N.Y., Citizen-Advertiser.

If the inquiring scientist can't stand the heat, he should get out of the kitchen.—Karl Abraham, science writer, The Philadelphia Bulletin.

Since both sides--government and saucer believers--both tend to say this, it is good that the press does 'badger witnesses,' and not leave the issue to those with axes to grind. People are greatly interested in UFOs, so you are not going to avoid 'sensational headlines' anymore than you would with a war, an extreme crime of violence or other event which commands wide interest.--David Lore, reporter, The Columbus, O., Dispatch.

This has some truth--But I'm not sure that's ever a legitimate criticism. Badgering causes inquiry as well as it hinders it.--David M. Milligan, city editor, The Washington, N.C., Daily News.

Invalid badgering would appear to be conducted on official level. Some irresponsible news media, however, are guilty of sensationalism regarding reports of sightings.--Donald H. Smith, science editor, The Orange County, Calif., Evening News.

The problem arises when officials are asked for an explanation of the sightings. For some obscure reason, Air Force and government officials tend to be extremely critical of even factual and responsible sightings.--Ernest E. Eschbach, publisher, The North Manchester, Ind., News Journal.

Nonsense, though I obviously can't speak for what other newspapers do. The Arizona Republic has treated the comments of Dr. James McDonald of the University of Arizona, a firm believer in UFOs, with complete respect. There has been no badgering, and, if there has been any sensationalism, it has been

contained in Dr. McDonald's remarks.--Earl Zarbin, The Phoenix, Ariz., Republic.

In personal correspondence of August 11, 1967, Dr. McDonald also commented upon statement 3:

. . .I don't think 'most scientists' are at all unhappy about press coverage of UFOs. 'Most scientists' have been told so many times by the press and the Air Force that there is nothing to all this nonsense that they would be unhappy if the press were giving very much more of the same kind of attention to it. . .On the other hand, the tiny handful of scientists who have studied the problem would, I believe, share (my) attitudes that. . .The press has, in a sense, 'stopped us from finding good evidence about the existence of UFOs.' But I emphasize again that I believe their failure to do more can be blamed directly on the Air Force asseverations that it was doing a thorough job. . . what could be more reasonable for scientists, newspaper editors and Congressmen than to assume that what the Air Force said was true. That it is utterly false is still not widely appreciated but will be in due time, and then it will be interesting to see what happens.

The respondents agreed most, or disagreed the least, with the fourth statement, "Many waves of UFO sightings are encouraged and maintained by news coverage." The mean response was 2.97, and of the 80 newsmen who responded to the statement, 36 agreed, 13 "saw both sides," 28 disagreed and three disagreed strongly.

Here were seven responses to the fourth statement:

No doubt this is a factor. I don't know what to say about it in terms of press coverage. It is merely a human reaction to press coverage. We have a story about some spiders having a red spot on their back, many of our readers will start seeing spiders with red spots on their back. Those same spiders may well have been in their view many times before but they just don't bother to look close enough. However, in the incidents of UFO sightings where the imagination can be a factor and surely must be in some cases, do doubt the fact that the press interviews some people who have seen UFOs stimulates people into thinking they have seen UFOs when they have not.--Robert M. White II, editor, The Mexico, Mo., Evening Ledger and past president, Sigma Delta Chi, professional journalistic society.

Agreed--this is why we're reluctant to publish such reports unless well verified.--Joseph S. Jennings, executive editor,

The Elizabeth, N.J., Daily Journal.

True, but this is human nature and is not caused by the press. And if UFOs are real, sightings probably would come in series.-- Scott E. Smith, assistant national editor, The Washington Star.

This appears doubtful, but since I don't have direct evidence on the subject I must say it is possible. The question might be: Does one sighting of an unusual phenomenon and its news coverage make it more likely that another person will report his sighting?--Lewis Cope, science writer, The Minneapolis Tribune.

Not here, maybe elsewhere. Certainly, if you report one sighting, the telephone starts ringing with more of the same. This could result from two things--those who saw the original UFO decide to add verification now that the story is out; the publicity-seekers want to get on the bandwagon.--Don Duncan, columnist, The Seattle Times.

There may be some truth in this, reports do seem to come in bunches. Generally, if we have a report, we have a couple of more. However, this may be the pattern of UFO activity. Who knows?--Edward A. Coyle, The Missoula, Mont. Missoulian.

There may be something indirectly true in this. I believe people tend to pay more attention to the night skies after a sighting is publicized. They then see a lot of things (like balloons, satellites, meteors) and report them. Normally they would not have noticed them.--Richard B. Spencer, managing editor, The Greenfield, Ind., Daily Reporter.

While the questionnaires had been addressed to city editors of the sample newspapers, responses were returned from editors, managing editors and reporters, as well as from city editors.

Although unplanned, the varied positions of the respondents permitted an analysis of responses to criticisms of the press on the basis of positions held by the respondents. The 92 respondents were classified in one of three ways: 38 were executives, that is editors, publishers, managing editors or executive editors; 42 were news editors or city editors; 12 were reporters.

Table 42 shows the overall mean response for each statement and the mean response for members of each category:

TABLE 42
 RESPONSES TO CRITICISMS OF PRESS COVERAGE,
 BY NEWSPAPER POSITION

RESPONSES TO CRITICISMS OF PRESS COVERAGE				
Statement	Overall	Executive	News Executive	Reporter
1	4.03	4.21	3.96	3.73
2	3.15	3.46	3.13	2.27
3	4.13	4.12	4.17	4.00
4	2.97	3.16	2.92	2.64
(N)	92	38	42	12

The analysis of responses by positions held on the newspaper indicated that reporters generally tended to disagree less with the criticisms than did the executives or news editors. This tendency was most evident in responses to statement 2., about news coverage discouraging people from reporting UFOs for fear of publicity and ridicule. The mean executive response was 3.46 while the mean reporter response was 2.27.

The differences in responses may have resulted from the fact that reporters were more involved in UFO news coverage and based their responses on personal experiences while the executives responded to the criticisms as comments upon press performance in general. Or, perhaps this response tendency is not unique to journalism. It may be that in other occupations, too, management personnel react more strongly to criticism of the company's product than line personnel do.

The questionnaire also provided opportunity for respondents to offer general comments about UFO coverage. And, in apparent support of the differing reactions to the four criticisms of the press, reporters seemed to express more dissatisfaction with UFO news coverage

than did those respondents in the executive category.

The number of reporters, 12, was not sufficient for detailed analysis. The reporters, however, appeared to characterize UFO coverage as fragmentary or sensationalized relatively more often than did the executives. Reporters also seemed to be more critical of both official news sources, particularly the Air Force, and UFO witnesses than were the executives. Perhaps these responses reflected again the deeper involvement of the reporters in the actual news coverage.

At the end of the questionnaire respondents were asked if there had been any change in press coverage of UFOs over the past several years. Their answers seemed as varied as arguments about flying saucers in the population at large. Many respondents said coverage had increased because the Air Force UFO inquiry had lost its creditability and there seemed to be many well-documented UFO reports; others thought coverage had decreased because of the lack of any tangible evidence after 20 years of UFO reports.

Two thoughts, however, were represented fairly consistently in the open-ended statements by respondents. They were (1) the novelty had worn off UFO news, and (2) the press had become more selective in its coverage of UFOs. Here are five responses which illustrated the two thoughts:

I believe press interest and therefore the play UFO yarns receive has diminished because of the frequency and loss of novelty (news value to readers. Like space shots--the first were sensational--but they've become commonplace in recent years. Press handling (and coverage) I think is based on this.--Justin Roberts, news editor, The Antioch, Calif., Daily Ledger.

Our local coverage has remained unchanged; however, we feel

wire service coverage is less 'wide-eyed' than several years ago when UFOs first became big news.--Don James, city editor, The Wichita Falls, Tex., Record News.

I think UFO coverage is becoming more and more routine. Immediately after World War II there was far greater excitement in the coverage than today.--Robert M. White II, editor, The Mexico, Mo., Evening Ledger.

Less attention is now being given individual sightings and more attention is being given theories about what is being seen.--Lewis Cope, science writer, The Minneapolis Tribune.

Yes. (there has been a change) Tend to ignore all but most sensational and better documented sightings now. Anything went in earlier years.--William F. Thomas, metropolitan editor, The Los Angeles Times.

Newsmen Who Have Seen UFOs

Of the approximately 115 respondents to the questionnaire, two acknowledged that they had seen UFOs. One was Bruce Clegg, news editor of The Arkadelphia, Ark., Daily Siftings Herald. The other was Mrs. Dorothea Stubbs, editor of The Tulsa County News, an Oklahoma weekly. Clegg mentioned his sighting briefly in his response to the criticism about news coverage encouraging reports of UFOs:

I do not think this is true. Many people in all walks of life have reported UFOs. I saw my first UFO about a month ago and I know it wasn't imagination. In my opinion, these things exist and people are just reporting what they see.

Mrs. Stubbs volunteered the information about her report after writing "I've noticed that more newspaper people have seen UFOs for themselves." Of her experience, she wrote:

During the UFO flurry in Tulsa in 1965, my daughter Shelly (who was 17) and I watched a brilliant object which glowed exactly like a star. When moving it glowed red, then green, then silver again. When still it was just silver. It was about a quarter as large as the full moon (the only way I can describe its size). It was much too low to be a star and I've never figured out what it was. I observed it for two hours. I didn't

call the airport or anybody. I felt like an 'idiot.'

I've taken considerable ribbing about it from co-workers who undoubtedly question my intellect. If I saw another I'd never tell anyone!

If the apparent movement of Mrs. Stubbs' UFO was not great, the length of her observation, two hours, would lead most investigators to conclude that it was a star or planet since they can be seen low on the horizon.

Of interest is this section, however, is not what Mrs. Stubbs' UFO might have been, but her reaction--"I felt like an idiot"--and the reaction of her co-workers--"who undoubtedly question my intellect."

While the questionnaire responses provided some information about UFO news coverage, it seemed that the stories of newsmen who had seen UFOs might also provided useful information. If newsmen who saw UFOs were ridiculed by other newsmen that might provide a clue as to the news treatment given non-newsmen who see UFOs or who telephone newspaper offices.

Table 43 lists 45 "UFO incidents" involving newsmen and a total of about 70 witnesses from 1947 through 1966. There are quote marks around "UFO incidents" because many were explainable as reports of natural phenomena even though first reported as UFO sightings.

The list was limited primarily to wire service and daily newspaper reporters because of doubts about the "newsman" credentials of many radio reporters and weekly newspaper correspondents who also were listed in news items as having seen UFOs.

Included in the list was the name of the reporter, the news

agency for which he (or she) worked at the time of the UFO report and the date of the sighting. Where the word "anonymous" appears in place of the reporter's name, it means he had requested that his name not be released; where the word "unidentified" appears, it means the Air Force record or news item did not name the reporter.

TABLE 43

NEWSMEN REPORTED AS HAVING SEEN UFOS, 1947-1966

Name	News Agency	Date
Richard L. Bitters.....	Wapakoneta, O., Daily News.....	6-23-47
John Corlett.....	Boise, Ida., United Press.....	7- 4-47
Samuel Cothran.....	Char'ston, SC, News-Courier.....	7- 5-47
John Brackett.....	Reno, Nev., State-Journal.....	7- 7-47
David Johnson.....	Boise, Ida., Statesman.....	7- 9-47
Unidentified.....	US newsman in Moscow, Russia.....	8- 3-48
Dale Stevens.....	Palladium, Ind., Item.....	11- 5-48
Doyle Kline.....	Scripps Howard.....	8- 1-51
Chic Shave.....	Cornerbrook, Nfld.....	4-15-52
Joe Swink, 15 others.....	Hugo, Okla., Daily News.....	7- 3-52
Saul Pett.....	Associated Press, New York.....	7-19-52
Emil E. Jemal.....	Newport, R.I., Daily News.....	7-24-52
Anonymous.....	Bend, Ore., Bulletin.....	7-28-52
Charles W. James.....	Philadelphia Inquirer.....	11- 9-55
Jim Nelson.....	Wichita, Kan., Evening Eagle	55
Arvo E. Haapa.....	Newport Harbor, Calif., Ensign....	11-12-57
Harrison Ullman.....	Willoughby, O., News-Herald.....	6- 8-60
Patricia Costa.....	Rochester, N.Y., Dem-Chron.....	6-12-61
Marge Davenport.....	Portland, Ore., Journal.....	7-31-62
Unidentified.....	Atchinson, Kan., Daily Globe.....	8- 2-62
Dick Pothier.....	Quincy, Mass., Patriot-Ldgr.....	6-25-63
Bill Smith.....	Port Arthur, Tex., News.....	Summer 65
Anonymous.....	Chicago Sun-Times.....	2- 3-65
Dick Hatfield.....	St. Paul, Minn., Dispatch.....	8- 5-65
Jack Spencer and wife.....	Shawnee, Okla., News-Star.....	8- 7-65
Charles Green.....	Longmont, Colo., Ledger.....	8- 9-65
Harry Graham, family.....	Santa Ana, Calif., Register.....	8-13-65
Darrell Morrow.....	Hutchinson, Kan., News.....	8-26-65
Andy Fusco.....	Morgantown, W.Va., Dominion-News..	8-26-65
Unidentified.....	Washington Daily News.....	8-27-65
Gary Harvey.....	UPI, Cheyenne, Wyoming.....	Aug. 65
Jim McCartney.....	Chicago Daily News.....	Aug. 65
David Rorvik.....	Billings, Mont., Gazette.....	Aug. 65
Dorothea Stubbs.....	Tulsa County News.....	Aug. 65
Jim Crawford.....	Asheville, N.C., Times.....	9-21-65
John Eckart, 3 others.....	Seattle Northwest Progress.....	Sept. 65
Unidentified.....	Scranton, Pa., Tribune.....	1- 3-66
Bob Woehler.....	Pendleton, Ore., Oregonian.....	3-16-66
Anonymous.....	Manchester, N.H., Union-Leader....	3-20-66
Richard Hunt.....	Royal Oak, Mich., Tribune.....	3-27-66
Michael J. Myers.....	Sioux City, Iowa, Journal.....	3-30-66
Robert L. Burnes.....	St. Louis Globe-Democrat.....	Mar. 66
Jim Bleyer, 9 others.....	Orlando, Fla., Sentinel.....	4- 3-66
Bill Mansfield.....	Miami, Fla., Herald.....	4-27-66*
Duane Bradford.....	Tampa, Fla., Tribune.....	4-27-66*
Jack Ledden.....	The Perry Papers.....	4-27-66*
Don Meiklejohn.....	St. Petersburg, Times.....	4-27-66*
Michael Gildea.....	Char'ston, S.C., Evening Post.....	7-25-66

*All aboard same airplane with Florida Gov. Haydon Burns

More than half of the UFO reports on the list occurred during 1965 and 1966. There were at least three reasons for this: (1) those were peak years for UFO reports; (2) the NICAP microfilm used in this study was weighted heavily toward 1965 and 1966, and (3) more attention was paid to sightings during recent years because, it seemed, the witnesses would be easier to contact than those involved in UFO reports in the 1940s and 1950s.

In all, this study interviewed in person, by telephone or by mail, newsmen involved in 10 of the 45 UFO incidents. Some cases did not lend themselves to further inquiry. For example, David Johnson, listed as a witness on July 9, 1947, was deceased, but there was a good report of his case available at Project Blue Book offices. And, the UFO sighting attributed to Michael Gildea, copy editor of The Charleston, S.C., Evening Post was reported in the newspaper on July 26, 1966, and explained a few days later as having resulted from flares dropped by marine aviators. Several other newsmen never replied to mail inquiries.

The reactions of the newsmen interviewed and those who reported their experiences in detail seemed similar to the reactions and experiences of UFO witnesses in general.

Many, perhaps most, recognized in time that what they really saw was Venus, some star, a balloon or an airplane. Others remained puzzled and intrigued; hardly any reported the sighting to a UFO investigator or investigative agency. News items about their sightings generally included testimony to their reportorial competence and stated they had not been drinking, were not "nuts" and were

serious.

For example, in his Associated Press news story of July 21, 1952, Saul Pett began:

I saw a flying saucer myself Saturday (July 19) midnight about the same time some unidentified objects were picked up on radar over Washington.

From now on you can't convince me there is no such animal. And after 12 years as a newspaperman--almost six of them with the Associated Press in New York--I don't jump to conclusions.

In an article in The Oklahoma City Journal of October 9, 1965, Jack Spencer of The Shawnee, Okla., News-Star told of a UFO he and his wife had seen on August 7, 1965:

My conclusion must be I don't know the answer. However, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that we saw a saucer. The interval was only two or three minutes but we saw its bulk clearly. We were cold sober and neither my wife or I are crazy. Skeptics may ridicule us, but we saw it--and it was nothing man has known.

Spencer spent part of the story recounting his 30-year newspaper career and listing the many accomplished reporters who had worked under him on the Shawnee daily:

Any one of these men will verify that what I write is the truth.

In a similar vein, Charles Green of The Longmont, Colo., Ledger wrote on August 12, 1965:

The story you are about to read is true. My name should have been changed to protect the innocent.

I saw an unidentified flying object. Before laughing please listen.

Green then wrote of the white and reddish-glowing object he had seen cross the night sky on August 9.

After gazing at the strange sight, I called the dispatcher at the Longmont Police Department. He did not laugh. The

following day (August 10), following local radio newscasts and a newspaper article, my phone rang off the hook with friends calling to laugh in my ear or to see if I felt all right. . .

Green's comments illustrated another general theme found in newsmen's reports of UFOs--that of kidding or ridicule by other reporters. The reception accorded newsmen who said they had seen UFOs may suggest what treatment awaited reports from non-newsmen. Reporters may have sensed what the newsroom attitude toward UFOs was and written their stories accordingly. Sociologist and former reporter Warren Breed wrote in his article, "Social Control in the Newsroom," in the May 1955 issue of Social Forces:

The newsman's source of rewards is located not among the readers, who are manifestly his clients, but among his colleagues and superiors. Instead of adhering to societal and professional ideals, he re-defines his values to the more pragmatic level of the newsroom group.

Bernard C. Cohen, in his book, The Press and Foreign Policy, quoted a newsman who told him:

Every newspaperman writes for other newspapermen; this is the common law. He writes for his peers who are competent to judge him.

The observations by Breed and Cohen may suggest why newsmen who wrote about their UFO reports often included their professional "credentials" to support their story. Perhaps they were writing for other newspapermen, rather than the readers.

Some evidence of newsroom hostility to UFO reports can be seen in the following three accounts.

(1) The Scranton Tribune on February 3, 1966, published a story which mentioned that an unidentified reporter had seen a UFO. Another reporter wrote the story and his article said the assignment

was risky because asking questions about flying saucers was "inviting the fellows with the white jackets. . ."

The second, third and last two paragraphs of the story were:

The stories of UFOs. . .continue to make the headlines from time to time and the latest unreported object was seen by a Scranton Tribune reporter Monday, Jan. 2, at 10:14 p.m.

At about the same time, a caller to The Tribune reported a 'flying saucer hanging' over the Courthouse in Central City, but this call received a couple of chuckles and the office boy took the information. . .

Other Northeastern Pennsylvania residents may now unfold their stories about 'flying objects' that they've seen after reading this article.

Meanwhile, we're keeping our eyes open for the little fellows in white jackets and watching our reporter who spotted his UFO.

In answer to a letter, Billy Halpin, under whose byline the story had appeared, wrote on June 7, 1968:

We here at the Tribune usually do not use other reporters' names, as they say, it's just style, maybe I should have used it but by not using his name he couldn't come screaming at me. The reporter in question is _____, a member of the staff since 1946. . .

Press coverage of UFOs in general, I have found, is to be scoffed at by a majority of reporters who regard phone calls from such persons reporting sightings as 'kooks'. . .

(2) Marge Davenport, science writer for The Portland, Ore., Journal, wrote, but did not publish, a story about a UFO she and her family had seen from their farm home in Longview, Wash., the night of July 31, 1962.

The next time she was in the office, she said, she wrote a story about the bluish-white glow that appeared to move through the sky at an altitude of about 1,000 feet. But, the story was killed by an editor who told her, "If we print this, no one will believe

anything else you write."

(3) In a letter written June 13, 1968, Andy Fusco, a reporter for The Dominion News of Morgantown, W.Va., said that he had received "no logical explanation" for a UFO he had seen on August 26, 1965. The object, he said, was brighter and larger than a star and moved faster than an airplane and in a different direction than a satellite.

He wrote:

The reaction to my story was, to say the very least, somewhat skeptical. Most asked me what I had been drinking the night before.

It is generally hard for a newspaperman to write about something as intangible and as controversial as UFOs and receive any kind of overall reaction other than skepticism.

The people who take the time to mention the topic to me invariably fall at opposite ends of the spectrum. . . One woman called who wanted me to join NICAP, and obviously was a sky-watching addict. In addition, she was more the type to warn her friends and neighbors daily of impending invasion by little green men from a distant galaxy. Others who called criticized the news value of the story itself.

Unlike Fusco and others who remain puzzled by their experiences, some newsmen find natural explanations.

On August 14, 1965, a headline in The Santa Ana, Calif., Register reported "Register Wire Editor's Family Sees UFO." The lead was:

A strange 'popcorn ball' like object flashing red, white and blue lights was reported in the sky early Friday (August 13) by Register telegraph editor Harry Graham of Orange and his family.

Taking turns looking through the reflecting telescope of Graham's 13-year-old son, Alan, the family viewed the object flashing across the Northeast section of the heavens about 1 a.m.

Responding to a letter, the son, Alan, now 16, wrote on May 25, 1968:

. . .the original 'sighting' was when my sister and I, observing a pair of stars, noticed that they twinkled strangely. If we had looked closely at the other stars, we probably would have noticed that the same was true of them also; but we wanted (his emphasis) them to be UFOs, since that was more dramatic and romantic than a summer air disturbance. My father was the one who came up with the 'popcorn ball' description, and it must be noted that it was 3:00 in the morning, he was half asleep and the telescope. . .was out of focus. The stars did twinkle red, blue and white, alternately, which was undoubtedly due to atmospheric refraction of the stars' light on a hot summer night. The only thing that has happened since to refute the 'sighting' is logical reflection, but the 'sighting' had already been reported in the newspaper.

I still believe, as I did then, that serious attention must be paid to the UFO data. The issue of whether 'flying saucers' actually exist. . .must be evaluated in the light of the undoubtedly very large incidence of non-objective, inaccurate information such as this. . .

Apparently, there was no followup story, explaining the Graham sighting. Nor was there a followup story explaining a UFO reported by Michael J. Meyers, who was a law student and a night deskman for The Sioux City, Iowa, Journal in March 1966 when he saw a UFO early one morning.

In a letter, May 27, 1968, Meyers, now a lawyer, admitted that sightings in Michigan in March 1966 and his own thoughts about UFOs had made him "a ripe candidate for a sighting." But, he had told an editor about his UFO experience, and it was suggested that Meyers write a story. He told what happened next:

. . .without any hesitation or qualms or self doubt I wrote the story in good faith. . .at 11:30 p.m. the edition containing the article rolled off the press and it wasn't 10 minutes later that another editor dropped an article on my desk which read there will be many pre-dawn UFO sightings this time of year with Venus so low in the southwest. The doubt was instant and penetrating. Yes, this was in the southwest; it was at pre-dawn; it was a bright object low on the horizon. . .a look at the map of the interstate highway showed that I was turning, not the alleged UFO. . .this had been Venus. It hadn't 'dropped' through the cloud cover as I had expected, but rather the cloud cover

was breaking up. . .

I made this admission of mistake immediately and openly and when questioned about it, and there were questions, many of them. There were also many telephone inquiries, particularly from the true believers, those persons who felt they had sighted UFOs but lacked the courage--or whatever it takes--to make such an admission. I was exposed to substantial attack from the non-believers, which ranged from innocent kidding to outright hostility. . .

The news account of a UFO report by Jim McCartney probably would come under the heading of "innocent kidding." McCartney was city editor of The Chicago Daily News when interviewed in May 1968 about a UFO sighting attributed to him in August 1965.

McCartney was identified as a "trained, award winning reporter," in a story printed in The Detroit Free Press August 9, 1965, under the headline "Michigan Saucers Convert Skeptic." The "skeptic" in the headline was Charles Nicodemus, like McCartney, a reporter with The Daily News and The Free Press-Chicago News Service. In the story, Nicodemus wrote that he was having second thoughts about flying saucers because McCartney supposedly had told him that he had seen a UFO.

Quoting McCartney, Nicodemus wrote:

It was while I was on vacation last week at East Lansing, Mich.

Four or five of us were standing out in the backyard around dusk and this thing goes past up in the sky. . .it was sort of shaped like a big dirigible, like a bloated cigar. . .

McCartney was asked if the story was accurate. He answered:

Accurate? Hell, I think it's a lot of crap myself. . .my colleague and close friend Charles Nicodemus didn't tell me what he was doing.

McCartney did not know Nicodemus was writing a story about their conversation, and he did not see the story until it was in

print. "I don't know what the hell it (the UFO) was," he said.

"Probably a balloon."

Although there were several persons involved in the incident, McCartney dismissed the news value of his sighting. To him, the "saucer" story was not that people see strange things in the sky, but that people call these things "flying saucers" and get caught up in the clubs, cults and excitement that often accompany saucer sightings.

In reading of newsmen's sightings of UFOs, only one instance was found of where a reporter was assigned to see a flying saucer and, to his satisfaction, succeeded. This was in 1947 and involved David Johnson, who was aviation editor of The Boise, Ida., Statesman. On July 6, 1947, James L. Brown, the general manager of The Statesman Newspapers, told Johnson to go saucer hunting by airplane until he saw a disc or decided the search was a waste of time.

The first day or so of this search, Johnson was accompanied by another Boise pilot, Kenneth Arnold, the man often credited with opening the flying saucer era when he reported seeing disc-shaped objects on June 24, 1947. Johnson flew alone on July 9, however, and later told Air Force investigators what happened:

I had literally talked to myself to keep beating into my head that I would not fall victim to the power of suggestion. . . arising from a naturally very intent desire to find a disc and bring success to the assignment. . .

. . .I saw the object appear suddenly. If it had moved in a jerky fashion (as it did at first) for the full length of time I observed it, I would not be so strong in saying that I saw something not an aircraft, not a balloon and not a corpuscle moving across the retina of either eye. The maneuver described by the object when its edge was presented to me convinces me that

I saw an object actually performing in an erratic flight path. . .

. . .I observed it to roll so that its edge was presented to me. At this time it flashed in the sunlight. It then appeared as a thin black line. It then performed a maneuver which looked as if it had begun a slow roll, or a barrel roll, which instead of being completed, was broken off at about the 180 degree point. The object rolled out of the top of the maneuver at this point and I lost sight of it. . .

I have worried about this matter a great deal since seeing it. I took myself aside and said, 'come now, Johnson, don't be stupid.' But I cannot bring myself to the point of thinking I did not see anything. The impression was too vivid, too realistic, and I knew in the air when I saw that partial slow roll or barrel roll, that I was not a victim of illusion. . .

Johnson disagreed with the Air Force explanation that what he had seen was a balloon, possibly a painted balloon.

On July 7, 1947, when Johnson had just begun his search for a flying saucer, a UFO was seen inadvertently by John Brackett, city editor of The Reno, Nev., State-Journal.

He and his wife said they saw what appeared to be disc-shaped cross the sky twice. Brackett was publisher of The Visalia, Calif., Times-Delta; when he wrote in a May 6, 1968 letter:

I did the story (about the UFO) after going to work that day and after we had received numerous telephone calls from other persons who had seen the same thing. I decided to do a first-person account since I had seen it, too. As I recall, there were other reports of sightings after the incident I reported.

I can't recall any particular reaction of newsmen. My contemporaries at the time were inclined to kid about almost anything. I have not discussed it with others for years. In fact, I'd almost forgotten about it until Dr. McDonald called me on the telephone last year about it.

I don't know whether what I saw was a so-called 'flying saucer.' I do know it was not a jet airplane. Even the fastest ones in military service now, which fly over Visalia every day (Navy Corsair IIs) don't begin to move with the speed of whatever I saw and their contrails are much heavier. Certainly, I have a deep interest in them (UFOs): privately and as a journalist. Stories about them certainly make for good reading, for one

thing. . .

Comments Of Non-Witness Newsmen

The discussion of questionnaire responses in Chapter III reviewed at length the reasons newsmen gave for news coverage of UFOs. There was general agreement with Brackett's statement that "Stories about them certainly make for good reading. . ." In other comments in the questionnaire and in interviews, newsmen generally agreed that UFOs merited news coverage, although some expressed concern with the nature of the coverage.

Don James, city editor of The Record News, Wichita Falls, Texas, declared:

We publish UFO sightings because of reader interest, not necessarily what we deem news value per se.

Scott E. Smith, assistant national editor of The Washington Star was somewhat more emphatic:

UFOs are News (his emphasis); people are interested; since they have not been 'solved' they are legitimate matter of public curiosity and concern.

John Snyder, city editor of The Denver Post, wrote:

I don't know what a UFO is, or what UFOs are. But, as a city editor, I believe any newspaperman who takes an ostrich attitude toward UFO sightings is making a mistake.

In an interview, July 27, 1967, Snyder said that, since UFOs were an issue of public concern, the press had a responsibility to help explain the UFO phenomenon, and UFO sightings, the same as it might have in dealing with problems of urban renewal, police force deficiencies, etc.

He did not see UFO coverage as markedly different from other

coverage:

The same standards apply in checking with sources and determining the credibility of sources. . .The press is doing a shabby job of reporting if it does not go to sources competent to comment upon the phenomenon.

If there was a significant absence of news sources such as airport control towers or astronomers in UFO news accounts, Snyder said, "the press is not doing its job." Snyder, however, said he did not think his comments would be representative of the press at large or of the typical American daily of 10,000 to 20,000 circulation.

City editors on such smaller newspapers, he said, had many chores and were much busier than he and did not have the manpower "to cover stories the way The Denver Post might." Larger newspapers, Snyder said, also had "more checks, more people to read each story before it's in print."

While Snyder discussed some similarities between UFO news and other news coverage, a few questionnaire respondents commented upon problems they thought peculiar to UFO news.

Dean Todd, aviation editor of The Register-Republic, Rockford, Ill., wrote:

This is the problem the newspaper faces: Our source need only report he saw a UFO--he doesn't have to prove it.

On the other hand, he is tacitly demanding that we prove he did not (emphasis his) see a UFO; if we can't--and of course we can't--he expects us to publish a story about the UFO he saw.

Ben Kent, city editor of The Daily Progress, Charlottesville, Va., observed:

Since truth is the guideline of newsmen and efforts to find the truth are an impossibility when it comes to UFOs, I see no reason to change the type of press coverage these incidents generate. Only proper explanations of such occurrences--or even

one occurrence--could lead to a change in press coverage.

Any change would have to lean toward believing in such reports or completely discounting them. There is little reason to lean either way in covering a phenomenon. Lacking definite proof or disproof of UFOs, the press must cover them as a 'mystery' rather than excite the public unnecessarily by scoffing at the reports or labeling them as visitors from outer space.

James C. Morris, editor and publisher of The Eagle, a weekly newspaper in Duncan, Okla., also commented upon the 'mystery' aspect of UFOs.

The phantom-like phenomenon can only be handled as it is being handled. Report them when they are seen. It isn't like reporting an accident of two vehicles. It's more like reporting a murder with only witnesses--no corpus delicti or murderer.

Don Duncan, a columnist for The Seattle Times, summarized his paper's coverage of UFOs:

The UFO pot has been boiling ever since Kenneth Arnold's alleged sighting over our own Mount Rainier 20 years ago. In that time, there have been hundreds of 'sightings' in our area and tens of thousands elsewhere in the world. Still, only a handful of these have really gripped the imagination. The general feeling in our newsroom when a saucer sighting is reported is one of 'ho-hum; here we go again.' We have interviewed too many saucer sighters who, upon being questioned, turn out to be emotional, unstable and generally incapable of rational descriptions.

Despite the problems of UFO coverage, including the ones suggested by Duncan, this study uncovered only one instance of a boycott of UFO news. While some newspapers have played down news of flying saucers, The Daily Republican-Times of Ottawa, Ill., in August 1952 announced a ban on "flying saucer stories." In an editorial, the paper said it would not print any more flying saucer stories.

We've chosen sides. And we invite the 1,700 other daily newspapers in the nation to join in a fight against feeding pap to the newspaper reading public. . .

For five years we've shrugged our shoulders and resigned ourselves to reading about deranged disks that flit from one end of the country to the other, sometimes with blinding flash, other times loping with a soft light.

The perpetually flying plates have made headlines year after year despite the fact the most exhaustive investigations have failed to uncover a solitary substantial clue pointing to their existence. . .

Tomorrow, if some Texas tells the police a flying saucer ran his car off a gravel road, he won't get his name in The Daily Republican-Times.

Fifteen years after the editorial, The Daily Republican-Times was included in the questionnaire sample of daily newspapers. The questionnaire was returned with the information that the paper printed one or two local UFO reports a year. The respondent, city editor, Christian Schmitt, made no mention of a 'ban' on such stories.

Summary

Responding to statements about press coverage of UFOs, newsmen disagreed most strongly with the statement that such coverage hampered scientific inquiry of the phenomenon. They disagreed least with the statement that some UFO waves are encouraged and maintained by press coverage. In between these extremes, they disagreed with the statement that the press had been schooled by the Air Force to "play down" UFOs, and they tended to disagree less with the statement that witnesses might be reluctant to report UFOs for fear of publicity and ridicule.

When their responses were analyzed on the basis of positions held on their newspapers, those in executive positions tended to disagree more with the criticisms than reporters did. Particularly

on the statement dealing with fear of ridicule; reporters tended to disagree less with the criticisms.

While views of newsmen tended to differ on trends in UFO coverage, they did agree on two general points: (1) that the novelty had worn off UFO stories, and (2) that newspapers were more selective in the UFO reports they did print: it was no longer a case of "anything goes" as it was in the late 40s and early 1950s.

Analysis of reports from newsmen who said they had seen UFOs suggested their experiences were the same as other UFO witnesses: some reasoned that what they had thought was a UFO was, after all, a natural object; others remained puzzled by their experiences; and some were ridiculed by fellow newsmen and others. The last finding suggested that hostile treatment might be given UFO reports from non-newsmen, too.

Non-witness newsmen generally said that UFOs merited news coverage, in part, because of reader interest. They also suggested that coverage of UFOs might present unique problems.

CHAPTER VIII

TWO PROBLEMS IN UFO NEWS GATHERING

Introduction

In discussing problems involved in news coverage of UFOs, reporters often--as they were quoted as doing in the preceding chapter--said that much of their information came from witnesses whose credibility was unknown or suspect. This problem appeared to be compounded by a general lack of reliable and relevant data on the UFO phenomenon.

This study found that an individual seeking information about UFOs--as a reporter might--was confronted by at least two related problems of data collection: (1) the partisan and erroneous nature of much of the available data, and (2) the lack of a sizable body of reliable data.

These problems will be discussed in this chapter before considering conclusions about the nature and extent of press coverage of UFOs.

Partisan and Erroneous Data

Because of the controversial aspects of the UFO phenomenon, those involved may, knowingly or unknowingly, be biased in their reports, changing their data to conform to or support their beliefs.

Mrs. Coral Lorenzen, a founder of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), candidly admitted such an approach in her book, Flying Saucers, The Startling Evidence of the Invasion from Outer Space:

The Sturgeon Bay saucer was about 780 feet in diameter, traveling slowly at an approximate (emphasis hers) altitude of forty miles. In releasing the story, we realized that people wouldn't believe or accept the 780-foot diameter, so we stated it was at least 400 feet wide. We ourselves found the actual measurement difficult to believe, despite the fact that we had worked out all the contributing figures very carefully. 1

In the summer of 1958, APRO was involved in press confusion about whether psychologist Dr. Carl Jung did or did not believe in flying saucers. The New York Times on July 30, 1958, printed this story under the two-column headline, "Dr. Jung Reports 'Saucers' Are Real:"

ALAMOGORDO, N.M. July 29 (AP)--One of the world's most eminent psychologists reports that unidentified flying objects are not quirks of the imagination.

Dr. Carl Jung, who studied under Sigmund Freud, said that if they came from other planets they could bring an enforced peace--and universal panic--to the world.

Dr. Jung, 83, now lives in Zurich, Switzerland. He wrote his speculations on Unidentified Flying Objects in the monthly bulletin of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization, a private organization with headquarters here.

'I can only say for certain that the things are not a mere rumor, something has been seen,' Dr. Jung said. 'A purely psychological explanation is ruled out. . .'

Dr. Jung called on 'authorities in possession of important information' to enlighten the public 'as soon as possible (and) stop those ridiculous antics of mysteries and vague allusions.'

Less than two weeks later, a related AP story was filed from Zurich, Switzerland:

ZURICH, Switzerland, Aug. 8 (AP)--Dr. Carl Gustav Jung said today he considered flying saucers a new 'savior myth.'

In one of his rare interviews, the 83-year-old psychologist denied reports that he believed in the existence of flying saucers.

He said he had for many years investigated the saucer reports from the point of view of their objective truth and of their psychological background.

'As to the reality of the perception of flying saucers; I have considered the matter for ten years and frankly I have not got anywhere,' he said. 'There is a vast literature on the subject. I have spoken to many people who have 'seen' flying saucers. These reports may be true or they may be lies. I am a scientist, I do not tell lies. So I cannot say that flying saucers are a reality. . .

'I am convinced that those who 'saw' flying saucers wanted to see them. Many people today are in need of fantasy. Their minds are cornered by the bad situation in which our world is today. They are in need of answers to their anxious questions, answers which nobody can give them. That is why they let their fantasy run on the lines of flying saucers and similar subjects. . .

'I do not consider the alleged eyewitnesses of flying saucers to be fools or knaves. They are usually perfectly honorable people. But I am convinced they all have in mind the need of a savior.'

The confusion between the two news stories apparently arose because the July 1958 APRO Bulletin reprinted an edited version of a Jung interview which had appeared in the May-June 1955 issue of Flying Saucer Review, a British magazine. The 1955 article, in turn, was a translation, apparently incorrect and out-of-context, of a July 1954 interview with Jung which had appeared in Die Weltwoche, a Swiss, German-language newspaper.

APRO also had listed Jung as a consultant in psychology, apparently because he had accepted an honorary membership in the organization.

Gabriel Green, president of the much smaller Amalgamated Flying Saucer Clubs of America, supported his theory about the hostility of flying saucers by "quoting" General Douglas MacArthur.

In Let's Face the Facts About Flying Saucers, Green wrote:

On October 8, 1955, The New York Times printed an interview with the late General Douglas MacArthur, who predicted that the next war would be fought between the people of the earth and armed invaders from outer space. General MacArthur felt that the nations of the world would have to unite to win the interplanetary war.

Then, in reference to material previously discussed, Green added:

If heat rays and paralysis lights are examples of alien weaponry, we may have difficulty in fighting off an onslaught of alien invaders. 2

The October 8 interview was not with MacArthur but with Mayor Achille Lauro of Naples, Italy. Mayor Lauro had met with the general because MacArthur was chairman of the board of Sperry Rand Corporation, which had recently built a plant in Naples. The headline of the story was "M'ARTHUR GREET'S/ MAYOR OF NAPLES" and the drophead was "Lauro Quotes Him as Saying/ Wars Between Nations/ Are Now Obsolete." In the 16-paragraph story, two paragraphs dealt with the material to which Green referred. The two paragraphs, quoting Lauro talking about MacArthur, were:

'He believes that because of the developments of science all the countries on the earth will have to unite to survive and to make a common front against people from other planets.'

The politics of the future will be cosmic or interplanetary; in General MacArthur's opinion, the mayor continued. He quoted the military leader as saying that a thousand years from now today's civilization would appear as obsolete as the stone age.

Howard V. Chambers, another UFO author, said that his book, UFOs For The Millions was designed to give the reader a basic ground-work in UFOs. In introducing the reader to UFO personalities, Chambers wrote:

Edward J. Ruppelt, the former head of the Air Force Project Bluebook. . .may well turn out to be one of the truly great friends of UFOs. . .He is one of the very few who have set heads spinning by asking some very basic questions. 'What constitutes proof?' Ruppelt wants to know. (emphasis added) 3

The book was published in 1967; Ruppelt had died in 1960.

The death of another UFO personality, author and newscaster Frank Edwards, in June 1967, also was unnoticed by some. Edwards' last book; Flying Saucers--Here and Now, was reviewed by Joseph J. Hennessy, a reporter for The Minneapolis Star, in January 1968.

However, the review did not mention that Edwards had died. In fact, Hennessy criticized Edwards for "plugging" his lecture tours. In response to questions asked by this study, Hennessy explained:

I'm not sure whether Frank Edwards. . .is alive or not. No mention of his death accompanied the book which was for publication release Nov. 29. He did use a foreword in the book dated June 1967.

This study then wrote to the publisher of Flying Saucers--Here and Now, Lyle Stuart Inc., and asked why those requested to review Edwards' book had not been informed of his death. Lyle Stuart responded January 30, 1968:

Contrary to what you believe, we've made no secret of Mr. Edwards' death.

As a matter of fact, in a series of commercials now running locally (in New York) with Long John Nebel we begin the commercial by talking about his death.

We had no special motive in not mentioning the fact except that to have done so on the book jacket might have discouraged sales and we felt the book spoke for itself.

Sources of partisan, erroneous or incomplete data were not limited to the ranks of those who believed in flying saucers or who sold goods to the UFO market.

As illustrated in Chapters v and vi, the Air Force UFO inquiry annually increased its efficiency by advancing all "probable" and "possible" explanations to "known" status; and, in individual cases, data inconsistent with a "known" explanation could be changed or ignored to make the "known" explanation more credible.

Dr. James McDonald, in his April 1967 address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, criticized fellow scientists who, he said, explained UFO reports by "invoking" scientific principles which did not apply to the report at hand. His particular target was Dr. Donald Menzel, former director of the Harvard College Observatory. One of several cases which drew McDonald's criticism was Dr. Menzel's explanation of a report of a UFO near Loch Raven Dam, outside Baltimore, on October 26, 1958.

. . .the witnesses' report of a large luminous object, estimated at 100 feet or so in length, hovering over a bridge structure, he (Menzel) attributes to. . .ball lightning. To make the latter seem to fit better, he refers to the object as a 'ball' despite the witnesses' remarks that it looked much like 'a Navy blimp'. . .Also ball lightning is a luminous mass only a foot or two in diameter, so how Menzel feels it can attain a size of 100 feet is far from clear. But the real irrelevance of the entire 'explanation' emerges only when one runs down the weather map for the day in question and finds that a large high-pressure area sat over the East Coast, precluding anything like the kind of atmospheric electrical activity so casually invoked by Menzel.

Opposing interpretations of UFO reports--such as the Menzel-McDonald disagreements--comprise one problem facing those who seek information about UFOs. Fabrications of reports--hoaxes--comprise another, particularly since UFO data consist almost entirely of anecdotal reports.

From 1957 to 1966, the number of UFO reports identified as hoaxes by the Air Force was relatively low, less than four-tenths of one per cent of all reports received. Hoaxes, however, still posed

a problem to the Air Force UFO inquiry. Lt. Col. Hector Quintanilla, director of Project Blue Book, said he would like to ignore all reports he considered hoaxes, but could not because Blue Book "reacts to political pressures" in dealing with hoaxes and crank letters. In a July 1968 interview, Quintanilla said:

Congressmen don't feel this way (that hoaxes and crank letters should be ignored). So you have to be very courteous even though you know the guy is an S.O.B. You always have that hammer over your head—he may call his Congressman. . . I didn't know how much power Congressmen had until I took this job.

UFO reports in which only the victims of the hoax were identified appeared to have caused little difficulty for Project Blue Book. In such cases, it was reported that what the witnesses saw were balloons illuminated by candles carried aloft, or what the witnesses saw was a circular patch burned by kerosene, not by a flying saucer. Reports in which the perpetrators of the hoax had to be identified posed a problem, Quintanilla said, because then the Air Force was in the undesired position of calling private citizens "liars."

Even in the previously discussed Maury Island hoax, in which two Army Air Force officers were killed, wide publicity was not given to the case and the hoaxsters were not prosecuted. Edward Ruppelt, a former director of Project Blue Book, explained:

. . . the government had thought seriously of prosecuting the men. At the last minute it was decided after talking to the men that the hoax was a harmless joke that had mushroomed and that the loss of two lives in a B-25 could not be directly blamed on the two men. . . By the time the facts were released they were yesterday's news and nothing is deader than yesterday's news. 5

In reviewing hundreds of Air Force UFO cases, it appeared that Air Force investigators spent much time and energy on what seemed to be obvious crank letters or hoaxes.

For example, in October 1956, a California girl reported that her unattended camera had taken a picture of a flying saucer while set for a time-exposure picture of the moon. She said the shutter of the camera had been opened for 10 to 20 minutes and when she developed the film she noticed it had captured the image of the moon moving across the sky and the image of a disc-shaped object. She forwarded a print of the picture to the Air Force for analysis. The analysis disclosed the film and the picture had been tampered with:

. . . Apparently a partial track of the moon was made; the shutter closed, and a light fixture on a dark ceiling was photographed; and an attempt to return the camera to its original position was made. Evidence of dodging and 'burning in' of the photograph in question is also evident.

The written response to the girl explained what the analysis had found about the triple-exposed film and concluded:

We have no grounds on which to suspect a deliberate fraud towards a government agency; however, there appears to have been some tampering by persons unknown with respect to the material submitted. Your interest in reporting this matter is appreciated.

The last sentence, "Your interest. . . is appreciated," or versions of it, were found in many Air Force responses to UFO reports which seemed to be childish or incoherent, if not fraudulent. To Quintanilla, such courtesies were necessary to maintain good relationships with citizens and with Congressmen.

The reluctance to call a hoax "a hoax" was not limited to the Air Force. During my work with the UFO Project at the University of Colorado, the project had prepared a news release stating that a flying saucer photograph taken by an Ohio barber was a hoax. The release was never issued because the university's legal advisers feared a libel suit.

To the Air Force and related agencies, hoaxes may have been viewed as evidence of the non-existence of flying saucers. (In fact, some critics of the Air Force inquiry say this is why so much time is spent investigating fraudulent reports). To UFO organizations, however, hoaxes appeared to be viewed as obstacles to the serious study of UFOs and as possible threats to the credibility of UFO investigators. NICAP, for example, suggested that a 1957 hoax may have been staged to discredit its UFO work.

The 1957 hoax involved three fraudulent wire service stories which dealt with supposed UFO reports near Miami, Fla. The "wire service" stories were faked by a television studio engineer. They were never published, but were passed along in teletype form to NICAP. In its July 1957 issue of The UFO Investigator, the organization said the hoax was "a plot to discredit NICAP." The article concluded:

. . .this carefully planned deception should serve as a warning not only to NICAP's staff and its network of members, but to all serious investigators of the UFO problem.

Had NICAP accepted these faked stories, printing them as bonafide accounts in this magazine, we would have been ridiculed and our standing as investigators would have been jeopardized.

This is not the first attempt to discredit serious UFO researchers, and it will not be the last. Everyone in NICAP--from the staff to the newest member--must be on guard against deliberate tricks, unconfirmed hearsay evidence and honest mistakes by inexperienced observers.

Don't accept--or pass on--any UFO report until you check the facts.

By exposing hoaxes and expunging contactees from its membership rolls, NICAP has attempted to separate what it considers 'spurious UFO data from that which may merit study.

A problem for NICAP--and especially for other organizations

which tended toward more sensationalization of UFO reports--was that the desire to document the existence of UFOs may have made the investigator more vulnerable to hoaxes, more willing to believe UFO reports than to disbelieve or judge each report on its merits.

Similarly, the press has been vulnerable to printing erroneous UFO data in the form of hoaxes. This seemed true even though newsmen apparently were not subjected to the political pressures discussed by Quintanilla; nor did newsmen appear to be motivated by a desire to document the existence of flying saucers.

While UFO hoaxes appeared to be printed in the press infrequently--perhaps in rough proportion to the number of UFO hoaxes reported by the Air Force--they generally appeared to be printed for at least two reasons: (1) Hoaxes, particularly the more outrageous ones, seemed to receive news coverage because it was thought there would be reader interest in fanciful, or funny, UFO stories; and (2) during periods of UFO sightings, reports tended to be accepted uncritically by the press, making it more vulnerable to hoaxes.

Examples of hoaxes in the first category would include the "Dr. Gee" and "Dimnick's Gimmick" stories discussed in Chapter ii and the 1953 "shaved monkey" hoax in Atlanta, Ga.

In the "shaved monkey" hoax, an Atlanta barber, Edward Watters, told authorities his automobile had struck one of three small creatures seen near a red-colored flying saucers. The other two escaped in the saucer, Watters said.

Watters and two companions took the corpse of the "space creature" to The Atlanta Constitution, and the repercussions of their story were reported in The Constitution on July 9, 1953. More than 25

newsmen, radio broadcasters, photographers and newsreel cameramen questioned the men; hundreds of people telephoned newspapers for information about "the men from Mars;" many wanted to know when and where the creature would be displayed; two Air Force investigators interviewed Watters; a bank teller in Austell, Ga., said he had seen the same flying saucer observed by Watters; Watters said one telephone caller offered him \$5,000 for the corpse, which was about 21 inches in length, had long ears, no tail and no hair.

A veterinarian at first reported that he had never seen such an animal, but, at Emory University, scientists said the creature was a monkey with its hair and tail removed.

The episode ended in a county court where Watters was fined \$40 for obstructing a highway because of a traffic tie-up at the point where he claimed to have hit the creature. The Air Force report said the hoax resulted from a \$10 bet that Watters had made with a friend that he could get his picture in the paper.

While it was not proved to be a hoax, a 1967 UFO case was illustrative of the excitement and high readership which may attend fantastic stories dealing with UFOs. This case involved a 3-year-old Appaloosa saddle horse supposedly killed "by a varmint. . .riding a flying saucer," as a United Press International Story of October 6, 1967, put it.

The horse, named Snippy, had been missing for two days when found dead on September 9. The case did not come to the attention of many newspapers until a month later.

In the meantime, the horse's owner, Mrs. Nellie Lewis of Alamosa, Colo., had apparently concluded that Snippy was the victim of

some extraterrestrial force. She believed in the existence of flying saucers, and at about the time Snippy was missed her 87-year-old mother had seen some object in the sky. The mother was not sure what the object was because she did not have her eye glasses with her at the time. But, Snippy's death did seem to include strange elements which could be interpreted to show that flying saucers were involved.

Mrs. Lewis was a correspondent for The Pueblo, Colo., Chieftain, and she provided that newspaper with information about the death of her horse. Stories in The Chieftain, combining an animal story with a flying saucer report, resulted in nationwide coverage by UPI and the Associated Press and also led to telephone inquiries from Canada, England, and Europe.

One of the first wire service stories about Snippy was an October 5 article by the Associated Press:

ALAMOSA, Colo. (AP)--Snippy, a 3-year-old Appaloosa horse didn't return to the Harry King ranch for her usual evening drink Sept. 7 and her owner is blaming a flying saucer or at least a radioactive surgeon.

The bizarre event, just one of many which has been plaguing the sparsely populated San Luis Valley in the past six months began Sept. 9, when Harry King began a search for the saddle pony.

He found Snippy just a quarter mile from the ranch house. King gave this account:

There were no tracks about the dead horse, but the animal had been completely skinned. All that remained of the neck and shoulders were bleached bones, but they were still intact and attached to the rest of the body.

The cut around the neck was completely smooth, not a jagged edge. No blood remained in the horse's body and there was none on the ground.

King returned to the site the next day with the horse's owners, Mr. and Mrs. Burl Lewis. Nothing had changed except a sickening sweet odor pervaded the area and the exposed bones were a bright pink.

After a search of the immediate area, they found what appeared to be 15 circular exhaust marks. They covered an area about 100 by 50 yards.

A hundred yards north of the carcass they found a three-foot bush which had been squashed to within 10 inches of the ground. The area within a 10-foot radius of the bush had also been flattened to within 10 inches of the ground.

Near the area Mrs. Lewis found a piece of the horse's flesh encased in a piece of the skin. It was very sticky, she said, and she dropped it. Her hand began to burn and turned red and continued to burn until she washed her hands.

On another check of the area they found more flattened brush, but this time there were six indentations forming a circle three feet in diameter. Each indentation was two inches across and four inches deep.

By Sept. 23, the neck and head bones had turned black.

Mrs. Lewis tried in vain to get the authorities to check the incident, but most of them told her the horse had been struck by lightning. None of them had visited the area.

A check of the area by a forestry official with a civil defense Geiger counter found the radiation count to be high.

The exhaust marks were radioactive as were the areas where the brush had been flattened. . .

In a telephone conversation in early October, Dr. Norman Levine of the Boulder UFO Project said the Snippy UFO report "smells like a dead horse." When I visited the UFO project the next month, November 1967, many staff members said that news coverage and persistent public inquiries had forced the project to investigate the case.

Interviews at Boulder, analysis of the project's investigation and a review of the news coverage indicated these errors were made in the AP story and other news coverage in general:

--It was first reported that the horse was completely skinned. (Only the neck and head were skinned; picked clean by magpies, a veterinarian later suggests).

--It was reported that a Denver pathologist conducted an autopsy witnessed by members of NICAP and found the brain, spinal and abdominal cavities of the horse unexplainably empty. The pathologist wished to remain anonymous. (The doctor was neither a pathologist or a veterinarian; the NICAP members, some of whom were given the inaccurate title "doctor," did not witness the autopsy; Dr. O.R. Adams, head of veterinary clinics and surgery at Colorado State University, told the UFO Project that, after the horse had been dead a month, it would have been surprising if the anatomical cavities were not empty).

--It was reported that "evidence" in the area where Snippy was found dead included exhaust marks, supposedly made by a flying saucer, brush which had been crushed to the ground, and indentations possibly made by landing gear. (A rough circle, the "exhaust marks," appeared to be a fungus known as black alkali; photographs of the area showed the brush had not been crushed; the indentations appeared to be weathered hoofprints).

--It was reported a forest ranger found high readings of radioactivity in the area. (He did not).

The North American Newspaper Alliance distributed a story written by John A. Keel, a UFO researcher and author, who linked the death of Snippy with other incidents involving flying saucers and animals. He concluded:

There are now hundreds of cases of animal mutilations and disappearances like these, all carefully investigated by ufologists and sober organizations. The grisly carcasses offer evidence that something bizarre is stalking the land, but, apart from the eyewitness testimony of many seemingly honest citizens, there is no concrete proof.

Indeed, millions are still awaiting some kind of tangible proof that the UFOs, themselves, are real. If, however, flying saucers are really only 'swamp gas' then what is butchering and stealing animals around the world? 6

Dr. Adams of Colorado State University told the UFO Project:

. . . Snippy showed no signs whatsoever of any unearthly causes of death. The carcass was extremely old for an evaluation, but there was a suggestion that there had been a severe infection in the hindlimb which could have incapacitated the horse. This type of infection can sometimes kill a horse in a matter of hours. There was also evidence that the skin along the shoulder and neck had been incised with a knife. This could have been done by someone attempting to put the horse to sleep when they found it unable to rise, or by a curious boy wondering what his knife would do to a dead horse. Other than that, all findings are consistent with any other horse dead this length of time.

Dr. Adams' conclusions were reported by AP and UPI.

Many of the mistakes in the Snippy stories appeared to result from the absence of reliable sources. The physician who conducted the autopsy was "anonymous" and unavailable for comment; the forest ranger who supposedly found high readings of radioactivity in the area had returned to his job and presumably was unavailable. Pressed for readable stories about Snippy, newsmen apparently accepted material from Mrs. Lewis, The Chieftain and other sources uncritically.

The National Observer on October 16, 1967 published an article by Ralph K. Bennett, "The Anatomy of a Saucer Scare," in which Bennett wrote that the Snippy episode was. . .

wrapped with anxiety, with an often irrational and misleading press coverage, and with an odd human predilection to sometimes cast out the plausible and embrace the weird.

While this "predilection to. . . embrace the weird" may have accounted for the publication of some UFO hoaxes, the nature of news coverage of UFO waves also may have brought fraudulent stories into print.

As discussed in previous chapters, at times--particularly during waves of reports--the press may be "in the market" for UFO reports to provide new or local angles for the news coverage. At such times, the newsmen may be less critical, or even solicitous, of someone with a UFO to report. And, at such times, one may not need a "shaved monkey" to get his particular UFO story into print.

At least five cases were illustrative of the apparent ease with which a hoax can be published when the news media appeared to be looking for UFO stories.

On July 6, 1947, pilot Vernon Baird of Los Angeles told wire service newsmen that his plane knocked a flying saucer out of the sky. The story was printed in newspapers across the nation. In an eight-column headline, The Syracuse, N.Y., Herald-Journal announced, "SAUCER DOWN, IT'S A PLANE!"

Under a four-column drophead, "Pilot Knocks Clam Shaped/Aircraft Out of Sky," was this story:

BOZEMAN, Mont. (UP)--A pilot reported today that his plane knocked down a 'flying saucer,' which he described as a 'pearl gray, clam-shaped airplane with a plexiglass dome on top.'

The pilot said the object, which he called a 'Flying Yo-Yo,' crashed in the tobacco root mountains in western Montana after being torn to pieces by the propwash of his plane.

Vernon Baird, Los Angeles, pilot for the Fairchild Photogrammetric Engineers Co., said he encountered the 'Yo-Yo' while flying a P-38. . .

Baird said that after the strange plane fell apart he looked around and saw several of them darting around.

Baird said he was too busy handling his plane to notice if there was a man inside the gadget. . .

The next day, July 8, 1947, The Herald-Journal referred again to Baird. This time the reference was limited to one paragraph toward

the end of a flying saucer wrap-up story, and the reference was on page 7, not on page 1 as the day before:

Pilot Vernon Baird admitted his report of being chased by a disc which disintegrated in his plane backwash over Montana was strictly a wild tale. He said he wouldn't do it again.

On July 7, 1947, another pilot was reported to have seen a flying saucer. North Carolina newspapers reported that Fred Cloud had seen a flying object rise up out of storm clouds over Raleigh, N.C. The report had been telephoned to the papers by a friend of Cloud's who thought it would be a funny story. Fayette (his real name) Cloud explained the hoax to the newspapers, but, he said, they refused to run a retraction or a clarification. Dr. McDonald reported on the Cloud case in his introduction to Report on the UFO Wave of 1947 by Ted Bloecher.

On April 7, 1952, Life magazine published what was to become one of the landmark articles on UFOs, "Have We Visitors From Space?" The article discussed some of the more puzzling UFO reports and singled out 10 cases for closer review, noting:

Checked and rechecked, 10 cases out of the formidable list on record are here presented in essential detail. Of these, three were discovered in the course of Life's own investigation and are reported for the first time.

It appeared that one of the 10 "checked and rechecked" cases, and apparently one of the three discovered by Life may have been a hoax. The case was based on "approximately 30 glowing, meteorlike objects" supposedly seen on May 29, 1951, at 3:48 p.m. by three technical writers for the aerophysics department of a North American Aviation plant near Los Angeles. The writers were identified as Victor Black, Werner Eichler and Ed J. Sullivan. Only Sullivan was quoted in the Life account.

In October 1952, American Mercury printed an article, "Flying Saucer Hoax," by Victor Black, reportedly the same Victor Black mentioned in Life. In the American Mercury, however, Black said the Life sighting was a hoax.

Black said that he had never been interviewed by Life and that Sullivan fabricated the story to make money from interest in flying saucers. Black's article sharply criticized Sullivan and other UFO investigators. In fact, the severity and scope of his criticisms resulted in a retraction published in American Mercury in January 1953. But his statement that he had not been interviewed by Life and his charge of a hoax raised some questions about the authenticity of the Life report.

College students in the midwest and on the west coast took advantage of press interest in UFOs in March 1966 to stage two separate hoaxes.

While news interest generally was focused on sightings in Dexter and Hillsdale, Mich., The Chicago Sun-Times found a localized angle in reports of UFOs in nearby Indiana cities. On March 28, a one-column headline on page 4 announced "New UFO/ Sightings/ In Indiana." The story was continued on page 20 under a three-column headline "Latest Area UFO Sightings:/ In Valparaiso, Crown Point."

On March 31, 1966, on page 28 and in the eighth and ninth paragraphs of a story on UFO mail received by the Air Force, The Sun-Times reported:

Valparaiso University officials said Wednesday (March 30) an investigation disclosed three students were responsible for recent reports of so-called unidentified flying objects in that area.

Authorities said the students told them they filled plastic laundry bags with heated gas and released them late at night. They said the bags took on an orange glow from the gas, but changed to red and then green as the gas cooled.

Using similar devices, students at the California Institute of Technology created excitement and considerable news coverage in Southern California before their hoax was uncovered. The hoax and its effects were explained in a March 30, 1966, article by Philip Fradkin of the staff of The Los Angeles Times.

PASADENA, Calif.—Unidentified flying objects seen over this and other Los Angeles suburbs in the last six days were identified Tuesday (March 29). . .

They were the creation of California Institute of Technology students who admitted that the four UFOs seen by hundreds of persons were simply experiments in 'gullibility.'

The UFOs were homemade plastic balloons with red flares dangling from rotating blades. . .

Fradkin wrote that the students had read about UFO sightings in Michigan, noted discrepancies in the reports of some witnesses and decided to experiment to see what would happen in Southern California.

The biggest balloon was set free Monday night and brought the best results.

Among the hundreds of phone calls to newspapers, radio stations and the police, the students cited such descriptions as, 'It zipped along at a fantastic speed;' 'the smell of exotic perfume in the air;' and 'red, white and blue lights' from the four (red) flares. 7

While the nature of hoaxes printed in the press may have varied from tales of outerspace creatures to contrived lights in the sky, one factor seemed true of most of them--the disclosure, clarification or explanation of the hoax seldom received the news coverage given the hoax. This tendency was illustrated in the coverage of the Maury Island, Cloud, Baird, Black and Valparaiso hoaxes.

The tendency seemed attributable to any or all of several factors: news coverage of a hoax may range over several days while the disclosure of a hoax may take only a day or two; there may be lack of information that the hoax was, in fact, a hoax; news interest in the incident may decline before the hoax element is recognized; news media may be reluctant to call attention to their inaccurate coverage.

Whatever the reason(s), the absence of detailed explanations of hoaxes seemed to be part of the overall dearth of reliable information about UFOs.

Absence of Reliable Data

During the years 1947 through 1966, Air Force public information about UFOs generally was limited to press statements explaining specific sightings or periodic news releases summarizing the findings and conclusions of the Air Force UFO inquiry. Reports of UFO studies, such as Project 14 and the Robertson Panel report discussed in Chapter v, were classified during most of the years covered by this study. A report issued by Project Blue Book in February 1966 included a section titled "NON AVAILABILITY OF MATERIALS."

The following items are for internal use only and are not available for distribution to the public. These concern management and procedures for forwarding UFO reports to the appropriate agency:

1. Air Force Regulation 200-2 (which set procedures for local air bases to follow in reporting UFOs)
2. JANAP 146 (an Army, Navy, Air Force regulation on the transmission of messages concerning all unidentified aircraft, ships or objects)

The Air Force has no films, photographs, maps, charts, or graphs of unidentified flying objects. Photographs that have been submitted for evaluation in conjunction with UFO reports

have been determined to be a misinterpretation of natural or conventional objects. These objects have a positive identification.

The Air Force no longer possesses, and thus does not have for distribution, outdated reports on Project Sign, Project Grudge, Blue Book Special Report No. 14, and outdated Project Blue Book press releases. Non-military UFO publications should be requested from the publisher, not the Air Force.

The last paragraph seemed questionable, particularly the statement that suggested the Air Force did not possess copies of reports which had cost thousands of dollars. The statement was rephrased in the Project Blue Book 1968 report to read:

The Air Force possesses only record copies, and thus does not have for distribution outdated reports of Project Sign, Project Grudge or Blue Book Special Reports No. 1 through 12 and No. 14. Copies of these documents can be made at the expense of the requester at rates prescribed by Air Force directives. . .

The change in wording apparently resulted from recommendations made by an ad hoc committee of the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board. The committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Brian O'Brien, met in February 1966 to review Project Blue Book.

In reference to the Blue Book report issued in 1966 and particularly to that section dealing with "NON AVAILABILITY OF MATERIALS," the committee recommended:

. . . anything which might suggest that information is being withheld be deleted. The form of this report can be of great importance in securing public understanding and should be given detailed study by an appropriate Air Force office.

While much of the Air Force UFO information was not available --or at least not offered--for public distribution from 1947 through 1966, some of it was available to newsmen whose employers took the time and expense to send them to Project Blue Book offices at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio.

Records kept by Lt. Col. Hector Quintanilla, Project Blue Book director, indicated that at least eight wire service or daily newspaper reporters visited Blue Book during the 30 months from July 1964 through December 1966. They were Emil Sveilis of UPI, Richard Lippincott of Scripps Howard, Al Goldberg of AP, Seymour Rothman of The Toledo, O., Blade, Bulkley Griffin of The Portland, Me., Evening Express, Mort Young of The New York Journal American, James Trunnel of The Louisville Courier-Journal and Carol Clapp of The Ravenna, O., Record-Courier.

This study found articles written by three of the eight visitors. Griffin's and Young's criticisms of the Air Force were reviewed in Chapter vi; Goldberg wrote an uncritical summary of the Air Force UFO program and it was published in many newspapers in late August 1965.

For the most part, however, it seemed that from 1947 through 1966, unless newsmen went to Air Force headquarters, their Air Force UFO information generally was limited to occasional press releases or what other newsmen had written. As noted in Chapter v, Air Force regulations prohibited local Air Force bases from releasing any information on unidentified objects--except that they were being investigated--and restricted the information which could be released on UFOs that were identified.

While only minimal UFO information seemed to be available from the Air Force, it might be thought that data on UFOs could be found in popular and scientific magazines and journals published during the years 1947 through 1966.

Viewed over the span of 20 years, the popular and scientific commentary on UFOs seemed plentiful and comprehensive; but, in a year-by-year analysis a different picture emerged.

The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature listed about 180 articles under UFO, flying saucer or related headings from the years 1947 through 1966. The 180 would include all references to Time, Newsweek and other news magazines and would constitute an average of about nine articles a year. Table 44 shows the number of UFO articles listed in The Reader's Guide on a year-by-year basis..

TABLE 44

NUMBER OF UFO ARTICLES LISTED IN READER'S GUIDE, 1947-1966, BY YEAR

1947 - 5	1952 - 35	1957 - 9	1962 - 1
1948 - 0	1953 - 11	1958 - 3	1963 - 2
1949 - 3	1954 - 8	1959 - 5	1964 - 0
1950 - 16	1955 - 11	1960 - 3	1965 - 3
1951 - 19	1956 - 5	1961 - 0	1966 - 49

As indicated by the table, for 12 years the number of articles was five or fewer; for 17 years, the number of articles was 11 or fewer; more than half the articles, 100 of them, were published during the three years of 1950, 1952 and 1966. The number for 1966, 49, was particularly high because of articles about the creation of the UFO Project at the University of Colorado in the fall of that year.

As discussed on the preceding page, taken as a whole the articles provided background on UFOs--particularly those from The Saturday Review. But, on a year-by-year basis the material was generally inconsistent or non-existent.

Comment on UFOs in scientific journals was negligible for most of the 1947-66 period, except for a rare article such as that written by Dr. J. Allen Hynek for the April 1953 issue of The Journal of the Optical Society of America. In the article, Hynek discussed some of the UFO reports he had encountered as an Air Force consultant and

stated:

. . .The chief point here is to suggest that nothing constructive is accomplished for the public at large--and therefore for science in the long run--by mere ridicule and the implication that sightings are the products of 'birdbrains' and 'intellectual fly-weights.' In short, it would appear that the flying saucer situation has always been a problem in science-public relations, and that a fine chance has consistently been missed to demonstrate on a national scale how scientists go about analyzing a problem. A lot is said about the proper interpretation of science to the public, but the only answer they receive to a question, about which they are more widely concerned than perhaps any other in this century, is ridicule. Ridicule is not part of the scientific method and the public should not be taught that it is.

Fifteen years later, on July 29, 1968, in hearings before the House of Representatives Committee on Science and Astronautics, Hynek commented again on the reluctance of the scientific community to study the UFO phenomenon:

We cannot expect the world of science to take seriously the fare offered at airport newstands and paperback shelves. . .

Indeed, in such newstand publications three or four UFO reports are frequently sensationalized on one page with gross disregard for accuracy and documentation; the result is that the scientist--if he reads them at all--is very likely to suffer mental nausea and to relegate the whole subject to the trash heap.

This is the first problem a scientist encounters when he takes a look at the UFO phenomenon. His publicly available source material is almost certain to consist of sensational, undocumented accounts of what may have been an actual event. . .There is nowhere a serious scientist can turn for what he would consider meaningful, hard-core data--as hard core and quantitative as the phenomenon itself permits at present.

If the newsman could not find the information he desired about UFOs from the Air Force, current periodicals or scientific journals, he might turn to a more immediate source--the newsroom library. Newspaper libraries, however, generally have been based upon information previously presented in the newspaper and consist largely of newspaper clippings filed under appropriate subject headings. The data may tell the reporter what has been printed about the subject, but may not

present new information for publication.

This study checked the library resources of two of the nation's largest news agencies on the topic of UFOs.

The library of the Associated Press in New York City maintained files on AP stories dating back more than 20 years and also maintained background material on various news topics and personalities. The packet of information on UFOs contained (1) several stories clipped from Time magazine; (2) five carbons of AP stories, three of which dealt with sightings in Dexter and Hillsdale, Mich., in March 1966; (3) a January 1965 news release from the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Information, which summarized the findings and conclusions of the Air Force UFO inquiry.

(The UPI library in New York advised that they had no UFO information which was not included in a special "Flying Saucers" magazine published in 1967 by UPI and Look magazine. The magazine consisted primarily of reviews of major UFO reports).

On March 20, 1968, also in New York, radio and television coverage of UFOs was discussed with Dean Mell, a newscaster on NBC's radio network. He was asked what background material was available to him if he were working on a UFO story. We went to the news library and he asked the librarian, "If I wanted some information on UFOs, what would you give me?" She replied that she did not think the library had "a single thing." She did find two listings in the library catalogue. One dealt with a Chicago astronomer, probably Hynek, quoted as saying that UFOs should be taken seriously; the other dealt with a news conference held by Donald E. Keyhoe, director of NICAP. There was no other information.

The quantity of news coverage of UFOs, however, did not seem to have been hampered by the apparent lack of information available from the Air Force, periodicals and journals and news libraries. This was possible because, as discussed in Chapter iii, UFO accounts in the press were based primarily upon the testimony of witnesses. In essence, the UFO stories said that people saw some things in the sky which they did not understand. It did not require much background information to write such stories. UFOs were covered primarily as breaking news events.

In Chapter iii, science writers Walter Sullivan of The New York Times and Arthur Snider of The Chicago Daily News were quoted about the reluctance of science writers to become involved in UFO news. Their views were consistent with the analysis of Air Force and NICAP press clippings which showed that, of the 511 clippings studied, only three carried the bylines of science or aviation writers.

I discussed the nature of such news coverage in a July 28, 1967, memo to Robert J. Low, coordinator of the University of Colorado UFO Project. The memo, in part, read:

. . .we have some information that it would be good to pass along to the news media for their benefit and ours. Some of the propositions and assumptions leading to this conclusion are:

UFO coverage by news media, in my eyes anyway, is not quality stuff. In large part, this is true because UFOs are covered as breaking news, and there is only time and space to report that someone saw something unexplainable. Time is not taken to provide some background or in-depth stories on UFOs. When there is time for such stories, there are no UFOs around and hence no 'solid' news peg for the in-depth stories.

The UFO Project at Boulder can provide or can be the news peg for the in-depth or educational UFO material lacking in the press to date. . .

The project appears to have at its disposal material and men to provide good news stories about UFOs without compromising our final report, without inviting criticism of methodology.

Some examples of such stories:

1. One could come from (Dr.) Roy Craig's internal memorandum on the number of satellites visible to the unaided eye. Hundreds of them. The story could name the most visible of the satellites, tell of others and suggest ways to distinguish between apparent UFOs and honest to goodness satellites.

2. Another story could suggest ways to gauge the distance of an object in the sky--other than telling us that 'it was twice the size of a basketball at that distance' or 'about the size of a star six or seven miles away.' Just a simple suggestion to relate the size of the object to a coin. . .at arm's length might be helpful.

3. Another story could deal with the size and color of meteorites. I had thought that meteorites visible to the unaided eye were about the size of houses. Dr. (Frank) Roach told me such meteorites need only have a diameter of about 1 centimeter. Dr. Roach seems to have lots of information that would be helpful to anyone who thought he saw a UFO.

It is granted that there is no real reason that good reporters could not dig these stories up on their own. What is missing is a news peg or the incentive to do such a story. The project could provide the necessary news peg and, at the same time, better educate the public about UFOs and satisfy the newsmen's demands for information. . .

I don't know how this utopia can be achieved. Perhaps it can be handled by just releasing some of our data in memo form and letting AP or UPI or the (Denver) Post or Rocky Mountain News write it as they wish. It does not seem to warrant hiring someone or having some present person devote full time to news work the newsmen would rather do themselves. It just seems that there is so much ignorance about UFOs that information which seems to us as exciting as the time of day would be quite interesting to newsmen and their readers.

Low responded on the same day:

I think your memo about our stance vis a vis the press is sound. I agree with your arguments, and, with Dr. C's (Condon's) concurrence, we'll try to do something along the lines of your suggestion.

I left the UFO Project about three weeks later and had not heard anything further about the memo. The suggestions may have been set aside because they were contrary to project policy not to issue press releases until the study was completed.

Summary

The problems of erroneous data, biased news sources and lack of reliable information are not limited to material dealing with UFOs. The danger of relying upon questionable data confronts researchers in any field.

The problem in the UFO inquiry, however, is not merely the presence of biased data, but the extent to which such data appear to blanket the area of investigation and the relative paucity of reliable information.

The situation has been compounded by the finding, as mentioned in Chapter iii, that newsmen often found it unnecessary or impossible to turn to expert news sources—such as weathermen, astronomers and other scientists—for information to include in UFO stories. Such expert sources were mentioned in about 16 per cent of the 1,500 news items analyzed.

Perhaps coverage of UFOs as breaking news limited the time available to newsmen to contact such sources. Similarly, the nature of the news coverage may have allowed reporters little time to consult data in the fields of astronomy, perception and social psychology for information to include in UFO stories.

The problems posed by the lack of reliable data on UFOs may have been magnified by the nature of much of the news coverage--including the vulnerability of the press to hoaxes--and by the failure of the press to consult expert sources for material that might help newsmen and their readers understand the UFO phenomenon.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

One purpose of this study, as stated in the preface was to collect information—much of it descriptive--about the nature of press coverage of UFOs from 1947 through 1966. Information about news coverage, the history of UFOs and the Air Force UFO inquiry was presented and discussed in the preceding eight chapters and chapter summaries; it would be redundant to review again much of that information in this final chapter.

Another purpose of this study, however, was to analyze critically UFO news coverage to determine what role(s) the press has played in the UFO phenomenon and what critical judgments could be made about the nature of press performance. To this end, seven general conclusions and a summary and some recommendations will be presented in this final chapter. The conclusions were organized for ease in presentation, not in order of relative importance.

Some conclusions may seem too obvious to merit restatement here, but they are presented because they may be related to less obvious conclusions.

1. Extensive press coverage has caused widespread public

awareness of flying saucers, or UFOs. Judging from the indices discussed in Chapter ii, hundreds of thousands, perhaps a million or more, UFO news items were published in the nation's daily newspapers during the years 1947 through 1966.

The high degree of public awareness was shown by public opinion polls which indicated that at no time after August 1947 was public awareness of flying saucers below 90 per cent. Polls in 1966 and 1968 indicated that more than 40 per cent of the public believed flying saucers were real objects.

On a less quantitative basis, awareness of saucers was illustrated and reinforced by references to the discs in comic strips, cartoons, television programs and motion pictures.

The role of the press in creating this awareness was shown by the Boulder Public Opinion Poll in which more than 90 per cent of the respondents said they received most of their information about UFOs from the mass media, especially from newspapers. The role of the press in the late 1940s may have been particularly important in creating public awareness, considering the relative scarcity of home-owned television sets, the minimal mention of saucers in periodicals and journals, and the reliance of radio news coverage upon newspapers and wire services.

The press provided and popularized a name or label, "flying saucer," under which objects in the sky could be classified. In addition to the alternatives of "star," "planet," "airplane," or "balloon," beginning in 1947 citizens also could call an object a "flying saucer." Many did.

The ubiquity of the "flying saucer" or "UFO" label has been a continuing problem for UFO investigators. The one name has been used indiscriminately by the press and others to embrace a wide range of experiences and phenomena--from weather balloons to saucer cults--which otherwise seem unrelated.

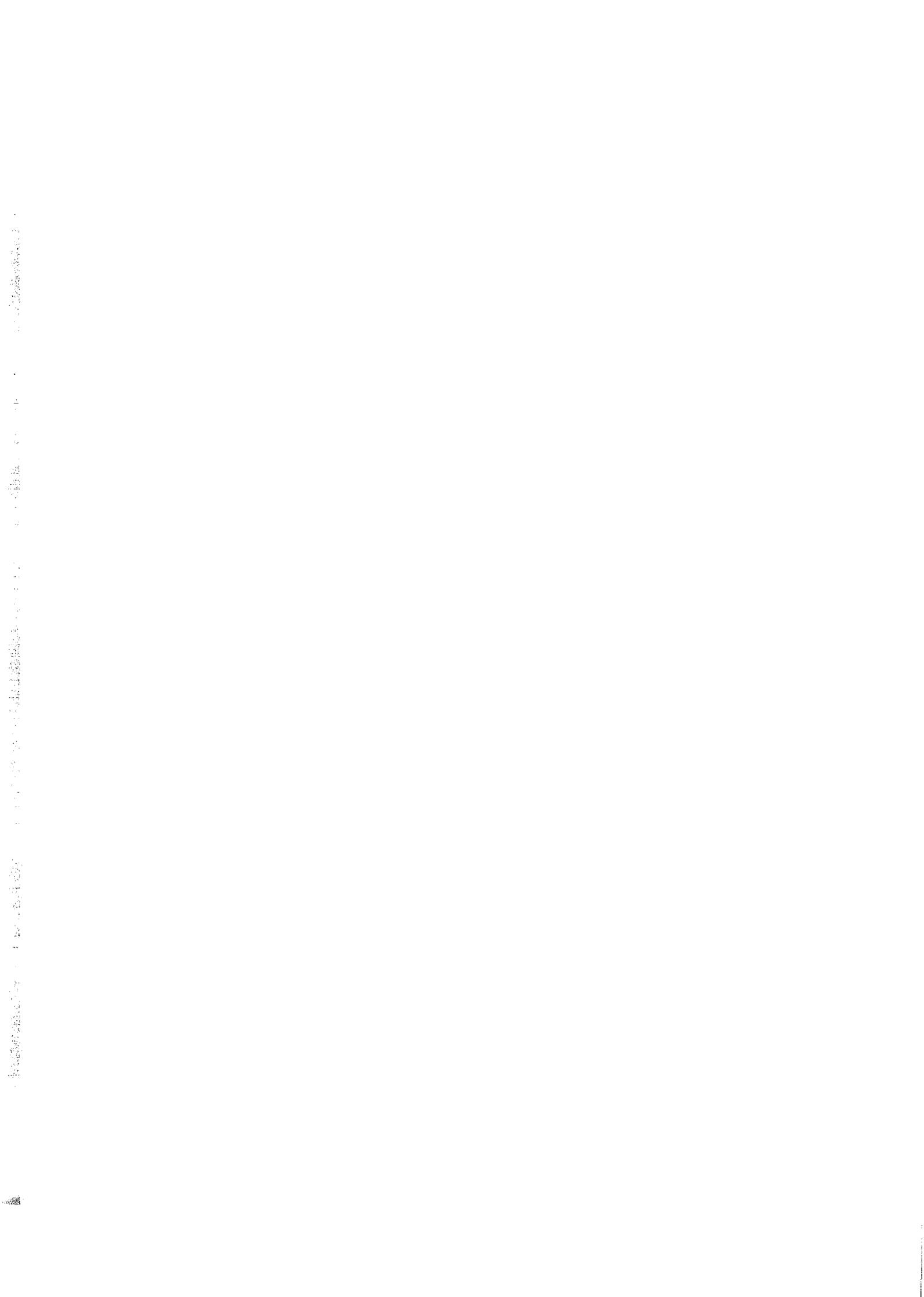
2. To a large degree, press coverage of UFOs has encouraged and maintained periodic waves of UFO reports by focusing public attention upon the subject and combining previously unrelated and isolated UFO reports.

The nature of such a wave was discussed in Chapter iv. News-men's questionnaire responses cited in Chapter vii indicated that the criticism about news coverage with which they agreed the most was that "many waves of UFO sightings are encouraged and maintained by news coverage."

This conclusion does not minimize the roles that interpersonal communication and contagion may have played in creating waves of UFO reports.

During such waves, however, news coverage did lower barriers against the reporting of UFOs. There was less ridicule of persons reporting UFOs, and newsrooms were receptive to UFO stories which otherwise might have gone unreported or unheeded if reported. Also, during such periods, the willingness to print UFO reports made the press more vulnerable to hoaxes and less critical of the UFO reports it printed.

3. The press had played a major role in creating and sustaining public interest in flying saucers from 1947 through 1966, but it



cannot be concluded that the press was solely responsible for existence of the phenomenon.

The impact of news coverage was seen in the high degree of public awareness of UFOs, reliance upon newspapers as the major source of information about UFOs and the manner in which news coverage encouraged and sustained waves of UFO reports.

The role of the press in creating reports of UFOs also is illustrated by the fact that most UFO reports are explainable as resulting from the mis-identification of known objects. The very small portion of UFO reports which merit detailed study stands in marked contrast to the extensive press coverage given to supposed UFOs.

To place responsibility for the existence of the UFO phenomenon on the press alone, however, would be to fall victim to the tendency to seek one explanation for the phenomenon because there has been one name for it. There are explanations of UFOs, and they include-- to a large degree--the nature of press coverage.

Discussion of the causes of UFO reports, however, must include consideration of sociological, psychological, physiological, educational, technological and meteorological factors. And, even after such discussion, there remain unexplained phenomena, as evidenced by Air Force reports.

Also, to conclude that UFOs were solely press-induced would suggest that the reports might not have merited news coverage. But some did. Judgments reached by newsmen suggest there should be news stories on reports of strange aerial objects sighted by pilots, tracked on radar or seen by numbers of people. From a news standpoint, it is

absurd to argue there should be no news coverage when radar appears to track unknown objects over the nation's capital or airplanes are dispatched to intercept UFOs.

But, again, such startling reports stand in contrast to the thousands of UFO news items which only report that someone saw something in the sky he did not understand.

4. Because of the high degree of public awareness of UFOs and the extensive press coverage, there have been tendencies to interpret the coverage as national in scope and marked by wide readership of individual UFO news items. Two reasons for this were (1) sporadic wire service coverage focused attention upon periodic waves of reports rather than upon the continuing nature of coverage on the local level, and (2) the national coverage often prompted official Air Force investigations.

UFO news coverage, however, was primarily local in nature. The coverage consisted primarily of items which were printed in one newspaper, usually one of low circulation, and provided the reader with a conversation topic but little information.

The small-newspaper nature of the coverage occurred, in part, because more than half of the daily newspapers in the nation have circulations of less than 10,000. Also, as discussed in Chapter iii, the smaller circulation newspapers tended to print more of the UFO reports they received than did larger newspapers.

Typically, the UFO news item--in large and small newspapers--provided little more information than that one or more persons had been confused by an object seen in the sky. Nonetheless, the local

nature of the coverage indicated that the number of UFO reports in the press would far exceed totals based on Air Force statistics or wire service coverage. The fact of continuing coverage on the local level, however, has been obscured by the excitement and wide news coverage which surrounded waves of UFO reports, such as those in 1952, 1957 and 1966.

5. Press coverage of UFOs has relied upon anonymous and "in-expert" witnesses as the only source(s) of information for many UFO news items and has failed to include relevant comments from even routine news sources, such as the police or weather bureau.

The analyses of more than 1,500 UFO news items, discussed in Chapter iii, indicated that in more than 20 per cent of the items the news story was based solely upon the word of one or more individuals, often anonymous, who reported seeing a strange object in the sky.

In these stories, there were no indications that the reporters had checked with the police, weather bureau, local astronomers, the airport, Air Force or other sources to determine whether an explanation of the report might have been available, or whether other reports also had been made. Nor were there any indications that the witnesses had reported or intended to report the sighting to the police, Air Force or other agency.

Such coverage made the press vulnerable to the publication of contrived reports and the publication of reports that might have been explainable by news sources; such coverage also meant the press might fail to uncover reports which would corroborate the first one.

In the analysis of news items selected from Air Force and NICAP microfilm, it was found that the tendency not to check news sources was most common among lower-circulation newspapers.

As indicated by Table 24 in Chapter iii, one-third of items published in newspapers with circulations under 20,000 mentioned no news sources other than the "inexpert" persons seeing the UFO; among newspapers with circulations from 20- to 100,000, 18.6 per cent of the items mentioned no other news sources; among newspapers with circulations greater than 100,000, 11.5 per cent of the items were based solely upon the word of the individual or anonymous witness.

The higher incidence of such stories among the smaller circulation newspapers may have been explained in a statement made by John Snyder, city editor of The Denver Post, quoted in Chapter vii. Snyder noted that larger newspapers, such as his, had more "manpower," and "more checks, more people to read each story before it's in print."

The failure to include such news sources as the police, weather bureau or airport terminal in news stories also seemed attributable to three inter-related factors:

(1) The news coverage was not based upon the possibility that the object seen might have been real, but upon the fact that someone said he had seen a flying saucer. This factor would seem to have been particularly important when, after a few years, UFOs became routine news. A simple verbal report of a UFO sighting was passed from witness to newspaper-reader unexamined by the reporter in between.

(2) The story was written because news accounts of flying saucers were presumed to have a high readership, but were not considered

to be stories requiring corroboration from official news sources. The fact of reader interest, created in large part by the press, would be considered sufficient reason to print the story.

(3) The reporter did not contact sources such as the police, weather bureau or airport because he was careless, lazy or incompetent. His incomplete story was not challenged by other newsmen because of lack of manpower--as suggested by Snyder--or because of reasons listed in (1) and (2).

Regardless of causes, the failure to check reports of UFOs with relevant news sources meant that many UFO news stories were shallow, superficial and redundant accounts of people puzzled by objects in the sky. The exceptional story was one which included comments from a local astronomer, meteorologist or psychologist.

6. The Air Force UFO inquiry from 1947 through 1966 generally had been depicted in the press as thorough, scientific and meriting public confidence. This study concluded that the Air Force UFO inquiry generally exhibited none of these characteristics.

Air Force Chief of Staff General Thomas D. White was quoted in Chapter vi as saying "all UFO reports are investigated in meticulous detail by Air Force personnel and qualified scientific consultants." Secretary of the Air Force Harold Brown was quoted to the same effect.

Despite such assurances and favorable press coverage, the findings in this study indicate that the well-investigated Air Force UFO case was the exception, not the rule. The Air Force UFO inquiry has been primarily a public relations program faithful to the directive to "reduce the percentage of unidentifieds to a minimum" and to prevent

presumed nonsensical reports of flying saucers from clogging Air Force intelligence and defense channels.

The Air Force UFO program seemed guided, in part, by the premise that taxpayers should be assured that the Air Force knew about everything in the nation's skies, from a private airplane taking off from a farmer's field in Illinois to migrating geese flying over Minnesota. Press coverage of UFOs has supported this myth of Air Force omniscience.

The fact is, however, that many objects in the sky are defined to be non-hostile because of their speed or trajectory and therefore are ignored by Air Force detection systems. As discussed in Chapter vi, the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) does not investigate several hundred unknown objects--classified as Uncorrelated Targets (UCTs)--each month because the objects are presumed to be familiar and non-hostile.

The Air Force UFO program has reduced the percentage of unidentifieds to a minimum, not by meticulous investigation, but through bookkeeping procedures which assured that all dubious explanations would be advanced to "known" status within a matter of time.

The press has uncritically accepted Air Force statistics on the high percentage of explained UFOs even though a cursory review of the Air Force UFO program should have raised questions.

The anecdotal nature of many UFO reports suggested that explanations would have to be qualified as "educated guesses," instead of known solutions, as to what the UFOs were. Further, it should have been puzzling that a one-room office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base was entrusted with investigating reports of unidentified

aerial objects when NORAD also had that responsibility and, as Lt. Col. Quintanilla acknowledged, was far better equipped to handle it.

The conclusion here is not that flying saucers exist and the Air Force has hidden the truth about them. The conclusion is that, despite the assurances of the press, little confidence can be placed in the Air Force UFO inquiry from 1947 through 1966.

7. The high degree of ridicule present in the UFO phenomenon was reflected in the press coverage, and much of the ridicule resulted from failure to distinguish between the nonsensical flying saucer stories and the few reports which merited study.

The element of ridicule was illustrated in reasons given for not reporting UFOs and in reactions to those who had reported (Chapter iv) and in the experiences of newsmen who reported seeing UFOs (Chapter vii).

Many aspects of the UFO phenomenon do lend themselves to feature stories or skeptical comments by reporters and columnists. The phenomenon does involve excitable and emotional people whose beliefs and antics others find laughable. Coverage of such personalities cannot be avoided any more than coverage of the bizarre personality in the field of entertainment, athletics or politics.

It should be recognized, however, that the primary question posed by the UFO phenomenon is not whether "kooks" exist. They do.

The riddle of the UFO phenomenon rests primarily in the relatively few supposedly well-documented reports by credible witnesses. Any coverage or investigation of UFOs must seek out such reports and distinguish between them and nonsensical ones. The prevalence of

ridicule hinders such investigation.

A shortcoming of news coverage has been that the clever headline or trite phrase about "space cadets" or "little green men" was too easy a substitute for checking reliable news sources and providing the reader with background to understand the UFO phenomenon.

Summary

The quick answer and easy generalization have been over-used in discussions about UFOs. Reports of flying saucers have been eagerly interpreted as evidence that this planet has been visited, if not invaded or saved, by extraterrestrial intelligence; on the other hand, the UFO phenomenon has been readily dismissed as comprised entirely of "kooks;" there has been unquestioned acceptance of such statements as UFOs have never been photographed, never tracked on radar or never seen by astronomers, even though such generalizations can be challenged by a brief study of UFOs.

Nonetheless, the quick answers and easy generalizations have provided much of the material for press coverage of UFOs. The coverage has been marked by superficiality, redundancy, silliness, careless reporting and lack of relevant information. The lack of information was attributable, in part, to the problems discussed in Chapter viii. But the lack of information was also attributable to the reluctance of the press to ferret out information about the phenomenon and those involved in it.

What emerges from this study is the picture of a process in which the press first popularized the label "flying saucer" as a name

for objects seen in the sky. Then news coverage resulted when persons used the label to classify objects they had seen. It was a cyclical process in which the press provided a name to be used and then gave coverage to those who used it. Such coverage created and helped sustain the "flying saucer" phenomenon.

This study found no evidence that flying saucers were real objects, although some data continue to be puzzling. This study did find UFOs to be an intriguing phenomenon marked by varied psychological and sociological factors, military boondoggling, questions about the nation's defense systems and the awareness that there remain puzzling phenomena in our atmosphere. Yet the information available in the bulk of the news coverage hardly hints at these intriguing aspects of the phenomenon.

Recommendations

On the basis of the data and conclusions presented in this dissertation, a few brief recommendations are offered here as to what changes might be made in news coverage and Air Force handling of UFO reports.

To begin with, in the news coverage, there should be more adherence to the journalistic practice of checking relevant news sources for information on newsworthy events. In the case of UFO reports, this would mean gathering information from such sources as the weather bureau, air traffic control towers, psychologists, physical scientists, etc. Information from these sources probably would make newsmen more hesitant in publishing UFO reports--because of lack of

corroboration. If stories were printed, data from such sources would provide readers with information beyond the bare--and almost meaningless--fact that someone said he saw a strange object in the sky.

To cover newsworthy UFO events adequately, the press should be wary of its tendency to create waves of UFO reports in which varied and sundry objects--from stars to aircraft--are all called flying saucers. The fact that one or two occasional UFO reports are puzzling should not be an excuse for opening news columns to hundreds of explainable, and sometimes nonsensical, reports.

Finally, the press should recognize that Air Force statements and statistics on the percentage of explained UFO reports are of dubious value, for the reasons given in Chapters v and vi. The press should be more critical of the Air Force UFO inquiry, as that inquiry currently exists.

With regard to the Air Force UFO inquiry, it is past time for the Air Force to abandon the policy of maintaining a UFO project "as long as" unexplained reports remain. Such a policy means there would always be a Project Blue Book, or the like, since there would always be unexplained reports, be they, in fact, hoaxes, mis-identifications of known objects, or bonafide UFOs.

In place of Blue Book, a scientific advisory panel could be appointed--or organized independently of the Air Force--to periodically review relevant data on UFOs, including information on uncorrelated targets tracked by the North American Air Defense command. Such a change would recognize that some UFO reports may merit study--as puzzling meteorological or astronomical phenomena--even if not related to extraterrestrial intelligence.

APPENDIX

Newspapers Responding to Questionnaire on UFO News Coverage

The 92 daily newspapers in the random sample used for analysis of newsmen's opinions about UFO news coverage were, in alphabetical order, by state:

The Gadsen, Ala., News-Times; Montgomery, Ala., Journal; Arkadelphia, Ark., Siftings Herald; Searcy, Ark., Citizen; Antioch, Calif., News-Ledger; Orange County, Calif., Evening News; Indio, Calif., News; Los Angeles Herald-Examiner; Los Angeles Times; Napa, Calif., Register; Redding, Calif., Record-Searchlight; Woodland, Calif., Democrat; Denver, Colo., Post; Denver, Colo., Rocky Mountain News; Leadville, Colo., Herald Democrat. Ansonia, Conn., Sentinel; Washington, DC, Post; Fort Lauderdale, Fla., News; South Naples, Fla., Collier County News.

The Marietta, Ga., Journal; Boise, Idaho, Statesman; Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph; Charleston, Ill., Courier News; Danville, Ill., Commercial-News; Jacksonville, Ill., Courier; Marion, Ill., Republican; Ottawa, Ill., Republican Times; Rockford, Ill., Star; Rockford, Ill., Register-Republican; Waukegan, Ill., News-Sun; Columbia City, Ind., Post; Greenfield, Ind., Reporter; Ames, Iowa, Tribune; Mount Pleasant, Iowa, News; Sioux City, Iowa, Journal; Dodge City, Kan., Globe; Ottawa, Kan., Herald; Crowley, La., Signal; Baltimore, Md., News-American; Baltimore, Md., Sun.

The Pittsfield, Mass., Berkshire Eagle; Bay City, Mich., Times; Escanaba, Mich., Press; Pontiac, Mich., Press; Traverse City, Mich., Record-Eagle; Minneapolis, Minn., Tribune; Greenville, Miss., Delta-Democrat Times; Rolla, Mo., News; Missoula, Mont., Missoulian; Kearney, Neb., Hub; Scottsbluff, Neb., Star-Herald; Winnemucca, Nev., Star and Scout; Elizabeth, N.J., Journal; Union City, N.J., Hudson Dispatch; Carlsbad, N.M., Current-Argus; Auburn, N.Y., Citizen-Advertiser; Malone, N.Y., Evening Telegram; North Tonawanda, N.Y., News; Charlotte, N.C., Observer; Washington, N.C., News.

Columbus, Ohio, Citizen Journal; Columbus, Ohio, Dispatch; Geneva, Ohio, Free Press; Upper Sandusky, Ohio, Chief-Union; Bartlesville, Okla., Examiner-Enterprise; Ponca City, Okla., News; Corvallis, Ore., Gazette-Times; Bangor, Pa., News; Brownsville, Pa., Telegraph; Erie, Pa., Times; McKeesport, Pa., News; Oil City, Pa., Derrick; Pottsville, Pa., Republican; Tarentum, Pa., Valley News; Greenwood, S.C., Index-Journal; Dalhart, Tex., Texan; El Paso, Tex., Herald-Post; El Paso, Tex., Times; Garland, Tex., News; San Antonio, Tex., News; Wichita Falls, Tex., Record-News.

Brattleboro, Vt., Reformer; Charlottesville, Va., Progress; Richmond, Va., Times-Dispatch; Bellingham, Wash., Herald; Tri Cities, Wash., Herald; Vancouver, Wash., Columbian; Hinton, W.Va., News; Parkersburg, W.Va., Sentinel; Fort Atkinson, Wisc., Union; Marinette, Wisc., Eagle-Star; Sheridan, Wyo., Press.

Eight major newspapers not included in the random sample, but returning questionnaires were:

The Phoenix, Ariz., Republic; Miami, Fla., News; Louisville, Ky., Courier-Journal; Detroit, Mich., Free Press; Philadelphia, Pa., Bulletin; Seattle, Wash., Times; Milwaukee, Wisc., Journal; Washington, D.C. Star.

Questionnaire Sent to Daily Newspapers

On the next five pages is a copy of the cover letter and questionnaire mailed to daily newspapers on July 3, 1967, to obtain information on newsmen's opinions of UFO news coverage.

UFO PROJECT

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND ASTROPHYSICS
202 Woodbury Hall

A.

3 July 1967

I. COVERAGE OF LOCAL UFO REPORTS

A. How many local UFO reports normally are covered in your newspaper? [Please complete the statement or circle the number of the most appropriate answer.]

1. About _____ a week.
2. About _____ a month.
3. About _____ every two or three months.
4. Virtually none.
5. Other [Please explain.] _____

B.

B. If your answer was other than No. 4, please circle the numbers of those items considered the most frequent conditions under which your newspaper covers local UFO reports:

1. There is a need for a "bright" or "freak" short news item.
2. The explanation of the UFO can be provided with the report of the sighting.
3. There are a number of witnesses to the reported sighting.
4. Competitive news agencies are covering the local report.
5. There are a number of local reports of different sightings.
6. Official sources (police, weather bureau, Air Force, etc.) tend to corroborate the report.
7. Non-official witnesses to the reported sighting seem trustworthy.
8. There are wire service reports of apparently significant sightings elsewhere.
9. Other _____

A.

II. UNCOVERED LOCAL REPORTS

A. How many local UFO reports does your news desk normally hear about, by phone, letter or other channel, but does not cover? [Please complete the statement or circle the number of the most appropriate answer.]

1. About _____ a week.
2. About _____ a month.
3. About _____ every two or three months.
4. Virtually none.
5. Other [Please explain.] _____.

B. If your answer was other than No. 4, please circle the numbers of those items considered the most frequent reasons for not covering local UFO reports:

1. There is insufficient news space.
2. The story is held for developments which do not materialize.
3. There is an insufficient number of witnesses.
4. There is no coverage by competitive news agencies.
5. There is no known nor responsible news source.
6. Official sources (police, weather bureau, Air Force, etc.) tend to discredit the report.
7. There is general mistrust of the subject matter.
8. The report appears to be an isolated case.
9. The report is from a known unreliable source.
10. Other [Please explain.] _____.

III. WIRE SERVICE COVERAGE [If applicable]

A. Do you believe your newspaper is more or less likely to publish an account of a local UFO sighting than a wireservice account of a sighting elsewhere? [Please circle the most appropriate answer.]

1. More Likely to publish the local report. _____
2. Less Likely to publish the local report. _____
3. Neither.

B. Would you please explain your answer:

IV. CRITICISMS OF THE PRESS

A. The press, in general, has been criticized by both so-called pro- and anti-UFO groups. Here are some of the more common complaints. Please comment on their validity.

1. "The press has been schooled by the Air Force and other agencies to 'play down' or ignore UFO reports."
2. "Press coverage discourages people from reporting sightings for fear of publicity and ridicule."
3. "It is impossible to conduct a scientific inquiry into a UFO sighting because the press badgers witnesses or sensationalizes the sighting, hampering objective inquiries."
4. "Many waves of UFO sightings are encouraged and maintained by news coverage."
5. Other comments you may have on criticisms of the press in this area:

V. TRENDS IN COVERAGE

Do you believe there has been any change in press coverage of UFOs over the past several years? Please elaborate:

your name

your position

your newspaper

May your name be used with your comments in a chapter on Press coverage of UFOs being prepared for inclusion in the University's final report?

yes

no

Would you prefer being contacted first regarding the use of any specific comment?

yes

no

Thank you for your cooperation.

Instructions for Coding Data from UFO News Items
Selected from Air Force and NICAP Microfilm
Files for the Years 1947-1966

COLUMNS 1 through 4 will identify individual clippings as to number in the analysis. Items will be numbered consecutively from 0001.

COLUMN 5 will indicate the source of the item by an identifying letter: N-NICAP, B-Bloecher, A-Air Force and, if needed, F-FATE magazine, L-Files of June Larson, M-MacDougall and S-Strentz.

COLUMNS 6 through 15 will show the name of the city in which the newspaper is published. If the name is shorter than 10 letters, the name will be right-justified, i.e., _ _ _ F R E S N O. If the name is longer than 10 letters vowels will be eliminated until there are 10 characters, i.e., SLT _ LK _ CTY.

COLUMNS 16 through 21 will show the name of the newspaper. If the name is less than six-characters long, it will be right-justified, i.e., _ TIMES. If it is longer than six characters it will be abbreviated and records will be kept to make abbreviations consistent, i.e., OREGMN for OREGONIAN, DSPTCH for DISPATCH, BULLTN for BULLETIN.

COLUMNS 22 through 27 will show the circulation for the newspaper of publication. The daily, non-Sunday, circulation will be recorded as shown in the Editor & Publisher Yearbook of the year of publication. If less than six figures, the circulation will be right-justified.

COLUMNS 28 through 33 will show the date the item was published. Columns 28 and 29 will show the month, 01-12; Columns 30 and 31 will show the day, 01-31; and Columns 32 and 33 will show the year, 47-67.

COLUMNS 34 and 35 will show the region and state of the newspaper of publication. The first digit indicates the region; the second the state.

<u>New England</u>	<u>East North Central</u>	46 North Dakota	50 <u>Virginia</u>
11 Connecticut	31 Illinois	47 South Dakota	<u>Border States</u>
12 Maine	32 Indiana	<u>South</u>	61 Kentucky
13 Massachusetts	33 Michigan	51 Alabama	62 Maryland
14 New Hampshire	34 Ohio	52 Arkansas	63 Oklahoma
15 Rhode Island	35 Wisconsin	53 Florida	64 Tennessee
16 Vermont	<u>West North Central</u>	54 Georgia	65 Washington DC
<u>Middle Atlantic</u>	41 Iowa	55 Louisiana	66 West Virginia
21 Delaware	42 Kansas	56 Mississippi	
22 New Jersey	43 Minnesota	57 North Carolina	
23 New York	44 Missouri	58 South Carolina	
24 Pennsylvania	45 Nebraska	59 Texas	

<u>Mountain States</u>	<u>West</u>
71 Arizona	81 Alaska
72 Colorado	82 California
73 Idaho	83 Hawaii
74 Montana	84 Oregon
75 Nevada	85 Washington
76 New Mexico	
77 Utah	
78 Wyoming	

COLUMN 36 will indicate the period of publication in this fashion: 1. 1947-1956; 2. 1957-1966.

COLUMN 37 will indicate the period of publication in this Fashion: 1. 1947-1950, 2. 1951-1954, 3. 1955-58, 4. 1959-62 and 5. 1963-67.

COLUMN 38 will indicate the region in which the newspaper is published; thus it will be the same figure as recorded in Column 34.

COLUMN 39 will indicate the nature of the newspaper as recorded in the Editor & Publisher Yearbook used for circulation data. The nature of the paper will be recorded this way: 1. Daily Morning, 2. Daily Afternoon or Evening, 3. Both 1. and 2., and 4. Weekly.

COLUMN 40 will indicate the dateline of the item analyzed this way:

1. There was no dateline; the story apparently was of local origin.
2. The dateline is of another city or area within the state.
3. The dateline is of another state within the same region of the paper of publication or of a border state not within the region.
4. The dateline is of another state not within the same region and not a border state; there is no dateline on a UFO story of out-of-state origin, such as a general wire-service national wrapup story.
5. The dateline is of another nation.

COLUMN 41 will indicate the news agency which wrote the UFO item:

1. There is no indication of any of the below or there is indication the item was written by an employee of the paper of publication.
2. The story carries the name or logotype of the Associated Press (AP)
3. The story carries the name or logotype of the United Press (IP)
4. The story carries the name or logotype of International News Service (INS)
5. The story carries the name or logotype of United Press International (UPI)
6. The story is a combination of any of the above.
7. The story carries the name of a news service other than those above.

COLUMN 42 will indicate the nature of the byline.

1. There is no byline.
2. The byline lists only the reporter's name or identifies him as an employee of the newspaper or wire service.
3. The byline indicates the reporter is a science or aviation writer/editor.
4. The byline indicates the story is by a person who saw a UFO or is "as told to" the newspaper or a reporter.
5. The story is by a newsman who saw the UFO reported in the story.
6. The byline is suggestive of a humorous or feature approach such as identifying the writer as "Space Cadet," or "Outerspace Correspondent."

COLUMN 43--Nature of the Item Analyzed

1. It is a news or news-feature item. That is, as generally accepted, it is timely coverage of an event dealing with the report or investigation of a UFO or commentary upon the UFO phenomenon in general and appearing on the news pages of a paper with a headline and byline or news agency listed or implicit. Not meant to include any category defined below or any item that uses UFO or "saucer" terminology with regard to such topics as beauty contests, fashions or sports.
2. It is an editorial. That is, as generally accepted, those items labeled as editorials, or the signed or unsigned opinion offered in the space the newspaper sets aside for comments on current events and dealing with the UFO phenomenon. Not meant to include other items defined in this category nor comments made while dealing with irrelevant topics, such as "Mayor Smith's budget is whirling around city hall like a flying saucer."
3. It is a column or opinion piece. That is, as generally accepted, those signed and/or regularly featured humorous or commentary items, other than editorials, attributed to specific writer(s) and understood to be primarily his personal views. This category would include question-man or inquiring-photographer items in which the subject is UFOs and the initiating source of the discussion is the newsman or newspaper.
4. It is a letter to the editor. That is, as generally accepted, those items generally printed in a regularly designated section for items addressed to the editor or the newspaper and submitted over the signature of an individual or group. This category would include question and answer items where readers seek information or initiate action leading to the publication of the item.
5. It is a review of a movie or book. That is, as generally accepted, those comments upon current books or movies dealing with the UFO phenomenon.

COLUMN 44--The nature of the UFO

1. The item deals with or mentions only one specific UFO report as best determined by time, date, location and description. There may be more than one witness, but the object reported is the same or is said to be so.

2. The item deals with or mentions more than one specific UFO report, but all reports are identified with regard to location and date, description or identity of those involved.
3. The item deals with or mentions specific report(s) as in 1. and 2., but also includes references to other unspecific sightings supposedly occurring at about the same time or seen previously in the current area of reports.
4. There may or may not be reports listed or mentioned by date, location and description, but the item deals primarily or exclusively with general and current reports of people seeing or reporting UFOs.
5. While the item may include UFO reports as described in any of the above, its emphasis is upon a historical discussion of the phenomenon, or related phenomena, or upon a review of the pros and cons of the existence of flying saucers.

COLUMNS 45 through 68 will indicate what sources (those who are not witnesses to a UFO sighting) are quoted by the press as to their knowledge of UFO reports in particular or the UFO phenomenon in general and what witnesses are reported by the press to have seen UFOs. The sources and witnesses are divided into nine occupational groups and these groups are classified as to their relative expertise in commenting upon the UFO phenomenon. The purpose of this analysis is to determine (1) what sources newsmen rely upon for data on UFOs and (2) according to the press, who are the people who see UFOs.

The occupational groups are these:

1) UFO INVESTIGATORS--Officials of Project Blue Book, Army Air Force and Air Force UFO investigators, Dr. J. Allen Hynek, William Powers, and others associated directly with the Air Force UFO investigation.

2) MEMBERS AND SPOKESMEN OR NICAP AND RELATED ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS APRO (Aerial Phenomena Research Organization)

3) THOSE IN FIELDS ASSOCIATED WITH AERIAL PHENOMENA--Pilots, former pilots, military pilots, balloonists, navigators, radar operators, airport control tower operators, men of the Federal Aviation Agency or Civil Aeronautics Board, the Air Defense Command, pilots looking for UFOs.

4) THOSE WITH TECHNICAL COMPETENCE--Astronomers, meteorologists, physicists, chemists and others in the physical and life sciences; psychologists, sociologists and others in the behavioral sciences.

5) OFFICIALS--Public Officials, appointed or elected, and military officers not directly connected with the UFO inquiry.

6) NEWSMEN--Radio, television and print journalists, including their comments as found in editorials, columns, reviews or as quoted by other newsmen or in telling of their own UFO experiences.

7) LAW ENFORCEMENT-- City, county, township or state police, security guards, civil defense, ground observer corps.

8) OTHERS--Comments attributed to individuals identified by name or occupation and address but not classifiable under any of the above categories.

9) ANONYMOUS--Comments attributed to anonymous or virtually anonymous sources such as a man, a woman, two brothers, several people, someone who would not give his name. Record only when ANONYMOUS is only witness or source or refused to give name but was still quoted.

The occupational categories were devised, in part, in consultation with several members of the UFO Project at the University of Colorado. For further analysis the occupational categories were classified into three groups based upon relative expertise to comment upon the UFO phenomenon.

The first group, those considered relatively "expert" to comment upon the UFO phenomenon, comprised (1) UFO investigators, (2) members and spokesmen of NICAP, APRO and related organizations, (3) those in occupations associated with aerial phenomena and (4) those with technical competence in the physical, life and behavioral sciences. The second group, those whose occupations may involve them with UFOs but who have no apparent training or particular skills to study UFO phenomena, comprised (5) public and military officials, (6) newsmen and (7) law enforcement and security employees. The third group of (8) others and (9) anonymous includes those not classified in the first two groups.

News-item references to occupational categories will be coded twice. One entry will be made in one of the nine occupational categories, and one entry will be made in one of the three groups discussed in the preceding paragraph.

The coding will take two forms. Within the occupational category, the coding will show whether the source(s) or witness(es) made comments in support of or hostile to the existence of flying saucers. Within the "expertise" group, the coding will only indicate whether or not that particular group appeared in the item analyzed.

Comments in the occupational categories will be classified in one of three ways:

1. Those comments considered to support, advocate or endorse the interpretation that UFOs are real objects, possibly extraterrestrial, possibly secret weapons from our nation or another, or at least not understandable in light of present known technology. That is, the object seen was a flying saucer or was called a flying saucer because it escaped other classification; it was not a hoax or misinterpretation of man-made or natural objects; the Air Force is deceiving the nation about the truth behind UFOs; UFOs are spaceships: the earth

is under surveillance by a superior intelligence; the object performed in ways impossible for any known aircraft or material; the unknown object was tracked on radar and/or clearly was not a result of known atmospheric or meteorological phenomena; thousands of people have seen UFOs unidentifiable as anything natural or known to earth; there was a physical evidence of the UFO sighting; the object landed; there is a denial of a statement listed under 3.

2. Those comments considered neither supportive of nor antagonistic to the comments in 1., but primarily neutral or narrative in dealing with the UFO phenomenon in general or a report in particular. That is something is seen when people see UFOs but it is not known what; the Air Force is investigating; the UFO subject may be interesting regardless of whether UFOs are real; it is not clear what happened during a particular sighting, but it is being checked; radar was not in operation; it is not sure whether the incident could be explained as the result of natural causes; supposed evidence is being studied. Results of the investigation will not be known for a while. Others looked for the supposed UFO but did not see it; the witness says "I'm not saying it was a flying saucer, but it was something strange" or a similar comment.

3. Those comments considered to be opposed to, critical of or hostile toward the interpretations offered under 1., or those comments which interpret the UFO phenomenon as resulting from the misinterpretation of known phenomena. That is, the UFO reported was Venus, an airplane, a searchlight or a hoax; the Air Force has investigated UFOs and found no substance for claims they are extraterrestrial or a threat to the national security; UFOs are products of mass hysteria or hallucination; it will all go away in time; a UFO report is explainable as a temperature inversion or other meteorological event. UFO reports cannot be substantiated.

Only one response will be coded under each occupational item-- even if more than one member of the occupational category is quoted or the one quoted makes several comments. The procedures for coding will be:

Code as 1 if the comment(s) are supportive of UFOs as explained above.

Code as 2 if the comments are both supportive and neutral as explained above.

Code as 3 if the comments are neutral or narrative as explained above, or supportive, neutral and hostile as explained above, or supportive and hostile.

Code as 4 if the comments are both hostile and neutral as explained above.

Code as 5 if the comment(s) are hostile as explained above.

Also, only one response will be coded on the expert-non-expert continuum. The particular group will either be coded as 1 (present) or 2 (not present) in the item.

COLUMNS 45 through 53 will indicate the nature of comments from sources quoted by the press as to their knowledge of UFO reports in particular or the phenomenon in general. As explained above either no entry will be made in a column or the entry will be 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5.

COLUMN 45 -- UFO INVESTIGATORS
 COLUMN 46 -- MEMBERS AND SPOKESMEN OF NICAP, APRO
 COLUMN 47 -- FIELDS ASSOCIATED WITH AERIAL PHENOMENA
 COLUMN 48 -- TECHNICAL COMPETENCE
 COLUMN 49 -- OFFICIALS
 COLUMN 50 -- NEWSMEN
 COLUMN 51 -- LAW ENFORCEMENT
 COLUMN 52 -- OTHERS
 COLUMN 53 -- ANONYMOUS

COLUMNS 54 through 62 will indicate the nature of comments from witnesses to UFO sightings as quoted in the press. As explained above either no entry will be made or the entry will be 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5.

COLUMN 54 -- UFO INVESTIGATORS
 COLUMN 55 -- MEMBERS AND SPOKESMEN OR NICAP, APRO
 COLUMN 56 -- FIELDS ASSOCIATED WITH AERIAL PHENOMENA
 COLUMN 57 -- TECHNICAL COMPETENCE
 COLUMN 58 -- OFFICIALS
 COLUMN 59 -- NEWSMEN
 COLUMN 60 -- LAW ENFORCEMENT
 COLUMN 61 -- OTHERS
 COLUMNS 62 -- ANONYMOUS

COLUMNS 63 through 65 will indicate what sources are quoted in the item with regard to degree of "expertise."

COLUMN 63 1 - Yes, a response is recorded in columns 45 through 48
 2 - No, no response is recorded in columns 45 through 48

COLUMN 64 1 - Yes, a response is recorded in columns 49 through 51
 2 - No, no response is recorded in columns 49 through 51

COLUMN 65 1 - Yes, a response is recorded in columns 52 through 53
 2 - No, no response is recorded in columns 52 through 53

COLUMNS 66 through 68 will indicate what witnesses are quoted in the item with regard to degree of "expertise."

COLUMN 66 1 - Yes, a response is recorded in columns 54 through 57

2 - No, no response is recorded in columns 54 through 57

COLUMN 67 1 - Yes, a response is recorded in columns 58 through 60

2 - No, no response is recorded in columns 58 through 60

COLUMN 69 1 - Yes, a response is recorded in columns 61 through 62

2 - No, no response is recorded in columns 61 through 62

COLUMN 69 will indicate the number of witnesses stated as seeing the UFO(s) mentioned in the story. Add witnesses for all sightings mentioned.

- 1 - One
- 2 - Two-Five or a few "observers," "some"
- 3 - Six-Ten or several or a number
- 4 - More than Ten or dozens
- 5 - Scores, hundreds, thousands

COLUMN 70 will indicate whether the item contains statements that might tend to encourage a person to report a UFO.

- 1 - Yes the item a. indicates that persons who see UFOs should report them or suggests they are to be respected for speaking their minds.
 - b. indicates that the UFO problem may merit serious study and there may be scientific rewards.
 - or c. indicates that persons reported UFOs because they read of other sightings and wanted to corroborate them or thought of sightings in a new light after reading of others.

2 - No the item contains none of the above.

COLUMN 71 will indicate whether the item contains statements that might tend to discourage a person from reporting a UFO. Code in this fashion:

1. Yes, the item a. suggests that persons who see or report UFOs can be considered gullible, untrustworthy, drunk, unstable, out of touch with reality, hoaxsters, addicted to UFOs or have other characteristics that may make them see fit subjects for ridicule.
 - b. mentions physical, personal or property damage a person suffered after making

- public a report of a UFO sighting.
- c. includes or refers to comments that an individual once having seen a UFO says that if he had it to do over again he would never report a UFO.
- or d. mentions person(s) refusing to be identified as having reported a UFO.

2. No, the item contains none of the above.

COLUMNS 72, 73 and 74 will indicate the circulation ranges of the newspapers publishing the UFO items. Every newspaper's circulation will be recorded in each of the three columns in this fashion:

- COLUMN 72: Code 1 if circulation is less than 40,000
Code 2 if circulation is more than 40,000
- COLUMN 73: Code 1 if circulation is less than 20,000
Code 2 if circulation is more than 20,000 less than 100,000
Code 3 if circulation is more than 100,000
- COLUMN 74: Code 1 if circulation is less than 10,000
Code 2 if circulation is from 10- to 25,000
Code 3 if circulation is from 25- to 60,000
Code 4 if circulation is from 60- 200,000
Code 5 if circulation is more than 200,000

These circulation categories were determined after the entire sample was drawn.

Reliability of Data Codes from UFO News Items
Selected from Air Force and NICAP Microfilm
Files for the Years 1947-1966

Three procedures were followed to assure confidence in the reliability of the data recorded from UFO news items: (1) About 20 items were selected at random and coded prior to coding items to be included in the sample: this familiarized me with coding procedures and suggested adjustments and clarifications to be made in the instructions; (2) the number of items coded during one day never exceeded 40 to lessen the likelihood that fatigue or boredom would bias the data; (3) throughout the coding, items were continually rechecked for errors and inconsistencies.

After the 511 items were coded, a test was conducted on the consistency and accuracy of the coding. Beginning at an item chosen at random, every twenty-fifth news item was recoded. Twenty items were recoded and the results were compared against those of the original coding.

The recoding did not include the variables of the newspaper's name, date or time of publication and circulation size. It was thought that including such data would make the coding appear more accurate than it may have been. The data which were recoded were the period of publication, dateline, byline, news agency involved, occupational categories and expertise groups of sources and witnesses, comments attributed to sources and witnesses, and presence or absence of encouragement and discouragement factors.

In recoding these items, a total of 382 entries were made. Of these, 13, or 3.4 per cent, differed from the original entries.

The differences did not cluster in any particular category or area of analysis and were distributed evenly through the sample. Three occurred in items selected from the 1-125 group; four in items selected from the 126-250 group; three in the 251-376 group; three in the 376-500 group.

The recoding showed that 96.6 per cent of the entries were the same as had been made in the original coding and that there appeared to be no bias or errors in any one particular category or period of coding.

Considering the uses to which the data were put, the test results were satisfactory.

Statement on Dexter and Hillsdale UFO Sightings
by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Scientific Consultant
to Project Blue Book
Detroit Press Club, March 25, 1966

The Air Force has asked me to make a statement on my findings to date. This I am happy to do, provided it is clearly understood that my statement will refer to the two principal events as reported to me: the event near Dexter, Mich., on March 20, and a similar one at Hillsdale, Mich., on March 21. It does not cover the hundreds of unexplained reports as opposed to the thousands of explained cases made not only to Project Blue Book, but those from other countries, over the past several years, as described in recent books and articles. I have not investigated those--such as the one near Exeter, N.H. and those in the western states last year, nor the puzzling foreign cases, such as that at Cuernavaca, Mexico, last fall. I have recommended in my capacity as Scientific Consultant, that competent scientists quietly study such cases when evidence from responsible people appears to warrant such study. There may be much of potential value to science in such events. We know a very great deal more about the physical world in 1966, than we did in 1866--but, by the same token, the people in the year 2066 may regard us as very incomplete in our scientific knowledge. We must not in our haste to have answers, be Frederick Smiths.

If then, it is understood I am not making a blanket statement to cover the entire UFO phenomenon over the past 20 years in this and other countries, I am prepared to discuss the Dexter and Hillsdale sightings.

Now, in addition to these two specific cases there has been a flood of other reports from this area, both before and after last Sunday and Monday, and I could not possibly have had the time to investigate all of these. I have had time, however, to determine that in Hillsdale, over and above the sincere and honest reporting by the young ladies at Hillsdale College of a very puzzling sighting, certain young men have played pranks with flares. And, I have also determined that the pictures released yesterday to the press were taken on March 17, near Milan, Mich., and have no reference whatever to the sightings of March 20 or 21st, and are without any question a time exposure of the rising crescent moon and the planet Venus. I emphasize that this explanation refers to those specific pictures and not to the two cases now in question.

At long last now, the Dexter and Hillsdale cases: Here are the hard facts, the residue, the common denominator after sifting out as much of the subjective, peripheral, and inconsistent statements as I have been able to do in this short time.

The majority of observers in both cases reported only lights--red, yellow and green, silent glowing lights, near the ground. They have not described an object. Even the only two observers who did describe an object have stated that they were no closer than 500 yards--better than a quarter of a mile away--a distance which does not allow details to be determined. Witnesses have described glowing lights--lights that seemed to move but never far from a definite locale, or which suddenly disappeared and popped up at another place. Now what was that locale in both instances? In both cases, a swamp. In both cases the location of the glow was pin-pointed: in Dexter it was seen between two distant groups of people, and at Hillsdale it was seen in a swampy depression between the girls and distant trees. It was in both cases a very localized phenomenon. I think that this is a most significant point.

A dismal swamp is a most unlikely place for a visit from outer space! It is not a place where a helicopter would hover for several hours, or where a soundless, secret device would likely be tested.

Now what is a swamp? It is a place of rotting vegetation and of decomposition. Swamps are not the normal province of the astronomer; he usually has his eyes trained toward far loftier places--yet the Dutch astronomer, Minnaert, in his book, "Light and Color, in The Open Air," has this to say about swamps. He describes lights that have been seen in swamps by the astronomer Bessel and other excellent observers. The lights, he says, resemble tiny flames, sometimes seen right on the ground, sometimes floating above it. The flames go out in one place and suddenly appear in another, giving the illusion of motion. The colors, he says, are sometimes yellow, sometimes red and blue-green. No heat is felt, and the lights do not burn or char the ground. They can appear for hours at a time and sometimes for a whole night. Generally there is no smell, and usually no sound, except the popping sound of little explosions, such as when a gas burner ignites.

Where does the gas come from, and what lights it? The rotting vegetation produces marsh gas which can be trapped by ice and winter conditions. When a spring thaw occurs, the gas may be released in some quantity.

The flame, Minnaert says, is a form of chemical luminescence and its low temperature is one of its peculiar features. Exactly how it occurs is not known and this in itself might be made a subject of an interesting study.

The glowing lights on the swamp near Dexter and Hillsdale were observed for two to three hours. No sounds were heard, except for popping sounds. The lights were red, green or yellow and they appeared to move sideways, and to rise a short distance. I emphasize this would not be seen frequently--it is of a unique character. I have never seen it myself and I can easily understand the dismay of the witnesses who saw it and who sincerely described what they saw.

It seems likely that as the present spring thaws came the trapped gases CH_4 , H_2S , PH_3 , resulting from decomposition of organic materials were released. The chemistry book by Sienko and Plane has this to say: "In air, phosphine, PH_3 , usually bursts into flame, apparently because it is ignited by a spontaneous oxidation of the impurity P_2H_4 . The will-o-the-wisp, sometimes observed in marshes, may be due to spontaneous ignition of impure PH_3 , which might be formed by reduction of naturally occurring phosphorous compounds."

Other scientists have pointed out to me that in swamps the formation of H_2S and CH_4 from rotting vegetation is common. These could be ignited by the spontaneous burning of the Phosphine, PH_3 .

It would seem to me that the association of the sightings with swamps, in these particular cases, is more than coincidence. No group of witnesses observed any craft coming to or going away from the swamps. The glow was localized there. Deputy Fitzpatrick described the glow as coming from beyond a rise adjacent to the swamp, and visible through the trees. He stated that the lights brightened and dimmed much as stage lights do--smoothly and slowly. The girls at Hillsdale described almost the identical thing. This could have been due to the release of variable quantities of marsh gas.

The disappearance of the light when people got close with flashlights or car lights, would indicate that the glow seemed bright only to dark-adapted eyes. The night was dark--there was no moon. The Hillsdale girls kept their rooms dark in order to see the lights in the swamp.

I emphasize in conclusion that I cannot prove in a Court of Law that this is the full explanation of these sightings. It appears very likely, however, that the combination of the conditions of this particular winter, an unusually mild one in this area, and the particular weather conditions that night--there was little wind at either location--were such as to have produced this unusual and puzzling display.

Vita

Name--Herbert J. Strentz

Date of birth--December 18, 1938

Place of birth--Chicago, Illinois

B.A.--Fresno State College
Fresno, California, 1960

M.A.--Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York, 1964

Current address--Department of Journalism
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, N.D. 58201

FOOTNOTES

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