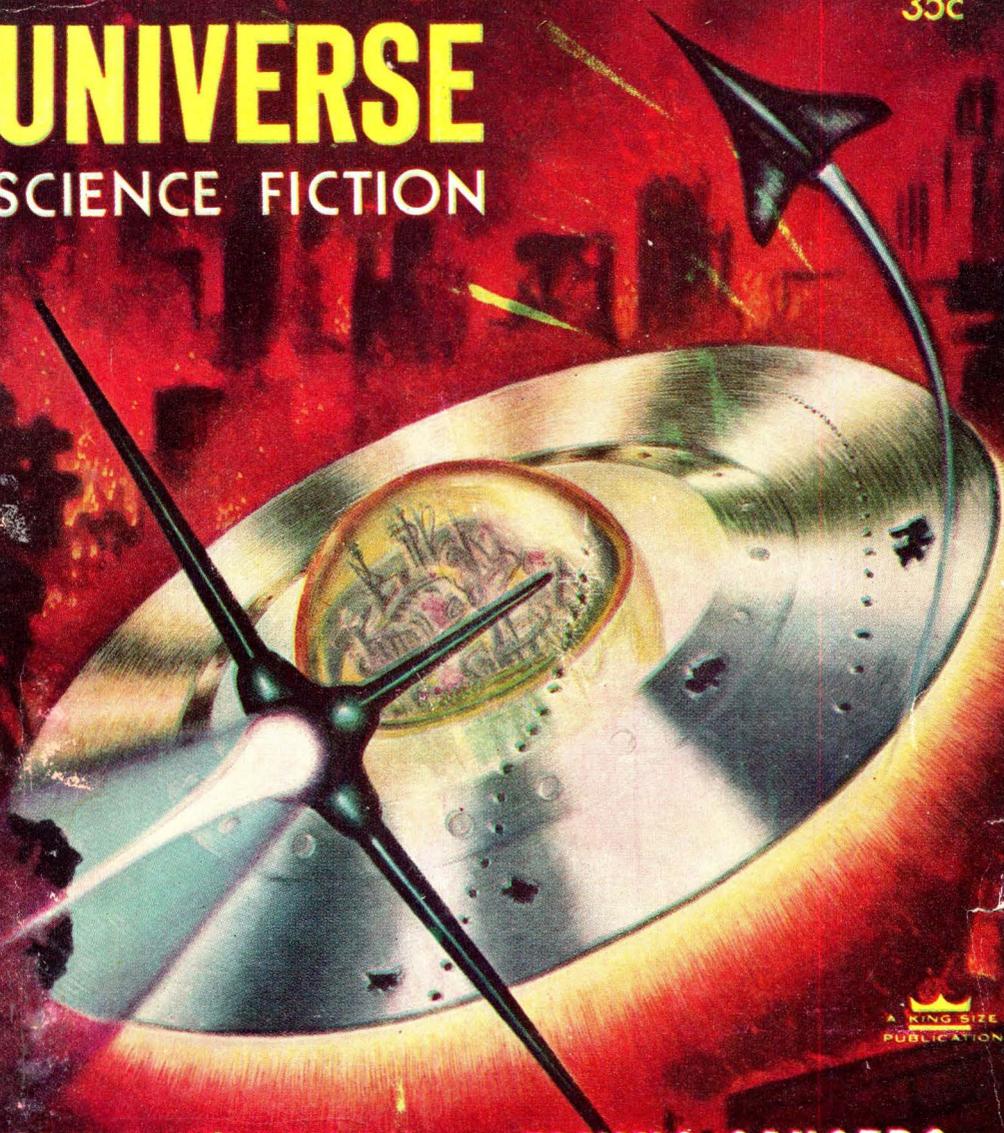


# FANTASTIC UNIVERSE

SCIENCE FICTION

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A KING SIZE  
PUBLICATION

**IVAN SANDERSON on FLYING SAUCERS**

ARTICLES AND STORIES BY GRAY BARKER • HARLAN ELLISON • RICHARD WILSON

**VOLCANERO** A Novelet by ROBERT E. GILBERT

# FANTASTIC UNIVERSE

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**how  
to  
be  
a  
saucer  
author**

by...*DEAN McLAUGHLIN*

**A spokesman for the "flying  
crockery" school examines  
case against certain writers.**

**UNLESS** you're squeamish about how you make money, you could do a lot worse than to write a book about flying saucers.

Anyone can do it. Auto mechanics, hot dog salesmen, and bird watchers—all have written saucer books. There's no reason why you can't, too.

However, people will believe the things you write a lot more quickly if they think you're an astronomer. God knows why, but they think **astronomers** know something.

Therefore, make yourself out to be an astronomer if you possibly can. For example, if you have ever been within a hundred miles of a big observatory, refer to yourself casually as "of" Palomar, or Mount Wilson, or whichever one you want to be associated with.

Don't hesitate to stretch the truth. In a book about saucers, you can't let little things like facts get on your way. Remember that for saucer **success**—that is, for perennial sale in Southern California—there is just one

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*Dean McLaughlin is well known in Astronomical and Geological circles, but is not the author of this article. Not that Dean McLaughlin! Many people interested in UFOlogy have to admit that there have been some unfortunate contributions to the field—sloppily written and still more sloppily edited—and also some rather strange personal "testimonies". The present article is prompted by the existence of this material.*

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basic rule. Give the readers what they want.

In a saucer book, this means insisting that saucers exist. Your readers will insist on being told that the saucers are not mere illusions, hoaxes, things imagined, or somebody's windborne bloomers. They want to be assured that there are real, honest-to-goodness flying saucers.

So tell them.

One saucer author didn't do this. He tried to disprove the saucers. Financially, his book was a miserable flop.

Your readers want to be told the saucers are space ships from another world—with people inside. Don't disappoint them, or they won't buy your book.

Furthermore, they'll want photographs. Photographs are the final, absolute proff of anything you say.

Anyway, you can say they are.

You *could* crib all the photos you need from the newspapers, but you shouldn't. Authentic new photographs are one of the major attractions of a saucer book. Besides, it's *much* more fun to make your own.

If you are any good at all in a darkroom, you won't have any trouble running bales of perfectly good photos with significantly saucer-shaped blotches. Or you might take pictures of actual objects you can pass off as saucers. Almost anything

disc-shaped will do—clay-pigeons, sun helmets, lids off garbage pails, the top of a chicken brooder . . .

So that no one can figure out what your pictures are actually of, it's a good idea to ruin the camera lens with steel wool, and make sure it's out of focus. Any details which are still apparent you can pass off as landing gear, pilot's cabin, portholes, or condensers for animal magnetism. Whatever comes into your head.

One of the problems you must deal with is other saucer books. No matter what you write, some of these books will make claims considerably different from your own. A lot of your readers will have to read these books, and many of them will come to yours convinced that the other books are Gospel truth. It is up to you to win them over.

Flies are caught better with honey. Speak tolerantly of the other books. You might even point out where they happen to agree with you, just to prove that if you're lying, you're not the only one.

As for the differences, attribute them—not to the fact that they are whole-cloth fiction—but to honest errors. Explain that the other books, though written with no intent to deceive, are not the final word. Because their author's memories are faulty,

because they have been led astray by doubtful facts, because—while meaning well—they have made mistakes—the books are not accurate. Only your own book—you will say—is the whole and accurate truth.

Under no circumstances should suggest that the other books are frauds. The suggestion might cause some minds to suspect that your book, too, is no more truthful than the journals of the Burlington Liar's Club. It would be one thing if you were telling the truth, but since you're just out for money, it's best to let well enough alone.

Finally, your book must have a title. It should include the words *flying saucers* or, at the very least, *saucers*. To all prospective customers, these words will instantly identify your book for what it is.

You have your choice between two ways to tell the Truth about the Saucers: a "here's proof" book, or "I Talked With A Martian."

If you decide to write a proof book, the collected works of Charles Fort are an absolute must. Without Fort's books, you would have to spend weeks concocting your evidence.

Fort has done the job for you. His books are packed with reports of strange and impossible phenomena which may or may not have hap-

pened. For example:

A fifty pound chunk of ice, cut square, fell from a clear sky near Wartburg, Texas, on July 19, 1924. It almost brained Uriah Gropp, who was sleeping in a hobo jungle.

Gropp lugged the ice to a local butcher shop, where it was weighed. Exactly fifty pounds. He mailed it to Columbia University to be studied.

*It never arrived!*

Only three days before, in Ipswich, Mass, an ice truck was reported missing. *It was never found!*

Ignore the explanation Fort supplies. Instead, tell your readers that this incident proves saucers exist.

Don't try to make it logical; it might be difficult, and you could only confuse your readers. Saucer addicts aren't accustomed to logic. Instead, use phrases like, "This can only be explained by ..." or "The only explanation is ..."

Such transcendental reasoning can't be argued with.

When you have proved the existence of saucers, tell your readers where they come from. Venus, Mars, or extra-solar planets are the usual choices, but it doesn't really matter. One place is as good as another. If you can't make up your mind, flip a coin.

It's not hard to prove that the planet you choose is the right one. Suit the details to

your individual case, but it should be enough to say astronomy has ruled out all the other possibilities. If you feel you *must* say more, say astronomy prove it can *only* be the planet you've picked.

You should also speculate on ways and means by which the saucers operate. Write learnedly—as if you knew what you were talking about—of negative and neutral gravity, the aerodynamic advantages of the saucer design, and magnetic lines of force.

Be careful, though, *not* to make sense. You want to convince your readers that the saucers are the product of a science far in advance of our own. Consequently, no attempt at explanation should be understandable.

Your readers will also expect you to reveal the motives of the saucer people. Since this is one of the subjects on which they have not made up their minds, you are free to proclaim the saucer people benevolent, friendly, indifferent, or unspeakable, whichever strikes your fancy.

No matter which you choose, remark significantly that the saucers first appeared almost precisely two years after Hiroshima, and only a year from the time of the Bikini experiments.

(If you have already proved the saucers have watched us since the days of Ezekial's wheel, explain that you only

mean the *latest* visitation of the saucers.)

Carefully choose your other evidence to corroborate your particular claim. If you want your readers to believe the worst, tell them about disasters which you can blame on the saucers. Start off with a few big air crashes, and build up to even more horrible things.

Half-remembered, the Texas City disaster of some years back is tailor made for your purpose, and, though a little more difficult, the Chicago Fire will be no serious problem to the talented liar. The destruction of Pompeii, the Sack of Rome, the San Francisco Earthquake, and even the Rape of Nanking, are also fair game.

However, you'd have a hard time blaming Hiroshima on the saucers. You'd better leave that one alone.

To clinch your argument, mention a few disappearances of the *Mary Celeste* and Judge Crater type, and for the final, really grisly thrill, tell your readers of the rains of blood and shredded meat which Charles Fort reports.

Then go on, almost hysterically, to accuse the Powers-That-Be-In-Washington of Concealing The Facts From The People. This, you will say, is why the Air Force continues to deny the existence of saucers in spite of evidence such as you have invented.

If, on the other hand, you decide to prove that the saucers are friendly—or, anyway, not unfriendly—simply point out that after almost ten years of intensive visitation, no saucer has done any damage or harmed a human being.

This wouldn't be as exciting, of course. You'd do better to declare the saucer people are outright fiends.

In writing this book, remember you have an advantage: saucers can never be disproved. The evidence against a thing that doesn't exist has to be negative evidence—an *absence* of evidence. In the face of such evidence as you can invent, a skeptic is helpless. Disbelief withers. The advocate of saucers always has the upper hand.

You may prefer to tell of a saucer pilot and the things he talked about. You can even describe a joy-ride in his saucer. There is certainly nothing to stop you.

Using this approach, you don't have to prove the existence of saucers. You start with the assumption they exist, just as if there could be no doubt.

Nor do you have to resort to proof to back up any of your claims. It is enough to tell your readers that the saucer man told you so.

You must write your story in the first person, as if it actually happened to you.

It's not difficult. Just say you met a saucer man and chatted with him for a while about this and that. Your readers will be satisfied.

If you really want to impress them, tell of the strange sense of something about to happen which you felt immediately before the meeting.

Naturally, you will have to describe the saucer people. This will not be difficult because they look just like other people. To make them look like anything else would put too much strain on your readers' imaginations.

You can, of course, make them short or tall, small or large, and their hair can be any color you please. Even bright green, if your stomach can stand it. If you want to, you can even make the proportions of their limbs and bodies a little abnormal, but don't get carried away. You don't want your readers to think the saucer men are freaks.

Under no circumstances should the saucer people be any color but white. A dark "space tan" is permissible if you make it very clear it is only a tan. Otherwise, no skin color but white can be allowed. Your readers would find it hard to believe that any race so far advanced is not their own.

To make the best impression, your people ought to be magnificent in appearance.

The men should be as handsome as Greek statues, and the women should be indescribably beautiful. There should not, however, be the faintest suggestion of the more carnal aspects of sex. These people, remember, are far above us.

The saucer people must have no disgusting habits. Their table manners must be impeccable. Their clothes and customs should religiously conform to what we think is decent. Keep in mind always that you want your readers to believe the saucer people are a perfect race. They must act the part.

Their language must be English. Any other tongue would be an affront to all English-speaking people, including the bulk of your readers. The only permissible alternative is to make the saucer people telepathic, having no spoken language.

The society of the saucer people must be Utopian in every way you can imagine. Your saucer man should describe it at some length. Their super-scientific technology provides them with every conceivable luxury. They have no wars. Their lives span centuries. Hard labor is unknown. Once in a while, they chase butterflies. There is nothing not within their power.

Beyond the broad outlines of the Ideal Life, you are free to preach whatever pan-

aceas you please. Care, however, would be wise in describing their system of government. For example, many of your readers would be horribly shocked to discover that the saucer people live in socialism. They might even prefer to stop believing in saucers.

The best thing is to avoid politics. Tell your readers that the saucer people have learned to live in harmony with one another without laws or any form of compulsion.

Obviously, people of such civilized behavior would be advanced far beyond us. This is exactly the impression you want to give.

In a book of this type, the saucer people must be friendly. Otherwise, you'd have a hard time explaining why you're still alive.

Exactly how friendly is up to you. Perhaps they are only mildly interested in us, amazed that a people so uncivilized could have advanced so far. However, it is usually better to tell your readers that the saucer people have come to save us from ourselves. They have a message which, if faithfully obeyed, will end war, abolish disease, and help you clean up on the horses.

You, of course, will be the chosen one to bring their message to the world. The message can be anything you feel like saying.

You can preach any craze, fad, or cult you happen to believe in. Anything at all. Any opinions you care to express, you can put in the saucer man's mouth. You can preach to an audience beyond your most fantastic dreams.

And get paid for it, too.

But don't proclaim your message too soon. Save it for a climactic chapter near the end. Before you tell your readers the secret of the ages, of the universe, or how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, you must tell of your adventure with the saucer man.

If you like, this may be only a protracted conversation—the saucer man doing most of the talking. It can ramble over as many subjects as you think you know something about.

The planet the saucers come from is not so important in a book of this type, since in no case will it resemble any planet known to astronomy. You may, if you really want to, give it a familiar name—the usual choices are Mars and Venus—but by the time the saucer man is through describing it, no astronomer would recognize it.

That, of course, would be the fault of the astronomers, since they have never been there.

If you prefer, you can invent your own world—a planet that astronomers have

overlooked because it's hidden behind the sun or among the asteroids, or underneath the Earth, which is flat. Or, if you don't want to bother making up your mind, say that saucer people live on all the planets.

To go deeper into the origins of the saucer people, say that they are descended from survivors of Atlantis. Many saucer addicts will be delighted to learn this, being already firm believers in Atlantis. Unfortunately, unless you are particularly talented, you cannot do the same for people who believe in ghosts.

Personally, you may prefer to believe in Mu. Nevertheless, you should give your readers Atlantis. Atlantis has more of a following, and most of your readers will find it more satisfying.

Since the saucers are supposed to be the product of a superscientific culture, you won't be able to explain how they fly. Don't let this discourage you—go ahead and explain anyway.

The best way is to let the saucer man do the talking. Be careful, of course, that the explanation makes no sense whatsoever. Load it with words at random from a physics text, to make it sound impressive.

The whole idea is to make your readers *think* it's being explained. The fact that nothing gets across they will attribute—not to the fact

that you are really saying nothing—but to their ignorance of the saucer people's Higher Science.

As long as you're making things up, you might as well be thorough. Since nothing restricts you to the familiar, disc-shaped things, tell your readers that the saucers are short range scout craft. The true space ships, from which the saucers are launched, never enter the Earth's atmosphere. These mother ships have never been seen, so you can make them any shape you please. For photographs, therefore, you can use anything handy—a stovepipe, a bowling ball, or the chimney off a hurricane lamp. An old shoe will do.

If your saucer man invites you aboard for a jaunt, you will have to describe the saucer inside and out. The simplest way is to draw a few diagrams and sandwich them into your book. Be careful to make them agree—at least reasonably well—with the features visible in your photographs.

The saucer should be crammed to the portholes with marvelous gadgets. Don't bother to explain how they work. They're not supposed to be understandable. Just describe what they do, or just let them squat where they are, blinking their lights and wiggling needles. Don't give them any moving parts. Moving parts are some-

thing a person can understand. It would ruin the illusion.

If you tell your readers about the mother ships, they will be very disappointed if you don't visit one. Such a visit would allow you to describe any gadgets you couldn't squeeze aboard the saucer. It would also give you a chance to meet more saucer people; if it is difficult for your readers to make sense of what one saucer man says, imagine how baffled they'll be by a whole gang of them.

In regards to all adventures with saucers, one note of caution. To make your book look like a documentary account, you'll have to give dates and times for your fabulous journey. Since it would be awkward if someone could prove you were somewhere else, it is usually best to limit yourself to overnight excursions. Choose carefully nights when you were alone.

(A tale like this would be something new to tell a suspicious wife when asked where you were last night. Try it sometime.)

While it isn't absolutely necessary, your readers will be a bit more convinced if you can supply a few witnesses. Witnesses are the final, incontrovertible proof that your story is true.

They don't have to be witnesses to much. Maybe they

saw a saucer at about the time you took your ride, or maybe they didn't see you the night you were gone. Witnesses like this should be easy to find. They shouldn't cost much, either.

If you follow these directions, your saucer book is sure to make money. However, if you have a true story to tell—if you *have* actually met and talked with a saucer man—if you rode in his saucer—if he gave you a message to proclaim to the world—your story would be far different from the one here outlined.

So you might as well not write. It wouldn't sell, and no one would believe a word.

When you have finished your book, you should consider where to have it published. Don't bother offering it to any reputable publisher. It would only be rejected with the same unsanitary haste usually lavished on dead cats and used tea bags.

Rather, offer your book to a comparatively small publisher who is just as eager to make money as you are. Be careful, though, that the publisher you choose is not so fly-by-night that you will have trouble collecting your royalties. There is no sense in writing a saucer book if you can't get money for it.

An additional source of revenue will be your lecture tour. Even if you have no

stage presence at all, you should make one. It should begin as soon as your book is published and, properly managed, it will last until your voice gives out. Every large city is practically crawling with people who will pay honest money to hear you speak the same lies you wrote.

Smaller towns will be good for one night stands. It's amazing what people will pay to see if there isn't anything better to do.

A profitable sideline to your lectures will be the sale of autographed copies of your book. Get the books from your publisher at a discount, and sell them for a little more than the usual price. If you like (and why not?—there's money in it) you might also sell authentic photographs of saucers and saucer people, and little souvenirs you slipped in your pocket when the saucer man was looking the other way.

You must be careful, though, that you remember thoroughly everything you wrote. It would be awkward if you were caught contradicting yourself from the platform.

Above all, NEVER go anywhere near a college town—there are fiends in those places who would ask some very embarrassing questions.

You should also, by this time, be hard at work on

your second book about saucers.

This one can approach the subject from any angle you please, since now you will have established a personal following. You can, of course, describe further encounters with saucer men, or report sensational new evidence of saucers' presence and or intentions. But it would be better if your second book was

not a retread of your first. You should strike out—break new ground.

Study the bibliography presented below. Study it carefully.

Then write of the religion of the saucer people—the only True Faith, or prove that Shakespeare's plays were written by a saucer man! Who can disprove your statement?

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The conscientious saucer author will want to produce a superior product, although his book will probably sell no matter how awful it is. I have nevertheless composed this list of readings which will not be particularly helpful. Some of these readings are primarily instructive in matters of basic psychology.

### *Instructive Examples:*

Asimov, Isaac: The Endochronic Properties of Resublimated Thiotimeline

Graves, Robert: The Nazarene Bible Restored

Raspe, Rudolph Erich: Adventures of Baron Munchausen

Locke, Richard Adams: Great Astronomical Discoveries Lately Made by Sir John Herschel, LL.D., F.R.S., etc., at the Cape of Good Hope.

Velikovsky, Immanuel: Worlds in Collision

Shaver, Richard S.: I Remember Lemuria

### *Technique & Customer Psychology:*

Freud, Sigmund: General Introduction to Psychoanalysis

Hoffer, Eric: The True Believer

Orwell, George: 1984

James, William: Varieties of Religious Experience