

FANTASTIC UNIVERSE

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SHIELD AGAINST DEATH

A New Suspense Novel

by J. T. McINTOSH

PAWNS OF TOMORROW

A Novelet by NELSON BOND

shapes

in

the

sky

by...*CIVILIAN SAUCER
INTELLIGENCE*

The second of a series of authoritative columns on UFO sightings and reports, written specially for this magazine.

FROM TIME to time, during the past nine years, claims to have dispelled the mystery of the "flying saucers" have been put forward. If we are to believe these claimants, UFO (Unidentified Flying Objects) are now IFO (Identified Flying Objects).

One of the first of these "inside stories" was Silas Newton's, brought to public attention as early as the Fall of 1949 by the gossip columnist of a weekly newspaper.*1 According to Newton, the Air Force was secretly in possession of several flying saucers, which had been manned by little men from Venus, and were powered by "magnetic" engines whose principles were secretly known to earthly scientists. Shortly thereafter, radio commentator Henry J. Taylor divulged that flying saucers were "good news for the American public": they were "harmless" remote-controlled discs up to 250 feet in diameter, which "usually disintegrated in mid-air"; and a national weekly magazine disclosed that the reported phenomena were in reality re-

The article which follows should perhaps be called UFO NOT IFO. It is the work of the Research Section of Civilian Saucer Intelligence of New York, one of the "UFO research" groups mentioned in Ivan Sanderson's article in the February issue. CSI has a program of public lectures, publishes a News Letter, describing sightings and reports, for its members, and has an extensive file of material and photographs on the UFO.

volutionary jet-powered aircraft developed by the Navy. *2 Not to be outdone, *Look* magazine unveiled the secret of the saucers twice: In 1951, Dr. Urner Liddel, of the Office of Naval Research, revealed that "there is not a single reliable report of an observation which is not attributable to cosmic-ray balloons" (an "explanation" which had been suggested three years earlier by *Popular Science* *3. And during the rush of UFO sightings in the summer of 1952, Donald Menzel, professor of Astrophysics at Harvard University, finally disposed of the flying-saucer myth in the pages of *Look* *4; a year later, his explanations appeared in book form: "all reports of saucers result from unusual and unfamiliar conditions in the atmosphere. *5 At about the same time, earthshaking disclosures began to come from California. George Van Tassel received detailed telepathic information from space-people aboard flying saucers: "As you know, the fireballs are ships from Blaau; our so-called saucers are from Schare." *6 And George Adamski actually conversed with a blond, long-haired, ski-suited Venusian, and made public numerous photographs he had taken of the Venusians' lampshade-like "scout ships" and cigar-shaped "Mother ships." *7 Since that time many others have come

forward to confirm or amend Adamski's well-received revelation.

There is no space here to discuss these claims in detail, but it will be noted that they all have one thing in common: they purport to account for *all* the phenomena by *one* sweeping generalization. But one need only look closely at the data to see that the phenomena known as "flying saucers" are of such widely divergent character that they cannot possibly all have the same origin or even be of the same nature. This remains true even after misidentifications and hoaxes have been eliminated. There are always cases that fly in the face of the explanations offered by the "inside-dope" peddlers.

In our first article (*Fantastic Universe*, March 1957), we described certain characteristic UFO shapes that have been frequently reported. The following accounts (not first-hand, but well-documented) will indicate the extreme differences in character exhibited by the phenomena.

Pot-Shot at a UFO

This is an observation at very close range of a structured object that is not identifiable with any of those prescribed by the "explainers." Not only was it seen, it was also heard—and fired upon.

On the night of January 29, 1953, Lloyd C. Booth, proprietor of a service station and

community store on Highway 701 eight miles north of Conway, South Carolina, had closed the store about 11:00 p.m. and had driven to his home, about a mile away. Shortly after arriving there, he heard his father's livestock raising a commotion in the barn. Booth grabbed a .22 calibre pistol and went outside to see what was disturbing the animals. Finding nothing, he was about to return to the house when he looked up and saw, just above the pinetrees, a peculiarly shaped object which was emitting a very low, almost inaudible, humming noise. The object was moving very slowly and Booth was easily able to follow it at a walk. He called out several times to try to arouse someone in the house, but his family had gone to bed and no one heard his shouts.

"I went directly into the woods, easily catching up with the object. I walked under it, around it, and viewed it from all sides. It was almost 24 feet long and about 12 feet across, was light greyish in color and was lit up on the inside. Two places in the front somewhat resembled cockpits and were glassed over. I could see a light on the inside... The back also had something resembling a cockpit with a stained glass over it. Light was coming through this section but I could not see through it. It

was about eight or ten feet deep. The front sloped upward from the base at an angle of about 60°, and the back sloped upward at an angle of 40° to 50°. The sides came straight down from the top for maybe four or five feet and then sloped outward and joined the base at about a 45° angle. U n d e r n e a t h . . . was something resembling a built-in 'wheel,' possibly three feet across, extending below the base in a crescent shape. There were no markings anywhere—I looked hard for identification."

Booth also stated that there were no visible means of support, no propeller, exhaust fumes, vapor trail or odor. The object continued to drift along slowly with a humming sound, with Booth following and watching it carefully. After twenty minutes, having given up hope of rousing anyone with his shouts, he fired his pistol straight up at the object from a distance of no more than 75 feet, aiming at the wheel-like projection underneath.

"I heard the bullet hit the object. It made a metallic sound and bounced off. A bare instant after the bullet hit, the object began making considerably more noise—like a large electric motor—and took off at a high rate of speed at about a 65° angle. It kept on the same course until it was completely out of sight." He added that the

noise was not as loud as a normal aircraft would have made. *8

Booth is a veteran of anti-aircraft service in War II, and is familiar with aircraft; it is hardly likely that he failed to identify a conventional craft. It certainly was no "meteorological phenomenon." High character recommendations from Booth's minister and other local residents support the reliability of his testimony. On the Air Force records, this case is apparently written off as a misidentification of a Navy blimp, according to correspondence received from Edward J. Ruppelt; however, there is little, if anything, in the witness's testimony that is consistent with such an "explanation." That the object was solid is proved by the fact that the bullet was heard to strike it. That it was under intelligent control is evident from its abrupt departure after being hit.

Kelly-Green Phantoms

A totally different type of UFO is represented by the "green fireballs" which have been seen in the southwestern United States and elsewhere—first in December 1948, and at intervals since then. Several extraordinary features of these objects appear to set them apart from true meteoritic phenomena: their brilliant color; their complete and invariable silence—

whether rushing across the sky in a horizontal trajectory, or exploding in a tremendous burst of green fire, or striking the ground; the absence of fragments upon impact; and—most unaccountable—their tendency to appear repeatedly over New Mexico (although they have been reported from other parts of the world also. *9

Let us also consider some sightings that are almost as amazing in quantity as in quality—"hosts," to use Charles Fort's term. The first, when enormous numbers of objects were seen by hundreds of people, is one of the best authenticated UFO cases on record.

Saucer Airmada

Beginning at 10:30 on the morning of March 17, 1950, at least several hundred residents of Farmington, New Mexico, observed a large group of silvery, saucer-shaped objects (estimated at from 100 to 500 in number) in the sky directly over the town. Many of the published testimonies speak of the objects as resembling saucers or dinner plates, complete with a ring on the under side. Dozens of witnesses mentioned that one object, larger and flying lower than the rest, was red. These objects came into view at high speed, darted about at extreme speeds, hovered momentarily, and darted off

again. Several flights of objects maneuvered briefly over the city before streaking suddenly upward out of sight. Some objects flew on edge, some seemed to waver, and "vibration" in the flight patterns was reported by numerous witnesses. Some appeared to "play tag." Others streaked straight from horizon to horizon in a matter of seconds. Triangulation established their altitude at about 20,000 feet, and they were estimated to be as large as a B-29. Most of the objects disappeared within a few minutes, but a few were still seen, in groups of threes, an hour later. *10

"Gelatinous Hat-Crowns"

On May 16, 1808, at Skeninge, Sweden, about 4 p.m., the sun suddenly turned dull brick-red and there appeared upon the western horizon a great number of round dark-brown bodies, seemingly "the size of a hat-crown." They passed overhead, and disappeared over the eastern horizon. The procession lasted two hours. Often, when approaching the sun, these bodies seemed to link together, or were then seen to be linked together, in groups not exceeding eight; and, under the sun, they were seen to have tails "three or four fathoms long." Away from the sun, these tails were invisible. Occasionally, one fell to the ground. When the place of a

fall was examined, there was found a "soapy jelly," which soon dried to a film and vanished. *11

The Evaporating Purple Sphere

On September 26, 1950, about 10 p.m., Philadelphia Patrolmen John Collins and Joseph Keenan were driving their patrol car in the vicinity of Vare Boulevard and 26th Street when they saw, through the windshield, what at first looked like a parachute drifting slowly down from the sky. The object, at treetop level when it caught their attention, settled into an open field near 26th Street. After summoning Sergeant Joseph Cook, who arrived with Patrolman James Casper, the four men went into the field to examine the object, which was described as spherical and roughly six feet in diameter. From a few feet away they turned their flashlights on it; it "gave off a purplish glow, almost a mist, that looked as though it contained crystals." After a few moments Collins stepped forward and tried to pick the thing up. The part of the mass on which he laid his hands dissolved, leaving nothing but a slight, odorless, sticky residue. "I touched it and it just dissolved, leaving my fingers sticky."

Within half an hour the entire substance had evapor-

ated; it had been so light that the weeds on which it had rested remained unbent.

Now this could hardly have been a "meteorological phenomenon," any more than it could have been a "space ship." The gelatinous quality of the object suggests something more animal than mechanical. Readers will recall Ivan Sanderson's article *Fantastic Universe* for February, in which he suggests that some of the UFOs may be upper-atmosphere life forms. Of all the post-Fortean cases, the Philadelphia purple sphere is most suggestive of this possibility. *12

The point about the five cases we have described is simply this: that there seems to be no one theory that will account for all of them. What possible relationship can there be between the green fireballs of New Mexico, the Booth object in South Carolina, the Farmington armada of acrobatic disks, and the gelatinous masses of Sweden and Philadelphia? They seem to be totally unconnected phenomena; and the existence of such widely varying types of UFOs is the reason why we are compelled to consider more than one origin and explanation for these objects.

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- * 1. Frank Scully, in VARIETY, October 12 and November 23, 1949; BEHIND THE FLYING SAUCERS, Henry Holt & Co., 1950.
 - * 2. U. S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, April 7, 1950.
 - * 3. LOOK, Feb. 27, 1951; POPULAR SCIENCE, May, 1948.
 - * 4. LOOK, June 17, 1952.
 - * 5. FLYING SAUCERS, by Donald Menzel, Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 272.
 - * 6. I RODE A FLYING SAUCER, by George Van Tassel, New Age Publishing Co., Los Angeles, 1952, p. 23
 - * 7. FLYING SAUCERS HAVE LANDED, by Desmond Leslie and George Adamski, Werner Laurie, London 1953.
 - * 8. THE STATE, Columbia, South Carolina, February 7, 1953; THE JOURNAL OF SPACE FLIGHT, September 1953, (report of investigation by H. B. Ketchum).
 - * 9. For further details, see Chapter 4 of THE REPORT ON UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS, by Edward J. Ruppelt, Doubleday, 1956.
 - * 10. Original NEW MEXICAN NEWS SERVICE TELETYPE, March 17, 1950.
 - * 11. THE BOOKS OF CHARLES FORT, Henry Holt & Co., 1941, p. 285, quoting TRANSACTIONS OF THE SWEDISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, 1808-15.
 - * 12. The Philadelphia INQUIRER, September 27, 1950; The Philadelphia SUNDAY EXPRESS, October 1, 1950.