

# THE TRUTH ABOUT ROSWELL

Article by Dava Sobel  
 Photographs by David Michael Kennedy

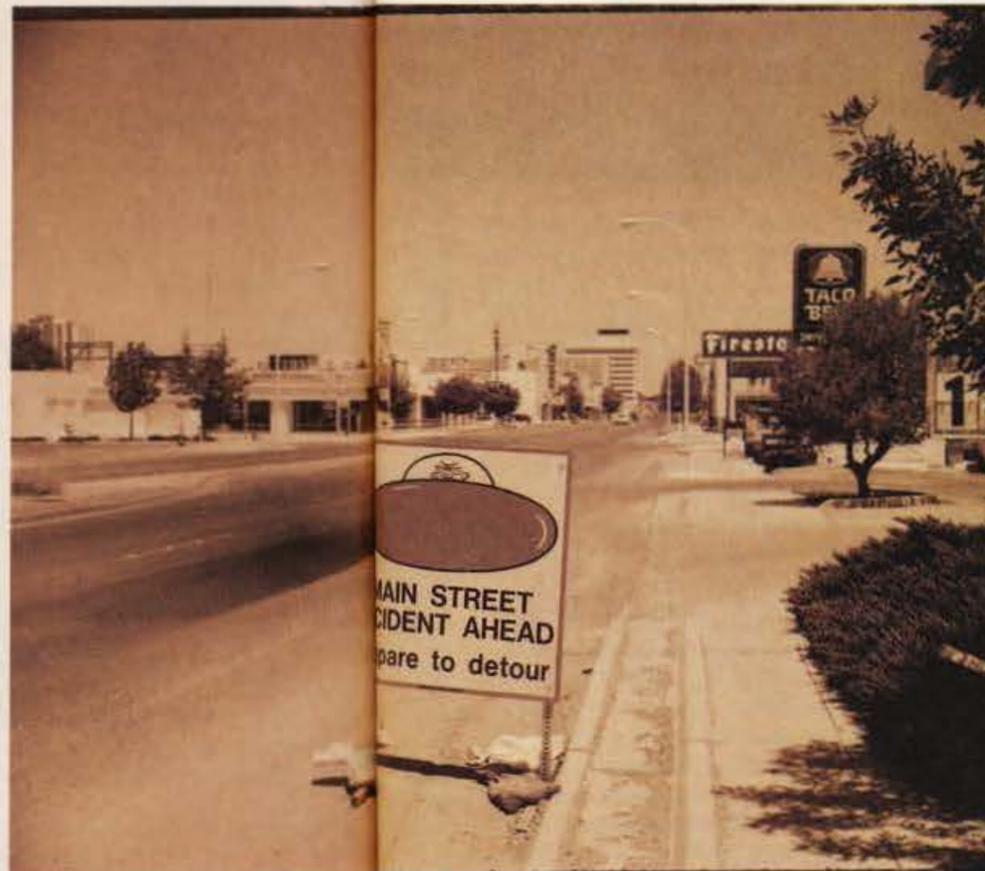
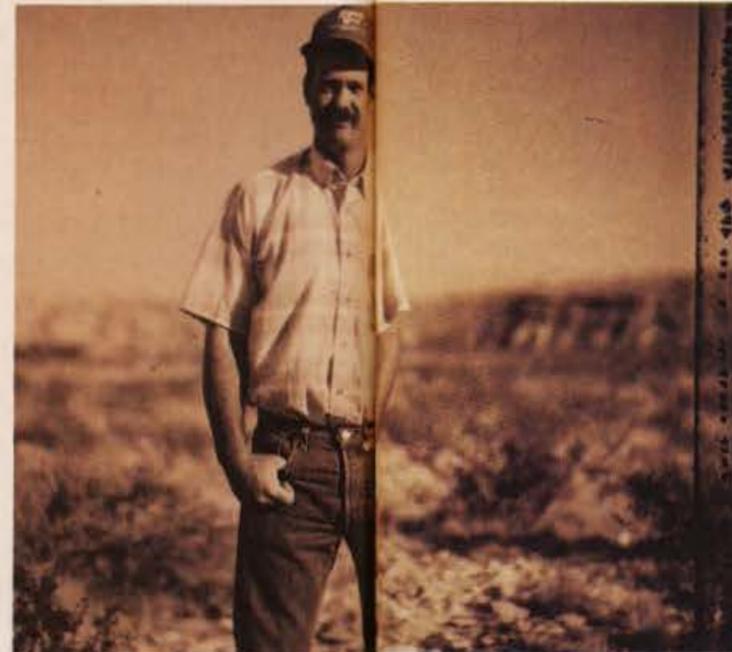
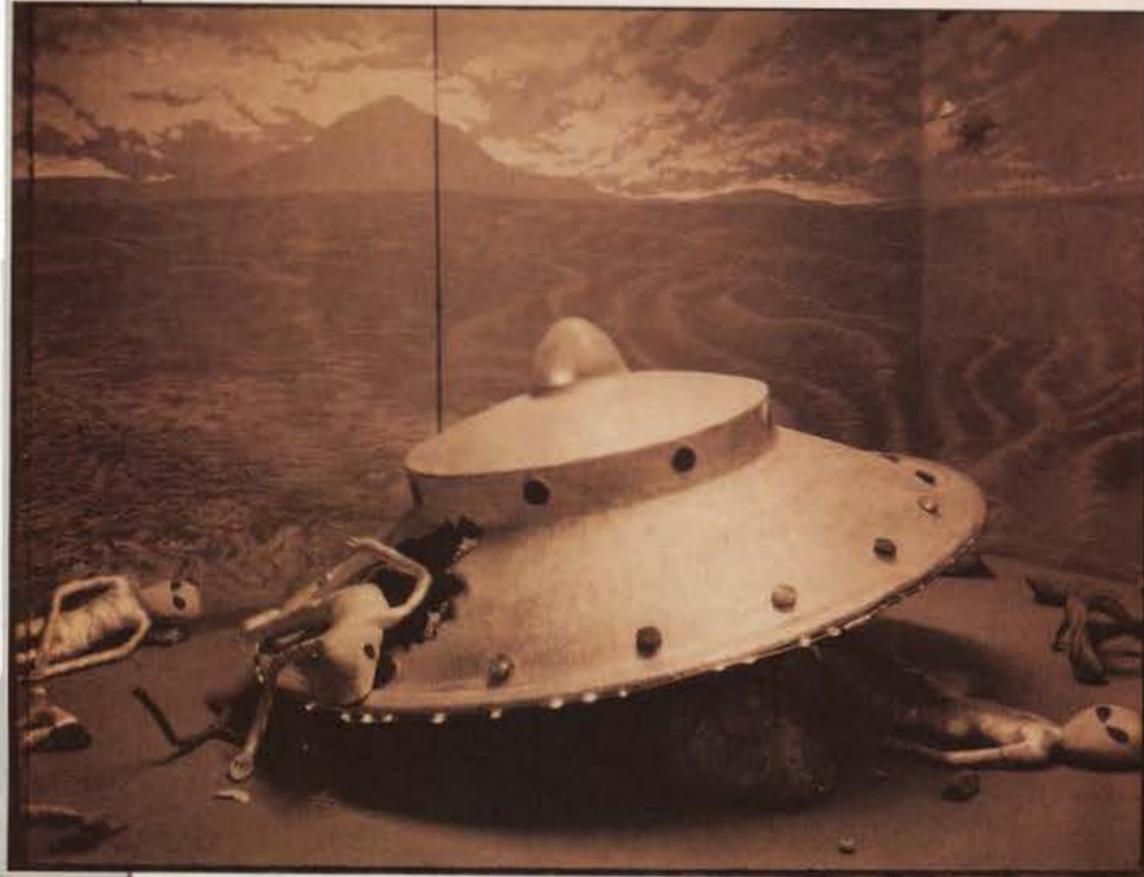


Flying saucers made their first official appearance in the summer of 1947. On June 25, Kenneth Arnold, a Boise, Idaho, rescue pilot working for the U.S. Forest Service, flew over the Cascade Mountains of Washington State, searching for a missing plane. He spotted nine disc-shaped craft, which he guessed to be moving at a speed of 1,200 miles an hour and at an altitude of 10,000 feet. When Arnold described their motion as resembling "a saucer skipping over water," a newspaper headline dubbed them "flying saucers." Almost instantly, believable witnesses from other states and several foreign countries reported similar sightings—enlivening wire-service dispatches for days.

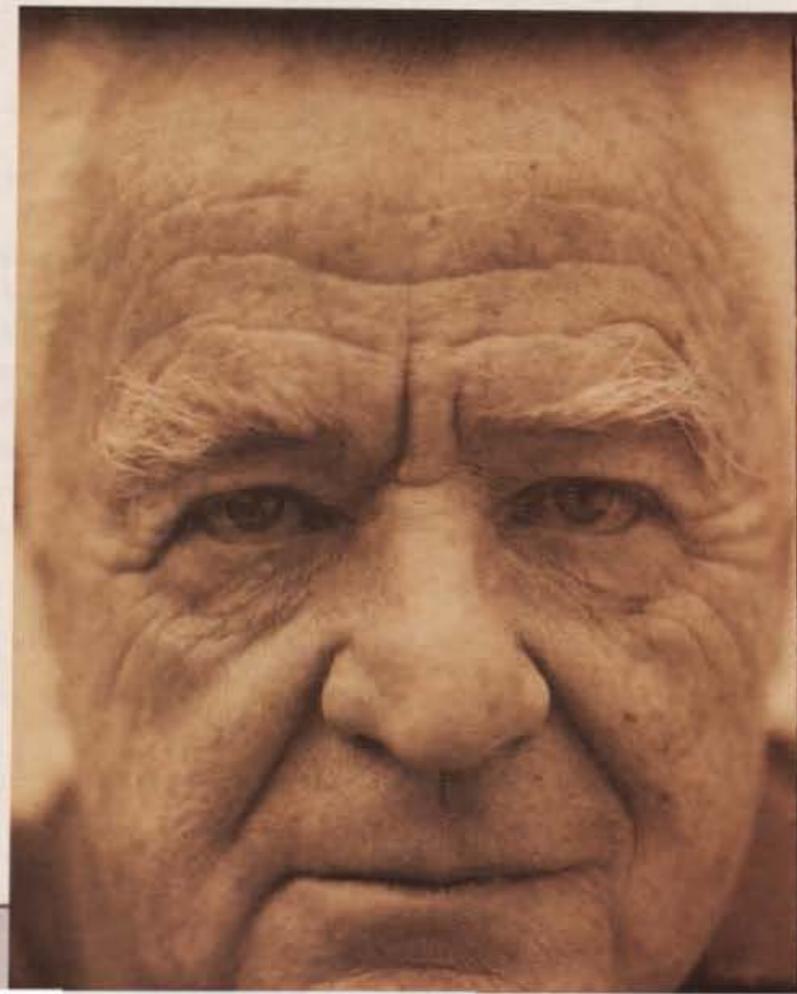
Within two weeks, on July 8, 1947, the United States Army announced that it had recovered a flying saucer from the New Mexican desert, near a town called Roswell. The morning after, the Army corrected itself: The "saucer" had been a misidentified weather balloon.

Thus began the infamous "Roswell Incident," the mother of all UFO scenarios. At first, it seemed to be a burst of excitement over nothing—a story of "Man Bites Dog" that quickly faded into "Dog Bites Man." But over decades, the event at Roswell has been repeatedly remembered, reevaluated, and retold, so that it now boasts seminal importance in the annals of contacts with extraterrestrial civilizations.

According to several residents of Roswell who claim to be eyewitnesses, at least one alien craft crashed there that summer of



Noteworthy in Roswell: Charles Moore (right) and Hub Corn at the crash site (top right); display at the UFO Enigma Museum (above); Main Street (far right).



Welcome to Roswell: Billboard east of the town (below),

1947. However, they say, military and government parties—including the Air Force, the FBI, and the White House—intentionally covered up the facts. As a former employee of the local funeral parlor recalls, the humanoid bodies of the saucer's crew were autopsied at the Roswell Army Air Field Hospital immediately after the crash. Then their remains were flown to Dayton, Ohio, to the site of what is now Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, where they were frozen for future study.

Rumors circulated that one of the creatures had even survived the accident. It lived for over a year, sequestered and cared for in a specially built top-secret facility, before succumbing to an Earth-acquired infection.

Now, nearly half a century after the precipitating event, New Mexico Congressman Stephen

members. The film celebrates the twin themes of the Roswell Incident—the arrival of extraterrestrial visitors and the paranoia regarding government conspiracy. With documentary verisimilitude, *Roswell* depicts UFOs as the vehicles that ferry aliens to Earth, and the governments of the world as the powers that conceal the alien presence.

At the opposite extreme, the U.S. Air Force has completed its own internal review of the events and allegations. Its "Report on Roswell," which was released in September 1994, identifies the so-called "weather balloon" as part of a once-top-secret experimental program, "Project Mogul," for monitoring Russian nuclear bomb tests. A page-one story in the *New York Times* of September 18, 1994, heralded this explanation as the long-awaited denouement of the Roswell

the moment of my birth, in June of 1947. Maybe Roswell was as real as I am. I mean, if the entire universe could happen once—rise whole cloth out of one Big Bang—why not admit the arrival on Earth of a lone flying saucer?

Part of me was wide open to that possibility when I started exhuming the incident's history. I read six books about it, along with miscellaneous reports on Roswell published by the Mutual UFO Network (an international contingent of UFOlogists). I read the Air Force report, of course, with all its supporting documentation, as well as numerous magazine and newspaper articles, plus back issues of newsletters devoted both to promulgating and debunking UFO sightings. I also viewed several hours of videotapes on the Roswell Incident, reviewed selected Internet files, and interviewed a dozen individuals on the telephone. Then I went to Roswell to meet some of the witnesses face to face and to see the place where the saucer is said to have landed.

To begin at the beginning, the Roswell of 1947 was a small town in a big desert, surrounded by acres of undeveloped land and sheep ranches stretching over the mostly flat terrain as far as the eye could see. At the south end of the business district stood the Roswell Army Air Field, home base for the fighting 509th—the world's only combat unit trained to handle and drop nuclear bombs.

About 100 miles west of Roswell, at Alamogordo, the first atomic bomb explosion had shot up its mushroom cloud just two years prior to the Roswell Incident. And although secrecy shrouded the activities at nearby White Sands Proving Ground, Roswell residents were aware that captured German V-2 rockets routinely penetrated the arid sky. What's more, Robert H. Goddard, the father of American rocketry, had moved to Roswell from Massachusetts, and launched 56 flight tests there from 1930 until shortly before his death in 1943. You could say that Roswell stood closer to outer space than any other town in the world.

The stories of flying discs that spread across the country in the summer of 1947 fell on receptive ears in New Mexico. Sheep rancher W. W. ("Mac") Brazel overheard the talk in a Corona bar on Saturday night, July 5. According to his own later account in the local press, he wondered if the strange debris he'd found on the ground during his ranch rounds might

be part of some such flying disc. He hoped it was. A prize of \$3,000 had been promised by a national news outfit to anybody who recovered one. Brazel drove some of the shiny litter into Roswell and showed it to the county sheriff, who showed it to the Army base's intelligence officer, who retrieved the rest of the pieces back at the ranch.

That Army intelligence officer, Major Jesse Marcel, had never seen anything quite like the debris that lay in scattered scraps and tatters over an area some 200 yards wide. Though plentiful, it was so lightweight that Marcel and a helper could pick it all up and load it in the backs of their cars. Brazel, the rancher, estimated in a newspaper interview that the whole lot couldn't have weighed much more than five pounds. Although Marcel's description of what he had found did not appear in any press reports published at the time, he later recalled that the material bore no resemblance to any aircraft he had been trained to recognize.

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"I saw . . . small bits of metal," Marcel told a reporter years after the fact, "but mostly we found some material that's hard to describe." Some of it was porous, he remembered. He also mentioned "stuff that looked very much like parchment," as well as long, slender solid members—like square sticks, the largest of which was between three and four feet long. These pieces resembled wood, felt as light as balsa, and carried undecipherable markings that Marcel called "hieroglyphics."

On Tuesday, July 8, 1947, a press release announcing Marcel's catch was distributed to the local newspapers and radio stations by Walter G. Haut, then-public relations officer at the base. The *Roswell Daily Record* spread the word under a banner headline: "RAAF Captures Flying Saucer on Ranch in Roswell Region."

The story began, "The intelligence office of the 509th Bombardment group at Roswell Army Air Field announced at noon today that the field has come into possession of a flying saucer." It is not

clear from the article who termed the debris a flying saucer. The words do not appear in quotes, and they are not attributed to either Marcel or to the base commander, Colonel William H. Blanchard. They are used matter-of-factly, as though such things would be well known to readers of the *Record*—and indeed they were.

"After the intelligence office here had inspected the instrument," the article went on to say, "it was flown to 'higher headquarters.'" Indeed, Marcel took the debris on a plane to Fort Worth, where General Roger M. Ramey identified it to Marcel and the press as the remains of a downed weather balloon carrying a radar target. The next day, in an even larger headline than it had used to announce the find, the *Record* reported, "Gen. Ramey Empties Roswell Saucer."

The Army's announcement of the "weather balloon" explanation ended the flying saucer excitement. All mention of the craft dropped from the newspapers, from military records, from the national consciousness, and even from the talk of the town in Roswell.

Thirty years passed with no further mention of the Roswell Incident.

Then, Stanton T. Friedman of Fredericton, New Brunswick, in Canada, rediscovered Roswell. Friedman had been working as a nuclear physicist (although he does not hold a doctoral degree in that discipline) for General Electric, Westinghouse, and other companies. He devoted his spare time to reading widely about flying saucers, including the reports of Project Bluebook—the Air Force's official investigation, from 1952 to 1969, into UFO sightings.

"In the 1970s, when the bottom fell out of the nuclear physics business," Friedman told me in a telephone interview, "I went full time as a lecturer."

Friedman has delivered his lecture, "Flying Saucers ARE Real!," at some 600 college campuses and to many professional meetings. Although Friedman never saw a flying saucer himself, his work made him a lightning rod for people with their own UFO stories to tell. They would seek him out after his talks and share bits of information. Over the past 17 years, by following leads from such sources, Friedman has become the self-styled impresario of the Roswell Incident. He has ferreted out several self-professed witnesses, and he believes that the cover-up of

and Walter Haut, International UFO Museum president (right) in front of painting by Miller Johnson.

H. Schiff has asked the General Accounting Office (GAO), which is the investigative arm of Congress, to investigate the incident.

Did the military act appropriately at the time—or did it move to suppress information, spread lies, and silence the residents of Roswell, some of whom claim they received death threats warning them never to reveal what went on there in July 1947?

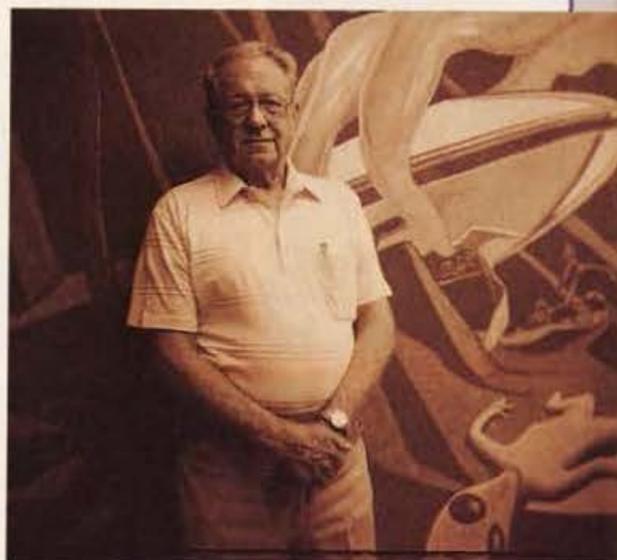
GAO spokesman Cleve Corlett insists his agency is *not* investigating Roswell, as many students of the case contend. "We don't talk about our work till it's finished," Corlett said. But whatever the truth, thanks to publicity from Schiff and others, Roswell has spawned interest from many quarters indeed.

For example, a recent Showtime movie called *Roswell*, based on the book *UFO Crash at Roswell*, paints a vivid picture of charred aliens on operating tables, amid a Watergate-style cover-up masterminded by four- and five-star generals, scientists, super-spies, and Cabinet

Incident. Project Mogul, the Air Force and the *Times* agreed, dismissed the alien-spaceship tale as a modern myth. Proponents of the alleged saucer crash and subsequent cover-up, however, remain unconvinced by the Air Force account.

How good is the evidence on each side of the Roswell Incident? What really happened there? And if all that landed was a glorified weather balloon, why won't the legend die?

I came to this story prejudiced, as all journalists are, with my own preconceived notions. As the co-author of a book about the scientific search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) through radio astronomy, I firmly believe that other civilizations share our galaxy, and may even be trying to contact us. But I do not think that flying saucers are landing here. The alien presence would have to be ubiquitous to explain all the claims of contact I have heard. Nevertheless, the Roswell Incident intrigued me because it was born practically at



the crash continues today at the highest levels of secrecy within the federal government, although his evidence for this claim is hotly contested.

Friedman received his first important Roswell tip in 1978 while appearing on a news program in Baton Rouge. The station manager mentioned that his ham radio buddy—a fellow named Jesse Marcel—had once handled the wreckage of a flying saucer.

Intrigued, Friedman called Marcel the very next day. The former major had retired from the Army and was working as a television repairman in Houma, Louisiana. Friedman ascribes great weight to that initial conversation. Writing about the encounter, and describing himself in the third person, he gauged its import as follows:

"Marcel described the material to Friedman over the phone, giving the veteran UFO investigator the first indication of the nature of what could possibly turn out to be the most important discovery of the millennium."

Friedman used his contacts to set up an interview for Marcel with the *National Enquirer*. In that 1979 interview, 32 years after the original discovery, Marcel said of the debris, "I'd never seen anything like that. I didn't know what we were picking up. I still believe it was nothing that came from Earth. It came to Earth but not from Earth."

Marcel continued to express puzzlement about the Roswell debris till his dying day in 1986. But he never called it a flying saucer. And he certainly never mentioned any bodies lying in or near what he had found. Nor did the original discoverer of the debris, Mac Brazel, ever claim that he had seen extraterrestrial aliens, dead or alive.

Friedman added that part—the corpus delicti. The crashed saucer and its alien crew were the gifts of Vern and Jean Maltais, who attended a Friedman lecture, and stayed late to tell him a flying saucer story related by their late friend, Grady ("Barney") Barnett. Barnett said he had seen a saucer wreck near Socorro, New Mexico, where he worked in the 1940s as a government engineer. The Maltais couple couldn't remember what year the crash might have taken place, and Barney was long dead, so there was no way to find out. But they assured Friedman that Barney was much too upstanding a citizen to have fabricated such a tale—complete with sunlight glinting off a great, metallic disc, some 25 or 30 feet in diameter. That was enough for Fried-

man to go on—in his preliminary reconstruction of the events, the 1947 craft dropped some of its pieces on the sheep ranch near Roswell, then continued flying in a northwesterly direction before it crashed. Friedman contributed these insights to the first volume in the Roswell literature—*The Roswell Incident* (Grosset & Dunlap), by Charles Berlitz and William Moore.

With the book's publication in 1980, the Roswell Incident took on new proportions. First it spread from the debris field on the sheep ranch to a site far away where Friedman thought the rest of the saucer must have landed. He put this "crash site" at Corona, about 90 miles northwest of Roswell. Since Brazel's ranch sprawled over desert that lay between the two towns, the "Roswell Incident" might just as well be called "The Crash at Corona." Indeed, Friedman later took this title for his own book, *Crash at Corona*, co-authored with Don Berliner and published by Paragon House in 1992. Friedman

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didn't stop at Corona, however, but continued westward, straight across central New Mexico for another 150 miles—to a second crashed saucer site on the Plains of San Augustin. Here, just past Socorro, was where Friedman figured Barney Barnett's craft must have touched down.

Struggling to understand the connection between the two sites, Friedman pondered various possibilities: There might have been several craft in the area. Two could have collided in midair, sprinkling debris, saucers, and bodies in a wide swath. Or one craft could have crashed at Roswell/Corona, while another got shot down over the Plains of San Augustin by military fire from the White Sands Missile Range. There seemed to be enough room in the desert for almost anything to have occurred.

Friedman eventually found a live eyewitness who could corroborate his second site on the Plains of San Augustin. This was Gerald F. Anderson, a mere boy of five in 1947, who saw Friedman on a 1990 national television

program called *Unsolved Mysteries*. Right after the show, Anderson phoned the network's toll-free number from his home in Missouri. He said he remembered coming upon the very craft that Friedman had mentioned, with its alien corpses ejected onto the sand, while out rock-hunting with his family.

"We headed straight toward it," Anderson later told Friedman in person. "There was a big gouge mark where it had cut a furrow across the arroyo. It tore up a lot of the sagebrush and there were fires smoldering here and there. 'That's when my brother said, 'That's a goddamn spaceship! Them's Martians!'"

Anderson's vivid memories of the hot, humid morning are stunning in their detail. Likewise his estimates of the distances between objects on the ground, and his total recall of the dialogue that engaged his father, his brother, his Uncle Ted, and his Cousin Victor. In all, Anderson's account, which fills six pages in Friedman's book, strains my belief to the breaking point. And I say this even though I know that Friedman had Anderson take a polygraph test (a de rigueur step in serious UFO investigations), and Anderson passed it.

Friedman, ever on the case, continued to look for another eyewitness to back up Anderson's outstanding memory. He never found one. Thus, Anderson stands alone against the attacks from other Roswell researchers, all of whom seek to discredit his testimony.

For example, Kevin D. Randle and Donald R. Schmitt, authors of two books published by Avon—*UFO Crash at Roswell* and its sequel, *The Truth about the UFO Crash at Roswell* (in which the date of the crucial crash is corrected from July 2 to July 4)—denounce Anderson's story. They summoned a forensic scientist to examine the 1947 diary purportedly kept by Anderson's Uncle Ted. This document, which supported Gerald Anderson's oral history, was duly found to be written on bona fide 1947-vintage paper. However, the ink upon that paper had not become available until 1974.

"Clearly this was not a document written by Anderson's Uncle Ted," Randle and Schmitt conclude triumphantly in their new book. "Ted Anderson could not be reached for comment. He had died several years prior to 1974."

This is a recurrent theme in Roswell research—the unfortunate disappearance of firsthand witnesses due to nat-

ural attrition. As the years go by, those who devote themselves to seeking the truth about Roswell face ever greater challenges from fading memories and failing hearts.

The Randle-Schmitt duo took on the Roswell Incident in 1988, thinking they could expose it as a hoax, or at least a harmless flap over something that never happened. Now, after six years and 25 trips to the town, they believe the claims that first struck them as extraordinary. As Randle told me early in our talks, "No mundane explanation fits.

"I'd be extremely disappointed if it turned out to be terrestrial," Randle later said of the Roswell debris, "but I'd accept definitive proof." Since no one saved any of the original debris—at least so far as anyone knows—Randle is unlikely to encounter enough evidence to make him deviate from his current career path.

A resident of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Randle is a former Army helicopter pilot who flew over Vietnam. He has demonstrated a flair for fiction by writing some 70 novels (mostly science-fiction and men's adventure) in addition to his two Roswell texts and consultation on the screenplay for Showtime's *Roswell* movie. Randle looked briefly into cattle mutilations before finding his métier in Roswell. Now he also hosts a weekly two-hour radio program out of El Paso, "The Randle Report," which covers the full gamut of paranormal subjects from past lives regression to the Bermuda Triangle.

When Randle and I met for lunch in Roswell, he chose the restaurant. And when we paid our separate bills at the cash register, he presented a special card that procured him free food from the establishment, in any amount, at any time. This hospitality, like his free room at the motel he recommended to me, is the way the townspeople thank him for his efforts on their behalf. Stanton Friedman may have put Roswell on the map, but Kevin Randle put it in the movies.

Randle's co-author, Don Schmitt of Hubertus, Wisconsin, once served as an assistant to the late J. Allen Hynek, founder of the Center for UFO Studies in Chicago (the first UFO group dedicated to scientific analysis of the phenomenon). Schmitt, who describes himself as a medical illustrator, actually works as a letter carrier for the U.S. Postal Service in Milwaukee, a position he has held since 1974. (This came as a surprise to many of his fellow UFO researchers, who simply were not aware of his "day job.")

Like Friedman, neither Randle nor Schmitt has ever seen a UFO.

Having dismissed Gerald Anderson

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as "a hoax," Randle and Schmitt originally put their faith in the eyewitness testimony of their own Jim Ragsdale of Carlsbad, whom they found around Roswell on one of their research trips. Ragsdale said he was camping north of Roswell on the night of July 2, 1947 with a female companion, Trudy Truelove, when a bright object roared overhead and hit the ground. The couple hunted down the wreck that night and identified it in a flashlight's dim beam as a flying saucer, with alien corpses nearby. They returned the next morning, Ragsdale claimed, but couldn't get close because the place was crawling with military police who had cordoned off the area.

This scenario, presented early in *The Truth about the UFO Crash at Roswell*, includes an asterisk next to Trudy Truelove's name. I glanced at the bottom of the page, expecting to find the usual disclaimer about aliases made up to protect the identity of actual individuals. Instead, I read:

"The story told by Jim Ragsdale has been well corroborated by various family members, including Clint Brazel, Wendelle and Willard Ragsdale, his wife Mary, and his mother-in-law, 'Grandma Lucky.'" Now I was not only being asked to accept the existence of

Trudy Truelove, but also Grandma Lucky, who was soon joined on following pages by a matriarch called "Big Mom."

Randle rues the fact that Ragsdale has now aggrandized his story and has thus discredited his own testimony. As Randle explained at last October's UFO conference in Pensacola, "The story he [Ragsdale] tells now is much more exciting than just seeing the bodies in the distance. He's now talking about going down and trying to pull the helmet off one of the dead aliens and seeing big black eyes, which is not consistent with what we have learned about what the aliens look like."

I asked Randle if he could get me an interview with Ragsdale, but he pooh-poohed the idea. "Jim, last we heard," Randle said, "was living in a trailer near Carlsbad. He's from there. He's an irascible old man."

Meanwhile, another witness has come forward to fill the gap, adding a weight of new evidence to Randle and Schmitt's new book. His name is Frank J. Kaufmann, although he is called "Steve MacKenzie" in the book. Kaufmann served in the Army in Roswell until 1945, and then stayed on in some paramilitary capacity. He saw the craft firsthand, he says, when he took part in a secret search for it, accompanied by

high-ranking officers on a reconnaissance mission through the desert. His name withheld and his face blurred for his first television appearance, Kaufmann pointed out the actual impact site during a Roswell segment of *48 Hours* aired on April 3, 1994.

Secrecy, or shyness—or both—still characterizes Kaufmann, who parcels out his story in installments, like a staged rocket. Nonetheless, he invited me to interview him in his Roswell home. Surrounded by his oil paintings of landscapes, he described the spaceship he saw as being shaped like a wingless airplane, not a round saucer. It was stuck at an angle in a sandy hill. Though still intact, it had popped a side seam, and through this portal he could see the bodies.

"I did everything in the world to try to block it out of my mind," Kaufmann said of the image that still haunts him. "I kept that secret till a few years ago, when Randle and Schmitt came to me. I made them wait a year before I gave them anything. I just told them a little even now. I just told them the outside version." I understood him to mean that he had more to reveal, but could not risk the consequences of telling all, and also feared being branded a kook.

Since Kaufmann offered no documentation for the secret group he said he'd belonged to, or of the debriefing where he was sworn to secrecy—and how could he be expected to produce evidence of such things?—I had to rely on my instincts to judge him credible or otherwise. As I listened to his account of the quickly deteriorating alien bodies, I believed his anguish to be real, though the story did not convince me the event had taken place. When he mentioned that he had personally spoken to Werner von Braun (the Nazi German rocket whiz who brought the V-2 to White Sands) about the events at Roswell, he tipped the balance for me. I could not follow him that far.

Kaufmann is to Randle and Schmitt what Gerald Anderson is to Stanton Friedman. Strong ties bind each Roswell researcher to his star witness, forsaking all others. I have even heard the researchers attack each other's witnesses—and one another—with insults the likes of "flaming ass," "clown," and "liar." Within the community of Roswell researchers, angry contention surrounds the discussion of conflicting crash sites, the descriptions of saucers, as well as the number, condition, and appearance of recovered

aliens. Try as Randle does to portray the dispute as a scientific debate—on a par with paleontologists wrangling over the precise shape of a *Bron-tosaurus* head—the rancor weakens the arguments on all sides.

The sole witness who remains everyone's darling is Glenn Dennis, a mortician at a Roswell funeral parlor during the late 1940s. Since Dennis never claimed to see the crashed craft, his story meshes well with all other accounts.

Dennis remembered that fateful July 4 weekend (now changed to the middle of the following week, according to his most recent recollections) as the time he received several unusual phone calls from the base mortuary officer. One inquiry concerned the availability of child-size caskets. (The aliens, all witnesses agree, were as short as ten-year-old children.) In another call, Dennis said he was asked about preservation techniques for deteriorated bodies, and also about the effects of embalming fluids on bodily

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fluids such as blood and stomach contents. Even more startling, Dennis recalled, an Army nurse at the base told him tearfully how she had been ordered by visiting doctors to assist at the autopsy of three mangled aliens. The nurse had been sworn to secrecy, and she made Dennis give her an oath that he would never reveal her identity.

Dennis, now vice president of the two-year-old International UFO Museum and Research Center in Roswell, no longer grants interviews with the news media. These days he speaks only to Karl T. Pflock of Placitas, New Mexico, who has interviewed him for *Omni* beginning on page 119.

Pflock is a former employee of the CIA. While living in Washington in the 1960s, he became active in NICAP (National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena)—an early pro-UFO study group founded in 1956. Before moving to New Mexico, Pflock worked as a congressional staff member, and served four years, from 1985 to 1989, as a deputy assistant secretary of de-

fense. He traces his lifelong interest in UFOs back to his own childhood sighting of one. He is married to Mary Martinek, a senior staffer in the Albuquerque office of Congressman Schiff—the same U.S. representative who requested the GAO study of the Roswell Incident.

Pflock believes Dennis's testimony is the key to the conundrum in Roswell.

"I'm firmly convinced Glenn is telling the absolute truth as he remembers it," Pflock told me, after making short shrift of the testimony of other witnesses. (Pflock on Kaufmann: "His story has evolved over the years. How could anyone be comfortable accepting it?" Pflock on Ragsdale: "Ragsdale claims he and his friend saw the flaming craft drop out of the sky during a violent thunderstorm, yet local newspaper weather forecasts and reports for July 4 say nothing about significant lightning or thunderstorm activity in the Roswell vicinity.")

The key to the Dennis testimony, as revealed in his *Omni* interview, is the long-lost nurse—how he met up with her on base while aliens were being autopsied; how he met with this same nurse the following day over lunch at the Officers' Club on the base; and finally, how she vanished, never to be heard from again.

Indeed, Roswell researchers have claimed that five other nurses at the base also vanished—hinting foul play or destruction of military records. However, all have since been tracked down by *Omni* reporter Paul McCarthy (see story beginning on page 106), and shown to have led eventful lives after the Roswell Incident. All except Dennis's nurse, who remains at large.

Dennis gave her name to Pflock as Naomi Maria Selff. But Pflock concedes that he has been unable to find any records of her presence at Roswell Army Air Field in July 1947—or anywhere else, for that matter.

"Similarly," writes Pflock, "no record of her family has been located. The search continues, but so far, she seems to have disappeared without a trace."

Another possibility is that all efforts to find her have failed because she does not exist. Or she goes by a different name. Los Angeles obstetrician Richard Neal, who investigates UFO events for a hobby, has been hot on Naomi's trail since 1990, when he learned her name from Friedman. In a recent conversation with Dennis, Neal

told me, the mortician hinted that Naomi's last name wasn't really Selff.

"From what I gather," said Neal, "Selff was just a name to throw off the researchers." If so, the ploy has certainly succeeded.

Naomi by any other name aside, Dennis's version of the Roswell Incident is singular in regard to the atmosphere at the scene of the action. As he tells it, the Army base was jumping that July afternoon he first sensed something out of the ordinary. Dennis saw Army ambulances parked outside the hospital, chock-a-block full of strange purplish debris, and MPs milling about, even before he encountered the hub-bub *inside* the hospital. But former public relations officer Walter Haut, Dennis's friend of 40 years, who was at his desk on the base that day, recalls no unusual activity whatsoever—except for Colonel Blanchard's asking him to issue a press release about a flying saucer.

As soon as I got to Roswell, I visited Walter Haut, now 72, and to all appearances extremely robust, clear-headed, and affable. I met him at the new International UFO Museum and Research Center, of which Haut is president—and, as I mentioned earlier, Dennis is vice president. This museum, right across from the courthouse on Main Street, opened its doors in October 1992. It is the second such institution to take advantage of tourist interest in the Roswell Incident. The older (by six months) UFO Enigma Museum, on the outskirts of town, features a life-size diorama of the crashed saucer, complete with flashing lights, soft-sculpture alien figures in the sand, and a rifle-toting store mannequin in an MP uniform.

I was pleased that Haut spent two hours talking to me, since he is about as busy as he can be making television and radio appearances, granting press interviews, presenting after-dinner talks, and running the new museum, which is open every afternoon, and has already welcomed more than 44,000 visitors from all 50 states and 54 foreign countries. On broadcasts, he said with a weary sigh, he has been asked everything "except whether I wear boxer shorts or jockey shorts." On occasion, the local police dispatcher awakens him in the night to check out a reported sighting by a concerned citizen.

"I think 99.9 percent of the time such things are explainable," said Haut, who recently had to convince a young policeman that what he identified as a UFO was actually the bright star Sirius—and that it appeared to be moving across the sky because the earth was turning.

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I asked the obvious question: "Is Roswell the .1 percent?"

Long pause. I thought I saw Haut torn between his down-to-earth training as a navigator and bombardier, and his public duty as museum president.

"I would guess so," he conceded at length. "Maybe .005 percent."

On a Haut-guided tour of the premises, I was surprised to find two dozen copies of my book on radio astronomy, *Is Anyone Out There?*, prominently displayed in the gift shop, cheek by jowl with titles such as *UFO Crash at Roswell*, not to mention souvenir Frisbees, hats, T-shirts, key chains, string ties, earrings, and even guitar picks emblazoned with the features of dark-eyed aliens. (I bought three of these for my son, the gilt flying-saucer earrings for my daughter.)

"Walter, do you recognize my name?" I asked him, pointing proudly to the book's cover.

"Well, I'll be," he replied. "I don't think we sell too many of those."

Undaunted, I asked Haut about the original press release, without which there would be no Roswell Incident even now—no matter how hard Stanton Friedman tried to breathe life into the event. The press release had generated the newspaper articles and wire

stories that linked the U.S. Army Intelligence Office of the 509th to a flying saucer crash near Roswell. Those reports had given the Roswell Incident a greater reality than any other sighting report. Haut seemed to know this, too, for he had souvenir copies of the front pages of the *Roswell Daily Record* from July 8 and 9, 1947 on sale in the gift shop. They were the only genuine relics in the whole museum.

"All my information came from Colonel Blanchard," Haut reiterated.

"When Blanchard talked to you about what to say, did he use the words 'flying saucer'?" I asked. "Did he seem to be frightened?"

"I've got an experience coming up in the latter part of March," Haut said by way of reply. "They're going to hypnotize me."

"They" turn out to be Randle and Schmitt—with help from the Center for UFO Studies, eager to plumb Haut's memory on the chance that anything else of note actually occurred.

"I do not remember the minute details," Haut told me. "I feel that I've had a pretty full life, and how the colonel passed that information on to me I cannot honestly tell you. I don't know whether he called me on the phone and said, 'Haut, I want you to put out a press

release and hand deliver it to the local news media. Here's what I want in it."

"Or," Haut continued, "the adjutant might have called and said, 'Haut, the old man's got a press release he wants you to pick up and take it around town.'"

When I pressed Haut about the authorship of the release, he answered frankly: "I cannot honestly remember whether I wrote it, whether he had given me the information and told me 'This is what I want in it.' It was not that big a production at that time, in my mind."

I couldn't believe *that*. Wouldn't a flying saucer have been a pretty spectacular find?

"Well, there were quite a few reports of flying saucers at that time," Haut reminded me. "I had a multitude of hats I wore. I had all kinds of things to do. I asked my wife, when all this [the renewed interest in Roswell in the mid 1980s] started, 'Do you remember me coming home and saying anything about it?'"

Her reply, he recalled, was simply no.

Haut's spin on the events seems to take the wind out of the cover-up theory. In and around Roswell, however, people now believe in the cover-up conspiracy as much as any other part of the incident, sometimes mentioning "the government" and "the military" with rolling eyes and in hushed tones, as though they were the KGB. The clerk at the hotel where I stayed while in Roswell gave voice to this comparison: "We talk about the Russians," she said. "People should know the things that go on in our own country."

In books and on television specials, when the usual Roswell suspects are rounded up and trotted out, the likes of Lydia Sleppy and Frankie Rowe recite the threats they received from the FBI and the military police. Sleppy was trying to send a teletyped news report from the local radio station when the bureau interrupted her transmission and signaled her not to complete it. She obeyed and never complained till Friedman found her years later. Rowe tells how her father had been summoned to the crash site with other members of the Roswell Fire Department, and later told her he saw two body bags and one live "very small being" near the wreckage of some kind of flying craft. She subsequently heard rumors that the being was being taken to the base hospital, and that it walked in on its own. She couldn't divulge any of this, however, she told Randle and Schmitt, because "The Air Force or the

Army or the military came up to our house and told us we could never talk about this. As far as we were concerned, the whole incident never happened."

These were two of the "witnesses" the Air Force and I chose *not* to interview. The reason: Neither one had seen anything firsthand. In the annals of Roswell research, however, a person who has heard a rumor about the incident may attain the status of "witness."

A deft step in the cover-up purportedly occurred at Fort Worth Army Field, soon after Marcel landed there on July 8. According to Randle and Schmitt, Marcel spread out the debris on the floor of General Ramey's office, the better to see it all. Then Marcel and Ramey left the room briefly. By the time they reentered, accompanied by press photographers, the strange material had disappeared. In its place was a shredded weather balloon. Ramey, who has been accused of ordering this quick switch, summoned his weather officer, Irving Newton, to identify the

Army or the military came up to our house and told us we could never talk about this. As far as we were concerned, the whole incident never happened."

"There was nothing to it," Newton concluded of the debris. "I went back to work and forgot about it."

Something of a small cover-up seems to have taken place, however, sanctioned by the Air Force, in order to disguise the military *purpose* of the balloon.

On July 10, 1947, the day after the "emptying" of the Roswell saucer, a full explanation of the "flying disc" appeared in the *Alamogordo News*. It described a press briefing that had helped reporters understand what all the fuss was about in Roswell. The story included an elaborate description, plus photo, of the balloon-borne corner radar reflector that the Army believed had crashed on the sheep ranch. Elements of the description published in this article matched key points in the accounts of both Marcel and the rancher Brazel. To wit: The balloons trailed "paper triangles covered with tinfoil and held rigidly by small wooden strips."

Marcel had said the longest pieces of woodlike material were about three or four feet. The article said, "These corner reflectors . . . are about 48 inches across." Marcel had found something porous on the debris field, and everything lightweight. "It is very light and is towed by a synthetic rubber balloon made of neoprene," the article offered.

Such devices were being launched at Alamogordo and all over the nation, the article continued, for radar target practice. Thus the article gave the impression that the balloons were as common as kites.

In reality, however, the particular balloon equipment the Air Force now says landed at Roswell as part of the top-secret Project Mogul was not at all common. It was a train of 23 meteorological balloons in two 650-foot-high strings that were, in essence, a forerunner of today's spy satellites. It belonged to an experimental effort to monitor nuclear bomb tests from the air. Everything about Project Mogul, the Air Force said in its recent report, was classified top secret with the highest priority—Priority 1A, on a par with the ultimate hush-hushedness of the Manhattan Project. And although Project Mogul ceased in 1950, after just four years of operation, it retained its top-secret status until the early 1970s. Even its name was a secret.

"I didn't know till three years ago it was called Mogul," confessed Charles

B. Moore, professor emeritus of atmospheric physics at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in Socorro, who served in the New York University part of the project as its engineer. Whatever the name of the project, its *raison d'être*, according to Moore, was the "tremendous concern" on the part of the United States that the Soviets were developing nuclear weapons for use against us, much like the ones that had ended the war with Japan in just eight days. Mindful of that danger, scientists in the Long Range Detection Program (eventually known as Project Mogul), tried to eavesdrop on the world for the telltale sounds of clandestine bomb tests.

Moore believes that both Blanchard and Ramey were ignorant of the program when they made their public comments about the weather balloon—although they were probably informed after the fact. For this reason, Moore said, neither one of them should be accused of participation in a cover-up.

"If you see a bus and you say it's a bus," Moore explained to me, "it's still a bus—even if it's being used to haul concrete."

The particular piece of Project Mogul that sparked the Roswell incident, Moore thinks, was a test flight launched from Alamogordo on June 4, 1947. History of the project goes like this: The NYU group had tried to monitor an explosion at Helgoland, an island off the German coast, from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. But when high winds prevented the launch of the monitoring balloon from Bethlehem, the Army Air Force scientists moved the operation to Alamogordo where they planned to track the balloons using the radar. To aid in the tracking, the NYU group took with them some special radar targets that had never been used before in New Mexico. One of the interesting features of these new targets is that they were reinforced with Scotch tape on which a pinkish-purple abstract flower design had been printed. Reportedly, the first targets with the new design had failed when they were flight-tested near the end of WWII, so a quick fix was devised for the later targets, using the only tape immediately available.

The first balloon train launched from Alamogordo was NYU Flight #4. Apparently, according to radar signals, it was lost over the town of Arabela, New Mexico, about 70 miles northeast of Alamogordo. Flight #5, launched on June 5, 1947, was tracked as well. Military records show that this flight ascended to 60,000 feet and then landed 26 miles east of Roswell.

The runic designs on the tape seem to answer the longstanding question about the pastel-colored markings on the original debris—Marcel's hieroglyphics, which had been described by other witnesses as "Chinese writing," "figures," "numbers in a column that didn't look like the numbers we use at all," and "different geometric shapes, leaves, and circles."

Credit for first tying the latter-day Roswell Incident to Project Mogul goes to independent researcher Robert Todd of Ardmore, Pennsylvania. Todd, originally a believer in UFOs, has abandoned 20 years' work as a UFOlogist in the wake of his discovery.

"I'm satisfied with Mogul as the solution," Todd told me. "I don't think Jesse Marcel had ever seen a radar target."

The Air Force, giving first credit where it's due to Todd, also acknowledges that Glenn Dennis confidante Karl Pflock, much to his credit as a researcher, independently came to the same Mogul-Roswell conclusion. Let the flowered tape fall where it may, Pflock still thinks Glenn Dennis is the real glue holding the incident together. Because in Pflock's scenario, the UFO that crashed and killed its alien crew may have collided with the ill-fated Mogul balloon—or went out of control while trying to avoid a collision.

"Whatever the exact circumstances," Pflock concludes in his report, "an encounter between some sort of crewed vehicle and one of Charlie Moore's unwieldy monsters may have brought both down."

In other words, Mogul is not enough to account for the full-blown Roswell incident. Thus the Air Force report, and the *Times* page-one story that announced it, have already been dismissed out of hand as "garbage" (Friedman's word) by aficionados of Roswell.

"I just have one comment about it," said Walter Haut, repeating to me what he'd already told the *Times*: "All they've done is given us a new balloon."

But I had a higher opinion of the Air Force investigation. It was clearly written and internally consistent. And when I questioned Lieutenant James McAndrew, the historian whose research supports the findings, he was more forthcoming than I could have hoped, and had more knowledge at his military fingertips than in all the books by Friedman, Randle, and Schmitt.

"About Frank Kaufmann," McAndrew interjected as politely as he could. "He has no records at St. Louis." McAndrew was referring to the National Personnel Records Center, the repository of all past and present military personnel records (the place where *Omni*

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IN AND AROUND ROSWELL, PEOPLE BELIEVE IN  
THE COVER-UP CONSPIRACY  
AND MENTION THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND  
MILITARY WITH ROLLING  
EYES AND IN HUSHED TONES, AS THOUGH  
THEY WERE THE KGB.

weather balloon as a weather balloon. Then Ramey fielded all the reporters' questions so that Marcel didn't get to say a word.

In a telephone interview with Newton, who lives in San Antonio, Texas, General Ramey's weatherman assured me that nobody had pulled a fast one on Marcel.

"I remember Marcel chased me all around that room," Newton said. "He kept saying things like, 'Look at how tough the metal is,' 'Look at the strange markings on it.' He wouldn't have made such a big effort to convince me the thing was extraterrestrial if he thought we were looking at a weather balloon."

"But *you* knew it was a weather balloon with a radar wind target—a Rawin—no question?" I asked.

"I was adamant," Newton concurred. "I said I'd eat it with salt or pepper if it wasn't a Rawin."

Newton added that Marcel should never have been faulted for failing to recognize the balloon and its attachments, since he would not have come

Interview by Karl T. Pflock  
Photos by  
David Michael Kennedy



**Glenn Dennis, right, speaks out on the UFO case of the century.**

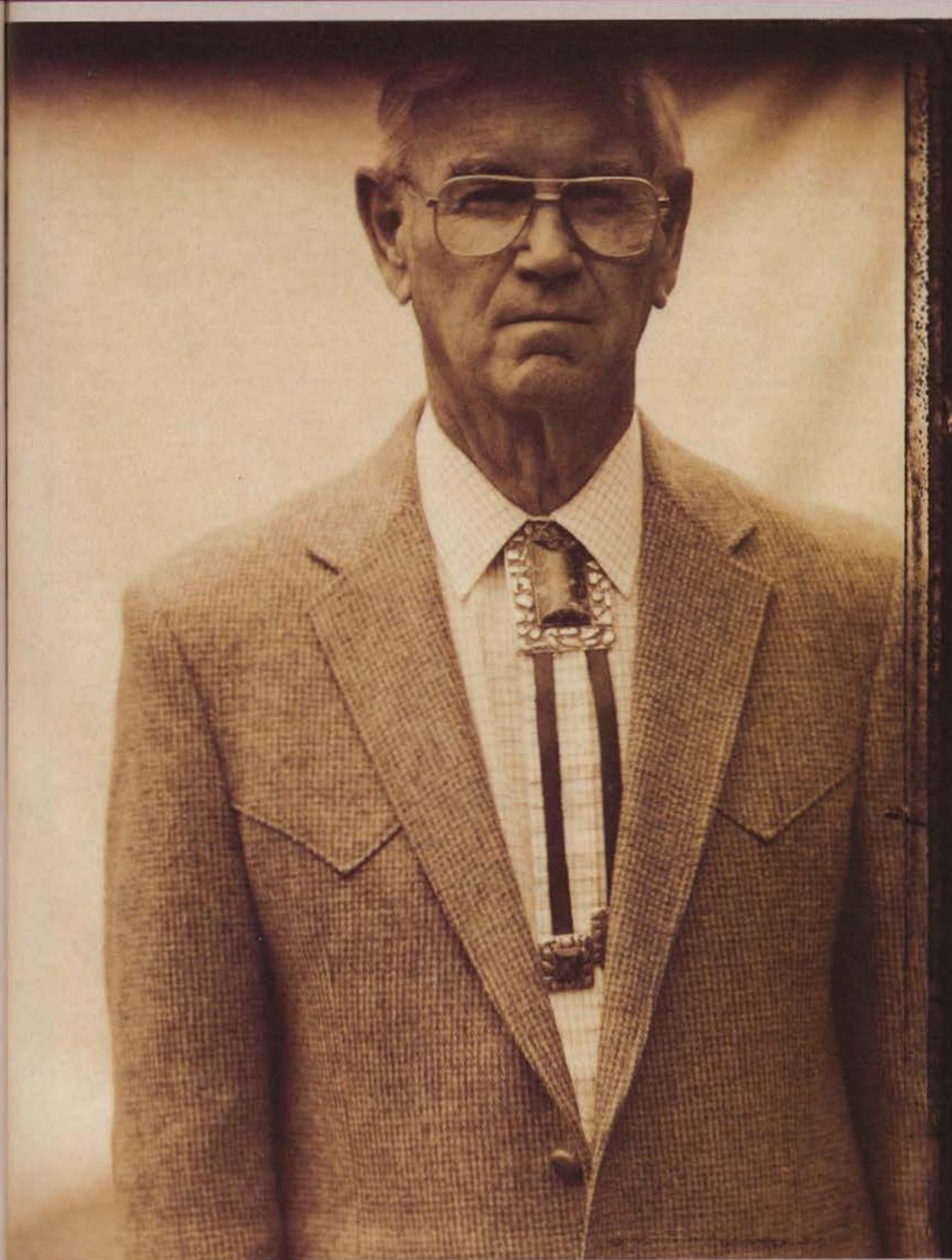
**I**t was back in junior high school in the small desert town of Roswell, New Mexico, that Glenn Dennis got his unusual start. "The teacher was going around the room asking us what we wanted to do for a living," Dennis recalls, "and I will never know why, but I said, 'I want to be an undertaker.'" He got what he thought he wanted: All the girls laughed. But little did Dennis realize that this flip remark would seal his fate, determining his career (mortician) and thrusting him into national prominence as the key witness to the most notorious UFO case the world has ever known.

Indeed, teachers being what they were, Dennis was asked to write a report on undertaking. To his surprise, he found the subject fascinating. And soon after, in 1940, he began working part time at the Ballard Funeral Home while attending Roswell High School. After graduation, excluded from World War II military service because of a hearing loss, Dennis apprenticed as an embalmer at Ballard, working to put his twin sister through nursing school and to save enough money to attend the San Francisco College of Mortuary Science, from which he graduated on December 22, 1946.

# STAR

The Mortician of Roswell Breaks His Code of Silence

# WITNESS



Shortly after returning to New Mexico and his job at Ballard, Dennis married and set up house-keeping in a cottage behind the funeral parlor. There, the 22-year-old Dennis was put in charge of the company's military contract work—ambulance and mortuary service for the Roswell Army Air Field (AAF), nearby.

Dennis was settling into his life as a "country funeral director" when, during the first week of July 1947, cowboy William W. ("Mac") Brazel moseyed into the Roswell office of Chaves County Sheriff George Wilcox. He announced he had found a large amount of unusual debris on the ranch he managed about 75 miles northwest of town. The sheriff contacted authorities at Roswell AAF, and by noon of Tuesday, July 8, the base public relations department had rolled into high gear: The U.S. Army Air Force had recovered one of the mysterious "flying discs," the press release declared. The implication, bandied about in headlines around the world, was that military officers had recovered an extraterrestrial vehicle, "a flying saucer," to be exact. But hours later, at his Fort Worth, Texas, headquarters, Eighth Air Force commander Brigadier General Roger M. Ramey deflated the excitement: The alleged saucer was nothing more than the misidentified remains of a weather balloon and its radar target.

**T**here the matter rested until the late 1970s, when UFO researchers Stanton T. Friedman and William L. Moore decided to take another look at the Roswell case. Their conclusion: The official denial was a cover-up. The Army Air Force had indeed recovered the remains of a flying saucer, just as originally announced. Even more startling was their claim that bodies of the craft's alien crew had been discovered and somehow spirited away by the military. This last, extraordinary claim gets its strongest backing from the testimony of Glenn Dennis, who, back in 1947, was the young mortician on call.

At the center of what is now considered the most controversial UFO story ever told, Dennis says that back in 1947 he was an innocent and reluctant player. He relates a story replete with the trappings of second-rate film noir: mysterious telephone calls, military strong-arm tactics, a secret autopsy of aliens, and a missing nurse who knew too much. In brief, he claims, after driving an injured airman to the base as part of his job as ambulance driver, he wandered into a top-secret military operation in which Air Force doctors were examining humanoids, or so it seemed. In fact, it became hard for him to escape that conclusion, he states, when an Air Force nurse, also unwittingly swept up in the covert operation, told

**Like a second-rate film noir, this story is replete with mysterious**



**telephone calls and disappearing witnesses.**

all (to him), drew some pictures of the alien creatures, and then promptly disappeared.

Always gracious, Dennis until recently has tried to accommodate virtually everyone. Now, however, tired of the intrusions, frustrated by what he says are published distortions of his recollections, and angered by the attacks and ridicule of skeptics, he avoids the media and most UFO investigators.

Dennis has agreed to break his silence of recent years at last, however, in an interview for *Omni* with writer and UFO researcher Karl T. Pflock, who is a former deputy assistant secretary of defense and intelligence officer. For those fascinated by the Roswell case, it is possible to read the testimony of the star witness for the first time here, without benefit of anyone else's spin, pro or con.

**Omni:** How did you first become involved in the events now known as the Roswell incident?

**Dennis:** I received a phone call from the Roswell Army Air Field mortuary officer on July 7 sometime after lunch, around one-thirty. I have no idea who it was, but he asked if we had any baby caskets, three foot six or four foot, hermetically sealed. I told him we kept a four foot. Then he asked how many we had in stock. I told him we had two. He asked how long it would take to get more. I told him, if we called Texas Coffin Company in Amarillo by three o'clock, we could have them by Hill Truck Line at six the next morning.

**Omni:** Did he tell you how many he wanted?

**Dennis:** No. I just said, "Hey, what's going on?" And he said, "We're just having a conference here about the future. In case something happens, we may need a lot of them."

**Omni:** Did the call seem unusual to you?

**Dennis:** No, I didn't think anything about it until later. We got that kind of inquiry all the time.

**Omni:** But then you got another call.

**Dennis:** About forty-five minutes later the same man called back. He wanted to know about embalming fluid: what chemicals it contained, what it would do to bodies that had been lying out in the open. Would it change the stomach contents? Would it change the tissue, the blood? He also wanted to know about our procedures for removing bodies from a site and for preparation of bodies that had been lying out in the elements and might have been shredded by predators.

**Omni:** Did he say they had bodies in that condition?

**Dennis:** No, just that the information was for future reference. He also wanted to know, if they transported a body under those conditions and without embalming, how they should do it. Back in those days, we didn't have air-conditioned

hearses or a pathologist in Roswell. So I told him I would go to Sunset Creamery or Clardy's Dairy and buy all the dry ice I could and pack them in it. I also told him, if he had a "hot one"—that is, if he didn't know the cause of death—they'd better contact a pathologist and damn sure do what he told them. I think I suggested they try Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, DC, because I remembered bodies of local boys who died in the service coming to us through there. I also remember telling him very politely, "You give us the specifications, you tell us how you want the bodies prepared, and we'll prepare them according to your specifications, not ours."

**Omni:** What happened next?

**Dennis:** A good forty-five minutes to an hour later, we got an ambulance call for an airman hurt on a motorcycle. He had a bad laceration on his forehead, and I think he had a fractured nose. I put a tourniquet on his forehead, put him in the front seat of the combination hearse-ambulance with me, and drove him to the base. In emergencies like that, we turned the red light on about a block from the gate, and they waved us through.

**Omni:** After you got on the base, what did you do?

**Dennis:** I went directly to the infirmary. When I swung into the driveway, there were three old Army field ambulances backed up at an angle at the ramp where I usually parked, and two MPs were standing in between. So I drove around to the end and parked, and the airman and I got out and walked up the ramp behind the ambulances.

**Omni:** What did you see as you walked up the ramp?

**Dennis:** When we got to the first ambulance, one of the rear doors was open—and when you're in the business, naturally you're going to look. I saw something in there that looked like half of a canoe, leaning up against the side near the open door. It was standing on end, and I was very close to it. It was about three, three and a half, maybe four feet high. All around the bottom of this thing, all over the floor, was a lot of wreckage. It was all sharp, and as best I can remember, it was like broken glass. Some of the pieces and the "canoe" looked like stainless steel that had been put in high heat. It shaded from very shiny to pink, to red, to brown, then black.

**Omni:** Were there any markings?

**Dennis:** I remember markings on the canoe-shaped thing, around the outer

edge, along the curve, and down one side. They were about four inches high, darker than the background, and clearly were deliberately put there.

**Omni:** You have said the symbols reminded you of Egyptian hieroglyphics.

**Dennis:** When I was in mortuary school, we studied Egyptian mummification and burial practices and customs. The bodies they'd pick up off the streets went on a funeral barge, which was pushed out to sea and set afire. There was always a decoration on the barge's side, a white swan or a panther. After I had a chance to think, I realized what I saw resembled the decorations they put around the necks of those animal figures.

**Omni:** Did you see anything in the other ambulances?

**Dennis:** I saw the same kind of wreckage in the second one. The doors were closed on the third ambulance, so I couldn't see what was in it.

**Omni:** Did the injured soldier see the material, too, and did the MPs do any-

**THE MARKINGS ON THE  
WRECKAGE RESEMBLED THE SYMBOLS THE  
ANCIENT EGYPTIANS  
USED TO DECORATE THEIR FUNERAL BARGES,  
WHICH THEY LIT  
IN FLAMES AND PUSHED OUT TO SEA.**

thing about your snooping?

**Dennis:** The MPs didn't even look at me, as far as I know. They may even have been gone by then. It wasn't like they were there guarding it. The airman saw the wreckage, too, but he was more concerned with his injuries. I followed him into the infirmary.

**Omni:** Didn't you have to sign him in, do some paperwork to get paid?

**Dennis:** To get paid, you had to get a voucher signed by whoever was on the front desk, but they took him away, and I never did get his name down or anything signed. It wasn't a big deal because the ambulance business was so minor, more of a goodwill kind of thing.

**Omni:** After he was whisked away, what did you do?

**Dennis:** I started down the hall to the lounge area to get a Coke. There was a lot of commotion, a lot of officers—two or three of them women—buzzing up and down the hall, but I didn't know any of them. There was an officer, a captain—I remember seeing his bars—leaning next to an open side door. I think

he was talking to someone through the door. I went up to him and said, "Sir?" He turned around, and I said, "It looks like we had a plane crash. Do I need to go in and get ready for it?"

**Omni:** The captain was not someone you knew.

**Dennis:** I'd never seen him before. He looked at me and said, "Who in the hell are you?" I remember that real well. He was real snotty. I told him I was from the funeral home, that we had a contract with the base, and said again, "Looks like you had a crash." He said, "Don't move from here, don't take one step," then walked away. After a few minutes he came back with two MPs, strangers to me. He told them, "Get this man off the base. He's off limits. You drive him back to town, make sure he gets back there." So they started to walk me back down the hall.

**Omni:** Did they physically manhandle you as has been reported?

**Dennis:** Oh, no. They weren't roughing me up or anything. They were real nice.

But then we'd only gone a few feet when a voice said, "Bring that SOB back here." We turned around and there was this big, redheaded captain, about six three or four, with a real short crew cut and the meanest eyes I'd ever seen, like the devil himself looking at me. He had with him a black sergeant who was holding a clipboard.

**Omni:** Where did they come from?

**Dennis:** Somebody went and got them, I guess. Anyway, the captain came up to me and poked a finger in my chest and said, "Look, mister, you don't go into Roswell and start a bunch of rumors that there's been a crash. Nothing has happened here, you understand?" And he kept poking me. Of course, I was getting a little upset. I said, "I'm a civilian and you can't do anything to me. You can go to hell!" That's when he jabbed me again and said, "Somebody will be picking your bones out of the sand." Then the sergeant said, "Sir, he would make better dog food." So I popped off at him, too. Then the captain said, "Get the son of a bitch out of here," and the MPs started taking me back down the hall again. That's when I saw the nurse.

**Omni:** This was your friend, an Army nurse assigned to the base infirmary?

**Dennis:** Right. She came out of a supply room to our left, right in front of us, and there were two men who came out behind her. She had a towel over her face. She looked up and saw me, and

she screamed, "Glenn! Get out of here as fast as you can!" She was sobbing, gasping for air, and she went on across the hall, through another door. The two men followed her. They were gulping for air, too, and looked like they were about to vomit.

**Omni:** Did you smell or see anything that might have made them sick?

**Dennis:** I don't remember smelling or seeing anything strange. When the MPs got outside with me, one of them turned around and said, "What the hell was that all about?" We went right back to the funeral home, and they warned me to stay away from the base for the rest of the day.

**Omni:** What did you do then?

**Dennis:** I picked up the phone and tried to call back out to the infirmary and the nurses' quarters to find out what was going on, but I couldn't get through. Nobody answered.

**Omni:** When you went home, did you say anything to your wife about this?

**Dennis:** No, I didn't talk about it to anybody, until my dad gave me no

choice. Let me tell you something. I never mixed my family or my home with the funeral business. I never discussed a body, a funeral, names, anything. When I left the funeral home, I had a different life. But the next morning, around six o'clock, Sheriff George Wilcox, a good friend of my dad's, went to my folks' house with one of his deputies. George said he thought I was in a lot of trouble out at the

base. He said, "You tell Glenn, if he knows anything, to keep his mouth shut. They want all your kids' names, they want to know when they were born, and they want to know where they are now." Dad said Wilcox was really shaken up, a basket of eggs. My dad got in his car and came to our house by the funeral home as fast as he could. He almost knocked our door down and bounced me out of bed. It wasn't very much after 6:00 a.m.

I got up and Dad and I went outside and I finally told him what happened, just like it happened. At first he said our government wouldn't do a thing like that. Then he got to thinking about it. He said I'd never lied to him—but twice when I was a kid, and he about killed me—so it must be true. Then he got very angry. But he said he wouldn't talk about it because he didn't want me to get killed.

**Omni:** Did you continue to try to contact the nurse?

**Dennis:** I called out there and finally got through, but didn't get her. They

said she wasn't on duty. Later that morning she called me, about ten-thirty or so. She said she knew I'd been trying to reach her, but that she'd been very sick. Then she said, "But I have to talk to you." She was crying.

**Omni:** Why do you think she came to you instead of someone else?

**Dennis:** Because she'd seen me at the hospital and thought I knew something, I suppose. Anyway, I suggested the officers' club, which was only about a block from her quarters. She agreed, and I drove straight out there. She was standing outside waiting for me, and we walked in and went to the bar because the dining room was closed. The place wasn't busy, but we took a table in a back corner. I asked her if she wanted anything to eat, and she said she didn't. She was crying, almost hysterical, and sick to her stomach and ash white. She was in uniform, but really disheveled. She wanted to know what happened to me. I told her what they did to me, but I didn't know why.

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She said, "Well, I'll tell you why." She said she found out later that all the regular infirmary staff wasn't supposed to report for duty. Somehow she didn't get the order, so she went to work as usual and went into the supply room to get her day's supplies. When she did, there were the two men, doctors, in surgical masks and everything. There were two gurneys, and there was a body bag on each one. Both were unzipped. The doctors were at one gurney, with the bag folded back. There were two small, mangled bodies in the bag. She said the smell was the most horrible, most gruesome smell she'd ever smelled in her life. The doctors said something about it being toxic, but I can't say what that means.

**Omni:** Did the nurse try to leave?

**Dennis:** She didn't get a chance. She said they ordered her to come over and told her, "We have to have some help. Lieutenant, you have to take notes for us, write down what we're looking at, what we tell you." She wrote down everything they said as they ex-

amined the bodies.

**Omni:** Did the nurse know who the doctors were or where they were from?

**Dennis:** I asked her, and she said she'd never seen them before. She told me she heard one say to the other that they'd have to do something when they got back to Walter Reed Army Hospital.

**Omni:** Did she describe the bodies?

**Dennis:** She said a hand was severed from one of the mangled bodies, and they turned it over on a long forceps. There were only four fingers. They had little pads on the tips with what looked like tiny suction cups. Their mouths were only slits, one inch wide. There were no teeth, only a firm piece of tissue like cartilage. One thing that caught her attention was where we had only one ear canal, they had two, but they had no earlobes. The nose was concave, with two orifices, but no bridge. The eyes were very, very large and sunken so far back in you couldn't tell what they looked like. If the bodies had lain out for some time, the eyes

probably ruptured, but she said the bone structure showed they were large. She said the heads were disproportionately large, and the doctors noted the skull structure was like a newborn baby's: flexible. She also said the bone from the shoulder to the elbow was much shorter than the one from the elbow to the wrist.

**Omni:** Did she say anything about the more intact body?

**Dennis:** She said that, as the doctors examined the mangled ones, they would go over and look at the other body, comparing things. It was about three and a half to four feet tall. She said she looked at it, and it was horrible, and she remembered one of the doctors said the features reminded him of those of a 100-year-old ancient Chinese. Then they all got sick and had to leave the room. That's when we met.

**Omni:** She took notes during the examination. Did she also make drawings?

**Dennis:** No. She did that that night. She went home and took a shower, and some other nurse helped her, washed her hair and everything. Evidently, the smell was so strong on her they couldn't stand it, either.

**Omni:** Why did she decide to make the drawings?

**Dennis:** She made the drawings for me—but only after I'd made a solemn oath I'd never reveal her connection to them. She wanted to know if I saw the same things she saw. She asked me if they brought the—I think she called

them "creatures"—to the funeral home. I told her I hadn't seen the bodies, that they hadn't been taken to Ballard's.

**Omni:** What did she make the drawings on and with what? Were there any notations?

**Dennis:** They were in pencil, and she did them on the back of a prescription pad. She said she didn't have anything else to write on.

**Omni:** What did she do with the drawings after she showed them to you?

**Dennis:** She gave them to me. She said she wanted me to have them. I think maybe it was for her protection. She said, "Guard them with your life."

**Omni:** Did she have any information about what became of the bodies?

**Dennis:** She said there was a rumor they had been moved to a hangar, where the autopsies had been finished that night. The head nurse, I think it was a Captain Wilson, told her they were flown out to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

**Omni:** Do you remember anything else she told you that seemed important?

**Dennis:** The doctors said there was nothing in the medical textbooks to cover what they had. She also overheard them saying the bodies were found with or in some wreckage two or three miles from where everything else was located.

**Omni:** How did your meeting end?

**Dennis:** She began to feel much worse. I drove her back to the nurses' quarters about noon, and that was it.

**Omni:** You left the base with her drawings and notes. What did you do with them then, and what became of them?

**Dennis:** Well, I hid them for a long, long time, then put them in my personal and legal files in the funeral home basement. When I finally left Ballard's in 1962, I left my files behind—shouldn't have, but I did. When UFO researcher Stan Friedman and I went to Ballard's to look for them a few years ago, the cabinets were still there, but empty. All my files were missing. The manager there now told us that he and another man, Joe Lucas, cleaned out everything; he said Lucas hauled it all to the town dump.

**Omni:** Returning to 1947, after meeting with the nurse, you had no doubt there was something very much out of line going on. When did you see the newspaper with the captured saucer story?

**Dennis:** About six or seven that night I went in to write an obituary, and the paper was lying on the desk at Ballard's. I picked it up, saw the headline, and thought, "Maybe that's what she's gotten into!"

**Omni:** Did you discuss the meeting and what the nurse told you with your

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father or anyone else?

**Dennis:** I never mentioned her, period.

**Omni:** When did you try to contact her?

**Dennis:** I kept trying to get ahold of her. I tried for two or three days, and they said she wasn't there; then I went out to the base on call, maybe a week or so later, and Captain Wilson told me she had been shipped out the same afternoon I last saw her.

**Omni:** July 8. Did you hear from the nurse later?

**Dennis:** About six weeks, maybe two months later I got a typed letter. The envelope was addressed to Ballard Funeral Home, not me personally. The letter was to "Dear Glenn" and had no signature, just her typed name. It gave a New York APO number [overseas military mailing address] where I could write her. It said she was in England, didn't have time to write, but that we'd correspond and she wanted to know what happened to me. To tell you the truth, I don't think it came from her. It didn't sound like her. I think somebody wrote it to try to find out what I knew.

**Omni:** Did you respond?

**Dennis:** I wrote saying I was glad to hear she was okay and, when she was ready, to write back. Another six weeks or two months later that letter came back. Stamped on the front was "Re-

turn to Sender," and down at the bottom, stamped in red, was the word "Deceased."

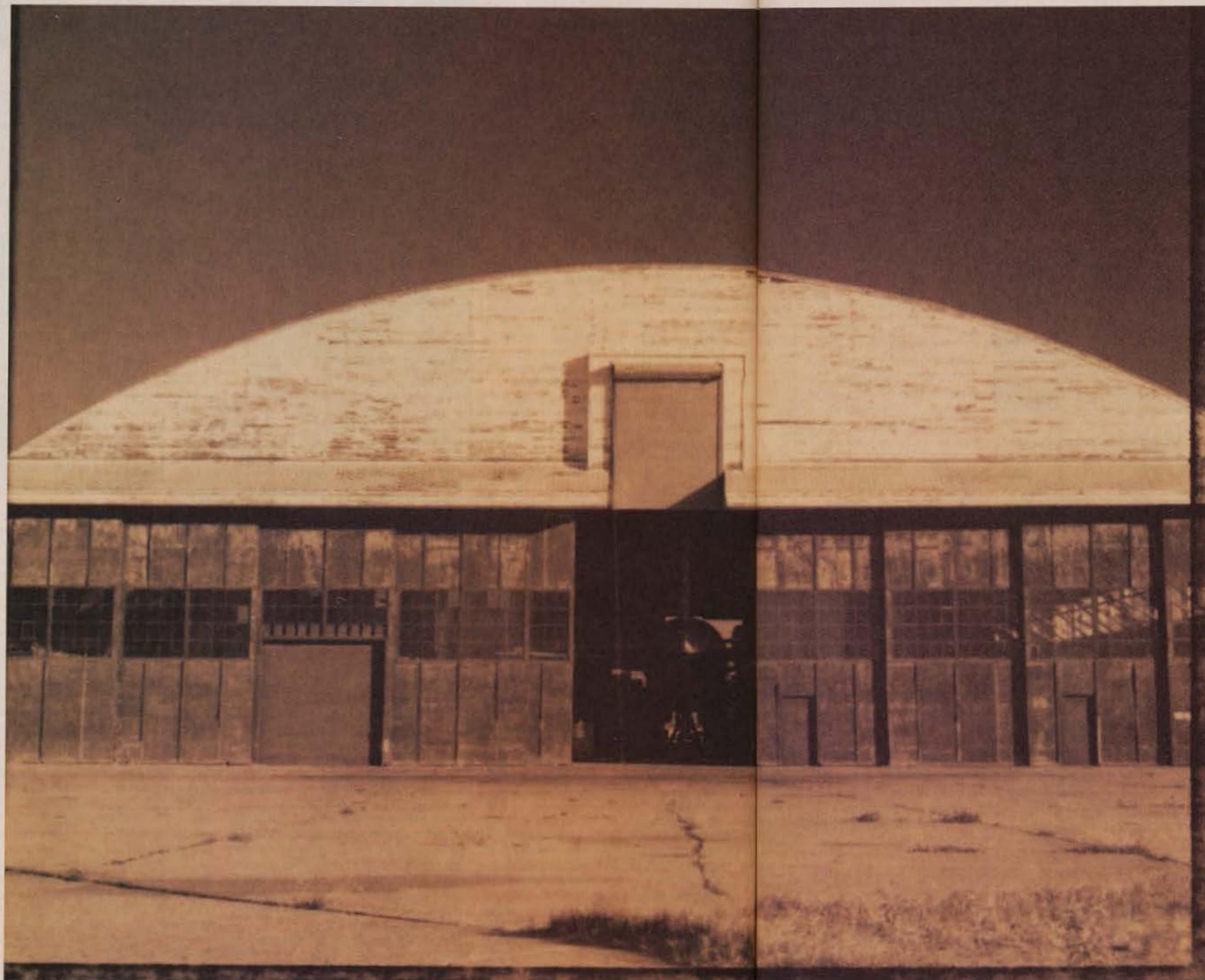
**Omni:** What did you do with the letters?

**Dennis:** I kept them in the same file as the drawings and notes I made on what she told me, in a big envelope marked "Personal."

A long time later, I told Captain Wilson about the returned letter and asked her if anybody ever heard what happened to the nurse. She said the rumor was she had gone down on a plane on a training mission and was killed with some other nurses, but you researchers say there's no record of such an accident.

**Omni:** Right, several careful investigations have turned up nothing. And now even you seem to think the nurse didn't die in 1947. When and why did you change your mind, and have you tried to locate her since?

**Dennis:** It was just a few years ago. I'd always hoped she was alive, but it wasn't until I learned from [UFO researchers] Don Berliner, Kevin Randle, and Don Schmitt that there was no record of a plane crash like the one she was supposed to have been in, that I really thought she might still be alive. I haven't tried to contact her because the way we left it the last time we



It was July 5, 1947. A day seemingly like any other in the sleepy, desert town of Roswell, New Mexico. A nurse who worked

at the Roswell Army Air Field hospital, a base with about 5,000 military personnel, was going about her usual routine over the long July Fourth weekend, when she stumbled onto a scene that shook her to the core. In search of supplies, she opened the door to an examination room and watched two strange doctors bent over the bodies of three small humanlike creatures. Oh, they *resembled* humans, all right, but there was a difference: Their bodies were too small, their arms too spindly, and their heads too bald and big.

Two were badly mangled and decomposed, while a third appeared relatively intact. A stench permeated the air. The physicians quickly enlisted



## THE CASE OF THE VANISHING NURSES

Article by Paul McCarthy  
Photographs by  
David Michael Kennedy

the nurse's help and the autopsies continued until all concerned were overwhelmed by the smell from the rotting bodies.

At least this is what happened if you believe a story long held true by those who say a UFO crashed into the desert near Roswell, New Mexico, one summer night long ago, spitting five extraterrestrials into the arms of U.S. Army medics, who autopsied the shattered remains. According to the legend—because by now, in UFO circles, it has become that—one lone nurse, referred to by pundits as Nurse X, decided to tell all. The recipient of this extraordinary confidence: 22-year-old Glenn Dennis, the town mortician. But Dennis would be privy to the strange revelations on one condition: He would, forever, keep the identity of Nurse X under wraps.

Dennis, who this month talks to *Omni* in the interview beginning on page 100, said he knew Nurse X because of his second job—driver of the town ambulance. As such, he was on the base frequently to drop off injury victims. The day of the alleged ET incident, Dennis says that he drove an injured man to the hospital and then was rudely ushered out and even threatened by Army officers who he had never seen before.

"All of these people came in from out of town," Dennis told *Omni*, "and just kind of took over. They were in the halls and everywhere. I didn't see the regular doctors or anybody. The only familiar person that I saw was her."

Naturally, Dennis wondered what was going on and a few days later set up a luncheon date with Nurse X to find out. Afterward, Dennis claims, she returned to the base, never to be heard from again. Dennis tried to contact her but was told she had been transferred. And still later "the rumor was," says Dennis, "that she went down in a plane that was on a training mission."

After six months the incident died away, according to Dennis, and wasn't raised again until the 1980s when UFO investigators descended on Roswell. "I just didn't want to be bothered," says Dennis. "I never told my wife or anyone else. My father is the only one I ever talked to. It was never brought up, you know. It never was."

There is much more to the alleged 1947 UFO crash near Roswell than the recollections of Glenn Dennis, of course, and throughout the 1980s

**UFO puzzler: Did five unlucky nurses vanish in the wake of a cover-up of an alien crash, whose debris was scattered**



**over a cornfield (above) and stored in a shed owned by Mac Brazel (at top)?**

a swarm of investigators pieced a story together through the accounts of many other people.

Even so, Dennis's part is an important one and central to the event. So I was all ears one day last year when, while interviewing Don Schmitt, one of the two major researchers on the Roswell case, the topic of missing nurses came up. Schmitt, who with Kevin Randle wrote *The Truth about the UFO Crash at Roswell*, said there were no official records to show that Glenn Dennis's nurse, or five other nurses who appeared in photos in the Roswell base yearbook, ever served in the military.

"Once again it appears as if they really covered their tracks," said Schmitt, referring to what he says is a government cover-up of the evidence of the crash. And, he went on to tell me, since 1989 he and Randle had *looked*. They had *scoured* the planet up, down, and sideways for those nurses, he told me, to no avail. The suggestion:

The government had willfully purged the nurses from the record, and, possibly, the earth, in its effort to hide the alien crash at Roswell. After all, the assumption went, dead women tell no tales.

Schmitt said he had worked with the Army Nurse Corps Historian's Office at the Department of Defense in an attempt to track the five yearbook nurses who, it was assumed, might have talked to Nurse X, heard something, or participated in some way in the Roswell incident. He had also checked with such organizations as the WWII Flight Nurses Association, the Military Reference Branch of the National Archives, and *Stars and Stripes*, the military newspaper in Washington DC, for some sign that the nurses had served. No luck.

**E**ven the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation in Washington, DC, had never heard of them, Schmitt told me, adding, "We are working now with some Pentagon officials who are more than a bit fascinated by the fact that even though we have photographs of these nurses from the yearbook, there are no records on these people."

Randle had also tried to uncover the trail of the Glenn Dennis nurse—the infamous Nurse X. He had, he told me, looked through the unit history of the 509th Atomic Bomb Wing that was stationed at Roswell, as well as the unit's transfer orders. He said he'd scoured the base phonebook and the town newspaper, which frequently

welcomed newcomers to the base. He also did credit searches on the woman—whose name, he says, Glenn Dennis had divulged to him—and her alleged brother, but came up empty. Then Schmitt tried birth certificates and baptismal records, based on hometown information supplied by Glenn Dennis, with equally dismal results.

The Schmitt-Randle conclusion, communicated emphatically, was plenty clear: Either Glenn Dennis had fabricated Nurse X, they said, or the government had eliminated all vestiges of actual, and documented, life.

#### The Challenge

When I told my editors at *Omni* this intriguing tale, I proposed writing it up as an example of investigatory diligence and the lengths to which UFO researchers would go to uncover witnesses. To my surprise, *Omni* saw something entirely different. It was an opportunity to doublecheck Randle and Schmitt's claims—a situation that does not arise that often in UFOlogy. Had they exercised due diligence? Could I find the nurses' records? And, my editors asked cagily—the expense budget being small—could I do so from my desk in Hawaii, without leaving home?

The task was especially important since the missing nurses pointed to sinister government activity—in other words, the presence of an official, high-level conspiracy to cover up the events at Roswell, as Randle and Schmitt claimed. If the nurses had been wiped off the face of the earth, as the researchers insisted, that would mean someone had gone to great lengths to "erase them." But if the nurses could be found, if there had been no effort to purge them from the databank of life, that would deal the conspiracy theory a notable blow.

I halfheartedly agreed to look for the nurses myself, but didn't have high hopes. Hadn't these guys been at it for five years? This was their life. What chance did I have, given my limited travel budget and my time frame—a few mere weeks?

#### The Search

I had the names of the six nurses—five from the Roswell Army Air Field yearbook for 1947, previously supplied by Randle, and Nurse X, given to me by Randle as well. (For more on the true identity of Nurse X, held by some to be Naomi Maria Selff, see "The Truth about Roswell," which begins on page 90.) So I began by digging in the mid-

1940s volumes of the Army Register in the Federal Government Document Depository of the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii. The Air Force was part of the Army until they went their separate ways in 1947, and the Register purportedly listed the dates of enlistment, promotion, death, and retirement for all personnel. There was even a section devoted to the Army Nurse Corps—column upon column of names and serial numbers, but no Roswell nurses.

Next I tried Lieutenant Colonel Carolyn Feller at the Army Nurse Corps Historian's Office in Washington, DC. She couldn't help me but suggested Bill Heimdahl at the Air Force Historian's Office, also in Washington. Heimdahl put me on to the World-Wide Air Force Locator at Randolph Air Force Base in Texas. A Captain Tom Gilroy found a listing for one of the nurses, Major Claudia Uebele, and her retirement date, 1965. I checked the Air Force Register for 1965, found her, and

THE MISSING NURSES POINTED TO THE PRESENCE OF AN OFFICIAL, HIGH-LEVEL CONSPIRACY. IF THE NURSES COULD BE FOUND, THAT WOULD DEAL THE CONSPIRACY THEORY A NOTABLE BLOW.

jotted down her serial number.

With that in hand, I again called Lieutenant Colonel Feller, thinking that with a serial number, she might be able to get me an address or phone number, assuming Uebele was still alive.

No luck. But this time she recommended Bill Siebert, archivist at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, which purportedly has records for all past and present military personnel. Bingo. Siebert had records for the five nurses but nothing for Nurse X. Records were complete for Majors Joyce Godard and Claudia Uebele and partial, reconstructed records existed, because of a 1973 fire, for Captain Adeline Fanton, First Lieutenant Angele LaRue, and Lieutenant Colonel Rosemary McManus. To access these, all I had to do was make a formal request using the Freedom of Information Act, which enables citizens like me to ask the government for information and, provided it isn't classified, have some realistic expectation of receiving it.

Amazingly, I had located the rec-

ords in three days flat, something the Roswell researchers told me they'd been unable to do in five arduous years. But could I find the nurses themselves?

#### Finding a Nurse

Three weeks later, the records arrived in the mail. Fanton had died in 1975 and Godard in 1981. Then, one of LaRue's relatives told me she had been dead for three or four years. That left Uebele and McManus. The records only gave the city of last-known residence. That was Phoenix in 1978 for McManus and Seal Beach, California, in 1971 for Uebele. But the Personnel Records Center would forward letters to the exact addresses. After calls to directory assistance in both cities turned up nothing, I decided to write letters and send them through the Personnel Records Center.

To do this, I began working with Charles Pelligrini, a management analyst at the center. Two months later the letters were returned—addressee unknown. Pelligrini suggested I try the Veterans Administration (VA). If the women had collected disability benefits, they would be in the VA files, and I could at least find out if they were dead or alive. The VA had nothing on McManus, but found that Uebele had died just three months earlier in May 1994.

Pelligrini then suggested the Defense Finance and Accounting Office in Cleveland, which cuts pension checks. They had nothing under Rosemary A. McManus, the name on her personnel records. This led to another chat with Pelligrini. McManus had been married twice and had thus also been known as Rosemary M. Jentsch and Rosemary J. Brown. "Try Rosemary J. Brown," said Pelligrini. He was right. And to my surprise, a clerk in Cleveland not only pulled up her name, but gave me her city of residence, too. Directory assistance even supplied a phone number.

Brown was 78 and in a nursing home, but alert. She had already been approached by two other investigators, possibly Schmitt and an associate, but the names escaped her. Yes, she had been stationed at Roswell in July 1947. She remembered the other four yearbook nurses, but not Nurse X, and not Glenn Dennis himself.

What's more, she told me, she had witnessed nothing to suggest a crash at Roswell or any unusual goings-on at the base hospital. "I had no sense of any-

# DOCUMENTED LIVES

Who were the Roswell nurses? It has been 47 years since the Roswell incident, but through military records and talks with family members, we have been able to piece together some facts about each woman. One thing is certain: They didn't vanish. They went on to have families, military careers, and more.

First Lieutenant Angele A. LaRue. According to her son Fred Thessing, Angele LaRue was born in Montreal, Canada, on May 26, 1922. She went to nursing school in Waterbury, Connecticut, and then entered the Army-Air Force Nurse Corps on April 9, 1945. LaRue served at Roswell and after that, with the 7th Bomb Wing at Carswell Air Force Base in Texas. She married Frederick Thessing, an Air Force pilot, in 1948 and left active duty in 1949. She went on to raise four sons. Like many military families, the Thessings moved a lot, living in Texas, Nebraska, Florida, and Connecticut. LaRue was an ardent spelunker, coin collector, and enjoyed traveling. She was diabetic and eventually developed heart disease. She died in 1986 in Conway, Arkansas.

Captain Adeline M. Fanton. Adeline Fanton was born March 16, 1916 in Louisville, Kentucky. She attended nursing school at Saints Mary and Elizabeth Hospital in Louisville, according to Mary Fanton, a distant relative. Fanton entered the Army-Air Force on April 19, 1945. She never married, but served in the Corps in various capacities for 13 years. After her Roswell tour, for example, she was a general duty nurse at March Field, California, and then moved on to the 5001st Medical Group at Ladd Air Force Base in Alaska. She served at a number of base hospitals until her retirement in 1958. In 1951 she received the American Campaign Medal, and in 1953 she was awarded the National Defense Service Medal. After retirement in 1958, Fanton moved back to the Louisville area and died there in 1975.

Captain Joyce Godard. Born in Milledgeville, Georgia, April 8, 1912, Godard attended Georgia College for Women for one year in 1929 and received her RN degree at Milledgeville State Hospital in 1932. From 1932 through 1938 she worked as a nurse at the Aiken County Hospital in Aiken, South Carolina. Godard entered the Army-Air Force Nurse Corps on March 11, 1942 and did her basic training at Barksdale Field in Louisiana. She served at Roswell from August

**By the time this picture was taken, Captain Fanton, below, had changed her first name from Adeline to Eileen. At**



**left is Major Claudia Uebele and, above, Captain Joyce Godard.**

1946 through August 1947. Her work involved service as a general duty nurse, an administrative nurse, a flight nurse, and at the close of her career (August 1959-May 1962), as chief of nursing services, 2796th U.S. Air Force Hospital, Norton Air Force Base, California, where she received the Air Force Commendation Medal. According to her cousin Mark, who is the last of the Godard clan, she returned to Milledgeville after retiring in 1962 and worked at the local hospital. She died on Christmas Day 1981.

Major Claudia Uebele. Born February 20, 1905, Uebele received her RN in nursing at Bethesda Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1930. On March 15, 1945 she joined the Nurse Corps and did her basic training at Billings General Hospital in Indiana. Uebele served at Roswell in 1947 and went on to practice general duty nursing at places like Marks Air Force Base in Alaska and MacDill Air Force Base in Florida. She finished out her career with a three-year stint with the 801st Medical Group at Lockbourne Air Force Base, Ohio. Uebele received the American Campaign Medal, the WWII Victory Medal, and the Air Force Commendation Medal, among others. She retired in 1965 and died in Seal Beach, California, on May 17, 1994.

**L**ieutenant Colonel Rosemary J. Brown. The only surviving Roswell nurse is Rosemary J. Brown, the former Rosemary A. McManus, who was born January 11, 1915. She received her nurse's training at St. Mary's Hospital in Wausau, Wisconsin, in 1942. Brown entered the Nurse Corps on April 6, 1944. After serving at Roswell in 1947, she was stationed at various bases in the southwestern United States as a general duty nurse and a surgical nurse. She also spent 18 months in French Morocco. Brown married twice and enjoyed traveling. "One of the most fascinating places I went was Alaska," says Brown, who spent a two-week vacation there. She received various military commendations, including the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal and the Air Force Longevity Service Award with one bronze oak leaf cluster. After her retirement in 1975 she worked eight years for the state of Wisconsin as an inspector for the Medicare/Medicaid Program. She resides in a nursing home now, and when it comes to her views on UFOs, she says she has none, "other than I am sure that there is something there but I haven't any idea what." ☐

thing weird happening at all," stated Rosemary Brown, formerly McManus.

Interestingly enough, based on readings in recent years, she felt the crash scenario along with the recovery of bodies was plausible. "I know that something went on, and I know it was very hush-hush. And I know I didn't know anything about it (at the time). It was closed up tight as a drum, you know, by the base officials."

She didn't hear any scuttlebutt about it from base personnel, either. "I can tell you that people who I knew, who were on active duty at that time, if they knew anything, they kept their mouths shut—you know, the pilots and others. I heard nothing directly."

And she says she wasn't told to keep quiet. "We were in the medics. We were not involved in anything like that. If anybody was, it might have been one of the doctors on duty."

She had not kept up with the other nurses. But through the grapevine, she knew that Angele LaRue had married, had had twins, and had moved to Carswell Air Force Base in Texas. She also knew that Joyce Godard had died, but was surprised to learn that Adeline Fanton and Claudia Uebele had passed on as well.

## The Roswell Researchers React

What would Schmitt and Randle say to all this? Schmitt wasn't returning my calls, so I gave Randle a ring. He was surprised that I had found the records and asked how I had done it. When I explained that I had gone through the St. Louis Records Center and that I was amazed Schmitt hadn't done the same thing, he agreed. "Surprises the hell out of me, too. I thought that would be the first thing Don would do."

Although Randle had located some witnesses through St. Louis, he was also astonished that they would send out records on living people, particularly when I didn't have serial numbers. "It sounds as if there were two ways to get there," said Randle. "One was the interstate highway system, and the other was the back gravel roads. And Don took the back gravel roads."

My take on that: Don had tried to use some special connections, possibly through his secret government contacts or the Internet, instead of asking right out. I also began to feel that though billed as a team, Randle and Schmitt actually worked independently. When the right hand doesn't know what the left is doing, what kind of investigation is that?

Randle said he was impressed with my straightforward approach. In the future, he told me, he would follow my

lead in seeking other military witnesses who had seemingly disappeared. He also said he would have Schmitt give me a call.

Weeks passed, and finally Schmitt left an enigmatic message on my machine. I tried to call him to talk directly, but he did not return my calls.

Frustrated, I finally called Randle again. He was incredulous that Schmitt had not gotten back to me. "I told Don it was imperative to get back to you," he explained. "I don't want you to say something in your article that is not true, just because we have not made proper connections."

He also said that Schmitt would send me documentation showing he had tried St. Louis in 1990, but had been told that there were no records. Schmitt would definitely call me, said Randle, "so we don't look like clowns bumbling around out here."

He had cause for concern. My investigation was coming at the same time as the Air Force's attempt to discredit their Roswell research with its own Roswell report ("Report of Air Force Research Regarding the Roswell Incident"). In the major thrust of this new, 1994 report, the Air Force contended that the object found at Roswell was actually a high-tech weather balloon, part of the Air Force's once-top-secret Project Mogul.

But the Air Force report also contained other information of special interest to me. One of the Roswell books, apparently the Randle/Schmitt volume, had claimed there were no records on file with the Veterans Administration or the Department of Defense for eleven servicemen stationed at Roswell in 1947. The Air Force went on to say, "That claim sounded serious, so investigators checked these eleven names in the Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. Using only the names (since the authors did not list the serial numbers) the researcher quickly found records readily identifiable for eight of them. The other three had such common names that there could have been multiple possibilities." Still, Randle seemed unphased by this discovery.

To Randle, the explanation was simple: Because he and Schmitt had raised a stink about the disappearing records, someone was returning them to the St. Louis files. Randle said this wouldn't harm their reputation, however, because Schmitt had the documentation to prove that the records were unavailable when he had requested them in 1990.

It wasn't necessarily an Air Force plot, either. Randle was willing to entertain the possibility that the records

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were misfiled or in use by other researchers when Schmitt asked for them. He offered as evidence the fact that the records of some military personnel critical to the Roswell story were easily located, while others less central to the reported events of July 1947 had seemed to evaporate. "This would suggest that there was another reason why those records were missing," according to Randle, "and it had nothing to do with Roswell."

### Dodging Disinformation

What about the nurses? To my amazement, Schmitt, who had finally reached me, did an about face: In a total reversal of his position, he told me he'd known about the St. Louis records and had documentation of his search. In fact, he said, he'd even found and interviewed Lieutenant Colonel Rosemary J. Brown.

I was incredulous. Here I'd been about to base a national magazine story on Schmitt's fruitless search for the missing nurses, and he says he's been pulling my leg. "It is not that we were putting out misinformation," he said, "it is just that we were denying that we found anything." He also expressed surprise that four of the five yearbook nurses were dead.

Why the initial claim of the vanishing records, which is what resulted in my investigation? His explanation goes something like this: Schmitt believes that Brown may actually be Glenn Dennis's nurse—the woman who allegedly was present at the alien autopsy—even though her name is not the same as the one Dennis gave him "because she is about one and a half hours from Minneapolis-St. Paul, which Glenn was under the impression was Nurse X's home town." Granted, Brown does not admit to any knowledge of the alleged crash, but Schmitt still hopes that she might be won over and persuaded to talk. "She may or may not know something, but she is the closest thing that we have. That is why we have treated her with kid gloves," says Schmitt, "and why I haven't publicized the fact that we have found her."

I later confronted Randle, and he agreed Schmitt's current claim was true as well: "What we found in the past," said Randle, "is that when we have let stuff slip out early that it has come back to haunt us in some fashion." So now they kept information quiet until it was thoroughly researched. They even knew about the death of Major Joyce Godard, another one of the Roswell nurses, but didn't reveal it, because they wanted to talk to her surviving relatives, said Randle, before other re-

searchers got to them.

All well and good, but then why make an issue of the missing nurses in the first place, as if their very absence were proof of a government attempt to perpetrate conspiracy, erase information (and even people), and be sinister in the extreme?

### The Slippery Sands

I was now deep in the heart of conspiracy country, and I had to watch my step if I wanted to get at the truth, because these were slippery sands. Here's how my logic went: On the one hand, it was possible that Randle and Schmitt had, as they now claimed, known about the nurses from the get-go, deciding to feed *Omni* erroneous information on some lark. It could be that when I contacted them they said, "Ah, there's our stooge!" On the other hand, perhaps they *hadn't* found the nurses—perhaps their original story, the one they wanted me to write for *Omni* initially, had been delivered straight. Could they have been embarrassed that their five-year search, including private detectives, elaborate inside connections, and computer expertise, had been largely unsuccessful, while I'd come up with the goods in three short days? Might they have invented their latest story just recently to save face?

Like the nurses themselves, I reasoned, I could find the truth in documentation. I would press Randle and Schmitt to show me proof. And the evidence I'd ask for would be specific. I myself, after all, had found the nurses through St. Louis. I had documents to that effect, including the papers received by way of the Freedom of Information Act. Randle and Schmitt claimed they had traveled that route—the superhighway for information in this case—as well. If so, they should have papers, too.

Again I left my messages on answering machines and waited weeks for my calls to be returned. I'd just about given up hope of ever hearing from them again when, one day, Schmitt called. He had been in Roswell, he said, had returned, and was, as usual, ready to help me in any way that he could.

To get the documentation on the St. Louis searches he told me to contact his assistant, Brad Radcliffe, a Wisconsin therapist, who had done the work. But when I called Radcliffe at his place of employment, using the number Schmitt had given me, Radcliffe didn't know who I was or what I wanted. In fact, in keeping with his practice of not mixing UFO work with his day job, he asked that I fax my

request for the documentation.

The next day I got even more "help" from Schmitt. Sarah Gillmore, another assistant, called to say that several months earlier she had talked to Lieutenant Colonel Brown and that she would answer any questions that I had. Even though I had not asked Schmitt for any information on Brown, Gillmore and I had a pleasant chat, and I eventually discovered that Gillmore didn't know anything about the St. Louis records search or its documentation. I reiterated my request for documentation, and assumed that it would get back to Schmitt—again.

My take was this: Schmitt wanted to show me he could be helpful, even if he didn't have any documentation showing that he had queried St. Louis.

The following day my fax cranked out five pages from Radcliffe. Unfortunately, it was all about his attempts to get confirmation from the Pentagon, various retired nurses groups, and other organizations that the nurses had served in the military—information I had not asked for—while my request for St. Louis documentation was completely ignored, except to say that St. Louis had no listing for the women. The next day I left a message with his wife indicating that what I really needed was the St. Louis material. She said her husband would get back to me.

When I hadn't heard from Radcliffe in four days, I gave him a ring just to make sure that he knew what I wanted. He was confrontational and disdainful of my efforts, even though he wouldn't let me tell him what I was doing. "I really don't have time now," he said. Nor did he offer to make it. He again told me to follow up with the Pentagon and the nurses organizations and didn't want to hear anything about St. Louis. The message I got was that if the women weren't on file with the places he had checked, then it was unimportant that I had found their records at the St. Louis center.

"I could have my twelve-year-old go to St. Louis and get records," said Radcliffe, as if to offer the ease of getting information there as his reason for not pursuing that avenue first, if at all.

I was beginning to think Radcliffe was the end of the chain. The nurses had been his responsibility, and he had not tried the obvious—St. Louis. On top of that, could the airmen, whose records the Air Force so easily unearthed for their Roswell rebuttal, also have been his responsibility? No wonder he didn't want to talk to me.

Even so, I decided to take Radcliffe's advice and touch base with his sources. I would redo Radcliffe's

search and see what he had found. If Schmitt was correct and the Air Force was now covering its tracks, the evidence, after all, would be here.

I started with *Stars and Stripes*. I was told they had back issues of their newspaper but no records for the Roswell nurses or any other nurses. I was referred to *Stars and Stripes, Pacific and European*, housed at the Pentagon. They didn't keep records of nurses, either, but suggested the Women in Military Service Memorial Foundation, also in Washington, a source Radcliffe had not cited, but which Schmitt had mentioned.

At the foundation, Lieutenant General Wilma Vaught, Retired, entered all the names into her database, but couldn't find a match. Still, there was a rub. Vaught pointed out that someone had to submit the names of the women in order for them to get into the database. It is something anyone can do, but "there's a potential of 1.6 to 1.7 million names and we've only got about 150,000, so there are all kinds that have never been entered," she said. It's not surprising, then, that the Roswell nurses weren't there.

Following Radcliffe's lead, I also contacted Captain Ethel Cerasale, Retired, a Floridian and past president of the World War II Flight Nurses Association, who has been active in the group since 1960. She didn't check her records because she has been involved with the organization for so long that she has the members' names in her head. "As far as my records go, I've had them around for a long time, and I am very familiar with them. And I don't recognize any of the names," she said. But she also said that there was no reason to assume that there was something strange or suspect about a woman not being on file with her organization. "It was a very small group who were Air Evacuation Nurses," said Cerasale, "and we only have about 500 members now."

Undeterred, I called Colonel Ruth Fussell, Retired, another Radcliffe source in Florida, who I assumed was the head of, or an officer in, the Society of Retired Air Force Nurses. To my surprise, she was not an officer in the organization and never had been. "I don't even go to the meetings anymore," she said. She didn't have any records, but did check her membership directory—the sort of booklet all members receive—which didn't list any of the Roswell nurses. But that didn't surprise Fussell since the society is a voluntary organization. "People don't have to belong," said Fussell. Why had Radcliffe approached her? "I don't

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know," said Fussell.

Maybe I did: Perhaps Radcliffe didn't know how to do this sort of research. In any event, I slogged on.

But the story was the same at the National Archives and at the U.S. Army Center of Military History, both in Washington, DC. Experts in both places directed me, specifically and emphatically, to the records center in St. Louis.

"The St. Louis Records Center has the personnel files, which are proof that someone served," said Archivist Deanne Blanton of the Military Reference Branch of the National Archives.

"This is only a small office," said the Nurse Corps Historian, Major Connie Moore. "The people who keep personnel records are in St. Louis."

It was uncanny. Even when I replicated Radcliffe's search, all roads led to St. Louis. Even if I'd done it his way, I would have gotten to the Roswell nurses in three days tops.

Radcliffe, on the other hand, had asked these organizations for the records, and when they couldn't comply, concluded he'd come up against a plot to hide the fact that these women had ever served in the Army Nurse Corps at all. In his fax to me he even cited the records of the Society of Retired Air Force Nurses and the WWII Flight Nurses Association and wrote, "They claim to have *everyone* who was ever a nurse." Right.

### End Game

Where does this leave us? If we can believe the records, and I suppose if we are entertaining conspiracies, we have to enter the caveat that maybe we can't, the mystery is solved. The records have been found and the whereabouts of all the nurses—except for the elusive Nurse X—have been determined. And remember: We have little more than the word of Glenn Dennis that this woman ever existed because, like 10 or 15 percent of Roswell personnel, her photo was not in the yearbook. In any event, it can no longer be claimed that the women vanished, if it ever could.

As to the second mystery—the mystery of Randle and Schmitt—that remains unsolved. Were they feeding me misinformation from the start? Did they know, all along, that Captain Joyce Godard was dead and Lieutenant Colonel Rosemary Brown was still alive? If so, why did they lead me on, deliberately encouraging a national magazine to publish a story they knew was a lie?

Or, on the other hand, was their research just unforgivably sloppy? Did they delegate so much responsibility to untrained help that they lost oversight

and ultimate control? Did they really think the nurses had vanished off the face of the earth after service at Roswell, only to learn otherwise in the face of *Omni's* investigation and then, in a panic, try to hide their mistake?

Their explanations aside, I don't think I'll ever really know.

Anyone who has read the books of Randle and Schmitt knows they have put in a lot of work over the years. Here are a couple of guys trying to reconstruct an event that occurred almost 50 years ago. No easy task. And if they are right, they are also butting heads with elements of the federal government. But they have been caught with their pants down on this one. Not only do they now say they fabricated their "vanishing nurses" claim, which they hoped would be published in *Omni*, they also cited evidence that just didn't stand up to inspection. It seems to me that in UFOlogy, more than in fields where follow-up and replication are common, researchers have a special obligation to get it right and not inflate their claims. To paraphrase astronomer J. Allen Hynek, one of the scientific fathers of the field, "extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence." Randle and Schmitt have not produced the latter here. ☐

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## Dinosaurs

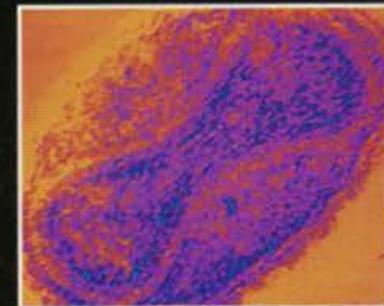
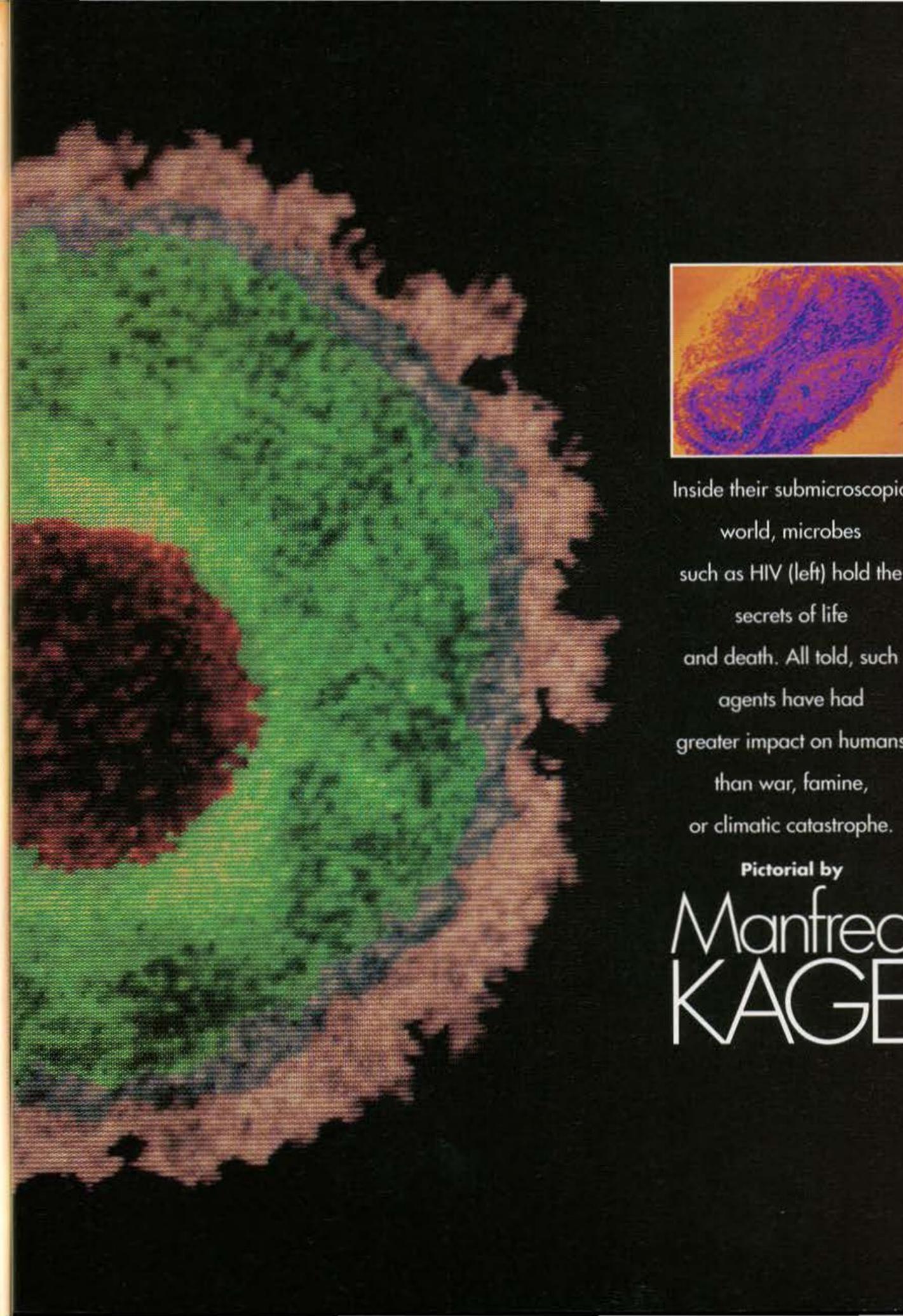
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 72

but couldn't read them until the discovery of the Rosetta Stone. With an effort to catalog and translate the entire human genome already in the works, science has just begun to carve the genetic Rosetta Stone. It may turn out that I'm a little optimistic in believing that dinosaur cloning lies only 20 years away. It could be 50 years, but I agree with Spielberg that we are looking at science eventuality, not science fiction.

So while I wait here at the midpoint of the last decade of the second millennium, with both amber and dinosaur marrow under refrigeration, I rejoice to see how closely science and science fiction have dovetailed. But it is also impossible for me to forget the warning spoken by Jeff Goldblum's character in the film: "Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not they *could* that they didn't stop to think if they *should*." A few people have suggested that I should be offended by such statements, that the film is "antitechnology," and that it "trashes" my ideas. Not at all. *Jurassic Park* does what good science fiction is supposed to do: It looks ahead to what bridges we may soon be building and asks us to consider very carefully what trolls may be hiding under those bridges. Crichton and Spielberg challenge us to start thinking about the trolls before we arrive at the bridge, before we have to deal with them.

I don't really believe that the formerly extinct will ever get loose, eat our lawyers, and threaten to take over the world. But I do see more subtle dangers on the road ahead. Consider recent proposals to sample all the plants and insects of the Amazon and to preserve their tissues in liquid nitrogen. Already, because of my recipe, it is becoming increasingly fashionable in certain industrial circles to stop worrying about felling the forests, because with care the extinct can be brought back again. So here we sit, you and I, on the brink of a genetic frontier in which our hopes of resurrecting extinct life forms may actually encourage the very behaviors that cause extinction.

A fanciful hope—that is how it began, as a hope to invent the ultimate paleontological tool that would allow me to study my favorite creatures face to face. But what did the Greeks name the last demon to escape Pandora's box; the one Pandora almost managed to slam the lid on; the most horrible of them all, because it came disguised as a blessing? Did they not call it Hope? ☐



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Manfred  
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- None of the above
14. Please indicate which of the following audio/video items you plan to purchase in the next 12 months.
- Blank Audio Tapes  
 Blank Video Tapes  
 Pre-Recorded Audio Tapes/Records/CD's  
 Pre-Recorded Video Tapes/Video Discs  
 None of the above

15. Have you rented pre-recorded video tapes in the past year?
- Yes  No

#### VIDEO GAME SYSTEMS AND GAMES

16. Do you currently own or plan to purchase a video game system in the next 12 months?
- Yes  No (Skip to Q.20)

17. Which of the following video game systems do you own/plan to purchase in the next 12 months?

	Own	Plan to Purchase
Nintendo (NES)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Super Nintendo (SNES)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sega Genesis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sega CD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sega Saturn (64 bit)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Atari Jaguar (64 bit)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interactive CD Player (3-DO, Phillips CDI, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hand-held player (Game Boy, GameGear, Lynx, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Please indicate the number of video game cartridges you own/bought past 90 days/rented past 90 days.

	Own	Bought past 90 days	Rented past 90 days
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1-4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5-9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20-29	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. What types of video game cartridges do you own?
- Vehicle Simulations  Fantasy/Role Playing  
 Arcade/Movie Theme/Action  Strategy Simulations  
 War/Battle Games  Sports  Educational  
 Board game/TV Show Adaptations  Other  
 None of the above

#### MAIL/PHONE ORDER

20. Approximately, how many times did you order goods or services by mail/phone in the past year?

- 1-2 times  3-5 times  6+ times  
 None (Skip to Q.24)

21. What was your total mail/phone expenditure in the past year?

- Less than \$50  \$50-\$99  \$100-\$299  
 \$300-\$499  \$500-\$999  \$1,000+

22. Which of the following items have you ordered by mail/phone in the past year? (Please check all that apply)

- Automotive Supplies  Camera equipment/Film  
 Food  Collector's items (coins stamps, etc.)  
 Audio/Video  Computer/Equipment/Software  
 Cosmetics/Toiletries  Financial  Jewelry/Watches  
 Shoes or Clothing  Hobby Supplies  Toys  
 Sports Equipment  Health/Medical Supplies  
 Other

23. Which of the following mail/phone order clubs do you belong to? (Check all that apply)

- Book Club  Music Club  Movie Club  
 Other  None

#### TRAVEL

24. Have you taken a foreign or domestic trip in the past year?
- Yes  No (Skip to Q.28)

25. What were the reasons for the domestic/foreign trips in the past year?

	Domestic	Foreign
Business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vacation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal (not vacation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business/vacation combined	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

26. If you have taken a domestic vacation in the past year, please indicate the total amount spent on trip.

- Less than \$1,000  \$2,000-\$2,999  
 \$1,000-\$1,499  \$3,000-\$4,999  
 \$1,500-\$1,999  \$5,000 or more

27. If you have taken a foreign vacation in the past year, please indicate the total amount spent on trip.

- Less than \$1,000  \$3,000-\$5,999  
 \$1,000-\$2,999  \$6,000 or more

#### AUTOMOTIVE

28. Do you plan to buy a new car/truck/van in the next 12 months?

- Yes  No (Skip to Q.31)

29. Please indicate your new vehicle preference.

- Foreign  Domestic  Open to either

30. Please indicate the type of vehicle(s) you are considering. (Check all that apply)

- Compact/Subcompact  
 Intermediate/Mid-size  
 Full-size/Luxury  
 Sports Car (Corvette, Nissan 300ZX, etc.)  
 Van/Minivan  
 Sports Utility Vehicle (Ford Explorer, Jeep, etc.)  
 Compact Pick-Up Truck  
 Mid-Size Pick-Up Truck  
 Full-Size Pick-Up Truck

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

31. Please indicate your sex.

- Male  Female

32. Please indicate your age.

- Under 18  18-24  25-34  35-44  
 45-49  50-54  55-64  65 or over

33. Please check the box that best describes your total household income before taxes in 1994. (Please include income from yourself and all other household members from all sources, such as salaries, pensions, interest, dividends, rentals, etc.)

- Under \$25,000  \$35,000-\$39,999  \$75,000-\$99,999  
 \$25,000-\$29,999  \$40,000-\$49,999  \$100,000+  
 \$30,000-\$34,999  \$50,000-\$74,999

34. What is the highest level of formal education that you have attained to date? (Please check only one)

- Grade school  Attended college  
 Attended high school  Graduated college  
 Graduated high school  Postgraduate study

35. Which of the following best describes your employment status? (Please check only one)

- Professional  Executive/Managerial/Administrative  
 Clerical, Sales, Technical  Precision, Crafts, Repair  
 Other employed  Unemployed

36. Which statement best describes you?

- I usually evaluate and try new products, services and innovations on my own.  
 I rely on the recommendations of others for choosing products and services.

## THE TRUTH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 99

ultimately tracked down the five "missing" Roswell nurses). If Kaufmann wasn't on file there, then either his records had been destroyed in a fire that ravaged the place 22 years ago—or he never really served in the Army. "The fact is," Kaufmann declares, "I did serve and was honorably discharged in October of 1945."

It didn't matter to me any more whether Kaufmann had ever worn a uniform. All I wanted was to see his alleged crash site out near the new Trans-Western natural gas pipeline. Kaufmann had warned me I'd never find it myself, and never make it without four-wheel drive. All I had was an economy-class rental car and a broken tape recorder. So I was very happy to discover a flyer on the bulletin board in my motel, announcing that the impact site near Roswell, "Home of the UFO Incident of 1947," was available for viewing. The pink paper showed a picture of a flying saucer with a phone number to call for information and reservations.

I met Herbert ("Hub") Corn the next morning, as arranged, at a mile marker on the highway leading north out of Roswell. Corn, a cordial young sheep rancher driving a workhorse pickup truck with two herding dogs in its bay, had agreed to chauffeur me to the spot for \$15. He asked me to sign a release, drawn up for him by a lawyer, agreeing that I would not hold him responsible for injuries I might incur from, among other things, "snakes, scorpions, cactus, lizards, and other wild animals" on the Hub Corn Ranch or crash site.

"You're joking about the scorpions, right?" I asked him.

"They're not a problem this time of year," Hub replied, smiling. "And my dogs'll take care of the rattlesnakes."

As we bumped slowly over the not-quite-road to the site, Hub told me he hadn't realized he owned the spot where the saucer had landed until he met Randle and Schmitt, who took Kaufmann's word that this must be the place. He seemed interested but removed from the event. It had happened long before he was even born. And he struck me as too savvy a rancher, too close to his land, to think that a tourist attraction—even one of this magnitude—would ever replace his real work of raising lambs for market and shearing sheep of their wool. Still, he's been improving the road in anticipation of the tour buses that will no doubt come this summer, especially during the first week of July, which Roswell Mayor Tom

Jennings has proclaimed "UFO Awareness Week." In another two years, when the fiftieth anniversary of the Roswell Incident rolls around, who knows what the traffic will bear?

Hub stopped on a flat stretch, as close as he could get to the hill where "it" had happened. Unlike the great mesas that poke their flat heads far above the desert floor, this elevation was not at all outstanding. It looked too low to get in any low-flying aircraft's way, so far as I could tell, although it might break the fall of a crashing one.

We walked through the chayote and prickly pear, talking about sheep prices and flying saucers, until we reached the dried-out stream bed at the foot of the hill.

"What we really need is some rain," said Hub.

I stared up and down Roswell's field of dreams. I let myself imagine the storied scene in all its glory. With pleasure, I found that in that spot, the incident raised a few goosebumps on my flesh, sent a shiver or two down my spine. Predictably, I didn't see anything to set this spit of sand apart from the rest of the desert—no vestige of wreckage, no markers where the bodies might have lain or the MPs could have thrown up their barricades. Yet, I felt happy and somehow privileged to be there, close to the heart of the mystery. "Even if this didn't happen," I remembered an author saying in the introduction to a novel, "it's true anyway." ☐

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## STAR WITNESS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 105

talked was she'd contact me when she was ready. Of course, I don't know where to find her anyway.

**Omni:** Many questions have been raised about your relationship with the nurse, even that you and she considered marriage.

**Dennis:** That's bull! I was married, and she and I were just friendly acquaintances, *nothing* else. I wasn't after her or anything. When all this happened, she'd been at the base only about three months, in the service about seven. She was about 23 and real cute—like a small Audrey Hepburn, with short black hair, dark eyes, and olive skin—but kind of a loner, shy, didn't fit in. But I talked with her whenever I saw her at the infirmary, so I got to know a little about her.

**Omni:** Why do you think the nurse and everything about her seem to have vanished?

**Dennis:** This is just my surmise, but I think when she was transferred, they discharged her and arranged for her to join an order, enter a convent. Everything was covered up with the church's help.

**Omni:** What do you think really was behind what happened to you in July 1947? What was really going on?

**Dennis:** Like I've said all along, I have no idea. All I know is what happened to me and what the nurse told me. The whole thing is weird. If someone else were telling my story, I wouldn't believe it.

**Omni:** If you really wanted to keep this story under wraps, why did you start talking to UFO investigators in the first place? How did they even know you existed?

**Dennis:** I told you about Joe Lucas tossing out my files. I've heard he told someone about a Ballard's co-worker of his being involved, without mentioning a name. This was about 1985, I think, and he's dead now. Anyway, if this is true, then maybe he found my file with the nurse's drawings when he was throwing things out. Maybe this is how my story started to leak out and Friedman eventually found me. I really don't know. Anyway, he did find me, and I agreed to talk with him because *Unsolved Mysteries* was using him as a technical adviser, so I thought he knew what he was doing. I wanted to have some verification of my story, but without any publicity or problems for the nurse, and I thought it might be important.

**Omni:** Some of those skeptical of your story have pointed out inconsistencies in the various tellings.

**Dennis:** When I talked to Friedman, that was the first time I'd tried to recall the

whole experience in 40 years or more. I was remembering out loud, and I made some mistakes. It's hard to get such old memories straight. Things got mixed up in later interviews, too. Interviews still make me nervous, and reporters are always getting things down wrong. What I've told you here is my story, take it or leave it.

**Omni:** You have provided some researchers with what you say is the nurse's name. Why?

**Dennis:** I would like to know what happened to her and have someone verify my story.

**Omni:** It has been alleged you made up the name you gave researchers.

**Dennis:** No, no way. I've never done that.

**Omni:** Others have suggested that you provided the wrong name, or possibly, a misspelled name, due to imperfect memory. Is this possible?

**Dennis:** Yes, I guess it's possible I don't have her name quite right.

**Omni:** Several researchers are attempting to locate the nurse under the name Naomi Maria Self, which has been published by UFO skeptic Philip J. Klass. Is this her true name?

**Dennis:** I promised her I would never reveal her real name, so I can't confirm or deny. If she's still alive, I don't want her to get in any more trouble. I don't want her or her family to be bothered, either.

**Omni:** Anyone who could conceivably confirm your story seems to be dead. Obviously, as long as you refuse to provide the nurse's name so it can be fully and openly checked out, people will continue to consider your story suspect. Doesn't this concern you?

**Dennis:** It doesn't make a damn bit of difference to me. They can believe it or not.

**Omni:** Would you be willing to give *Omni* the nurse's true name so the magazine can attempt to locate her?

**Dennis:** To answer the first question: definitely not, and I've already said why. If I ever got proof she was dead, I probably would make her name known or confirm it.

**Omni:** If you could do anything over again with respect to your involvement in this incident, what would you do?

**Dennis:** I would never tell anybody anything about it! I'd just keep quiet and go about my business. I resent being put on the defensive, ridiculed, and called a liar for telling the truth about what happened—especially by people who just take potshots with no facts to back them up.

**Omni:** If the nurse or some member of her family or someone who knows her is reading this, what would you like to say to her or them?

**Dennis:** Whenever she is ready to contact me, I would like to hear from her. I really hope she's okay. ☐

## Death and Dying

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 67

company. The man didn't even remember until he got out of the car that his father had been dead for 20 years." While stories such as this may not be the norm, they are certainly common.

One reason that people find comfort in these supranatural communications is that it blurs the hard distinction between life and death, and suggests that the finality of death may be overcome—the potent promise that has long inspired and plagued Judeo-Christian theology.

For some time eternal life seemed to be solely a concern for religion; however, science and pseudoscience is beginning to assert its own bid for immortality. As Grosso explains, "Cryonics and bioengineering are exploring ways to extend life, to eliminate death. It's a logical extension of the Christian hope of resurrection."

Some, however, question the American obsession with prolonging life. According to Kramer, "We are in denial about death. Americans are extreme in their masking and disguising anything that has to do with death. This is characteristic of industrial cultures obsessed with material belongings. We feel we have a lot to lose." Grosso, on the other hand, feels that Americans simply choose a form of ignorance. "The majority of Americans have a vague positive image, but they do not have a clear picture of what they think the afterlife will be like. They just don't give it much thought." Miller has reached similar conclusions in her research. "We are young and naïve. We are not long-range thinkers. Here we have change every 20 minutes. It is difficult for us to consider something as profound as eternity."

Nevertheless, as the *Omni* survey demonstrates, there is increasing interest in the subject of the afterlife. Numerous books about NDEs, visions, angels, and journeys have been published in the past few years. As Greeley notes, "The only way to prepare for the afterlife is to have a great capacity for surprise." When asked about his own sense of what it will be like, Greeley says, "My sense of it is that it is not necessarily a place where we've come from, but it will be going home to a place to which we've been destined all along." In this same spirit, a 71-year-old retiree from Fort Erie, Ontario, wrote to us with some pretty good advice. "There is no fear. I'm looking forward to the adventure!"

So may we all. ☐

*The original survey appeared in the November 1992 issue of Omni.*

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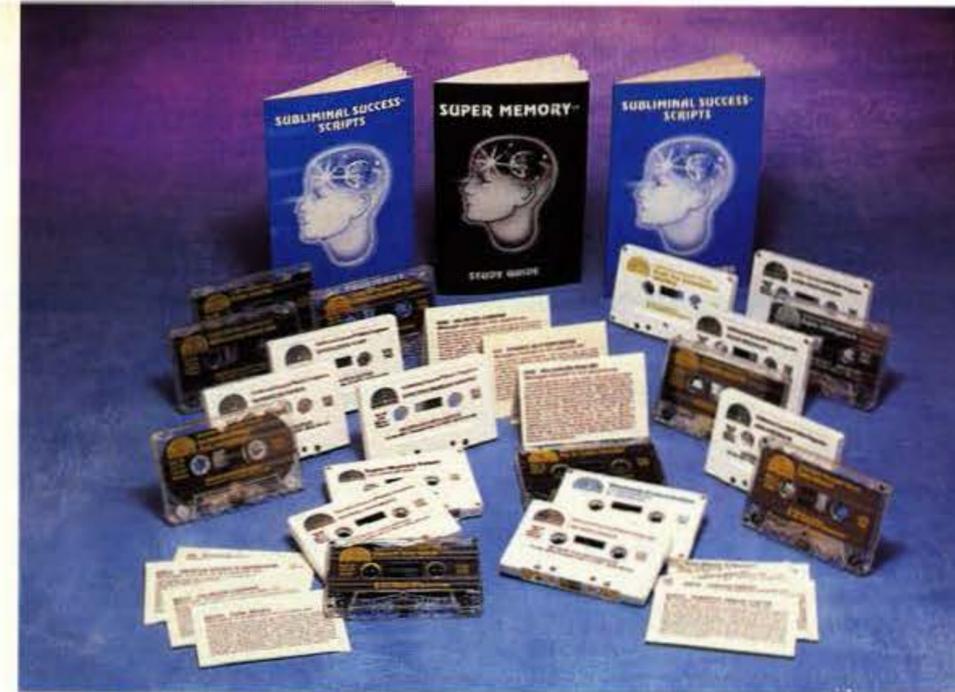
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