

COLLECTOR'S EDITION

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EXPANDED
PROJECT
OPEN BOOK:
HOW TO
SEARCH
FOR UFOS



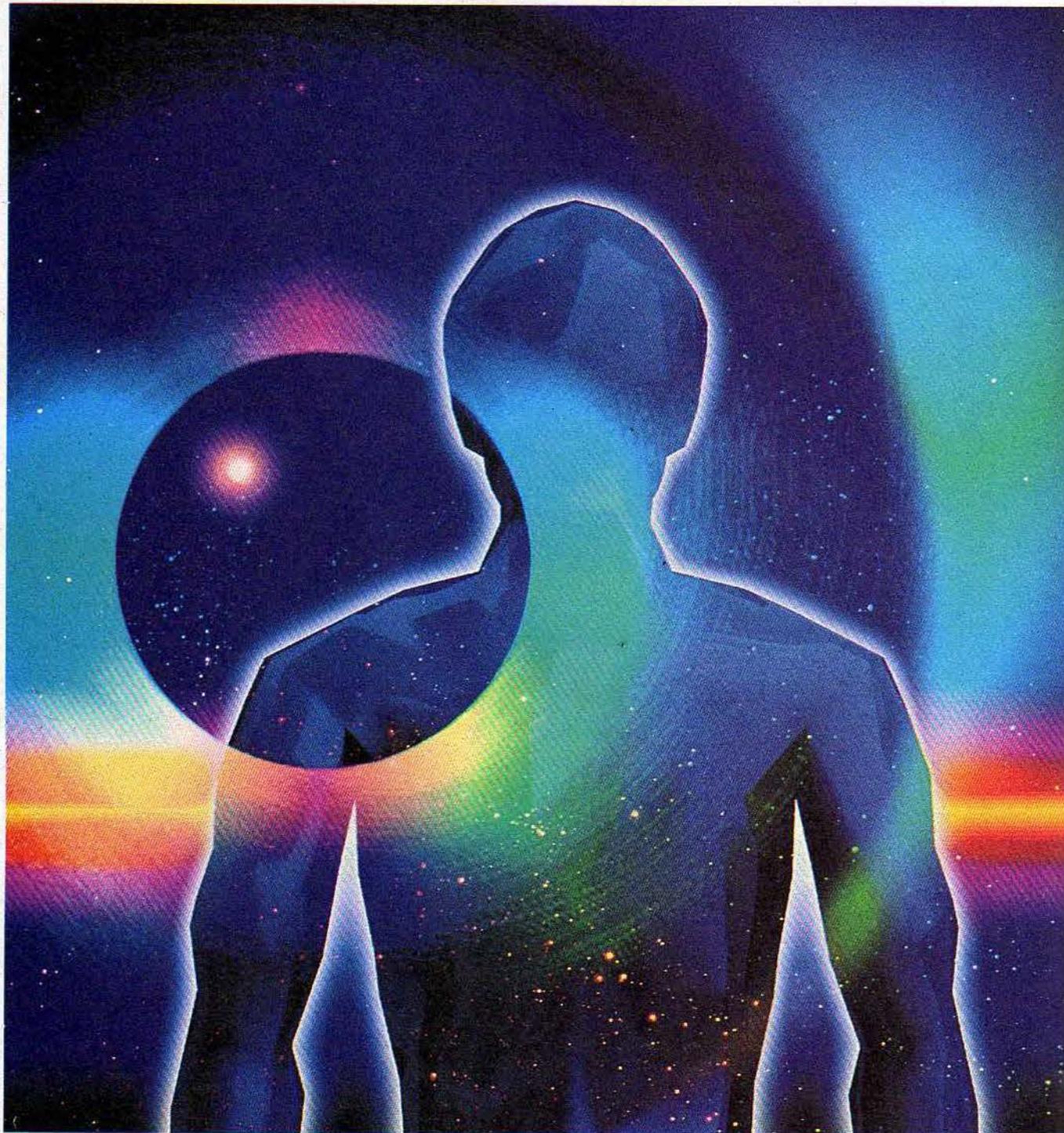
OMNI'S PROJECT OPEN BOOK



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Editor's note: This is the first of twelve chapters in the Omni Open Book Field Investigator's Guide, the ultimate tool kit for hunting UFOs. In his first installment, Dennis Stacy tells UFO hunters how to locate "prey"—in other words, a UFO worth investigating at all.

The Need for a Guide

On November 2, 1957, at about 10:00 p.m.—long before the world at large knew of it—the Soviets launched their second dog-carrying Sputnik. An hour later, on the flat plains of the Texas panhandle, near the otherwise unremarkable town of Levelland, ranch hands Pedro Saucedo and Joe Salaz encountered something that forever changed their lives.

According to Saucedo's signed statement, "I was traveling north and west on Route 116, driving my truck. At about four miles out of Levelland, I saw a big flame, to my right front. I thought it was lightning." The white and yellow torpedo-shaped object, Saucedo went on to say, apparently made his truck's motor stop and the headlights fail. Traveling at some 600 to 800 miles an hour, he estimated, the object generated so much heat he "had to hit the ground."

Over the next two hours, Patrolman A. J. Fowler would receive at least a dozen more calls, all of them from independent witnesses reporting much the same thing. For instance, at 12:05 a.m.,

THE OMNI OPEN BOOK FIELD INVESTIGATOR'S GUIDE: PART ONE

ARTICLE
BY DENNIS STACY

A GUIDE
FOR THE SERIOUS
UFO INVESTI-
GATOR SEEKING TO
UNDERSTAND
AND EXPLAIN ONE
OF THE
GREAT MYSTERIES OF
THIS CENTURY

a 19-year-old Texas Tech freshman said he was driving his car nine miles east of Levelland when the motor suddenly "started cutting out like it was out of gas." The headlights dimmed, then went out altogether after the car rolled to a stop. The student raised the hood but could find nothing obviously wrong with the engine or electrical wiring. Returning to the driver's seat, he now noticed an egg-shaped object, flat on the bottom, sitting astride the highway in front of him. It glowed bluish-green, he reported, and looked to be 125 feet long and made of an aluminumlike material with no visible details or markings. Frightened, he tried turning the motor over again, but the car would not start. Shortly, the UFO rose "almost straight up," disappearing "in a split instant." He tried the ignition again; the car started, and the lights came on, and he drove home, although he did not report the incident to Fowler—"for fear of ridicule"—until the following afternoon, after his parents told him he should.

Nationwide, the Levelland sightings garnered almost as much press attention as the new Soviet satellite, eventually forcing the Air Force's Project Blue Book to send an investigator to the site. (Project Blue Book, first under the auspices of the Air Technical Intelligence Center, or ATIC, and

later run out of the Foreign Technology Division, was the official Air Force agency charged with investigating UFOs. Its immediate predecessors, also associated with the Air Force, were Project Sign, and Project Grudge.) According to the now-deceased astronomer J. Allen Hynek of Northwestern University, then Project Blue Book's scientific consultant, the Levelland investigation, conducted by a member of the 1006th Air Intelligence Service Squadron (AISS) was cursory at best. Writing in his now-classic book, *The UFO Experience* (Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1972), Hynek states, "I was told that the Blue Book investigation consisted of the appearance of one man in civilian clothes at the sheriff's office at about 11:45 a.m. on November 5; he made two auto excursions during the day and then told Sheriff Clem that he was finished."

According to Temple University historian David Jacobs, author of another classic volume, *The UFO Controversy in America* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1975), "the officer failed to interview nine of the fifteen witnesses and also erroneously stated that lightning had been in the area at the time of the sightings." Indeed, the Air Force and Project Blue Book ultimately attributed the incidents to "weather phenomenon of [an] electrical

nature, generally classified as 'ball lightning' or 'St. Elmo's fire,' caused by stormy conditions in the area, including mist, rain, thunderstorms, and lightning." The engine stalls and headlight failures? "Wet electrical circuits," said the Air Force. "Privately," Jacobs observes, "Blue Book officers believed the Levelland sightings were obviously an example of mass suggestion."

The upshot of the ball lightning pronouncement was an angry spate of criticisms by editorial writers and the growing legion of civilian UFO organizations, charging the Air Force with ignorance or incompetence at best and a purposeful cover-up of the UFO phenomenon at worst. The outrage was exacerbated when 500 more UFO cases poured into Project Blue Book over the next couple of months, making it the most explosive UFO year since 1952.

In response to all the brouhaha, the Air Force launched an investigation of its own UFO operation. The recommendation? That some 20 men be assigned to a UFO detail. What's more, suggested the Air Technical Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, where the study was done, the Air Force would do well to create a standard UFO kit containing an operating procedure manual and other tools necessary for investigating the mysterious, alleged craft.

That way, when the 20 UFO experts went out on assignment, there would be no more foolish errors. They'd know what to do.

The report also recommended that the Air Force investigate press reports and not just those reaching Project Blue Book through direct channels, including Air Force pilots or radar operators. It was assumed that such actions might deflect civilian criticism and at the same time drastically reduce the number of reports classified "unknown" or "insufficient data." Indeed, as of November 1958, these two categories were accounting for 20 percent of all UFO reports received to date.

Unfortunately, the staff recommendations were never implemented. The notion of a UFO tool kit was quickly quashed, along with any idea of a rapid deployment team. Instead, Project Blue Book limped along much as it had before, understaffed and underfunded. Press clippings were stuffed into boxes and later thrown away. Letters and reports from the general public generally went unanswered and uninvestigated.

Even so, from the summer of 1947 until December 19, 1969, Air Force representatives amassed 12,618 official case reports of UFOs, defined by the Air Force as "any aerial object or phenomenon which the observer is unable to identify."

PROJECT BLUE BOOK, THE U.S. AIR FORCE'S RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC FUROR OVER THE UFO PHENOMENON, WAS A PUBLIC RELATIONS DISASTER; IT WAS UNDERSTAFFED AND UNDERFUNDED, AND ITS INVESTIGATIONS WERE LACKADAISICAL AT BEST.



(Hynek would later amend the definition of a UFO to refer to any flying objects which "remain unidentified after close scrutiny of all available evidence by persons who are technically capable of making a common-sense identification, if one is possible.") Of the 12,000-plus cases studied, 701, or almost 6 percent, were classified "unknown."

Those cases that were investigated—like Levelland—were typically looked into lackadaisically when they were looked into at all. The Air Force also indulged in a little creative bookkeeping. Those cases classified as "probable" or "insufficient data" were counted on the solved side of the ledger instead of the unsolved side, skewing the percentage of true unknowns. A growing number of critics contended that, far from being an investigative agency, Project Blue Book amounted to little more than a public relations ploy, one designed to downplay the phenomenon's prevalence and possible importance.

Even Hynek himself was ultimately disillusioned by his experience as scientific consultant. "I can safely say that the whole time I was with the Air Force, we never had anything that resembled a really good scientific dialogue on the subject," he said shortly before his death in 1986.

Project Blue Book's death knell was sounded in the

spring of 1966, in the wake of another Air Force boondoggle. At a press conference in March of that year, Hynek attributed some intriguing Michigan sightings to "swamp gas"—the spontaneous ignition of methane. The resulting editorial uproar pictured the Air Force team more as buffoons than villains. If the ball lightning and mass hysteria explanation of almost a decade earlier had been the first straw in the public's negative perception of the Air Force's handling of UFO investigations, swamp gas was the straw that broke the camel's back.

Before the decade was up, the Air Force would be out of the UFO business for good. One driving force: a controversial University of Colorado study directed by physicist Edward U. Condon. Condon's largely negative report summary concluded that chasing UFOs was a waste of time. Indeed, UFOs seemed shrouded in secrecy, Condon declared, only because the Air Force resisted "premature publication of incomplete studies of reports."

Thrilled by Condon's publicized pronouncements—few reporters were about to wade through a 965-page report in search of any UFO gems—the Air Force seized the offered brass ring. On December 17, 1969, in the wake of the Colorado/Condon study, Secretary of the Air Force Robert C.

Seamans, Jr., announced the closure of Project Blue Book, saying that its continuance "cannot be justified either on the ground of national security or in the interest of science."

Hynek was one of several scientists who saw the situation differently. "When the long-awaited solution to the UFO problem comes," he said, "I believe that it will prove to be not merely the next small step in the march of science, but a mighty and totally unexpected quantum jump."

A Civilian Blue Book?

With the Air Force out of the picture since 1969, the burden of investigating the UFO phenomenon has largely fallen on the shoulders of individuals and a handful of civilian UFO organizations. While individuals are hardly hampered by bureaucratic rules, public relations considerations, and other policy requirements, they can only do so much on their own. Moreover, the weight of their public pronouncements is linked, directly or indirectly, to their personal and professional credentials. It's one thing for an established astronomer, such as Hynek, to speak out about the phenomenon in general; it's another thing altogether for, say, an advertising executive or fast-food clerk to claim that Earth is being invaded by genetic engineers from another planet or galaxy.

The same is also true of UFO organizations, which are only as good and efficient as their collective members. One overripe member may not "spoil the whole barrel, but he or she can certainly detract from the overall respectability of the subject by his or her unbridled comments about what the UFO phenomenon does or does not ultimately mean. As Hynek and others have been quick to point out, the U in UFO stands for "Unidentified," not necessarily for extraterrestrial spaceships and alien abductors in that order. All three may or may not be related. Some UFOs, however, are almost certainly unrecognized or little understood natural phenomena, swamp gas and ball lightning very possibly included.

The one undeniable truth about the UFO phenomenon—Air Force pronouncements aside—is that further investigation is still required. According to one Gallup Poll, some 15 million adult Americans have at one time or another in their lives witnessed what they believed to be a UFO. Compare that figure with the 12,618 UFO reports the Air Force collected over 22 years, extrapolate it worldwide, and it's painfully clear that the UFO phenomenon represents both the most prevalent and underreported anomalous phenomena of this or any other century. Even if UFOs aren't a three-dimensional,

solid, physical object, any student of human psychology or sociology worth his or her salt should be suitably intrigued as to why humans continue to report UFOs in vast numbers in the absence of any unusual stimuli. To say that the best interests of science will not be served by further study of the UFO phenomenon—in all its myriad, mysterious manifestations—is to say that science should concern itself only with things humans *don't* do, as one of the things they *do* do is report UFOs—even in the face of peer and public ridicule for doing so. If human behavior isn't of scientific interest, then we might as well drop the soft science disciplines of anthropology, perceptual psychology, and social interaction from the academic curriculum.

In installments to follow, *Omni* will provide you with the UFO tool kit the Air Force never produced. The Project Open Book tool kit will allow you to conduct your own investigation of the persistent UFO phenomenon. It will contain tips and techniques about locating and classifying UFO reports. It will tell you, precisely, how to investigate UFO reports. And, it will tell you how to report and then investigate a sighting of your own. You'll learn how to interview witnesses, how to collect physical evidence (where indicated), and how to sniff out potential hoaxes. You'll

be instructed in the finer arts of audio and photographic analysis, both still and video. And you will be provided with the names and numbers of information sources, both print and electronic. Hopefully, when your own research is done, you'll share it with your colleagues. Collectively, we may be able to do what the Air Force couldn't.

Overcoming the Ridicule Factor

In order to investigate a UFO case, you must, of course, first find one. Despite the perceived plethora of sightings, this is not always as easy as it seems. For one thing, the overwhelming majority of UFO sightings are never reported. The reason for this reluctance is fairly straightforward: fear of ridicule. Hynek lamented this situation in a letter written to the magazine, *Physics Today*, in which he solicited UFO reports from scientifically trained observers. "It has been my estimate over the past 20 years," Hynek noted, "that for every UFO report made, there were at least 10 that went unreported. Evidence for this comes from the Gallup Poll, the many UFO reports I subsequently learned of that were not reported to the Air Force, and from my own queries. There has always been a great reluctance to report in the face of almost certain ridicule. It would seem that the more trained and sophisticated the observer, the

less prone he is to report unless he could be assured of anonymity as well as respect for his report."

Many respondents only reinforced Hynek's fears. One report, from a man who is now a professional astronomer, had gone unreported for 11 years, precisely because of a reluctance to face ridicule or embarrassment by peers—and this despite the fact that his own sighting was corroborated by several other credible witnesses, including at least two police officers.

In the summer of 1960, near Walkerton, Ontario, the story went, the man had observed a ball of light hovering near a tree. As he and several of his relatives approached to take a picture, "it noticed us, and noiselessly accelerating at a very high rate, headed almost directly south, disappearing over the horizon in about two and a half seconds."

Yet another astronomer had failed to report a pertinent observation out of embarrassment as well. To sustain his self image as the ultimate scientist, he "preferred to regard his sighting as being of an unusual physical phenomenon," according to Hynek, "rather than admit the possibility, perhaps even to himself, that it was a genuinely new empirical observation."

Given the embarrassment that seizes the best, most respectable UFO witnesses, any investigator worth

his or her salt must learn to cope with the "ridicule factor" before an investigation in earnest can begin. But given the right circumstances, the right individual, and the right approach, the curtain of ridicule can be overcome, as the large response to Hynek's letter in *Physics Today* clearly indicates. For this to happen, the witness/reporter must have confidence in his or her confidante, as *Physics Today* respondents clearly did in Hynek after seeing his credentials. Even with such confidence, moreover, the UFO witness often must still be drawn out. Few of those embarrassed by a close encounter, after all, will volunteer the information unless asked to do so.

Given the ridicule factor, the UFO hunter in search of a case to investigate must follow two basic rules: First, to learn about someone's UFO experience, it's best to ask. Even a lifelong friend may be reluctant to broach the subject of a UFO sighting unless drawn out. And second, when you do ask, ask those who have the most confidence in you—your family members and closest friends. A complete stranger is likely to react with serious reservation when another stranger arrives suddenly on his doorstep, asking questions about UFOs. (The stranger the UFO experience this subject has had, moreover, the higher his or her resistance will be.)

An example from my own experience may be instructive. In the early 1980s, I was hired to write a weekly column for the *San Antonio Express-News* about unusual events that had taken place in the state of Texas over the years. The first six months or so went well enough, but inevitably the scramble for material, or at least significantly different material, set in. By October (the series had begun the previous December), I was asking friends and acquaintances—except for "Rudy"—if anything strange or unusual had ever happened to them.

My reasons for not asking Rudy were obvious. He taught history at a local community college, and the shelves of his personal library in a prominent neighborhood on the north side of town were overburdened with straight literature, including some 10,000 historical biographies. I had worked with him on several occasions and was well aware of his disdain for anything unusual—typified by his attitudes toward mysticism, astrology, and anything else that remotely smacked of the occult. I assumed this would naturally include flying saucers and UFOs, too. But I also knew that he had been a B-24 bombardier during World War II and the heyday of the so-called "foofighter" phenomenon, in which glowing balls of light had perplexed both Allied and Axis aircrews during the

closing nights of the war.

On the extremely remote possibility that he might have encountered a foofighter, I asked Rudy if anything strange had ever happened to him during his flying days in the war. "No, nothing ever did," he said matter-of-factly, and that, I assumed, was naturally that. After a brief pause, though, he said, "but last November, I was driving back from Austin . . ." and promptly launched into his personal UFO story. Rudy had a sister who lived in Austin, 75 miles north of San Antonio on Interstate Highway 35, whom he frequently visited. He had been returning to San Antonio alone late one night, probably after Thanksgiving, and was just south of New Braunfels, about 20 miles from his own home. The sky was overcast, with a ceiling of about a thousand feet, and traffic on the highway was relatively light, although there were other cars and trucks in both the north- and southbound lanes of the four-lane highway.

Rudy first became aware of something visible in the upper portion of his windshield, but continued driving while leaning forward to look up through the curved glass. To his amazement, he told me, what looked like a flying saucer flew into view, traveling slowly southward and directly over the right-hand lane he was in. He pulled off onto the shoulder—the only car to do so—

stopped, and stepped outside for a better view.

The object was underneath the overcast, probably 800 or 900 feet overhead. "I can see it clear as daylight now," he said, a year after the fact. "It was perfectly circular and just under 100 feet in diameter. The outer rim consisted of what might be flaps or at least individual segments. An antenna hung down from the middle of the object, and the central portion, the area inside the flaps or flanges, slowly rotated on its own axis as the whole continued southward down the highway."

A short distance away, Rudy told me, the vehicle initiated a sharp U-turn and started back up the north side of the highway, slowly rising as it did. Eventually it entered the clouds and disappeared from view. Rudy waited a few more minutes to see if it would reappear. When it didn't, he got in his car and drove home. "All the way home," he said, "I kept thinking. Well, that's it. I'll get up in the morning and the headline will read 'UFO Mystery Solved!'" But if anyone else had seen or reported Rudy's UFO it certainly wasn't in the San Antonio papers, and it was almost certainly nothing Rudy himself would ever bring up in casual cocktail or coffee conversation unless directly confronted.

Almost as remarkable as

THERE ARE TWO BASIC RULES TO OVERCOMING THE RIDICULE FACTOR FOR THE UFO INVESTIGATOR: FIRST, TO LEARN ABOUT SOMEONE'S UFO EXPERIENCE, IT'S BEST TO ASK; SECOND, ASK THOSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE MOST CONFIDENCE IN YOU.



the sighting itself, perhaps, was Rudy's reaction to it. True, it was unusual and unexpected, apparently a flying craft of technology radically different from his old B-24 Liberator—but also nothing to lose a night's sleep over. Class was tomorrow night, and life went on. Besides, who does the average citizen call to report a UFO, especially when that UFO has already disappeared into the clouds?

One might say, then, that the UFO investigation begins at home. Ask your parents, your husband or wife, your aunts and uncles, your cousins, your neighbors and acquaintances. Many of these cases may only be anecdotal; others may involve data—such as the names of other witnesses and a possible paper trail—that can be used to fill in and corroborate the historical record, if nothing else.

If the witness you wish to approach is a total stranger, we suggest you do so with kid gloves. It would help if you had some credentials—say, a few UFO cases you have investigated in the past—to boost your credibility. Otherwise, you should utilize what, in the vernacular of the Nineties, we call "networking." For instance, if a friend has witnessed something unusual, and then refers you to a second witness, the second witness, knowing your connection to the case, may be more willing to talk. Above all, do not

approach potential witnesses, especially strangers, with theories involving aliens and extraterrestrial ships. You will be far more likely to gain confidence if you say, simply, "I understand the other night you witnessed something a bit out of the ordinary. I've been collecting some information on this and wonder if I could speak to you as well." (This will be covered in greater detail in an upcoming chapter on interviewing witnesses.)

UFOs in Print

If you find it hard to get your leads from people, you may be interested to learn that a countless variety of fascinating cases—most merely reported but not thoroughly investigated—are described in print. Coverage of UFO sightings by the nation's major daily newspapers tends to vary widely, depending on whether or not UFOs are in vogue at a particular time. A much more consistent source of UFO sighting reports is the small community daily or weekly newspaper. So many sightings have been reported in the Gulf Breeze, Florida, area in recent years, for example, that the local paper, *The Islander* (P.O. Box 292, Gulf Breeze, Florida 32562) has been offering mail subscriptions to investigators.

Another excellent source of current UFO sightings in localities around the United States is the U.F.O. Newsclipping Service, edited and

published by Lucius Farish, Route 1, Box 220, Plummerville, Arkansas 72127. Each 20-page issue consists of copies of newspaper clippings submitted by Farish's far-flung web of correspondents and clippers. It regularly includes Canadian and English newspaper clippings, as well as articles translated from foreign-language papers.

Numerous annual national and regional UFO conferences also provide a rich source of contemporary reports—and often the original witnesses themselves. To find out about local conferences and newsletters which may alert you to cases open for investigation in your area, you may contact:

The Mutual UFO Network of Seguin, Texas. MUFON holds an annual symposium every July; this year's will be in Seattle. For more information, write international director Walter Andrus, Jr., at MUFON, 103 Oldtowne Road, Seguin, Texas 78155-4099. For other case material, you can subscribe to the *MUFON UFO Journal*.

The J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies, 2457 West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659. The center also publishes the annual *Journal of UFO Studies* and the bi-monthly *International UFO Reporter*.

The nonprofit Fund for UFO Research at Box 277, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712, which sells copies of its reports.

**OMNI'S
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Finally, for those of you online, the Internet is a great place to learn of UFO sightings in your area. As you traipse from one bulletin board to the next, you will read the postings of local residents whose stories have never been reported before. You can correspond with these witnesses through E-mail, gathering potentially interesting data, possibly discovering a case you feel is worth further investment of your time.

Blast from the Past

If you can't find a suitable case in periodical literature, at conferences, or online, moreover, you might try digging around in the past. "Consult your local library or the major archives," advises Jan Aldrich, a UFO researcher recently retired from the military. "You'll probably be surprised by the treasure trove of uninvestigated cases."

With a grant from the Maryland-based Fund for UFO Research, Aldrich is presently re-examining UFO press clippings from the year 1947, popularly perceived by the public as the year the modern UFO era began, following the sighting by pilot Kenneth Arnold of nine silvery, crescent-shaped objects near Mount Rainier, Washington, on June 24, 1947.

Much of Aldrich's present work replicates an earlier 1967 study done by investigator Ted Bloecher

while with the now-defunct National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena. Bloecher's "Report on the UFO Wave of 1947" was, essentially, a collection and analysis of press clippings demonstrating that Arnold was hardly alone in his experience. In fact, UFOs were being seen and reported in large numbers up and down the country, from Washington to Maine.

But Aldrich's ongoing investigation delves even further. "Good as Bloecher's study was," says Aldrich, "it wasn't complete. For example, he didn't include any newspapers from Montana or from many provinces in Canada."

By examining the Helena, Montana, *Independent Record*, Aldrich discovered that a local flurry of UFO sightings was just getting underway, even as the national flap spurred by Arnold's sighting was fading in other areas of the country. Aldrich also discovered that UFOs continued to be reported in Canada in great numbers. "In fact," he notes, "the Canadian wave was even more pronounced in terms of population density than what was happening in the United States."

From a microfilm copy of Project Blue Book files scheduled to be destroyed but inadvertently discovered at the last minute by a university researcher, Aldrich was able to locate another

unpublished discovery: 2,000 to 3,000 letters written by U.S. citizens in the wake of an April 1952 article about UFOs by Bob Ginna published in *Life* magazine. "Blue Book was swamped at the time," says Aldrich, "and then-director Edward Ruppelt apparently didn't care about the letters or trying to follow them up. They were just stuffed into a file, which, fortunately, someone put on microfilm." The majority of the letters, says Aldrich, consist of individual theories or explanations for the UFO phenomenon, "but about 20 percent were personal case reports, the earliest dating back to 1913."

Interestingly, letters addressed simply "Flying Saucers, Washington, DC," eventually found their way into the file. *In toto*, the letters indicate that, while Arnold may have gotten the headlines and generated the furor, the UFO phenomenon itself was arguably around much earlier. It also proves that one individual, armed with nothing more than a microfilm reader, can still make a difference in our eventual understanding of what may well be one of this century's most misunderstood mysteries.

Choosing Your Case

As a UFO investigator, you will soon find that, with the right approach and the right reading material, you will unearth endless instances of reported UFOs.

But the truth of the matter is, not all reports are created equal. For instance, you may want to delve into the past, but if all the witnesses to a given sighting have died, and if there is little documentation, there may not be much you can do. A UFO reported by your friend, a college student, while drunk and staring at the stars, is not as compelling as a UFO reported by three separate individuals—such as a policeman, an astronomy professor, and a teacher—while stone sober. If the second UFO has left any physical evidence—from a burnt area of land to some blips on the airport's radar screen—so much the better.

As you hunt down UFO cases you wish to investigate, you will also find it is better to pursue those closer to home. Indeed, a thorough UFO investigation is time-intensive. It often requires multiple interviews with multiple witnesses. You may need to visit the site of the report at various times of the day and year, sometimes with specialists in tow. What's more, the input of those well versed in local habits, history, geography, and atmospheric phenomena may be invaluable to your research.

For instance, a few years back, hundreds of witnesses reported a weird, boomerang-shaped UFO over Westchester County and other parts of New York. It later turned out that at least

some of the reports were made when pilot-hoaxers using a local airport in the town of Stormville decided to fly in boomerang formation. Someone making a few phone calls from London could not have learned about the hoax as easily—if at all—as the local investigators on the scene who ultimately did. The take-home message is this: If you live in New Jersey, it makes more sense to investigate cases in Newark or Asbury Park than in Santa Barbara.

Starting a File

This chapter has given you enough material to get started. We suggest that you empty a file drawer, get a few folders out, and start collecting. We'd like you to spend the next few weeks just keeping your eyes and ears open. Speak to friends and relatives. Read the local paper. Scour the Internet. Anytime something of interest enters your field of vision, clip it, load it onto a disk, or jot it down, and put it in your drawer.

At the end of this period, you may have a case—a completely original case, never before investigated by anyone—you feel is worthy of your time and effort.

Next month, in the second installment of the *Omni Open Book Field Investigator's Guide*, we'll provide you with some tools of the trade, so your own investigation may begin. ☐

Anyone hoping to investigate UFOs must, of course, keep track of research that has gone before. The best sources are those classics of UFO literature that tell the story of this controversial field, often in the words of the researchers who know it best.

UFO books vary widely in quality and reliability from sober, reflective studies such as Hynek's *Experience*, to the self-promoting personal anecdotes typified by the early contactee movement of the 1950s.

Any list of the best UFO books is highly subjective. Here, however, are 11 UFO classics recommended for any UFO investigator seeking the right reference tools.

1. *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects* by Edward J. Ruppelt (Doubleday, New York, 1956). For many of today's mainstream UFOlogists, interest in the phenomenon was probably sparked by a reading of Captain Ruppelt, who was the acting head of the Air Force's Project Blue Book from 1951 to 1953. Widely available in used-book stores and libraries, *Report* was published in two controversial versions. The first edition ends with Chapter 17, "What Are UFOs?," and Ruppelt's own response, "Only time will tell." Subsequent editions contain three additional chapters in which Ruppelt seems to recant his earlier stance and casts doubt on

the phenomenon as one of extraterrestrial origin.

2. *The UFO Controversy in America* by David Michael Jacobs (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1975). A Temple University professor of history, Dr. Jacobs' *Controversy* remains one of the few purely historical treatments of the subject as it examines how UFOs were approached by the American press, government, and public. Jacobs' most recent book is a study of UFO abduction cases, *Secret Life* (Simon & Schuster, New York, 1992).

3. *The UFO Experience* by Dr. J. Allen Hynek (Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1972). For 22 years, until its closure in 1969, astronomer Hynek served as a scientific consultant to Project Blue Book. *Experience* is a thoughtful account of his own experiences and gradual awakening and also an examination of the UFO phenomenon more or less in its entirety. It's here that Hynek first uses the marquee phrase "close encounters of the third kind."

4. *Anatomy of a Phenomenon* by Jacques Vallee (Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1965). A colleague of Hynek's, Vallee remains one of the field's most original and prolific thinkers, although some of his most recent work has fallen out of favor with the hardcore UFO

crowd. In *Anatomy*, however, and again in *Challenge to Science: The UFO Enigma*, (Henry Regnery, 1966), co-authored with wife Janine, Vallee is in fine phenomenological form.

5. *Passport to Magonia: From Folklore to Flying Saucers* by Jacques Vallee (Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1969). One of the more controversial books within UFOlogy as it posits parallels with the observed UFO phenomenon and various past legends and lore associated with the "fairy folk" and other non-human entities. Raises many questions, especially about UFO abductions, which remain unanswered.

6. *The UFO Encyclopedia*, Volumes 1 and 2, by Jeromé Clark (Omnigraphics, Detroit, 1990, 1992). Clark's impressive and massive UFO survey is more up to date and more comprehensive than preceding UFO encyclopedias. A third volume, *High Strangeness*, is expected to be available this year.

7. *Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects*, edited by Daniel S. Gilmoor (Bantam Books, New York, 1969). The complete text of the controversial University of Colorado, Boulder, study directed by physicist Edward U. Condon under contract to the Air Force. Turgid and tedious in parts, but still an indispensable reference book.

8. *Observing UFOs* by

Richard F. Haines (Nelson-Hall, Chicago, 1980). A former perceptual psychologist with NASA's Ames Research Center, Haines focuses here on perception, particularly the peculiarities of our visual field and sense of time, as related to the observation of anomalous aerial phenomena.

9. *Project Blue Book*, edited by Brad Steiger (Ballantine Books, New York, 1976). A wildly miscellaneous grab-bag of odds and ends drawn mostly from official (and declassified) Air Force Project Blue Book files, including a list of those cases classified "unknown." Contains much original source material found nowhere else.

10. *The Interrupted Journey* by John G. Fuller (Dell, New York, 1987). The book that first introduced the UFO abduction phenomenon to the public, this volume, first published in 1966, examines the case of Betty and Barney Hill, who experienced a UFO close encounter which resulted in nearly two hours of alleged missing time.

11. *Missing Time* by Budd Hopkins (Richard Marek Publishers, New York, 1981). Hopkins is an abstract artist widely recognized as the leading proponent of the genetic-engineering theory of UFO abductions. A pioneer in UFO abduction research, he gives his theories in this controversial volume. 



Investigator: Dennis Stacy, journalist and editor of the *MUFON UFO Journal*, who has made three separate visits to Mexico in pursuit of this case during the past four years, most recently in September 1994. (Stacy's investigative aides include Tom Deuley, formerly assigned to the National Security Agency and the administrative assistant to the Mutual UFO Network of Seguin, Texas, who accompanied Stacy on each of the three trips; Elia Maldonado of Guerrero, who served as translator; and Enrique Cerverra, former mayor of Guerrero.)

Central Event: The alleged crash and subsequent recovery of a UFO by a top-secret joint Mexican-

American military operation

Time: December 6, 1950

Place: Along the Texas-Mexico border near the towns of El Indio, Texas, and Guerrero, Mexico

Ramifications: Aside from its own innate significance, the El Indio-Guerrero crash, if verified, would lend credence to those claiming an extraterrestrial or otherwise unconventional explanation for the famous Roswell crash, which occurred in New Mexico sometime in late June or early July 1947. It would also bolster the case for the much-maligned MJ-12 documents, said to prove that government experts have been hot in pursuit of UFOs

CRASH AT EL INDIO

ARTICLE
BY DENNIS STACY

DID AN ALIEN
CRAFT
ATTEMPT TO LAND
IN MEXICO?

since the 1950s; most UFO researchers now regard these documents as a clever hoax or ingenious exercise in disinformation, with possible ties to the Air Force Office of Special Intelligence, Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque.

Deep Background/The Roswell Connection: Something crashed to the earth near Roswell, New Mexico, in the summer of 1947. The Army Air Force admitted as much in the form of a press release which first appeared in local newspapers on Tuesday, July 8, 1947, and was widely reprinted around the world. "The many rumors regarding the flying discs became a reality yesterday," said the report, authorized by base

commander Colonel William H. Blanchard, "when the intelligence office of the 509th Bomb Group of the Eighth Air Force, Roswell Army Air Field, was fortunate enough to gain possession of a disc through the cooperation of one of the local ranchers and the sheriff's office of Chaves County."

Later that same afternoon, however, Eighth Air Force commander Brigadier General Roger Ramey called a press conference at Carswell Field, Fort Worth, Texas, to announce that what was *really* recovered was an ordinary weather balloon. During the intervening years, many UFO advocates pushed an extraterrestrial interpretation of the crash. And finally, on September 8, 1994 in response to a General Accounting Office inquiry into Roswell launched by New Mexico Republican Congressman Steve Schiff, the Air Force attributed the original Roswell object to Project Mogul, a top-secret balloon project it said was designed to monitor Soviet nuclear bomb tests.

As we pursue the truth behind the El Indio story, our questions are straightforward. What, if anything, did happen on December 6, 1950, and how, if at all, was this possible event related to the crash at Roswell. Whatever the origin of the Roswell crash, is the incident reported at El Indio in some way related?

Deep Background/The MJ-12 Connection: The suggestion that a second UFO might have crashed and been retrieved by the same recovery team employed at Roswell first arrived anonymously in the mail at the home of Hollywood producer Jaime Shandera in December 1984. Postmarked Albuquerque, the package contained a single roll of undeveloped 35mm black and white film. When developed, the film revealed eight pages of what purported to be a top-secret report. Dated November 18, 1952, the report itself claimed to be a UFO briefing paper prepared by the outgoing Truman administration for the recently elected Dwight David Eisenhower. It described the creation of the Majestic-12 group, composed of 12 high-level military and intelligence officials, along with civilian scientists, to oversee the investigation and analysis of the UFO phenomenon, and it even referred to the Roswell crash by name. What's more, the report referred to El Indio: "On 06 December, 1950, a second object, probably of similar origin, impacted the earth at high speed in the El Indio-Guerrero area of the Texas-Mexico border after following a long trajectory through the atmosphere," the papers proclaimed. "By the time a search team arrived, what remained of the object had been almost totally inciner-

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ated. Such material as could be recovered was transported to the AEC (Atomic Energy Commission) facility at Sandia, New Mexico, for further study."

The Air Force, along with most UFO researchers, has denounced the so-called MJ-12 papers as a hoax or a scam.

But bogus or not, we felt the reference to a crash along the Rio Grande between Texas and Mexico was worth looking into. Obviously, if the incident could be confirmed, then at least some of the content, if not the whole, of the MJ-12 document would be verified. Such verification would tend to support those claiming an extraterrestrial or unconventional explanation for Roswell, as well as charges, long made by some UFOlogists, of an ongoing government UFO cover-up.

By the same token, if the El Indio-Guerrero crash could be disproved, it would support the Air Force claim that the documents are indeed bogus and that the Roswell crash was just a weather balloon or something equally mundane.

Either way, investigating the El Indio report could help shed light on the anonymous author of any Majestic hoax. Who, after all, had even heard of El Indio (population less than 100) and Guerrero in any context? The former is so small that it isn't marked on most Texas highway maps.

Early Evidence for a Crash at El Indio: Shortly after the MJ-12 papers were first made public in 1987, Tom Deuley began a review of the case. One tantalizing clue came from nuclear physicist Stanton Friedman, author of *Crash at Corona*, a book about Roswell. Friedman, virtually alone in the UFO community in his support of the MJ-12 papers, wielded the Freedom of Information Act to procure a previously classified communique from a field agent named Auerbach (first name not given) in Richmond, Virginia, to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, dated December 3, 1950.

According to Auerbach, of the Counter Intelligence Corps, his office had been asked to stay attuned to "any data on flying saucers." Any information, the memo added, would be telephoned, immediately, to Air Force Intelligence. Although the date was theoretically "wrong" for El Indio—December 3 instead of 6—the coincidence, if that's what it was, was intriguing.

The second piece of evidence was another declassified document found in the National Archives by Don Berliner, a board member of the Maryland-based Fund for UFO Research and co-author of the *Corona* book with Friedman. Previously stamped "Confidential," this six-paragraph memorandum for the Secre-

tary of Defense from Colonel Charles B. Winkle, assistant executive, directorate of plans, announced an air alert effective as of 1030 hours. According to Winkle, "The ConAC Air Defense Controller notified the Headquarters USAF Command Post that at 1030 hours a number of unidentified aircraft were approaching the northeast area of the United States and that there was no reason to believe the aircraft were friendly." By 1040 hours, 40 aircraft at an altitude of 32,000 feet were confirmed by radar in the vicinity of Limestone, Maine. Winkle added that President Truman had been notified and interceptors scrambled. By 1104 hours, the situation was apparently defused. Winkle noted that "the original track had faded out, and it appears that the flight as originally identified is a friendly flight." The date was 6 December 1950.

Truman even mentioned the incident in his memoirs, not published until 1979. At the time, he noted in his diary, "It looks like World War III is here. I hope not—but we must meet whatever comes—and we will." Truman, however, attributed the radar returns and subsequent High Alert to an atmospheric disturbance.

Friedman found yet a third account of the incident in *The Wise Men* by historians Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas (Simon &

Schuster, 1986). An assessment of the role played by cold war warriors like then-Secretary of State Dean Acheson and others, the book noted that on the same day—again, December 6, 1950—Acheson was informed that "a national emergency was about to be declared" because "there is flying over Alaska at the present moment a formation of Russian planes heading southeast." The British ambassador to the United States, Clement Attlee, was visiting at the time, and Acheson was instructed to notify him to "take whatever measures are proper for his safety." In the Isaacson and Thomas version, the threat evaporated when the incoming UFOs were reportedly identified as flocks of geese.

Despite the discrepancies—unidentified flying objects over Maine in one case, Alaska in the other—it is clear that the Air Force and government went into overdrive on December 6, 1950, the precise date given in the purportedly spurious MJ-12 papers for a flaming UFO crash in the vicinity of El Indio and Guerrero "after following a long trajectory through the atmosphere." As it turns out, whether tracked through Alaska or Maine, the El Indio crash does represent a long trajectory, indeed. Moreover, the top-secret documents suggest an anonymous MJ-12 hoaxer may have hit

upon this particular day in history not by sheer serendipity, but rather by inside access to previously classified government reports.

But why had MJ-12 placed the crash near El Indio in the first place? What, if anything, did the author of the MJ-12 papers know or suspect that we did not? As we pondered the papers, both real and bogus, we realized our options had narrowed considerably. To learn more, we would have to travel to El Indio and Guerrero in person.

First On-Site Investigation (March 1990): El Indio overlooks the Rio Grande separating Texas from Mexico, and lies some 160 miles southwest of San Antonio. The itinerary for our first visit, conducted in March 1990, was not overly ambitious. Mainly, Tom Deuley and I intended to scope out the lay of the land, interview a few longtime residents who may have had knowledge of nearly half-century-old events, and establish contacts for a more thorough follow-up investigation later on. If we mastered the intricacies of crossing international borders and actually contacting possible eyewitnesses in Mexico, so much the better.

We were both disappointed and encouraged by our initial foray into crashed-saucer terrain. Through contacts in San Antonio, we acquired the names of Jack

and Quixie Keisling, prominent local farmers who had lived in El Indio since 1939, a year after its establishment. Although they welcomed us into their home with typical Southern hospitality, they couldn't remember any significant event in the late 1949-early 1950 time frame that might have been associated with anything remotely resembling a flying saucer or crash.

"There was still a pilot training base in Eagle Pass after the end of the war," Jack volunteered, "and I could tell you some stories about that. The pilots used to love to buzz our pick-ups on the highway."

We also talked to the El Indio postmaster, Estelle Courtney, who had lived there since 1947, but she, too, was unable to shed any light on an alleged UFO, plane, or meteorite crash. Unfortunately, the widow of the town's original founder had died two weeks before we arrived.

We spent the night in Eagle Pass, 18 miles upriver, and crossed over into Mexico at Piedras Negras the next morning. Like El Indio, Guerrero (population 2,000), some 35 miles back down the river and south of its sister city, had seen better days. Knowing my high school Spanish would confuse, rather than clarify, any interviews we might be able to conduct, we sought a translator. We were fortunate enough to secure the ser-

vices of Elia Maldonado, who had just moved back to Guerrero from Green River, Wyoming, and would prove invaluable on our first visit as well as those to come. Maldonado was able to put us in touch with former mayor Enrique Cerverra, who in turn directed us to Rosendo Flores, a retired school-teacher (now deceased) and, according to Cerverra, the town's acknowledged historian. "If anyone knows anything about such an incident, it will be him," Cerverra assured us.

Straight of spine if slow in step, Señor Flores invited us into his home two blocks off Guerrero's *zócalo* or main square, a welcome respite from the already beating sun. Underneath a full head of gray hair, sparkling dark eyes peered at us through thick glasses. Seated in a simple wooden chair in his living room, Flores answered our questions promptly and to the point. Not only did he remember such an incident, he had actually witnessed it. Shortly after siesta, he had been working on his family's land north of town, toward the river and El Indio, when "a ball of fire fell from the sky," crashing on the adjoining ranch and igniting a grass fire. A day or two later, a military contingent arrived from Piedras Negras, blocked off the area, and "hauled something away by truck." We asked him if American soldiers, *norte-americanos*, might have been

involved, but Flores said he couldn't be certain. What about the object or objects hauled away: Could it have been as mundane as airplane wreckage? "We never knew," Flores answered. "No one told us anything." When we asked how he could be sure of the date, Flores simply said that "it was common knowledge, everyone knew about it." The old gentleman even gave us the name of the landowners and the location where the "fireball" had impacted—El Rancho del Griegos (the Ranch of the Greeks). Before leaving, we asked if anyone had ever visited him previously about this incident. His reply was adamant and economical. "No, never. You are the first."

Buoyed by Flores' account, we sought out the people named but none was home. We spent the remainder of the day driving backroads bordering the ranch—Deuley's handwritten notes at the time refer to them as "stone washboards"—in search of other potential eyewitnesses, only to learn that many had long since died or moved away.

Indeed, as we delved deeper, we were unable to turn up any additional eyewitnesses to corroborate Flores' account. If a flying disc had crashed near Guerrero on December 6, 1950, it certainly hadn't insinuated itself into the local memory in the way

Flores had suggested.

Still, we felt the case was worth a second visit: We had by no means interviewed everyone who might have remembered the incident, and we had not yet seen the alleged crash site. Maldonado and Cerverra agreed to assist us further by continuing to ask questions locally and trying to arrange access to the Ranch of the Greeks.

Second Journey Out

(November 1990): In the first week of November 1990, we returned to Mexico, having decided to concentrate our investigation in the Guerrero area. Cerverra learned that the original ranch had since been subdivided and sold, but he had contacted the new owners, who wish to remain anonymous, and obtained permission to search their property. He had also contacted two individuals who, while they had no knowledge of any fireball or other crash in the area, did know of a "mystery hole" on the ranch that had appeared sometime in the late 1940s or early 1950s as portions of the land were first cleared of mesquite and scrub brush for cultivation. At one point the hole had been large enough to trap a tractor, which had to be winched out. We chose to return in November, after the field had been harvested, facilitating our search.

In the meantime, Cerverra

also contacted two of the four children whose parents had owned the land in December 1950. Both were of little help, alas, since they'd been younger than 10 at the time.

After we arrived in Guerrero, Cerverra arranged a guide, a young man with his leg in a cast who worked the ranch and would be able to lead us to the hole in the field. As with everyone else we talked to on this occasion, he had no idea how the hole had appeared, only that it had been there as long as he could remember. Its only direct connection to the alleged crash, then, as best we could determine, was that it lay in the same immediate vicinity where Flores had told us the fireball had come down more than 40 years before.

An afternoon spent searching the field proved hot, fruitless work. Unable to walk because of his injury, our guide could only give us general directions. And while the last crop had been cleared, the soft, loamy soil had quickly sprung up in weeds and grasses. Coupled with the flatness of the terrain, this meant that one part of the large field looked pretty much like another. As the day wore on, however, word leaked out that we were looking for a "UFO hole," and we soon drew a crowd of curious locals, all of whom were perfectly willing to help out. At one stage, we had some

15 people in the field, separated by outstretched arms, walking up and down the weed-grown rows, all for naught except a video of the event taken by our photographer, Steve Lewis.

It's no wonder that both Deuley and I were feeling a little foolish. In fact, with sweat pooling in my armpits, I couldn't help but hum the words of an old Grateful Dead song: "What a long, strange trip it's been!" We had started out with a single reference to a crashed flying saucer in what in all likelihood was a bogus "government" document, we had located but a single eyewitness to an event of ultimately unknown nature, and yet here we were, stirring up dust in a field on the south bank of the Rio Grande, looking for a mystery hole of equally unknown origin, and with no incontrovertible evidence that the two events were connected by anything other than coincidence.

We thanked Maldonado and Cerverra for their gracious assistance, but advised we probably wouldn't return unless there were any new dramatic developments on either side of the border. Back in San Antonio, we continued to accumulate data in hopes some of it might prove relevant. The MJ-12 documents aside, we continued to hear rumor of some UFO crash along the Texas-Mexico border during our targeted time

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frame. Unfortunately, these waters were muddied by known hoaxes, including the so-called "Tomato Man" case involving photographs of an alleged fried "alien" inside a burned-out "spaceship" said to have crashed near Rio Sabinas, Mexico, on July 7, 1948, some 130 miles south of Guerrero. The photos were later demonstrated to be of a human accident victim, the head having swollen and bubbled from the intense heat so as to resemble a giant, mutant tomato. Another unsubstantiated story in circulation had a UFO crashing in 1950, but 30 miles northwest of Del Rio on the Rio Grande, a good 100 miles north of Guerrero. We were still intrigued by the prospect, however remote, that all such stories had some common root, perhaps indicative of a real event, mundane or otherwise.

Another Long Strange Trip (September 1994): Last year, at the behest of Project Open Book, we undertook a third trip to Guerrero with the intention of laying the case to rest one way or the other: as a legitimate UFO incident, an example of runaway folklore, or some other as-yet-unidentified third category. This time we were accompanied by two other UFOlogists who had recently taken an interest in the case: Hal Landrum, an Eagle Pass attorney, and John Yates of Fort Worth, a

salesman for The Psychological Corporation. Landrum had earlier visited Guerrero on his own, and as for Yates, he brought his metal detector. We informed Maldonado of our impending arrival. She, in turn, told Ceverra, who by now had located a former ranch foreman, Jose Garcia, who said he could take us straight to the mystery hole.

It took awhile, but Garcia ultimately delivered a shallow depression in the same field we had searched in November 1990. Hairline cracks in the soil around the small circular depression indicated an original diameter of some 20 feet. Yet a search with the metal detector revealed nothing, not even the usual beer-bottle caps and soft drink pull-tabs one normally encounters in such situations. While we hadn't expected a perfectly preserved crater with still-smoking rim and flying saucer parts strewn about, we had hoped to be able to tie the hole to a particular place in time. Like others we had interviewed, Garcia could add nothing in this regard.

Our own assessment of the situation was that we were looking at a natural sink-hole phenomenon, probably attributable to the porous limestone underlying the Rio Grande-deposited silt on which we stood. As we left, in fact,

we encountered several active wash-outs alongside the dirt road encircling the field, one of which could have swallowed a compact car easily.

Moreover, after interviewing more than 40 additional people on both sides of the border, we were unable to directly connect the hole in the field with the fireball described by Flores. Nor were we able to identify any additional witnesses to the fall of the fireball itself.

Tom Deuley may have put it best when he said, "I think we've triggered some sort of investigator effect. We ride into town and start asking questions about unusual events, and the people do their best to help out. We ask about UFOs and crash sites, and without necessarily making up anything, they show us the best they have. But every community probably has something 'strange' in its history. It doesn't necessarily mean that a UFO crashed nearby."

Ultimately, another avenue of investigation bore fruit. While researching the history of the area in general, we were directed to two retired historians now living in Fort Clark Springs, Texas. Neither had encountered UFO stories in their years spent up and down the Rio Grande, but one of them, Ben Pingnot, did remember that a plane crash had

taken place in the area. The source he gave Landrum was *Wings Over the Mexican Border: Pioneer Military Aviation in the Big Bend*, by Kenneth Baxter Ragsdale, University of Texas Press, 1984.

On January 16, 1944, according to Ragsdale, a Civil Air Patrol Stinson spotter plane had crashed seven miles from Guerrero, killing Lieutenants Harry Hewitt and Bayard Henderson. Aside from a brief mention in the *Laredo Times*, the incident was promptly hushed up for reasons that can only now be guessed. The international nature of the accident was probably one factor. Another, stronger reason for a cover-up is the suggestion that the Stinson was the victim of friendly fire—"a gunnery school accident"—from what Ragsdale was able to learn. And, indeed, a restricted gunnery range zone is still marked on aeronautical maps of the area, stretching south-eastward along the American side of the border from El Indio.

Some sort of joint Mexican-American military cooperation would almost assuredly have been involved in the recovery of the bodies and any surviving wreckage, arguably triggering the inevitable bureaucratic tendency toward secrecy. Hewitt's widow was unable to ob-

tain a cause of death from the authorities and was only granted survivor's benefits after the Oregon legislature introduced a bill to that effect in Congress.

As for the ultimate cause of the crash, Ragsdale concluded, "the facts will probably never be known. The military keeps its secrets well."

Conclusions: Sadly, we may never know beyond reasonable doubt whether or not an extraterrestrial object slammed to earth near Guerrero in December 1950. We do know, though, that an indisputably real terrestrial object impacted within seven miles of the very same Mexican town in January 1944. Could this have been the event, witnessed by a much-younger Rosendo Flores, before his memory of specific dates became blurred by the passage of time? If so, it's conceivable, depending on who was talked to and how the questions were phrased, that the crash of the Civil Air Patrol plane and its military retrieval could have given rise to all sorts of UFO rumors along the Rio Grande. In the end it's impossible to prove a negative—that a UFO didn't crash near Guerrero, Mexico, in December 1950. One might just as well search for the proverbial needle in the haystack—or a hole in the ground. **□**