

WARD CONNERLY,  
CLINTON AND RACE

# The Roswell Files

This month is the 50th anniversary of a weird crash in New Mexico. Now the site is a Graceland for *X-Files* fans and UFO lovers. What *really* happened out there?



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# ROSWELL OR BUST

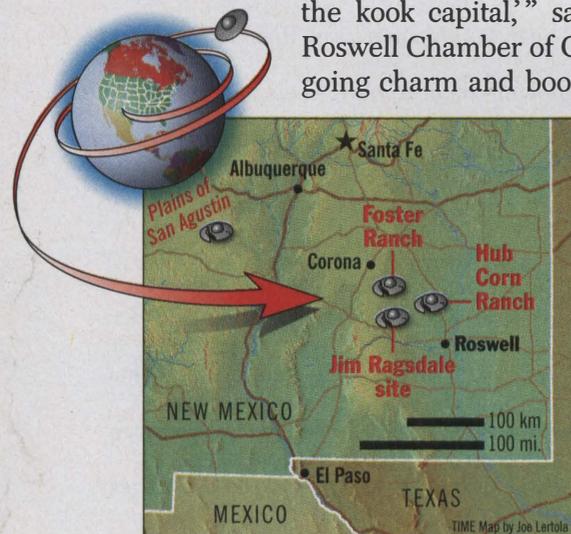
A town discovers manna crashing from heaven and becomes the capital of America's alien nation

## SOCIETY

By BRUCE HANDY ROSWELL

**T**HE CITY OF ROSWELL, N.M. (POP. 49,000), IS THE BIRTHPLACE of Demi Moore. It is also home to the nation's largest mozzarella plant. On warm spring nights, visitors deplaning onto the tarmac at the local airport may be struck, in a not necessarily unpleasant way, by the rich, manurelike odor rolling in from the surrounding ranchlands. But none of these things is what Roswell is most famous for.

A half-century has passed, and Roswell's citizens are still struggling to come to grips with the strange events that put the city on the national map and made its name a national buzz word connoting both otherworldliness and governmental perfidy. "Some people come up to me and say, 'Gosh, I don't like this. I don't want to be known as the kook capital,'" says Bill Pope, interim CEO of the Roswell Chamber of Commerce, speaking with the easy-going charm and booster's earnestness one expects in a Southwestern city father. He is referring to next month's three-day gala marking the golden anniversary of the alleged crash in 1947 of a flying saucer near Roswell. It is a civic distinction that was long ignored by most Roswellians—Moore, for one, says she never heard of it while growing up—until a recent surge of national interest in extraterrestrial phenomena, both "real" and fictive, convinced locals that



rather than be ashamed of their heritage, they might instead make some money from UFO-related tourism.

Pope puts it this way: "I've been in a lot of communities in my lifetime. I was near a community in Oklahoma one time that had the champion cow-chip-throwing contest. And there's a little community not far from us over here that has lizard races. What it all comes down



to is having something to create an interest in your community. And we have something to create interest, and that creates an inflow of people, and that creates dollars, and that's what we're all about." He hands a visitor a lapel pin emblazoned with the legend ROSWELL 1947 and the image of a smiling spaceman waving from a flaming UFO shaped like a Stetson hat—a unique spin on an event that, if it actually occurred, was surely one of the most momentous in history; no one would argue that it doesn't trump lizard races. And so the town is gearing up, not entirely wholeheartedly, for what it is calling Roswell UFO Encounter '97, a celebration that will

CHIP SIMONS FOR TIME (3)



**BOOSTERS** Deon Crosby, left, director of the International UFO Museum, with her husband Stan, who is the organizer of the anniversary gala

include a flying-saucer Soap Box Derby, films, symposiums (speakers include Erich von Däniken, author of *Chariots of the Gods?*) and what an organizer describes as "a UFO belly dancer." Crowds of upwards of 100,000 are hoped for.

Outside city limits, the name Roswell speaks to less tangible concerns. Like the black helicopters of the new world order or the racist-police conspiracy to frame O.J. Simpson, the Incident, as it is known, is either pretty sensational stuff or yet another of the ingenious tales those of us who mistrust mainstream institutions tell ourselves to help make sense of a scary, sometimes depressing world. In this case, it is a tale that combines deeply American strains of spirituality and paranoia as well as—let us be frank—a large scoop of native wackiness. One could even say, if one were inclined to put yet another spin on the following cliché, that we have met the aliens and they are us. In fact, to judge from the way they are most often depicted, aliens have sprung from the same corner of the national psyche that has

a thing for Walter Keane's paintings of grotesquely doe-eyed children. Unless, of course, aliens actually look like that.

Everyone agrees that something crashed in the desert outside Roswell in mid-June or early July 1947. On July 8, the Roswell Army Air Field issued a press release saying it had recovered the wreckage of a "flying disk," sparking incredulous news stories around the world. A few hours later, a general at the regional Army Air Force command in Fort Worth, Texas, where the debris had been sent for further analysis, announced that what had really been recovered was a weather balloon. This is the indisputable core of the Roswell Incident. Whether one chooses to believe that the government has been covering up an affair involving extraterrestrials is, of course, a more subjective matter. But because Roswell represents the only time the U.S. military has gone on record saying that flying saucers

exist, it has become a cornerstone of belief for the UFO community. They are, by the way, quite a diverse and fractious group of folks—studies say they tend to be better educated than the norm—whose numbers include casual believers; so-called UFOlogists, most of whom are pretty earnest in their efforts to document UFO sightings with something approaching objective rigor; contactees, who believe they have had telepathic communication with aliens; abductees, who believe they have been subjected to experimentation by E.T.s; and cultists like the Heaven's Gaters, who are an enormous source of embarrassment to their comparatively sober-minded confreres. But despite their many differences, for nearly all of them Roswell is central, a way into the darkness. Peculiar theories ripple out from Roswell. So do further-ranging cultural tides.

According to a TIME/Yankelovich poll, 34% of Americans believe intelligent beings from other planets have visited Earth; of those, 65% believe a UFO crash-landed near Roswell, and 80% believe the U.S. government knows more about extraterrestrials than it chooses to let on. But those numbers don't quite capture Roswell's current hot-

PHOTOGRAPHS OF SOUVENIRS BY URBANO DEVALLE FOR TIME



**UFOLOGIST** Curator Ralph Reich at the museum out by the old Air Force base



**MAYOR** Thomas Jennings with a poster for Showtime's documentary

button status. "Five years ago, if you made an offhand reference to Roswell, nobody would know what you meant. Now everybody does." So says Kevin Randle, a UFOlogist who, as co-author of the seminal *UFO Crash at Roswell* and its follow-up, *The Truth About the UFO Crash at Roswell*, is one of the Incident's heartiest champions. His efforts achieved a not entirely positive validation on Dec. 1, 1995, when President Bill Clinton, on a state visit to Ireland, said the following during a speech in Belfast: "I got a letter from 13-year-old Ryan from Belfast. Now, Ryan, if you're out in the crowd tonight, here's the answer to your question. No, as far as I know, an alien spacecraft did not crash in Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947. [Pause for laughter, according to an official transcript.] And, Ryan, if the United States Air Force did recover alien bodies, they didn't tell me about it either, and I want to know. [Applause.]" UFOlogists will tell you bitterly about the way Jimmy Carter, while running for the presidency, admitted he had seen a UFO, but then, once in office, reneged on promises to open the government's flying-saucer files.

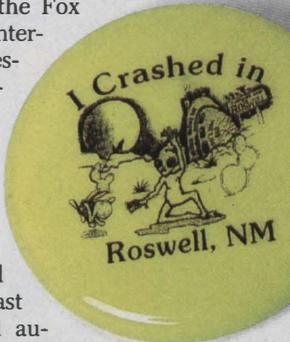
A lost opportunity. But on the cultural radar, presidential recognition barely reg-

isters next to playing a pivotal role in a popcorn movie. In last year's *Independence Day*, the seventh highest grossing film of all time, Bill Pullman's President Whitmore also assures an audience the government has nothing up its sleeve concerning UFOs and Roswell, only to be told by his Secretary of Defense, "That's not entirely accurate." Well, sure—otherwise the movie would be finished halfway through. Fortunately, the embattled Earthlings are able to use the recovered Roswell saucer against the invaders and triumph. Talk about vindication.

Roswell's pop-cultural apotheosis has been as an inescapable reference on Fox Television's *The X-Files*, a paranormal *Dragnet* that details the efforts of two wooden, underacted FBI agents to expose what has metastasized over the show's four seasons into an increasingly baroque conspiracy between the Federal Government and sinister extraterrestrials—a fiction whose particulars have been cherry-picked from among the wilder theories flitting through the UFO community. Its perspective is offered by John Price, founder of Roswell's UFO Enigma Museum, which began in 1988 in the back of his video store and today sprawls through four big rooms and features a homemade diorama of a crashed saucer with blinking lights,

brush-off when he tried to persuade his second cousin, the late producer Don Simpson, to make a movie based on Roswell.

On the Hollywood end of things, Peter Roth, the Fox Broadcasting Co.'s Entertainment Group president, readily concedes that aliens have been good to Fox: besides its well-rated *The X-Files*, the company's movie studio produced *Independence Day*, and the network broadcast the patently hoaxed autopsy of a creature supposedly recovered at Roswell. But when pressed as to his personal feelings on the subject, Roth is willing to admit only that "there's something in the cosmos that suggests there may be a presence elsewhere." Dean Devlin, co-writer and producer of *Independence Day*, comes to the field more naturally: he was steeped in UFO culture as a boy by a mother who dragged him to UFO conventions. Although he's skeptical of official explanations of the Roswell Incident, he doubts extraterrestrials were involved: "I don't know what it was, but our government is so bad at keeping secrets, I have a hard time believing that after all these years, the smoking gun hasn't appeared. I live by the watchwords 'Never attribute to deviousness that



**ALIEN ECONOMY** Some of the souvenirs that tourists have to take home

surrounded by four dead-alien dolls and a stuffed, seemingly unconcerned jackrabbit. Says Price: "The old sci-fi films were just kind of made up from someone's imagination. But *The X-Files* calls us every once in a while for information; a lot of the shows do. So a lot of your sci-fi is based on facts, so to speak. And that makes it something that a lot more people will watch, because they're getting more than just entertainment."

This observation is more or less true as well for two of this summer's potential movie blockbusters: *Men in Black*, an inventive action-comedy loosely based on lore about mysterious dark-suited agents who harass people who've seen UFOs; and the more solemn *Contact*, based on the Carl Sagan novel and said to be, in the words of its director Bob Zemeckis, the rare alien movie "rooted in true scientific believability." "We've done more for them than they do for us," says Price of Hollywood. A handsome, weather-beaten man with surprisingly still, pale blue eyes, he has no apparent enmity toward Hollywood, even though he once got what sounds like the

**ROSWELL ATTACKS!** A few of the out-of-this-world gifts currently available in town

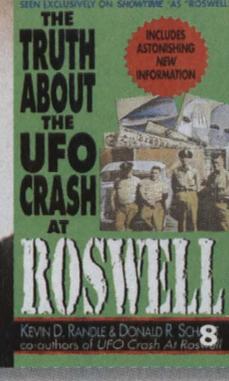




## HOLLYWOOD VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS

Some producers let their imagination take flight, while others took a more prosaic approach to depicting aliens. Interplanetary views over the years:

1. Will Smith in *Men in Black*
2. A poster for *War of the Worlds*
3. Jodie Foster in *Contact*
4. *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers*
5. *Close Encounters*
6. Roswell comics
7. *The X-Files*
8. The book that inspired Showtime
9. *Independence Day*
10. *FX: The Series*



which can be explained by incompetence.”

Consumers who are interested in learning the thoughts of true believers unmediated by people who drive Land Rovers can turn to the Internet, of course, and to local bookstores. Over the past decade, the publishing industry has pumped out dozens of books on Roswell and hundreds on UFOs in general. In fact, according to *Books in Print*, there are nearly as many titles available about UFOs (256) as there are about the Kennedys (266), who probably represent the gold standard when it comes to unwarranted public interest in a subject. Not surprisingly, many more Roswell books will be hitting the shelves just in time to capitalize on the Incident's anniversary. The most notorious is Pocket Books' *The Day After Roswell*, the volume that features a foreword by Strom Thurmond that the Senator disavowed two weeks ago when he learned what the book was actually about. Written by Philip J. Corso, a retired Army-intelligence officer and former member of Thurmond's staff, *The Day After Roswell* numbers among its many revelations the claim that ever since 1947, when the Roswell crash put the military on alert, the U.S. government has been fighting “the ‘real’ cold war” against what Corso says the military calls EBES, or extraterrestrial biological entities. Fortunately, it turns out, Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative tipped the balance of power. As Corso writes, “[The U.S. and U.S.S.R.] both knew who the real targets of SDI were ... When we deployed our advanced particle-beam weapon and tested it in

orbit for all to see, the EBES knew and we knew that they knew that we had our defense of the planet in place.”

With the '80s finally explained, we can return to the question of what really happened at Roswell. According to which experts one chooses to believe: there may have been more than one crash site; the U.S. government may have recovered dead aliens (the number varies) as well as a salvageable spacecraft; the craft may have

### Percent who believe each of the following is true:

Intelligent beings from other planets have been in contact with human beings	22%
Intelligent beings from other planets have abducted human beings to observe or experiment on them	17%
Intelligent beings from other planets have been in contact with members of the U.S. government	13%

From a telephone poll of 1,024 adult Americans taken for TIME/CNN on June 4-5 by Yankelevich Partners Inc. Sampling error is ±3.1%.

been a secret government prototype and the dead aliens may have been test chimps with their fur eerily singed off or, as *Popular Mechanics* hypothesizes this month, imported Japanese pilots who had been flying similar experimental craft during the war; then again, the wreckage may really have been extraterrestrial, and one of the aliens may have been taken into custody alive (the docudrama *Roswell*, which aired on Show-

time in 1994, even implies that the suicide of James Forrestal, Harry Truman's Secretary of Defense, was caused by his inability to deal with the enormity of what had been communicated to him telepathically by a captured alien); government scientists may even have reverse-engineered alien technology, as Corso claims, and come up with Stealth bombers and computer chips.

If alien society is anything like ours in its leanings toward tragicomedy, the most believable explanation may come from Kristin Corn, the daughter of Hub and Sheila Corn, ranchers whose property 30 or so miles outside of Roswell is home to one of the alleged crash sites (Sheila offers pleasantly homespun tours at \$15 a head). Kristin's theory: the crash was caused by alien teenagers who slipped away from a mother ship and went for a joyride, little knowing that alleged film of one of their autopsies would one day appear on the same network as *World's Scariest Police Chases*.

The real truth, assuming it doesn't involve a weather balloon, is made harder to get at by the sometimes mutable memories of aging “witnesses” and the fact that some of the most provocative evidence is second-hand. Industrious UFOlogists may spend years tracking down slim leads like the one attributed to a former café owner in Taos, N.M., who told interlocutors that an old customer, a desert rat named Cactus Jack, once told her he was “out there when the spaceship came down” and saw dead aliens with blood “like tar.” But despite the best ef-

forts of Kevin Randle and others, no one has yet been able even to confirm Jack's existence, let alone his veracity. Hunting spacemen can be as daunting as finding the lady who dried her poodle in the microwave.

**A**ND YET IT IS THE VERY MURKINESS of the Roswell Incident, the sense that it is both knowable and yet never quite confirmable, that gives the Incident its enduring appeal; after all, if the government ever really said “jig's up” and produced a preserved alien for our delectation, we would be stunned for a day or two, perturbed for a week longer, and then we would move on to the girl who gave birth at the prom. As the makers of monster movies know, the unseen is always more compelling than the seen. The particular appeal of Roswell's elusiveness, and allusiveness, is captured in the canny words that appear at the end of *The X-Files*' credit sequence: “The truth is out there.” The point is made more succinctly by the pins sold at the Enigma UFO Museum that read, simply, BELIEVE. What we are talking about is a leap of faith.

Benson Saler and Charles A. Ziegler, professors of anthropology at Brandeis University, have just published a study of what they call the Roswell Myth, which in their view has “religious-like” elements without being religion per se. Its primary purpose, Saler and Ziegler say, is twofold. One is as a

means of social protest, in that the Roswell story is in great part an antigovernment narrative; as Zeigler points out, the Incident was largely ignored until the late '70s, when it resurfaced and resonated with a public made cynical by those twin devils, Vietnam and Watergate. By then too, the Federal Government had grown so large and its concerns so cosmic—what with the space program and a nuclear arsenal that could, if push came to shove, wipe out humankind—that covert interactions with an alien culture might very well seem within the realm of possibility (curiously, the supposedly advanced alien race of *Independence Day* takes days to wipe out Earth's great cities, when everyone knows we could do the job in a matter of minutes).

By positing a government conspiracy with limitless resources, the more fervent believers in the Myth also inoculate themselves against heresy: any concrete evidence the government or anyone else unearths to prove that the crash was strictly terrestrial is obviously engineered—it's a cannier brand of fundamentalism. The appearance of skeptical articles in a national magazine like this one could be part of a disinformation campaign to distract letter-to-the-editor-writing UFOlogists from more fruitful pursuits. For all you know, this author may be a member of an ultra-top-secret National Security Council committee with a terribly spooky acronym.

But no one would work this hard to hash out such an enthrallingly elaborate belief

system—the human imagination is depthless, the anthropologists point out—if more profound needs weren't being met as well. At its core, the Myth is a secular way to give the universe meaning, and humanity a renewed place at the head of the table: not only are we not alone, not only are the skies populated by superhuman beings, but their visits here are prima facie evidence that we are of some consuming interest. In Saler's words, the Roswell Myth is “an effort to put enchantment back in nature.” UFOlogists, he says, “are employing idioms of science in what is really a romantic pursuit. I find that fascinating, even inspiring in a way.”

An informal survey suggests that Roswellians themselves are generally less inspired by the whole thing than amused, although some—Christian Fundamentalists in particular—are offended by the city's growing embrace of its unique legacy. “There's kind of a love-hate relationship with this thing,” says Stan Crosby, a self-described oil-and-gas man who is the chief organizer of Roswell UFO Encounter '97 (he is married to the director of the International UFO Museum, the glitzier rival to the Enigma). “It's not like we have the prettiest beach,” admits Crosby, “or the Carlsbad Caverns. But you know, we've got to go with what we've got. And it sure brings them in.” He is already thinking three years hence, when the theme will be Roswell UFO Encounters: On to the Millennium.

—With reporting by Jeffrey Ressler/Los Angeles

By LEON JAROFF

**A** MYSTERIOUS CRASH, DEAD EXTRATERRESTRIALS LITTERING THE landscape, a government cover-up. Today the incident near Roswell, N.M., is an elaborate tale, growing ever more so with time and mythic imagination. But when it happened, it was almost imperceptible.

The wreckage was strewn over a 200-yd. swath and consisted largely of rubber strips, tinfoil, wood sticks, Scotch tape, other tape with a floral design and what rancher W.W. ("Mac") Brazel described as a rather tough paper. On the day Brazel chanced upon the strange debris, June 14, 1947, he was making his rounds at the J.B. Foster sheep ranch, 85 miles northwest of Roswell. As he later recalled, he

was in a hurry and didn't pay much attention to the scattered assortment.

Ten days after Brazel's chance discovery, pilot Kenneth Arnold was flying near Washington State's Cascade Mountains when he spotted what he described as nine disklike objects flying in formation at about 1,200 m.p.h. Arnold's report, yet unexplained, immediately gave rise to other sightings, and by July 4, newspapers were heralding literally hundreds of reports of "flying saucers" in skies across the nation.

But Brazel had no radio in

his ranch shack and was unaware of the sightings until July 5, when he drove to the nearby town of Corona, heard about the saucers and may have learned of a rumored reward for anyone who recovered one. By then, Brazel later told the *Roswell Daily Record*, he had already returned to the littered field with his wife and two children, gathered the debris and taken it home. On July 7, while in Roswell to sell wool,

Brazel dropped by the office of Sheriff George Wilcox, where, he recalled, he "whispered kinda confidential-like" that he might have found a flying disk. Sheriff Wilcox immediately phoned nearby Roswell Army Air Field, home of the 509th Bomb Group, and notified Major Jesse Marcel, the group intelligence officer.

Barely able to control his excitement, Marcel sped into town with counterintelligence corps officer Sheridan Cavitt, picked up Brazel and headed out to the ranch. After collecting the debris—which Brazel later reported weighed no more than 5 lbs.—they stowed it in the trunk of Marcel's Buick. On his way back to Roswell, Marcel stopped at his home to show off the booty. Marcel's son Jesse Jr., now 60 and a doctor in Helena, Mont., remembers being awakened by his father and shown tinfoil, plastic, "beams or struts" that seemed metallic, and some strange markings that he thought resembled "hieroglyphics." The younger Marcel was only 10 at the time, but, he told *TIME* last week, he recalls that his father "was pretty excited, and I kind of think he said 'flying saucers.'"

That is most likely the description Major Marcel used when he returned to the airfield. As Walter Haut, who was then the 509th's press officer, tells it, he was ordered by Colonel William Blanchard, the group commander, to issue a press release. Haut, now 75 (he and his wife have license plates that read MR UFO and MRS UFO), remembers Blanchard's saying, "We have in our possession a flying saucer. This thing crashed north of Roswell, and we've shipped it all to General Ramey, 8th Air Force at Fort Worth."

Haut's press release caused a sensation. RAAF CAPTURES FLYING SAUCER ON RANCH IN ROSWELL REGION, proclaimed the *Roswell*

**CONTACT AND COVER-UP? At first the local paper broke the news of cosmic encounter, but then quickly printed the official retraction. Was the discovery hushed up? Or was it an embarrassing mistake?**

*Daily Record* on July 8. Word of the "capture" quickly spread, and the phone lines in the offices of Sheriff Wilcox and First Lieutenant Haut were jammed for hours with press inquiries from around the world.

**T**HE FUROR WAS SHORT-LIVED. At 8th Air Force headquarters the same night, Brigadier General Roger Ramey, after consultations with his weather forecaster, Warrant Officer Irving Newton, called in the local press and announced that the debris was the remnants not of a saucer but of a high-altitude weather balloon. The sticks and tinfoil, he explained, were from a reflector used to track the balloon by radar. The next day, under the headline GENERAL RAMEY EMPTIES ROSWELL SAUCER, the *Daily Record* reported his retraction and explanation. In the same edition, the paper quoted rancher Brazel, overwhelmed by the uproar and embarrassed: "If I find anything else besides a bomb they are going to have a hard time getting me to say anything about it." Tranquillity returned to Roswell, and three decades would pass before any more excitement was stirred.

Enter Stanton Friedman, a former itinerant nuclear physicist now living in New Brunswick, Canada, who has long been, in his words, "a clear-cut, unambiguous UFOlogist." In 1978, while waiting in a Baton Rouge, La., television station for an interview, Friedman was told that Jesse Marcel, long retired from the Air Force and living nearby, had once handled the wreckage of a UFO. After quizzing Marcel, who still believed the debris he retrieved was extraterrestrial, Friedman reviewed the old stories about Roswell, painstakingly sought out and interviewed other witnesses, and came



IS IT ALIEN, OR IS IT A WEATHER DEVICE? Brigadier General Ramey and Colonel Thomas Dubose examine the Foster debris

miles west of the Foster ranch, in 1947. Before being shooed away by military police, he claimed, he had spotted several little bodies strewn nearby. Since the story had no apparent connection to Roswell and was given scant credence by Friedman and the authors, it was generally ignored. Yet it was the UFO era's first mention of alien casualties.

But not the last. In 1988, responding to the continuing speculation about Roswell, the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) in Chicago sponsored a team to seek out the crash site, recover any remaining debris and interview surviving "witnesses." Three years later the key members of that team, science-fiction author Kevin Randle and CUFOS investigator Don Schmitt, published their conclusions in the book *UFO Crash at Roswell*. In addition to recovering a UFO at Roswell, they charged, the government had found and spirited away the remnants of its crew, several little alien bodies.

Randle and Schmitt bolstered their tale with accounts by Roswell witnesses, some of whom had earlier been ferreted out and interviewed by Friedman. The most notable of their sources was Glenn Dennis, who in 1947 was

22 and working as a mortician. Dennis told of receiving inquiries from the air base that July about the availability of child-size coffins and procedures for embalming bodies that had been exposed to the weather for days.

Even more intriguing, he claimed that he had seen strange activity at the base hospital early in July and had been ordered to leave after encountering a hysterical Army nurse, who later told him she had aided doctors performing autopsies on strange-looking, small bodies. The nurse, he added, had sworn him to secrecy and had been transferred to England, and flown

to a dramatic conclusion: there had been a cover-up of "cosmic Watergate" proportions. His research and conclusions became the basis of the 1980 book *The Roswell Incident*, co-written by Charles Berlitz (author of *The Bermuda Triangle*) and UFO investigator William Moore. Its publication put Roswell back on the map.

Mentioned briefly in the book was a yarn, told secondhand to Friedman by a couple who attended one of his lectures in 1972. They claimed that a friend named Grady ("Barney") Barnett, now dead, had told them about coming upon a crashed saucer on the Plains of San Agustin, N.M., about 150



# DID ALIENS REALLY LAND?

An examination of events in 1947 shows something did happen. But the resulting stories got out of hand and out of this world



out of the base shortly after they spoke. Later, he said, he heard that she had been killed in a plane crash.

Dennis, who still lives near Roswell, claims that until 1990, the only person he ever told about the strange goings-on was his father. Why? "I didn't want to get mixed up in this mess."

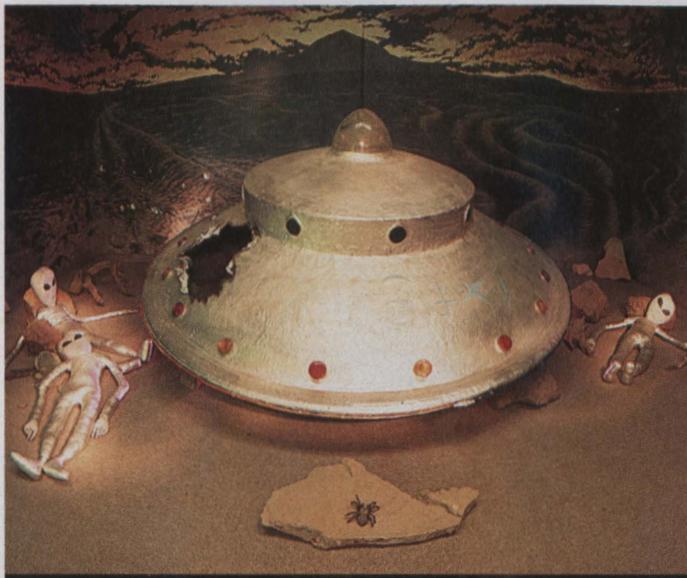
Friedman, meanwhile, was pursuing a new lead. His preoccupation with UFOs had landed him a stint as adviser for a 1989 episode of the TV show *Unsolved Mysteries* that dealt with Roswell and other purported UFO crashes, including the one that ostensibly occurred in 1947 on the Plains of San Agustin. One viewer of that show, Gerald Anderson, responded quickly to an 800 number flashed on the screen, protesting that the re-enactment of the event was inaccurate. For one thing, he told the operator, the shape of the crashed spacecraft was wrong. And how did he know? Anderson, now a resident of Springfield, Mo., explained that he moved to New Mexico with his family in 1947, when he was five, and that on a rock-hunting outing on the Plains of San Agustin, the group had come across the wrecked craft.

Friedman was ecstatic. This seemed to be solid confirmation of the story casually mentioned in *The Roswell Incident*. He arranged to have John Carpenter, a Springfield therapist, interview Anderson. Carpenter, who also directed investigations for the local chapter of MUFON, the Mutual UFO Network, conducted several sessions with Anderson, often using hypnosis, presumably to help him "recover" buried memories of the event. Anderson later told the *Springfield News-Leader*: "We all went up ... to it [a large silver disk]. There were three creatures, three bodies, lying on the ground underneath this thing in the shade. Two weren't moving, and the third one obviously was having trouble breathing, like when you have broken ribs. There was a fourth one [that]... apparently had been giving first aid to the others." Soon after, Anderson claimed, the military arrived, warned everyone to forget what they had seen and "un-ceremoniously ushered" the civilians away from the site. And why hadn't Anderson ever told his story before? As he grew into manhood, he explains, he "tucked" away the memory. "I learned you just don't go up to the average person on the street and say, 'Damn, know what I saw?'"

Armed with his new evidence, Fried-

man and UFO researcher Don Berliner co-authored their own book, *Crash at Corona*, in 1992. Their conclusion: the government recovered not one but two saucers in July 1947, along with seven dead extraterrestrials and one that was still alive. The first craft, they claimed, crashed near Corona after some kind of midair accident that showered debris on the Foster ranch. And the second, they wrote, was surely the one Anderson saw.

In their 1994 sequel, *The Truth About the UFO Crash at Roswell*, Randle and Schmitt introduced still more people they



**CRASHED SAUCER DIORAMA**, complete with bodies of aliens, is the centerpiece of the UFO Enigma Museum, in Roswell. An early tale had one survivor attempting first aid on the others

called witnesses. One was Roswell resident Frank Kaufman (called Steve MacKenzie in the book because he initially preferred anonymity). He maintained that he was part of a military contingent that had searched for a crashed saucer and, 40 miles south of the Foster sheep ranch, had discovered a craft shaped like a plane fuselage, its nose buried in a sandy hill. Through a cracked section, he insisted, he saw several little bodies.

**A**NOTHER TALE WAS TOLD BY A Carlsbad, N.M., resident, Jim Ragsdale, who said he and a woman friend, camping out in an area north of Roswell during the Fourth of July weekend in 1947, were amorously involved one night when they saw an object flash overhead and crash not far away. Seeking out the wreck, he said, they discovered a crashed saucer and, using a flashlight, spotted several little corpses. They returned in the morn-

ing to get a better look but beat a hasty retreat when they saw a military convoy approaching.

Roswell researchers agree that something happened out there, but they are a rancorous bunch, given to ferocious infighting. Collaborators become enemies, one calls another a "pathological liar," another attempts to block publication of a rival's book, and they relish discrediting each other's witnesses. The bête noire of the Roswell community is a former *Aviation Week* senior editor named Philip Klass, who now publishes the *Skeptics' UFO Newsletter*, a bimonthly that regularly exposes duplicity and deflates UFO claims. Roswell believers are hard pressed, for example, to counter Klass's point that while they argue about whether the crash date was July 2 or July 4, Brazel reported unequivocally that he discovered the debris on June 14. Klass has constantly quoted secret documents, recently released under the Freedom of Information Act, showing that well after the Roswell incident, the nation's top security officials were still seeking physical evidence—any evidence—that UFOs are real.

Minutes of an Air Force Scientific Advisory Board meeting convened on March 17, 1948, for example, quote Colonel Howard McCoy, then chief of intelligence at what is now the Wright Patterson Air Force Base (where the bodies and debris were supposedly shipped): "We are running down every [UFO] report. I can't even tell you how much we would give to have one of these crash in an area so that we could recover whatever they are." As Klass sees it, "The real Roswell-crashed-saucer cover-up" is not by the U.S. government but "by the authors of these books and by producers of television shows who exploit the 'Roswell incident' for their own financial gain."

Still, as the Roswell controversy becomes more heated, Washington has been under increasing pressure to resolve it. At the urging of New Mexico Representative Steven Schiff, who complained about a government "cover-up" of Roswell and the "runaround" he was getting from the Pentagon, the General Accounting Office announced in January 1994 that it would launch a hunt for any documents related to

the "incident." That announcement was noted in the *Washington Post* under the headline "GAO Turns to Alien Turf in Probe: Bodies of space voyagers said to have disappeared in 1947."

Stung by the publicity, the Air Force reacted defensively. It promptly began a six-month investigation of its own, and released its report the following July. The Air Force investigators, under Colonel Richard Weaver, interviewed the surviving firsthand witnesses to the debris recovery, searched records and followed leads that brought them to Charles Moore, a scientist who in 1947 was working on the then top-secret Project Mogul.

Mogul, Moore explained, involved launching trains of balloons that carried acoustical equipment designed to monitor Soviet nuclear tests. So that the balloons could be tracked by radar, they were equipped with corner reflectors. Records showed that one such balloon train was launched on June 4 and was tracked to within 20 miles of the Foster ranch before it disappeared from the radar scopes in mid-June. Even more telling, Moore reported, the corner reflectors were put together with beams made of balsa wood and coated with "Elmer's-type" glue (to strengthen them). Also, he noted, the New York

toy company that manufactured the reflectors had reinforced the seams with leftover tape that Moore recalled had "pinkish-purple abstract flower-like designs"—markings that Major Marcel could have interpreted as hieroglyphics.

Finally, the Air Force report stated, "there was no indication in official records from the [1947] period that there was heightened military operational or security activity which should have been generated if this was, in fact, the first recovery of materials and/or persons from another world." The GAO probe, released in 1995, reported much the same conclusion.

Perhaps even more disturbing to Roswell buffs was "Roswell in Perspective," an article in the publication of the Fund for UFO Research. That report was the product of a two-year investigation by Karl Pflock, who, after a career that included stints in the CIA and the Pentagon, re-

signed to become a full-time UFO investigator and writer.

Pflock, who still believes that some UFOs are extraterrestrial, nonetheless diligently pursued leads and helped uncover the Charles Moore revelations. Pflock also found gaping holes in the testimony of such "witnesses" as Frank Kaufman and Jim Ragsdale. Pflock's conclusion: "It is all but certain that at least the great majority, if not all, of what was found at the debris field on the Foster ranch" was the wreckage of a Project Mogul balloon.



**THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL** in this scene from a Showtime special on Roswell was also the subject of three photographs submitted by a hoaxer to *Penthouse* magazine, which published them as "genuine" images of a creature from outer space. The Fox TV network was similarly duped when it aired a crude black-and-white film purportedly shot in 1947 of doctors autopsying a grotesque little alien that even confirmed UFOlogists recognized as a dummy

Still another recent defector from the ranks of the hopeful is Kent Jeffrey, a Delta Air Lines pilot and UFO buff best known for his "Roswell Declaration," a petition urging the Federal Government to promptly release all documents pertaining to Roswell.

**B**ECAUSE HIS FATHER HAD known Colonel Blanchard of the 509th Bomb Command, Jeffrey was able to wangle an invitation to the 1996 reunion of the 509th. There he met pilots stationed at Roswell in 1947, most of whom, he found, had "heard nothing about the supposed crashed-saucer incident until years later, after all the publicity started." After chasing down other sources suggested by 509th pilots, Jeffrey was convinced. "In essence," he says, "the 1947 Roswell case has turned out to be a red

herring, diverting time and resources away from research into the real UFO phenomenon."

Later this month, the Air Force will release the results of its second study, launched after UFOlogists complained that its 1994 report did not address the issue of alien bodies. ("It seemed rational to us," explains the Air Force's Weaver, "that since we proved there were no UFOs, it automatically meant no aliens.")

For a few years after 1947, the report will explain, the Air Force conducted experiments that involved dropping dummies from high-altitude balloons to study the results of the impact. Witnesses' descriptions of the "aliens," the Air Force notes, closely match the characteristics of the dummies: 3½ ft. to 4 ft. tall, bluish skin coloration and no ears, hair, eyebrows or eyelashes.

"What quite likely happened," says Weaver, "is that people who saw these dummies mistook them for aliens." And, he notes, because no mention of aliens was made until 1978, those "who were interviewed were trying to recall events that took place 30 years earlier." Weaver blames UFOlogists for "linking" these sightings, which occurred after 1947, to the original Roswell incident.

Despite the Air Force reports, despite Pflock and Jeffrey, Roswell believers remain unshaken. "If you can't attack the data," Friedman says, "attack the people by saying they are nuts, kooks, quacks ... The evidence is overwhelming," he insists, "that planet Earth is being visited by extraterrestrial life."

The millions of Americans who believe that U.S. officials are withholding the truth about Roswell specifically and UFOs in general are not about to be swayed by the facts. Echoing *The X-Files*, they insist the truth is still out there. Says Weaver: "What I hadn't realized [before we issued our first report] was the vehemence of the pro-UFO people. Telling them there was no saucer at Roswell was like telling a kid there is no Santa Claus." With the urge to believe so strong, the legend of Roswell will doubtless go on and on.

—Reported by James Willwerth/Roswell, Elaine Rivera/New York and Chandrani Ghosh/Washington

# WHO YOU CALLING TE

The British band the Prodigy was supposed to lead an electronic music revolution.

By CHRISTOPHER JOHN FARLEY

**W**HEN THE BRITISH BAND the Prodigy played Irving Plaza in New York City this month, something extraordinary happened. Yes, the performance had punk-rock vigor; Keith Flint, the singer-dancer with the shock-rock hairdo, made Halloween faces at the crowd, emcee Maxim did some bare-chested stage strutting, and band mastermind Liam Howlett coolly orchestrated the show from behind his banks of keyboards. But from the first note, the sweaty, expectant crowd, which had seen the band pushed on MTV for months, began to dance. There's no dancing at alternative-rock shows—people merely mosh, which is as close to dancing as car crashes are to figure skating. But when the Prodigy's deep bass groove hit the crowd, they were off.

Feet were moving in time, and arms were swaying with the rhythm. Dance-rock was cool again.

This was supposed to be the summer of "electronica"—artificially flavored pop that relies heavily on synthesizers, samples, loops and dancebeats and less on guitars and vocals. But so far, electronic, or techno, music seems to have only a few more fans in the U.S. than Dennis Rodman has in Utah; the most heralded acts have been weak performers in the marketplace. Now the Prodigy has arrived in the U.S., and its potent album, *The Fat of the Land* (Maverick/Mute XL/Warner Bros.), due out July 1, is not far behind. Can the band give elec-



**CHEMICAL BROTHERS  
DIG YOUR OWN HOLE**

Not bad, but RUN-DMC and the Beastie Boys did it earlier and better

JOSEPH CULTICE—OUTLINE

tronica the jolt it needs?

Others have tried and failed. The ambient electronic group the Orb's newest CD, *Orblivion*, has sold only 65,000 copies in the U.S.; recent releases by such vaunted acts as the Future Sound of London and Underworld have moved fewer than 60,000—the Spice Girls sold more than that last week. Even the Chemical Brothers, after a media push that would make Madonna blush, has failed to crack *Billboard's* Top 10.

And what's worse, these CDs have been creatively wanting—the Chemical Brothers' *Dig Your Own Hole* (Astralwerks) features a few songs that energetically blend rock and hip-hop, but Public Enemy and



**THE PRODIGY  
THE FAT OF THE LAND**

Its eagerly awaited album has more than 600,000 preorders