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CHILES-WHITTED: BURN, BABY, BURN

Martin S. Kottmeyer

IN THE early morning hours of 24 July 1948, a DC-3 piloted by Captain Clarence S. Chiles is being overtaken by something. Captain Chiles nudges his co-pilot, John B. Whitted: "Look, here comes a new Army jet job."(1)

His official statement reads, "At 2:45 a.m., we were cruising at 5,000 feet when there came what looked like a jet-type aircraft to our right and slightly above meeting us. It was a clear moonlit night with the visibility excellent; therefore, we were able to view the ship as it passed for a period of about ten seconds. It was clear there were no wings present, that it was powered by some jet or other type of power shooting flame from the rear some fifty feet. There were two rows of windows, which indicated an upper and lower deck, from inside these windows, a very bright light was glowing. Underneath the ship there was a glow of blue light. After it passed it pulled up into some light broken clouds and was lost from view. There was no prop wash

or rough air felt as it passed." In a 2 November 1948 interrogation, Chiles added that it made a departure using an "excellent, well-coordinated gentle climbing turn into clouds before disappearance." Blue Book files indicate Chiles also apparently thought "the flame flared out from a nozzle in the rear which he thought he perceived. The flame extended some 30-50 feet behind the object and became deeper in intensity and increased in length as the object pulled up into a cloud."

The co-pilot confirmed this for the most part: "We were at 5,000 feet and our position was 25 miles southwest of Montgomery, Alabama. The strange object had a stream of red fire coming from its tail. I assumed it was a jet type airplane of the Army or Navy but as it came nearer I could see it was much larger than any Army or Navy jet I have seen or read about. It passed us on the right side of our DC-3. I would estimate its speed in the neighborhood of 700 mph but this is

purely a rough estimate. We were holding a compass heading of 50 degrees and the object passed us going in the opposite direction. To me, the object seemed about a half-mile from us, flying straight and level. I could see no wings supporting the object. The object was cigar-shaped and seemed about a hundred feet in length. The fuselage appeared to be about three times the circumference of a B-29 fuselage. It had two rows of windows, an upper and lower. The windows were very large and seemed square. They were white with light that seemed to be caused by some kind of combustion. I estimate that we watched the object at least 5 seconds and not more than 10 seconds. We heard no noise nor did we feel any turbulence from the object. It seemed to be at about 5,500 feet." Whitted added that he didn't perceive the nozzle Chiles saw, but confirmed "the increased length of the flame as the object 'pulled up'".

After the pilots recovered from their initial surprise, they found one passenger awake and got him to see the thing, but by then there was "no physical shape -- only a streak of flame moving in a straight line". Newspaper reports painted the encounter in more lurid terms: "It flashed down and we veered to the left and it veered to its left, and passed us about 700 feet to our right and about 700 feet above us. Then as if the pilot has seen us and wanted to avoid us, it pulled up with a tremendous burst of flame out of its rear and zoomed up into the clouds. Its prop-wash or jet-wash rocked our DC-3." The pilots denied the presence of felt turbulence both in their interviews with Air Force investigators and, later, ufologist James McDonald.

Ruppelt indicates that old-timers at ATIC were shook up by this case worse than by the Mantell incident. "This was the first time two reliable sources had been really close to a UFO to get a good look and live to tell about it...A few days after the DC-3 was buzzed, the people at ATIC decided that the time had arrived to make an Estimate of the Situation. The situation was the UFOs; the estimate was that it was interplanetary!"(2)



MAGONIA READERS' MEETINGS

First Sunday of each month from 1915 to 2230, at the Railway, Putney, opposite Putney station. If you live in or are visiting the London area, then why not come along? Visiting American ETHers are particularly welcome, as we enjoy a good argument, and we've got a couple of nice bridges for sale.

Menzel indicates the case "went far to establish in the minds of the general public as well as of Air Force investigators that the saucers were solid objects and some sort of flying craft, humanly manned". He reports that "a widely-circulated story claimed a high-speed rocket had broken loose from White Sands" and caused the encounter. Menzel laughed this explanation off as completely fantastic with no foundation in truth.(3) Hynek felt the case was an undoubted meteor in his report to ATIC of 30 April 1949. Menzel concurred and argued it was part of either the Aquarid or Perseid meteor streams, based mainly on the date.(4) This has been generally accepted among sceptics.(5)

Loren Gross felt that the weakest point in this idea is the fact that both pilots indicated the object changed course and they were not fuzzy on the point. Most recently, Kevin Randle in *Scientific Ufology* has offered a long attack on the meteor explanation that focuses on the detail reported by both pilots that square windows were visible. Noting that Hynek said psychological research would be needed to decide the issue if people would see square windows in a meteor's ion trail, Randle did an experiment to settle the issue. The results: "people do not normally create, in their minds, square windows on a streak of light."(6) I suspect the thought that forms in most sceptics' minds is that this experiment comes a couple of decades too late. There is no general presumption of portholes or windows in saucers anymore. Randle also notes that the fact that Chiles first suggested the craft was a jet job and that should have skewed the interpretation into something closer to normal jets and they don't have double rows of windows.(7) He avers, "There is no solution for this case. That does not mean Chiles and Whitted saw a craft built on another planet."(8) Randle does not discuss why he does not think it is surely extraterrestrial if it is unsolved, but it is easy enough to fill in the blanks.

Who believes alien spacecraft travel by means of jets or rocket exhaust anymore? Those flames are inconsistent with how more thoroughly alien spacecraft are held up, i.e. forces like magnetism, anti-gravity, static electricity, dimensional drives, or ultra-energy.(9) The craft was not a classical saucer, but was described as "one of those fantastic Flash Gordon rocket ships in the funny papers". For the record, Flash and Dr. Zarkov's rocket did have lighted square windows, but did not have a double-decker configuration.(10) The rockets in Buck Rogers preferred a single row of round portholes.

The meteor explanation may well be wrong. The radiant of the Delta Aquarids was off towards due south and sounds wrong for an object that appears ahead and to the right of a plane bearing a 50 degree compass heading. The radiant of the Perseids is better

placed, but the 24 July date seems too early - borderline at best. Jay Pasachoff's *Contemporary Astronomy* puts the limits at 25 July-18 August which, if it does not absolutely forbid a meteor solution, renders the effort to tie the meteor to a shower dubious.(11)

The fact that both pilots agreed the craft displayed longer flames when it 'pulled up' certainly sounds like a jet to me. It has been rumored that Navy pilots would sometimes practice intercepting enemy bombers in the dark by using unsuspecting airliners as mock targets. When in a playful mood they would turn off the external lights and come up real close. They'd turn on the afterburner, creating a long rocket-like plume, and the airliner would be left in the dust. The next day, they'd enjoy the mystery UFO they created.(12) Without external lights, the wings may have been hard to discern or, maybe, the roll angle was such that the wings were not apparent. The windows might have been reflections of light of the exhaust off surfaces along the side of the plane. Who knows? I'm merely guessing here and I am sure ufologists will offer a raft of reasons why this is impossible.

It is easy enough to think of a dozen probable objections. Frankly, if they want to argue it is a complete and total mystery to them, so be it. The only points worth caring about: 1) Do you have a better explanation? 2) Do you think the case really helps the ETH? Unless ufologists are prepared to give an unequivocal 'Yes' to both questions and actually provide reasons why their specific explanation is better, don't expect solutions for the alleged problems. If you're half as smart as I think you are, you can work out the answers yourselves. Really, folks, are you impressed these days with alien craft spouting flames like jets and rockets? Another mystery - yawn - we're so in awe - zzzzzzz.

References

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EDITORIAL

We said it many years ago and we are saying it again. In August 1973 we published an editorial titled "Serious research or juvenile entertainment" (*MUFON*, Vol. 6, No. 2) in response to pleas, in *BUFORA Journal*, for researchers to concentrate on "genuine extra-terrestrial hardware" (which still seems to be unavailable) instead of all those boring psychological theories or detailed reports of objective investigations of UFO reports.

In those days, it seems, popular ufology was aimed at "starstruck teenagers", whereas now it is aimed at those who never grow up. When veteran ufologist Richard Hall recently submitted one of his regular columns to *MUFON UFO Journal*, it was rejected by the Editor, because of Hall's critical comments about some of the speakers booked for the forthcoming *MUFON* conference. Hall resigned from *MUFON* in protest. Having looked at the list of speakers, your Editor found only one who seems likely to make a sensible and worthwhile contribution to any topic in UFO studies. The others have obviously been chosen for their entertainment value. However, it seems that this policy of entertaining the immature, the cranks, and the feeble minded is not succeeding; *MUFON* membership is reported to be on the decline. In its present state, its eventual demise would be no great loss.

UFO CRASHES: AN EMERGENT PATTERN

Gareth J. Medway

I HAVE come to doubt whether it is possible to draw any conclusions from individual UFO reports. It may be, however, that a group of reports considered collectively can reveal something significant. As briefly as possible, I shall try to show this with the example of UFO crash stories.

It was on 14 June 1947 that William Brazel, a farmer near Roswell, New Mexico, found a lot of silvery wreckage on his land.⁽¹⁾ At first he did nothing, but on 8 July, following news reports of flying saucers in the area, it occurred to him that this might be one of them, and he reported it to the sheriff, who passed it on to the Air Force, who told the press that the mystery of the flying discs would now be solved. According to the official report, however, when they got there it proved to be merely a balloon. This they declared at a press conference, and the incident was totally forgotten for over thirty years. Their initial announcement suggests that, if they had captured an alien spacecraft, they would have said so.

Nonetheless, persistent rumour, at least in California, had it that a saucer had indeed crashed and that the Air Force were busily learning the secrets of its technology: a 1949 memo by Meade Layne of the Borderland Sciences Research Foundation (an organisation mainly devoted to recording channelled messages from "The Etherians", as they called the ufonauts) reported that two scientists, one of them "Dr Weisberg, a physics professor from a California university" had seen a crashed disc with six dead occupants.

The source of Layne's information is unclear, but soon people started to talk. In February 1950 Barney Barnett of Socorro, New Mexico, told some visiting friends that when working near Magdalena, New Mexico (nowhere near Roswell) he had chanced across a crashed metallic disc, 25 to 30 feet across, with dead bodies of small humanoids around it. Some archaeologists also saw it. Then the military turned up and ordered them all away.⁽²⁾ This sequence of events was the template for many subsequent stories.

On 8 March 1950 a lecture was given to students at the University of Denver, Colorado, by a mysterious man who claimed that a saucer had crashed at Aztec, New Mexico (hundreds of miles from both Roswell and Socorro), in the spring of 1948. The man

was later identified as Silas Newton, and his testimony was used as the basis for one of the first UFO books, *Behind the Flying Saucers*, by Frank Scully. Silas Newton was a partner with one "Dr Gee", who claimed that later two other saucers had crashed in Arizona, and that he had been privileged to examine all three. The first two both had a (dead) crew of sixteen, the third only two. He believed they came from Venus. Dr Gee claimed to be a magnetic scientist, though what he said on the subject ("there are 1,257 magnetic lines of force to the square centimetre"⁽³⁾) was utter drivel.

Scully also described how Gee and Newton had developed a magnetic device which could detect underground oil deposits. Two years later, this led to their arrest on a charge of fraud. They had been trying to sell their device for \$800,000, but according to police it was "a worthless piece of war surplus equipment" that they had bought for \$4.50.⁽⁴⁾

In the spring of 1952 one Bill Devlin was told by a soldier he met on a train from Philadelphia to Washington that he had been one of three drivers who took the remains of a saucer, along with "sixteen or so" small bodies, from Aztec, New Mexico, to Fort Riley, Kansas.⁽⁵⁾ This is the other main type of crash story, the military man who was there after the civilians were cleared away, and who is sworn to secrecy by frightful penalties, though willing to violate it to casual acquaintances. His story of a saucer at Aztec with sixteen small bodies is consistent with that in Scully's book, though since this had become a bestseller, it is hardly independent confirmation.

In February 1954 President Eisenhower went on a golfing holiday in Palm Springs, California. On 20 February he went off leaving his entourage behind, and the press corps started speculating wildly as to where he might have gone. In the evening a press secretary explained that he had had to make an emergency trip to a dentist. This did not satisfy the rumour mongers, who quickly put it about that that the President had secretly gone to Edwards Air Force Base to view a crashed flying saucer. Sure enough, three months later Meade Layne received a letter from a man named Gerald Light, who claimed to have visited the base himself and seen no fewer than five different alien craft that the Air Force was studying.⁽⁶⁾

Badly piloted UFOs kept on crashing, so it was said, in among other places Arizona, California, Montana, Pennsylvania, British Heligoland, Spitzbergen, Mexico, Sweden and Brazil. Invariably the local military picked up the pieces, except in the case of a four-foot saucer that fell on Silpho Moor near Scarborough, Yorkshire, which was bought from the finder by a civilian and put on display in a local fish and chip shop.⁽⁷⁾ Though such stories went out of fashion in the sixties, in the seventies Leonard Stringfield renamed them "retrievals of the third kind", and, having thus put the subject on a scientific basis, began a collection of anecdotes: he learned for instance of a room in the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, "in which several small humanoids were preserved in a glass case"; two disc-shaped craft at Wright-Patterson, with four small bodies preserved in chemicals; and the 1953 crash of an oval object near Kingman, Arizona, in which was a dead four-foot tall alien.⁽⁸⁾ By the end of the decade he had accumulated nineteen retrieval stories, all different.

According to one tale, in the late 1940s, the photographer Nicholas von Poppen (d. 1975) had been flown to "Los Alamos" airfield, where he was paid to photograph a flying saucer, 30 feet in diameter, which still had four dead aliens, dressed in shiny black one-piece outfits, in their seats in front of a control board. The only problem is that there was no air base at Los Alamos; obviously, he was told that was where he was as part of the cover-up.⁽⁹⁾

The problem, for the rigidly scientific ufologist, was that the witnesses did not fully confirm each other's stories. In general terms they agreed that alien spacecraft had crashed and come into the possession of the military; but the crash sites were all different, the bodies (varying in number from one up to sixteen) and the wreckage were supposed to be stored in a variety of Air Force bases and other places, and where dates were given they did not match up. Yet soon this was to change.

Jesse Marcel, one of the officers who had picked up the wreckage from Brazel's farm, used to talk about the incident, stating that he believed that the object had indeed been an extraterrestrial spacecraft. When Stanton T. Friedman was interviewed on TV in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on 21 February 1978, to promote his lecture tour

"Flying Saucers Are Real", a friend of Marcel's who worked there mentioned him. Friedman often heard "Stories of acquaintances who claimed to know someone who worked with a guy who said he knows where the bodies of a 'flying saucer' crew are stored", but was always unable to follow them up.(10) This was different, a real man who had handled the wreckage.

Later that year Friedman also heard about Barney Barnett. He passed both stories on to William Moore, who then needed a subject to form a sequel to the bestseller he had co-written with Charles Berlitz, *The Philadelphia Experiment*. A crashed UFO was suitably sensational. Asked in an interview by Gray Barker if he was investigating saucer crashes, Moore was reticent, but said: "If I were working on this, I would take one particular rumor, one of the more persistent ones, and devote all my investigative efforts to that one case."(11)

Though the original newspaper reports, and an interview with Marcel, were not nearly enough to fill a book, they were padded out with crashed saucer rumours generally, glossing over the discrepancies with regard to dates and places. They were able to bring in Barney Barnett's claims by suggesting that the saucer had exploded over Roswell, leaving the wreckage that was found on Brazel's farm, but that most of it travelled another 125 miles to crash near Socorro. (Or perhaps, in a variant of the urban legend, there were at that time only two UFOs in the whole of the New Mexico airspace, and they collided with each other.) Eisenhower's 1954 disappearance could have been to view the Roswell saucer, they suggested, failing to explain why it was seven years before the President took an interest.

The Roswell Incident was indeed a bestseller, so much so that the subject has dominated ufology ever since. Suddenly, lots more witnesses (and people who had heard the confessions of witnesses since deceased) came forward with their Roswell, 1947, stories, which none of them had ever felt the need to tell before, enabling the publication of a whole series of subsequent books. Frankie Rowe said her fireman father told her he had been on the way back from a fire when he came across the crash, and saw "two little corpses and one person running around". Iris Foster, of Taco, New Mexico, said one "Cactus Jack" had told her of seeing a round object and four little bodies. More than one archaeologist, who had been out looking for evidence of early American settlements, testified: "I was there and saw everything." Jim Ragsdale, who was there with his girlfriend, saw the craft and several small beings, but, "While observing the scene, we watched as a military convoy arrived and secured the scene. As a result of the convoy's appearance we quickly fled the area." So did the others.(12)

If all these people are telling the

truth, then we have to assume that a flying saucer crashed in a semi-desert region, and for four weeks no one chanced to go near it but the farmer on whose land it was. Then, suddenly, a whole crowd of people, who were in the vicinity for a variety of reasons, archaeologists, courting couples and so on, all happened to converge on the wreckage by pure accident. Just then the army arrived, preventing them from getting any proof. Such synchronicity would be a remarkable anomalous phenomenon in itself.

In 1979 Sergeant (as he had been in 1947) Melvin E. Brown read the Daily Mirror's review of *The Roswell Incident*, and told his family - he had married an Englishwoman and lived in the UK - "I was there. Everything in the article is true."(13) This would be rather more compelling if he had told his family the story before it had appeared in a national newspaper. It will have been observed that, whilst no pattern emerges if one takes the alleged dates of these crashes, there is a definite pattern if one takes the dates on which the various stories are first known to have been told.

The different accounts still do not agree: most say that the craft was a disc, but Frank Kaufmann (who claimed to have detected the crash on radar from White Sands) claimed it was wedge shaped, and that there were four corpses and one living being - others say three corpses, two corpses and one alive, three corpses and one living, and so on and so forth.

Space does not permit me to deal with the claims of Philip Corso and others to have been employed to "back engineer" the wreckage, but I have often wondered at a technology that enables the Greys to navigate safely across nine trillion miles of void from Zeta Reticuli, only to smash into the ground on arrival. Perhaps at this very moment American saucers, built in Area 51, are crashlanding near military bases on the aliens' home planet.

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LITERARY CRITICISM

Review by

Christopher D. Allan

Michael David Hall and Wendy Ann Connors. *Captain Edward J. Ruppelt: The Summer of the Saucers - 1952*, Rose Press International, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2000

For those who enjoy UFO history this is a superb account of the early 1950s period (particularly 1952) in the USA, focusing on the life and work of Edward J. Ruppelt, who was chief of Project Blue Book from 1951-53 and whose book *The Report on UFOs* (1956) became an early classic and is still often cited by believers and sceptics alike.

The authors have, for the first time, published many useful tidbits gleaned from Ruppelt's private files and notebooks (which run to some 700 pages) and have spoken to members of his family and to many of his former colleagues, both military and civilian. The result is a book which will interest any UFO student of whatever persuasion. The only drawback is its inevitable American bias, there being very little on UK or foreign ufology.

There are many examples of letters to or from Ruppelt, pages of discussions of the logistics of USAF organisation from 1947

onwards, accounts of top-level meetings on such topics as UFOs, the Cold War, atomic energy, and atmospheric phenomena; plus several new UFO case studies, as well as some old ones with fresh updates. One of interest is the Kinross F-89 radar case, which John Harney wrote about in *Magonia ETH Bulletin* No. 9, under the heading "Disappearing Planes". The authors reveal, through an aviation historian, that the Kinross tragedy had nothing to do with UFOs, but much more to do with the fact that the F-89 was a disastrous, unreliable aircraft. (It was scrapped soon afterwards.)

We get new insights into the workings of the Battelle Institute study, the CIA sponsored Robertson Panel, and the aftermath of the famous Washington radar sightings. For the first time a complete transcript is given of General Samford's press conference of 29 July 1952.

It may not be generally known, for instance, that the Battelle study and report (quoted by certain UFO proponents as proof of UFO reality) had been completed in September 1953 but was not released until October 1955, and even then it was dressed up as *Blue Book Special Report No. 14*. The name "Battelle" was deliberately suppressed at the time. When Ruppelt was asked about the report after his own book came out he said he had discarded the Battelle study as worthless in 1953. Similarly, it seems Ruppelt was kept in the dark over the conclusions of the Robertson Panel, although he participated during some of its meetings. He was never shown its written findings while at Blue Book, although its report was written in January 1953. The first inkling of any written report was not until April 1958 when a brief summary was released. The complete report, by Frederick C. Durant (an associate member of the panel) did not appear until 1966. Ruppelt had carefully omitted in his book any mention of the CIA who, as is now well known, was the instigator of the Robertson Panel in the first place.

One curiosity is the "Lubbock Lights" case of autumn 1951, involving repeated sightings of strange night lights over Lubbock, Texas by four science professors, plus many other people. The case did not publicly come to light until an account appeared in *Life* magazine in April 1952. Ruppelt had investigated the case at length but officially the lights were left as unexplained. However, in his book he tells how a certain scientist had later, privately, resolved the case but that he (Ruppelt) could not divulge the details as the man had sworn him to secrecy. In the revised edition of Ruppelt's book, however, he reveals that the lights were identified as moths reflecting a row of street lights.

Hall and Connors reveal that the scientist in question was none other than one of the original professors (W.L. Ducker) who had, after lot of experimentation, finally

identified the lights as a flight of plover. However, when he told Ruppelt of this he asked for his identity to be kept secret. The irony was that Ruppelt had first suggested to the professors, in 1951, that the objects might be birds but they flatly rejected this idea! It was only after repeated sightings of these lights (which reappeared during 1952 and after) that Ducker proved Ruppelt was right in the first place but, presumably, did not want his colleagues to know this. The puzzling aspect is that Ruppelt gave a false explanation in his revised book. Why? The authors cannot say, and admit it is not a satisfactory ending to the story. However, we can surmise that Ruppelt was still modestly trying to avoid giving the impression that he was correct all along and still wanted to credit an anonymous scientist with solving the case. To divulge the true solution would give the show away. Hence the false "solution". Unfortunately, Ruppelt's notes shed no further light on how the "moths" explanation came about.

There is an interesting new story of Donald Menzel which the authors describe as "a shocking story of security violations by Menzel", where he obtained Blue Book files by unauthorised means after first being refused them. It does not paint Menzel in a favourable light.

Also included are incidents from the post-Ruppelt era, NICAP's rise to fame in the late 1950s and the early attempts at congressional hearings. As letters make clear, Ruppelt strongly disapproved of Congress wasting its time over UFOs; he had a few exchanges with Donald Keyhoe over this.

Finally, the authors prove conclusively, through documents and Ruppelt's personal notes, that there was no official pressure brought to bear on him either during the writing of his book or its later revision. At no time did the USAF, the CIA or anyone else seek to make him change his mind, reverse his views or censor his book in any way, although he did, of course, submit it for clearance. Indeed his letters show that he was always sceptical of UFO reality, even when serving with Blue Book.

In early 1956 the vice-president of engineering at Northrop Aircraft (Ruppelt's employer) even issued an internal memo to staff praising, and giving publicity to, his book. This memo is printed in full.

Unfortunately Ruppelt's health declined in the late 1950s and, after two heart attacks, he died in September 1960 aged only 37.

Do not read this book expecting any "smoking gun" revelations. There are no crashed saucers, no abductions and no underground bases. Just a straightforward narrative with many interesting quotes and insights into the early American UFO era. Strongly recommended for all UFO historians.



LETTER

My esteemed associate Hilary Evans's mis-sive in *Magonia Supplement* No. 34 is curious indeed. There is a good bit in it with which I agree, causing me to dither a while before deciding to take issue with the rest, which truly is curious.

I refer not to the gentle, benign, fin de siècle-like condescension we colonials have with exasperated amusement come to expect from your side of the Atlantic (did the Romans have to suffer the Classical World equivalent from faded Athenians?). Nor do I refer to Hilary's apparent confusion of the "feasts" and "shows" of science fiction conventions (wherever staged) with the stale doughnuts (if one is lucky) and unintended comedy of many speakers at American UFO gatherings.

Nay, what I have in mind is his, on the one hand, taking to task American ufologists for including cartoons in their works (thus proving their lack of seriousness) and, on the other, crying out for "even one major American UFO author who could stand back and see the UFO phenomenon steadily and whole, for the extraordinary mixture of sense and nonsense that it is!" - citing John Keel as having come closest to this ideal. More confusion, to say the least.

This confusion is distilled in Hilary's observation about "the different tones of voice in the letters section of Jim Moseley's *Saucer Smear*. If it's Chris Allan, or Tim Good [!], or Jenny, then the subject is likely to be something at least halfway serious: whereas the majority of the American letters are not about UFOs but about personalities, calling names, slinging mud, using d*rt y w*rds." Clearly, Hilary and, perhaps, his compatriots don't understand that *Smear* most

often has nothing to do with UFOs and bloody well nigh everything to do with ufology/ufology/UFOdumb, whereas our American nonsubscribers most definitely do. Curious.

But take heart. There's a book coming next spring that just might answer Hilary's prayer: *Shockingly Close to the Truth!* by Jim Moseley and Yours Truly. We promise you at the very least an "extraordinary mixture of sense and nonsense".

Karl T. Pflock, *Saucer Smear* Contributing Editor and Fifth Columnist, Placitas, New Mexico

NOTES AND NEWS

from Nigel Watson

Weird Weekend

The new US Star Wars project is being created to fight the secret war against the aliens. That's the reason given by controversial ufologist, Tim Matthews, at a recent and rare public appearance.

Speaking at the Weird Weekend held in Exeter by the Centre for Fortean Zoology, on 16 June, Matthews didn't give much credit to ufologists as they are mainly fixated on the ET hypothesis. As for ufological sceptics, armchair theorists and *Fortean Times* readers they are worse than Martian swamp scum.

He thinks that ufology focuses too much on individuals rather than on the evidence itself, and as a consequence he would rather not be associated with the subject (I'm sure the feeling is mutual). He's gone as far as selling his expensive collection of UFO aeronautical/military books at a car boot sale for £50. As a kind of swan song to his UFO days he provided us with a story that he believes is true:

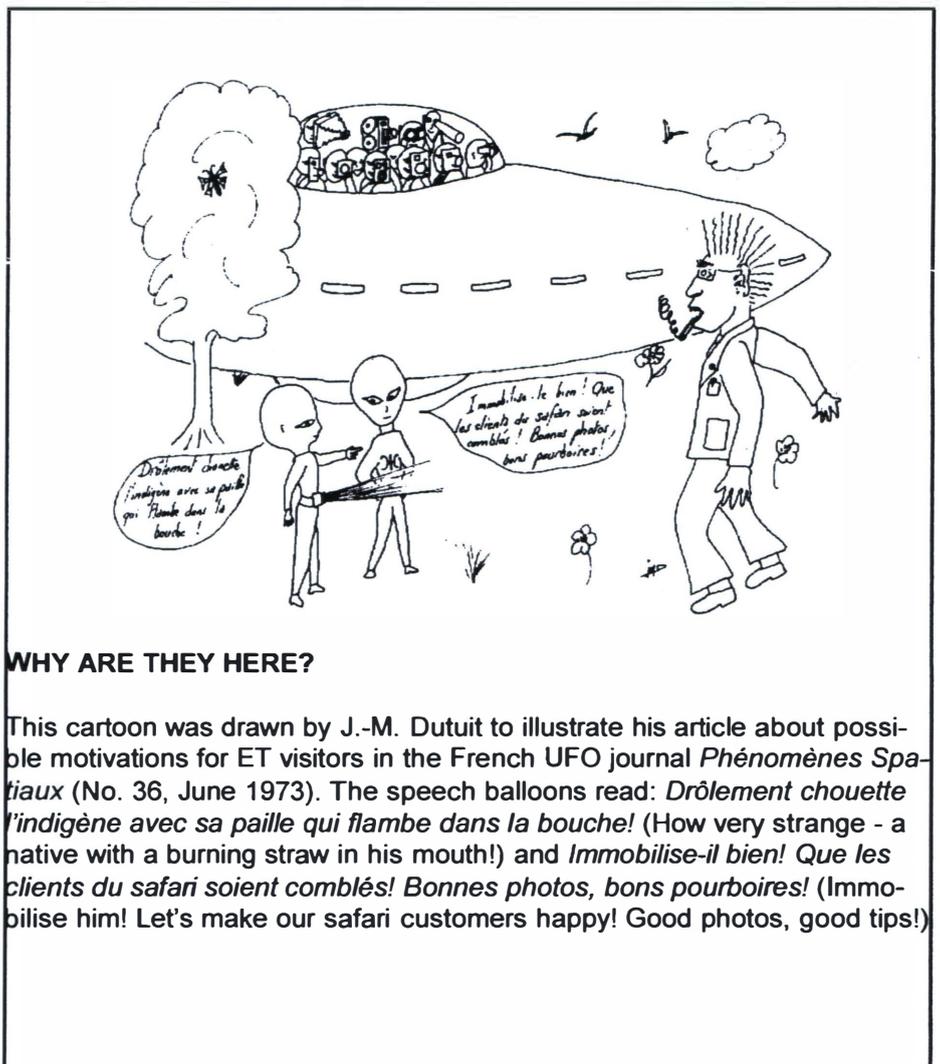
Through a casual conversation unrelated to ufology, a widow of a US four-star General told him that one night many years ago her late husband was called out to an 'incident' in Canada. The General's behaviour, once happy-go-lucky, became morose after he returned from investigating the incident. He never said much about it except that he had been to a remote village where all the graves had been opened up. He said that on his death he wanted to be buried 12 feet deep. Is this a case of grave robbing aliens? Do they feast on our dead bodies? Is someone's imagination working at warp speed?

Matthews, despite disliking ETH believers, does accept the ET hypothesis. He is equally contradictory about some poltergeist activity plaguing his home at the moment. Since a man died in the house years ago

he thinks any psychic investigators would link it with his spirit. He thinks they, like ufologists, are closed minded. Of course he's so open minded he'll believe everything he tells himself.

Rumours

Remember Zigmund Adamski, who was found dead on a coal tip in Todmorden in 1980? At the Exeter conference one of the attendees had one explanation for it. Apparently some of Adamski's former work mates discovered he had been responsible for atrocities during World War Two; to scare him they locked him up (in a mine-related building?). When he tried escaping he fell over and killed himself. To cover their prank that back-fired, they dumped his body and kept silent. Like most rumours this needs to be taken at more than face value but it does sound more reasonable than a botched alien abduction.



WHY ARE THEY HERE?

This cartoon was drawn by J.-M. Dutuit to illustrate his article about possible motivations for ET visitors in the French UFO journal *Phénomènes Spatiaux* (No. 36, June 1973). The speech balloons read: *Drôlement chouette l'indigène avec sa paille qui flambe dans la bouche!* (How very strange - a native with a burning straw in his mouth!) and *Immobilise-il bien! Que les clients du safari soient comblés! Bonnes photos, bons pourboires!* (Immobilise him! Let's make our safari customers happy! Good photos, good tips!)

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