

CIVILIAN SAUCER INTELLIGENCE OF NEW YORK

Public Meeting, May 23, 1958 - Steinway Hall, 113 West 57 Street

SPACE VISITORSSPEAKERS: Lester del Rey .. Jules B. St. Germain .. Lex Mebane .. Willy Ley

The meeting was opened by John Du Barry, President of Civilian Saucer Intelligence of New York, who welcomed those present and expressed the hope that both critics and friends of CSI would find the program interesting, since the four speakers represented very divergent points of view. He introduced the first speaker, Lester del Rey, as the author of more than 200 science fiction stories - as well as of books on other subjects, such as Rockets Through Space - and therefore well qualified to compare tales of alleged space visitors with their fictional counterparts.

In a picturesque, rapid-fire attack, Mr. del Rey announced himself to be a complete skeptic on the entire subject of flying saucers, characterized UFOlogy as "a mess," UFOlogists as "goofball artists," the contactists' claims as "the same old crud" to be found in old and hoary cults and in cheap editions of science fiction magazines; and described the contact claimants as "the biggest small group of credulous nincompoops, idiots, uneducated, illiterate damn fools that the world has ever seen - and I am sure that some of this audience is included."

Replying to the charge of "narrow-mindedness" always levelled against skeptics like himself, he asserted that open-mindedness is by no means a safe attitude for a scientist. For example, man would not now be on the point of entering space if we had not been skeptical toward the previously-accepted theories of what was out there. Every one of the theories about getting to the moon - by birds, by balloons, by soul-travel, by telepathy, and a thousand other methods - would have had to receive equal attention, a lifetime job even if only five minutes were given to each theory. "No scientist who lives in an age as complicated as ours, with as many problems, dares to be broad-minded. A broad-minded man is a damn fool. He has to be."

He pointed out that since the alleged spacemen cannot come from our own solar system, they must come from far distant space, from worlds billions upon billions of miles away. Such trips would require energy in incredible amounts; and to command such energy implies an extremely advanced technology. "No two cultures can brush together without some of the technology of one wearing off on the other. But so far, in ten years of so-called contact cases, there has been no technology brushed off from the aliens. Therefore I must conclude that they have no such technology. A highly technical culture with no technology? Not in my book!"

The same remarks apply to the tremendous sociology that the aliens brag about. They're slumming and they want to help the natives. But if they want to spread their fine sociology to us yet they don't know the elementary rudiments of how to get along with an alien race, then they don't actually have any sense of dynamic sociology at all. Of course if you say this to a contact claimant, he tells you that the aliens could spread the word around "but they aren't ready yet" - like a kid in school who looks at the teacher and says, "I know the answer but I won't tell ya."

What it boils down to is that if these aliens want to contact us, they can certainly do so. Or if they want to hide from us and work in secret, with their kind of technology they can do that too. Theoretically they have to be better than we are in order to get here. But they have to be stupider than we are in order to act the way they do after they've arrived. "So until we have some aliens who have something non-human about their behavior, I'll go along with the majority, while contact UFOlogy has its little minority and yips around."

Mr. Du Barry then introduced Jules St. Germain, the Long Island lawyer who has spent much time investigating contact cases, and has several times discussed them as a guest on The Party Line, the night radio program conducted over WOR by "Long John" Nebel. Mr. St. Germain defined his use of the term "contact case" as follows: "By this I mean an allegedly consummated communication between an alleged extraterrestrial and an inhabitant of earth. I do not refer to the so-called humanoid cases in which communication does not take place."

In evaluating these contact cases, he continued, we must bear in mind certain questions. 1) What is the reputation and character of the person who claims to have had a contact? 2) What motives might he have had for misrepresentation? 3) What is the basic nature of his story - does it have some degree of logic, however fantastic it may be? 4) Does he have any witnesses, and if so, what in turn is their reputation for honesty? 5) Is there any concrete, tangible evidence to support his story?

My personal experience has been chiefly with five of these contactees: Howard Menger, George Van Tassel, Daniel Fry, John Otto, and Reinhold Schmidt. My final impression of each of these men is unfavorable. Not that any of them make an unpleasant or disagreeable impression personally; on the contrary. They are usually described as "very honest and sincere," and they are actually pretty likable fellows. Van Tassel, for example, has a fine speaking voice and might seem honest and sincere if you didn't listen to what he was saying. Schmidt is a simple, honest-appearing gentleman; and so on. Unfortunately that sincere demeanor is built-in equipment for the high-grade con man too, so I couldn't put too much stock in it.

Howard Menger is one of the few contactees offering witnesses who claimed to back him up by saying that they had seen his space people also. Of course these witnesses were well selected and well trained - they had to follow Menger's instructions. They weren't allowed to carry flashlights or cameras, and they had to remain at a certain distance from the "spacemen" he let them look at. These spacemen, incidentally - these superior beings - acted like clowns: jumping up and down, running back and forth, leaping over fences, and generally making fools of themselves. Once Menger actually showed a "spacewoman" to some witnesses, indoors and with suitably mysterious circumstances; the light was dim, but not so dim that the lady wasn't recognized as a friend of the Menger family's. None of Menger's witnesses, however, were still supporting his story when I talked to them (except Mrs. Menger).

He has also offered photographs as material proofs of his experiences. There are gross errors in these pictures, and very suspicious features in the accounts he gives of how he took them. One picture is supposed to show a spaceman; he is just a dark silhouette in front of a luminous "saucer"; and what I want to know is, if the spacemen let themselves be photographed at all, why don't they do it so that they can be clearly seen?

To give the entire Menger story, even in condensed form, would take several evenings. He has told many other strange tales; for instance, he said that he has talked, on the spaceships, with deceased persons, and he said he had built a spaceship in his own kitchen but had to get rid of it because it would make a hole in his roof. Since I last saw him, some time ago, he claims to have been to the moon by saucer several times, and I understand he has brought back what he says are "moon potatoes" as evidence. He has also got some piano music on a phonograph record and it's being sold as music from Saturn; I suppose we'll get tunes from Uranus next.

George Van Tassel is the man from Giant Rock, California, who gets those amazing telepathic messages from all those space people - hundreds of them, a regular space hierarchy. I've had the pleasure of being on the radio with Mr. Van Tassel only once, and I understand that the pleasure was not mutual. He runs an "Annual Spacecraft Convention" at Giant Rock, and he runs the "College of Universal Wisdom" there and publishes its "Proceedings." You'll find some choice nonsense in this publication. For instance, he tells you that when the Bible talks about "angels" it ought to use the word "angles" instead; the translators all reversed the letters by mistake. It's strange that no Biblical scholar ever noticed this error before.

Van Tassel's chief claim to fame is his "rejuvenation machine." His space friends have given him all the information needed to build this miraculous apparatus, which he claims will restore to full health and vigor people with all kinds of ailments - such as elderly Californians and "tired, worn-out playboys." All Mr. Van Tassel needs is money, and he willingly accepts contributions toward the machine, or toward the College, which is set up along the lines of a religious institution. He claims he has already built a model rejuvenator, too small for humans but large enough to have restored to life and full health a lizard with a crushed head that was placed in it for the prescribed time. I believe there are even photographs - lizard before rejuvenation, lizard after rejuvenation - for the benefit of any skeptic.

Probably the cleverest of the contactees is Daniel Fry. His story is that in 1950 he was taken on board an object that had landed near White Sands, and was flown to New York and back in 32 minutes. He never saw the one occupant, named A-Lan, who spoke to him by a kind of remote control. Fry has never claimed any further personal contacts that I know of, and because he's got a technical background he avoids making statements that are scientifically nonsense to the degree that the other contactees do. His story contains fewer glaring boners and it's hard to trip him up. But he associates with the other contactees, and if he's as smart as he seems he must see through their stories himself.

John Otto rates himself as a UFO investigator because he tries to induce the saucers to communicate with earth by radio and light-beam, and he rates as a contactee because he claims to have succeeded. One of his methods is to be on a radio program, explain to the listeners - including any spacemen who might happen to be tuned in - that he is inviting a message from the saucers, and then say dramatically, "Come in, Outer Space!" The station is then silent for three minutes to give space a chance to reply. The experiment was tried in Chicago, in Los Angeles, and on WOR here in New York. None of the stations got any messages on their own tapes of the broadcast. But the next day in Chicago, Otto claimed that two girls had received peculiar noises on their wire recorder, which no one else had heard. Otto inserted these noises into the "three minutes of silence" of a tape of the Chicago broadcast. I heard this dubbed tape played on a later occasion, when Otto used it in a broadcast from a local station, Jamestown, New York, I believe it was. But he did NOT mention that the sounds the listeners were hearing had been recorded in Chicago; so far as the Jamestown audience knew, a "message from outer space" was coming in then and there on their local radio. My tape of the Jamestown program makes it perfectly clear that Otto was engaging in this kind of deception.

After the Los Angeles "Come in, Outer Space!" experiment, two people submitted tapes to Otto that carried sounds later identified as coded teletype signals. And here in New York, who do you suppose, of all people, was the only one to report getting signals on his tape recorder during the three minutes of silence? That's right - Howard Menger. Otto was much excited and impressed, and claimed that this fully verified Menger's story. What he did not know was that on the day after the broadcast Menger had his tape recorder with him in his paint shop for several hours before he played the tape for Otto.

Most of you know the story of Reinhold Schmidt, the latest addition to the contact claimants. Near Kearney, Nebraska, he said, he was on a landed spaceship with a crew that was much like human beings; when he told his story he was put into a mental institution, from which he was released two weeks later. That was in November 1957. Then on February 5, 1958, near Elm Creek, Nebraska, he had another meeting with the same ship and the same crew. This time they took him for a ride of 2 1/2 miles, and asked him to get the answers to three questions for them: What would be the reaction of Americans if a fleet of saucers landed for a friendly visit? How would earth people like it if spacemen were to begin testing H- and A-bombs? What else besides passengers was the airplane carrying that exploded over the Pacific? (This was the Pan American Stratocruiser Romance of the Skies that crashed November 8, 1957, between San Francisco and Honolulu. Search finally recovered 19 bodies and 14 cartons of wreckage, but the cause, if known, has not been released so far as we are aware.--Eds.)

I felt sympathetic with Schmidt at first; I still think he got a rough deal in Kearney. But then he made the fatal mistake of trying to embellish his story. He "remembered" a disintegration ray that he had seen demonstrated on the ship during his first contact. Although he then believed that the ship belonged to a foreign power, he hadn't mentioned this ray to the government investigators who questioned him. And those questions they asked during the second contact - why would these super-intelligences need to be told such things? Most of all, why would they think that Schmidt was in a position to obtain the answers?

This of course brings up another point. I will admit that if the UFOs do come from space, then it is logical to assume that by accident or by intention a contact might take place. But would the contactees be such relatively obscure people? I am not disparaging anyone because he is obscure; but certainly these spacemen could get their messages across more effectively if they contacted someone of high standing and well known - a scientist, for example, or a religious leader.

Then there are the numerous internal contradictions in the things the space people are reported as saying about their own way of life. Contradictions about language, about diet, about dozens of matters on which the spacemen ought to agree.

As for "proof," I have yet to see any satisfactory tangible proof from any of these contactees. Yet if their stories are true, it would seem very simple to arrange for an unmistakable piece of evidence. One honest-to-goodness photograph of another planet, showing their buildings or what goes on there, would be convincing. One simple electronic device. One object composed of substances unknown to us, or manufactured by a method beyond our technology. The fact that neither the contactees nor any of their alleged space friends have ever done this seems to be to be conclusive negative evidence against the stories. It all goes back to the question, On whom is the burden of proof? It is on the contact claimants. Their stock answer to this is, "I don't care whether you believe it or not. I'm not here to convince you." But how hard they try!

Finally, why do the contactees do it? I think money is a big inducement in some cases; they all write books, lecture, and so on. Then there is fame; people who have never been the center of attention find themselves listened to raptly by others. There may be a burning belief of some sort, occult or pseudo-religious - such an important belief that the contactee feels he is justified in promulgating it by these dubious means. Fourth, in some cases there may be some kind of sensory hallucination.

Finally, are these stories harmful? Not necessarily. But if someone near the edge of emotional stability goes over into neuroticism, delusions, or a psychotic state; or if a gullible believer is separated from hard-earned money that he needs for something else - then I think the contact stories are worse than merely extravagant nonsense.

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After expressing the thanks of all serious researchers to Mr. St. Germain for his efforts to expose these false claims, Mr. Du Barry introduced Lex Mebane of the Research Section of CSI, to talk about the second, and very different, type of "space visitor" that has been reported: the ones who do not communicate with human beings, that have no "message" and no human "interpreters," and that look and act "non-human."

The files of CSI, Mr. Mebane said, now contain about 100 reports of such creatures. The year 1950 was when "little men from saucers" were made notorious by Frank Scully's book, Behind the Flying Saucers. He said that saucers had crashed in the southwest on several occasions, that dead little chocolate-colored men from Venus had been found in them, and that study of the machines had led to many scientific discoveries, such as magnetic propulsion. In 1952 the yarn was exposed by Cahn of the San Francisco Chronicle, who showed that Silas Newton, the supposed oil man from

whom Scully got the story, was a con man in trouble with the law for swindles of various sorts.

Where does the story of non-human space visitors begin? We don't know, of course, not having gone far enough back. Our first contemporary report - since 1947, that is - was made by two California prospectors, Mace Garney and Buck Nelson (not the same as the current contactee from the Ozarks), who said that on August 19, 1949, they had seen a saucer crash-land in Death Valley and two little men jump out of it. True or not, this story just preceded the Scully-Newton stories, and may have partly inspired Scully's book.

So far as we know, the year 1951 had no little men stories. But the 1952 wave included many landing reports. On August 6, for example, James Allen of Lumberton, North Carolina, said that an egg-shaped luminous saucer or object had bumped into his chimney and landed in his yard; when he went outdoors there appeared to be a small man about 30 inches high standing beside it. "When I asked if it was hurt, it went away in a whiff." We know nothing about Mr. Allen's reliability, however.

Then on August 19, 1952, a very famous story broke, that of the Florida Scoutmaster, Sonny DesVergers. It is not generally known that DesVergers later embroidered his first account, claiming that he had climbed up on the saucer and had engaged in fisticuffs with three little men who had a very bad sweaty odor. The Air Force looked into his reputation, and reported that he had a record of telling yarns, and none of his associates believed for a moment that the fight with little men had taken place. There were other witnesses, Boy Scouts, to the actual landing of the object, before the alleged fight took place; the Scouts did not add to their story.

There are no photographs of "little men from space" (except a few known fakes); but there are several sketches, some of them drawn under the immediate direction of the witnesses. For the celebrated "Flatwoods Monster" of September 12, 1952, reported near Sutton, West Virginia, we have two such drawings, shown as Sketches 1 and 2.* The witnesses, Mrs. Kathleen May, a beauty-shop operator, a 17-year-old boy named Gene Lemon, and five younger boys, went to investigate a red-luminous object that had landed on a nearby hill, and saw a pear-shaped thing about 10 feet high that pulsated alternately from neon-red to dark. Then they noticed this "thing" in the sketches, which seemed to be floating under an oak tree, and which scared them so much that they all took to their heels. Sketch 1 was made by Ivan Sanderson, who investigated the case personally. Notice the blue-luminous eyes, the spherical head with something red around it. Sketch 2, drawn by Gray Barker, shows luminous eyes also, though of a different color, and the round head surrounded by something red. Those green claws were mentioned only by Mrs. May, and perhaps they are a spurious detail; but they are interesting in view of some of the later reports.

None of the witnesses could describe the bottom part of the creature distinctly; notice how it trails off in Sketch 1, and ends in dark "folds" in Sketch 2. Since all of them had the impression that the thing was floating, it might not have been more than five feet tall. There was also a noxious vapor or gas, which was worse near the ground; Gene Lemon fell down and put his face in it, and was made very sick.

Sketch 3 shows a little man with short legs, a large head, and big round eyes, drawn crudely on the side of a barn by two Frenchmen some time during October, 1954. The greatest sighting wave in history took place in Europe that autumn, concentrated apparently in France, and there were a large number of reports of landings with occupants. The new book by Aime Michel, "Flying Saucers and the Straight-Line Mystery," describes many of these cases in detail, and CSI has a number of them in its files; but probably no one knows about all of these reported cases in France.

* Mr. Mebane's talk was illustrated with lantern slides. The sketches he describes will be found on the last page of this summary.

The next sketch, No. 4, represents a celebrated Italian case of November 1, 1954. This is one of two little creatures encountered by Rosa Dainelli, a peasant woman of Bucine, in northern Italy not far from Florence. She was going to early Mass, carrying daisies and carnations for the church, and her black stockings, to put on when she neared the church. When she met the two little fellows she thought at first they were children. This sketch is taken from a drawing which appeared in "La Corriera del Dominica," an Italian magazine, and which showed the little men wearing these mustaches. But in another account, purporting to be Mrs. Dainelli's direct testimony, she said not that they had mustaches but that they were unshaven - that was how she knew they were not children, because they needed a shave. She was favorably impressed by them; they spoke to her in a liquid tone, which of course she couldn't understand. She argued with them in her best Italian, trying to explain that she needed these things. Finally she kept the stockings, I believe, and they kept the daisies but gave the carnations back. Then they entered this machine, which she had not noticed at first - a kind of cigar with a blister on one side - and it took off.

We have heard something about Mrs. Dainelli's reliability, from a report in "Le Courrier Interplanetaire" on an investigation into her background. She was given a good reputation by those who knew her; the town doctor and local health officer, for example, said that he had known her for years and she had never been in any kind of trouble. The family is practically illiterate; they have no books in the house, no radio, and Mrs. Dainelli had been to the movies only once in her life. She is a hard-working mother, with no previous record of inventing sensational experiences.

Sketch 6 shows a creature reported from Venezuela on November 28, 1954 - the phenomenon was turning up in South America. Two meat delivery men of Itari, near Caracas, on their way to work at 2 a.m., saw a luminous object in the road, like two deep dishes joined together, with two small windows. They got out of their truck, and as they approached the object a small "man" appeared carrying something in his hands. One of the men, Gustavo Gonzalez, picked him up, but was thrown to the ground, and the creature jumped about 15 feet away. Gonzalez - an expert witness because he dealt with haunches of meat - said that the creature was much heavier than would be expected from his size; and that he was "hard as a tile drainpipe" and covered with hair or fur. The creature then advanced upon him with raised arms, and Gonzalez noticed the claws. Terrified, he pulled out a knife, but it glanced off the creature's hard flesh. The little man then ran back to the "saucer," and jumped in through a window. Meanwhile Jose Poncez, the second man, had seen two other creatures, carrying earth in their hands; they too entered the object, and it took off. We know something about Gonzalez' reliability; for what it is worth, a Venezuelan newspaper the next day said he did not drink and had a good reputation.

In March 1955 a man named Robert Honicutt reported seeing in the headlights of his car, near Cincinnati, at 4 a.m., the three lop-sided creatures shown in Sketch 5. At first he thought that they were three crazy men kneeling beside the road and praying; then he saw that they were not human beings, not kneeling, and not praying. He got out of his car and looked at them for several minutes. When they saw him, the one that held that chain, or whatever it is, aloft put it down; Honicutt got the impression that he put it around his ankles. Then they just stood and looked at him. They were gray and ugly. Honicutt saw no saucer, and the "men" did not go away. Honicutt got back in his car and drove straight to the home of the chief of police, Robert Fritz, and got him out of bed. Fritz got a camera and a gun and drove to the spot, but this took about 45 minutes and there was nothing beside the road when he got there.

In July 1955 Mrs. Margaret Symmonds of Cincinnati, driving at 3 a.m. near Stockton, Georgia, saw four things in the road that she thought were hogs, until she got closer and saw, she said, the things shown in Sketch 7. One was digging in the road with a stick. One she passed so close she could have touched him. There was a long nose like a witch's, claws, and glowing red eyes - she thought it was the reflection of her headlights. She was too frightened to stop the car for a closer look.

Sketch 8 represents the creatures reported in what CSI considers the best-authenticated case on record, a unique case because of the number of people involved (eight adults, three children), because of the duration of the incident (the better part of a night), and because it was investigated in great detail by two CSI members, one of whom began his inquiry on the morning immediately after the sighting. It took place in a very small community named Kelly, near Hopkinsville, Kentucky, on the night of August 21-22, 1955. The creatures had metallic-looking "skin," huge luminous eyes, those big triangular ears, and possibly no mouth, although this is not certain. They were invulnerable to shots at close range, they "floated," and they were bothered by direct light. A saucer was reported to have landed some distance behind the farm about half an hour before the first creature was seen. The case was widely reported, usually in a distorted form. Although the family had a rather low status in the community, other facts about the case make it seem almost impossible that the story represented either a hoax or a hallucination.

Notice that among these little men cases there are similarities - the small size, the large head, the luminous eyes, in several cases claws. There are also many differences - the hairiness in the Venezuelan, the metallic "skin" at Kelly, and the gray rubbery appearance reported by Honicutt.

But there are much greater differences between these and the contact cases. For one thing, none of the "little men" spoke intelligibly to the human being(s) who met them. Most important is the behavior of the witnesses in the "little men" cases. None of them have made a profession out of their experiences, none of them have lectured or written books. None of them have ever shown a desire to repeat their experience - some say emphatically they wish it had never happened at all. In our opinion, these and other differences from the contact stories warrant considering the little men reports as a separate group from the others.

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Mr. Du Barry then introduced the last and most distinguished speaker, qualified as no one else is to give us an accurate idea of what space visitors, if and when they definitely appear, will look like. Mr. Willy Ley's first book on space travel, Trip Into Space, was published 29 years ago. Among his other specialties are biology and zoology. Two of his books have the sub-title "An Excursion into Romantic Zoology;" I would guess that this may describe Mr. Ley's feeling about reports to date of space visitors.

Mr. Ley began by stating his qualifications for discussing UFOs and his attitude toward the problem. "I have read most of the books written on flying saucers, though I may have skipped a few pages when I was annoyed by obvious nonsense. As for my attitude, I do not think people are liars because they have seen unexplained things in the sky; but I believe - using the word in its non-religious sense - that if UFOs exist at all, they exist only within our atmosphere and are natural phenomena." He pointed out that in preparation for the launching of the artificial satellites, which scientists knew would have to be tracked visually with instruments or by short-wave radio after their original batteries for broadcasting gave out, very intensive searches had been made in the vicinity of earth in order to make sure that there were no natural bodies already in nearby space that might be mistaken for the artificial satellites. These searches between the earth and the moon revealed no natural satellites, no artificial satellites, and no spaceships bound from or to Elsewhere. Although it is possible to put forward the hypothesis that such spaceships, as the products of an advanced technology, could be made invisible both to optical instruments and to radar, "personally, I like one hypothesis at a time."

Mr. Ley then related the origin of the ideas in the article which led to his talk for CSI (see "What Will Invaders from Space Look Like?" in the New York Herald Tribune, November 10, 1957, This Week magazine). About 20 years ago, he said, I

was talking with Sprague de Camp, another well-known science fiction author, and I told him about the earliest story I had been able to find in which people from elsewhere came to earth. (I am a member of the History of Science Society, and of course every member's pride and glory is to know earlier sources than the man who is speaking. In fact, all my life I have been in the habit of looking for earlier sources, so when I began to read American science fiction I tried to find older science fiction.) That was a German novel written in 1893, but never translated into English. Mr. de Camp asked what the visitors had looked like; I told him that in this story they were so human they could even cross-breed with human beings. Then we started to talk about more recent science fiction, and how the extraterrestrials looked. They were all kinds of impossible mixtures - they had 20 pairs of wings, or they were things like lobsters with a few extra appendages, and so on; anyway, they were creatures that zoologically made no sense. So the two of us said: But what would an extraterrestrial look like from a correct scientific point of view? Suppose someone asked us that question - what would we answer?

We quickly discovered that we could not pin down extraterrestrial life as a whole. On earth you have these enormous differences, between the centipede and the jellyfish, between the bird and the movie star. But what we could pin down, or thought we could, was the question of what intelligent extraterrestrial life would look like.

Some things were obvious in the first place. Intelligent life shows its intelligence by building things and making things, and it grows more intelligent in the process. Finally it comes across metals. Therefore if intelligent civilization has to use metals sooner or later, it cannot be an underwater civilization. Theoretically you might have an underwater civilization at the cultural and technological level of Neanderthal man, but not at the level of Cro-Magnon man, because Cro-Magnon already needed and used metals; and metals must be smelted, and smelting cannot be done under water.

Sprague de Camp and I debated this question for two days, and he wrote and published an article about it. Then eight years later I found out that a Dutch scientist had done the same thing 200 years before we had. He is well known in the history of science, and I am going to pronounce his name the way he did (I want to say that I do not have a respiratory infection, it's just that some Dutch names sound that way). His name was Christiaan Huygens, and in about 1700 he pointed out that the inhabitants of other planets must have eyes to see with. We can be a little more specific. Last night I was driven home by an Air Force Colonel, who expressed his surprise that human beings' eyes make use of such a small part of all the light waves in the spectrum. The reason is simple: our eyes use that part of the spectrum to which our atmosphere is transparent. We cannot see X-rays, for example (I am simplifying this explanation, of course), because during the long course of our evolution any X-rays that originated 200 miles or more away from us wouldn't even reach our eyes. Our eyes work with the rays that can pass through our atmosphere, and so would the eyes of creatures from other planets with different atmospheres.

Huygens also said that intelligent beings must have organs like hands, or with the functions of hands, to manipulate things. That rules out any tentacle-like organ such as the elephant's trunk, which is strong for pulling but not for pushing because it has no internal bracing. Obviously an intelligent being must be able to move around; therefore it must have legs of some kind. One of the things that Huygens did not mention, and that surprised both de Camp and me when we thought about it, was the fact that of all creatures on earth that have an internal skeleton, not one has more than four limbs. We do not know whether this is a sheer accident of terrestrial evolution, or whether there is a natural law in operation that we have not happened to discover yet.

We also concluded that an intelligent being on another planet could not be much smaller than a human being, because it would then not have enough body cells to sup-

port the brain cells, and there must be a certain number of brain cells because we have postulated that the creature is intelligent. Nor can it be much larger than we are, because then we run into something called the square-cube law, which would make the creature very clumsy - the larger it was, the clumsier it would be. In short, we ended up with a creature that I later described as somebody that needs glasses but doesn't wear any, and that in the dusk, seen from a distance, you would not at once be able to tell from a human being.

Of course this does not mean that it wouldn't show the results of minor accidents of evolution. A minor accident of evolution is whether my ears are large and floppy or whether I don't have any external ears at all, or whether I have hair all over me or none at all. An even smaller accident is a difference in skin coloring; a very small accident would be the presence or absence of a tail.

So as soon as somebody tells me he has had contact with a person looking exactly like us, I have all the biological reasons in the world for not believing it. How great the differences might be we cannot tell; but the living body has to fulfill certain functions and there must be a general resemblance.

In all this reasoning one main assumption has been made without being mentioned; namely, that the chemical constitution of non-terrestrial life is very much the same, or just the same, as ours. Are we justified in making such an assumption? In some cases ignorance may be a justification, and we are talking here somewhat from ignorance. Our bodies are built on the carbon atom, and the carbon atom has three chemical characteristics that are unique. First, it combines readily with almost any other element (the inert gases argon, neon, krypton, etc., being obvious exceptions). But secondly, it does not favor anything unduly among the other atoms or combinations of atoms. Third, carbon likes to hook itself into enormous chains, thereby producing molecules of the size and complexity necessary for what we call life. It has been suggested that there might be a life form in which the silicon atom replaced the carbon atom. This would lead to very interesting creatures. But in the first place, silicon is not as versatile as carbon, and in the second place, silicon favors oxygen in a very pronounced manner. That means that if you had a silicon-hydrogen compound, one single atom of oxygen that came wandering along would break it up, and you could not have the complex compounds needed for life processes. Thus we are quite sure that although silicon is quite similar to carbon, it is not similar enough to be a substitute for it, and if Silicon Man exists anywhere in the universe it is on a planet where there is no free oxygen, and he is about as intelligent and as mobile as the average not-too-bright oyster.

Being broad-minded (although I was cautioned before this speech not to be), I will make one possible exception. So far I have spoken of life at temperatures which human beings would find comfortable - or at least bearable - not killing. It has been suggested that at very low temperatures - the temperatures that we get on earth when we make liquid oxygen - another life chemistry might be possible. At present we do not know enough chemistry to say that this is possible. We also cannot say that it is impossible; so I have to leave this open.

To sum up: I believe that life exists elsewhere in the universe. I think it is statistically possible that somewhere there is intelligent life. On the other hand, I do not believe that the so-called UFOs can even exist outside of our atmosphere. I think they are natural phenomena. But if we ever do get a visit from space, I believe that the intelligent life forms that construct the ship will be built along the lines of our chemistry, and will obey the mechanical laws which have come into play in building the bodies of earth creatures.

Following a short intermission, written questions addressed to the speakers by members of the audience were read aloud by Ted Bloecher, Research Director of CSI, and answered from the platform. Some of the further interesting topics brought up in this discussion were as follows.

Mr. del Rey was asked whether there was a place in the universe for God, "or are you all atheists?" His reply was, "I happen to be an agnostic. But what has this to do with the subject under discussion? The Biblical verse, 'In my Father's house are many mansions,' covers the existence of life on other worlds, if you want to take it that way. But if you are religious and you use the contact stories to explain part of the Bible while rejecting the main tenet of the Bible, then I maintain you have no use for God either. Don't throw God around to destroy science, since if there is a God he created all science."

Mr. del Rey was also asked about dimensions other than the third. "Study up on mathematics and you'll find that there are any number of dimensions, but they are simply mathematical terms having no relation to reality as we perceive it."

Answering a question about the possibility of life at very high temperatures, Mr. Ley said, "A writer I know, who is a chemist, tried, for the purpose of writing a science fiction story, to picture life at very high temperatures. He had to give up - we don't know enough about chemistry. The story was published as 'Ice World.'"

Another question to Mr. Ley was, "Why couldn't Jupiterians be small and flat? Then the high gravity wouldn't bother them - they could roll around on the ground." Mr. Ley answered that on a planet of high gravity such as Jupiter has, yes, any life forms that exist (though this doesn't apply to the planet Jupiter to my knowledge) would in all probability be small, but not necessarily flat. (You don't have to be small and flat to roll around on the ground - my daughter proves that every day.) I have been talking, of course, about our efforts to picture alien intelligent life.

Mr. Mebane was asked whether there are any reports of completely non-human creatures allegedly coming from saucers. "We know of only one, from Garson, Ontario, in 1954. A miner named Ennio Sarza said that 13-foot insect-like creatures got out of a saucer and made telepathic demands on him. We learned later, by the grapevine, that these were improper demands - at any rate, he fainted. He was a known mental case. Incidentally, it's rather remarkable that this is the only report of beings that deviated entirely from the human shape."

In answer to the question, "Do the reports of little men sound to you any more acceptable than the contact stories about men just like us?" Mr. Ley answered, "No." Mr. del Rey also gave his reaction to the alleged appearance of non-human space beings, as follows: "I have seen absolutely no evidence whatsoever - and this includes photographs, of which only the negatives are important because you can do anything to prints - for anything which is of artificial or non-terrestrial origin that will stand up. There are things which cannot be explained, but I agree with Willy Ley completely - they are natural phenomena characteristic of this earth. I consider both types of story the product of fear, hysteria, or an attempt to defraud."

Mr. Ley was asked for his opinion of the famous Farmington, New Mexico, case (March 17, 1950), and said, "If that is the case I think it is, they were most likely flying spider webs." Mr. Bloecher, CSI Research Director, mentioned that the objects, seen in three separate "waves," went in many directions, had a definite plate-like form with a rim on the bottom, and "flipped" as they flew; and that one object was distinctly different from the others; it was larger and flew lower, and it was red.

Mr. Ley replied, "All I can say is, you cannot ask a man who hasn't seen something what he saw. I wasn't there, but I have heard this case referred to as flying spider webs, which I know do exist. I still think this was essentially a natural phenomenon. When I say 'essentially,' I mean that the the natural phenomenon I have

generally in mind as an explanation of UFOs (especially in two cases which I heard from bomber pilots) is an electrical phenomenon of high altitudes. This particular case, until I see evidence, I still put down as a natural phenomenon, but not as a high altitude phenomenon and not as an electrical phenomenon.

"My general belief is as follows: there is a natural phenomenon, observed very rarely anywhere on earth, but it seems to be a little less rare on the northern slopes of the Alps - what is known as ball lightning. I know of two other cases, reports from the ground, one from the Crimea and one from Denver, Colorado. We don't know yet how ball lightning originates, but it consists of a luminous ball, usually bluish, 6 to 8 inches in diameter, moving very slowly - at less than walking speed. It moves along electrical conductors, and can end in one of two ways: either it blows up, causing a small amount of damage (it would push a door in, for instance), or it collapses on itself, giving the optical effect of receding enormously fast. Some of the UFOs reported by pilots as seen in flight fit this description, and I have a tentative theory, which I have not yet had time to work out in detail, that these ball lightning phenomena in the atmosphere are probably caused by the presence of the airplane itself; if you have atmosphere with a high degree of electric tension, the presence of a metal object may cause this phenomenon. This is purely tentative, and I may be proved wrong tomorrow morning - but I want to be proved wrong."

Mr. St. Germain asked, "Do you seriously suggest this to explain all UFO sightings?" Mr. Ley replied, "It is an explanation for those described to me directly, not for those I have read about."

Mr. del Rey was asked, "What about the 'angel hair' reported as falling from UFOs on several occasions? Some of this has been preserved. Does this qualify as evidence?" Mr. del Rey answered, "This would be the best evidence I ever heard of to support Willy's statement about spider webs. Webs come in a number of forms, some of which look remarkably like angel hair. I have never seen angel hair."

Mr. St. Germain asked Mr. Ley to explain as natural phenomena some of the cases in the "flap" of November 1957. As background information, Mr. Bloecher mentioned that while there were several cases near Levelland, Texas, in which cars stalled while the UFO was nearby, other reports came from a number of other states also, and stalling of cars occurred in at least a dozen cases. Mr. Ley said that his only information about the Levelland case was that while he was in the office of the Chicago Sun-Times that day, the paper received information (after the paper was out) that the man had confessed that he had made up the report. Mr. Bloecher stated that not one man but a dozen or more people were involved at Levelland. Mr. del Rey then told of a case of contagious hysteria he had heard of, in which a farmer, in a very emotional state after the death of his mother, thought that he saw her ghost. He was working at the time with a threshing crew, and inside of a week at least 40 farmers living in the vicinity reported that they had seen ghosts also. By analogy, the later reports at Levelland might have been hysterical imitations of the first one.

Mr. Bloecher pointed out that the Deputy Sheriff on duty had received six or seven independent telephone calls within two or three hours, all of them coming in before any of the others had been published. Mr. del Rey denied that this would invalidate his theory of mass hysteria, since Mr. Bloecher was referring to communication at the official level, and news can get around a community unofficially at a terrific rate. "Furthermore, having worked on a newspaper myself, I will not accept a newspaper account as a fact." Asked whether he generally rejected what he read in the papers, he said, "Anything which the average reporter does not understand, or which carries an incomplete by-line, or which has an incomplete circumstantial back-up, or which has an incomplete follow-up - yes, I do reject it."

Further discussion of the validity of newspaper stories had to be ended for lack of time, and after extending the thanks of CSI and its guests to the speakers, Mr. Du Barry adjourned the meeting.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO THE SUMMARY

- Page 2, par. 4: Howard Menger has now divorced his original wife, Rose, and has married the girl whom he was passing off as a "spacewoman." His former wife no longer supports his stories. Par. 5: It should be mentioned that several of Menger's original photographs can be positively identified as photographs of paintings (copies of Adamski's pictures). Menger was a sign-painter before he became a professional contactee.
- Page 3, par. 2: On June 21, 1957, in the presence of three CSI officers, Fry attempted to pass off a "ferrite" non-metallic magnet as an extraterrestrial artifact.
- Page 5, par. 2: The prospectors' names should be "Mase Garney and Buck Fitzgerald."
Par. 4: Desvergers' little-man story is mentioned in Flying Saucer Review, Nov.-Dec. 1956, p. 32. How much (if any at all) of Desvergers' story can be accepted is still a moot point in the CSI Research Section; in Mebane's original presentation the confirmatory evidence of the Boy Scouts was not emphasized as it is in this summary, and Desvergers was characterized (perhaps unfairly) as "a Menger type of personality."
- Page 6, par. 1: The name of the magazine should be La Domenica del Corriere (as on the sketch); it is published in Milan. The flowers were dahlias (which the little men returned) and carnations (which they kept). The stockings were shared evenly between Mrs. Dainelli and the little men. Their craft was only about 6 feet high. (Weltraumbote, July-Aug. 1956.) Witness's reputation: Le Courier Interplanétaire, April 1955. Par. 3: The place name should be "Petare" (a suburb of Caracas) and the second witness was named "Ponce." Source: APRO Bulletin, Nov. 1954, and Caracas El Nacional, Nov. 29 and 30, 1954.
- Page 6, par. 4: The witness's name should be "Hunnicutt," as on the sketch. This case and that of Mrs. Symmonds have been described and illustrated in Leonard Stringfield's 1957 book, Inside Saucer Post ...3-0 Blue.
- Page 7, par. 5: "Gave our" should be "gave out." The satellite search considered by Mr. Ley to indicate the absence of UFOs was conducted by Clyde Tombaugh, who has recently reaffirmed his conviction that UFOs are real and are not natural phenomena.
- Page 8, par. 4: The de Camp article appeared in Astounding Science-Fiction, May and June, 1939.
- Page 9, par. 1: The last sentence should read something like this: "We ended up with a creature that - seen from a distance in the dusk by somebody who needs glasses but doesn't wear them - would not be immediately distinguishable from a human being."
- Page 11, par. 5: The case mentioned by Mr. Ley in which "the man confessed that he had made up the report" is obviously not the Levelland case but some other one - perhaps the Stokes sighting of November 4, which was later called a hoax by the Air Force, though certainly not with Stokes' agreement. The only confessed hoax that came to our attention at that time was that of Grapevine, Texas, on November 6 - a prank by newspaper reporters.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Members who were not able to attend may be interested to know that, owing to the publicity given it by Long John, this program drew a more than capacity audience; after the 275 seats available were filled, at least 200 others had to be disappointed.

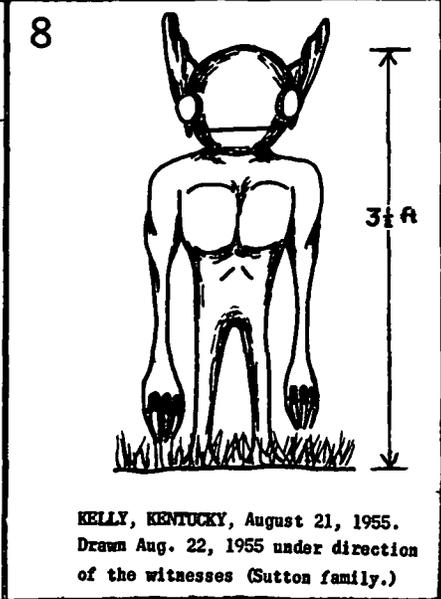
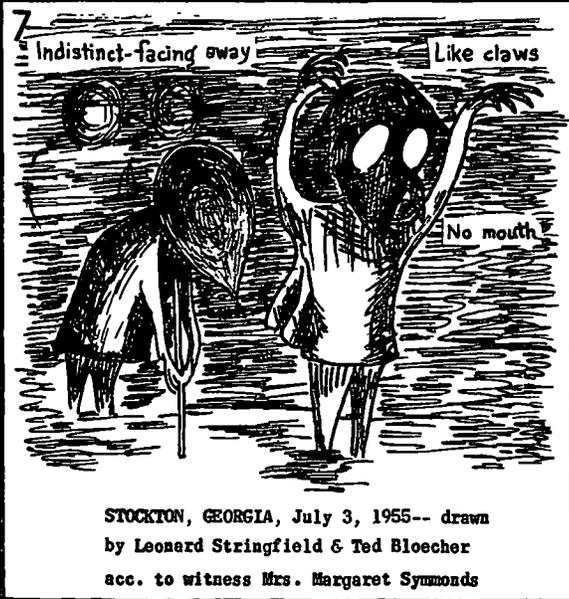
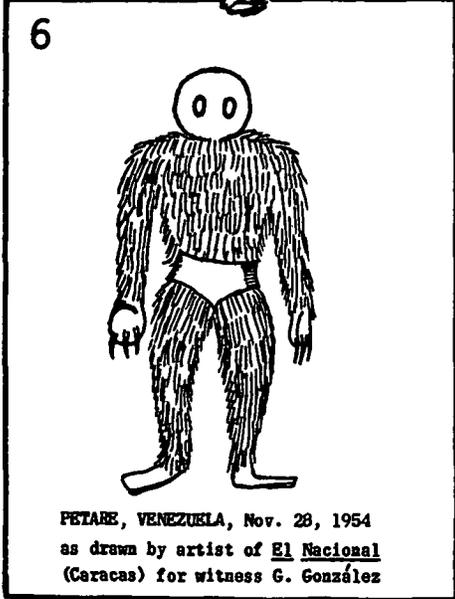
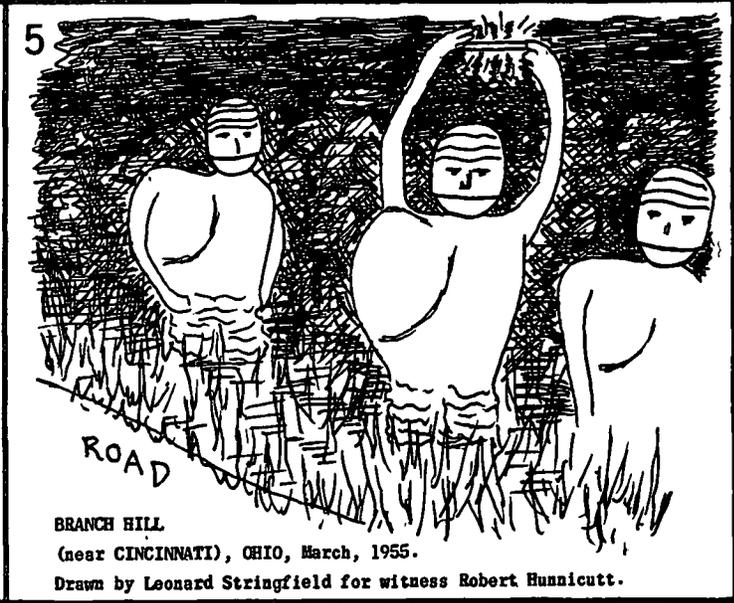
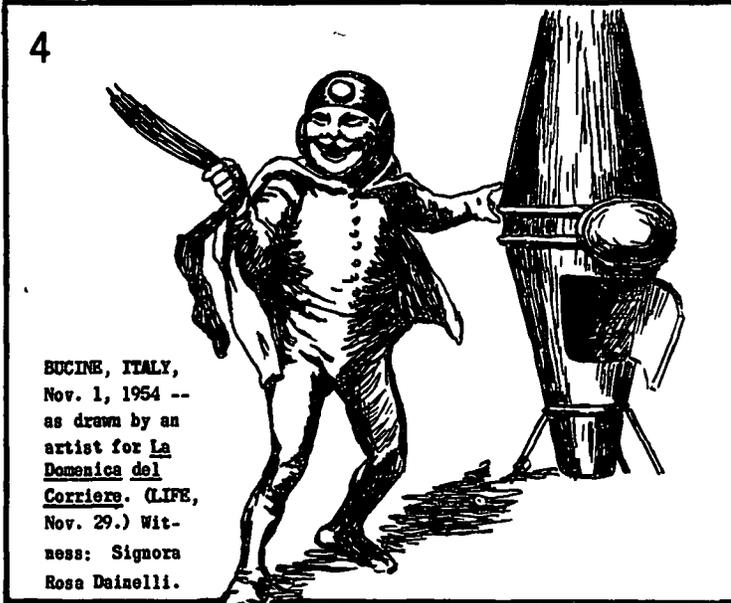
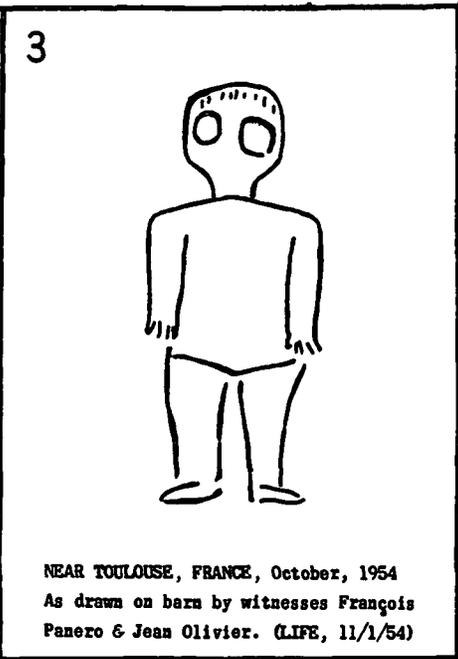
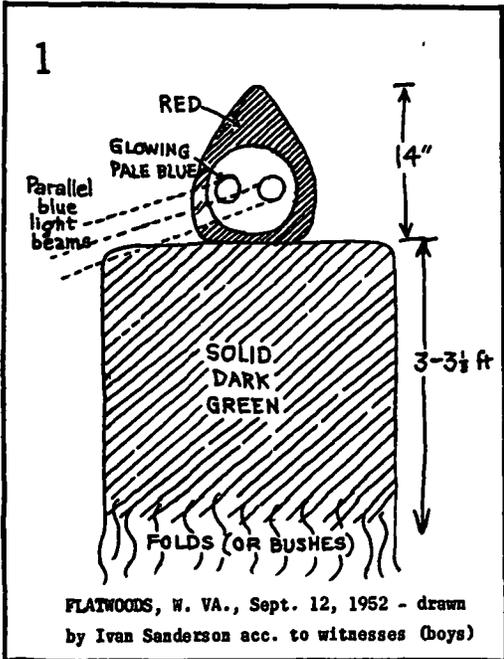
But although successful in one sense, the program failed to come up to our hopes in another; it did not focus as sharply as it might have done. The point that deserved more emphasis was the really striking agreement between Willy Ley's theoretical specifications for an intelligent extraterrestrial and what has actually been reported. With what seems to be the sole exception of the promptly-discredited LaSarza tale (which, moreover, belongs in the contact-communication category anyhow), all of these alleged witnesses have somehow managed to describe non-human beings of approximately human construction and size - which, according to Mr. Ley's conclusions, is exactly what they "ought" to describe if they had really seen intelligent extraterrestrial beings. Details of these beings, as reported by the witnesses, have varied, but the details that vary are precisely those singled out by Ley as "minor accidents of evolution." Some were earless, some had large floppy ears. Some "had hair all over them," others none at all. And the skin coloring was almost always described as being different from that of any human being - usually grey. The smallest accident of all, Mr. Ley mentioned, would be the presence or absence of a tail; no witness in these or any other "little men" reports has mentioned a tail. But all the creatures had two eyes, more or less on the front of a head borne on top of the body. Is it not a thought-provoking circumstance that independent and untutored "liars" all over the world should so consistently have varied their "lies" in exactly the ways that are scientifically permissible, while never falling into the error of "making up" details that are scientifically unacceptable? It seems so to us. But this point was not pressed at the time.

(We realize that this attitude is rejected by many serious UFOlogists, for understandable reasons. But in spite of all the stereotyped jokes about "little green men from Venus," can we go on ignoring forever the saucer-occupant reports that are not only different in almost every respect from the contact cases, but are also in such remarkable agreement with theoretical considerations?)

In one respect Willy Ley's lecture marked a welcome advance over his article in This Week: he now makes it clear that extraterrestrials are definitely not expected to look "just like us." That article inadvertently gave the impression that they might, and the believers in the Adamski-Menger type of story immediately began to hail Mr. Ley as a defender of their faith. His remarks should put the quietus on that.

Since the topic of the meeting was not UFOs as such, but reported UFO occupants, there was no serious discussion of Mr. Ley's current explanation for UFOs - ball lightning. However, we may point out that "ball lightning" is itself just as much of an inexplicable, and hence generally scoffed-at, phenomenon as are flying saucers. For a delectable example, see W. J. Humphreys, Proc. Am. Philos. Soc. 76 (1936), p. 613, in which Dr. Humphreys, exactly like the Air Force (or Mr. Ley) in our own day, proudly demonstrates that neither quantity nor quality of evidence can tarnish his skepticism. He examined no less than 280 first-hand ball-lightning observations (a few of which he deigns to quote), but triumphantly emerged victorious over every one. Most of them were "optical after-images"; others were "St. Elmo's fire" or "luminous owls."

For a recent technical article showing all proposed electrical theories of ball lightning to be scientifically invalid, see Zeitschrift fur Angewandte Physik, 5 (1953), p. 441. (It seems possible that the so-called "ball lightning" may actually belong to the UFO-animal category; it is frequently reported to move in a purposeful way.)



"LITTLE MEN"