

The Cowflop Quarterly

REPORTING ON UFOLOGICAL FRAUDS AND FANTASIES

Vol. 1, No. 1

Friday, May 5, 1995

Free

By Robert G. Todd

EXPLANATION:

What follows are those portions of my letter to the editor of the International UFO Reporter (IUR) which, for one reason or another, the editor did not consider worthy of publication in that august journal. Without debating the merits of Jerome Clark's decision, I believe it only fair to offer the following so that the full story is known, and the reader can decide for himself.

Perhaps the reason for the misrepresentations, mischaracterizations, and outright lies foisted on the public by certain Roswell "investigators" has finally been revealed in Randle's response to my letter, published in IUR. Randle "explained" his unwillingness to circulate investigative materials to other researchers because his interest was in protecting the copyright of those materials. With that "explanation," Randle revealed that the commercial aspects of Roswell are far more important to CUFOS' "investigators" than the search for the truth. The commercialization of Roswell also helps explain why certain facts have been withheld. No market exists for explained mysteries. There are no book deals, no movie deals, not even for fictionalized accounts of mysteries that never were. The Roswell incident started because of human error, but it survives because of human greed.

ROSWELL: THE RUSE THAT LAID THE GOLDEN EGG

This is in reference to the article, "The Air Force report on Roswell: An absence of evidence," by Mark Rodeghier and Mark Chesney, which appeared in the September/October 1994 edition of *IUR*.

The authors accept what CUFOS' Roswell "investigators" (Schmitt and Randle) refer to as the "conventional wisdom." Of the many flaws in the "conventional wisdom," perhaps none is more important to the case than the false premise upon which the entire Roswell myth is based, and on which the myth continues to flourish. Rodeghier and Chesney make use of this false premise as the foundation for some of their criticisms of the Air Force report.

The authors quote from the July 9, 1947, edition of the *Roswell Daily Record*, which described the debris found by W.W. Brazel, based on statements Brazel made to the paper's reporters during an interview the previous day. According to the paper, Brazel "had previously found two weather balloons on the ranch, but that what he found this time did not in any way resemble either of these." Rodeghier and Chesney observe that, "This statement has never been able to square with the original Air Force explanation that a weather balloon was the source of the Roswell debris. It also remains difficult to reconcile with the new balloon explanation, because Flight 4 did not consist of any unusual balloon material . . ."

The crashed-saucer promoters have not been able to reconcile Brazel's statement with the Air Force statements because the investigators reporting on Roswell either did not know, or deliberately did not report, the fact that radar targets, such as the one(s) recovered in the Roswell incident, were *not* in widespread use at the time of the Roswell incident, and with only a few exceptions, were virtually unknown to Air Force personnel, other than those personnel engaged in weather or research and development activities. These particular targets, parts of one or more of which appear in the Roswell photographs, were designed for use with a specific radar, the SCR-584, which was a gun-laying radar for anti-aircraft artillery. The artillery men operating the guns needed accurate wind information to adjust the weapons to compensate for winds aloft. This was the primary use of these radar targets. By 1947, these targets were *not* used for routine meteorological observations. Instead, the weather services relied on two other methods for determining winds aloft, the "pibal" (Pilot Balloon) method, which required visually tracking a pilot balloon, and the Radio Direction Finding (RDF) method, which used a small radio transmitter to track the progress of the balloons.

This information was furnished to the press back in July of 1947, in response to queries made in connection with the Roswell incident. Although not widely reported by the crashed-saucer promoters, an Associated Press (AP) wire,

dated July 8, 1947, quoted Brigadier General Donald Yates, chief of the Air Weather Service, as saying that only a very few of the targets "are used daily, at points where some specific project requires highly accurate wind information from extreme altitudes." My research into the subject more than forty years after the fact confirmed General Yates' statements to the press. These targets were *not* in widespread use at the time of the Roswell incident, and it is doubtful that *any* of the Roswell witnesses, including Major Marcel and W.W. Brazel, had ever seen one before. Brazel may have found weather balloons on the ranch on two previous occasions, but neither of these balloons carried the unusual radar targets. As a result, Brazel's statement that what he found this time in no way resembled a weather balloon is perfectly consistent with the Air Force's statement. A radar target is not a weather balloon, a distinction the crashed-saucer promoters consistently fail to make.

Relying on allegations made by certain Roswell witnesses, the crashed-saucer promoters conclude that Air Force personnel at Fort Worth concealed the "real" Roswell debris and substituted a beat-up radar target in its stead. But since these targets were not used for routine meteorological observations, and were not supplied to the weather squadrons on a routine basis, where did the Fort Worth personnel find one to substitute for the wreckage from the alien spaceship, which, coincidentally, bore a remarkable resemblance to the radar targets? The targets were not available either at Fort Worth Army Air Field or Roswell Army Air Field. New York University (NYU) Balloon Group personnel, operating out of Alamogordo Army Air Field, were using these targets, but the personnel at Fort Worth had no knowledge of their work. So where did they dig up some of the targets? The obvious answer is that they didn't. The debris depicted in the Roswell photographs is the *real* debris W.W. Brazel recovered, and the very same debris Major Marcel brought to Roswell Army Air Field, and subsequently flew to Fort Worth.

But the Roswell photographs reveal other evidence. Professor Charles B. Moore, who headed the NYU balloon team in New Mexico in June-July 1947, examined the photographs and reached several relevant conclusions. First, he recognized the balloon material as having come from sounding balloons. The radar targets were "Pilot Balloon Targets" and one might reasonably expect them to be flown on pilot balloons. Flying them on clusters of sounding balloons was unorthodox, and as far as Professor Moore was aware, only his balloon group was making these unorthodox flights in New Mexico at the time.

In addition, whereas the pilot balloons generally in use at that time were all pigmented to aid visual tracking, the sounding balloons were unpigmented to eliminate as many impurities from the neoprene as possible, in order to attain the highest altitudes possible. The unpigmented sounding balloons deteriorated after exposure to sunlight, and discolored in the

process, while the pilot balloons tended to retain their pigmented colors, even after exposure to the sun. But, contrary to the erroneous information contained in the statement the Air Force asked Professor Moore to sign, the balloon material did not deteriorate to the point where it would "almost look like dark gray or black flakes or ashes after exposure to the sun **for only a few days** [emphasis added]." In fact, it took a few **months** for the balloon material to deteriorate to the point where it resembled charred paper. It became brittle and would flake easily, and could easily be mistaken for something that had been in a fire, although it would not be precise to call it ash. Professor Moore furnished me with material from a sounding balloon he exposed to New Mexico sunlight for **four months** which displayed these characteristics.

After examining the Roswell photographs, Professor Moore concluded that the depth of darkening of the balloon material is consistent with an early June launch. This, in turn, is consistent with the newspaper accounts, apparently based on Major Marcel's statements to the press at the time, that Brazel had discovered the debris on June 14th.

There is no disputing the **fact** that the balloon material shown in the Roswell photographs had been exposed to sunlight for several weeks. Ordinary sounding balloons are considered expendable equipment. Nobody goes searching for them once they're launched. The balloons are not recovered and are not -- indeed cannot be -- used over again. Once exposed to sunlight, they start to deteriorate. **Nobody** saves used balloon material. So, how did the personnel at Fort Worth know of Professor Moore's unorthodox balloon flights, and where did they find sounding balloon material that had been exposed to the sun for several weeks, so that it could be substituted for the "real" Roswell debris? Again, the answer is simple. No substitution was made. The Roswell photographs show the **real** Roswell debris, and the photographs show material from one or more radar targets, and material from one or more sounding balloons that had been exposed to sunlight for several weeks.

Neither the radar targets nor used balloon material was readily available to the personnel at Fort Worth Army Air Field, certainly not on such short notice. So few Air Force personnel were familiar with the appearance of radar targets that it is ridiculous to suggest that somebody actually recommended substituting radar targets for the "real" Roswell debris. Even the Roswell witnesses who insist they handled the **real** debris say the debris depicted in the photographs resembles the debris they saw back in 1947, although they say it is not the same, which isn't terribly surprising after the passage of nearly five decades.

Furthermore, the Air Force did not lie when they stated that what the rancher recovered was a weather balloon, General DuBose's statements notwithstanding. To the extent that the balloons were being used to carry scientific instruments being developed to detect compressional waves from Soviet atomic explosions, and the radar targets were being used to track the position of the balloons -- neither piece of equipment being used for **weather** purposes -- the statement that the debris was from a weather balloon was a little misleading as to the purpose to which it was being put, but it was the truth.

Another flaw in Rodeghier and Chesney's article is their attempt to call into question the recollections of Project Mogul personnel who recall the tape with the pinkish-purplish symbols. This maneuver seems to be directed primarily at Professor Moore, who drew the symbols at my request, and showed how the tape was applied to the targets. One of Professor Moore's drawings appears in the Air Force report.

Rodeghier and Chesney say, "Even though Project Mogul documentation exists, there is no paper or physical evidence to prove conclusively that the purplish-pink tape, for example, was used in constructing the balloon trains." The tape was not used to construct the balloon trains, as Rodeghier and Chesney put it. The tape was **used by the manufacturer of the radar targets** as reinforcement on the targets that were flown on the balloon trains. That aside, unlike the witnesses to the "alien writing," whose testimony Rodeghier and Chesney eagerly accept, even though the witnesses saw the writing on only one occasion, Professor Moore, for example, used the

targets on between 50 and 100 balloon flights made between June 1947 and 1952. Since multiple targets were used, we could be talking about several hundred targets with the peculiar tape, which caught Professor Moore's attention upon his every use of the targets. Yet, in their attempt to discredit the Mogul explanation, Rodeghier and Chesney reject as many as several hundred firsthand observations of the tape with the pinkish-purplish symbols in favor of the one-time observations of the "alien writing."

It should be noted that personnel who worked with the radar targets, but who had no connection with Project Mogul, also recall the peculiar tape with the pinkish-purplish symbols.

The photographs are the best, most reliable evidence for what W.W. Brazel found on the Foster Ranch, and the newspaper accounts furnish the best, most reliable account of the sequence of events that occurred back in July of 1947. The crashed-saucer promoters tend to dismiss the newspaper accounts because they dispute the "alien spaceship" explanation. What the public has not been told is that much of the information in those newspaper stories was furnished by Major Marcel himself. Instead, the crashed-saucer promoters actively promote the idea that General Ramey told Marcel to keep his mouth shut and not talk to the press. This may indeed be true, but if it is, then Marcel spoke to the press in Roswell, **before** the official cover-up was instituted.

According to the newspaper accounts, Marcel said Brazel had found the debris three weeks previously and didn't think anything about it until he went into Corona on Saturday night, July 5, where he first heard mention of the "'silver' flying disks." He probably also heard about the \$3000 reward being offered for a genuine flying saucer. We reasonably can assume Brazel, having recently found the silvery debris on the remote ranch, put two and two together and concluded that the debris he found must have come from one of the silvery discs. Although he had found weather balloons on the ranch before, neither included the unusual radar targets, which in no way resemble a weather balloon. For Brazel, the flying disc explanation won by default.

We may reasonably suppose from these newspaper accounts that Brazel headed for Roswell and contacted the sheriff, in the hope of claiming the \$3000 reward. It seems reasonable that Brazel presented his story to the sheriff in a flying disc context, and that the sheriff turned around and presented Brazel's story to Roswell Army Air Field and Major Marcel in a flying disc context. Since Major Marcel had never seen a radar target before, and since the targets in no way resemble a weather balloon, he, too, was not able to identify the debris, and, once again, the flying disc explanation won by default. The meaningless, pinkish-purplish symbols on the reinforcing tape only added to the mystery.

We may reasonably conclude that, upon his return to Roswell Army Air Field, Marcel showed the debris to Colonel Blanchard and his staff, none of whom had ever seen a radar target before.

The flying disc explanation won by default because nobody who examined the debris in Roswell had ever seen one of the unusual radar targets before. Because the debris had been located on a remote section of a remote ranch, the people involved reasonably concluded that the debris hadn't walked there on its own, and that, whatever it was, it had fallen from the sky. Contributing to the erroneous identification were the widespread radio and newspaper reports of flying saucer sightings. If an air of hysteria did not exist, certainly an air of excitement and expectation did.

There is no mystery as to why the crashed-saucer promoters ignore Marcel's earlier statements in favor of his statements made thirty-plus years after the event occurred. Certainly this is proof that "the best Roswell investigations," as Rodeghier and Chesney put it, do **not** "use all the available evidence," as they claim.

There are numerous other points for which the crashed-saucer promoters pick and choose the evidence they want the public, Mr. Schiff, and GAO to see. This selective use of information has painted a picture of the Roswell incident that bears little resemblance to reality.
