

The Testimony of Jesse Marcel, Jr.

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Introduction

This Special Edition of the *Ohio UFO Notebook* contains an important paper by Robert J. Durant which initially appeared in the January, February, and March 1998 issues of the *MUFON UFO Journal*. We are making the paper available in one document to enhance its usefulness as a research resource for those interested in the reported crash of an alien spacecraft near Roswell, New Mexico in 1947.

For the subscribers of the *Ohio UFO Notebook*, given that this article was published elsewhere, please be advised that it shall be counted as $\frac{1}{2}$ of a subscription issue. Chances are many of you are subscribers to the *MUFON UFO Journal* and, as such, may not need this paper as a stand-alone document. Issue #17 will be the other half of the "subscription issue."

The Testimony of Jesse Marcel, Jr.

Synopsis

The interrogation under hypnosis of Dr. Jesse Marcel, Jr. is examined. It is demonstrated that, contrary to the claims of Mr. Kent Jeffrey, the material Marcel handled was not associated with a weather balloon radar target, and in particular that it was not the radar target shown to the press by General Ramey in July 1947.

Introduction

Among the many reasons Kent Jeffrey gives for concluding that the Roswell Event was caused by nothing more than the debris from a Project Mogul balloon array is the testimony of Jesse Marcel, Jr.

In July 1947 Marcel and his mother were awakened by his father, Major Jesse Marcel, who had just returned from the Foster Ranch. The Major was excited, and proceeded to show his wife and son a collection of the material he had gathered at the ranch. Over the years Dr. Marcel has spoken in many forums about what he saw on that fateful night, and his account has remained remarkably stable.

In January of 1997 Mr. Jeffrey arranged for an interrogation under hypnosis by Dr. Neil Hibler, a specialist in the use of hypnosis for information retrieval through memory enhancement. Hibler's credentials are impressive, and include extensive work for law enforcement agencies and federal intelligence services. An artist was also present to record in visual form what Dr. Marcel recalled.

The interrogation was comprised of three sessions, each lasting a little more than two hours. A video tape was made of the entire procedure.

I was among a handful of ufologists to whom Mr. Jeffrey sent copies of the video tapes of the interrogation. Assuming that the tapes were mine to keep, I viewed them in four or five sessions, but did not make audio or video copies. Nor did I take notes during the viewing.

However, I watched the proceedings with very keen attention, and recall vividly those points where Dr. Marcel touched on specific topics that I thought were of vital importance. My concern was to determine, if possible, what he was describing. Alternatively, I wanted to gather enough detail from his testimony to tell what he was *not* describing. During this viewing I was fully aware that the received opinion in some quarters, including the U.S. Air Force, was that he had handled the remains of a balloon-

borne radar target, and I was using that as a specific point of comparison with his testimony.

Almost immediately after I viewed the tapes, I began composing notes and a preliminary analysis for the purpose of sharing my thoughts with Mr. Jeffrey and the other "insiders." Were it not for that, I could not write the comments that follow, because several days later I received a telephone call from Mr. Jeffrey abruptly requesting that I return the tapes at my earliest possible convenience. I complied, and I also complied with his previous request that the tapes not be copied or reproduced in any way. Within hours of his call, I fedexed the tapes to Mr. Jeffrey.

Now Mr. Jeffrey tells me he does not intend to release the video tapes or transcripts, even to other researchers, but that he is planning to use the tapes on a network television program about Roswell! Thus the scholarly community is deprived of the chance to examine this very valuable document, just as the readers of the *MUFON Journal* were deprived of the opportunity to examine what Dr. Marcel said during his six hours of interrogation. Although he devoted a great deal of space to the interrogation, Mr. Jeffrey does not offer the reader a single quotation from the testimony. The reader is left with nothing but Mr. Jeffrey's personal editorial interpretation of the meaning of the testimony that took over six hours to elicit.

Kent Jeffrey's Thesis

Here is what Mr. Jeffrey had to say concerning Dr. Marcel and his testimony:

"Potentially, the key to the whole Roswell UFO case lies in Jesse Marcel, Jr.'s memory. He saw the debris. Either it was extraterrestrial or it was not."

"There were no descriptions or memories of any kind of exotic debris or wreckage." And, immediately following with the editorial interpretation, "There is a very good reason for that -- there simply was no such exotic debris or wreckage for Jesse to remember. If there had been, in all probability, he would have remembered it consciously. Nonetheless, because of the extreme importance of the debris to the Roswell case, the effort was worth a try -- just in case."

"The sessions made it absolutely clear that the material recovered from the Foster ranch northwest of Roswell in 1947 was anything but unique or exotic. As it turned out, it was extremely mundane."

"In addition to being mundane, the material recovered from the Foster ranch is definitely reconcilable with the debris from an ML-307 radar reflector -- the length and cross-sectional size of the beams or sticks, the pieces of foil, and the plastic-like material (now thought to be part of one of the plastic ballast cases that contained sand.) Even the color of the symbols that Jesse, Jr. remembers is almost identical to the color of the

flower patterns on the balsa stick that Irving Newton remembers seeing in Ramey's office."

And finally, commenting on the journalist's photographs of debris on General Ramey's office floor, *"There is absolutely no question that this is the debris from an ML-307 radar reflector. If this is the same debris that was recovered from the Foster ranch, then the Roswell case is closed, period. It's over, end of subject."*

Mr. Jeffrey confuses two different topics. His invocation of the terms "exotic" and "unique" and his antonymous "mundane" are apparently meant to make the point that if the Roswell debris were of extraterrestrial origin, that fact would immediately be obvious upon inspection. This is a very quick answer to a question that has vexed a great many minds over many decades. Namely, how can one establish the extraterrestrial provenance of an object? Although readers of this journal will pose the question in terms of alleged "implants" or items said to have been dropped by passing UFOs, the issue is a very broad one and includes the ongoing debate about life-forms in rocks thought by some scientists to have originated on Mars. The search for radio signals from extraterrestrial civilizations has been underway since 1959. A central issue of SETI that has never been resolved is how to determine in rigorous terms if a signal is in fact extraterrestrial. In sum, Mr. Jeffrey may have an easy answer, but a multitude of thoughtful scholars and scientists would demur.

Elsewhere in his paper, Mr. Jeffrey equates complexity with extraterrestrial origin, citing modern jet airliners and their humble predecessor, the Sopwith Camel. He might have added that a jetliner operated by the airline that employs him recently lost part of a flap, a very simple part of the very complex airplane that lost it. Puzzled bystanders who found the flap had to wait several days before it was identified by experts.

To the best of my knowledge, the debris brought home by Major Marcel has never been thought to be the entirety of an interplanetary craft. Rather, if in fact it was extraterrestrial, it may have been a covering, or something jettisoned or fallen by mishap like the jetliner's flap. There is no reason to suppose that he even implied that what he had found was a space craft, as distinguished from miscellaneous and structurally simple detritus "not of this earth." If we try to insist that both the Major and his son were talking about a craft, we are putting words in their mouths. Worse, we are creating a straw man to tear apart, and making logical analysis of this profound puzzle even more difficult. In any event, the point made by Mr. Jeffrey is beyond the scope of my comments, and I will freely admit, beyond my ability to plumb.

The second topic is much easier to deal with. Despite Mr. Jeffrey's urgings, it is entirely separate from the problem of defining "exotic" and "mundane" and so on. Specifically, it is the question, "Does Dr. Marcel's testimony under the hypnotic interrogation (or in any other venue) lead to the conclusion that the material he inspected in his kitchen was the remains of a balloon-borne radar reflector target?"

To paraphrase Mr. Jeffrey, if Dr. Marcel's testimony shows that he handled and inspected the remains of a radar reflector, then the Roswell case is closed, period.

But I don't agree that the testimony shows anything of the sort. Upon careful consideration of what Dr. Marcel had to say, and comparison of that very carefully elicited six hours of testimony with what is known about the ML-307 target, one reaches quite the opposite conclusion.

The Interrogation

Dr. Hibler began with a very informative discussion of hypnosis, with particular emphasis on its use in enhancement of memory. He explained that about 20% of the population is easily hypnotizable, with the rest lying in a spectrum of capacity for hypnosis. Hypnosis is not a means of ascertaining absolute truth, but has been shown to be very useful in obtaining certain types of details hidden in the memory. Examples were given, such as the recollection of license plate numbers.

Several induction techniques were attempted, but with little apparent success. It appeared to me that Dr. Marcel was never in a trance, in my layman's understanding of that term. Marcel was outwardly calm, friendly and cooperative, but seemed tense inwardly and uneasy about the process. At one point Dr. Hibler said that Dr. Marcel was very intelligent and alert to everything going on in the room, and that he was an extremely self-reliant type of personality. I gathered that Dr. Hibler made this comment as an objective assessment of Dr. Marcel, but also by way of venting in a subtle way his frustration at his inability to induce a trance.

By the end of the third and final session, Dr. Marcel had become much more relaxed and had his eyes closed. Whether he was finally in a hypnotic trance, I can't say. His speech patterns did not change from those in the earlier sessions, but he did seem at last to be detaching from the immediate environment and reaching far into the depths of his memory.

After the first attempts at inducing a trance, Dr. Hibler began asking a series of questions. The bulk of the questioning was done by the hypnotist. During the later sessions, questions were asked by Mr. Jeffrey, and then by the artist. The questioning took place in a pattern that proceeded from vague queries posed in very general language at the outset, and then became quite specific toward the end of the last session. Nearly every relevant topic was raised at least several times. Questioning was interspersed with further attempts at hypnosis and little "pep talks" designed to relax the still tense Dr. Marcel.

The artist was present during all three sessions. She did not intrude into the conversations until late in the third session. At that point it came as a shock to discover that she had been drawing throughout the sessions, and when Dr. Marcel was shown what

she had drawn simply from listening to him talk, he was as amazed as I was. Dr. Marcel pronounced her work nearly perfect. At his suggestion she made a few minor changes to the drawings.

The patience and skill of the hypnotist, and the skill of the artist remain as highlights of the interrogation video. Mr. Jeffrey did an excellent job of briefing the hypnotist on the outlines of the issue at hand, allowing Dr. Hibler to handle very competently a line of questioning much more complicated than asking someone to recall a license plate.

At the beginning, Dr. Marcel could not recall how he or his father or his mother were dressed, who woke him, or what was in his father's car when he followed him outside after the "debris" had been examined in the kitchen. During the final session, Dr. Marcel recalled with ease that his father was in uniform, that his mother was dressed in a bathrobe with a flowered pattern, that he was wearing a plaid bathrobe and slippers, and that he had been awakened by his father. He even remembered some of the items in his bedroom.

The Kitchen Floor

When Dr. Marcel appeared in the kitchen, he found his mother and his father. A collection of strange material had been spread on the kitchen floor. This material was comprised of three distinct types, and only three, which by common consent we have come to designate as the "foil," the "I beam" and the "bakelite." This comprised the entirety of the material seen by Dr. Marcel.

Unlike his mother, who did not handle any of the material with special care, Dr. Marcel spent what he estimates as 15 to 20 minutes handling and looking at it. At least some of this time was devoted to an attempt by the family to arrange the segments of "foil" as one would coordinate the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. The nature of the size and shape of the "foil" was such that it suggested a common and complete integral form prior to its reduction to the many disparate parts arranged on the floor. There was no success in this attempt, either in the grand scheme or in connecting the edges of even two pieces. Dr. Marcel was not asked, nor did he volunteer, how many pieces of "foil" there were, but the implication from this and other testimony is that there were many.

Dr. Marcel paid particular attention to the single "I beam," handling and observing it with great care, and viewing it from various perspectives with the kitchen light behind his shoulder. It was during this inspection that he observed the "hieroglyphics," and brought them to the attention of his parents.

One aspect of the story that Dr. Marcel emphasized by repetition during various phases of the sessions is that his father was plainly very excited. Although he was quizzed on this topic, Dr. Marcel was unable to offer a hint about the cause of his excitement. His mother seems to have been emotionally neutral and ambivalent, as was

the young Marcel. On several occasions during the inspection and handling of the debris, Major Marcel asked his son to look for electronic parts such as resistors, capacitors and tubes. None were found. Dr. Marcel does not know why his father was eager to find such components, or why he apparently expected them to be in the collection of debris.

After the inspection, the material was gathered from the floor and replaced in the cardboard box. A very small amount, consisting of little shreds, was left on the kitchen floor. His mother swept the floor, and using a broom moved these tiny pieces out of the kitchen through the door into the back yard. Dr. Marcel believes it probable, but not certain, that the shreds were composed of the "foil" material.

Dr. Marcel's father carried the box out of the house to his car, with the boy following. The box was placed in the back seat. There was more material on the seat that appeared to be the same as that which he had examined in the kitchen, but Dr. Marcel did not get a good look at it and can't recall either the exact nature or quantity of that material.

His father drove off to the air base, and Dr. Marcel went back to sleep. He remembers his activity of the next morning, which consisted of bicycle riding with two close friends. He did not mention to them his experience of the previous night, and says it did not preoccupy him.

It is most unfortunate that Major Marcel did not explain the reason for his excitement. It is consistent with what he told researchers 31 years later, when he was still in awe of what he had found on the Foster Ranch and said he thought it was "not of this world." Whether that specific conclusion was in his mind when he presented the material to his family, or whether he drew it pursuant to additional information gleaned in the days that followed, we have no way of knowing. But it is a fact that time did not dull his perception that there was something exceptional about the substances he found. Nor do we know why the Major expected to find electronic parts in the box. But this implies that the material in the box had been gathered in such great haste that even a cursory inspection had not been made.

When these events took place, Dr. Marcel was one month shy of his twelfth birthday. He was by all accounts an unusually precocious youngster, who was offered a scholarship to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology when he graduated from high school. He declined that honor, having already decided to pursue a career in medicine.

The Mogul Hypothesis

The U.S. Air Force, drawing on work done by researchers such as Robert Todd and Professor C. B. Moore, has concluded that the debris in General Ramey's office was that of a Project Mogul balloon array. These arrays consisted of many balloons lifting an instrument package and several radar reflectors. The array or "train" configuration varied during the course of the experimental launchings. Of particular importance in this hypothesis is the rarity of the radar reflectors, which have been described as box kites made of balsa wood structural members supporting metal foil surfaces that reflect radar waves.

At the time in question, reports of "flying saucers" were widespread, and when rancher Mac Brazel found the remains of a Mogul array he assumed it must be a "saucer." According to the Air Force, Major Marcel, being ignorant of the radar targets, gathered the material and took it to the 509th Bomb Group, where confusion about the real nature of the debris continued, and a stupidly contrived press release was issued claiming that a "flying saucer" had been found. The following day the debris was identified as nothing more than a battered radar reflector. Thirty years passed. Then, through a combination of poor memory, confabulation and some outright lying, the story of a crashed spacecraft reemerged. Mr. Jeffrey has embraced this explanation for the central event that launched what he now calls the Roswell Myth.

The consensus of the skeptical community is that the Mogul array launched on June 4, 1947 was the source of the debris found by Brazel and then delivered by Major Marcel to his Army unit. According to C. B. Moore, this array consisted of 28 balloons lifting a plastic container of kerosene ballast and three radar reflector targets. Unlike other Mogul test flights, this one did not carry a "radiosonde" transmitter.

Testing the Hypothesis

The Mogul Balloon Hypothesis is falsifiable, that is to say, it is amenable to testing. Thanks to the initiative and largesse of Mr. Jeffrey, and to the exceptional skill of the professionals he employed, we have a very detailed and reliable description from Dr. Marcel of the material he observed with great care. This description can be compared, point by point, with the known characteristics of a radar target. Although such a target probably exists in the collections of aviation museums and should have been easily available to the skeptics, most especially to the U.S. Air Force, they have neglected to sit down with Dr. Marcel and a target and ask him the obvious question: Is this what you handled?

In July 1997, on his own initiative, Dr. Marcel traveled to Socorro, New Mexico to visit C. B. Moore at his home, where he at last was able to examine a radar target.

Marcel told Moore that the target was simply not what he had handled 50 years ago in his kitchen.

However, we have nearly the same thing as a radar target, which is actually more useful for the purposes of establishing if the debris shown to journalists by General Ramey was the same as the debris brought home by Major Marcel. I refer to the set of very clear photographs taken in Ramey's office by the professional press photographer J. Bond Johnson. With the exception that it denies us the tactile sense a real target could provide, the photographs are entirely sufficient to the purpose.

In the remarks that follow I will examine the "foil," the "bakelite" and the "rod," comparing the testimony of Dr. Marcel with the known qualities of an ML-307 radar target. Due to the intransigence of Mr. Jeffrey, I must rely on my recollection and notes instead of being able to supply the exact language used by the witness.

The Metal Foil

The bulk of the material in the kitchen consisted of pieces of what Dr. Marcel calls metal foil. These came in various sizes, the largest being about four by six inches. They were nearly weightless. They did not flex in his hands. Dr. Marcel has no recollection of an attempt to flex or deform these pieces by conscious effort. However, they did not change shape or flex while he was handling them.

The "foil" was the color of "lead" foil, a dull metallic color. He compares the color with that of the foil in packages of cigarettes, but seemingly with little confidence. It is only his best choice of description, not an exact one. Also, he was referring to cigarette packages *circa* 1947, which used metal foils much different from modern wrapping materials. He was well familiar with standard cigarette package foil, having saved it for the war effort.

Dr. Marcel is adamant that there was no paper attached to either side of the "foil." Nor did he observe paper or tape attached to or protruding from the "foil" in any way. The "foil" was devoid of any markings or symbols. Moreover, it had no signs of creasing or of abrasion. It is important to note that Dr. Marcel is not describing metal foil, but rather the *color* of the thin, mysterious material whose composition he could not describe. In response to the many questions he was asked about the foil, he could have said that it *felt* like cigarette foil, was *as thick* as cigarette foil, and so forth, but he did not. An excellent depiction of a typical piece of the "foil" was made by the artist, but Mr. Jeffrey chose not to use it to illustrate his article.

He was not asked how many pieces of "foil" he handled, leaving open the possibility that some of the pieces did have paper backing, creases, abrasions, and so forth, but were not among those he inspected or handled. On the other hand, much of the time Dr. Marcel was looking at the material was devoted to the attempt to piece together the fragments into a matching whole. This exercise was done by placing the pieces on

the kitchen floor. The attempt was abandoned without finding a "fit" or a "match" for the edges of even two pieces.

When all of the material was removed from the cardboard box and placed on the floor, it occupied about two-thirds of the area of the floor. The witness believes the area of the floor was roughly eight by ten feet. If that is so, the material would have comprised the remains of more than three radar reflectors. The surface area of an intact, undamaged reflector is 14 square feet. Although Dr. Marcel can't recall how much additional material was left in the back seat of his father's car, it could easily have amounted to the equivalent of several more reflectors.

According to the Mogul hypothesis, the "foil" was the reflecting surface material from either one or two or three of the radar reflectors. As the balloon array gently fell and was carried along by the prevailing wind, the reflectors were dragged over the ground, snapping the thin balsa wood supporting members and tearing the paper-foil reflecting surfaces. Will this process applied to a lamination of paper and metallic foil result in a multitude of small pieces, independent and cleanly differentiated from each other, none adhering in any way to the others? It seems very unlikely. In addition to the detailed verbal descriptions from the witness about the appearance of the tearing patterns forming the periphery of the "foil" pieces, we also have the artist's vivid depiction.

According to Dr. Marcel, each piece was flat, and there were neither creases, scratches nor abrasions on any piece he examined. This debris was collected from the rough ground of the Foster Ranch, then jammed into a cardboard box, then removed from that box and examined and dumped on the kitchen floor. But with all of these opportunities for abrasion or deformation, the paper-foil covering of what we are asked to believe was a radar target somehow slipped through untouched. Incredibly, while the delicate foil surface remained pristine, the radar target had been ripped into many small pieces, the largest of which measured only four by six inches!

But the real test is the comparison between what Dr. Marcel tells us and the photographs taken of the debris in General Ramey's office. At this point I invite the reader's attention to the photograph on the cover of the June 1997 *MUFON Journal*. This is the photograph illustrating the article by Mr. Jeffrey in which he invokes the Marcel interrogation as a pivotal argument against the anomalous nature of the Roswell Event. I offer the same photograph, but by way of proving Mr. Jeffrey wrong.

At the risk of elaborating the obvious, note that the radar reflector is virtually intact. Where is the multitude of tiny pieces spoken of by Dr. Marcel? Would anyone worry over the debris in this photograph, trying to piece it together like a jigsaw puzzle? Observe the universal creasing and folding that is so evident. This is consistent with the paper-foil laminate that you are looking at. Are any of the pieces flat? Even the major, supported pieces bend and flow. If Mr. Jeffrey's article had included the artist's drawing of the "foil," the reader could compare the obviously different tear patterns on the edges with those on the artist's depiction made at the Marcel interrogation. The paper backing

for the foil is evident in many of the pieces, and along the edges of the intact major sections.

In sum, the description of the "foil" brought home by Major Marcel conflicts in every particular with what we see on the floor of General Ramey's office.

The "I Beam"

In the box of debris was a single rod which Dr. Marcel examined with great care. In order to view the rod under the best circumstances, he moved in the kitchen to a place where the ceiling light played over his shoulder directly on the rod.

The rod was about 12 to 18 inches long, about three-eighths of an inch on edge, with smooth, undamaged ends, and had a well defined cross-section shaped like an "I" beam. The rod was very light and did not flex, although he can't recall trying to bend it. The sense I got from the testimony is that the rod was not obviously supple, but that its strength was not tested. Dr. Marcel insists that the rod seemed to be composed of metal, not wood.

On the inner surface of one side, running along the entire length of the rod, he saw a series of markings or figures that for want of a better description he called "hieroglyphics." These markings were of uniform density and color. He was puzzled about how they were fixed to the rod, and concluded that they appeared to be printed or embossed. The string of "hieroglyphics" was contained on the flat surface *within the lips* of the "I." There were no other markings on the rod. (Some time ago Dr. Marcel, Mr. Jeffrey and engineer Miller Johnson cooperated on the production of plastic models of this "rod," which were then advertised for sale. The description of this "rod" under hypnosis is consistent in every detail with the plastic model.)

According to C. B. Moore, who was chief engineer of Project Mogul, the framework for the radar reflectors consisted of balsa wood sticks coated with "Elmer's Glue" for waterproofing and strengthening. The edges of the paper-foil were glued to the balsa members, and cellophane (acetate film) adhesive "Scotch" tape was used to strengthen the bond between the paper-foil and the framework on some of the targets. About 48 linear feet of balsa sticks were used in the construction, which consisted of seven right angle triangles, each having sides two feet long with a hypotenuse member two feet and ten inches long. The entire assembly weighed only 3 ½ ounces!

Mr. Jeffrey believes that Dr. Marcel thought he was handling metal instead of balsa wood because of the glue that covered the surface of the sticks. I have tested the effect of three coats of Elmer's Glue on a balsa stick, letting each coat dry before applying the next. The result was a stick undeniably of balsa wood, but with a somewhat smooth surface. (Nor did the cross section change in shape from square to I beam.)

Moore remembers that some of the radar reflectors in the Project Mogul arrays used cellophane tape about three-quarters of an inch wide. A fact that has caused great confusion is the recollection of Moore and his colleagues that the cellophane tape had a repeating pattern of flowers embossed on its surface. The flowered pattern had no special meaning or function. Apparently the manufacturer of the targets, a small company in Manhattan that has long since gone out of business, simply used whatever tape they had on hand.

Quite naturally, it has been assumed that Dr. Marcel saw the tape and mistook it for the "hieroglyphics." One of the few areas in which the witness was questioned aggressively and repeatedly is the issue of the tape. His response was consistent and detailed, per the remarks above. Dr. Marcel saw no tape on the rod, and he recalls no tape of any sort in the material his father brought home.

In an attempt to obtain a sample of the flowered tape, I contacted the Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan, whose archivists referred me to the Cooper-Hewitt Museum of Design, who in turn contacted the Smithsonian Institution. All of these searches were in vain, so I approached the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company, the firm that makes "Scotch" and other cellophane adhesive tapes. I hoped to find at least an advertising brochure or engineering specifications for the flowered tape, but MMM had nothing in their files. This is an area which the skeptics, and particularly the U.S. Air Force with its immense resources, should have pursued and can still pursue. But if we are to take Dr. Marcel's testimony seriously, it is a dead issue. Whatever his "hieroglyphics" were, it is now clear that they were not the flowered tape of which Moore speaks.

Referring again to the photograph of the debris on General Ramey's floor, we see a number of the balsa wood sticks, some covered by the paper-foil, others nearly bare. The irregularly spaced daubs of black glue used to adhere the paper-foil to the sticks are plainly visible. Although various sticks are shown, and arranged at varying angles to the light source, there is no evidence of the shadows that would be caused by an "I" beam shape. Nor is there anything like flowers or other markings evident on the sticks. And where is the flowered tape?

In front of General Ramey's right foot lies a pile of rubble that is the remains of the balloon that lifted the radar target. Its condition is consistent with the quick deterioration of these balloons in sunlight. All sides in this debate have long since stipulated that the balloons were not part of what excited Major Marcel or what his son saw. But did Major Marcel bring home the balloon as well as the other debris? And if not, why not? Why is the balloon on the General's floor?

The "Bakelite"

The "bakelite" was thin like the "metal foil," and very smooth. Dr. Marcel handled small pieces, all of them obviously broken from larger segments. He remembers the jagged edges, and concluded that they resulted from the process of breaking. The pieces were all flat and he recalls no lips or other structural deviations from flatness. I do not believe he was asked directly if there were any markings on these pieces, but the inference is that there were none. Compared to the amount of "metal foil," there was very little of the "bakelite."

Bakelite was a primitive form of plastic used in the 1940s, and was found in kitchen cabinets, knife handles, enclosures for small radios, and the like. Because it had excellent electrical insulating properties and was easily formed by drilling and sawing, bakelite became a favorite material of radio hobbyists. Dr. Marcel made it clear that he used the term bakelite only as his closest approximation to the material, and definitely not as a positive identification. He was in an excellent position to judge whether it was bakelite, because he had sawed bakelite and mentioned the unusual smell produced by bakelite when it is sawed. When Dr. Marcel mentioned this smell, Dr. Hibler asked if any of the material in the kitchen had an odor. Dr. Marcel remembers none.

A likely candidate for the source of the "bakelite" would be the plastic containers of kerosene ballast carried by the array. However, these were egg-shaped with no straight surfaces, and were made of clear plexiglass. Dr. Marcel's "bakelite" was flat, opaque, and coal black.

Kent Jeffrey concludes that the "bakelite" was the covering of an instrument package. The instrument package was in the upper portion of the Mogul array, which even the skeptics agree was not part of what Mac Brazel found. The package consisted of a sonobuoy microphone and its transmitter. The transmitter was enclosed in a box only three by five by five inches, which was probably constructed of sheet metal to minimize weight. In any event, if what Dr. Marcel handled was the shards of the bakelite cabinet of an instrument package, one would expect to find square ends, straight sides and other signs of workmanship such as drilled holes.

Irving Newton

Warrant Officer Irving Newton was a meteorologist assigned to General Ramey's staff, and was mentioned in newspaper reports of Ramey's press conference. Thus he was sought out and interviewed by William Moore, co-author of the first book on the Roswell Event.

According to Newton, he received a call from the General asking him to come to his office at once. When he arrived, he was shown the debris on the floor and asked to identify it for the General and the assembled reporters. He was able to tell them without hesitation that the material consisted of a weather balloon and its radar target. Here is the relevant portion of Moore's text that is in quotation marks, and presumably Newton's exact words: *"It was cut and dried. I had sent up thousands of them and there is no doubt that what I was given was parts of a balloon. I was later told that a Major from Roswell had identified the stuff as a flying saucer, but the General had been suspicious of this identification from the beginning, and that's why I had been called."* Text: But wouldn't the people at Roswell have been able to identify a balloon on their own? Newton: *"They certainly should have. It was a regular Rawinsonde. They must have seen hundreds of them."* Text: What happened after your identification of the object? Newton: *"When I had identified it as a balloon, I was dismissed."*

Ten years later, Kevin Randle interviewed Newton at length. The basic story as it appears in the Moore-Berlitz book did not change. Note that in the 1979 version, Newton arrives abruptly, does his job, and departs: "I was dismissed." Randle asked Newton if he had met Major Marcel. This was asked and answered twice during the taped interview, and on both occasions Newton denied ever having met Marcel. This should be enough, and it is entirely consistent with what he told Moore: "I was later told that a Major from Roswell..."

Five years after the Randle interview, in correspondence with Robert Todd and C. B. Moore, Newton changed his story in a remarkable way. Now he clearly recalled meeting Major Marcel in the General's office. Moreover, the Major had pestered Newton, insisting that the weather balloon and radar target on the office floor were actually parts of a spacecraft. Also, that Major Marcel had insisted that markings on the balsa wood sticks were alien hieroglyphics.

Major Marcel told interviewers that he was ordered not to talk to anyone at the press conference. Why would he violate that order and engage in unseemly dispute with a man five military grades junior to him? In any event, we have already established beyond reasonable doubt that the debris he brought home from the Foster Ranch was not the debris in General Ramey's office. Thus the topic that Newton claims was urged on him by Marcel is unlikely to have been raised, even if they had conversed.

And finally, in recent conversation with Kent Jeffrey, Newton has produced still another striking addition to his story. Rather than paraphrase it, I will reproduce Mr. Jeffrey's account:

In one of my conversations with Newton, quite by chance, a new and important revelation came to light. He was describing the color of the symbols on one of the balsa sticks and mentioned how it was faint and had somewhat of a mottled appearance because of "the way that the dye had bled through onto the surface of the stick." This was a very important piece of information. The symbols that Newton saw on the debris in

Ramey's office were on the surface of the stick, not on tape! The tape had apparently peeled away, probably because of several weeks' exposure to sunlight while it lay out in the desert. This serendipitous revelation immediately cleared up one of the biggest questions in my mind about the Roswell case -- how could Jesse Marcel, Sr., or Jesse Marcel, Jr., for that matter, not have recognized flower patterns on tape? The answer is now crystal clear. The symbols they saw were not on tape. What they saw were images of the original symbols from the dye that had bled through before the tape had peeled away. Jesse, Jr.'s testimony about the symbols definitely not being on tape was absolutely correct.

Under the heading "A Remarkable Resemblance," Mr. Jeffrey introduces the drawing made by the same artist who did the Dr. Marcel drawings, and juxtaposes it with the only one of the three interrogation drawings he chooses to share with the reader. Mr. Jeffrey does not tell us why, if he went to the trouble of arranging this professional meeting with the artist, he failed to take the logical next step and include a session with the FBI hypnotist, Dr. Hibler. If nothing else, the forensic psychologist might have been able to elucidate what appears from the record to be an ever-changing story about what Newton saw, whom he met, and so on.

Refer once again to the photograph of the debris on the office floor, and keep in mind that this is precisely the debris about which Irving Newton is speaking. There is tape clearly visible on the edges of the paper-foil. It is particularly obvious on the portions of the paper-foil on the left side of the photograph, appearing as a strip of light color perhaps one inch wide strongly contrasting with the duller metallic foil. The strips extend the entire length of the sides of the paper-foil segments. That is consonant with their function in adding strength to the bond between the paper-foil and the balsa sticks. Examine that tape with care. Are there any symbols on it? (In a previous section I discussed the absence of symbols on the many balsa sticks that appear in the photograph.)

Plainly, an examination of all the J. Bond Johnson photographs under maximum possible magnification should be accomplished. This idea is not original with me. I got it from Mr. Jeffrey several years ago, apparently before he had decided such research is irrelevant. I have been told, but can't confirm, that the Johnson photographs were studied by the National Security Agency's photographic laboratory in connection with the Air Force Roswell investigation. Reportedly, no "flowers" or "hieroglyphics" were found.

By all accounts the tape used in these radar reflectors was a cellophane adhesive tape. In fact, the military specifications are available, and that is exactly what they call for. Cellophane tape is impermeable. That's one of the reasons customers buy it today, and the reason it was specified for the radar targets, which were expected to endure flight through heavy moisture and to be stored in damp places.

How can a printed or embossed pattern on the outer (non-sticky) surface of such tape "bleed through" to the other side? It would then have to "bleed through" the

adhesive, as well, before imprinting itself, with remarkably intact outlines, if we are to credit Irving Newton's rendition. And upon what surface would this faithful reproduction of the tape images be painted? Not a porous wood surface, which might conceivably hold such an image, but if we believe Mr. Jeffrey, a surface so hardened by impregnated glue that it is indistinguishable from metal.

And if this dye is so unstable that it can bleed *through*, why did it not simply bleed *off* first and long before? That question applies both to the original tape and then to the wood sticks. Finally, C. B. Moore and the others who unarguably did handle and examine reflectors with flowered tape remember the decoration as flowered, not as Newton's series of abstract figures, which appear recently contrived to look like Dr. Marcel's. Another hint that the Newton depiction is contrived is the way his figures are slightly offset from the center of the stick, as if to make his "bleed through" version more believable. But recall that Dr. Marcel's "hieroglyphics" were exactly centered in the indented area within the lips of the "I beam."

If the same standards were applied to Irving Newton's testimony that have been applied to other Roswell "witnesses" such as Frank Kauffman, Glenn Dennis and Jim Ragsdale, we would consider his word of little worth.

Dr. Marcel As A Witness

There are reasons to suppose that Dr. Marcel was unusually well equipped to judge the anomalous nature of the material he handled. For example, the "rod" that the skeptics insist was only a stick of balsa wood. Elsewhere Dr. Marcel has spoken of his childhood hobby of building model airplanes from balsa wood, and apparently he built dozens. During the interrogation he speaks of a model airplane hanging from the ceiling of his bedroom. As a hobbyist accustomed to working on a regular basis with balsa wood in many forms, Marcel's opinion about whether a certain rod that he had studied with rapt attention was or was not balsa wood should be given great respect.

For the same reason, when Dr. Marcel says that the rod was metal, we should listen with care. Major Marcel was a radio hobbyist, which in those days meant building from scratch short wave receivers and transmitters and all the associated appurtenances. Obtaining a license to operate this equipment was not an easy matter either, for it required passing a difficult written examination and proficiency in sending and receiving Morse Code. Several times during the interrogation he mentions his father's ham radio call sign, W5CYI. The son soaked all this up. That's why, during the interrogation, he speaks in awe as if it were yesterday about the aluminum tube construction of his friend's bicycle, and about his father's egg-shell blue '42 Buick convertible, and about the smell produced by sawing bakelite. Both father and son were technicians, tinkers and hands-on practitioners to the core.

Dr. Marcel has carried on this tradition. Thus he is a skier, bicyclist, helicopter pilot, Army Reserve officer, aircraft accident investigator, and so on, in addition to his demanding professional work as a surgeon.

Neither Jesse Marcel, Sr. nor Jesse Marcel, Jr. were even "average" witnesses or reporters. Instead, they were exceptionally well equipped to sort the anomalous from the mundane when they picked it up in their hands and studied it so long ago.

The character and probity of the father have been attacked. Todd concludes that he was a chronic spinner of tall tales, and if one is to credit Newton's story, Major Marcel was delusional. For various reasons, the testimony of the son has never been given much attention. Now that it has been demonstrated that Dr. Marcel's testimony is crucial, it can be expected that he will be attacked, probably as a person suffering from a cognitive disorder or serious neurological disease, and we will be told that it runs in the family.

The Ramey Hoax

General Ramey's press conference was a deliberate deception. The material he presented to the press, and thus to the American public, was neither the material collected by Major Marcel at the Foster Ranch, nor was it representative of that material. Moreover, it is not the remains of a Mogul array. The debris in Ramey's office matches the testimony of no witness on record.

While the General was lying to the public, he was also deceiving the intelligence branch of the Army. Writing about Newton's identification of the debris as that of a balloon and weather target, C. B. Moore says, "In fact, it now appears that General Ramey wanted a second opinion after Warrant Officer Newton's identification of the radar target debris." Moore goes on to say that the material in the General's office was flown at once to Wright Field. It was not sent to the Foreign Technology Division or a similar office, but directly to Colonel Marcellus Duffy, the highest ranking officer at Wright Field who would have known at once that the balloon was a balloon, and that the reflector was an off-the-shelf reflector. These reflectors were developed under Duffy's personal command during the war.

In order to insure the quick and efficient deception of Army Intelligence, it was necessary that Duffy be the one to receive this "debris." Here are Duffy's words as quoted by Moore: "While stationed at Wright Air Force Base in 1947, I received a call at home one evening saying that what was currently being described by the press as a 'flying saucer' was being flown to Wright Field and would be *brought to my home that evening* for identification." (Emphasis added).

In other words, the General did indeed want a second opinion, but not in the usual sense. He knew beforehand exactly what Duffy's opinion would be, as he had known in advance what would be said by the hapless Newton. And now he wanted that opinion spread throughout the Wright Field intelligence network.

The FBI made inquiries, and was similarly disinformed. An FBI teletype message sent on the evening of July 8, 1947 stated: "(deleted name) at headquarters Eighth Air Force, telephonically advised this office that an object purporting to be a flying disc was recovered near Roswell, New Mexico, this date. The disc is hexagonal in shape and was suspended from a balloon by cable, which balloon was approximately twenty feet in diameter. (deleted name) further advised that the object found resembles a high altitude weather balloon with a radar reflector..."

Ambiguities Resolved

General DuBose is the man in the cover photograph posing with General Ramey. Both are holding the deformed radar reflector. DuBose, then a Colonel, was Ramey's Chief of Staff, and would have known if the reflector in the photograph was what Major Marcel had brought from the Foster Ranch. According to all but one of those who interviewed DuBose, he said that the material had been switched. Mr. Jeffrey has chosen the testimony of that single odd-man-out, Jaime Shandera. This ambiguity, if it ever really existed, is now resolved in favor of those who claim that DuBose said the material was switched.

The "McCoy letters" are adequately described by Mr. Jeffrey. He correctly points out that these letters make no mention of the existence of crashed "discs" or debris. Nor do they deny the existence of such material, but the strong implication is that McCoy believed there was no such material. This ambiguity is at least partially resolved, in that the hoax perpetrated on Colonel Duffy would have been the basis for what McCoy and the rest of his colleagues at the Foreign Technology Division knew or thought they knew about the existence of physical materials connected with the "flying discs."

When the General Accounting Office discovered that the outgoing message traffic and the records of the military police unit at Roswell were missing and apparently destroyed contrary to regulations, some thought this was a coverup, and others thought it was merely an administrative error. This ambiguity is resolved in favor of "coverup," for reasons of consistency with the basic Ramey hoax. The removal of these records must have been done well after 1947, but recall that it was several years after 1947 that Army officers visited Bill Brazel, Mac's son, and confiscated the cigar box he had filled with tiny pieces of the "radar target" that still littered the Foster Ranch.

Where did Ramey get the debris shown to the reporters and then sent to Wright Field? Almost certainly from White Sands, where Captain John R. Smith had routinely been using single balloons with single radar reflectors in connection with the V-2 rocket tests. Smith's recollection is that his targets were reinforced by "plain" instead of "flowered" tape.

Ambiguities Unresolved

What was the origin and nature of the material Major Marcel showed his son?

It is important to note that Dr. Marcel's testimony elicited under hypnosis is not unique. A number of others who handled the material have left their recollections of this strange debris for posterity. The following fragments of testimony are transcriptions of tape recorded interviews with four such witnesses.

Bill Brazel, the son of rancher Mac Brazel, who apparently was the first to find the debris, speaking of his father and of his own experience with some of the material: "The next day he was up on the ranch, and he found this debris. He picked it all up, in his pickup, and was talking to people, and of course there was some talk about UFOs. He was going to Roswell, and as far as I know, he got in touch with the Sheriff's department. They in turn called the Air Force. Then the Air Force got with dad and swore him to secrecy and they came out to the ranch and picked up this debris. Wood, I call it wood, I don't know what it was, it was something like balsa wood, but it wouldn't burn, and I couldn't cut it with my knife."

Major Jesse Marcel, Sr., who was sent to the site by Colonel Blanchard, describing the material and what was reported to him about it by one of his subordinates: "...one piece of metal, it looked like metal, anyway. It was not flexible, and it was as thin as the foil on a pack of cigarettes. It was that thin. One of my boys told me, 'There's something unusual here,' he said, 'I tried to make a dent in this metal,' but he says, 'you can't bend it, you can't make a mark on it.' He says, 'I took a sledgehammer, and whammed it, I put it on the ground and whammed it. And the sledgehammer bounced off of it!'"

Dr. John Kromschroeder, a dentist and intimate friend of Captain Oliver "Pappy" Henderson, recounting an instance when Henderson showed him a strange piece of "metal": "He said, what do I think of that? I said, well, it's different. And I felt it and it did feel different. And I studied it some. And I was able to determine that its metal structure was different than alloys like we have in our aircraft, for instance. And of course he did preface this question by stating this was from this craft. Apparently, I think it was a case of 'appropriation,' that he acquired this, you know, for future study, perhaps."

Master Sergeant Lewis Rickett was stationed at Roswell as a member of the Counter Intelligence Corps under Captain Sheridan Cavitt. He accompanied Cavitt to the debris field after Cavitt and Marcel had made at least one previous visit. Approximately 30 armed military policemen were stationed in a ring several hundred yards in diameter to protect the debris field from intruders. Picking up a piece of the debris, Rickett asked if he could try to break it. Cavitt told him to try: "He says, do what we couldn't do. Go ahead, touch it! I said, for God's sake! ...what in the hell is that stuff made out of, it can't be plastic. I said, it don't feel like plastic. It just flat feels like metal, but I never saw a

piece of metal that thin, that you can't bend...the more I looked at it, I couldn't imagine what it was."

Prior to his recruitment into the CIC, Rickett was attached to the Army Air Inspector's Office. His military occupational specialty was Line Chief and Air Inspection. This meant that he was an expert in the repair of aircraft systems and components. Immediately after the end of the war, Rickett was assigned to an air disarmament team inspecting German aircraft in Europe in order to gather data requested by the foreign technology specialists at Wright Field. These are the professional qualifications of the man who said of the debris, "...the more I looked at it, I couldn't imagine what it was."

Sheridan Cavitt retired as a Lieutenant Colonel after a career in counter-intelligence. When researchers attempted to question him about the events that took place in the Summer of 1947, Cavitt insisted that he did not know what they were talking about, and vigorously denied that he had ever been stationed at Roswell.

In 1994, pursuant to the Air Force investigation of the Roswell Incident, Colonel Weaver visited Cavitt, armed with a letter from the Secretary of the Air Force relieving Cavitt of any secrecy restrictions in order that he could speak freely. Cavitt told Weaver that he and Marcel had found a single rubber weather balloon and a radar reflector, and that these were in an area no more than 25 feet in diameter. Then he signed an affidavit to that effect, formally swearing that it was the truth.

None of this answers the question about the nature and origin of the debris handled by Dr. Marcel. All that can be said with confidence is that the material and the circumstances of its appearance on the New Mexico desert were such that it triggered a massive deception, and that neither the passage of five decades nor the intervention of officials of such exalted rank as the Secretary of the Air Force have proven sufficient to unmask the deception.

-end-

End Note:

1. Dr. Marcel was furnished with a pre-publication copy of this article. In a letter to the author, he stated: "I read your essay with utmost interest and I heartily endorse what you have to say about the interview conducted in Washington by Dr. Neil Hibler."

R. J. Durant


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