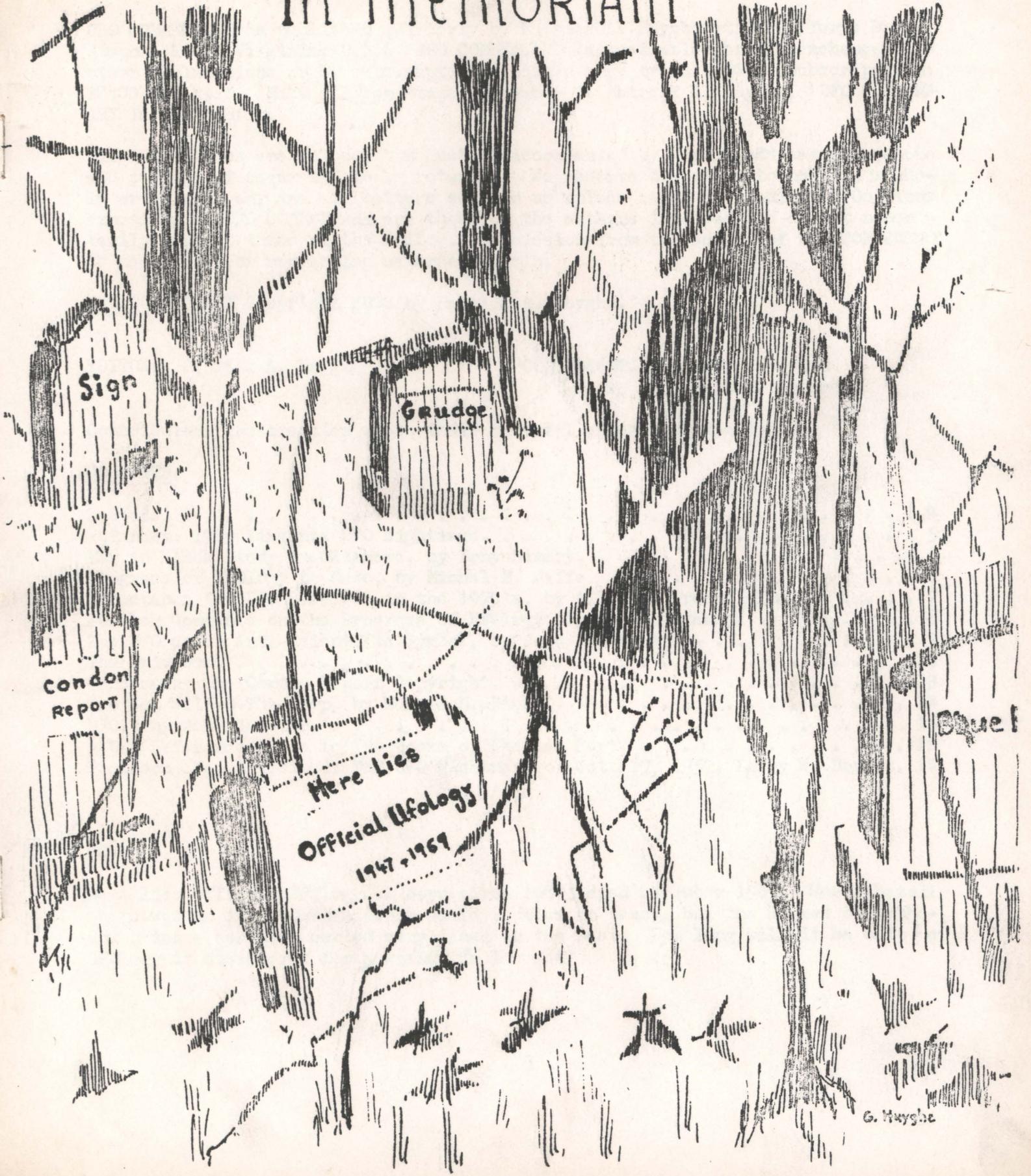


UFO COMMENTARY

vol. 1 No. 1
Spring, 1970

In memoriam



G. Mygbe

UFO COMMENTARY
(Formerly the UFO Analysis & Research Bulletin)

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COVER:

Here lies official UFOlogy... Born circa 1947, died December 1969. Were that all there was to it, modern science could rejoice in peace, but the Damned of orthodox science has been buried many times in the past. How long will it be before UFOlogy is disinterred for a worldwide inquest?

LETTERS

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"Thanks for sending UFOARB #5. The rundown on 1969 sightings in Virginia is most useful, and I was pleased to see my friends and fellow INFOers, Allen Greenfield and Dennis Stamey represented. Keep up the good work! -- Paul J. Willis, Sec't., INFO.

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"... In fact the whole UFO business will take a new turn I am afraid, of course I am only participating in wishful speculation but I have a hunch that the next area of activity for the UFOnuts is in the infiltration of the peace and civil rights movements and to cause some violent clashes to further their ends. Now just what are their ends?? Well, how about domination?? But it is a weird kind, it is the mental domination of a planet and a change back to the thoughts of ancient men and a complete destruction of the systems of earth governments as we know of them now. Just think what this will do to the egos of those in power in Washington, Moscow, Johannesburg, Bonn and Paris! I expect a lot of top leaders of the world being declared insane and even the White House will not escape this one..Of course I am not a prophet but I do see a trend to avoid the unavoidable, Condon is a good example..."

11/30/69

-- M.L.S.

"... I thought that the special issue was very good overall. However, I would like to take this opportunity to make a few personal observations. Next time include a more detailed key to the abbreviations used for the English counties and Canadian provinces...Also I believe it would be a good idea to revise the O-L-G-P-A classification, and adopt the Valle type of report system - I, II, III, IV, for UFO behavior and star, plus sign, blank, equal sign, minus sign for reliability of reports... The US map should be at least half the page, preferably full page... I think that, in addition to the global graphs, graphs plotting activity in North America, South America, Europe, etc., would be very useful. Some of the above comments, at first sight, may seem out of place or trite. I believe, however, that on closer examination these comments will lead to a better, more useful publication."

3/6/70

-- Allen Benz, Field Investigator APRO.

(Be assured that your comments will be put to good use! --Editor)

"I would like to take a minute of your time to thank you for sending me your Special Issue of 1000 sightings for 1968. You are to be congratulated on a superb piece of work which I know took you many months of time and patience. It is a tremendous achievement on your part and I feel of much use to other researchers such as yourself. I hope that you will be able to compile a 1969 list sometime this year, now that most of the reports have been made known... By looking at individual reports as they come in, they very often do not give a pattern of picture of events. However, I have found out that only by reviewing reports over a longer period does a picture come into view. For instance Saucers, Space, and Science #57, the activity around nuclear sites emerged, otherwise it may not have been noticed. . . You are putting out a very informative magazine and I wish you continued success with it. I look forward to future issues as you cover every point of view."

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THE PROGRESS OF UFOLOGY TO DATE . . .

AN EDITORIAL PERSPECTIVE by Michel M. Jaffe

By taking the easy way out, this short piece could end here. Actually very little progress has been made in the past 24 years. Apart from acknowledging their existence, we still really know very little.

We do not know what these phenomena are or where they come from and so on. Indeed we do not know if we are dealing with a single problem or several. Perhaps these mysterious objects have several origins, possibly totally unrelated to each other.

Before we change the title to "The Lack of Progress," let us see what we do have. Some, such as we of DATA-NET, believe that these strange aerial objects are indeed real. Therefore we do have a problem.

We believe that trying to run an investigative agency similar to NICAP will accomplish absolutely nothing and is doomed to failure. The harassment of Air Force agencies and the government will produce only sore toes, at best, and is therefore a waste of time. Reading 1000 pages amassed by some clown who admits that it was done for the half million proves only that there is a serious problem but not exactly what that problem is. We have enriched our libraries with about a hundred books, but personally, I seriously doubt that this is progress. Some of the garbage in print written by a bunch of paranoid so-called free lance writers has actually accomplished more harm than anything else.

Then what progress have we made...? Any?

Yes...recently a secret society has been formed. A group of scientists, some in different parts of the world, have joined together in order to SOLVE this mysterious problem. Not to sell, buy, or "earn" a half million, but to solve for true science sake. The "secret" in "secret society" is forced by the narrow and close-minded majority of scientists today (and yesterday). By this I mean the *!#**!!#&! who call themselves Dr. because of a degree that they earned by rote. The pitiful clowns who sweep under the rug what does not "fit" (or are told that it does not fit). The ones who in the past damned away the heavier-than-air machines, and meteors, and today damn everything that does not fit into what they have been "taught".

Presently the progress then is this small group of people with degrees, rightfully earned, most of them well known and famous in the world. Now they are quietly and seriously working together to solve the UFO phenomena.

If my intuition is correct, the solution to the problem will also answer many other questions.

(ED. NOTE: Although I do not agree with everything Mr. Jaffe says, I can recommend their organization, DATA-NET, because in their effort to set up a Ham UFO reporting network, they have produced a fine publication covering a wide variety of UFO sighting reports in detail. (624 Farley St., Mountain View, Calif. 94040)

D I R E C T I O N S
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by Allen H. Greenfield

Research into the UFO problem during the new decade might do well to proceed in at least three directions.

The development of research into individual cases of high merit may be one area of great promise. Such efforts might be directed at interesting individual cases, or at areas which seem to have a high concentration of UFO activity. The more extensive the documentation, the more valuable this particular type of information may be. During the 1960's, I participated in a considerable amount of field research, including investigations in the area of Brooksville, Florida and Brown Mountain, North Carolina, and I think work of this sort may have great value to UFO research in general. I would suggest that such investigations should be carried out by teams of researchers where possible, and should be approached with caution and seriousness.

A second possibly important direction is the possible need for in-depth research into historical data, some of which may give a superficial appearance of irrelevancy to the UFO problem. Historical factors have in the past been presented, such as in the documentation of the 1897 phenomena, but there may remain a great deal to be discovered in such areas as the "men in black", little men, contact cases, previous efforts (prior to UFOlogy) to deal with unusual phenomena and communication attempts. It may well be that what we in UFOlogy are experiencing today has been experienced before in much the same way, perhaps in repeated historical cycles.

A third area which might be profitable to UFOlogists is that of statistical data. We take note of some recent movement in this area, and hope that this will foreshadow a great amount of work in this direction, which may yield, through analysis, information of great value.

If work is carried out in these directions, what may we reasonably hope to find? Further detailed information on individual cases may give us a better idea as to the actual nature of UFOs. Perhaps advanced researchers are beginning to realize for the first time the possibility of a "deception factor", deliberate or otherwise, in individual UFO reports. Comparison of extensive data on individual details of cases may disclose what factors, if any, tend to be constants in UFO reports. Well-documented cases may also be useful in attempts to develop further well-funded investigations into the UFO problem.

Statistical information, and field investigations in areas that seem to be inclined towards UFO incidents, may enable investigators to establish permanent or relatively permanent UFO observation sites, resulting, perhaps, in increasing UFOlogists' ability to measure UFO data. Such work may point the way for discovering hitherto unknown important cases.

continued

by John A. Rimmer

(Reprinted with permission from the Merseyside UFO Bulletin, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1969).

In a recent article Quentin Crewe puts forward an interesting thought on the public's attitude to UFOs and UFOlogists. (1) He cites a recent appearance of FSR's Gordon Creighton on "24 Hours", in confrontation with Patrick Moore. Crewe cannot understand why people like Gordon Creighton should be invited to television shows and then hardly allowed to speak, and concludes that the public half believe in UFOs, and have to keep knocking down the guardians of their belief in a sort of propitiation ritual.

The particular discussion under review was a classic of this genre. Despite Mr. Creighton's continued assertions that he did not seriously consider that UFOs were extraterrestrial craft, Patrick Moore felt obliged to spend the greater part of the limited time proving that UFOs were not extraterrestrial craft. During this performance Moore emerged not as an arch-sceptic which is a perfectly understandable attitude when confronted with such a tendentious subject; but as an urscientific and emotionally prejudiced person. The lunacy of the whole episode was in the BBC's naive belief that the question of UFOs was one that an astronomer could be expected to be an expert on. It would have been equally valuable -- or valueless -- to have had a soil analyst, etymologist, or business efficiency expert.

However, to return to Quentin Crewe's suggestion. It does appear to a perceptive observer that there is a serious contradiction in the public's attitude to the question of the UFO. Mention UFOs to a friend who is not a student of the subject and the initial reaction is one of laughter. As an editorial in this Bulletin has indicated, UFOlogy is an incredibly mirthful subject amongst "boring suburbanites." (2) However, on further investigation this attitude seems to break down. Pressed, an outsider will admit that "there could be something in it." More times than not they will admit to having read a UFO book. Ultimately may come the admission that they too have seen a UFO.

In a not-untypical encounter such as this, one can see the conflict of attitudes in an individual. At the outset is the Establishment Attitude, fostered by such media as television and the national press and their scientific pundits. One cannot blame the media for this attitude, as it is one found only too often within the ranks of UFOlogists themselves. One need only mention NICAP's attitude, to contact claims, and just about everybody's attitude to John Keel. On the other hand there is the public's desire for novelty and surprise and a growing anti-scientific, almost neo-Luddite, movement. Concurrent with increasing scientific development and technological advances there is a vast opposing populist emotion. The growth of the computer atrocity story, the reaction to transplant operations, the development of pastoralism almost as a political movement amongst minority communities in America are all symptoms of this. (3) These are on too large a scale to be dismissed as a few reactionaries and Peter Simples.* The UFO is the one thing which under present circumstances stands most impregnable against the scientific floodtide. It is little wonder therefore that the UFO is being adopted by many as a sort of symbol of the neo-Luddite cause. It is the last refuge of the old magic. It is seen, literally

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and metaphorically, as the Holy Grail, unattainable, unimaginably remote, yet always near enough to lead us on in a hopeless chase. The UFOlogist is the necromancer who can cast spells upon the scientist and leave him stumbling in the enchanted forest, blundering into trees marked "Temperature Inversion," or "Weather Ballon," and falling into thorns and nettles labelled "Venus through a Heat Haze."

So much for the Wagnerian imagery. However, the concept of the UFO as being magical and anti-scientific is valid and important. There is nowhere on the face of the Earth, and never has been, any society that has existed without magic. We are, in Europe, America and the other technologically advanced nations very close to this situation. We have driven magic underground, but we have not eliminated it. It may be a dangerous thing if we do. The UFO is a fairly pleasant, often beautiful, rarely malignant piece of magic, far preferable to the violence and ugliness of some other magical survivals in our age. Perhaps we should not attempt too much to explain the UFOs, either in terms of space-craft or unknown forms of plasma, or even pieces of detached psyche. On the face of it we shall not be able to do this anyway. The UFO may be just there, for us to marvel at, worship, chase, gape at, or get little frissons of fear from.

Jung saw the UFO as the Circle, the Mandala, a symbol of wholeness and permanence. (4) Perhaps in its permanent inaccessibility it is a symbol of purity. In a world violated and sullied by radiation, smoke, fumes, the excrement of a scientific society, the UFO is almost a Virgin image of our time. Consider the so-called occupants of these craft. What are they but the dwarves and elves, the pastoral inhabitants of unsullied hedgerow and field and the dark Northern forests that we have left behind us. Here they come now from the UFOs, reminding us of our rural background. The Hippie mystic sees the UFO as the Grail above Glastonbury; the French farmer sees the "occupants" as small, grotesque creatures of tree-root and woodland glade; the American Factory worker sees the "men in black" as a re-creation of a romantic Chicago Gangsterdom that never was (even their cars are from the past). Each perceives a phenomenon that is a part of their past, a movement against the Establishment's glorification of scientific progress.

Like all effective magic the UFO is a perversion of the orthodoxy, rather than something totally different from it. It is the space-craft of the scientist, but a space-craft that does strange, irrational things: the occupants, although weird and unearthly, apparently wear space suits not so different from the ones worn by those symbols of scientific progress, the astronauts. Magic in the past was twisted from religion -- the Black Mass a horrific perversion of Christian ritual, not something totally different, but close enough to disturb even more. So the UFO parodies, one hopes in a more pleasant form, the developments of science. The UFO's essentially unscientific nature can be seen in the strange, almost obsessive interest it holds for scientists who are most vehement in denying its existence. A number of Patrick Moore's books suddenly introduce UFOs into the discussion of some astronomical problem, only to dismiss them as something of no importance. (5) One is reminded of atheists who spend a disturbing amount of time disproving the existence of the Devil. Other scientists, like Hynek, perhaps Condon, act as sceptical priests, who while not accepting the positive existence of ghosts, feel that it is worthwhile going to the trouble of exorcising them.

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For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Perhaps for every scientific advance there is an equal and opposite mystical reaction. It has been noted that a large number of UFO incidents occurred in the USA after the launching of the first Russian satellite. This could be viewed as the reaction to that scientific advance. It will be interesting to see if there is a comparable reaction after the moon landing. It would be instructive to see if any of the major flap periods over the last twenty-three years followed immediately upon a major scientific advance. Certainly the first flaps of 1946-47 followed the development of nuclear weapons. If science is a movement into the future the UFO if it is a reaction, must be a movement into the past. We have seen above how the form of the UFO and especially its occupants are often reversions to ancient forms. If one analyses reports in more depth one can see a number of almost sentimental elements that are strongly opposed to the conventional view of the UFO as a futuristic phenomenon.

The stories told by the early contactees were apparently of journeys to incredibly advanced communities. However, a closer look reveals that the futurism described is already dated. It is the futurism of the thirties, the New York World's Fair and Amazing Stories Magazine. The architecture of these advance worlds is either that of Superman's Krypton (6) or an idealised Graeco-Roman myth. Images, perhaps, of an idyllic childhood. Although the witnesses of these early contact phenomena may not have been science fiction addicts, I doubt if any one of them does not connect Superman with secure childhood afternoons in some safe American mid-Western town.

The anti-scientific image of the UFO is now incredibly complex. Whether this is due to some fundamental change in the phenomenon itself, or to a new attitude that is being brought to bear on the study of the subject, is a matter of debate. It is clear that the UFO mystery now is one of Gothic strangeness and wonder. It has retreated so far from scientific method that it is doubtful if it will ever be capable of explanation in any rational manner. The world of the UFO is peopled with a Tolkien-like collection of entities with no rational pattern of behaviour. If there is an overall plan it must be infinitely more convoluted than the most farcical Italian opera buffo. In this at least the victory of anti-science is almost complete. Nothing so incredibly irrational could be taken seriously by any scientist. The Condon Report can be seen only as a document of surrender. The people who consciously adopt an anti-scientific stance often regard themselves as a resistance movement. - the "underground." Every resistance movement requires a figurehead, both as a rallying point for the committed, and as an example to the uncommitted but vaguely sympathetic masses. In this movement the UFO is the Che Guevara image. Although "killed" by the CIA of the scientific analysis the underground is still wearing its metaphorical "Che Lives" badges and the UFOs are still there, and not just in the Bolivian jungle!

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*Note: The "Peter Simple" mentioned in the article is a penname of a columnist in the London "Daily Telegraph" noted for his somewhat reactionary, anti-technology attitudes.

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THE UNIVERSE: "IT'S LIKE A VAST LIVING COMPUTER"

The whole universe is one vast living entity consisting of pure intelligence. This theory, put forward by Dr. David Foster, may will provoke one of the biggest scientific controversies in years.

Dr. Foster believes that the universe is something like a living electronic computer. His theory, which has taken more than 30 years to formulate, will soon be published in the form of two books, The Intelligent Universe and The Immortal Robot.

The first book will explain his theory generally, while the second will concentrate on the significance of man living in an intelligent universe.

Dr. Foster, aged 60, of Windlesham, Surrey, says in the introduction to The Intelligent Universe: "I was, and still am, apprehensive about publishing the theory, for if it is true it could establish the breakthrough between science and religion.

"Though that might be a worthwhile achievement, I shudder at the responsibility of what this implies. History is strewn with philosophers whose main effectiveness has been to set man against man through the dissemination of half-baked ideas.

"It would have been better if some had never been born."

(Source: Evening News, September 5, 1969, England. Credit: Fred Gething)

FROM THE AIR FORCE:

CONCERNING THE CONDON REPORT COPYRIGHT

The following is the text of a letter sent to the SAFOI office of the Dept. of the Air Force on Aug. 18, 1969:

"I was told by Major James H. Aikman in his letter to me dated Jan. 2, 1969 that U.S. Government publications cannot be copyrighted.

"Since the Condon Committee was financed by the Air Force, this makes the Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects a government publication. Why then is it copyrighted?"

The reply from the Dept. of the Air Force, Civil Branch Community Relations Division, Office of Information, dated Sept. 23, 1969 was:

"The Scientific Study of UFOs, Univ. of Colorado Report, is copyrighted by the Univ. of Colorado Board of Regents, January 1969."

End

"Sometimes I wonder what is the most mysterious, the UFOs or the minds of UFOlogists."
-- John A. Rimmer, 1/24/70.

It's sad, very sad, but we flying saucer addicts are suddenly old-fashioned and I didn't realize it until the other night when the eerie green light hung over my house.

It was about 8:45, a soft night on Key Biscayne, and I was in a bedroom we are remodeling, busily cleaning silver grey latex paint off the greyhound's nose. (she sticks her nose in anything.)

"Daddy, Daddy!" came the sadly-excited shout from kids in the front yard.

Alertly dropping the greyhound back in the paint-roller tray, I raced outside, pausing only to break one shin on a sawhorse. I recognized it as our family UFO cry.

I dashed out in the front yard, fully prepared to marvel with the 7-year-old at an unusually bright star; watch a plane's winglights, or again isolate a buoy light in the Atlantic. (Our only real UFOs have been a mother ship posing as Venus and, occasionally, a few Martians going over Key Biscayne, cannily disguised as the Goodyear Blimp.)

This time my jaw dropped so hard it hit my Adam's apple with a thud.

Huge, eerie, utterly without precedent, there in the cloudless clear night about 70 degrees above the horizon was a huge green...not a light, exactly, but a green shape.

It was immense, out over the ocean. It was shaped like a tornado - a big green funnel but it was absolutely motionless. It was as if somebody had taken a gigantic paintbrush and painted a great picture of a curving funnel - just like the tornado in Wizard of Oz - in the sky, in fluorescent soft green.

It just hung there without moving.

I snapped out of it, pushed my jaw closed and skidded back onto the house to call my paper, and alert photography. The switchboard was jammed.

I finally reached an off-duty cameraman, Charles Trainor, a friend of mine. It's not easy to convince an ex-Marine newspaperman he should get up from a nap and go out and look up at a green tornado. (But we had a page one picture in our next edition.)

And, motionless, it hung there for nearly 20 minutes...then, strangely suddenly, dispelled.

I called the weather bureau, control tower, Air Force base, the usual places and all the lines were busy. The radio bulletins began with "...no official explanation."

Then, on the 11 o'clock TV news, Cape Kennedy announced a missile had been

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POQUOSON, VIRGINIA REVISITED:

THE UFO NIGHTMARE OCT. 19, 1959

L a r r y W. B r y a n t

What would you have to say in retrospect if it were you who, 10 years ago, fired "the shot unheard around the world"... if it were you who had started out that clear autumn day of October 19, 1959, with the sole purpose of bagging a few muskrats or swamp birds with your 12-gauge shotgun... if it were you, instead of young Mark Muza, who had your hunting trip rudely interrupted by the appearance of a noisy little flying object directly above your head in the middle of a deserted marsh just a few miles northeast of Langley Air Force Base, Va.?

Well, if what you'd say is less than that being said by Mark Muza, then this classic case of UFO provocation might remain among the most tantalizing cases in the annals of UFOlogy.

There are good reasons why Mark Muza's UFO sighting now stands as a classic. At the time I heard of the case, I had behind me two years of investigating local UFO sighting reports for a local UFO hobby club called the Air Research Group. When, in the morning newspaper of October 21, 1959, I read of Muza's harrowing encounter, I immediately realized the significance of the case -- here was the first public record of a "flying saucer" having been attacked by an observer in Virginia. Unfortunately, as I was later to find out, the Air Force didn't share my enthusiasm.

Here let me recount the actual facts of the event before I continue my historical commentary.

When I arrived at Mark Muza's home on Ridge Road in Poquoson that evening of the 21st, I was met first by his mother. It was she who had telephoned the Daily Press about her son's story. "Mark came home all shaky and nervous," Mrs. Muza began, "and I thought he must have had something real terrible happen to him out there. I know my boy. If he says he did something, good or bad, I can tell you one thing for sure -- he did it! And in this case, I don't believe he's exaggerating."

As she was describing her son's reactions, he entered the house and greeted me with the reserved, cautious manner that strangers find characteristic of native Poquosonites. Mark and I went through the preliminaries of introduction and small talk, and then got to the point: what had he seen that caused such a furore two days before?

"Me and my buddy Harold Moore," answered Mark, "were about a mile out into the Big Marsh. Harold was about a hundred yards from me and I was resting with my knees on the ground." At this point in the discussion, Mark took his shotgun from its rack on the living room wall and assumed the position he was describing.

"Well," he continued, "I was just sitting there when all of a sudden I heard

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this whirring noise. At first I thought it was a flock of wild birds. But when I looked up I saw this round thing coming down at me tipping back and forth like this" (gesturing with his hand in a rocking motion).

"What did you do then?" I asked.

"Like this!" replied Mark, raising his shotgun to firing position. "It scared me, so I shot at it. I had a load of 'Maximum 4's' in the gun. And I heard the shot bounce off that thing, like when you throw a rock against a heavy kettle."

Meantime, from across the way, Harold Moore heard the shooting, looked skyward, and saw the target. "The object kept coming down, so Mark just kept on shooting," Harold told me later.

"About 50 feet above my head," resumed Mark, "the thing stopped and I hit it with another shot of 'Maximum 4's'. Then I put a steel slug in the gun and fired again. That must have done it, because I looked down to reload and then when I looked back up the thing had disappeared." (Harold said that after the third shot the object started spinning rapidly and went straight up out of sight in seconds.)

What about this "thing" that caused Mark Muza's panic and violent reaction? Was it a remote-control device being tested by NASA's Langley Research Center? The boys had been hunting in an area that was part of an old Air Force bombing range; could the mysterious object have been some sort of airborne bombing platform? Mark Muza had no interest in such speculation; neither was he asserting that what he had seen was a flying saucer. He was ready, though, for an official explanation for what he had seen and assaulted in the otherwise peaceful twilight hours of the past Monday. So far, no-one has come forward with the explanation.

The next day, I met with both boys to survey the sighting area and to wrap up my report on the case. I had no doubt about their sincerity and honesty. To accuse them of perpetrating a hoax not only was unfair, but also was technically unsupportable. All the evidence pointed to a genuine encounter with an aerial anomaly the likes of which UFOlogists, both within and out of the Air Force, had yet to document.

But those in the Air Force were stuck with the then-unannounced policy of playing down public interest in UFOs. In short, with the Muza case, the Air Force didn't want to get involved. They made this quite plain to me in telephone conversations and in a series of correspondence from local Air Force officials, former congressman Porter Hardy, Jr., and high-level Pentagon public-information spokesmen. My quarrel with the Air Force was that while they maintained they investigate all UFO sightings reported to them they failed to launch a formal investigation into a sighting which occurred in their own backyard. They tried to justify their noninvolvement by saying that because neither Muza nor Moore chose to contact them directly they weren't compelled by regulations to commit their intelligence officers and resources to a formal investigation. To me, that policy was the same as if, say, the Coast Guard were to decide against aiding a sinking ship simply because it was a bystander, rather than the ship's crew, who

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sounded the alarm. Since I couldn't manage to reconcile the Air Force's selectivity of investigation with their stated objective of investigating ALL UFO sighting reports, I berated them and accused them of conducting a wishy-washy program. (Perhaps that's one reason why, today, the Air Force is reluctant to cooperate with me or other private UFOlogists in tracking down UFOs.)

If the Air Force's UFO troubleshooters were systematically cold-shouldering the overtures of the private UFOlogists, it wasn't because government UFO files were cooling off. On the contrary, two months after the nightmare at Poquoson, the Air Force's Inspector General issued a "brief" to all operations and training commands, urging that UFO investigation officers be equipped with Geiger counters, cameras, binoculars, and other specialized equipment. Ironically, one enterprising journalist, the late Frank Edwards, chose the brief's title, "UFOs-Serious Business," as the title for his best-selling book on the UFO controversy.

The Air Force's little-publicized interest in UFO reports may have been whetted by the Poquoson case and other prominent incidents of the period. NICAP (National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, Washington, D.C.) lists the following major sightings for the month of October, 1959:

- Oct. 7th: A Kentucky Air National Guard pilot chased a glowing object over the skies of North Forrest City, Ark.
- Oct. 20th: Two military enlisted men in Key West, Fla., witnessed a star-like UFO rendezvous with another and then speed away with its companion.
- Oct. 22nd: A motorist in Cumberland, Md., had his car motor, headlights, and radio fail as a UFO hovered low over the road ahead.
- Oct. 28th: An astronomer and others in Valparaiso, Chile, observed a maneuvering orange disc.

Unlike NICAP, the Air Force UFO information spokesmen rarely release detailed data on a case-by-case basis. They prefer to publish statistical summaries for public consumption. The Air Force summary of the reports they received for 1959 shows that from the total of 390, the month of October took 47 reports, making that month the most active of the year. Twelve reports were listed in the "unidentified" category for that year.

Had Mark Muza or Harold Moore reported their UFO encounter directly to the Air Force, perhaps the total "unidentifieds" would have been 13. Why didn't they take that step? As they explained to me, they were (1) afraid of official reprisal for having trespassed on government property, and (2) weary of being taunted by their disbelieving friends and neighbors.

So there it stands - the story of one of the most dramatic incidents in the history of UFOlogy.

As a postscript to the story, I recently visited Poquoson to interview Muza and Moore for their impressions. I had in mind such questions as "Have you ever returned to the scene of the 'crime'?"... "Are you sorry you shot at the object?"

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continued...

... "How would you react if you were to see a similar object now?"... "Do you still feel it's important to find out what the UFOs really are?"... "Have you been contacted yet by Air Force investigators?"

Unfortunately those questions will remain unanswered; for neither Muza nor Moore wants to rekindle the flames of ridicule that lapped around them back in 1959. Both have declined to be interviewed, and both seem more interested in raising their families than in resurrecting a mystery they thought was buried for good 10 years ago. Who knows... if you or I were in their position, maybe we'd see it their way.

Mark Muza's shooting spree may not have been heard around the world... but, in spite of his self-imposed silence, the echo of those three shotgun blasts is still being heard; and the world of the hard-shell UFO skeptic will never be the same.

. . . End

NEXT PAGE, TOP:

When then 15-year-old Mark Muza made headlines in the Daily Press 10 years ago, it wasn't because he was an exceptional artist -- it was because the subject of his drawing shown here had rudely dropped in on him when he and hunting companion Harold Moore were concentrating on more earthly creatures.

NEXT PAGE, BOTTOM:

Essentially unchanged since the day of the violent UFO confrontation, this sparsely populated landscape along Poquoson's Ridge Road remains an ideal spot for clandestine visitations by Unidentified Flying Objects. The distant pine trees shrouded by mounds and valleys of marsh grass, wild shrubs, brier bushes, and the remnants of dead foliage combine with swamp waters to make the area a forbidding place for native and tourist alike.

