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Introduction

Unexpected events can signal the onset of huge changes in human affairs. One such event took place on the night of July 2, 1947, on a ranch not far from Roswell, New Mexico.

Something strange fell from the stormy sky that night, leaving a trail of wreckage hundreds of feet wide and three quarters of a mile long. The wreckage was discovered the next morning by ranch manager Mac Brazel, who brought it to the attention of military authorities at Roswell Army Air Force Base. After an initial examination of materials from the crash site, the base commander declared in a press release that a "flying disk" of unknown origin had been recovered. The announcement was an instant sensation. "RAAF Captures Flying Saucer" headlined the Roswell Daily Record of July 8.

However, one day later, commanding General Roger Ramey at Carswell Army Air Force Base in Texas officially declared the first report to be in error. Evidently acting on direct orders from Washington, Ramey said that the alleged "flying disk" had turned out to be just a weather balloon. Apologies were made, witnesses declined further comment, and the "weather balloon" was secretly flown to Wright Field (now Wright-Patterson Air Force Base) in Dayton, Ohio, never to be seen again. Thus was a potentially earth-shaking story consigned to oblivion, where it rested for over 30 years.

Today, thanks to the determined efforts of UFO researchers, the so-called Roswell incident is recognized as a milestone in the unfolding drama of human-alien contact on planet earth. That a majority of Americans, along with most people the world over, still remain uninformed about this incident testifies to the power and ingenuity of official efforts to keep it secret. Yet, the evidence supporting claims that the "weather balloon" was, after all, a flying object of unknown origin is now so voluminous as to virtually rule out contrary explanations.

What crashed in 1947 near Roswell did signal a turning point in history, for it made plain the fact that non-human intelligence, equipped with astounding technology, was present on the earth.

Waking up to this fact can be an unsettling development in one's life. For me, this development began in August of 1989, when I first took a serious look at evidence pertaining to UFOs and the alleged alien presence. On recognizing that I could not casually brush this evidence aside, I felt almost unable to function. I sensed that if claims of the alien presence were even partly true, they must eventually come to bear upon every dimension of human affairs. After regaining my composure, I decided to learn all I could about the subject and found its importance growing clearer with every passing day. In December of 1989, I launched the Visitors Investigation Project as a special focus of my future-studies organization, the 2020 Group; and in March of 1990, I published a brief summary of initial findings titled UFOs and the Alien Presence: Time for the Truth.

An unexpected outcome of this modest first effort was that I soon found myself talking with many of the most

accomplished UFO researchers in America. Some of these people have pursued the maddeningly elusive evidence of the alien presence for decades, and their willingness to share their hard won understandings with me face to face has accelerated my own learning as nothing else could.

This brings me to the purpose of the present book. During 1990, several of these researchers consented to indepth interviews with me and my associate Ralph Steiner. These interviews trace the paths these researchers have followed in coming to their present viewpoints on the alien presence. Each one, therefore, is a personal story of the quest to find meaning and order in a body of data that is often shocking in its implications, yet also frustrating in its incompleteness. These interviews, supported by numerous annotations, form the body of this book. My hope is that this approach will make the subject of the alien presence more accessible and compelling to a general audience.

Toward the end of his life, the noted astronomer and UFO researcher J. Allen Hynek said, "We don't have UFOs, only UFO reports." At first glance, this statement might seem to reduce the phenomenon to a collection of wild stories, signifying no more than the all-too-human penchant for selfdeception and wishful thinking. But Hynek made clear that this was not his intent. He was acknowledging that, at present, there is nowhere that the interested citizen can go for incontrovertible evidence of the alien presence. No public museum houses alien artifacts. No craft of unknown origin has ever landed on the White House lawn for the benefit of television news. Not one UFO photo out of thousands has yet been accorded the status of absolute authenticity. Lacking such things as would silence skepticism once and for all, researchers must admit that the argument for an alien presence on earth rests mainly upon a huge number of reports from witnesses who are, or ought to be, inherently credible. These witnesses include police officers, airline pilots, military personnel, highly educated professionals of many kinds, and tens of thousands of citizens from all walks of life who risk great discomfort, with little hope of personal gain, in telling their frequently bizarre stories of alien visitation. Far from belittling these "mere" reports, Hynek insisted that their volume and consistency demanded serious scientific attention.

There is other evidence, to be sure. Though every known UFO photo to date is subject to various criticisms, some have been studied by expert photo analysts and judged likely to be authentic. Though the phenomenon of alien abduction is evidenced mainly in the stories told by alleged abductees, it is supported by inexplicable physical scars and undeniable psychological trauma in many cases. Then there are the physical traces allegedly left by alien craft, including burn rings, odd concentrations of radiation, changes in soil chemistry and compaction' and so forth. Over 4,000 such trace cases have been compiled around the world by UFO researchers. Other "traces" include mysterious animal mutilations and crop circles. In recent years, there has been growing speculation that neither of these widespread and highly visible phenomena can be explained without reference to alien activity.

And what of alleged top-secret documents that have recently come to light, purporting to describe the U.S. government's longtime covert handling of the alien presence? Chief among these are the so-called MJ-12 documents, first brought to public attention in 1987. As recounted by former New York Times journalist Howard Blum in his 1990 book *Out There*, the FBI launched a top-priority investigation of the MJ12 documents in order to determine whether they were authentic and, if so, who was responsible for their release, which would constitute an act of espionage. To their evident embarrassment, Blum says, they could not answer either question.

The investigative approach to such documents is always to prove fraud, if possible, since proving authenticity is much more difficult. But regarding MJ-12, the FBI could not prove fraud (much as they might have wanted to). Alongside that, as recounted in the present book, UFO researcher Stanton Friedman did an exhaustive analysis of these documents, also looking for signs of fraud. In his opinion, there are none. Indeed, many small details argue strongly against the possibility of fraud. If, therefore, we regard these documents as probably authentic, we are left to conclude that the alien presence is not only abundantly real but also the best-kept secret in history. If, on the other hand, the documents represent a fraud of such exceptional quality that neither the FBI nor other expert investigators can detect it, we are most probably dealing with officially-contrived disinformation on a level rarely seen before. And we must ask why.

Taken all together, the evidence for an alien presence on earth is enormous. Few people on earth know that evidence better, or have thought about it more carefully, than the researchers who speak in the following pages:

- Stanton Friedman, a nuclear physicist whose long scientific career spans both private industry and classified

government projects, has investigated UFOs for some three decades.

He is probably the top independent authority on the U.S. government's UFO cover-up, as well as a firm advocate of the proposition that at least some UFOs are bona fide alien spacecraft of extraterrestrial origin.

- Linda Moulton Howe, a documentary film-maker whose production credits include work for CNN and the Fox television network, has become the outstanding expert on animal mutilation and its probable origins in alien activity since her award-winning documentary *A Strange Harvest* was released in 1980.
- Budd Hopkins, a successful New York artist, is largely responsible for bringing the phenomenon of abduction to the forefront of current UFO research with his publication of two bestselling books on the subject during the past decade. Recently, he has established the Intruders Foundation to accommodate the growing demand for assistance from traumatized abductees.
- Donald Ware, a career Air Force officer schooled in nuclear engineering, has studied the UFO phenomenon for some three decades and today is Eastern Regional Director for the Mutual UFO Network. Don played a key role in MUFON's investigation of the now-famous Gulf Breeze UFO sightings. Recently, he has turned his attention to what he calls "the larger reality" behind UFOs, contending that the main intent of the alien presence is to help usher in a new spiritual dimension to human existence.

Alongside these four accomplished researchers, I have included in this book two other people whose personal stories serve to illustrate the profound complexity of alleged human-alien interaction.

The first of these people is already famous in UFO circles. His name is Bob Lazar, and he claims to have been hired by the Office of Naval Intelligence to conduct engineering studies of an operational alien spacecraft at a secret government base in Nevada. Bob has become the subject of endless speculation among pundits of every stripe. The bottom-line question, of course, is simply this: Is he telling the truth? In this book, he recounts his story more fully than ever before. Having sat eyeball to eyeball with him as he spoke, having considered the efforts of those who purport to discredit him, and having recently heard from new witnesses whose claims parallel Lazar's in many respects, I offer my own opinion: I think he is telling the truth. If I'm right, his testimony has devastating implications.

The other personal story in this book is told by "Tom," a successful businessman living in Santa Barbara, California. In a sense, Tom's story represents the untold stories of thousands of ordinary citizens who, unknown to their friends and associates, harbor a deep secret: they have encountered the alien presence, not once but many times, and it has indelibly marked themselves.

It seems only fair to acknowledge that many other people could have been invited to speak in the pages of a book like this, circumstances permitting. There are, at a conservative guess, at least several dozen researchers in the United States alone whose expertise and contributions to our knowledge of the UFO phenomenon rival those of the people presented here. There are, furthermore, at least as many also working in Europe, Latin America and other parts of the world. I for one feel indebted to them all.

I also feel obliged to say that this book makes no attempt to represent a true cross-section of opinion on the alien presence. Such a cross-section would include at least the following four categories of opinion.

First, there are substantial numbers of well-informed people who insist that all UFOs and alleged close encounters can be explained as natural phenomena or, in some cases, the products of human folly or fraud. It is certainly true that many UFO sightings can be attributed to misidentified conventional aircraft, celestial bodies and so forth. Some "abductions" probably have prosaic explanations, ranging from distorted recollections of rape or other trauma to outright delusion. Likewise, there are demonstrable cases of fraud, some very cleverly contrived. But the people in this first group, many of whom are scientists, hold that there is no evidence whatsoever to support claims of an alien presence on earth, past or present. In this book, Stanton Friedman addresses these people in no uncertain terms, arguing that their viewpoint, which seems to proceed from the assumption that an alien presence is impossible *a priori* can only be based upon ignorance or willful denial of the facts. While many in this first group seem to be expressing sincere views, evidence indicates that some are simply lying. Indeed, denial and deception have characterized the official UFO cover-up since its

inception in 1947.

Second, some UFO researchers believe that only a very small number of cases represent evidence of an alien presence. While agreeing, for example, that the Roswell incident is legitimate, they are inclined to see it as a rare and isolated event, evidence that intelligent beings do exist beyond the confines of earth, but not that such beings are here in significant numbers. I like to think of these people as the conservative wing of ufology. They are important in that they provide a much needed corrective for others in the field whose enthusiasm runs at times toward credulity. Among the present interview subjects, Bob Lazar probably comes closest to this conservative view. On the other hand, his claims are hotly disputed by many in the conservative camp. All in all, the conservative viewpoint is not represented here.

Third, there are some people whose professed knowledge and experience of the alien presence is derived from channelled entities, telepathic communication and the like. These people often speak of a benign "space brotherhood" that watches over the plight of humanity and stands ready to assist in our eventual salvation. Some of them claim to have taken rides on alien craft in full waking consciousness, and to have dealt with alien beings that appear like "perfected humans." Famous contactees of the 1950s, such as George Adamski and George Van Tassel, and the more recent case of Billy Meier, epitomize this category. While it would be pleasant to discover that the adherents of space brotherhood are even partly correct, the best current evidence leads mainly in other directions. Thus, these people are not represented here, although the interview with Donald Ware does address some aspects of their viewpoint.

Finally, there are numerous researchers who belong to what I will call the liberal wing of ufology. I include myself in this group, along with those who speak in these pages. Within this group, the alien presence is generally regarded as having several important characteristics, among which are the following:

- The alien presence is real. Evidence overwhelmingly supports the basic claim that intelligent non-human beings are present on the earth.
- The alien presence is substantial. There are not just a few compelling cases, but hundreds or thousands, suggesting that alien entities are here in large numbers.
- The alien presence is active and purposeful. Evidence suggests that alien entities are engaged in a wide variety of activities, some involving human-alien contact, some involving other earth-based life-forms, geophysical experiments, and so forth. Many of their actions remain inscrutable, yet some kind of purpose must motivate them.
- The alien presence is diverse. Evidence suggests that more than one type of alien intelligence is functioning on earth. There may be dozens of different types, some related to and cooperative with one another, some perhaps wholly unrelated and even at odds with one another. Some of these beings are probably true extraterrestrials, visiting from a planet that circles a distant star. Some may actually be indigenous to the earth, yet belong to an order of being unrelated to humanity. Some may even traverse parallel dimensions to appear among us, only to disappear again (as often reported) through esoteric portals they alone can see.
- The alien presence is known to elite and secretive groups within the U.S. government, as well as other major governments. For a variety of reasons, those who know of it decided decades ago that public revelation of the alien presence posed an unacceptable risk to social order. Thus, the truth has been hidden behind the most aggressive and ingenious cover-up in history. It is possible that the nature of this coverup has started to change in recent years. In any case, alien-related occurrences have become so numerous and visible that the cover-up is slowly being undone. How governments will respond to this development, over which they have very limited control, remains difficult to predict.

Although I believe all the voices in this book speak essentially from this "liberal" viewpoint on the alien presence, I do not mean to suggest that they are all in complete agreement. On the contrary, there are probably as many independent viewpoints on this complex subject as there are researchers and firsthand witnesses. Nor do I necessarily agree with everything said in the following pages. I do feel confident, however, that those who speak here have gone further than most other people toward understanding what is actually true in the matter of an alien presence on our planet, and that their willingness to speak out is a service to humanity.

There can be no doubt that human history is entering a new era. Assuming that much of the information in this book proves true, as I expect it will, the new era might well be characterized above all by the discovery of our place in the galactic community of intelligence. Such a discovery could bring many anxieties and discomforts in the short term. But perhaps, in the end, it will be exceedingly good news. Regardless, it is important for citizens the world over to recognize that we are not alone in the wide universe. Ignorance and willful denial of this stupendous fact must soon end. This book is offered as a contribution toward that goal.

Michael Lindemann
President, 2020 Group
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