

Kinder, Gary. *Light Years: An Investigation Into the Extraterrestrial Experiences of Eduard Meier*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987.

Korff, Kal K. *Spaceships of the Pleiades: The Billy Meier Story*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1995.

———. "The Meier Incident: The Most Infamous Hoax in Ufology." *MUFON UFO Journal* 154 (December 1980): 3-6.

———. "The Meier Photographs—Hoax from the Pleiades." *UFO Report* 8,6 (December 1980): 14-21,44.

———. "The Billy Meier Hoax." *Frontiers of Science* 3,3 (March/April 1981): 31-33,44.

Korff, Kal K., with William L. Moore. *The Meier Incident: The Most Infamous Hoax in Ufology*. Fremont, CA: The Author, 1981.

McClellan, Bill. "Sleuths to Film Movie on Visitors from Outer Space." *Phoenix Gazette* (June 30, 1978).

Maccabee, Bruce. "Pendulum from the Pleiades." *International UFO Reporter* 14,1 (January/February 1989): 11-12,22.

———. "Billy, No; Ed, Yes." *International UFO Reporter* 14,3 (May/June 1989): 16-19,24.

"Open Letter." *The A.P.R.O. Bulletin* (August 1979): 1,3,4.

"Sightings and Encounters: Update on the Pleiades Contact Case." *Second Look* 2,4 (May/June 1980): 10,12.

Stevens, Wendelle C. *UFO . . . Contact from the Pleiades—A Preliminary Investigation Report—The Report of an Ongoing Contact*. Tucson, AZ: Wendelle C. Stevens, 1983.

———. *UFO . . . Contact from the Pleiades: A Supplementary Investigation Report—The Report of an Ongoing Contact*. Tucson, AZ: Wendelle C. Stevens, 1989.

———, ed. *Message from the Pleiades: The Contact Notes of Eduard "Billy" Meier, Volume I*. Phoenix, AZ: Wendelle C. Stevens and Genesis III Publishing, 1988.

———, ed. *Message from the Pleiades: The Contact Notes of Eduard "Billy" Meier, Volume II*. Phoenix, AZ: Wendelle C. Stevens and Genesis III Publishing, 1990.

———, ed. *Message from the Pleiades: The Contact Notes of Eduard "Billy" Meier, Volume III*. Phoenix, AZ: Wendelle C. Stevens and Genesis III Publishing, 1994.

Thompson, Richard L. *Alien Identities: Ancient Insights into Modern UFO Phenomena*. San Diego, CA: Govardhan Hill Publishing, 1993.

Winters, Randolph. *The Pleiadian Mission: A Time of Awareness*. Atwood, CA: The Pleiades Project, 1994.

MEN IN BLACK

In the midst of a religious revival in Wales, a young rural woman, described as "exceptionally intelligent," was visited three nights in succession by a "man dressed in black," Beriah G. Evans of the *Barmouth Advertiser* reported on March 30, 1905. "This figure has delivered a message to the girl which she is frightened to relate."

The revival owed its inspiration to the charismatic Mary Jones, a 38-year-old farmwife and recent convert to fervent Christian faith, who had quickly become a preacher of exceptional power and persuasiveness. Those who accompanied her in her travels through the Welsh countryside noted that mysterious lights seemed to accompany her. This aspect of her ministry was widely remarked on in press accounts—not surprisingly, because journalists saw the lights, too. Since the lights also appeared in places where Mrs. Jones did not happen to be, the association between the lights and her was most likely coincidental. Wales apparently was undergoing what decades later would be called a UFO wave.

Evans wrote that on at least one other occasion a man in black was observed:

During Mrs. Jones's visit to Bryncrug, in the neighborhood of Towyn, a similar apparition was seen from different standpoints, but simultaneously by (a) a local professional man and (b) a gentleman farmer of good standing. The former, startled, uttered an involuntary prayer. Immediately one of Mrs. Jones's mysterious "Lights" appeared above, a white ray darting from which pierced the figure, which thereupon vanished [Evans, 1905].

Nearly a century later it is difficult to know what to make of stories like these. The Welsh landscape of early 1905 was rife with supernatural manifestations. Persons affected by the revival reported encounters with Jesus, angels, and demonic black dogs. Satan, too, was met on dark country roads. Perhaps the men

in black were his agents, and as dependent on the imagination of the beholder as the other denizens of heaven and hell "seen" by the faithful and the fervent.

Men in black had already been associated with the devil for several centuries (Gregory, 1971). As William Woods writes of medieval encounters in *A History of the Devil* (1973), "Sometimes the devil wears green or gray, but mostly he is dressed in black, and always in the fashion of the day." In 1730 a 13-year-old Norwegian girl told clerical witch-hunters, who did not doubt her testimony, that six years earlier she and her grandmother had flown on the back of a pig to attend a meeting with Satan. On the way, the clerics wrote in their report of the interrogation, "they met three men dressed in black whom the grandmother referred to as 'grandfather's boys'." Once arrived at their destination, they "went in and sat down at table next to the devil, whom her grandmother called 'grandfather'" (Robbins, 1959). "Three men dressed in black" would be heard of again, in a whole new context, over two centuries later.

Albert Bender and the men in black. In the summer of 1947, as "flying saucers" entered public consciousness following a wave of sightings that began in the Pacific Northwest and soon spread across the continent (Bloecher, 1967), a man named Harold Dahl reported that he had observed a UFO as it discharged metallic substances into the ocean water between Tacoma and Maury Island, Washington. The following morning, he claimed, a stranger clad in a dark suit invited him to breakfast in downtown Tacoma, then startled him by reciting a detailed account of Dahl's experience of the previous day, even though at that point it had received no publicity. The stranger then threatened Dahl, intimating that he and his family would be harmed if he discussed his sighting with anyone else.

Subsequent investigation by the Air Force (Ruppelt, 1956; Strentz, 1970) elicited confessions from Dahl and associate Fred L. Crisman that the two—with Crisman acting as mastermind—had engineered a fantastic **hoax**. Nonetheless some civilian investigators, most notably Kenneth Arnold (Arnold and Palmer, 1952; "The Mystery," 1948), refused to credit the retraction and charged that the truth about what would be called the "Maury Island mystery" was

being covered up (see *The Emergence of Phenomenon*, pp. 244-46). This is almost certainly untrue, but the legend would live on among uncritical flying-saucer enthusiasts. It would mark the first claimed appearance of a man in black in a UFO-era context, though the concept of "men in black" would not be formed until a few years later.

The International Flying Saucer Bureau (IFSB), which came into being in April 1952 under the direction of Albert K. Bender of Bridgeport, Connecticut, was the most successful early UFO organization. Within months of its creation the IFSB had branches in other countries, an active investigations unit, and a magazine, *Space Review*. But in the fall of 1953 Bender's ardent pursuit abruptly ended. The following month Bender wrote in *Space Review*, "The mystery of the flying saucers is no longer a mystery. The source is already known, but any information about this is being withheld by orders from a higher source." He urged UFO enthusiasts to "please be very cautious."

To a few close associates, including IFSB chief investigator Gray Barker, Bender confided a strange story. He said that in late September, after he had confided a UFO theory to an unnamed correspondent, three dark-suited men visited him. The men, who Bender intimated were agents of the U.S. government, imparted the alarming answer to the UFO mystery and threatened him with imprisonment if he told anyone. The episode was so upsetting that Bender was physically ill for three days afterwards. One of the strangers paid a return visit, acting friendlier this time and enabling Bender to recover from the trauma of the earlier meeting.

Bender's "silencing" obsessed Barker, who would go on to become a prominent writer, editor, and publisher on the fringes of saucerdom (see *Emergence*, pp. 71-76). In a February 1954 article he wrote a cautious summation of all that was known, which was not much; he also acknowledged that UFO enthusiasts, including himself, might be making too much of this. The article mentioned Australian ufologist Edgar Jarrold, who recently had received a visitor who had told him startling UFO secrets which Jarrold was directed to keep to himself (Barker, 1954). Not long afterwards a badly frightened Jarrold dropped out of active UFO research (Barker, 1956).

Almost certainly the Bender and Jarrold matters would have passed into obscurity if not for *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*, the book Barker would write two years later. *They Knew Too Much* launched the men-in-black legend in ufology. Casting all his previous reservations and doubts aside, Barker recounted, in 246 pages of dramatic, paranoia-drenched prose, the doings of the sinister "Silence Group" which brought enforcers in dark suits to the residences of UFO researchers who got too close to the truth. Among the victims, Barker asserted, were Bender, Dahl, and Crisman in the United States, Jarrold in Australia, John Stuart and Doreen Wilkinson in New Zealand (see **Sex and UFOs**), and Laimon Mitris (given the pseudonym "Gordon Smallwood" in the book) of Canada. Barker freely speculated that the silencers might be of unearthly origin, and he warned readers that soon they "will be at your door, too, unless we all get wise and find out who the three men really are."

Barker kept what he called the "Bender mystery" alive by featuring it regularly in the pages of his magazine *The Saucerian* (later *Saucerian Bulletin*), whose readership consisted mostly of persons attracted to the claims and concerns of the emerging contactee movement. Conservative ufologists paid little attention to men-in-black tales, but such stories frightened and enthralled saucer fans of a paranoid bent.

South African contactee Ann Grevler identified the "'Men in Dark Suits' and all the other mysterious strangers threatening those 'who know too much'" as evil space people seeking to thwart the efforts of benevolent extraterrestrials (Anchor, 1958). To contactees George Hunt Williamson and John McCoy, the

"three men" are not just peculiar to "Saucer" investigation, for there have always been "three men" present during every great event of recorded (and unrecorded) history. They operate as hired henchmen of the "International Bankers" and their only duty is to suppress all men who would act as channels of truth to other men. . . . These secret world rulers will never allow official UFO announcements to be made to the public. If they did allow it, it would spell their doom. If the technology of the space

visitors is revealed it will immediately eliminate the need for oil, gas, automobiles, and practically everything else that drains the public and keeps every family in America on a credit-buying spree until they are deposited six feet under [Williamson and McCoy, 1958].

George Adamski, the leading contactee of the period, was sure he knew from where the conspiracy was being orchestrated. "Zurich, financial center of the world, is the international headquarters for the 'Silence Group'!" he exclaimed. "The invisible reins of financial influence extend from Zurich to puppet organizations in every nation!" (Adamski, 1961).

But in 1962, in *Flying Saucers and the Three Men*, Bender told a different story. He claimed that his silencing had occurred after he incurred the wrath of monstrous extraterrestrials who kidnapped him and flew him to the South Pole. These beings monitored his activities until 1960, when they returned to their home planet Kazik and Bender was freed to tell his tale. Even Barker, who published the book—which read like a mediocre science-fiction novel—under his Saucerian imprint, privately expressed disbelief, and most readers did not take it seriously. Still, whatever his off-stage reservations, Barker kept the "mystery" alive in a series of publications and promotions, the last of which appeared a year before his death (Barker, 1983). In 1963 he released both *The Bender Mystery Confirmed*, an anthology of readers' sometimes strange responses to *Three Men*, and the more interesting—and even stranger—*UFO Warning*, John Stuart's allegedly true account of how supernatural sexual harassment drove him and Doreen Wilkinson out of ufology. His colleagues suspected Stuart, a married man, had spun an absurd yarn to cover up an affair which resulted in Wilkinson's pregnancy.

There was no way to reconcile Bender's earlier story, sketchy though it was, with the latter tale. Those whose interest in the matter had not yet flagged could only deduce that either the "Bender mystery" was a fabrication from the outset or the first story was true and the second a concoction intended to end years of pestering by nosy UFO buffs. Persons who knew Bender, recalling how frightened he had been in the

fall of 1953, remained convinced that government agents had indeed threatened him.

Bender eventually moved to Bakersfield, California, and later to Los Angeles. Since the late 1960s he has had virtually nothing to do with UFOs and ufologists. It is likely that the truth will come to light only if one day someone finds the relevant documents in an official file—assuming, of course, Bender was in fact the subject of government attention. In the meantime, however, a plausible retrospective interpretation of the episode is possible.

In January 1953 the Central Intelligence Agency, fearing that the Soviet Union might use UFO reports for psychological warfare and other subversive ends, assembled a panel of five American scientists, all with CIA connections, under the leadership of physicist H. P. Robertson. Over the next four days, in Washington, D.C., the scientists devoted a total of 12 hours to reviewing data from the Air Force's **Project Blue Book**. Their final report contended that UFO reports, while all potentially explainable, comprised a danger to national security because they could "overload channels of communication with material quite irrelevant to hostile objects that might some day appear." Thus the Air Force should energetically debunk UFOs and embark on an educational campaign to discourage public interest, thereby reducing the "dangers related to 'flying saucers'."

Furthermore, civilian UFO groups "should be watched because of their potentially great influence on mass thinking if widespread sightings should occur. The apparent irresponsibility and the possible use of such groups for subversive purposes should be kept in mind" (Durant, 1953; *Emergence*, pp. 289-91).

In September 1953, when Bender allegedly met the three agents, the Robertson panel's existence, formally classified Secret, was unknown to anyone in the civilian UFO community.

There are other, more specific reasons Bender may have drawn official interest. Unlike most other saucer clubs of the period, IFSB participated actively in investigations of UFO reports. The most remarkable of these was a physical-evidence case. Shortly after 9 P.M. on August 19, 1953, residents of New Haven, Connecticut, heard an explosion and observed a fast-

moving, ricocheting "fireball" at treetop level. They also saw a freshly made foot-wide hole in a nearby metal signboard. The object apparently had ripped through 20-gauge steel and continued on its way undeterred ("Mystery Blast," 1953). Naval Ordnance personnel were on the scene soon afterwards. So was IFSB investigator August C. Roberts, who managed to extract at least one small piece from the sign.

IFSB sent the sample to Col. Robert B. Emerson, a Louisiana-based physicist, member of the U.S. Army Reserve, and IFSB research consultant, later to serve on the Board of Governors of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena. Emerson said he would contact friends at the atomic-research facility at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, about having it analyzed. If anything came of this, no record of it survives. A separate analysis arranged through the Wisconsin-based Aerial Phenomena Research Organization determined that a second fragment consisted mostly of copper and copper oxide (Eifert, 1953). This, plus the fireball's movement, ruled out any possibility it was a meteorite. (In the late 1940s, in the wake of a series of sightings of enigmatic green fireballs in New Mexico, scientists were surprised to find copper particles in collections of air dust. University of New Mexico meteoriticist Lincoln La Paz, who was investigating the fireball sightings for the Air Force, said, "I know of no case in which even the tiniest particle of copper has been reported in a dust collection supposedly of meteoritic origin." [See *Emergence*, pp. 182-91.])

In a reconstruction of the Bender episode, Michael D. Swords has suggested that Roberts's retrieval of the metal pieces—"under the noses of Naval Ordnance investigators"—would almost certainly have attracted the attention of federal authorities (Swords, 1992). Furthermore, he writes, IFSB

was a civilian organization actually attempting scientific research on UFOs (case studies, photo analysis, metallurgy). In some significant way it may have been the first such organization probing into the flying discs in this fashion. It also had an expanding international network for sharing projects and information. One such project between Bender and his Australian and New Zealand colleagues was to plot UFO flight

paths in hopes of discovering their bases of origin. What do you think U.S. intelligence thought of all this in 1953?

It requires little genius to suspect that the CIA, et al., were monitoring this organization and that several developments indicated that the stage in which the IFSB was only a harmless flying-saucer club was passing. International projects plotting unidentified aircraft flights are plenty enough to concern the CIA. . . . Also it was the period directly following the Robertson Panel and its CIA concerns with the potential Soviet manipulability of the UFO phenomenon. What would intelligence agencies' opinions be about a bunch of Americans preaching an open-arms welcome for strange incoming ships in the sky?

This interpretation does not necessarily require us to believe that the United States government was covering up secrets related to extraterrestrial visitation (nor, of course, does it contradict this view). The copper "fireball" may have been a military device, the aircraft flights those of Allied or Soviet planes. The fantastic, frightening story the three men told Bender may have been concocted for his benefit, to scare him out of further UFO research.

If this is indeed what happened, Bender would not be the last victim of such a counterintelligence scheme. In the early 1980s Albuquerque physicist and UFO enthusiast Paul Bennewitz became the target of intimidation after he monitored electronic signals emanating from a nuclear installation near Kirtland Air Force Base. Bennewitz decided that these messages were of extraterrestrial origin, sent from UFOs operating in the area. The signals, which were not illusory, were part of a highly classified military experiment, though there is no reason to think they had anything to do with UFOs. When Kirtland authorities learned of Bennewitz's eavesdropping, they turned on him with a vengeance, employing psychological-warfare techniques which one observer and partial participant (Bishop, 1993; Moore, 1989) has claimed were intended to trigger an emotional collapse. If so, they succeeded. Bennewitz was already entertaining dark, conspiratorial theories about UFOs and their intentions; operatives from the Air Force Office of Special

Investigations passed on disinformation, alleged to be the U.S. government's deepest UFO secrets, which confirmed and enlarged on Bennewitz's fantasies. Bennewitz became so distraught that soon afterwards he was hospitalized. He subsequently retired from the UFO scene. (For a full account of this extraordinary episode, see *UFOs in the 1980s*, pp. 88-95, 103-07.)

The Jarrold affair, it is now known, was neither so menacing nor so mysterious as Barker made it out to be, and it had nothing to do with the "Bender mystery." Jarrold's flying-saucer obsession had placed him in an unstable state which soon led to an emotional breakdown and the break-up of his family. The purportedly enigmatic visitor whom Barker linked to Bender's men in black was in reality an itinerant occultist, contactee, and retired bank security guard named Gordon Deller. Deller told the impressionable Jarrold that flying saucers were of "etheric" (other-dimensional) origin, that etherians had chosen Jarrold as one of their earthly agents, and that their coming had to do with an imminent geological cataclysm. Deller also called on Jarrold's New Zealand friend and colleague Harold Fulton, who dismissed him as an amiable crackpot. After leaving New Zealand, Deller traveled to North America where he met, among others, Laimon Mitris. (See *Emergence*, pp. 339-41, 344-46.)

John Keel and the MIB. By the mid-1950s the legend of the men in black had become fixed in the imaginations of ufology's more excitable followers. Yet, with the arguable exception of the early Bender affair (as opposed to the later Bender book), it was much ado about little beyond fabrication, paranoia, and Barker's promotional genius. Probably the notion of men in black would have devolved into vague memory had it not been for the efforts of occult journalist John A. Keel. Through Keel men in black were not only revived but transformed into something else entirely: the "MIB."

Though he did not appear on the UFO scene until the mid-1960s, Keel would become one of the most influential writers in the history of ufology. At a time when the mainstream ufological consensus had only recently embraced reports (later to be called **close encounters of the third kind**) of even briefly ob-

served UFO occupants, Keel championed a far more exotic vision of the UFO phenomenon than anyone but fringe figures had fancied heretofore.

Financed by a hefty advance from a major New York book publisher, he set out from his home in Manhattan to collect testimony from witnesses in the field. The bulk of his time in 1966 and 1967 was spent on Long Island and in the Ohio River Valley, where he interviewed persons who recounted bizarre experiences with a range of otherworldly entities. Essentially a demonologist, Keel ridiculed extraterrestrial theories; to him UFOs and the creatures associated with them represented a malevolent supernatural order which had been interfering in human affairs as long as there had been *Homo sapiens*.

Among the entities whose activities Keel chronicled were not-quite-human individuals who intimidated witnesses and who seemed linked with UFOs. Sometimes, he wrote, they threatened witnesses who had not told anyone else about their sightings. Usually they wore dark suits, sometimes with turtleneck sweaters, and had dark complexions and Oriental features. Others were pale and bug-eyed. Their behavior was frequently odd, as if they were operating in an environment alien to them. In many cases they drove black Cadillacs or other limousinelike vehicles.

Keel had no doubt that his informants were telling the truth because he himself had seen these entities on more than one occasion. In the summer of 1967, responding to a series of strange phone messages which urged him to go by himself to a solitary location on Long Island, "I found a large black Cadillac containing two dark-skinned men in dark suits apparently waiting for me," he wrote (Keel, 1968). "They blinked their headlights at me and then slowly drove off. I followed them for several miles, until they went around a bend in the road in a heavily forested area and disappeared. I had cruised around for several minutes trying to pick up their trail when suddenly they reappeared behind me and followed me! I stopped and started to get out of my rented car but they drove slowly on past me and again vanished. Apparently the whole episode was staged to convince me that the Men In Black really do exist."

On other occasions, he wrote, "I woke up in the middle of the night to find myself unable to move,

with a huge dark apparition standing over me" (Keel, 1970). This sounds suspiciously like an occurrence of a variety of sleep paralysis, and in fact behavioral scientist and folklorist David J. Hufford cites precisely this quote in a classic book on the subject (Hufford, 1982). Keel further claimed, more fantastically, to have had numerous phone conversations with a "Mr. Apol," who "did not know who or what he was. He was a prisoner of our time frame. He often confused the past with the future. I gathered that he and all his fellow entities found themselves transported backward and forward in time involuntarily, playing out their little games because they were programmed to do so, living—or existing—only so long as they could feed off the energy and minds of mediums and contactees." A Long Island woman allegedly saw Mr. Apol. She knew it was he because when he stepped out of a black Cadillac he shook her hand—his own was "as cold as ice"—and so introduced himself. She said he resembled a "Hawaiian" (Keel, 1975).

Years later Keel would make an even more incredible claim. "I was learning that I could actually control UFO events in those days," he wrote. Having noticed that many reports had MIB wearing turtleneck sweaters, he tried an experiment. He told a friend, biologist and anomalist Ivan T. Sanderson (himself a recipient of MIB visitations, according to Keel [Keel, 1973]), that MIB wore this particular type of apparel to cover the fact that they were sea-dwelling creatures with gills. Soon afterwards, Keel related, a Florida correspondent told him that one rainy night a driver had picked up a turtleneck-clad hitchhiker. When the neck slid down at one point, the driver was shocked to see that his passenger had gills. "I tried numerous variations on this later and found that the MIBs quickly took up many of my notions," Keel asserted. "They were playing games with me. It became obvious that they were not real people but some kind of phantasms" (Keel, 1994).

In Keel's view MIB are ubiquitous presences in human history, responsible for or related to such disparate phenomena as the Grim Reaper image, vampire lore, and demonological visitations. "A dark gentleman in a cloak and hood is supposed to have handed Thomas Jefferson the design for the reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States," he has written. "Julius Caesar, Napoleon, and many others are sup-

posed to have had enigmatic meetings with these odd personages." Another, according to Keel, was Malcolm X (Keel, 1970). Keel claims, moreover:

Men In Black are also an integral part of the Oriental belief in the King of the World. Ancient tradition in parts of China, Tibet and India claims that there is an underground city where the King of the World runs everything by sending spies and minions to the surface. They dress in black robes and suits, of course, their countenances are very Oriental. In the Middle East, they move around the deserts in black robes and headdresses [Beckley, 1990].

Weird tales. Those who suspected MIBs (as Keel called them) were Keel's own invention soon had to deal with similar reports from other sources, and from the 1970s into the early 1980s stories of MIB visitations were, if not welcome in all quarters, certainly ubiquitous. Some examples:

On May 3, 1975, a young private pilot named Carlos de los Santos experienced a near-collision with three daylight discs—an event confirmed by radar at Mexico City airport. The incident attracted considerable press attention, and a week later De los Santos was invited to discuss it on a television talk show. As he drove down the freeway on the way to the interview, a large black Galaxie limousine pulled in front of him. An identical car appeared just behind him. The two vehicles, which looked brand new, forced him to the side of the road. Four tall, broad-shouldered, pale-skinned men in dark suits jumped out and approached the young man, still in his car. Speaking Spanish in a "mechanical" tone, one warned him to cease speaking about the sighting "if you value your life and your family's, too."

A month later, on his way to breakfast with visiting American astronomer/ufologist J. Allen Hynek, De los Santos encountered one of the MIBs on the hotel steps. The MIB shoved him and said something that indicated the young man's movements had been monitored. As before, De los Santos was intimidated into breaking his appointment (Clark, 1979; De los Santos Montiel, 1977).

Though a link between MIB and UFO intelligences is implied in some of the stories, the connection be-

comes explicit in two 1971 tales from South America. On January 23, 1971, a Porto Alegre, Brazil, newspaper took note of recurring UFO sightings in a rural location close to Brasilia. An unnamed local man, a peasant, is quoted as saying that the "state governor" shows up regularly and looks for "little stones" in the nearby woods. Always dressed in black, he arrives via an "airplane . . . made of two dishes, like one atop the other, and when it goes up in the air it changes color and then disappears quicker than a flash" (Creighton, 1972).

In July of that year *El Mundo*, published in Caracas, Venezuela, printed a letter from a Spanish physician, Guillermo Arguello de la Motta, who described an experience he and his family underwent early on the evening of the seventh. While visiting friends who lived near a small town east of Caracas, they saw two black-clad men step out of a brand-new red Mustang automobile. Both wore red ties and black berets—an odd detail which caught the observers' particular attention. In Arguello's words:

The two men stood there waiting for about five minutes and then began to put on orange-colored belts, talking together animatedly in the meantime. Suddenly a shining object appeared in the sky. It rapidly descended and then stopped at a height of about 60 centimeters from the ground. It was circular, bell-shaped underneath, and with a turret on the upper part. Its width could have been about 30 meters. What surprised us most of all about it [were] the rapid changes of color, from orange to blue and then to white. When it halted, floating in the air, it rotated through almost 180 degrees. Suddenly a small parabolic staircase came down from the base of it, which enabled the two men from the Mustang car to enter the saucer with ease. When the staircase had been drawn in again, the craft dipped slightly towards its left side and then, following an inclined flight path, vanished into the sky at an impressive speed. The machine was of course definitely no helicopter. It was totally silent, and its shape was something totally unknown, i.e., not conventional [*ibid.*].

All MIB are not necessarily garbed in dark suits. The term is a generic one, used to refer to any unusual,

threatening, or strangely behaved individual whose appearance on the scene can be linked in some fashion with a UFO sighting. One of the most surrealistic—and comic—MIB episodes took place in rural Ohio in 1974. The witnesses were a couple who to all indications had never heard of MIB.

Marc Hunker, a local representative of the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), interviewed and tape-recorded the couple shortly after the alleged events occurred. The quoted remarks that follow are from the tape.

On a Saturday evening in early April, while driving on a country road in east Hancock County, Frank and Kathy (pseudonyms) spotted a brilliant light low in the north-northeastern sky. Thinking it was from a fire, they decided to drive to the site to see if there was anything they could do to help. Soon, however, the “fire” got bigger and shot up into the air so that the two could see underneath it. Frank conceded the obvious. “That ain’t no barn fire,” he said. “Looked like the whole northeast section of the sky was on fire from it. It was pulsating and shooting off light. It was down on ground level, treetop height and below, just nosing around along the ground there.” They were about five miles south of it.

They got closer to the object. “I got on channel 18 [of his citizen’s band radio] and broke four other guys, and I told them, ‘Fellows, this is the Longrifle Man out here on the Cromer Road, and I got a saucer critter. . . . It’s reddish orange and maybe two or three hundred yards across, and it’s movin’ around.’” As Frank told Hunker:

While we were talkin’ on the radio, that thing seemed to open up and eject, on the end of a rope or somethin’, a large square box-kite contraption. It stuck ‘em out, and they’d go whirly-whirly-whirly in the air for a while, and then it’d stick ‘em back in and close the door. Appeared to me that it was takin’ samples of some kind.

It turned towards us and approached. That’s when I first said, “Kathy, let’s get out of here. We don’t want to get scooped up in that contraption.” But when it started chasin’ us, it quit pullin’ ‘em out.

When it turned slaunch ways—that’s edge-ways—it would look like a long cee-gar. But when it would straighten out, it’d look like a saucer. And when it came towards us—it came well within a half a mile—I could hear some kind of runnin’ sound very faintly to it. . . . Anyway, we turned around and hauled tail out of there. . . .

[I]t must have got aggravated at me for tellin’ the world where it was at and what it was doin’ because it commenced to follerin’ us. . . . It followed us for 47 miles according to my speedometer.

We finally caused it to leave when we turned out the lights. Seems like it was following us by watchin’ the headlights! So I turned out the lights, and with a black car in a black night, it—I guess—finally gave up and left.

By now they were hungry, so they pulled off into the parking lot of the Wigwam, a roadside bar and restaurant. It was 2:15 A.M. They had barely stepped inside when a man rushed up to them and asked excitedly, “What did you see in the sky?”

“You must have a CB,” Frank said. “Did I talk to you?”

The man started at him blankly. “No,” he said. And then, as Kathy would express it subsequently, “he kept a-talkin’ real dumb.” His voice became slow and choppy, and he spoke like a record being played at considerably less than its intended speed: “What . . . did . . . you . . . see . . . in . . . the . . . sky?”

He followed them to their table. Frank asked him again, “If you don’t have a CB, how do you know about it?” The man ignored the question and continued to press them about what they had seen. Finally Frank snapped, “I don’t think that it’s any of your business.” Still, unable to suppress his curiosity, he tried one more time to get an answer. “How do you know about it?” he asked.

The man, in Frank’s words, “got the stupidest look on his face, and then he said the weirdest thing I ever heard.” The man said, “I . . . live . . . by . . . visions!” The words were spoken slowly and choppy. Then, as

Frank put it, "he bugged his eyes out of his head a good three inches."

"Sometimes further," Kathy added. "I thought that I was seeing things. But . . . I knew we weren't seeing things."

As all of this was going on, Frank and Kathy were astounded to observe that nobody else in the restaurant was paying any attention.

The man had an unusually large mouth. Frank said it opened "five inches at least" when he uttered his peculiar remark about visions. The man's nose was longer than normal, and his eyes seemed to emit light. He was short (about 5'4") and bald, with an apparent weight of 140 pounds. His fingers were twice as long as normal fingers.

"I looked daggers at him," Frank said. "He was startin' to make me disgusted, saucer critter notwithstanding. He goes making eyes at my lady. . . . He turned away and went to the other end of the bar." When Frank and Kathy got up to leave, the man shouted, "Hey, where do you think you're going? You get back here! I want to talk to you!"

Speaking loudly enough so that the man could overhear him, Frank said to Kathy, "We don't want to talk to that poor white trash. Let's go!" They got into their car and drove off.

"Everything was all right for a couple miles," Frank recalled. "And then there was two bright eyes that appeared like headlights, only they were real close-set together—closer-set than a jeep would be. . . . They appeared to vary from three inches in diameter and very intense to about 12 inches . . . and they'd go back up and raise up."

Frank's first thought was that they were car lights, probably from a vehicle with a drunk driver at the wheel. The lights were three miles or so away, but they were closing in fast. "I was rollin' along at 50," Frank recalled, "and he was closin' in like 90. So we turned. I didn't want no part of him."

Frank turned off his lights and watched to see what would happen to the lights. "All of a sudden," he said, "zoop! zoop! zoop! Right down he went! He overrun the road, stopped in his tracks, backed up, turned down the road, and then took off it. . . . I presumed

that he left. . . . I turned on the lights again, and about two minutes later, blink! There he was, right behind us again."

By this time Frank and Kathy understood that they were not car lights. In fact, they were shining directly into Frank's rearview mirror, which meant they had to be five or six feet in the air. "We lost him again by turning out the lights again," according to Frank. "I was, I must admit, becoming a little unnerved."

"Just about then," Kathy related, "it felt like a force came up behind me—behind my head—and made me turn around and look back. We were sitting there where the road ended and the other road comes through. And when I turned around, I seen this big orange ball coming up behind the car. And it acted like it was gonna suck us up. . . . I went to say, 'Frank, the red ball!' But all I could say was a bunch of mumbles."

By now some force had grabbed hold of the car and was hanging on. The lights—the ones the couple had seen first—then reappeared on the other side of the orange ball. In front of them, in Frank's words,

a little man on a little black object . . . kept a-goin' back and forth. It was just like a little black man. Like a devil or something. It looked like it had an odd-sized top on it. It was all funny-shaped. I can distinctly remember the triangle on the end of the tail. I was sittin' still, tryin' to make up my mind whether to cross 12 and go south or go in on 12. . . .

But I made up my mind that we better go straight across. And then all this transpired, and instinct took over, and I pulled him into low gear, and away we went across. I let in the clutch and did give it gas, and nothing happened. "Come on, come on, let's go! We ain't gonna wait around for this thing!" And I realized that the rear tires had broke traction. . . .

I stopped, put it in reverse, and backed up, and I definitely felt it wham something solid. Yanked it into low and floored it, and it broke loose three times and then pulled itself across Route 12. And then the critter started followin' us again.

"We saw two white lights, and they were just like glued to the window," Kathy remembered. "We kept seein' this thing—the little man—goin' back and forth, back and forth."

The object followed them nearly all the way home, finally stopping about a quarter of a mile from Frank's house in Findlay. The couple went inside to call Kathy's parents. Half an hour to 45 minutes later, when they next looked, the UFO was gone, and it did not reappear as Frank drove Kathy home.

Marc Hunker interviewed the couple a few days after the alleged encounter. Subsequently he talked with the Wigwam waitress, who remembered seeing Frank and Kathy there that night but did not recall the bizarre events. She did say, however, that she had seen a strange man sitting alone at the bar. She wondered who he was and thought it odd that he would be there by himself at such a late hour. Hunker later found two CB operators who confirmed hearing the "Longrifle Man's" UFO report. One of them had even seen the object.

Hunker wanted to ask Frank and Kathy some further questions. He spoke with Kathy over the phone, and she informed him that recently Frank and a friend had returned to the sighting area and had seen "hundreds of white lights moving about the roads and fields." But Frank refused to discuss the matter with Hunker. Hunker inferred that the couple's recent break-up had soured him. Then Kathy would talk no more either. She and Frank both made it clear that they desired no publicity (Hunker, 1975).

Though it is unlikely that Frank and Kathy were aware of it, on occasion witnesses have described the MIB's habit of making nonsensical declarations and of speaking in suddenly slowed speech. Both of these features appear, for example, in the 1976 Herbert Hopkins episode; see **Oxford Abduction Case**. (See also the 1966 Gallipolis, Ohio, CE3 recounted in **Animal Mutilations and UFOs**.) Possibly the apparent failure of other Wigwam patrons to notice the stranger's peculiar antics connects the encounter with the eeriest of all MIB-related phenomena: the Oz Factor.

Oz Factor. Late one November afternoon in 1980, at the University of Pennsylvania library, Peter M.

Rojcewicz was doing research for a Ph.D. thesis on the folklore of UFOs. "I sat alone in a wing facing a large window to the south," he would recall. "I had the table closest to the window, facing the window. Without any sound to indicate that someone was approaching me from behind, I noticed from the corner of my right eye what I supposed was a man's black pant leg. He was wearing rather worn black leather shoes."

The stranger walked around the table and briefly looked out the window, his back to Rojcewicz, then turned and sat down. He was dark-complexioned, tall, thin, sunken-eyed, and wearing a rumpled black suit too big for him. Speaking articulately with a slight accent Rojcewicz thought to be "European," he asked what the young man was doing. A short conversation on UFOs followed as Rojcewicz, who was not much interested in idle talk, tried to return to his studies. When the stranger asked if he had ever seen a UFO, Rojcewicz said he was more interested at the moment in stories of flying saucers than in the question of whether UFOs existed as physical spacecraft.

These words seemed to set off the man, who suddenly shouted, "Flying saucers are the most important fact of the century, and you're not interested?" Startled and afraid that he might be dealing with a lunatic, Rojcewicz tried to calm him, and the man lapsed into silence. Then he stood up "as if he were mechanically lifted." He placed his hand on Rojcewicz's shoulder and said (as close as Rojcewicz could remember), "Go well in your purpose." Rojcewicz did not watch him go. But a few seconds later he became abruptly fearful as the strangeness of the encounter hit him.

I got up, walked two steps in the direction he had left in, turned around, and returned again to my seat. Got up again. I was highly excited and finally walked around the stacks to the reference desk and nobody was behind the desk. In fact, I could see no one at all in the library. I've gone to graduate school, and I've never been in a library when there wasn't *somebody* there! No one was even at the information desk across the room. I was close to panicking and went quickly back to my desk. I sat down and tried to calm myself. In about an hour I rose

to leave the library. There were two librarians behind each of the two desks! [Rojcewicz, 1987].

Rojcewicz here describes an odd impression some UFO witnesses have described but whose significance went unappreciated until British ufologist Jenny Randles took note of what she called the "Oz Factor"—"the sensation of being isolated, or transported from the real world into [another] environmental framework . . . where reality is but slightly different" (Randles, 1983; see *UFOs in the 1980s*, pp. 169-70.). The Oz Factor figures in other MIB reports, for example this October 1981 report from Victoria, British Columbia:

Three days after a nighttime UFO sighting, a young man named Grant Breiland went to Victoria's business district to meet a friend. When the friend did not show up, Breiland called him from a pay phone located between two glass doors which served as the entry to a popular department store. When he put down the phone and turned around, he was surprised to see two odd-looking men staring at him. Dressed in dark suits, they had "sun-tanned," expressionless faces and unblinking eyes. When they spoke, their lips did not move.

The first asked, "What is your name?" Breiland declined to answer, nor would he offer any information to the second stranger when the latter asked where he lived. Undaunted, the second man posed another question: "What is your number?" Breiland remained silent, and after five seconds the two, moving with a stiff, mechanical stride, left through the main door and walked in perfect synchronization to a nearby roadway. Frightened yet fascinated, Breiland followed them at a close distance even though rain was pouring down. The strangers paid no attention to him, not even when they stopped briefly at the roadside before crossing it and entering a muddy plowed field some 80 to 90 feet across. Three-quarters of the way through it, the MIB vanished. Certain they must be hiding somewhere, Breiland dashed into the field, but when he noticed that the strange men had left no footprints, his nerves finally failed him, and he caught the first bus home.

During the entire time the MIB were visible, no other human beings were in view: in the store, on the sidewalk, or in the streets. Breiland saw parked cars

but no passing ones; yet this was mid-afternoon on Friday in a busy shopping district which had been far from deserted before the incident began. Indeed, the scene became mysteriously repopulated as soon as the MIB disappeared (Edwards, 1982).

Official agents? In early 1967 Col. George P. Freeman, a Pentagon spokesman for Project Blue Book, reported that unknown individuals posing as Air Force officers or as government agents were threatening UFO witnesses, sometimes even confiscating photographs. "We have checked a number of these cases," he said. "We haven't been able to find out anything about these men. By posing as Air Force officers and government agents they are committing a federal offense. We would sure like to catch one" (Keel, 1967).

A few months later, in May 1967, a man identifying himself as Maj. Richard French called on an Owatonna, Minnesota, woman. "He was about five feet nine inches tall with a kind of olive complexion and pointed face," she later told John Keel. "His hair was dark and very long—too long for an Air Force officer, we thought. He spoke perfect English. He was well educated." He wore a fashionable gray suit, white shirt, and black tie.

In the course of the conversation, which dealt with a UFO experience she and a friend had undergone the previous November, French complained of stomach problems, and the woman replied that he might try some jello. French said he would return for some if the problems continued. The following morning he showed up at the door, and the woman sat him down with a bowl of jello, which he proceeded to try to drink. "I had to show him how to eat it with a spoon," she recalled (Keel, 1970). Coincidentally—so one assumes—in the early to mid 1960s the Pentagon spokesman for Project Blue Book was someone named Richard France.

According to ufologist William L. Moore, "the Men in Black are really government people in disguise . . . members of a rather bizarre unit of Air Force intelligence known currently as the Air Force Special Activities Center (AFSAC). . . . As of 1991, the AFSAC, headquartered at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, has been

under the operational authority of the Air Force Intelligence Command centered at Kelly Air Force Base in Texas" (Moore, 1993). Moore claims that "Gray Barker's early-'50s hype" inspired operatives to dress in dark suits and to imitate the men in black of early and later lore. Presumably, if we are to credit Moore's assertions, "Richard French" was having fun at the expense of a UFO witness.

Indeed, many accounts concern individuals who look and behave like normal human beings, or at least normal military officers or intelligence agents, albeit ones who appear under peculiar circumstances (*see*, for example, **North Dakota CE3**).

Consider this March 16, 1993, story from the Groom Lake, Nevada, area, near the site of a highly classified military base at which stealth aircraft are being flown and from which unsubstantiated rumors of captured UFOs and extraterrestrial technology have circulated for years (Cameron, Crain, and Rutkowski, 1990; Campbell, 1993). A couple who had come to watch aerial activity from a hill adjacent to the base saw strange UFO-like lights which, subsequently and confusingly, seemed to transform themselves into an automotive vehicle. After the sighting was concluded, the witnesses sensed that half an hour of the encounter was unaccounted for. Soon afterwards they underwent hypnosis during which they "recalled" an abduction by gray-skinned UFO beings. The man was taken into the craft while the woman was led into a white van she had seen earlier as the two were driving to the site. According to an account written by the male witness, ufologist William F. Hamilton:

Inside the van, two men, dressed entirely in black with black baseball caps on their heads, subjected her to intrusive procedures. They administered some drops in her right eye and placed an odd instrument into her left ear canal. She remembered seeing electronic instruments inside the van as well as automatic rifles. She also recalls that these men admonished her not to speak about her experiences. She did not see the little Gray [alien] during this period, nor does she remember exactly how she was placed back in position by our truck [Hamilton, 1993].

Stories like this one show that the MIB image not only continues but continues to be adaptable to new circumstances and to fresh ufological contexts.

MIB in experience and imagination. In some instances, as we have seen, men-in-black reports can be plausibly interpreted as instances of official interest in UFO sightings, especially those of an unusually evidential nature. MIB reports, on the other hand, tend, as we have seen, to have an outlandish, surrealistic flavor. Keel, Rojcewicz, and other chroniclers, who take the stories at face value, have offered various explanations based on their belief in occult phenomena (*see Paranormal and Occult Theories About UFOs*). Others, for example Hilary Evans, see MIB experiences as psychological experiences of a particularly remarkable kind, though he acknowledges the limitations of this sort of reductionism (Evans, 1984).

Unless all those reporting such experiences are lying—an appealing proposition for which, unfortunately, no good evidence exists—it is hard to imagine an explanation that does not force us to exceed the boundaries of current knowledge. Yet MIB (as opposed to men-in-black) stories, products solely of memory and testimony, can be little more than curiosities. One provisional interpretation, more descriptive than explanatory, might be that such occurrences take place in an "experiential reality"—a kind of subjective state which, at least in its ostensible physical setting, is indistinguishable from event-level reality; yet within this seemingly familiar environment, unearthly entities of various kinds appear and interact with the experient. They may be no more "real" than figures in unusually vivid dreams; thus, for example, they leave no footprints when they are seen to cross a muddy field.

This is in itself, needless to say, an extraordinary hypothesis, positing a kind of hallucinatory experience unrecognized by psychology, whose notion of what comprises a hallucination is far more modest, and it is hard to imagine how such an explanation could apply to that minority of cases involving more than one witness. Even by UFO-report standards, MIB stories are hugely anomalous. It is possible, though hardly certain, that MIB are a strange experi-

ential phenomenon inspired by UFO sightings but not truly related to them.

Thomas E. Bullard, a folklorist specializing in UFO-related beliefs, has placed MIB in a broader tradition of mysterious visitants:

[A]lmost a sense of familiarity attaches to the Men in Black. They step into the shoes vacated by angels and demons to serve as modernized versions of otherworldly messengers, modified to reflect extraterrestrial rather than supernatural employment but clearly functionaries in the same mold. Even high gods like Odin in Norse mythology sometimes disguised themselves and roamed the earth to dispense justice or stir up strife among humans, but this sort of work usually devolved on a servant class of beings. In classical belief demons populated the earth in great number, as did fairies in Celtic folklore, and like fairies these demons worked to help or harm mortals. In Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian and Islamic beliefs these beings lost some of their choice of action as they divided into two distinct camps, one loyal to God and the other henchmen of the devil. . . . Devils and demonic beings enjoy broader license for mischief as they cause harm by whatever means their evil imaginations can devise. . . . [T]he primary activity of demons is to tempt humans into sin. For this purpose demons often disguise themselves by transformation and a common motif in folklore leaves an imperfection in the disguise, often the cloven hoofs of the devil going unchanged. Strange feet and an "artificial" or doll-like look are common traits of Men in Black as well. The devil of folklore sometimes rides a black carriage, the nearest thing to a Cadillac, and often has considerable knowledge and power. If he harms a human he may have to win the permission or cooperation of the victim first, often by trickery; but the saint with a trust in God knew that the devil had no power over the faithful. This theme perhaps reflects the usual harmlessness of Men in Black despite their ability to threaten and scare a witness, though the parallels between devil lore and

Men in Black lore are mostly remote. We can even wonder if MIBs are really evil, since their warning to keep silent might offer good practical advice after all, everything considered [Bullard, 1987].

Sources:

- Adamski, George. *Flying Saucers Farewell*. New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1961.
- Alpert, Kenneth. "The Search for the Hidden World." *Caveat Emptor* 2 (Winter 1971/1972): 19-22, 27-28.
- Anchor [pseudonym of Ann Grevler]. *Transvaal Episode*. Corpus Christi, TX: Essene Press, 1958.
- Arnold, Kenneth, and Ray Palmer. *The Coming of the Saucers: A Documentary Report on Sky Objects That Have Mystified the World*. Boise, ID, and Amherst, WI: The Authors, 1952.
- Barker, Gray. *MIB: The Secret Terror Among Us*. Jane Lew, WV: New Age Press, 1983.
- . *The Silver Bridge*. Clarksburg, WV: Saucerian Books, 1970.
- . *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*. New York: University Books, 1956.
- . "Editorial: The I.F.S.B. Closing." *The Saucerian* 2,1 (February 1954): 1-10.
- , ed. *Bender Mystery Confirmed*. Clarksburg, WV: Saucerian Books, 1962.
- Beckley, Timothy Green. *The UFO Silencers*. New Brunswick, NJ: Inner Light Publications, 1990.
- Bishop, Gregory. "They Paid Me to Say This!" *The Excluded Middle* 2 (1993): 12-17.
- Bloecher, Ted. *Report on the UFO Wave of 1947*. Washington, DC: The Author, 1967.
- Bowen, Charles, ed. *Beyond Condon: Flying Saucer Review Special Issue No. 2, June 1969*. London: Flying Saucer Review, 1969.
- Boyd, Mary. "The Case of Carlo Rossi." *Flying Saucer Review* 21,5 (February 1976): 25-26.
- Bullard, Thomas E. *UFO Abductions: The Measure of a Mystery. Vol. 1: Comparative Study of Abduction Reports. Vol. 2: Catalogue of Cases*. Mount Rainier, MD: Fund for UFO Research, 1987.
- Cameron, Grant R., T. Scott Crain, and Chris Rutkowski. "In the Land of Dreams." *International UFO Reporter* 15,5 (September/October 1990): 4-8.

- Campbell, Glenn. "Area 51" Viewer's Guide. Second edition. Rachel, NV: The Author, 1993.
- Clark, Jerome. *The Emergence of a Phenomenon: UFOs from the Beginning Through 1959—The UFO Encyclopedia, Volume 2*. Detroit, MI: Omnigraphics, 1992.
- . *UFOs in the 1980s: The UFO Encyclopedia, Volume 1*. Detroit, MI: Apogee Books, 1990.
- . "Carlos de los Santos and the Men in Black." *Flying Saucer Review* 24,4 (January 1979): 8-9.
- . "Men in Black." In Curtis G. Fuller, ed. *Proceedings of the First International UFO Congress*, 273-93. New York: Warner Books, 1980.
- Creighton, Gordon. "South American Round-up, 1971." *FSR Case Histories* Pt. I. 10 (June 1972): 8-9,11.
- Davenport, Marc. *Visitors from Time: The Secret of the UFOs*. Tigard, OR: Wild Flower Press, 1992.
- De los Santos Montiel, Carlos. Interviewed by Jerome Clark and Richard Heiden, April 1977.
- Durant, F. C. *Report on Meetings of Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects Convened by Office of Scientific Intelligence, CIA: January 14-18, 1953*. Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1953.
- Edwards, P.M.H. "M.I.B. Activity Reported from Victoria, B.C." *Flying Saucer Review* 27,4 (January 1982): 7-12.
- Eifert, Carl. Milwaukee, WI: United Press International dispatch, October 21, 1953.
- Evans, Beriah G. "Merionethshire Mysteries." *Occult Review* Pt. I. 1,3 (March 1905): 113-20; Pt. II. 1,4 (April 1905): 179-86; Pt. III. 1,5 (June 1905): 287-95.
- Evans, Hilary. *Visions, Apparitions, Alien Visitors*. Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, England: The Aquarian Press, 1984.
- Fairbanks, Thomas A. "A New Look at the Three Men in Black." *Caveat Emptor* 3 (Spring 1972): 6-8,23.
- Fawcett, Lawrence, and Barry J. Greenwood. *Clear Intent: The Government Coverup of the UFO Experience*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984.
- Fenwick, Lawrence J. *Phone Calls to UFO Landing Witness Reveal More Data on Men in Black*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: The Author, 1977.
- Fenwick, Lawrence J., and Joseph Muskat. "Toronto Abduction Report." *Flying Saucer Review* 26,2 (August 1980): 21-27.
- Glemser, Kurt. *The Men in Black Report*. Kitchener, Ontario, Canada: Galaxy Press, 1971.
- Grandstaff, Eric. "My Experience with Deros and the MIB." *Caveat Emptor* 6 (Winter 1972/1973): 7-8.
- Gregory, Janet. "Similarities in UFO and Demon Lore." *Flying Saucer Review* 17,2 (March/April 1971): 32-iii.
- Hamilton, William F. "Area 51 Encounter." *MUFON UFO Journal* 304 (August 1993): 14-17.
- Harney, John. "The 'Men in Black' Reports." *Flying Saucer Review* 15,2 (March/April 1969): 9-11,20.
- Hough, Peter A. "The 'Men in Black': A New Case?" *Magonia* 21 (December 1985): 19-21.
- . "Sinister UFO Encounter." *Fate* 39,6 (June 1986): 37-41.
- Hufford, David J. *The Terror That Comes in the Night: An Experience-Centered Study of Supernatural Assault Traditions*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.
- Hunker, Marc. Letters to Ron Westrum (July 30 and August 19, 1975).
- Hynek, J. Allen, and Jacques Vallee. *The Edge of Reality: A Progress Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1975.
- Jablonicky, Anne. "M.I.B.: The Terrorists of Ufology Strike Again!" *UFO Universe* (November 1988): 56-59.
- James, Derek, and Jenny Randles. "The Car That Disappeared." *Flying Saucer Review* 23,3 (October 1977): 23.
- Keel, John A. *The Mothman Prophecies*. New York: Saturday Review Press/E. P. Dutton and Company, 1975.
- . *The Telephone Problem in the United States*. New York: The Author, 1968.
- . *UFOs: Operation Trojan Horse*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1970.
- . "UFO Witnesses 'Silenced'." *Orlando [Florida] Sentinel* (February 3, 1967).
- . "UFO Report: The Sinister Men in Black." *Fate* 21,4 (April 1967): 32-39.
- . "From My Ohio Valley Note Book." *Flying Saucer Review* 13,3 (May/June 1967): 3-5.
- . "More from My Ohio Valley Note Book." *Flying Saucer Review* 13,4 (July/August 1967): 20-21.

- . "UFO 'Agents of Terror'." *Saga* (October 1967): 29-31, 72-74, 76-79, 81.
- . "The Cape May Incident." In Charles Bowen, ed. *Beyond Condon: Flying Saucer Review Special Issue No. 2, June 1969*, 57-62. London: Flying Saucer Review, 1969.
- . "MIB: 1967-1968." *Saucer News* 16,4 (Spring/Summer 1969): 5-6.
- . "Ivan T. Sanderson: An Appreciation." *Flying Saucer Review* 19,5 (September/October 1973): 23-24.
- . "Strange Riddle of the 'Men-in-Black'." *Saga's UFO Report* 1,5 (Spring 1974): 25-27, 70, 72-74, 76, 78.
- . "The Contactee Key." *Flying Saucer Review* 31,1 (October 1985): 19-22.
- . "Beyond the Known: Return of the Men in Black." *Fate* 47,12 (December 1994): 24, 27.
- "Letters to the Editor." [Name withheld]. *Saucer News* 15,2 (Summer 1968): 23-25.
- McClure, Kevin, and Sue McClure. *Stars, and Rumours of Stars*. Market Harborough, Lancashire, England: The Authors, 1980.
- Maggio, Elizabeth. "Paperboy Experiences Close Encounter of Strange Kind in Tucson." *Arizona Daily Star* [Tucson] (February 21, 1979).
- Marianti, Marco. "Mail Bag: Carlo Rossi: Sketch Correction." *Flying Saucer Review* 23,1 (June 1977): 31.
- Moore, William L. "UFOs and the U.S. Government." *Focus* Pt. I. 4,4-5-6 (June 30, 1989): 1-18; Pt. II. 4,7-8-9 (September 30, 1989): 1-3.
- . "Those Mysterious Men in Black." *Far Out* (Winter 1993): 27-29.
- "Mystery Blast Shatters Sign; Origin Baffles City Police." *New Haven [Connecticut] Journal-Courier* (August 20, 1953).
- "The Mystery of the Flying Disks." *Fate* 1,1 (Spring 1948): 18-48.
- O'Brien, Glenn. "The Saucer Men and the Unspeakable Things They Did to Stanley Ingram's Daughter." *Oui* 6,8 (August 1977): 90-98, 106, 108.
- Randles, Jenny. *Abduction: Over 200 Documented UFO Kidnappings Investigated*. London: Robert Hale, 1988.
- . *UFO Reality: A Critical Look at the Physical Evidence*. London: Robert Hale, 1983.
- . "In Search of the Oz Factor." *BUFORA Bulletin* 26 (July 1987): 17-18.
- "Recent News: The Expanding Case for Aliens Among Us." *Saucer News* 17,1 (Spring 1970): 20-21.
- Robbins, Rossell Hope. *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1959.
- Robinson, John J. "Men in Black, Cadillacs, Doppelgangers and Laser Beams—You Name It and We Have It in Jersey." *Saucer News* 15,3 (Fall/Winter 1968/1969): 4-9.
- "'Robot' Occupants Reported." *Skylook* 84 (November 1974): 10-11.
- Rojciewicz, Peter M. *The Boundaries of Orthodoxy: A Folkloric Look at the UFO Phenomenon*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1984.
- . "The 'Men in Black' Experience and Tradition: Analogues with the Traditional Devil Hypothesis." *Journal of American Folklore* 100 (April/June 1987): 148-60.
- Ruppelt, Edward J. *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1956.
- Sanj, Pier Luigi. "Mail Bag: The Carlo Rossi Case." *Flying Saucer Review* 24,3 (November 1978): 32-iii.
- Schwarz, Berthold E. *UFO-Dynamics: Psychiatric and Psychic Aspects of the UFO Syndrome, Book I*. Moore Haven, FL: Rainbow Books, 1983.
- . "The Man-in-Black Syndrome." *Flying Saucer Review* Pt. I. 23,4 (January 1978): 9-15; Pt. II. 23,5 (February 1978): 22-25; Pt. III. 23,6 (April 1978): 26-29.
- Shaver, Richard S. "Letters." *Saucer News* 17,1 (Spring 1970): 38.
- Shelton, C.R.H. "Mail Bag: That 'Sac of Silence' Surrounding MIB Encounters." *Flying Saucer Review* 27,6 (June 1982): 26.
- "The 'Silencers' at Work." *Flying Saucer Review* 13,2 (March/April 1967): 10.
- Slovut, Gordon. "Encounters with 'Men in Black': Fact or Fantasy?" *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (March 24, 1990).
- Steiger, Brad. *Alien Meetings*. New York: Ace Books, 1978.
- . *Mysteries of Time and Space*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974.

Steiger, Brad, and Joan Whritenour, eds. *Flying Saucer Invasion: Target—Earth*. New York: Award Books, 1969.

Stevens, Jennifer. "Mystery on the Mohawk." In Charles Bowen, ed. *Beyond Condon: Flying Saucer Review Special Issue No. 2, June 1969*, 36-38. London: Flying Saucer Review, 1969.

Strentz, Herbert J. *A Survey of Press Coverage of Unidentified Flying Objects, 1947-1966*. Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1970.

Stuart, John. *UFO Warning*. Clarksburg, WV: Saucerian Books, 1963.

Swords, Michael D. "Tales from the Barker Zone: Three Days at the Gray Barker Manuscript Depository." *International UFO Reporter* 17,6 (November/December 1992): 4-10.

Vallee, Jacques. "Mail Bag: Vallee on Witness Intimidation." *Flying Saucer Review* 15,1 (January/February 1969): 29.

Watson, Nigel, and Granville Oldroyd. "Venus with Her Trousers Down." *Magonia* 17 (October 1984): 15-18.

Wilkins, Harold T. *Flying Saucers on the Attack*. New York: Citadel Press, 1954.

Williamson, George Hunt. *Other Tongues—Other Flesh*. Amherst, WI: Amherst Press, 1953.

———. *Road in the Sky*. London: Neville Spearman, 1959.

Williamson, George Hunt, and John McCoy. *UFOs Confidential! The Meaning Behind the Most Closely Guarded Secret of All Time*. Corpus Christi, TX: The Essene Press, 1958.

Woods, William. *A History of the Devil*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974.

"World Round-up: UFOs and Telephone Mystery Voices." *Flying Saucer Review* 13,4 (July/August 1967): 32.

"World Round-up: Venezuela: MIB in a Sports Car!" *Flying Saucer Review* 19,4 (July/August 1973): 31,iii.

Worley, Don. "Stanley Ingram and the Plantos Games." *MUFON UFO Journal* 300 (April 1993): 12-13.

MICHALAK, STEFAN. See **Falcon Lake CE2**

MOODY ABDUCTION CASE

In 1975 Sgt. Charles L. Moody worked the swing shift at Holloman Air Force Base near Alamogordo, New Mexico. When his shift ended at 11:30 P.M. on August 12, he drove home, changed clothes, watched the *Tonight Show* for an hour, and then drove out into the desert. Earlier in the day he had read a newspaper article which reported that the earth was experiencing a meteor shower and it could be best observed at around 1 A.M. Moody, a 14-year career man and a decorated veteran of the Vietnam war, knew little about astronomy; thus he expected to see a literal shower of meteors, not an occasional appearance of one.

Moody took a dirt road out into a remote area where the lights of Alamogordo were distant enough not to brighten the sky. Sitting on the front left fender of the car, he smoked a cigarette and watched for shooting stars. Instead he saw a metallic disc fall out of the sky some 300 feet from him. It was about 50 feet long, 20 feet wide, and faintly luminous. At first it did not occur to Moody that this might be a UFO; he not only disbelieved in such things but openly laughed at persons who claimed to have seen them.

At about 20 feet altitude the object stopped its descent, then headed toward Moody's car at a leisurely pace. Only then did it dawn on the witness that this was *not* some sort of conventional aircraft. Suddenly uneasy, he got into his car and turned the ignition. The engine was dead. Moody was baffled; he had put in a new battery only a month before. He looked over at the object. It was hovering some 70 feet from him. An oblong window, five feet high and three feet wide, was now visible just to the right-center of the structure. Through it Moody could see shadowy human forms. A high-pitched sound like a dental drill filled the air for a short time, then ceased. A numbness came over him.

The next thing he knew, the object was ascending, disappearing from sight within seconds.

This time, to Moody's immense relief, the car started, and he raced toward Alamogordo. His relief would be short-lived. Entering his kitchen, he happened to glance at the clock and was shocked to note that it was

one building such as a school, a factory, or a theater. For example, in March 1972 workers in a Midwestern data-processing center complained of a mysterious cause that made them sick. Air, blood, and urine samples failed to detect anything out of the ordinary. Moreover, a worker – who did not speak English and was therefore socially isolated from the others – did not smell the gas even when others did. The scientists who investigated the attacks eventually told the workers a phony story – that an “atmospheric inversion” was responsible – and after that the attacks ceased. A later study by sociologists indicated that those workers most alienated from their jobs were the most susceptible.

Still, just enough aspects of the Mattoon and Botetourt incidents resist the mass-hysteria explanation to leave open the question of what really happened there.

Sources

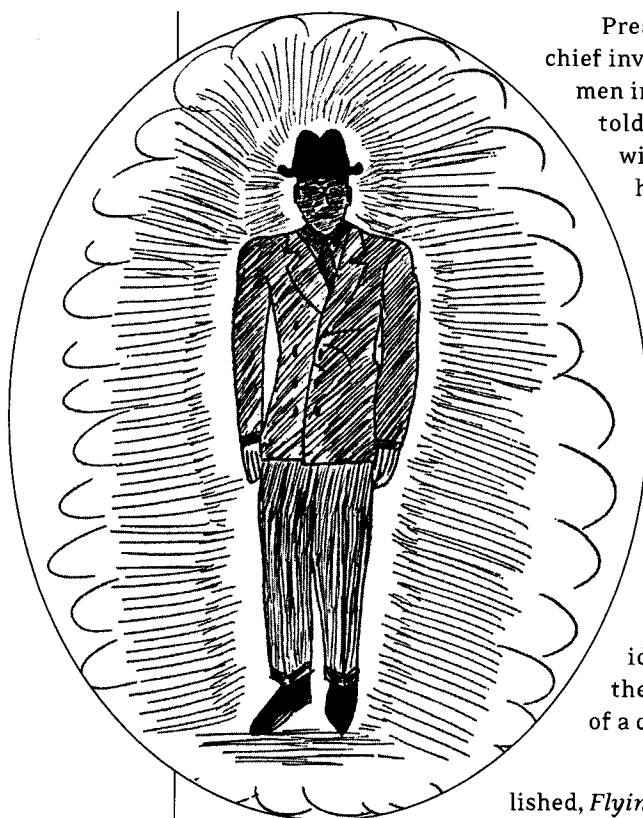
- “The Case of the Psychic Vapors.” *Human Behavior* (January 1975): 13.
- Coleman, Loren. *Mysterious America*. Boston, MA: Faber and Faber, 1983.
- Johnson, Donald M. “The ‘Phantom Anesthetist’ of Mattoon: A Field Study of Mass Hysteria.” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 40 (1945): 175-86.
- Shoemaker, Michael T. “The Mad Gasser of Botetourt.” *Fate* 38, 6 (June 1985): 62-68.
- . “Resurrections.” *Fortean Times* 49 (Winter 1987): 52-53.
- Smith, Willy. “The Mattoon Gasser: A Modern Myth.” *International UFO Reporter* 9, 6 (November/December 1984): 7, 9, 14.
- . “The Mattoon Phantom Gasser.” *Skeptic* 3, 1 (1994): 33-39.

Men in Black

In the March 30, 1905, edition of the *Barmouth Advertiser*, a Welsh newspaper, it was reported that over a period of three nights a “man dressed in black” had appeared in the bedroom of an “exceptionally intelligent young woman of the peasant stock. . . . This figure has delivered a message to the girl which she is frightened to relate.”

This curious incident allegedly occurred in the midst of a religious revival in which sightings of mysterious lights figured prominently. It is the first known report of a “man in black” in an arguably UFO context.

In 1953 men in black entered twentieth-century folklore permanently when Albert K. Bender of Bridgeport, Connecticut, abruptly closed down his popular International Flying Saucer Bureau (IFSB) and refused to elaborate on a cryptic statement in the last issue (October 1953) of the IFSB magazine *Space Review*. The statement indicated that Bender now knew the answer to the UFO mystery but could not publish it because of “orders from a higher source.” In addition, he urged “those engaged in saucer work to please be very cautious.”



Albert Bender's sketch of one of the three Men in Black who visited his Connecticut home in 1953.
(Courtesy Fortean Picture Library.)

Pressed by Gray Barker, who had been IFSB's chief investigator, Bender would say only that three men in black suits had visited him in September, told him what UFOs are, and threatened him with prison if he revealed what they had told him. The experience was so traumatic that Bender subsequently fell ill. He told Barker that the strangers were "members of the United States government."

Even so, some suspected that the men in black were representatives not of American intelligence but of alien intelligence. Barker wrote a scary, paranoia-driven book on the episode, *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers* (1956), and over the next few years exploited – and freely embellished – the "Bender mystery" in various publications. Soon Bender's visitors were being identified variously as demons, agents of the International Bankers, or representatives of a civilization inside the Earth.

In 1962 Bender wrote, and Barker published, *Flying Saucers and the Three Men* – a wild story that only the most impressionable readers took to be anything other than a clumsy science-fiction novel. In it Bender was taken to the South Pole by monstrous aliens, who then monitored his activities until 1960, when they returned to their home planet.

Men-in-black stories were revived in the 1960s when a New York writer, John A. Keel, recounted episodes of witness harassment in New York, Ohio, West Virginia, and elsewhere. Keel even claimed some personal encounters: "I kept rendezvous with black Cadillacs on Long Island, and when I tried to pursue them they would disappear impossibly on dead-end roads. . . . More than once I woke up in the middle of the night to find myself unable to move, with a dark apparition standing over me." In Keel's telling, the men in black were not government agents or even human beings but paranormal entities associated with the UFO intelligences themselves. Frequently described as being vaguely Asian in appearance, they behaved strangely, asking odd or even rude questions of those whom they confronted. They usually traveled in large black cars.

Keel warned investigators, "Do not attempt to apprehend MIB yourself. Do not attack them physically. Approach them with great caution. They frequently employ hypnotic techniques."

According to Keel – given to making sweeping pronouncements not always susceptible to independent verification – men in black played a hidden role

in history. They interacted with such historical figures as Julius Caesar, Thomas Jefferson, Napoleon, and Malcolm X. Moreover, "the general descriptions of the vampires . . . are identical to the 'men in black'." The danger of MIB visitation to those interested in UFOs – especially "the neurotic, the gullible, and the immature" – is such, Keel warned, that parents should "forbid their children from becoming involved [in UFO study]. Schoolteachers and other adults should not encourage teenagers to take an interest in the subject."

Through Keel, men in black were transformed into what he called MIB. *Men in black* were government (presumably FBI or military intelligence) agents; *MIB* were otherworldly terrorists. MIB typically bore only a superficial resemblance to human beings. While frequently ignorant of the most elemental matters (such as, in one instance, how to eat jello), they seemed to know things no mere mortal could have been aware of, everything from obscure details about a witness's or investigator's personal history to that person's unreported UFO sighting.

MIB reports were not confined to Keel's witnesses or even to the United States. In May 1975, two weeks after a dramatic sighting from his Piper Pa-24 – a sighting confirmed on the radar screens at the Mexico City airport – a young pilot was pursued down the freeway by four black-suited, "Scandinavian"-looking men in a black limousine. After forcing him to the side of the road, they warned him not to discuss his sighting; the pilot was on his way to do a television interview. A month later one of the strangers reappeared and threatened him again as he was on his way to a hotel to talk with J. Allen Hynek, the prominent American astronomer and UFO investigator. That was his last meeting with the MIB, whom he remembered as tall and strangely white; "I never saw them blink," he added.

By the late 1980s such tales were sufficiently numerous to warrant the attention of the *Journal of American Folklore*. There Peter M. Rojcewicz surveyed the MIB's role in flying-saucer legends and related it to earlier demonic traditions. He also told of his own MIB encounter, though giving himself the pseudonym "Michael Elliot." While doing research on UFOs in a library, he was approached by a dark-featured, dark-suited man who, speaking briefly in a slight accent about flying saucers, placed his hand on Rojcewicz's shoulder and said, "Go well in your purpose," and vanished.

A popular 1996 film, *Men in Black*, directed by Barry Sonnenfeld and starring Tommy Lee Jones and Will Smith, used the MIB concept to splendid comic effect, imagining a supersecret agency battling the machinations of evil extraterrestrials. Its inspiration was not UFO literature but Lowell Cunningham's comic-book series of the same name. Scott Spencer's literary novel *Men in Black* (1995) concerns a serious writer whose hack work on UFOs brings him unwelcome success. Once only in the vocabulary of ufologists, the men-in-black concept is now a part of our common culture. Nonetheless, reports of "real" MIB remain as uncommon as ever.

Sources

Barker, Gray. *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*. New York: University Books, 1956.

- Bender, Albert K. *Flying Saucers and the Three Men*. Clarksburg, WV: Saucerian Books, 1962.
- Clark, Jerome. "Carlos de los Santos and the Men in Black." *Flying Saucer Review* 24, 4 (January 1979): 8-9.
- . "Men in Black." In Curtis G. Fuller, ed. *Proceedings of the First International UFO Congress*, 273-93. New York: Warner Books, 1980.
- Keel, John A. *UFOs: Operation Trojan Horse*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1970.
- . *The Mothman Prophecies*. New York: Saturday Review Press/E. P. Dutton and Company, 1975.
- . "Investigating UFOs." *Strange Magazine* 6 (1990): 12-15.
- Keith, Jim. *Casebook on the Men in Black*. Lilburn, GA: IllumiNet Press, 1997.
- Randles, Jenny. *The Truth About Men in Black: Government Agents – or Visitors from Beyond*. New York: St. Martin's Paperbacks, 1997.
- Rojcewicz, Peter M. "The 'Men in Black' Experience and Tradition: Analogues with the Traditional Devil Hypothesis." *Journal of American Folklore* 100, 396 (April/June 1987): 148-60.
- Schwarz, Berthold Eric. "The Man-in-Black Syndrome." *Flying Saucer Review* Pt. I 23, 4 (1977): 9-15; Pt. II 23, 5 (1978): 22-25.

Merfolk

"Are we to believe that all those beings equally exist, and, on the principle that there can be no smoke without a fire, are we to hold that there would be no popular conception of the banshee, the leprechaun, or the *Maighdean-mhara* (sea-maiden, mermaid), and consequently no tales told about them," the Irish historian and folklorist Douglas Hyde asked, "if such beings did not exist, and from time to time allow themselves to be seen like the wood-martin and the kingfisher?"

Hyde was venting his exasperation on a colleague, W. Y. Evans-Wentz, who had given him space in his *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* (first published in 1911) to dispute Evans-Wentz's heretical view that fairies may be real entities who dwell in a paranormal dimension of existence. Something like Hyde's question will occur to anyone who reads reports – and there is (or was) no shortage of them – of merfolk "sightings."

Consider, for example, the results of a 1723 official inquiry into the merfolk problem. A Danish Royal Commission set out to lay the issue to rest; if it found merfolk mere fantasy, then those who continued to speak of them would find themselves in trouble with the law. Free expression about such matters was preserved, however, when members of the commission themselves spotted a merman near the Faroe Islands. On the approach of their ship, it sank into the water but surfaced shortly afterwards to stare intently at them with its deep-set eyes. A few minutes of this scrutiny proved so unsettling that the ship effected a retreat. As it was doing so, the merman puffed out his cheeks and emitted a "deep roar" before diving out of sight.

B

BARKER, GRAY ROSCOE (1925-1984)

Gray Barker was born on May 2, 1925, in Riffe, West Virginia, and would remain a resident of West Virginia all his life. In 1947 he received a B.A. from Glenville State College. After teaching public school between 1948 and 1949, he took a job selling theatrical equipment. By 1952 he was working out of Clarksburg as a theater booker and owner.

In 1952 a newspaper account alerted him to the **Flatwoods monster** story. Barker investigated the report and wrote an article on it for *Fate* (Barker, 1953). That same year, as he was reading the letters column of **Ray Palmer's** science-fiction magazine *Other Worlds*, he saw an announcement for the **International Flying Saucer Bureau (IFSB)**, headed by Albert K. Bender of Bridgeport, Connecticut. Barker quickly joined, became one of the most active members, and wrote frequently for the IFSB magazine *Space Review*. In the fall of 1953, Bender abruptly closed down the organization after allegedly being threatened by three men in black who imparted to him the frightening answer to the UFO mystery. Barker became obsessed with the "**Bender mystery**," as it was called, and wrote a book about it, *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers* (1956).

In September 1953 he started a magazine, *The Saucerian*, later (beginning in March 1956) called *The Saucerian Bulletin*, which covered the more outlandish aspects of popular fascination with UFOs, including monster reports, contactee yarns, the **Shaver mystery**, and the latest rumors about Bender and his mysterious silencers. Barker was privately skeptical of much of what he reported but genuinely delighted in the colorful tales that came his way. **James W. Moseley**, who knew him well, has written: "Probably by the mid-1950s Barker realized that he was functioning only as an entertainer and folklorist rather than a factual reporter, but he enjoyed the role and played it exceedingly well" (Moseley, 1984). Whatever one thought of what Barker was writing, there was no question that he was a gifted writer with a gentle, understated sense of humor.

For the edification of their audiences, Barker and



Gray Barker's *Saucerian Bulletin* (September 1, 1959) imposes a sketch of the Flatwoods, West Virginia, "monster" on a photograph of the encounter site.

Moseley, who published the rival *Saucer News*, pretended to be feuding, though in fact the two were close friends, and regularly sniped at each other in the pages of their respective magazines. Once a *Saucer News* writer, Lonzo Dove, went so far as to charge—via extremely selective use of quotes from Barker's book—that Barker had played a "cruel joke" on Bender; according to Dove, Barker, wearing a disguise, and two confederates were the three men who threatened the IFSB director (Dove, 1959b).

No one besides Dove gave that particular theory any credence, but Barker was undeniably responsible, along with Moseley, for one of the most notorious **hoaxes** of the 1950s, a December 1957 letter written on State Department stationery by one R. E. Straith and addressed to contactee **George Adamski**. "Straith" claimed that the department knew of the truth of Adamski's reported meetings with Space Brothers and was quietly supporting his efforts. Dove conclud-

ed (correctly) that the letter had been written on Barker's typewriter (1959a), but Moseley refused to publish his manuscript on the subject; Dove did not know of the *Saucer News* editor's involvement. Adamski's partisans made much of the letter (Zinsstag and Good, 1983) until, soon after Barker's death, Moseley confirmed the long-standing rumors about the document's true provenance (Moseley, 1985).

In 1959 Barker entered book-publishing with *From Outer Space to You*, Howard Menger's account of his claimed interactions with space people and something of a classic of contactee literature. Soon he was trying to persuade Bender to tell all and succeeded in due course. Bender's *Flying Saucers and the Three Men* (1962) told a wild story which read like (and which many assumed to be) science fiction, in which monstrous aliens abducted Bender to the South Pole and frightened him into silence. Even Barker privately, and sometimes not so privately (Young and Barker, 1976), confessed this was a bit much, but that did not stop him from relentless Bender-related promotions, including the compilation of a hastily tossed-together collection of letters from impressionable readers of Bender's book (Barker, 1962).

The last issue of *Saucerian Bulletin* (which had attained a circulation of 1500, making it one of the most popular UFO magazines) was released in 1962, and the following year Barker sold it to Moseley, who incorporated it into *Saucer News*. In 1968 Barker purchased that magazine from Moseley and let it die in 1972.

Under the Saucerian imprint Barker published a number of large-sized paperback books, usually compiled from his mail (*The Strange Case of Dr. M. K. Jessup* [1963]) or from clippings (*Gray Barker's Book of Saucers* [1965]). In 1970 he wrote *The Silver Bridge*, a partially fictionalized account of some bizarre, UFO-related events which allegedly took place in West Virginia and Ohio in the mid-1960s. It and *They Knew Too Much* are the only significant (some would say "real") books bearing Barker's by-line. Yet even the least interesting works Barker published usually had something to recommend them, and a few titles were notable for various reasons.

John Stuart's *UFO Warning* (1963), for example, is as strange a flying-saucer book as has ever been pub-

lished. A New Zealand ufologist of the early 1950s, the now-deceased Stuart figures in *They Knew Too Much* as one of the silenced "researchers" driven from the field by dark forces. Finally able to tell all, or at least what he says is all of it, he relates his involvement, which he continually protests was platonic though the steamy tone of the book causes readers to suspect otherwise (Moseley, 1963; Collins, 1990), with a beautiful fellow "researcher" (Doreen Wilkinson) given the pseudonym Barbara Turner. According to *UFO Warning*, Stuart and Turner spent many hours every evening, and not infrequently into the early morning, discussing flying saucers. Then a hideous-looking monster appeared to the two of them. Soon afterwards three invisible entities raped Turner in her room, and she and Stuart fled town, separately. In the introduction Barker confesses, "I personally don't know quite what to think of it."

In the 1970s Barker started an irregularly published tabloid, *Gray Barker's Newsletter*, and continued to release interesting books such as Anna Lykins Genzlinger's *The Jessup Dimension* (1981), about the alleged murder of 1950s UFO author M. K. Jessup, and two excellent bibliographies, Barker's own *A UFO Guide to "Fate" Magazine* (1981) and Bruce A. Walton's *A Guide to the Inner Earth* (1983) (see **Hollow Earth and UFOs**). Fittingly, one of the very last releases revived Barker's first love, the men in black; it was called *MIB: The Secret Terror Among Us* (1983), and it told, yet again, the tale of Al Bender. In the early 1980s Saucerian Books became New Age Press.

In his last years, according to those who knew him, Barker grew deeply unhappy as he battled financial problems and wrestled with personal demons. In October 1984 a severe illness put him in the hospital. After a few weeks he was released. Days later he was placed in the intensive care unit of a Charleston, West Virginia, hospital, where he remained until he died on December 6.

Sources:

- Barker, Gray. *MIB: The Secret Terror Among Us*. Jane Lew, WV: New Age Press, 1983.
- . *The Silver Bridge*. Clarksburg, WV: Saucerian Books, 1970.
- . *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*. New York: University Books, 1956.

- , ed. *Bender Mystery Confirmed*. Clarksburg, WV: Saucerian Books, 1962.
- , ed. *A UFO Guide to "Fate" Magazine*. Clarksburg, WV: Saucerian Press, 1981.
- . "The Monster and the Saucer." *Fate* 6,1 (January 1953): 12-17.
- . "Lonzo Dove." *Saucerian Bulletin* 4,2 (September 1, 1959): 7-9, 32.
- . "The End of an Era." *Saucer News* 10,2 (June 1963): 18-19.
- Bender, Albert K. *Flying Saucers and the Three Men*. Clarksburg, WV: Saucerian Books, 1962.
- "Booker's Flying Saucer Hobby Makes Him Author and Film Aide." *Boxoffice* (August 18, 1956).
- Clark, Jerome. "Books, News & Reviews: The Wild Side of Ufology." *Fate* 36,12 (December 1983): 95-96,98,100,102,104.
- Collins, Daryl. Letter to Jerome Clark (July 1, 1990).
- Dove, Lonzo. *The "Straith" State Department Fraud*. Broadway, VA: The Author, 1959a.
- . "Gray Barker's 'Three Men in Black'." *Saucer News* 6,3 (June 1959b): 6-13.
- Menger, Howard. *From Outer Space to You*. Clarksburg, WV: Saucerian Books, 1959.
- Moseley, James W. Review of Stuart's *UFO Warning*. *Saucer News* 10,2 (June 1963): 24.
- . "Miscellaneous Ravings." *Saucer Smear* 31,9 (December 15, 1984): 1-2.
- . "In Which We Offer a Possible Solution to the Long-time Mystery of the Infamous 'R. E. Straith' Letter Written to George Adamski Many Years Ago (Circa 1957)." *Saucer Smear* 32,1 (January 10, 1985): 1-2.
- Sachs, Margaret. *The UFO Encyclopedia*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1980.
- Story, Ronald D., ed. *The Encyclopedia of UFOs*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980.
- Stuart, John. *UFO Warning*. Clarksburg, WV: Saucerian Books, 1963.
- Stuppel, David, and Abdollah Dashti. "Flying Saucers and Multiple Realities: A Case Study in Phenomenological Theory." *Journal of Popular Culture* 11 (Fall 1977): 479-93.
- Walton, Bruce A. *A Guide to the Inner Earth*. Jane Lew, WV: New Age Books, 1983.
- Young, Jerry A., and Gray Barker. "Letters." *Gray Barker's Newsletter* 3 (January 1976): 7-12.

Zinsstag, Lou, and Timothy Good. *George Adamski—The Untold Story*. Beckenham, Kent, England: Ceti Publications, 1983.

BENDER, ALBERT K. See **Bender Mystery; International Flying Saucer Bureau.**

BENDER MYSTERY

In April 1952 Albert K. Bender, a factory worker from Bridgeport, Connecticut, announced the formation of the **International Flying Saucer Bureau (IFSB)**, whose purpose was to "gather flying saucer information" and to "get all Flying Saucer minded people acquainted with each other.... We would like to be considered 'Friends of the Flying Saucer Occupants' providing they decide to land on earth with a friendly attitude. Perhaps they may be able to use mental telepathy and already know that we shall welcome their visits. It seems that everybody that speaks or talks about the saucers have [sic] aggression on their minds [sic], but not so with members of the IFSB" (*May We Welcome You*, 1952).

But by fall of the following year, Bender had left the UFO business an unhappy, frightened man, and a flying-saucer legend had begun.

At the time he established the IFSB, Bender was a 31-year-old bachelor who lived with his stepfather. He was obsessed not only with UFOs but with occultism, horror movies, and science fiction. Bender transformed his part of the house into what he called a "chamber of horrors," lining the walls with pictures of monsters and filling shelves and tables with shrunken heads and artificial bats. At night he would entertain himself with imaginary out-of-body trips into deep space, where "strange and eerie dark shadows swirled by me, with thousands of eyes watching me from the blackness of it all" (Bender, 1962). Meanwhile he proceeded with publication of the IFSB magazine *Space Review*, an informal periodical patterned after the science-fiction fanzines Bender was fond of. The first issue appeared in October 1952. The organization grew quickly and attracted some 1500 members. One of the most active was a West Virginia man named **Gray Barker**, with whom the name Albert K. Bender was destined to be forever associated. In February 1953 Barker was appointed the IFSB's chief

investigator. Soon the organization had representatives in Europe, New Zealand, and Australia.

All went well until one day in September 1953 when, so Bender would confide to Barker and other close associates, three menacing men (whom he initially identified as "members of the United States Government" [Barker, 1954, 1956]) called on him, told him the answer to the UFO mystery, and warned him that he would be imprisoned if he repeated it. Bender said that the experience had upset him so much that he was sick for three days afterwards. Though pressed by Barker and other IFSB confidantes, he would reveal little else, only that the visitors, all dressed in black suits, arrived after he related a theory about UFO origin to an unnamed "someone.... Then the men came" (*ibid.*). Bender added that the U.S. government had known what UFOs are since 1951 and would reveal the secret—a frightening one—within either five months or four years. A subsequent visit from one of the men was friendlier, and Bender felt a little better.

Soon afterwards the last issue (dated October) of *Space Review* appeared, with this cryptic announcement:

STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE: The mystery of the flying saucer is no longer a mystery. The source is already known, but any information about this is being withheld by orders from a higher source. We would like to print the full story in *Space Review*, but because of the nature of the information we are very sorry that we have been advised in the negative. We advise those engaged in saucer work to please be very cautious.

Over the next year and a half, UFO enthusiasts in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia left the field under cloudy circumstances, amid allegations or suspicions that they had been "silenced" by mysterious, dark-suited strangers (*see UFOs in Australia and New Zealand through 1959*). In 1956 Barker published a book-length treatment of all this, under the sinister title *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*.

Barker kept interest in the "Bender mystery" alive by featuring it in his popular magazine *The Saucerian* (later *Saucerian Bulletin*). In 1957 Bender contributed a short piece to **Ray Palmer's** *Flying Saucers* maga-

zine. Most of it is devoted to complaints about harassment from enthusiasts who were trying to get him to reveal his secrets; but Bender also wrote, "The time has not yet come when things I know about can be told or written.... [T]he real truth would hurt, because the answer will affect so many."

Barker became a book publisher in 1958, when he purchased a manuscript by contactee **Howard Menger**, released the next year as *From Outer Space to You*. He urged Bender to write a book, which Barker would release under his Saucerian imprint, and in December—to Barker's delight—Bender agreed. A few weeks later, however, Bender reported in a letter, "I wrote one chapter and something happened. As a result I don't think this is the proper time to write about UFOs." Nonetheless Barker went on his already-planned trip to visit the now-married Bender and his wife Betty. There Bender apologized for his reluctance to do the book. "I fear for the safety of Betty and myself should I go ahead," he explained, expressing a fear of physical harm but not from the U.S. government ("Albert K. Bender," 1959).

But three years later, in 1962, Barker let it be known that the book was about to be published. Careful readers of Barker's initial announcement, however, could have sensed that the manuscript had been something of a letdown. Writing with a striking absence of hyperbole, Barker offered the underwhelming observation that the book seemed "written in a straightforward manner." He added, "When you see this book I do hope that you will not immediately accept it [as] any final solution to the saucer mystery, and that you will find time to exercise careful judgment upon it" (Barker, 1962a).

When the book, titled *Flying Saucers and the Three Men*, appeared soon afterwards, many readers, who found the story it told impossible to believe, were as disappointed as Barker. Bender claimed that the three men were aliens in disguise—without their disguises they looked like the **Flatwoods monster**—and their mission was to gather and refine sea water, from which they were extracting an element needed on their home planet in a distant solar system. The beings, who possessed vast paranormal powers, took Bender to their base in the Antarctic. They told Bender that God does not exist and that human

beings do not survive death. They gave Bender a small disc which would monitor his activities until the aliens were finished with their mission and on their way home. That happened in 1960, freeing Bender to tell all.

Some readers embraced the story as literal truth (Barker, 1962b). Another called it "first-rate space fiction with the advantage that the author believes it to be true" (Lade, 1962). But to others it resembled nothing so much as a clumsy fabrication. One critic, David Halperin, pointed to a telltale clue. Bender reported that the beings came from a planet called Kazik, which they pronounced "Kayik"; yet, Halperin observed, "There is no record in Bender's book of the word['s] ever having been spelled out for him or put in print," surely suggesting that the word was invented by Bender (Clark, 1964)—in short, an inattentive fantasy writer's blunder. H. P. Beasley and A. V. Sampsel noted another problem: "[T]he story lacks a good solid motive or purpose.... How could Bender or anyone else have discovered [the aliens'] secret unless they chose to reveal it; and if they wished their secret to remain unknown, what possible purpose could they have had in revealing it deliberately to Bender, only to have to then force silence upon him, causing him physical pain and disturbing his peace of mind for the next eight years? ... What was so significant about a few tons of sea water? ... What had such entities to fear from anyone, if Bender did publish such a 'secret?' Who would believe it, or be able to interfere with such an advanced civilization?" (Beasley and Sampsel, 1963).

The application of logic to such an inherently implausible tale seemed pointless to other critics. Nonetheless few who knew Bender doubted that *something* had genuinely frightened him and caused him to shut down his organization. Those still intrigued with the Bender mystery went back to his sketchy original account and debated whether the three men were government agents (as Bender had hinted in his original conversations with Barker and others), malevolent beings from inside the earth (Johannes, 1972), or—as Beasley and Sampsel, among others, argued—demons.

Barker himself would confess that he "liked the first set of circumstances better. It could still be true. He

could've come across some military secret which some intelligence agency might have visited him about and made him keep quiet about. Or maybe let's say he did know something, and the CIA came to visit him, and they knew of a skeleton in his closet.... That could have upset him." In the original story the men in black were not "weird-looking" and looked like "businessmen." As for the story in Bender's book, "I'd rather believe it was something that came to him in a trance or a dream.... I mean, if I'd been there in his room while he was in 'Antarctica,' maybe I would have seen him lying in his bed in a trance" (Barker, 1976).

Nonetheless, whatever his personal feelings, Barker plunged ahead with the publication and promotion of Bender materials, including a volume, *Bender Mystery Confirmed* (1962), composed of speculative, often eccentric letters from readers of *Flying Saucers and the Three Men*. A follow-up volume by Bender, *The World of Kazik*, was announced but never published; the manuscript Bender produced, Barker said, was not "good enough to do anything with" (*ibid.*).

Shortly after publication of his book, Bender moved to Los Angeles, where he started the Max Steiner Memorial Society, dedicated to the famous film scorer. On occasion he would answer letters from UFO-minded inquirers. In one response, written in late 1976, he predicted that "in 1977 something spectacular will take place involving space" (Bender, 1976). This prophecy, like the one about the official release of UFO secrets in the 1950s, was not to be fulfilled.

Stories of men in black were revived in the 1960s and 1970s (Keel, 1975, 1990; Schwarz, 1977/1978) and in time were even being discussed in the august *Journal of American Folklore* (Rojcewicz, 1987). In 1980 British ufologist Brian Burden theorized that Bender was the victim of an intelligence-agency thought-control experiment; he had been given drugs so that he would be susceptible to hypnosis and other manipulation (Burden, 1980). But for most the Bender mystery, once one of the liveliest issues in at least some ufological circles, was an obscure historical footnote. Still, it had not entirely lost its capacity to induce paranoia. According to one story, in 1980 a California UFO enthusiast, learning that Bender lived not far from him, wrote him a letter and asked for a

meeting. Bender did not answer, but shortly afterwards "very frightening phenomena" entered the man's life. They would erupt whenever he spoke or wrote of UFOs, and he broke off all his associations in ufology, refusing to provide any details (Collins, 1990).

Sources:

"Albert K. Bender—Five Years Later." *The Saucerian Bulletin* 4,1 (May 1959): 10-14.

Barker, Gray. *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*. New York: University Books, 1956.

———. *To All Colleagues in UFO Research*. Clarksburg, WV: Saucerian Books, 1962a.

———, ed. *Bender Mystery Confirmed*. Clarksburg, WV: Saucerian Books, 1962b.

———. "Editorial: The I.F.S.B. Closing." *The Saucerian* 2,1 (February 1954): 1-10.

———. "Why the Bender Book Has Been Delayed." *Saucer News* 9,2 (June 1962): 6-7.

———. Interviewed by Jerome Clark (December 1976).

Beasley, H. P., and A. V. Sampsel. "The Bender Mystery—Still a Mystery?" *Flying Saucers* (May 1963): 20-27.

Bender, Albert K. *Flying Saucers and the Three Men*. Clarksburg, WV: Saucerian Books, 1962.

———. "The Seriousness of the Flying Saucer Position." *The Australian Flying Saucer Magazine* (August 1953): 15-16.

———. "When the Truth Is Known." *Flying Saucers* (November 1957): 38-40.

———. Letter to Jerome Clark (November 29, 1976).

"The Bender-IFSB Affair." *The A.P.R.O. Bulletin* 2,4 (January 15, 1954): 4-5.

Burden, Brian. "MIBs and the Intelligence Community." *Awareness* 9,1 (Spring 1980): 6-13.

Clark, Jerome. "The Bender Mystery: A Re-Examination." *Flying Saucers* (April 1964): 24-38.

Collins, Darryl. Letter to Jerome Clark (July 1, 1990).

Gade, Henry. "An Analysis of the Bender Mystery." *Flying Saucers* (January 1963): 28-31.

Johannes, Lewis W. "Shaver, Saucers and the Three Men in Black." *Flying Saucers* (June 1972): 16-18.

Keel, John A. *The Mothman Prophecies*. New York:

Saturday Review Press/E. P. Dutton and Co., 1975.

———. "Investigating UFOs." *Strange Magazine* 6 (1990): 12-15.

Lade, John. "Al Bender—and After." *Flying Saucer Review* 8,6 (November/December 1962): 18-19.

McCollum, Lem. "Mystery Visitors Halt Research; Saucerers Here Ordered to Quit." *Bridgeport [Connecticut] Sunday Herald* (November 22, 1953).

May We Welcome You Into Our Organization! Bridgeport, CT: International Flying Saucer Bureau, 1952.

Moseley, James W. "The Al Bender Story." *Saucer News* 3,2 (February/March 1956): 4-7.

———. "Recent News Stories: Bender Talks!" *Saucer News* 8,4 (December 1961): 8,11.

———. Review of Bender's *Flying Saucers and the Three Men*. *Saucer News* 10,1 (March 1963): 4-6.

Plunkett, E. L. "A Voice from the Past." *Flying Saucer Review* 21,6 (April 1976): 11.

"Reported Intimidation of UFO Researchers." *CSI Publications* 15 (May 24, 1956): 1-4.

Rojciewicz, Peter M. "The 'Men in Black' Experience and Tradition: Analogues with the Traditional Devil Hypothesis." *Journal of American Folklore* 100 (April/June 1987): 148-60.

Schwarz, Berthold Eric. "The Man-in-Black Syndrome." *Flying Saucer Review* Pt. I. 23,4 (1977): 9-15; Pt. II. 23,5 (1978) 22-25.

Williamson, George Hunt, and John McCoy. *UFOs Confidential! The Meaning Behind the Most Closely Guarded Secret of All Time*. Corpus Christi, TX: The Essene Press, 1958.

Young, Jerry A., and Gray Barker. "Letters." *Gray Barker's Newsletter* 3 (January 1976): 7-12.

BETHURUM, TRUMAN (1898-1969)

Truman Bethurum was among the most prominent of the 1950s-era contactees, occupying the second rank (behind **George Adamski**, the movement's most influential figure) alongside such notables as **Daniel Fry**, **George Van Tassel**, **Orfeo Angelucci**, and **Howard Menger**, with whom he shared stages at contactee-oriented flying-saucer conventions.

Bethurum was born in Gavalin, California, on August 21, 1898. Poorly educated, he worked as a laborer