

and one of them had been responsible for the phone calls to Morello (Ruppelt, *op. cit.*).

Never told of the Air Force's negative conclusions, Arnold went on to report it as a genuine mystery in the first issue of *Fate* ("The Mystery," 1948) and later in a book written with Palmer, *The Coming of the Saucers* (1952). As late as June 1977, in a speech delivered at a UFO congress sponsored by *Fate*, Arnold remained convinced that Crisman and Dahl had told him the truth.

Other writers, notably **Harold T. Wilkins** (Wilkins, 1954) and **Gray Barker** (1953, 1956), rejected the hoax explanation and treated the incident as a particularly sinister operation of a shadowy Silence Group possibly associated with the UFO intelligences themselves. Palmer noisily disputed Ruppelt's account and claimed Crisman had *wanted* investigators to believe the story was a hoax. "The Maury Island story cannot be extricated from the Shaver Mystery," he wrote. "The saucers do not come from outer space and Maury Island proves it" ("The Truth," 1958). Years later two British ufologists, Brian Burden and J. B. Delair, speculated that the affair was an intelligence-agency set-up whose purpose was to discredit Arnold and through him the "entire UFO business" (Delair, 1980); moreover, the supposed deaths of Brown and Davidson had probably been faked, the two men parachuting to safety under cover of darkness (Burden, 1980). Four decades after the incident, John A. Keel wrote that Dahl happened to witness an illegal dumping of radioactive waste conducted by cargo planes in the service of the Atomic Energy Commission (Keel, 1987). In common with other would-be Maury Island revisionists, Keel provided no evidence to support his extraordinary claim, and there is no reason to believe it—or any of the others—is true.

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MENGER, HOWARD (1922-)

Howard Menger was born on February 17, 1922, in Brooklyn, New York. In 1942 he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in the Armored Tank Division and later with Army Intelligence. After his discharge in 1946, he formed a sign-painting company and worked on inventions in electronics. He and his family lived on a farm near High Bridge, New Jersey.

What made Menger world-famous, however, were

his claimed contacts, a la **George Adamski**, with Venusians, Martians, and Saturnians. Menger became one of the most celebrated contactees of the 1950s.

Menger went public on October 29, 1956, on the popular Long John Nebel show on WOR radio in New York City. He showed up in the company of the already-well-known contactee **George Van Tassel**. In this and later appearances Menger reported that his contacts had started in childhood, when he experienced "flashbacks" of life on another world as well as sightings of flying discs. In 1932 he met a beautiful blond woman who told him that "we are contacting our own" and who read his mind (Menger, 1959). He would meet other, similar beings in the years ahead, and in 1946 he saw the blond woman step out of a flying saucer. Although she looked to be only 25, she was, she said, "more than 500 years old" (*ibid.*). She explained to Menger that beings from other worlds were coming to earth to help its inhabitants solve their problems. Many contacts would follow, and eventually Menger would go public.

By 1956 Menger was taking pictures of the spaceships, and on August 4 he was invited aboard one of the craft. There he conferred with its "Aryan-type" occupants. A month later he flew in a "Venusian scout" over the landscape of another planet. The scene reminded him of "beautiful suburban areas I have seen on our own planet, though, of course, wondrously different" (*ibid.*). Later area residents reported seeing unusual lights over the Menger property, and one even stated that while in the Mengers's company she saw three flying saucers; one landed, and a man got out. "He came to within 20 feet of us," she claimed, "and Mr. Menger talked to him" ("Visitors, Phone Calls," 1956).

Menger's appearances on the Nebel show led to others on East Coast radio and television programs. On November 1 the nation watched him on the late-night *Steve Allen Show*. **Civilian Saucer Intelligence of New York** (CSI) noted that Menger's story was "old stuff to anyone who has read Adamski. All the details of the Menger story may be found in [Adamski's] *Inside the Space Ships...*" ("A New 'Contact' Claimant", 1956). CSI did not mean this as a compliment. (Menger at first denied any familiarity with Adamski's works,

but after investigator Lee Munsick reported otherwise, he was forced to acknowledge that he had read *Flying Saucers Have Landed* when it came out in 1953 and that *Inside the Space Ships* had been inside his house all that summer.) The organization examined Menger's photographs and declared them fraudulent; the "spaceship" in several of them was determined to be a painting. Another ufologist wrote: "These photos are so evidently faked that it is almost foolish to even criticize them.... The six examples that I have seen are only snapshots of two different crude paintings on a flat plane of two dimensions, taken by varied lighting and distance with a dark background" (Dove, 1957). Menger was among the contactees challenged by the **National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena** to take a polygraph test, and he was among those who declined ("Contactee Letters," 1957).

Nonetheless, the ordinarily contactee-phobic CSI conceded that the Menger episode, at least ostensibly, comprised "more ... than one man's unverified story and unacceptable photographs." Reputable investigators, including Munsick, CSI vice-president **Ivan T. Sanderson**, and Jules St. Germain, interviewed persons who on a number of occasions had been taken outside and shown tall "spacemen" in luminous "ski pajamas" standing or leaping about in the Mengers's apple orchard. Others saw "thought discs," ranging from 18 inches to six feet in diameter, lying on the ground amid the trees. Menger would not allow the witnesses to shine flashlights on either the spacemen or the discs. CSI thought the discs were likely "mock-ups sprayed with fluorescent paint (which comes in exactly the colors that have been reported)"; moreover, "at least three people in addition to the Mengers have been going to considerable trouble to stage some nocturnal demonstrations to strengthen Menger's story" ("A New 'Contact'," *op. cit.*).

Some years later Berthold Eric Schwarz, a New Jersey psychiatrist with interests in parapsychology and ufology, reinterviewed witnesses to these events, which took place as Menger's 12-year-old son Robert was dying of brain cancer. Several persons, including the boy's mother, confirmed an account related to Dr. Schwarz by "B.C.," who said a mysterious "bar of light" which "pulsated and grew whiter" had appeared above Robert's bed one night shortly before

his death. That same night, B.C. said, "I saw four men in luminous uniforms" on a hilltop 300 feet away. "They were on the edge of the rise and walking and glowing. If they were stooges, it would have been a very strange hoax." All of the Mengers were inside the house, as was everyone else B.C. and a companion had seen when they arrived at the farm (Schwarz, 1972).

Another couple told Schwarz that while people sitting around the boy's bed saw "columns of light," Robert saw or hallucinated beings from the "planet [sic] Orion" who "are coming to take me away." Because his father claimed experiences only with beings from other planets in this solar system, the couple thought this was especially odd. On an earlier occasion, according to a friend of Robert's, Howard Menger brought his son into the pasture "to meet the spacemen and receive help. The boy, who was blind from the brain tumor, couldn't see the spacemen, and the father screamed and smacked his son" (*ibid.*). Interviewed by Schwarz, Rose Menger, Robert's mother and Howard's wife at the time of the described incidents, related her own encounters with the hopping, luminous entities and with apparent UFOs. Though she characterized Howard's later claims as fraudulent, she told Schwarz that these mid-1950s events still puzzled her.

(Nonetheless at least one person charged Rose Menger with complicity in a dubious episode. The Mengers publicly reported that on the night of December 29, 1956, four of their followers had met two spacemen and a spacewoman at a place in Pennsylvania. But when one of these women was interviewed by New York attorney and ufologist Jules St. Germain, she told a significantly different story. To start with, the incident had occurred not in Pennsylvania but in Menger's paint shop in Washington, New Jersey, and it involved only one "spacewoman," who turned out to be something else entirely. As the new story had it, the four women were taken to meet the spacewoman in the unlighted building; she would have a brief audience separately with each and deliver a personal message. "As bad luck would have it," the *CSI News Letter* related, "at the time one of these was admitted some light from the door accidentally revealed the 'spacewoman's' face, and the startled woman recognized 'C.W.,' whom she knew well, having talked to

her at Menger's house a week before ["Very Sincere Fellow'," 1957].)

In the latter part of 1956 Connie Weber, an attractive young blonde, showed up at the Menger residence to attend a Van Tassel lecture. Menger immediately recognized her as the "sister" of the blond spacewoman he had been told he would encounter one day. Also he recalled suddenly that in a previous life she had been a Venusian and he had been her Saturnian lover. Soon he left his wife and married Connie (better known by her nom de plume Marla Baxter), and the two of them embarked on a busy career as professional contactees, even hosting the Howard Menger Space Convention in rural New Jersey on September 13 and 14, 1958 ("Recent News Stories," 1958/1959). That same year Baxter wrote of her affair with "Alyn" (as she called Menger) in a vanity-press book entitled *My Saturnian Lover*. Menger put out a record album, *Music from Another Planet*, which purportedly featured compositions from Saturn but which, to one unbelieving listener, UFO bibliographer George M. Eberhart, sounded more like "Muzak from 1955" (Clark, 1986).

But by 1959, when Menger's *From Outer Space to You*, one of the most widely read contactee books of the period, was published, the New Jersey contactee had mostly retired from the scene. The following year, however, he asked to appear on a television show hosted by Nebel. To the astonishment of host and viewers alike, Nebel would write, Menger virtually recanted: "Where he had once sworn that he had seen flying saucers, he now felt that he had some vague impression that he might on some half-remembered occasion possibly viewed some airborne object—maybe.... Howard Menger backed up, and backed up, until he fell into a pit of utter confusion..." (Nebel, 1961).

In 1963, broke and trying to market a four-foot, radio-controlled saucer model, he spoke with **James W. Moseley**, editor of *Saucer News*, who subsequently reported that Menger "seems to feel that he was misinformed at the time as to the origin of the people he was meeting" (Moseley, 1963). He moved to Sebastian, Florida, and circulated a letter claiming that after he had sent UFO photographs to the Pentagon, a secret government agency had asked him to