

THE CASH-LANDRUM CASE - A VERITABLE PLETHORA OF WHIRLYBIRDS

Mention must be made of this important case. Although there is no direct mutilation connection with this event, the helicopter aspect is most pertinent. We are reprinting below the coverage of the case we published in STIGMATA NO. 17 (2nd Quarter 1982), then in STIGMATA No. 19 (4th Quarter 1982). We are then presenting a crucial report from a military insider, previously unpublished.

From STIGMATA No. 17:

Most of our readers are already familiar with reports regarding an extraordinary UFO incident which occurred northeast of Houston, Texas on the night of December 29, 1980. Three people were involved - two women: Betty Cash and Vickie Landrum - and Mrs. Landrum's 7-year-old grandson, Colby. The Cash-Landrum case has been under investigation by John Schuessler, Alan Holt and other members of the Houston area Project VISIT UFO group, which includes several NASA personnel. The Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO) and the Center For UFO Studies (CUFOS) have also been involved in the investigation. In the April 1981 MUFON UFO JOURNAL, editor (at that time) Richard Hall writes that the Cash-Landrum case "promises to be one of the most significant physical evidence cases in modern UFO history". Dr. J. Allen Hynek of CUFOS termed it a "really crucial case" because of the "absolutely unequivocal physical effects" suffered by the witnesses. Investigator Bill English, formerly of APRO, called it "the most incredible UFO sighting reported in the U.S. in recent years...an unimpeachable case of three common people who find themselves suddenly caught up in events stranger than the wildest of science fiction". MUFON's John Schuessler says: "I believe fully that (the witnesses) saw a UFO. To not believe them would be foolish, especially after seeing the physical pain they've experienced from it".

The dramatic event unfolded as Betty Cash was driving Vickie Landrum and Colby along a tree-lined rural road in the Dayton-Huffman-New Caney area north of Houston at around 9:00 P.M. They were confronted by a roughly diamond-shaped object, glowing, sporadically spewing fire, emitting a roaring noise and off and on beeping sounds - eventually hovering over the otherwise-deserted road in front of Betty Cash's car. All three witnesses got out of the car to watch. Colby, then Vickie, returned to the ostensible safety of the car while Betty remained outside, watching. Eventually the object departed and the three harried percipients were able to make it home. Soon, all three witnesses began to suffer from a myriad of physiological ills. In the MUFON UFO JOURNAL (November 1981), Schuessler said that, while standing outside her car, Betty Cash had been exposed to the object for 5 to 10 minutes, Vickie for 3 to 5 minutes and Colby for about a minute. Although the temperature was in the 40's, the car became so heated from exposure to the craft that the air conditioner had to be turned on to even begin to approach a modicum of comfort. Schuessler summarized the medical effects exhibited on each of the witnesses:

Colby: Erythema (reddening of the skin); eyes swollen and watery; stomach pains; diarrhea; anorexia (loss of appetite); some weight loss; increase in tooth cavities.

Vickie: Erythema; photophthalmia (eyes swollen, watery and painful); vision diminished; stomach pains; diarrhea; anorexia; ulceration on the arms, resulting in scarring and loss of pigmentation; haratin affected resulting in fingernail damage; hair loss; hair re-growth of a different texture.

Betty: Erythema; acute photophthalmia; vision impaired; stomach pains; vomiting; diarrhea; anorexia; loss of energy, lethargy; scarring and loss of skin pigmentation; excessive hair loss; hair re-growth of a different texture.

(Copyright 1981 by the MUFON UFO JOURNAL; 103 Oldtowne Road; Seguin, Texas 78155)

Betty Cash, who was outside the car the longest, seemed to suffer the most, and Colby the least - although he, convinced at the time that it was "the end of the world", later suffered from nightmares and increased fear and anxiety.

John Schuessler reported in the newsstand publication UFO REPORT (Winter 1981) that MUFON's radiology consultant...

...concluded that "we have strong evidence that these patients have suffered damage secondary to ionizing radiation. It is also possible there was an infrared or ultraviolet component as well". This means that the symptoms...could have been caused by ionizing radiation plus ultraviolet and infrared radiation.

Open case...insert helicopters. This, to us, is fully as intriguing an aspect of the case as the physiological effects. As the roaring object (periodically belching flames and almost seeming to struggle to stay airborne) began to leave the area, flying off to the southwest (in the general direction of Houston), at least 20 and perhaps as many as 23 helicopters appeared. They moved in, surrounded the object, and seemed to "escort" it off into the night. Using helicopter identification charts, the witnesses were able to identify many of the helicopters as Boeing-Vertol CH-47's, commonly known as "Chinooks" or "flying bananas". The other helicopters were smaller and single-rotored. It wasn't certain, but they appeared to be "Hueys". Additional witnesses have been located in the area who saw either the UFO itself or one or more helicopters that night. It seems that we can offer three potential scenarios for what occurred on that night of December 29, 1980:

(1) The UFO itself was extraterrestrial, non-terrestrial, alien or otherwise extramundane in origin, and the "helicopters" were nothing more than UFOs themselves, perhaps attending to their "mother ship" while wanting terrestrials to think they were "just" helicopters, after all.

(2) The UFO was "alien", but the helicopters were conventional terrestrial craft, probably attached to the military.

(3) The UFO was terrestrial in origin, representing a secret or experimental operation, and the choppers were operating under military auspices.

As they lived through their encounter that night, the witnesses, Vickie Landrum in particular, surmised they were having a religious experience, maybe even the Second Coming itself. Looking back on the incident, however, they felt the object they saw was most likely part of a government-military operation, rather than an intrusion from outer space.

Dr. J. Allen Hynek said of the case: "...we're not sure if it's a government exercise or a UFO sighting". Arizonan Bill English believed the helicopters may very well be "unmanned probes" attached to the extraterrestrial UFO. John Schuessler of MUFON and Project VISIT said, regarding the helicopters: "It had to be a military operation. It was a military operation. I'm convinced of that. There are no Ch-47's on the Gulf Coast that are not military. We've checked very thoroughly".

Some investigators have felt there is a possibility that some, if not all of the helicopters came from the Army's massive Fort Hood in Central Texas or the adjacent Gray Air Force Base. The existence of "Gray Field" is no secret, but for some reason it has long been surrounded by an aura of mystery, largely because so few people seem to know what really goes on there. In fact, it was rumored in the mid-1970's that the military was conducting a UFO investigation from a secret installation on either Fort Hood or Gray Field. In November of 1973, ufologist and paranormal investigator Tommy Roy Blann was investigating the UFO "flap" of that period around Calvert, Texas, about 60 miles east of the Fort Hood/Gray Field area. On the night of November 21, 1973, Blann, his wife Linda and two other witnesses had been watching UFOs cavort over the Brazos River. Blann told writer Timothy Green Beckley (in the newsstand publication UFO ANNUAL, 1976) that: "As the UFOs bobbed around overhead, we became aware of aircraft and helicopter activity to the north. At one point, one of our military planes circled directly over the UFOs, but kept at a respectable - and safe - distance. Checking with officials at Gray Air Force Base - the closest military installation from where they could have originated - it was admitted that there had been a routine reconnaissance mission in progress that night. However, the officer I spoke with emphatically denied any knowledge of 'flying saucers'. To my way of thinking...there is no way on earth...that their pilots could have missed seeing the UFOs unless they were totally blind".

John Schuessler stated in UFO REPORT (Winter 1981) that: "Most military installations powered down for the Christmas holidays and flew very few missions..." during that time. Oddly enough, it seems that Gray Air Force Base has admitted that sometime during that period "more than 100 helicopters came in from the field 'for effect'" - whatever that means. Over the years, even soldiers and guardsmen at Fort Hood have been curious about the operations at Gray AFB. Schuessler and his team did manage to make contact with an Army major in the Houston area - a helicopter pilot who claimed to have been piloting a CH-47 on a mission (which he would not detail) on that night. Unfortunately, the major soon decided he would have nothing more to say on the matter.

For further reading regarding this crucial case: MUFON UFO JOURNAL (April 1981 and November 1981 and others); APRO BULLETIN (Vol. 29, no. 8, 1981); UFO REPORT (now defunct - Winter 1981). The nationally-distributed tabloids got into the act, of course (example: GLOBE; April 28, 1981). One of the first reporters on the scene was Dick Donovan of the WEEKLY WORLD NEWS (March 24, 1981), a sister publication of the NATIONAL ENQUIRER organization. Deviating from the approach taken by some of his peers, Donovan's article is most credible and minus unnecessary sensationalizing (strange for the WEEKLY WORLD NEWS, even). The NATIONAL ENQUIRER itself later published a full-page article on the subject. Yet strangely and incredibly and suspiciously, the article made no mention whatsoever of the helicopters involved in the case. In the fall of 1981, the Cash/Landrum case was covered in an unusually-long segment of ABC-TV's "That's Incredible".

From STIGMATA No. 19:

The investigation into the important Cash/Landrum case of December 1980 continues. Readers are directed to the "UFO Update" in the "Anti Matter" section in the February 1983 OMNI magazine. The unfortunate aftermath drags on for Betty Cash (heart attack stroke in recent months, reports of cancer), Vickie Landrum (worsening cataract, weakness, sores that leave scars) and young Colby Landrum (vision impairment, sores, nausea, anemia and potentially (according to OMNI) leukemia). The witnesses, in fact, sued the U.S. government seeking 20 million dollars in damages. The case apparently and ultimately went nowhere. There were unconfirmed rumors in later years that the government or some other mysterious source was paying all or part of the witnesses medical expenses. An investigation led by McDonnell Douglas engineer John Schuessler (an officer in both the MUFON and VISIT (Vehicle Internal Systems Investigative Team) UFO organizations) uncovered a number of witnesses who saw Chinook-type helicopters that night and in that area. Schuessler wrote in a December 1982 report:

The Cash/Landrum incident took place during Monday evening, 29 December 1980. During the incident the three victims were exposed to something that caused lasting physi-

cal injury and impairment. Also during the incident the victims reported sighting more than 20 helicopters. Many of the helicopters were of the large twin-rotor type - distinctly military.

Schuessler reports that during the follow-up investigation Ft. Hood (the Army reservation in Central Texas), Ellington Air Force Base (near Houston), the Army Inspector General's office and others excused the possibility of military helicopter operations during the incident, by stating that military units don't operate during the Christmas holiday period. Ellington people went one step further by stating they fly only on weekends. VISIT investigators proved both statements to be incorrect by citing specific activities of helicopter units as proof. (Furthermore, a reliable and trusted military contact has informed Project Stigma of his involvement in an alien crash-retrieval operation between Christmas and New Year's Day one year. Obviously, military operations will be conducted during the holiday season if the circumstances warrant.). The source of the helicopters in the Cash/Landrum incident remains a mystery. At least, nothing has been proven. Following the incident, helicopter operations of various kinds continued in the Houston area. On Tuesday, December 28, 1982, a CH-47 Chinook with Army markings approached the Clear Lake, Texas area (near NASA) from the south at 3:01 PM, made a turn over the Johnson Space Center, and landed at Ellington Air Force Base. Additional CH-47 flights out of Ellington were observed at 6:19 PM, 6:41 PM and 7:19 PM. Later flights were mixed with F-4 Phantom flights until after 9:30 PM. Again, CH-47's flew on a week-night and during Christmas week.

Schuessler also found that a Dayton, Texas police officer, L.L. Walker and his wife saw CH-47 helicopters in the area of the Cash/Landrum incident on the same night, December 29, 1980. Walker reported seeing four groups of three helicopters each, flying in "V" formations, with the lead helicopter in each group shining a spotlight on the ground. They were flying at a round 500 feet altitude. They eventually altered their course and flew off in the direction of the Gulf of Mexico.

Project Stigma has a source in the military community whom we shall call "Victor". While being normally stationed in a particular area, Victor periodically visited yet another military base in the U.S. during 1989. While at this second base, he was contacted by another military man ("Tony") who had sought to meet Victor, knowing of the latter's interest in UFOs. He wanted to tell Victor of an experience he had had while stationed at Fort Hood, Texas in December of 1980. While Tony related his story, Victor closely observed his facial expressions and noted every nuance in his tone and manner of speaking. Victor felt that Tony was being sincere.

Tony was a helicopter pilot at Fort Hood. Between Christmas and the end of 1980, there was a "special alert". The helicopter pilots (not known how many participated, other than Tony) were told where they would be going - that once they reached the general area, they would vectored in. They were told they would see an "unusual aircraft" there - that their mission was to "cover" this craft and to try to force it to land by keeping it at a low altitude. Once the craft landed, they were to "mark" the spot, radio in, and wait for "other people" to move in. The choppers would then be dismissed to return to their base. Tony told Victor that the whole operation happened so suddenly that he was "half-drunk" when he took off from Fort Hood, but that what he saw later sobered him up. They reached the area in question and Tony saw a craft he described as "the biggest damndest diamond he ever saw in his life". As the choppers flew over the top of the object, trying to "hold it down", it was "throwing off sparks like a 4th of July sparkler". Sometimes the sparks would hit the ground; sometimes they would appear to burn out before hitting the ground. The craft began to move off and the choppers followed it for 7 to 10 miles. As they were following it, it stopped throwing off sparks and started to "glow". The craft then became stationary again. At that moment, the choppers received word that they were to abort the mission and "return to their various bases" (i.e., they had come from more than one base). Later, all the Fort Hood personnel who had been involved in the mission were re-assigned. Tony ended up in Germany.

After their arrival back at Fort Hood, everyone was de-briefed. They were told that what they had encountered was an "experimental aircraft" that had gone astray outside of its flight pattern and had started to "experience problems". It was crucial to insure that no one (civilians) got too close to it. Not all of the choppers were CH-47 "Chinooks"; some were UH-1 "Hueys", which is what Tony was piloting. The Chinooks had "contact teams" in them. If the craft had crashed or set down, these "contact teams" were to go down and secure the area. From what Tony had understood, there had been 4 contact teams.

Tony couldn't verify the total number of choppers (23?) since they had come from different bases. Tony had no idea what the "diamond object" really was. They were told they would be vectored into the location; but then they would have to "go visual" because the object they were looking for would be flying below radar. Apparently, thought Tony, whatever malfunction had occurred on board the strange craft, it was corrected. Tony said he had kept his mouth shut about the incident and nothing untoward had happened to him since then. He felt that Victor would be interested in the story, but Tony advised he should keep his mouth shut about it, as well.

THOMAS R. ADAMS

# THE CHOPPERS — AND THE CHOPPERS

MYSTERY HELICOPTERS AND ANIMAL MUTILATIONS

**REVISED EDITION**

40 PAGES

PUBLISHED BY:

**Project Stigma**

**P. O. Box 1094**

**Paris, Texas 75461**

Copyright 1991 by Thomas R. Adams. Direct reproduction of this publication is prohibited unless written permission is granted, with the exception of brief passages or excerpts which may be quoted for the purpose of a review or other similar reference work, provided that credit is given to: Project Stigma - P.O. Box 1094 - Paris, Texas 75461.

---