

A Symposium

Opening Statement by Curtis G. Fuller, Publisher of *Fate*,
Which Sponsored the Congress

Could UFOs Be "Psychic Constructs?"—An Hypothesis

During the years when I was actively editing *Fate* I developed several concepts concerning UFOs.

The first idea was that what we call UFOs are probably more than one kind of thing.

The second idea was that some of them might well be a kind of mind phenomenon—though exactly what kind I was not qualified to define.

The third idea was an extension of the second. I offered the specific concept that some UFOs might be a kind of "psychic construct"—an actual physical creation of the mind. Bear with me for a bit if this seems too much to swallow.

In the early 1960s I was president of the Illinois Society for Psychical Research. One of our monthly pro-

grams was devoted to exploring various theories of UFOs. Among the participants were Robert Achzener, who represented APRO, and Sherman Larsen, who has done so much with the Center for UFO Studies and at that time was very active in NICAP.

Both of them were hardware boys, and they were upset with me as a third member of the forum for suggesting that UFOs might be a kind of psychic phenomenon. In defense of my views I discussed the experience described by Mme. Alexandra David-Neel in creating a *tulpa*—or thought form—while she was in Tibet. Mme. Neel's *tulpa* took the form of a monk which gradually grew more and more menacing until she became frightened and determined to destroy it by the same method she had used to create it—the powers of her trained mind.

I recall so well Mme. David-Neel's dry comment that she knew her *tulpa* was an hallucination but she was disturbed by the fact that other people could see it, too.

From that point I referred to the great UFO flaps of the 1890s, when hundreds of thousands of persons reported they had seen airships—before there were any powered airships or dirigibles in the United States. Anyone who studies the old newspaper files realizes that the thousands of persons who saw UFOs then believed they were seeing devices made on earth. It never occurred to them they could be anything else.

I then recalled a particular UFO sighting by Captain Larry W. Vinther, flying a Mid-Continent Airlines plane near Sioux City, Iowa. Captain Vinther had been vectored to the object by ground control, and as it approached he at first believed it might crash into his plane. Instead he watched it go past his wing and barely had time to swivel his head as it went past before there it was again, flying at his wing tip, in the same direction, only two hundred feet away.

Captain Vinther thought his UFO resembled a B-29 in many particulars, and as it gradually veered away he became more and more convinced that it was one of these World War II bombers.

From such reports as these the idea came to me that something more could be involved in UFO sightings than

the presence of physical objects. Whatever the witnesses of the 1890s actually saw, they had to interpret it as an airship. Even though there were no powered airships in the 1890s, they were within the realm of possibility. Jules Verne had written about them. It was widely believed that their development was not far off in the future. So I concluded that whatever the witnesses were actually seeing, their minds were interpreting the sighting in terms of what they could accept and what was familiar.

Similarly, in the case of Larry Vinther's B-29, I asked myself what the object would have looked like to Vinther and his crew if they had seen it in the days before there were B-29s. I concluded they had to see it in terms of the familiar. In Biblical times there were chariots of fire. In the Middle Ages there were sailing ships aloft in the heavens.

Now of course I am merely suggesting some background for speculation at this private meeting, just as I did to the Illinois Society fifteen years ago. Some of you have carried these and similar speculations much further. Some of you are opposed to any such concept. I am not offering a personal hypothesis here for debate. But these speculations are the ideas which eventually led to convening this meeting. As Kenneth Arnold says, "I'm still as puzzled about what is going on as I was thirty years ago."

And I don't believe that I am any closer to a solution either.

Jim Lorenzen, Aerial Phenomena Research Organization

Contacts with space beings should not be ruled out even though there are psychological explanations.

One thing that has concerned me about the so-called UFO abduction cases is that they are so varied and so bizarre. They seem to insult human intelligence in many cases. I don't know whether this is a comment on the limits of my imagination or open-mindedness, or whether it is inherent in the evidence. Naturally I prefer to believe

the latter rather than something due to my own limitations.

I have found the work of Dr. Alvin Lawson, who is present, impressive since it may offer some explanation for the weird variety of UFO reports, especially abduction cases.

One thing we have learned when we have gone into the background of persons who claim to have been abducted by UFOs, to have had contacts with UFOs, or to have received messages from space people is that for the most part they have a history of being battered children or have had sad histories in other ways. Betty Hill brought this to my attention initially, and we have confirmed that many of them had very sad childhoods.

This suggests that contactees may be people who, for one reason or another, have been made to feel that they don't fit into their family situations—and that they are looking for ways to bolster their self-images. Their stories seem to follow a regular progression. First, the contactees-to-be feel they simply can't belong to their own family because of the way they're treated.

Next they decide they must have been adopted and that it has been kept a secret from them. Then, when they are exposed to the UFO idea through press and books or electronic media, they begin to believe that maybe they've been transplanted here from another planet.

The next step is that they're being accepted for some sort of special duty by other planetary beings. This leads them to believe that they have special abilities, that they can predict things. And sometimes they do in fact predict things well enough to make us wonder how far an idea like this can take one.

We need to define and to classify what is going on with contactees. The human mind likes to classify things and give them names, and this is one sort of research that needs to be done.

Dr. Lawson's experimental work in California suggests that in some cases we may take a person who has had a real UFO experience and plant in his head the idea that he also had an abduction. (See page 195 for Dr. Lawson's report.)

If Dr. Lawson's work is valid, it certainly suggests

that the subject can then create a complete story of such an abduction. I don't believe this deprives us of the real abduction experiences, however, because there are cases, such as the Travis Walton case, in which I've been closely involved, where so many witnesses report the same bizarre occurrence that it cannot be doubted. It certainly does not sound rehearsed.

In the Walton case there were six witnesses who all passed lie-detector tests and whose testimony agreed and supported each other's without sounding the least bit rehearsed. They were a pickup crew of workers who had grabbed onto temporary jobs and were thrown together. They are not the sort of group one could expect to connive and come up with a conspiracy.

I want to stress, therefore, that although there may be an increasing number of people who, for abnormal psychological reasons, are creating abduction cases, that doesn't mean there aren't real abduction cases. I keep coming back to the same thing. We need good research; we need funding and manning for that research.

**Professor Frank Salisbury, Director, Plant-Science Department,
State University of Utah**

Witnesses' descriptions are accurate even though their interpretations may be faulty.

I'd like to emphasize that UFO witnesses generally do a good job of observing and remembering what they see not only in spite of but also because of the excitement and emotion generated by their experience. Certainly the mind plays a role in UFO observation, but this is not always bad.

The basis for this idea consists of the many reports in which the witness is totally convinced that he or she has seen some unearthly machine whereas the witness is really observing something much more conventional, such as the planet Venus. In some cases, it is possible to compare what was reported with what was actually there.

Aimé Michel had talked about a weather balloon

that moved across southern France and was reported as a UFO by many persons who nonetheless pretty much described a weather balloon. Emotion and excitement play an extremely important role in interpreting what is seen, but the abilities to observe and remember are not distorted by emotion and excitement but are sharpened. It's not difficult to imagine that one's powers of observation might be increased by excitement. One pays attention when one is observing something strange and unfamiliar. One concentrates intently, focusing all of one's senses, sight, hearing, perhaps touch or smell, on the phenomenon.

Distortions develop, but the point is that you see what you expect to see, and this may distort the memory of what was observed. Still, in my experience with UFO reports I'm amazed at the small extent to which the memory is distorted by this phenomenon.

Three weeks ago I was in Snowflake, Arizona, and got to meet Travis Walton. I was giving a series of lectures at the local church and I mentioned the Travis Walton case and asked if anyone had any information that might relate to it.

Later, a woman told me about two men who she believed had seen a UFO in the same area and at the same time that Travis had his experience. This was exciting news, so I visited one of them. The sighting was on November 15, 1975, ten days after Travis had been abducted, so the witness had his mind full of the Travis Walton case at the time he had his experience. The two men had been hunting only two or three miles from the site of the abduction. About three o'clock in the morning, they decided to return home. They drove down the rim road about a quarter of a mile from the highway, looked to the east, and saw a brilliant light shining through the trees slightly above the horizon. As they drove along, the light came up out of the trees and moved about a half mile ahead of them on the highway.

They stopped the automobile to listen for sounds coming from the light, but everything was perfectly silent. When they stopped the automobile, the object also stopped. As a matter of fact, whatever they did, the object maintained the same distance from them—about a

half mile to the east. They sped up, slowed down, changed directions as the road turned. As they drove the two or three hours required to reach Snowflake, the object gradually increased its elevation. They observed it through a rifle scope and thought they could discern a saucer shape but its brilliance was too great for them to be certain of this.

They became quite worried and excited. On two occasions a buzzing sound seemed to come from the dashboard. When they arrived home the man awakened his wife, who also was able to observe the object until daylight.

Of course, the men had been observing Venus. A little checking confirmed that Venus was at a near maximum elongation from the sun in the eastern sky at that time and also at near maximum brilliance. The men were totally convinced and had remained convinced for a year and a half after the sighting that they were watching a UFO, perhaps the same one that abducted Travis Walton. Yet everything about their description exactly matched the planet Venus, with the exception of the buzzing in the dashboard, which obviously was some kind of coincidence. The position in the sky, the brilliance, the apparent movement only when the witnesses moved, the increasing elevation in the sky as the morning wore on, even the brilliant distorted shape in the rifle scope all perfectly match Venus. As far as I could tell in listening to this man there was not a single item in his report that conflicted in any way with reality. Yet the witnesses were emotionally wrought up and fully convinced that they were observing an extraterrestrial machine rather than an extraterrestrial planet.

On another occasion, I was telephoned by several UFO witnesses. They were watching a saucer-shaped, silvery object in front of the mountains west of Fort Collins, Colorado. There were two women and several children and they had been observing the object for more than an hour. I was unable to see it from where I was so I drove to their place and was impressed that the witnesses had been able to discern through binoculars that the object was square-shaped rather than disc-shaped. As

I observed the object through the binoculars it was difficult to see the square shape. It was just at the bare limits of what could be perceived.

We drove toward it and found that it was a silver-colored polyethylene inflated weather kite being flown by the Atmospheric Sciences Department at Colorado State University. Again, the witnesses showed all the psychological symptoms of typical UFO observers and yet every detail of their description exactly matched reality.

In a third case, there may have been a detail that did not exist which was generated by the excitement of the sighting. Two women, a mother and a daughter, were driving in Wheatridge, Maryland. As they drove by a schoolyard, they saw a puzzling light, pinpointing its location above the playground. Suddenly it moved rapidly to the northwest and disappeared below the horizon. The next night I went to the area with the intention of questioning people in the neighborhood about TV or radio interference. Some high-school boys were making hot-air gas balloons with candles and polyethylene bags.

As you must anticipate, when I asked what they had been doing the night before they said they were doing the same thing. Again, the appearance of the light described by the two women exactly matched the appearance of the hot-air balloons. The rapid disappearance was described by the boys as being due to a high wind coming over the school that would catch the balloons and move them rapidly toward the northwest.

Of course, witnesses are notoriously inept at estimating sizes, distances and velocity, so it is easy to see how the women could have said it went fifteen miles in twenty seconds or whatever, instead of the probably three hundred yards that it traveled until it disappeared.

The women also said they saw a large black object below the light. I've thought maybe that represents reality too, some way—a cloud of black smoke or something. I don't know for sure. I strongly consider the possibility that the women were extremely desirous of witnessing a UFO and therefore imagined the large black object. It's apparent that witnesses can imagine details that are not there, even extremely important details. These would certainly be mind

phenomena that might represent part of the UFO experience. But I'm personally impressed with the abilities of witnesses to observe and accurately report details of a UFO sighting. I surely don't think that this is always the situation. I'm not trying to argue against the idea of UFOs as mind phenomena because I'm intrigued by the idea that there may well be cases when they are indeed. But at the same time, my feeling is that witnesses are amazingly good observers.

Stanton T. Friedman, Nuclear Physicist

Mind phenomena may be involved in some UFO sightings, but Friedman believes UFOs are nuts and bolts.

The reason most UFO sightings can be explained as Identified Flying Objects instead of Unidentified Flying Objects is that the witnesses' descriptions are accurate although their interpretations may be wrong. One man wrote me describing two very bright objects night after night, getting closer in the western sky—a perfect description of Venus and Jupiter at that particular season of the year. I had another case where thirty independent witnesses in Los Angeles described a bright red light in the sky. When I finally pinned it down, it was a plastic bag with car flares, and I even found the firemen who retrieved it from the Wilshire Country Club lawn. The thirty witnesses were right-on.

So we must make a distinction between description or observation and interpretation. Very often we find that the problem lies with the interrogator, not with the witnesses . . . putting words in the witness's mouth and then quoting him as to how big the UFO was, how high it was, how far away it was—when he had said he didn't know any of those things. The next day the newspaper reports that it was thirty feet in diameter, a quarter of a mile high, half a mile away. And everybody says, "That's a bunch of baloney, no one can estimate any of those things." Don't blame the witness.

It's important that we stay away from interpretation.

I'm convinced that some UFOs are somebody else's spacecraft. In other words, I believe we're dealing with hardware. *Some UFOs.* I think one of the problems is that we ask the wrong questions. As a physical scientist, my way of looking at the way the question ought to be stated is; "Are any UFOs extraterrestrial spacecraft?"

Now those of you concerned strictly with mind phenomena have a right to ask; "Are any UFO sightings mental constructs?" Note that I said "sightings" and not "UFOs." The answer there is probably yes, too, but as a physicist, I don't know what to do about those. I don't believe their significance for mankind is the same as the significance of some of them being intelligently controlled extraterrestrial vehicles.

I can't accept the reasons why some people jump to a kind of fourth-dimensional parallel universe or a three-dimensional hologram kind of explanation for UFOs because I find that usually those reasons are a deduction from a wrong set of assumptions. In other words, if you accept as truth that you can't get to earth from another star system; that, having gotten here (even though you can't!), your craft couldn't behave the way these things are observed to behave; and that, having somehow surmounted these first two objections, you wouldn't personally behave in the manner that these beings do behave, then you seek nonphysical explanations. If you start from such assumptions and throw in a fourth, that is, that people are mostly honest and sincere and not pulling your leg all the time—if you accept the last one and you also accept that first one—then you're stuck with saying people are seeing something. Now, by this line of reasoning, it can't be a spacecraft because you can't get here from there, and if you could, you couldn't act this way, so what could it be? You then conclude that it must be something projected from your mind, or something like John Keel's holograms. If so, I say, "Who's running the machine?" I find there are no good physics objections to some UFOs being extraterrestrial spacecraft—some, I'm certainly not saying all.

Now, when I say some UFOs are extraterrestrial spacecraft, that's not because I throw up my hands and

say people are seeing something crazy and what else could it be? It must be that they're vehicles from someplace else. Now, there are a number of skeptics who say that's the only reason those of us who hold that viewpoint get there. What else can they be? They must be spacecraft.

I say that some are extraterrestrial spacecraft because of a combination of two things. When you take the best reports available and sort and sift through them, you wind up with a hard core of reports of objects of definite size, shape, surface texture, and physical characteristics indicating that they are manufactured. Now, lights in the sky don't meet that criterion, no matter how bright. The second thing is that the UFOs' behavior has to include certain aspects that we cannot associate with the behavior of the things that we know how to build down here on planet earth. For example, the steady, slow rising of an object in the atmosphere doesn't qualify as evidence for an extraterrestrial spacecraft, though it doesn't exclude it. But the ability, for example, to move at right angles at a few thousand miles an hour, and to move very fast and very slow and without noise, and up and down and back and forth without turning around does help qualify it. Those things, coupled with its appearance, coupled perhaps with physical manifestations, such as landing-trace cases, lead me to say that we're dealing with manufactured objects behaving in ways that we can't duplicate on earth.

I'm not saying that there are no reports of UFOs that aren't secret government projects from here or Russia or anyplace else. Certainly an airline pilot fifteen years ago seeing a YF-11 or an SR-71 zipping along at eighty thousand feet at Mach 3 would say, "We don't have anything that flies like that." As far as he knew, we didn't. That doesn't mean we didn't—as far as he knew, we didn't!

Now, I am confining this part of my discussion to manufactured objects behaving in ways that we can't duplicate. Let's back away a little bit and look at the physics objections and see if they make any sense. The first objection is that you can't get to here from there. That's the easiest one to deal with, because it is true that you can't get here from other solar systems on a bicycle,

let's say, or even in a good motor boat or in a balloon or a 747. But for that matter, you can't get from here to Sydney, Australia, exclusively on a bicycle. That doesn't mean you can't get to Sydney, Australia.

So, when I look at the question of getting here from there, I don't want to restrict my attention to distant galaxies—to say, "They can't be coming here because look how far it is to Andromeda, or the limits of the universe." This is a sly trick—I don't know what else to call it—this switching away from our local galactic neighborhood, which objectors often use. If you go out fifty light years there are a thousand stars. That's enough for me to be worried about. That's a big enough chunk of space. Let's not make the mistake of going from there to other galaxies. The objectors set up a straw man. They say UFOs can't get to other galaxies so they can't get here from someplace else. That is illogical and irrational. Can you get to other stars in the local neighborhood? That's enough to worry about without worrying about other galaxies.

Let me say that there are published papers which show that trips to nearby stars are feasible—trips to nearby stars, down-the-street, around-the-corner kinds of things, are feasible with a round-trip time shorter than the average person's life span, without invoking fourth-dimensional space-time warping. I would even accept the notion that such warps may exist. But they aren't required to get here from someplace else. Staged fission-and fusion-propulsion systems, on both of which I have worked, will do the job very nicely, if you want to spend enough money—say fifty to one hundred billion dollars. It's a political choice. We know how to proceed if that's what people want to do, and I can think of half a dozen other schemes besides fission and fusion which also ought to be able to do the job.

I find the same problem—this setting up of straw men and making inappropriate assumptions—universal among the critics. It is certainly true that conventional systems for moving people and things can't duplicate UFO flight behavior, can't make right-angle turns, can't go fast without making sonic booms and so forth. But that's only

because of the limitations of the particular systems we are using. You can't make a pocket calculator using vacuum tubes. That doesn't mean you can't make a pocket calculator. You can do it very well using micro-integrated circuits. Right-angle turns cannot be made with conventional jet or rocket airplanes—because they're not designed to make right-angle turns. They're not designed to be able to hover, to be able to move straight up and down and back and forth. It's just that the critic looking at these cases isn't aware of other techniques for doing these things that he believes can't be done. That doesn't mean that there aren't ways of doing them. You have to look at the advanced technology and most of us don't.

Some strange things happen with UFOs and I'm sure the psychiatrists present would agree that 2 to 5 percent of the public can be expected to be rather weird in the first place. I like to tell people that the American Physical Society said that 2 percent of the papers submitted one year were crackpot papers. That means, I presume, that 2 percent of physicists are crackpots; however, I expect the rate is higher than that. So it is certainly to be expected that among the general population one will find some bizarre reports, descriptions, experiences. I think Alvin Lawson's work with Dr. William McCall (see page 195) is enlightening. They induced UFO sightings and abduction descriptions hypnotically, and I found that work very interesting but not surprising. Fiction writers have been creating unreal worlds for a very long time. We know the mind is capable of projecting and creating exciting, interesting, bizarre phenomena. I don't agree with Jim Lorenzen's view that sometimes the phenomena seem like an insult to human intelligence.

I think it's a challenge to the imagination, not an insult to the intelligence. I think that you have to back up a step when you say "weird variety." On what level are you dealing with weirdness? I mean, if you've seen *Star Wars*, there're a lot of weird characters. On what level are we discussing "weirdness?" If one looks at abduction cases, it appears that most abductees are treated as specimens. That covers a large number of abduction cases—even

though not all the abductors are identical in appearance. But how many of us are identical in appearance? What's an Earthling look like, for example? Obviously he's got to have hair on his face and hair on his head, right? (Editor's note: Friedman has a heavy beard but is bald.) I think we need to move up to a level of abstraction and look at the problem dispassionately. I read an article once asking "What do Frank Sinatra, Cher, and—I think the third party was Dean Martin—all have in common?" The answer was that none of them finished high school. You could look at those three and their life histories for a long time and come up with all kinds of crazy explanations, but the real explanation isn't nearly as crazy as most of the ones you might come up with. Who is the most weird—we or our Visitors?

I know that Jacques Vallée has documented a couple of cases that look as if we're dealing with psychic healing or, for want of a better phrase, "parapsychological healing." It would amaze me if alien beings from an advanced civilization didn't have that ability. If they are sufficiently advanced so that they can get here it would amaze me if they hadn't explored the many areas of parapsychological techniques. It seems to me any sensible civilization would, and so it would not surprise me if many occurrences might be explained that way. Betty and Barney were apparently under thought control; there was some kind of telepathy. We do it, too. Their physician, Dr. Simon, was guilty of thought control. He induced amnesia after each session. There's an example. I don't see it as being terribly mysterious.

As for healing, a lot of exciting work is going on involving the use of electromagnetic fields. Dr. Robert O. Becker in Syracuse, New York, has done some fascinating work that enhances bone growth. When the bones won't knit, you attach a little device and get a low-level current and the bones heal. Now, that might be considered rather weird if you didn't know what was going on. The curing of cancer by exposure to cobalt sixty is another example. They use a sophisticated chamber where they rotate the person. You don't see anything, smell anything, feel any-

thing. A century ago all this would certainly have been considered mind-blowing mumbo-jumbo, or whatever other far-out word you want. We call it "technology" and let it go at that.

So I am not willing to bypass the nuts-and-bolts explanations for some UFOs. I expect that there's plenty of material in any field for the psychiatrist or the parapsychologist. If you look at the press treatment of UFO people, any of us, or any of the contactees or any of the abductees, you find that standards of journalism are not very high—that a guy can get Robert Spencer Carr exposure . . . the story about the bodies, you know, at Wright Patterson. He was not carefully interrogated. He got enormous publicity without having to provide anything other than a good story. Any science-fiction writer could provide a better one, I'm sure.

So, let me conclude, I'm for hardware; I'm for mind-blowing in a different kind of way, and I'll wait and see whether I want to throw out the nuts and bolts. Before I do that, I'd have to see a lot more than I've seen so far and I've been looking pretty hard.

David Jacobs: I've been wondering about what Dr. Salisbury said: that people by and large accurately describe what they see, and I think Stan Friedman backed him up on that. How does this relate to the 1890s sightings? One of the central ideas about these sightings is that people were seeing something within their technological outlook. It is proposed that their technological outlook had distorted their perceptions to the point that they were describing something that might not even have come close to what they actually were seeing. Yet all our research indicates that people do by and large accurately describe what they see and there's no reason to believe that people living in 1897 would be any less accurate. My other point is that if, in fact, they are accurately describing what they see, then we are led much more deeply into the concept of the UFOs having some sort of psychic connection because of the form in which they appeared. In other words, the objects did in fact appear to be airships but obviously were not.

Salisbury: Why do you say that?

Jacobs: Well, I say they're obviously not airships because all the research that everybody has ever done on the subject has failed to come up with a single airship.

Salisbury: You mean there were no airships in the country at that time?

Jacobs: There was one airship in the country in May 1897. A Professor Barnard at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition fabricated a pedal-powered airship and flew a few miles.

Salisbury: Well, I think that's the point of the whole business. I don't consider myself any kind of authority on this area of UFOs as Mind Phenomena, but in my limited experience I'm impressed with the idea that people describe accurately what they see. Consequently, I have to entertain the idea that they really saw some kind of airship-looking affair. The question then would be why. The possibility is that the phenomenon is controlled by some kind of intelligence, extrahuman, extraterrestrial, whatever. For the reasons known to that intelligence and apparently not discernible by us, they like to let people see what they expect to see, according to their time and sociological situation and so on. It's a kind of mind-boggling thought.

Friedman: I take an entirely different approach to that, Dave. I think you're presuming absence of evidence as evidence for absence of evidence. Airship is a very general word. People are much better at recognizing them than they are at describing them. They normally describe in terms of what they know, you know, football-shaped. Now what is football-shaped? It can mean ten different things, especially if you're from England instead of the United States. I would say that there were no sightings in 1897 that truly match cases of the sort I have been trying to set up with extremely high-speed performance, metallic surfaces, that sort of combination. The 1890s UFOs certainly had an appearance indicating manufactured objects, but not the behavior we witness today in

some UFOs. Now, you say there were no airships in the country. There were certainly lighter-than-air craft in the country.

Jacobs: There were no powered airships, but there were balloons.

Friedman: Well, okay, but if you hook an engine of any kind to a balloon, what are you dealing with? There were patents granted. There were . . . certainly there was an awful lot of research going on by private inventors trying to develop powered airships. It's just a happenstance that they were using hydrogen instead of helium in those days that we don't have an awful lot of zeppelins going back and forth across the oceans instead of airplanes today. The technology went into a different direction. So I don't think that those descriptions need to be thoughts that were put in mind by some mysterious beings. I think there really was a stimulus for those observations. I feel that people were accurately describing what they saw.

Salisbury: It's a question . . . I don't know all the details of this 1897 business. I know mostly what I read in Jacques Vallée's book, but I have the impression that they did do strange things. There were rapid takeoffs and brilliant beams of light and behavior that was not explainable in terms of 1897 airships anywhere.

Melton: Let's let Jerry Clark get into this discussion.

Jerome Clark: I spent a lot of time looking into this airship business. I have personally examined thousands of those reports and there is no way that anybody can tell me they were manufactured or flown by an American inventor unless there was some kind of massive conspiracy going on. It was impossible. There were thousands and thousands of sightings all over the country. It was a nationwide. . . .

Friedman: Of one thing? Seen by many people in many places or—?

Clark: No, these things were generally described as airships, but the descriptions weren't all the same. There was variety just as there is in modern UFO reports. Now, the objects were landing. Most often, the people who got out of them appeared to be normal human beings and they gave names, dates, places. They would say that they had a patent on the airship, which Dave has shown to be completely untrue. They told a number of absurd contradictory stories. There were parapsychological elements in some of these accounts. There are some very strange stories, equally as weird as the stories we have in our own day. But there's one particular episode that's particularly interesting.

This involves the Wilson reports of 1897 in Texas. Dave Jacobs and I had a long conversation about the 1897 airships at one point. He said to me, "There's a purity in these reports that we don't see in modern UFO phenomena." Well, this isn't true. With modern UFO reports we have innumerable accounts of occupants that don't add up. The 1890s reports don't add up either, but we don't seem to be dealing with the same objects. We seem to be dealing with a thousand different manifestations which are only generally similar.

Well, the Wilson reports are very interesting. They are sometimes pointed to by people who try to claim that there must have been an airship inventor whose name may have been Hiram Wilson. They base this idea on about eight reports from 1897. Most of them came from Texas, though there's one from Lake Charles, Louisiana, which is just across the border.

In these incidents the airship would land, a man would get out, and he would say, "My name is Wilson. I've invented this airship. You're all going to hear about it because I'm going to start an airship company. We're going to have transportation all over the country." All this sounds credible. In one of the places he said that he had stopped to see his old friend Captain Akers. It turned out there was such a Captain Akers, but he was out of town at that exact moment. When Captain Akers was later contacted by the newspapers, he said, "Certainly, twenty years ago, when I was living in Fort Worth I knew a

young man named Wilson who was extremely interested in aviation, and I thought he was nuts, but apparently he's onto something."

All this sounds superficially evidential. Unfortunately, when you study the reports it all breaks down. In almost all the cases in which Wilson was physically described he has a different appearance. In almost all the cases, the descriptions of the ship that he arrived in don't agree. The estimates of its size are wildly at variance with each other. And remember, these were not cases where the object zipped quickly overhead. These airships were supposedly on the ground. In some of them the witness allegedly entered the craft. The size of the crews was different; the descriptions of the crew members, the things that Wilson would tell the witnesses were different. Sometimes he would tell them one thing, sometimes another—things that were completely contradictory. The implication seems to be that the airship phenomenon was as absurd and as complex as the modern UFO phenomenon.

Salisbury: Would you comment on the suggestion that these were hoaxes written up by the media? Menzel talked about how some newspaper syndicate worked up these stories. They were supposed to be hoaxes, not actual witness accounts.

Clark: Again, I think that's one of the problems with the skeptics. Ultimately the case of UFO skeptics in general is founded on an obsession with conspiracies.

Friedman: That's an interesting way you put it.

Clark: I think there certainly were a lot of hoaxes. In fact, some of the most famous 1897 airship stories are hoaxes, such as the Alexander Hamilton calnapping case, which I was recently able to show was completely fictitious. It was a story made up by a local liars' club and there are a number of similar problems; for example, I got a call last week from a researcher who has been able to establish that the Merkel, Texas, case where the airship had the anchor that caught in the church is a complete hoax. So a number of these stories are breaking down. However, we have the fact that similar sightings

occurred in Britain in the early part of the twentieth century, in New Zealand, in Sweden, in Australia. This really was a worldwide phenomenon. There were sightings in South Africa in 1914. Ruppelt mentions in his book that he interviewed an old man who had been one of the witnesses to the 1896 airship that had passed over San Francisco. Also, my friend John Musgrave, a brilliant Canadian ufologist, interviewed a family who had a story that their grandfather had been aboard such an airship. A man from Portland two or three years ago said that UFOs were nothing new to him because in 1906 he had boarded an airship which had landed near Mitchell, South Dakota. So there are people who remember these kinds of events from that period.

Among the witnesses of the airships were people like Mayor Adolph Sutro of Sacramento, California. Some very prominent people witnessed these airships, and also the sightings involved thousands of people. Airships flew over Omaha and San Francisco, where many, many people saw them and reported to the papers. It seems to me that no newspaper could get by with a hoax of that magnitude.

Coral Lorenzen: In all the years that I've been dealing with newspaper reporters, not once have I been accurately quoted. I've been misquoted, quoted out of context, and even in those instances when I was sitting with the reporter and saying "No, don't put it that way," he still would go back to his office and change what I said.

Friedman: Even when you give them something in writing.

Coral Lorenzen: So I view the 1897 wave as partly hoax, partly misrepresentation of what the witness said, all down the line, just like the manifestations we have now—but something was seen.

Jacobs: But you haven't checked on that, though. In many of these newspapers there were letters to the editor which described airship sightings. We would assume that they wouldn't be changed.

Coral Lorenzen: You have to assume that somebody actually wrote it in the first place.

Fuller: Other than the editor.

Jacobs: One of the central problems of the 1897 airship cases which I find absolutely incomprehensible if we are, of course, dealing with a true wave, is that we don't have a single witness to an 1897 airship sighting. Not one—in the entire country. That's odd, because it wasn't that long ago. It's long, but there should be a few old-timers around.

Friedman: You presume that because you don't know of one, there isn't one.

Jacobs: We don't know of a single witness.

Friedman: How much real effort has been made to find those witnesses?

Jacobs: Unfortunately, probably none, but I would suggest that if people are near any nursing homes or anything like that, you might run a little article requesting witnesses. . . . Hynek got on the radio in New York City in 1967, I think it was, and made a plea for any UFO witnesses of the 1890s to come forward, and he's never received a single response. I think one of our priority items would be some sort of search for some witnesses.

Ray Palmer: I am basically a science-fiction writer. That's what I want to talk about in relation to the 1897 airships. When Jules Verne wrote his story, he described our launching to the moon almost to a "T." He even had the location right—Cape Canaveral. Several authors of that period wrote stories and described airships. Jules Verne wrote many. I suppose there were probably thousands of stories written that concerned powered airships, although none had ever been flown. I think that when we try to establish why people saw those airships, we'll find they were science-fiction readers. I think that we're not arguing about whether we have a mental phenomenon here or a real airship. We're talking simply about the human desire to imitate or mimic behavior. There are

probably thousands of stories that fall into that same category. I think this is irrelevant to whether there was an airship or not.

I could take Kenneth Arnold's own sighting. He never heard of airship sightings or flying saucers or whatever before he made his sighting. He was flying along and suddenly he saw these things. That is the kind of sighting that doesn't fall into this classification. But when we talk about the 1897 sightings we're simply speculating. Jules Verne wrote it first, and even I have invented some stories based on his imagination. I don't have to have any psychic explanation for it, I don't have to have mental hallucination, I don't have to have hypnotic suggestion. I don't have to believe there was such an aircraft. And I think that people who read Jules Verne in that time might even have passed his story down through the family as something that happened to grandpa. I don't think there's anything unusual about that type of story at all.

Alvin Lawson: I don't think we can answer the 1897 problem here but I would like to ask two questions. They're associated. First, I'd like to know why there are so few (I don't know of any) interrupted abductions. Each one seems to be integral—complete. We know of CEIs (close encounters of the first kind) that are interrupted—a truck comes along and the thing takes off. But we don't know of anyone's pancreas which is in the process of being examined when the subject is suddenly dumped out and the craft takes off. And this suggests a mode of proceeding that would be consistent with a mental rather than a physical event.

My second question is related to the first. In most abduction cases that I've known about, there seems to be a dominant witness. There is one person who seems to be more alert, perhaps more interested, more observant, and ultimately more cooperative with the investigator. The other witness or witnesses are not as helpful and don't seem to possess information that is helpful directly.

Not being a psychologist, I can speculate endlessly here, and fearlessly, but this suggests something in the

way these things are perceived and sensed that we cannot trust altogether. I think they're good questions and need to be confronted.

Jim Lorenzen: I want to observe that professional people expressing public opinions or speculations on the UFO subject very often tend to place the mystery outside their own area of specialty.

Friedman: Lawson is an English professor. What do you want?

Jim Lorenzen: It's really a trend. For instance, Dr. Hynek likes interdimensional UFOs. That places it outside physics.

Friedman: I'm an exception.

Jim Lorenzen: There are always a few exceptions. But I have an idea on this. Menzel was a good example. He was within his field when he talked about astronomical things being mistaken for UFOs. But when these explanations failed, he went immediately into psychology or behaviorism to explain the cases. I want to make one comment. When a person places the subject outside his own field of specialty, then he can approach it as an amateur and he can also avoid the responsibility of making responsible statements.

Friedman: If we keep it in our fields, it's okay?

Jim Lorenzen: You're okay, Stan.

Melton: It's a real problem you're hitting upon. Once anyone operating as a professional academician steps outside the narrow field in which he was trained, he's no better than Joe Blow on the street. That's a very real problem with UFOs because they're an interdisciplinary study.

Coral Lorenzen: I have a question for Dr. Lawson. When you asked why are there no abductions which are interrupted—by what?

Lawson: Halfway.

Coral Lorenzen: By what?

Lawson: By anything.

Coral Lorenzen: It seems to me that if this is a nuts-and-bolts situation, in a way we've got extraterrestrials messing around, they would take the abductees where they would be safe—so that they could carry out the research.

Friedman: That's why they don't land in Times Square.

Betty Hill: In regard to interruption of abductions, I have a woman friend named Lyndia Morel who was saved from being captured by a UFO. She was followed for several miles and the UFO was coming in on her. She could see the alien looking down at her telling her not to be afraid, no harm was going to come to her. It was four-thirty in the morning. She panicked and drove her car over the lawn right up to the door of this house. Meanwhile, she was getting tremendous sounds in her head. She was holding her head and was banging on the door to be let in. Meanwhile, their guard dog jumped at her. She was so frightened that she hit the dog so hard she knocked it across the yard. She kept pounding on the door and they let her in. The people living there went outside. They saw the UFO. They called the police. The police saw the UFO; her husband came along and saw it. Her house was only about two houses down. She was so terrified she never went back to her own home; she moved immediately. This happened in Goffstown, New Hampshire. And as a footnote, the man who opened the door to let her in died three weeks later of a heart attack at age forty-two.

Palmer: Did this woman you're talking about have this experience after you talked to her about yours?

Betty Hill: Lyndia Morel? No. In fact, when she had this experience, she knew nothing about UFOs. I met her quite a few weeks after it happened. She knew nothing about my experience at the time this happened.

Palmer: What I was trying to get at is that here, again, I would be looking very seriously into the possibility of suggestion, which relates to what I said before about the airships. People hear a story like this and they want to get in on the act. It's very real that she could go home and say, "There's a UFO following me," and so people in the house come out and they too can see the UFO.

Betty Hill: But this is not true of Lyndia. She was not influenced in any way by my experience. For one thing, our UFOs were completely different.

Palmer: They're always different, depending on the suggestion. The person interprets it differently.

Friedman: There's another point here. Lyndia's job was not one she was very proud of at the time. She was not anxious for publicity.

Hill: Okay, everybody said, "Lyndia was a masseuse." Now, in New Hampshire—I don't know about the rest of the United States, but in New Hampshire—a masseuse is a masseuse, and other things have their names, too. Lyndia is a decent, respectable person.

Friedman: We didn't mean she wasn't.

Hill: She needed a new job, too.

Friedman: She massaged people, really.

Jacobs: I read the newspaper reports of that case as it first came out. Then the investigator from MUFON, I believe, investigated it and wrote it up for the *Mufon Journal*. I was impressed with that case in many ways. The woman was apparently hysterical when she jumped out of her car, which was driven onto a neighbor's front yard and left running with the lights and engine on as she ran in a panic to the nearest house to try to get help. Of course, the point here is that there wasn't an abduction. It wasn't a follow-up on Betty's case. We don't know whether there would have been an abduction, really, and the only similarity is with the preliminary part of Betty's

and Barney's case, when they saw a person leaning out of a window of the UFO and looking at them. That is one of the few parallels. But I found it a very interesting case and one that definitely needs follow-up.

Hill: If I could add here, about Lyndia and her experience, that in the area where Lyndia lived, there were also two other experiences, all within three nights. In one an elderly woman heard her trash barrels rattling and she thought it was dogs, and she picked up a broom and opened the door quickly and almost hit an alien going through the trash on the head. She called the police. Then half a mile from there, there were two aliens picking up soil and rock samples from Mr. Snow's back yard in the middle of the night, and in this case, he had a German shepherd attack dog—we have a lot of them in New Hampshire—but he gave the dog the order to attack and the dog leaped and fell down and got down on his stomach and crawled around, crying. He ordered the dog again to attack and the dog repeated that, and now he says the aliens ruined his dog because now every time he gets the order to attack, the dog gets down and cries. But these things all happened within three nights in the same area.

Jacques Vallée: I'd like to start from what Ray Palmer was saying a little bit earlier about Jules Verne because I've been very interested in science fiction, and in French science fiction especially. Jules Verne was an extremely well-informed man and he was getting clippings and letters and gathering reports from all over the world that he used in formulating his stories. It's not an alternative explanation to what you're . . . we're suggesting. Jules Verne got earlier reports of airship sightings and in fact, as Jerry Clark was pointing out, most studies of sightings can claim that there were many reports not only in 1897 but from 1870, 1880, 1885 and so on, so we should not discount entirely that Jules Verne in fact was using actual reports of that era.

Clark: I have two things to say to that. For one thing, the reports of airships began long before Jules Verne ever wrote *Robur the Conquerer* and *Master of the World*—his

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