

alien pilots are supposedly seen in or about their craft, or have forcibly taken onboard their ship one or more human beings. Usually, these people claim they are subjected to some sort of physical examination or interrogation (sometimes with a sexual component) and are then released.

Surely the existence of millions of reports worldwide proves something, doesn't it? Of course it does, but unlike a good deal of my colleagues, I don't profess to have the answer as to what it might prove. The reason for my cautious stand rests with the very nature of this so-called evidence. To be blunt, most of it is scientifically worthless.

Consider if you will the first category of UFO data: sightings. In truth, a sighting is nothing more than a story. You can't prove it actually happened.

Unless glaring evidence of a hoax is detected, all you can do is accept the person's word that what he or she is telling you is the truth. After you've gotten this far and made this leap of faith (not science), you have another problem: How can you prove that the incident actually occurred precisely the way the witness describes? Practically and scientifically speaking, you cannot.

What about the second category of UFO reports: radar-visual cases? Once again we're left with the same problem in that you cannot prove that the object in question is an extraterrestrial spacecraft. It could be a secret military vehicle for all we know.

The landing-trace or landing-track cases offer theoretically the largest potential for scientific pay dirt. But while there are more than 4,500 such

reports on record, a truly unexplainable physical trace or irrefutably extraterrestrial artifact has yet to be uncovered, even in the Roswell case.

The "creature" reports and abduction reports bring us full circle to the same fundamental problem once again: they are nothing more than stories, perhaps genuine, perhaps not.

This is why I say that there is no hard scientific evidence for UFOs' being extraterrestrial spacecraft. However, keep in mind that there doesn't necessarily have to be such proof in order for a "phenomenon" to exist. I believe that whatever each UFO report ultimately turns out to be, we can only learn from these answers. As long as we strive to be scientific, objective, and apply these lessons, the subject is worth studying and we are better off for it. □

Son of Originator of 'Alien Autopsy' Story Casts Doubt on Father's Credibility

TIMOTHY SPENCER CARR

My father was Robert Spencer Carr, who achieved national fame in 1974 with the story of aliens in cold storage at Wright Patterson Air Force Base following a 1947 UFO crash in New Mexico. He died in 1994 at age eight-five in Dunedin, Florida, and as far as I know has no living relatives except me and my son. (His ashes are in my Atlanta workshop, waiting to be scattered in the headwaters of the Pecos River in New Mexico, not far from our home at the time of the alleged Roswell incident.) Now that he is gone, I finally feel free to speak out about the confabulations that so many gullible people have taken as gospel truth.

I am fifty-six, have a Ph.D. in social

psychology, and have worked at the Georgia Department of Corrections for twenty-five years developing information systems, doing statistical reports, and studying the impact of criminal justice policy on crime, crowding, and recidivism. I decided to write this when, browsing the Internet, I found a site called "Robert Carr Alien Autopsy Discussion" on Critchley's UFO Sites on the Web (www.nmaa.org/member/skaeser/carr.htm). It is a lengthy verbatim transcript of the radio show on which my father first concocted the autopsy yarn.

Robert Spencer Carr was a child prodigy, publishing magazine articles before he was ten and an international

best-selling novel entitled *The Rampant Age* (1928) when he was just seventeen, in the mid-1920s. He graduated from high school but never went to college or got any kind of advanced degree—yet he is called "Professor Carr" throughout the UFO literature. In many of his papers, he called himself "Dr. Carr." He started writing science fiction in 1948, right about the time when the alleged crash took place. His stories included one about flying saucers landing at the White House and the Kremlin, which he later published in a collection called *Beyond Infinity* (1951).

With his brilliant and voracious mind, he absorbed a vast storehouse of information. He could start knowledge-

able conversations with professionals in many disciplines—but he would invariably alienate them when he started acting as though he knew more about their fields than they did. To say he had a vivid imagination is an understatement. His imaginary world was more real to him than the real world. He often seemed unable—no, *unwilling*—to distinguish between fantasy and reality.

Often he mortified my mother and me by spinning preposterous stories in front of company or complete strangers. Tales included finding a *Lost Horizon*-like Shangri-la in New Mexico, befriending a giant alligator in the Florida swamps, and sharing complex philosophical ideas with porpoises in the Gulf of Mexico. It wasn't the tall tales themselves that hurt so much but his ferocious insistence that they were true. They weren't tongue-in-cheek; they weren't for fun; they weren't told with the license of a raconteur. They were dead serious, and you had by God better pretend you believed them or face wrath or rejection.

But when it came to flying saucers, he finally found an audience that would believe anything he said, no matter how bizarre or unlikely.

In the mid-1970s he came to Atlanta to give a talk at Georgia Tech and invited me to attend. It was called "Flying Saucers and the CIA," as I recall, and the auditorium started out packed with about five hundred students and professors. The serious-minded started trickling out almost from the beginning, when he refused to identify sources. The trickle turned into a mass exodus when somebody asked him if he, personally, had ever had direct, up-close contact with aliens, and he answered in his deep, mellifluous *basso profundo*, "Why, yes, as a matter of fact, on four separate occasions." By the end, there was left only a small adoring cadre of a couple dozen true-believers in the front rows, and me, flaming with shame in the lobby.

When my father died in April 1994, I phoned everybody in his address book. One was James Moseley, who publishes

Timothy Spencer Carr lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

Saucer Smear (www.mcs.com/~kvg/smear.htm), a UFO newsletter of the skeptical stripe. Moseley asked my opinion about an interview he and some colleagues had with my semi-invalid father ten years earlier, in 1984, which he had promised not to print until after my father's death. The following is excerpted from the article that appeared in the August 1994 *Saucer Smear*:

[Carr] told us in some detail about a series of contacts he himself had had in 1983 with 3½-foot-tall humanoids who visited his property in a spaceship about 11 months in a row, on nights when there was no moon. These creatures came in a 19-foot-diameter craft. There were three occupants, two of whom were able to "shield their minds" from Carr's telepathic powers, whereas the third could not. . . . Their craft always landed in the small garden under the deck of Carr's home, being extremely careful not to be seen by anyone other than Carr, who seemed to share their paranoia. . . . One of the people with us . . . was a highly trained nurse, and it was her opinion that Robert Carr believed what he was telling us about the extraterrestrial visits to his home, and that his experiences were hallucinations caused by his physical condition. On the other hand, [his son] Timothy Carr probably has the real answer. He informed us on the telephone recently that his father told these stories and several other similar ones just to make himself seem more interesting. And thus we close the file on Robert Spencer Carr. . . .

In conclusion, I know with certainty that the myth/legend of the "Alien Autopsy" and UFO at Wright Patterson AFB is nothing but total fantasy, not based on even a scintilla of reality. I am so very sorry that my father's pathological prevarication has turned out to be the foundation on which such a monstrous mountain of falsehoods has been heaped.

I am not naive. It is a mathematical certainty that intelligent life exists elsewhere in the universe, and I am open to the proposition that our planet may have been visited by alien craft. I also know that government often lies through its teeth and conceals many things from the public. But, believe me, the "Alien Autopsy" is not one of them. □

A Roswell Reader Update

Here is an updated listing of earlier *SKEPTICAL INQUIRER* articles dealing with the Roswell "crashed flying saucer" story and related matters.—The Editor

- "The 'Roswell Fragment'—Case Closed" [News & Comment]—Dave Thomas (November/December 1996)
- "That's Entertainment! TV's UFO Coverup"—Philip J. Klass (November/December 1996)
- "An Absence of Alien Artifacts"—Carl Sagan (March/April 1996)
- "How to Make an 'Alien' for 'Autopsy'"—Trey Stokes (January/February 1996)
- "A Surgeon's View: Alien Autopsy Plagued by Overwhelming Lack of Credibility"—Joseph A. Bauer, M.D. (January/February 1996)
- "The GAO Roswell Report and Congressman Schiff"—Philip J. Klass (November/December 1995)
- "'Alien Autopsy' Show-and-Tell"—C. Eugene Emery Jr. (November/December 1995)
- "'Alien Autopsy' Hoax"—Joe Nickell (November/December 1995)
- "The Roswell Incident and Project Mogul" [first-person recollections by scientist Charles B. Moore]—Dave Thomas (July/August 1995)
- Report of Air Force Research Regarding the 'Roswell Incident'** [reprinted]—Richard L. Weaver (January/February 1995)
- "Showtime's Roswell"—C. Eugene Emery Jr. (January/February 1995)
- "Conflicting Recollections in Witnesses' Accounts of Roswell 'UFO' Crash" [News & Comment]—Philip J. Klass (Fall 1994)
- "New Evidence of MJ-12 Hoax"—Philip J. Klass (Winter 1990)
- "The MJ-12 Papers: Part 2"—Philip J. Klass (Spring 1988)
- "The MJ-12 Crashed-Saucer Documents"—Philip J. Klass (Winter 1987-88)
- "Crash of the Crashed-Saucer Documents"—Philip J. Klass (Spring 1986)

Most of these articles are included in the just-published, single-subject *SKEPTICAL INQUIRER* anthology *The UFO Invasion: The Roswell Incident, Alien Abductions, and Government Coverups*, edited by Kendrick Frazier, Barry Karr, and Joe Nickell (Prometheus Books, Amherst, N.Y., 1997).