A HISTORY OF CANADA'S UFO INVESTIGATION, 1950-1995

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ABSTRACT

A History of Canada's UFO Investigation, 1950-1995

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From 1950-1995, the Canadian government investigated the phenomenon of unidentified flying objects (UFOs), amassing over 15,000 pages of documentation about, among other matters, nearly 4,500 unique sightings. This investigation was largely passive and disconnected, spread across a number of federal departments and agencies that infrequently communicated about the subject. Two official investigations, Project Magnet and Project Second Storey, were initiated in the early 1950s to study the topic. The government concluded that the UFO phenomenon did not "lend itself to a scientific method of investigation," and terminated the projects. After this point, the investigation entered a state of purgatory, with no central communication, and every government department eager to pass the responsibility onto someone else. As such, Canadian citizens writing to the government for straight answers to the UFO enigma were often on the receiving end of what they called "doublespeak." Citizens were seeing things in the sky and wanted the government to simply tell them what they were. The government was unable and unwilling to do this, and over time frustration grew on both sides. What began for the government, in its own words, as an irritating intrusion into more important matters, became the catalyst for a dynamic of mutually-reinforced mistrust between state and citizen during the postwar period.

This dissertation offers a chronological history of the efforts that the Canadian government and citizens made to investigate UFOs, and when and why these efforts came into conflict. The main argument is that the Canadian state attempted to use UFOs as a

site to assert its modernity during a time of uncertainty and anxiety over its legitimacy, by drawing on the cultural authority of the scientific community. The project was one of ridding the public of ignorance and creating instead a more rational citizen. This attempt ran up against beliefs and attitudes that some citizens shared, that tapped into a spirit of anti-authoritarianism present during the 1960s and even earlier. These citizens considered themselves to be iconoclasts, unmoved by claims of expertise, and accused the government of conspiracy theory. These approaches fed into one another, contributing to further misunderstanding and conflict. The history of Canada's UFO investigation is thus more broadly a history of changing attitudes toward authority and expertise in the postwar era.

Keywords: UFO; state; citizenship; history of science; scientific object; Canada

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAPIC	Canadian Aerial Phenomena Investigations Committee
CAPRO	Canadian Aerial Phenomena Research Organization
CFHQ	Canadian Forces Headquarters
CUFOR	Canadian UFO Research
DND	Department of National Defence
DoT	Department of Transport
DRB	Defence Research Board
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
NICAP	National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena
NRC	National Research Council
PM	Project Magnet
PSS	Project Second Storey
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
UFO	Unidentified Flying Object

Introduction

For forty-five years, the Canadian government investigated UFOs. From 1950-1995, the Departments of National Defence and Transport, the National Research Council, and the RCMP attempted to understand what UFOs were, and whether or not they posed a security threat or an opportunity for scientific inquiry. They accumulated over 15,000 pages of documentation on the subject, detailing among other matters approximately 4,500 unique sightings. Despite this, the government never solved the UFO enigma. By the mid-1950s, however, it did conclude that UFOs posed neither a security threat nor were they amenable to scientific study. From then on, the government attempted to ignore the subject altogether.

A number of Canadian citizens with a particular interest in UFOs were not happy with this conclusion. They submitted sighting reports in the thousands, and wrote letters to the government campaigning for the disclosure of information about UFOs. When they received what they thought were inadequate responses, they tried to solve the mystery themselves by starting UFO clubs and civilian investigation groups. Despite these efforts, over seventy years have passed since the UFO phenomenon began in earnest and we know little more about it than we did in the late 1940s.[1] If UFOs are a real physical phenomenon, then their nature is beyond our current understanding.

This dissertation does not attempt to explain what UFOs may or may not be. Rather, its aim is a history of Canada's involvement in the subject, from the perspectives

[1] See Robbie Graham (ed), *UFOs: Reframing the Debate* (Hove, UK: White Crow Books, 2017).

of the government and a handful of dedicated civilian UFO enthusiasts.[2] This is a story about what some Canadians expected from their government, how these expectations changed over time, and how the government responded to these changes. The actors in this story are a motley crew of state scientists and military personnel from various departments, RCMP officers in detachments around the country, and a wide variety of citizens from every province, major city, and seemingly every small town. This is a story specifically about the *federal* government's response to unidentified flying objects, and its relationship with those people on the ground making observations.

This is also about a second, related relationship, between scientists and the objects they study. UFOs are *contested* objects, sometimes seemingly real, other times imaginary. The case of UFOs in Canada gives broader insight into how things in the natural world come into being or fade away as objects of scientific inquiry, and how this process occurs within certain political contexts and results from the *work* that various people put into it at different times. Civilian UFO investigators worked to *make UFOs real*, to make them into legitimate objects for scientific study. The Canadian government never took it for granted that UFOs – in the more fantastical form of flying craft piloted by extraterrestrial beings – were actually real. They assumed most often that UFO witnesses had simply misidentified prosaic natural phenomena, like meteors or the planet Venus. Many civilian investigators disagreed with this conclusion.

I argue that the Canadian state, visible in the actions of its various officials, attempted to use the UFO phenomenon as a site and a means through which to assert its

[2] That is, this history is not evaluative, but rather descriptive and explanatory. See Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985): 12.

modernity during a time of national redefinition and anxiety about its legitimacy. This attempt ran up against some citizens' changing attitudes toward official expertise, which tapped into broader countercultural trends of anti-authoritarianism and more limited ones like the rise of conspiracy theory. What the UFO material presented here shows is how the state's efforts to contain the phenomenon actually constructed, for Canadian citizens, the experience of the state itself. Through various points of contact across the country and throughout the forty-five year investigation, some Canadian citizens came to know the state and its power through their interactions about UFOs.

Two main factors structured these interactions: on the one hand, an expanding civil service, combined with an ideal of positivistic science that state officials attempted to use to clear away ignorance and unreason amongst the Canadian citizenry, in order to create and regulate better citizens; on the other hand, the 1950s and 1960s saw the rise of conspiracy theory and a decline of deference to official authority, producing people who saw themselves as iconoclasts who were not fooled by the state's claims, and in fact only become more defiant whenever the state attempted to counter their ideas. These conditions produced a spiral of mutual mistrust that underpinned the very experience of the Canadian state for citizens and officials alike.[3] In other words, Canada's UFO investigation was really about how the state attempted to become authoritative and where and why it came into conflict with citizens on the ground.

[3] Greg Eghigian, "Making UFOs make sense: Ufology, science, and the history of their mutual mistrust," *Public Understanding of Science* 26.5 (2015): 1-15.

The Modern Era of UFOs

To get a sense of how Canada came to be involved with the UFO phenomenon at all, a brief history of the American investigation is necessary. As Greg Eghigian has stated, America was the clear "vector" in the UFO story,[4] and given Canada's proximity to the U.S., there was bound to be some spill-over. To date, there has been very little writing on Canada's involvement with the UFO mystery. Several works have explored aspects of the investigation, focusing in on specific events, or surveying a number of sightings over the years.[5] No other work has provided a systematic history of the investigation from start to finish, and so this dissertation necessarily involves intensive primary research, the majority of which has not been reported on elsewhere. As such, it is even more imperative that the history of the American investigation is included here, to give necessary context for Canada's own involvement.

The year 1947 was pivotal for the UFO phenomenon. This is the date some have given to the beginning of what they call the "modern era of UFOs".[6] From this year until the new millennium interest in UFOs grew exponentially. Histories of the UFO phenomenon often point out that strange things have been seen in the skies for hundreds or even thousands of years. A number of writers have proposed that so-called "ancient

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[4] Greg Eghigian, Invited Talk for the Consortium for History of Science, Technology and Medicine, 12 December 2017.

[5] See, for instance, Chris Rutkowski and Geoff Dittman, *The Canadian UFO Report: The Best Cases Revealed* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2006); Palmiro Campagna, *The UFO Files: The Canadian Connection Exposed* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1998); Grant Cameron, *Charlie Red Star: True Reports of One of North America's Biggest UFO Sightings* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2017); Chris Styles and Graham Simms, *Impact to Contact: The Shag Harbour Incident* (Halifax: Arcadia House Publishing, 2013); Matthew Hayes, ""Then the Saucers Do Exist?": UFOs, the Practice of Conspiracy, and the Case of Wilbert Smith," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 51.3 (2018): 665-696.

[6] Hilary Evans and Dennis Stacy, *UFOs, 1947-1997* (London, UK: John Brown Publishing, 1997): 5.

astronauts" visited Earth millennia ago to simply observe the evolution of complex life forms or to actively intervene in their development. Stanley Kubrick's classic sci-fi film *2001: A Space Odyssey* portrays a mysterious black obelisk that appeared millions of years ago and affected the evolution of early hominids.[7] In 1968, the Swiss author Erich von Däniken published his controversial and best-selling *Chariots of the Gods?*, in which he proposed that many ancient civilizations were in direct contact with aliens. The supposed evidence for this claim is the level of technological sophistication of many ancient structures, such as the Egyptian pyramids and Stonehenge, with von Däniken claiming these structures could only have been made possible through alien intervention.[8]

Some writers have also interpreted as UFOs the ambiguous orbs or balls of fire in the skies of some medieval paintings and woodcuts. In his classic text *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies*, the psychoanalyst Carl Jung concludes that UFO sightings are simply a psychological phenomenon, a modern manifestation of a very old tendency to see deities in the heavens. He traces such sightings back through the centuries to, for instance, a broadsheet from 1566 depicting a number of black orbs flying over the skies of Basel.[9] Similarly, the retired computer scientist and venture capitalist Jacques Vallee points out the similarity between modern UFO sightings and 19th century fairy lore.[10]

The most significant event that preceded the swell of interest in the late 1940s is the case of the mysterious airships of the 1890s. Newspaper reports told of Zeppelin like

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[7] Stanley Kubrick, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (United States: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Corp., 1968).
[8] Erich von Däniken, *Chariots of the Gods? Unsolved Mysteries of the Past* (New York: Putnam, 1968).
[9] Carl Jung, *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979): 95.
[10] Jacques Vallee, *Passport to Magonia: From Folklore to Flying Saucers* (Daily Grail Publishing, 2014): 35.

airships over the western United States, the wave of which slowly traveled east. The airships moved silently overhead, and some even landed and divulged dapper and articulate humanoid pilots.[11] This trend continued with two key events in 1947 which many now consider the origin of what we today refer to as UFOs.

Kenneth Arnold was a businessman and a private pilot who was flying over Washington State on 24 June when he witnessed nine shiny discs flying in formation past Mount Ranier. According to Arnold, they resembled discs and moved like a rock skipping across the water. Arnold's sighting gave rise to the moniker "flying saucer", which an anonymous Associated Press journalist coined in the days after Arnold reported his sighting.[12] Some have since hypothesized that Arnold actually witnessed a formation of flying geese, and the "shininess" he saw was the reflection of the setting sun off the wings of the birds.[13] Several weeks after his sighting a second event occurred: an alleged crash in the desert outside of Roswell, New Mexico. This event is perhaps the single most infamous within the phenomenon and is largely responsible for many of the familiar images now associated with UFOs. The standard story is that a technologically advanced craft piloted by extraterrestrial beings malfunctioned and crashed in the desert, only to be found by a local rancher in the early hours of the morning. The U.S. army soon arrived and cleared the scene completely, leaving no trace behind. The next day, an army press release announced that a flying disc had crashed and was recovered. However, this story was quickly retracted and in its place the army admitted that what was really recovered

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[11] David Clarke, *How UFOs Conquered the World: The History of a Modern Myth* (London, UK: Aurum Press, 2015): 20.
[12] Brenda Denzler, *The Lure of the Edge: Scientific Passions, Religious Beliefs, and the Pursuit of UFOs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003): 4.
[13] See, for instance, Robert Sheaffer, *Bad UFOs: Critical Thinking About UFO Claims* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015).

was the remains of a balloon that had crashed. This latter story was also confirmed decades later by an investigation that revealed the details of Project Mogul, a U.S. operation that used balloons to test for nuclear explosions in the upper atmosphere.[14]

Those with a conspiracist mindset pounced on the 1947 story. They accused the U.S. government of a cover-up. The story has only grown in scope and imagination since, and serves as a founding myth of the whole phenomenon.[15] The contemporary "disclosure" movement is predicated on the idea that the U.S. government is hiding the "Truth" about Roswell and associated crashes and sightings, and that one day this information will finally be revealed to the public.[16] Part of what fueled this long standing interest was the investigations the U.S. government undertook into the phenomenon. After Kenneth Arnold's sighting, which gained significant press attention, UFO sightings began to pour in. While the American government immediately assumed UFOs were misidentified natural phenomena, the fear that they were a secret domestic project of which the Air Force had no knowledge, or a foreign intrusion, forced the U.S. government to take action.

On the suggestion of Lieutenant General Nathan Twining, the commander of the U.S. Air Materiel Command, Project Sign was established on 22 January 1948 to investigate the phenomenon.[17] The project's analysts concluded that the majority of sightings were indeed misidentifications or hoaxes, but "a small residue of UFO reports

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[14] See Kathryn Olmsted, *Real Enemies: Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy, World War I to 9/11* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009): 184.
[15] See Susan Lepselter, *The Resonance of Unseen Things: Poetics, Power, Captivity, and UFOs in the American Uncanny* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016).
[16] The ufologist Stephen Bassett has been particularly vocal about this goal. See his website: www.paradigmresearchgroup.org.
[17] Charles Ziegler, "UFOs and the US Intelligence Community," *Intelligence and National Security* 14.2 (1999): 4.

remained unexplained."[18] The project's officials produced an "Estimate of the Situation" which clearly showed a difference of opinion among the staff: some felt that there simply was not enough information to make an informed conclusion about the "residue", whereas others were convinced that the remaining unexplained reports represented an extraterrestrial presence that was visiting the planet. General Hoyt Vandenberg, the Air Force Chief of Staff, was not pleased with the "extraterrestrial hypothesis" and immediately ordered the Estimate document suppressed. In its place a new official report was issued which provided a variety of prosaic means that might account for the unexplained sightings. In April 1949, Project Sign was terminated and immediately reopened with new staff as Project Grudge. In December of that year Grudge was also terminated, and the project staff issued a new report which definitively accounted for *all* sightings, despite the earlier doubt.[19] The difference between these two reports has certainly contributed to the idea that some kind of a cover-up was taking place.

To the public, the U.S. Air Force had seemingly gotten out of the UFO game by the end of 1949. The U.S. government did not like the publicity the studies were attracting, and there was always the fear that someone would divulge legitimate secrets. It is clear from the Air Force's actions that they simply wanted the problem to go away as quickly as possible, and issuing the Grudge report ending all investigations seemed to be the answer. But behind closed doors, the U.S. investigation continued, albeit at a much more minimal level. The very next year, in early 1950, analysis of reports was again initiated, with new staff. This new effort was eventually called Project Blue Book. Charles Ziegler writes that the year 1953 was another watershed in the UFO

[18] Ziegler, "UFOs and the US Intelligence Community," 5.
[19] Ziegler, "UFOs and the US Intelligence Community," 6.

phenomenon. Further analysis of reports between 1950 and 1953, and continued pressure on government officials to explain away UFOs, resulted in a change in official stance. At this point, the U.S. government adopted the view that all UFOs "had mundane causes and unexplained sightings were merely those for which the attribution of such causes was precluded by the lack of sufficient information."[20] In other words, UFOs were bunk, and the government was not going to change its mind about them. Project Blue Book, from that point on, "became largely a public relations effort to convince the American people that UFOs were explainable in prosaic terms."[21]

This effort did not go exactly according to plan. A number of independent UFO researchers and authors continued to write that the U.S. government was covering up the truth. UFO groups began popping up all over the country and even members of congress began demanding answers as to whether or not the government was still investigating. In an attempt to quash speculation once and for all, in October 1966 the Air Force funded what they referred to as an outside, third-party study. Edward Condon, a physicist at the University of Colorado, was contracted to put together a team of scientists who would analyze the sighting reports Project Blue Book had compiled. The result was the Condon Report, issued in January 1969. The report was bleak. It concluded that the previous twenty-one years of UFO studies had yielded nothing of scientific value and that all efforts into the matter should be discontinued. It also reiterated the official stance that all sightings had mundane origins and that any unexplained cases simply lacked the

[20] Ziegler, "UFOs and the US Intelligence Community," 10.
[21] Ziegler, "UFOs and the US Intelligence Community," 11.

necessary information.[22] On the report's recommendation, the Air Force terminated Project Blue Book, ending the U.S. government's investigations.

There is no doubt that these events heavily influenced Canada's own entry into UFO investigations. The timing of developments across the border and decisions made by officials in both governments frequently line up, as is shown in the following chapters. The establishment and outcomes of the U.S. projects framed much of the discussion that occurred in Ottawa. This included what steps to take to investigate sightings, as well as how to handle publicity about the matter. The Canadian government did not begin officially investigating UFOs until several years after the U.S. projects began. There was plenty of time for interested officials in the Canadian government to watch events unfold south of the border and see how the public reacted to them.

Despite this, it is questionable how much the Canadian government learned from these lessons, as there is striking similarity between both cases. Both governments adopted much the same public stance regarding UFOs and the extraterrestrial hypothesis. They both set up official projects that ultimately served a public relations objective, but were undermined by individuals working within the system as well as interested and concerned citizens outside of it. Neither government was able to control the publicity their investigations attracted. It seems both governments established investigations largely against their will, because of external pressure. However, as is explored below, the Canadian case had its own unique twist, given the history of deference to the state and the anxiety about its authority and expertise during the postwar period.

[22] Ziegler, "UFOs and the US Intelligence Community," 13.

The Canadian UFO Files

There is no single Canadian UFO archive. The approximately 15,000 pages of documentation I pored over were gleaned from multiple archives and collections. Rather than a tidy archive, UFOs are a keyword search. The fact that Canada's UFO documents are spread across a number of different places is itself performative. It mirrors the individual actions that each department involved over the years took when confronted with UFO sighting reports. Rarely did departments communicate or collaborate with one another on UFO investigations, and so the documents usually remained with the originating department. This reluctance to communicate interdepartmentally became especially obvious when citizens began writing into various departments demanding answers to their questions, and receiving different (stock) answers that were often contradictory.

The UFO documents I gleaned for this study are housed primarily at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. There, they are found in the files of the Department of National Defence, the Department of Transport, the Department of Communications, the RCMP, and the National Research Council. A large collection of files specifically about Wilbert Smith, the electrical engineer employed with the Department of Transport discussed in Chapter One, are found at the University of Ottawa archives. I also consulted files held at the City of Vancouver archives, the archives of Saint Mary's University in Halifax, and Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

The vast majority of the documents are UFO sighting reports. In addition, a small selection comprises minutes and associated correspondence from Project Second Storey,

Canada's "official" investigation from 1952-1954, the subject of Chapter Two. A number of newspaper clippings of UFO stories are found throughout the various files, along with the occasional document from the U.S. government. A significant portion of the documents comprise letters that citizens wrote to various departments that I see as distinct from the sighting reports. While nearly all sighting reports originated with a citizen who informed, for instance, the local RCMP detachment, many of the letters are much more than just a report of an observation. They often contain detailed speculations about the origins of the UFOs and multiple questions they posed to the government about its involvement and conclusions. There are inevitably those letters from citizens convinced that the Canadian government was covering up the truth, and demanded some kind of disclosure.

The bulk of the documents are, however, conventional sighting reports (of an admittedly unconventional phenomenon). These were often RCMP reports, although some originated through other bodies, such as the Department of National Defence and in some cases air traffic control centres. There is some discrepancy between the actual amounts of documentation as compared to the number of actual sightings. Given that a single sighting might generate several pages of documentation – a report might be one to three or more pages long; it might be accompanied by witness statements on additional pages, including drawings or maps; there may be a covering letter attached if the report was forwarded to another official or agency, etc. – there is more documentation than actual sightings.

In total, I counted nearly 4,500 unique UFO sightings in Canada from 1949-1995 (see Appendix 1 for exact figures). There are a number of factors mitigating the accuracy

of this number. While individual departments often failed to effectively communicate with one another, there are instances where they did exchange reports and so there are a number of duplicated reports across the various files at LAC. There are many sighting reports that contain only partial information – either because the investigator did not include it all, or it was redacted after the fact for privacy concerns – and many others that are now illegible because of poor microfilming or photocopying in the past. Some sighting reports that appear to have duplicates in different departments contain key details like dates and locations that do not exactly align, and so it is sometimes difficult to determine whether they depict the same event. There is also the question of what exactly constituted a UFO sighting, specifically, as there are many reports of fireballs and meteorites in the UFO files. As astronomer Martin Beech usefully argues, there is also a distinction to be made between a "report" and an "event."[23] Some UFO sighting events might generate multiple reports – each of which might comprise multiple pages – in cases where more than one person was witness to it. However, to count reports rather than unique events would inflate the numbers of actual UFO encounters.

Visualizations of these sightings provide some interesting insights. It is immediately obvious that the most sightings came from Ontario, Alberta, Quebec, and British Columbia (see Graphs One and Two in the Appendix). There was a very large spike in sightings in 1967, a phenomenon explored in more detail in Chapter Four (also see Graph Three). Sighting reports slowly increased over the years, reaching their highest point in 1969 with 283 sightings, although the 1970s saw the highest volume of sightings compared to any other decade (see Graph Four). Several factors again mitigate the

[23] Martin Beech, "The Millman Fireball Archive," *Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada* 97 (April 2003): 72.

accuracy of these figures. There is no obvious reason why there are such spikes in certain years (such as in 1981, 1985, and 1990). However, it must be kept in mind that the archives themselves are partial. Especially prior to 1965, the documents available are somewhat sketchy. Consistent and accurate reporting procedures were not in place until the mid-1960s when the RCMP became the primary agency on the ground responding to reports. It was also standard procedure in many departments to destroy documents after a certain number of years (in some cases as few as three years) if they were no longer considered important. As a result, there may well have been more sightings from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s, but they were not reported properly or the records have been lost. There is also, of course, the assumption that more sightings are made than are ever reported. A person might see a UFO and choose not to report, fearing ridicule from family, friends, and government officials, or because it is unclear who to send a report to in the first place. However, as the number of unreported sightings is, by definition, unknown, I only take into account those documented in the archives.

In addition to the tables and graphs, I mapped the UFO sightings to get a sense of their distribution across the country (see Appendix 1). What the map, in conjunction with the tables, makes immediately clear is that the majority of sightings follow population density in a very linear fashion, and that sightings are distributed approximately 75% rurally and 25% in urban centres. Martin Beech found almost identical results in his analysis of the National Research Council's archive of fireball reports, a collection of 3,876 reports corresponding to 2,129 unique events of visually-observed fireball meteors, from 1962 to 1989. Similar to the UFO reports, residents of Ontario most commonly

reported fireball observations, followed by residents of Quebec and British Columbia. These reports clustered along lines of population density.[24]

What is difficult to ascertain from the tables and graphs is how often, in real terms, government departments received UFO sighting reports. While the number of total sightings over the forty-five years may seem significant, they amounted to an average of one or two sightings per week. In some weeks, several sightings were made, whereas none at all were reported in other weeks. In addition, this is not one or two sightings per week at *each* department. This number represents a sighting a week, for instance, at one or the other RCMP detachment – perhaps at Kamloops one week, and on the other side of the country, at Lunenburg, the next week. Thus, any single detachment or government department might go weeks, months, or even years, without receiving a report, if ever. In terms of the amount of paperwork generated within the Canadian government during this time, 15,000 pages is also not a large number, given the forty-five-year span. Dealing with one or two sightings a week, if that, likely was not a top priority.

The importance of the UFO phenomenon in Canada is also reflected in how little attention the national press paid it. From 1947 till 1995, only about a dozen articles on the topic were published in national newspapers or magazines, some of which will be highlighted in the following chapters. This does not include the number of articles in smaller, especially local, newspapers, but still gives a clear indication of how small a role UFOs played overall.

Nevertheless, even though UFOs demanded relatively little attention from the government and press, the fact that sighting reports continued to arrive on its doorstep

[24] Beech, "The Millman Fireball Archive," 73.

cannot be ignored. I see the UFO reports as a low-level hum, a phenomenon constantly in the background of RCMP, National Research Council, and Department of National Defence activities, among other departments. This dissertation traces a history of the UFO investigation by focusing mostly on the highlights, such as those sightings that were cause for more intensive investigation, the subject of Chapter Four. What is missed is a sense of the continuous, almost monotonous, drone of sightings occurring all over the country, which is only visible in hindsight. It would appear as if there are a number of significant gaps in the attention the government paid to UFO sightings, when seemingly the UFO front had gone quiet. Rest assured, even during these lulls, UFO reports regularly came in, and it is simply due to a lack of space and cohesiveness that this dissertation does not include more descriptions of them.

The unevenness of the narrative is also a result of the problem of the archive.[25] Documentation of the UFO phenomenon prior to 1950 available in the national archives is incredibly slim. Of the thousands of pages within the archives, less than ten come from the 1940s. These include two sighting reports, letters forwarding these sighting reports to relevant personnel, and two American documents: one containing instructions for how to report sightings, and the other a press release announcing the termination of Project Grudge. There are several possible reasons for this dearth of material. It is clear that Canadian officials in the Department of National Defence were following their American counterpart's investigations into the subject, even if they had not yet decided to enter into one themselves. More American documents are found scattered throughout the LAC files. It seems that DND officials kept on top of American developments when available

[25] On the inadequacy of archives and access to their secrets, see Robert Darnton, *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014):14.

and necessary, and were often frustrated to find that they could not access more information from the U.S. government. This was a result of the limits of the Canadian defence establishment's relationship with the U.S.

Canada has been described as a junior partner in the early postwar world. Whereas before WWII Canada followed Britain's lead in international affairs, afterwards the U.S. and its desires came to dominate Canada's political decisions. The U.S. government expected Canada to share whatever military intelligence they were able to acquire, but this was rarely an equal two-way exchange.[26] Canada usually only received information when and how the U.S. government deemed it appropriate. For example, the U.S. operated a military base in Newfoundland that was kept separate and secret from nearby Canadian forces. In 1952, C.J. Robinson, an official at an ionosphere station in Newfoundland, wrote that he was unable to obtain information about what type of radar equipment a nearby U.S. base was using. Robinson and his team had detected unusual ionospheric readings and the suspected source was a "powered, long range Radar unit within two miles" – that is, close enough to the Canadian ionosphere station to affect their readings. Despite this educated guess, Robinson was unable to obtain a clear answer, "due to a high security impossed [sic] by the United States Forces".[27] This limited partnership helps to explain why only the more well-known and readily available U.S. documents are found within the Canadian national archives.

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[26] See Andrew Godefroy, *In Peace Prepared: Innovation and Adaptation in Canada's Cold War Army* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014).

[27] C.J. Robinson, 1952. Memorandum to Controller of Telecommunications at the Department of Transport. 4 November. RG 97, volume 115, file 5010-4, part 1. Sightings of Unidentified Aerial Objects file. Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa, ON.

A second reason why documentation prior to 1950 may be so sparse is because much of this archival record was destroyed. According to later DND correspondence, it was common practice for the department to destroy such material after a period of five years, if it was no longer considered to be of national security interest.[28] If this was the case in the 1940s and 1950s, then very little indeed would have survived, given the weight that the Canadian government came to place on UFOs. The archival record now available at LAC is a patchwork of disconnected files, the majority of which date from the mid-1960s onward. Prior to the unification of the Canadian Armed Forces in 1968, the Air Force, Navy, and Army all operated independently. This included separate procedures and policies guiding the retention and disposition of documents. The unification caused a great amount of upheaval in the bureaucracy of these units and likely contributed significantly to the destruction of a large amount of UFO material.[29]

A third possible reason for the dearth of material is the simple fact that UFO witnesses did not regularly report their sightings to the government at this time. While the Roswell incident occurred in 1947, it was primarily of American interest. It took several years for interest in the subject to spread in a substantial way, and so for many Canadians in the late 1940s, UFOs were not likely of any interest or even known at all. If sightings were made at all the first venue for them seemed to be the press, and the Department of National Defence itself obtained information about sightings through the newspapers.

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[28] W. Bain, 1969. Memorandum to unidentified recipient. 25 June. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. Unknown Flying Objects file. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

[29] Paul Hellyer, former Minister of National Defence. Interview by author, 16 June 2017; Martine Paquette, LAC archivist. Email correspondence with author, 27 July 2017.

Theoretical Framework

The history of Canada's (lack of) interest in UFOs sits within a broader history of the nation's involvement in the Cold War, a time of uncertainty and illusion. According to John Lewis Gaddis, the Cold War was a competition of ideas.[30] It raised a fundamental question: how best to organize society? In doing so, it inverted conventional wisdom and logic, whether specifically military or more broadly that of the state. Military strength, "a defining characteristic of "power" itself for the past five centuries," ceased to carry the same weight, and deep anxieties about the role of the state and its relationship with its citizenry arose.[31] Whitaker and Marcuse argue that this "gnawing anxiety" underpinned debates about various kinds of security in Canada – social, economic, national, military.[32] Echoing Gaddis, they write that these debates "were rarely debates in the sense of free exchanges of ideas. They were struggles for control of the symbols of legitimacy in Canadian society."[33]

Odd Arne Westad, on the other hand, argues that the Cold War was more than a bilateral conflict between America and the Soviet Union, but rather global in scope. It is impossible to understand the Cold War without recognizing its effects on Third World countries, as "a separate, identifiable part of a much richer spectrum of late twentieth-century history."[34] In this view, the Cold War was one period among others, or an international system, that played a significant role in shaping political culture around the

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[30] John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2005): 84.
[31] Gaddis, *The Cold War,* 262-263.
[32] Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996): 22.
[33] Whitaker and Marcuse, *Cold War Canada,* 24.
[34] Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambrige: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 4.

world.[35] Paying attention to these consequences is an effective way of untangling the ideologies that underpinned American and Soviet interventions in other parts of the world.[36] Ideology played a major role in this system, as each power bloc regarded itself as the successor to "the very concept of European modernity," and thus served to legitimize the state.[37]

During the early Cold War, there was still a high degree of deference to state authority in Canada, yet the state itself was anxious about the status of its legitimacy – Mark Kristmanson refers to it as the "neurotic state." Canada emerged from the Second World War as a "middle power." Clearly not a superpower like the U.S. or the Soviet Union, but also faring better than its other allies after the devastation of the war, Canada consolidated its position as a "junior partner" within the emerging Western alliance. This unique role entailed a significant amount of concern: in international matters, over Canada's sovereignty; and in domestic matters, over deference to authority and expertise. As Whitaker, Kealey, and Parnaby argue, given that Canada is a country of immigrants, the state has displayed a "persistent anxiety" about the loyalty of its citizens.[38] For Canada, the Cold War was actually primarily a struggle against possible *internal* subversion, about the relationship between state and citizen. I would more broadly construe this argument to say that it was not just loyalty that was in question, but reliability too. This becomes especially important when discussing the importance of reliable citizen observations of, and testimony about, UFOs.

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[35] Holger Nehring, "What was the Cold War?" *English Historical Review* 127.527 (2012): 922.
[36] Odd Arne Westad, "The New International History of the Cold War: Three (Possible) Paradigms," *Diplomatic History* 24.4 (2000): 552.
[37] Westad, *The Global Cold War,* 4.
[38] Reg Whitaker, Gregory S. Kealey, and Andrew Parnaby, *Secret Service: Political Policing in Canada From the Fenians to Fortress America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012): 8.

Mark Kristmanson links the uncertainty surrounding the relationship between state and citizen to the supposed need for official secrecy, which he argues was "essential to the ongoing reproduction of the nation as a historically stable entity."[39] The public could not be privy to all the inner workings of the state, lest information that could affect national security get out. But more importantly, Kristmanson argues, was the need for citizens to strategically remember and forget certain kinds of information. Essential to the state's authority was "the citizen's [act] of remembering to forget information unassimilable to the national culture and its official narrative, a willed amnesia that selected out certain knowledge."[40] Canada's position and authority after the Second World War was vastly increased, but nevertheless remained precarious and depended in part on the deference of its citizens.

Andrew Burtch, in his book about the obligations of the Canadian citizenry toward voluntary civil defence, provides a relevant counter-example. Canada's federal civil defence planners undertook a nation-wide campaign to convince citizens that preparedness for nuclear war was a burden that everyone needed to shoulder. The "implicit contract" between state and citizen required that the latter voluntarily prepare for the worst by, for instance, building backyard fallout shelters. Thus, citizenship became a national project that aimed to balance public rights and duties. Unfortunately for the government, many citizens refused to cooperate. Seeing defence against nuclear attack as a clear duty of the state, citizens were "unwilling to fulfill their obligation" and Canada's civil defence program failed. This was a failure both of government planning at

[39] Mark Kristmanson, *Plateaus of Freedom: Nationality, Culture, and State Security in Canada, 1940-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002): 88.
[40] Kristmanson, *Plateaus of Freedom,* 90.

various levels, but also a broader failure of knowledge production and dissemination. Part of the problem citizens complained about was the uncertainty of the effects of nuclear war and exactly how effective civil defence preparations would actually be. The Canadian state was unable to satisfactorily answer these questions and alleviate citizens' concerns. Burtch's example is interesting in that the roles are reversed in one way, but the same in another. Whereas with civil defence, the government attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to get citizens on board, UFO sightings were a citizen-driven initiative that failed to convince the government. On the other hand, both are cases where the government failed to convince citizens of its authority. Some citizens refused to defer to the government's expertise, with each failure contributing to a mutually-reinforcing dynamic.

Denis Smith argues that Canada displayed a number of other "lapses in the provision of knowledge about the post-war world." For example, the government failed to initiate "a crash program of training experts in Russian language, politics, and economics, to give [the Department of] External Affairs an enhanced capacity to judge Soviet politics and intentions on its own," rather than relying solely on Britain or America for its intelligence. Similarly, Canada failed to secure for itself its own unique air reconnaissance and warning systems in the North.[41] The inability or refusal to make such efforts was apparently a regular problem for the Canadian state. Thus, this study ties into what Robert Proctor and Londa Schiebinger refer to as "agnotology": "the study of ignorance making, the lost and forgotten." Whereas there is a long tradition of studying "how we know," there is much less attention on "how or why we don't know." Ignorance

[41] Denis Smith, *Diplomacy of Fear: Canada and the Cold War, 1941-1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988): 230.

is something that can be made and unmade; it can be active or passive.[42] The important point here is that this applies to the UFO phenomenon. Canada's insistence on ignoring the UFO problem was arguably an act of passive "agnogenesis." It was a failure to acquire possibly unique (scientific) knowledge about the postwar world.

Of course, the postwar era was one of significant change, and the government had many other priorities. The horrors of the world wars shook confidence in the rationality of technical expertise and the state's ability to ensure the safety of its citizenry. After the end of World War Two, Canadians began expressing distrust of their government and its benevolence. Ian Milligan argues that "a new culture of defiant anti-authoritarianism and self-expression" animated youth during the 1960s.[43] Doug Owram argues that these baby boomers were the first to think of themselves in generational terms, as a group distinct from what came before. He describes their impact as a shock-wave.[44] The sheer size of the generation forced numerous social and political changes in the Canadian landscape. It was also the most prosperous generation, even if this prosperity was unevenly distributed.[45] The particular historical circumstances shaping the generation gave it the opportunity to push boundaries and, especially in the case of this study, to push back against the government's attempts to preserve its secrecy privilege. Lara Campbell and Dominique Clement argue that when we talk about "the sixties," we should not be talking

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[42] Robert Proctor and Londa Schiebinger (eds), *Agnotology: The Making and Unmaking of Ignorance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).
[43] Ian Milligan, *Rebel Youth: 1960s Labour Unrest, Young Workers, and New Leftists in English Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014): 3.
[44] Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997): xiii.
[45] Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherdale, "Introduction," in Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherdale (eds) *Creating Postwar Canada: Community, Diversity, and Dissent 1945-75* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008): 3.

strictly about a single decade, but rather an *idea* – that of questioning established and hierarchical authority.[46]

Neil Nevitte, writing about the 1980s specifically, has called this change a "decline of deference," and I argue that this shift began even earlier, as the UFO documents explored here will show. Some Canadians – certainly not all – began sending letters to the government to express their frustration with its inability to provide clear answers to the UFO enigma. The state actors involved in the investigation likewise expressed their frustration with citizens who did not seem to understand the nature of scientific investigation and the inherent limits to knowledge claims. I argue that the UFO documents show a mutual mistrust that developed and hardened over the course of Canada's investigation. This was not simply the case that the government and certain citizens held different views on the matter. The back-and-forth was more dynamic, each side's attempts to convince the other simply reinforcing everyone's stated views. In other words, by engaging with the UFO issue, it would seem that the government and citizens only made it worse by contributing to further misunderstanding and frustration.

This misunderstanding also signals the need for a working definition of the state. Rather than assume that the Canadian state during this period was a monolithic organization with only one point of access, this dissertation adopts Margot Canaday's vision of a "social history of the state." For Canaday, we "see the state through its practices; the state is "what officials do." And by officials, I mean not only top decision-makers but bureaucrats at all levels. This is, moreover, not only a "people" but a "places"

[46] Lara Campbell and Dominique Clement, "Introduction: Time, Age, Myth: Towards a History of the Sixties," in Lara Campbell, Dominique Clement, and Gregory S. Kealy (eds) *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012): 21.

approach to the state."[47] The state is visible in many different places and at different times, and manifests in the actions of its officials.

Similarly, Theda Skocpol sees the state, in one definition, as a set of individuals and groups who work toward accomplishing goal-oriented activities, within the bounds of available resources.[48] As a result, "the state certainly does not become everything," but rather becomes one actor among others competing for the power to structure relationships between citizens and authority.[49] In the case of Canada specifically, E.A. Heaman is blunter: "There is no such thing as the state in Canada." Rather, what we think of as the Canadian state is "a chained series of institutions, across the various territories constituting contemporary Canada, that people recognized as the state at any given time." And again, Heaman also argues that the state is essentially the actions of "office-holding individuals."[50]

This dissertation is rife with instances when a Canadian government official responds to a letter about UFO information, whether coming from, for instance, the publicity office of the Department of National Defence in Ottawa or a small RCMP detachment in Barrington, Nova Scotia. As Mike Larsen and Kevin Walby argue, referring to access to information requests: "There is no "state" as such; a quick scroll down the list of departments to which one can submit an ATI request at the federal level alone suggests that we are dealing with a multitude of networked government agencies,

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[47] Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011): 5.
[48] Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," In Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds) *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 21.
[49] Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In," 7.
[50] E.A. Heaman, *A Short History of the State in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 1.

each with specific missions, which also have a degree of autonomy from one another."[51] The social history of the Canadian state explored here bears out this argument, as it shows various instances of departmental autonomy and subsequent miscommunication and confusion when it comes to UFO information and responsibility for investigation. There is no one Canadian state, but a plethora of departments and individuals working within them, all attempting to make sense of UFOs and citizen requests for information, often in isolation.

Nevertheless, throughout the dissertation, I refer to the Canadian state as a shorthand, with the understanding that it is multifarious, and the history told here shows the disconnection between its parts. Writing about the Canadian state in the abstract makes it easier to identify broader priorities it explored during the postwar years, which are still necessary to this story. One such area was scientific study. In the context of UFOs, I argue that, specifically, one of the things about which the Canadian state was most anxious was the scientific status of certain kinds of objects. In *Biographies of Scientific Objects,* Lorraine Daston asserts, first of all, that objects of scientific inquiry do in fact have a history and are not necessarily discovered outright in nature, and second, that through various kinds of work these objects can come into being and even pass away.[52] In other words, the ontological status of scientific objects – their *reality* in our world – is heavily dependent upon social and technological means, or "how densely they are woven into scientific thought and practice." Objects can become more or less real;

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[51] Mike Larsen and Kevin Walby, "Introduction: On the Politics of Access to Information," in Mike Larsen and Kevin Walby (eds) *Brokering Access: Power, Politics, and Freedom of Information Process in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012): 4.

[52] Lorraine Daston, "Introduction: The Coming into Being of Scientific Objects," in Lorraine Daston (ed) *Biographies of Scientific Objects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

they can coalesce or fade away. Reality for scientific objects becomes a continuum, the objects sliding toward one pole or another depending on the work people put into their emergence or embeddedness, or how productive the object becomes in the manipulation of nature. Daston argues that it is most appropriate to speak of scientific objects in terms of the participle "in the becoming," indicating that some objects "thicken and quicken with inquiry," whereas others slip into obscurity.

Ian Hacking refers to this approach as "historical ontology," or to be more precise, "historical meta-epistemology," given that it does not actually "propose, advocate, or refute theories of knowledge," but rather "examines the trajectories of the objects that play certain roles in thinking about knowledge and belief."[53] That is, Hacking's historical ontology is concerned with "the space of possibilities" that exists for any given object, scientific or otherwise, to come into being.[54] As such, this dissertation attends to the space of possibilities that opened up or closed down for UFOs to become legitimate objects of scientific inquiry.

One other such object that this dissertation is concerned with is the citizen itself, especially in relation to state science. In *Leviathan and the Air-Pump,* Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer argue that "solutions to the problem of knowledge are embedded within practical solutions to the problem of social order."[55] What they mean is that when scientists attempt to solve what appear to be purely scientific questions about the natural world and how we know about it, they are simultaneously producing answers to the problem of what it means to be a citizen who effectively fits into society, and can and

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[53] Ian Hacking, *Historical Ontology* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002): 9.
[54] Hacking, *Historical Ontology,* 23.
[55] Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump,* 15.

does propose alternative ways of organizing people and activities. When a scientist refutes a citizen's claim that UFOs are real, the scientist is simultaneously making a claim about the natural world, and about the citizen – that the threshold for scientific belief in the object has not been met, and also that the citizen is not conforming closely enough to rational thought and practice.

Zygmunt Bauman's analysis of how the state and science came together for mutual benefit further illuminates this. Bauman argues that beginning in the mid-18th century, a shift occurred in (especially) French statecraft. Whereas the state's goal was once only to control the masses and maintain order, it turned instead to civilizing them, to "lifting fellow human beings to a new level of existence."[56] Society became a school, the state the teacher and the citizenry the students. The state would educate citizens in order to rid them of ignorance and superstition, and replace these outdated ideas with reason, thus producing a better quality of citizen. Intellectuals of various kinds were tasked with the responsibility of producing authoritative statements about the natural and social world that could be used to model a better society. Bauman uses the word "legislators" to describe these people, as a means of describing modernity and its goal of eliminating uncertainty.[57] The primary agent for this task became the scientist, who's trusted voice of reason dispelled ignorance and replaced it with objective knowledge that could be applied across time and space.[58] Echoing Shapin and Schaffer, Bauman writes that "What was at stake was not only the solution of concrete 'social problems', but a truly fundamental

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[56] Zygmunt Bauman, "On the Origins of Civilisation: A Historical Note," *Theory, Culture & Society* 2.3 (1985):7.
[57] David Lyon, *Postmodernity* (London: Open University Press, 1999): 8.
[58] Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987): 4.

reshuffle of the sites of social power and a readjustment of the mechanism of social control."[59] Dipesh Chakrabarty describes this as the two-fold task of "the supposed triumph of humankind over nature" and "the triumph of humankind over itself."[60]

Scientific knowledge became the privileged means of producing more effective social control, bringing the state and scientists closely together. Chandra Mukerji explains how this relationship developed into the 20th century by describing the scientific community as an "elite reserve labor force," on which the state draws whenever it requires legitimation of its actions.[61] There is, in many cases, a direct exchange of money for services. Scientists receive state funding for their work, and they in turn provide services to the state – services that might seem to be about scientific expertise, but are really required for political ends. By the mid-20th century, the state became less interested in what scientists actually had to say than the cultural authority they offered simply by association, which it could draw on in times of uncertainty.

Canada was no exception to this. As Edward Jones-Imhotep and Tina Adcock argue, "science and technology have been the unacknowledged legislators of modern Canada."[62] They have been enrolled at various times and places in the service of the state, in order to shore up its authority, even if these attempts inadvertently revealed "cracks in the nation's façade."[63] Ultimately, science and technology in the 20th century became sites "for Canadians to imagine, renounce, and reshape themselves as modern," tying

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[59] Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters,* 45.
[60] Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Muddle of Modernity," *American Historical Review* 116.3 (2011): 669.
[61] Chandra Mukerji, *A Fragile Power: Scientists and the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989): 6.
[62] Edward Jones-Imhotep and Tina Adcock, "Introduction: Science, Technology, and the Modern in Canada," In Edward Jones-Imhotep and Tina Adcock (eds), *Made Modern: Science and Technology in Canadian History* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018): 18.
[63] Jones-Imhotep and Adcock, "Introduction," 12.

them to the state and its efforts to effect a new kind of control over its citizenry.[64] In a related but broader context, Carol Harrison and Ann Johnson write that "science would teach citizens to be sovereign and would draw them into a close relationship with their new state."[65]

What does all this mean for the study of UFOs in Canada? I argue that the Canadian state, by bringing scientists into a close relationship so as to benefit from their cultural authority, attempted to use UFOs as a site to assert its modernity during a time of uncertainty over its authority. This involved an attempt to educate citizens about the value of a scientific production of knowledge, which was simultaneously an attempt to produce a better kind of citizen that thought rationally and fit into an orderly society. Beliefs in UFOs were, in Bauman's words, nothing but ignorance and superstition that needed to be cleared away in order to lift citizens up to a new level of existence. Scientists, those 20th century holders of objective knowledge, were the agents of modernity necessary to carry out this task. Perhaps unexpectedly, the state's efforts did not go according to plan. The rise of conspiracy theory and counterculturalism, including specifically a "declining public trust in the political and cultural role of scientists,"[66] in the 1950s and 1960s began producing a new kind of citizen activism, in competition with the state's vision of an orderly, rational public. The following chapters detail the conflict that resulted between these two visions.

In one respect, Canada's UFO investigation represents a failure – not necessarily that it did not solve the UFO question, but that it failed to maintain citizen confidence in

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[64] Jones-Imhotep and Adcock, "Introduction," 4.
[65] Carol E. Harrison and Ann Johnson, "Introduction: Science and National Identity," *Osiris* 24 (2009):2.
[66] Gordon Gauchat, "The cultural authority of science: Public trust and acceptance of organized science," *Public Understanding of Science* 20.6 (2011): 752.

its efforts and that it failed even to recognize this as a potential problem.[67] Likewise, the citizens who were engaged in the issue displayed a failure of patience and understanding with the way in which government and science works. UFOs are complex objects, whatever the status of their reality. It is unlikely that the mystery will ever be solved to the satisfaction of everyone involved. Geppert refers to the anxiety over this situation as a "blind spot" that historians are forced to circumnavigate, lest they "only perpetuate the discursive deadlock between believers and skeptics, proselytizers and debunkers, and amateurs and scientists."[68] As a way of wading through this murkiness, this dissertation offers a history of Canada's forty-five-year long involvement with the UFO phenomenon that focuses on the effects on the state's relationship with its citizenry and how this is tied to histories of the emergence and fading away of scientific objects.

Overview of the Chapters

The dissertation proceeds chronologically, covering the span 1950-1995. Chapter One tells the story of Wilbert Smith, an electrical engineer employed with the Department of Transport. In 1950, Smith established "Project Magnet," ostensibly the first official Canadian investigation into UFOs. Magnet was a study into the nature of geomagnetic phenomena and their potential for energy and propulsion. Smith proposed that UFOs might be advanced technology (not necessarily extraterrestrial in origin) that

[67] This is somewhat of a different kind of failure from technological failure, which comprises the very small amount of literature on the topic. See W. Patrick McCray, "What Makes a Failure? Designing a New National Telescope, 1975-1984," *Technology and Culture* 42.2 (2001): 265-291; Edward Jones-Imhotep, *The Unreliable Nation: Hostile Nature and Technological Failure in the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017).

[68] Alexander C.T. Geppert, "Extraterrestrial encounters: UFOs, science and the quest for transcendence, 1947-1972," *History and Technology* 28.3 (2012): 337.

operated by harnessing the power of the Earth's magnetic fields. Given that the Department of Transport was already involved in research on the effects of the aurora and ionosphere, it gave Smith permission to set up Magnet, which emphasized the geomagnetic science angle more than the UFO part. Smith spent the next four years conducting a number of experiments in an effort to ascertain the nature of UFOs, as well as the nature of observation and reporting procedures. This included contributing to a witness questionnaire and developing a unique statistical "weighting factor" system, as well as establishing a UFO observatory on the outskirts of Ottawa. Smith maintained that he was conducting rigorous scientific work, even if the subject was unorthodox. As the months and years passed, however, his supervisors within DoT started having second thoughts. Almost immediately, Smith's work leaked to the press and journalists hounded the department for information. In 1954, claiming that it was receiving too much adverse publicity, and that Smith's work had ventured outside the bounds of its mandate, the department terminated Project Magnet. Chapter One tells the story of Wilbert Smith as an example of the kind of work a dedicated individual attempted to put into solving the UFO problem – into making UFOs real – and the reception that this work received within the Canadian government.

Chapter Two continues the narrative by tracing the history of Canada's second UFO investigation, "Project Second Storey," which ran from 1952-1954. Established under the auspices of the Defence Research Board – Canada's military science agency – Project Second Storey became the "official" investigation, given that the Department of Transport eventually disavowed Smith's work on Project Magnet. Whereas Project Magnet was almost solely conducted by one man, Project Second Storey comprised a

committee of scientists and military officials that met a total of six times over the two-year period. Oddly enough, Smith himself was also a part of the committee, due to his prior expertise. Smith met his match in National Research Council astronomer Peter Millman, the Chairman of Project Second Storey. Millman firmly disbelieved that UFOs were of extraterrestrial origin and anything other than misidentified natural phenomena. It is clear that Millman's views extended to the other members of the committee, Smith notwithstanding, and this determined the direction the project took. Whereas the goal of Project Magnet was to do a proper scientific study of UFOs, Project Second Storey was established as an "advisory" committee that could comment on sightings and inquiries from other departments, if they required such assistance at all. The minutes from the last meetings of the committee make it clear that Millman and other members felt they had sufficiently debunked the whole subject that no further investigation was necessary. The committee concluded that the UFO phenomenon did not "lend itself to a scientific method of investigation." Project Second Storey provides an example of the move toward official and willing ignorance and the work that was put into ignoring the issue rather than engaging with it.

Chapter Three covers the period 1954-1967, a time seemingly in between major events in the UFO investigation, one of the lulls in official activity mentioned above. With Projects Magnet and Second Storey terminated, the government settled into a passive role that included only the collection, with no investigation, of UFO sighting reports. However, a small group of disconnected citizens attempted to fill the gap and take charge by forming early UFO clubs and writing into various departments and agencies, demanding answers to the mystery. This chapter shows a growing unrest and

mistrust of government "doublespeak," as citizens felt that they were either being directly lied to or were victims of unnecessary secrecy. Some citizens were bold enough to accuse the government of conspiracy, and so the chapter attempts to approach conspiracy theory not as a psychological aberration or individual pathology, but as a historical phenomenon very much tied to the broader cultural and political changes taking place after the war. And, despite some inactivity for several years, the chapter also traces changes in the way the government began collecting and writing up UFO reports in the mid-1960s, reflecting what might appear to be a renewed interest in the phenomenon.

Chapter Four provides an in-depth look at a single year: 1967. Canada's Centennial Year was noteworthy not just for its various civic projects and celebrations, which just so happened to include the construction of a UFO landing pad in St. Paul, Alberta. In 1967, UFO sightings shot up dramatically, and only continued to rise in subsequent years. In addition to the general level of reported sightings, the government took a keen interest in three specific cases, primarily because they actually left behind physical evidence. No other cases before or after called for such intensive investigation as these, and it is a strange coincidence that they all occurred during 1967. This chapter traces the history of the three cases and what steps the government took to investigate them. I argue that the events of this chapter represent the culmination of Canada's UFO investigation. Indeed, the investigation only continued to decline afterward, making 1967 out as a special year in this history.

Chapter Five takes a break from the narrative in order to delve more deeply into a discussion of the nature of evidence. It attempts to answer the question of why it was that physical evidence was so much more compelling than two other kinds of evidence also

found in the archives: oral testimony and images of UFOs. Ultimately, none of these forms of evidence were able to convince the government of the reality of UFOs, yet they all produced differing levels of trust, which speaks to the theme of historical ontology and how objects come into and fall out of being. The chapter also argues that UFO reports potentially constitute a kind of "involuntary" citizen science, a crowdsourced effort that the government neither solicited nor appreciated, and teases out the contradictory meaning of the term itself and how this further contributed to misunderstanding and mistrust.

Chapter Six traces the history of the Department of National Defence's efforts to transfer responsibility for the UFO investigation to the National Research Council in the late 1960s, and concludes the narrative up till 1995. This may seem like an unwieldly span of time to cover in a single chapter, but as it makes clear, a major hinge point in the investigation was the period around 1980. In the late 1970s, a scientist with the National Research Council authored what appears to be their final report on the subject. "UFO's: What Are They?" took a very condescending and limited view of the phenomenon, in the end simply reiterating the conclusion that Project Second Storey had reached decades earlier: UFOs were nothing other than misidentified natural phenomena. It seems this report provided a necessary justification to severely curtail the National Research Council's involvement in what had already become a listless and extremely passive collection of reports. From about 1980 onward, the only documents surviving in the archives are sighting reports, unaccompanied by any further commentary. Nevertheless, the chapter provides insight into how citizen UFO investigators saw their role changing. Whereas the citizens writing to the government featured in Chapter Three were

concerned with answers to the extraterrestrial question and the question of conspiracy theory, many investigators featured in this last chapter saw their work as necessary to critiquing and exposing government secrecy more generally, part of a growing interest in government "transparency" and the move toward access to information legislation.

The Conclusion provides a summary of the narrative and brings the dissertation back to the broader argument about the relationship between state and science, state and citizen, and how scientific authority was constructed and used during this time. In the early days of this study, I quickly came to the conclusion that this research was not really about UFOs at all. At first, this seemed somewhat disappointing. Why write at length about UFOs if the work is not actually about UFOs? I realized though that UFOs were just the surface of a much deeper, and I think more interesting, story about the significant changes taking place during Canada's postwar years.

Chapter 1: Wilbert Smith and Project Magnet, 1950-1954

Introduction

Canada's UFO investigation began in 1950 with the work of Wilbert Smith, an electrical engineer employed at the Department of Transport. While attending a radio broadcasting conference in Washington, D.C., Smith allegedly met with an American physicist who told him that the U.S. government was covering up UFOs and that they were indeed extraterrestrial. Based on this meeting, Smith initiated Project Magnet, a study of geomagnetic phenomena and their relationship with UFOs. Hypothesizing that UFOs somehow used the power of the Earth's magnetic fields as a source of propulsion, Smith thought he could make this technology available to the Canadian government. Perhaps surprisingly, the Department of Transport granted Smith permission to carry out his research, funding Canada's first official UFO investigation. Why would any government department allow this?

This chapter is guided by the question of why the Department of Transport agreed to Wilbert Smith's proposal, and explores what Smith tried to achieve with Project Magnet. The argument is that the government became involved in the phenomenon because Smith was able to frame research into UFOs as part of the Department of Transport's existing research program on ionospheric and magnetic phenomena. In effect, Smith shoehorned the investigation into existence. The events and press of 1947 – the Kenneth Arnold sighting and the alleged Roswell UFO crash – forced the U.S. government into action. There was no similarly clear hinge point for the Canadian

government. If not for Smith's personal interest, it is conceivable that the Canadian government might never have engaged with the phenomenon. Indeed, by the time of Project Magnet's termination in 1954, the Department of Transport wished it had never become involved.

Smith carried out several experiments in an attempt to ascertain the reality and nature of UFOs. Lorraine Daston writes that scientific objects come into and fade out of being. Smith's efforts were an attempt to make UFOs resolve into being. His experiments, including a makeshift observatory, were designed to produce tangible evidence of the reality of UFOs and convince others that there was in fact something concrete to study. For the most part, Smith's colleagues were not convinced, especially given that Smith began advocating the merits of the extraterrestrial hypothesis. A number of civilians, on the other hand, did believe in Smith's work, and began calling and writing in to the government for answers. This attention antagonized the Department of Transport, which blamed Smith for bad publicity, who in turn became equally frustrated with the department. This chapter explores the development of this mutually reinforcing tension. The dynamic between the Department of Transport and Wilbert Smith, revolving around differing ideas about the nature of UFOs, serves as the origin of what would become a much wider problem of trust between government and citizen. In other words, if the state wanted to use UFOs as a site to assert its modernity, then it considered Smith's work a false start.

The Sarbacher Memo

The "curious and sincere" Wilbert Brockhouse Smith was born in Lethbridge, Alberta in 1910.[69] Smith received his B.Sc. and M.Sc. in electrical engineering from the University of British Columbia, in 1933 and 1934 respectively. After working for a time as the Chief Engineer for the Vancouver radio station CJOR,[70] Smith found employment with the Department of Transport (DoT) in Ottawa, in 1939. According to a DoT obituary, Smith "was engaged in engineering Canada's wartime monitoring service during World War II and in 1947 was in charge of establishing a network of ionospheric measurement stations, several of which were in isolated parts of the North."[71] He contributed to a number of cross-border radio initiatives, including the 1947 Canada-U.S. FM Broadcasting Agreement and the 1952 TV Allocation Agreement, and attended conferences like the 1949 North American Regional Broadcasting Conference in Montreal and the same in Washington in 1950. When the Soviet satellite *Sputnik* was launched in 1957, Smith was one of those in charge of receiving and analyzing radio transmission reports.[72] He died of cancer on 27 December 1962.

Paul Hellyer became the Minister of Transport in 1967 and recalled that Smith's reputation was still very high in the department at that time.[73] Smith was a senior

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[69] Arthur Bray, *The UFO Connection* (Ottawa: Jupiter Publishing, 1979): 75.
[70] "U.B.C. "Open House" Aired Over CJOR," Newspaper clipping, n.d. X30-3, box 1126.7. W.B. Smith, Biographical file. University of Ottawa Archives (UOA), Ottawa, ON.
[71] "In Memoriam: Wilbert B. Smith." X30-3, box 1126.7. W.B. Smith, Biographical file. UOA, Ottawa, ON.
[72] Wilbert Smith, 19 November 1957. Memorandum to C.R.R. at the Department of Transport, "Satellite Transmissions – Sputnik I." RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[73] Paul Hellyer, former Minister of National Defence. Interview by author, 16 June 2017.

engineer with the DoT by the time he became involved with the UFO phenomenon. Smith became interested in UFOs in the late 1940s, after reading several newspaper reports. These were the years immediately after the 1947 Roswell crash and the increasing publicity surrounding the U.S. projects Sign and Grudge. Everything changed for Smith when he traveled to the U.S. and met with an American scientist.

In 1950, Smith attended the aforementioned radio broadcasting conference in Washington, DC and while there allegedly met with Dr. Robert I. Sarbacher, an American physicist and defence consultant. Sarbacher told Smith that flying saucers are indeed real and that the "matter is the most highly classified subject in the United States Government, rating higher even than the H-bomb."[74] He also told Smith that the flying saucers most certainly do not originate on Earth and that they are of such advanced technology that the U.S. government had been unable to duplicate them. The details of this meeting are very unclear, and it is unknown why Smith even met with Sarbacher in the first place. But it is clear that the meeting was a catalyst for Smith.

The evidence for the meeting are two documents, both written by Smith. A handwritten document, dated 15 September 1950, outlines a series of questions and answers between Smith and Sarbacher, reproduced here:

WBS: I am doing some work on the collapse of the earth's magnetic field as a source of energy, and I think our work may have a bearing on the flying saucers.

[74] Wilbert Smith, 21 November 1950. Memorandum to the Controller of Telecommunications at the Department of Transport. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. Unidentified Flying Objects File. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

RIS: What do you want to know[?]

WBS: I have read [Frank] Scully's book [*Behind the Flying Saucers*] on the saucers and would like to know how much of it is true.

RIS: The facts reported in the book are substantially correct.

WBS: Then the saucers do exist?

RIS: Yes, they exist.

WBS: Do they operate as Scully suggests, on magnetic principles?

RIS: We have not been able to duplicate their performance.

WBS: Do they come from some other planet?

RIS: All we know is, we didn't make them, and it's pretty certain they didn't originate on the earth.

WBS: I understand the whole subject of saucers is classified.

RIS: Yes, it is classified two points higher even than the H-bomb. In fact it is the most highly classified subject in the U.S. government at the present time.

WBS: May I ask the reason for the classification?

RIS: You may ask, but I can't tell you.

WBS: Is there any way in which I can get more information, particularly as it might fit in with our own work?

RIS: I suppose you could be cleared through your own Defense Department and I am pretty sure arrangements could be made to exchange information. If you have anything to contribute we should be glad to talk it over, but I can't give you any more at the present time.

Note: The above is written from memory following the interview. I have tried to keep it as nearly verbatim as possible.[75]

This document is seemingly a recollection of Smith's interview, written after the fact. It is not an official document; it is not part of the national archives collection. Rather, it lives within the archives at the University of Ottawa, in the Arthur Bray fonds. Bray was an independent UFO investigator active mostly in the 1960s and 1970s who took an interest in Smith's story after the engineer's death. Bray self-published two books, *Science, the Public and the UFO* and *The UFO Connection,* both of which mention Smith and his work.[76] Bray wrote that he obtained Smith's personal papers, many of which contained copies of official DoT documents or their first drafts, from Smith's widow. Bray eventually donated his collection of materials on Smith to the University of Ottawa. For those interested in studying Smith's work, this collection is actually more complete and organized than that found within LAC.

What makes the matter of Smith's meeting with Sarbacher more unclear is that the handwritten interview notes are prefaced with the line: "Notes on interview through Lt/C. Bremner with Dr. Robert Sarbacher." Bremner was a defence attaché at the Canadian embassy in Washington and it is unclear whether Smith himself spoke to Sarbacher in person, or simply passed on questions to the scientist through Bremner. While this document is not found within the national archives, there exists within them

[75] Wilbert Smith, 15 September 1950. "Notes on interview." X30-3, box 1126.2. Wilbert Smith – Project Magnet File. UOA, Ottawa, ON.
[76] Arthur Bray, *Science, the Public and the UFO* (Ottawa: Bray Book Service, 1967); Arthur Bray, *The UFO Connection* (Ottawa: Jupiter Publishing, 1979).

another similar document. A 21 November 1950 memo on DoT letterhead, from Smith to the Controller of Telecommunications, outlines Smith's thoughts about flying saucers and mentions that he had a meeting with a prominent American scientist, which he arranged by making "discreet enquiries through the Canadian embassy staff in Washington". The meeting yielded the following information:

a. The matter is the most highly classified subject in the United States Government, rating higher even than the H-bomb.
b. Flying saucers exist.
c. Their modus operandi is unknown but concentrated effort is being made by a small group headed by Doctor Vannevar Bush.[77]
d. The entire matter is considered by the United States authorities to be of tremendous significance.[78]

The official memo did not mention Sarbacher's claim that UFOs are definitely extraterrestrial, but did allude to the idea by referencing two books published in the same year that popularized the idea. Smith instead emphasized the need to research the saucers for scientific purposes. Specifically, Smith noted that he was interested in UFOs for their potential to convert geomagnetic energy into electrical energy. He thought that they

[77] Vannevar Bush was an American scientist who served as chairman of the U.S. National Defense Research Committee created during World War II (see Donald Avery, *The Science of War: Canadian Scientists and Allied Military Technology During the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998)). For many years, Bush has been connected to the UFO phenomenon as one of the alleged architects of the U.S. UFO cover-up. Smith's memo was instrumental in making this connection.
[78] Wilbert Smith, 21 November 1950. Memorandum to the Controller of Telecommunications at the Department of Transport. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. Unidentified Flying Objects File. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

might be operating “on some hitherto unknown magnetic principles” that manipulate the planet’s gravitational fields. He also noted that this research might very well result in “profit”. He requested permission to set up what he called Project Magnet to pursue this theory.

Smith’s request represents Canada’s official entry into UFO investigation. There is a key difference between Smith’s request and the kind of analysis the U.S. projects undertook. The latter focused on analyzing UFO sighting reports in an attempt to ascertain their credibility and to explain them away as misidentifications or hallucinations. The effort was a scientific one, but one intent on seeing through the fog of untrained eyes. Most of those working on the projects maintained the assumption that UFOs were not real and were simply mistaken observations or the type of psychological artifacts Carl Jung later examined. Smith’s efforts, on the other hand, focused on essentially back-engineering technology that existed only theoretically. There was no physical evidence of UFOs that Smith could use to make conclusions. That is, in Lorraine Daston’s words, nothing had yet established the reality of UFOs; they had not yet come into being in a way that would make mainstream science take notice. Smith set out to remedy this situation. He tried to solve an engineering problem inspired by accounts he had only read, but which he nevertheless believed were legitimate.

Project Magnet

In the official memo to his superior, Smith requested permission to start Project Magnet as well as the use of DoT equipment to do so. Commander C.P. Edwards, Deputy

Minister of Transport for Air Services, granted this permission and in December 1950 Smith began his investigations.[79] Smith was, at first, the only DoT employee working on the project, and this on a part-time basis. This quickly changed as Magnet acquired the assistance of three engineers and two technicians by the end of 1950, still meager resources by Smith's reckoning.[80] The physical resources available to the team were basic. Smith had at his disposal, for instance, a galvanometer, a gamma-ray detector, a radio receiver, and a gravimeter, all spare technology that the DoT had on hand.[81] The project received a "Secret" security rating, due to the potential of discovering profitable technology.[82] This classification eventually became a sore point for the DoT and one of the main reasons the department later shut Magnet down.

In the project's early days, Smith worked quietly on what he called "small and very crude" experiments. He had actually carried out his first experiment into geomagnetics about a year before requesting permission to set up Magnet. Spurred by reports of UFOs in the late 1940s, Smith had already begun trying to puzzle it out. A preliminary report on the results of this experiment provided details on Smith's attempt to induce the collapse of the Earth's magnetic fields and thereby capture the released electrical energy through a system of coils wound around "a core of ferro-magnetic material." Smith concluded that the experiment was successful, in that the captured energy was able to register a reading on a voltmeter, but that "the apparatus was

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[79] Wilbert Smith, n.d. "Project Magnet Report." Flying Saucers File. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[80] Wilbert Smith, 3 January 1951. Letter to Air Services at the Department of Transport. Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.
[81] "Ottawa Constructing Flying Saucer Sighting Station – Just in Case," *Sudbury Daily Star* (12 November 1953).
[82] Wilbert Smith, 3 January 1951. Letter to Air Services at the Department of Transport. Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

extremely crude and very difficult of precise measurement" and so "the observations were purely qualitative in nature".[83] Thus, the object of pursuing Project Magnet eight months later was to construct more adequate equipment and test his hypotheses in a more rigorous and quantitative manner. Smith believed that if these more advanced experiments were successful, they would prove that he could harness energy from the induced collapse of the Earth's gravitational fields and use it as a method of propulsion. UFOs might operate using the same principle, Smith proposed, and so it was necessary to continue the study to determine exactly what kind of technology the flying saucers represented.[84]

Judging from later correspondence, officials within the government did not believe that the flying saucers were of extraterrestrial origin. In fact, the DoT likely did not have any interest in UFOs at all, except for the potential (however small) of uncovering new technology that might assist with aviation. What made the proposal palatable to the DoT was that Smith's ideas fell in line with research the department was already carrying out. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Canadian government was intensely interested in the study of aurora and their effect on radio waves. Edward Jones-Imhotep has written that scientists in Ottawa struggled to understand the unique conditions the ionosphere presented for the extension of reliable communications throughout the Canadian North. In fact, the technology these government scientists used to produce and read ionograms – the visual images of the ionosphere that "furnished the working objects of the discipline" – regularly failed, and this technological failure was

[83] Wilbert Smith, 10 March 1950. "Preliminary Report on Initial Experiment Geo-Magnetic Release." Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.
[84] Wilbert Smith, 25 June 1952. "Interim Report Project Magnet." Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

used to help define a certain idea of Nordicity and the Canadian nation. These ionosphere scientists leveraged the seeming uniqueness of Canada's ionosphere to their advantage, claiming an expertise for Canadian science that could help bolster the nation's sovereignty, during a time of "national redefinition."[85]

Smith wrote that Project Magnet was a way to delve more deeply into "the study of various aspects of radio wave propagation," such as "the fields of aurora, cosmic radiation, atmospheric radio-activity and geo-magnetism," and contextualizing the proposal in these terms made it plausible. Conveniently for Smith, DoT already had a hand in researching the ionosphere. In fact, one of Smith's responsibilities during this time was to assist in the establishment of a network of ionosphere stations throughout the North, with the explicit goal of researching these communication issues. As a result, DoT viewed Smith's proposed work on UFOs as a logical extension, given that he articulated it primarily as a study of geomagnetic phenomena, within the same category of ionosphere research.

During 1951, Smith wrote several reports on observations arising from his experiments. The papers are all short, usually two to three pages, containing text and sometimes equations, in which he puzzles out results that may or may not fit preexisting frameworks in the study of electrical engineering. His main preoccupation was an attempt to determine the relationship between the propagation of a magnetic field and the electric current used to "excite" the field.[86] Smith did not address these short papers to any specific person and so he likely produced them for use internal to the Magnet team, or

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[85] Edward Jones-Imhotep, *The Unreliable Nation: Hostile Nature and Technological Failure in the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017).
[86] Wilbert Smith, 26 June 1951. "The Establishment of Magnetic Fields." Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

just for his own reference. It was not until 1952 that Smith began regularly reporting to his superiors on Magnet's progress.

The introduction to a draft report from March 1952 summarized why Magnet was established and reiterated that the "large number of sightings of unidentified objects, generally called "flying saucers", raised the question as to whether such objects could be emissaries of some other civilization having a technology somewhat different than ours, and possibly more advanced in magnetics."[87] Whereas in Smith's original project proposal his mention of the extraterrestrial possibility was more of a footnote, increasingly his correspondence with superiors foregrounded this idea. It is likely at this point, if not earlier, that his superiors began to suspect Smith's understanding of his research differed from theirs. To be frank, Smith's interest in UFOs was becoming a problem for the DoT. His 1952 report marks the beginning of the cycle of mutually-reinforced mistrust between Smith and the DoT that, in his case, ended with the project's termination, but also broadened out to affect the relationship between the government and inquisitive Canadian citizens.

The remainder of Smith's report outlined various experiments the Magnet team undertook to determine if Maxwell's equations – which govern the behaviour of electrical and magnetic fields – are inviolate or in fact are "a special case of a more general set of equations". In effect, Smith and his team were working to experimentally confirm equations dominant in the field since James Clerk Maxwell introduced them in 1861, all because of UFO sightings and hypotheses made about their flight. Smith's efforts on these more prosaic and fundamental scientific questions, as noted above, were one of the

[87] Wilbert Smith, 18 January 1952. "Project Magnet Report." Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

main reasons DoT granted permission for Magnet in the first place: when contextualized within the existing paradigm, the study of UFO technology did not appear so absurd.

Smith concluded the report by writing that the results of the project "to date have hardly been spectacular and may even be claimed to confirm only what could be expected in the behaviour of fields." In other words, by simply replicating long-standing results Smith was unable to produce any novel conclusions and make any headway toward explaining the UFO phenomenon. He also noted in the report's conclusion that while Magnet "was quite small to start with", it "was further depleted during the [previous] year by two resignations in favour of more lucrative positions elsewhere."[88] Smith and the Magnet team were doing this work on a part-time, even casual, basis. Their main priorities were their regular DoT duties, and so the time they could commit to Magnet was extremely limited. As a result, after only a year of operations, Project Magnet was floundering.

Smith's next official report was even less optimistic. Titled "Project Magnet Thinking as of July, 1952", it posed the problem of UFOs in the form of two questions: first, "their origin and purpose"; and second, "their technology". Smith quickly acknowledged that the answer to the first question was beyond the team's ability to explain and so skipped over it. The answer to the second question was the subject of the rest of the fourteen-page report. Smith dismissed each in turn the possibility that UFOs were powered by chemical fuels, nuclear energy, and electricity and magnetism, the latter being the very sources of energy which Smith had spent the previous two years investigating. The reason for this was the fact that his experiments found no useful

[88] Wilbert Smith, 18 January 1952. "Project Magnet Report." Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

variation in Maxwell's equations and that they were unable to reliably harness the energy produced from a gravitational field collapse.

Smith concluded that flying saucers obviously operated using a technology unknown to scientists on Earth, or they operated using known principles that their makers had extended beyond current understanding. In the end, the report was highly theoretical and ended by saying that if the Project – and science generally – is to understand UFOs and their underlying physical principles then the only option left was to continue tinkering and waiting for the discovery of new results and formulas. He left unsaid the idea that the extraterrestrials Smith believed to exist might gift this new knowledge to the human race. As such, Smith explicitly asked for continued support and funding (however meagre it was) for Magnet, despite having no concrete results to show for the previous years of work.

Perhaps in an attempt to provide some results, Smith proposed an experiment. He had noticed by this point that in interviews with those who had seen a UFO, the witnesses displayed "a certain amount of malobservation and faulty memory." In an attempt to test this in a more controlled setting, he outlined a plan that would "check the general characteristics of public observational capacity". Smith proposed to inflate a meteorological balloon controlled by bursts from a magnesium flare suspended underneath, that would lift it into the air. The balloon would be "brilliantly illuminated" and provide "a suitable object for observation." The plan was to release the balloon into the skies above Ottawa without any advance notice and wait to see if anyone reported it as a UFO, either to the newspapers or to the government. Smith and his team could then

interview witnesses and measure their accounts against the known facts of the experiment.[89]

Smith's superiors gave him approval for the experiment, but he was unable to acquire the necessary equipment until nearly three months later. Finally, on 8 September at 9:45 PM, they released the balloon. They timed the magnesium flare to burn for one minute. The balloon successfully floated "over the Rideau Canal near Dow's Lake at an elevation of 1.1 miles." Smith and a colleague made two simultaneous observations at different locations, in order to obtain bearings that would corroborate one another. To Smith and his colleagues, the first phase of the experiment was a success: "The flare was clearly visible from Ottawa and did not resemble a meteor or northern lights. It could not be mistaken for a star and could not be associated with the moon which was on the eastern horizon. It could not be mistaken for a plane, since it was soundless and flashed only for a short time from an almost stationary position." Once the one-minute flare ended, the anticipation began.

Alas, Smith was to be disappointed. His summary of the experiment concluded anticlimactically: "There was no mention made of this object in the newspapers."[90] Perhaps there had been some Ottawa residents pondering the heavens during the exact one-minute duration of the experiment. If they were out there though, they neglected to report the incident. The experiment was inconclusive.

By the end of 1952, Smith had also compiled twenty-five sighting reports from that year that to him defied conventional explanations. He included his analysis of these

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[89] Wilbert Smith, 16 June 1952. "Memorandum to Project Second Storey Committee." Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[90] J.H. Thompson, 10 September 1952. Department of Transport memorandum to Defence Research Board. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

sightings as an appendix to another progress report he wrote on Project Magnet. The appendix noted that a "few other sightings were reported [to the DoT during 1952] but were obviously of conventional objects and [so were] omitted from [the] analysis."[91] The report also concluded that despite the small sample of data used, "the Department of Transport sightings are quite representative of the sightings reported throughout the world."[92]

Even as early as 1952, the sighting reports were coming in from around the country. Specifically, for Smith's analysis, six were from Ottawa, four more from small Ontario towns, three from Halifax, four from Regina, three from British Columbia, and one each from Calgary, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories. Aspects of all the sightings defied full and satisfactory explanation despite Smith's attempts to make them fit into predetermined categories. As a result, he wrote, "We are forced to the conclusion that the vehicles are probably extra-terrestrial, in spite of our prejudices to the contrary" and "regardless of whether or not they fit into our scheme of things." The only thing left to do was to mount "a substantial effort towards the acquisition of as much as possible of this technology, which would without doubt be of great value to us."[93] Smith's report clearly put all his cards on the table. What began for Smith in early 1951 as an effort to understand the relationship between magnetic and electric fields transformed, over the span of three years, into a full-fledged belief in the

[91] Wilbert Smith, n.d. "Summary of Sightings Reported to and Analysed by Department of Transport During 1952." Reprint of Project Magnet Report file. X30-3, box 1126.1. UOA, Ottawa, ON.
[92] Wilbert Smith, 18 January 1952. "Project Magnet Report." Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.
[93] Wilbert Smith, 18 January 1952. "Project Magnet Report." Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

existence of extraterrestrials and the urgent need to make contact and acquire their knowledge.

Bad Publicity

Despite Project Magnet's Secret classification, Smith's efforts did not stay classified for long. American interest in the UFO phenomenon was steadily growing, and word of an obscure Canadian scientist – and one with government sanction – working on the issue eventually got out. Magnet's classification became a sore point for the DoT. Smith's work should have remained secret. It was to the DoT's chagrin that it got out at all and especially that it was Smith who leaked the details. Officials at the DoT were beginning to feel that Smith and those interested in his work were antagonizing them, and that withdrawing from the whole subject might be the only sensible solution.

In the early 1950s, a number of best-selling books and alien invasion films helped shape the foundation of the UFO stories still told today.[94] As Mark O'Connell writes, "With so little being done officially to address the questions and anxieties of the public where UFOs were concerned, Hollywood sensed the country's mood and provided the necessary nightmare, in the shape of the 1951 film *The Thing from Another World*…[which] terrified moviegoers across the country and single-handedly created the template for the alien invasion movie."[95] The public consumed these books and films amidst the paranoia of the Cold War and the constant threat of Soviet invasion into North

[94] See Susan Lepselter, *The Resonance of Unseen Things: Poetics, Power, Captivity, and UFOs in the American Uncanny* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016).
[95] Mark O'Connell, *The Close Encounters Man: How One Man Made the World Believe in UFOs* (New York: Harper Collins, 2017): 63

America.[96] Alien invasions from Mars and flying saucers piloted by extraterrestrials represented the violent intrusion of the unknown, and thinly veiled the fear that North Americans felt at the prospect of the Soviet Union creeping ever closer. International communism was on the rise, and one could never tell where it might spring up. The trope of the body snatcher clearly played on this theme. One never knew if it was in fact the neighbour or even a family member who the "Others" had silently converted.[97]

For many, this fear was made more acute by outrage. Americans were angry that the government might be covering up their knowledge of UFOs and putting the citizenry in danger: "the alien invasion movies did their best to convince the public that aliens from other worlds were ready to attack and destroy us at any time, while UFO books and magazine articles did their best to convince the public that the government already knew all about the aliens' nefarious plans and was keeping them a secret."[98] National security concerns have always been at the forefront of UFO disclosure rhetoric.[99] Echoing the argument about a problem of trust, these concerns have also animated government actions. Whitaker and Marcuse, in *Cold War Canada,* write that the primary target of Canadian government surveillance was its own citizens, rather than spies abroad.[100] Fears of dissension and subversion were acute enough in the early Cold War period to justify a number of secretive and invasive actions. Dennis Molinaro, for instance, has written about the existence of an extensive Cold War wire-tapping program in Canada. These

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[96] Ray Pratt, *Projecting Paranoia: Conspiratorial Visions in American Film* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002).
[97] Don Siegel, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Walter Wanger Productions, 1956).
[98] Mark O'Connell, *The Close Encounters Man: How One Man Made the World Believe in UFOs* (New York: Harper Collins, 2017): 108.
[99] Richard Dolan, *UFOs and the National Security State: Chronology of a Cover-Up, 1941-1973* (Keyhole Publishing, 2013).
[100] Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

wire-taps were government-sanctioned and executed without the need for any warrant.[101] Additionally, the RCMP was authorized to carry out security-clearance investigations on civil servants who the service thought might constitute a risk.[102] These investigations were not simply a matter of screening for security risks, but an active form of moral regulation.[103]

Against this backdrop of paranoia, a number of American writers began releasing books that accused the government of a UFO cover-up. Perhaps the most prominent among these was Donald Keyhoe, a retired Air Force Major. Keyhoe was injured in an airplane crash while on duty in the early 1920s and during his convalescence began writing short science fiction stories for various pulp magazines. He retired from the air force shortly thereafter, and by that time had already established himself as a writer of "weird tales", perfect for an entry into the world of UFOs.

In January 1950, Keyhoe published an article in *True* magazine called "Flying Saucers Are Real." The article was so popular that he expanded it into his first UFO book, *The Flying Saucers Are Real*. In the book, he claimed to have used his military contacts to unearth previously unknown details about the U.S. government's knowledge of the matter. He wrote that the government did indeed know about flying saucers, that they were of extraterrestrial origin, and that they were covering it all up in the interest of public safety, lest a panic break out. He concluded that the extraterrestrials must have

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[101] Dennis Molinaro, ""In the Field of Espionage, There's No Such Thing as Peacetime": The Official Secrets Act and the PICNIC Wiretapping Program," *Canadian Historical Review* 98.3 (2017).
[102] Reg Whitaker, Gregory S. Kealey, and Andrew Parnaby, *Secret Service: Political Policing in Canada From the Fenians to Fortress America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012): 186.
[103] Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009).

been surveilling Earth for hundreds of years prior, but that they had increased their attention because of the atom bomb detonations beginning in 1945.[104]

It is no surprise that Keyhoe located his expose within the context of the atom bomb. Joseph Masco argues that the first atomic detonation in the deserts of New Mexico "can only be narrated as a moment of historical rupture and transformation."[105] While the atom bomb served as a symbol of American technological superiority and the end of the Second World War, its legacy is much more unclear. The Manhattan Project, Masco writes, inaugurated a new sense of American society as one defined by risk, "a new modernity in which dangers produced by the nation-state can no longer be controlled by it or be contained within its borders."[106] The profound consequences of the Manhattan Project, and the secrecy that shrouded it, generated ambivalency and fear as much as pride, leading some to question the motivations behind the project and the state and scientific establishment generally.

Authors like Keyhoe latched onto this ambivalence by, for instance, helping to establish the trope of the benevolent humanoid alien attempting to stop Earthlings from destroying themselves with nuclear weapons. Opposed to this image was the one of the merciless extraterrestrial monster intent on colonizing the planet.[107] Writers like George Adamski fashioned themselves as "contactees", in his case a specific type who had been

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[104] Donald Keyhoe, *The Flying Saucers Are Real* (Gutter Books, 2011 [1950]).
[105] Joseph Masco, *The Nuclear Borderlands: The Manhattan Project in Post-Cold War New Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006): 1.
[106] Masco, *The Nuclear Borderlands,* 26.
[107] Robert Wise, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (20th Century Fox, 1951); Byron Haskin, *The War of the Worlds* (Paramount Pictures, 1953).

taken up in alien crafts and spirited throughout the universe.[108] These kinds of contactees invariably arrived back on Earth with messages of peace and the need to disarm.

Keyhoe's widely read books, however, focused specifically on the government's involvement with UFOs and extraterrestrials. In addition to *The Flying Saucers Are Real,* he also published such titles as *Flying Saucers From Outer Space, The Flying Saucer Conspiracy, Flying Saucers: Top Secret,* and *Aliens From Space.* In one of these later books, Keyhoe told the story of Wilbert Smith's work, and news of the Canadian government's involvement began to spread in earnest. Smith and Keyhoe first began corresponding in 1950. Smith wrote to Keyhoe expressing his interest in Keyhoe's first UFO book. In his 1950 memo to his superiors, asking for permission to establish Project Magnet, Smith specifically mentioned that Keyhoe's book was one of those advocating the extraterrestrial hypothesis. In his letter to Keyhoe, Smith also told him about his own work on the conversion of energy through the collapse of magnetic fields.[109] They began to correspond regularly after this and Smith provided Keyhoe with more information about his experiments, in violation of Project Magnet's security classification. In his 1953 book, *Flying Saucers From Outer Space,* Keyhoe dedicated an entire chapter to "The Canadian Project." He described Smith as "A tall quiet-voiced man with close-cropped black hair, [who] had the cool detachment of a typical scientist." It is clear from the rest of the chapter, however, that Smith was anything but detached. Keyhoe's prose presented Smith as intelligent, articulate, and deeply dedicated to figuring out how flying saucers work. Keyhoe wrote that other "reputable groups" had previously suggested theories

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[108] Desmond Leslie and George Adamski, *The Flying Saucers Have Landed* (London: Werner Laurie, 1954).
[109] Wilbert Smith, 26 September 1950. Letter to Donald Keyhoe. Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

along the same lines as Smith but had ultimately dismissed them for fear of their reputations. Keyhoe quoted Smith extensively on the details of his theories of propulsion, which Keyhoe then used to confirm to his readers the truth of various sightings he had dug up. In Keyhoe's words, "Smith's earlier explanations seemed almost uncanny" in their ability to make sense of recent sighting reports.[110] *Flying Saucers From Outer Space* gave Smith his most widespread exposure, and the effect was significant.

Almost as soon as Keyhoe's book came out, Smith and the DoT began receiving telephone calls and letters from both Americans and Canadians wanting more information. For instance, a civilian in California wanted to know more about "certain experiments having been conducted by your government".[111] The DoT was concerned about the conflation of its work with Smith's, considering Smith's work represented a very small part of a single department of the government.

Another letter from a civilian in Quebec was slightly more specific. Writing to Smith, the author stated that they read Keyhoe's book: "It is in this book that I have discovered YOU." They did not mention the government specifically, but did ask for details about sightings made in Canada, as if in their mind Smith had become a clearinghouse for UFO information. In a way, Smith had. In the years after Magnet's termination, other officials regularly dumped letters about UFOs on Smith's desk.[112] As will be explored in more detail later, this goes to show how unorganized the UFO investigation as a whole was and how little communication existed between departments.

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[110] Donald Keyhoe, *Flying Saucers From Outer Space* (New York: Henry Holt, 1953): 144
[111] William H. […], 22 October 1953. Letter to Wilbert Smith. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[112] For instance: Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence, 10 December 1957. Letter to Under Secretary of State of External Affairs. Department of National Defence microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17988, file HQC 940-105, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

It is also clear that the DoT did not strictly enforce the security restriction on Magnet. The letter writer from Quebec had noted that they would understand if Smith could not divulge more information about his work because of any security restrictions. This is ironic, given that Smith began telling others about his research almost immediately after the DoT approved Project Magnet.

The letters were not all as benign. A number of letters arrived from what Smith and his superiors began referring to as "cranks".[113] They agreed to create a separate file of these crank letters, which they would ignore. Several of these crank letters contained in nearly illegible handwriting what seem to be streams of consciousness detailing religious and cosmic visions, verging on incoherent rambling.[114] An undated letter from a 22-year old contained a request for a job with Smith's "private company" which, in their understanding, was in search of life on other planets. The writer also made sure to mention that they were "on a diet of cold Orange Juice and Cold Water, which a doctor told [them they] have to be on for the rest of [their] life."[115]

More difficult to dismiss were the letters from colleagues. A letter from Washington, D.C. based Westinghouse Broadcasting Company, for instance, began by reminding Smith of the author's acquaintance with him, first made at the 1950 radio broadcasting conference he attended – the very one during which Smith allegedly met with American physicist Robert Sarbacher. After reading Keyhoe's book, the writer had discussed Smith's ideas with a colleague in the same field, and doubted the results: "This

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[113] Wilbert Smith, 8 September 1954. "Memorandum to Mr. van Allen." Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[114] For instance: Allen Lee Wiseman, 25 June 1955. Letter to Wilbert Smith. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[115] Myroslaw Drozda, n.d. Letter to Wilbert Smith. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

letter may be impertinent, but I would appreciate hearing from you and learn[ing] whether you substantiate within reason the statements made by Major Keyhoe."[116] Another letter came from a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The student was interested in knowing more about magnetic propulsion, but also expressed skepticism: "as far as I can learn this theory belongs in the realm of pseudo-scientific theories, and no one seems to know anything about it, except you."[117] Even Keyhoe himself was at first a skeptic: "I'd checked [on the validity of the theory] with two or three engineers. But when several well-known scientists ridiculed the theory, I'd lost interest in it."[118] Nevertheless, Keyhoe included the material in his book, and the publicity Smith received generated excitement and interest among the public in the activities of the Canadian government. It also raised eyebrows among colleagues and cast doubt, if not on the facts within Keyhoe's book, then on Smith's own reputation.

Officials at the DoT were not pleased. J.C. Lessard, the Deputy Minister of Transport, explained to the Minister that the publicity now pouring in was due entirely to Keyhoe's book. Lessard attempted to reassure the Minister: "Mr. Smith informed the Press that the equipment used was entirely of the reclaimed type and that the activities of Project Magnet represent a very small outlay of funds."[119] It seems that despite the enthusiasm of Smith and other like-minded persons aware of his work, the project was almost unknown to higher officials, even within the same department. They only became aware of it once Keyhoe's book generated adverse publicity, and this made it a problem.

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[116] Dwight A. Myer, 9 August 1954. Letter to Wilbert Smith. Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.
[117] Joseph P. Neville, 4 January 1955. Letter to Wilbert Smith. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[118] Donald Keyhoe, *Flying Saucers From Outer Space* (New York: Henry Holt, 1953): 131.
[119] J-C. Lessard, 17 November 1953. "Memorandum to the Minister." Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

A draft speech the Deputy Minister of Transport prepared in 1953 makes this evident. He wrote the speech for members of the House of Commons, who had obviously begun to hear enough about Smith from the newspapers that they requested a report. The speech began by mentioning "the somewhat sensational articles appearing in the press as to some of the researches being carried out by the Department of Transport" and outlined the potential value of studying the small percentage of UFOs that remained unexplained. The Deputy Minister never explicitly mentioned the words "UFO" and "flying saucer", but rather euphemistically referred to them as "strange objects, lights or queer effects in the sky." The report made it clear to the House that the "small group" carrying out this work was using instruments "left over from a previous program of radio skywave recording" and that it "is in no sense unusual since most of the instruments are quite conventional." The report ended by reassuring the listeners that the small group was "not assigned exclusively to this work, and in fact much of the work has been done on their own time."[120] In an attempt to deflect attention, the DoT began using the same refrain: that Project Magnet, while given official sanction, was a casual, spare-time activity that utilized dusty old equipment.

However, concern within the DoT escalated when word got out that Smith was not only doing part-time research into UFOs, but was actively building a UFO observatory. Newspaper stories appeared in November 1953 ranging in tone from interested and curious to outright disparaging. The *Vancouver Daily Province* stated, "Canada has launched a highly-technical research program to learn whether the earth has

[120] Draft report, 1953. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

had interplanatary [sic] visitors during the last few years."[121] The *Sudbury Daily Star* reported that the observatory was a joint effort of the DoT and Defence Research Board (DRB) intended to "track down the truth of the flying saucer mystery – "just in case.""[122] A *Jerusalem Post* article ended with: "Mr. Smith said that although scientists believed there was no real proof that flying saucers existed "there is a high degree of probability that they do exist and are interplanetary.""[123] The Canadian edition of *Time* magazine described the laboratory as "a complicated jumble of electronic gear" that aided in Smith's study of "flying crockery".[124]

Perhaps the most scathing report appeared in the *Toronto Daily Star*, which was headlined "Maze of Instruments in Tiny Shack Hunts for Saucers" and began with: "The world's first flying saucer sighting station, the unwanted, virtually disowned, child of the Canadian government, yesterday went into operation at Shirley's Bay, 10 miles northwest of here." The article referred to "sheepish government officials, reluctant to confess that they regard stories of flying saucers as anything but utter nonsense," who dismissed the sighting station. The article also quoted DRB Chairman Omond Solandt as saying that the DRB had nothing to do with the project. The Minister of Transport at the time allegedly also said that Smith was undertaking the project for the National Research Council, and noted "[t]he sighting station is ludicrously small and insignificant to be engaged in such a project."[125]

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[121] "'Interplanetary Visitors' Subject Of Research," *Vancouver Daily Province.* 13 November 1953.
[122] "Ottawa Constructing Flying Saucer Sighting Station – Just in Case," *Sudbury Daily Star* (12 November 1953).
[123] "Laboratory to Probe Flying Saucers." Newspaper clipping, n.d. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[124] "Clipping From the Canadian Edition of Time Magazine 14 November, 1953." Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[125] Bruce MacDonald, "Maze of Instruments in Tiny Shack Hunts for Saucers—Ottawa," *Toronto Daily Star* (14 November 1953).

The reality of Smith's "makeshift" UFO observatory was very close to what the papers reported.[126] It was indeed a small shack located at Shirley's Bay, a restricted military site about fifteen kilometres west of Ottawa on the river. The site, previously part of the Army's firing range, became the home of a chemical laboratory and a telecommunications centre. Construction on the site was not finished until the mid-1960s, and so prior to this comprised a motley collection of buildings and equipment.[127] Smith's shack had a large antenna attached to it and a maze of equipment filling the inside. However, it had nothing to do with the National Research Council. Project Magnet did have a connection to the DRB, as the DoT had consulted Omond Solandt before giving approval to the project, and DRB had use of the Shirley's Bay site.[128] By late 1953, Magnet was winding down and it seems obvious that Smith was once again the only DoT employee working on the project. The size of the shack itself surely could not have accommodated more than one person. So how did Smith obtain these additional resources, given his lack of concrete results from the previous two years of study? Likely, Smith was able to stretch the bounds of the latitude initially granted to him, and bureaucratic inertia prevented his superiors from shutting him down earlier. By this point, Smith was also a senior engineer, and so he likely had access to spare equipment and the department's trust that he would not abuse it.

The press around the saucer station brought more letters to the DoT's doorstep. Bill Bantey, a "Publicity Counsellor" from Montreal, wrote to the department asking for

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[126] G.S. Pope, 16 September 1965. Memorandum to Mr. Oatway. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[127] Jonathan Turner, "The Defence Research Board of Canada, 1947 to 1977," PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto (2012): 164.
[128] G.C.W. Browne, 25 June 1954. "Memorandum to Supt. Of Radio Regulations." Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

more information and photographs of the Shirley's Bay shack. In an attempt to appease him and deflect more attention from the issue, W.H. van Allen, the Chief of the Information and Editorial Bureau, sent Bantey several photographs along with the remark, "You will see that [the observatory] does not lend itself to publicity and we are discouraging any attempt at further pictorialization."[129]

van Allen's attempt failed considerably, as the following year brought further international press. Alexander Barrie, a Toronto-based writer with the U.K. Kemsley Newspapers group, contacted the DoT to arrange an interview with Smith. van Allen granted access with the understanding "that there be no interview quotations, no levity and no comments which might hurt the project." Barrie enclosed a copy of the story to van Allen, in which he wrote that the topic "has been treated in a sober manner and the story makes it clear that investigation of UFO's is a small part of Wilbur [sic] Smith's work."[130] Barrie wrote that because the story took longer to finish than anticipated, he had already sent it to the publisher without DoT's final approval.[131] van Allen responded with frustration: "I waited for considerable time to receive your copy in connection with the Shirley Bay development…Despite the fact that your article may have been overdue in England, it was certainly most inadvisable to send it along before enabling us to see the copy. Frankly, I am disappointed with the sensationalism you have worked into it and must ask that you recall the copy." The remainder of the letter included seven objections

[129] W.H. van Allen, 18 December 1953. Letter to Mr. Bantey. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[130] A number of correspondents misspelled Smith's name, likely because Donald Keyhoe did so in his book. Keyhoe eventually realized the mistake and apologized to Smith. See Donald Keyhoe, 9 January 1954. Letter to Wilbert Smith. Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.
[131] Alexander Barrie, 18 June 1954. Letter to W.H. van Allen. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

and requested changes, including "Eliminate reference to "alien vehicle"" and "Reference to Mr. Smith's or any government office uncalled for."[132]

The DoT was clearly worried about the impact any article could have that referenced the extraterrestrial hypothesis in the same space as the Canadian government. Mark O'Connell similarly writes that the idea "caused a significant amount of concern in some quarters" of the U.S. government,[133] and so it is likely that the Canadian government was worried about receiving the same kind of attention. Just the year before, in 1952, two articles were published in national publications, one in *Time* and the other in *Saturday Night*, which likely helped fuel this concern. The *Time* article, at least, was entirely meant to debunk the phenomenon, by focusing on the case of two men convicted of fraud for weaving a tale about flying saucers and little men landing on farmers' fields.[134] *Saturday Night*, however, took a different approach. Mentioning specific names in the article, like Omond Solandt and Peter Millman, the article claimed that Canadian scientists agreed "that the saucers are no laughing matter and must be closely investigated."[135] This was certainly an exaggeration, and must have seemed like the same kind of story as that Alexander Barrie later wrote.

Unfortunately, for the DoT, they were too late to intervene in the latter case. Barrie wrote that the story was going ahead without the requested changes, and that he was taken aback by the DoT's reaction: "Some of your comments surprise me. I cannot see that "sensationalism" was "worked in" – except in so far as flying saucers are by

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[132] W.H. van Allen, 29 June 1954. Letter to Alexander Barrie. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[133] Mark O'Connell, *The Close Encounters Man: How One Man Made the World Believe in UFOs* (New York: Harper Collins, 2017): 50.
[134] "Flying-Saucer Men," *Time* (27 October 1952): 48-49.
[135] R.S. Lambert, "Flying Saucers – their lurid past," *Saturday Night* 67.9 (17 May 1952): 18.

themselves inclined to be something of a sensation at any mention." Barrie went on to chastise van Allen about journalistic integrity by writing that "it puts a reporter in an extremely difficult position when a good and legitimate story of this sort is only to be half-told. It is not part of a newspaper's job to suppress facts except when such things as security regulations require it." Barrie's letter ended with an apology for the misunderstanding, but also the firm belief that the story did not contain anything harmful. Perhaps Barrie's letter convinced van Allen of this belief or the DoT resigned itself to its fate, as van Allen's response was short and to the point: "It would be regrettable if Kemsley Publications used the article as sent, but I do not think any great damage would be done."[136] At this point DoT's public relations unit was attempting damage control, and not particularly successfully. One journalist later accused the DoT of placing an "iron curtain" around Smith in an attempt to stop the flow of information to the press.[137] Rather than trying to put out individual fires, however, higher officials within the department were trying to stamp out the source: termination of the project was in the works.

Though the end was in sight, a glimmer of hope emerged. One of the instruments in the shack at Shirley's Bay was a gravimeter, a device "designed to detect and record gamma rays, magnetic fluctuations, radio noises and gravity and mass changes in the atmosphere."[138] In the same way a polygraph records changes in a person's vitals, the gravimeter used a pen that reacted to atmospheric changes by scribbling lines "along a four-inch wide, 250-foot long strip of paper."[139] Since becoming operational in late 1953,

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[136] W.H. van Allen, 23 July 1954. Letter to Alexander Barrie. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[137] "Memorandum to the Deputy Minister." 17 May 1955. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[138] "Machine 'Records Saucer'." *Vancouver Province* (10 August 1954).
[139] "'Thing Trips Saucer Alarm At Shirley Bay Sighting Post," *Ottawa Journal* (9 August 1954).

the gravimeter had been recording these signals nonstop. The main source of fluctuations had been airplanes flying overhead, but even these registered only small blips on the paper. On 8 August 1954, however, at 3:01pm, the gravimeter registered something else. The detection was so large that it set off alarm bells in the shack. Smith came running, and later said, "The deflection in the line was vastly greater and much more pronounced than we had seen even when a large aircraft had passed close overhead." He ran outside to obtain visual confirmation of the unknown object only to find that the sky was so overcast nothing was visible. Despite the care astronomers take in their work, and their confidence in their calculations and refined equipment, the weather often thwarts their attempts to map the heavens. Something as innocuous as a cloud passing overhead can destroy years of preparation.[140]

Smith's moment of excitement and potential success quickly dissipated. While he noted that the reading might have indicated a flying saucer, it may also have been nothing more than equipment malfunction. Without the confirmation of a clear visual sighting, Smith could not confidently say one way or the other. The press briefly reported on the incident, but it did not even register in any official documentation now available. This was likely because the termination of Project Magnet had already been set in motion. An ambiguous reading on an obscure piece of instrumentation in a tiny, cluttered shack on the outskirts of Ottawa turned out to be less than convincing to Smith's superiors. For Project Magnet, the flying saucer observatory was the last gasp, as the increased attention

[140] J. Allen Hynek experienced the same problem after traveling to Iran to view an eclipse. See Mark O'Connell, *The Close Encounters Man: How One Man Made the World Believe in UFOs* (New York: Harper Collins, 2017): 114.

and lack of results caught up to Smith and the DoT shut the project down the very next year.

The Wrong Fit

The DoT was not happy about the publicity Wilbert Smith received from his UFO observatory and Keyhoe's book. In June 1954, DoT officials terminated Project Magnet. The memo reasoned that "no facts had emerged which would warrant making this a special government project" and that no other country – specifically the U.S. or the U.K. – had any such project either. Of course, this was not entirely accurate. The U.S. had continued its own investigations under Project Blue Book, although this project operated on a minimal level. It is possible those within the Canadian government were not yet aware of it or they were simply ignoring the fact to better make their argument against Magnet.

In any case, the memo requested that "Mr. Smith should be told that so far as official work is concerned, this project must not be carried on in Departmental time, and that what he wishes to do in his own free time is purely a matter for himself." Smith could continue to use DoT equipment, so long as it was not in use elsewhere, but that "in the event of Mr. Smith's name being coupled officially with the Department in any publicity, that might eventually develop through his spare time investigation, the Department would have to take the position publicly that there was no official

Departmental sponsorship of Mr. Smith's activities."[141] Indeed, the DoT very quickly began disavowing all participation in the project. The department stated that while Magnet once had official sanction, this was no longer the case and any efforts Smith was making were entirely unrelated to government business. A form letter van Allen began using in 1955 to respond to inquiries read, "It is regretted that we are unable to supply you with any information of the type requested in your letter, as the Government decided last year to discontinue official investigations along the lines previously carried out."[142]

Officials in other departments started using similar form letters to respond to inquiries about Smith, years after the DoT terminated Magnet and even years after Smith's death. Arthur Bray, the UFO investigator responsible for the collection of Smith's papers at the University of Ottawa, was one such recipient. Bray wrote to the DoT in 1964 asking for information about Magnet. Bray noted that he had, "on many occasions, read conflicting reports concerning the activities of The Dept. of Transport in this field" and that because UFOs obviously did not pose a threat to national security "there can be no reason to keep information from the taxpayer."[143] F.G. Nixon, the Director of the Telecommunications and Electronics Branch, stated, "At no time has this Department carried out research in the field of unidentified flying objects. The late Mr. W.B. Smith, an employee of this Department, who died in December 1962, however, did study unidentified flying objects as a personal hobby. The Department did not take part in

[141] G.C.W. Browne, 25 June 1954. "Memorandum to Supt. Of Radio Regulations." Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[142] W.H. van Allen, n.d. Draft form letter to unidentified recipient. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[143] A.R. Bray, 16 November 1964. Letter to the Department of Transport. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

any of his research work nor did Mr. Smith provide the Department with any useful information arising out of his work."[144]

Another letter from 1964, this time from an RCAF member to a writer in England, was even blunter: "I regret that we have been unable to provide you with all of the information you require. Every attempt was made to provide you with satisfactory answers, insofar as is permissible by security regulations. As you have been supplied with all the information permissible, it is suggested that further correspondence on this matter would be pointless."[145] By the late 1970s, the DoT had apparently clamped down entirely on the issue. A resident of Truro, Nova Scotia wrote to the DoT in 1978 inquiring not even about Project Magnet, but about UFOs in the area. In their view they had been given the runaround, as they complained of hearing "the same excuse and explanation" so often that contacting the "Queen of England would be simpler".[146]

After Magnet's termination the DoT's goal, especially by the 1960s, was to cease all communication with "cranks" as soon as possible. When the DoT terminated Magnet, Smith acknowledged that a "backlog of mail" had accumulated at the department that was "obviously in the "crank" class".[147] The following September the issue was still unresolved. Smith once again informed van Allen that the letters remained unanswered. Smith struggled with the difference between the crank letters and those "written to [him]

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[144] F.G. Nixon, 20 November 1964. Letter to A.R. Bray. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[145] J.A. Connolly, 8 June 1964. Letter to Julian Hennessey. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[146] Name Redacted, 5 July 1978. Letter to Bob Ward. Department of Transport Minister's Office file. RG 12, volume 3930, file 2-1-33, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[147] Wilbert Smith, 10 June 1954. "Memorandum to Superintendent of Radio Regulations." Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

in good faith", and so proposed to politely answer the latter but ignore the former.[148] He did not indicate in what way he distinguished between the two, perhaps assuming it was obvious to all involved. A clearer directive did not come until March 1955. van Allen explained the situation to J.R. Baldwin, the Deputy Minister of Transport: "Many of [the letters Smith has received] come under the "crank" letter type and should be absolutely ignored, but others could be persons of some importance and can not be ignored."[149] Baldwin advised that the DoT proceed in one of three ways: first, entirely ignore all outdated correspondence (leaving the definition of "outdated" to van Allen's "reasonable discretion"); second, send a form reply to those who wrote in good faith that clearly states all investigations have ceased (this is the form letter quoted above); and third, leave it up to Smith to reply privately so long as he also indicates the same. For Baldwin, the most important objective was to avoid involving the DoT "in any correspondence with a lot of ""cranks"".[150] Baldwin, and others at the department, clearly did not trust the judgment of civilians inquiring about Magnet. To the DoT, UFOs were not real, and so any attempt to engage with the issue was bound to end in frustration.

Smith complied with Baldwin's directive and began using the form letter, if grudgingly, for he had not entirely given up hope of continuing with his investigations. Immediately after the DoT terminated Magnet, Smith wrote to C.M. Brant, the Superintendent of Radio Regulations, appealing for further support. Someone must have tipped off Smith that the department was going to terminate Magnet, or he could simply

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[148] Wilbert Smith, 8 September 1954. "Memorandum to Mr. van Allen." Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[149] W.H. van Allen, 4 March 1955. "Memorandum to:- Deputy Minister." Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[150] J.R. Baldwin, 8 March 1955. Memorandum to W.H. van Allen. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

feel the winds of change. In his letter to Brant, Smith firmly resolved to carry on with his studies, whether or not they would "continue within the purview of this Division." He acknowledged that "this subject can hardly be considered as a Telecommunications matter" and so suggested one of three potential courses of action: first, to reestablish Magnet within the DoT but in a separate division; second, for the DoT to provide "a nominal grant" so he might continue Magnet as a part-time project; or third, for the DoT to "release the project entirely from this Department so that it may be carried on as a private effort."

The DoT went with the third option. The department wanted nothing more to do with Smith's studies, and it is perhaps not difficult to see why. Smith had prefaced the three options he presented with the unequivocal statement that, "I am satisfied that there is a sufficient probability for the real existence of some Unidentified Flying Objects as Alien Vehicles, to warrant carrying on with the investigations and if possible, expanding them to include a more intensive study of the physics of the problem." If Smith had not made his views on the matter to the DoT clear before this point, then he certainly accomplished it here. A handwritten note at the bottom of Smith's letter reads, "As you are aware I am not in agreement with para. 2." C.M. Brant wrote the note and directed it to "C.T.", the Controller of Telecommunications, who issued Magnet's termination fifteen days later.[151]

Those within the DoT, if not other departments, were not happy that journalists and civilians had conflated Smith's work with the Canadian government. In the government's view, this "coupling" did not reflect the true relationship it had with Smith

[151] Wilbert Smith, 10 June 1954. "Memorandum to Superintendent of Radio Regulations." Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

and his research. What began for the DoT as a modest, part-time project aimed at experimentally testing legitimate electric and magnetic principles related to ionosphere research, ballooned into a public relations fiasco. Those associated with the project were not quick to forget it. A.S. Shore, the Defence Research Liaison Officer in London, England wrote to the DRB Chairman in 1957 asking for guidance about a student request for information on the project. "If my memory serves me aright," Shore wrote, "W.R. Smith [sic] is the Department of Transport employee who caused considerable embarrassment to the Board a year or two ago by disclosure to the Press of his private studies of flying saucers."[152]

Smith was equally unhappy about how things turned out. Responding to a civilian, he wrote, "You see, I put it straight to the Government that a half effort wasn't good enough, and it was an all out effort or drop it so that I could carry on in my own way. So I guess they felt they couldn't justify a big project in the face of the public reaction, so they dropped it."[153] It seems Smith, at least in private correspondence, attempted to claim some ownership over the decision by framing it as the result of the ultimatum he delivered to his superiors. Smith had previously complained about the government's lacklustre attitude toward UFOs.[154] Smith felt that the phenomenon was more important than this and deserved the proper resources. Some of Smith's correspondents felt the same. W.W. Stewart expressed his disappointment that the government shut down the observatory and his concern for what this meant more

[152] A.S. Shore, 20 November 1957. Letter to the Chairman of the Defence Research Board. Flying Saucers File. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[153] Wilbert Smith, 12 June 1955. Letter to George. Project Magnet Correspondence file. X30-3, box 1126.3. UOA, Ottawa, ON.
[154] For example: Wilbert Smith, 6 August 1952. Letter to Donald Keyhoe. Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

generally: "I felt that the Canadians were going to lead the rest of the world in solving the mystery of the flying saucer phenomina [sic]."[155] Even as early as the mid-1950s, civilians interested in UFOs – not to mention Smith – were beginning to feel that the government was failing them.

In the end, the DoT justified the termination of Project Magnet by appealing to mandate. In the view of certain officials in the department, the goals and details of the project fell outside the scope of Transport affairs. In charitable terms, they felt that what Smith was attempting to accomplish was more akin to basic science, a subject that in the Canadian government of the early 1950s had no appropriate home. In less charitable terms, Smith's work was downright pseudoscience. The DoT's mandate is to do research into and develop policy related to making transportation systems in the country safer and more efficient. It is a very practical, and frankly down-to-earth, mandate and one is hard pressed to make the case that investigations into potentially extraterrestrial, gravitationally-driven flying discs falls within its scope.

The death of Project Magnet was ultimately bureaucratic. There was no place for it within the Canadian government. It likely would not have fared any better even within a department that supported basic or less mainstream science, if one existed. For government officials, the study of UFOs was unscientific. The fact that Magnet produced no applicable results simply confirmed this for the DoT. The form letter the DoT asked Smith to use in reply to civilian inquiries admitted that his studies held "little promise of adding proportionately to our knowledge".[156] The bad publicity that the department

[155] W.W. Stewart, 20 May 1955. Letter to Wilbert Smith. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[156] Wilbert Smith, n.d. Draft form letter. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

received was the most convenient excuse to act on what was likely a feeling that was already floating around the department. While Paul Hellyer indicated that Smith still had a good reputation within the DoT in the late 1960s, he was likely remembering the department's opinion of the work Smith did unrelated to UFOs. Smith, despite his foray into this "unwanted" and "virtually disowned" work, still did his job well and colleagues respected his technical expertise.

There is also an element of boundary work in Smith's story. This chapter, and the next, both deal with the state's attempts to set clear boundaries around what it considered to be legitimate scientific work. Smith's work tended to blur boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable knowledge, and the state had a problem with how the two became conflated in discussions about UFOs. What is most interesting here, however, is not the status of either truth claim, but the formation of the boundary itself, which becomes most visible during times of controversy, like in the case of UFOs.[157] Bruno Latour has written that it is the making of the boundary between objects that should be interrogated, not necessarily the objects themselves, as the boundary is itself a historical construction.[158] Writing about the conflict between local and expert knowledge, Tina Loo similarly argues that "it might be more productive to consider such labels as the outcomes of conflict, not the causes of them."[159] In this sense, this chapter aimed to consider Smith's and the state's efforts as the cause, not the outcome, of the boundary between "legitimate" scientific work and "illegitimate" ufological work.

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[157] Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).
[158] Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
[159] Tina Loo, "High Modernism, Conflict, and the Nature of Change in Canada: A Look at *Seeing Like a State*," *Canadian Historical Review* 97.1 (2016): 46.

Conclusion

UFOs were clearly of some substance, if only because people believed they existed and expected the Canadian government to do something about them. The fact that the government could not explain their origin, purpose, or even their method of propulsion was, on one hand, an embarrassment that they simply wanted to ignore. On the other, it was never a matter to engage with in the first place, given that Smith's colleagues did not believe UFOs actually existed. In an early articulation of what Proctor and Schiebinger call "agnogenesis," Smith explained to a civilian that "when certain government people came face to face with the reality of the space people, and realized that there wasn't anything they could do about it, they promptly closed their eyes and hoped that the whole business would fade out and go away!"[160] Smith's conviction that the Canadian government was too cowardly to seriously look into the matter only became stronger after Magnet ended in 1954. It seems his employment as a senior engineer in the Broadcast and Measurements division at the DoT was never threatened by the legacy of Magnet. Indeed, by 1959 he had been promoted to Superintendent of Radio

[160] Wilbert Smith, 24 January 1956. Letter to Mr. Fry. Project Magnet Correspondence file. X30-3, box 1126.3. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

Regulations.[161] Considering the fear that many scientists have for their reputations if found to be involved in the study of UFOs, Smith was probably fortunate.

But it seems he never forgave his department and the government for shutting down what he thought was fundamental research that might have led to incalculable discoveries. Smith's bitterness is apparent in a 1959 letter to a civilian: "I am amused at your attempts to get a copy of my Project Magnet report [from the DoT]. You will recall that I remarked last March that I didn't think you had the chance of the proverbial snowball of prying it loose. No Minister in his right mind is going to release ANY report which in any way might prove embarrassing or give rise to questions which he or his colleagues might find difficult to answer."[162] And Smith remained frustrated not only with the Canadian government, but eventually took aim at what he came to call the "Golden Calf" of orthodox science, "lovingly fabricated by the hands of its devotees and by them raised to the status of a Diety [sic], in complete and utter disregard of the cosmic truths which it mocks…and for which its worshippers will rise up with religious fervor and smite anyone sacrilegious enough to challenge its authority."[163] After Magnet's termination, Smith found his attempts at engaging other scientists in his work almost entirely unsuccessful. He blamed this reticence on the orthodoxy of established science and the practice of "shouting "Heresey" [sic] when anything inconsistent with established principles is mentioned."[164] Smith made a connection between the way in which the

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[161] Wilbert Smith, 10 April 1959. Letter to John Diefenbaker. Project Magnet Supplementary file. X30-3, box 1126.5. UOA, Ottawa, ON.
[162] Wilbert Smith, 2 February 1959. Letter to Bill. Project Magnet Correspondence file. X30-3, box 1126.3. UOA, Ottawa, ON.
[163] Wilbert Smith, 2 November 1961. Letter to Dr. Stearns. Project Magnet Supplementary file. X30-3, box 1126.5. UOA, Ottawa, ON.
[164] Wilbert Smith, 24 November 1961. Letter to unidentified recipient. Project Magnet Correspondence file. X30-3, box 1126.3. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

Canadian state dealt with UFOs and the way in which mainstream science operates on a fundamental basis.

This chapter has provided a look at the first episode in what I argue became a mutually-reinforcing feedback loop of mistrust between the Canadian government and those interested in a serious study of UFOs. Smith was able to start Project Magnet only because he proposed to work on it within the framework of the ionospheric and geomagnetic research the Department was already conducting. Eventually, officials at the DoT felt that Smith's work created unnecessary problems for the department, and that Smith refused to heed common sense. Smith felt much the same way about the DoT, that his colleagues were too closeminded to explore unconventional areas of research. They were each working at cross-purposes, which, perhaps predictably, culminated in Magnet's termination. The end of Project Magnet, however, was not the end of Canada's official investigation into UFOs. Even before Magnet was terminated, Project Second Storey had also been formed to look into the matter. The difference between the projects is striking.

Chapter 2: Project Second Storey and the Official Response, 1952-1954

Introduction

J. Allen Hynek, the astronomer responsible for the "Close Encounters" designation, was a consultant with Project Blue Book during the 1950s. In later years, he became very critical of the project and how investigators fished for certain answers: "What investigations were carried out…and what questions were asked were almost always aimed at establishing a misperception, and the questions were so directed."[165] In his words, Blue Book operated using the theorem, "it can't be, therefore it isn't."[166] The Canadian government had the same approach.

In 1952, the Defence Research Board, Canada's military science agency, established Project Second Storey, a committee tasked with investigating the UFO phenomenon. Whereas Project Magnet was the brainchild of one individual, Project Second Storey comprised members from the various arms of Canadian military intelligence. The committee held a total of six meetings until its termination in 1954. This chapter will recount each of the meetings and the issues the committee members discussed to reveal the nature of the government's official response. Just as the question of how the Canadian government first became involved with UFOs animated the previous chapter, the question of why the government formed a *second* project guides this chapter.

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[165] J. Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1972): 67-68.
[166] J. Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1972): 70.

Why did it last only two years? What did the Defence Research Board expect Project Second Storey to accomplish that Wilbert Smith had not done with Project Magnet? What was the point, given that by this time the U.S. had repeatedly debunked the subject?

There is no doubt that events south of the border heavily influenced the Canadian investigation. A U.S. Department of Defense press release from 27 December 1949 announced the discontinuation of the Air Force's "special project investigating and evaluating reported "flying saucers" on the basis that there [was] no evidence the reports [were] not the results of natural phenomena." The U.S. Air Force reported that the 375 incidents they evaluated led them to the conclusion that all, or very nearly all, sightings of UFOs were the result of "misinterpretation of various conventional objects," "a mild form of mass hysteria," or hoaxes. The short press release concluded that "continuance of the project is unwarranted since additional incidents now are simply confirming findings already reached."[167] In other words, even as early as 1950 – only three years after UFO sightings began in earnest – the U.S. government concluded that it had already uncovered all possible knowledge about UFOs that might be available.

By 1954, Project Second Storey would make the same conclusion. The events of this chapter demonstrate the Canadian government's first concerted effort to use UFOs as a means of asserting its modernity. Project Second Storey chose not to delve into the UFO subject in the way Wilbert Smith, for instance, had requested. Instead, the committee directed its attention to the apprehension of misidentifications, drawing on the scientific authority to claim that UFOs were clearly a case of mistaken identity. As a result, the committee's work also caused UFOs to fade further out of reality. Thinking of

[167] "Air Force Discontinues Flying Saucers Project." 27 December 1949. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

UFOs sitting on an ontological continuum, Wilbert Smith had worked to produce evidence of the reality of UFOs, to make them slide toward the pole of tangibility. Project Second Storey, however, directed its efforts at undoing this work. The details of this process are not unique, but the committee's decisions nevertheless had a profound impact on the way in which the Canadian public related to the issue in later years. This chapter argues that the establishment of Project Second Storey was the government's first major strike back against what they saw as the disaster of Project Magnet. The chapter also shows how civilians demonstrated their anti-authority and anti-establishment views much earlier than the 1960s, the decade normally associated with this kind of radicalism. The history of UFOs in Canada demonstrates how some of these radical views came into being: through the distrust that citizens came to feel about their government, in concert with the government's own conclusion that it needed to clear away the superstition and ignorance of belief in UFOs, and educate citizens about the merits of scientifically-grounded knowledge. If the experience of Project Magnet was a false start in the state's attempt to draw on the cultural authority of science, then Project Second Storey was its attempt to overcome this failure and establish its expertise and vision of itself as a thoroughly modern, scientifically literate institution.

Hot Tomalley

In early April 1950, the Minister of National Defence Brooke Claxton put an item on the agenda for the next meeting of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). The members of the JIC were directors of intelligence services with each of the Canadian

armed forces, as well as representatives from the RCMP and Department of External Affairs. The goal of the committee was to make it easier to collaborate and share information across agencies. Claxton wanted Omond Solandt, the Chairman of the newly-formed Defence Research Board, "to seek the cooperation of the [Armed] Services in reporting on the occurrences or alleged occurrences of Flying Saucers passing over Canada."[168]

The 220th meeting of the JIC included item VI – "Flying Saucers (Restricted)". The meeting minutes suggest that discussion of the matter was brief and action-oriented, rather than philosophical. They noted that a number of reports had come in from across the country and that perhaps "the field intelligence officers of the three Services and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police might be instructed to investigate these incidents and report thereon to the Department of National Defence." The meeting ended with a suggestion that the Directorates of Air Intelligence (DAI) and Scientific Intelligence (DSI) develop a questionnaire to assist with these investigations, which they would circulate to the various departments.[169] These recommendations do not at first seem significant, but they marked the beginning of a forty-five-year period during which UFO sighting reports were collected, as well as an attempt to make sense of the bureaucracy of the phenomenon and who exactly would be responsible for the baffling reports. Indeed, a sighting report submitted just one month earlier by two RCAF officers expressed confusion: "It is not known if official credence is given to the existence of "flying

[168] Directorate of Scientific Intelligence, 6 April 1950. Letter to the Secretary of the Joint Intelligence Committee. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[169] "Minutes of the 220th meeting of the Joint Intelligence Committee," 12 April 1950. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

saucers" at any level." The author of the report simply wished to pass on the information, in case it was "of interest to [a] higher authority", whatever that authority might be.[170]

Further to the meeting of the JIC, the RCAF had already communicated with the U.S. Air Force to obtain whatever information might be available from their end. Air Commodore H.H. Hendrick requested a copy of the U.S. flying saucer study, only to be told that the "final study was not reproduced for distribution but [was] available for examination" at the U.S.A.F. headquarters in Washington.[171] A Canadian Air Force member made the trip in May 1950 and their report became the subject of further correspondence.[172]

The U.S. study had concluded that "any further publicity in regard to "flying saucers" would tend to induce further sightings of an imaginative character." As a result, the U.S.A.F. adopted a policy to "play down" the subject and deal with reports in a more ad hoc manner. "It seems to me," wrote DAI Group Captain W.W. Bean, "that a similar policy on our part would be wise and that it would be undesirable therefore for us to produce a special questionnaire or make any special arrangements for investigation since this would tend to give emphasis to the matter."[173] Bean's colleagues ignored his suggestion. The only progress the DSI and DAI members made on the matter over the rest of the year and throughout 1951 was, in fact, the development of a preliminary questionnaire.

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[170] W.B. Millar, 17 March 1950. Letter to RCAF Air Traffic Control. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17988, file HQ 940-105, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[171] Jack W. Saunders, 21 April 1950. Letter to Air Commodore H.H. Hendrick. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[172] G.S. Austin, 3 July 1950. Letter to Group Captain Birchall at the Canadian Joint Staff in Washington, D.C. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[173] W.W. Bean, 29 June 1950. Memorandum to the Directorate of Scientific Intelligence. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

They designed the "interrogation" form to obtain information about the UFO witness, about their observation, and also about the interrogator, "including his opinion of the reliability of the observer."[174] Reliability quickly became a constant concern throughout the vast majority of reports from this point onward, ascribed to UFO witnesses according to factors like age, education, excitability, and sobriety. It is remarkable that this questionnaire, although just a draft drawn up quickly and without any consultation with other departments, contained the essential questions that all later versions would display. Not much would change over the course of the next several decades when it came to reporting mechanisms.

Included in correspondence about the initial questionnaire was the suggestion that, "should the Flying Saucer actually make a landing on Canadian territory, the nearest RCAF Command should be advised immediately by telegram or something of the sort."[175] This is as close as any document would get to preparing for actual contact and the somewhat offhand tone of the statement belies just how unlikely officials thought this situation was. Other than several sighting reports forwarded to various departments during 1950 and 1951, there was no more correspondence on the matter until the formation of Project Second Storey.

By 1952, various Canadian government departments were receiving letters from civilians – be they concerned, ecstatic, confused – which detailed all manner of flying saucer sightings. One writer referred to it all as "some of the mysteries which are taking

[174] H. Williamson, 20 April 1950. Memorandum to the Directorate of Air Intelligence. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17988, file HQ 940-105, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[175] A.J.G. Langley, 19 April 1950. Letter to G.S. Austin at the Directorate of Air Intelligence. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

place in the heavens."[176] Solandt himself received several of these directly addressed to him. "It may be of interest to you," read one letter, "to know that what appeared to be a flying saucer was seen by me on April 7."[177] A 1953 letter asked about "the forces which caused and maintain moons [sic] orbit, the cause of "flying saucers" and with reference to magnetic propulsion in man made craft."[178] A 1955 letter indicated that some members of the public saw Solandt as an expert in the matter. The writer was contacting a number of individuals "with similar technical knowledge in the hope [they could] interpret for the public some of these strange phenomena."[179]

Despite Solandt's best efforts, the UFO enigma clung to him. Historian Jason Ridler writes that by 1952 Solandt had become "the public face for the DRB and did his best to weather the distortions and accusations that cropped up about him, his organization, and its fields of research."[180] In his biography of Solandt, Ridler is not shy about discounting the UFO phenomenon, noting that "a full examination of this trivial but publicly popular part of the DRB's existence cannot be deal with here," but goes on to say that "one can only imagine the pragmatic Solandt politely dealing with this bizarre episode before focusing his mind on the serious matters of modern warfare."[181] Solandt was indeed polite about the issue. He publicly maintained an open mind about UFOs, but

[176] M. Weller, 21 April 1952. Letter to O.M. Solandt. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[177] Name Redacted, 18 April 1952. Letter to O.M. Solandt. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[178] G. Davies, 16 April 1953. Letter to O.M. Solandt. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[179] Tom Eastham, 2 February 1955. Letter to O.M. Solandt. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[180] Jason Ridler, *Maestro of Science: Omond McKillop Solandt and Government Science in War and Hostile Peace, 1939-1956* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015): 181.
[181] Jason Ridler, *Maestro of Science: Omond McKillop Solandt and Government Science in War and Hostile Peace, 1939-1956* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015): 197.

was clearly never convinced by what he saw as a total lack of direct evidence of their existence: "I do not feel able to make any useful comment concerning these reports. I naturally follow such reports with great interest but still feel that the best I can do is to reserve judgement concerning the nature of the objects that are reported to have been seen."[182] Nevertheless, public interest forced him to take action: "For three years he…had quietly ignored the rising tide of interest in "flying saucers" in Canada and the United States, but by 1952, so many reports had been made and so much interest had been generated that [he] was forced to respond."[183]

Solandt chaired a general "Meeting to Discuss "Flying Saucers" Sighting" on 22 April 1952. Eleven people were present, including astronomer Peter Millman from the Dominion Observatory, Wilbert Smith from the DoT, and H. C. Oatway as the Secretary. Three more members were from DRB, one from JIS, one from DAI, one from the Directorate of Navy Intelligence, and the last from the Directorate of Military Operations and Plans. The goal of the meeting was "to determine if a more serious effort [was] justified and, if so, ways and means of implementing an organized effort." Solandt opened the meeting by remarking that the "frequency and persistence of the sightings would tend to discount the theory of 'hallucinations,'" but that "the gathering of reports was rather haphazard and the reaction of the [Armed] Services was passive." The committee lamented that "precise and realistic details were lacking in all known reports" and that it would be "desirable to obtain information from U.S. interviews obtained under proper interrogation procedure, but to avoid the U.S. analysis of these interviews which

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[182] O.M. Solandt, 8 February 1955. Letter to Tom Eastham. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[183] Jason Ridler, *Maestro of Science: Omond McKillop Solandt and Government Science in War and Hostile Peace, 1939-1956* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015): 197.

was often unacceptable to some members of this Committee." The minutes do not indicate exactly which members found the U.S. conclusions unacceptable, but it is safe to say at the very least that Smith had voiced his discontent with them, given his ongoing correspondence on the matter. The minutes also indicate that Smith was given some time to outline the extraterrestrial hypothesis and other potential celestial origins for sightings. In contrast, Solandt provided the terrestrial origin theory, "namely a new type of aircraft (presumably Russian)…[which] had some discrepancies, [even if] the aerodynamics were worth following as, even if of extra-terrestrial origin, the bodies would have to follow aerodynamic theory within the earth atmosphere."

The members concluded that the various services involved (such as Defence and the RCMP) should undertake a more active investigation into UFOs, but that the role of the DRB would be mainly advisory. The committee, following through on the earlier recommendation, agreed to prepare reporting instructions and a questionnaire so as to ensure more standardized and reliable observations and "interrogations" of witnesses. This appears to be at least the second version of a questionnaire developed. Smith noted that the ionosphere section of the DoT had also independently written up reporting instructions and distributed them to the stations, making for a third, separate questionnaire.

There is ample evidence throughout the archives that departments communicated with one another about UFOs very infrequently. Officials made and submitted documents within their departments that never made it to other departments for analysis or investigation, and there was often confusion about who exactly had responsibility for the matter. Only several days before the DRB meeting, the DoT Controller of

Telecommunications G.C.W. Browne had written a memo that he forwarded to the officers in charge of ionosphere stations throughout the country. “A study of some of the traces taken at our Ionosphere Stations,” Browne wrote, “indicates that reflections have been obtained from conducting objects approximately overhead. From the character of the traces it is concluded that these may be associated with the so called Flying Saucer phenomena and all stations are requested to keep a sharp lookout for unidentified aerial objects. Any trace not conforming with the general established pattern should be regarded with suspicion and the sky promptly scrutinized for any visible object which might be responsible.” The instructions indicated specific information that the stations were to carefully note, including any accompanying sound, the shape, luminosity, and maximum dimensions of the object as well as the time it took “to travel through a certain arc.”[184]

Whereas before the 22 April DRB general meeting those within the government who confronted the UFO issue were slow to respond (if they responded at all), the newly formed committee acted quickly. It met for the first time only two days later, on 24 April. The first conspicuous difference between the meetings is that Peter Millman replaced Solandt as Chairman. Given Ridler’s assessment of Solandt’s attitude toward the subject, it seems Solandt was doing everything he could to distance himself from the subject and continue his work on other matters of importance. Peter Millman shared Solandt’s skepticism of UFOs and this likely had a significant effect on the tone of the committee meetings and the conclusion it eventually made. A total of eight members attended the 24 April meeting, compared to eleven at the previous one. Millman began by tabling three

[184] G.C.W. Browne, 18 April 1952. Letter to W.D. McLeod, Officer-in-Charge of the Baker Lake Ionosphere Station. Sightings of Unidentified Aerial Objects, “Project Second Storey” file. RG 97, volume 115, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

popular UFO books, including one by Keyhoe, which were "worthy [of] study as they give a fairly useful summary of the most important publically recorded sightings." He also said the books could be used in addition to newspaper reports of sightings. At this early stage, the government did not have any special access to sightings, above and beyond regular civilians. For the most part, unless someone specifically sent a sighting report to a department, government officials learned of sightings through unofficial sources, like published books and news reports.

Next on the meeting agenda was the matter of security classification: "It was agreed that CONFIDENTIAL was sufficient, but that members should be cleared to SECRET to facilitate any exchange of information from international sources." Except for the odd memo that Wilbert Smith marked "Top Secret", at no point during Canada's involvement with UFOs was this security classification increased. In fact, it was later removed altogether. The National Research Council would eventually take over responsibility for collecting UFO reports, but one of the conditions for agreeing to do so was that all reports were to be unclassified.

Millman went so far as to suggest that the committee adopt a name for itself, but one "entirely without meaning" in order "to divorce this work from the questionable title of "Flying Saucers."" His suggestion of "Project Theta" was adopted, seemingly because no one could think of anything better. The remainder of the meeting concerned the questionnaire that the committee was to develop, and with that the first official meeting of Canada's UFO committee came to a close.[185] Several days later, Oatway distributed the date of the next meeting, and revealed that the name "Theta" could not be used

[185] "Minutes of the First Meeting of the Committee Set Up to Deal with "Flying Saucers" Sightings." 24 April 1952. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17988, file HQ 940-105, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

because of security regulations. He instead made the suggestion of "Hot Tomalley", but admitted that "[o]ther suggestions are in order."[186] As was the case in the U.S., the name suggests that the committee felt the whole subject was embarrassing, given that UFOs were not actually real.

Just an Advisory Committee

Nevertheless, the committee forged on and held their second meeting on 19 May. "Dr. Millman cautioned the members with respect to dealing with the press and public…Contacts with the press or public are not to be made." The last thing Solandt wanted was the newspapers getting wind of what the committee was up to, any more than they had already done concerning Wilbert Smith's work. The next item discussed was the committee name. Oatway explained that "Theta" was not appropriate because the word had "not been assigned to Canada under tripartite agreements" and "if a single word name were used, it as well as the Committee deliberations, would be classed as Confidential and could not appear on interrogation forms which would be used to obtain data from the public." A two-word nickname was preferable and so, without any indication of its meaning or origin, the committee agreed to the name "Project Second Storey."

With housekeeping out of the way, the committee turned again to the issue of sighting reports and theories behind them. Millman brought up the work of Donald

[186] H.C. Oatway, 30 April 1952. Memorandum to Project Second Storey committee members. Sightings of Unidentified Aerial Objects, "Project Second Storey" file. RG 97, volume 115, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Howard Menzel, an astronomer with the Harvard University Observatory. In an article published in *Look Magazine*, Menzel concluded that the things people were seeing and reporting as UFOs were in fact real, just not extraterrestrial. Rather, they were optical illusions of various kinds. Often, witnesses were misidentifying natural phenomena, such as the planet Venus: if only there was more information available, all UFO sightings would be identified as perfectly prosaic natural events. Other critics had come to the same conclusion even earlier and, given Menzel's stature in the scientific community, it gained even more traction as a result. Menzel believed this, despite having seen a UFO himself. "I do NOT believe that what I saw," he wrote, "or anything anyone has reported seeing, were missiles or messengers or vehicles from the moon or Mars or space. I do NOT believe they were missiles or messengers or vehicles from Russia or any other foreign country. Indeed, how simple science and life would be if every time we encountered some seemingly inexplicable fact, we could blame it on some outside force over which we have no control."[187]

Menzel's conclusions clearly swayed Millman. Given his later correspondence, it is likely that Millman did not allow for much debate in the meetings. For example, in a 1968 letter, Millman thanked an army captain for his cooperation in the investigation of an incident at a local farm. "It is very helpful," Millman confided, "to have someone run these things down to earth. I am afraid that the more I study this field, the more I realize how much hoaxing has occurred on the park of pranksters and publicity seekers."[188] Millman's opinion of UFOs continued to decline over the years, and his experience with

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[187] Donald H. Menzel, "The Truth About Flying Saucers," *Look Magazine* (17 June 1952). Http://www.project1947.com/fig/look61752.htm. Accessed 1 October 2018.
[188] Peter M. Millman, 17 April 1968. Letter to Captain S.B. Goddard. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N68 001-058. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Project Second Storey set the foundation for this. The remainder of the 19 May meeting concerned information that the committee might be able to glean from their U.S. counterparts, as well as the questionnaire in development. The committee agreed that the armed services involved would only "follow up particular sightings provided that personnel and time [were] available," and that they would approve the "interrogation form" at the next meeting. Finally, "an attempt would be made to have Lt. Ruppelt visit Canada and describe the USAF project to the Committee."[189] By this time, the U.S. Air Force had initiated Project Blue Book, the successor to Projects Sign and Grudge. Blue Book was intended to collect and analyze sighting reports in much the same way that Project Second Storey was set up to do, and the 19 May meeting minutes suggest that the Canadian government, while developing their own reporting procedures, was also looking to the south for guidance and potential answers to the problem.

Canada has had a complicated relationship with America's postwar leadership. Several historians of Canada's military endeavors have argued that the country was very self-conscious of its status as a "junior partner" with the U.S., and as a result tried very hard to chart its own course. Many Canadian government officials, especially those within the Department of External Affairs, were fearful for Canadian sovereignty. After the Second World War, U.S. influence over Canada's policy decisions became incredibly strong, and so creating a clearly Canadian path forward became a necessary task. Andrew Richter, for instance, laments that when it came to nuclear weapons, conventional wisdom holds that Canada "lacked an independent capacity to articulate its interests," and so simply deferred to U.S. policy. Richter argues the opposite, that in fact Canada had its

[189] "Minutes of the 2/52 Meeting of Project Second Storey," 19 May 1952. Project Second Storey file. X30-3, box 1126.6. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

own unique and robust strategy and took every opportunity to challenge U.S. policy and implement their own.[190] Similarly, Andrew Godefroy laments that critics have viewed the Canadian Army as a force that, "aside from brief bouts of professionalism," was "confused and generally met with failure." In contrast, Godefroy argues that the Army, as with nuclear weapons strategy, innovated and adapted in its own unique ways to serve its specific geopolitical interests.[191] This was *not* the case with UFOs. There is no evidence to suggest that the Canadian government attempted or even wished at all to chart its own path when it came to UFO investigation. Other than a few isolated individuals like Wilbert Smith, government officials were happy to let the U.S. take the lead. It is clear even from the earliest intragovernmental correspondence on the matter that UFOs were something confusing and with which the government wanted as little involvement as possible.

Project Second Storey met for the third time on 31 July 1952. The draft interrogation form was approved and titled, simply, "Project Second Storey Sighting Report." The committee then discussed "complementary" instructions they would append whenever they distributed a form, including "guidance in reporting on unknown flying objects" and "descriptions of normal phenomena which might cause reports of unidentified aerial objects." This information will be recounted below.

Wilbert Smith took some time to detail his concerns and progress. He suggested that the committee subscribe to a press clipping service so as to keep abreast of the latest UFO reports and follow up promising sightings. As mentioned above, the government at

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[190] Andrew Richter, *Avoiding Armageddon: Canadian Military Strategy and Nuclear Weapons, 1950-1963* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2002) : 5.
[191] Andrew Godefroy, *In Peace Prepared: Innovation and Adaptation in Canada's Cold War Army* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014): 11.

this time discovered UFO sightings much the same way anyone else did: through public reports made in the newspaper, or through letters sent in. Smith felt it was necessary to keep track of these sightings and when possible have a government representative "interrogate" the witness so as to clear up any confusion or misreporting. However, the other PSS members understood their role quite differently: "It was pointed out that the business of the Committee is not to undertake the actual interrogation of persons who have seen unidentified flying objects. Therefore, in so far as the Committee was concerned, there could be no direct action taken to follow up a promising sighting." The committee had decided its role would be mainly advisory. Smith clearly felt this was inadequate to conducting a thorough study, but the other members overruled him.

Smith then tried a different tack. He motioned "that where a sighting appears not to be readily explicable in terms of normal factors a special effort be made to obtain as many reports as possible, in order to construct a suitable geometry and obtain a reasonably complete description." This suggestion was very much in keeping with the committee's goal to conduct a thorough and scientific investigation, yet Smith was again disappointed. The committee agreed "that such action may be desirable" but that the preparation for conducting an analysis was in such early stages that the decision had to be postponed.

Smith tried again. He proposed that the committee conduct an experiment that would test the public's capacity for making accurate observations, so that weighting factors might be developed to help assess sightings. Smith was referring to the balloon experiment described in the last chapter. This time, the minutes note that Millman himself stepped in to quash the idea: "The Chairman noted…that this motion was a

matter for consideration by persons, as yet unspecified, who would be responsible for the evaluation of sightings reports. The Committee expressed no objection to having any person or group of persons, carry out such an experiment independently and without public reference to the Committee or the Services." As with the DoT's caveat to Smith, Millman wanted only that any such action would not be associated with the government, lest it draw more publicity. Smith, of course, went ahead with the balloon experiment anyway.

Lastly, Smith tabled a letter he had received from "Civilian Saucer Investigations", based in Los Angeles, California. The committee, unsurprisingly, "agreed that no formal contact would be established" and that Smith could keep the members up to date on any "pertinent" information received. With that, the meeting adjourned.[192]

Smith was unhappy with how things were going. Just one week later he wrote to Donald Keyhoe: "I do not feel that the present effort of merely correlating and cataloguing sighting data is nearly sufficient. I maintain that it takes only one black sheep to prove that all sheep are not white, and one unexplained saucer sighting should be enough to warrant establishing a serious scientific study group."[193] Despite the involvement of established and well-respected scientists like Omond Solandt and Peter Millman, Smith felt that PSS was inadequate, if not an outright farce.

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[192] "Minutes of the 3/52 Meeting of Project Second Storey," 31 July 1952. Project Second Storey file. X30-3, box 1126.6. UOA, Ottawa, ON.
[193] Wilbert Smith, 6 August 1952. Letter to Donald Keyhoe. Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

The Sighting Form

What exactly did the sighting form look like? What were the results of all the months of preparation and deliberation? Did the sighting form take a unique approach, asking questions that cut straight to the core of the witness experience? By all accounts, it did no such thing. There appeared to be nothing unique about it. The form began with a section for "Details of observer." These details included the witness's name, address, age group, "occupation and previous relevant experience," whether the observer was wearing glasses, and whether the observer had seen "flying objects" before, "and if so, briefly, when, where, and [under what] circumstances." The form went on to ask about the details of the observation, including a laundry list of items: date and time, position of the observer, the number of objects seen, the length of time they were visible, their position in the sky at the beginning versus the end of the sighting, changes in the direction of motion, the object's shape, colour, size, and brightness, whether any exhaust or vapour trails were visible or noise was heard, and what the weather conditions were during the sighting, including whether the object flew above, behind, or in and out of cloud cover. The form also asked if anyone else saw the object and if so what their names and addresses were, and if any other "contributory evidence" existed, such as photographs. There was a section for any other details that might have been missed, which indicated that a sketch of the object should be included, if possible. The form's final page asked for details of the "interrogator," including their name and position, the date and place of the "interrogation," and the interrogator's opinion of the reliability of the observer.[194]

[194] "Project Second Storey Sighting Report," n.d. Reprint of Project Magnet Report file. X30-3, box 1126.1. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

In addition to the form itself, more extensive "complementary" instructions, referred to in the third PSS meeting, were included in the form of three appendices. The extra material began with a general statement:

> In collecting data on unknown flying objects, accuracy of observation and record is of prime importance. The observer should report carefully and precisely what he sees and hears with a minimum of private personal interpretation. Accurate numerical data to the best of the observer's ability are most desirable. Confirmation of the observation by others is also desirable, particularly if other observers are located some distance away so that they may have a slightly different view of the object.

Thomas Porter has written that as scientific communities enlarged, new methods were needed to ensure one could trust the results of experiments done elsewhere. The most effective way to do so was to trust in numbers, rather than personal testimony.[195] In the case of PSS's UFO sighting form, there is an obvious emphasis on the desire for quantitative and objective data. In a practical sense, this often meant limiting or eliminating altogether any narrative or testimonial account of a sighting. As a 1953 correspondence between DoT employees made clear, it was always preferable to "prepare a formal sighting report rather than attempt to convey the information in narrative form."[196] There was also an emphasis placed on physical evidence of the sighting: "an

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[195] Theodore Porter, *Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).
[196] J.R. Robertson, 21 February 1953. Letter to the District Controller of Air Services in Edmonton, AB. RG 97, volume 115, file 5010-4, part 1. Sightings of Unidentified Aerial Objects file. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

effort should be made to uncover any evidence of a photographic, electronic, magnetic or radioactive nature which might have some association with the sighting. No unusual happenings at the time or place of sighting should be overlooked." This aspect of sightings would become especially relevant during 1967, as Chapter Four will explore.

Beyond these instructions, there was an appendix that dealt with the "weighting factors" Smith developed for the PSS committee. It also began with a general statement:

> In the analysis of sighting reports it is fairly obvious that different reports will have widely different values from the viewpoint of reliability, confirmation and lucidity. A formula has been devised giving approximately the same significance to each of these factors and derived from numerical values assigned to the answers given to the various questions on the Project Second Storey sighting report form.

Smith introduced the formula as a way of scoring each sighting by "obtaining numerical values for each of the factors" presented. These factors corresponded to the questions on the sighting form. Analysts were to assign scores based on things like the level of the observer's relevant training (a trained observer in "sky work" would score higher than a trained observer in "other fields"), how many objects the observer had seen previously (significantly, a higher score given to someone who had never seen an object before), and how detailed the observer's description was (the more specific and consistent, the higher the score). The weighting factors were meant to assist in the use of "extreme care" so that the interrogator could "avoid influencing the score by any prejudice regarding reliability

or confirmation." As argued in the last chapter, Smith developed this system as a means of making UFOs more real, by appealing to a trust in numbers and attempting to limit or eliminate the effect of testimony.

Finally, the complementary instructions contained an appendix with "Descriptions of Normal Phenomena which might cause reports of unidentified aerial objects." Included in this list were balloons, aircraft, the effects of viewing objects through screens and glass, "nacreous or mother of pearl clouds," noctilucent clouds, cloud reflections, optical phenomena, meteors, stars and planets, and the aurora. Each of these objects had a description that outlined what they would generally look like to an observer on the ground, preparing the interrogator to identify a potential match in the observer's description. Several of the descriptions stated that the average person should not be likely to misidentify the object for a UFO. In the case of optical phenomena, for instance, the description stated that rainbows might at times "give the appearance of a small object in the sky," but "because rainbows are [a] fairly common occurrence, they are unlikely to deceive anyone." However, the committee obviously felt it necessary to include such examples, just in case.

What is ironic about the inclusion of these descriptions is that the committee assumed observers *would* misidentify natural phenomena. The committee took special care to emphasize the need for unbiased reporting and interrogation, yet prefaced the entire operation with a convenient list of possible origins for the UFOs. It is this kind of detail that critics, especially the civilian UFO investigators who would later come to annoy the government so much, latched onto when claiming the government was not in fact taking the issue seriously. Wilbert Smith himself said as much when he lamented the

committee's limited mandate. It is hard to keep an open mind and conduct a serious scientific investigation, he said, when the options are so foreclosed from the start. This also demonstrates, as Zygmunt Bauman argues, the state's goal of educating the public by clearing away ignorance, or even the possibility of ignorance. By precluding the possibility of a misidentification, the state was actively trying to shape how citizens thought, in order to lift them up and make them more rational.

The presence of these descriptions within the complementary instructions is clear, if subtly placed, evidence of the committee's position on UFOs and those who witnessed them. To the members of PSS, UFOs were nothing but misidentified phenomena about which we have either known for some time or have yet to fully discover and explore, but they were nevertheless *natural* and not supernatural or extraterrestrial phenomena. People were simply inexperienced at observing nature and comprehending what they see, and so the sighting form and instructions were meant to make clear to investigators what was an unclear and even miraculous experience for the scientifically inept public. This was a commonsensical position to take, given the public's limited scientific literacy.

In total, the PSS form is four pages long (including ample space for the written answers) and the complementary instructions run to twenty pages. This is significantly longer than most other forms used. The PSS form was ambitious in its hopes of including as much detail as possible, and I suggest that part of the reason why it was not used more widely was because of its length and complexity. Of the approximately 4,500 sighting reports made from the late 1940s to 1995, only about a dozen reports were submitted using the PSS form. This is a minuscule fraction of the overall reports, and they were all made in the mid-1950s, immediately after the form was first developed and distributed to

other government departments. Almost as soon as PSS made the form available, other departments either ignored it or translated into a different format, one that suited the needs of the particular organization looking at the sightings.

The two most common types of alternative reports were the RCMP reports and telex messages. Beginning especially in the 1960s, RCMP officers submitted their reports on a regular basis. These reports followed a standard format, listing essential details like the witness's name and contact information, the location and time of the sighting, and any other details the witness could recall or that the investigator saw themselves or gleaned from other sources. Sometimes, written or typed witness statements would accompany the report, providing a narrative of the event. On rarer occasions, investigators would include drawings that the witnesses made of what they saw.

These RCMP reports stood on their own as testimonies to these incredible events, but investigators often translated them into telex messages and sent them to the National Research Council. The telex reports were briefer, containing only the barest of details, and were for the most part limited to a single page. The telex report would indicate from and to whom the report was being sent, followed by the location, date and time, name and address of the witness, and a brief description of the event and weather conditions. Sometimes, if relevant, the telex would conclude with a statement about the reliability of the witness. Reliability was usually only positive or negative: either the witness was highly reliable due to their training as a pilot or other kind of objective observer, or the witness displayed low reliability, because according to the investigator they seemed to be intoxicated, were too young to make an objective observation, or were "excitable". This last factor, in particular, was often used to describe women, invariably housewives, who

had made a sighting. Reports often noted that their husbands had discredited their statements.

Citizen UFO investigators usually created their own version. They would track down witnesses and submit the report to the government for consideration. These civilian reports very closely mirrored the government reports, asking much the same information. Beyond formal reports like these, witnesses sent numerous sightings to the government in the form of handwritten or typed letters, which usually offered more of a narrative of the experience rather than any objective accounting of the details.

The PSS committee developed their form prior to most of these alternative reports, and so it is tempting to argue that the committee's work laid the foundation for later reporting procedures. However, it is also likely that PSS made use of previously existing forms, such as those the U.S. government was using. In addition, PSS thought creating a form was simply common sense. It made sense, of course, to obtain the witness's contact information and as much detail about what was seen as possible. But the form and the questions were nevertheless framed in a particular way. Questions about sobriety, for instance, were infused with morality. The emphasis on numbers and quantitative measurements, such as noting specific times, locations, and elevations, indicated that any observation or report that did not satisfactorily meet these requirements was not reliable.

To others, especially those who witnessed the UFO, such questions might have been inappropriate, or unnecessary. For instance, the forms provided no space to account for the *feelings* the witness experienced. Many of the narrative reports the government received indicated feelings such as fear, anxiety, euphoria, confusion; they might also

mention connections with literature or art, such as passages from the Bible. For PSS, however, these details were fatally subjective: irrelevant, and harmful to a proper, scientific analysis. They wanted reports to stick to the objective facts. Some civilians may have been upset that PSS and other government officials did not take seriously their narrative accounts, but in the government's defence, it was always unclear exactly what value a description of the feelings associated with a UFO observation could offer to an analysis, especially if the writer included this description at the expense of hard details.

As mentioned, there was nothing particularly unique about the Second Storey form. If it was used and redeveloped by other departments within the government, and civilians who got their hands on a copy, this is only evidence of the fact that, for the most part, those looking into the matter all agreed on what details were considered pertinent and what approach would be most effective in gathering and analyzing data for the investigator in question. The RCMP and telex reports serve as evidence of this. It is common to read on the RCMP reports that the officer investigated a "complaint" of a UFO sighting. Officers also usually filed the report through the Criminal Investigation Branch. The RCMP was concerned with any crimes that might have been committed, such as violated property rights, and so they collected the kind of data that would determine the answer to a more legalistic question. On the other hand, investigators used telex reports to inform the National Research Council of sightings. The NRC was primarily interested – if at all – in the scientific aspect of the phenomenon, and more specifically in whether or not the sighting might provide information about a misidentified meteor or fireball. UFO sighting reports were filed through the Meterorite Section of the Upper Atmosphere Division, and so telex reports sent to the NRC tended

to focus on weather conditions and descriptions of the object that would help determine what kind of natural phenomenon it might have been.

In short, a number of different departments were obliged to report UFO sightings, but they did so in ways that were tailored to their department's specific needs, and this is reflected in the kind and scope of information collected on the forms. The PSS form was far too detailed for most investigators, and so elements of it were used while others were discarded. To some civilians, there appeared to be a contradiction in the way the committee articulated its mandate and the kind of information they developed the form to elicit. The form might read as if the committee intended to make a rigorous, detailed study of the particular sighting, as if a scientific study into the UFO phenomenon was actually taking place. However, the PSS committee also made it clear that it existed only as an advisory body and that it was not in fact meant to investigate anything. As such, some felt that the form and the mandate did not very closely match. However, this feeling only arose if one assumed PSS operated under the assumption that UFOs were real. PSS did not share this belief, and when this fact is taken into account, the sighting form becomes a means by which to ascertain misidentifications of natural phenomena, not to undertake a study of the nature of UFOs. The form represents very different things to different people, depending on their perspective and belief in the reality of UFOs.

These differences in belief were part of the reason for the confusion that occurred within other government departments regarding the responsibility for reporting and investigation. The very same Captain Ruppelt that the PSS committee was trying to consult later wrote that the U.S.A.F. tackled the UFO problem with "organized confusion." The Canadian government seems to have done the same. On the one hand,

this is understandable. Ruppelt also wrote, "The military wants answers, not mysteries."[197] The military is pragmatic, and requires concrete threats to tackle. Yet, this organized confusion is also the reason why people like Wilbert Smith, and later a number of Canadian citizens, became frustrated with and came to mistrust the government's efforts.

Winding Down

In the vast majority of cases, once an investigator filed a UFO sighting report, the investigation ceased. This could be because the interrogator felt they could obtain no further information. Or, the departments to which the report was submitted might not have had the time or interest to investigate further. I suggest that another reason was because officials within the government, especially those on PSS, felt that once the form was filled out, all due diligence had been done. The committee assumed that the majority of reports would provide evidence of misidentified natural phenomena, or that if confusion existed it was only because of insufficient information. It was inconceivable to the committee and to the logic used to create the form that anything other than a natural, prosaic phenomenon had occurred, and so it was only natural, in turn, that the investigation would cease after the form was completed. The evidence would be thus recorded and made available to those who were qualified to carry out further study, but the committee understood that this was invariably personnel from another, unspecified department. In other words, the work was done, and if someone else wanted to take it up

[197] J. Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1972): 175.

further, that was their business. The very mandate of PSS supported this attitude, given that it articulated itself as an advisory committee. It fostered a desire for competent reporting, but certainly not one of analysis.

RCMP reporting procedures, which began in earnest in the early 1960s, mirrored this attitude. Thousands of pages of documentation of UFO sightings exist within RCMP files, but this is all there is. There is great consistency to the way in which RCMP officers reported UFOs. They were diligent in recording all the pertinent details – observer's information, location and time of sighting, weather conditions, etc. – but their reports very rarely offered any further opinion on what exactly the observer had seen. Comment on possible origin of the objects was always withheld, in favour of meticulous documentation of the observer's report. Steve Hewitt, in *Spying 101*, notes that the RCMP was particularly skilled at producing mountains of paperwork, but largely inept at actual analysis of the material they accumulated. Hewitt describes the service as "Drowning in a sea of reports, all with red margins." In the early 1950s, the Canadian government was overwhelmed with the idea of UFO reports (even if the actual number of them was low), and the disproportionate amount of attention they seemed to demand. The government felt that this attention was unnecessary, but I argue that it was also impossible to provide, given the constraints the government placed around its own investigation by starting with the assumption that UFO reports were nothing other than misidentified natural phenomena.[198]

The number and quality of sightings did not seem to convince government officials that UFOs deserved serious attention. Several colourful reports and inquiries

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[198] Steve Hewitt, *Spying 101: The RCMP's Secret Activities at Canadian Universities, 1917-1997* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002): 138.

were made in 1952. The RCAF received a letter on 16 September from a German man living in Mont Joli, Quebec, who claimed to be an aeronautical engineer who had worked under Hitler during the Second World War building secret aircraft. The man cautioned the Canadian government not to take seriously the claims that UFOs were extraterrestrial, as he knew from personal experience that they constituted nothing less than "Hitler's secret weapon."[199]

Just several days later, the DoT received a report describing a government official's attempt to interview Mr. Gabriel Durocher, of Windsor, ON, about his observation of a UFO. However, the official was unsuccessful in tracking the witness down, and a local reporter with the *Windsor Daily Star* informed him that "Mr. Durocher is a psychopath and usually after heavy drinking steals a bicycle and then gets himself mixed up with the law. He has appeared in court a number of times on charges of theft but always seems to get off on suspended sentence."[200]

Just the month before, the lighthouse keeper at the Nootka station spotted something that he could not identify and so reported it to his superior at the DoT, describing it thus: "It was a smooth job whatever it was!"[201] A letter addressed 6 December to the DND began with the line, "This is <u>not</u> a crank letter and should have been written on my own stationary at the office yesterday but it slipped my mind at the time."[202]

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[199] Rudolf Goy, 6 October 1952. Letter to the Air Vice Commander, RCAF. Flying Saucers file. RG 24 accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[200] R.G. Gooding, 22 September 1952. Memorandum to G.C.W. Browne, Controller of Telecommunications at the Department of Transport. Sightings of Unidentified Aerial Objects file. RG 97, volume 115, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[201] T.E. Morrison, 8 August 1952. Memorandum to the Director of Marine Services at the Department of Transport. Sightings of Unidentified Aerial Objects file. RG 97, volume 115, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[202] T3291 - 224

These kinds of oddities are no doubt part of the reason why the government tried so hard to keep reports from the media. In January 1953, members from the DoT again attempted to reinforce the ban on media contact. Several reports came in from the Regina, SK region containing testimony from concerned citizens that "would appear to indicate that some unknown objects are landing and taking off." Andrew Thomson, a DoT controller, advised government weather observers in the area to give special attention to the sightings for the next few weeks, but also warned them "that the matter is confidential and it is most desirable that the newspapers do not get hold of any information in regard to our interest in this matter."[203] H.V. Anderson, the Director of Marine Services, stated that while the sighting forms he had sent out to the weather observers to assist in their observations did not bear any classification, "they are to be considered as Confidential and, under no circumstances, should they be released to the Press."[204]

The PSS committee met two more times, on 17 November 1952, and then not again until 9 March 1953. Both meetings were short and uneventful. The committee continued its work refining the sighting form and debating how many minutes it should take an investigator to complete (deciding that ten minutes was the maximum).[205] Attendance at the meetings continued to decline, with only Millman, Smith, and Oatway regularly attending. Interest was obviously waning by this point. The committee was also thinking about the need for centralization of UFO reports. They decided that the DSI "would henceforth act as the central agency, and reports received through the various

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[203] Andrew Thomson, 21 January 1953. Memorandum to W.R. Fryers at the Aviation Forecast Office in Regina, SK. Sightings of Unidentified Aerial Objects file. RG 97, volume 115, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[204] H.V. Anderson, 19 January 1953. "Sighting of Unidentified Flying Objects Circular Letter M.S. 476." Sightings of Unidentified Aerial Objects file. RG 97, volume 115, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[205] "Minutes of the 4/52 Meeting of Project Second Storey," 17 November 1952. Project Second Storey file. X30-3, box 1126.6. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

Services would be forwarded to DSI for filing." The decision to centralize the collection of UFO reports within the *scientific* intelligence branch further indicates that the committee did not believe UFOs were a security threat. It also foreshadowed the transfer of responsibility for all reports to the NRC that would take place in 1968, as discussed in Chapter Five. Even as early as March 1953, it was clear that officials within the government – military or otherwise – were trying to pass it off as a chore.

Finally, this attitude was most clearly reflected in Millman's remarks in the meeting. After discussions with Solandt, Millman "pointed out that [the] evidence to date did not seem to warrant an all out investigation by the Canadian Services." Millman reiterated that he "considered [it] unnecessary" for the "Committee or any other section of D.N.D. to undertake a detailed analysis of the reports received," but that "other government organizations may persue [sic] these investigations more actively on their own initiative." UFOs were, in Oatway's words, a "Hot Tomalley." If any other organization was foolhardy enough to investigate, they were welcome to the reports. But Millman made it clear that PSS, officially, had no interest in contributing in any way beyond standardizing and coordinating reports.[206]

The Last Meeting

For the next year, UFO witnesses continued to report their sightings. Investigators used the PSS form several times, but the uptake was minimal. Nevertheless, while Millman and the PSS committee (Smith excluded) were not particularly interested in

[206] "Minutes of the 5/53 Meeting of Project Second Storey," 9 March 1953. Project Second Storey file. X30-3, box 1126.6. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

UFOs, other departments maintained an active interest in reporting, if not fully investigating sightings. RCAF Squadron Leader G.C. Campbell stated that while his Air Command was "not prepared to undertake scientific analysis of unidentified flying object reports, it does have primary interest in current reports on this subject."[207] At the very least, other departments retained an active interest just in case a security issue might arise, and to remain reasonably informed of what was going on. This attitude would persist for at least two more decades, until major changes were made in the late 1960s as to how the government received reports.

In the meantime, civilians started articulating more unorthodox views. For example, Leonard H. Stringfield, of Cincinnati, Ohio, wrote to the DRB:

> In common cause and in the spirit of International cooperation, this writer earnestly believes the world can no longer be restricted from certain overt truths regarding one of the greatest riddles of our time - - UFO phenomena! I am aware that your Government has viewed this subject seriously and is presently working, under wraps of secrecy, toward its resolution…I am convinced "saucers" are controlled devices from some extraterrestrial Intelligence. Unfortunately, at the present time, our [U.S.] Air Force, through a policy of contradiction, is embarrassed before the public. However, anyone who has weighed the massive evidence can find only one logical answer - - the Interplanetary answer![208]

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[207] G.C. Campbell, 25 May 1953. Letter to the Chief of the Air Staff, RCAF. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17988, file HQC 940-105, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[208] Leonard H. Stringfield, 30 September 1953. Letter to Project Magnet. Flying Saucers file. RG 24 accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Stringfield addressed his letter to "Project Magnet," no doubt a result of the press Smith's UFO observatory had garnered by late 1953. And not just Americans were taking an interest in the work by this point. Elmore Philpott, Member of Parliament for Vancouver South, wrote Smith in November 1953 after reading about his work: "I don't know how much of your enterprise is confidential. But the purpose of this letter is to let you know that I am intensely interested in what you are trying to do. If the time ever comes when you have anything which you can report without violation of your instructions, I should greatly appreciate being informed."[209] It seems even members of parliament were no more privy to the work of PSS and Project Magnet than members of the general public, but were in some cases equally interested.

As mentioned in the last chapter, the DoT began receiving scores of letters after the public found out about Smith's UFO observatory. The period November 1953 to February 1954 was a tense time for the DoT and DRB. Government information officers attempted to quell interest in the subject. Enough press and interest reached the departments by the New Year that Millman called another PSS meeting. On 22 February 1954, six members met for the sixth meeting, one of the most perfunctory of them all. Millman opened it by reminding the members "that one of the prime objects of keeping the Committee in being was to keep abreast of developments in connections with unidentified flying objects." As such, he raised three items of interest. He noted that no progress had been made since the previous meeting a year before in bringing U.S.A.F. Captain Ruppelt to Ottawa. Millman also mentioned "the latest book on the newstands [sic] entitled "Flying Saucers have Landed", by Leslie and Adamski," which to his mind

[209] Elmore Philpott, 17 November 1953. Letter to Wilbert Smith. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

appeared "to be of doubtful authenticity and must not be taken too seriously." Finally, before adjournment, he gave Smith some time to review three items: "(a) what the [DoT] is now doing with reference to analysis of reports and any conclusions arrived at…(b) methods used by the DOT sighting station…[and] (c) future plans." [210]

This was the last meeting of the committee. The members were frustrated that they had not been able to bring Ruppelt to Ottawa, and there is no evidence to suggest he ever made it up. While Millman felt the committee would have benefited from the advice and wisdom of the U.S. investigation, it is clear that bilateral relations in this case were severely restricted. During this time, different departments made a number of unsuccessful attempts to obtain information from their U.S. counterparts, whether it was UFO related or not, confirming a very uneven distribution of power within the relationship. And while Millman's opening remark might have indicated that the committee was still interested in UFOs, his disparagement of Leslie and Adamski's book suggested that this interest was narrowly confined to specific cases, such as tracking meteorites and fireballs. In other words, Millman was interested in UFO reports only so far as they could provide detailed information about recognizable natural phenomena.

No further notes were included in the minutes that give an indication of how the committee received Smith's report, but by this time it is safe to say that Millman wanted the details only to know how far Smith had gone in communicating his work and how much damage control the DoT and other departments would have to do. The fact that the PSS committee never met again indicates that Millman and others on the committee felt, as they had previously admitted, that UFOs did not present a viable scientific object of

[210] "Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of Project Second Storey," 22 February 1954. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

study and were unworthy of serious consideration. There is also evidence to suggest that, even as anticlimactic as the sixth and final meeting was, Millman only grudgingly called it at all. Several months earlier, in November 1953, Millman had authored a summary report of PSS activities, believing that the committee would not be required to meet again. The summary report best encapsulated Millman's thoughts about the subject.

It began by emphasizing the advisory role of the committee. "An attempt was made," Millman wrote, "to eliminate, as much as possible, the subjective element from the sightings. The majority of sightings reported to date have over-stressed irrelevant personal opinions rather than the straight-forward objective facts." "The committee as a whole," Millman concluded, "has felt that, owing to the impossibility of checking independently the details of the majority of the sightings, most of the observational material does not lend itself to a scientific method of investigation."[211] In speaking for the committee, Millman obviously excluded Smith's opinions. He made it clear to anyone coming to the subject after the fact that they were wasting their time.

Earlier in the year, the Central Intelligence Agency had convened the Robertson Panel, a meeting of American scientists to discuss UFOs. Although the Panel did not publicly release its report, the Canadian and American governments were clearly on the same page. The Panel concluded that UFOs did not represent a security threat, but did provide the circumstances for public hysteria. As Hynek lamented, "The Robertson panel did get someplace: they made the subject of UFOs scientifically unrespectable, and for nearly 20 years not enough attention was paid to the subject to acquire the kind of data needed even to decide the nature of the UFO phenomenon. Air force public relations in

[211] Peter M. Millman, 21 November 1953. "Project Second Storey Summary Report." Project Second Storey file. X30-3, box 1126.6. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

this area was egregious, and the public was left with its own decisions to make: was the air force attitude a result of "cover-up" or of foul-up and confusion?"[212] PSS did not specifically mention the problem of mass panic, but did share the same general view of UFOs. With Millman's final report in place and the sixth and last meeting adjourned, Project Second Storey was quietly terminated, establishing the conditions for the very same public confusion and suspicions that Hynek described.

Conclusion

The one task that occupied the majority of the Project Second Storey committee's time was the sighting form. Yet others doubted whether even this was necessary at all. In 1952, after only the second PSS meeting, DoT Controller of Telecommunications G.C.W. Browne wrote to a colleague: "I would advise that we have not considered it necessary to supply all offices with the sighting report forms, since there appears to be little justification for the wide distribution of these forms in order to meet the requirements of the relatively few actual sightings." Even after PSS worked on developing a sighting form, others were not convinced it was necessary. "As a matter of fact," Browne continued, "it is the information pertinent to the sighting which we require, rather than the completion of the form itself and if the same information is forthcoming in the form of a letter or memorandum we consider it of equal value to a completed sighting report."[213]

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[212] J. Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1972): 169.
[213] G.C.W. Browne, 17 July 1952. Letter to Andrew Thomson, Controller of Meteorological Services at the Department of Transport. Sightings of Unidentified Aerial Objects file. RG 97, volume 115, file 5010-4, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Millman felt the standardized sighting form was necessary in order to obtain just the "straight-forward objective facts," as narrative accounts sent by handwritten letter, for instance, tended to include "over-stressed irrelevant personal opinions." Millman was not alone in this. As J. Allen Hynek wrote: "The problem [with the phenomenon] is compounded by the fact that most UFO reports are frustrating in the extreme. They contain so few facts!"[214] Browne was of the opinion that it did not really matter at all what the physical format of the report was, just so long as it contained the facts. Browne, perhaps, felt it was not too much trouble to take the time to "separate the grain from the chaff," as one observer would later put it.[215] This difference of opinion is, however, superficial. In the same letter, Browne also thanked the correspondent for the information provided, as it was "precisely the type of information which we require in our investigations." That is, the information was ultimately straightforward and "objective." Whatever the rationale for using a form or narrative account, the government required unbiased reporting of what was observed, not subjective interpretations of the event. Interpretation was a job for the experts, and the experts invariably decided that UFO sightings were nothing more than misidentified natural phenomena.

As a result, in Lorraine Daston's words, UFOs faded further out of reality and so became less amenable to scientific inquiry. Project Second Storey's conclusions accelerated the cycle of mistrust between government and citizen that Smith had previously become embroiled in during his time with Project Magnet. To the government,

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[214] J. Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1972): 22.
[215] Name Redacted, 25 August 1968. Letter to APRO. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N69 001-030. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

the aim of Project Second Storey was commonsensical. UFOs were clearly nothing other than misidentifications of natural phenomena, and some basic investigation proved this.

For Project Second Storey, UFOs were a waste of time, because it was evident they did not exist. It was ludicrous to scientists like Millman to think that anyone would take the subject seriously. The only viable reason to continue collecting reports was to keep up to date on the latest developments, just in case something significant did occur. The assumption was, however, that anything of significance would not involve actual UFOs, but rather something of a physical, likely meteorological nature. In other words, something legitimate science recognized and could actually study. For the Canadian government, officially at least, prudence was the motivation for its involvement with UFOs in the early to mid-1950s. Others within the government, such as Smith, clearly thought otherwise. It would become clear that many outspoken civilians likewise did not share the government's conclusions. As the next chapter will show, these civilian investigators were not shy about making their opinions known.

Chapter 3: Very Persistent Men, 1954-1967

Introduction

By the mid-1950s, a small group of disconnected Canadian citizens really wanted to know what the government was doing about UFOs. They began writing letters in earnest, posing all manner of questions about the craft's origins and purposes. The government was not happy about this. In its estimation, Project Second Storey had proven that UFOs were not amenable to scientific inquiry, and so felt the matter did not require any further attention. This chapter is about the increasing interaction between government and citizen, after the two investigative projects were terminated. The chapter highlights all these various points of contact, where the cracks started to appear in the foundation that Project Second Storey attempted to lay down. This chapter is really about *letters* to the government. These citizen letters demanding answers to the UFO mystery reveal what Canadians expected from their government, and their frustrations at the responses they received. In short, the Canadian citizens writing to the government for answers felt betrayed.

This sense of betrayal and frustration was the result of several converging factors. As the previous chapter argued, at first glance there seemed to be a lack of fit between PSS's mandate as an advisory committee that did not investigate sightings, and the sighting form it developed, which hinted at a serious study. This only seemed like a contradiction, however, if one assumed the government believed UFOs might actually be real, which was not the case. Nevertheless, some citizens writing to the government did

assume this, and became disillusioned once they started receiving what they called the "go-around" and letters full of "doubletalk." However, this is not to say that the government was always deliberately obfuscating the issue. The run-around that some citizens experienced was also the result of a passive lack of communication between government departments. It was almost inevitable that citizens would receive different and sometimes contradictory answers about UFOs when communicating with multiple departments, each with their own approach to the phenomenon.

There is another aspect to this dynamic. As the last chapter showed, citizens started expressing feelings toward the government in the early 1950s that historians usually identify with the counterculture of the 1960s. This chapter again argues that the case of UFOs shows how these views were present in Canada years earlier. It also reveals the historical origins of a particular manifestation of distrust in the wider culture: conspiracy theory. Lest it seem that citizens were the only ones wronged in this situation, this chapter explains how conspiracy theory – again, usually considered a product of the 1960s – began to infuse citizen letters in the late 1950s, further antagonizing the government and the rational skepticism it was trying to advocate. UFOs and conspiracy theory go hand in hand. This chapter shows how Canadian citizens did not develop conspiracy theories about UFOs in isolation. Neither were they the products of delusional minds. Rather, citizens conceived such explanations due to a combination of "normal psychological processes",[216] and as part of the broader critique of the establishment in the postwar years.

[216] Jan-Willem van Prooijen, *The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories* (New York: Routledge, 2018): viii.

The letters that citizens wrote also served as their first real attempt to make UFOs resolve into focus as legitimate objects of inquiry. Without necessarily knowing it, they were following up on Wilbert Smith's attempts to make UFOs emerge "from the horizon of working scientists."[217] Or, in other words, they simply wanted to make it more difficult for UFOs to go away.

Communication Troubles

In February 1955, *Chicago American* reporter Tom Eastham wrote to DRB chairman Omond Solandt. "[M]y investigations have convinced me," said Eastham, "that many people are seeing strange things that have not been satisfactorily explained." Eastham had been following the phenomenon for some time, clipping out newspaper articles about UFOs, and was trying to find technically qualified people "to interpret for the public some of these strange phenomena." Eastham asked, "What do you think saucers are? Are they fact or fantasy and what makes you think so?"[218] Solandt briefly replied, several days later: "I do not feel able to make any useful comment concerning these reports. I naturally follow such reports with great interest but still feel that the best I can do is to reserve judgment concerning the nature of the objects that are reported to have been seen."[219]

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[217] Lorraine Daston, "Introduction: The Coming into Being of Scientific Objects," in Lorraine Daston (ed) *Biographies of Scientific Objects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000): 1.
[218] Tom Eastham, 2 February 1955. Letter to O.M. Solandt. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[219] O.M. Solandt, 8 February 1955. Letter to Tom Eastham. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Solandt's reply would not be unique. The majority of replies to curious citizens were noncommittal, and Solandt's tone is indicative of an attitude toward UFOs that the government had been cultivating for several years. Solandt himself, during the initial Joint Intelligence Committee meeting that called for the formation of Project Second Storey, had been polite but ultimately dismissive when it came to the subject. Officially, UFOs were bunk, and the many citizens writing in were either mistaken or delusional. This official conclusion would help fuel the rise of conspiracy theories among citizens interested in UFOs, but also paint a picture of believers as pathological types prone to irrationality rather than people tapping into broader cultural trends or demonstrating normal psychological tendencies present throughout society.

The next year Solandt went even further in his attempt to discredit the whole phenomenon. In February 1956, another American, Daniel Kamman, wrote to the DRB asking for information about Project Magnet and "a building 12 ft. square" which he believed acted as a flying saucer observatory, and if the Canadian government had ever released an official statement about UFOs.[220] Solandt's reply was again brief, indicating that Kamman's inquiry had been forwarded to Wilbert Smith. Solandt also provided Smith's personal address for further correspondence, and concluded that "the Canadian government had not "gone on record", at any time, "with any opinion as to the existence of flying saucers, or to the contrary"."[221] This was true to the extent that the government had never made any public statement in this regard, although it is clear that PSS did uphold an official stance of disbelief.

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[220] Daniel Kamman, 6 February 1956. Letter to the Defence Research Board. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[221] R.S. Thain, 14 February 1956. Letter to Daniel Kamman. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

The government's disinclination to make this stance known is not surprising, given the way in which policy and political decisions more broadly were handled. Robert Bothwell has written that *caution* was at the base of Canada's politics, and especially foreign affairs, during and even before the postwar years. During the tenure of Prime Minister Mackenzie King, a desire to appeal as broadly as possible and to avoid "radical, violent change" was what animated policy. Good government, to King, was about "order and orderly procedures."[222] Things in their place, and no fuss about it. This was especially evident when it came to relations with the U.K. or U.S. Whereas before the Second World War, English Canadian loyalties clearly aligned with England, after the war this shifted significantly toward the United States. As a "middle power," Canada had to balance these loyalties, and so the ability to waffle and refuse to take sides became an effective skill.

Jack Granatstein argues that "the Ottawa men" – "an extraordinary group of civil servants who collectively had great influence and power in Ottawa from the Depression through to the late 1950s"[223] – were responsible for Canada's "one distinctive position" on foreign policy, "functionalism." The functional principle argued that a country's unique talents or abilities would decide what power it had on the international stage.[224] This was a very Canadian, middle-of-the-road approach to balancing power, neither pushing too forcefully nor acquiescing entirely, and matched King's approach well.

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[222] Robert Bothwell, *Alliance and Illusion: Canada and the World, 1945-1984* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007): 12; J. L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945* (University of Toronto Press, 1990 [1975]) xi.
[223] J. L. Granatstein, *Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945* (University of Toronto Press, 1990 [1975]) xi.
[224] J. L. Granatstein, *The Ottawa Men: The Civil Service Mandarins, 1935-1957* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1982): 92.

When it came to UFOs, however, Canada clearly denied any functional expertise, instead taking King's position of caution. This broader stance – essentially a reluctance to take a stance – often translated into disinterest. The DRB and DoT had adopted this disinterest by the mid-1950s, causing confusion even among other personnel within the departments. For instance, the DoT received a 1957 telegram reporting a sighting of three slow-moving UFOs over Etobicoke. A handwritten note at the bottom read: "I thought we had cancelled these reports."[225] Later that year, RCAF Squadron Leader J.C. Lovelace responded to a married couple from Ontario to tell them he had forwarded their sighting report to Wilbert Smith, "the Canadian Chairman of the Committee on unidentified Flying Objects." Further, Lovelace wrote that the committee was international in its membership and studied all "reliable" reports in Canada and the U.S.[226] At first these details seem inaccurate, given that neither Project Magnet nor Project Second Storey were in existence by that point. Lovelace may have been referring to the fact that Smith was the primary Canadian contact with the U.S. based, civilian National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), headed by Donald Keyhoe. After Projects Magnet and Second Storey were terminated, it became common for those who knew him to automatically forward all UFO-related correspondence and material to Smith, avowing ignorance of the topic. They were likely thankful for such an easy way out of the situation. Another memo similarly stated: "The RCAF does not have the investigative

[225] H.E.J. Holloway, 2 August 1957. Telegram to Wilbert Smith. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[226] J.C. Lovelace, 21 May 1957. Letter to Mr. and Mrs. McGovern. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

capability to deal with these phenomena. The Department of Transport however, has a Mr. W.B. Smith, who is ex-officio Canadian Chairman."[227]

The practice of automatically forwarding UFO correspondence to Smith continued into the 1960s until his death. Afterward, it became common for DoT and other departments to simply plead ignorance of Project Magnet. Between Smith's death in 1962 and 1965 alone, over a dozen government replies to citizens contained some combination of the facts that Smith carried out the work of Project Magnet on his own spare time, that it was never an official project, that a different department had the relevant files, or that the department in question had no knowledge of it at all.[228] In some cases, officials tasked with responding to UFO inquiries likely did not actually have any knowledge of the Canadian government's involvement, given that the investigations were modest and classified. In other cases, the officials likely did have some knowledge of what work had been done to date, but did not want to engage in further correspondence. Whatever the case, once the two projects were terminated in 1954, a point of central communication no longer existed. This left each individual department to field inquiries as they saw fit.

It is not hard to imagine the intensity of interest in UFOs in the late 1950s, especially once the Russian satellite Sputnik was launched in October 1957. In his book *In Sputnik's Shadow,* Zuoyue Wang, for instance, writes that U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower understood Sputnik not as a military threat but as a political and scientific

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[227] W.L. Gillespie, 9 December 1957. Memorandum to Directorate of Operations at the Department of National Defence. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17988, file HQC 940-105, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

[228] For example: J.D. Harvey, 7 April 1964. Letter to Julian Hennessey. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

crisis. The real threat was one of diplomacy and propaganda, of America's public image when it came to scientific superiority.[229] This led to the creation of the President's Science Advisory Committee, and ultimately to the establishment of NASA. The Canadian government was also concerned about the potential political and scientific consequences, even if it did not form any special committees or organizations. The Department of Transport, however, immediately began an initiative to monitor Sputnik's orbit, as well as that of the second Soviet satellite launched in November.[230] And as in the case of UFOs, even while tracking this undoubtedly legitimate object in the sky, communication issues were paramount. As DoT technician L.G. Cope wrote, "[the only] critical observation I have of this whole exercise is the pointed lack of communication facilities between Headquarters and our Monitoring Stations." The delays in relaying messages from the various ionosphere stations across the country to headquarters in Ottawa were, in his words, "annoying."[231]

Mr. John Public

Of course, citizen UFO investigators were similarly annoyed at the poor or complete lack of communication they had received from the government. Several lengthy exchanges between government and civilians occurred in the years after Sputnik. Donald Keyhoe, now the director of NICAP, had continued to publish books on the alleged flying

[229] Zuoyue Wang, *In Sputnik's Shadow: The President's Science Advisory Committee and Cold War America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009): 77.
[230] C.M. Brant, 4 November 1957. "Satellite Transmissions" Memorandum to S.T. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[231] L.G. Cope, 6 November 1957. Memorandum to Wilbert Smith. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

saucer conspiracy, and in August 1958 wrote to the DRB. He asked if any sighting reports might be made available to the organization, and "whether RCAF pilots are instructed not to discuss or make public UFO sightings, as is the case in the United States?" Keyhoe also made sure to mention the names of several of NICAP's illustrious board members – former military and intelligence personnel, "and other distinguished citizens of the fields of religion, education, newscasting, etc." – and asked what his organization might do for the Canadian government in these matters, making the letter as much an inquiry for information as a gracious offer of expert assistance.[232]

The DRB did not respond until October. According to Public Relations Officer C.A. Pope, since 1947 various government departments had collected sighting reports "on a voluntary basis," but that they became numerous enough by 1952 to justify the creation of an advisory committee. "In 1954," Pope continued, "the Committee felt that most of the observational material did not lend itself to a scientific method of investigation," and so the committee was disbanded. Pope concluded that the DRB had no knowledge of any instructions for RCAF pilots. He referred Keyhoe back to Wilbert Smith, reminding the major that Smith was a member of Keyhoe's own organization and "would be the logical person to contact for information."[233] It is unclear exactly why Keyhoe felt the need to contact the DRB when he had full access to Smith, unless he was simply hoping to catch someone in the government unaware, or to solicit an "official" statement.

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[232] Donald Keyhoe, 14 August 1958. Letter to the Defence Research Board. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[233] C.A. Pope, 8 October 1958. Letter to Donald Keyhoe. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

That same month, Keyhoe wrote back, requesting the release of sighting reports collected since the termination of Project Second Storey in 1954. The copy of his letter in the archives contained three handwritten notes on the bottom. The first, from Pope to PSS secretary Oatway, asked if they could in fact release the reports. The second note, addressed to DSI, read: "Release of information is your responsibility. If releasable, suggest you ensure that there is no implication of official endorsement." Finally, the third note was addressed back to Pope: "We spoke. Can we politely disengage ourselves from Keyhoe[?]"[234] Pope's final reply to Keyhoe again suggested that he contact Smith for such information, given that the "majority of the sighting reports received by the advisory committee are passed eventually to Mr. Smith whom I am sure would be glad to help you." Pope also noted that the DND "is somewhat reluctant to make [the reports] directly available for examination because they include assessments of the individuals who originally report the sightings."[235] That is, sighting reports contained personal contact details and the investigator's thoughts on the witness's reliability and reputation. Personal privacy was always a concern, even up until 1995 when the NRC finally stopped collecting reports; the only redactions made on any of the UFO documents available were of witness's names and addresses.

Whether or not Keyhoe obtained what he was looking for, he did not write to the DRB again. There was never any shortage of similar civilian letters though. In fact, a May 1959 RCAF memo lamented how the particular branch was "plagued from time to time by the submission of UFOB Reports and by civilian letters following sensational

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[234] Donald Keyhoe, 17 October 1958. Letter to Charles Pope. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[235] C.A. Pope, 29 October 1958. Letter to Donald Keyhoe. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

newspaper accounts of unexplained lights in the sky."[236] The memo's wording indicates the RCAF member believed citizens were refusing to listen to common sense. Later that year, Saskatoon resident D.M. Spicer wrote to the DoT: "It seems peculiar to me that with all these reports, both yourself and the armed forces have remained silent." Spicer wrote that a recent Vancouver sighting had "brought a "No Comment" statement from your department in that area," and that it seemed "that you people are in a good position to either prove or disprove these sightings."[237] After receiving a reply with the contact for another DoT official that apparently was in a better position to comment on UFOs, Spicer resent his letter. Spicer's second letter prompted an internal DoT memo titled "Another Letter from D.M. Spicer." The author, Officer in Charge S.L. Young, wrote that he had no comments to make and had cautioned his staff "accordingly." The local Control Tower also declined to accept the letter and so Young sent it on to the Regional Director for Air Services in Winnipeg.[238]

Late in December C.R. Brereton, Regional Superintendent for Air Traffic Control in Winnipeg, did send a reply to Spicer, informing him that "Anything out of the ordinary which might be noted by our Controllers would be reported through this Office to Ottawa and under no circumstances would it be made public by the operators themselves or this Office."[239] This answer did not sit well with Spicer. He replied just two days later: "I am wondering in particular if you think that the public needs this protection or is it for the

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[236] E.P. Wood, 5 May 1959. Letter to the Chief of the Air Staff, RCAF. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[237] D.M. Spicer, 13 December 1959. Letter to the Department of Transport in Saskatoon, SK. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[238] S.L. Young, 23 December 1959. "Another Letter from D.M. Spicer" Memorandum to Regional Director of Air Services in Winnipeg, MB. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[239] C.R. Brereton, 29 December 1959. Letter to D.M. Spicer. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

convenience of your own office?" Spicer reminded the DoT that he was simply interested in "clarification from authoritative sources" about what people might be seeing. "Failure to give such a service," he railed, "appears to infer that Mr John Public suffers hallucinations or spots before his eyes."[240] Of course, unofficially, that is exactly what scientists in Ottawa thought.

Spicer's letter prompted another internal memo, this time from the office in Winnipeg up the chain of command to the Director General for Air Services in Ottawa. The memo noted that previous letters to Spicer had "attempted to discourage further enquiry," and that the UFOs to which Spicer was referring were "invariably" "high flying SAC [U.S. Strategic Air Command] aircraft shimmering in the bright sunlight." The office, naturally, could not divulge this information and so was asking for guidance from headquarters.[241] However, this is the only time the government provided this specific answer. No other letter ever mentioned the Strategic Air Command as a potential origin for sightings. In February 1960, the Director of Civil Aviation R.W. Goodwin provided his thoughts:

> Mr. D. M. Spicer, obviously, is a very persistent man. Your problem seems to be how to tell Mr. Spicer that he cannot obtain from this Department the information he wants. Perhaps the easiest solution would be to tell him that such suspected "Unidentified Flying Objects" as have been reported to and identified by ATC

[240] D.M. Spicer, 31 December 1959. Letter to the Department of Transport in Winnipeg, MB. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[241] Regional Superintendent, Air Traffic Control for Winnipeg, 6 January 1960. Memorandum to the Director General, Air Services in Ottawa. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

> [Air Traffic Control], have actually been military aircraft, without revealing that they are foreign military aircraft.[242]

The available correspondence ends there, but presumably Spicer received a general response and was satisfied (or frustrated) enough that he did not write back.

Spicer's letters demonstrate at least some citizens' rapidly growing distrust of the government's statements and intentions. As other citizens shortly would as well, Spicer raised the prospect that the Canadian government might be intentionally covering up information. The documents show that what many would come to call a conspiracy was most likely the result of poor communication and bureaucracy, and the government's concerns about public embarrassment, given the nature of the subject. This conclusion does not detract, however, from what citizens were feeling in the moment, and the aim here is not to single out a type of individual prone to believing in conspiracy theory, but rather to explain why they might have held such beliefs in the late 1950s and 1960s. The scholarly literature on conspiracy theory is still quite small, but one of the most compelling sources is Joseph Uscinski's and Joseph Parent's book *American Conspiracy Theories*. The two political scientists argue that people who believe in conspiracy theories are what they call "losers," which they intend entirely as a descriptive rather than a pejorative term. They are "losers" in the sense that they lack power, political or otherwise. Conspiracy theorists are usually on the margins of authority, and use

[242] R.W. Goodwin, 19 February 1960. "Inquiries from D. M. Spicer – Saskatoon" Memorandum. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

conspiracy theory as a way of understanding the world and their place in it. Conspiracy theories, they argue, "are weapons of the weak and on balance an adaptive behaviour."[243]

While this political explanation is compelling, in this chapter I also want to foreground the importance of a combination of an historical and psychological approach. Uscinski and Parent focus heavily on the role of ideology and previous political affiliation as a means of determining predispositions toward certain conspiracy theory beliefs. I want to place conspiracy theory about the Canadian government's involvement in the UFO phenomenon within a more general framework of changing ideas about deference to authority during the postwar period. Canadians were becoming less deferential toward the government as early as the 1950s. Citizens' letters about UFOs demonstrate how anti-establishment and anti-expertise views were becoming more common in the wake of the Second World War. This chapter argues that conspiracy theory is not necessarily the product of individual minds, geared toward certain beliefs based on idiosyncratic pathologies or predispositions, but rather – at least in part – the product of wider cultural changes. Conspiracy theory about UFOs in Canada comes from the same place as changing ideas about the government's technoscientific and political expertise. Combined with Uscinski's and Parent's ideas, for instance, this analysis puts letters from citizens like Spicer – and others below – in the context of "the "thinning out" of social discourse," what historian Christopher Dummitt characterizes as the key change underway in a wider cultural and political transformation that is present most obviously in the rebelliousness of the 1960s, but "was presaged by similar developments in the

[243] Joseph E. Uscinski and Joseph M. Parent, *American Conspiracy Theories* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014): 17.

1950s."[244] Similarly, in the context of the experience of modernity more generally, Marshall Berman describes this as "a radical flattening of perspective and shrinkage of imaginative range."[245]

This is not to say, though, that psychology does not play a role at all in this phenomenon. Jan-Willem van Prooijen writes that conspiracy theory is not a pathological behaviour, not something that should be studied in clinical psychology, but rather falls within the domain of social psychology, the study of ordinary citizens and what they think and why. That is, conspiracy theory is "rooted in similar, recognizable, and predictable psychological processes".[246] The need to construct conspiracy theories around momentous events or phenomena comes out of a combination of behaviours and features psychologists have studied for decades. This includes the need for "sense-making" in times of crisis, when fear and uncertainty are common. In such situations, it is common for people to place blame on powerful institutions, especially if they did not trust these institutions to begin with.[247] The early Cold War was just such a situation, when politics and the changes taking place generally in society created a situation of uncertainty. Added to this is the observation that people seem to be hard-wired to find patterns everywhere they look, even if connections between people and events do not actually exist. In times of crisis, especially, people want to attribute agency to events beyond their control, to help make sense of them.[248] These factors help to explain why some Canadian

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[244] Christopher Dummitt, *Unbuttoned: A History of Mackenzie King's Secret Life* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017): xiv.
[245] Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982): 24.
[246] van Prooijen, *The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories*, 5.
[247] van Prooijen, *The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories*, 26.
[248] van Prooijen, *The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories*, 40.

citizens started to accuse the government of a cover-up, of being deceitful, but also that this behaviour – while not explicitly widespread – was not necessarily pathological, but rooted in the political and social climate at the time, and further motivated by common psychological tendencies.

Wide Open For Inspection

In the same month that R.W. Goodwin called Spicer a "very persistent man," the RCAF was similarly bombarded. "What has Canada concluded about the UFOs?" asked Vancouver resident Ken Kaasen. "Are the UFOs a genuine threat to Canada? Do RCAF jets ever "chase" UFOs? If you have the answers to these questions, can you tell them to me? The U.S. and Canada give the public nothing but doubletalk when it comes to the subject of Unidentified Flying Objects. I find the only way to get the facts is to write to someone who has them."[249] Flight Lieutenant J.S.D. Francis replied two weeks later, simply to say that the RCAF had no official responsibility for UFO reporting and so had no answers.[250] Kaasen was not one to be mollified so easily. He wrote to the Edmonton RCAF base, identifying himself this time as a member of NICAP, the civilian UFO investigative group based in Washington, D.C. He posed a total of ten questions concerning sightings in Alberta and specifically over Edmonton, about whether any landings had been made in the province, and whether or not the base adhered to JANAP 146 (D).

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[249] Kenneth Kaasen, 14 February 1960. Letter to the Chief of the Air Staff, RCAF. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[250] J.S.D. Francis, 23 February 1960. Letter to Kenneth Kaasen. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Joint Army-Navy-Air Force Publication (JANAP) 146 (D), implemented in 1953, was an order clarifying the reporting procedure for things in the sky that might be of "vital intelligence." As such, the order made it a crime for military personnel in the U.S. to report a UFO sighting to the public, punishable under the Espionage Act. This military order did in fact extend to Canada, although likely without the same level of punishment. Air Force Regulation (AFR) 200-2, another U.S. order implemented in 1954, complemented JANAP 146, and required that all UFO sightings submitted to the Air Force had to be classified and unavailable to the public, unless the case was officially solved (i.e. positively identified as a natural phenomenon or otherwise).[251] Kaasen must have obtained this information from NICAP, presumably through Donald Keyhoe and his old military contacts. At the end of his letter, he attempted to wrap the RCAF respondent in a bind: "If you cannot answer my questions, I will know that you either have not got this information, or that you are under order of JANAP 146 (d)."[252]

After sending at least two internal memos that attempted to account for the UFO reporting structure within the DND, and assess who had responsibility for replying to such inquiries,[253] RCAF Group Captain L.C. Dilworth finally responded to Kaasen. Dilworth confirmed that the RCAF had in fact implemented JANAP 146 (D), but that he was not at liberty to answer any of the other questions Kaasen posed.[254] The next month

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[251] Brenda Denzler, *The Lure of the Edge: Scientific Passions, Religious Beliefs, and the Pursuit of UFOs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003): 14.
[252] Ken Kaasen, 21 April 1960. Letter to the Commanding Officer, RCAF Base in Edmonton, AB. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[253] L.C. Dilworth, 23 June 1960. Letter to the Air Officer Commanding at RCAF Station Trenton. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON; G.A. Woolley, 13 May 1960. Letter to the Chief of the Air Staff, RCAF. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[254] L.C. Dilworth, 23 June 1960. Letter to Kenneth Kaasen. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Kaasen wrote instead to DRB: "It is a fact that Canada and the United States are not in complete control of their skies…As bad as it sounds, North America, and many other countries, are wide open for inspection by these unknown flying objects. Can you honestly deny that?" Kaasen was convinced that U.S. congressional hearings would imminently "reveal hidden USAF information on UFOs," and that this disclosure would force the RCAF to do the same. Kaasen closed his letter with a prayer: "I only hope the UFOs prove to be harmless…"[255]

C.A. Pope replied the next month, hoping to curb any further correspondence. He admitted that the DRB had participated in Canadian investigations, although claimed (inaccurately) that it was not in charge of them. "You may be interested to learn," Pope concluded, "that the vast majority of reported sightings have been explained by known phenomena. The remainder have not supplied evidence that any threat to our country exists."[256] Kaasen wrote back two days later, countering Pope: "You may be interested to know that [NICAP] of Washington D.C. now has proof that UFOs (at times called flying saucers) are intelligently guided by an unknown race of beings, possibly from another planet, or more than one planet."[257] He did not indicate how NICAP determined this or exactly what proof they possessed.

Kaasen did not write again until two months later. In a letter addressed to "UFO Investigations, RCAF," he again summarized his knowledge of the secret air force regulations and questioned why UFO reports must be kept secret at all. "While it is Air

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[255] Ken Kaasen, 25 July 1960. Letter to the Defence Research Board. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[256] C.A. Pope, 9 August 1960. Letter to Ken Kaasen. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[257] Ken Kaasen, 11 August 1960. Letter to Patricia Larkin, for the Public Relations Officer at the Defence Research Board. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Force policy," he said, "to explain every UFO sighting away, I know how serious the UFO problem is…If flying saucers do not exist, why does the Air Force spend time and money investigating something that does not exist?" To Kaasen, the only reasonable conclusion a member of the public could draw was that the RCAF, which was clearly withholding information from the press and public, must have themselves concluded that "UFOs are under intelligent control."[258]

It seems that no one at RCAF responded to Kaasen, perhaps realizing that they could not disentangle themselves from the correspondence any other way. Kaasen, of course, did not give up. The next year, he wrote to Douglas Harkness, the Minister of National Defence. Kaasen explained to Harkness that NICAP was a "fact-finding organization" that investigated UFOs and attempted to "offset official secrecy." Chapter Five will explore this dimension of independent UFO investigations in more detail, arguing that the battle against secrecy was a logical conclusion of the civilian investigations, which began in response to perceived government inaction and soon took on the appearance of conspiracy theory. The remainder of Kaasen's letter was a lengthy condemnation of the government's secrecy. "If UFOs are nothing more than natural phenomena and mistaken identity, why not open <u>all</u> the files on UFOs and let the press investigate <u>all reports</u> for itself? This will not be done." Kaasen also wrote that making all information about UFOs public would help resist the Soviet Union. He argued that the Soviets crafted propaganda to convince the North American public that their governments were indeed hiding information and so could not be trusted.[259] Whether

[258] Ken Kaasen, 23 October 1960. Letter to "UFO Investigations" at RCAF Ottawa. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[259] Ken Kaasen, 4 March 1962. Letter to Douglas S. Harkness. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Kaasen believed this was a legitimate threat or not is unclear, but nevertheless the rising tensions with the Soviets was clearly playing into fears about UFOs.

Several days later Harkness sent a brief reply, in which he attempted to reassure Kaasen that in the event of a potential threat to Canada, no information would be kept from the public, and indeed the government had never in the past withheld such information.[260] Perhaps Harkness was naïve, and thought his letter would sway Kaasen. Robert MacDougall has written that people who believe in theories that others label as pseudoscience often maintain beliefs that do a kind of social or psychological work for them in maintaining their self-image. Such people, conspiracy theorists or otherwise, think of themselves as iconoclasts, "who cannot be fooled by authority figures." MacDougall, speaking of present concerns, concludes that "you can't fight flat earthers or anti-vaxxers or any other brand of pseudoscience with arguments from authority. If you want to combat false belief, you have to ask, "What work is this belief doing for the person who holds it?" Then you start from there."[261]

Similarly, further appeals from authority figures within the Canadian government never easily appeased UFO enthusiasts, who distrusted it in the first place. To Kaasen, Harkness's reply was nothing short of a challenge. "Statements from the RCAF concerning UFOs," Kaasen replied four days later, "completely contradict your stand on UFOs." Kaasen referenced a RCAF letter from the previous year in which an officer explicitly stated that information *would* indeed be withheld from the public, and again

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[260] Douglas S. Harkness, 8 March 1962. Letter to Ken Kaasen. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

[261] Robert MacDougall, "Why Do People Believe in Pseudoscience?" *Gizmodo* (11 March 2019), https://gizmodo.com/why-do-people-believe-in-pseudoscience-1833193811. Accessed 1 April 2019; see also Robert MacDougall, "Convention of Cranks," *SCOPE Magazine* (Spring 2011), http://www.scope-mag.com/about/issues/spring-2011/convention-of-cranks. Accessed 1 April, 2019.

explained his understanding of the secret air force regulations, lamenting that the Canadian public was unaware of the secrecy.[262] Kaasen's letter prompted an internal memo debating how to proceed. "As Mr. Kaasen apparently wants to believe that we are hiding something," wrote Wing Commander W.H. Muncy, "it will be difficult to convince him otherwise, but in view of the apparent contradictions in our statements, it would seem desirable to attempt to do so."[263]

Based on this memo, Harkness responded again, caught up in the correspondence. He told Kaasen that the contradictions arose from differing definitions of "UFOs." If the term meant objects piloted by extraterrestrials, then the information would not be withheld from the public. However, if the term meant foreign aircraft, then "prudence and the requirements of military security" demanded the information remain classified.[264] Again, this exchange speaks to how the efforts of the government and citizens like Kaasen grew from completely different roots, based on whether or not one already believed in the reality of UFOs. Harkness and other government officials simply could not fathom why someone would write letters like Kaasen's, given that, for them, UFOs clearly did not exist.

The final documents in this exchange reveal confusion within the RCAF about the secret regulations Kaasen repeatedly mentioned. Wing Commander W.H. Muncy wrote an internal memo asking whether or not Canada did in fact follow the same air force regulations as the U.S., as this was apparently not common knowledge even within the

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[262] Ken Kaasen, 12 March 1962. Letter to Douglas S. Harkness. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[263] W.H. Muncy, 22 March 1962. "Unidentified Flying Objects – Mr. Ken Kaasen" Memorandum. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[264] Douglas S. Harkness, n.d. Letter to Ken Kaasen. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

service. In some cases, it seems, it took an intrepid UFO investigator to force military personnel to obtain knowledge of their own operations. This inquiry prompted what appeared to be Harkness's last letter to Kaasen, only accessible as a draft, from April 1962. Harkness clarified that AFR 200-2 did not apply to Canadian forces, and that in the U.S. it only applied to base commanders, as final investigations and conclusions were the domain of "higher headquarters." Harkness finished his letter by stating that he saw no useful reason why UFO reports should be released anyway, given that no investigations to date had revealed any security threat.[265] In other words, what Kaasen and others interpreted as official secrecy, Harkness simply saw as expediency. Why release the information if those in the know did not see in it any "useful purpose" or require any assistance from the public? Whether or not this satisfied Kaasen, it does not appear that he wrote back, and his two-year correspondence regarding secret air force orders came to an end.

It is not hard to understand why Kaasen was so upset. It was clear that the RCAF *was* withholding information, given the government's contradictory answers. Of course, the government disagreed with the conclusion that Kaasen drew, but the difference illustrates the nature of this aspect of conspiracy theory. Kaasen's belief in UFOs was not necessarily the product of what the government had previously called a "pathological" or "delusional" mind, but it was rooted in common psychological behaviour. The government, however, did ascribe to historian Richard Hofstadter's seminal characterization of the "paranoid style" of American politics, arguing that "the paranoid" feels dispossessed, as if his very way of life is under attack by "the existence of a vast,

[265] Douglas S. Harkness, April 1962. Letter to Ken Kaasen. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

insidious, preternaturally effective international conspiratorial network designed to perpetuate acts of the most fiendish character."[266] This is a clinical psychological approach to diagnosing the problem. Rather, in combination with the common features of social psychology that van Prooijen articulates, Kaasen was responding to the government's own statements, and tapping into a broader change in what citizens expected from their government and how they engaged with it.

Common Courtesy Becomes the Go-Around

Around the same time that Ken Kaasen first demanded answers, the government established a new reporting procedure. Starting in April 1960, a new plan for "the reporting of vital intelligence sightings during peacetime" would come into effect. The purpose of the plan, known as CIRVIS-MERINT, was to extend the early warning defence system for the continent by providing instruction on how to report all air and water sightings of potentially hostile craft.[267] Witnesses were to report their sightings by radio to the nearest ground station. A poster was designed that gave examples of what potentially hostile sightings included. Ufologists have since made much ado about this poster, because of one single detail: it contained a drawing of a UFO. The poster included other more conventional objects such as submarines, warships, aircraft, and missiles, but also contained a drawing of a rocket ship and a flying saucer whizzing through the sky.

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[266] Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics: and Other Essays* (New York: Knopf, 1965): 14.

[267] A. de Niverville, 10 March 1960. "Vital Intelligence Sightings – CIRVIS Reporting Procedures." Reporting of Vital Intelligence Sightings (CIRVIS/MERINT) file. RG 12, accession 1980-81/303, box 14, file 700-20, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

The caption underneath confirmed this: witnesses were to report any "Unidentified Flying Objects or unidentified objects in the water" using the CIRVIS method.[268] The bottom of the poster indicated that the DND authorized it for display in post offices, which meant they intended it for public as well as military use.

In any case, the posters caused confusion. Various DoT and DND offices received dozens of copies, often without a covering letter explaining their purpose. A memo from the Winnipeg Regional Office is representative of one reaction: "A package of 33 posters entitled "CIRVIS-MERINT Reporting Procedure" has been received by mail with no covering instructions…It would be appreciated if Headquarters would advise the intended distribution of these posters."[269] A number of handwritten notes on the memo further illustrate the confusion. One person wrote that their department only sent five copies and had no idea where the others came from. Another said they had sent out forty copies, whereas another note simply passed the memo on, stating "Appear to be yours – please action."

An incident from later that year demonstrates the limits that departments placed on their own operations, interest, and abilities when it came to UFO investigation. At about 6:00PM on 22 June, a camper at Clan Lake, NWT heard a strange noise from the sky, "like a big plane in the distance." The camper looked up but could not locate the origin of the sound, which grew in intensity until suddenly they heard something strike the water. "I turned around," their statement to the RCMP read, "[and] saw a splash and

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[268] Department of National Defence, n.d. CERVIS-MERINT Reporting Procedure poster. Reporting of Vital Intelligence Sightings (CIRVIS/MERINT) file. RG 12, accession 1980-81/303, box 14, file 700-20, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

[269] H. Raynes, 22 February 1962. Memorandum to A.D.M.A., Ottawa. Reporting of Vital Intelligence Sightings (CIRVIS/MERINT) file. RG 12, accession 1980-81/303, box 14, file 700-20, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

what appeared to be some object with arms or spokes rotating in the water." The object gradually slowed and sunk below the water's surface. The camper and his partner paddled out to the spot in a canoe to find a section of burnt grass and "a channel which corresponded to the cut path of grass." The RCMP report noted that the camper "is well known in this country having lived in and around Yellowknife for many years. He has a good knowledge of bush life as he is a prospector and woodcutter by trade. He is considered very reliable." [270]

The report was evidently detailed and reliable enough that it called for an actual investigation. An aerial patrol went to view the site from above, and determined that something likely did hit the lake, although nothing could be found.[271] The next month, a RCMP inspector recommended using a skin diver to search the area underwater,[272] and also mused "that possibly the object which fell into Clan Lake may be a nose cone of a rocket or some other scientific object," thus calling for some "extra endeavour."[273] He notified the DND at this point, but they demurred: "It is our view that R.C.A.F. are much better equipped to handle matters such as this than we are and it is obvious that if there is anything in this story which seems to be quite reliable and objective, it is certainly more of R.C.A.F. interest than ours. With personnel and equipment at their disposal, it does not

[270] F.T. Wright, 19 July 1960. "Report of Strange Object Striking Clan Lake, N.W.T." Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[271] L.J. Matheson, 25 July 1960. "Report of Strange Object Striking Clan Lake, N.W.T." Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[272] H.F. Price, 9 August 1960. Message Form to RCMP Forth Smith, NWT. Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[273] H.F. Price, 10 August 1960. Letter to the Officer Commanding, RCMP Forth Smith. Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

seem that we should be spending any time or effort on this matter until we are provided with the ability to do the job."[274]

Later that month, the RCMP Commissioner received a report stating that a patrol checked out the site with a geiger counter and probed the mud underwater with a rod, all with negative results.[275] A month later, a DND memo to the RCMP stated that, as far as they were concerned, the object was likely a meteorite that had disintegrated as it fell. "On the strength of investigations to date," the report read, "we doubt that the object has significance as far as National Defence is concerned."[276] In May 1961, the RCMP followed up. They were unsuccessful in finding a qualified person to conduct a magnetometer reading of the site, but Ian Halliday, an NRC scientist, had concurred with the theory that the object was likely a meteor.[277] It seems the investigation ended at this point.

The incident is illuminating in two immediate ways. First, it shows the limits of any department's ability and interest to investigate. The DND no longer cared once they decided that the object was probably a meteorite and not a piece of space technology. Another example also illustrates this point. In August 1965, an object fell to the ground in Foster, Quebec. The DND was quick to investigate but soon stopped. "Because the object is man-made and its markings are in English, it is no longer of direct interest."[278] In other

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[274] W.H. Kelly, 16 August 1960. Letter to the Officer Commanding, "G" Division, RCMP. Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[275] J.T. Parsons, 18 August 1960. Letter to the RCMP Commissioner. Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[276] L.C. Dilworth, 23 September 1960. Letter to W.H. Kelly, Assistant Director of Security and Intelligence, RCMP. Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[277] J.T. Parsons, 16 May 1961. Letter to the RCMP Commissioner. Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[278] B.H.B. Moffit, 30 September 1965. Memorandum to J.K. Brown. Microfilm reel T-1743. RG 77, volume 310, file DND/UAR (1965-1966) 1-10. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

words, the objects in these two cases no longer constituted a potential security threat – the first because it was a natural phenomenon and the second because it was not a foreign-made (i.e. Soviet) object. The incidents were outside the operations of the department, something that the DND would later claim about UFOs more generally as justification in ridding themselves of the responsibility. The RCMP apparently only had limited resources and so took the investigation as far as these allowed.

Second, it also shows the power of potential physical evidence of UFOs. Investigations of this sort, where helicopters and multiple teams were sent out to investigate alleged sightings were only ever ordered in cases where physical evidence might have been accessible. This point will be explored in more detail in Chapter Four.

Despite the relative clarity behind the rationale for the previous two investigations, one of the main issues plaguing the military and civilians alike was the continued confusion surrounding how the government was supposed to investigate UFOs, if at all. An earlier RCAF memo from June 1959 makes this clear. Flight Lieutenant J.S.R. Francis noted that the public relations officer had been "hard-pressed to supply satisfactory answers" to inquiries from press and public about recent sightings, and that it was "unreasonable" to continue "without official recognition and some policy direction." Francis had attempted to dig up some form of official statement in vain: "There seems to be no recorded instance of the Canadian Government having any interest whatsoever in "flying saucer". No RCAF organization has ever been charged with the responsibility for handling UFO reports either to investigate or simply to acknowledge receipt of letters from observers." He noted that Squadron Leader Lovelace had, since the previous year, attempted to reply to inquiries "on the basis of common courtesy – feeling that persons

who took the time to write the Department about what appeared to them [to be] an important defence matter, deserve an official reply – as at that time all such reports seemed to get the "go-around"."[279] Francis and Lovelace were obviously among the more sympathetic military personnel, whether or not they shared Wilbert Smith's or Ken Kaasen's views about the origins of the objects.

Unfortunately, despite Lovelace's best intentions, it seems civilians regularly received the "go-around." For example, in April 1966, a civilian sent a three-page handwritten letter to the Prime Minister's Office: "Sir, you must excuse me if I doubt very much whether the general public will ever get an honest and truthful report from the government on such matters." Nevertheless, the writer continued, "We do look forward to the day when the authorities will have the courage to release the truth, but with all due respect to you and your office, I doubt it."[280] Another civilian, Wilfrid Daniels from Stafford, England, wrote to the DoT in frustration. He had received two replies regarding inquiries about Wilbert Smith's research that directly contradicted one another, prompting him to ask if someone could "please make up their mind and give me a factual, unambiguous reply to the question…One way or another, I am determined to elicit the truth of this; I have been, with reluctance on my part and considerable distaste, drawn into what seems to me to be an incredible web of evasion, prevarication, circumlocution and downright 'double-talk'."[281] Later that year, J.J.A. Hennessey, another Englishman, wrote to the Chief of the Air Staff with the same intention. He

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[279] J.S.R. Francis, 16 June 1959. "Policy – Unidentified Flying Objects" Memorandum. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17988, file HQC 940-105, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[280] Name Redacted, 8 April 1966. Letter to the Office of the Prime Minister. Intelligence – General: Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[281] Wilfrid Daniels, 2 April 1964. Letter to the Chief of Information Services at the Department of Transport. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

pointed out a contradiction in letters he had received regarding whether or not Project Magnet was an official government initiative, and asked for a clear answer, all the way through his letter politely expressing his apologies and regrets for troubling the government with such an inquiry.[282]

Examples such as this make it easy to see how some civilians concluded that the government *was* covering up information. Especially when it came to Wilbert Smith, at this point over a year after his death, and after the DoT's attempts to distance itself from his work, it must have been difficult to confirm any details. However, it is important to keep in mind the scope of such beliefs. A 1966 Gallup poll asked Americans if they had ever seen a UFO. Only 5% responded positively. Gallup had yet to ask Canadians the same question, but it is likely even fewer Canadians had seen one, given the difference in data from later polls.[283] Again, there was very little national press attention on the issue. In May 1966, *Maclean's* published an article called "Look, Ma! It's Flying Saucer Time Again," lampooning the "20th-century community sport of UFO-hunting [which] abides by no fixed rules."[284] The article mentioned some recent sightings, including one by Canadian heavyweight boxer George Chuvalo, who claimed to see a UFO shortly after his heavyweight title loss to Cassius Clay.[285] Despite the overall tone of the article, it nevertheless also stated that scientists were taking the issue more seriously than ever before.

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[282] J.J.A. Hennessey, 1 October 1964. Letter to the Chief of the Air Staff, RCAF. Unidentified Flying Objects (Incl. Outer Space Travel) file. RG 97, volume 182, file 5010-4, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[283] Polls from the 1970s and 1980s show a significant difference: Canadians tended to believe less strongly in the reality of UFOs than Americans. These polls are discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.
[284] Douglas Marshall, "Look, Ma! It's Flying Saucer Time Again," *Maclean's* 79.47 (2 May 1966): 47.
[285] See Bryan Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009): chapter 4.

There were only ever a handful of Canadians actively trying to interrogate the government for information, but through their bombastic letters they made their presence well known. It is possible they even inflated the government's concerns about how widespread these conspiratorial ideas actually were. Nevertheless, by the mid-1960s, changes in the way citizens related to the government were clearly showing in their letters. The one citizen doubted that they would ever receive a truthful reply. Whatever responses citizens did receive only seemed to further obfuscate the issue, drawing them into the belief that the government was covering up information, that perhaps there was some kind of conspiracy. These letters show that this distrust was mutually reinforced, with its origin in the various points of contact since the 1950s that seemed to only antagonize and confirm each side's lack of confidence in the other. It was not the case that all citizens writing about UFOs started with the assumption that the government was covering them up. Rather, many citizens were open-minded and initially respected the need for secrecy, only to become frustrated and disillusioned with the process after months and sometimes years of the government "go-around."

The Canadian government was not unaware of this situation. In January 1966, NRC Community Relations Officer John R. Kohr wrote to DRB Public Relations Officer Charles Pope. Kohr enclosed an article from a Montreal newspaper that apparently quoted "Dr." Wilbert Smith speaking about his attempt to analyze a piece of metal that fell from the sky. "In view of the fact," Kohr wrote, "that Wilbur [sic] Smith died several years ago, I assume that the article is based on some warmed-up and badly garbled incident."[286] However, the degree to which information about UFOs was "garbled" was

[286] John R. Kohr, 18 January 1966. Letter to Charles Pope. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

due mostly to inept and uninterested communications between departments, rather than a conscious conspiracy. In other words, it was a cock-up rather than a cover-up. It was inevitable that if a civilian dug deep enough and wrote to enough departments, they would receive contradictory statements. When it came to UFOs, departments rarely communicated with one another and the answers they gave to civilians, in the absence of any coordinated response or guidelines, were done using personal discretion. It was also simply the case that those within the government or military receiving letters usually had no information themselves, but this lack of, or gap in, understanding would have been unacceptable to admit to the public. The government did not intend to maliciously mislead the public. There were moments, however, when secrecy was necessary, in the case of protecting legitimate information relevant to national security.

Nevertheless, the government's responses contributed to a growing distrust swirling within the wider milieu. It is tempting to say that there were always those civilians who would insist on the more fantastic explanation. This is inadequate though, because it again privileges the idea that conspiracy theory is solely the product of warped minds rather than broader social changes. Especially by the mid-1960s, citizens writing about UFOs were tapping into the counterculture of the era. UFOs may have been an especially unorthodox topic, but they still fit within the search for personal, rather than expert, truth. To this end, van Prooijen argues that conspiracy belief is rooted in an intuitive, rather than analytical, mode of thinking, with people relying on their gut feelings to come to conclusions.[287]

[287] van Prooijen, *The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories*, 38.

In July 1966 the same civilian who earlier in April looked forward to the day when the government would have the courage to release the truth, this time sent a twelve paper letter to the DND outlining their views on extraterrestrial visitation. They defined the public as “a strange body” that holds contradictory statements and suffers “from a psychological condition termed “Fear.” This strange body was divided into “The Non-Believers” and “The Believers,” the latter broken down further into “A Soft Core” and “A Hard Core.” The soft core held relatively agnostic views about UFOs, whereas the hard core believed that flying saucers were under intelligent extraterrestrial control. The writer was convinced that aliens had made face-to-face contact with humans, especially those within government and the military. “Our Prime Minister Pearson,” they wrote, “would probably be among one of those who have been so contacted.” The rest of the letter contained numerous and confident statements about how, for instance, the aliens spoke all Earthly languages, the U.S. government was in possession of “bulging” files of information on UFOs, and that it was the duty of all human beings to follow the wishes of the extraterrestrials in “revamping” the world’s monetary system, its research initiatives, and its military and police powers in order to create a more equitable and safe world. In their closing remarks, the writer was careful to state that they were “NOT [a] member of any “Ban-the Bomb-Movement”, Communist or Communist inclined-party or organization.” The goal of his work was more universal than this. In the matters of knowledge about things unknown, which could affect the welfare of all humankind, “The

real problem is what quality proof does the modern, ignorant man require, and when he gets it, is he willing to accept it?"[288]

The rest of the "Hard Core" civilian's lengthy letter is meandering and tangential, but this question was a central one. What is the threshold for believing in UFOs as extraterrestrial craft, and what kind of evidence does it require to exceed that threshold? This question will be explored in more detail in the next chapter, when it comes to several cases of physical evidence. Despite the significance of this question, the DND's response was to dismiss and debunk. In his reply, Commodore F.B. Caldwell referred to the Hard Core civilian's description of several sightings in the Montreal area, remarking that their comments "respecting these sightings reflect a slight prejudice against explainable events and in favour of the unknown." Caldwell goes on to debunk each observation as nothing more than a misidentified sighting of a satellite or jet aircraft.[289] Again, the government's attitude was that these people were all idiosyncratic cases. UFO enthusiasts, they thought, were predisposed to believing in odd things, and nothing could be done about the situation other than ignore and debunk it – to ignore the "cranks." This was, for the government, a commonsense view that fit within their understanding of the world. It did not acknowledge interest in UFOs as part of a broader change happening in Canada, but rather considered the belief akin to superstition that the state was responsible for clearing up in an attempt to educate the public.

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[288] Name Redacted, 23 June 1966. Letter to F.B. Caldwell at the Department of National Defence. Intelligence – General: Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

[289] Name Redacted, 23 June 1966. Letter to F.B. Caldwell at the Department of National Defence. Intelligence – General: Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

As in other cases, rather than shutting down the correspondence, Caldwell's letter only invited further debate. The Hard Core civilian responded the next month with a mélange of information, invoking, for instance, the questions around JANAP 146 and AFR 200-2, and rebutting Caldwell's claims about satellites and jet aircraft. "As time goes on," they concluded, "and as the sightings continue, the efforts of people all over the world to get at the truth and have it brought before the public will be found to have been useful."[290] It seems that something within the Hard Core civilian's letters prompted yet another internal review of the procedure for dealing with such matters. A DND memo noted that "periodically" the department received a sighting report that might make headlines if reported to the press. "To date, no system has been established for the follow-up of such reports before the embarrassing questions are asked."[291] As in the case of the DoT's reaction to Wilbert Smith's work, what the UFO problem often came down to in operational terms was bad publicity. Caldwell again replied to the Hard Core civilian. "You continue to suggest that information is being withheld from the general public by the Department of National Defence. I can assure you that such is not the case…As our responsibility to the Canadian people is to provide for their security, we are only concerned with the possibility of unidentified flying objects being a threat to Canada. All evidence points to the fact that there is no threat from them." Caldwell again attempted to dissuade further correspondence: "We are not prepared to prolong the discussion on this matter, as it is really only a matter of judgment."[292] On the very same

[290] Name Redacted, 5 July 1966. Letter to the Department of National Defence. Intelligence – General: Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[291] J.C. Arnell, 22 August 1966. "Unidentified Flying Objects – Follow-Up Action on Reports" Memorandum. Intelligence – General: Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[292] F.B. Caldwell, 23 August 1966. Letter to Name Redacted. Intelligence – General: Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

day, Caldwell replied to yet another, similar inquiry. One paragraph in particular is significant in terms of its candidness about the DND's position:

> We do not criticise you for your beliefs and in fact are glad to see that individuals are prepared to devote their time and energy to searching for the possibility of a new truth in a mass of reports which are often coloured by emotional distortion and a near-religious certainty of the existence of an extraterrestrial presence. Within the Department of National Defence we are expected to be pragmatists and this makes us appear disinterested in views such as yours.[293]

The political theorist Frederic Jameson described conspiracy theory as the "poor man's cognitive mapping." Jameson meant that people use conspiracy theory as a way of making sense of the world by connecting what might otherwise be unrelated dots.[294] Jonathan Kay calls this process "historical hopscotch," whereby conspiracy theorists connect events and people across time and space as a way of unifying their ideas.[295] It seems Caldwell would have agreed with this assessment, given his views on how emotionally loaded the UFO subject was. Again, however, this characterization belittles individuals. It may be easy to label conspiracy theorists as cranks, but their ideas were the result of common and predictable psychological processes, further motivated by the

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[293] F.B. Caldwell, 23 August 1966. Letter to Name Redacted. Intelligence – General: Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[294] Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism; or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991).
[295] Jonathan Kay, *Among the Truthers: A Journey into the Growing Conspiracist Underground of 9/11 Truthers, Birthers, Armageddonites, Vaccine Hysterics, Hollywood Know-Nothings and Internet Addicts* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2011): 106.

broader cultural changes that began in the 1950s, which mutually reinforced tension and distrust between government and citizens.

Belief in UFOs is also not an isolated phenomenon. A number of commentators have found continuity between this specific postwar belief and belief in, for instance, fairy folklore and medieval apparitions, or have looked at similar phenomena from an historical rather than purely psychological perspective. Carlo Ginzburg, for instance, in analyzing 16th and 17th century witchcraft in Italy, also argues that the phenomenon "can not be explained on pathological grounds." Rather, because belief in witchcraft was so widespread, "the boundaries between a healthy and diseased state become vague," and that instead, the beliefs had "a precise cultural basis."[296]

Two other commentators have written specifically about UFOs in this respect. Computer scientist and venture capitalist Jacques Vallee understands postwar UFO belief as one aspect "in a much wider tapestry blending the mysteries of antiquity with the wonders of the Space Age."[297] To Vallee, people throughout history have always seen objects in the sky, "under forms best adapted to the believer's country, race, and social regime."[298] To this end, he traces a history of folklore to show continuity with previous tales of visitation from otherworldly beings, arguing that modern flying saucers are not so different from religious visions, but simply reflect postwar techoscientific concerns and aspirations.

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[296] Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft & Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983 [1966]): 18.
[297] Jacques Vallee, *Passport to Magonia: From Folklore to Flying Saucers* (Brisbane, Australia: Daily Grail Publishing, 2014 [1969]): 8.
[298] Jacques Vallee, *Passport to Magonia,* 11.

Similarly, the psychoanalyst Carl Jung characterized the UFO phenomenon as a "living myth," or a modern myth in the making: "We have here a golden opportunity of seeing how a legend is formed, and how in a difficult and dark time for humanity a miraculous tale grows up of an attempted intervention by extra-terrestrial "heavenly" powers—and this at the very time when human fantasy is seriously considering the possibility of space travel and of visiting or even invading other planets."[299] By drawing on examples of dream analysis and objects in paintings from medieval to modern times, Jung argues that the prospect of heavenly intervention was simply a matter of course in previous eras, and that people are no longer "rooted enough in the tradition of earlier centuries" to make sense of this.[300] In other words, people have been seeing "UFOs" for centuries, simply in different guises and filtered through the lens of the day. What all of this says about UFOs in Canada during the 1950s and 1960s is that this phenomenon was potentially more widespread than the concern over literal flying saucers in the sky, but speaks to much broader psychological and cultural trends.

Citizens Organize Early UFO Clubs

One person prepared to devote their time and energy to the search for a new truth, as Caldwell wrote, was Wilbert Smith. The termination of his Project Magnet "brainchild" forced Smith to conduct his work independently. He soon realized that even if the government had no interest in UFOs, there were plenty of other civilians who were

[299] Carl Jung, *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978 [1964]): 16-17.
[300] Carl Jung, *Flying Saucers,* 22.

perfectly open-minded about the possibility of extraterrestrial existence. Smith began meeting and speaking with like-minded people outside of work, and in March 1957 formally established the Ottawa Flying Saucer Club. The OFSC met regularly every month in Smith's basement at his house in City View, a suburb of Ottawa.

Anywhere from a dozen to forty people attended the monthly meetings. Club members would regularly travel to meet, some from as far away as New York, and even from places like Finland. According to Smith's son Jim, the mood of the meetings was always excited and positive.[301] By 1960, the club's presence was substantial enough that Smith began publishing a regular newsletter called *Topside,* in reference to the "Boys From Topside," the extraterrestrials he claimed perched above the Earth in the topside ionosphere. *Topside* contained reviews of recent sightings, the odd piece of poetry, and longer essays that either Smith or other members of the club wrote on such topics as the theory of gravitation, Soviet science, and the relationship between religion and science. It is clear from the newsletter that the club's mission was to disseminate the kind of information and reasoning about UFOs that the club thought the government was unprepared or unwilling to undertake. "I maintain," Smith wrote, "that it takes only one black sheep to prove that all sheep are not white, and one unexplained saucer sighting should be enough to warrant establishing a serious scientific study group."[302] Of course, Smith had hoped that his own Project Magnet, as well as Project Second Storey, would be the solution, only to be disappointed. Instead, he used the OFSC to pursue this task.

[301] James Smith. Interview by author, 17 July 2018.
[302] Wilbert Smith, 6 August 1952. Letter to Donald Keyhoe. Miscellaneous Project Magnet file. X30-3, box 1126.2. UOA, Ottawa, ON.

Government scientists, in Smith's view, were too close-minded for this kind of work, and so it fell instead to civilian organizations like the OFSC. This was not unique to Canada. A U.S. Gallup poll from 1974 concluded that eleven percent of Americans were UFO witnesses who, in addition to the many other people interested in the subject, were unable to obtain clear answers from the government about their experiences. As such, "grassroots organizations" like the OFSC in the case of Canada became the only available source of information.[303] In other words, some civilians felt compelled to form their own groups to investigate the problem because of the government's failure to provide unambiguous answers. To the government however, such people were unwilling to accept expert opinion.

In another sense, it is perhaps unsurprising that these enthusiasts turned away from authority and toward one another. Writing specifically about the U.S., Robert D. Putnam argues that during "the first two-thirds of the twentieth century a powerful tide bore Americans into ever deeper engagement in the life of their communities."[304] After the Second World War, civic engagement was at a high point, especially as the baby boomers started to come of age. Whereas Putnam tracks a decline in civic engagement in the last third of the 20th century, during the 1950s and 1960s "community groups across America had seemed to stand on the threshold of a new era of expanded involvement."[305] It is likely that this trend extended to suburban Canada and influenced, at least in part, the formation of UFO study groups at this specific time.

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[303] Brenda Denzler, *The Lure of the Edge: Scientific Passions, Religious Beliefs, and the Pursuit of UFOs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003): 16.
[304] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000): 27.
[305] Putnam, *Bowling Alone,* 16.

If not the first, the OFSC seems to be one of the earliest formed, and certainly the most organized and productive, clubs in Canada. The Vancouver Area Flying Saucer Club was also founded in the 1950s, although very little documentation remains of its activities. At least as early as 1956, members began meeting to discuss the topic, and quickly set out to recruit "younger folk, say from 9 or 10 years, to 15 years," given that adults were "not the only ones who ask questions about U.F.O.'s!" The VAFSC "Chairman" Margaret Fewster wrote in the February 1957 newsletter that the club had been successful at starting up a junior branch that rotated their bi-monthly Sunday afternoon meetings at one another's houses ("rumpus rooms [were] ideal"). "The younger people," Fewster wrote, "ask extremely intelligent, and often strangely penetrating questions, and they deserve an opportunity to receive answers of the same caliber."[306]

One such youngster was Ramon McGuire, the vocalist for the Canadian rock band Trooper. He described attending VAFSC meetings as the youngest member, sometime in the mid-1960s: "My Mom and Dad took turns driving me to meetings in Kits[ilano], and I was warmly welcomed by an eccentric group of truth-seekers who thought I was just the cutest thing – until the night I stood up and mockingly questioned a presentation about two Australian boys and their suspicious close encounter of the third kind." According to McGuire, that was his very last meeting with the VAFSC club – apparently his questions were *too* penetrating.[307]

Beyond recruiting youth, the VAFSC, like other groups, collected sighting reports, mused over cosmic questions like the unification of space and time, and brought

[306] Vancouver Area Flying Saucer Club newsletter, January-February 1957. Pamphlet Collection. PAM 1957-172. City of Vancouver Archives, Vancouver, BC.
[307] Ra McGuire, 2 April 2016. UFO blog post. Http://www.ramcguire.com/blog/2016/4/2/ufo. Accessed 1 October 2018.

guest speakers to Vancouver. On 7 May 1964, for instance, the club hosted George Van Tassel, an aircraft mechanic and contactee who ran a private airport in California that also played host to an annual UFO convention.[308] A number of other organizations with similar goals and activities were established in the 1960s, whether independently or as a branch of an American club. Several examples of these will be explored in further detail in Chapter Five.

Of course, not all civilians were, at least at first, convinced by what they saw in the sky. What the experience of seeing a UFO comes down to, in part, is the question of doubt and knowledge production. It is clear that the government response was doubt, but this was also, at first, the default response for many civilians. For instance, a civilian from Rodney, Ontario wrote to the DND in August 1958 about a brilliant white light they had seen steadily rise up from the horizon. They prefaced their report, "At the risk of seeming a little 'off,'" before stating that they "have always taken the reports of flying objects with 'a grain of salt' but this one [had them] wondering."[309] A telex report from July 1965 described a witness to another sighting, this time in Vancouver, as "an intelligent business man" and noted that "he did not believe in UFOs until this morning."[310] Similarly, in a detailed statement about a June 1989 sighting in Meldrum Creek, BC, a witness stated they saw a UFO "beaming" with orange and yellow lights, with "what appeared to be windows on the bottom half" of the object. "I could not believe what I saw," the witness wrote. "I thought that this only happened in magazines

[308] Vancouver Area Flying Saucer Club public lecture, 7 May 1964. Pamphlet Collection. PAM 1964-148. City of Vancouver Archives, Vancouver, BC.
[309] Name Redacted, 21 August 1958. Letter to the Department of National Defence. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[310] UFO Sighting Report, Vancouver, BC, 19 July 1965. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N65 001-036.

that you read." As the "hard core believers" often said, it usually took a personal experience to convince someone of the reality of UFOs.

An RCMP memo illustrates this in the case of its own officers. In January 1967, a Constable Ford saw a UFO in the area of Inuvik, NWT. Upon investigation, Ford's superior, Inspector K.D. Smith, concluded that he had "no doubt" that Ford saw what he described in his report. However, Ford's fellow constables St-Jean and Kaminski "showed little confidence" in his story. Inspector Smith was not happy about the latter's reactions. St-Jean and Kaminski apparently did not go to any great lengths to confirm Ford's sighting, limiting "their observations to looking out a window in the general direction he indicated." The other two constables simply attributed Ford's sighting to a star. "These three members are all single and live in barracks," Inspector Smith wrote in his report, "and I suspect that both Csts ST-JEAN and KAMINSKI believed that [Ford] was trying to play a joke on them. I have told [St-Jean and Kaminski] that I expect them to be more receptive to observations of their fellow members, and I am satisfied that their apparent indifference in this instance was an isolated case that occurred only because of the subject under discussion."[311]

As internal memos illustrate, the DND still took a dim view of the subject. CBC Winnipeg, intent on doing a program on UFO sightings, contacted the DND in February 1965 asking for background information on the department's procedures when dealing with reports. Colonel L.A. Bourgeois, Director of Information Services, instructed his

[311] K.D. Smith, 31 January 1967. Letter to Commanding Officer of "G" Division, RCMP. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

colleagues: “This HQ does not wish to become involved with such a program. It is policy to stay clear of this subject whenever possible…Please tactfully say “NO” to CBC.”[312]

Conclusion

The previous two chapters were about discrete government projects aimed at investigating UFOs. In contrast, this chapter presented the first real efforts that a handful of citizens made to interrogate the government for its knowledge about UFOs. The government had received letters of this sort from the earliest days, but they accelerated in volume and content after the termination of Projects Magnet and Second Storey. The government took the position that UFOs were nothing other than misidentified natural phenomena, and many citizens disagreed, some of them vehemently.

Citizens like D.M. Spicer and Ken Kaasen made their views known by writing one letter after another. Others formed UFO clubs, at a time when this grassroots movement had only just begun, in direct response to perceived government inaction. UFO enthusiasts tapped into broader countercultural movements taking place simultaneously. As Lara Campbell and Dominique Clement write, Canada was “a hotbed of activism”: students, women’s rights groups, gay rights organizations, environmental, aboriginal, and African-Canadian activists all fought for greater recognition and rights, “while advocates for children’s rights, prisoners’ rights, animal rights, peace, poverty,

[312] L.A. Bourgeois, 4 March 1965. Letter to the Office of Information at the Department of National Defence. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17988, file HQC 940-105, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

and official languages organized in unprecedented numbers."[313] One of the main ideas all these various movements had in common was a sense of the postwar period, and especially "the sixties," as an idea, or moment, of questioning established and hierarchical authority.

Conspiracy theory about UFOs in Canada was, in part, a manifestation of the growing distrust citizens felt for their government in the postwar years. It was not necessarily a purely psychological phenomenon that "the paranoid" experienced on his own, although psychology clearly also played a role. There are established psychological processes, such as pattern recognition and the need to attribute agency to events and causes – especially to institutions that people already believe to be distrustful – that influence the generation and spread of conspiracy theory. On a much broader level, these ideas were the result of historical changes taking place that affected political deference and trust in established authority. Some citizens felt that the government was not living up to its obligations to provide for them, whether through national defence or scientific knowledge, and they were not shy in making this opinion known. This conflict was also the result of the state coming up against these changing views while they attempted to educate the masses. As I have argued, the Canadian state attempted to use UFOs as a site to assert its modernity, partnering with the scientific community in order to borrow its cultural authority. By making pronouncements about the unreality of UFOs, through the voices of its officials, the state tried to shore up its authority and clear away uncertainty and what Bauman refers to as superstition. Unfortunately for the state, times were

[313] Lara Campbell and Dominique Clement, "Introduction: Time, Age, Myth: Towards a History of the Sixties," in Lara Campbell, Dominique Clement, and Gregory S. Kealey (eds) *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012): 10-11.

changing and the people they were attempting to directly educate considered themselves, as Robert MacDougall writes, to be iconoclasts who were not fooled by the establishment. What resulted was two sides butting heads, neither of them willing to relent.

Finally, these citizens' views speak to the question of the malleable reality of UFOs. By this point, the question of the objects' *realness* assumed as much a rhetorical as a scientific answer. The citizen letters attempted to make UFOs more real to the government through the use of words and arguments (however antagonistic and ineffective), rather than physical evidence. UFOs meant any number of things to Canadian citizens and they lobbied to embed the objects more concretely into the government's consciousness. The next chapter will show that perhaps these efforts primed the government for the kind of investigation Project Second Storey avowed it would never do. This chapter showed how uninterested the government had become in UFOs after the termination of Project Second Storey; the main priority was to avoid all mention of the subject. The examples covered in the next chapter, however, demonstrate that government interest did pique again, and even reached a culmination that would be unmatched by any other period.

Chapter 4: 1967, The Year of Physical Evidence

Introduction

The year 1967 was filled with what the astronomer and ufologist J. Allen Hynek would have called "high strangeness."[314] The year was Canada's centennial, celebrated by events and activities across the country, most notably Expo 67 in Montreal, which attracted millions of visitors. Journalist Tom Hawthorn argues that the Canada of today "owes more to the decisions made in the wake of 1967 than to the negotiations conducted in 1867."[315] The greatest achievement of the year, he writes, was "a seductive awakening of the spirit."[316] At least one place explicitly connected this awakened spirit with the UFO phenomenon. The Canadian government declared the small city of St. Paul, Alberta the Centennial Capital after it built a UFO landing pad. The former Minister of National Defence, Paul Hellyer, opened the pad with a speech about the wonder of space travel and the promise of a technological future.[317]

In addition to national pride, however, a number of stranger phenomena occurred, and not just in Canada. John Keel's book *The Mothman Prophecies* described a series of bizarre encounters involving UFOs and a moth-like creature in the area of Point Pleasant, West Virginia, that culminated in a fatal bridge collapse in December.[318] The infamous

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[314] J. Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1972): 25-27.
[315] Tom Hawthorn, *The Year Canadians Lost Their Minds and Found Their Country: The Centennial of 1967* (Madeira Park, BC: Douglas and McIntyre, 2017): v.
[316] Tom Hawthorn, *The Year Canadians Lost Their Minds and Found Their Country: The Centennial of 1967* (Madeira Park, BC: Douglas and McIntyre, 2017): 5.
[317] Paul Hellyer, 3 June 1967. "Speech by the Honourable Paul T. Hellyer, PC MP Minister of National Defence at a Banquet St. Paul, Alberta." Speeches file. MG 32, B-33, volume 3, file 1.
[318] John A. Keel, *The Mothman Prophecies* (New York: Tor, 1975).

Patterson-Gimlin film was shot in October, depicting one of the most controversial images of an alleged Sasquatch.[319] In Canada, witnesses reported a record number of UFO sightings in 1967, jumping to 169 from only fifty-five the previous year. The numbers continued to climb in the late 1960s and into the 1970s, but it is 1967 that clearly marks a shift in UFO activity in Canada – however one might account for this.

The year also marked a hinge point in how the Canadian government responded to UFOs. Official interest in the subject culminated in this year, and almost immediately afterward dropped off. As Chapter 6 will show in detail, the DND took steps to rid itself of the responsibility for UFO investigation, clearly having reached the end of what it felt was necessary and sufficient. However, the events of the year did not make it easy for the department.

The next two chapters explore the nature of three kinds of evidence the UFO phenomenon in Canada presented at various times. Whereas in previous years the majority of evidence on offer was either anecdotal or in the form of amateur drawings, as Chapter 5 will discuss, three cases in 1967 presented *physical* evidence: Stefan Michalak's encounter at Falcon Lake, Manitoba; the Duhamel, Alberta crop circles; and the Shag Harbour, Nova Scotia crash. Scientists in Ottawa felt they could not ignore the evidence they found at these sites. Hynek characterized UFO encounters that left physical traces as Close Encounters of the Second Kind. As he wrote, "The significance of such physical interactions is obvious; they offer opportunity for physical measurement and the

[319] See Loren Coleman, *Bigfoot! The True Story of Apes in America* (New York: Paraview, 2003): chapter 7; Brian Regal, *Searching for Sasquatch: Crackpots, Eggheads, and Cryptozoology* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Joshua Blu Buhs, *Bigfoot: The Life and Times of a Legend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

promise of "hard data.""[320] This chapter tells three stories of UFO encounters in 1967, attempting to show when, how, and why government investigators took seriously and found them compelling, to demonstrate the lengths to which the Canadian government went to investigate and solve them. I argue that 1967 was the year during which the reality of UFOs coalesced most convincingly. If UFOs are objects that occupy varying positions on an ontological continuum, then this was the year when they slid the farthest towards the pole of tangibility.

The three cases of physical evidence discussed here come directly from departmental briefings, indicating that the government was well aware of how physical evidence commanded special attention. In November 1967, the Minister of National Defence Leo Cadieux wrote the following to the Minister of Industry C.M. Drury: "Most frequently reported, are sightings of aerial phenomena which, in general, cannot be fruitfully investigated after the event. Occasionally, however, there are associated physical phenomena on the ground that require scientific investigation."[321] Those involved with the UFO investigation were aware of the differing values placed on different types of evidence, and agreed that anything physical warranted more serious attention. Again, as Hynek wrote, "Close Encounters of the Second Kind bear a special importance, for when it is reported that a UFO has left tangible evidence of its presence, here is clearly the area in which to begin digging for "scientific paydirt.""[322] This, and the next, chapter will explore what this digging actually comprised, and why, in the end, even the physical evidence failed to yield paydirt.

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[320] J. Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1972): 111.
[321] Leo Cadieux, November 1967. Letter to C.M. Drury. Intelligence – General: Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[322] J. Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1972): 112.

The Michalak Case

The Falcon Lake incident is easily the most extensively documented Canadian UFO case. Scattered across a number of files are approximately 250 pages of material documenting the investigation. The incident is one of the most frequently cited Canadian cases,[323] and was even recently the subject of an entire book.[324] So why the intense interest in this specific case? Why did the Canadian government invest so much more time and energy into this case than any other? Compared to the vast majority of other UFO sighting reports, which only offer descriptions of ambiguous lights in the sky, the Falcon Lake incident came with a cornucopia of physical evidence. The government was able to get its hands on *something*. The fact of physical material that could be collected and tested, in addition to testimony and a drawing, granted the alleged UFOs more reality than any other case had done. The events and effects of the Falcon Lake incident provided the necessary conditions for the reality of UFOs to coalesce concretely, even if this newfound status was only temporary.

The story began on 19 May 1967. Stefan Michalak, 51 years old at the time, was a mechanic and amateur gold prospector who lived in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He decided to prospect in Whiteshell Provincial Park and so took the Greyhound bus to the site, about 150 km east of Winnipeg, close to the Ontario border. He checked into a motel for the

[323] Nearly every book that discusses UFOs in Canada has a section on the case. See, for example: Palmiro Campagna, *The UFO Files: The Canadian Connection Exposed* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1998): chapter 8; John Robert Colombo, *True Canadian UFO Stories* (Toronto: Prospero Books, 2004): 144.
[324] Stan Michalak and Chris Rutkowski, *When They Appeared: Falcon Lake 1967: The inside story of a close encounter* (Winnipeg: McNally Robinson, 2017).

night and in the early morning of 20 May gathered his gear and headed into the forest. He spent the morning surveying near Falcon Lake and then set up a small camp for lunch. What had started out as a routine trip soon took a bizarre turn that plagued Michalak for years.

After lunch Michalak went back to a vein of quartz he had found that morning. The sounds of geese flying overhead soon distracted him. Michalak looked up and saw two cigar-shaped UFOs. They were in plain sight, in the middle of the day, and less than two hundred feet away. Michalak wrote that they descended steadily and at the exact same rate before one stopped in mid-air. The second continued to descend and landed about 160 feet away on top of a flat rock. The first UFO hovered above Michalak for several minutes before ascending and disappearing into the sky. The UFO on the ground began changing colour, "turning from red to grey-red to light grey and then to the colour of hot stainless steel, with a golden glow around it."[325] Michalak noticed an opening at the top of the craft that emitted a brilliant purple light as well as waves of warm air and the stench of sulphur emanating from inside.

The craft remained motionless for long enough that Michalak sketched it on his pad of paper, producing the drawing shown above. He had not brought a camera with him, as he said there was no need for one on a prospecting trip. Michalak thought it must be some kind of advanced, likely American, technology, but could not see any identifying marks. He eventually approached the craft and heard two human-like voices coming from inside. After attempting to hail the occupants in several different languages, to no avail,

[325] Stephen Michalak, *My Encounter With The UFO* (Winnipeg: Osnova Publications, 1967). See microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 311, file DND/UAR (1967) 200. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Michalak approached and stuck his head into an opening in the side. He reported seeing "a maze of lights" inside, all flashing randomly.

Michalak stepped back and touched the UFO with his gloved hand, scorching the fingertips. Then the UFO moved. As it began to ascend, a wave of hot air blasted out of what appeared to be a ventilation screen. The heat struck Michalak in the chest, burning his shirt and skin. The craft disappeared into the sky, leaving Michalak confused and injured. As if this encounter was not strange enough, the investigation was even odder.

Michalak collected his gear, noticing that the needle on his compass was spinning wildly. He moved to inspect the landing site but was overcome with nausea and a severe headache. He began vomiting and, once he was able, staggered through the woods to the highway, heaving the whole way. By this point it was about three in the afternoon. The burn on his chest had resolved into a pattern of red marks much like the holes in a grate. With a stroke of luck, Michalak was able to flag down an RCMP cruiser driving down Highway 1. At this point, accounts of the incident start to conflict. Michalak maintained that he tried to explain his story to the RCMP officer, Constable Solotki. Michalak warned Solotki to stay away from him in case he was irradiated, but also asked Solotki for medical assistance. Solotki apparently did not believe Michalak and left him on the road. Michalak was forced to walk back to his motel, check out, and take the bus back to Winnipeg that same night.

Solotki's version frames Michalak differently. In an RCMP report dated 26 May, Corporal Davis – an investigator on the case – summarized what Solotki witnessed: Michalak told Solotki that his shirt was burned and so had put it in his briefcase. However, Michalak refused to show it because "he didn't want any publicity." Michalak

later said he refused to show it because he was afraid the shirt would emit radiation. Solotki assumed Michalak had been drinking and was hungover, as "his eyes were red and he acted in a very irrational manner." Every time Solotki approached him, Michalak would back away. Michalak also refused to show the constable the landing site, again because he wanted to avoid publicity. He did show Solotki the marks on his chest, which "looked like marks that were caused by rubbing ash onto the skin." As Michalak was so uncooperative, Solotki was forced to leave him on the road.[326]

Once back in Winnipeg with his wife and three children, Michalak continued to feel the effects of his encounter. He had lost weight, he could not rid his mouth of the taste of sulphur, he saw pink dots in his field of vision, and he would vomit anytime he tried to eat or drink. Despite his statements to Solotki that he wished to avoid publicity, one of the first things he did upon arriving back home was to call the local press. One of Michalak's sons, Stan, later recalled that his father felt a moral duty to report his experience, lest the public be left unaware of a potential danger.[327] A reporter showed up that same evening, 21 May, and began what Michalak himself characterized as the "beginning of [a] long series of questions and harassment by the press, radio, television, the air force and various authorities."

Michalak was right. Interest in his case continued for a number of months, as RCMP and RCAF officers conducted interviews, followed up on soil sample tests, and hunted for the elusive landing site near Falcon Lake. At subsequent meetings with RCMP officers, representatives from civilian UFO organizations accompanied Michalak. For

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[326] C.J. Davis, 26 May 1967. UFO Sighting Report, Falcon Beach, MB. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[327] Stan Michalak and Chris Rutkowski, *When They Appeared: Falcon Lake 1967: The inside story of a close encounter* (Winnipeg: McNally Robinson, 2017): 50.

instance, just two days later, on 23 May, when RCMP Constables Zacharias and Davis visited Michalak at his home, a J.B. Thompson of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO) was also present. Michalak himself had gotten in touch with APRO. At this meeting, Michalak reported that he had been treated at the hospital and again by his family doctor for the burns on his chest, which resembled severe sunburns. He said he did not want to reveal the location of the landing site because he had "a good nickel strike in the area and [did] not want it to be common knowledge just where he [had] been prospecting."[328]

RCMP officers followed up with Michalak on a number of occasions afterward, recording interviews with him and trying to convince him to take officers to the landing site. Michalak said he would not go back out until he was physically well enough and he had assurances that the site would not be publicized. In the meantime, Michalak's shirt was tested for radioactivity and the results came back negative. The RCMP officers attempted to acquire Michalak's burned glove for testing, but were told that Thompson from APRO had taken it without the RCMP's knowledge. As Michalak was too ill to go, RCMP officers headed out to the Falcon Lake area themselves in an unsuccessful attempt to find the site. Michalak's story did not seem totally consistent. For instance, on their search, the RCMP found several landmarks near Falcon Lake that Michalak had described, but the actual landing site remained elusive. They also interviewed the bartender at Michalak's motel near the site, who was convinced he served Michalak several beers the evening of 19 May. Michalak maintained he had drunk only coffee.

[328] C.J. Davis, 26 May 1967. UFO Sighting Report, Falcon Beach, MB. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Adding to the case's strangeness, Michalak eventually returned to the area alone and found the site. This was after several unsuccessful trips that Michalak took, with investigators in tow. Squadron Leader Bissky, the RCAF investigator, noted several times that Michalak seemed to be stonewalling him and withholding information about his experience, potentially for private gain. In any case, the landing site was much smaller than Michalak had led the authorities to believe, but did contain the flat rock on which the UFO had come to rest, as well as some of the gear he had been using and had left behind. The flat rock was completely free of grass or moss, as if it had been burned away.

The area was tested for radioactivity, and this time higher than normal levels were detected. S.E. Hunt, with the Department of Health and Welfare, concluded that the radioactive material detected was radium 226, a common element found in radioactive waste, but the level was not high enough to cause a hazard to the public. Hunt also noted the confusing nature of the case, given the variety of actors involved and their general unwillingness to cooperate.[329] He was appalled that Michalak, once he had located the landing site, had taken his own soil and rock samples and contaminated them by placing them all in the same bag with his prospecting gear and storing it in his basement. In short, to an outsider, Michalak appeared at times inebriated, confused, and disingenuous. However, Michalak always maintained that he had experienced a traumatic event that scarred him for the rest of his life, and that he had only the public's best interests in mind.

In the end, however, the investigators could not make any more headway. They could only interview Michalak so many times before they stopped receiving new

[329] In addition to APRO's Mr. Thompson, another civilian, Gerald Hart, also showed up to "aid" the investigation. It is clear that nobody apart from Michalak himself trusted Hart; his motives were always unclear.

information. Michalak's burns eventually healed, although they would apparently flare up again intermittently in the months and years to come. Radioactivity at the site was detected, but it was still within relatively normal ranges. The case had received a considerable amount of press attention, which had attracted unsavory characters like APRO's Thompson. And despite the ample documentation of the events of 20 May and onward, there were no more witnesses to the actual events and Michalak's account lacked the kind of objectivity and consistency that was needed to make a more rigorous assessment. Ultimately, however, the investigators "were unable to provide evidence which would dispute Mr. Michalak's story."[330] The case remains unsolved.

Nevertheless, it is clear that what drove the interest in the story was the amount of physical material on offer. Regardless of the truth of Michalak's story, there were pieces of evidence that defied explanation. Michalak had severe burns on his chest in the pattern of a ventilation grate, matching the drawing he made. The burns never blistered, but they were certainly not minor. His general behavior after the event, including the vomiting and pain, were consistent with radiation poisoning. His clothing displayed burns of a similar force. The flat rock at the landing site was conspicuously absent of vegetation, and the radiation levels were unaccountable. These were simply elements of the story that could not be ignored, whatever their origin.

[330] "UFO Report: Falcon Lake, Man.," n.d. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Seven Day Wonder

It was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that crop circles entered the popular imagination.[331] When they first began appearing in farmers' fields, ufologists immediately linked them to the UFO phenomenon. Many witnesses assumed that only saucer-like craft could make the unique shapes of the circles. Only a saucer could descend, leave such perfect impressions upon the ground, and then lift off again without leaving any other traces of their visit. As interest grew and more crop circles appeared – mostly in the U.K. – the designs they traced in fields grew more complex. Viewed from the air, many crop circles looked like works of art. Perfectly geometrical and displaying a variety of unique designs, witnesses associated them with an otherworldly mystique.

It did not matter that a number of people eventually admitted that crop circles were hoaxes.[332] Almost as well known as the impressions themselves is the image of several mischievous men who toil through the night, pressing down stalks using nothing more than simple wooden boards looped through with rope.[333] As David Clarke writes, ufologists "depended upon UFOs retaining an aura of mystery." When it came to crop circles, "few ufologists wanted a resolution. The integrity of the enigma had to be defended at all costs."[334] Interest in crop circles never entirely abated. For example, the

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[331] Brenda Denzler, *The Lure of the Edge: Scientific Passions, Religious Beliefs, and the Pursuit of UFOs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003): 27.
[332] Crop circles have even become commercialized: In 2014, the tech company Nvidia created a crop circle in a California field in the shape of their new microchip, to help promote the release of their new mobile processor. Https://blogs.nvidia.com/blog/2014/01/05/salinas-crop-circle-and-project-192/. Accessed 2 October 2018.
[333] See, for instance, Mark Pilkington, *Mirage Men: A Journey in Disinformation, Paranoia and UFOs* (London: Constable, 2010): 9.
[334] David Clarke, *How UFOs Conquered the World: The History of a Modern Myth* (London: Aurum Press, 2015): 92.

2014 documentary film *A Field Full of Secrets* attempted to revive interest in crop circles by arguing that they are more than interesting shapes on the ground: they are actually 2-dimensional designs for free-energy spacecraft.[335]

While crop circles were predominantly a British obsession, a number of them did appear in farmers' fields in North America. Even before ufologists gave them the moniker "crop circles," Canada was host to one of the earliest appearances. The case of the 1967 "reputed UFO landing marks" at Duhamel, Alberta remains a mystery. While the Canadian government clearly maintained an official stance toward UFOs of indifference, if not outright disbelief, any physical traces discovered were cause for concern and investigation. Like the case of Michalak, the Duhamel crop circles represent a time and place when UFOs *came into being* in a way not previously experienced. No other case of physical depressions on the ground warranted an investigation like Duhamel. While the effort put toward the mystery's resolution was relatively minimal – the documentation of the incident amounts to only about twenty-five pages – it is nevertheless a fact that the Department of National Defence did assume the marks represented some kind of physical reality that could be investigated.

The mystery allegedly began several weeks before the crop circles themselves were discovered. A number of citizens in the hamlet of Duhamel, near the small city of Camrose, Alberta, had reported instances of UFO sightings to friends, family, and the local newspaper. In the words of G.H.S. Jones, the investigating DRB scientist, two schoolgirls reported seeing "a UFO, largish, creamish, standardish, at a range of not more than two or three hundred yards, bobbing up and down near the ground "as if to attract

[335] Charles Maxwell, *A Field Full of Secrets* (Gravitas Ventures, 2014).

attention."" Jones was not impressed with the sighting, as he also noted that "this description could be taken from any of many previously published reports." As is often the case, one sighting begets another, especially when media coverage is involved, and so Duhamel was primed for a more spectacular occurrence.

There was a heavy rain the night before the crop circles appeared on Edgar Schielke's land. Schielke, a local farmer, had not been out to his fields in weeks. He stated that he only went out if his cows did not come home for the night.[336] On the morning of 5 August, he trudged through the soft ground to his pasture to find his cattle and "immediately noticed a circular mark some thirty feet in diameter on a region of relatively high ground." He thought little of the mark and more of his cows; he concentrated on getting them back home. Word of the crop circle might never have leaked out if Schielke had not "casually" mentioned it to his neighbor, who immediately assumed it was from a flying saucer. The neighbor then informed a local schoolteacher and amateur ufologist, Ray Sanders, who – in Jones's words – "became the <u>obvious</u> prime-mover in the growth of the story and its distribution to the Press, a UFO society in Edmonton, and in due course to the CBC."

Schielke maintained from the beginning that he did not believe in UFOs and that none of his farming equipment could have made the marks. Rather, he assumed they were the result of "some strange lightning phenomenon." The farmer gave Sanders permission to visit the site and conduct an investigation. During the first several days after Schielke first noticed the mark, nobody thought to contact the authorities. Instead, Sanders and several others repeatedly visited the site, leaving tire tracks throughout the field. They

[336] As such, it is possible that the marks appeared days before Schielke found them.

found three additional marks of similar size and quality, and also took soil samples, which they forwarded to the Edmonton UFO society. Ken Patridge, a reporter with the *Camrose Canadian*, visited the site on 8 August and a story was published in the newspaper, with accompanying photographs, the next day.[337]

At this point, Patridge directly contacted CFHQ and priority telexes went out on 9 August ordering an investigation and indicating the following: "Four rings in ground as though round large object settled into ground. Depressions heavier to one side. Ring diameter of 34 ft to 36 ft[.] No scorch. Clearly marked teeth or claw like marks around edge."[338] Two days later, on 11 August, a government team arrived at the site.

The investigating scientist, G.H.S. Jones, worked with the nearby Defence Research Establishment Suffield, a military research facility, itself a branch of the Defence Research Board. Jones introduced his report on the Duhamel investigation by lamenting the sorry state of the process used to clear his travel logistics to and from the site. Jones noted that "the use of a staff car [to drive to the site] would have meant that the inspection became a weekend affair." This was clearly an unacceptable prospect, as Jones anticipated the job could be done within a single day – that is, it did not require wasting any more time. He then attempted to arrange passage on a RCAF aircraft that was coincidentally flying into the region, only to encounter a delay of two hours to arrange the necessary clearance, which "involved numerous expensive phone calls."

Jones eventually made it to the site and met up with Patridge, the newspaper reporter, and Captain Walker, a helicopter pilot with the Royal Canadian Army Service

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[337] G.H.S. Jones, n.d. "Onsite Inspection of Reputed UFO Landing Marks at Duhamel, Alberta." Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[338] UFO Sighting Report, Camrose, AB, 8 August 1967. Microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 310, file DND/UAR (1967) 91-100. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Corps. Jones was tasked with conducting a scientific inspection of the site, Patridge with taking more photographs, and Walker with carrying out interviews with all the relevant witnesses. As Jones wrote, “By the time the inspection team visited the site, it had been, literally, a seven day wonder.” Tire tracks from “droves of people” covered the pasture (but not the marks themselves). Schielke, oddly, seemed unconcerned about the damage to his pasture and “maintained an attitude of nonchalance towards the whole business.” Despite the damage from the visitors and the heavy rainfall from several days before, the marks were still clearly visible. Jones, however, did admit his disappointment upon first seeing the circles, again lamenting that he “had been brought so far to look at so little.”

Nevertheless, the crop circles left him puzzled. Jones’s five-page report gives a detailed explanation of what he encountered and his attempts to account for the circles. In total, Jones and Walker identified six circular marks, ranging in diameter from thirty-one to thirty-six feet. According to a map of the site that Walker drew as part of his own report, the marks were randomly arranged within the single field, isolated from one another. All of the circles were “incomplete” on one side and contained within them tread or lug marks. Jones thought they looked as if a rolling tire had made them, although there was no single tire track leading to or from the circles. He observed that the “droves” of tire tracks in the field from visitors gave a reliable comparison: the crop circle marks were obviously made by something heavier than a normal car or truck. He was also skeptical of anyone’s ability to carry and roll a tire with the weight required to make such “sharply impressed” marks.

Jones considered the possibility that the circles were a hoax, although he concluded that he was “unable to find <u>anything</u> which would lend strength to this

supposition." Lastly, he considered "the UFO possibility." After some quick calculations of potential load versus area, he assumed the necessary load to make such marks would be 135 tons, "in [the] right ball park for a large aircraft, or presumably, small space craft." In the end, Jones was equivocal: he could neither confirm nor deny the possibility of a hoax, and the previous evidence of strange phenomena in the area could have been "a lead-in" to the hoax; a rolling wheel could have produced the marks, although it was unclear how this would have been accomplished; and the marks were "sufficiently unique" in his experience to "state categorically" that he would likely discount the possibility of a hoax if in future he encountered such marks again.[339]

Walker's report was similarly detailed and also withheld firm judgement. He gave a general description of the site and specifics for each of the marks found. He noted that the cattle seemed unaffected: "There is no evidence, physical or verbal, of any change in their habits." He found no evidence of "deliberate interference" or "chemical involvement." He noted that Jones tested the area with a Geiger counter which returned normal background radiation readings.

On 15 August, Walker returned to the site to collect soil samples. A DND summary of the incident written 25 August indicated that the soil sample was ordered as a direct result of the ambiguity encountered during the Michalak case. Tests of the soil taken from the Falcon Lake site had shown higher than normal radioactivity levels, and so "it was deemed advisable" to test the Duhamel site as well. The DND sent the Duhamel soil to the University of Alberta to test "for foreign matter." The DND summary notes that nobody reported any further UFO activity after Schielke discovered

[339] G.H.S. Jones, n.d. "Onsite Inspection of Reputed UFO Landing Marks at Duhamel, Alberta." Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

the marks, and that "it has not been possible to arrive at a conclusion" regarding the incident. Rather, it was advisable to wait until the soil sample tests came back from the laboratory.[340]

Unfortunately, and perhaps predictably, the tests were inconclusive. A 17 October memo indicated that gamma-ray spectral analysis of the soil samples revealed entirely normal levels of radioactivity.[341] In the new year, in response to a ministerial inquiry, F.B. Caldwell, with the Secretary of Defence staff, blandly summarized the incident by stating that "DND is unable to arrive at a solution as to what caused the impression on the property of Mr Ed Schielke of Duhamel, Alberta."[342] No official filed a further report on the matter and those involved with the incident moved on.

Dark Object

Flying saucer crashes hold a special wonder for ufologists. Sightings of mysterious lights in the sky are relatively commonplace; the archives are full of them. An actual crash, however, is rare, with only a handful around the world that have been reported. Perhaps most infamous of all is the 1947 Roswell crash, which, in combination with Kenneth Arnold's sighting, kick-started the modern era of UFOs. Ufologists and conspiracy theorists have built and maintained an extensive mythology around the

[340] F.M. Caldwell, 25 August 1967. "Ministerial Iniquiry" Memorandum. Microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 310, file DND/UAR (1967) 91-100. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[341] T.R. Overton, 17 October 1967. "Soil Samples Received in DRB, Originating from a Supposed "UFO" Site at Duhamel (Alberta)." Microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 310, file DND/UAR (1967) 91-100. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[342] F.M. Caldwell, 25 August 1967. "Ministerial Iniquiry" Memorandum. Microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 310, file DND/UAR (1967) 91-100. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Roswell crash. It is arguably the basis, or at least one of the founding pillars, of the American UFO phenomenon, continuing to fuel speculation and commercial interests.

Canada has its own UFO crash mythology, although it came much later and in many ways is much more believable. Whereas the evidence for the Roswell crash is largely speculative and has become so convoluted it is difficult to trust, the evidence for "Canada's Roswell," as some ufologists have called the incident, has retained an uncommon consistency. As with the Michalak and Duhamel cases, the 1967 Shag Harbour UFO crash produced an amount of physical evidence convincing enough to warrant a serious DND investigation. It is likely that if the crash had comprised only eyewitness testimony and not the possibility of finding an actual craft then the Canadian government would have handled the case like any other: that is, interviewed the witnesses and filed the report into oblivion.

Shag Harbour is a small fishing village on the South Shore of Nova Scotia, right at the bottom south-west corner of the province. The area is so small it is served exclusively by the RCMP, which has a detachment in the nearby town of Barrington, about 15 km away. On 4 October 1967, close to midnight, the detachment received several calls – one right after the other within a span of fifteen minutes – about an airplane that had crashed into the harbour. Corporal Wercicky was the officer in the station at the time and after taking the calls drove down to the harbor with a second officer. A third officer met them there. Thus, there were three RCMP officers as well as half a dozen civilian witnesses to the event.

The civilians had first noticed the UFO as nothing more than an object with lights that moved silently and slowly across the night sky. Witnesses later described the UFO as

an object "in excess of 60 feet in diameter [that] carried four white lights spaced horizontally at a distance of 15 feet."[343] Suddenly, as a DND report put it, the object descended rapidly to the water with a high whistling sound and made a bright flash upon impact. The object floated in the water, a single light still visible. At this point, the RCMP officers arrived and stood on the shore with the other witnesses watching the curious object. It was obvious to them that this was no ordinary aircraft. Subsequent inquiries about "all other possible leads" – such as "aircraft, flares, floats, or any other known objects" – had come back negative and investigators determined that no commercial or military aircraft were operating in the area.[344]

After watching the object for several minutes, the RCMP officers commandeered a fishing boat and piloted into the harbour. They thought it possible that survivors of the craft might be in need of rescue. Although this detail is not contained within the official documentation, subsequent accounts have noted that as the boat approached the craft, it "entered a swath of glittering yellow foam estimated to be eighty feet wide by a half mile long and three to four inches thick."[345] Before the boat could actually reach the exact site, the remaining light on the UFO went dark and the whole object quickly sank.

The next day, 5 October, the RCMP detachment reported the incident to DND. A helicopter airlifted a three-man diving team along with 400 lbs of equipment to the site the same day to search the water for the craft or any other physical traces.[346] A local boat was hired to assist with the operation, and DND requested regular updates from the team.

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[343] Rg 24-G-1 Ban2003-00412-2 Box 1 File 2000-4-106
[344] UFO Sighting Report, Barrington Passage, NS, 5 October 1967. Microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 311, file DND/UAR (1967) 201-214. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[345] Chris Styles and Graham Simms, *Impact to Contact: The Shag Harbour Incident* (Halifax: Arcadia House Publishing, 2013): 14-15.
[346] Telex message, 7 October 1967. "Provide helo to airlift three divers." Microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 310, file DND/UAR (1967) 116-125. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Unfortunately, the search did not go well. A DND memo from Ottawa indicates that "two days of underwater search by divers of probability area under good conditions has produced nil results." The divers were unable to locate any trace of the craft and the memo concluded that if no results were obtained by the end of day on 8 October then the search would be terminated.[347]

At the same time, DND was receiving letters regarding the incident. One civilian from Quebec requested that the department "give [him] all available information about it," while another from Calgary expressed their concern and ventured that they were "sensible enough to realize that what was seen there was some kind of 'flying machine/vehicle', and it was either man made or of alien construction."[348] The RCMP officers involved had given the story to the press, which followed it closely. The Halifax *Chronicle-Herald* reported that officials in Ottawa were very interested in the search results. One article quoted a Squadron Leader Bain, apparently a spokesman for "a special and little known Royal Canadian Air Force department" that investigated UFOs, as saying that the Shag Harbour crash was one of the few reports where they might find "something concrete."[349] There is no evidence for a special RCAF department of this kind, but it was certainly the case that DND thought something more tangible might come of this particular investigation, especially given that three of the witnesses were RCMP officers and so considered more reliable than the other witnesses.

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[347] Telex message, 8 October 1967. "Two days of underwater search by divers." Microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 310, file DND/UAR (1967) 116-125. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[348] Name Redacted, 12 October 1967. Letter to RCMP. Flying Saucers file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON; Name Redacted, 7 October 1967. Letter to RCMP Headquarters. Flying Saucers file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[349] Ray MacLeod, 7 October 1967. "Something Concrete in Harbor UFO – RCAF," *Halifax Herald*. See microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 310, file DND/UAR (1967) 116-125. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Alas, only disappointment followed. On 9 October, DND terminated the search.[350] The divers did not find any trace of the craft and so went home. In response to one civilian inquiry, Director of Operations for DND's Maritime Command W.W. Turner wrote:

> A search of the area failed to produce any material evidence which would assist in explaining or establishing the identity of the object. An underwater search conducted by divers from the Department of National Defence also failed to locate any tangible evidence which could be used to arrive at an explainable conclusion.[351]

As with the previous two cases, the Shag Harbour incident officially remains unsolved. This has not stopped amateur ufologists from investigating the case themselves in an attempt to unearth new details. For instance, Chris Styles is a Nova Scotia based ufologist who has published two books on the incident. Styles claims that there is actually evidence for a second crash site, further along the shore, which DND investigated in secret. He argues that it is possible the craft traveled underwater to this second spot, and that DND was aware of this movement. In any case, nothing was recovered from this site either.[352]

Despite this speculation, accounts of the Shag Harbour incident retain an uncommon consistency. The story has remained essentially the same since 1967, with

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[350] Telex message, 9 October 1967. "Search continued 08 Oct negative results." Microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 310, file DND/UAR (1967) 116-125. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[351] W.W. Turner, 25 October 1967. "UFO Report: Lower Wood Harbour, N.S." Memorandum. Microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 310, file DND/UAR (1967) 116-125. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[352] Chris Styles and Graham Simms, *Impact to Contact: The Shag Harbour Incident* (Halifax: Arcadia House Publishing, 2013).

very little embellishment. This is likely due mostly to the fact that there is very clear documentation within the archives of who witnessed the event and what appeared to occur. The event has also remained mostly a local phenomenon. While others outside of Nova Scotia are aware of the event, it has not been publicized to the same extent as, for instance, the Roswell crash.

Nevertheless, like the Duhamel case, there is actually very little documentation about the Shag Harbour crash. Curiously, despite the fact that three of the witnesses – and in the DND's mind, the most reliable ones – were RCMP officers, no RCMP files regarding the Shag Harbour crash have survived in the archives. All available documentation, which amounts to about twenty-five pages, comes from either DND or NRC files. This is especially odd given that the RCMP were habitually detail-oriented and their files on UFO sightings are some of the most detailed and complete of any department. There is no satisfactory way to account for this omission.

Conclusion

Despite its official stance of indifference, the Canadian government was obviously paying attention to UFO sightings within its borders. This was especially so in the case of any sighting that involved a physical encounter. The Michalak incident was the most heavily investigated of all UFO sightings in the history of Canada's interest in the phenomenon, due to its relative abundance of tangible evidence. It even informed future investigations: soil sample tests were ordered for the Duhamel crop circle case in large part because of the radioactivity analysts found at the Falcon Lake site. However,

despite the physical evidence on offer at Falcon Lake, Duhamel, and Shag Harbour, investigators remained unconvinced of the reality of UFOs.

J. Allen Hynek called cases like these Close Encounters of the Second Kind, arguing that only they had the power to disrupt mainstream understandings of the topic. Physical evidence left behind commanded attention in a way nothing else seemed able to do. Scientists measure things. Their quantitative measurements are the means by which they claim to produce, and not merely communicate, knowledge. Trust in numbers, as Theodore Porter put it, is a thoroughly modern means of understanding the natural world, and so the state's investigations into these cases, where physical evidence was available, fits neatly into the image of itself it was attempting to construct. And so the three cases described in this chapter were able to, if only briefly, overcome the threshold of legitimate evidence. I have argued that this moment in 1967 was the culmination of the Canadian UFO investigation, when the physical evidence left behind in these cases made UFOs coalesce into reality the most concretely. In other words, investigators looking into these cases believed more than they had ever done that there might actually be something to the phenomenon.

This change of attitude was short-lived. In the end, the government declared the cases a mystery, and they remain unsolved. Despite the relative abundance of evidence, there still was not enough to move forward in any systematic way. The cases still presented what seemed to be isolated instances that investigators could not generalize, and that again fit the pattern of anomalies that fell outside acceptable scientific boundaries. Again, it is not hard to see why this was the case in the end. There may have been evidence that leant itself to scientific study, such as radiation readings and bodily

harm, but it was impossible to do much more with it. The investigations simply hit a wall that they could not overcome.

As a result, the Canadian government would take steps to remove itself from the UFO phenomenon, given that years of investigation had apparently yielded nothing useful. The next chapter explores the nature of other forms of evidence UFOs offered, after which Chapter 6 describes the process by which the government closed out its investigation, as well as how citizen UFO investigators took up the task instead, in opposition to and in conflict with the government, concluding the narrative of how each side perpetuated this dynamic of mutual mistrust.

Chapter 5: Other Forms of Evidence

In November 1967, *Maclean's* ran another article on UFOs, one that contrasted dramatically with their article the previous year. Whereas in 1966, the writer was clearly skeptical, the 1967 article, which ran to nearly five full pages, was full of detailed sighting information and extensive quotes from both government scientists and civilian investigators.[353] Clearly, something had changed to pique new interest in the topic. But if the previous chapter discussed the most compelling evidence that UFOs in Canada could offer, this chapter will break the narrative and explore in more detail the other forms of evidence that failed to convince as readily: anecdotal and visual.

For most of the life of Canada's UFO investigation, all that investigators – whether civilian or government – had to go on were stories of things that had happened. Most of the time these were first hand stories by those who observed the unusual events, but not always. In addition, once in awhile there was some form of visual evidence, such as a photograph, although this was extremely rare and invariably too unclear to make out any detail. Slightly more often, UFO witnesses included a hand drawing of what they saw, building a small archive of visual representations. This chapter explores the various kinds of testimony and amateur drawings that populate the UFO documents, and why these forms of evidence failed to convince investigators of the reality of UFOs.

This chapter also argues that citizen reports of UFO sightings constituted a kind of "involuntary" citizen science – involuntary, because it was uncoordinated and

[353] J. Ruddy, "Look – there's a flying saucer!" *Maclean's* 80 (November 1967): 34-36, 92-94.

unrequited. I provide several counter-examples of citizen science that other governments did take seriously and incorporate into professional efforts. The difference lies in the status of UFOs as a "boundary object," which in other circumstances has served to draw citizens and governments closer, but in the case of UFOs only pushed Canadians citizens and their government further apart.

The Value of Anecdote

As early as 1947, Canadian UFO witnesses began reporting their sightings to the government. For example, on 3 July, farmer Brenton Clark sighted an object at approximately 10,000 feet that dived toward the ground leaving a vapour trail in the sky. "It appeared to resemble a shooting star and there was a considerable reflection of light."[354] The farmer reported this sighting only nine days after Kenneth Arnold's famous encounter in Washington State with nine, shiny discs that led a journalist to coin the term "flying saucer."

And again, just another nine days later, a witness from New Brunswick wrote that he had "seen the flying saucer which one hear[s] [about] on the radio nearly every day," that he saw it fall and he had been searching for it but had not yet found it. He also made sure to mention that he was a returned soldier.[355] Word of Arnold's sighting had obviously traveled fast and was influencing what people were seeing in the sky. However, witnesses generally did not send their reports to the government at this time,

[354] W.W. Brown, 11 July 1947. Letter to the Chief of the Air Staff, RCAF. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[355] Name Redacted, 12 July 1947. Letter to the Department of National Defence. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

but rather to the media. As mentioned in Chapter Two, even the Project Second Storey members obtained much of their information about sightings from newspaper reports. Wilbert Smith even proposed subscribing to a press cutting service for this very reason. The government directly received less than five sightings during the 1940s, and only about thirty during the 1950s.

Witnesses began reporting sightings to the Canadian government in greater numbers in the 1960s. Observers reported over 800 sightings during this decade, an exponential jump. However, despite the rising number of reports, this did not change the quality of the reporting. At the heart of every sighting report was a narrative. The main features of this narrative rarely changed much from one report to the next, nor did its quality as evidence. Sighting reports offered oral testimony – anecdotal evidence that scientists tend to ignore. State officials, likewise, had a hard time accepting this particular kind of evidence.

So what did witnesses actually report? Most commonly, reports contained vague descriptions of objects in the sky. For instance, a report from Lindsay, ON contained only the following description: "One single object followed "a few minutes" later by two similar objects."[356] Similarly, a report from Vancouver, BC contained the notes: "Oval shape, white, altitude unknown, nondirectional movement, one object observed…below cloud and appeared to rotate at times and showed red rings when rotating."[357] Witnesses often remarked that they did not believe the object they saw could have been an aircraft, given that they generally knew what an aircraft looked and sounded like. A sighting

[356] UFO Sighting Report, Lindsay, ON, 20 April 1952. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[357] UFO Sighting Report, Vancouver, BC, 1 March 1967. Microfilm reel T-1743. RG 77, volume 310, file UAR/N67 001-066. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

report from Chilootin, BC described an object in the sky that traveled at very high speed and emitted a loud explosion. The report concluded that "the description of the object did not appear to be that of an aeroplane."[358]

The Chilootin report also contained a witness's description of the object as "very high with a bright light" which they compared to a welding light, "without the blueness." Descriptions of lights in the sky are extremely common in the UFO reports. The lights are usually bright and moving, sometimes rapidly, but are otherwise unidentified. The number of reports containing descriptions of ambiguous lights in the sky often led investigators to conclude that what the witnesses had actually seen was the planet Venus or some other prosaic phenomenon. In a report regarding sightings in Corner Brook, NL in January 1969, RCMP officer D.J. Wright wrote that his investigation "established that in one instance it was actually the rays from the sunset shining on a vapor trail from a jet aircraft and that in other instances the object observed was in fact the planet Venus."[359] In other instances, an official – whether a scientist or commanding RCMP officer – simply handwrote on top of the report the word "Venus," presumably concluding the file. In rarer cases, investigators stamped sighting reports with the words "Identified as Possible Meteor."

Peter Millman, the Chairman of Project Second Storey, responded to one civilian report by stating that while he could not be positive, the witness's description "of the object, its position and its duration agree very well with Sirius, the Dog Star, and the brightest star we see." Millman provided a description of how this might have been

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[358] J.B. Harris, 18 November 1962. UFO Sighting Report, Chilootin District, BC. Microfilm reel T-3291. RG 24, volume 17984, file HQ 940-5, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[359] D.J. Wright, 22 January 1969. Letter to the Commanding Officer of "B" Division, RCMP. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N69 050-100. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

possible: "Unusual atmospheric conditions that often occur during the winter in Canada cause this star to change colour and perform other changes which may look quite peculiar, especially when it is low in the sky."[360] Civilians were sometimes irritated that officials in Ottawa so easily dismissed their sightings, calling into question their reliability as observers. Bruce Burridge, from Port Arthur, ON, stated: "I know I have perfect vision and that I am quite sane. So I can quite definitely state that I was not seeing things."[361]

Reliability was a sticky point when it came to UFO sighting reports. Ottawa scientists like Millman assumed that the vast majority of witnesses had misidentified something entirely explainable, or had fallen victim to a hoax, and so their testimonies were unreliable. Indeed, as Hynek wrote of U.S. Project Blue Book, investigations were generally aimed *at* establishing a misperception, or even that UFOs were "the products of unstable minds."[362]

RCMP reports told a different story. Overwhelmingly, RCMP reports from the mid-1960s onward described witnesses as reliable, using that very word. Of all the documentation of UFOs over the decades, RCMP officers easily produced the most comprehensive and detailed sighting reports. However, it was only in 1965 that they began to file them in increasing numbers. With the exception of 1952, in no year prior to 1965 were more than half a dozen reports submitted to the government. In 1965, thirty-

[360] Peter M. Millman, 28 February 1969. Letter to Mrs. G.J. McMullen. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N69 050-100. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[361] Bruce W. Burridge, 17 March 1969. Letter to the Minister of National Defence. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N69 050-100. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[362] J. Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1972): 68.

two reports were submitted to the government. 1966 saw fifty-five. The year 1967 saw the first big jump: 169 reports were submitted, and it grew from there.

It was mainly the RCMP that took on this duty of filing reports. Officers began systematically following up on reports and obtaining witness details and testimony. A routine part of the process for the investigator was to comment on the witness's reliability and sobriety. A report from Fort Norman, NWT, for instance, described the observer as illiterate but nevertheless "very reliable."[363] Other reports variously described the observers as "reliable and quite sincere,"[364] "a reliable source of information,"[365] and "sensible type persons."[366] Reports often included more detail that revealed the investigators had made inquiries within the community regarding the observer's reputation. One stated: "Character inquiries resulted in [the witness's] employer describing him as "a very hard worker". One friend of [the witness] described him as being "a very honest man". This office has known [the witness] for a number of years and would describe him as being a reliable source of information."[367] If the observer lived in a small town, sometimes the RCMP investigator even personally knew them.

In short, RCMP reports rarely concluded that the observers were unreliable. Most commonly, the officers found "no reason to question the [witness's] statements as being

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[363] UFO Sighting Report, Fort Norman, NWT, 14 February 1968. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N68 001-058. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[364] P.N. Hills, 10 December 1968. UFO Sighting Report, Nanaimo, BC. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 3. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[365] G. McLean, 16 January 1969. UFO Sighting Report, St. John, NB. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 3. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[366] J.A. Fisher, 20 September 1971. UFO Sighting Report, Ashcroft, BC. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 3. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[367] O.B. Williams, 22 December 1968. UFO Sighting Report, Rocky Mountain House District, AB. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 3. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

untrue."[368] Hoaxes were a rare occurrence. Of the approximately 4,500 sightings over the forty-five year period, investigators determined that hoaxers had definitely perpetrated only about half a dozen of them. However, I argue there is a subtle distinction here. The issue was never that the *observers* were unreliable. Rather, investigators thought their *observations* were unreliable. The vast majority of people reporting UFO sightings were sober, sincere, honest, and intelligent. It was more that they were also overwhelmingly amateur, untrained observers. Rarely did someone making a sighting have formal training in any type of sky-watching activity. In any instance, because of the huge distances between them and the general unfamiliarity that people have with atmospheric phenomena, it is difficult to determine the actual size of an object in the sky, along with its speed and direction on a clear night. It is even more difficult to determine these values from within, for instance, a moving car. To the scientists in Ottawa, and the RCMP investigators, these factors made many of the reported observations ambiguous and unreliable, and prone to the pitfalls of oral testimony.

However, it was not only untrained civilians who could make simple observational mistakes. Those involved in the study of UFOs typically assumed that trained personnel, like RCMP officers, were more perceptive and level-headed than the general public, and so made better witnesses. While this seems to be generally true, there are counter-examples. For instance, in December 1972 two RCMP officers from Placentia, NL witnessed a UFO. Constables Waterhouse and Fraser were parked on Beach Road and while "looking west over Placentia Bay spotted a large glowing mass that looked like the rock of Gilbralter [sic] only sloping in the opposite direction. It

[368] P.L. Ellis, 15 September 1969. UFO Sighting Report, Torbay Man's Pond, NFLD. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 3. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

glowed like red hot steel and there was no movement. After about three minutes it moved downwards out of sight."[369] Inquiries to the nearby U.S. naval base did not yield any explanation, and this fantastic sight may have remained unexplained if the constables had not returned to the location for further investigation. Sergeant H.L. Dornan explained in a letter several days later that the constables "now feel the identity of the object to be the moon. Conditions were such at the time of the sighting that the moon was ruled out by our members, however, further observations at the same time on subsequent dates and at the same place has led to this final conclusion."[370] Dornan apologized for the inconvenience the "alleged sighting" may have caused. Almost certainly, the apology implied the embarrassment the officers must have felt at misidentifying something as prosaic as the moon.

On another occasion, Fort McMurray RCMP officer A.O. Taylor made a similar mistake. While on patrol in the early morning, Taylor "had occasion to observe two objects in the sky" which "were quite visible and appeared to move slightly." Taylor described the objects as oval lights, one "bright white bluish" and the other "dull hazy redish [sic] brown." After reporting the sighting, Taylor made inquiries with the DoT and "established that these two objects were the two "Morning Stars" of Venus. It has been learnt that this is a natural phenomena and there was no need for concern."[371] Obviously, even trained observers could make the very same mistakes for which scientists like Millman pilloried the general public.

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[369] UFO Sighting Report, Placentia, NFLD, 15 December 1972. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 307, file UAR/N72 051-108. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[370] H.L. Dornan, 18 December 1972. Letter to the Upper Atmosphere Research Section of the National Research Council. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 307, file UAR/N72 051-108. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[371] A.O. Taylor, 31 December 1970. UFO Sighting Report, Fort McMurray, AB. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 3. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Many civilians were disappointed that the scientific establishment did not take them seriously. A number of letters to the government indicated that civilians felt a duty to report UFOs, in case they had a bearing on national security or scientific inquiry. To have the government rebuff these efforts was insulting. For instance, Evelyn Mellanby, of Hamilton, ON, wrote to the DND about lights she and others in the area had witnessed in the night sky in 1968 for weeks on end. Their regularity made her wonder "if we in Canada are being surveyed by some foreign power." She expressed her alarm "that something unknown is allowed to hover over Hamilton and vicinity" and that if the government did not know what the lights were, then it was time to spend some money to investigate.[372]

Similarly, in January 1978, Mary Heitkemper complained to Otto Lang, the Minister of Transport, about "supersonic jet test flights" over her residence in Cape Breton. Heitkemper had previously raised the issue with the RCMP, who passed her off to the DoT, and so she felt the need to complain about how the "appalling lack of regard for residents here is unbelievable" and that it "shows your continued disregard and lack of concern for the people of the Maritimes."[373] Many citizens took this lack of regard for what they thought were legitimate issues as a challenge. As the previous chapter showed, some expressed their displeasure through repeated correspondence. As the next chapter will show, others tried to take matters into their own hands and solve the UFO question themselves, antagonizing the government in the process.

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[372] A.H. Mellanby, 12 September 1968. Letter to the Department of National Defence. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N68 116-170. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[373] Mary T. Heitkemper, 27 January 1978. Letter to Otto Lang. Unidentified Flying Objects file. RG 12, volume 3930, file 2-1-33, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

At the heart of this issue was the reliability of testimony. According to philosopher Peter Lipton, testimony is ubiquitous: "We live in a sea of assertions and little if any of our knowledge would exist without it."[374] Lipton argues that "the acquisition of knowledge is a collective enterprise," and that scientific inquiry "is no refuge" from this. Why, then, did the Canadian government distrust testimony from UFO witnesses? Lipton explains this as the result of a particular understanding of it: "testimony has been seen as derivative, a means merely of the transmission and not the creation of knowledge."[375] Scientists like Millman understood testimony as nothing other than a subjective interpretation of results ordered and transmitted after the fact, and filtered through individual bias. Testimony, in their minds, was not a fundamental part of scientific investigation, in the same way as laboratory experiments or rigorously structured astronomical observations. It was nothing more than memories of an event.

Lipton disagrees with this conclusion, arguing instead that testimony is itself "a means of the creation of knowledge," and that we cannot move forward without it. Jeffrey Kripal similarly argues for the value of testimony and anecdotal evidence. He describes the efforts of scientists to debunk the testimony of UFO witnesses as an attempt "*to control what is on the table*."[376] In order to protect a particular understanding of the natural world in which oddities like UFOs have no place, it is necessary to take off the table anything that conflicts with "permissible evidence." Restricting what counts as legitimate evidence is a routine part of what Thomas Kuhn called "normal science" – the

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[374] Peter Lipton, "The Epistemology of Testimony," *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science* 29.1 (1998): 1.
[375] Peter Lipton, "The Epistemology of Testimony," *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science* 29.1 (1998): 2.
[376] Whitley Strieber and Jeffrey J. Kripal, *The Super Natural: Why the Unexplained is Real* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2017): 12, emphasis in original.

quotidian activities of scientists aimed at solving problems that contribute to solidifying the paradigm currently in place.[377]

Kripal is not satisfied with this approach, however. As a scholar of religion, he takes a comparative approach and so uses the metaphor of placing all pieces of evidence on the same table in order to evaluate them all to the same level. Others have called this approach "methodological symmetry" – the goal of providing the same quality of analysis for both sides of a debate, regardless of each side's ontological status.[378] Another way to put this is to offer a "charitable interpretation" of each side, in order to break down any "aura of self-evidence" surrounding any given side.[379] Kripal raises these concerns specifically in the case of evaluating anecdotal evidence. He argues that "if we collect enough seemingly "anecdotal" or "anomalous" experiences from different times and places and place them together on a flat and fair comparative table, we can quickly see that these reports are neither anecdotal nor anomalous."[380] Kripal further argues that labeling something "anecdotal" is a rhetorical strategy that erroneously isolates the story or piece of data as if it was not part of a larger context or pattern. Michael Gordin similarly argues that the only people who use the word "pseudoscience" are scientists attempting to put boundaries around their areas of expertise, in order to exclude outsiders; in other words, "pseudoscience" is nothing more than an epithet.[381] Scientists who use this technique attempt to explain away UFO stories as "local constructions of a single

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[377] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).
[378] Jan Golinski, *Making Natural Knowledge: Constructivism and the History of Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 7.
[379] Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump,* 13.
[380] Whitley Strieber and Jeffrey J. Kripal, *The Super Natural: Why the Unexplained is Real* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2017): 81.
[381] Michael Gordin, *The Pseudoscience Wars: Immanuel Velikovsky and the Birth of the Modern Fringe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

human psyche" that is divorced from "our other more public and so more reliable perceptions and experiences."[382] Ultimately, Kripal argues, this all hinges on how science and those things that traditionally fall outside of science are defined. He advocates for a re-imagination of just what exactly "super natural" can mean – and more specifically, that so-called anecdotal evidence can in fact be useful.

Unfortunately for Canadian civilians reporting UFO sightings during the 1950s and 1960s, UFOs did not possess the type of capital required to force a redefinition of these terms, or a scientific revolution of the kind Kuhn described. Scientists in Ottawa maintained what they considered a commonsense view of the situation: that is, UFO witnesses were usually totally untrained, and so their observations were next to worthless. They did not take the longer, comparative approach Kripal advocates, but rather considered UFO reports in isolation. By taking this approach they could only conclude that sightings were in fact isolated incidents of potentially pathological minds. This was ultimately a rhetorical strategy that placed UFO observations in a category outside of legitimate scientific inquiry, and thus outside of the political will to investigate them.

The Value of Images

In his best-selling book *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics*, theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli writes that "before experiments, measurements, mathematics, and rigorous deductions, science is above all about visions."[383] A number of historians and sociologists

[382] Whitley Strieber and Jeffrey J. Kripal, *The Super Natural: Why the Unexplained is Real* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2017): 84.
[383] Carlo Rovelli, *Seven Lessons on Physics* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2016): 24.

of science and technology have likewise recognized images as fundamental to the workings of science.[384] Images are, in the words of Bruno Latour, "*mobile* but also *immutable*, *presentable*, *readable* and *combinable* with one another."[385] Images have a power that words do not. Anyone (with relevant training) can presumably "read" images. It seems images can move anywhere in the world without losing their meaning, and possess a certain objectivity that allows scientists to present them as everlasting. Scientists can also combine images with one another for easy comparison. Efficient comparison in the laboratory was essential to early attempts to professionalize and imbue science with authority, for instance in the ability to compare diverse botanical samples in the same room – specifically, on the same *table* – that are otherwise inaccessible.[386]

Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison write that images are not just illustrations in science, but *make* the science. Scientists, if they want their discipline to succeed, must furnish "working objects," idealized versions of their subject of inquiry, in order to eliminate the contingency of nature. Further, these working objects, when brought together, make a "collective empiricism" possible, which allows scientists across time and space to work on the same subject.[387]

Unfortunately for Canadian UFO witnesses, the centrality of vision to everyday science did not help their case. The various kinds of UFO images produced simply did not meet any standard criteria that would have made them compelling. Those within the

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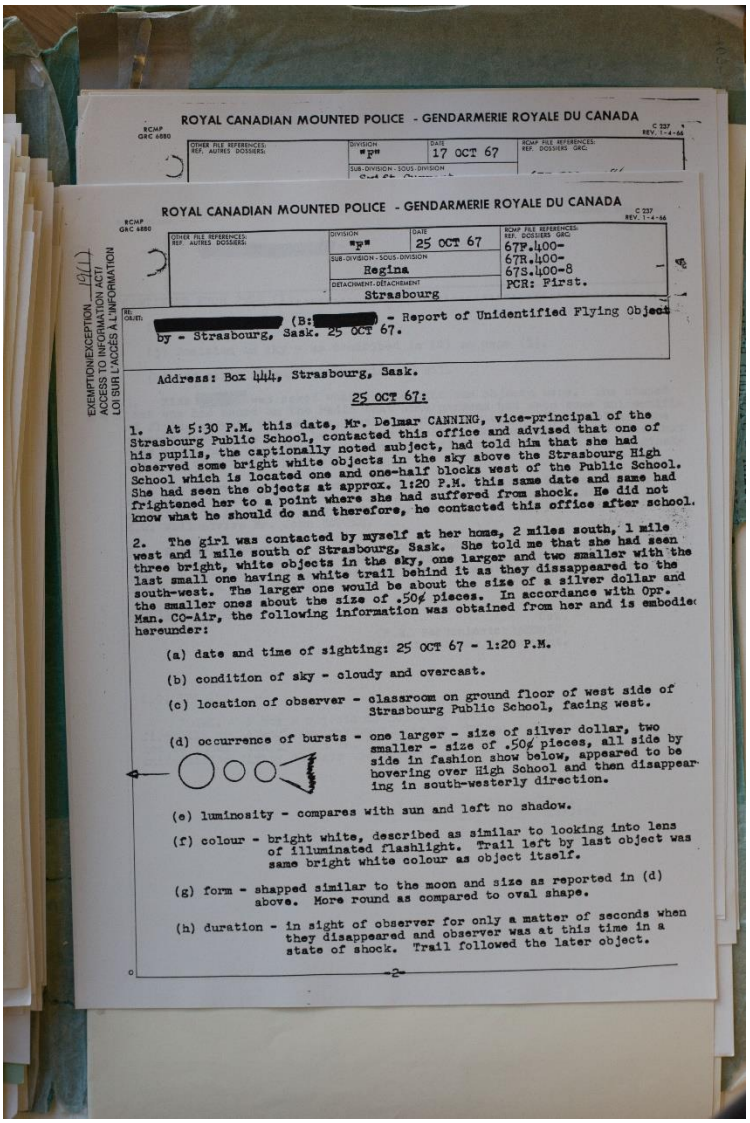
[384] See, for example, Karin Knorr-Cetina and Klaus Amann, "Image Dissection in Natural Scientific Inquiry," *Science, Technology, and Human Values* 15.3 (1990) 259-283; Martin J.S. Rudwick, "The Emergence of a Visual Language for Geological Science 1760-1840," *History of Science* 14.3 (1976): 149-195.
[385] Bruno Latour, "Visualisation and Cognition: Drawing Things Together," in Henrika Kuklick (ed) *Knowledge and Society Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present* 6 (1986): 7.
[386] See Raf de Bont, *Stations in the Field: A History of Place-Based Animal Research, 1870-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).
[387] Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone, 2007): 19-22.

scientific establishment who analyzed photographs of alleged UFOs concluded that they were too easy to hoax, or were likely the result of technical errors. Drawings of UFOs, in the end, carried too little weight, falling into the same trap as so-called anecdotal evidence. Despite the fact that images convey a certain objectivity, especially when compared to oral stories, no image produced within Canada contained the smoking gun. In the end, UFO investigators were unable to produce the necessary working objects.

Canadian witnesses included a significant number of images of UFOs with their sighting reports. Indeed, standardized reporting forms – such as Project Second Storey's – usually included a reminder to ask for a drawing of what the observer saw. Observers made these drawings by hand, in pen or pencil. In total, there are over 200 instances of UFO drawings spanning the decades-long investigation. While this number may at first seem small, it is nevertheless significant, in comparison to the cases of the Duhamel crop circles and Shag Harbour UFO crash. The latter cases only produced about twenty-five pages of documentation each – and these are two of the most compellingly documented cases in all of the archives.

UFO drawings in the archives range from small, plain sketches of lights in the sky to large, detailed craft with occupants. They are all in black and white, and hand drawn. They were often used to indicate relative sizes of objects compared to one another, as well as direction of movement. A typical example is a 25 October 1967 sighting report from Strasbourg, SK. A student at a public school witnessed three bright white objects in the sky and described them in terms of the size of coins:



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE - GENDARMERIE ROYALE DU CANADA

RCMP GRC 6880 — C 237 REV. 1-4-66

OTHER FILE REFERENCES: REF. AUTRES DOSSIERS:

DIVISION: "P" — DATE: 17 OCT 67

RCMP FILE REFERENCES: REF. DOSSIERS GRC:

SUB-DIVISION - SOUS-DIVISION:

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE - GENDARMERIE ROYALE DU CANADA

RCMP GRC 6880 — C 237 REV. 1-4-66

OTHER FILE REFERENCES: REF. AUTRES DOSSIERS:

DIVISION: "P" — DATE: 25 OCT 67

RCMP FILE REFERENCES: REF. DOSSIERS GRC: 67P.400- 67R.400- 67S.400-8 PCR: First.

SUB-DIVISION - SOUS-DIVISION: Regina

DETACHMENT - DÉTACHEMENT: Strasbourg

EXEMPTION/EXCEPTION ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT/ LOI SUR L'ACCÈS À L'INFORMATION 19(1)

RE: OBJET: [redacted] (B:[redacted]) - Report of Unidentified Flying Object by - Strasbourg, Sask. 25 OCT 67.

Address: Box 444, Strasbourg, Sask.

25 OCT 67:

1. At 5:30 P.M. this date, Mr. Delmar CANNING, vice-principal of the Strasbourg Public School, contacted this office and advised that one of his pupils, the captionally noted subject, had told him that she had observed some bright white objects in the sky above the Strasbourg High School which is located one and one-half blocks west of the Public School. She had seen the objects at approx. 1:20 P.M. this same date and same had frightened her to a point where she had suffered from shock. He did not know what he should do and therefore, he contacted this office after school.

2. The girl was contacted by myself at her home, 2 miles south, 1 mile west and 1 mile south of Strasbourg, Sask. She told me that she had seen three bright, white objects in the sky, one larger and two smaller with the last small one having a white trail behind it as they dissappeared to the south-west. The larger one would be about the size of a silver dollar and the smaller ones about the size of .50¢ pieces. In accordance with Opr. Man. CO-Air, the following information was obtained from her and is embodied hereunder:

(a) date and time of sighting: 25 OCT 67 - 1:20 P.M.

(b) condition of sky - cloudy and overcast.

(c) location of observer - classroom on ground floor of west side of Strasbourg Public School, facing west.

(d) occurrence of bursts - one larger - size of silver dollar, two smaller - size of .50¢ pieces, all side by side in fashion show below, appeared to be hovering over High School and then disappearing in south-westerly direction.

(e) luminosity - compares with sun and left no shadow.

(f) colour - bright white, described as similar to looking into lens of illuminated flashlight. Trail left by last object was same bright white colour as object itself.

(g) form - shapped similar to the moon and size as reported in (d) above. More round as compared to oval shape.

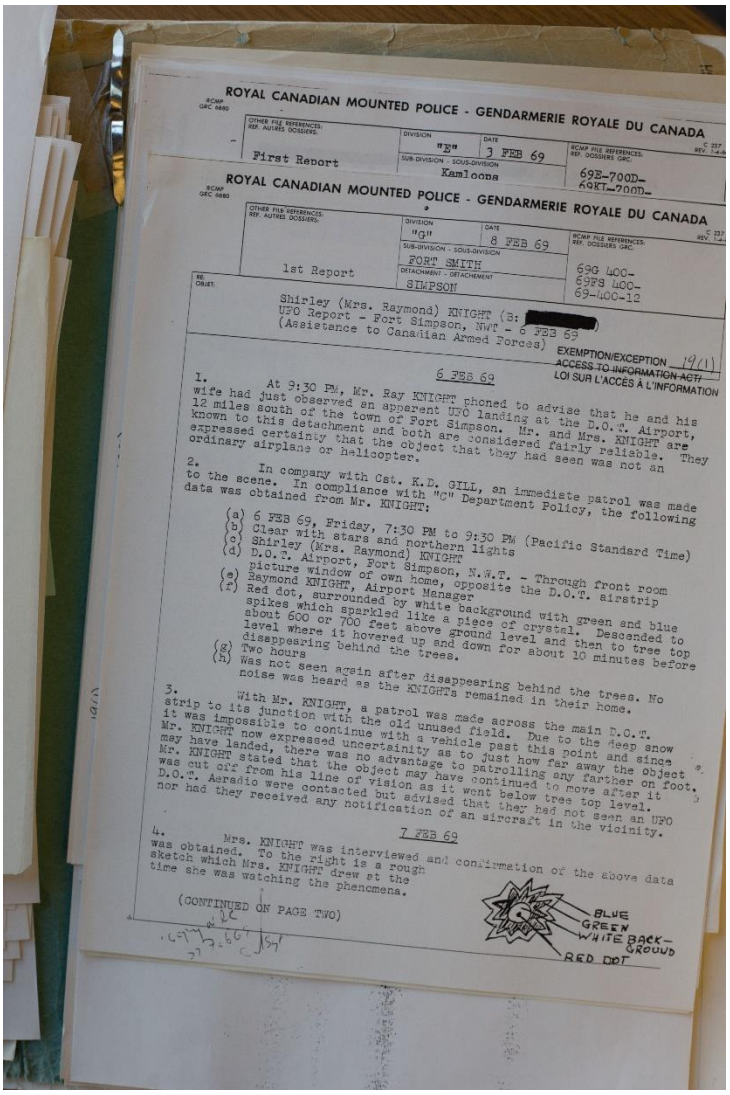
(h) duration - in sight of observer for only a matter of seconds when they disappeared and observer was at this time in a state of shock. Trail followed the later object.

-2-

UFO drawing from an RCMP report of a Strasbourg, SK sighting.[388]

[388] R.E. Serbanievich, 25 October 1967. UFO Sighting Report, Strasbourg, SK. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 3. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Another example from Fort Simpson, NWT shows a multi-layered star with a circular dot in the centre, each layer labeled with a colour:



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE - GENDARMERIE ROYALE DU CANADA

First Report — "E" — 3 FEB 69 — Kamloops — 69E-700D-, 69KT-700D-

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE - GENDARMERIE ROYALE DU CANADA

1st Report — "G" — 8 FEB 69 — FORT SMITH — SIMPSON — 69G 400-, 69FS 400-, 69-400-12

RE: OBJECT:

Shirley (Mrs. Raymond) KNIGHT (B: [redacted])
UFO Report - Fort Simpson, NWT - 6 FEB 69
(Assistance to Canadian Armed Forces)

EXEMPTION/EXCEPTION 19(1)
ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT/
LOI SUR L'ACCÈS À L'INFORMATION

6 FEB 69

1. At 9:30 PM, Mr. Ray KNIGHT phoned to advise that he and his wife had just observed an apparent UFO landing at the D.O.T. Airport, 12 miles south of the town of Fort Simpson. Mr. and Mrs. KNIGHT are known to this detachment and both are considered fairly reliable. They expressed certainty that the object that they had seen was not an ordinary airplane or helicopter.

2. In company with Cst. K.D. GILL, an immediate patrol was made to the scene. In compliance with "G" Department Policy, the following data was obtained from Mr. KNIGHT:

(a) 6 FEB 69, Friday, 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM (Pacific Standard Time)
(b) Clear with stars and northern lights
(c) Shirley (Mrs. Raymond) KNIGHT
(d) D.O.T. Airport, Fort Simpson, N.W.T. - Through front room picture window of own home, opposite the D.O.T. airstrip
(e) Raymond KNIGHT, Airport Manager
(f) Red dot, surrounded by white background with green and blue spikes which sparkled like a piece of crystal. Descended to about 600 or 700 feet above ground level and then to tree top level where it hovered up and down for about 10 minutes before disappearing behind the trees.
(g) Two hours
(h) Was not seen again after disappearing behind the trees. No noise was heard as the KNIGHTs remained in their home.

3. With Mr. KNIGHT, a patrol was made across the main D.O.T. strip to its junction with the old unused field. Due to the deep snow it was impossible to continue with a vehicle past this point and since Mr. KNIGHT now expressed uncertainity as to just how far away the object may have landed, there was no advantage to patrolling any farther on foot. Mr. KNIGHT stated that the object may have continued to move after it was cut off from his line of vision as it went below tree top level. D.O.T. Aeradio were contacted but advised that they had not seen an UFO nor had they received any notification of an aircraft in the vicinity.

7 FEB 69

4. Mrs. KNIGHT was interviewed and confirmation of the above data was obtained. To the right is a rough sketch which Mrs. KNIGHT drew at the time she was watching the phenomena.

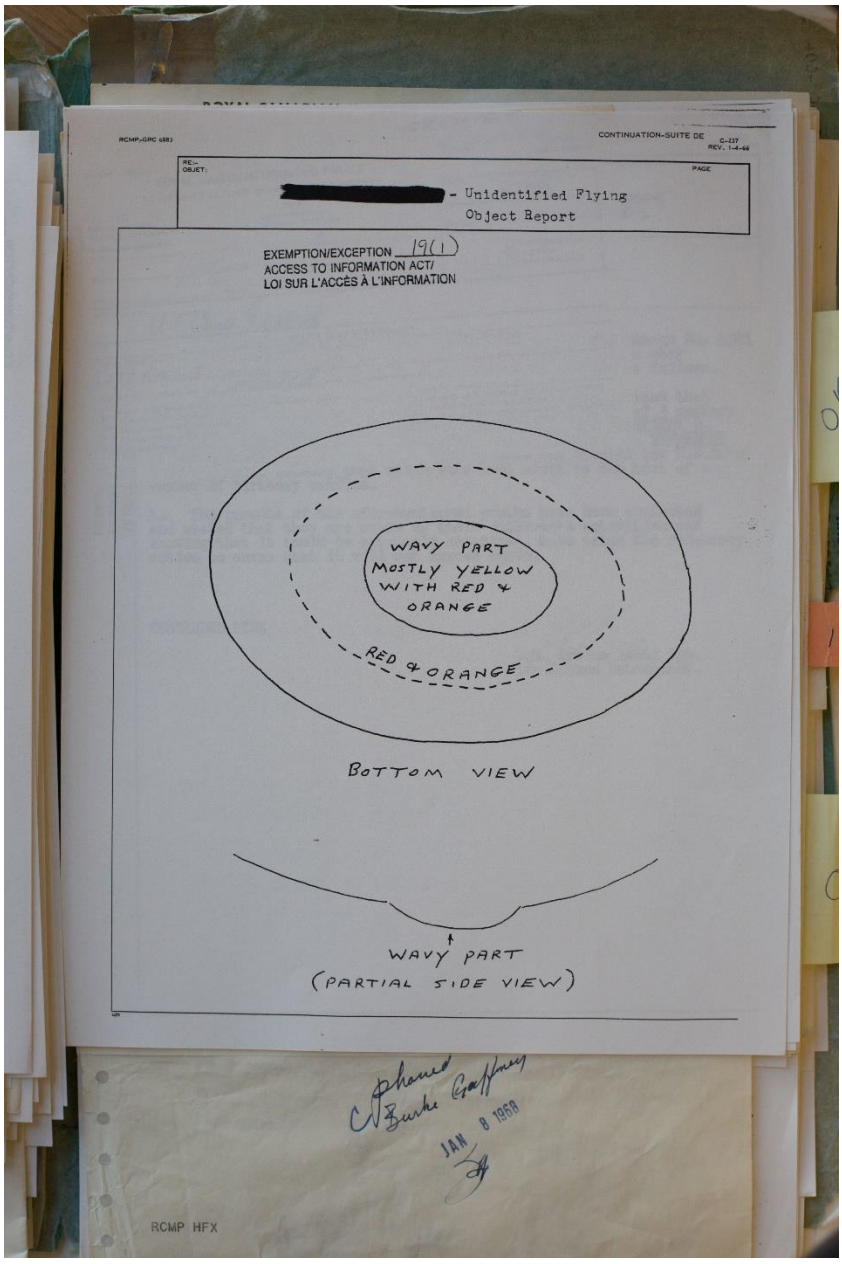
(CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO)

BLUE
GREEN
WHITE BACK-GROUND
RED DOT

UFO drawing from an RCMP report of a Fort Simpson, NWT sighting.[389]

[389] J.H. Ellis, 8 February 1969. UFO Sighting Report, Fort Simpson, NWT. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 3. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

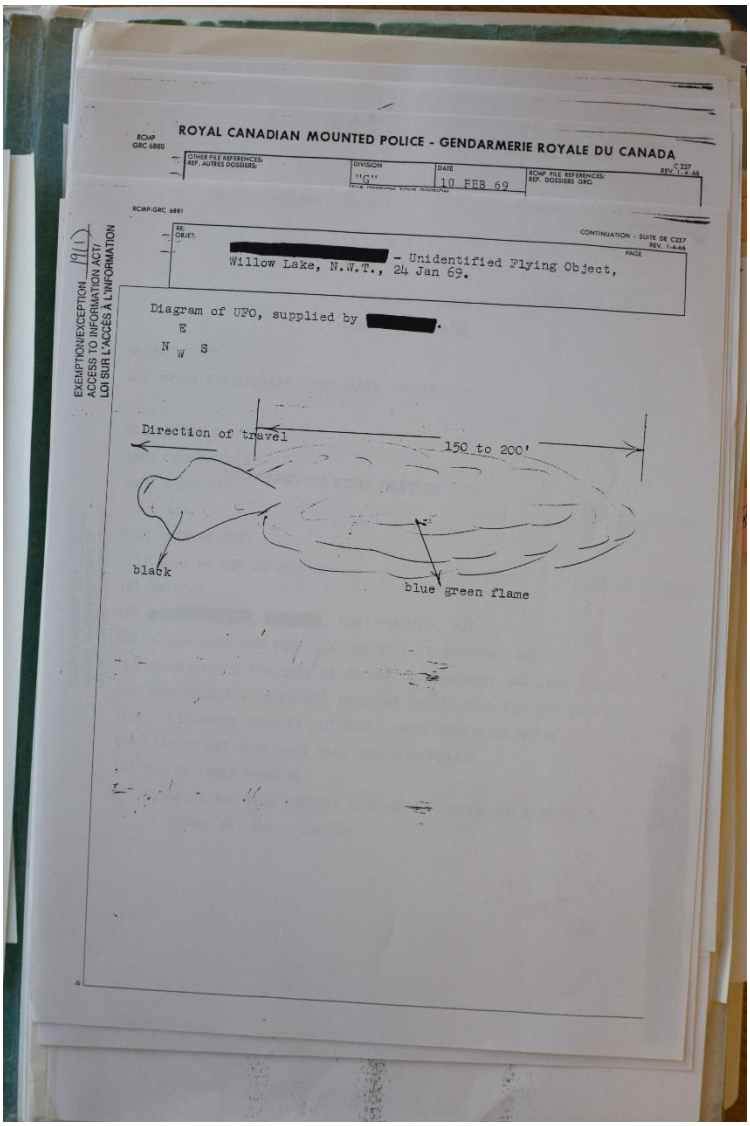
A similar drawing takes up a full page, each layer of the object again labeled with a colour:



UFO drawing from an RCMP report of a Whitehorse, YK sighting.[390]

[390] H.A. Johnson, 16 January 1968. UFO Sighting Report, Whitehorse, YK. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 3. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

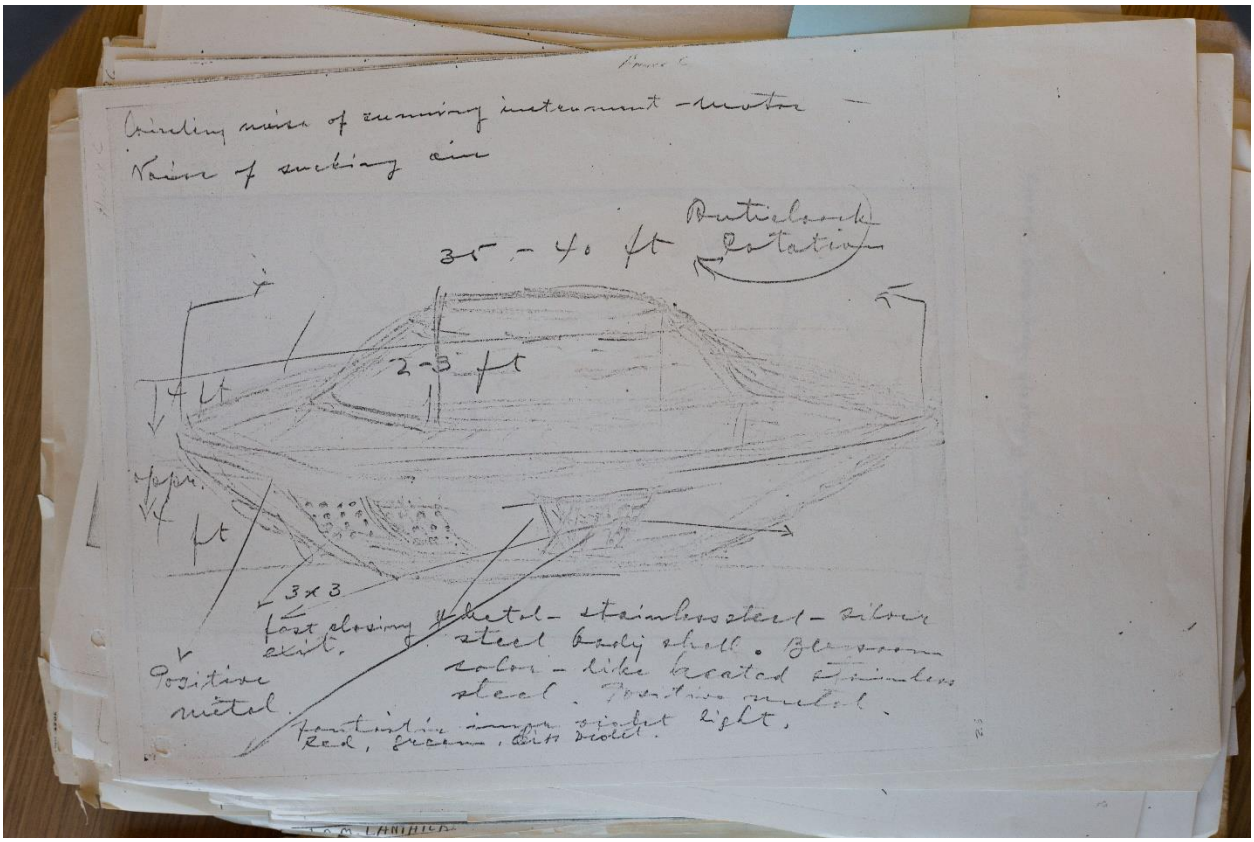
Another shows an ambiguous mass, indicating colour, direction, and estimated distance:



UFO drawing from an RCMP report of a Willow Lake, NWT sighting.[391]

[391] K.D. Gill, 27 January 1969. UFO Sighting Report, Willow Lake, NWT. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 3. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

These reports contain the drawings – small or large, made on the RCMP report itself and alongside the text – as a minor visual aid to the description. Other drawings are more evocative and the witnesses clearly intended them to be of more assistance than as a mere descriptive aid. They contain more detail and are intended to act more like a photograph, a copy of what the witness saw. One of the more well-known is Stefan Michalak's drawing of the UFO he claimed to see in Manitoba in 1967 (described in more detail below):



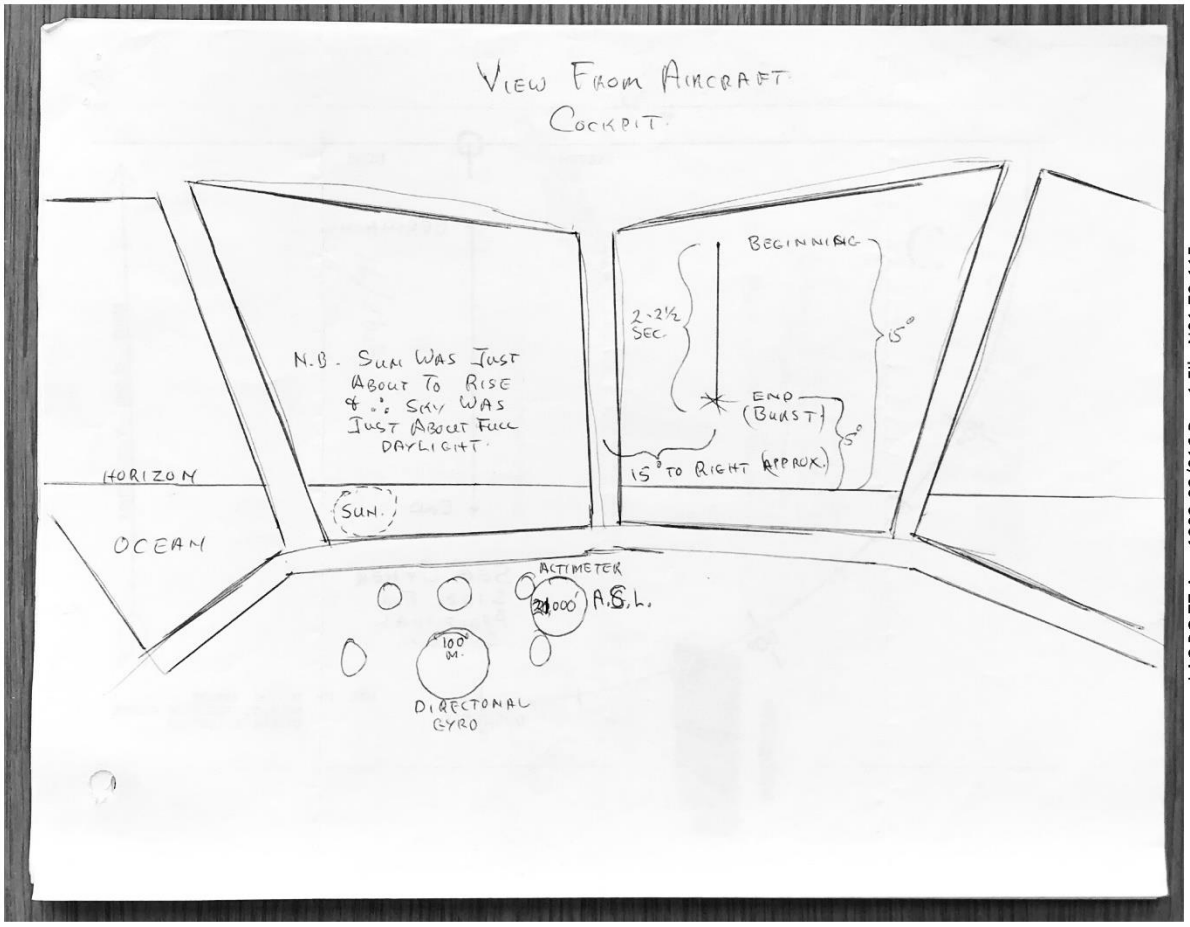
Stefan Michalak's drawing of the UFO he encountered at Falcon Lake, MB.[392]

[392] Stefan Michalak UFO drawing, n.d. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. Library and Archives, Canada, Ottawa, ON.

Michalak's drawing caused a stir within the RCMP and DND, but not because of its perceived evidentiary value. Rather, after the investigators terminated their inquiry into Michalak's UFO sighting, the drawing became a thorn in the government's side because someone in Ottawa lost it. Michalak sent a letter to the President of the Privy Council in November 1969 – two years after the incident – requesting the return of his drawing. The drawing had passed hands within several departments, including the DND, RCMP, and apparently the Privy Council, all in an attempt to make satisfactory copies of it for their files (which they were apparently unable to do). Sometime in 1969 the drawing was lost, and Michalak was "heartbroken that it had been misplaced." Nevertheless, Michalak himself admitted that "Only a limited number of details can be read from a crude Drawing. Eventually it would only go to an impersonal file there to gather dust." [393] Michalak was aware that his drawing – and others like it – were of relatively insignificant evidentiary value, no matter the trouble he encountered in reclaiming the drawing (which, it seems, he never was able to do).

Another example of a drawing intended to convey a more sophisticated representation was from a pilot who witnessed a UFO through the window of his cockpit:

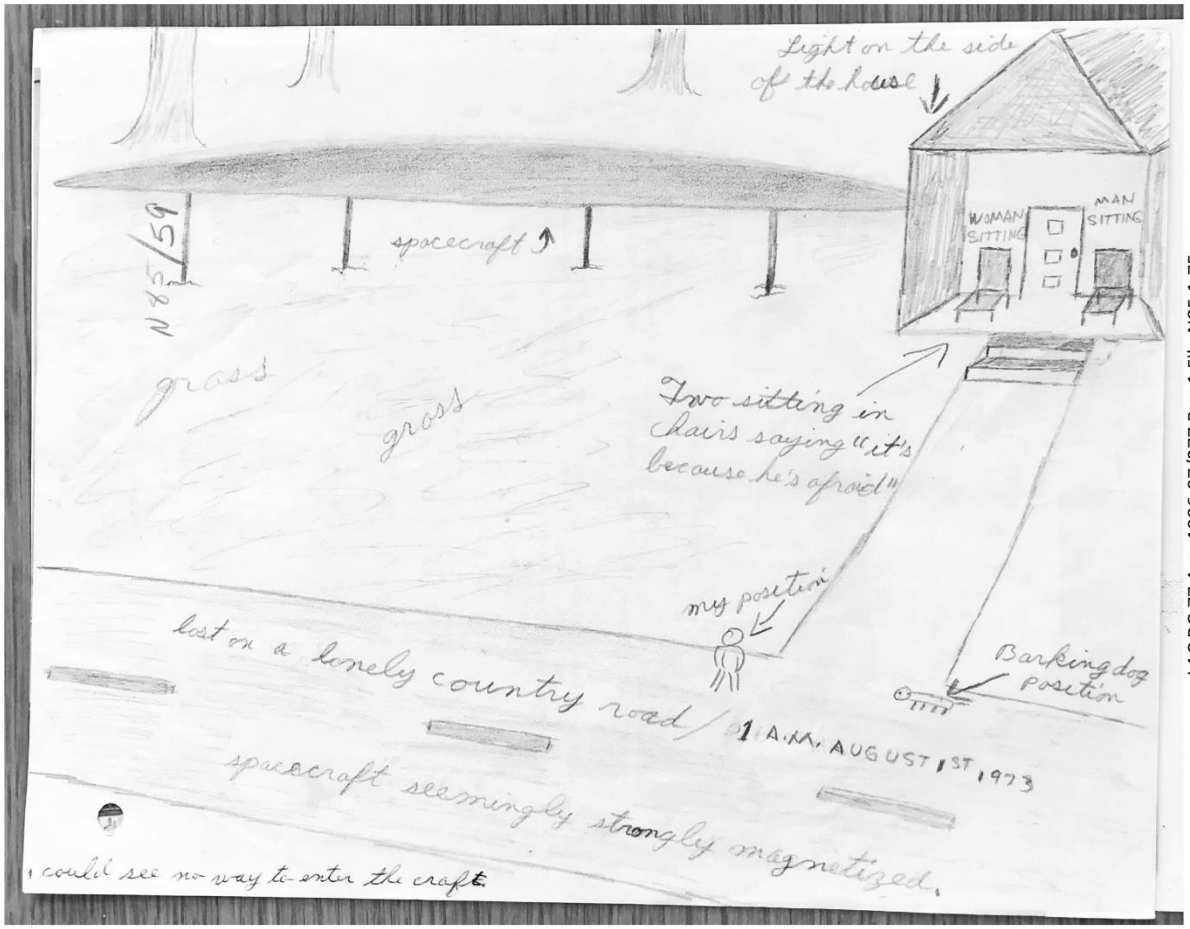
[393] Stephen Michalak and P.F. MacKenzie, 8 December 1969. Letter to the President of the Privy Council. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 3. LAC, Ottawa, ON.



Drawing from a fireball report from the Kelowna, BC airport.[394]

[394] "View From Aircraft Cockpit" drawing, 19 August 1991. Non-Meteoric Sighting file. RG 77, accession 92-93/016, volume 1, file N91/70 115. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Then there was the drawing a hitchhiker made of a scene he witnessed at a home on Highway 20 on his way to Toronto:



LAC RG 77 Acc. 1986-87/377 Box 1 File N85 1-75

Drawing of a hitchhiker's encounter on the way to Toronto.[395]

[395] Name Redacted, 28 June 1985. UFO Drawing. Non-Meteoritic Sighting file. RG 77, accession 1986-87/377, box 1, file N85 1-75. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

There is also a chart, likely of U.S. origin, depicting a selection of the types of flying saucers witnesses had seen over the years:

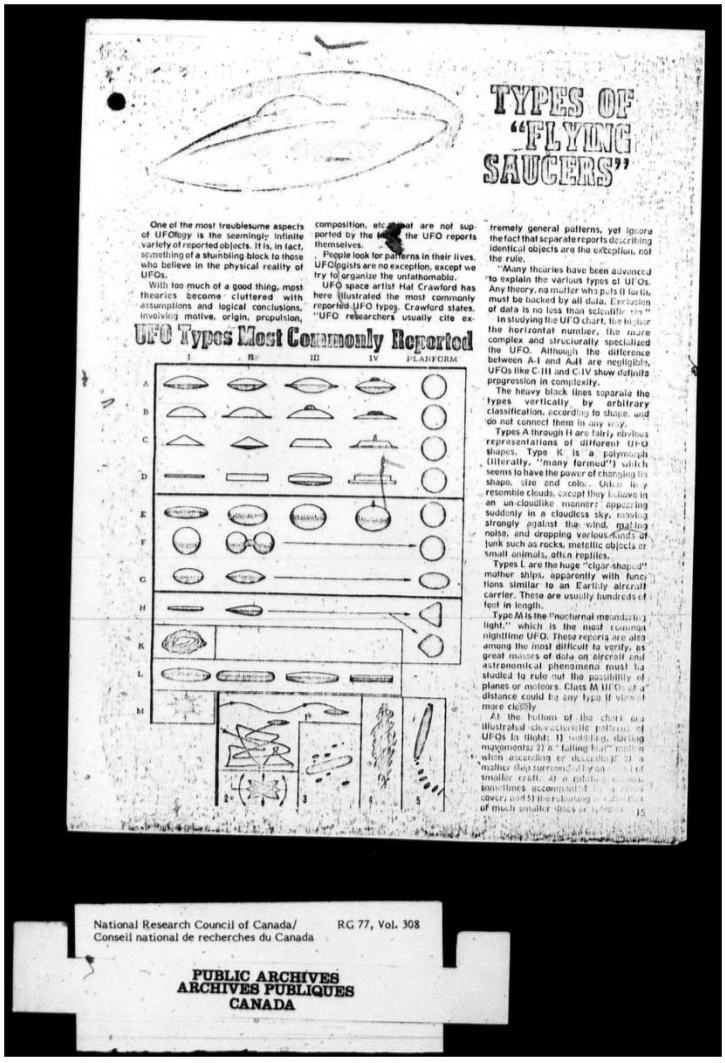
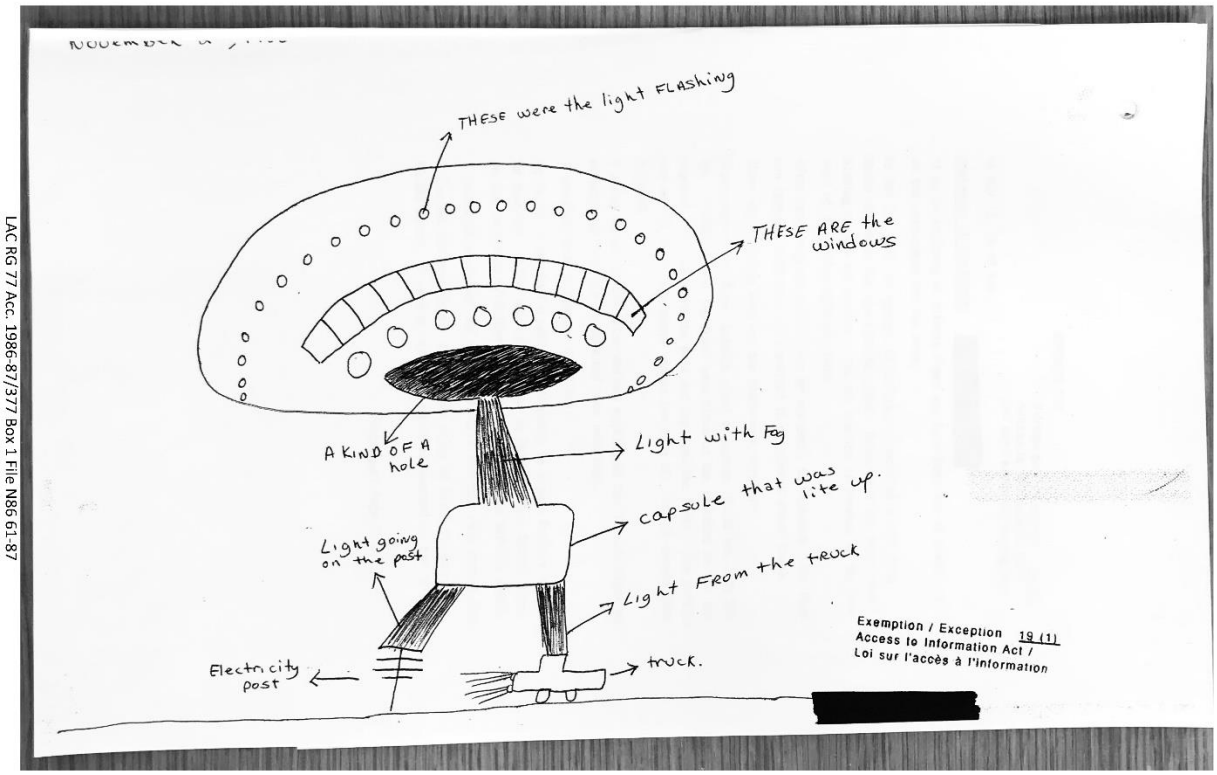


Chart showing various types of flying saucers.[396]

[396] "Types of "Flying Saucers"" chart, n.d. Microfilm reel T-1742. RG 77, volume 308, file UAR/N76 051-090. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

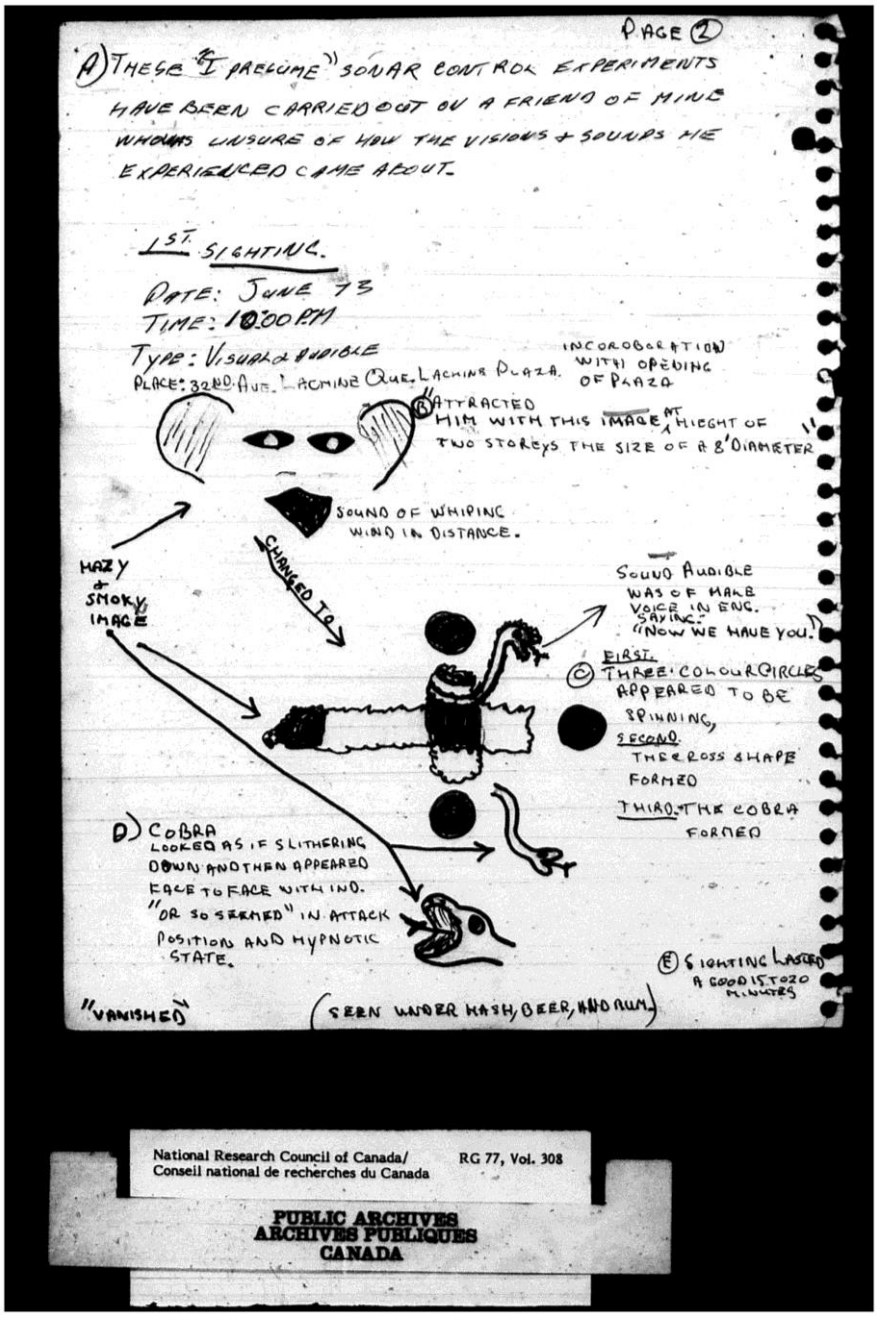
A number of drawings depict an actual spacecraft, such as the following 1986 sighting from Falher, Alberta:



UFO drawing from an RCMP report of a Falher, AB sighting.[397]

[397] P.R. Brisson, 3 December 1986. UFO Sighting Report, Falher, AB. Non-Meteoric Sighting file. RG 77, accession 1986-87/377, box 1, file N86 61-87. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

And finally, there are a number of drawings that depict strange scenes and alien beings, such as the following – perhaps the oddest drawing of all:



Drawing from a witness report of a strange sighting in Lachine, QC.[398]

[398] Name Redacted, June 1973. UFO drawing. Microfilm reel T-1743. RG 77, volume 308, file UAR/N77 101-130. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

In the end, government investigators felt that these drawings told them very little. An RCMP officer summed up the official attitude this way: "Attached [to the report] are drawings obtained from the observers. These are quite plain and I doubt if they will supply much information."[399]

David Clarke, a professor of journalism at Sheffield Hallam University, has written extensively on the U.K.'s own UFO files, and was responsible in large part for their declassification and dissemination. Like the Canadian files, the UK archives also contain an assortment of UFO images, some of which Clarke collected in the volume *UFO Drawings From The National Archives.* In the book, he writes about the potential value of the images:

> Most of the illustrations in this book lack the sophistication of drawings produced by professional artists for use in newspapers and magazines. Viewed from a purely aesthetic viewpoint, sketches of UFOs made by schoolchildren or policemen might appear naïve or worthless. But as visual evidence of unusual sightings that are deeply meaningful and significant to those individuals who see UFOs, they are uniquely valuable historical documents in their own right, and shed light on how the events and popular culture of the age imprinted on people's imaginations.[400]

[399] J.W. Quinn, 19 July 1968. UFO Sighting Report, Fort Resolution, NWT. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N68 059-115. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[400] David Clarke, *UFO Drawings From The National Archives* (London: Four Corners, 2017): 17.

Similarly, the drawings in the Canadian UFO files are not impressive. They are amateur drawings which rarely give any tangible sense of perspective or distance, or even colour and texture. But the artistic ineptitude of UFO observers is hardly the point. Even if professional artists had rendered every single one of the images in photorealistic detail, they would not have been convincing to Ottawa scientists or RCMP investigators. This is because the UFO drawings failed to meet the standards of what a scientific image should be.

Latour argues that "no scientific discipline exists without first inventing a visual and written language which allows it to break with its confusing past."[401] The very creation of a scientific discipline hinges on the sophistication of its images. Latour further says, in the case of obtaining support for a specific knowledge claim, "He who visualizes badly loses the encounter; his fact does not hold."[402] Michael Lynch argues that visualization transforms "specimen materials into observable and mathematically analyzable data."[403] Images *make* scientific objects – which might otherwise remain abstract ideas or metaphors – into tangible things that scientists can manipulate. Lynch calls these "docile objects." For Lynch, visualization is a "civilizing" process that renders the object understandable. In other words, "If it is a scientist's task to plumb the "depths" of a phenomenon, available representations provide the material with which such "plumbing" is visibly constructed."[404] Images mark the difference between mere representation and active intervention, a distinction Ian Hacking uses to characterize the

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[401] Bruno Latour, "Visualisation and Cognition: Drawing Things Together," in Henrika Kuklick (ed) *Knowledge and Society Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present* 6 (1986): 13.
[402] Latour, "Visualisation and Cognition: Drawing Things Together," 17.
[403] Michael Lynch, "Discipline and the Material Form of Images: An Analysis of Scientific Visibility," *Social Studies of Science* 15 (1985): 37.
[404] Michael Lynch and Steve Woolgar, "Introduction: Sociological Orientations to Representational Practice in Science," *Human Studies* 11.2/3 (1988): 106.

power of science.[405] Images with sufficient sophistication allow a scientist to move beyond description and into the realm of actual manipulation.

The UFO drawings in the archives do not possess this sophistication. There are plenty of images from which to choose, but they are inevitably vague. They lack the kind of detail necessary to make significant comparisons, and there is very little consensus on the main categories of UFOs, as the chart showing the diversity of UFO types illustrates. As the chart admits, "One of the most troublesome aspects of UFOlogy is the seemingly infinite variety of reported objects. It is, in fact, something of a stumbling block to those who believe in the physical reality of UFOs." Ultimately, as Latour says, the UFO drawings lose the encounter. At no point did they become working objects that researchers around the world could use. They were unable to account for what witnesses saw in any more detail or sophistication than the oral testimonies. For investigators, the drawings were just more of the same, and oftentimes of even less value than the anecdotal evidence. In Latour's terms, while UFO drawings might be mobile, it is hard to argue that they are also immutable, presentable, readable, and combinable.

Involuntary Citizen Science

There is a growing literature on how citizen science, or crowdsourcing, has contributed to scientific efforts, both historically and in contemporary cases. An example of the latter is the "SETI@home" project, a free program that citizens can download and run on their home computers. When the computer is not busy with other tasks, the

[405] Ian Hacking, *Representing and Intervening: Introductory Topics in the Philosophy of Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

program runs in the background by downloading and analyzing radio telescope data to assist in the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. As of April 2019, the program boasted over 1.7 million users. SETI@home is an example of modern scientific "crowdsourcing," an effort to actively involve citizens – whether or not they are trained in science – in the production of scientific knowledge, especially in fields burgeoning with data so large that no one scientist can manage it.

Historically, certain sciences have also undertaken similar efforts. Deborah Coen has described late nineteenth century European networks of "seismic observers." These observers were people, preferably locals, who were the most bodily attuned to their particular environment and so would be the first to notice any changes that might indicate an earthquake. Their observations of earthquakes were sent to scientists working in major cities, who collated and analyzed the data. This anecdotal evidence, or testimony, was integral to early earthquake science, before the development of advanced technologies made it redundant. Similarly, W. Patrick McCray has written about Operation Moonwatch, an American initiative set up after the Soviet Union launched Sputnik in 1957. No professional system was yet in place to make observations of the satellite, and so this responsibility fell to amateur observers. Schoolteachers organized their students into astronomy clubs and dedicated amateur astronomers built their own telescopes and started sending observations to professional scientists for collation and analysis. These amateur efforts were so successful that Operation Moonwatch became more than just an effort to track Sputnik: it became a means of popularizing science throughout the U.S. and recruiting young, aspiring scientists into the field.[406] These efforts worked to increase

[406] W. Patrick McCray, *Keep Watching the Skies! The Story of Operation Moonwatch and the Dawn of the Space Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

public awareness of this kind of research, but more importantly to prepare the citizenry to make observations when it became necessary, all part of the larger goal of clearing away ignorance and producing a more rational citizen.[407] What these examples illustrate are situations where the scientific establishment at the time took amateur observations of the natural world seriously and incorporated this data into their professional activities, even if there was a certain anxiety attached to the status of the observations and the observers' reliability.

An example even closer to home is NRC astronomer Peter Millman's efforts from 1960 onward to enlist amateurs in the tracking of fireballs and meteorites. Millman "realized that amateur astronomers, such as those attached to regional RASC [Royal Astronomical Society of Canada] Centres, could play a pivotal role in the acquisition of fireball data. Help was also sought from professional workers whose jobs required them to be outdoors at nighttime." In addition, Millman enlisted the help of RCMP officers in the forwarding of reports.[408] In terms of Canadian UFO research, Campion College astronomer Martin Beech's study of what he calls the "Millman Fireball Archive" is extremely illuminating. He writes that Millman coordinated the effort from about 1962 to 1989, which consisted of a "systematically collated catalogue of fireball report cards gathered from across the nation." Beech's own statistical analysis of the archive closely resembles my own for the UFO files. Sightings for both fireballs and UFOs were highest in Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia, and "the number of events reported by each of the Provinces and Territories correlates in a linear fashion with the population density."

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[407] Johan Kärnfelt, "Knut Lundmark, Meteors and an Early Swedish Crowdsourcing Experiment," *Annals of Science* 71.4 (2014): 454.
[408] Beech, "The Millman Fireball Archive," 72.

It is perhaps natural that UFO and fireball sightings would correlate so closely, given that both events occur in the same space and time. The striking difference is that Millman and the NRC actively solicited the help of others in tracking fireballs, but attempted to ignore the very similar data on UFOs that citizens were volunteering. By the early 1960s, Millman had, of course, made his position on UFOs and the potential of extraterrestrial intelligence very clear. On the one hand, it is no mystery why Millman wanted no part in UFO reports: he did not think they were real. On the other hand, it seems strange that Millman did not attempt to incorporate UFO reports into the fireball reporting scheme in some more significant way, given that some UFO observations – as he admitted – might have been misidentified fireball or meteorite sightings.

In a similar context, Johan Karnfelt has described the efforts of Swedish astronomer Knut Lundmark to raise awareness of meteorite reporting beginning in the 1920s, but more significantly to "prepare the Swedish citizenry for the making of astronomical observations should the need arise."[409] Lundmark conducted his studies before the modern era of UFOs, but his goal of producing reliable observers in the field applies more broadly than just meteorites. Karnfelt argues that a meteorite is a "boundary object," a "spectacular revelation" that "enables the world of the scientist and the world of the citizen to intersect," even if only for a moment, or during the experience of observing the meteor, and then submitting a report.[410] This kind of moment can create and strengthen the bond between scientist and citizen; crowdsourcing initiatives serve to

[409] Kärnfelt, "Knut Lundmark, Meteors and an Early Swedish Crowdsourcing Experiment," 454.
[410] See also Susan Leigh Star and James R. Gresemer, "Institutional Ecology, 'Translation' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39," *Social Studies of Science* 19 (1989): 393.

draw them closer together.[411] In terms of UFOs, however, it almost seems like the opposite effect occurs – there is *no* bond created between the two, and in many cases, the "spectacular revelation" of seeing a UFO pushes scientists and citizens even further apart.

In contemporary terms, Millman advocated for and organized a crowdsourcing network for fireball reports. But he did not extend the same solicitation to UFO reports, and so perhaps this latter effort might be called "involuntary" citizen science.[412] Citizens were seeing things in the sky and thought that the government should be aware of them, or simply wanted to hear from the experts about what they saw. Some citizens felt a moral duty to report their observations, whether for scientific or national security interest. Citizen UFO reports were not coordinated or solicited, and were, frankly, unwanted. Nevertheless, the sheer amount of reports that citizens sent to the government constitutes a body of knowledge, and should, by existing definitions, rightly be termed citizen science. The value of this body of knowledge is admittedly unclear, but this does not detract from the efforts of citizens who attempted to contribute to scientific understanding of this seemingly natural phenomenon. Writing about his work with Project Blue Book, J. Allen Hynek argued that the typical witness to a UFO is "a responsible citizen who feels it is his duty to make a report."[413]

Elena Aronova argues there is an "implicit tension" in citizen science, which explains some of this confusion. This "mode" of scientific work embodies two different and somewhat contradictory meanings: "one that encourages amateur contributions to science within a framework defined by experts and the other that implies a critical stance

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[411] Kärnfelt, "Knut Lundmark, Meteors and an Early Swedish Crowdsourcing Experiment," 472.
[412] Lorraine Daston, "How Cold War anxiety and citizen science fuelled Canada's massive UFO report files," *CBC Ideas* (11 May 2018).
[413] J. Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1972): 16.

toward experts' interests and goals."[414] That is, the *citizen* in the term "implies that it is loyal, political, and focused on participatory rights" – in other words, the citizen is politically invested. The *science* in the term, however, "implies respect for scientific norms and boundaries" and is ostensibly disinterested and neutral.[415] "Citizen science," then, is almost oxymoronic, but this actually aids in understanding, at least in part, why the Canadian UFO reports caused such distress for the government and citizens alike.

As will be explored in more detail in the next chapter, citizen UFO investigators became engaged in a dual task: to contribute to scientific understanding and to critique government secrecy. The majority of citizens who reported UFOs attempted to contribute to science within, as Aronova writes, the framework defined by experts. However, there were others, like Ken Kaasen, who took a more critical stance toward expert knowledge. I argue that a significant part of the problem arose because the Canadian government did not attempt to reconcile these competing interests. Millman and others involved in the UFO investigation did not recognize that UFOs held multiple meanings and interests for citizens and that their attempts to ignore the issue only inflamed all of these passions. Government scientists regarded those citizens genuinely interested in contributing to science as unskilled observers. Officials in Ottawa assumed citizens who attempted to critique the state and the way in which science works were irrational. In the end, the government's ongoing attempt to ignore the UFO issue only made matters worse.

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[414] Elena Aronova, "Citizen Seismology, Stalinist Science, and Vladimir Mannar's Cold Wars," *Science, Technology, and Human Values* 42.2 (2017): 243.
[415] Aronova, "Citizen Seismology, Stalinist Science, and Vladimir Mannar's Cold Wars," 227.

Conclusion

Neither testimony nor visualizations of UFOs were able to convince investigators of the reality of the phenomenon. As Hynek wrote, when discussing anecdotal evidence, "The problem is compounded by the fact that most UFO reports are frustrating in the extreme. They contain so few facts!"[416] He argued that scientists expect a certain type of data and presentation – graphs, charts, and numbers. UFO reports rarely contain this type of data and this turns off the scientific establishment. It did not matter that, in Peter Lipton's words, testimony is ubiquitous. Despite the growing collection of reports by the late 1960s, investigators understood them as almost isolated instances. Testimony was not reliable because they understood it as merely a means of communicating, rather than producing, knowledge. Similarly, Jeffrey Kripal explains the reluctance to take UFO testimony seriously as an attempt to delimit scientific inquiry.

It is not hard to see how this logic extended to visual representations of UFOs. Hand-made drawings in pencil of a flying saucer, or a vague light in the sky, failed to convince authorities of the reality of the sighting. The drawings acted more like another version of testimony, rather than the "immutable mobiles" that Bruno Latour and others have argued are essential to the development of disciplinary science. Testimony, and drawings to a much lesser extent, might be ubiquitous, but Canadian investigators nevertheless felt they could not trust it.

These kinds of evidence rarely warranted any further investigation beyond the initial RCMP report, and never anything approaching the scale of three cases discussed in

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[416] J. Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1972): 22.

the previous chapter. In instances where only narratives were collected, sometimes RCMP investigators would forward their reports to the NRC on the basis of something interesting in the story, but scientists never conducted any further analysis. There might have been a growing mountain of sighting reports, but they ultimately come up against the need for something more, the kind of hard evidence in which scientists actually deal. By the end of 1967, twenty years after the UFO phenomenon exploded, no indisputable evidence had been found that proved the existence of advanced technological craft, let alone extraterrestrial visitation. As the next chapter shows, this made the Canadian government's decision to start shutting down the investigation an easy one.

Chapter 6: The Government Gets Out of the Game, 1967-1995

Introduction

On 20 June 1968, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development administrator D. Davies wrote to the National Research Council to report a UFO sighting above Frobisher Bay: "The object appeared to be a star moving very slowly across the sky in a west to east direction. The local camera enthusiasts were out in full force." Davies consulted with the local Department of Transport office, which informed him that the object was likely a weather balloon flying at high altitude. Davies concluded his letter by reassuring the NRC: "There have been no reports of landing by little green men or other weird non-world creatures. Furthermore, there have been no reports that all our women are pregnant."[417] Davies was clearly no believer in the UFO phenomenon. He also assumed the letter's recipient shared his views and so would appreciate the joke. By this point the government's stance on UFOs was clear, and letters like this, mocking the subject, show this.

What was less clear by the late 1960s was what some members of the public thought. Chapter Three explored some citizens' early attempts at eliciting information from the government. They were largely unsuccessful, leading some UFO enthusiasts to accuse the government of a cover-up. The chapter attempted to place the rise of

[417] D. Davies, 20 June 1968. "Unidentified Flying Objects" letter. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, UAR/N68 001-058. LAC, Ottawa, ON. Davies likely got this idea from John Wyndham's novel *The Midwich Cuckoos* (London: Michael Joseph, 1957) and/or from Wolf Rilla's movie adaptation, *Village of the Damned* (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1960).

conspiracy theories about UFOs within the context of changing attitudes towards expertise and deference. This chapter will continue the narrative after 1967, again arguing for a mainly historical approach to conspiracy theory. Citizens continued to write into the government about UFOs, seemingly trusting the official responses they received even less.

However, a transformation started to take place in the late 1960s and into the 1970s. Whereas previous correspondents like D.M. Spicer and Ken Kaasen were primarily concerned with information about UFOs, some of the Canadians introduced in this chapter became just as concerned about government secrecy more broadly. It seems that at least some of the earlier efforts at achieving UFO disclosure found their logical conclusion in attempts during the 1970s to advocate for more effective access to information policies. This chapter places the efforts of UFO enthusiasts in Canada during the period 1967-1980 within the broader history of changing ideas about government secrecy and information, culminating in the introduction of ATIP legislation in the early 1980s.

What this chapter also shows is that citizens were as responsible as the government for the confusion about UFOs. The available documents show that the government was not covering up any information about UFOs. They show instead that there was a significant amount of confusion with departments about responsibility for the investigation, arising mostly from a lack of communication and political will to pursue the matter. However, some citizens' responses to this situation were not justified, and served only to further inflame the tension between them and the government. More specifically, *the way in which* some citizens approached the government about UFOs was

antagonistic. As the letters in this chapter show, some were brazen with their demands, rude and unforgiving, and sometimes made personal attacks against government officials. They tried many ways of making themselves seem more credible, such as affiliating themselves with UFO research organizations, but the government saw these as mere pretenses. This kind of approach did not endear these citizens to the government, which generalized this behaviour to the entire field as yet more examples of ignorance and superstition that impeded the state's task of educating the public and maintaining its modern image.

The Transfer of Responsibility

Despite the events of 1967, the Department of National Defence maintained a position of disbelief in the physical reality of UFOs. Early in the 1950s, the DND established that UFOs did not present a security risk. The only thing left to do, in the department's mind, was to leave the investigation to scientists, who might be able to make something of it. When it became obvious that even Canada's foremost astronomers, such as Peter Millman, were similarly uninterested in the topic, the DND pushed harder to dissociate itself from the phenomenon. In other words, the DND had been trying to get out of the game for years before they finally made it happen.

"DND should NOT be put in the position of appearing to be responsible for this subject," read a 1967 memo, "thus linking these phenomena, in the public mind, with some sort of threat to the national security."[418] Attempts to ignore and brush aside

[418] H.H.A. Parker, 10 July 1967. "Canadian Aerial Phenomena Investigations Committee" Memorandum. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. Unknown Flying Objects file. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

civilian investigators culminated in late 1967. By June of that year, word began to circulate that the DND might be transferring responsibility for the UFO investigation, and that the National Research Council would be the obvious choice to take it over.

John H. Hodgson, Director of the Observatories Branch within the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, wrote to DRB Chairman R.J. Uffen to report that the Dominion Observatory "have in their files a number of reports about UFO's" and to ask "if any agency in Canada is interested in maintaining a file on these reports." A response noted that Hodgson was told to hold off on transferring any files until discussions between the NRC and DND could determine the responsible agency.[419]

The next month, RCAF Air Commodore R.M. Aldwinckle asked an unidentified recipient to "assume responsibility for determining the Department's [DND] position with respect to UFO's and communicating this to [NRC scientist] Dr. Rettie." Aldwinckle also noted his personal interest in the subject and that he would "appreciate being kept in the picture."[420] Even at this time, it was unclear who had responsibility for the subject. It was a necessary task in and of itself to identify someone simply to look into the matter, let alone decide who would eventually take on the project.

Later that month, H. Sheffer, Scientific Advisor to the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, wrote that the DND had positively identified the NRC as the ideal candidate for UFO responsibility:

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[419] John H. Hodgson, 23 June 1967. Letter to R.J. Uffen. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

[420] R.M. Aldwinckle, 5 July 1967. "Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO's) – DND Interest" Memorandum. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

> I agree that it would be a good idea to transfer responsibility for investigation of UFOs to the National Research Council if they are willing to undertake this responsibility. One of the reasons given by DOps for wishing to relinquish responsibility is lack of sufficient staff and necessary scientific assistance. NRC might well have the same objections. It is, after all, not an attractive field for investigation and there are very few scientists who will eagerly undertake the required studies.

Sheffer asked if he should "explore informally NRC interest" or whether a formal ministerial inquiry would be more appropriate.[421] At this point, these discussions were taking place solely within the confines of the DND.

Sheffer went ahead and informally inquired about NRC interest. W.G. Schneider, with the NRC, replied to Sheffer: "On the question of UFO's, we had a preliminary discussion here on this matter and it was decided we would not proceed further unless we had a request from your Minister addressed to ours." In other words, Schneider and others at the NRC decided to force the DND's hand. Schneider confirmed this by adding, "after having gone through the exercise of fitting ourselves to our projected budget, which is rather sad, we are at the moment very chary about taking on anything that might involve any expenditures of funds."[422]

In September, RCAF Wing Commander D.F. Robertson drafted a letter meant for Minister of Industry and Defence Production C.M. Drury. Robertson indicated that

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[421] H. Sheffer, 26 July 1967. "UFOs – Comments on paper for defence council" Memorandum. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[422] W.G. Schneider, 28 August 1967. Letter to H. Sheffer. Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

CFHQ had carried out a study and determined that, despite Schneider's misgivings, the NRC was the most appropriate agency to investigate the phenomenon, due to the availability of their "scientific research facilities and trained personnel." Robertson outlined the procedure CFHQ undertook upon receiving a UFO report. Each case would be classified into one of two categories: if the report contained information "which would suggest the type of phenomena associated with fireballs and meteorites" they were classified as Category One; if the report did "not conform to the physical patterns usually associated with fireballs or meteoritic activity," they became Category Two. All Category One reports were automatically forwarded to NRC, and had been for some time before the discussions about transferring responsibility were initiated. Category Two reports would necessitate one of two responses: they were "either placed on file and annotated that no further action [was] required, or action [was] initiated to conduct a formal investigation of the report by a military officer." These investigations were rare and the letter admitted that those done to date "[had] failed to disclose any evidence which would suggest that UFOs pose a threat to national security."

In an attempt to further justify the transfer of responsibility, Robertson added that, rather than constituting a security threat, "a number of investigations suggest the possibility of UFOs exhibiting some unique scientific information or advanced technology which could possibly contribute to scientific or technical research." It also noted the recent formation of the Condon Committee at the University of Colorado, which was tasked with solving the UFO enigma once and for all. Robertson used this

example to justify the need for a civilian, scientific organization to look into the matter, rather than a military one.[423]

In October, the recommendation to transfer responsibility became a formal ministerial inquiry. Minister of National Defence Leo Cadieux signed the letter that Robertson had drafted, and sent it to Drury. Two weeks later, Drury replied. The NRC, according to Drury, acknowledged that immediately after the Second World War, there had been sufficient cause to justify a UFO investigation. This centered on two aspects: the "possibility of unexpected military innovations in or above the atmosphere" and "the sensitivity of the civil population to the remarkable scientific progress in upper atmosphere and space research." However, Drury continued, "After some 15 years of publicity and of conditioning to the acceptance of natural explanations for unusual sightings," such an investigation was no longer warranted. Further, if any investigation was to take place, "it is one that should preferably arise by the natural extension of scientific work in progress rather than by the intrusion of UFO phenomena seeking explanation." In other words, UFOs were a bother to the scientist, who was preoccupied with more rational pursuits.

Drury offered a revision of Cadieux's proposal to transfer wholesale responsibility to the NRC. Since he thought UFOs were an intrusion into normal science, Drury instead proposed "a substantial reduction in the government effort, in fact to something rather akin to a judicious sampling procedure."[424] Drury saw this as not just a means of transferring responsibility to another agency, but as an opportunity to reduce

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[423] Unsigned, September 1967. Draft letter to C.M. Drury. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[424] C.M. Drury, 23 October 1967. Letter to L. Cadieux. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

involvement to the most minimal level possible. Cadieux agreed with Drury's assessment. The next month, he replied "that it is unnecessary and wasteful of effort to investigate all reported UFO sightings," although admitted that investigation would be required in cases where physical evidence was available – such as those detailed in the last chapter. Cadieux suggested that they give the NRC the responsibility for UFO reports, but also more specifically the authority to determine when and where scientific investigation was warranted. This latter decision had a significant impact on how the government received UFO reports from that point forward.

By the end of 1967, the NRC had become responsible, willingly or otherwise, for UFO reports and inquiries. The DND wrote that the NRC "has recently assumed responsibility for the scientific investigations of UFO's where such appear warranted," and while no individual scientist had yet been identified as the lead investigator, all inquiries could be forwarded in the meantime to NRC scientist R.S. Rettie.[425] The DND wasted no time in spreading the word about the transfer and passing the buck on civilian inquiries.

Listless Approach

Not all within the government were happy with this decision. The NRC, of course, had already expressed their reluctance to become any more involved with the "intrusion." Others within CFHQ were similarly dissatisfied. E.W. Greenwood, despite his earlier call for a form letter that took the DND "out of the circuit for further

[425] Unsigned, January 1968. Stock response letter. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, volume 24031, file 3800-10-1, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

inquiries," wrote that the NRC's intention was to undertake only a passive role. The organization would not actively investigate any cases and would not solicit information from observers. "All this adds up," Greenwood wrote, "to a quite listless approach; the NRC staff members concerned appear to be personally convinced that UFO sightings do not merit serious attention."[426] Brigadier N.H. Ross also expressed his concern over the NRC's commitment: "This Division supports the views that should a scientific governmental agency accept the responsibility for investigating UFOs, the agency concerned must be prepared to undertake a serious and objective investigation." Of course, one could say that Ross was not overly concerned with UFOs per se, but rather indignant that a publicly funded institution such as the NRC would shirk its responsibilities, whatever they were.

However, Ross also suggested that the NRC "be discreetly advised that the DND has a genuine interest in UFOs and it is intended to maintain a close association with any studies undertaken in this field."[427] It seems reasonable to conclude that while Ross may have had a personal interest in the subject, the department as a whole did not. Many within the government thought a serious study of UFOs perhaps should be conducted, but that another department – not their own – should be responsible. Since every department shared this view, it is clear why nobody undertook such a project.

To the UFO enthusiast though, without the benefit of this inside view, it was very *unclear* why the government did not engage in the task. While several military and government employees may have been dissatisfied with the result, the number of

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[426] E.W. Greenwood, 8 November 1967. "Investigation – UFO Reports" Memorandum." Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[427] N.H. Ross, November 1967. "Investigation – UFO Reports" Memorandum. Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

disgruntled and offended civilians was surely higher. Word of the decision to transfer responsibility to the NRC did not take long to travel among UFO enthusiasts. Allan K. Vezina was a Chairman of the Canadian Aerial Phenomena Investigations Committee (CAPIC), based in Scarborough, ON. In early January 1968 he wrote to Leo Cadieux to congratulate the Minister – not on the successful transfer of responsibility, but on winning CAPIC's "Booby of the Year Award." Given this chapter's argument that the way in which citizens presented themselves did nothing to help their credibility, it is worth quoting Vezina's letter at length:

> I simply cannot understand why you turned the UFO investigations project over to the Space Research branch of the National Research Council and expect to achieve something. Yes, it lifts responsibility from your shoulders, but why them? Why not some private agency which showed some semblance of open-mindedness toward the subject?
>
> Dr. R.S. Rettie, the head of the space research branch stated: "The whole business is awfully like the belief in witches and hobgoblins." Now, that's just what scientific research needs; the head of a supposedly scientific project being so close-minded that he likens the item he is investigating to witches and hobgoblins. I am absolutely certain you will receive the answer you want from him about UFO's. But, will it be the right answer? I rather doubt it! Dr. Rettie does not have to investigate UFO's; to him, the answer is obvious – the whole thing is a myth. You really outdid yourself this time. Imagine, the government wasting money on

> an investigation where it already knows the answer.
>
> The Defense Department has stated that the UFO presents no threat to national security. So, what took you so long? The United States Defense Department issued that statement some twenty years ago!

Vezina reminded Cadieux of just how many readers his next editorial on the subject would draw, and that they all "expected a white-wash of this subject," anyway. "Again," Vezina wrote, "congratulations on winning our 1968 award so early in the year."[428] Vezina's letter was a passionate indictment of the Canadian government's efforts, or seeming lack thereof, to seriously investigate the issue. His observations followed from much of what Wilbert Smith argued a decade earlier, when Smith wrote about "official reticence" and the government's fear over what they might find – not necessarily extraterrestrial intelligence, but that they were unable to solve the problem and reassure the citizenry.

Vezina's call for a "private agency" to fill this gap was one he had previously made. Seven months earlier, Vezina wrote to then Minister of National Defense Paul Hellyer, outlining CAPIC's mandate and history. CAPIC was a Canadian offshoot of an American civilian UFO investigation group. At its peak, it had about 1,000 members, ranging in age from "eleven years to sixty-five years" and in profession, including "scientists, engineers, technicians, lawyers, radio announcers, and many other interested citizens." In his letter to Hellyer, Vezina proposed that CAPIC take over the duty to

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[428] Allan K. Vezina, 5 January 1968. Letter to Leo Cadieux. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, volume 24031, file 3800-10-1, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

receive and investigate UFO reports. In order to do so, Vezina wrote, it would be necessary to have the cooperation of the armed forces, so as to facilitate the travel of a CAPIC investigator wherever they were needed in the country. Vezina also proposed "a small subsidy" in the form of "a permanent staff of, let's say, two persons – one of CAPIC's Directors and a secretary," along with "an office with office equipment such as typewriters, filing cabinets, etc.," and "an offset printing press so that we may publish our findings."

Vezina thought the total cost might come to about $20,000, which he acknowledged was "a great deal of money," but certainly "a great deal less than if the government set up a Royal Commission." Finally, Vezina felt the need to "emphasize this one point; we are not a so called "crack-pot" organization."[429] Of course, the necessity of making such a statement rarely bolstered anyone's credibility.

Paul Hellyer did not respond. Rather, the very same Leo Cadieux, at the time the Associate Minister of National Defence, replied on Hellyer's behalf with a standard response thanking Vezina for his letter and assuring him it would be discussed "with the appropriate officials."[430] Cadieux wanted the correspondence to end. Vezina, however, was dogged. Only two days later, Vezina wrote back to Cadieux, reiterating the sensibility of providing CAPIC with a grant to take the investigation off the government's hands. Vezina also appended a detailed budget, which included lines for office space rental costs, salaries for the director and secretary, stationary, equipment, and printing costs, generous expense accounts for "Auto travel, Air travel, lunches, etc." and

[429] Allan K. Vezina, 9 June 1967. Letter to Paul T. Hellyer. Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[430] Leo Cadieux, 13 June 1967. Letter to Allan K. Vezina. Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

"Miscellaneous Items and Expenses Incurred," and an "Apartment in Ottawa for Director." Whereas Vezina quoted $20,000 in his letter to Hellyer, the budget proposed to Cadieux ran to $37,290.[431]

Again, Cadieux replied with a standard response: "As previously advised, your representations are being investigated."[432] It would only be another two months before Cadieux succeeded Hellyer as Minister of National Defence and facilitated the transfer from the DND to the NRC, an act which, in Vezina's eyes, earned him CAPIC's Booby of the Year Award.

Vezina's letters, despite their antagonistic tone, reveal a more commonly-held feeling amongst citizens interested in the topic: that the government was not taking UFOs seriously and it was shirking its duty to properly investigate all potential threats and follow up on scientific leads with an open mind. Unfortunately for CAPIC, the tone of Vezina's letters meant that Cadieux and the DND dismissed the organization as "crack-pots." Vezina's tone was especially ill-advised, considering that RCAF member D.F. Robertson – who had drafted the original ministerial inquiry between Cadieux and Drury – also wrote that, since "the general public is becoming more interested in unusual aerial objects which can be neither identified nor explained…[m]any private citizens, many of whom are exceptionally well qualified, are either carrying out personal and independent research studies on UFOs, or have joined organisations established for this purpose."[433] Robertson had intended that any discussion of the Canadian UFO investigation after its

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[431] Allan K. Vezina, 15 June 1967. Letter to Leo Cadieux. Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[432] Leo Cadieux, 19 June 1967. Letter to Allan K. Vezina. Allan K. Vezina, 15 June 1967. Letter to Leo Cadieux. Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[433] Unsigned, September 1967. Draft letter to C.M. Drury. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

transfer to the NRC should include mention of these "exceptionally well qualified" citizens, as they would undoubtedly have something to offer. After his exchange with CAPIC, it is doubtful that Cadieux would have placed Vezina in this category.

Another case from Alberta surely added to the government's doubt about the public's qualifications. The Calgary Canadian Forces base forewarned CFHQ in Ottawa about William Albert Small, a man "actively engaged in the investigation of UFOs as a centennial project." Small was upset with the "passive" response he had received to previous inquiries to the government and so intended to "visit Ottawa in the near future to contact senior governmental and defence officials." The memo was clear about how the government should approach him: "Mr Small is a crank and should be treated as such."[434] DND officials and NRC scientists thought very little of the public's qualifications on this matter, and so it is unlikely the departments would have categorized any of them as "exceptionally well qualified."

Declassification

The National Research Council quickly settled into its passive role. In February 1968, Drury again wrote to Cadieux confirming that the NRC had "agreed to act as the repository of reports of unidentified flying objects […and that i]nvestigations by NRC, if any, of these reports will depend on the degree of scientific interest in each case."[435] This wording left a great deal of leeway for the NRC to decide on their level of interest in the

[434] Telex Message, 14 November 1967. "Mr William Albert Small." Microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 311, file DND/UAR (1967) 164-176. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[435] C.M. Drury, 16 February 1968. Letter to L. Cadieux. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

topic. Peter Millman, for one, made his interest clear in a number of letters to colleagues and civilians. In March he replied to A.F. McQuarrie, the Officer in Charge at the Gonzales Observatory in Victoria: "Apart from the fireball and meteor reports, we do not solicit unidentified object reports and we only investigate reports that seem to be of scientific interest."[436] The following month Millman responded to Captain S.B. Goddard, of CFB Penhold, regarding an incident at a local farm: "It is very helpful to have someone run these things down to earth. I am afraid that the more I study this field, the more I realize how much hoaxing has occurred on the part of pranksters and publicity seekers."[437]

Nevertheless, Millman did take extra measures to make the collection of reports more efficient. He drew on one of the NRC's "associate committees," a program first established in 1917 and finally terminated in 1989. While in operation, associate committees served "as instruments to provide the opportunity to bring together experts for the study, coordination, and promotion of research on problems of national significance. When an associate committee studied a particular problem, it collected and collated pertinent information, delegated research problems, coordinated research, and suggested new avenues of research."[438] Millman outlined this program to the RCMP Commissioner, writing that the NRC associate committee on meteorites had been established "for some years" and that it would assist in collecting and cataloguing reports.

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[436] Peter M. Millman, 22 March 1968. Letter to A.F. McQuarrie. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N68 001-058. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[437] Peter M. Millman, 17 April 1968. Letter to Captain S.B. Goddard. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N68 001-058. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[438] Brian Wilks, *Browsing Science Research at the Federal Level in Canada: History, Research Activities, and Publications* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004): 118.

Members of the associate committee were scientists in a variety of fields scattered across Canada. There was usually representation from a university or observatory in each province, with the NRC in Ottawa serving as the link for Ontario and the northern territories. The committee members regularly met in Ottawa to discuss their latest findings. For instance, the twelfth meeting of the committee on meteorites took place on 5 April 1968, and included seventeen members, representing various universities and observatories, the Royal Astronomical Society, the Geological Survey of Canada, the Royal Ontario Museum, the DRB, the DND, and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.[439] One member, University of Manitoba geologist Edward Leith, wrote to Millman a week after the meeting. Leith had found the most recent article on the Michalak case and joked, "You can see that it must be an authentic "saucer" because of the drawing made at the site!!!!"[440] Other committee members likely shared Leith's and Millman's view of the subject.

Millman made it clear to the RCMP Commissioner that his, and the committee's, real interest was in the scientific study of the nature of meteoritic objects and their rapid recovery when found. UFO reports might be useful under this umbrella as a contribution to tracking meteorites and fireballs, but "all sighting reports that do not seem to refer to fireballs or meteors will be placed on the non-meteoritic sighting file which will be unclassified, as in general we do not deal with classified material in our research program."[441]

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[439] National Research Council Proceedings of the Twelfth Meeting of the Associate Committee on Meteorites, 5 April 1968. RG 77, accession 1997-98/094, volume 34. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[440] Edward Leith, 11 April 1968. Letter to Peter Millman. Microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 311, file DND/UAR (1967) 200. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[441] Peter M. Millman, 22 March 1968. Letter to the RCMP Commissioner. Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

The creation of the non-meteoritic file marked a turning point in how the government responded to UFO reports and interacted with civilians looking for information. It was the first step in the process of declassification of Canada's UFO material, which Millman continued to spearhead. Greg Eghigian has written that the work of ufology has changed over the decades since the modern era began in 1947, and has come to include two distinct tasks. The first and more well-known task, articulated in the early days, was about determining the nature of UFOs and whether or not they were extraterrestrial in origin. Part of this work involved pressuring the government to reveal what they knew about the phenomenon, and ufologists have been successful at times at forcing the government to give up otherwise classified documents, an example of which follows. According to Eghigian, "there has been a clear and consistent consensus among UFO investigators and enthusiasts that government authorities have to be pressured to disclose critical information they have kept from the public." This situation has engendered hostility and mistrust of government action, and contributed to the rise of civilian investigations. "Thus," Eghigian continues, "indignation over state secrecy has given birth to a second-order of work for UFO investigators, namely explaining and combating government crypticness [sic]."[442]

Many within the government felt uncomfortable, or even indignant, that the collection of reports was happening at all. So why did it continue? Perhaps there were some who thought reports ought to be collected, just in case something of value did come of them – that is, in case the knowledge actually translated into understanding one day. It also likely was a case of bureaucratic inertia. Once the DND and the RCMP, for instance,

[442] Greg Eghigian, "Suspense and the UFOs," Unpublished Paper Presented at the Consortium for the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine (12 December 2017): 16.

had set a precedent for collecting UFO reports, it was hard to stop the process. After all, it was not until 1967 that the DND finally managed to offload responsibility for the investigation, even though they had come to the conclusion that UFOs were not of interest over ten years before.

The ufologists mentioned in this chapter also ran into these issues of secrecy and institutional inertia when attempting to access UFO documents. The standard practice since the beginning of Canada's involvement in the early 1950s was to place any such documents under classification, and despite the fact that the government quickly decided that UFOs were not a security risk, the documents remained classified. This was a frustrating situation for ufologists attempting to access information.

However, the LAC documents tell a slightly different story, at least at a certain point. Millman was actually quite eager to declassify the UFO material. He thought of it as a burden that was best dumped on someone else's lap. Declassification was one way to stop the flood of civilian inquiries. If civilians could access the documents themselves, through an unclassified file of sighting reports, then there would be no more need for Millman and his colleagues to remain involved. The DND was even more eager. In November 1967, Brigadier Ross wrote to the Directorate of Information Services. Ross noted the increasing number of "requests from private citizens, reporters and civilian organizations for the release of UFO material" and that the normal practice within the DND was to withhold material that contained confidential police reports and information from private sources. "However," Ross argued, "as a result of the nation-wide publicity being given to UFOs, it has become advisable to adjust this policy in order to avoid giving the impression that DND is "hiding something" and attempting to suppress the

release of UFO information to the general public."[443] This is the same Ross who had earlier lamented the NRC's lacklustre approach to the investigation and maintained, at least, a personal interest in the topic.

These early calls within the government for declassification were for not just current sighting reports, but even older material, like the Project Second Storey documents. In March 1968, Millman wrote to the DRB requesting the declassification of the PSS material. "This Committee has been dormant for many years and I see no reason why the attached material could not be declassified and transferred to the NRC for their use as they see fit."[444]

The DRB obviously agreed with Millman's assessment, as they granted the declassification the following month.[445] In addition to the Project Second Storey material, Wilbert Smith's final report on Project Magnet was also declassified. Since the mid-1960s, several researchers, most notably Arthur Bray, had again started writing to various departments asking for information about Smith's work. Millman must have thought including the Project Magnet material would also solve the problem of these specific inquiries. Millman's "Note on Project Magnet Report," dated 9 May 1968 and tacked to its cover, repeated a previous conclusion:

> I have been informed by the Department of Transport that although Project Magnet was officially authorized by the Department, work on this Project was

[443] N.H. Ross, 21 November 1967. "Policy – Release DND UFO Information" Memorandum." Microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 311, file DND/UAR (1967) 164-176. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[444] H.C. Oatway, 28 March 1968. "Project Second Storey Material" Memorandum. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, volume 24031, file 3800-10-1, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[445] L.J. L'Heureux, 16 April 1968. Letter to Peter Millman. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, accession 83-84/167, box 7523, file 3800-10-1, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

> carried out almost entirely by Mr. W. B. Smith and was in the nature of a spare-time activity. The conclusions reached in this report are entirely those of Mr. Smith, and do not represent an official opinion of either the Department of Transport or of the Second Storey Committee.

What Millman and civilian UFO investigators were battling was a tradition within the Canadian government of secrecy of information. Ann Rees describes secrecy as "an old and welcome friend" of the Canadian government.[446] Canada evolved as a country with a ""culture of secrecy" and citizen exclusion from government decision making."[447] Whereas the U.S. introduced modern access to information legislation in 1966, Canada followed Britain's lead and maintained its right to withhold information from the public using the mandate of the *Official Secrets Act*. Americans hold "a powerful belief that citizen access to government information is a right." The Canadian government does not share this belief.[448] Canada adopted Britain's version of its secrecy legislation wholesale in the late 19th century, and despite minor modifications over the years since, it remained entirely intact until 1983, when Canada's own *Access to Information Act* (ATIA) was introduced.

This is a key difference between Canada and the U.S., precipitated by certain political events. The American law was the result of pressure from journalists fighting for

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[446] Ann Rees, "Sustaining Secrecy: Executive Branch Resistance to Access to Information in Canada," in Mike Larsen and Kevin Walby (eds) *Brokering Access: Power, Politics, and Freedom of Information Process in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012): 43.
[447] Ann Rees, "Sustaining Secrecy: Executive Branch Resistance to Access to Information in Canada," in Mike Larsen and Kevin Walby (eds) *Brokering Access: Power, Politics, and Freedom of Information Process in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012): 55.
[448] Vivienne Monty, "Due North: Issues in Access to Government Information, A View From Canada," *Journal of Government Information* 23.4 (1996): 492.

better access to government information, especially in the wake of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The law was also then "strengthened by several amendments during the 1970s in response to the loss of public trust over the unpopular war in Vietnam and President Richard Nixon's resignation over Watergate."[449] Americans had clear reasons to demand better access to government information. The Canadian government, however, was not as willing to oblige, waiting until 1983 to enact its own legislation. To the credit of Canadian civilian UFO investigators, it is not hard to imagine how frustrating this situation might have been, especially given that their American counterparts were able to file access to information requests as early as 1966. Many of the same pressures in the American context applied in Canada, especially the decline of public trust in government. However, government secrecy was so entrenched in Canada that UFO investigators were stonewalled as a matter of course.

A Flap of Civilian Investigators

If Millman and others within the NRC and the DND thought declassifying the Project Second Storey and Project Magnet material would stop the civilian inquiries for good, they were sorely mistaken. In June 1968, Arthur Bray again wrote to the DND asking for information. His letter did not make it into the archives, but Director of Operations Colonel W.W. Turner wrote a lengthy and revealing internal memo discussing the inquiry. Bray had pointed out that his "close perusal" of the files

[449] Ann Rees, "Sustaining Secrecy: Executive Branch Resistance to Access to Information in Canada," in Mike Larsen and Kevin Walby (eds) *Brokering Access: Power, Politics, and Freedom of Information Process in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012): 47.

transferred to the NRC revealed that no sighting reports prior to March 1965 were included. Rather, the only ones accessible were dated 1965-1968. To account for this discrepancy, Turner explained that "prior to 1965 Air Defence Command (ADC) in cooperation with NORAD was the recognized defence agency primarily concerned with UFOs." As a result of their own "numerous" investigations, ADC had determined there was no security threat and so transferred responsibility to CFHQ. Turner admitted that ADC "did not forward their UFO files to CFHQ and unofficial talks held with ADC suggest that the files were destroyed in accordance with normal disposal instructions." This means that a significant amount of UFO material in ADC's possession was destroyed as part of routine protocol. Clearly, the DND and other departments were simultaneously receiving UFO reports and debating what to do with them, but the timeline Turner suggests helps to explain why the archival material prior to 1965 is patchy.

Bray also lamented that the files the NRC did receive were incomplete, and he knew this because he had at the same time examined RCMP files that listed sightings not referenced in the NRC material. Turner again had a ready explanation for this discrepancy. Upon learning that the NRC was to take over responsibility for the UFO files, the RCMP decided to retain all their own reports and correspondence, rather than transfer them to the NRC. In the event that anyone from the NRC wanted to see an RCMP report, they were welcome to do so, but the files would remain with the originating department. This worked for all parties, as "NRC advised that they did not think that the RCMP reports would be of any value, and if they felt that the reports were necessary they would negotiate directly with the RCMP." In other words, the NRC was

not overly concerned that the files they received were incomplete, as they had no real intention of conducting investigations anyway.

This confirmed Bray's own observation that "very few sighting reports were actually investigated, and this is no doubt due to lack of funds and staff." Turner clarified this statement: it was true, in part. "[H]owever, our operational and scientific staff agree that it would be senseless to become engaged in a large scale, expensive investigation where no tangible evidence exists. The majority of UFO reports consists [sic] of information of objects moving quickly across the sky and disappearing, [and so] it is suggested that to investigate such a report would be difficult if not impossible." Turner concluded his memo with instructions: "It is the opinion of this office that the [material in Bray's letter is] designed for sensationalism purposes and suggests that DND are concealing or hiding something. It is recommended that […] Bray be advised of the information contained herein in order that any reference to DND reflects facts and not suppositions."[450]

Despite Millman's hopes for the value of an unclassified UFO file, researchers like Bray were clearly still disappointed with what they found. Nevertheless, the NRC and other departments forged ahead, trying their best to ignore the UFO issue altogether. During the remainder of 1968, witnesses continued to submit sighting reports. The RCMP maintained their vigilance in collecting reports, which invariably included a statement on the witness's reliability. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the majority of RCMP reports described observers as generally reliable. Reports of July sightings from Fort Resolution, NWT described, in one case, the witness as a "steady, truthful

[450] W.W. Turner, 13 June 1968. "Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) – DND Files" Memorandum. Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

individual and quite reliable,"[451] and in another as "not the type to imagine or invent the sighting described."[452] A sighting report later that month from Amos, QC attributed high reliability to the witness because of their "good knowledge of astronomy" and their occupation as a notary with the county court.[453]

Amidst the flood of sighting reports were inquiries for information. Colonel L.A. Bourgeois, the DND Director of Information, received a letter asking for information about Wilbert Smith, his flying saucer observatory, and four of his colleagues who the writer had heard worked on Project Magnet. The writer, his name redacted, also asked for information about previous DRB Chairman Omond Solandt and previous NRC president C.J. Mackenzie, as well as records of sightings from 1947 to the present.[454] This kind of civilian letter is typical in terms of the sheer number of requests it makes of the government official to whom it is addressed (if there is an addressee at all), but is atypical in that the writer knew the specific names of a number of officials involved.

In addition to Vezina's organization CAPIC, other civilian investigators were also coming on the scene. In October, Donald Golding wrote to the DND Chief of Defence Staff on behalf of Canadian UFO Research (CUFOR), based in Oshawa, ON. In the first half of his letter, Golding described seeing two bright objects in the sky that orbited one another. Thinking they might be U.S. satellites, he contacted NASA, who told him such satellites would orbit beyond the limits of the naked eye. "The only thing I can

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[451] J.W. Quinn, 19 July 1968. UFO Sighting Report, Fort Resolution, NWT. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[452] V.K. Weys, 26 July 1968. UFO Sighting Report, Fort Smith, NWT. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[453] J.G.W.R. Monier, 29 July 1968. UFO Sighting Report, Amos, QC. Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[454] Name Redacted, 5 August 1968. Letter to Colonel L.A. Bourgeois. Flying Saucers file. RG 24, volume 24031, file 3800-10-1, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

suggest," Golding concluded, "is a couple of space stations maybe U.S.S.R. I must make clear that these two objects do not fit the right pattern to be U.F.O." Having brought up the subject of UFOs, however, Golding felt the need to expound further. "I must say that in dealing with U.F.O. we must keep in mind, that we are dealing with matter and anti-matter objects." Golding connected this realization with the government's decision the previous month to terminate its Intense Neutron Generator program, which conducted basic research in nuclear physics. "It is true that the generator is costly," Golding wrote, "how ever [sic] what we will learn from it in regards to anti-matter makes it worth while [sic] building. This country is making a very bad mistake by dropping the neutron generator project!"[455] For Golding, the government was failing its citizens not just when it came to UFOs, but also in its commitments to basic science that might enrich the nation. And, of course, these two ideas were entwined.

Golding sent another document to the DND around the same time, likely attached to this letter. "Unidentified Flying Objects Report: 3 Year Study" was dated 1968 and consisted of five pages, the first of which was the title page. Perhaps the report contained more pages that did not make it into the archives. The one thing that is clear is that somebody at the NRC did read it, as they underlined all the spelling errors in the text. Again, it is unlikely the presentation of this document added any credibility to the writer's cause. The second page contained a preface: "There are meney [sic] things about the universe unknown. Man is not the king of universe [sic] in which he lives. How can he even think such a silly idea as that [sic]. For we are but a small stone in a ocean of meney stars [sic]." The third page contained a suggested reading list of books on UFOs,

[455] Donald W. Golding, 2 October 1968. Letter to the Chief of the Defence Staff at the Department of National Defence. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N68 116-170. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

whereas the fourth page was a partial photocopy of an unidentified summary of Project Blue Book. Above the photocopy Golding expressed his astonishment that the U.S.A.F. had spent $20 million on the program (it is unclear where he found this number) and surmised that Blue Book was nothing more than a cover-up for the CIA. The last page contained Golding's conclusion:

> When our research started three years ago, we could not understand, how these unidentified objects could appear and disappear in mid air [sic]. How ever [sic] we now beleave [sic] to have to this problem, an answer which also explains ghost. In June 1962 Columbia and Brookhaven physicist [sic], completed an exeriment [sic] in the 33 billion volt atom smasher, that proved the neutrino particle is as closest to nothing as an [sic] thing can get. It has no charge but it does have a definte [sic] mass, and can pass though all forms of matter as if it didn't exist. now [sic] then if an anti matter electron can exist then so must the anti matter atom. Hence life may exist as we know it in anti matter form, hence some u.f.o. may be from the 4th diemention [sic]. What ever [sic] the case may be U.F.O. dose [sic] exist.[456]

In early 1969, another civilian investigation group entered the fray, albeit much more subtly. The Winnipeg based Canadian Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (CAPRO) reported a 2 February 1969 sighting in Ste. Rose, Manitoba. CAPRO submitted the report on their own unique sighting form, which contained an internal file

[456] Canadian U.F.O. Research, 1968. "Unidentified Flying Objects Report: 3 Year Study." Flying Saucers file. RG 24, volume 24031, file 3800-10-1, part 2. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

number and a host of meteorological information.[457] The report was very detailed and professionally composed, much more akin to Robertson's definition of "exceptionally well qualified" citizen investigators. Unfortunately for CAPRO, it was too little too late. The NRC took no interest in the report other than to file it away with the others. Given Millman's disbelief in the whole matter, it also likely did not help that Brian Cannon, a CAPRO member, wrote to him a month later admitting that they had put Stefan Michalak under hypnosis. The results, Cannon wrote, "were about as expected. The story [about the Falcon Lake incident] remained virtually the same with small differences although it is unfortunate that we waited this long to accomplish what may have been, a meaningful part of the investigation."[458]

In March, yet another civilian group made their presence known. Thomas James Cameron, handling Public Relations with the Montreal UFO Study Group (MUFOSG), wrote directly to the top, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. MUFOSG had formed two years earlier and had over 200 paid members. The organization's aim was to investigate sightings and study reports in order to learn "the origin and/or construction of this phenomena; be it psychological or physical, natural or man-made, terrestrial or extra-terrestrial." Information and cooperation was the purpose of the letter, Cameron wrote. MUFOSG was "attempting to work along the lines of the now disbanded "PROJECT MAGNET" – a former Canadian Government-sponsored investigating body, but on a much smaller scale, having neither the funds, nor the time (all persons involved, having

[457] Canadian Aerial Phenomena Research Organization UFO Sighting Report, Ste. Ross, MB, 2 February 1969. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N69 031-049. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[458] Brian C. Cannon, 5 March 1969. Letter to Peter Millman. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N69 031-049. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

outside full-time employment) to spare."[459] Cameron and the others in the group were obviously unaware of how small an operation Magnet was to begin with, given that it was essentially the work of Smith alone, using borrowed equipment. Cameron expressed the group's wish to meet in person with Trudeau, as well as Leo Cadieux and Paul Hellyer, to discuss the matter. Six weeks later, Trudeau's Appointments Secretary Mrs. G.J. Cook acknowledged the letter and informed MUFOSG that the Prime Minister's schedule was unfortunately "heavily committed" during the next several months and so a meeting would be impossible.[460]

The various civilian UFO groups continued to collect and report sightings, occasionally asking the DND or the NRC for further information. In April, CAPRO's Brian Cannon wrote to the Commanding Officer at CFB Esquimalt to ask whether the facility's radar tracked an object in the skies over Victoria, BC. Witnesses saw the object expel "some form of "glowing" material that fell to the ground near a transformer."[461] The same month, Arthur Bray again submitted his thoughts. He wrote to Bruce McIntosh, a scientist in the same division as Peter Millman at the NRC. Bray expressed his displeasure with remarks that McIntosh had made to the *Ottawa Citizen* regarding a 22 April UFO sighting near Ottawa that involved an object in the sky that looked like "a huge drinking cup turned upside-down."[462] McIntosh dismissed the sighting as a misidentified helicopter, despite the fact that the witness worked at the DND as a

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[459] Thomas James Cameron, 19 March 1969. Letter to the Office of the Prime Minister. MG 32, B-33, volume 90. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[460] G.J. Cook, 29 April 1969. Letter to Thomas James Cameron. MG 32, B-33, volume 90. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[461] B.C. Cannon, 15 April 1969. Letter to the Commanding Officer, CFB Esquimault. Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[462] B.A. McIntosh, n.d. "UFO Sighting Report on 23 April 1969." Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N69 050-100. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

mechanic and had also disagreed with McIntosh's assessment. Bray told McIntosh that "your conclusion would seem to be entirely unwarranted" and stands "on no apparent evidence to support it." Bray further lamented the "misinformation as well as lack of information" plaguing the public. "It is my belief," he wrote, "that government agencies and private researchers should work hand in hand in studying the UFO problem because often some information is available to one group which is not available to the other, and thus we stand a better chance of an eventual solution to the mystery."[463]

In May, CAPRO's Director Brian Cannon again wrote to the DND, following up on his previous letter. He had not received any reply to his inquiry with CFB Esquimalt other than a form letter from a Captain Frewer, and wanted clarification on who exactly was now handling the UFO investigation: "We were under the impression that the matter had been turned over to Dr. Peter Millman and his staff at the National Research Council. However, I interpret Capt. Frewer's remarks as to indicate that the Defence Dept. is handling at least a portion of the cases."[464] Despite the best efforts of people like Arthur Bray and Brian Cannon, and their associated organizations, the "doubletalk" and "go-arounds" persisted.

Mr. X

In 1974, Gallup first surveyed the Canadian public about UFOs. 67% of people had heard of UFOs, while 8% of people thought they had seen one. When asked if they

[463] Arthur Bray, 27 April 1969. Letter to Bruce McIntosh. Microfilm reel T-1741. RG 77, volume 306, file UAR/N69 050-100. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[464] B.C. Cannon, 27 May 1969. Letter to Canadian Forces Headquarters. Unknown Flying Objects file. RG 24-G-1, BAN 2003-00412-2, box 1, file 2000-4. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

were real or just people's imagination, nearly 30% had no answer, 15% said they did not know, almost 20% thought they were just imaginary, and 36% thought they were real.[465] These numbers are much more conservative than the U.S. Gallup polls, when in 1973, 94% of Americans had heard of UFOs, 11% thought they had seen one, and 54% thought they were real.[466]

By 1978, the numbers had increased. 81% of Canadians had heard of UFOs, 10% thought they had seen one, and 46% thought they were real.[467] Just the next year, Gallup asked Canadians to indicate their belief in UFOs: almost 61% responded positively.[468] Despite these rising numbers, the phenomenon did not have nearly as significant an impact on the daily life of most Canadians, as it did for those few enthusiasts mentioned here. UFOs still held a very special allure for a small group of Canadian civilian investigators, such as the enigmatic "Mr. X."

In May 1979, after a break of almost ten years of the kind of brazen civilian inquiries the government was used to receiving, a new civilian investigator arrived on the scene. Based in Kingston, ON, Mr. X wrote to the RCMP Commissioner. His letterhead described him as "Consulting Resologist of the Res Bureaux" and provided a PO Box address in Kingston. The "Res Bureaux" was his formal organization, which for a number of years in the late 1970s and into the 1980s produced and posted to subscribers a printed bulletin containing the latest news regarding all manner of Fortean occurrences,

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[465] The poll did not elaborate on what "real" in this context meant, whether of extraterrestrial origin or otherwise. See Canadian Institute of Public Opinion (CIPO), *Gallup Poll, May 1974, #365.* [Data set]. Gallup Canada Inc.
[466] Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, *Gallup Poll, November 1973, #883.Q05A.* [Data set].
[467] CIPO, *Gallup Poll, February 1978, #409.* [Data set]. Gallup Canada Inc.
[468] CIPO, *Gallup Poll, January 1979, #420.* [Data set]. Gallup Canada Inc.

such as falls of frogs from the sky, giant worms on the ocean floor, and of course UFO sightings.[469]

In his three-page letter, Mr. X explained that he had been researching the UFO phenomenon for five years, and had been unsuccessful at eliciting any straight answer on the subject from the Canadian government. He lamented the incompleteness of the NRC's UFO files and the DRB's decision to withhold documents from Project Second Storey. In his previous contacts with the RCMP, Mr. X came to the conclusion that "the 'policy' of whether or not copies of UFO reports might be obtained is often determined not by any Force, Division, nor Sub-Division commander but merely the Detachment commander or officer-in-charge." Furthermore, Mr. X wrote,

> As I have been reading UFO reports made by or transmitted by members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for the last five years, I have gained considerable insight into the difficulties arising and confronting investigating members who are not experienced in UFO investigations. Many reports are of admirable quality and most professional, whereas others are regretfully lacking in the most basic of details and full of erroneous data. It is a pity so few members of the Force cannot distinguish between Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars nor the stars. They might thus be able to re-assure confused witnesses and readily determine the identity of the UFO in many instances. One cannot expect members of the Force to be knowledgable [sic] in astronomy considering their many tasks; but, as I suspect they might benefit by having access to information on celestial phenomena, which

[469] For example: Mr. X, May 1979. "Res Bureaux Bulletin No. 47." Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

> I am aware is not always forthcoming from astronomers at the National Research Council.

Mr. X concluded his letter with a list of questions. He clearly asked if the RCMP would disclose how many and what kinds of reports they had gathered under Project Second Storey and whether or not any policy governing such disclosure actually existed. He also asked if it would be possible "to distribute a supplementary questionaire [sic] to all detachments, which would provide more detailed data than currently asked for by the [National Research Council's] Meteor Centre," as well as to identify a civilian liaison "through which information of UFO reports received by the [RCMP] might be made available to serious investigators."[470]

Unlike several previous civilian investigators, and despite his lamentations about government secrecy and incomplete files, Mr. X's letter demonstrated that he had managed to obtain very detailed information about the government's involvement with the UFO phenomenon. He knew about the involvement of the Department of Transport with Project Magnet and the DRB with Project Second Storey. He was also aware of the transfer of files to the NRC in 1967, and had personal experience with how departments could inadvertently or purposefully give civilians the run-around when inquiring about the subject. The RCMP, nor any department for that matter, had no clear policy on how to investigate or communicate UFO sightings, leaving the matter to the lowly investigator to puzzle out, whether or not that person had any specialized training that would give them insight into what witnesses might have seen. In short, Mr. X's letter was a concise

[470] Mr. X, 30 May 1979. Letter to the RCMP Commissioner. Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

diagnosis of some of the main administrative problems the Canadian government had allowed to develop when it came to UFO reports.

Perhaps to be expected, however, the RCMP did not seriously engage with Mr. X's questions. An internal memo dated two weeks later indicated that the police force was more concerned about his pseudonym: "Although not in agreement with corresponding with an anonymous person on matters such as this, it is felt if Mr. X is serious about conducting a bona-fide study then he should present himself at this Headquarters and outline what he wants exactly and establish his credentials."[471] Another two weeks later, Inspector D. Chiarot replied to Mr. X, noting that his request would not be considered because the RCMP did not feel it could offer "too much additional information" beyond what the NRC had in its possession. "However," Chiarot continued, "for further consideration to be given to your request, you would be required to appear at this Headquarters to establish that this information will be utilized for a serious, bona-fide study as well as produce your credentials and establish your identity."[472] The wording of Chiarot's letter is unique. Nowhere else in the archives did a government department or agency indicate that a civilian inquirer needed to establish that they were conducting a "bona-fide" study. The usual response was a form letter that thanked the writer for their interest and assured them the inquiry would be passed to the appropriate department. Perhaps Chiarot thought this unusual request would dissuade Mr. X from further correspondence, assuming the standard of a bona-fide study would be too high to meet. If

[471] Corporal Ford, 13 June 1979. Memo to the Federal Police Branch. Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[472] D. Chiarot, 27 June 1979. Letter to Mr. X. Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

this was the case, then Chiarot and the RCMP were unaware of the tenacity of UFO investigators, however misplaced it might have been.

Mr. X responded to Chiarot a week later. His two-page letter acknowledged the question of his name: “As my inquiry into UFOs and my signature are not the Force’s normal fare, I would not doubt that it may have elicited some strong scepticism and probably some chuckles.” However, he continued, “I would point out that my true and legal name is “X” and enjoy its recognition as such by Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. Its adoption was one of precedent for patent and copyright purposes; but, for more mundane matters, I still use my former Christian name as circumstances dictate.” As such, Mr. X wrote that he included with his letter a copy of the court order changing his name. LAC archivists eventually removed this document from the archives because it contained personal information. Obviously, Mr. X was aware of how incredulous he appeared, and how this would not help his appeal for information.

Despite the oddity of his persona, Mr. X’s letter again demonstrated a very clear grasp of the bureaucratic dynamics at work in the Canadian government. “Often it is a lack of clear communication,” he wrote, “between government departments and a lack of departmental responsibility being designated to a single agency that has scattered UFO reports into the archives of several ministries. Yet, each UFO report is of importance, for the number of UFO reports is not as large as some enthusiasts would hold.” Mr. X noted that no agency or department had ever undertaken any effort beyond collecting reports, and it was a shame that agencies like the RCMP have “received little support from other

agencies in clearing the identity of UFOs or passing their investigation over to others with the knowledge and resources to deal with their analysis."[473]

Chiarot took over three weeks to respond. His letter was short and to the point: "Before giving further consideration to your request for access to our files on U.F.O. sightings, additional information will be required." Chiarot asked for information on Mr. X's date and place of birth, as well as his previous residences, and documentation in the form of "something tangible to indicate you are a qualified researcher into this subject."[474] Chiarot did not make explicit what such tangible documentation might comprise. Given that the government had previously dismissed other qualified investigators – people trained in physics or engineering, for instance – it is unclear what would have sufficed. As mentioned above, it was an unusual step to ask for such documentation at all, given that no other correspondence mentioned this requirement. Perhaps this burden of proof turned out to be too high to meet, as Mr. X did not appear to reply. However, it may also have been the case that his reply letter was removed from the archives because of the personal information he provided.

Whatever the case, Mr. X continued the struggle. In December 1983, the RCMP Information Commissioner sent him a letter with attached photocopies of their UFO file, the very same file now publicly available at LAC. Mr. X had asked for copies of the entire file and had sent in a money order for the sum of $176.75 to cover the cost. He was closely following developments with the way in which information was handled, and was ready to act on them, as the *Access to Information Act* was approved just earlier in the

[473] Mr. X, 3 July 1979. Letter to D. Chiarot. Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[474] D. Chiarot, 27 July 1979. Letter to Mr. X. Unidentified Flying Objects (Sighting Of) file. RG 18, volume 3779, file HQ-400-Q-5, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

year. Mr. X wasted no time in making use of the new service, and it seems appropriate that one of the earliest requests concerned UFO reports. In other words, Mr. X finally achieved a victory. He obtained the RCMP files that were earlier denied to him. However, it is unlikely that Mr. X found anything revelatory in the documents. What is more interesting was his feeling that *something* was hidden or covered up at all, and that he needed to expose it.

Mr. X's efforts and the fact that he obtained nothing more than routine, mundane documentation speaks to a larger change in the way the public came to think about government secrecy. Mark Fenster argues that advocates of government disclosure began using the metaphor of *transparency*: "the metaphor presumes a problem and suggests its logical solution: The distant, invisible state must be revealed to the public."[475] He characterizes this logic as the "transparency fix," which presumes that the state is a large, faceless bureaucracy that operates at a remove from the public and routinely withholds information. This is the problem that must be fixed by opening it up to public scrutiny, a problem that the "visibility metaphor" presents as commonsensical. It is a very powerful metaphor, Fenster argues, but is fundamentally flawed and so doomed to failure.

The main problem with the transparency fix is that even many diehard disclosure advocates admit that some secrecy is necessary to protect the nation-state. This is evident in various letters Canadian UFO investigators sent to the government. Many UFO enthusiasts ask for information, acknowledging that disclosure might not be possible given the interests of national security. However, once this concession is made, transparency becomes only one value competing among many others for the attention of

[475] Mark Fenster, *The Transparency Fix: Secrets, Leaks, and Uncomfortable Government Information* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017): 3.

bureaucrats and politicians. And, unfortunately for the public, secrecy is easier to justify than transparency, given the varied threats that the state anticipates. In the case of Canada specifically, with its long culture of secrecy, classification of documents is far easier to effect than declassification. Fenster argues that transparency thus becomes the problem in and of itself, as it "becomes a term of concealment and opacity that promises more than it can deliver."[476] Transparency advocates can never muster as much political support as those advocating for national security. Even if disclosure advocates articulated the transparency fix in its strongest form – in terms of a completely open government that allows absolute access to all information – there is still enough doubt about the feasibility of such a plan that it becomes easy to dismiss. In other words, according to Fenster, those Canadians who requested UFO information from the government – and particularly the way in which they did so, from the level of transparency they asked for, to their personal presentation – were in a way also responsible for the responses they received.

The NRC's Final Report

A good sense of the NRC's thoroughly modernist position on UFOs by the late 1970s comes from an undated article entitled "UFO's: What Are They?"[477] The author was A.G. McNamara, Head of the NRC's Planetary Sciences Section, and a close colleague of Peter Millman. The three-page report provided a select overview of the history of the UFO phenomenon as well as its terminology, and attempted to provide the

[476] Fenster, *The Transparency Fix,* 11.
[477] A.G. McNamara, n.d. "UFO'S: What Are They?" Unidentified Flying Objects file. RG 12, volume 3930, file 2-1-33, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

most compelling scientific explanations for sightings known at the time. It is unclear for what purpose or audience McNamara wrote the article, but by this point it did not provide any novel information; rather, it rehearsed phrases well known to any serious ufologist. "There are some people," McNamara wrote, "often called 'believers', who take the position that if [a UFO] is not identified [through investigation] then it must be of extra-terrestrial or supernatural origin […] Actually, in the great majority of UFO reports there is no definite yes or no answer and there never can be, simply because the data recorded are either lacking entirely or insufficient to make an interpretation. The proper scientific attitude is to declare the observation to be indeterminate."

McNamara traced a lineage that included medieval beliefs about "witches, demons, wizards, fairies, ghosts, [and] elves," the mystery airship sightings in the U.S. in the late 19th century, and the 1947 Kenneth Arnold sighting, which he dismissed as "mountain top mirages." Despite this long lineage, McNamara concluded that "throughout the entire course of human history there has never been an authentic case of physical contact with an alien spacecraft or of the recovery of any artifact of clearly extraterrestrial origin."

Having set up what he considered the relevant background to the study, McNamara's article proceeded to "examine the physical and psychological characteristics of the human 'instrument' to try to understand its sources of error and limits of observation." In other words, McNamara found the root of the UFO problem in the unreliability of the human observer. He wrote about the physical limits of the eye and how easily they can lead someone to see a "figment of the imagination." The eye-brain "mechanism" is also faulty, he wrote, in that the brain only receives a fraction of the

information the eye processes, which leads to the old adage that “the human sees what he wants to see, what he is conditioned to see, and what he expects to see,” given that the partial information is filtered through what is familiar and known.

McNamara condemned human psychology for fostering the secret hope “that a wise and benevolent superior civilization is near at hand to help solve the crushing problems of the world.” He equally condemned the mass media for their role in deluging the average citizen with information until “the individual loses his capacity for individual reason and follows the flock.” McNamara described the feedback loop that media can generate when reporting on a sighting, encouraging others to report their own sightings, and on and on until “the original (erroneous) interpretation of the report as an extraterrestrial spacecraft lives on and may even be quoted and re-quoted throughout the UFO literature as a ‘classical unsolved’ case.”

Having dealt with the question of the human instrument, McNamara finished his analysis by debunking the various natural origins for UFO sightings. These included misidentified sightings of such things as “bright planets and stars, meteors, aircraft landing lights and navigation lights, high altitude balloons, aircraft contrails, sun glints from aircraft, chemical seeding experiments in the ionosphere from rockets, satellite re-entries, unusual cloud formations, birds, insects, power line reflections, reflections from windows and other surfaces, aurora, sundogs, mirages, -- the list is almost endless.” He wrote that photographs and radar readings are also unreliable, given their tendency to malfunction and produce anomalous effects. McNamara likewise dismissed “local effects of UFO landings” as nothing more than, again, misidentified natural phenomena (in the case of broken tree limbs and depressions in the soil), and “the action of the fairy-ring

mushroom" (in the case of rings of burnt grass). As for close encounter cases, it was clear: "No such cases have ever been adequately substantiated."

All this is not to say that McNamara was a total unbeliever: "few scientists doubt that there are probably many planets in our galaxy with intelligent life forms." They are just unlikely to be here, on Earth, given the many factors keeping them apart, such as interplanetary distances and the time it takes to develop such advanced technology. In his summary, McNamara was unequivocal. "Two thousand years of observations and thirty years of rather intensive collection (15,000 reports in the U.S.A.F. Project Bluebook and 1500 in Canada) and examination of reports have not yielded any positive sighting or artifact of extra-terrestrial origin." About the only thing UFO reports had been good for, he argued, was assisting with the data collection on "meteor research and the recording of rare atmospheric phenomena."[478] In other words, McNamara's report was a concise summary of the views articulated over the years since the early 1950s. Millman expressed much the same in many letters to colleagues and civilians. It is clear that, for NRC scientists, UFOs were nothing but an intrusion into the daily work of normal science. Perhaps useful, in isolated incidents, in providing additional information about known meteorological effects, but otherwise a waste of time.

The timing of this article was not a coincidence. While it is undated, the article's bibliography cites other work up till 1975, and so it was likely published in the late 1970s.The period around 1980 was another major hinge point for the Canadian UFO investigation. Beginning in this decade, nearly the only documents collected or remaining in the archives were sighting reports. Almost no other kind of document was retained,

[478] A.G. McNamara, n.d. "UFO'S: What Are They?" Unidentified Flying Objects file. RG 12, volume 3930, file 2-1-33, part 1. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

whether an official memo or a letter from a civilian. It is unclear exactly why this is the case, although it was likely a combination of at least two factors: the NRC may have continued to receive letters, but simply did not respond to and retain them the way they had done with previous correspondence, and so they did not end up in the archives. It is also possible that by this point, due to the NRC's passive involvement and clearly unenthusiastic attitude (and the stock answers that every other department sent out), citizens stopped sending their reports to the government, and turned in greater numbers to independent investigators. McNamara's report likely served as the final nail in the coffin for the NRC's involvement, giving them the same kind of rationale to end their active involvement that the members of the U.S. Project Blue Book received from the Condon report in 1969. McNamara's report was justification for an unofficial termination of the NRC's "investigation" – an investigation the organization had never wanted in the first place, and a termination it had been attempting to accomplish essentially since the DND thrust the responsibility upon them.

The End of the Investigation

This is not to say that from 1980 to the end of investigations in 1995 the Canadian government did not receive a single civilian letter. There were inevitably a few that trickled in, but the volume during this period compared to previous decades was substantially reduced: during this period the NRC only received about half a dozen unique letters. Considering how many the department received prior to McNamara's

report, this is a drastic difference. One of the exchanges was the one outlined above, concerning Mr. X's access to RCMP files.

Another was a January 1984 letter that a mathematics professor at Trent University, in Peterborough, ON, sent to the Minister of Defence, only to have it immediately forwarded to the NRC. "Our official science," the professor wrote, "claims that all UFO's can be explained by something originating on Earth, since the distance to the closest star is 4 light years away and since it is believed that Einstein has proved that the speed of light cannot be exceeded." Like others before him, including Wilbert Smith, this mathematics professor claimed to have discovered new physical laws governing the universe. In short, he believed that the speed of light was not always constant, but that it varied in other parts of the universe. As such, interstellar travel would actually be possible and so, he wrote, "some of the UFO's come from the cosmos and that the illegal immigrants from the cosmos are now citizens of several countries, including Canada." What the professor was apparently trying to explain was a potential security risk: "Since the UFO's avoided official contacts, there is reason to believe that their intentions towards us are not friendly ones and that they might plan the biological deterioration of the Earth's people by radioactive fallouts over the densely populated areas and/or by the sophisticated radiesthesian and ultrasonic equipment used against neighbours by those who have already settled among us."[479] There is no record of a government response to the letter.

In 1986, Gallup once again asked Canadians about UFOs, and the results curiously reverted to previous levels. Almost 70% had heard of them, a decline of 10%,

[479] Name Redacted, 10 January 1984. Letter to the Minister of Defence. Non-Meteoritic Sighting file. RG 77, accession 1985-86/179, file N84-1-29. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

and only 36% of people thought they were real. Then, two years later, the numbers rose again, to their highest values: nearly 84% of Canadians had heard of UFOs, almost 11% thought they had seen one, and about 47% thought they were real. However, the only ideas about UFOs that were fluctuating were positive beliefs. The numbers for those who did not believe they were real remained steady, at about 19%. Of course, the vehemence of the letters the government received belied these conservative numbers, giving the somewhat false impression that the public was obsessed with the phenomenon.

Two more letters during this period, for instance, echoed the Trent University professor's concerns about malevolent extraterrestrials by mentioning encounters with actual alien beings. On 12 September 1990, a school principal from Bloodvein, MB, reported "that community members had seen a U.F.O. and little men" over the course of several days. At first, a witness sighted a big, bright light in the sky like a falling star. Another witness later in the evening was doing dishes in her kitchen when she looked out the window and observed "about 50yds in the bush, the head of a person shaped like an egg, sharp pointed ears, with eyes shut and wrinkled, she could not see a nose or a mouth. This person was about 3ft. tall." Another witness, while driving, saw "someone run across the road in the headlights. The person was 3ft tall, brown in color and was naked. [The witness] could not determine the sex, no could she see the face of this person." Lastly, a seven-year old witness "claimed to have been bitten by one of these little men, but upon examination, no injuries could be found nor could he provide a description of these little men." What were the RCMP investigators to make of such accounts? The last

line of the report read: “Police have not recd any further reports of U.F.O. sightings and do not believe the witnesses in this incident to be reliable.”[480]

Five years later, a woman reported to the DND that her son had been abducted by aliens. The boy stated that “an alien approx 2 ½ ft tall entered his room through his second story townhouse window.” The report continued with an account that mother and son jointly provided:

> Mother could not verify how he was able to move from the window to the ship. She described the ship as a dovetail shape grey in colour. The ship had pinky, orange cushion walls that smelled similar to paint chemicals. Upon entering the ship he noticed five others. They communicated to him, without moving their lips, ensuring that he would be all right. He described them as being between 2 ½ - 4 ½ ft tall, pointed ears, slanted almond eyes, three fingers (they were wearing five finger medical gloves[)].

The boy stated that the aliens did some medical tests and examined his chest and brain before returning him to his room and putting him to sleep. The boy at first thought he had dreamed the whole encounter and so did not tell his mother for several days. However, he displayed physical evidence in the form of “scabs on his chest, in the shape of a square horseshoe.” In the end, the investigator merely suggested to the mother that she take her son to a medical facility as well as take photographs of his chest.[481]

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[480] UFO Sighting Report, Bloodvein Indian Reserve, MB, 10 October 1990. Non-Meteoric Sighting file. RG 10, accession 1991-92/022, box 1, file N89 71-117. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[481] Caprice Brunelle, 19 March 1995. Letter to Denise Cardinal. Non-Meteoritic Sightings file. RG 77, accession 1997-98/046, box 1, file N95 1-54. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

Lastly, a Sidney, BC resident wrote to the NRC in January 1992 about a UFO sighting they were "privileged to observe approximately 56 years ago" while based in the Arctic doing aerial mapping. "Having now passed my 81st birthday with time running short," they wrote, "I feel I should try to outline and describe the incredible sighting I was so privileged to see, and to say that I firmly believe I was the only person likely to have observed this phenomenon." The sighting occurred in 1936 in Aylmer Lake, NWT, during a clear day without any cloud cover. The witness happened to look up while doing a flight inspection on their plane, and saw a "completely stationary" vehicle in the sky. "In trying to describe this vehicle I can only say that it was the most magnificent configuration of an airship one could imagine […] I can still see this vehicle today in my mind's eye clear as the day of sighting." Its colour was "light aluminum but without shine," it was made of entirely unknown materials, no outer appendages, portholes, or "propellant medium" were discernable, and there was "no sign of contrails at take off." The vehicle eventually "took off at a fantastic speed going east," and in a matter of moments had vanished.

"The fact," they wrote, "that I have not bothered to mention this sighting officially or otherwise until now undoubtedly seems strange. At the time in question, as a young fellow, I took most happenings for granted. I was fascinated by the beauty of the barren lands and the great solitude it presented. I took the sighting I have described as a point of interest only. From an early age I considered our world to be a mere spec in the vast universe. This possibly explains my lack of excitement concerning the incident I

have described. If the foregoing event I have described is considered "old hat" or "shear fantasy" [sic] no acknowledgement will be expected."[482]

Suffice it to say, the 81-year old did not receive a reply. By the early 1990s, the NRC was almost entirely out of the game. Their role in the investigation was as passive and listless as RCAF member E.W. Greenwood had feared it would become in 1967. It was only another three years before it all came to a close for good. In 1995, the forty-five yearlong investigation was finally terminated in its entirety, due to budget cuts and retirements within the department.[483] The very last sighting report that the NRC catalogued came from Repulse Bay, NWT on 15 August 1995. The time was 05:11 and in the "Notes" section of the reporting card it simply said "meteor."[484] No other information was provided. After decades of receiving thousands of UFO reports, rampant civilian speculation, and scientific frustration, Canada's UFO investigation ended not with a bang but a whimper.

Conclusion

In 1970, Peter Millman wrote to American astronomer J. Allen Hynek: "I try very hard to keep an open mind in this subject, but I must confess I get more and more disillusioned with what people report they have seen with their eyes."[485] This might

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[482] Name Redacted, 17 January 1992. Letter to the National Research Council. Non-Meteoritic Sighting file. RG 77, accession 1992-93/308, volume 1, file N92-1-83. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[483] Beech, "The Millman Fireball Archive," 72; Chris Rutkowski and Geoff Dittman, *The Canadian UFO Report: The Best Cases Revealed* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2006): 237.
[484] Non-Meteoritic Sighting (UFO Sighting Report), Repulse Bay, NWT, 13 August 1995. Non-Meteoritic Sighting file. RG 77, accession 1997-98/046, box 1, file N95 1-54. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

[485] Peter M. Millman, 2 July 1970. Letter to J. Allen Hynek. Microfilm reel T-1744. RG 77, volume 310, file DND/UAR (1967) 71-80. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

explain why the UFO front went quiet for the next several years. The NRC continued to receive sighting reports, at a rate of several per week and sometimes once a day, but rarely did a NRC scientist follow up on them. In the cases where a witness did receive a reply, it was inevitably one that attempted to supply a prosaic explanation for the sighting. Peter Millman wrote a number of such replies over the years, but other NRC scientists also did so.

Ian Halliday, in the same section at the NRC as Millman, sent a typical response in November 1974. A civilian had written in describing "an interesting atmospheric phenomenon" he observed while flying over Melville Island in the Arctic. In clear skies, the civilian saw "an orange, yellowish, ballshaped image at the horizon […] similar in size and colour to the moon or sun when hidden behind cloud." Over the course of the next few minutes the object grew in size and became more diffuse until it finally faded away.[486] Halliday provided two possible explanations. The object might have been the "moderately bright star Altair" approximately in the position the civilian described. It might also have been the "much brighter star Sirius" located in the opposite direction, but potentially reflected through the windows depending on the airplane's configuration. "Neither of these explanations is very convincing," Halliday admitted, "but they appear to be the best ones available for the time of your observation."[487] Even when the attending scientist was unconvinced, no other speculation was ever indulged. It had to be a prosaic explanation, or nothing at all. This is clear from the numerous cases where NRC

[486] R.E. Thom, 21 November 1974. Letter to the Meteor Centre at the National Research Council. Microfilm reel T-1742. RG 77, volume 307, file UAR/N74 063-117. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[487] Ian Halliday, 29 November 1974. Letter to R.E. Thom. Microfilm reel T-1742. RG 77, volume 307, file UAR/N74 063-117. LAC, Ottawa, ON.

replies simply stated that no explanation could be provided due to the inadequate information supplied.

In terms of debunking, it is clear that the NRC's favourite explanation was that UFOs were misidentified meteors. This explanation became so common that in August 1977 someone at the NRC began stamping reports with the words "IDENTIFIED AS A METEOR."[488] The stamp was clearly meant to convey certainty. The capital letters and the wording were unambiguous. What is even more interesting is that about ten months later the wording changed. A report from June 1978 instead read "IDENTIFIED AS POSSIBLE METEOR." No document provided an explanation for this change, or even mentions the use of the stamp at all. On the surface it is a subtle difference, but given the attitude toward UFOs within the NRC, and the amount of work put into ignoring the issue, it is interesting to see the certainty in the prosaic explanation slip. Someone must have realized that, despite their best efforts, NRC scientists could not know for sure what civilians had seen in the skies. Some margin of error had to be built into their analyses of sightings, even if what they meant by "analysis" was simply a four-word stamp.

Nevertheless, for the NRC, the question was moot. Once the transfer of responsibility had taken place, and the files had been downgraded to unclassified, the job was presumably done. In his book *The UFO Experience,* J. Allen Hynek wrote that the 1969 Condon Committee report from the University of Colorado gave the study of UFOs the "kiss of death."[489] The NRC tried to effect the same death for the Canadian documents, and seems to have succeeded, given how sharply documentation dropped off

[488] E.P. DeBalinnard, 15 August 1977. Letter to W.R. Danner. Microfilm reel T-1743. RG 77, volume 309, file UAR/N80 001-050. LAC, Ottawa, ON.
[489] J. Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1972).

after 1980. Despite the introduction in 1983 of Canada's access to information legislation, the disclosure that civilian UFO investigators had long called for did not materialize. This was, as Mark Fenster argues, the ironic result of the flaw in the "transparency fix," that it is unable to deliver on its promise. Advocates began using the visibility metaphor in the 1960s as part of a broader countercultural movement that saw public trust in government decline. However, Canada's history of secrecy, replicated from Britain's model, prevented any kind of significant disclosure of information, and citizens' frustration with this situation was evident in the letters described in this chapter. This is not to say though, that the fault lies entirely with the government. The way in which citizens presented themselves, and unapologetically demanded answers, did not endear them to the government. Citizens rarely looked credible. The conflict that developed between them and the Canadian state as a result of the state's attempt to educate the public, which hit the wall of citizens' iconoclasm and their refusal to see the light of modern science, only strengthened during the years after the National Research Council assumed responsibility for the UFO investigation.

Conclusion

In 2005, Library and Archives Canada released a virtual exhibition called "Canada's UFOs: The Search for the Unknown."[490] The online exhibition allows users to search through a selection of the UFO documents, and offers a short timeline and map that feature some of the more sensational sightings described in the previous chapters. The exhibition was created as part of a broader initiative begun in the late 1990s that "utilised the interactive technology of the Web, making digitised images more than just illustrations or pictures at an exhibition."[491] The point was to make as many records as possible accessible to the public. In the words of Michael Eamon, the project manager for – among others – the "Canada's UFOs" exhibition, the initiative was meant "to make records known." At LAC, during this wave of digitization, there was no special interest in the UFO material, other than that the public generally found it intriguing – it was a "hot topic" – and so it lent itself well to a virtual exhibition that might draw in more eyes.[492] It certainly worked to draw me in. I stumbled across the online exhibition one day while idly reading about UFOs, and the site provided the inspiration for what eventually became this dissertation.

The virtual site, released ten years after the NRC catalogued the very last sighting of Canada's UFO investigation, also serves as a bookend on the whole project. LAC, when creating the exhibition, had no specific directive to do so, or any contact with any

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[490] "Canada's UFOs: The Search for the Unknown," LAC online exhibition. Http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/unusual/ufo/Pages/default.aspx?PHPSESSID=gp2jatcgf08bnc92llav7n3femdpvmhotbcc7fvfbnuean18btc1. Accessed 2 October 2018.
[491] Michael Eamon, "A Genuine Relationship with the Actual": New Perspectives on Primary Sources, History and the Internet in the Classroom," *The History Teacher* 39.3 (2006): 305.
[492] Michael Eamon, 5 July 2017. Interview by author.

other department originally involved, like the DND or the RCMP. They made it simply because of the sustained interest in UFOs. The government may have worked as hard as it could to ignore the issue, but the public maintains a fascination with the topic, for myriad reasons. The same year the exhibition was released, Gallup poll results showed 21% of Canadians believed that extraterrestrials have visited the Earth at some point in the past.[493] While this number has declined from previous levels in the 1970s and 1980s, the fascination has yet to disappear. More recently, a 2018 Ipsos/Historica Canada poll included a question about the St. Paul, Alberta UFO landing pad: 27% of respondents correctly answered that it was the world's first.[494] Sightings of UFOs remain steady, although civilian organizations now do all the data collection and analysis. That small group of disconnected citizens that began writing to the government for answers in the early 1960s still exists today, and still continues to ask the same questions. A recent edited collection of essays by leading ufologists notes that, seventy-five years on from the Kenneth Arnold sighting and alleged Roswell crash, we arguably know nothing more than we did then:

> The UFO field has produced thousands of dedicated researchers over the years, and reams of literature; but to what end? What can we claim to know conclusively

[493] Linda Lyons, "Paranormal Beliefs Come (Super)Naturally to Some," *Gallup News* (1 November 2005). Https://news.gallup.com/poll/19558/paranormal-beliefs-come-supernaturally-some.aspx. Accessed 2 October 2018.
[494] "Most Canadians (79%) Can Tell You We're A Maple Syrup Power House, Only a Quarter (27%) Know We're A UFO Destination," *IPSOS News* (27 June 2018). Https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/news-polls/Historica-Canada-Canada-Day-Poll-June-27-2018. Accessed 2 October 2018.

> today about the underlying nature of UFO phenomena that we didn't know in the late-1940s?[495]

Indeed, the book questions whether "ufology" even exists at all: "If "ology" refers to a branch of knowledge or learning sprung from organized research, then ufology is a broken twig." This is certainly the position that mainstream scientists within the NRC adopted, given that they had argued as early as the 1950s that UFOs were nothing other than misidentified natural phenomena or the products of delusional minds. It does not change the fact, however, that Canadian citizens took an interest in UFOs, and were dismayed and angered that the government did not respond in kind.

From 1950 to 1995, the Canadian government did its best to ignore UFOs. During much of the time, especially from the early 1960s onward, a small group of disconnected citizens from around the country wrote letters to various government departments to report sightings and to demand answers to the UFO mystery. They were frequently the victims of what they called "doublespeak" – the government's attempt to respond to them without giving them any actual information. These non-answers had a direct effect on the way in which citizen ufologists organized. For instance, beginning in the late 1950s, some citizens organized and participated in UFO clubs. However, citizens asking for information about UFOs were not the only ones frustrated. The government, through its various departments, found it equally disconcerting and annoying that some citizens continued to demand answers, when none were available, and that they refused to accept this situation. Even more so, some of these citizens were rude and demanding in their

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[495] Robbie Graham, "Introduction," In Robbie Graham (ed) *UFOs: Reframing the Debate* (London: White Crow Books, 2017): xxiii.

letters, and the attempts they made to appear professional sometimes came across as bizarre. This dynamic caused both sides to double-down. The government's position on the unreality of UFOs and extraterrestrials hardened, whereas the citizens involved turned to conspiracy theories as a way of explaining the state's unwillingness to engage. This dynamic demonstrates how the UFO phenomenon served to structure the very experience of the state for these citizens. They came to know at least a part of the state's power through the experience of interacting with state officials.

There were several individuals within the Canadian government, however, who did take UFOs seriously. Chapter One told the story of Wilbert Smith, an electrical and radio engineer employed with the Department of Transport. Smith became convinced that UFOs were real, and that they were the product of extraterrestrial intelligence. He set about trying to prove this through a series of experiments which he conducted, from 1950 to 1954, under the banner of Project Magnet at the Department of Transport. Smith's efforts included establishing "weighting factors" to assist in determining the validity of any given UFO observation, a balloon experiment he conducted in an attempt to ascertain the reliability of witness observations, and the establishment of a UFO observatory on the outskirts of Ottawa. Smith's efforts were largely unsuccessful, as he failed to convince his colleagues at the Department of Transport of the reality of UFOs. The DoT terminated Project Magnet in 1954, forcing Smith to continue his work privately.

Lorraine Daston argues that objects of scientific inquiry do not simply exist, waiting to be discovered. Rather, they come into and fade out of being, depending on timing and the amount and kind of work that people put into them. I argue that UFOs are one such object. They seem to exist differently, depending on who is researching them

and at what time and in what location. For Wilbert Smith, they held a certain reality that he claimed he could empirically measure. In Daston's words, Smith worked to weave UFOs more densely into scientific thought and practice. He envisioned UFOs emerging from "the horizon of working scientists," if only others would open their minds to the possibility.[496]

Unfortunately for Smith, his colleagues did not share this belief. For scientists like Peter Millman, the NRC astronomer who chaired Project Second Storey, UFOs barely registered on the ontological continuum. If at all real, they existed for Millman only as misidentified natural phenomena. What the UFO mystery came down to was a problem of human perception and bias. As detailed in Chapter Two, this was the philosophy behind his approach to the PSS committee, and its conclusions followed from this. PSS, which ran from 1952 to 1954, concluded that UFOs posed neither a security threat nor were they of scientific interest. More specifically, UFOs were not amenable to scientific inquiry at all – that is, they did not even constitute the kind of object that scientists could, or would, study. As such, the committee recommended ending all such investigation. PSS's conclusion had a significant impact on the study of UFOs in Canada for decades to come. Robert Proctor and Londa Schiebinger have advocated for the study of "agnogenesis," the making and unmaking of ignorance. I have argued that UFOs as legitimate objects of scientific inquiry have oscillated along an ontological continuum, depending on who was thinking about the issue. If the Canadian UFO investigation began, as a result of Smith's efforts, by presuming UFOs sat further toward the pole of

[496] Lorraine Daston, "Introduction: The Coming into Being of Scientific Objects," in Lorraine Daston (ed) *Biographies of Scientific Objects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000): 1.

tangibility and reality, then by the mid-1950s, as a result of PSS's conclusions, they had slid to the opposite pole.

Those Canadian citizens interested in UFOs started to show their frustration with PSS's attitude in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Chapter Three provided examples of letters that citizens wrote to the government asking for information on the subject. This is when the dynamic of mutually reinforced distrust started to appear in earnest. Citizens like D.M. Spicer and Ken Kaasen were unhappy that the government was not taking a more serious interest in UFOs. They believed that UFOs were indeed real, possibly constituted a security threat, and were certainly of scientific interest. It became quickly clear, however, that those citizens writing in would not receive the responses they thought they deserved. This was the result of a combination of factors. The government, generally, did not have the information they wanted. There is no evidence of any kind of a cover-up of information. Rather, the more realistic scenario was a cock-up. Given that the Canadian state does not exist as such, but rather comprises a multitude of autonomous departments and agencies, it was actually uncommon for government officials to communicate with one another about the topic. Citizens might receive multiple, contradictory answers as a result, fueling conspiracy beliefs. Again, this back-and-forth shows how some citizens came to know the state and its bureaucracy. The chapter attempted to historicize these beliefs as part of a much broader cultural change occurring in the 1960s, which saw a rise of anti-authoritarian views and a growing distrust of government.

The fault here does not lie entirely with the government. From the beginning, UFO enthusiasts seemed to be a different breed of correspondent. Often brash and

assuming, they demanded information, rather than asked for it, and were indignant when they did not receive it. They rarely presented themselves as professional researchers, and when they did their affiliations often seemed illegitimate. These factors produced a distrust that seemed to spiral ever more deeply, pushing UFOs further toward unreality for the government, and more toward tangibility for the UFO enthusiasts. In other words, the question of trust between government and citizen was closely tied to the status of the UFO as a legitimate scientific object.

At no other time was this question of UFO as object more salient than during 1967, the year that saw the largest jump in the number of UFO reports, as well as three specific cases that produced physical evidence of some kind of occurrence. Chapter Four argued that these cases – Stefan Michalak's encounter with a UFO in the wilderness at Falcon Lake, the crop circles at Camrose, Alberta, and the alleged UFO crash at Shag Harbour, Nova Scotia – were unique to Canada's UFO history. They constituted the moment when UFOs slid the furthest along the ontological continuum toward the pole of reality. A Close Encounter of the Second Kind, as the astronomer J. Allen Hynek referred to cases where a UFO left physical evidence, was the most compelling for scientific study. Scientists study things by measuring them. Most UFO reports leave no trace of physical evidence behind, and so it becomes nearly impossible to make sense of them scientifically. The three cases in this chapter defied the conventional wisdom by presenting tangible evidence in the form of disturbed physical environments, higher-than-normal radiation readings, multiple-witness sightings, and even severe burns left on a body.

Unfortunately, despite this relative abundance of physical evidence, it was still not enough. Once government scientists had taken their readings, it was unclear how to proceed. The mystery was not solved, and so again officials simply had to move on to their other duties. Naturally, citizens were again unhappy about this decision, signaling yet another contradictory aspect of the phenomenon, namely, the conflict inherent in citizen science, covered in Chapter Five. Since the late 1940s, Canadian citizens had been submitting UFO reports to the government. Their reasons for doing so were multiple, but one main reason was to aid in any scientific investigation that might be under way. Many citizens felt it was their duty to report their sightings, in case it aided in knowledge production. The effort to identify UFOs was arguably a form of "involuntary" citizen science, considering the government did not ask for the help and did not particularly appreciate it. This was not always the case. Peter Millman, around the same time, was actively soliciting citizen observations of meteors, to build up a database of sightings that might help with tracking them. However, the government felt that UFO observations were too subjective to be of use, despite their similarities. This highlights the fundamental contradiction in the term "citizen science:" *science* presumes detachment, whereas *citizen* presumes engagement. I argue that the government's failure to reconcile this contradiction contributed to the growing distrust between them.

This distrust was on full view by the late 1960s and early 1970s. Chapter Six covered the remaining years of the UFO investigation, which ran right up till 1995. The conspiracy theories of Chapter Three had evolved by this point. While citizens were still attempting to elicit information about UFOs, they also came to understand their work as a fight against government secrecy. This second, related aspect tied into the radicalism of

the 1960s, understood as a moment of questioning established authority, as a broader idea of what it meant to be a citizen in relation to the state. By the 1970s and 1980s, this change manifested concretely in calls for transparency of government and disclosure of information, culminating in the establishment of Canada's *Access to Information Agreement* in 1983. Unfortunately, this legislation did not solve the problems UFO enthusiasts had identified. As Mark Fenster argues, "the transparency fix" is ultimately an illusion that obfuscates more than it reveals. Transparency is realistically only one ideal competing among others, and it simply cannot muster the same level of political will that secrecy demands.

As such, Canada's UFO investigation declined rapidly after 1980. The Department of National Defence had managed to transfer responsibility for the investigation to an unwilling National Research Council, which in turn took a passive approach to the subject. The government's position on UFOs remained almost unchanged since Project Second Storey's conclusions in the mid-1950s. If anything, the state's attitude only hardened over time in response to citizen's letters, and by the time the NRC catalogued its last UFO sighting in 1995, the agency had long since given up any pretense at serious investigation.

At the heart of this story were the myriad changes taking place during Canada's postwar years. Especially relevant to the UFO investigation was the rise of an anti-authoritarian attitude and a growing distrust of institutions. Citizens made it clear in their letters that they were not afraid to call out the government when they felt they had discovered duplicity, however bizarre their approach may have seemed. The government, for its part, found itself unprepared to handle this new kind of interaction, and unwilling

to engage with the antagonistic interactions some citizens insisted on having. The pressures of the Cold War and the postwar period also played a significant role in this dynamic. The Canadian state was wracked with insecurity and anxiety about its status, internationally and domestically, and about the changing relationship it had with its citizens.

Zygmunt Bauman explains how, after the French revolution, states turned from controlling the public, to educating them. The goal was to inaugurate a new age of reason by ridding the masses of their old superstitious ways. In the postwar period, as Chandra Mukerji argues, this meant courting the scientific community, so that the state could draw on its cultural authority in times of need. The Canadian state – visible in the actions of its officials – attempted to draw on the authority of its scientists in debunking UFOs as a means of ridding citizens of their ignorance. As Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer argue, solutions to the problem of knowledge are simultaneously solutions to the problem of social order. So in its attempts to solve the seemingly scientific question of UFOs – what are they and what can we know about them? – the state was simultaneously attempting to solve a problem of social order – that is, how to make sense of and deal with aggressive citizens who refused to acquiesce to institutional authority. Through this attempt, which manifested most often in formal (and formulaic) replies to UFO enthusiasts' letters, some citizens came to know the state in a very specific way, as one motivated by a positivistic idea of science that spared no room for alternative explanations for supernatural phenomena. In a sense, this is an accurate representation of the state and how it approached the topic. In another, it is too simplistic. As this dissertation has attempted to show, there was resistance on both sides, between state and citizen, which mutually

reinforced the other. The attempt has not been to prove one side correct over the other, but to describe the rationale behind both sides in order to understand why and how they came into conflict.

I have argued that the state attempted to use UFOs as a site to assert its modernity during the postwar period, by drawing on the authority of the scientific community in debunking the phenomenon. The dissertation has traced a history of the state's involvement with UFOs as a way of showing how a small group of scattered citizens reacted to this attempt, underpinned by their own beliefs about authority and expertise during a time of anti-authoritarianism, and how these fed into one another throughout the investigation. At the broadest level, I argue that the story of Canada's UFO investigation was really one of changing ideas of trust – manifested in ideas about trust between government and citizen, and trust in scientific expertise and authority. Now that the story is told, I feel I would be remiss if I failed to mention that most iconic of UFO popular culture, the X-Files. As the opening credits of every episode reminded viewers, "Trust No One." If nothing else, this dictum seemed to run through the full forty-five years of Canada's own UFO investigation.

APPENDIX: UFO STATISTICS AND GRAPHS

Table 1 – Number of Sightings Reported to Canadian Government, by Year

Year	# of Sightings	Year	# of Sightings
1949	1	1973	166
1950	0	1974	102
1951	0	1975	176
1952	14	1976	98
1953	3	1977	149
1954	7	1978	187
1955	1	1979	109
1956	0	1980	158
1957	1	1981	258
1958	1	1982	104
1959	2	1983	99
1960	3	1984	140
1961	2	1985	204
1962	5	1986	87
1963	3	1987	74
1964	3	1988	83
1965	31	1989	86
1966	55	1990	212
1967	167	1991	82
1968	274	1992	151
1969	283	1993	141
1970	147	1994	146
1971	176	1995	43
1972	182		

Table 2 – Number of Sightings Reported to Canadian Government, by Decade

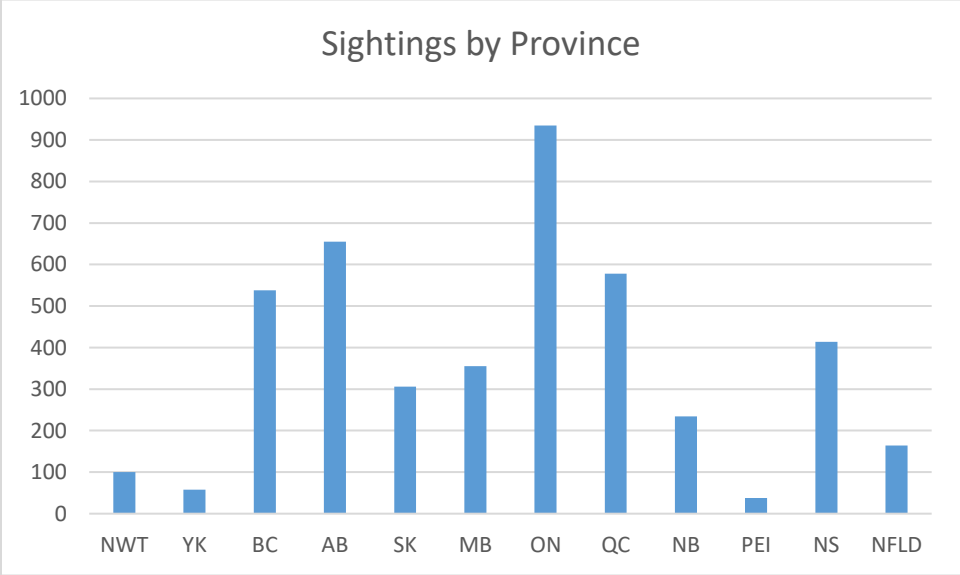
Decade	# of Sightings	Percentage of Whole
1940s	1	0.02%
1950s	29	0.66%
1960s	826	18.7%
1970s	1492	33.79%
1980s	1293	29.28%
1990s	775	17.55%
	Total: 4416	

Table 3 – Number of Sightings Reported to Canadian Government, by Province

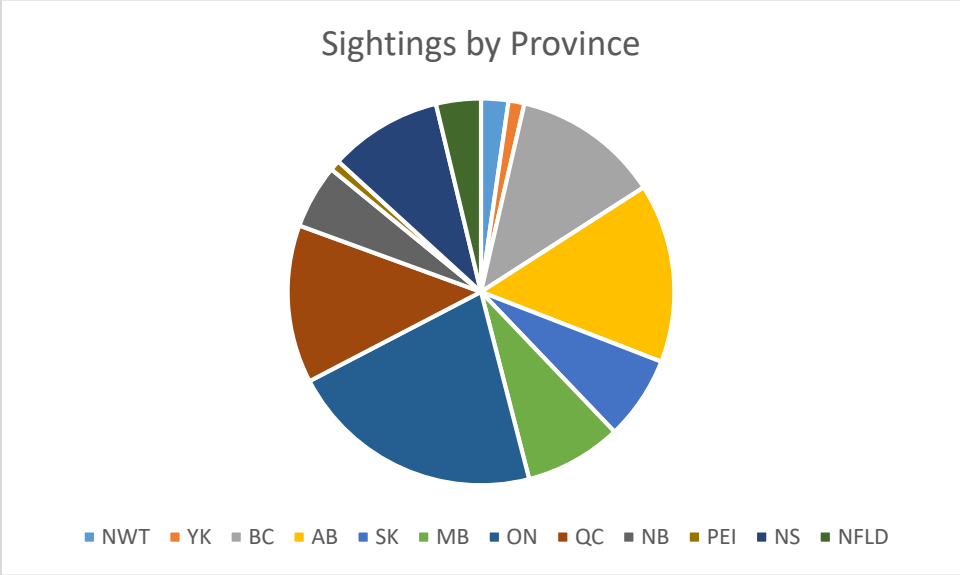
Province	# of Sightings	Percentage of Whole
NWT	100	2.26%
YK	58	1.31%
BC	538	12.18%
AB	655	14.83%
SK	306	6.93%
MB	355	8.04%
ON	935	21.17%
QC	578	13.09%
NB	234	5.30%
PEI	38	0.86%
NS	414	9.38%
NFLD	164	3.71%
	Total: 4375*	

***Note: The total number of sightings from Table 3 does not match Table 2, as some sighting reports retained a date but the location was redacted.**

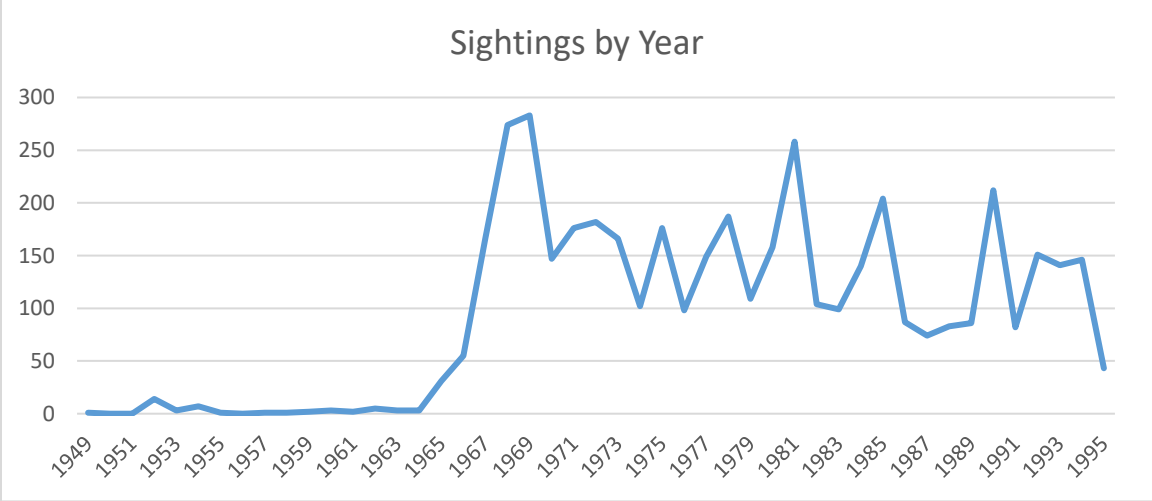
Graph 1 – Sightings by Province



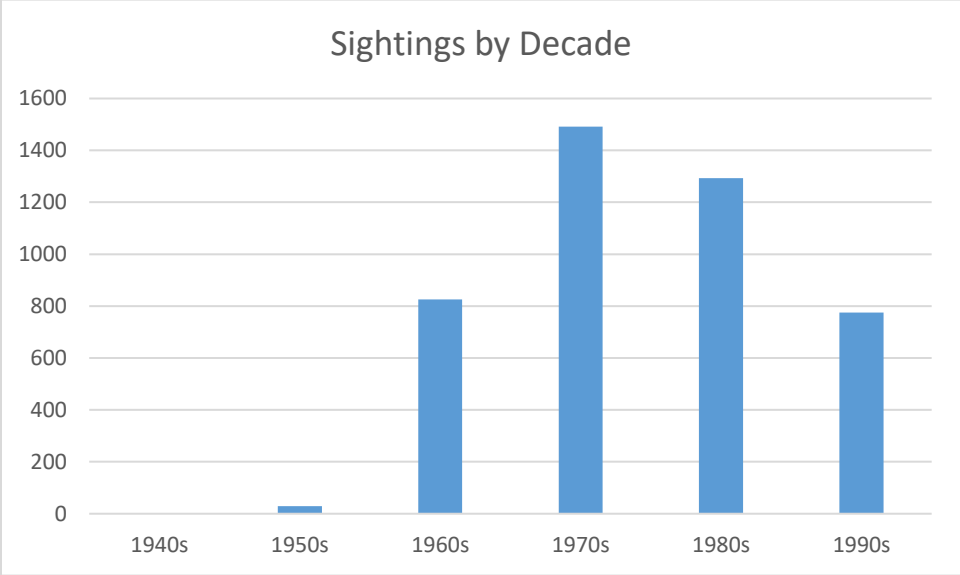
Graph 2 – Sightings by Province



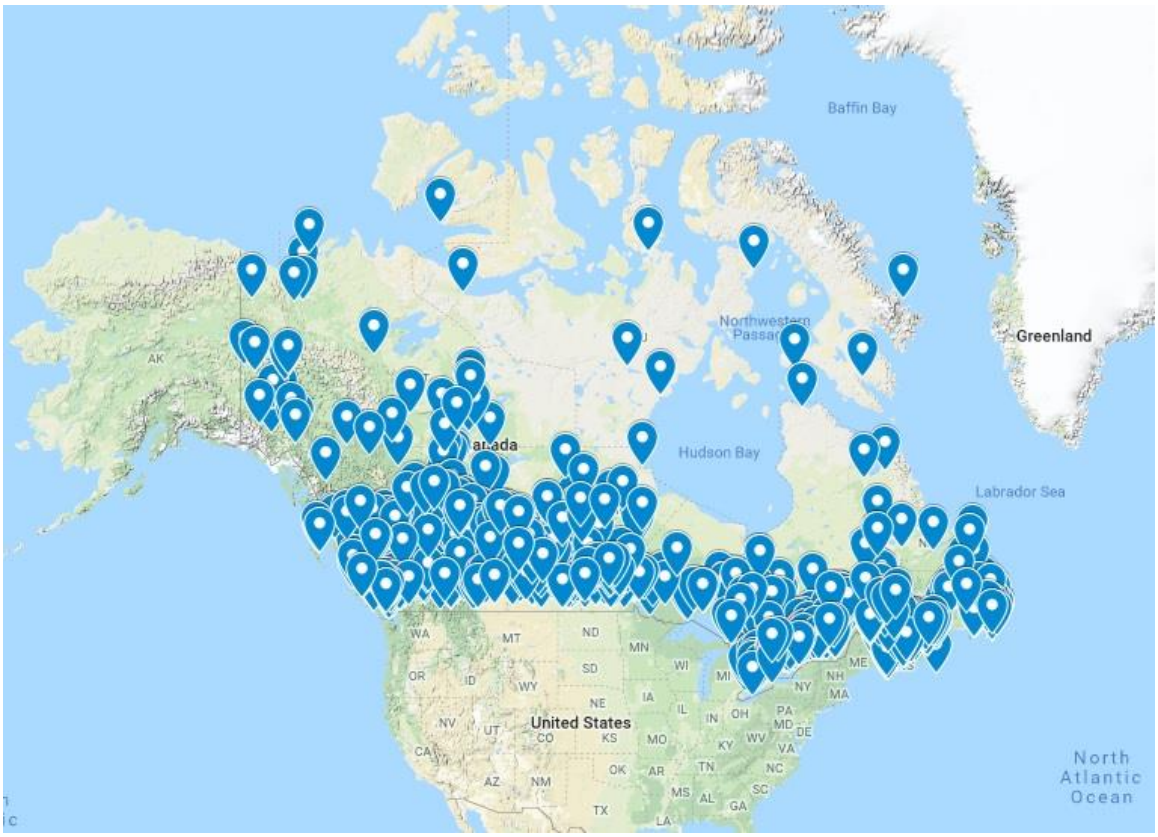
Graph 3 – Sightings by Year



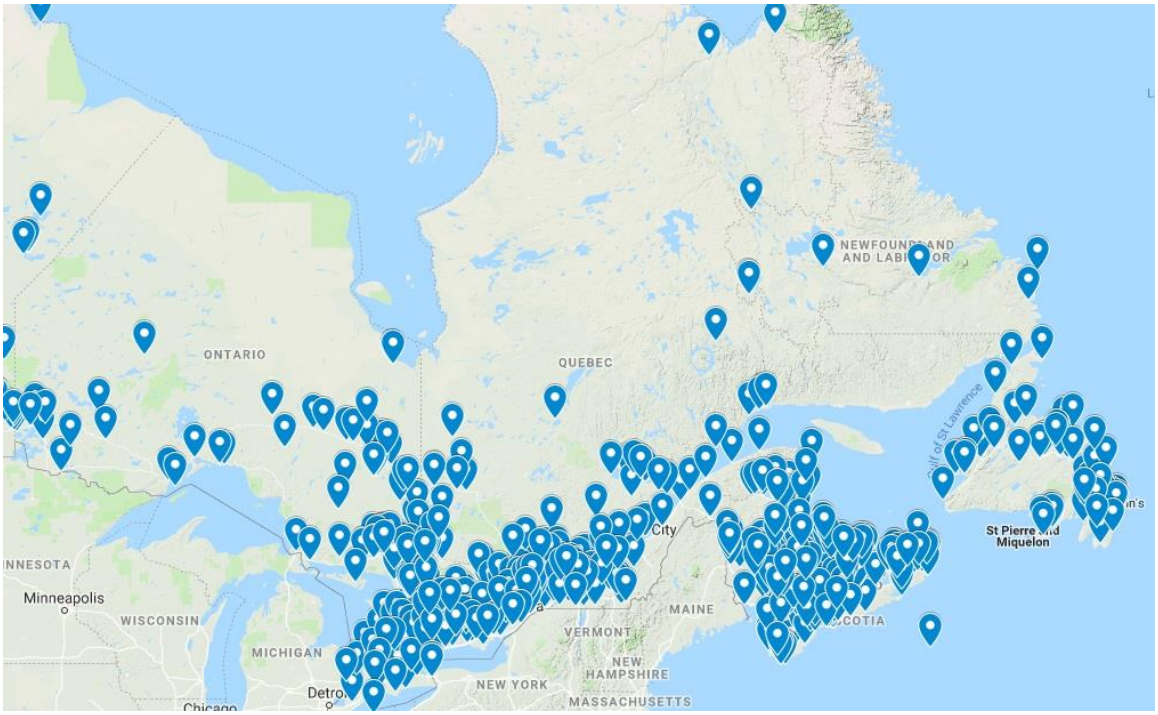
Graph 4 – Sightings by Decade



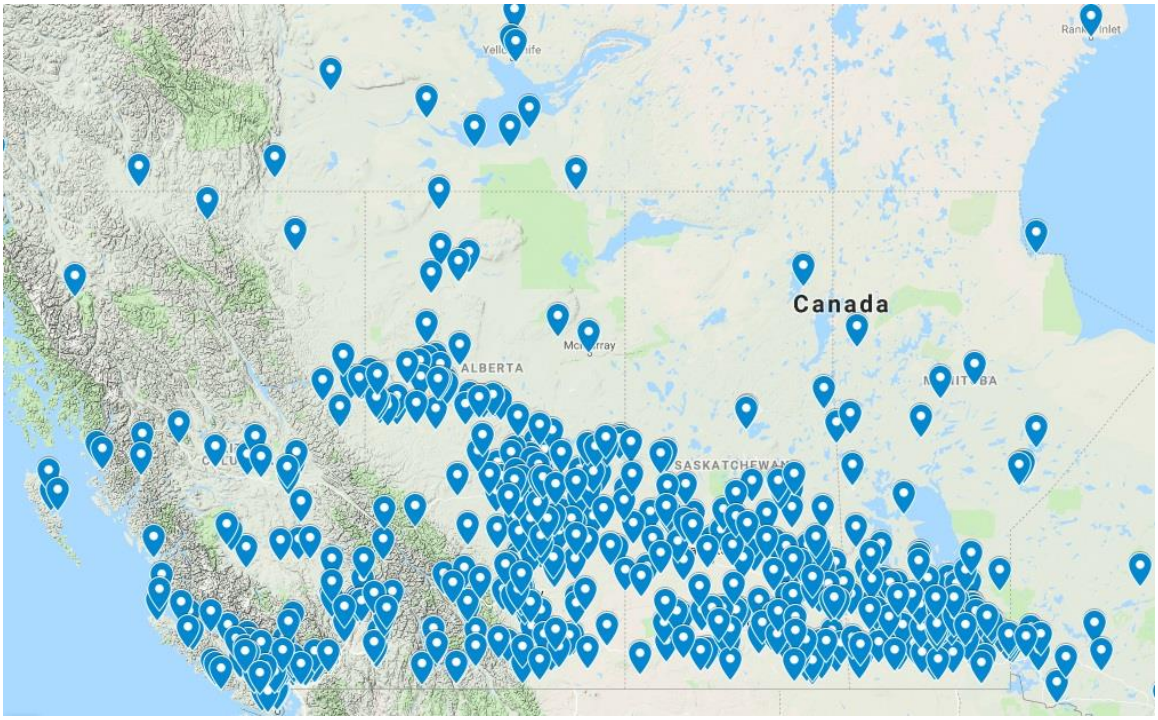
Map 1 – Distribution of Sightings Across Canada



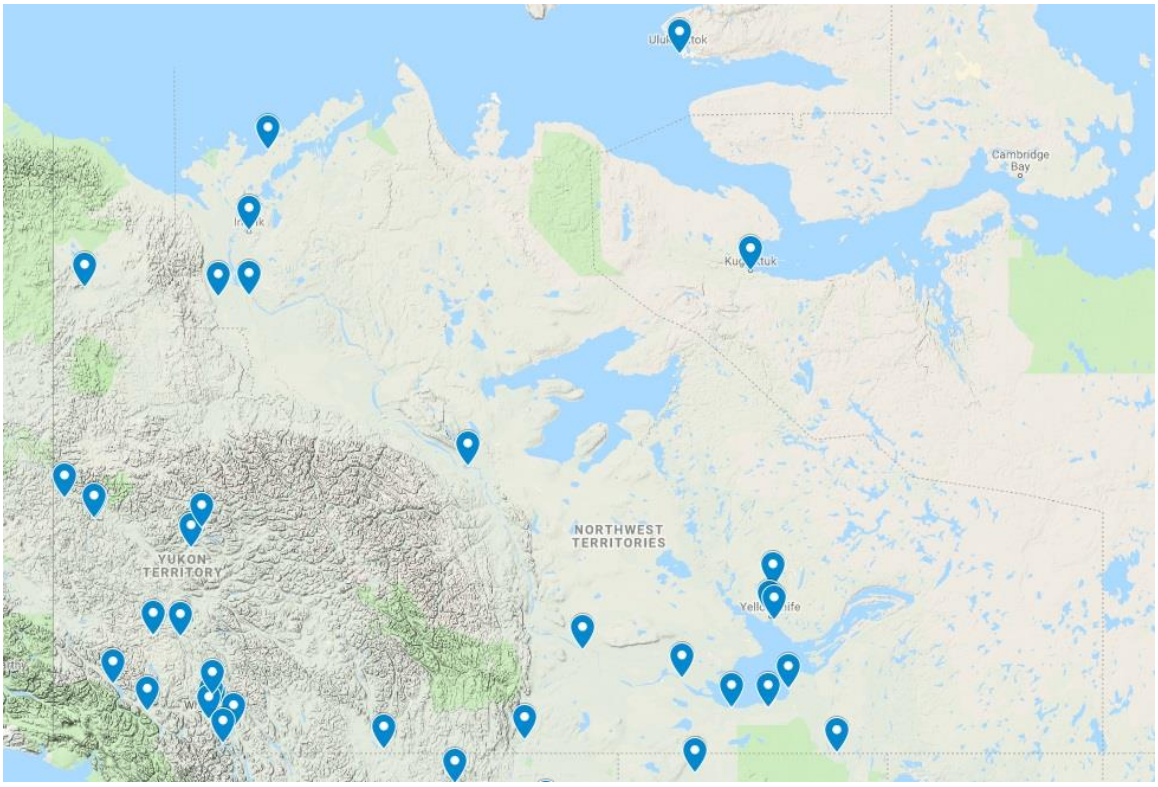
Map 2 – Detail of Sighting Distribution: Ontario, Quebec, Atlantic Canada



Map 3 – Detail of Sighting Distribution: Prairies and West Coast



Map 4 – Detail of Sighting Distribution: Yukon and Northwest Territories



Map 5 – Detail of Sighting Distribution: Nunavut