

Critique of “Roswell — Anatomy of a Myth”

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Introduction

Kent Jeffrey, an airline pilot by profession, has focused considerable energy in the last four years on UFO issues. He was, for instance, the prime mover in the creation of “The Roswell Declaration,” a document that the leaders of three UFO organizations agreed to, signed and circulated (CUFOS, 1994; Jeffrey 1994.) This document argues for a release from security oaths for those who may have been involved in prior Government UFO activities and secrecy. The Roswell Declaration has been signed by many persons, including this writer. Jeffrey has continued to be active, speaking and exploring certain aspects of some of the Roswell reports. He decided to initiate such innovative things as finding some retired Air Corps and Air Force witnesses, and hypnotizing one witness, Dr. Jesse Marcel, Jr., who reportedly handled some of the wreckage as an 11-year old in the very early morning of July 8, 1947. These two activities, together with his exposure to some newer Freedom of Information Act documents, appear to be the principal basis for his preceding report.

After reading Jeffrey’s denunciation of Roswell, one must be wondering how any persons of normal intelligence and psychology could possibly take the Roswell Incident seriously. The arguments he urges are many, and must be bewildering and overwhelming to the non-specialist. Luckily, we can deal with several specific central issues to illustrate how far he has drifted from logic, and reasonable interpretation of the available data.

Summary of Facts as Agreed to by Nearly Everyone

As the Intelligence Officer of the 509th Bomb Group, Major Jesse Marcel had been sent to investigate reports of unusual debris discovered on a remote sheep ranch. He was returning to the Roswell airfield to report his findings to his commanding officer, Colonel William Blanchard, but was so excited by the nature of the debris that he stopped on the way to show it to his wife and son. Thus it was that Jesse Marcel, Jr., then one month shy of his twelfth birthday, was awakened by his father and shown a mass of strange material laid out on the kitchen floor. The young Marcel studied it with some care. Then his father

placed it in a cardboard box and took it to his car where Jesse Junior noted more apparently similar material piled in the back seat.

Colonel Blanchard, and presumably a number of other staff officers, shared Major Marcel's puzzlement and excitement about the debris, because Blanchard authorized a press release stating that his personnel had "captured a flying disc." This extraordinary claim made headlines around the country in evening papers in all but the Central time zone.

In very short order, at a press conference in Fort Worth, Brigadier General Roger Ramey showed reporters a battered weather balloon radar reflector and apologized for the furor caused by his ignorant and rash subordinates. The Air Force issued a report in 1994 concluding the "flying disc" was no more than a misidentified weather-balloon radar reflector, but added that the reflector was part of a complete array of balloons and other equipment launched as part of a then, Top Secret attempt to hear the sounds of Soviet nuclear explosions. In addition to being the "official" explanation, this is the essence of the skeptical community's interpretation of the Roswell Incident, and it is embraced by Jeffrey. This is the end of the summary of facts as agreed to by nearly everyone.

There have been a dozen books written about the alleged Roswell crash, some of them disagreeing with each other on some details, but largely agreeing that there are many dozens of witnesses telling interlocking tales, and that the reality of the crash or crashes does not hinge on the testimony of one person at one site. This is the essential problem with the article: selectively including those things that support the hypotheses of "no crash" and rejecting those reports that do not support it, while seeming to assume that the only testimony is that which is relevant to the Brazel debris field, and appearing to ignore most other July 1947 reported events.

Jeffrey begins with some of the same techniques that debunkers have often used: the "Santa Claus" analogy and the letter from Virginia, the "I wish it were true" stance to attempt to convey objectivity, and closing his article with the absence of evidence from SETI. These ideas are irrelevant to the real content of Jeffrey's data discussion.

In a recent article, Swords (1997b) established with clarity the conflict between two schools of thought that think (a) "Even though there is no physical evidence, I am sure that an extraterrestrial spacecraft crashed at Roswell," and those that think (b) "Nothing particularly unusual came down at Roswell, and whatever it was, it certainly wasn't an extraterrestrial spacecraft." This polarization seems to me the way many people often react, and thus the problem is that of discriminating between these two hypotheses based on the data. To what extent does the Jeffrey article provide meaningful discriminants?

Clearly, if there was a real crash or crashes, our Government cover-up was superb to have ensured a reasonable level of secrecy up to 1998. The (b) type school has much difficulty believing that this is possible, and therefore feels more comfortable in rejecting the whole idea of a crash. In fact, some would say that a successful cover-up from the public of the crash for more than 50

years would be an even more incredible series of events than the discovery of the crashed vehicles containing ETs. We have no way, however, of knowing *a priori* which of these is more likely, so we are looking for discriminants. Do Jeffrey's discussions help us discriminate?

Conversations with Retired Military Officers

The first possible discriminant is that of Jeffrey's conversations with the military personnel, the members of the 509th Bomb Group, assigned at that time to Roswell Army Air Field (RAAF), and the officers at Wright Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB). The problem is to discriminate between a Top Secret program with effective cover-up versus more prosaic explanations. It is reasonable to assume that if an effective "black" security program was in place, most personnel stationed at RAAF would have been led to believe that nothing important had happened. Jeffrey's interviews resulted in reports that nothing important happened, but he only interviewed the few personnel he could locate, all of whom had formed opinions on this topic, no doubt, long ago. Thus, the negative testimony is without merit. It does not discriminate between a non-event and a sophisticated covert cover-up of an event. Nevertheless, it was good that Jeffrey had these conversations. It is also possible to claim since nothing was revealed by the 509th officers, that the cover-up worked well.

Jeffrey talks about his conversations with the B-29 pilots. Why would they have had a need-to-know for information regarding crashed saucers? That would not increase their skills as bomber pilots. It is erroneous to claim that if they knew or had known anything beyond that which was in the papers, they would have told him.

Stanton Friedman attended the 50th anniversary reunion of the 509th in Wendover, Utah, and another reunion in Roswell and talked with many people from the 509th. He was also very impressed with the men of the 509th. Jeffrey proclaims "The most significant and dramatic event in recorded history would surely have been discussed by these men." Security does not work this way. In the first place, there would have been no need-to-know. In the second place, if they did know, they would have known better than to talk to anybody. Remember that Major Jesse Marcel was in Intelligence; investigators Cavitt and Rickett were in the Counter Intelligence Corps. None were pilots.

One could only wish that at some point in his career, Jeffrey had held a security clearance and some experience in the top levels of security classification and compartmentalization. Then perhaps he would understand that those privy to Top Secrets do not discuss them with colleagues. Higher classification information cannot be presented in lower classification documents; having a particular level clearance is not enough to gain access to classified information; one must have a need-to-know for that information; people with high level security clearance do not pass on classified information to people not having a clearance and need-to-know for the information. For those of us who

have spent much of our adult lives in that environment, it makes sense that a military man knowing that the Roswell event was a spacecraft would joke with his colleagues when asked about it. It also makes sense that the same man might whisper the awesome truth to his wife or closest friend. Jeffrey turns this inside out. Note, for example, his treatment of the case of Roswell pilot Oliver Henderson. Jeffrey denigrates Henderson. Friedman spoke with his wife, with his daughter, with his son, and with his World War 2 bombardier. Henderson told none of these people anything before seeing a newspaper article about the crash, after 1980.

The reports from interviews of the Lt. Colonels at WPAFB (Klinikowski, Vatunac, and Weinbrenner) have the same problem, but a bit more sophisticated, since there is little doubt that all of them were cleared for Top Secret information, even though none of them were at Wright Field in 1947. Clearly if there were a genuine Top Secret code-word-designated “black” project to deal with crashed discs, then most likely only one officer at that level would have been involved in the chain of command. On special projects it is not uncommon to minimize the number of people involved by skipping reporting ranks, so that a captain may report directly to a general. Nevertheless, it is likely that the officers Jeffrey interviewed *thought* they would have known about any crashed disk analyses. Our sophisticated security systems had just achieved the greatest covert success in the history of war: the secrecy of the atomic bomb. Secrets can be managed and can be kept, especially at the “black” level, where even the existence of the program is denied and the money is hidden from any publicly available budget. Certainly, finding three officers of the right era who said they did not know about it is good to know, but is to be expected. Furthermore, if there had been a project and they were cleared for it, they would have violated their security oaths discussing it with Jeffrey. It is not unreasonable to imagine that “black” security oaths carry more leverage than collateral ones — no discriminant.

General Arthur Exon told Friedman personally that he did *not* have a need-to-know for all the activities at WPAFB even when he was base commander in the mid-1960s. There is no reason to expect that the three officers would have been told about events and wreckage brought there more than a decade prior to their management assignments at the Foreign Technology Division (FTD). The FTD was very compartmentalized, and its principal concern no doubt was the “here and now” and the near-future and enemy (not alien) technology.

The 1948 Military Correspondence

The 1948 military documents appear to have made an impression on Jeffrey, because he states that “they cannot be simply or smugly characterized as ‘absence of evidence.’ They are evidence.” They definitively state that there was no crashed saucer. If there was indeed a black project, it would have been essential to let the rest of the Government think, at the Secret level anyway, that indeed there were no crashed saucers. Therefore, it is easily possible that these

documents, including the well-known Twining to Schulgen memo, were intentional fabrications based on partial truth. It is also possible that McCoy was successfully kept in the dark about the Top Secret black project with the recovered parts. See, for example, the scholarly and detailed discussion of the McCoy letter by Swords (1997a). The point is that if the crashed saucer data were kept separate from the rest of the Secret-level Project, this is also consistent with the evidence — no discriminant.

Jeffrey hardly mentions the security level of the many documents to which he refers and which he contends would have certainly told about a crashed saucer. Only one document, as it happens, was Top Secret and it dealt with “Analysis of Incidents,” not analysis of wreckage: two very different areas of technological investigation. To my knowledge, none of the National Archives provide for viewing Special Compartmented Information rated, for example, Top Secret/UMBRA or ULTRA, or MAJIC. W. B. Smith, in an available 1950 Top Secret memo, stated that the matter of flying saucers was the most classified subject in the USA, even more than the H-bomb. Our Government appears to feel that the public is not entitled to know about this topic if it is there.

Jeffrey implies that the US government would never lie. When the Trinity Site nuclear explosion occurred in July 1945, a cover story was issued saying an ammunition dump had blown up, but fortunately, no one was injured. During World War 2, elaborate disinformation schemes were used to misdirect enemy activity. The Air Force has even admitted lying once with the July 9 weather balloon story to cover up the Top Secret Mogul balloon story. In matters of security, our Government long ago adopted a standard policy of deception to protect important secrets.

The 1947 Photos and Testimony

In 1947, as Jeffrey states, a photographer took eight photos of the wreckage in General Ramey’s office. They are not included with this article, but one of them was on the cover of the MUFON Journal issue containing the Jeffrey article. They show various views of the torn wreckage of radar reflectors and a pile of weathered balloon material. They have been analyzed in considerable detail elsewhere (Thomas, 1991; Shandera & Moore, 1990; Schmitt & Randle, 1991; Shandera, 1991).

In addition to Jesse Marcel, Jr. (whose testimony is discussed after this part) a second witness invoked by Jeffrey is Warrant Officer Irving Newton. A trial attorney would have a great deal of fun with Newton on the stand. He was one of the first parties to be interviewed by researchers in the late 1970s, when interest in Roswell revived, and has changed his story in substantial and critical ways in subsequent interviews. Newton’s latest version of events in General Ramey’s office is that promoted by Jeffrey. Here we have Major Marcel chasing Newton around the office, insisting that the radar reflector on the General’s floor is a space ship. Newton recalls “hieroglyphics” on the balsa sticks, and Marcel claiming that they were alien writing. To cap it off, Newton produced

for Jeffrey a drawing of the symbols that is remarkably like the drawing made of Dr. Marcel's "hieroglyphics."

But there are no "hieroglyphs" on the balsa sticks of the radar reflector shown to the press by General Ramey. Recall the set of very clear photographs. These have been studied with greatest care. Even the CIA studied them on behalf of the Air Force (Pflock, 1997). There are absolutely no markings on the balsa members (or elsewhere on the reflector). Newton's claims are impeached by this objective evidence. Furthermore, Newton's original testimony, recorded accurately by Moore (1980) follows, presumably with Newton's exact words from a July 1979 interview: "*It was cut and dried. I had sent up thousands of them and there is no doubt that what I was given was parts of a balloon. I was later told that a Major from Roswell had identified the stuff as a flying saucer, but the General had been suspicious of this identification from the beginning, and that's why I had been called.*" Text: But wouldn't the people at Roswell have been able to identify a balloon on their own? Newton: "*They certainly should have. It was a regular Rawin sonde. They must have seen hundreds of them.*" Text: What happened after you identified the object? Newton: "*When I had identified it as a balloon, I was dismissed.*"

Furthermore, even considering the one Brazel-site debris field, there is no attempt to deal with whether the wreckage of a Mogul balloon would have been described as it was by the witnesses or would have confused a skilled intelligence officer like Major Jesse Marcel. The words that Brazel used the first time he reported, described anomalous parts. It was only after he had been interrogated incommunicado for a day that he stated for publication that he had first seen the debris on 14 June instead of "last week," that it was made up of "rubber strips, tinfoil, and rather tough-looking paper and sticks." Jeffrey does the reader a disservice by not noting that these followed the incommunicado interrogation, and were approved by the Air Corps for the *Roswell Daily Record*.

The article said that when the debris was gathered up, the tinfoil, paper, tape, and sticks made a bundle about three feet long and 7 or 8 inches thick, while the rubber made a bundle about 18 or 20 inches long and about 8 inches thick. He estimated the entire lot would have weighed about five pounds. This description was a massive distortion of what he first reported. However, it is quite consistent with part of what was photographed for the media on 8 July. The events are totally consistent with a cover-up of the real crash, showing the balloon reflector debris as the alleged recovered material, for the purpose of killing the story. There is no evidence that the Ramey photos are anything but radar reflectors and old balloon pieces, and hardly anyone who has studied the subject, including Jeffrey, claims otherwise.

In what is perhaps the farthest "reach" of all, Jeffrey tells us that dye from the "flowered tape" somehow bled through the impermeable cellophane tape, then through the adhesive backing of the tape, then onto the balsa wood, and

thus the symbols seen by Newton and the presumably delusional Major Marcel. Actually, the balsa wood, according to Jeffrey, was impregnated with Elmer's glue, and this is why the young Marcel thought he was handling metal, instead of wood. So this extraordinary osmotic process left intact figures from the original flowered tape on the "metallic" surface of the wood.

Master Sergeant Lewis Rickett, an expert aircraft mechanic who had toured Europe in the aftermath of World War 2 to gather data about German aircraft on behalf of Army Intelligence, was on the debris site in his capacity as a Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) official. Rickett picked up a piece and asked CIC Captain Sheridan Cavitt if he could try to break it. Cavitt said, "*Do what we couldn't do. Go ahead, touch it.*" Rickett said, "*For God's sake!... what in the hell is that stuff made out of, it can't be plastic... it don't (sic) feel like plastic. It just flat feels like metal, but I never saw a piece of metal that thin that you can't bend... the more I looked at it, I couldn't imagine what it was.*"

Why does Jeffrey not tell us the last line of the July 9 *Roswell Daily Record* article quoting Brazel. Brazel said, "*I am sure what I found was not any weather observation balloon.*" Remember that Brazel had previously recovered balloons. Why does Jeffrey not mention that Colonel Weaver, in the huge 1994 Air Force report, intentionally eliminated a most important phrase from a July 8, 1947 FBI memo about the supposed balloon. The memo stated: "*The object found resembles a high altitude weather balloon with a radar reflector ("But that telephonic conversation between their office and Wright Field had not borne out this belief")... disc and balloon being transported.*" Here, the intent even today is clearly to deceive the public.

Newton's testimony is very different now from what it was in 1979 to Moore after Friedman had located him. Could it possibly be relevant that both are loyal career officers on nice pensions who need no hassles in retirement? Almost 20 years ago, Major Jesse Marcel told Friedman that the wreckage covered a huge area, hundreds of yards long and that he and Cavitt, the Counterintelligence officer assigned, each took away only a small portion of it. Also, Mrs. Cavitt told Moore: "*He's not going to tell you anything. They told him not to.*"

Dr. Marcel's testimony about the anomalous debris does not stand alone. Bill Brazel, the son of rancher Mac Brazel who was the first to find the debris, said that it was "*something on the order of tinfoil except that it wouldn't tear... You could wrinkle it and lay it back down and it immediately resumed its original shape. It was quite pliable, but you couldn't crease or bend it like ordinary metal. Almost like a plastic, but definitely metallic in nature. Dad once said that the Army had once told him it was not anything made by us.*"

Major Marcel: "*I saw a lot of wreckage but no complete machine. It had disintegrated before it hit the ground. The wreckage was scattered over an area about three quarters of a mile long and several hundred feet wide.*"

Jeffrey accepts the current stories from Cavitt and Newton — although they completely contradict earlier stories told by them long before Roswell became

a major *cause celebre*. The stories even contradict each other as well as the testimony of Major Jesse Marcel as told to Friedman first hand, long ago. The only basis for even considering a Mogul balloon explanation is the disinformation newly told by Mac Brazel after being “debriefed” and reported in the *Roswell Daily Record* on July 9, 1947, with the supposed June 14 recovery date and the stick-and-foil nonsense.

July 8 articles say the stuff was recovered “last week.” Even the *Roswell Daily Record* says the material covered an area 200 yards in diameter... neat trick for a few sticks and foil from a radar reflector. Brazel would never have made the difficult trip to Roswell on the basis of a tiny radar reflector. If Cavitt’s story were truthful, Brazel would have tossed the wreckage (Cavitt said it would fit in one vehicle) in the back of his pickup, and there would have been nothing for Marcel to go to see.

Now we begin to see that the testimony does permit one to discriminate between the recovered parts and the radar reflector in Ramey’s office. They are not the same.

The 1997 Hypnotic Session with Jesse Marcel Jr.

Fifty years later, in January 1997, Jesse Marce, Jr. underwent three sessions of interrogation under hypnosis administered by Dr. Neil Hibler, a renowned forensic psychologist specializing in memory retrieval, mainly on behalf of police and federal intelligence agencies. The interrogation was arranged and paid for by Jeffrey in order to settle, once and for all, the true nature of the debris that so excited Major Marcel and Colonel Blanchard, and persuaded the Colonel to announce the capture of a “flying disc” by the Army Air Force. Jeffrey does not refer to the prior hypnotic session of May 1990 arranged by Schmitt and Randle (1991), nor does he compare the results of the two sessions.

In Jeffrey’s words, “*The central focus of the Roswell story has been the recovery of the unusual debris from the Foster Ranch in July, 1947. This is where it all started. The most important living witness to that debris is Jesse Marcel, Jr., MD. Jesse Marcel, Jr. got a good look at the unusual material. Potentially, the key to the whole Roswell UFO case lies in Jesse Marcel, Jr.’s memory. He saw the debris. Either it was extraterrestrial or it was not.*”

“*Either it was extraterrestrial or it was not*” requires another set of discriminants not available to us. Note the extreme controversy over the “extraterrestrial” nature of the microorganisms found in meteorites, and the as yet unresolved question at the heart of SETI, which is how to determine in rigorous terms if a radio signal is truly “extraterrestrial.”

We can rephrase the Jeffrey challenge in terms that can be easily addressed. Why not replace “extraterrestrial” with “weather balloon radar reflector?” In other words, Jesse Marcel, Jr.’s six hours of interrogation at the hands of Dr. Hibler and the others present either produces a description of a radar reflector, or it does not. Put this way, Jeffrey’s hypothesis is falsifiable.

A remarkable feature of Jeffrey's essay is that it relies so heavily on the Marcel interrogation, but offers the reader not a single word of quotation from the testimony. The reader is kept ignorant of the fact that the artist made five drawings, not the single one Jeffrey chooses to reproduce. Finally, video tapes of the interrogation have not been made public. Only a handful of investigators close to Jeffrey have seen it. Thus, the basic data upon which Jeffrey relies — and upon which the concerned public must rely — has been hidden from critical scrutiny!

I have consulted with others who have seen the video and studied it with care, and they speak with one voice in saying that the Marcel testimony is extensive and explicit, and that no reasonable interpretation of that testimony corresponds with the conclusion drawn by Jeffrey. In sum, Marcel is describing a set of materials absolutely distinguishable from a radar reflector; nor is his description easily reconciled with any known objects or materials.

More specifically, Marcel describes three categories of material, which he has somewhat arbitrarily designated "foil," "Bakelite," and a single "rod."

There were many pieces of "foil," the largest being about four by six inches. The family spent some time trying to meld these together as one would the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, but were unable to make even one set of edges match. The "foil" was flat, smooth, very light, very thin, and did not flex. The color was similar to the lead foil used in 1947 to wrap cigarette packages. It had no abrasions or other markings. Marcel is adamant that there was no paper attached to the "foil," and that there was no cellophane or other tape on the "foil" or with the other debris.

Jeffrey would have us believe that this "foil" was the laminate of paper and metal foil that comprised the reflecting surfaces of the balloon-borne radar reflectors. When General Ramey held his debunking news conference, two photographers took seven pictures of the debris. Excellent first generation prints are available, and these show very clearly, and from various angles, what a battered radar reflector looks like. The paper-foil laminate is creased and wrinkled throughout, the paper backing is immediately obvious on torn pieces, and the tearing pattern has a unique quality. Had Jeffrey shown the reader the artist's rendering of Marcel's "foil," and then compared it to one of the Ramey photographs, that would have been a fair test of his hypothesis. But he did not, and little wonder.

The "Bakelite" consisted of many small pieces with jagged edges, apparently broken from larger segments. The pieces had a shiny black color, flat, without markings or abrasions, and showed no sign of workmanship such as drilled holes or corners. It was slightly thicker than the "foil," but still quite thin and did not flex. Like the "foil," Marcel uses the term "Bakelite" only as his closest approximation. He had worked with real Bakelite in radio projects at home, and knew the material well. Jeffrey concludes that this material was in fact the Bakelite box enclosing the "Mogul" instrument package.

Unfortunately for Jeffrey, the only possible candidate would be the radio transmitter, housed in a rectangular box only three by five inches.

The “rod” was about 18 inches long, about three-eighths of an inch on edge, with smooth undamaged ends, and had a well-defined cross-section shaped like an “I” beam. The rod was very light and did not flex. Marcel insists that the rod was metal, not wood. On the inner surface of one side, running along the entire length of the rod, there was a series of markings that for want of a better term he called “hieroglyphics.” The “hieroglyphics” were on the flat surface within the lips of the “I.” Incredibly, Jeffrey concluded that this rod was simply a balsa wood structural member for the radar reflector. The young Marcel had built dozens of model airplanes from balsa wood, and thus his opinion about the composition of the “rod” deserves some respect.

Marcel has expressed dismay over Jeffrey’s interpretation (Durant, 1997). Moreover, his testimony describes a set of materials of truly anomalous nature, clearly not the simple radar reflector parts.

The creative idea of hypnotizing Jesse Marcel Jr. could have perhaps been more important if all the testimony had been accurately reported. There were six hours of hypnosis-related tapes, some of which support the opposite of Jeffrey’s conclusions. If a Mogul balloon had crashed, it might or might not have had paper tape with symbols on it. The wreckage photographed in Ramey’s office on July 8, 1947 does not appear to have paper tape. The symbols, however, described by Jesse Marcel Jr. were not on a piece of paper but a piece of metal, which was understood to be very stiff. This does *not* correlate with the balloon description. Furthermore, the original testimony of Irving Newton did not include a reference to markings on the debris at all. His current testimony is inconsistent with previous testimony, and that would be consistent with either poor memory or intentional deception, which cannot be ruled out.

The similarity of the hieroglyphic-like markings was left to the reader to decide. Some see similarities, and some see differences. Five drawings were made, based on the hypnosis session, and only one of them appears in the article. Such omissions would be labeled fraudulent by some skeptics. In experiments in remote viewing, correlation with targets is typically made with a panel of six judges under very controlled conditions. It would seem to me unlikely that a panel of judges would do much more than agree that both samples have hieroglyphs of some sort. To go from the similarity of writing to the conclusion that therefore Marcel picked up pieces of a Mogul balloon and excitedly showed them to Jesse Marcel Jr. is a wild extrapolation.

Jeffrey says the symbols drawn based upon Jesse Marcel Jr.’s testimony are the same as recalled by Newton. The symbols have been on display at the Roswell Museum and also have been available on an extruded replica, based on the earlier 1990 detailed accounting from Jesse Marcel Jr., also partly under hypnosis. These Marcel Jr. sketches are included in Randle & Schmitt (1991), and do not agree in detail with those of 1997, drawn by Kimberly Moeller.

There should be a discussion as to whether either Newton or Moeller had the opportunity or motivation to see either of these items.

Reliability of UFOs

The concept that equipment from advanced civilizations has superior reliability has widespread appeal. Our aircraft indeed do well, most of the time — except for the crashes!

Jeffrey, discussing the high reliability of today’s aircraft engines implies that alien spacecraft would be much more reliable. One would think that the only reason an airplane could crash was engine failure. Yet Jeffrey himself tells of an MD-88 that crashed because the flaps weren’t set properly. The ValuJet and TWA 800 crashes did not occur because there was engine failure, but apparently because of unexpected events having nothing to do with engine reliability. Landing gear have collapsed on airplanes. Sometimes birds are ingested into engines — no fault of the engine.

If one were to speculate about the varied possibilities that might have been responsible for downing a legitimate ET craft in July 1947, the following four are all good choices and have little to do with reliability calculations made ahead of time.

- A lightning strike; thunder and lightning were reported and their presence is not contested;
- A collision of two ET craft in the presence of electromagnetic pulse caused by the lightning;
- A near burst of a proximity-fused shell fired from a long-range radar-guided gun at White Sands Proving Ground; such weapons were in development there and then;
- Loss of navigation, guidance or control system caused by radar illumination from White Sands.

A Rebuttal Response

Towards the conclusion of the Jeffrey article, he offered seven clear points, refuted in the following Table 1.

TABLE 1
 Jeffrey’s Concluding Points and Rebuttal
 (These refute all the conclusions as incorrect — not just some, but all.)

Point No.	Jeffrey argues that these unlikely things would have had to happen:	Rebuttal
1.	“A machine with unimaginable technological sophistication and consequent incredible reliability would have simply broken down and crashed.”	Even our reliable aircraft crash when struck by lightning, hit each other, are exposed to electromagnetic interference or are shot at. And, of course — pilot error.

Point No.	Jeffrey argues that these unlikely things would have had to happen:	Rebuttal
2.	“The only known wreckage from this sophisticated vehicle, capable of interstellar travel, would have consisted only of a few short beams, pieces of foil-like material and small pieces of thin plastic-like material.”	The description of the wreckage based on Brazel’s first reports are not these at all. Major Marcel is reported to have had additional parts in his vehicle. No serious researcher thinks that the debris field was more than just part of a saucer. Not all flying discs need be capable of interstellar travel.
3.	By incredible coincidence, the material from the crashed spaceship would have very closely resembled radar reflectors from a balloon array that went down in the same general area a few weeks earlier.	If a “spaceship” crashed, it clearly left only part at the Brazel ranch. “A few weeks before” is inconsistent with testimony. Descriptions of the recovered parts clearly do not agree with the photographs in Ramey’s office of a radar reflector.
4.	“Despite the fact that this would have been the most spectacular event in recorded history, and despite the fact that word was already out that something had happened (because of Lt. Haut’s press release), there was absolutely no contemporary discussion or talk about such an earthshaking event among the pilots and navigators of the close-knit 509th Bomb Group.”	This “spectacular event” would have been a significant security concern, and discussion would have been controlled by “debriefings” and other techniques. If the event occurred and was covered up, a principal objective would have been to ensure that the 509th pilots did not get any hint of real evidence. Even so, Jeffrey found one witness who “recalled seeing a lot of extra activity around one of the hangars...”
5.	“West Point graduate and retired general Thomas DuBose would have to have lied nine times in an interview that the debris (definitely that from an ML-307 radar reflector) shown in the pictures in Ramey’s office was not substituted material and was the “real debris” recovered from the ranch northwest of Roswell.”	If the event occurred but the photographed material was balloon remains, DuBose would have not had to lie. However, he merely stated that it was not switched before the photography. He might not have known that it was not the real debris in Ramey’s office and that it was just Rawin radar reflector and balloon parts, which it clearly was.
6.	“Major General C.P. Cabell, Director of Intelligence for the Air Force at the Pentagon, who prepared a report on the unidentified flying object situation would have been totally ignorant of the fact that the Air Force was in possession of a crashed flying saucer.”	It is well known that the Twining to Schulgen memo was at the Secret level, not Top Secret, and could have been intentionally fabricated to conceal the knowledge of crashes and recoveries. Cabell might or might not have known the truth. It makes no difference. See Swords (1997a) for in-depth McCoy letter discussion.
7.	“Three retired Air Force Colonels, all former top officials at the Foreign Technology Division at Wright Patterson Air Force base would have been lying to me — unnecessarily wasting inordinate amounts of their own personal time in a protracted game of charades.”	An equally likely explanation is that the colonels were carefully kept in the dark about the crash recovery. Furthermore, if one of them had known, they would have not informed Jeffrey if they had been keeping silent all this time.

Jeffrey Article Good Points

I now offer a summary of a few of the good things about the article, with qualifications.

- I do not think that Jeffrey was employed by the Government to write this article or sponsor the investigation (even though his current position on Roswell is the same as that of the Government).
- Jeffrey still seems to endorse the Roswell Declaration to provide amnesty for those who would talk about UFO recoveries (although it might violate existing national secrecy legislation).
- His money is where his mouth is; he has spent a lot of money to get more data (but may have been unaware, for example, of prior 509th reunion conversations by Friedman at Wendover, Utah).
- He has paid some attention to the literature (but seems to be insensitive to subtleties).
- He shows respect for the men of the 509th (but is unaware of how security works).
- He took the initiative to hypnotize Marcel again (but ignored the first results from 1990).
- He chose to have an artist present (but he failed to reveal the total results, or determine how much she might have been influenced by prior exposure to this subject).

Where Jeffrey Went Wrong

In summary, Jeffrey's article appears to be a response by someone who made some genuine attempts to obtain more data to understand the Roswell mystery, but inadvertently looked at only a small amount of the evidence without becoming familiar with the total problem. In the process, he omitted significant data that would have weakened his argument.

The principal value of the energy and money spent by Jeffrey may lie in letting the research community have access to the complete tapes and transcripts (if the latter yet exist) as well as the transcripts of other interviews conducted with the witnesses identified. The raw data is very likely to yield a far different interpretation from the one in the Jeffrey article.

If I had been asked to referee this article for the JSE, I would have rejected it because:

- It shows but limited knowledge of the relevant literature;
- It either intentionally or inadvertently suppresses critical information that would significantly change the argument;
- It displays clearly incorrect assumptions about security procedures, bordering on the naive;
- It uses none of the critical, careful, conservative approaches used, espoused and published in JSE about other anomaly studies.

The publication of the full transcript and video of the interrogation would go a long way towards suggesting exactly the opposite of the Jeffrey conclusion.

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