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Statement Validity Analysis of "The Jim Ragsdale Story": Implications for the Roswell Incident

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Abstract — "The Jim Ragsdale Story" purports to be the only known first-hand testimony to the alleged UFO crash near Roswell, New Mexico in 1947. This testimony, in the form of an affidavit and a less formal conversational account, was analyzed using Statement Validity Analysis (SVA) which is an established technique for evaluating the credibility of forensic witness accounts, and Fact Pattern Analysis which is a less formal procedure that complements SVA. SVA indicated that the testimony was not consistent with known features of memories for true events. Similarly, the fact pattern analysis identified major factual inconsistencies as well as potential implausible information. These findings suggest that "The Jim Ragsdale Story" is not credible. Accordingly, the possibilities that the Ragsdale story represents a deliberate fabrication or sincerely reported memories of imagined experience are discussed.

Keywords: UFOs — aliens — Roswell — extraterrestial — credibility assessment

Introduction

In early July of 1947 an airborne object crashed on a ranch in the New Mexico desert during a violent thunderstorm. It was discovered by a rancher Mac Brazel and the debris was described as being scattered over a large area and having unconventional properties. It was shown to local authorities who in turn contacted the Roswell Army Air Field. A military investigation ensued which prompted a press release reporting the crash and retrieval of a "flying disc." A subsequent press release from higher authorities retracted the claim stating that personnel had recovered the remnants of a weather balloon, not a "flying disc." The events have become known as the Roswell Incident — one of the most controversial and enduring cases in Ufology. Berlitz and Moore (1980) made a preliminary study of this case, but Friedman and Berliner's (1992) seminal research was the first to locate many of the early witnesses.

Discourses both pro and con towards the Roswell Incident continue to be published (*e.g.,* Korff, 1997; Pflock, 1995; Randle & Schmitt, 1991, 1994).

Recently, the Roswell Incident has received increased attention in the popular press (Nelson, 1996; Stover, 1997) due to the deathbed testimony of Jim Ragsdale, documented in the Affidavit in Figures 1a and 1b. "The Jim Ragsdale Story" (Jim Ragsdale Productions, Inc., 1996, pp. 10-11) is potentially important for the Roswell case, since it represents the only known testament to the crash itself. According to Ragsdale, he was lying in the back of a pickup truck in a secluded mountain area with a female companion on the night of July 4, 1947. After a bright explosion, a 20 foot disc came flying through the trees close to his truck and imbedded itself among some large boulders. Ragsdale and his friend investigated the scene and stated that there was a large hole in one side of the disc. He peered inside and saw an impressive instrument panel, a "captain's chair," and several little chairs. He also reportedly observed four bodies which looked like midgets with gray, snakelike skin. They left the crash site only to return in the morning to collect some of the debris scattered around the craft. Ragsdale and his friend left abruptly however, when they heard or observed what they believed to be military trucks approaching. The female companion died in a car accident, and reportedly, some crash debris she had in her possession was never found. Ragsdale claimed to have shown some of his debris to friends. Unfortunately, these friends are all deceased, and the samples he collected were reportedly stolen from his home.

Discussions about the story's credibility continue (see *e.g.,* Korff, 1997; Randle & Schmitt, 1994) because aspects of the story seem consistent with other independent testimony yet corroborating evidence is not available. Further, the location that Ragsdale identified as the crash site has changed (Friedman, 1996), along with various details of his account (Korff, 1997). Interestingly, the United States Air Force (McAndrew, 1997) cited the Ragsdale story as support for their explanation that the aliens sighted in conjunction with the Roswell crash were anthropomorphic test dummies that were carried aloft by U.S. Air Force high altitude balloons for scientific research. Popular methods of credibility assessment such as polygraph testing, voice pattern analysis, nacroanalysis, hypnosis, and possible nonverbal clues to deceit are not applicable in this case because Ragsdale is dead. For these reasons, the first author contacted the second author to have "The Jim Ragsdale Story" analyzed via Statement Validity Analysis (SVA), an established method in forensic psychology for evaluating the credibility of witness reports.

Method

Narratives

The present study was based on (1) a continuous 608-word narrative in the booklet, *The Jim Ragsdale Story: A Closer Look at the Roswell Incident* (Jim Ragsdale Productions, Inc., 1996, pp. 2-4) and (2) a copy of a 1,021-word affi-

davit signed by James R. Ragsdale and published in the same source (pp. 10-11). Both narratives are given in their entirety in the Appendix of the article. Excluded from the research was the video "The Jim Ragsdale Story" because it contained mostly hearsay from Ragsdale's daughter. Both the booklet and the video were obtained from the International UFO Museum and Research Center (Roswell, NM). The date of the alleged event was July 4, 1947 and the date of the witness account (*i.e.,* affidavit) was April 15, 1995. This represents a span of approximately 48 years, so some inconsistencies are to be expected. Consequently, the details in the two narratives were considered collectively as well as in comparison.

Assessment Techniques

Exact copies of the two Ragsdale accounts were sent to the second author (a trained expert in Statement Validity Analysis) who agreed to analyze them with SVA and Fact Pattern Analysis. It should be pointed out this research was initiated by the first author and that this application of SVA to a report of anomalous experience is unique to the best of the authors' knowledge.

SVA is a systematic procedure for assessing the credibility of memory reports which has been used with child witnesses for decades in Germany (Undeutsch, 1982). SVA consists of a Criteria-Based Content Analysis (CBCA), in which an analysis is made of the verbal report itself. Nineteen CBCA criteria have been proposed to reflect qualitative and quantitative differences between credible and non-credible reports (for a detailed description see Steller & Koehnken, 1989; Yuille, 1988). For example, a high degree of detail is a good indication of credibility because of the difficulty in embellishing a false testimony with details not existing in memory (Arntzen, 1983) and maintaining the story's consistency. In accordance with this hypothesis, research has indicated that adult deceivers provide less information than non-deceivers (*e.g.,* deTurck & Miller, 1985; Knapp, Hart, & Dennis, 1974; Kraut, 1978; Mehrabian, 1971).

Direct assessments of CBCA have yielded positive results with both children (Joffe, 1992; Steller, Wellershaus, & Wolf, 1988 cited in Steller & Boychuk, 1992; Yuille, 1988) and adults (Landry & Brigham, 1992; Zaparniuk, Yuille, & Taylor, 1995). One of the best known studies of CBCA was conducted by Esplin, Houed, and Raskin (1988; cited in Raskin & Esplin, 1991), who applied CBCA to 40 child abuse statements with surprising efficacy. Twenty were confirmed cases of abuse (*i.e.,* confessional and/or physical evidence) and 20 cases were "doubtful" (*i.e.,* no corroborating evidence, recantation of allegation, *etc.*). Overall, CBCA strongly differentiated the groups. All criteria were more prevalent in the confirmed cases. Some were present in 100% of the confirmed cases (*e.g.,* logical structure, quantity of details) and certain criteria found in most of the confirmed statements were completely absent in the unconfirmed statements (*e.g.,* related external associations, attributions of perpetrator's mental state). Nonetheless, methodological shortcomings in this

study (*e.g.,* the "ground truth" problem, the use of a single rater) preclude any firm conclusions regarding SVA's validity (Wells & Loftus, 1991).

More recently, Porter & Yuille (1996) tested the efficacy of 18 proposed verbal clues to deceit taken from several statement analysis techniques: SVA, Reality Monitoring, Sapir's Training Program, and Lexical Diversity (for a review of these other techniques, see Porter & Yuille, 1996). In particular, participants were recruited for a study addressing "security effectiveness" and either committed a theft "to test the effectiveness of a new security guard" or carried out a similar but innocuous task. The participants then provided either (1) a truthful alibi, (2) a partially deceptive account, (3) a completely false alibi, or (4) a truthful confession regarding the theft to "an interrogator hired for the purpose of investigating thefts" with a monetary incentive for convincing the interrogator of their truthfulness. Results indicated that only 3 out of the 18 clues tested significantly differentiated the truthful and deceptive accounts. All 3 clues were derived from the SVA technique (amount of detail, coherence, and admissions of lack of memory).

Consequently, the literature provides limited support for the SVA technique in analyzing the credibility of verbal reports provided by both children and adults. Porter & Yuille (1996) reported a mean classification accuracy of 78.3%, whereas canonical coefficients indicated that the three best criteria (details, coherence, admissions) distinguished truthful from deceptive accounts about equally. Moreover, Porter & Yuille (1996, p. 449) indicated that raters trained in the SVA technique generally show good inter-rater reliability.

The memory report is evaluated on 19 criteria under 5 major categories. Each criterion is considered an indicator of the truthfulness of a statement but its absence does not necessary mean that a statement is false. The presence of each criterion is scored on a 0–2 scale (0 = no evidence for criterion, 1 = some evidence for criterion, 2 = much evidence for criterion). "Not applicable (N/A)" indicates that the criterion is employed for child witness accounts and is not applicable for this event. The evaluator employs the 5+2 rule: the first five criteria plus two of the remaining fourteen are necessary for a credible statement. These criteria are discussed below.

Fact Pattern Analysis examines statements for (a) factual consistency/ inconsistency, (b) logical pattern/ fallacies, and (c) factual plausibility/ implausibility. This is a less formal and less researched procedure that serves merely to complement SVA (Porter, 1997, personal communication).

Results

The following is a complete transcript of the Statement Validity Analysis as performed by the *second* author. However, the first author provides commentary to the Fact Pattern Analysis since the authors do not fully agree on the significance of some of the findings. The commentary is italicized to separate our views.[1]

Statement Validity Analysis

A. General Characteristics of the Statement

1. *Coherence:* A statement is considered coherent if the various parts of an account fit together in a logical, coherent, and consistent fashion. The Ragsdale accounts are characterized by a high degree of temporal and spatial coherence. (rating: 2)
2. *Spontaneous Reproduction:* A statement is considered to exhibit spontaneous reproduction if it occurs in a spontaneous, unstructured fashion. Rigid structure would result in a low rating. The Ragsdale account is consistently characterized by spontaneous reproduction with little evidence for a fixed, rigid structure. The two accounts relate the same event somewhat differently but only to the extent expected in memory reconstruction. (rating: 2)
3. *Sufficiency of Detail:* A high degree of detail is considered one of the best indices of credibility because of the difficulty in embellishing a false testimony with details not existing in memory and maintaining the story's consistency (Arntzen, 1983). An account is considered detailed if it relates sufficiently the context (descriptions of places and times) and series of occurrences within the event. Throughout the Ragsdale accounts, a marked insufficiency of detail is evidenced. For example, he recalls that bodies of the UFO occupants had "strange looking arms, legs, and fingers" (p. 11) with no further elaboration. A credible account would likely have elaborated these remarkable aspects of the occupants. (rating: 0)

B. Specific Contents of the Statement

4. *Contextual Embedding:* This criterion is present if a memory account relates an event anchored in the appropriate context. This includes space-time interrelations in the person's life. The Ragsdale accounts exhibit a high degree of contextual embedding including descriptions of occurrences leading up to and following the event. (rating: 2)
5. *Descriptions of Interactions:* This criterion is present if the witness describes interactions with other people who may have been present during an event. The Ragsdale accounts exhibit very few descriptions of the interactions one would expect between him and his companion under the circumstances. The interactions which he does mention are abrupt and brief. For example, he mentions, "we started drinking beer and making out" (p. 2) but throughout the rest of the alleged experience, Ragsdale

[1]The first author is an active researcher of anomalous phenomena, whereas the second author is concerned only with forensic psychology and has never before published in this field. The second author was intrigued by the prospect that SVA might be applicable to other areas of science rather than limited to interrogation and law enforcement contexts. The fact that we hold two different professional interests does not imply that either author has a confirmed belief or disbelief in all aspects of UFO phenomena.

scarcely notes any discussions or contact the two may have had. (rating: 0)

6. *Reproduction of Conversation:* Related to Criterion #5, this criterion is present if conversations with others present during an event are described. The Ragsdale accounts are characterized by no descriptions of conversations between him and his companion. (rating: 0)
7. *Unexpected Complications During the Incident:* This criterion is present if unforeseen interruptions, complications, or difficulties occur during an event. The Ragsdale accounts show considerable evidence for this criterion. For example, he was unable to remove the helmet of one of the UFO occupants and he and his friend were unexpectedly forced to abandon the site when they heard trucks and heavy equipment approaching. (rating: 2)

C. Peculiarities of the Content

8. *Unusual Details:* This criterion is present if there are spontaneous reports of details concerning the event that are realistic but unusual. The Ragsdale accounts show limited evidence for the presence of this criterion. For example, Ragsdale observed that the UFO material was not rigid but thick and "flexible up to a point" (p. 11). Nonetheless, most information provided is stereotypical, or the "usual" details associated with UFO sightings (*e.g.,* dome roof, large oval eyes, *etc.*). (rating: 1)
9. *Peripheral Details:* This criterion is present if detail is provided for relevant but peripheral aspects of the event. In the Ragsdale account there is some limited evidence for the presence of peripheral details (*e.g.,* the crash material on the mountainside and the large boulders). (rating: 1)
10. *Accurately Reported Details Not Understood:* N/A
11. *Related External Associations:* This criterion is present if spontaneous references to external incidents related to the event but not within the event. The Ragsdale accounts show much evidence for this item. For example, he described the initial flash as being "as bright as a flame from a welders arc" (p. 10) and the noise as being like "the sound of a jet motor now used on take offs by large jet liners" (p. 10). (rating: 2)
12. *Accounts of Subjective Mental State:* This criterion is present if descriptions of the witnesses' subjective emotional experiences during the event are provided. There is very little evidence for the presence in the Ragsdale accounts. For example, when he and his companion peered into the UFO, they saw "four bodies of a type we had never seen before, and all were dead" (p. 10). There is no mention at this point of the expected feelings associated with this type of incident. (rating: 0)
13. *Attribution of Perpetrator's Mental State:* N/A

D. Motivation-Related Contents

14. *Spontaneous Corrections:* This criterion is present if the witness provides corrections during the interview of information given during the interview or on a previous occasion. There is no evidence for this item within the Ragsdale accounts. (rating: 0)
15. *Admitting Lack of Memory:* If a witness admits not recalling some aspect of the event during the provision of the account, it is associated with enhanced credibility. There is no evidence for the presence of this criterion in the Ragsdale accounts. (rating: 0)
16. *Raising Doubts About One's Own Testimony:* N/A
17. *Self-Deprecation:* N/A
18. *Pardoning the Perpetrator:* N/A
19. *Details Characteristic of the Event:* N/A

Conclusions

The results of this statement analysis indicate that the Ragsdale accounts were *not credible* according to known features of memories for true events. Only three of the first five criteria were present.

Fact Pattern Analysis

Within the Ragsdale accounts, the details are generally consistent. However, a major factual inconsistency occurs between the two statements. In one account (the affidavit), he states that as he and his friend were "looking at the total area, we heard what we believed was trucks and heavy equipment coming our way, so we left and were not there when whatever it was arrived," p. 11. In the other, he contradicts this, stating "The campsite was in a secluded area and we watched as many military vehicles pulled up to the crash. We decided to get the hell out of there," (p. 3). This discrepancy detracts from the credibility of the accounts. A minor inconsistency occurs when Mr. Ragsdale states when the initial flash occurred (11:00 pm versus 11:30 pm). However, this inconsistency is not necessarily a sign of confabulation given the lengthy time period between the event and the accounts.

There are no salient logical fallacies in the Ragsdale accounts, but there are several major factual implausibilities within the accounts:

1. Mr. Ragsdale claims to have entered the craft and attempted to remove the helmet of one of the occupants. This is an incredibly unlikely action given that most people would be extremely fearful of doing so. Further, how did he know all four occupants were dead? *The first author agrees that most people would be fearful of touching an allegedly dead alien or any UFO equipment. However, Ragsdale stated that he and his companion had been drinking which would lower his natural inhibitions and might be a reasonable argument for this action if it occurred. Moreover,*

Ragsdale appears to speculate frequently within his narratives and this may be the basis for his assessment that the UFO occupants were deceased.

2. Mr. Ragsdale claims that he and his friend decided to return to their campsite with the plan of revisiting the UFO crash site in the morning. If the event had occurred, a more credible choice of action would be to immediately report the incident to authorities. *The second author is not familiar with the Roswell Incident itself, and does not know that Mac Brazel waited several days before bringing his debris to the authorities for analysis. Thus, it is not entirely inconceivable that Ragsdale and his companion would delay in telling the authorities about this incident, if at all. Of course, Mac Brazel apparently did not fully anticipate the implications of showing his debris, whereas the Ragsdale experience would clearly be a different case. However, if Ragsdale's affidavit accounting is correct in stating that they heard trucks and heavy equipment coming their way, it seems that Ragdale assumed these individuals were already coming to investigate the crash. Assuming this, there would be no need to tell the authorities.*
3. How did Mr. Ragsdale know that his friend was transporting some of the crash material in her truck when she was killed? (p. 11). *This question arises from the statement in his affidavit that his "friend had some in her vehicle when she was killed hitting a bridge. And it was gone when the wreckage was brought in to town" (The Jim Ragsdale Story: A Closer Look at the Roswell Incident, p. 11). Since Ragsdale never explained how he knew these details, the statement can be interpreted reasonably as suspect. However, Ragsdale may have felt that those details were not important — his main point being that the material had disappeared under suspicious circumstances.*

Conclusions

The results of this fact pattern analysis indicate that the Ragsdale accounts are *not credible* in that they exhibit major factual inconsistencies and, independent of the nature of the event itself, include potential implausible information.

Discussion

Statement Validity Analysis is an established technique for assessing the validity of witness reports under forensic contexts, and fact pattern analysis is a less formal and complementary procedure that examines the factual structure of narratives. However, the validity of SVA and fact pattern analysis in evaluating accounts of anomalous experience has not yet been established, and this research used a single rater. Despite these methodological limitations, the

lengthy content of "The Jim Ragsdale Story" made SVA technically applicable in assessing this potentially important testimony.

Statement validity analysis and fact pattern analysis performed by the second author suggested that the accounts of Jim Ragsdale do not contain the features of memory reports for true experienced events and are therefore not credible. In particular, this assessment argues that they are characterized by an insufficiency of detail and a paucity of descriptions regarding interactions between Ragsdale and his companion. Some aspects of his statements contained signs of credibility, but this is to be expected in well-prepared or frequently recalled memory reports for fabricated events. Moreover, the fact pattern analysis revealed purported weaknesses in Ragsdale's version of the alleged incident including a major contradiction and possible implausible details regarding his own actions. Whereas these possible implausible details are debatable, they are not the foundation of the Fact Pattern Analysis. Accordingly, we suggest that two most likely possibilities are that Ragsdale fabricated the event or that he sincerely recalls an experience which never occurred, *i.e.,* a "false memory" (see *e.g.,* Johnson, *et al.,* 1988). Both of these possibilities deserve discussion.

Deliberate Fabrication?

Stanton Friedman, among others, have stated that Ragsdale was rational and believable during his interviews, but Friedman (1996) and Korff (1997) correctly noted that details in his story changed significantly from what was reported originally to Randle and Schmitt (1994). As reported by Sheaffer (1997), some have charged that Ragsdale changed the location of the alleged crash site to make it easier for tourists to visit. Still other researchers hold the opinion that some of the details in his story are plausible in places and questionable in others. Many proponents of the Ragsdale account balk at the notion that Ragsdale would lie to his family on his deathbed. For her part, Ragsdale's daughter said, "I know my father was a man who would never lie. He hated lies and deceit" *(The Jim Ragsdale Story: A Closer Look at the Roswell Incident, 1996,* p. 25). Was there a motive for fraud? Nelson (1996) reported that neither Ragsdale nor his daughter were paid for their story. However, Stover (1997) proposed that Ragsdale fabricated the story as a legacy to his grandchildren, who will receive a share of the profits from the booklet and videotape (Nelson, 1996). The present authors do not feel there is ample evidence to support the hypothesis of fraud by Ragsdale or his family. Instead, a common theme that emerges from the interviewers' statements is that Ragsdale appeared sincere in his statements. Therefore, if our analysis is valid, the question arises how witness sincerity and fictitious content can co-exist. This conflict may be more apparent than real as we will discuss next.

False Memories?

Accounts can be sincerely reported and accompanied by genuine psychological incidents, and yet still be spurious. For instance, Lawson (1977) compared fictional accounts of encounters with extraterrestrials given by hypnotized subjects with minimal interest and knowledge of UFO experience with reports by those who claimed genuine encounters. Due to the proper suggestions, the two types of reports showed a close correspondence in both their broad outline and minute details. Moreover, it has been shown by Meheust (1978) that many alleged encounters with extraterrestrial beings replicate in detail incidents which can be found in science fiction stories, often from another country and another era. These studies, coupled with the fact that many "anomalous entities" appear and behave in stylistic or symbolic manners (Evans, 1986; Rhine, 1961), suggest the possibility that individuals can fabricate narratives of imagined experience in greater detail than that for which conscious knowledge would seem to account (see also Dingwall, 1967). Further, such psychological experiences can be triggered by the perception of purely natural or man-made phenomena *(e.g.,* Derr & Persinger, 1989; Evans, 1986; Houran, 1997). For example, in *The Jim Ragsdale Story: A Closer Look at the Roswell Incident,* Ragsdale's daughter related that her father told her about a plane that crashed in the mountain area where they used to go on picnics — the same area that was later identified by Ragsdale as the UFO crash site. Stover (1997, p. 87) suggested that as Ragsdale's health deteriorated, he perhaps began confusing the "Roswell spaceship crash" with this alleged plane crash.

Conclusion

SVA and fact pattern analysis by the second author suggested that "The Jim Ragsdale Story" is not credible. We argue, therefore, that the story represents either a deliberate fabrication or false memories of imagined experience. Since direct evidence for either of these two alternate hypotheses is lacking, it can never be known conclusively if deliberate fabrication or false memories were involved in the formation of the Ragsdale accounts. Nevertheless, we argue that Ragsdale's story does not clarify the events of July 4, 1947. Rather, we find ourselves in agreement with UFO researcher, Karl T. Pflock who stated, "…the Jim Ragsdale story, as interesting and entertaining as it is, remains just that, an interesting and entertaining story…" (as cited in *The Jim Ragsdale Story: A Closer Look at the Roswell Incident,* 1996, p. 30). In addition, the authors suggest that methods such as SVA may provide a means of screening for reliable accounts in existing databases, especially when the witnesses are deceased and corroborative evidence is lacking. On a more general level, we hope this article inspires others to apply SVA to reports of other types of anomalous phenomena as well.

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Appendix

Narratives from The Jim Ragsdale Story: A Closer Look at the Roswell Incident.

A. *Conversational Account* (pp. 2-4):

"Since it was the Fourth of July weekend, I had several days off work. I was working driving a truck, transporting heavy equipment for a gas line. My girlfriend was from Las Cruces, and I lived in Carlsbad. We decided to go to the perfect place near Boy Scout Mountain in a campsite where we would have solitude. We went up Pine Lodge Road and turned onto a gravel road heading toward the campsite. We went where there is a picnic grounds and we had access to water. I parked my pickup behind a clump of trees, got the quilts out and put them in the back of my pickup, and we started drinking beer and making out.

"We were lying in the back of my pickup truck, buck naked, drinking beer, and having a good ole time when about 11:30 the night of July 4, 1947, all hell broke loose. From the northwest, there was a big flash, an intense, bright explosion, and then, shortly thereafter, with a noise like thunder, this thing came plowing through the trees, shearing off the tops, and then stopped between two huge rocks. It was propped up against one rock. It was about twenty feet around. As it was approaching, huge streams like fire were coming out from behind. After the impact, silence.

"The damn thing stopped about sixty yards from the pickup, and we thought at first it was going to hit us. After the impact, we were scared, but curious. We went down to the crash of this disc-like thing. There was a hole in one side about four feet wide and two feet high. There was junk scattered around the disc, and we picked some of it up. I looked inside the hole, and inside, there was a chair that looked like a throne. It looked like it was made of rubies and diamonds.

"There were other little chairs — four or five and a lot of instruments on a panel. There were also the little people, four of them. They looked like midgets, about four feet long. Their skin, if it was skin, was sort of gray and when I touched one of them, it felt like a wet snake. How on earth did this thing fly, I wondered. All around the bottom of the capsule were little wheels that had more wheels. I figured these had to have something to do with how it maneuvered and flew. The captain's chair was something else. It was beautiful.

"Several hours later, we went back to see the disc in daylight. Shortly afterwards, my girlfriend and I heard a siren and trucks coming. We picked up some of the trash around the crash, and headed back to our campsite. The campsite was in a secluded area and we watched as many military vehicles pulled up to the crash. We decided to get the hell out of there.

"Several days later, I went to the Blue Moon. That was a popular tavern back then. We showed some of the debris to some of my buddies. They are all dead now. My girlfriend went back to Las Cruces and took some of the material with her. She died in an alleged car accident pretty soon after, and the crash stuff was never found. My house was broken into, and the only things that the thieves stole was a pistol and all of the debris I had picked up at the crash. From that time until today, I was afraid; afraid for the safety of my family, knowing that many had been threatened by officials in the military."

Affidavit

MY NAME IS JIM RAGSDALE, FORMERLY OF 702 NORTH GREENWOOD, ROSWELL, N.M. AND I AM MAKING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO CLARIFY ANY AND ALL PORTIONS OF MY INVOLVEMENT IN THE UFO INCIDENT OCCURING IN 1947. EVERYTHING CONTAINED HEREIN IS THE RESULT OF MY PERSONAL OBSERVATION AND NOT FROM ANY SECONDARY SOURCE.

AT THAT DATE I WAS EMPLOYED BY AN OIL CO, LIVING IN CARLSBAD, N. M. AND MY TYPE OF WORK WAS TRANSIT HAULING, OPERATING ALL TYPES OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT RELATED TO OIL FIELD DEVELOPMENT. OVER THE LONG JULY 4TH WEEKEND, I HAD 7 OR 8 DAYS THAT I DID NOT REPORT FOR WORK. IT WAS ON THIS WEEKEND, MY FRIEND AND I SPENT SEVERAL DAYS IN THE PINE LODGE AREA, WEST OF ROSWELL.

AT THAT TIME THE PINE LODGE WAS A FAVORITE SPOT FOR ALL OF THE AREA RANCHERS AND OTHERS FROM ALL OVER SOUTHEAST NEW MEXICO, FOR THEY ALWAYS HAD A DANCE ON SATURDAY NIGHTS DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. I HAD BEEN AT PINE LODGE ON MANY OCCASIONS DURING THE TIME BEFORE 1947.

MY FRIEND AND I HAD A PICKUP TRUCK ON THIS WEEKEND, SLEEPING IN THE BACK, WITH COVERS AND A TARPAULIN (TARP) COVERING THE BACK OF THE TRUCK. IT WAS ABOUT 11:00 PM, THE WEATHER WAS PERFECT, AND WE WERE LOOKING UP AT THE STARS. A STORM WAS IN THE WEST, WITH LIGHTNING, BUT FAR AWAY ENOUGH WE COULDN'T HEAR THE THUNDER.

SUDDENLY, A TREMENDOUS FLASH OCCURED, SEVERAL MILES TO THE NORTH, WITH IT BEING AS BRIGHT AS A FLAME FROM A WELDER'S ARC. IT WAS HUGE, BUT FAR ENOUGH AWAY WE COULDN'T HEAR IT IMMEDIATELY. THEN THE OBJECT STARTED IN OUR DIRECTION AND SOON WE COULD HEAR THE NOISE IT WAS MAKING. THE ONLY WAY TO COMPARE THE NOISE IT WAS MAKING COMING OUR DIRECTION, AND UNTIL IT HIT THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN, WAS IT WAS LIKE THE SOUND OF A JET MOTOR NOW USED ON TAKE OFFS BY LARGE JET AIR LINERS. WE WERE FRIGHTENED AND DIDN'T KNOW IF IT WOULD MISS US. THE OBJECT PASSED THROUGH THE TREES NOT MORE THAN 60 YARDS FROM OUR TRUCK, AND STRUCK THE MOUNTAIN AT A POINT A FEW YARDS FARTHER FROM WHERE WE WERE IN THE TRUCK.

AFTER A LITTLE BIT WE TOOK FLASHLIGHTS AND WENT TO THE SITE OF THE IMPACT AND SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME LOOKING ALL AROUND.

THE CRAFT SPLIT OPEN ON IMPACT AND HAD STRUCK LARGE BOULDERS IN THE AREA SOME AS LARGE AS AN AUTOMOBILE. THE CRAFT HAD SLID DOWN BETWEEN BOULDERS OF THIS SIZE, BUT WAS EASILY APPROACHED. WHEN WE LOOKED INTO THE CRAFT, WE SAW FOUR BODIES OF A TYPE WE HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE, AND ALL WERE DEAD. THE INTERIOR OF THE CRAFT HAD THE EQUIVALENT OF A DASH BOARD WITH VARIOUS INSTRUMENTS AND WRITING OF SOME SORT I HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE OR SINCE.

IN ADDITION TO THE WRECKAGE ON THE INSIDE OF THE CRAFT, THERE WAS LOTS OF MATERIAL OF THE TYPE REPORTED ON THE SITE OF THE "CRASH" NEAR CORONA. THIS MATERIAL WAS ON THE OUTSIDE AND SCATTERED ALL OVER THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN, DESCRIBED LATER AS WEATHER BALLON MATERIAL.

10

Fig. 1a. Copy of Jim Ragsdales' Original Affidavit (p. 10).

Affidavit

THE BODIES OF THE OCCUPANTS WERE ALL ABOUT FOUR FEET OR LESS TALL, WITH STRANGE LOOKING ARMS, LEGS AND FINGERS. THEY WERE DRESSED IN A SILVER TYPE UNIFORM AND WEARING A TIGHT HELMET OF SOME TYPE. THIS IS POSITIVE BECAUSE I TRIED TO REMOVE ONE OF THE HELMETS, BUT WAS UNABLE TO DO SO. THEIR EYES WERE LARGE, OVAL IN SHAPE, AND DID NOT RESEMBLE ANYTHING OF A HUMAN NATURE.

WE DECIDED TO RETURN TO OUR PICKUP UNTIL DAYLIGHT SO WE COULD BETTER SEE THE SITE, HOWEVER THERE WAS VERY LITTLE SLEEP UNTIL IT WAS DAYLIGHT. WHEN WE RETURNED WE FILLED TWO LARGE GUNNY SACKS WITH THE MATERIAL, AND IT WAS WITH US WHEN WE LEFT THE SITE.

DURING THE EARLY DAYLIGHT HOURS WE INSPECTED THE MATERIAL USED IN THE CRAFT AND THE PIECES RESULTING FROM THE CRASH. IT WASN'T A RIGID METAL, BUT EVEN THOUGH BEING THICK WAS FLEXIBLE UP TO A POINT. YOU COULD BEND IT AND IT WOULD COME RIGHT BACK TO IT'S ORIGINAL SHAPE. THIS WAS ALSO TRUE OF THE LIGHTER MATERIAL SCATTERED ALL OVER THE MOUNTAIN THAT LOOKED LIKE TIN FOIL AND WOULD GO BACK TO IT'S ORIGINAL SHAPE WHEN CRUMPLED IN YOUR HAND. THE MATERIAL OF THE CRAFT ITSELF HAD A SORT OF BRONZE-GRAY COLOR. THERE WERE NO RIVITES, SEAMS OR INDICATION OF HOW IT HAD BEEN CONSTRUCTED. THE CRAFT WAS ABOUT 20' IN DIAMETER + HAD A DOME IN THE MIDDLE. NO WINDOWS WERE SEEN.

IT WASN'T TOO LONG AFTER WE WERE LOOKING AT THE TOTAL AREA, WE HEARD WHAT WE BELIEVED WAS TRUCKS AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT COMING OUR WAY, SO WE LEFT AND WERE NOT THERE WHEN WHAT EVER IT WAS ARRIVED.

THIS MATERIAL WAS WITH US LATER IN THE DAY WHEN WE STOPPED AT THE BLUE MOON TAVERN, JUST SOUTH OF ROSWELL, A FAVORITE PLACE FOR TRUCKERS GOING THROUGH THE AREA AND I SHOWED THE MATERIAL TO SEVERAL OF MY FRIENDS. HOWEVER, AS FAR AS I KNOW, ALL OF THEM ARE DEAD.

UNEXPLAINED TO THIS DAY IS THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE MATERIAL. MY FRIEND HAD SOME IN HER VEHICLE WHEN SHE WAS KILLED HITTING A BRIDGE, AND IT WAS GONE WHEN THE WRECKAGE WAS BROUGH IN TO TOWN. MY TRUCK AND TRAILER WAS STOLEN FROM MY HOME, AGAIN WITH MATERIAL IN THE TRUCK, NEVER TO BE HEARD FROM ANYWHERE. MY HOME WAS BROKEN INTO, COMPLETELY RANSACKED, AND ALL THAT WAS TAKEN WAS THE MATERIAL, A GUN AND VERY LITTLE ELSE OF VALUE.

THE IMPACT SITE IS EXACT AND CAN BE DESCRIBED AS: A SIGN POST ON THE PINE LODGE ROAD INDICATES "53 MILES TO ROSWELL". NEAR THIS SIGN IS A ROAD GOING SOUTH TOWARD PINE LODGE (THE LODGE BUILDING WAS BURNED DOWN SEVERAL YEARS AGO) AND THE TURN OFF TO ARABELLA LEADS EAST AND SOUTH. 2 OR 3 MILES DOWN THIS ROAD TOWARDS ARABELLA IS THE SITE OF OUR PICKUP THAT NIGHT AND NEARBY THE IMPACT SITE. THIS AREA IS NEAR THE MOUNTAIN INDICATED AS "BOY SCOUT MOUNTAIN."

James R Ragsdale
JAMES R. RAGSDALE

State of Oklahoma
County of Logan

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 15th day of April, 1995.

Heeby Weaver
Notary Public

My commission expires 12-8-98

Fig. 1b. Copy of Jim Ragsdales' Original Affidavit (p. 11).