

The Passport to Magonia Ends at Trinity

By Donald R. Schmitt c. 2021

The very last time I had dinner with Dr. J. Allen Hynek was at one of his favorite restaurants in Evanston, Illinois. Hynek, the consummate astronomer that he always was, wrestled often with the insurmountable problem accepting the very conception of physical objects traveling from point A to B in space.

Which is why his surprising remark stays with me to this day: “Don, it’s [the UFO phenomenon] smacking more and more of nuts and bolts,” conceded the aging scientist. Just a few years before in a popular magazine article he made the following comment, “There is so much nuts-and-bolts evidence. How do you explain things [UFOs] you can see on radar? How do you explain imprints on the ground? How do you explain something that comes along and tears off the tops of trees? How do you explain bullets ricocheting off whatever was in the sky?” From the chief skeptic at the U.S. Air Force Project Blue Book, which led him to an unapologetic acceptance of the UFO phenomenon, and lastly, accepting one colleague in particular be damned, that some UFOs may indeed represent someone else’s physical hardware.

The question remains: What would cause a highly respected academic so deeply rooted in rational methodology to think beyond his rigid comfort zone? More directly, as an “old man in a hurry” as he often lamented, Hynek realized that the human question of “how” no longer applied. The reality of the situation left him with no other conclusion – near inconceivable distances withstanding. A physical phenomenon of advanced intelligence was directly interacting with our planet and its inhabitants.

Such a revelation in most scientific arenas would be applauded as one of the greatest discoveries in the history of humankind, yet to one of Hynek's staunchest supporters and admirers, Dr. Jacques Vallee fell from grace with his quip, "I will be disappointed if they [UFOs] turn out to be nothing more than advanced spacecraft." It has become quite evident that unlike Hynek, who with the true mind of a curious scientist following the evidence, Vallee, like Carl Sagan, was not only searching to prove preconceived theories, he was also guilty of crossing into other's scientific disciplines simply to encompass an academic consensus. That would be the very definition of a pseudoscientist to whom I would proffer the wise words of Sherlock Holmes: It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts."

When Vallee, the former director of the Paris Observatory, broke away from mainstream ufology with his most controversial book *Passport to Magonia* (1969), the French scholar took on the role of a folklorist in an attempt to look at the enigma for antecedents in different cultures and fiction. The word "Magonia" closely means "magicland," and as Vallee stated his enlightened theory, "the modern, global belief in flying saucers and their occupants is identical to an earlier belief in the fairy-faith." For those not reticent to outright accept the extraterrestrial hypothesis, this was a breath of fresh air. Vallee, still accepting the reality of the phenomenon, was now attempting to redesign the wheel – UFOs have always been here, they exist on a separate plane all around us, and they only interact within our dimensional existence on rare occasions. He effectively was tossing out the entire "nuts-and-bolts" scenario and found that new generations of UFO wannabe researchers were ready to follow. The problem would be

that Vallee, had no idea where he was leading, but strangely, deep down, was still chasing physical windmills like Don Quixote.

While Vallee is generally regarded as a free-thinking futurist who is willing to mix UFOs in the same blender as religion, demons, angels, ghosts, fairies, and psychic phenomenon as a whole, he has a solid history of seeking out the very physical proof which apparently he publicly castigates. The “heretic among heretics” as he has labeled himself, is no stranger to field investigation and has displayed considerable passion in his detailing of mostly-obscure physical-trace cases involving UFOs. The scientist recounts his efforts to have such “fragments” analyzed and acknowledges the obstacles associated with such research:

“The public, the military, and most scientists assume that if an alien craft happened to pose for the perfect photograph or simply dropped some metal residue on the White House lawn it would be a straightforward matter to take this evidence to a state-of-the-art laboratory where it would be analyzed once and for all. My own experience with a number of such cases provides a radically different picture. While we know what to expect when we analyze a piece of a satellite or a meteorite, or when we reverse-engineer a technical device, we do not enjoy such luxury in the case of the suspected UFO sample. Laboratory analyst – literally – does not know where to start. The choices of investigative technique branch out to infinity, and there is little to guide the initial goals. We do not even know what is significant: is it the presence of a particular element, or its absence, or its combination with others?’ Personally, I would suggest not tipping off the lab that the sample is anything exotic. We require that three separate tests verify the same results and allow the analysis demonstrate non-terrestrial, if present, patterns. Vallee is correct about

the lack of commonalities of that which to search for, as he has suggested that, “There may be as many as 30 specimens in the United States alone,” without going into specifics.

The irony remains that when I personally invited Vallee to participate in one of our archaeological projects at the Roswell debris/crash sites he expressed zero interest. Ditto for the entire Roswell investigation which portends to provide the greatest opportunity for physical proof of the existence of hardware manufactured off the planet than all UFO events combined. Amusing to me was when Vallee suggested to stage a fake-find of a crash artifact at the dig for the sole purpose of “luring someone” out using the phony find as bait. My immediate response was to turn down the misguided plan citing the possibility that someone “might get hurt” over an orchestrated prank. To his credit Vallee did agree that it was a “silly suggestion.”

It was in the late summer of 1997 that I had just completed a Roswell presentation in Ventura, California, just north of Los Angeles. I was introduced to a man who described that he was witness to the crash in 1947 but added that it was on “The Plains,” which I assumed to be the Plains of San Agustin. The late Stanton Friedman was still promoting a separate crash incident in that general vicinity, but for our part, had thoroughly dismissed anything UFO-related happening in that region in the year of concern. I did take down his name and contact information and stored it in my witness-lead folder.

A couple of years would pass and during one of our frequent phone conversations, Friedman mentioned the same potential witness. The story was the same and our mutual reaction was that it was an interesting story and little more.

By the next year my research partner Tom Carey was following up on phone exchanges with that same individual...but this time he claimed he had in his possession

an actual remnant from the crashed ship. At our request the witness quickly sent color photos of what clearly was a machined piece of metal which looked strangely familiar from all of our research trips to New Mexico. Where have I seen this before? I kept asking myself and the answer finally hit me while looking at pictures from the very ranch where the entire Roswell saga began. No, it wasn't a photo of actual crash debris...or that of a weather balloon. There it was in plain sight and there was no doubt what it was.

This year, 2021, came the release of the long-awaited book by Paola Harris, written by Harris, nevertheless, co-authored with the scientist who had originally authored the paper for the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, "Five Arguments Against the Extraterrestrial Origin of UFO's" The subject of this paper who has done more to prove that UFOs were not "nuts and bolts" physical craft was now investigating an alleged crash and officially endorsing it. Dr. Jacques Vallee had now entered the fray of UFO crash retrieval incidents and what amazes this writer to no end, it remains a case that we had proven to be a hoax almost 25 years ago.

Trinity: The Best Kept Secret by Dr. Jacques Vallee and Paola Harris is the tale of two boys who as adults claimed to witness a crash of a huge object, witness the occupants, only later to observe the bumbling efforts of the military in their attempts to gather up the evidence. Vallee accepts the story as genuine and goes to great lengths to defend the testimony of the then children and that in general young people are not known to embellish and rely strictly on detail and not fantasy. Santa Claus and Mother Goose will be relieved to know that their secrets are safe with Vallee.

Nonetheless, this is not a tale from children but rather grown men who have been influenced and contaminated by years of exposure to the one documented case where a crash of a craft of unknown origin did take place – Roswell.

The book falsely claims three witnesses, whereas only Reme Baca and Jose Padilla were alive at the time of the alleged crash. The third, Sabrina Padillo was just born that year and it wasn't until she was 15 in the year 1960 that she was taken to “inspect” the site. How this would qualify her as a witness is no different then Reme first telling me the story after my Roswell lecture he attended.

We begin in the summer of 1945 with Reme and Jose performing their ranch chores, just outside of San Antonio, New Mexico, which is just south of Socorro. All at once the ground began to rumble and they are drawn to a loud noise. For the sake of brevity, as the reader can easily find all of the aforementioned comparisons in previously published accounts, I will simply indicate the word “Roswell” whenever the Trinity story “borrows” from the 1947 event. They soon observe a rising cloud of dust and smoke and on the ground below an approximately 300 foot-long gouge. (Roswell). Debris is scattered all along the course of the furrow (Roswell) and the material resembles foil from a pack of cigarettes (Roswell) and some of the pieces appear to possess memory-like abilities. (Roswell). Next, the two observe three beings, moving erratically as if to be in different phases of teleportation. They are described as having “bulging eyes, spindly arms, light gray skin, body-tight coveralls, and about four-feet in height. (Roswell). What becomes a direct plagiarism of a Roswell witness is the use of the term “Jerusalem Cricket” as was used by Frankie Rowe, when Reme and Jose describe the appearance of

the beings. No other witness has ever used that term before Rowe beginning in 1990 when she was interviewed for the first time. It is presented in *Trinity* as though original.

As nighttime approached to two boys returned home and reported the incident to Jose's father Faustino and told him about the *Hombrecitos*, "little men." He was evidently hardly impressed with their amazing story as none of them ventured back until two days later... but this time with a state police officer, Eddie Apodaca.

When they arrived at the scene of the crash, neither the ship, the bodies, not even a shred of debris could be found. But then, "as if by magic," the object, alone, reappeared. The fearless men next crawled into the gash in the side of the craft, (Roswell) and Faustino warned the boys not to tell anyone as the government calls these sorts of things "weather balloons." (Roswell). Again, the search party returned home.

Two days later, in a most bizarre turn of events, the Army arrived but first asked for permission to clean up the crash site. And while both Reme and Jose were allowed to casually observe the Army take charge of the situation, the scenario they claimed to view was more like a scene from a "B" comedy movie. The story goes that the soldiers "burned" the crash debris and what wasn't destroyed was "buried." At one point, the military totally vacates the scene to go have lunch at another location. And if that all wasn't unbelievable enough, the craft was hoisted onto a flatbed truck and then left unattended...overnight! As one would predict, the boys returned with no one guarding and took a piece from inside the alien ship. The Army soldiers, just home from the War, must have considered all of this rather routine and took absolutely no special precautions in the supposed recovery of an alien spaceship. One could surmise that back in 1945 if you've recovered one spaceship, all the allure and excitement must have faded. This is

what totally shocked me about Vallee's lack of knowledge in military prodigal. I know he knows better so why did he ignore it?

We are then asked to believe that none of the family talked about the incident for the next 50 years at which time Reme approached a number of UFO researchers with a crash story which happened on the Plains and in July, 1947. It was abundantly clear that he became immersed in the subject, read books about the Roswell Incident, and attended my lecture on the subject when we were introduced. He even had me sign a copy of a Roswell book. He sought me out as well as Friedman and then my partner Carey. No one was impressed or interested in the least because of all of the irrational elements of the account. To us it was science fiction. In one last attempt to entice us Reme provided photographs of the part from the alien ship they had recovered when the Army left to go sleep for the night. To the novice it may look strange but we had seen it before... and not at Roswell. Quite simply it was a flange from a rotor-blade on a windmill. The final straw was when Carey recorded Reme asking how he could "make money" off of the story. Carey suggested writing a novel.

Much to the credit of Vallee and Harris, they do acknowledge there are no press accounts, no press releases, no documentation such as diaries, logs, or photographs, no military witnesses, no deathbed confessions... and absolutely no physical evidence. Certainly, if the military was that cavalier about disposing and collecting the remains of the crash, something should have been left behind. Ask any crash investigator. This is precisely why we have to date had five archaeological digs at the Roswell debris/crash site and with positive results. Geologist Frank Kimbler who has literally spent days combing the actual Roswell site has discovered numerous artifacts substantiating the

crash. Whereas, the time spent at the San Antonio crash location described in Trinity, according to Kimbler, “There is absolutely no evidence that anything crashed there, left wreckage of even the minutest form. The case is a crude hoax at best. It was later suggested that there was computer circuitry on the windmill replacement part. Pure fantasy.”

How convenient that today the crash location is within a “flood-plain” and there would be little chance of salvaging the required physical proof. As a more sinister deterrent, Vallee claims that government-types deliberately planted noxious weeds at the crash site to dispel his efforts. In reality, a simple test by a botanist demonstrated that the plant life was totally indigenous to the area – Jimson Weed. Nevertheless, where are the attempts to track down additional witnesses, especially uniformed soldiers and their superior officers? Unlike Roswell, there is no effort to bring in state-of-the-art equipment to scan the area in search of “buried treasure.” Aerial subterranean radar would certainly be a viable solution – if the story had any chance of being true. We are constantly reminded that the evidence is still there but just out of reach. That doesn’t get the job done.

So the ultimate question remains: Why would a world-famous computer scientist and internet pioneer, heavily influenced like myself by non-other than Hynek... one of the most highly respected UFO scholars who became a maverick by embracing the UFO inter-dimensional hypothesis, now endorse a fraudulent tale told by highly contaminated witnesses... one of which was asking how to profit from his fantasy (We have him on tape). Just as Hynek feeling the pressure as an “old man in a hurry,” Vallee is now even older. His 50-year mission to prove UFOs were more closely linked to psychic phenomenon has fallen short and he apparently has returned to his roots. Even as much as

Hynek was forced to concede the physical properties of the paradox, Vallee is now searching over what he may hope is still fertile territory. But alas, like the fictional character Don Quixote, Jacque Vallee's windmill (flange) is still manufactured on earth.