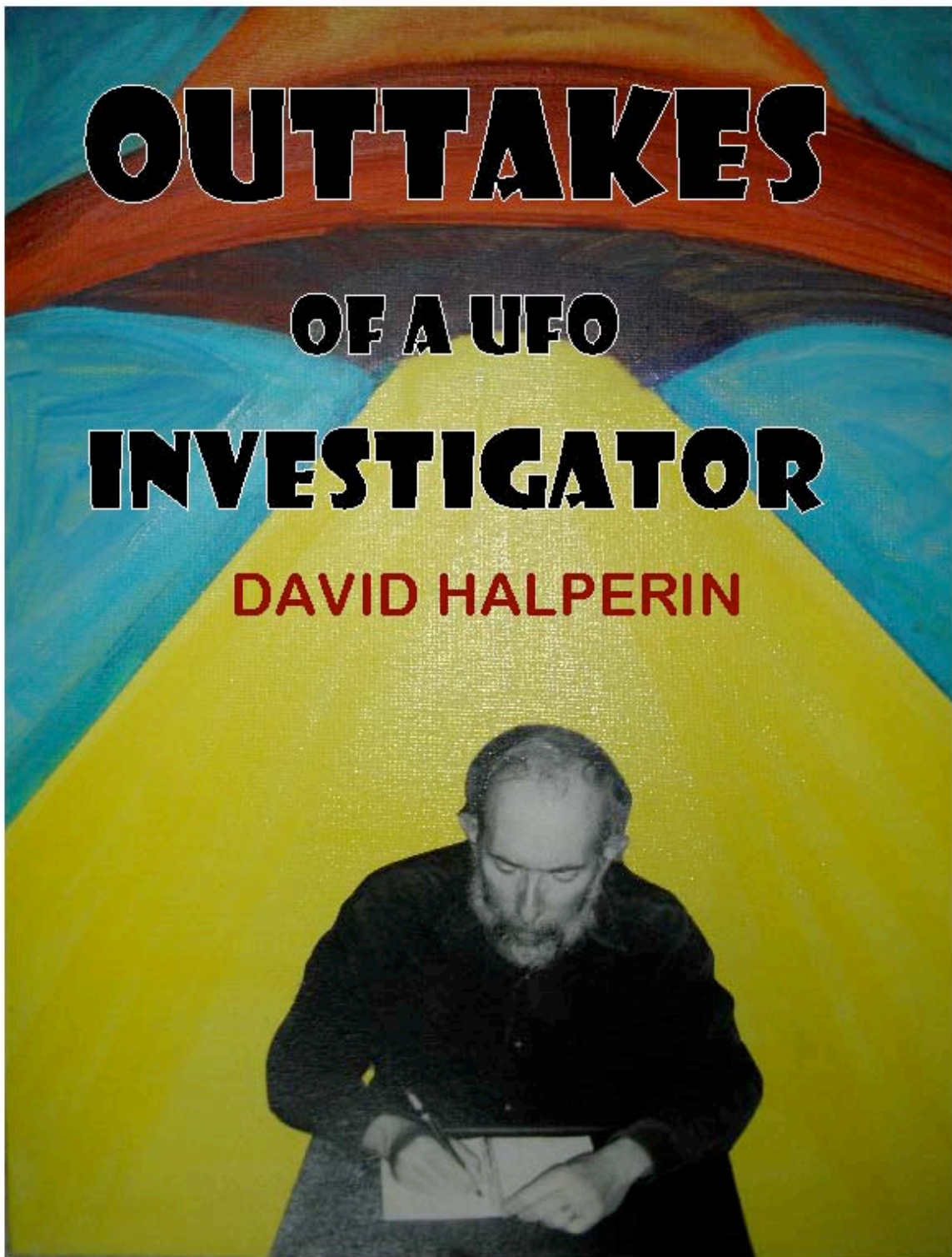


OUTTAKES

OF A UFO

INVESTIGATOR

DAVID HALPERIN



Chapter 2: Alien Landing

APRIL-MAY 1965

1.

By the time he reached the last months of tenth grade, Danny Shapiro had begun to live for the mail.

His mother noticed that he came home from school each day sunk in thought, hardly speaking to her except to ask the moment he walked into the house, "Any mail today?"

He might be happy if there was a letter or two for him, mostly from the teen-age boys in distant towns with whom he exchanged long letters discussing UFO sightings and the three men in black and what he called the "Allende mystery" — something about an invisible ship and three gypsies and a mysterious annotated book. When no letter came, he looked dejected.

Anna tried to coax a smile from him but got nowhere. This annoyed and even embarrassed her. She'd been assuring her husband for years now that Danny's perpetual state of un-smiling-ness was temporary, that as he became a teenager he'd get over it. Nothing of the sort had happened. If anything, it had gotten worse. Leon was continually irritated at this, blaming it on the cloud of gloom Anna and her illness had diffused throughout the house. This was obviously unfair. No one could have tried harder to be cheerful than she had. So she concealed her irritation under a smile even brighter than before, and said:

"Anything the matter?"

"Nothing."

What could he have said? That he was hopelessly in love with a shiksa who refused to give him the time of day? His mother would probably assure him this was OK, things were better this way, there would not be the heartbreak down the road. He didn't need a lecture from her about how interdating and intermarriage posed a danger to Judaism. He knew it well enough. Months ago he'd read the books in the Bible that told how Ezra and Nehemiah had made the Jewish men divorce their Gentile wives, because intermarriage was a sin against God. Obviously Ezra and Nehemiah had done the right thing.

"Any mail today?" Danny asked as he stepped through the door.

"Tons of it," said Anna, smiling her broadest smile.

Danny lit up. He'd actually been having a pretty good day even before this. The weather had decided to turn nice, after what seemed like weeks of being cold and blustery even though it was almost the end of April. His clogged sinuses felt like they might begin to dry up and heal in the new warmth. In English class he had been asked to read aloud a short story he had written for the class, and it had kept the kids in stitches. And now there was plenty of mail for him. Perhaps today was the day things would begin to turn around.

"Daddy got a letter too," said Anna. "*A mysterious letter.* Maybe you can figure out what it might be about."

"Let's see it," said Danny, mildly curious. Anna handed him a small envelope with the name and address of Mr. Leon Shapiro typed very neatly in the center. It was postmarked somewhere in Long Island, April 24, 1965. That was Saturday, three days ago. No return address.

Danny switched on the light above the sink and held the letter up to it. But the envelope was made of thick, good quality paper, and he could see nothing of what was inside. He tried to think what other clues one could find on a sealed envelope but came up with nothing. He shrugged and handed the letter back to his mother, who laughed.

He was slightly puzzled. He hadn't said or done anything that was funny, had he?

His own mail consisted of four letters, the largest number he'd ever received on a single day. Although he saw at once that one of them was a piece of junk, the sight of so much mail addressed to *Mr. Daniel Shapiro* made his heart lift with pleasure and anticipation. There was a crisp envelope, imprinted with the words OFFICIAL BUSINESS, which had the Department of the Air Force in Washington as its return address. A letter from Lawrence, Kansas, obviously from Mark Ferris; and another one from Gainesville, Florida, just as obviously from Anson Cole. And a colorful junk-mail envelope from The Mind Explorers, with a boldly printed note beside the address, **This may be your last chance to EXPAND YOUR MIND POWERS!!!**

Danny hesitated for just a moment before writing RETURN TO SENDER on the outside of the letter from The Mind Explorers. He took a kitchen knife from the drawer and slit open the OFFICIAL BUSINESS from the Air Force. As expected: one more official denial of a string of radar sightings over Philadelphia, which

Danny knew for a fact to have taken place. In the next envelope, two pages of Anson Cole's lunacy about the green, white and red "hovering UFOs" that Cole, a bachelor in his fifties, saw every clear night over his home in Gainesville. Only recently had it dawned on Danny, who for months had been begging Cole to rig up a photographic telescope to get good pictures of the "hovering UFOs," that they were really stars seen through cheap binoculars.

Which left Mark Ferris's letter — meaty, articulate, and this time eight single-spaced pages long. Danny was in the middle of reading it when he realized his mother was watching him hungrily, her smile still fixed on her face.

"Well," Anna said. "What's old Mark got to say for himself?"

Not much, Danny wanted to tell her. But, given that the letter was eight pages long, this was obviously not true. "He's writing about the Allende mystery," he said. "He thinks Basil Richard may have a copy of the Varo edition of *The Case for the UFO*."

Anna looked bewildered. Danny tried to explain. "That's the mimeograph edition the Navy had made up. Of the book the gypsies sent them in 1955. You know, *The Case for the UFO* by M.K. Jessup. With all their marginal annotations. The gypsies' annotations, I mean."

"Uh-huh," said Anna. "Well, that's interesting, I guess." She paused, and her smile turned just a little bit sly. "Actually, Danny, I think *I've* got some UFO news for you."

"UFO news?" He stared at his mother as if this was the first time he was seeing her. "What?"

"I was talking with your grandmother this morning. Over the phone."

"Uh-huh?"

"She said there was a piece in yesterday's *Trenton Times*, that she thought maybe you might be interested in."

"Uh-huh?"

"Seems like one of your UFOs landed in New Jersey, just last weekend."

"Landed? In New Jersey? Where?"

"Take it *easy*," Anna laughed. "You don't have to get so excited. It was down in good old Scofield. You remember Scofield. You were there."

"I was? When?"

"Back when you were little, and you and Daddy and I used to go on drives. All over South Jersey. There was a pretty lake, not far from Scofield. We stayed in a motel there, and we all went out on a rowboat on the lake. We took slides of the lake. You used to love to look at those slides."

"I don't remember any of that," said Danny, annoyed. Though actually he did have some dim recollection of the slides. They'd project them onto the wall, and he'd run up to the wall and touch the image of the blue water and wonder why it wasn't wet, and everybody would laugh.

"Tsss!" said Anna. That hiss of hers, her way of showing mild amusement, as if to say, *Much you know.*"

"But when did it happen?" said Danny, eager to get back to the real issue. "The landing, I mean. And who saw it, and what did they see?"

"I told you, it was last weekend. No, I don't remember which day it was. And I don't know the details, either. I just heard it from Grandma. You're the one who's the great UFO investigator, not Grandma. She just thinks of you and notices things you might be interested in. She said something about two boys saw a red glow landing in the woods, and the next day they found a big hole and tripod marks. I phoned Daddy at his office. He said he'd stop by Grandma's on his way home and pick the paper up for you. That's pretty nice of him, don't you think?"

2.

Anna handed Leon the mysterious letter, the one from Long Island with no return address, as soon as he walked through the door. He hadn't even taken off his hat, hadn't put down his briefcase. She sat down again in her rocker, smiling, gazing at Leon expectantly. Danny, who had come running from his typewriter, stood by smiling. The aroma of the paprika chicken that was their dinner filled the small kitchen. "How was work today, Dad?" said Danny.

"Not bad, not bad," said Leon. He slid the letter, unopened, into his briefcase, and pulled out yesterday's *Trenton Times*. "How's *me bai-i-i*?" he said. "Got something for you, *me bai-i-i*."

Danny wanted more than anything to start hunting through the *Times* for the news from Scofield, but patience seemed the wiser course. Leon had been nice enough to pick up the paper for him; he didn't need to be reminded that Danny

wanted it because it had something in it about UFOs. There would be time enough to read the article after dinner, when Leon was doing something else.

"You're almost as tall as me now, *me bai-i-i*," said Leon. He squeezed Danny's upper arm. "And you got nice hard muscles! They're working you out in phys ed, are they?"

"We're learning to climb ropes," said Danny. He enjoyed the rope climbing. It was the only thing in phys ed that he did enjoy.

Anna laughed, relieved at Leon's good mood.

"The mailman brought something real exciting today," she said as they sat down to eat. "For Danny. From his friend Mark Ferris."

"Mark Ferris?" said Leon. "Is he that kid out in Kansas?"

"Uh-huh," said Danny.

"The one who writes you those Ph.D. theses for letters?"

"Uh-huh."

"He's in tenth grade, like you?"

"Eleventh."

"What kind of a family does he come from?"

"What do you mean?" Danny asked.

"I mean, like what do his parents do? What does his father do for a living?"

"I don't know," said Danny.

"Does he have any brothers or sisters?"

"I don't know," said Danny.

"Does he go out with girls?"

"I don't know," said Danny. "I don't think he does."

"He doesn't talk much about himself in those letters of his, does he?"

"No," said Danny, "I don't guess he does."

"So then what the hell do you and he write to each other about, in your ten-page letters?"

"UFOs," said Danny.

Leon cracked a chicken bone between his teeth and stared sullenly at his plate for what seemed a very long time. The mood had soured, and neither Danny nor Anna knew what to do to retrieve it.

3.

Danny had phys ed the next day. As he waited in line to use the parallel bars, which he hated, he took care to stand next to Jack Bingham.

Jack was a tall, fair-haired, good-natured boy with a fine resonant voice, who wanted to be an actor. He was often the one who read the morning's announcements over the school PA system, even though he was only a tenth grader. What was more to the point, he worked afternoons at WKLR, Kellerfield's own radio station.

"Did you hear?" Danny said to him. "There was a UFO landing last Friday. At Scofield, New Jersey. That's about twenty miles outside Philly, to the south."

"No!" said Jack. "You don't say."

"I'm going down to Scofield this weekend," said Danny. "To investigate."

"Well, now, that *is* exciting," said Jack. "Just watch yourself, Danny. We don't want any little men to get you."

"I was wondering," said Danny. "Would you be able to write a letter for me? On WKLR stationery, I mean. Saying that I'm a representative of the station, that I'm doing the investigation for WKLR."

"Oh, my," said Jack. He laughed nervously. "Well, what the heck. Let's give it the old college try. Anything to chase those flying saucers. Down to the last cup and saucer, right, Danny?"

"Right," said Danny.

That was Wednesday. On Thursday, Danny waylaid Jack after his morning geometry class. Jack said that he had written the letter, but he had forgotten to bring it to school. He would bring it tomorrow, he said.

Danny phoned Jack on Thursday evening, to remind him.

On Friday, Jack had the letter. *TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The bearer of this letter, Mr. Daniel Shapiro, is a representative of the WKLR Radio News team. It would be appreciated if you would extend complete press privileges to our reporter in covering the Scofield UFO landing.* And Jack had signed it.

4.

The bus pulled to the curb. The driver yanked the door open. "Last stop, Scofield!"

Danny stepped down to the sidewalk and looked around. Downtown Scofield, he saw, was bleak and unwelcoming under the thick gray sky. Although it was the first of May, the weather had again turned cloudy and cold; Danny wore a flannel shirt, heavy pants, and a tan raincoat. He looked at his watch. 11:43 already. These buses, you can spend the whole day riding back and forth on them.

Where does one begin to investigate a UFO landing?

In the luncheonette on the corner, where he had a cup of coffee and a hamburger, the lady at the cash register directed him to the town library. There he could find the past week's copies of the local paper, which he imagined would give fuller and more accurate accounts of the landing than the garbled story in the *Trenton Times*.

Which it did. And quoted Jerome Bauman, Scofield chief of police, as saying that they thought a hoax unlikely and were continuing to investigate. Danny put on his raincoat and inquired his way to the police station.

He looked at the sky. He wished he'd brought an umbrella.

He reached the station at just the right time. Chief Bauman had just got back from lunch. Danny pulled his WKLR credentials out of his pocket and showed them to the young policeman who sat at the desk by the entrance. "Down the hall, first door to the left," said the policeman. "Just go on in."

The chief was a burly man who looked to be about forty, with a blond crew cut. For some reason Danny couldn't imagine, he was wearing dark glasses. Danny showed him the letter from WKRL Radio. Bauman glanced at it and handed it back. He reached into his breast pocket and produced a pack of cigarettes.

"Smoke?" he said, tapping the bottom of the pack.

"No thanks," said Danny. He tried, successfully, to hide his surprise. He'd never been offered a cigarette by anybody, much less a grownup. He sat down in a chair across the desk from the chief and opened the small, dark blue notebook he'd brought with him on the investigation, along with his Brownie box camera.

Bauman replaced the cigarettes, not taking one for himself. "They're saying now it's a hoax," he said.

"Who're saying that?"

"Couple professors. One of them from the University of Pennsylvania. The other from some place in New Jersey – what was it? – Rutgers. Come down here with three fellas from the Air Force. They go out to the hole Thursday, all of them together, stand for five minutes looking at it. Ten minutes at most. Then they go back to the Air Force base. Three hours later I get a phone call. 'Chief Bauman'" – here Bauman began speaking in a falsetto – " 'Chief Bauman, we've determined that hole of yours, the UFO was supposed to have made it, is really a hoax.' I ask them just how the hell they determined it. 'You'll have to phone Rutgers,' they tell me. I ask them, 'Who do I have to talk to in Rutgers?' I'm on the phone the next five minutes while they're shuffling papers trying to figure out who the damn expert is who can tell me why they think it's a hoax. Then the line goes dead."

Standard cover-up, Danny thought. The chief laughed bitterly. Danny laughed too.

"Isn't as if there was still anything to see there Thursday," Bauman said. "Newspapers printed the story on Monday. By Thursday we had *three thousand people* here to look at the hole. The holes, really; there's four of them. People from all over New Jersey. Parts of Pennsylvania, too. If I didn't know better I'd of thought they were bringing in tourist excursion buses from Philly."

"And they trampled all over everything?"

The chief nodded. "Curiosity seekers," said Danny. He wondered, with some annoyance, why Bauman hadn't had the area roped off as soon as the landing was reported. Now the curiosity seekers had probably managed to destroy whatever physical evidence there'd been.

"You been out there yet?" said the chief.

"Not yet. I wanted to talk to you first."

"Uh-huh," said the chief. "Well, it's really too bad. You're not gonna see what you would have seen if you'd been out here when we first found them. Like the big hole, the one in the middle. It was absolutely, perfectly circular. I've never seen a hole dug like that in my life."

Danny tried to keep his eyes on Bauman's face while scribbling this into his notebook.

"And those other holes, the tripod holes. *They were not dug.* I tried to tell this to those Air Force people, but they were too busy to listen. They were *pressed* into the ground. The leaves were flattened at the bottom of them. Whatever did it must have come down with *tremendous* force. You won't see that any more. Too many people been poking round the holes. But you got to go out there anyway. Got your car with you?"

"Uh, no," said Danny.

"That's OK. I'll have Smitty drive you out there. Here now, take a look at this."

Bauman pulled a piece of paper out of a folder and pushed it across the desk to Danny. Danny felt his heart pound with excitement as he looked at it. The diagram, drawn by a policeman named Stuart Hauck, showed a perfectly circular hole, its diameter labeled as 2' 4", located at the center of a regular triangle of three smaller holes. The distances from each of the tripod holes to the others, and to the central hole, had been neatly marked. Each side of the triangle was about twenty-five feet. The tripod, and whatever had rested on it, must have been enormous.

"Mind if I copy this?" said Danny.

"Don't bother. I'll do it for you."

The chief took the paper to a large machine that stood in the corner. He lifted a metallic lid, inserted the paper beneath it, and pressed a button. A brilliant light shone beneath the lid, and a motor whirred loudly. Of course; a photocopy machine. Danny had heard of them. This was the first he'd ever seen.

The photocopy the chief handed him was still damp, and had a strong acrid smell. Danny carefully folded it and inserted it into a pocket in the back of his notebook. "Thank you," he said. "*Very much.*"

"Don't mention it. Got anything else you want to ask, or should I give Smitty a holler?"

"Just this," said Danny. "Have the witnesses come forward yet?"

"Nope," said Bauman. "We have appeals out for them to come forward; so far no luck. All we have to go on is the description Frank Crenshaw's two boys gave. The kids were fishing out at Curley's Lake Saturday afternoon. These two young fellas come up to them, real excited. Say they saw something glowing red, landed in the woods about dusk on Friday. Say they've come back to see if it left any marks, and it did. In a clearing in the woods, they said. And they want the boys to come into the woods with them and look at the marks."

"Curley's Lake?" Danny said. This was not in the newspaper accounts.

"George Curley owns the property. About sixty acres, most of it woods. There's a lake on it. He lets the kids fish there weekends." The chief lowered his voice. "And, Mister – Mister –"

"Shapiro."

"Mister Shapiro. I got to tell you, Frank wasn't too comfortable with that business of his two boys going into the woods with those two young fellas. He questioned his boys about, did they do anything with them, besides show them the holes in the woods, you know what I mean. He questioned them *real* carefully. And so did I."

"Uh-huh," said Danny. He couldn't quite read the expression on the chief's face, and was afraid he'd done something to offend him.

"But there was *no* funny business. Frank and I are both sure of that. They saw a UFO land, saw the marks it made, wanted the Crenshaw boys to see the marks too. Then the young fellas left, and the Crenshaw boys went running for their Dad."

"And the young men were – ?" There was an odd detail in the newspaper story, which now came back to Danny.

"Barefoot. The reporter got it right. They were dressed OK otherwise, but they were barefoot. You got some idea what they were doing barefoot, Shapiro, you tell me. We can't figure it out. Wasn't that the day was so pretty. It was damn cold, for April." The chief paused, looked at his watch. "Damn if it isn't almost three o'clock. Let's get Smitty, have him drive you out there. *Smitty!* Got a fella here, needs a lift."

5.

Danny rode in the patrol car with Smitty, a husky young cop with freckles and a shock of blond hair. They drove out beyond city limits, where Scofield's Main Street became a narrow country road. Smitty slowed and then stopped. Two cars were parked on the right shoulder, barely off the road. Danny could see a trail leading into the woods, with a large NO TRESPASSING sign posted on a tree where the trail began.

"Don't pay no attention to that sign," Smitty told him. "Mr. Curley doesn't mind people on his land. There's been three thousand out to the clearing since the UFO landed there. The chief musta told you that. Beats me why he even bothers to put the sign up."

Danny thanked him and began to walk down the trail. The rain began, at first just a drizzle, but getting heavier by the minute. He tucked his camera inside his raincoat to protect it. He passed two teenage girls walking in the opposite direction. They were holding a newspaper over their heads to keep themselves dry, and giggling. When they saw Danny they said to him, "Are you a space scientist?"

"No, I'm not," he said. They kept on walking.

By the time he reached the clearing his glasses were too wet for him to see very well. He fished out his handkerchief and dried them, which worked OK. But it was clear he'd have to repeat the operation every couple of minutes.

Curley's Lake was visible through the trees, a few hundred feet away. When the chief mentioned it, Danny had vaguely wondered if there might by any chance be a motel by the lake where they rented rowboats. But there was no motel here, and Danny couldn't see any sign of a rowboat. There was, however, a water storage tank by the lake. A teen-age boy and girl, who'd obviously come out to have a look at the holes, had taken refuge beneath it from the rain.

Danny located the central crater easily, and, with a little more difficulty, the three tripod holes. Just as Bauman had said: the curiosity seekers had managed to erase whatever of UFOlogical interest there might once have been. All that was left were four nondescript holes, one fairly big and the other three smaller.

And the tree. Danny noticed it as soon as he had stepped into the clearing. It was within the triangle formed by the tripod holes, not far from the crater. Obviously the sassafras tree mentioned in the newspaper accounts.

The reporters had been right. The tree had been partly uprooted, three of its branches partly broken by some force from above, so that they drooped down toward the crater. The end of the longest branch lay on the ground only about five feet from the crater, its leaves brown and wilted.

The rain hadn't eased. If anything, it was getting worse. Danny looked toward the water storage tank and wondered if he should take shelter with the teen-age couple. Better not. They'd been necking there under the tank, and were now starting to kiss.

He pulled out his camera and began to take pictures – of the holes, of the sassafras tree from different angles, and, stepping back as far as he could without actually going into the woods, of the entire clearing. One or two shots of the lake might be useful too, but he didn't want the couple under the water tank to think he was photographing them. Afterward he would have to measure the holes and record the measurements in his notebook. Ideally, he should measure the distances between the holes as well, to make sure Stuart Hauck had got them right in his diagram. But he couldn't quite see how he could do that without someone else there to hold one end of the tape measure for him. And it would be a trick and a half to write down the figures without the whole notebook getting soaked.

“Would you like to share an umbrella?”

Danny looked up and saw a large handsome dark-haired woman in her forties, wearing a blue raincoat and holding a huge umbrella over her head. She was standing and calling to him from the entrance to the clearing, about twenty feet away.

“There's plenty of room under here,” she said. “Bob and the girls will be along in a minute, and they'll have umbrellas too.”

“No, that's all right,” said Danny. He walked over to the woman but didn't step under her umbrella. “I'm already about as soaked as I'm going to get.”

“Yes, I can see that,” the woman said. “We live out on the other side of Scofield, weren't able to come out and see the holes till this afternoon. And what a day we picked for it, too. I'm Elaine Jameson, by the way.”

“I'm Danny Shapiro.”

“Danny Shapiro.” She paused for a moment, as if trying to recognize the name. “Are you from around here, Danny?”

"No, I'm from Kellerfield. Pennsylvania. That's up across the river from Trenton."

"Gracious. You've come quite a ways. You must be very interested in this kind of thing."

"Oh, I am," said Danny. "I'm doing an investigation for PURA. That's the Pennsylvania UFO Research Association. Whenever there's an important UFO sighting, or a landing even, we try to get whichever of our members lives closest to the place to go there and investigate. And I guess I was the closest."

"*Poora?*" said Mrs. Jameson. "Oh, of course. *Pee-you-ar-ay*. Pennsylvania UFO Research Association. How stupid of me."

"It confuses a lot of people," Danny assured her. "A lot of people think that *pee-you-ar-ay* is how we ought to pronounce it." He didn't add that this was a subject of considerable controversy among the PURA membership, or that there was a third faction that thought the group ought to change its name to PUFORA, pronounced *poo-FORE-ah*. Danny himself thought the whole argument was ridiculous. Let people call the group whatever they wanted, as long as they went out and did the research.

"*There they are,*" said Mrs. Jameson. Three figures emerged into the clearing, struggling with several umbrellas and a mass of photographic equipment. "Everybody, this is Danny Shapiro. He's down from Pennsylvania, investigating the hole for the Pennsylvania – the Pennsylvania UFO Investigators. Danny, this is my husband, Bob Jameson. And these are our daughters. Melanie's the one with the kerchief. And this is Christie, our youngest."

"Sorry we can't quite shake hands," said Melanie. She looked to be in her twenties, and was wearing a heavy raincoat in addition to the kerchief. Christie seemed to be more Danny's age. Chilly as it was, she wore only a light windbreaker. And shorts. Rather shortish shorts, if truth be told.

Danny nodded to each of the Jamesons. He realized with irritation that he'd forgotten to mention he was also investigating the landing for WKLR Radio News. He couldn't say that now; it would sound lame if he did.

"Got some weather for your investigation, haven't you, Dan?" said Mr. Jameson, setting up the tripod. "I could hardly believe it this morning when I turned the calendar to May. But April's been pretty awful too, hasn't it?"

"Last week it seemed to be getting better," said Danny.

"And now here it is May and it's winter again." Mr. Jameson screwed the camera onto the tripod. "Well, now, Dan, what do you think we ought to photograph here?"

"I'm afraid there's no longer much to see in the holes themselves," said Danny. "It was different a week ago, I'm told. But with all the people that have been through here —"

"Yes, indeed," said Mr. Jameson. "*Five thousand* people tramping through this one clearing, can you imagine that? And this rain isn't helping matters, is it?"

"As far as I'm concerned," said Danny, "the most interesting thing is the sassafras tree. With the broken branches." He pointed to it.

"Oh, *yes*," said Mr. Jameson, gazing at it. "The UFO broke the branches when it came down here, didn't it? That's what they say, anyway."

"Charred the leaves, too," said Danny.

"They say it had something like a corkscrew on the bottom," said Melanie. "Like what they use to dig for oil. That's how it made the big hole. It was after a soil sample, or something like that."

"I think that's very probable," said Danny.

"Frank Crenshaw thinks they wanted a soil sample *and* a water sample. That's why they picked a spot so close to the lake, so they could get both at the same time. That's what Frank told me yesterday. Make sense to you, Dan?"

"I think so," Danny said carefully. He tried to think of any precedents for the UFO beings landing to collect water samples. "There was a case back in 1953, at Brush Creek, California. The witness saw a little man with a pail, taking water from the creek. The sources for the incident may not be entirely reliable, though," he added.

"Wow," said Christie. "You really know your stuff, don't you?"

"Frank Crenshaw?" said Danny. "Is he the father of the two boys? Who met the men who said they'd seen the UFO?"

"That's him," said Mr. Jameson. "Quite a fellow, that Frank. You need to talk to him, get his angle on all this."

"I was planning to phone him, after I'd seen the landing site."

"Why don't you come to our house," said Mr. Jameson. "After we're done taking pictures. You can phone him from there. Or better, I'll phone him, introduce you, put you on the line. Otherwise Sally might be the one who picks up the phone. She'd probably hang up on you. She's been prickly with strangers, since all this happened. She's not letting *anybody* talk to the kids."

"I can understand that," Danny said.

"Your car is the brown DeSoto, isn't that right? We're parked right behind it. We'll drive slowly, you can follow us."

"Well, actually, Mr. Jameson, I don't have a car."

"I know you don't, Dan. Most teen-agers don't. Your Dad's car, I meant."

"No, what I mean is I didn't drive here. I don't drive yet. I'm still in tenth grade. Next year's the year I get my license."

"You're lucky," said Christie. "I wish *we* lived in Pennsylvania. I'm already in eleventh grade and I *still* don't drive. In New Jersey they won't let you get your learner's permit till you're seventeen."

"So I have one more year of sleeping soundly," said Mrs. Jameson.

"How did you get out here, then?" said Mr. Jameson.

"I took the bus into Scofield, from Philly. The police gave me a ride out here."

Mr. Jameson looked impressed, as far as Danny could tell through his rain-streaked glasses. "Bob," said Mrs. Jameson. "Why don't we take the pictures and get ourselves packed up? This poor boy is so soaked we'll have to wring him out and hang him up to dry."

"OK," said Mr. Jameson. "We're going to need people in the pictures, to give some idea of the scale. Christie, Melanie, why don't the two of you stand next to the hole?"

"Just *stand* there, Dad?" said Christie.

"They could be measuring it," Danny suggested.

"I'm afraid we didn't think to bring a tape measure," said Mrs. Jameson.

"I have a tape measure," said Danny.

So the two girls crouched by the central crater, one on either side, and stretched Danny's tape measure across it. Their father photographed them in that position. So did Danny. The girls did not smile for the camera, or pretend to be anything other than two young women squatting on sandy dirt in a cold pouring rain, measuring a vaguely circular hole in a clearing in a New Jersey woods that had been left by an extraterrestrial vehicle in search of soil samples. Christie's firm, shapely legs, bare to the thigh, shone in the rain. They were the only bright spot in Danny's view finder. He snapped the photo.

"Twenty-nine inches!" Christie sang out.

Danny recorded the measurement in his notebook, bending over it to shield it from the rain. He heard the click and whirr of Mr. Jameson's camera.

"Took a picture of you writing in your notebook, Dan," he said. "Hope you don't mind."

"My turn now, I suppose," said Mrs. Jameson. "Oh dear." She stood beside the sassafras tree, holding her umbrella with one hand while gesturing awkwardly with the other toward the spot where the limbs had been broken. The camera again clicked and whirred.

"What else should we get?" said Mr. Jameson.

Danny suggested they photograph the shore of Curley's Lake, with the water storage tank somewhere in the picture. The teen-age lovers were no longer beneath it. They'd presumably figured out the rain wasn't going to let up any time soon, and they might as well get soaked now as later.

When they were done they disassembled the equipment, and Danny helped them carry it to their station wagon and pack it into the back. They all climbed into the car. Danny sat by the right window in the back seat as they rode. Christie sat between him and Melanie.

6.

"Shoes off, everybody!" Mrs. Jameson called out as the five of them sloshed their way in through the front door. "Socks too! Slippers are on the floor by the grandfather clock. Danny, we'll find a pair for you."

"Mom has this thing about tracking in dirt," Christie whispered to him.

Danny could see why. The floor of the Jameson home was creamy wall-to-wall carpeting from the vestibule onward, as far as the eye could see. All of their shoes, and their socks as well, were soaked and muddy. Even getting his shoelaces untied was a trick.

The moment her shoes were off, Mrs. Jameson vanished down the hallway. Danny heard an oven door open and close, smelled a trace of some marvelous aroma. A minute or two later she was back.

"You'll stay and have supper with us, won't you, Danny?" she said. "There's plenty."

"Oh, it would be wonderful," said Danny. "But I don't think I can." He pulled out his notebook. "The last bus for Philadelphia leaves at 6:45. And, actually, I told my parents I'd take the 5:30 bus out of Scofield. That'd get me home about 8:30. And if I didn't leave here till 6:45—" He turned to the next page, where he'd copied the schedule of the Saturday evening buses from Philadelphia to Kellerfield.

"Why don't you give your folks a call?" said Mr. Jameson. "See if they mind you being late. It won't be any trouble to get you onto the 6:45 bus, after we've had dinner. I can drive you to the bus stop on the Scofield-Castle Rock road. It's only five minutes from here."

"I've got a date tonight," Christie told him. "And we're going to a seven o'clock movie. So we've got to finish eating by 6:30 anyway. You'll catch your bus, no trouble."

"We'll go to the study right now," said Mr. Jameson. "You'll call your parents, see if it's OK with them. Then we'll see if we can't reach Frank Crenshaw."

Danny began to follow Mr. Jameson from the living room to his study. He was now confused as well as wet. The prospect of staying for dinner with the Jamesons, and particularly the Jameson girls, excited him. But he wasn't sure whether he ought to be doing it, or even whether he really wanted to. Or what Anna and Leon would think about it all.

"Wait a minute, Danny," said Mrs. Jameson.

He stopped and turned toward her.

"You're Jewish, aren't you?" she said.

"Yes. I am."

"Are there any foods you don't eat? I mean, that you aren't allowed to eat?"

"Well," he said, "I don't eat ham or pork. Or any kind of shellfish, like shrimp or anything. Otherwise it's all pretty much OK. There are other rules, but I don't follow them too strictly. I'm not all that orthodox."

"Oh dear," said Mrs. Jameson. "We're having pork roast, I'm afraid. And it's already in the oven. Bob, help me think this through."

So this is what pork smells like, Danny thought. The flesh that is unclean unto you because it cheweth not the cud, even though it does divide the hoof. He didn't know quite how he'd expected it to smell. But not like this.

"Here's what I think," said Mr. Jameson. "We'll let Danny take the 5:30 bus home tonight, so he won't have to bother his parents. Then he'll come back to Scofield next Saturday and have dinner with us then. Maybe we'll have Frank and Sally over in the afternoon. Frank'll tell you everything about the landing, Dan. There's nobody in Scofield knows more about it than he does. Sound good to you?"

"It sounds wonderful," said Danny. He was afraid only that he couldn't express how grateful he felt.

"There was a Jewish holiday a couple of weeks ago, wasn't there?" said Melanie. She'd changed into a clean skirt and sweater, and was now back in the living room. "I saw something about it in the Philadelphia paper. It was on a Friday, or was it a Saturday?"

"Passover," said Danny. "It started Friday night, two weeks ago."

"Yes, Passover," said Mr. Jameson. "That's when the Hebrew people all sacrificed lambs, wasn't it?"

"Uh-huh," said Danny. He was starting to feel uneasy with the turn the conversation had taken, and wished they could get back to talking about UFOs.

"They don't still sacrifice lambs nowadays, do they?" said Mr. Jameson.

"Dad!" said Christie. "Of course they don't sacrifice lambs." She said to Danny, "We had a unit on world religions in ninth grade. My group gave the report on Judaism. I think it's the most *interesting* religion."

"Well, Christie, I wish you'd tell us some of the things you learn in school," said Mr. Jameson. "Then I wouldn't have to embarrass you like this."

"You do a—a cedar something, don't you?" said Melanie. "It was in the newspaper."

"Cedar?" said Danny. "Oh, the Seder. It's like a kind of special holiday meal. Sort of like Thanksgiving. Except you eat special foods. And you drink four cups of wine. Only," he corrected, "most of the time you don't really drink all four cups. You just take sips from them."

"That's right," said Melanie. "I remember now. It was in the article. They said that Jewish people now drink red wine—"

Danny nodded.

"—but a long time ago you used to drink white wine, right? Because Christians would see you drinking the red wine, and think it was the blood of children you were drinking."

"No!" said Mr. Jameson.

"Is that true, Danny?" said Melanie.

Did she mean, is it true that Jews once drank white wine instead of red, because people used to mistakenly believe that the red wine they were drinking was the blood of Christian children? Or, is it true Jews really did drink children's blood? The former, probably; but Danny wasn't sure. He ransacked his knowledge of Jewish history, which now seemed to him so inadequate and fragmentary, for some answer that might serve both questions.

"Well," he said, "about the white wine, I don't really know about that. But I know that back in the Middle Ages they had a lot of superstitious beliefs about Jews. Like they had about witches. So just like they burned witches at the stake, sometimes they rioted against the Jews, because of all sorts of crazy impossible things the Jews were supposed to have done. And *that* part I know is true. So I guess whoever wrote the article probably had his facts right."

"Ignorance and prejudice will do terrible things," Mr. Jameson said loudly. "Ignorance, mostly. Dan's telling us about the Jewish Passover," he said to Mrs. Jameson, who had just appeared in the doorway, wearing her apron. "Very interesting indeed."

"You be sure to come back next week, Danny," said Mrs. Jameson. "I want to hear all about this."

The grandfather clock began to chime five. "Mr. Jameson," said Danny. "I wonder if we shouldn't try phoning Mr. Crenshaw. I'm going to have to catch my bus pretty soon."

"Yes, Dan, that's a good idea."

"I'm going upstairs," Christie announced. "And get ready."

For the second time, Mr. Jameson led the way to his study. Danny sat in a huge leather armchair while Mr. Jameson dialed the telephone.

"Sally?" he said. "Frank there? Oh. Oh, I see. Well, tell him I called, will you? No, no, nothing special. Just tell him I called." He replaced the receiver. "It's just as well," he said to Danny. "You wouldn't have had more than a few minutes to talk anyway. We'll try to arrange something for next week."

"Thank you," Danny said. "I really appreciate that."

Mr. Jameson walked over to a bookcase and contemplated it. One of the shelves seemed to hold ten or fifteen copies of the same paperback. At this distance, Danny couldn't make out what it was.

"Dan," said Mr. Jameson. "I don't suppose you're much interested in politics? I'm sure your schoolwork and your UFO investigations keep you too busy for anything else."

"Most of the time, I guess that's true. I did get pretty interested last fall, though, during the election."

Mr. Jameson nodded. "Of course. That's natural. And which candidate do you think you might have voted for? If you were old enough to vote, that is. If you don't mind my asking."

"Johnson," said Danny. "I was involved with our school's Johnson campaign. We had a student election."

"Well, there's nothing to be ashamed of in that, Dan. You're in good company. A majority, it now appears. They've managed to fool a lot of people."

"Fool a lot of people?"

"Yes indeed," said Mr. Jameson, nodding again. "People in this country are sleepwalking. You, me, most of us. Most people have no idea what our government really is. It's time we all woke up, before it's too late to do anything."

"What our government really is?"

"That's about it." Mr. Jameson turned back to the bookshelf, pulled down one of the multiple paperbacks and handed it to Danny. "Might be worth your time to read this. It'll open your eyes *real fast*."

The book was entitled *None Dare Call It Treason*. Danny glanced, with growing horror, at the blurbs on its front and back covers, then at random pages inside it. Its argument seemed to be that the entire Federal government was on the verge of being taken over by Communists, if they didn't control it already. Chapter after chapter hammered away at this single point. Danny looked up at Mr. Jameson, expecting to see the crazed eyes of a right-wing fanatic. Yet Mr. Jameson didn't look particularly fanatical, any more than he had all afternoon. Earnest, indeed, but hardly fanatical.

"Well, thank you very much, Mr. Jameson," Danny said, hesitantly holding the book out to him. "I'm not sure that I'll have time to read it this week, though."

"I didn't expect you would. I know you're a very busy young man. Keep it. Read it this summer, or whenever you find time. It might save your life. Stop you from dying in Mr. Johnson's Vietnamese adventure."

"That's one thing I don't understand, Mr. Jameson. If everybody in the government is a Communist, then why are we sending troops to contain Communism in Vietnam? Why –?"

"Dan, Dan," said Mr. Jameson, shaking his head and smiling. "This is not the way you fight a war. You don't *contain* your enemy. You *beat* your enemy. You send in all the force you've got and you smash him. That's *if* you really want to beat him. We knew that during World War Two. You ask your Dad about that; he'll tell you. If back then we hadn't known that very simple fact, there'd be a swastika flying over the county courthouse in Scofield. Right this moment."

Danny stared at him. He knew there was a good reason why we couldn't simply smash the Vietnamese Communists with all the force we had, why we had to respond to their aggression with moderation and restraint. But he had not the smallest recollection of what that reason might be.

"*He's here!*" Christie yelled from upstairs. "Ted's here! Somebody get the door!"

"That's Ted Kraeling," Mr. Jameson told Danny. "He's the young man Christie's been dating." He looked at his watch. "We'd better get a move on, Dan. I just hope he didn't park behind the station wagon. Don't forget your book and your notebook."

Dan followed Mr. Jameson back down the hall. He glanced, through a doorway to his right, into the Jameson dining room. He saw with a pang that the table was set for five, obviously including this Ted Kraeling. Not including himself.

While he was struggling to get his wet shoes back on, he and Ted were introduced. They shook hands. "Pleased to meet you," said Ted. He was a tall, broad-shouldered boy with high cheekbones and a very powerful grip. He wore a blue sport coat, a white shirt, and a narrow dark tie. Danny felt ridiculous in his plaid flannel shirt. He couldn't remember why he'd chosen to wear this shirt to investigate the Scofield landing. He had difficulty remembering why he wore such shirts at all. Christie hadn't yet come downstairs.

It was still raining, though not as heavily as before. The bus stop wasn't sheltered, so Mr. Jameson insisted Danny stay in the car while they waited for the bus to arrive. A minute or two later its headlights appeared, tiny and distant down the long straight road.

"It was good meeting you, Dan," said Mr. Jameson, shaking his hand. "Do come back and see us next Saturday. See if your Dad won't let you borrow his car. It'll make everything a good deal easier."

"I don't drive yet, Mr. Jameson. I'm still in tenth grade."

"Yes, that's right. You told us that. It'll be all right then, Dan. We'll work around it."

"Thanks for everything. Thanks for contacting Mr. Crenshaw and arranging things with him. And thanks—thanks for the book."

"Read it," said Mr. Jameson. "Ponder it. Ignorance will do terrible things. Not only by action. By *in*action as well."

Danny nodded, though he wasn't sure just what he was assenting to.

A moment later he was climbing onto the bus.