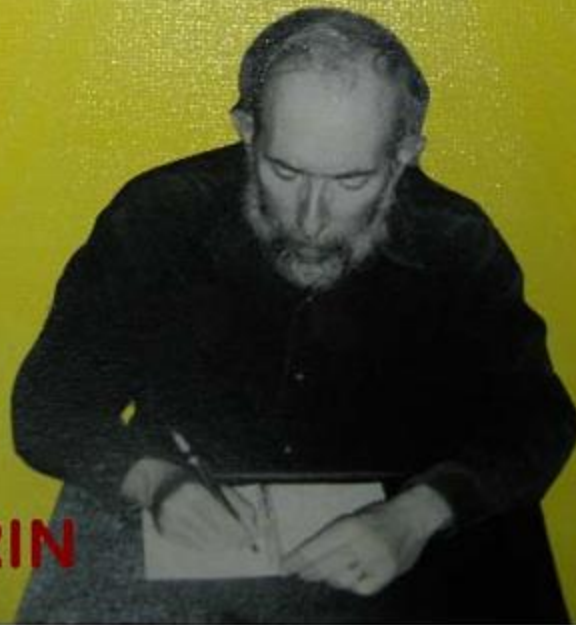


OUTTAKES

OF A UFO

INVESTIGATOR

**DAVID
HALPERIN**



Epilogue: 1969-1990

1.

Barney Hill, the black man who joined together that which custom had strictly divided, died on February 25, 1969. He died without knowing that his harrowing experience, of helpless and terrified captivity in the dead and deathly hours of the night, had buried itself like some alien seed in the soul of his nation. There it would lie for years, quietly germinating.

Some twenty years later, the seed would sprout. Scores, or perhaps hundreds, would begin to remember their own unwilling night journeys into alien craft. They would remember how they had been laid upon smooth white tables, their orifices violated by rods and needles. They had endured strange, pleasureless orgasms. They had begotten and borne children, only half human. The unremembered hung on relentlessly at the edges of their minds. It became their torment and their obsession.

A professor of history at Temple University in Philadelphia, and a distinguished professor of psychiatry at Harvard, were among those who understood that in all this testimony was a real and vital truth, and that attention must be paid. Yet in the end all of them – those who had suffered, those who remembered, those who believed – were dismissed and ridiculed and forgotten. For the truth is that rejection and ridicule are the essence of the UFO, and the three men in black are even more real and vastly more important than spaceships that crash in the New Mexico desert, or tortures by perverted dwarfs in underground caverns, or mysterious red lights that swell and then erupt upon the face of the moon, flooding the scarred and pock-marked surface with blood.

Barney Hill died of a stroke, five years almost to the day after hypnosis had brought him face to face with the enormity of what he'd endured. He was forty-six years old.

2.

Danny Shapiro didn't hear of Barney Hill's death, either then or afterward. By that time he no longer even tried to keep up with the UFO news. His passion for UFOs, his conviction that his destined task was to solve their mystery, had died away almost entirely by the end of his freshman year at Carthage.

His belief died more slowly. He couldn't have told you the morning when he first woke up and knew it wasn't true, the earth is not being visited by extraterrestrial spacecraft. Yet even after the passion was dead, after the belief was dead, there persisted a vague but powerful sense that there was *something*, somehow, important about UFOs. But he could never say just what that was.

Browsing in a bookstore one day in 1987, Danny came upon a book called *Communion*. The book was evidently a best-seller, and its cover was dominated by the enormous black eyes of the smooth, mask-like alien face that was soon to resurface everywhere, in advertisements and comic strips, and among the ghosts and goblins and witches each Hallowe'en. Danny thought: *This is something I have seen. This is something I have known. This is something I used to care about.* He even picked the book up, and started to flip through its pages. But almost at once he put it down again, and walked out of the store.

3.

Often through the years, especially on those occasions when business brought him to New York, Danny thought he ought to look up Basil Richard in the phone book and give him a call. He would apologize, tell Basil he now appreciated what a truly fine friend Basil had been, how very sorry he was that he'd treated him so shabbily. Perhaps he and Basil could now be friends. Perhaps they would sit together over drinks, two grown men together, and Basil would tell him all that had happened in UFOlogy, now that Danny had retired from the field.

But Danny never quite found the opportunity, or perhaps the courage. He never learned that it was too late, that it had been too late for a very long time. He

never knew that in the spring of 1971, just two weeks before Danny's graduation from Carthage University, Basil Richard had died of stomach cancer.

4.

Leon Shapiro also died of cancer, in the spring of 1990, when Danny was forty years old. He'd been sick for months. During those months, Danny had come to visit him several times, and gradually removed his remaining books and papers from the house where he'd grown up. Leon had suddenly decided not to leave the house to Danny after all, as he'd always told him he would, but rather to give it to his nephew Peter, his brother Mickey's son.

Leon explained to Danny his reasons for the decision. Danny didn't try to argue against the convoluted string of rationalizations. He didn't even listen to them very closely. He didn't want the Kellerfield house, and he was tired of listening to his father. He'd spent a weary lifetime listening to Leon, believing in Leon, trusting Leon.

After the funeral he went to the house for the last time, to take from it whatever he might want.

The shelves in his old bedroom were mostly empty now. There were suntan pants and flannel shirts, most of them checkered brown and a dull, ugly red, in the lower drawers of his dresser. Some of the shirts went back to Danny's high school years, but some were new, still encased in their plastic wrappers. Leon had stubbornly kept on buying shirts of this kind for him, long after he knew that Danny no longer liked them and would not wear them. He'd bought similar shirts for himself. Danny knew that the drawers in Leon's bedroom were filled with them.

The top drawer of Danny's dresser was empty. The UFO manuscript, which Danny had left untouched since returning from his trip to Israel, he'd already removed on an earlier visit. He'd thought briefly of throwing it away, but something inside him wouldn't let him do that.

Danny had wanted badly, when he took the manuscript from the drawer where it had lain so long, to sit down on his bed and cry. Back then, he could not do that. Leon, sick as he was, still clung to the aging house where for years he had lived alone. Gaunt and withered, he stalked from room to room with the last of his energy, keeping a suspicious eye on his son. It was as if he'd come to believe that somewhere in this house there was something precious—just what it might be, he didn't know, but it still might redeem his life if only he could find it. He must watch Danny carefully, lest Danny get to it first and take it away.

Danny drifted from one room to the next of the empty old house where his father had just died, saying his final goodbye to each one.

It wasn't me who was turned to stone when she died, he thought, marveling at how little had changed in twenty-four years. It wasn't me, the way I always thought. It was him.

I was in the deep freeze, the way you sometimes become when they've made you invisible. But when you're frozen you can thaw. It may take half a lifetime; but eventually you thaw.

You can begin to see.

You can begin to turn.

You begin to heal.

He stopped in his parents' bedroom just long enough to pull his mother's brown leather death-case down from the shelf where it had sat, undisturbed, for twenty-four years. The *Mom's sneaks* box sat beside it. He pitched both of them, unopened, into a trash bag.

That's enough, he thought. It's Peter's house now. Let him clean it up.

He went back into his own bedroom and threw the top drawer of his dresser wide open. He left it that way. Peter could close it if he wanted to.

By the door he stopped for a moment. He felt in his pocket, to reassure himself that his car keys were there. Leave them inside this house, and I'm sunk, he thought. I'll have to camp out on the sidewalk, till Peter gets here.

He left the key to the house in the house, and locked the door behind him. He got into his car and drove away.