



UFOs

An Insider's View of the Official
Quest for Evidence



ROY CRAIG

© 1995 Roy Craig

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

First edition 1995

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

The paper in this book meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, Z39.48-1984.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Craig, Roy, 1924–

UFOs: an insider's view of the official quest for evidence / by Roy
Craig.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-929398-94-7 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Unidentified flying objects. I. Title.

TL789.C686

1995

001.9'42—dc20

95-10882

CIP

All photographs in this book, except where otherwise noted, are used by
permission of Roy Craig.

Chapter 2

His Chest Was Burned

UFO reports are most frequently descriptions of strange lights in the distance. They are interpreted in various ways by observers, but they seldom leave any markings or evidence to reveal their presence or their nature—no calling cards. As Colorado Project investigators, we were most interested in studying cases which involved “calling cards”—something which was left for us to analyze and evaluate, and present to the world as authentic evidence of whatever was indicated.

In late May, a reporter for the *Winnipeg Free Press* telephoned us to inform us of a UFO sighting which might be of special interest. A fifty-year-old mechanic, doing some weekend prospecting alone in the Canadian woods, had reported seeing two domed saucer-shaped flying craft which traveled at fantastic speed. One of them had landed near him and, after watching it for more than a half hour, the prospector approached near enough

to touch the saucer. When he did so, it began rotating and vanished quickly over the horizon. At the beginning of its rotation, a blast of hot gases had struck the prospector, who was standing near a patterned exhaust area of the craft. It left him with a rather severe burn on his chest and a scorched pattern on his shirt and undershirt. It also made him violently ill. He was, at the time of the phone call, sick in bed and unable to go back to the site where he encountered the UFO.

This report contained the most detailed description of a flying saucer I had yet heard. It was a craft about thirty-five feet long and eight feet high with a three foot protrusion on top, displaying the rainbow-colored appearance of hot stainless steel. Before it cooled, it was surrounded by a red glow. A bright violet light beamed out of a door-like opening which closed before the craft departed. No welding, bolts, or joints were apparent on the craft.

The prospector also reported hearing a loud hissing sound, like air rushing in and out of the opening, and human-like voices from within the craft. He had tried to talk with the people he assumed to be inside as he approached the craft, addressing them in English, Russian, Polish, German, and Italian. (A Polish immigrant, he claimed to speak 5 languages.) The only response was closure of the doorway and departure of the craft.

It wasn't the description of the craft that interested us so much as the apparent possibility that a project representative could be with the first party to revisit the site of the claimed encounter. The primary question was, "Is there any evidence to verify that the man actually had such an experience"? Unless one could establish the event as factual, details of the description, fascinating as they may be, were meaningless, for study of individual fantasy does not produce evidence regarding a physical reality. If a saucer landing site did exist, with physical evidence there to identify it, we wished to examine it before other

human beings obscured or destroyed the evidence. We also wished to be present the first time the site was revisited to reduce the probability the "evidence", such as landing marks, burned areas, or material deposition, would be created by human beings who intended to deceive others.

In this case there were also the burns on the weekend prospector's chest. They, reportedly, were real. Was the experience described also real? There might be some evidence, remote in the Canadian woods at the site where the flying saucer reportedly landed, which could help us answer that question.

For reasons I could only guess at, the decision was made that if anyone representing the Colorado Project were to go tramping through the Canadian woods looking for a UFO landing site, it was to be me. We were in the middle of final examinations at the University, however, and I simply could not get away to chase UFOs until my students' exam papers were scored and their term grades submitted to the records office. That seemed to be no disadvantage, however, for the burned man had not yet recovered from his illness sufficiently to attempt to guide a search party back to the region of his experience, and there was no chance of locating the site of that experience unless he described exactly where it was or led us to it.

As the days went by, news of this UFO encounter spread across the country. *Life* magazine wanted to send a reporter and photographer along if the Colorado Project sent an investigator to Winnipeg. We didn't know yet whether a trip would seem warranted. The staff kept informed of developments through an occasional phone call.

After several more days, we obtained a tentative commitment that the burned witness, now nearly recovered from his illness, would lead a search party to the region of his encounter. This commitment was obtained through Mr. Thompson, a Winnipeg civilian UFO enthusiast who had gained the burned

man's confidence. I could see the end of the exam papers by then, and agreed to catch a Friday afternoon plane for Winnipeg. The search party was expected to leave on Saturday.

Changing planes In Minneapolis, I boarded the flight to cross the Canadian border. Two fellow passengers on the same flight were carrying boxes bearing "photographic equipment" and "*Life* magazine" labels. I assumed their mission was closely related to mine, for I had been told that a *Life* reporter had phoned the project office again after my trip was scheduled, learned of our plans, and indicated he would join our search.

As far as I was concerned, my business was to seek information and evidence about unidentified flying objects. Reporters were welcome to conduct their business however and wherever they saw fit, and I would communicate freely with them as long as their business didn't interfere with mine. At this point, however, I saw no reason to identify myself to *Life* representatives, for I chose to avoid the undesirable implications which could develop if we arrived in Winnipeg together.

As I started for a cab stand at the Winnipeg International Airport, I looked back to see the *Life* photographer arguing with a Canadian customs agent. From the nature of the gestures, I assumed there was some question about importation of his camera. I also assumed I would see this man and his companion again soon.

During the long cab ride to my hotel, which was on the outskirts of the city, I listened to the friendly, talkative driver. He told me of the numerous sightings of unidentified flying objects around Winnipeg. I was particularly interested as he told me, "One guy got burned. He's still in the hospital. The thing left a foul odor on him—his wife can't stand the smell of him even yet. That happened a week ago."

I knew that the event he referred to had happened two weeks previously, not one, and that the burned fellow has been sick at

home, not in a hospital. Such inaccuracies were of no particular consequence. However, I was interested in observing the manner in which UFO stories were accepted and developed by the public, so I continued to ask questions and listen to the responses. The cab driver never suspected the nature of my mission. He was a willing source of information when he thought he was relating local news to a passing tourist. I did not disturb his assumptions.

I had hardly finished unpacking my suitcase at the hotel when the *Life* reporter telephoned. I agreed to talk with him at a set time later that evening, for Mr. Thompson was already on the way to my hotel to review the case of interest and arrange plans for the search for the UFO landing site.

Mr. Thompson informed me that the UFO witness, whom I shall call Mr. Zellinski, had developed a rash near the burned area on his chest and had an appointment to see the doctor about it the next morning. He was certain the rash was a result of his exposure to the UFO blast. He was reluctant to lead a search for the landing site in any case, saying he wasn't sure his health would permit it. An item in the newspaper revealed that Mr. Zellinski had already made an unsuccessful search for the site the previous day, mostly by helicopter, in cooperation with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Mr. Thompson had arranged for Mr. Z to see me on Saturday afternoon, after his appointment with the doctor. He hoped we could convince Z to lead us on another effort to find the landing site. By this time, the *Life* representatives were included in all plans, and it appeared that both Mr. Thompson and Mr. Zellinski anticipated some financial benefit from a *Life* article.

Since I had some free time Saturday morning, I phoned the *Free Press* reporter who had originally notified us of the reported UFO encounter. He came to my hotel to give me his version of

the original story and what he knew of subsequent developments. He was delighted to get an exclusive interview with me, although I told him I knew, as yet, nothing more about the UFO case than such people as he had told me. His response, which constituted the beginning of my initiation into the public relations aspect of being an "official" UFO investigator, was, "Your coming to town is news!"

The *Free Press* reporter was an impressive man of about thirty-two, with a neatly trimmed heavy red beard. He was intelligent and independent in his thinking. Although we quickly covered what he then knew of the total UFO situation around Winnipeg, present and past, we talked for a couple of hours. We spoke "off the record", after his agreement not to print anything I said about anything other than UFOs, since that was my sole business here.

As we chatted, this red-bearded citizen of the world revealed his effective method of teaching languages to his children. At home, the family spoke nothing but German, which was his original native tongue. English was spoken at school. The family television set was tuned only to French stations. Thus, his children had naturally become trilingual.

I was admiring this man's system of education as he left my hotel with his story. Apparently he was right when he said my coming to town was news. The Saturday edition of the newspaper was already made up when he left my hotel, and the *Free Press* did not print on Sunday. When the Monday edition hit the street, however, it carried a front-page headline, in bold red letters on the lower half of the page, "U.S. UFO Expert in Winnipeg." This was 5 June 1967. The only headline which was in larger type announced the outbreak of what proved to be the six-day war between Israel and her Arab neighbors.

I learned later that this high degree of public interest in local UFO experiences was not at all unusual. I laughed at the "ex-

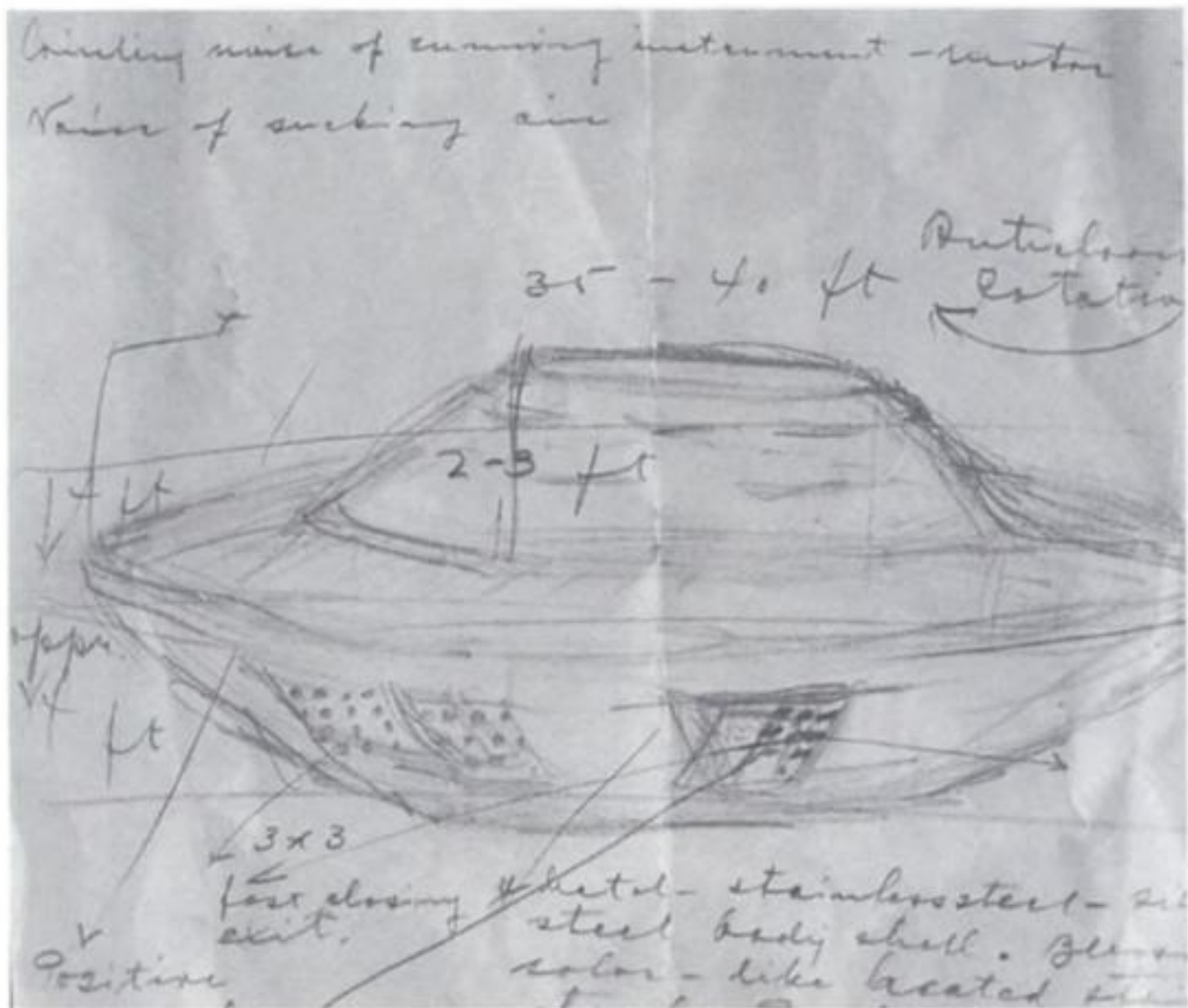
pert" label, however, and agreed with the definition of an expert as anyone more than fifty miles from home. I had been working one-fifth time on the UFO study for about six weeks, and I was already an "expert."

By the time the news article was published, we had already been searching the Canadian bush for the landing site. The Saturday afternoon interview had found Mr. Zellinski reluctantly cooperative. He started by saying we would get the details of his experience from the recording of an earlier interview he had granted Mr. Thompson, so he would not repeat those details for me. Leading questions, however, got him to review every aspect of his claimed ordeal. I recorded this interview on tape as the *Life* representatives took notes and shot roll after roll of film. The photographer got pictures showing our expressions during the question and answer process, pictures of Mr. Z's sketches of the saucer-shaped craft, and pictures of his scorched undershirt and partly-burned cap.

Mr. Z had said he made one of his sketches at the site while watching the craft and waiting for someone to emerge from it. The undershirt had been "confiscated" by an RCAF officer who returned it, at Mr. Z's request, during my interview. When he brought the undershirt to Mr. Z's house, the fact that Colorado Project and *Life* representatives were there was kept secret from him. I got the officer's name and telephone number for later contact.

Mr. Zellinski agreed to guide us on a search for the landing site on Sunday, warning us not to let RCAF, RCMP, newsmen, or anyone else know of our plans. He explained that if the public knew we were going into the area, there would be so many people there that a search would be impossible.

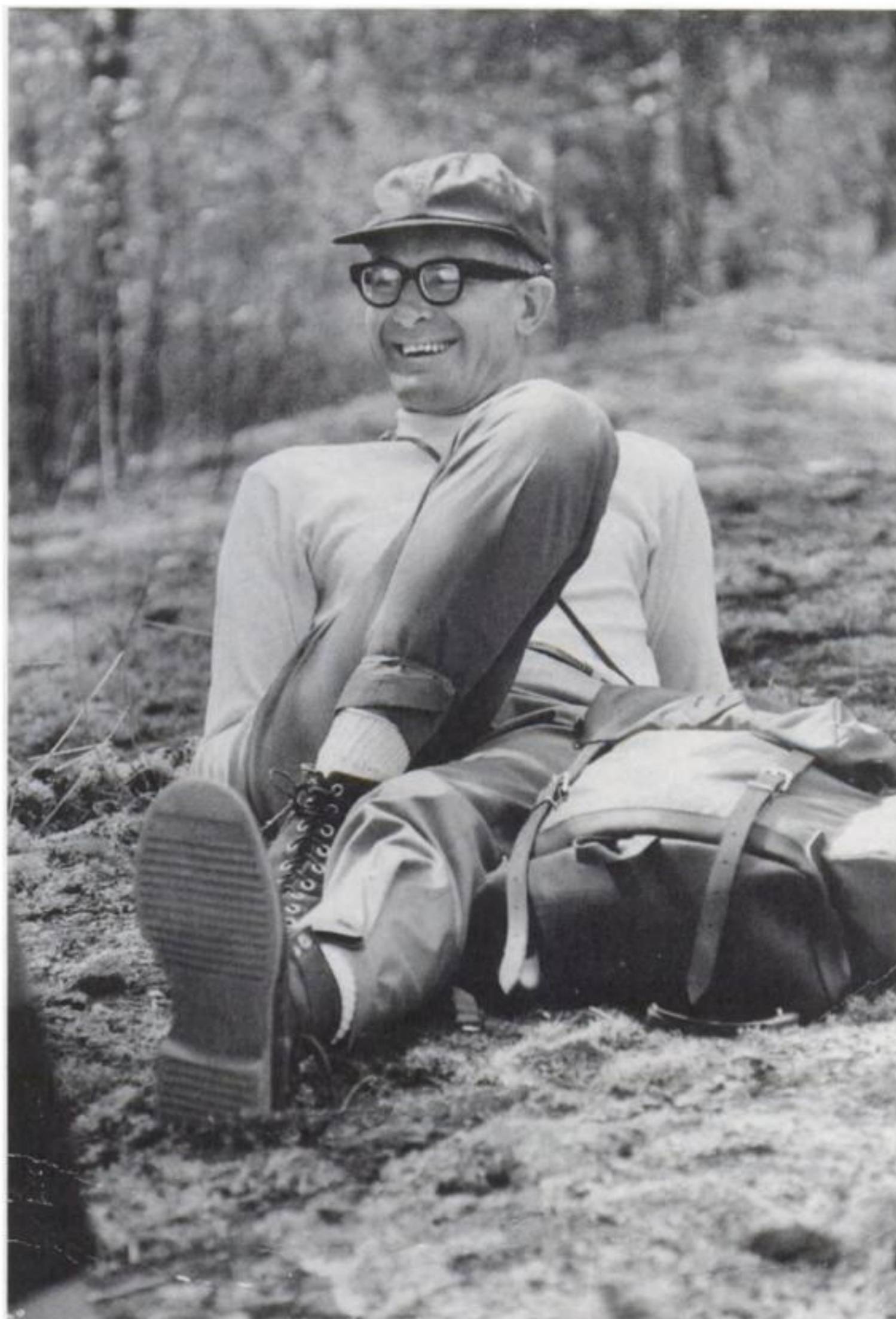
Saturday evening, after the lengthy interview, I compared notes with reporter John Fried and photographer Jerry Brimacombe from *Life*. We all agreed that, fantastic as this man's



Sketch of UFO at Falcon Lake, Canada. Sketch said by observer to have been made at the site while he was observing the object.

story was, he seemed sincere and told his story convincingly, as if he were describing an authentic experience. Other people considered Mr. Z to be a stable and reliable man. There were some incongruities in the story, such as a compass which spun wildly in the presence of the UFO, and yet told exactly the direction one UFO departed while the other hovered nearby. Nonetheless, the case seemed to all of us to be worth further checking. We were anxious to find the landing site to see if evidence there supported Mr. Z's claims.

Besides a landing spot where the lichen had been burned or blown from the rock by the hovering and landed craft, there should be remnants of Mr. Z's burned shirt, evidence of a small moss fire started by the burning shirt when he threw it to the



Life photographer's picture of Roy Craig chasing flying saucers in Canada. (*Life* Photo used by permission of Jerry Brimacombe)

ground, and a 6-foot rule he had neglected to put back into his prospecting bag while gathering his equipment after stamping out the fire. Mr. Z didn't know if there might be other physical evidence there, for he said his illness commenced within minutes after the blast of hot gases struck him. He had said earlier that he vomited and passed out briefly several times during his struggle back to the highway. He did recall finding a small saw, evidently left by a lumbering crew, and placing it on a stump he passed before he saw the UFOs. This saw had been found again on the unsuccessful site search with the RCAF and RCMP, so Mr. Zellinski felt he knew just about where his UFO encounter took place.

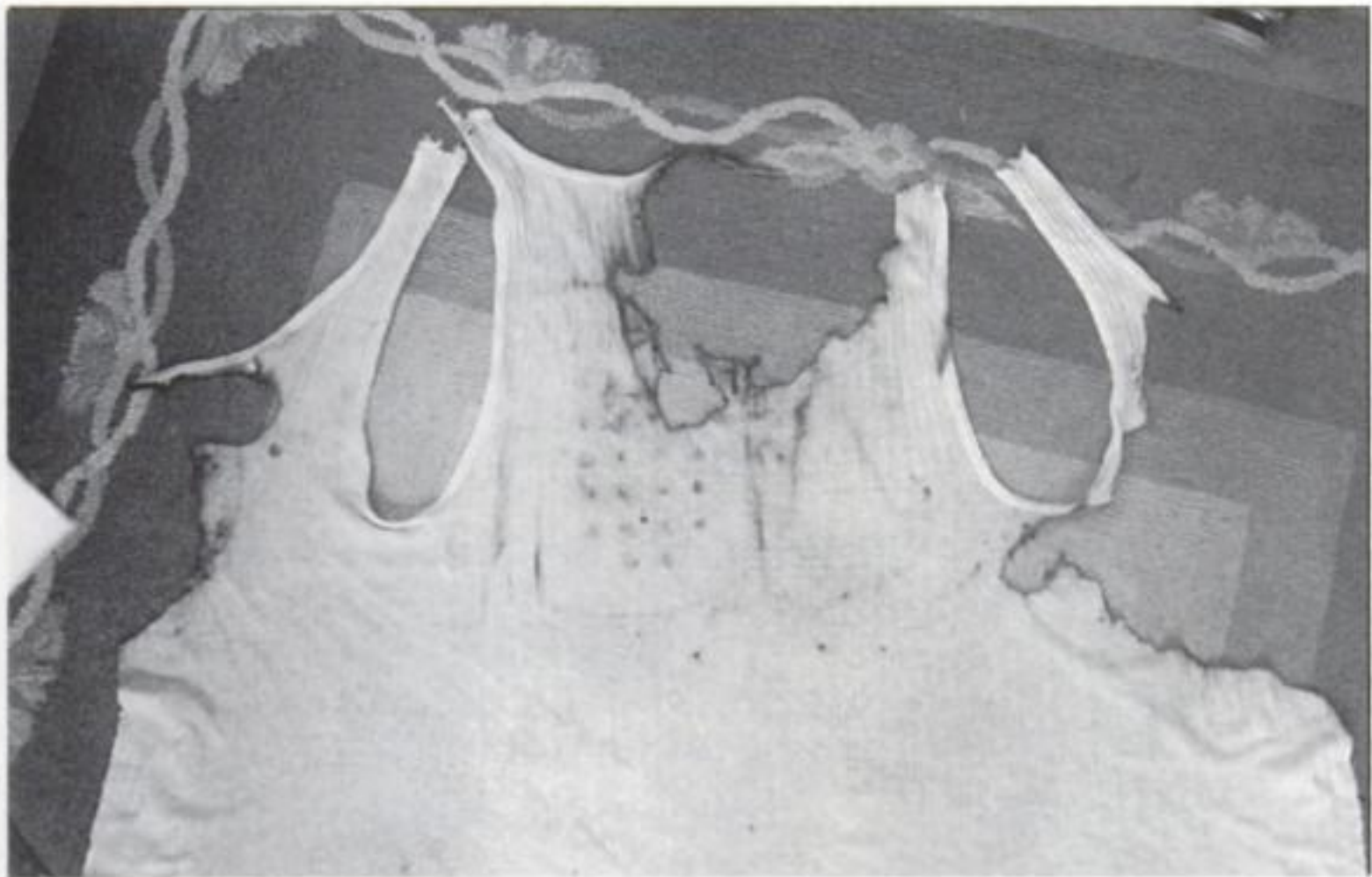
Sunday morning we drove about eighty-five miles east of Winnipeg and a mile or so off the highway to park by an abandoned gravel pit. We had been warned that this would be a rugged hike in remote bush country, and the site would be about five miles from the highway. We were appropriately equipped for a rugged all-day hike, with individual canteens filled with water and lunches packed for the occasion. I stuck my lunch in a light backpack which already contained cameras, a Geiger counter, sample containers, and other equipment I thought I might need for a reasonably thorough examination of the landing site.

We taped our trouser legs tight around our ankles, wore long-sleeved shirts with tight wrists, and sprayed insect repellent on our hands and faces, following Mr. Zellinski's advice, to keep the black flies from "eating us up." Then, we headed into an area of small trees, brush, and beaver ponds. We noticed a fire look-out tower about half a mile behind us when we started out.

The search party consisted of Mr. Zellinski, his eighteen-year-old son, Mr. Thompson, the two *Life* representatives and myself. Mr. Zellinski took the lead and proceeded fairly slowly as he



The residue of the claimed burn from the hot exhaust of departing saucer from Canadian woods near Winnipeg.



The undershirt said to have been burned by a UFO. Patterned burn shown is apparently the *back* of the shirt.

was, he said, trying to retrace the path he took while searching for veins of ore the morning of his UFO encounter. This, he hoped, would lead him to where he saw the UFOs. He frequently recognized places he had been, and pointed out spots where he had chipped off segments of rock for examination. We were on the right track.

It was hardly past noon when Mr. Zellinski suggested that we could not find the site that day, but, since he was determined to find it, he'd have to come back and search again some other time. The day was still young and we were not likely to be with him "some other time," so we urged that the search be continued. Mr. Z's efforts so far had already impressed me as those of someone who was trying to create the appearance of searching, rather than of one who was actually searching for something. Although he talked as if he were leading us deep into the bush country, we had actually wandered around a small area within two miles of our cars, frequently doubling back and crossing our own path. It seemed like rather aimless wandering. The fact that Mr. Z wanted to give up so easily strengthened my suspicions about the nature of the outing.

Mr. Z agreed to "look some more." After additional wandering in the same general vicinity, I was convinced that what he said was true—we were not to find a UFO landing site that day. Either there was no landing site to be found or, as Mr. Thompson suggested, Mr. Zellinski had found valuable ore where he was prospecting when the UFOs arrived, and didn't want anyone in the area until he staked his claims. In any case, if Mr. Z said he didn't think we would find his landing site, it obviously was futile for us to insist on trying.

I took advantage of the early termination of this search to talk with people who had seen Mr. Zellinski after he reached the highway and before he returned to Winnipeg on the day of his UFO encounter. I also visited with those persons who were in



The group, including media personnel, starting off to search for a flying saucer nest in the Canadian woods.

charge of manning the fire look-out tower we had seen, and with people who reported having observed an unidentified flying object in this region on the day Mr. Z was burned. I returned to Winnipeg with the feeling there was no UFO landing site to be found. The other object observed had the appearance of a box kite, rather than of Mr. Z's UFO, and conservation officers were sure the watchman on the fire tower would have seen both the smoke from the small moss fire and the flying objects themselves had the described event actually taken place.

I spent three more days investigating this report and other UFO reports in the Winnipeg region, with full cooperation of RCAF and RCMP personnel, medical personnel, news reporters, and regional radar operators. Each afternoon when I returned to my hotel, the girl at the telephone switchboard handed me a stack of messages from people who wanted to tell me about their UFO sightings, wanted to tell me where UFOs came from or how

they worked, or wanted an interview for their radio or TV station. This switchboard operator was most helpful, putting through on schedule the calls I desired, screening incoming calls and checking with me before connecting the caller with my phone, and letting visitors cool their heels in the lobby until I could get a chance to talk with them. She would be a superb secretary.

I left Winnipeg still puzzled at how this gentleman had gotten burned. He had initially convinced his family, RCAF and RCMP officers, and several of the half-dozen doctors he encountered for various reasons regarding his burn, as well as UFO enthusiasts, that he told a strange tale of an actual experience. Beyond the burn itself, however, I had found no evidence to verify or even support his story. I had encountered so many discrepancies and incongruities that, however the man got burned, I felt the case could not be used as evidence that flying craft like he sketched in such beautiful detail existed outside human minds.

Mr. Zellinski had agreed to phone the Colorado Project office immediately if he were to locate the landing site on a later search. The office received no such call. We heard rumors a week or two later that the site had been found. After a few more weeks, I received from Mr. Zellinski a copy of a booklet he had published which described his experience and what was found at the located landing site. Those findings included the presence of radioactive material in the cracks of the rock upon which the UFO had landed. Upon checking with the Canadian officials who had been involved in investigating Mr. Z's reported encounter, I learned that the radioactive material from the rock cracks was similar in nature to uranium ore from a nearby valley. Since it appeared that the landing site had been prepared by humans for "rediscovery," I could see no reason to expect useful information could be gained by further investigation of this case.