

PROJECT 1947

Report on talks with Major Dewey Fournet Air Force Intelligence.



Major Dewey Fournet's briefcase which contained the UFO files used for his CIA briefing of November, 1953, his briefing of the CIA sponsored Robertson Panel in January, 1953, and for carrying documents after his release from the Air Force in January of 1953.

The briefcase was later transferred to Bill Pitt's "New Project Blue Book," and then to David Marler, where it will be on display at the:



National Historical UFO Records Center

By Major Donald E. Keyhoe

1. The most important fact about Major Fournet is that he wrote a secret analysis for General Samford — a long report based on three years' study, checking 2500 cases, personal interviews with witnesses — and that he concluded the saucers are extraterrestrial. Also, he is the one who is mainly responsible for the recent change in Air Force policy.

2. Fournet, in civilian life, was in charge of special investigations and analyses for the Texaco Company. He was selected by AF Intelligence to come on active duty and become the key man in the saucer Investigation. His job was to go over the whole set-up from 1947 to date: analyze all the bona fide reports, improve Project investigations, and recommend action to the Chief of AF to Intelligence. He had top-secret clearance with Atomic Energy Commission to check the possibility of A-bomb after effects, also atomic propulsion angles; FBI, checking on witnesses; and with foreign governments, to get any reports they had. AF Intelligence considers him the best informed man on the saucers, and I've had proof of the weight he carries with Samford and his deputies.

3. It took me four months to meet Fournet, and I kept after Al Chop every week. Al told me, off the record, it was Fournet who got Samford to release those radar cases for us. Fournet also relayed, through Al, the dope on the Utah Pictures, and other items still classified secret. But he wouldn't meet me because Gen. Samford had forbidden him, Ruppelt and other Project officers to meet or talk with any of the press. I convinced Al I could be trusted, and he kept after Fournet. The way we handled the radar piece helped a lot, and Fournet finally agreed to see me, with Al present, for confidential talks.

4. The first time, I found later, he was feeling me out, and I didn't get very far. But after that he opened up, with the understanding I wouldn't link him with anything I wrote, unless he first gets permission from the Air Force.

5. First, he explained why he was talking with me, against orders. In analyzing the set-up from 1947 to date, he'd read the *TRUE* articles and my book. He said that no one investigating the situation as carefully as we did could have come to any other conclusion — and that the Air Force actually was trying to "explain away" all reports, as we said. He said they had a pretty good picture of what we'd done since '49, that he thought we were honest in our approach and opinions; that he admired *TRUE*'s courage in printing the first article.

Fournet confirmed the fact that we threw the AF into confusion, that Pentagon and Wright Field acted hastily and independently, that Major Boggs was told to give those three statements to the press re: Mantell, Chiles-Whitted, and Gorman — and that Wright Field then crossed them up, by letting out the summaries.

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He said that even then there was one group that believed the saucers real, quite probably extraterrestrial, but the other group kept them quiet.

Fournet didn't try to change this policy until his last year of duty; by then, he'd made a complete analysis, followed every possible angle. He finally convinced some of the brass that the AF had made a bad mistake; that many of the public refused to believe AF statements, also some of the press, and it could hurt them aside from the saucer deal. Also, he convinced some of them that the things were real objects, presenting a serious problem. He urged Samford to relax the publicity policy, open up and finally tell the public all they'd learned.

This was begun on a small scale by letting *Life* and *Look* talk with Project officers.

This was the situation when the Washington Airport cases occurred. The news and radio stories put Samford in a spot; he didn't want a press conference, but they had to say something. So they put on that big show at the Pentagon. Samford had been given the temperature-inversion idea to toss out, but not as the answer. Major Fournet was strongly opposed to this evasion and tried to stop it, but apparently there was pressure from higher up to get the public quieted down.

By a coincidence, I had been trying to get some recent cases from ATIC, two weeks before the WNA excitement. I made my approach through the Magazine and Book Section, and was turned down. So when this press conference was announced, Maj. Patterson of Mag. Section called me in and suggested some questions for me to spring on the brass. Col. Dick Searles, Press Branch, saw me getting my questions ready; he told Fournet, and they both expected me to throw a monkey wrench when Samford asked the press for questions.

During the press conference, I changed my mind about openly questioning Gen. Samford and the others. For one reason, it would tip off my main points to other writers; secondly, it would seem I was trying to needle the Air Force. Instead, I asked the questions of Samford privately, when the conference was over. Though I didn't know it, this made a big impression on Fournet. Later, when I asked again for new cases, especially radar, he got them okayed, told Al Chop to give me everything possible.

The radar piece made another good impression. The only bad point was leaving out the paragraph saying I was convinced the AF wasn't holding back facts.

One colonel thought I did it on purpose, but I convinced Al, and later Fournet and Ruppelt, it was an accident. (We should cover that angle in any later pieces)

Fournet also explained this reason for talking with me; He said he considered me as the best informed man on the saucers, outside the Project — that I could be of help to AF intelligence, if they trusted me and cooperated. He said my getting [McLean to submit his movies](#) was an example; also my giving them some sighting reports

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they didn't have. In addition, he felt that *TRUE* could be of help in putting over the new policy, if the AF played ball.

Summing it up, Fournet said he had urged his superiors in Intelligence to encourage me and cooperate with me and *TRUE*; that he considered us honest in our investigation and opinions; that we'd be of real value as the situation developed.

After he'd made this clear, Fournet said he'd answer all my questions if possible; if he had to refuse on any, he'd explain why, or try to give me a way to get the information. Here are the main points he covered:

A. His final report recommended making all facts public (except certain Intelligence procedures) and stating where the weight of evidence pointed to the extraterrestrial answer.

B. From the effect his secret report had on Samford and others, he is sure the AF will follow this policy, with the first admission or hint of the interplanetary answer within the year.

C. He expects the first break to come when the Utah pictures are released. But if his original statement is watered down, he told me ways to put on pressure and force the answers.

D. He says that Samford, Col. Smith (Fournet's chief), and other high ups in Intelligence now admit an increasing percentage of cases (30% or more) in which all ordinary answers have been ruled out — including all of Menzel's theories. This

leaves only: 1. Interplanetary. 2. Very strange phenomena totally beyond our comprehension. 3. A revolutionary secret weapon.

The latter, he said, was not considered seriously, and we could omit it; the idea of bizarre phenomena had been thoroughly explored, but the competent reports of intelligent maneuvers, and other reasons made it very unlikely. In other words, the weight of evidence strongly indicates the saucers are extraterrestrial.

E. Fournet was uneasy about discussing all the interplanetary angles, because his report has been read by only top Intelligence people, Capt. Ruppelt, and Al Chop. He finally agreed to answer questions on an "If they're interplanetary" basis. His ideas in general coincide with what we've said. He wouldn't give me the key cases which he said convinced him and the others, but said he would try to get an okay from the Air Force; if not, Al will try to help me frame questions to bring them out.

F. Perhaps linked with this, Fournet told me to ask for an ATIC summary of unexplained 1952 cases, also any in 1953. From this summary, he hinted, I'd be able to pick out certain important cases and I could then ask for details. Capt. Ruppelt has agreed to give these to me, on a request through Al.

G. I asked Fournet if he'd by-line a piece stating the saucers are interplanetary, according to all evidence from his 3-year analysis. He said no at first, the AF wouldn't permit it: I kept at him, and he said he'd ask, and if they agree, he'd give us first chance.

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H. Fournet discussed most of the famous cases — Mantell, Chiles-Whitted, Gorman, on up to date. Re: Mantell, he said they'd applied every so-called solution, from Liddell's sky-hooks to Menzel's theories, and the official answer was still: Unexplained. Incidentally, he gave me the dope on Mantell's body; Mantell's scalp was torn off by the canopy, and his body was found some yards from the wreck. No burns, no bullet-holes or other peculiar wounds.

He said the PAA sighting, near Norfolk, was one of the strongest in ATIC files; he said *TRUE* did a swell job on it, absolutely accurate — he compared it word for word with confidential reports.

He said if he were with *TRUE*, he'd look carefully into the Pittsburgh, Kansas case, where the radio-station musician described seeing a strange craft hovering near a field, just about dawn. He said he wouldn't guarantee it, but there was a strong chance it was far more important than most people thought.

Re: Washington airport cases, he said that first week-end the details were even more conclusive than we realized; he referred to Andrews Field reports, and AF pilot reports, and hinted that some of it was still to come out.

I. Re: the Utah pictures. He described all the analysis tests, how the pix had swayed Samford and others; said our McLean Pix had helped him overcome opposition by some who wanted [to keep the Utah films secret](#).

J. F. suggested I follow up other leads beside Air Force, and recheck some earlier sources. For example, he told me that Admiral Cal Bolster had recently asked for a confidential briefing on the saucers — all the latest dope. Bolster, you remember, is a classmate of mine; he's the one who gave me some help before. Fournet said Bolster had some new reports, or new angles, and was obviously serious about the briefing. (It took 3 hours, F. said.) I don't know whether Cal will open up for me, but it's worth a try, if I can get him alone some time.

K. Fournet also said I might help them get reports certain airline pilots are now withholding, for fear of ridicule. I told him that Larry Cates, of ALPA, offered to let me put a notice in the *PILOT*, asking pilots to send me confidential reports or see me when they're going through Washington. Fournet said I should do it, and maybe I could persuade the pilots that the AF now will give them decent treatment.

L. He told me he had talked with top scientists regarding Menzel's ideas, and he confirmed what Ruppelt said. I think he will give me the scientists' names, if I write him. He agreed to correspond and give me all the help he could; also, in contacts with his Intelligence friends, to continue urging them to work with us.

M. This is only a fraction of what we discussed. I wrote out over a hundred questions, and he volunteered other stuff besides answering those.

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Fournet told me his successor, Capt. Harry Smith, was new to the saucer investigation and wouldn't be of much help for at least a few weeks. He said if I can get higher Intelligence officers to trust me I stand a good chance to learn of new developments and plans long before anybody else. He intimated that Col. Smith would be the best one to count on.

My impression is that Fournet is on the level with us, with no ulterior motives. He doesn't seem very much interested in dough for articles, though his by-line, linked to his former job, would be valuable.



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