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The Gulf Breeze Photographs

1987

FOR NEARLY A DECADE NOW, we have been treated to spectacular stories of a UFO hovering over the Gulf Breeze area in the Florida panhandle. Photographs have been taken, many of them quite spectacular. Others reported that they, too, have seen the object, some of them producing their own pictures including a couple of videotapes. But those taken over a period of several months by a man originally identified only as "Mr. Ed" were, by far, the best.

On November 11, 1987, Ed Walters, a self-described prominent businessman, was working in his office at home. He thought he saw something glowing behind a thirty-foot pine tree in the front yard. He stepped outside to get a better look and saw a top-shaped craft with a row of dark squares and smaller openings across the midsection. There was a bright, glowing ring around the bottom.

Realizing that this was something very unusual, Walters reached into his office and grabbed an old Polaroid camera. He stepped back out and took a photograph as the craft moved from behind the tree. In all, he would take five pictures as the UFO, about a hundred and fifty feet away, continued to drift in a northeasterly direction.

Out of film, he returned to his office, reloaded the camera, and took the fifth picture. The object was closer, and Walters ran into the street to take additional photographs. Then, according to what he would tell some investigators, he was hit by a blue beam of light that paralyzed him and lifted him off his feet. A computer-like voice that he heard inside his head said, "We will not harm you." Other images, and a female voice filled his head. Suddenly, he fell hard on the pavement, as the blue beam vanished. When he looked, the UFO was gone as well.

Just six days later, Walters visited Duane Cook, editor of the *Gulf Breeze Sentinel*. He showed Cook the pictures, but claimed they had been taken by someone else. Walters gave Cook a letter allegedly written by the anonymous photographer explaining the situation. Two days later, on November 19, 1987, the letter and the pictures were published in the newspaper.

On November 20—as Walters returned home and walked through the door, he heard a humming in his ears. At first he hardly noticed it, but it grew in pitch until it was nearly unbearable. He walked through the house, followed by his wife, Frances, and then went back outside. According to Walters, the hum was the same as the one he heard while trapped in the blue beam. They saw nothing in the sky.

Walters went into his office and sat down. He heard voices in his head, speaking in something that sounded like an African dialect to him. When his wife came in to tell him that she, along with their daughter, were going to a football game, he said nothing about the voices.

After they left, Walters picked up his camera, and walked out the front door. Outside, he said, "I hear you, you bastard." There was a rush of air, and the internal voice said, "Be calm. Step forward."

High overhead, a speck of light fell toward him rapidly. Walters raised the camera but a voice told him, in Spanish, that photographs were prohibited. The female voice told him, "You can't expose them. They won't hurt you. Just a few tests. That's all."

But Walters didn't care. He took a picture of the UFO as it hovered above a power pole. While the voices were still speaking to him, the UFO shot to the right and Walters took a second picture. About that time, the first voice told him to take a step forward so

that he could enter the craft. Walters told them they had no right to do what they were doing, and the voice said, "We have the right."

The female voice added, "You must do what they say. They haven't hurt us and we are going back home now."

As the first voice said, "We will come for you now," images of naked women filled his mind. Walters took a third picture. The UFO moved forward and then shot upward, into the sky, vanishing almost instantly.

He next saw the UFO on December 2, when he was awakened by the sound of a baby crying. Although there were no babies in either of the neighbors' houses or his own for that matter, Walters was upset. Then he heard the voices, speaking Spanish, and talking about the crying baby. Accompanied by his wife, Walters, carrying a .32 caliber pistol, checked the house and the yard. Out back, he saw the UFO descending rapidly. It stopped about a hundred feet above the pool, then drifted a short distance before stopping.

Walters retreated to the house to join his wife, who was seeing the craft for the first time. What he would later describe as the "UFO voice" commanded that he "Step forward now."

Once again Walters grabbed his Polaroid camera and took it, along with his pistol, out the door. Near the pool in his backyard, he took another picture, but when the flash went off, he felt exposed. He ran back into the house. From the kitchen, he, along with his wife, saw the UFO vanish. When it was gone, the hum inside his head faded.

Back in bed, Walters said he heard the dog bark once, which he said was unusual. Walters again got up, and carrying both his pistol and camera, walked to the French doors, sure that he would see the UFO once again. Instead, when he opened the curtains he saw, just inches from him, a four-foot humanoid with big black eyes. It was wearing a helmet with a bit of transparent material at eye level that apparently allowed it to see.

Walters, who seemed to have remained calm enough through his other UFO experiences to take multiple photographs of the craft and who disobeyed their commands not to photograph the object, forgot about the camera in his hand. He screamed in surprise, jumped back, and tripped. Walters raised his pistol, thinking he would fire if the creature tried to enter the house, but never thought to take a picture.

Walters finally got to his feet and then struggled with the lock on the door. He put down his pistol and camera. The creature retreated, but was no more than twenty feet away. Walters was sure that he could capture it. But, as he opened the door and attempted to step out, he was again struck by the blue beam. It seemed that his foot was nailed to the floor. As the beam lifted his leg, Walters grabbed at the side of the doorway for balance. Frances grabbed at him and pulled on him. Both saw that the UFO was about fifty feet in the air, above the back yard.

With the UFO hovering over a nearby field, Walters, now free of the blue beam, again grabbed his camera, and shot a picture of the UFO. He didn't manage to photograph the alien being, but had the presence of mind to take still another picture of the craft. He saw the object shoot out another blue beam and Walters believed this was to pick up the creature. Maybe to "beam" it aboard.

Over the next several days, Walters would see the UFO again and again. He would hear the voices from the craft again and again. They called Walters "Zehass" and told him they had come for him. He would take more pictures of the craft as it hovered close to the ground. By December 17, he had taken seventeen photographs of the object. By the end of December, Walters had figured out that videotape would be more impressive than still photographs. On December 28, he made a videotape that ran just over a minute and a half. According to Walters, his wife, son Dan, and daughter all saw the object.

The next encounter happened on January 12, 1988. While driving on a county road, Walters was hit by two blinding flashes of light that left his arms and hands tingling with "pin pricks" but no other feeling. Five hundred feet in front of him hovered the now familiar UFO. Walters tried to stop and make a U-turn, but his hands wouldn't obey. He stopped two hundred feet from the object. Although he couldn't drive, he could pick up his camera and take still another photograph of the UFO.

As the UFO began to drift toward him, Walters abandoned the truck, trying to crawl under it to hide. Before he could escape, he was hit again by those blue beams and his legs went numb. The UFO was visible, even though he was halfway under the truck. Walters took another picture as a voice told him, "You are in no danger. We will not harm you. Come forward." Walters ignored the message.

Five blue beams shot from the craft, leaving five creatures on the ground who began to move toward him. Once again Walters was confronted by alien creatures when he had a camera in hand, but somehow he failed to photograph them. Instead, screaming obscenities, he leaped back into the truck, and drove off. Apparently his hands and legs were working fine by that time.

Over the next month, Walters continued to see UFOs and photograph them. On January 21, he was in communication on a walkie-talkie with Bob Reid who was staked out a block away with a camera. Reid saw the lights that Walters reported, but he identified them as a small aircraft. Walters said that Reid was not looking in the right direction to see the real UFO.

At the end of February, the Mutual UFO Network provided Walters with a special camera that had four lenses to take three-dimensional photographs. The camera produced four negatives for each picture. It should have made it possible to gather a variety of technical information about the object, based on measurements from the negatives. That evening, Walters took more pictures of an object, or at least, took pictures of lights in the distance. Frances thought the object was small and close, but Walters thought it was larger and farther away. None of those pictures matched the spectacular nature of the other photographs.

On March 8, Walters returned to a Polaroid camera, now using a newer model. Again he took a picture of the UFO, this time hovering about 300 feet beyond two pine trees. It was much better than the pictures of distant lights he had taken with the special, sealed camera.

In the middle of March, Walters and his wife discussed whether or not they should go "UFO hunting" with newspaper editor Cook and a reporter, Dari Holston. They drove to a park, where there were several other people who were also UFO spotting. After about two hours, the others announced they were going to leave. Within minutes, Walters heard the internal hum that announced the appearance of the UFO. Walters took a single picture with a "self-referenced stereo" (SRS) camera he had built. Just as the UFO vanished, the others returned, alerted, according to them, by flashes of light. None of them had seen the object that Walters photographed.

Brenda Pollak, the wife of one of the UFO hunters, arrived at the park late, telling all that she had seen a UFO while driving to meet them. Dr. Bruce Maccabee, a Navy physicist who investigated part of the Gulf Breeze case, concluded from the pictures that Walters had been looking southwest, over the shoreline, when he took the photographs. That was the general direction in which Pollak had seen her UFO. Maccabee suggested that it was plausible that Walters had photographed the object Pollak saw, which meant there was independent corroboration for at least one of Walter's UFO sightings.

At the beginning of May, Walters, again alone, was in the park with the SRS camera when he heard the faint hum. This time he shouted, "Here I am! I want you out of my life!" As he attempted to photograph the object yet again there was a blinding flash and Walters lost all sensation except for a feeling that he was falling. About an hour later, he regained consciousness at the edge of the water. This was the last encounter that Walters reported.

Jerry Clark, writing in his massive UFO encyclopedia, reported that "The Walters' sightings were not occurring in a vacuum. In the six months between November 1987 and May 1988 over 100 persons in the Gulf Breeze area reported UFOs. On November 11, for example, there were seven sightings besides Walters'. In one of these a witness, Jeff Thompson, reported seeing an object with a bluish beam."

Because of the nature of the case, the number of sightings, potential corroborating witnesses, and the existence of the photographs, a number of investigations were launched. Researchers from the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies, including Robert D. Boyd, were convinced, almost from the beginning, that the case was a hoax. Boyd felt that Walters did not react as someone who had six months of self-proclaimed horrifying experiences would react. In fact, it was noted by Center investigators that the only cases in which a witness claimed repeated encounters with multiple photographs were either known hoaxes or strongly suspected to be hoaxes.

On the other hand, the Mutual UFO Network's investigators, including Don Ware and Charles Fannigan, were convinced that this was one of the best cases to have been reported to date. Bruce Maccabee of the Fund for UFO Research was also convinced, based

on his professional examination of the photographs, that Walters was telling the truth and that the pictures showed a real craft from another world.

Jerry Clark, in his UFO encyclopedia, in defense of Walters, wrote, "To begin with, the Walterses' motive was obscure at best. They certainly were not seeking publicity. In fact, they went to some lengths to keep their names from getting out, even though the newspaper editor and a handful of locals knew who they were."

This idea, espoused by so many including Ed Walters, apparently wasn't challenged. On the face of it, though, it is ridiculous. Within days of taking the first photographs, Walters was at the offices of the newspaper with his pictures. Within months, everyone knew who he was. If Walters was serious about keeping away from the publicity, then he shouldn't have gone to the newspaper in the first place. Those who seek no publicity do not volunteer to meet with the members of the media. They keep their mouths shut and their drapes drawn. Clearly, from his actions, regardless of what he said, Walters wanted publicity.

Clark continued, parroting what is the Walters' party line. "Moreover, unlike many hoaxers in UFO history, they seemed to have no financial interest in perpetrating UFO fraud."

Of course, that overlooks the fact that there was a financial reward for the case. According to *Publisher's Weekly*, William Morrow and Company paid \$200,000 as an advance for the book about the sightings, and a production company paid an additional \$100,000 down against \$450,000 for the miniseries rights. In other words, it turns out that there was a huge financial reward because of the sightings and photographs. That first book was followed by a second, which increased the financial rewards.

All of these points are interesting. It can be argued that the financial benefits came about, not because of the hoax or plans for a hoax, but as a result of events that Walters didn't or couldn't control. While the case seemed to be a hoax, there was no real evidence that it was. Some of the top investigators in the UFO community had researched it and concluded that Walters was telling the truth.

But there were other hints. One of the first to suggest that there was more to the Walters case than had been published was Tommy Smith. Around the first of January 1988, Smith told family mem-

bers that he had seen a UFO and showed them a series of pictures he claimed to have taken. But, about a day later, Smith confessed that the photos were part of a prank that Ed Walters, also known as Ed Hanson to those in the Gulf Breeze area, was playing.

According to an investigation conducted by Carol and Rex Salisberry, Smith told his family that Walters had given him the photos and told him to take them to the *Gulf Breeze Sentinel*. There, he was to claim that he had taken them. He also said that he had seen two UFO models at the Walters' home and that he had seen Ed Walters photograph one of them. According to the report prepared by the Salisberrys, Smith said that Walters' wife, son, and another teenager named Hank Boland were all involved in the hoax.

Smith told family members that he didn't know what to do, but his father, Tom Smith, Sr., asked his law partners and then Gulf Breeze Chief of Police, Jerry Brown, what his son should do. They all decided that the best action, at the moment, was no action. They believed that since many people in Gulf Breeze already knew the pictures were part of a practical joke, the interest in them would die quickly.

Of course, that didn't happen. Interest in the photographs continued to spread with national television audiences having a chance to see them. On June 19, 1988, Gulf Breeze mayor Ed Gray called a press conference. Tommy Smith's account was substantiated by sworn testimony and independent interviews conducted with the principals.

Smith was given a number of tests in an attempt to verify his veracity. According to the Salisberrys, a recording of one of the interviews had been made. It was the opinion of a number of professionals that the recording could be used in a voice stress analysis. In a report dated October 10, 1990, Dale Kelly, in a signed statement for the Gulf Breeze Chief of Police, wrote, "At the request of and under the authority of Chief Jerry Brown of the Gulf Breeze Police Department, I analyzed a tape of a person known only as Chris [Tommy Smith] to me. The subject matter was the taking of photos of 'UFOs' and if the photos were faked. Based on the test results, it is the opinion of this examiner that 'Chris' was telling the truth when he described how he was told how the photos were faked. In answer to all questions put to 'Chris,' in my opinion he was telling the truth."

In a second report dated October 18, 1990, Ed Halford, in a signed statement for the Gulf Breeze Chief of Police, wrote, "I ran a test for the chief of police in Gulf Breeze, Fl., to determine the truthfulness of a statement made by a male identified as 'Chris' [Tommy Smith]. The statement was recorded by Chief Jerry Brown and Mayor Ed Gray of Gulf Breeze, with the permission of 'Chris.'"

"In my professional opinion, the answers to all the questions asked of this person were truthful. I used the Mark II Voice Stress Analyzer to arrive at this conclusion.

"I have a degree in criminology, twenty years police experience, and thirteen years with the Mark II Voice Stress Analyzer.

"This test was analyzed by the authority of the Chief of police, Gulf Breeze, Fl."

Both Carol and Rex Salisberry continued their investigations, trying to learn more about the photos and the circumstances around them. Smith told them that Walters had bragged to him and others how he faked UFOs in Costa Rica by using hot-air balloons. According to the report, Smith said that "Walters also expressed his satisfaction on how he was fooling the MUFON investigators and Duane Cook. When Walters showed Tommy and others the video which Mr. Cook had taken on the evening of 24 January 1988, Walters roared with laughter at how he had fooled Cook."

Of course, when Smith's allegations were printed in the *Pensacola News Journal*, there was a response from the UFO community, especially those who believed the photographs to be real and Ed Walters to be truthful. By this time, a model of the UFO had been found, and to many it was the smoking gun proving the case a hoax.

According to the massive report prepared by the Salisberrys, after their intense and exhaustive investigation, Craig Myers, a staff writer for the Pensacola newspaper, told of how the model was accidentally found. Walters had sold the house from which he had repeatedly seen the UFO. Myers, according to a statement in the report, went to interview the new owners on June 4, 1990.

Myers wrote, "Because the Menzers live in the house where Walters reports he had encounters with aliens and photographed UFOs, Myers was curious if the Menzers had ever seen anything unusual.

"During the interview Myers asked if they had ever seen or heard anything unusual, found any darkroom materials, models, etc. The

Menzers said they had found what may be construed as a UFO model, and loaned it to the *News Journal*. During the next several days the model was used in an exhaustive series of photographic experiments."

Farther down in the statement, Myers wrote, "Using the model we were able to recreate photographs very similar to those Ed Walters printed in his book. Walters and his supporters have stated that the photographs are not the same because most of his UFOs had two rows of windows. However, a second row of 'windows' can easily be recreated by drawing them on the lower portion of the model."

In what is an important point, Myers wrote, "On Saturday, June 9, 1990, *News Journal* Managing Editor Ken Fortenberry interviewed Walters in Fortenberry's office. Metro Editor Joedy Isert and reporter Nathan Dominitz witnessed the interview in which Walters denied any knowledge of the UFO model, but refused to take either a lie-detector test or a voice stress analysis conducted by independent experts. Walters did, however, sign a sworn statement denying any knowledge of the model. Walters said the model was obviously 'planted' in his former residence by debunkers, and intimated that the government may have been behind the debunking plan."

All of that would seem to have destroyed the credibility of the photographic case. But the believers in Ed Walters weren't finished. They released their own information that proved the story to be real, and that the evidence found and the testimony gathered by the Salisberrys was all part of a clever plot to destroy it.

According to the Salisberrys, "When Tommy Smith's allegations were printed in the *Pensacola News Journal* and the *Gulf Breeze Sentinel*, a furor of activity ensued among Walters' supporters to initiate damage control. Walt Andrus, International Director of MUFON, and other MUFON officials promptly named Tommy Smith a liar."

In fact, in an article written by Craig Myers and printed in the *Pensacola* newspaper, Andrus' opinions are reported. "But Andrus also said he was convinced the model found in Walters' former home had absolutely nothing to do with the photos and was planted by determined critics. And he said Smith is 'lying' about being with Walters when he faked UFO photos. . . . Andrus said he also believes Walters' story that Tommy Smith is lying to protect his parents' religious beliefs, which do not allow for UFOs."

To understand what is happening here, let's look at two aspects of Andrus' statement to Myers. First, the idea that Tommy Smith would be lying to police officials about the creation of the photographs because of his parents' religious beliefs is absurd on the face of it. However, the Salisberrys checked this out, as they did all allegations slung by all sides, and learned that the Smiths are members of the Gulf Breeze Episcopalian Church, which does not espouse any stern views regarding UFOs.

Second is the idea that critics, debunkers, or government agents planted the model in the house to discredit Walters and the case. According to the report prepared by Carol Salisbury, Ed Walters had said that the model was uncovered in plain sight for anyone to see should they go into the attic. She wrote, "I agreed that it was important for Rex and me to get first-hand testimony and to see the model for ourselves."

If Walters was right and the model was found in plain sight, then the discovery of it smacked of a set-up. If someone had gone to all the trouble to build a model to hoax the photographs, certainly he would be clever enough to destroy it or hide it so that it wouldn't be easily discovered.

In a handwritten statement dated September 9, 1990, Sara Lee Menzer wrote, "We [Robert & Sara Lee Menzer] moved into the house in Nov. 1989 and purchased a new refrigerator as the one that had been in the house had been taken by the previous owner [Mr. Ed Walters]. The previous refrigerator had had an ice maker, and there was a piece of copper tubing protruding from the wall and the water source—the tubing had been crimped to stop the water flow. Our new refrigerator had an ice maker but with many other things to do at the time we put off connecting the ice maker until 6 March [1990]. In order to install the ice maker the water had to be shut off so that the old tubing could be cut and connected to a new piece of tubing long enough to reach the new refrigerator. Unfamiliar with the construction practice of this region, we did not know that the cut off for the entire house was in the ground in the front yard. . . . Having exhausted other ideas as to where the water cut-off was, my husband went into the attic crawl space by way of the garage and worked his way on the joists to the area over the kitchen and followed the pipes to the point it turned down into the kitchen wall. In

order to reach around the pipe, he pushed aside the loose insulation. In doing so, he uncovered the paper model of the UFO. He put the model aside, thinking little of it. He then called Ed Walters and asked where the water shut off was."

So the model, which had been reported by some to have been found in the garage, and claimed by others to have been found in plain sight was neither in the garage nor in plain sight. Had Menzer not been searching for the water cut-off valve, he would have never found the model. If debunkers, critics, or government agents planted the model, they hid it so well that the odds of it being found were extremely low. In fact, I have never crawled around in an attic of any of the homes I have owned. There has never been a reason to do so.

It would seem, with the testimony of Tommy Smith, with the discovery of the model, and the misleading statements made about the case, the only conclusion to be drawn is that the Gulf Breeze photographs and the accompanying story was little more than a hoax. But the supporters had their own side of the events. They insisted that there was a conspiracy to destroy the case. Solid investigation, corroboration from additional witnesses, and the shady background of those suggesting a hoax would prove to believers that there was no hoax.

Carol Salisbury began to investigate the backgrounds of those who were suggesting that Ed Walters was a practical joker and who had faked "ghost" photographs, who delighted in frightening teenagers with scary stories, and who had a reputation for inventing UFO tales.

One of the teenagers who corroborated parts of Tommy Smith's story was Nick Mock. Mock had also made a number of damaging allegations against Ed Walters. Mock said that Walters was a known practical joker, that the "demon" or ghostlike pictures that surfaced during the investigation and suggested double exposure had been taken by Walters with his Polaroid camera, and that Walters had told some of his high-school friends during the summer of 1987 that he was going to pull off the "Ultimate Prank." Asked what it would be, according to Mock, Walters said that they would know when he did it.

If those allegations were true, they certainly damaged the Walters

case. Carol Salisbury, who investigated the Mock aspect wrote, "I was initially under the impression that Nick Mock was a juvenile delinquent because of a note on a correspondence (from Walt Andrus to Willy Smith [no relation to Tommy Smith]) I had seen in Don Ware's file. Walt was asking Willy if he wanted to see Mock's criminal record. I had also read an article in the *MUFON Journal*, April 1989, #252 (pages 15-16), written by Bruce Maccabee indicating that N.M., a teenager, 'In late 1987 he began to write nasty, demeaning letters to Ed's son . . . put sugar in the gas tank, and scratched the son's car.' So, I added another question to my list, 'What sort of person was Nick Mock?'"

Salisbury learned, again according to her report, ". . . he [Mock] was unfairly smeared in the beginning stages of the Walters' investigation. We have since discovered that he was not the only person accused of damaging Danny's [Walters] car. One girl testified that he was with her during that particular time period, and could not have done that. He has no criminal record and there is no proof that he did any of the things he was accused of during the course of the investigation: damaging Danny's car, writing hate mail, using drugs, being a bad influence. In retrospect, the personal attack on his character was disproportionate to what he had to say to the investigators in 1988. He had a list of 7 or 8 names of other kids who could tell about went on at the Walters' parties. Prior to our investigations, this was originally documented by Bob Boyd in his investigation."

There was quite a bit of discussion about those parties held at the Walters' house. They involved quite a few teenagers over a period of years, while Danny Walters was in high school. During that time Ed Walters was apparently a band booster, doing what he could to promote the high-school band. So, there was nothing wrong with the Walterses hosting parties for teenagers. They sound like a family who were, or are, very supportive of their children's activities.

However, the tricks played, or the photographs taken, during those parties is illustrative of the mind of Ed Walters. Again, according to the investigation conducted by the Salisberrys, "They said that Tommy [Smith] was aware of Ed's tricks and even was Ed's accomplice in a stunt. . . . In one instance of the stunt being played, a girl's name (obviously preselected) was also made to mysteriously appear

on a board when a match was struck. According to several witnesses the girl was so scared by this that she ran from the room in tears. (Ed told Charles Flannigan, Rex, and myself that he had chosen Tommy to be in on the stunt because Tommy was so quiet that no one would suspect him of being an accomplice.)”

Salisbury, attempting to corroborate these parties investigated further and learned, again according to her report, “I asked one young woman if she had ever gone to a party at the Walters’ home. Her reply surprised me. ‘It was no party; it was a seance! I’m a Christian, and I was offended by what happened there and I never went back again.’ She explained that there was a pentagram or star on the floor and that Ed had 3 girls sit in the middle of a circle surrounded by the other guests. Then he read the 23rd Psalm backwards, having the kids recite after him. (Summoning the ghost for the Polaroid pictures of 3 individuals, one of which would be the chosen one. The chosen one would have the ghost in the picture with her.) This girl’s brother, who was also present at this party, and some of the others I interviewed verified this. . . . The kids, now all graduated from high school, said that they couldn’t figure out how Ed did the pictures or some of his other tricks. Those interviewed considered Ed to be very clever and that he seemed to know a lot of tricks and games. . . . Several of these witnesses who knew Danny . . . said that they thought it was unusual that Danny never spoke about the numerous UFOs that appeared at his house . . .”

Let’s stop and take a look at all this. Tommy Smith said that he was asked by Walters to take the UFO photos into the newspaper office. He said that he had seen two models at Walters’ home, and he was involved in one of Walters’ practical jokes.

Nick Mock was another teenager who said many of the same things. He also talked about the faked ghost pictures and the practical jokes that Walters created.

And we have the testimony of a number of other teenagers who were there when some of the jokes were played or who saw the results of the trick Polaroid pictures. Some were offended by Walters’ seances, and others participated in his practical jokes. In other words, there was a great deal of corroboration for the fact that Walters played practical jokes.

But let's look at this aspect of it carefully. There is very good evidence, from a number of people, that Walters used a Polaroid camera in his jokes. He created photographs of ghosts to fool the teenagers at these parties. A Polaroid camera was used to produce evidence that the seance had worked and that there were ghosts in the room. This is all the result of double exposures.

There is one more aspect of this that needs to be examined. During the initial MUFON investigation, Don Ware was given a list of names of the teenagers who had participated in the parties. Ware, according to Carol Salisbury, said that he had enlisted the aid of a teenager to attend a party to find out what went on at them. The names on the list supplied by Mock were not interviewed at any time by MUFON investigators. Ware told Salisbury that those kids had been interviewed by a reporter for the Pensacola newspaper, but there is no record that the interviews ever took place.

Carol Salisbury concluded, "Based on the information given in peer group interviews, it seems that the Walters had a variety of parties and also small group gatherings at their home. The same teens did not always attend the gatherings. All the parties did not involve a mock seance or spooky tricks but there seem to have been several parties in 1986-87 where these things did take place and a ghost photo was taken. Most of the interviewed teens and parents stated that when the UFO pictures first came out in the paper they thought it was just another of Ed's jokes."

All this seems to suggest there are some major problems with the Ed Walters case. But on the other side are a number of lie-detector tests taken by Ed Walters to prove that he was telling the truth. In fact, in the *MUFON UFO Journal* No. 280, August 1991, Ed Walters wrote, "I have taken and passed four lie-detector tests administered by three different examiners, all of whom signed their reports."

Walters, went farther, writing, "The Salisberrys are guilty of quoting only part of the MUFON sponsored PSE [lie detection test]. The complete sentence says, 'The rest of the interview, from the standpoint of being able to say he [Ed Walters] is being truthful about what he saw and what he did, *does not show any reactions to cause this examiner to doubt his answers* [emphasis in original].'"

Walters also wrote, in that letter, "In April 1990, Rex Salisbury told other MUFON Investigators [Bruce Morrison, etc.] that he

had seen the 'Gulf Breeze type' UFO. That makes him a witness to the UFO that I photographed. [You figure that one out.] Either he was confused about seeing the UFO then, or he is confused about it being a hoax now."

These would seem to suggest that, like so many other UFO cases, we will not learn the truth. It comes down to who you want to believe. Tommy Smith, Nick Mock, and the teenagers, or Ed Walters who took four lie-detector tests and even had one of the MUFON investigators claiming to have seen the UFO Walters photographed.

Fortunately, there is additional information that will allow us to sort all this out. First, the lie-detector tests seem to indicate that Walters actually took the pictures of a real UFO even though he apparently has a reputation for practical jokes.

What we learn is that Charles Flannigan, one of the original investigators on the case, arranged for a polygraph examination to be given by Hugh Jones. Walters, however, failed to keep the appointment. When asked why, in September 1990, Walters said he had simply forgotten it.

Walters did arrange for two polygraph examinations himself. Walters apparently went to the phone book, looked for the names of polygraphers, and then called two to arrange for tests. Two examinations were arranged and performed on February 18 and 23, 1988. Walters explained the two examinations, writing, "I expected that I would receive the results then. Later I discovered that McLaughlin [the polygrapher] wanted to confer with some of my references and had also wanted to ask the MUFON investigators what particular questions they wanted to have answered."

According to the lengthy report prepared by Carol Salisbury, "During the discussion of the pre-test interview, the examiner states: 'He [Walters] claims to desire no personal gain or remuneration from these sittings [*sic*].' Yet, Charles Flannigan and Donald Ware both admit that they encouraged Walters to keep good notes, as early as December 1987, so that he could write a book. Additionally in January, 1988, Bud [*sic*] Hopkins writes: 'After outlining the salient facts and chronology of the Gulf Breeze sightings Don [Ware] told me he had called me for two reasons. First, he wanted to know if I would speak to Ed Walters, the key witness, and offer him some advice having to do with publishing issues.' The above seems to in-

dicating that Walters was contemplating the writing of a book as a commercial venture as early as January 1988 despite what he supposedly told the polygraphist.”

Jerry Black told the Salisberrys that a copy of McLaughlin’s report should be evaluated by a disinterested third party. They sent all the information they had to the Florida Polygraph Association. Billy J. Rakes, then the president, wrote back, telling them that an “overall fair and impartial analysis could not be made without the complete data from the exams.”

He also noted that McLaughlin had never been a member of the Florida Polygraph Association, nor any professional polygraph association that adheres to standards of practice, principles, and ethical conduct of polygraph examinations.

But more importantly, Rakes echoed a cautionary note that had been raised by Hugh Jones after Walters failed to appear for the first scheduled test. Rakes said that self-sponsored tests are not advisable. Jones had said, “Can one imagine the predicament of the polygraphist in having to tell the client, ‘Well, sir, your tests show that you are lying. That will be two hundred dollars, please.’”

The conclusion, then, of the examiners questioned by the Salisberrys, and of the president of the state board, was that self-sponsored examinations mean very little. Couple that to the report written by McLaughlin in which he writes, “With the information that is available to this examiner at this time, it is felt that Mr. Walters truly [*sic*] believes that the photographs and personal sitings [*sic*] he has described are true and factual to the best of his ability,” and a good case can be made that none of the tests are valid.

Rakes, in his letter to the Salisberrys wrote, “The paragraph under ‘opinion’ indicated the examiner based his opinion on his ‘feelings’ by stating ‘it is felt’ the examinee answered truthfully. Experts in the field base their conclusions and opinions on careful analysis of the examinee’s physiological reactions noted on the polygraphs during the examination.”

In other words, the test was not valid. Walters, at best, was ill-informed about the validity of the tests. At worst, he was misrepresenting the situation in an attempt to elevate his flagging reputation.

But that isn’t the end of the lie-detector tests. In 1988 Robert Oeschler, a self-promoted UFO expert, submitted two taped inter-

views to Dektor Counterintelligence & Security, Inc., in Glen Burnie, Maryland, for voice stress analysis. These two tapes are apparently the rest of the basis for Walters' claim of four lie-detector tests. The two administered by McLaughlin and the two voice stress analyses which are not, of course, the same as a polygraph.

The report, which was signed by Michael P. Kradz said, "The way the interviews were done and the type of information discussed does not give the examiner the verbal material necessary for him to be able to say if these individuals are being completely truthful with the interviewer."

So, there aren't actually four lie-detector tests that Walters passed. There are two self-sponsored tests, and two voice stress tests that were inclusive. When Walters wrote, "I have taken and passed four lie-detector tests administered by three different examiners, all of whom signed their reports" he wasn't being strictly accurate. It could be argued that a man whose reputation has been challenged has the right to a little self-promotion, but some of what he said in that same published letter was intentionally misleading.

Remember, Walters wrote about the voice stress tests by Dektor, "The rest of the interview, for what it's worth from the standpoint of being able to say he is being truthful about what he saw and what he did, *does not show any reactions to cause this examiner to doubt his answers* [again, emphasis added by Walters]."

But like so much else in this case, that is not the final word. Walters ended the statement with a period after the word answers. It should have been a comma, because it continued, "but the interview is not covering any specifics, therefore a more general discussion and it appears Ed is enjoying the discussion mainly about photography."

So, Walters, in his attempt to validate his sightings and his photographs, took the portions of the letter that he wanted, quoted only the parts that supported him, and left out the rest. It's not unlike a movie advertisement in which it quotes a reviewer as saying the film is "Stupendous," but neglects to reveal the reviewer had said, "A stupendous bore."

In that same letter, remember, Walters wrote that Rex Salisbury had seen the same type of UFO that Walters had photographed. Walters wrote, "That makes him a witness to the UFO I photographed." A stunning statement, if at all true.

However, in a letter dated August 6, 1991, Rex Salisbury clarified that point. He wrote, "I have never seen, nor have I claimed to have seen, an unidentified flying object which resembled any of the photos shown in Walters' book. I have seen the UFO model which was found in the attic of the Walters' former residence and it does resemble some of the photos in the book."

The confusion, if that is what it was, came about because Salisbury had told reporters for "A Current Affair" that he had seen a dim red glow while attending a Pensacola MUFON meeting and that the red glow did resemble the red glow on a photograph allegedly taken by Walters outside the meeting that night.

In fact, there were lots of sightings of the red glowing UFO around Gulf Breeze and Pensacola during the early 1990s. Hundreds of people saw it, dozens photographed it, and a few even made videotapes. Believers in Ed Walters said that it proved his sightings authentic. The logic seemed to suggest that the hundreds couldn't be in on the hoax.

The problem is that the red UFO was not the same thing that Walters had photographed. There were those, including the Salisberrys, who believed that the red UFO was nothing more than a railroad or emergency flare carried aloft by a balloon. In one piece of video it seems that a burning bit flare is seen to drop away. Believers suggest it is a "scout" ship falling away from the mother.

Bruce Maccabee, in a statement read by Walt Andrus at the MUFON Symposium held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in July 1992, said that he found such a suggestion—that is, the emergency flare—to be inconsistent with the facts. It is not only illegal to launch such a device, but if the burning material fell on a house, it could start a fire. Of course, when was the last time that someone pulling a practical joke worried about legalities and consequences of their actions?

All the evidence seems to weigh against Walters. He stands alone against a large number of witnesses to his love of jokes, his ability to fake photographs, and his attempts to induce others to join in the jokes. His lie-detector and voice stress tests are meaningless, and his desire for publicity seems to outweigh his caution. All of this makes a great circumstantial case suggesting the story is a hoax, but the die-hard believers are always going to say it doesn't prove it. Find real evidence that the pictures are faked.

The final test of this comes from an examination of the photographs that Ed Walters claimed to have taken over a period of several months. Some had suggested that if one was proven to be a hoax, then it could be claimed that all were a hoax. To me, that seems to be a valid theory. After all, if a man is taking photographs of a real object on a number of occasions, what purpose could be served by faking one? Instead of having twenty such pictures, he has only nineteen, which puts him way ahead of everyone except contactees.

One of the Ed Walters pictures has been proved to be faked. Photograph No. 19, which Walters claims to have taken from his truck, clearly shows the hood of the truck, part of the road, and the UFO. It is a hoax. The photograph itself also shows a darkening sky, a tree line, and some other detail, seen at twilight. Several disinterested photographic analysts have used that picture to prove the point.

We could go through, carefully, the analysis of all the other pictures that Walters took of the UFO. Some of them, under objective analysis, provide us with clues, but all the analysis from various sources leads to indefinite conclusions. Those who believe will continue to believe and those who are skeptical will find no persuasive evidence that the pictures are authentic. The case lives or dies on Photograph No. 19.

Early on in the investigation of the photographs, Bob Boyd tried to warn the MUFON investigator, among others, that there were problems with some of the Ed Walters pictures in general and Photograph No. 19 in particular. On March 7, 1988, he wrote, "The photographic evidence reveals certain inconsistencies which cause suspicion. One example is the state highway 191 B photograph [this is Photograph No. 19, which was taken as the object hovered over the highway] of the object a few feet above the road. The reflection below the object on the pavement does not conform to proper physical features consistent with such reflections."

Although this was a serious defect, Bruce Maccabee, according to the Salisberry study, conducted an investigation. Using a flashlight, Maccabee reported "... By holding a flashlight at various heights above the road and about 200 feet away it was determined that no reflection in the hood [of the truck] appeared until the light was seven or more feet above the road. This is because the

front of the hood was bent by a collision in the fall of 1986 . . ." Later, Maccabee revised his measurements, suggesting that it should be set at six feet.

More importantly, however, Ray Sanford said that he had examined Photograph No. 19, which had been "light blasted and enhanced for detail as published in Walters' book." He noticed that he could see the reflection of the tree line on the hood and believed that the reflection from the UFO illumination should also be visible. This especially when it is remembered that not only was there a light ring under the UFO, but porthole lights around the center and some sort of light on the top. Even if the light ring was too low to reflect in the hood of the truck, though there is debate about that, those other lights should have been reflected and they were not.

That led to the suggestion that another analysis be performed. The best of the various independent analyses was completed by William G. Hyzer, with an assist from his son, Dr. James B. Hyzer. Their investigation of Photograph No. 19 revealed "There was no UFO present and the photo is a product of multiple exposure techniques."

Hyzer, in his report, ". . . There are three sources of light related to the UFO-like object: 1) the crescent-shaped illuminated dome and dome light at the top of the object, 2) the light from the power ring on the underside of the object and, 3) the light reflected from the surface of the roadway. His photometric analysis of the photograph shows that all three of these sources are brighter than the overcast sky above the tree line and, hence, bright enough to cause a reflection on the hood of the truck."

To put all this in context without resorting to minor detail that is unimportant, it must be said that a number of experiments were performed on the road. The Salisberrys, among others using various light sources, distances, and a truck similar to the one owned by Walters, established an "envelope" of distances, heights above the road, and deflections right or left of the truck. Inside the envelope there would have been a reflection in the truck's hood. According to all the information available, the UFO, as well as the lights on it, fell inside the envelope. In other words, given the location, time of day, and evidence as available on Photograph No. 19 itself, there would have been a light reflection on the hood of the

truck if a UFO had been hovering over the road. That there was not was the conclusive evidence that Photograph No. 19 was a double exposure and therefore a hoax.

Hyzer, in his report, wrote, "It is this author's professional opinion that the results of this study are conclusive: if the UFO-like object in photograph number 19 had been real, reflections of luminous sources associated with the dome and dome light at the top of the object would have to be visible in the truck's hood; but they are not."

If that isn't enough to convince most of the UFO believers that they have been taken for a ride by Ed Walters, that the Gulf Breeze case is a hoax, and that the multiple witness sightings used to substantiate the Ed Walters story are the result of flares and balloons, let's add one more bit of data. It is provided by the original statements of Walters, taken right after he supposedly saw the first of the UFOs.

On November 16, 1987, Ed Walters, claiming to be an intermediary, provided the *Gulf Breeze Sentinel* with a statement about the facts surrounding the sighting and photographs. Now, I have no problem with Walters attempting to protect his identity by suggesting he was acting for someone else. But, I do have a problem when others begin to suggest that Walters' original statement was part of the deception and shouldn't be considered too important.

In that first statement, written by "Mr. X," it said, "I was reluctant at first to show them [the photos], but my wife convinced me to show them . . . I had just sat down to dinner . . . before it shot up and disappeared. . . . It was, however, quite a distance away. . . . The markings [windows?] on the upper and lower sections were aligned and equally spaced . . . no beams coming from it. None of that 'Star Wars' stuff; it was just a dull grey-blue thing."

As we have already learned, some of these things do not square with the story that Walters later told, nor would there be any reason to lie about them originally because they would do nothing to identify him as the photographer. They were just details of the story. Remember, Walters said that he was alone in the office, not that he had just sat down to dinner. The object was close, not far away. But the important point here is the claim that there were no beams coming from it.

According to the report prepared by the Salisberrys, the comment about no beams is important because, "Ed specifically denies the object had any beams at all. Yet, when he learned about Mrs. Zammit's sightings [UFO sightings made by another witness about the same time] and her blue beam, the feature was promptly incorporated into both his narrative and his photos. It has been argued that Ed had no way to know about Mrs. Zammit's sightings, as the published version of *The Sentinel* (Nov. 25) had no mention of the blue [beam]. This is true, but it is also true that in the report prepared by Don Ware on 14 Dec. 1987 the characteristics of Ed's objects are listed but no beam, blue or otherwise, is indicated. In this same report, however, Mrs. Zammit's blue beam is mentioned. The report is also signed by Duane Cook, so there is no doubt that he received a copy; since Ed was a daily visitor to *The Sentinel* in those days, it is clear how he learned about the blue beam."

At the expense of seeming to beat a dead horse, the report continued, "An interesting anachronism appears here. As correctly pointed out by Robert Boyd, the blue beam did not make an official appearance until the second MUFON report, dated January 25, 1988, and not until February 25, 1988, in *The Sentinel*, when Ed [said] that 'what was unreported was the UFO shot a blue beam that froze and lifted me from the ground.' But in Ed's photographs, the blue beam had debuted in PHOTO #11, allegedly taken on December 2! There are then two choices: (1) Ed lied when he completed his first MUFON report (as Mr. X) on December 7; or (2) he lied when he dated PHOTO #11 as taken on December 2. Either way, one more untruthfulness has been proven."

The one thing that I have learned during various investigations is that when a witness begins to change his story, it is a very good indication that the story is a hoax. When the witness begins to incorporate new elements into the story, in an attempt to provide additional corroboration, such as mentioning a blue beam after others had reported such an event, there is a very good chance that the case is a hoax. This is, and should be, the last item in a long list of items that suggest the photographs taken by, and the story told by Ed Walters is little more than a hoax.

Is it necessary, at this point, to again list the evidence against Ed Walters and the case? Shouldn't one or two of these items be enough

to suggest to all of us that the case is a hoax? How many different problems is it necessary to find before all of us become convinced of the truth?

The thing that strikes me here is how UFO investigations in the 1990s has evolved. We have learned how to conduct a detailed and proper investigation as outlined by the considerable work done by Carol and Rex Salisbury, with a great deal of help from Jerry Black. They spoke to dozens of potential witnesses, they cross-checked information, and they used all the tools available to them to learn the truth.

Others, rather than look at that truth, tried to find reasons not to believe it. This also demonstrates an aspect of UFO investigations of the 1990s. When the information flows against you, attack the messenger. Tommy Smith is a liar, though no proof of that is offered. Nick Mock is a liar and a criminal, though the record suggests something else. Photograph No. 19 might be a hoax, but that doesn't mean all the others are hoaxes. Ed Walters might be a practical joker, but that doesn't mean he knew how to take double exposures with his Polaroid camera. That he did take double exposures with that camera to fake "ghost" photos to fool and terrorize teenagers doesn't mean that he faked the UFO photographs.

We could go on, over the evidence against the Gulf Breeze sightings and photographs once again, but is it necessary? It is clear what happened here. Ed Walters, playing a somewhat admitted practical joke, found himself the center of attention, and he loved it. The fact that there was nothing to the sightings meant nothing to him. He grabbed the spotlight as quickly as he could, and has done everything possible to stay in it. But his story, from the very beginning, was a hoax.