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CONVERSATIONS WITH MAJOR DONALD KEYHOE

Donald Edward Keyhoe was one of the most prominent people in the world of UFOs in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. His influence on ufology was great. His five books and numerous magazine articles about UFOs convinced countless thousands of people that UFOs are real. Because of him, many of those readers became UFO researchers themselves who are still active today.

A prolific writer on many subjects, his books on UFOs were *The Flying Saucers are Real* (1950), *Flying Saucers From Outer Space* (1953), *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy* (1955), *Flying Saucers: Top Secret* (1960), and *Aliens from Outer Space* (1973).



Keyhoe was born in Iowa in 1897. In 1920 he graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy with a commission as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. He flew balloons and airplanes for a few years but was injured in a crash in Guam. He retired, worked for the government for some time and eventually began a career as a freelance writer.

During World War II he was recalled to active duty with the rank of Major and served in the Pentagon. Contacts that he made there were to prove valuable to him years later when he became interested in UFOs.

After the war he returned to private life and began writing again. He also test flew and evaluated airplanes for *True* magazine. From his early flying days on, he came to know many pilots, both civilian and military. Two years after Kenneth Arnold reported seeing "flying saucers" in 1947, *True* magazine assigned Keyhoe to look into claims of UFO sightings.

He was skeptical of such reports, but he interviewed numerous pilots and military officers and discovered that many of them had had sightings and close encounters. He soon became convinced not only that UFOs were real, but that they came from outer space and that the government was trying to cover up the truth.

In January 1957, Major Keyhoe became director of the newly formed National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). Under his direction, NICAP sought to bring public pressure on the government to reveal what it knew about UFOs.

He was ousted as NICAP's director in December 1969 but he remained on the board of governors. By then, government agents reportedly had infiltrated NICAP, and the character of the organization changed greatly in the following years. NICAP became little than a report collection agency, many members resigned, and in 1980 it was shut down for good.

I never met Keyhoe. I did see him at a UFO conference once but didn't get to talk to him. However, I did speak to him by phone several times in the late 1970s when I was a reporter for the National Enquirer. By then, he was in his early 80s, living with his wife near Luray, Virginia. He was still active, keeping an office nearby where he went for several hours a day. He died in 1988 at the age of 91.

We talked five times in 1977, 1978 and 1979 for thirty to fifty minutes each time. The first call was on October 7, 1977. I was trying to learn something about an Air Force general named Ramey. Ramey's name meant nothing to me at the time and it was only two years later when I began looking into the 1947 Roswell incident that I learned much about him.

(By odd coincidence, less than a month later I went to Puerto Rico to look into UFO sightings near the town of Aguadilla on the western coast of the island. I spent one or two nights in a converted military building on a base that had once been known as the Ramey Air Force Base.)

Below are excerpts from that and subsequent conversations, edited to eliminate pauses, redundancies, re-starts and the like, and to avoid boring the reader with endless and sometimes awkward ellipses.

Please note: Anyone familiar with Major Keyhoe and his books and magazine articles about UFOs will probably find little new in these transcripts.

RAMEY AND THE JULY 1952 UFO FLAP

(I had phoned Major Keyhoe because I had seen a reference to Ramey in one of his books and after introducing myself, we talked about Ramey and who he was.)

KEYHOE: . . . Ramey was the chief of the Air Defense Command.

PRATT: Did you ever talk to him personally?

KEYHOE: Yes, I did, after the conference was over . . .

[A UFO flap occurred over a period of eleven nights in 1952. Between 2 A.M. July 18 and 5 A.M. July 29, UFOs were seen and/or tracked on radar over the Washington, D.C. area at least 17 times, with some of the witnesses being military personnel or airline pilots. The UFOs were tracked on radar eight times with as many as 10 to 12 objects being detected at a time. Jet fighters were scrambled at least twice from bases in nearby Delaware and New Jersey. The incidents attracted considerable publicity, and at 4 P.M. on July 29 – just eleven hours after eight to twelve UFOs were tracked by radar – the Pentagon staged a large Washington press conference to debunk the flood of UFO reports. Major General Roger M. Ramey participated in the conference, as did Major General John A. Samford, the chief of Air Force Intelligence. Ramey and Samford were referred to as the Air Force's top two saucer experts]

KEYHOE: . . . and Ramey was very polite and certainly very smart. He managed to evade the pointed nature of each question and somehow seemed to be covering it anyway (Keyhoe chuckled), but of course that was because he had to. He was under orders like all the rest of them, but after that time I don't recall having any other contact with him.

PRATT: Somebody told one of our editors or the publisher that he was an acquaintance of Ramey's back in the '50s. The man who gave us this was a former brigadier general himself, I believe. But he was under the impression that Ramey very definitely believed these (objects) were from outer space. Whether he would say that publicly, he didn't know, but –

KEYHOE: Well, there were lots of them that did believe it, even at that big press conference. They, naturally, evaded these things, but I wouldn't be a bit surprised. I did ask the senior public information officer there, Albert M. Chop, who also believed although he wouldn't admit it until after he resigned. But he believed they were interplanetary. But he said, "Well, I'm not going to give you any names but there are several pretty high ranking officers, including generals." And I said, "Brigadier, major general?" He just grinned and said, "Generals, let's just go with that." . . .

RUPPELT RENEGES UNDER PRESSURE

PRATT: I know Ruppelt's book mentioned that several officers in the Pentagon seemed to be believers but he didn't name anybody.

[Air Force Captain Edward J. Ruppelt was a bombardier on a B-29 in World War II, serving in China and the South Pacific. After the war he went to

college but was recalled to active duty when the Korean War started. He was assigned to the Air Technical Intelligence Corps at Wright Field (later Wright-Paterson Air Force Base) near Dayton, Ohio. For about two years he was in charge of Project Grudge, the Air Force's investigation of UFOs, and later, when its name was changed, Project Blue Book. He left the service in 1953 and three years later he published the widely read book, ***The Report On Unidentified Flying Objects.***]

KEYHOE: Yeah, well, too bad about Ruppelt. See, he came out with that book and it caused the Air Force a lot of trouble. He had made some statements in public, articles and so forth, and newspaper interviews, and they put the heat on him. Well, after he had gone on inactive, he got a job with an aerospace company, and the Air Force put the heat on him and also the company. If he didn't renege on some of these things he said, they were not going to have anything more to do with the company. So he added three new chapters to the (revised edition of the) book . . . and he completely reneged on the whole thing and said there was no evidence. It was a ridiculous thing and all that which crucified him. He died of a heart attack shortly after that, and I think that had a lot to do with it. In the three chapters he added, he takes a crack or two at me, and before that he'd been very carefully giving me inside information. He managed to get about 50 cases, really important cases, cleared for me right after that big (July 29, 1952) conference. (General) Samford, who tried to explain away the whole thing, must have been privately in favor of getting it out because shortly after that he allowed headquarters to release all these cases to me with a definite clearance and a statement they were all unexplained, unsolved . . .

THE PENTAGON 'LOSES' RAMEY

PRATT: All right, this is Major General Roger M. Ramey. Is that correct?

KEYHOE: Yeah.

PRATT: And he was chief of the Air Defense Command at that time?

KEYHOE: That's right.

PRATT: Son of a gun. An Air Force public affairs guy (at the Pentagon) went through his list of generals the other day and could find no reference to any such man (Ramey).

KEYHOE: Oh, for- (laughs)

PRATT: That's curious. But he said the list was almost complete but not quite. I'm not quite sure what that meant. He had all living and dead generals but he couldn't come across any by that name.

KEYHOE: Well, it's possible, since you were inquiring about top figures

connected with UFOs, that they may have just simply decided not to give you that information. What kind of an article, if you don't mind, are you planning to do on this?

PRATT: Well, this came down from the publisher who said, this guy (Ramey) if you can find him, he used to believe that UFOs came from outer space. Why don't you find him and talk to him? Well, I have to find out first what his real name is and then find out if he's still living and, if so, where he is living, and then if he'll talk to us about such things. So many high-ranking former officers just will not talk about UFOs, if they believe anything, you know?

KEYHOE: Yeah. That's true, although quite a number of them have broken over lately and while they ask that their names not be used, they've come out and admitted the whole thing.

[Nothing ever came of my attempt to speak to General Ramey. He had died years before.]

BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT'S SECRECY

KEYHOE: It's incredible that they (the military) have gotten away with this for 30 years. I've been on this subject longer than any other writer on UFOs and sometimes I wished to hell I'd never heard of it, because I was a writer on various different subjects and even selling pictures now and then, and I was really living a very relaxed life. I can't explain all this but I have been working on something which could put this thing into the open. If it doesn't get into the open, the public will know what was turned down. It's a plan that I have been told by my insiders at the Pentagon, that headquarters would consider seriously. (There are) three things that would keep them doing all the denials, and one of them is they're sure they're going to catch holy hell if they come out and admit they've been misleading the public and being really harsh in some of their attacks on some of the witnesses for 30 years. The next one is they are afraid they will scare a lot of people if they admit that these things are interplanetary and that some of the accidents on record were caused by UFOs, not proof of hostility but they were caused by it. And mainly because we've been chasing and shooting at them. And the third one is - and this one I can't accept it - is that there is a very terrible answer to all this, and the CIA and the Air Force and the national defense security council are agreed that they must fight to the last inch to keep this from coming out because it would cause panic all over the world. (Some) of these things are Above Top Secret. I know a case, well several cases in that grouping, and one of the chief witnesses told me privately that he was told at the Pentagon that they would like to have the copy of his report (on his UFO sighting). He wasn't supposed to have a copy anyway. He was supposed to make a single copy without any carbon or anything, and he told them, "You know, I was instructed not to make any copy of it, and I didn't." And they said, "Well, that's too bad because we've mislaid or lost your copy," and I happened to know every damned thing that was in that because I got, not a verbatim copy, but a copy of all the facts concerned. And

this officer told me, "I know of at least 10 other retired Air Force officers who have been involved in rather strong UFO cases who have been given the same story." And he says they're getting ready in case Carter does decide to order this thing released, all of a sudden everything will be "lost" or burned. So, it's really a very, very tough and amazing situation.

[In 1976 at a stop during the presidential election campaign, a fellow National Enquirer reporter asked candidate Jimmy Carter: "You once saw a UFO. If you were President, would you re-open the inquiry into UFOs?" Carter replied: "Well, I would make the information we have about those sightings available to the public. I never have tried to identify what it was I saw. It was a light in the western sky. It was very unique. There were about twenty of us who saw it. None of us could figure out what it was. I don't think it was anything solid. It looked to me like it was just a light. It was a very peculiar aberration. But I don't make fun of people who say they've seen unidentified objects in the sky." The reporter then asked: "The United States used to have a body that investigated UFOs, but that's been discontinued. Would you re-open it?" To which, Carter replied: "I don't know yet." Carter then moved on with his entourage. When Carter became president, pro-UFO people hoped he would carry through on his pledge to release all documents. Other people, particularly in the Pentagon, were afraid he would.]

PRATT: I had an interview by phone with an Assistant Secretary of Defense about 10 days ago, and he confirmed that the military forces have never stopped reporting UFOs to the Pentagon -

KEYHOE: Well, that's right.

PRATT: - and if you can point out the time and place where one of these occurred, and go through the FOI (Freedom of Information) Act, you can get the information on it.

KEYHOE: Well, you will unless it happens to be one of those Above Top Secret ones. In that case, you're going to find yourself up against a stonewall . . .

PILOTS ALLOWED TO TALK, SAYS OFFICIAL

PRATT: This guy, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, his name is Donald Ross, when I asked him if there is any penalty for a serviceman or former serviceman to talk about these things, he says: "No. Of course, providing there is no security or vital classified information involved." Of course, that's the key. Now, if classified data IS involved and they talk about it, then they do risk being penalized.

KEYHOE: I know that because I know two very close friends of mine who have been on UFO investigations with me, and one of them did have a very dramatic sighting with several Air Force witnesses and he will not confirm or deny

anything. I told him what I had heard, and I am positive that what I heard was right, and from the way he looked at me and he said, "Well, I can't confirm or deny anything. Please don't ask me any more about it." But there are enough people fighting it. I'm amazed that [Senator Barry] Goldwater didn't follow up on what he told me he was going to do. He decided that it was wrong what's being done, harming responsible, honest witnesses. And there's another angle because if this thing does start partway to breaking, then the Air Force and CIA blocks it. I think that if some of these people who are sore as the devil at the way they have been discredited could get together - quite a number of them were pilots or connected with high military sections or divisions - I think it would go right on the front pages and out on the air with a special broadcast . . .

THE TERRIBLE FIX THE AIR FORCE GOT ITSELF IN

KEYHOE: I have realized more and more the hell of a situation the Air Force is in, mainly because of the early years when that policy was carried out of discrediting witnesses and so forth and denying and making it so completely negative. (They're) going to catch hell for it and the people who started it are either dead or long retired. And so many times they've been in a spot they didn't know what to do and they hate to crucify anybody and yet some of their top Air Force officers have been accused of being absolutely deluded, and they're damned sore about it . . . You say you have a story coming out and on the NASA angle?

PENTAGON RULES REQUIRE REPORTS ON UFOS

PRATT: Yes, we've got a story on the NASA thing and I have written a story about the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs admitting that they have been reporting these things all along, they never stopped and all that, and giving some details on JANAP 146E, you know-

[JANAP is the acronym for Joint Army-Navy-Air Force Publication, the regulations for reporting intelligence sightings of unidentified aircraft, missiles, vessels and so on. 146E is that version of the procedures, superseding earlier versions. These regulations specifically include sightings of "Unidentified flying objects" and what to report about them.]

KEYHOE: Is that still in effect?

PRATT: Still in effect. You know, it has two and a half pages of details on what to report on unidentifiable objects and things like that . . . Part of it all stems from a classified report on that Iranian UFO incident a year ago. That was finally declassified and released just a month ago. I've been trying to get a hold of it from various sources in Washington, the White House and so on down the line, and I kept getting told there was no such thing. And then some other guy, an American who lives in Berlin, using the FOI Act, he was working for the past five or six months and he finally succeeded, and they finally released the

darned thing and declassified and released it. Right up to that time they were absolutely denying it. What we got was just a simple Telex message from a defense attaché (in [Tehran](#)) running maybe 500 or 600 words. (But) the interesting thing was that it came in to the DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency] and then was re-transmitted to the White House, the State Department, the NSA, the CIA and on down the line, and they kept telling me there was no such thing. Somebody was lying and they knew it.

KEYHOE: I'll tell you, I don't see how it can go on much longer without being broken because so many people in influential positions or whoever with a good name have been keeping still because- airline captains have been told by the top airline officials to keep your mouth shut, don't be talking about this thing.

WHAT EDDIE RICKENBACKER SAID ABOUT UFOs

PRATT: That's interesting. I talked to half a dozen airlines the other day to see what their policy was on UFOs because this guy in the Pentagon told me, I'd asked him if airline pilots are required to report UFOs and he said, "No, but they are requested to." So I went to the airlines to see if they had a policy on this and they said they didn't, that it was up to the individual crews to report such things if they saw fit. But I didn't think to ask them if they were told to be quiet about it.

KEYHOE: Well, I don't think it's a written order. I used to know Rickenbacker . . .

[Eddie Rickenbacker, a top fighter ace in the first World War and later president of Eastern Airlines].

. . . We were friends and one night I just put it up to him. I said, "I know some cases of sightings by some of your pilots and what's the chance of coming up there and talking about this?" and he said, "Don, I'll tell you. Our policy so far has been 'Don't talk about any of these things unless you can prove it absolutely down to the last period.' Some of them, I admit, are fine pilots and they are reliable and capable. I'll admit I'm against getting any big publicity because you scare airline passengers, it isn't going to help."

[April 14, 1978 phone interview]

CARTER'S PLEDGE TO RELEASE UFO FILES

PRATT: I understand you're speaking at the MUFON Symposium this summer.

KEYHOE: Yes, I have actually been trying to work out a series of lectures or syndicated articles giving the whole inside story on some things I have not mentioned publicly because I knew the ordeal that they were going through at (Air Force) headquarters and so forth, with CIA and pressure and all. And I

didn't see how it would do anything more than add to their trouble. But now, what happened after that (movie) **Close Encounters of the Third Kind**, (President) Carter just got swamped with letters demanding that he keep his promise. And he tried to get rid of it and the Air Force stalled and simply said they couldn't discuss it right now but they had to have a special group of experts talk with him and the CIA. Well, he jumped to NASA, and the CIA immediately told NASA to reject it, which they did. And so finally Carter seems to have been convinced that he better just lay off for a while. But there's a lot of Air Force headquarters people think that he might just go ahead and order everything released, and if he does, that would include the Above Top Secret cases. (They) are the ones that scare the hell out of quite a number of people. They're only a relatively small number and the percentage is about less than one percent of the total reports. But some of them in there are disastrous, airplane crashes, mostly pilots pursuing these things and trying to force them down and things like that. But at any rate it would be bad. Some newspapers and TV people would concentrate on that. Well, I figured a way to get around it and I talked it over with my Pentagon sources and they said it's a helluva good plan, and if you had only been able to get it in here earlier, it might have worked, but the situation now is such that we don't think the Secretary (of the Air Force) would consider it. So, I'm going to take everything I got and either try to frame it into lectures or else I'll go ahead with syndication . . .

CRASHED SAUCERS AND LITTLE BODIES

KEYHOE: I have criticized the Air Force, and sometimes the CIA, but I haven't been nasty and blasted the hell out of them. But even so, I have criticized and I've gradually learned more, and I see now the hell of a spot they've been in. Because if they came out with - you see, one of the big factors is the fact that Russia and the United States have both been trying to get the technical secrets (of UFOs). And if either one gets them ahead of the other, that's it. They own the world. (There) have been several pilots who lost their lives or disappeared trying to get these things on the ground. And Russia's had the same trouble. It's sort of a hidden war. Well, if we could get one, I suppose it would be worth all of the trouble that they've gone to . . .

PRATT: There've been all those reports of crashed saucers and little bodies-

KEYHOE: Yes, but nothing that crashed was in any condition that they could find out the technical answers to it. One of them that did crash and burn, there was nothing that they could analyze.

PRATT: You feel they do have wrecked vehicles but nothing that will tell them anything?

KEYHOE: They have some parts of them, yeah. I was told by sources that I believed right along, "It's infuriating that we still do not have the technical answers. We know what the results are, like their control of gravity, and we've been spending millions on it. But we still don't have the answers to that." . . .

WHY THE GOVERNMENT IS SO SECRETIVE

PRATT: Have you ever figured out why the government has been so secretive about these things?

KEYHOE: Well, in the first place, they were afraid it might be some Russian weapon that they stole from the Nazis, and then they realized that (the Nazis) couldn't have possibly developed it. They didn't have any factories left. And it certainly wasn't any U.S. secret, as some people were suggesting. So the only other answer was the extraterrestrial one. And, I don't think there's any question but that's been proved right down the line, although lately several publications - did you notice that the **Reader's Digest** and the **Smithsonian** both have taken pretty harsh cracks at-

PRATT: Well, **Reader's Digest** says the main source there was Phil Klass-

KEYHOE: Yeah, I know that-

PRATT: - and, you know, Stan Friedman did a critique on that article and found like 60 or 80 factual errors-

KEYHOE: I know. He sent me a copy-

PRATT: - and they refused to mention anything about that-

KEYHOE: Well, do you know Klass?

PRATT: I've talked to him on the phone. I've never met him in person.

KEYHOE: Well, I know him and I can tell you this. When I was director of NICAP, he came up there one day and said, "Well, you can close up shop pretty soon because I've got all the answers." And I said, "WHAT?" And he said, "I took three weeks off and I worked it out and I've got all of them." And I thought, "This is a lunatic." Then he came along with several statements on cases and there wasn't a damned thing in there that would stand up. And I said, "Look, I'm busy. If you want to write this down and put it in a letter to me or the board of governors, OK, but I don't think you know what you're talking about." Well, he's a very nasty bastard . . . Did I tell you about my encounter with him?

PRATT: I don't think so.

KEYHOE: He once jumped in front of a television camera down at the Press Club in Washington. I was having an interview. And of course they stopped the camera, and the head cameraman looked at me. I said, "Look, Klass, you were not invited here," and he said, "Well, I'm a member of the press." And I said, "No, you are not. You are an editor for an aviation magazine. You can stay here

if you keep your mouth shut. Don't try any more of this monkey business or I'm going to have you put out." And all the newsmen said, "Sit down or get out." And he shut up. But how **Reader's Digest** swallowed that, I don't understand.

DID KLASS GET SECRET HELP FROM PENTAGON?

PRATT: I don't know except that they went to him first, you know, and figured that was the truth. I do know that he apparently is a good friend of Dave Williamson over at NASA, who had something to do with that decision over there, and on the Tehran case, what really annoys me about - do you remember the Tehran case, September 1976, the two jets over Tehran?

KEYHOE: Yeah.

PRATT: OK, a fellow over in Berlin named Charles Huffer, who's an American teaching school over there, he went after that through the Freedom of Information Act. We had heard there was a government report on that incident. Well, he went after this from last April until August, when they finally released a two and a half page, it's like a telegram, from Tehran describing the incident. And the Pentagon finally declassified that and released it with several deletions. And later on Klass was bragging to Stan Friedman in a letter that he had a copy of that several weeks BEFORE the thing was declassified and released but he got an UNEXPURGATED version of it. That's a little annoying that he has access to classified documents that the rest of us don't have.

KEYHOE: Right. I don't know whether that's true or not because-

PRATT: He claims this anyway.

KEYHOE: - I wouldn't believe a damned word he says . . .

WHY UFO REPORTS GET 'LOST' IN PENTAGON

KEYHOE: There are several sources that I know in the Pentagon would like to have everything come out, if it can be done safely and wisely, but they said that if we release all that Carter orders, everything released, the press would immediately seize on these very serious and alarming reports, and they would scare the holy hell out of people. So I can understand why the Air Force over the years burned or destroyed some of those reports. I know that one pilot reported an encounter and he wanted to check certain points. He went up to the Pentagon and they said, "We're very sorry, Colonel, but your report has been lost. We've been searching for it but apparently somehow it got lost." Isn't that something?

PRATT: Yes, it is. Strange. Let me give you a name. Have you ever heard of a General Kelly in any investigation into UFO incidents?

KEYHOE: The only Kelly that I can think of is Major General Joe Kelly, who was

head of legislative liaison way back there. He made a couple of admissions that they were still pursuing UFOs for any technical secrets involved. He made that (statement) to a congressman. I think he was unwise because he didn't expect it to come out, but the congressman sent NICAP a copy and later on he made ANOTHER statement saying they were still being pursued . . .

AIRLINER DESTROYED BY A UFO?

KEYHOE: Well, you know, this subject — I wish I had never even got dragged into it — is the most infuriating thing. I think it's the biggest deception in the history of the United States. One man I know, a TV newsman, he didn't want to be quoted, he said, "You're not right. It's something else. It's even bigger than that." But I don't think so. The strange part of it is that it's lasted 30 years! And it took a long time before I could see the reasoning back of it. They've had one crisis after another. One case that I know of that scared headquarters badly was that Braniff airliner destruction over Texas in '59. You know that case?

PRATT: What is this now?

KEYHOE: The Braniff airliner that disintegrated over Texas in 1959. It was four nights after the Air Force tried to force down a UFO near Redmond, Oregon. This thing had been hovering and changing positions but was down fairly low. The FAA flashed word to the Air Force and the Air Force sent six jets and grabbed two more that were nearby and they came in and started to try to force this thing down. Well, the object shot flames from the under section and went right straight up through the middle of the jet group. It's a wonder it didn't knock one of them out. This thing was tracked by radar, going up and down and so forth, and quite a lot of people saw it. It was near dawn and it got some publicity. The Air Force came out and said it was a balloon. Anyway, four nights after that, this Braniff airliner was flying over Buffalo, Texas, and a glowing object was seen off to one side and something appeared to shoot out of it toward the airliner, and the next instant the airliner completely disintegrated. One of the CAB (Civil Aeronautics Board, later the FAA) men said that there was no question about whatever caused it was from outside. And a Braniff vice president said absolutely no bomb could possibly have caused such complete utter destruction. And an Air Force major flying a bomber near there said he saw this thing happen and it was like a typical A-bomb explosion. When that got to headquarters, they were scared because that could have made headlines all over the United States. I still don't understand why it didn't. There have been several cases of bad scares. But it's been going on and that it is part of the reason for the constant ordeal. They never know at (Air Force) headquarters what's going to happen next.

PRATT: . . . Just changing the subject slightly, have you ever heard of two jets crashing in Death Valley in California, near Baker, California, in December 1960, in pursuit of UFOs?

KEYHOE: Uh, no, I'm not positive.

PRATT: There's a fellow in Alaska who I've been corresponding with who claims to have had maybe a hundred sightings over the past 30 years, mostly in Alaska and down in Brazil. And there was a period when he was in Death Valley helping with some mining work and on his day off he saw these two UFOs coming down the valley followed by three jets. Then suddenly the two lead jets just disintegrated in air and the third one just did a big barrel turn and went back towards Edwards Air Force Base. He said (it was) as if they just collided with an invisible wall. And he said within a couple of hours the whole valley was full of Army and Marine vehicles, people searching for the wreckage.

...

[October 10, 1978 phone interview]

TWELVE GIANT SPACECRAFT IN ORBIT

PRATT: Do you have nobody at the Pentagon who's willing to speak out publicly?

KEYHOE: No, I've got at least five people and I think maybe I'm getting one more, an officer that was retired and he was brought back on active duty. He's been very much against this (cover-up) but they're afraid. The ones that I know and worked with secretly, they trust me because I wouldn't reveal them even them if I were threatened with court martial. But they don't know exactly what to do because it's too powerful to deal with, the CIA is really running this thing now. And that is too bad. I'm trying to make a final move regarding this letter (to President Carter) because I put a lot of time and effort into this thing and if Carter ever had time to read the letter, even if he didn't read the enclosures, I think it might make him consider coming out in the open.

PRATT: What do you have besides a letter that you want him to read? Do you have some data?

KEYHOE: Well, I didn't enclose them all because I didn't want to throw everything in one lump there. There's one thing that I did stress that very few people seem to remember, about the tracking and sighting of these giant spacecraft. It really surprised me that that hasn't gotten more attention and scared people. (They) have records of at least twelve giant spacecraft that came down and orbited the earth and five cases where they came down fairly close. Two of them came down and hovered around between Washington and (Baltimore) for about an hour one night and the Air Force sent its best jets up there but they couldn't get high enough to do anything. And one of the pilots told me later, he said, "Thank God, because all of us were scared, you know, if we get up there and start shooting at them, that's the end of us." (And) later there was a chartered plane out over the pacific carrying Air Force officers and other military men to Japan after World War II, in 1965, and three of these things came down and paced this plane for about five or six minutes. And they had a very careful radar check on it showing the distance and they estimated

the size, and the senior Air Force officer who was called up to the cabin said it was at least two thousand feet long. It was number one. The other two were a little bit behind it. But these- do you remember the Army said they created this Sky Sweep and said (in explaining the giant spacecraft) there were some asteroids that came in and started circling the earth? Well, you don't need to be an astronomer to know that's a lot of damned nonsense. It's utterly impossible for even one to do it and for TWELVE of them to come down and circle the earth at low altitude and then go back up again, that's ridiculous. So, we have been circled by really large spacecraft from some more advanced civilization. I mean, there's no question about it . . .

PRATT: Just this past March, there were reports in Iran of a number of UFOs about twenty times the size of a 747, which is pretty damned big, and this was supposedly picked up by government radars and even caused one airliner to lose power and dive down for several thousand feet . . .

GENERAL MAKES BLATANT THREAT

KEYHOE: In (my) last book I think I mentioned (the giant spacecraft), not as definitely as I said it to you, but I did mention that they did have them and there wasn't a panic, but they were really scared at Air Force headquarters. The CIA was scared too because if those things happened to come down in daylight over a big city, I don't know what in the world would stop the panic. Even though not one of (the spacecraft) has given any sign of hostility. The small ones, a few of them, have been involved in accidents, which were mostly our fault for trying to bring them down. None of these big ones, as far as I know, has ever indulged in any hostility or even come close enough to frighten pilots of a plane. I don't know whether I can get my sources at the Pentagon to send me anything (on the giant spacecraft) because they're pretty scared. Air Force headquarters knows that I have been getting inside information and they have been trying like hell to find out who it was. And there was a general who came up here and told me that I was doing something that was very unpatriotic, being a military man and so forth. He didn't impress me. I said, "Well, General, what the Air Force's been doing, and you know very well, is bad. I understand why it happened at the start but by now it's gotten very bad and even more dangerous." Finally he got to where he was practically threatening me. He said, "You know, we can get you put on active duty and sent over to the other side of the world and shut up" And I said, "General, I have a lot of very high friends. I'm a Naval Academy graduate and I have classmates, two of them are vice admirals, and they have told me, 'All you need to do if they start crucifying you is just let us know, and we'll jump in and raise hell.'" And he said, "Well, the Navy won't be able to do anything about this. We can do it." I said, "What you're doing is threatening me with being forced off into oblivion probably and not even my family would know where I was." And he said, "Well, sometimes things have to be done." I said, "Well, General, you're not going to like this. I have been, not threatened like this, but treated pretty badly. This office is bugged. It has been for some time, and every word that you have said, the threats you have made, are on record." And he looked at me, his

face turned red and then kind of funny, and he said, "I didn't want to do this but I'm under orders." And I said, "I know that, but I am not going to take it. If anybody makes an attempt like that, there's going to be copies of these bugged conversations (sent out). It's going to raise a lot of hell." Well, I never heard a word from anybody in the Pentagon since then, that is, on that score.

PRATT: How recently was this?

KEYHOE: About two years ago.

. . .

[November 7, 1978 phone interview]

CUBAN MiG IS BLOWN OUT OF SKY

PRATT: A friend of mine in Tucson told me an interesting story a day or two ago. He was asking me about the so-called Cuban MiG incident in March '67. Are you familiar with that?

KEYHOE: The Cuban what?

PRATT: The Cuban MiG being destroyed by a UFO in 1967. Have you heard about that one?

KEYHOE: I can't recall -

PRATT: This is something that came to light earlier this year. Stan Friedman in his lectures had come across some guy who came up to him (after one of his lectures) and said that he (had been) part of a Navy surveillance monitoring station in the Key West area, monitoring Cuban military transmissions, and that sometime in March of '67 he overheard a report that a bogey was coming in from northeast Atlantic toward the Cuban land mass. And they scrambled two MiGs, I don't know what they were, MiG-21s or what. These two guys got up there and not too far off the coast they spotted a huge sphere. The ground people were trying to make radio contact with the object, and got no reply. So they ordered the planes to open fire on the object. The leader said that he had armed his weapons and locked onto the target, and about that time his plane just disintegrated in air. The wingman screamed hysterically that the leader's plane had been destroyed. And with that the UFO shot up to 30,000 meters - they were at about 10,000 meters then - and just headed off towards South America. And that was the end of it.

KEYHOE: Huh!

PRATT: And what brought this all to prominence recently was that I had tried to get some confirmation from Washington and got nowhere. So I wrote to the Cuban government and didn't get any answer there. Then a young friend of mine in Philadelphia named Bob Todd, who is a researcher, had tried to get

some confirmation too, and I think the CIA, in fact, suggested that he write to the Cubans. But, he first wrote to the NSA (National Security Agency). This information originally had gone to the NSA (from Key West) but the NSA paid no attention to it. Then the (surveillance monitoring station personnel) reported it again, and someone from NSA came down and took the tapes and the written record, and said it was just a malfunction of the plane, and that was the end of it. So, my friend in Philadelphia, since he got nowhere with NSA, finally wrote a letter saying he intended to write to the Cuban government to inquire about this (incident) since he could get nothing out of the American government. (He asked if there was) anything in this report that is confidential and should not be passed on to the Cubans. OK?

FBI AGENTS COME DOWN HARD ON RESEARCHER

KEYHOE: Uh-huh.

PRATT: He got visited by two FBI agents. This was the same night we were in Dayton (at the 1978 MUFON Symposium), OK?

KEYHOE: Oh yeah.

PRATT: On the Friday night we were in Dayton they went to his house in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, and they spent about an hour and a half to two hours with him, sort of putting the fear of God into him. And they started reading him provisions of the espionage act, or something like, that about revealing secrets to a foreign government under threat of penalty of imprisonment or death, that type of thing, you know?

KEYHOE: (Laughs) . . .

THREE F-102s VANISH - INSIDE A UFO?

PRATT: And the (FBI agents) asked what his source was and he finally told them it was me, Bob Pratt. So I thought I was going to get a call next, but I never did. But the thing is that, visit by the FBI was publicized pretty much in the UFO literature, the ***APRO Bulletin*** and several other things, and this friend of mine in Tucson was asking me if I had gotten any flack from the FBI on it. I said no, and then he started in on another incident. He said that within six months of that, three F-102s out of Florida were vectored in on a UFO or a huge blip on the radar screen and all three merged with the big blip and the big blip just disappeared and that was the last they ever saw of the three jets. The thing is, he said the original source of this material was you.



KEYHOE: Yeah.

PRATT: The F-102s?

KEYHOE: Yes. That's right. It was not supposed to be leaked out either. I've gotten to the point where, I'm very careful in telling even my best friends. Sometimes they get excited and tell somebody else. I told Len Stringfield and he put that incident in his book [**SITUATION RED, The UFO Siege**, Doubleday, 1977, pages 143-144]. I did not get a copy of the book before it came out, the manuscript, and I suppose I should have nailed it down, but he'd been very good about not revealing anything without my say-so. But that case, I think, is absolutely definite, is true. A retired Air Force colonel came through Luray to see a friend of his with whom he had worked in World War II. I don't know how they got around to the UFO subject, but he gave them the points of this (F-102) thing and there were three other witnesses there. One of them wanted to call me and have me come over there. That's when this guy got scared because he knew it might be published. But the next day just after he left, another colonel who lives in this area told me this, and then I got together with the other two witnesses who were there. I saw each one of them separately and they had the same details each time. And this colonel, whom I know quite well, is not easily fooled. He said, "Actually, I was startled to see how much tension built up while this man was revealing this stuff." Since then I tried to check with some of my Pentagon sources and first one of them said he didn't know anything about it. And the other one hesitated and said, "Uh, I have HEARD of it." And he said, "But I don't know whether I can go any farther than that." I said, "Well, at least they haven't sent anybody around to cut my throat." And he said, "No, that's one thing that they would like to avoid, having any more publicity about it." So, I think that's a true case, these three jets disappeared and then immediately after that the UFO went up vertically at terrific speed off the radar . . . I've noticed within the last year sources who used to very carefully give me leads, give me full details of certain cases, have become very cautious, and some of them won't even meet me anywhere. They won't talk on the phone - I understand that - and they won't write. I saw one of them in New York some time ago and he said, "They know damn well that several people in the Pentagon must be tipping off Keyhoe and they would like to catch one and nail it down and crucify him." . . .

PILOTS TERRIFIED BY GIANT UFOS

PRATT: Do you have a lot of information that you just cannot reveal? I'm not talking about names now. I'm talking about incidents-

KEYHOE: Well, there are some. I remember when those gigantic UFOs were tracked orbiting the earth and two of them came down between Washington and Baltimore and hovered around 79,000 feet. Well, after that thing I talked with one of the pilots who was in the jet squadron that was spread out trying to get up near (one of) these things. And he told me, "I have never been more terrified in my life. Just to look at that thing you could tell that you would be

crazy to go up there and try shoot at it. Thank God we couldn't get up that close." Later on he had a friend (who told me), "Yeah, I was there and I was scared too. I don't know any of the pilots that were involved who weren't scared just seeing these damned, huge things like that. And there was no question about those being real." I've always wondered why that giant spacecraft angle did not break wide open.

PRATT: How many men might have seen these things? How many pilots went up after this?

KEYHOE: Well, there was more than one squadron, but they were divided into groups. One was coming from one base (in Delaware), and the other from New Jersey, the same base (that responded during the 1952 Washington overflights). He didn't give me an exact number. I would estimate that there were at least 18 jets that were up there at that time. And all this time the thing was being tracked, these two things were being tracked by FAA radar and Air Force radar.

UFO PAPERS STOLEN FROM HOTEL

PRATT: Do you have trouble sometimes things disappear?

KEYHOE: You mean material?

PRATT: Yes.

KEYHOE: That happened once when I was in Washington staying at a hotel where we almost always go, the Shoreham. I came back (to my room) and I couldn't find some material that I had brought down to check with NICAP. Finally one of the maids there, whom we had known for quite a little while, said, "Who are those men that have been looking for you?" And I said, "What's that?" And she said, "After you had registered, you mentioned you were going out somewhere. They came up and they were in your room. I don't what they were doing." Well, they got away with some stuff in there. But I very seldom take any red-hot material and leave it sitting around anywhere . . .

F-86 AND BACKSEATER VANISH

PRATT: Going back again to the F-102s, did you say you did or did not recall the approximate date? Was the year 1967? The reason I ask is because Norton Air Force Base in California keeps records of all military plane crashes. But you're going to have to get a pretty close idea of the date and as much identifying information as possible, such as "F-102 in the Gulf of Mexico in December 1967" or something like that. And once you have that information, then you can get, through the FOI Act, copies of the accident investigation reports, although they will delete certain information . . . I did this on a UFO case up in Cape Cod, Otis Air Force Base, (that occurred) in 1953. There's a fellow up in the St. Louis area named Clarence Dargie, who's a retired Air Force sergeant, and Dargie says he was in Operations at Otis Air Force Base when this plane crashed. He knew about it because he was in charge of the typing pool and everything had to be typed up in quadruplicate, and he read all these things as they came through. His recollection of



some of these names and dates was not totally accurate, but eventually I tracked it all down. And his story was that on this evening, like 7 o'clock in the evening, this F-86 was scrambled after a UFO. It got only 1,500 feet off the end of the runway when everything on the plane went dead – the engine, lights, the radio, intercom, everything

went dead – and went into a dive. The pilot immediately hit the eject button and he parachuted. His chute opened just before he hit the ground. They never found the backseater, they never found the plane. They found the canopy on the rifle range at the end of the runway. This was about twelve miles from Buzzard Bay. (Dargie) said they searched all over for the plane, couldn't find it. They had a dredge come up from Norfolk that summer, spent all that summer, three or four months, dredging the entire bay, or searching the entire bay, and could not locate the plane. And that was the end of it. When I found out the exact date and names of the pilot and co-pilot, I wrote to Norton (Air Force Base) and I got the accident investigation report, and the circumstances were entirely different from what Dargie says, according to the Air Force. They claim the plane was up at 8,000 feet, had been up there 20 minutes, caught fire and they both bailed out and the plane and the man in the back seat simply disappeared into the sea. And they REFUSED to release (to me) the testimony of the pilot even though that occurred about 23 years before, and the pilot himself got killed three years later in a similar incident up in Michigan. They refused to release the pilot's testimony in that first case up there in Massachusetts, claiming it would impugn his reputation and all that. And I would like to see if he'd been told, you know, he'd been scrambled after a UFO, what he had to say. But I've done this on several occasions now involving uh – you know Major Rudy Pestalozi down in Tucson?

KEYHOE: Offhand I don't remember.

JET FIGHTER AND UFO COLLIDE

PRATT: He was an intelligence officer who investigated UFO cases back in the mid-50s, I think. And he was at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in '54 when there was a big sighting there in daylight and they took a lot of photographs and all that?

KEYHOE: Yeah?

PRATT: Anyway, he told Todd Zechel about a case out in the Iwo Jima or Okinawa area, in which there were four jet fighters going along Indian file, one after the other, one day. It was broad daylight, and this lead jet was approaching a cloud and just about at that second this UFO just dropped down out of a cloud and into the path of the jet. The jet collided with it and disintegrated and the UFO popped back up into the cloud. The pilot and the plane went into the sea. Pestalozi was very concerned because he wanted authorization to retrieve the wreckage. And they finally decided against it because of the depth of the ocean and the cost involved. Well, I tried to track that down and the records at Norton Air Force Base are quite different. The only thing they could find that was somewhat similar in which a plane did collide with something but didn't know what it was, but the plane came down in shallow water and the pilot parachuted to safety, and just very different

circumstances entirely. I don't think that Dargie and Pestalozi were telling lies, and yet the so-called official records at Norton Air Force Base are completely different, just totally different.

KEYHOE: Well, of course, it can be in some big cases where they put out one statement and then there's another one somewhere else that's totally different. I've seen that in some cases. I don't consider it too big where you get letters from someone fairly high up in the Air Force giving you an explanation and somebody else, another person, a different name, writes in and gets a different answer. That happens frequently.

PRATT: That's why I say if we could figure out, get a pretty good idea when these F-102s crashed and, I assume this was the Gulf of Mexico. Is that about right?

KEYHOE: Yeah, well, I think so. I'm still trying to recall the name of that Air Force base . . . (Discussion of various bases in Florida.)

PRATT: Would it be McDill (in Tampa)?

KEYHOE: McDill, that's it. it was McDill, this colonel told me. I tried to get more details on that from my sources at the Pentagon and they said, "Well you've got about all that we have." I think they were telling me the truth. They said, "That's one that we wouldn't want to be tangled up with right now." So apparently, if that broke out with all the facts nailed down, it would scare a lot of people.

PENTAGON SOURCES SCARED

PRATT: Both of your sources on this were retired military men?

KEYHOE: No. One of them retired but he was brought back on active duty. The one that I consider next best is a civilian who was in World War II with the Air Force. He's been put up at pretty high level and he has very close ties with Intelligence. Everything that I have gotten from either one of these men has been true. There wasn't any question about it. And I have some other sources that I think would probably be all right but I haven't been able to see them lately because they're getting a little scared.

. . .

[November 26, 1979 phone interview]

LINDBERGH'S GRIN SAID IT ALL

PRATT: Somewhere I heard that you were Charles Lindbergh's aide but I guess it just didn't register. Do you have any idea what Lindbergh's feelings were about UFOs?

[In 1927, Charles A. Lindbergh became an international hero when he successfully completed the first ever solo flight across the Atlantic. About a year later, he made a triumphant 90-day tour of all states in the country. Keyhoe, then working for the U.S. Department of Commerce, accompanied Lindbergh as his aide. He later wrote a popular book, ***Flying With Lindbergh.***]

KEYHOE: Well, that's very peculiar. I can't prove this but he was back on active duty as a brigadier general, and I asked a couple of my contacts up at the Pentagon, Air Force people, what they knew. And they said he was called in and told not to discuss this (UFOs) if anybody asked you. And at that time apparently he knew too many witnesses who had good reports and he was convinced. But I wrote him a letter and, boy, they must have got on him in a hurry.

PRATT: Yeah?

KEYHOE: Yeah, because we were pretty good friends. After all, I was his aide all those 90-some days all around the United States and then afterwards, but he never answered (the letter). Sent me a copy of that book he wrote, and I met him later once at a meeting in honor of him in Washington. I was by there and there was nobody close enough to hear and I kidded him. I said, "You must have a blank spot in your mind about UFOs" and he just looked at me and grinned and didn't say a word. So, I don't think he, I know he wasn't stupid enough to just throw it over when the hundreds of good witnesses that he knew were on record.

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