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Deadly Silence 4
by James E. Gunn

Behind the Sputniks 56
by Lester del Rey

Birthright 66
by Margaret St. Clair

H. L. Herbert
Publisher

Judgment Day 70
by Lloyd Biggle

Hans Stefan
Santesson

Editorial Director

A Spudget for Thwilbert 80
by Theodore Cogswell

Grand Prize 89
by Richard Wilson

Universe in Books 94
by Hans Stefan Santesson

Shapes in the Sky 96
by Civilian Saucer Intelligence

Case History 106
by Nelson Bond

Virgil Finlay
Cover Design

Full Quota 110
by William F. Nolan

Microcosm 119
by Stanton A. Coblentz

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case history

by . . . Nelson Bond

**He'd made up his mind that
he would solve the riddle
of the UFOs. Nothing must
be allowed to interfere!**

"CASE 139," said the chief of staff. "John Wilson, white, male, 45. He calls himself the man who solved the Flying Saucer secret. Listen carefully, please. When you have heard him, I'll ask for your suggestions."

He motioned to attendants, who ushered in a short, plump, balding man in beltless slacks and sandals without laces. The chief of staff greeted him gently.

"Mr. Wilson, these doctors are your friends. They want to help you. Will you be good enough to tell them your story?"

John Wilson nodded quietly, stepped to the rostrum and addressed the group.

"Sirs," he said, "I will not waste your time. I will tell you in simple, straightforward fashion how I solved the secret of the Flying Saucers. If there are any questions afterward, I will be glad to answer them.

"At the time I conceived my brilliant scheme I was a bank teller. An uninteresting occupation you will say—not one that calls for great imagination. Yet from my youth I was an imaginative man. An avid reader of fantasies and

Nelson Bond is so much a part of Fantasy and Science Fiction that he needs no introduction to any reader in the field. Here is a unique approach to the question of just what the men (little or otherwise) in Flying Saucers really do want from us as they appear and reappear in all sorts of places.

science-fiction, I had reached middle-age convinced that life is rich with unsolved mysteries.

"You are aware that a few years ago began a series of inexplicable appearances. In the skies were seen strange objects known as Flying Saucers. So many observations were reported by reputable citizens that governments were forced to concede something unusual was happening. Commissions were appointed to investigate. These groups brought in reports. To their great shame, all claimed the Flying Saucers were merely optical illusions, known heavenly bodies, or runaway balloons.

"These explanations did not satisfy me. They were too pat, too simple. Studying the history of Flying Saucers I discovered that such objects had been sighted for over a hundred years. It became clear that Earth, for many decades, had been under observation by unearthly aliens. Who were these creatures, where they came from, or what they looked like, I had no idea. But I resolved to learn.

"I based my effort on two logical assumptions: that these visitors were intelligent, and that since observation was their purpose, they would be attracted by any unusual action. Obviously, if I could draw my quarry to watch *me*, I could also see *them*. Therefore I determined to make myself uniquely, inescapably, conspicuous.

"Earth's most outstanding artificial landmark is the Empire State

Building. I went to this structure, paying an admission fee like any visitor. But where others came to see, I came to be *seen*. To the tower I carried in a suitcase certain attention-compelling props: a crimson cloak similar to that worn by a cartoon character known as Superman; bells and horns of varied pitch and tone; an assortment of rocket flares. These last I selected in varied colors: red, green, purple, orange, not knowing which hues might be most visible to creatures of an alien world.

"I reached the observation tower on a fine, clear morning in midsummer. The sky was blue and cloudless; only a faint breeze stirred. Having reached my destination unchallenged, I committed the only act of violence of which I may be charged. At gunpoint I forced from the platform all others who were there—visitors and guards alike. Then I secured the doorway so I might be alone. I estimated that before I could be evicted from my eyrie I had about thirty minutes to attract those whose attention I sought.

"Alone on the tower, I sprang into action. Putting on the bizarre costume I have mentioned, I climbed from the platform to the tip of the metal spire which rises an additional hundred feet. To this I secured myself with a linesman's belt, then set into action my visible and audible apparatus. Bells rang, a siren howled, lights flashed about me, rockets flared; the sky was dyed

with a dozen gorgeous hues as I made myself the center of a pyrotechnic display deliberately designed to gain attention.

"I attracted attention quickly enough. But not of those from whom I desired it. The city sprawled beneath me like a concrete web. Its streets swarmed with a huddle of human ants, faces upturned. New York had turned out in mass to witness the suicidal swansong of a madman. But no unearthly visitors appeared.

"At such times as my siren was not wailing or I was not deafened by the clamor of my own bells I could hear men attempting to force the tower door. With battering at first. Then, when that had failed, I heard the hiss of a blowtorch as the door was seared from its hinges. This worried me, for I was well aware that if this attempt failed I would never get another.

"I can bridge the next ten minutes with one word—despair. My effort was in vain. In a moment of over-zealous jangling I dropped my bells. I am sure they struck no one in the crowd below, for I saw a swift circle open in the ring of humanity packing the streets. For this I am grateful, since I had no wish to harm anyone.

"But my bells were gone, my siren battery finally failed, and eventually I exhausted my small stock of flares and Roman candles. I heard voices, and looking down discovered the tower door had been forced. Uniformed men were flood-

ing onto the platform. A tense-jawed man—I presume a professional steeplejack—started climbing the spire toward me. He approached to within fifty feet, then thirty, twenty. As he moved upward he talked desperately, pleading with me to come down quietly and stop being, as he put it, a damned fool.

"Then, at the last minute, when all seemed hopeless—when I was about to unbuckle my belt and tell the advancing man I would follow him down—out of failure came triumph. Scudding across the sky appeared a Flying Saucer. The crowd below loosed a cry of amazement. I heard the gasp of my would-be rescuer, saw him hastily descend the spire, leaving me to my fate.

"But this I saw with only half an eye, for the Saucer was circling closer and closer, until at last I saw a portal open in its side. An alien figure appeared in this opening, gestured to me. I signaled my desire to speak to him. He nodded and drew closer still, bridging the gap between us to mere inches. I unfastened my safety belt, stepped into the Saucer, and—" John Wilson smiled—"you know the rest. I became the first Earthman to make contact with the occupants of a spaceship from the planet Tria of the star Aldebaran."

The speaker paused, glanced hesitantly at the chief of staff, who rose and nodded pleasantly.

"Thank you, Wilson. That will be all for now."

To those who flanked Wilson he said, "Take him back to his cell."

When the man who solved the Flying Saucer secret was gone, the chief of staff turned again to his associates.

"I am sure," he said, "you have been interested by this narrative, the true case history of the first creature to be brought home to Tria

alive from the planet Earth of the star Sol. As you see, theirs is a primitive civilization. But their planet is greatly to our liking. Now that we have successfully contacted one member of their race and can learn from him those things which we have been trying to discover over a period of decades, I believe we can proceed more swiftly toward our goal of occupation."
