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By Gordon Cooper
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An Astronaut's Journey
into the Unknown

"An exciting insider's look at Projects Mercury, Gemini and Apollo, full of startling details about NASA's internal politics, disasters, glitches and close calls." *Publishers Weekly*

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Help from the Cosmos?

THE MIDDLE-AGED MAN COULD HAVE BEEN WAITING at any bus stop in America that summer day. He wore chinos, a faded shirt, and tattered gym shoes. His Coke-bottle glasses had been repaired at the temple with black electrician's tape. He walked into my office at the Disney Imagineering complex in Glendale clutching a brown paper lunch bag as if his life depended on it.

I had gone to work for Disney in the mid-1970s as vice president for research and development. The word had gotten out the past couple of years that I had an open-door policy when it came to considering new technologies from any and all sources.

After brief introductions, the guy explained that he'd been working for years on an "advanced engine" but had found no one willing to give him the time of day.

I had heard much the same from others who had walked in off the street with some of the most fantastic things I'd ever seen. Without college degrees, financial backing, or high-powered contacts, many of these folks had found it difficult to be taken seriously. It was

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a shame. In the history of the world, lots of "little people" had been responsible for some big breakthroughs. How could any of us be too busy or too important to be receptive to new ideas for improved technologies?

I listened, wondering if he had his "super engine" out in the parking lot. About then, my visitor reached into his lunch bag and pulled out a tiny reciprocating engine. It started right up.

I couldn't believe my eyes. It was the smallest working four-cycle motor I'd ever seen. But work it did—humming along like *The Little Engine That Could*. The backward and forward motion of its tiny pistons produced rotary movement of a crankshaft about the width of a pencil.

I showed my amazement, and the inventor swelled with pride.

Disney was building lots of new rides and exhibits at its amusement parks, I explained. Taking down his name, phone number, and other pertinent information, I promised to call in the event that we needed self-propulsion on a small scale.

I meant it too.

Before he left, the man shut down his engine and returned it to the paper bag. He walked out with a new bounce to his step. He and his invention had been appreciated, if not bought, and he was pleased to have been recognized at last.

For me, it was still another reminder to avoid making a judgment based on someone's appearance. Who knew what brilliance lurked behind the patched-up horn-rim glasses of the guy waiting at the next bus stop?

Another amateur inventor had come in with a stereo-optic camera and projector that allowed viewers to see

a movie in 3-D without wearing special glasses. He accomplished the effect with two lenses in the camera and projector and by projecting the motion-picture images onto a special rough-textured screen. This idea we bought, and spent money developing it. In the end it went into a warehouse and never saw the light of day. I believed the decision was a political one—the capital investment that would be required of the theater owners, who are a powerful industry force, was probably what killed this new, potentially revolutionary movie system.

Nevertheless, big things were happening at Disney at the time. We had a large R&D budget and were working on a number of alternative energy projects, including an electric vehicle, solar-powered systems of different kinds, and experimental residential use of my old friend from *Gemini 5*: the fuel cell.

We had taken a small tract of Florida homes off the public utilities grid and wired each one with its own individual fuel cell. The fuel cells supplied all the electricity for the homes, and because they ran on natural gas, there were no residual pollutants at all. I was perplexed about why it had taken all this time for the fuel cell, which had made trips to the Moon and other extended manned space exploration possible, to be put to such a simple commercial test. We found them to be very proficient, although the particular brand we were using turned out to require quite a lot of maintenance and repair. Fuel cell design has since improved greatly, and I expect to see them in homes of the future as well as in electric cars, thereby eliminating the need for banks of batteries that need to be recharged every hundred miles or so.

Epcot Center was coming together, and lots of interesting projects were flowing from that development, which involved alliances with major companies such as General Motors, General Electric, and RCA. One afternoon several of us from various companies and in different locations held the world's first closed-circuit satellite conference in real time. I had access to the inner sanctums at Disney and other firms, and felt I was involved in some interesting work.

I was still flying whenever possible, and Disney had its own plane, which was available to me from time to time. But I did miss NASA's T-38s—and having my own jet to run around in. Once you've flown a jet fighter and gone to afterburner just for kicks, no other airplane matches up. A fighter is not unlike what they say about a stunningly beautiful and mysterious woman: exciting and at times unpredictable, but worth the danger.

For several weeks in 1978 a woman whose name I didn't recognize had been trying to reach me at my office, but I was always tied up or away and she declined to leave her number. One morning she called and my secretary put her through.

The woman introduced herself and invited me to lunch.

"Lunch?" I said, somewhat taken aback. "What's this about?"

"I think we have some mutual interests."

As I said, there's something about a mysterious woman. And Valerie Ransone turned out to be beautiful too. She was a brown-eyed blonde in her late twenties who bore a resemblance to the French actress Catherine Deneuve.

We went to a barbecue place for lunch. It didn't take

long for me to appreciate that this was one smart lady. With a master's degree in broadcast journalism, she had worked for network radio, covering a Midwest news beat during the Watergate scandal. She then worked for the White House during the Ford administration, helping develop a national energy conservation program, with an office in the new Executive Office Building next to the White House. As a strategic planner, she worked on devising ways to better educate Americans about energy concerns and undertook a thorough examination of big oil and the role of Shell, Exxon, and Mobil in the worsening energy crisis that would lead to long lines at gas stations. Valerie said she'd investigated alternative energy sources and technologies, like solar collectors and wind generators, but found most of them too small-scale to service the demand.

Valerie had held some important positions for her age, although she carried herself not with arrogance but with the air of someone who knew her place in the world. She also wasted little time getting to the point.

"I have a plan to bring together a group of technical people who have unusual talents," she said before our salads even arrived. "I know Disney is doing some interesting things, but there are other technologies vastly more advanced. I'd like you to consider helping me assemble the nucleus for a private technology group."

"I already have a job," I said.

"I'm talking about *advanced* technologies. Technologies we need to understand if we are to solve the problems that threaten mankind's potential as a race."

"Uh-huh."

Her eyes bore into mine.

"You must understand, Colonel. I have access to unusual help."

I nodded.

Then she gave me both barrels. "My source of knowledge is not of this planet."

She knows my feelings about UFOs and is putting me on. It was my turn to look hard at her. She didn't flinch from my icy stare.

From meeting the stream of people off the street with their inventions, I knew that out of every ten people, three or four were various shades of nut cases. Another three or four—like a fellow who had come in that morning with batteries vastly superior to those made by Ever Ready—would be for real. I didn't yet know to which group Valerie Ransone belonged.

"Sounds interesting," I said as casually as I'd say, "Pass the butter."

"There is a universal intelligence that permeates the Earth. The source can originate from any one of numerous points. I know because I am getting these signals and have been for years. I think we're involved in a grand communication experiment." With a smile, she added, "This experiment moves the idea of broadcast journalism to a whole new level of possibility."

Who is this articulate, bright-eyed woman? I wondered.

"The point is," she went on after the waiter came with our entrees and left, "there is a significant intelligence source in the universe that wants us to succeed. They're willing to serve as intermediary so we can evolve as a people and a civilization, but we need to

do the spadework for ourselves. No one is coming here from another planet to do it for us. And time is running out."

She said a parent group had been formed with offices in Washington, D.C., where she had an office. She explained that a subsidiary, the Advanced Technology Group, would be responsible for testing and implementing new and revolutionary technologies.

"We're putting together a network of thinkers, innovators, engineers, teachers, scholars, scientists, and social policy analysts who are ready to contribute their research to help design a new landscape for tomorrow. We're going to bring together talented people and concepts for high technologies that are very exciting. Everyone will have their own role—their own area of expertise. Propulsion. Medicine. Electronics. And most important: energy technology—to provide us as a nation, and as a globe, with a clean, renewable, unlimited source of power. We can use your help."

"Why me?" I asked.

"Your credibility from the space program would help attract the best technical people possible," she said. "They'll need to build new equipment to prove some of these theories to the world. We'll provide the context for that to happen."

I dove into my barbecued beef thinking it might be wise to get lunch over with, but then a funny thing happened. The more she talked, the more intrigued I became. I had enough skepticism that I was simply listening, nothing more. At the same time, my lifelong openness to new and unusual possibilities—both on Earth and in the vastness of space—kept me in my seat.

By the time we finished lunch, she'd piqued my interest sufficiently that I agreed to meet with her again, and to keep listening.

We met several times over the next few months. Each time we parted, I was even more impressed with her intelligence, insight, and enthusiasm. I saw no weirdness, foolishness, or quackery. Valerie Ransone was a thinker and a doer—a nice mix.

Along the way, she introduced me to a number of individuals who were willing to contribute their expertise to her effort. I found them to be technically very qualified: outstanding scientists and researchers, many with private, university, and even military lab affiliations. In some cases they had been ostracized by their peer groups and professional organizations because they were "way out there" in their theories. The way-out part didn't bother me as long as their math and science were sound. That they appeared to be well qualified, and at the same time believed in Valerie Ransone and were ready and willing to join the Advanced Technology Group, meant something. Some had known her for years, and were true believers. I saw what she offered them: hope that they might be able to prove their own and other new technologies to make the world a better place.

They were ready to take the leap.

I was not yet there; I needed more information. It came slowly, as in working a giant jigsaw puzzle one piece at a time.

Valerie Jean Ransone was born in Illinois to an upper-middle-class family. Her father was an engineer and her mother a stay-at-home Mom. Valerie had al-

ways been a quick learner and excelled in school. I learned that she was born with some unique abilities, such as a photographic memory, a strong sensitivity to "energy fields," and an "openness" to assorted "electromagnetic signals." She explained matter-of-factly: "Some of us just have bigger antennae."

She confided in me that when she was seventeen years old she'd had her first "contact experience" while driving home alone after attending a summer party. She told of experiencing six hours of "missing time," and said that her life had been irrevocably changed.

After we had known each other a few months, Valerie went into more detail about her "first contact." She said a "space civilization" of beings more advanced than humans had contacted her. This civilization represented the "highest minds in the universe" and was seeking individuals with unique capabilities: people with whom it could communicate via telepathic transfers, providing technological and other information. She referred to her "contact group" as UIC—Universal Intelligence Consortium. "This intelligence consortium presented this to me as a matter of world peace. I was told that if we succeeded it would be a natural progression of man's evolutionary processes. If we failed, the possibilities were unthinkable. I felt I had no choice but to stumble along and pursue this course in good faith."

Valerie said she agreed to be used as a "telepathic conduit." She later found out, she explained, "that I wasn't the only one who agreed to participate in the experiment. The communication plan, as it was outlined to me back in 1968, sounded rational. As rational as anything could sound to a seventeen-year-old."

More than once she repeated to me her original

pledge, made upon that first contact, that she would participate in the "communication experiment" as long as no one was harmed and only if the process contributed to world peace. "I was attracted by the idea of world peace amidst the ugly backdrop of the Vietnam War," she went on. "Here was something I could do, though I must admit that had I known what I know now, I would have said I wasn't up to the task. I've never had a problem receiving signals, although it can be physically exhausting. The problem comes when the consciousness returns to daily living—the inordinately difficult task of clearing my mind of everything I've taken in and then carrying on a normal conversation with people or just going to the supermarket and buying broccoli or taking the cat to the vet. Often I would receive contradictory information, telepathically, from what was emerging from a person's mouth who was standing directly in front of me. The benefit was that my BS meter worked all the time, seven days a week, without an off switch."

Her establishment credentials disarmed many, Valerie said with a mischievous smile. "Because of where I came from, I was allowed entry into some former male bastions of power that had been inaccessible to women."

Brains and beauty are a powerful combination, I thought, while considering the astonishing scenario of a well-educated young woman working at an important post in the White House while claiming to be in contact with extraterrestrials.

It made Watergate seem awfully puny.

After leaving the White House, Valerie taught communications and media production at a private college

in Washington, D.C. One day, following her lecture about dolphins and interspecies communication, a student told her of a lecture that evening by a well-known medical doctor and researcher with a long-time interest in paranormal communication. Valerie attended the lecture that night by Dr. Andrija Puharich, a graduate of the Northwestern School of Medicine.

Dr. Puharich, who had a long-time interest in studying psychic phenomena, told of working with some gifted "space kids"—"all with big antennae of their own," Valerie explained—brought in from seven countries to take part in extended scientific experiments in Ossining, New York, not far from New York City.

After the lecture, Valerie went up to the podium and told Puharich, "Doctor, I'm one of your space kids." He invited her to visit his lab, and soon came to value her telepathic abilities as well as her administrative skills. He hired her as a research assistant in 1977. Her job was to identify, document, and test many of the space kids who came for regular evaluation to the private lab at Puharich's estate compound.

I learned that Dr. Puharich was for real and was doing research on contract for the U.S. government—even the military. Valerie arranged for us to meet in Washington, and I found him to be brilliant. We discussed electromagnetic energy and talked for an hour about various advanced propulsion systems for space travel.

Dr. Puharich had previously discovered a young Israeli who had gone on to fame: Uri Geller. Like Geller, Valerie was able to bend utensils with mind power.

"I wasn't too good with spoons," she told me at one of our lunches, laughing. "I specialize in forks."

I wanted to know how it worked.

"Anyone can learn to do it. It's just mind over matter."
"Show me."

Rubbing her index and middle fingers over the hump part of the fork but not touching the metal, she closed her eyes, and within thirty seconds the fork began to bend and kept moving until the prongs nearly touched the handle.

This was the restaurant's fork, not Valerie's, and she had accomplished the feat without touching the utensil. I was convinced I had seen the real thing, not a parlor trick.

Valerie described the space kids as "long-time tuned in." They spent time in Ossining perfecting their telepathic skills. "Telepathic powers," Valerie went on, "are part of human evolution. The potential lies in every human being. You just need to eliminate the distraction." They also practiced "remote viewing," in which the power of the subconscious is used to "travel" to different times and places and "see" actual events. (The U.S. military and CIA had secretly become involved in remote viewing research and, unbeknownst to Valerie at the time, was funneling money into Puharich's private research group in the furtherance of what became known as "psychic espionage." The CIA's program, known as Stargate, would not become public until fifteen years later, and only when former government "remote viewers" began to come forth with their stories in articles and books.)

Puharich conducted experiments in a "Faraday cage," named after Michael Faraday, who in 1831 rocked the scientific world with his discovery that magnetism could produce electricity if it was accom-

panied by motion. The cage was a rectangular metal box approximately eight by eight by twelve feet, which was lined with copper and placed on insulated supports. Inside was a complete electrical vacuum—no electromagnetic waves such as TV and radio signals could penetrate the cage. This was the environment for various communications experiments to see if the subject was picking up signals from other sources of intelligence.

"With the shielding, communications came through much clearer when we were in the cage," Valerie said. This was important, she explained, because it served as a "double-blind experiment" to isolate signals, making certain the subject was not "reading information from the biofield" or local environment. "Psychics can read off someone else's field. We didn't want that. We weeded out the fakes."

Valerie explained that "space civilizations of beings more advanced than we on Earth" had made contact through telepathic means with members of the research group. During her time in Ossining, she said she documented twelve civilizations that appeared to have "receivers or agents of change" operating on Earth, "a sort of relay network." These receivers were particularly clear, she said, among the youth—the younger space kids who had sought out Dr. Puharich to have their extraordinary, and at times disturbing, natural gifts validated.

Valerie said it had been a priority of hers to document the messages that "came through the space kids," making sure that no one—not Dr. Puharich or anyone—was planting subliminal or hypnotic suggestions in the minds of these subjects. "I became one hundred per-

cent certain that no suggestions were being planted," she said.

In all, she worked with some thirty-five of Puharich's space kids, ranging from twelve to fifty-five years of age. She helped collect the information that came through each transmission and cross-correlated the data with the content of other transmissions to isolate the "civilizations with whom communication was occurring."

Using her "own access to extraterrestrial sources," Valerie would attempt to confirm or deny the authenticity of information contained in Dr. Puharich's Faraday experiments. Often this information would be of a highly technical nature. Without formal training in science, she would use other resources and experts in various disciplines to validate the accuracy of the content—for the most part, she explained, "backing into the content" because she didn't know what it meant until it was analyzed by the experts. Often, she said, the answers and questions that "came through" were offered by "other intelligences" without any formal inquiry having been made. "I began to wonder if our minds weren't being read," she told me.

Valerie explained that she had for some time been "pretty much a computer," bringing in transmissions in "several different languages." She didn't use the term *channel* to describe what she did, and she attached no mysticism to it. She preferred to be seen as a "pioneer in a new field of communication: *interdimensional communication*."

And suppose it was true?

I believed that the big question everyone liked to ask about when we might make *contact* with an extrater-

restrial intelligence wasn't all that weighty. There had been too many credible people with proven cases of sightings and contacts with UFOs, flying saucers, and other vehicles clearly not of this world to keep debating that issue. There has been *contact*—period. I always felt that these were the more important questions: *Now what were we going to do about it? Was there a way we could sit down with them and learn about some advanced technologies?*

Suppose everything Valerie Ransone said was for real?

What if she and some other select people were receiving signals from an advanced civilization?—the kind of alien signals NASA had been trying at great expense to pick up for years. Suppose they were just coming in on different wavelengths—not radio frequencies that could be picked up by SETI's radio astronomers but via telepathic messages to people who had such communication skills?

What might that kind of assistance mean in the history of mankind?

The heck with getting to the Moon first, or even a Mars landing. This would be bigger. *Much bigger.*

I had been talking about UFOs and the very real possibility of extraterrestrial intelligence for years. Was it time for me to put up or shut up?

I had long believed it vital to keep an open mind and not lock up on the status quo. Remarkable new technologies that we can't envision in the present are always around the corner. I had seen that in the space program. Without open minds, we'd still be gazing up at the Moon wondering what kind of cheese it was made of.

What interested me most was the promise of new technologies. Our track record in this country is dismal when it comes to developing and utilizing advanced technologies. Look how agonizingly long it took the fuel cell to make its way from space to everyday life, even in a small way. Throughout my military career and years with NASA, I saw people willing to stifle advanced technologies in favor of business as usual. I had fought such narrow-mindedness with every ounce of my being. When I was a test pilot at Edwards, I worked on the early digital electronic flight controls and found them much more efficient, and a lot safer, than the traditional hydraulic controls. It was an improved design change that should have been instituted in new aircraft *immediately*—for safety alone. But how long did it take? *Thirty-five years.* Seeing such vastly superior technology ignored by the “experts” had been a nearly lifelong frustration.

Valerie was clear about what she hoped to accomplish. She envisioned the group building prototypes of electromagnetic propulsion systems and other free-energy devices; developing technologies to conserve Earth's natural resources; conducting contract research and development work with governments and scientific institutions around the world. The possibility of using medical devices with low-frequency pulses to heal wounds and stimulate bone growth particularly interested her. She also favored advanced research on paranormal phenomena and establishing a clearing-house for information on new technologies to be shared among private firms and government agencies. “I have been led to believe that our planet and inhabitants can be healed, physically and mentally, and eval-

uated spiritually so that open communication with extraterrestrial civilizations can be realized within our lifetime. Whatever small part I have in making that happen—well, that's my goal, Gordon."

For my part, from observing Valerie and the technical contributors in their animated discussions about theory and science, I realized that exciting possibilities could be on the horizon. She had already proved to many of these experts an ability to produce vital bits of information that bridged gaps in their existing research. Beyond the question of where this data came from, the fact was that these researchers felt they could take the information and develop some extraordinary new technology.

I was willing to at least give that part a try.

When I asked where the money was going to come from to finance research and development and pay salaries and expenses, Valerie shrugged.

"You've got me. What I've been saying all along is that when the right people are gathered, the money will be there."

I thought that was being extremely hopeful, if not naive. I assumed that short of an extraterrestrial civilization making greenbacks or gold bars for us, we would at some point have to solicit financial backing. But what would it cost me except some time and effort? While I was in a full-time job at Disney, I had flexibility in my hours—and there were always weekends. As long as I could work things around my schedule—

"We'll work around your schedule," she promised.

I agreed to come aboard, ready for what, exactly, I did not know.

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The Space Shuttle Transmission

"THERE COULD BE TROUBLE WITH THE SPACE SHUTTLE."

It was December 1978.

By then Valerie Ransone and I had been working for a solid year and with great effort to get the Advanced Technology Group up and running. Typical of a new business in the planning, some things had gone smoothly and others had not. We had a handpicked team of top-caliber researchers and inventors who had agreed to come aboard. We had a targeted start-up date and had secured some early financing.

"What kind of trouble?" I asked her over the phone.

Valerie was at her office in Washington; I was at mine in California.

"Technical flaws," she said. "Something to do with the heating or cooling system. It's pretty sketchy."

The warning had come to her during one of her "transmissions." She had no idea when they would arrive—the telepathic messages she believed were from an extraterrestrial source of intelligence. They sometimes reached her at inconvenient times—such as

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Tesla: Twentieth-Century Genius

NIKOLA TESLA WAS BORN BEFORE HIS TIME. HE dreamed of interplanetary communications and space travel even as he battled with Thomas Edison over which method of electrical current would be most efficient for modern civilization.

Time and again, Tesla was proven correct. But history has a short memory when it comes to the Croatian-born inventor—the father of modern-day electrical engineering—whose alternating current (AC) electricity replaced Edison's direct current (DC) soon after the turn of the century.

The advantage of AC power—invented by Tesla in 1882—is that high voltage can be sent hundreds of miles through reasonably sized wires, then reduced for household use by transformers. If the wires accidentally come together, they short out just at the place where they touch and only for as long as they are in contact. In contrast, DC power needed huge cables and power stations every few blocks. Also, the thick cables heated up, and when shorted they melted all the way

back to the powerhouse, meaning that streets had to be dug up and new cables laid.

With the stakes so high, Edison and his company, General Electric, put together a traveling road show to demonstrate the "dangers" of AC power, going so far as to publicly electrocute puppies and larger animals—in one case an elephant.

Tesla, with the help of his friend and benefactor, industrialist George Westinghouse, won the "battle of currents" by proving the safety and efficiency of his method when he illuminated and powered the New York World's Fair of 1899 and a year or so later harnessed Niagara Falls by converting its hydraulic power to AC electricity. By 1905 all generating stations in the United States were operating on AC power. Although history credits Edison with inventing our worldwide system of electricity, Tesla's AC power is what runs our cities and households today.

Early in our discussions, Valerie Ransone brought up Tesla's name. Anyone seriously involved in technology has heard of Nikola Tesla, the greatest inventor the world has ever forgotten, and I remembered him well from my early days studying engineering and electrical theory. Through my association with the Advanced Technology Group, I came to have an even greater respect for his work. Valerie was a champion of Tesla's technology, as were a number of our top contributors.

When she was working for the White House on alternative energy, she studied Tesla's plan for a "wireless power system" as an alternative to fossil fuel energy, which was finite and would one day be used up. She'd ended up doing more than a thousand hours of hard research on Tesla, sorting through old files in

the Smithsonian, examining his original patents (more than five hundred of them), and running down endless leads to inventors who claimed to have modern-day free-energy devices.

"Are you familiar with Tesla's wireless work?" she asked me.

I said I knew about his accomplishments in radio.

"That's only part of it."

One of Tesla's most revolutionary discoveries was his system for transmitting energy via wireless antennas. In 1900 he obtained two patents on the transmission of wireless energy covering both methods and apparatus and involving the use of tuned circuits as receivers. Two years earlier Tesla described the transmission of not only the human voice—this three years before the wireless radio was "invented" by Marconi, a former assistant of Tesla's—but images as well. Tesla later designed and patented devices that evolved into the power supplies that operate our present-day TV picture tubes. In 1900 Tesla announced that "communication without wires to any point of the globe is practicable."

Tesla's turn-of-the-century experiments revealed that the air at its ordinary pressure is distinctly conducting. In some of his research notes, copies of which Valerie showed me, Tesla wrote, "This opens up the wonderful prospect of transmitting large amounts of electrical energy for industrial purposes to great distances without wires. Its practical consummation would mean that energy would be available for the uses of man at any point on the globe."

The possibilities were astounding—no unsightly

utility poles and wires passing over every street in America and no hardwired grid that could fail without notice, stranding a major metropolitan area or even several states without power, as has already begun to happen in the United States.

I learned that Tesla had received early financial backing for a wireless transmission project from Wall Street financier J. P. Morgan. Construction was begun on a full-sized broadcasting station and 180-foot tower on Long Island, which would have been able to provide usable amounts of electrical power at the receiving circuits. But financial support was suddenly withdrawn by Morgan when it became apparent that such a worldwide power project couldn't be metered and charged for, as could a hardwired grid. The project was never completed, and the Tesla tower was torn down, without question stifling the development of clean energy technology in this country and beyond.

"I want to build a Tesla tower," Valerie said.

Many of the experiments she had been involved in with Dr. Puharich in Ossining were based on the work of Tesla, she explained. Several of the space kids she worked with were "bringing through" Tesla-related information on technology that had "global and interstellar application," she told me. Her interest had been piqued when she found math equations in Tesla's lab notebooks—written in Colorado Springs in 1899—that suggested a scientific platform for telepathy, or "supraliminal information transfer," as he called it.

"The mathematics that provided the underpinning for Tesla's work also provided the basis for understanding telepathy," and this in turn opened up "new

frontiers for mind sciences," she said, providing "an extensive laundry list of the creative potentials of the human mind."

The more technical information she gave me about Tesla's technology, the more excited I became. It was a language I was accustomed to speaking from my work in the air force and NASA as well as at Disney. She showed me copies of some of his patents, which provided the technical basis for his inventions and technology.

In his autobiography, which I read on Valerie's recommendation, Tesla reported his uncanny ability to use "creative visualization." He would picture a particular apparatus, test-run the device, disassemble it, and check for proper action and wear—all through visualization. He was said to be capable of judging the dimensions of an object to a hundredth of an inch and to perform difficult computations in his head without the use of a slide rule or mathematical tables. When manufacturing his inventions, he worked with all the blueprints and specifications in his head, which has made some of his experiments difficult to duplicate. Tesla also reported having had a vision of some kind while taking a walk in a park one day. He claimed to have seen his "first rotating magnetic field," which gave him a key of sorts and led to some of his scientific accomplishments.

Valerie was convinced that not all of Tesla's knowledge originated on Earth. She thought that perhaps he—like she, the space kids, and others—had been selected to receive "subliminal transmissions" from sources of higher intelligence. After all, Tesla had been far ahead of everyone else at the time, and the visuali-

zation in the park he'd reported sounded to her a lot like telepathic transmissions or even remote viewing.

Had the same source of intelligence that had provided her with the space shuttle warning and other information been helping humans for a century or more? she wondered aloud. *Were technological transfers from other civilizations responsible for some of mankind's greatest scientific breakthroughs?*

Throughout the years, her own transmissions had often made mention of Tesla's work, in some cases listing his notes and patents for reference.

On one of my trips to Washington, D.C., to meet with Valerie at her Georgetown office, she presented me with a detailed proposal, "How to Build a Tesla Transmitter." Synthesizing the work of three of our primary technical contributors, she had written a draft document that was costed down to the penny.

I had seen and heard a good many fantastic claims since our first lunch more than a year ago. But here in my hand was a blueprint for introducing a clean, non-depletable energy system that had universal technological applications on a global scale. According to Valerie, a prototype could be built and tested in the southern California desert near Palm Springs for the grand sum of \$64,400. The proposal went on to estimate that the initial pilot production plant would then require a \$1.5 million investment.

Valerie suggested that we make an appearance before the Science and Astronautics Subcommittee of the House of Representatives, as well as the Atomic Energy Commission. She prepared a detailed campaign to educate the American people, our leaders,

and the power companies about how this new technology might be integrated into the existing power grid. Lists of well-placed individuals representing corporate, civic, and private partnerships were laid out for my review.

Valerie's research on Tesla had been meticulous. Drawing on her training as an investigative reporter, she had pieced together from the work of this twentieth-century genius what she described as a "global puzzle," which was nothing short of a history of the evolution and suppression of free-energy technology on our planet.

With great enthusiasm, Valerie brought in more Tesla technology as possible projects for our researchers to explore—breakthrough inventions and proven scientific theories from half a century ago still not widely accepted or used. She was hopeful that acceptance would be found for this technology once it was tested and proved.

How far ahead of his time was Tesla? Forty years before Sputnik, he wrote an article that gave detailed and accurate descriptions of present-day guided missiles and rockets based on remote control. *How could he have known?*

Tesla's interest in aviation intrigued me. Documented through numerous patents were inventions considered impractical for his day and never developed, including a vertical-takeoff aircraft that resembled in appearance the modern helicopter. And it was only during World War II that radar, a concept first described by Tesla in 1917, was developed.

As for space, Tesla's theories would contribute to its exploration, even though he didn't live to see it. In

1921 he first examined the possibility of a link being established with the planets of our solar system by means of ultrashort waves sent into space. Using his principle, the first ultrashort waves were sent by radar to the Moon and the Sun in 1946. When the beams bounced back to Earth, they brought with them the first scientific data on the exact distances these celestial bodies were from Earth.

If I had to choose a single person in history with whom to sit down for an hour-long chat, it would be Nikola Tesla, for the chance to hear about his inventions and future technological possibilities for mankind.

Tesla's inventions, which numbered eight hundred, replaced coal, eliminated the steam engine, and introduced modern-day electricity from industry to private homes. The areas in which he worked were far-reaching.

He was using fluorescent lights in his laboratory forty years before the industry "invented" them, and he demonstrated the principles used in microwave ovens decades before they became an integral part of our society.

His patents for an AC electric motor, purchased by Westinghouse in 1888, gave that company leadership in the field. From Tesla's early model evolved a wide range of motors in use today, from 1/10 horsepower to giants of over 60,000 horsepower.

Applied in the practice of medicine, Tesla's electronic advances have brought millions of people back to life from heart attacks with defibrillator units. Only recently has it become known that he made successful photographs of inner parts of the body by means of

"very specific" waves some three years before a German researcher is credited with developing the use of X rays.

Another of his breakthroughs: designing and building prototypes of a fuel-burning rotary engine that was based on his earlier design of a rotary pump. Recent tests conducted on the Tesla bladeless disk turbine indicate that if built using today's high-temperature-resistant materials, it would rank as the world's most efficient gas engine.

Why some Tesla technology has long been overlooked is not hard to figure out. During his lifetime, Tesla found himself up against some powerful forces: power companies, oil companies, automobile manufacturers, and financial institutions.

If we were to move ahead with Tesla's technology, I wondered, would Valerie and I end up facing some of the same institutional opposition?

Tesla died a penniless recluse in 1943 at the age of eighty-seven in the New York hotel room that had served as his laboratory after a mysterious fire destroyed his research facilities, technical papers, and most-prized prototypes. Three months after his death, the U.S. Supreme Court nullified Marconi's patents on radio transmission, declaring that Tesla's patents predated them. Marconi, the court declared, had simply copied his former employer's work. But go into any middle-school science class in America and ask who invented the radio, and you'll hear the name Marconi, not Tesla.

It was the scientific community's loss to bury Tesla's achievements and not include or emphasize the study of his principles in elementary or secondary

education. He is seldom mentioned with the "greats of electricity"—Faraday, Hertz, Marconi, Bell, Edison. Possibly because his life did not culminate in wealth and acclaim, Nikola Tesla has unfairly slipped from our national memory.

Tesla's wireless power transmission was reported at the time as an experimental reality, but the "secrets" of implementation were said to have died with the inventor, who wrote few things down. This is not so, for modern-day research and study of Tesla's patents—some by researchers we had lined up to work with—have shown that sufficient data are available to prove his theory a reality.

Valerie showed me photographs of Tesla's central power plant, transmitting tower, laboratory, and various inventions. She also produced several pieces of correspondence signed by Tesla, which alluded to his often futile attempts to generate interest in his discoveries.

The feasibility of wireless power transmission was proved by Tesla between July 1899 and February 1900 in Colorado Springs. His main areas of wireless research: sending Hertzian wave signals of very low frequency, and transmitting power based on creating a conductive path between the ionosphere and the Earth.

Tesla found that the Earth's surface could be used as a basic long-haul circuit for very low frequencies and that electrical energy could be transmitted worldwide from Earth—by going *through* the ground and using the ionosphere as a return path. This he accomplished in Colorado with little loss of energy. (Today's hard-wired power grid loses up to 10 percent for every sixty miles that energy is transmitted.) "It is difficult to form an adequate idea of the marvelous power of this. . .

[with] which the globe will be transformed," wrote Tesla of his experiments.

Today we know the ionosphere as an electrically conducting spherical shell of ions and free electrons that surrounds the Earth in the upper atmosphere—between fifty to two hundred miles high. And we know how important it is in radio communications, serving as a reflector of radio waves over a range of frequencies that permits transmission beyond lines of sight and around the Earth by successive reflections. In Tesla's time, however, little was known about this phenomenon, and much of the apparatus and components that would be needed to carry out this type of transmission had not yet been designed and built.

The possibilities for the wireless transmission of power are intriguing. Natural oil or gas deposits in a remote region of the world could be converted into electrical energy at the wellhead, or huge hydroelectric power projects could be developed in inaccessible locations and the electric power could then be transmitted—or beamed—to the user's location, potentially anywhere in the world, without the need for a network of high-voltage long-haul transmission wires.

Unfortunately, breakthrough technology sometimes has a dark side.

Valerie was certain that these electrical signals could produce dramatic effects on our ionosphere and showed me some of Tesla's original notes that alluded to specific physiological effects—good and bad—that these oscillations could produce.

Among the U.S. military and intelligence community, there were alarming reports that the USSR was engaged in large-scale efforts to develop a form of

wireless radio transmission capable of affecting the behavior patterns of entire populations. That there was this type of activity seemed without question, as the Canadian Department of Communications recorded high-power low-frequency transmissions coming from the Soviet Union. Independent researchers verified similar transmissions originating from various sites in the Soviet Union. In intelligence circles, the Soviet signals became known as "Woodpecker" because they had a distinctive tap-tap-tap sound over the airwaves.

One of the most brilliant among the researchers we had lined up for the Advanced Technology Group was Dowd Hansen, an electronics genius who had an integral understanding of Tesla's technologies and could replicate some.

With a mass of unkempt hair, a reddish complexion, and a permanently disheveled look, Hansen had a definite look of Einstein about him. He was director of a research laboratory in California and had a bachelor's in engineering and a doctorate in science. For ten years he had been investigating the psychophysiological sensitivity of animals and humans to magnetic and electrical fields in extreme-low-frequency (ELF) ranges corresponding to brain waves. He had developed sensitive and reliable monitors, including an extremely low-noise, highly filtered amplifier capable of recording and displaying naturally occurring magnetic oscillations in our atmosphere.

I loved sitting down with Dowd and finding out the latest thing going on in his prolific mind. As brilliant as he was, he could be just as ornery to deal with personally, and as a result had few friends. I think he looked forward to our talks.

One day he was explaining to me about the "ionospheric wave guide" and how wave signals of very low frequency could be transmitted around the world without benefit of wires or antennas—just as Tesla envisioned. As a result of his low-frequency research, Hansen knew it worked.

I listened, then asked if such a system could be made secure.

He said it certainly could.

"Can you build a prototype for a demo?" I asked.

"Sure. Why?"

Having heard about the need for improved communications with our submerged nuclear submarines around the world, I suggested he arrange to give the U.S. Navy a demonstration of the Tesla-influenced communications system. It took more than a little nudging before he agreed, but the navy soon gave him the job of helping to design and implement the system. Today Hansen's work serves as the backbone of a very efficient worldwide communication system with our subs.

And the flip side. . .

Dowd Hansen was called in during the late 1970s to investigate widespread cattle deaths in Oregon. After some work in the field and follow-up in his laboratory, it was his opinion that the cattle had been killed by adverse ELF radio frequencies. The culprits? According to Hansen: *the Russians and their low-frequency transmissions.*

Dowd told me that researchers had for a few years been looking at the possibilities that man is a "biocosmic transducer"—not only a transmitter but a receiver too—and that somehow our brain waves can lock on

and modulate with the Earth's electromagnetic field (which Tesla referred to as the Universal Magnetic Field, or UMF). Dowd speculated that this might be the medium for extra-sensory perception (ESP). According to Dowd, good work had been done on the subject at UCLA in the brain research group, and various government grants were sponsoring research into the effects of very-high- and very-low-frequency fields. He said published papers showed that these signals could influence the brain waves of cats and monkeys.

"What about humans?" I asked.

"It's a very sensitive subject among researchers," he said, "but yes, humans are affected. But as yet we don't know why."

From his own work, he knew at what levels humans were affected. Anything above 11 hertz (cycles per second) produces a range of general agitation or uneasiness. High-voltage power lines throw off 50 to 60 Hz, and there has long been concern about what such high frequencies can do to people living nearby. Frequencies under 7 Hz result in general feelings of relaxation, known as the "alpha state." The most beneficial frequency on Earth is believed to be 6.8 Hz. Interestingly, the Cheops Pyramid, built by the Egyptians three thousand years before Christ and about five thousand years before the invention of electricity, has a constant 6.8 Hz signal running through it. Various experts have measured and studied it but still do not know where the frequency comes from or why it is present in such an ancient structure.

A real mad-scientist type, Dowd had invented an electromagnetic pendant that gave off alpha frequencies and wore it around his neck. He claimed it not

only increased his own sense of well-being but also beneficially affected others around him. "Gordo, it attracts women like magnets," he told me with a sly grin.

"We are electrical people," he explained. "We can be disoriented by electrical impulses." Our hearts could be made to start, *or stop*, by electricity, he said. "Electromagnetic radiation may be the most harmful pollutant in our society. There is strong evidence that cancer and other diseases can be triggered by electromagnetic waves."

Dowd had worked with Dr. Puharich in Ossining, designing receiving equipment to measure ELF waves. Their experiments showed that low-frequency signals could even penetrate the copper-lined walls of a Faraday cage. What protection did any of us have from the frequencies being used by the Russians? Several of them were thought to cause depression in humans.

Dowd said that when the Russians first started transmitting in 1976, they had emitted an 11 Hz signal through the Earth—just as Tesla had sent signals through the ground in Colorado some seventy-five years earlier. This ELF wave was so powerful that it upset radio communications around the world, and many nations lodged protests. The U.S. Air Force eventually identified five different frequencies the Russians were emitting in a wild ELF cocktail. "They never sent out alpha waves," Dowd explained. "Nothing in the six or seven hertz range that would be beneficial. They had more sinister things in mind."

ELFs will penetrate anything and everything, Dowd said. "Nothing stops or weakens these signals. At the right frequencies and durations, whole populations could be controlled by ELFs."

"Once the killing range is perfected and it's operational, this weapon will render nukes obsolete," he said, doom in his voice. "It can kill almost immediately with powerful adverse frequencies. Men, women, and children could be wiped out indiscriminately without destroying buildings, bridges, or cities. The conquering army walks in and takes over a completely undamaged infrastructure."

Through the years I had heard many scenarios about how future wars might one day be fought, and most of them were very frightening. But the scenario that Dowd Hansen presented was the coldest and most horrific I had ever considered.

Hot coffee on the stove, meals on the table, engines purring—

—and every living soul dead from adverse radio signals transmitted from half a world away.

Two decades after this conversation with Dowd Hansen, I know nothing about the present status of research—if any—by our country or other nations on this potential "ultimate weapon." However, Hansen has since told me he believes that the former USSR came very close to having such an operational weapon.

Prior to his death in 1943, as World War II was peaking, Tesla claimed to have developed a "death-ray" weapon. Nothing ever came of it—some people speculated the inventor might have stopped work on it because of its destructive powers. "Peace can only come as a natural consequence of universal enlightenment," Tesla once said.

Upon his death, his hotel room was immediately searched by FBI agents looking for the design of the "death-ray" machine. Supposedly, his scant notes were

all turned over to his native land, where a Tesla museum was built in Belgrade.

The push behind our 1980s "Star Wars" missile defense system was widespread fear that the Soviets had begun deployment of weapons based upon Tesla's high-energy principles. Reports of mysterious "blinding" of U.S. surveillance satellites, and the evidence of radio-signal interference gave credence to those concerns.

I can only assume that if low-frequency weapons research is under way in the United States or elsewhere, it must be cloaked in the highest level of secrecy imaginable.

I pray it will not be Nikola Tesla's final legacy to mankind.

17

Reservation for an Alien Saucer Ride

I HAD NEVER MET ANYONE WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE ridden in an alien saucer.

Dan Fry looked every inch what he was: rocket scientist, researcher, electronics engineer. Favoring the tweed-jacket-with-leather-elbow-patches look, he was middle-aged with a receding hairline, mild-mannered, intelligent, quiet. A devout Christian, he practiced his beliefs. I don't suppose he'd ever said a naughty word in his life. He held a Ph.D. from St. Andrews College in London, England, where his doctoral thesis, "Steps to the Stars," prophesied much of the manned and unmanned space explorations of the 1960s and 1970s.

Valerie Ransone brought Dan Fry to my Disney office in 1979. Beforehand she assured me I would hit it off with this fellow because we had a good deal in common, most notably our "penchant for adventure" and "interest in a good UFO story." She added, "You've both experienced the real thing, Gordo."

When they walked in—Dan in a plaid shirt and smiling affably—he came over and gave me a firm hand-