

# "UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS": A Most Remarkable UFO Documentary Film

BY ROBERT BARROW (Winter 1977/78, Argosy)

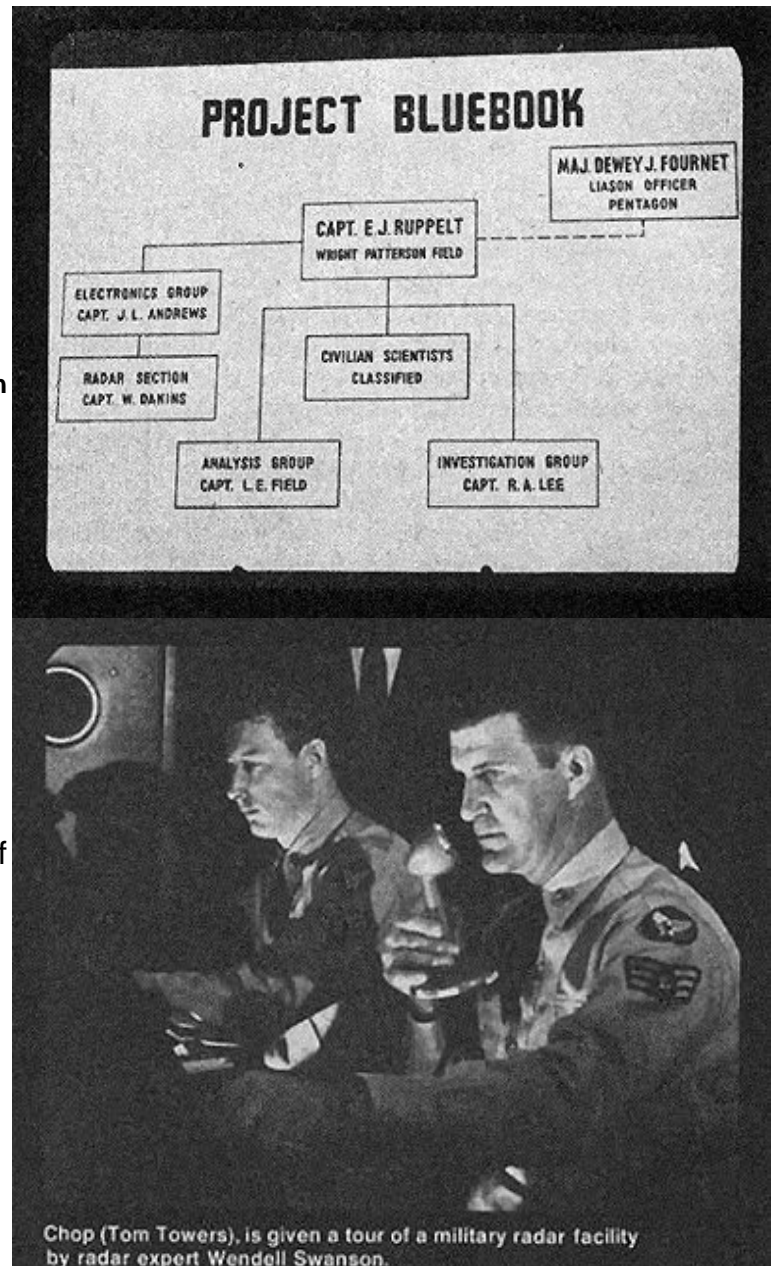
Most science fiction movies which have dealt with the UFO topic have done so in anything but a sober fashion. But, if, you happen to watch the late-late show on TV, you might be lucky enough to catch the pioneer of serious UFO documentaries -- a film entitled, appropriately enough, "Unidentified Flying Objects." You'll be in for a real treat.

Every few weeks, somewhere in the United States or overseas, a TV station airs an old 1956 motion picture on its late-late show or afternoon movie feature. *TV Guide* lists its title as "U. F. O.," though the more wordy program logs might print the elaborate title of the United Artists release, "Unidentified Flying Objects."

Filmed primarily in black and white (except for two short, authentic UFO movies, shown in their original color), this Clarence Green-Russell Rouse production enjoyed only less than moderate success during its initial release to international movie houses 21 years ago.

However, a recent research session on the film's background, which led me to contact people in 17 cities among 12 states, convinced me that "U. F. O." is truly a documentary, dealing fairly and, for the most part, accurately with the UFO subject as it was treated by the U.S. Government during the late 1940's and early fifties.

And "U.F.O." is a remarkable piece of work for its time. Whereas the other major studios have only recently considered the UFO)



theme for *serious* motion picture productions, the 1956 United Artists documentary was a far-sighted film. Most of the science-fiction movies which inundated the fifties, you may recall, dealt with the UFO topic in *anything but* a sober manner!

What was "U.F.O." about? On the surface, it seemed to make a good case for the existence of UFOs. In a deeper sense, the movie explores a very important historical aspect of the official U.S. investigation of the aerial phenomenon.

Unfortunately, United Artists' U.S.A. pressbook did not describe the film's storyline in detail, but a rare copy of the London, England "U.F.O." pressbook that I stumbled upon does. Following, then, is United Artists' English synopsis of the motion Picture---which I have paraphrased and added to in some spots in order to include other related material about this true motion picture account.

This writer, who openly confesses his respect for "U.F.O.," urges that the reader be on the lookout for the movie. I hope, too, that you enjoy viewing a few of the rare promotional photos herein that accompanied the film during its theater days..

### SYNOPSIS

*(1956 Press release by United Artists Corp., notes in italics added by Robert Barrow)*  
When Albert M. Chop (*played by Tom Towers, a veteran newsmen*) reported to work on the Public Information Office desk of Air Materiel Command at Wright Patterson Air Base early in 1950, he airily dismissed press queries about Unidentified Flying Objects with, "This whole saucer business is pure, unadulterated bunk." He believed this despite all reports of sightings and the death of Captain Mantell, in 1948, while chasing a



Nicholas Mariana, whose film of two UFOs over Montana remains one of the most controversial and respected, portrays himself (left).



Clarence Greene (Producer) and Wendell Swanson, a radar expert who played his own role in "UFO," are shown discussing the motion picture script.

flying saucer.

Promoted to Chief of the Press Section at A.M.C., he soon began to have doubts. Startled to find that a famous scientist, Dr. Reiskaywitz, had an open mind on flying saucers, it was unsettling for Chop to learn from the Public Information Officer that Project Sign had not been closed down but merely renamed Project Grudge. Most disturbing of all was the Colonel's reluctance to express any opinion on flying saucers.

When Chop was transferred to the Press Section in the Pentagon, by the special request of Col. Richard Searles, he felt sure he was finished with flying saucers. Instead, he was assigned directly to the investigation. Project Grudge was expanded and renamed Project Bluebook by U.S. Air Force Intelligence and Captain Edward J. Ruppelt was made chief of it (*Ruppelt played himself in the movie, adding to its historical value and authenticity*). (NICAP note: Robert Barrow advised us that he did not make this statement and that Ruppelt did NOT appear in the film, although others did)

Soon afterwards, Chop (*the real Albert Chop approved every line of the script dealing with himself*) learned from Major Dewey Fournet of Current Intelligence Branch, that the Air Force actually had motion pictures of U.F.O's. Fournet showed him the Montana film, explaining that, after thorough analysis, the objects remained unidentified (*the real Dewey J. Fournet, like Chop, also approved every line in the script regarding his official activities, though Fournet's role was played by an actor*).

Chop also learned that more film had been shot in Utah by Navy Photographer Newhouse (*Delbert Newhouse himself was interviewed in the movie*), and that Ruppelt and his staff were analyzing it. Later, after



Radar expert Wendell Swanson, seated, talks about his field with producer Clarence Greene and the Late Capt. Edward J. Ruppelt, who was probably the best known former chief of Project Bluebook.



Albert M. Chop (played by Tom Towers), right, gives information to a personnel clerk at the Pentagon prior to undertaking his UFO duties.

CLARENCE GREENE and RUSSELL ROUSE  
present  
**"UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS"**  
Written by Francis Martin  
Produced by Clarence Greene      Directed by Winston Jones  
**RELEASED THROUGH UNITED ARTISTS**

**CREDITS**

Presented by .....Clarence Green and  
  Russell Rouse  
Produced by .....Clarence Greene  
Directed by .....Winston Jones  
Associate Producer .....Fernando Carrere  
Written by .....Francis Martin  
Film Editor .....Chester Schaeffer, A.C.E.  
Photographed by .....Howard A. Anderson,  
  Ed Fitzgerald (Northwestern Locations)  
  Bert Spielvogel (Eastern and Southern Locations)  
Assistant to Producer .....Paul Stone  
Music by .....Ernest Gold  
Conducted by .....Emil Newman  
Associate Editor .....Stefan Arnsten  
Sound Recorder .....Hal Overton  
Rerecording Mixer .....Buddy Myers  
Music Mixer .....Vinton Vernon

**A GREEN-ROUSE PRODUCTION**

The press demanded explanations. They knew that interceptors had been sent up, and now they wanted the facts. The Chief of Staff ordered a press conference the next day (*film clips from the conference are included in the movie*). Chop and Ruppelt were present when General Samford stated there were "credible observers of relatively incredible things."

From that night on, Chop was convinced there was no longer any controversy as to whether or not there were U.F.O's moving in the atmosphere. They were an undeniable fact. The only questions left now were, "What are they?" and "Where do they come

from?" He was also convinced that there was intelligence behind the objects and that their source was, space.

*(A final note: In the years following his own official UFO activities and the production of "U.F.O.," the real Mr. Albert M. Chop has considered other UFO theories besides the extraterrestrial idea, though he still, to this very day, remains certain that the phenomenon is real and demands a full investigation.)*



Chop (Tom Towers), seated at left, sits through a classified showing of the Utah UFO film with highranking military officers. These men and many other extras in "UFO" were really members of the Los Angeles Police Dept.



Chop and his wife discover that LIFE has hit the nation's newsstands with an important article suggesting that UFOs are very much a reality, and that they may be extraterrestrial.



At home, Chop gets a fateful telephone call from a government official—UFOs are over Washington, D.C. for the second time in a week.