

PHIL'S ANTIGRAV BUICK Part 1

by William W Brownson

Peering through thick lenses splashed with rosin, Phil Dobson touched the Iron to the resistor he was soldering to the circuit board. Last time he had put power on the project. It had taken the roof off his garage. The wife wasn't talking to him and he was still limping a bit. It was a good idea to go over this in his mind for few minutes, before powering up again. The previous experiment that wrecked his garage verified that his device worked.

It was so simple. He couldn't understand why no one else had thought of it. Massive colliding beam particle accelerators are not necessary. This device operated by laser bombarding hydrogen gas at a near vacuum. He had discovered the correct wavelength laser to trigger the energy release. Phil was not sure what the name of the energy was. Gravity? Strong Force? Whatever it was, the only use he had found for it so far was demolition. If he could get control of the size of this force, perhaps he could learn more about how to control it.

Looking through the hole in the garage roof and then glancing over to the rafter fragments, one, of which had nearly broken his leg. Phil thought, "I'm going to have to fix that one of these days." He was hoping that he could get to it before it rained, but first things first. He opened the garage door and took the project out onto the driveway. There was no need for pushing his luck again with this. The project was a steel beam with the laser, its power supply, microprocessor, and batteries at one end, and the target at the other end. The target consisted of a piece of heavy-duty pipe with a glass window for the laser to pulse through. This time Phil was going to activate the system with a remote control and stand back, way back and out of sight.

He pushed the button to activate, and then watched the results. The steel beam made a sound like a sonic boom and then disappeared. Neighbors came running out of their houses to see what had happened.

Phil shrank into his garage and pushed the down button on the door. It was hard to believe the hydrogen in the target had been hit with only a one microsecond-modulated pulse and all that much energy had been released. His project was down range, like a Scud Missile. He would pay close attention to the news tomorrow, hoping it did no harm.

Phil switched the light off in the garage and looked at the stars through the hole. "I am going to have to fix that soon." He thought.

While opening the door to the house he encountered his wife who said sarcastically, "Is any of the roof left?" Phil lied, "That noise wasn't anything I did. It could have been a sonic boom." Susan looked skeptical. She had been hoodwinked before. After seeing no additional damage she said, "You are going to have to get that hole fixed before it rains." Phil said, "Yes, Dear." At least she was talking again.

The next day at lunch he was talking to his friend Ralph. Ralph had been reading the newspaper and said, "Here is a strange one, Flight 521, out of Seattle, got hit with a piece of steel beam that nearly knocked it down. This thing hit the cargo compartment and lodged itself in an aluminum container.

It says here that the pilot, a vet of the Gulf war, thought it was a SAM missile. He saw it coming and tried to dodge it. Some people were thrown around in the tube when it hit. He was surprised that it was a dud . . . no explosion."

Phil's reaction was, "Was anyone hurt?" Ralph studied the newspaper some more and then reported, "This old schoolteacher had to go to the hospital and get her nose fixed, but she has been released." Phil did a silent, "Thank God," and said nothing else.

Several weeks later, Phil had his newest version of the experiment together. It had changed a lot. This time it was built into a four-foot piece of six-inch steel steam pipe, he had obtained at the junkyard. One end had a steel cap welded on it and the other had a threaded pipe cap.

Communications with the processor were through a small heavy duty antenna protruding from the cap. He would control it with a device that looked like a TV channel changer via UHF Data Link. He had some new program code in memory. He hoped the changes would make the device function the way he wanted it to. Waiting until Susan went to bed at about one am; he put the now eighty-pound apparatus on his little wagon and wheeled it out into the driveway again. He pointed the wagon way from the Anderson house and aimed it in a westerly direction, "no more aiming at Seattle, for sure, even though that had been unintentional." Phil then entered the garage and closed the door. The neighbors had been getting a little unruly lately. If this thing made another big noise, he didn't want them to see him anywhere. He then pushed the power forward button. The wagon moved slowly toward the end of the driveway. He pushed the reverse button and the wagon backed toward the house.

Phil experienced a moment of panic so he powered down immediately. He was definitely going to have to continue this experiment somewhere else but it was

starting to look like he was going to be able to get control here.

The new plan involved his old 1968 Buick. The motor was pretty well gone in this old car and it could use a little boost. Phil decided that if he could push the old Buick around for free that would be a good deal. He had always loved that old car.

Fitting the project into the trunk turned out to be a bit of a problem. The pipe was just a little too long to fit in lengthwise like it had to be. Cutting a hole through the back of the trunk was no problem but the back seat had to go. After some thought, Phil attached the device securely to the frame of the car, using heavy-duty I-beams, bolts, and a few strategic welds. He didn't want the thing coming up in the front seat with him. He wanted it moving the Buick.

He was just finishing the job, including a control system in the cab, when his son Dan happened by. "What ya! Building now dad?" he asked. Nothing, Phil answered, needing no help at all from his son. If it was green, his son spent it. If it drove, he wrecked it and now he was here. This was not a good sign. "Is that some kind of a new fuel tank back there?" he asked. "Nope, its air-brakes son, I'm going to fix this thing up so even you can stop it," Phil lied.

There had been a recent incident where Dan had rear-ended a pickup with the Buick. Phil was thinking that the kid would want dad to fix up the old Buick so he could drive it again.

Dan knew how to get points, "You want me to fix that rafter for you?" he asked. "I've been working as a roofer and can get the stuff to patch that hole for you. My boss will help.

Phil was starting to feel trapped. He was going to have to deal with Dan. He knew there was no way he was going to get up on the roof in this heat. And considering heat, this would get him back in Susan's good graces. His reply was, "How much it going to cost me?" Dan said, "Naw, don't worry about it Dad. It won't take but three or four hours." After that, Dan spent some time working off a ladder measuring rafters and plywood, a list was made up Dan said he would do the job on Saturday. That worked out okay because Phil was planning on being gone testing his Buick on Saturday morning.

At 4:00 AM Saturday Morning Phil headed out for a remote spot with some good, long, straight stretches in the Buick. He drove for an hour or so to a section of state highway 12. There he found a good spot for his test. First he stopped where he could see a section of highway that gave him a good mile of visibility. Turning off the motor and waiting until there was no visible traffic, he then he turned on the power to the project and eased the lever forward.

The old Buick started moving slowly. He pushed the lever ahead a bit more and the Buick went faster. Phil very carefully continued pushing the lever forward until the speedometer read 80. He had a magic marker in his shirt pocket. With that, he made a mark on the console at the point the lever had advanced to. Then he cut the power on the project, turned on the ignition and put the old Buick in gear starting the motor. Pleased and happy, Phil returned home. Yes, he definitely had something here.

Phil pulled into his driveway at 10:30 a.m. Dan's boss was there helping unload the roofing, plywood and 2x6's for the rafter. Dan's boss and Dan started fixing the roof. These two were pretty good buddies, working together they finished the repair with unbelievable speed. Phil asked Dan's boss what he was going to owe him. The guy said, "You'll have to furnish the beer." There was a six-pack of beer in the fridge so no problem meeting that obligation.

"Did your new braking system work on the Buick?" Dan asked. Phil told him the truth, "Not worth a damn! I'll have to work on it some more." There was an idea here, perhaps you could reverse thrust on the project and use it for brakes. Phil would have to look into that.

Phil bolted a bar across the point he marked. Now he believed that he would be able to throttle the power properly. This would require some further testing of course.

Phil and Susan had a trip planned for Monday. They were going to go to Richland. He was going to work on a control system at the Hanford Area. This type of travel was a good deal for Phil, he had his per Diem and everything was paid for. Susan went with him on these expeditions and they generally had a good time. He told his son, "Dan don't do anything with the Buick. I'm working on it and it isn't safe so just leave it alone." "Ok! Dad assured Dan." Phil wasn't completely comfortable with that, so before he left he went out to the Buick and disconnected the battery cable connection that was powering the project. That should keep Dan out of trouble.

Monday, Dan returned home after working in the hot sun all day. The folks were gone and he could lay back and drink a few, kind of cool off a bit. He bought a case of Budweiser at the 7-11 and was getting ready to tip a few when the phone rang. It was his buddy Eddy, who had heard the news that the folks were out of town.

Eddie and dad didn't get along too well. Long hair and tattoos turned him off big way. So Eddie favored those occasions when Phil was out of town. Eddie asked, "What about we take a drive out to Ironwood and toss cans in the lake?" Dan said, "My car is not running very well right now. I think it sucked a valve last week when we were drag racing with the Slammers." "Too bad answered Eddy, you'll have to rebuild the motor." "I can't afford it right now" answered Dan, "I had to pay all those traffic tickets, before they put me in jail."

About an hour later the two young men each with a couple beers in their belly were heading out of the garage in dad's Buick. Lying on top of Phil's project was a couple of sleeping bags, the rest of the beer and a few snacks. Dan was driving, he told Eddie, "You know those new brakes dad put in? They don't work at all." Eddie asked, "What is that lever for?" "It must have something to do with the thing in the back seat", Dan replied. He reached for the lever and pushed it, nothing happened.

When they got to the lake, they ran into the Slammers, motorcycles, hotrods, leathers and all. The best part was the girls. Too bad the gang was so stingy with them. The only one way to impress the Slammers was to have a real fast machine, something that really moved. The other option was to be big and mean. Eddie and Dan didn't qualify in either respect.

Dan had noticed the girls kind of gravitated to the coolest and fastest machines with the ugliest bikers, like it turned them on or something. There would be some insults about the old Buick for sure. It didn't work out that way though, the bikers were pretty well wasted and in a foul mood. Eddie thought it best to camp at the other end of the lake. They spent an uneasy night hoping the gang wouldn't mess with them. Every thing turned out ok, those guys were already pretty well burned out and they must have turned in early.

In the morning Dan was checking the oil in the Buick, a wise thing to do in this old oil burner, when he noticed that one of the battery connections was off. Dan replaced the connection, but he was a bit puzzled about what it was for. Oh! Well! One way to find out would be to connect it up and see what started working. Could be the air brakes?

A few minutes later they were getting ready to go to town after some more beer and potato chips. Dan started down the road, the old Buick leaving its usual trail of smoke. He remembered the lever and reached down and pushed it forward. He felt himself thrust back in his seat a bit and saw the trees going by real fast. He also saw the corner coming up fast. He jerked the lever back and hit the brakes hard, he hoped those new brakes were good. Nearly losing it on the corner, he came to a stop right in front of a bunch of the Slammers.

Jake, the biggest and meanest of the Slammers asked, "What is in that thing to make it go like that?" Dan, thinking fast, replied, "We have been tuning it up a bit." Jake said I'd bet I could take you in a quarter with my Harley. "Bet what?" asked Dan. Jake answered, "You win and I won't take your beer and money or stomp your brains through your asshole, how's about that?" Dan was thinking that winning could get important.

Turning the Buick around and pointing it down the straight stretch of road, Dan's hand was hovering over the lever. He hoped it would work again. Dad's projects weren't always reliable.

Doris, Jake's girl was standing in front of the car holding a flag. Jake was revving up his motorcycle and Dan's hand was hovering over the lever. Doris shook her parts a bit and then dropped the flag. Jake's Harley made a fearsome roar and leaped down the road leaving the Buick pretty much setting there. Dan was thinking, maybe it would be a good idea to turn around and run.

Eddie was busy doing something to the controls that is when he wasn't ogling Doris he was. Dan thrust the lever forward and felt his self being slammed into the seat hard, the trees turned into a blur. Eddie said, "I took that stop off of the throttle. You had best ease off a bit."

Things weren't looking quite right. The trees were gone. Dan looked out the window and nearly had a heart attack. It looked like the old Buick was at about two thousand feet off the ground. Eddie started whimpering about how he didn't want to die. Pulling the throttle back wasn't a really good idea either. The Buick turned its nose toward the ground and started acting like an anvil. Dan pushed the lever forward and noticed that the front of the Buick went closer to horizontal. He screamed at Eddie, "Get in the back seat it might bring the hood up some more. Eddie jumped in the back saying something about how he wanted his mamma. Dan pushed the lever forward some more and the Buick started to go up. He eventually found a point that kind of trimmed out.

Looking out the window made Eddie gasp! He was at about ten thousand feet and headed toward Seattle in an old 68 Buick. This would make a great story if he could figure out a way to live through it. Right now the prospect for a long life wasn't looking all that good."

November 121 Charlie, This is SeaTac Control, how copy?" This was over the radio in F14 N121C, which was headed toward Tacoma. "There is an unidentified aircraft closing on SEATAC they won't answer their radio can you identify?"

N121C replied I have a radar target at 30 NM Vector 252, no transponder. I'll intercept and identify. A few minutes later the pilot answered, "I have what looks to be a 68-Buick heading 282, at about 380 Knots airspeed."

"Say again," replied SeaTac. "You heard me right the first time," replied the pilot in N121 Charlie. "I am in inverted flight and looking down into the windshield. I see two kids that look like they are going to have to change their shorts as soon as they figure out how to land a 68 Buick."

A long silence at SeaTac was broken by an inquiry, "What is the mode of flight?" N121C's reply was, "Your guess is as good as mine. The wheels are turning, but I doubt that's what pushing it. No visible propulsion system. No propellers, No Jets, No Rockets, No wings, If I didn't see those kids in there, I'd think it was a UFO with a confused alien trying to look disguised. This is the weirdest thing I've ever seen. Just a minute, one of them has a magic marker and he is reverse writing on the windshield." "What does it say asked SeaTac Control?" "Help us, is the message sir."

Secure communications in the F14 came alive with a message from SATCOM, "Major Richards, This is NORAD, General Maximilian speaking, identify the unknown aircraft." "Sir the aircraft appears to be an automobile. To be precise it is a 1968 Buick the color is green. Sir, do you have the track on your console?" "Yes," answered the General. "Do you have an explanation for this vehicle being at ten thousand plus, 380 knots?" "No Sir," was the response. After a pause, "Escort this 68 Buick until Delta Flight relieves you. Upon being relieved, proceed to Fort Lewis. You will be met there by a Civilian who will debrief you." "Thank you Sir," Was the response.

Just what he needed a debriefing from a shrink, this was much worse than a flying saucer? Now he would be suspected of being psychotic or something. Delta flights two F14's arrived and trailed the Buick in close formation. Major Richards received a radio message, "You are relieved Sir."

Delta flight was on a different channel with NORAD incredulously confirming that the Unknown was indeed an automobile. NORAD asked the Flight leader Colonel Norris to take a close look.

Colonel Norris inverted his F16 Aircraft and put his bubble about 25 feet away from the windshield of the Buick. "What do you see inside Colonel?" Came over the radio. "I see a couple of young men looking very frightened. The words, Help Us are written on the windshield." NORAD told the Colonel to reverse-write on his canopy, "Can you cut Power?" This was done and there was an answer. One of the young men was nodding his head up and down.

So the vehicle was under power and the mode of power could be controlled. "What else are you seeing?" "Sir, the gasoline engine, is running, the wheels are turning, and exhaust is coming out of the tail pipe." NORAD asked for the Colonel to communicate to the Unknown that they would like for them to shut off the gasoline engine.

In the Buick Dan said to Eddie, "They want me to turn off the motor." Dan thought this over for a while. The gizmo in the back seat was hooked to the battery, if the battery discharged whatever it was. It would quit working. The Old Buick would plummet to Earth when that happened. On the other hand there was a limited set of options here. If he didn't do what these guys asked. They could shoot him down. It was a good idea to cooperate and not make them mad. He chopped the motor and as a second thought set the emergency brakes and foot brakes holding them tight with his foot.

Dan's next request was for Eddie to hand him a beer. He needed it. Flight Delta 2 Reported to the Colonel, "He has cut power to his wheels and no more smoke out the exhaust Sir." NORAD picked up on this. "Ask them if they can land" The answer was, "No Sir, whatever is pushing that thing they don't seem to be able to control it other than to shut it off.

"NORAD asked, "What are our option's Colonel?" The Colonel replied, "If we had a big aircraft with a ramp that could be opened in flight perhaps we could maneuver it into the cargo area and have these guys cut power. The vehicle seems to be in fairly stable flight. They report that they can cut power. Otherwise, we may not capture this thing to study it. In about fifteen minutes we are going to be over the Puget Sound. We'll never find it when it crashes. There is a lot of debris about that size in the Sound. Locating it will be tough. The other option is to drop it over land where we can recover it. I don't like the idea of wasting those kids. The crash could destroy whatever device is moving that thing. I for one would like to know what it is".

The command set in the F16 passed this message to Colonel Norris, "We are going to try an in-flight pickup. You will rendezvous with C130 aircraft Foxtrot One over the sound in ten minutes. Foxtrot one is presently airborne near Tacoma. Get this one for us. We would like to solve this puzzle."

Dan had just finished chugging down his beer and was thinking about asking Eddie for another. Eddie wasn't much use for anything he was in the back setting on the device looking like it was the electric chair. Since Dan looked pretty much catatonic, Eddie figured he would have to get his own beer. He started climbing over the front seat into the back. He climbed back quickly when he realized that the car was starting to pitch up. In a minute or two the car drifted back to level flight.

He started reasoning with Eddie, "Eddie if you don't snap out of it, I'm going to climb back there and throw you out the window." At this Eddie started whimpering again, "I want my Momma." Dan said hand me another beer, "Eddie did it." Amazing, thought Dan.

The Fighter turned upside down, and the pilot was writing on the canopy again. The message read, "Cut power when in aircraft." This puzzled Dan for a while, and then he saw the big airplane in front of him. It was obvious what was in the works. Dan said to Eddie, "We might live through this after all, they are going to try to pick us up with that airplane." It didn't have any effect on Eddie who was too deep a panic to hear it."

The huge aircraft opened a door in the back. A gigantic ramp came down. Eddie could look into the cavernous hole inside the airplane and see some men in green fatigues wearing helmets. One of them was gesturing to Dan to hold it steady. He could tell the universal meaning of both hands extended to the front with both hands down. Dan shook his head up and down to indicate that he understood there was very little he could do to help anyway. He was just along for the ride.

The aircraft maneuvered its self so that the entrance was right in front of the Buick. Dan could see one of the crewmen talking into a headset obviously directing the pilot. Soon the Buick was actually entering the opening. Dan's eyes were riveted on the crewman with the headset. When the Buick was completely in the cargo hold, the crewman made a slashing motion across his neck. Dan understood the gesture; he pulled the lever all the way back to cut the power. The Buick dropped to the floor of the cargo hold.

There was a flurry of activity. The GI's were wrapping big nylon straps over the Buick and securing it to the floor. One of them motioned Dan to roll down the window. Dan did that.

Eddie came to life and asked him, "You want a beer?" The GI's reaction was, "Get your ass out of there. Now! He had his pistol drawn and was pointing it at Dan. At this point Dan was really more afraid of the Buick than the pistol. He shot out of the Buick like a pea out of a pod.

Eddie however wasn't so fortunate. When he jumped over the seat to climb out, he bumped the lever with his knee. That was when the shit hit the fan. The Buick lunged forward, the strap in front crushed out the windshield but eventually held. Eddie was pinned by the strap and the seat. The lever was under him and he was trying to pull the damned thing back. He could barely breathe and couldn't move the lever at all.

Captain Curtis, commander of Foxtrot 1, felt himself thrust back into the seat. His eyes went to the airspeed indicator, which showed that at the present rate of acceleration he would soon be supersonic. C130's don't go supersonic they go into pieces first.

Captain Curtis grabbed hold of his throttles and pulled the levers all the way back. As an afterthought he stopped the engines. Not much help, the old bird was starting to shake, she was going to break up soon if something wasn't done. First Officer Holdings started to hit the flaps lever hoping the drag would slow her down then he realized that it would just yank the wings off.

Dan was nearly thrown out the open cargo bay door by the sudden acceleration. He struggled over to the Buick and saw that the big straps had buckled up the hood. He could see the battery. Dan knew that the aircraft wasn't going to stand up long to the kind of stresses it was taking and the way to shut it off was the battery. He struggled over to that side of the car and reached out to unloosen the battery cable.

Dan was looking down the barrel of a 9MM Pistol the airman told him, "Spread Eagle." Dan looked him right in the eye and screamed, "If I don't shut this thing off we are all going to die." He went ahead and removed the battery cable.

Up in the cockpit the Captain was suddenly flying a 600 MPH decelerating glider. He calmly said to the First Officer, "We have lost that thrust, now start the engines." The flight engineer and the First officer began to start the engines. Captain Curtis was trying to get a fix on his location. A quick check of the satellite navigation system showed he had went in a big arc during the emergency and was now entering the Hanford Area.

The flight engineer reported that the engines wouldn't crank there was something wrong with them. So they tried an air start and again no luck. The airspeed was now at 150 Knots altitude 3000 feet and things were starting to look grim. The flight engineer reported a start on the Number 3 engine. The first officer throttled it up to 80% right away. Not enough power they were still losing altitude. The captain realized he was going to have to set this bird down so he lowered the landing gear. He was on the intercom to the crew in the cargo bay, "Raise the ramp and prepare for an emergency landing." There was a flurry of activity in the cargo bay. Then he told the Engineer 100% on #three. Keep trying to bring #two up.

Phil was having a great day. He had just exited the main building at the Vitrification facility for a break. He had just solved the problem that he had been brought out here to fix and was feeling pretty good about himself. Time to go out and grab a bit of sunshine. There was a group of engineers and technicians outside the building enjoying the nice weather. They were watching a C130 aircraft that was getting closer all the time. The aircrafts landing gear came down and it had only one propeller going. It looked like it was in trouble.

They could see that the aircraft was lining up for an approach to the access road to the Plant. It was going to land. A few minutes later Phil was looking in the cargo bay of that C130. It was a shock to see his Buick in there all crushed up from the straps. No doubt that this was it, the trunk was open and he was looking at his device. It was even more of a shock to see Dan and Eddie. Dan walked down the ramp looked at his dad all he could think of to say was, "Hi, I'll bet you're surprised to see me?"

Chapter II

Susan awakened to a knock on the door. Hoping to snooze a bit longer, she turned over, ignoring the noise. Whoever it was would come back later. She thought but twenty knocks and ten rings later she gave up that idea. A quick look through the through the peephole revealed two men in business suits, one about fifty, the other a young man. With the safety chain firmly in place, she opened the door, prepared to give them a piece of her mind. She was in no mood to talk to Jehovah's Witnesses or salesmen, the only visitors she could imagine attired in those clothes. "What do you want?" she snarled. The younger man flipped open a wallet, flashing an official looking badges. "FBI we would like to speak to you. It's about your husband and son."

Susan hadn't heard from Phil or Dan since they disappeared two weeks earlier leaving no clues to their whereabouts. Attempts to find them led to one dead end after another. It was as if they simply evaporated. She felt her stomach tighten and heave as she opened the door to the two strangers. Her skin felt as if every nerve was exposed and on the verge of exploding. She didn't want to hear what the men tell her.

The older man introduced himself as they walked in, looking from side to side as if they expected to encounter a problem. "I'm agent Donaldson this is officer Paxton," he said, nodding toward the younger man. "We are authorized to negotiate with you on behalf of your husband and at his request." "Where are they? Are they ok? What happened?" she asked, feeling that the voice she heard was not her own. "Are they hurt?"

Donaldson answered in a monotone voice resembling a robot reading a book aloud, "They are fine and being detained by the government on a national security matter."

With momentary relief at hearing them discussed in the present tense, Susan's next biggest fear engulfed her. Phil had been caught poking around in a place he shouldn't have been. She was always afraid his insatiable curiosity would lead to trouble. "What did they do?" she asked, not really wanting to hear the answer. "That is a classified matter and we're not at liberty to discuss." Donaldson droned. "All we can tell you is that they are being held for an indefinite time. They are not under arrest, and not accused of a crime. As I said, national security is at stake here."

"Can I see them?" she pleaded. Paxton spoke this time, "We are here to discuss a meeting between you and your family at Phil's request, but we must negotiate certain agreements before we can take you there." Neither man ever made eye contact with Susan and their presence exuded a cold chill that filled the room. As anger rose from her already knotted stomach, Susan's voice rose, "And what the hell do you mean by agreements?" Paxton continued, "You must agree to never say anything about this situation to anyone. Breaking this contract will have serious consequences. However, if you cooperate, you will get to regularly see your husband and son. You will receive a monthly allowance from the government as negotiated by your husband in the amount of ten thousand dollars a month. These checks will continue as long as your husband is working on this national security situation."

With trembling hand, Susan held a ten thousand-dollar government check as she watched the two men depart. For that much money she could agree to almost anything. They would return in two days to take her and a week's supply of clothes to an undisclosed location where she would see her family again. No need to bring anything fancy, they told her. This won't be a luxury hotel. Susan didn't know where she was going in two days, but she knew where she was going in the morning: the bank.

Eddie paced from the refrigerator to the couch and from the couch to the refrigerator. Back and forth, again and again, varying the routine only when nature called. The refrigerator held no beer and the couch offered no comfort. The conditions of his release from the FBI's clutches were clear. He couldn't talk to anyone about Dan or his dad, not to his mother or to Susan. His emotions seemed to be fighting for priority. First there was anxiety about his own situation, fear for everyone involved and there was guilt. Susan always treated him well, and got him out of jams more than once. Knowing the government had abducted Phil and Dan and was bad enough but keeping it secret from Susan struck him as a betrayal of the faith she had placed in him. His own mother had been intimidated into silence. They're worse than a bunch of Nazis he told himself. I have to do something he told himself, but what? Save myself? Lie to Susan? He knew if he would be watched if he violated his agreement, he would be stuck somewhere underground himself. Cutting the lights and peeking out the window blinds, he saw nothing suspicious.

Eddie had been grounded frequently as a child and devised crafty ways to maintain his social life. His upstairs room was the exit to town, as good as a door except it opened onto a roof instead of the porch. Not much of an obstacle to a determined boy. The oak tree couldn't have been in a better place if he had planned it himself. He considered himself a world-class escape artist.

The next day, Susan set out to cash her first check. Left in a financial predicament by Phil's disappearance, she welcomed the chance to catch up on some bills. Having money left over was a new experience as was buying a new eighty-dollar pair of Nike cross trainers and a new double door refrigerator. Sitting in the kitchen admiring her new purchase she made plans for her next shopping spree, right after her visit with Phil. First, she would replace the wobbly and mismatched chairs. That will be next week, she thought, as soon as I get back home.

A knock on the door sounded familiar, "tap, tap, tap, tap, then a short pause, and tap, tap. This could only be Eddie sending the "hi sign," his trademark Morse code knock. Eddie disappeared at about the same time that Phil and Dan had. "Come in Eddie," Susan said as she released the chain lock. Looking over his shoulder like a thief, Eddie entered the room. His nervousness was evident in his shaking hands. "Calm down Eddie. What is wrong?" Susan said. Eddie's voice was higher than usual and tremulous. "Phil and Dan were taken by the government. They're being held in a secret underground location at Hanford. I was there, too, but they released me after I signed a document acknowledging that it would be illegal for me to reveal anything that had happened."

Susan looked at him, concerned about his anxiety. Eddie usually appeared so calm he bordered on comatose. "I'm in the same boat Eddie, they made me sign something." The color drained from his face, reflecting his distress at this piece of information. "I'm so sorry, Susan," he said, his speech rapid and barely understandable. "I wish I could have warned you."

As he opened the door to leave, Susan saw the two men approach the building. Cuffed without explanation, Susan and Eddie were loaded into a van and hauled off into the night.

"This silly looking brainless kid is the best damned Extra High Performance Vehicle pilot we've ever had, they never say UFO anymore" thought Brigadier General Thomas. "He flew a damned 68 Buick across half the State of Washington and landed it in a C130. We've got to keep him." "Put a good scare in that Eddie Kid and get rid of him, but we've got to keep Dan." He nodded as he spoke to Sergeant Anderson.

"How many of those EHPV's have been splashed out in the last 20 years?" He asked the Sergeant. "Eight Sir, I've been out on two recovery operations. I watched them scrape the pilots up with a putty knife myself." "There seems to be no reasonable way to control the thrust from the device." "The ET's claim they direct the thrust of the vehicle by power of mind, no doubt telekinesis. It appears Dan has the talent. He's the only control capable human telekinetic we have ever found, and he is completely unaware of it." "The aliens are quite impressed with both Phil and Dan." Said Anderson, "But don't get into big a hurry to get rid of the other kid. Our little gray friends say that it takes two minds to get proper control. Eddie must have assisted Dan in the flight."

General Thomas said, "If you have to go retrieve that long hair tattooed miscreant. Make sure he gets a haircut before I have to look at him again. Understand?" "Yes Sir, we are bringing in the wife tomorrow, we'll get the kid on the same trip," answered Anderson.

After a trip of about five hours, Susan and Eddie were escorted out of the van that they had been riding in. They were in a large building that looked like a factory building. Accompanied by two armed Air Policemen, they passed through a door with a security checkpoint and into an elevator, then taken down to a lower level. It was hard to tell how deep the elevator went but there was a feeling like falling for a while. At the bottom they entered an electric powered vehicle. The ride lasted about twenty minutes eventually the tunnel opened into a large well-lighted cavern. There was one more security door opening into a subterranean excavation that contained large buildings.

A large man in military fatigues with Sergeants stripes all over his shoulders and a cap with the brim pulled down nearly to his nose, beckoned to Eddie, "Come here kid. Your going to get a hair cut." Eddie gave him the one finger salute and said, "Make me." The Sergeant pulled his pistol from his holster, and while pointing it up in the air he said, "I'm going to have to shoot you then." Eddie decided that it was about time to get rid of all that hair; it was getting to be a drag anyway. He asked, "Why do I have to have a hair cut." The Sergeant's nametag read, "CMS ANDERSON and on his shoulder there were more stripes than Eddie could count. CMS Anderson said, "The little gray guys don't like hair. It makes them nervous, they don't have any hair on their bodies . . . anywhere. Besides that the General doesn't like long hair. Since you've been drafted. You are going to have to conform."

Just what was this idiot raving about?" Eddie wondered.

The haircut was quick and easy, if not stylish. Looking like sheep sheers the barber's clippers must have been four inches across the cutters. Three passes over his head with the clippers and Eddie was nearly bald. While hoping the gray guys didn't have anything against his tattoos, Eddie glanced dismally at the mass of hair on the floor.

Haircut, shower, shave and now dressed in new starched fatigues with Gold Bars on the shoulder, Eddie examined himself in the mirror.

Anderson backed off and threw Eddie a salute and said, "Will that be all sir?" No! Answered Eddie what is this uniform for and why am I wearing it?" Sergeant Anderson said, "All the pilots are officers, Sir.

Eddie looked in the mirror. He could not believe the reflection he was looking at. He really looked sharp. He wondered how Doris would like him in it. The door to the room opened up and in walked Dan who was similarly attired. They did some, Hey. Dudes and High Fives then got down to some serious discussion. Eddie started out with, "Just what the hell is going on here?" Eddie replied you'd find out soon enough. I'm supposed to keep quiet but I can't keep from letting one thing out of the bag. "What's that?" Asked Eddie. "You and me are going to be doing some more flying." He said.

Select contacted Zpath telepathically asking, what is the probability that these Earth people are developing telepathic sentience? We have seen some rare examples of brilliance in this cloning, but in general there has been little discipline of that sense in humans. Where there is psi development, the individual is so confused that he often displays poor societal maturation. Zpath continued. Expressions of telepathic sentience have often been dealt with severely by the different Earthly cultures. This tends to repress the talent. At one time they would actually burn them at the stake. Other Earthly cultures used chemicals' to induce susceptibility, not a good practice for consistent development of the talent. What is your analysis of Phil's discovery of the device to tap unified fields? Asked Select.

Zpath mentally communicated. Phil is a latent telepath; technical competence and superior power of deduction have allowed him to unknowingly tap into the universal knowledge grid. Now that the humans have actually done that we will have to consider, how we relate to them. This has to be decided by the Galactic Council. During the next daily cycle Colmotdn will accompany you on the scheduled flight. You will be assisting the humans in telepathic control techniques. This will be as an observer only intervening only to insure survival. We understand that the two humans have had no contact with our species. So they will be ill at ease at our appearance. Deal with it as best you can. I would recommend nodding and making the facial gesture they call a smile.

"I don't care how busy Phil is I want to see him, immediately!" Susan had every intention of seeing her husband, now that they were in the same cavern. Sergeant Anderson, a very personable and downright handsome man, even if he was quite a bit older than the other men she had seen in the complex. Said, "On the way to your quarters we will be close to the lab. You can briefly visit him. Please don't take too long. His work is very important."

Complaining about being handcuffed on the previous night didn't bring Susan any sympathy, Anderson just replied, "It's procedure Mam. Those NSA operatives never skip any of the steps and physical restraint is part of their procedure. Personally, I am very unhappy this happened. Next time we have to bring you here. I will try to do the transport myself." He gave her a nice smile and said, "You'll still have to ride in a blacked out van and endure sedation. That is a part of

the procedures that even I can't skip. In a few minutes, you can go in and greet Phil and spend a few moments with him. But not alone this is a security area. He is working on a very important project." The Sergeant pulled a small cell phone looking gadget from his pocket and spoke into it without dialing, "Code ten, Lab four, Estimate five."

Stopping at a large security door that looked like a bank vault, Sergeant Anderson said, "I have to put my eye to this scanner and it will read the pattern of my retina. He said this while pointing at a rubber rimmed adjustable peephole, which was at about eye level. You'll have to be scanned. This will allow you access to parts of this complex via an optical retinal scan. A computer will remember your pattern. If the door doesn't open for you, access to that facility is prohibited. In general you will be allowed into cafeterias, recreation rooms and your living quarters, every thing else is off limits. If you are interested there is a good selection of DVD movies in the recreation room. No costs just bring them back. The doors are all labeled and the ones you will be allowed to visit will not require the eyeball check. This will be the only time you will be allowed in the lab where your husband works."

Select sentient first class, received an alarm, ALL NON HUMAN LIFE FORMS EXIT ROOM TO GATHERING PLACE FOR SECURITY REASONS. This happened infrequently, and was quite annoying when it did. All work on the artifact ceased and the grays exited to the break room in the back part of the lab. Phil was working on the fourth generation model of his device. This one was marvelous, a low-pressure hydrogen filled stainless steel sphere. It was pulsed on a three-dimensional axis by hydrogen argon lasers tuned to the precise Glueon resonance frequency. The windows were the purest quartz crystal and its lattice oriented to the lasers frequency. This very device was to be installed in the artifact, as the grays called it.

Dan and Eddie were going to take a ride in the vehicle tomorrow. Phil didn't feel too comfortable with that idea, but he was assured that the grays going on the trip could handle any emergency. The whole thing was really a training session for Dan and Eddie. Select, who said it was functional, had approved the current model. The device was supposed to be safe when handled properly. It probably wasn't any more dangerous for the boys than when they were riding motorcycles.

The grays had just shuffled off to the back. Phil had never seen them do that before. The main entrance door swung open and there was Susan. Forgetting his work Phil ran to her and gave her a kiss. He had been so caught up in this project he had hardly given her a thought. The only time she had come up was when he negotiated his contract with NSA. Susan asked, "Just what the hell is going on and why are you in this strange place." It was then that she got a glimpse of a curious gray peeking out the break room window. Sergeant Anderson saw her reaction and knew that she had been compromised. The grays seemed to have an obsession with female humans for some strange reason.

Susan asked him, "What was that?" Anderson said, "Nothing." Susan said "I know something when I see it. I just want to know what it is." Susan would have to be debriefed now. Anderson didn't like that. We have to go now. You have seen Phil. He will be off all day tomorrow so that you two can spend some time together, but today he is working on a special project that is sort of behind schedule.

Dad had visited for an hour or so, earlier in the evening. He had been concerned about the vehicle being piloted by his son. Dan himself was concerned about the trip, but he had been told that they would be taught the techniques of flight and he was reassured that they would have instructors. It was getting late and he thought he would turn off the TV and try to get some sleep. A bit restless and worried about what might happen to him tomorrow Dan was having trouble drifting off.

Just then, Eddie made his trade mark Morse code knock at the door," Dan wondered how the hell he managed to get around this complex so easy. After 10:00 they were supposed to stay put in their rooms. Eddie was not used to following all the rules. He made a few for himself. Dan went to the door opening it a crack to see what he wanted. Eddie was standing there with a big grin and holding a bag. Dan knew that meant a few brewskis were in the bag.

Eddie entered already slightly intoxicated from the beer, he said, "I went to the commissary and asked if they had any beer. The clerk said that I could have a six-pack. I went back a little later and a different guy was working. He gave me another one. Guess what? They change clerks every four hours, and I have managed to get a whole case. Free beer, they just give it to you."

Eddie was splashed out all over the couch and grinning from ear to ear. He took another swig of the brew and said, "When you pushed that lever forward I was looking at Doris. She had her arms spread out and her mouth wide open, like she had just been sucked up in a whirlwind. She reminded me of the picture of the girl at the Kent State shootings, the one that was kneeling by the dead guy with her mouth wide open. Same look."

Dan knew that Eddie had always had a crush on Doris and didn't say anything. He just grinned. "Why do these guys think we are the ones to fly this thing Phil is building?" Eddie asked. Dan said, "I think its because we lived." Eddie gloomy now shoots back, "That's not too promising. I would find a way out of this cave if they hadn't told us we were going to have some experienced pilots aboard." Dan thought, "He would too, even if he had to climb up a ventilator shaft." Eddie's chicken streak had saved his butt on more than one occasion.

Airman Thompson said to Sergeant Anderson, "Eddie flew the coop with a case of beer. He smuggled a couple of six packs to Dan's room and they are getting their selves inebriated. You want me to do something about it Sarge?" Anderson said, "Leave them alone, this could be their last night alive. I have seen too many of those crashes and too many good men buried on this project. Just let them have their fun and hope they can handle the job tomorrow."

Thompson asked, "Have they met the aliens yet?" Anderson chuckled and replied, "We are saving that one for tomorrow. Phil could have spilled the beans on that when he visited Dan, but he didn't. Phil is a good man. We are really lucky to have found him. They will not have to lift the moon vehicles to orbit with the Space Shuttle, or boost them up with a Titan Rocket anymore. That will be a real improvement in the technology." What is important here is reducing any contact with non-agency personnel and alien cultures. It would be a much nicer if Dan and Eddie never had to see our gray friends. No way to do that and accomplish this mission."

What was that thing I saw in your lab, and don't give me any bull roar?" Susan demanded? The answer was the usual, "You don't want to know." Susan, who was tired of this game, taunted Phil a bit, "If you don't tell me I'm going to pack up and go home tomorrow." Phil's reply was a simple "That's just it Susan if you find out. They won't let you go. You'll be stuck here as a virtual prisoner, like I am. The same for Dan and Eddie and you don't want to know a thing because if you do. You won't be allowed to visit me or get your check every month. I'm sure you'll be getting the lecture tomorrow, please Susan just let it slide and pretend you saw nothing."

The Airman opened the door. He had three stripes on his shoulders and had on one of those cloth caps pulled down nearly to his eye. His nametag read Thompson. He unceremoniously roused Dan and then Eddie saying, "Up and at em sirs, time to take your ride." The vestiges of a hangover and the foul taste of the beer lingering in his breath was all that Dan could think about. Airman Thompson had to put a little extra effort into getting Eddie out of bed. Eddie was one of those people who just couldn't break loose of the rack. The hangover didn't help.

When Eddie refused to get out of the cot, Thompson rolled the bed over depositing him on the floor. Eddie was on his feet in a flash looking for a fight. The airman backed off and snapped to at ease with his hands folded behind his back. He said, "Now that you are awake sir, I would suggest a shower. Pre-flight briefings at eight A.M., it's seven now. Breakfast is being served Sir's. The uniform of the day is flight suit, they are in your closet." With that he spun around and exited the room.

All shaped up with breakfast and dressed in shiny blue flight suits with gold bars on the shoulders the boys went to breakfast. After a quick breakfast the Airman stood up and gave them a silent nod and then headed for the door. Dan and Eddie followed him out of the room to an elevator. He addressed them with, "Sir's this is elevator 2D it will take us to the briefing room."

The elevator took a very long ride, going up this time. Exiting the elevator Thompson took a left turn and walked down a short corridor with two sets of doors, one at each end. One end was stenciled in white paint, "BRIEFING ROOM," the other "HANGER." They entered the briefing room. Inside the room there were several people.

Dan could see one General with a single silver star a Colonel with a silver Eagle on his shoulders. There were several other officers in the room along with Some NCO's including Sergeant Anderson. The General spoke up, "This meeting is called to order. For those of you who don't know me, I'm General Thomas. This is a pre-flight briefing for the benefit of our novice officers. Sergeant Anderson please begins your presentation."

Anderson stood and started addressing the group. I believe you all know me so I'll just start with the briefing. First items first. Security is the number one consideration. I'm going to explain why security is so important and then I'll get down to the consequences of security breaches.

Item #one: The United States of America has a Treaty with the Unified Galactic Council (UGC) that protects us from rogue alien civilizations. This protection is essential, without it we are in jeopardy of being attacked and exploited. All the people of our planet could be wiped out by rogue civilizations existing elsewhere in the universe.

Item #two: We are being protected by the UGC under conditions of a treaty that states that our civilization has to develop its own technologies. Alien technology transfer is prohibited. That is why we are here tonight. For many years the United States of America, and for that matter several foreign states have been developing new technologies that will eventually put us on a par with our galactic neighbors. These developments are energy related and will change our way of life in many ways. One change will be the ability to travel the universe in our own vehicles.

Item #three: We are directed by the UGC to keep the provisions of this treaty secret from our own populations. This provision will be dropped at some time in the future when we have achieved recognition from the UGC.

Item #four: Strict security enforcement of the existence of this treaty and alien life form interventions on our planet is paramount. Enforcement is the NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY'S job and NSA has absolute authority including lethal intervention to insure the security of this agreement. Pay strict attention to the term lethal. We don't want to harm anyone, but if you become a security risk your life could be forfeit.

Serious things going on here and some people are involved who are outside of our normal security precautions. We have to be sure that these persons can be trusted not to divulge any of the classified information before allowing reintegration into normal society. This is as uncomfortable for me as it is for you. Believe me. I've been involved in this situation since the late seventies and have seen strange things happen.

Phil and his family are involved along with one of the family friends. At this point I am going to confirm to the Dobson's and Eddie that there are alien beings in this facility. Two of these persons, we think of them as friends, are going to be on the test ride. Extraterrestrial entities named Seleot and Colmotdn will be in the vehicle as advisors.

Our allies the Zeta's avoid human contact when it's not absolutely necessary, so they are not with us now in a physical sense. They are aware everything that is going on at this meeting. You need to understand that these entities communicate via telepathy. They are capable of some limited vocalizations but are much more comfortable with their normal mode of communication.

"General Thomas do you have anything to add?" Anderson nodded to General Thomas, who had been standing through Anderson's brief presentation. The General nodded and spoke, "Continue with the exercise." Sergeant Anderson ordered, "ATTENTION" Everyone went to attention including Dan and Eddie. General Thomas thought, "Military discipline can become ingrained in a young man so fast. It's scary."

Sergeant Anderson said, "this way sir's", motioning to the boys. Dan and Eddie followed him out the door and down the hall to the door labeled HANGER.

Chapter III

Sergeant Anderson said to the boys, "You need to process through security, it's the door to the right of the hanger." He motioned to a sign that read, "SECURITY," Anderson opens the door and they enter.

Processing consisted of fingerprinting; retinal imaging, and signing multiple documents, which described in detail all of the things that could happen to them if they blabbed anything. The surprise was the last process of the security check, "UGC Mental Scan." Dan and Eddie met their first alien; he was a security officer for the UGC in USAF uniform wearing a Colonel's insignia. His nametag read Colonel Teiam.

Eddie said, "Hey dude you're going to have to do something about those eyes. Wow! Three fingers."

Sergeant Anderson said, "Gentlemen please show courtesy to the officer."

"I'm sorry Sarge, said Eddie this is too weird. Can I start over?"

"Please do quipped Anderson." At this point Eddie pops to attention and salutes the alien. He returns the salute. Eddie was giggling under his breath at the three-finger salute when he heard a voice in his mind, "That's better young man, now I will look into your psyche to probe for talent and reliability."

Eddie felt a sensation that he would later describe as a spider crawling around in his brain it was an eerie, but not unpleasant sensation. Dan had his turn with the same results except the alien officer remarked, in a muted raspy voice. "Control capable,"

Dan heard his dad's voice somewhere in the dark cavern of the hanger. All he could see were camouflage tarps draped over dark aircraft size objects. Anderson guided them through the hanger till they could see an illuminated area. Phil's voice was coming out of an opening in one of the tarps. Looking inside they could see Phil and two alien's working on a round sphere swaddled with what looked to be bundles of fiber optics. Dan noticed that these aliens looked different, they had smaller eyes. "Hi Dad," said Dan. "What you doing trying to make this thing go through the roof?" "Yep!" Phil pointed up to a distant hole in the ceiling, you're supposed to fly this out through that hole. "Think you can do it?"

"How much clearance do we have up there to get out?" Said Dan.

"Don't sweat it you have a couple of inches."

"The ceiling up there looks a little tougher than the roof of your garage dad."
"No problem, come in and I'll introduce you to my helpers, these are two UGC pilots who will give you guys a check ride, come on in" Said Phil

The boys entered the hatch, they could see a well-organized space full of devices they didn't understand, the sphere with the optic bundles was being attached to a mount by one of the two aliens. The other alien was looking at the boys with his tiny mouth contorted into what resembled a grin, an unnatural perhaps even painful grin. Eddie whispered under his breath to Dan, "I wonder what he knows that we don't?"

Phil gestured to the first alien and introduced him as Zpath and the other as Colmotdn. Colmotdn flashed the same fake contorted smile to the boys making them even more uncomfortable. The group moved up a ladder into the control cabin, they could see four seats facing what was obviously a control console. Eddie asked, "Where's the windows." "Don't need any said Phil," He threw a switch and the walls became transparent they could see everything in the hanger as if it were brightly illuminated. The whole cavern was filled with vehicles like the one they were in.

"Wow! Where did all those come from?" Asked Eddie. It was then that Zpath spoke to the group using telepathy. "The other vehicles in this room belong to the UGC and are here by treaty with the USA. This vehicle belongs to USAF it is a test vehicle used to prove access to the Universal Matrix. The UGC upon successful completion of testing would then recognize your people as galactic citizens. Phil said, "The interior of this spacecraft is fitted with high-resolution three-dimensional video panels instead of windows. You will have an excellent view of all your surroundings."

“Take your seats boys and we’ll fire up the artifice for static testing, he motioned to the seats in the cabin. The vehicle ready now. ” Phil said as he finished installing the huge mounting bolts for the round sphere.

The cabin had six seats four of them were much larger than the other two. Eddie took a seat; Phil grinned and said, “Nope that’s the pilots seat you’re the co-pilot take the one to the right.” Eddie switched seats and started tinkering with the controls.

Phil said, “I wouldn’t do that you might splash us against the walls.”

Chapter IV

Eddie let go of the controls as if he was snake bit he then sat in his seat and noticed an Ice Chest with a flip up lid bolted to the floor. Flipping up the spring-loaded lid he saw that it had sandwiches and beer. He could read the label Budweiser he heck is this for? Asked Eddie.

“The aliens want us to duplicate everything that you guys were doing when you took off in my car. They believe that the alcohol might have had an effect in Dan’s mental link to the artifice. Which reminds me, “We have to have a serious talk about drinking and driving before you ever drive another of my cars.”

Eddie without asking picked up a bottle and handed it to Dan, “Party time old buddy.”

Dan grinned and said, “Where’s the girls?”

“We have to go somewhere in this new version of a 68 Buick Electra, might as well go looking for the Slammers. Huh? Hey! Officer Zpath do you have one of those fancy beaming machines in here?” Said Eddie.

Zpath telepathically talked to the group, “The matter dissimulator-assimilation-transporter is installed but it is still UGC technology.”

Eddie asks, “Can I use it?”

Zpath replies, “What for?”

Eddie says, "We might like to pick up some people to study up close."

"That's what we use it for, you can't operate it but we will assist in transporting any biological samples or even solid objects. " Replies Zpath.

Eddie, always the generous host, hands Phil a bottle of the brew. Phil declined, "remarking at least one of us needs to be fully functional; you guys might need to operate in an altered state. For this trip, I want to be wide-awake."

Eddie then handed each of the two gray aliens a bottle of Bud and was surprised when they accepted. Everyone had a drink; the aliens could barely fit the top of the bottle in their tiny mouths.

Phil pointing at what was obviously a control device in front of his seat said, "See the control pad on the console? Take the grips and I'll turn on the simulator system and we will do a few practice takeoffs" When the simulator was turned on by one of the aliens, Dan could see a vertical yellow beam of light that exited the round hole in the ceiling. What happens now is only a simulation so don't get excited if you crash. You are supposed to intuitively learn how to control the spacecraft using the control system. You will find that each finger provides an input function on the control pad.

Dan spent a few minutes crashing into the walls ceiling and other UGC saucers before he started to get the feel of the control system. It was awesome, you just had to tweak the control forward, capture the beam and pop out the hole, like the cork out of a champagne bottle. After exiting the hanger the simulator took him on a trip of the planet. He could navigate by following his position on a holographic globe that hovered over the control console. At high altitude the moon and near planets became visible at low altitudes he could see surface geographic features, mountains, deserts, rivers, and cities.

Dan asked, "What's the range of this thing?" Zpath answered, "It should function properly until the next maintenance cycle in approximately three hundred earth years. In inter-dimensional mode it can travel anywhere in the known universe. Expand your navigation range to get the feel of long distance travel." Dan experimented with the controls until he could zoom the navigation range. He found Luna and saw some text data pop up in the display it read 25.00321 M20.

"What's that mean Dan asked? "

"Minutes to orbit, was the answer."

“He’s trained, It’s time to take the vehicle into flight” Said Colmotdn telepathically.

Chapter V

Doris entered the neonatal ward looking for her friend Alice and her new baby. She sees a large man in male nurses uniform feeding an infant. Then she recognized him, it was Jake, her Slammers bike gang companion. During good weather, she at times let down her hair and spent wild times in the sun with what was supposed to be a yuppie bike gang. It was a vacation from her normal boring job at the beauty salon. She had asked Jake what he did for a living and his reply was always, “You don’t want to know.” She had wondered if Jake lived a shady life rolling drunks and beating up unfortunates, or something like that. Jake’s ugly disposition was a put on, she was certain of it, as he could be darn right charming when he chose to be. He was a good road companion who wasn’t pushy with the girls. Seeing him in this setting, as of all things a male nurse, almost took her breath away.

Jake looked up at her and grinned, “Hi Doris, you just blew my cover, Isn’t this little feller cute?” He turned the baby so she could see the tiny squinty milky mouth all bundled up in a white blanket.”

Doris squealed, “It is you, Oh! My gosh; are you really a nurse?”

Jake looked down to his nametag and said, “It says Jake Plummer RN. I wonder how that happened? Do I look out of place away from my Harley?”

“You got that right! Do you work here in pediatrics?”

“Only when ER isn’t busy, things are slow today so they send me to what ever part of the hospital is busiest. Today that’s here with the babies.” Jake said

“I know I’ve never asked, but do you have your own family Jake?”

“No kids my wife died of breast cancer two years ago and I’ve just not been able to give her up. We wanted kids but she was sick a lot and it just never happened.”

Doris said, “I’m sorry.”

Jake looked longingly at the baby and said, "I like the babies though and they seem to like me. Working in a hospital like this doesn't give a guy a chance to get far enough away from tragedies; I've seen a few. So I get out on the bike and make enough noise that I can't think for a while. Maybe we could get together for a bite in the cafeteria or something? I'll be able to take a break in a few. "

"I'd like that but sorry, dad is waiting for me out in the parking lot. I just ran up here to see the baby. What's that baby's name?"

Jake picked up a chart and read it, "This is Josh Logan."

Doris smiled and said, "My friend is Alice Logan, and you are feeding her baby. "He is cute." She pulled a camera out of her purse snapped a photo and said, "bye! Gotta run"

Chapter VI

"What do I do?" Dan asked.

Colmotdn again speaks in Dan's mind, "Move forward into the yellow beam by pushing forward with the left index finger on the control pad, capture it with the left pinky finger and hit the vertical movement button with the right index finger. Don't worry too much about making a mistake. I will override any control sequence that would result in a collision."

Dan did as the alien suggested the UFO glided over to the beam, made a capture that he could actually feel as a sensation in his mind. When he hit the vertical movement control the craft popped out of the cave like a jack-in-the-box. As they cleared the top of the ridge everything slowed down and looked different.

"What's that?" Asked Dan

Phil replied, "Takeoff's are time shift cloaked to make it difficult to observe the aircraft. We are ever so slightly not here, but somewhere else in time just far enough to make observation difficult. Did you ever see something in the sky, but on second look it was gone? It happens more often than you would ever believe; these little gray guys are to blame. It's their cloaking technology."

"Where do we go?" Dan asked again.

“We could take a drive around the planet, buzz by the moon then go Slammers hunting.”

Eddie’s idea of how to spend the afternoon didn’t set well with Phil he asked, “Eddie is that all you ever think about is that long hair biker broad?”

Eddie asked, “Does beer count?”

At this point Seleot interrupted telepathically, “Sir, to make things work Eddie has to be the navigator, Dan’s the pilot, Eddie assists in all else including mission objectives, don’t you think a shake down flight would make more sense right now?”

“What would you suggest?” Asked Eddie.

“My suggestion for a shakedown flight would be to achieve orbit in both Equatorial and Polar mode then say . . . Lunar circumnavigation then grab the girl and put in some cerebral implants.”

“You lay off the implants. This is a girl I care about and I don’t want one hair on her head messed with by you guys, ok?”

“The data we could collect from her consciousness could be extremely valuable in some places. You do set the agenda for this trip, but your not really going to bring this person into the vehicle without allowing us to remove memories of the abduction are you?” Seleot asked?

Eddie assured Seleot that if he touched one feather on her butt, he was going to throw him out the hatch. Seleot telepathically inquired of Colmotdn, “Do some human females have feathers on their butt?”

Before Colmotdn had a chance to reply Dan engaged the drive and accelerated the craft into an Equatorial orbit, He was amazed it only took a few minutes. He asked Seleot, “Is the object I see off to the right the International Space Station?”

“Yes it is,” Seleot replied but I wouldn’t suggest approaching the ISS it is an area sensitive to public scrutiny.”

“How’s that?” Dan Asked.

“The ISS has several video feeds that are downloaded to public media, we have been in trouble before because of a person named Jeff Challender who monitors and films all anomalous events from these video feeds. He keeps a website of all these events that is open to the public.” Replied Seleot.

“Really! Said Dan”, “What’s its name?”

Project Prove,” said Seleot.

(I left Project Prove's mention intact in memory of Jeff Challander, my good friend)

Chapter VII

Dan concentrated on the Image of the moon, without even thinking his left ring finger pressed the control. Suddenly the holographic control display plotted a spiral path intersecting with the moon, the path appeared as a red dashed line. Dan pressed the control panel with his right middle finger and the line turned solid amber and blinked. He was wondering what to do next when Seleot interrupted telepathically, “Sir you must select a mode of motion.”

“How,” asked Dan?

“That depends on how much energy you wish to expend. The energy supply is not a problem, but you might not want to stress untested components of the artifice with extreme demands on performance.” Seleot replied.

Eddie busted in with, “Giver hell Dan, wanna nother beer?”

“Yeh!” Dan said. “Whip one on me.”

Eddie reached in the ice chest pulled out a brew, popped off the lid and passed it to Dan. Dan pressed the button again this time with his right middle finger, as Phil's hand reached out to the ice chest seeking a brew, the red curved tracking line turned into a straight vector to Luna and everything became blurry. Instantly, the moon appeared as big as the Earth. Phil popped off the lid and threw it on the floor amazed at the size of Luna. The sun appeared as an orb of extreme brightness. Looking off to his right, Dan could see the big blue marble of Earth, to his left a bright shining days-side Luna and beyond a bewildering mass of stars. Colmotdn spoke by voice, "Please sir go down close to the surface before we are shot down."

Phil busted in, "Just who the hell is going to shoot us down?"

"Reptilians have had a presence on Luna for centuries, they regard this satellite as their own. Mostly they inhabit the backside to keep from influencing Earth cultures and meet UGC treaty requirements. It is possible that if they were on the day's side at this time they might believe this test vehicle belongs to the Grey Worlds. Since we are now at war they might kill us with a plasma beam." Said Seleot. Dan plotted a course to the surface. Colmotdn said, "I'd choose to travel a little slower, Luna has some high terrain."

A huge cliff loomed in front of their path of travel. Dan put the UFO in a hover and said, "No more surprises! If you know something that might be dangerous let us know, OK!"

Seleot broke in with, "We have a policy of non-interference when evaluating a culture's inclusion into the UGC so we can intervene with information only when it is absolutely needed to preserve the mission."

"It would have been nice if you brought this up, before we find ourselves looking down an Acturian death ray", Eddie burst out.

Seleot spoke to Colmotdn telepathically in a near panic, even his brain wave, wavered, "I wonder if they sense an Acturian presence?"

Colmotdn replied, "They have not been seen in this sector of the galaxy for at least 30 years, we can only hope we never have to deal with them again. Should we tell them about the plasma beam device we installed?"

"Can't," Utters Seleot, "Transmitting an untranslatable Gray cussword."
The Gray's have two cuss words in their vocabulary this was the worst for vulgar.
"ZZtnnDtt the damn treaty anyway. What are we doing here catering to these Earthlings when we could be making big currency on implants."

Colmotdn said, "Just following orders . . ."

Phil joined in telepathically, "I'm reading you Grays and your scaring me."

The two Aliens looked at each other eye-to-eye, eye contact between two grays will get your attention right away.

Eddie asked, "Can we dimension shift so we can't be detected, like when we exited the hanger?"

The two Aliens in unison shook their heads no.

Colmotdn said in his raspy voice, "This is dangerous work even when we do it. The Reptilians have technology that will sense dimension shifting. Dimension shifting is a very bad idea; they would know we are here right away. The best tactics when dealing with Reptilians is to outmaneuver them, they have very slow reflexes, but good technology. Reptilian weaponry systems are excellent, but not as good as our plasma weapons. Another item to keep in mind when dealing with the Reptilians is that their vision is not too great; they depend on thermal sensors more than visual. So keep cool."

Eddie broke in, "Is he trying to be hip or does he mean, turn off the heat?"

"Turn off the heat." Said in Phil.

Phil shut of the energy to the artifice and the craft plunked to the ground. Things started to cool off right away, even on the days side Luna is no tropical paradise. He un-strapped from his seat opened a hatch and started pulling out space suits, "Quick put these on it are going to get cold fast." When he pulled the suits out of the locker it was obvious which suits went to the Aliens, the helmets were bigger and the suits were much smaller.

After about an hour setting quietly on the surface of the moon and peering into the view screens, they saw it. Gliding silently over the rim of the crater, it was an irregular shaped vehicle with no streamlining, obviously made to function in a vacuum environment. Colmotdn telepathically opened a previously inconspicuous console. Visible on its screen was the alien vehicle. The console shows an obvious weapons lock.

Eddie whispered, "I think we should have just let that old Buick set in the garage."

"They can't hear talk us can they." Asked Dan.

Select replied verbally, "No but they might hear your thoughts, suppress your fear. Your broadcasting and we are barely able to mask it."

The alien craft glided over the crater and disappeared from sight.

Chapter VIII

In the Batchelor Officers Quarters, Susan was making a snack when she saw the alien. He walked up to the refrigerator opened it and took out a beer, popped off the lid and sat down in the lounge.

"Excuse me, but you're not exactly from around here are you?" Susan was saying this in her head only.

Speaking out loud by voice, the alien responded. "Neither are you Susan."

"I'm sorry but I'm at a disadvantage, I don't know your name." Susan said aloud.

"Sorry Susan, My name is Zpath I'm a military ambassador working for the United Galactic Council, UGC. I want to get to know you a little bit and discuss your son Dan's unusual talents. Have you noticed any precognition or telekinesis in your son?" Zpath spoke using amazingly human sounding voice, sounding too much like Leonard Nimoy.

Susan quipped, "Now I'm expecting the Vulcan Salute."

“Hard to do with just three fingers.” Zpath seemed to grin if that’s possible with a mouth that tiny. “I can change characters if you like. In fact I can use Phil’s voice if you would prefer.”

“Please continue with the Vulcan flavor, right now I’m missing Phil a lot.” Susan dropped her head a little and a drop of moisture could be seen in the corner of her eye. “You’re doing this in my mind, aren’t you?”

“Sorry for the intrusion into your centers of speech, I’ll not probe any further into your psyche; we gather good data concerning your son by doing so. Since his talent is inherited genetically it would be interesting to discover if your genetics contributed to his talent.” Zpath said.

Susan was watching and Zpath didn’t move his mouth at all. “She thought this is just too weird.” Aloud she asked, “Where are Phil and the boys I haven’t seen them for a couple of days?”

Zpath went into what appeared to be a short trance then he said, “They are on the moon hiding from a Reptilian warship at the moment.”

“What’s a Reptilian warship?” Susan asked.

“Pretty much what it sounds like, hostile possessive Reptilians who don’t want humans on Luna. The boys have to complete the mission that Eddie defined. It’s a test for the UGC to circumnavigate the back side of the moon and return home.” Zpath said.

Susan asked, “I need to get out of this place and into my own home to grieve for my guys. I’ll keep quiet; can you convince the powers-to-be around here that I’ll cooperate? Phil will know how to find me when they get back.”

Zpath went silent for a few minutes then said. “I’ll talk to Colonel Thompson and see if I can work something out for you.”

Chapter IX

Dennis was lying on his back ready to tack weld a piece of plate on his dune buggy when Wanda, his wife hollered from the house. "Phone!"

"Can you bring it down here?" Dennis asked.

After a minute or two Wanda hollered back, "It was Jake he was wanting to know if you're going to organize the spring Slammers Bike meet soon? He said that He had talked to Doris and remembered it was time to have a club meeting."

"I'll get to it tonight, some of the members have email addresses only I'll get the computer to send out a notice to all the members to meet at One Shot Charlie's Bar on Saturday night. We can have a few and talk it over Ok?"

Wanda closed the door without replying. Dennis flipped down his hood and struck an arc.

How the hell did he ever get this secretary job anyway? He chuckled as the flash of light from the arc played in the glass of his hood. Doris should have got the job but she didn't have a computer. Darn! He would have to get Wanda to call the beauty shop.

Chapter X

Eddie said. "We've been hiding in this crater long enough lets go up and take a peek."

"Dad can you switch the power back on? We'll keep these suits on for a while." Dan replied.

Phil switched the power on, the consoles lit up and the view screens once more displayed the surroundings. They were setting all alone in the lunar crater. "Take her up and be ready to plot a quick course out of here if we see that lizard ship again." Eddie said.

Dan once again used the control pad to slowly bring the ship up to the crater rim. Both aliens were busy at their defense and weapons console, that secret was pretty much out now. Nothing showed anywhere, but endless miles of empty craters.

“Take it slow and easy follow the terrain closely, keep alert. We’ll do our reconnoiter and see if we can learn something.” Eddie said.

Eddie asked Phil, “What’s the name of this ship anyway?”

“Electra, in consideration of the prototype.” Replied Phil

Dan plotted a course to circumnavigate the moon. He set an altitude of 100 meters and a speed of three hundred kilometers per hour. They found themselves zooming over mountains through craters and into the dark of lunar night using the terrain avoidance system the military had installed.

After about two hours travel Phil cleared a crater rim to see lights on the surface, instinctively he veered the craft behind another ridge.

“I hope the Reptilians didn’t spot us?” Said Dan.

The two grays hovered over their console not saying or thinking a word, a total blank. They were repressing.

Eddie said, “I want to go out and peek over the rim of that crater. Can you get a little closer Dan?”

Dan maneuvered the Electra to a point just behind the craters ridgeline and set the craft on the surface.

Seleot said, “We need to pull a vacuum on the cabin by compressing the cabin atmosphere, venting would be detected by the Reptilian security sensors. It seems as if we weren’t detected by their security when we cleared the ridgeline, they didn’t react. Venting will take at least twenty minutes.”

“Damn! Can’t even have a beer in this darn space suit while I’m waiting.” Eddie said.

Colmotdn took an appliance from his cabinet, pulled a can of beer from the now dry ice chest, punctured the top of a can bulging from the cabin vacuum and plugged it into a tube on Eddie's suit. "You may drink from the mouthpiece he said."

Phil watched as the boys had their liquid reinforcement, after the twenty minutes were up the hatch was popped open and Dan and Eddie headed out for the crater rim.

They didn't dare talk on the radio so communication was by hand signal. Eddie took his camera pointed at the flash and shook his head. Dan nodded. Eddie pushed buttons on the camera till the display indicated the flash was off.

They crawled on their bellies up to the ridgeline and viewed the Reptilian base, it was huge and well lit up by massive floodlights. Eddie started snapping pictures they could see several reptilian aliens and some people in space suits working on equipment on the surface.

"What the Hell! There are people down there." Eddie looked at Seleot asking, "Why are people, human people here on the moon and just what the hell are they doing?"

Seleot answered, "Sir be aware our radio communications are line of sight keep your antenna below the ridge line when you speak."

Eddie moved down below the ridgeline.

Ok! Explain why are humans on Luna at an alien base?"

Eddie could sense the alien's reluctance to speak.

Colmotdn spoke up, "The reptilians have used humans as beasts of toil for centuries. Humans have been used as labor and for body tissue for thousands of years here on Luna."

Dan spoke up, "Slavery is bad enough, but discussions of body tissue is just too much. What body tissue and how do they use it?"

Colmotdn continued, "They take blood routinely from the humans, when they expire the flesh of the deceased is used for food. Reptilians like rotting meat, that tissue is exported it is extremely valuable and brings great profits on the home world. The UGC prohibits that behavior, but this operation is allowed to continue using a grandfather clause in the treaty. No new humans have been brought here for a thousand years."

The boys were too shocked to speak, They both peered over the crater and watched a tiny person in a space suit walking around picking up small crystalline objects and putting them in a basket.

"What's he doing?" Asked Dan

"The human is picking up ice crystals for use as water and fuel for the facility. See how the crater is all white? A comet impacted here centuries ago and the ground is littered with its ice. That's why the facility was sited here." Said Colmotdn. They watched as the tiny figure moved to better pickings close to the crater rim. Colmotdn and Dan turned to return to their spacecraft. Eddie was not to be seen. Keeping their communication antennas below the crater rim they tried to contact him by radio. He didn't answer.

"Awww Keerapp! Eddie is off to grab that kid." Said Dan.

Colmotdn replies, "Please Sir return to the spacecraft immediately it would be best if you were at the controls in case we have to make a quick exit under fire.

Chapter XI

Tia, the tiny one, gathered crystals for melting. Glancing around she could see that the guard had gone to sleep where she stood. Tia could now safely approach the crater rim and find bigger crystals without the guard punishing her. She could then fill her bag with crystals and go into the warm habitat; she was so cold.

Tia was working around the crater rim when something grabbed her and pulled her behind some big rocks. She looked into the faceplate of a survival suit unlike any she had ever seen before. She saw the face of a beautiful man. Tia didn't see many men the Reptilians took most of them away for food. Tia had been told that their seed was kept for making more babies; the women were kept as long as they could have babies.

The man put the glass of his helmet against the glass of her faceplate. She could hear him speak, "Come with me Darling, I'm going to take you with me."

Tia didn't understand a word, but the smile warmed her heart. She didn't have her momma any more. Momma had told her she was going to be taken because she couldn't have any more babies and now that Tia was old enough to feed herself they would take her away. Momma had cried a lot, so had Tia.

Eddie picked up the little girl and started leaping and running for the ship. It was time to get the hell out of here. They reached the Electra without incident and found the airlock open, waiting for them to board. As soon as they entered the airlock door Colmotdn slammed it shut and the system started pressurizing. Soon the pressure was up and helmets were off, Colmotdn said, "It would have been best if you had not removed that child from her owners, they will consider that abduction a threat to their culture and will respond with force."

"Forget it, now that I know what's going on there I'm coming back for the rest of them. I'll whack lizards till Luna is smeared with green guts, got that?" Said Eddie. Colmotdn said, "It won't be that easy. We will be lucky to get away at all. The only advantage we have is Dan's piloting skills and our beam weapon. Before we go back it will be necessary to remove the child's implant before the Reptilians can track her.

Seleot emitted the alien equivalent of a grin, it would be necessary to fill the cranial void with an implant and of course he would get the royalties from the data returned. He wasn't too worried about Dan's ability to outmaneuver these crude Reptilians, so things should work out well. He darn well wasn't going back to Luna with Eddie; the reptilians will be mad and waiting for revenge.

"Get strapped in boys it's time to get out of here." Said Phil who was in his seat and strapping himself in, the alien crew members were already prepared in they looked anxiously at Dan as if to say, "We are not out of here yet?"

Eddie strapped Tia in his seat with him since there were no extra seats and the only seat she would have fit in belonged to the gray aliens, they hadn't been expecting any passengers on this trip. Tia jabbered a lot in a strange language and studied the crew. She seemed to be alarmed but not surprised at the sight of the Gray's.

“Hang on to your hats boys we are going to be flying low and close to the ground.” Dan was frantically punching in circuit breakers and firing up the propulsion system. “Yahoo! We are out of here. Keep your pressure suits on till we get out of Dodge.” He said.

To be continued...