

Monday, February 2, 1976. James Riggerford, 42, happily married with three children, walked from his beachside home south-west of Houston, Texas, sometime shortly after 3:00 a.m. - two days after resigning as the Operations Administrator with NASA. His body, found clad in pajamas, was later recovered from the Gulf of Mexico.

Tuesday, September 7, 1976. Roger Marshall-Smith, a 31-year-old physicist who had recently returned from temporary attachment to NASA in America, was living with his parents in Winchester, Hampshire. They found him just after 1:00 a.m. - two hours after they had all gone to sleep - in flames at the bottom of the stairs. He had apparently, while still asleep, doused his clothing with turpentine and then set fire to himself. The agony of burning had awakened him but it was then too late to save his life.

Saturday, January 15, 1977. James Arthur Carmichael, 35, aerospace technician, hurtled inexplicably to his death at 4:35 a.m. from a sixteenth-floor hotel bedroom window in Washington. Friends said that he had seemed happy and in normal spirits the previous evening and had gone to bed alone at about midnight. He, too, was wearing pajamas.

Were these three men victims of "telepathic sleep-jobs"? We do not claim to know but we consider it reasonable to suggest that the possibility cannot now be discounted. And what of the "regional officer" mentioned in the transcript? The answer to that question was to come, eventually, in the most unexpected way.

Benson returned to the production office and Simon Butler joined Clements in the little room behind Studio B. "How were things with Fergus?" he asked.

"Not good," said Clements miserably. "He wants to junk Colin's interview with Grodin. Quite frankly, Simon, the whole thing looks like it's getting screwed up...unless, maybe, you can squeeze more out of Gerstein."

"You mean Alternative 3?"

Clements nodded. "That's what it all seems to hinge on," he said. "Gerstein obviously knows about it. Or, at least, he knows the theory..."

"There's a big difference between knowing and talking." Butler was remembering how he's been given a sherry when what he's really wanted was an answer. "When I say him in March he was quite definite. He simply didn't want to know..."

"Try him again," urged Clements. "Tell him everything you know ... what we've got from Grodin and Broadbent ... tell him the lot ... and then see if you can't persuade him."

"Well," said Butler. "I'm prepared to try..."

Two days later he was back in that book-lined study in Cambridge. And, to his surprise, Gerstein eventually agreed to talk about Alternative 3. At first Gerstein was very much on his guard, very reluctant to be drawn,

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but he listened courteously to all Butler had to say.

"You people have done your homework pretty thoroughly," he acknowledged. He re-lit his dead pipe and stared thoughtfully at the desk. "There doesn't seem any point now in me not telling you what I know..."

Here is a transcript of the interview which followed -- as it was presented on television:

GERSTEIN: You already know about Alternatives 1 and 2 -

and why they were rejected. Well ... Alternative 3 offered a more limited option -- an attempt to ensure the survival of at least a small proportion of the human race. We were theorists, remember, not technicians ... but we realized we were talking about the kind of space travel that - twenty years ago - seemed no more than science fiction.

BUTLER: You mean...go to some other planet?

GERSTEIN: I mean get the hell off this one - while there was still time! I had no idea whether it would, or could, be done. And I still don't.

BUTLER: Did you have any ideas about who might go?

GERSTEIN: I remember we discussed the kind of cross-section we'd like to see get away ... a balance of the sciences and the arts, of course, and, indeed, all aspects, as far as possible, of human culture ... The list would never be complete - but it would be better than nothing.

BUTLER: And these people ... where was it visualized they might go?

GERSTEIN: Ah, now that was the big question. There are about 100,000 million stars in the Milky Way -about equal to the number of people who have ever walked this earth - and as long ago as 1950 Fred Hoyle was estimating that more than a million of those stars had planets which could support human life...

BUTLER: So it really was as vague and theoretical as that?

GERSTEIN: In 1957 ... at the time of the Huntsville Conference ... yes. But the situation has changed quite considerably since then. Now the most distinct possibility seems to be Mars..."

BUTLER: Mars!

GERSTEIN: Yes, I can imagine your viewers raising their eyebrows because most people think of Mars in terms of little green men with aerials sticking out of their heads ... but, scientifically, our attitude to Mars has had to be amended more than once.

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In the early days of astronomy, Mars was believed to have artificially-constructed canals - which was taken as evidence of intelligent life on the planet. Later this theory was discredited. In its place we had a picture of a barren, inhospitable planet, inimical to the survival of any form of life.

Then, more recently, an interesting idea was put forward: Suppose life did at one time exist on Mars...

As the climate and conditions worsened, any surviving life may have evolved into a state of hibernation, awaiting the return of more favorable conditions. It has even been suggested that the actual atmosphere which used to support life may have become locked up in the planet's surface soil.

There was an occurrence several years ago which made this theory very persuasive. Mars has always had a covering of cloud, varying in density at different times, until the time of which I speak, when the cloud thickened to a degree never

previously observed. This happened, and was scientifically recorded, in 1961.

It was obvious that storms of colossal proportions were taking place on Mars. Now...this is the really interesting bit ... when the clouds eventually cleared, some remarkable changes were seen. The polar ice caps had substantially decreased in size, and around the equatorial regions a broad band of darker coloring had appeared. This, it has been suggested, was vegetation.

BUTLER: Has anyone explained this happening?

GERSTEIN: At a conference shortly before it happened, I put forward a theoretical suggestion. I said that if the atmosphere of Mars was in fact locked into the surface soil, then a controlled nuclear explosion might be able to release it - and, of course, revive whatever life was in hibernation... the only problem was about how to deliver the explosion well in advance of arriving there ourselves. That same year the Russians had a great space disaster. Yes, that was in 1959. Only the barest facts are recorded, the rest was kept secret. A rocket blew up at its launching. Numbers of people were killed and the area was devastated ... what were they trying to launch? And did they finally succeed?

Was that rocket carrying a nuclear device which accounted for the devastation it caused? A nuclear device which, on a second attempt, could

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have reached the surface of Mars to cause the dynamic changes recorded in 1961?

The sudden outbreaks of storms on Mars, the dwindling of the ice caps, the growth of what appears to be vegetation in the tropical zone ... all that is recorded scientific fact.

The interview, as transmitted, ended at that point. The original version, before being edited, contained this additional exchange:

BUTLER: But I don't understand ... the pictures relayed from Viking 2 on Mars ... they showed little more than a plateau of red rock ... the sort of terrain that seemed to offer little prospect of survival...

GERSTEIN: I don't pretend to understand that either. But, as you've already told me, there does seem to be some sort of cover-up going on. Maybe you should take that up with someone more up-to-date in these matters ... someone who is abreast of modern developments in aerospace ...

BUTLER: Yes...maybe Charles Welbourne can help us there. But there's one other aspect I'd like to discuss with you, Dr. Gerstein, and that's to do with animals, birds, insects and so on. It's all very well talking about transporting man off to a new life on a different planet but how much of his environment could he, or should he, take with him?

GERSTEIN: That's one you ought to put to a biologist. Stephen Manderson ... Professor Stephen Manderson

...was also at Huntsville and he's a singularly pleasant man...very approachable.

Butler telephoned Clements from Cambridge and Clements instructed Terry Dickson to make the necessary arrangements with Manderson. Kate White interviewed him the following day at his home in Reigate, Surrey. The interview went well but, as you may remember, it was not included in the transmitted program. Clements has explained that he was forced to omit it because, despite his pleas, his screen time was severely limited. ITN's News at Ten, scheduled to follow that edition of Science Report, could not be delayed. And, Harman had told him, he could not continue after the news because the rest of the evening had been allocated to programs from other companies.

We consider that, in this instance, an exception should have been made to the rigid pattern of ITV's program-planning. Manderson's views were fascinating. They were also extremely pertinent.

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"The Bible concept of taking two of every type of creature into the ark ... that, in this context, would be impossible and quite irrational," he said. "Man, basically, is a selfish creature. There's nothing much wrong in that because a certain degree of selfishness is necessary for survival.

"We wear other creatures and make cloths and cosmetics out of them and, in fact, we use them in all sorts of ways. So in this Alternative 3 operation - if, indeed, there is such an operation - it would surely be logical to select only those we wanted to take with us.

"Would we want to take rats and mosquitoes, for instance? Of course not! We'd be given the opportunity to create the ideal environment for ourselves and, for the very first time, we'd be able to choose which creatures should share that environment. It would be a most marvellous opportunity.

"But think of the species we could happily do without. Starlings ... rooks ... pea-moths ... eelworms which do such damage to crops like potatoes and sugar-beet ... what possible use are any of them to us?

"Do you realize that three million species of insects have already been taxonomically classified and that, because of the present rate of insect evolution, the total classification will never be completed!

"And consider the damage they do! In India alone insects consume more food every year than nine million human beings - and that's in a country where there's widespread starvation.

"No ... leave them here and let them perish. Man doesn't need them ..."

Kate White interrupted: "But surely some of the most humble creatures are useful to man. Earthworms, for instance, aerate the soil and ..."

"Earthworms, like every other species, would have to be properly assessed for usefulness," said Manderson briskly. "Gophers, for example, might prove to be more efficient. In the Canadian plains they perform exactly the same function as earthworms. Vast tracts there have no worms and it's the gopher which turns vegetable mould into rich loam ... no, as I said, each case would have to be scientifically assessed."

"But what about the sort of creatures we now keep in zoos? Creatures like lions and giraffes and elephants?"

Manderson seemed surprised by her naivety. "Well, what about them? It wouldn't be good economics to shuttle them off to another planet - even if sufficient transport were available. They'd have to die and, quite frankly, it wouldn't make one iota of difference.

I beg you, Miss White, not to get bogged down in sentimentality. It's fashionable but it really is quite pointless.

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"The dinosaurs lasted on this earth for a hundred million years - fifty times as long as man has been around -- but the world goes on very well without them. And it's been the same with so many other creatures. How many people, would you say, have ever been in mourning for the dinomys?"

"Dinomys? I'm sorry...I don't quite follow..."

"Precisely! You're an educated young lady but you've never even heard of them, have you? Dinomys ... rat-like creatures which grew as big as calves ... used to flourish in South America. Polar bears and ostriches ... they'll be the same one day ... people will look blank, just as you did a moment ago, when their names are mentioned."

He smiled, and ruffled his finger through his hair. "I could give you example after example - just to show how narrow the conventional view-point really is..."

"But creatures like bears ... they seem so, well, so permanent..."

"So did the onactornis."

"Onactornis?"

"Carnivorous bird...eight feet tall...couldn't fly but terrorized smaller creatures for millions of years."

Kate White was anxious to divert the interview into more positive channels. Clements, she knew, would hardly thank her for wasting so much film footage on a philosophical discussion about prehistoric monsters. That, in her experience, was one of the troubles with experts. They often got carried away with their own cleverness. They liked, in fact, to show off. "But if one assumes that the basic premise is correct, that men are colonizing Mars, wouldn't they have to start from scratch with stocking an entire new world? And wouldn't that be a almost unsurpassable task?"

"Not when you understand the facts or life," said Manderson. "You've heard, of course, about the experiments which have resulted in the creation of test-tube babies..."

"Yes, but..."

"But do you realize that enough female eggs to produce the entire next generation of the human race could be packed into the shell of a single chicken's egg?"

"Goodness! I' no idea."

"And the same convenient compactness, Miss White, applies to other creatures. A mother cod, for example, can lay up to six million eggs at a single spawning. Fortunately most of those eggs are destroyed before they develop into fish...or else there'd be no room for people to paddle off our beaches. If they all survived the seas of our world would be solid masses of cod by now - and they could all survive if nurtured in the right conditions.

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"There was a ling caught, not so long ago, which was carrying more than 28 million eggs! So you can see right away how easy it would be to stock any seas there may be on Mars..."

"That's assuming there's nothing already in those seas."

"Granted - and there may well be for all we know."

"But what if tiny things in the Martian seas - or on the Martian land for that matter - were harmful to man or were a nuisance to man?"

"Then we'd have to use our initiative to balance the ecology in our favor. It's been done often enough before, y'know. Sparrows, for instance, were first imported into New York in the middle of the nineteenth century - simply to attack tree-worms..."

"But wouldn't that automatically bring other problems? What about the creatures that live on the creatures you'd have to introduce to strike this ecological balance?" She paused, trying to grasp for a good example. Manderson, she'd decided by this time, was a cold and unlikeable man. He seemed to lack soul and she couldn't resist the temptation to bait him just a little. "Like hedgehogs?" she said triumphantly.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Hedgehogs," she repeated. "I heard somewhere that they get withdrawal symptoms and become quite neurotic if they are deprived of their fleas..."

Manderson smiled indulgently. "I'm sorry," he said. "I don't pretend to be an authority on neurotic hedgehogs and I do feel we're starting to get in rather deep. Can I help you in any other way?"

"Just on last question. In this new world - as you see it, Professor Manderson - is there any room for creatures that people simply enjoy ... creatures like squirrels and nightingales?"

"Not unless their productivity value were proved," said Manderson. "No room at all."

"You know something," said Kate. "I find that very, very sad."

Charles Welbourne, interviewed on screen by Colin Benson, agreed that there was an obvious conflict between the description of Mars offered by Gerstein and the pictures which had been released by NASA.

"Many people have also wondered why NASA should apparently have been so stingy on its photographic budget," he said. "Particularly when you consider how important the pictures are supposed to be."

"Why should people wonder in that way?" prompted Benson.

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Welbourne pointed to a blow-up photograph of "familiar" Martian terrain which was mounted on a board in the studio. "That picture there almost says it for me," he said. "We're told that they spent all that money putting that probe on Mars and then what do they do? They equip it, if you please, with a camera which can focus only up to one hundred meters. And that, as somebody observed, is about the size of a large film studio."

"It doesn't start to add up. If they'd really wanted good pictures of Mars they would have fitted a vastly superior camera system. Better cameras are available - make

no mistake about that - but the one they used ... well, it was almost as if they'd deliberately fitted blinkers to the whole mission."

"You mean they were determined that we should see only what they wanted us to see?"

"That could well be. You've got to remember that all these pictures we get come in through NASA - they're simply passed on to the rest of us. So if they tell us it's Mars ... well, we have to believe them.

"It's exactly the same soundwise, of course. I mean, we don't hear everything that's said between Mission Control and the spacecraft. There's a second channel. They call it the biological channel ... "

"We did learn a little about that from Otto Binder," said Benson.

"Sure, Binder the former NASA man ... I remember he did blow the gaff on that after Apollo 13 ... well, this biological channel is officially just for reporting on medical details. In fact, though, they switch to it whenever they have something to say they don't want the whole world listening in on ..."

Welbourne paused, looked thoughtfully at the Martian picture. "I've just had a crazy thought," he said. "How about if that picture wasn't taken on Mars? Look at it closely ... don't you agree that could have been shot in some studio in Burbank?"

We should stress that Welbourne had been told nothing of the other pictures which we know were "dummied-up" in a studio - the ones of people like Brian Pendlebury which were an integral part of The Smoother Plan.

He had no idea then how near the mark he was with his "crazy thought".

The proof came unexpectedly. It came from Harry Carmell's girlfriend Wendy - the one who had ordered Benson and his crew out of that derelict house in Lambeth.

And Wendy was very frightened.

Wendy had not gone back to that house in Lambeth - not since the day Harry had disappeared. She had returned on that morning with the bandage and antiseptic and, realizing that Harry had gone, she had panicked and fled. He couldn't have managed to get out on his own, not in the state he was in, so someone must have taken him.

Obviously he had been found by them - those mysterious men he'd sworn were determined to kill him - and she knew then, deep down, that she'd never see him again.

She had to get away. Far away. She had to hide. Or they might find her and kill her too. An hour later she was thumbing a lift to Birmingham. There was no special attraction in Birmingham. It just so happened that that's where the lorry was going. And it seemed a long way from London. They would not find her in Birmingham.

However, she had taken no chances there. She had kept on the move, rarely staying in one place for more than a couple of nights, for she had a frightening feeling that,

somehow< they might catch her just as they had caught Harry. She also, as she has since told us, felt guilty. She felt she had let Harry down. For she kept remembering that small box which he had considered so important, the one he had hidden under floorboards in the derelict house, and she knew that she should have retrieved it. She'd forgotten all about it in the flurry of leaving but Harry had wanted so desperately to get it to the television people. It held the key, he'd told her, to something important ... to some tape which had been made by the dead man Ballantine. She felt she ought to get that box to that colored chap Benson. She ought to do that because Harry had been good to her and she owed him that much. But now it would mean going back to the house. And she dreaded stepping back into danger ...

She finally made up her mind on Thursday, June 9. She took a train to London and travelled by bus across the city. And by 3:30 p.m. she was at number 88 - walking between the posts where the front gate had once been.

Now there was no rubbish in the front garden and the boarding at the windows had been replaced by glass. Other attempts had been made to brighten and improve the terraced house. The steps at the end of the cleared path were freshly scrubbed and the door, slightly ajar, had recently been painted in bright canary yellow.

All the neighboring houses looked just as she remember them but number 88 had been dramatically transformed. It was a building which had been snatched back from decay.

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Through the windows of the front ground-floor room she could see a group of young people - all in their late teens or early twenties - who were kneeling silently, with their eyes shut, in a circle.

Wendy hesitated, anxious and disappointed. She had expected the house to be empty, just as it had been when she and Harry had first found it in February. She had anticipated merely walking in, of going quietly to the first-floor room where the floorboards were loose, of hurrying away, unseen, with the box. Now it couldn't be like that at all... The youngsters were still kneeling, trance-like, apparently lost in some communal meditation. They might not notice her, she thought, if she were stealthy enough and fast enough. But, on the other hand, there might be more of them in other rooms. There might be some in the room where Harry had hidden the box...

She tapped with her knuckles at the door - tentatively, at first, and then harder.

Footsteps approached across the bare boards of the hall. Then the door was opened wide by a tall and immensely scrawny man with long hair and an unkempt ginger beard. His feet were bare and he was wearing tattered blue jeans patched with bits of floral curtaining. His eyes - dark and deep-set and staring with fierce intensity - were oddly disconcerting and he was older than the people in the front room. In his mid-thirties, maybe, or even nudging forty.

"Good afternoon sister," he said. "Jesus loves you." His voice was deeply resonant and his accent was strongly east London.

"Who are you?" asked Wendy.

"Eliphaz," he replied solemnly. "Eliphaz the Temanite."

"Look ... I used to live here ... a few months ago I was living here and I left something important behind ..."

"The only thing that is truly important is Jesus. Has He entered your heart? He is waiting - waiting for you to invite Him in ..."

"So I was wondering if I could just pop in and collect it ..."

The man stepped back, gestured for her to follow, and Wendy noticed for the first time that he was holding a small Bible. "Here in the Temple everyone is welcome," he said.

Could this, Wendy wondered, be a trap? Harry had never told her what they looked like. Could this bizarre character - this Eliphaz or whatever he called himself - be one of them? Questions raced through her mind. Would she, if she went inside, disappear like Harry?

She had a great urge to run away, to forget the whole thing. Why should she go further into danger ... it really wasn't her responsibility ...

"Come on in ... Jesus is here," said the man encouragingly. "And you need Jesus."

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Wendy pointed to the youngsters who were still kneeling in their silent circle. "What are they doing in there?" she asked. "All you people ... who exactly are you?"

"We are the Children of Heavenly Love," said the man. "We were sinners and we lived in the bondage of the flesh but Jesus Christ, the greatest revolutionary of them all, has entered our hearts and saved us from sin." He closed his eyes, screwed up his face in apparent anguish, held his Bible high. "Thank you, oh thank you, Lord Jesus," he said. He opened his eyes, smiled, extended a hand in invitation.

"Eliphaz ..." said Wendy. "Is that your real name?"

"It became my name when I entered into the love of Christ," he said. "Before I found the Lord I was called Jack - Jack Perkins. But now I am saved and the old me, the wicked me, has gone for ever ..."

No, she decided, he wasn't acting. No-one could act like that. Not unless he was someone like Michael Caine. This one just had to be a genuine Jesus freak ...

"That thing I mentioned," she said. "I left it upstairs ...under the floorboards for safety..."

"You are more than welcome to come in," said the man. "Here in the Temple we do not wish to keep things which are the possessions of others."

She followed him through the hall and up the stairs. And she was amazed by the transformation. The place had been cleaned and the walls had been painted. And the entire building had a curious atmosphere of tranquillity.

All three doors on the landing were open. Wendy indicated the front room. "In there," she said.

The man stopped, put a hand on her arm. "I forgot to ask your name."

Instant suspicion. "Why do you need to know it?"

He smiled, shook his head sadly. "There is fear in you, sister. You should accept the Lord and let Him help you..."

"Why is my name important?" persisted Wendy.

Another smile. "So that I can introduce you to my brothers," he said. "They will expect me to introduce you."

Then Wendy noticed there were two young men in the room. Both, she would have guessed, were about eighteen and both were dressed in the style of the man called Eliphaz. There was no furniture, not even the old sofa which had been there, and the two of them were seated on the bare boards. They were studying Bibles, mouthing words silently as if trying to

memorize them.

"Wendy," she said quietly. "My name is Wendy."

Both youngsters immediately looked up and scrambled to their feet. They were smiling broadly and welcomingly.

"This is Wendy," said Eliphaz.

He took Wendy's elbow, eased her firmly into the room.

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"This here is Lazarus, one of our brothers from America," he said. "And our friend over here used to be called Arthur. But now he's filled with the Spirit and he's become Canaan. Canaan the Rechabite."

"Jesus loves you, Wendy," said Lazarus politely.

"Praise the Lord!" He spoke with the warm and homely drawl of the Deep South. On the knuckles of his right hand was tattooed the word "love". A matching tattoo on his left knuckles said "hate".

"Yes, Jesus surely loves you," said Arthur who had become Canaan. Wendy could immediately identify his Birmingham origins.

They stared at her, now waiting for her to take the initiative, and their solemn sincerity made her feel oddly uncomfortable. "Thank you," she said. It sounded ridiculously inadequate and there was an awkward silence. She indicated the section of the floor where the sofa had been and turned to Eliphaz the Temanite. "It should be just there," she said. "Under the loose boards."

He nodded. "You need help?"

"No...no, thank you...I can manage."

They watched while she went down on her knees and started trying to prise up one of the boards.

"Wendy...do you know Jesus?" Lazarus put the question casually. He might almost have been asking about the weather.

"Sure." She has pre-occupied with her work and she did not look up. "Sure I know Him." The board was fixed more firmly than she'd expected.

"I mean really know Him." said Lazarus more vehemently. "There's a whole heap of dudes out there in the systemite world, in all them fine churches an' all, who reckon they know Jesus but they wouldn't even recognize Him if He stopped them in the street..."

The board was now rising from the floor. Wendy wormed her fingers under it and started to tug.

"I tell ya...He was an unwashed hairy hippy from the slums of Galilee...but, ya gotta believe me, that cat was for real," said Lazarus. "And he still is today..."

Loud creaks as the bit of wood bent and finally burst away from the retaining nails. Wendy peered down into the darkness, put a hand down to grope around. Nothing. She must have picked the wrong board.

"...yes, He's here with us today...He's right here in this room...and, I tell ya, He's here with us today...He's right here in this room...and, I tell ya, He's a mind blower.

Maybe it was a bit nearer the window. Yes, now she came to think of it, the board had been just behind the sofa. She moved across, started again.

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"He's the ultimate trip, Wendy...and you wanna get right

there with Him because there ain't much time left..."

This board was much looser. She jiggled it a little to get a better grip and then lifted it.

"...it's all right here in the Bible...how the seven vials of the wrath of God will be poured over the nations..."

There it was! She snatched up the box, got to her feet. "Thank you," she said. "I'm sorry to have interrupted you."

Eliphaz, she now realized, had placed himself squarely between her and the door. His face was coldly resolute and his arms were folded across his chest. "That box is yours and whatever is in it is yours...but I have to ask you one question," he said. "Does it contain drugs?"

Suddenly he seemed bigger than before. Bigger and more powerful. And her old fears about them came flooding back. She had been a fool to return to this house...

Lazarus and Canaan the Rechabite seemed to be closing in on her, one on either side, and her stomach was churning with panic. "I've got to go now." She was struggling to control her voice, to stop it going all squeaky. "Please let me go."

"It's all here in the Book of Revelation." Lazarus appeared to be unaware of what was happening in the room. He was preoccupied entirely with his own thoughts, with his convictions about the imminent End of Time. "Listen to this...the Bible gives facts and details...it don't mess about..."and the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun...and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire..." "

Eliphaz held out his hand. "Give the box to me," and blasphemed the name of God..."

"No!" she shouted. "It's nothing like that!"

He stood aside to let her pass. "Please forgive me for being suspicious." Now his manner was contritely apologetic. "We would have taken them if they had been drugs. We would have taken them and destroyed them. You have to realize that many of our brothers and sisters here were damaged by drugs...in their days of fleshly bondage."

"Then you're letting me go?"

"Of course - but please come back to see us again," said Eliphaz. "All God's children are welcome here in the Temple."

"Let Jesus into your heart, Wendy," said Lazarus as she walked to the landing. "He loves you real good."

"Hallelujah!" added Canaan the Birmingham Rechabite.

Eliphaz escorted her to the front door. "Don't forget, sister, that you do need Jesus," he said. "God be with you."

She ran from the house, along the street around a corner to a telephone box. She dialled the number for Sceptre Television. "Please may I speak with Colin Benson?"

"Hold on," said the operator. "I'm just putting you through..."

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Terry Dickson had prepared a background-information sheet about Mars for Clements so that some of the details could be fed into the program's links. It said:

Mars has a diameter about half that of Earth and is officially classified, together with Mercury and Venus, as one of the inferior planets in our sun's family of planets.

It is our nearest neighbor among the planets - being 12.6 light minutes away from the sun, compared with our 8.3 light minutes. You will see this in

perspective when I point out that Neptune and Pluto are 250 and 327 light minutes from the sun respectively.

The principal significance of this is that Neptune and Pluto, together with the other giant planets, Saturn and Uranus, would be far too cold to support life as we understand it.

Conversely, Mercury and Venus - 3.2 and 6 light minutes from the sun respectively - would be too hot.

Mars is appreciably cooler than Earth, of course, but scientists have long been agreed that temperatures there could be endured by man: the problems, while serious, should not prove insurmountable.

The actual distance between Earth and Mars varies considerably - being anything from 35 million miles to 60 million miles. This is because Earth moves in an almost circular orbit while the orbit of Mars is much more eccentric.

The predominant red color which has given Mars its popular name comes from regions very similar to many of the deserts known on Earth. Like, for instance, the Painted Desert of Arizona.

Green patches which vary in size and shape from season to season are believed to be caused by the growth of plants similar to rock lichens. I am advised that lichens can survive at lower temperatures than most terrestrial plants and require very little moisture. However, pioneering work in the deserts of the Middle East has proved that more valuable crops can be grown if a region is properly irrigated and tended. That could apply equally well to the desert regions of Mars so making it possible, at least in theory, for man to become self-supporting there.

There is no shortage of water or potential water. It has been known for thirty years, as a result of work done at Yerkes Observatory near Chicago, that the polar caps of Mars are composed of snow. This snow could be converted into water which could then be channelled as required.

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The one question which has apparently still not been satisfactorily resolved is that of atmosphere.

Does Mars have air which we could breathe? The answer, quite frankly, is that no-one really seems to know. I've now spoken to a number of scientists who are confident that appreciable quantities of free oxygen probably did exist there at one time. It may well be that, as Gerstein has suggested, life supporting atmosphere has been locked in the surface soil but I have been unable to find any other expert who is prepared to publicly endorse that suggestion.

Obviously the whole question of the possible colonization of Mars, the central question you asked me to investigate, depends on the certainty that the planet has an atmosphere similar to Earth's. There appears to be no such certainty. Gerstein is being decried by most of his contemporaries in Britain and abroad and, without wishing to be rude about the man, I wouldn't fancy sticking my neck out professionally on his say-so.

In short, Chris, it's a fascinating theory but it doesn't quite add up.

Clements read the last few paragraphs through for the second time and snorted impatiently. "Well, Terry love, it's my neck that'll be sticking out - not your," he said. "Gerstein's got me convinced and I'm prepared to gamble on him."

But he didn't need to gamble, not as it turned out. For, at that moment, Wendy was waiting to talk to Colin Benson...

Memo dated June 13, 1977, from Leonard Harman to Mr. Fergus Godwin, Controller of Programs:

I have returned to the studios today after a week's sick leave and I am astonished to learn that it is apparently your intention to allow the screening of that interview with the former astronaut Grodin.

We have already discussed at length the unethical circumstances under which the interview was conducted and which resulted in Grodin expressing extravagant views. We agreed, I thought, that Grodin's statements could not possibly be substantiated and that, if dignified by being included in a program purporting to be serious, they could do considerable harm.

The whole of this particular Science Report program, as I have told you on numerous occasions, is a blatant example of irresponsible sensationalism which will reflect adversely on the company's image.

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Are companies in the rest of the ITV network and those abroad aware of the troublesome and, indeed, unsavory background to this production? I can only assume not for, otherwise, I am certain they would not be prepared to buy it.

Once again, I urge you most strongly to withdraw this program from the schedules.

Memo dated June 14, 1977, from Fergus Godwin to Leonard Harman:

I can no longer agree with you over the remarkable "brain-drain" investigation which has been mounted by Clements and his team.

I grant that it is highly controversial and even frightening. It will also cause embarrassment in certain high places.

However, I have assessed the evidence which is now in the program - the product, I might add, of diligent research and impressive dedication - and I feel we would be failing in our public duty if we were to suppress what appears to be the unpalatable truth.

Since we last spoke I have had the opportunity of studying Simon Butler's interview with Dr. Gerstein. Gerstein is a man for whom I have the greatest respect and no-one of his stature would lend his name to anything which, in your words, savoured of "irresponsible sensationalism".

Three have been times, as you know, when I have been perturbed by the unexpected directions in which this investigation has moved. I now feel able to set all my reservations aside. Clements has my unqualified support.

I do not propose to reply in more detail to your

query relating to networking and overseas sales for I consider that to be irrelevant in light of my present feelings.

Memo dated June 15, 1977, from Leonard Harman to Mr. Anthony Derwent-Smith, Managing Director.

You are already aware of my severe misgivings in relation to the Science Report program, scheduled for network transmission on June 20, in which it is suggested that there is an international conspiracy to transport intellectuals and others to life on another planet.

I have made my opinions known on many occasions and I commend your attention, in particular, to the minutes of the Senior Executives' Meeting held on April 8. I warned then against what I recognized as a policy of expensive folly.

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I am taking the unusual step of enclosing herewith copies of all correspondence between the Controller of Programs and myself on the subject for I feel that, in view of the damage this production could do to the reputation of the company, this is a matter in which you might see fit to intervene.

I cannot urge too strongly that under no circumstances should this program be screened.

Memo dated June 15, 1977, from Anthony Derwent-Smith to Fergus Godwin:

See the attached note and pile of bumph which reached me by hand today from Mr. Harman.

It is not my practice to become entangled in differences of opinion between my Controller of Programs and any of his subordinates - particularly when I am approached in what I consider to be an underhand manner, with no copy of the note having apparently been sent to you. Nor did I intend to start intervening on this aspect of program policy which I consider to be entirely your territory.

Please deal.

Godwin re-read the note and the one sent to Derwent-Smith by Harman.. "Cheeky bastard!" he said. He dialled on his internal telephone. "Harman...be in my office within two minutes. I'm going to mark your bloody card!"

Katherine White took the call in the Science Report office. "No...Colin Benson's popped out for a coffee...who's this calling, please"

"I must speak to him quickly," said Wendy. "It's urgent."

"Can I take a message? Ask him to call you back?" All Wendy wanted now was to get rid of the box. She anxiously scanned the faces of people loitering near the telephone box. Every wasted minute, she felt, put her in greater danger. If only she knew what they looked like..."Could you find him? It is desperately important."

"I'll see if I can catch him in the canteen. Can I give him a name?"

"Tell him it's the girl who was with Harry," said Wendy.
"Tell him I've got what Harry wanted to give him."
"Hold on..."
"Look...I'm in a pay-box and I'm right out of change..."
"Give me the number of the box and then replace the receiver," said Kate. "I'll call you right back."

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Wendy obeyed. She waited, her back to the door of the booth. And she was unaware of the man until he jerked the door open. He looked angry and beefily pugnacious. She gave a small scream, cowering away from him. He glowered at her with distaste. "You planning on spending the day in here?"

"I won't be more than a minute...I'm waiting for a call."

"Yeah?" He grabbed her arm, started to pull her.

"Well, I'm waiting to make one. So come on...out of it."
"...Please, this won't take long, really..."

"Lady, this is a public box and I'm not hanging around all day while..."

"At that moment the bell rang. Wendy shook away the man's hand, snatched up the receiver, heard Benson's voice. "Yes, that's right...I was the girl with Harry," she said. The man muttered aggressively, stepped out of the box and positioned himself immediately outside. Wendy spoke quietly, convinced that the man was trying to eavesdrop. "I must meet you," she said. "Harry had something he wanted to give you and now I've got it. But I've got to be careful in case they are looking for me..."

They met an hour later at the spot where Benson had first seen Harry Carmell - outside the fruiterer's in the street market near the studios.

"You said they might be looking for you," said Benson. "Who are they?"

Wendy shrugged, pulled a face. "Who knows?" she said. "Goons, heavies ... Russians, Americans, Germans, Outer Bloody Mongolians ... what difference does it make?" She discreetly gave him the box. "That's what Harry wanted you to have - he said something about it helping you see what was on some tape made by Ballantine. That make sense to you?"

"Not much," said Benson. "Wait here ... I'll have a shufti inside the box." He hurried to the nearby men's lavatory, locked himself in a cubicle and opened the box. It contained a square printed circuit and he gave a low whistle of surprise. "Well, I'll be..." He put it back in the box, re-joined Wendy.

"I've just remembered," she said. "Harry said you fit it to an IC40 of something and then you get a juke-box. Does that mean anything to you?"

"I must get back to the studios right away," said Benson. "See what sort of tune we can get out of the juke-box."

"You don't need me any more?"

"Where'll you be?"

"Not sure - but not in London. There's too much heat in London."

Benson tapped the box. "Surely you'll want to know what all this adds up to...where can I contact you?"

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"I'll contact you," she said. And, as Harry Carmell had done months earlier, she hurried away and disappeared in the

crowds.

Technicians at the studios had never before been presented with such a problem. They puzzled and experimented for the best part of an hour before finally getting it right. And then, in the darkness of the preview theater, Clements and Benson watched in amazement as the pictures suddenly started spilling across the large screen.

"I don't believe it! said Clements. "Good God...I simply don't believe it!"

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SECTION TWELVE

Every seat in the preview theater was filled. All members of the Science Report team had been summoned there - to see what Clements and Benson had been watching only a little earlier. Fergus Godwin was also there, sitting next to Clements, and so were many other executives of the company.

Clement's eyes were sparkling with excitement when the house lights eventually came up. "Well, Fergus?" he asked. "What d'you think?"

Godwin frowned and nibbled at his bottom lip, baffled and reluctant to commit himself. "What the hell can I possibly think?" he countered. "If what we've just seen is authentic, if it isn't just an elaborate fake, then the human race has been conned rotten and we've got the most incredible television scoop ever. But...I mean...that can't have happened - it can't possibly be true!"

"But it fits in, doesn't it?" persisted Clements. "It fits with everything else we've got..."

"Have you checked with Jodrell Bank? With people who worked with Ballantine?"

"Well, no..."

"Then do it. Do it now. And put the whole thing to NASA as well. If we used that in the program and it turned out to be a stumer ... there'd be the most God-awful blow-back. And, I give you fair warning, Chris, I'm not prepared to carry the can."

"But NASA are certain to deny it," protested Clements. "That stands to reason..."

"Let me know when you've spoken to them." Godwin got up, started to leave the theater. "And I also want to hear what Jodrell Bank have to say."

Hendlemann, the man at Jodrell Bank, was friendly and eager to be helpful. But, when he heard Benson's description of what was on the tape, he was utterly sceptical. "Sir William never mentioned a word about it," he said. "And something of that magnitude ... he'd never have kept it to himself."

Benson tried to smother his disappointment. "But did he ever say anything to you, or to anyone else, about meeting a man called Harry something-or-other when he was at NASA last year?"

Hendlemann was apologetic. "Not a thing. I'm afraid I'm not being much use to you, Mr. Benson..."

"Would you ask around? Maybe he did mention this Harry to someone else at Jodrell Bank. I assure you, Mr. Hendlemann, it really is important."

"You said earlier you thought it might throw some fresh light on Sir William's death..."

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"It's just possible."

"Hm, in that case I'll do all I can. There was something about that crash which didn't quite add up, as far as I was concerned. Now I'm not promising anything, mark you, but I will ask around."

"And if you do discover anything..."

"I'll call you back either way. That is a promise."

The NASA official, who refused to give his name, took a very different attitude. "I heard some freaky notions in my time but this one sure caps the lot," he said. "You better face it, son...someone's been pulling your leg."

"Then you are stating categorically that the tape must be a forgery?"

"How could it be anything else? That must be the most stupid question I've heard this year."

"And the information on it is not accurate?"

"Son, do me a favor, will you? I've been very patient but I'm a busy man and I really think this joke's gone on long enough..."

"I'm taping this conversation and I want you on record as saying that the information is inaccurate - if it really is."

"I'm sorry...I've wasted more than enough time on this already. There's absolutely nothing more to say."

Benson was left with the dialling tone. The anonymous man in Houston had replaced his receiver.

"Blast! said Benson. He was tempted to dial again, to try speaking to someone different at NASA. Not that it would be likely to make any difference. All the official spokesmen had presumably been briefed to trot out the same sort of line. Laugh the idea right out of court - that seemed to be the tactic. And Benson was sure it was no more than a tactic.

He felt he had detected some hint of uncertainty under the man's brash derision. And he felt, more strongly than ever, that the tape was genuine. But proving it - or, at least, proving it enough to satisfy Goodwin - that was another matter.

He put the receiver back in its rest and was contemplating going for a canteen coffee when the bell rang. Hendlemann again. And this time with excitement in his voice.

"I've discovered something quite astonishing, Mr. Benson," he said. "Sir William did meet somebody called Harry at NASA. He made a note about it in his diary while he was in America. I've been checking through that diary and it really is quite remarkable. He doesn't mention this Harry's surname but, listen, I'll read you the extract:

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"Harry gave promised help but is now frightened. Told me today - These bastards would kill us if they knew what we've just seen. Take a word of advice, friend, and destroy that damned tape." "

"There! added Hendlemann. "Now what are we to make of that?"

"Anything else in the diary?"

"Nothing that appears to be relevant."

Benson thought fast. "The tapes you use at Jodrell Bank...is there anything distinctive about them?"

"In what way?"

"Could you, by studying this tape, establish if it belonged to Jodrell Bank?"

"No...but I might well be able to establish that it did not belong to us."

"And if you couldn't do that ... it would, at least, reduce the chances of it being a fake..."

"Most certainly."

"Is it possible, Mr. Hendlemann, for you to come to London?"

"I'll leave immediately," said Hendlemann. "I'm very anxious to see exactly what is on that tape."

Benson met Hendlemann at reception and took him to the preview theater where Clements was waiting. The tape was laced-up ready for viewing once again. They sat in silence, watching and listening.

"Incredible!" said Hendlemann eventually. "Absolutely incredible!"

"You think that might have originated at Jodrell Bank?" asked Clements.

"Let me examine the actual tape," said Hendlemann.

Clements led the way to the projection box and Hendlemann produced an eye-glass through which he minutely studied the tape. He became so absorbed in his examination

that he appeared to be oblivious of the men with him. "Why?" he asked. "Why didn't he tell me?"

Clements signalled to Benson not to interrupt. They waited while Hendlemann checked frame after frame. Then he closely scrutinized the leader section of the tape and finally he nodded his head emphatically and put his eye-glass back in his waistcoat pocket.

"Well?" asked Clements. "What do you think?"

"I'm almost afraid to tell you this - but I have to," said Hendlemann. "I do believe, Mr. Clements, that this is the genuine article."

They hurried him across to Godwin's office where he repeated his belief - and the reasons for it.

"Give me just one minute," said Godwin. "I'd like to have the Managing Director in on this one." He dialled Derwent-Smith's internal number, briefly explained the situation, replaced the receiver. "He's joining us," he said.

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Derwent-Smith listened while Hendlemann again repeated all he had said. "Fascinating," he said. "And this diary of Sir William's - may we see it?"

Hendlemann nodded. "It's outside in my car."

"Well, Fergus," said Derwent-Smith. "You're Controller of Programs..."

"Yes, but this is different," protested Godwin. "This is one where I want your help - because if we put one foot wrong here there's going to be such a stink..."

"You mean you might want me to share the blame."

"No, I just..."

Derwent-Smith stopped him. "I think we should talk a little more to this mysterious girl," he said. "The one who so conveniently supplied us with the printed circuit."

"But we don't know where she's gone," said Benson. "She refused to tell me."

"And you just let her walk away. That doesn't sound too clever, does it?" Derwent-Smith turned to Clements. "And what's your opinion?"

"Well, the girl...the tape. Are you still keen on using it?"

"Absolutely," said Clements.

"Good," said Derwent-Smith. "Fergus?"

"In view of what Mr. Hendlemann says, I'm for going ahead."

"Fine," said Derwent-Smith. "I'm with you all the way."

That particular week, although the Sceptre Television team did not then realize it, was an extraordinary one for disappearances - the sort of disappearances which might have been linked with Batch Consignments.

New Zealand - Monday, June 13, 1977. At 10:30 a.m. accountant Miles Thornton drove into the caravan-park near Tauranga in the North Island's Bay of Plenty. With him were his wife and two young sons - all looking forward to a break of a few days. This was one of their favorite spots, a place where they'd spent many holidays.

Thornton found, to his surprise, that there was no-one on duty in the prefabricated building which served as a reception center. And, even more surprising, there was no sign of anyone in the park. There were cars there. Plenty of cars. But the whole place was completely deserted.

Normally there'd have been people sprawled out on loungers, children playing ball-games between the rows of caravans. "But the only living thing to be seen was a dog," he said later. "It was weird."

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More weird, in fact, than he realized at the time. Records later found in the abandoned reception center shower that more than 200 people should have been there that morning, including twelve employees of the caravan park. There were no signs of violence, no signs of any struggle. But not one of those people has been seen since.

America - Tuesday, June 14. At 3:00 p.m. two coach-loads of young trippers - average age 19 - set off on a sigh-seeing tour from Casper, Wyoming. They were last seen heading in the direction of Cheyenne. Seven hours later the vehicles were found empty by the side of a lonely road.

In the sand around the coaches there was a confusion of footprints. But they seemed to lead nowhere. A camera, a pair of binoculars and a girl's handkerchief were found. But, like the people in New Zealand's Bay of Plenty, those seventy-six youngsters were never seen again.

At 4:30 p.m. that same day a small passenger-cargo vessel, the Amelio, left Barcelona with 165 people on board. Intended destination: Tunis. The Amelio was last seen steaming into a light sea mist south of the Balearic Islands. There was virtually no wind and the water was calm.

The mist was a comparatively small patch, covering little more than about two square miles, but there is no record of the Amelio ever having come out of it. And of the area resulted in a complete blank. Not even a bit of wreckage has ever been found. As one coastguard official put it: "This is one of the absolute mysteries. It is just as if the sea had opened up its mouth and swallowed her."

So there it was. More than 440 people disappeared in the oddest combination of circumstances during those two days in June.

It would be irresponsible for us to state that those people have now become "Batch Consignment Components" for we have no absolute proof. We do suggest that, however, as a distinct possibility.

The Ballantine tape was, of course, the most astounding feature of that television production. It was authentic. Absolutely and startlingly authentic. But, as Godwin had feared, it did bring the most "God-awful blow-back."

Simon Butler introduced it and, as viewers will recall, all that could be seen at first was a haze of colors and uncertain shapes. There was a whirling blur of confusion - multi-colored dust dervishes glimpsed crazily through a tumbling kaleidoscope-and nothing, nothing more.

Then the picture cleared and the camera seemed to be skimming low over a wild and barren landscape. No vegetation, no suggestion of life. Just mile after mile of wilderness and brown-red desolation.

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Sounds of static. Then, faintly, of men cheering. And finally there were the American voices - from the Space Control Room at NASA:

FIRST VOICE: Okay...try to scan.
SECOND VOICE: Scanning now.
FIRST VOICE: The readings...where are the readings?

At that moment, superimposed over the scanning of the alien landscape, viewers saw the computer-printed word "temperature." And, almost instantaneously, that word was duplicated in Russian. Now there was a great outburst of Russian voices. Excited, jubilant. And then, once again, the second American voice came through with great clarity: "Wait for it...w-a-i-t for it...Come on, baby, don't fail us now...not after all this way..."

Computer figures appeared alongside the words on the screen. The temperature, they showed, was four degrees Centigrade. More printed words - "Wind Speed" - in American and then Russian. And the first American voice was shouting triumphantly: "It's okay...it's good, it's good." A Russian voice, equally ecstatic, carried the same message.

Then the computer print-out started giving the most vital information of all - information, in English and Russian, about the atmosphere of that strange and distant territory.

The words and letters were appearing with agonizing, nerve-shredding slowness. As though they were being formed, uncertainly, by some retarded, mechanical child. There was a great silence of anticipation and of dread. Then from the screen came the shrieks and whoops of joy. The first American voice could be heard shouting over the din: "On the nose! Hallelujah! We got air, boys...we're home! Jesus...we've done it...we got air!"

His yells of excitement, and similar ones from his Russian counterpart, were drowned by the crescendo of cheering. And, during a lull in that cheering, the second American voice could be heard saying: "That's it! We got it...we got it! Boy, if they ever take the wraps off this thing, it's going to be the biggest date in history! May 22, 1962. We're on the planet Mars - and we have air!"

That was it. The end of the Ballantine tape. And millions of viewers, in many parts of the world, briefly wondered if they had misheard. Man on Mars in 1962? No, surely, that was not possible...

Simon Butler, his face sombre, assured them that it was more than possible. Here, from a transcript of the program, are his actual words:

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We believe that to be an authentic record of the first - and secret - landing on Mars by an unmanned space probe from Earth. We also believe the date given - May 22, 1962 - to be accurate.

Clearly, the blanket of total security by which this information has been covered could have been maintained only through the active participation of governments at a very high level.

Equally clearly, there must have been some powerful reason why the true conditions on Mars - suitable as they appear to be for human habitation, have been kept secret. Indeed, the effort which has gone into persuading the world at large that the opposite is true argues that some operation of supreme importance has

been going on beneath this security cover.

We believe that operation to be Dr. Carl Gerstein's Alternative 3.

Whether a human survival colony has by now been established on Mars, or whether preparations are still in hand for its transportation from the Moon to Mars, we do not know. But we put out this program tonight as a challenge to those who do know to tell us the truth.

He paused after spelling out that challenge, one hand resting on a model of the Earth and the other on a model of Mars, to underline its significance. The program was over and the gauntlet had been thrown down. The next move was up to the government. And the governments of other countries - particularly those of the super powers.

Butler knew, of course, about the behind-the-screen doubts and anxieties. He knew how Harman had tried to neuter the program and, indeed, how he had come close to succeeding. He was only too aware that the company had taken a calculated risk in persisting with this program, that what had been revealed would very likely be emphatically denied, that there could be ugly repercussions for Clements and Fergus Godwin. And, of course, for himself.

He was the anchorman, the man who - as far as the public was concerned - was right at the center of the entire investigation. He was well-known and well-respected and that, from the official viewpoint, made him doubly dangerous. It would be remarkable if attempts were not made to discredit him, to prove that, far from being a responsible commentator, he had been party to an ill-conceived hoax.

At no time, however, had he considered opting out. He has always believed in the truth. He had always presented it professionally. And this particular truth was far too important to be suppressed.

He concluded with these words:

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We regret if the implications of what you have seen are less than optimistic for the future of life on this planet. It has been our task, however, merely to bring you the facts as we understand them - and await the response.

The response started almost before he finished speaking. Switchboards at newspaper offices and regional television stations were flooded with calls from frightened people, from people desperate for reassurance.

Those people got their reassurance. They got it because of the statement drafted by Harman. But that statement was a lie.

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SECTION THIRTEEN

There is nothing new, of course, in the concept of men using the moon as a launch-pad for a new life on Mars. H.G. Wells, who correctly anticipated so many technical triumphs which seemed ludicrous to most people in his day - was expounding it back in 1901.

Here, from his classic *The First Men In The Moon*, is a segment of dialogue between two space travellers:

"It isn't as though we were confined to the moon."

"You mean -?"

"There's Mars - clear atmosphere, novel surroundings, exhilarating sense of lightness. It might be pleasant to go there."

"Is there air on Mars?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Seems as though you might run it as a sanatorium..."

So Wells, once again, has been proved right. A number of leading journalists, maybe remembering Wells and his track-record as a prophet, did not automatically believe the Harman denial. They were puzzled by it, and were possibly thrown a little by it, for it had the ring of authenticity. And after all, they reasoned, what possible motive could a reputable television company have for claiming they had just presented a tissue of untruths? And yet...Alan Coren, writing in *The Times* of June 21, was one of the first to throw doubts on the validity of the Harman statement:

The seeming preposterousness of the story, on the

other hand, was totally acceptable. The preposterousness of the times have seen to that. Why should the madness of the NASA program not be linked to the madness of Watergate, to create a Nasagate in which life is discovered on Mars, but the information is suppressed for governmental ends?

That was a shot in the dark by Coren - a shot guided by instinct as much as by insight. But, as he will realize today, it was uncannily on target.

But, in the final analysis, it was all to make little difference to Harman. Remember what was said at the meeting of the Policy Committee on August 4, 1977:

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A TWO: But what about the regional officer concerned?

A EIGHT: You're right there. He should have stopped that television crap. He's proved himself to be utterly unreliable. He failed and failed badly and, what's worse, he could let us down again. The man, without any question, is a liability and I propose an Expediency.

R TWO: Seconded.

R EIGHT: Those in favor? ... Then that is unanimous. The method?

A THREE: How about a telepathic sleep-job ... maybe with a gun...

R EIGHT: That seems sensible ... it's too soon after Ballantine for another hot-job...

Harman, on that day in August, was being sentenced to death. The date of his death, however, was not so easily settled. That, as Dr. Hugo Danningham has now explained, would depend on Harman's biorhythmic sensitivity cycle-on the unseen assault being synchronized with his moments of extreme vulnerability.

James Murray of the Daily Express is another level-headed and highly-experienced writer who does not readily accept the obvious - particularly when it is given to him in the form of an official Press statement. He has a reputation for seeking the facts behind the statement. And so, despite the "Knock-down" treatment being given to the program on the front page of his own newspaper, he courageously stuck to his assessment of Butler, Benson and the others:

They plausibly linked natural phenomena and real events in space to come to the inevitable conclusion that there was a monumental international conspiracy to save the best human minds by establishing a new colony on Mars...So all these scientists and intellectuals slipping abroad to the "Brain Drain" were really being shipped to Mars on rockets via the dark side of the moon.

Murray, in other words, recognized the truth even though he did not have the facts completely to substantiate that truth.

Men like Coren and Murray worried Harman. They were

helping to perpetuate the doubts and suspicions he had tried to smother. And he was frightened that they might start digging deeper, that they might eventually be able to present the full and horrendous truth. Just as we are now doing in this book.

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The men of the Policy Committee had put no great priority on this particular murder. Alternative 3's chief executive officer in Britain had already been instructed to suspend Harman from his secret regional duties - and to recruit his successor. Harman would die. They knew that with certainty. He would die without revealing what he knew. And that was all that really mattered.

Other men, for other reasons, were disturbed by the realization that the Alternative 3 sensation was not to be swiftly buried. They were particularly unhappy about Philip Purser's Sunday Telegraph suggestion that the investigation might have been a Fiendish double bluff inspired by the very agencies identified in the program".

They were among the Members of Parliament, the overwhelming majority, who were not privy to the facts about Alternative 3. Some have since claimed that they suspected the truth but they certainly did not know it. Yet they had the task of coping with much of the terror which spread so insidiously after that television transmission.

Most people, as we have said, were only too eager to believe Harman's denial. But a sizable minority appreciated the full significance of what had been revealed. These were people, in the main, who had already been uncomfortably aware of the sort of people who were only too aware of the mammoth cover-up which the 1968 Condon report had provided for so-called Flying Saucers.

There were those who vaguely remembered what the Evening Standard had said about the \$500,000 Condon study:

It is losing some of its outstanding members, under circumstances which are mysterious to say the least. Sinister rumors are circulating...at least four key people have vanished from the Condon team without offering a satisfactory reason for their departure. The complete story behind the strange events in Colorado is hard to decipher...

The validity of the suspicions in that Evening Standard article suddenly seemed to be confirmed by other statements later made public - quite apart from President Carter's apparently remarkable about-turn on the subject of Flying Saucers.

Professor G. Gordon Broadbent: "At the very highest levels of East-West diplomacy there has been operating a factor of which we know nothing."

Would a man of Broadbent's caliber make a statement of that nature lightly?

Apollo veteran Bob Grodin: "The later Apollos were a smoke-screen...to cover up what's really going on out there...and the bastards didn't even tell us!"

Why, if there was nothing to hide, should he make such a curious statement?

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More and more snippets of information started being remembered and re-quoted - some from old newspaper files, some from records leaked from NASA.

Here, for instance, is a verbatim transcript from a

taped conversation which Scott and Irwin had with Mission Control during their moon-walk in August, 1971:

SCOTT: Arrowhead really runs east to west.
MISSION CONTROL: Roger, we copy.
IRWIN: Right...we're (garble)...we know that's a fairly good run. We're bearing 320, hitting range for 413...I can't get over those lineations, that layering on Mount Hadley.
SCOTT: I can't either. That's really spectacular.
IRWIN: They sure look beautiful.
SCOTT: Talk about organization!
IRWIN: That's the most organized structure I've ever seen!
SCOTT: It's (garble)...so uniform in width...
IRWIN: Nothing we've seen before this has shown such uniform thickness from the top of the tracks to the bottom.

NASA has never explained those tracks - or who made them - although there are now grounds for the belief that they were left by a giant Moon-Rover vehicle of American-Russian design.

That is just one more example of how information about real space progress is being kept strictly secret. Dr. James E. McDonald, professor of meteorology at the University of Arizona and senior physicist at its Institute of Atmospheric Physics, has been a vociferous critic of this secrecy.

In The Enquirer on February 19, 1967, he said: "The U.S. Air Force has been scandalously blinding the public as to what is really going on in the skies. The Air Force investigations have been absurd, superficial and incompetent...and scientists all over the world had better stop accepting the ridiculous Air Force reports and start investigating the problem themselves at once...it's a problem demanding truly international investigation."

So, with that sort of background to this latest television investigation, is it surprising that there were people not impressed by the denial? Or that those people should start demanding information from their Members of Parliament?

Michael Harrington-Brice is typical of those M.P.s. He says: "I was put in an impossible position. For weeks after that program went out I was getting deputations at the House, demanding that the government should issue a formal denial.

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I tried to bring pressure for that to be done, for a government denial would have helped alleviate the understandable anxieties of my constituents. However, it was not possible to pin down anyone in authority.

"I tried to put down questions about Alternative 3 but they were invariably blocked and what is particularly odd is that there now appears to be no official record of those questions.

"I also tried to raise the matter privately with Ministers but I was invariably told that Alternative 3 was a subject they were not prepared to discuss."

What, at that stage, was Harrington-Brice's personal opinion?

"I formed the distinct impression that something really unusual was happening behind the scenes, that we in Britain

were on the periphery of some secret venture being controlled by the super-powers.

"Nothing specific was said, you understand, but hints were dropped. I was obliquely given the message that it would be sensible for me to stop probing.

"It would be quite wrong, however, for me to pretend that, at that time, I had any information to confirm the accuracy of otherwise of the allegations made in that program."

Another Member of Parliament, Bruce Kinslade, was also seeking an official investigation into the statements made during the television program - according to his private secretary.

On Wednesday, July 6, Mr. Kinslade, as you may recall, was hit by a lorry while crossing a side street near his home in Kensington. The lorry did not stop and has never been traced. And Mr. Kinslade died almost instantaneously. The inquest verdict was "Accidental death". That verdict, for all we know, may have been accurate...

Letters continued to arrive at Television Center. Letters which confirmed that more people, having had time to reflect, had reservations about the denial - or flatly refused to accept it.

The President of the prestigious Hampstead H.G. Wells Society wrote: "In my experience I would estimate that there was a lot more truth in your program than the majority of the public realize."

A woman living in Southcroft Road, London S.W.16, summed up the attitude of many in her thoughtful letter:

With reference to your "Alternative 3" program which was shown on Monday, 20th June, several newspapers the following day declared the program to be a hoax, and your spokesman was quoted as saying, "Everything was based on what could happen."

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I and many other people feel strongly that this is a ridiculous claim just another attempt by the government to hush things up (as seems to be the case with UFOs and the Bermuda Triangle). Everyone has a right to know what is going on; we all have to live on this planet, and space exploration should benefit us all.

It greatly incenses me to be continually kept in the dark when any discovery is made. Pressure was obviously put on you, but it does you no credit to show up the production team as charlatans. No, I cannot believe it was a hoax for the following reasons:

1. Would you really have included references to Ballantine's death as a hoax - at the expense of his family's feelings?
2. The ex-astronaut was obviously a highly intelligent man and well-educated. He had seen something that caused the dreadful deterioration we had to witness.

Please realize that the majority of your viewers are discriminating adults who can think for themselves. Let us have the truth of the matter.

That July also brought evidence of other aspects of the

disaster looming inevitably nearer for this world. The Times, July 26:

A frightening picture of the accelerating world population is given in the 1977 World Population Report, published this week by Population Concern.

The report points out that if the present rate of population growth had existed since the birth of Christ there would now be 900 people for every square yard of Earth.

Half the fuel ever used by man has been burnt in the past 50 years.

The world's population is now more than 4,000 million and increasing by 200,000 every day.

Two hundred thousand extra people on this crowded planet every single day! That is 73,000,000 a year. And that will result, in only three years, in more additional people than the entire present population of America!

Those figures emphasize the magnitude of just one of the survival problems facing mankind - with this planet's water and other natural resources becoming progressively more scarce.

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And that is in addition to the inevitable "Greenhouse Armageddon" described by Gerstein.

Is it, then, any wonder that the men behind Alternative 3 were anxious to accelerate their operation? Was it not obvious to them that time was running out - possibly even faster than they had earlier anticipated?

During the autumn of 1977 the subject of Alternative 3 began to drop out of the headlines. We know from Trojan that there was mounting activity behind the scenes - and that there was talk of attempts being made to sabotage the Alternative 3 operation. But the public, for a while, was allowed to forget.

Then, on Thursday, September 29, Dr. Gerard O'Neill - the Princeton professor who had given that astonishing interview to the Los Angeles Times in July - again came boldly into public prominence. This time he had been interviewed by Angus Macpherson, space correspondent of the Daily Mail, and the headline said: THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF 2001 IS OUT THERE WAITING.

Macpherson, respected as one of the world's most authoritative science-fact specialists, wrote:

Flying to London today is another scientist who is perfectly serious about his prediction of what faces the human race as we approach the start of the 21st century. But American physicist Dr. Gerard O'Neill holds out the promise of a totally different future...a brave new world in space. The choice, as he sees it, is between George Orwell's 1984 and Arthur Clarke's 2001.

"Tell humanity there's no hope and everyone applauds you. But tell them there is a way out and they get furious," say Dr. O'Neill, who has worked for seven years on a mind-stretching scheme for the emigration of most of us into artificial colonies in outer space.

He has been brusquely dismissed as a pedlar of nonsense by Jacques Cousteau, whom he greatly admires, and there was hurt as well as humor on the lean face

under its trendy Roman fringe as he told me: "Jaques is terribly worried about the pollution of the ocean and the destruction of its life.

"He thinks we ought to be doing more about it. So do I. Environmentalists are really very negative. They're so obsessed with Earth's problems they don't want to hear about answers."

O'Neill's own answers are that we not only can colonize the solar system - but must, if human life a few generations from now is to remain civilized or even bearable.

O'Neill's colonists would get away from the start from the space suits and cell-like space stations of science fiction...

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O'Neill is coming to London to present his prediction of space colonization to the British Interplanetary Society.

The BIS is a legendary forum for glimpses of the future. Its members have seen a Moon-landing ship unveiled, looking eerily like the Apollo LEM, but some thirty years before it.

And they were the first to hear Arthur Clarke outline a visionary scheme for a global chain of communication satellites.

This could be a similar bit of history making...

For most of the generation that gaped at the first Moon landings it has become a madly expensive confidence trick - a game of golf on a useless rockpile that only two could play and that cost ≈ 500 a second.

All this is desperately myopic, declares O'Neill, for the denizens of a planet whose 4,000 million inhabitants face the prospect of being two to three times as crowded by the early years of the next century.

"In fact, we found in space precisely the things we are most in need of - unlimited solar energy, rocks containing high concentrations of metals and, above all, room for Man to continue his growth and expansion...

"A static society, which is what Earth would have to become, would need to regulate not only the bodies but the minds of its people." he told me. "I refuse to believe man has come to the end of change and experiment and I want to preserve his freedom to live in different ways.

"I see no hope of saving it if we remain imprisoned on the Earth."

Macpherson pointed out that O'Neill is "consulted respectfully - if a shade warily - by Government officials, Senate committees and State governors."

The article showed that O'Neill was visualizing the future along slightly different lines to those approved by the men of Alternative 3. It also indicated that O'Neill was not aware - and possibly is still not aware - that the Alternative 3 "future" had already arrived.

Macpherson wrote:

His colonies are planned as vast cylindrical metal islands drifting in orbit, holding inside a natural atmosphere, trees, grass, rivers and animals - a capsule of a warm Earthlike environment.

He see them reaching half the size of Switzerland, ultimately, housing 20 to 30 million people and sustained by the inexhaustible energy of space sunshine.

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Yet their construction, he insists, would need only the technology we already have...

The article finished with these thoughts:

For most people of the pre-space generation, probably, the moment when the magic finally went out of the adventure came a year ago when the dream of life on Mars was dispelled by the Viking spacecraft.

But for O'Neill that was another plus for space. The best thing we could have found was nobody there.

The colonization of the new frontier can take place without. repeating the shaming history of the Indian nation - or even the bison.

"Perhaps nobody's there, anywhere, after all. Perhaps there isn't a Daddy to show us how to do things.

"It's a bit frightening...but it gives us a lot of scope."

We discussed the content of that article with M.P. Michael Harrington-Brice. What, in view of his own researches, was his opinion?

He said: "Dr. O'Neill is arguably the most brilliant man in his own line in the Western world and I am certain he is right in saying the technology is already available for a project such as he envisages.

"However, he is apparently working on the assumption that the information officially released about conditions on Mars is true and I would certainly hesitate before making that assumption.

"If what was shown on the Ballantine tape was the real truth - and I have seen no evidence which convinces me it was not - then the whole situation changes dramatically.

"Obviously it would be far easier and cheaper to colonize a suitable and empty planet, to which we have got comparatively ready access, than to build gigantic, artificial islands in the sky.

"It would be grossly impertinent of me to say that Dr. O'Neill is wrong for he is a Pan of immense international stature. However, I can't help wondering if the political facts, the facts of East-West co-operation, have not been kept from him. There is certainly nothing in what he says which convinces me that Mars is not the venue for Alternative 3."

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Harman, we learned later, read that article in the Daily Mail. He read it on the morning of publication - on September 29. He did not know then, of course, that he had exactly 48 days left to live.

A cryptic message from Trojan. Brief, typed, unsigned:
"Surprise development rumored. Sabotage possible. Will
send details if and when available."

We puzzled over the message but we did not try to
contact Trojan. That was the arrangement. He always took
the initiative. It was safer that way.

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SECTION FOURTEEN

They call it Archimedes Base. And that's where the
trouble, the really big trouble, flared so violently.

Archimedes is a walled crater-plain on the western
border of the Mare Imbrium, the Moon's "Sea of Shadows". It
has a diameter of about 50 miles and, unlike the nearby
Aristillus crater, it has a relatively smooth ground surface.
That is why, according to information from Trojan, it was
developed as the principal transit camp on the Moon -the
place from where people were normally lifted for the final
leg of their journey to Mars.

Man cannot survive in the natural atmosphere of the
Moon. NASA said so years ago and NASA, in that instance, was

telling the truth. So most of Archimedes Base was hermetically sealed under a transparent bubble inside which air and temperature was controlled to the levels usual on Earth. The construction had taken two years and had been a fantastic triumph of space engineering.

Conditions under the bubble were similar to those visualized by Dr. O'Neill for his artificial worlds of the future. Men and women could live there comfortably for indefinite periods - secure inside a domed and gigantic greenhouse.

There were two huge airlocks in the southern section of the bubble. Shuttle craft arriving from Earth and from Mars entered through these locks before taxiing to the centrally-sited Arrival Terminal. A series of roads the centrally-sited Arrival Terminal. A series of roads ran from the terminal to the stores and service areas and to the three separate "living-quarter villages" - one for pilots and resident personnel, one for "designated movers", and one for "batch-consignment components". And over it all was a spread of camouflage, reminiscent of that used during World War Two, to ensure that Archimedes Base could never be seen by unauthorized observers on Earth.

There was another transit camp, the original one on the Moon, in the crater known as Cassini but that was now considered too small. Most of its equipment and furnishings had been moved to Archimedes. For Archimedes was the bustling center of activity...

Trojan's cryptic message about possible sabotage was soon followed by this report:

Stringent security ensures the complete segregation of Designated Movers from Batch-Consignment Components until after disembarkation in the new territory.

They are transported in separate craft and, while awaiting transportation, they are quartered in different areas of Archimedes Base. This is as a result of an

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order from the Policy Committee.

It is felt that among the Designated Movers there may be those who initially harbor reservations about the morality of the mental and physical processing considered necessary for Components.

"Components"! Let us not be confused by the jargon euphemisms. Trojan uses them. Trojan, like most others in Alternative 3, has been brain-washed into accepting such words as normal. He is revolted by what has been done, by what is being done, but he has unwittingly absorbed the obscene distortion of language. So, just for a moment, forget "components". Trojan means people. He is writing about slaves, about men and women who have been mutilated mentally and physically, who have been programmed to obey orders. And who have been condemned to a life of sub-human degradation.

His report continued:

These Designated Movers can have their doubts put into "proper perspective", after they have become acclimatized to life in the new territory, by representatives of the Committee in Residence. They can, according to official reasoning, be persuaded to recognize that the ultimate survival of the human race must take precedence over the fate of a limited number of low-grade individuals.

Consider the appalling significance of that paragraph! It means, if "official reasoning" is right, that Ann Clark and Brian Pendelebury and others like them can be taught to regard fellow humans as expendable beasts of burden. It means, surely, that natural compassion must be systematically eradicated, that the minds of "designated movers" are also moulded to match the needs of Alternative 3. Orwell's vision of 1984, it seems, has already come to fruition - millions of miles from Earth.

Trojans report then went on to detail the curious circumstances which resulted in Earthly efforts to undermine Alternative 3. And which eventually culminated in carnage at Archimedes Base ...

Bacteria are far more tenacious than humans when it comes to clinging to life. They survive the seemingly impossible. They can apparently retreat into a form of hibernation for centuries. For millennia even. Then, when conditions are right, they wake up, as it were, and they flourish. That is apparently what happened on Mars.

The "dynamic changes" recorded in 1961 and described by Gerstein provided the ideal conditions. And across the silent wastes of the empty planet there was a great awakening

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of the minute unicellular living organisms. They developed and they spread. they were too small to be seen but they were there, waiting, when Man first arrived...

These were alien strains of bacteria, pernicious and voracious strains never before encountered by humans, but they were not numerous enough noticeably to damage the imported and carefully-cultivated crops. Not until late 1976. That, as we now know, was the time of the great blight...

Attempts were made to fight them with bactericides and even by bacteriophages which involved the introduction of ultra-microscopic organisms normally parasitic to bacteria. But the Committee in Residence realized it was a losing battle. And that was when the super-powers decided they needed The German.

The German, whose name we have agreed to withhold, is possibly the most imaginatively successful bacteriologist in the world. That is accepted by his contemporaries in the East and the West. He has probably achieved more than any other man in his sphere - not only in combating bacteria but in harnessing them into the service of man. That was why he was needed so urgently in the new territory...

But he refused to go. He was seen by the Alternative 3 regional officer and, eventually, by the West German Chief Executive Officer. They argued with him, offered him every possible inducement, but he remained adamant. Certainly he would respect the confidences he had entrusted to him but he had work to do, work on Earth, and he had absolutely no inclination to become involved in Alternative 3.

They did recruit his principal assistant, an American in his mid-thirties, who travelled as a designated mover in February, 1977. He went willingly, enthusiastically even. But he is another man whose identity it would be unfair to reveal for, if he is still alive, he is today being hunted. He is being hunted by agents of the East and the West.

He will certainly have changed his name by now, and probably his appearance as well, but he must know that for him there can be no permanent hiding place. He is the man

chiefly responsible for founding the guerilla group known as Anti-Alternative. He was also responsible for the eventual disaster at Archimedes Base. We call his The Instigator.

It soon became apparent to the Committee in Residence that The Instigator, although competent and experienced, lacked the intuitive flair needed for the new-territory task. they still needed The German. But The German was still refusing...

Urgent meetings were convened in the Hall of the Committee in Residence. there were consultations with the Policy Committee on Earth, with key men in Department Seven. And eventually a decision was reached. The German liked and respected The Instigator. He had confidence in his judgement. And if any man could persuade The German to

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become a designated mover it was The Instigator. He should go back to Earth, they decided. He should go back to talk to The German. That, as it turned out, was their biggest and most disastrous mistake...

They had made one serious miscalculation over The Instigator. they had failed to realize that he still had not got the plight of the Components into "proper perspective". Maybe that would have changed if he had been allowed more time for there had been others, many others, who had needed months to become completely accustomed to living with an enslaved sub-species. All of them had eventually accepted that this was part of the essential balance. But The Instigator had not been allowed time, not enough time, and he was tormented with secret guilt. What right, he wondered, did he have to be one of the Chosen, on of the Superior Select? He was racked with disgust and with doubts and he knew then that, somehow, he had to shatter the component system...

And then they told him they were returning him to Earth.

There was a stop-over at Archimedes Base on his return journey and he was temporarily housed with a new group of designated movers awaiting transportation to the new territory. They knew nothing, these people, about the components - quartered, as usual, in a different "village" -who were being condemned to spend the rest of their lives as slaves. He told them. He told them exactly what was happening and exactly what to expect. He described the kidnappings and the mutilations being carried out on Earth- for their benefit and comfort. And they were not ready for such horrendous information. They were normal people, highly intelligent and sensitive, and they had not yet been exposed to the skilled and persuasive arguments of the Committee in Residence. They were uncertain about whether to believe him. It all sounded so lunatically outrageous. Yet this man was strangely convincing...

the truth. They decided surreptitiously to visit the village he'd described. And that is what sparked the holocaust at Archimedes Base...

The Instigator did not contact The German when he returned to Earth. He fled into hiding. And then, with a small group of trusted collaborators, he founded his action group, Anti-Alternative. This group, unlike organizations such as the IRA of the PLO, could make no public statements for such statements could lead to them being rooted out and destroyed. They dedicated themselves to disrupting, by guerilla tactics, all work connected with the exploration and exploitation of space. Their actions, they felt, might force an eventual re-think on Alternative 3.

On October 1, 1977, the Daily Telegraph carried a story,

written by Ian Ball in New York, which was headlined:
SATELLITE ROCKET No.2 BLOWS UP. It said:

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A second communications satellite was reduced to debris over the Atlantic yesterday after another spectacular rocket failure at the Cape Canaveral space center in Florida.

Within two and a half weeks, the failures have destroyed communications satellite projects, one European, the other American, worth a total of \$91.4 million (about \pounds 54 million).

An Atlas Centaur rocket, carrying a \$49.4 million Intelsat 1V-A satellite built by Hughes Aircraft, was destroyed minutes after its launching late on Thursday. The failure was similar to the September 13 explosion of a Delta rocket carrying a \$42 million European Space Agency orbital test satellite.

"We had indications of trouble in the engine area within seconds after lift-off," said the Atlas Centaur launch director, Mr. Andrew Stofan. "At 55 seconds the Atlas lost control and broke up. It flipped, broke apart, and then the Atlas blew up."

The remainder of the Centaur stage was destroyed by an Air Force range safety officer, ending the mission four miles high and four miles down the range. The debris from rocket and satellite fell into the ocean.

The next Intelsat 1V - a launch scheduled for November 10 - and other Atlas Centaur launches have been postponed until an investigation into the latest failure is completed.

Similar problems were being experienced by Russian space-teams. On October 11, 1977, the Guardian carried this Reuter report from Moscow:

Two Soviet Cosmonauts failed yesterday to dock their Soyuz-25 craft with the Salyut-6 orbiting laboratory.

Mission commander Vladimir Kovalyonok and flight engineer Valery Ryumin, thought to be planning a long stay aboard the new space station, were ordered back to Earth after abandoning the link-up.

Tass, announcing the latest in a series of troubles to affect the Salyut series, said there had been "deviations from a planned docking regime" during the approach while the Cosmonauts' Soyuz-25 capsule was 120 yards from the station. The Soyuz-25 failure has come as a blow to Soviet space chiefs...

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So that is what happened. Did it happen because of The Instigator? That is a question we cannot answer. We simply do not know. We do know, however, that the catastrophe at Archimedes Base can be traced back directly to The Instigator. And that was incomparably more devastating.

Leonard Harman died at ten minutes past two in the morning on Wednesday, November 16, 1977. He died, wearing his pyjamas, in the dining-room at his home.

His widow, Mrs. Sarah Harman, gave this evidence at the inquest:

My husband had been depressed and rather withdrawn for some time, possibly for six months or more, but he never confided any reason to me.

I knew there had been some friction between him and Mr. Godwin, Mr. Fergus Godwin, at the studios and at first I thought that was possibly making him feel the way he did. But the trouble at the studios, whatever it was, seemed to pass over and still my husband was no better. I urged him on several occasions to see a doctor but he told me that it was nothing serious and that I was not to fuss.

I never, at any time, thought he might be likely to take his own life.

On the Tuesday evening, I mean the evening of the 15th of November, we watched television and then went to bed as usual just before midnight. I didn't notice anything particularly unusual about him. He behaved just as he normally did.

We read in bed for a while and it must have been nearly one o'clock before we settled down for sleep.

Just before two o'clock I was disturbed by him getting out of bed. I assumed he was going to the bathroom. But then he seemed to be gone a long time and I can't really explain why but I began to get rather worried. I had a feeling that something wasn't quite right.

I called out to him but there was no reply so I got out of bed. The bathroom door was open and, because of the street lights outside, I could see that he was not in there.

Then I heard a movement from downstairs. I called out to him again but still there was no reply. By this time I thought that he must be feeling unwell and that he'd probably gone down to the kitchen to make himself a hot drink. He'd done this once or twice before and it had always soothed his stomach.

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I decided then to go down and make the drink for him. But he wasn't in the kitchen. The house was completely silent. I called out to him again but there was still no reply. I was a bit frightened by this time because I couldn't possibly imagine what he could be doing.

There weren't any lights on, not until I switched on the one in the hall, and my husband had never done anything like this before. He'd never walked in his sleep or anything.

Then there was a sort of scuffling noise from the dining-room. I went in and he was standing there in the darkness in the middle of the room. I switched the light on and spoke to him but he didn't seem to hear. His eyes were open - they were staring straight at me - but he didn't seem to be aware of me or of anything else. It was as if he was in a trance.

He had a gun in his hand, a little pistol, and he put the barrel to his head and pulled the trigger. And that's all that happened. The next second he was dead.

Mrs. Harman also told the coroner that her husband had not owned a gun, that he'd never had one in the house. But the coroner reached his own conclusion. Wives, in his experience, didn't necessarily know everything about their husbands.

The verdict was "suicide".

Disaster hit Archimedes Base on a cataclysmic scale. The Arrival Terminal ... the service centres ... the buildings of the three villages ... they were all ravaged and wrenched from their foundations by the sudden and cyclopean clash of uncountable tornados. They crumbled and disintegrated, these buildings, as they juddered and somersaulted high in the air. And people spilled from them. The living and 'he dead - they all looked the same in that great spasm of destruction. They were all flailing limbs and buckled, distorted bodies. Many of them exploded far above the ground and bits of them whirled around in the dust and the debris before being sucked out into the eternal blackness of space.

And all of it, we now know, had been sparked by a gentle and compassionate marine biologist called Matt Anderson. He had meant well. He had been inspired by the highest motives. By consideration and humanity, by raw and spontaneous pity. And he had unleashed a nightmare.

That is clear from documents analyzed by Trojan. Very little else, however, is certain. there were few survivors and their accounts were so disjointed and confused. The full facts, now, will probably never be known.

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Here, however, is what we have been able to piece together:

Anderson, a thirty-three-year-old single man from Miami, Florida, was one of the designated movers at Archimedes Base who listened to The Instigator. He was one of the small group who secretly visited the segregated Components Village. He talked to the people there, heard enough to realize that The Instigator had been telling the truth. It was grotesque and barbaric but it was, unquestionably, the truth.

That whole party of designated movers was scheduled for transportation to the new territory that night. And everything would have been different if they had all gone. there would have been no disaster.

They would certainly have posed a bigger "conscience problem" to the Committee in Residence but, in time, the Committee would have converted them into accepting the necessary realities of Alternative 3.

But Anderson did not travel with the others. He stumbled on the return journey from the village of the slaves. He stumbled and hurt his spine. And it was decided that he was not fit to travel, that he should stay for a while at Archimedes Base.

Ten days later he slipped unseen from his room and again visited that village. It was not difficult for there were no guards. There was no need for guards around the village. The people temporarily there had been instructed to remain their quarters. And they had been programed to obey,

unquestioningly, every order they received.

Anderson wanted to talk to them at length, to understand them, to see if he could possibly help. And that was when he got his great shock. By then there was a new Batch consignment in the village and in that Batch was a man he knew, a man who, years earlier, had been a colleague at school.

The man recognized him, could obviously think fluently and intelligently, but all the vital personality had been gouged out of him. His bearing and his attitude showed that he knew and accepted his position. He was a slave. That was when Anderson knew he had to take action...

Trojan's report says:

Two of the Components who did survive have revealed under interrogation that they heard Anderson talking to the man of two occasions, on that first day and later when he returned with details of the plan for the intended evacuation. This is principally how Department Seven has been able to establish much of what did happen before the disaster...

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There was an aerospace technician in the latest group of designated movers, a highly-qualified man who had been trained by NASA, and Anderson, it seems, sought him out and explained the whole situation. He told this man of the atrocities to which they were all, unwittingly, a party. He elaborated on how they had been lured towards a debased and de-humanized future, on how they would be battenning for the rest of their lives on the misery of the mutilated slaves. He convinced him it was their duty to rescue the people from the village, to return them to their families on Earth - and to ensure that this traffic in human life was stopped for ever.

Trojan's report continues:

The main depot for craft on the Earth-run was south of Archimedes Base on the far side of the mountain range known as Spitzbergen. Most long range vehicles were maintained and parked there and smaller craft were used to convey passengers to and from Archimedes, rather in the style of airport buses on Earth.

There were invariably a number of these smaller craft on the tarmac at the Archimedes Arrival Terminal and the plan was for Anderson and Gowers, the aerospace technician, to steal one of these craft and use it to evacuate as many of the Components as possible.

Another sympathetic designated mover, briefed on the technicalities by Gowers, would operate one of the airlocks in the southern section of the bubble to allow them through. They would then travel to the main depot where by force if necessary, they would commandeer a vessel in which to make the journey back to Earth.

So that, apparently, was what was meant to happen. But it all went wrong. Horribly and hideously wrong. Gowers found a suitable craft and he checked it, established that it was fuelled and ready for flight. And Anderson was in charge of discreetly marshalling the people in the village of

slaves, of supervising their march to the Terminal.

Everything went well at first. There were a hundred and fifty-five slaves in the village at that time and the small craft could accommodate only eighty-four of them, so Anderson selected the youngest, including his former schoolmate, for in his opinion they ought to have priority. When he returned to Earth and publicly exposed this sick side of Alternative 3 there would be such an international outcry that the other slaves would also be returned to their homes. Yes, and those who had already been taken to the new territory. The vast majority of human beings would never tolerate the obscenities being committed in their name. That, according to the evidence from Trojan, is what Anderson really thought.

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There was no problem in sifting aside those who were not to immediately saved, although all the people in the village now knew exactly what was being planned, for, of course, the slaves had been programed into automatic obedience.

Trojan's report went on:

One of the surviving Components later interrogated said that Anderson told them: "There are few guards and so it is unlikely that any serious attempt will be made to prevent us leaving this Base or, indeed, this planet.

"However, those of you chosen for repatriation must remember that, in these circumstances, it is better to kill than be captured. The lives and freedom of many people depend on us getting back to Earth and so you must be prepared to kill anyone who tries to stop you. that is an order."

In fact, six of Alternative 3's resident personnel were soon killed. They were trampled down and kicked to death by the slaves, near or in the Terminal, when they tried to stop the party reaching the craft. They were left broken and bleeding on the ground and the slaves, with no show of emotion, walked over them and climbed on board. Then the engines fired into life and Gowers, seeing the opening-lights winking around the airlock on the left, eased them upwards.

The craft hovered briefly in the still air, thirty or forty feet above the tarmac, and then the inner lip of the airlock rolled aside like a transparent stage curtain. their path was now clear and Gowers depressed a switch to start the forward thrust. the horror, at that moment, was just seven seconds away...

Trojan's report picks up the story:

A senior technician at Archimedes Central Control, one of the permanent staff who did survive, has made a statement in which he describes how he was alerted by shouting and screaming from the direction of the Terminal. the angle of his view prevented him from observing what was happening there but then he did notice the unexpected opening of the airlock door. He knew that if the outer door were also to open, possibly because of some malfunction in the equipment, the Base would be subjected immediately to acute decompression.

He saw no traffic and no traffic was scheduled for departure. So, assuming there was a serious fault and that the shouts were probably ones of warning, he

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pressed a master-control button. This was on a board designed to activate a fail-safe system, over-riding all other, and his action resulted in the airlock door snapping instantly back into position.

An experienced pilot could have coped with the problem by taking avoiding action and returning his craft to the Terminal but Gowers was not an experienced pilot...

Gowers, in fact, was almost at the door when it closed. Suddenly, straight ahead of him and all around him, there was a transparent domed wall. He felt trapped like a fly under an upturned tumbler, and he panicked. He swerved the craft violently upwards to the left and then, in desperation, he over-compensated and jerked it into a fast and erratic zig-zag course. The craft, now bucking viciously, surged towards the roof. Gowers, hopelessly out of control, snatched wildly at the control stick, sending the craft into a lethal whiplash dive. It exploded into one of the walls of the dome, spewing fire and wreckage and blazing bodies, and it smashed a devastating hole in the transparent surface.

The entire base, where the air was artificially maintained at Earth pressure, immediately decompressed. It was as if some mammoth and malignant vacuum-cleaner was greedily sucking everything into its mouth. Litter-cans and small vehicles and the six men who'd been trampled to death. And the savagery of the maelstrom shattered heavy objects against the dome, rattling them and bouncing them until they too punched their way through and were swirled out into the outer blackness. And the new holes brought new snatching whirlwinds. And the buildings groaned and surrendered and shot up, disintegrating, in that monstrous cannonade of havoc. That day brought death to every Designated Mover at Archimedes Base. There were twenty-nine of them - scientists, technicians and medical specialists - mainly from America and Russia. And not one survived. They were brilliant men. Carefully selected men. Today they are mere particles of dust. Drifting through the uncharted wastes of eternity.

However, as we have indicated, there were survivors. Two of the people known as components lived through the holocaust and so did five of the resident staff. If they had perished the events of that terrible day at Archimedes would probably have remained a mystery for ever. There would possibly have been reports from observatories of a strange and momentary flare of activity on the moon - activity which might have been presumed to be the result of some unknown natural phenomena. And that would have been all. But because of these seven survivors, because of the information they gave to Department Seven and which Trojan has passed to us, the truth can be recognized.

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These seven lived because at the time of the devastation they happened to be insulated in rooms where the atmosphere was independently maintained - and they escaped to the obsolete base at Cassini.

Cassini Base, we understand, is now being redeveloped. It will once again become the principal transit camp on the moon. The Alternative 3 operation suffered a serious set-

back at Archimedes but it has certainly not been abandoned.

No voyages are being made from Earth at the moment for there is much work to be done at Cassini but people are still being watched and assessed as potential Designated Movers. And, according to Trojan, plans are being made for the imminent round-up of more Components.

Maybe there are men and women in your town, possibly on your street, who will disappear, suddenly and inexplicably, in the near future...men and women already ear-marked for an astonishingly different existence on that far-distant planet.

They would already have gone, those people, if it had not been for the obstinacy of The German. And for the concerned compassion of The Instigator. They would already have joined those who, if biologist Stephen Manderson is right, are now on a planet where no squirrel will ever scamper. And where no nightingale will ever sing.

There is just one final point for us to make. On the back cover of this book you will note one word which you may consider puzzling: "speculation".

Why "Speculation"? That is a valid question ... especially in view of the fact that so much of our evidence, particularly that quoted from newspapers, was already a matter of public record. Well ... we did mention that politicians tried to suppress this book, that two in Britain sought injunctions to prevent its publication. And we did explain that we were forced into a "reluctant compromise".

Need we say more?

E N D