APPENDIX C: VISUAL MYTHOLOGY, OR, THE IDEA OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL UFO PROMOTED BY WITNESSES AND MEDIA REPORTING OF UFO SIGHTINGS.

While eyewitnesses can be accurate conduits for observations of unusual phenomena, they can also be agents of misrepresentation, as the "spacecraft" versions of the reentry events of Appendix B will testify. The media reporting on UFO sightings contribute to the allure of the UFO idea by portraying reports in more stereotypical forms than the witness meant or implied, thereby adding to the weight of existing cultural influences that predispose or pressure the witness to conform to these expectations.

The three UFO cases discussed at length in this paper illustrate the point. Witnesses of the Phoenix Lights not only divided between descriptions of independent lights and descriptions of a solid V-shaped craft, they also put their differences into pictoral form in some cases. Tim Ley was convinced that he saw a gigantic V-shaped craft with lights and created computer graphics to illustrate his experience, including the awe-inspiring depiction of the craft rising overhead as it passed, an image that became famous when *USA Today* published it on the front page of the June 18, 1997 issue. Stacey Roads drew a sketch of her sighting that showed a huge triangle with three lights clustered near the front tip and one each at the base of the trailing legs. For others, and for the Terry Proctor videotape, the Phoenix Lights were just that, a group of lights without any connecting framework. The same stimulus led to two very different portrayals.

A satellite reentry likely created the giant Yukon UFO. Many saw just lights, some saw seemingly ordered patterns of lights, and a few saw unmistakable spaceships. An improved version draws on the reports of two Fox Lake witnesses to produce an impressive image that has become iconic of this event. The illustration shows a huge tub-like craft with rows of windows, countless smaller lights, and searchlight beams sweeping the ground. The sight inspires wonder, but does it also mislead?

The Exeter case has been around longest and has a well-earned reputation as a UFO classic. A variety of depictions have attempted to capture the events of the September night in 1965 when Norman Muscarello and the two police officers encountered a flashing UFO. An early version from *Readers Digest* shows the object like a cluster of glowing reddish grapes, probably the least technological version on record. Ray Fowler collected witness descriptions using a NICAP reporting form and gathered illustrations of the sequence of flashing lights set against a dimly seen object behind the lights. J. Allen Hynek used a picture of the Exeter sighting in his public lectures that emphasized the flashing lights without introducing the appearance of a specific sort of craft.

When Time-Life books presented the Exeter object in *The UFO Phenomenon* in 1987, it acquired a definite form as a circular craft with red lights flashing around the rim. Other versions circulating on the Internet favor a technological appearance for the UFO, like two sketches from the Netherlands that show an unmistakable craft. But perhaps the prize for mechanizing the UFO in the "Incident at Exeter" goes to a cover illustration from Ray Palmer's *Flying Saucers* magazine, issue 55, December 1967. In this version the craft is so mechanical it looks like it was made in Detroit in the 1960s, with no doubts, uncertainties, or subtleties left, just hard metal, throbbing engine, hatches, portholes, and lights

Pictures beckon with the lure of certainty. They have a concrete distinctiveness that abolishes doubt, and when they show a machine, the viewer often swallows the persuasive power. "So this is what the witness saw? Then surely it was real, and surely a vehicle not of this earth." Convincing indeed, but not necessarily what the witness saw—viewer be warned.

Sources:

Tim Ley, “Phoenix Lights UFO,” http://phoenixlightsufo.com/

Peter Davenport, “National UFO Reporting Center: Phoenix Lights Case Images—March 13, 1997” (Group 4, Stacey Roads), http://www.nuforc.org/phoenix/phoenixslides.html

Video of Phoenix Lights: *MUFON UFO Journal* no. 351, July 1997, front cover.

UFO*BC, “Simulated Graphic of FOX2 and FOX3’s UFO Encounter” (Fox Lake, Yukon, Dec. 11, 1996), http://www.ufobc.ca/yukon/2205fox3image1mj.htm

Exeter UFO: *Readers Digest* May 1966, p. 72

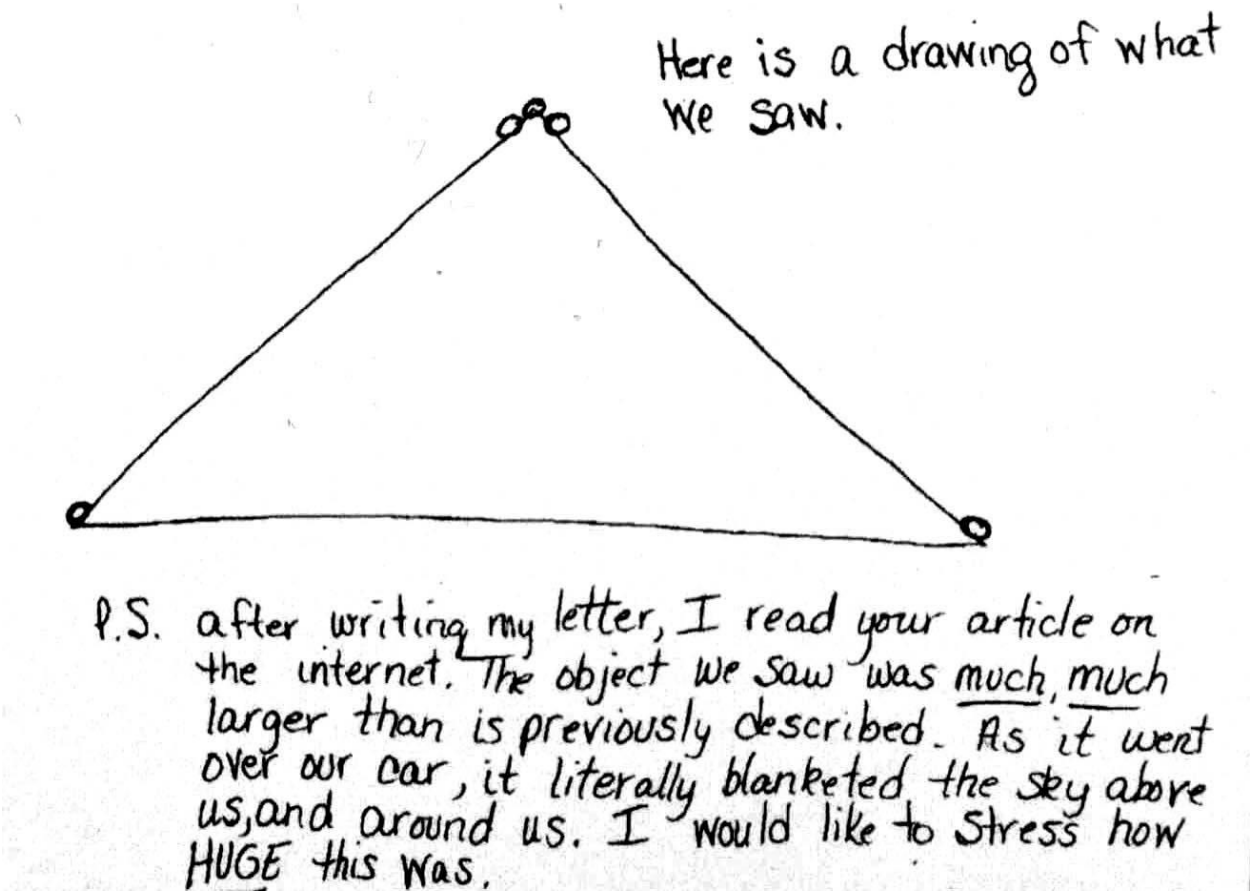
Raymond E. Fowler investigation of Exeter case for NICAP (CUFOS)

Illustration of Exeter event used by J. Allen Hynek (CUFOS)

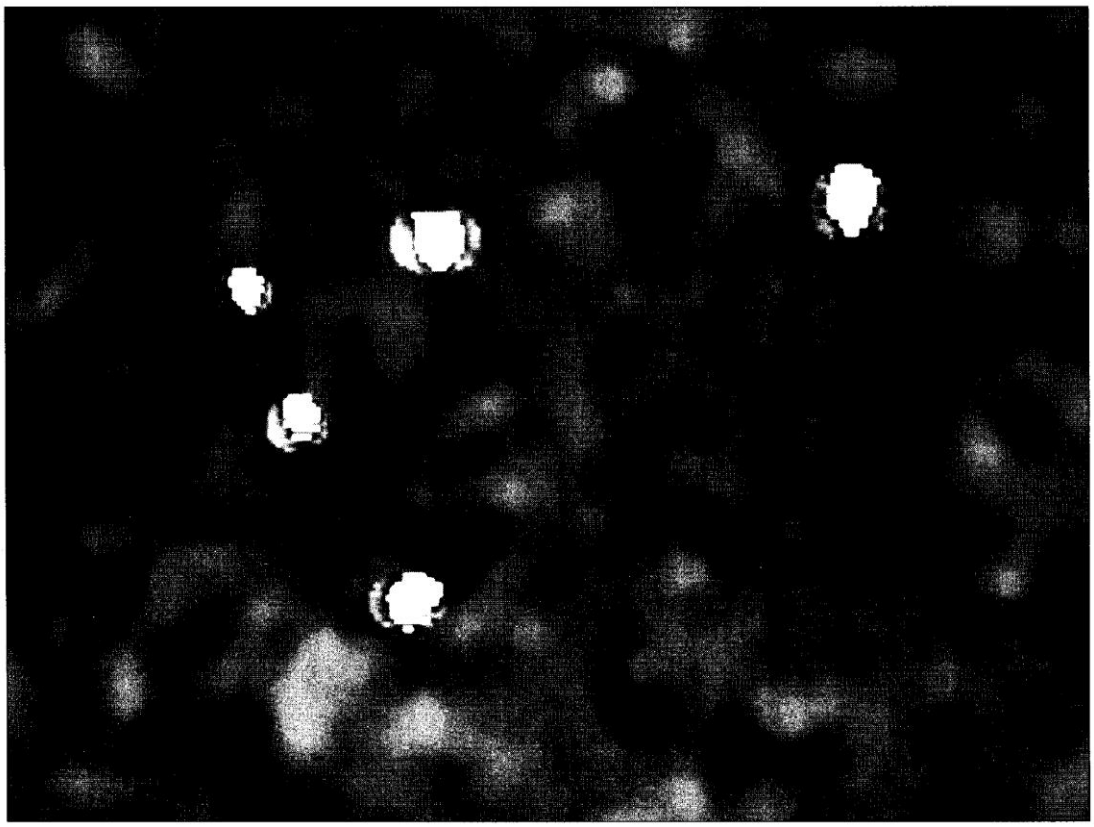
The UFO Phenomenon. Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1987, pp.100-101.

Ray Palmer’s *Flying Saucers* no. 55, December 1967, front cover.

Phoenix Lights, Tim Ley

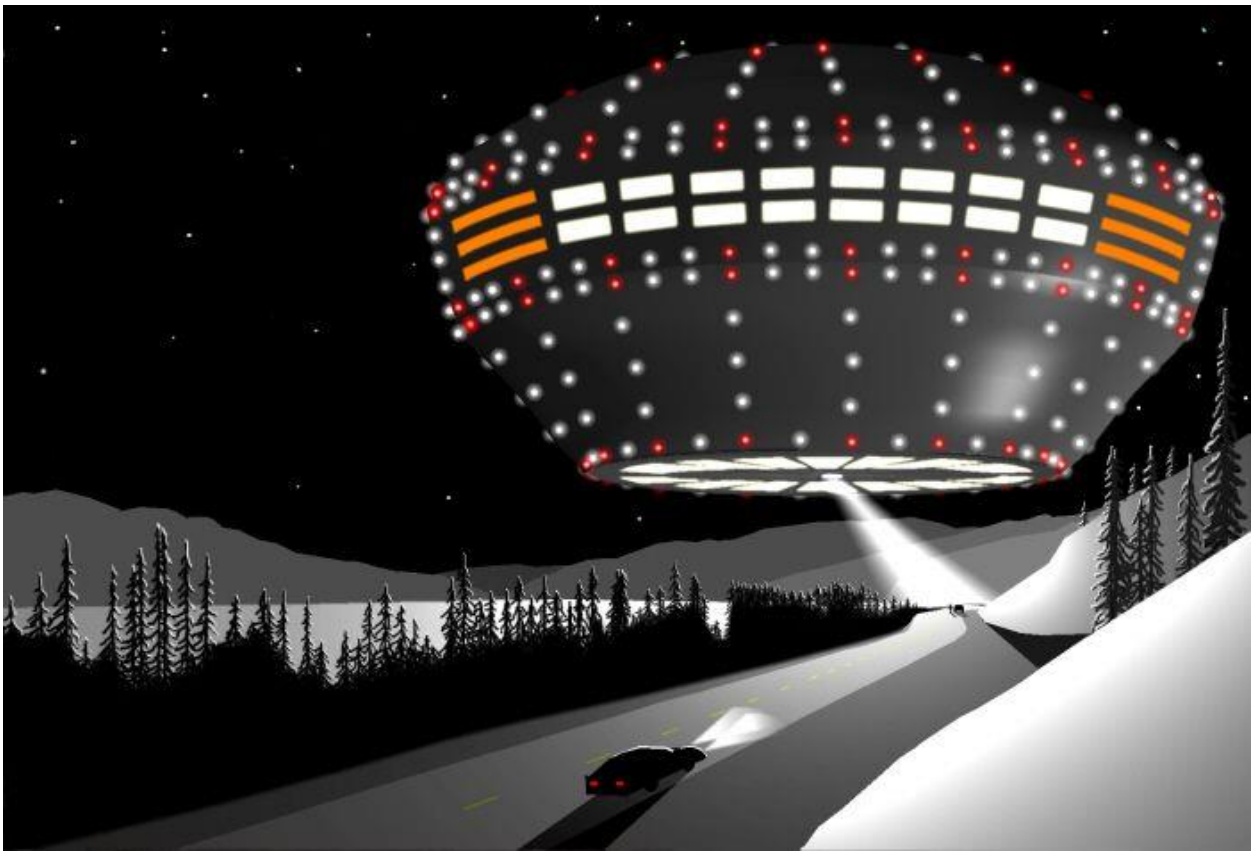


Phoenix Lights, Stacey Roads



THE PHOENIX "V" FORMATION

Phoenix Lights video, MUFON UFO Journal.



Yukon Giant UFO, UFO*BC

Exeter, *Readers Digest*

RECEIVED SEP 2 0 1965

ADD TO SEPT. 3 EXETER, NH Case

DURATION/SECONDS

ADDENDUM I

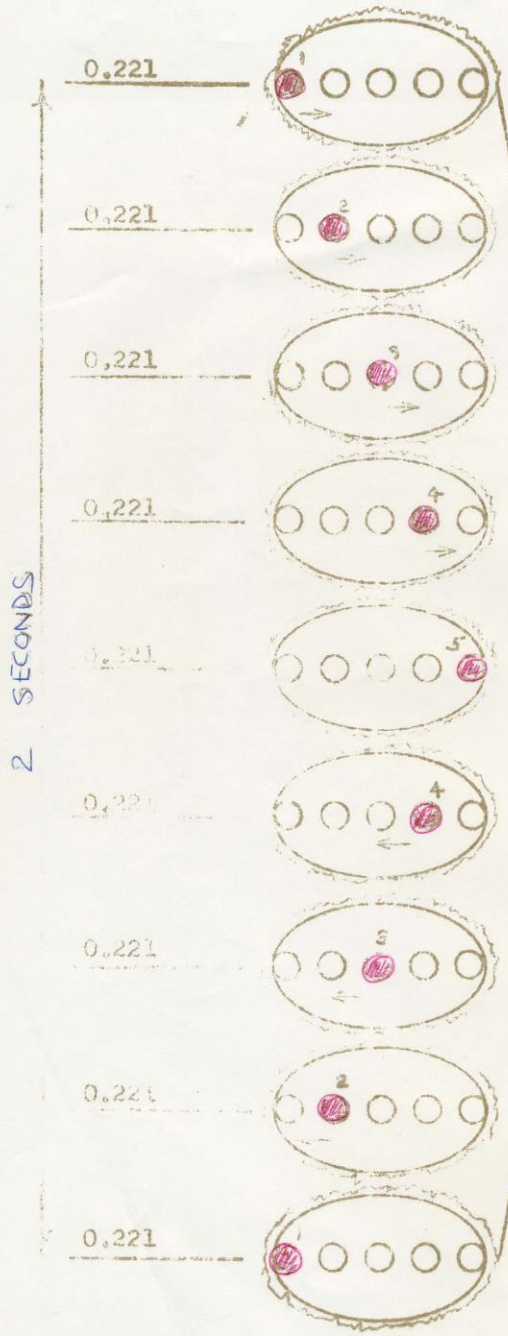
UFO RPT-9/3/65 - KENSINGTON, N.H.

(Additional information obtained from notes of one who personally interviewed Norman Muscarello on 6 September 1965)

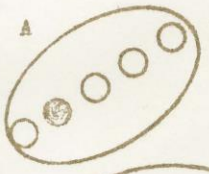
DURATION/Muscarello initial sighting:
± 5 MINUTES TOTAL

SHAPE

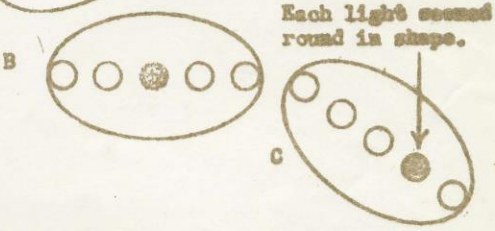
Exact shaped concealed by glare of flashing red lights - Between and during flashes Officer Bertrand got the impression that the object was "compressed" with no protrusions "like and egg" but this is just an educated guess.



LIGHTS PULSED IN A SMOOTH SEQUENCE 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1 TAKING TWO SECONDS TO COMPLETE A FULL CYCLE.



All witnesses observed the object rock back and forth several times during its flight.



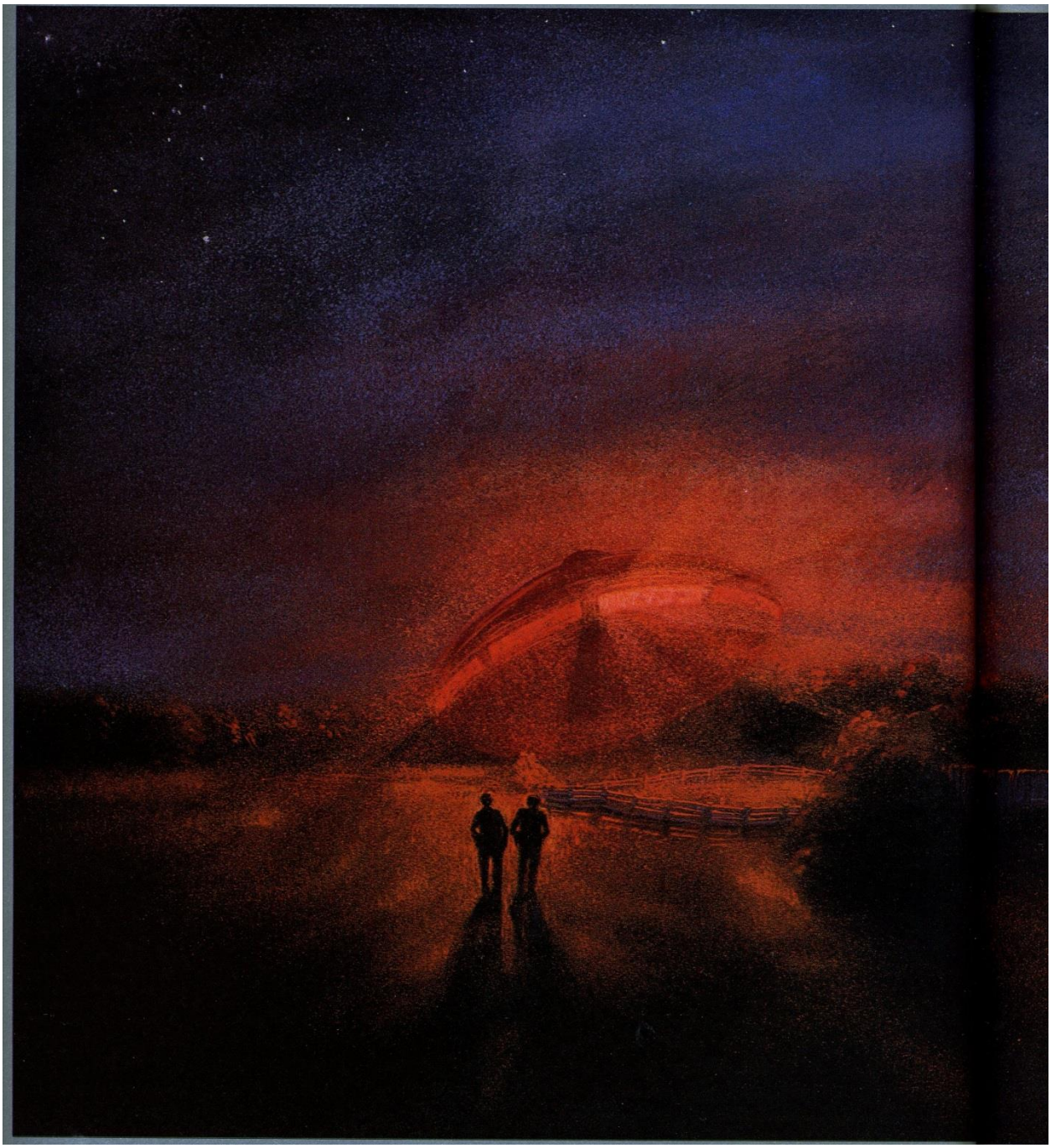
Each light seemed round in shape.

POSITION A - Maintained as it came across the field toward Muscarello's initial sighting - maintained this position while over Russell residence - Also when approached Bertrand&Muscarel

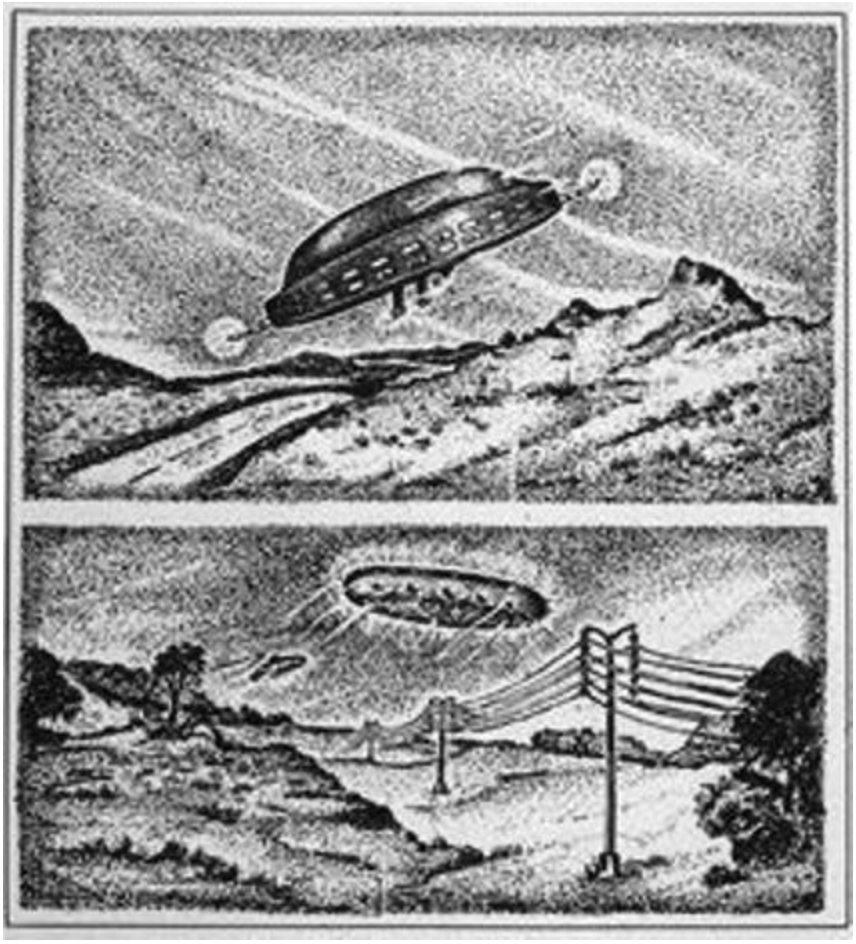
Raymond E. Fowler
Raymond E. Fowler
NICAP Investigator

Exeter investigation, Ray Fowler

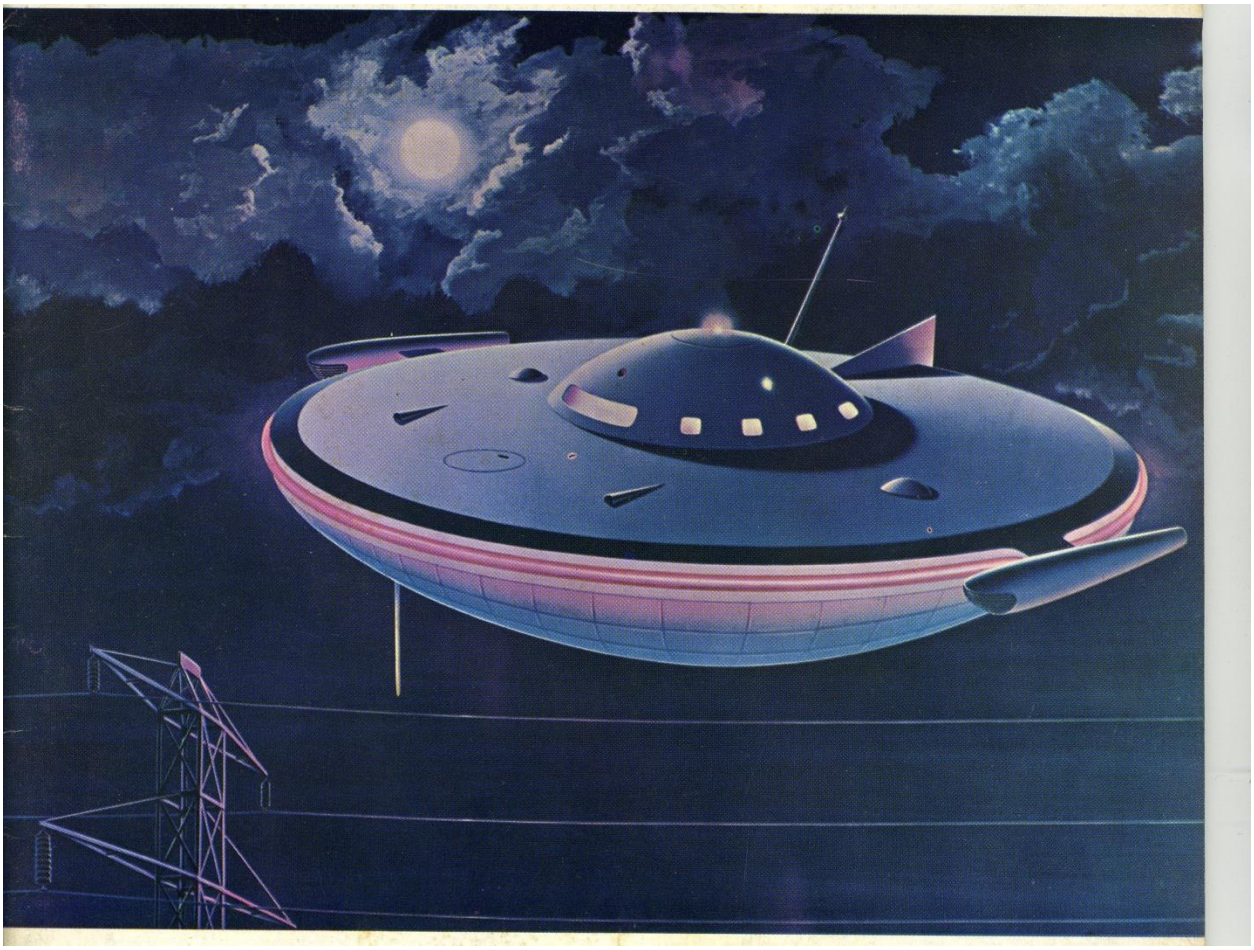
Exeter UFO, illustration used by J. Allen Hynek



Exeter UFO, Time-Life Books



Exeter UFO illustrations from The Netherlands



Technological version of Exeter UFO from Ray Palmer's *Flying Saucers*