

For the Record of

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability

Hearing on “Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena”

September 9th, 2025

Good morning, Chairwoman Luna, Ranking Member Crockett, and Members of the Task Force.

I’m George Knapp, Chief Investigative Reporter for KLAS-TV in Las Vegas—not a whistleblower, and not a UFO witness (as far as I can remember, that is). My pursuit of the UFO mystery—and the many rabbit holes attached to it—started in 1987, 38 years ago. Nearly every day since then, I get asked the question: Do I believe this UFO stuff? Do I believe in aliens or ETs? And my answer is no.

Belief has nothing to do with it. To me, it is—and always has been—a news story, and an important one, likely the biggest story I will ever cover. I am not sure if there is another reporter working for a mainstream news organization who has stuck with this story as long, nor could I imagine anyone would want to do so.

It is a great honor to be asked to participate here, and also an honor to be seated with these three men. It is daunting to testify under oath in front of Congress and, essentially, the whole world, especially about something as sensitive and controversial as this. No matter how things go here today, this will likely change their lives. It takes courage for them to step into the spotlight because they know they will be pummeled for it. The barrage started on social media as soon as the names were announced, as it did for members of this Task Force.

The residents of UFO world are a tough crowd. They expect nothing less than for House staffers to wheel in a slab with a charred alien body on it or arrange a media tour where we travel to Wright-Patterson and kick open the doors to the Blue Room to see the crashed saucers.

I understand that impatience and was the same way. During my first deep dive into the subject, I remember realizing this topic is a mess. And I concluded that what it needed was a good reporter. I can have this sorted out in about six months. Youthful cockiness and naivete is not a good combination.

Topic One: The Paper Trail

What hooked me on the subject was not the tales of crashed saucers or Area 51. It was the paper trail, the massive piles of government documents which paint a very different picture than what the public is told about UFOs. The first time I saw some of them, they literally walked in the door under the arm of a guy named John Lear, son of Bill Lear, developer of the Lear Jet, who had helped our TV station break a big story years earlier—a story about the testing of a plane out in the Nevada desert, a plane that was invisible to radar. It turned out it was the F-117, the Nighthawk, the Stealth Fighter. It proved to be real.

Later, Lear returned to KLAS and brought a stack of paper, and in that stack were dozens of pages of legitimate documents, squeezed out of the U.S. government through the use of FOIA. The public has been told, over and over, since the late 1940s that there is nothing to worry about, these things aren't real, they're not a threat, the witnesses are crackpots.

But FOIA forced the Air Force, CIA, FBI, NASA, and other agencies to release thousands of pages of internal memos and reports and candid assessments written in complete candor, long before anyone knew FOIA would exist in the future. It was clear that what they told each other behind closed doors was the opposite of what they told the public. They lied, and are still lying, to the public and to Congress. The documents show that military and intelligence personnel admitted that, quote, "these are real, not fictitious, that they fly in formation, are evasive, and outperform any aircraft known to exist, including ours."

That is what hooked me. I was ticked off that they were lying to us.

Given our time constraints, I won't list key documents here but am forwarding a detailed list so you can read them for yourself, including a report prepared for you, members of Congress, by the Congressional Research Service. And I can recommend the names of a few highly credible UFO document archives where members and staff can read the material for yourselves.

Topic Two: Crash Retrievals and Reverse Engineering Programs (They're Real)

Back in 1989, I was not aware that I was diving into the deep end of the pool when I reported about Bob Lazar and S-4, the place out near Area 51 where Lazar said there was a reverse engineering program underway. I am well aware of the objections and questions about Lazar. It does not matter to me whether people believe him or not, and I won't litigate it yet again. If I did not believe him, I would not still be reporting on his claims. KLAS News Director Robert Stoldal and I knew this investigation was risky for the station, so we approached it cautiously. This was a potentially huge story, but we needed more than just Lazar to move forward. And so we went to work. I appealed, on the air, and asked people who had knowledge of this to contact me. And, over time, they did. I had more than two dozen sources with bits and pieces of the same story who spoke to us. The most alarming development in that process is that I spoke to six people, six in a row, on my phone in the newsroom, who agreed to tell me their stories, some of them under the condition that we disguise their identities. And six people, right in a row, were visited the very next day after speaking to me by government agents, security from former employers, Men in Black types who essentially threatened them and told them to keep their mouths shut. One of the people who agreed to speak to me had worked for a prominent defense contractor. She told me about sitting in a meeting with Air Force officers in which they discussed crashed UFOs. The people who came to see her after she spoke to me told her she was still subject to her NDA, adding that they knew her daughter lived in L.A., that both she and her daughter would drive to see each other on occasion, and then the two men in suits ended with this: "It's a big desert out there. It would be a shame if anything happened to either of you." She was terrified. The idea that someone would issue veiled death threats to this family was jarring to me and outrageous. Also outrageous was the realization that someone had been listening to the phone in my office. It seemed unlikely a judge would approve wiretaps of a news organization.

The first person I told, outside of our newsroom, about the story we were pursuing was Nevada Senator Harry Reid, who would later become Senate Majority Leader. I worried he might think I was crazy, but

instead, he said he was interested. It was the start of a private collaboration and conversation that continued for the rest of his life. Senator Reid was immensely helpful to me over the years but didn't really want to be too public about his interest. That private conversation proved to be immensely important years later. Suffice to say, by the time he co-sponsored the creation of the largest U.S. investigation of UFO matters, Senator Reid firmly believed that the U.S., Russia, and China had recovered advanced unknown technology and were in a race to reverse engineer the technology. The first one to do so would control everything.

Here's another name who also believed it: Howard Cannon. Senator Cannon, a predecessor to Reid, was a bomber pilot and hero, a staunch defender of defense spending, Nellis, and Area 51, and who had a personal relationship with the top guys at Lockheed. Cannon had never spoken publicly about UFOs, but his son Alan confided in me that his father had told him the story about Roswell and crash debris was true. I knew Senator Cannon during his years in office and wrangled a face-to-face with him. He told me that his best friend in the Senate, Republican Barry Goldwater, had spoken to Cannon several times about what was being hidden at Wright-Patterson. Goldwater suspected it was UFO crash material, so he asked for permission to get in to see it, and even though he was a ranking member of Armed Services and Intelligence Committees, the response wasn't merely "no" but "hell no, and never ask again." I corresponded with Senator Goldwater in the early '90s, and he confirmed the story to me. When I asked Cannon on camera about it, he said yes, that's what happened, admitted he was also curious, then hinted that if he—Cannon—had asked, he thought he could get the okay. But then he said, "What would be the point? You couldn't tell anyone about it."

Next name: Al O'Donnell. I have told this story in public before but have not confirmed the name. I kept working the story and looked for people who were in a position to know if this story was legitimate. Someone suggested I try to get Al O'Donnell to open up. Mr. O'Donnell is considered one of the 100 most important people in the development of modern Las Vegas. He had been at MIT when the three founders of EG&G engineered their amazing technology and became vital to the U.S. nuclear weapons program. O'Donnell was sent to Las Vegas to be the first general manager of the EG&G operation there. It meant he had the highest clearances for the most important national security program in the world. He accumulated years of direct, hands-on experience with atomic weapons, hundreds of which were exploded in the Nevada desert and elsewhere. He was the real deal.

It took me a while, but he agreed to open up about "that subject." We would meet in coffee shops, and he would answer my questions, but I wasn't allowed to take notes. (I would always rush to my car afterward and scribble down shorthand versions of what he shared with me.) Over several months, he told me that he was directly involved in securing what amounted to a flying saucer that had crashed, most likely in 1953. He said it wasn't kept at Area 51. It was hidden at Indian Springs Air Base outside of Las Vegas, now known as Creech AFB. Eventually, he also said there was a live being housed out there, a crash survivor, but they did not know how to communicate with their captive. Its existence was known by only a handful of people. He said sometime after 1955, when Area 51 was created, the craft and the being were moved from Indian Springs to somewhere near Groom Lake, but he was never specific.

Sometime later, at our final coffee meeting, he told me he had been warned to stop talking to me. He told me he could not meet with me anymore. A few years later, a new version of his story emerged, one different in every respect.

An anonymous source (who sounded to me like a carbon copy of Al O'Donnell) told a book author the Roswell saucer was a Russian-made craft that was crashed on purpose in a remote, barely populated

desert in New Mexico. The Russians allegedly wanted to start an alien-invasion public panic but picked an odd place to do it. The alien-looking bodies were said to be concentration camp survivors who had been surgically altered by the infamous Nazi Dr. Josef Mengele to look like beings from outer space.

Take your pick. Al had a reason for changing the story. Someone told him to do it.

A more current source regarding unknown technology is Dr. James Lacatski. Dr. Lacatski is a brilliant man who spent the bulk of his career working for the Defense Intelligence Agency. He and a DIA colleague came up with the idea for the Advanced Aerospace Weapons Systems Application Program (AAWSAP). AAWSAP is the acronym for the program mentioned earlier in this presentation. It is the largest UFO investigation ever funded by the U.S. government (that we know of). Senator Harry Reid and two other senior senators secured the funding for the program. It was highly compartmentalized, even by the standards of DIA.

Dr. Lacatski is a by-the-book guy. He does not spill secrets unless the information is approved through the DOPSR process and so long as it does not endanger national security. As a matter of disclosure, I am a co-author of two books written primarily by Dr. Lacatski and Dr. Colm Kelleher, the principal manager of AAWSAP in Las Vegas. Kelleher worked for Robert Bigelow, a successful developer and aerospace contractor in Nevada. His company, BAASS, was awarded the DIA contract for AAWSAP. In an amazingly short turnaround, BAASS managed to recruit and hire fifty full-time investigators for BAASS, most of them former military or law enforcement, and all of whom were able to qualify for top-secret security clearances.

As I mentioned in a statement submitted to Congress during the 2023 hearing into this subject, BAASS/AAWSAP generated an enormous amount of research and content in its 27-month existence. In addition to more than three dozen preliminary reports (DIRDs), the program compiled the largest known UFO database—or rather data warehouse—consisting of more than 240,000 case files obtained from multiple other collections, including files from other governments. The data warehouse was designed and overseen by Dr. Jacques Vallee and has reportedly been used by U.S. agencies up to the present date. BAASS/AAWSAP also produced more than 100 highly detailed papers focusing on different issues and questions, including studies of the health effects on humans from encounters with UFO/UAP technology. None of these 100-plus reports have been released by DIA, though a few have been leaked.

In 2023, the usually tight-lipped Dr. Lacatski dropped a bombshell. He revealed that he had been in high-level talks with the Department of Homeland Security to create a new program, dubbed Kona Blue. During the discussions with a U.S. senator and an undersecretary of DHS, Lacatski revealed that “the U.S. is in possession of a craft of unknown origin and had successfully gained access to its interior.” The craft has “a streamlined configuration suitable for aerodynamic flight but no intakes, exhaust, wings, or control surfaces. In fact, it appeared not to have an engine, fuel tanks, or fuel. What was the purpose of this craft?”

Lacatski flat out stated to a senior government official and a sitting senator that our government does have (at least) one UFO, though he did not say where it is or how it was acquired, and in multiple conversations since 2023, he has declined to say anything more.

The BAASS/AAWSAP effort was a success on every level, producing an inordinate amount of data and analysis, but when its existence was leaked, which stunned other power centers in the national

security establishment, the funding was pulled, and the program ended. However, while AAWSAP was active, the prime contractor, BAASS owner Robert Bigelow, made a bold attempt to acquire physical proof of UFO crashes. It has been widely reported over many years that aerospace titan Lockheed Martin is one of the defense contractors entrusted with mystery material and perhaps entire craft. The principal facility at Groom Lake was built to be a safe haven and testing ground for Lockheed's legendary spy plane, the U-2. Later, it was home to the A-12, the first of the "Blackbird" super planes, also designed by Lockheed. Could it be true that Lockheed was a repository for intact saucers, crash debris, or perhaps bodies? Robert Bigelow decided to find out.

This is no longer a rumor. I have confirmed that Bigelow and a trusted colleague met with and negotiated with a senior executive at Lockheed and hammered out a deal wherein Bigelow's company, BAASS, would receive a quantity of unusual material that Lockheed was safeguarding at a facility in California. A source who was in the room for that discussion has confirmed this. The material was not made here. It contained no unknown element, no unobtainium, but its composition suggested it had been crafted in a zero-gravity environment—in other words, space. As far as anyone knows, we do not have any manufacturing plants in space, nor does anyone else. The agreement was not completed. There are two reasons for that.

People can believe it or not, there is a crash recovery program, and reverse engineering has been underway for a long time, with limited success. A veteran intelligence operative, David Grusch, who documented the existence of such programs while working with the UAP Task Force, testified to Congress back in 2023 about this. That testimony was under oath. Mr. Grusch now works for Representative Burlison as an advisor on these matters.

Topic Three: The Russia Files

As one of the planet's other nuclear superpowers, do the Russians also have a program to study UFOs and crashes and materials? The answer is yes.

The Task Force now has copies of documents I obtained from the Russian Ministry of Defense and from affiliated organizations back in the '90s. Some of this material has been reported to the public over the years, but only a few pages of the original documents have been shared. I was asked to share the most important papers with BAASS and the DIA and did so because I wanted someone way smarter than me to figure out whether they are legit and what they mean. AAWSAP did that.

The documents and interviews I obtained in my 1993 visit to Moscow show that the USSR launched what is almost certainly the largest UFO investigation in world history. The first phase included a standing order to every element of the vast Soviet military empire to fully investigate every UFO sighting, whether it was a craft, orb, unusual ball of light, or other kinds of close encounters. The military witnesses were to be interviewed, evidence including photos, drawings, and physical effects were to be gathered, and all of the material was to be forwarded to a single office at the Ministry of Defense. That program lasted a full ten years, 1978–1988, and possibly longer, and then another program grew out of that, dubbed "Thread III," which seemed to be an analysis program that also monitored UFO cases, news reports, and government interest in the U.S. and other Western nations. The purpose of these efforts was very simple, as told to me by Colonel Boris Sokolov, who was head of the MOD program. He said that many thousands of reports were collected during his part of the program for the purpose of figuring out the technology that UFOs displayed—unpredictable

movements, the maneuverability and quick angles, and because UFOs could be seen visually but not on radar, or seen on radar but not visually. Quote, “If the secrets of the UFOs could be discovered, we would be able to win the competition against our potential enemies in terms of velocity, materials, and visibility.” The fighter planes could intercept, but in three cases where Russian planes fired...

In other words, the Russians were trying to reverse engineer UFOs. That was underway decades ago.

Sokolov and his files documented highly alarming encounters, similar to what our own military has encountered. He told me, on camera, there had been 40 incidents in which Russian fighter planes were sent to intercept unknown craft. In most of those cases, the UFOs zipped away before the pilots could shoot at the unknowns, but in three cases where the MiGs did fire, the planes fell out of the sky. Two of those pilots died. After that, the standing order changed. When you see a UFO, change course and get out. I was able to get a follow-up to this policy when I returned to Moscow in 1996 and interviewed General Igor Maltsev, who had issued that standing order. He explained that the pilots were told to leave the UFOs alone because, quote, “they could have incredible capacities for retaliation.” The Ministry of Defense folks shared with me photos of Russian MiGs that tried to intercept UFOs but had their wings clipped in mid-air collisions. (I have provided photos to the Task Force.)

There were also dozens of cases, Sokolov says, in which ground forces fired upon UFOs, but the on-the-ground soldiers say UFOs knocked out car engines, along with radar, radio, and communications systems. There are also a few incidents in those files in which military personnel were literally frozen—immobilized—when they tried to shoot down the UFOs.

The Russians had been studying UFOs as far back as Roswell in 1947. Stalin had an interest and had tasked his top scientists to find out what had crashed at Roswell. They eventually told Stalin it wasn't any craft known to exist on Earth, wasn't American, certainly wasn't Russian. For decades afterward, the official position of the USSR was that UFOs were a propaganda distraction manufactured by the West and discouraged any public interest or investigation. Behind the scenes, they tasked scientists and intelligence assets to find out what these things were and whether the Russians could build their own.

Basically, the USSR was doing the same thing our own government has done all these years: tell the public one thing and do the opposite in secrecy. In other words, lie.

The most disturbing incident I was able to document after reading the files and speaking to Russian military leaders who were part of these classified programs occurred in October 1982 at a missile base in Ukraine. These missiles were meant to be fired at Western targets, including the U.S. The report had been sent to the chief of the general, their version of the Joint Chiefs. A UFO had appeared over the Ukraine missile base. It was observed for four hours. In that time, the UFO split into pieces, merged back together, displayed amazing velocity and other abilities, and then, unexpectedly, something or someone entered the correct launch codes for the missiles. In Sokolov's words, it was a “spontaneous illumination of all displays.” Those missiles fired up and appeared ready to be launched. The officers at the controls could not shut them down. They tried their best to disengage but could not. This was World War III about ready to start, and there was nothing the Russians could do to stop it.

And then, poof. The UFOs vanished in an instant, and when they did, the missiles turned themselves off. Colonel Sokolov and his team were sent from Moscow to investigate. They took apart the control panels but could not find anything wrong. This was not a power surge or a security test using EMP or any of the other weak cover stories that have been used in this country to try to debunk or explain away similar events that have been reported at our own nuclear missile facilities. The Ministry of Defense

concluded that this was a message sent by the UFO. By the way, while I have spoken publicly about the Ukraine incident a few times over the years since I returned from Russia, I have never made public the witness statements, all of them Russian military officers. The Task Force has now been supplied with copies of all of those statements.

Another of the most unsettling findings during the visits to Russia is what we learned from a Russian physicist, Dr. Rimili Avramenko. He showed us a table model of what he called “the weapon of the aliens.” It was a plasma beam generator, and he demonstrated what that little model could do, burning an instantaneous hole in a razor blade. Avramenko and other military figures told us that Russia is well aware of ongoing secretive programs in the U.S. wherein our agencies monitor and collect UFO information via advanced sensor platforms in an effort to understand and duplicate the technology—in other words, reverse engineering. I met with and interviewed dozens of Russians during my two visits in the '90s and believe the overall meaning of their considerable efforts is that they take UFOs seriously and that all of that research and resources over so many years was carried out for the purpose of building and deploying their own versions of the advanced technology they had seen in their skies, on land, and underwater. They know that we know what the Russians are doing, and the Russians know what we know what they have been doing. The difference is, the Russians essentially admitted this back in the '90s, while their American counterparts still pretend none of this is real and tell the same old lies to the public and to Congress.

One other note on the Russian files. After I shared much of this material with AAWSAP and BAASS, they put a team together to do translations and analysis, far more than I could do on my own. The full report is included in one of those unreleased papers submitted to DIA and still bottled up there, but we were allowed to publish a brief synopsis, which reveals that there was a much larger program than Thread III, a shadowy group known as Unit 73790, which controlled three separate UFO programs, so a much larger effort than anyone has known before. It looks like they were way ahead of us as far as 30 years ago.

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