



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO

5720
Ser 09B30/7U512576
February 28, 1997

Mr. Grant Cameron
649 Silverstone Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2V8

Dear Mr. Cameron:

This responds to your Freedom of Information Act request (FOIA) of January 20, 1997, in which you seek any and all files that we possess on Dr. Robert Sarbacher and/or the Washington Institute of Technology run by Dr. Sarbacher.

Based on the limited information you provided, it appears that Dr. Sarbacher did business with this Department in the 1940s. Unfortunately, based on records disposal requirements, contractual records are destroyed six years three months after final payment. Hence, we would not be maintaining any contractual records dealing with Dr. Sarbacher or his company.

I regret that I cannot assist you in this matter. I am enclosing a brochure that will assist you in formulating future requests, as your current one does not meet the minimum requirements of the FOIA.

In view of the above, your request is returned and all fees waived in this instance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Doris M. Lama", is positioned above the typed name.

DORIS M. LAMA
Head, DON PA/FOIA Policy Branch
By direction of the
Chief of Naval Operations
(202) 685-6585

Enclosures (2)

navy

Jan 20, 97

Navy
Doris M. Lama
CNO (N09B30)
Rm. 5E 521
200 Navy Pentagon
Washington 20350-2000

Dear FOIA Officer:

This is a request filed under the Freedom of Information Act.

I request that all documents containing information regarding the following topic be provided to me:

I would like any and all files that you have on Dr. Robert Sarbacher and or the Washington Institute of Technology run by Dr. Sarbacher.

I have enclosed some written material that might help in the search.

In order to help to determine my status to assess fees, you should know that I am an individual seeking information for personal use and not for commercial use.

I am willing to pay fees for this request up to a maximum of \$ 20.00. If you estimate that the fees will exceed this limit, please inform me first.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Grant Cameron
649 Silverstone Ave.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2V8
204-269-8940

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When Dr. Robert Sarbacher was in the second grade, the teacher asked his mother to take him out of school for a year, because the other children simply couldn't keep up with him.

Look Out— Here Comes a Genius!

By *SIDNEY SHALETT*

Introducing the man of the future — Dr. Robert Sarbacher, who earned \$35,000 a year before he was old enough to vote, and now invents devices more fantastic than Jules Verne's.

ONE evening recently at the Army and Navy Country Club outside of Washington, D. C., a young man on the dance floor drew the attention of a three-star general who was seeking release from the onerous worries that beset the high brass. Sharply dressed in a light-colored suit and hand-painted tie of unashful hues, the young man was executing an expert rumba with a congressman's wife. His face, smooth and untroubled, reflected not a single care. A little envious, the general asked if anyone knew the gay young man. A junior officer identified the dancer as Dr. Robert I. Sarbacher, an eminent electronic scientist and nuclear physicist, whose laboratory was handling an intricate research contract for the general's own branch of the Army. "Him a scientist!" exclaimed the general. "Never!"

Later in the evening the general and Doctor Sarbacher were introduced. The general, in his best three-star manner, began shooting questions designed to expose what he thought was an Einsteinian impostor. Sarbacher, who, as a matter of fact, studied under Einstein, soon had the general submerged in a discussion of thermionic vacuum tubes, electron optics, harmonic voltage and the like. Though he refrained from identifying himself as the author, he also was able to buttress his theories by statements of principle extracted from the Sarbacher-Edson textbook, *Hyper and Ultra-High Frequency Engineering*, which is a classic for graduate students in electrical engineering and physics.

There was nothing unusual about the general's experience. Robert Irving Sarbacher, Sc.B., Sc.M. and Sc.D., now forty-two years old and founder, president and director of research of the National Scientific Laboratories, of Washington, D. C., has been astounding people for a long time. The first known instance occurred when he was in the second grade. His teacher called on his mother to ask her if she would take Robert out of school for a year. His mother asked what he'd been doing wrong. "It isn't anything wrong," the teacher said. "It's just that I'm afraid he's a genius. The other children can't keep up with him."

Despite the teacher's plea, Mrs. Sarbacher kept her son in school. The teacher became so interested in Robert that she arranged a transfer for herself, so she could follow him into the third grade.

At the age of ten, Sarbacher was astounding the neighborhood children by experiments performed with a chemistry set his father had bought him for Christmas. At twelve, he was making radio sets, had built his own transmitter and was a licensed "ham" operator. At eighteen, he was graduated from Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, and before he was twenty-one he was earning \$35,000 a year.

At twenty-four, Sarbacher decided to go back to school. In the course of the (Continued on Page 143)

in Germany is to encourage the West German government to become more representative, and to improve its relations with Western countries. About 45,000,000 Germans are now living under this government, as compared with only 17,000,000 in the Soviet-sponsored East German state. Here in Western Germany, if anywhere, is the real Germany today, and what happens here should determine the future of all Germans.

In fact, Mr. McCloy believes that what happens to these Western Germans during the next five years is likely to determine the future of the whole European continent. This great community, more populous than France or Britain, has seen its old order collapse. One fifth of its inhabitants are newcomers driven out of ancient homes in the East. Another one fifth lost their homes and possessions in a war which Germans started. Living conditions in Western Germany are so chaotic that anything might happen if they were left to themselves.

But they have not been left to themselves; the American people have undertaken to subsidize an experiment here in which the British and French governments have been accepted as partners. Since this experiment is being conducted under the abnormal conditions of a foreign occupation, it cannot be expected always to run smoothly. The French, for example, are certain to fight hard for their own national interests, as they have done recently in fortifying their hold upon the disputed coal-mining frontier region of the Saar.

But Mr. McCloy never forgets that Western Germans also have been accepted as partners in this experiment. He is not surprised or disappointed when German politicians also fight for their national interests. The American policy under which the High Commissioner agreed to come to Germany was designed to restore self-government to the Germans as rapidly as possible. If and when that accepted American policy should be repudiated, Mr. McCloy would feel that his usefulness in Germany had ended.

LOOK OUT—HERE COMES A GENIUS!

(Continued from Page 34)

next eleven years, he studied at the University of Florida, Princeton and Harvard, and he taught at Harvard, Radcliffe and the Illinois Institute of Technology. At the same time, he conducted a private consulting business that netted him anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year. During the war he was a Navy consultant in electronics research and development, and then he went to Georgia Tech in Atlanta to become, at thirty-eight, dean of the graduate school. Today he has carried out an ambition he has long had to head his own research organization.

Doctor Sarbacher is the despair of persons who fancy they can guess a man's profession by his appearance and surface manner. Although he has been losing his hair since he was eighteen and now is down to about one half the normal complement of scalp covering, Sarbacher is a long-haired scientist in the longest-haired of scientific fields. The contrast between Sarbacher as he appears on the dance floor and Sarbacher in the laboratory is heightened by the fact that, whereas the average long-haired scientist is content to work for some big corporation, for the Government or in a college laboratory, this unaverage cross between Beau Brummell and Albert Einstein represents, in his field, a triumph of personal private enterprise.

Sarbacher's capacity for enjoying himself is outstripped by an even greater capacity for hard work and intense concentration. When at grips with some problem such as how to split time down to a billionth of a second or how to develop a pocket-sized radar whose beams will penetrate obstacles without bending, Sarbacher has been known to forget the outside world completely. During such spells he has worked forty-eight hours and longer without sleep and with very little food. He uses not only his brains but his hands, and he will grab up a soldering iron or a piece of metal plate, oblivious of whether a drop or so of molten lead or acid drips on the \$150 tailor-made suits he wears. He also has the capacity to inspire his associates to work long and arduous hours with him.

Though Sarbacher refers to himself as a scientific black sheep who has let commercial considerations affect his operations, he is at heart a pure scientist. He is not an inventor or gadgeteer, though he could be if he wanted to. Patents, as such, mean little to him, and it is highly unlikely that he ever will bother to devise, say, a little radar-controlled egg beater that will make his name a household word and attract a few hundred thousand dollars into the till. He is happiest when attacking something truly abstruse, even if there is small chance of quick profit.

Sarbacher is convinced that scientific virtue is its own reward and that such things pay off. His bank account and the solvent state of National Scientific Laboratories seem to substantiate this theory. His professional standing is similarly solvent. Sarbacher's former mentor and colleague, Prof. E. L. Chaffee, the head of Harvard's Engineering Sciences and Applied Physics Department, says of Sarbacher's work at Cambridge, "I was always amazed at the amount of work which he could turn out in a given time. I don't think I have ever known a man who had so much interest in the work, and at the same time was so untiring in his efforts to accomplish results."

Pres. Blake R. Van Leer, of Georgia Tech, says simply, "Sarbacher is a genius . . . and a genius with an unlimited capacity for hard work."

Sarbacher was born in Baltimore, the youngest in a family of three boys and a girl. His father, a conservative of the old-fashioned school, had a book-binding-and-publishing firm. The family lived well but unostentatiously in a house run without a full-time servant. Robert used to go without lunch and walk to school to save money for buying radio parts.

Even before the second-grade episode, Robert's unusual brightness manifested itself in demonstrations of phenomenal memory. The Sarbachers were Christian Scientists, and Robert, before he began going to grade school, showed an outstanding knack for memorizing Bible verses and hymns. Much later in life, according to scientific associates, Sarbacher casually memorized pages of electrochemical tables and the complex periodic table of atomic elements, so he wouldn't have to be bothered looking them up in reference books.

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When Sarbacher was seventeen, his father ran into financial reverses, and Robert graduated from Baltimore Polytechnic on a slim budget. After a desultory stab at a college business course, which he found boring because economics seemed to him such an inexact science, he decided to strike out on his own. He set off for New York City with a capital of twenty-three dollars. His family did not approve of his going to the big city, so, next to the primary business of keeping from starving, Robert's main concern was to prevent news of his desperate straits from filtering back to Baltimore.

His first act after arriving in New York was to buy a newspaper and consult the rooms-for-rent and help-wanted columns. He found a seven-dollar-a-week room near 72nd and Broadway, then started making the rounds of the employment agencies. No one wanted him. He was down to fifty cents when he finally got a job as a draftsman for a public utility. His salary was forty-five dollars a week, payable every two weeks, but, for some bookkeeping reason, the initial wages were withheld, so that it was four weeks before Sarbacher received his first ninety dollars. "That," he says, "was when I acquired a hock-shop set of values. I lived by pawning my belongings and I learned the value of good and durable clothing."

To save carfare, he would walk from 72nd Street to his office, which was at 41st and First Avenue. The last thing he had left to hock was his leather suitcase. That brought seventy-five cents and got him through to his first payday.

As his financial status improved, Sarbacher reclaimed his possessions and built up a bank account. In his zeal to do a good job and also to keep from doing things that cost money, he worked overtime at the office until the night watchman would get impatient and insist that he leave. This was the beginning of a lesson that hard work pays off; Sarbacher's salary rose to seventy-five dollars a week within six months.

However, he decided to give up the seventy-five-dollar-a-week job for a sixty-dollar one with Electrical Research Products, Inc., then a Western Electric affiliate, because he felt it would advance his prospects of graduating from draftsman to engineer. In about six more months, ERPI did make him an engineer. Sarbacher helped produce a new motion-picture projector and accessories, and then was assigned the task of designing trunks in which to package them.

In due course, the purchasing agent obtained a number of outside bids for manufacturing the Sarbacher trunks. Sarbacher felt that they all were outrageously high. "They offended my sense of hock-shop values," he says. The purchasing agent told Sarbacher he could have the contract if he could build them for less.

"I went over to Third Avenue, where there were a number of small trunkmakers, and lined them all up," Sarbacher relates. "I told them if they'd co-operate with me we could make ourselves a lot of money. In ten days we had produced better trunks which we could sell at less than half the amount of the lowest bid obtained by the purchasing agent. ERPI was happy, the Third Avenue manufacturers made a nice profit and, by merely giving an hour or two to the project after working hours, I was able to clear nearly thirty-five thousand dollars a year for myself."

With his new prosperity, Sarbacher, now twenty-one, began living better. Some old school friends whose fathers were well-to-do looked him up. They were fascinated with him because, unlike themselves, he had a job in a company not owned by his father. Soon Sarbacher, with the mildew and cooking odors of his seven-dollar-a-week furnished room hardly out of his clothes, found himself living in a fancy hotel and running around in the evenings on Park Avenue. All that he recalls vividly from this period are the twelve-cylinder, yellow convertible roadster he acquired, and the fact that at a bridge game he lent Babe Hutton, the Woolworth heiress, thirteen dollars to pay off her losses. He doesn't remember whether he ever got it back.

Sarbacher had no intention of pursuing this butterfly existence for long. The easy money of the trunk business interested him only as a means of grubstaking himself to an engineering education. He knew that science was going to be his chosen field and he realized he would get nowhere in it without higher training. Schools with fancy names meant nothing to him; his method was to survey the field of teaching talent and decide under whom he wanted to study. His first choice was the University of Florida, where two men whose work he admired, Dr. Blake Van Leer and Prof. Joseph Weil, were, respectively, dean of engineering and head of the electrical-engineering department. A more mundane factor in Florida's favor was that Sarbacher's oldest brother was living in the state and Robert could establish legal residence with him, thus saving on tuition.

Only one thing went wrong with Sarbacher's plans. Another brother had come to live with him in New York City and had persuaded him to invest all his savings in a real-estate venture. This was just at the time of the 1929-30 crash. When Sarbacher picked up the pieces, he found that after selling most of his furniture and changing the twelve-cylinder convertible for a secondhand small car, he could pay for his first semester's tuition and have fifty dollars to spare.

At the University of Florida, Sarbacher soon became a legend, both as a scholar and as a personality. A certain number of credits were allowed him for the work he had done at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. By taking summer courses and carrying a staggering load, he was able to graduate in two years with 144 credits.

He solved his money problem by renting his secondhand car to his Kappa Sigma Fraternity brothers. He was a good mechanic and could keep it in perfect running order despite the abuses it took under such a rental system. "As a matter of fact," Sarbacher recalls, "nothing much happened to the car except that one night a wheel was stolen while a fraternity brother had it on a week-end date in Jacksonville. He sort of borrowed a wheel from another car he found parked on a dark street, but it was a larger car and the wheel didn't fit very well. However, I let him take the car back to Jacksonville the following week end and he came home with the right-sized wheel."

Next on Sarbacher's educational program—though again with the idea of choosing the teacher rather than the institution—was a year of graduate work at Princeton, where he also attended seminars at the Institute for Advanced Study. Here he worked under many great professors in the fields of mathematics and physics, including Albert Einstein. Sarbacher used to

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walk with Einstein from the latter's home to Fine Hall, where classes were conducted. "It was a real privilege to be able to learn from him," Sarbacher says. "When I left Princeton, mathematical physics never again was a problem to me."

By the time he entered Harvard in 1935 for graduate work in physics and communication engineering, Sarbacher was married. As a married student, he was permitted to rent quarters in a Harvard development known as Holden Green. "Old President Lowell had felt that married students should begin learning some of the responsibilities of life," Sarbacher explains, "so he had equipped each apartment with its own furnace and coalbin. From an engineering standpoint, the furnaces had atrocious drafts, and the fire was always going out during the night." The real trouble with the furnaces, according to a classmate of this period, was that Sarbacher used to study until three o'clock in the morning and forget to stoke it.

Sarbacher's record at Harvard was remarkable—three A's and one B the first year, and all A's thereafter. He stayed on at Harvard until 1940, earning both his master's and doctor's degrees in science and serving as an instructor and as an assistant in research to the renowned Doctor Chaffee.

Sarbacher's natural talent for making large sums of money while pursuing his scientific interests began to assert itself at Harvard. As Chaffee's assistant in services as a consultant were in great demand, and his fee was \$100 a day. The first time he was paid for eighteen days of research, he proudly announced to his associates that a pure scientist just mustn't become accustomed to having so much money around, so he blew in the \$1800 as down payment on a convertible roadster even more glittering than the one he had abandoned in New York. A \$2000 fee came along soon after, and that went into a mink coat for his wife. Then he began saving his money.

Sarbacher went from Harvard to the Illinois Institute of Technology, in Chicago, where he taught electronics. Harvard borrowed him during the summer of 1941 to help build up a war-training course for Army Signal Corps officers. Doctor Chaffee tried to persuade him to remain at Harvard, but Sarbacher returned to Illinois in November. While at Harvard as a student and instructor, Sarbacher had studied with or taught many of the

small and highly select group of men who later became the brain of the Navy's electronics department. When the United States was drawn into the war, these officers, then on their way to becoming captains, lured him from Illinois Tech and installed him at the Navy Department in Washington as a consultant on radar, loran—long-range electronic navigation—blind-landing systems and other electronic devices.

His friends persuaded him to remain a civilian consultant, instead of going into uniform, so he could talk back when necessary to the rare but at that time still-surviving type of admiral who was not convinced that radio would ever replace the signal flag. This turned out to be a good idea, as there were a few times when he had to step on some important toes, which he couldn't have done as a subordinate officer.

Toward the end of the war, Sarbacher was given a thirty-day leave of absence to help a manufacturing company out of a hole. The firm had a contract, involving approximately \$10,000,000, to manufacture a desperately needed piece of equipment known as a "spot-jammer" for the Air Force. The Germans had developed a high-altitude fighter that was hovering over our bombers, well above gun range, and broadcasting flight information to the Wehrmacht anti-aircraft batteries. The spot-jammer was needed to obliterate its signals. About a year after the contract was let, according to Sarbacher, the manufacturer still had not developed even a model for the instrument.

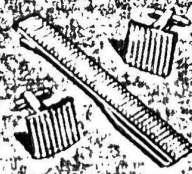
Sarbacher knew how urgent the problem was; he had been told the secret figures on Air Force's losses due to lack of this piece of equipment. He was determined to produce the model in less than thirty days and, toward that end, he attacked the problem by means of what might be called a saturation method. This is a system he still employs when a deadline is pressing or inspiration is flowing. It means sitting down and working until sheer exhaustion stops him, then resting a few hours and resuming the search for the answer. This instance was Sarbacher's all-time high for concentrated work.

An associate who watched him at it tells the story. "He sat in a workroom with paper, pencils, slide rule, a soldering iron and other tools. Sometimes he had other engineers with him, but often he was alone except for one man, an engineer named Uriah L. Allen, who stayed with him right through it. Bob



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worked for ten days, and in that ten days he had only about twenty hours' sleep.

"At the end of ten days he had produced a model that worked. He had conceived it, designed it and largely built it with his own hands. He had done what the other engineers had not been able to do in a year."

Sarbacher went back to the Navy, making a mental note, which he has carried out, that when he started his own laboratory, Urey Allen was going to be the first man he hired. But in a week or so the spot-jammer manufacturer was calling again. He had the model, but now he was in production difficulties. Would the Navy let him have Sarbacher back to supervise production? Sarbacher went back to the company and remained for seven months.

His postwar acceptance of the deanship of Georgia Tech's graduate school was, as he puts it, "a rounding out of my academic experience." Among his corollary duties, he represented the school on the governing board of the Institute of Nuclear Studies at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. President Van Leer says that the Georgia Tech graduate school still is benefiting from ideas imparted by Sarbacher during his three years there.

But Sarbacher was eager by this time to get on with his long-nurtured plan to set up his own laboratories, and he was impatient with the administrative duties, the conferences and the ten-part aspects of his graduate-school job. Offers of fat consulting contracts began coming his way, and it was frustrating to Sarbacher when he found time to accept only a few of them. The contracts he did accept involved complex electronic problems that genuinely interested him. When a request for scientific help on some purely gadgeteering problem came in, Sarbacher would either dismiss it or would give a curbstone opinion without charging a fee.

For instance, at a party one evening he met an official of a large soft-drink corporation. The official remarked that his laboratory men had been trying unsuccessfully for a year to develop a practical method of bottling a straw along with the beverage, so that, when the bottle cap was lifted, the straw would pop up, ready for the consumer's lips. Would Sarbacher like to take on the contract? Instead, Sarbacher gave a minute's thought to the problem and suggested that the laboratory men try tipping the straw with a certain tasteless, harmless, magnetic plastic element, which he named. When an electromagnet is used underneath the bottle during the capping process, the combination does the trick. The company hasn't marketed the pop-up straw yet, but the official was delighted with the free information. Sarbacher's philosophy, which he insists has paid off many times, is that if he is generous with easy ideas and does not try to squeeze every dollar out of a situation, companies will remember him when they have truly difficult research problems.

Sarbacher's decision to establish his laboratories in Washington was based on three factors: first, the nearness to the National Bureau of Standards, which offers unequalled facilities for testing the accuracy of the delicately balanced instruments that are used in electronic research; second, the availability of the incomparable scientific files of the Library of Congress for research purposes, and, third, the handiness to headquarters of the Army,

Navy and Air Force, which are his biggest customers.

Sarbacher's organization is one of the few privately controlled organizations in the country equipped to carry out electronic research on the scale it undertakes. The corporation is capitalized at \$250,000 and Sarbacher holds more than 80 per cent of the common stock.

As a home for National Scientific Laboratories, Sarbacher leased a spacious old brownstone-and-brick mansion on Massachusetts Avenue, not far from the beginning of Embassy Row. Laboratories, drafting rooms, chemistry and glass-blowing sanctums, and metal- and wood-working shops have been set up in former bedrooms, sitting rooms and pantries. Most spectacular is a chamber with an inner room, constructed at a cost of \$15,000 and consisting of two layers of copper and two

chinese. According to Sarbacher, the machine will take bills of all descriptions, count them by denominations, divide them by Federal Reserve Districts and perform all the other adding operations which banks require. For good measure, it will determine electronically what bills are so worn that they should be retired, and will set them aside after counting them. It even will detect certain types of counterfeit bills. This is one device that Sarbacher and his associates will release only under a royalties arrangement.

Most of the military projects carry security classification and cannot be discussed. These projects often involve the design and construction of instruments which have important civilian applications. One device may be described as a superaccurate, pocket-sized radar whose beams have extraordinary properties when they encounter moun-

tain. According to Sarbacher, the machine will take bills of all descriptions, count them by denominations, divide them by Federal Reserve Districts and perform all the other adding operations which banks require. For good measure, it will determine electronically what bills are so worn that they should be retired, and will set them aside after counting them. It even will detect certain types of counterfeit bills. This is one device that Sarbacher and his associates will release only under a royalties arrangement.

Even so, extensive tests were needed to determine which approach was best. Since testing it would interfere with the city's normal television channels, the experiments had to be conducted on a lonely highway outside Washington at two o'clock in the morning. Sarbacher often wonders what would have happened if a group of suspicious policemen or deputy sheriffs had come across his men working on the highway with a mysterious black box. Now, to provide a place where such experiments may be conducted in privacy, he has set up a subsidiary laboratory at a small airfield near Washington.

Sarbacher's greatest impatience today is directed at the school of thought which holds that, in view of the destructive potential of atomic energy, science has gone too far.

"Rubbish!" he says. "They could have said the same thing when man discovered fire. In the beginning, fire, too, was a great menace and a great destroyer before we learned how to harness and control it. The splitting of the atom eventually will produce great good for man."

He thinks a great deal about the world of mass and energy in which we live. This, he says, is "a world in which invisible particles of electric energy constantly streaking through space at speeds of over a hundred thousand miles per second, are creating, within their atomic orbits, everything we touch and see, including man." He speculates on the further unmasking of the hidden secrets of nature and on the harnessing of the atomic nucleus.

"This is the field to which I would like to make some contribution," Sarbacher says. "Gadgeteering is all right in its way. We could make you a bed that would be heated by radar beams—though you'd have to substitute plastics for all metals, including the springs in your teeth, as the metal would get awfully hot. We could fix up windows that would open and shut for you when you addressed them by name. We could make you a bed with an electronic mattress that would both keep you warm and massage you as you slept."

"But I'm not particularly interested in these things. The back-carussing mattress, the straw that pops up when you open the soft-drink bottle, hold little fascination for me. I happen to think that we are on the threshold of a whole new world in which we shall gain a revolutionary concept about the structure of matter and a means of applying this concept. I think that scientific research is the answer to every material problem now facing us. I think that the new knowledge we are certain to gain is capable of curing our economic ills. It is capable of producing our food for us by synthesis, thus conquering famine; it will eliminate, in time, the diseases before which mankind now seems so helpless."

"So, when anyone complains that science has gone too far and that, if we're not careful, we'll all push-button ourselves out of jobs, I repeat, rubbish. Neither the United States nor any other progressive country is going to remain a nation of candlemakers or buggy-whip manufacturers. There is no limit to the expanding frontiers of science."

THE END



"... I says to her and she says to me and I says to her and she says to..."

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

of steel. It is a "screen room" in which hypersensitive electronic instruments can be tested without interference from any stray rays.

Sarbacher, now divorced, gave up his own apartment so he could live in the laboratory while it was being organized. When a project is under way he will work until three or four o'clock in the morning, and then fall into bed in his third-floor room. His staff has a tacit conspiracy to let him sleep late. However, he is usually up early, breakfasting on milk and packaged cereals, which he keeps in a refrigerator along with certain perishable chemicals, and is ready for the morning's work.

Sarbacher's laboratories took on a considerable number of contracts immediately after organizing. Deadlines on some of the projects were so pressing that there was not time enough to paint and plaster the walls in several of the workrooms. Projects now are being carried out for the armed services, the Civil Aeronautics Administration and private industrial concerns.

In the last-named field, the laboratory is undertaking the development of a weird electronic currency-sorting ma-

chine. According to Sarbacher, the machine will take bills of all descriptions, count them by denominations, divide them by Federal Reserve Districts and perform all the other adding operations which banks require. For good measure, it will determine electronically what bills are so worn that they should be retired, and will set them aside after counting them. It even will detect certain types of counterfeit bills. This is one device that Sarbacher and his associates will release only under a royalties arrangement.

One of the imagination-staggering problems the laboratory had to solve in developing a special instrument was the question of "making time stand almost still." Sarbacher and his engineers are seeking to perform a certain operation—and measure it—in a time interval of ten-billionths of a second. At this rate, the electromagnetic waves with which they are working, traveling at the speed of light, move only approximately ten feet. "I think it safe to say," Sarbacher declares, "that we already have worked with time intervals in which very few, if any, practical experiments previously had been conducted. We now are trying to move up to the one-ten-billionth-of-a-second interval."

When Sarbacher took on a certain Army contract, the specifications seemed feasible, though another company had been stalled for a year on the project. Then further changes in requirements made the problem more difficult. There was a necessity for completing it in an extremely short period of time, despite

SARBACHER'S UFO ALLEGATIONS QUESTIONED

by T. Scott Crain, Jr.

A frustrating problem in solving the UFO mystery is that nobody has produced a flying saucer for scientific study, which is not to say a UFO has not fallen into government hands. In fact, it was admitted by Dr. Robert I. Sarbacher, an American scientist who worked for the U. S. Defense Department, that a crashed alien craft and its occupants has been in the possession of the American authorities since the late 1940s. But is it true?

Sarbacher's alleged knowledge of UFO retrievals became apparent on September 15, 1950, during a meeting to discuss matters of national defense at his Washington office with a group of Canadian government scientists and engineers. Dr. Sarbacher, an American physicist, was at the time, speaking in his capacity as a science consultant for the U. S. Defense Department's Research & Development Board, headed by Vannevar Bush. Sarbacher served on the Guided Missile Committee. The content of the meeting was penned in a memo by Canadian Scientist Wilbert B. Smith. What follows is a transcript of that meeting.

Sept 15, 1950 — Notes on [an] interview through L/C. Bremner with Dr. Robert I. Sarbacher.

WBS I am doing some work on the collapse of the earth's magnetic field as a source of energy, and I think our work may have a bearing on the flying saucers.

RIS What do you want to know?

WBS I have read Scully's book on the saucers, and I would like to know how much of it is true.

RIS The facts reported in the book are substantially correct.

WBS Then the saucers exist?

RIS Yes, they exist.

WBS Do they operate as Scully suggests—on magnetic principles?

RIS We have not been able to duplicate their performance.

WBS So they come from some other planet?

RIS All we know is, we didn't make them, and it's pretty certain they didn't originate on the earth.

WBS I understand the whole subject of saucers is classified.

RIS Yes, it is classified two points higher than the H-bomb. In fact, it is the most highly classified subject in the U.S. Government at the present time.

WBS May I ask the reason for the classification?

RIS You may ask, but I can't tell you.

WBS Is there any way in which I can get some information, particularly as it might fit in with our own work?

RIS I suppose you could be cleared through your own Defense Department, and I am pretty sure arrangements could be made to exchange information. If you have anything to contribute, we would be glad to talk it over, but I can't give you any more at the present time.

Note: The above is written out from memory following the interview. I have tried to keep it as nearly verbatim as possible [WBS].

UNBELIEVABLE ALLEGATIONS

These are, to say the least, startling remarks made by a prominent scientist working for the upper echelons of the government. Sarbacher implies that UFOs (flying saucers) are probably extraterrestrial, that scientists are working on how they fly, and that the whole project is as secret as it gets. If the project is classified two points (whatever that is) higher than the H-bomb, why is Sarbacher openly discussing these activities with our Canadian counterparts? If Sarbacher did have access to information of the magnitude he describes, did he not have to sign a security agreement about divulging such high level classified information?

Smith's attempts to find out more details about Sarbacher's remarks were, for the most part, unsuccessful. However, three months later, Smith was put in charge of a short-lived UFO investigation, Project Magnet, under the auspices of the Department of Transport, for the Canadian Government. Smith died in 1961, and eventually many of Smith's personal papers came into the possession of Authur Bray, a Canadian researcher. Bray mentioned Smith's memo during his lecture at the 1982 Mutual UFO Network symposium which caught the attention of another researcher,

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is co-author
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Cameron of
UFOs, MJ-12
and the
Government,
available from
MUFON for
\$19 plus
\$1.50 s/h.

"About the only thing I remember at this time is that certain materials reported to have come from flying saucer crashes were extremely light and very tough. I am sure our laboratories analyzed them very closely."

Stanton T. Friedman, who contacted Sarbacher.

A review of the contact is best described by Jerome Clark, editor of the *International UFO Reporter*, in his authoritative book, *UFOs in the 1980s: The UFO Encyclopedia*, Volume I. Clark writes:

"When he spoke with him over the phone, Friedman learned immediately that Sarbacher had *not* been. Bray to the contrary, "deeply involved in UFO research for the U.S. government." He did confirm the essentials of the Smith account but said his knowledge of the UFO project was based only on what he had heard from other scientists who were involved. At one point, he said, he had been invited to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base to hear a presentation by scientists and military men who were studying UFO remains, but other pressing business had kept him from attending. Sarbacher said his colleagues had told of wreckage and bodies, but with the passage of years his memory had grown hazy about the specifics. He said he did not know why the matter had been covered up all these years."

Friedman met Sarbacher in early 1983, but little more was learned that had not already been discussed on the phone. Friedman mentioned his conversation with Sarbacher to a colleague of his, UFO writer William L. Moore, who later relayed the details to UFO enthusiast William S. Steinman. Steinman wrote Sarbacher several letters, and finally received a response from Sarbacher, dated November 29, 1983. The contents were quite revealing. Sarbacher writes:

I am sorry I have taken so long in answering your letters. However, I have moved my office and have had to make a number of extended trips.

To answer your last question in your letter of October 14, 1983, there is no particular reason I feel I shouldn't or couldn't answer any or all of your questions. I am delighted to answer all of them to the best of my ability.

You listed some of your questions in your letter of September 12th. I will attempt to answer them as you had listed them.

1. Relating to my own experience regarding recovered flying saucers, I had no association with any of the people involved in the recovery and have no knowledge re-

garding the dates of the recoveries. If I had I would send it to you.

2. Regarding verification that persons you list were involved, I can only say this: John von Neuman was definitely involved. Dr. Vannever Bush was definitely involved, and I think Dr. Robert Oppenheimer also.

My association with the Research and Development Board under Doctor Compton during the Eisenhower administration was rather limited so that although I had been invited to participate in several discussions associated with the reported recoveries, I could not personally attend the meetings. I am sure that they would have asked Dr. von Braun, and the others that you listed were probably asked and may or may not have attended. This is all I know for sure.

3. I did receive some official reports when I was in my office at the Pentagon but all of these were left there as at the time we were never supposed to take them out of the office.

4. I do not recall receiving any photographs such as you request so I am not in a position to answer.

5. I have to make the same reply as on No. 4.

I recall the interview with Dr. Brenner of the Canadian Embassy. I think the answers I gave him were the ones you listed. Naturally, I was more familiar with the subject matter under discussion, at that time. Actually, I would have been able to give more specific answers had I attended the meetings concerning the subject. You must understand that I took this assignment as a private contribution. We were called "dollar-a-year men." My first responsibility was the maintenance of my own business activity so that my participation was limited.

About the only thing I remember at this time is that certain materials reported to have come from flying saucer crashes were extremely light and very tough. I am sure our laboratories analyzed them very carefully.

There were reports that instruments or people operating these machines were also of very light weight, sufficient to withstand the tremendous deceleration and acceleration associated with their machinery. I remember in talking with some of the people at the office that I got the impression these "aliens" were constructed like certain insects we have observed on earth, wherein because of the low mass the inertial forces

involved in operation of these instruments would be quite low.

I still do not know why the high order of classification has been given and why the denial of the existence of these devices.

I am sorry it has taken me so long to reply but I suggest you get in touch with the others who may be directly involved in this program. [End quote]

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Even skeptics would agree that Dr. Sarbacher's background is exceptional. In our book, *UFOs, MJ-12 & The Government*, Canadian UFO researcher Grant Cameron and I reported on some of Sarbacher's past accomplishments.

Dr. Sarbacher's credentials are impressive: he was a graduate of the University of Florida (B.S., 1933), Princeton University (M.S., 1934), Harvard University (Sc.D., 1939). He served as a Harvard instructor in physics and communications engineering (1936-40) and was a professor of electrical engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology (1940-42). Sarbacher was a professor at Harvard in 1941, a wartime science consultant for the U.S. Navy from 1942-45, and dean of the graduate school of the Georgia Institute of Technology from 1945-49. He was an inventor and helped author such technical works as *Hyper and Ultra-High Frequency Engineering* (1944). In the 1980s he was President of the Washington Institute of Technology.

Sarbacher's job on the R & D Board would definitely put him in a position to have access to sensitive high-level information, and may have been privy to details about UFO retrievals, if they existed. All of those who contacted Sarbacher, including William Steinman, author of *UFO Crash At Aztec*, Jerome Clark, who interviewed Sarbacher for an *OMNI* article, Bruce Maccabee, of the Fund for UFO Research and Barry Greenwood, for an article in *Just Cause*, a UFO newsletter, were impressed with Sarbacher's seeming sincerity, and his willingness to answer questions as best he could. His story is fairly consistent with these UFO researchers who interviewed him, and sounds like the truth as he may have understood it.

CREDIBILITY QUESTIONS

The story sounds so credible on the surface, most UFO researchers assume Robert Sarbacher's testimony is valid, even though

there is no corroboration for it. But there are problems in the story that go deeper than no confirmation.

According to an article in the September 1985 issue of *Just Cause*, editor Barry Greenwood explained that Sarbacher became involved with the UFO evidence due to his connection with the Research and Development Board. Greenwood writes:

"Sarbacher's role with the R&DB was as Chairman of the Guidance and Control Panel of the Guided Missile Committee of the R&DB."

"The R&DB meetings were not necessarily UFO meetings per se but were part of their regular schedule and UFOs came up among other subjects under discussion. Sarbacher told me that since he did not attend the meetings, he had only heard snippets of stories which others more closely involved in the meetings had heard. This included the information in his 11/29/83 letter to Steinman. The crash/retrieval data originally came from Wright Field, as Sarbacher recalls."

A contrasting version of the R & D Board meetings comes from Fred A. Darwin, who was the Executive Director of the Guided Missile Committee for the R & D Board from 1949-54. Darwin was a good friend of Sarbacher's. He met him while at Harvard University where he, William Edson and Sarbacher studied a lot together. In a letter to me in August, 1988, Darwin writes:

"I wish that I could give you news more likely to be welcome: The RDB took a rather dim view of UFO's. Not that UFO's do not exist; they have existed, probably since the beginning of time. Vehicles from outer space are, however, another proposition."

The Public Affairs Division of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base also takes a dim view of Sarbacher's assertion that the crash/retrieval data originated from their location. In a fact sheet, dated January 1985, it states:

"Periodically, it is erroneously stated that the remains of extraterrestrial visitors are or have been stored at Wright-Patterson AFB. There are not now, nor ever have been, any extraterrestrial visitors or equipment on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base."

Sarbacher's job on the R & D Board would definitely put him in a position to have access to sensitive high-level information, and he may have been privy to details about UFO retrievals, if they existed.

Strieber said that Sarbacher indicated the analysis of the debris was helpful in making seamless coatings that would cover "radar-proof aircraft which eventually evolved into the Stealth."

SARBACHER & THE MISSILE COMMITTEE

Just how involved was Dr. Sarbacher on the Missile Committee? First let's examine Sarbacher's recollection of those days on the R&D Board. In a telephone interview with Stan Friedman, Sarbacher states:

S: And ah, Fred came to me and asked me if I would help him on the guidance and control.

F: I see.

S: For the missiles?

F: Ya he was chairman for that subcommittee.

S: Ya that's right.

F: Or went on to be anyway.

S: That's right and I came down and I was in that, and worked on it, for a long time and I guess it was over a year, maybe a couple of years, I don't know, I don't remember. But I know it was during that time we had an office there that we all went to. You know.

F: The Research and Development Board?

S: Ya the Research and Development Board. It was sorta like a little cabinet post.

F: OK so the guys there told you about the UFO's?

S: Ya it was among those fellows in conversation.

F: Remember any of those guys?

S: Not a one. Not a one. Fred would know them all. I should think that somewhere among his files he would have a list of all the men that worked there.

F: Oh ya. He did. As a matter of fact he had names at his fingertips so to speak.

S: Ya I know, Fred was right in the middle of it.

Sarbacher stated he worked on the R&D Board for a long time, perhaps a year or two. However, Darwin provided me with a different perspective of Sarbacher's participation on the Missile Committee. Darwin writes:

"Bob Sarbacher (originally known as Irving) had virtually no connection with the activities of the Research and Development Board. (More's the pity.) I got Bob appointed to membership on the Guidance and Control Panel. After a couple of months, the Chairman requested his replacement; he never came to the meetings. Bob had talents that could have been valuable."

OTHER SCIENTISTS INVOLVED?

In Sarbacher's 1983 letter to William Steinman, he writes that those having

knowledge of UFO retrievals and who were "definitely involved" were John von Neuman and Vannevar Bush, "and I think Dr. Robert Oppenheimer also." Again, I questioned Darwin about some of the names Sarbacher offered along with a few others, and he responded:

"Of the people listed on page 2 of your letter, I knew pretty well Johnny von Neuman, Wernher von Braun, Robert Oppenheimer, Vannevar Bush, Detlev Bronk, and Lloyd Berkner. None of those was ever convinced that vehicles from outer space even existed."

One would think that the Director of the Missile Committee would have had some knowledge of a UFO retrieval or a meeting about crash hardware and aliens at Wright-Patterson AFB if it happened as Sarbacher claims. Darwin makes no mention in his letter to me that any such discussions took place.

Another source I contacted who knew Sarbacher well, and was in close contact with him from 1935 to 1950, recalled having no conversations with him about UFO research. He described Bob as "brilliant" and "charming," but doubted whether some of the statements Sarbacher makes are entirely truthful.

Sarbacher told Friedman he had a problem remembering the names of those men serving on the R&D Board. For the record, the United States Government Organization Manual 1951-52 indicates the following list of names serving as the R&D Board members during this period: Chairman, William Webster; Deputy Chairman, James A. Perkins; Army members Archibald S. Alexander and Major General Ward S. Maris; Navy members Dan A. Kimball and Rear Admiral M. E. Curtis; and Air Force members John A. McCone and Major General Gordon P. Seville. Dr. Eric A. Walker served as Executive Secretary. The R&D Board was established by the National Security Act of 1947, and was set up to advise the Secretary of Defense on trends of scientific research affecting national security, and to promote research and development among the services involving security-type scientific problems.

STRIEBER'S TALE

Earlier versions of Sarbacher's story were fairly consistent. But in 1986, shortly before he died, it is alleged his story became more elaborate and detailed. According to

science fiction writer Whitley Strieber in his 1995 book *Breakthrough*, Sarbacher told him on the phone the UFO debris had some unusual properties. "That fabric we obtained at Roswell had molecular welds so small you couldn't even identify what they were until the sixties, when the microscopes to do it became available." Strieber said that Sarbacher indicated the analysis of the debris was helpful in making seamless coatings that would cover "radar-proof aircraft, which eventually evolved into the Stealth." Strieber said he asked Sarbacher if he had seen the material and he reportedly replied that he had not only seen it, but examined and studied it. Asked if the material was of a non-human origin, Strieber said he answered, "What I can be certain about is that it was not produced by any technology that we were aware of in 1947. Or now."

In all fairness, Sarbacher was getting up in age, and perhaps his memory was not what it used to be. Strieber's account is also suspect, because it seems to contradict one of his earlier books, *Communion*, where he indicates he only learned of Steinman's letter after Sarbacher's death, and "...was unable to interview him ..." I wrote to Strieber on April 13, 1997, for clarification, and in mid-May he sent me a two-page form letter explaining, "I wish that I could reply to each of you individually, but the volume of mail prevents me from doing this."

CORSO'S TALE

Support for Sarbacher's claims have recently been reported in the 1997 book, *The Day After Roswell*, by Col. Philip J. Corso (ret.). Corso, who served as the Chief of the Army's Foreign Technology Division in 1961, says Sarbacher was a valuable player, was in close touch with the U.S. Government's UFO working group, and was instrumental in helping General Nathan F. Twining decide to move the Roswell crash saucer debris to Wright-Field for a preliminary examination.

Although this all sounds very interesting, there was no evidence that I could see to support these points. Corso could very well say Sarbacher was involved based on Sarbacher's own remarks regarding his involvement, and created a story using Sarbacher based on previous research already found in the literature.

Corso also reported in his book that alien artifacts that have been recovered have been reverse engineered by earthly scientists, re-

sulting in the development of lasers, fiber optics, integrated circuit chips and super tenacity fibers by some of the nation's largest companies. The companies have publicly admitted on nationwide television they have no knowledge of this, but Corso says it was meant to be that way. It all sounds a little too easy, and until Corso coughs up supporting documents and detailed notes supporting his claims, these allegations cannot be taken seriously.

CONCLUSIONS

All the allegations Sarbacher reported could still be true, but there are inconsistencies as well as Darwin's remarks that cast a shadow of doubt over Sarbacher's testimony. I discussed some of these discrepancies with an associate, Grant Cameron, who suggested that Darwin could have been left out of the loop, and that Sarbacher was asked to attend UFO meetings because of his technical expertise. The alleged group asked to attend meetings at Wright-Patterson AFB may have been on a need to know basis, and Darwin didn't need to know. When researcher Bruce Maccabee interviewed Sarbacher on August 5, 1985, Sarbacher explained it "... as something I should have done but didn't do. I had had a request to visit a site...(either the site was Wright Field or the request came from there) ... regarding a fallen... UFO and at that time could not go...tied up with personal business." He went on to tell Maccabee that, "Some of the men went. I went to the office some time after they got back and talked to some of the guys who saw it. I wish I could have gone."

Looking at this situation another way, one could say Sarbacher simply overheard some of the guys talking around the water cooler about alleged UFO crashes and bodies that were discussed at the meeting, maybe even the situation at Roswell came up, and Sarbacher began to fill in the blanks. Sarbacher openly admitted he had no first-hand knowledge of the UFO crashes, did not attend the R&D meetings where they may have been discussed, and according to Darwin, didn't show up at too many Missile Committee meetings either. It seems very odd that Sarbacher would pass up an opportunity to attend an event this extraordinary because of personal business.

Dr. Sarbacher did identify to researcher William Steinman a member of the R&D Board who he said attended all the UFO

Sarbacher openly admitted he had no firsthand knowledge of the UFO crashes, did not attend the R & D Board meetings where they may have been discussed . . . and didn't show up at too many Missile Committee meetings either.

**Reading of
Kent Jeffrey's
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Robert Mac-
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culpa after he
sent 58,000
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to state last
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mistake!**

meetings. His name is Dr. Eric A. Walker, who served as Executive Secretary of the R&D Board between 1950-51, and later became President of the Pennsylvania State University. Cameron and I investigated Walker for several years, but we could never get Walker to admit to us that he participated in UFO retrieval discussions while at the R&D Board. However, Steinman claims he had a telephone interview with Walker in which he admitted attending UFO meetings at Wright-Patterson AFB and was familiar with a group known as "MJ-12," an alleged group of military and government officials brought together under President Truman to oversee UFO recovery operations. Since that interview with Steinman on August 30, 1987, in all follow-up interviews with us and others, Walker has proved elusive in answering direct questions about UFO retrievals. Walker died on February 17, 1995.

RUMORS TO THE END

Dr. Sarbacher died on July 26, 1986, in West Palm Beach, Florida. Hints of a conspiracy concerning Dr. Sarbacher's death appeared on the internet. One notebook file SX112 dated September 21, 1996 reported... "Why did Dr. Sarbacher 'drown in a boating accident' only TWO DAYS after his third interview in 1983 or so in which he really began naming more names and talking more?"

The source of that comment originated with writer Whitley Strieber. In his book, *Breakthrough*, Strieber indicated after having a telephone conversation with Sarbacher in 1986, he forwarded a letter to him via United Parcel Service outlining some experiences he had had. Strieber writes, "I didn't hear anything for a while, then received a telephone call from UPS. They could not deliver because the recipient was deceased. The UPS driver had been told that he had fallen off his boat and drowned." An Alexa Cameron questioned Strieber by E-Mail about the admission, and he replied on September 22, 1996. Strieber repeated the UPS story he said he was told, and wrote, "I never researched this any further. The fact is that he died at a very inopportune time for me, and that was where my interest in the matter ended."

If Strieber had followed up, he would have discovered that Sarbacher died of heart failure according to the newspaper account

appearing in the July 29, 1986 issue of *The Palm Beach Post*.

There was no boating accident. Sarbacher was 79 years old.

Sarbacher leaves behind an extraordinary file of possible government involvement and cover-up of a retrieved UFO and its pilots. But lacking corroborating evidence to support these claims, it remains one of many reports that remains unverified.

MUFON FORUM Letters to Mufon UFO Journal

DISGRUNTLED

Speaking as a MUFON Consultant and a Psychotherapist-Hypnotherapist with many years of research and work with abductees, I do not believe that *my Journal* should be used to debunk the UFO phenomenon generally nor the Roswell crash specifically. I was astounded and irate that the editor would give Kent Jeffrey fifteen pages out of a total of eighteen pages to expound his negative views about the Roswell incident. Whether he has been co-opted or he has simply had a change of heart is not relevant. This is not the first time you have given over *my journal* to debunkers, but if it is not the last, you no longer represent my thinking and have no further need of my membership dues or my services.

Reading of Kent Jeffrey's conversion is reminiscent of Robert MacNamara's mea culpa after he sent 58,000 Americans to their deaths in VietNam, only to state last year that he had made a mistake!

Moreover, Jeffrey's apology is replete with contradictions. To begin with, he uses the film *Roswell* as an example of exaggerated statements. No one familiar with the Roswell affair believed the film was anything other than a popularized and fictionalized version of events. Jeffrey is disingenuous when he cites the film as a factual explanation of events in New Mexico in 1947, and then proceeds to point out its exaggerations and shortcomings.

When he writes of the discredited MUFON Board Member and author, once again he sets up a straw man in order to destroy him.

He embarks on pseudo-philosophical musings concerning the relationship of advanced technology to reliability, using modern airliners as his medium. Modern airliners are wondrous examples of 1990s state of the