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BLUE BOOK

Episode 101

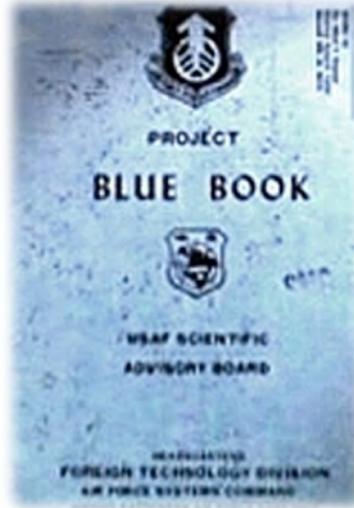
"The Red Diamond"

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PRE-PRODUCTION DRAFT
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In 1951, under increased pressure from the public, the U.S. Air Force (USAF) launched what would be its final inquiry into "flying discs" and "unknown aerial phenomena": Project Blue Book.



Coining the term 'UFO', Blue Book was officially created to:

1. Determine if UFOs posed a threat to National Security.
2. To scientifically analyze genuine UFO-related data.

The USAF enlisted the help of Ohio State Physics and Astronomy professor, **Dr. J. Allen Hynek**, an ardent skeptic of UFO events.

From 1951-1969, Hynek investigated thousands of cases for Blue Book as its Chief Scientific Advisor. While most were proven as misidentifications, a small percentage remained unexplained.

Still, by its end, the USAF deemed UFOs to be "nothing anomalous". Except for Hynek himself, who had become utterly transformed...

He came to suspect Blue Book was an elaborate disinformation campaign, used to confuse and control public perception of UFOs. Hynek, in fact, switched sides, from skeptic to avid believer.



This series is inspired by the true events of this mysterious era in American history. A time when many believe, the darkest conspiracy ever known began, and continues on to this day.

Many of the characters, affairs, and cases that follow are real.

TEASER

EXT. WEST VIRGINIA WOODS - DUSK

A rain puddle reflects the rising evening moon. Celestial, serene -- until fast moving SHOES splash it away REVEALING--

Siblings WILL (8), baggy overalls, and LILY (11), wearing a farmer's hat as they trample through. Their husky mother KATHLEEN lags behind with their bloodhound DALLAS.

WILL

It went down just beyond that creek, mama. You wouldn't believe it! It went weeoosh! Then kabussh!

Kathleen stops, wipes her brow, looking ahead.

KATHLEEN

Well that's Fisher's farm ahead, and ain't no way is we trespassin'.
(turns to go)
C'mon. I need to put supper on and you got chores to do. That's enough of this nonsense--

Lily steps in front of her mother.

LILY

Ma, Will's not makin' this one up. It fell right out of the sky.

LATER -- Our trio climbs a steep ridge as:

KATHLEEN

I swear, if either you grasshoppers are pullin' my leg again, you'll be sleepin' with the cows tonight...

Dallas has stopped atop the hill ahead of them, growling.

WILL

What is it, boy?

As the trio reaches THE HILLTOP:

KATHLEEN

...God Almighty.

DOWN IN THE RAVINE

Treetops afire like they just crossed into Hades. A pungent mist fills the vast chasm, burning their eyes and throats.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Cover your mouths!

That's when Dallas darts down into the smoke.

WILL

Dallas, no!

Will moves to stop him but trips on a root. Trees SNAP and buckle as he rolls head first into the ravine.

KATHLEEN

WILLIAM!

Panicked, Kathleen races DOWN THE HILL into the inferno, Lily right behind as ash rains down. They finally find Will at the bottom, dazed, blood mixed with soot on his face.

KATHLEEN

You all right? WILL?!... Lily, help me get him outa here.

WILL

(pointing)

There's something... Out there.

Suddenly WOOSH! Dallas darts past them. All three turn as the mist clears from where he came. Then their faces slowly GLOW A DEEP RED. Off their crimson horror, we SLAM TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT/ULINE ARENA - NIGHT

Two bright headlights burn towards us like unfeeling electric eyes before the car (a 1951 Chrysler Crown Imperial) stops.

GENERAL NATHAN TWINING (40's), a military man so old school he probably graduated twice, steps out, looks toward

THE ULINE ARENA

A sea of FANS are heading toward the building where a distant crowd ROARS.

INT. ULINE ARENA - NIGHT

Basketball game in progress. Twining glides past CHEERING FANS. Sign reads: "1st Game of the '51 Season. Go Capitals!".

Finding his row near court-side, Twining slides in next to an overly handsome sage of a man with slick white hair and mustache: USAF General HOYT VANDENBERG (60's).

TWINING

Your office said it was urgent. And they lied to me because--

VANDENBERG

(gesturing to a player)
See number eighteen out there?
That's Charles Felton. 4 years ago, before the playoffs against St. Louis, he ripped his left shoe, had to pin it closed. Scored forty-one that night. Now before every game, he still pins that left shoe, in hopes of repeating greatness.

The two watch FELTON on the bench. Sure enough, he pulls out a pin and fastens it to his left sneaker. Twining scoffs.

TWINING

Superstition should be a 4-letter word.

VANDENBERG

No, it's our penchant *for* myth that'll save us now--

TWINING

Only if they believe that it *is* a myth. We've had this argument...
'The hell are we doing here?

Vandenberg hands Twining what looks like a SCREW. Twining looks up -- *what is this?* Vandenberg motions to look closer. Twining does, realizes it's not at all what it seems.

CLOSE ON THE SCREW as he twists the head and it comes off. The inside is hollowed out like a tiny, metal tube.

VANDENBERG

Treasury office this time. Russians were funneling out intel written on tiny slips hidden in those.

TWINING

They got into our *Treasury*?

VANDENBERG

Can't trust anywhere anymore. Or anyone.

A look between them. Twining gets it.

TWINING

Meet in a loud public space where
it's not possible to record this
conversation.

(off Vandenberg)

You think I'd have a tail and not
smell it? I have M-J clearance--

VANDENBERG

Which is precisely why you're here.
The Situation is--

TWINING

I know what the god-damned
Situation is! What are we doing
about it now is the question.

VANDENBERG

The Panel convened. Your
initiative, General, is approved.

And for the first time Twining looks genuinely surprised.

TWINING

What changed their mind?

VANDENBERG

There's been another event, in West
Virginia. Whole forest nearly
burned to the ground. Media's gone
frantic. It's out of control.

(leans over to Twining)

This project, this Blue Book?
Better do just what you say it will
this time. 'Cause make no mistake,
Nathan, the success or failure of
our efforts impacts every man,
woman, and child on the planet now.

CROWD ROARS as another basket goes in. Twining sees it was
Felton who made the bucket. He stands, scanning the raucous
CROWD with his eyes alit now.

TWINING

Rest assured, General. They're all
in good hands now.

As he moves off, we SNAP TO BLACK -- A MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE
BEGINS: A COLLAGE of EERIE MUSIC, UFO photos, snapshots of
1950s AMERICA, blacked-out documents, archival footage,
headlines and audio placing "Project Blue Book" and "Allen
Hynek" in UFO History before it BLURS then CRESCENDOS to
BLACK...

ACT ONEINT. BATHROOM/HYNEK HOME - MORNING

DR. ALLEN HYNEK (40s), plastic-rimmed glasses, sits fully dressed (with pants buckled) on the john scouring a HORSE-RACING BOOKLET, jotting complex formulas in the margins.

Hynek's a handsome man, but someone whose gears always seem to be turning. If you asked him, he'd say it's because life is something you need to calculate. Luckily, he knows how to do the math. There's a KNOCK on the door.

MIMI (O.S.)

Hon? Scrambled or sunnyside?

Hynek starts to furiously erase his math.

MIMI (CONT'D)

Hon?

HYNEK

...Scrambled, thank you.

MIMI

Did you talk to him?

Hynek looks up, suddenly remembers.

HYNEK

Not yet. You gotta give me a minute, Mim.

Hynek waits until he hears her move off, then finishes his calculation. Satisfied, he folds his booklet, stashes it in his back pocket, stands and flushes. Out of habit, he moves to wash his hands and catches sight of his reflection in the mirrored medicine cabinet. Only he doesn't seem to be looking at himself, more like looking *through* the mirror. As if he senses something... He opens the cabinet and pulls out a PILL BOTTLE OF DEXAMYL labeled "Mimi Hynek". As he studies the pills inside closely, suddenly concerned, we PRE-LAP:

JOEL (O.S.)

Foolish earthlings. You dare battle the great Klatu!

INT. JOEL'S BEDROOM/HYNEK HOME - MORNING

CAMERA TRACKS past a 'Tales of Tomorrow' poster hanging in a cluttered kid's room... Then a Silly Puddy box-kit, an "Atomic Energy Lab" playset...

JOEL (O.S.)
Now your city is covered in space
slime! HA! HA! HA!

We continue to MOVE PAST some "Superman" comics then a half-glued train set before finding JOEL HYNEK (11), at his desk marching a SILVER ROBOT TOY from "The Day the Earth Stood Still" across a sea of tiny Lego people.

JOEL (CONT'D)
(high pitched)
Help! My legs! It's crushing us!
(deeper voice)
Ha-ha, no one can save you now!

Joel suddenly stops when he sees his dad in the doorway.

HYNEK
Hey, bud.

JOEL
...I was just about to get dressed.

Hynek steps inside, taking in the space, the posters...

HYNEK
Mom tell you she saw Miss Adams
last night?
(off Joel)
You chose Flash Gordon as your
personal hero for your report. I
thought we picked Edison.

JOEL
...You picked Edison.

HYNEK
Greatest inventor of our day,
right? A man of science? Changed
the world.

Joel shrugs. Maybe.

HYNEK (CONT'D)
Alright, well, Flash Gordon isn't a
real hero. And it's not appropriate
for school work.

JOEL
Do you even know who Flash Gordon
is?

HYNEK
Sure. He runs fast.

JOEL

That's *The Flash*, dad. Here...

Joel picks up a comic and walks it over, flipping through, full of genuine enthusiasm.

JOEL (CONT'D)

See, Flash Gordon is trapped on a far away planet forced to save Princess Aura from the evil Ming. And he's outnumbered like a hundred to one! If that isn't a hero...

HYNEK

Oh, so he lives in deep space?

Hynek takes the comic, studies it.

HYNEK

I don't see an oxygen mask. How's he breathe?

(back to comic)

And this planet is ice-cold, but he's wearing tights? How's he not freeze? Joel, it makes no sense.

Joel looks at his dad -- *he just doesn't get it.*

HYNEK

He's still a comic book character. Which makes it science fiction, not real science. Which was part of the assignment.

JOEL

But real science is boring.

Hynek considers him for a beat, drops the comic on the bed.

HYNEK

Bottom line, if your grades don't improve, we'll have to talk about summer school. Okay?

(turns to go, stops)

Not everything you'll need to learn in life is going to be fun.

And at that, Hynek exits. Off Joel, we CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN/HYNEK HOME - DAY

SSsss. MIMI (30s), Hynek's wife, scrambles eggs in a blue polka-dot apron.

Although every bit the vision of a classic 50's housewife, her homemaker facade hides a lurking discontent. Something she doesn't always cover particularly well.

Hynek enters, heads for his chair at the table where his morning paper is waiting. Mimi drops some bread in the toaster, plates his eggs as

MIMI

How'd it go?

Hynek's attention has already been drawn to a headline.

HYNEK

(reading)

Ohio's gonna use lie detector machines so that Communists can't infiltrate state-run programs now.

MIMI

A *what* machine?

HYNEK

It measures pulse, breath, skin conductivity...

She sets his eggs down in front of him.

MIMI

They have a machine that can tell when you're *lying* now?

HYNEK

Maybe I'll buy one and strap you to it. Find out what you girls really do at book club...

He gives her a little wink and Mimi smiles.

MIMI

Honey? What did Joel say?

HYNEK

I don't think we let him have any more of those comics until his grades improve.

MIMI

Did you try sharing a bit about why you chose science like I said? Why *his* interests and yours are really not--

HYNEK

Diametrically opposed? Mim, he's not interested. I can't change that before breakfast.

KNOCK-KNOCK! The milk man, BEN (21), outside. Handsome in his service cap, he carries in a basket full of glass milk jugs.

BEN

Morning, Misses H. Think I just saw Joel's bus just up the street.

MIMI

Thank you, Ben.
(calls off)
Joel, time to go!

Ben tips his cap to Hynek who gives him a small wave and exits. Mimi puts the milk in the ice-box as Hynek quickly downs a bite of eggs and rises.

HYNEK

Better get going myself.

Mimi turns back to catch her husband before he can leave.

MIMI

Wait... I wanted to talk to you about something.
(pulls it from her apron)
I found this ad. For a typist. It's part time, but I could start right away...
(sees his face change)
To take some pressure off.

HYNEK

You're the one who's been under pressure, Mim.

She starts to protest, but--

HYNEK (CONT'D)

And have you been upping your dose? The doctor said you only need one a day... Two weeks, 14 pills. But 18 were missing. I counted.
(then)
Let's just, follow what he says.
Okay? And money's fine, Mim.

MIMI

But you said if they turn down your project--

HYNEK

You don't have to worry.

Hynek sees Joel in the doorway now. *How much did he hear?*

HYNEK (CONT'D)

Bus is here, bud. Grab some toast.

Hynek turns back, gives Mimi a peck on the cheek.

HYNEK (CONT'D)

Left you some shirts on the bed.

(back to Joel)

Have a productive day.

And Hynek's gone. Mimi looks to Joel, forces a smile. DING!
The toast pops up. Burnt. Joel moves for the door.

JOEL

I'm not hungry...

Joel exits. Mimi holds for a beat before grabbing the toast and tossing it in the trash. Then she pulls out her typist ad. As she considers tossing it as well, struggling, CUT TO:

INT. UNITED STATES AIR FORCE HANGER - DAY

CAPTAIN ED RUPPELT (29), fit and trim, paces in the massive empty hanger with a swagger that reads like a matinee idol on opening night. What isn't evident yet is the charm he uses to back it up. He stops to check his watch when -- WOOSH! The main door slowly opens, allowing a SILHOUETTE to enter. As it draws closer we see it's

TWINING

Sorry to keep you waiting.

Ruppelt salutes.

RUPPELT

I'm here are your behest, General.

Twining motions him "at ease," looks him over.

TWINING

Is that why you're here?

RUPPELT

...Sir?

TWINING

Vandenberg debriefed you in
Arlington.

(MORE)

TWINING (CONT'D)

Let's hear how the old man did.

(off Ruppelt)

Gimme the skinny on your new job,
son.

RUPPELT

Of course... Project Blue Book,
sir. To replace the now defunct
Project Sign and Grudge. The U.S.
Air Force's official investigation
into flying saucers.

TWINING

I'm sorry, flying *what*?

RUPPELT

...Isn't that what the papers are
calling them?

TWINING

The papers are full of lies. Some
Hillbilly sees a flock of birds and
suddenly headlines are being
written and the Russians think
we're a bunch of backwards fools.
Maybe even foolish enough to let
Communists infiltrate our country.
(off Ruppelt)

I've reviewed your file... Five
battle stars, two theater combat
ribbons, three Air Metals and a
Distinguished Flying Cross. You
manage pressure well. I need that.
I also need you to understand
exactly what it is we're going to
be doing here.

RUPPELT

Investigating reports of--

TWINING

We're going to show the public the
truth. These saucers? Don't. Exist.

Twining studies Ruppelt. *Does he get it?*

RUPPELT

...I completely understand.

TWINING

Well, just to make sure you do, I'm
procuring you with some help...

As Twining hands Ruppelt a dossier, we CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT/BEULAH PARK RACETRACK - MORNING

Hynek stands by his car, alone in the vacant lot. A long grim look. At last, he retrieves an ENVELOPE from his glove box.

EXT. TRACKSIDE/BEULAH PARK - LATER

ROGER PERRY (50s), a showboating race track owner slowly counts the money in the envelope as Hynek gazes out at the first turn where some TRAINERS are working with a HORSE.

ROGER PERRY

Most'a my other clients ain't so prompt. Specially when they lose. Then I gotta send my boys to accrue... can get messy.

(looks up, smiles)

But you come back any time. Luck always changes.

He turns to go. Hynek holds for a beat, then:

HYNEK

You switched the feed.

Roger stops, turns back -- *huh?*

HYNEK (CONT'D)

To a cheaper brand, lacking lysine. It's an amino acid I'd accounted for in my calculations. The weather, weight, jockey -- those were constants. You change his feed, my horse never has a chance.

ROGER PERRY

Chance?

(chuckles)

This is horse racing. Try going with your gut next time, not your head. Soon as you start trying to figure it all out, that's when you get into real trouble...

As Perry walks off, we PRE-LAP a SCHOOL BELL and SMASH TO:

INT. CLASSROOM/OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY - DAY

A lecture hall full of STRESSED STUDENTS all look up from their EXAMS to the front where Hynek has been watching them closely, no mercy.

HYNEK

Pencils down, leave your booklets
on your desk and I'll collect them.

STUDENTS grumble, start to exit en masse. As Hynek moves to collect their work, the room emptying behind him:

VOICE

Dr. Hynek?

HYNEK

(without looking)
Test time is over, I'm sorry--

VOICE

Oh, I finished early...

Hynek turns, finds a student, LISA (20), hovering behind him.

LISA

I just wanted you to know there was
a typo. Page five?

(off Hynek)

Syzygy. There's no 'i'. In case
someone got confused, or put in a
wrong answer because of it. I know
I'd hate that if it happened to me.

Hynek considers her for a beat then opens the test up, scans the page. Finds the typo. Looks back.

HYNEK

Who are you?

LISA

Lisa Mahaffey.

HYNEK

...You scored ninety-eight on the
mid-term.

LISA

(pleased he knows her)
Constellation, stellar
classification and visual magnitude
are my favorites.

(then)

And you make it fun.

That throws Hynek for a beat before:

HYNEK

Thank you. For catching the typo.
Lisa...

She smiles, nods and turns to go. Then:

HYNEK (CONT'D)

You really think I make it fun?

LISA

(the truth)

No. But you do get what's fun *about* astronomy. I mean... The stars are where we come from. You look out, you're really looking in. Right?

INT. HYNEK'S OFFICE - LATER

Cluttered with books and celestial maps. Hynek enters, drops the stack of tests on his desk and sits. He contemplates the exams for a beat before his eyes drift to his trash can. He pulls it over, digs out a crumpled piece of paper.

CLOSE ON THE PAPER

It's from the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics. Words jump out. "Sorry to inform you... No relevant need at this time... poor evidence to support your claims..."

VOICE

How you holding up?

Hynek looks up. Sees an older PROFESSOR in his doorway.

PROFESSOR

I just heard. Those grants are tough. Even the three I managed to get myself were...

(trails off, then)

You'll keep trying though.

HYNEK

(fuck you)

Can you get my door?

Professor obliges, moves off as Hynek re-crumple the paper. He's about to toss it back in the trash before he turns, opens his window and throws it out. As he slams the window shut, we CUT TO --

EXT. OBSERVATORY/OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY - DUSK

Hynek pulls to a stop, gazes out at this serene, isolated observatory tucked in the mountains.

INT. OBSERVATORY - MOMENTS LATER

Hynek enters with a box of equipment as the CAMERA admires the high-domed ceiling... the MASSIVE TELESCOPE stretching up to the heavens.

Hynek approaches it like a sculptor might a slab of marble. Sets his box down. Takes a deep breath. He's home.

A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Hynek peers in the telescopic eye-piece. Jots down numbers. Adjusts. Looks again before moving to a MASSIVE ASTRONOMY STAR MAP... A BED-SIZED GRID of dots (stars) with numbers underneath. As he focuses intently on it, the CAMERA starts to slowly PUSH IN on him, giving us the feeling we are

ENTERING HYNEK'S MIND. *Cosmic events FLICKER as 2 forming STARS, swirl, collecting dust, and begin rotating each other. It's millennia in moments UNTIL*

ELLIS (O.S.)

Time traveling again, Hynek?

Hynek turns as ELLIS HOLLY (35), Black, an eccentric, whip-smart university technician, enters with a bag of tools.

HYNEK

Ellis... I just found the most beautiful binary system. It's like two starlets in a cosmic Waltz.

Ellis walks over to take in what Hynek has mapped out.

HYNEK (CONT'D)

Proxima Centauri is an M-type red dwarf binary star, right? Much, much dimmer than the Sun. Now it's over a million miles away, but this new binary system is further, but it's luminosity is *more* intense...

Hynek trails off when he sees Ellis just staring at him.

ELLIS

You know, you could just ask me how my vacation was.

Hynek smiles, clearly these two are friends.

HYNEK

How was your vacation, Ellis?

ELLIS

It was great, thank you.

HYNEK

The Big Easy, right?

ELLIS

Five days of no kids, rum and jazz.
That's what you should be looking
into.

HYNEK

(re: telescope)

Can't beat this when you wanna look
into the past though.

ELLIS

Wanna see the future?

LATER - Ellis shows Hynek a newspaper. As we'll see, Ellis is no ordinary technician. In fact, he's a budding 1950s Steve Wozniak, or would be, if not for the color of his skin.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

So four years ago, Alan Turing wrote a theoretical chess computer program. No machine's powerful enough to run it of course, but that wasn't the point. Now in London, they've built a multi-diode display. You can't beat it at Nim.

HYNEK

The Chinese math strategy game.

Hynek reads THE STORY, sees a PHOTO of this massive machine.

ELLIS

And one day, men just like me will build even better.

HYNEK

(looks up)

Like you?

ELLIS

Decided to get my full degree.
Started night school. After *someone*
kept nagging me.

HYNEK

I'd call it *encouraging*, Ellis.

(then)

That's fantastic. Congratulations.

ELLIS

(re: paper again)

These intelligent machines, they're
the future.

HYNEK

And one day we'll carry 'em in our
pockets. They'll have TV, phone,
radio. Information all
interconnected. We'll be a
generation of digital servants...

(lost in thought)

Makes you wonder where we're
headed. How it all ends...

ELLIS

Sometimes I wish I saw things as
you do, brother. But other times,
I'm glad I don't.

(laughs, moving off)

I gotta grab some more tools from
the truck, fix that heater.

And he's gone. Hynek turns back to his telescope peers into
it and out into

THE UNIVERSE

The stars... The milky way... The infinite beyond.

Hynek pulls back, jots down numbers when he hears the large
door open behind him.

HYNEK

You wanna see something really
beautiful, Ellis? Venus is in
retrograde tonight...

Hynek turns, sees TWO FIGURES in the doorway. They slowly
move in and we notice they're wearing AIR FORCE uniforms.

AIR FORCE SECURITY

Doctor Hynek, United States Air
Force... We're going to need you to
come with us.

Off Hynek, we...

END ACT ONE

ACT TWOEXT./INT. UNITED STATES AIR FORCE JEEP - NIGHT

VROOM! A green Air Force jeep barrels down an Ohio dirt road with Hynek in the back, holding his glasses tight to his head so they don't fly off, as they enter

EXT. WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE - MOMENTS LATER

Hynek perks up when he sees the large, imposing GOVERNMENTAL BASE emerges on the horizon surrounded by high fences.

Jeep passes through security gates as we enter a vast network of runways and air hangars.

Finally, the jeep pulls up to a modest BUNGALOW and stops. DRIVER hops out and motions for Hynek to follow him over to:

INT. BLUE BOOK HEADQUARTERS/WRIGHT PATTERSON - NIGHT

Hynek is ushered into a SMALL OFFICE of fresh carpets, unopened boxes and a few empty desks. He looks around -- *where am I?* He turns to the Driver who simply points to a back room where we can hear faint giggling. Only more confused, Hynek makes his way to

A BACK OFFICE

Where Ruppelt sits on a desk, his back to the door as he tries to charm the curls out of a young SECRETARY's hair.

RUPPELT

...It was Germans. But I was hugging a tree on account of that schnitzel. So literally, a wiener saved my life!

Secretary laughs as Hynek clears his throat. Ruppelt spins.

RUPPELT (CONT'D)

Dr. Hynek!

HYNEK

Yes...

Ruppelt hops off the desk, holds out a hand, big smile.

RUPPELT

Captain Ed Ruppelt. Thanks for coming.

HYNEK
(shakes his hand)
Where am I?

RUPPELT
What can I get you? Coffee? Tea?
Scotch...?

He turns to the Secretary -- *that's your job, go!* She hustles off. Ruppelt lingers on her exit.

RUPPELT (CONT'D)
She's somethin', huh? Hired her
this morning.
(turns back)
Do I call you doc? Allen? What do
you like best?

HYNEK
How about you just tell me what I'm
doing here first?

Off Hynek, we TIME CUT TO:

A B&W PHOTO

The iconic ROSWELL IMAGE from newspapers. MAJOR JESSE MARCEL kneels by some shredded metallic debris posing for reporters.

RUPPELT
July of '47. Roswell, New Mexico.
You familiar with it?

Hynek looks up from the photo as Ruppelt lights a cigarette.

HYNEK
From the papers? Sure. A crashed
high-altitude Army weather
balloon...

RUPPELT
I'm talking about the initial
reports, do you remember those?

HYNEK
My son wouldn't stop talking about
them. Spacemen were invading.

Ruppelt exhales a puff of smoke, leans back.

RUPPELT
When that story hit, it jammed
phone lines nationwide.
(MORE)

RUPPELT (CONT'D)

Even broke a few switchboards in the process. *War of The Worlds* all over again.

Ruppelt reaches over to a STACK OF FILES on his desk, picks one up, reading:

RUPPELT (CONT'D)

Indianapolis '48, an electrician sees dozens of strange lights, calls the cops. Media catches on and the city buckles in fear over what turns out to be migrating geese...

(another file)

Oregon '49, a fisherman swears he sees a metallic disk hovering in a State Park. Rangers are overwhelmed. Turns out to be the park's water tower.

(another file)

Two weeks ago in Manhattan? A man sees this unearthly anomaly...

Ruppelt hands Hynek a blurry black-and-white photo of a hovering WHITE ORB behind misty clouds.

RUPPELT (CONT'D)

Do you know what that is, Doctor?

HYNEK

...That's the moon.

RUPPELT

The moon! Took four Coast Guard vessels combing the Hudson to make that same astute determination.

(off Hynek)

That's why you're here.

Secretary re-enters with water for Hynek and scotch, neat for Ruppelt. He nods his thanks, stands, still focused on Hynek.

RUPPELT (CONT'D)

Our nation is suffering from a form of mass hysteria right now. One we can't afford. Not with Russia breathing down our neck and a nuclear arms race on the brink of explosion. When people panic, communications channels jam, police can't do their jobs, and our boarder patrol literally chases the moon.

(MORE)

RUPPELT (CONT'D)

(off Hynek)

How would you like to help the U.S. Air Force instill rational scientific thinking into our public consciousness again?

HYNEK

Me?

RUPPELT

We're launching a program to investigate unknown aerial phenomena. And we need a man with your unique talents to make sure it runs smoothly.

EXT. KITCHEN/HYNEK HOME - NIGHT

WOOSH! A match sparks alive as Mimi lights her gas oven. She tosses in a frozen-dinner on an oven-ready aluminum tray as Hynek lights up his pipe at the table.

MIMI

Flying saucers?

HYNEK

You know the public has gone crazy with all this stuff.

MIMI

But why would the Air Force come to you?

HYNEK

I have a PhD in AstroPhysics, Mim. I'm respected in my field --

MIMI

But this isn't your field, Allen.

HYNEK

You're missing the point. When I come on, I give the Air Force credibility. My opinion becomes the standard. My knowledge will be... respected. They'll *rely* on me.

MIMI

I just meant, if anything, you're over-qualified. I could tell 'em it's all bologna.

HYNEK

They made me a great offer, Mim.
You'd never have to lift a finger.

Mimi fidgets. *That* makes her nervous.

HYNEK

I don't have all the details yet,
but... Joel?

Hynek turns as Joel emerges from the hallway. Indeed, he was eavesdropping. And he's excited.

JOEL

Are you really gonna fight Spacemen
for the Air Force, Dad?

HYNEK

There's no such thing, Joel. We
talked about this. I'll be doing
research. And you should be doing
your homework. Are you finished?

He shakes his head. Hynek's on the verge of scolding him.

MIMI

Honey? Your father and I are
talking. Go finish, please?

Joel reluctantly heads out. Mimi turns back to Hynek.

MIMI

What about your grant? For your
telescope? If that comes through...

Hynek knows it didn't, but can't bring himself to admit it.

HYNEK

We don't need to worry about that
right now. It's... I can take care
of that.

Off Mimi, Hynek dumps his pipe ash into a napkin, stands.

HYNEK

This will be good for both of us. I
promise.

Off Mimi's look, we hear a PAPER FLIPPING and CUT TO:

A SKETCH OF A CRESCENT-SHAPED CRAFT

From the granddaddy of UFO cases: The 1947 KENNETH ARNOLD case (REAL). As we study it's shape, we PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

INT. RUPPELT'S OFFICE/BLUE BOOK HQ - NIGHT

A lone desk lamp casts a small glow in the otherwise empty office as Ruppelt studies the sketch, trying to make sense.

He sets it aside to scan another folder, sees another sketch. This one looks more like a FLYING DISC. He flips through another stack, sees more versions of the same craft. Makes him a little uneasy. So he reaches in his desk drawer, pulls out some scotch, pours a splash.

Then he picks up a file with THE 1947 VILLA SANTINA CASE (REAL). Inside are sketches of TWO HUMANOID-LOOKING CREATURES. It's eerie, these creatures staring back at him.

And when Ruppelt leans in for a closer look -- BRiiing! The phone makes him practically fall out of his chair. *Who could be calling at this hour?*

RUPPELT
(answers)
Captain Ruppelt...

TWINING (V.O.)
I need you in West Virginia
tomorrow.

RUPPELT sits up as the file falls off his lap.

RUPPELT
Yes, sir--

TWINING (V.O.)
And you took care of that other
thing?

RUPPELT
...Dr. Hynek's a go, yes.

TWINING (V.O.)
Excellent.

RUPPELT
But if I may, sir... Are we sure
he's our top pick for this? Guy's
pretty stiff--

TWINING (V.O.)
10am train tomorrow out of
Columbus. File on the incident is
being delivered to your home.

RUPPELT
Anything I should know now?

TWINING (V.O.)
Yes. I'd appreciate it if you not
drink at the office.

Ruppelt's baffled. *How the hell did Twining know that?*

RUPPELT
...Y-yes, sir.

CLICK. Ruppelt looks at the receiver, then the empty office,
a little unnerved now as he hangs up. As he stands to go,
clicks off his lamp, we MATCH CUT TO:

A FLASHLIGHT COMING ON

Revealing a *Flash Gordon* comic book in:

INT. JOEL'S BEDROOM/HYNEK HOME - NIGHT

Joel has his blanket over his head, using a light to read
without being seen. He's soaking in every detail of the
story, reading softly to himself when he hears something. He
stops. Listens. Then climbs out of bed, moves to

HIS WINDOW

Hears VOICES outside. He opens his window and looks across to

HIS NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE

Sees a TV in the living room showing "Tales of Tomorrow."
Joel leans out to get a better view. But as he gazes across
the divide, he spots a YOUNG GIRL (12) in her room upstairs
brushing her hair -- ANNA FISK.

Joel watches her, captivated, but unaware he's pointing the
flashlight in her direction. Anna suddenly turns and she and
Joel LOCK EYES before he ducks down.

After a beat, he peeks out the window once more just in time
to see Anna whip her curtains shut.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM/HYNEK HOME - SAME TIME

Mimi removes her make-up at a vanity as Hynek finishes getting into his pajamas, watching her... Her shoulders... neck. The way she removes her earrings. Her skin, hair, eyes. The details of his wife --

HYNEK

You're breathtaking, you know that?

She looks up, that caught her by surprise. Hynek comes over her shoulder now.

HYNEK

I don't say that enough.

She smiles and he leans down to kiss her neck. Lingers there then reaches for her waist... and she pulls away.

MIMI

Allen... I can't. I'm sorry.

HYNEK

You have nothing to be sorry for.
The doctor said it would take time.
Your body went through a lot. And
psychologically a loss is always...
(then)
When you're ready to try again, we
will. Okay?

She gives him a reassuring smile then climbs into bed. Hynek joins her. The two of them reach over and turn off their lights. As they both turn to their side, we PRE-LAP:

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The sky is the stage, the actors,
so-called flying saucers...

1951 TV ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE FLICKERS IN: Dramatic music plays. A TITLE CARD reads: 'Nation Looks Skyward for Mysterious Riders'. Planes fly.

NEWS ANNOUNCER

And they're back with some new
twists!

AN EYEWITNESS addresses the camera, holding a UFO photo.

EYEWITNESS

I managed to snap this when it flew
over my house. Reminded me of two
straw hats stuck together at the
brim. See right here...?

He points to the photo before we CUT TO:

A CLEAN-SHAVEN MAN with a collared shirt speaking to camera.

CLEAN-SHAVEN EYEWITNESS

I saw this insanely bright white-green object in the sky... Now, I wouldn't say it's one of those so-called flying saucers, but whatever it was, it was NOT an illusion...

Off his earnestness, we PRE-LAP the sound of a TRAIN WHISTLE and SMASH TO:

EXT. COLUMBUS TRAIN STATION - DAY

Establish the crowded station filled with PASSENGERS.

INT. TRAIN - SAME TIME

Hynek is settled in across from Ruppelt, making notes in an astronomy book as Ruppelt scans the faces on the train. He spots a GORGEOUS YOUNG WOMAN down the aisle, gives her a smile. She smiles back. Hynek looks up, sees this.

RUPPELT

I just love the railway, don't you?

Hynek refocuses on his book. Ruppelt reaches in his pocket.

RUPPELT

Gum?

Hynek looks up. Ruppelt's offering him a stick.

RUPPELT (CONT'D)

It's sugar-free. They just started doin' that. Swear you can't taste the difference.

HYNEK

No, thank you.

Ruppelt re-pockets the gum as he looks at the cover of the book Hynek's reading.

RUPPELT

Astro-Particle Dynamics and Its Stellar Foundations... must be a real page turner, huh?

HYNEK

It is, actually.

Beat.

RUPPELT

So how long you been doing the teaching thing?

HYNEK

Thing? 11 years. Not counting the 4 while I earned my doctorate.

RUPPELT

Wow... I hated school. No offense.

HYNEK

Why would I be offended?

RUPPELT

You just look like that kind of guy, I guess.

A beat between them before Ruppelt reaches over, grabs a briefcase and places it between them, opens it.

RUPPELT

Well, Teach. Whaddya say we do some homework then?

As he starts to pull out all sorts of files/books, we CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS - DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Mimi moves down the block, slows when she sees a MOM MANIKIN in a storefront window gripping a new vacuum. "Moms Love the Hoover Upright!" It's a scene meant to convey domestic bliss. But for Mimi, it's more like coming upon a car accident. She looks away, moves into:

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Mimi enters the BEAUTY AISLE, slowing to take in the polish, blush and perfume before pausing at the lipsticks. Her eye catches a glossy red one, "Raspberry Passion." She grabs it then spots another shade, "China Red". As she debates her choice, a STYLISH WOMAN with a blonde bob and an eye-catching dress strolls up to ponder the same selection. Mimi looks her over, clearly envying her style right now. And could use an opinion.

MIMI

Could I ask you something?

The woman turns -- yes?

MIMI (CONT'D)

Which shade do you think works best?

She holds up her two choices.

STYLISH WOMAN

Depends on who it's working for. But, honestly? With your complexion? Neither.

Ouch. Stylish Woman comes closer to clarify.

STYLISH WOMAN (CONT'D)

It's just with delicate features like yours, reds can be overwhelming. Something a bit softer suits you...

She reaches past Mimi into the pink shades, finds "Tea Rose", a tasteful peachy hue. She uncaps it and very matter of factly turns Mimi toward her.

STYLISH WOMAN (CONT'D)

Stay still...

Mimi's taken slightly off guard as Stylish Woman slowly coats her lips, then turns her to face the MIRROR.

STYLISH WOMAN (CONT'D)

What do you think?

MIMI

...I love it.

STYLISH WOMAN

Now your boyfriend's gonna owe me.

MIMI

You mean my husband.

STYLISH WOMAN

Oh, I should've known. I'm a newlywed myself.

MIMI

Oh, congratulations.

Susie smiles. She likes Mimi. Holds out her hand.

STYLISH WOMAN

I'm Susie.

MIMI

Mimi.

SUSIE

Mimi. What do you know about men's ties?

INT. TRAIN - SAME TIME

Documents (including newspapers, files and photos) are spread between the two as Hynek inspects an actual BLUE BOOKLET, the signature of the BLUE BOOK program.

HYNEK

Blue Book. Blue booklets. Guess the Air Force isn't prone to metaphor.

RUPPELT

You were never in the service. Subtlety's never been Uncle Sam's strong suit.

(off a file he's reading)

So, we have three witnesses. All with the same account...

HYNEK

Can I see that?

Ruppelt hands him a copy of a West Virginia newspaper where we read the headline: "POTENTIAL SAUCER CRASH CAUSES STRANGE FIRE". REAL 'FLATWOODS MONSTER' CASE IMAGES FLICKER: Witnesses, sketches of a fiery light, burnt woods, etc.

HYNEK

Mother and her two kids come upon a quote "fiery hell" in the middle of the woods after seeing a strange object crash down.

RUPPELT

Can probably rule out geese, huh?

HYNEK

I think until we see the actual site, we rule out nothing.

Ruppelt studies Hynek for a beat.

RUPPELT

Can I ask you something? As someone with your *pedigree*. You think even an inch of this could be for real?

HYNEK

Are you asking me if it's possible other life out there exists?

RUPPELT

Isn't that what you're looking for when you're peeking through your telescope?

HYNEK

When I'm "peeking," I'm looking for an understanding of how the universe works. From the planets in our own Solar System to the evolution of stars and nebulae. The macro-system of the galaxies holds the key to our existence.

RUPPELT

Is that a 'yes?' I don't know what you just said.

HYNEK

Given the finite speed of light, the vast distance between the stars, any alleged visitation is a scientific impossibility.

RUPPELT

Good. If not, we'd have a problem.

Ruppelt goes back to work. Hynek considers him.

HYNEK

I'd like to amend the term 'Unknown Aerial Phenomena' in our reports.

Ruppelt looks up -- *what'd you say?*

HYNEK

'Unknown' doesn't exactly instill confidence. Plus, it primes that it's mysterious. How about... *Unidentified*.

RUPPELT

'Unidentified?'. Ah, maybe...

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

In Men's Wear now, Mimi and Susie pore over a sea of ties.

MIMI

What color are your husband's eyes?

SUSIE

Hazel. No, brown. I always confuse the two.

Mimi holds up a couple ties to compare, puts one back.

SUSIE

You're so good at this. How long have you been married?

MIMI

Twelve years.

SUSIE

No... But you're so young.
(off Mimi)
Children?

MIMI

...Just one.

Mimi grabs another tie, distracting herself. Susie sees this. She doesn't miss a thing. But, she switches subjects.

SUSIE

So what does your husband do?

MIMI

He teaches. Astrophysics.

SUSIE

Should I pretend to know what that is?

MIMI

Worked for me for the past ten years.

They both chuckle. Mimi stops on a tie. Turns, modeling it.

SUSIE

Oh, that's perfect. Cal's gonna flip.

That's when they both notice a POSTER nearby (REAL): It's a NEAR-NAKED WOMAN cradling a man's dress shoe: "Keep Her Where She Belongs," it reads. Susie eyes Mimi's appalled reaction.

SUSIE

Mimi, am I crazy, or do I smell
apple pie?

MIMI

Oh, there's a cafe in the back.

SUSIE MILLER

Get out!

(off the poster re: cafe)

Well, I think *that's* where we
belong, don't you? Come on...

As Susie takes her hand and leads her off, the song "High
High The Moon" by Mary Ford PRE-LAPS and we CUT TO:

INT. RENTAL CAR - HUDSON HORNET - DAY

VROOM! MUSIC CONTINUES from the car radio as Ruppelt drives a
sparkling 1951 Hudson Hornet, feeling the song, loving the
breeze through the window. Hynek's inspecting the dash.

RUPPELT

Sleek for a rental, right? They
call this design 'step-down.' Lots
of Senators drive these.

HYNEK

I don't know. It's far too low to
be practical. And not very
ergonomical.

Ruppelt turns to him.

HYNEK

Do you not know what that means?

RUPPELT

(laughs)

Boy, I bet your students love you.

HYNEK

The smart ones do.

RUPPELT

Just do me a favor, okay? Once we
get to the farmhouse? Let me do the
talking.

As he TURNS UP THE RADIO to emphasise his point, hits the
gas, we CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - SAME TIME

MUSIC CONTINUES as the car speeds along, the SONG carrying us down the road before we TIME CUT TO:

EXT. KATHLEEN MAY'S FARMHOUSE - DAY

A small group of PEOPLE are gathered near a CLOSED GATE including LOCAL PRESS as the Hudson Hornet turns down the long driveway and approaches. A LOCAL SHERIFF waves it to a stop. FROM AFAR, we watch as Ruppelt rolls down his window to speak to the Sheriff. A beat later the car moves on toward

THE FARMHOUSE

Where it parks. Ruppelt and Hynek step out, scan the area.

RUPPELT

I grew up in a spot like this...

HYNEK

(looking back at the
gathering)

Is *that* gonna be a problem?

RUPPELT

If they are, I'm authorized to
shoot them.

(off Hynek)

C'mon...

Hynek stares at him. Was that a joke? Ruppelt heads up to

THE FRONT DOOR

KNOCK-KNOCK. No answer. Then Hynek sees a woman's face peek out of the living room curtains to the left.

HYNEK

Afternoon, ma'am. We're here to--

RUPPELT

(cutting in)

Kathleen? It's Captain Ruppelt? We
spoke on the phone?

KATHLEEN

(re: Hynek)

Who's this one?

RUPPELT

This is Doctor Hynek. We work
together. Could you open the door?

Kathleen whips the curtain closed. A beat later the front door opens and Kathleen reaches for Hynek.

KATHLEEN
You a doctor? Follow me.

EXT. KATHLEEN'S BARN YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Kathleen leads Ruppelt and Hynek to a big barn door, heaves it open and the trio enters:

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Stacks of hay have blocked out all the windows, so it's dark in here. Even DARKER when Kathleen closes the door. Hynek's just trying to get his bearings when a small CHICK runs over his foot. Hynek jumps back, bumps into some saddles.

KATHLEEN
Mind where you walk, they're everywhere.

She motions for Ruppelt and Hynek to follow her past a couple sheep, a horse, and some goats.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
Had to move 'em in here. The sunlight burns their eyes now...

She comes to a ladder leading to a LOFT, calls up:

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
Lily, Will, it's all right. You can come down. There's a doctor here.

Hynek and Ruppelt step back as Will and Lily descend from the darkness. But when they land, the real shock sets in.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)
Please, doctor, tell me what's happening to my babies...

REVEAL NOW - the children are gaunt, pale and petrified. But most prominent are the painful RED BLISTERING SORES festering around their eyes. Off Hynek and Ruppelt, we...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. DEN/KATHLEEN MAY'S FARM HOUSE - DAY

Hynek uses a Q-tip to swab ointment over the children's burns as Ruppelt and Kathleen speak in the background.

HYNEK

Does that hurt?

(off Will)

Y'know I got a boy about your age.

You read comics? What's your favorite?

WILL

Journey into Unknown Worlds.

(then, leans in)

I'm not supposed to. My mom says I can't read it, 'cause sometimes I get scared. But only *sometimes*...

HYNEK

Oh... Well, I understand that. But, don't worry. I won't say a word...

Off Will's smile, we MOVE TO --

RUPPELT

As he takes notes while Kathleen speaks, hands shaking.

KATHLEEN

It felt alive, whatever it was. Its flames ravaging trees. Feeding... Smelt like compost. Burned my nose, my eyes...

Ruppelt scribbles this down as Hynek walks up, taps him, "can I see that?" Ruppelt hands him the pad as.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

I ain't never been more afraid. Dog ain't come out from the under the porch since we been home either.

Hynek hands the pad back and Ruppelt sees he's scribbled: "Corrosive tree fungus?". Ruppelt looks to Hynek, "really?"

HYNEK

Miss May. Could you take us to where this all happened?

EXT. RAVINE - LATER

The trio approaches from the top of the hill where Kathleen and the kids first encountered the fire. But Kathleen stops. She won't go any further.

KATHLEEN

It was down there...

Ruppelt and Hynek stare at the VALLEY below... The charred trees... The scorched earth. Remnants of Armageddon.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

It was fire from Hell. And only by God's Grace was I able to free my son from the Devil's claws...

As Hynek stares deeper INTO THE RAVINE, we ZOOM IN on his eyes (just like at the observatory) as we realize, just like then, he's moving HIS MIND BACK IN TIME to --

THE BURNING WOODS (FLASHBACK)

The moment after Will fell. Kathleen and Lily are searching, SCREAMING FOR WILL as swaying FIRE-TREES HISS and SNAP. They finally find Will and lift a branch off him to help him up.

KATHLEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But, when that smoke cleared, this horrid thing smiled back at us...

The smoke clears and for the first time we glimpse a truly horrifying, melting RED FORM.

KATHLEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was the size of a house with lava pouring from its heart. Was like a raging... red diamond...

CAMERA PUSHES so close to its pulsing diamond-like shape, it's like we can feel its heat before we SMASH BACK TO

HYNEK

Coming out of his vision as Kathleen finishes her story.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

But then the angels gave us wings,
and we ran for our lives.
(off the two men)
So, what are y'all gonna do now?

Hynek (who had been carrying a bag), zips it open to double check his inventory before he slings it over his shoulder.

HYNEK

See what we can find. Captain?

Without waiting for a reply, Hynek heads down into the ravine. Off Ruppelt, a little more tentative, we PRE-LAP:

SUSIE (V.O.)

My Lord, this is an aphrodisiac!

INT. CAFE/DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Mimi and Susie sit in the store cafe, eating apple pies.

SUSIE

I'm getting flushed it's so good.

Mimi laughs aloud, embarrassed as patrons give them looks.

MIMI

Do you miss living in New York?

SUSIE

Oh, only every day. Ohio's been an adjustment.

MIMI

So's marriage...

Mimi suddenly looks down. *Did she just say too much?*

SUSIE

Mimi... Where are the fun spots in this town? And if you say the roller-rink, I'm'a squeal.

MIMI

I'm not the best one to ask. Allen and I don't get out that much anymore. We used to Rumba down at the Rec Center...

SUSIE

Oh, I love to dance.

MIMI

It's been harder to go. He works so much. He actually just took on another job.

SUSIE MILLER

You're kidding. Doing what?

MIMI

I can't really talk about it.

Susie studies Mimi intently, an idea forming.

SUSIE

Know the best thing about dining
with a stranger? No need for
niceties.

(stands)

I have an idea...c'mon.

INT. WEST VIRGINIA WOODS - DAY

Hynek and Ruppelt are moving slowly through the charred woods, scanning, taking notes when Hynek stops suddenly.

HYNEK

You smell that? Sulfur.

Ruppelt sniffs, not sure he smells anything. He turns to follow a long stain of black ash, but freezes when he sees

A FIGURE IN A FEDORA

Maybe a hundred yards away on a distant road, standing outside his car, watching them. Let's call him MR. UNSEEN.

Ruppelt squints, between the trees, trying to make him out. But when moves to get a better look, Mr. Unseen is suddenly not there. That's odd.

HYNEK (O.S.)

Captain...?

Ruppelt turns back.

HYNEK

Look at this.

Ruppelt walks over to where Hynek is studying a tree.

HYNEK

Tree bark's usually a natural
insulator in a fire. But see how
deep these singe marks go?

He follows them down to the base of the tree, gears turning. He then picks up a stick, starts to prod the soil.

HYNEK (CONT'D)

Surface soil's loose. This entire
area was jolted somehow...

RUPPELT

Jolted?

HYNEK

Like an earthquake.

Ruppelt looks around -- he could not have figured that out.

RUPPELT

How do you know about all this stuff? Huh? I thought you just studied the sky.

HYNEK

When I was seven, I contracted a severe case of meningitis. Didn't leave my bed for almost a year. Read the entire Britannica. Twice.

Hynek hands Ruppelt the stick and moves off. Off Ruppelt, trying to assess just who he's partnered with, we CUT TO

INT. CHANGING AREA/DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Susie sits in the WAITING AREA by the dressing room door.

MIMI (O.S.)

I don't know. It's a little tight.

SUSIE

Well come out and show me first.

Dressing room door opens and Mimi emerges in form-fitting, busty teal sheath. Susie stands in genuine awe.

SUSIE

Honey. You look amazing.

MIMI

I couldn't get the...

She turns to show Susie her backside; zipper's still undone. Susie walks up behind her, gently guides it up.

SUSIE

Turn to me.

Mimi does and Susie stays close -- very close. Mimi never breaks her gaze.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

I envy your husband right now.

MIMI

You really think he'll like it?
(then)
It's really expensive.

SUSIE

Didn't you say he just started a
new job?
(off Mimi)
Then you deserve this. And when he
sees you in it, he'll take you out
dancing every night. And not at the
Rec Center.

Susie smiles. And off Mimi, feeling good, we CUT BACK TO

EXT. WEST VIRGINIA WOODS - SAME TIME

TWEEZERS LIFT a blackened acorn into a glass vial, as Hynek suddenly stops. He looks around. Rises. Ruppelt trails up.

HYNEK (CONT'D)

I haven't seen a single insect in
this forest since we arrived, have
you?

RUPPELT

Considering it all just burnt to
the ground...

Hynek drops his bag, and starts to dig in for something.

RUPPELT (CONT'D)

Hey. Doc. This was just a forest
fire. Some teenager dropped a
cigarette, sparked a flame. Kids
probably saw a branch fall. We're
wasting our time now...

Hynek pulls out a small METAL BOX with a meter read-out,
flips its "on" switch.

RUPPELT

What is that?

HYNEK

Radiation detector. Borrowed it
from the university.

RUPPELT

Radiation? Why would...

Hynek moves off, Ruppelt staying close behind.

RUPPELT

Doc?

HYNEK (CONT'D)

Point two-seven. Level's near
toxic...

RUPPELT

What? Should we be out here?

Meter suddenly spikes as they move close to a tree. Lowering the meter to the roots, Hynek sees the dial go crazy. He looks up at a LARGE DEAD TREE then spots something.

HYNEK

Gimme a hand.

Together, the two of them start to move away fallen branches and other debris before they discover a huge CAVE-LIKE OVAL HOLE at the base of the tree: looks like a giant tarantula. The machine is going berserk now: BEEP-BEEP! Hynek sees something, whispers, almost with quiet glee.

HYENK

...The red diamond...

INT. LIVING ROOM/KATHLEEN MAY'S FARM HOUSE - DUSK

A FIRE ROARS inside now, as Ruppelt adds another log. Under a blanket, Lily and Will stare into it from a safe distance as Hynek speaks with Kathleen.

HYNEK

So the red streak across a sky, the fire in the woods that began at the treetops, the pungent mist, all do point to something extraterrestrial.

KATHLEEN

Lord, I *knew* it.

HYNEK

A meteor crash.

Kathleen seems confused now. Slightly stunned actually.

HYNEK (CONT'D)

What made everyone sick were the 'arsenic fumes', quite common with a crash of this nature... The skin burns could have come from the level of radiation off the meteor, if it was uranium. Or thorium.

(MORE)

HYNEK (CONT'D)

Even if you didn't touch it, the area is toxic enough to have that effect. Good news, it's temporary.
(re: the kids)
You're all going to be okay.

Will and Lily seem uneasy. Kathleen steals a glance at them.

KATHLEEN

But... It wasn't a meteor.

Hynek sees them all sharing a look -- a *secret*. Before he can say something -- KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK! Ruppelt turns as Kathleen rises to the door, opens it. It's the local SHERIFF.

SHERIFF

What are you doing to me, Kathy? I thought you wanted this to die down!

KATHLEEN

I do. What's happened now?

Sheriff enters, drops the local paper on a coffee table in the center of the room. We don't see it yet.

SHERRIF CALLOWAY

Tomorrow's front page...

Ruppelt sees the headline and his face hardens. He turns to Kathleen.

RUPPELT

What's going on here, Ms. May? Have you been lying to us this whole time?

Hynek picks up the paper and for the first time we see the actual (REAL) headline from the case: "IS A MONSTER FROM SPACE ROAMING THE WEST VA. HILLS?"

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

I ain't lying! He is! 'Cause it wasn't no meteor. How do I know that fire came from Hell? 'Cause we was face-to-face with its maker!

Hynek flips the newspaper over, revealing a DRAWING -- It's of a HUMANOID CREATURE with crazed, saucer-like eyes, giant sharp claw-like hands, hovering. As its hallow unearthly cold eyes stare cruelly into us, we...

END ACT THREE

ACT FOURINT. LIVING ROOM/HYNEK HOME - NIGHT

Mimi bursts in the front door with a department store bag, catches sight of Joel at the coffee table doing homework.

JOEL

Mom... Where were you?

MIMI

Sorry, honey, just got hung up at the store... Your father call?

JOEL

No. What'd you buy?

She comes over and gives him a peck on the top of his head.

MIMI

I need to fix you dinner.

She moves off into

INT. KITCHEN/HYNEK HOME - CONTINUOUS

Mimi enters, puts her bags on the kitchen table. Pauses to look at them... then pulls out a slip of paper. CLOSE ON THE PAPER: It's Susie's name and phone number. As Mimi smiles, clearly smitten with her new friend, we CUT TO:

INT. KID'S BEDROOM/KATHLEEN MAY'S FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

Will and Lily sit on a bed. Ruppelt's in the chair across from them. Kathleen hovers nearby as Hynek reads the paper the Sheriff brought. NOTE: as Lily talks, the CAMERA drifts toward Hynek, drawn towards WHAT'S IN HIS CALCULATING MIND.

LILY

After we found Will, Ma told us to rush straight home. I held Will's hand and we took the shortcut through Fisher's stream...

As Lily continues, we PUSH IN on HYNEK'S EYES, where the reflection of the "monster" is visible and suddenly we are

BACK IN THE WOODS (FLASHBACK)

Lily holds Will's hand, running, leading him back home.

LILY (CONT'D)
Hurry, Will! Ma, it's this way!

LILY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Then we heard this cry. Shrieking.
Like nothing I ever heard before...

An UNEARTHLY CRY startles them from the trees.

WILL
What was that!?

SHRIEK! That shrill again. Much closer now. Will and Lily race up a hill, but STOP COLD as a GIANT DARK FIGURE moves in front of them. As they SCREAM IN TERROR, we SLAM BACK TO:

HYNEK

Looking up from the image in the paper at the kids now.

LILY
It had huge yellow eyes. And these claws. But it glowed. I couldn't get it out of my head. So I drew it. I had to draw it...

HYNEK
Will, you saw this too?

Will's upper-lip trembles, mm-hmm.

RUPPELT
Lily, how exactly did the press get a hold of your drawing?

LILY
One of them reporters snuck on our the farm when mama was at Church. He wore this hat. He seemed nice, but also strange...I'm sorry, Mama!

As Kathleen soothes her, Ruppelt gestures to Hynek toward

THE HALLWAY

Both men step out to talk in hushed tones.

RUPPELT
The press is gonna go nuts now. We can't leave here until we put this to bed or it's both our asses, Doc.

Off Hynek, we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM/FARMHOUSE - LATER

It's late. Ruppelt snores, asleep on the couch, case file still in his hand. Hynek is making notes trying to concentrate, but the snoring is distracting. He looks over, contemplates waking Ruppelt, but sees something peeking out from under a couch cushion instead.

Slowly, Hynek slides it out -- it's the *Journey into Unknown Worlds* comic book. It gives Hynek a slight smile. He opens it, flips through and panels of the comic scroll by. Then Hynek stops, gears turning, something's clicking in for him.

He looks over at the drawing on the newspaper headline once more and

IMAGES FLASH HIS MIND -- TREES, GLOWING YELLOW EYES, RAZOR CLAWS, metal tubes embedded into scaled skin. A mouth SNAPS CLOSED.

Hynek snaps out of his vision, rouses Ruppelt.

HYNEK

Ed, get up. Think I got something.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Still half-asleep, Ruppelt stands between the barn and the farmhouse, watching as Hynek exits the barn.

RUPPELT

What were you doing in there?

Hynek just keeps moving, forcing Ruppelt to follow.

EXT. WEST VIRGINIA WOODS - NIGHT

Flashlights in hand, the two trudge towards the 'crash site'.

RUPPELT

Look, can't we say the fumes from the meteor caused hallucinations? That'd make sense, right?

HYNEK

A result doesn't need to make sense to be true. But it does need to be proven by science before it can ever be called a fact... So, that's what we have to do here, Captain. Discover the facts...

Off Ruppelt, Hynek reaches into his jacket pocket, pulls out a scared BABY CHICK.

RUPPELT

And to do that, you stole a baby
chicken...?

Hynek shushes him as he places the chick on the ground. But it's not until Hynek starts making odd SHRIEKING SOUNDS that Ruppelt thinks he's really crazy.

RUPPELT (CONT'D)

Alright, now I'm worried about you.

Hynek calls again: CA-CAW! Waits. Suddenly from the darkness there comes a SHRIEEEEK!

RUPPELT

...What was that?

CA-CAW! Hynek caws once again. SHRIEK! It's MUCH CLOSER now. Ruppelt eyes dart to the sky when WOOSH! SOMETHING HUGE descends from above! Ruppelt drops to the ground as--

A GIGANTIC OWL

SWOOPS DOWN to snatch the Baby Chick. Hynek dives to protect it and the Owl shoots back up, lands on a nearby branch.

RUPPELT (CONT'D)

I'll be damned...

Getting up now, he and Hynek move close to the branch where Hynek shines his flashlight up, casting an eerie glow on the Owl's yellow eyes, his razor-sharp beak and prominent claws. It's a "monster" from their angle.

HYNEK

I give you...our forest monster.

RUPPELT

You're a god-damned genius.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MORNING

Farmers, policemen, and news reporters gather in the town square. On a platform, Ruppelt stands with Kathleen, Lily and Will, wrapping up his address.

RUPPELT

...So you see, it was entirely reasonable for Kathleen and her children to assume that something extraordinary happened that night. Because it did! A meteor that size? It's like being struck by lightning. Twice!

Ruppelt looks to Kathleen, Lily and Will.

RUPPELT (CONT'D)

Oh, and as for that mystery creature from the sky? Sheriff...

TWO COPS carry up a large object, covered by a bright yellow tarp. They place it on stage and Ruppelt yanks the tarp away revealing the SPECKLED OWL in a cage. As Ruppelt holds Lily's NEWSPAPER SKETCH of the creature by the caged owl's face:

RUPPELT (CONT'D)

I think we got our man.

As the Crowd *oohs* and *ahhs*, CAMERA MOVES to discover

HYNEK

Across the street on a payphone, mid-call.

HYNEK

No, it all went great, hon... Anything newsworthy I miss on the home-front? How's Joel?

INT. KITCHEN/HYNEK'S HOME - SAME TIME

Mimi cooks bacon, Joel's head is in a comic.

MIMI

He's good, we're good. Nothing newsworthy here... Are you going to make it home for dinner?

HYNEK (V.O.)

I was thinking steaks at Moe's if it's early enough.

Mimi perks up. That's unlike him.

MIMI

...I know just what to wear, too.

EXT. THE TOWN SQUARE - SAME TIME

Ruppelt is posing for pictures now with Kathleen and the Owl. As FLASHBULBS POP, we shift perspective

ACROSS THE STREET

To where a BLACK BENTLEY sits. Inside is a FIGURE IN A FEDORA WHOSE FACE WE DON'T SEE, his black gloved hands resting on the steering wheel. He watches the spectacle closely, then turns to focus on Hynek who's still on his call. As he pulls his hat lower and opens the door to get out, we notice Lily's ORIGINAL SKETCH on the seat next to him before we are

ON A SIDE STREET

Lily and Will approach their mom's truck, happy to be away from the commotion behind them.

WILL

Lil... Do you think it really was
just an owl?

Lily opens the truck's door, digs around inside.

LILY

Nope.
(turns back, shows Will)
Nickel. Gonna buy a soda pop.

Will watches her go, then spots his slinky on the front seat. He grabs it and quickly moves to a set of stairs, heads to the top so he can make it walk on down.

CLOSE ON THE SLINKY now as it drops down each step...drop... drop...drop... before landing on a SHINY BLACK SHOE. A gloved hand picks it up -- that UNSEEN MAN. Will looks up, uneasy.

WILL

...You're that reporter guy.

Mr. Unseen hands Will back his slinky and, as he bends down, WHISPERS SOMETHING to him, never showing us his face.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Hynek has rejoined Kathleen and Ruppelt, puffing on his pipe.

HYNEK

I thought I was gonna get my
picture taken?

RUPPELT

No, I see you as more of a behind-the-scenes kinda guy.

Hynek seems genuinely disappointed. Then the CROWD CHEERS. All three turn just as the owl is freed from its cage. As it CAWS into the sky, Hynek watching it soar, Kathleen turns back.

KATHLEEN

I really ought to be gettin' back.

(then)

Thank you both for all your help.
God sure works in mysterious ways.

She moves off, quickly blending into the dispersing CROWD. Ruppelt turns to Hynek.

RUPPELT

Mysterious indeed, huh?

(then)

You a religious man at all, Doc?
Did we cover that?

HYNEK

...Like, do I believe in god?

RUPPELT

Or does He have to be "proven by science to exist" in your eyes?

Hynek doesn't answer, clearly struggling with the question.

RUPPELT (CONT'D)

I don't need a grant essay. I was just curious.

(then)

I'm outta smokes, gonna grab some.
Meet you at the car?

And with that Ruppelt moves off. Hynek watches him go, then heads off towards

THE RENTAL CAR

Where he finds Will sitting on the curb, staring at his slinky, slowly rocking it in his hands.

HYNEK

I think your mother's looking for you...

Will hasn't even acknowledged him. That's odd.

HYNEK (CONT'D)

Will?

Hynek touches Will's shoulder and the boy holds out his hand.

WILL

He told me to give this to you.
Said you better not tell anyone...

Hynek looks down, sees Will has given him a POLAROID: It's a grainy image of A LAKE WITH A TINY ISLAND WITH A TREE ON IT.

It takes a second to register, but clearly this photo means something to Hynek. *And it unnerves him.*

HYNEK

Who? Who gave this to you?

WILL

That weird man... With the hat.
(leaning, in a whisper)
He says the truth is like the sun.
The closer you look, the more it
blinds...

Hynek is speechless. But, before he can even figure out what to do, Will darts off and quickly joins his mom who scoops him into THE TRUCK. And as they speed off, Hynek is left completely dumbfounded, alone with that Polaroid, as we --

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVEEXT. THE PENTAGON - DAY

Establishing.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM/THE PENTAGON - DAY

Hynek is lost in his own world, watching but not really listening, as Ruppelt DEBRIEFS someone OFF SCREEN. We're not really hearing any words until

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Is that right, Doctor Hynek?

Hynek comes to and we see it's Vandenberg across from them.

VANDENBERG

Asteroids bombard our atmosphere
all the time, but mostly burn up?

HYNEK

Meteors, sir. Technically, 'meteor-
ites' if they strike Earth.

Vandenberg nods, never knew that. Pats the Blue Book report.

VANDENBERG

Well, it's excellent work, Doctor.
And you're doing your country a
huge service. We appreciate it.

A door opens and Vandenberg looks over.

VANDERBERG

Nathan. There wasn't a need for you
to--

TWINING

No, no. I wanted to meet our new
Scientific Advisor in the flesh...

Hynek stands as Twining approaches, offers his hand.

TWINING (CONT'D)

General Twining, doctor.

HYNEK

Nice to meet you.

Twining releases his hand, studies Hynek for a beat, assessing.

TWINING

Helluva job down there in Virginia.
We didn't start you off easy, did
we... Always the simplest folk with
the most untapped imaginations.

Hynek forces a smile. Twining turns to Vandenberg.

TWINING (CONT'D)

He's up to speed on Discretion?
Security?

VANDENBERG

Signed and sealed.

Twining turns to back to Hynek.

TWINING

Great! You're all set then. Take
the rental. The three of us still
got a little pow-wow-ing to do here,
so... we'll be in touch.

Ruppelt rises, shakes Hynek's hand warmly.

RUPPELT

Nice work, doc... And cut those
college boys some slack, huh?

Ruppelt winks. Hynek exits. The three of them watch him go,
Twining *holding his stare* an extra beat longer.

INT. LIVING ROOM/HYNEK RESIDENCE - DUSK

TAP, TAP. Mimi's high-heel pats their coffee table. She sits
in the teal dress she bought. Joel's hair slicked and parted.

MIMI

He must've just hit traffic.

Mimi rises, looks out the window. As she lowers the curtain,
she accidentally tips over a vase. CRASH!

MIMI (CONT'D)

Darn it... Do me favor, sweetie.
Fetch the big broom from the
garage? I can't cross the lawn in
these heels...

EXT. GARAGE/HYNEK'S RESIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER

Joel shuts the garage door, broom and dustpan in hand when:

ANNA

Know what they do in prison to
Peeping Tom's?

Joel turns -- it's Anna from next door, blocking his path.

ANNA

Observation therapy. They tie you
to a chair and stare at you 'til
you break down sobbing.

JOEL

...I wasn't peeping, honest. 'Tales
of Tomorrow' was on your TV and--

ANNA

(comes in close)

I'll be watching you, Hynek. See
what kind of secrets you're hiding
in there...

She gestures to his room upstairs before heading off. As Joel
watches her go, somehow excited by that, we CUT TO:

EXT. FIVE AND DIME STORE - DUSK

A group of KIDS play STICK BALL on the street as the sun goes
down. One of them cracks it, others run to base as we REVEAL

HYNEK

Watching from behind the wheel of the rental car, smiling,
perhaps his mind on Joel. Then we see that mysterious
Polaroid in his hand. He considers it for a beat, then
pockets it, gets out and heads towards the store.

EXT. HYNEK RESIDENCE - NIGHT

The Hudson Hornet's lights burn towards us, as Hynek's rental
car pulls up to the driveway. It's late.

INT. RENTAL CAR - SAME TIME

Hynek puts the car in park, stares up at his home. Most of
the lights are now off. In shotgun, now a LARGE BOX sits.

INT. LIVING ROOM/HYNEK HOME - NIGHT

The TV displays an after-hours "OFF-AIR IMAGE". Hynek enters.
Hears voices coming from

THE KITCHEN

Hynek comes to the doorway, sees Mimi and Joel playing Scrabble. He holds for a beat, just watching them. Happy to be home. Mimi finally sees him, rises.

MIMI

Allen... I was getting so worried.

She comes to him and they hug.

HYNEK

Traffic was horrible, I'm sorry.

(pulls back)

Is this a new dress? Wow...

She pulls back, a little defeated that she couldn't show it off the way she wanted tonight.

MIMI

It is...

Joel is up, comes over as--

JOEL

Did you see any spacemen, Dad?

...What's in the box?

HYNEK

A special tool. To help you explore the stars. Just like your hero...

EXT. BACKYARD/HYNEK RESIDENCE - NIGHT

The open box on the ground, Hynek finishes putting together and adjusting a shiny NEW TELESCOPE as Joel and Mimi look on.

HYNEK

So it occurred to me on my drive home, tonight is the opposition of Mars. Now, that's not a martian uprising, Joel, it's the point in Mars' orbit when it passes closest to Earth.

Joel comes closer, clearly intrigued.

HYNEK (CONT'D)

And when I was your age, the first time I saw it, it got me interested in astronomy...

Mimi eyes Hynek as Joel approaches the telescope, looks in.

JOEL

Whoa. Far out, Dad. Pretty far out.

Mimi joins Hynek. As they watch their son discovering, for the first time, part of what makes Dad tick we HEAR a CLICK! Their family moment FREEZES like a photo before we REVEAL

INT. PINK CADILLAC - UP THE STREET

Susie snaps a few more shots before lowering a CAMERA with a telephoto lens; She'd been spying on them. *The hell?* She finally puts her car in gear, drives off, no headlights.

EXT. VACANT PARKING LOT/DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS - NIGHT

Cadillac pulls to a stop by a pay phone. Using her rearview, Susie applies lipstick before BRiiiiing! Susie steps out into the cold wind, picks up the receiver, speaks with a heavy Russian accent.

SUSIE MILLER

Mikhail... Ya svyazalsya.

TRANSLATED: 'I've made contact.' Off Susie, we SLAM TO:

EXT. TARMAC/AIR FORCE BASE - NIGHT

FOOTFALLS. Vandenberg and Twining walk with purpose.

VANDENBERG

I think the Captain will perform his part rather well, don't you?

TWINING

He'll suffice. It's that doctor I'm not so sure about now...

INT. BATHROOM/HYNEK HOME - SAME TIME

Hynek blots cold water on his face. It soothes him. Drying off, he gazes long at the CROSS OF JESUS on his wall.

TWINING (V.O.)

There was something off about him.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM/HYNEK HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Mimi's already in bed as Hynek emerges from the bathroom.

HYNEK

Hon, I got some paperwork I need to go through. Be up in a minute.

He gives her a kiss, turns and moves off as

TWINING (V.O.)

Are you sure he didn't say anything else in the debrief?

INT. DOWNSTAIRS OFFICE/HYNEK HOME - MOMENTS LATER

In the dark, Hynek moves to a bookshelf, retrieving a key from behind a stack. He then opens a desk drawer, reaches to a hidden compartment. Pulls out a small SILVER BOX.

VANDENBERG (V.O.)

No. He didn't. Why?

With the silver key, he opens it. INSIDE: old photos, a Star of David golden ring, a yarmulke, a wooden dreidel, a track metal written in Hebrew. He takes out that Polaroid, studies it for a long beat... lays it inside this SECRET BOX.

TWINING (V.O.)

He was afraid. I'm not sure about what. But he's hiding something.

We hold on Hynek, alone in the dark, before we CUT BACK TO:

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE - TARMAC HANGAR - NIGHT

Twining and Vandenberg stop, outside a MASSIVE HANGAR. It's surrounded by bared-wire fences and HEAVILY ARMED SOLDIERS.

VANDENBERG

Isn't everybody hiding something?

(then)

We'll keep an eye on him. He *is* smart.

Twining motions to one of the Guards -- open it up, turns back to Vandenberg.

TWINING

No one's that smart...

Light spills across his face as the MASSIVE DOORS BEGIN TO OPEN. In the distance we begin to make out something OVAL AND ABSOLUTELY GIGANTIC under a huge, white tarp at the far end. As the Generals enter now, the blinding light ahead washing them out into nothingness, we SNAP TO BLACK.