

September 21, 1964

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U.S.A.

Dr. Grote Reber
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Australia

Dear Dr. Reber:

Harlan J. Smith of the University of Texas has been kind enough to give me your address.


Recently I read a most interesting article on your early work in radio-astronomy in a curious little American magazine. A key paragraph reads:

".... Back in 1939 (as a result of some years of research) an electronics expert in Wheaton, Illinois received and recorded what he stated (in an article in the Chicago Tribune) were intelligent, though undecipherable, messages from the stars. This expert was Grote Reber. The messages he received were a peculiar sort of dot-dash signal which he recorded on tape." The article goes on to give details which sound authentic.

I'm engaged in a book on various aspects of the extra-terrestrial life question, and have gone to some trouble to collect as much information as I can find on the cases where persons have heard signals from space, i.e. the van der Pol and Strömer echos and the Todd-Jenkins "faces". However, this is the first reference that I've seen which mentions you. Could you tell me if the statement is at all correct? If so, are copies of the Chicago Tribune article available, or could I have the date on which it appeared? If you published any other material on the subject I would be most interested in the references.

I would be most grateful for any confirmation you can give me on the above.

Very truly yours,


Gordon H. Evans

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bases.

Specifically, the intelligence agencies would want to locate these bases so that other techniques, such as reconnaissance satellites, could be brought in to monitor them for signs which might signify a surprise nuclear missile attack on the United States.

Sugar Grove was to be an intelligence host and an uninvited third party listening in on Soviet conversations.

So, at any rate, went the theory, The reality proved quite a different thing.

In July, 1962, the office of Secretary McNamara announced the termination of the radio telescope project.

This marked the end of the scheme to eavesdrop on Soviet countdowns.

The official epitaph alleged the cause of death to be scientific progress, and soon the word was passed that Sugar Grove was canceled because the air force Midas satellite and other eavesdropping schemes were coming along so well and so fast.

Now, let's insert another quote, this time from a previous issue of FLYING SAUCERS, regarding another "radio telescope". It will help to clarify the points we will be making from Mr. Diamond's Sugar Grove bit:

Back in 1939 (as a result of some years of research) an elec-

tronics expert in Wheaton, Illinois received and recorded what he stated (in an article in the Chicago Tribune) were intelligent, though undecipherable, messages from the stars. This expert was Grote Reber. The messages he received were a peculiar sort of dot-dash signal which he recorded on tape. It was none of the codes used on Earth, either in general use, or in secret code use, such as the military.

How did Grote Reber receive his "messages"? Your editor knows personally for he visited the site, and saw the instrument with his own eyes. It was a sheet metal reflector, approximately 30 feet in diameter, looking exactly like today's circular radar aerials, except that it was of sheets rather than wires or bars; and the only opening in it was a small circular one in the center, through which the concentrated electronic waves being collected by the reflector were concentrated on his electronic receiver. This large reflector operated on axes mounted atop concrete pillars, and could be rotated through a 90 degree arc in a north and south direction.

In his Tribune story, Grote Reber told of "listening" nightly for as much as eight hours to these signals from the stars. He specifically stated that they came from one area, either a star or

a constellation, and that he recorded for hours at a time. Since the earth rotates from west to east, astronomically speaking, it is impossible to focus on any single star or constellation for many hours at a time with an instrument that rotates only in a north and south direction. Thus whatever it was that Grote Reber was listening to, remained stationary in relation to the Earth's surface during the period of reception, i.e., it rotated with the Earth in the same direction.

Necessarily, then, the source of the signals had to be comparatively close, more than likely very much closer than the moon, because in order to maintain its comparative position in the sky, it would have had to have a speed through space of many thousands of times that of the speed of light (which Einstein postulates as impossible) if it were a star (the nearest of which is four light years away!). The only reasonable conclusion that can be drawn is that Grote Reber's transmitting source was located very close to or actually in our own atmosphere, quite possibly from a space object (ship?) rotating in an orbit just as does the moon although at a rate calculated to enable it to maintain a constant position above one particular portion of the earth's surface.

Surely, you will say, Grote

Reber would have known this. Why, then, claim his message was from a star?

Here we have an answer also, circumstantial, of course, but logical. Grote Reber lived in an area noted for its concentration of what we might call metaphysically inclined people. He himself was associated with a local group interested in investigating unusual and even psychic phenomena. To them, messages from our atmosphere (from an astral plane) would not be difficult to accept. But to the readers of the Chicago Tribune, and to his fellow electronics engineers, who would instantly dismiss his claims as hogwash were he to make any "psychic" claims it would seem necessary to make his "signals" conform to a necessary logic in order to make himself heard respectfully.

That he was heard respectfully is evidenced by the fact that today Grote Reber is head of a four-million-dollar Government instrument which is a very advanced form of Reber's original receiver in Hawaii, engaged in the very serious business (obviously!) of listening to "hissing noises from the stars". Not intelligent signals now, they say, but radio wave signals of a natural nature very important to the new electronic astronomy.

How important is this new "lis-

tening device"? Important enough to cause Great Britain to erect a similar one costing ten million dollars! And literally dozens of other smaller instruments are going up all over the earth.

Radio signals are being received from "space". The same man who originally insisted they were intelligent, and whose reception was obviously not from a "hissing star" or any star, today says nothing. But he listens at Government expense now.

From the foregoing quotation, the astute reader will deduce that we think the radio telescopes are listening to something other than hissing stars and outer space phenomena. He will realize that we think these telescopes (nothing really but big "ears" which can eavesdrop on a variety of radio signals) are picking up intelligent signals, and not from as far away as one might think. Bearing this in mind, we'd like to make a few comments, and ask a few questions.

Before we do that, we'll recite from memory our concept of the Sugar Grove project. Originally, we understood that the natural amphitheater in West Virginia was selected for three reasons: 1) the amphitheater itself would be the "dish" of the radio telescope reflector, which because it was so huge, could not be mounted on towers and kept from

being twisted and distorted; 2) located in the valley, it would not pick up local interference of a variety of natures, such as electrical equipment, radio broadcasts, television, etc., but would be capable of receiving signals from the sky with best possible clarity; 3) would not be disturbed by earthquake activity, because this area is peculiarly free from the constant earth shocks which would effect adversely such a giant dish.

That the towers erected at Sugar Grove were not to bear the dish itself is revealed by Mr. Diamond, who says they were merely to serve as ladders for workmen engaged in constructing the reflector.

When the telescope was first announced, by the Navy, in June, 1958, it was said that it would "contribute greatly to basic knowledge of the complex physical processes that occur in outer space." But the truth, apparently, was that the navy and astronomers were merely fronting for the CIA, whose real purpose was to listen in on the Russian military, civil, and space radio communications in Russia itself, this by picking up the signals from the moon as they were weakly reflected to Earth.

This cooperation on the part of the navy and astronomers might be commendable, if it were