

CHAPTER TWO

1959, Alamogordo

“Did you hear?” Billy O’Hallorun said without looking up, his hands and eyes concentrating on an intricate mechanism.

“Aw geez, not again,” said Tom, who knew exactly what Billy was talking about. Another sighting. He did look up to see if Billy was joshing. No hint there either way.

CJ, Pablo and Silver Feather also glanced away from their tedious task, their part in the development of a new, highly sophisticated weapon. They looked disappointed to see a serious expression on Billy’s face rather than the usual, devilish eyes twinkling in concert with a crescent moon of a smile whenever he was pulling their legs in another of his endless array of practical jokes.

“Yep,” Billy said. “And Big Brother keeps spewing bullshit to keep the crazies quiet.”

“Weather balloons again?” asked Pablo. Billy shook his head.

“Atmospheric gases,” added CJ. Another head shake.

“Personally, I like the gases,” Silvy said. “Remember they used that one to explain away Bigfoot?”

“Yeah, swamp gases,” said Tom and he whistled a familiar song from an eerie science fiction movie.

“Nope,” said Billy. “This time they’ve added a new twist. Hinted it could be one of the secret weapons being developed for national security. Went so far as to suggest we’ve been testing them at White Sands, and that’s probably what the people are seeing, not spaceships from other planets.” CJ let go with a low whistle of his own, an oh-brother kind of whistle.

“I know we’ve gone through this a zillion times before; just tell me again, why don’t they tell the truth?” Silvy asked.

“Oooh, ooh, ooh,” Billy said, raising his hand and waving it like an enthusiastic little kid in first grade sure he has the right answer.

“Cause they figure the human race can’t handle it. There’d be panic in the streets, a worldwide economic depression, and massive suicides, that’s why.”