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| “late summer night tales”  By  Robert S. Sacchi |
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FAde In:

INT: living room - night

JOHN, 60, African-American, is sitting on a couch and watching television.

A telephone RINGS.

felicia (O.C.)

It’s your Aunt Silvia

John jumps from the couch and strides into the kitchen.

INT: kitchen - night

The kitchen has a wall calendar that shows September.

FELICIA, 56, African-American, John’s spouse, hands the phone to John.

JOHN

Hello, Aunt Silvia.

Aunt silvia (V.O.)

Hello Johnny. I was going through my stuff to see what we should take with us for our move to Florida. I came across some things of Uncle Bill’s from when he was in the Air Force.

(beat)

Would you want them? If not, I’ll throw them out.

john

Sure, I’ll take them. I’ll drop by and pick them up tomorrow, OK?

aunt silvia (v.o.)

Good, what time tomorrow?

john

I’ll pick them up after work, about 6 o’clock.

aunt silvia (v.o.)

Six, o’clock is fine.

john

Good, I’ll see you then.

John hangs up the phone.

felicia

Pick what up tomorrow?

john

Some of my Uncle Bill’s things from when he was in the Air Force.

felicia

You’re going to go there directly after work?

john

Yea.

(pause)

Uncle Bill, I haven’t thought about him in years.

(pause)

He was my favorite Uncle you know.

exT: a suburban single-family home - night

John steps out of his house and sits on the stoop.

It’s a clear night.

John looks up at the night sky.

exT: a city street - night

It’s a clear night.

Super: “September 1965”

JOHN 5, a few of his friends, and his UNCLE BILL, 35, sit on a stoop.

Uncle Bill has a bottle of wine, wrapped in a brown paper bag, in his hand.

Uncle Bill takes an occasional sip of the wine as he speaks.

uncle bill

Then the cyclops ate one of the crew.

John 5, and his friends, vocalize their pretend disgust.

uncle bill (CONT’D)

The cyclops said, ‘you men taste stringy’. That’s when I got an idea.

(beat)

I said; ‘give us the grapes and we’ll make wine for you. That way you won’t care how we taste.’

(beat)

So, we stomped the grapes into wine. This made him drunk and he went to sleep.

(Pause)

Then I put a poker in the fireplace. While he was sleeping, I stuck the hot poker in his eye.

John 5, and his friends, vocalize their pretend disgust.

uncle bill (CONT’D)

Then me and the rest of the crew ran out of the cave.

Uncle Bill takes a long sip of wine.

uncle bill (CONT’D)

Now this story here is true.

inT: movie theater - day

It’s a small auditorium.

Officers in mid-1950s uniforms, some in flight suits, pile in.

SUPER: “September 1955 – Two weeks before the story’s beginning.”

The officers have pilot’s wings. They include: 1ST LT. WILLIAM MITCHELL, mid-20s version of uncle Bill, CAPTAIN HARRY VOSS, 30, white, average height and build. 1st LT. JAMES MOORE, white, tall with a slim build.

captain harry voss

They’re going to show us a film of an interview with a World War II German pilot.

1st lt james moore

That’s all we need now, taking advice from the losers.

A few of the pilot laugh.

The pilots sit down.

The lights go out.

There is the CLICKING of the tape reel.

inT: movie theater – later - day

1st Lt. Moore is sleeping, others appear board, 1st Lt. Mitchell pays close attention.

ON SCREEN:

GENERALLEUTNANT ADOLF GALLAND, 43, dark hair, mustache, chubby, speaks with a thick German accent.

generalleutnant adolf galland

One time a Spitfire had me in a bad position. I couldn’t get away from him.

(beat)

In desperation I fired my machine guns and cannons. He was behind me of course and there was no one in front of me.

(beat)

When you see tracers in front of you it’s difficult to tell if they are going away from you or coming towards you. If one or two of the empty shell casings hit your aircraft you may think it was bullets hitting you.

(beat)

In any case the trick worked and the Spitfire pilot broke off the attack. I used this trick once more during The Battle of Britain and again over Germany against four Mustangs. In these cases, the enemy fighters broke off their attacks.

OFF SCREEN:

inT: officers club – night

SUPER: “September 1955 – The night before the story’s beginning.”

At a table at one end of the room is 1st Lt. William Mitchell. He is with an AFRICAN-AMERICAN FIRST LIEUTENANT, an AFRICAN-AMERICAN SECOND LIEUTENANT, and CAPTAIN DON PRICE, 32, African-American.

Captain Harry Voss is at a table at the other end of the room. He is with 1st Lt. James Moore and two WHITE CAPTAINS.

COLONEL JOHNSON and LT. COL. KENNEDY sit at a table in the center of the room.

Captain Voss is on his third 3.2 beer. One captain is also on his third beer. The other captain is drinking scotch and getting quietly drunk. First Lieutenant Moore is drinking scotch. He is speaking in a loud voice.

1st Lt. james moore

Them Brooklyn Bums don’t have a chance against the Yankees.

First Lt. Mitchell is on his third 3.2 beer. The 2nd Lt. is also on his third beer. The 1st Lt. is drinking scotch and getting quietly drunk. Captain Price is drinking scotch. He is speaking in a loud voice.

captain don price

I tell you Archie Moore is going to knock Marciano out.

Colonel Johnson and Lt. Col. Kennedy look at 1st Lt. Mitchell’s table. First Lt. William Mitchell is in their direct line of sight.

First Lt. William Mitchell gestures for Captain Price to lower his voice.

1st Lt. james moore

They got Whitey Ford, Tommy Byrne, and Bob Turley pitching. The Bums are going to have a hard time getting a single run.

captain don price

Marciano is slow. Moore is going to stick and move. By the 9th round, if it even goes that far, Moore can knock him out with a feather.

Colonel Johnson and Lt. Col. Kennedy look at 1st Lt. Mitchell’s table. First Lt. William Mitchell is in their direct line of site.

First Lt. William Mitchell gestures for Captain Price to lower his voice.

1st Lt. james moore

With Yogi Berra, Phil Rizzuto, and Mickey Mantle the Bronx Bombers are going to give the Bums a good look at the bleachers.

captain don price

Joe Lewis was old when he fought Marciano. In his prime Marciano wouldn’t stand a chance against Lewis.

Colonel Johnson and Lt. Col. Kennedy look at 1st Lt. Mitchell’s table. First Lt. William Mitchell is in their direct line of sight.

First Lt. William Mitchell gestures for Captain Price to lower his voice.

exT: A desert – day

There are no clouds.

SUPER: “September 1955 – The Story”

Captain Harry Voss and 1st Lt. William Mitchell fly their F-86 Sabre jets across the desert sky.

exT: sky – day

There’s a silver flying saucer.

inT: 1st Lt. mitchell’s cockpit – day

1st lt. william mitchell

Indian 2 to Indian Leader, I see something 11 o’clock low.

inT: captain harry voss’s cockpit – day

captain harry voss

Indian Leader to Indian 2 I see it too. Indian Leader to Wigwam, we see what looks like a flying disk.

(beat)

We’re going for a closer look.

‘wigwam’ (V.O.)

Wigwam to Indian Leader, we don’t have anything on radar.

exT: sky – day

Two F-86s close in on the object.

captain harry voss (v.O.)

Object is silver, disk shaped, about 3 feet in diameter. It’s thin, can’t be more than a couple of inches thick.

Object climbs vertically.

captain harry voss cont’d (v.O.)

Hey where did it go?

1st lt william mitchell (v.O.)

Indian 2, it climbed straight up.

The two Sabre Jets climb to the disk’s altitude.

The F-86s are closing in on the disk.

The disk makes a sharp turn to the left.

1st lt william mitchell cont’d (v.O.)

Indian 2, did you see that? It had to be a 25g turn at least!

captain harry voss (v.O.)

Indian Leader, I wouldn’t believe it if I didn’t see it.

The two jets turn towards the disk.

The F-86s pursue the disk.

They gradually close the distance between themselves and the disk.

The disk stops and the fighters overshoot it.

The jets turn.

The disk makes a quick circle around the fighters.

The disk climbs vertically.

exT: f-86 – day

Holes appear on a jet’s fuselage.

inT: captain harry voss’s cockpit – day

The aircraft shakes.

captain harry voss

Something’s hitting me!

exT: sky – day

The F-86s weave.

exT: f-86 – day

Holes appear on the F-86’s tail.

inT: 1st Lt. mitchell’s cockpit – day

1st lt william mitchell

He’s shooting at me too!

captain harry voss (V.O.)

Split-S! Let’s go for the deck.

exT: sky – day

The two jets roll over and make vertical dives.

The disk matches their speed and altitude.

The F-86s pull out of their dives about 1,000 feet off the ground.

exT: f-86 – day

Holes appear on the F-86’s tail.

inT: captain harry voss’s cockpit – day

The aircraft shakes.

captain harry voss

He’s still on us! He’s hitting me again! Crossover break!

exT: sky – day

The F-86s turn towards each other.

The disk reverses direction and flies between the two fighters.

exT: f-86 – day

Holes appear on a F-86’s fuselage.

Holes appear on a F-86’s tail.

inT: captain harry voss’s cockpit – day

The aircraft shakes.

captain harry voss

He’s hitting me again!

1st lt william mitchell cont’d (v.O.)

Me too!

captain harry voss

Thatch weave!

1st lt william mitchell cont’d (v.O.)

Roger.

The fighters turn towards each other.

The disk climbs vertically.

exT: f-86 – day

Holes appear on a F-86’s tail.

Holes appear on a F-86’s wing.

inT: 1st Lt. mitchell’s cockpit – day

His aircraft shakes.

1st lt william mitchell

This thing can hit us from anywhere!

captain harry voss (V.O.)

Fly low and fast, and keep jinking!

exT: sky – day

The F-86s are less than 100 feet off the desert floor.

An F-86 executes and Immelmann maneuver then turns hard. The F-86 opens fire with its cannons.

The disk makes sharp maneuvers to avoid being hit.

An F-86 explodes.

exT: a city street - night

It’s a clear night.

Super: “September 1975”

Uncle Bill, 45, sits on a stoop. He is with some children about 5 years old.

JOHN 15, watches from the porch.

Uncle Bill takes sips of wine as he speaks.

uncle bill

He was made out of bronze, so the bullets just bounced off him.

(pause)

Then I thought, ‘Achilles Heel’. I looked at the back of his foot and saw what looked like a giant screw.

(pause)

I used my rifle to unscrew it. As I unscrewed it some smoke was coming out. When the giant screw came off the giant statue fell apart.

Uncle Bill takes a long sip of wine.

uncle bill CONT’D

Now this story here is true.

exT: small living room - night

John 15, is watching television.

There are sounds from his parents in the kitchen.

ON SCREEN

The scene from Ulysses where Ulysses is dealing with the cyclops.

OFF SCREEN

mother (O.C.)

I’m tired of having to stretch less and less money.

father (O.C.)

The economy is bad. It happens in business. What do you want me to do?

mother (O.C.)

Bill either shows up late, hung over, or not at all.

father (O.C.)

That’s not true.

mother (O.C.)

It is true often enough. He’s not doing his share.

father (O.C.)

I’ll talk to him.

mother (O.C.)

Talk is cheap. You have to let him go.

father (O.C.)

You know it’s been rough for him. He never got over what they did to him in the Air Force.

mother (O.C.)

You wanted your own business then run it like a business, not a charity.

father (O.C.)

He is my brother.

(Pause)

Families stick together no matter what. That’s final.

exT: a city street - night

John 15 and his FRIEND watch from his porch as the children walk away and Uncle Bill makes his way to the downstairs apartment.

friend

I remember when we use to listen to your uncle’s stories.

JOhn 15

We’ve grown up. Uncle Bill is the same.

(Pause)

You’d think he’d try to fill in the holes in his story. If it was over the U.S. the UFO would have been picked up by radar.

friend

Yea, and if a flying saucer wanted to shoot down two fighters it could do it in a second.

JOhn 15

I guess Uncle Bill didn’t change his story because he didn’t have to. A kid young enough will either believe it or go along for the ride.

INT: basement - night

John is next to a large open box.

He is looking at pictures.

There is a picture of Uncle Bill in a flight suit standing by a T-33.

There is a picture of Uncle Bill in a flight suit standing by an F-86.

There is a picture of Uncle Bill with a group of other pilots and an F-86 in the background.

John puts down the pictures and rummages through the box. He takes out a log book.

He opens the log book and reads.

exT: sky – day

SUPER: “September 1955”

An F-86 explodes.

1st lt william mitchell

Indian 2! It just shot down Indian Leader!

An F-86 streaks across the sky with the disk close behind.

inT: f-86 – day

There is a series of TAPPING sounds.

exT: sky – day

The F-86 is taking evasive action. The disk is matching. The jet’s moves.

inT: f-86 – day

First Lt. Mitchell maneuvers his aircraft and looks back.

1st lt william mitchell

I wish this thing could shoot backwards.

First Lt. Mitchell presses his trigger.

The cannons burst to life.

exT: sky – day

The F-86 goes into a slight climb.

The disk wobbles violently, then decelerates.

inT: f-86 – day

First Lt. Mitchell stops firing. He goes into a slight dive until he is a ground level.

exT: sky – day

The disk takes up the pursuit.

inT: f-86 – day

First Lt. Mitchell sees high tension lines at his 2 o’clock.

First Lt. Mitchell turns and flies for the high-tension lines.

exT: sky – day

The disk is close behind the F-86.

inT: f-86 – day

First Lt. Mitchell feels more hits on his aircraft.

exT: sky – day

The F-86 with the disk close behind flies low enough to the ground to kick up dust.

inT: f-86 – day

First Lt. Mitchell feels more hits on his aircraft.

The F-86 flies under the high-tension lines.

First Lt. Mitchell opens fire and climbs slightly.

inT: disk – day

The disk is analyzing all moving objects. It is weaving to avoid shell casings.

exT: high-tension wires – day

There is a huge electrical explosion.

exT: sky – day

The disk is no longer present the F-86 flies across the sky.

INT: basement - day

John is rummaging through the box.

Lyon, 30, steps in.

john

Oh Lyon, you’re here.

lyon

Mom said you were looking through Some of Aunt Silvia’s old things?

john

Actually, it’s my Uncle Bill’s stuff from when he was in the Air Force.

lyon

Uncle Bill?

john

Yes, he died a couple of years before you were born.

lyon

Can I look too?

john

Sure.

John finds a diary in the box.

Lyon pics up and looks at the flight log.

INT: stark room - night

SUPER: “September 1955”

First Lt. William Mitchell sits in a chair. Before him is a board of majors and colonels. The board includes Col. Johnson and Lt. Col. Kennedy.

lt. col. kennedy

You and Captain Voss were drinking at the officer’s club last night.

1st lt. william mitchell

I had a few beers sir. Captain Voss was at another table.

(beat)

He wasn’t drunk or hung over when we went up. We were weren’t drunk when we were flying.

lt. col. kennedy

Why did you stop transmitting?

1st lt. william mitchell

What do you mean sir?

Lt. Col. Kennedy picks up a piece of paper.

lt. col. kennedy

The last transmission we heard was: ‘Object is silver, disk shaped, about 3 feet in diameter. It’s thin, can’t be more than a couple of inches thick’.

(pause)

The tower made repeated attempts to raise you but received no response.

1st lt. william mitchell

We were transmitting all along, that’s when we weren’t too busy fighting that thing.

(pause)

Come to think of it the last message we received was a message saying they didn’t see anything on radar.

lt. col. kennedy

A couple of inches thick, what was flying that mysterious object, ants?

col. johnson

Captain Voss is dead, power lines were cut and so was electrical power to thousands, and you come back with your plane heavily damaged and with most of your ammunition gone. All you have for an explanation is this crazy story.

1st lt. william mitchell

It happened sir. I’m telling you exactly what happened.

col. johnson

Well none of us here believe you and no one above the age of 10 will ever believe such nonsense.

1st lt. william mitchell

But it’s true.

col. johnson

Stop this! You have two choices. Resign and we’ll let you out for the good of the service, or face a court martial.

(pause)

A court martial will probably end in dismissal.

INT: basement - day

John closes the diary.

lyon

Dad, this is fantastic!

(pause)

He had a dogfight with an extraterrestrial vehicle. I’m surprised they let him keep this. Did he say anything about it in his diary?

john

Yes, you don’t believe any of it, do you?

lyon

You think he made it all up?

john

He had to explain the reason why another pilot got killed.

lyon

Dad, if someone is going to make up a story to get out of trouble, they would come up with something people are more likely to believe.

john

How come this thing didn’t show up on radar?

lyon

Dad, hello, stealth.

john

The size, something that could fit into something that small wouldn’t have the intelligence to make something like that.

lyon

A robot.

john

Ground control not receiving the messages?

lyon

Jamming.

john

But he claimed he was talking to the other pilot, besides something that advanced could have taken Korean War vintage aircraft down in a second.

lyon

Yes, if that is what it wanted to do. If it wanted to know as much as possible about our capabilities it would want to test out the capabilities of the aircraft and the capabilities of the people who were in those aircraft.

john

So, you’re saying it was toying with the two fighters to find out what the planes could do and how humans are likely to react?

lyon

Yes, exactly. Keep in mind in the 50’s sci fi movies the aliens used ray guns with beams of light. He doesn’t say anything about a beam of light. Laser beams don’t have beams of light.

john

They don’t?

lyon

No.

john

How would he know that?

(beat)

He wouldn’t.

(beat)

It was true.

lyon

Destroying their space ship was probably more than they bargained for. Your uncle Bill may have saved the planet.

john

You mean them not expecting us to have the capability or ingenuity to take out one of their craft?

lyon

Exactly.

john

Uncle Bill told his story to kids under 10 because he wanted someone to believe him.

INT: upstairs hallway - night

John bangs a picture hanger into a wall.

He hangs up a picture of Uncle Bill standing next to an F-86.

FAde Out:

the end