

## **The Psychology of Dreamland** **How Secrecy is Destroying Public Faith in Government and Science**

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By Terry Hansen  
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"Out here on the perimeter there are no stars!" - Jim Morrison

Topographic maps of Groom Lake, Nevada, available for a modest fee from the United States Geological Survey, show little more than scattered mountain ranges, a dry lake bed, and assorted unimproved roads running this way and that across the parched, high-desert terrain. The Las Vegas Sectional Aeronautical Chart, published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for navigation purposes, offers no indication of landing strips or military facilities on or near the lake bed.

These maps are official cartographic lies, part of a coordinated strategy among various federal agencies to deceive people about what the U.S. government is doing out there in its sprawling, top-secret desert test range northwest of Nellis Air Force Base. Yet even the most bungling and ill-equipped spy can get a pretty good look at the clandestine Groom Lake facilities by examining commercially available satellite photos. In sharp contrast to U.S. government maps, the photos reveal an elaborate complex of buildings and what is perhaps the world's longest runway cutting diagonally across the western edge of the dry lake.

This suggests that the government's efforts at cartographic deception may be aimed more at the American public than foreign intelligence agencies. If so, it would not be unprecedented. CIA spy planes such as the U-2 and A-12, designed at the legendary Lockheed Skunk Works, flew for years over the Soviet Union, China and other foreign countries whose air-defense agencies often knew quite well what was going on. It was the American public that was successfully kept in the dark until these operations were exposed or declassified.

Though the Cold War is over, the U.S. military, with the generous assistance of our congressional representatives, continues to work very hard to keep us ignorant of where many of our tax dollars go. By various estimates, tens of billions of dollars disappear each year into so-called "black projects" whose purposes we are not allowed to know. How this happens has been outlined by Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Tim Weiner in *Blank Check: The Pentagon's Black Budget* (New York: Warner Books, 1990).

One of the most widely propagated explanations for where much of this money is vanishing is that it's being used to develop and fly stealthy, high-speed aircraft such as the rumored "Aurora" hypersonic spy plane and the TR-3A "Black Manta." (See, for example, the March 1993 *Popular Science*.)

Seldom mentioned in such accounts, however, are far more sensational R&D projects said to employ technology that is quite literally out of this world. Although these bizarre and troublesome reports clearly are difficult for mainstream journalists to get their minds around, the evidence that otherworldly projects are under way in the Nevada desert is at least as good, and often much better, than the evidence for the much-publicized Aurora. Aside from the screaming headlines of sensationalist grocery-store tabloids, though, the subject is carefully avoided by major national newspapers and TV networks. As every astute editor knows, news, to be taken seriously, must be plausible - even if it's wrong.

History has demonstrated, however, that the truth has occasionally been unbelievable. So set aside your heart-felt prejudices and incredulity for the moment, and come along on an epistemological adventure into the tangled and shadowy jungle of officially forbidden knowledge. Here, rational analysis can no longer be considered a reliable guide. This is a realm ruled by the high priests of the intelligence community who simply do not like us poking our noses into their business, even though we're footing the bill for it. They have posted life-threatening signs warning us not to take pictures, much less set foot on their turf, and they've unleashed their wizards of disinformation to confound our investigative progress. Any hopes for

certainty must be left behind at the outer boundaries of consensus reality, for we are about to explore the enigma of Dreamland.

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### Closing Freedom Ridge

In October of 1993, nearly nine years after the Air Force illegally seized some 89,000 acres of public land surrounding the high-security Groom Lake test-flight facility in Nevada, the Air Force asked the Interior Department to close the last publicly accessible sites from which the base is visible. Included among them were two often-visited areas--White Sides Mountain and Freedom Ridge--that the Air Force had missed in its initial land grab due, apparently, to a surveying error.

As with most of what goes on around Groom Lake, also known as "Area 51" and "Dreamland," the reasons for the Air Force's sudden need for heightened secrecy were never made public. When hauled before a congressional committee to explain its actions in late 1984, an Air Force spokesman would say only that the Air Force did have the authority to take the land but would not reveal the source of that authority or its reason for doing so in open session.

Claims by a maverick, self-described physicist Robert Lazar, first televised by Las Vegas CBS affiliate KLAS in March 1989, that government flight tests of alien spacecraft were taking place at a secret facility south of Groom Lake had attracted swarms of curious observers to the area, including a number of television crews. Clearly this unwanted attention had proven irritating to the Air Force which no doubt wishes to keep secret its stealthy fleet of costly vehicles that have begun to exhibit, in the words of *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, "exotic propulsion and aerodynamic schemes not fully understood at this time."

Possibly the most thorough and well-documented account of the sensational Robert Lazar affair is offered in Timothy Good's recent book, *Alien Contact* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1993). For dramatic impact, though, it's hard to beat Lazar's own videotaped testimony about what he claims to have witnessed at a secret facility near Papoose dry lake known as S-4. *UFOs: The Best Evidence*, a series of TV reports produced by George Knapp for KLAS, contains the original Lazar interviews and a copy can be obtained from the UFO Audio-Video Clearinghouse (P.O. Box 342, Yucaipa, CA 92399), an organization that exhibits a distinctly cavalier attitude toward intellectual-property laws. Knapp later produced an extended, one-on-one interview with Lazar for KLAS's *On the Record*, broadcast in December of 1989. (This, too, can be garnered from the UFO A-V Clearinghouse.)

Stories of alien spacecraft in the hands of the U.S. military are legion and date back at least to 1947 when Lt. Walter Haut, public information officer at Roswell Army Air Field, issued a press release stating that the Army had recovered a crashed flying saucer from the New Mexico desert. The release made reporters around the world sit up and pay attention. Although the Pentagon soon made a concerted effort to squelch this story, military authorities were never quite able to kill it off.

The official cloud of denials and disinformation did manage to force the case into epistemological limbo until 1978 when first-hand witnesses to the crash recovery began to surface. Detailed accounts of these now legendary events comprise the subject of several books including *Crash at Corona* by Stanton T. Friedman and Don Berliner (New York: Paragon House, 1992) and *UFO Crash at Roswell* by Kevin D. Randle and Donald R. Schmitt (New York: Avon Books, 1991).

Hard-headed skeptics who prefer to believe that such tales are merely exercises in creative fiction targeted at a gullible public might have their minds pried open a just crack by viewing videotaped interviews with first-hand witnesses to the Roswell incident. *Recollections of Roswell, Part II*, a videotape available from the non-profit Fund for UFO Research (P.O. Box 277, Mt. Ranier, MD 20712), contains a compelling body of testimony from 26 of the over 100 people who have now come forth to tell what they saw or know about the affair. Why did they wait so long? Some of the witnesses say they were told at the time by military personnel that they and members of their family would be killed if they ever talked about what they had seen.

For those who place more faith in official government sources than eyewitnesses, there are also thousands of pages of UFO-related documents extracted from various reluctant branches of the U.S. military-intelligence community with the help of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). These documents, which indicate a large-scale, ongoing interest in UFOs by military-intelligence authorities long after the Air Force closed its Project Blue Book, were first published in 1984 in the book *Clear Intent* by Lawrence Fawcett and Barry J. Greenwood (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1984). The book has since been renamed as *The UFO Coverup*. Although government censors deleted much information prior to releasing the requested documents, a few relevant tidbits managed to sneak through. For example, a 1950 FBI memo from agent Guy Hottel reported that he had been told by an Air Force investigator of three flying saucers that had been recovered in the New Mexico desert, complete with humanoid bodies.

Much of the American public--and nearly all of the American press - seems to have swallowed the Air Force cover story that what had been recovered was merely a weather balloon. Advisers to Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin apparently did not. According to former KLAS-TV news reporter Bryan Gresh, who visited the Soviet Union with George Knapp in March of 1993, Valeriy Burdakov, once a scientist at the Moscow Aviation Institute, said he was told by one of Stalin's top scientific advisers that the Soviet leader had asked for an assessment of the Roswell UFO situation. Stalin was reportedly informed by his advisers that the recovered UFO was real and not something manufactured in the United States.

Recently, however, the General Accounting Office has begun to investigate certain aspects of the Roswell case at the request of Rep. Steven Schiff (R-N.M.). Schiff says he's been frustrated in his attempts to get more information about the recovery operation from the Defense Department. "Generally, I'm a skeptic about UFOs and alien beings, but there are indications from the runaround that I got that whatever it was, it wasn't a balloon. Apparently, it's another government coverup," he told the *Washington Post* in January of 1994.

Faced with mounting evidence of a deception, the Air Force in September of 1994 finally admitted it had lied to the public about the Roswell events. In place of the weather balloon cover story, however, it quickly introduced a new explanation for the mysterious crash/recovery episode--a secret Project Mogul balloon launched to detect Soviet nuclear-weapons tests.

The new Air Force account was duely reported by William J. Broad of *The New York Times* in a story picked up by many other major daily newspapers around the nation. In an obvious departure from basic standards of responsible journalism, Broad defended the Air Force deception, characterizing it as "a white lie" and dismissed the hundreds of military and civilian witnesses who contradict the Air Force account as "flying-saucer fans and cover-up theorists." Yet, a comparison of the new Air Force story with eyewitness testimony leaves nearly as many unanswered questions as before, as various critics were quick to demonstrate.

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## Supporting Testimony

Robert Lazar's fantastic story about his experiences reverse-engineering alien gravity-propulsion hardware at S-4 is not without important gaps and inconsistencies, although reporter/producer George Knapp, who has probably spent more time cross-examining him than anyone, says he thinks Lazar may be telling the truth about the essential facts. But even if Lazar turns out to be a sophisticated con artist or government disinformation agent, Knapp, who has spent years chasing this story, says other sources in the Las Vegas area confirm that alien technology is being stored and tested near the Groom Lake area.

"The story about alien technology in Nevada did not begin with Bob Lazar nor does it end with him," Knapp told a Triad UFO-research conference held July 17, 1994, in the Seattle suburb of Bellevue. "Similar information has been floating around in Nevada since before Bob Lazar was even born."

"UFO files bulge with testimony from former military men who say they have seen disks or alien material, or even alien bodies, at various military facilities around the country," Knapp said. "Residents of Lincoln and Nye counties report seeing flying disks and other UFOs in and around these military facilities since the early 1950s."

Knapp went on to recite a long list of mostly named sources, many of whom he says he had spoken with directly, who claimed knowledge of alien materials kept in Nevada. Some of these sources work for companies funded by the U.S. government, so they're not about to go public as Bob Lazar did. Doing so would mean loss of their incomes, jail time, or worse. Knapp said some of his sources said they had been threatened after he had talked with them.

Knapp ended this list of testimonials by describing "a highly credible source" from a "very prominent Nevada family" who has verifiable credentials demonstrating he has worked on classified programs since the early 1950s. (Unlike Bob Lazar, a more problematic character whose records and credentials seem to have nearly disappeared, a fact Lazar attributes to his former employers in the intelligence world.) Knapp said he stalked this source for about two years before the source would even talk. But when he finally did, the source related the following details: (1) alien technology has been stored and tested at the base since the early 1950s; (2) research on the technology is carried out by civilian contractors, paid in cash, which provides an extra buffer to any security breaches; (3) in the beginning, the people running the program did not know what the disks were made of and had little success in trying to fly them, at least up until the 1960s; and (4) a live alien had once been held by the military on the Nevada base. Knapp said this source "has agreed to provide a videotape deposition to be released after his death."

Knapp also said this source told him the alien hardware was brought to Nevada in 1952 or 1953 from a military base in Ohio and was initially stored at a Nevada facility known as Indian Springs. (Sources who claim knowledge of the Roswell crash-recovery effort said the recovered material had been flown by several bomber aircraft to Wright Field near Dayton, Ohio, now known as Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Former Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater has said he once tried to get access to examine UFO evidence alleged to be kept at Wright-Patterson but was turned away for lack of appropriate security clearance.)

One source cited by Knapp claimed the military-intelligence community is afraid to release such information because it might cause the "disintegration of our social institutions" and that people might stop paying their taxes.

Whatever you make of such tales it may be hasty to simply write them off. Even the aerospace trade publication *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, acknowledged in its Oct. 1, 1990, issue that some very odd things are being spotted in the skies over Nevada these days. A few key details apparently were left out of the *Aviation Week* story, however. As described in Timothy Good's *Alien Contact*, the author of the *Aviation Week* story reportedly later told researcher William Hamilton III that the "exotic propulsion" systems being tested could be some sort of antigravity system. Good also quotes an FAA radar operator who said that whatever is being tested often hovers in one place for up to fifteen minutes.

This is the age of the video handycam and, not surprisingly, attempts have been made to capture some of this unusual aerial activity on videotape. Robert Lazar and others have made night-time videos of glowing objects moving around in the Nevada sky. A far more compelling sighting was captured in broad daylight and broadcast on Fox TV's *Sightings: The UFO Report*. The segment shows a group of glowing objects hovering and looping rapidly around the sky in a most unaircraftlike manner. Whatever they are, an F-16 fighter would be no match for them.

Further evidence for the captured-alien-spaceship story comes from a controversial document leaked anonymously, in the form of an undeveloped roll of 35mm film, to movie director Jamie Shandera in December 1984. When developed and printed, the film was found to contain images of a briefing document seemingly prepared for then-incoming President Dwight D. Eisenhower on behalf of President Truman. This document, bearing the date of 18 November 1952, is known among UFO researchers as the "MJ-12," or "Majestic 12," document. It describes the recovery of a crashed UFO and alien bodies in New Mexico and says that a "covert analytical effort" organized by General Nathan Twining and Dr. Vannevar Bush had been set up to investigate the matter.

Among the twelve members of the Majestic-12 group was noneother than the late Harvard University astronomer, Dr. Donald Menzel. This was surprising to UFO researchers because, in the 1950s and '60s, Menzel had been one of the most outspoken critics of UFO research. He even wrote three anti-UFO

books in an attempt to debunk the subject. The idea that Menzel had maintained a covert relationship with the U.S. intelligence community, and had even participated in a top-level UFO research effort, was a piece of the puzzle many UFO investigators concluded simply could not fit. Or could it?

A CIA panel convened in early 1953 had concluded that the continued reporting of UFOs by the American media posed a threat to national security for various reasons. The "Robertson Panel," as it is now known, recommended that the continued reporting of UFOs should be actively discouraged through a covertly exercised mass-media program of "training and debunking." One of the methods discussed at the time was the use of high-profile scientific authorities to explain away the phenomenon. (For an account of the Robertson Panel and its affect on public opinion see *The UFO Controversy in America* by David M. Jacobs, now a history professor at Temple University. The book was based on his doctoral dissertation.)

Until the Majestic-12 document appeared, there was no solid evidence to support the view that Menzel was playing the role of CIA disinformation agent, even though his explanations for UFO sightings often seemed irrational and inconsistent with the reported facts. It was only in the course of trying to poke holes in the MJ-12 document that physicist and UFO researcher Stanton Friedman discovered Menzel's hidden intelligence career, a fact apparently unknown even to Menzel's wife. The story of this and other discoveries are related in Friedman's *Final Report on Operation Majestic 12*, available from the Fund for UFO Research.

Even within the UFO-research community, the authenticity of the MJ-12 document is hotly debated. Friedman, who conducted a thorough investigation of the document with the help of a \$16,000 grant from the Fund for UFO Research, concluded there was no evidence indicating it could not be genuine. Other investigators are more skeptical. As Friedman explained, though, whoever prepared the MJ-12 document could only have done so with an insider's knowledge of some very esoteric historical details--such as Menzel's clandestine intelligence career, for example, and other minutia about White House operations in the 1950s. In short, if the MJ-12 briefing document is disinformation, it is highly *sophisticated* disinformation, almost certainly prepared by someone within the intelligence community.

If the MJ-12 document is a fraud, it presents still another paradox in a field already rich with them. Why would the U.S. intelligence community prepare a fake document designed to convince us that undeniable evidence for the existence of UFOs is in government hands when the Air Force had spent many years attempting to convince the public that UFOs are mythological? One suggested reason would be to suck civilian UFO investigators into accepting the authenticity of MJ-12 and then obliterate their credibility with the media and scientific world by exposing the document as a hoax. After all, a similar thing seems to have occurred back in the 1950s following publication of a book about a crashed UFO and alien bodies called *Behind the Flying Saucers* written by Frank Scully (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1950). Was history about to repeat itself?

Perhaps the boys in U.S. counter-intelligence had decided UFO researchers were getting a little too close for comfort and needed to be cut down a notch. If so, however, this only provides further evidence that something very important is being covered up by the intelligence community. Anyway you look at this issue, something doesn't add up--unless, of course, the document is genuine.

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## Spy Versus Spy

What is known about the CIA's involvement with the UFO controversy could by now fill a substantial book but, for the purposes of this article, a few choice examples will have to suffice. I've already mentioned the Robertson Panel's recommendation that media reporting of UFO sightings should be covertly suppressed, as well as the fascinating case of Donald Menzel's secret life in the U.S. intelligence community. The Robertson Panel made other recommendations as well. One of them was that the two major UFO research groups existing at the time, the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO) and Civilian Saucer Intelligence, should be "watched because of their potentially great influence on mass thinking if widespread sightings should occur."

The CIA's conclusion that UFO groups needed to be watched apparently was taken to heart. One of the most influential private UFO research organizations in the 1960s, the now-defunct National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), was literally crawling with CIA or former CIA personnel. In fact, it is hard to escape the impression that NICAP was being actively managed (or, more appropriately, mismanaged) by the CIA for its own inscrutable purposes. The history of the NICAP-CIA connection was detailed by researcher Todd Zechel in the January 1979 issue of *Just Cause*, the newsletter of Citizens Against UFO Secrecy (CAUS), one of the organizations that successfully sued the Agency under the Freedom of Information Act for release of classified UFO-related documents.

Shortly after NICAP was founded by space-propulsion researcher T. Townsend Brown in October 1956, at least two CIA covert agents worked their way into key positions in the organization. Nicholas de Rochefort, an employee of the CIA's Psychological Warfare Staff became vice-chairman of NICAP in late 1956. The second was Bernard J.O. Carvalho who became chairman of the group's membership subcommittee. According to Zechel, Carvalho, among other things, had been a cut-out (go between) man for CIA proprietary (privately owned) companies such as Fairway Corporation, a charter airline used by CIA executives.

In 1957, Roscoe Hillenkoetter, the CIA's original director (from 1947-50), joined NICAP's Board of Governors. As stated earlier, the authenticity of the MJ-12 briefing document is a subject of dispute, but it is nevertheless worth noting that Hillenkoetter was listed in that document as a member of the Majestic 12 UFO investigation team, along with Donald Menzel.

Another NICAP board member was Col. Joseph Bryan III who, from 1947-53 had been the founder and original chief of the CIA's Psychological Warfare Staff. In addition, former CIA briefing officer Karl Pflock was chairman of NICAP's Washington, D.C., subcommittee during the late 1960s and early 1970s, according to Zechel. Pflock, who has researched the Roswell case under a grant from the non-profit Fund for UFO Research, was author of the theory that the alleged Roswell UFO crash was really a secret Project Mogul balloon, an idea the Air Force endorsed in its recent press release. Pflock vigorously ridicules any suggestion that he has a hidden, CIA-inspired agenda. (See "I was a Ufologist for the CIA..." *UFO Magazine*, Vol. 8, No. 6, 1993) There are other CIA connections, as well, but I will not belabor the point.

NICAP began to run into financial problems following the release of the University of Colorado UFO "study" which portrayed the potential for UFO research in a very negative light. (More about this shortly.) Under the tenure of president John L. Acuff, NICAP's financial difficulties grew steadily worse, largely because most of the money the organization was raising wound up in Acuff's pocket. Membership dropped off further after Acuff sold NICAP's membership list to the Nazi Party. Prior to his NICAP appointment, Acuff had been head of the Society of Photographic Scientists and Engineers, whose membership included many Defense Department and CIA photo analysts.

When NICAP's money finally ran out, Acuff resigned and was replaced by Alan N. Hall, another retired CIA employee.

Todd Zechel summed it up best: "To come right out and say it was all a conspiracy would either be leaping to conclusions or stating the obvious--take your pick. But in the final analysis, the results speak for themselves. And the results are that if [the CIA] wanted to destroy the leading anti-secrecy organization of the 1960s, they couldn't have done a better job if they'd tried...."

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### **Weird Science:**

Readers who are old enough to remember the 1960s may dimly recall that, in 1966, when the Air Force had exhausted its credibility with the public over the persistent UFO issue, the Secretary of Defense turned the matter over to physicist Edward Condon at the University of Colorado. Like Donald Menzel, Condon was a respected scientist with impressive credentials and a history of secret military work. He had been director of the National Bureau of Standards and president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. At last, it seemed at the time, the UFO issue was to get its long-overdue day in the court of science.

Soon after this investigation got started, however, Condon began to behave in a most unscientific manner. Long before the results of his study were made public, Condon started giving speeches ridiculing UFO witnesses and the subject in general. Scientists both inside and outside the investigation team found this behavior very upsetting--as they should have. But what really upset insiders was the discovery of a memo from project coordinator Robert Low indicating that the investigation planned to trick the public and scientific community by focusing on the psychology and sociology of UFO witnesses, rather than investigating the physical reality of the UFOs themselves.

This was the last straw for team psychologist David Saunders who leaked the Low memo to the press. This action ultimately resulted in his dismissal by Condon for "insubordination." Saunders, with reporter Roger Harkins, later wrote a fascinating exposé, of the whole twisted affair called 'UFOs? Yes! Where the Condon Committee Went Wrong' (New York: Signet, 1968).

Many observers of the University of Colorado episode concluded the CIA was orchestrating the entire peculiar affair to derail any serious scientific attempt to study UFOs. As Saunders put it in a concluding chapter of 'UFOs? Yes!', "The Central Intelligence Agency is around, everywhere." Direct, completely unambiguous connections between the CIA and the Condon Commission are difficult to establish, however. The Agency was clearly wary of revealing its interest in UFOs. As Timothy Good pointed out in 'Above Top Secret' (New York: William Morrow, 1988), the CIA even took care that any work performed by its National Photographic Interpretation Center for the Condon Commission was not identified as being performed by the CIA.

(The latest controversy involving the CIA has to do with Dr. Bruce Maccabee, an optical physicist with the Naval Surface Weapons Center. Maccabee is well known in the civilian UFO research community for his technical analyses of UFO photos and films. It recently came to light that Maccabee secretly had been lecturing about UFOs at the CIA, a fact that set off alarms of paranoia in certain quarters. This is probably a tempest in a teapot but it demonstrates again an ongoing, clandestine interest in the UFO phenomenon by the intelligence community.)

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### **News That's Unfit to Print**

Roger Harkins, then a reporter for the 'Boulder Daily Camera,' had a particular interest in documenting the CIA's suspected involvement with the Condon Commission. One day he was asked by the Denver Associated Press (AP) Bureau to file a story about an upcoming press conference by Jim and Coral Lorenzen of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), then an influential private UFO-research group. Harkins decided to use the opportunity to smoke out any CIA operatives he thought might be lurking in or around the Denver AP Bureau by doing a story purposely linking the Agency with UFOs.

APRO's Jim Lorenzen provided Harkins with a seven-point rationale for the CIA's interest in UFOs. Harkins then wrote his story around this indictment of the CIA, assuming the Agency would want to suppress the story and that the AP might just do it. He then filed the story with the AP and returned to the 'Daily Camera's' office to wait for it to come across on the teletype. He waited all night and the rest of the next day and, just as he expected, the story never appeared.

While this doesn't prove CIA involvement, it raises some interesting questions in light of the Robertson Panel's recommendations. Those who think the CIA couldn't, or wouldn't, suppress news about matters judged to have national security implications have something to learn from authors Victor Marchetti and John Marks. In their book 'The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence' (itself the subject of a famous CIA censorship effort), the authors made it clear that planting CIA operatives in deep cover with major American media organizations has been a long-established tradition at the Agency. More common, perhaps, are the CIA's efforts to suppress news coverage through pressure or friendly persuasion.

For most Americans, all they know is what they read in the newspapers or see on TV, and if they don't read about or see UFO reports, then they effectively cease to exist. Like government maps, newspapers and television broadcasts are often mistaken for a faithful description of reality.

James McCampbell, an engineering physicist and author I interviewed in 1979 for a radio documentary broadcast on National Public Radio said he, too, had concluded UFO news stories were being suppressed. In response to a question about lack of American press coverage of sensational UFO-related developments in France, McCampbell responded, "I think that the principle sources of information in the media are controlled, at least by pressure from the government, to keep information concerning UFOs out of general circulation. I reach that conclusion when I compare the hundreds and hundreds of [UFO] clippings I get from small-town newspapers throughout the United States, none of which ever get covered in the wire services. The principle newspaper editors are relying quite heavily on the wire services for information."

Paranoia? Well, consider the fact that some of the most sensational UFO flaps in recent years were never mentioned by most of the nation's leading newspapers. According to the U.S. government's own documents, retrieved under the Freedom of Information Act, UFOs haunted major military bases across the United States in 1975. Unusual lighted objects were seen by Air Force personnel over bases in Maine, Michigan, Montana, North Dakota, Florida, New Mexico and elsewhere, only to escape again into the night. The Air Force explanation for some of these events was that the objects were unidentified helicopters. Even if you accept this explanation, one would think that a story about unidentified helicopters flying at will over some of our nation's most sensitive nuclear-weapons facilities would be worth a few column inches in 'The New York Times' or the 'Washington Post.' Yet, the story never surfaced until the FOIA documents came out years later.

Press coverage hasn't improved much since 1975. An electronic search for articles about the triangle-shaped UFO seen nightly by thousands of people over Belgium in 1990 turned up only one tongue-in-cheek story in 'The Wall Street Journal.' Across the Atlantic, however, these sightings were being seriously reported in major European publications such as the July 5, 1990, 'Paris Match.' The sightings were even officially confirmed by the Belgian Defense Minister who released radar tapes from an F-16 fighter that had chased and tracked the mysterious object. The unidentified craft also was videotaped by several ground observers. Yet, unless you're a loyal devotee of tabloid TV or spent that time in Europe, you probably don't know these events occurred.

A still more sensational series of UFO sightings took place over and around Mexico City during and after the total solar eclipse of 1991. This being the age of the video camcorder, many people recorded these UFOs on tape. Hundreds of such videotapes, including footage from broadcast TV cameramen in Mexico City, have been edited into two documentaries, 'Messengers of Destiny' and 'Masters of the Stars' (available from Genesis III, Box 25962, Munds Park, AZ 86017). This was big news for months in Mexico, but 'The New York Times,' along with other major U.S. newspapers, apparently decided it was just not news that was fit to print. An electronic search revealed not a single story about these events in any of the indexed major U.S. newspapers.

The major TV networks haven't much to crow about, either. For example, on October 1982, the PBS network broadcast 'The Case of the UFOs' on its popular NOVA science series. By any standards, it was a masterful piece of anti-UFO propaganda, completely misrepresenting the most basic facts about the subject, albeit in a seemingly objective style. Although many UFO researchers were filmed for the program, nearly all of this footage wound up on the cutting-room floor. Footage of the few researchers who were allowed to speak was carefully edited to completely misrepresent their views. Their original testimony in support of UFO research was presented to suggest that they thought there was little evidence for the phenomenon.

Even worse, the nation's most famous and experienced UFO researcher who founded the non-profit Center for UFO Studies, the late astronomer Dr. J. Allen Hynek, was not allowed to speak on the program in defense of the subject to which he had devoted much of his life. The heavily slanted program left viewers with the impression that few scientists believe UFOs exist or should be studied, an idea that is completely contradicted by polls and surveys of scientific and engineering opinion.

In 1977, for example, 53 percent of 1,365 members of the American Astronomical Society who responded to a survey from Stanford University physicist Peter A. Sturrock, said they thought UFOs "certainly" or "probably" should be investigated further. Surveys published by 'Industrial Research' magazine show similar support for UFO research among engineers and scientists. Dozens of professional scientists are currently involved in UFO research and hundreds more would certainly join them if federal funds were available. Of course, you can't get federal money to study something the government insists does not exist.

It later came to light that content decisions for the NOVA program had been made on the advice of Kendrick Frazier, editor of 'The Skeptical Inquirer,' the mouthpiece for the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. The organization has waged a kind of holy war on UFO researchers for years and could hardly be counted on for a balanced view of the controversy.

However you account for all of this, the evidence shows that the national media, for whatever reasons, have not been providing accurate coverage of either the UFO phenomenon itself or those who study it. Again, it may be jumping to conclusions to attribute this to government policies; perhaps American journalists have simply decided that mass sightings of UFOs have less public appeal than, say, traffic accidents, robberies, and celebrities--to which they devote enormous time and resources. Even so, suppression of UFO coverage was precisely the goal the CIA set out to achieve in the early 1950s when media reports began to pose a national-security problem for the U.S. government. Whether by design or dumb luck, they seem to have gotten their wish.

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### Little Gray Men

If the military-intelligence community really *has* been studying alien technology out there in the Nevada wasteland, it doesn't take much imagination to come up with reasons why authorities would want to keep this information out of circulation. Advanced technical knowledge has inescapable political consequences, as those attempting to stop nuclear proliferation know so well. Simply admitting that alien contact has taken place could open up a virtual Pandora's box.

If authorities were to acknowledge that alien beings are here, then everyone will quite reasonably conclude that they may have been here all along. The religious and scientific establishments would suddenly find many of their fundamental assumptions called into doubt. Human society is built upon belief in the authority of its principle institutions. Undermine those beliefs and the entire system starts to crumble, a phenomenon that has often occurred in world history. When Robert Lazar was asked what would happen if the technology he claims to have witnessed was released, he replied, "It would change everything."

For most bureaucracies, the prime directive is self-preservation. Maintaining the political and economic status quo has always been job one for the military-intelligence community. If they discovered something they believed would "change everything," releasing that information all at once could totally upset the political apple cart. Thus, some observers of the UFO controversy speculate that we're being slowly conditioned to the idea of extraterrestrials through films, advertising campaigns and calculated leaks of pertinent information, all designed to minimize culture shock.

Culture shock might be the least of the government's problems, however. If aliens are here, the next question is, *why* are they here? This might not be an easy question to answer but increasing numbers of UFO researchers have concluded that thousands of people are being picked up, examined, and used in strange genetic experiments. Here things *really* start to get spooky.

It almost doesn't matter whether any of this is true in the physical sense. The point is that the evidence, whether genuine or fabricated, suggests to scientists *who are familiar with it* (and that's a critical and often overlooked qualification) that something very weird and shocking is going on. Again, we're talking about *beliefs* here. If Americans start believing that aliens are snatching people out of their homes and cars, and the authorities can't do anything about it...well, it doesn't exactly enhance the public's faith in the value of government.

Until fairly recently, even UFO researchers--who become accustomed to hearing strange stories--were deeply skeptical about evidence that people were being abducted. Much of this evidence was obtained under hypnosis, a technique that many researchers felt was plagued with serious methodological pitfalls. They wanted physical evidence.

One of the pioneers in this field is psychologist Leo Sprinkle, formerly a professor at the University of Wyoming. Like most intellectual pioneers, Sprinkle experienced some very tough times with his academic associates who felt his conclusions were completely ludicrous.

Inconvenient though it may be, alleged abductions have long been a component of the UFO phenomenon. The issue first burst into public consciousness in 1966 with the publication of 'The Interrupted Journey' (New York: Berkley, 1966) by journalist John G. Fuller. The book told the now well-known story of Betty and Barney Hill and their encounter with a UFO and its occupants on an autumn night in New Hampshire. According to information obtained under hypnosis, the Hills seemed to have been taken aboard the UFO and subjected to some kind of examination by aliens.

Public interest in the subject was rekindled with the appearance in 1981 of the best-selling book 'Missing Time' (New York: Ballantine, 1981) by artist Budd Hopkins. Hopkins took a much closer look into the phenomenon of alleged alien abductions. He concluded that certain recurring patterns provided support for the idea that abduction experiences were more than just random psychological delusions.

A still more thorough exploration of the issue appeared in 1992 with the publication of 'Secret Life' (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992) by Temple University history professor David M. Jacobs (author of 'The UFO Controversy in America' mentioned earlier). Now the issue was finally out of the closet. Even the ultra-cautious 'New York Times,' whose coverage of the UFO controversy has been exceptionally sparse, recognized the abduction phenomenon with a surprisingly open-minded story about Jacobs in its Oct. 28, 1992, edition.

Jacobs does not mince words when drawing conclusions about the abduction phenomenon. "We've been invaded," he says in the final chapter of 'Secret Life.' "At present we can do little or nothing to stop it. The aliens have powers and technology greatly in advance of ours, and that puts us at a tremendous disadvantage in our ability to affect the phenomenon or gain some control over it."

Before you dismiss Jacobs and others who share his assessment as crazy, you might want to talk with John Mack, professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. Mack says he became interested in the abduction phenomenon in January of 1990 when an associate offered to introduce him to Budd Hopkins. Mack's initial assessment when told of Hopkins' activities was, "He must be crazy." After becoming involved with abduction cases himself, though, Mack now says he regards the phenomenon as having tremendous scientific and cultural importance. (His book about the phenomenon, 'Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens,' was published in April 1994 by Charles Scribner's.)

As with Leo Sprinkle and David Jacobs before him, Mack has faced intense criticism from some of his academic associates who are not at all happy with what he has to say. "They've stretched the limits of mid-life crisis," he joked at the Triad conference in July of 1994. "I'm 63. I thought mid-life was, you know, 45-50, so they haven't really got a category for me yet."

Mack insists the experiences of abductees are genuine and says he is continually astounded at the lengths to which educated people go to force-fit them into some inappropriate conceptual framework. "There are new limits of stupidity you encounter in this work," he said. "It's amazing to me the extent to which people will go to avoid something new."

As far as the underlying cause, Mack agrees with many others who have investigated different aspects of the UFO phenomenon over the past few decades. "I don't see any explanation for this phenomenon other than that there is some intelligence that we don't understand at work," he said.

"The resistance to accepting that there's other intelligences at work here is not a scientific matter, it's a *political* matter," he insisted. "It has to do with who decides, in a particular culture at a particular time, what is reality."

Mack said that the phenomenon is subtle and seems to be trying to correct our self-destructive world view--the view held by large corporations who employ science and technology to carve up the earth for material profit and power. As Mack puts it, "What [the phenomenon] says is, 'We are not masters of the universe; we are not in control.'"

For people who encounter it, this is usually a terrifying notion, he explained. "The terror [that the phenomenon inspires] is the terror of the realization we are not in control."

Dr. Pierre Guerin, a high-ranking French astrophysicist who was employed by the French space agency to study the UFO problem, expressed very similar conclusions in 1979. "...what is quite certain is that the phenomenon is active here, on our planet, and active here as Master. We can neither stop the phenomenon nor comprehend it, and we are well aware that its power totally defies not merely our technological possibilities but probably our mental possibilities as well."

"Science...believes in [extraterrestrials] only on condition that they remain at distances of many light-years from Earth," Guerin continued. "Or rather, it believes that, if they do visit us they will not do it in the fashion in which they are now doing it, -- clandestinely, and with the dice loaded, making it crystal-clear that they come from a transcendental level right outside of and beyond the cozy, reassuring little framework into which our scientists are so anxious to fit this whole new UFO scene with which we find ourselves confronted."

Dr. Guerin agreed with Mack that this realization inspires terror in government authorities. "Even the security forces of the various governments (who, in our opinion, do know what the truth is about the reality of the UFOs, but have no idea of how to go about tackling the problem) are wary of making the matter public, because of their fear that by so doing, they might not only cause a panic that could destabilize the entire globe, but also they might trigger off a backlash from the intellectual and political elites, who would refuse to give credence to the security services revelations."

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### **War of the Worlds?**

Assuming the U.S. government reached similar conclusions to those expressed by Mack and Guerin, but much earlier due to its superior intelligence-gathering resources, the seemingly contradictory behavior the government has exhibited over the past 45 years begins to make sense. Seen from the perspective of government, an organization whose entire purpose is control, the UFO phenomenon presents a counterintelligence threat, not simply an interesting scientific problem for open discussion in learned journals.

Science generally assumes that the phenomena it is studying do not "mind" being studied. Such an assumption is unsafe in the world of counterintelligence, where one must assume that potential opponents are aware of your every move unless precautions are taken to disguise them. In fact, it is standard technique to disseminate a cloud of false information, the purpose of which is to deceive the opposing force. In order to deceive an enemy, one must also deceive friends--i.e., the public. Thus, an elaborate game of deception evolves between the opposing forces.

It has often been said that if the U.S. military-intelligence community had undeniable proof for the existence of extraterrestrial visitors, they could not possibly keep this information secret, since leaks would inevitably occur. In fact, leaks *do* occur in any intelligence-gathering operation but they don't necessarily compromise the secret because the leaks are typically buried in a dense cloud of false and contradictory information. An intelligence expert (or UFO investigator) is thus presented with the formidable task of determining which among the vast sea of facts are reliable and relevant.

In Anthony Cave Brown's classic history of British Intelligence efforts in World War II, 'Bodyguard of Lies' (New York: Harper & Row, 1975) the author explains the basic method used by the elite corps of English aristocrats who made up the powerful London Controlling Section (LCS): "Deception was the province of the LCS, and its special assignment was to plant upon the enemy, along the channels open to it through the Allied high command, hundreds, perhaps thousands of splinters of information that, when assembled by the enemy intelligence services, would form a plausible and acceptable--but false--picture of Allied military intentions."

The plan worked extremely well, as history testifies. Even the massive D-Day invasion force managed to reach Normandy without knowledge of German intelligence. If the entire German intelligence force could not divine the true intentions of the Allied forces, imagine the difficulty of attempting to divine the intentions of an alien intelligence with technologies beyond our conception. Imagine also the difficulties UFO researchers have faced in attempting to penetrate the security veil of the U.S. intelligence community which has had hundreds of billions of dollars at its disposal.

Were the members of Majestic 12 the equivalent of the British LCS? If the MJ-12 document is genuine, it would appear so. Assuming this was the case, their main problem would have been to gather UFO information clandestinely while feigning disinterest so as not to alarm the public or tip off the perceived opponent to its progress. In this light, the strange games played by Project Blue Book, the mysterious machinations of CIA, the apparent suppression of relevant news and information about the phenomenon, and the Condon Commission's peculiar tricks suddenly come into sharper focus: they are all consistent with a clandestinely planned and executed war of the worlds. Of course, as German intelligence discovered in World War II, consistency and truth may be different matters.

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### **Darkness and Paranoia**

In 'The Russians' (New York: Times Books, 1983), Hedrick Smith's pre-glasnost tale of life in the former Soviet Union, the author describes a society in which the most wild and astounding rumors were given serious credence by the populace because the official explanations were almost universally regarded as lies. The price the Soviet government paid for suppression of information was a population that was ready to believe *anything*, so long as it did not appear to come from an official source.

A similar situation has developed in the United States in regard to UFO sightings. The constant background of sightings--reported now mainly by regional newspapers, videotapes, specialized newsletters and books--has been greeted in recent years only by official silence. Attempts to discover the government's true attitude toward the phenomenon through the Freedom of Information Act have been met by resistance and censorship justified on vague national-security grounds. This absence of official information has fostered an environment rich in rumors of the most bizarre and creative sort.

It's being said, for example, that the U.S. government has opened direct, face-to-face negotiations with extraterrestrials, similar to what was portrayed in Steven Spielberg's film 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind.' Others claim the government has made a kind of Faustian pact with the aliens, allowing them to use some of our people and farm animals for their genetic experiments in return for saucer technology. (Robert Lazar claims to have seen nine well-preserved alien spacecraft at S-4, a surprising number.)

Another story has it that a massive cooperative effort is underway between the U.S. military-intelligence community and the aliens to construct vast underground bases where horrific biomedical experiments are underway using abducted street kids as guinea pigs! Others say the U.S. government is planning to use its clandestine knowledge of alien technology to stage a fake extraterrestrial invasion in an attempt to unify the world's people behind a common but manufactured threat. Some say the whole captured-alien-hardware story is just a highly elaborate cover for the wholesale looting of the federal treasury by the corrupt and cynical secret government.

Many of the most bizarre and unsubstantiated rumors originate with self-appointed "investigators" who seem to appear out of nowhere to suddenly become superstars of the UFO lecture circuit. One of the more controversial examples is John Lear, son of the Lear Jet's inventor and an admitted former CIA

employee. Lear claims his inside knowledge of the frightening UFO situation originates with sources in the U.S. intelligence community. More established and conservative UFO researchers say they are deeply suspicious of Lear and claim he is effectively a government disinformation agent out to undermine the movement's credibility. By making the entire subject sound as ludicrous as possible, they say, the CIA's psychological warfare people can ensure that most serious scientists and journalists will never come *near* the subject, much less publicly admit any serious interest in it.

Whatever the case, paranoia runs very deep indeed. As reporter George Knapp commented in July 1994, "We all have our share of loonies to deal with but the [government] coverup angle attracts a special breed--dark, foreboding conspiracy buffs who see evil tentacles around every corner: Secret treaties between the government and the aliens--they give us technology; we give them permission to conduct abductions--as if they need our permission; the Trilateral Commission; the CFR; the Bilderbergers, the Illuminati; Neo Nazis; the Rockefellers; One World Government--and UFOs. The gang's all here."

But as someone once observed, just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they really aren't out to get you. And therein lies the dilemma. After all, the U.S. government clearly does lie about quite a few things and doesn't say much at all about many others. As long as very odd things continue to happen and authorities are unable or unwilling to tell us what they know, almost anything begins to seem possible. Take a persistent and genuinely puzzling phenomenon, add a half-dozen or so secrecy-obsessed government bureaucracies, a scientific establishment that is fearful of pressing for an investigation, throw in hundreds of well-meaning but financially strapped amateur investigators, a handful of cynical con artists, a few literary opportunists, some disinformation agents, and half a dozen egotistical scientists who glibly dismiss events they've never taken time to study, and you've got the perfect recipe for mass confusion.

Welcome to the troubled frontier of officially sanctioned knowledge. Whether American society will ever move beyond this frontier depends entirely on whether we can summon the courage to do so, for we must accept that the answers to our questions may not be to our liking, nor to the liking of powerful commercial and government interests.

Science, always a potentially subversive activity, began as an investigation into the nature of experience conducted by a handful of brave intellectuals, often in the face of brutally repressive church-state authorities. Things haven't changed all that much in 350 years. As Herbert Foerstel explains in 'Secret Science: Federal Control of American Science and Technology' (Westport: Praeger, 1993), the U.S. government has increasingly come to regard scientific knowledge as both a threat to social stability and an opportunity for increased geopolitical control. Foerstel reports that most scientific research in the U.S. is now federally funded and most of this research is conducted by the military whose obsession for secrecy is astounding. Over one trillion classified documents are now in existence, Foerstel reports.

"Scientists have taken their place as an influential force in society, even as the state has emerged as the chief sponsor and promoter of scientific research," Foerstel writes. "As a result, scientists have compromised two of the most cherished aspects of the scientific ethos; the freedom to pursue knowledge unhampered by interference from authorities, and the freedom to communicate their ideas without hindrance to the international community of scientists to which they belong."

More fundamental than the question of scientific freedom, though, is the question of whether we wish to live in an open society or in a society controlled by military bureaucrats who determine, without oversight by our elected officials, what we can and cannot know about what they're up to. It would not be overstating matters to say that the choice is really between totalitarianism and democracy, between a society of ignorant serfs and an open society of informed citizens.

Etched on the main lobby wall of the Central Intelligence Agency in Langley, Virginia, is this line from the 'Bible':

"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."

Perhaps the truth is that no terrifying mysteries lie within the tightly guarded boundaries of Dreamland or anywhere else in the scattered network of secret military facilities that dot our nation. Although there are

now many good reasons to doubt it, the U.S. intelligence community may be just as mystified by the UFO phenomenon as are civilian researchers. Given the stakes, though, the most disturbing lesson of this elaborate and long-running controversy may be that American citizens have lost their right to find out.

(Terry Hansen is a science and technology journalist who lives in Seattle, Washington. This article is copyrighted and may not be reproduced in print or electronically for commercial purposes without permission of the author.)