**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DREAMLAND**

**How Secrecy is Destroying Public Faith in Government and Science**
**By Terry Hansen © 1995 -- page 1**

"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.

**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. Rainier, 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 duly 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.

**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 handicam 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 nonother 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 effect 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. Any way you look at this issue, something doesn't add up--unless, of course, the document is genuine.

**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...."