**Majestic 12**

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*This article is about the purported secret committee called 'Majestic 12'. For other uses, see* [*Majestic 12 (disambiguation)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Majestic_12_(disambiguation))*.*

In [UFO conspiracy theories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UFO_conspiracy_theory), **Majestic 12** (or **MJ-12**) is the [code name](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code_name) of an alleged secret committee of scientists, military leaders, and government officials, formed in 1947 by an [executive order](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_order) by [U.S. President](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_United_States) [Harry S. Truman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_S._Truman) to facilitate recovery and investigation of [alien spacecraft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flying_saucer). The concept originated in a series of supposedly leaked secret government documents first circulated by [ufologists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ufologists) in 1984. Upon examination, the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Bureau_of_Investigation) (FBI) declared the documents to be "completely bogus", and many ufologists consider them to be an elaborate [hoax](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoax). Majestic 12 remains popular among some [UFO conspiracy theorists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UFO_conspiracy_theory) and the concept has appeared in [popular culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_culture) including television, film and literature.

**Origin**

The concept of "Majestic Twelve" emerged during a period in the 1980s when ufologists believed there had been a [cover-up](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cover-up) of the [Roswell UFO incident](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roswell_UFO_incident) and speculated some secretive upper tier of the United States government was responsible. Their suppositions appeared to be confirmed in 1984 when ufologist Jaime Shandera received an envelope containing film which, when developed, showed images of eight pages of documents that appeared to be briefing papers describing "Operation Majestic Twelve". The documents purported to reveal a secret committee of twelve, supposedly authorized by United States President Harry S. Truman in 1952, and explain how the crash of an alien spacecraft at Roswell in 1947 had been concealed, how the recovered alien technology could be exploited, and how the United States should engage with extraterrestrial life in the future.

Shandera and his ufologist colleagues [Stanton T. Friedman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanton_T._Friedman) and [Bill Moore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Moore_(ufologist)) say they later received a series of anonymous messages that led them to find what has been called the "Cutler/Twining memo" in 1985 while searching declassified files in the [National Archives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Archives_and_Records_Administration). Purporting to be written by General [Nathan F. Twining](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathan_Farragut_Twining) to President Eisenhower's assistant Robert Cutler and containing a reference to Majestic 12, the memo is widely held to be a forgery, likely planted as part of a hoax. Historian Robert Goldberg wrote that the ufologists came to believe the story despite the documents being "obviously planted to bolster the legitimacy of the briefing papers".

Claiming to be connected to the United States Air Force Office of Special Investigations, a man named Richard Doty told filmmaker [Linda Moulton Howe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linda_Moulton_Howe) that the MJ-12 story was true, and showed Howe unspecified documents purporting to prove the existence of small, grey humanoid aliens originating from the [Zeta Reticuli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeta_Reticuli) star system. Doty reportedly promised to supply Howe with film footage of UFOs and an interview with an alien being, although no footage ever materialized.

Soon, distrust and suspicion led to disagreements within the ufology community over the authenticity of the MJ-12 documents, and Moore was accused of taking part in an elaborate hoax, while other ufologists and debunkers such as [Philip J. Klass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_J._Klass) were accused of being "disinformation agents".

The FBI began its own investigation of the supposed "secret" documents and quickly formed doubts as to their authenticity. The [United States Air Force Office of Special Investigations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Air_Force_Office_of_Special_Investigations) stated that no such committee had ever been authorized or formed, and that the documents were “bogus.” The FBI subsequently declared the MJ-12 documents to be "completely bogus.”

Later in 1996, a document called the MJ-12 "Special Operations Manual" circulated among ufologists. It is also widely considered to be a fake and "a continuation of the MJ-12 myth".

Ufologists Linda Moulton Howe and [Stanton T. Friedman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanton_T._Friedman) believe the MJ12 Documents are authentic. Friedman examined the documents and has argued that the United States government has conspired to cover up knowledge of a crashed extraterrestrial spacecraft.

According to journalist [Howard Blum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Blum) the name "Majestic 12" had been prefigured in the UFO community when [Bill Moore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Moore_(ufologist)) asked [*National Enquirer*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Enquirer) reporter Bob Pratt in 1982 to collaborate on a novel called *MAJIK-12*. Because of this, Blum writes, Pratt had always been inclined to think the Majestic 12 documents a hoax.

**Alleged members**

The following individuals were described in the Majestic 12 documents as "designated members" of Majestic 12.

* [Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roscoe_H._Hillenkoetter)
* [Vannevar Bush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vannevar_Bush)
* [James Forrestal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Forrestal)
* [Nathan F. Twining](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathan_Farragut_Twining)
* [Hoyt Vandenberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoyt_Vandenberg)
* [Detlev Bronk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detlev_Bronk)
* [Jerome Clarke Hunsaker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerome_Clarke_Hunsaker)
* [Sidney Souers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney_Souers)
* [Gordon Gray](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gordon_Gray_(politician))
* [Donald H. Menzel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Howard_Menzel)
* [Robert M. Montague](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Miller_Montague)
* [Lloyd Berkner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lloyd_Berkner)

**Popular culture**

The Majestic 12 stories inspired the television series [*Dark Skies*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_Skies) and have appeared as a plot element in [*The X-Files*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_X-Files), as well as in the [Electronic Arts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic_Arts) [ARG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alternate_reality_game) '[Majestic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Majestic_(video_game))'.

The 2005 video game [*Destroy All Humans!*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destroy_All_Humans!) has the protagonist, an alien landed in 1950s rural America, fighting agents of "Majestic".

[Alien abduction claimant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alien_abduction_claimants) [Whitley Strieber](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitley_Strieber) wrote a novel called [*Majestic*](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Majestic_(novel)&action=edit&redlink=1) in 1989 that focused on the origins of MJ-12.

MJ-12 is featured heavily in the [Eidos Interactive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eidos_Interactive) game [*Deus Ex*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deus_Ex)*,* released on PC and Macintosh in 2000*.* The game was later released on the PlayStation 2, and again on the PlayStation 3.

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