

name but not the number of each section appears at the top of each page in a section, yet the cross references are by section number and lack page numbers. Also, the index is far too short and generic for a reference work of this size and complexity. Almost offsetting these failings are the footnotes, which are quite good, and the bibliography (actually, bibliographies, as some sections have reference lists of their own), which is outstanding.

Shortcomings aside, this is a significant and important work, a “must have” for anyone with a serious interest in UFOs and a valuable addition to the reference section of any good public or institutional library.

KARL T. PFLOCK
P.O. Box 93338
Albuquerque, NM 87199-3338
ktperhwon@aol.com

The UFO/FBI Connection: The Secret History of the Government’s Cover-Up by Bruce Maccabee. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2000. 311 pp. ISBN 1-567-184-936.

This volume, written by physicist and UFO researcher Dr. Bruce Maccabee, collects together for the first time in book form the highlights from the FBI’s sizable UFO files. Summaries and discussions are presented of the wide variety of sighting reports, administrative decisions and meetings, field office submissions to FBI headquarters, and copies of clippings, publications, and letters that accumulated in the FBI’s archives through many decades.

During the 1970s, an amended Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) allowed private citizens to request and receive copies of files from government agencies. The files were released with the provision that the information did not fall under any of nine exemptions. The exemptions were intended to protect agencies from, among other things, compromising intelligence sources, revealing private information about individuals, exposing internal decision making processes, and, more broadly, violating national security—reasonable restrictions given that some government activities must be performed without a spotlight on at all times.

Maccabee and other researchers recognized the potential for using the FOIA to request what was known to exist on unidentified flying objects not only within the Air Force’s records but also within the records of many other government agencies. One of the earliest targets of FOIA requests was the FBI. This because of the FBI’s reputation for detailed investigative and laboratory work, for having agents available to quickly respond to unusual situations, and for the FBI’s name having surfaced in numerous Air Force investigative reports. The Air Force’s Project Blue Book records had been made available in censored form to the public: first in storage at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, then at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., at the time of the early

UFO FOIA requests. This provided researchers with enough leads to file detailed, specific requests for UFO records rather than “shotgun” requests that were broad to the point of being ill defined.

This reviewer had been one of the early requesters of UFO records from these agencies, and to the best of my knowledge Maccabee’s was the earliest pursuit of FBI material in not only assembling the information, but in presenting the first detailed overview of these records. He published a series of reports on the FBI files in UFO journals (see *MUFON UFO Journal*, issues 119, 120–121, 123–124, 130, 132 from 1977–1978), some twenty-five years before this present book!

The book is arranged in 25 chapters, a glossary, a few document reproductions, and source and index listings. The information is generally chronological, no small task since a reading of the raw files shows them to be a tangled nightmare of detail. One quirk about the FBI files is that for the multi-decade timeframe covered, most of the interesting data lies between 1947 and 1952, the period when government agencies concerned with UFO reports were trying to get a grip on exactly what UFOs were all about. This time frame constitutes about three-quarters of Maccabee’s book. It is ironic that while the publisher takes advantage of the popularity of the “X-Files” television show in promoting the book, the vast bulk of FBI records generating these particular “X-Files” happened well before most “X-Filers” were born. Such a realization tends to unchill one’s spine if one is conspiracy minded!

However, that is not say that UFO information was never suppressed, or “covered up.” Maccabee cites many instances, whether based upon deliberate intent or snafu, where the government had withheld information about UFOs to the public. Of this there is no doubt. The unfortunate consequence is that, whether or not there actually are explosive facts about the exotic nature of UFOs, one is given the impression that there are. Impressions without clear explanation go a long way toward forming public mindsets about the way things aren’t instead of what they really are. By having the FBI records in hand, and by having them presented in an orderly fashion by Maccabee, we are helped in turning impressions into knowledge.

An example of the government contribution to the notion that flying saucers were a serious matter can be seen in chapter 17, “Immediate High Alert: For Flying Saucers.” Maccabee cites a December 8, 1950, message sent to FBI headquarters by the Special Agent in Charge, Richmond, Virginia:

This office very confidentially advised by Army Intelligence, Richmond, that they have been put on immediate high alert for any data whatsoever concerning flying saucers. CIC here states background of instructions not available from Air Force Intelligence, who are not aware of reason for alert locally, but any information whatsoever must be telephoned by them immediately to Air Force Intelligence. CIC advises data strictly confidential and should not be disseminated (sic).

Maccabee speculates that the message alluded to either (1) a flying saucer crash on the Texas/Mexico border around December 6, or (2) a formation of unidentified objects heading toward Washington, D.C. While there is little to suggest the former, there is much more for the latter, though even this was a confusion of different explanations. Maccabee reported a great deal of uncertainty as to what caused the December 6th alert, but, nevertheless, suggested that based upon the message two days later, the objects tracked were “flying saucers.” If that means to the author the same thing as what constitutes a crashed “flying saucer” in the modern understanding of the term, then he is concluding that the objects seen on December 6th were extraterrestrial vehicles. Is that what the message writer meant when the alert was reported in a time prior to popular usage of the acronym “UFO”? Was “flying saucers” a term to describe a spaceship? Or was it a generic term used to describe merely an unknown, like a “bogey” that appears on radar?

I must admit to being a bit confused by Maccabee’s treatment of this story. But it does emphasize the ambiguity that often accompanies government UFO document releases and their contribution to the popular perception that “UFO” or “flying saucers” means extraterrestrial visitors.

Another example can be found in chapter 10. Maccabee cites the Rees catalog, a listing of southwest U.S. UFO incidents up to May 1950. Lt. Col. Doyle Rees, commander of the 17th District Office of Special Investigations, prepared the catalog for the Air Force at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico. The purpose was to track strange aerial activity over the southwest, including the “Green Fireball” phenomena reported widely through the area. The catalog lists three possible explanations for sightings. One, “Disk or Variation,” which is held as distinct from meteors and Green Fireballs as an explanation, is not quite clear in what is being suggested, but it infers an exotic phenomenon, or even an extraterrestrial one. How can the public, seeing these documents after their official release under FOIA, help but think that there are certain elements within the government suggesting that reports of odd aerial phenomena are more than garbage can lids, toilet seats, or pie plates thrown into the air for effect?

Maccabee notes in chapter 21 on CIA involvement with UFO reports that a recent study by CIA historian Gerald Haines makes a curious suggestion. Haines offered that half of all UFO reports from the late 1950s on were due to misidentified flights of U-2 spy aircraft. A remarkable claim because if the 50% figure of 2343 was not just plucked out of thin air as a “guesstimate,” it suggests that the CIA had conducted its own survey of UFO sightings independently of the Air Force—and never told the Air Force of its results. Or if the Air Force was advised of the results, the claims of lies and cover-ups by the Air Force were legitimate inasmuch as the Air Force Project Blue Book files show no evidence of the CIA’s conclusions.

FBI records became sparse after 1952, as Maccabee relates, but there were still notable UFO reports being given a look by FBI agents. Chapters 22 and 23

discuss observations by credible witnesses, one by Senator Richard Russell on October 4, 1955, and the other by policeman Lonnie Zamora of Socorro, New Mexico, on April 24, 1964. A reading of either story would give pause to any suggestion that study of the UFO phenomenon is a waste of time.

Maccabee wisely steers clear of the MJ-12 controversy—the claim concerning the existence of an official government panel allegedly convened to study the supposed Roswell flying saucer crash and other rumored saucer crashes elsewhere. MJ-12 has permeated discussions of government UFO interest for over a decade, despite the fact that all of the evidence for it is dubious. The FBI had begun an investigation of MJ-12 but dropped it after examining the questionable documents. While Maccabee suggests that a source for the MJ-12 documents had not been precisely identified, there are several good candidates for having faked the material.

Maccabee examines another sensational document, which we no longer have but which was certainly authentic, in chapter 5. He recounts the “Estimate of the Situation,” a draft of an Air Force document written in 1948 by personnel of “Project Sign,” a predecessor to Project Blue Book. It was said to have concluded that flying saucers were interplanetary vehicles! Remarkable indeed in that this was the first time such a conclusion was officially considered by Air Force personnel. The document was said to have been rejected by the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Hoyt Vandenberg, for lack of proof. Maccabee goes on to consider that Vandenberg might have known about hard evidence for saucers but rejected the report to protect the crashed saucers’ cover-up, or at least to have kept the Air Force from admitting that they lied about flying saucers.

Maccabee adds, “...although the publicly known history of the ‘Air Force–UFO connection’ does not prove there was a crashed extraterrestrial saucer and an orchestrated effort to withhold that information, the publicly known history is not necessarily incompatible with that possibility.”

Maccabee seems to bend over backward to accommodate the existence of crashed saucers in trying to rationalize Vandenberg’s rejection. But there is some relevant commentary from one who was familiar with the Estimate. Major Dewey Fournet, now deceased, was an eyewitness to the contents of the document. He served as the Air Force’s UFO project monitor at the Pentagon in 1952. He said in a letter to a UFO researcher that he stumbled across the document in files he had inherited when he took the Pentagon job. It was twenty to thirty pages long. It reviewed all of the apparently unexplained reports received by the Air Force up to the time of the Estimate. Different explanations were explored but in the end the extraterrestrial explanation was regarded as the answer. Fournet said there was no confirmation of artifacts from flying saucers, a crucial omission from the Top Secret document if crashed saucers were true and a case were being made for the existence of extraterrestrials.

To Fournet, there was deplorably little UFO sighting data available when the report was written and the extraterrestrial conclusion was the result of “ex-

trepreneurial extrapolation.” He felt that the Estimate’s purpose was to create enough interest within Air Force Intelligence by using a premature conclusion to motivate a more organized and complete investigation than had been done to that time. Fournet added, “I’ve never given that Estimate much weight in the overall USAF UFO program simply because it occurred too early in the investigation.”

The UFO/FBI Connection effectively organizes the FBI material and hits all of the highlights. It constitutes a rare insight into a government agency’s UFO investigation and collection procedures. It is also one of the better reads of the current crop of books on UFOs. One might quibble with Maccabee’s conclusion that FBI and Air Force files have evidence that “proves” flying saucers to be real and that the Air Force officials knew it but withheld that information from the public. I can agree that information has been withheld, but if flying saucers were proven from what we know they have, there would no longer be a debate and the saucers would be as much of an everyday, factual part of life as McDonald’s burgers, PCs, and lawn mowers!

BARRY GREENWOOD

Box 80176

Stoneham, MA 02180

bgreenwood@mediaone.net

UFOs and the National Security State by Richard M. Dolan. Rochester, NY: Keyhole Publishing. 555 pp. ISBN 0-967-799-503.

For about a year, several friends of mine, knowing my research and writing interests in UFO history and its relationships with military, intelligence, and academic institutions in America, have urged me to read this book. “A good book,” or “worth a look,” have been typical incentives tagged on. Now that I’ve spent time with it, this review is very difficult. Let me begin by saying that, although I can imagine many readers enjoying this book and admiring all the Herculean labor the author put into its creation, this is not my kind of book. For that, I apologize to Mr. Dolan for having been chosen as the reviewer.

Let’s begin at the beginning: *UFOs and the National Security State*. Great title. Reading that, one expects to be presented with a powerful, rather “academic,” heavily documented history of the inside information as to the misbehavior of the military and intelligence communities toward the UFO subject. This *may* be, in fact, what many readers think that they have gotten, and may be what the author honestly feels that he has written. I just can’t read it that way. To me, the content of the book would be better characterized by the title *UFO Conspiracy Theory*. I am not trying to be flippant. The latter title would give the impression that what one was about to read was derived from popular culture sources much more than true historical scholarship or primary docu-