

constant, dark energy, quintessence, and what have you. Actually, it's creation (but don't say so)".

Geoff Burbidge's concluding remarks include a potted history of his early interactions with Hoyle—the nucleosynthesis work, the supernova stuff, the founding of the Institute, the Cambridge infighting—and the sense of excitement of those heady days long ago just bubbles to the surface. As does the sense of affection for a great scientist, from his many students and colleagues. Here, for example, is Margaret Burbidge's account of listening to Fred Hoyle, reading his famous paper on the synthesis of the elements from hydrogen: "... I sat in the RAS auditorium in wonder, experiencing a marvellous feeling of the lifting of a veil of ignorance as a bright light illuminates a great discovery". One wonders if astrophysics will ever again go through such a heroic phase, and will ever again benefit from a Fred Hoyle.

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Project Beta: An Adventure in the Disinformation Age by Gregory Bishop. Paraview Pocket Books, 2005. 288 pp. \$14.00 (paper). ISBN 0-743-470-923.

UFO research has been rife with stories of intrigue, conspiracies, counter-conspiracies, government cover-ups and, last but not least, mysterious characters. Gregory Bishop's new book, *Project Beta*, deals with all of this to the most extreme degree as being a chronicle of one of the most infamous series of episodes in the history of the UFO controversy. The author lays out the details of physicist Paul Bennewitz's experiences with government and civilian purveyors of UFO misinformation in the 1980s. The aim of the misinformation was to create paranoia in the mind of Bennewitz and to observe the result of his mental decline, which eventually led to Bennewitz's being committed to an institution. Bishop also discusses the bigger picture of a few individuals attempting to create a new mythology of UFO conspiracy belief from scratch. Some of those people used their positions within the government to lend credibility to their claims, doing so with no official sanctioning of their deeds.

When I was approached to review this book, I was of two minds. Having been involved in observing these events at the time as a researcher, there was a great deal of detail that has never been circulated widely, especially about the mysterious characters that Bishop describes: William Moore, Richard Doty, "The Aviary," and assorted others. This seemed like an opportunity to clear the air about what had happened. On the other hand, I'm not sure I can believe everything Bishop is relating. The reason is given by the author himself. These individuals consistently lied, fed false information to whomever would listen,

and forged documents, all with the purpose of creating a fantasy world in which they lived and dominated. They had also displayed an arrogant defiance of any sort of criticism or questioning of their techniques and motives by others. They contributed to a man's paranoia about alien visitations and allowed him to slip into mental illness. As such, the reader must weigh carefully anything emanating from the "mysterious characters."

There is a curious naivete in which the author describes his subjects. For example, Richard Doty, then working for the Air Force's Office of Special Investigations, is said to have been assigned to Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota, after which a strange, official looking document surfaced, describing a UFO landing and aliens attacking a sentry. The document was leaked to a tabloid newspaper in 1978. Doty explained that he had had his own sighting that was not unlike what the document reported but he had nothing to do with this "leak." Bishop, on the basis of Doty's disclaimer, suggests that Doty's sighting was embellished and disseminated as a training exercise to Doty on how to conduct counterintelligence! Or maybe a simpler explanation, which the author seems reluctant to suggest, is that Doty had faked the document while stationed at Ellsworth to begin a pattern of fantasy constructs, considering that he had later falsified strange UFO documents at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico in 1980.

UFO author William Moore is described as having denied any payment for his involvement and cooperation with government "officials" in aiding and abetting the hatching of the new conspiracy fantasy. Bishop suggests that Moore's ability to look back on an interesting life, rather than relying upon financial compensation, was his motivation for being, as Moore has put it in the past, an "unpaid government agent."

However, early in Moore's reported involvement with government agents, this reviewer and Lawrence Fawcett, then editor and publisher, respectively, of Citizens Against UFO Secrecy's publication, *Just Cause*, asked our lawyer at the time to offer assistance to Moore in filing document requests, and to obtain verification of the rumors Moore was reporting. Moore declined with the specific reason that he had to put "bread on my table." Clearly the implication was that he intended to make money from his storytelling.

Still more bamboozlement is evident, about which the author of Project Beta seems unaware. He relates how in 1987 one of Moore's sources warned Moore that another person had sent British author Timothy Good copies of "MJ-12" documents, which were going to be released by Good "soon." For those unaware, "MJ-12" is a name given to an alleged government investigation into the Roswell UFO crash, backed by dubious government documents first released in 1987 by Moore. Good had intended to release his copies as a promotion for the debut of his book *Above Top Secret*. The first edition of this book reproduces Good's copy of the 1952 "Eisenhower Briefing Paper," one of the suspect documents. Good had claimed that his copy came from a "CIA agent." However, when Good's reproduction was compared carefully to a reproduction that Moore had sent to subscribers of his *Focus* newsletter, it revealed a pattern of photocopier "dirt" or

smudges on each person's first page copy. This showed that both copies came from the same photocopy machine. The copier was William Moore's machine, used to print the document exhibits for his newsletter. It is a curious fact that after the first edition of *Above Top Secret*, all subsequent editions had eliminated the photocopier dirt on the reproduction of the Briefing Paper, which was so incriminating to Good's claim of a CIA source for his copy of the document.

Bishop asks why the UFO community continued to reject Moore's revelations, even after a ridiculous 1989 speech that Moore gave in Las Vegas testifying that he was a government operative, helping to degrade Paul Bennewitz's mental state after he reported UFOs to the Air Force. His query was qualified by suggesting that the answer is not a simple one. Why isn't it? The reader of *Project Beta* should be able to see through even the soft touch the author often applied to his treatment of Moore and others. With just a little bit of research outside of the book, one can quickly note credibility problems with the characters that Bishop has placed in the forefront of the conspiracy tale he tells. Does the reader know that the core of the "MJ-12" conspiracy that filters throughout Bishop's book was constructed as a fiction novel before the story ever became public? Ask Robert Pratt, a former writer for the *National Enquirer* who was one of the co-authors. This manuscript still hasn't seen the light of day.

In spite of these questions, it would be difficult to comprehend the Doty-Moore-Bennewitz affair without having access to many hard to find references that Bishop brings together in one volume. It is a sorry picture that has been painted, and I use a current marketing term which seems more than appropriate here, "UFOlogy Gone Wild!" This multi-leveled story was a contributing factor to the steady decline of UFO research in recent years. The aliens' love of strawberry ice cream and Tibetan music that we laugh at now had sprung from this bunch of "mysterious characters." It is also a chilling thought that Richard Doty has (as of 2003 according to Bishop) passed the bar exam and works for the District Attorney's office in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Maybe as a public service I should send my copy of *Project Beta* to the Albuquerque D.A.!

Read *Project Beta* as an object lesson in how to avoid manipulative UFO conspiracy theories in the future. They serve only to fuel someone's ego or pockets.

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The Republican War on Science by Chris Mooney. Basic Books, 2005. 342 pp. \$24.95 US, \$32.95 Canada (hardcover). ISBN 0-465-04675-4.

This is the most important book I have read all year—perhaps in several years. Once upon a time, when a politician said something really stupid on a scientific topic I knew something about—for instance, when Senator James