

Abduction Watch 12/13 August 1998

GULLS AND GULLIBILITY

Somewhere, out there . . . are Tim Rifat, David Morehouse and a host of people who've been on Remote Viewing training courses!

We are, soon, going to be suffering from a surfeit of Remote Viewing, which looks like being the coming fad among the X-Files generation. I understand that Century have paid substantially for Tim Rifat's forthcoming book, and I'd like to stimulate a vigorous and constructive debate on the reality of RV at an early stage. Before, perhaps, it becomes necessary to suggest that the Fraudulent Mediums Act could be used in specific instances.

To my surprise, a number of senior figures and Council members from BUFORA seem to have been impressed by RV, and attended a course run by David Morehouse, one of those involved in the scrapped US government research. Steve Gamble writes about it in the pseudo-history magazine *Quest*, and the man responsible for inflicting Derrel Sims on last year's BUFORA conference, Richard Conway (in *AE* 28), recounts two of Morehouse's cases, both of which involved time travel. One necessitated travelling a mere year or so, allegedly 'explaining' the TWA 800 crash in July 1996

"The viewers went back to that point in time and saw the plane explode in the air . . . they saw the entire side of the plane cave in, and saw heads explode as well as bodies . . . The viewers discovered through many viewing sessions that a microwave weapon had been fired during a test, and it was this weapon that had ripped through the plane"

For the second journey, the viewers went back more than 80 years

"One of the targets that I found most fascinating that the viewers had to view was the Tunguska incident, also known as the Great Siberian Explosion . . . Experts have advocated that this was caused by a meteorite/space debris. However, 17 remote viewers witnessed very similar things when doing a routine training exercise in the military program. They saw a rip open up in the sky and a structured craft of some sort come through the rip. David Morehouse described having a feeling that the pilot of the craft was nothing more than a learner driver."

If the claims made for RV were true, it would be reasonable for either governments or individuals to pay. In *Alien Encounters* Tim Rifat - who charges £160 for a postal training course in RV - describes RV's potential for human cruelty

"Both Russia and China have already deployed remote viewing as psi-warfare against the Americans. It enables them to hypnotise people at a distance, give them cancer, or even kill them."

Rifat also demonstrates the immense range of RV, and of the viewers. He reports that

"Leading (*though unnamed*) experts have revealed that American and Russian beam weapons are regularly shooting down alien craft, engaged in a secret war to protect mankind. Remote viewers are able to psychically spy on these UFOs and aliens, some of whom come from different dimensions, such as the 'transcendentals' from the biophysical realm."

The *British Association of Remote Viewing and Paranormal Research*, based in Selby, N Yorks wants

to develop programmes using RV "as an aid in personal development and emotional problems" and for "A UFO reporting and investigative network". It commends readers to the writings of Carlos Castaneda, Tim Rifat and David Icke, and also gives a stern instruction to potential members

"The Remote Viewing of United States and British security installations is forbidden to our members. We do not recommend the RV of Soviet sites kindly leave them alone to get on with whatever they need to do. You have been warned."

You might think that a learnable - purchaseable, even - skill like RV could be easily demonstrated. If it's really possible to travel out into different dimensions in space to see invisible aliens being shot down by American and Russian "beam weapons", or to hop back 80 years with 16 other remote viewers (who would presumably all have to be observing at the same time, even if they started out separately!) to see what caused the crater at Tunguska, surely much simpler journeys could be easily achieved.

Yet that never seems to be the case. As often happens, really remarkable events are reported when they can't possibly be tested or verified. If only remote viewers can go to those extraordinary times and places, the rest of us can't prove those events didn't happen. Confusing, isn't it?

I've suggested before - and suggested to Tim Rifat, too - that there must be straightforward tests which could, compared to all this travel in time and space, be easily performed. Finding out the makes, colours and registration numbers of the cars parked in a nearby car park? The colours of the front doors and the layouts of the front gardens of the houses in a particular road? The titles, authors and cover colours of the books on a particular shelf in a local library? I'm not aware that any remote viewer, despite the extensive claims made for RV, has ever publicly succeeded in, or even attempted, such straightforward but potentially convincing tests.

More to the point, if RV really can be learned, and operated so specifically that 17 remote viewers can travel back 80 years to precisely the same place, and the same moment in time, then I don't understand why it is only used for such stupid, speculative, trivial and useless purposes. Or why anyone is impressed or satisfied by hearing stories which sound as if they are designed to appeal to those with a dumb, speculative, believer's interest in the paranormal, willing not only to suspend disbelief on demand, but also happy to pay for the privilege.

Those selling RV make very clear claims. They claim that it can be used to travel freely in space or time - preferably backwards in time, but not necessarily or exclusively so - to precise times and geographical locations. There appears to be no limit to either parameter. After all, 80 years and deep space are supposed to be no problem.

If those claims were true, then I cannot comprehend why RV is not being used, day in and day out, all over the world, to prevent and solve all kinds of crime. If a range of the sort of simple tests I've suggested above could be set up by US or UK police forces, and passed repeatedly by remote viewers to establish their dependability, I am sure that it would only be a short time before police forces and courts all over the world would accept RV as a sound investigative technique which produces reliable evidence. If the claims made for RV are true, surely it would be so simple for remote viewers to return - maybe just a few hours or days, not 80 years - to a crime scene. They wouldn't even have to travel geographically: they could be taken there by the Police.

Once at the crime scene, it would surely present no problem for the remote viewer to travel back in time to see precisely how a crime was committed, the sequence of events, what was said, who was responsible. If 17 remote viewers can go to a precise second at Tunguska to see "a rip open up in the

sky and a structured craft of some sort come through the rip", then I don't see that precise descriptions of vehicles, descriptions of persons involved, how a murder or assault was carried out, what weapon was used, and how and when the criminal(s) left the scene of crime, could present any difficulty at all. Where a child goes missing, and was seen, for instance, being taken away in a car, the remote viewer could easily go back those few hours or days, look at the car, remember its registration number and description, describe the person or persons who have taken the child away, and presumably, being able to move at will in space or time, follow the car and lead the Police to where the child has been taken. War crimes trials could be transformed: the remote viewer could provide precise evidence of how torture and killing had taken place, who was responsible for it. Once it was established that RV is as reliable as those who make money from selling it claim it to be, what criminal would be able to argue against the evidence of remote viewing? What court, in what country, would not accept the evidence of RV?

Investigation of this kind would absolutely transform the solving of all kinds of crime. It would be a far greater deterrent than the death penalty, dramatically reducing serious and violent crime all over the world. And, as well as specific criminal events, RV could be used to investigate - precisely, by locating the black box, for instance - the cause of air crashes and other disasters. It could be used to monitor human rights abuses all over the world, prisons and other establishments being visited through RV, so that brutal regimes would fear the wholly dependable revelations made by remote viewers about the treatment of political prisoners.

If the claims made for remote viewing were true and accurate, the potential for good that could come out of it is almost limitless. I am sure that the best remote viewers would be lauded by society, and paid salaries commensurate with the effect that their skills could have. RV could, without doubt, change the world for the better.

Yet none of these remote viewers, or even the governments alleged to have found that they could genuinely do what they claim, have ever used RV for any good or constructive or worthwhile purpose. Claims for the reality of RV are all based in the fringes of the paranormal, in conspiracy theory, in the myth of alien intervention, in fear of a supposed New World Order. They cannot be tested or checked, and whether potential customers accept RV or not is a matter of belief, not proof. So long as RV is as pointless and useless as it currently seems, and so dependent on fear for its publicity, I suggest that we treat it as a rather unpleasant and exploitative nonsense. If the claims made for RV are true, then not only are there easy ways to prove them, but we should be able to look forward to seeing remote viewers use this remarkable skill to really help others, and not just to make money for themselves. Somehow, I think we might be in for a very long wait.

Alison's Balloon update - the GMC responds

I finally wrote to the General Medical Council, which has responsibility for the conduct and discipline of most doctors in the UK. I couldn't insist that the GMC gives me its opinion of the use of 'recovered memory therapy', because nothing has happened to me which I, personally, could complain about. Nor was I writing to them on behalf of anybody who wanted me to. It was up to the GMC if it wanted to give an opinion. Here's the essence of what I wrote -

"You may be aware of the relatively recent phenomenon of people believing that they have been 'abducted by aliens'. This belief generally entails a conviction that the person has been physically taken into a spacecraft by alien beings, and has there been subjected to an intimate, pseudo-medical, physical examination and other procedures. For female 'abductees' - the majority - the other procedures tend to involve insemination, followed some months later, during a separate abduction event, by the forced removal of a hybrid - alien/human - foetus.

Later, it is believed that they will be taken again in order to 'nurture' the hybrid children, who are supposedly bred so the aliens may continue their bloodline in the face of imminent extinction.

These unusual beliefs have been primarily developed and promoted through the use of regression hypnosis, which has generally been induced and controlled by abduction investigators themselves, few of whom have any kind of relevant training or qualification in medicine or psychology. The accepted justification for the inability of the abductee to recall these extraordinary events consciously, without hypnosis, is that the aliens have covered the true events with 'screen memories' which only hypnosis can penetrate. Sometimes the abductee is allegedly aware of is a period of 'missing time', for which he/she cannot account.

At a conference earlier this year, I heard an account of an instance of a working GP using regression hypnosis specifically for this purpose. The account was given by the 'abductee' herself, and by a solicitor, well-known for his belief in the reality of alien abduction, who had arranged the involvement of the GP. The GP was named, and he has responded to an enquiry I sent, confirming that he used regression hypnosis in this case.

I understand that the GP had attended a training course in hypnosis 'for dentists', which I presume would be concerned with hypno-anaesthesia rather than regression and the recovery of memory. The solicitor had apparently sought out the young woman who was not, prior to his involvement, aware that her sighting of an unusual aerial object entailed a period of 'missing time'. Once she had decided that was actually the case, the arrangement was made with the GP, and the purpose of the hypnosis seems to have been to explore what 'happened' during that period, in the context of the 'unexplained' object (which from the video taken by the young woman appears to many to be a balloon).

It is likely that a video was made of the regression, although I have not seen it. However, the solicitor explained that the young woman "became very distressed and frightened under hypnosis", and indicated that she did not wish to continue with it after recalling that she had been "taken from her home into a black hole". She spoke at the conference on the basis that she was speaking at first-hand about the abduction experience. The impression was given that she accepted the reality of her being "taken" as she had said. Further hypnosis was not ruled out.

I would be grateful to know whether the GMC would consider that hypnotic regression, undertaken by a GP with this training, for these reasons, with these results, raises any issue of conduct. I don't know whether it is pertinent to the question, but it is likely that this solicitor (see the *Newsletter* of the British Society of Experimental and Clinical Hypnosis No 20, April 1983) will have paid the GP for his services.

I have in mind, particularly, paragraph 17 of 'Good Medical Practice', which under the heading 'Abuse of your professional position' provides that doctors registered with the GMC "must not . . . recommend or subject patients to investigation or treatment which you know is not in their best interests". It seems unlikely that any investigation - or was it treatment - in which the patient "became very distressed and frightened", and in consequence of which she came to believe that she was "taken from her home into a black hole", was likely to have been in that patient's best interests.

It would seem inappropriate for any person - least of all a doctor - to seek to represent that regression hypnosis is an accurate or dependable method of 'recovering' memories of hitherto

unremembered, but deeply traumatic events. I would imagine that you are familiar with 'Recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse - Implications for clinical practice', published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* no 172 (1998). Summarising a detailed exposition of the problems of 'recovered memory' techniques, this article explicitly finds that

"when memories are 'recovered' after long periods of amnesia, particularly when extraordinary means were used to secure the recovery of memory, there is a high probability that the memories are false, ie of incidents that had not occurred."

The authors refer specifically to 'alien abduction', saying that

"The creation under hypnosis of memories of previous lives, often as distinguished historical subjects, or of abduction by aliens and sexual abuse in space ships reveal the extent to which this technique is suspect. Of concern is the extent to which people who elicit and report such memories appear to believe them despite their semi-delusional nature."

Reflecting a substantial amount of other medical, psychological and legal opinion, the authors go on to urge the utmost caution in any consideration of the use of techniques to enhance or recover memory. I would, in conclusion, be grateful to know whether the GMC would also consider that hypnotic regression is an undependable and possibly harmful technique, the product of which is likely to be confabulated at best. And whether the GMC considers that the use of hypnotic regression by a registered GP for the purpose of exploring an alleged experience with an unidentified flying object could ever be regarded as acceptable conduct, whether or not it resulted in the patient becoming "very distressed and frightened", or convinced that she had been "taken from her home into a black hole".

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me."

I received a brief 'holding' reply, and then the following response from Head of the Standards Section of the GMC, which leaves me with some difficult decisions.

"Thank you for your letter of 27 July about the use of regression hypnosis by registered medical practitioners. I have referred your letter to a medical member of the GMC. He has asked me to reply in the following terms.

First, it might be helpful to explain our role and remit. The General Medical Council licences doctors to practise medicine in the UK. Our purpose is summed up in the phrase: *Protecting patients, guiding doctors.*

The law gives us four main functions:

- * keeping up-to-date registers of qualified doctors
- * giving advice on standards of professional conduct and on medical ethics
- * promoting high standards of medical education
- * dealing firmly and fairly with doctors whose fitness to practise is in doubt

However, we are not in a position to judge the value or effectiveness of particular medical therapies either in orthodox or non-orthodox medicine. This is a matter for bodies such as the Royal Colleges and the BMA. Nor can we comment on specific cases, such as the actions of the general practitioner which you discuss in your letter, as to do so may compromise the fair consideration of a complaint at a later stage.

We provide guidance to doctors on the standards of practice and care expected of them, and I enclose a copy of the second edition of our booklet *Good Medical Practice*, which was published last month. We also consider under our fitness to practise procedures the actions of doctors who have put patients at risk by behaving in an irresponsible manner, for example by providing treatment without having adequate training or experience, or by offering treatment while knowing that it is not effective, or is inappropriate to the patient's needs.

If you have concerns about the conduct of a doctor, whom you believe to be putting patients at risk, the member suggests that you raise this with us formally, providing the name of the doctor concerned, and any documentary evidence you have about the events or the conduct of the doctor. This information can then be considered formally through our fitness to practise procedures. I enclose a copy of our booklet *A problem with your doctor?* which gives some further information about the scope of the GMC's procedures, and how to make a complaint to us."

So, what do I do? Making any kind of formal complaint against a doctor is a serious business, and I'm conscious that I know nothing of the GP's motives or intentions when he decided to become involved in this. He may have thought he was helping, he may have thought his actions were for the best. He may, perhaps, have become convinced of the reality of alien abduction, and may see himself - as other apparently responsible and intelligent people have come to see themselves - as playing a part in understanding that reality. He may be an excellent doctor with an unusual belief, and I wouldn't, personally, want to disadvantage him professionally simply because he holds that belief.

I have the impression from the careful wording of the reply that the "medical member of the GMC" considers that there may be a real issue here, and that if a complaint was made, it would be taken seriously. But I don't know enough about the circumstances of the case, and the individuals involved, to put anyone at risk simply because, quite possibly, an individual made a poor judgment for the best of reasons. "Above all, do no harm" is as good a byword for me as for those I criticise.

My view - and I'd be happy to hear any other constructive opinions - is that it would be best to communicate to other researchers that if any doctor subject to GMC discipline becomes involved in regression in connection with alien abduction, he may well find himself subject to a complaint and investigation. And that if it isn't appropriate for a doctor to regress, then it certainly isn't appropriate for some belief-ridden amateur with no medical training. And, also, to see whether I can follow-up the GMC's suggestion and obtain a general view of the technique and its use in this context from the BMA. Please let me know of any other/better ideas you might have.

The Secrets that you Keep (and the ones you don't!)

If we're ever going to get to grips with the constantly-growing belief in alien visitation, which underpins the more specific, and even more frightening belief in abductions, we need to look behind the other strand of belief in aliens. This is the 'real evidence' strand, that claims to have accessed hard information from official sources, to know what governments believe and, more important, really know, about alien life and the threat it presents.

In the USA, this strand has found its Holy Grail in Roswell and associated crashes, landings and recoveries. You'll probably be all too familiar with them by now, and have realised why the most sensible figures involved have concluded that it's worth demanding that the US government releases whatever facts it has. Without some sort of new input, there will never be anything but argument and the endless dissection of minutiae with ever-decreasing results. Personally, I doubt that the US government knows enough to be any help: if we can't find a plain answer with what we already know,

then I don't suppose there's one to be found. Sometimes you have a mystery you can solve. And sometimes, you just have a mystery.

Here in the UK, Tim Good, Nick Redfern and Nick Pope are the three prominent figures writing at this end of the 'alien reality' spectrum. Good and Redfern seem less than comfortable with the medical/millennial content of abductions. Pope - strongly rumoured to consider himself an abductee, though unwilling to let that be seen to cloud his apparent objectivity - seems able to believe in more or less anything if his column in *Sightings* was anything to go by, but his employment with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) gives him a credibility as a source that he is not alone in finding useful. The three of them propagate - and seem genuinely to believe in - the proposition that Earth has been subject to a persistent history of physical, real-time alien visitation, about which the UK government knows much, and deliberately keeps secret from its people. All three make substantial sums of money from writing books based on that premise.

Yet the quality of evidence depended on by all three appears consistently poor. All use essentially the same simple tactic, mixing together

1. 'official' accounts of UFOs and of 'official' investigations
2. 'unnamed soldier' material, from anonymous and untested sources who ostensibly claim to know the secrets behind the 'official' reports and investigations, and to be willing - usually for no apparent reason - to pass them on to popular UFO authors, who may then make money out of telling them to everybody else
3. UFO reports made and investigated by believers in alien visitation, presence and, often, abduction of humans and animals as well (Good, for instance, depends on more than 70 references culled from the frequently loopy and apocalyptic *Flying Saucer Review* - and some of the world's worst, old, untested UFO photos - to glue together his speculations in *Alien Base*. Pope - who referred callers to the MoD to Tony Dodd's regression-riddled Quest International, regurgitates much of Quest's array of belief in abductions without asking any of the vital questions as to credibility and proof, and the production of accounts through the amateur, secretive use of hypnosis to obtain 'memories' of abduction. The most dramatic 'new' case in Redfern's *Covert Agenda* is the now utterly devalued 'Welsh Crash', for his Rendlesham account he was willing to depend on Larry Warren, and for other secrets of government activity he was content to rely on John Lear and Linda Moulton Howe.)

Its unfortunately easy, if authors aren't scrupulously careful, for anonymous speculation to appear to turn into official information. I've been cross-checking a few of the more unlikely references, and, by way of example, came across this clear instance of a wild and unproven secondhand tale being made to look like a fact -

In his book *A Covert Agenda - The British Government's UFO Top Secrets Exposed*, in the chapter 'Meeting the Ministry' - actually just an interview with civil servant and fellow alien presence believer Nick Pope - Redfern makes an apparently astonishing, but unequivocal statement about the MoD's financial and policy commitment to UFO research, along with a hint that there might be a cover-up of the real facts

"Pope has advised me that Sec (AS) 2a has no appreciable 'UFO budget' to support its investigations. Yet, as Timothy Good has learned, in 1978 no less than £11 million was appropriated by the MoD to ensure that in-depth studies into the UFO enigma were undertaken."

Redfern does give a reference for this assertion - to page 18 of Timothy Good's book *Alien Liaison - The Ultimate Secret*. And there's the source for Redfern's supposed knowledge of MoD spending and activities. Good says

"And as to the lack of Defence funds to undertake in-depth investigations, I have learned otherwise. Via an academic source who was involved in secret research for the Ministry of Defence, I was informed that in 1978, for example (a year of intensive UFO activity), no less than £11 million had been appropriated.

The same source confirmed that secret research by the RAF had determined the extraterrestrial origin of UFOs, and furthermore suggested that the origin of humankind was in some way connected with the visitors. Unfortunately, I am unable to substantiate these claims except in apocryphal terms."

So, Good can't substantiate his unnamed source, who, for someone involved in secret research himself, and apparently passing on other secrets as well, seems surprisingly untroubled by having all these secrets set out in a UFO pot-boiler. Particularly when you consider that there must be so few people who would fit his description that Good might as well have named him in great big letters. If he wanted to. If he actually could without it becoming apparent that the claims made were absurd.

But Redfern doesn't just draw the line at accurately reproducing Good's proofless claim. No, instead of merely passing on the speculation that £11 million had been appropriated, he goes on to add that this was "to ensure that in-depth studies into the UFO enigma were undertaken". Good had never said that, nor had Good's unnamable source. An appropriation of £11 million - making £11 million available - becomes £11 million of studies that have actually been undertaken into the UFO enigma by the MoD, studies which the MoD supposedly wanted to be "in-depth" and which it wanted to "ensure" were undertaken. There isn't a shred of proof for this claim. It doesn't appear in Good's account, which appears to be Redfern's only source. Maybe Redfern had another source who could be depended on to provide accurate information to back up, and provide more detail of, the claims made by Good's source. But Redfern doesn't indicate that he has such a source, and the way he has set this passage out indicates that this could be one of the "British Government's UFO Top Secrets", promised in his title. That sure would back up an argument that aliens are real, and that the government knows all about it. Which could be useful if that's what you want potential buyers of your books to believe is true.

I don't know quite how to describe this problem. It's unfortunate - and potentially misleading - enough for this claim to be given the appearance of fact, but Redfern is regarded as a relatively dependable researcher within the field. The incestuous reproduction of attractive and saleable accounts of UFO and alien reality worldwide suggests that in due course - if it hasn't happened already - yet more authors will state that the UK government actually spent £11 million on in-depth UFO research in 1978. Which will almost certainly be untrue.

Because of the degree of commitment that all three of the UK authors - typical of others around the world - have to the reality of the alien presence, it probably wouldn't be right to make any suggestion of dishonesty. These people have their own agenda. They want to provide evidence which supports what they believe to be true, and consequently they are happy to use any claim or report which offers that support, regardless of how feeble or flawed or unlikely or disturbingly anonymous it may - to us outsiders - appear to be. But however much external disinformation, from a source or sources we have barely started to identify, there may be, there is also an element of what I might term 'self-hoaxing', where believers build on each others' fears and beliefs to present what appears, at first glance, to be evidence that supports their beliefs.

A heavily-publicised example of this 'self-hoaxing' appears in a recent 'News Release from Nick Redfern', dated 17 July 1998, where he pursues a tactic he adopted in the 'Meeting the Ministry' chapter of his book *A Covert Agenda*, publishing (it also appears in the last edition of *Alien Encounters*) an interview he apparently conducted with Nick Pope.

Some of you will have seen this: it's worth a read. It's written in the usual terms, implying secrets not quite understood, with shadowy hints of the suppression of facts, and ever-present eavesdroppers waiting to prey on would-be whistleblowers. Remarking on his "interest in the MoD's involvement in the UFO issue", he describes Nick Pope's "forthcoming book, 'Operation Thunderchild' (scheduled for a 1999 release)". Pope is quoted as saying about it

"The book tells the story of an encounter between UFOs and the RAF. Forget Independence Day; this is how it would really happen. There will be all sorts of things I can say in there that I can't say in a non-fiction book."

After a couple more questions, Pope goes on

"I have to be careful with every single word I say, because I know that every word, every sentence will be picked over by ufologists, the Ministry of Defence and, er, a number of other agencies".

Redfern comments - a bit heavy-handedly -

"Despite repeated attempts on my part for clarification on the issue of 'other agencies' noting his every word, Pope refused to elaborate. A slip of the tongue perhaps? Who knows?"

And goes on to be surprised at how much cooperation the MOD gave in the making of that wonderfully OTT, formulaic, unoriginal but entertaining SF extravaganza 'Invasion Earth'. Oh wow. But if what Pope had said really was a "slip of the tongue" then surely Redfern would have had the decency not to deliberately issue a 'News release' emphasising what Pope had apparently said, neither would he have published the same information in *Alien Encounters*. This reads like melodrama, staged for a purpose, rather than a chance unfortunate remark.

At a time when Redfern and Pope are headliners at conferences, when both are well-paid for their books, and Good commands extraordinary sums of money for his written work, I feel distinctly out of step here. But, the raw documentary research aside - and I admire Redfern's work in that respect - there is no solid proof for the claims of alien presence made by any of them. Good and Redfern depend on official documents and secondhand sources, and Pope implies a direct access to secrets. But I have reason to doubt that, much as Pope may genuinely believe in the reality of an alien/RAF encounter and the rest of the alien presence/abduction construct, any significant proportion of what he says he knows arises directly from within the MoD.

In an early article - as in his first book and repeatedly since - Pope claimed that, "I held the rank of Executive Officer when in Sec(AS)2a; this civil service rank equates to that of an Army Captain. I am now a Higher Executive officer, which equates to the rank of Major." I have little doubt that this comparison has assisted Pope to give an impression of authority and access to inside knowledge that a clearer explanation of his position in the MoD - and the precise limits of his job in Sec(AS)2a - would not. In 1996 I wrote -

"It appears that while Mr Pope was collecting the apparently vital and significant information that he is now presenting to the public in various different formats, he was an Executive Officer in the

civil service, a rank he says, "equates to that of an Army Captain". As an Executive Officer (EO) myself, in the HQ of another department, I found this an intriguing proposition.

After more than twenty years in the EO grade, on the maximum of the ordinary pay scale, and with some additions for good performance, I earn less than £16,000 a year (*all figures are as of April 1996*). When I joined the civil service, the entry qualifications for the EO grade were two 'A' levels of any description, and I don't think that has changed much since. I currently have no responsibilities for staff, and have never been responsible for more than seven. Occasionally, an EO might supervise up to a dozen staff, but he would rarely have personal responsibility for significant decisions involving their deployment. If you get fed up at your local social security office, or Jobcentre, and demand to see the supervisor, that will be an EO. It's a job where you need to be honest, accurate, and technically sound, but it's nothing special in the great scheme of things. Higher Executive Officer (HEO) is the next step up, and is a standard civil service 'middle management' grade.

The comparison with the Army ranks suggested by Mr Pope did not seem to ring true to me. I had this impression that a Captain could well, in combat, be responsible for the lives and deaths of a substantial number of men. A Major even more so. Using the straightforward investigative technique of finding out the facts, I compared the pay scales of the two civil service jobs with their supposed Army counterparts. This was enlightening.

Executive Officer	between £11,433 and £16,826
Army Captain	between £23,668 and £27,521
Higher Executive Officer	between £15,363 and £21,491
Army Major	between £30,054 and £36,010

In addition, Army officers receive subsidies for food and accommodation, and various allowances. Civil servants seldom receive any addition except London Weighting. The differences in income are actually greater than the figures suggest. The differences in responsibility are as great.

Continuing my investigation - actually, having a chat with the Sergeant in the local Forces Information office - I found that probably the only way in which civil service grades equate with Army ranks as Mr Pope has suggested is in the privileges given to civil servants if they visit an Army base. Where they eat - the Officer's Mess - and where they sleep. Otherwise, I suspect that they do not equate at all, and that Mr Pope's comments might possibly be regarded as misleading.

If the Government has entrusted responsibility for the conduct of its information-gathering, assessment and public relations regarding UFOs to a mere EO, then you can be pretty sure of one of two things. Either it has secrets to protect, and placed in the job someone who has no idea what they are, and whose ignorance is useful in protecting those secrets. Or - and this is far more likely - the Government has long since decided that UFOs have no defence or other significance, and decided to fill its 'UFO liaison' job as cheaply, and as at low a grade, as would be consistent with the rudiments of providing a service to its customers."

Later, as Pope's star continued to rise in the firmament of ufology, I wrote a couple of letters to the MoD asking about the nature of his job, his responsibilities, and the time he spent on it, as well as querying the sense of referring callers to the dubious skills of Quest International - which in a second letter they informed me they no longer did. Kerry Philpott's replies were consistent with my view that an EO would have been responsible only for dealing with incoming phone-calls, logging them,

and sifting them for anything that would be of interest further up the line before issuing standard replies. It seems that this was far from a full-time job: Pope's 'Meeting the Ministry' interview, "There is no specific 'UFO budget', excepting the staff costs, ie around 20% of my salary", suggests it only occupied one day a week.

The caption to Pope's photo in *Covert Agenda* says "Nick Pope, who for three years (1991-4) investigated UFO sightings for the Ministry of Defence." If he had the Sec(AS)2a job for three years, then if he spent only one day a week on it, the maximum number of days he could have spent on the UFO issue in work time was around 156. An average civil servant, even without sickness, will have around 7 weeks a year off, which would bring that down to around 135 days on the UFO task. In the Introduction to *The Uninvited* (p.xiii) he states of his time with the MoD "My conversion was not a blind leap of faith, but was based upon numerous instances where my rigorous official investigations had failed to uncover any conventional explanation for what was seen." In *Open Skies, Closed Minds* (p.3) he refers to "The hundreds of cases I investigated each year . . ." Considering that he had to man the phone and answer letters as well, I wonder what Pope's "rigorous official investigations" amounted to. It scarcely seems credible that he could have conducted hundreds of rigorous investigations each year in around 45 days.

From Kerry Philpott's letter to me dated 4 November 1996, it seems likely that Pope's job didn't actually require him to "uncover any conventional explanation for what was seen". Instead, Philpott explains - and this seems to fit the available work time much better than Pope's version - that

"The MoD examines any reports of "UFO" sightings it receives solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance; namely, whether there is any evidence that the UK Air Defence Region might have been compromised by a foreign hostile military aircraft. The reports are examined, with the assistance of the Department's air defence experts as required and, unless there is evidence of a potential military threat, and to date no "UFO" sighting has revealed such evidence, we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each report."

In other words, Pope's task may have been different to what he has intimated. Was he really, in the course of his work, looking for unknowns? Or was he looking only for reports of "defence significance". Despite his claim that "my official status gave me an edge over other researchers" (*Open Skies, Closed Minds*, p.3), was research actually part of his job? The MoD's real level of interest in reports from the public may be summed up in a brief extract from Hansard, August 1998.

Lord Hill-Norton Why [has] the MoD installed an answering machine to report UFOs?

Lord Gilbert It carries a message that explains that callers will be contacted only in the event that follow-up action is deemed appropriate.

Unfortunately, nobody seems to have asked Pope just how he obtained all the remarkable information he claims to know. Maybe people have assumed that he would have access to it, by virtue of his job, maybe convinced by his Captain/Major comparisons. But I can't think of a situation in which a lowly EO would be given that access. Are we to believe that Pope has been accessing information for which he does not have clearance? That he's a master of espionage? I think not. So, should we really accept that what Pope says about secret and sensitive information comes from within the MoD? Why should we believe it? What proof has Pope provided not only that it's true, but also that it comes first-hand from official sources?

Although the part-time occupant of the 'UFO desk' would have heard and read some interesting reports going up the line from the public, he wouldn't have been told any more about a matter of serious importance or secrecy. Why would the MoD bother to pass secret, sensitive information back

down the line to a desk EO who wasn't even engaged full-time on the UFO task, and had management responsibility for only one shared, junior member of staff? He had no need to know. He couldn't do anything with the information. The proposition that he would have been included in the distribution of secret and sensitive information makes no sense at all.

That Pope is still churning out 'new' secrets is also a surprise. I understand that he was promoted to Higher Executive Officer (HEO, the grade I'm now working in too, by chance) in 1994. I gather that this took him away from the Air Secretariat into, if I remember correctly, some sort of Finance/Admin work. The MoD is a huge government department, and the chances of Pope continuing to have access to any sort of 'secret' material after his change of job - let alone material about a UFO/RAF confrontation - are pretty much nil. Even if a rumour went around the MoD to that effect, Pope would know no more than anyone else who heard it, and it's unlikely that any such rumour would be more than fragmental, tiny suggestions of strange events. Any significant leak of information would undoubtedly be reported, and the appropriate security action would be taken. The civil service has clear and well-used disciplinary procedures, and I'm not aware that Pope has been made subject to any of them. The MoD isn't MI5, Pope is no David Shayler, and I suggest that any supposedly 'secret' material he appears to have accessed since his change of job should be scrutinised with particular rigour to identify its source.

If Pope really were party to information about a UFO/RAF confrontation, if such a confrontation had ever actually taken place, then I am reasonably confident that he wouldn't be writing a book about it, let alone boasting about it in advance to acquaintances. For me, the fact that he is doing so, and so far in advance of publication, leads me to believe that what he has to say is of no concern to the government, however convinced he may be of its truth. I suggest that it may be wise to look at Pope's claims in the light of his unusual, possibly unsubstantiated, beliefs, rather than accepting an extraordinary access to state secrets - secrets which nobody else has dared to reveal. In *Open Skies, Closed Minds* he thanks, among others, Tim Good, Budd Hopkins, Tony Dodd and Colin Andrews. In *The Uninvited* he adds Peter Robbins, Betty Hill, Whitley and Anne Strieber, Philip Mantle and Harry Harris to that list. No doubt they would thank Pope, too, for carrying their beliefs to a wider public on the back of his employment with the MoD, but I suggest we should be more than cautious in assuming that Pope's information about alien reality - including an alien/RAF encounter - comes from the government, when it seems so much more likely that he heard it from his new-found friends. Who probably started him worrying about there being "er, a number of other agencies" interested in him, too!

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PS I'm not trying to ignore the 'Nazi UFO' investigation. I'm just swamped with ground-breaking material from incisive and generous researchers all over the world, with more promised and on the way. I already have hundreds, probably well over a thousand pages of relevant sources to go through, so it's going to be a while before *Secrets or Lies 2* makes it onto the printed page. But please don't let that deter you from keeping the flow of research going. This one really is worth doing!