

THE DESERT RAT - Notes from the Research Center
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UFOs - Parapsychology - Philosophy - Government Secrets
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In this issue...

WE'RE BACK!

PROJECT PRESERVE DESTINY -- A REVIEW

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----- WE'RE BACK! -----

The Desert Rat is back in service, and the first order of business is to refute our obituary. We were never really dead; we were merely resting. Since our last issue of over a year ago, we feel that we have evolved into a higher form. We were once a humble worm, but we wrapped ourselves in a silken cocoon, hibernated for a while and now have proudly emerged -- a bigger worm. We have moved from childhood into full blown adolescence, and apart from picking at zits, we are now asking vague and meaningful questions like "Who are we?" "Why are we here?" and "What should we be when we grow up?"

Time has softened us a bit. We are somewhat larger about the belly, owing to all those Las Vegas buffets. We hardly ever slink along the borders of secret bases anymore. That unnamed facility in the Nevada desert that gave us life is still unnamed, but for us it has become as much a burden as an asset. As a defiant symbol of our coming of age, we have purged that base from our title, although we will probably never be free of its influence. None of us has had the privilege of choosing our parents, and no matter how we try to reinvent ourselves, we cannot escape our heritage. In the past few months, we experimented with being someone else. We tried walking with a limp. We tried wearing a monocle and speaking with a fake British accent. It didn't work. We decided in the end that we am who we am -- The Desert Rat -- and there is no sense in pretending otherwise.

People can change. They can grow. But you also have to work with what you've got. That's one of the sermons of the "New Rat." Truth, we preach, is relative. We'll probably never find any absolute, permanent truth about anything. Science, technology and current affairs are changing too fast to allow anything to be set in stone. What we can find, though, is a "better truth" -- better, that is, than other available theories when applied to a

particular purpose. In the New Rat, we will explore the unknown and conduct ridiculous mind experiments along the fringe of possibility. Ultimately, though, we must bring whatever we find back to earth and somehow integrate it with our mundane personal lives.

The New Rat will not be too concerned with secret bases. We will report on them if something significant happens, but we will not be trapped by them. We will accept no prior restraint on the subjects we can cover but will report on anything interesting that crosses our desk. And a big desk it is! While we were repairing in our cocoon, we were fortunate to be equipped with Internet access, and in the past year we have built what appears to be the largest and most sophisticated website for UFOs and paranormal phenomena. It is an open system that anyone can contribute to, and we will discuss its philosophy in future issues. A lot of weird stuff passes through our portals, most of which we can only shrug our shoulders about and file on the appropriate webpage. Some of it, though, evokes in us more than a passing interest, and these are the cases we'll focus on.

In future issues, we will perpetuate myths and distort current affairs to illustrate the political and philosophical points we wish to make: for example, that in this crazy mixed up world of ours all the problems of the universe don't amount to a hill of beans which compared to those of two small people. We will also explore UFO and paranormal claims that show restraint and retain substantial connections to our life on earth.

There ain't no rules, however. We will report on whatever topic we want, whenever we want, for however long it amuses us. If you don't like it, then get off the bus.

----- PROJECT PRESERVE DESTINY -- A REVIEW -----

We love a good story, quite apart from its relative truth, and while on hiatus we were eager to hear new accounts from alleged government insiders. Former Army Colonel Philip Corso made a splash this summer with his Roswell revelations. We read his book, or at least tried, but the effort left us more queasy than entertained. Corso, if he is believed, has to be one of the most important men in the history of our planet, having brokered not one technological breakthrough but dozens. He was the intermediary who brought alien devices from the Roswell crash into our homes as microwaves ovens and television sets. Lord knows what we would have done without him and his alien suppliers; we'd probably still be rubbing sticks together to make radio. Analyzing Corso's revelations posed a problem for us, however, being as there were few leads to follow up on. We were also disappointed by the lack of human details, the sort of unexpected twists that give a story depth and texture. In the end, Corso proved too large a figure for our feeble mind, so we chucked the book and turned on "The Simpsons." Homer we can relate to. He may never understand the alien agenda, but at least

he appreciates a good doughnut.

Fortunately, our dry spell has ended with the low-key release of another book by an ex-government employee. "Above Black: Project Preserve Destiny," has just been published by former Air Force technical sergeant Dan Sherman. Like Corso, Sherman offers no proof for his claims, but neither does he portray himself as a central figure in world history. In spite of its revelations, Corso's book offered few surprises -- rooted as it was in the well-known MJ-12 documents and the conspiracy theories arising from them. Sherman's book, in contrast, seems quite original. It offers a new synthesis of popular themes, including alien abduction, genetic manipulation, government cover-up, alien-government collusion and the growth categories of remote viewing and psychokinesis. Regardless of its veracity, we expect this book to have a significant impact on the direction of the UFO movement, much more so than Corso's.

Sherman's story is refreshingly simple. While in the Air Force, he was assigned to a routine electronic intelligence course at NSA headquarters at Fort Meade, Maryland. There, he was informed that he would also be taking another, not-so-routine course -- an evening training program in communicating with aliens. He was told that he had a special "intuitive" ability that had been genetically engineered by aliens during an abduction of his mother in the early 1960s. (He expresses as much surprise as we do.) The course would "turn on" this ability through a series of exercises in front of a computer terminal. A few months later, Sherman was receiving "comms" from extraterrestrial entities consisting of both coded alphanumeric transmissions and direct "conversations" with two aliens he called "Spock" and "Bones." Sherman learned a few things about the aliens, but he never saw any. He seems to have been little more than a communications officer who was kept mostly in the dark and who never got much support from his employers. He performed his new duties for a couple of years -- namely typing communications into a blank window on his workstation -- but he eventually became disenchanted and quit. End of story.

Sherman has no information on what the aliens are up to, although he believes that abduction data was part of the communications he received. He doesn't know what the government's agenda is, either. He was told that this form of communication, under the name of "Project Preserve Destiny," was being developed because at some point in earth's future all electromagnetic communication would be disrupted, but he was given no details. (To us, this is the most terrifying revelation of all, since without electromagnetics we at the Desert Rat will cease to exist. We will cry "I'm melting! I'm melting!" and will end up a puddle on the pavement.) Sherman reports only what he says he directly experienced, and he generally declines to speculate further. In that sense, his account is not unlike that of Bob Lazar, whose story we still recall fondly. (Is Lazar still alive?) The difference, however, is that Sherman has put his claims down on

paper, so there can be no renegotiation of them.

Those who have followed academic parapsychology research will find the description of Sherman's training sessions familiar. To activate his abilities, Sherman was submitted to a series of exercises at a computer workstation. While facing the terminal, but without touching it, Sherman's task was to "flatten" a series of sine wave graphs displayed on the screen. This is reminiscent of psychokinetic research in which a subject tries to remotely influence the output of a random number generator. The difference is, Sherman appeared to achieve near 100% success once his abilities "clicked." After mastering the skill of flattening ten lines simultaneously, more meaningful communication began. In a matter of weeks, Sherman learned how to correlate photos and video clips with their "intuitive" equivalents. He was then released from Fort Meade with little information about what would happen next.

A few months later, Sherman was transferred to what he calls, "PPD Base #1," an Air Force base he declines to name but that he provides three photos of (enough, in theory, for us to identify it). There he held a "conventional" Top Secret job while occasionally receiving "Above Black" communications from the aliens. The "comms" happened only while he was at work and consisted mainly of numbers and letters, most of which he no opportunity to decipher. At one point, however, he "hiccuped" and found himself in a higher level of communication. (No, not Hungarian!) There, he found that he could communicate directly with his alien contact, asking questions and occasionally getting answers. The aliens were, as Grays are often described, strictly business, with a reserved sense of humor and an abrupt manner. If Sherman asked a question they did not want to answer, they would simply terminate the session.

Often they did respond, however. Sherman claims no earthshaking revelations and provides few details to compare with other stories. The alien lifespan is similar to ours. They have a male and female sex. They eliminate waste like us, but "not in the same way." They have been visiting earth for a "long time" and have impacted at least three cultures in the past. (They did not say which ones, and Sherman departs from his just-the-facts demeanor by offering his own speculation. We wish he wouldn't.)

In storytelling terms, this is not the best material. The book is like the first five minutes of an "X-Files" episode: riveting, but without enough conflict to sustain a whole show. We'd like to hear more about our alien brethren -- where they come from, what they're up to, whether they know who killed JFK, etc. Any fiction writer ought to have supplied these details, because that's the payoff of the whole exercise. But Sherman does not come across as a fiction writer. We sense that he does not supply those details because he simply does not have them, and he resists many opportunities to make the story more sensational. His is a straightforward chronological account of what he says happened to

him. There is no artifice or embellishment, no outrage or significant speculation. There is nothing here to make this book a bestseller, which, if you are going to create a hoax, ought to be your top priority.

We should note that Sherman first came to our attention in quite the opposite vein: In January, an email campaign by "Word of Mouth Publishing" promised to sell 20 million copies of Sherman's forthcoming book by a sort of pyramid scheme. If you recommend the book to a friend and they recommend it to another friend, and so on, you were supposed to get rich in "recommendation rewards" at the end. This ill-conceived plan was apparently not Sherman's, but that of the amateur marketers he got involved with. Sherman later pulled the plug on the scheme, and when the book was delayed he sent a refund to everyone who had ordered. Sherman's book, as now released, is anything but sensational. He may make a little money on this self-published work, but not a lot, and it can't compete for market share with the more colorful books like Corso's which claim to have all the answers.

Although this book may be overlooked in the UFO mainstream, it is likely to have a subliminal influence on it, especially in the abduction field. The modern history of the abduction movement started with the notion that there was "missing time" in which aliens took us away for unknown medical experiments, then brought us back with our memories wiped clean. Then, a few years later, we learned from Budd Hopkins that the experiments were genetic in nature, and that aliens were interested mainly in our sperm, eggs and embryos. Now, Sherman is giving us a reason for that manipulation: The aliens are genetically preparing our offspring for psychic communication later in life. Soon, we predict, we'll be hearing a lot more about this in abduction circles.

The UFO subculture seems ready for this kind of claim right now. This is because psychic "information exchange" has come to be widely known and accepted, especially remote viewing. Even hardware-oriented ufologists (i.e. males) are more open to psychic claims these days because there seems to be some experimental evidence for them. It is now known that the NSA had its own remote viewing program during the Cold War. What if that research had succeeded to a far greater degree than acknowledged? In that case, a program like the one Sherman describes would not be that absurd.

Previously, the major connection between UFOs and parapsychology were the revelations of remote viewers like Ed Dames and Courtney Brown, who claimed to have the inside scoop on alien activity. Based on their personal psychic observations, Brown and Dames have made a number of specific predictions regarding the impending alien arrival, including a spaceship on the backside of comet Hale-Bopp. Sadly, they have been stood up every time, and you wonder whether Krusty the Clown could have managed these disclosures more wisely. (Hmmm... Art Bell, Krusty the Clown... Separated at birth?) Sherman's book adds a slightly more

plausible dimension by saying that the aliens are far more reliable in the psychic domain than we are. Sherman indicates that his communication sessions were dominated primarily by the aliens and that he himself has shown no psychic ability outside of those controlled conditions.

Sherman's scenario also adds a new level of subtlety to government cover-up claims. According to his military contacts, every alien program is hidden behind a "collateral" black project. This conventional secret project provides a cover story as well as an additional level of security. While it could be difficult to prosecute personnel for discussing aliens, which do not exist, an employee cannot provide too many details about these imaginary creatures without also divulging conventional Top Secret information. Sherman says he is being cautious here. He is not afraid to reveal the alien program, but he won't discuss many details about the conventional black projects he was assigned to. He indicates only that his work involved the analysis of radar emissions.

Sherman was assigned to a series of military supervisors, one at each base where he served. Apart from the first, each was personally introduced by the previous contact, as is the policy in compartmentalized programs. Each was a captain with little apparent knowledge of the "big picture," who seemed in his interaction with Sherman to almost be reciting from a script. With no one he could talk to about his experiences, Sherman says he felt profoundly isolated and unhappy.

Here, we turn skeptical. It seems unthinkable to us that so many resources, alien and human, should be invested in this program without the "talent" being provided with some psychological support. The human management of the project appeared to be inept, being so obsessed with its envelope of security that nothing could survive within it. One PPD officer seemed unaware of what the previous one had already briefed Sherman on, and the actions of Sherman's last supervisor were purely incompetent. Upset by the abduction data he seemed to be receiving, Sherman voiced an interest in resigning. Instead of offering support, the officer said that no resignation would be allowed, adding the Mafia-like assertion that Sherman could never leave the program. This is not the way to treat a sentient being, and it prompted Sherman seek a discharge at any cost. (Although it is not mentioned in the book, he apparently did it by falsely claiming homosexuality.)

Inept? Our government? It couldn't be. If the program is real, then it is probably still in its infancy, because there is only so much talent you can burn through before you are forced to loosen up. Wherever you have humans in stressful positions you have to provide some personal acknowledgement and emotional support if you expect them to perform. This project seemed to treat its people like laboratory rats, which works only in the laboratory or in the minds of military planners.

In spite of Sherman's reluctance to talk about his Air Force position, it seems clear that this part of his resume is genuine. We have little doubt that he attended the electronic intelligence class at Fort Meade during the period he claims, and we have no reason to question his military credentials. Of course, the alien portion of his resume is a different story. There are a few leads we can follow up on, but for the most part the story rests on his testimony alone. That doesn't mean it will never be resolved, though. This story by itself might not be verifiable, but other reports might later emerge to reinforce or discredit it.

There are a lot of possible reasons why someone might fabricate claims like this. Money and attention are obvious motivators, but Sherman's presentation is so low-key and non-sensational that we think he could have done a lot better. He should have added sinister guards showing guns in his face. A midnight abduction or a visit from the Men in Black would have probably helped sales, too. Where is the moral outrage those aliens must be feeling about the way we have screwed up our planet? Sherman could have taken a hint from Corso and peddled some alien technology. (Aliens invented the Gillette Sensor razor blade: We know it is true because those things never wear out.) He also should have told us more about the aliens and their agenda. There would be no risk in doing so because no alien is likely to come forward to protest. Instead, Sherman drops the ball. He gives us only an unadorned, dramatically incomplete account of what "really happened."

Conspiracy buffs will claim that it is all a government disinformation ploy, to which we reply, "Cool!" A government program to confuse the public about aliens would be almost as interesting as aliens themselves. There could also be more subtle psychological forces at work that we can only guess at. What possible motivation could Sherman have if not truth, money, attention or government coercion? We see no obvious answer right now, but that does not mean one will not emerge later.

In all, we are pleased that Sherman stuck to the facts and created a story worthy of attention. He has delivered unto us a new mystery, and the Rat is grateful to him for our revival.

["Above Black: Project Preserve Destiny" is available from the Area 51 Research Center for \$18.00 plus \$4.00 shipping (in US). See <http://www.ufomind.com/catalog/p/ppd/> for on-line ordering, or call 702-729-2648 for credit card orders.]

----- RELEVANT LINKS -----

Dan Sherman: <http://www.ufomind.com/people/s/sherman/>
Sherman's Book: <http://www.ufomind.com/catalog/p/ppd/>
Philip Corso: <http://www.ufomind.com/people/c/corso/>
Corso's Book: <http://www.ufomind.com/catalog/c/corso/>
Roswell Incident: <http://www.ufomind.com/ufo/place/us/nm/roswell/>

Ed Dames: <http://www.ufomind.com/people/d/dames/>
Courtney Brown: <http://www.ufomind.com/people/b/brown/>
Remote Viewing: <http://www.psispy.com/para/psi/rv/>
Psychokinetic Research: <http://www.psispy.com/para/psi/pk/>
MJ-12: <http://www.ufomind.com/ufo/topic/mj12/>
Abduction: <http://www.ufomind.com/ufo/topic/abduction/>
NSA: <http://www.ufomind.com/people/n/nsa/>
Bob Lazar: <http://www.ufomind.com/people/l/lazar/>
Budd Hopkins: <http://www.ufomind.com/people/h/hopkins/>

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