

Investigation of Bob Lazar's M.I.T. Claims

Glenn Campbell June 1993

Lazar's Statements

Bob Lazar claims to have degrees from MIT and Cal-Tech. He has also made public the names of two of his professors. Specifically, the following exchanges took place at a [UFO conference \(transcript, 120k\)](#) on May 1, 1993:

QUESTION: Bob, could you tell us about your education. I've heard a lot of different conflicting things; I'd like to hear from you.

LAZAR: That varies widely. As far as electronic technology, my degree there is from Cal-Tech and physics is from M.I.T.

QUESTION: Did you go to Pierce College?

LAZAR: Yeah, I did. Where did you hear that?

QUESTION: A friend that said something, somebody I don't even know. I just thought, it's something I want to ask, to clear my mind.

LAZAR: Yeah, I went to Pierce and Northridge and then... I'm terrible at dates. I don't remember what date I was at Pierce, probably like in seventy-six or something I was at Pierce and then seventy-seven or eight I went to Northridge just for a short time for some classes, then I was at Cal-Tech, and M.I.T. after that.

Later... [\[transcript\]](#)

QUESTION: ...What was the year of your graduation from M.I.T., and did you get a Ph.D.?

LAZAR: No, it was a Masters degree. The year. What was the year of graduation? Probably eighty two...

Later... [\[transcript\]](#)

QUESTION: Could you reveal some of your professors at M.I.T. and Cal-Tech?

LAZAR: Yeah, if you want. I don't have a list of them here. Dr. Duxler I think was one of them. And Hohsfield was another.

QUESTION: Hohsfield?

LAZAR: Hohsfield. H-O-H-S-F-I-E-L-D, or something along those lines.

QUESTION: Would he remember you?

LAZAR: Oh, yeah. Hohsfield I know will.

QUESTION: These are at M.I.T. or Cal-Tech?

LAZAR: Hohsfield was at M.I.T. Duxler was at Cal-Tech.

What follows is an attempt to verify the MIT claims using local directories housed at the MIT Institute Archives and national directories kept at other libraries.

Previous Inquiries

Both Stanton Friedman and George Knapp say they have contacted MIT by phone and have been told that MIT has no record of Robert Lazar. I have not repeated this inquiry myself. I assume that such inquiries are handled by computer and that computer records can be easily altered or deleted. Printed records, however, are much more difficult to obscure.

MIT Institute Archives

The following is based on examination of various printed directories housed at the MIT Institute Archives. This library is located on the MIT campus in Cambridge, Mass., Room 14N-118, and is open to anyone claiming to be a researcher. Annual student directories, faculty/staff phone directories, commencement lists and course catalogs dating back to the early days of MIT are available in open bookshelves in the main reading room. No volumes appeared to be missing, and none showed any obvious signs of tampering.

Could these directories have been falsified? It is conceivable that a government intelligence agency could re-create a modified document that looked just as old and authentic as the original, but any such action could create much larger problems. Most of these documents were originally produced in large quantities, and there are likely to be duplicate copies scattered around the country in unpredictable places. Tampering with one copy runs the risk of detection if any other copy of the document happens to turn up. While deliberate deception may be possible, this would imply a very complex and costly operation to neutralize all the potential inconsistencies. It may be possible to eliminate all printed records for a student, but it seems unlikely you could eliminate his professors.

National faculty directories were also consulted at the MIT Humanities Library and the Tufts University Wessell Library. Falsification of these directories seems nearly impossible, since there are thousands of copies of these publications available at libraries around the country.

Lazar's MIT Credentials

There is no "Lazar, Robert S." listed in any MIT student directory between 1978 and 1990.

These soft bound books are published every academic year and given to all students and all academic departments. Certainly, many copies must still exist in alumni attics around the country. MIT student directories are printed on low quality newsprint, which turns brown with age. It would be difficult to replace individual pages in these directories without an obvious color difference.

In the copies of the student directory at the MIT Archives, there was no visible indication of tampering on any of the pages where Lazar ought to appear. The 1981-82 student directory was also carefully searched for obvious misspellings of Lazar--"Lezar," "Lazear," etc.--with no match found. The only student listed with the same last name in the 1981-82 directory was "Lazar, Howard S." He appears in four student directories beginning 1978-79, graduating in 1982 in Chemistry. Howard Lazar's picture also appears in the 1981 and 1982 undergraduate yearbooks: He is definitely not Robert Lazar.

There is no "Lazar, Robert S" listed in any MIT faculty/staff telephone directory between 1978 and 1990.

These annual phone directories were consulted on the assumption that, as a graduate or post graduate student, Lazar might be listed as a research assistant instead of as a student. The closest entries are several people by the name of "Lazarus," none of which is appropriate.

No "Lazar, Robert S" has been found in the *MIT Degree List* between 1979 and 1990.

These books are published twice a year for each commencement. They list each degree recipient alphabetically and by department. The book apparently includes all degrees issued by MIT, not just undergraduate. The closest match found in the alphabetical list was "Lazar, S. R." who was shown in the department list as "Steven Roy Lazar," graduating with a BS degree in Biology on June 1, 1981.

"Lazar, Robert S" is not listed in the 1989 *MIT Alumni/ae Register*.

This big hard cover book is published only occasionally. Since the current one has a copyright date of 1989, it was probably assembled in late 1988. It is conceivable that if Lazar's computer records were deleted in 1988, they also would also not show up in this book. There are several people in this book with the names Lazar--as well as Lazear, Lazarus, etc.--but none are a good match.

Professor Hohsfield

There is no listing for "Hohsfield" in the current 1992-93 faculty/staff telephone directory.

Obvious misspellings were also checked for--"Hostfield," "Hohlfeld," "Ostfield," etc.--with no match. (This directory was consulted not at the MIT Archives but at another randomly chosen site on campus.)

There is no listing for "Hohsfield" in annual MIT faculty/staff telephone directories, 1980 to 1987.

Obvious misspellings were also checked for. The closest match was a "Hohlfeld, Robert G." listed as a Research Associate in Earth and Planetary Sciences in 1981-82 and 1982-83. The home telephone number listed for this person is no longer valid, and there is no listing for him after 1982-83.

In the annual MIT course catalogs, 1980 to 1990, there is no "Hohsfield," or name resembling it, listed as a professor for a physics course or in the Physics Department faculty lists.

"Hohsfield" is not listed in the 1993 National Faculty Directory

This is a comprehensive listing of all college and university faculty members in the U.S., published by Gale Research. There is also no Hostfield, Hosfield or Hohlfeld

"Hohsfield" is not listed in *American Men & Women of Science*.

The name is not listed in all editions examined: 1976, 1979, 1982, 1986 and 1992-93. However, this absence may not be significant, since only a nominated subset of scientists and faculty members appear in this book.

"Hohsfield" is not listed in the 1988 *Faculty Directory of Higher Education*.

Professor Duxler

"Duxler" is listed in the 1993 National Faculty Directory.

There is only one entry for Duxler. The entry is, "Duxler, William. Dir. of Computing, Los Angeles Pierce College, 6201 Winnetka Ave., Woodland Hills CA 91371." Pierce College is one of the schools that Lazar says he attended, and it is the only one that has been publicly verified. (Stanton Friedman has confirmed that Lazar took classes there.) Unfortunately, Lazar said Duxler was at Cal-Tech.

Lazar M.I.T. Investigation Follow-Up

Glenn Campbell August 1993

Journalistic Ethics

Since the above data could be seen as potentially damaging to Mr. Lazar, reasonable attempts were made to obtain his response. In keeping with accepted journalistic ethics, it was important that Lazar be made aware of the evidence and be

given a chance to comment on it. It would be preferable that Lazar respond at length, but a "no comment" would also be sufficient to fulfill the requirements of ethics.

Unfortunately, Lazar is not easy to contact. His phone is unlisted and his address is not common knowledge. Lazar has made it clear that he does not like to deal with reporters or UFO enthusiasts, and most such inquiries appear to be handled by his friend, real estate appraiser Gene Huff.

Attempts

Immediately upon completion of the conference transcript and the MIT investigation report (both above), this reporter sent copies of both to Lazar at Gene Huff's address. There was no response for one month until Gene Huff wrote back advising this reporter to cease publication of the transcript.

We have a lot of commitments for movie, video, and literature projects and we've made certain agreements regarding marketing which you are unaware of. Your marketing plans conflict with ours. Please make this easy and take the transcript off your list of available items.

No mention was made of the MIT document.

This reporter wrote back, explaining his reasons for publishing the transcript and drawing attention to the MIT issue. This letter was sent both to Huff and to Lazar at his "unpublished" address. An excerpt:

Among the most interesting passages in the transcript are when people in the audience ask Bob about his educational credentials. Admitting that his memory for such things is poor, Bob replies with some dates and the names of two of his professors, one at MIT and one at CalTech. Since I happen to live near MIT and am familiar with the campus, I took it upon myself to look up the MIT professor and see if he remembered Bob. Unfortunately, upon arrival on campus, I could find no staff member of that name anywhere, and several hours spent in the Institute Archives seemed to indicate that no professor of that name had worked at MIT for at least the past 20 years. I also looked up Bob Lazar, as others had done before me, and found no listing in any official printed directory since the 70s. The latter discovery was not particularly distressing to me, because I recognize that government agencies have the technical capability to alter documents and delete computer records. The disappearance of a professor, however, would seem difficult to pull off, and I wondered if Bob had been mistaken on the name.

I wrote down all my MIT findings in a three-page document which I sent to Bob in the same envelope as the transcript. I expected a comment of some kind. Perhaps, he would correct the spelling of the professor's name, admit he was mistaken about the school or give me some other hint as to why I could not find the professor at MIT. Instead, what I got, a month later, was a nasty letter, not from Bob but from his spokesman, telling me to cease publication of the transcript and implying nasty repercussions if I didn't.

I cannot overemphasize how bad this looks. It is the liars who get evasive and belligerent and threaten to sue on unrelated grounds when you press them on a sensitive point. The people telling the truth aren't supposed to behave that way. Personally, I am not the sort who jumps to conclusions. I accept the possibility that a student's records could be deleted at a major university, especially one that has a lot of government contracts. I also find it plausible that a former student could be mistaken in remembering the names of his old professors; I myself cannot remember the names of mine. My credulity is strained, however, when the student's records don't exist, a professor does not exist and I get a belligerent response from the student's spokesman when I report these facts. I do not jump to conclusions. I try to let the data speak for itself, but as the data stands now, it is tempting to declare that Bob Lazar never obtained any degree from MIT.

To me, the issues of whether Bob went to MIT and whether he worked with alien craft are separate. Logically, I know that any answer to one question does not imply a conclusion to the other. Still, most people do not make such fine distinctions, and the MIT question, as long as it remains unresolved, is going

to be a reoccurring problem for Bob. Matters are further complicated when Bob's de facto spokesman attempts to suppress a transcript which appears to contain some incriminating evidence in this regard. This conveys the appearance of a cover-up and virtually guarantees that this particular issue, relatively minor by itself, will always dominate any discussion of Bob Lazar in the future.

In my opinion, the MIT problem has to be dealt with directly. Belligerence and claims that the government is now eliminating MIT professors will not wash. People may not have the right to probe into Bob's private life, but degrees earned at a major educational institution are not private information. Proving a degree at MIT would help Bob's credibility 100%. Admitting no degree at MIT would certainly hurt, unless there was a good explanation, but the damage would not be as bad as leaving the question unanswered and letting someone else prove the fact.

I'm willing to go back to MIT if there is a hope of digging up better information. There are certainly countless student directories in private hands, and if Bob did go to MIT, they would provide a smoking gun. I am not interested in a wild goose chase, however, and unless there is some new input of information, my three-page document stands on its own.

Huff's reply was lengthy but shed no further light on the MIT question. The only passages mentioning MIT are as follows. (The names of third parties have been removed.)

...I know what you're thinking, it's our fault for not responding within your unstated time frame. You must remember, you are one of tens if not hundreds of people throughout the world who appeal to Bob for one reason or another. Since he never responds, it's literally my burden to respond to the worthy with my time and my expense. You see you're not the only martyr. This story has been around since 1989 for the public and you're not the first nor even the hundredth to hit us up for information or clarification, etc. To imply that Lazar's de facto spokesman is trying to suppress the transcript to hide something is quite insulting. I'm trying to stop the inadvertent spread of disinformation. You whine on and on about MIT. I never even mentioned it so you presumed I was trying to hide something. I am involved in trying to substantiate Bob's credentials from another direction. There are many people digging into the info on him from Los Alamos. After all if he worked there, they must have known his credentials when they hired him right? Anyway, some researchers just recently found out that Bob worked on beam weapons at Los Alamos and sent it to S----- F----- . Believe it or not these guys are anti-Lazar and inadvertently confirmed something that F----- didn't want to hear. He's been graciously praying that Bob is a fraud for some time, yet he remains friendly. I hope something comes of this "back engineering" of his credentials. Then people can feel comfortable and address the more important issues. So don't consider our lack of interest in your MIT search to be evasive. Others before you have done the same thing with no luck, and G----- K----- and I agree that the Los Alamos employment records are the key. Therefore we won't spend our time and energy going down that same dead end. We've been there.

I hope I've made clear that my opposition to the transcript was a sincere effort to keep the story straight, not to suppress anything. I used the term "my" instead of "our" because Bob wouldn't waste the time to respond to you and I don't want to hear more whining about me using "we". MIT is a dead end. Los Alamos is the key. I hope you can clearly see how you've used the transitive property of equality to come to your conclusions, except your variable about MIT was something you made up in your head and not based on anything I said. And correlating info on what I didn't say is how ufology got in it's present state. Too bad you've caused an adversarial situation, it may have been fun. If you have any remedies to the situation, please let me know. By the way I didn't worry about punctuation, etc. in this letter because your correspondence is always so perfect, I thought this would aggravate you. Just like answering these god damn letters aggravates me.

Regarding whether or not Lazar is aware of Huff's correspondence, Huff writes...

You seemed like someone with which I could communicate and educate so you could help us move forward but after talking with Bob this morning, I don't think that's possible. Bob and I thought it humorous that you

included a copy of my letter in your letter just to make sure that Bob knew what the letter I sent you had said. He knew. He always knows.

Conclusion

From Huff's correspondence above, it can reasonably be inferred that Lazar's response to the MIT data is a deliberate "No Comment." Lazar himself prompted my pursuit by offering the name "Hohsfield" at the conference. He even spelled it out, presumably inviting others to check. I followed this lead by visiting MIT and trying to locate that professor. I assembled all the relevant data I could find from open MIT sources, with "negative" data predominating. I submitted the data to Mr. Lazar for his comment and made reasonable attempts to obtain a response. Although Lazar himself said nothing, his acting spokesman gave me an acknowledgment and a reply: "MIT is a dead end." According to the rules of fair journalism, I am now free to publish my findings.

There are no certainties in this world: No matter how long you investigate, new information is bound to come along to disrupt your assumptions. No investigation is ever really "complete"; the best we can do is collect data in one area until we reach a natural stopping point. This document does not "prove" anything about Lazar's education at MIT; instead, it can only lead us to a "working assumption." This is the best analysis we can come up with given our current imperfect knowledge. It could someday be disproven, but until it is, this assumption is what we must base our future actions upon.

Judging from the data collected here, it is a reasonable working assumption that Bob Lazar never earned any degree from MIT, in spite of his claims that he did. The notion that the government has somehow suppressed his academic records seems less and less plausible when all the implications are considered. Unlike Los Alamos Laboratories, where information is tightly controlled, M.I.T. is an open institution. Any student going there would make hundreds of indelible impressions--on the memories of others, in printed directories and in the files of dozens of disparate agencies. It wouldn't take much clandestine effort to remove a student's files from the registrar's office, but the entire budget of the CIA would seem insufficient to wipe out every trace of his existence. My own investigation was only superficial, and there are certainly many other potential documentation sources that could be pursued, but the effort does not seem worthwhile when the subject himself gives out false information.

I caution the reader against using this data to pass judgment on any of Lazar's other claims. There are a lot of reasons people can lie. They can do it to enhance their public prestige or promote a larger fraud, but there can also be more complex and less dishonorable reasons for lying, and these are not always obvious until explained. Following the example set by Lazar himself in his interviews, to be a serious researcher is to stay close to the data and not issue any speculations beyond what the data directly implies. To find the answer to anything, you don't need to speculate. What you must do, instead, is organize the information that is accessible, neutralize peripheral distractions and keep looking at the problem from different angles. Sooner or later, the data will fall into a natural structure, and the story will tell itself.

Addendum

In the original MIT Investigation document, I failed to include one additional relevant quote from the May 1 conference. This would eliminate one possible explanation for Lazar's absence in MIT directories. [[transcript](#)]

QUESTION: I hope you won't be offended by this question. I have to ask it to verify you're bona fide. Have you ever gone by any other name?

LAZAR: Have I ever gone by anything other name? No.

Q: You've been Bob Lazar from birth.

L: As far as I know.

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