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MJ-12 and William Cooper

source: Fortean Times

<http://www.forteanimes.com>

While MJ-12 (the semi-secret body allegedly overseeing the "alien problem") and Area-51 (the supposed alien HQ on Earth) are now well-known, few people are aware of their origins in the late 1980s. Veteran ufologist Don Ecker -- who had a ringside seat at the birth of this murky mythology -- concludes his account.

The close of 1988 saw American ufology in chaos over the claims and counter-claims about MJ-12. The airing in October 1988 of the 2-hour TV special "UFO Coverup - Live" only fanned the flames higher. In it, William Moore and Jaime Shandera -- who had both gained fame for their investigations of the MJ-12 affair -- introduced 2 men as American intelligence agents. Disguised electronically and given the codenames of "Falcon" and "Condor", the men stated as fact that the American Government was playing host to alien visitors. Memorably, "Falcon" claimed the "grey aliens" liked strawberry ice cream.

Within days of this broadcast, William Cooper sent me his critique of it for publication on the ParaNet bulletin board system (BBS)2. He claimed that "UFO Coverup - Live" -- in tandem with the MJ-12 documents -- was part of an elaborate disinformation scheme designed to lead UFO researchers away from the "real" situation.

William Cooper

William Cooper declared that he could confirm "150 percent" of the 'Lear Hypothesis' -- a paper by John Lear containing allegations of the U.S. Government's alliance with ETs who, in exchange for advanced alien technology, were "allowed" to abduct unwilling human subjects for experimentation and the harvesting of biological material. The confusing war of fantastic, paranoid, and often contradictory claims between Lear and Cooper proved too much for ParaNet's founder Jim Speiser. He ejected them from the ParaNet membership on October 26, 1988, explaining his reasons in a 4-page document.

Speiser also mentioned he had been contacted by a 24-year-old ParaNet user named Jeff Felix whom he agreed to meet in a restaurant in Tempe, Arizona. Felix claimed to work as a cryptology technician for the National Security Agency (NSA) who -- while "fooling around" on the NSA computer -- had stumbled across files on secret projects called "Majestic" and "Aquarius". After consulting contacts who had a genuine intelligence background, Speiser put some testing questions to Felix at a second meeting several days later. Felix failed this simple test but referred to something he called "Project X-calibur".

When Speiser mentioned this to Cooper, he claimed to have heard of it but knew nothing more. Later that day, Cooper called Speiser back and -- to Speiser's surprise -- proceeded to tell him that 'Project Excalibur' was real and concerned an MJ-12 project to obtain technology from the *aliens*. Speiser later said he began to think that Cooper and Felix "were scamming me behind my back". ParaNet, he said, was becoming "a home for unwed paranoids."

That same month (October 1988), Lear sent Cooper copies of all his research into UFOs including communications from "Val Valerian" (aka John Grace, an Air Force NCO on active duty who had a keen interest in UFOs) and the "Dallas Revisited" videotape made by Lars Hansson exploring the theory that John F Kennedy had been fatally shot by his driver. Hansson had sent it to Lear in the hope that Lear might help finance his JFK research, asking Lear not to pass it on to anyone. The fact that Lear passed it on to Cooper had catastrophic consequences.

In April 1989, KLAS TV journalist George Knapp presented a highly successful multi-part series on UFOs. In one segment, Knapp interviewed a man (electronically disguised) identified as "Dennis" who claimed to have worked at a super-secret site in Nevada known as 'Area 51' and at an even more secret site called 'S-4'. His fantastic claim was he had worked on "real flying saucers". At this time, no-one except Knapp and Area 51 security knew who "Dennis" was.

Billy Goodman

Lear and Cooper also appeared on a radio program broadcast from Las Vegas and heard all over the western United States, hosted by Billy Goodman on KVEG radio. In May of 1989, Lear and Cooper were asked to appear on a tabloid television program "PM Magazine". Later, Lear heard Cooper telling the interviewer that while he was on the Naval briefing team in Hawaii, he saw secret files containing documents designated "O H Krill". I knew these documents. John Lear sent me copies of the "Krill papers" in early 1988. I knew that they were written by the USAF NCO John Grace using the pseudonym "Val Valarian".

The name "Krill" was an inside joke, referring to a case in the late 1950s in which Navy investigators interviewed a woman who claimed to *channel* an *alien* named "Cyril". Lear and Grace made up the initials "O H" out of thin air.

Grace did not want his actual name on these papers because he was still in the Air Force. So the "O H Krill papers" were just over a year old at the time of this television program. Yet here was Cooper claiming to have seen them in 1972 or 1973.

Lear said: "When I heard Bill tell the interviewer he saw the Krill papers while he was in the Navy, I motioned him over and asked him, 'What-in-the-hell are you doing?' He said, 'What do you mean?' I said 'Bill, John Grace and I did the Krill papers. We named them after a 1950s case' [...] Well, Cooper insisted he saw them in the Navy. That is when I really began to wonder about Cooper."

By June of 1989, Lear's paper on the "evil grey *aliens*," Bill Moore's MJ-12 research, and Cooper's twist and spin on both subjects were causing shockwaves throughout American ufology, as exemplified by the controversial 1989 symposium in Las Vegas organized by MUFON (Mutual UFO Network). During that year, John Lear became MUFON's director for Nevada and had invited Bill Cooper, Bill English, and me to speak about our own research. At the very last moment (Saturday, July 1), Walt Andrus -- the International Director of MUFON -- objected to the content of the papers by Lear, Cooper, and English and cancelled their presentation scheduled for Sunday.

The MUFON membership reacted with open revolt. Lear threatened to take his speakers down the street to another location. Most of the conference would have followed him had it not been for an even more outrageous event.

William Moore's talk ran for over 2 hours in length and had the audience calling for his blood. He admitted that he had worked hand-in-fist with military intelligence during the 1980s in an attempt to "get on the inside" of the military's knowledge on UFOs. During his speech, he admitted participating in the "disinforming" of Paul Bennewitz (a civilian UFO investigator who had to be hospitalized for severe mental problems). When Moore's talk was complete, he refused questions and rushed from the room leaving the proceedings in turmoil. **[StealthSkater note: some of this is archived at [doc](#) [pdf](#) [URL-doc](#) [URL-pdf](#)]**

Lear seemed severely stressed and uncommunicative. Later, he said: "Bill Cooper came to my house on Friday before the talk and was drinking heavily. He demanded to know who I was working for. He said he was afraid that either I or someone else was setting him up. The more he drank, the louder he became and started slamming his hand down on my desk. His girlfriend was there and I thought she might try to temper him but did nothing. He then told me that anyone who tried to cross him would regret it. I moved to the other side of my desk, not sure what he might do. Finally his girlfriend led him out."

That Sunday (July 2,1989), the "alternative" MUFON event began. Lear spoke first and then Cooper. By this time, Cooper had refined his material and -- for the most part -- stunned his audience by claiming that the U.S. Government had recovered dozens of UFO crashes and *alien* pilots. The *aliens* were abducting people and killing them, he said. The U.S. had a 'secret' space program jointly with the Russians. And the *aliens* with bases on Mars and the Moon.

Cooper even claimed there were areas on the Moon where there was free-standing water and vegetation. "Man can walk on the Moon with just an airpack," Cooper confidently told the audience. Finally, he blurted out that President Kennedy was murdered by his Secret Service driver as part of a huge conspiracy plot and that he read about it in secret Navy documents.

Serious researchers and some media channels were now suspicious about Cooper's claims -- especially concerning the Kennedy assassination tape. Even Lear talked openly about how Cooper claimed to have "read" the "Krill paper" years before Lear and Grace invented them.

A rival TV station hired private investigators to follow Knapp and Lazar around. When news leaked out that Lazar was followed to an illegal brothel, Knapp convinced Lazar to go public first. Lazar admitted that he knew the madam, saying she had hired him to set up a computer and software for her. **[StealthSkater note: see [doc](#) [pdf](#) [URL](#)]**

Facing increasing criticism of his material as unreliable at best or deliberately twisted at worst, Cooper distanced himself from the UFO field. Lars Hansson had spent a great deal of time explaining why the "driver" theory was invalid. Significantly, Cooper had been calling for the driver (William Greer) to be brought before a court of law and charged with murder -- seemingly oblivious to the fact that Greer died in the 1970s. Cooper slandered many prominent JFK assassination researchers while pushing this theory. And it was obvious he had very little investigative experience with the case.

In a typically sudden and arbitrary switch of loyalties, he began to ally himself with the ultra right-wing militia movement. It is a position that he maintains to this day. Now he claims that all UFO cases are actually part of a vast One-World conspiracy by a secret government that aims to enslave everyone

through its tyranny. Ufology was nearly destroyed by the disinformation games that I've detailed here. Great harm was done. The real problems are still with us, and there is no end in sight.

The full version of this article can be found in *FORTEAN TIMES 122*.

Part One appeared in *FORTEAN TIMES 121*

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