

ARE UFO REPORTS SUBJECT IN BRITAIN TO THE D-NOTICE SYSTEM AND THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT?

Timothy Good

Timothy Good, Britain's foremost lecturer on UFOs, won some of the highest prizes at the Royal Academy of Music, and for over 15 years worked and toured first with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and then with the London Symphony Orchestra. He has also played and toured extensively with numerous other leading orchestras and worked with many of the world's top conductors and composers.

"A D-Notice is a formal letter of request which is circulated confidentially to newspaper editors . . . a Notice has no legal force and can only be regarded as a letter of advice or request . . . it gives an editor warning that an item of news, which may well be protected under the Official Secrets Act, is regarded by the Defence authorities as a secret of importance and . . . whether or not any legal sanction would attach to the act of publication, publication is considered to be contrary to the national interest."¹

Britain's Official Secrets Act prohibits all forms of espionage, and bars Government officials from divulging secrets and unauthorized persons from receiving them. The Act is invariably linked to the D-Notice system, and, since a D-Notice warns an editor that publication of a given news item may violate the Act, the effect is similar to censorship.²

Is there any evidence that some news items on UFOs have been subject to this procedure? I have been conducting an enquiry into this possibility for many years, after freelance journalist Tony Gray told me that one of his colleagues had been warned not to write a follow-up on a certain UFO story. The warning had been made over the telephone by 'someone in the Government.' Such threats are not without precedent.³

In 1980 I wrote to several of our leading national papers, asking if there was any possibility that some UFO stories were subject to the D-Notice system, but not one editor or features editor would confirm this: quite the contrary. I then contacted Mr Chapman Pincher, a journalist who has written a number of books on Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). His reply, dated 4 October 1981, stated:

"... There is no way I can help you with UFO's because I am convinced that they are entirely mythical. I can assure you that the 'world's secret services' are not wasting the smallest resource on keeping tabs on them. For many years I have had access to the highest levels of Defence Intelligence both in Britain and the U.S. There is not the slight-

est evidence there to support the existence of UFO's other than those explicable by normal means — meteorites, satellites, aircraft, etc. I can assure you that UFO's are not classified under the O.S.A. nor have D-Notices ever been applied to reports about them. . . ."

That should be the last word on the matter, of course, if Mr Chapman Pincher is to be believed. Fortunately, we now have unequivocal proof of the involvement of many of the world's secret services, such as the CIA, KGB, National Security Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, FBI, as well as statements by former agents such as George Langelaan of the French Intelligence Service,⁴ and Steve Lewis of USAF Intelligence.⁵

Following one of my lectures in April 1981, I spoke with a man who had been working at Heathrow Air Traffic Control in September 1966 when a UFO was observed during the small hours. All personnel in the control tower saw the object hovering at low altitude above the airfield, at a time when there were no aircraft movements. The object was tracked on radar, and its speed at departure was clocked at 3,000 mph. The Ministry of Defence was notified, who told the witnesses that they had 'seen nothing', threatening them with dire charges under the Official Secrets Act if they revealed their sighting publicly. This story, like so many others, was given to me on condition that I did not reveal the informant's name.

In September 1981, I wrote to the Ministry of Defence mentioning this case in particular, and the application of the Official Secrets Act to UFO reports in general. I received the following reply, dated 18 November 1981:

"... I can find no evidence in our records that UFO sighting reports have been the subject of D-Notice attention. As you are no doubt aware the Official Secrets Act applies to the release of information obtained in the course of official duty. However, our records show no occasions on which the Official Secrets Act has been specifically applied to the handling of UFO reports . . ."

In February 1982 I interviewed a retired Police Inspector in an effort to ascertain whether the Police have standing instructions relating to UFO sightings, and whether or not the D-Notice system or the Official Secrets Act has ever been invoked. I reproduce part of the interview below:

GOOD: "Can you confirm that some UFO reports have been subject to the Official Secrets Act?"

INSPECTOR: "Well, only in as much as policy decisions, and anything which would come from the Home Office . . . would be subject to the Official Secrets Act, as that which you learn in the course of duty cannot be disclosed . . . *But what I can say to you is that I know that the subject itself was the subject of a Home Office directive . . .* The Home Office send out directives to Chief Constables, or they send a letter, laying down certain procedures to be followed in the event of UFOs being sighted . . ."

GOOD: Have you ever seen such a directive?"

INSPECTOR "There is a Force Policy Manual, and there is a section which lays down procedure for reporting UFOs . . . and that is the result of some time ago — I cannot tell you when it was — I saw in fact one of these things that come down from the Home Office, laying out a brief directive, and giving certain telephone numbers. I was in the Operations Room — in Communications — when I saw this directive . . . there were certain specified telephone numbers: they turned out to be monitoring stations in relation to aircraft . . . I don't know if they were monitoring stations for any other purpose . . . and we had a set procedure, because there was a time factor on all these things as to when you could report, because it would be out of range of a tracking station . . ."

GOOD: "These were presumably Air Force monitoring stations?"

INSPECTOR: "They were Air Force stations, which would also have been contacted in the event of, say, if you saw an aircraft in distress.⁶ So it was obviously radar that they were relying on there, and also somebody that they were relying on who had control of aircraft in the area . . ."

GOOD: "I understand that the D-Notice system can be applied to some UFO reports?"

INSPECTOR: "Yes, that's so. The D-Notice can be for anything that the Home Secretary considers sufficient. But I cannot recall whether in fact he *has* ever issued a D-Notice . . ."

Yet another informant, who is in a position to know what official policy is, has confirmed to me that the Official Secrets Act can indeed be invoked — particularly with regard to sightings by the military. I was also assured (in 1981) that there is a definite policy of playing down the entire subject, and that the 'Open Door Policy' once adopted by France, for example, where selected government UFO files were passed to GEPAN, was being dropped. In his ominous article '*A Warning To All*' Monsieur F. Lagarde corroborates this.⁷

To sum up: although we have as yet only circumstantial evidence for the application of the D-Notice system and the Official Secrets Act where some reports of UFOs are concerned, I am confident that documentary evidence for this will eventually be forthcoming.

Notes and References

1. From the First Radcliffe Committee Report, *Security Procedures in the Public Service* (Cmd. 1681), published in April 1962 by Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
2. See *The Espionage Establishment* by David Wise & Thomas B. Ross (Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1968).
3. See, for example, Gordon Creighton's article in FSR Vol 28, No 1: 'Continuing Evidence for Retrievals of the Third Kind', Notes & References (1).
4. See FSR Vol 27, No 3.
5. In APRO Bulletin Vol 30, No 7 (August 1982) it is reported that a former military intelligence officer, Steve Lewis, stated at a talk to Tulsa, Oklahoma, Astronomy Club, that the 12 years in which he investigated UFOs in the U.S. and abroad convinced him that intelligent, extraterrestrial beings visit Earth. Lewis said that he was under orders from the U.S. Air Force not to divulge specifics about his UFO research from 1965 to 1977, but he did say that only a fraction of the information the military has accumulated has been released.
6. RAF stations are linked to the U.K. Warning & Monitoring Service, which is part of our Civil Defence network.
7. See FSR Vol 28, No 1.

THE UFO CRASH/RETRIEVAL SYNDROME STATUS REPORT II: NEW SOURCES, NEW DATA. PART I (CONTINUED)

Leonard H. Stringfield

CASE A-6

REPORTING information from a firsthand witness is a criterion of this second paper, however, in this instance, I must rely on an intermediary of trust and his willingness to replay a number of informative tapes over a period of 18 months for me, recording the voice of a former C.I.A. employee. Normally, this reporting procedure might raise doubts about any such informant, but it is my judgement based on a long period of communication by phone, correspondence, and tape that my intermediary is an honest person, and to this date, there is no hint of deception in his role.

Just as certain in my belief that my intermediary has been honest with me, I must, therefore, believe that his informant friend, the former C.I.A. employee is what he poses to be, and hopefully that the information he relates is true. I have heard his voice and his revelations a number of times on tape, and at this writing I feel I know him as a person of authority, yet personable; crisp of tongue, leaving more questions unanswered than answered; and a person whose voice intonations hint that he has a keen sense of wit. In short, I feel that both he and his taped voice I have heard are bona fide.

My intermediary is Robert D. Barry. He is Director of the 20th Century UFO Bureau, residing in Yoe, Pennsylvania, and he's been a UFO researcher and lecturer since 1957. My first contact with Barry came in March 1978, when I learned of his knowledge of a crashed UFO with occupants. I reached him by phone, explained that I was working on a paper to be addressed to the MUFON Symposium in Dayton, Ohio, and was asked to submit a letter to further identify myself and my objectives. In response, Barry sent me the following letter which I had quoted, in part, in Abstract #14 of my first paper:

"...My sources of information on the crashed UFO subject involve quite a few but my major sources number four, including one within Intelligence circles as well as a scientist. As it relates to the crashed UFO of 1962, it occurred in the state of New Mexico. The craft experienced flight difficulty at a time it was being tracked on military radar. It was tracked across two southwestern states before coming in over New Mexico. Military jets were sent up to intercept. As the craft moved in over the state of New Mexico, it lost altitude and continued to experience flight difficulty. It

impacted on desert sands at an estimated 90 m.p.h. Its underside hit the sand as a plane coming in for a landing. Its landing gear was not down and its flight pattern at impact gave the indication that the two occupants in the craft were evidently dead at the time of the crash ... hence the flight difficulty experienced by the craft.

The craft was 68 feet in diameter and 13 feet in height ... typically circular. The two beings discovered inside the craft were 42 inches each in height. Each being was donned in a one-piece suit that contained no buttons or zippers. The occupants were removed the following day after impact to a major medical university hospital in the U.S. where skin tests and other scientific analyses were performed. Skin colour was grey-pink. Head slightly larger for the size of the body; eyes somewhat larger than norm but the nose was small with little protrusions ... no ear lobes, but a hole at each side of the head where we have ears ... then, of course, inside the hole area was the inner ear portion. Mouth very small and thin lips. The circular-shaped craft was described as exploratory and was removed to a major military base in the southwest where scientists and engineers were assigned to work on the craft in an attempt to discover its power of propulsion. On this particular case, a total of twenty individuals were involved in the investigation and research. Since that time, three of them have died ... of natural causes ... leaving a total of 17 familiar with the incident and follow-up research."

As it turned out I invited Bob Barry to accompany me in Dayton to air a letter he had received allegedly from the C.I.A. The letter, using a C.I.A. masthead, concerned Barry's recent involvement in producing material about the 1962 crash, for a documentary film about UFOs being made by Sun Classic Films. In summary, because of the sensitivity of some of the material about the crash incident, the letter directed Barry to visit the C.I.A. offices for consultation. However, when Barry checked with the C.I.A. for affirmation, they claimed no knowledge of the letter. Mystified, Barry, nonetheless, felt that the letter deserved more than a brush-off and despite the C.I.A.'s denial as its sender, there were certain aspects of the letter's character and content that warranted further investigations.

After many discussions of the letter's pros and cons with Barry, I felt that its contents, inasmuch as it tied