I met with the author of the following document, Jerry Birdsall, at the Lincoln Symposium, and found him to be genial and credible. He has asked me to post this information with the understanding that I not mention the name of the individual or the book referred to. You can correspond with Jerry on this system, in private mail to: JERRY BIRDSALL.

--Jim Speiser

THE GROWING CONCERN REGARDING MISINFORMATION AND UNFOUNDED CONSPIRACY SPECULATIONS IN THE UFO COMMUNITY

The purpose of this letter is to warn interested persons that misinformation is occurring in the UFO community and in at least one case is being carelessly propagated. This is based on my own experience due to the publishing of a recent trade paperback concerning UFO phenomena in the greater New York area. This book specifically contains naive and off-based speculations about certain government involvement in this phenomena.

I am referred to in this book (under an alias) as a government agent who interfered, threatened, and in general loused up research investigations. Nearly all of the recounting concerning me is either out of sequence, out of context, misinterpreted, or out-and-out wrong. It is true that I did work for the Department of Defense when I first contacted the author in 1984 (I left the government shortly thereafter). I volunteered this information up front so that this sort of misunderstanding would not happen and stressed that I was interested for purely personal reasons only. I did not in any manner represent myself as an "agent" from the government as was alluded. The main reason that I wanted to meet the author was to try to get him funding through the Fund For UFO Research (FUFOR) of which I was a member while I lived in the DC area. As a point of fact, several key members of FUFOR are employed by the government -one by the Navy, one a Pentagon lawyer, and one by the CIA.

I tried to contact the author several times by phone between the Fall of '84 to the present. It was only just recently that I finally got through to him. He was not interested in hearing me out but chose instead to cling to his seemingly paranoid conspiracy beliefs. I think that this is quite unfortunate - that someone who purports to be an authority on UFOs hasn't the interest or courtesy to listen to someone who he has in effect slandered in the eyes of the UFO community. And what happened to scientific objectivity? We should all truly examine our definitions of what an authority in this field means. There are those who represent themselves as such who are doing harm, in my opinion, to the future of UFO research. If the legitimate UFO community as a whole shared information more openly and networked more efficiently, consensus approval could be given to those who wish approval from the UFO community as legitimate and responsible researchers.

I contend that there is no room for unfounded, wild speculation in a field such as this where things are bizarre enough on their own without the creation of contrived, self indulgent, half-cocked bizarreness. I am really disappointed in the author, and have lost nearly all respect for him. Irresponsible writing of this nature only serves to raise the ambient level of paranoia, muddles future research, and is a true disservice to the field in general.

I first found out about the author from a local newspaper article when I came home to Connecticut one weekend. I was living and working in Maryland at the time. This was in the summer of 1984. I called him from my home in Maryland (he said I called from my office), we spoke briefly (he said I quizzed him for an hour), and I didn't mention any details of what work I did until we met at my parent's home weeks later. Furthermore, I only had his home number and could not have called him from work because I didn't have his work number. In fact, I didn't even have an office!

It would take several pages to list all the errors about me in his book, and that is not the point I wish to make here. If the author was half the investigator that he makes himself out to be, you [would] think that he would have bothered to verify that I indeed was from Connecticut, and not only that, but was raised in the same town he was! He did admit to me that his editor did change a few things around. I contend that the motive was to add drama to help sell his book.

It was just recently when I had finally spoken to the author and heard his position that I felt I owed this to the UFO community at least to set matters straight. I am all for the government coming clean on all it knows about UFOs. I am however totally against irresponsible, conjectural accusations being leveled against anyone - the government included. I think it is absurd that two persons who are on the same side of the fence - even between the same fenceposts - on the UFO issue should be at odds with one another. This is through no fault of my own. The author knows that anytime he wishes to talk, I am more than willing.

I feel now more than ever it is time for responsible, objective, and open-minded research into all areas scientific, psychological, sociological, medical and paranormal if we are to make any real progress regarding the UFO question. This is the time for more cooperation and sharing of information within the UFO community. As our awareness of the UFO issue grows broader, and our notions of the phenomena become more complex and unusual, I think we will find that we will be straining our perceptions of reality itself. It will become increasingly difficult to remain objective. It is time we put our preconceived notions aside and reexamine the issues with a fresh eye.

Jerry Birdsall

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AUTHOR IN BIRDSLL1.UFO RESPONDS

ParaNet Alpha 06/29 -- Phil Imbrogno, author of NIGHT SIEGE: THE HUDSON VALLEY UFO, has responded to charges levelled in the ParaNet file BIRDSLL1.UFO. The file, submitted to ParaNet by its author, a former NSA employee named Jerry Birdsall, consisted of a statement in which Birdsall levelled charges tantamount to libel at Imbrogno. While he didn't name Imbrogno or the book in his ParaNet release, Birdsall, referred to in NIGHT SIEGE as "James Madison," told us in a face to face encounter that Imbrogno had misinterpreted his actions, misquoted him, and otherwise distorted the truth in his accounts of their interactions.

In a conversation today, Imbrogno was at first reticent to admit that Birdsall was the James Madison referred to, for obvious reasons. When assured of our purposes, Imbrogno freely discussed his dealings with the former NSA SIGnals INTelligence specialist. He said that Birdsall first came to the UFO researcher due to his interest in the Hudson Valley sightings, which were in full swing at the time. According to Imbrogno, Birdsall told him of his NSA employment "in a way that sounded like it was designed to impress me somehow," but told him that his interest was to obtain funding for Imbrogno's investigation from the Fund for UFO Research, of which Birdsall claimed to be a member. "He said he was a good friend of [FUFOR Chairman] Bruce Maccabee, and that he could use his influence to get me funded." But it turned out that Maccabee and other Fund members "barely knew" Birdsall, says Imbrogno, and FUFOR turned him down for funding.

While not specifically referred to in the file, a central point seems to be a quote in NIGHT SIEGE, attributed to "James Madison": "The government has been known to dispose of people for less" (referring to UFO research that might compromise government secrets). Imbrogno said he found it "rather strange," but admitted that it could just as easily be interpreted as

a statement, rather than as a threat. "It was just strange coming from this guy who had made a big deal about his ties with the NSA."

Imbrogno said that at no time in the book did he insist that "Madison" (Birdsall) was an agent assigned to monitor or sabotage his UFO research. He said he was merely suspicious of his activities, and thought them worthy of note in his book. He admitted that the book's editor may have "spiced up" one or two passages for dramatic value, but that the book was "90% accurate" in its portrayal of Birdsall.

"If I was going to invent incidents involving a government agent just to sell more books, do you think I'd design them around a real person who could come back and refute what I'd said?" asked Imbrogno. "Hell, no, I'd make the guy up out of thin air. Who could argue with me then?"

--Jim Speiser