

Richard Dolan's Tinfoil Hat; a General Systems Theory of Conspiracy

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This is a review of the second volume of Richard Dolan's "UFOs and the National Security State." The first, subtitled "Chronology of a Cover-up, 1941-1973," published originally in 2000, was greeted with near universal acclaim. Why? Because Dolan is seen as a meticulous writer. He actually uses footnotes. He cites his sources. He provides a comprehensive bibliography. He is not the only UFO author who has done this, but it's fair to say he comes across as the best and most scholarly-sounding writer who also appeals to those outside academia. Compared to the usual UFO books, the original really was a breath of fresh air. This second volume is "The cover-up exposed, 1973-1991," picking up where the earlier volume stopped. It's vintage Dolan. No serious reader will have any trouble just picking up the next chapter and continuing on.

In the last ten years Dolan has become a legend in UFO circles. You might say he has a bit of a fan club and that he has been placed on a pedestal. That has its issues, I'm afraid, because some people consider him above reproach and beyond critique. He is seen as so scholarly, so advanced in his thinking, so erudite, that pointing out the mere suggestion or shadow of an issue earns heaps of scorn, not only from his fan club, but from Dolan himself, who it appears has come to enjoy his stardom and believe his fans. To be fair, Dolan himself has never said, "I am a scholar!" This has been put onto him by others.

For example, Alfred Lehmborg, goes over the top at <http://redstarfilms.blogspot.com/2005/05/richard-dolan-ufologys-alan-bullock-or.html>, and says:

With this book, Richard M. Dolan (a new minor god I have selected for -my-personal pantheon [g].) is right up there with what I've generally considered the Brahms, Bach, and Beethoven of classical Ufology (with a capital "U").

He then proceeds to defend Dolan from criticism as if Dolan were his Personal Savior. I would have placed myself in this camp initially. I read his first volume and believed just as Lehmborg stated. It wasn't until I started scrutinizing the books a little more carefully that I discovered issues. It's one thing to uncritically point out that Dolan actually uses footnotes, but it is quite another to actually follow those footnotes and see where they go.

This is a critical review. This is not a happy-talk 'He's so wonderful!' review so often found on places like amazon.com. If you choose to comment critically, I only hope that it's not too much to ask you to actually read the book first. I know that's a tough requirement to impose, but if you have not read the book (and may I suggest following a few footnotes yourself?), then I suspect your comments are pre-formed rather than based on any facts.

Having said that I adhere to a school of literature that says, “The author means what the author says.” (The academic English literature world has several names and variations for this idea, including “Formalism,” “New Criticism,” and “Close textual analysis.” Thanks to John Bayley, PhD, University of Washington, and Alan Rader, Portland State University, for explaining this to me. I knew the idea, but not the formal names.) I do think it relevant to examine his credentials, but what I mean is that I don’t care who Dolan hangs out with, what his wife believes, what shows he goes on, or at what conferences he speaks. I think it is perfectly acceptable for him to make money from the sale of his book, even a lot of money. I don’t even care what he thinks about himself. The issue here is to confine ourselves, inasmuch as possible, to what he writes. That’s the only testimony we should need. We’re trying to deal with the book and its thesis here, not a bunch of peripheral and largely irrelevant details.

This volume, as before, is chronological, year by year. Dolan presents some cases from each year, followed usually by political events, then an analysis of the UFO story in light of those events. This is a very workable system because it has the effect of placing UFOs, the cover-up, and the politics of the day in context with each other. This was also particularly exciting for me because the time frame covered mirrors my own entry into adulthood and serious involvement in studying the issue. I remember many of the cases when they happened. I have or have read many of the books he discusses (My library of UFO titles numbers about 300.) It was like a *de ja vu* all over again experience to read this volume.

There’s nothing we haven’t actually seen before. As we shall see, Dolan’s accounts come from previously published sources, most of them popular treatments. The history is readily available, and he is certainly not the first to suggest a cover-up of things related to UFOs or any other aspect of American or any government. Indeed, it is our familiarity with these topics that serves to give the book a certain appeal and grounding. Moreover, the book knits all these ideas together in what will eventually be three volumes covering from 1941 up to the near present.

The Cases Themselves

Though any number of important cases are cited in these yearly accounts: Bentwaters, Gulf Breeze, etc., which have had entire books devoted to them by others, many of them are of the ‘light in the sky’ variety—not particularly noteworthy, more or less forgettable over time. Like this:

“On March 25 at 8:55 p.m., a driver reported that a bright red ball of light, about 10 inches in diameter, maneuvered around her car with a bouncing motion. It approached to within a foot of her car lighting up the hood and windows. Her sighting lasted for nearly a minute.” (P. 332)

This is actually from a *Mufon Journal* Hotline report from April, 1984, page 6:

“March 25, 1984, 8:55 PM, Santa Monica, California: A motorist reported that a bright ball of red light—about ten inches in diameter—maneuvered around her car with a bouncing motion. The ball, moving at about head level, approached to within one foot of the car and illuminated the hood and windows. No sound was heard and the duration of the incident was about one minute.

Hotline Reports were from the National UFO Reporting Center, then located in Seattle, Washington where “names of the witnesses are on file.” MUFON usually has a half dozen or so ‘Hotline’ reports in each issue, very brief accounts which read like a typical “Police Blotter” column in the local newspaper.

Dolan had access to half a dozen cases in this issue of Hotline. The other five are arguably much more compelling than the one he cited. (See for yourself and decide: http://www.theblackvault.com/encyclopedia/documents/MUFON/Journals/1984/April_1984.pdf) In the same issue is a comprehensive article on a multiple witness sighting in Michigan, an article on two sightings in British Columbia, both concerning large crafts, and one article on a UFO flap in North Carolina. Out of all that material, some of it quite comprehensive, he chose a bouncing ten-inch red ball. Notice that it is very lightly paraphrased. He uses much the same phrasing verbatim, changes the word ‘motorist’ to ‘driver,’ changes “about one minute” to “nearly a minute,” changes dashes to commas, and calls it good. One wonders why he even bothered. He only saved about a dozen words.

Here you begin to see what Dolan’s *modus operandi* is with regards to his citations of hundreds of UFO events like the one cited above. They come from the research of others. His is a tertiary role of compiling sightings from other authors on the subject. But when you look at the citations themselves, they often don’t have any references; they’re dead ends. So it looks like there is a documented, cited source for Dolan’s description when, in fact, there is no such thing. For example,

“The next day, November 11, a police Captain and deputy were driving from Missoula, Montana to Great Falls when a large orange light descended, lighting up the road. The officers described the object as traveling at “incredible speed,” as low as 200 feet in altitude. But silent. They reported the event to Malmstrom AFB. On the same day an employee of the Montana Fish & Game Department saw a B-52 bomber flying over Freezeout Lake (northeast of Great Falls) being paced by an unknown object. This object briefly attached itself to the bomber, detached itself, then climbed out of sight. Choteau County Sheriff, Pete Howard, took the report and conducted follow-up interviews with the military. Although the Air Force denied knowledge, military personnel confirmed the event and added that the plane’s radar equipment went out as the object attached itself.” (44)
Dolan, Ch. 2, p. 96.

The reference: “44. Fawcett, Lawrence & Greenwood, Barry, *Clear Intent*, p.34-35.”
(Dolan, Endnotes, p. 592)

From *Clear Intent*:

“Wolverton told of a personal encounter with one of the flying objects on the night of November 1, 1975. He and a deputy were returning to Great Falls from

Missoula. The evening sky was clear and the cruiser traveled over the highway at about 50 mph. Suddenly, out of the northern sky, a very large orange light descended, lighting up both sides of the road. This object was traveling at an incredible speed and passed directly over the cruiser at about 200 feet. Wolverton attempted to stop the cruiser to get a better view of the light, but it was traveling so fast that "It went from horizon to horizon in four seconds. It was impossible for us to determine its size or shape in the brief time we saw it!" There was no time to use the several thousand dollars' worth of photographic equipment in the cruiser. Both officers could not see any sound from the light as it passed over the cruiser. Wolverton reported the incident to Malmstrom AFB, but they could not help him with identifying the light.

Woverton told of another incident that occurred the same day. Occasionally, the Air Force would practice bomb runs over the missile sights by flying low over the silos and opening the bomb bay doors. As a B-52 bomber was flying over Freeze Out Lake, a Montana Fish & Game Department employee saw a light flying directly behind the bomber. Using his rifle scope to get a better look, he noted that the strange object seemed to be pacing the aircraft. It then briefly *attached itself to the bomber, detached itself, and climbed out of sight*. Wolverton said that this sighting was reported to Sheriff Pete Howard of Choteau County. Howard conducted follow-up interviews with military personnel and learned that as the object attached itself to the B-52, *the plane's radar equipment went out!* The Air Force has denied any knowledge of this report." –*Clear Intent*, p.35, italics in original.

Dolan's account is admittedly taken directly from *Clear Intent*. No problem; it's properly attributed. It's shorter, but again uses some of the exact same phrasing. The point is that he cites *Clear Intent*, but when you read the passage in *Clear Intent*, there is no citation. It's effectively a dead reference. Perhaps documentation IS available from the authors, but it is not in the book. Many of Dolan's citations are like this. To be perfectly clear: Not "most," not "the majority," but many. He cites *Clear Intent* forty times in his book, Richard Hall, 49 times, Timothy Good, 29 times. There's over ten percent of his citations right there, from books that are themselves essentially listings of sightings. The last two do provide references. How much do you want to bet that Dolan looked at the references at all? If he did, he would have cited the original sources instead. There is no evidence he ever looked at them.

This kind of reference has the effect of making his book seem more scholarly than it really is. Although Dolan is widely considered to be an academician without portfolio, even though he has never held an academic post (or claimed to), the fact is that this kind of research would never be accepted in academia, where you would be expected to get to the original material, even if you found it elsewhere. (Note: There are over 1,000 footnotes altogether.) What Dolan has essentially done is summarize sightings reported and summarized by other authors, condensed them a bit, paraphrased the originals (or not, often using the original phrasing verbatim), then woven in some contemporary history surrounded by conspiracy theory. This is a daunting task by itself, but it isn't exactly original research. They are summaries of summaries with no access to original sources. You might get away with that at a junior college, where their libraries often do not have the original journals on hand, but you'd never get away with that in graduate

school where abstracts and summaries are intended to lead you to the source—not become the source themselves.

This scatter gun drive-by approach of citing case after case can cause serious lapses. In a single paragraph reporting three different sightings, one in Osbornville, New Jersey, one in Bangor, Washington, and several in Little River County, Arkansas, Dolan writes,

“...Another case was reported from September 1, in Bangor, Washington. An elliptical-shaped object with windows beamed a light down upon children at a playground. The children said they could see two humanoid-type creatures in the object...” p. 415. The citation is from Richard Hall, *The UFO Evidence*, Vol. 2, p.30, 492.

This seems like an innocuous sighting, one amongst several. What could be the significance? Some children in a playground saw a UFO. That’s all we’ve got. Bangor, Washington is otherwise known as “NSB Bangor.” That would be Naval Submarine Base Bangor, home for the West Coast fleet of Trident nuclear submarines, the Ohio-class ‘Boomers,’ each one of which carries 24 Trident II missiles, each capable of deploying eight to twelve MRVs (multiple re-entry vehicles), in other words, nearly 300 nuclear bombs apiece. I was employed there in the early eighties.

Literally right next door is a place called SWFPAC (pronounced “Swiff-Pack”) which stands for Strategic Weapons Facility Pacific, which stores nuclear armaments. In fact, the Bangor Subbase was originally SWFPAC land. Down the road apiece is PSNS: Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, one of the only facilities in the entire world capable of refueling nuclear powered submarines and aircraft carriers. Across the highway a couple of miles is NUWES Keyport: Naval Undersea Warfare Engineering Station, one of only two places in the USA where acoustic testing of torpedoes, which can be equipped with tactical nuclear warheads, is done.

Do you think maybe the Subbase (spelled correctly) has anything to do with the sighting? Might it make it a bit more interesting or important? You’ll never know because Dolan, in his zeal to fill his volume with ‘incidents,’ flies right on by and misses the significance completely. The name of the place barely registers before Dolan is on to the next sighting. One has to wonder what else is being missed in this vast array of sightings and how useful they really are to his major thesis.

These hundreds of sightings reported by Dolan seem more like filler than an attempt at really analyze what is happening. They weren’t selected for their relevance and in some, like the reference about Bangor, one of three in a single paragraph, the relevance was missed altogether. Further, they not only do not represent original research, the source material often has no research or citation either. There are many dead references.

It’s a Conspiracy

The heart of Dolan’s thesis, and what could be called his contribution to the field, is that the UFO situation, including potentially recovered vehicles, communications, and

encounters, sightings, and abductions, has spawned a 'National Security State' which pervades our daily life which is rife with cover-ups, violations of civil liberties, betrayal of the citizenry, misuse of public funds, and an overwhelming veil of secrecy to keep what is really going on from general knowledge. Dolan has never met a conspiracy theory he didn't like. To Dolan, there is a conspiracy behind every blade of grass. The CIA is everywhere and many people are agents or tools of agents. These include John Lear, J. Allen Hynek, Gene Pope (the founder of the *National Enquirer* tabloid), Philip Klass, Bill Moore, Charles Berlitz, and a host of others all with "ties to the CIA," and who, one way or another, are actively working to discredit Ufology, spread disinformation, disarm or destroy pressure groups, stifle dissent, and bring on a dictatorship, or support the one already installed, even though we don't all know it.

All the three-letter agencies are involved: The NSA, The DIA, the NIS, indeed, all the covert agencies. They use drugs, secret mind control techniques, Mafia connections, drug smuggling, arms smuggling, and similar tactics to benefit the rich and powerful including David Rockefeller, the Rothschild bankers of Europe, and other vested private interests. They do this by using international groups such as the Bilderberger Group, The Trilateral Commission, and the Council on Foreign Relations to weaken national sovereignty in favor of a New World Order. In other words, the usual suspects are up to their usual conspiracies, but this time with a UFO twist that might have started it all.

As an example, on page 252 Dolan relates a story connecting John Hinckley to the Bush family. Hinckley, Sr. was a friend of Bush, Sr. Their eldest sons were to have dinner the night Reagan was shot. Hinckley, Sr. ran World Vision, a CIA connected church (Dolan says without references of any kind), with ties to Mark Chapman, murderer of John Lennon, and Jim Jones, the Kool-Aid chaplain. So what is Dolan implying here? He's basically leading us to believe that the CIA and specifically George H.W. Bush is somehow responsible for the death of John Lennon, the attempted assassination of President Reagan, and the tragedy at Jonestown. His reference? Jim Keith, who related this idea in *Mind Control: World Control, The Encyclopedia of Mind Control*. Another of his titles: *Saucers of the Illuminati*. Keith himself died after falling off a stage and breaking his leg at Burning Man and neglecting to get medical attention. He suffered a blood clot. This, of course, is also a conspiracy.

Dolan often makes his connections with innuendo, but no real proof. For example, after a few scathing pages on Philip Klass which, if Klass behaved as described, are well deserved, Dolan says,

"Klass's actual analyses of the UFO phenomenon were consistently shallow and politically motivated. His true legacy lies in his efforts – sometimes quiet, sometimes public – to persuade and frighten appropriate targets away from the study of UFOs. Whether or not he did this on behalf of the U.S. intelligence community has (as of this writing) not been proven publicly. However, the ducks certainly appear to be lining up." (P. 223)

Dolan gives himself an out by saying it's not proven, at least not yet, at least not publicly, but floats the balloon anyway, giving you no doubt where he stands on the matter. He's

saying, “Maybe I can’t prove it—yet, but Klass was CIA!” OK. Now we know. Dolan’s ducks have lined up and there you have it.

Dolan also makes the claim that the *National Enquirer*, which was purchased by Gene Pope, who had “long time” CIA connections, got the money from a CIA slush fund. (p. 326). His reference is Terry Hansen’s analysis in his book, *The Missing Times*. The idea is that by virtue of the *National Enquirer* reporting on UFOs, sometimes quite accurately, according to Dolan, again with no references, this somehow marginalizes the subject and further meets the nefarious goals of the CIA.

Pope bought the *Enquirer* in 1952, two years after his father’s death. Pope apparently worked for the CIA between 1951 and 1952, likely less than a year. Another explanation of the start-up money (if he needed it at all) is that Pope got it from Frank Costello, the Mafia boss, in exchange for never fingering the Mafia in its stories. But since that possibility does not fit Dolan’s overall “The CIA did it” thesis, he doesn’t even bring it up.

Hansen himself has this to say about the issue:

“So maybe it is not just a meaningless coincidence that the Enquirer was founded by Gene Pope, formerly of the CIA’s psychological warfare division. Pope, 25 at the time he left the CIA, had loads of cash to spend on buying and nurturing a newspaper, the source of which has never been determined.”
<http://www.themissingtimes.com/documents.xhtml>

And...

“For this to be workable, one must assume that Pope continued to work for the CIA in deep cover as a newspaper publisher after he left the agency. Although there is no direct evidence for this, it hardly seems out of the question in light of what we know about the CIA’s extensive covert involvement with the news media. *Missing Times*, p. 236.

Hansen builds a more extensive, but completely circumstantial case for this in pages 236-239. First, Hansen claims that Pope had “loads of cash” to buy the *Enquirer*, then he suggests Pope was “formerly of the CIA’s psychological warfare division.” He does say that Pope was at the CIA for less than a year, but he fails to say that Pope spoke fluent Italian, or that Pope and the CIA were engaged in fighting Communism in Europe (specifically Italy) during the time he was there, or that he was bored to tears (He was 24 years old.) and hated the CIA bureaucracy. There’s not one shred of proof that Pope got the money from the CIA. Hansen’s account provides no documentation and leads you to believe that since he doesn’t know where Pope got the money, the likely source was the CIA. This is essentially an illogical ‘conclusion from ignorance.’ That’s where and how Dolan gets his information, thus what starts out as an extremely weak assumption that waffles in double negatives as it speaks, “maybe...not just a meaningless coincidence,” winds up as fact, a “CIA slush fund” by the time Dolan is finished with it.

For a much more comprehensive account of Pope and the CIA see: *The Godfather of Tabloid: Generoso Pope Jr. and the National Enquirer*, By Jack Vitek, PhD (2008):

University of Kentucky Press), where Vitek explains that he did not have ‘loads of cash’ at all:

To make the purchase, Pope put down whatever cash he had left from his millionaire father’s sole slim cash legacy—possibly as little as \$5,000—and borrowed another \$20,000 toward the down payment on the \$75,000 total.(9) Pope never revealed where he got the money. But he told how he spent his “last buck” on the deal: “I took a cab to the lawyer’s office on Wall Street, and I didn’t have the money to pay the cab. I had a lucky silver dollar, so I paid the cab with it, and went up to close the deal, more on nerve than anything else.”(10)...

Many sources have indicated that Pope had turned to the Mob and Costello for the loan,(11) Roy Cohen also claimed he loaned Pope money towards the paper’s purchase, but his recollection of the numbers doesn’t square with Pope’s account. Cohn was dying of AIDS when he related his story to his biographer, Sid Zion, who said Cohn’s mind occasionally wandered into hallucination. Zion said he assumed the virus had affected Cohn’s brain,(12) a well-known phenomenon in death from AIDS. Cohn said Pope bought the *Enquirer* for \$40,000, and that he loaned Pope \$10,000....Aside from the problem with the amounts, there seems little reason to doubt that Cohn loaned Pope money on the *Enquirer*, though his help could have come later, because for the next few years Pope continued to borrow money, almost certainly from Costello, to keep the paper afloat. (pp. 41-42)

Dolan either did not find or look for alternative explanations, or if he found them, he did not use them. As is obvious from the passage immediately above, Vitek’s account is both documented and much more comprehensive than Hansen’s, which is not documented at all—another dead reference based on the ‘coincidence’ that Pope did a short stint with the CIA then took over a newspaper. Obviously we ‘must assume’ the two are connected because, after all, one happened after the other. Vitek’s account at least deserves a hearing, but once again, Dolan flies right on by.

No professional historian in academia would ever write like that. The standards of proof in historiography, a fancy word for ‘how history is done’ rather than history itself, are much higher than mere innuendo. If you make a claim, you have to prove it. Rumor doesn’t count. Dolan uses this technique of selective evidence throughout the book. These are just a couple of examples out of many; this is a review, not a book. I’ve had this point confirmed by two of my colleagues, Ms. Gail Goodrich, M.A., History, M.L.S., UW, and Ms. Carolyn Neal, M.A., History, UW. So don’t just take my word for it; ask any history professor what the state of the art in research is.

Some of Dolan’s sources are also highly suspect. For example, he uses Ed Danes (p. 383), Sean David Morton (p. 551), and Steven Greer (several, or as Dolan would say, “passim,” which is Latin for, um, “several.”). The first two were extensively researched by UFO Watchdog’s Royce Myers, III, (<http://www.ufowatchdog.com>) who concluded they are charlatans. Morton even sued Myers for a million dollars for his expose, and lost spectacularly in court and was required to pay Myers’ attorney fees. Myers nailed these two as complete and utter frauds.

When asked by me why he used such people as references in his work (on The Paracast forums), Dolan replied in a classic tautology, “An interview is an interview.” If they are part of the story, as Bob Lazar and Steven Greer are, (and whom Myers also tackles less extensively) despite their many fabrications, that’s one thing, but if these charlatans are used as references for corroboration, it is quite another. Dolan doesn’t seem to care that there is a difference. When you question him on it, he just says, “You are wrong.” As if Dolan speaking from the mountaintop settles the issue. He refuses to discuss the issue seriously, acting as if he can make up any rules of scholarship he wants.

In another strange move, Dolan tells the story of Richard Doty’s deceiving ways as a member of the United States Air Force duping Linda Moulton Howe by showing her fake MJ-12 documents, which actually eventually caused a cancellation of one of her movie projects. He tells the story of Doty recruiting William Moore into intelligence work against Paul Bennewitz, and comes to the conclusion that Doty was the likely origin of the MJ-12 documents sent to Moore and Jaime Shandera. In other words, he exposes Doty as a disinformation agent. Well, to be more precise, Dolan, once again, is reporting on other people, such as Greg Bishop, Don Ecker, and Robert Hastings, who actually did the exposing. Dolan did not do the research himself; he read about it and repeated it.

Yet a few pages later Dolan uses Doty as a source for a story about a briefing to Bush 1 relating to plans for UFO disclosure. (p. 565) He has a nice little disclaimer at the beginning of the story, but then tells it with the same relish as every other story. You’re left scratching your head saying, “Wait, I thought Doty was one of the Bad Guys!”

On page 439 Dolan gives an extended account of an impromptu interview with George H.W. Bush where he admits to knowledge of UFOs. According to the story a private citizen named Charles Huffer approached him carrying a tape recorder and asked him of his knowledge of UFOs. Bush replied, “I know a fair amount {about UFOs}” and several other statements. Bush actually had two conversations with Huffer, one before he entered the building and one when he came out and Huffer was still there. The source is a blog, <http://presidentialufo.com>, by Grant Cameron, who himself provides no citation, another dead reference. Cameron’s other articles include, “*Are Flying Saucers following Obama?*” and “*Bush: An alien on his shoulder*” which shows a picture of the reflection of a ‘Communion-style grey’ in a window behind Bush 2, faintly, um, maybe. Or maybe it’s old wavy glass.

Personally, I consider this story very unlikely. I’ve been in the same building as the Vice President (Al Gore) when he was about to make a speech before a VFW convention in Washington, D.C. You don’t just walk up to him with a tape recorder and initiate a conversation. The Secret Service makes sure you don’t get near him. They cordon off an area, making a cloth ‘hallway,’ and you don’t get close. One of my colleagues, in my presence, asked one of the agents, “What if I just walked out into that area?” The reply was a bemused, “You would never make it.” Maybe it really happened, but it is an extraordinary claim that requires extraordinary proof. And we, once again, have none whatsoever.

This may be a paragraph of minor points (so acknowledged), but Dolan is often called a 'meticulous researcher.' Yet in one place he tells us an E-4 is a sergeant (p. 71). That would be E-5 and above. E-4 is a corporal. This may not matter to you, but I guarantee you it matters to a Corporal. In another place he tells us Cessna has a 'single seat' airplane (P. 429) The smallest plane Cessna makes is the 150 to 162 series (now called a SkyCatcher) with two seats. Are these objections pedantic? He's called 'meticulous.' You can't have it both ways! This is just what one person noticed. He either is or he isn't, and these sorts of lapses show that he is not and leave you with the suspicion there are a lot more of these incidents in the book that you, as a single reader, simply failed to get.

Politics

Dolan's attitude can be summarized in his own words:

"Humanity may, in the end, be powerless to prevent itself from self-annihilation in its quest to trash the planet. But we only have a chance to prevent this when informed and intelligent citizens make it their business to organize for a better future. Personally, I am doubtful this can be sufficiently achieved, but must we not fight the good fight despite the likelihood of failure?"--
<http://www.ufoevidence.org/Researchers/Detail33.htm>.

Some people have accused Dolan of being far left-wing. Indeed, in some of his writings he appears to admonish the far right wing. However, it's not that simple. You really can't tell much of a difference in conspiracy theory between Far Left and Far Right. They both are obsessed with the Council on Foreign Relations, The Bilderberger Group, the Trilateral Commission, the New World Order, and Bohemian Grove. The Far Right may have more guns stockpiled, but both groups share a deep suspicion of anything governmental or financial. Indeed, with some people, such as Ted Kazinski, a hatred of civilization itself.

Dolan is either strictly a Nuts & Bolts guy (at least insofar as this book is concerned) who believes implicitly in the Extra-Terrestrial Hypothesis, or he simply does not deal with the broader issue of origins. He certainly never addresses the issues of inter-dimensional travel, the problems associated with inter-stellar space flight, or the high-strangeness aspect of the phenomenon. If there is a psychological aspect to UFOs, it comes from CIA mind control techniques or the ability of the aliens themselves to do the same thing.

Whether this represents an evolution in his thinking is hard to say. Perhaps the forewords to his two volumes suggest so. The first book had a foreword by Jacques Vallee, probably the deepest thinker the field has ever had the fortune to attract. His second book has a foreword by Linda Moulton Howe, the Drone Queen, a researcher who is not known for her lack of gullibility. One can only conclude that Dolan is attracting a different sort of fan base these days, and that it is increasingly from the lunatic fringe.

Dolan doesn't really discuss 'the Aliens' at all. They are just a presumed given. They are here, but treated more as background material and immaterial in the light of the vast conspiracies surrounding them. It's the same way with the UFOs themselves, whether they are bouncing ten inch red balls or vast hovering crafts. He never addresses what they

might be doing here or how they may be interacting with the government or people. He doesn't presume to call them benign or evil. It's the government that is evil, and that is the only important point.

Criticism

There is almost no critical material about Dolan. (We're not talking about the 'He's in it for the money' type of criticism, which we deem unfair and irrelevant.) He has never undergone peer review. At least, nothing has shown up. Although he has written a few articles, and spoken at many conferences and podcasts, they are generally derived from this two-volume work which is his only substantive contribution to Ufology. He's a kind of one trick pony. The *Magonia Supplement* has a piece on him at <http://www.users.waitrose.com/~magonia/ms40.htm> and Paul Kimball has an extensive piece on Dolan at: <http://redstarfilms.blogspot.com/2005/05/richard-dolan-ufologys-alan-bullock-or.html>. Kimball writes,

"With this in mind, an objective read of UFOs and the National Security State, on which Dolan's reputation in the UFO field as a serious researcher is largely based, shows it to be nothing more than conspiracy theory masquerading as a serious historical study."

In *Magonia*, cited above, John Harney writes,

"The author apparently has no knowledge of, or interest in, scientific and technical matters. He thus evaluates reports on the basis of choosing those he wants to believe as the best ones. He also shows no interest in the sociological and psychological factors which generate many (but not all) UFO reports, and the distortions of perception which can occur when witnesses do not know what they are looking at. He doesn't even mention the psychosocial hypothesis, and gives his readers only two choices as to what UFOs might be--secret military aircraft or extraterrestrial spacecraft. He rejects the first alternative leaving only the second, all other possibilities apparently not being worth discussing."

Michael Swords, Professor Emeritus at Western Michigan University, is one of few true academics to discuss Dolan, and he does so in a fairly charitable style (though one could call it 'damning with faint praise'), but still manages to get at the heart of the matter:

This volume seems to me to be a heroic and honest effort aimed at a good cause, but by a writer who doesn't realize how deep and complicated the UFO history is. And he seems to have had little help in cutting through some of the chaff and locating certain vital elements of the literature. Due to this, the book seems to have been written upside-down: starting with a gut feeling (perhaps drawn from Internet-style sources, which he admits are where the best UFO work is being done) about the conspiracies, forming a firm attitude about their reality and ubiquity, and then searching the popular literature somewhat indiscriminately for support for his thesis.

This is from *The Journal of Scientific Exploration*, Vol 15:3, 2001, pp. 417-420. The entire review is available on-line here:

http://www.scientificexploration.org/journal/reviews/reviews_15_3_swords.pdf

My thanks to Dr. Mark Rodeghier, Scientific Director of The Center for UFO studies (<http://www.cufos.org>) for alerting me to this review, which is not otherwise indexed. He also says:

I am very much in agreement with your take on his first and second book. It is a sad commentary on the UFO field that so many take Dolan so seriously (those in the know, don't). (Personal communication, on file.)

One reader agrees with this assessment this way, reacting to an online piece where Dolan called Bush 2 a 'dictator,' among other things. Bush has to be the first dictator to willingly give up power. In any case,

"Some of it was interesting but most was overly-simplistic bunk. Mr. Dolan appears to be one of those people who likes wearing dark sunglasses and then complaining that the world is a dark place in which to live."--
<http://pub19.bravenet.com/forum/static/show.php?usernum=1612013923&frmId=187&msgid=821511&cmd=show>

Jerry Cohen takes on Dolan for his calling J. Allen Hynek a mole for the CIA: http://www.cohenufo.org/Hynek/hynk_mole3_cohn.htm. This is a detailed line by line response to Dolan's original article. And Richard Hall, whom Dolan uses extensively as a source (150 times in the first book alone) has this to say about his work when commenting on Cohen's article.

I think you perform a service by presenting a much more balanced picture of Allen Hynek's role than Dolan and others. Dolan's views are constantly colored by his conspiratorial and "anti-government" biases. He committed some real whoppers in his book, which I reviewed for International UFO Reporter. (CUFOS: Center for UFO Studies)

It took some digging. Book reviews in *IUR* are not indexed either, but Hall's original review of Dolan's first volume is in the *International UFO Reporter*, Vol. 26:1, Spring, 2001, pp.13-16. He spends several pages pointing out errors and inconsistencies in the first volume. This is important because Hall is not only cited numerous times by Dolan in both volumes as a source, Hall was actually an important figure in ufology before Dolan was born, and certainly before Dolan became interested in the phenomena in the mid nineties. Dolan cites Hall over 200 times between the two volumes (approximately 10% of ALL Dolan's citations). So when Dolan claims (in the first volume) that Hall was fired from NICAP by Keyhoe, Hall says:

As of September, 1967 the author reports (p. 430) "Just recently, for personal reasons, Keyhoe had asked Richard Hall to resign." This is absolutely untrue. Neither then nor at any other time did Keyhoe ask me to resign. To the contrary he made a strong effort to get me not to resign, but I had personal reasons for doing so. (p.15)

In another incident cited by Hall, Dolan uses the same line of reasoning mentioned above with Gene Pope: A suspicion that something might be so, even with no proof whatsoever offered, is converted by Dolan from wishful thinking to a proven fact within a few pages.

Unsupported allegations of this often substitute for reasoned argument, {*Hall is discussing Dolan blaming the CIA for the murder of a CBS reporter.*} A major example of this is what the author has to say about Robert J. Low, project coordinator for the Colorado UFO project. The CIA, he reports (p.112), was attempting in 1949 to build a resistance movement against communism in Albania. One of the people selected for the job was a Robert Low, and the author wonders whether this might have been Robert J. Low of the UFO study. In that context he mentions that Low had been a Navy combat-intelligence officer during World War II (a far cry from CIA-type “spook work”).

Later (p. 402) he reports that Robert J. Low “appears to have performed some serious work for the CIA” in 1949. Then (p. 449) what started out as a question and then became “apparent” is converted to a “probability”: “Considering the probable history of Robert Low as a CIA covert operative in the 1940s...” This sort of reasoning is simply not acceptable. Unless documentary evidence is found of CIA work by Bob Low, weak arguments like this have no place in serious history. Not to mention the seeming implications that attempts to encourage resistance against communism were somehow inherently evil. (p.16)

This is the same kind of reasoning used to ‘prove’ the *National Enquirer* was a CIA front. We don’t know where Pope got the money. He spent a few months working for the CIA, *THEREFORE* it was a CIA slush fund. Except this time we don’t even know if this is the same Robert Low. It’s not exactly an uncommon name. There are over 100 ‘Robert Lows’ living in the United States today. (Source: <http://www.ReferenceUSA.com>, subscription required.)

If you do criticize Dolan, his fan base rises in his defense and you are accused of ‘political motivations,’ whatever those are. Alfred Lehmborg, for example, one of Dolan’s acolytes listed above and a columnist for *UFO Magazine*, reacts to Don Ecker’s criticism of Dolan this way. Note the juvenile swipe at The Paracast:

Additionally, his criticism of Richard Dolan via the Paracrats Biedny and Steinberg is obviously canted and I suspect politically motivated... when it is not incredibly presumptuous and astonishingly impertinent. "Fine tooth comb," my flaccid backside. <http://ufomagazine.forumotion.com/columns-and-columnists-f6/welcome-to-the-columns-t8.htm>

“Astonishingly impertinent”? It’s surprising Ecker wasn’t accused of blasphemy. Ecker has sinned by daring to call into question Dolan’s research and conclusions. Ecker was suggesting, in this case on an episode of The Paracast, that those who were actually there at the demise of NICAP: The National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, saw mismanagement and mistakes of the founders as seminal reasons. Dolan, of course, maintains the CIA did it on purpose. Dolan actually makes a decent, though undocumented case for this, but that’s not the point. Alternate theories are not acceptable. The response is not to address the issue, but to attack Ecker personally. Ecker has done ten times more for the field than Lehmborg, who is still riding on his coattails, and for that matter, Ecker has been in the UFO field far longer than Dolan. If anyone is impertinent it is Lehmborg, who has done nothing substantive in Ufology.

Lehmberg has said:

I think it's important to remind everyone that Dolan's scholarship is not competently questioned _anywhere_ and it is largely uncontested, moreover...
...Excepted, that is to say, by a few more concerned with the disruption of their personal paradigms than chips falling where they may.

(<http://mufob.blogspot.com/2006/10/richard-dolan-scholar-or-entertainer.html>)

In other words, if you don't agree with Lehmberg, the problem is your personal paradigm, not that you have contradictory information. The answer to that, however, is easy. First, that's simply not true, as is shown above. It has been competently questioned by Kimball, Harney, Cohen, Swords, and Hall. It's just that Lehmberg is not sufficiently familiar with the literature to know that. Second, that tells you more about the credulity in the field than anything else, and third, no academic scholar would touch Dolan's work with a ten foot pole. It's toxic and could cause tenure to be questioned, something Dolan needn't worry about. (Swords, a PhD in natural sciences, is retired.) If I were Dolan I would worry about a fan base like that. It's not doing any good for his credibility.

Dolan's Credentials

Dolan is often made out to be an academic, but one who spurned academia in favor of striking out on his own. A Rhodes Scholarship finalist, he says he managed to "alienate the selection committee." (<http://www.ufoevidence.org/Researchers/Detail33.htm>) He does have a real Master's degree in history from the University of Rochester and he studied at Oxford for an unknown period earning a "certificate" in Political Studies, but no degree. (A "certificate" at Oxford (and elsewhere) can be earned by taking as little as one course, or represent years of study, depending upon the field of study and the program in question. Requirements are less strenuous than they are for an actual 'degree.') In a field where degrees are often mail-order, phantom, or non-existent, this is clearly a cut above. He has made his living as a "self-employed business writer," though details are vague. In any case, for anyone to make a living at writing is no mean feat. Few do. It's to his credit.

We kind of like this, (Dolan told the selection committee to go to hell! Isn't that great?) the notion of an iconoclast spurning the establishment, thumbing his nose at academia, which contains nothing but pretentious PhDs who scorn the study of UFOs. Then there's the government, which we don't like, and "rich people," whom we don't like, and the helpless feeling of our lack of control. Then there is "The Conspiracy," that thing we can't quite prove, but are quite sure exists. If we can't, well, then, Dolan can! So, he's been portrayed as a kind of knight in shining armor who can PROVE what others feel they know for certain, but can't quite pin down.

However, although a Master's in History is, indeed, impressive and a duly noted achievement, it does not qualify you for much, which explains his vocation as a business writer. You are qualified to be a junior college history teacher, though these days you would likely face stiff competition from more qualified PhDs. If you have additional degrees, you would be qualified as an academic librarian or a public school teacher. A

Masters, except in some very rare cases, does not qualify you to be a college professor and a Master's in History is, well, quite as common as a Master's in English. Unlike a Masters in Civil Engineering, these degrees don't qualify you to DO anything. You can still easily be put into a position that requires you to say, 'Would you like fries with that?' albeit with an Oxonian accent. Given the paucity of positions at the PhD level, Dolan was looking at a possible life as an itinerant professor on adjunct faculties. Dolan has managed to avoid that, and that's great, perhaps even inspirational.

Historiographic standards of proof are much higher than what Dolan writes, which is full of innuendo, questionable proof, and discredited sources. Not that he is incapable of it; he just doesn't do it, citing the certifiable nutcases such as Sean David Morton right alongside serious researchers such as Stanton Friedman. Citing a fellow conspiracy theorist is not proof of conspiracy. It just shows you walk on the same side of the street. Dolan could not use this book as a dissertation; it would be rejected. If he wrote this as a serious attempt at academic research, he would be laughed out of the profession. No academic editor would touch it, not for what it says (although probably that, too.), but for how it is said and the dead-end references that go nowhere. Dolan is fond of calling the research of others "sloppy." He should look inward.

Summary & Conclusions

There can be no doubt that Richard Dolan has made and continues to make a contribution to the field of Ufology, even if his fans are as credulous as he is. His volumes are must reading for anyone who considers him or herself conversant in the field. He has managed to compile a great amount of material, largely researched and/or popularized originally by others, in more or less chronological order, into a consolidated history of the UFO phenomenon. In other words, he is not so much a researcher as he is a compiler of others' research efforts, most all of them popular treatments of the subject.

His reputation as a meticulous researcher is overstated by others who have not realized that footnotes do not make a researcher. He is at heart, a conspiracy theorist who believes conspiracy is at the heart of nearly everything important that has happened in the 20th and 21st centuries. Whether it is CIA mind control that caused the Jonestown massacre, the staged 9/11 attacks, or the assassination of John F. Kennedy as a result of Kennedy wanting to spill the beans on UFOs (not to mention Marilyn Monroe and Dorothy Kilgallen), it remains the work of vast unseen power elites in perfect coordination who secretly rule the world and have in mind one world government and a New World Order, all at the expense of humanity. UFOs and aliens may have been the catalyst that started all this, but they are incidental to the story of conspiracy itself. Reptilians from another parallel dimension would work just as well. Dolan doesn't seem to care one way or another.

For those who just love this sort of talk and who are convinced of this reality (and there are many of them), Dolan will continue to be the cult hero he is, basking in the glow of adoration, flitting from conference to conference with his General Systems Conspiracy Theory of Everything. Others will see him as a one trick pony with a tin foil hat,

espousing a theory we have all memorized, but which is getting a little old and doesn't do a single thing—not one single thing—to explain the UFO phenomena itself.