

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO CONSPIRACY X

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1933: Watchmaker

Walter Stein, a native of Venice and an British intelligence agent, spent many years studying the occult in Germany during the 1920s and 30s. There he became well acquainted with a fellow student of the arcane arts, Adolph Hitler. Stein followed Hitler's occult involvement very closely, schooled himself from the same texts. Hence, Stein became the world's foremost authority on Nazi Occult activity outside of the party itself.

Stein soon became frantic over developments in Germany. Hitler's rise to power coincided directly with his initiation into The Secret Doctrine, a gathering of the most elite and powerful Mages in the world. Further, the core of the Nazi party leadership was dominated by powerful occultists. Stein realized that although they had studied occultism together, Hitler had traveled down the shadowed path of dark magic. Stein knew that Hitler's admission into The Doctrine could be disastrous for all those who opposed him. With this power and a cadre of dark mystics, Nazi Germany had a secret weapon the Allied forces would be ill-prepared to meet.

The Nazi mystics sensed Walter Stein's presence, and in 1933 he fled to England, narrowly escaping forced service into Germany's Nazi Occult Bureau. Upon arriving in England, Stein warned Winston Churchill of the impending danger posed by Hitler's indoctrination. It was clear that action must be taken to either quell Nazi progress in matters Arcane or find a way to match it. Stein had further grim news, however. Stein had uncovered evidence while spying on the Nazis that Hitler's English intelligence network was alarmingly extensive. There was little chance of an English counter-occult program remaining hidden from Nazi spies. Churchill had no choice but to contact President Roosevelt and ask the Americans for help. Churchill arranged a meeting between the crippled President and Stein.

Roosevelt was skeptical, but decided to leave no stone unturned in his efforts to defeat the Nazis. Less than a week after Walter Stein's meeting with Roosevelt, one of the President's most trusted advisors was placed at his disposal. Stein was charged with the creation of an organization whose purpose was to monitor and analyze Nazi Occult activity. Most importantly, the group was to devise counter-measures in the event that mundane firepower alone could not stop Hitler. This group became known among its participants as The Watch. The Watch was an eclectic collection of individuals whose only common thread was power and influence. Stein was the group's unofficial leader. Roosevelt's advisor acted as the president's proxy. Eleven other members brought the total to thirteen. Most of the original thirteen were high-ranking Military Intelligence officers or scientists, the most notable exceptions being a Catholic Archbishop and a powerful and respected U.S. Senator. FDR kept the existence of The Watch completely secret, even from the American government and military, to avoid the inevitable public backlash in the event that government-sanctioned occult research ever be uncovered.

Despite the doubts of President Roosevelt, over the next decade the Watch was consistently and horrifyingly successful. Only Stein was unshaken by discoveries that threatened the sanity of the other members of The Watch. The conspirators used their authority and positions to fund and conduct research into the occult, gradually expanding to all areas of paranormal and psychic investigation. The accomplishments of The Watch's occult and psychic research allowed them to undertake several successful missions that kept the Axis occult power in check. The Watch's wartime operations included the assassination, by both mundane and arcane means, of several leading Nazi occultists and the recovery of certain artifacts of mystical significance, including the famed Spear of Destiny. By 1945, The Watch had become extremely powerful organization, and yet remained completely hidden from the world.

The end of the World War II was in large part due to the success of The Watch's endeavors in destroying Nazi occult power. That ultimate success also meant the loss of the primary impetus for the Watch's activities. As usual with any powerful and motivated group, however, The Watch soon found another Focus. From the debriefing of Axis scientists and review of German military records, the conspirators learned that accounts by Allied airmen of mysterious German experimental aircraft, dubbed "Foo Fighters", were erroneous. Axis command records revealed that Luftwaffe pilots reported identical craft, and assumed them to be Allied experimental aircraft. This evidence, coupled with similar reports uncovered from accounts during WorldWar I and earlier, convinced the Watch that the phenomena of Unidentified Flying Objects deserved attention and investigation. While continuing its occult and parapsychology research, The Watch redirected a large part of its manpower and resources toward the study of UFOs and their possible source. It would not have long to wait for answers.

1947: Discovery and Betrayal

By 1947, UFO sightings had become more frequent. The U. S. government and military decided to institute new programs to discretely investigate these strange phenomenon. Monitoring these investigations, unseen, was The Watch.

The Roswell Incident

March 17, Cascade Mountain Range, Oregon: The Watch's parapsychology team gathers a group of psychics together in a research center in the Cascade Mountains. The team was to test the range of their psychic abilities by attempting to contact a similar group in New England. The experiment yields spectacular but unexpected results. Contact is made, not with the target team, but instead with strange, unearthly minds. The contact lasts only thirteen seconds, but that brief time would change the course of history. Although they could make out little of what they mentally encountered, the psychics become certain of one thing: extraterrestrial life is present on Earth.

July 1, White Sands Proving Ground, New Mexico: During the flight monitoring of a V-2 rocket fitted with advanced guidance systems, radar stations begin to track a UFO moving over the missile range erratically, but under apparent intelligent control.

July 2, White Sands Proving Ground, New Mexico: Under direct orders of Brigadier General Martin Scanlon, a 24-hour radar vigil is established to track the object. Through a contact in General Scanlon's staff, The Watch learns of the developing situation.

July 3, White Sands Proving Ground, New Mexico: The Watch convenes to decide on a course of action. Two options arise from the discussion. Some members of The Watch believe that the crew of the UFO could be contacted telepathically, using knowledge gathered from the March 17 contact and subsequent research. They propose that The Watch open a line of communication with the aliens and attempt a peaceful exchange of information. They are opposed by those members of Watch overwhelmingly concerned with the danger posed by an unknown intelligent extraterrestrial race. They recommend shooting the craft down and analyzing the technology, so that when later communications are initiated, something is known of the aliens. After a long and heated debate, a narrow majority decides to attempt peaceful communication. The mission is designated Operation Dove. The research team of parapsychologists and psychics in the Cascade Mountain research center is enlisted. They establish a base of operations on an isolated mesa in the New Mexico desert. Complete consensus had not been reached within The Watch. Those who opposed Operation Dove, convinced of the folly of contacting extraterrestrial unprepared, form a second team. This rogue group secretly meets and initiates Operation Pigeon Shoot.

July 4, White Sands Proving Ground, New Mexico: While the Dove team waits on the mesa top for the UFO to reappear, Operation Pigeon Shoot readies itself in secret on the far side of the missile range. A V-2 rocket with the experimental guidance system is hastily reprogrammed and loaded with high explosives. The exact order of the events that follow is unclear. The following account of the incident has been reconstructed from the chaotic records that remain. At 21:18 (local time), radar contact is reestablished with the UFO that had been tracked over the last four days. As the Dove psychics attempt to contact the crew of the craft mentally, Pigeon Shoot finalizes their preparations and awaits the launch command. A few minutes later, the alien craft appears to notice the psychics efforts, stops and hovers within sight of the mesa. Encouraged, the psychics redoubled their efforts. Presented with the stationary target they hoped for, the Pigeon Shoot team launches the rocket. Three events appear to have occurred nearly simultaneously. First, the psychics succeed

in contacting the alien minds in the UFO. Second, the V-2 rocket detonates on the hull of the ship. Third, an intense psychic assault devastates the assembled psychics. The ship immediately begins to accelerate away at an incredible speed, but is fatally damaged. The craft touches ground once, gouging the earth and scattering debris over a large stretch of a ranch near Roswell. Several miles later, it crashes into a cliff side.

July 5, Roswell, New Mexico: Prepared, in fact hoping, for this eventuality, Operation Pigeon Shoot springs into action. By dawn the next day, the final crash site is located and a recovery team is dispatched. The recovery team loads the wreckage, including four alien bodies, onto trucks for transport to Roswell Army Air Base for temporary storage. At Roswell, the wreckage is packed away and loaded onto cargo planes for transport to Fort Worth Army Air Field. By nightfall the day after the crash, some of the wreckage arrives at Fort Worth. The Watch's influence in the military allows the Pigeon Shoot team to operate freely at the Roswell and Fort Worth without fear of questioning. Although it is obvious to the soldiers stationed there that something was afoot, none ask any questions. While Operation Pigeon Shoot secures the alien wreckage, Operation Dove attempts to salvage what they could of their team. Of the nine psychics who attempted to make contact, two die almost immediately of cardiac arrest and brain hemorrhaging. Another actually bursts into flame. A fourth slips into permanent catatonia. Three more soon develop debilitating psychoses. Only two survive with their sanity intact. After nearly a full day of damage control and debriefing, the Dove leaders realize they have been betrayed by other members of The Watch. Moving quickly, the remnants of Operation Dove pull themselves together and attempt to outmaneuver their new enemies. Using what military pull they could immediately muster, and aided by a little psychic sleight-of-hand, Dove manages to redirect one of the cargo planes heading for Fort Worth to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. There, a Dove team secures the cargo. Unbeknownst to either group, the chaos at Roswell hid the actions of yet another group of Watch members. These individuals, some of the most powerful of the founding members of The Watch, learn of the split in their group and are dismayed. They commandeer another of the cargo flights and take the shipment to Washington, DC. They make certain that the shipment they appropriate includes an alien corpse and an impressive amount of crash debris. The group, the plane and the cargo mysteriously vanishes. A very long time would pass before any hint of their whereabouts would arise.

July 6, Roswell, New Mexico: By 03:00 the day after the crash, all Watch personnel had been evacuated from Roswell Air Base and White Sands Proving Ground, believing that all traces of the crash had been recovered. All are mistaken. While patrolling his property that morning, a local rancher, Mack Brazel, finds the trough and debris left when the craft touched down briefly before crashing. Later in the day, he calls the Roswell sheriff to report his find. The sheriff in turn calls Captain Jesse Marcel at the Roswell Air Base, thinking the wreckage is the result of a military test. Captain Marcel investigates the touchdown site, patrols the trench and gathers some of the debris. He loads up his jeep with debris and returns to the Base. The Base Commander, visions of promotion dancing in his head, issues a press release that the Army had recovered the wreckage of a UFO. This news reaches the Operation Dove team at Wright-Patterson AFB. A few well-placed calls are made, and Captain Marcel and the debris are immediately summoned to Wright-Patterson. Part of the Operation Dove team returns to Roswell to oversee the recovery of the debris at the ranch.

July 7, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio: Under orders from Operation Dove, General Roger Ramey, the Commanding Officer of Wright-Patterson, holds a press conference in which the Roswell press release and its officers are portrayed as fools for having misidentified a weather balloon as a UFO. The embarrassed Captain Marcel is ordered to pose holding fragments of a weather balloon claimed to be the recovered debris. In Roswell, Operation Dove agents finish cleaning up the debris field and escort rancher Brazel to the Roswell Base for three days of questioning.

July 8, Roswell, New Mexico: The debris collected from the ranch is sent to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

July 9, Roswell, New Mexico: Mack Brazel is released from custody at the Roswell Base and soon appears on a local radio show to confess. He explains that the UFO story was a hoax and that he knew the wreckage was just a balloon all along. The combination of this "confession" and the Watch's pressure on other witnesses keeps the incident under control. The American public accepts the story and the Roswell crash remains all but forgotten for over forty years . . .

1950's: Smoke and Mirrors

In the aftermath of Operation Pigeon Shoot's betrayal of its comrades in Operation Dove, The Watch splits into two distinct groups. The stated purpose of both groups was the protection of the human race from the predation of extraterrestrial and supernatural forces. Beyond that, the two organizations developed diametrically opposed.

Aegis

The remnants of Operation Dove regrouped at Wright-Patterson AFB and set up a temporary center of operations. In an attempt to avoid a recurrence of the damage caused by Pigeon Shoot's treachery, a new organizational pattern was imposed. The new organization, modeled after the secret mystical societies of Europe, was composed of small independent groups or "Cells". The original founding group became the master Cell and selected members for the first generation of Cells. Each offshoot Cell had only a single contact to the "parent" Cell, whose true identity remained unknown. These Cells in turn recruited members into "child" Cells as necessary, and the process continued until an extensive network was established. The Cell structure minimized the information that could be revealed in the event hostile forces infiltrated or uncovered any particular Cell. Were this to happen, only the "child" Cell and its contact to the "parent" Cell would be compromised. The new organization, which continues to this day, was given the name Aegis, after Zeus' magic shield in Greek mythology. The Operation Dove members who formed Aegis' original "master" Cell came to be called Aegis Prime.

The Black Book

At the same time Aegis was forming, the members of Operation Pigeon Shoot started construction on a secret underground base in the New Mexico desert. This base was to become the research center and headquarters of a covert project within the U.S. military, answerable to no government authority and unknown to all but its agents and a few highly placed officials, who assured that any investigation was curtailed. The project was funded exclusively through the portion of the U.S. military budget assigned to covert or "Black" projects, leading the project's secret sponsor in the U.S. Senate to refer to it as The Black Book.

Relations between Aegis and The Black Book

Despite the original common purpose of Aegis and The Black Book, the circumstances leading to the division of The Watch resulted in a great deal of animosity between the two organizations. This enmity was heightened as the Focus of The Black Book slowly drifted away from the protection of the human race and toward the acquisition of alien technology and knowledge by any means necessary. The Book's Military-Industrial Complex backers demanded concrete returns on their investment of time, power and monies. To this end, The Book began making deals with extraterrestrial; working with them, rather than against them. Over the years, the alliance between The Black Book and both the Greys and the Saurians grew very powerful. Aegis took a much harder stance on human-alien communication, in response to the disastrous results of Operation Dove. Because of the close ties between the extraterrestrial and The Black Book, Aegis came to view The Black Book as just as much of a threat as the aliens themselves.

The 1950s: Smoke and Mirrors

The 1950s were an important period of growth for Aegis. Strong ties within the American intelligence community allowed Aegis Prime to create a number of powerful first generation Cells. These Cells were composed of high ranking officers from various agencies, giving Aegis Prime access to a large pool of information and resources. These Cells formed the backbone of the Aegis organization and established a strong foothold in the military and intelligence community, in particular the newly created U. S. Air Force and Central Intelligence Agency.

The MKUltra Project

During the CIA's creation, Aegis Prime made certain that Aegis operatives were placed in key positions throughout the new organization. The newly commissioned agency was to become Aegis' primary powerbase in the intelligence community, complimenting the military resources gained through the similar "guidance" Aegis Prime provided to the fledgling United States Air Force. The CIA soon became Aegis' single largest source of operatives and information. The free reign given to the new agency by the U. S. government allowed Aegis operatives to work under the auspices of the CIA without fear of investigation.

Capitalizing on Cold War paranoia and rumors that Red China and the Soviet Union were achieving incredible results in their research into "brain-washing" techniques, the Central Intelligence Agency commenced research programs on mind control and human behavior modification. Aegis operatives monitored the programs, waiting to step in and take control of any that began to produce useful results. Should such results occur, the operatives would intercept and falsify reports to the CIA Inspector General so that only failure or very limited success would be revealed. In this manner, Aegis subverted any successful program's resources, and transferred the knowledge and further research to their benefit. Not all successful projects were "secured" by Aegis Cells, however. Some projects lacked properly positioned agents, others were just too distasteful. Still others were canceled without warning or explanation, or ended with the sudden disappearance or death of a key researcher. These mysterious events lead Aegis to conclude that at least some of the CIA's secret mind control projects ended up in the hands of The Black Book.

The fear of Communist superiority in any area provided a smokescreen and apparent motive for a wide range of behavior modification projects conducted by the CIA. Early projects such as BLUEBIRD and ARTICHOKE concentrated on a few specific techniques, most commonly mind-altering drugs, hypnosis and brain surgery. These projects resulted in some impressive successes, but the most ambitious and successful project by far was MKULTRA.

The MKULTRA Project was in fact several research projects combined into one. Widely disparate subjects were being investigated, such as psychoactive drugs, hypnosis, sensory deprivation, cerebral implants, microwave radiation, Extra Sensory Perception and brainwashing through cult indoctrination. Most of these topics had been studied previously, and MKULTRA broke little new ground in each field independently. What made MKULTRA so successful was its study of the interaction and combination of these varied disciplines. These experiments yielded the MKULTRA team two very impressive programs.

Through a combination of cerebral implants, psychoactive drugs and microwave transmitters, the MKULTRA scientists were able to create hidden split personalities. The test subjects were completely unaware of their condition and exhibited normal, obedient behavior until the introduction of a triggering stimulus, often via radio or microwave transmission. The triggering stimulus induced a trance-like state in which the subjects would carry out preprogrammed orders without hesitation or question. After the mission or task was completed, the subject would revert back to a normal state, completely unaware of actions taken while in the induced trance. These individuals were often used as covert assassins or couriers, unaware of their own role and therefore nearly undetectable.

MKULTRA's experimentation involving parapsychology led another research group to develop a strong psychic Warfare (Psi-War) program. These parapsychologists took individuals who showed an aptitude for extra-sensory perception and subjected them to a regimen of psychoactive drugs, hypnosis, sensory deprivation and advanced meditation techniques. The result was a group of

powerful psychics capable of impressive feats of psychic power in several disciplines. Unfortunately, the treatments often left the psychics addicts, insane, or worse.

The Psi-War program in particular caught the attention of Aegis operatives within the CIA. They prepared to take control of the MKULTRA project by the usual means. Before this power shift could be fully realized, however, rumors of the MKULTRA project and specifically the Psi-War program found their way to the public and the news media. Public outrage caused a Congressional investigation during which the CIA downplayed the success of the program and emphasized that the subjects were all volunteers, which was not, in many cases, true. The investigation caused the official end of the MKULTRA project in 1963. But as was often the case, the project lived on, hidden from the public, and exempt from congressional inquiries or other governmental accounting. The new MKULTRA project remains to this day wholly under Aegis control.

Project Bluebook and Moondust

As more and more Americans reported UFO sighting in the early 50s, the military's official denial of the phenomenon became increasingly suspect. Such categorical denial quickly became as much a cause of speculation as the origin of the UFOs. In 1952, the U. S. Air Force gave in to the public pressure to "do something" about UFOs and created Project BLUEBOOK, an official Air Force investigation into such reports. Given its subject matter, BLUEBOOK soon came to be entirely, although secretly, controlled by Aegis. It was Aegis' intention to use BLUEBOOK as a smoke screen for Aegis operations and as a source for public disinformation.

To reduce the possibility of a link being discovered between Project BLUEBOOK and Aegis, the BLUEBOOK staff contained no Aegis operatives. BLUEBOOK was a legitimate and official Air Force project, although Aegis made certain that the personnel chosen for the project were predisposed toward skepticism of the phenomenon.

The primary instrument of Aegis' control over the BLUEBOOK was another Air Force project completely hidden from the public eye, Project MOONDUST. Project MOONDUST was created in 1953 and charged with "the retrieval and exploitation of crashed foreign spacecraft". Within top military circles, MOONDUST's stated purpose was the recovery and examination of downed Soviet and Eastern Bloc spacecraft and satellites, but the MOONDUST charter clearly made it responsible for the recovery of extraterrestrial spacecraft as well. For this role it was exploited heavily by Aegis, and was staffed almost exclusively by Aegis personnel. All UFO reports were filtered through Project MOONDUST before transmission to Project BLUEBOOK, and only those reports deemed of little significance or validity were passed on.

At the end of its study, Project BLUEBOOK concluded that there was in fact no substantial evidence to support claims that UFOs were anything but misidentified terrestrial craft, weather phenomena or hallucinations. The Project's report was widely accepted by the populace and proved quite effective at undermining the credibility of those UFO reports that followed.

National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena

As always, there were those who were not convinced by BLUEBOOK's investigations and who saw the final BLUEBOOK report as the disinformation it was. Many of these people investigated UFOs and related phenomena on their own, attempting to uncover the truth and form their own conclusions. The most dangerous of these truth-seekers formed civilian investigative groups to better share information and resources. Fortunately for Aegis, these groups were often much too eager to recruit new members for their own good. Aegis Cells had little trouble infiltrating the organizations, subverting what information they managed to uncover, and guaranteeing that they never got too close to important information. Many of these groups were much more interested in finding evidence to support their pet theories than conducting serious investigations. This made them ideal mouthpieces for Aegis lies, and further degraded the credibility of all such organizations.

One civilian organization stood apart from the majority. This group could not be easily dismissed given the credibility of its membership. In 1956, Navy physicist Thomas Brown founded NICAP, the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, an Unidentified Flying Objects and related events study group. Although NICAP was a civilian organization and contained many well-known civilian UFOlogists, a disturbingly large number of members were retired Air Force and CIA personnel. The Aegis operatives who were monitoring the group became acutely aware that

many of the NICAP members had secret agendas. The operatives learned that some NICAP members were reporting back to groups within the CIA and other Intelligence Community organizations. Other members seemed to be working for an organization or organizations that Aegis could not identify. Due to the extent of NICAP's infiltration by agents from outside organizations with unknown objectives, little of the data it managed to collect can be trusted. Also, Aegis' inability to identify all the organizations operating within NICAP made Aegis Prime more paranoid than ever. Despite all this, NICAP served Aegis as a fertile ground for recruiting well-connected operatives and Cells.

The Majestic 12 Document

During the 50's, Aegis often uncovered evidence that secret organizations, other than The Black Book, were at work within the US government. The most puzzling document discovered by a Cell within the CIA described the creation of a secret organization charged with investigating UFOs and alien phenomena in response to a "flying saucer" crash near Roswell, New Mexico in 1947. The document detailed that group's members including high level government and military officials and respected scientists, and that its designation was The Majestic 12. The document, while superficially convincing, was plagued with errors that undermined its credibility. To those familiar with the actual events at Roswell, it was obviously a work of disinformation. Still, the events described in the MJ-12 document were uncomfortably close to the actual events, and the composition of the fictitious MJ-12 was reasonably close to that of The Watch. Aegis believed that either the writers of the document knew at least partially what really happened at Roswell, or were being fed information by someone who did. But the questions remained, who wrote the document and what were their intentions? Unable to determine if the document represented the discovery of themselves or The Watch or neither, Aegis destroyed the MJ-12 document and waited. They observed no reaction and the document did not immediately reappear. Aegis Prime grew even more paranoid.

Groom Dry Lake Research Facility

After the MJ-12 incident, Aegis Prime reevaluated its security measures. Two key aspects of the organization were deemed insecure: Aegis' base of operations at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and its current procedures for distributing information. Wright-Patterson had attracted too much attention in recent years, resulting in rumors that 'Hangar 18' contained alien technology and extra-terrestrial bodies. The rumors were correct, but the hangar number was wrong. Wright-Pat was just too close to population centers for proper security. A new base was needed, far away from prying eyes.

The methods Aegis used for distributing information between Cells was the other chink in Aegis' armor. Current procedures involved passing encrypted files physically between parent and child Cells. This was slow, relatively insecure, and required frequent contact between Cells. Aegis needed another way and new developments in technology provided it.

Both problems were addressed in a single, aggressive plan. Aegis constructed a secret military base, under the auspices of the Air Force, on the Nellis Bombing and Gunnery Range in Nevada. The Nellis Gunnery Range is a massive military base, roughly the size of Connecticut, used by the Air Force for live-fire tests and training missions. The detonation of munitions was not only accepted, but expected on the base. Aegis could deal with intruders and trespassing aircraft (terrestrial and otherwise) with whatever force deemed necessary, and blame training and testing operations for the gunfire and explosions.

The base was built on the shores of Groom Dry Lake and was designated a no-fly zone. On early flight maps the no-fly zone was marked Area 51, which became one of the base's many nicknames. Others included Dreamland, S-4, and The Groom Dry Lake Test Facility, but the base was given no official name or designation. Indeed, the military has no records of the base, and those officers who are aware of its existence are all members of Aegis. Aegis operatives simply call it The Ranch.

To alleviate the security problem inherent in distributing information through human connections, a massive computer system and database was constructed at the Ranch. This computer network, dubbed HERMES, became the repository for information gained through Cell investigations and research. Cells no longer needed to contact each other simply to relay information. HERMES also gave Cells a means of alerting Aegis Prime if their parent Cell was neutralized, preventing the Cell from being completely cut off. Each cell's connection to the HERMES network was provided by computer terminals specially manufactured at the Ranch for Aegis Cells. The main HERMES system was installed and went on-line before the base was completed. In time, The Ranch became a large research facility housing a myriad of Aegis research projects. Several Aegis Cells are based there, though none of them know who else on the facility is an operatives. The vast majority of researchers and workers at the Ranch are civilians and Air Force personnel unaware of the base's true purpose or commanders. The researchers work on small aspects of a project and never see its full extent. Those who do are either recruited into the Cell supervising the project or simply "removed".

The most prominent projects at The Ranch involve captured alien spacecraft. Most of the long term research centers around reverse-engineering extraterrestrial craft in order to exploit the alien technology. The most successful project to date in this area is the Aurora interceptor. The Aurora is a fantastic aircraft combining the best aspects of terrestrial aerospace technology, Atlantean cybernetic control systems and captured Saurian propulsion systems. The Aurora is one of the few craft at Aegis' disposal that has a respectable success rate for pursuing and overtaking alien craft. While six Aurora have been built, only four pilots have been found that can handle them so far.

The Kennedy Assassination

By the early sixties, Aegis had infiltrated every aspect of the government and was developing Cells in the private sector as well. Aegis had done a remarkable job burying itself within layers of government programs. The combination of the Cell structure and the HERMES network thoroughly concealed Aegis from public and government eyes. Even so, a not so insignificant incident in 1963 threatened to compromise the integrity of Aegis.

Through a routine illicit wiretap in the White House, President John F. Kennedy discovered that one of his own Secret Service bodyguards was an agent of some type of secret society called Aegis. After further surveillance by his own men, Kennedy discovered that his Secret Service agents were under the orders of this organization and were engaging in covert actions for the agency. President Kennedy confronted one of the agents and threatened him with a full Congressional investigation and imminent exposure. In exchange for his silence, Kennedy demanded that the agents make themselves available to him at any time to use as his personal covert operations team. The Secret Service Aegis Cell was caught completely off guard. They contacted their parent Cell and waited for instructions. The horrible answer was swift in coming. The parent's Cells mandate came directly from Aegis Prime. Kennedy must be eliminated. It would happen during his upcoming visit to Dallas.

Unknown to the Secret Service Cell or Aegis Prime, one of the Cell members was a double agent working for The Black Book. While Aegis was plotting the assassination, the double agent apprised The Black Book of the situation. The Book seized the moment and approached President Kennedy with a counter-proposition. The Black Book offered Kennedy protection from Aegis, and a group of agents to use as he saw fit, in exchange for Kennedy's assurance that any investigation in The Black Book's involvement with the Government would be silenced. Kennedy accepted the deal. The Aegis Cell recruited Lee Harvey Oswald, one of MKULTRA's success stories, for the dirty work. They supplied him with the details of the President's motorcade route and the buildings along the route whose security would be "overlooked" by the Secret Service. Unknown to Oswald, the Cell also positioned two psychics in the crowd outside the book depository as backup. Both psychics had powerful telekinetic abilities and were to insure that once Oswald's bullets hit, President Kennedy would be fatally wounded.

As the President's motorcade came into view, Lee Harvey prepared to take the shot. Suddenly, a Black Book agent burst into the room. Startled, Oswald hastily fired and turned to face the agent. Before The Black Book agent could bring his weapon to bear Oswald fired on him. The agent was wearing a bulletproof vest, but was stunned by the impact of the bullet long enough for Oswald to escape. The Black Book immediately tipped off the police, giving Oswald's description and general location. Oswald was captured within minutes.

Outside, Lee Harvey's shots hit the President, but off target. The Aegis psychics took over from there, bouncing the bullet through several vital organs in the President's chest. The damage was critical, but most likely not fatal. Yet, Oswald's attack was not the only one directed at the President at that instant. From a nearby grassy knoll, another assassin simultaneously shot the President, with a weapon quiet enough and powerful enough to blow Kennedy's head off. Although Aegis could not take credit, Kennedy had indeed been assassinated.

Aegis took two extremely important lessons from the whole episode, lessons which would change future Aegis operations. First, it was obvious that The Black Book knew about the plan beforehand. This increased Aegis' already excessive paranoia and forced them to regard The Black Book as a constant and lethal enemy never to be underestimated. Second, Aegis realized that they were not

solely responsible for the Kennedy assassination. This again raised suspicions in Aegis of another secret group operating toward similar goals. The fact that the third party acted in a way helpful to Aegis did not dampen Aegis' concerns about this other group's motives. Aegis learned little more at the time despite intensive investigation, and in the end, Aegis simply counted the mission as an uneasy victory.

The Challenger

The success of the 1960s and 1970s in the area of space exploration had an amazing impact not only on all humanity, but also, perhaps even more so, on the extraterrestrial operating on Earth. For reasons that Aegis could only speculate, the Saurians were particularly troubled by the recent push into space. The Saurians seemed to fear most the development of a reusable space shuttle.

In February 1986, Aegis learned that the Saurians planned a fiendish plot to sabotage the space program. Aegis discovered that The Black Book had provided the Saurians with details about the route which the solid rocket boosters would travel. In exchange, The Black Book received technology necessary to build space craft of their own. Interestingly, Aegis also learned that knowledge of the principles behind the Saurian technology was not part of the deal. Thus, The Black Book remained dependent on the Saurians.

While the solid rocket boosters were en route to Cape Canaveral in Florida, a team of three Saurians masquerading as humans (the infamous Men in Black) replaced the security team and sabotaged the rockets. On January 28, 1986, the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded just moments after launch due to a malfunction in those booster rockets. The results were greater than the Saurians could have hoped. Not only was a reusable shuttle destroyed, but the graphic horror of the tragedy, transmitted into nearly every American home, shattered the public's faith in space exploration and NASA's space program in general. The act of Saurian terrorism revealed to Aegis the depth of NASA's vulnerability, and result in an increase in the number of NASA Cells.

The Majestic Twelve Document Resurfaces

One year after the Challenger tragedy, Aegis found itself facing more problems from outside forces. In 1987, the MJ-12 document that Aegis had buried so long ago resurfaced in the hands of two crusaders for "the right to know the truth about aliens". Aegis was unable to discover where the document came from, or how and why anyone would send it to these two UFOlogists. The MJ-12 document supported the accounts of witnesses from Roswell who had begun coming forward with their stories, but until then the appearance of the document had been paid little attention. This newfound credibility, however, actually aided Aegis as it supported a document which was a work of disinformation.

The widespread acceptance of the MJ-12 document upon its release revealed that more and more people were willing to believe in the existence of UFOs. In fact, since the early 70's, a radical "New Age" movement had been slowly gaining popularity. An integral part of the New Ager's doctrine was the belief that aliens were cosmic "Space Brothers" who wished to help humanity along the path to its own "Spiritual Awakening". Aegis was suddenly forced to deal with a public intrigued by extraterrestrial and willing to accept evidence of alien life. This mind set made Aegis' cover up operations more difficult. Fortunately, many UFO enthusiasts believed the MJ-12 document, or the New Agers, or both. This ensured that their belief in a phenomena that was real was based on details that were lies.

MKULTRA 1990: Shooting at Harper's Crossing

Although the CIA's MKULTRA project was considered an overall success, the project met with its share of failures. During the 1960s, many of the project's research teams were pursuing genetic engineering experiments in an attempt to outpace similar covert projects underway in Eastern Bloc nations. These projects silently spurred each other onward and quickly escalated into a covert race to create the first bio-engineered "super soldier". The lengths to which the scientists were willing to go to beat the Soviets and the disregard they showed their human test subjects caused the Aegis Cells within MKULTRA to distance themselves from the projects. This is not to say that they did not keep tabs on the projects' success or lack thereof.

One of MKULTRA's more spectacular failures was an experiment in which genetically modified teenagers were subjected to a battery of drugs and hypnosis sessions. These teenagers were normally docile and well-behaved, but would become violent and detached from morality on command. This seemed to be an excellent step toward the creation of so-called "super soldiers". However, it soon became clear that many of the "patients" were unstable and psychotic as a result of the dichotomy in their own behavior. Indeed, one subject's psychotic episode sparked a riot among the other patients and resulted in the destruction of much of the lab facility and the death of almost half the research staff. The experiment was quickly shut down. An Aegis Cell stepped in, oversaw the cover up operation, and recovered all useful information that could be salvaged from the experiment. Through extensive therapy and repressive hypnosis, the Cell was able to rehabilitate a good number of the patients and allow them to be reassimilated into society.

Aegis closely monitored the young charges for signs of relapse, but after nearly two decades of normal behavior, Aegis canceled its surveillance program. This proved to be a tragic mistake. During the late 80's, Aegis began receiving reports of former MKULTRA subjects experiencing psychotic episodes, often resulting in a homicidal rampage and the death of the subject. It seemed the Aegis hypnosis was crumbling, leaving the MKULTRA patients violent sociopaths. Having lost track of most of the patients after ending its surveillance, Aegis was forced to wait for the test subjects to act up before they could neutralize them.

One of the worst cases to date arose when agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) requested FBI support during a stand-off situation at the home of one Jackson Reeves and family. Reeves had been one of MKULTRA's test subjects and his name in the BATF request triggered warning bells in Aegis. Upon further investigation, the situation was found to be worse than expected.

The BATF had been watching Reeves, a militant white supremacist, for some time. He lived with his wife, son and two young daughters on a rural farm in Harper's Cross, Iowa. While the BATF was building a case for illegal weapons possession, Reeves and a neighbor began a dispute over certain land. The escalating argument triggered a psychotic episode and Reeves began firing high caliber weapons at his neighbor's house at night. Reeves' nightly attacks prompted the BATF to take action. Reeves was arrested on a number of weapons and assault related charges, but was released on bail and later failed to appear in court. After adding a few more charges to their warrant, BATF returned again to the rural homestead to arrest Jackson Reeves.

Anticipating that Reeves would resist arrest, and considering the nature of the charges, the BATF surrounded the Reeves home with agents. Not surprisingly, Reeves' response was hostile. The BATF agents were met at the door with gunfire, and one BATF agent was wounded before he could make it off the Reeves' porch. The agents fell back and attempted to negotiate with Jackson. Any chance of a quick and painless resolution to the situation was lost, however, when the Reeves'

dog escaped the house, flushed out and attacked a BATF agent, who shot and killed it. The dog's death triggered a psychotic rage in Jimmy, the Reeves' teenage son. Jimmy rushed the BATF agents, guns blazing, and managed to kill one agent and wound two others before being cut down by the BATF crossfire. After his son's death, Jackson refused to negotiate, and BATF called in the FBI.

An FBI SWAT team sent to provide backup was made up entirely of Aegis operatives. The team had been used extensively during Aegis' cover up operations of MKULTRA failures and had become quite proficient at taking out delusional and psychotic "super soldiers". During the flight to Harper's Cross, the team received word that Aegis had made another unpleasant discovery. Jackson Reeves' wife Tammy had been positively identified as another MKULTRA "patient" who had been chosen for her high scores in ESP testing. Furthermore, Aegis had found indications from the BATF surveillance reports that the Reeves' two young twins were exhibiting signs of uncontrolled psychic or supernatural ability. The SWAT team reassessed the threat that the Reeves' family posed and revised the Rules of Engagement at Harper's Cross to "shoot on sight". The team would be taking no chances.

The FBI backup arrived at the Reeves' home to find a stalemate. Jackson Reeves would neither negotiate nor present the assembled agents with a clear target. BATF would not assault the home for fear of endangering Reeves' wife or children. The Aegis team had no such reservations. After a quick briefing on the current situation, the SWAT team took up positions and attempted to coax either Jackson or his wife out into the open. They convinced Jackson to begin negotiating by promising his wife safe passage. When the opportunity presented itself, Aegis snipers took the shot and killed Tammy Reeves. One hour after the death of his wife, Jackson Reeves gave himself up to the BATF agents without further violence.

Aegis acted quickly to bring the situation to a close and prevent any further attention. Reeves was taken quietly into custody to await trial. Initial testing indicated to Aegis that the Reeves twins, Ginger and Amanda, were both supernatural Foci. The twins were split up and sent to separate foster homes, but Aegis kept a close eye on them both, unwilling to risk a repeat of the Harper's Cross incident.

The Phoenix Situation

Ginger Reaves was sent to live with a foster family in Arizona. The family was kind and caring, but Ginger's violent and bigoted upbringing made her assimilation into the new family difficult. The subtle but ever-present supernatural manifestations that followed Ginger to her new home wore at her family's sanity, though a connection between her and the strange apparitions was never conclusively established. After four years of increasingly strained relations, the attempt to give Ginger a "normal" family life came to a sudden and tragic end. Ginger's foster family was killed in a freak spontaneous fire on Halloween. Twelve year old Ginger was made a ward of the State and institutionalized.

The Aegis Cell watching Ginger decided that she posed too great a threat to herself and others, and more importantly to Aegis anonymity. The Cell began to arrange for Ginger's release into Aegis custody and the subsequent "loss" of any records of her existence. This process took several weeks, and during that time, Ginger made friends with one of the other children at the institution. Together, Ginger and her new friend escaped the institution mere hours before Aegis operatives arrived to take custody of her.

The operatives tracked Ginger and her companion to the isolated temple of a religious cult outside Phoenix. The cult was extremely paranoid and fanatical, and the agents were prevented from

following Ginger into their fortified compound. The uncharacteristically high security of the cult's compound and the unusually well-armed guards both piqued the agent's curiosity, and convinced them that the forcible acquisition of Ginger would be folly.

An Aegis operative spent nearly a month infiltrating the cult and gaining entrance to the compound. Once inside, he made a series of frightening discoveries. The leader of the Cult, Harold Simms, was a powerful and charismatic occultist who had assembled a large following of fanatic disciples. Simms had convinced his thralls that Armageddon was fast approaching, and that he, as their Messiah, would lead them through the destroyed world to paradise. Simms had amassed a huge arsenal of weapons to "ease" the cult through their journey. More importantly, Simms was preparing to conduct a powerful ritual that he claimed would shield his followers from the upcoming destruction, and impart him with the divine power he would need to shepherd them to the promised land. Part of Simms preparation involved taking a large number of young women as his wives. The infiltrator determined that two of the adolescents taken by Simms as consorts were supernatural Foci, one was Ginger Reeves.

Aegis concluded from the undercover agent's reports that Simms' likely goal for the ritual was to become one of the Incarnate, an individual with a powerful connection to the supernatural world. Aegis knew that such status invariably drove the individual mad. With the power of two supernatural Foci and an group of heavily armed fanatics at his beck and call, an insane Simms could bring forth his own Armageddon. The Cell decided that Simms must be stopped at any cost.

Aegis tipped off the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to Simms' stockpile of weapons, planning to use their inevitable raid as cover for a strike team. The team would acquire Simms' two young Foci and rob him of his power. Somehow, Simms was forewarned of the BATF raid and prepared an ambush for the BATF agents. Unprepared and outgunned, half the BATF team was cut down immediately and the rest forced to beat a hasty retreat. The BATF, joined by the FBI, surrounded the compound and demanded that Simms surrender. Simms of course refused and soon the cultists and the assembled agents prepared for a prolonged standoff. Given the siege, the operative inside the compound was unable to report to Aegis on the situation for nearly two weeks. When word finally got out, the tone was terse and panicked. Simms had begun his ritual several days earlier and was very near completion. Aegis had less than twenty-four hours to put an end to the ritual.

Using every ounce of pull the Cell had in Washington, Aegis managed to get the federal agents the go-ahead to take out the compound by any means necessary. Just before dawn the following day, the assembled agents launched a full scale assault on the compound. Over one hundred agents and several armored vehicles were employed. In the course of the assault, the compound was set ablaze and destroyed, and many cultists were killed. The Aegis strike team, however, was able to secure Ginger and the assault was considered to be successful, if only to Aegis. The body of Harold Simms was never found and was assumed to have been incinerated by the inferno that destroyed the temple. Once again, Aegis was reminded that Aliens and The Black Book were not the only threat. Old loose ends kept coming back to haunt Aegis, and they could never allow their vigilance to falter.

Status Quo

Aegis

Aegis today retains the Cell structure it assumed when it was first created. The individual Cells are largely independent and autonomous, but able to easily share information via the HERMES computer system. By maintaining a loose connection with their parent Cell, each Cell assures that their heavy reliance on HERMES does not become a true vulnerability.

Because of the autonomy granted them by Aegis Prime, each Cell is free to interpret and carry out the ultimate goals of the organization as it sees fit. This is not to say that Aegis Prime will not step in if a Cell gets out of control. For the most part, a cell's missions are initiated by their own needs and plans. On occasion, their parent Cell or Aegis prime will mandate a mission. Cells are obligated to fulfill such mandates and may not refuse them. Rogue Cells are dealt with very harshly indeed.

Cells are free to create their own child Cells, in an attempt to be more effective. A parent Cell may receive a request for aid from the child Cell. The parent operatives are expected, but not obligated, to respond.

The primary goals currently mandated by Aegis Prime are the conclusive determination of the true goals and motivations of the various alien races currently operating on Earth. Aegis Prime ultimately hopes to determine how much threat these races pose to the continued prosperity of the human race.

Aegis' secondary objective is to learn as much as possible about the aliens' physiology, technology and psychology and to develop weapons capable of exploiting any weaknesses discovered. In the event that the alien threat can not be neutralized peacefully, Aegis wants an immediate and effective strike force capacity.

All Aegis Cells have standing orders when investigating aliens. If a clear level of threat or motivation can not be estimated, the Cell is to assume a hostile intent and neutralize, by any and all means, the alien presence.

Aegis sees the supernatural as a relatively minor menace. Indeed, it is seen as a potential weapon to be exploited in the fight against the aliens. With regards to supernatural manifestations, Aegis Prime has made it clear that emphasis should be placed on investigation and research, rather than eradication.

The Black Book

Aegis knows that The Black Book operates from a central underground base in the mountains near Dulce, New Mexico. The base provides storage for most of their equipment and acquired alien technology, as well as housing for a majority of their agents. Unlike Aegis Cells, The Black Book operatives are strictly controlled by the commanders at Dulce. All operation teams live in the base. Only individual spies and intelligence agents networked around the country are not. Whereas Aegis prefers to recruit influential operatives into Cells and allow them the freedom to work as they see fit, The Black Book operatives are all the equivalent of foot soldiers. The agents know very little of what the organization as a whole is doing, and for the most part blindly follow orders they receive from Dulce. This structure inhibits a flexible response to quickly evolving situations, but ensures that the integrity of the operation as a whole can not be jeopardized by the capture of any agent.

The Black Book's greatest strength lies in the pacts it has made with extraterrestrials, and the information and technology gained therein. In addition to some personal weaponry and equipment gained from the Saurians, The Black Book has a fleet of ships built with a combination of Saurian and Human technology. These hybrid craft, called TD-121s, are small interceptor-type fighter aircraft equipped with Saurian weapon and drive technology, and human control systems. The Saurian components are supplied to The Black Book complete, without the knowledge to build or repair them. Therefore maintenance of the ships requires continued Saurian cooperation. The Black Book has made some attempt to lessen this dependence. They have developed a hypersonic troop transport vessel built from technology derived from the Saurian systems in the TD-121. The transports, designated "Black Manta", are stealth aircraft capable of vertical take off and landing. Aegis managed to steal some of the Black Manta technology and combined it with Atlantean cybernetic control systems to the TD-121 only effective rival, the Aurora. Aegis has learned that The Black Book has become so entwined with the Saurians that groups of Saurian Black Book agents, referred to as The Men in Black, have been formed. These agents are believed to be altered to look human and always work in groups of three. Further, they possess superhuman strength and agility and generally carry Saurian technology.

The Book also has made several treaties with the Greys. These pacts generally involve The Black Book abducting humans and exchanging them for Grey psychic aid. The combination of Grey mind control abilities and Black Book cunning and firepower creates a lethal counterforce to Aegis operations. In at least two respects, Aegis has the upper hand over The Black Book. Aegis has managed to learn far more about Atlantean technology than The Black Book. Although Aegis is not certain why this so, Aegis seized this opportunity and exploited it as far as possible. In addition, Aegis' knowledge and abilities in the realm of psychic phenomena are far superior to that of The Black Book, despite its alliance with the Greys.