

Office Copying Technology in the Flying Saucer Subculture: Gray Barker's Saucerian Books

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Print historian Ian Batterham has referred to the explosion of new methods of low-cost, small-scale printing throughout the twentieth century as “the office copying revolution.” As Batterham’s bold but apt description suggests, these technologies were chiefly developed to aid in commerce, but the enticement of printing and publishing soon found applications in other arenas as well. The increasing availability of office copying technology was revolutionary in several senses of the term, and political activists quickly latched on to new print technologies. Labor activist Dwight MacDonald, recalling the Marxist splinter groups of the 1930s, noted:

the mimeograph machine...played the same part in the American revolutionary movement that machine guns did in the Russian. The mimeographs were the instruments of production, which, as any Marxist schoolboy knows, are the base of power of every ruling class, and many a faction-fight was decided by who seized control of them first.¹

Similarly, Kristin Matthews explores the relationship between print technology and the self-understanding of the New Left of the 1960s, noting that the Students for a Democratic Society

“locat[ed] SDS’s ‘becomingness’ within its multilith’s reproductive capability.”² For the SDS, its print capabilities were an explicit and central part of its political mission:

SDS’s perpetually producing presses strove to liberate print from the confines of a centralized author and authority, democratizing production, reproduction, and distribution of print matter to help ‘the people’ articulate, replicate, and circulate their own ideas, and thereby define themselves as subjects and citizens.³

In this levelled production landscape, anyone could and should be at once author, printer, publisher, and distributor, and this democratized flow of information would be reflected not only in how printed matter was produced, but in its nature and content as well.

The impact of these new print technologies was felt in the world of literature and the arts, as well. Suzanne W. Churchill and Adam McKible note the role of both the portable typewriter and affordable printing technologies on the “Little Magazines” of the modernist period, arguing that these developments

not only made publication more efficient and affordable, but also inspired new forms and principles of artistic expression, generating new material for little magazines to print...New technologies thus helped drive the Little Renaissance at least as much as the combustion of individual genius.⁴

In the 1930s, stencil printing enabled science fiction fans to produce “fanzines,” containing amateur fiction, criticism, and intercommunication in what became a robust subculture.⁵ Around the midcentury, mimeograph and dittograph machines provided an affordable means of self-publishing to a new generation of post-Beat poets and authors. Rona Cran notes that the mimeograph

facilitated quick, cheap production and circulation. Partly due to their relative unwieldiness and partly due to their cost—they were reasonably cheap at round fifty dollars depending on their age and quality, but not so cheap as to enable widespread personal ownership—mimeograph machines were often located in shared spaces.⁶

Chelsea Jennings highlights the impact that print technology had on the nature of the art and literature produced in the “mimeograph revolution” of the 1950s and 1960s:

With these technologies, writers could bypass traditional publishing venues and distribute work quickly and cheaply, often in the context of local artistic communities. The publications produced during the mimeograph revolution range from professional-quality offset-printed, perfect-bound books to blurry copies with sloppy hand-lettering and staple bindings. Printers like [Ed] Sanders who opted for the quick-and-dirty end of the spectrum embraced the ephemerality of their texts under the aegis of immediacy, and low production quality affirmed their do-it-yourself ethos.⁷

Authors of the mimeo revolution had no need to appeal to a mass audience, and the ability to write for a close-knit community of readers enabled the development of new interpretive frame that inverted mainstream culture’s ideas of aesthetic value.

Most scholarly attention to the impact of office copying technology on small-press and private publication has been in the overlapping fields of politics and literature, but the impact of these technologies was felt in countless other areas. In the context of postwar literary publications, Kyle Schlesinger points out that “The magazines of the mimeo revolution had a disposable allure; they were easy to produce, inexpensive to purchase, fun to give away, and could literally materialize overnight.”⁸ But these same factors apply not only to poetry periodicals and radical leaflets, but to the entire universe of small-circulation publications

produced in the aftermath of the Second World War, from fanzines to middle-school literary journals to movie theater newsletters to prison newspapers. Machines like the mimeograph extended the process of democratization inaugurated by the printing press to new sectors of society. But this came with a challenge as well: as Kembrew McLeod notes, “media technologies made it easier to misrepresent reality.”⁹ This broadening of print culture involved the disruption of the line between truth and fiction and did away with the need for editorial mediators to tailor messages for broad appeal. As book artist Rich Dana comments, cheap print technology became “a platform from which discontented misfits...attempted to connect with other discontented misfits.”¹⁰ And as with the mimeo revolution’s inversion of mainstream aesthetics, ideas about the nature of evidence and the mediation of experts in interpreting the world were just as subject to reversal.

Among the new modes of subcultural communication that grew from these developments in print technology was the flying saucer subculture of the postwar period. In the aftermath of pilot Kenneth Arnold’s sighting of a group of fast-moving objects in Washington State in July 1947, stories about flying saucers, later known as “unidentified flying objects” or UFOs, spread rapidly via newswire. Colin Dickey highlights the importance of this form of information technology in shaping early flying saucer narratives:

One of the legacies of Samuel Morse, the newswire laid the groundwork for the very idea that news could be “objective.” Before the telegraph, the notion that local news would be partisan was taken as a given, but wire services, in order to maximize their profit potential, had to strip out local tone and outlook...Once news was designed to be shared and repurposed for hundreds of local papers and local markets, it had to lose whatever

color the original reporter might have brought to the story. Merely the facts, objectively reported, condensed down to their bare minimum.¹¹

The newswire did not merely disseminate saucer narratives; its compression of information served to smooth out the differences and distinctions between individual micronarratives describing unusual aerial sightings, encouraging the public's assumption of a single phenomenon.¹²

The 1950s saw the rapid spread of informal information networks dedicated to the study of flying saucers, generally centered around small-circulation newsletters issued by groups like the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO) and the International Flying Saucer Bureau (IFSB). Ufological bibliographer Tom Lind called these publications, which were often produced on mimeograph machines or spirit duplicators, "the backbone of UFO literature."¹³ In the thirty years following Arnold's sighting, UFO narratives were chiefly propagated through print media, much of which could only have been produced using the copying technology developed in the early and mid-twentieth century.¹⁴ Thus UFOs are ultimately a literary phenomenon, functioning primarily as narratives which are bibliographically mediated.

Among the earliest publications in this field was *The Saucerian*, founded in 1953 by Gray Barker, a motion-picture booker and educational equipment salesman from Clarksburg, West Virginia.¹⁵ Over a thirty-year career, Barker was central in the development of ufological mysteries like the Men in Black (MIB), the Philadelphia Experiment, and the Mothman, and his publishing firm established itself as the home for the most outlandish saucer and paranormal narratives of the postwar era. Barker leveraged office copying technology and other postwar developments in printing and information technology to stoke the narrative flames of flying saucer lore. The path of Barker's career as a publisher tracks through multiple methods of

printing and distributing his narratives, shifting with the expansion and contraction of his audience network. At all phases of his career, Barker interacted closely with his audience, with correspondents and customers often transitioning into Saucerian Books authors. Through Barker, new technologies for printing became vectors for the production and distribution of occult knowledge.

“A Rather Decrepit Ditto Machine”

Gray Barker was born in 1925 in Braxton County, West Virginia. During the Second World War, he attended Glenville State College, where he had his first experiences with publishing and printing as a contributor and later editor to the school’s newspaper, *The Glenville Mercury*.¹⁶ He also published occasional satirical publications (like the *Glenville Smirkury*), which were printed on mimeograph machines.¹⁷

But it was science-fiction fanzines, not college newspapers, that Barker emulated when launching *The Saucerian* in 1953. For the production of the first issue (figure 1), he used a spirit duplicator—a rotary office printer named for the strong-smelling, methanol-based solvent used in its ink transfer process.¹⁸ The machines were frequently used in schools, and Barker had likely used one during his brief post-college teaching career in Maryland. Barker commented to his associate August C. Roberts in the immediate aftermath of the print run:

The darn thing really took work. I ran 300 copies on a rather decrepit ditto machine which would ball up the paper every now and then. The magazine ran to 31 pages before I could possibly get it stopped. Think what a job it is running 31 pages in 300 copies, then assembling all of these, stapling, etc.!¹⁹

Where other saucer publications strove for simple, respectable designs often resembling trade newsletters, Barker instead embraced the striking, if crude, visual conventions of science fiction fanzines, which had developed a coherent aesthetic around the limitations and opportunities of mimeograph and ditto-graphic printing processes, combined with a general attitude of one-upmanship. The first issue of *The Saucerian* is adorned with a striking image of the Flatwoods Monster, a frightening apparition about which Barker had written for the paranormal pulp *Fate Magazine* in 1952; a fuller report of his investigation is the centerpiece of the issue. For *The Saucerian*'s second issue, he printed the cover on heavier paper stock using an offset process, providing a sharper, clearer image than ditto, which was still used for the interior pages.²⁰ But the image itself—of a flying saucer base emerging from a moon crater—still owes much to the world of science-fiction fanzines.

The growing popularity of Barker's zine soon necessitated a change in his printing methods. He explained to Canadian saucer investigator Laimon Mitris: "My ditto machine is rather old and I can get only about 100 really sharp copies before they start getting dim. I run 300, however, and am saving the last 100 copies in case of requests for additional copies."²¹ By the fourth issue, Barker's subscriber list had expanded beyond what he was able to produce, and he switched to offset printing for the entire publication, changing the zine's format from a corner-stapled full page size to a saddle-stapled pamphlet.²² This enabled him to more than triple his print run, from 300 copies to 1000.²³

In 1956, Barker's successes in the saucer zine community culminated in the publication of his debut book, *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*, a cryptic tale of conspiracism describing mysterious circumstances in which a group of "Men In Black" had pressured IFSB founder Albert K. Bender to leave the flying saucer field. *They Knew Too Much* was among the

first titles issued by University Books, an imprint founded by Felix Morrow after his departure from Shocken Books and the British Book Company.²⁴ Barker had relished the process of assembling his zine by hand, but the increasing demands of his daily work in motion-picture booking left little time for this time-consuming process, and as the 1950s went on he outsourced more and more of the publication's design and printing. By 1959, the periodical—now rechristened the *Saucerian Bulletin*—was typeset by a jobbing printer who used a Vari-Typer machine, which produced a neater, more clearly readable design.²⁵

At the same time that *The Saucerian Bulletin* was increasing the professionalism of its appearance to reach a larger audience, Barker was experimenting with new copying techniques to enhance his communication with the smaller community of his “inner circle.” In 1956, he acquired a Verifax machine, a Kodak photographic duplicator that used a gelatin-based ink. The Verifax produced a copy of a letter-sized document in about a minute, and a single matrix could produce several copies of the same original, albeit with diminishing quality.²⁶ The Verifax could never produce copies on the scale that the *Saucerian* required—but it proved an ideal method for Barker to send copies of “crackpot letters” that he had received to his friends. In particular, Verifaxes are present in several of his lengthy letters to his closest associate, *Saucer News* publisher James W. Moseley, with whom Barker shared his private mockery of many of his correspondents' ideas.²⁷ In 1957 Barker compiled a satirical publication to circulate as a Christmas gift to a small group of friends, similarly including Verifaxed copies of letters from *Saucerian* subscribers, along with additional humorous texts reproduced dittographically.²⁸ The Verifax also drove the production of the *Saucerian Daily*, a smaller-scale, irregular periodical in which Barker circulated his private feelings about the saucer mystery to a select group of associates.²⁹

From Zine Editor to Book Publisher

Barker pivoted from publishing zines to books in 1959, launching his Saucerian Books imprint with *From Outer Space to You*, in which New Jersey sign painter Howard Menger recounted the tale of his lifelong contact with friendly space people. For his initial publications, Barker emulated the press with which he had the most familiarity: Felix Morrow's University Books. For the production of *From Outer Space To You*, Barker used George McKibben & Son, Morrow's printer and bindery, with Morrow himself serving as an intermediary between the production facilities and the fledgling publisher.³⁰ This arrangement likely continued throughout the next three years, though most of the books Saucerian released during this period were reissues of extant material and required little direct oversight. But by the time he was preparing his next original book—Albert K. Bender's *Flying Saucers and the Three Men*, in which Bender told his own side of the story Barker had spun in *They Knew Too Much*—Barker wanted to avoid the kind of production delays he had experienced with Menger's book, and he contracted the book production to the vanity publisher Exposition Press. The undated contract calls for the publisher to produce 5,000 copies—of which only 2,000 would initially be bound—at a total cost of \$3,200. The contract allows for the remaining copies to be bound at a later date, a delay that allowed Barker to save over \$1,000 on the up-front production costs.³¹ Barker preferred Exposition Press to George McKibben: "I feel that [Exposition] did a more complete job for me, which included a great deal of design and minor editing."³² Nevertheless, Barker required a loan to cover the initial the payment to Exposition, and this debt contributed significantly to his mounting financial distress.

Around the same time that he was preparing Bender's book, Barker purchased a new office duplicator, which would become an important part of his publishing venture going forward.³³ This appears to have been an Addressograph Multilith 1250, a rotary offset duplicator introduced in 1954.³⁴ A photo published in Gene Duplantier's zine *UFolk* (figure 2) shows Barker's staff (Mae Britton, John Sheets, and Thelma Atha) unloading the machine upon its arrival at the Saucerian office.³⁵ Barker used this duplicator to print flyers and circulars for his film-booking business but also began using it to produce Saucerian publications. In the solicitation letter for the first such book, he refers to a "recently developed photographic process for making offset negatives and plates."³⁶ This may have been a reference to his use of his Verifax copier to produce transparent masters for the Multilith.³⁷

Among the first publications printed on this new machine was the twenty-fifth issue of the *Saucerian Bulletin*, released in October 1962. This was the most lavishly produced issue of the *Bulletin* to date, with a four-color cover and several color interiors. The multicolored cover was experimental, however, and the different color screens are poorly aligned on most copies. Barker later told collector Glenn Bray that he had done the cover printing himself and that he was proud of it despite these errors.³⁸ Barker issued a flier on overrun copies of the cover to readers whose subscriptions had lapsed, promising that the magazine was "now bigger and better than ever due to the acquiring of our own printing facilities."³⁹ The issue itself promised: "you can expect to see us around for a long time."⁴⁰ Though this would prove true for Saucerian Books itself, it would not be borne out for the *Bulletin*, of which this turned out to be the final issue. Barker's financial difficulties from the high production costs of his publications combined with legal trouble when he was prosecuted for homosexuality in late 1962, and he declared bankruptcy soon afterwards.⁴¹

“Readers Prefer to Receive it in This Fashion”: In-House Production

Amidst the stresses of his criminal trial in December 1962, Barker made a major shift in his publishing methods with the release of *Bender Mystery Confirmed* (figure 3), a compilation of reader comments on Bender’s *Flying Saucers and the Three Men*. In contrast to his prior hardcover publications, which aspired to bookstore success, *Bender Mystery Confirmed* aims to give its audience what it wants without wasting effort on frills: it is a simply produced, staple-bound pamphlet printed on untrimmed letter-size paper, typeset, printed, and bound in an edition of 500 copies by Barker himself on his Multilith.⁴² His solicitation materials for the volume include a statement of purpose:

The book may not have the “slick,” easy-reading characteristics of a commercially produced volume. Since this is a publication of limited circulation we believe readers prefer to receive it in this fashion. The public acceptance of the book in this form will determine how publication projects of similar nature may be carried out.⁴³

Moreover, in compiling reader comments and selling them back to the readers themselves, Barker produced a text that served as an open forum for occult debate.

In producing this volume, Barker was following a suggestion from his fellow saucer author Morris K. Jessup, who had published several hardcover UFO titles with Citadel Books. The worst-selling of these was *The UFO Annual*, a compilation of news clippings and other brief reports of saucer sightings released in 1956. Citadel issued the book as a hardcover but at the unreasonably high price of \$4.95, compared to \$3.50 for *The Case for the UFO*. Though his first book had been targeted at a general audience, the *Annual*, a dry compendium of saucer data, was intended for a completely different audience: the smaller core of dedicated flying saucer

researchers. Jessup had envisioned a different container for this information: “I had expected a cheap, telephone-book style of printing and binding to sell at 2 or 3 \$\$ but Citadel thought otherwise.”⁴⁴ Jessup considered the mismatch between the publisher’s assumptions and his audience’s desires to be the reason for the book’s failure. *Bender Mystery Confirmed*, which similarly targeted a specialized audience, fits Jessup’s description of what his *UFO Annual* should have been.

In addition to new printing methods, Barker adopted a new distribution model for *Bender Mystery Confirmed*. Barker had carefully assembled a mailing list, combined from his own subscribers, University Books’ marketing list for *They Knew Too Much*, Citadel Books’ list for M. K. Jessup’s *The Case for the UFO*, and the distribution list of the New York saucer club Civilian Saucer Intelligence.⁴⁵ This may also have been expanded with the customers of Dorothy and Franklin Thomas’s New Age Publishing Co., which had done much to advance spiritual interpretations of the flying saucer narratives.⁴⁶ Together, these lists encompassed the lion’s share of the country’s most dedicated enthusiasts of flying saucers, the paranormal, and the occult. This audience was hungry for information but cared little for the trappings of the relatively luxurious hardcovers Barker had produced in his firm’s first three years, and cheaply-produced, no-frills publications immediately became the press’s norm. With very few exceptions, all of Barker’s books for the next two decades were produced in a similar style.

Saucerian’s Charter Subscription program offered discounts to customers who pre-ordered these in-house-printed publications. The announcement indicates that Barker initially planned a bimonthly publication schedule, advertising a yet-untitled book by New Zealand saucer investigator John Stuart for November or December 1962, and Barker’s own *The Strange*

Case of Dr. M. K. Jessup for January. Barker describes the Charter Subscription program as a collaboration with his readers:

Both forthcoming books will be printed in limited editions, as the first in the series has been. They will sell for \$3.00 or more, depending upon production costs. YOU CAN ASSURE YOURSELF OF RECEIVING *ALL THREE BOOKS*, HOWEVER, and *SAVE \$3.00*, equivalent to receiving a book FREE, if you will participate with us in this project in both an intellectual and financial level.⁴⁷

Both of the titles in this initial series were delayed from their projected publication dates, likely due to Barker's legal troubles, but the Charter Subscription model survived for several years.

One of the reasons Barker had struggled as a magazine publisher was the relatively low cost of subscriptions. With long gaps between issues, his readers would pay \$1 only every two to three years. As a book publisher, however, Barker could charge a higher subscription cost, and if he could keep books coming out regularly, he could charge that fee two or more times per year. Individually, books were more substantial than magazines, but in many ways the process of assembling them was simpler, with less elaborate layouts and fewer contributors to communicate with. Barker likely printed 1,000 copies of each title in this initial series, meaning Saucerian Books would have grossed about \$6,000 on its first round of Charter Subscription titles.⁴⁸ The first series had taken just over eight months to release, meaning Barker would need to release a half-dozen titles a year and keep other costs low in order to reach a middle-class income from book publishing alone. But only rarely did he meet this target, suggesting that money was not a primary motivating factor in Barker's publishing career.⁴⁹ In a letter to Constable on the eve of *Bender Mystery Confirmed*'s release, Barker suggests that his publishing endeavors were a passion, or even a compulsion:

Businesswise I would be sensible to get out of this field and devote my time to more profitable pursuits. I find myself, however, taking money out of the theatrical end and putting it into SAUCERIAN PUBS to keep it going. Most of my business friends think I'm a fool and probably I am. But I'm in it till the last cup and saucer.⁵⁰

This new subscription model lasted through Barker's bankruptcy and went on to sustain his publishing activities for decades.

Barker quickly set out finding material that he thought would find its audience in books produced in the samizdat style of *Bender Mystery Confirmed*, identifying John Stuart's offbeat *UFO Warning* as a strong candidate for follow-up sales to readers of Bender's book. In their brief negotiations over the book, Barker offered Stuart a simple royalty structure of 10% on bookstore sales and 5% on mail-order sales.⁵¹ However, Barker well knew that the book would not be offered for sale to bookstores and would be distributed entirely through direct sales. With an initial print of 500 to 1,000 copies, Stuart's maximum possible royalty from the book would be under \$200. Barker neither offered Stuart an advance nor required an up-front subsidy payment, as vanity presses like Vantage required—but he hoped to sell enough Charter Subscriptions to cover his production costs. When Stuart inquired about royalties, Barker told him that “it has not gone too well, and it seems that the Flying Saucer Book Market has gone ‘ker-flunk.’”⁵²

In-house production on the Multilith may have cut down Barker's up-front costs on book production, but the labor involved in printing and assembling each book by hand came with its own costs. When he began corresponding with Virginia Brasington about the manuscript for her *Flying Saucers in the Bible*, the author was eager to see the book in print, expecting the completed book to be available within a few weeks of the manuscript's submission.⁵³ When she

demanded the return of her manuscript, Barker was able to placate her by promising a faster turnaround if the book were published on a subsidy basis—something he had actively discouraged in past communications with other saucer authors.⁵⁴ Under Barker’s proposal, Brasington would pay \$600 up front toward the cost of producing the book, foregoing any potential royalties in exchange for 1,000 copies of the published book. He would retain 1,000 copies himself for subscription and mail-order sales. To expedite the process, he would use a commercial printer and binder, rather than producing the book in-house—but he designed the book in the same letter-size, eighty-page format as his Multilith publications.⁵⁵ Under this agreement, Barker was able to leverage the author’s eagerness in order to secure his standard 1,000 copies but with no production expenses and little labor beyond layout. The arrangement worked well, and following Saucerian’s next book, D. T. Elkins’ *Extraterrestrial Communication*, Barker abandoned Multilith production. For nearly two decades, Barker’s books would be printed at a separate facility, as *Flying Saucers in the Bible* had been. By the 1970s, one printer dominated.

Tomorrow River

When Barker took over *Saucer News* from Moseley in 1968, he utilized professional typesetting rather than Moseley’s offset-reproduced typescript format, turning to Tomorrow River Printers, a Wisconsin press operated by Ray Palmer.⁵⁶ Palmer was not only an affordable printer—he shared Barker’s outré interests. Palmer had founded one of the earliest science-fiction fanzines, *The Comet*, in 1930, and by the early 1940s he was the editor of *Amazing Stories*. But Palmer fell out of favor with science-fiction fandom over his endorsement of “The Shaver Mystery,” the branding under which Palmer published the pseudoscientific writings of schizophrenic author

Richard Shaver.⁵⁷ In 1948 Palmer had pivoted away from fiction to paranormal fact, founding *Fate Magazine*, which published early coverage of flying saucer sightings. By the 1960s Palmer was primarily a publisher of paranormal magazines like *Mystic*, *Search*, and *Flying Saucers*, for which Barker provided a regular column for several years. In addition to these magazines, Palmer issued books under the Amherst Brooks imprint and worked as a jobber as well. Palmer was responsible for the increasing professionalization of Saucerian's publications during this period—which came at a cost to readers, as the magazine's price immediately increased from 50 cents to \$1 per issue and subscriptions from \$2 to \$4. In his opening editorial to this issue, Barker explains: “Although I am now financially strong, I do not have the vast resources that Jim possessed of operating a money-losing operation.”⁵⁸ He goes on to add that he should be able to break even at this price, “considering certain side benefits such as purchases of books from our ads.”⁵⁹ Barker may have increased the magazine's price, but he also increased its content. The Spring–Summer 1969 issue was the largest issue of *Saucer News* to date, at fifty-six pages (including densely-printed text on the covers). But this includes what was likely a cost-cutting measure: the central eight pages consist of a full-color advertisement for occult publications issued by Palmer's Amherst Press, almost certainly provided to Palmer for free in exchange for a discount on the printing of the issue. The advertisements also enabled Tomorrow River to run a test on full-color printing, likely in preparation for a richly illustrated book then in preparation for Saucerian, John W. Dean's *Flying Saucers Closeup*.⁶⁰ Barker similarly pushed Tomorrow River to innovate in his preparing his edition of an annotated edition of Jessup's *Case for the UFO* in 1973 (known as the “Varo Edition”), working with them to develop a color separation technique for printing the book's annotations in red.⁶¹ Barker used Tomorrow River as his primary printer until Palmer's death in 1977, after which he never again established so close a

relationship with another printer. But the gradual decline of his readership meant that he no longer needed to produce as many copies of his publications. For the final seven years of his life, Barker turned to a variety of methods for the cheap design and printing of his publications.

Xerography

By the end of 1979, Barker's office had acquired a Xerox 9400 photocopier. The first commercial electrostatic (or xerographic) machine was marketed in 1950, but it was expensive, slow, and required special paper.⁶² The first plain-paper copier was produced in 1959, and machines gradually increased in automation and ease of use in the coming decades. Barker had some experience with xerographic printing as early as 1969, when he launched the *Journal of the Congress of Scientific Ufologists* in photocopied format.⁶³ Setup for this kind of printing was easy, but it was more expensive, page-by-page, than the offset printers that Barker had typically used. The subscription price for this limited run publication—\$10 per year for members of the Congress, \$25 for nonmembers—was steep, particularly since it came out irregularly and rarely more than once per year.⁶⁴ Barker used the same method for the *Saucer News Non-Scheduled Newsletter*: “These bulletins will be reproduced rapidly by the expensive Xerox process rather than being sent to a printer while vital news is getting cold.”⁶⁵ The subscription cost of this newsletter was \$2 per year, but the publication typically consisted of only a single page.

The Xerox 9200 (of which Barker's 9400 was a derivative model) broadened the photocopier's capabilities and increased its automation. Most importantly for Barker's purposes, it was capable of the high-speed, economical production of double-sided photocopies. Before the machine was even delivered, Barker announced a “Rare Book Copy Service,” providing “professional Xerographic copies” of a range of out-of-print saucer titles.⁶⁶ The initial offering

was exclusively for works originally published by Saucerian, along with Meade Layne's *Coming of the Guardians*, which had been published without copyright. Prices ranged from \$15 for Connie Menger's *Song of Saturn* to \$35 for John W. Dean's *Flying Saucers Closeup*, with the average eighty-page Saucerian reprint priced at \$17.50—nearly three times the price of Saucerian's in-print books of the same size. The announcement also mentioned the possibility of producing photocopies of complete runs of early saucer periodicals, though admitting that this would prove expensive: "We invite inquiries from libraries with suitable grants and from UFO researchers who are willing to pay the relatively high costs of search and reproduction."⁶⁷ Barker vastly expanded this print-on-demand service in the coming years to encompass dozens of titles. The typical reprint is a straightforward photocopy with no additions or alterations to the text, bound with a plastic comb binding. This labor-intensive production method was suitable for titles printed on demand. As Barker shifted toward in-house publication for more of his books, this comb-binding style would become his standard. This shift to more labor-intensive, less professional and more expensive publications indicates that his audience was dwindling but devoted to the occult knowledge on offer.

Tabloid Printing

In 1978 ufologist Timothy Green Beckley launched the saucer tabloid *UFO Review*, featuring a revival of Barker's "Chasing the Flying Saucers" column as a regular feature. Beckley published the zine on newsprint in tabloid format, explaining his adoption of this inexpensive style in language echoing Barker's description of *Bender Mystery Confirmed* years before: "I frankly feel that it's what you print that's important in this field, not so much the quality of the paper you're printed on...A tabloid is the most economical form of printing available today, and this is why

we have decided to publish in this format.”⁶⁸ The cheap newsprint format enabled Beckley to print in large enough quantities to encourage broad distribution of what in science fiction fandom would be called a “semiprozine.” Barker had used newsprint for two promotional issues of *Spacecraft Review* years before but soon abandoned the cheap paper stock. Now, however, he took inspiration from *UFO Review*’s format, which was cheaper to produce than the offset printing he had used in the mid- to late 1970’s for *Gray Barker’s Newsletter*. Beginning with its eighth issue, the *Newsletter* appeared in tabloid format on newsprint, and it is likely that Barker used the same printer as Beckley. The central section of most issues was an eight-page advertising insert, which Barker overprinted, sending it free to those members of his mailing list that had not purchased a subscription.⁶⁹

The tabloid printing used for the *Newsletter* was the most cost-effective printing method available to Barker, and he saw no reason that this format—which could fit up to 2,500 words to a page—could not be used for book-length works as well as periodicals. The first newsprint issue of the *Newsletter* also contains an announcement of a tabloid-format reprint of Menger’s *From Outer Space To You*, reduced from a 256-page hardcover to twenty large-format newsprint pages.⁷⁰ In a letter to Hal Crawford, he described this as

an experimental type of book I’m doing, in tabloid format, so that I can get the retail price down to three or four dollars...I plan to do a number of the “tab” reprints, along with some original works. These are rather cheaply done, but at least they get done this way. It costs so much to get a conventional “book” done nowadays in an edition of 1000 copies which is our average.⁷¹

Barker referred to later works in similar format as “Giant Tab” publications, and Barker’s purpose in producing them was probably to reproduce strong-selling titles at a lower cost than the made-to-order photocopies he offered.

As cheap as tabloid printing was, Barker still looked for methods of cutting his costs. In May 1984 he told *Shavertron* editor Richard Toronto: “I print 2 issues of THE NEWSLETTER at a time when we go to the tabloid printer to save \$\$\$\$\$.”⁷² As a result, the last few issues of the *Newsletter* contain some obvious padding, devoting full tabloid pages to a reproduction of a NASA photograph of a rock formation resembling a human face, an illustration from Dominick Lucchesi’s *Flying Saucers from Khabarah Khoom*, and a reprinted article from *UFO Report*. Nevertheless, this printing schedule meant that the *Newsletter* remained on a bimonthly schedule for four consecutive issues, the first time since 1957 that one of Barker’s zines had managed such a regular schedule.

The “Giant Tab” series was not Barker’s sole experiment with tabloid printing. For *Worlds Beyond the Poles*, a compilation of Ray Palmer’s hollow-earth writing, Barker used the same newsprint stock as *Gray Barker’s Newsletter*. The sixty-four pages of *Worlds Beyond the Poles* originated as sixteen newsprint pages, which Barker and his staff then trimmed down to letter size and saddle-stapled in heavy paper wrappers. The interior pages were trimmed roughly and unevenly, extending significantly beyond the wrappers in some copies. This format suggests an attempt to revive the “Giant Tab” series in a format that readers would better understand—a book, even a crudely trimmed and staple-bound one, being easier to handle than a full-size tabloid. But the labor involved in producing it must have been intense. Barker’s introduction apologizes for the format:

Physically speaking the book you are now ready to read certainly does not possess the graphics, design, paper, binding, and other efforts you will find in your latest *Reader's Digest* volume of condensed books! But it's about the best we can do, given our financial resources and circulation expectations in such a limited market. Perhaps we should be *glad* it's not slick publishing, otherwise it might not communicate the "flavor" of that great New Age iconoclast, Ray Palmer!⁷³

The TRS-80 Computer and Barker's New Age Books

Throughout his career, Barker experimented with new technologies. He acquired a TRS-80 computer in November 1978 (a little over a year after the early personal computer model became available) and put the new device to work in support of his UFO work (figure 4).⁷⁴ He wrote to Glenn Bray shortly after buying the computer, describing his plans to inventory his stock of saucer publications, as well as to make a simple computer game loosely based on Bender's experiences as described in *They Knew Too Much* and *Flying Saucers and the Three Men*.⁷⁵ In addition to this game, he began work on a rudimentary database of West Virginia UFO sightings—though his *UFO Review* column he cautioned that "the 'Flying Saucer' Mystery cannot be actually solved this way."⁷⁶

More practically, he began using the computer to handle his mailing list, and planned to eventually segment his customers for targeted promotions: "when our programming is completed, it will enable us to mail out certain offers to very small segments of the list, such as (for example) those who are interested in the Shaver Mystery, those interested in ESP, etc."⁷⁷ To those who were interested, he offered a "'UFO Friendship' service" to share the addresses of UFO enthusiasts with others in their area, thus reinforcing a sense of community surrounding the

paranormal.⁷⁸ He also inventoried books and magazines available for sale, creating a searchable database both to help in the production of sales lists and to locate materials ordered, including individual titles from his personal book collection.

Barker continued expanding the capabilities of his computer in early 1981, purchasing the word processing program Scripsit in January and saving up for the \$2,000 Daisy Wheel Printer II, which he acquired a few months later.⁷⁹ This combination, he wrote to skeptic Sheaffer, “will enable us to set fairly decent type for our small editions, and will greatly improve our capabilities for Confusing the Public, and Spreading False Teachings.”⁸⁰ The first book prepared entirely on this new rig was *A UFO Guide to Fate Magazine*, a publication whose very existence was predicated on Barker’s new technological capabilities.⁸¹ He had teased the work behind this book the previous fall as a more meaningful and manageable task than the saucer sighting database he had initiated:

We may have gone off half-cocked in announcing we would use our computer to analyze UFO data. Instead we got into indexing early UFO literature. We recently finished doing this with Ray Palmer’s FLYING SAUCERS magazine, and have now started the Herculean job of indexing every issue of FATE for UFO articles, photos, book reviews and ads. With this retrieval system we will, for example, be able to almost instantly scan more than 300 issues of FATE and pull out issue dates and titles of articles by any UFO author... These can be accessed on the computer screen or printed out in lists. We also plan to do this with many other publications, including many of the ‘amateur’ UFO zines. I am very excited about this and feel that, when it is further [a]long, it can begin to be a very valuable contribution to UFO research. Thus our original plans to use data processing methods on sightings themselves have been postponed for the present time.⁸²

In many respects, *Fate* was synonymous with flying saucers: it was in the pages of its first issue that Kenneth Arnold's full account of his sighting near Mount Rainier appeared, and though the magazine covered a much broader range of Fortean and paranormal topics, UFOs were a consistent presence in its pages. Barker soon realized that he had not a mere inventory but rather a broad overview of how the general metanarrative of unidentified flying objects had unfolded over more than three decades. "If you thought that bibliographies and indexes were pretty dry stuff," he wrote, "you weren't reckoning with FATE."⁸³

After acquiring his computer and its print-enabling components, Barker's publishing output increased significantly in 1983. In the catalog section of the December 1982 *Newsletter*, he summed up the difficulties his press had faced since Palmer's death:

For the past two years we have been faced with the problem of publishing the new books and reprints we desperately want to bring you and which I am certain you would like very much to have. Before that time we were able to have books printed in small editions which we could afford. But more lately it seems everything is geared to mass marketing, due to heavy mechanization in the printing industry which lowers the cost of printed books, but increases greatly the "setup" costs—the up-front process of getting printing ready for web-offset presses. The result: Savings for publishers printing 5000 or more copies, but IMPOSSIBLY high per-copy prices for mini-publishers (such as we) who may not be able to sell more than 500 copies of a book.⁸⁴

The new solution, which delayed the release of Barker's book *M.I.B.: The Secret Terror Among Us* (figure 5), but opened the door for a more robust publishing program, lay in a confluence of technological factors:

We already had an expensive computer used mainly for mailing lists and word processing... We also had an excellent “Daisy wheel” printer of typewriter quality. We found a new word processing program which enabled us to set proportionate-spaced type (like that used in professional typesetting) with margin justification. Then a printing supply house (which evidently was hurting for sales during the recession) offered us a remarkably high line of credit on printing and master-making equipment... The result: We’re now printing our own books, and able to do this in the small editions required for our operation!⁸⁵

On top of this, Barker leased a new photocopier “that offers greater economy than the previous Xerox.”⁸⁶ The model of printer is not known, but Richard Wilt, a printer technician who worked on Barker’s equipment shortly before this period, speculates that it may have been a liquid photocopier like those manufactured by Savin.⁸⁷ Whatever its make, this printer became the beating heart of Barker’s publishing operation, now rechristened New Age Books. With the exception of newsprint publications, all of the books released with the New Age imprint were printed in-house on this machine. The better pricing enabled Barker to revive the “Limited Editions Reprints” series with reduced prices.⁸⁸

Barker hired his nephew Joe to work as a press operator.⁸⁹ The two soon learned that the new machine came with a steep learning curve:

The supplier delivered a box of bad printing masters, and half of MIB was “burned” before we knew this. I had to completely re-format the type for the entire book... I chopped up several pages of layouts by mistake on the paper trimmer. The supplier had not stocked expendable parts for the plate maker and we were “down” for a week. In learning to run the press my assistant and I ruined several thousand sheets of paper!

Finally, just as we were ready to assemble and ship books our binding machine (which punches the holes for the plastic spiral bindings) broke down, requiring another week (and a \$200 bill) to get repaired.⁹⁰

Barker produced a limited reissue of the Varo Edition, printed in black only, likely as a way to test out his new equipment for material he knew he could sell for a high price.⁹¹

Barker greeted this return to fully in-house production with enthusiasm, reflected in the detail into which he went in describing his production process. In his introduction to *The Year of the Saucer: Gray Barker's UFO Annual—1983*, Barker goes into detail on the design, layout, and printing of the book:

The type has been set by the use of a Radio Shack Model I computer, outputting to a daisy-wheel printer and utilizing a new word processing program called *Superscript*. I have inputted all of the text with my own fingers, done my own pasteups (not the most expert) and even proofread the copy...[with] the use of a sophisticated computer dictionary program called *Electric Webster* which “reads” and corrects spelling errors.⁹²

Barker also emphasized the greater care he was able to take as a result of the book's small edition size:

I have used expensive Xerography on vellum sheets (in the first edition) for certain art work I deemed deserving of such treatment. Such treatment would be prohibitively expensive in books done by an outside printer on a large press. And since I have printed this one sheet at a time and had much of it hand collated, all this is possible in a small edition. Spiral binding also lends itself to this sort of treatment.⁹³

Barker presents this as an artisanal process, but Moseley was more blunt in his review of this title, referring to it as “primitive home printing.”⁹⁴ Moreover, Barker's emphasis on the attention

paid to each copy glosses over an important fact: whereas he had previously averaged 1,000 copies on each print run of his books, he was now printing drastically fewer copies of each title. Exact edition sizes are unknown for most of the publications Barker issued in 1983 to 1984, but the description of the handcrafting process behind *Year of the Saucer* suggests that he prepared very few copies—likely closer to the fifty copies he had announced for the new, black-and-white issue of the Varo Edition. Barker’s readership had declined significantly, but he remained dedicated to distributing occult narratives to his small core of supporters.

Barker released a final book, *After the Philadelphia Experiment*, in the fall of 1984, but he had little time to distribute it. On December 6, he died at the age of 59, having left a lasting impact on the world of flying saucers, conspiracism, and the occult.

Information Technology and the Production of Occult Knowledge

In 1986, a little more than a year after Barker’s death, UFO and computer enthusiast Jim Speiser launched ParaNet, a computer bulletin board service (BBS) that allowed users from around the world to share files and other data.⁹⁵ The ParaNet BBS soon attracted conspiracist users like William Cooper, John Lear, and saucer contactee Richard T. Miller, who had channeled space beings like Mon-Ka in the 1950s and was now exploring conspiracies about subterranean alien bases via his Phoenix Project.⁹⁶ These and other ParaNet users shared narratives, hypotheses, data, and misinformation directly with other enthusiasts. Lear in particular rose to the forefront of the paranormal scene, and his ideas concerning the government’s secret “MJ-12” documents and subterranean alien bases were propagated primarily in electronic format. The nascent internet, rather than printed newsletters and zines, had become the central locus for the production of the genesis and distribution of new ufological metanarratives.

ParaNet, and the email lists and message boards that followed it, obliterated the distinction between paranormal authors and readers. Book-historical scholarship on information technology tends to see the internet as an unprecedented development. James Dewar and Peng Hwa Ang, for example, contend that “Until the Internet, there has been no comparable breakthrough [to the printing press] in communications capability...For the first time, just about anybody can distribute the same message to hundreds or thousands of people, and do so very easily and inexpensively.”⁹⁷ Though there is certainly no doubt that the internet represents a substantial development in communications, it was not a completely new development but rather the culmination of a centuries-long process of democratization accelerated by computer publishing (like Barker’s use of the TRS-80); print technologies like the photocopier, the office offset printer, the spirit duplicator, and the mimeograph; and, much earlier, the printing press itself. ParaNet allowed Lear to share his ideas directly with his audience, but two decades earlier Barker’s *Bender Mystery Confirmed* had provided a similar forum for the readers of occult texts to become authors. And this development was based in turn upon the interactivity of science fiction fandom, particularly that nurtured by Ray Palmer via the letter column of *Amazing Stories* and his later magazines.⁹⁸

In their book on the development of the Slender Man, a folk legend born entirely on internet forums in the first decade of the new century, folklorists Shira Chess and Eric Newsom propose these forums as “digital campfires” where new legends are developed and shared. They argue that “Digital communication brought about the potential for reciprocal, impactful, two-way communication between author and audience, sender and receiver, system and user, often leading to the limiting or dissolution of boundaries between each.”⁹⁹ Though digital communities enable this communication to occur at a rapid pace, the interactivity that Chess and Newsom highlight

existed long before the internet. Barker's network of researchers, readers, and authors constituted a "print campfire" in which interaction occurred extensively, albeit at a slower pace than digital communication enables. "Digital campfires" became the sites for occult knowledge production at the close of the twentieth century, but they developed from "print campfires" established decades before, where office copying techniques permitted the development and sharing of new and strange thoughts beyond the reach of professional editorial mediators.

Illustrations



Figure 1: *The Saucerian* vol. 1, no. 1, 1953. Archives for the Unexplained/Public Domain.



Rare photo of Saucerian Press when there really was an actual press there. Staff workers, Mae Britton, John Sheets (involved with the Lost Creek saucer) and Thelma Atha help uncrate the offset press used to print early Saucerian Press titles.

Figure 2: The Saucerian Multilith. From UFOlk no. 1. Archives for the Unexplained/Public Domain.

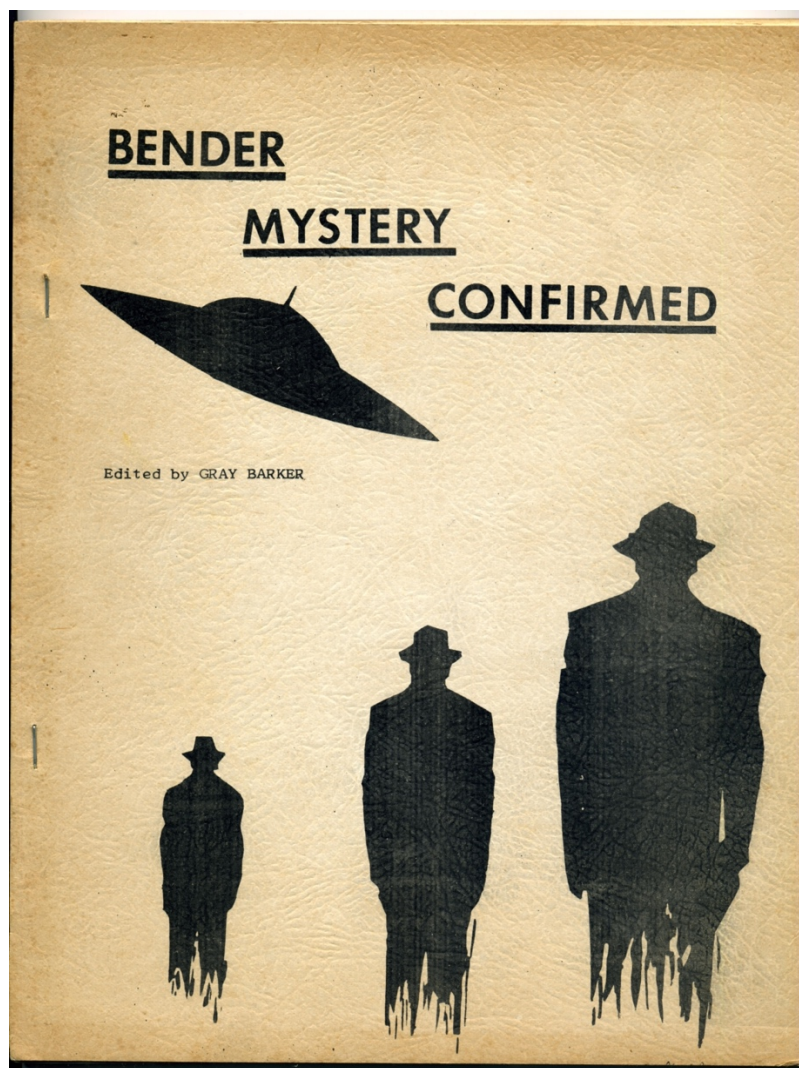


Figure 3: *Bender Mystery Confirmed*, 1962. Author's collection.

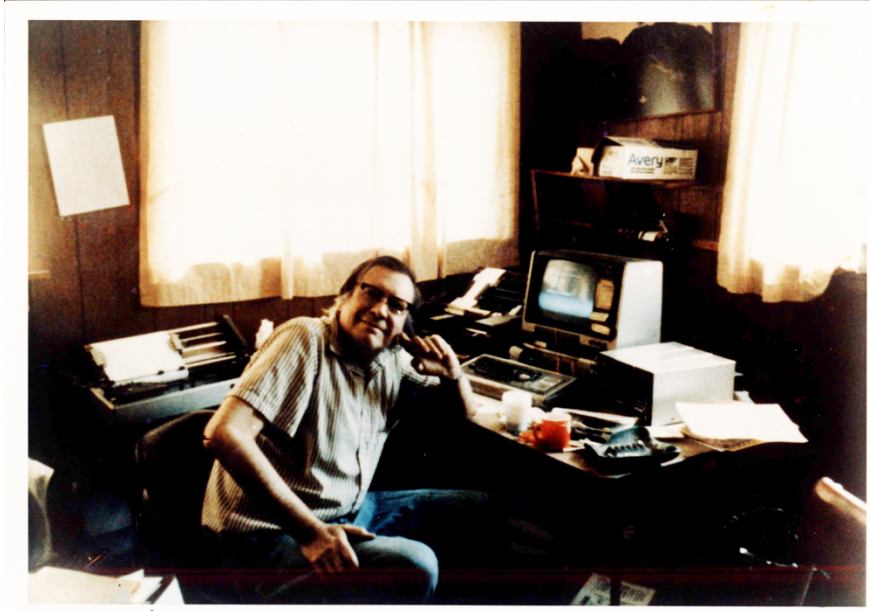


Figure 4: Gray Barker at home in Exchange, WV, with his TRS-80 computer, around 1980 to 1984. Gray Barker UFO Collection, Clarksburg-Harrison Public Library.

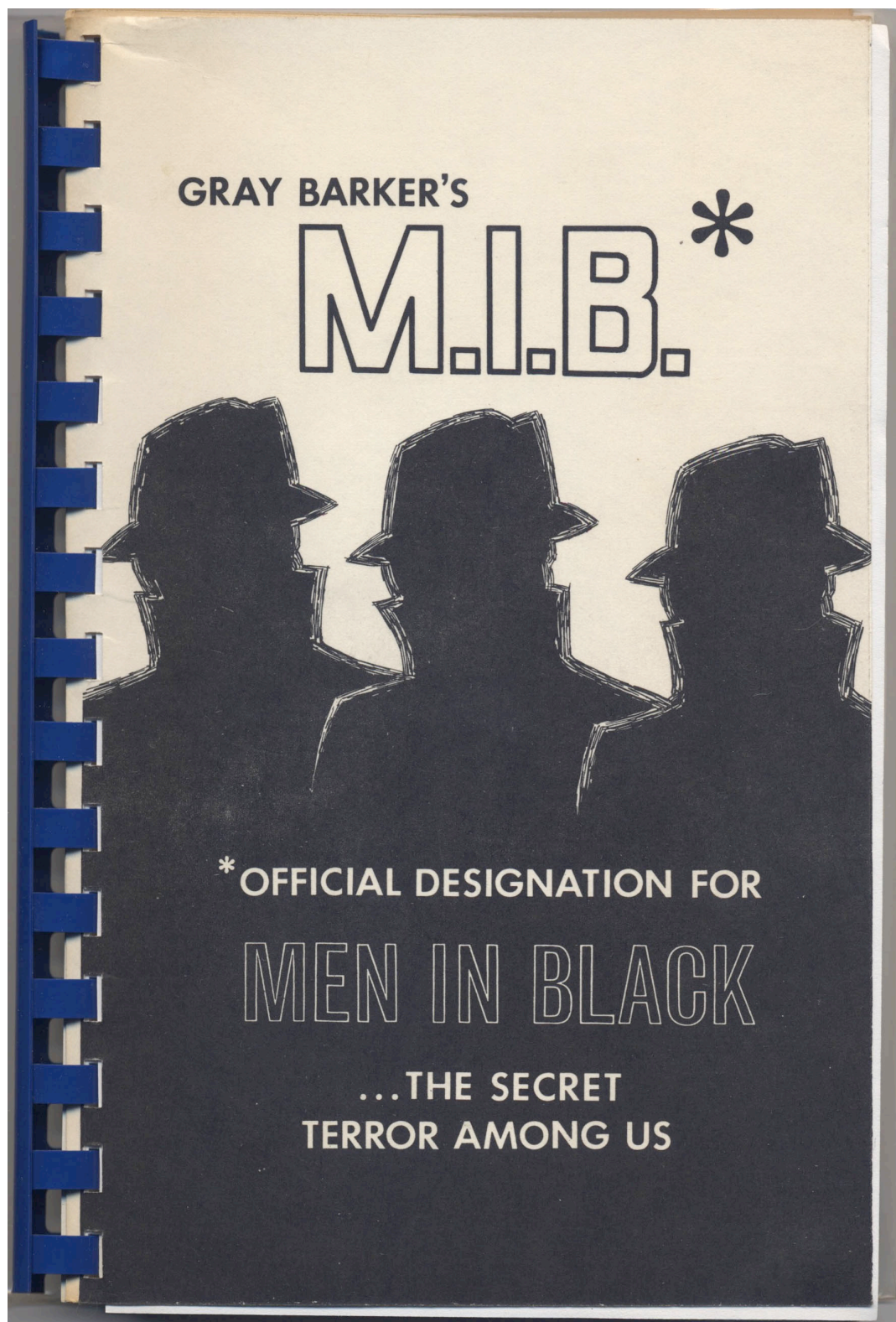


Figure 5: M.I.B.: The Secret Terror Among Us. Author's collection.

Notes

¹ Dwight MacDonald, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist: Essays in Political Criticism* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1957), 16–17.

² Kristin Matthews, “The Medium, the Message, the Movement: Print Culture and New Left Politics,” in *Pressing the Fight*, ed. Greg Barnhisel and Catherine Turner (University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 35, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vk8tb.4>.

³ Matthews, “The Medium, the Message, the Movement,” 33.

⁴ Suzanne W. Churchill and Adam McKible, “Introduction,” in *Little Magazines and Modernism: New Approaches*, ed. Suzanne W. Churchill and Adam McKible (London: Routledge, 2016), 11.

⁵ On the earliest science-fiction fanzines, see Sam Moskowitz, *The Immortal Storm: A History of Science Fiction Fandom* (Westport.: Hyperion Press, 1974 [1954]), 8–17 and throughout; see also Stephen Duncombe, *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (London: Verso, 1997); Johan Kugelberg, Jack Womack, and Michael P. Daley, eds., *The Tattooed Dragon Meets the Wolfman: Lenny Kaye’s Science Fiction Fanzines 1941–1970* (New York: Boo-Hooray, 2014).

⁶ Rona Cran, “Space Occupied: Women Poet-Editors and the Mimeograph Revolution in Mid-Century New York City,” *Journal of American Studies* 55, no. 2 (May 2021): 480, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021875820001073>.

⁷ Chelsea Jennings, “Pirating Pound: Drafts and Fragments in 1960s Mimeograph Culture,” *Journal of Modern Literature* 40, no. 1 (Fall 2016): 91, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jmodelite.40.1.05>.

⁸ Kyle Schlesinger, “Letterpress in the Mimeo Revolution,” *Journal of Artists Books*, no. 23 (Spring 2008): 18–19, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asu&AN=505301812&site=eds-live>.

⁹ Kembrew McLeod, *Pranksters: Making Mischief in the Modern World* (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 25.

¹⁰ Rich Dana, *Cheap Copies! The Obsolete! Press Guide to DIY Hectography, Mimeography & Spirit Duplication* (Coralville: Obsolete Press, 2021), 4.

¹¹ Colin Dickey, *The Unidentified: Mythical Monsters, Alien Encounters, and Our Obsession with the Unexplained* (New York: Viking, 2020), 137.

¹² In the nineteenth century, newspapers had played a similarly key role in advertising sideshow attractions like P. T. Barnum's Feejee Mermaid or Maelzel's Chess Player (James W. Cook, *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001], 56, 70).

¹³ Tom Lind, *The Catalogue of UFO Periodicals* (Hobe Sound, FL: The author, 1982), i.

¹⁴ Works focusing on the oral exchange of UFO narratives include Susan Lepselter, *The Resonance of Unseen Things: Poetics, Power, Captivity, and UFOs in the American Uncanny* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.7172850>; William J. Dewan, "Occam's Beard: Belief, Disbelief, and Contested Meanings in American Ufology" (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico, 2010), https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/amst_etds/10.

¹⁵ On Barker's life and work, see Gabriel Mckee, *The Saucerian: The Unbelievable Life of Gray Barker* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2025), from which the biographical material about Barker herein is summarized; see also Gabriel Mckee, "A Contactee Canon: Gray Barker's Saucerian Books," in *The Paranormal and Popular Culture: A Postmodern Religious Landscape*, ed. Darryl V. Catherine and John W. Morehead, Routledge Studies in Religion (New York: Routledge, 2019), 275–88, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315184661>.

¹⁶ Gray Barker, "Mercury Musings," *The Glenville Mercury* 17, no. 1 (September 25, 1945): 1, 4, https://www.glenville.edu/sites/default/files/assets/mercury_19450925.pdf.

¹⁷ "'Glenville Smirkury' Makes Debut at April Fools' Day Party Held Saturday," *The Glenville Mercury* 14, no. 22 (April 4, 1944): 1, https://www.glenville.edu/sites/default/files/assets/mercury_19440404.pdf.

¹⁸ Ian Batterham, *The Office Copying Revolution: History, Identification and Preservation* (Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 2008), 50–51. In correspondence Barker referred to the printing process as "ditto," a shorthand term for both spirit duplication and hectography derived from the Ditto Corporation, which manufactured both types of machine. However, spirit duplication is specified as the printing process used in Gray Barker, "Editorial," *The Saucerian* 2, no. 2 (whole no. 4) (September 1954): 1, 39, <https://files.afu.se/Downloads/Magazines/United%20States/Saucerian/1954%2009%2000%20-%20Saucerian%20-%20Vol%202%20No%202%20-%20Whole%20%20No%204.pdf>.

¹⁹ Gray Barker to August C. Roberts, August 5, 1953, 1, folder "Roberts, August/correspondence with Gray Barker," Gray Barker UFO Collection, Clarksburg-Harrison Public Library (henceforth GBC). In a later publication,

Barker stated the edition size as 200 rather than 300 (Gray Barker, ed., *The Saucerian Review* [Clarksburg: Gray Barker, 1956], 7). I believe the contemporary, private report to Roberts to be the more reliable figure.

²⁰ Barker refers briefly to the new offset process for cover printing in Gray Barker to Dominick Lucchesi, October 21, 1953, folder "Lucchesi, Dominick," GBC.

²¹ Gray Barker to Laimon Mitris, November 12, 1953, 1, folder "Mitris, Laimon," GBC (extraneous comma removed).

²² Barker, "Editorial (*Saucerian* No. 4)," 1.

²³ Barker, "Editorial (*Saucerian* No. 4)," 1; see also Gray Barker to Morris K. Jessup, December 17, 1954, 1, folder "Jessup, Morris K.," GBC.

²⁴ On Morrow's career, see Alan M. Wald, *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s*, 30th anniversary edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 287–89.

²⁵ Gray Barker, "Editorial," *The Saucerian Bulletin* 4, no. 1 (whole no. [20]) (May 15, 1959): 1.

²⁶ Batterham, *The Office Copying Revolution*, 102–3.

²⁷ For example, Gray Barker to James W. Moseley, "The Books of Charles Fart," October 14, 1957, box "Moseley/Private Writings," GBC; Gray Barker to James W. Moseley, "The Hearing: Consisting of a Letter from Gig to Zo," [June 30–July 4, 1963?], box "Moseley/Private Writings," GBC.

²⁸ Gray Barker, ed., *Youranus* (Clarksburg: Gray Barker, 1957) GBC, box "Moseley/Private writings."

²⁹ For example, Gray Barker, "Saucerian Daily, Issue of October 5, '59," October 5, 1959, folder "Saucerian Daily," GBC.

³⁰ Gray Barker to Trevor James, June 10, 1959, folder "James, Trevor," GBC; Gray Barker to James W. Moseley, "Ogden Out-Mongered: A Full (and Expensive) Report," typescript, July 2, 1959, 2, box "Moseley/Private Writings," GBC; Gray Barker to Trevor James Constable, December 10, 1962, folder "James, Trevor," GBC.

³¹ Gray Barker and Exposition Press, "Agreement between Exposition Press Inc. and Gray Barker for the Publication of Flying Saucers and the Three Men," [1962?], folder "Bender, Albert K.-Barker correspondence," GBC.

³² Barker to Trevor James Constable, December 10, 1962.

³³ Gray Barker, "Press Time Bulletin," *The Saucerian Bulletin* 7, no. 1 (whole no. 25) (October 31, 1962): 29, <https://files.afu.se/Downloads/Magazines/United%20States/Saucerian%20Bulletin/1962%2010%2031%20-%20Saucerian%20Bulletin%20-%20Vol%207%20No%201%20-%20Whole%20No%2025.pdf>.

³⁴ Barker mentions his plans to purchase an offset press from the Addressograph company in Gray Barker to James W. Moseley, "More Mulberry Place," [April 6, 1962?], 2, box "Moseley/Private Writings," GBC; on the Multilith, see Batterham, *The Office Copying Revolution*, 110–11; Laurens Leurs, "The History of Prepress and Publishing: 1950–1959," *Prepressure* (blog), [2010?], <https://www.prepressure.com/prepress/history/events-1950-1959>.

³⁵ Gene Duplantier, "Gray Days at Clarksburg," *Ufolk*, no. 1 (1978): 12, <https://n2t.net/ark:/13960/t38132h7h>.

³⁶ Gray Barker, "Should You Burn the Bender Book? [Solicitation Letter for Bender Mystery Confirmed]" (Saucerian Publications, 1962), 2, folder "Promo - Bender Mystery Confirmed 1962," GBC.

³⁷ Barker refers to such a process in Gray Barker to Gene Duplantier, [September 1962?], 2, folder "Stuart, John—correspondence," GBC; see also Batterham, *The Office Copying Revolution*, 111.

³⁸ Gray Barker to Glenn Bray, February 10, 1976, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CbxeLdsrjPW/>.

³⁹ Gray Barker, "Dear Former Subscriber" (Saucerian Publications, [October 1962?]), folder "Promo - Saucerian/Saucerian Bulletin," GBC.

⁴⁰ Barker, "Press Time Bulletin," 29.

⁴¹ Barker to James W. Moseley, "The Hearing," [June 30–July 4, 1963?]; on Barker's criminal trial, see *Shades of Gray: A True Story* (United States: Seminal Films, 2010); Mckee, *The Saucerian*, chapter 8.

⁴² Barker, "Should You Burn the Bender Book?" 3.

⁴³ Gray Barker, ed., *Bender Mystery Confirmed: Consisting of Comments by Readers of "Flying Saucers and the Three Men"* (Clarksburg: Saucerian Books, 1962), 7–8.

⁴⁴ Morris K. Jessup to Gray Barker, December 22, 1956, folder "Jessup, Morris K.," GBC.

⁴⁵ Morris K. Jessup to Gray Barker, October 4, 1956, folder "Jessup, Morris K.," GBC.

⁴⁶ Barker had obtained some unsold stock from the New Age Publishing Co. after Franklin Thomas's death, and though I am speculating that he also obtained their customer lists, he certainly would have been interested in doing so (Gray Barker to Trevor James, June 4, 1959, folder "James, Trevor," GBC).

⁴⁷ Barker, “Should You Burn the Bender Book?” 4.

⁴⁸ Barker mentioned thousand-copy print runs to several authors; see Gray Barker to Virginia Brasington, November 5, 1963, folder “Brasington, Virginia,” GBC; Gray Barker to John Stuart, June 24, 1963, folder “Stuart, John—correspondence,” GBC.

⁴⁹ Gabriel Mckee, “Saucerian Books Publication Data,” 2019, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17T-S1IdpEo6OEXWXjePOqKV0gGZfrxhVibfWiz-VOyo> or <https://tinyurl.com/yabnct4q>.

⁵⁰ Gray Barker to Trevor James Constable, [October 3, 1962?], 2, folder “James, Trevor,” GBC (paragraph breaks removed).

⁵¹ Gray Barker to John Stuart, August 9, 1962, folder “Stuart, John— correspondence,” GBC.

⁵² Barker to John Stuart, June 24, 1963.

⁵³ Gray Barker to Virginia Brasington, February 21, 1963, folder “Brasington, Virginia,” GBC; Virginia Brasington to Gray Barker, April 27, 1963, folder “Brasington, Virginia,” GBC; Virginia Brasington to Gray Barker, June 9, 1963, folder “Brasington, Virginia,” GBC.

⁵⁴ Gray Barker to Virginia Brasington, August 2, 1963, 1, folder “Brasington, Virginia,” GBC.

⁵⁵ Barker to Virginia Brasington, August 2, 1963, 1.

⁵⁶ Though there is no direct evidence of Tomorrow River printing this specific issue, several elements of the design match both later Saucerian publications for which evidence does exist and Palmer’s own publications of the same period. For details on Palmer’s business in Amherst, including a photograph of his high-speed offset press, see Richard Toronto, *War over Lemuria: Richard Shaver, Ray Palmer and the Strangest Chapter of 1940s Science Fiction* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2013), 200; for Palmer’s life and career in general, see Fred Nadis, *The Man from Mars: Ray Palmer’s Amazing Pulp Journey* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2013).

⁵⁷ On Shaver, see Toronto, *War Over Lemuria*; Gabriel Mckee, ““Reality – Is It a Horror?”: Richard Shaver’s Subterranean World and the Displaced Self,” *Journal of Gods and Monsters* 1 (Summer 2020): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.58997/jgm.v1i1.1>.

⁵⁸ Gray Barker, “Editorial Notes,” *Saucer News* 15, no. 1 (whole no. 71) (Spring 1968): 2, <https://files.afu.se/Downloads/?dir=Magazines%2FUnited%20States%2FSaucer%20News%20%28James%20Mosely%29>.

⁵⁹ Gray Barker, “Editorial Notes,” 2.

⁶⁰ Gray Barker to John W. Dean, February 11, 1969, 1, folder “Dean, John W.,” GBC.

⁶¹ Ray Palmer to Gray Barker, February 14, 1972, folder “Varo (Jessup),” GBC. The annotated book itself is a complex and unusual chapter in the history of ufology; see Jacques Vallee, “Anatomy of a Hoax: The Philadelphia Experiment Fifty Years Later,” *Journal of Scientific Exploration* 8, no. 1 (1994): 47–71; Mckee, *The Saucerian*, chapters 8 and 11; Mckee, “A Contactee Canon,” 280–82.

⁶² On the history of xerography, see Batterham, *The Office Copying Revolution*, 145–50; J. Mort, *The Anatomy of Xerography: Its Invention and Evolution* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1989), 48–69.

⁶³ Gray Barker, “[Editorial],” *Journal of the Congress of Scientific Ufologists*, no. 1 (July 1969): 2, <https://n2t.net/ark:/13960/t0rr9tb6x>.

⁶⁴ Gray Barker, “Editorial Notes,” *Saucer News* 17, no. 1 (whole no. 75) (Spring 1970): 2, <https://files.afu.se/Downloads/?dir=Magazines%2FUnited%20States%2FSaucer%20News%20%28James%20Mosely%29>.

⁶⁵ Gray Barker, “Saucer News Non-Scheduled Newsletter #34,” [July 20, 1969?], 2. Richard Wilt, a technician who serviced Barker’s printing equipment in the late 1970s and early 1980s, recalls him also using an A.B. Dick mimeograph during this period. It is not clear what publications were issued on this printer, if any, and it is possible that it was used exclusively for advertising motion pictures at Barker’s theaters (Richard Wilt, interview by Gabriel Mckee, October 10, 2023).

⁶⁶ Gray Barker, “Rare Book Copy Service,” *Gray Barker’s Newsletter*, no. 8 (June 1979): 3.

⁶⁷ Gray Barker, “Rare Book Copy Service,” 3.

⁶⁸ Timothy Green Beckley, “On the Trail of Flying Saucers,” *UFO Review* 1, no. 1 (1978): 12, <https://n2t.net/ark:/13960/t7xm68z7t>.

⁶⁹ Gray Barker, “If You Are Not a Subscriber, This Is a Sample Copy!” *Gray Barker’s Newsletter*, no. 8 (June 1979): [8].

⁷⁰ No copy of this publication was available for examination during the preparation of this paper. By the end of 1980, Barker was already listing it in the list of “rare out-of-print and collectors’ items” section of his catalog (Gray Barker, “Collector’s Corner,” *Gray Barker’s Newsletter*, no. 10 [October 1980]: [13]).

⁷¹ Gray Barker to Hal Crawford, [April 1982?], folder “Newsletter orders #6 (Gray Barker’s),” GBC.

⁷² Gray Barker to Richard Toronto, May 1, 1984, folder “Shavertron,” GBC. The simultaneously-printed issues of the Newsletter were probably 18-19, dated October and December 1983, and 20–21, dated February and April 1984.

⁷³ Gray Barker, “Introduction,” in *Worlds Beyond the Poles*, by Ray Palmer (Jane Lew: New Age Books, 1984), 4.

⁷⁴ On the development and marketing of the TRS-80, see Boisy G. Pitre, *CoCo: The Colorful History of Tandy’s Underdog Computer* (Boca Raton: CRC Press/Taylor & Francis Group, 2014), 15–18.

⁷⁵ Gray Barker to Glenn Bray, November 28, 1978, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CbyIawsvKfi/>.

⁷⁶ Gray Barker, “Chasing the Flying Saucers [New Series, No. 6],” *UFO Review* 1, no. 6 (November 1979): 21, <https://n2t.net/ark:/13960/t1fk0f879>.

⁷⁷ Gray Barker, “Dear Friend: This Is Not a General Mailing” (Saucerian Publications, [June–July 1980?]), [1], folder “Promos 1980,” GBC.

⁷⁸ Gray Barker, “Dear Friend: This Is Not a General Mailing,” [3].

⁷⁹ Gray Barker to Robert Sheaffer, January 15, 1981; March 17, 1981; August 7, 1981, collection of Robert Sheaffer, <https://www.debunker.com/historical/GrayBarkerPapers.pdf>; see also Gray Barker, *A UFO Guide to Fate Magazine* (Clarksburg: Saucerian Press, 1981), 101.

⁸⁰ Barker to Robert Sheaffer, March 17, 1981; for a contemporary commentary on the use of the TRS-80 for word processing and design, see Ian Hodgson, “Word Processing with the TRS-80,” in *The Creative TRS-80*, ed. Ken Mazur (Morris Plains: Creative Computing Press, 1983), 313–17.

⁸¹ Barker anticipated publishing the book in May 1981, and it was released by the end of July. See Gray Barker to Library of Congress Card Division, March 19, 1981, folder “Genzlinger, Anna,” GBC; Barker to Robert Sheaffer, August 7, 1981.

⁸² Gray Barker, “Letters,” *Gray Barker’s Newsletter*, no. 10 (October 1980): 6.

⁸³ Barker, *UFO Guide to Fate*, 11.

⁸⁴ Gray Barker, “Secret Weapons and the Hitler/Hollow Earth Connection,” [*Gray Barker’s*] *Catalog*, no. 17-B ([May 1983?]): 1.

⁸⁵ Gray Barker, “Secret Weapons and the Hitler/Hollow Earth Connection,” 2.

⁸⁶ Gray Barker, “Varo Edition Available!,” [*Gray Barker’s*] *Catalog*, no. 17-B ([May 1983?]): 12.

⁸⁷ Wilt, interview.

⁸⁸ Most of the titles previously offered at \$25 now cost \$17.50 (Gray Barker, “Catalog No. 18 [“Scientists and Seers Alike Predict Polar Flip”],” *Gray Barker’s Newsletter*, no. 18 [October 1983]: c15).

⁸⁹ *Shades of Gray*.

⁹⁰ Barker, “Secret Weapons and the Hitler/Hollow Earth Connection,” 2.

⁹¹ Gray Barker, “Catalog No. 17 [“Gray Barker’s MIB Book and Varo Edition Available!”],” *Gray Barker’s Newsletter*, no. 17 (December 1982): [10].

⁹² Gray Barker, *Year of the Saucer: Gray Barker’s UFO Annual—1983: A Review of the Year 1982* (Jane Lew: New Age Press, 1983), 9.

⁹³ Gray Barker, *Year of the Saucer*, 9.

⁹⁴ James W. Moseley, “Miscellaneous Ravings,” *Saucer Smear* 30, no. 1 (January 20, 1984): 2, <https://files.afu.se/Downloads/?dir=Magazines%2FUnited%20States%2FSaucer%20Smear%20%28Jim%20Moseley%29>.

⁹⁵ Material from ParaNet is archived in multiple locations online, including “The ParaNet Vault,” 2002, <https://web.archive.org/web/20080603153235/http://www.paranetinfo.com/vault.html>; “UFOBBS,” Higher Intellect, October 5, 2015, <https://cdn.preterhuman.net/texts/alien.ufo/UFOBBS/>.

⁹⁶ Mark Jacobson, *Pale Horse Rider: William Cooper, the Rise of Conspiracy, and the Fall of Trust in America* (New York: Blue Rider Press/Penguin Random House, 2018), 75–77; Michael Corbin, “Review of the ‘Phoenix Project’ by ParaNet,” August 16, 1992, <https://cdn.preterhuman.net/texts/alien.ufo/UFOBBS/2000/2495.ufo>; Aaron John Gulyas, *Conspiracy Theories: The Roots, Themes and Propagation of Paranoid Political and Cultural Narratives* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co., 2016), 87.

⁹⁷ James A. Dewar and Peng Hwa Ang, “The Cultural Consequences of Printing and the Internet,” in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, ed. Sabrina A. Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst /Washington, DC: University of Massachusetts Press/The Center for the Book, Library of Congress, 2007), 366, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vk8sv.25>.

⁹⁸ On the role of letter columns in science fiction and other literary genres, see Andrew Goldstone, “Origins of the US Genre-Fiction System, 1890–1956,” *Book History* 26, no. 1 (2023): 216–17, <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/1/article/895543>.

⁹⁹ Shira Chess and Eric Newsom, *Folklore, Horror Stories, and the Slender Man: The Development of an Internet Mythology*, Palgrave Pivot (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 84, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137491138>.