

# New Evidence of MJ-12 Hoax

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A “smoking gun” recently has been discovered that confirms beyond any doubt that the alleged “Top Secret/Eyes Only” MJ-12 documents, which seemingly showed that the U.S. government had captured at least one crashed flying saucer and the bodies of several extraterrestrials in 1947, are counterfeit.

The MJ-12 documents were made public on May 29, 1987, by William L. Moore and two associates, Jaime Shandera and Stanton T. Friedman. If authentic, the documents would confirm claims made in a 1980 book, *The Roswell Incident*, authored by Moore and Charles Berlitz, of “Bermuda Triangle” fame.

The MJ-12 papers include what purports to be a one-page memorandum from President Harry Truman to Defense Secretary James Forrestal, dated September 24, 1947—several months after the alleged crashed-saucer recovery in New Mexico. The letter authorized Forrestal and Vannevar Bush to create a top-level Majestic-Twelve (MJ-12) group to analyze the crashed saucer and alien bodies. The other MJ-12 document is a lengthy status report on MJ-12’s crashed-saucer research efforts, seemingly intended to brief President-elect Eisenhower, dated November 18, 1952. The briefing paper seemingly was written by Rear Admiral R. H. Hillenkoetter, who had earlier headed the Central Intelligence Agency and allegedly was a member of MJ-12.

A roll of 35-mm film, together with photocopies of these two “Top Secret/Eyes Only” documents, reportedly arrived at the home of Shandera by mail from an unknown sender on December 11, 1984. Moore, Shandera, and

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*Examination  
indicates  
signature on  
key MJ-12  
document was  
photocopied.*

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Friedman claim that they spent the next two and a half years investigating the authenticity of the MJ-12 papers before making them public in May 1987.

Moore and his associates said that their lengthy investigation had failed to turn up anything that would cast doubt on the authenticity of the MJ-12 papers. My own investigation revealed many reasons to suspect the MJ-12 papers were counterfeit. (See my two articles published in *SI*: Winter 1987-88, p. 137; Spring 1988, p. 279.)

Recently, I discovered hard physical evidence that demonstrates that these documents are counterfeit. This is based on the fact that a person's handwritten signature is like a snowflake—no two are ever *identical*.

Before the advent of the "Xerox Era" and "signature-machines," the very existence of two identical signatures was considered to be "*very strong evidence of forgery*," according to the book *Questioned Documents*, by Albert S. Osborn, published in 1978. Osborn notes that "the fact that two signatures are very nearly alike is not alone necessarily an indication of forgery of one or both but the question is whether they are *suspiciously alike*." (Emphasis added.)

The "Harry Truman" signature on the MJ-12 Truman memorandum of September 24, 1947, is *suspiciously like* the signature on the letter that Truman wrote to Vannevar Bush on October 1, 1947, the original of which I found in the Bush collection in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress and made several photocopies of it there.

In signing the authentic letter to Bush, Truman's pen accidentally skidded slightly, creating a small extraneous mark on the left upper part of the right-hand vertical stroke in the letter "H." *The same "skidmark" appears on the Truman signature of the MJ-*

*12 memo of September 24, 1947.* It is slightly heavier on the MJ-12 memo because of the multiple photocopying operations used to make the hoax document.

(Photocopies of both signatures are shown on the opposite page. Readers who are sufficiently interested can make photocopies and superimpose them before a strong light to confirm that the two are identical.)

If the Truman signature is a counterfeit, then so is the alleged Hillenkoetter MJ-12 briefing paper, contained on the same 35-mm film, which makes specific reference to this "special classified executive order of President Truman on 24 September, 1947. . . ."

To obtain an expert corroboration of my own findings, I called David Crown, a professional "document examiner" in the Washington, D.C., area, who previously headed the Central Intelligence Agency's questioned documents laboratory. Crown informed me that the Truman memo had already been exposed as a hoax because it was written on a typewriter that "did not even exist in 1947." He told me that this discovery had been made by a highly respected document examiner, whose name and telephone number he provided. (I will refer to the latter document examiner as PT because of his reluctance to become a public figure in the MJ-12 controversy.)

When I called PT, he expressed great interest in obtaining a copy of

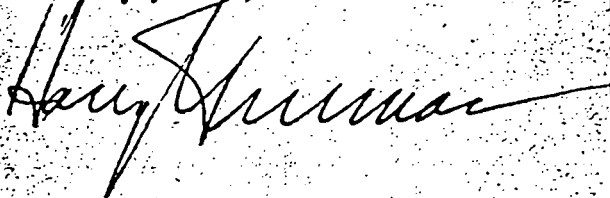
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*Opposite page:* Authentic Harry Truman signature from letter of Oct. 1, 1947, to Vannevar Bush (*top*). This signature and the one on MJ-12 document (*bottom*) are "suspiciously alike"—indicating MJ-12 memo is a forgery. The MJ-12 skidmark on the "H" is heavier because of multiple photocopies used to create counterfeit document.

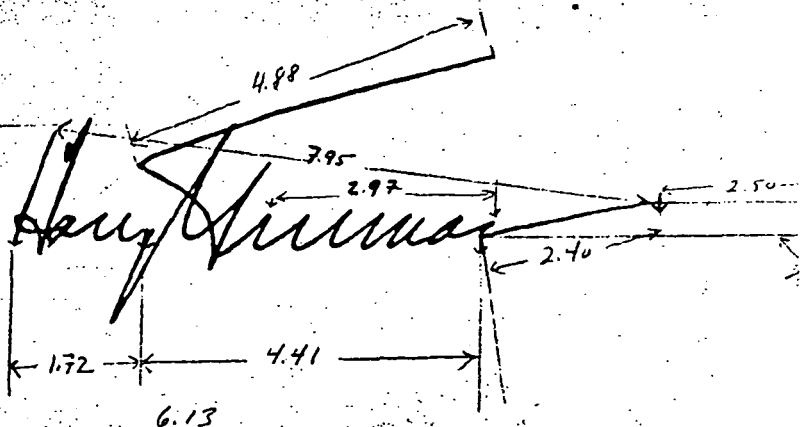
Dr. Bush:

I appreciated very much your good  
of September twenty-sixth and I hope  
will work out in a satisfactory manner  
oming season.

Sincerely yours,



o be my feeling that any future  
tive to the ultimate disposition  
ld rest solely with the Office  
llowing appropriate discussions  
Bush and the Director of Central



3.2% longer than signature on Truman - Bush.

the authentic Truman-Bush signature of October 1 because he had earlier been drawn into the MJ-12 controversy through a friend, also a professional document examiner. PT's earlier analysis of the typeface of the machine used to prepare the MJ-12 Truman memo indicated that it was a Smith-Corona machine that first appeared in 1963—more than 15 years after the September 24, 1947, date on the memo.

PT asked me to send the October 1 memo to him by overnight mail because he was leaving in two days for a meeting of professional document examiners in San Francisco, and I did so. In our first conversation, I mentioned that the MJ-12 Truman signature was approximately 3.6 percent longer than the one on the October 1 letter, which I attributed to optical distortion during the several photocopying operations needed to produce a counterfeit. PT explained that Xerox, and its competitors, intentionally do not reproduce a thin border around the outside of a document to be copied—to avoid creating unwanted lines at the edges. To compensate for this, the original copy is enlarged by roughly 1.2 percent—which is imperceptible to the casual reader.

Thus, if a counterfeiter had needed three photocopying iterations to produce the MJ-12 memo—as my own experiments suggested—this would account for the fact that the MJ-12 signature is about 3.6 percent larger than the October 1 signature.

Eight days later, PT called and informed me that the MJ-12 signature was “a classic signature transplant,” i.e., a photocopy forgery. In the authentic October 1 signature, a portion of the top of the “T” in “Truman” barely intersected the “s” at the end of “Sincerely yours.” When the counterfeiter had used typewriter correction fluid to retouch out the “Sincerely

yours,” he had slightly “thinned” the width of the top of the “T.” This retouching, PT told me, is the “kind of coup de grâce we look for.”

PT told me he had made overhead projector transparencies of the MJ-12 and October 1 signatures and taken them to San Francisco to show at the meeting of professional document examiners. He first showed his audience the MJ-12 Truman memo typeface, pointing out that the Smith-Corona machine used did not exist in 1947. Then PT showed the MJ-12 Truman signature and superimposed a copy of the October 1 signature—enlarged by about 3.6 percent—and pointed out the “thinning” of the top of the “T.” PT said his audience gave a verbal endorsement—“a chorus of ‘Ah-haa!’ ”

PT told me he had already called Moore's longtime associate Stanton Friedman to inform him of PT's findings because “he had [earlier] sent me all this [MJ-12] material . . . [and] I felt I owed it to him to tell him that he should just wash his hands of this.” (Friedman opted to ignore PT's advice. The next week Friedman spoke at a MUFON regional conference near St. Louis and repeated his earlier endorsement of the authenticity of the MJ-12 papers.)

Friedman, who has been the most outspoken defender of the authenticity of the MJ-12 papers, knew at least shortly after their release—more than two years ago—that the Truman signature on the MJ-12 memorandum “match[ed]” the one on a letter Truman wrote to Bush in October 1947.

Friedman reported this fact in his article published in the September/October 1987 *International UFO Reporter* claiming that this “match” confirmed the authenticity of the MJ-12 document. In fact, it really revealed just the opposite. (I am indebted to Chris-

topher D. Allan of the United Kingdom for bringing Friedman's claim to my attention, and to Joe Nickell for supplying references from the book *Questioned Documents*.)

Earlier this year, Friedman requested and received a \$16,000 grant from the Fund for UFO Research (FUFOR) for further investigation into the authenticity of the MJ-12 papers. Ironically, he already had in his possession the "smoking gun." Friedman, in an interim report on his FUFOR funded research, published in the September 1989 *MUFON UFO Journal*—prior to receiving PT's call—said his research had found nothing to question the "legitimacy" of the MJ-12 papers.

Others have earlier pointed out another suspicious flaw in the alleged Truman memo to Forrestal. This is the fact that the numerical portion of the date—"24, 1947"—was typed using a different machine from the one used to type "September."

The logical explanation for this flaw is that the counterfeiter used an old-vintage machine to make it appear that the memo was written in 1947. But the machine's numerical keys were inoperative, forcing the counterfeiter to type the numerical part of the date on a different machine and paste it in. If this were an authentic Truman memo, it would indicate that the President's secretary did not have access to a fully operable typewriter—which is highly unlikely.

Friedman and Moore visited the library to peruse the Bush collection in 1981-1982, prompted by a 1950 memorandum written by Wilbert B. Smith, a Canadian engineer. Smith's memo claimed that the U.S. government was conducting a highly classified investigation into "flying saucers," directed by Bush.

In Moore's paper presented at a MUFON conference in early July

1982, he reported that he and Friedman had "spent considerable time in Washington, D.C. over the past year locating and researching dusty files and records. . . ." This enabled him to report that Vannevar Bush and Defense Secretary Forrestal had met with President Truman on September 24, 1947—the date of the MJ-12 memo—after Bush had agreed to head the Pentagon's new research and development board.

A third document made public by Moore, Shandera, and Friedman in the spring of 1987 was what purported to be a "Top Secret" memo from President Eisenhower's special assistant, Robert Cutler, to USAF chief-of-staff Gen. Nathan Twining. The memo, dated July 14, 1954, informed Twining of a slight change of plans for a White House meeting of the "NSC [National Security Council]/MJ-12 Special Studies Project" to be held on July 16.

Moore and Shandera said they found the unsigned carbon copy when they visited the National Archives in mid-1985. As Shandera explained to me, because the memo was found in the National Archives it seemed to officially confirm the existence of MJ-12. However, the Cutler memo lacked a registration number, which all other Top Secret documents in the same files had. Nevertheless, Friedman claimed the memo was authentic because it concluded with "your concurrence in the above change of arrangements is assumed"—almost identical language to that used by Cutler in an earlier memo to Twining, dated July 13, 1953. Friedman and Moore had found this authentic memo in 1981 in the collection of Twining's papers at the Library of Congress.

Curiously, the MJ-12 Cutler memo was found in recently declassified USAF intelligence material—an unlikely place for a carbon copy

seemingly intended for White House files. Also, it had been folded as if it had been carried in the breast pocket of a man's suit. Subsequent investigation by the National Archives revealed that Cutler could not possibly have written the letter because he was out of the country on July 14, 1954. This and other questionable aspects of the document were detailed by a National Archives official in a three-page memorandum.

Did Twining attend an NSC meeting at the White House, as instructed by the MJ-12 Cutler memo? When I checked Twining's official log for July 16, 1954, it showed many appointments but no NSC briefing. When I pointed out this discrepancy to Friedman, he argued that the White House MJ-12 meeting was so secret that it would not be listed in Twining's official log.

If Friedman's logic were valid, then Twining's official log ought not show him attending the "Extraordinary Meeting of the National Security Council" referred to in the authentic Cutler memo of July 13, 1953. Cutler's memo explained that "special security precautions" should be taken "to maintain absolute secrecy regarding participation" in the NSC meeting. For example, Cutler explained that Twining was to enter the White House grounds via a special entrance and his Pentagon limousine should not remain parked near the White House. No such security precautions were prescribed in the MJ-12 Cutler memo.

When I checked Twining's official log in the Library of Congress it did show that Twining attended the very

secretive NSC conference in 1953. His log showed: "National Security Council at White House all day"—demolishing Friedman's claim. By a curious coincidence, this secret July 16, 1953, NSC meeting was held one year to the day of the alleged MJ-12 NSC meeting.

Ironically, in the introduction to a paper on crashed-saucer claims authored by Moore and Friedman, presented at the 1981 MUFON conference, they quoted Albert Einstein as follows: "The right to search for the truth implies also a duty; one must not conceal any part of what one has recognized to be the truth." This recalls the admonition by French philosopher Charles Peguy: "He who does not bellow the truth when he knows the truth makes himself the accomplice of liars and forgers."



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● *Editor's Note: William L. Moore was informed of the investigation and conclusions reported above. In a letter (October 16, 1989), Moore acknowledged that the document examiner referred to as PT had indeed made his (hoax) findings available "some time ago" and "we have not yet published them." But, he said, PT was only one of four document examiners he and his colleagues had consulted and claimed the opinions of the four about the issues involved with the Truman document are "mixed." He did not name the other examiners. Moore said that a report would be published soon.*