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Breaking the Silence: AATIP's Secret Partner Speaks

By [Roger Glassel](#) and Curt Collins, © 2020

Conspiracy theory and Conspiracy theorist. Those terms have become tactical labels used to portray opponents as tinfoil hat-wearing crackpots. This is the story of one UFO conspiracy theory, involving the US government and federal funding, that has been proven to be true.

When the AATIP story broke in 2017, it put the neglected UFO topic back on the front pages. Unfortunately, within it, the AATIP story also contained one of ufology's worst scandals or fiascos in recent history, and it confirmed the rumors of the US government's involvement in civilian UFO research. Not only was this conspiracy theory real, it involved the US Congress, the Department of Defense, and billionaire Robert Bigelow, a NASA contractor.

There's a lot to unpack, so the story and information is broken into the following sections:

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In our previous article, [The Pentagon UFO Program's Secret Partner](#), we revealed a previously hidden chapter of the AATIP story. For those who need a glossary for the alphabet soup involved:

- **AATIP:** Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program

- **AAWSAP:** Advanced Aerospace Weapon Systems Applications Program
- **BAASS:** Bigelow Aerospace Advanced Space Studies (owned by Robert Bigelow)
- **CMS:** MUFON's web-based Case Management System, a UFO report database.
- **DIA:** United States Defense Intelligence Agency
- **DoD:** United States Department of Defense
- **FAA:** Federal Aviation Administration
- **MATE:** MUFON Advanced Technology Establishment
- **MUFON:** Mutual UFO Network (largest civilian UFO group in the USA)
- **NIDS:** National Institute for Discovery Science (owned by Robert Bigelow)
- **SIP:** STAR Team Impact Project (MUFON's field investigations)

To Recap our Previous Article:

Newly surfaced documents show how in 2008, billionaire Robert Bigelow was contracted by the US Government's Defense Intelligence Agency, and in turn his Bigelow Aerospace Advanced Space Studies (BAASS) subcontracted a civilian group, the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) to write scientific papers and to conduct field investigations of UFO sightings. However, MUFON was duped; Bigelow did not reveal that their funding came from the Pentagon. Another strange angle is that the language used in the contract and the studies ordered avoided UFO terminology, and it appears to have been a deception to conceal what the government was funding.

Under the BAASS contract, UFO data was to be obtained in three ways. First, the "MUFON Advanced Technology Establishment" (MATE) prepared five scientific papers on advanced aerospace performance, for which they were paid \$10,000. Second, they wanted MUFON's files, and third, to pay them \$56,000 a month for on-the-spot investigations of new UFO sightings.

It all went sour over the money, and the two parties had an ugly break-up in early 2010. Here's a sanitized official view of the BAASS arrangement from the man who helped create it, John Schuessler, in "[A Brief History of MUFON](#)," from 2012:

"In 2008, [director] [James Carrion](#), Jan Harzan, Chuck Modlin and John Schuessler met with Robert Bigelow and his team... Later, Carrion negotiated a contract with Bigelow Aerospace that allowed MUFON to organize a funded rapid-response effort that could put investigators in the field on high value UFO cases within 24-hours. It also gave Bigelow Aerospace access to the MUFON Case Management System. Unfortunately, dissident UFO buffs quickly came up with nonsense conspiracy theories about the cooperative agreement and spread malcontent and disinformation about it across the Internet."

The Bigelow-MUFON saga was discussed in Sarah Scoles book, [They Are Already Here: UFO Culture and Why We See Saucers](#):

"Carrion resigned in 2010, putting out a public statement... In it, he revealed his qualms about the Bigelow deal and hinted that the government was involved. Who was the true sponsor of the STAR team? '*It is time for MUFON to sweep its own house clean*,' the letter concluded. The cobwebs wouldn't get clear for years—not even when Robert Bigelow landed on the front page of the *New York Times*."

That Dec. 16, 2017, *New York Times* article revealed that Bigelow's company "hired subcontractors and solicited research for the program." It confirmed what had been suspected by a few ufologists, that Bigelow was working for the Pentagon, and that his work with MUFON had been part of it.

That disclosure went largely unnoticed at the time, with the focus put on the Navy UFO videos released in connection with the story. What changed things was Tim McMillan's Feb. 14, 2020, article, [Inside the Pentagon's Secret UFO Program](#), which stated:

“The first pages list the names of every contractor working for BAASS with appropriate security clearances... some of those listed are very familiar to the UFO community, including (Hal) Puthoff, (Eric) Davis, Jacques Vallee, and Colm Kelleher.” It was “full of strategic plans, project summaries, data tables, charts, descriptions of biological field effects, physical characteristics, methods of detection, theoretical capabilities, witness interviews, photographs, and case synopses,” including, “A possible UAP landing reported to BAASS by the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) and its STAR Team.”

In an [interview on Inside the Black Vault](#) with John Greenewald, McMillan mentioned another name in connection with the security clearances:

“...that 10 Month report lists every BAASS contractor who had the clearance to be approved in the program. ...Jacques Vallee, John Schuessler...”

(Jacques Vallee's involvement in BAASS was kept quiet at the time, and ever since. His website bio however, listed him since 2002 as serving on the scientific advisory board of Bigelow Aerospace, and so it remained until 2019. The last name McMillan mentioned seemed way out of place, since John Schuessler was on the Board of Directors of MUFON, and its previous International Director.)

But it was that STAR Team case, the “possible UAP landing” case that MUFON had sent to BAASS that fascinated us, because if specific data could be traced from MUFON to this report, it would conclusively prove the flow of information from a civilian organization into the hands of the Pentagon. That set Roger Glassel in motion, and what we found caused us to reexamine AATIP history with a new set of eyes.

AAWSAP or AATIP, “Mostly Just One Guy?”

In the eyes of [Congress, the DIA](#), and Pentagon spokespersons, AATIP and AAWSAP were the same project, and Dr. Hal Puthoff has stated that AATIP was just a nickname for AAWSAP. However, Luis Elizondo differentiates the two as distinctly separate. Throughout our articles, we have used AAWSAP to refer to the original program, and mostly used AATIP to refer to how the project was discussed after it was publicly revealed. Some [readers objected](#) to our previous article’s literary device to illustrate that the size and scope of AATIP had been overinflated in its press debut. We said, that the hype:

“... led us to believe this project was an elite squad operating out of the Pentagon doing hands-on UFO investigations, but it’s slowly come out that at their end, it was a ‘portfolio,’ mainly a part-time job for one guy to collect the material packaged and delivered by Bigelow’s company.”

We don’t have all the puzzled pieces, but if that’s an exaggeration, perhaps not by much. The DIA AAWSAP project was managed by Dr. James T. Lacatski, but essentially all operations were outsourced to BAASS in Las Vegas. About the time Lacatski left, and Luis Elizondo took over, the work from BAASS was gone, or going away. Whatever was left became known as AATIP, basically an internal network with a near-zero budget. Elizondo apparently worked on the project in addition to his other assignments (aka a part-time basis), and while others may have been involved, AATIP was “mostly” Elizondo and his efforts to gather material from the Navy and other branches of military service.

What’s So Bad About Taking a Little Government Money?

Ufology, rightly or not, has cast the US government as the bad guy, the keeper of UFO secrets, so it’s very odd indeed that MUFON would sell out, even unknowingly, to start working for “The Man” in order to facilitate the use of UFO-type technology for commercial or military use. The Bigelow contracts seem to have compromised the organization’s goals and ethics in a number of ways, including:

- **Privacy intrusion** - from BAASS 3rd party access to witness data
- **Background checks** - with nosy questions required answered by STAR Team members
- **Mandatory Secrecy** - NDAs required by BAASS
- **Nonprofit status** - did MUFON's sale of products to BAASS betray that?

MUFON was hired to facilitate UFO propulsion to Bigelow, part of the “military industrial complex.” Unless that was to used to defend the planet, how did they square that with their mission of working for “The Scientific Study of UFOs for the Benefit of Humanity?”

Additional Data: MUFON UFO Reports Sent to BAASS

We'll begin by presenting data shared by [Keith Basterfield](#). His Excel spreadsheet of UFO case investigations by the STAR Impact Program was compiled from the *MUFON Journal*, and the data shows the number and type of SIP cases that went to Bigelow's company during the AAWSAP contract. It includes case numbers, which can be used to retrieve more information on each from at the MUFON [Case Management System](#) site.

71 MUFON STAR Team reports sent to BAASS

Also, we've uploaded a new file with three case files as sample of the SIP field investigations that MUFON sent to Bigelow's company:

MUFON to BAASS - 3 Sample Cases

The Devil's Advocate: Possibly Misunderstood, Not Sinister?

The mysterious aerospace billionaire Robert Bigelow would make the excellent basis for a James Bond supervillain, but the real man is more complex. Maybe he has good reasons and a benign motive for his Machiavellian machinations. Bigelow appears to have a sincere and enduring interest in UFO, extraterrestrial and paranormal matters, and while he's not alone in that, most buffs are not ruthless businessmen with secret government contracts.

Bigelow's NIDS organization was relatively transparent, with their goals, personnel and research presented openly on their site. Something changed. First NIDS was shut down in 2004 for a flimsy-sounding reason, then the site was scrubbed of data after the AAWSAP contract was awarded.

Rob Swiatek is still on MUFON's Board of Directors. In April 2009 he wrote a candid letter on the BAASS-MUFON project to veteran UFO researcher [James W. Moseley](#), publisher of the newsletter *Saucer Smear*. It's reproduced below, and it almost reads like a postcard from an excited passenger about to board the Titanic: "...the fortunes of MUFON have catapulted recently, although not from the sinister hand of government. ...Robert Bigelow, and his Bigelow Aerospace Advanced Space Studies came to a consensus that, yes, they need data on ...close encounter type cases ... Bigelow has agreed to pay for MUFON field investigations... But the initiative is generating its own stress, and MUFON is about to discover what happens when substantial amounts of money are injected into an arena that previously had none..."

Robert Bigelow's contact with MUFON was someone that had worked with him in the National Institute for Discovery Science project, John F. Schuessler. It was Schuessler who took his offer to MUFON, and helped set everything up - apparently on both ends.

Unidentified Space Vehicles - that was John Schuessler's unambiguous designation for UFOs, though his public comments were more moderate. [Schuessler retired](#) from Boeing aerospace company at Houston, Texas in 1998. In the 1980's he preferred his job to be described as "a mechanical engineer employed as McDonnell Douglas project manager for space flight operations" at NASA's Johnson Space Center. To decode, he was emphasizing that he did not for the US government and NASA, but actually for McDonnell Douglas, a company doing contract work for NASA. The math is simple, though, no NASA, no job. The AAWSAP and BAASS relationship was much the same.

This also shows that Schuessler had a background in working with government projects, and probably a certain level of familiarity and comfort with it. His letter to *Popular Science* magazine in December 1967 showed his support of government involvement in ufology, but that particular project didn't end so well:

"Dr. Condon's highly capable group at the University of Colorado has given the investigation of UFO... an air of scientific respectability... a baseline for future efforts."

We've not solved the puzzle, just found more of the pieces. Switching analogies, on the UFO chessboard, we don't even know which pieces Robert Bigelow or John Schuessler are or were. Royalty, or bishops? Surely not pawns.

Public Statements by Bigelow, Elizondo, and Harzan on the BAASS-MUFON Era

Before we hear the new comments from MUFON players with their side of the story, we'll take a look at what Robert Bigelow and Luis Elizondo may have recently said about the BAASS-MUFON days. Mr. Bigelow, to the best of our knowledge, has made only one public comment on his involvement since the *NYT* article in Dec. 2017. In an [interview recorded Aug. 28, 2019](#), with George Knapp, Bigelow *almost* talked about AATIP matters:

Knapp: "You haven't spoken about it really since all the news broke, but I mean your fingerprints are all over that stuff. You helped make all that happen."

Bigelow: "Well, I don't know about that. I think that the future here is what's potentially interesting. If these exposures and these exhibitions that are currently ongoing... if they continue, and they provide the opportunity for investigation and to create the awareness... that this phenomena is real."

AATIP's Luis Elizondo has only touched on the BAASS-MUFON relationship indirectly, but dropped a big clue about why the Pentagon contact with Bigelow was terminated. In late 2008, (when Bigelow was nervous about maintaining his Government funding) Elizondo quietly entered the picture. In a [2018 interview with George Knapp](#), Elizondo stated that he joined AAWSAP, admitted that he had coordinated with BAASS, and said:

"... the decision was made to refine and refocus the effort only on... the UAP phenomena, on what it is, and how it works, and and frankly, with a hell of a lot of help from the great folks over at Bigelow Aerospace, the scientists and the researchers over there, we were able to successfully do that. AAWSAP was a slightly larger-focused program, and we really quickly realized it was basically taking a shotgun approach to the problem, and what we needed was a sniper rifle. So basically, what we decided to do was focus the aperture on what it is we were trying to achieve..."

MUFON's current Executive Director Jan Harzan spoke about AATIP on the [MUFON Podcast Episode I](#), June 6, 2019, and he praised (former BAASS contractor) Hal Puthoff's connections, so maybe he honestly doesn't see working with the government as a problem:

"We've had some major things happen here in the last 18 months... TTSA... major news coverage by the New York Times, and breaking this front page cover story that the Pentagon had a secret UFO program, and then of course, Lue Elizondo stepping out of the shadows... I just had an opportunity to know Lue since that all happened, and Tom DeLonge, and Stephen Justice, and Chris Mellon, and of course Hal Puthoff, who's been a long, long, long time MUFON member, and I couldn't think of a finer group of men of government service to come out and share this."

MUFON's Response to Questions about the Bigelow Contracts

Seeking comments about what MUFON research may have been used by BAASS in their work with the Pentagon, we reached out to those involved in the 2008 - 2009 BAASS contracts. We began by asking each of them if they had seen the Feb. 14, 2020, Popular Mechanics article, "Inside the Pentagon's Secret UFO Program" by Tim McMillan, which stated:

We asked if that was accurate, and whether MUFON had received a copy of that BAASS 10 Month Report. From MUFON's Executive Director, Jan Harzan, ex-Director John Schuessler, BAASS contractor Hal Puthoff, Luis Elizondo, and an executive assistant for Robert Bigelow, there was nothing.

Tom Deuley, formerly of the MUFON Board of Directors courteously replied, but said that he was no longer active in the organization, and did not wish to make a statement. However, three others did respond with comments.

Robert Powell (now with the [SCU](#)), former MUFON national research director replied:

"I was not privy to the information that MUFON shared with BAASS." In a follow-up, we asked specifically about his work in the MATE project, and he said, "I'm sorry but I can't help you as all work that I ever did for BAASS was confidential and under a NDA." He subsequently was able to confirm the project, saying, "Yes, MUFON did have a MATE team and I was part of that team."

Rob Swiatek, from the MUFON Board of Directors replied:

"I seem to recall there was a landing or a CEII case the Bigelow investigators looked in to. MUFON did not receive a copy of the BAASS 10-month report. I was on the board at the time (still am) and never heard a whisper of such a report at the time."

He later kindly added, "I've gone back and reviewed some documents to refresh my memory on how matters stood

in 2009 re. MUFON and BAASS. ...MUFON's STAR Impact Project (the 'rapid response field investigators') didn't begin operations until April 2009. (To best of my knowledge, this was also the date on which MUFON began supplying case information to Bigelow.) ...In all—from April to October 2009—STAR teams were deployed about 45 times across the U.S. MUFON's contract with BAASS ended in October 2009, and the flow of case information would have ceased sometime around then as well."

James Carrion, former MUFON International Director (2006 - 2009) replied:

"Unfortunately I did not [see the BAASS document] as I would love to compare the report to the stream of SIP data that MUFON fed BAASS and ascertain whether it was a good portion of this report. By June 2009, Bigelow complained MUFON wasn't giving him his money's worth, but if the report shows that MUFON contributed the bulk ...well you can do the math on that one as to Bigelow's character."

Carrion was involved in virtually all aspects of the BAASS-MUFON story up until the time of his resignation. While researching this story, we asked science journalist Sarah Scoles if she'd talked to him while writing her book, *They Are Already Here: UFO Culture and Why We See Saucers*. She said, "... I did talk to James Carrion. We met once in person when he was in Colorado, and... [had an] interview over the phone. ...it seemed like the book would be incomplete without an account of his time at MUFON during the AATIP years (although I didn't succeed in tying MUFON and AATIP together by more than inference)."

Hearing about the MUFON data used in the BAASS 10 Month Report seemed to change Carrion's willingness to protect the secrets of the relationship. We contacted him for a series of questions about the events and people involved, and he gradually opened up with some valuable information on a key aspect of the AATIP story.

An Interview with James Carrion

Q: James, I found your 2011 blog article "[Strange Bedfellows](#)" (which discusses his resignation from MUFON), and would like to hear if you now think that the undisclosed backer for the MUFON/BAASS contract STAR Team Impact Project (SIP) was the DIA/OSD with the AATIP/AAWSA program? Reading old *MUFON Journals*, the story seems to fit, with BAASS hiring fifty scientists to help with the SIP, and some of the areas of interest were the same as that of AAWSAP.

Carrion: I would have to say yes... given the timing of Bigelow's startup activity and engagement with MUFON. Bigelow disclosed the sponsor to Schuessler but not the rest of the MUFON Board. You could ask [John] Schuessler straight up if Bigelow told him it was the DIA.

Q: (Referring to details shared in our first article) Why did BAASS not ask for more of the technical papers by the MUFON Advanced Technology Establishment team - the 12 areas of interest?

Carrion: Perhaps the MATE reports were the carrot for MUFON's initial involvement... Is there any proof that the MATE reports went anywhere past Bigelow's desk? After the MATE papers delivery that was the end of any conversation regarding MATE. The focus then shifted 100% to BAASS contracting MUFON.

Q: At the January 2009 Las Vegas meeting (to set up the SIP field investigations contract) with Robert Bigelow and his BAASS team, I believe you'd already interacted with Colm Kelleher, but when did you first know that Hal Puthoff and Jacques Vallee were involved?

Carrion: The first I knew of Puthoff and Vallée's involvements was when they showed up at the January meeting.

Q: What were their roles in this meeting, and what did they say about their work for Bigelow?

Carrion: I was never told exactly what their roles were. Neither Puthoff nor Vallee volunteered any information to me about what exactly they were doing on the project.

Q: What interaction did you have (before during or after the Las Vegas meeting) with Douglas Kurth? (Kurth was the BAASS Program Manager, a retired Marine Corps Commander and USS Nimitz UFO witness.)

Carrion: I had no interactions with Kurth at all.

Q: Can you tell me anything memorable about what Robert Bigelow said or did during this January 2009 meeting?

Carrion: Nothing memorable that Bigelow himself said but I found it highly unusual that he proposed increasing the amount of money to spend on SIP staff incentives after the meeting. As much of a penny

pincher he is and as much they dug into every detail of how the money was being spent, in hindsight this appears odd.

Q: What did Robert Bigelow tell you about how they were using the material MUFON provided?

Carrion: SIP - to achieve breakthroughs in aerospace technology by learning from UFOs - either through observation or gathering of physical material.

Q: What were you told about BAASS's own UFO research?

Carrion: Nothing was communicated about individual projects.

Q: We know now that the BAASS-MUFON relationship was doomed no matter what, because Bigelow lost his AAWSAP funding the next year. Briefly, had it not soured, what do you think might have happened with MUFON in another year of operation?

Carrion: Just more of the same. "Not managing" but still managing MUFON through the gullible Board of Directors and squeezing everything he could out of the organization for the least dollars possible.

Q: Did you suspect that "the sponsor" who provided Bigelow's funding was a government entity?

Carrion: No, because of the assurances given by John Schuessler at the time.

To document this, Carrion provided an exchange of emails that took place shortly after the BAASS Las Vegas meeting. On Feb. 11, 2009, Chuck Reeve cautioned that "... if funding depends on Government sources this could be a problem if that information ever leaked." Carrion replied, "The funding is coming from BAASS 'sponsors' which John Schuessler knows and feels comfortable with but that we are not privy to. I asked if there was any government ties at the meeting with Bigelow and he stated no."

Two years later, James Carrion was interviewed on *The Paracast* radio show with Gene Steinberg and co-host Chris O'Brien, Feb, 20, 2011. At 41:15 minutes into the show, Carrion told the same story about the Bigelow meeting in slightly different words:

"I point-blank asked him, 'Is this government money?' and [Mr. Bigelow said, no.](#)"

Picking up the Scent: The FAA and the UFO Hotline

There were some early hints that Robert Bigelow's contract with MUFON was part of his relationship with the US government, and one of the first to gather evidence was their state director for Utah, Elaine Douglass. She [sent emails](#) to MUFON leaders in December 2010, with privacy concerns over material inserted into UFO the reporting during the BAASS contract. It asked for: "consent to the release of your contact information to 3rd parties not connected to or affiliated with MUFON." Douglass received no reply, but when another MUFON member asked, director Clifford Clift responded, saying it was to employ outside labs and consultants in investigations, and that, "There are no conspiracies and no intent by MUFON to hide things from members. Trust MUFON." Be that as it may, many witnesses would not have been comfortable knowing "3rd party" BAASS might have put their personal information and report into government hands.

Discussing possible government involvement, Douglass wrote, "since an intelligence agency wouldn't want to reveal it was operating within MUFON, it might send in a front company such as Bigelow Aerospace with a cover story such as that Robert Bigelow hoped to learn the principles of alien technology so he could commercialize space vehicles."

In 2001, Robert Bigelow's National Institute for Discovery Science proudly announced on their site: "[NIDS Becomes Only Official Organization to Receive UFO Reports from the Federal Aviation Administration \(FAA\) June 22, 2001.](#)"

And so it remained until after BAASS was launched, then listing was changed. An [FAA memo effective July 29, 2010](#) stated:

"One of the organizations (National Institute for Discovery Sciences (NIDS)) that would receive and investigate UFO/unexplained phenomena activity has morphed into a new larger organization called Bigelow Aerospace Advanced Space Studies (BAASS). ... air traffic control reporting of UFOs in the United States should now go to BAASS..."

NIDS shut down in 2004, but their website remained with their many UFO articles. That is until around the time of the AAWSAP contract, when most of the content was removed. By the time of the FAA listing for BAASS, Bigelow's NIDS site was [defunct altogether](#).

Alfred Lambremont Webre looked into the BAASS-FAA connection in the Examiner.com, April 7, 2010, article, "[Robert Bigelow's and MUFON's hybrid UFO investigation venture 'under review' in 2010](#)." Webre called Dr. Colm A. Kelleher, BAASS Deputy Administrator, about the UFO hotline. Kelleher confirmed that BAASS had an office to receive UFO reports, but minimized it, and Webre reported, "He stated that the monthly volume of UFO reports received by BAASS is 'infrequent.' Dr. Kelleher stated that BAASS received no FAA funds for receiving UFO reports. This reporter verified that BAASS UFO hotline staff was on duty to receive UFO reports."

True, the company received no FAA money, but Kelleher was not asked, nor was he inclined to volunteer, anything about the DIA funding for BAASS. Webre also discussed confidential documents that were anonymously leaked, but Dr. Kelleher did not wish "to comment on the leaked BAASS-MUFON documents."

Elaine Douglass received a copy of the [leaked BAASS-MUFON contract](#), then shared it among the UFO community on Jan. 15, 2011. Later, Douglass gave Robert Bigelow some unwanted exposure the next year, on [Conspiracy Theory With Jesse Ventura: Skinwalker](#), Season 3: Episode 5, Dec. 3, 2012. Ventura's investigation-style reality show was intentionally far-out, and it often included Alex Jones, and while the show itself was looney, this episode did capture a few interesting bits, and it documented Bigelow discussing UFOs around the end of his AATIP relationship.

Ventura interviewed Elaine Douglass about BAASS having "unseen backers," and she told how Bigelow insisted upon control and secrecy in his contract with MUFON. There were two brief "ambush interviews" of Bigelow. In the first, Ventura asked him about how BAASS was listed as the place to report UFO sightings in the FAA manual, but Bigelow seemed to duck the question.

Later in the episode, Ventura spoke to retired Col. John B. Alexander, who took credit for arranging the FAA listing - but did not explain that it'd originated years before, with NIDS. In Alexander's 2011 book, *UFOs: Myths, Conspiracies and Realities*, he described how he had arranged a meeting in Washington, D.C., that included himself, Bigelow, Colm Kelleher and FAA officials where they volunteered NIDS:

"to be their 911, and that they would not assume any risk or cost, they agreed... and did post the information in their operations manual. After NIDS was closed, Bigelow established a follow-on organization called Bigelow Aerospace Advanced Space Studies (BAASS) to pick up the mission."

Bigelow's involvement with the FAA extends into his AAWSAP contract days, and can by extension, be rightfully considered part of the AATIP story. In the episode's second mini-interview with Bigelow, Sean Stone got in a few quick UFO questions, including one about sharing his research. He asked, "Would you ever consider putting together some kind of dossier or document based on all the investigation that you have done over the years?" Robert Bigelow replied, "I try to stay away from words like ever or never. ...I think now is not the time for that, and I don't see that on the horizon..."

The Legacy of Elaine Douglass

Elaine Douglass worked for the Department of Defense, and after retiring became a full time UFO investigator from the mid-1980s, and a founding editor of [JAR magazine](#). She was MUFON State Director for Utah, but was fired in 2010, and formed [the Committee to Reform MUFON](#) (CRM). One of Elaine's big concerns was the involvement of Robert Bigelow in MUFON, and the secrecy regarding it. Those issues were never resolved, and Elaine lost her battle with cancer and passed away in 2014.

Marilyn Carlson of CRM created The Elaine Douglass Files to preserve Marilyn's research documents, and correspondence. Unfortunately, the site is now defunct, and in what seems to be a cruel twist of fate, MUFON now houses the physical collection of Elaine Douglass' files. Fortunately, it was not all lost. Marilyn gave permission for UFO archivist Issac Koi to collect Elaine's files as a PDF, which is now permanently hosted at the Archives for the Unexplained (AFU) website as the [Elaine Douglass Files](#).

On The UFO Trail of Robert Bigelow

Jack Brewer has been following the involvement of Robert Bigelow in ufology for many years at [The UFO Trail](#). We reached out to him for comment on the exposure of government funding in the BAASS-MUFON relationship.

“The actions of Mr. Bigelow do not necessarily reflect those of someone with objectives of facilitating quality research or disseminating accurate information. For decades, however, organizations and people within the UFO genre framed him as a benevolent philanthropist and reliable source. Such a portrayal has not been entirely established and there is much evidence to refute it. A lack of transparency was long at issue, translating into questions of methodologies, objectives, ethics, and even competence. Now that Mr. Bigelow’s involvement with the DIA was established, it would seem questions will justifiably persist.”

Brewer also pointed out two other earlier unsettling episodes of MUFON’s files being purchased by Bigelow or a “sponsor.”

The Carpenter Affair - Circa 1995: Bigelow’s purchase of MUFON’s Alien Abduction Records, which included sensitive witness information.

“[The Carpenter Affair: For the Record](#),” Oct. 22, 2013

MUFON’s Ambient Monitoring Project - Circa 2008 Originally “the Abduction Monitoring Project” Which he says “was a rather odd initiative with an unnamed financial sponsor...”Reportedly completed, the data/results seemed to vanish.

“[What Happened to the Ambient Monitoring Project?](#)”, April 2, 2014

Brewer also obtained documents pertaining to the 2008 BAASS-AAWSAP contract, and it shows the DIA’s refusal to reveal the identity to a FOIA requester in 2011:

“[DIA Withheld AAWSAP Contract Awarded to BAASS in 2011 FOIA Response](#),” Aug. 1, 2019

Documents released responding to Brewer’s 2019 FOIA:

[Defense Intelligence Agency... Dear Mr. Brewer](#)

Dissident UFO Buffs

We now know that back in 2008, Robert Bigelow turned to MUFON for aid, and they provided guidance that shaped not only the creation of BAASS, the entire scope of the UFO project, and also key material produced for AAWSAP. It appears that a significant portion of the BAASS Ten Month Report may have been derived from MUFON SIP casework, from the CMS database, and from the guidance of their MATE papers. Then, the whole thing vanished, despite MUFON’s mandate, which reflects the N in their name, Network, for their “dedication to sharing UFO information and research data...” Somehow it got all twisted around by the secrecy agendas of a billionaire and a US intelligence program.

As mere mortals, maybe we shouldn’t question the wisdom of the Gods of Olympus, the Pentagon or even the man behind the curtain in the land of Oz. MUFON portrayed the critics of the Bigelow deal as complainers, crackpots and conspiracy theorists. To them, James Carrion was only a disgruntled ex-Director, Elaine Douglass was only a fired Utah State Director and nutty old gal, Jack Brewer was only a nobody blogger and keyboard warrior. However, these three were no over-imaginative Chicken Littles. All these “dissident UFO buffs” had been saying the emperor had no clothes, and in time, they were proven right.

In our closing exchange with James Carrion, he expressed the opinion that since the cat is out of the bag about BAASS and MUFON, maybe those involved will no longer be bound by their NDAs. If nothing else, we now have more pieces of the puzzle, and it’s a foundation to build on. We hope it goes much further still; that all parties involved - from the contractors, the technical paper authors, to the US government itself - will open up and end the protracted drama about the secrecy surrounding AATIP. The ultimate goal is to clean away the debris and proceed with clarity. That would be a good first step towards chipping away at some secrets that really matter.

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This and the preceding article was put together drawing from a great many sources. In the link below, we’ve gathered the primary documentation into a PDF, which includes the two BAASS-MUFON contracts, leaked emails, other documents, and four of the MUFON Advanced Technology Establishment papers produced for BAASS.

[AAWSAP-BAASS-MUFON Document Collection 2008 - 2009](#)

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Dedicated to the memory of the late Elaine Douglass.

Special thanks to Clas Svahn, Isaac Koi, Keith Basterfield, Sarah Scoles, Tim McMillan, Jack Brewer, for research, materials, documents, advice and fact-checking. And to “David Vincent,” and “Claude Lacombe,” without whom none of this would have been possible.

Sources, Resources, and Further Details on BAASS and MUFON’s SIP (Revised)

Freedom of Information Act Requests have not yet produced any material of substance on AATIP, in part because of the “commercial in confidence” nature of the AAWSAP contract with BAASS. Most of the other sources remain bound by NDAs relating to long-dead projects, but journalists such as George Knapp and Tim McMillan have presented documents from unnamed anonymous sources relating to the Pentagon’s AATIP study. In our report, we’ve depended chiefly on items of demonstrable provenance, but also have referenced a dossier of BAASS-MUFON documents from a confidential, but verified source. Some of the material used in this story references previous leaks of BAASS-MUFON documents.

MUFON’s SIP training materials. Archived page:

[MUFON STAR Impact Project \(SIP\) Information Page](#), March 5, 2009

Keith Basterfield, Unidentified Aerial Phenomena - scientific research, an invaluable resource on the AATIP saga: [BAASS articles](#)

Jack Brewer, [The Greys Have Been Framed: Exploitation in the UFO Community](#), Dec. 16, 2015

Jack Brewer, [“UFO-Pentagon Story Reflects Fundamental Problems,”](#) Dec. 20, 2017

This article contains a post-AATIP reveal statement by James Carrion.

James Carrion, [“Strange Bedfellows,”](#) Jan. 31, 2011

Also, see Carrion’s article, [“What is Really Happening at the Skinwalker Ranch?”](#) from Feb. 8, 2011, where he discusses “uncovering disturbing information about the Skinwalker Ranch owned by Robert Bigelow [and] began to have doubts about the real purpose behind the MUFON-BAASS project.”

Curt Collins, [“UFOs, the Media, the Military & Dreams of Discovery,”](#) Dec. 27, 2017

Released shortly after the first AATIP story, an examination of Bigelow’s acquisition or hoarding of UFO databases.

Elaine Douglass, [“The Gagged-for-life Star Team Confidentiality Agreement,”](#) May 12, 2011

[The Elaine Douglass Files](#) includes a dossier on Bigelow and his UFO-related activity.

[The Committee to Reform MUFON](#) (defunct, last archived Jan. 3, 2014)

Richard Lang, [“What caused the Failure of the BAASS - MUFON SIP Program?”](#) March 6, 2011. “During the period from February 2009 until the end of January 2010, I served as the STAR Team Manager and SIP Project Coordinator.”

Sarah Scoles, [They Are Already Here: UFO Culture and Why We See Saucers](#), 2020

Chapter 5 on Robert Bigelow, “The Patron Saint, or Something, of Saucers”

Tim McMillan, *Popular Mechanics*, [“Inside the Pentagon’s Secret UFO Program,”](#) Feb. 14, 2020

Erik Seedhouse, [Bigelow Aerospace: Colonizing Space One Module at a Time](#), 2014