

# JUST CAUSE



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## EDITORIAL

As one can see, I (B.G.) am back in the masthead. I no longer feel threatened by the Ethics in Government Act since it has come under round-house attack by numerous prominent individuals, government unions and even high-ranking politicians. Signs are that it will be amended to exclude the average government worker. Let us hope that such nonsense does not happen again.

### AIRMAN MENDEZ VS THE BUREAUCRACY - PART TWO

The espionage investigation had ended for Simone Mendez in July 1982. The six-month ordeal of constant grilling by Air Force and FBI investigators had culminated in her being cleared. But life had changed. No longer did she have the promising future in the Air Force for which she had hoped. Her security clearance was gone, meaning access to high-paying technical jobs in telecommunications was ended.

She settled back into the routine of a regular military living, doing a variety of clerking jobs. In 1984, Simone was transferred to Tinker AFB, Oklahoma in billeting work (For non-military folks, "billeting" means providing living accommodations for base personnel). All went well until mid-1985.

Being that her relocation to Tinker would put her in fairly close proximity to her friend George, one of Simone's letter correspondents who was involved in the document episode, she thought that it would be interesting to get together again to chat about all that had happened. An off-day was selected so that George could drive up to the base. When that day arrived, Simone waited for George to stop in. Morning drifted into afternoon. Still no sign of George. Late in the day she called his home and spoke to his mother. George was there but refused to speak to Simone, despite her pleading with his mother to do so.

Simone was baffled by this behavior, especially since he initially wanted to meet. On the next day she received a Federal Express overnight shipment at her apartment. In it were all of her letters, artwork; etc., that she had sent to George over the years, rudely stuffed into a box with not a word of explanation. It was, and still is, a complete mystery to her.

Some weeks later, unbeknownst to her, a piece appeared in the October 1985 issue of "Saucer Smear," a UFO newsletter by James Moseley which specializes in gossip and a good old American tradition called "muckraking."



The story related details of Simone's experience in brief. It was not completely accurate but enough was told to determine that it came from an insider. That insider was none other than Simone's friend George!

While the account had also appeared in one or two privately circulated monographs written by midwestern UFOlogists, little of it went far and Simone's name was safe. Moseley's revelations were more detailed and, consequently, more damaging. Damaging because the "Smear" piece was noticed by a staff writer for OMNI magazine named Owen Davies.

In 1986, Davies called various individuals over a period of a few weeks at Tinker trying to track down Simone for an interview. He finally did locate her. Davies at first did not identify himself, but when he did she refused to talk to him. She was in fact stunned that the whole thing had become so public that a national magazine spared no small expense to locate her. She referred Davies to her good friend, Jean Waller, who worked at the base and who was very familiar with the story. "I was afraid to talk to him because of the possible consequences for me, having signed a secrecy form and all," she explained. Apparently OMNI never printed the story at that time.

Things had quieted on this matter but came back with a vengeance later in the year when Simone travelled back home on leave. When she arrived her family told her that the base had been frantically trying to call looking for her. She immediately called the lieutenant who had left the message. Without hesitation, he began threatening her with disciplinary action about discussing the document case with the media. Befuddled, Simone did not understand what prompted the call as she had spoken to no one about the case. "You better keep your mouth shut about that," he growled. "I want to know the name of the reporter you spoke to," he said. "That was the OMNI writer," she thought, "But it was a long time back and a dead issue."

She spent a very unhappy vacation thinking about what trouble awaited her when she arrived back at the base.

Upon her return a week later, she discovered that the reason for the eruption against her was that OMNI had made another attempt to get the story. This time they went directly to the base commander, asking that he give clearance for them to get through the secrecy restrictions on her and obtain an interview. Needless to say, the base commander did not know what this situation was all about and he angrily set off a domino effect of outrage down his line of command to get to the bottom of the OMNI request.

The steam build-up was exhausted by the time she had returned. The lieutenant who had called Simone's family had temporarily shipped out to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, and his replacement, a captain, told her not to worry about any of this. "It's a good thing that I was on vacation when all of this happened," she recalled, "because my nerves would have put me in the hospital again if I wasn't!"



Simone Mendez - 1982



On into the Spring of 1987, when a curious turnabout occurred. While on duty in the base linen exchange, Simone received a phone call from her master sergeant. He told her that OSI wanted to see her but that she was to first report to the orderly room. Panic set in again. "Oh no, what did I do now?" she nervously thought as she went to the orderly room.

Both the sergeant and a captain met her there. They told her not to be afraid, that there was no trouble for her. She was about to be made an interesting offer. Simone and the sergeant went to the OSI office and entered a conference room where they were met by the base's head of counterintelligence. He said he knew of her background and trouble in 1982 but that didn't matter because he felt that she would be a good "contact." "You can say no to this but it would look bad on your record if you did," he informed her somewhat threateningly. Faced with such mandatory volunteerism she had two options: an enthusiastic yes or a grudging yes. She took the later. He said they would be in touch later.

Sometime later she was called again and given a guided tour of the OSI offices. She was personally introduced to many of the OSI agents and other personnel there. In an office with five other agents she was asked many personal questions about her life, family; etc. "I felt like they were preparing a Mata Hari," she observed at the "breaking-in-a-new-member" nature of the attention. She was told that she would be involved in exciting, and sometimes dangerous, things.

Simone was astonished at this turn of events. At one time she felt like she was heading for federal prison, with OSI driving the paddy wagon! Now she was actually being recruited to do undercover work for them. "I was intrigued but at the same time I was nearing the end of my stint with the Air Force and wasn't sure I could take pressure situations all over again," she thoughtfully pondered. They wanted her more than she was willing.

In mid-1987, the head of counterintelligence at OSI discovered that Simone was heading for the MUFON annual conference in Washington, D.C. "How they knew this I wasn't sure," she thought. "They must have tapped into some of my phone conversations. There were warnings all over the base that calls from the base would likely be monitored and I never talked about going to the symposium except by phone." He met with her and asked point blank that she brief him on everything that happened there when she returned.

She did indeed attend the conference, which was dominated by discussions of UFO abductions and the MJ-12 documents. Simone listened carefully, knowing that she was going to be debriefed. "I was still active duty military and did what I had to do. I needed no more problems with my superiors so a correct briefing is what they were going to get," she said.

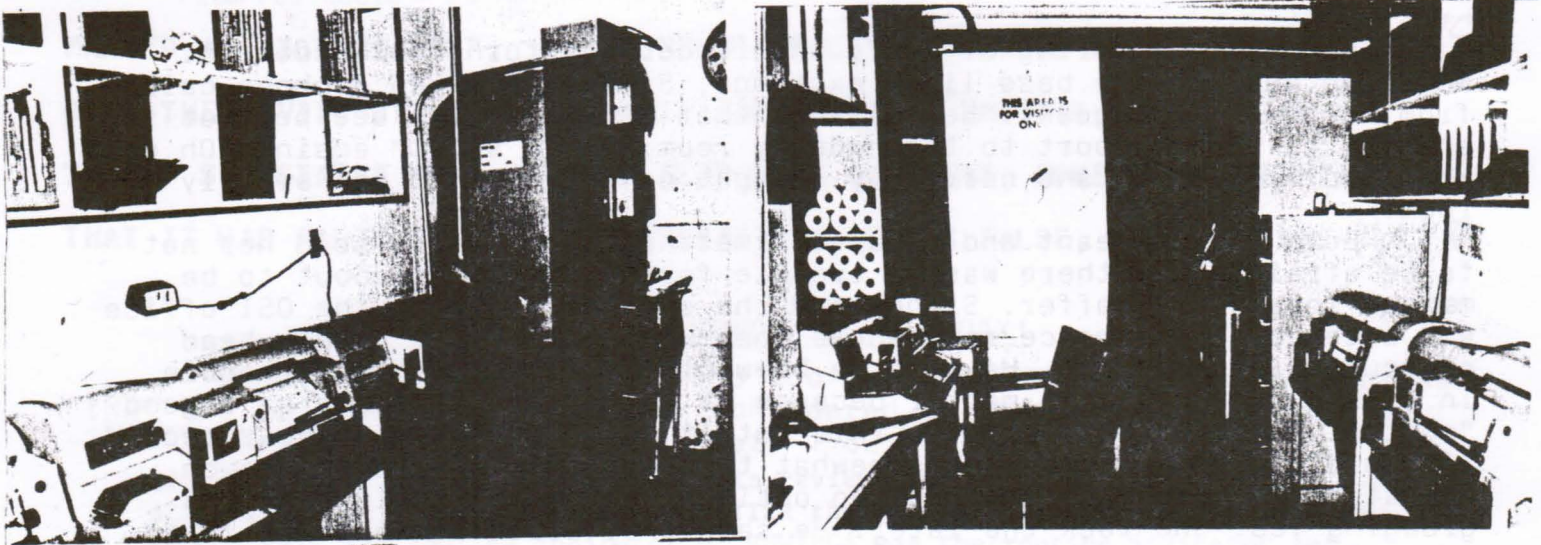
Upon her return, she was again met by the head of counterintelligence who listened to her account of the symposium. He seemed satisfied with what she told him and left. Nothing more was said about it. Simone never did learn why they wanted a rundown of the conference. It was not her place to ask.

Despite pleadings from her superiors and the OSI personnel she dealt with, Simone left the Air Force on March 31, 1988. She felt it was time to move on to other things.

She held various jobs in her civilian life thereafter but the "incident" never left her. It was a great frustration not to know for sure whether her life was altered due to seeing proof of a sensational truth or at being conned by a con man, or men.

At first very reluctant to probe into the past for fear of reviving nightmarish memories, Simone slowly began to realize that to put to rest





Views of a message center much like that which Simone Mendez worked in during her experience. (From the book The Falcon and the Snowman).

her "Flying Dutchman" she must build up the courage to ask hard questions of those in positions of power and authority - those who put her through her ordeal.

She first contacted UFO organizations, hoping that they would have the necessary knowledge to guide her through the bureaucratic maze to her goal. Her reading of stories had led her to believe that the UFO groups had the power to gain access to hidden materials. She found this to be an exceedingly disappointing effort as, one after another, individuals in the UFO community put her off. The advice she was given included remarks that she was wasting her time. She would get nothing from the government. She would end up in a "file." That "they" would come knocking at her door for asking such probing questions. "I thought these people were supposed to help witnesses get to the bottom of such important UFO-related issues," she later told us. "It was as if they were consumed by a kind of paranoia about government related incidents and were trying to pass that paranoia to me. It was very disillusioning to hear well-known organizations and individuals in UFOlogy attempting to frighten me out of pursuing my story."

What Simone did not have was proof of the reality of her story. Her's was another in a long line of secrecy tales in the UFO field. By itself, the story was nothing more than her word against the military. When she contacted CAUS, we felt there was sufficient reason to pursue the possibility of documented evidence of her experience. If her story was true, the paperwork had to be there.

CAUS advised her on procedures of filing FOIA requests, to whom and how to word them. She had to do the work of filing herself as it was her personal file she sought. No one else but her could ask for it. She was assured that there would be no knocks on the door, nor other stereotypical manifestations of a paranoid believer mentality which now dominates much of the UFO community in America. How can we be so sure that it wouldn't happen to her? Because being what CAUS is in UFO research, a group designed to unearth government documentation, it simply has not happened to us. We should be prime targets for such harassing activities. Yet, somehow, we've escaped that onslaught. With CAUS behind her, Simone Mendez finally had allies.

She filed requests with the FBI and two FBI field offices beginning



in January 1989. Another request was filed with the Air Force Office of Special Investigations during July 1990.

Over a year later, on May 7, 1990, the first of several releases of Simone's FBI file took place. Eight years had passed since the investigation. Documents which she was assured by many would not be released were now available. AFOSI had followed with a release of its own with papers declassified in January 1991, that request having taken seven months to fulfill. The files totalled nearly two hundred pages, one of the largest government files on a single UFO-related case on record. However, as expected, many dozens of documents were withheld entirely and released papers were often very heavily censored.

### THE EXPERIENCE DID OCCUR

That a document existed and the circumstances surrounding it did occur is beyond question:

From FBI cable - 27 January 1982:

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OF THE CHICAGO DIVISION,**

**INVESTIGATION HAS DETERMINED THAT THE SUBJECT MENDEZ HAS ACCESS**

**TO CRYPTOGRAPHIC KEYS AND ROUTINELY SENDS AND RECEIVES**

**CRYPTOGRAPHIC MESSAGES. ON A DAILY BASIS, MENDEZ HANDLES**

**CLASSIFIED COMMUNICATIONS UP TO AND INCLUDING TOP SECRET. THIS**

**INFORMATION WAS PREVIOUSLY PROVIDED TO THE BUREAU AND DALLAS VIA**

**LAS VEGAS TELETYPE DATED JANUARY 12, 1982**

**INFORMATION SET FORTH REGARDING THE AGREEMENT COVERING THE**

From OSI document - 27 February 1982

8218D27-517

SUMMARY: (C) Investigation requested by TFWC/CC, NAFB, NV, on 12 Jan 82, based on information that SUBJECT may have compromised classified information. (U) SA [redacted] FBI, Las Vegas, NV, advised that their Dallas, TX, office received information that [redacted]

[redacted] advised that

[redacted] had seen a "Top Secret" message

[redacted] furnished a statement relating

Coordination with HQ MAC, HQ TAC and Bergstrom AFB,



MARKED AS "TOP SECRET". THE COMMUNICATION RELATED TO THREE UFOS b7c  
OVER THE SOVIET UNION AND THE AIR FORCE WAS ATTEMPTING TO IDENTIFY  
THEM. SHE STATED THAT SHE HAD KEPT THIS DOCUMENT, HOWEVER, DETERMINED  
THAT IT WAS FALSE. PRIOR TO DETERMINING IT WAS FALSE, HOWEVER, SHE ~~(S) (X)~~

THE GOVERNMENT'S CONCLUSION - HOAX!

Through all of the censorship and deletions what was made clear was that the document was officially considered to be a hoax by unnamed sources.

From OSI document - 23 February 1982:

17. (U) On 11 Feb 82, the message was reviewed with the assistance of Lt ALTIER, and it was the opinion of ALTIER that the message was false. ALTIER stated that the routing indicator of RUWTPGA was the routing indicator for Bergstrom AFB (BAFB), TX, which did not make sense since the message was from HQ TAC MACALCE, Langley AFB, VA. ALTIER stated that there was what is referred to as an in-house test whereby a message could be typed, sent out electrically from the TCC and return which would give the indication that it was a bonafide message; however, the message was sent to no one. ALTIER was not certain as to how the system worked, but stated that it was possible.

18. (U) On 11 and 12 Feb 82, this matter was coordinated with Lt Col GEORGE M. SINCLAIR, AFOSI District 5/OL-D, Scott AFB (SAFB), IL, and on the latter date, Lt Col SINCLAIR advised that coordination with Hq MAC/DO, Hq TAC, 21AF and appropriate personnel at Dover AFB, DE, disclosed no information that a MACALCE unit had ever been established at LAFB, VA.

19. (U) On 19 Feb 82, SSgt HERMON BARNES, 1882nd Communications Squadron, Bergstrom AFB (BAFB), TX, was contacted and furnished the date/time group and routing indicator for the message. BARNES advised that there was no record to indicate that the message had ever been sent from Bergstrom AFB, TX.

22. (U) On 19 Feb 82, Maj BARRY B. BESOLD, Hq MAC, Liaison Officer to 4440th Tactical Fighter Training Group (TFTG), NAFB, NV, was interviewed and furnished the following information:

After reading a copy of the message [REDACTED] A MACALCE is a Military Airlift Command Airlift Control Element (ALCE), which is a sub-element of an Airlift Control Center and is established at each MAC base. The Airlift Control Elements are assigned to the specific base on which they are located, such as Dover AFB, DE; McChord AFB, WA; and Norton AFB, CA. BESOLD stated that the 63rd Military Airlift Wing which is assigned to Norton AFB, CA, would have an ALCE designation of 63MAWALCE and in the case of a 63ALCE deployment to NAFB, NV, any message traffic originating from this ALCE while on deployment to NAFB, NV, would read "FROM: 63MAWALCE, Nellis AFB, NV (Deployed)." BESOLD stated that ALCE personnel are involved in the processing of passengers and cargo in support of a deployment. BESOLD stated that there is no such thing as "HQ MALCE" since each ALCE is assigned to LAFB, VA, for at least eight years. According to BESOLD, one of the most obvious discrepancies in the message is the fact that "AWACS" were referred in the message; however, the "AWACS" are assigned to TAC and not MAC. It was the opinion of BESOLD that the message was false. OSI  
b7D

23. On 19 Feb 82, a review of the worldwide locator files failed to disclose any information identifiable with a Lt Col JAMES W. HOLKS. HOLKS was referred to by name in the message which SUBJECT had in her possession.



RECEIVED  
TELETYPE UNIT

DL0002 0622307Z

4 MAR 82 00 52

RR HQ LV

FEDERAL BUREAU  
OF INVESTIGATION

DE DL

R 032944Z MAR 82

SM FBI DALLAS (65B-2464) (P)

TO DIRECTOR FBI (65-77643) ROUTINE

FBI LAS VEGAS (65-199) ROUTINE

BT

SECRET

SIMONE CHARRISSE MENDEZ; [REDACTED] ESPIONAGE-X.

OO: DALLAS.

RE BUREAU TELETYPE DATED FEBRUARY 26, 1982. (U)

EXC. AD. ADM.	
EXC. AD. INV.	
EXC. AD. LEG.	
EXC. AD. PLAN.	
EXC. AD. RES.	
EXC. AD. SEC.	
EXC. AD. TRN.	
EXC. AD. UNCL.	
EXC. AD. VICE	
EXC. AD. WFO	
EXC. AD. YOUNG	
EXC. AD. ZONE	
EXC. AD. OTHER	

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 11/11/82 BY SP4/DA [REDACTED]  
FBI b7C

CLASSIFIED BY: SP4/DA [REDACTED]  
DECLASSIFY ON: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

FOIPA # 309935  
12356  
2/28/90  
(S) is OSI

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (S) FBI b1

THE ENTIRE CONTENTS OF THIS COMMUNICATION ARE CLASSIFIED  
"SECRET".

FOLLOWING ARE PERTINENT FACTS OF THIS CASE AS DETERMINED  
THROUGH INVESTIGATION AT DALLAS, TEXAS:

65-77643-16

[REDACTED]

b1C  
b7D

1000

SECRET

0-73  
AFOSI, DSG  
3/5/82

FBI b7C



## DISCUSSION

Only fragments of the Air Force version of this affair are readable. The incident has been verified. Still, what of the document? The Air Force felt it was a hoax and, based upon what they released, the reasons seem valid. Simone thought the same through much of the ordeal but the behavior of the Air Force during the investigation left her with nagging doubts.

We had requested a copy of the document itself through FOIA. If it were a hoax, then we would expect no valid reason to continue to withhold it. If, however, it were not a hoax, then we might expect some acrobatic maneuvers by the Air Force to avoid commitment in releasing it. OSI settled the issue in an undated release letter early in 1991:

"A review of our records reflects that the message you have requested is not being maintained by OSI."

If not them, then by whom?

Therefore, the very object of the investigation, for which six months of manpower were expended, is mysteriously not available. Everything else is and has been kept in secure files by both the Air Force and OSI.

We cannot come to a conclusion about the Simone Mendez case until the "hoax" is made available for verification. To accept the Air Force's conclusions at face value, with the realization that they have now "lost" the document, would not be appropriate at this time.

One cannot help but notice the relative lack of justice in this case when it is compared to something like the MJ-12 hoax. With MJ-12, supposed highly-classified materials were openly flaunted by promoters who circulated them by the thousands to anyone who would buy them. Amongst the promoters was an active OSI agent! Yet, there is no evidence of an FBI or OSI investigation comparable to that inflicted upon Simone Mendez, who was in no way involved in creating the document in her case, nor did she circulate it or make it freely available.

She paid a steep price for being involved in the UFO phenomenon. It is too bad that significantly more blatant abuses of ethics, morals and scientific principles are not called upon the carpet as equally in UFOlogy as what happened to her. That may be life but it doesn't make it right.

END

Simone Mendez - 1991,  
with remembrances, and  
reminders, of her past.

