

Lawmen on the trail of UFOs:

THE SCIENTIFIC BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

By Antonio Huneeus

The Scientific Bureau of Investigation (SBI) may be a new comer to the world of UFO investigators, yet I wouldn't be surprised if one day it becomes one of the major research organs. I took a jaunt out to New York's Staten Island to interview the SBI's two International Directors, Jim Fillow and Pete Mazzola — who are also police officers — at their headquarters. It was their disenchantment with the way the major UFO organizations handle investigations, they quickly pointed out, which led them to found the SBI on January 16, 1979. "We are part of a new breed of ufologists, with modern-day ideas and procedures," Mazzola states. "We feel the UFO mystery is solvable within our own lifetime and we will not rest until it is solved."

The SBI appears to have a number of advantages over many of the older UFO organizations. The first one is that 46 per cent of its investigators are law enforcement officers, including cops, deputies, sheriffs and so on.

Policemen are not strangers to the UFO field, of course. Both as direct witnesses and as links between the government and the public, the police have provided an invaluable service. There are literally hundreds of cases involving policemen on record, one of the most famous being Lonnie Zamora's 1964 close encounter of the third kind in Socorro, New Mexico. As Jim Fillow points out, "The fact is that police officers have the highest percentage of UFO encounters of any profession." Perhaps this is the reason why there is little or no ridicule of flying saucers among cops.

As well as their repeated involvement with the phenomenon itself, a second advantage is that policemen are professionally trained to conduct investigations. "If we can do criminal investigation we can investigate a UFO incident," explains Fillow, adding that "a policeman has already gone through a school of investigation and is used to getting acquainted with the figures and facts." Partner Jim Fillow

elaborates: "A police officer is trained not to have an emotional involvement in an investigation. The SBI evaluates what has happened without adding anything to it, more or less as a policeman would; you don't add anything or subtract anything."

The motivation to probe the murky waters of ufology evolved from the personalities and backgrounds of the SBI's two International Directors. Fillow, 30, and Mazzola, 35, met years ago when they were both investigators for the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization, APRO. Both have about 15 years of experience in the field, plus extensive training and experience in law enforcement.

Jim is a police officer in New Jersey, while Pete is a cop in New York City, with 12 years of service. He is also a polygraph expert. Both are members of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Pete holds a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology and Jim is a computer technician. Each has his own style