

This book is parabolic.

FORECASTS

ALIEN AGENDA:

Investigating the Extraterrestrial Presence Among Us

Jim Marrs. HarperCollins, \$24 (464p)
ISBN 0-06-018642-9

Paranoia strikes deep in this thorough—and thoroughly slanted—report on alleged aliens in our midst. Marrs, who in his bestselling *Crossfire* sifted the evidence in the JFK killing and found a conspiracy, now does the same with evidence relating to UFOs, their occupants and any possible cover-up of them. "[T]here can be little doubt," he concludes, "that a small clique of the wealthy elite exercise unprecedented conspiratorial control over much of the world's business and government...." It is this clique, Marrs suggests, who may be covering up the facts about UFOs, primarily in order to control any alien technology. But even those who scoff at this conclusion should relish Marrs's lively run-through of just about every important UFO and alien development and incident ever, from tales of ancient astronauts to recent abduction accounts. In his drive to cover the waterfront, Marrs shows little discrimination, overemphasizing dubious phenomena like remote viewing and crop circles, and giving nearly equal weight to ludicrous pretenders like Billy Meier (who claimed close encounter with Pleiadians) and sophisticated commentators like Jacques Vallee. Marrs even devotes a chapter to theories that the moon may be a UFO, and he refuses to rule out obvious frauds like the alien autopsy tapes. But if rigorous analysis escapes Marrs, little else does; this is the most entertaining and complete overview of flying saucers and their crew in years. Photos not seen by PW. \$40,000 ad/promo; simultaneous Harper Audio; author tour; first serial, dramatic rights: Paraview. (June)

THE RACE CARD:

White Guilt, Black Resentment, and the Assault on Truth and Justice

Edited by Peter Collier and David Horowitz. Prima/Forum, \$24 (230p)
ISBN 0-7615-0942-9

Essays on race—some cursory, some substantial—from the magazine *Heterodoxy*, published by prominent neo-conservatives Collier and Horowitz (*The Rockefellerers*), make up this book. The authors' unapologetic perspective is clear: in Los Angeles and other big cities, "the issue is not lawless white cops but remorseless black criminals." While Collier and Horowitz dwell in their eponymous essay on the troubling fact that blacks commit a disproportionate share of crime, they ignore routine police harassment of blacks and care not to explore sociological expla-

nations for crime. Similarly, an essay by Paul Mulshine that effectively dissects the case made by supporters of convicted killer Mumia Abu-Jamal ignores questions about the fairness of his trial. A one-time supporter of the Black Panthers, Horowitz apparently aims to atone: the book includes Kate Coleman's important reconstruction of the unsolved murder of Panther bookkeeper Betty Van Patter, and Hugh Pearson's account of the heckling he received from blacks unwilling to accept his research regarding the Panthers. In a section provocatively titled "Afro-Fascism," contributors warn about some disturbing Afrocentric books used in high school curricula. Other essays take on academic bell hooks and columnist Clarence Page. While this book contains some useful and provocative criticism, the authors don't seem to recognize that the "race card" is still played regularly by whites, most notably in cases of false accusation (Susan Smith, Charles Stuart, etc.) (June)

BOGEYS AND BANDITS:

The Making of a Fighter Pilot

Robert Gandt. Viking, \$22.95 (352p)
ISBN 0-670-86721-7

Longing to climb back into the cockpit of a U.S. Navy jet, former naval aviator Gandt persuaded an old squadron mate, now an admiral, to pull some strings. Gandt (*Sky Gods*) is a seasoned journalist who had more than just a joy ride in mind. With his friend's blessing, he rejoined the flight training program he had gone through more than a quarter-century earlier, to report on the progress of eight students hoping to qualify to fly the navy's difficult FA-18 Hornet. His compelling account of this experience, which centered at an air base near Jacksonville, Fla., is a sort of an aviator's *Chorus Line*, as presented by one who spent six months watching the students' progress and trying to climb inside their skins. One of the most fascinating students is a brilliant woman unafraid to play "the sex card," and whose abrasive personality alienates nearly everyone around her, including the other woman in the class. Another is an African American man who is alternately burdened and encouraged by the fact that his father was one of the famed Tuskegee Airmen. Gandt describes the range of qualities possessed by elite fighter pilots. He manages to evoke both awe and sympathy for these young yet distinguished aviators, so that readers will agonize over their defeats and cheer their triumphs. The icing on the cake is the satisfaction Gandt himself receives in taking his best shot at realizing a sentimental dream. Author tour. (June)

THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN SOLDIER FROM CRISPUS ATTUCKS TO COLIN POWELL

Michael Lee Lanning. Birch Lane,
\$22.50 (288p) ISBN 1-55972-404-8

This 10th military history by retired army officer Lanning (*The Military 100*, etc.) offers a basic introduction to the legacy of black men and women in our nation's armed forces from the American Revolution through the Persian Gulf. Along the way, Lanning introduces a variety of black heroes—men such as Sergeant William H. Carney of the 54th Massachusetts, who saved his unit's flags after the failed assault on Fort Wagner during the Civil War (popularized in the movie *Glory*) and Dorie Miller, a crewman on the USS *West Virginia* who saved the life of his captain and shot down two Japanese planes during the raid on Pearl Harbor. Lanning also chronicles the extreme prejudice that black soldiers encountered for much of the past 200-plus years—separate (and worse) facilities, community hatred, lynchings, lack of promotions to better duty slots and more. He covers the 1906 Brownsville racial clash—sparked by the open hostility of white Texans against black soldiers, but resulting in the dishonorable discharges of 167 black soldiers—as well as the views of Generals George S. Patton and Douglas MacArthur, both of whom looked down on black troops. Ultimately, blacks achieved integration into the American military earlier than into most of the country's institutions. In his illuminating and much-needed history, Lanning graphically depicts the hard struggle toward that goal, and beyond it. Illustrations not seen by PW. (June)

THE SECRET LIFE OF NATURE: Living in Harmony with the Hidden World of Nature Spirits from Fairies to Quarks

Peter Tompkins. Harper San Francisco,
\$22 (384p) ISBN 0-06-250847-4

According to Tompkins, living spirits, invisible to the untrained and inattentive eye, lie beyond the physical world and animate the world of nature. In what's being billed as a follow-up to Tompkins's coauthored (with Christopher Bird) megabestseller *The Secret Life of Plants*, Tompkins regales with tales of the clairvoyants, theosophists, occultists, shamans and scientists who have supposedly peered into the immaterial world of fairies, gnomes, bonnies and quarks. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Madame Blavatsky and the alchemist Paracelsus were, he says, all familiar with the forces that "lead to the knowledge of the world from which our world is derived." Tompkins includes chapters

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