

BOOK REVIEW

Forbidden Science 4: The Spring Hill Chronicles. The Journals of Jacques Vallee, 1990–1999 by Jacques Vallee. San Antonio, TX: Anomalist Books, 2019. 550 pp. \$22.95 (paperback). ISBN 978-1949501056.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31275/2019/1555>
Copyright: Creative Commons CC-BY-NC

As Jacques Vallée is an inveterate scribe, *Forbidden Science 4: The Spring Hill Chronicles* is an excellent compendium of contemporaneous notes for the period between January 1990 and December 1999. While there is a customary focus on the business at hand, UFOs, he also includes a wide variety of personal information such as his health, emotional state, cinema exploits, tips on restaurants, and books that he and his wife, Janine, have read. The weather, especially if cold, also draws commentary.

Importantly, the role Janine played in Jacques' life cannot be overstated and she permeates the text, her guidance, counsel, and companionship vital to the exploration. Occasionally poems are included, and there are infrequent comments on the Dow Jones Industrial Average. He reminds us that it was in December, 1999, that the 10,000 mark was broken for the first time. Things have changed. Also of interest may be the running narrative of the rapidly changing geopolitical circumstances that exert influence on all topics being considered. Conditions in France and America predominate, but emerging exigencies in many other countries are given consideration.

That the Soviets may have been concerned about a real extraterrestrial threat is learned early in the book. Many other surprising revelations soon follow. Hardly a topic on anomalies is missed, from remote viewing and abductions by extraterrestrials (ET) (and maybe the military) to fastwalkers and cattle mutilations. There is a dazzling array of contacts Jacques has made over the years, and very few of the extensive list of characters involved in such research are missing. This is a treasure trove of information about researchers; either he personally knows them or he has heard about them. One has but to explore the 43 pages of the index to conclude that he has extensive experience in several fields.

Like me, you may not run through the book very quickly. I found it necessary to have my computer handy and to engage in frequent Google searches on all manner of topics. As an example, he mentions being in the

woods at a meeting of “witches and warlocks” and singing *The Blood of the Ancients*. Damned if I didn’t find the song available and sung on the Internet.

Adroitly written, this book may make you want to reach for a dictionary from time to time (at least I did), and that does not count the sporadic inclusion of the French language. He employs consummate control of the vocabulary, and I admit looking up the meaning of *lugubrious* and *manzanitas*. The rich tapestry of this chronicle reveals background material on a vast array of topics. What is guaranteed is that you will learn things about subjects you never knew existed. One encumbrance is that the text is replete with comments that beg fact-checking or just invite further study. As extracts from Jacques’ diaries, many entries are tantalizing clues that continually will exercise the curiously minded reader.

One memorable quote by a French publisher, Robert Laffont, regarding Jacques’ earlier book, *Revelations*, will ring true for many SSE authors: “Rational books never sell as well as fake ones.” Another comment by his friend, Dan Tolkowsky, raises a perennial issue; “He said there was certainly something there, but was it a scientific problem?” Many SSE members believe that science can address the multitude of counterintuitive observations reported, while many of us have serious reservations about the confluence of materialistic definitions and seemingly ineffable experiences.

This is a veritable *Who’s Who* in the study of UFOs and other phenomena. In addition, also mentioned are friends, politicians, business acquaintances, and researchers from other fields. That includes literally hundreds of people. Writing this personal compendium, Jacques often uses the first names of his friends even if they have been absent for many pages. As an admonition, at times it may seem difficult to follow his train of thought or remember whom he is addressing.

There are interesting and probingly insightful commentaries. As an example, while contemplating international affairs in October 1996, Jacques writes, “America’s creative chaos turns to sordid apology for crime, its technology an excuse for sloppy information, virtual worlds of noxious drugs and rotten greed.” This visionary entry portended the devolution of information that vomited forth on the Internet infecting the intellectually minded and general population alike.

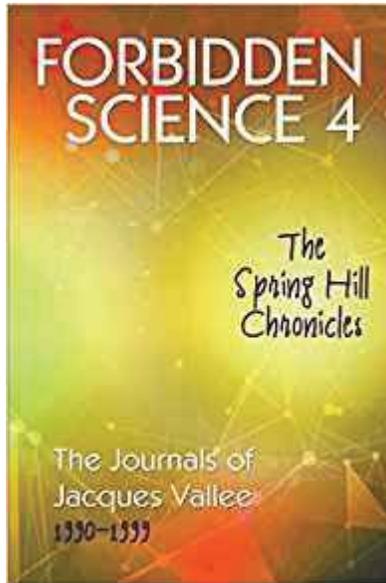
Sub-rosa context points to the fundamental flaws in UFO and related studies of various phenomena. They include endemic secrecy (both official and otherwise), a reluctance/failure to communicate, and egoism that leads to intellectual cannibalism. It is my opinion that these phenomena are at least as complex as cancer and require an integrated approach with extensive data sharing. Such is not the case today.

One can't help but note a recurring strain of frustration generated by the notion of ineptitude in many contemporary researchers in the field. We certainly agree on a significant problem related to all groups studying UFOs or other phenomena. When funds are provided, "one can only work on theories that are aligned with the particular framework, that of the sponsor." Repeatedly we have witnessed dilettantes entering these fields, always expecting quick answers to complex problems, but only those in their specific area of interest. Another area that Jacques and I certainly agree on is summed up in his quote: "The point that irks me most in the ufology dogma is the absurd idea that the Aliens gave us modern technology." Like a zombie, that notion keeps coming back to life no matter the evidence to the contrary. But then, we now are living in a post-truth world.

There is little doubt that many readers will not agree with some of Jacques' analysis and conclusions on certain cases. Such is the lot of all UFO researchers and enthusiasts. The pieces never all quite fit together in a consistent pattern. That may be part of the cerebral attraction of the field for some—as well as a piece of the repulsion for others. What will be found are many enticing clues sprinkled like a trail of crumbs waiting for intrepid investigators to follow. Exactly where they will lead is unknown. Can we assume that a *Forbidden Science 5* will continue the exploration with the turn of the century?

For any serious researcher or student of UFO phenomena, Jacques Vallée's *Forbidden Science 4* is not just *suggested*, rather it is *mandatory* reading. While you probably will not agree with all of his observations (and this community never agrees on anything), your understanding of the seemingly perverse interrelationships among people, concepts, and objectives will be broadened.

In his final reflections, Jacques addresses the personal nature of his diary. He indicates, "I have no ideology to present, and no theory to hype, no politician to lobby, and no axe to grind." As always, he remains an independent thinker.



For truth in advertising, readers should know that Jacques and I have interacted for a long time, and we did share a very moving experience. At 5:04 p.m., on 17 October, 1989, I was standing in his office on Sand Hill Road in Menlo Park, California, when the 7.1 Loma Prieta Earthquake struck. It killed 17 people and injured thousands while sending us diving for cover. Memorable indeed. Generously, he also provided a Foreword to my book *UFOs: Myths, Conspiracies, and Realities*, and he has included many references to me in this book.

—**JOHN B. ALEXANDER**