



**BOOK AND
MULTIMEDIA
REVIEW**

Imminent: Inside the Pentagon's Hunt for UFOs

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Luis “Lue” Elizondo has a full dance card these days. The podcast, television, and radio airwaves have been burning up to meet the demands of so many people eager to hear his story. Perhaps that’s exaggerated—but not by much. News of Elizondo’s recently -released book, *Imminent: Inside the Pentagon’s Hunt for UFOs*, and the interviews he has given to support that release have penetrated deeply into both the newsrooms and the living rooms of America. But the book has global reach, as well. In early November 2024, I saw *Imminent* prominently displayed in the window of a Budapest, Hungary bookstore.

Written in a popular style, *Imminent* is easily digestible. It eschews scientific jargon and theorizing, except in the most general but necessary way, and comes across as a fairly humble account of a quite extraordinary life. Of most interest to JSE readers would be Elizondo’s seminal association with the Pentagon’s AATIP UAP (UFO) investigation program and its successor(s). I’ll say more later, but it’s important to note that this book isn’t *only* about that. To contain that core part of his story, Elizondo weaves a cocoon out of his life before and after. That alone is worth the price of the book.

Elizondo’s first encounter with anything “paranormal” (with respect to the US government) involved an association with the late Gene Lessman, a veteran of the Star Gate remote viewing program (and a long-time friend of mine) who recruited Lue for a clandestine US Army intelligence cover program. As an off-the-books sidebar to this official relationship, Lessman also let Elizondo in on the existence of Star Gate, the final iteration of the military’s psychic spy remote viewing program. Lessman then informally taught Elizondo remote viewing, intending to introduce him to the managers of the program as a potential recruit. Unbeknownst to Gene, who by then was no longer formally associated with the program, Star Gate was about to be cancelled by the cynical leadership of the CIA. That was perhaps fortuitous for the UAP saga. If Elizondo had been inducted into Star Gate, he may not have been available for later recruitment into the UAP program.

But what *about* those UAPs? The book does not disappoint. Elizondo’s first inkling that anything was up in that domain—or that there was even anything worth *taking seriously* about UAPs—was when he was contacted by a man named Jay Stratton (now himself well-known in the UAP world) and asked to handle the counter-intelligence (CI) envelope protecting from prying eyes what Lue soon learned was the Department of Defense’s program investigating UFOs.

As he describes his steep learning curve, Elizondo summarizes a substantial number of UFO events and reports, some famous, others obscure. The initial account he relates is the long string of occurrences in the vicinity of Colares, Brazil—encounters he first heard about at a business dinner he attended with his DoD associates, along with Robert



Bigelow, Hal Puthoff, and a Brazilian military officer, General Roberto Uchôa. Over the past ten years, the Colares events have become much more widely known, recently comprising a major portion of the first episode of George Knapp's new "Investigation Alien" documentary on Netflix. But in the world of ufology, Colares still counts as a recent revelation. Elizondo learned of these occurrences from the original sources and Brazilian authorities. The other events Elizondo describes span a time frame from the 1950s to the very recent.

But these are in the book as just a sampling. Interwoven are stories of his deepening influence within the top-secret UAP program, ending with his exit under protest from there into the world of civilian whistle-blowers. What *Imminent* brings to the table is useful detail for understanding the organizational and bureaucratic complications and maneuverings that have made "Disclosure" so difficult to accomplish. Indeed, the parts of the story where Elizondo reveals the legislative contortions, the back-channel deal-making, the promises kept and broken, the bureaucratic logjams and dead ends, may seem tedious to those seeking the newest, juiciest UAP and ET revelations. But it is the most important part of the book for those seeking to understand and—just maybe—influence the process, rather than simply be titillated and entertained, as seems to be the true goal of the most popular "Disclosure" communities.

If you pay attention to what Elizondo is saying, this is what you will learn: Thinking that the Government will finally cave in to disclosure demands, and simply hand each of us a binder neatly organized with verified case studies, autopsy photographs and complex engineering diagrams of real UAPs, all arranged in chronological order is as much a fantasy as some of the most extreme popular speculative claims about Pleidians, Zeta Reticuli and Lizard People.

Even this isn't the whole story. It's clear that there are things Elizondo can't yet talk about. When finally revealed, those details will, hopefully, bring a fuller understanding of the whole picture. Lue does engage in a bit of ax-grinding. There are folks that Elizondo doesn't name who purposely put up obstacles to the investigative process, continually trying to block any and all attempts to establish ground truth.

There are two exceptions to this anonymity that Elizondo is very happy to name: Intelligence community bureaucrat (and retired soldier) Garry Reid and Congressman Mike Turner. If their behavior was truly as egregious as *Imminent* makes it sound, then these two deserve whatever (figurative!) stones can be thrown at them. It's a shame

that others just as—or even more—culpable can't receive the same treatment. This ax-grinding is understandable, even justified. Elizondo spells out the threats and reprisals taken against him, as well as the numerous ways that he was maligned, marginalized, and pressured not to step out of line, even when he had the best interests of the nation in mind.

Elizondo does lapse briefly into scientific speculation when he considers possible explanations for some of the observed characteristics of UAP appearances. Of particular note is a section where he considers how Hal Puthoff's theories about UAP propulsion fit into the framework of reported observations. These theories do correlate nicely, but correlation doesn't necessarily mean that's how things will turn out to be in the end. It's still likely that, if Elizondo (channeling his inner Puthoff) turns out to be wrong, the true principles behind UAP propulsion and other behaviors will nevertheless solve the problem in a similar way, once they're finally discovered.

No good book review is complete without including a few things to complain about. My first point is trivial, but a sore point for me: The confusion about the Star Gate Program's name. People, it is *two words*, with initial capitals! Written the wrong way, "Stargate" is a book, a movie, and a television series. "Star Gate" is the correct umbrella name for the Government's 23-year remote viewing program. It's a self-perpetuating error promulgated because the people who know better don't make enough of a fuss about it. So put me on record as making that fuss. I don't blame Elizondo for this. The mistaken usage is so widespread that I may be tilting at windmills to even bother protesting. But one must shout against the storm.

Okay, now to be a little more serious. One of the things that annoyed me about *Imminent* is the lack of attribution and sourcing. Maybe this was the publisher's choice to avoid footnoting. But there are less distracting options, such as chapter notes at the back of the book. Too often Elizondo relates a story, mentions a quote or cites an interesting detail that he attributes to an unnamed someone or somewhere else, and about which it would have added to the book's credibility to be able to seek out the context or to read more; yet there was often no clue where to find that "more." Many of the references I was already familiar with, and could put my finger on. But there were some that were not, and the same would apply more broadly for many who might read the book. This is a problem that in the future should be corrected, if *Imminent's* full value is to be realized.

One way to describe the book would be as a series of vignettes, some short, some longer, united by a common

thread—Elizondo’s personal story that anchors the pieces together. But there is a bit of skipping back and forth and around. If managed properly, this is not problematic. But I didn’t always feel that the chronology was preserved. It was occasionally hard to tell whether something described in one section or chapter occurred before or after what was happening in the next.

There were several interesting reveals here, most of which will be familiar to those who are well-steeped in the UAP lore. But the majority of readers will likely be unaware. One example that will surprise many unfamiliar with the literature is the extent to which harm has occurred to humans from close encounters with UAPs. For example, the Colares, Brazil, incidents yielded many documented injuries to locals.

In some passages, Elizondo seems to imply such harm is knowingly inflicted; yet elsewhere leaves the question open as to whether it is merely an unintended consequence of coming into too close contact with inherently dangerous forces and attributes of a UAP. (This is, by the way, an ambiguity I also encountered in Lacatski, Kelleher, and Knapp’s (2023) book *Skinwalker at the Pentagon*, as well as some other sources.) It’s not unreasonable to expect some confusion when discussing such topics with respect to this esoteric subject matter. After all, we don’t actually know whether harm is intended. If we focus strictly on facts and not speculation, all we can say is that *significant harm can and does result* from close encounters of the wrong kind.

There is, nonetheless, much that is interesting, useful, and revelatory in this book. I found enlightening Elizondo’s concept of six “observables”. These form a set of criteria describing characteristics that single out UAPs as anomalous and differentiate them from mundane phenomena typically mistaken for UAPs. This struck a chord for me, in ways similar to Vallée and Davis’s (2005) “6-layer Model for Anomalous Phenomena.” (Though the coverage is different, the two sets of six fit well together.)

I also resonated to the answer he gave to a question he was occasionally asked by upper-level decision-makers as to “why [Lue and his associates] had gone to such lengths to push this [UAP] subject into the light of day? Don’t we have other problems to focus on?” Elizondo’s response:

...long running secrets end up disastrous to all nations. Secrets are like perishable food left untouched for too long. Eventually they

rot and stink, forcing you to clean out the entire refrigerator. One keeps secrets in the first place to ensure that the enemy doesn’t learn something we want to protect. But once a secret becomes widely known, you lose credibility the longer you cling to it. Secrets kept too long impede scientific progress. In this case, it affects everyone on the planet, and so it’s better that all of humanity should know the truth. (227)

As a long-time former intelligence officer and classified document custodian, I am cognizant of legitimate reasons to keep secrets beyond their perceived shelf-life. I’m further prepared to believe that many of the *details* about UAPs, technical or otherwise, may justifiably still be kept secret. But that doesn’t weaken the force of Elizondo’s response. And in this particular case, the Government’s history of denial, skepticism, and cynical obfuscation is the major contributor to the kind of doubt and suspicion that exists today over the UAP issue.

I’m no conspiracy theorist, for whom the Government is nothing more than a hive mind, indiscriminately trampling rights and individuals as it works to achieve its nefarious goals. Elizondo’s book shows that view to be mistaken. In *Imminent*, there are good guys, bad guys, and in-between guys at every level. But since *we don’t often know* which factions in the Government are the obfuscators, I am forced to use “government” as a broad brush, hopefully painting the guilty while not tarnishing too many of the innocent in the Government’s employ. Fortunately, Elizondo has pointed his finger at some of the perpetrators. There clearly are more yet that deserve their own form of “disclosure.”

If you have any interest at all in the UAP phenomenon, you will definitely find *Imminent* well worth your time.

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