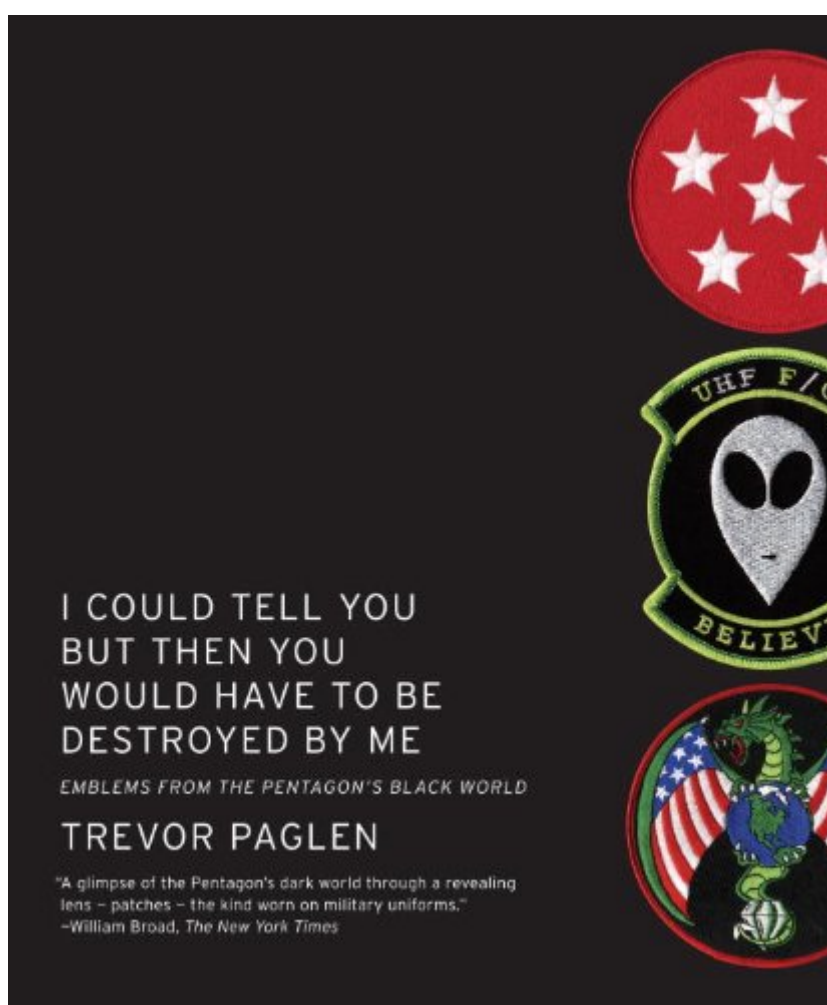


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# I Could Tell You But Then You Would Have To Be Destroyed By Me: Emblems From The Pentagon's Black World



## Synopsis

Updated with New Information and Additional Patches • They're on the shoulders of all military personnel: patches showing what a soldier's unit does. But what if that's top secret? • A glimpse of [the Pentagon's] dark world through a revealing lens "patches" the kind worn on military uniforms. . . The book offers not only clues into the nature of the secret programs, but also a glimpse of zealous male bonding among the presumed elite of the military-industrial complex. The patches often feel like fraternity pranks gone ballistic. • "William Broad, The New York Times • I COULD TELL YOU. . . is a bestselling collection of more than seventy military patches representing secret government projects. Here author/photographer/investigator Trevor Paglen explores classified weapons projects and intelligence operations by scrutinizing their own imagery and jargon, disclosing new facts about important military units, which are here known by peculiar names (• "Goat Suckers," • "Grim Reapers," • "Tastes Like Chicken" •) and illustrated with occult symbols and ridiculous cartoons. The precisely photographed patches "worn by military personnel working on classified missions, such as those at the legendary Area 51" reveal much about a strange and eerie world about which little was previously known. • "A fresh approach to secret government." • "Steven Aftergood, The Federation of American Scientists • An impressive collection." • "Justin Rood, ABC News • "A fascinating set of shoulder patches." • "Stephen Colbert, The Colbert Report • "I was fascinated... [Paglen] has assembled about 40 colorful patch insignia from secret, military "black" programs that are hardly ever discussed in public. He has plenty of regalia from the real denizens of Area 51." • "Alex Beam, The Boston Globe

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I really liked the info and the presentation. It seems like the book is a little small for the money, but I still really enjoyed reading it. I deducted only 1 star because the book seems like a short read, and it would have been nice to have some more backstory on a few of the patches, and related topics. There are a few photographs of airfields, and bases, but a little more info on the bases, programs, aircraft, or meaning of the military/intelligence organizations would have been useful and helped explain context. Also, in probably a minor unrelated point, the cover of the book was a bit mangled when I received it, but I didn't feel the need to waste time/money returning it. It just needs to be more careful packing small odd shaped books when in combined order shipping.

I found myself gaping as I read this book, by turns astonished that classified personnel could get away with having a sense of humor on the job and cackling madly at the inside jokes. There appears to be a rich language of symbolism in the patches' patterns, and many an afternoon could be whiled away by the reader attempting to piece it together. I've already recommended this book to several friends, and I can't recommend it highly enough to anyone curious about military heraldry or black projects.

What a great book! If you are a conspiracy nut, military historian, believe in aliens, collect military artifacts, are into aviation, or any of the above, this may be a really fun book for you! This is not a dense or didactic book, but rather, it is a picture book with a paragraph or two about each entry. A good supplement to a more serious collection, or a unique coffee table book.

This book became irresistible when a large, well-illustrated article about it appeared in the New York Times ("Inside the Black Budget" by William J. Broad) on April 1. The book came in the mail today. It is very good. Folks who are interested in the subject might really like it, but, as the spread in the

Times indicates, there is a general audience also for a look behind the green door if the presentation is accessible. In the case of this modest book, it is small in size and just right in length. The author, Trevor Paglen, states that this book is not intended to be a reference for historians and with that important caveat, I recommend it highly. Mr. Paglen, a candidate for a PhD in geography at UC Berkeley, treats the subject with respect and seems to have enjoyed himself, as do the patch designers and the people who approved those designs. His next book (and his thesis), says the Times, is about secret bases and "undisclosed locations" in the US. It is called "Blank Spots on the Map: The Dark Geography of the Pentagon's Secret World" and will be published by Dutton next February (2009). While you're waiting, have a look at "Top Secret Tourism: Your Travel Guide to Germ Warfare Laboratories, Clandestine Aircraft Bases and Other Places in the United States You're Not Supposed to Know About" by Harry Helms, which is also recommended.

good but need more information on patches

A very enjoyable book. The darkest projects have one thing in common - Humans like comrades. Where the same special job is shared by a few. Like firefighter and police officers. To identify one as part of the team they make shoulder patches unique to their unit. Some of the patch designs are self explanatory while others you turn upside down or reverse in the mirror looking a clue as to the patch might be saying.

I love this fascinating little book. It is a tiny fact-filled volume, with a patch from a different top-secret test flight or satellite reconnaissance unit on each page. Where possible, the author describes what the patch symbolism represents and where the unit was located. This is a thrilling little book for anyone that was involved in these or similar "black" programs themselves, and maybe even more intriguing for civilians. Not the dimensions of the book - it is very small; the patches are photographed at approximately life size and each page is not much bigger than each patch. This book focuses mainly on Air Force and NRO secret units. I'd love to see one of these for military intelligence and NSA units.

The Black Projects that are covered in this book are those that you would expect, not the ones I was hoping for. Almost all of the patches are from now declassified projects that took place between 1980-2000 and they are vastly in the field of aeronautics. Trevor Paglen gets about as close as any one could I suppose without being destroyed, and for that I respect his work. I guess I was hoping

for more glimpses, more of a deeper overall survey of the special projects world. I certainly had my hopes too high for such a tiny book with such a narrow focus. If he had added more conjecture to entertain the reader he would have reduced its believability. This book is worth reading if you can borrow a copy (it will take you a couple hours to read), but it's only worth buying if you are a military historian or are an avid patch collector.

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