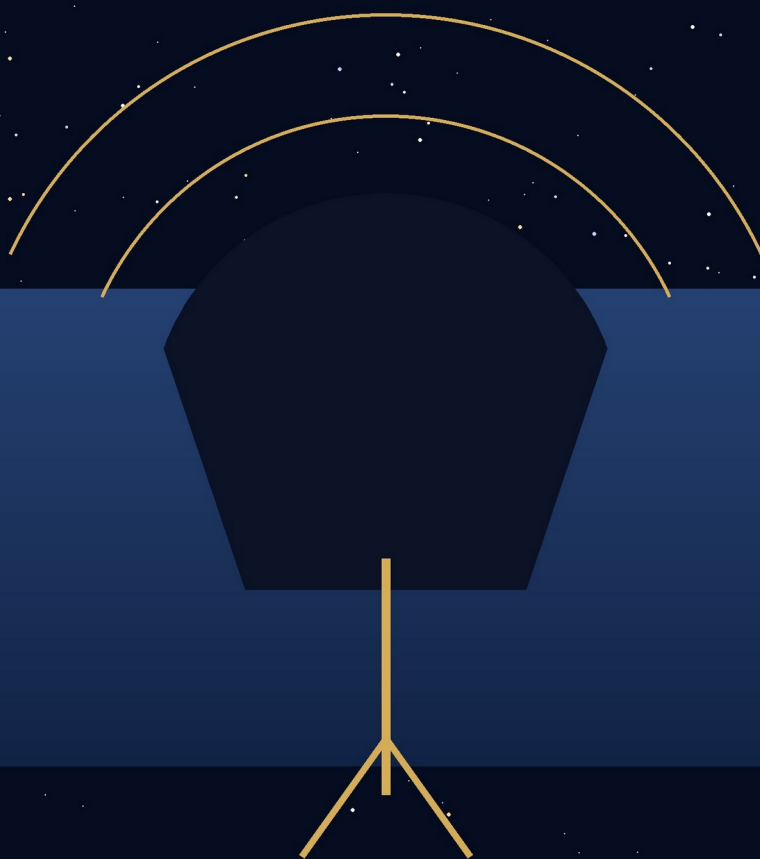


THE UNEXPLAINED FILES · BOOK TWENTY-THREE

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SIGNALS FROM THE UNKNOWN

Strange Radio Bursts, Cosmic Messages and the
Search for Intelligent Life



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PUBLISHING NOTE

This is a work of general-interest nonfiction about radio astronomy, technosignatures, SETI, strange signals and related scientific claims. It distinguishes documented observations from interpretation and speculation. Scientific and institutional material was checked through August 2026 where relevant. No radio, optical or planetary anomaly discussed in this book is presented as confirmed extraterrestrial technology.

Preprints and evolving research are identified where appropriate. Search results and null detections can change as new observations become available. Readers who want to evaluate individual cases should consult the primary literature and public datasets listed in Selected Sources and Further Reading.

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PREFACE

The universe is loud. Stars flare, pulsars tick, planets crackle, magnetars erupt and human technology leaks radio energy into the sky. Against that background, the search for an artificial signal from another civilization is not a matter of simply hearing something strange. It is the harder task of proving that a signal is not a natural phenomenon, not a satellite, not an aircraft, not a transmitter on Earth, not a software artifact and not a statistical coincidence.

That distinction is the heart of this book. Some of the most famous “alien signals” in popular culture became valuable precisely because they were not alien. Pulsars taught astronomers that nature can produce astonishingly regular radio pulses. Perytons taught researchers that a microwave oven can imitate an astronomical transient. BLC1 showed how a candidate that looks persuasive in one slice of data can collapse under deeper interference analysis. Fast radio bursts began as one-off mysteries and became a major field of astrophysics, with magnetars now providing a compelling natural engine for at least part of the population.

One case still refuses to disappear from the public imagination: the Wow! Signal of August 15, 1977. It remains famous because it was strong, narrowband, apparently compatible with a fixed point on the sky and never convincingly repeated. A 2025 reanalysis of archival Ohio SETI data revised its estimated frequency, strength and possible sky position and argued that an astrophysical explanation may be more plausible than previously appreciated. That is not the same as solving the case. It is an example of how a mystery can change when old data meet new methods.

This volume follows the evidence ladder used throughout *The Unexplained Files*. Documented observations are separated from reasonable interpretation, and both are separated from speculation. No radio signal discussed here is presented as