

## **Pulp Fiction**

### **Two books About Bilderberg**

*Bilderberg Group: What Don't You Know?*

*Conspiracy Theories Surrounding The Top Secret Society*

William Myron Price  
(self published, 2018)

*Bilderberg Exposed:*

*The Shadow Architects of Global Power*

Michael Rodriguez,  
(self published, 2025)

### **Will Banyan**

**G**iven the fascination that the Bilderberg Group engenders amongst the conspiratorially inclined, it would be refreshing to report that the two books reviewed here add new insights or information. But, alas, both publications do little more than recycle already existing material, repeat erroneous factoids, and make ultimately unconvincing attempts to demonstrate Bilderberg's alleged political power. The research methods needed to unpack Bilderberg's complex political impact appear to be beyond the capabilities of these authors.

William Myron Price is an Australian, whose oeuvre includes such titles as *True Police Stories*, *Unsolved Mysteries*, *Aztec History*, *World War 2 History*, and books about the Illuminati, Skull and Bones, the Knights Templar, and secret societies more generally. While Price is a competent writer and assembler of information, his book is a mediocre survey essay.

His aim is to assess whether 'Bilderberg Meetings really do have an impact on the way that the Western world is run'. This is driven by his observation that because of the 'limited' mainstream reporting, this has generated some 'fairly wild theories' about the Bilderberg Group. And yet Price offers no theory, only the promise to 'look at the evidence'. But what evidence? The book has no footnotes or bibliography. Some sources are cited in the text, otherwise referencing is sparse. This is hardly a trivial matter as it becomes apparent that Price relies a little too heavily on flawed conspiratorial accounts of Bilderberg.

For example, Price repeats that old canard that the existence of Bilderberg

was a 'closely guarded secret' until US columnist Westbrook Pegler wrote about the 1957 Bilderberg meeting on St. Simon's Island in Georgia, US. Pegler's article, writes Price, 'was the first time that a journalist had highlighted the existence of a Bilderberg Meeting'. Except this claim, which appears to have been lifted from one of the few sources he cites – Jim Tucker's *Bilderberg Diary*<sup>1</sup> – just isn't true. Pegler's two syndicated columns on the Georgia meeting came out months *after* the *New York Times* reported that the 'informal association' known as the 'Bilderberg group' were gathering on St Simon's Island for a 'private and unofficial three-day meeting'.<sup>2</sup> It would be more accurate to credit Pegler with launching the conspiratorial version of what happens at Bilderberg.

Price promotes this myth of the Bilderberg 'media blackout' elsewhere, but succeeds only in making more demonstrably untrue claims. For example, he claims that up until the 'late 1970s' there were 'sporadic press reports in Europe about Bilderberg but almost nothing in the US'. But I have managed to collect nearly 100 US press clippings covering 17 out of the 27 Bilderberg meetings held between 1954 and 1979.

Price also puts forward the novel argument that Bilderberg fails to follow Chatham House rules, that participants can refer to what was said at the meeting without identifying the speaker.<sup>3</sup> It is Price's contention that contrary to this rule, 'participants at Bilderberg Meetings won't talk publicly about anything that has been discussed'. Again, this isn't true. Over the years quite a few of them, mostly journalists, have written publicly about what was said. *Financial Times* columnist and frequent Bilderberg participant Martin Wolf, for example, has referred to its deliberations numerous times.<sup>4</sup> More recently detailed accounts have been provided by European journalists who were participants, including Trine Eilertsen (2015), Stefano Feltri (2019, 2022, 2025), Martin Krasnik (2022), and Kaius Niemi (2022).

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<sup>1</sup> See Jim Tucker, *Bilderberg Diary: One Reporter's 25 Year Battle to Shine the Light on the World Shadow Government*, (American Free Press, 2005), pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> See 'Views exchanged on NATO policies', *New York Times*, 16 February 1957 and 'World discussions end', *New York Times*, 19 February 1957.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Bilderberg Meetings' official website: 'Meetings are held under the Chatham House Rule, which states that participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s) nor of any other participant may be revealed.' <<https://www.bilderbergmeetings.org/>>

<sup>4</sup> See for example the following columns: 'A partnership heading for destruction', *Financial Times*, 23 May 2003; 'The transatlantic divide must not be allowed to widen', *Financial Times*, 23 June 2004; 'America needs "liberal realism" at the heart of its foreign policy', *Financial Times*, 14 June 2006; and 'The looming 100-year US-China conflict', *Financial Times*, 5 June 2019.

Perhaps the least convincing part of the Price's book is its attempt to expose Bilderberg's political power. His primary example is how 'fairly junior' politicians have found that a Bilderberg invitation 'seems to lead to a stellar improvement in fortunes'. Price lists a number of transatlantic political leaders who attended Bilderberg meetings before they assumed high office but makes no attempt to demonstrate causality, offering speculation culminating in this conspiratorial take:

However, there is a third and more sinister possibility: that aspiring politicians are invited to Bilderberg Meetings so that they can be informally vetted to see whether their views correspond with the agenda of the group (whatever that may be). If they are found to be supportive, then members of the group could then use their influence to advance the careers of selected politicians.

This is a long-standing claim about Bilderberg, but beyond merely noting which future leaders had attended Bilderberg, it works more by guilt-by-association. I've yet to see a serious attempt at demonstrating the direct king-making benefits of Bilderberg participation by conspiratorial writers. More recent work by academic Lukas Kantor, in this journal and in *International Politics*,<sup>5</sup> presents a more nuanced picture in which Bilderberg participants may leverage some of the connections they make at the meetings to help their careers.

In contrast to the equivocations in Price's book, *Bilderberg Exposed: The Shadow Architects of Global Power* by self-described 'renowned economic analyst and investigative journalist'<sup>6</sup> Michael Rodriguez, is quick to paint Bilderberg as a sinister enterprise. In a fevered introduction, Bilderberg is described as 'arguably the most influential shadow institution in modern history'. 'For seventy years', he claims, 'this secretive organization has operated in the shadows of democratic societies, wielding influence that extends far beyond the reach of any elected government'.

As with Price's dispiriting effort, Rodriguez promises much, but delivers very little. The promotional materials boast of a 'meticulously researched investigation' that draws from 'declassified documents, insider testimonies, and decades of investigative research'.<sup>7</sup> Rodriguez claims his investigation 'reveals the mechanisms through which the Bilderberg Club [sic] has shaped everything

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<sup>5</sup> See Lukas Kantor, 'Elite clubs as career elevator? Mixed evidence from the Bilderberg Group', *International Politics*, vol. 60, no. 6, pp. 1209-1247; and 'Bilderbergers Head the EU, NATO, the IMF and the UN', *Lobster* 89 (2024) at <<https://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/article/issue/89/bilderbergers-head-the-eu-nato-the-imf-and-the-un/>>.

<sup>6</sup> <[https://zews123.github.io/michael-rodriguez-books/books/Bilderberg\\_Exposed](https://zews123.github.io/michael-rodriguez-books/books/Bilderberg_Exposed)>

<sup>7</sup> See note 6.

from NATO's expansion and the European Union's creation to financial crises and digital surveillance systems'. But sourcing is literally non-existent, and I suspect this book was churned out using an AI program, because it is full of errors. The most common of which is naming people as Bilderberg participants which is not confirmed by public meeting records. I found over a dozen prominent people falsely named by Rodriguez as Bilderberg participants. If any of these people were undeclared participants, he provides no evidence. For example, Rodriguez claims that Bill Gates was at the 2017 meeting. Gates did attend the 2010 meeting, and was credibly observed attending the 2012 meeting, despite not being a listed participant, but there is no evidence he went in 2017. Other factual errors include:

- It is claimed a pivotal moment in the creation of the Bilderberg Group, was a meeting allegedly held in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel New York in December 1952, at the behest of then CIA Director-General Walter Bedell Smith. A meeting where participants allegedly sought inspiration from structures and practices of the Freemasons. No sources are cited to prove this meeting occurred, and there is no record of it in most recent academic accounts of Bilderberg's origins.
- It erroneously claims that future US Vice President Walter Mondale was appointed US co-chairman of Bilderberg in 1977 after the resignation of Prince Bernhard. In fact Mondale only attended the 1974 and 1981 Bilderberg meetings and never joined the Steering Committee. Lord Home replaced Prince Bernhard as Bilderberg Chairman; there were no Bilderberg co-chairmen at that stage.
- Rodriguez claims that in the midst of the pandemic, the 2021 Bilderberg meeting 'was held virtually', even though Bilderberg officially announced that the 2020 and 2021 meetings were cancelled because of pandemic travel restrictions.
- And finally, for some reason he keeps referring to the meetings held at Chantilly, Virginia as having occurred in some place called 'Chesterfield'.

As a consequence, Rodriguez struggles to prove his assertion that Bilderberg has 'served as an informal mechanism for coordinating policy between European and American elites'. He makes a number of specific allegations about Bilderberg, including that it was responsible for devising NATO's 'flexible response' in the 1950s, set the seeds for European integration, tried to prevent Brexit, had anticipated the global pandemic, and was the driver of various digital technologies. But the evidence he presents is slim to risible.

Looming over the future of that transatlantic relationship is the chaotic presidency of Donald Trump. Price's book, published in the midst of Trump's first

term, has little to say other than to note that Bilderberg Steering Committee member Peter Thiel was a donor to Trump and a 'confidante'. Rodriguez is more forthright, describing Trump's election as a 'blow to the globalist project' and a 'shock' to the Bilderberg crowd.

The Trump administration conducted policies that directly contradicted ideas discussed at Bilderberg meetings. Withdrawal from climate agreements, trade wars with allies, criticism of NATO, rapprochement with authoritarian leaders — all this undermined the foundations of the world order created after World War II.

But then the analysis peters out with little of note to add. This is unfortunate, for in the current era of the second Trump administration the stresses on post-war world order and the transatlantic relationship are even more extreme. Officials, including senior appointees from the Trump administration, have continued to attend Bilderberg and there is surely something of substance to say about that, particularly given Bilderberg's original purpose of enhancing the transatlantic relationship. Trump advisor and son-in-law Jared Kushner, for example, briefly mentions attending the 2019 Bilderberg meeting in his memoir.<sup>8</sup> This document is, of course, not consulted by Rodriguez.

Both books finish on a slightly different notes. Price decides Bilderberg is 'simply a conspiracy' not a conspiracy theory, but he rejects the idea its aim is 'world dominance'. Instead he believes Bilderberg participants seek only more wealth and power. Rodriguez in contrast, claims the history of the 'Bilderberg Club' (sic) is of an organisation that attempted to 'create an informal world government when a formal one was impossible'. And he insists that Bilderberg 'has played and continues to play an important role in shaping world order'.

Neither book really adds any new, credible information. Rodriguez's book is filled with factual errors and repeats claims of dubious provenance, while Price just recycles earlier conspiratorial works. Worse, neither book attempts the difficult work of trying to substantiate the wilder claims about Bilderberg's political impact. In sum, there is nothing to see here.

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<sup>8</sup> Kushner refers to Bilderberg as 'one of the world's most secretive gatherings', and notes he turned down two previous invitations, but decided to attend the 2019 meeting, held in Montreaux, Switzerland, hoping it would be a 'useful venue to explain our approach to the Middle East peace and build support among an influential class of people'. Jared Kushner, *Breaking History: A White House Memoir* (New York: Broadside Books, 2022), p. 260. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also attended but makes no reference of it in his memoir.

*published in Nexus and Paranoia, and published numerous pieces on the now defunct Conspiracy Archive website. He wrote 'The "Rothschild connection": the House of Rothschild and the invasion of Iraq' in Lobster 63 and 'Bilderberg Myths: Were the Bilderbergers behind the 1973 oil shock?' in Lobster 76.*

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