

Valenzetti

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Though shrouded in mystery, this much is known about the Valenzetti Equation: it is a mathematical calculation designed to predict nothing less than the exact number of years left before the extinction of the human race. Although little is known about the circumstances leading to the creation of the equation, mystery novelist Gary Troup put forward an interesting theory in his sole non-fiction book "The Valenzetti Equation" (a fair-to-middling tome which owes as much to popular conspiracy fiction as it does to higher mathematics).

According to Troup - whose research is primarily based on interviews with "UN members" willing to break their non-disclosure agreements, and recently declassified Soviet files - the equation was the end result of a study commissioned by the United Nations following the Cuban Missile Crisis. With their respective nations having just faced the very precipice of mutually-assured destruction, the United States and Soviet Union - under the auspices of the Security Council - secretly sought Valenzetti out as a disinterested third party and charged him with the creation of an infallible mathematical algorithm for the prediction of Armageddon.

Less than a year later, Valenzetti returned with his eponymous equation - which, reportedly, is not unlike the Drake Equation (sometimes mistakenly referred to as the "Sagan Equation"), but far greater in complexity. Because of the conditions of secrecy under which Valenzetti produced his work, the totality of the equation has never been brought to light, nor has his final tally for the number of years left before the human race extinguishes itself with nuclear fire. Compounding the mystery is Valenzetti's steadfast refusal to discuss his work (he is best known for allegedly torching his proof of Fermat's last theorem after it was verified by a group of colleagues). Valenzetti's mysterious death and Gary Troup's disappearance (and presumed death) on Oceanic Airlines flight 815, which was lost over the pacific on September 2004.

Enzo Valenzetti

Very little is known about Enzo Valenzetti, save that he was born in the island of Sardinia sometime in the late 1920's. Identified as a math prodigy from an early age, Valenzetti attended the prestigious Fibonacci State Institute of Advanced Sciences early in life - achieving the equivalent of a full doctorate before the age of sixteen - but his strident desire for privacy, compounded by a gag order placed on his personal information by the Italian government - reportedly in exchange for his services - has thwarted even the most intense of inquiries into his career and movements, and Valenzetti's death silenced many who sought to tell his story. Similarly, Valenzetti has never published his research - but his reputation is legendary among mathematicians and scientists alike.

As a young man, Valenzetti reportedly spent a significant amount of time in the company of such luminaries as Kurt Godel, Albert Einstein, and John Forbes Nash, but, as no record exists of his having had a tenure at any major academic institution, it is difficult to establish his exact contributions to the field. Most controversial among those who follow advanced mathematics is the contention, made by several prominent figures in the early sixties, that Valenzetti was first to devise a proof of Fermat's last theorem - a proof verified by several colleagues - only to throw the completed work in the fire so that - according to his former assistant - "other could have as much fun as he did in solving it."

Valenzetti's most legendary contribution is said to be his eponymous equation. Anecdotal reports indicate that Valenzetti, at the request of the United Nations, devised a complicated algorithm capable of predicting the exact date of the extinction of the human race. As with so many things relating to Valenzetti, the actual equation has never been seen. The result of Valenzetti's equation remains unknown and is the subject of much speculation. Sadly the answers to many of the mysteries of Valenzetti's life vanished with him after his single-engine plane crashed during a trans-European flight.