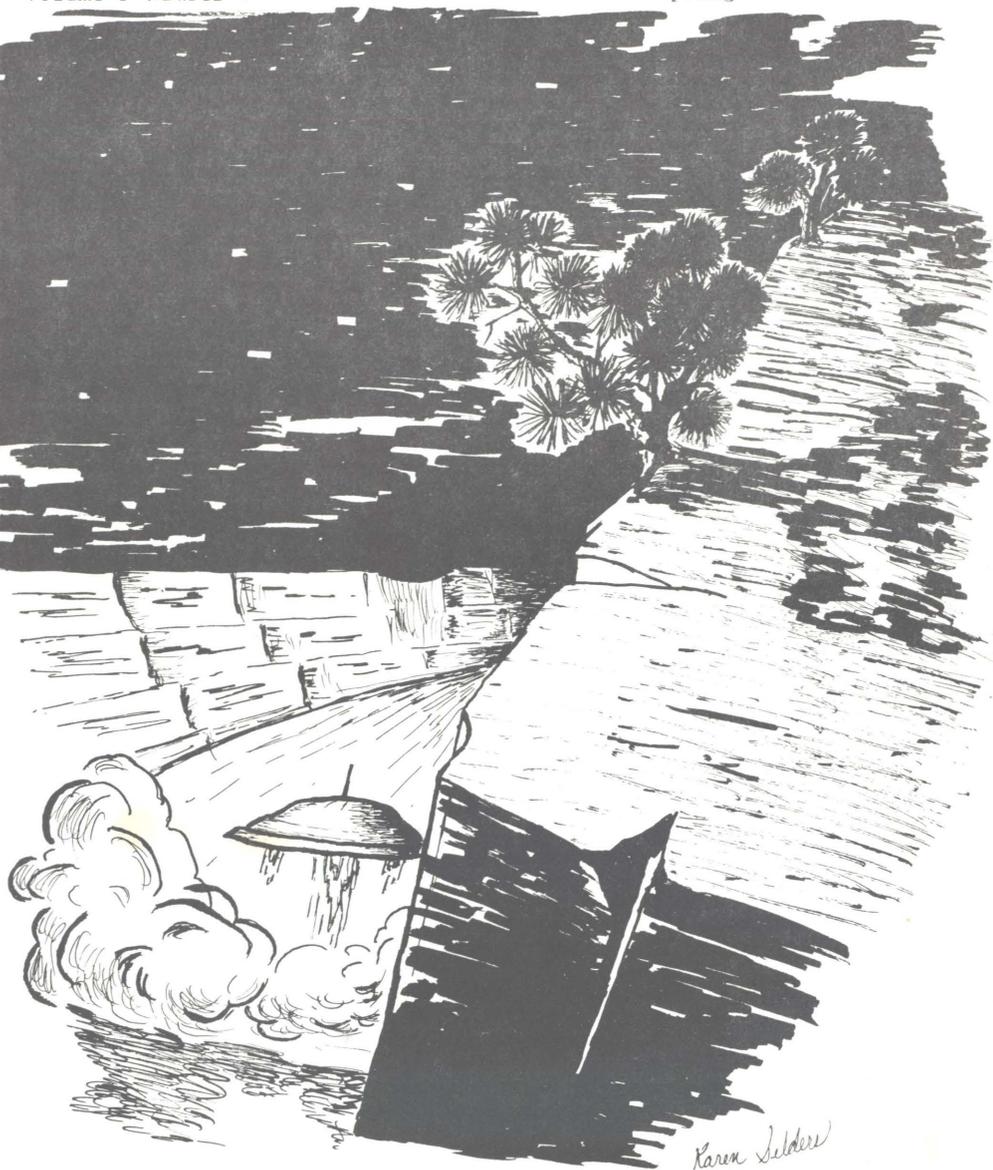


UFO MAGAZINE

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Dear Friend:

Since the dawn of recorded history Man has reported many strange things in the sky. Historians such as Livy, Cicero and Pliny have written about "pillars of light" or "new moons or suns" flying in the sky. Since 1947 this phenomena of mysterious objects seen has increased a thousand-fold. Today objects are seen all over the world by citizens from every walk of life.

Scientific and non-scientific investigations into the Flying Saucer phenomena indicate that something is being seen in our skies. Some researchers feel they are a natural phenomena while others feel they are intelligently controlled spaceships from another planet. My feelings as a saucer researcher is to bring out all facets of the UFO mystery to the public and let them decide for themselves.

UFO MAGAZINE'S NEWS BULLETIN, published in conjunction with UFO MAGAZINE, is my effort to bring out true facts about UFOs. It is a mimeographed 4 page 8 1/4 inch Bulletin published quarterly. The pages contain recent sightings and recent news in the UFO world. A one year subscription is one dollar (\$1.). Mail your check or money order to NEWS BULLETIN, P.O. Box 2708, Cleveland, Ohio 44111

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Robert S. Easley
Robert S. Easley
Editor

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The recently issued Condon Report-more exactly, the "Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects" (Bantam, 1969)-must be considered a major document, both for the ufology field and for social science in general. Before giving my reactions to it, I should first state that my own bias is that a certain small proportion of UFO sightings represent observations of objective, and as yet unexplained, phenomena; of the possible explanations for these phenomena, I find the extra-terrestrial spacecraft hypothesis the most appealing, logically (it offers a plausible, coherent account for the behavior of the phenomena) and personally. I should also note that as a social scientist, I am a layman in the natural sciences, and particularly in the disciplines of most concern to ufology- physics, astronomy, and meteorology. Therefore, until such time as the scientific community has reported in on its views, I must accept the scientific methods and data described by the Condon committee as valid for the present- especially since they have been so accepted by a committee of the National Academy of Scientists; indeed, this attitude is one recommended by Condon himself in Section I of the report. Of course, one is not thereby compelled to accept the interpretations given by Condon or his committee members to the significance or implications of their findings.

The report may be usefully approached from three perspectives.

First, it is a fascinating document of source material for the social sciences, particularly those disciplines involved in crowd behavior and attitude formation. While the report wisely, and necessarily, avoids making direct psychological studies of UFO observers, since this would not be helpful to the thrust of its investigation, the sections on a UFO attitude survey (III, Chapter 7), perceptual problems (VI, Chapters 1 and 2), case studies (IV), and a UFO history (V) are replete with valuable information on social-psychological factors that may influence the ways of individuals perceive and report anomalous phenomena such as UFO's. Since it is (or should be) obvious that the UFO observer's mental set, interrelation with other participants in the sighting, and expectations regarding the consequences of making his sighting public will all influence the quality of any report made, ufologists would do well to give the relevant sections of the Condon book as much attention as they pay to the sections dealing with criteria for handling direct and indirect physical evidence.

Second, the Condon report may itself be viewed as a large-scale case study in the sociology of science, specifically, the way scientists organize and carry out an investigation of phenomena ("anomalies") whose objective existence, if established, could not be explained by presently understood natural laws.

This receptivity system of science to newly-perceived data that cannot be accounted for by prevailing scientific theories has been most provocatively analyzed by Thomas S. Kuhn in "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" (Chicago Phoenix, 1964). The idea is that the acceptance by the scientific community of data which appears to challenge established theories may depend, in part, on such extra-scientific factors as the personalities of the individuals reporting the data or the threat felt by scientists who have a vested interest in maintaining the inviolability of established theories. Therefore, while the report should be judged on its own merits regarding its conclusions on UFO's, it is of direct relevance under this second perspective to study the report, and associated documents, for what they reveal regarding the attitudes and motivations of the committee members.

Condon is himself very sensitive to this question of how science works, as he spends the opening pages of the book on a description which accurately portrays how most scientists view their business-scientists are skeptical, prone to challenge authority, and willing to consider new findings for which a plausible case can be made, so that, in due course, any individual errors of judgement will be corrected by the working of the scientific community. Unfortunately, studies in the history and sociology of science have indicated that, in fact, the hostility of establishment scientists to particularly stressful new data may be such as to prevent for some time serious consideration of the implications of the data for science. Regarding UFO's, the question becomes whether, as Condon states, the general indifference of scientists to UFO studies over the last twenty years has been due to the tenuousness of the data (itself due in part to this indifference!) or perhaps at least as much to the unwillingness of scientists to engage in a systematic study of anomalous data that UFO's, at face value, represent.

Condon's own views, as expressed directly and indirectly in Sections I and II, then become important data themselves in investigating the receptivity of science to UFO material. Suffice it to say that, while I have no doubt that Condon sincerely believes that UFO sightings studied do not justify further research, I can't help but wonder at a disposition he appears to have that would bias him toward just such a conclusion. As one small, but interesting, example one may contrast his statement (p.9-10) that "it is clear that less well informed individuals are more likely to see a UFO than those who are more knowledgeable because the latter are better able to make direct identification of what they see" to his reaction to the finding of an opinion survey made for the project "that increased amount of formal education is associated with an increased tendency to believe in the reality of flying saucers"; "Perhaps this result says something about how the school system trains students in critical thinking." (p.44) The sarcasm in this last sentence is puzzling when he has previously admitted that knowledgeable people are likely to be careful about UFO observations (I assume more education has at least some positive correlation with making one more knowledgeable). One might just as well say that more educated people believe in the reality of UFO's precisely because they are convinced of the validity

of the data-but Condon does not choose this interpretation.

The third perspective from which one may judge the report is what it has to say on its central subject, the existence of UFO's as alien spacecraft and the desirability of continuing further scientific research into the subject-on both points of which Condon's conclusions are negative.

Here I would start by saying that this report is probably the most thoroughly researched, detailed study on the subject that exists to date, and, if its recommendations are followed, that we are likely to get for some time. It is filled with useful suggestions for the field investigation and analysis of UFO sightings, while its own investigative teams have shed clarifying light on several classic cases (particularly the Washington, D.C. sightings of 1952 and the Santa Ana photographs of 1965). Ironically, then, the book must be an indispensable handbook for the serious ufologist.

But of course it is on the major conclusions of the committee that public attention is focused. It might be noted that these conclusions are apparently those of Condon himself, as he alone is listed as the author of the opening two sections; conclusions of other committee members are contained in the rest of the book under the various chapters for which they were responsible.

Now, there are three levels of uncertainty, or ambiguity, which one must pass through before reaching Condon's negative findings. One deals with the sample of sightings chosen for analysis from the total available, the latter only a small fraction, in turn, of the total number of sightings people have made-the report estimates (pp. 11,45) that only 7% of all sightings are reported to collecting organizations; the key decision of what to include and what to leave out, for the basis of the report, may have had some influence on the conclusions Condon would reach. Another level is the data obtained on the reports which it was decided to investigate. Since the committee did not have enough resources to establish a nation-wide network of mobile, well-equipped investigative teams, it had to make do with sending out staff members to look at intriguing cases as soon as they came to the committee's attention-by which time chances of obtaining possible physical evidence had vanished. Finally, sticking just to the data obtained for the cases investigated, in reading the bulk of the report, one comes across a certain number of cases where the investigator says, in effect, "I've done everything I can to identify what they saw, but I can't; this doesn't prove an alien craft was seen; but on the basis of available evidence, I just don't know what was observed." I was struck by this attitude of committee members regarding several of the astronaut sightings (pp.204-208), the Mc Minnville, Oregon photos (Case 46), and several incidents involving radar and/or visual sightings (Cases 2 and 21).

Condon gives careful consideration to all these matters, and decides that they do not substantively alter his conclusions. The crux of the matter, then, revolves around the third point-setting aside the fact that the committee could not have investigated all

available cases as soon as they came to light, what significance are we to give cases among those it did investigate for which no natural explanation is now available? Condon makes very clear his belief that it is not necessary for one to completely account for ambiguous cases in order to reach a conclusion that they are probably explainable in natural terms, as long as the bulk of cases available have been so explained. That is, most cases can be explained on the basis of present knowledge; given such a trend of sufficiently high probability, a presumption is established that remaining cases could be explained similarly if sufficient and more reliable data were available. Science cannot establish certainties, but it does work with probabilities, and this is the direction the explained cases point. Such is Condon's argument.

My own belief starts with the acceptance of the scientific findings of the report, explaining the bulk of the cases, as given. The crucial difference is that I reach the opposite interpretation, based on the same data, namely, that in spite of every effort the committee made to obtain natural explanations for the cases it chose to investigate, a residual number of impressive, ambiguous cases remain unaccounted for. For me, the fact that causes may be established for the majority of cases does not constitute a trend of such high probability to overcome my feeling that it is not simply insufficient data that renders the remaining cases undefined, especially in a field where a possibly rare or elusive phenomenon is being observed in only a literal handful of circumstances. I conclude as follows:

(1) Condon is right in saying that no conclusive evidence yet exists to prove that UFO's are extraterrestrial spacecraft;

(2) Condon is incorrect in his interpretation of the data which leads him to recommend no further scientific study of UFO's—sufficient ambiguities remain, hinting at the existence of presently unexplained phenomena (of whatever origin), to justify precisely such continuing investigation.

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Around And About The Saucer World

By Rick Hilberg

Another "angel hair" case has been reported, this time in the Spring Beach area near Houston, Texas.

The substance reportedly floated to earth on November 6th shortly after two teen age boys saw a UFO hanging in the air.

David Wuliger, a professor of music at the University of Houston and a student of UFOs, said a chemist analyzed the substance in the laboratory of a multi-million dollar petroleum company.

Wuliger said the substance would not dissolve in water, alcohol, and sulfuric acid, among other things. The chemist did not want his identity or that of his company revealed, he said.

"Microscope and tactile examination indicates the substance is fibrous, elastic, relatively strong, somewhat sticky and white in color," Wuliger said.

Robert Hubbard, 15, and David Kelley, 17, students at Spring Beach High School, said they found the substance shortly after they saw a strange object in the sky.

The boys said the object looked like a coin on its side with a dome and black dots that might have been windows.

A San Jon housewife who preferred to remain anonymous said that she saw a UFO November 25 in the New Mexico night sky.

The woman said she happened to be looking out a front window of her home at about 7 P.M. when she noticed a bright, colorful UFO flying what appeared to be several feet south of U.S. 66. The UFO was traveling west to east at a low altitude and was on a steady course.

She said she could see the object for only about five seconds because it mysteriously turned off its lights after that and apparently continued flying in total darkness. It was traveling at about the speed of an airliner although she heard no noise whatsoever.

Adding that she had seen meteors before, she stated that the UFO was not a meteor or an airplane. The woman described it as being a



Hilberg and Gray Barker (r) at the 1968 Congress at Cleveland, Ohio.

saucer shaped machine with a dome in the center. The top of the dome was bright orange, the center a lighter shade of orange and the bottom yellow. The colors blended together like a rainbow and the dome emitted a steady glow similar to a light bulb but unlike a flaming object such as a meteor.

The bottom part of the craft was a shiny, white color and did not appear to be a silvery color associated with most aircraft. The UFO emitted a white smoke which could be seen behind it in a big puff, unlike the exhaust trails of jet planes. The lady stated that she did not report the sighting to authorities for fear of being ridiculed.

A spokesman for KFDD television in Amarillo, confirmed that their station ran a news account of a UFO sighting the same night in Groom, Texas. He said the information was gained from monitoring the police radio frequency. The police later denied such a report on their frequency, however. The airport at Amarillo said that an unidentified object was picked up on radar, but declined to state further.

A Michigan truck driver contends that he saw a UFO on Interstate 75 south of Bowling Green, Ohio on January 9th. Harold Lamb, a truck driver and part-time deputy sheriff in Tipton, Michigan, reported sighting the UFO between 8:30 and 9:30 P.M. as he drove his truck on I-75 between Carey and Bowling Green.

Mr. Lamb reported that he was headed toward Findlay on Ohio 15 near the Carey exchange when he spotted an object out of his left window that looked and glowed white like a light bulb.

He related that he continued to observe the object and that he switched on the truck's spotlight, placing its beam on the UFO.

Mr. Lamb said the object stayed in the light's beam until he reached Findlay, at which time he stopped to see what the UFO would do. He said it stopped and stayed in the beam's light with the only movement apparently being a slight up and down motion.

He then reported he proceeded on I-75 with the object staying in the spotlight's beam. As he neared Bowling Green the object appeared to be moving away from him and began to take on a reddish-orange appearance. Then, Mr. Lamb said, the object became dimmer until he lost sight of it at Bowling Green. Lamb said the UFO appeared to stay about 1000 feet off the ground, but he could not report any distinguishing details.

We invite our fellow UFO investigators to attend the 1969 Congress of Scientific Ufologists to be held at Charleston, West Virginia June 20 and 21. Closed sessions will be at the Daniel Boone Hotel Friday the 20th, while open sessions at the Charleston Civic Center Little Theater on the 21. Write to 2523 Winter Street St. Albans, West Virginia 25177 for more information. See you at the Congress!