

Day	Total	U.S.A.
Sunday	95	30
Monday	142	44
Tuesday	121	42
Wednesday	123	46
Thursday	119	49
Friday	141	50
Saturday	117	39

TABLE 4
Distribution by days of the week

confirm this pattern, and Table 4 shows the distribution we have found.

This study will be completed by an examination of 5-

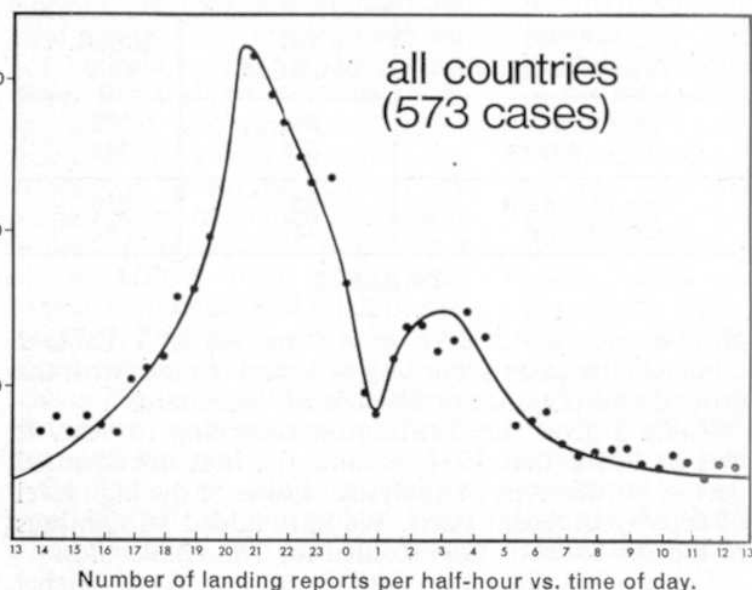


Figure 1
Time distribution—all landings

the distributions in time and space, necessarily a long and detailed piece of work. Donald Hanlon, whose contribution to the catalogue has been of primary importance, is now engaged in the analysis of the topo-

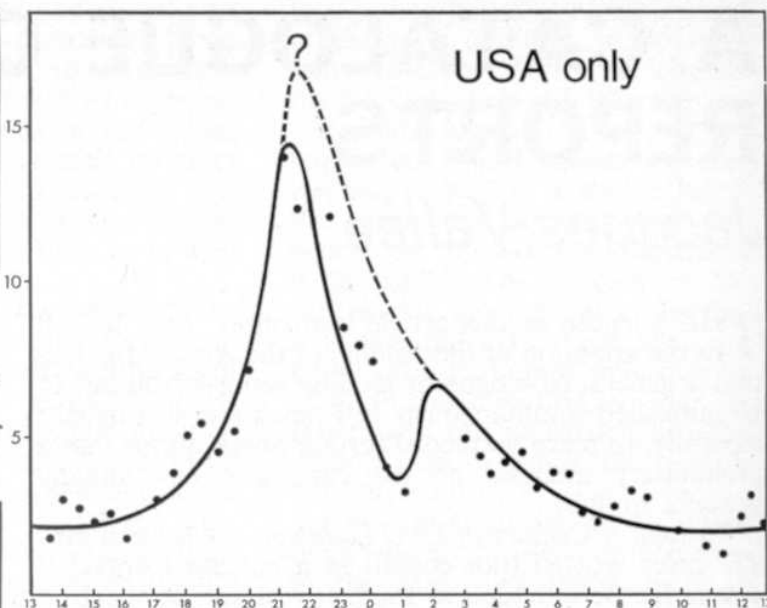


Figure 2
Time distribution for American landings

graphy of the American landing sites. For my part, I was eager to verify the "law of the times" as given in *The Humanoids* in 1966, but first proposed in FSR for January/February 1964, page 11, based on a sample of only 211 landing cases. On the new sample, which contains 573 cases for which the time of day is known (by far the largest, homogenous sample of reports on which this type of analysis has been attempted) the frequency distribution of figure 1 has been found. This can be compared with the curve of figure 2 drawn exclusively from United States cases. The dotted line of figure 2 shows the *possible* activity curve of the phenomenon, taking into account the variation in the actual number of potential witnesses.

The assistance of Messrs. J. Vuillequez, Aimé Michel, and of other European correspondents who wish anonymity, is very gratefully acknowledged.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND BOOKS ON UFOs

There must be scores of thousands of people in this country who haven't an inkling that good, serious books on UFOs have been written. You and your friends can help enlighten them by asking the librarian to obtain any of the best titles that are missing from the shelves, or card indexes. How about the following, for a start . . . ?

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Get down to that library, ask, keep asking and get your friends to ask too

DR. CONDON'S DILEMMA

R. H. B. Winder

COLLOQUIALLY known as the "Condon Report", the paperback published in January, 1969, by Bantam Books Incorporated of New York, entitled *Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects*, is stated to be a full and faithful copy of the report of that name sent to the Secretary of the United States Air Force by the President of the University of Colorado on October 31, 1968. The book is a heavy one, in more ways than one, comprising 989 pages of which 804 are occupied by the report proper; the rest carrying introductory matter, appendices, and an index. It is bound in attractive and sober plasticised covers bearing a coloured photograph of an aurora illustrating a lens flare. The retail price in the U.S. is \$1.95. In the U.K. it is cheaper, at 12s. 6d.

The investigation reported was conducted by a team of well-qualified scientists occasionally assisted by other organisations and individuals. All participants are listed in appendices W and X. It was directed by Dr. Edward Uhler Condon, a 67-year-old physicist of high reputation and demonstrably unimpeachable integrity. The project was carried out under contract to the U.S.A.F. for a consideration of about half-a-million dollars. Contrary to some opinion, this is not a large sum by modern standards, being equivalent in real value to about £100,000 in this country: a typical annual budget for a small industrial research laboratory employing one to two dozen qualified scientists and providing appropriate accommodation, equipment and supporting staff. It is not a generous allowance for a two-year project on the scale attempted by Colorado.

Viewed against that background, I can just accept the commendation "very creditable" awarded by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. Otherwise I would rate the work as average contract stuff, somewhat conscious of the client's expectations, quite pedestrian, and taken no further than the contract required. There are signs of editorial effort to make the thing appear more impressive than it is, some directorial pontification on the scientific method, a great deal of text-book padding, and traces of prejudice. Its circumlocution could mislead laymen.

A place in UFO literature

Nevertheless, the report is a valuable addition to UFO literature. Informative and by no means anti-pathetic, it will rank well in a field where there is not yet a great deal of competition. With a few notable exceptions, scientific standards in UFO research are not yet high enough to justify severe criticism of what, after all, is the first major attempt at a scientific approach. We can learn a great deal from it, particularly in the conduct of investigations, and can make good use of it in controversy. We only wish that the work could have

been pressed further and reported more clearly. I do not feel that its quality justifies Walter Sullivan's sycophantic introduction.

Dr. Condon's conclusion, that the study of UFOs is unlikely to advance science, is innocuous and should not upset UFO "buffs", as we are now labelled. At least he did not conclude that witnesses are barmy, and he offers no opinion on the reality or unreality of flying saucers. I think this caused him some heart searching because it is clear from the text that he considers interstellar travel, and anything possibly connected with it, to be nonsense, but that is his dilemma not ours. It is obvious that his training ultimately overcame his prejudices, but it is equally probable that the inner conflict jeopardised the quality of the investigation.

Interesting treatment of photographs

However, the project's treatment of photographic cases is particularly interesting and maintains the high standards set by an earlier investigator, Dr. R. M. L. Baker, Junior. It is fascinating to realise the amount of information that can be extracted from a photograph or film by a competent and painstaking analyst. There is no doubt that photographs, when properly examined, cease to be controversial and become powerful evidence, for or against witnesses' assertions. The McMinnville, Oregon, photographs, taken in May 1950 and discussed on pages 78, 82, 396-407, 510 and 511 of the book, have gained considerable prestige from the Colorado investigation and now constitute, as the report admits, very strong evidence for the existence, at least on that occasion, of an extraordinary flying object. UFO researchers will appreciate that the validation of the witnesses' testimony provides valuable confirmation of certain flying saucer characteristics. The Colorado study did not, of course, go so far as that. In fact, in no case was there any attempt to correlate findings with other sightings: examination always stopped as soon as the UFO began to acquire reality. This is surprising—for competent scientists are pathologically inquisitive—but could be attributed to the financial restrictions already discussed.

The Montana film

The film taken at Great Falls, Montana, also improves its already considerable standing. It is dealt with on pages 52, 53, 82 and 407-415. Once again, the investigation could have been taken further but stopped short, not necessarily for financial reasons this time. There appears to have been no attempt to extract more information from the measurements taken from the film and tabulated on page 414. If, for example, a graph had been drawn, as most scientists do instinctively, a distinct cyclical variation in the inclination of each of the two

objects would have become apparent. This "flutter" is, of course, characteristic of flying saucers and was in fact described by one of the witnesses. Thus an elementary extension of the examination would have tended to confirm the testimony, to depress still further the weak competitive aircraft theory, and to add still more reality to the flying saucer explanation. Yet it was not done.

No reasonable person would deny that these two cases argue very strongly in favour of at least three extraordinary flying objects. Those who carry the investigations further (as needs doing) or who can link the cases with others, could argue with good reason that this evidence is, as near as dammit, conclusive. But that opinion would not be reached by an uninformed reader of the Bantam book, especially anyone influenced by the gratuitous comment, offered on page viii of the Introduction, by the panel of the Academy, to the effect that although some sightings are not easily explained, there exist many reasonable and possible directions (implying that real UFOs are unreasonable and impossible) in which explanations may eventually be found. Thus the comment of these eminent scientists conflicts with the report and smacks of prejudice. One traditional function of the elders of science is to ensure that laymen are not led to false conclusions.

Dr. Condon avoids that issue by focusing on the substantially irrelevant question of value to science. His conclusions make no reference to the flying saucer controversy. His recommendation that schoolchildren should be protected from the extremes of UFO literature also seems irrelevant, but may be desirable in an American context. However, I think his approach to the subject succeeds—no doubt after some tribulation—in being honest, objective, and professional; but the circumlocution in the report makes him terribly vulnerable to misquotation, and I am sure that he will be misrepresented as the arch enemy and destroyer of the flying saucer myth for many years to come. In fact he has performed a most valuable service in clearing away a lot of rubbish to reveal the hard core of the UFO problem.

Blind spot

Dr. Condon's treatment of the extraterrestrial hypothesis does seem a little old-fashioned. He can't stomach Villas Boas or Truckee, cases that were not studied by the project. Nor can he accept the one rather weak occupant case that was studied. And he appears to be unaware of the two to three hundred well-documented occupant incidents now on record. But, undismayed by any sense of ignorance, he states that there is no convincing evidence of visits from another civilisation. He does seem to have a blind spot in relation to these matters, as we shall see later.

He follows, on page 27, with a statement that would upset NASA if they took it seriously, to the effect that human interstellar travel seems quite out of the question in the foreseeable future. He cites "Purcell 1960" in support without quoting Purcell's argument, which happens to be a decidedly crooked one because he was, at the time, advocating radioastronomy as the best means for communication through space. In essence, the argument is that the ratio of starting mass to finishing mass, in a rocket designed for interstellar travel at

99 per cent of the speed of light, would be something like a thousand million to one, which everyone would agree is ridiculous. The initiated know that you can make this ratio what you like by choosing your speed; and, as Professor Edward Purcell also knows very well, a more reasonable choice of half the speed of light would have reduced his absurd figure to a much more feasible one hundred. But most readers of the Condon report will not know that.

Incredible concept

The existence of a fundamental prejudice is most strongly suggested on page 28 of the book, where Dr. Condon puts the common nuclear pessimist view that many civilisations might annihilate themselves before developing a space technology, and then moves on to an astounding codicil, presumably intended to suppress any optimist who might demur, in which he says that a civilisation clever enough to be able to travel in space **might be too intelligent to have any interest in it!** Of all the pearls of cosmic wisdom that have, from time to time, been cast before us, this is surely the one beyond price. I can only cope with it by suggesting that it ought to be printed neatly along the great Saturn boosters at Cape Kennedy as a sort of hippie motto for NASA, or parodied in a disrespectful astronaut's anthem for whiling away the tedium of the countdown—"Only the stupid travel in space. Idiots all who join in the race . . .", or something of that nature. I think this incredible concept springs from deep anti-space travel geocentric prejudice often found in, and occasionally manifested by, men of Dr. Condon's generation. We all know of other examples. I therefore feel that the few impressive cases encountered by the Colorado investigators presented Dr. Condon with a serious dilemma, and I admire him for overcoming what must have been a most unscientific temptation to dismiss all UFO-favourable evidence as nonsense. Nevertheless, it must be said that if such antipathy had been discovered and eliminated, at an early stage, the investigation might have followed a different course and the report might have taken a different form. But it must also be said that if any conscious attempts have been made to exploit Dr. Condon's prejudices, his integrity has defeated them.

Genuine UFO?

Consequently, the report is only superficially anti-UFO. As we have seen, it contains two very convincing photographic cases. There is also a very interesting radar-visual sighting (Case 2) which involved the U.S.A.F. and R.A.F. near Lakenheath in this country in August, 1956. It was reported too late for exhaustive study, but the report awards high probability to the existence on that occasion of "at least one genuine UFO".

The investigation of astronaut sightings is also interesting, but characteristically curtailed. We receive 28 pages telling of the conventional things that astronauts see, and only four discussing the strange objects seen by McDivitt and Borman. The investigator classes their three separate sightings as "a challenge to the analyst". It is a pity that he appears not to have faced up to it.

The study of electromagnetic effects, after repeating

(without acknowledgement) Alan Watts' famous test on a car ignition coil, concluded as he did that the field strength necessary to inhibit sparking could only be produced at a distance by a magnet of impossible power. It then lapsed into a pathetic search for traces of the said intense fields in the bodies of cars alleged to have been stopped by UFOs. Any schoolboy could have told the investigators that if such fields had been experienced they would probably also have received the body of the witness, unable to unstick the heavily-magnetised doors! The thought of looking for ionisation effects upon a car's electrics apparently never occurred to them. I do not, however, decry the potential value of using a magnetic mapping technique for confirming weaker magnetic traces, but only in very close approach cases.

Conclusions

In conclusion, I would say that the Condon document presents the best value if it is treated as a reference book, rather than as a definitive report. As a reference, it is essential reading for all UFO researchers, who can glean a great deal from it. They will discover that it is rather obscure in places, but very useful if persisted with.

There is, for example, much citation of references without sufficient indication of their content, some crooked argument, and some bad bibliographical practice such as the listing of the FSR with our printer's in place of our publisher's address. There is much circumlocution and occasional traces of slyness, and an excessive and annoying coyness over names and locations in the presentation of sightings. It took me some time to realise that Greenwich + 3 means Brazil! There is also a lot of technical padding presumably taken from standard textbooks, but useful to have in the same volume.

The investigations are generally good examples of objective scientific work, but severely abbreviated and often unimaginative. The report is also scientific, but rather too devious and tedious to be classed as a good example of technical reporting, even in contracting work. It needs to be read with a great deal of circumspection. Laymen could be misled into believing that it proves that flying saucers do not exist, whereas it actually comes close to confirming their existence. On the whole, I consider it does our case more good than harm. It might have done great harm if Dr. Condon had not resolved his dilemma.

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