

22 July 1968

Dr. E.U. Condon
1006 JILA Building
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado 80302

Dear Ed:

Your letter of July 19th has arrived, together with its enclosures. As I mentioned on the phone, I did not see a copy of your letter to Boffey dated June 26, nor can we find it in the office. However, I have recently moved to another office in NCAR, and the handling of my mail has been re-organized. It is possible that it was misplaced somewhere here, for which we apologize.

If I had seen the letter it would have given me a little more background about Boffey's effort to gather material for a Science story on UFO's, and it might have prompted me to urge you to see him. I doubt, however, that it would have changed my position that editorial responsibility to publish such a story lies with Science's editor, much as I personally wish that they would hold their story until after your UFO report is out.

Of one thing I am very sure: there is no malicious effort to discredit the University of Colorado involved in any of this business. I am a little appalled that pressures you are obviously under could so distort your viewpoint as to lead you to think this. Your project has been in the public view from the beginning, and has obviously elicited greatest public interest. You are kidding yourself if you think that ~~Spring~~ declining to grant interviews to the press you can keep it from doing stories based on what is available. In my view your own best interest is served if you give the press the most direct and straightforward information that you can within the limits of discretion imposed by the fact that your report is still under preparation.

Your comments on the legality of use of quotes that have already appeared extensively in the public press is one that I am not competent even to discuss. I have relayed your threat of suit to Dael Wolfle who has much more experience than I in such matters, and who will have legal counsel to advise him. As you know, I have felt that these quotes were used out of context anyway.

Nobody will be happier than I when this whole thing is laid to rest, and your report has been submitted and evaluated. But I also hold the view that anyone who chose to take on a passion-loaded matter like this one must have done so with the full realization that he was going to run into strong flak from cranks. The thing that worries me is that I fear that you are mistaking the real concerns of a few people with serious beliefs that some of the sightings are real UFO's (whatever that means, and however wrong they may perhaps be) as also the delusions of cranks, or worse. In this, as well as in your statement that an article by Science that you haven't even seen is part of "a malicious effort to discredit the University of Colorado" you cut yourself off from those who would most like to help you.

I'm sure that the columns of Science will be available to you for a reply if you feel the Science story unjust. I can assure you that Science is not malicious, that the article is not intended to discredit you or the University, and that the AAAS has no intent through Science or otherwise to commit crimes against the University of Colorado. If I had any slightest question on these matters I would not hesitate to ask Dael and the Board of Directors to examine the situation in detail immediately. But I do not have any such question.

As I have said before to you, if you feel that the article is unjust, when it appears, I will take steps to see that your viewpoint is brought to the Board of Directors promptly.

Meanwhile, it is Dael's view and mine that the editor of Science is acting within the proper bounds of his editorial discretion and responsibility if he publishes the story that his staff has prepared. I hope, moreover, that you will not feel that the article is all that bad when it comes out.

Very sincerely,

Walter Orr Roberts

cc: President Joseph R. Smiley
Dr. Dael Wolfie

E. U. CONDON
761 CASCADE AVENUE
BOULDER, COLORADO, 80302

26 July 1968

Dr. Walter Orr Roberts, President
American Association for the Advancement of Science
1829 Bluebell Avenue
Boulder, Colorado

Dear Dr. Roberts:

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

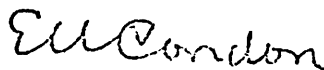
I herewith transmit my resignation from membership in the American Association for the Advancement of Science in protest against the falsehoods and misrepresentations contained in the article entitled "UFO Project: Trouble on the Ground" (pp. 339-342) in Science for July 26, 1968. The article is bound to contribute to confusion in public discussion because of the inexcusable errors which it contains. More important, however, than my objection to the errors is the whole emphasis on muck-raking to which the article devotes itself. Publication of such stuff is not a proper function for the AAAS house organ.

As you know, I wrote to the Editor on May 6 offering to help him in guarding against error. Again on June 26 I wrote to the reporter offering to safeguard against error. Before that I had telephoned to the News Editor. On July 9 I telephoned to the Editor repeating my offer. All of these offers were arrogantly rejected. On July 18 I discussed the problem with you at length on the telephone, and on July 19 I wrote you a letter about the situation. You wrote me a note on July 18 in which, however, you made it clear that the President of the AAAS is helpless, in your opinion, to control the misconduct of his staff.

The Editor sent me the page proofs which arrived yesterday for an article to be in the July 26 issue. This was obviously planned to arrive late enough to make it impossible for any corrections to be made. The Editor's letter says the proofs were being sent to me "in deference to your many years of distinguished service." This makes it clear that he would give even less consideration to one of fewer years of distinguished service, and that even in this case he is determined that the errors of his reporter be published.

I do not care to be associated with an organization that permits its Editor to behave in this way to any member, distinguished or not. Now that I understand how it is edited, I could never again believe any "news and comment" that it contains.

Sincerely,



E. U. Condon

EUC:kes

cc - Members of the Board of Directors of AAAS,
Treasurer and Executive Director