

May 2, 1968

Notes by E. U. Condon on Fuller article in Look for May 14, 1968

Paragraph

5. It was mere chance that psychologists were recruited a little earlier. Recognition of the importance of psychologists goes back to the O'Brien panel recommendations.

Low's scientific background includes many years experience with High Altitude Observatory as well as NCAR.

6. The Denver Post story was itself irresponsible - so here it is quoted again. As a matter of fact, it is not a good subject for university study but we took the job on at Air Force request and are doing the best job on it that we can. It should be judged by its final report. The Fuller article attempts a book review of a book not yet written.

7. No need to debate the irresponsible Denver Post story.

8. "Well-documented reports" merely means that documents exist, not necessarily that they are accurate or sound. If McDonald rejects all explanations of hoaxes, hallucinations or ball lightning he is certainly wrong, as some cases fall in these categories.

9. McDonald has consistently taken the biased attitude of the near-certainty of UFOs being from outer space and has accordingly tried to bias our study toward acceptance of this totally unsubstantiated view. One man's open mind is another man's bias!

10. NICAP is not "large and well-organized." It has about 10,000 members and frequently has to make special appeals for donations to keep afloat.

The CU group has largely concentrated on current cases of unusual interest, but does not believe it worthwhile to do elaborate re-investigations of old cases by re-interviewing persons who have been interviewed many times already.

We have not been told of any new material that McDonald has uncovered by his interviews of people who were involved in old cases.

11. Condon was on the project half-time until February 1 1968 when he went on full time. He did a great deal of his work in his own office. There is an unfair insinuation here that he did not do project work except when in the project office.

12. In this talk these ideas were carefully labelled as tentative first impressions, not as conclusions already reached. This was a nice piece of press irresponsibility in saying "with a smile he added" intending dishonestly to imply that the statement emphasizing tentativeness of these first views was not sincere.

13. In the vast majority of the cases the only material available is that of interviews rather than direct observations. At least this is true of all of our field trips.

16. The NICAP cooperation was useful, but not indispensable, when we were setting up the Early Warning system. When Keyhoe threatened to withdraw cooperation in the fall of 1967, a new group of early warning reporters was easily recruited. Because some staff members experienced some difficulty in reaching Condon does not mean he was really unavailable or not working. People on any staff frequently experience difficulty in reaching the busy man at the top. As to decisions for "apparently specious reasons" that is merely an opinion. Nobody ever complained to Condon about these decisions by Low.

17. Condon does not remember saying that he "wished the project could give the money back" but in view of the irrational controversies involved in it, he does now wish that he had not taken it on.

18. The idea that the folder belonged to "open files" is entirely false. The folder in question belonged to Low's personal files and was not part of the working files of the project.

19. The date of this memo, August 9, 1966, reveals at once that it was not part of the project files, but informally discussed the prior question of whether the University should undertake the job at all. It was written a day before the first meeting of two Air Force scientists with a faculty group to explore their interest. In any case, Condon was unaware of the existence of the memo until February 7, 1968 and it bore and bears no relation to his planning of the study. Much irresponsible effort in the article is devoted to trying to attach a bad meaning to the word "trick." It is quite clear from the context that this word was used in the sense of the dictionary meanings: "the art, method or process of doing something unsuccessfully or of getting a result quickly" (Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language) or "a clue or ingenious device or expedient, the art or knack of doing something skillfully" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language.) A good recent example of this use of the word appears in the culinary column of the Boulder Daily Camera for April 30:

KING'S HOUSE STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE — Arrange a layer of halved ladyfingers, top with a generous amount of thickly sliced sugared strawberries. Cover with quantities of whipped and slightly sweetened cream. The trick, according to Lady Huggins, is to have enough strawberries and great swooshes of cream.

The insinuation that the word was used in a different sense is a malicious misrepresentation.

A similar comment applies to the insinuations about the word "appear." The insinuation is that the study would not be objective but would only appear to be so. This is quite inconsistent with any of the meanings in the Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language. These are: "1. to come into sight. 2. to be in sight. 3. to become understood. 4. to seem; look. 5. to be said in a piece of writing. 6. to present oneself formally in court . . . 7. to come before the public . . . 8. to be published." The same is true of the meaning in the Random House Dictionary of which "3. to be obvious or easily perceived; be clear or made clear by evidence: 'It appears to me that you are right.'" This fits most nearly the sense intended.

20. Thus Levine's disturbance at the words "trick" and "appear" were due to his inadequate grasp of the English language, a factor contributing to his unsatisfactory performance as a project staff member.

21. Condon's apparent concentration of effort on the far-out aspects of the subject was due to the belief that this aspect should not be neglected and that it was not being handled by other staff members. It was a mere coincidence that the director also took on this specific working assignment and does not indicate any notion that this is the most important phase of the study. The Congress of Ufology held at the Hotel Commodore in June 1967 did turn out, in fact, to be rather "kooky" in the main. One of the principal speakers was Ivan T. Sanderson, author of a UFO book "Uninvited Visitors," published by the Cowles Education Corporation in 1967. Condon's presence there was an important part of the job of gaining understanding of the whole UFO problem as in this field there is not as clear a boundary between the rational and the irrational as some persons maintain. (See note at end.)

22. Saunders never revealed to Condon that he had read the memo and did not reveal the basis of his concern to Condon who did not become aware of the existence of the memo until February 6, 1968 on reading the January 31 letter of McDonald to Low.

23. Condon did get tired listening to Saunders expound what to him seemed to be a ridiculous position. Earlier Saunders had agreed without permission to take part in the program of the Annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in Washington. He was intending to discuss the psychological problem of how best to prepare the American people for acceptance of the idea that there exist extra-terrestrial visitors in the event that we were to obtain such evidence. We required that he not give such a talk on the ground that there was grave danger that it would be reported and discussed as if we really had or were likely to get such evidence, when that is not in fact the case. Saunders agreed not to give such a talk.

Then later he requested the September 18 discussion to urge that we ought to be taking steps to prepare public opinion for the acceptance of this idea, this time going so far as to insist that we did have already strong indications of the real presence of extra-terrestrial visitors.

Condon objected to the proposal of Saunders on three grounds (a) that we do not have such indications, and that we do not seem likely to get them, (b) that study of techniques of moulding public opinion is outside the field of our competence and (c) it is also outside the scope of work authorized for the study. The reason the discussion took three hours was that Condon did not want to seem impatient or arbitrary in refusing to go along with Saunders' ridiculous proposal.

Incidentally, Saunders is now free from the restraints of being a project staff member and is quite free as an individual scientist to present to the public the best case he knows how to make for his stated belief in the actual reality of extra-terrestrial visitors.

24. It has been clearly understood from the outset that there would be no withholding of any of our findings from the public on completion of our study. It

would not be wise to release in the meantime a great flood of incomplete and tentative findings to the public. We have been under great pressure to make premature statements and have tried to resist such pressure, but not always successfully due to the skillful importunities of the news media.

This paragraph corresponds to a distortion of the actual situation. Condon had said that if we ever got the extra-terrestrial craft together with "little green men" we would not try to withhold the information until the final report was made but would telephone the President at once to let him know, so that the National Security Council could give this important matter proper consideration. It is a falsehood to say that the discovery would "never be allowed to go to the public." It is evident that Fuller is reporting Saunders' views so if Fuller is reporting reasonably correctly on these views, this is a clear indication of Saunders' confused state of mind.

25. This is an example of repeated attempts by Keyhoe to bring pressure on the project.

26. The speech was an after-dinner speech clearly labelled as not being a serious report but merely an account of some of the amusing side-lights. Condon is pleased that Bickel found it "funny and entertaining" for that is all that it was supposed to be. It has been observed that the fanatic believers in flying saucers are scarcely able to see any humor in the subject.

27. McDonald's "failure to see" is an example of the deadly earnestness of believers to which allusion has just been made.

28. Keyhoe did send such a long letter making unreasonable demands and Condon replied declining to meet them. From about that time on Keyhoe declined co-operation from the Washington office of NICAP. But this did not affect the project work because the important thing was the Early Warning network and the members of that, who were also members of NICAP, continued to cooperate with us despite Keyhoe's sulking. So far as we know Keyhoe did not try to get the NICAP members (about a dozen people scattered across the country) to stop co-operating with us, but he may have done so and failed.

The original contract ended January 31, 1968. When it was given an extension to run to September 30, 1968 Condon suggested that a letter be sent to each of the Early Warning people thanking them for past services during most of 1967 and requesting their continued cooperation. As an indication that Saunders was more interested in serving Keyhoe than in supporting the project, Saunders violently objected to the sending of such a letter saying that it would make Keyhoe angry. Although surprised at this behavior Condon did not insist and no such letter was sent until after Saunders' connection with the project had been terminated.

29. Condon did say substantially this to the Rocky Mountain News and believes this more strongly than ever as a result of recent events. See Rocky Mountain News editorial of May 1, 1968.

30. Condon does not know of these discussions of the staff. He does know that several were concerned lest the Rocky Mountain News article might make some people unwilling to cooperate with us. The full article ought properly to be read as an appeal for better reports than we had been getting. That was the intent back of Condon's comments. There is no indication that the news article did in fact result in less cooperation from the public.

31. This clearly identified McDonald and Hynek as working with Saunders and Levine. It is a falsehood that it was at this meeting that McDonald first became aware of the Low memo, although this was the occasion at which a stolen copy of the memo was passed to McDonald by one or the other of the CU staff members present. (On page 3 of the McDonald to Condon letter of March 5, McDonald says persons had read the stolen memo to him several weeks before he received a copy on December 12. The "concerned Boulder reporter" there alluded to is Roger Harkins, formerly on the editorial staff of the Boulder Daily Camera, a close associate of Saunders and Levine.) This paragraph implies that Hynek was not present when the stolen copy was passed.

32. Low can comment on this phone call. He did not hang up in anger but, after listening to McDonald for about an hour, began to be relieved from having to go on listening.

33. Condon thinks that there is general agreement that an employee should be fired for abstracting an internal memo from his employer's or supervisor's files, and surreptitiously passing it on to an unfriendly third party with the expectation that that third party would probably try to use it in a way harmful to his employer's interests. Even Keyhoe said that on April 30 at his press conference in Washington.

34. The sole purpose of this interview was to determine how the stolen memo was given to McDonald and was successful. Saunders tried to divert attention from the inquiry into the theft, but finally did admit to a part in the December 12 meeting. Condon does not remember saying that he ought to be ruined professionally, and does not think he did say anything resembling that, but after the fact does think that such conduct ought not to add to his professional stature.

35. Saunders did try to divert the inquiry to other issues. On other occasions dissatisfaction had previously been expressed with Saunders' work, especially in connection with a study he had made on orthoteny.

36. The misrepresentation here amounts to falsehood. Before Levine came in, Condon and Low had told Saunders that we wanted to talk with Levine alone. Far from "offering to stay" Saunders stubbornly insisted on staying when Levine came in. We reminded him that he had been told to leave when Levine came. He looked at Levine and said "That's not the way we intend to play it," and settled back as if to stay. At this point he was ushered out.

Levine did say that he saw nothing wrong with what he had done. Condon explained to him what was wrong and he insisted on rejecting the explanation.

Levine was often unwilling to accept decisions by his supervisors so Condon is not surprised if there was an incident when Low became impatient with him.

Levine set up an occasion to give a talk at HAO in direct violation of a rule that no such talks were to be given without arrangement with the project director. Condon heard about this and told him he would have to cancel it. Levine persisted that the talk was already announced and Condon replied that it shouldn't have been so he had better call in sick.

37. Disloyalty and treachery here refer to disloyalty and treachery to the interests of the University of Colorado in its contractual relation with the United States Government. Levine had never communicated his dissatisfaction in a broad and basic way before this occasion although he had frequently expressed differences of opinion on details such as often occur between independently operating investigators.

The distortion in the same sentence is that Condon was objecting to the fact that Levine would often go on a field trip and not let Condon know when he returned, so that Condon could hear a report of the results.

38. Mrs. Armstrong now says she had been dissatisfied for a long time. But she had never expressed this to Condon despite the fact that she had a personal acquaintance with him, having been his personal secretary for about a year before the project started.

39. All these charges she did make in a long interview with Condon and also expressed in a long letter of resignation. She had agreed in advance to keep these matters confidential and Condon wrote her a letter to make sure she understood. She also told my secretary, Mrs. Shapley, that she had no intention of making it public. Apparently she later decided not to keep her word.

40. McDonald's "outspoken letter" was to Low so there was no occasion for Condon to reply to it. McDonald did intrude by writing to the president of the National Academy of Sciences and sent him a copy of the stolen memorandum even after Condon had pointed out to him that his possession of it was improper and had asked for its return. McDonald attempted to justify his possession of the stolen memorandum by saying he knew of others who also had a copy.

One is reminded of the story of the thief who was caught with an attache case full of secret documents and then protested "They're not secret any more!"

41. There was no near-mutiny. Two members of the staff were discharged "for cause" and by their evident cooperation in the preparation of Fuller's article have chosen to give to the public a pretty clear idea of the kind of unsatisfactory conduct which made their discharge necessary. A secretary who proved unworthy of the trust which had been placed in her resigned before the director could discharge her. Other members of the staff continued to work with improved efficiency, because the absence of these three removed an unfortunate atmosphere of conspiratorial intrigue which these three had generated.

42. Unjustified personal opinion of the author.

Addition to 21: Condon has been reminded that Keyhoe had a personal feud with James Moseley, organizer of the UFO Congress, and terminated his NICAP membership. He also called Low in early June 1967 to protest against Condon's going to this Congress.

General conclusions:

- (1) None of this material was given to Fuller by Condon or Low;
- (2) The article contains numerous falsehoods and misrepresentations;
- (3) Such an article could not appear without the specific approval of the publisher and editor of the magazine who are therefore directly implicated in a vicious attempt to harm the University of Colorado;
- (4) This attempt is bound to fail as the full story gradually becomes known.

End of Notes