


SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs



If the proponents of extraordinary phenomena want to be taken seriously, they must pick one case which they agree is strong evidence and invite other scientists to investigate it. We should put the burden of proof on the proponents of EFO's. The only way to convince the scientific community that something strange is going on is to present specific evidence concisely. If the evidence is good, the case will stand up, and the existence of extraordinary phenomena will have to be taken seriously.

Dr. William Hartmann (Historical perspectives: Photos of UFOs)

Volume 9 Number 3

May-June 2017



Here we go....again.....

Cover: A morning sunrise revealed a sun pillar and sun dog. Sun dogs and similar phenomena can be reported as UFOs.

Left: The solar eclipse of 1991 is famous for producing UFO reports in Mexico City. These were mostly of the planet Venus. However, the 1954 solar eclipse is also famous for a UFO film/photos. This time it wasn't Venus. The UFO evidence under review discusses this case. Will the August 21 Solar eclipse, visible over the United States also produce UFO reports?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Who's blogging UFOs.....	2-3
The Roswell Corner	3
A new scientific study of UFOs?	4-8
The UFO evidence under review: June 30, 1954.....	9-13
The 701 club: May 29, 1952.....	14-15

UFOlogy continues to demonstrate that they are desperate for something that will prove that UFOs are actual craft unknown to science and there is a conspiracy to cover it all up. The latest messiah is blink 182 star, Tom Delonge. He was christened "UFO researcher of the year" by the International UFO congress and has stated that, sometime in May, he will reveal something important to the UFO community. Where have we heard this song and dance before? Is this anything new and why isn't the UFO community heeding the lessons of the past? It is ironic that he has chosen May as the potential time of his reveal. One must recall that it was not long ago that there were promises of a great reveal in May. We all know how that turned out. I predict that Delonge's revelation (if it actually happens) will be so vague and unimportant that it will have to be explained to the masses by the UFO promoters championing Delonge as their new savior.

A few years ago, I mentioned that UFOlogy is boring. That is because, besides the occasional "new best case" being promoted, most of the reports are pretty mundane and not that interesting. Missing from these reports is any evidence that these cases were ever investigated properly. If MUFON thinks these reports are important enough to promote them, why don't they publish the investigation reports? What does MUFON have to fear? Are they afraid to subject their investigations to review by individuals outside of their little empire? This is just another instance where MUFON fails the test of being a "scientific" organization. What they are doing does not "benefit humanity" and is not scientific.

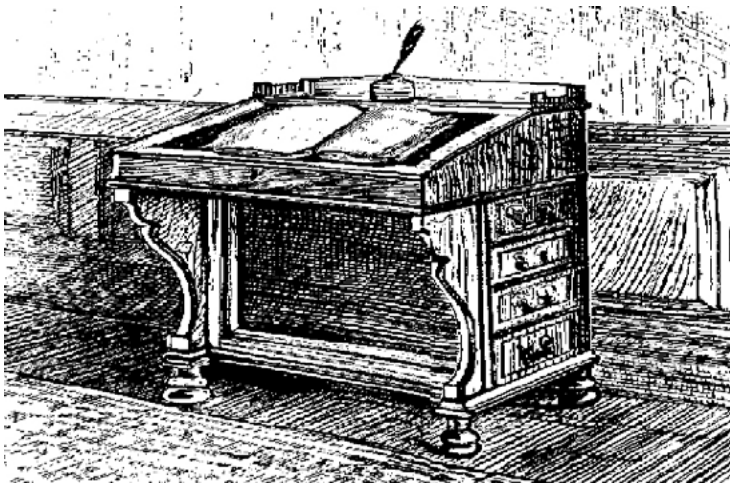
In a follow-up to last month's article about CEFAA's IR video of a contrail and airplane, Geoff Quick e-mailed me a correction. CEFAA had stated in their rebuttal of IPACO's analysis, "Aircraft are not authorized to eject waste water prior to landing". Geoff responded,

This is simply not true. Sink water is dumped overboard as a matter of course during flight. Most Airlines typically having heated vent pipes under the rear fuselage for exactly that purpose, technically referred to as "Drain Masts". The water vented vaporizes long before reaching the ground (as does jettisoned fuel) and it is common, and legal, airline practice. N.B this is not to be confused with lavatory effluent which is retained -although occasionally inadvertent leaks through relief valves give rise to "blue ice" sometimes coming down on property. Since a condensation trail forms some distance behind each engine (sometimes trails later combining) and since the pattern seen in the imagery comfortably matched that of grey water coming down out of a ventral drain mast I am fairly confident that that, indeed, was what it was - as you say yourself "If it looks like a duck..."

With the solar eclipse fast approaching, my interests are focused on getting ready for it and less about UFOs. As a result, SUNlite will continue to be somewhat thin on articles unless something significant occurs.

Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



Rich Reynolds took a swipe at skeptics for using the planet Venus as an explanation for UFO reports. He states that he never misperceives Venus as something other than a bright star and can't understand how skeptics indicate that witnesses could perceive it as something other than that. There is no question that the planet Venus is the source of a certain percentage of UFO reports. The Condon report has a good example of how Venus fooled a lot of police officers. Even Hynek was left shaking his head and remarked that those hiring policemen might want to consider this case before choosing a candidate.

Ryan Sprague wrote a piece about Ingo Swan remote viewing alien bases on the moon. In order to put meat on Swan's claims, Sprague trotted out "astronaut consultant pilot" Ken Johnston, who claims to have seen films of alien bases in one of the moon's craters. Johnston's claims were debunked by James Oberg some time ago. Recently, Robert Sheaffer re-

vealed that Johnston was nothing more than another UFO promoter using his previous positions at NASA as a hook to get people to believe his stories.

Sprague also gave us an article about the supposed alien shooting at Fort Dix in 1978. Missing from Sprague's account is the report by NIDS' Roger Pinson and Eric Davis. I guess he was unaware of it because it is no longer on the Internet. However, one can find it in the Internet archive. The bottom line is the story appears to be a hoax that was debunked by Pinson and Davis. Had Sprague done a bit more homework, instead of just retelling the story people want to hear, he might have appeared more objective. His peddling of these old stories makes him appear to be just another UFO buff more interested in sensational stories than actual facts.

Continuing with his love of alien bodies, Ryan Sprague added another article that was less than compelling. According to Sprague, Space shuttle crewman, Ellison Onizuka, told Clark McClelland that he once saw a film showing alien bodies. Of course, most know that Onizuka died in the Challenger accident so McClelland's story, told over thirty years later, is nothing more than hearsay. McClelland's interest in spreading wild stories about UFOs is well known. His "Stargate chronicles" web site promotes some of the most outlandish stories. Based on this, it seems likely that this is another one of McClelland's "ghost stories" that has little or no basis in fact. This is another case of "fool me once..."

Speaking of sensationalism, Jason McClellan wrote a short piece that he was selling on Amazon. Because it was about how media reported UFOs, I was curious as to what he had to say. McClellan has been guilty of promoting wild stories about UFOs in his writings on Open Minds and on the program....Hanger One. Many of these are based on speculation and not established facts. It is hard for me to read somebody complaining about how the media makes fun of UFOs when that same person is responsible for some of the reasons that makes UFOlogy open to such ridicule.

The twentieth anniversary of the "Phoenix lights" came and went with the usual retread of the same old stories. When Jason McClellan had a discussion panel about the case, I was intrigued to see what they had to say. They did a basic summary but not once did they discuss any potential explanations for the 8-8:30 PM flyover. They also wanted to focus on the military's involvement and initial failure to disclose the source of the 10PM event were flares dropped by aircraft from Tuscon (not Luke AFB as stated by Ryan Sprague). They also tried to suggest that the flare explanation was linked to the release of the USA today article. Nothing could be further from the truth and it demonstrated their knowledge was based more on belief than actual research. Richard Motzer, a MU-FON investigator, had been suggesting they were flares long before this and the news about the Maryland ANG (July 25) did not surface until a month AFTER the USA today article (June 18). If that news was meant to deflate the USA today article it was poorly timed. Captain Bienz, the Luke AFB base PIO, did the research to uncover the source of the aircraft dropping the flares, which explained the 10PM videos. There was no mention of the video shot by Terry Proctor and no mention of the observations of others, who reported seeing just lights in formation. Most notably, they seemed to be ignorant of amateur astronomer Mitch Stanley's observations that is an important observation to consider. Instead, they focused their attention that it was a massive object flying over the city. It was clear that they were unaware that only about a third of the witnesses from the 1997 NUFORC database reported seeing some sort of structured object. The majority of the witnesses just saw a formation of lights that were unattached to any structure (see my analysis in SUNlite 2-4). Like any good story, the sensational reports grabbed the headlines while the mundane reports were swept under the rug. The problem with UFOlogists is they tend to focus on these sensational stories and not on the information/reports that suggest another explanation. The "Phoenix lights" story continues to be a UFOlogical mystery simply because the promoters want to ignore a good deal of information that suggests there was no mystery.

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

John Greenewald seemed to think a UFO report from 1986-1989 was important because it occurred near the Savannah river nuclear reservation site. He filed a FOIA request about the report and discovered that the report was filed with the NRC in 2010 and they tried to look back and see if they had a record of it. They did not. This is just another "UFO story" told decades later and made important by UFO proponents. Not much to see here without more information.

Stanton Friedman once again was telling everyone that we are such a threat to the universe, with our chemical rockets, and that the aliens are interested in keeping us imprisoned on our planet. Friedman provides no real evidence to prove his point. It is all speculation based on what he believes. One has to wonder if Friedman is more like an evangelist than a "scientist".

The Canadian UFO survey for 2016 was released with the usual fanfare. I have to admit that Chris Rutkowski, and his fellow UFO proponents, did a pretty good job in examining the cases. However, as I have previously stated in past years, some of his "unidentifieds" really should be classified differently. I did not find any "u" cases that can readily be identified but there were some questionable cases that earned the "unidentified" classification, which should be reserved for cases that have credibility. How can one give credibility to a case involving a "6 ft tall, thin, long fingered, white alien", which goes through walls? In another case, a witness reported seeing a bright light while sleeping. Afterwards, the witness felt an itching in their throat and then proceeded to become a vegetarian. Does such a case really deserve a "U" classification. In my opinion, such cases needed a special classification or listed as Insufficient information because they rely solely on the testimony of one person and have the potential for being hoaxes or involving individuals with psychological problems. These cases pad the percentage of "unidentifieds" from the survey.

Michael Salla, of exopolitics fame, continues to amaze everyone with his ability to say nonsensical things. He implied that the United States used its massive GBU-43 bomb, which packed an explosive force equivalent to 11 tons of TNT, to take out "Giants" and not terrorists. He added that these locations are actually bases that contain extraterrestrial technology, which is vital to mankind. Does he really believe this stuff or does he think people are just gullible?

A story about the 1976 Allagash Abduction case, that was published in September, got some attention by a few Facebook groups. It seems that one of the claimed abductees, Chuck Rak, is stating the whole idea about the group being abducted by aliens was simply made up. Some of the group felt there was money to be made off of the claim but this never happened. Apparently, they did see a UFO on one of the nights but that is was not really much to talk about. It was at night and they saw a bright object that changed color. The men were in a canoe and the object could have been astronomical in nature. Details about the event appear to be rather vague since the men did not start telling the story until the late 1980s. If Rak's statement are true, it is another case of UFOlogists endorsing another hoax.

Cheryl Costa's book about collecting UFO sightings made the news. Something not really noted is that her collection is like collecting a bunch of stamps without any concern for the quality or type of stamps being collected. She simply lists all the UFO reports and makes no effort to identify any of them. This is clear when the article mentions a sighting in NY on September 27, 2011. Apparently, Roger Marsh felt it was something significant but IPACO discovered that it was probably a banner towed by a plane. When I asked Cheryl about this case she indicated that all she does is list data. She seemed uninterested in how many of these sightings can be explained.

James Oberg debunked a recent TV show about Gordon Cooper's "secret treasure". Apparently, Cooper told some stories about performing secret surveillance during his Mercury flight. Oberg looked at these claims and demonstrated that they are inaccurate. Like his UFO stories, Cooper seemed to exaggerate about what transpired. One has to admire his courage as an astronaut and pilot. However, one also has to question his integrity if he could not present facts to back up his claims.

The Roswell Corner

New Roswell evidence?

A book with the unusual title, "THE FINAL REVELATION: The Sun Project", claims to have evidence of the Roswell UFO crash. Apparently, somebody discovered some carbon sheets that were in the possession of a now deceased clerk, who was stationed at the base. These sheets contain the morning reports, which describe the recovery efforts of the RAAF. One wonders why the clerk chose not to release these before his death or why these earth shattering documents found their way into a book, instead of the scientific community or news media. One could draw the conclusion that this might be a ploy to "buy the book" and that the carbon sheets could easily be forged, like previous Roswell documents. In my opinion, these are probably fakes and would be found to be such the instant they were presented for analysis.

A NEW SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF UFOS?

Recent discussion about how the Condon study was flawed has me wondering exactly what mistakes were made and what a modern version of such a study might look like. Could it accomplish anything? What would be required to satisfy the UFO proponents and skeptics alike?

A caustic environment

In his conclusions to the Colorado Project, Dr. Condon had written:

I had some awareness of the passionate controversy that swirled around the subject, contributing added difficulty to the task of making a dispassionate study. This hazard proved to be much greater than was appreciated at the outset. Had I known the extent of the emotional commitment of the UFO believers and the extremes of conduct to which their faith can lead them, I certainly would never have undertaken the study.¹

This kind of environment is more prevalent today. Social media is full of UFO proponents, who are highly critical of any scientist, who voices an opinion contrary to the accepted conclusion that "UFOs are real". Scientists have been portrayed as dishonest or uninformed by various UFO supporters. Despite this kind of criticism, UFOlogists still want the scientific community to respect their work and recognize that UFOs are something that needs to be examined.

The failures of the Colorado project

The Colorado project suffered from many flaws but not the kind of flaws often mentioned by UFOlogists. In my opinion, Dr. Condon was starting "behind the eight ball" to begin with. Unless evidence had surfaced that indicated there was something truly remarkable associated with these UFO reports, he was going to be stuck evaluating cases that may or may not have explanations. Solving each and every one to everybody's satisfaction was going to be a tall task.

The US Air Force's, Project Blue Book, had been the subject of a great deal of criticism. Some of it was justified. However, a great deal of it was generated by UFO organizations that chose to exaggerate claims about cases and ignore evidence that indicated those cases may not be as solid as they wanted everyone to believe. These same criticisms by UFO organizations would be leveled at the Condon report once it was released.

Some of those criticisms were:

1. The "classic" UFO cases from previous years were never examined. These cases were considered, by UFO organizations, as indisputable evidence that they represented reports of actual craft that were something "alien" to the earth.
2. The study did not "solve" a good portion of the cases examined. This indicated UFOs are something that needed to be studied.
3. Witness testimony was often ignored when cases were "explained".
4. They did not level criticism at Blue Book for poor investigations and misleading the public.

The study tried to address these criticisms in their report.

1. It was determined that old cases would not prove beneficial to the team's investigations. The passage of time and reliability of memory would interfere with uncovering new information that might solve these cases. In general, testimony of witnesses recorded shortly after their experiences can be considered more reliable than the stories told years, or decades, later.
2. The fact that a good deal of these cases were not solved does not mean there was no solution. A lack of a good explanation does not mean there weren't possible explanations that could not be confirmed. As the National Academy of Sciences stated:

The Report recognizes that there remain UFO sightings that are not easily explained. The Report does not suggest, however, so many reasonable and possible directions in which an explanation may eventually be found, that there seems to be no reason to attribute them to an extraterrestrial source without evidence that is much more convincing.²

3. The problems with witness testimony has always been the problem with UFO sightings. When William Hartmann wrote about the Zond IV sightings, he demonstrated that there was a percentage of UFO reports that often can be unreliable and exaggerated.³ This does not mean that all UFO sightings are exaggerations or unreliable but one has to consider the possibility that

the testimony might be flawed to the point that the solution is not readily apparent. The scientists recognized this problem. UFOlogists often ignore it.

4. The lack of criticism was not quite accurate. The O'Brien committee had noted that the USAF had lacked resources and sometimes identified cases without enough data.⁴ However, they, and Condon, did not spend a lot of effort trying to be overly critical of how the USAF was trying to explain every case. The USAF did make mistakes in their investigations but NICAP also made mistakes in their promotion of weak cases. If UFO proponents wanted Blue Book's performance evaluated, one would expect them to have NICAP's efforts also evaluated. In my opinion, both sides would not have looked very good. Such an effort would have done nothing to further the study of UFOs and would have been a waste of time and money.

Conspiracy

Some UFOlogists felt the whole event was a grand conspiracy, where the scientists were told by the USAF to debunk all UFO sightings and prove that UFOs were nonsense. The testimonies of Condon and other scientists involved indicate that this is not true. All seemed to think they were given a free hand to pursue their studies. The study itself is proof that this was not a whitewash. After all, if their objective was to explain away all UFO reports, why would they list so many of their cases as "unexplained"?

The source of the conspiracy appears to come from two documents. The first is the Low Memorandum, which was found by Dr. Craig and the existence known by the staff before being leaked to the media. The document was not classified or swept under the rug. Low did not even bother to hide the memo from the rest of the staff. Even more important is that Dr. Condon was unaware of the document's existence.⁵ The memo did not even reflect his approach in conducting the project. While UFOlogists like to state that this meant the conclusion of the study was pre-determined, the memo does not prove this.

The other document that supposedly proves the conclusions of the study was a "fait accompli", is a letter Colonel Hippler had written to Condon. Kevin Randle has interpreted this document to indicate that the Condon study was nothing more than propaganda presented by the USAF and that it was not science at all. One has to examine what Colonel Hippler had written and look at this from his point of view. He was trying to convey to Dr. Condon that the USAF would like a conclusion from the study that could determine what path the USAF could take with project Blue Book. He was concerned that the study would come up with an ambiguous conclusion regarding UFOs, which would result in the USAF spending more resources on a subject that, they felt, had no endpoint in sight. He did not state, "You must debunk UFOs". He only wanted a conclusion that could allow the USAF to either discontinue the study of UFOs or, if there was something there to be concerned about, require Blue Book to continue:

When you have looked into some sightings and examined some Blue Book records and become acquainted with the true state of affairs, you must consider the cost of the Air Force program on UFOs, and determine if the taxpayer should support this for the next decade. It will be at least that long before another independent study can be mounted to see if the Air Force can get out from under this program. If the contract is up before you have laid the proper groundwork for a proper recommendation, an extension of the contract would be less costly than another decade of operating Project Blue Book.⁶

Dr. Craig described this same attitude in his book on the Condon study:

Later, after Dr. J. Thomas Ratchford, who had represented the AFOSR in negotiating the project contract, said, "I think the only thing that we are really asking you to do is to take a look at the problem, first of all, and on the basis of what you determine recommend what the Air Force should do in the future." Col. Hippler then remarked, "I don't think we want any recommendations from you unless you feel strongly about it."

The USAF was simply stating that if Condon was going to recommend that "UFOs still needed to be studied by the USAF", he would need to provide good reasons why because the USAF could not see any reason to do so at this point.

Effects of the Condon study

Many UFO proponents feel that Condon's conclusions had made it impossible for scientists to study UFOs. This is not true. There have been plenty of scientists, who have pursued the study of UFOs. Unfortunately, they have failed to produce meaningful results. Is this because their fellow scientists have belittled their research or is because, as Condon had noted, it is very difficult to study the subject scientifically?

In 1997, Peter Sturrock put together a panel of scientists and UFOlogists to examine the best UFO evidence to date. Much was made of this because, according to the press release, the panel had "overturned" Condon's conclusions. This was something of an exaggeration.

The panel also reviewed some of the conclusions advanced in 1968 by Dr. Edward U. Condon, director of the Colorado Project. He asserted

that “nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge,” and that “further extensive study of UFOs probably cannot be justified in the expectation that science will be advanced thereby.” While agreeing with the first conclusion and its extension to the present, the panel considers that there always exists the possibility that investigation of an unexplained phenomenon may lead to an advance in scientific knowledge.⁸

Anybody who actually read Condon's recommendations would realize that he never stated that scientist should never study UFOs. After making the statement about scientifically studying UFOs could not be justified, Condon added that he felt that scientists, who wanted to study UFOs should do so.

Our conclusion that study of UFO reports is not likely to advance science will not be uncritically accepted by them. Nor should it be, nor do we wish it to be. For scientists, it is our hope that the detailed analytical presentation of what we were able to do, and of what we were unable to do, will assist them in deciding whether or not they agree with our conclusions. Our hope is that the details of this report will help other scientists in seeing what the problems are and the difficulties of coping with them.

If they agree with our conclusions, they will turn their valuable attention and talents elsewhere. If they disagree it will be because our report has helped them reach a clear picture of wherein existing studies are faulty or incomplete and thereby will have stimulated ideas for more accurate studies. If they do get such ideas and can formulate them clearly, we have no doubt that support will be forthcoming to carry on with such clearly-defined, specific studies. We think that such ideas for work should be supported.⁹

It seems that the Sturrock panel essentially mirrored what Condon had stated. This is interesting because this panel of scientists were exposed to a very one-sided presentation of UFO cases by UFO scientists. One might classify this as “UFOlogy's best and brightest” presenting the “best evidence available”. Despite the biased presentation, they really did not make a dent in the opinion of these scientists.

Panel co-chair, Dr. Von R. Eshleman, would elaborate about his participation in a subsequent interview:

I got a cold call from someone I knew, and it sounded like an interesting subject, and I'm emeritus, so I don't have to worry about my colleagues saying I shouldn't be doing these things. The concept of not even listening to the reports, I think is a mistake, and there are examples in the scientific literature where scientists have been wrong for very long periods of time...UFOs remain unidentified because there isn't enough evidence to go beyond the unidentified category, ... “unfortunately many people, when you say UFO, think that means a visitation of aliens or a government cover-up or something like that...”¹⁰

He also commented about their conclusions:

I thought we wrote a pretty mild report...We only changed the Condon Report in a minor way. We agree that nothing so far has really overturned science, but let's keep an open mind. I was surprised the media picked it up the way it did, but for a scientific group to say anything that doesn't completely debunk the UFOs, I suppose, was a surprise.¹¹

Several other members of the panel discussed their participation and mirrored D.r Eshelman's comments. In some cases, they were critical of how the UFOlogists did not objectively consider explanations other than exotic ones. This was mentioned in the conclusions by the panel:

It appears that most current UFO investigations are carried out at a level of rigor that is not consistent with prevailing standards of scientific research...It may therefore be valuable to carefully evaluate UFO reports to extract information about unusual phenomena currently unknown to science. However, to be credible to the scientific community, such evaluations must take place with a spirit of objectivity and a willingness to evaluate rival hypotheses.¹²

This is the only time, since Condon, that scientists, outside of the UFO field, had formally examined the UFO evidence and this was their response. Can UFOlogists really expect scientists to come to a different conclusion in any study?

A new scientific study

If Condon is as flawed as UFOlogists want everyone to believe, getting a different result should not be difficult. This means that a new study should be conducted. While the first was funded by the US government, this study would have to be funded by outside sources. This might present a conflict of interest unless the terms of the contract was clear that those conducting the study were independent of UFOlogy/formal skeptics and that their conclusions would not be influenced by the financier.

The source of the finances should not be too difficult. MUFON spent money on a public relations firm and probably could team with other UFO organizations to fund such a study. After all, it is the UFOlogists who state that the evidence exists and a new study will prove it. They want it, they should pay for it.

Wanted: Scientists

It is a common theme in UFOlogy that scientists do not want to study UFOs because they consider it nonsense or that there exists a conspiracy set in place by the findings of the Condon study that scientists are not allowed to study the subject. Most scientists, who have spoken on the subject, seem to reflect the attitude that there is little to the subject that interests them. For them to quit their current line of work, they would have to be enticed financially and given guarantees that they would not be beset by UFOlogists trying to influence their conclusions.

Since there is no such thing as the science of UFOlogy, one would expect that multiple disciplines (astronomy, geology, atmospheric sciences, chemistry, optics, etc.) would be needed. In addition to sightings/physical evidence, abduction claims would also have to be investigated, which means that personnel from the medical profession will be required.

A possible project

The study would have to include all the areas championed by UFOlogists. This would include:

1. An Examination of old cases selected by UFOlogists as the most significant. Perhaps a top twenty, which would include photographic and video evidence.
2. A time period would be set aside for a field team to be dispatched to any case in the United States that presents evidence that is significant and contains multiple independent witnesses from different locations. Single witness cases would be also included if they involve additional corroborating evidence such as photographs or video evidence. The team would not be asked to go investigate single witness that cannot be verified.
3. Cases involving data obtained solely through instrumentation.
4. Set up UFO stations to collect UFO data in selected "hot spot" areas
5. Medical examination of persons claiming to be abducted.

I can address some of the problems with these goals:

1. Old cases tend to be hard to analyze as noted here in SUNlite. However, there has been indications that some cases that were declared "unsolvable" in the past now have reasonable explanations for them. Cases like Rendlesham, the 1997 Yukon case, Sky-lab III, McMinnville, RB-47, Malmstrom, Kelly Johnson, Teheran, and Shag Harbor were all presented as "Best evidence" in Paul Kimball's film. The list was a consensus list of best cases. Some of these cases had explanations offered for them in the past and others had explanations offered for them since the film's release. It is hard to believe that scientists would consider any of these cases of evidence of anything significant unless there was new evidence unearthed in any follow-up. Since UFOlogists have not revealed anything new and skeptics have, it seems that these cases would be rejected as not being significant. One might say the same for just about any old UFO case. Perhaps if UFOlogists picked one good case, they can agree upon, scientists could examine that one case closely. As Dr. William Hartmann stated, in the quote I put on the cover of this issue, if it stands up to scrutiny, they might have a point.¹³ However, if it is solved or potential solution is presented, would they accept the conclusion? Would UFOlogists be afraid of having one of their "best cases" closely examined and evaluated by scientists?
2. The investigation of cases seems to offer something for scientists to evaluate. I suspect the conclusions would be similar to that of the Condon study. They may stumble across cases that do not have a definitive solution but this does not mean that there is no solution. The rejection of any single witness/non-independent group sighting without verification is important here. Some of the "unknown" cases in Condon were of the single witness type and these are often difficult to evaluate.
3. The cases involving instrumentation would be the best cases for scientists to study. The Puerto Rico video would be an ideal case for evaluation since the data is available. Skeptics would be willing to accept any conclusion offered by scientists outside of the UFO community but I doubt that groups like MUFON and the SCU would be so willing to accept their conclusions if it differed from theirs.
4. The UFO station idea has been tossed about for a few years. That being said, it has been mostly talk and there seems to be no firm plan in place or progress in this area. What is ignored is that there are actual stations scattered across the world already doing something very similar. The fireball network employed by NASA¹⁴ and the "Sky sentinel" network¹⁵ have all sky cameras monitoring the skies every night for bright meteors. Surely one would record these huge "spaceships" witnesses have claimed to be seeing for the past twenty to thirty years. The more stations, the greater the odds that a craft "unknown to science" would be recorded. To date, none of these cameras have recorded anything truly "unknown" but they have recorded hundreds of

bright meteor events. Some of these camera systems have been run by amateur astronomers who invested their own money to produce data to collect possible meteorites. Why haven't UFOlogists invested their own funds to set up their own networks?

5. One has to wonder if any abductee would be interested in examinations by medical doctors and psychiatrists outside of the UFO field. I also wonder if any doctor would be interested in opening themselves up to a malpractice lawsuit filed by an abductee if they consider them to be suffering from sort of mental illness.

Is a new study worth it?

Based on the arguments above, I think a new scientific study, if UFOlogists could get scientists interested, would be a wasted effort. There would be some explanations, some mysteries, but no definitive answers. The results would simply mirror what Condon had discovered and the conclusions would be pretty much the same. UFOlogists would not be willing to accept such a result.

Establishing a government agency to study UFOs, as Leslie Kean has proposed, would be a complete misuse of taxpayer funds. All it would result in is a database of sightings, which is already being done by NUFORC and MUFON. It probably would also squander resources from other government agencies trying to investigate "lights in the sky" reports. It would be tough selling that idea to somebody in congress when the money can be spent elsewhere on "more important" things.

In my opinion, the only possible path for UFOlogists to take is that outlined by Dr. Hartmann in his article about UFO photos. That is to select one case and then present it in a manner that would allow scientists to review the data. That means they would have to attempt to publish in a professional journal of some kind instead of publishing in the MUFON journal or on the Internet.

Somebody once stated that if you keep doing things the same way, you are going to get the same results. Until UFOlogy decides to take new steps to improve their approach on the subject, they will always be regarded as a pseudo-scientific/fringe field that has no hope of proving anything.

Notes and references

1. Condon, E. U., et al., eds. Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects. New York: Bantam 1968. P. 548
2. Panel of the National Academy of Sciences. Review of the University of Colorado report on Unidentified Flying Objects. National Academy of Sciences. 1969. Attachment 2 P. 9
3. Condon, E. U., et al., eds. Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects. New York: Bantam 1968. P. 575-6
4. *ibid.* P. 814
5. Craig, Roy. UFOs: An Insider's View of the Official Quest for Evidence. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1995. P. 200.
6. Randle, Kevin. "The Hippler letter". A Different Perspective. March 21, 2007. Available WWW: <http://kevinrandle.blogspot.com/2007/03/hippler-letter.html>
7. Craig, Roy. UFOs: An Insider's View of the Official Quest for Evidence. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1995. P. 235
8. Sturrock, Peter. The UFO Enigma. New York: Warner Books 1999. P. 122
9. Condon, E. U., et al., eds. Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects. New York: Bantam 1968. P. 2.
10. Koerner, Daveid and Simon LeVay. Here be dragons: the scientific quest for extraterrestrial life. Oxford University press. New York. 2000. P. 190
11. *ibid.* P.191
12. Sturrock, Peter. The UFO Enigma. New York: Warner Books 1999. P. 121
13. Sagan, Carl, and Thornton Page, eds. UFO's: A Scientific Debate. New York: Barnes & Nobles, 1972. P. 21
14. NASA's all sky fireball network. Available WWW: <http://fireballs.ndc.nasa.gov/>
15. SkySentinel, LLC. Sky Sentinel. Available WWW: <http://gokysentinel.com/>

June 30, 1954

This case was given special consideration because it supposedly involved scientists seeing, and recording, UFOs during an eclipse expedition. The chronology describes it this way:

June 30, 1954--Nr. Oslo, Norway. Two silvery disks observed and photographed from eclipse expedition planes. [VIII]¹

Section VII gives a description of the film.

Scandinavian eclipse film. Three aircraft carrying scientists, newsmen and other observers were flying near Lifell, Denmark; on an expedition to film and study a total eclipse of the sun. At 2:17 p.m. two shiny discs were noticed flying past the planes and witnessed by about 50 people on the three planes. John Bjornulf, chief cameraman of the expedition, managed to obtain about 10 seconds (of the approximately 30 second UFO flight) on 16 mm color film. The film was reportedly shown on American television December 26, 1954. [See Section I]²

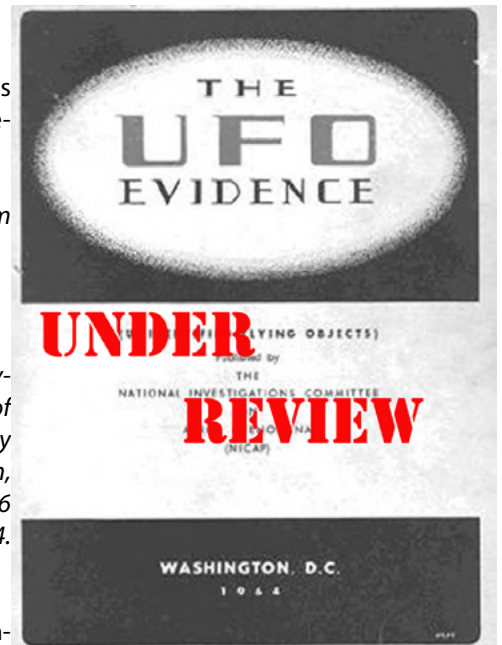
Section I states their source for this information comes from a story written in the London Evening News by Robert Chapman on December 21, 1955. This is over a year later but it gives a rather extraordinary account given by an Ernest Graham, were 50 people saw the UFO:

A solar eclipse was in progress, and three planes carrying scientists and technicians on a scientific expedition were flying through the moon's shadow. About 50 people in the three aircraft saw two "enormous" silvery discs swoop down from some clouds 15 to 20 miles away (estimate based on fact UFOs were in sunlight).

The objects sped along the horizon keeping an exact distance from each other, one slightly behind and above the other, both with forward edge tilted down. The observers detected apparent rotation, as the UFOs leveled off and disappeared into the distance after about 30 seconds. The chief cameraman of the expedition, John Bjornulf, managed to expose about 10 seconds of movie film which showed the UFOs. The films, released by Gaumont, a British firm, were shown on American television September 26, 1954. Still photographs of the UFOs have also been printed. Ernest Graham, one of the witnesses, stated that 50 persons afterwards wrote reports on what they had seen.³

The total eclipse had occurred at 1:32 PM⁴ local time so the film was not during totality but during the partial phases after totality. Additionally, Lifell is in Norway and not Denmark. The eclipse was not total in Denmark and the scientists would have no need to be flying in an area outside of the eclipse path. Since there is no Blue Book file on the photographs one has to look elsewhere for additional information.

NICAP did not include the photographs but research revealed they are available. Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos has an excellent copy in his Fotocat report #1: The year in photographs 1954.⁵ It shows the wing of the aircraft and two white lines that appeared to be streaking points of light or disk shaped objects seen on edge.





Other details reveal that the film was shot through the windows of a Heron aircraft⁶ at very high altitude. To prevent window glare for the photographers, the panes had been removed on some of the windows.

News Accounts

The account of the film was a news story in several newspapers in early July of 1954.⁷ It told a slightly different story than what appears in NICAP's document. Instead of these saucers being seen and then filmed, the photographer did not see the objects at the time. He only saw them after he watched the film. The newspaper also mentions that an unnamed photographic expert felt they were reflections resulting from filming through the laminated glass windows. Bjornulf also seemed to think they were some sort of mirage or reflection.

he
n-
er
in
ht

as
e.
ed
Y
T-

Eclipse Photos Show 'Saucers'

OSLO, Norway (UP)—A famed cameraman said today pictures he took during the solar eclipse last week showed "shiny white objects like flying saucers."

Photographer Johnny Bjornulf said "it is especially interesting to find the objects" since they "nearly coincided in time with the observation of six 'flying saucers' from a BOAC plane off Labrador."

The cameraman discovered the shiny objects while showing a color movie of the eclipse in London last Monday. He flew back to Norway and examined still pictures he took at the same time and saw the same objects.

Bjornulf took the pictures aboard a Scandinavian Airlines plane at 13,500 feet altitude while photographing the eclipse of the sun last Wednesday for scientists.

He said he had no idea the objects were on the film until he saw the movie in London.

"My personal opinion is that the shining white spots on the pictures

are some reflex phenomena, although I am quite sure that it is not due to any reflection in the camera lens."

He ruled out lens reflection because the objects appeared on film taken by two different cameras.

A photographic expert in London who saw one of the still pictures said sun reflections from the airplane wing through the plane's laminated glass may be responsible.

On one still picture, taken with the still camera, a circular white spot can be seen midway between the sun and the tip of the airplane wing. The object has a very faint tail line like the condensed vapor stripes sometimes seen in the wake of jet planes at high altitudes.

Another but vaguer "object" can be seen partly hidden by sunlit clouds.

"In my opinion the second flying saucer seems to be a kind of mirage of the first one," Bjornulf said.

Flying Saucer Review tells a fascinating story

Flying Saucer Review of January-February, 1956 had a slightly different account than the media reports. In this story, which was told by a Mr. Graham, indicated they had seen the objects during flight and Bjornulf then filmed them.⁸ This is probably the same Graham quoted by NICAP. He stated that Bjornulf had been shooting through the open windows with no glass being present for reflection. The article also mentioned how skeptics looked foolish trying to explain the images. It seemed that the case was pretty solid.

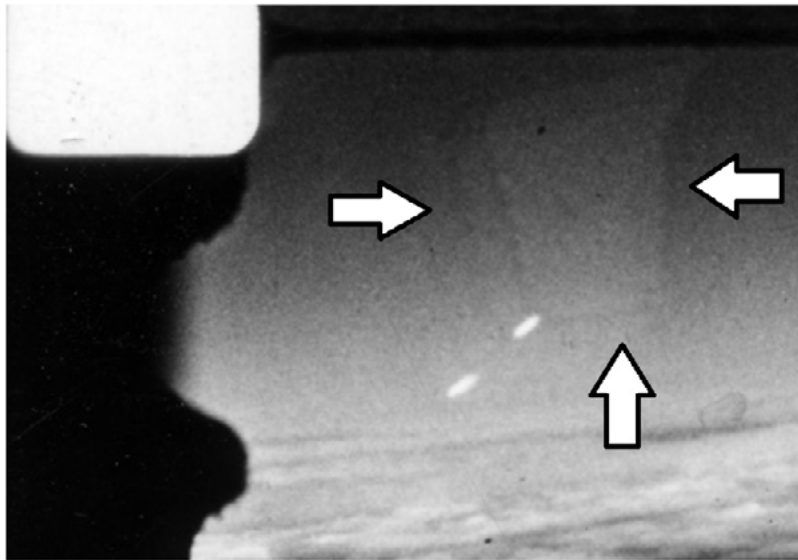
Flying Saucer Review debunks the film

Sixteen years later, Flying Saucer Review published a new version of the story that said the film was a hoax!⁹ In that article Charles Bowen revealed that the film was not even taken by Bjornulf. It had actually been filmed by a man named Conradi. Apparently, Bjornulf began to promote the "saucer" aspect of the film a few days after the eclipse. At that point, a scientist in the eclipse party, Dr. Garwick, stated they were reflections in the window. In order to debunk the film, both Dr. Garwick and H.C. Christensen had a similar plane fly the same route at the same time of day. They noted similar reflections on the windows. Examination of the photographs taken during the eclipse and the position of the wing indicated that these were taken through the third window on the plane. Dr. Garwick explained:

The last two windows on the port side of the plane had been removed and everybody, including the photographer, were of the opinion that the pictures had been taken through window No. 2, i.e. through a window without panes so no reflections would appear.

The team (Brade, Garwick and Christensen - C.B.) took pictures out of the last three windows with the same camera which was used on the flight. These pictures were superimposed upon the pictures showing the light spots, and it was found that the wing perspective fitted exactly for the picture from the third (paned) window, and no others.¹⁰

If one looks closely at the photograph in Olmos' image, one can clearly see a reflection in the window where the UFOs were located indicating that the image was taken through a window.¹¹



It appears this case had been debunked in 1954, when Brade, Garwick and Christensen had addressed the images in an article in *Aftenposten* on October 14, 1954(see next page)!¹² In that article, they presented their evidence as to which window the photographs were taken. Apparently, the proponents of the film were arguing that there was no window and had asked the photographer if he had taken them through a window or not. Conradi had replied he thought he had shot through one of the windows without glass but this was during totality. A photograph taken from the rear of the plane during the eclipse showed Conradi on the right side of the plane. This indicated that personnel were not always in the same location and, since the film was taken AFTER totality, it seems logical that Conradi had moved and filmed through a window with glass.¹³

For some reason, NICAP and Flying Saucer Review seemed to be unaware of this information when they published their one-sided account of what had transpired. It wasn't until 1972, when somebody decided to look a bit further, was the true story revealed.

Case closed?

In 1991, Flying Saucer Review would publish another story about the film by somebody who was an advisor on films for the British Ministry of Supply. His story was based on his memories about seeing the film in the late 1950s. Some of the story did not quite

match with the story about the film. He seemed convinced that these UFOs were actual craft.¹⁴

That being said, the story told in the 1972 Flying Saucer review seems the most accurate. The sources are people who were present at the time the film was recorded and appear to be more reliable than those used by NICAP. In my opinion, the case should be considered explained and rejected as "UFO best evidence".

Notes and References

1. Hall, Richard M. (Ed.) The UFO evidence. The National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). New York: Barnes and Noble. 1997. P. 134.
2. *ibid.* P. 89
3. *ibid.* P. 5
4. Espenak, Fred. "Total solar eclipse of 1954 June 30". Eclipse Predictions by Fred Espenak, NASA's GSFC. Available WWW: <https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEgoogle/SEgoogle1951/SE1954Jun30Tgoogle.html>
5. Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos. Fotocat report #1: The year in photographs 1954 (expanded). Apartado de Correos 12140, 46080 Valencia, Spain. P.20.
6. Goebel, Greg. "The De Havilland Dove & Percival Prince". AirVectors: Commercial Aircraft. Available WWW: http://www.airvectors.net/avdove_05.jpg
7. "Eclipse photos show saucers". The Daily Inter Lake . Kalispell, Montana. July 7, 1954. P. 1
8. Girvan, Waveney. "Scandinavian eclipse expedition films UFOs". Flying Saucer Review. January-February 1956. P. 6
9. Bowen, Charles. "Doubts about the Lifjell film". Flying Saucer Review. January-February 1972. P. 22
10. *ibid.* P. 23
11. Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos. Fotocat report #1: The year in photographs 1954 (expanded). Apartado de Correos 12140, 46080 Valencia, Spain. P.20.
12. Bowen, Charles. "Doubts about the Lifjell film". Flying Saucer Review. January-February 1972. P. 23
13. Bradhe, A.V., H.C. Christensen, and J.V. Garwick. "The explanation for the bright spots on the film for the solar eclipse". Aften-posten. Oslo, Norway. October 14, 1954. P. 4. (courtesy of Ole Jonny Braenne via Gilles Fernandez)
14. Densham, Denny. "A story about the scientists of the British Ministry of Supply, and about their film of two UFOs." Flying Saucer Review. Summer 1991. P. 11

THE 701 CLUB

CASE 1236: MAY 29 ,1952

Don Berliner describes this as:

May 29, 1952; San Antonio, Texas. 7 p.m. Witness: USAF pilot Maj. D.W. Feuerstein, on ground. One bright tubular object tilted from horizontal to vertical for 8 minutes, then slowly returned to horizontal, again tilted vertical, accelerated, appeared to lengthen and turned red. The entire sighting lasted 14 minutes.¹

One has to wonder about this case because of its duration. Fourteen minutes in daylight indicates something that should have been obvious to more observers than one individual.

The Blue Book file

The file contains a single message and an Air intelligence report describing the event. According to the file²:

- It was a long tubular shape in a horizontal position that slowly moved from azimuth 300 to 325 degrees.
- It had possible exhaust flames
- It changed to a vertical position after 8 minutes
- It then tilted to the horizontal before going vertical again.
- It moved up and out of sight. As it did, it lengthened and change to a mild red/orange color.
- The object was visible at about 25-30 degrees elevation. It moved upwards to an angle of 45 degrees prior to disappearing.
- The sighting last 14 minutes between 1900 and 1914 CST.
- There was high scattered cirrus in the area.
- The air traffic information was unavailable to the investigators.

Solution?

With such minimal information, it is difficult to come up with a potential solution but there are clues in the report. This was just before sunset when conditions for certain phenomena are likely to occur. The estimated azimuth of the sighting was roughly 20-30 degrees to the right of the setting sun. This is the direction one would expect for a sun dog reflection. While the elevation angle appears off for the sighting, this may have been an overestimate by the observer. The changing shape could have been the result of the shifting cirrus clouds that were seen by the observers. Towards the end of the observation the witness described seeing flame type colors. As one can see from these images, sun dogs have a yellowish-orange-red color.



Vapor Trail Explains Local Air Object

The mysterious "comet-like" object seen flashing through the skies by several Pottstown area residents Wednesday evening was explained yesterday as the vapor trail of an aircraft reflected by the setting sun.

The plausible solution came from Edward Semich, 35 West Fourth street, who also saw the object. Substantiating this explanation was a statement made by the air traffic control tower at the Reading airport which said that a vapor trail was reported to them at approximately the same time the object was reported seen headed toward Reading.

The "brilliant comet-like" phenomenon was first reported by three area residents shortly after 5 p. m. Wednesday. All three said they saw it travelling West at approximately the same time—between 4:50 and 5 p. m.

Reading airport officials said that although the aircraft did not land there, it may have been either a conventional or jet type plane, since both leave vapor trails.

'Saucers' Vapor Trail

COLUMBUS, O. (AP) — Columbus residents called newspapers Wednesday night to report seeing a strange object in the sky over Columbus. It usually was described as a colored streak of flame headed north. Since it was reported just after sunset, officials at airports and the weather bureau figure it was the vapor trail of an airplane.

Vapor Trails Get Many Excited

Vapor trails formed by condensation of aircraft engines in cold or freezing temperatures put Peninsula residents in a tizzy late yesterday afternoon.

Ordinarily white, the vapor trails were scarlet and gold from the setting sun.

Police departments from San Jose to South San Francisco were flooded with calls between 5:15 and 5:25 with reports ranging from "a burning plane" and "meteors" to "flying saucers." However, it was only a B-50 bomber flying at 35,000.

AIR BEHAVIOR OVER RENO AREA IS EXPLAINED

Anxious phone calls to the Gazette newsroom concerning peculiar objects in the sky this morning brought an explanation from the weather bureau.

The weather bureau said the unusual behavior over Reno was merely a vapor trail.

A vapor trail is caused by air condensing which rarifies in back of a flying object, in this case an airplane. This cools the air enough to condense it to a vapor and thus the vapor trail.

Nope, It Wasn't A Flying Saucer, It Was A Vapor Trail

Nope, it wasn't a flying saucer or any other "mystery type" of aircraft that passed over the city this morning. It was an ordinary twin-engine plane flying at high altitude, leaving a vapor trail behind it.

Necks were strained and all eyes were looking "straight up" about 10:30 this morning when the "trail of white smoke" appeared out of the west and extended slowly eastward across a bright blue and cloudless sky.

Those who served in the air force during the war estimated the plane was flying at an altitude of from 30,000 to 35,000 feet. The plane itself was visible for a short time when it was directly over the city. Aside from that, its location could be determined only by the head of the vapor trail as it moved slowly eastward.

After traveling nearly out of sight, the white trail turned to the left and the plane reversed its flight, passing over Fairfield flying west. Its second trail of "smoke" was to the north of the original white belt it left across the sky.

Former air force pilots explained the strange sight as a vapor trail left by the heated exhaust from an airplane. When the temperature is right, and there is a certain amount of moisture in the air, the exhaust from a plane causes a vapor as the heat mixes with the cold, damp air. In other words, the vapor trail is actually a small cloud.

Vapor trails were common sights to those who served in the armed forces where large fleets of bombing planes winged their way toward enemy targets. As hundreds of planes passed over, each one leaving two or four vapor trails.

Another possibility is a jet contrail. The jet contrails seen at sunset/sunrise, were not a common sight in 1952. These articles above demonstrate that, in the early 1950s, people were reporting contrails as "mysterious objects"^{3,4,5,6,7}. An aircraft flying at high altitude could produce an interesting contrail that could be confused as something unknown. The witness was described as a pilot but that does not exclude the possibility that he mistook an unusual contrail for a UFO.

Both the sun dog or contrail explanation are possible answers for this sighting. It is interesting to note that Blue Book noted the possibility of a reflection of some kind on the record card. While the case can not be listed as "explained", I feel that it could be reclassified as a possible contrail or sun dog.

Notes and references

1. Berliner, Don. "The Bluebook Unknowns". NICAP Available WWW: <http://www.nicap.org/bluebook/unknowns.htm>
2. Knipp, M. D. "Air Intelligence information report IR-1-52". Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9614324>
3. "Vapor trail explains local air object". Pottstown Mercury. Pottstown, Pennsylvania. December 19, 1952. P. 37.
4. "Saucers vapor trail". The Lima news. Lima, Ohio. March 13, 1952. P. 28.
5. "Vapor trails get many excited". San Mateo times. San Mateo, California. January 12, 1950. P. 7
6. "Air behavior over Reno area is explained". Reno evening gazette. Reno, Nevada. March 14, 1953. P. 9.
7. "Nope, it wasn't a flying saucer. It was a vapor trail". Fairfield daily ledger. Fairfield, Iowa. April 15, 1950. P. 6.