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### WEDNESDAY PHENOMENON

The "Wednesday phenomenon" is a phrase coined by John A. Keel, who has written that the "greatest number of sightings are reported on Wednesday, and then they slowly taper off through the rest of the week. The lowest number occurs on Tuesday. This inexplicable 'Wednesday phenomenon' proved very valid," or so Keel concluded from analyses of close-encounter reports from 1966, 1967, and 1968. Keel has suggested that "psychic and occult events seem to follow the same cycles as the UFO phenomenon" (Keel, 1970).

Two subsequent studies failed to validate the existence of a Wednesday phenomenon. Psychologist/statistician David R. Saunders put 7025 sighting reports (from 1921 through 1970) into a computer and tallied the days of the week on which they had occurred. There was no significant difference between Wednesday and other days (Saunders, 1971). Another scientifically trained ufologist, Jacques Vallee, found that the "lowest proportion of landings is observed on Saturday night, the highest on Friday night" (Vallee, 1971).

Yet another study, this one conducted by Belgian ufologist Edgar Simons, noted a slightly larger than normal occurrence of Wednesday sightings in the United States, Spain, and Belgium during 1950, but

when Simons expanded his sample to encompass the next two decades of Belgian sightings, Tuesday—Keel's slowest day—emerged as the most sighting-intensive of the week ("The Wednesday Phenomenon," 1973). A later critic, Allan Hendry, complained that all such studies, whatever their conclusions, were compromised because they had been insufficiently screened for bogus reports such as those resulting from misidentifications of conventional stimuli (Hendry, 1979).

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### WHITMAN CONTACT CLAIM

A widespread power failure blacked out New York City and much of the northeastern United States late on the afternoon of November 10, 1965. By dawn of the following day, power still had not been restored. Movie and television actor Stuart Whitman, who was staying in a Manhattan hotel, heard a "sound, like a whippoorwill whistling outside my twelfth-story window." When he stepped to the window, he was startled, so he told Hollywood reporter Vernon Scott two months later, to see two UFOs hovering nearby. According to his account:

One of them was orange, and the other was blue. They gave off a strange luminescent light, so I couldn't see if there were portholes or who was in them.

Then I heard them speaking to me as if they were on a loudspeaker. They spoke to me in English. It may not have been audible to anyone else. They said they wanted to talk to me be-

cause I appeared to have no malice or hate. They said they were fearful of earth because earthlings were messing around with unknown quantities and might disrupt the balance of the universe or their planet. The people in the UFO said the blackout was just a little demonstration of their power and that they could do a lot more with almost no effort. It served as a warning. They said they could stop our whole planet from functioning. They asked me to do what I could to fight malice, prejudice, and hate on earth, and then they took off.

I couldn't say how big the objects were, but when they took off I felt elated. I wasn't even shocked. And I know I wasn't asleep because I was standing by the window and wide awake the entire time. I don't know why they picked me as a contact. But I'll swear on a Bible that I saw them out there and that they talked to me.

Whitman insisted that he had not been drinking. Scott, who thought the story was absurd, nonetheless acknowledged that Whitman seemed sincere ("Stuart Whitman," 1966). It was not, after all, the sort of tale likely to advance his career.

He never spoke publicly of the incident again. So far as is known, no one else reported seeing UFOs hovering near a hotel-room window at dawn on November 11, though there were a number of sightings during the blackout. Warnings about the upsetting of the "balance of the universe" figure in several obscure contact claims (Keel, 1970).

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#### WILLAMETTE PASS PHOTO HOAX

In 1971, at the conclusion of a lecture to a local group, California ufologist Paul Cerny was approached by a distinguished-looking man holding a photograph. The man turned out to be a Ph.D. biochemist employed as a consultant to a major logging company, and his photograph would generate years of controversy.

He told Cerny that on November 22, 1966, he and his wife were traveling on Highway 58 through the Willamette Pass when he decided to stop and take some pictures of the scenery. He climbed up a snowbank at the Diamond Peak overlook and snapped two photographs of the mountain, then paused for a short period as he looked through the camera preparing to take the third. Suddenly a disc-shaped object with a domed top ascended into his field of view. It had a bright yellow top but was otherwise black. After stopping for a very brief period, it shot off toward the right and disappeared into a cloud bank. The entire sighting took place in about three seconds.

The witness was so shaken that when he returned to the car, he did not mention the incident to his wife. Later, when the roll of film was developed, he got a further surprise: Beneath the disc shape he remembered seeing were two dark and light bands resembling secondary images. His eyes had registered nothing like these, and he could not imagine what they were—unless, he speculated, the UFO had emitted "power pulses" of some sort, perhaps related to the thin rectangular "vapor trail" stretching from the bottom of the object.

The man said he had sent a copy of the picture to William K. Hartmann, who for a period of time in the late 1960s was investigating UFO photographs for the **University of Colorado UFO Project**, but by the time Hartmann got it, he was wrapping up his work.

Cerny, a field investigator for the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), had the man fill out a standard NICAP report form. Cerny then forwarded it and the photograph to NICAP headquarters in Kensington, Maryland.

The photographer's professional credentials notwithstanding, NICAP was not much impressed. Its analysts found what they regarded as fatal flaws. As NICAP's *UFO Investigator* expressed it:

NICAP's photographic consultants . . . were skeptical that an object could have deployed itself three different times in the one one-hundredth (1/100) of a second the camera was set to fire. Even if the shutter speed was actually slower, it was almost inconceivable that three distinct