

THE CORPSE THAT NEVER ATTENDED THE FUNERAL

Charles Bowen

SOBER and informative, an excellent new book, *The UFO Controversy in America*, by David Michael Jacobs (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana 47401, 360 pages, price \$12.50) has already achieved a measure of fame by being the first book to be published by an Academic Press which, after a fair and sound presentation of the case, is seen to be for the subject. The book will no doubt achieve further well-merited fame as the first definitive historical text on the subject, although I am sure that it was never Dr. Jacobs' intention that it should be that.

The foreword is by Dr. J. Allen Hynek who, as would be expected, features prominently in a work which puts into perspective the developing scene of the phenomenon of the UFO in the United States. Dr. Hynek points out the parallels between the UFO phenomenon, "which has never been properly presented at the Court of Science," and that of meteorites, stones from the sky which were so often "reported by peasants." He remarks that most of the observers of UFOs have been anything but untutored peasants, but "...the data on the UFO phenomenon have had to run an insidious gauntlet that meteorites were spared," for meteorites "did not become the fabric of cultists and pseudo-religious aberrants." In other words meteorites were never regarded as sent by would-be reformers of erring mankind, and no-one ever claimed to have ridden on one to Venus, as has happened in the UFO phenomenon. So, says Dr. Hynek, when the Condon Report dismissed the entire subject as unworthy of scientific attention, and gave it a \$500,000 burial, there was an audible sigh of relief in scientific circles. Yet "...it turned out that the corpse had not even attended the funeral."

Dr. Jacobs is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Nebraska (his dissertation for his PhD at the University of Wisconsin was on the topic of the UFO controversy in the United States). He was permitted to research previously inaccessible US Air Force documents, and he conducted a number of other important interviews in his preparations for this book. He traces the history of the subject in North America from 1896/97 through to 1974, and, as his title declares, his book is about controversy. So he dwells on the various deliberate attempts – which stemmed from the secret report of the Robertson Committee, and especially its notorious "debunking" clause, in January 1953 – to kill off the subject. Attempts which crystallized in the late Dr. Edward U. Condon's Colorado University project (1966-68) and its peculiar Report issued in January 1969. And although interest in the subject fell away considerably, and its devotees in the amateur clubs and groups took a hammering, the UFOs came

bouncing back, and public interest soared in 1974. The "corpse" which had missed the obsequies, showed itself to be as vigorous as ever it had been.

For me the reading of this book was at once a nostalgic exercise and a hair-raising experience. Quickly through the 1896/97 chapter – quickly, only because many of the reports had re-awakened, after 70 years in the archives, in the pages of *Flying Saucer Review*, thanks to the researches of Jerome Clark, Lucius Farish and Dr. Jacques Vallée – and one is back in those exciting days of the 1947 wave. From there on one re-acquaints ones-self with Captain Ruppelt, Projects Sign, Grudge (so aptly named!) and the birth of Project Blue Book; with that enthusiastic journalist and retired U.S. Marine officer, Donald Keyhoe, the heady days of the great 1952 wave, and the hopes that existed then of being contemporary with possibly momentous discoveries. Then, as we well recall, everything went off the boil, and the subject turned sour on us. This happened later here in England than in the States, for even FSR in its early days carried items from the Services – due I realise now, to the influence of Derek Dempster, its first editor. Years later Waveney Girvan and I often pondered the problem: "When did the official 'clamp' go on?" We knew nothing of the Robertson Committee's secret recommendations, and speculated that clamp-down year was 1954.

The late Dr. James E. McDonald revealed to the world the existence of the historic hitherto unknown clause in which the call went out to the U.S. Services to "debunk all flying saucer reports." McDonald discovered the clause twelve years later, after the report had been routinely de-classified, and it was immediately put back on the secret list. The Arizona University professor's view was that the controversial clause was necessary because the enormous volume of 1952 reports had clogged intelligence channels at the time of the Korean War. Jacobs has shown that not only was this true, but also that "...the reports [of UFOs] could make the public vulnerable to 'possible enemy psychological warfare' by cultivating a 'morbid national psychology in which skillful hostile propaganda could induce hysterical behaviour and harmful distrust of duly constituted authority.'" In other words it was the UFO reports and not the UFOs that were considered to be the danger. That is the point, I feel, on which Dr. Jacobs bases the whole of his study. As he observes: "The real enemy had been identified. The battle was joined."

Which is where my personal "hair-raising" experience began, for even at this distance in time the injustices that were perpetrated make my hackles rise, for without a shadow of doubt the

practices over there quickly found their official ways over here. It appears that the panel even recommended that the existing amateur groups of UFO researchers and devotees be put under surveillance as security risks. And so began the years of official ridicule of witnesses — and of researchers — and of the character assassination, the deliberate destruction of reputations of honest folk whose only crime was to report something they saw that puzzled them. There have even been cases where professional folk with an interest in the subject have been deliberately and publicly ridiculed by opponents in their fields, so that their reputations have been destroyed. Small wonder there have been suicides.

In recent months we have heard much of the "dirty tricks" brigades. It seems similar methods were operated on the UFO scene. For example, when Keyhoe obtained details of cases from Project Blue Book for use in a book he was writing (*Flying Saucers from Outer Space*) an excerpt was due to be published in *Look* magazine. The Air Force, says Dr. Jacobs, pressured *Look* into publishing a disclaimer in the same issue, and to include parenthetical remarks disputing points throughout the article and so completely destroying its impact.

And so the sordid story went on, with the "fiddling" of methods of "identification" to reduce drastically the percentage of unknowns, with the arrival of AFR 200-2 to regularize investigation and reporting, and JANAP 146 to make the release to the public, by members of the Services, of UFO reports, a criminal matter. (The Air Force gave the FBI names of UFO-interested individuals who were "illegally or deceptively bringing the subject to public attention.") These times also saw the birth and rise, on the civil front, of NICAP (APRO was already in existence, and no doubt under surveillance) of which Donald Keyhoe eventually became director.

The years rolled by, and the U.S. Air Force remained bitterly engaged in the "Great Keyhoe War" and seemingly losing sight of the reason why their security clamp had gone on. The "political adventurer" (U.S.A.F. description) Keyhoe left no stone unturned in attempts to get Congressional Hearings about Air Force secrecy, and its handling of the UFO programme; the Air Force, fearful of its Public Relations image, and for its secret files, moved heaven and earth to thwart him.

Meanwhile UFOs were still reported, and in growing numbers, particularly during the period 1964 to 1966, with the Socorro case "liberalising NICAP" (they at last conceded that there might be UFO occupants) and completing Air Force Scientific Consultant Hynek's 180° turn from scepticism to acceptance of the subject. By 1966/67 the Air Force could no longer side-step Congressional Hearings and symposia, but it saw its chance with the setting up of the Condon Commission (the excuse being to report on the UFO problem; the reason being that it wanted to shed its responsibility for the troublesome UFO burden). For Keyhoe it was a hollow victory.

What now? The UFOs, as Dr. Jacobs demon-

strates in his final chapter, are still with us. Some of the groups still soldier on, although NICAP, having burnt up its energies in the great struggle, is but a shadow of its former self. Gratifyingly there is a gradual emergence of scientific interest and involvement in the reports, with an enfranchised Hynek, the survivor, emerging unscathed and now leading the way with his institute, the Center for UFO Studies. Also the AIAA is involved and the AAAS too (how Condon blasted them for putting on a UFO symposium: "the UFO buffs are a slippery lot, and do a great deal by 'insinuating' " — etc., etc.).

A thoroughly readable book, with a mass of detail that is new and revealing (among the many stories I recommend that of the CIA man who saw a UFO during the investigation of a psychic witness, and of what happened to him), about the officially provoked, and establishment-condoned in-fighting, that went on for the best part of 20 years.

I know Dr. Jacobs' book is about the *American* controversy, but I do feel he has not stressed sufficiently the fact that UFOs are a global phenomenon, and that the American reports are but a fraction of the whole. Let us hope that when academic communities new to the subject venture into the book, as some of them must, they will not conclude that the subject is after all just another American parochial oddity. In the past this has been an argument used with some effect against the need for serious scientific study of the subject, an argument that is obviously discounted by the volume of world-wide UFO reports.

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ALLEGED KIDNAPPINGS, AND OTHER MATTERS

Gordon Creighton

WE are indebted to Dr. W. Buhler for more press-clippings concerning the UFO scene in Brazil. Our thanks also to Monsieur Jean Bastide of Aix-en-Provence, France, for sending us details of the first case.

Catanduva

Catanduva, a small inland Brazilian town lying to the north-west of Sao Paulo, has figured in more than one extraordinary recent report. The following account is condensed from the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* of May 18, 1973.

At half-past-four in the early hours of Monday, May 14, 1973, Sr. Inocência Correa, manager of the Cecat factory, which manufactures concrete posts and blocks, went out as usual, with his wife Dona Dolores and their daughter Maria-Cristina, to the cowshed to milk the cows. Their *fazenda*, the "Tres Marias," lies beside the Washington Luís Highway, a few kilometres from Catanduva. The Cecat plant is near by.

The daughter was the first to catch sight of a strange object about 300 metres from them, on the other side of the road. Our press-clipping describes this object as "different from the so-called 'flying saucers.'" The upper portion of the thing resembled an open parachute, while the under-part is described as being like the body of an airplane, but without wings. Its size was about the size of a passenger car. The colour was dark, and it showed no lights, but it made a noise that sounded like a ventilator.

The girl shouted to her parents that a low-flying craft was approaching. They could not believe this, for at that hour of the early morning there are never any aircraft in that vicinity, and certainly none likely to be landing there. However, as the girl insisted, the mother came out to take a look. Then, terrified, both women ran and hid in a heap of hay. The father then came out of the cowshed, and he was the only one who secured a close view of the machine. It was no more than 30 metres from him, over an open piece of ground which is used as a football-pitch. It remained there, at a height of some 50 metres for at least five minutes, and possibly a little longer. As it hovered there it seemed to be making a rocking motion.

Sr. Corrêa, who once worked for three years as an employee of the local Catanduva Aero-Club and is familiar with aircraft, told press reporters that the object could not possibly have been a helicopter, balloon, or light aircraft.

He watched it vanish, finally, at high speed towards the west.

On the Belém-Brasília highway

Our next report is taken from *O Dia* (Rio de Janeiro) of July, 1974. The news item was headlined A BAD LANDING and HIT ON THE ROAD BY A FLYING SAUCER.

The doctors on duty at the municipal casualty post in Belém thought at first that the body injuries presented by the farm labourer José Nobre Uchôa were simply the result of just another traffic accident. But when he began to describe how the wounds were caused "by the lack of skill of the pilots of a flying saucer who perpetrated a flight error," the doctors didn't know what to say about it!

The farm-worker had been found lying beside the road, unconscious, and with various injuries. As his condition was serious, he was taken in to Belém. So far as the doctors there were concerned, the "nasty tumble" taken by José was indeed due to a blow — but to a blow from a car, which gave him a powerful bang on the head and affected his brain.

But José Uchôa continues to insist upon the truthfulness of his fantastic story and bemoans the lack of skill of the strange beings which stopped him from paying a visit aboard a flying saucer.

José, who lives near Kilometre 48 on the Belém-Brasília Highway, says that he was in his house one night "...when two strangely dressed men appeared, wearing a reddish, luminous garb. They asked me if I was interested in seeing a flying saucer. I didn't know at first what to do, but in the end I accepted.

"The men asked me to walk along the highway next day at a certain time."

As arranged, José began walking along the Belém-Brasília Highway on the day and at the time fixed, but was run over.

Says he: "It can only have been an error in calculation when those queer men tried to land on the road.

"Just at that moment, as I was going along, I saw a light right ahead of me and then came that violent bang on my body which threw me on to the side of the road. Then they went off, fearing that something had happened. And me — I went to complain to the Police."

Underwater Bases?

According to a report published in *O Dia* of Rio de Janeiro on July 12, 1974, a flying saucer was seen to drop into the sea off the coast of southern Brazil on June 18, 1974. The report, from the Florianópolis representative of the paper, is as follows: