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Hynek 10/10/66 Newsweek - Pt. 1

From: Jerry Cohen <rjcohen@li.net>
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Fwd Date: Mon, 14 Dec 1998 08:53:21 -0500
Subject: Hynek 10/10/66 Newsweek - Pt. 1

For those without web browsers.

Because it can't be transmitted all at once in email, footnotes to this article will appear in Hynek 10/10/66 Newsweek Article.2. Those downloading this article can connect both into one file for research purposes. The footnotes are extremely relevant to this post for researchers, as all information can be checked for accuracy therefrom, and also provide additional insights.

Life and Times of Dr. J. Allen Hynek:

In trying to learn as much as we can about the life of J. Allen Hynek and his ufological relationship with the United States Air Force we note the following:

Since the late 1940's, the Air Force had been releasing explanations for UFO cases and in effect, doing its best to assure the American public (and the world) that it had this "UFO thing" under control. Skeptics could feel confident that UFO claims were probably all scientifically explainable if one would simply dig deeply enough into each case.

However, the number of UFO cases that made the newspapers in 1957 again began increasing dramatically in 1965/66, the quality of some began rising as well and the Air Force seemed to be falling short in publically explaining some of them.

Then, something happened in 1966 that had a profound impact on every person following this fascinating controversy: Dr. J. Allen Hynek, chief civilian astronomical scientific consultant to the Air Force on UFOs (for approximately 18 years), the scientist responsible for debunking all the cases for the Air Force, suddenly went public with information which apparently contradicted what the Air Force had been saying all along. In simple terms the man said; "I can't explain all of this. Some of it has me baffled." (This researcher's quote, not Hynek's)

So that we can remember exactly what happened back then, I am posting those 2 articles that originally exploded this controversy into a major dispute, unresolved to this day.

The following article was taken from: Newsweek Magazine, 10/10/66, p. 70. It contained quotes by Dr. Hynek. A brief discussion of same follows.

Another much longer and more detailed article by Hynek himself appeared in the Saturday Evening Post on 12/17 of the same year. I believe that 2nd one may have been a large portion of the major text of the article Hynek evidently submitted to "Science"

journal prior to their editing. I'll be submitting that shortly.

Begin Newsweek article:

SCIENCE AND SPACE

UFO's for Real?

Flying saucers once again have zoomed back into the public eye-or imagination. In the first six months of this year the U.S. Air Force's Project Blue Book, the official registrar of Unidentified Flying Objects, has duly noted 508 UFO "sightings." Saturday Review columnist and UFO believer John Fuller's "Incident at Exeter" has been sharing space on the best-seller lists with former radio announcer Frank Edwards' book "Flying Saucers-Serious Business." And just last week Fuller began a two-part story in Look magazine recounting the terrifying two hours that a New Hampshire couple claim they spent being interrogated aboard a flying saucer.

The Air Force has been chasing-and usually shooting down-such stories since the late 1940s. The issue has always seemed clear-cut: on the one side, the excited believers or someone with a story to sell; on the other side, the sober scientific Establishment which explained away alleged sightings as weather balloons, birds, jet aircraft, cloud formations or even ball lightning (NEWSWEEK, Sept. 5, 1966). But last week one of the leading Establishment members seemed to be defecting to the other side. No less a figure than J. Allen Hynek, the Northwestern University astrophysicist and the Air Force's own UFO consultant, believes something's up. "There is a phenomenon here," Hynek says. "I've studied this for eighteen years and it's not all nonsense."

In a letter to the authoritative journal Science, to be published this month, Hynek calls upon reputable scientists to investigate UFO's seriously. "I'm not saying we are being visited by extraterrestrial beings," Hynek told Newsweek's Richard Steele, "but I believe it is one of the possibilities and I think we should hold an open mind about it. It would be provincial to believe we are the only intelligent beings in the universe." UFO's might even be, according to Hynek, "something entirely new to science. Where would you have gotten in 1866," he asks, "if you had talked to a scientists about nuclear energy?"

Unlike the true UFO believers, Hynek does not cry conspiracy. First of all, he dismisses the idea that UFO's are some secret military device. "I just don't think people can keep a secret for eighteen years," he says. Hynek also acknowledges that most UFO reports can be explained as down-to-earth events. At first, Science (journal) rejected Hynek's letter, reluctant to lend its reputation to a controversy that has been the property of publicity seekers and circulation-minded editors. But Hynek's arguments persuaded the magazine to publish an abbreviated version.

In his letter Hynek eloquently seeks to win over "scientists who would like to look into the UFO phenomenon but are so vastly afraid of ridicule . . . They don't dare investigate." He presents his argument in charge and rebuttal form:

- *CHARGE: "UFO's are reported by unreliable, unstable, uneducated people."
REBUTTAL: "... some of the very best, most coherent reports have come from reliable, scientifically trained people."
- *CHARGE: "The Air Force has no evidence that UFO's are extraterrestrial or represent advanced technology of any kind."
REBUTTAL: "As long as there are unidentifieds' the question must obviously remain open."
- *CHARGE: "UFO's have never been sighted on radar or photographed by meteor or satellite-tracking cameras."
REBUTTAL: "This is not equivalent to saying that radars, meteor cameras and satellite-tracking stations have not picked up 'oddities' on their scopes."

Search: To turn UFO's into IFO's (Identified Flying Objects) Hynek recommends reliable reports be searched by computer for common features such as the appearance of the object and where and when it was sighted. Then, says Hynek, the investigators could try to be on scene to observe the UFO's.

Hynek claims a pattern 'has already begun to emerge from the "hard-data" cases. They contain, he says, "Frequent allusions to hovering, wobbling and rapid take-off. Other often reported features are oval shapes, flashing lights or brilliant lights whose glare is uncomfortable." This is an apt description of ball lighting--the glowing mass of ionized air molecules that can occur during stormy weather--but Hynek thinks that relatively few UFO sightings can be explained by ball lighting. Many have been seen, he says, when atmospheric conditions are not right for ball lighting.

If an inquiry is launched (the Air Force is searching for a university to do the job) Hynek wants only an advisory role. "I'm not whipping up a bonfire," he says. "so I can dance around it."

Gullible: How soon, if ever, Hynek's program will be carried out is anyone's guess. Yet the need for a systematic investigation of UFO reports to end the uncertainty is undeniable. The national capacity for gullibility is enormous. Look magazine's story, for example, recounts the adventures of Barney and Betty Hill, as revealed under hypnosis performed by a Boston psychiatrist named Benjamin Simon.

Look insists that he story is a "human document" and not an attempt to convince the public that the Hills actually boarded a flying saucer. But the title of Fuller's series--"Aboard a Flying Saucer" --seems to contradict that and so does the prose: Barney found himself remembering that "The men had rather odd-shaped heads, with a large cranium, diminishing in size as it got toward the chin. And the eyes continued around to the sides of their 'heads'." The Hills have earned \$24,000 from their story so far and author Fuller and Dr. Simon will share earning from a projected book and possibly a movie.

Until the U.S. acts on Hynek's proposals, it seems, the public will continue to be taken for a ride aboard UFO's.

End - Newsweek article

A brief discussion concerning the article:

The publication of the preceding Newsweek magazine report is the first time this researcher realized that Hynek was admitting there were cases he couldn't solve and that he believed further study should be performed on them.

We might ask ourselves; "Why did Hynek say "it's not all nonsense" in that release?" What could be gained for Hynek by this move other than to ostracize himself from both the Air Force and the Scientific community? It was almost professional suicide for any scientist to say this. Why ruin your main career? He already had had a prestigious post with NASA in charge of tracking our first satellites shot into orbit. If he remained silent at Blue Book's demise, there probably would have been other such projects he would have been in line for. Instead, here he was refuting the very people who hired him.

In an article written by Hynek and published in the Saturday Evening Post about two months later, he officially informs us the Air Force wasn't always using his analyses and yet we had all thought the Air Force evaluations were all his, some of their explanations were missing the mark scientifically, "difficult to explain cases" were beginning to mount, the press was getting annoyed, the public was getting riled up, the Air Force was embarrassing him, and Hynek could see his scientific reputation gradually becoming tarnished in the process. He obviously didn't like the position the Air Force was putting him in and he really couldn't explain certain cases if he were pressed to do so.

Hynek had previously lived through the embarrassment of the August 2nd, 1965 Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Kansas

sightings where those states were deluged with UFO reports including some from police officers. [1] The weather bureau in Wichita tracked an object at 3:40 A.M. Bob Campbell, television newsman in Sherman, Texas near Oklahoma took a picture of a strange object. [2] The Air Force attempted to explain them away but Robert Risser, the director of Oklahoma City's Kirkpatrick Planetarium disagreed with the Air Force's explanation that the sightings were "either twinkles from the planet Jupiter or stars Rigel, Capella, Betelgeuse or Alderbaran." Risser said "Somebody has made a mistake. ... Many of those objects mentioned by the Air Force are not visible until just before dawn in Oklahoma City and other aren't visible at all." [3] Who else bore the direct brunt of this but Hynek, the Air Force's number one civilian scientific advisor.

Six months later (2/66), an article appeared in Look Magazine by author John Fuller. It concerned UFO incidents that allegedly took place one month after the Texas, New Mexico sightings, beginning approximately Sept. 3, 1965 at Exeter, N.H. [4] (We are all still trying to explain those folks.) The Exeter sightings continued over a period of several weeks and were claimed to have been witnessed by approximately 60 people including police personnel.

Simply for the record, an odd coincidence had occurred just two months after the claimed Exeter incidents, in November 1965, the lights went out along the Northeast coast. We were in the midst of the 1st great Northeast Power Failure. [5] After all the "hubbub" died down, when the final report came in as to the cause of the failure, it turned out to be a relay switch of some kind that had tripped at Niagara Falls. No one knew why it had tripped. They knew the sequence after it tripped but not the reason for its tripping.

And then, Hynek suffered another major embarrassment after a rash of UFO sightings which occurred near Dexter/Hillsdale, Michigan (3/66). Dr. Hynek flew to Dexter/Hillsdale to investigate. Being pressed by reporters as to what he thought the sightings might be, he guessed that some might possibly have been swamp gas. [6] The press jumped on this, and both the newspapers and the public went crazy. They had had enough. [7]

Although the Dexter/Hillsdale case wasn't the strongest, the summation of the aforementioned circumstances, eventually led to Congressional hearings on Capitol Hill. [8] As some of you may remember, those hearings ultimately led to an Air Force sponsored University study concerning UFOs; it was none other than the greatly disputed Condon Study or Colorado Project. [9]

In the end however, the Colorado (Condon) Report was negative and the Air Force was finally able to shut down project Blue Book and silence Hynek who had defected from their camp. [10] Hynek disagreed with the report and bravely said so to other scientists in no uncertain terms. [11]

So, why did Hynek take this incredible stand? The simple reason is he spoke out because all his experience had indicated to him other scientists were missing the mark with regard to this UFO thing and he felt it wasn't totally impossible it might be the most important scientific "event" to happen to mankind since man discovered the sun didn't revolve around the earth.

He firmly believed in his heart and soul it was time to have the rest of the world look closely at something extraordinary he himself was not able to solve. Hence the Newsweek & Post articles [12] and eventually his book "The UFO Experience" which, amongst many other things finally explained to the public why he had to break with the Air Force and disagree with the Colorado report. [13] Hynek, the scientist, had looked at this subject for a period of approximately 18 years. His in-depth investigation for all those years indicated to him that the Colorado Committee may have made a grave error; one the scientist within him couldn't ignore.

Additionally, after evaluating what others that worked with him closely have said about his character, etc. after his death, [14] I am fairly certain Hynek's press releases were his honest evaluation of the entire situation, written with hope the Colorado committee would perform an honest assessment. As we all know, this didn't happen back then.

continued: Hynek 10/10/66 Newsweek.2 (footnotes)

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