

CODE of PRACTICE for UFO INVESTIGATORS

Over the years UFO investigators have given some consideration to the methods of their occupation and some groups have published "Investigators Handbooks" (BUFORA for example). However, little emphasis has been placed on the practice and conduct of an investigator during an investigation. This despite the obvious importance of such matters. Do not forget that we are dealing with a very emotive subject, one which is frequently misrepresented to the public, and often we are a party to this misrepresentation. Witnesses whom we confront may have undergone harrowing physical and psychological traumas as a result of their experience. In this sense we have a role to play which stretches far beyond the investigation of a witness's story.

Once these points were accepted, the need to do something about them was clear. Ufologists have not had a good record for co-operation, and much of our internal strife has been counter productive. It has also worked against the interests of the person we should consider most - the witness. However, early in 1981, various groups of investigators met to discuss future co-operation, the first positive result was the creation of a working party to plan what was variously termed a 'code of ethics' or 'code of conduct', which has now emerged as a 'CODE of PRACTICE'. This was formulated at meetings in Nottingham, London, Swindon and Bristol between March 1981 and February 1982. The final draft was then vetted by a solicitor before presentation to Ufologists and the world at large.

This code is a triumph of co-operation, and shows what can be achieved by concerted effort, but as it stands, it merely sets out principles which ideally should be followed during an investigation. Unless followed by investigators it will mean nothing. Consequently investigators must always bear it in mind when investigating UFO Phenomena.

The code was drafted by the following organisations:- British UFO Research Association (BUFORA), UFO Investigators Network (UFOIN), Northern UFO Network (NUFON), Nottingham UFO Investigation Society (NUFOIS), Manchester UFO Research Assn. (MUFORA), Swindon Centre for UFO Research and Investigation (SCUFORI), and PROBE Research Group (Bristol). Contact UK and British UFO Society (BUFOS) also participated in some stages of the discussions. This code is now offered to the whole UFO community at home and abroad for their consideration, and hopefully adoption.

The principle groups involved in the formulation of the code have joined together to create a Supervisory Body for Britain. Not only have they resolved that members who investigate on their behalf MUST sign an undertaking to follow the code, but they are willing to inform the public of this. Thus the public are invited to make specific complaints regarding abuse of the code (though hopefully such complaints will be few and far between) to the organisation concerned. Such complaints will be passed to the Supervisory Body (consisting of representatives of the participating groups. It will be their decision what action should be taken against the investigator (or group) concerned, if they are found to be in breach of the code of practice.

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In conclusion I would like to thank all those who contributed so much of their time and effort in devising this code, most of all I would like to mention Geoff Bird of PROBE, who suggested it to me. "Great trees can from little acorns grow".

Jenny Randles
April 1982

CODE OF PRACTICE for UFO INVESTIGATORS

INTRODUCTION

1. The Code is intended to regulate the investigation of UFO phenomena by UFO groups and organisations, and by lone investigators.
2. This Code of Practice is based on proposals discussed by representatives of leading national and local UFO organisations on 28th March, 25th April, 13th June and 14th November 1981.
3. UFO groups, organisations and lone investigators are equally invited to subscribe to the Code of Practice.
4. Investigators who are members of, or acting under the auspices of, a UFO group or organisation which subscribes to the Code of Practice, must themselves subscribe to the Code.
5. A supervisory body, with its members drawn from several leading UFO organisations, will administer the Code of Practice.

DEFINITION

1 Preamble

Except where specifically stated, words shall have the commonly accepted meaning, all cases of doubt to be resolved by reference to the 'Concise Oxford Dictionary'.

- a. Investigator includes both lone investigators and UFO organisations.
- b. Reference to the Singular includes the Plural, and vice versa.

2 Directive Verbs

- a. MUST indicates mandatory action on the part of the investigator.
- b. SHALL or SHOULD indicates strongly recommended (but discretionary) action by the investigator.
- c. DESIRABLE indicates preferable action by the investigator.

3 Reports

- a. ORIGINAL the report made and filed by the investigator. (May contain CONFIDENTIAL material).
- b. EDITED report cleared for general distribution and publication, may have been edited or rewritten. (MUST not contain CONFIDENTIAL material).

4 Classification

CONFIDENTIAL information not to be disclosed generally.

5 Publication

Publication includes UFO (& other) periodicals, newsletters, circulars news media hard cover books, paperbacks etc.

C O D E O F P R A C T I C E f o r U F O I N V E S T I G A T O R S

This Code of Practice consists of Three Sections

1. Responsibility to the Witness
2. Responsibility to the Public
3. Responsibility to Ufology

CODE OF PRACTICE

Section One: Responsibility to the Witness

- 1.1 The identity of a witness to a UFO event is CONFIDENTIAL and MUST not be disclosed unless written consent is obtained from the witness to release such information. (Sect. 3 para. 4 refers)
- 1.2 The witness MUST be advised of the consequences which may arise if the information specified in clause 1.1 is released.
- 1.3 Insofar as is practical, all interviews shall be by prior appointment.
- 1.4 It is desirable that all interviews shall be conducted by two investigators, and in the event of the witness being a woman or child (under 16 years), that one of the investigators shall be female.
- 1.5 All requests by the witness (or, in the case of a minor, a parent or other responsible person) for a third party to be present during an interview MUST be honoured.
- 1.6 If the witness categorically refuses to co-operate in any way, or to meet another investigator, he or she MUST not be approached further, the option for further contact resting with the witness.
- 1.7 An investigator MUST not enter or attempt to enter any private property without the permission of the owner, tenant (or occupier), or authorised agent.
- 1.8 Any damage to property caused by an investigator during the course of an investigation (for which the investigator admits liability), shall be made good by that investigator.
- 1.9 Specialised techniques, or equipment MUST not be used during the interviewing of a witness other than by the written consent of the witness and the use of any such aid, or aids, shall be restricted to interviews conducted by fully qualified practitioners. the use of hypnosis shall only be under the guidance of a medically qualified psychologist.
- 1.10 The witness is entitled to be informed of the conclusions reached if he so requests.
- 1.11 Due consideration should always be given to the health and welfare of the witness.

Q CURRENTLY NOT ALLOWED

Section Two: Responsibility to the Public

- 2.1 All investigators MUST so far as is practicable, co-operate fully with the police and any other official body, particularly in circumstances which may affect national security. (Sect. 3 para 4 refers)
- 2.2 If, during any investigation, a situation is encountered which is, or is liable to become, dangerous to the general public, or result in damage to property, the investigator MUST without delay notify the police or other responsible body, and take all reasonable steps to protect public and property.
- 2.3 No information gained during an interview shall be made available prematurely to the news media.
- 2.4 The investigator shall not issue unsupported statements to the news media concerning any case.
- 2.5 Investigators are reminded that they have no special privilege, and may be required to disclose confidential information to the courts.

Section Three: Responsibility to Ufology

- 3.1 The free flow of information shall not be restricted for personal gain, where possible the investigator shall make data available promptly to accredited investigators, with due credit being given to the source of that information.
- 3.2 All interviews regarding cases of high strangeness shall be electronically recorded unless the use of a recorder is objected to by the witness, (or other responsible person in the case of a minor).
- 3.3 All reports should indicate the persons present during interviews, and their status.
- 3.4 Any information, confidential because of factors inherent within this code, MUST not be made available in the EDITED report. Only the EDITED report should be made available for external use. (Note- unless released by witness, the witness's identity is confidential, and MUST not be included in the EDITED report. To fully protect witness's in sensitive occupations, it may be desirable to restrict details of the time, place and circumstances of the incident to such UFO researchers as 'need to know').
- 3.5 An investigator should not discuss his personal theories with a witness during the course of an investigation.

February 1982

DECLARATION of the ADOPTION of the CODE of PRACTICE for UFO INVESTIGATORS

I, the undersigned, have read and understood the CODE of PRACTICE for UFO INVESTIGATORS (Feb 82). and state that:-

1. I wish to be registered as a Subscriber to the above Code of Practice.
2. I will conform to the clauses and principles of the Code of Practice when engaged in UFO investigation or research.
3. I understand that I may be required to give account to the Supervisory Body of any failure to conform to the Code of Practice for which I am responsible.

Signature Date.....

NAME (In block Capitals) Address

..... Group or Society

Certified that I have received DECLARATION as copied above Group Sec.

..... Date