

SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs

A dark night sky with a bright star in the upper right and a faint, winged object in the lower center. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a book cover or a photograph of a night sky.

...the sky contains an almost endless variety of peculiar sights and objects, only a few of which any one person is likely to encounter in a lifetime. Yet any average observant person is bound to see some of them, and not knowing the explanation may be misled into thinking he's seen something incredible - Instead of merely unfamiliar.

Arthur C. Clarke (Report on planet three)

Volume 4 Number 5

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WHICH WAS
THE BIGGER
BLOCK
BUSTER????
WHICH WAS
THE BIGGER
BUST????



Unidentified ≠ Extraterrestrial craft

The mere listing of UFO cases that can not be explained as some sort of evidence for alien spaceships is not very scientific. This is especially true when those making the list have not really investigated some of the cases thoroughly. This issue, I spend a great deal of time examining some cases found in NICAP's "The UFO evidence" document. I hope to carry a regular column, where I (or other skeptics) closely examine some of the other cases on the list. I also take a look at one of the 701 Blue Book "Unknowns" and present a very plausible explanation.

My Roswell articles in the last issue drew some comments. There was one that I felt needed a public response. That comment had to do with the omission of Sheridan Cavitt from my "ignored witnesses" article. Sheridan Cavitt has never been ignored by Roswell crashologists the way the others were avoided. They had to find ways to demonize him because he did not tell them he saw a crashed spaceship. I am surprised that he has never been implicated as the leader of the "goon squad". Cavitt's testimony in 1994 was devastating and, based on the writings of Schmitt and Carey, some individuals even tried to get him to recant it when he was close to death. Despite trying to use pressure from family members, Cavitt apparently was a lot sharper than Walter Haut. Haut seemed to have been pressured into signing an affidavit before his death that added all sorts of claims that disagreed with what he had said in the past. One really wonders who is the more dishonest at this point. Was it Cavitt or was it those who tried to trick him? Cavitt's testimony is what it is. There is no reason to waste time discussing it ad nauseam.

As you can see from the image above, I was unimpressed by MUFON's "block buster" announcements at their UFO symposium! With all the hype, one would expect some form of government documentation revealing the truth about UFOs or something like that. Instead, we got news about some UFOlogist's files and some guy plugging his DVD about a UFO crash (or is it crashes?) near Kingman, Arizona in 1953. In fact, both block buster items are so secret that the details are not available to the general public at the time of this writing without having to pay for it. I would call this a "Bust" and not a "Block Buster"!

I see that Leslie Kean is going to keep pushing the CEFAA bug videos. For everyone's consideration, I present the following evidence below. When I was in Florida I recorded a rocket launch and a UFO very similar to the CEFAA images appeared in my video. Careful examination of the footage revealed many more UFOs. They were all just bugs and acted just like the objects in the CEFAA videos. Despite Kean's and CEFAA's protests, there is little doubt, in my opinion, that these UFOs were bugs.

On a final note, a change to SUNlite will appear in the next issue, which has to do with my "Buy it, borrow it, bin it" book review section. As I pretty much have gone through my library (although not completely), this column will now read "Buy it, borrow it, or bin it". My original desire for this column was to review the older books in my collection so others, who might want to expand or build their own personal libraries, have a reference point. The column will now review just one book (preferably of recent publication) with one of the three recommendations.

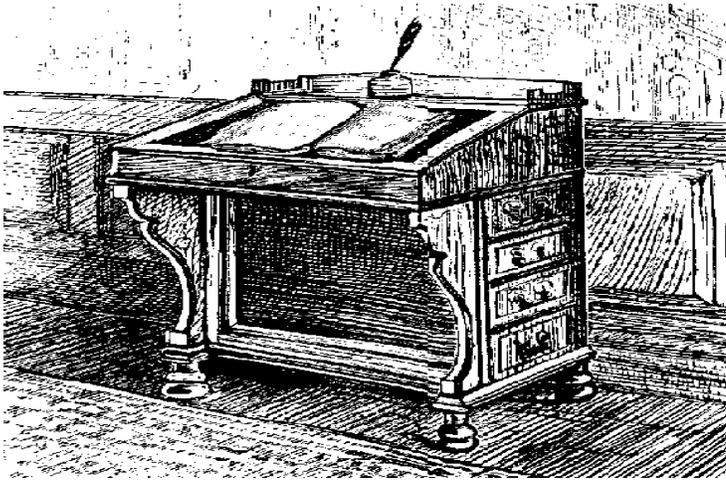
Cover: Photograph of a Super chief sounding rocket launched from Cape Canaveral in May of 1993. Venus is the bright object to the upper right. This was taken from 150 miles away.

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Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



Another UFO poll was done by the National Geographic channel in conjunction with their "Chasing UFOs" television show. It stated that only 36% thought UFOs existed. As always, this is a completely inaccurate statement. It is 100% certain that UFOs exist because people report seeing objects they can not identify in the sky. This is a FACT. What the poll probably is indicating is that 36% of people think that the source of some of these UFO reports are alien spaceships. Because the question is poorly worded, we don't know how many of the 36% think that way (in 1999, a Roper poll stated that 25% felt UFOs were alien spaceships). The poll also stated that only 10% of those asked, felt they had ever seen a UFO and that 79% felt the US government was covering up information about UFOs. I would not be surprised that some information about UFO reports are withheld from the public because they expose secret projects or some other classified information unrelated to alien spaceships. The idea that the government

is concealing the existence of alien spaceships patrolling the skies of the world is a ridiculous conclusion that is based on nothing but a mistrust of government, which Americans tend to do (see their views of politicians as an example). If they only reserved that kind of skepticism towards those promoting the alien spaceships theory. The rest of the poll is mostly nonsense. Apparently, 41% of the participants thought the Hulk, Spider-man, and Batman were best suited to combat an alien invasion!

The UFOs-scientific research blog revealed the Fredrick Valentich files from the Australian government were now available for viewing. I was never impressed by the case and the files seem to offer nothing to solve the mystery. There certainly was no evidence in the file that an actual alien spaceship was involved.

Jack Brewer's UFO trail had his open mic night on his blog. He sent out some requests for e-mail responses on the topic of future UFO research. I responded the same way I always respond. That being, UFOlogy needs to stop wasting its time chasing old cases and become proactive in its effort to establish UFOs as something worthy of study. The technology is affordable and available. Some of the other responses were standard UFO stuff but there were also some interesting commentaries about how UFOlogists need to clean up their act. I am all for that!

David Clarke announced the latest release of MOD UFO files. I guess this is old news and a lot of the good stuff seems to have been already released. The briefing of Tony Blair was interesting information but that was about it. You can catch Dr. Clarke's summary on Youtube.

Tim Hebert took on the Robert Salas story again. Tim's argument continues to be the lack of any documentation to support Salas' story. Adding to this lack of documentation is the lack of anybody else at Malmstrom knowing about the incident involving a multiple missile shutdown. All the launch crews knew about the Echo flight incident but nobody seemed to be aware of the Oscar flight a little over a week later (according to Salas). Tim argues that within 15 minutes of the missiles being reported as shut down, a great number of launch crews would have been aware of the event. He tries to give Salas an out by suggesting he might have had a prank played on him. This seems unlikely but Tim points out that such things did happen. Hebert's conclusion seems to be that either Salas' story is fabricated or simply confused memories about some incident that really did not involve any missiles being shut down by a UFO.

Rick Phillips' UFO disclosure countdown clock blog showed us some images from St. Augustine, Florida that looked pretty familiar. They are supposed to be fast moving "orbs". However, the photograph was taken from inside the car looking forward and appear to be a window reflection of the sunlit steering wheel or some other curved object inside the car.

Dr. Steven Greer is at it again. He apparently is getting a film made about his disclosure efforts, an alien body, and how efforts to obtain new energy are being suppressed. Because the mainstream media won't fund this project, he needs your money to make this a reality! One wonders what Dr. Greer has done with all those dollars he gets for showing people how to summon UFOs with their minds and communicate with them using lights. I guess he is expecting these same people to dig deep while he laughs all the way to the bank.

Chris Rutkowski revealed the results of the 2011 Canadian UFO survey. There were several items that jumped out at me in his summary. The first was that only 11% of the UFO reports were "unexplained". This is more evidence for my argument against Stanton Friedman, who likes to only cite statistics that support his claim that the number of "unexplaineds" are much higher than this. The second thing that struck me was that in the number of high quality cases that remained unexplained was less than 1%. I was also interested by the average duration for these UFO reports. It was about 11 minutes in length. One wonders why, if the duration

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

is so long, that UFOs are not more easily recorded by witnesses? The answer may lie in the time when most UFO sightings occur. According to the data, most of the sightings were seen between 1700 and 0600 (with a peak around 2200-2259). This means that most of these happen at night when lighting conditions do not make it easy to record faint objects/shapes. History has shown that astronomical objects (planets, meteors, satellites, stars) are often the biggest producers of UFO reports. I would not be surprised that a great number of their explained/possibly explained cases were astronomical objects.

The will to believe UFOs are alien spaceships is great enough that some people jump on just about anything as "evidence" that we are not alone. During the opening ceremonies for the 2012 London Olympics, several saw a UFO hovering over the stadium. Most people would suggest it probably was part of the festivities but that was not the case for some UFO proponents. Billy Cox suggested that CAA records should be opened to determine if it were an alien spaceship or not. About the same time, Billy Cox tried to make something of this, Robert Sheaffer posted the solution on his blog. The source was the Goodyear blimp! I would think these various sources (including the mainstream media's only UFO web log), would make an effort to rule out the obvious. Apparently, it is more about making a splash than actually doing just a small amount of research. This won't be the last time this sort of thing happens.

David Clarke recalled the story of a Scottish shepherd, who found some strange debris on his land back in 1962. The name of the man was not MacBrazel but MacKenzie. What he found was strange to him and he thought it might be a crashed satellite of some kind. Dr. Clarke documents how secrecy about the downed object in official channels bred all sorts of speculation and story telling. The source of the debris probably came from a "Moby Dick" balloon launched from nearby Inverness in 1955-56. It was designed to pass over and photograph various bases in the Soviet Union. The project was replaced by the U-2 and never achieved the results hoped for. The Soviets shot a lot of them down and those that were retrieved, did not produce meaningful results. It is a fascinating read and the parallels to the Roswell story are uncanny.

MUFON's big disclosure news was really not as big as they hyped, which indicates they were more interested in filling seats than being honest with their membership. There were two major announcements. The first was leaked before the big event on Sunday afternoon. Leonard Stringfield's "sixty volumes of meticulous research" were "made public". According to the UFO examiner, the files reveal UFOlogists being interfered with by the CIA and FBI "at any cost". Now these are not documents from the FBI or CIA but the writings of a UFOlogist, who had a conspiracy mind set. So, they are his opinions about what transpired. Despite the claim of the files "going public", I have yet to see them in the public domain so all could read them. My guess is they will not be free for all to access. The second announcement had to do with the research of Harry Drew, who has been investigating the Kingman UFO crash (or is it crashes) of May 1953. His research has shown that there definitely were UFO crashes near Kingman and that live or dead aliens were recovered with their craft. Drew's evidence involved some cans and plates of military origin from 1951 or 1952, indicating a military presence. The rest of it appears subjective even though we are told there is a crash mark on the side of a mountain. Of course, that location is "classified". In fact, Mr. Drew's entire work does not appear to be in the public domain. He has a web site but the only things there are him making claims and urging people to buy his DVD! So, it really is more about the money than getting the facts out. In his presentation, Mr. Drew seemed to be unclear because MUFON's original article by Roger Marsh contained many errors that Drew had to comment on for corrections. His comments were equally unclear, in my opinion. One has to wonder exactly where the UFOs crashed, when they crashed, and what real evidence does he have that can be verified. So far, there is little of that presented to the public. **Jack Brewer would eventually contact the head of MUFON, David McDonald, and ask him if the block buster news was over hyped.** McDonald would respond that it is all in the eye of the beholder and he felt the Stringfield information was a big deal. The Stringfield files did not need a symposium and the Kingman crash information does not appear to be very significant. McDonald can spin it anyway he desires but it sure appears that the hints of something big were exaggerated in order to get people to come to the symposium.

Anthony Braglia seems to have bitten by the "Moby Dick syndrome" when it comes to Socorro. His latest installment quotes Dr. Stirling Colgate. Braglia stated that Colgate's responses to him were short and cryptic. The last time he interviewed Dr. Colgate, he appeared to quote him out of context based on Colgate's response to Patrick Gross, where he stated that Braglia had abused their correspondence. I wish him luck in his pursuit on this (will he go "round perdition's flames"?), but I find the explanation about as good as Phil Klass' explanation that this was a hoax created for tourism (See my comments in SUNlite 1-4). Until Braglia can provide names with a demonstration showing exactly how they performed the hoax, it is just rumor and gossip.

Jeffrey Lindell wrote an interesting article for Skeptic magazine about the Foo Fighter Mystery. Luckily, the article also appears on-line. The bottom line is that most of the sightings were probably illusions and he makes a good case for it.

Jerry Cohen is attempting to revive the Rendlesham case. After an initial reading, I am amazed at some of the errors in understanding Mr. Cohen displayed. His argument against the meteor explanation is based on his own understanding of meteors and how he thinks they should have reported it. I can also say the same for Cohen's reason to dismiss the stars explanation. It is almost as if he never has seen any UFO reports witnesses have made in the past regarding these astronomical sources. This all seems like a desperate effort to resurrect the case, which has been slowly losing ground to Mr. Ridpath's explanation over the years. It won't be long before all the proponents of the case will start quoting Mr. Cohen as a counter-argument. I commend him on his determination but I find his arguments poor and not very compelling.

The Roswell Corner

Is it all about book sales?

The CIA's former Entertainment Liaison Officer (really....that was his position!), Charles Brandon, announced that he has seen the secret Roswell case files in a box marked "Roswell". However, he will not reveal what was in there except that a craft and bodies were recovered. Color me skeptical but I suspect this is a ploy by Brandon to promote the release of his new book. Rumors and claims of seeing top secret documents, bodies, alien metals, and such have been around for decades. Many crashologists considered the story to be a bogus claim and were very skeptical of his statements. If only they would show the same degree of skepticism towards some of the other claims/stories about Roswell. The CIA would later publicly respond stating they did not know what Brandon was talking about.

Burnt ground and an Air Force button

On "Chasing UFOs", Frank Kimbler presented his LANDSAT images of the area, which supposedly shows a controlled burn of the crash site. He gave no time frame for the burn and I doubt that it happened right after the Roswell incident. If the materials were as indestructible as claimed, I doubt a fire would eliminate, or significantly alter, the evidence. Another interesting point is the "burn area" goes from WNW to ESE. This is not what Jesse Marcel Sr. stated in his interviews. He stated the debris field went from NE to SW.

Kimbler also showed the team an enclosed box displaying the bits of debris he found over the years. If one recalls, back in a July of 2011 interview with Openminds radio (time 00:55:47-00:56:15), Kimbler claimed that he had discovered that one piece exhibited extraterrestrial properties. However, in SUNlite 3-5 (page 4), I pointed out that the values he presented fell within the terrestrial range if one included the margins for error. Since then, he seems to have pulled back on the claim. This did not prevent him from implying to the "Chasing UFOs" team that what he was showing them, was part of the crashed saucer.

While the "Chasing UFOs" team was stumbling around in the dark waving metal detectors over the "crash site", something strange happened. As the team was sifting an ant hill for possible alien scraps, Erin Ryder got up and decided to go searching for more debris on her own. She surprisingly found something with her metal detector. Some quick digging revealed a silver Air Force button. They would determine this came from the 1947-1949 time frame, implying something significant occurred on the Foster Ranch that summer. Ben McGee's blog would later reveal that they had shown the button to a historian, who determined it came from a time period after 1949! He would add that this type of button was only found on dress uniforms and not working fatigues, which is what one would expect from a field operation.

I realized that they made these errors when I saw the button. In July of 1947, there was no Air Force and the 509th was part of the Army Air Corps. The Army Air Corps buttons I have seen had either the army eagle or a propeller/star with wings. Of course, one begins to speculate about how the button might have gotten there. Is it pure luck that they found this button in the dirt or was it possible that it was planted by others? If it was a button found by chance, it does not state much. Maybe it was a button from some officer's uniform that happened to be in the area? The 1997 USAF report documented all sorts of military activities outside the White Sands area in the 1950s. In addition to the activities of the test dummy drops, Holloman also launched many research balloons, which landed all over New Mexico (as well as places outside the United States!). It would not be any surprise that one might find a uniform button some place in the New Mexico desert.

Kevin Randle also commented about this in his blog. Kevin mirrored the comments about the button and that it was only available after September 1947. He also seemed to think the button was very likely planted by somebody because it was too pristine to have been in the dirt for over fifty years. Who would do such a thing? It could have been a Roswell crash proponent but they would have to know where the team would be stumbling around, which points towards the producers of the show. In SUNlite 3-1, Peter Merlin described how a producer had him "plant" a bit of material at a "crash site" and treat it as if it were just found! Did the producers of this program do the same thing?

More whining from the dream team!

Anthony Braglia added his whining to the mix about skeptical criticism of the "dream team" in the July 15th edition of Saucer Smear. If they don't want anyone to comment, why do they keep making announcements? He also stated that I declared they would cover-up evidence of a prosaic explanation. I did not actually state that. I posed the question wondering if they would announce such information if they found it. Mr. Braglia closes by referring to Sheridan Cavitt as a liar and stating that no military personnel interviewed reported they saw a weather balloon at the ranch. The only military personnel, who are known to have gone to the ranch, are Marcel and Cavitt. All other individuals interviewed have never been proven to have actually been at that Foster Ranch in July 1947. We also know that in the 1947 media accounts, Jesse Marcel Sr. and Mac Brazel both described materials from a balloon. Bessie Brazel also stated so in her interviews/affidavit. Finally, the photographs at Fort Worth (the only physical evidence from 1947) show a radar reflector and balloon materials. If Braglia is going to ignore or not mention this testimony/evidence, when making such proclamations, he demonstrates that my question about some of the team member's objectivity is a valid one.

Peter Merlin comments concerning SUNlite 4-4

Last issue's Roswell commentaries sparked some interesting comments by Peter Merlin. His statements were worth publishing and commenting upon:

On lightning strikes to aircraft and spacecraft:

In 1976, I was on a flight to New York City in an American Airlines 747. We approached the airport in a thunderstorm during which I witnessed several lightning strikes to the aircraft. I vividly recall a hit to the tail that resulted in a shower of sparks visible through my window, and I saw a bolt strike the outboard right hand engine (or very near to it). In any case, we landed without incident. In later years, when I worked at Burbank Airport, I saw a Convair 440 that sustained lightning damage. The bolt struck the nose area, traveled through the fuselage, and blew off the cap on the vertical tail. Again, a commercial aircraft had survived a significant lightning incident. That said, I have also seen the opposite end of the spectrum. I was at Cape Canaveral in April 1987 when Atlas-Centaur 67 was launched into a thunderstorm. The 11-foot-tall aluminum alloy tube, trailing hot plasma, became an instant lightning rod. It was struck nine times before it got more than half a mile downrange. Electrical damage to the Centaur Digital Control Unit resulted in an erroneous hardover yaw command and subsequent destruction of the vehicle and payload. Presumably, a civilization with the technology for crossing interstellar space could devise some decent electrical shielding for their spacecraft.

My comment: With the exception of the UNMANNED (and this is important to note) Atlas-Centaur mentioned by Peter, I still find it amazing that our manned aerial craft and spaceships can withstand lightning strikes and are designed to handle them. My point of this section was to demonstrate how our "primitive" technology has considered the possibility of lightning strikes and other adverse conditions to help the craft survive such events. For some reason the aliens were not very bright and designed a craft that could cross the interstellar void but not handle the weather presented by the planet they were exploring.

On private photographic records of government crash retrievals:

In October 1959, the Navy's YF4H-1 Phantom II prototype crashed on a ranch near Frazier Park, California, during a test flight from Edwards Air Force Base. Military officials instructed the landowner in no uncertain terms not to take any pictures of the crash scene. He ignored this instruction, and managed to take some pictures from a low rise about within a quarter mile of the impact point. When I visited the ranch in June 2007, the original landowner's son provided one of these photos, which was instrumental in pinpointing the crash site. Fortunately for historians and researchers, the government doesn't always succeed in preventing civilians from acquiring documentary evidence.

My Comment: The missing photographs of the huge gouge at the Foster Ranch site has always made me skeptical of its existence. If it did last for over a year, it should have been photographed by the locals at some point. Additionally, nobody wrote letters or made diary entries documenting that they had picked up debris and the military had confiscated it

On military intimidation of civilian witnesses:

Following the 1963 crash of an A-12 near Wendover, Utah, officials went to great lengths to prevent disclosure of the top secret aircraft to unauthorized persons. Cleanup was given top priority, and efforts were made to conceal the wreckage before it was removed from the scene. The CIA had the Air Force provide a cover story that an F-105 had crashed. The only serious threat came from reporter Art Kent of KUTV television news in Salt Lake City who claimed to have pictures of the accident scene and planned to show them on the evening news. OXCART project personnel debated how to approach Kent in attempts to suppress the photos. Brig. Gen. Boyd Hubbard made arrangements for an Air Force representative with Office of Special Investigations (OSI) credentials to contact Kent and request that he not air the pictures. Kent, surprisingly with no reluctance, agreed to mail the pictures to Hubbard at Nellis. In September 1967, a top secret D-21B was accidentally launched during a captive test flight from Area 51. After it crashed in a rural area, recovery forces with armed security personnel arrived and closed off the area to local residents. One witness now recalls with bitterness how Air Force personnel ordered him out of the area with a warning to forget what he had seen. But, not everybody was unhappy with the uninvited guests. USAF/CIA liaison Col. Frank Hartley somehow learned that another witness had taken unauthorized photos of the crash scene. Reluctant to strong-arm the civilian, he asked if there was anything he might be able to exchange for the film. The civilian subsequently traded his film for a cream pie. Sometimes it is easier to offer a gift or appeal to someone's sense of patriotism than to bully them.

My Comment: It seems odd that the military in actual documented cases behaved so differently than the military at Roswell and other UFO crashes. In peacetime, and in the United States, there is absolutely no need for heavy-handed tactics of threatening civilians with their lives and confiscating/damaging property. To do so would be violating several laws and military regulations. Contrary to statements by the authors, such actions would have sparked written letters to various elected officials and the news papers in Roswell (as well as other media outlets). The failure of any such evidence to be produced indicates these events probably never happened this way.

In SUNlite 4-3, I addressed Stanton Friedman's use of The UFO evidence document by NICAP as some sort of statistical study. To directly quote what he stated:

*In Richard Hall's "The UFO Evidence" it was found that 746 of the 4500 (16.6%) cases examined could not be explained.*¹

Overlooking the fact that Friedman got the numbers wrong (it was a total of over 5000 cases), I responded that there were many problems with using this document as a statistical study of any kind. To further check this, I chose to go through the case files and see how good the evidence in them really was.

Insufficient information

One of the first things I noticed when examining this document was the number of cases that did not have enough information or predated the UFO era of June 1947. These need to be weeded out of the totals simply because they classify not as "unknown" but "insufficient information". Out of the cases that are listed in the chronology, I counted 51 individual cases that had no date. Eleven more cases predated 1947 and two were "waves" (airship and ghost rocket) and not specific. That makes 64 cases out of the 746, that have no meaning or specific information that can be evaluated.

Questionable photographic cases

Another thing about the document that bothered me were the claims of photographs that were taken of UFOs but never examined. Out of the sixty-four photographic cases listed, eighteen are listed as "incomplete information" and fourteen are listed as "dubious or negative information". Another six of these cases are "reported photographs/films" that are said to exist but never have been examined for various reasons. This brings the total to 38 cases that should not qualify as evidence. If one couples this with the "insufficient information" cases previously described, we have a total of 102 cases out of 746 that can be removed from the list. This brings the percentage of "unexplained cases" down to 12.9%.

Reviewing some of the cases

What follows is a review of ten cases that appeared to be UFOs, where there should be enough information in the historical record to discover their source. Some of the results revealed some interesting issues concerning the document itself and how NICAP dropped the ball on some of their investigations.

Case #1 - The bobbing UFO

The first case that jumped out at me was an obscure one from central Florida:

*April 3, 1959 - Ocoee, Florida. Treasury enforcement officer saw UFO ascending and descending.*²

Section VII of the document does not give much in the way of additional information other than the name of the witness:

*Large greenish-yellow light ascending, reflecting on lake; faded, re-appeared descending, hovered...finally ascended out of sight.*³

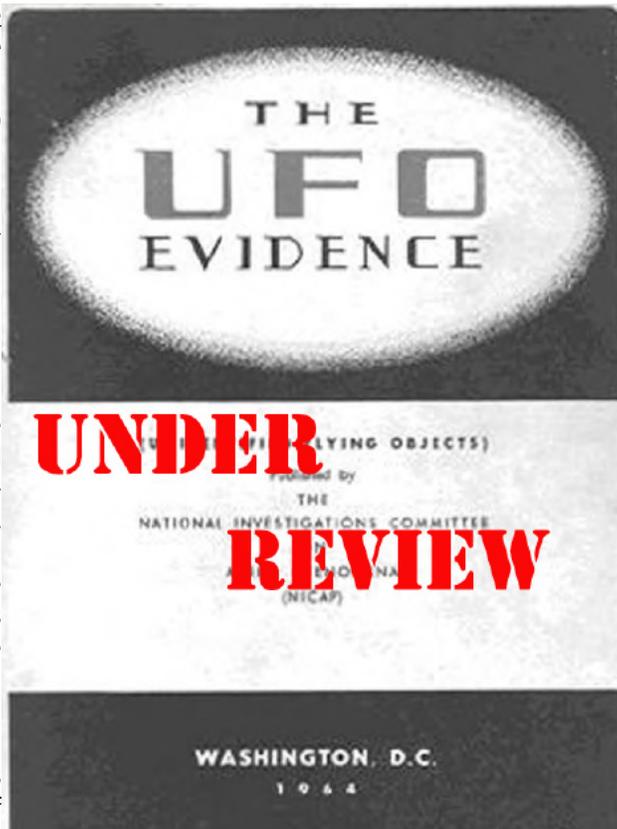
The footnote states the report comes from the NICAP files. Looking at the archive of NICAP UFO investigator newsletters, I found a bit more information like time and direction:

*April 3 - Central Florida - A greenish-yellow UFO which ascended and descended several times at about 7:30 P.M. was reported by John F. Wilmeth, a Treasury Enforcement Law Officer for 28 years. He said the object dimmed as it rose and brightened as it came down again, returning to the same spot in the eastern sky three times. Wilmeth could see light from the object reflected in a lake. The moon was not visible at the time.*⁴

The location of Ocoee is on the west side of Orlando and I am somewhat familiar with the area. If one looks towards the east, as Mr. Wilmeth was doing, one is looking towards Cape Canaveral. This results in the possibility that he had seen a rocket launch. The web site Astronautix has a chronology of all rocket launches, which contains this applicable entry:

*1959 April 4 - . 00:34 GMT - . Launch Site: Cape Canaveral. Launch Complex: Cape Canaveral LC26B. LV Family: Jupiter. Launch Vehicle: Jupiter. LV Configuration: Jupiter IRBM CM-22A.*⁵

The date/time of April 4, 1959 at 0034 GMT converted to local time is 7:34 PM EST on April 3, 1959. The coincidence of the Jupiter rocket launch at the same approximate time Mr. Wilmeth observed his UFO rising and falling is hard to ignore. What he probably saw was the rocket rise in the east



and then change its brightness and direction as the rocket arced over downrange. The three times rising and falling probably can be attributed to the witness being misinterpreted or their misperception of what exactly was seen. The bottom line is that there is a solution to this "mystery" and it should be removed from the "UFO evidence" list.

Case #2 - The half-crescent with the pulsing light

After seeing a rocket launch produced a UFO report in this document, I began to wonder if there were others. It did not take me long to discover another UFO report that might have been caused by a rocket launch:

*September 26, 1963--Sunnyvale Calif. Police officer, many others, observed a gray disc with central bright spot, moving on a westerly course at high speed.*⁶

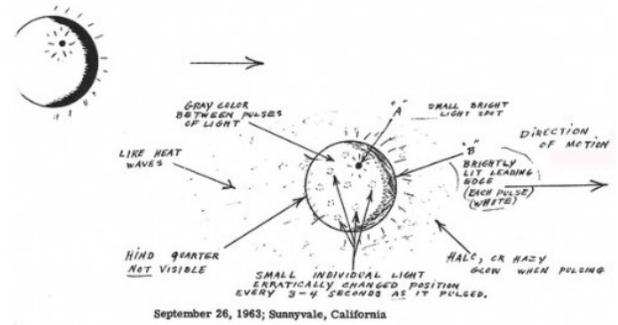
This item references section VII, so I went there to see if there is anything more I could learn about this case. This description stated:

During the early morning hours of September 26, 1963, a UFO was sighted by people in scattered locations around the San Francisco bay area. Paul Cerny, Chairman of the Bay Area NICAP Subcommittee, conducted an investigation and located nine witnesses. (The sighting was reported September 26 in the San Jose Mercury News, Los Altos Times, and the San Francisco Chronicle.) A particularly detailed report was obtained from Officer Galen Anderson of the Sunnyvale Police Department, who observed the UFO for 45 seconds.

About 4:20 a.m., Officer Anderson was patrolling the streets in a squad car. A radio call from other officers alerted him, and he stopped to watch the UFO. The object was traveling from the east to west at an elevation angle of about 45 degrees, at about the speed of a propeller-driven aircraft. The leading edge was brightly illuminated, the main body grayish in color, with a small point of light visible in it. (See sketches and description prepared by Bay Area Subcommittee). The UFO then made a turn towards the northwest, was momentarily visible edge-on, then quickly disappeared from view.

*In nearby Monta Vista about 4:15 a.m., George W. Scott was on the job as a supervisor at the Permanente Cement Company. One of the work crew called his attention to a strange object in the sky, and he watched its flight for about a minute. To him, it appeared that the UFO stopped briefly each time the small body light pulsed, then moved 3 to 4 degrees between pulses. The UFO continued on a westerly course, disappearing behind the coastal mountains.*⁷

The document also contained a sketch that looked vaguely familiar to me. I grew up in Florida and was also stationed there several times. I had seen my share of night rocket launches from around the state. I recall observing one rocket launch in the summer of 1976 from my parent's home in Jacksonville. After the solid boosters were ejected, I was able to follow the remaining stage with my 3-inch refractor for a short period of time. My recollections were that it looked something like the head of a bright comet with a red nucleus, which is similar to this sketch. With that in mind, I began to look into the possibility of this being a rocket launch from Vandenberg.



The astronautix chronology listed a Minuteman I launch on the 26th of September but gave no time. The media reports for this launch were not very helpful because the USAF only stated (as was their policy at the time) that it was a routine launch of a missile/rocket with no specific time given. One newspaper did indicate it was launched late in the day and this was confirmed when I talked to space expert Jonathan McDowell, who has a complete listing of all launches on his web site. That seemed to eliminate the possibility this was a rocket launch until I looked closely at the sources of information. According to the NICAP document, the event occurred around 4AM on the 26th of September and then appeared in the newspapers the same day. Unless these were evening editions, it seemed unlikely that a morning paper could have the story. A little bit of searching produced an article in the September 26th Oakland tribune giving the correct date of the event in question. The article states that events occurred on Wednesday morning, which was the 25th (lower left).⁸ Further confirmation occurred when I checked

MYSTERIOUS LIGHTS IN SOUTH BAY SKY

Two questions puzzle Bay Area astronomer - humanists today. What were those lights in the South Bay Area sky about 4 a.m. Wednesday? And what were all the people who saw them doing up at 4 a.m.?

Nobody knows about the lights. They were reported variously as half-moon shape or boomerang shape, moving rapidly across the heavens, brightly lighted, glowing intensely and fading alternately, and, according to one watcher, blowing up in the west.

Clara County sheriff's offices don't know what they were and the Federal Aviation Agency says it doesn't know.

There is a partially satisfactory explanation for the number of persons in the wee-hour impromptu moonwatch. At least 20 called various sheriff's offices and more called other places seeking information.

Ed Cameron, of 380 Muller Rd., Walnut Creek, was starting on his paper route and some of the watchers were workmen at the Permanente Cement plant near Los Altos. The other witnesses are a mystery. Just like

the APRO bulletin of November 1963 (lower right)⁹, which also listed the date as the 25th.

With this in mind, I now went to the date of September 25th to see if a rocket launch produced this UFO. Thanks to Jonathan McDowell's database, I discovered that an Atlas E was launched at 4:04 AM PDT (11:04 GMT - DST in effect for California until October 27, 1963). This rocket failed shortly after the booster package separated. According to McDowell:

The detailed launch report says "Missile failed to reach target area due to in flight malfunction of sustainer hydraulics... normal until booster jettison at T+127.4 seconds .. followed

Widely Seen UFO In Calif.

Shortly after 4:00 a. m., on the morning of 25 September 1963, a fast-moving UFO was reported over Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Reports came in from the town of Woodside and San Jose also. Sheriff's offices in the above-mentioned counties received twenty reports. Some descriptions given by witnesses were as follows: "A half moon pulsating object," a "circular object lighted from the interior." The light, which appeared to turn off and on was visible intermittently. The Federal Aviation Agency, when queried, was unable to account for the UFO.

immediately by loss of sustainer engine control and resultant loss of missile control”¹⁰

The Astronautix web site states it reached only 100Km altitude but McDowell states that this is just a guess based on the time of 127.4 seconds. He suggested it may have been as high as 200KM. With a flight duration of more than 127 seconds before failure (we don't know if the rocket was destroyed at that instant or it was allowed to continue), it should have been visible to the witnesses. If it were not destroyed instantly, the subsequent unstable missile with sustainer engine firing probably produced a “pulsing” effect to observers.

While the times do not exactly match, I would not consider a difference of 10-15 minutes that significant. The same can be said for some of the witness' descriptions of direction. The rocket was probably to the south-southwest and not to the west.

The distance from these locations to the launch site was about 200 miles but it was not unusual for these locations to see rocket launches and report them as a UFO. The following year, the September 22, 1964 launch of an Atlas rocket (codename “Buzzing Bee”) produced UFO reports as far away as Sacramento and Stead AFB, Nevada (over 270 miles away). In that incident, two of the witnesses described the UFO as an arc that turned into a hazy oval with a bright object in the center. Does this sound familiar?

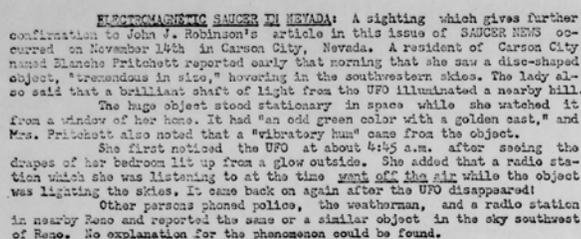
What I learned from this little investigation was that the NICAP document had a major error in the date even though it was investigated by their NICAP subcommittee. I also learned that this investigation was less than thorough as it seems they did not pursue all potential explanations (or dismissed this one without good reason). In my opinion, this case is solved and can no longer be considered UFO evidence.

Case #3 - A titanic radio shutdown

The next case on the list was explained long ago by the USAF and involved another rocket launch. The NICAP document describes it as:

November 14, 1963 -- Carson City, Nevada. A huge bluish green disc was seen hovering in the northwest sky about 4:45 a.m. Mrs. Blanche Pritchett said she was listening to her radio when a bright light shining through her drapes caused her to look outdoors. As she watched the hovering object, her radio went off. A brilliant shaft of light from the UFO illuminated a hilltop. Suddenly the UFO blacked out and disappeared, after which the radio resumed playing. Other residents reported odd glows in the sky that morning.¹¹

The source for this appears to be the Carson City news paper, which may or may not have gotten the details correct. Again, there appears to be no investigation.



ELECTROMAGNETIC SAUCER IN NEVADA: A sighting which gives further confirmation to John J. Robinson's article in this issue of SAUCER NEWS occurred on November 14th in Carson City, Nevada. A resident of Carson City named Blanche Pritchett reported early that morning that she saw a disc-shaped object, "tremendous in size," hovering in the southwestern skies. The lady also said that a brilliant shaft of light from the UFO illuminated a nearby hill. The huge object stood stationary in space while she watched it from a window of her home. It had "an odd green color with a golden cast," and Mrs. Pritchett also noted that a "vibratory hum" came from the object. She first noticed the UFO at about 4:45 a.m. after seeing the drapes of her bedroom lit up from a glow outside. She added that a radio station which she was listening to at the time went off the air while the object was lighting the skies. It came back on again after the UFO disappeared! Other persons phoned police, the weatherman, and a radio station in nearby Reno and reported the same or a similar object in the sky southwest of Reno. No explanation for the phenomenon could be found.

On November 14, 1963, a Titan I was launched from Vandenberg AFB (310 miles away) at 1342Z (5:42 PST). It was reported in the Blue Book files as a UFO by a weather observer at Stead AFB near Reno, Nevada (about 330 miles away). The file also includes this clipping from Saucer news (March 1964). Note that some of the details in the NICAP report are different and potentially wrong. The NICAP report states the object was to the Northwest but the Saucer news report was towards the Southwest.¹²

While the time seems to be off by one hour, it seems that this might be explained by an error in recording the time. The witness may have gotten the time wrong or it may have been recorded wrong. The coincidence of the rocket launch is hard to ignore. The case is very likely explained as a Titan rocket launch from Vandenberg.

Case #4 - UFO says “Aloha”

The next case is a “mass sighting” event in Hawaii on March 11, 1963:

March 11, 1963--Oahu, Hawaii. Brilliant light headed west and leaving a trail observed by many people just after 8:00 p.m. Two National Guard pilots flying jets about 40 miles west of Honolulu reported UFO was “much higher” than their altitude of 40,000 feet and moving “very fast”. Possibly an observation of the recently announced A-11.¹³

The first thing I checked was the launch database. According to Astronautix, an Atlas D was launched on the 12th of March at 0521 GMT (0521 GMT is 7:21PM HST) making it a good candidate for this UFO. A check of the Blue Book files also identified it as this ICBM test and provided additional information.

The National Guard pilots were Captain Jon Parish and Lt. George Joy. Captain Parish was quoted as stating that it was “possibly a rocket or some sort of space object flying a predetermined course”.¹⁴ The time listed in the bluebook files was 1940 HST (0540 GMT), which is a reasonable match to the launch time of the Atlas D. Rocket launches from Vandenberg take about 30-40 minutes to go from Vandenberg to Kwajalein and Hawaii is about half-way. The rocket was probably readily visible because of the fact that this was about 1 hour after sunset and the sun was able to illuminate the trail of the rocket.

Once again, we discover that the NICAP document missed the potential explanation here. Blue Book got this one right and NICAP got it wrong. It no longer deserves to be listed in the NICAP UFO evidence document.

Case #5 - Air Defense Command cover-up

I was shocked and confused when I read this entry:

June 16, 1955 -- Eastern U.S. UFOs observed over wide area, jets scrambled. ¹⁵

This sounded really serious and one would think it would have made the news and would be part of the Blue Book record. Strangely, there is no mention in the Project Blue Book files of this massive incident. Additionally, I could find no mention of it in the newspaper archive. One would think that some news outlet would report interceptors scrambling up and down the east coast. Where did NICAP get their information?

NICAP lists the source of this information as coming from "Dozens of interceptor pilots" ¹⁶ and is footnoted as being recorded in Donald Keyhoe's, *Flying Saucer Conspiracy*. Curious, I asked for a copy of the appropriate section of the book from others. Isaac Koi promptly gave me the appropriate section of the book, which read more like pulp fiction than an objective UFO report:

In one of these officially hidden cases, on the night of 16th June, scores of UFO's reconnoitered the area from the Mississippi to the Atlantic.

At 11 O'clock, U.S. Central Standard Time, a Flying Tiger Airlines plane was on a routine flight, forty miles north-east of Springfield, Missouri. Suddenly a blue-white disc, moving at tremendous speed, shot in toward the plane. After circling around it in a tight turn, the saucer tilted up steeply and streaked out of sight.

Hurriedly the captain of the plane radioed the nearest CAA tower. Unknown to him, his was only one of dozens of sightings reported by pilots within the last few minutes. Before midnight Air Force Intelligence was swamped, with CAA and GOC messages pouring into Air Filter Centres from Chicago to Baltimore.

By midnight all Air Defense Commands east of the Mississippi were on a full alert, as scores of armed jet night-fighters pursued the low-flying objects.

Though I had learned of this important sighting early the next morning, my first hint of widespread alert did not come until the day after that, when Lou Corbin called me from Baltimore.

"Did you hear about the uproar over hear?" he asked. "It was on the night of the 16th."

"No," I answered. "But I heard of one report."

Then I told him about the Flying Tigers Airlines case.

"The Air Force was almost wild that night," said Corbin. "At the Baltimore Filter Center reports came in from GOC posts all over Maryland and up and down the coast. They said the saucers were over Washington too."

"The Pentagon certainly put a clamp on it," I told him. "Usually I get a tip on any sightings around the area"

"Yes," Corbin replied. "They've tightened up so much that I don't know how much longer I can get information." ¹⁷

A check of the Blue Book records found some references to what Keyhoe might be referring. The Tiger airlines incident occurred on 15th and was part of a series of sightings that night. ¹⁸ On the same night there was a bright fireball, which was seen over the mid-west around 9:15 pm CDT. ¹⁹ The bluebook record card lists the time of this specific incident as being at 0508Z ²⁰ (1108 CST), which does not quite match the time of the fireball recorded two hours previously. They originally gave an insufficient data evaluation but would later change it to "possibly astronomical" since it coincided on the same night as all the other fireball reports. It seems

unlikely that this case was the same fireball as the 9:15 PM event if the information listed were accurate. This does not mean it was not a fireball as there may have been a second bright meteor that night that was not as widely observed as the previous one.

15	Minneapolis, Minnesota		
15	Topeka, Kansas		Astro (METEOR)
15	Anita, Iowa (CASE MISSING)	Civilian	Insufficient Data
15	Ne Springfield, Missouri	Tiger Airlines	Astro (METEOR)
16	Baltimore, Maryland		Insufficient Data
17	Riverside, California		Insufficient Data

Meteor Flash In Iowa Skies

It Explodes Into Blue-White Light

(By The Associated Press)

A meteor flashed through Iowa's skies Wednesday night and exploded about 9:15 o'clock in a blue-white flash.

1. DATE 16 June 1955		2. LOCATION Springfield, Missouri		12. CONCLUSIONS	
3. DATE-TIME GROUP Local _____ GMT 16/0508Z June 1955		4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION <input type="checkbox"/> Ground-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Ground-Radar <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Air-Intercept Radar		<input type="checkbox"/> Was Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Balloon	
5. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		6. SOURCE Civilian (Air Lines Pilot)		<input type="checkbox"/> Was Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Aircraft	
7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION Unknown		8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS One (1)		9. COURSE NE	
10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING One (1) whitish-blue object travelling NE apparently descending at high speed. No visible lights or markings.		11. COMMENTS Due to the lack of sufficient data for evaluation and the improbability of further investigation yielding worthwhile data, no investigation authorized.			

Meanwhile, there were some sightings on the 16th of June in Baltimore. The Blue Book summary initially labeled it as insufficient data but later identified it as a balloon. That case seems to have been something very small and would not warrant a wide spread alert of jet fighters.

As far as I can tell, there are no records indicating a major scramble of jet fighters or Air Defense units being on alert. What Keyhoe was reporting here is more rumor than fact. Keyhoe provides no details of significance that can be verified and it seems he got the date and some of the details wrong regarding the Tiger Airlines case. As far as the UFO cases are concerned, I am willing to let them remain "unidentified" even though both were possibly what Blue Book determined them to be. However, the entry about fighter jets and alerts in the NICAP document is based mostly on a belief in a conspiracy. That part should be removed from the UFO evidence because there is very little data that confirms that this occurred.

Case #6 - The great white whale breaches in Oregon

This case caught my eye because it was recorded on multiple nights:

*September 11-13, 1953--Chiloquin, Ore. Police Chief, others, watched top-like UFOs three consecutive nights.*²¹

Looking further in the document, the source of this information was revealed to be the Los Angeles Daily News of September 15, 1963. Beyond this source, there is little information or documentation. Apparently, there was no investigation either.

Anytime I see a repeating event, I immediately suspect the object is probably astronomical. However, when I scanned the newspaper archive and found the Nevada State Journal description of events, I began to look at another possibility based on the shapes and lighting reported.²²

According to that article, the events were seen on the 11th through the 13th. There was great emphasis on the shape as being top-like and that the UFOs had flashing lights and a bright light suspended beneath them. It appeared on the 11th around 7:30 PM and was visible for about an hour. The night of the 12th seemed to have been very similar. On the evening of the 13th, two UFOs were observed and they came from opposite directions. While details about the case are very sketchy, I believe there is a probable solution.

During the 1950s, there were hundreds of research balloon launches every year. Many of these were under the program called "Moby Dick". They were launched from multiple locations around the country, with one of these locations being the Naval Air Station at Tillamook, Oregon. Many of these balloons had special lighting (like flashing lights) to prevent collisions with aircraft at night.

Looking at the Stratocat database for Tillamook²³, we discover that balloons were launched on the 11th (1708 local or GMT - it is not clear which from the table at the web site) and 12th (1740 local or GMT). The balloons ended up in Colorado and Texas with average speeds of around 60 and 20 mph respectively. In both cases, the general direction of flight from Tillamook was towards the ESE. Chiloquin was located roughly 225 miles to the SSE of Tillamook. Without a complete flight path, one can not positively determine if these balloons were the cause of these sightings. However, one can suggest that it was likely that on the nights of the 11th and 12th, the UFOs were caused by these research balloons drifting towards the southeast. The key observations were the shape, the idea that a light was suspended below it, and that a flashing light was visible on the UFO.

Only the events of the 13th remain unexplained. However, were there actual observations on the 13th or was it just a confused news report where the details were added? It is also possible that a balloon was launched but not recorded (Statocat states their database is incomplete). A final possibility is that on the third night, observers were expecting to see these UFOs and confused something mundane (aircraft or astronomical objects) as being the same type of UFOs. While I would classify these all as insufficient evidence, it certainly appears there is a possible and plausible explanation for two of the three sightings in this case. This case should be removed from the list.

Case #7 - And resurfaces again in England

A Moby Dick balloon also seems to have been the source of this UFO report in England:

*November 3, 1953--London, England. A huge apparently metallic UFO, "Completely circular" and white, was tracked on radar and observed visually through a telescope by the 256th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment.*²⁴

Bernard Gildenberg revealed the source in his article about the Skyhook program and UFOs:

*Alamogordo Air Force Base was renamed Holloman AFB in 1953. On October 27 of that year, we launched an unclassified payload. It failed to terminate at the scheduled twelve-hour flight duration, and, six days later, it was detected by the Royal Air Force over the Atlantic headed for London!*²⁵

The Stratocat database lists England as the landing spot for this balloon launch and that it was a flight under the "Moby Dick" pro-

Oregon Sees Flying Tops Over Village

CHILOQUIN, Ore., Sept. 14. (AP)—They're seeing flying tops, instead of saucers, over this little town of 400 persons in southeastern Oregon.

Observers report they have appeared over the area three nights in succession. The first one came in about 7:30 p.m. Friday. Witnesses said it had flashing lights and a white light appeared to be suspended below the object.

It flashed over the town, then slowed up, stopped and hung suspended at the edge of a bluff. It remained visible for approximately an hour.

The same thing happened Saturday night. On Sunday night two came in from opposite directions. Light became so brilliant it almost hurt the eyes of the spectators.

Glenn Kircher, trained radar screen observer who served in the Navy, observed the objects through binoculars.

gram.²⁶ The record for the flight I was able to obtain (which was labeled HAFB-175) stated the balloon lasted over 48 hours and was last tracked near Key West on the 29th of October.²⁷ It seems probable that the balloon could have made it to England on the third if upper level winds sent it in that direction. A check of upper level winds for Florida and the Bahamas indicate winds at the 50,000 foot level were blowing from the west and southwest during this time period (bearings of 270 to 225), which might support a trajectory towards England.

There is enough information to suspect that this UFO event was probably caused by the October 27th balloon launch from New Mexico. I would not consider this 100% explained without more conclusive evidence of the balloon actually making it to England. The records I saw seemed to suspect it was the Holloman balloon but did not give an actual positive ID. However, I still think this case should be removed from the list.

Case #8 - Keyhoe and Menzel fight over a lady

This case has me wondering how objective NICAP could be regarding any of their cases listed in this document. It involved an American Airlines crew that chased a UFO from Albany to Oswego, New York on April 8, 1956. The story presented in the UFO Evidence is based solely on what the airline captain reported in a television interview. However, what was reported in the Blue Book files and elsewhere seem to contradict some of that story.

The Chronology summarizes it as:

*April 8, 1956--Nr. Schenectady, N. Y. American Airlines pilot followed UFO across state.*²⁸

The US Air Force explained this as the planet Venus but NICAP stated the explanation in the television interview refuted this:

*In a taped description of his sighting, Capt. Ryan states that the UFO zoomed through a 90 degree arc from off his wing tip to dead ahead. Control tower operators reported seeing a silhouette of a UFO.*²⁹

Missing in NICAP's description are several important facts. The only person who reported seeing a "silhouette" was the tower at Griffiss AFB. Ryan only saw it as a bright light. The UFO appeared to go in 90 degree arc but this probably had to do with the plane's movement and not the movement of the UFO. The pilot stated they took off to the north (the Albany runway runs roughly north-south) and then turned towards Schenectady as they were flying towards Syracuse. This is when they saw the UFO ahead of them. However, they then turned towards the south to avoid the UFO before turning again towards the west. This is how Venus might have appeared to move from the wing tip to dead ahead. The time this all occurred was around 10:15PM. Venus would set after 10:30 PM at an azimuth of 305 degrees. This is the general time frame when the pilot lost sight of the UFO. According to the pilot, he deviated from his flight path to pursue the UFO, which he ceased following near Oswego, NY on Lake Ontario, about 30 miles northwest of Syracuse.

However, Donald Menzel would write:

*To the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), Captain Ryan replied that he had observed an unidentified object, but that he had not altered the course of his flight. He repeated this explicit statement to officials of the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) and of American Airlines. Airline records provided independent confirmation. Since the scheduled time of the flight between Albany and Syracuse had been 49 minutes, and the actual time elapsed on the night in question had been 48 minutes....*³⁰

It is extremely possible that Captain Ryan, in the excitement of the television interview, really meant this was the direction that the UFO disappeared and not that he pursued the UFO to this location. The azimuth towards Oswego from Schenectady is a bearing of 290 degrees. This value would increase on a plane with a heading of 270, the further west it flew. Venus was between 300-305 degrees during this time period. Considering the potential for error on his bearings, the 10-15 degrees is not significant.

Blue Book records indicated that four other aircraft saw the UFO and felt that it was a star or planet. Additionally, the UFO returned about the same time and location in the sky on the 10th of April. The report from ground observers indicated the UFO simply faded over the horizon to the northwest and they did not appear to perceive any significant motion other than thinking it was a plane approaching the airport. If the UFO had actually moved through 90 degrees as stated by the air crew, this motion should have been seen by the tower personnel. They did not report this. Most important to note is the pilot and control towers never reported seeing the planet Venus, which was in the same location of the sky. This is a clue that Venus was probably the culprit in all of this. NICAP dismissed this solution without good reason and this case should be removed from the document.

Case #9 - The selenites are coming!

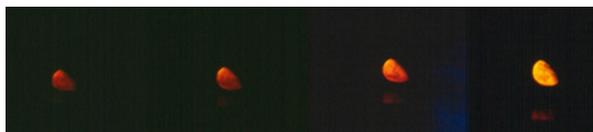
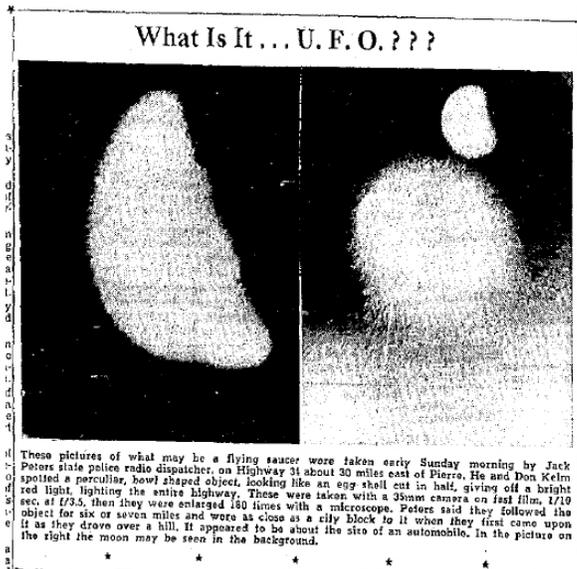
The UFO evidence document reads the following:

*November 24/25, 1956- -Nr. Pierre, South Dakota. (Wide spread UFO sightings for several days.) State police chased UFO, Air Force jets scrambled.*³¹

There is little else other than a brief mention of it in section VII, which references an AP report.

*"Widespread sightings, rumors of radar contacts by Ellsworth AFB pilots; near Rapid City officers chased a UFO which had steady green light, flashing red light. UFO occasionally beamed a white light upwards."*³²

The problem with this statement is that it is rather vague. They have lumped several sightings together. Checking the Blue Book



files, one of these sightings was identified as the planet Mars setting. There is no mention of any radar contacts or interceptors being sent out. They were just rumors. However, there is one case that deserves discussion and possible identification. That being the police pursuit of a UFO on the morning of November 25th. One may recall that pursuit of a UFO by Dale Spaur in April 1966. Skeptics have suggested he chased the planet Venus. I was also aware of police officers chasing Venus in the Georgia 1967 case studied by the Colorado project. Could this have been Venus?

A quick check revealed that Venus, while visible in the morning sky, rose too late for the police officer's pursuit, which occurred about 12:43 in the AP account Venus rose about 5 AM. Jupiter was in the morning sky as well but it rose at 2 AM. Both celestial objects were not in play. So, I read the news accounts of the police officers that performed the pursuit. They originally saw it as they crested a hill on route 34. The road runs pretty much from west to east and they indicated they were driving eastward. The object was described as being about a block away and the size of a car (or semi-trailer depending on the article). It was also described as, "...bowl-shaped - like an eggshell cut in half- and it gave off a red light which illuminated the highway."³³ The police officers pursued the UFO for about seven miles but it maintained its distance away of about a mile and it rose in altitude. Since they could not catch it, they turned around. The UFO then seemed to follow them. What happened to the UFO is hard to say. One account said it disappeared, while another stated it disappeared in the west. However, before turning around, patrolman Peters took a few pictures of their UFO using a fence post to support his camera. The reproductions are not very good in The Huronite and daily plainsman but they do look very familiar (see image to upper left).³⁴

What was never mentioned in all of this was the phase of the moon. It was last quarter (bowl-shaped as it rose) and would appear red when low on the horizon. See the stellarium image (middle image to the left) for 0040 on November 25. My images of a last quarter moon rising over Lake Michigan (bottom left image) is a good example of the moon as a reddish object low on the horizon.

It seems that these two policemen were possibly pursuing and being pursued by the moon. The only time the policemen mention the moon is in

the photographs, when it is stated the moon is in the background. However, the moon in the background looks a lot like the photo on the left, which is supposed to be an enlargement of the UFO. If one questions how police could ever mistake the moon for a UFO, I point towards Alan Hendry's UFO handbook, where he mentions in case # 100, that police chased the setting moon believing it was a UFO. So, it can happen under the right conditions. These conditions may have been met that morning. As hard as it is to believe, or accept, it seems probable that this specific case was caused by the moon.

Case #10 - How is the weather up there?

To me, the cases that are likely to have an explanation are the ones that involve multiple witnesses from multiple locations. If a reasonable amount of observational data is obtained, one can determine an approximate altitude and location. Such is the case of the September 18, 1962 UFO event:

*September 18, 1962--Northeast, Ohio. Six policemen sighted UFOs about the same time. One hovering object, two maneuvering.*³⁵

On page 62, the details of the police sightings are revealed. All were in the northeast section of Ohio and saw the event about 5 a.m. They all indicated the sighting was towards the East or Northeast. A pair of the police officers described the two UFOs as "...cone-shaped, with a fiery exhaust, leaving a trail of smoke..."³⁶. Some stated that the object rapidly disappeared and others stated it just hovered and then disappeared.

However, there are a few other sightings in the UFO evidence that were also on the same date and time that were not mentioned. On the same page, in the "Northeast New Jersey concentration" section, we read:

September 18 -- 4 a.m. Two Westwood, N. J., policemen reported a 7-8 second observation of a huge object, round at the top and tapering to a cone.

*4:45 a.m. ; Two Oradell policemen reported a brilliant light in the sky.*³⁷

One has to recognize that New Jersey did not recognize DST in 1962 but Ohio did. As a result, 4AM in New Jersey, would be the same

as 5AM in Ohio. The 4:45 AM observation may or may not be related but the 4AM observation sounds a lot like the Ohio observations.

Blue Book also recorded this event. According to the record card, there were other reports involving pilots on different aircraft all over the northeast. There was even a report by two B-47s flying northwards in Tennessee. The general time frame was 0900Z (4AM EST/5AM EDT). All of this indicated the observations were widespread and at the same time.

There was also a blue book observation from Fort Bragg, South Carolina (Fort Bragg is actually in NC). This was determined to be flares. The time listed is 0855Z, which is about the same time all the other sightings were made. The witnesses saw the UFO initially in the eastern sky at a high elevation angle (estimated at 60 degrees) and it arced over towards the northeast horizon, where it disappeared at an elevation angle of 45 degrees. This certainly sounds very similar to the UFO the other witnesses reported.

The explanation in the Blue Book record card reads:

*Report essentially one of bright light going out & leaving cloud which dissipated. Observed fm Ohio to Illinois & Michigan to Tennessee. Observation fm such a wide area indicates that obj at considerable altitude. Cases of this nature in the past have always turned out to be meteor observations.*³⁸

Before seeing the Blue Book file, I was of the initial opinion it might have been stars or planets creating the report. However, the description of a cloud being produced eliminated that idea. After reading Blue Book's explanation I felt it had some merit but I could not find any record of meteor observations in the news media or astronomical files. Such a bright meteor visible over a wide area should have been recorded somewhere as a meteor and not just a UFO. So, I decided to look a bit further. Being seen over a wide area indicates the UFO was at an extremely high altitude but what could cause something like this? I came up with several ideas after the fireball explanation.

The first thought was a research balloon. There were several launches in the United States preceding this data that might have fit the bill. However, to be seen over such an extremely large area would require an altitude that even research balloons probably could not reach. So I decided the event must have been in the upper regions of the Earth's atmosphere. This led me to believe it might be a satellite re-entry. However, no such event was on the record. Another idea was that it might have been an explosion of a booster rocket in space similar to the Briz-M explosion back in 2007. There were several failed Soviet launches preceding the 18th but they re-entered before the date in question.

I then decided to look at rocket launches as a possibility. I figured that the object might have been something recently put into orbit. One launch caught my eye on the Astronautix chronology list:

*1962 September 18 - . 08:53 GMT - . Launch Site: Cape Canaveral. Launch Complex: Cape Canaveral LC17A. LV Family: Delta. Launch Vehicle: Thor Delta. LV Configuration: Thor Delta 318/D12. •Tiros 6 - . Payload: Tiros F2 (A-51). Mass: 127 kg (279 lb). Nation: USA. Agency: NASA. Program: Tiros. Class: Earth. Type: Weather satellite. Spacecraft: Tiros. USAF Sat Cat: 397 . COSPAR: 1962-A-Psi-1. Apogee: 654 km (406 mi). Perigee: 631 km (392 mi). Inclination: 58.3000 deg. Period: 97.60 min.*³⁹

The launch from Cape Canaveral had me doubt that it was the cause because the UFO was to the northeast. However, the time caught my eye because it was so close to the 0900 GMT sighting time. Further examination of the data revealed that the inclination of 58.3 degrees would have resulted in the rocket being launched up towards the northeast. Intrigued, I downloaded a document from NASA dated November 1962, which documented the flight of this Delta rocket.

I noticed that not only was there a first and second stage to this mission but a third stage as well. It was an Altair X248 solid fuel booster rocket. More importantly were the altitudes and locations for when the third stage fired. According to the report, the following are the parameters of third stage firing time, location and altitude:⁴⁰

event	Time	Longitude	Latitude	Altitude
Third stage ignition	t+652.2 sec	62.27W	45.08N	374.6 NM
Third stage cutoff	t+694.1 sec	60.09W	46.48N	376.1NM

This had the indication that it might be the source for several reasons:

1. The duration of 42 seconds was similar to what was reported in the Project Blue Book files (30 seconds).
2. The location of the burn was over Nova Scotia, which is to the east-northeast of all of the witnesses. By my measurement, the bearings would have been between 55 and 75 degrees azimuth. This is the general direction most of the witnesses reported. They reported the object in the northeast (45 degrees azimuth) and heading towards the northeast or north-northeast.
3. The altitude of about 375 nautical miles would make it visible from great distances.
4. The burn probably would have created a trail of some kind visible to the observers. It was referred to as a "super contrail" in one report. Others referred to it as "funnel" or "cone" shaped. This trail quickly disappeared after the ignition ended according to the Blue Book record card.
5. The time of the burn would have been at roughly 9:04 to 9:05 GMT, which is the time given in the Blue Book files.

6. The observers in North Carolina would have had an excellent viewing angle of the rocket's trajectory up the coast. Their observations are consistent with the rocket's flight path.

So how bright would this third stage appear? The description of this part of the rocket sounds like it does not seem very powerful.

*The third stage, mounted to a spin table on top of the second stage, was an Allegheny Ballistics Laboratory (ABL) X-248 spin-stabilized "Altair" solid motor. Altair, a 1.83 meter long, 0.46 meter diameter fiberglass-case motor that only weighed 227 kg, could provide 1.27 tonnes of thrust for 38 seconds.*⁴¹



However, when a rocket is at an altitude of over 300 nautical miles, it does not take much to become visible from a long distance away. On May 3rd, 2002, I observed the Spot 5 satellite being launched from French Guiana. However, I was not in South America at the time. The path of this launch went towards the NNW and it passed east of Nova Scotia. It was easily visible from my house in Manchester, NH at an altitude of about 430 NM and distance of 600 NM (see image to the left, where the brightness was about magnitude +1). I even read an observation of the debris cloud from the rocket as far away as Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (>800 NM). This was all after the main engine's cutoff and was relying solely on the sun to reflect off the satellite and rocket body. So, I am of the opinion that the third stage of the Thor-Delta would have been visible from a large location especially with the time of day being before sunrise. The combination of the exhaust plume of the third stage and favorable sun conditions could have made it visible from a long distance away.

The coincidence of the timing of the third stage firing with the sighting and the direction of observation being in the general direction of the satellite gives me good reason to suspect the third stage firing of the Tiros 6 weather satellite launch created these UFO reports. This was not a classified launch and the details were readily available for those investigating the case. I can understand why Blue Book did not see the solution because of their limited staff. However, NICAP, with all of its trained investigators, should have done their homework on this one and not allowed it to appear as "unexplained".

Conclusions

I am sure there are a great many of people, who believe I am cherry-picking these ten cases in order to imply the NICAP document is completely worthless. That is not the case. What I am trying to point out is that using this document as a database of unexplained UFO cases is not correct. It is just a collection of raw UFO reports that may or may not have been adequately investigated. There are far too many cases that have insufficient data or were not properly investigated for it to provide valid statistics. What surprised me the most was the fact that several cases had the dates or times wrong. How many more had the incorrect dates, times, or locations, which would prevent identification? Doesn't that information mean anything? For the NICAP document to mean something, the cases need to be accurately recorded and investigated. Each case in this document needs to be looked at closely and not blindly accepted as being "good" evidence. It certainly does not fit the lofty status of being a catalogue of UFO cases that have been investigated to the point they represent evidence of, as the document states, "*manifestations of extraterrestrial life*".⁴²

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The 701 club

Project Blue Book (along with Projects Sign and Grudge) was the Air Force's attempt to investigate all the UFO reports they received. Everyone agrees that the manpower that was devoted to the project was too limited for such a large case load. As a result, when Blue Book closed its doors, they had 701 cases they considered unknown. Many UFOlogists dispute this number. Brad Sparks has a list of over 1600 unknowns and states James McDonald felt that there may have been 3600-4800 cases that are actual unknowns. This article will be the beginning of a column, where I will examine one of these Blue Book Unknowns and hope to find a potential explanation for the case I pick.

Case #7741

This event occurred on the evening of November 21, 1961. The location was in the countryside west of Gainesville, Florida near a cross road town called Old Town. I was somewhat familiar with the area because I did a lot of astronomy in the late 1980s and mid-1990s at a place called Chiefland, Florida, which is not far away. In the 1980s, the place was remote. It was probably even more so in 1961.

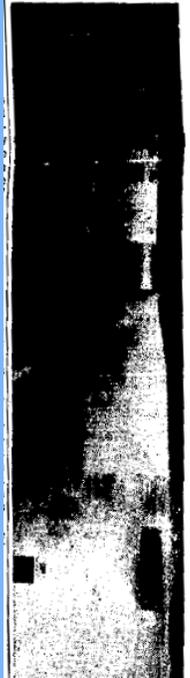
1. DATE 21 Nov 61	2. LOCATION Ooltow, Florida	12. CONCLUSIONS <input type="checkbox"/> Was Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Was Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Was Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Other UNIDENTIFIED <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient Data for Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
3. DATE-TIME GROUP Local	4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ground-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Ground-Radar <input type="checkbox"/> Air-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Air-Intercept Radar	
5. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	6. SOURCE Civilian	
7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 3-4 min	8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS 1 objt k	9. COURSE S
10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING: Round reddish-orange objt size of auto tire at approx length. Observed over trestops due S. Disappeared straight up until it looked like star still S. At altitude brightened and then faded.		11. COMMENTS Objt responsible for sighting is unidentified. It is probable that if additional data had been provided with this report the cause for sighting could have been determined.

According to the Blue Book files, two men reported seeing a bright reddish-orange object rise above the trees over the southern horizon (the document lists approximately 180 azimuth while the record card says due south). It rose up until it looked like a star and then it disappeared after 3-4 minutes. The location of the observers is not precise but it is listed as approximately 7 miles ENE of Old Town. The comments section states that the case was unidentified but if they had more data, they might have resolved the case. The file only includes a message with a Date-Time-Group transmission time of 2215Z on November 22nd. It

In the Titan test last night, Air Force personnel manned all blockhouse positions as the 98-foot rocket blazed away from the Cape.

Previous Titan launches were conducted by civilian personnel of the Martin Co., makers of the missile.

Data from the flight will be used in computing intercept patterns when the Zeus is launched against the Atlas missiles. The obtaining of that data was the objective of the crews manning radar tracking units on Ascension Island.



NOSE CONE TESTED - This Titan missile, about to soar into space, carried the nose cone which will be used as a target for the Nike Zeus missile in future tests. The Titan went down the Atlantic test range 3,000 miles from Cape Canaveral. (UPI Telephoto).

Page 1 story of the November 22, 1961 Burlington, N.C. Daily Times News.

was transmitted by the Cross City Air Force Station UFO officer, who investigated the case only thirty minutes after the event.

Solution?

Anytime I see the state of Florida involved after 1958, I begin to suspect a rocket launch. The description is exactly what one would expect. A check of the Astronautix Chronology web site revealed the following:

1961 November 22 - . 00:30 GMT - . Launch Site: Cape Canaveral. Launch Complex: Cape Canaveral LC20. LV Family: Titan. Launch Vehicle: Titan 1. LV Configuration: Titan 1 AJ-22. •Mk 4 re-entry vehicle test - . Nation: USA. Agency: USAF. Apogee: 1,000 km (600 mi).

The 0030 GMT time on the 22nd is 1930 (7:30PM EST) on the 21st for Florida. This is the exact same time the witnesses reported their observation. The only reason I would not call this a "slam dunk" was the direction of the observation. According to the file, it was to the south. From Old Town, Cape Canaveral is to the East-SouthEast about 170 miles away. This is roughly a difference in azimuth of 60 degrees. Could there have been an error of this kind? It is possible for this to be the case. Unless one has good bearings in the dark or is familiar with the night sky, I can see how it might be possible for somebody to think they were looking south, when they were actually looking southeast or East-SouthEast.

How did the USAF miss this?

When I saw the rocket launch entry, I was shocked the USAF did not slap this explanation onto the record. Based on the way some UFOlogists describe it, the USAF would have used it even if the witnesses claimed they were looking in the north! The reason probably lies in complacency on the Cross City AFS UFO officer and Blue Book personnel. The UFO officer probably went to the location, discussed the incident with the witnesses, returned back to the base, and then filled out his report without looking at a possible solution. The message was transmitted less than 24 hours later, which indicated there was little follow-up investigation. The officer probably figured it was up to the upper chain of command to resolve the case. In 1961, the USAF did not normally announce their upcoming rocket tests, which probably contributed to the lack of identification. This launch was so classified that one media account stated that the blockhouse was manned only by AF personnel instead of the Martin specialists, who normally were present (see news clip to the left). It did make it into the news accounts but those reports may have been limited or hidden as footnotes at the bottom of the page depending on the newspaper. Blue Book, limited in manpower, probably just looked at the report, shrugged, and then filed the case as unexplained. They may not have been aware one could see a night rocket launch from Old Town, Florida or that a rocket launch had occurred at the exact same time. As the record card states, if they had this information, they probably would have identified it. In my opinion, this case can now be considered identified as a Titan ICBM test.

Balloon material testing - Part II

Last issue, I discussed my tests with balloon materials and the results I had obtained. For some reason, some Roswell crashologists seemed to have confused what I was trying to prove. I was not trying to replicate the exact conditions of the balloon material from the "cluster of balloons" launched on June 4th. What I was trying to do was to determine whether Professor Moore's recollections/statements about the balloon material's reaction to sun light was more accurate than the claims made by Roswell crashologists concerning the balloon materials. My tests demonstrated that some of the claims regarding the balloon materials made by the proponents of an alien spaceship crash were not accurate. Meanwhile, the result did confirm what Professor Moore had stated in various settings over the years after he had performed his own tests.

Recognizing that I probably could not duplicate the conditions in the New Mexico desert and wanting to see if others got the same results, I mailed out some samples to skeptics to see what results they would obtain. Two of the skeptics performed similar tests to mine. The first was Lance Moody, who tested from Mason Ohio. The second was James Carlson, who was located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Would their results differ significantly from mine?

Lance Moody's report

Lance sent me an e-mail documenting his results:

Mason, Ohio June 12th-July 12th

I received the neoprene material from Tim Printy by mail. It was packed in a sealed zip lock bag. The material was a light tan in color and very wrinkly. It was thin but quite strong and stretchable but I would guess that it was not as strong a child's balloon, which is made from a thicker material.

On the morning of 6/12/12, I took the long piece of the neoprene and folded it over itself to create an upper layer exposed directly to the sun and a lower layer beneath it. I pinned the material to a piece of wood and placed it in a position to receive as much sun as possible. It was a very sunny day.

Within the first hour, there was a change in the color of the upper layer of material. It had become slightly darker. After 8 hours, the color was very much darker on the upper layer. The lower layer was only slightly darker than its original color. There was no noticeable change in the texture/elasticity of the material. (see image below)



it is still relatively strong and stretchable. The lower layer is much closer to the same texture as day one. It's color is much lighter than the upper layer.

After 16 days, the upper layer is noticeably more fragile. It is easy to tear, almost as weak as tissue paper. The lower layer is still stretchy and still lighter in color than the upper layer.



Over the next days and weeks, I noted that the color of the outer layer did get slightly darker but there nowhere near as dramatic a change as on that first day. Much of the color change takes place in those first hours. The texture did change a bit each day.

After 9 days, the material of the upper layer is drier looking. It's strength against tearing is reduced but

After 25 days (see image on left for material after 21 days), there is even more deterioration in the upper layer. It makes a crinkly sound when handled. The lower layer is weakened but still retains some stretchiness. It's color is still lighter than the layer above. If I take a piece of the upper layer and ball it up in my hand, it produces very tiny flecks of material.

During the course of the test, the wind occasionally blew enough to displace the pins. I would re-pin the material when I discovered this but I have no idea how much additional sun my lower layer got during these periods. Certainly it got darker than it would have otherwise.

We had very little rain to speak of and much sun, including several record setting high temperatures. One night a very powerful thun-

derstorm moved through and I brought the whole operation inside.

I note no odor from the neoprene to speak of. If you put your nose right up on it, there is a slight burnt rubber smell. On most days, I took at least one photo of the test.

I am struck, after handling the material so closely, as to how similar it appears to what we see in the famous Ft. Worth/Roswell photos. I see in the photos what appears to be the same variety of textures as I obtained in this test: crinkly and torn portions and stretchy lighter portions of neoprene.



The image to the right was taken by Lance on day 16 demonstrating the elasticity of the material at that point. This was consistent with what I had observed in my testing.

Lance had felt that our tests would come under criticism because they were not conducted in New Mexico under similar conditions that the NYU balloons had experienced. I was not too concerned about such criticism because Professor Moore had already tested materials under those conditions and described the results he had obtained. However, Lance convinced me that it wasn't a bad idea. So, I contacted James Carlson, who was quick to volunteer his services.

James Carlson report (based on e-mail reports from James)

James began his testing on June 10th at 1330 local time. By 1830, the balloon had changed color to a dark gray the same way the tests by Moody and myself had (see image to the right). James reported the following about the texture:



June 10th 1830

As for texture, it really hasn't changed that much. There is no brittleness at all, and if I had to find some change, all I would suggest (and I probably wouldn't swear to it, since it's significantly warmer from the sunlight) would be a possible weakening; it seems a little thinner, but only a very little. It still stretches with the same consistency, at least in my judgment.

He would add this comment the following day:

As for texture of the material, the "weakness" I noted earlier must have been caused by direct heat. I know it's expected of other materials due to the increased molecular vibrations, but I didn't expect the balloon bits to snap back once they had cooled. The rubber (or whatever it is) suffered no permanent changes. It seems just as consistent as it was before the tests.

James' testing continued and the material darkened at a similar rate to the other tests. By the 13th, James reported that the texture had weakened. This was not unexpected as my tests showed that after three days, the texture of the material had begun to change on top. By the 17th, the balloon material on some parts of the balloon had turned black (see image on the right) On the 18th of June, he had a windy day and discovered the material had been blown such the unexposed portions became exposed to the sun. As a result the underlying layer became darker although it still had a tannish color to them. On the 20th, James reported that the texture, while having changed somewhat, still did not exhibit brittleness or tearing.



June 17th 1830

On the 22nd (12 days after putting the material out), James noticed that the material was splitting in the top layer (see image to the bottom left). My test showed splitting on the 13th day but I had some rain for several days early in my testing. Lance noticed the splitting around day 16. So, once again, it appeared that the tests agreed within a certain margin of error.



On June 26th (16 days into the test), James reported:

As for today, the samples are definitely drier, with the only exception being the few square inches that still



June 27th 1730

retain some of the original coloring. Of the two shades of black that you can make out, the lighter is the driest, and it's starting to reflect some of the "brittleness" you've mentioned in the past. It's much less malleable, but it still retains enough body to put off any type of "flaking". It's much easier to tear through, and you'll note that there are more "splits" in the samples.....

This can be seen in the image to the left, which was taken on June 27th.

On the 28th (day 18), James had bad news to report:

As you can see in the attached photos, the entire lower sample was pulled free of the staples last night and was then blown hither and yon, yon being where I was able to find one small part of the whole (about 15 feet away) and hither being God knows where (I couldn't find it).



July 1st 1200

While the gusting winds are typical of the New Mexican desert, one has to remember this was a test strip of material on a board that was exposed to the sun in a position well above the ground. It is not quite the same as a balloon fragment lying flat on the dirt. If the wind did play a role it might have broken the balloon materials into smaller fragments and littered them over a large area (as well as blowing the ML-307 fragments "hither and yon"). This seems to be what Bessie and Mack Brazel described.

On the 29th (day 19), James started to notice a slight brittleness in the remaining material. On July 5th (day 25), James noted there were still portions of his sample that displayed some of the original color of the balloon strip. Sometime between July 6 and 7 (day 26-7), the balloon material was once again blown off the board. James, once again, retrieved the fragments. Despite all of this time in the sun and the fragmentation of the pieces, he still had sections that retained some of their original color. By day 30 of his testing, the remaining fragments had become a dark black parchment-like material. He sent me these scraps for examination.



July 7th 1200 (note bits of tan color on largest piece)

The thing I noticed concerning the samples I received was that there were certain sections of the dark material that retained its elasticity. One part, I could put my finger into and stretch. However, another section tore quite easily. When I put the material up to the sunlight, I noticed that there were two different densities and colors visible (see image lower left). This is all consistent with what both Lance and I experienced in our tests.

Conclusions

There really is not much to conclude other than what I wrote in the last issue of SUNlite appears to be confirmed. There is no indication that after a few weeks the material turns to ash as some have claimed. There is also no indication that one can put a balloon out for a few hours and achieve the results one sees in the Fort Worth images. However, there is plenty of indication that what professor Moore had written was accurate and that the material in the Fort Worth images contain balloon material that was exposed to the sun for a considerable amount of time ranging from about ten days to over a month.



I tried to present most of the data for all to see but there is only so much space for the images. Professor Moore did conduct these kinds of tests but just made general statements about his results. On the following page, there is a collection of photographs converted to black and white (without any other adjustment) for comparison to the Fort Worth image. At this point, it will take something a lot more convincing than a change of color to convince me that the balloon materials in the Fort Worth images came from something that was put out in the Texas sun for a few hours as a trick to fool the media and public.



Photographs of the two tests (duration and daily test) conducted in Ohio, NH, and NM (with an additional daily test in Florida) compared to the balloon debris in the Roswell photographs. Images were converted to black and white for comparison without any other adjustment. The balloon material tested for 30 days appear to be a closer match to the Fort Worth photographs in both color and appearance. In none of the duration tests, did the balloon materials turn to ash although sections of the balloon turned brittle and began to fragment. One can infer that this effect is usually experienced after many more weeks just as Professor Moore would state after he had conducted his own tests. Meanwhile, the texture of the balloon material after one day showed no significant change.

The lighthouse at Orford Ness

I have just about reached a certain level of frustration with some of the more ridiculous arguments defending the Rendlesham case. In the recent UFO documentary, "Secret history of UFOs", retired Colonel Charles Halt once again denied he could be confused by the lighthouse,

There was a distant light house out of Orford Ness, which I was very familiar with....and it wasn't the lighthouse.¹

To follow this up, Leslie Kean added:

It is just absurd to imagine that these gentlemen... you know...would not know what the light house beam looked like and would come up with stories about UFOs. I mean there are people out there that will say anything to make a UFO case go away....²

Kean's statement is based not on the evidence but on what Halt told her and what she wants to believe. The actual evidence demonstrates that Halt was not as knowledgeable about the lighthouse as he and Kean claim.

The evidence

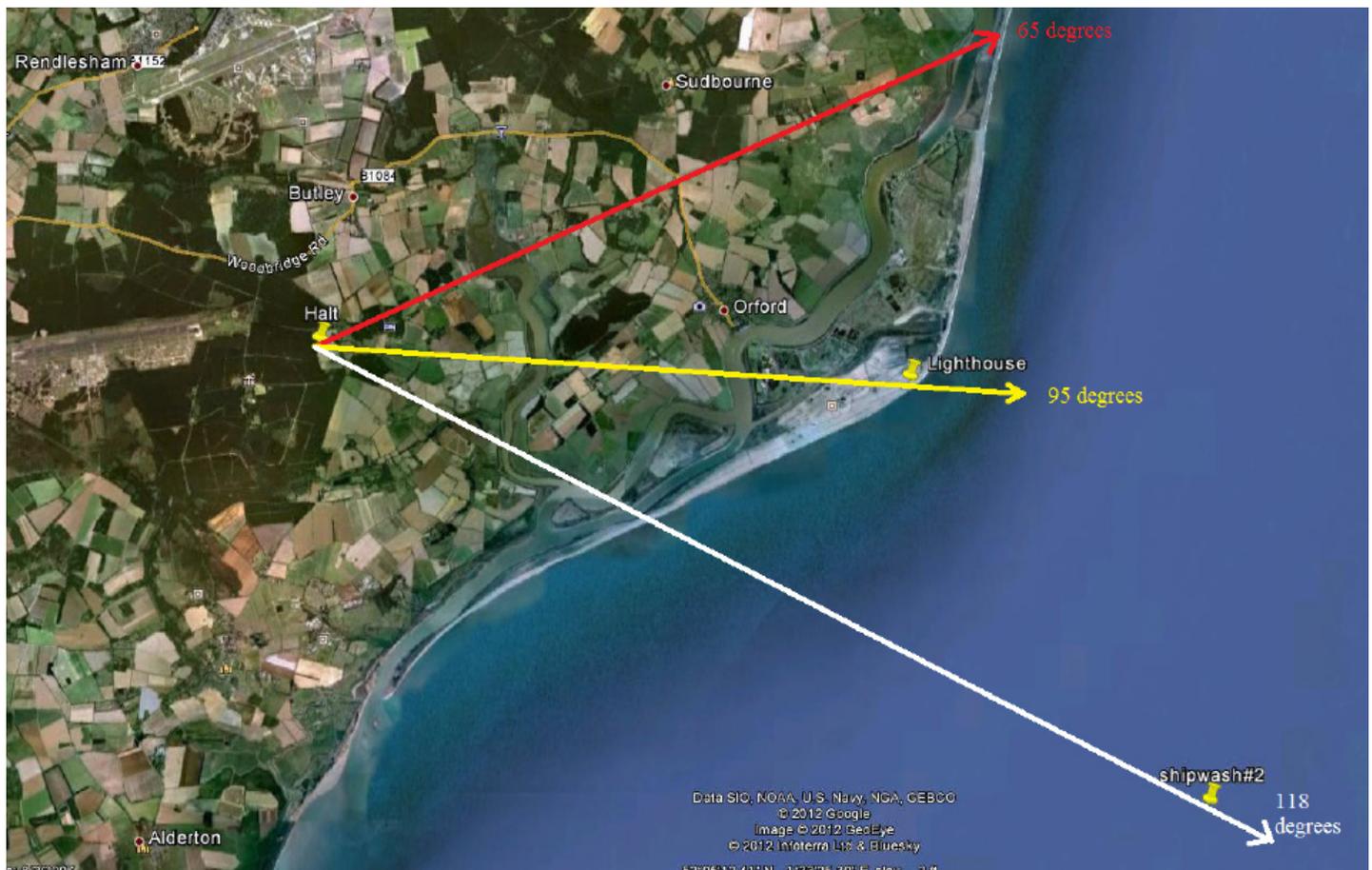
Colonel Halt has repeatedly stated in interviews that he was not looking at the lighthouse and it was off to the right of his flashing light that he describes on the tape and in his memo:

First, the lighthouse was visible the whole time. It was readily apparent, and it was 30 to 40 degrees off to our right. If you were standing in the forest where we stood, at the supposed landing site or whatever you want to call it, you could see the farmer's house directly in front of us. The lighthouse was 30 to 35 degrees off to the right, and the object was close to the farmer's house and moving from there to the left, through the trees.³

How does this claim compare to the actual evidence from 1980? The recording of Halt and his team's observations that night gave a bearing for the flashing light:

Now it's stopped... Now it's coming up... Hold on. There we go... about approximately four foot off the ground, at a compass heading of 110 degrees.⁴

Based on what Halt has continuously stated to those who want to believe him, the lighthouse should have been at a bearing of 140-150 degrees. We can see on a map that the lighthouse was on a true bearing of 95 degrees (yellow line). Clearly, it was not at a bearing 30-40 degrees to the right if the 110 degree bearing is accurate. Perhaps the bearing on the tape was significantly off. That would mean the bearing to the UFO was about 65 degrees from the lighthouse, which puts the bearing to the UFO in the direction well to the left of the farmhouse and towards the town of Sudbourne (red line).



The evidence from the Halt tape refutes this direction:

2:44. We're at the far side of the farmer's...the second farmer's field and made sighting again about 110 degrees. This looks like it's clear off to the coast. It's right on the horizon. Moves about a bit and flashes from time to time. Still steady or red in colour...⁵

Instead of heading towards Sudbourne, to the ENE, Halt took his team almost due east into the field beyond the farm house. Looking at Ian Ridpath's image of the farm house from where Halt stated he was standing (see right), one can see that the Orford Ness lighthouse is just visible over the ridge line.

The difference between the bearing on the tape and the actual bearing to the lighthouse can be explained by the inaccuracies involved with making such a measurement on an intermittent point source in the dark. Considering this, it seems that a difference of 15 degrees is within the margin for error.

Why would Halt think the lighthouse was to the right? The source of this confusion was first publicly identified by James Easton. At a bearing of about 118 degrees was the Shipwash lightship. (I got the location used on the previous page from <http://www.wrecksite.eu/refPosView.aspx?126471> - 52 deg 1.734 min N and 1 deg 38.237 min E). This position may be inaccurate (other sources give locations in slightly different positions) but it serves as an approximate location for evaluation. The lightship had a flashing white light on it and was over twenty degrees to the right of the lighthouse. Assuming a reasonable margin for error in Halt's memory, it is reasonable to conclude that he had confused the lightship for the lighthouse.

Finally, we have the obvious description of the flashing light on the tape syncing up with the rotation rate of the Orford Ness lighthouse. This was demonstrated back in 1983 by Chuck DeCaro of CNN and was also presented on the Secret History of UFOs program. It is the most important evidence that this UFO was the lighthouse.



More denial

The other players in the Rendlesham affair are James Penniston and John Burroughs. They also have denied for many years that they could not confuse the lighthouse for their UFO. In 1998, we learned that they were not being completely honest. In 1980, Colonel Halt collected statements from all of the individuals involved that night, including a third team member and the supervisory personnel. James Easton discovered these statements in the case file and published them. What became clear, after reading them, was that all three personnel were confused by the lighthouse. They stumbled through the woods chasing some lights in the distance. One of these was a flashing light, which they pursued for some time before realizing it was just the lighthouse. This was something they had claimed they knew all about and could never be confused by. It appears that these claims, made years later, were less than accurate.

The excuse has been made that these principal witnesses simply lied in their official statements about this lighthouse pursuit. However, the statements of Master Sergeant Chandler and Lt. Buran, who had no reason to lie, confirm that this is what was reported to them on the radio. The truth of the matter is that these individuals, like Halt, have convinced themselves, and others, that they could not be fooled by the lighthouse when they actually were.

Conclusion

When Kean states this it is absurd that AF personnel could mistake the lighthouse for a UFO, she is either ignoring the evidence or simply hoping the viewer would not be exposed to it. The producers of the program, "Secret History of UFOs" submarined her claim by showing the lighthouse and playing the tape. That evidence is very clear that they were confused by the lighthouse and it played a major role in this case on both nights.

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The Thing from Roswell

~~THE THING FROM ROSWELL~~

By Martin S. Kottmeyer

Perhaps I'm a glutton for punishment to even think of purchasing a book with a title reading Cryptoscatology: Conspiracy Theory as Art Form, but honestly I thought it would be an attempt at a humorous debunking or maybe a distanced sniffing of the insanity of the subject. To my disappointment - then growing distaste - I found the author's approach is a loving embrace that tries to find something to believe in every conspiracy. One rather naked example of his style is to say, like, yes, some moon landing hoax paranoia was successfully explained away, but there is still this, and this and this and that won't be so easy to brush off, so maybe the conspiracy nuts are right after all. My feeling though is, No, they aren't, stop wasting your and my time. Get away.

The worthlessness of this guy's opinions became doubly certain to me when I saw he was a willing conduit of Bruce Rux's slop about the Acclimation Program. I was simply going to throw the book into the attic without reading a word more, but then I recalled Tim wanted something fresh about Roswell and I noticed Robert Guffey expressed some thoughts about Roswell I suspected could not have been addressed anywhere yet. I decided to work up a skeptical appreciation this artless claim.

Guffey writes, "Bruce Rux claims that *The Thing From Another World* was a thinly-veiled account of the Roswell Crash, its purpose to assimilate the public at large to the truth of the alien presence on Earth." Guffey is enamored of the fact that the screenwriter of the film Charles Lederer married Orson Welles' first wife, Virginia Nicholson, and Lederer was a close friend to Orson. Welles and Lederer he speculates "may have collaborated unofficially on the film." He bases this also in part on a line in a Leslie Halliwell's film history asserting the director received "mysterious help" from "either Howard Hawks or Orson Welles." We also learn from him that RKO, the studio that made *The Thing*, was a subsidiary of Time-Life which was "directly connected to the CIA." RKO was also owned by Howard Hughes, friend to Jack Parsons, both names guaranteed to set the spidey-senses tingling in any self-suspecting conspiracy aficionado. Guffey thinks that an Orson Welles connection to *The Thing* would be exciting given his well-known role in stirring up the infamous War of the World panic of 1938.

I have a copy of Leslie Halliwell's *The Filmgoer's Guide* (1975) and was amused when, as a first gesture of fact checking, I read the entry. To begin with, Halliwell gets the year of release wrong, stating it was 1952, when in fact it opened in April 1951. Halliwell terms the film, "a competent job but disappointingly thin and tame considering its credits." Halliwell reports that it was produced by Howard Hawks, parenthetically adding that some say he also directed it "despite the credit to Christian Nyby." He states, "there are also rumours that Orson Welles had a hand." It ends with an opinion that the gripping early scenes are weakened when the frozen intellectual carrot "proved to be James Arness in a metallic suit."

If Arness's outfit was metallic it certainly did not look it. It lacks the shine of Klaatu's suit in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. In 1951, Arness was an obscure actor and viewers had no flash of recognition. Only years later, when his show *Gunslinger* ruled the genre of television westerns, did celebrity recognition cut into the experience of meeting the unknown. Reviews in 1951 showed consensus that the film was a success in evoking scares and thrills. We'll return to Nyby's credit momentarily, but we can already see Guffey has garbled things with regard to Howard Hawks. There is nothing mysterious about his help. Hawks was the producer of the film. In fact other sources will tell us he was deeply involved in the whole enterprise of bringing *The Thing* to the screen. He bought the rights to the story, rehearsed actors, made decisions on the makeup of the monster, and rode herd on everything. There is no either/or situation between Hawks and Welles in Halliwell. Welles' involvement there is only rumored, and I will say here that no retrospectives of the film I consulted say a word about Welles. Given the ample amount of information available I can only suspect any role he had was too trivial in shaping the final product to merit attention. Chatterboxes would happily have dropped such a big name had he truly been involved.

Let's turn now to Bruce Rux's claims that helped lead Guffey into wonderland. In opening his account, Rux retells the story of *The Thing* in several paragraphs initially veiling it as a retrievalist tale, then jumping up to say, surprise, this is actually not a real crash/retrievalist ufo report but a Hollywood film. Having seen the film several times, the desired effect was quite impossible to evoke in myself. I am going to give a more compressed description of the film than Rux does, hopefully including all salient points, though Rux can only blame himself if I miss a couple. His habitual vagueness makes the effort a series of guesses.

We open learning that sound detectors, seismographs and magnetometers detected an iron mass crashing in the arctic. Radiation helps investigators home in on the mass. They find something melted into the ice. A fin sticks out. A team of men spread out along the edges. When they form a circle they know they've found a flying saucer. They have the secret of the stars in their possession. To break into it, they detonate thermite within the ice. Big mistake - the ship blows up. Fortunately they find they still have an alien in the ice. It has crazy hands, no hair and its eyes are open. Rux says it looks like a tall man with a large bald head and "black eyes." Characters refer to it as a man from Mars. It revives when thawed. It soon goes on a killing spree and they learn when an arm is torn

off it is vegetable based. Bullets don't kill carrots. They also find it uses blood to grow its seedlings. Dr. Carrington speculates that on the alien's world "vegetable life underwent an evolution similar to our own animal life - which would account for the superiority of its brain. Its development was not handicapped by emotional or sexual factors." Lacking nerves, it knows "no pain or pleasure as we know it: no emotions - no heart - far superior, far superior in every way." It has seed pods in the hand - "a neat non-confused reproductive technique of vegetation." Eventually the survivors fricassee the Thing with a surge of electricity. Our compliments go to the cook and the artist who drew the volts of lightning. The End.

When Rux finishes his recounting of the story he offers the observation "the similarity of the foregoing to Roswell should be obvious." In fact, it is not obvious at all. The only similarities are that both stories have a crashed spacecraft, bald human-shaped figures with scary eyes, and an alien biology quickly realized to be different from terrestrials. Roswell did not happen in the Arctic, did not involve removing things trapped in ice, did not involve thermite or complete destruction of the craft, did not involve 7 foot tall hulking Frankensteinoids, did not speak of green blood, did not have an alien running around killing everything to feed its young.

The points of similarity are few and mainly conventional pulp attributes – scary eyes and bald heads especially were stereotypical throughout early science fiction. Nyby stringently avoided close-ups of the monster in the film, but publicity stills show the eyes are quite unlike contemporary Grays. They are neither large, nor all-black, nor tilted. At most they are deeply shadowed by a substantial brow ridge like some sort of Neanderthal. Indeed the head has a substantial nose and human shaped ears quite unlike Gray skulls where such things are either vestigial in character or absent. Rux's attempt to suggest a resemblance to Grays in Roswell tales looks mostly misguided.

Unrealizing he has failed to say anything interesting, Rux then asks "How did filmmakers in 1951 know the facts about the most top secret occurrence in human history, which had happened only four years before?" He makes a gesture to de-vague what was obvious to him by finding it interesting that "man from Mars" is used to describe the being since the "first published research connecting Mars and UFO activity did not occur until more than a decade after the making of this movie, being the findings of Jacques and Janine Vallee in conjunction with the French astrophysicist Pierre Guerin." Rux takes care to mention that The Thing was adapted from the John Campbell story "Who Goes There?" but he regards it significant how the adaptation departs significantly from the original in having a Frankenstein-shaped human with vegetable aspects replacing the shape shifting, tentacled, three-eyed horror in Campbell's story. Rux complains Arness's make-up was comically short on terror, but grants the art of special effects was in its infancy and making a realistic portrayal would have been difficult. I gladly second that last point. Tentacles were generally laughable even up through the 80s and even the best betrayed their artificiality. Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within (2001) strikes me as the film that made the breakthrough achievement of consistently well-rendered tentacles. There was no prayer of getting them working in 1951.

Rux observes the first screenplay followed Campbell's story closely and even described its monster as an anthropoid with 3 eyes, rubbery blue hair and razor-sharp tentacles, but that changed, "for some reason or another – by implication, because someone higher in the production chain of command ordered it so." He finds it amazing the end-product was so close to actual flying saucer occupants except for the height "as are the multiplicative coincidences in its nature, and the nature of the saucer crash and recovery."

Now, part of the problem with Rux's account is that he should have taken a better look at John Campbell's story which was first published in 1938 and long before Roswell. Hawks bought the rights to "Who Goes There?" after he read the story in a book he picked up in an Army PX in 1948 in Heidelberg, Germany. Hawks was working there on an earlier film.

"Who Goes There?" is set in Antarctica. Magnetic surveying established an anomaly which was initially expected to be a large iron meteorite but, when studied turns out to be a craft 280 feet long and 45 feet in diameter. They determine the craft struck solid granite head-on and cracked up. Not everyone inside was killed, but the ship was ruined. The ship was made of a magnesium alloy and when thermite was used, it is destroyed. The secrets of the drive mechanism is lost and, in the process, forces are unleashed that fry all local electronics. In both the story and the film, no craft remains to be retrieved. In the ice they find a 4 foot tall survivor of the crash had escaped to ten feet away. Seemingly it then collapsed and froze. The monster is cut out and taken to a shack and people argue about whether to unthaw it. Will there be germs surviving? Another is simply bothered at how monstrous it looks, complaining he has had nightmares ever since seeing those 3 red eyes. He thinks it is waiting to be thawed. This is echoed in the film in a line where one character comments the Thing's "eyes are open and they look like they can see." It thaws. In the print version, "Three mad, hate-filled eyes blazed up with a living fire, bright as fresh-spilled blood..."

As a shape shifter, it quickly becomes a menace, of course. They argue about whether it came from Mars, Venus, or beyond the stars. At one point, they realize the fact that it has not turned into a bird and flown off suggests maybe it came from Mars because the thin atmosphere might not support bird-life. Fighting the creature at one point they see it bleed "greenish-yellow ichor." At the finale, they find it has been working at creating an antigravity device powered by a small atomic power plant. Certain other evidence combines and leads them to conclude "They came from another sun, a star beyond the stars. They came from a world with a bluer sun."

From this synopsis, we can see you don't need Roswell for such elements as crashed crafts, advanced technology, high intelligence, scary alien eyes, or an alien biology with fluids not resembling human blood. I am happy to concede Campbell's story probably had no role in the "man from Mars" expression in the script, but Mars had been the favored source of alien life in discussions of life outside earth from as early the 1800s. Astronomical discussions nearly universally put Mars as the likeliest world for life to appear on in our solar system. Pulp fiction used Mars three times as often as any other world for the setting of alien life before 1900. Mars never loses majority status even as the percentage lowers in the 1920s and 30s.

Charles Fort was talking about Martians patrolling earth in airships in a letter published in the New York Times of September 5, 1926. Mars was nearing opposition and he wanted readers to look for a wave of sightings. Fort suggests the timing of the New England Airship flap of 1909-10 implicates Martian intelligence - decades before the Vallees and Guerin. In a few weeks Mars would be in opposition. He was predicting a new wave of sightings. At the prior Mars opposition of August 1924, there was a highly public grand listening project where radio broadcasting was silenced so researchers could listen for radio signals from Mars. In 1950 Don Keyhoe, Gerald Heard, and Frank Scully all discussed Mars as a likely place for flying saucers to originate. James Lipp of Project Sign noted that certain nuclear blasts would have been visible from Mars and thus a possible stimulus for Martians to come check on us. There were even cinematic precedents: The Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars serial of 1938; The Purple Monster Strikes serial of 1945 has Martians coming to Earth as does its 1950 remake Flying Disc Man from Mars.

We can even add it makes mythic sense to prefer Mars, given we are dealing with a literally bloodthirsty killing machine. Emotionless sexless intellect was typical among Martian villains in the pulps.

Rux's dismissal of the monster as laughable is atypical. Bill Warren's perfect history of SF film reports recollections that his 8 year old classmates were scared badly by it. Warren quotes critics who uniformly praise the film's power. While I won't personally use superlatives to rank it, I absolutely respect those who do. It is solidly entertaining. Publicity stills admittedly were less than helpful in selling the film but they do not capture the tension and atmosphere evoked within the film itself.

The film's screenplay went through 6 re-writes and changes continued as rehearsals suggested alternative phrasings. While Charles Lederer gets the writing credit, he was writing in collaboration with Ben Hecht (himself a cinematic legend with stature equaling Orson Welles), who turned in the initial draft of July 31, 1951. In that one the monster is described as having "a bulbous head, a tiny suck hole for a mouth, multiple eyes, no ears. Its arms were extra long, ending in thorny clusters, rather than hands. It stares malevolently through the ice." The original script also had a sexual subtext, equating the Thing as Hendry's libido. The love interest complains Hendry had his hands all over her like an octopus, which would have equated with the tentacles. There is a faux-bondage scene where Hendry is tied up by his girlfriend Nikki while she kisses him. However Hendry demonstrates he is not tied up at all by holding her glass of liquor. Cut to the Thing bound in a block of ice tied with a rope, who also is less bound up than everybody thinks. Artist Harper Goff actually built a prosthetic version of the Thing having 3 eyes and 4 tentacles per Campbell's story and the Hecht draft.

At a 1982 revival of Hawks' The Thing to capitalize on Carpenter's remake, talk surfaced that Hawks at one point wrote Howard Hughes a memo promising him that the film would not be a Gothic horror film like Frankenstein. When Lee Greenway does a number of makeup tests without Hawks' input, however Hawks retaliated: "Make him look like Frankenstein." So they did. If true, say BYE-BYE to the chatter about a Roswell Gray being the source of The Thing's look. (Newsome, p. 60) Lee Greenway worked two months experimenting on the look and his \$10,000 makeup budget had to be doubled before Hawks was finally satisfied.

Returning to Nyby and slights that Hawks was the real director, Nyby, in 1982, spoke of his directorship in terms like an apprentice. It was his debut effort as a director. To him, Hawks was a Rembrandt and he was his student. You don't interrupt the Master when he takes the paintbrush to touch up your work. Yes, the film has the same rapid-fire delivery of lines of other Hawks films and that was by design. When Nyby did other work, others have properly noticed an absence of the same style of execution of The Thing, its crispness. Well, how many of us can name any of Rembrandt's students? That said, while Hawks was certainly supervising Nyby, it is no deception that he got screen credit. A student driver is still a driver.

While reading through retrospectives of the film, I found one interesting tidbit missed by our conspiracy artists. RKO approached the Air Force to provide the facilities and equipment for the setting in Alaska. They flatly refused to cooperate. An RKO document dated September 14, 1950 exists stating the Air Force reviewed the script and, we quote this verbatim: "does not wish to be identified with any project that could be interpreted as perpetuating the myth of the flying saucer." (Turner 1982) They not only refused to provide facilities or equipment, they even asked that there be no mention of the Air Force, its personnel, or any representations that could be construed as Air Force related. They were even displeased enough to remind them that if they go ahead with this film, they should keep in mind maintaining good will and relations between RKO and the Air Force might be beneficial to their business.

In a later negotiation the Air Force suggested that if the film were "presented as a dream" they might reconsider. Hawks refused. Consequences followed. The production decides Cut Banks, Montana has the desired landscape to double as Alaska. They pick an isolated windswept runway on which they built sets to mimic buildings. Unfortunately, the runway had been built where it was

precisely so it would be windswept. Snow could not accumulate there. They waited for snow so things would look more Arctic, but it refused to happen. They ended up faking the scenes at the RKO Ranch back in Hollywood with cornflakes, flour, paint, and photographic solutions. Because of the Air Force's non-cooperation, the film's budget ended up a costly \$1,257,327. Considering no big name celebrities had been hired, this was highly annoying and it is a shock to realize this cost over a third more than *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), a much slicker looking A-budget production.

The military does not come off well in the story, we must note. Hendry, the quick-thinking man of action, performs best when he disobeys his superiors who issue orders like to "avoid harming the alien at all costs." Scotty the reporter delivers a line, "That's what I like about the Air Force, smart all the way to the top" with breezy sarcasm. Pentagon brass has little incentive to be fans of the film.

Aware now of all this, thoughts like this bubble up: If the film was ever intended to prepare or clue in the public for something like Roswell, what demon would possess Hawks to contact the Air Force in the first place and hand them a script with, in Rux's phrasing, "the facts about the most top secret occurrence in human history."

Not like there was no warning.

Scat!

Scat indeed.

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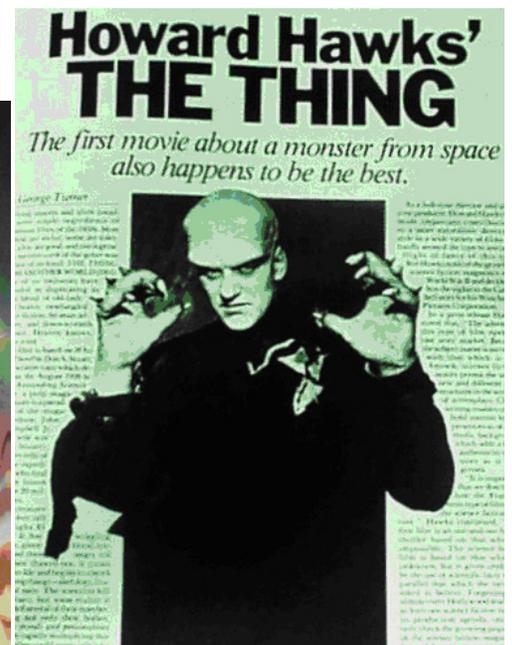
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Did a green fireball follow Apollo 7?

Anthony Bragalia, as is his custom, wrote another sensationalist style piece on his blog, which discussed the green fireball phenomenon. Some of the evidence he presented had little to do with the green fireball observations of the late 1940s other than somebody recorded green lights in the sky. However, there were two claims that Mr. Bragalia listed that intrigued me:

- Revealed here are remarkable images (recently found buried within NASA space footage archives) of a Green Fireball that seems to "follow" our astronauts

- Striking and exceeding rare film has been located, also taken from space, where one can vividly see the strange Green Fireballs doing the impossible: exiting the earth's atmosphere rather than entering it

All of these comments had to do with Bragalia "finding" two images that showed what appeared to be green fireballs moving across the frame. One appeared to be even exiting the earth's atmosphere! Bragalia would imply that these "green fireballs" actually exited the earth's atmosphere to follow/track out astronauts.

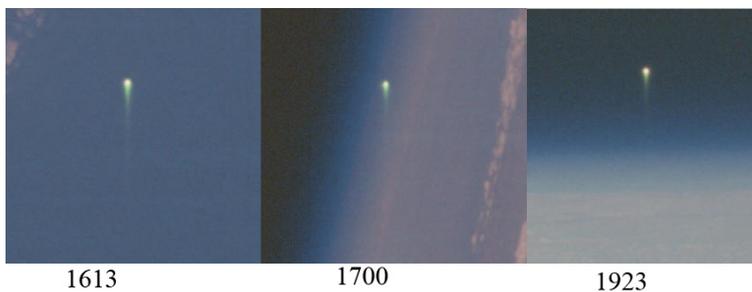
Dispelling some myths about meteors

In his article, Mr. Bragalia stated that it was "impossible" for meteors to exit the earth's atmosphere. However, this is not true. Meteors can, and do, leave the earth's atmosphere. They often are referred to as "earth grazers". It is all a matter of what angle the meteoroid enters the earth's atmosphere. If it has a low entry angle, it will basically "skip" off the earth's atmosphere. A great example is the daylight fireball of August 10, 1972. It reached a low point of below 60 km and then began to increase in altitude as it exited the earth's atmosphere. When I pointed this out to Mr. Bragalia, he stated that he did consider this possibility (yet declared it "impossible") and felt the angle in the photographs was too steep (yet he provided no analysis to demonstrate this). He added that meteors don't follow astronauts even though there is little evidence to indicate these "green fireballs" were actually doing this.

Another statement about "green fireballs" that Anthony Bragalia noted was that nobody was ever able to recover any fragments from these "green fireballs" and they leave no impact marks. I beg to differ because the Peekskill fireball was "green" and fragments were recovered. The truth is meteorites are not always produced by fireballs. I have seen plenty of searches for meteorites following a bright fireball over the years come up empty. Additionally, meteorites rarely leave any "impact marks" in the ground. It takes a really large meteor to create a crater in the ground. On October 7, 2008 an asteroid (2008 TC3) about 7-16 feet in size entered the earth's atmosphere. A search for the debris revealed plenty of meteorites but they were simply laying around on the desert. They left no obvious impact marks.

The Apollo 7 fireballs

Mr. Bragalia's evidence for "green fireballs" following Apollo 7, were two photographs from the NASA archive (AS07-5-1613 and AS07-6-1700). However, these images were not "recent revelations" as we are led to believe. The Above Top Secret Forum had discussed these two images back in 2008 and it was announced on a lunar enigmas web site around the same time.



AS07-5-1613, AS07-6-1700, and AS07-8-1923 "green fireballs" cropped exactly as they appeared on the high resolution images from the NASA archives. Notice that they are all in the same direction - parallel to the horizontal edges of the film frame (see image AS07-8-1925 on next page).

Curious, I decided to check the archives for the source images. They did show the objects in question but something caught my eye. In relation to the borders of the frame, both images showed the "fireball" going in the same direction!. I found that a bit peculiar and I began to suspect that this may not be an actual photograph of a meteor but something that was part of the film or scanning process. If so, I should find more of these artifacts in other images. So, I decided to "scour the deep recesses of the NASA archive" for anymore "buried" images as well. It did not take too much "scouring" to find two more examples of the "green fireballs". The two images were AS07-8-1923 and AS07-8-1925. Both showed

the green fireballs and they were also going in the same direction in relation to the film edges. Even more astounding was that AS07-8-1925 had recorded two on the same frame! If these were random fireballs, or even alien spaceships, the chances they would all move in the same direction, in relation to the film frame, seems to be extremely unlikely. After finding these two additional images, I stopped my search. I would not be surprised if I looked through all the images, I could find more of these green fireballs and most, if not all, would go in the same direction.

It is my belief that the images actually show some artifact in the original Kodachrome emulsion that was caused by the advancement of the film or by handling over the years. It also may have been produced in the scanning process (either by the scanner, damaged emulsion, or from prints that were scanned). This seemed more likely than green fireballs that always went in the same direction as the film.



AS07-8-1925 with its two "green fireballs". I enlarged the images of the fireballs to show their lengths and direction. Like the other frames, they all go in the same direction in relation to the film's borders.

Walt Cunningham speaks

When I shared my findings with James Oberg and other skeptics, James responded that he would contact Walt Cunningham, who was one of the crew of Apollo 7. When shown the story by Bragalia, he responded in July 22nd e-mail to James Oberg:

Rubbish, of course. I have my collection of prints from back in 1968. As you know, I took a majority of our pictures, and these two are both pics of the Middle East - - - and we weren't being followed.

Cunningham would later state that he looked at his prints and did not see these "green fireballs" that are in the scans being used by Bragalia and others. That indicates that whatever these anomalies were, they were not originally recorded on the film and appeared much later.

Conclusion

The images being used to promote this case have artifacts in them that are apparently from the film or scanning process that look like fireballs. There is no reason to believe they are actual meteors or spaceships. Therefore, the case of the Green Fireballs chasing the Apollo 7 capsule can be considered essentially closed unless somebody can prove they are spaceships/meteors.

UFOs on the tube

A secret history of UFOs

I have some mixed feelings about discussing this show since I was a participant and probably am biased. I had my reservations about appearing on the show when I was first approached by one of the producer's assistants because I normally don't like doing interviews. However, my wife and some friends suggested I should try and get the skeptical side out there no matter what the show was going to present. When I got a call from the producer of the show and discussed it with them, I was a bit more positive about the way they viewed the material. The three hour interview at the National Geographic offices in Washington DC was interesting and I was bombarded by dozens of questions about various UFO cases. I recall making a few minor mistakes that I did not correct myself on at the time, which made me slightly concerned about how the show would present me.

The show began with an overview of UFO history and quickly went towards the Arizona UFOs segment. They presented the standard group of witnesses, who reported seeing a large flying triangle. Missing were the majority of witnesses (based on my evaluation of the NUFORC data in SUNlite 2-3), who reported only seeing a formation of lights. They also showed Mike Kryzton's interpretation of the 10PM videos. I had spoken at length on this case but they used James McGaha for the explanation, which was OK with me. He exposed the 10PM events for flares and the 8PM event for a formation of planes. The best point he made had to do with the use of the FAA approved airway by the 8PM UFO. This is good evidence that indicates what was seen was man made. The show, for some reason, stated there was no video showing the 8PM event. They were wrong. There is the Terry Proctor video, which was omitted for some reason (even though I mentioned it to them). We were then treated to the witnesses proclaiming they don't believe the explanations given. This would be a common theme in the production.

Following this was about a 15-minute history of UFOs from 1947 to the early 1960s. Seth Shostak's point about the development of rocketry in the 1940s helping pave the way for the flying saucer interpretation was well made. The rest of the history was mostly old news. The program then sequed into the abduction phenomena, which dominated a good part of the show.

The telling of the Betty and Barney Hill story was highlighted by Kathleen Marden's interpretation of the story. To their credit, the producers then mentioned how Dr. Simon felt their stories were probably not true and that hypnosis probably played a factor in the development of the tale. Robert Sheaffer was good enough to provide us with the discussion about driver fatigue playing a critical role in the events that night. This is rarely mentioned in the Betty and Barney Hill saga. While, they gave Marden the last word, I felt the arguments against an actual alien abduction were fairly presented.

What followed this was a description of how the abduction phenomenon evolved over the years. In the 1970s, people were out in remote areas when they were abducted. However, in the 1980s it was discovered that people were being abducted from their own

homes. The narration explained the problems with hypnosis. Matthew Baxter made some excellent points about how hypnosis usually involve people making up stories and then reinforcing their beliefs. Additionally, Brian Sharpless described how sleep paralysis plays a critical role. To counter this, David Jacobs stated that while the evidence was extremely weak, it was still evidence. Of course, Jacobs also forwarded his idea that the aliens are creating hybrids to replace human beings. Does this mean President Obama might be an alien hybrid? Finally, a pair of twins reinforced their beliefs that they do not suffer from sleep paralysis or they are not confabulating under hypnosis. This is very similar to what UFO witnesses state about their own personal sightings, which brought us back to two of the major events in UFOlogy.

The Rendlesham case was presented by Leslie Kean and Charles Halt. Of course, Kean relies solely on what Halt and Penniston had told her and she completely ignores all the witness statements made in 1980, where they witnesses stated clearly they pursued a lighthouse for some distance. On the skeptical side, James McGaha made some very good points and I was able to describe how meteors can be misinterpreted as aircraft crashing just beyond the trees, which is what started the whole episode on the first night. After Halt described his tale, McGaha and I were able to mention how the audio tape described the UFO flashing on and off in sync with the revolution rate of the Orford Ness lighthouse. Halt countered that he knew where the lighthouse was but that is not what was stated on the tape and in the witness statements. Halt never mentions the lighthouse on the tape but does mention the UFO in the same general direction as the lighthouse. He did not even state that the UFO was near the lighthouse beacon! Halt also never states that, in 1980, Burroughs and Cabansag confessed they pursued the lighthouse. Other items such as radiation, holes in the ground, and markings on the trees were blown out of proportion. Ian Ridpath debunked all of this long ago. To all of this Kean states the explanations are ridiculous and that she believed Halt instead of the known FACTS about the case. It is a FACT that the lighthouse flashed at the same rate as the UFO and it is a FACT that Halt described the UFO in the same general direction as the lighthouse. Kean demonstrates a will to believe rather than any critical thinking.

This brought the show to the other major UFO event - Roswell. Don Schmitt and a group of old ladies got to tell their stories. Only Frankie Rowe can be considered a first-hand witness and her story is highly suspect. One person, Carlene Green, claimed that some Roswell civilians/military personnel went missing because they spoke about the secrets of Roswell. No evidence is presented to back up this claim and we did not even hear any names. Frankie Rowe spoke of the threats she received if she EVER spoke about it. One wonders about these threats. Frankie Rowe, and others, publicly spoke about Roswell and never suffered any retribution. Meanwhile, all these mysterious unnamed individuals mentioned by Mrs. Green, never publicly spoke but were "silenced" anyway.

Don Schmitt claimed that the actual escape pod from the main craft landed 30 miles to the southeast of the Foster Ranch site. As I have noted in a previous criticism of Schmitt and Carey's book, the location of this second crash site shifts depending on who they quote. We still have yet to see an exact location presented for all to examine. Seth Shostak spoke about Project Mogul and I added some comments about how this "indestructible craft" shattered into thousands/millions of small fragments. Schmitt countered they had evidence of a gouge based on Dr. Doleman's study. The show pointed out that the same evidence could have been produced by a coyote burrow, which is what Dr. Doleman wrote in his paper and Schmitt conveniently omitted discussing. I pointed out that there were no photographs of the gouge anywhere. I also committed a "mea culpa", when I stated the aerial photographs of 1949 don't show the gouge. It was actually the 1954 photographs. When the section of the show concluded, Dr. Shostak made the best point. He stated that when one looks at the possibilities of an advanced alien spaceship that crashed and compared it to project MOGUL, the MOGUL explanation is more likely.

The conclusion of the show spent most of the time going over hoaxes like Alien Autopsy and the mass sighting at O'Hare airport, which has yet to produce one identifiable witness or photograph. Leslie Kean states that people are afraid for their jobs and the FAA refuses to investigate UFOs. James McGaha countered that the FAA's job is to keep the skies safe and there is not one aircraft accident that has been shown to be caused by a UFO. Kean does not state that the FAA tells its personnel to contact NARCAP with any reports they have.

In its final comments, the narrator pointed out how police and pilots are not expert witnesses and cited statistics by Hynek and Hendry. Seth Shostak made the comment that science wants cold hard evidence and that out of the thousands of UFO cases, not one has met this standard. As a punch line, Giorgio Tsoukalos made a brief appearance. I am not sure if this is comic relief or what but his clownish hairstyle brought a chuckle from my wife and I when we saw him.

The program had some good and some bad but this is far better than the "Chasing UFOs" or other UFO programs I had recently seen on National Geographic. This is worth watching as it fairly presented both sides of the argument.

More chasing UFOs

This show continues to amaze me and it is being universally criticized by skeptics and proponents alike. In fact, the outrage seemed to be so high that James Fox and Ben McGee had to respond in public e-mails about how they have little control over the finished product. I may give them some leeway here but there are some things about the show that are beginning to bother me and Fox/McGee seem to be quietly endorsing it by their silence.

In the Roswell episode, we were treated to the "lucky" find of an AF military button in the dirt. Watching Ryder walk away from the main group and suddenly stumble onto this find makes one wonder. Kevin Randle's observation that the button was very clean right out of the sand also raises some questions. If this was staged, one has to wonder what other incidents might have been staged

for effect. While walking around with Jeffrey Gonzales, who swears that white vans follow him about, the team was treated to a white van squealing its wheels to alert them of its presence. The van then speed away while the team looks on in "amazement". Gonzales responded by doing a little fist pump as if he had been proven to be right. Is this really covert surveillance or something else? The same thing can be said for the mysterious car that appeared in the same episode while they were walking around in the dark. In both cases, nobody bothered to follow the car/van or get a license plate number.

Another potential staging had to do with them conducting a night surveillance near Holloman AFB. They intercepted an official transmission indicating there was some sort of activity where they were standing. Now, they were not trespassing or anything like that but it scared the team. Of course, the reason they might have been mentioned in the transmission may have had to do with the dozens of people, who were part of the film crew. I am sure they were quite the spectacle for security personnel, who did not know they were there. I would not be surprised if security personnel were even asked to mention them in their broadcasts!

The show is also endorsing some very questionable characters from UFOlogy. Clifford Stone was presented as an expert even though people, like Kevin Randle, consider him an individual, who exaggerates a lot of things. The program showed the Stan Romanek video of an alien peeping into his window. This has been considered a hoax by many skeptics but it was presented as something that could be real on the program. Ben McGee played a trick on James Fox by putting a mask up to a window during a surveillance, which appeared to shock Fox into suspecting he saw an alien. Despite this reasonable simulation, Erin Ryder said the alien blinking and moving its eyes in the Romanek video ruled out it was a puppet/mask! I have seen quite a few dummies with animatronic eyes that are made by amateurs so Ryder, who is a technical expert, seems to be easily fooled. The appearance of Jeff Willes in the Arizona UFOs segment was another instance where questionable individuals were given air time. Even Arizona UFO witness and proponent, Mike Fortson considered his videos nothing more than hoaxes. I found it humorous that when they did spot a UFO, it was a Chinese lantern. Then they gave Jaimie Maussan some air time with his alien baby nonsense (which turned out to be a Marmoset skeleton). It seems that chasing UFOs has gone out of its way to promote people with questionable motives and videos. Many of them are probably hoaxes and all they are doing is encouraging others to follow suit. Is this what National Geographic is about?

I was also disgusted by the emotional appeal taken by Fox and Ryder in the Varginha case episode. After interviewing a few questionable witnesses in the Varginha case (who seemed to have seen an individual called "little Luis"), James Fox got all emotional and had to be calmed down by Erin Ryder. They then cut to Ryder, who also was in tears as she explained that Fox was trying really hard to "get the message out". One wonders if Fox is crying because of what the witnesses were stating or the realization that this episode was nothing more than a wild goose chase! The bottom line is that one can not allow one's emotions to affect your objectivity. If Fox is going to get all teary-eyed by this kind of testimony, he really has no place investigating UFOs. It was a completely unnecessary appeal for sympathy.

While I have been critical of the program and its participants, I want to give Ben McGee credit for his efforts in some of the episodes. Despite being burdened with a bad production, in the later shows, he eventually began to provide a good skeptical response at the end of each show. Even though it was brief, he was capable of debunking some of the events discussed on the show. His work regarding the Mexican AF FLIR videos pretty much confirmed what I and other skeptics had determined years ago.

The program continues to be a low point for National Geographic. I doubt it will make another season but I thought the same about UFO hunters.

Book Reviews

Buy it! (No UFO library should do without it)

Phenomenon: Forty years of flying saucers- John Spencer and Hilary Evans

I always enjoy books that are written by multiple authors with different points of view.. This book takes a pretty good look at the UFO mystery. I particularly liked the contributions of Martin Shough, Andy Roberts, Jenny Randles, John Keel, Hilary Evans, and John Spencer. This does not mean the others were unworthy. It is just those articles struck me as most appropriate from my point of view. There is something here for everyone. Find a copy at a used book store/web site and buy it.

Borrow it. (Worth checking out of library or borrowing from a friend)

The UFO evidence - NICAP (Richard Hall ed).

This document can be found in multiple forms at various web sites. It is an interesting compilation of cases but, as noted in this issue, it overlooks many explanations.

Bin it! (Not worth the paper it is written upon - send to recycle bin)

Aliens from space - Donald Keyhoe

I found this book in the used book store and figured I would take a chance that Keyhoe might have something important to say. I was wrong. Keyhoe pretty much rehashes the same old NICAP party line except this was written in 1973. Most of what is written is exaggeration. He even dismisses the solution to the UFO event of June 5, 1969. Phil Klass published that it was just a fireball but he did provide evidence for this solution in that somebody photographed it. Keyhoe makes no mention of the photograph. Probably the most ridiculous idea in this book was Keyhoe's section on how they can "lure" UFOs to a location by putting up dummy UFOs and buildings. The UFOnuts, curious, would then come closely examine the bait. Did Keyhoe and NICAP really think that would work?