

SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs



"The hen is the wisest of all the animal creation, because she never cackles until the egg is laid."

Abraham Lincoln

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Is history repeating itself?

Last issue I briefly mentioned the release of a “scientific” report concerning a UFO video shot from a homeland security plane over La Puerto Rican airport. The Scientific Coalition for UFOlogy (SCU) got a lot of promotion from the standard UFOlogical media but failed to convince a lot of people outside of this circle.

Intrigued by the proclamations that were made, some members of the Roswell slides research group (RSRG) decided to form another group to look at the video and the report. While our group tends to take the case seriously, we also have a whimsical side and designated our group the Puerto Rico Research Review (PRRR). Curt Collins even presented us with a mascot. I thought the cat was a bit creepy looking but others found it entertaining.

While many of the main contributors to the list came from the RSRG, others joined in to assist in evaluating the evidence. While I agreed with some of the comments/opinions presented, I also disagreed with others. The diversity of the group tended to make it difficult to gather a consensus but we all seemed to agree that the SCU’s paper had some serious flaws with it. Several of the members, myself included, were of the opinion that this was nothing more than a balloon. This issue, I take a look at that hypothesis as well as the mistakes I feel were made by the SCU team in their attempt to eliminate that explanation. Like the Roswell slides promoters, it appears the SCU allowed their beliefs to influence their approach in examining the balloon explanation. If their beliefs prevented them from objectively examining that possibility, they may have allowed those same beliefs to influence their analysis of the rest of the video.

In other news, Walt Andrus passed away. For those who are new to UFOlogy, he was MUFON’s leader for three decades and endorsed UFO events like the Gulf Breeze fiasco. I believe James Moseley often referred to him as MUFON’s Czar or supreme overlord (or words to that effect). I doubt MUFON will have a leader like him again. Too bad they did not get him to do a cameo on “Hanger one”.

Speaking of MUFON, there has been quite a bit of criticism directed towards that organization recently. MUFON, apparently unhappy with its members publicly denouncing them on face book, closed down their face book page. This also deleted the discussion record from that page so nobody could ever read them again. MUFON, dedicated to the scientific investigation of UFOs, appears to be more committed to the promotion of its image at all costs. Instead of “expanding UFOlogy”, they appear more interested in “expanding their wallets”. Is this any surprise?

Front: UFOlogy’s new “best case” was presented to the public in August. Not surprisingly, it was declared a great case because the word “science” was used to describe the analysis of the case. However, “science” seems to have taken a back seat when the investigators failed to give due consideration to a rival hypothesis because it conflicted with their belief that they had the latest “UFOlogical smoking gun”. Image created from Flight Simulator X.

Left: In late October, the planets Mars, Venus, and Jupiter were grouped close together and they generated UFO reports.

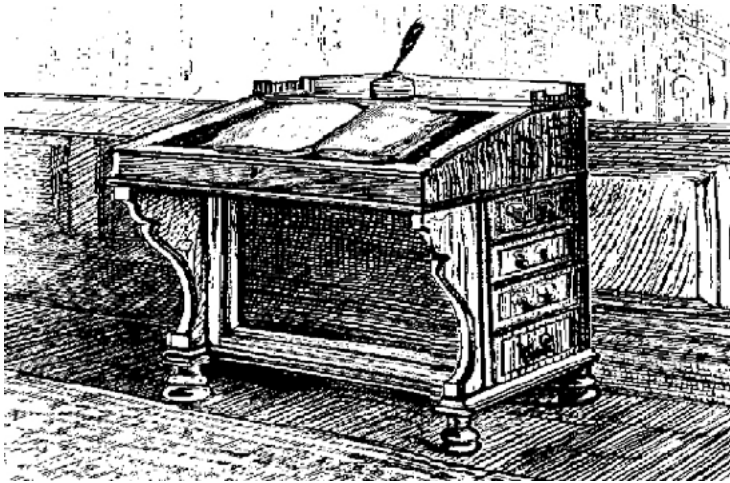
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Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



This story about Patrick Moore editing out UFOs is typical UFOlogical nonsense. The source of this report is, of course, some UFOlogist, who is repeating the claims of Arthur Shuttlewood from 1969. Watching the attached video of the Moore/Shuttlewood night watch, I think Moore was trying to be polite. Shuttlewood claimed all these lights were close but judging distances at night is always an iffy thing. The fact that these UFOs could only be seen at night tends to indicate that they were probably distant planes or satellites.

Cheryl Costa continues to write about UFOs in NY state. I found this writing typical of most UFO investigations and discuss this on page 5. She also added this UFO report at the end of her story:

Aug. 13, 2015: At 3:30 a.m., Delmar, NY, resident witnessed multiple white orbs of light traveling across the night sky during the Perseid meteor shower.

I find this report fairly easy to explain. Either the witness was observing morning satellites or simply seeing meteors. A more realistic representation of what the Delmar resident probably saw can be seen in this video.

The Betty and Barney Hill story is going to appear in film! I am sure Kathleen Marden will be happy but knowing the way Hollywood likes to sensationalize things, the producers may create something that isn't even close to the actual story.

MUFON had their annual symposium in September. The theme of the symposium was, "Opening new doors in academia, industry, and media". Sounds like an interesting goal. However, looking at their list of topics, I did not see much in the way of "opening doors in academia". Is "meeting the cast of Hanger one" really something that you want academics to see? Are episodes of Hanger one really challenging academia to accept UFOlogy as a worthy study? I am sure that having the keynote speaker be Paul Hellyer is something all academics would be interested in hearing. Wasn't he part of the Roswell slides fiasco? Then there were plenty of other "intellectually stimulating" topics. One speaker was using the bible as their source and another was instructing people how to talk to aliens. If this is "opening new doors", then UFOlogy has a problem because those are the kind of doors that will turn academia away. The whole symposium had the air of something like comic con for UFO buffs.

IMO, MUFON should be closing some "old doors on UFOlogy" in order to gain some "respect" in academia and elsewhere. One obvious door that needed to be closed appeared in their Sunday schedule. MUFON was apparently oblivious to the irony in their afternoon lineup.

Sunday, September 27th

7:30-9AM
9-10:15AM
10:30-11:45AM
11:45AM-1:15PM
11:45AM-1:15PM
1:15-2:30PM
2:45PM-4PM
4-5:15PM
5:30PM

Experiencer Workshop - hosted by **KATHLEEN MARDEN** -- (paid separately)
AARON JUDKINS "UFOs and the Return of the Nephilim"
PRESTON DENNETT "Are There Undersea UFO Bases Off the California Coast?"
OPEN LUNCH
Private Speaker Panel #2 -- (paid separately, see website for details)
JAIME MAUSSAN "Video Evidence that UFOs are Real"
STANTON FRIEDMAN, M.S. "Making UFOlogy Respectable"
Panel Discussion; "Making UFOlogy Respectable"
Symposium Closing

If the reader can't identify the problem with how "Making UFOlogy respectable" is preceded by Jaimie Maussan's talk about "Video evidence that UFOs are real", then they haven't been paying attention to Maussan's track record. I wonder if Jaimie included some clips from his Roswell slides fiasco?

Billy Cox has been "pumping the tires" of the Puerto Rico video study. I doubt that Cox has even examined the report closely and is just blindly parroting what the authors are telling him. Not once in all of his writings have I ever seen him actually do much investigating or examination of the claims that he has promoted. It is easy to repeat what UFO promoters are telling him and then complain science or the media is not interested. It is much harder to actually examine the report closely, see what the writers wrote, and see if they might be mistaken. If he actually looked at these stories/reports critically, he might understand why the media/science does not take the subject, or his articles, seriously.

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

Robert Sheaffer documents the recent revelations Ted Molczan made regarding a National UFO Reporting Center (NUFORC) sighting from July 10th that was actually reentering space debris. The witness made a similar report to MUFON. As usual, the witness interpreted the group of lights as being attached to some large dark craft. Another case for the "airship effect" and another nice catch by Mr. Molczan.

However, the case was not closed because the witness became aware of the explanation and then amended his story. Brian Sanders reports, on Robert's blog, that the witness, "C.J.", was an Army Sergeant, who had also seen the re-entry a few minutes later (but never mentioned it in his original report). Ted Molczan requested that Peter Davenport add the explanation to this sighting on July 14. He began to circulate his final analysis in late September. It is no surprise that the newer version of the sighting appeared on Linda Moulton Howe's web site about a week later. "C. J." now reports continuing his journey and eventually writing down code he telepathically received from the UFO. The code was translated from ASCII, which produced a secret message to the people of earth. The code was examined by Nablator on his blog. Nab was quick to point out how the message was wrapped up in some common UFO themes. We have heard this story before and, based on the additional commentary provided by the witness, it is no surprise that he would be familiar with the mythology. The major problem with "C. J.'s" UFO sighting is how he had to alter the story once an explanation was presented.

Speaking of space events producing UFO reports, there was an event on October 8 that produced all sorts of UFO reports in Asia and the middle east. Space weather reports that the October 7 launch of an Atlas rocket from Vandenberg AFB. The upper centaur stage was seen conducting a burn to move it into the appropriate orbit. One orbit later, it was seen venting fuel. The NOSS satellites deployed by the booster were seen accompanying the centaur stage on both passes. Had this been seen over the United States, I wonder how many UFO reports would have appeared at NUFORC and MUFON?

Jaimie Maussan reports that a school is going to offer a class in UFOlogy. The school is called IMIX and its face book page indicates it is some form of digital art school. They claim it is a scientific course but I did not see any evidence that it would be the case. Maybe the school will be showing people how to create convincing UFO videos using CGI or, maybe, they are just interested in collecting money for a course that will teach people what they want to believe. Will the syllabus include the Roswell slides fiasco or will it proclaim that it really was an alien body?

Jean-Michel Abrassart published a very interesting paper called "UFO Phenomenon and Psychopathology : A Case Study". He presents a case study of one individual, who apparently has some psychological problems. This may be an extreme case to present but Jean-Michel points out that this is an example of UFO reports that can be explained by hallucination and is an important lesson learned.

Isaac Koi has been compiling a list of UFO videos that have circulated on the Internet as "proof" of alien visitation. Isaac debunks them all. If somebody shows you a video that looks too good to be true, I suggest you start your search here. Odds are good that Isaac has exposed it as a hoax. If it is not listed, I suggest you send it to him and he might discover how good the video really is.

There is an organization that intends to finally create a system of stations designed to monitor the sky for UFOs. UFOdata promises to incorporate new technology to "take UFOs seriously" and record scientific data associated with them. Writing about the project, Mark Rodeghier states that they need money and volunteers to establish the prototype station. It appears they envision stations all over the world. Will it work? Nobody can say but, based on what we know about UFO reports, they are random and it will take a lot of stations to have a chance of recording a UFO event that might be significant. Each station sounds very expensive so they are going to need a lot of money and a lot of assistance. In my opinion they are violating the KISS rule. Something simpler would cost less money and, as a result, would allow more stations that could cover more ground. I wish them luck but I have to wonder, will they publish the data from these stations on a regular basis or will they, like MUFON investigations, not publish any of the data that might explain a UFO sighting?

In late October, astronomers revealed that a star monitored by the Kepler space telescope had a peculiar light curve that could not readily be explained as something natural. Their best explanation offered to explain the behavior appears to be that it may be huge artificial structures created by an alien civilization interested in harnessing electricity from their star. SETI seemed to be interested in the possibility that it was an alien civilization and issued a press release. They chose to turn their Alien telescope array towards the star in order to look for possible radio signals. I look forward to any results that might come from this research but I tend to think this has a more natural explanation.

Gilles Fernandez took on the Delbert Newhouse footage. This case has been examined by scientists twice (Robertson and Condon) and came to the conclusion the UFOs were probably seagulls riding thermals. Gilles presents us with some video footage taken recently of pelicans from a distance that look a lot like the Newhouse footage. UFO proponents have contested the conclusion that the film shows birds but these videos indicate that the Condon and Robertson scientists were probably right.

The Roswell Corner

Circleville and Roswell

With the death of the Roswell slides, we are back to arguing over interpretations of the stories told about the event. Kevin Randle posted a commentary about the Roswell time line, which brought up some valid points that are not covered by the UFOlogical time line regarding Roswell. Randle openly questioned how Marcel could spend time cleaning up the debris field and still arrive home late. To him, it should not have taken the entire day on Monday to clean up the debris field. Of course, in my time line (See SUNlite 4-4), Marcel arrived at the debris field late in the day. If Randle divorced himself from the idea that Marcel stayed overnight, the answer would be obvious. Unfortunately to accept the possibility that he was not present at the Foster Ranch on July 6th, would mean that Marcel was mistaken and that the 1947 testimony may be correct. Kevin Randle's puzzle was answered long ago but he just can't recognize it.

In the same blog entry, Kevin Randle implied that Colonel Blanchard could not have fooled by the Rawin reflector debris because he MUST have known about the Circleville findings. This rational acts as if Colonel Blanchard, and his staff, had access to a 1947 version of the Internet. The only news that Blanchard would have access to was the Roswell Daily Record (RDR) and Morning dispatch (RMD). Was the Circleville story, complete with photographs, available in those two media outlets? Randle, who has researched this subject for three decades, probably looked over every issue of the RDR and RMD for the weeks before and after the event. If the Circleville case was mentioned, I am sure he would have presented this evidence. The only story that is known to be mentioned in the Roswell dispatch regarding recovered discs prior to July 9th, I have discussed previously. They involve two discs being recovered in Texas and was published in the Roswell dispatch on July 8th. The descriptions of these discs were very similar to RAWIN targets. This

news paper story, not the Circleville one, was probably staring Blanchard in the face when Marcel came into his office that morning.

As far as the Circleville story goes, the national media coverage was limited. Some of the papers had photographs of the disc stating it was a radar reflector. However, there was a story that was circulated by the International News Service on July 6th, which gave a one paragraph description of the Circleville incident. It stated that farmer Campbell found a "flying disc" in his field and that it resembled a box kite. It never mentioned the words balloon or radar target. Had Blanchard seen this article, he probably would have put it in the same category as the July 8th RMD article. That

being that these objects were being called "crashed discs" and what Marcel brought back, based on the Fort Worth photographs, matched that description.

Stating that Blanchard absolutely knew about Circleville requires more evidence than, "I say so therefore it is". Far too often the Crashologists repeat these statements as if they were facts when they are not. It is just another case of Crashology trying to ignore other possibilities and is the same reason the Roswell slides ended the way they did.

Ramey "memo" resurrection?

In an effort to uncover the UFOlogical truth about Roswell, David Rudiak, Kevin Randle, and Martin Dreyer (who may be the "mysterious" Nitram Ang) made another high resolution scan of the infamous "Ramey memo" photograph. Based on what Lance Moody told me, the new scans really did not help much. Randle states that skeptics were involved but the only one that I was aware of viewing the scans was Lance Moody. According to Randle, he was going to post the scans on line but only posted one scan because of the concerns about copyright. The image he did post appeared to be processed and was not a raw image. If, and when, these original scans are posted, it is hoped that somebody will be able to resolve the memo.

Resolving the text will be a tough nut to crack. The memo is not blurred or out of focus. It is a case of signal-to-noise. The signal (the writing on the letter/memo) is being lost in the noise (the film grain). As a result, this becomes more of a Rorschach test, where various researchers are probably going to see what they want to see. I am sure that some members of the RSRG will be interested in taking a stab at it but it may not produce any conclusive results. Whatever the results are, if any, I am sure that Rudiak will insist that his interpretation is the correct one.

A NEW CANDIDATE FOR THE “BEST EVIDENCE”?

In August, a group, called “The Scientific Coalition for UFOlogy” (SCU), released an extensive report regarding an Infrared video of a UFO that was taken by a Department of Homeland Security tracking plane orbiting an airport in Puerto Rico. The report, and its conclusion, was then promoted heavily by several blogs as something extraordinary that deserved scientific attention.

According to the SCU’s report, the UAP was flying at high speed against the wind and then submerged into the ocean without changing its speed significantly. To the authors of this report, this event was one of those classic UFO cases that could never be explained by something conventional. Because the name of the group used the word “scientific”, it implied those studying the video were actual scientists and gave the conclusions credibility. However, examination of the report and video demonstrated that some of the conclusions reached by these individuals were wrong and not very scientific.

The SCU report

The SCU states that they are “scientifically studying UFOs, USOs, and UAPs”.¹ Some of the members of SCU are also part of MUFON, which makes me wonder why they had to form a separate group to investigate the case. After all, isn’t MUFON supposed to be “scientifically studying UFOs” as well?

The report is an extensive item that is full of a lot of calculations that the average reader can quickly be overwhelmed by. After burying the reader with a lot of information, they concluded that this was some form of exotic craft:

*This video is the best documentation of an unknown aerial and submerged nautical object exhibiting advanced technology that the authors of this report have seen.*²

This statement is rather strong wording and indicates they have conducted an exhaustive study that can not be debunked. Because of the reports length it took some time to digest the main arguments. Fortunately, I had some help from some associates I worked with in the past.

Once again, several UFO proponents and skeptics met together on Face book to take a look at this report. The group became known as the “Puerto Rico Research Review” (PRRR).³ It included some newer members that presented an even more diverse collective than the RSRG. It did not take long for the team to note that some of the claims made by the report were not supported by the evidence. Isaac Koi took the liberty to create a web site, which contains a wealth of data and information (including how to read the video display indications) for anybody wanting to access information about the case without having to wade through the report for details.

Instrument accuracy

Looking at the data in the video display, there were several items I noticed that would affect any measurements performed from this information:

1. The digital readout displays the position of the aircraft but that position is only precise to the nearest second of arc. That means the position of the aircraft is only reliable to within about fifty feet.
2. The true azimuth indication for the center of the frame only reads out to the nearest degree. That means the azimuth bearing can be that value ± 0.5 degrees. At the distances involved, an error of 0.5 degree can shift the position of the target significantly as the distance to the target increases. One can see this in the image below, where the azimuth (white) is flanked by two red lines indicating the ± 0.5 degree error range.



3. There are several instances in the video that show locations of known targets where we can check to see how reliable the data being displayed was. There is one example of the water tower on the north side of the airport. According to Google earth, it is located at 18°29'46.17"N 67° 8'38.96"W.⁴ The camera pans at the water tower in frame 332.⁵ The following table gives us the position of the plane, the azimuth provided by the instrument, and the cross-hair target location. Compare this when using the position of the plane, the water tower, and the azimuth using “the great circle calculator” tool and Google Earth:



	Plane Long.	Plane Lat.	Target Long.	Target Lat.	Azimuth Ind.	Google Earth az ⁶	Great circle az ⁷
Frame 332 to Target	67:05:53	18:30:42	67:09:05	18:29:40	251	251.24	251.37
Frame 332 to Water Tower	67:05:53	18:30:42	67:08:39	18:29:46	N/A	250.47	250.62

These values indicate that the azimuth indication can be off by a half-degree or, possibly, more. The SCU team mentions the resolution error in their paper. They state that the error for the target location is lagging behind by about a second, which they incorporated in all of their measurements.⁸ However, they never show how it was incorporated/determined. If their assessment is true, the location for the water tower should be correct in frame 362.⁹

	Plane Long.	Plane Lat.	362 Target Long.	362 Target Lat.	362 Azimuth Ind.	Google Earth az	Great circle az
Frame 332 location with Frame 362 target	67:05:53	18:30:42	67:08:50	18:29:42	249	250.3	250.44

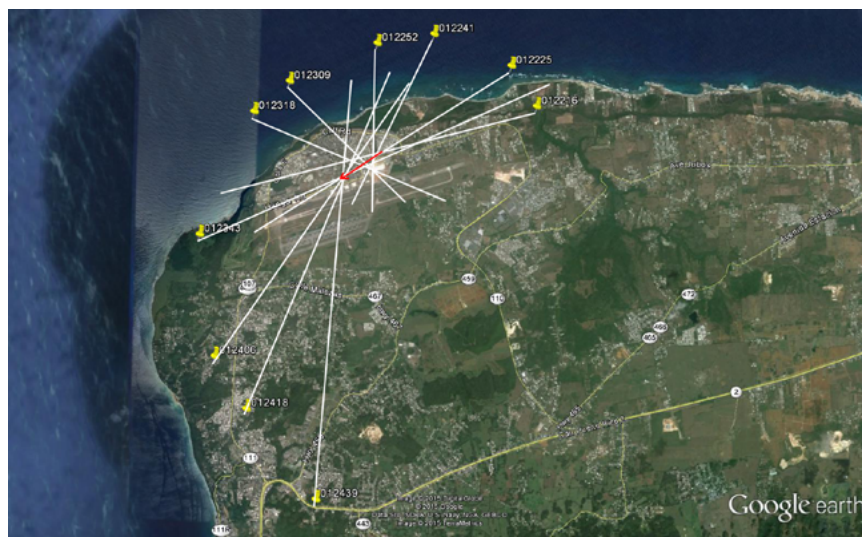
While these values are an improvement, it is not quite the precise measurement that the SCU report implies. Comparing the true azimuth from the plane to the tower in frame 332 to the target values found in frame 362 improves the precision to about 1/5th of a degree.

These issues are important factors to consider when attempting to determine locations of the target and drawing any conclusions.

Is it a balloon?

Viktor Golubic had been debating this case on the UFO updates Face book page for some time before the release of the SCU report.¹⁰ He had concluded it was nothing more than a balloon. While Viktor had his strong opinion on this, he did not present any report so others could examine his conclusions and how he arrived at them.

One of the posts that caught my eye early in our discussions came from Gilles Fernandez, who had posted some plots made by Florent Michaud. They showed another possibility for the UAP's track other than the large looping trajectory that the SCU team had suggested. While the track proposed by the SCU indicated an object that appeared to move against the wind at high speeds, Michaud's work indicated a linear track over a small area. Encouraged by his diagrams, I decided to do an exercise using the data in the video. I created some plots where the azimuth of the UAP was close to center of the frame. Using the position of the plane and these sight lines¹¹, I then created the following diagram:



Even though these positions do contain some error, they tend to indicate the general location of the target. The red arrow is the approximate path that I came up with based on these plots. This course implies the object displaced a distance of about 0.6 miles in 2 minutes and 20 seconds, which computes to be about 15 mph in a WSW direction. This is consistent with wind direction and speed. It seemed to me that this possibility needed to be considered. Instead, the SCU group chose a track that had the UAP basi-

The change in azimuth in 46 frames is about 2 degrees. That indicates the camera was rotating to the left at about 0.04 degrees per frame. Interestingly, the displacement measured by the SCU team between frames 711 and 712 was .025 degrees. Considering the inability of the instrument to give precise measurements, the two values are close enough to consider them a pretty good match. This means it is very likely that the motion of the UAP between frames 711 and 712 is due to the motion of the camera rotating as the plane proceeded on its track. I could not even find the word “parallax” in the SCU report. This indicates they were not very thorough in their study or they deliberately left this possibility out of their report.

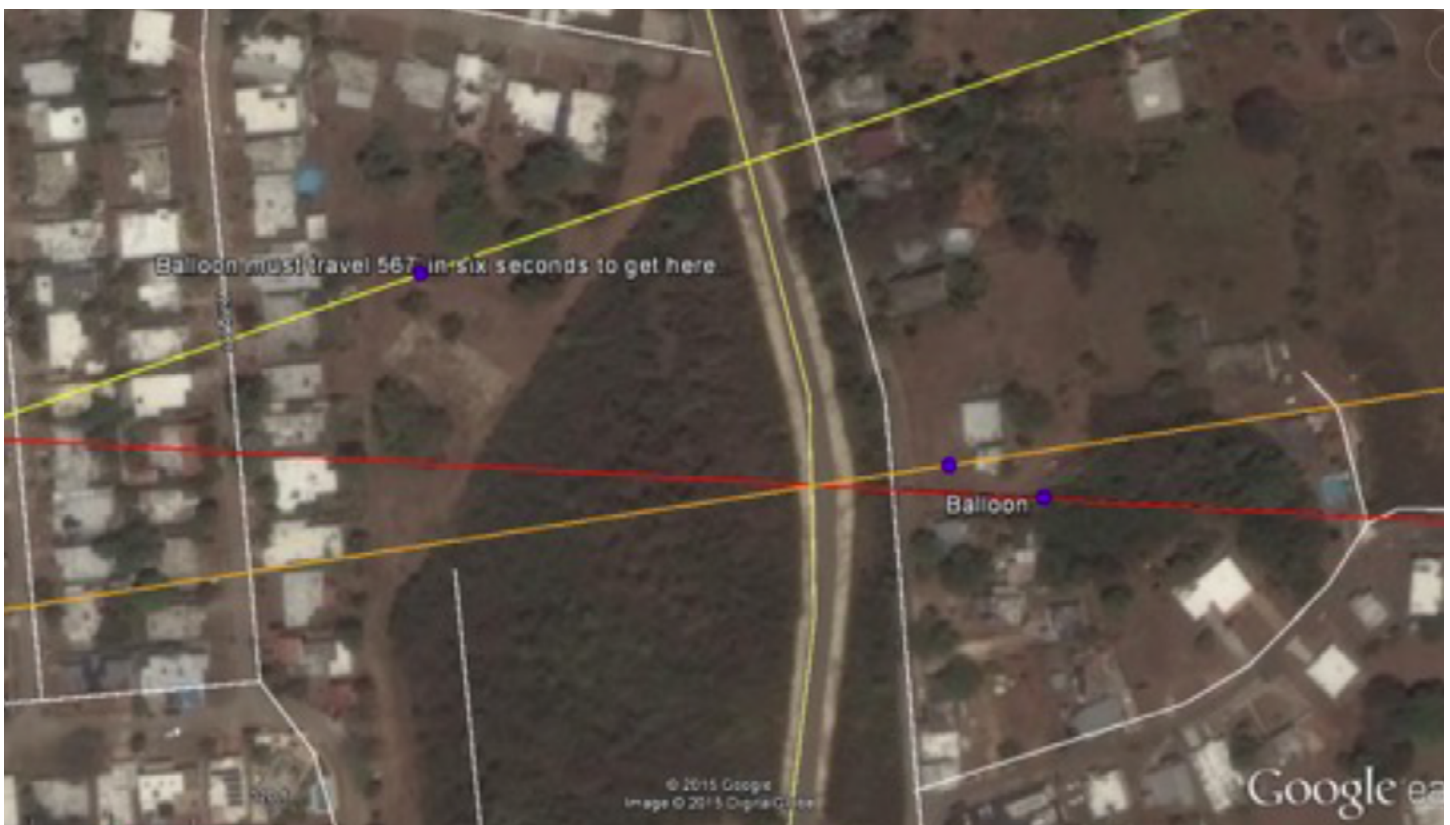
The secondary argument put forth by the SCU is that, if it were a balloon, the object was only 1250 feet from the plane. If that were the case, the angular motion would have been 68 degrees between the frames 711 and 836. Instead, the angular motion was only eight degrees. The writers seem sure about this 1250 foot argument and proceed to tell us why.¹⁵

According to their report the UAP was moving towards an azimuth of 188 degrees during this time period. This is based on the assumption that they correctly plotted the path of the UAP. As I stated previously, there seems to be evidence that another track was possible based on the sighting lines. However, that is not the key component of the SCU’s argument for the 1250 feet number. They rely on the measurements made between frames 711 and 712 for this. That measurement produces an angular motion of 0.25 degrees in 1/30th of a second. With the speed of the wind being 18 mph, the balloon would displace 0.88 feet in 1/30th of a second. Based on this assumption, the balloon had to be 1250 feet away in order to produce that much angular motion. The problem with the 1250 feet calculation is that it is based on the flawed assumption the camera was not rotating between frames 711 and 712. The evidence indicates otherwise, which makes this second argument invalid.

The whole argument that “this is not a balloon” appears to be based on a measurement that ignored some simple rules of geometry. Failure to recognize this indicates the science being used by the SCU team is a case of selecting only the data that appears to support their arguments. This was evident in their subsequent rebuttal of the balloon explanation.

We told you....it is not a balloon!!!

After releasing their report, the opinion that this was a balloon was voiced by enough individuals that the SCU felt a need to respond. Their rebuttal stated that it was impossible for a balloon to have been the object in the video.¹⁶



In their argument, they selected only three data points to “prove” it was not a balloon. However, they did not consider the fact that the azimuth readings on the display are only to the nearest degree. Precise measurements of the kind described in their rebuttal are just not possible.

Despite these limitations, the SCU berates the balloon explanation proponents:

Duplication and verification on the basis of objective data is the essence of the scientific method.¹⁷

Their comment appears hypocritical because their rebuttal lists no specific frames or actual data so others can replicate their work. They simply plot it as if the reader was supposed to blindly accept their measurements.

Based on the line of sight paths and times they did give, I was able to determine that they probably used frames 20, 200, and 379 (inquiries by PRRR members indicated the frames were 15, 199, 379). The interesting thing about this is that, while frame 20 has the UAP in the center of the cross-hairs, frame 200 has the object to the right of center and frame 379 has the object to the left of center (15 and 199 were similar to 20 and 200). This means their sighting lines are incorrect. They did not compensate for the distance the UAP was from the center of the frame.¹⁸

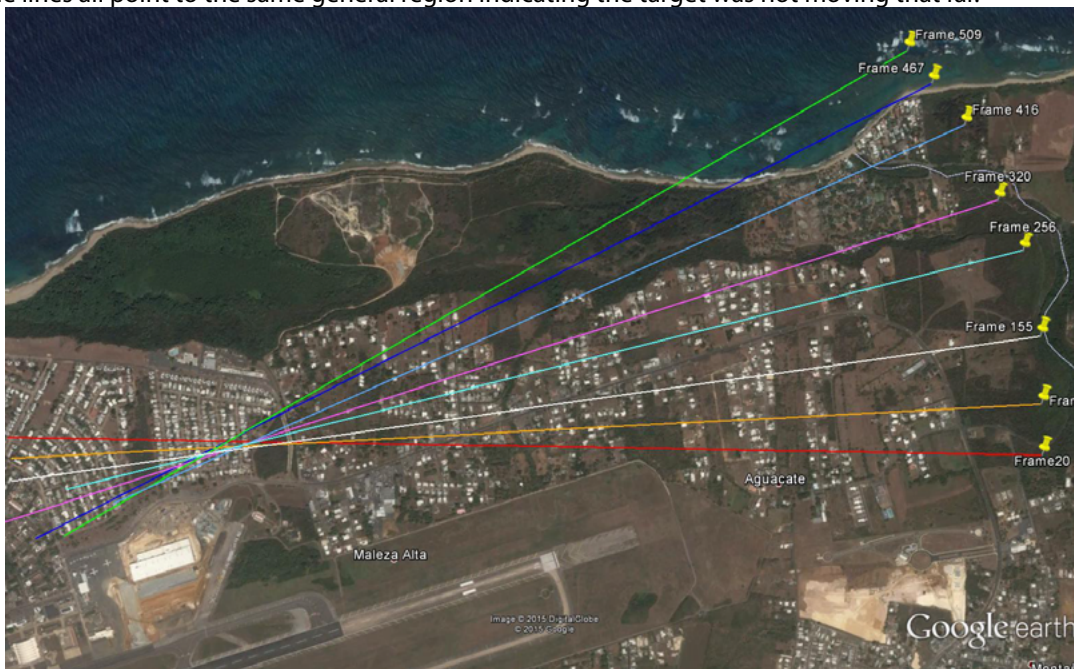


The distance from the center of the field of view shifts the frame 200 sight-line to the right and the frame 379 sight-line to the left. If one includes potential instrument error and the accuracy of the measurement, all three lines could be much closer together. The resultant computed speed of the object would be much slower than stated by the SCU.

The SCU team's choice of only three data points is something I do not consider as being very scientific. Drawing a conclusion from such a meager amount of information is not an accurate way of analyzing data. The SCU team implies that they used more data points and it made the balloon hypothesis untenable. However, they chose not to demonstrate this. Instead, they repeated their complaint that any opposing hypotheses need to be backed up by more data.

We could draw a fourth line-of-sight and so on, which only makes the balloon hypothesis harder and harder to explain. This is what someone who supports a balloon hypothesis should do in order to determine if their hypothesis can fit the information at hand. As we noted at the beginning of this response, we are glad to examine any hypothesis but they must be put down in writing with the analysis, numbers, graphs, and diagrams to back the hypothesis and allow for secondary analysis.¹⁹

In an effort to demonstrate what happens when one uses more data, I selected eight data points over a period of slightly more than sixteen seconds. I only used data points where the cross hairs lined up on the target for the best possible precision (see images on next page).²⁰ The lines all point to the same general region indicating the target was not moving that far.





When we zoom in, one can see the region of intersection.



There are many lines that do not exactly line up but that is to be expected. The margin of measurement error is at least ± 0.5 degree and shifting them a few tenths of a degree can make the sight lines line up. For instance, I adjusted one data point (Frame 20 - the red line) only 0.2 degrees CCW and it suddenly lined up with the other data points to provide us with a potential flight path along the red line (note: I am not stating that this is the actual path, just a possible path).



The length of this path along the red line is less than 600 feet in 16 seconds, which equates to about 25 mph. This is balloon-like speed and suggests that the object might have been a balloon.

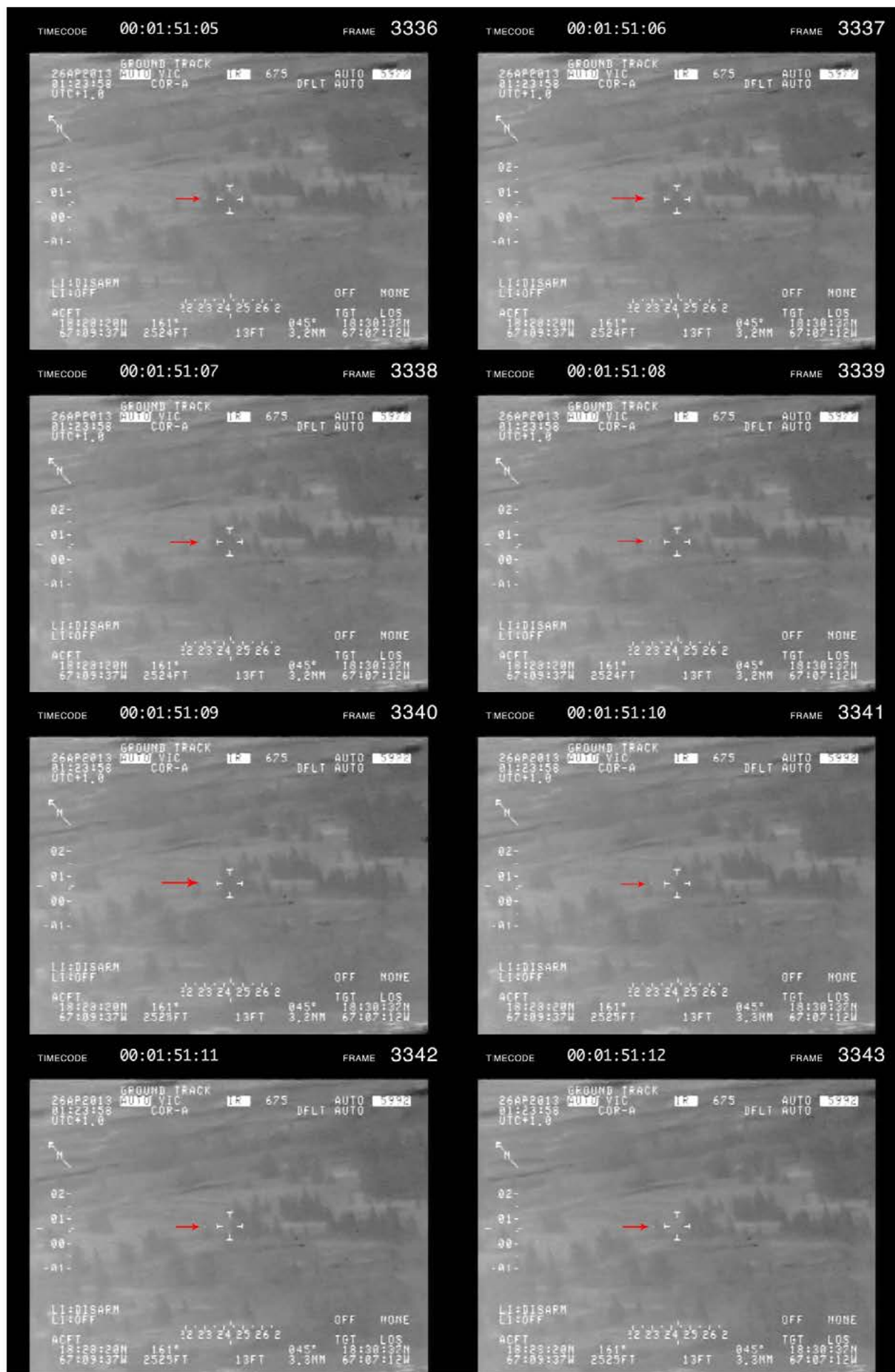
Unlike the writers of the SCU report, I would never suggest this is conclusive proof for, or against, a balloon. There is just too much room for error to precisely locate the object using line of sight values. What this exercise does demonstrate is that the balloon hypothesis is not falsified contrary to what the SCU team wants everyone to believe. It also demonstrates that eight data points tends to gives us more precision than three.

To add to this discussion, there are other items that need to be considered that were not mentioned in any detail in the SCU's rebuttal. They take an effort to point out that the winds that night did not support a fast moving balloon. Their radiosonde data comes from San Juan, 60 miles to the east. While they might represent the winds possibly encountered by a balloon at this airport, they are not precise measurements. Once again, there is a margin for error not being considered. A radiosonde is a single data point sample of the atmosphere as the balloon rises. This snap shot does not indicate what the winds were for the entire 12 hour time period between balloon launchings or in the location the aircraft was flying. Therefore, suggesting that the maximum speed could only be 18mph, is not being quite correct. It could have been higher or lower than this value. It certainly could not have been 60 mph but it could have been 20-25 mph.

This second attempt by the SCU to falsify the balloon explanation was a failure. It drew a conclusion based upon a minimum number of data points, it did not consider the accuracy of the device recording the data, and it selected data points that did not line up with the measuring device. It appears this paper was a case of confirmation bias. They presented/considered only the data that supported their argument and rejected/did not consider the data that suggested their conclusions might be wrong. It was "bad science" from a group claiming that they were interested only in scientifically analyzing the data.

There is no way it can be a balloon!

The SCU makes a point about how they can determine the distance to the object because it flies behind trees and telephone poles. Since the distance to these objects is known, it proves that the object was moving at high speed and could not be a balloon. While this is mentioned in the report, the SCU seems to avoid stating specific frames where the UAP disappears behind an object.



The SCU does give us one sequence of the UAP disappearing behind objects on pages 19 and 20.²¹ On those pages, the SCU shows three images, which gives the impression that between frames 2698 and 2712, the object is behind trees. However, the real fact of the matter is that the object is only invisible for a few frames (2704-6). In other frames it is faded (2702-3, 2707-8). During this entire time, the object is “behind” the trees for only three frames. Is it really behind the trees or is it possible there is another explanation?

Another interpretation of what transpires is that the UAP merely blended into the background. This effect can be seen several times in the video if one watches the entire sequence. This fading is very prominent between frames 3300-3360, the UAP is not dark but pale white.²² It appears to fade away several times but is not behind any trees. This image sequence around frames 3336-3343 shows the object tends to fade from view (it is practically non-existent in frame 3340). It even passes in front of a tree, demonstrating it was not disappearing behind something.

It appears that these intermittent “disappearances” behind objects could be possibly due to the way the imager displayed the object against the background it was imaging. If this is accurate, then the measurements made by the SCU team for the object’s position are in error.

Balloons can’t swim!!!

The highlight of the SCU’s report is the UAP apparently submerging into the ocean. Appearances can be deceiving. This disappearing act may have not been due to the object diving into the ocean. I think there are two possibilities not discussed by the SCU team in their analysis.

The first has to do with the weather. The weather observations for that night was scattered clouds.²³ This is mentioned in the SCU report but it is then ignored. That is unfortunate because there appears to evidence that these scattered clouds might have played a role in the apparent “submergence” sequence in the video.



Examining the video, there appears to be clouds between the plane and ground targets. In frame 412, we see these “clouds” (red arrows).²⁴ The SCU seems to either ignore them or determined that they were trees. Google earth has an image of the airport from March of 2013.²⁵ In this image of the water tower (right), there are no tall trees that reach to the height of the tower as in the video. This indicates the objects are possibly low clouds that are between the plane and the water tower (large red arrow). They just

look close to the water tower.

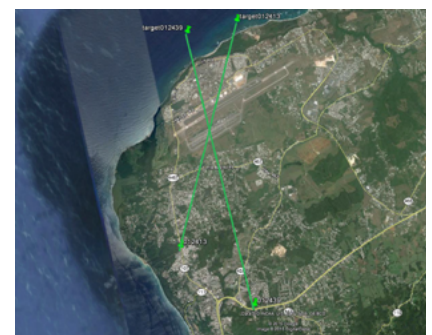
There is an interesting sequence that occurs between frames 200 and 300 as the UAP appears to disappear behind these clouds several times in the area near the water tower. This is consistent with these objects being clouds closer to the plane than the target and not trees.²⁶

As previously pointed out, the section of frames between 3300 and 3360 exhibited the UAP fading out. In that imagery, there are trees in the background but the entire field appears to be faded and lacks contrast. This could be due to the camera looking through something like a clouds or fog or mist.²⁷

This is an important item to consider when the UAP “submerges” at time 1:24:13 UTC (frame 3769). It seems possible that the UAP did not disappear into the water but disappeared behind some of the same clouds/fog/mist that almost obscured the target in previous frames.²⁸

The position of the aircraft at the time of the submergence is important when attempting to examine the cloud explanation. One can see the location of the aircraft with the SCU location for the UAP in the image to the right. Note the crossing points for these observations are to the south side of the runway.

If there were clouds, they would have been visible in this region when the plane was north of the runway. This image looks towards the area where the LOS crosses at time 01:24:13UTC. Notice the various “trees” (red arrows) that are visible.²⁹ However, there are no large trees in this area in the March 2013 Google image.³⁰ This indicates the “trees” are, possibly, low





clouds between the plane and the ground. The red circle in the middle image is the general area the plane was located at the beginning of the UAP's "submergence". The plane would be moving towards the left in this image and have to look through these apparent clouds to see the target beyond them.

The only problem with this explanation is that there appears to be no clouds clearly visible in the video at the time of the UAP's disappearance. In my opinion, the extreme zoom produces a lot of electronic noise and the ocean background does not provide adequate contrast to see the clouds. Earlier and later images of the UAP against the ocean at lower magnifications tend to show, what appear to be, clouds in the frames.

During the "submergence" sequence, the UAP disappears from the right and not the left as one might suspect from an object moving towards the left and diving into the water.³¹ This is the kind of effect one would expect if there were something opaque, like a cloud, to the right of the object. As the plane's motion went towards the right, the opaque object would cover the UAP from the right.



In their paper, the writers try and explain that this is the water coming up the rear as the object slowly submerges into the ocean.³² This is caused by an unseen portion of the object creating some sort of wake that hid the object from right to left. I am curious how a wake can overtake an object that, by the SCU's calculations, did not slow down. One has to wonder why the SCU team needs to try and explain it at all since UAPs, by their definition, defy the laws of physics and nature. They might as well have concluded it was a cloaking device of some kind.

While I originally felt the cloud explanation was plausible, discussion with others in the PRRR had me thinking that was another, more likely, explanation for the "submergence effect". The ability of the camera to sense the temperature signature of a target decreases with increasing distance because the atmosphere scatters the Infrared emissions of a target. If the rough LOS path I plotted on page 6 is reasonably accurate, the plane was always about 2 miles from the target for most of the video and the background was the land. As the plane began to depart the area (around frame 3500), the distance to the target on the LOS Path increased to 2.5 miles and beyond. The target may have been simply fading into the ocean background and not "submerging" into the ocean.

According to the conclusions of the SCU report, the submergence of the UAP is one of the major items that demonstrates that this was something exotic. However, this sequence may be nothing more than the conditions of the environment and/or the capabilities of the camera when that section of the event was recorded.

Balloons don't split into two!

Another argument against the balloon explanation is that, after the object reappears over the water, it is displayed as two different objects. A couple of theories have been presented that might explain this:

1. Viktor Golubic suggested it might have to do with a refractive layer of some kind.³³
2. It is a second object. One theory suggested the UAP may have been two balloons tied together all along and they finally had separated. This seems unlikely because the object never clearly demonstrated that it was two separate objects until this point. While I don't support this theory, it is a possibility that needs to be considered
3. It is an artifact of some kind in the video/camera system. This would require some technical expertise by somebody who is familiar with the system. At the time of this writing, no expert has publicly commented on the video. The SCU team has only presented us with comments from unnamed technicians³⁴, who are not willing to go on the record.

All the options offered at present are really not adequate to explain what is appearing in the video. It could be any of these or something else. Without more information it is difficult to say.

Balloons can not be hot!

The balloon theory has another problem. The black target indicates some form of heat being emitted from the object. It is hard to say how well the imager records thermal signatures. On various occasions, the video shows objects that are confusing. At frame 1547, there is a pond reflecting some trees that appear to be emitting heat in the reflection but not above ground.³⁵ Apparently, just because an image is dark does not mean it is emitting a large amount of heat.

In appendix K, the SCU spends a great deal of time computing the heat signature of the UAP. Their computed temperature of the balloon is 105 degrees F (40.6 degree C).³⁶ It is interesting to point out that the temperatures of birds is 105 degrees. Is it possible the object was a bird and not a balloon? One could suggest this possibility but the behavior of the object is more balloon like than bird-like. Still, that possibility can not be ignored.



While this temperature is pretty warm, it really is not excessively warm to fall outside the range of possibility that it was a balloon of some kind. It may have been that the balloon had some sort of small heat source inside or the "heat signature" may not be as warm as the SCU team has determined. We don't have enough information to draw a conclusion on this part of the video. So far, the only "experts" that have publicly commented about the video appear to be unidentified technicians and engineers, who choose to be anonymous. Second hand reports of these kind really don't carry much weight.

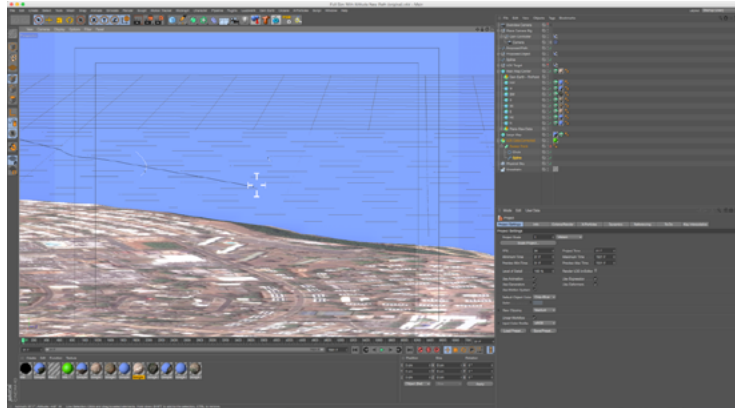
Maybe it is a balloon after all

While the SCU insists the object can not be a balloon, several members of the PRRR have reached the conclusion that it probably is a balloon. Line of sight plots tended to indicate the object was a balloon floating towards the southwest. Could it be proven that it was a balloon?

Lance Moody, in conjunction with Florent Michaud, put his skills to work in producing a 3D model of the plane, the terrain, and a potential balloon candidate. Several balloon paths have been computed by various individuals but, as I previously noted, a precise computation is difficult. Lance created this rough path in a West-Southwest direction to test the balloon explanation:

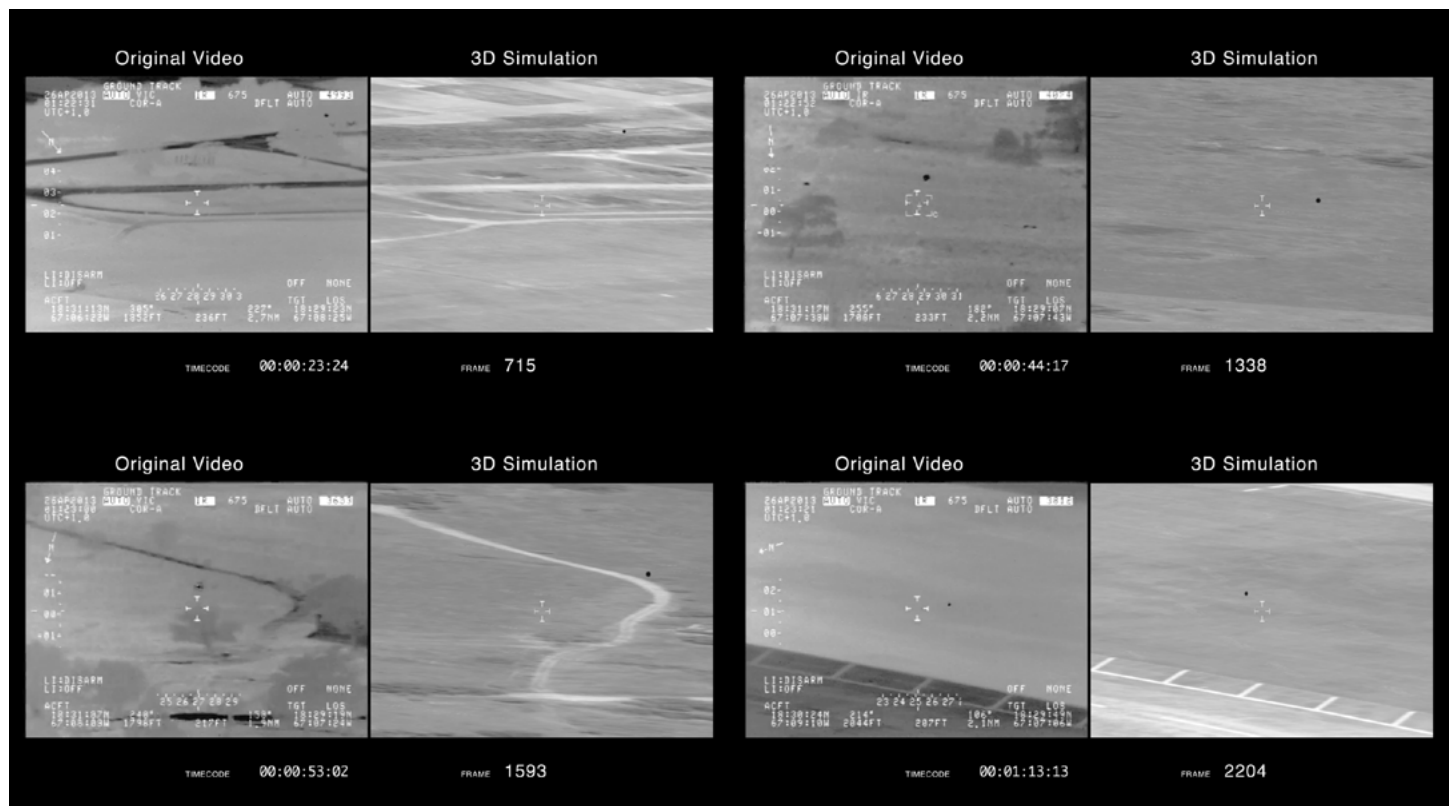


He assumed that the balloon had a size of 14 inches with an altitude of 245 +/-20 meters and a speed of 20 mph.³⁷ Incorporating the known position of the plane, the direction the camera was looking, and approximate zoom levels he attempted to recreate the video using Maxon Cinema 4D.



The result was very interesting and several members of the PRRR group were impressed. While there was some slight differences in elevation and position in some parts of the video, the final product was a reasonable match. It made a very convincing argument that the UAP could have been a balloon.

Lance is still refining his work but he did allow me to publish some stills from it. Lance assures me that he will be finished with the video soon. Like the upcoming Star Wars movie, readers of SUNlite will have to be satisfied with these “teasers” for now.



Possibly solved?

Of all the possibilities offered to date, I think that the balloon explanation is the best possible solution to what is seen in the video. While the SCU has tried to conclusively eliminate this solution, their major arguments against it appear flawed. I agree that there are some issues that are unresolved but I do not consider any of them to be fatal at this point. I hope that continued work on this video by the PRRR, and others, might help resolve them.

A work in progress

What I have written here is based solely on my own personal observations about the video and is not a report by the PRRR. The PRRR is a very diverse group and it is difficult for everyone to agree. It is my desire that the group will be publishing something

in the near future but I expect it to be a slow process. The SCU team researched the case for well over a year before they published anything. The PRRR should be given a similar amount of time to produce a report. I look forward to reporting the results of all tests and analysis performed by the PRRR in future issues of SUNlite.

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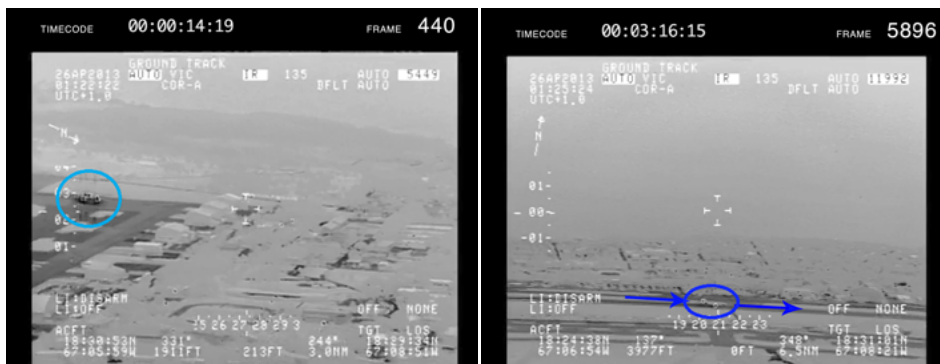
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THE UAP SHUT DOWN THE AIRPORT

The SCU report decided to highlight a statement by their primary witness as indication that there was government knowledge of the UFO interfering with aircraft activities. The primary witness stated that the airport was shut down for a long time period while these events were transpiring.¹ The evidence presented by the SCU team to confirm this story is a FedEx plane departed the airport sixteen minutes late.² There can be many reasons, other than a UFO, that a plane was late departing an airport. The most obvious appears to be visible in the video itself.

A potential reason the airport might have delayed flights in and out is because this Home security plane was orbiting the airport at low altitude for close to ten minutes starting at time 9:16 PM local, when the plane took off from the airstrip.³ According to witnesses, nobody was aware of the UAP until the plane was airborne.⁴ This indicates the FedEx plane was not delayed by the UAP at this point. It probably was supposed to take off after the Homeland Security plane. However, because the security plane was flying about the airport, the FedEx plane had to wait for it to exit the area.



Examination of the video appears to confirm this. A plane was apparently idling on the runway at the beginning of the video at time 9:22:22 PM (Frame 440).⁵ As the security plane departs the area at time 9:25:24 PM (Frame 5896), we see, what appears to be, the same plane moving down the taxiway.⁶ Based on the available information, I would suspect that this was the FedEx plane preparing to take off, which happened one minute later. The mystery of the sixteen minute delay is explained.

It was the Homeland Security Plane's interest in the UAP that delayed the departure of the FedEx plane and not the UAP itself. Had the homeland security plane ignored the UAP, the FedEx plane would have left sooner.

The reason the SCU report felt it was important to mention this delay was to give credibility to their primary witness. In the process, they apparently ignored the most likely scenario.

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CHASING A UFO

Cheryl Costa likes to write about UFOs in New York state. I have mentioned her commentary several times in the past and noticed she seems to have little, if any, astronomical knowledge. Meteors, stars, and planets are often being reported as UFOs and she is more than willing to report these as some form of exotic event. In September, she once again presented us with another UFO puzzle but I think I know what the source of the UFO report was.

The event

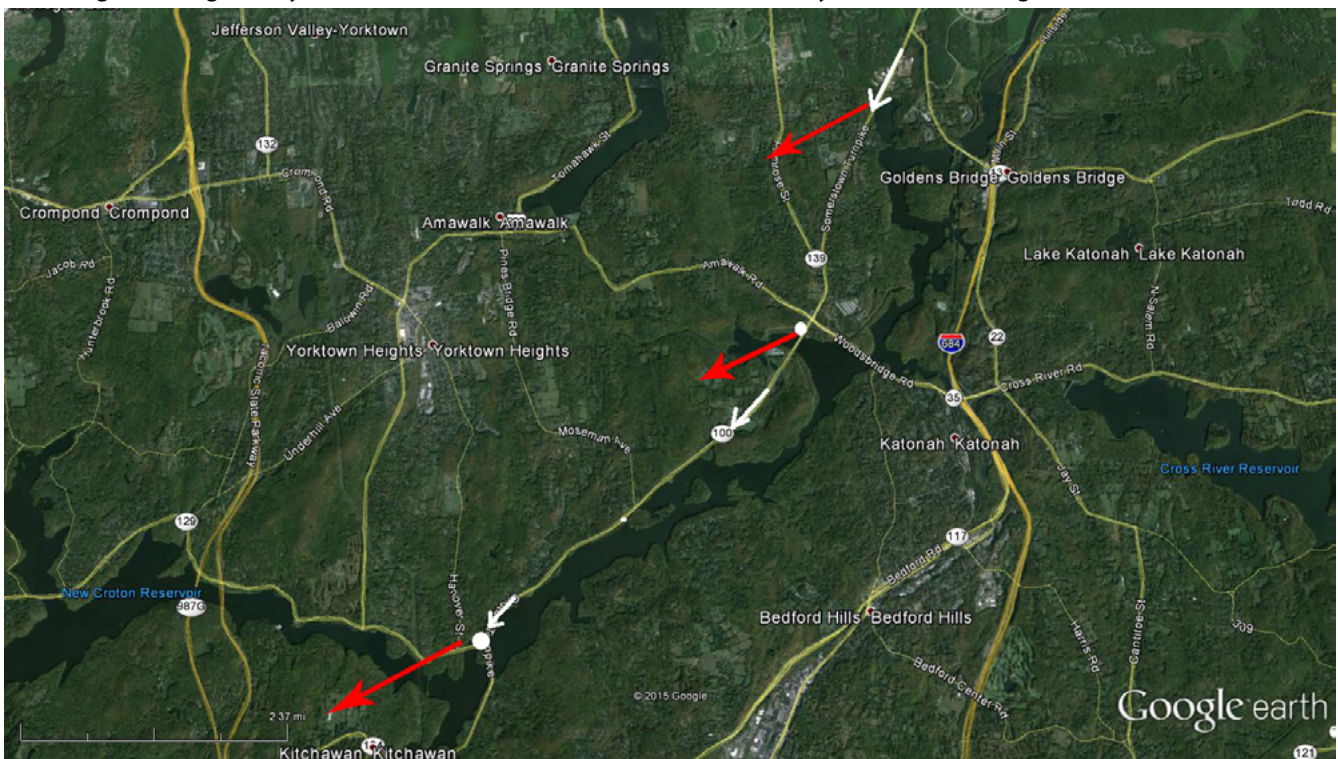
Costa tells us about the witness who is driving south on the Somerstown Turnpike (SR 100) in Yorktown Heights, NY at 11 PM on March 31, 2015.¹ The witness then noticed a bright object in the sky that they immediately considered to be a UFO because of its brightness. They drove south on route 100 until she got to the Muscoot Reservoir. The UFO was hovering over the “left side of the reservoir”. The witness added that the object did not twinkle but did look like have a “cross shape” to it. The witness went down SR100 until they got to Route 129. The UFO then disappeared.

Astronomical solution?

The description by the witness made me think this might be an astronomical object. The first thing to do was determine if the skies were clear enough for an astronomical solution. Weather underground reports that at 10:56, the skies were “mostly cloudy” but were “clear” by 11:38.² This indicates skies were clearing. We do not know the accuracy of the times given but one can assume that they were probably accurate to within fifteen minutes. With that in mind, I decided to examine the possibility that the UFO might have been a bright astronomical object visible in the direction the witness was driving. The witness stated they first saw the object “out of the corner of their eye”. Since they were driving towards the south-southwest, the object would have been to their right or to the west or southwest. At 11:00 PM, the bright star Sirius was low on the southwest horizon.

	Azimuth	Elevation
2300	236	10
2315	239	8
2330	242	6
2345	244	3
2400	247	1

One can see how Sirius might have been the source as we observe the path the witness drove. The red arrow is the general direction the star Sirius was located. As the witness drove to the Muscoot Reservoir (the road runs along an azimuth of about 215 degrees when crossing the bridge), they stated it was to the left of the reservoir. As they crossed the bridge, with the reservoir to the right.



"To the left" could be interpreted as being in the direction of the road.

The witness' continued effort to follow route 100 (azimuth of about 225 degrees) to route 118/129 (initial azimuth of about 257 degrees) indicates they were pursuing the UFO towards the southwest. How long this pursuit lasted and how many stops were made is hard to determine. The distance is five to ten miles depending on where the initial observation was made. I estimate the duration of observation was between ten and twenty minutes. Sirius would have lost two to three degrees elevation during that time period.



Looking at Google street view, we see that there are a lot of trees lining the road for most of the journey. There are gaps before the Muscoot reservoir, where the tree line is less, which would allow Sirius to be seen. However, after the Muscoot reservoir, the trees become more numerous. Even though it was early spring, most of the trees would have been missing their leaves. They would have only played a factor when the trees became dense, which is a description one would have for SR 100 to the SR 118/129 intersection. It is no surprise that, with the decreasing altitude of Sirius, the witness would begin to lose sight of it. By the time they reached the intersection of SR 118/129, Sirius was probably too low to be seen.

Stars are not cross-shaped!

The main argument by proponents will be that stars are not "cross-shaped". Stars have been described by witnesses over the years in many ways. Allan Hendry's UFO handbook gives many descriptions:

Included among these shapes are: discs and discs with domes ("Like two plates put together"-case 332; "elongated, as big as a distant plane"-case 377; "dome on top and bottom" - for one and a half hours in case 332), domes, a "plate with a hole in the center," vertically oriented small triangles, ovals, a football ...even "teacups," "Mexican somberos," and "bananas as large as the moon, shrinking back down to a star." People have seen "spikes," beams," "appendages," and sparkles shooting out in all directions from bright stars.³

The idea that somebody could not describe a star as "cross-shaped" is simply ignoring what is known about how witnesses have described stars in the past.

Solved?

Is it solved? I can't say it is solved with 100% confidence. However, there is enough evidence to suggest that the bright stars Sirius was a likely candidate for this UFO report. Costa, like so many UFO proponents, is simply repeating UFO stories without really investigating them. Costa needs to take an astronomy class before she starts talking about UFOs. Maybe she will be less likely to promote these potential astronomical events as UFOs. Of course, that means she probably would have less to write about. Nobody wants to read a UFO column that is all about IFOs.

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RAISING THE ANTE ON THE ROSWELL SLIDES



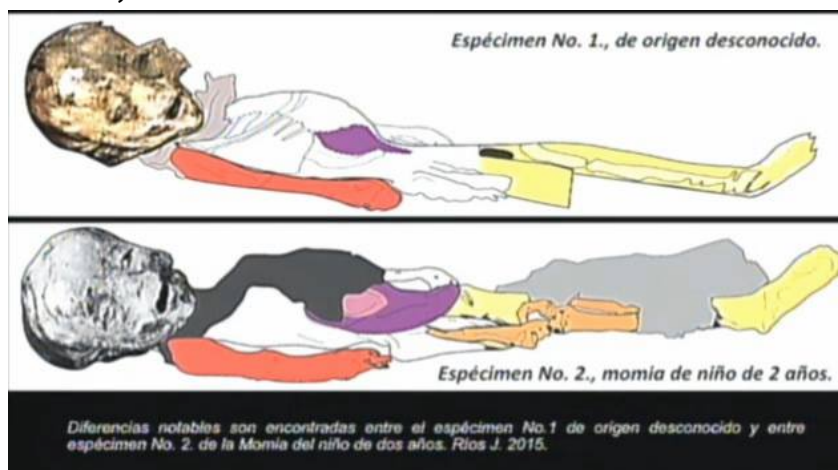
Jaimie Maussan is desperately trying to save his reputation by paying some experts to back his interpretation of the Roswell slides. In a promotional video, Maussan announced that on October 26, INACIFO was going to hold another press conference where they would pronounce that the work done by their Dr. Zalce was correct and that the body is “non-human”. The Director of INACIFO, Mr. Miguel Angel, told Maussan¹:

1. That he thinks the slides are evidence of life on other planets
2. Presented an invitation for scientists and anthropologists to attend
3. Backed the work of Dr. Zalce, who concluded the body was “non-human”.
4. They are interested in studying the slides and money has nothing to do with it.

Maussan added that nobody has shown that Zalce’s work was incorrect. This is not true. In SUNlite 7-4, I demonstrated that Zalce was wrong in how he computed the body’s height. Maussan and his “experts” (Zalce among them), all failed to understand the simple concept of perspective. Not once has Zalce, INACIFO, or Maussan addressed this issue. They are either unable to understand the concept of perspective or are purposefully ignoring the argument.

INACIFO and Maussan appear to be “doubling down”. Zalce’s inaccurate work was presented under the INACIFO label and, rather than admitting that a mistake was made, they backed his conclusions. The motto of INACIFO is “For the truth through science” but they appear to have ignored it. They have yet to publicly answer the critics outside the confines of Maussan’s protective custody and this little dog and pony show was no different.

The program occurred during my work day and I only saw brief glimpses of Dr. Zalce, Dr. Cruz, and Jaimie Maussan pretty much repeated the same claims they have been making all along. They still believe the body is four feet long and they are sure it is not a mummy. Maussan and his experts attempted to say the image in the slide is not the Palmer mummy for various reasons. This image was presented and, to me, the two bodies looked pretty similar. The only differences appear to be the angle the image was taken from and the layout of the body.²



What seems to have gone unnoticed by the slide promoters is that the Palmer mummy is 29 inches in length. In this comparison, both bodies were scaled to have the same length. If the Roswell slide body was really four feet tall, the head would have been about 3/5ths the size of the Palmer Mummy's head after it had been scaled down in size. Instead, the heads are the same approximate size. This indicates that the Roswell slide body is the same length.

As far as the placard is concerned, it seems that it is now being accepted that it was correctly read but it was all a government smoke-screen. The body is an alien/non-human, which was placed in a museum. The placard was put in front of the body to deceive the viewers into thinking they were looking at a mummy. This was so the government could gauge the public's reaction to seeing an alien body! This kind of logic could only be accepted by people wanting to blindly believe and this kind of nonsense you see on an episode of Hanger one. For some reason, people still think that Maussan is making UFOlogy respectable!

In my opinion, the entire program was staged for the benefit of Maussan and INACIFO's reputation. Had they really wanted to answer the critics, they would not hide behind such theatrics. Instead, they would publish in a scientific journal, where real experts could tell them all the problems with their analysis. This is something they probably would want to avoid. It is bad enough to be laughed at by skeptics. They would not want to be laughed at by their peers.

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November 23 1955 Spirit Lake, Iowa

In the UFO evidence, this case is described in the chronology:

*November 23, 1955--Spirit Lake, Iowa. Ground Observer Corps spotters reported a brilliant object which changed color, moved erratically. [VII]*¹

Going to section VII, we read these details:

*November 23, 1955; Spirit Lake, Iowa. Earl Rose (a biologist) and Gay Orr (superintendent of schools) were on duty at the GOC post about 5:45 p.m. Attracted by a multi-motor sound on their amplifying pickup system, the two men scanned the sky with binoculars. A brilliant object at low altitude was visible maneuvering erratically to the southwest. As it moved, the UFO changed color from white to bluish-white to green and red. For about twenty minutes, Rose and Orr watched the gyrating object as it moved forward, up and down. At one point, the UFO hovered over Center Lake for about 10 minutes. Its maneuvers were totally unlike an aircraft, and it moved against the wind. [27.]*²

Note 27 is listed as the Des Moines Register for November 24, 1955. There appears to be no additional information beyond a simple newspaper clipping. I found a copy of the same story in the Cedar Rapids Gazette on the 24th of November.³ NICAP's summary of the event is essentially a repetition of that story, which was published in several papers.

A check of the Bluebook files did not reveal any investigation of the case because it is not part of the system. No report was filed.

Possible source

There seems to be a good possibility this was an astronomical object. Did the weather support an astronomical event? Nearby Sioux City listed the sky conditions as clear so visibility was good.⁴

Sunset was at 4:57 PM CST and Nautical twilight ended at 6:03 PM. This means the sky was darkening. If it were an astronomical object it would have been pretty bright. A planet or first magnitude star might be the source.

The evening sky had this view to the southwest at 5:45 PM CST. Venus, at magnitude -3.9 was low in the sky (3 degrees elevation) at azimuth 232 degrees. Venus set around 6:10 PM, which closely matches what the observers reported. They stated the object disappeared twenty minutes after initial observation.



Ground Observers Spot Brilliant Object in Sky
SPIRIT LAKE (AP) — Two members of the ground observer corps on duty near here were puzzled Wednesday night by what they described as a brilliant, unidentifiable object which hovered in the skies for about 20 minutes.
The observers are Earl Rose, a state fisheries biologist and Gay Orr, Spirit Lake superintendent of schools.
They said their attention first was attracted when they heard a "multi-motor sound" over an amplifying system and then they spotted the object about 5:45 p.m. a half mile from their post.
Rose said it appeared to move in an erratic southwesterly direction at an altitude of between 500 to 1,000 feet.
He and Orr said it did not appear to be a weather balloon because it changed colors and moved against the wind.

The apparent movement of the UFO (gyrating, moving up, down, and forward) are good examples of the auto-kinetic effect familiar to many careful UFO investigators. Most important is that the observers never reported Venus as being visible or near the object. Failure to mention Venus tends to add weight to the conclusion that they had observed Venus.

Solved?

Based on all of this information, it appears that Venus is a good candidate for this sighting. We can't say for sure but it is very likely. I would reclassify this as "probably Venus". With that in mind, we can declare this is not an example of Best Evidence. It is also another example of "trained and reliable observers" mistaking the planet Venus for a UFO.

Notes and references

1. Hall, Richard M. (Ed.) The UFO evidence. The National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). New York: Barnes and Noble. 1997. P. 135.
2. *ibid.* P. 66
3. "Ground observers spot brilliant object in the sky". Cedar Rapids Gazette. Cedar Rapids, Iowa. November 24, 1955. P. 25.
4. "Weather history for KSUX". Weather underground. Available WWW: http://www.wunderground.com/history/airport/KSUX/1955/11/23/DailyHistory.html?req_city=Sioux+City&req_state=IA&req_statename=&reqdb.zip=51101&reqdb.magic=1&reqdb.wmo=99999

701 CLUB: CASE 5227 NOVEMBER 6, 1957

According to Berliner's summary:

Nov. 6, 1957; Radium Springs, New Mexico. 10:50 p.m. Witnesses: one Las Cruces policeman, one Dona Ana County Deputy Sheriff. One round object--changing from red to green to blue to white-- rose vertically from a mountain top. Sighting lasted 10 minutes.¹

Brad Sparks states:

Nov. 6, 1957. Radium Springs, New Mexico. 10:50 p.m. Las Cruces policeman [Barela?] and a Dona Ana County Deputy Sheriff saw a round object changing from red to green to blue to white rising vertically from a mountain top. (Sparks; Berliner; Saunders/FUFOR Index)²

At first glance of reading this, I wondered if the event might have an astronomical explanation. The changing colors sounded like a bright star, or planet, scintillating. The only problem was that the object "disappeared" after ten minutes according to these summaries. I had to wonder if there might be more information in the Blue Book file that could help explain this.

Blue Book investigation

Blue Book's file is rather interesting. There are two cards. One of them, with the title of "UFOB record card", lists the case as having an astronomical explanation. However, the remarks section, which reads "Concur with reporting officer that this sighting was caused by stars" is written over in a squiggly line³. This appears to be a record of the investigation conducted by the Air Intelligence Service Squadron assigned to the case. The Blue Book 10073 record card for this event makes no mention of an astronomical explanation and has "UNIDENTIFIED" in the comments section⁴.

UFOB INDEX CARD			PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD		
1. DATE: 7 Nov 57	2. LOCATION: Radium Springs, NM	12. CONCLUSIONS: ☐ Was Balloon ☐ Probably Balloon ☐ Possibly Balloon ☐ Was Aircraft ☐ Probably Aircraft ☐ Possibly Aircraft ☐ Was Astronomical ☐ Probably Astronomical ☐ Possibly Astronomical ☐ Other: Insufficient Data for Evaluation ☐ Unknown	1. DATE: 6 November 1957	2. LOCATION: Radium Springs, New Mexico	12. CONCLUSIONS: ☐ Was Balloon ☐ Probably Balloon ☐ Possibly Balloon ☐ Was Aircraft ☐ Probably Aircraft ☐ Possibly Aircraft ☐ Was Astronomical ☐ Probably Astronomical ☐ Possibly Astronomical ☐ Other: Insufficient Data for Evaluation ☐ Unknown
3. DATE-TIME GROUP: 07/0550Z Nov 57	4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION: ☒ Ground-Visual ☐ Ground-Radar ☐ Air-Visual ☐ Air-Intercept Radar	5. SOURCE: Civilian	3. DATE-TIME GROUP: Local: 07/0550Z GMT: 07/0550Z	4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION: ☒ Ground-Visual ☐ Ground-Radar ☐ Air-Visual ☐ Air-Intercept Radar	5. SOURCE: Military & Civilian
6. PHOTOS: ☐ Yes ☒ No	7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 10 minutes	8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS: One	6. PHOTOS: ☐ Yes ☒ No	7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 10 minutes	8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS: one
9. COURSE: Up and into a cloud bank	10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING: One round, red, green, blue and white object, the size of a quarter at arm's length. Object was seen moving straight up and into a cloud and was in sight for 10 minutes.	11. COMMENTS: Concur with Reporting Officer that this sighting was caused by stars.	9. COURSE: vertical	10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING: Round object, size of quarter at arm's length, alternating between red, green, blue and white. Object rose vertically from top of organ mountains and disappeared 10 minutes later into a cloud bank.	11. COMMENTS: Unidentified.

The file consists of a long teletype message describing the events. What is not mentioned by Berliner and Sparks is that the USAF sent personnel to investigate at the time of the sighting and that there was 60% cloud coverage that night. The UFO had disappeared into these clouds after rising above the mountain. While the AF personnel were present, they saw another "light" rise above the mountains and slowly enter the cloud bank. To them, the lights were nothing more than stars. The explanation was there for both Berliner and Sparks to examine but they missed it.

At the end of the message, the reporting officer states:

*It is the opinion of this officer, T/SGT Albro, and other US Air Force personnel involved that the object observed was merely a star rising from behind the mountains. The two previous objects were sighted at the same point and it is our conclusion that these were also stars.*⁵

I am surprised this is listed in the Blue Book file as "unexplained". Is there a reason to reject the conclusion that these were just stars misidentified?

The Astronomical explanation

We are told the objects rose above the Organ mountains. Organ peak appears to be the most prominent of the mountains visible from Radium Springs and was at a rough azimuth of 115 degrees. This value depends on where the observer was precisely located. At 10:50 PM MST, the star Sirius was at azimuth 112 degrees at an elevation of just over 4 degrees. Sirius had risen around 10:27 PM MST about azimuth 110 degrees. Organ peak was over 21 miles from the observers and, at a height of roughly 9,000 feet,



would only extend about 1-2 degrees above the horizon. Therefore, Sirius was in the right location and elevation to be the possible source of the sighting. At such a low angle of elevation, Sirius would have been scintillating giving the changing colors described in the report.

Conclusions

Everything points towards this being nothing more than a star, very likely Sirius, scintillating and entering a cloud bank. The airmen, who were present, personally observed another star rise above the mountains and do the same thing. They all felt the objects being observed were stars. This case should be listed as "identified - Astronomical".

This case has another twist that needs to be mentioned here. For some reason, somebody at Blue Book decided that the AISS investigation was incorrect and gave it the unidentified label. It is popular UFOlogical mythology that Blue Book personnel were purposefully changing as many "unidentifieds" as they could into explained cases. This is based on the writings of Donald Keyhoe and statements later made by Dr. Hynek:

When Major Quintanilla came in, the flag of the utter nonsense school was flying at its highest on the mast. Now he had a certain Sgt. [David] Moody assisting him...[Moody] epitomized the conviction-before-trial method. Anything that he didn't understand or didn't like was immediately put into the psychological category, which meant "crackpot." He would not ever say that the person who reported a case was a fairly respectable person, maybe we should look into it, or maybe we should find out. He was also the master of the possible: possible balloon, possible aircraft, possible birds, which then became, by his own hand (and I argued with him violently at times), the probable; he said, well, we have no category "possible" aircraft. It is therefore either unidentified or aircraft. Well, it is more likely aircraft; therefore it is aircraft.... An "unidentified" to Moody was not a challenge for further research. To have it remain unidentified was a blot... and he did everything to remove it. He went back to cases from Captain Gregory's days and way back in Ruppelt's days and redid the files. A lot that were unidentified in those days he "identified" years and years later.⁶

According to Hector Quintanilla's unpublished manuscript, Dr. Hynek did not get along with Sgt. Moody and vice-versa⁷. This might have affected Hynek's recollections of Moody in later years. This case indicates either it had escaped the ever watchful eye of Moody or Hynek was guilty of over-exaggerating what Moody did. Is it possible that the one guilty of not wanting to look closely at the "unidentifieds" was actually Hynek? As the astronomical expert, he should have identified this case (as well as a few others previously mentioned in SUNlite) quickly. Instead, he seemed to have "dropped the ball" or was "too busy" to look at these unidentified cases.

Notes and references

1. Berliner, Don. "The Bluebook unknowns". NICAP. Available WWW: <http://www.nicap.org/bluebook/unknowns.htm>
2. Sparks, Brad. Comprehensive Catalog of 1,600 Project Blue Book UFO Unknowns: Work in Progress (Version 1.25, January 2, 2014) Available WWW: http://www.cufos.org/BB_Unknowns.pdf
3. "Project 10073 record card". Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/6780764>
4. "UFOB record card". Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/6780756>
5. "Msg Cmdr 685th ACWRON to COMDR ADC ENT, COMDR 34th ADD, COMDR Air Technical Intelligence Center, Director of Intelligence HQ USAF. DTG 070654Z". Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/6780781>
6. Clark, Jerry. The UFO Book. Detroit: Visible Ink Press 1998. P. 473
7. Quintanilla, Hector UFO'S: An Air Force dilemma. Unpublished manuscript. P. 67. Available WWW: <http://www.ufocasebook.com/pdf/afdilemma.pdf>