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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:07,000

During the Cold War, fighter pilots were scrambled to intercept unknown objects at 30,000 feet.

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00:00:08,000 --> 00:00:11,000

This is maximum speed, maximum urgency.

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00:00:12,000 --> 00:00:15,000

These objects appear to defy the laws of physics.

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00:00:16,000 --> 00:00:18,000

There is absolutely no way to explain these sightings.

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00:00:19,000 --> 00:00:23,000

Military documents reveal high speed encounters with the unknown.

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00:00:25,000 --> 00:00:29,000

But a lack of evidence makes it hard to verify and easy to speculate.

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00:00:30,000 --> 00:00:33,000

You have science, you have speculation, which would you rather do?

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00:00:34,000 --> 00:00:38,000

Are they secret aircraft, radar hoaxes, or truly unknown?

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00:00:39,000 --> 00:00:44,000

Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence, and I don't think we have the extraordinary evidence at this point.

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00:00:45,000 --> 00:00:47,000

Chase the answers at Mach 1 and beyond.

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00:00:48,000 --> 00:00:50,000

He was thinking, damn, I could be starting World War 3.

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00:00:53,000 --> 00:00:57,000

Unidentified flying objects. They've been reported in our skies for decades.

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00:00:57,000 --> 00:01:01,000

Thousands of UFO sightings have been documented in official government files.

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00:01:02,000 --> 00:01:04,000

Most have logical, scientific explanations.

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00:01:05,000 --> 00:01:09,000

Yet some cases remain unexplained, classified, unidentified.

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00:01:10,000 --> 00:01:14,000

Can newly released files reveal the truth behind these UFO encounters?

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00:01:19,000 --> 00:01:22,000

May 20th, 1957, Kent, England.

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00:01:22,000 --> 00:01:27,000

Ground control at Royal Air Force Base, Manston, picks up an unusual target on radar.

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00:01:28,000 --> 00:01:32,000

The blip on radar had unusual flight patterns. It was doing unconventional things.

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00:01:33,000 --> 00:01:41,000

Two pilots are scrambled into the night. One of them is Milton Torres, a US Air Force pilot based in the United Kingdom.

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00:01:43,000 --> 00:01:48,000

My dad was in his 20s, and these guys were finally tuned machines.

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00:01:49,000 --> 00:01:53,000

Milton Torres' son, Jeffrey, recounts his dad's story about that night.

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00:01:54,000 --> 00:01:59,000

The ground radar told him, flying to a heading of 32,000 feet over East-Ep Swash.

24

00:02:00,000 --> 00:02:02,000

He said, do you want me to go full gate? And I said, go full gate.

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00:02:03,000 --> 00:02:06,000

Full gate is Air Force Lingo for full power.

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00:02:07,000 --> 00:02:13,000

At the time, the F-8060 could reach speeds of 700 miles per hour, just under the speed of sound.

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00:02:14,000 --> 00:02:19,000

It's the Cold War, a time of great international tension and paranoia,

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00:02:20,000 --> 00:02:25,000

and the radar hit could be a Soviet spy plane or worse, a bomber.

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00:02:26,000 --> 00:02:29,000

They had incursions from the Soviet Union to Allied airspace,

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00:02:30,000 --> 00:02:36,000

and that was the whole design of the F-86D as an all-weather fighter to prevent these kind of incursions.

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00:02:37,000 --> 00:02:43,000

According to Torres, visibility is almost zero. He is using only his instruments to navigate.

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00:02:44,000 --> 00:02:47,000

Zulu-1, turn right, heading 010.

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00:02:48,000 --> 00:02:55,000

As ground control guides him towards the target, he asks to decrease his speed, but his request is denied.

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00:02:56,000 --> 00:02:58,000

Negative, maintain afterburner to intercept.

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00:02:59,000 --> 00:03:02,000

So now he realizes, whatever this thing is, they want him to close in on it fast.

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00:03:02,000 --> 00:03:06,000

Control, it's impossible to see anything.

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00:03:09,000 --> 00:03:17,000

Torres is flying blind, still waiting for the object to appear on his radar when he says ground control gives an order that shocks him.

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00:03:18,000 --> 00:03:21,000

Zulu-1, engage target, I repeat.

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00:03:22,000 --> 00:03:25,000

They told him to fire all of his rockets. All 24 rockets, they wanted him unloading all of them.

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00:03:26,000 --> 00:03:29,000

He was thinking, damn, I could be starting World War 3.

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00:03:33,000 --> 00:03:37,000

He thought it was a real event. He told me he was scared.

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00:03:39,000 --> 00:03:45,000

Torres can't lock on and fire until his radar finds the object, and when it does, he is astounded.

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00:03:48,000 --> 00:03:51,000

And his quote was, it was burning a hole in the radar.

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00:03:52,000 --> 00:03:55,000

Torres said his radar showed a target the size of an aircraft carrier.

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00:03:56,000 --> 00:04:01,000

He pulls the trigger and waits for the plane's computer to lock onto the target and shoot the rockets.

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00:04:03,000 --> 00:04:11,000

But just then, the object disappears off Torres' radar, leaving the rockets unfired and Torres alone in the sky.

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00:04:12,000 --> 00:04:13,000

Control, I've lost the target.

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00:04:14,000 --> 00:04:18,000

Zulu-1 copy, we've lost target as well. Return to base.

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00:04:20,000 --> 00:04:29,000

Upon returning, Torres said he was told the mission was considered classified, so for 30 years, he followed orders and kept his story a secret.

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00:04:30,000 --> 00:04:34,000

But it haunted him, and eventually, he went looking for answers.

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00:04:36,000 --> 00:04:38,000

He couldn't explain this thing. He didn't know what it was.

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00:04:39,000 --> 00:04:48,000

Finally, in his retirement, Milton Torres wrote this affidavit in 1988, but he kept it classified to avoid disclosing a potential military secret.

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00:04:49,000 --> 00:04:53,000

It detailed his version of events from that night in 1957.

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00:04:54,000 --> 00:05:01,000

Dr. Roger Launius wonders how accurate a story can be after passing through the decades as one man's secret.

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00:05:02,000 --> 00:05:10,000

When stories pop up many, many years after the fact, for the first time, then you have to ask the question, why is it coming out now?

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00:05:11,000 --> 00:05:13,000

It makes you question whether or not this actually happened.

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00:05:14,000 --> 00:05:19,000

But Torres was determined to find any information the military might have on the matter.

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00:05:20,000 --> 00:05:24,000

His lawyers sent the secret, sworn testimony, to the UK's Ministry of Defence.

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00:05:25,000 --> 00:05:32,000

Nick Pope investigated classified UFO sightings for the British government from 1991 to 1994.

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00:05:34,000 --> 00:05:41,000

He said, we have no desire to break the Official Secrets Act, we'd like to know more about this incident if possible.

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00:05:41,000 --> 00:05:50,000

In a series of letters in the late 1980s, Torres' lawyer asked the military to declassify the incident, so Torres and others could speak publicly.

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00:05:51,000 --> 00:06:00,000

The Ministry of Defence responded by saying that neither they nor the US Air Force had any official record of the incident from 1957.

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00:06:01,000 --> 00:06:06,000

What we don't have is any of the original official documents.

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00:06:06,000 --> 00:06:16,000

In 2008, the military declassified the incident and released the few documents ahead on the matter, including the affidavit Torres' Sentom in 1988.

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00:06:17,000 --> 00:06:28,000

Once the Ministry of Defence itself had released into the public domain Milton Torres' statement, Torres realized that he was free to discuss this.

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00:06:29,000 --> 00:06:37,000

Torres could now tell a story 50 years later, but did it happen the way he remembered it? Did it happen at all?

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00:06:38,000 --> 00:06:45,000

Now memory obviously morphs with time, I mean anybody can tell you that, who looks into it, and it usually doesn't take very much time.

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00:06:46,000 --> 00:06:48,000

I mean even the next day the stories are beginning to diverge.

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00:06:49,000 --> 00:06:54,000

Seth Shostak is the lead astronomer for SETI, the search for extraterrestrial intelligence.

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00:06:54,000 --> 00:07:07,000

Our brains are designed not to be like tape recorders where we just record some objective truth, they're interpreters and they refashion the stories to suit whatever our brain finds interesting and important.

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00:07:08,000 --> 00:07:09,000

So you really can't rely on it too much.

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00:07:11,000 --> 00:07:13,000

There was a second pilot scrambled that night.

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00:07:14,000 --> 00:07:22,000

At the request of the military, trying to find answers for Torres, he described his recollections of the night 30 years earlier.

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00:07:23,000 --> 00:07:27,000

He wrote that what he remembered varies somewhat from Torres' narrative.

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00:07:28,000 --> 00:07:34,000

While he did get radar hits of the unknown objects, he did not recall any shoot down order.

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00:07:36,000 --> 00:07:41,000

But what Torres claims next takes the story into the realm of conspiracy.

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00:07:42,000 --> 00:07:44,000

He said he was debriefed the next day.

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00:07:45,000 --> 00:07:46,000

Have a seat Lieutenant.

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00:07:47,000 --> 00:07:53,000

But instead of an Air Force investigator, he met a man in civilian clothing.

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00:07:54,000 --> 00:07:59,000

This is highly unusual. His commanding officer isn't anywhere to be seen. He's by himself.

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00:08:00,000 --> 00:08:02,000

According to my dad, he was from the NSA.

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00:08:03,000 --> 00:08:10,000

The NSA, or National Security Agency, monitors and analyzes intelligence from around the world.

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00:08:11,000 --> 00:08:14,000

Did you at any point get a visual of this thing?

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00:08:14,000 --> 00:08:16,000

According to my dad, he was extremely intimidating.

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00:08:17,000 --> 00:08:23,000

Torres answered his questions about the mission, and the man emphasized it would remain classified,

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00:08:24,000 --> 00:08:29,000

saying it would be a national security breach to breathe a word of it to anyone, even his own commander.

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00:08:30,000 --> 00:08:37,000

But when people claim secrecy and cover-up, skeptics claim that it's a convenient excuse for having no official records.

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00:08:38,000 --> 00:08:46,000

One of the tropes that has emerged from the investigation of UFO incidents is the men in black show up,

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00:08:47,000 --> 00:08:52,000

and they interview this person and they tell them to tell nobody, and that's the end of it. There's no records taken.

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00:08:53,000 --> 00:08:57,000

Torres never claimed to see any type of ship, only radical radar readings.

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00:08:58,000 --> 00:09:00,000

But he thinks they were weird enough to trigger the secrecy.

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00:09:01,000 --> 00:09:03,000

Zoo one copy, we've lost target.

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00:09:03,000 --> 00:09:13,000

Ground controllers told him the blip had gone off the radar in two sweeps, implying an aircraft going Mach 10, or almost 8,000 miles per hour.

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00:09:14,000 --> 00:09:15,000

What was this thing?

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00:09:18,000 --> 00:09:21,000

Just asking the question, people just fill it in.

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00:09:22,000 --> 00:09:25,000

And so this is the problem with UFO sightings, is what does a blip mean?

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00:09:26,000 --> 00:09:31,000

Michael Schermer argues that radar blips do not equal proof.

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00:09:31,000 --> 00:09:36,000

We don't know what it is, but the mind just fills it in, and we all do it. It's a big problem with perception.

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00:09:40,000 --> 00:09:46,000

Jock Williams was a Canadian fighter pilot and knows the limits of radar, especially at high speed.

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00:09:47,000 --> 00:09:57,000

If you banked as an example and pulled too much G, the radar didn't have enough stabilization to stay on the target.

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00:09:57,000 --> 00:10:07,000

Radars inherent limitations also made it vulnerable to jamming and spoofing, such as projecting targets onto an enemy's screen where there really were none.

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00:10:08,000 --> 00:10:11,000

Nick Poe knows of one such top secret project.

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00:10:12,000 --> 00:10:19,000

Project Palladium was a classified CIA scheme to effectively spoof radar systems.

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00:10:20,000 --> 00:10:29,000

The goal was to create a ghost return on the radar screen to con the other side into thinking there were aircraft there, when in fact there weren't.

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00:10:30,000 --> 00:10:32,000

It's just a kind of electronic hoax.

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00:10:33,000 --> 00:10:36,000

Is this what Torres encountered in 1957?

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00:10:39,000 --> 00:10:48,000

The problem with the radar spoofing theory is that if you are involved in a classified test of that nature,

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00:10:49,000 --> 00:10:54,000

afterwards you are simply told you have been involved in a classified test.

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00:10:55,000 --> 00:10:57,000

That's it, end of exercise.

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00:10:58,000 --> 00:11:01,000

But Torres claims he wasn't told of any classified test.

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00:11:02,000 --> 00:11:06,000

He was simply reporting an encounter with an unidentified flying object.

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00:11:07,000 --> 00:11:09,000

He was not the only one.

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00:11:10,000 --> 00:11:14,000

The military was in the midst of a UFO wave that it could not explain.

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00:11:15,000 --> 00:11:18,000

Everybody was worried about this threat from above.

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00:11:19,000 --> 00:11:25,000

This was just the tip of the iceberg and the Air Force scrambled to find out what was invading the skies.

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00:11:30,000 --> 00:11:39,000

In 1957 Air Force pilot Milton Torres says he almost fired on a UFO so big that it burned a hole in his radar.

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00:11:40,000 --> 00:11:43,000

When he returned he claims he was sworn to keep it quiet.

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00:11:44,000 --> 00:11:50,000

Was it a secret Soviet plane, a radar hoax or something truly from another world?

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00:11:51,000 --> 00:11:55,000

Torres is not the only one to report a UFO in the mid-20th century.

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00:11:57,000 --> 00:12:02,000

Thousands reported strange phenomena from lights and blobs to saucers and disks.

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00:12:03,000 --> 00:12:09,000

There's kind of a feedback cycle when it comes to UFO sightings because as soon as you talk about flying disks,

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00:12:09,000 --> 00:12:13,000

then suddenly you're getting reports of a lot of flying disks.

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00:12:14,000 --> 00:12:18,000

It stoked questions and speculation about what they were or who they were.

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00:12:19,000 --> 00:12:24,000

And it all intertwined with pop culture's fascination with outer space.

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00:12:25,000 --> 00:12:29,000

Metal casing is definitely extra-dress drill, not found on this earth.

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00:12:30,000 --> 00:12:35,000

In 1938 Orson Welles broadcast a radio drama called The War of the Worlds.

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00:12:35,000 --> 00:12:39,000

Some thought the dramatized Martian invasion was real.

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00:12:50,000 --> 00:12:56,000

In the 1950s science fiction was popular in print, at the movies and on television.

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00:12:56,000 --> 00:13:03,000

20th century politics also reached into everyday life with the Cold War.

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00:13:04,000 --> 00:13:09,000

In the 50s the United States and Soviet Union were each developing experimental aircraft

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00:13:10,000 --> 00:13:13,000

and racing to put the first satellite into space.

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00:13:15,000 --> 00:13:19,000

Between geopolitical tension and pop culture imagination,

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00:13:20,000 --> 00:13:23,000

people were all too ready to interpret something strange in the skies a threat

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00:13:23,000 --> 00:13:26,000

from the Soviets or from space.

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00:13:27,000 --> 00:13:30,000

Everybody was worried about this threat from above.

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00:13:34,000 --> 00:13:40,000

An internal CIA memo in 1952 illustrates the concern inside the military

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00:13:41,000 --> 00:13:44,000

that UFOs pose a serious national security problem.

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00:13:45,000 --> 00:13:50,000

Flying saucers exposed the vulnerability of the United States to air attack.

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00:13:50,000 --> 00:13:56,000

The Air Force then began the now famous project Blue Book to investigate UFOs.

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00:13:57,000 --> 00:14:01,000

They were serious about trying to understand these things, not so much because they necessarily

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00:14:02,000 --> 00:14:04,000

believed that they were of extraterrestrial origin, but once again,

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00:14:05,000 --> 00:14:07,000

is it a national security threat in some particular way?

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00:14:09,000 --> 00:14:14,000

Captain Edward Ruppelt led the UFO project, with the authority to investigate claims

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00:14:15,000 --> 00:14:17,000

without going through the usual chain of command.

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00:14:17,000 --> 00:14:22,000

The military was eager to find out if UFOs were a national security threat

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00:14:23,000 --> 00:14:27,000

and internally there was debate about where the potential threat was coming from.

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00:14:28,000 --> 00:14:32,000

In 1952 an internal FBI memo stated,

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00:14:33,000 --> 00:14:36,000

air intelligence still feels flying saucers are optical illusions,

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00:14:37,000 --> 00:14:42,000

but some military officials are seriously considering the possibility of interplanetary ships.

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00:14:42,000 --> 00:14:51,000

Real or not, things no one could explain appear to be violating American airspace with alarming frequency.

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00:14:52,000 --> 00:14:56,000

Ruppelt's team crisscrossed the country investigating these claims,

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00:14:57,000 --> 00:15:00,000

but there was some reluctance within the military to report them.

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00:15:01,000 --> 00:15:06,000

In his 1956 book entitled, The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects,

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00:15:06,000 --> 00:15:13,000

Ruppelt wrote of a flying saucer incident in 1952 that he claimed has never been told.

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00:15:16,000 --> 00:15:21,000

It took place at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, September 1952.

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00:15:22,000 --> 00:15:27,000

Jan Aldrich is a researcher specializing in Air Force UFO investigations.

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00:15:29,000 --> 00:15:33,000

Ruppelt got a call from Lieutenant Parrish, who was the intelligence officer

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00:15:33,000 --> 00:15:37,000

of the 34th Air Division at Kirtland Air Force Base.

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00:15:38,000 --> 00:15:43,000

According to Ruppelt's account, when they were alone, Parrish pulled an unfiled UFO report from his safe

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00:15:44,000 --> 00:15:47,000

and only allowed Ruppelt to read it in his office.

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00:15:48,000 --> 00:15:54,000

Ruppelt writes, about 10 o'clock in the morning, a radar near the base had picked up an unidentified target.

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00:15:55,000 --> 00:15:57,000

Two jets are immediately scrambled.

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00:15:58,000 --> 00:16:01,000

One F-86 went high, one went low.

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00:16:01,000 --> 00:16:07,000

The F-86 that went low flattened out his dive, saw what he thought at first was a weather balloon.

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00:16:08,000 --> 00:16:15,000

When he got closer, about a thousand feet away from the UFO, it didn't appear to be a weather balloon anymore.

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00:16:16,000 --> 00:16:21,000

Ruppelt's story claims the object couldn't be a balloon, as it was staying ahead of the plane.

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00:16:22,000 --> 00:16:28,000

In Ruppelt's account, the pilot was intent on getting a visual sighting, flying at 3,000 feet

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00:16:28,000 --> 00:16:30,000

and traveling at the speed of sound.

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00:16:31,000 --> 00:16:35,000

The pilot was finally closing in and got a good look at the object.

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00:16:38,000 --> 00:16:42,000

It appeared to be a saucer-shaped object, round and flat.

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00:16:43,000 --> 00:16:48,000

But the pilot realized he could not catch the object and wondered what he should do.

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00:16:49,000 --> 00:16:52,000

When he gets within 500 yards, the object starts pulling away from him.

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00:16:53,000 --> 00:16:57,000

The pilot tried calling ground control for instructions, but he was out of range.

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00:16:58,000 --> 00:17:01,000

The pilot then claims he opened fire.

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00:17:05,000 --> 00:17:11,000

Ruppelt writes, a moment later, the object pulled up into a climb and in a few seconds, it was gone.

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00:17:13,000 --> 00:17:15,000

Ruppelt says he is astonished by this story.

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00:17:16,000 --> 00:17:19,000

Why didn't Parrish send this report immediately to Project Blue Book?

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00:17:19,000 --> 00:17:25,000

This is a very serious incident. Probably people did not want this going into the chain of command.

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00:17:26,000 --> 00:17:31,000

The belief gap, extraterrestrial or not, often played out within a military base.

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00:17:32,000 --> 00:17:36,000

When the pilot reported his encounter, his squadron command accused him of cracking up.

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00:17:37,000 --> 00:17:40,000

If you're a pilot, this is the way to discredit yourself.

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00:17:41,000 --> 00:17:46,000

If you make a UFO report, even under Ruppelt, they didn't like to report UFOs.

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00:17:46,000 --> 00:17:52,000

Ruppelt reports that the commander called the pilot psycho or may have flipped for no good reason.

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00:17:53,000 --> 00:18:00,000

But Parrish found the report credible and despite being ordered to destroy it, he secretly kept a single copy in his safe.

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00:18:05,000 --> 00:18:13,000

In this case, one can only speculate on what the pilot really saw, something from space or something from Earth.

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00:18:14,000 --> 00:18:20,000

They'll fly past it, they'll fly around it and it will actually think that the object is actually trying to have paid them.

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00:18:21,000 --> 00:18:25,000

Tim Printy is a retired Navy Submariner and a UFO skeptic.

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00:18:26,000 --> 00:18:34,000

What they'll do is they'll go around in circles while the balloon is really not moving that fast, but because of their own motion, it'll appear to be moving very fast.

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00:18:35,000 --> 00:18:43,000

In addition to the faults of human perception, UFO reports like this are filtered through the prism of eyewitness storytelling.

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00:18:44,000 --> 00:18:55,000

Anybody who has worked in the criminal court system will tell you that eyewitness testimony isn't all that reliable and in fact in science it's about the worst kind of evidence possible.

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00:18:55,000 --> 00:19:03,000

To get around the eyewitness problem, the Air Force tried to gather more tangible evidence.

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00:19:05,000 --> 00:19:12,000

In December of 52 they specifically mounted gun cameras on fighters at Wright Patterson Air Force Base.

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00:19:13,000 --> 00:19:24,000

Regular cameras were often installed in fighter planes to capture bird's eye footage, but the Air Force proposed mounting modified cameras that would film the entire spectrum of light to analyze any objects.

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00:19:25,000 --> 00:19:29,000

The Air Force was able to see UFO passing by its lens.

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00:19:32,000 --> 00:19:36,000

But a fighter plane would have to get close enough to a UFO to film it.

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00:19:37,000 --> 00:19:43,000

If the special cameras were ever deployed in an airplane, the film has never surfaced.

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00:19:45,000 --> 00:19:49,000

By the late 1960s, the Air Force stopped investigating UFOs.

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00:19:49,000 --> 00:19:51,000

What shut down Project Blue Book?

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00:19:52,000 --> 00:19:57,000

And after that, how did the military respond to a compelling UFO report?

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00:19:58,000 --> 00:20:00,000

It's so fast! It's impossible!

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00:20:02,000 --> 00:20:07,000

Coming out of World War II and into the Cold War, UFO sightings exploded around the country.

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00:20:08,000 --> 00:20:15,000

There was a concerted effort for, I don't know, more than a dozen years by the Air Force to actually track these things down and try to figure out what they were.

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00:20:15,000 --> 00:20:23,000

A special group of Air Force investigators spent years trying to identify the nature and potential threat of reported UFOs.

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00:20:24,000 --> 00:20:31,000

Their body of work, Project Blue Book, history's most extensive government investigation into UFOs.

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00:20:32,000 --> 00:20:37,000

The value of Project Blue Book is at least the UFologists can't say no one's taken it seriously.

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00:20:37,000 --> 00:20:45,000

But after 17 years and thousands of reports, the U.S. Air Force had no proof that any UFOs were extraterrestrials.

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00:20:46,000 --> 00:20:55,000

Pressure to find either solid evidence or stop wasting money, the Air Force created an outside panel to study the value of their UFO investigations.

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00:20:56,000 --> 00:20:58,000

Physicist Edward Condon led the study.

209

00:20:59,000 --> 00:21:08,000

After a two-year review, the Condon report concluded that nothing has come from the study of UFOs in the past 21 years that has added to scientific knowledge.

210

00:21:10,000 --> 00:21:14,000

The Air Force took the committee's recommendation and shut down Project Blue Book.

211

00:21:15,000 --> 00:21:23,000

We may not be able to exactly explain what was taking place here, but there's no evidence to indicate that this is a national security threat.

212

00:21:23,000 --> 00:21:31,000

But after Project Blue Book, a compelling UFO report did get the attention of the military from halfway around the world.

213

00:21:32,000 --> 00:21:36,000

Tehran, Iran, September 20, 1976.

214

00:21:37,000 --> 00:21:42,000

At the Imperial Iranian Air Force headquarters, a group of high-ranking officers hold a secret meeting.

215

00:21:46,000 --> 00:21:50,000

Author and journalist Leslie Kane has written about the Tehran incident.

216

00:21:50,000 --> 00:21:56,000

As well as all the Iranians that were present, there was also an American colonel there, Colonel Olan Mui.

217

00:21:57,000 --> 00:22:00,000

In 1976, the United States and Iran are allies.

218

00:22:01,000 --> 00:22:08,000

Colonel Mui has been sent by the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group, which trains any allies using American technology.

219

00:22:09,000 --> 00:22:13,000

The Iranian Air Force is using American F-4 fighter jets.

220

00:22:13,000 --> 00:22:25,000

Iran shares a border with both Iraq and the Soviet Union, so the U.S. is helping Iran patrol the borders and perform aerial espionage.

221

00:22:27,000 --> 00:22:32,000

Lieutenant Colonel Mui has been invited to attend a debriefing about an incident that happened the previous night.

222

00:22:33,000 --> 00:22:37,000

Colonel Mui took extensive notes and they were written up for the U.S. government.

223

00:22:37,000 --> 00:22:42,000

Mui's notes have since been declassified. They describe the story he was told in that meeting.

224

00:22:45,000 --> 00:22:53,000

At Mirabad International Airport, tower operator Hussain Peruzzi begins to receive calls from concerned citizens in a suburb of Tehran.

225

00:22:54,000 --> 00:22:57,000

The person told him that they saw something up in the sky that worried them.

226

00:22:58,000 --> 00:23:02,000

It looked like a star, only it was bigger and brighter, and it was just hanging there.

227

00:23:02,000 --> 00:23:03,000

What did you tell them?

228

00:23:04,000 --> 00:23:10,000

A minute later, another call came in, and so he stepped outside, took a pair of binoculars, and he could see the thing himself.

229

00:23:11,000 --> 00:23:15,000

At 12.30 a.m., the command post connects Peruzzi to General Yusefiy.

230

00:23:16,000 --> 00:23:20,000

The Assistant Deputy Commander of Operations of the Imperial Iranian Air Force.

231

00:23:21,000 --> 00:23:24,000

General Yusefiy learns nothing is being picked up on radar.

232

00:23:25,000 --> 00:23:29,000

Looking north towards Tehran, he sees the same bright light as the other.

233

00:23:29,000 --> 00:23:33,000

Looking north towards Tehran, he sees the same bright unknown object.

234

00:23:34,000 --> 00:23:39,000

Yusefiy decides to scramble a jet from Shiroki Air Force Base, 200 miles away.

235

00:23:40,000 --> 00:23:47,000

But as the F-4 gets within 25 nautical miles of the glowing object, it reports all electrical systems are suddenly down.

236

00:23:50,000 --> 00:23:54,000

Whenever the plane approached within a certain distance of it, all their equipment would go out.

237

00:23:55,000 --> 00:24:05,000

But when the F-4 turned away from the object, the pilots at the aircraft regained all instrumentation and communications.

238

00:24:08,000 --> 00:24:14,000

Then, General Yusefiy tells Colonel Moye at 1.40 a.m., he scrambled another F-4.

239

00:24:15,000 --> 00:24:19,000

It's flown by top Iranian pilot Lieutenant Parviz Jaffari.

240

00:24:19,000 --> 00:24:27,000

He knows this is not a training exercise. It could be a dangerous incursion demanding a lethal response.

241

00:24:28,000 --> 00:24:39,000

This is the mission. Recognize, make them to land. If not, shouldn't die.

242

00:24:42,000 --> 00:24:47,000

Jaffari is directed towards Tehran and given the coordinates of the apparent object.

243

00:24:48,000 --> 00:24:56,000

I looked to that area while I was climbing and I saw it. I saw the object now.

244

00:24:57,000 --> 00:25:03,000

As Jaffari closes, his jet is able to achieve radar lock on the bright object at 27 nautical miles.

245

00:25:04,000 --> 00:25:09,000

The radar signal was as big as the 707 tank.

246

00:25:09,000 --> 00:25:16,000

The Moye memo states the visual size of the object was difficult to discern because of its intense brilliance.

247

00:25:17,000 --> 00:25:21,000

It's so brilliant you couldn't see the body of the object.

248

00:25:22,000 --> 00:25:27,000

But when Jaffari finally gets close, he reports more than just a bright light.

249

00:25:27,000 --> 00:25:44,000

The object was like a diamond shape and the top was red light, green, orange, blue. So it was illuminating very fast.

250

00:25:45,000 --> 00:25:51,000

As Jaffari attempts to close in on the object, he says it moves in a manner beyond the ability of any known aircraft.

251

00:25:52,000 --> 00:25:57,000

All of a sudden, it jumped about 10 degrees to my right. Just like that.

252

00:25:58,000 --> 00:26:04,000

About 40, 50 miles in less than a second. It's so fast. It's impossible.

253

00:26:06,000 --> 00:26:12,000

Then, Jaffari claims the incident quickly changed from mystifying to terrifying.

254

00:26:13,000 --> 00:26:16,000

All of a sudden, something underneath it came out.

255

00:26:21,000 --> 00:26:25,000

I thought I'm under attack. It is a missile coming toward me.

256

00:26:26,000 --> 00:26:30,000

Jaffari decides to take aggressive action against the second smaller object.

257

00:26:31,000 --> 00:26:36,000

I immediately thought that I had to fire a missile, a heat-seeker missile toward it.

258

00:26:37,000 --> 00:26:42,000

But when Jaffari attempts to fire, he reports all his systems shut down.

259

00:26:43,000 --> 00:26:47,000

His weapons control panel goes off and he loses all communications.

260

00:26:48,000 --> 00:26:52,000

Then, Jaffari claims the object appears to circle around his jet.

261

00:26:53,000 --> 00:27:01,000

Now imagine you're flying close to a speed of sound and something is turning around. Unbelievable.

262

00:27:02,000 --> 00:27:10,000

Jaffari thinks he's in a dogfight with something he can't explain. Could it be from another country

or another planet?

263

00:27:11,000 --> 00:27:15,000

My weapons, it's coming toward me and I'm going to have impact.

264

00:27:18,000 --> 00:27:25,000

High above Tehran, Iranian Air Force pilot Parviz Jaffari thinks he's in a dogfight with a UFO.

265

00:27:26,000 --> 00:27:30,000

Threatened by an unknown object that appears to emerge from a mothership,

266

00:27:31,000 --> 00:27:34,000

he throws his jet fighter into a steep dive to evade the attack.

267

00:27:35,000 --> 00:27:42,000

Then, just as quickly as it began, it ends as the object seems to disappear.

268

00:27:42,000 --> 00:27:50,000

The second object flew away from it and went underneath the main object and disappeared.

269

00:27:51,000 --> 00:27:57,000

The Iranian pilot said the object returned to the primary object for a perfect rejoin.

270

00:28:01,000 --> 00:28:08,000

Then, as Jaffari flies away from the main target, his plane regains all weapons systems and communications.

271

00:28:09,000 --> 00:28:11,000

He is ordered to return to base.

272

00:28:12,000 --> 00:28:20,000

But Jaffari's experience isn't over yet. As he turns to make the approach into Tehran, he reports seeing something incredible.

273

00:28:21,000 --> 00:28:26,000

It's a small, wrong object coming out of it, like, right toward the ground.

274

00:28:27,000 --> 00:28:32,000

I said, oh God, I'm going to see a very big explosion right now.

275

00:28:33,000 --> 00:28:40,000

Instead of an explosion, Jaffari sees the new object stop dead, a few feet above the ground.

276

00:28:41,000 --> 00:28:44,000

All over the area was brightened.

277

00:28:45,000 --> 00:28:49,000

General Yusefhi orders Jaffari to evaluate the object before returning.

278

00:28:50,000 --> 00:28:53,000

Jaffari approaches the object to try and get a closer look.

279

00:28:56,000 --> 00:29:01,000

Again, his instruments start to go haywire, things start to malfunction.

280

00:29:02,000 --> 00:29:07,000

Mouay Memo notes a commercial airliner in the area also has a similar communications failure.

281

00:29:08,000 --> 00:29:12,000

At that point, General Yusefhi orders him to turn around and come back to base.

282

00:29:13,000 --> 00:29:14,000

Say a barrel.

283

00:29:16,000 --> 00:29:21,000

The next day, the pilot recounted his story to superiors and Colonel Mouay.

284

00:29:22,000 --> 00:29:25,000

His experience was mysterious and potentially dangerous.

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00:29:26,000 --> 00:29:31,000

And though it was supposed to remain an internal matter, it soon became national news.

286

00:29:32,000 --> 00:29:36,000

The young one leaked the UFO story to the press the night it happened.

287

00:29:37,000 --> 00:29:40,000

Now there was added pressure to investigate and explain it.

288

00:29:44,000 --> 00:29:48,000

But there was little to investigate except the dramatic story of one man

289

00:29:49,000 --> 00:29:52,000

who interpreted a radical experience as extraterrestrial visitation.

290

00:29:53,000 --> 00:29:55,000

There's a whole list of things it could be.

291

00:29:56,000 --> 00:29:59,000

So you can't just jump to the conclusion, hey, I don't know what it was,

292

00:29:59,000 --> 00:30:01,000

but consequently it must be an alien spacecraft.

293

00:30:02,000 --> 00:30:04,000

I mean, that's what's called an argument from ignorance.

294

00:30:05,000 --> 00:30:07,000

I don't know what it is, therefore I'm going to tell you what it is.

295

00:30:08,000 --> 00:30:14,000

The story of the dog fight with the UFO strains all credibility that is out there.

296

00:30:15,000 --> 00:30:23,000

An Iranian pilot who is flying an Air Force built fighter gets into a dog fight with the UFO.

297

00:30:23,000 --> 00:30:30,000

That UFO has extraterrestrial technology.

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00:30:31,000 --> 00:30:36,000

If he had a fight with the UFO and a UFO shot at it, why is he not dead?

299

00:30:37,000 --> 00:30:41,000

Jaffari's experience is dramatic and difficult to fathom,

300

00:30:42,000 --> 00:30:44,000

but there is a rare phenomenon that might explain it,

301

00:30:45,000 --> 00:30:47,000

something earthbound that can appear otherworldly.

302

00:30:47,000 --> 00:30:53,000

The behavior of this so-called UFO was very much like ball lightning.

303

00:30:54,000 --> 00:30:58,000

Professor of astronomy Michael D. Robertis has studied atmospheric phenomena

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00:30:59,000 --> 00:31:01,000

in relation to unidentified flying objects.

305

00:31:02,000 --> 00:31:07,000

We know it performs erratically, it can hover sometimes for minutes in the sky, sometimes low to the ground.

306

00:31:08,000 --> 00:31:12,000

Scientists consider the rare phenomena of ball lightning to be a small,

307

00:31:12,000 --> 00:31:16,000

but super hot mass of electrically charged gas.

308

00:31:17,000 --> 00:31:22,000

It can appear high in the atmosphere and close to the ground, similar to what Jaffari witnessed.

309

00:31:23,000 --> 00:31:30,000

Sometimes ball lightning will fragment and one part will disappear, one part will go to the ground.

310

00:31:32,000 --> 00:31:40,000

Ball lightning's highly charged state might also explain the electromagnetic failure of radar and weapons systems on the F4.

311

00:31:40,000 --> 00:31:45,000

In fact, there could be any number of reasons for electrical malfunctions.

312

00:31:46,000 --> 00:31:58,000

There can be all sorts of causes for electrical failures, it can be generator trips and the backup doesn't come back on, fuse box failures, short circuit, anything.

313

00:32:00,000 --> 00:32:09,000

Under pressure to fly a malfunctioning supersonic jet, amid a phenomenon he couldn't explain,

Jaffari admits he was in a confusing situation.

314

00:32:10,000 --> 00:32:23,000

Why should I go land? I was confused. What happened at that time to me? I don't know. I don't remember. I don't know what happened. That period of time.

315

00:32:24,000 --> 00:32:32,000

Jaffari's disorientation could have also affected his attempt to fire. Instead of alien interference, it could have been a simple error.

316

00:32:32,000 --> 00:32:44,000

That is that he made an improper switch selection. If you don't take the armament master switch and flick it up, if you don't select the correct weapon station, any of those mistakes and you push the fire button, nothing happens.

317

00:32:46,000 --> 00:32:53,000

After the debriefing, Colonel Moy's notes were filed with the US government as an unclassified memorandum of record.

318

00:32:54,000 --> 00:33:05,000

But the report was soon changed to classified. What happened over the skies of Iran that demanded secrecy?

319

00:33:07,000 --> 00:33:14,000

Four months later, the Iranian Deputy Commander-in-Chief, General Azar Barzan, revealed the reason.

320

00:33:15,000 --> 00:33:25,000

In an interview, Azar Barzan stated the US and Iran have this procedure to exchange information on UFOs.

321

00:33:28,000 --> 00:33:32,000

Then he revealed the information that interested US authorities.

322

00:33:33,000 --> 00:33:43,000

It is because of what we found out. This jammer could jam different frequencies at the same time. This technology doesn't exist.

323

00:33:44,000 --> 00:33:55,000

Radar jamming was a known tactic in 1976. An enemy could confuse radar and even create a false target on a pilot's screen, but not disable the entire cockpit.

324

00:33:56,000 --> 00:34:03,000

Any government in the world would have paid billions of dollars to have the capacity to turn off the guy's instrumentation in any way.

325

00:34:04,000 --> 00:34:10,000

Stop him from being able to effectively make switch selections. Such a thing is unknown even now.

326

00:34:11,000 --> 00:34:21,000

If someone was developing such a disruptive technology, it would be a military game changer. So this report got the attention of the Defense Intelligence Agency, or DIA.

327

00:34:22,000 --> 00:34:34,000

The DIA's main mission is to look at adversary capabilities. They're focused on potential enemy technology.

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00:34:35,000 --> 00:34:39,000

Six years later, the DIA declassified its report on the Tehran incident.

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00:34:40,000 --> 00:34:54,000

All the factors that were most compelling about this UFO sighting are picked out in this DIA analysis. It talks about the credibility and rank of the witnesses.

330

00:34:55,000 --> 00:35:08,000

It talks about a visual sighting corroborated by radar evidence. It talks about possible electromagnetic effects. And it talks about the extraordinary manoeuvrability of this object.

331

00:35:09,000 --> 00:35:16,000

Through this, nor any report ever surfaced with a clear explanation of what happened over Tehran in 1976.

332

00:35:17,000 --> 00:35:24,000

The event's declassification seems to indicate that while it might remain a mystery, nothing remains a secret.

333

00:35:25,000 --> 00:35:38,000

Ball lightning remains the best earthly explanation, a rarely seen phenomenon misinterpreted by a confused pilot at a time of great political tension. And that tension was about to snap.

334

00:35:42,000 --> 00:35:52,000

In 1979, the monarchy of Iran fell to an Islamic Revolution hostile to the United States. Many government records were lost or destroyed.

335

00:35:53,000 --> 00:36:00,000

So in this UFO incident, no evidence exists beyond the notes taken the next day by Colonel Moynihan.

336

00:36:01,000 --> 00:36:07,000

There are no cockpit recordings, no telemetry data, no mechanical records, no radar records.

337

00:36:09,000 --> 00:36:18,000

No supporting testimony exists from anyone else in the military or any citizens on the ground. No photos or video have ever surfaced.

338

00:36:19,000 --> 00:36:22,000

But it is still seared into the memory of the pilot.

339

00:36:23,000 --> 00:36:30,000

Because the speed of it and the capability of maneuvering, it cannot be a man-made.

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00:36:31,000 --> 00:36:37,000

So Parvez Jafari is left alone, sincere in his story, but unsupported by evidence.

341

00:36:38,000 --> 00:36:46,000

Another pilot would soon make an extraordinary claim, one that some UFO investigators believe to be historic.

342

00:36:47,000 --> 00:36:56,000

Mosque Santa Maria is probably the only military pilot ever to have opened fire on and hit the UFO.

343

00:36:59,000 --> 00:37:05,000

In 1980, just four years after the Tehran incident, another fighter pilot makes an extraordinary claim.

344

00:37:06,000 --> 00:37:15,000

This US defense document was filed June 3, 1980. It's a record of a South American UFO incident with hundreds of witnesses.

345

00:37:17,000 --> 00:37:34,000

La Jolla Peru, April 11, 1980. According to the report, 1800 military and civilian personnel are on shift at Mariano-Melgar airbase when a round shaped object is spotted hovering in restricted airspace during the morning hours.

346

00:37:35,000 --> 00:37:42,000

At first, the thinking is that this is a weather balloon, but there was a clear concern here about espionage.

347

00:37:43,000 --> 00:37:51,000

This is a sensitive military establishment. It's restricted airspace, so this is perceived essentially as an incursion.

348

00:37:52,000 --> 00:38:01,000

At the time, Mariano-Melgar was considered Peru's most strategic base, storing weapons and recently purchased Soviet combat aircraft.

349

00:38:03,000 --> 00:38:06,000

Pilot Oscar Santa Maria races to intercept the object.

350

00:38:07,000 --> 00:38:15,000

He is flying a Sukhoi-22, a Soviet-made ground attack fighter equipped with a 30-millimeter cannon.

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00:38:24,000 --> 00:38:29,000

At the 2013 citizen hearing on UFO disclosure, Santa Maria recounted his story.

352

00:38:29,000 --> 00:38:39,000

He says he rapidly located the target and placed it in his firing site. Acting with a shoot-down order, Santa Maria didn't hesitate to complete his mission.

353

00:38:39,000 --> 00:38:48,000

But according to the DIA report, the pilot claimed to fire upon it without causing any apparent damage.

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00:38:49,000 --> 00:38:54,000

The rounds just seemed to disappear into the object and have no effect whatsoever.

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00:38:56,000 --> 00:39:02,000

But Santa Maria was a well-known fighter, and he was a very good fighter.

356

00:39:02,000 --> 00:39:08,000

The pilot said he was going to fire upon it without causing any apparent damage.

357

00:39:09,000 --> 00:39:15,000

Santa Maria was a well-trained pilot. He lined up the target again. This time, the target moved.

358

00:39:16,000 --> 00:39:23,000

The balloon made a sudden rise, leaving me under it without the possibility of firing.

359

00:39:24,000 --> 00:39:34,000

Santa Maria turned on his afterburners and accelerated to one and a half times the speed of sound, but did not appear to gain any ground on the object.

360

00:39:35,000 --> 00:39:42,000

The DIA report states, the pilot tried to make a second pass, but the UFO outran the SU-22.

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00:39:42,000 --> 00:39:50,000

Santa Maria made several attempts to engage the target, but every time he got within firing range, the object ascended.

362

00:39:52,000 --> 00:39:56,000

It's almost as if it's anticipating his every move.

363

00:39:57,000 --> 00:40:03,000

The pursuit took Santa Maria to 63,000 feet, twice as high as the average commercial airliner.

364

00:40:04,000 --> 00:40:13,000

He pushed his SU-22 beyond its operational ceiling and was now in unknown territory. Then, a warning sounded.

365

00:40:25,000 --> 00:40:31,000

Santa Maria made a desperate final push toward the object before turning back.

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00:40:34,000 --> 00:40:43,000

When he got closer, the Peruvian pilot claims that what he initially thought was an intruding espionage balloon was actually something else.

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00:40:45,000 --> 00:40:47,000

According to Santa Maria...

368

00:41:03,000 --> 00:41:08,000

...he had a circular metal surface with a silver-plated color base.

369

00:41:09,000 --> 00:41:15,000

He did not have any motors, engines, windows, antennas, and all that.

370

00:41:16,000 --> 00:41:20,000

With his fuel running low, Santa Maria was forced to turn back.

371

00:41:21,000 --> 00:41:28,000

It's clear to him at this point that further pursuit of this object is impossible, and now he's out of fuel.

372

00:41:28,000 --> 00:41:32,000

It's the point of no return. He has to go back. Otherwise, he's dead.

373

00:41:33,000 --> 00:41:42,000

As Santa Maria descended, the report states that the object hovered around Mariano Melgar's restricted airspace for another two hours before vanishing.

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00:41:45,000 --> 00:41:52,000

The DIA report summarizes, apparently some vehicle was spotted, but its origin remains unknown.

375

00:41:53,000 --> 00:42:06,000

For skeptics, it's one thing to report something unexplainable, but it's another to say it played cat and mouse with a fighter jet, even if the story comes from a respected source.

376

00:42:07,000 --> 00:42:17,000

This is why you always hear this case. Well, it was a sheriff, or it was a politician, it was a general, it was an Air Force pilot who saw it as if that makes them better observers.

377

00:42:17,000 --> 00:42:29,000

They're not better observers. We all have the same set of apparatus, eyes and ears and brains that all work the same way, and we're all subject to the same kinds of biases that distort what we think we see.

378

00:42:30,000 --> 00:42:33,000

Some take Santa Maria's story as objective truth.

379

00:42:34,000 --> 00:42:43,000

Oscar Santa Maria is probably the only military pilot ever to have opened fire on and hit a UFO.

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00:42:44,000 --> 00:42:54,000

But no one can confirm that he hit anything, let alone an extraterrestrial craft. Historical evidence shows that a man-made object is a more likely culprit.

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00:42:55,000 --> 00:43:02,000

Weather balloons can be a source of UFO reports. They produce very bright objects, they almost look like stars from a distance.

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00:43:03,000 --> 00:43:08,000

In the case of research balloons and planes, they're over 100,000 feet and many of the aircraft couldn't reach that altitude.

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00:43:08,000 --> 00:43:13,000

Traveling at high speed with few reference points, a pilot's perception is easily fooled.

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00:43:14,000 --> 00:43:25,000

Pilots, when they're in the air, once they're looking up into the sky, there's really no point of reference. So even though they think something is close, it may be very far away. So it is an optical illusion in some cases.

385

00:43:26,000 --> 00:43:33,000

Aviation journalist Bill Sweetman also notes a problem with Santa Maria's aircraft, at least within this high-flying scenario.

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00:43:33,000 --> 00:43:41,000

The Su-22 is a pretty simple rudimentary ground attack aircraft. It's not an interceptor in any way, shape or form.

387

00:43:42,000 --> 00:43:50,000

So it was designed to fly low to the ground and fire heavy bullets a short distance, with great power, but not with great accuracy.

388

00:43:51,000 --> 00:43:59,000

What it means if your guns don't have a very high muzzle velocity, then you have to get closer to the target in order to get an accurate shot.

389

00:43:59,000 --> 00:44:05,000

Because what's going to happen at great range is that the shells will start to drop more because they're not coming out very fast.

390

00:44:06,000 --> 00:44:14,000

Santa Maria's 30mm cannons may have never hit the target, if there was one. Today, only speculation is possible.

391

00:44:15,000 --> 00:44:22,000

For the pilot himself, more than 30 years later, the experience convinces him that we have been visited by other beings.

392

00:44:22,000 --> 00:44:32,000

They were 22 minutes in the manoeuvres, which have been recorded in my memory, and they convinced me that there is technology and extraterrestrial life.

393

00:44:33,000 --> 00:44:46,000

There is absolutely no evidence of any pilot encountering an alien spacecraft. But there is plenty of evidence of them spotting something strange that ends up being explainable, rather than extraterrestrial.

394

00:44:46,000 --> 00:44:55,000

Because there's just weird stuff out there, atmospheric phenomenon of all kinds, sun dogs, northern lights, for example in Alaska.

395

00:44:56,000 --> 00:45:00,000

Pilots see weird stuff all the time. But if you believe in UFOs, then you're going to interpret it that way.

396

00:45:01,000 --> 00:45:06,000

And if a pilot interprets something as extraterrestrial, their actions could become dangerous.

397

00:45:06,000 --> 00:45:16,000

If humans are frightened, if a pilot sees something coming towards them, or they're in a situation where they're doing something unknown, they might take some kind of impulsive action.

398

00:45:17,000 --> 00:45:27,000

A fighter pilot UFO encounter is a rare event with riveting aftershocks. Their stories have yet to confirm alien life, but they do reveal human nature.

399

00:45:28,000 --> 00:45:36,000

In the absence of facts, people are hardwired to supply an explanation for something that they've seen, heard, or experienced.

400

00:45:37,000 --> 00:45:47,000

Our brains just naturally go to the invisible, to the supernatural, to agency, to hidden forces that work. Just simply as a causal explanation for things we can't explain otherwise.

401

00:45:47,000 --> 00:45:58,000

Some pilots remain convinced they chased, or even saw some sort of spacecraft, but they may forever remain unidentified.