

Missile sighting from Rachel & elsewhere, 1/16/97

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Subject: Missile sighting from Rachel & elsewhere, 1/16/97

Rachel, Nevada, 1/16/97, 7pm

I lived full-time in Rachel for 2-1/2 years and can proudly say I've never seen anything I can't explain. I've seen impressive "UFOs" but they turned out to be aircraft lights or military flares.

Just now, though, I saw something startling in the skies southwest of Rachel. It was the most spectacular contrail I have ever seen: An erratic corkscrew starting at the horizon and ending about 10 degrees above it.

I happen to be in Rachel today, attending to business at the Research Center Head Office. There was a foot of snow on the ground and it was bitterly cold. At about 5:50pm, some visiting tourists burst into my trailer with great excitement and told me to come look outside.

This was just after sunset, and the rest of the sky was perfectly clear. The setting sun had illuminated the contrail, and it was just like a kid had scribbled on the blue sky with a white crayon. This was the trail of some aircraft doing extreme maneuvers. I have often seen twisted contrails, usually of two jets engaged in a dogfight, but this one was stunning (in part because of the lighting), and only one aircraft seemed to have been involved. The contrail was thinnest at the horizon, and wider as it got higher in the sky -- suggesting that it started far away and got closer.

It was a stunning display, but it could have been created by a fighter jet doing extreme maneuvers. For example, the Thunderbird aerobatic team practices in the winter at Indian Spring. Still this one was unusual. There was no straight lines at all in the contrail, just a continuously erratic corkscrew. The area of sky it covered was impressive. (Holding my hand at arms length, fingers parallel to the horizon, just barely covered it. This was a lot of area given its apparent distance.)

The visitors said they saw something else: A bright white light above the contrail with a wide "tail" behind it. The 3 visitors, who were passing through while enroute from Las Vegas to California, had first seen the contrail when they were driving about a mile east of Rachel. They also saw what they described as this "comet" above the contrail. They pulled over and the bright white light "blinked out" about 30 seconds later and the cone-shaped "tail" faded out shortly thereafter.

My neighbor called and said that her friends in Alamo had seen the same thing. Since Alamo is 40 miles away, this was unusual for a plane contrail and indicated that the pattern of smoke was both very wide and very high.

We watched the contrail as the sun set, and when the rest of the sky was all dark, the top end of the contrail was still illuminated, indicating that it was indeed very high, as though the object was heading into space.

Just now, my neighbor called back. The 6:30 Channel 8 news from Las Vegas (KLAS) reported the contrail, too. Las Vegas is about 110 miles south of Rachel.

The TV station also reported that the object was a Minuteman

missile fired from Vandenburg Air Force base at about 5:30 pm. (Vandenburg is consistent with the direction where the contrail first appeared above the horizon. A spokesman from Vandenburg was on the line, but since I didn't see the newscast, I haven't collected all the details yet. Apparently the Minuteman failed to complete it's mission. There was also something about another missile being involved, one fired from the Marshall Islands. The Vandenburg spokesman says he was also getting a lot of calls locally, suggesting that it was seen over a vast area.

A missile? At least that's what they WANT you to believe. It certainly has to be embarrassing to have a missile wandering around up there. The contrail looked positively drunken, and I wonder if it was under intelligent control.

A follow-up might appear in newspapers tomorrow.

Glenn Campbell

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