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Update: UFOs Photographed in South Carolina 3/9/00

From: Chris Pittman <Soccorro64@aol.com>
Date: Sat, 05 Aug 2000 02:55:21 -0400 (EDT)
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Subject: UpDate: UFOs Photographed in South Carolina 3/9/00

UFO Sighting Report
March 9, 2000 South Carolina
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Near the beginning of March, 2000, my friend Sam Hussein told me that while traveling on Interstate 26 in South Carolina, returning from a trip to New Orleans, he and 3 friends had seen and photographed a series of triangular UFOs. I was intrigued by the story and it was agreed that I would investigate the sighting report.

I next saw Sam on April 1, 2000. At that time I was able to interview him along with his girlfriend, Alison Reeves, who was also a witness. I was also shown a photograph taken by one of the other two witnesses that appeared to show a triangular craft. I had decided that interviewing Sam and Alison together would not be problematic because they had already had ample time to discuss the events and they were both very honest when their recollections differed. I interviewed the other two witnesses separately.

The event took place on March 9, 2000 between 8:15 and 8:45 PM. Sam was driving on I-26 near the exit sign for an Air Force base (Alison believes it was called Shaw AFB). There were three other people in the car: Alison, Sam's college roommate Peter, and their friend Cass Hunter. The first person to see anything unusual was Sam. While heading northwest, he spotted a large object slowly moving from right to left across his field of vision, apparently crossing over the highway. The "cross-shaped" aircraft appeared to stop and hover in midair when it had crossed over the road. Sam pointed the lighted UFO out to Peter, who said he thought the lights were attached to a tower. To settle the issue, after they had driven past the object, Sam turned the car around and they drove back down the interstate going southeast. When they came to the place where the lights had been seen, they were gone.

Five minutes later, either the same or an identical object was seen further away.

The car was still traveling south at this point. The UFO appeared to move parallel to the highway, and it was moving very slowly. The group lost sight of the object below the tree line.

Sam and Alison had definite ideas about the shape of this "cross-shaped" object. I had them both sketch the craft for me. Though there were differences in the two drawings, both witnesses emphasized that the wings and fuselage appeared oval in cross-section. Sam compared the object's appearance to that of two crossed bananas.

Sam drove off the highway and turned the car around. He got back on I-26 going North. Then he saw a triangular object emerge from below the tree line. The trees were about 100 yards away, and the craft was far beyond the trees. At first it moved very slowly, but then it accelerated very quickly and swooped across the highway behind the car. It was soon lost to view in the distance.

Excited, the group pulled over. There were trees about 50 feet away, and the witnesses could not see through the trees. They got out of the car and watched as a UFO became visible over the tree line in the area where the last object was last seen. It came very close to the witnesses at an estimated altitude of only 2000 feet. Sam felt that it was a triangular craft but Alison described it as cross-shaped. The craft rapidly approached the witnesses, then slowed down and crossed over the highway very slowly. Alison did not feel that she was able to get a very good look at the object. The location of the witnesses was near mile marker 205, very close to the site of the first sighting Sam had.

At this time, the witnesses started taking photographs. Sam and Alison were unsure exactly how this object was lost from view. While the object was close, they could barely hear a quiet engine- like humming sound.

Further up the highway, relatively far away, the UFO was again seen above the trees. This UFO was definitely triangular. When first spotted, it was moving perpendicular to the highway, but it then turned and began moving towards the witnesses. Sam was certain that the craft banked as it turned. It passed the group on the other side of the highway traveling very slowly. Sam roughly estimated that the UFO was 1-2 miles distant. After passing the witnesses, the UFO turned without banking, crossed back over the highway, and sped up. It began moving faster than a conventional airplane at the same altitude and was soon lost to view. Sam noticed something interesting about the way the triangle turned. The first time it changed direction, the body of the craft turned so that the "point" was always in front (the way a conventional aircraft turns.). However, the second time, the craft remained facing the same direction, but the direction of movement changed. When the UFO crossed back over the highway, one of the triangle's sides was in front.

After that triangular object was no longer in view, another object appeared on the right, coming from the same area where the previous object was first spotted. This UFO crossed the highway almost directly over the witnesses' position. It was moving so slowly that Alison was able to easily catch up with the UFO by running and she got directly beneath it. The craft was at an incredibly low altitude. It was huge. At the time of the sighting, Sam guessed that the altitude was only 300 or 400 feet above the ground, but on reconsidering it later, decided it was probably closer to 1000 feet. Sam thought that this craft was probably triangular, but Alison believed that it was cross-shaped, with a compact body and round (cylindrical) wings. The underside looked gray. Sam stated that the UFO's apparent size was as big as his hand held at arm's length, but Alison felt it was much bigger, perhaps as big as a piece of poster board. Sam said that the object made a "quiet hum- no loud engine sound." The sound was more similar to a car motor than to a jet engine. As they watched, the object actually appeared to descend and lose altitude, and it disappeared behind the trees. Then, no objects were seen for 5 minutes.

At this point a police cruiser came. The officer told them that they had to leave. They got going, with Sam driving. Alison does not remember the following incidents very clearly, so Sam related the details of the following incidents. Off to the right, Sam saw a light that flew across the highway in front of the car. Then, an object, described as a large, low-flying triangular craft, was seen coming towards the car. It then crossed immediately over the highway. Sam noticed some details on the underside of the triangle. It was a silhouette, but he could barely make out lines that seemed to define cylindrical "fuselages" on the undersurfaces of the wings. Sam felt that this craft did not look extraterrestrial. The underside had a texture- it was not smooth.

Immediately after that UFO was lost to view, Sam spotted another

one. It was triangular, similar to the others, but this one had a small tail in the back, like an airplane. It flew across the highway. That was the last sighting, and the end of the event.

During the incident, Sam took about 5 photos, which are still undeveloped. Cass Hunter had taken photographs with 2 cameras, and I was able to speak with her briefly after my interview with Sam and Alison. She had developed one of the UFO films, and it had a single UFO photo. She gave me the print and the negative and agreed to an interview at a future date. The photo is somewhat ambiguous, but it appears to show a dark triangle with a bright white light in front.

I was able to interview Sam's roommate Peter and Cass Hunter on April 4, 2000. I spoke with them separately in Cass' dormitory room at Boston University, where all the witnesses go to school. I talked to Cass first, and I had her fill out a MUFON Form 1. This is her account.

Cass was sleeping in the car as they drove away from Charleston, where they had picked up Alison. Suddenly, she awoke to hear Sam excitedly yelling about what he was seeing. At this time she saw a bright light in the sky. They turned the car around to have another look at the craft. At first, Cass thought it was an airplane, but then she realized how slowly it was moving- she estimated the speed at only 5 miles per hour. There was a very bright light visible on the front of the object visible at this point. There also appeared to be two other white lights and one yellow light. It was over the trees on the horizon, moving parallel to the car.

Cass did not remember the sequence of events as clearly as Sam had. She remembered that the UFO had passed overhead 3 or 4 times but it was hard for her to remember how the object looked each time. The first time she saw it, she said, it looked like an airplane. The next time, it looked round, like a "saucer." The members of the group were arguing about the craft's shape, as it was difficult to see a silhouette. Every time Cass saw the object, she became more confused as to its actual shape. She could see that it was a dark color- possibly dark gray. Cass remembered pulling over and taking pictures. She was unsure precisely when the photo she had given me was taken, and she was not even sure that she was the one using the camera when the picture was taken. She told me that she had taken other pictures using her Pentax auto-focus camera, and she gave me an exposed roll of Kodak Gold 200 film, which she said had UFO pictures on it.

Cass stated that the UFO appeared to be moving in wavy lines, as if it had a "drunken pilot." It was "really, really big" and she was especially impressed by how quickly the object was able to accelerate. She estimated that while flying quickly, the UFO took only 5 seconds to go from being enormous to just a dot in the sky. Cass stated that once or twice, she got the impression that there were actually two separate objects. They were "triangular or boomerang" in shape, without wings or a tail. The apparent size of the UFO, she said, was an enormous two feet at arm's length! The object appeared to be flat, and she felt that she had seen it "flip." Strangely, when I asked her if the craft had made any sound, Cass told me that the first time she saw the UFO after they had stopped on the highway, she heard absolute silence- "I didn't even hear the highway for a little while." This appears to be an example of the so-called "Oz Factor". Afterwards, the UFO did seem to emit a "whoosh" sound, but "not very loud." Cass did recall seeing the UFO twice after they had been asked to leave.

I asked Cass to draw the UFO for me. She drew a delta wing-shaped aeroform with a long central fuselage and two shorter fuselage-like forms under the wing areas. I also had Cass fill out the MUFON Form 1. Some of her written responses differed slightly from what she had told me. Cass indicated that at its closest approach, the UFO was two miles away and at an altitude of 300 feet. This distance estimate is different from that given by the other witnesses, who remembered the UFO as being virtually overhead. She estimated that the UFO flew as slow as 20 and as fast as 200 miles per hour, which was different from the speed she indicated when I interviewed her. She also estimated that the apparent size of the thing was about 6 times the size of a full moon, which is much smaller than her earlier estimate of 2 feet (I believe that the more conservative

guess is likely closer to the truth). The form reflects Cass' belief that there were actually two objects, and that the UFO was able to change shape.

I also interviewed the fourth witness, Peter, that same day. Peter told me that they were driving northwest from Charleston on I-26 when the sighting began. They had gotten about 20 miles away from the city, and there was still a fair amount of light pollution, when Sam first saw the UFO. Of this particular object, Peter said, "All I saw were whitish lights that moved very slowly." He was struck by the UFO's "really slow speed" and stated that the craft's altitude was "definitely less than 1,000 feet." It was moving parallel to the highway in the direction of the city. The group then lost sight of the object. They turned around and saw the UFO again. Peter said that at times the UFO would lose altitude and descend below 100 feet.

Interested, they turned the car around again and stopped. They saw the lights again, to the southeast, on the east side of the road. Peter found it difficult to recall the exact sequence of events after this point. He believed that there had been at least two objects, and the presence of more than one UFO confused his memory of the events. He described the objects as "boomerang-shaped", or like a Stealth airplane, black in color, with 3 white "landing lights." He was unsure if there had been any other lights on the UFO. The craft made a "very faint jet-engine type sound." And it had "really great maneuverability- like a fighter plane." Peter described the object's maneuvers at length. He narrated how it banked when it turned, and "you could see the banking because of the lights." Sometimes, the craft appeared to hover, and it could lose altitude quickly without covering much ground. The object's speed was "very slow for a plane"- about 50 miles per hour, down to zero when turning. Even when the craft was seen to move rapidly, Peter said that it was moving slowly, up to about 100 miles per hour. The craft appeared "thin", with a length to height ratio comparable to that of a hand. While they were stopped, Peter remembered taking at least ten pictures. He gave me a disposable camera, a Jazz model DZ50 with 27 exposures of 400 speed film.

Peter got his best view of the UFO after the encounter with the police. He saw the craft low in the southeastern sky and watched as it flew overhead, no more than 200 feet over the road's surface. The apparent size of the thing was about that of a hand at arm's length. He drew this object as an acute boomerang with 3 white lights on the corners.

Peter believed that he had seen some kind of secret military aircraft. He emphatically stated, "It definitely was an airplane, but like no other airplane I have seen in person or on television."

Cass and Peter had given me 3 films, the two UFO films as well as a third roll of vacation photos I pledged to develop. I was disappointed on May 4 when I had the negatives developed to find no UFO photos at all! Both rolls that were supposed to have UFO photos ended before the leg of the trip when the sightings took place. Cass' photos ended in New Orleans, and the disposable camera ended near the start of the trip. There are four possible reasons for this. Firstly, the witnesses made a mistake and somehow lost the UFO films. Secondly, the witnesses may have been taking pictures with no film in the camera, or the film may already have been used up. Thirdly, the light entering the camera may have been insufficient to make any image at all on the negative. The final possibility is that some weird paranormal UFO-related phenomena caused both cameras to mysteriously malfunction. I personally feel that the second and third possibilities are most likely.

On May 22, I finally developed Sam's roll of film. Five UFO photos were apparent on the negatives. The camera was a Minolta Maxxum with a Power Zoom 35-80 lens, and the film used was Kodak 400 speed. The photos are all ambiguous, showing mostly streaks of light. The images appear very distorted due to motion either of the UFO or the camera while the shutter was open. I plan on having the photos looked at by a MUFON analyst to see what if any value they might have.

All four witnesses are highly credible college students with no motive for hoaxing. I have known Sam Hussein for about seven

years and I know him to be very reliable and intelligent. The phenomena reported and photographed cannot be ascribed to any known aircraft. My honest evaluation is that this sighting cannot be explained.

Christopher W. Pittman

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