

UFO INVESTIGATOR



NICAP ■ 3535 UNIVERSITY BLVD. WEST, SUITE 23 ■ KENSINGTON, MARYLAND 20795 ■ A NONPROFIT CORPORATION FOUNDED 1956

POLICE SIGHT UFOs FROM NORTH TO SOUTH . . .

NICAP has been consistently receiving reports from police officers up and down the eastern seaboard for over two months. All of the sightings made by the officers have had similar characteristics.

NEW JERSEY

The first series of reports filed was from Ramsey, New Jersey on October 4. The two officers that witnessed the object were Francis J. Gross and C. Ragazzo.

The policemen were on routine patrol when Officer Ragazzo received a radio call from Gross informing him of five "strange looking" lights in the southwest sky. Both officers were able to observe the objects for a period of five minutes. The time of the sighting was 2:55 a.m. The lights were in a straight line formation moving very slowly. They appeared solid and were reddish in color. The rear sections of the objects were blurred but the rest of the cigar shape was distinctly outlined.

The officers watched the objects intently until they disappeared from sight.

FLORIDA

On November 5, six Dade County police officers sighted three UFOs in the early morning sky. It was 4:39 a.m. when two additional UFOs were observed. The officers were able to keep the objects within viewing range until daybreak.

Dade County police, radio stations, newspapers, etc., were literally inundated with hundreds of telephone calls from local residents reporting cone-shaped ob-

jects during a three day period. By the third day, the reports began to decline in number, but something was still being observed in the early morning skies.

The planet Venus was ruled out as a possible explanation due to the number of the objects being seen as well as the mobility characteristics. Homestead Air Force based was contacted but a spokesman for the base stated that "nothing unusual had been picked up by radar." He further stated that to the best of his knowledge no unusual craft were being flown and there were no air experiments conducted during that period of time. The Air Force once again denied the existence of UFOs over Dade County. An expert meteorologist for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration stated that there was no usual or unusual phenomena that could be attributed to the sightings.

Another witness (not a police officer) was on her way home from work when she spotted two "strange objects" in the sky about 4:30 a.m. Her first impression was that it must be an extremely bright star, but later realized it wasn't. The witness stopped her car to enable her to observe the objects more closely. The UFOs appeared to come almost together then all of a sudden, one went to the east and the other south. The witness then followed the object that had gone in the southerly direction. She stated that the UFOs behaved in an erratic manner and had blinking lights. The witness emphatically stated that she observed a most unusual phenomena and concurs with the other residents and police officers that "something" was visiting Dade County for three mornings in a row. . . .

INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY

A conscientious NICAP member who resides in Rosel, France telephoned to report a most extraordinary UFO case.

One of the leading newspapers in Spain, La Gaceta-Del Norte, ran an article regarding a UFO that crashed in the northern area of Lima, Peru on November 11. The crash site was in a dense jungle and difficult to reach with conventional vehicles. However, the Director of Education for the region, Mr. Rodolfo Chujutalli, assisted the local authorities in their efforts to retrieve the craft. When the police and Chujutalli reached the crash site, it was reported that the UFO was very much in tact.

The craft was described as being oval shaped and measured 380 centimeters wide. The UFO had an extremely unusual metallic exterior surface. There were two spheres which measured 30 centimeters in diameter. One had been severely damaged. An antenna (which looked like a TV antenna) protruded at the top of the craft. It had five spikes connected to the antenna-like apparatus.

The object is presently being held at a Spanish Civil Guard Station. NICAP's foreign investigators are endeavoring to have the craft released for proper analysis. Their findings will be reported in the UFO INVESTIGATOR when available.



THE NICAP BOARD OF GOVERNORS, OFFICERS AND STAFF WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND THEIR SINCERE WISHES TO EACH MEMBER AND THEIR FAMILIES A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON.

WHY MIGHT A SCIENTIST DECIDE TO INVESTIGATE UFO REPORTS?

By: Bruce S. Maccabee, Ph.D.

The November 1975 issue of the UFO INVESTIGATOR published a submitted article entitled, "WHY MIGHT A SCIENTIST DECIDE TO INVESTIGATE UFO REPORTS?". Space limitations made it necessary to conclude the article in this issue for your reading pleasure.

I shall now present a detailed analysis consisting of representative arguments and counter-arguments in a series of attempts to explain the report in terms of known phenomena. The arguments to be presented naturally refer specifically to this report, but they are typical of arguments used in the analysis of all well-documented UFO reports.

The basic characteristics of the object described in the report are (1) it was dark against the bright blue sky, (2) it was apparently rather large, and (3) it maintained a fixed position for an extended period of time. Dark objects which are seen in the sky and which could exhibit these characteristics are insects, birds, helicopters, and balloons. (Astronomical objects are ruled out primarily because the object was reportedly dark against the sky, but also because the sighting lines to the object are not parallel and because the object was seen considerably before sunset). However, various other characteristics of the object make these identifications difficult, if not impossible, to accept. For example, one might consider the possibility that the several observers misidentified (a) a hovering bee, some other insect, or a hummingbird which was at close range, (b) a helicopter that was hovering at a large distance (several kilometers), or (c) a dark colored, large, freely-floating balloon. Explanation (a) is contradicted by the major observer's claim of seeing the object at distances of up to 9 miles, by the duration of the sighting, and probably also by the time of the year (early spring). Explanation (b) is not contradicted by either the distance over which the object was observed or by the duration of the sighting, although one might wonder why a helicopter would hover, motionless, over the side of a mountain in the middle of the Shenandoah Valley for a period of about two hours. However, explanation (b) is contradicted by the

rather detailed description of the object by the observer, who would have recognized a helicopter, especially if it were viewed through seven power binoculars. Also, the overall shape and "tilt" of the object is difficult to reconcile with typical orientations of helicopters. Moreover, a helicopter would turn on its running lights as evening came (if it were flying legally), yet no lights were reported in the vicinity of, or associated with, the object. Explanation (c) is also improbable for several reasons. One of these is the distance over which the object was reportedly seen. To be visible over about 9 miles, a balloon would have to be quite large, like a weather balloon. However, I was assured in several conversations with weather bureau personnel who are acquainted with weather balloon characteristics that it would be virtually impossible for such a balloon to meet the combined requirements of being dark colored, being large enough to be seen for 9 miles, and being over the Shenandoah Valley at an altitude as low as two kilometers. Of course, a large, dark colored, locally-launched balloon (not launched by the weather service, however, since there are no launch sites in the Shenandoah Valley) could satisfy all of these requirements, but it would still have to satisfy the requirement of perfect balance between the weight and buoyancy of the balloon in order to remain at a fixed altitude. However, the main reason to reject the freely-floating balloon explanation is the very probable existence of a least a gentle breeze in the vicinity of Mt. Jackson since there was a 2.5 m/sec. wind at Staunton. Of course, the reported shape and orientation of the object are also inconsistent with expected shapes (spherical, conical (apex downward), or elliptical) and orientation (rotationally symmetric about a vertical axis) of a stable, hovering balloon.

Since a straightforward identification of the object in a manner that is consistent with the totality of the report is apparently not possible, one is left with the following choices: (1) attempt to identify the object with some rare, but "understood" physical phenomenon; (2) show that certain parts of the report can be ignored, and that the remaining parts

describe an object which can be identified; (3) claim that the object was not real, and that the report is a fabrication; (4) claim that, since the data are insufficient to establish the nature of the object, the report is of marginal value and one must wait for better data before reaching a conclusion; or (5) conclude that the report describes a truly new physical phenomenon.

An example of the type of explanation that would be consistent with the report and the first choice above would be that the object was, in effect, a hoax (intentional or unintentional) on the part of someone other than the observers. The object might be an oddly-shaped balloon or kite "anchored" to Short Mountain so that it would not drift away. However, the possibility that this could be a valid identification of the object seems extremely remote since the side of Short Mountain is a forest which would make launches of large balloons or kites very difficult, to say the least. Moreover, the apparent height of the object would have required tethering cable lengths greater than a kilometer. With particular regard to the kite hypothesis, the kite would have to be unusually large and would have to be constructed in such a way that it would not flutter in the wind. Moreover, it would have to be designed so that it could appear with the upper end toward the northeast even though the wind was from the southwest. I can think of no way in which a kite could have its upper end downwind from its lower end.

With regard to the tethered balloon hypothesis, it is difficult to imagine how a balloon could take on the shape and tilt described in the report. In particular, a typical balloon made of flexible material would not come to a point at its upper end; rather, it would be rounded so that it would have an overall "ice-cream cone" shape. Even if the reported object had a rounded upper end, it would still be only marginally consistent with a balloon because of the apparent tilt of the object. For the axis of an ice-cream cone shaped balloon to be tilted as shown would require a strong (and steady) wind because the gas in the balloon would always be "trying" to make the cone axis verti-

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CANADIAN FARMER REGRETS SIGHTING

Robert Suffern, a lifetime resident of a small Ontario town received a telephone call from his sister regarding a bright glow a few blocks from his home.

Mr. Suffern drove toward the area and was able to observe the craft on the road. His description was that the craft appeared to be 12 to 14 feet in diameter and saucer-shaped. The witness proceeded toward the craft in his automobile even though he was extremely frightened. The object was directly in front of him. Suddenly the "ship" ascended straight up leaving no visible trail of smoke or exhaust behind and vanished within seconds from view.

Suffern, a 27-year old carpenter and father of two children stated that before the ship ascended, he saw a distinct "figure" only 300-400 yards from his car. The description of the "spaceman" was that, "he had very wide shoulders which were out of proportion with the rest of his body." The creature was wearing a globe-type helmet and a silvery grey suit.

The witness quickly turned his car around and headed for home. He was "shaken and panicked" because of what he had encountered. Once again, the object appeared on the road ahead of him. The witness stopped his car and again observed the "creature" as it mounted a fence effortlessly as though "it" were weightless.

Mr. Suffern reported the incident immediately upon his arrival home to the local authorities. He felt frustrated, confused and could not even begin to express the panic he was experiencing regarding this incident.

Because of the nature of UFO reports, witnesses are reluctant at times to report sightings for fear of ridicule and embarrassment. Fortunately in most news media reporting, UFO reports have been treated with dignity and the respect deserved. However, there are still "sensational" and inaccurate accounts published by the news media.

A typical example of this type of reporting is the Suffern sighting. Television, newspaper reporters, and radio stations literally inundated Mr. Suffern with questions, calls, inquiries, etc., to the point that he refused and regretted ever having reported the incident.

SIGHTING ADVISORY

Preliminary information on new reports. Details and evaluations will be published when available.

May 16, 1975, West Chester, Pa.—A retired aircraft industry worker who also has thirty years service as an Army Reserve Officer, and his wife reported observing a brilliant light in the northwestern sky. The night sky was clear and the couple was able to view the light for twenty minutes. The light was estimated to be 15° above the horizon and maintained a steady position. The exterior circumference appeared to be outlined with bright white lights. The interior of the circle was composed of numerous white and a few green lights illuminated with the same intensity of brilliance.

At various times, the light appeared to pulsate as a total unit. The witness analyzed the possibility that he and his wife had been viewing Venus. This theory was discounted five minutes later, when the couple noticed that the light had vanished completely.

September 12, 1975, Farmington, Minnesota—Two county policemen observed two unusually shaped lights in the early morning sky at 4:05 a.m. Their first impression was that they were very bright stars until the two objects began to move in a circular motion which then changed to a "yo-yo" pattern. Suddenly, the second object moved from below the first light to the top and then returned to its original position.

The troopers reported the incident to headquarters, and FAA was also contacted to inquire if radar was recording any unusual patterns. The agencies reports were negative.

Mr. Suffern felt the need to have his telephone disconnected so that he can return to a "normal" type existence. He felt that his life became a "three ring circus." The process in which an investigation is handled and the publicity given to this type of case can become a deterrent for conscientious, scientific UFO research efforts.

Mr. Suffern has refused to discuss the incident further with the news media. NICAP's regional investigator has written to the witness, and Mr. Suffern has stated that he will cooperate to the best of his ability with NICAP.

Additional information pertaining to this incident will be published in the UFO INVESTIGATOR upon receipt of the Regional Investigator's report and analysis conclusion.

ERRATUM

The two drawings which appeared in the November 1975 issue of the UFO INVESTIGATOR on page 3 were sketched approximately 1½ years apart.

FEEDBACK / Readers write

I am responding to an article in the October issue of this paper which gave an example of police assistance to NICAP. The official procedure for handling reports of UFOs received by the Enfield, Conn., Police Department was explained in this article. This procedure includes giving cooperation to NICAP by passing along information to NICAP, and cooperating in any investigations sponsored by NICAP. The article concluded by suggesting that the readers bring the need of police assistance in this field to the attention of their local police department.

Since reading that article, I have decided to check into the amount of assistance my local police department gives in this regard. I strongly urge others to do the same.

It is imperative, in order to make progress in the field of ufology, that those who receive sightings reports (namely the police) give full cooperation to researchers. There is an equally great need for this to be brought to the attention of the police.

Sincerely,
Patricia McMahon

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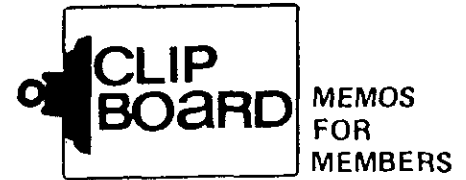
cal. Only a rigid "balloon" could have the shape and orientation of the object. Of course, even a rigid balloon, shaped like a long narrow football to match the shape would "try" to maintain a vertical axis if tethered at the (lower) end. To make it tilt sufficiently the tether would have to be attached near the middle of the "balloon". Of course the colorations of the "balloon" plus the addition of a "white fog" would be necessary to match the description, and one would have to have a perfectly steady wind so that the "balloon" would not move or wobble.

The second choice offers the possibility of explaining the report by the "divide and conquer" technique which has been used very successfully, although perhaps not always in the best interests of science, to explain other reports of unusual phenomena. To apply this technique one could argue that the only significant part of the report is the multiple witness sighting lasting for "maybe five minutes". By giving zero weight to (i.e., ignoring) the statements of the major observer's children, the number of observers can be reduced from four to two. With regard to the object itself, one could argue that the report is correct only as to (1) the general shape of the object, and (2) the absence of other objects in the sky near the object. These arguments reduce the report to its "hard core," i.e., to the portion that is least likely to have been misreported because it contains only the most obvious details and was made by the smallest number of (supposedly) reliable observers. According to the "hard core" of the report then, a dark object was seen in the southeast against the clear blue sky just before sunset. The object was motionless for about five minutes. The two observers were not able to identify it despite its rather large angular size and despite the aid of binoculars. It is not possible, from the hard core of the report, to estimate the actual size of the object since its distance is not known. Yet, despite the loss of the size information and despite the loss of the information on the fine detail of the object, it still seems unlikely that it can be identified as an insect, a bird, a balloon, a kite, a helicopter, or some other known phenomenon.

The third choice is often used as an "ultimate resort" by those who are convinced that there are no unknown, macroscopic, physical phenomena left to discover. They would argue that if the phenomenon described in the report cannot be explained in terms of known phenomena, the report must be a fabrication, either intentional or unintentional, on the part of the person(s) making the report. An intentional fabrication would be a premeditated hoax (fraud); an unintentional fabrication would be a manifestation of physiological and/or psychological phenomena. Reasons for intentional fabrication could include the desire for monetary reward, the desire for public notice, and, perhaps, "status inconsistency." Reasons for unintentional fabrication include mental distress, and/or hallucination (psychological), and incorrect sensory data (physiological). Since the report presented here was confirmed in part by at least one other reliable observer, it seems highly unlikely that it is an unintentional fabrication. Moreover, in view of the fact that the observers neither expected nor received either compensation or publicity, and, in fact, may have even placed their social and economic security in jeopardy, it seems extremely unlikely that the report is an intentional fabrication.

The fourth choice, which is to adopt a "wait and see" attitude, is a legitimate choice for a scientist who is only marginally familiar with the literature of UFO phenomena. Whether this scientist eventually decides to accept an explanation in terms of known phenomena, or whether he decides to accept an explanation in terms of a new phenomenon would depend strongly upon his inner feelings toward "semi-scientific" subjects and upon whatever further studies he might make.

The fifth choice, that the report describes a new physical phenomenon, is probably not a legitimate choice for a scientist to make based on the information contained in only a single report such as this one. However, it would be a legitimate choice for a scientist who is familiar with the literature and for whom a single credible report such as this one is essentially the "last straw."



The Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, N.Y. is offering a non-credit course on UFOs beginning in January. The course description has been included for your information.

With the abled assistance of dedicated UFO researchers, courses such as this one could be included into non-credit curricula throughout the country.

"UFOs: AN INTRODUCTION"

Instructor:
Robert Barrow

Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to offer students a sampling of modern UFO history, primarily from the 1940's to the present, and deals mainly with events on the national U.S.A. level (some earlier sightings and foreign sightings will be touched upon). The course presupposes that the UFO is a real, existent anomaly whose identity must be reckoned with through structured investigation. The intention of the course includes attempting to clear up some of the myths and misunderstanding about the UFO subject while, at the same time, allowing for classroom discussion of the views and evidence presented.

Course Outline (for six classroom sessions)

1. a) Introduction to course.
b) Discussion: "UFOs: What They are Not, What They Could, and What Kinds of People See Them,"
2. "Some of the Classic UFO Sightings."
3. "The Government and UFOs (Part I)."
4. "The Government and UFOs (Part II)."
5. "Early UFO Sightings and Foreign Sightings."
6. "Private UFO Investigative Organizations and Individuals Who Played an Important Part."