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UFO INVESTIGATOR

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON AERIAL PHENOMENA

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SEPARATE SIGHTINGS IN NEW JERSEY POINT TO SINGLE UFO

On May 11, 1977, the first in a trilogy of articles written by Shirley Lazarus appeared in the Morris County, New Jersey's Daily *Record.* All three of the articles involved the May 9th sighting of an apparent UFO by Morristown area residents. During the time between the sightings and the appearance of the first story, Ernest Jahn, a New York based investigator, was informed of the case. He immediately contacted the reporter and the witnesses for interviews as well as the local authorities for data on the night's sky activities. The following account of the events surrounding the sightings contains excerpts from both Mr. Jahn's report and from the witnesses' account. (see Sighting Advisory, June 1977 issue).

On the evening of May 9, Leslie Hendricks, a Morristown resident and the first witness to acknowledge the presence of the object, walked out of the Livingston Shopping Mall and headed toward her car. It was 9:30 PM and the Mall was closing for the night. Out in the parking lot, Leslie looked up into the dark, overcast sky. Far to her right and high up in the night sky she saw a large glowing sphere about the size and color of an oversized harvest moon. The sphere was stationary in the southwest quadrant of the night sky. According to Leslie's calculations, the object was hovering at an altitude that was higher than that of an ordinary commercial aircraft.

Leslie watched the glowing ball for approximately fifteen seconds. During this time she observed that the object was comparatively as bright as the moon, but that it was not quite as intense as a bright star. The most appropriate term Leslie could find to describe the object's intensity was "energizing." Around the perimeter of the globe, Leslie noticed that the intensity of the light kept changing from bright to dim and back to bright. This caused the object to appear to be pulsating, or as the witness described it, as if it were "energizing."

It should be noted that the sky was completely overcast and that neither the moon nor any stars were visible. The strange sphere had a distinct shape although no sharp outline could be seen. The grapefruit-sized light was self luminous and it did not vary from its original orange-red color during the course of the sighting.

After fifteen seconds, the glowing sphere, which had previously remained steady at approximately 40 degrees above the horizon, suddenly moved at a very high rate of speed toward the northeast. In the judgement of the witness, the object moved at a greater velocity than that of a jet aircraft. After this burst of speed, the object disappeared.

Ms. Hendricks did not know whether she had seen a UFO. Even though the Morristown Airport was nearby, she did not think that the object looked or behaved like a conventional craft. The sighting had only lasted a few seconds and she had not had time to overcome her surprise and excitement in order to direct the attention of the other people in the parking lot toward the unusual object. However, in her curiosity to find out if any one else had seen the spherical shape, she contacted the local paper and told her story to Shirley Lazarus of the Daily *Record*.

Two days later, an article about the sighting appeared asking for any other witnesses to please contact the newspaper office. Fortunately, by May 13, a second witness called in. Mrs. Nancy Allocco and her two children, Lee, age twelve and Neil, age fourteen, had observed an unusual object at approximately 9:30 PM on May 9 that was remarkably similar to the one seen by Ms. Hendricks. Friday's Daily *Record* carried the Allocco story.

While Mrs. Allocco and her children were returning to their home in Harding Township from the Drew University Campus, they noticed a large glowing object in the sky. Because the road that the family was travelling on took them behind trees and other visual obstructions, the Allocco's frequently lost sight of the object. However they could see that it was too close and too bright to be a star. When the three witnesses reached their driveway, they again could observe the moon-shaped, orange-white light. The three observers sat in the car after parking in the driveway and watched the glowing sphere. As they watched the light suddenly began to move away and then just as suddenly, it disappeared.

The Allocco home in Harding Township is approximately ten miles from the Livingston Shopping Mall where Leslie Hendricks had noted the object.

In her interview, Mrs. Allocco described the object as a huge, glowing star and she also revealed that she was not sure that it was a UFO. She thought that it might have been some type of aircraft or a familiar object that appeared strange due to the cloudy night.

In order to draw factual conclusions about the case and to classify the light as identifiable or unidentifiable, Mr. Jahn summed up his investigation as follows:

Investigative Action Taken

Upon receiving these reports I checked with the major airports and radar facilities in this area. They did not report any

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(See New Jersey Sightings)

Analysis of a Photo from Miami, Florida

The photo submitted to NICAP from a member in Miami shows an apartment building, greatly over-exposed streetlights, a nearby truck and a strange bright patch of light which the member thought might be a UFO. This "UFO" was not seen when the photo was taken, but nevertheless it appeared on the final print. Was this a "rare" invisible UFO that could only be seen by the camera? The answer is no; the bright patch was caused by reflections of light *within the camera itself.* Such reflections cause images that may have various shapes, but which are all referred to as *lens flares.* There are several characteristics which allow a bright image to be identified as a lens flare. The first characteristic is that (except perhaps with expensive *reflex* type cameras) the bright image was not seen when the photo was taken. The next characteristic is that there was at least one very bright source of light in the surroundings when the picture was taken. This source may not appear in the picture itself; all that is necessary is that the source was illuminating the lens when the picture was taken. The third characteristic is that a line drawn from the center of the (uncropped) complete photograph *through the center of the bright image* and extended beyond the image should "point" toward a bright source of light, or else it should pass through a bright source on the way from the center of the photo to the unusual "UFO" image. The fourth characteristic is that the line from the center of the photo to the image is usually an *axis of symmetry* of the image (it has the same shape on one side of the line as it has on the other side, except that the shapes are *reversed* as in a mirror reflection).

A lens flare is an image which is nowhere near as bright as the source which causes the flare. For this reason lens flares are not seen in daylight pictures unless either the sun illuminates the camera lens directly (and generally is within the field of view of the camera) or a reflection of the sun from some shiny surface illuminates the lens.

Lens flares in nightime photos are common in areas where there are bright lights. The reason for this is that in order to obtain a sufficient amount of exposure to produce an image of the background of the lights, either the camera lens is wide open, or the shutter stays open a long time, or both. Under these conditions the normally faint lens flare has plenty of time to "build up" a noticeable image density. A clue to the long time of the exposure is the overexposure of lights appearing within the photo. Another clue is a smearing of the images of lights combined with a large "halo" region around any particular bright light. Still another indication of long exposure time is elongation of images of lights. Instead of being basically circular, the images are like rather thick wavy lines. The existence of streaks of light, rather than of points or large circular areas, indicates that either the light(s) or the camera or both moved during exposure.

Let us now compare these characteristics of lens flares with the image in the Miami photo. In accordance with the first characteristic the photographer was "amazed" to find the "UFO" on his photo because he had not seen it as the picture was taken. In accordance with the second characteristic there was a bright source (a nearby streetlight) which, however, did not appear within the photo itself. What did appear was a portion of the halo-like glow around the light at the left edge of the photo. The picture as reproduced in the May Investigator shows a slight vestige of this glow near the upper left hand corner. In the original (color) picture this glow is much more evident, indicating that there was a bright light just to the left of the field of view of the camera. In accordance with the third characteristic a line drawn from the center of the photo through the center of the "UFO" points toward the source of the glow beyond the left edge of the picture. Unfortunately this test does not work out exactly on the NICAP reproduction because the picture is slightly cropped and because the source of the glow at the left hand edge does not indicate *exactly* where the bright light is, only approximately where it is. In accordance with the fourth characteristic the line from the center of the photo through the image is an axis of symmetry of the flare. Variations in brightness of the flare, called brightness structure, are apparent in the NICAP reproduction and much more so in the original. The brightness structure in the original is clearly symmetric about a line drawn from the center of the photo.

Other characteristics of the photo are consistent with what one would expect under conditions which cause lens flares. These characteristics are: nighttime; overexposures of the lights appearing within the photo; and smearing of images within the photo (streaks of light). These characteristics indicate that the camera lens was wide open and that the shutter stayed open for a considerable time—maybe several seconds. The smearing indicates motion of the camera—undoubtedly hand held— during the time the shutter was open. Under these conditions the normally weak lens flare from the nearby bright light had plenty of time to "build up" an image of apparently considerable brightness.

Lens flares have been sensationalized as genuine "UFOs" in many popular publications. Usually a picture is cropped (part is cut away) and only the "UFO" image is published. Under these circumstances it is difficult to decide for or against a lens flare. To be sure, one must have the original or at least an uncropped copy. However, the serious investigator should begin to suspect that a bright image is a lens flare whenever the witness says something like "I didn't see it when I took the picture, but when I got my pictures back from developing, there it was!" (Note: with relatively expensive reflex cameras, in which the photographer looks through the lens which takes the picture it may be possible to see the flare just as the picture is being taken. Inexpensive cameras use different lens systems for sighting and for exposure of the film. Thus in simple cameras a flare may appear in the exposure lens but no in the sighting lens.)

Dr. Bruce Maccabee
NICAP Consultant

SITUATION RED: The UFO Seige; An Update on Strange and Frequently Frightening Encounters by Leonard H. Stringfield (Foreward by Major Donald E. Keyhoe)

Book Review

Dr. Bruce Maccabee, a NICAP member and consultant, submitted the following book review.

Len Stringfield has been actively involved in UFO research for over twenty years. He is a former advisor and field investigator for NICAP and he used to have his own investigatory group (CRIFO-Civilian Research, Interplanetary Flying Objects) with its own publication, *Orbit.* He also wrote a previous book entitled *Inside Saucer Post. . . . 3-0 Blue.* I had come across this book but had never read it. However, I had wondered about the name until I read in this book that in 1955, he was asked by the Air Force to screen UFO reports made by the Ground Observer Corps (GOC) and that he had been given a code name to use in contacting the Air Force to inform them of good reports. The code name was FOX TROT KILO 3-0 BLUE.

Mr. Stringfield mentions that his interest in UFOs was sparked by his own WW II interaction with teardrop shaped glowing objects that passed near, and may have affected the operation of a military plane in which he was travelling in 1945. As a result of direct contacts with Keyhoe in the early fifties, Stringfield founded CRIFO in 1954. He was immediately given considerable press coverage by the late Frank Edwards, and thence begins his long and rather fascinating involvement with all aspects of Ufology. His interactions with the Air Force are particularly interesting. Of special interest is his recounting of events in August 1955 when jets were scrambled over Cincinnati. According to Stringfield he was given complete information about radar confirmations of objects spotted by the GOC posts during two evenings, and about jet scramblings from Lockbourne AFB and was subsequently told he could publish this material in *Orbit.* However, when he approached the Cincinnati newspapers *they weren't interested.* Only one reporter checked up on the story, and to this reporter the Air Force denied the incident! Although Stringfield doesn't say it, one may get the impression that he was "set up" by the Air Force.

Mr. Stringfield states his opinion of the cause of UFO reports very explicitly in the opening sentence of the book: "Since the advent of the UFO, . . . Earth's civilization has been the obvious target of an alien surveillance." However, to his credit, he keeps his theorizing to a minimum and presents, instead, a large collection of cases ranging in time from 1947 to the present, with the emphasis on 1973 cases and on reports made since 1973. Most of the reports go beyond the low order "lights in the sky" type, and many reports contain rather detailed descriptions of interactions between UFO "craft" and "UFOnauts" and humans. Perhaps his most compelling report is the next to the last one in the book. It describes the apparent temporary abduction of *three* women who were driving in a car along a winding road in Kentucky. There are over sixty other rather detailed cases reported in this book, any one of which could be a sort of proof of Stringfield's statement quoted above.

Along with presenting UFO cases and a sparing amount of his own commentary, Mr. Stringfield has also included a collection of statements concerning the UFO situation from certain noted people in the UFO field in this country and in others. He has also presented comments on his correspondence with the USAF through the years and on the interaction of the military with civilian UFO reports.

One of the many cases that Stringfield related involved the observations of an object illuminated by a searchlight beam on several different occasions. This "searchlight case," according to Stringfield, began on Aug. 19, 1949, when a Sgt. Berger rocked a searchlight into the vertical position. The light illuminated an apparently stationary circular object at a great altitude. As I read the report in Stringfield's book I had an urge to make a trip to the National Archives where the Blue Book files are on microfilm. I had this urge because I was sure that in previous random searches through the files I had come upon a report of an object seen in a searchlight. However, I had not copied the report, but merely noted its existence. Soon after finishing the book I visited the National Archives and, sure enough, there was a file on the searchlight case, which took place in *Cincinnati.* However, the case file index (a sort of table of contents) listed the source of the report as Langley AFB, Virginia! The reason for this error was that the first document in the file was a letter to the Commanding General of *Langley AFB from* a Col. Dixon of the Dept. of Military Science and Tactics of the University of Cincinnati. The letter described Sgt. Berger's observations with the searchlight on the night of Aug. 19, 1949. Apparently the Blue Book (at that time Project Grudge) investigators, in their typical sloppy fashion, assumed that the origin of the report was Langley AFB without bothering to read the letter, which clearly stated the location of the sighting.

The main portion of the searchlight case file consists of letters from William Winkler, who is mentioned in Stringfield's book as being one of the witnesses. Winkler wrote rather detailed letters to Col. Vandenburg in 1949 and 1950, and again to Capt. Ruppelt in 1952. Although there are indications that certain documents are missing from the case file, it seems that Mr. Winkler did not get satisfactory responses from the Air Force.

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FEEDBACK / Readers write

In response to the photo analysis published in the May 1977 *Investigator*, NICAP received several letters from members who were intrigued by the large, circular light in the upper left corner of the photograph. Three of these letters are printed below.

From Dr. H.D. Palmer of White Cloud, Michigan:

Regarding the UFO analysis in the last *Investigator*:

1. All items in the photo are blurred except the UFO (or item).
2. Light reflection would indicate no reflection of its own.
3. Size is way out of proportion.

Opinion: Possible reflection of the circle of light under the bus or picture flaw, or moon with slight cloud cover. NOT A UFO.

From Jim D'Angelo of the Drew Institute for Archaeological Research:

With virtually no information supplied regarding this photograph, only the following can be deduced:

1. It is a time exposure with a hand held camera taken at night. Blur (up/down)

indicates this. . .

2. The UFO would have to be stationary in a time exposure to appear like this one does. But it is not blurred like the rest of the scene! It can not only not be the moon, it can not be anything taken on the same frame as the rest of this scene.
3. It is not a lens flare like any I have seen, nor a water mark nor an air bubble on the negative. I think it is man-made hoax—two negatives, one print.

From Doris M. Disbrow of Sugar Hill, New Hampshire:

Gentlemen, your picture on page four of the May 77 *Investigator* looks to me like the moon over Miami.

NICAP wishes to thank all of those who wrote in for sharing their analyses.

BOOK REVIEW

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Apparently the Air Force took little interest in the case despite the repetition of the sightings. As I read the documents, I at first decided that the searchlight was picking up a very high altitude dust layer (the Air Force "explanations" suggested clouds). However, it is clear that Mr. Winkler and the others were not to be fooled easily by atmospheric effects. Winkler stated repeatedly that the object would remain fixed even when the beam was moved. Sgt. Berger had apparently reported to Col. Dixon (mentioned above) that the object "appeared to change color in the light beam from a sort of phosphorescent appearance to a bluish color if held in the light and when the beam was removed the *object remained visible* with what has been described as a luminous appearance" (italics by this author). Perhaps the searchlight did not pick up a "flying saucer;" perhaps this was merely a "rare" case of fluorescence and phosphorescence of the atmosphere (so "rare" that it has never been officially noted as being possible). In either case, it seems that here was a real phenomenon with just what science demands of a UFO report—repeatability—and was the Air Force interested? You can draw your own conclusions from the fact that this case is listed as having "insufficient information." (It is clear that in this case "insufficient information" = "insufficient *investigation*".)

Although *Situation Red* starts off rather slowly, it is generally very well written. It is definitely not for the faint-of-heart. Mr. Stringfield claims that his purpose is "not to scare, sensationalize or paint a picture of doom. . . ." However, the reader of this book will be confronted with UFO cases. ". . . some so bizarre they stagger the imagination." Part of what makes some of these cases "stagger the imagination" is that they are not sensationalized. One cannot merely attribute them to low grade hoaxes or delusions. Nor can one attribute them to attempts by the writer to "make mountains out of molehills." If you consider UFO reports to be mere bedtime stories, you better stay away from this book. However, for anyone who is willing to accept a challenge to his mental image of man's position in the universe, I recommend it.

New Jersey Sightings

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unusual activity or contacts during this time period. Upon checking the weather conditions for that evening, I found them to be as follows: three thousand foot ceiling, overcast with mist and light rain.

After checking with local observatories as to the possibility of the sighting's being an astronomical occurrence, I was advised that this would have been unlikely because; (1), The moon on the evening of the occurrences was in its last quarter and therefore, would not have appeared as a large harvest moon as described by the witnesses, and (2), further discounting this possibility, I was advised that the moon did not rise until 11:00 PM on the evening in question, which would mean that it was not visible during the time of the sightings.

It was further determined that all of the major planets which are often reported in this type of incident would not have been visible in this area at the time of the sighting even if the sky had been clear. Also, no astronomers reported seeing fireballs or meteors that evening.

Summary

Based on personal interviews with the witnesses involved and on information obtained as to possible causes of this phenomenon, it is my opinion that the reports filed are truthful and factual to the best of the witnesses' knowledge. At this time the object witnessed would have to be classified as unidentified.

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