

# SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs



*People say seeing is believing, but I disagree. All the evidence suggests the opposite is the truth. In plain fact, we see what we believe.*

*David Clarke - How UFOs conquered the world*

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# Back to the unknowns

With the death of the Roswell slides, we can now proceed to look at more of the same old UFO Cases that really don't amount to much of anything. Most of the cases have potential explanations offered that are usually dismissed because things don't precisely line up the way the witness' recall. The problem with all of this is that UFO investigators often forget that the biggest problem with their "data" is that it is based on the subjectivity of the witness testimony. Just because a witness states, "I know what I saw", it does not mean they are reporting accurately what they had seen.

This brings us to some recent news that came out regarding a case that did not use witness testimony as the primary evidence. A group called "The Scientific Coalition for UFOlogy" (SCU) states that they have the "best documentation of an unknown aerial and submerged nautical object exhibiting advanced technology". This is typical UFO wording to make it appear they are being scientific but what they are actually saying is, "We think this is an alien spaceship". Even more amazing is that they state in their paper they are willing to listen to criticism but that criticism must be written in the form of some formal study of some kind. In other words, they won't listen to the arguments presented on blogs, newsletters, or any other form of communication. Allowing only one point of view to be presented is more of the typical UFOlogical myopia we have seen in the past. Didn't the Roswell slides suffer from the same illness? It is interesting to point out that their report was self published, was not subject to any critical review, and contains potential errors that were ignored/missed by the authors. The writers all had the same point of view on the subject and did not exhibit very much skepticism about their conclusions. From what I understand, the only review came from UFO organizations and unnamed experts. Again, this sounds a lot like the Roswell slides.

While the SCU might not want to recognize, or accept, critical examination of their work, I am sure the reader would like to know more. I recommend readers visit the Puerto Rico Research Review (PRRR) web site to get some excellent information on the matter. The PRRR was formed using the core group of RSRG members and some additional UFO agnostics. We have been debating and examining the data for a few weeks. As much as I wanted to present information regarding the group's work in this issue, I decided to allow the PRRR web site to publish the group's finding before I comment. I will probably have an extensive discussion on the matter in the next issue.

My summer schedule has limited my time writing articles so this issue is a bit thin. I did take the time to type up a fictional story about how I think a group of UFO proponents and a skeptic might look at a UFO case. The details of the case are purely fictional but I am sure that people will see bits and pieces from various UFO cases I have discussed in the past. Hopefully, readers will find it an amusing read.

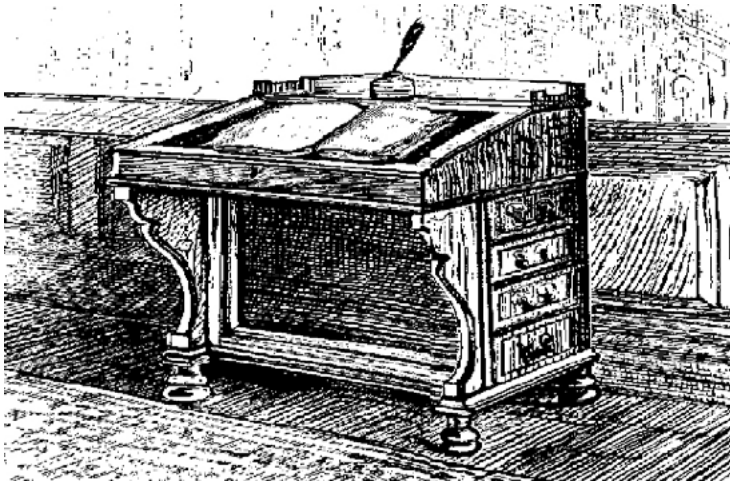
Front: The theme of this month's issue, based on some blog postings and e-mail exchanges, appears to have evolved into rocket launch UFOs. This is a rocket launch I saw from Port Canaveral, Florida on January 20, 2015. It was taken with a 180mm lens just before the solid boosters were jettisoned.

Left: My annual Perseid photography managed to record two very bright meteors on August 12th. The exposure time was only 52 seconds.

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# Who's blogging UFOs?

## Hot topics and varied opinions



**Is MUFON an astronomical organization?** That's what the organization appears to claim for their tax exempt status. I find that strange because I have rarely, if ever, seen members of MUFON demonstrate the basic understanding of astronomy when it comes to analyzing UFO reports. While I am aware that MUFON investigators have some astronomical training, many seem incapable of using it when describing their investigations.

**The Black Vault presented some images supposedly taken through a submarine periscope in 1971.** Looking at the images and reading the story, I found a lot of things to question. The first thing has to do with the source of the images, which is not given. The second is the description. At one point they claim that an officer on the periscope was the first person to see the UFO. However, the name given is of an enlisted man, who was an Interior Communications Technician (IC). When at periscope depth, an officer (usually the Captain) manned the

periscope. It is not the time for skylarking by an enlisted man. I was also unimpressed by the quality of the photographs. They look like something taken in 1941 and not 1971. While portions of the story sound credible, most of the story makes me wonder if it isn't just another hoax being presented to the UFO community. Most of the details about the Trepang's operations are readily available on the Internet. At one point it was suggested that an Admiral was on board. However, that was an incorrect assumption based on the career of the Trepang's commanding officer. Unlike "Voyage to the bottom of the sea", the commanding officer of submarines were usually Commanders and, sometimes, Captains (O-5 or O-6). Admirals rarely stayed aboard on submarines for long missions. My experience was they usually went out to sea for a day or two and then were dropped off. Like so many "UFOlogical smoking guns", without provenance, these photographs are just another campfire story.

**Charles Halt is still out promoting his "experience" at Rendlesham.** He now states he has "new evidence" that the UFO he saw was tracked on radar. What he doesn't seem to want everyone to know is that this is anecdotal evidence presented by ex-radar operators, who are making this claim. They have no radar data or reports from 1980 confirming this radar contact.

When Robert Sheaffer wrote about these new revelations, Gary Osborn chose to comment about the "binary code" that Jim Penniston had presented to the world as proof he had contact with the intelligence he encountered. Osborn evaded any detailed description of his findings other than giving seven earth locations that had some form of significant meaning. He also implied that his "discoveries" would be published when the time is right. When Osborn mentioned a book he co-authored, *The Giza Prophecy*, I became increasingly skeptical of his arguments. In my opinion, Osborn's seven earth locations were selected by the author of this binary code because of their mystical connections. By doing this, they know they could "hook" people like Osborn into accepting the code as some sort of higher intelligence communicating through Penniston. I seriously doubt Osborn will be publishing his revelations in a scientific journal but the MUFON journal is always available. Is Gary Osborn a future "Hanger one" star?

**For some reason the Kecksburg event was news in late July.** Nothing new was revealed. It was just more of the same old stories being retold with more embellishments. While Stan Gordon relies on faded memories, he has still failed to present any documentation that, other than a few airmen from a nearby radar station, there was a huge military presence as his witnesses proclaim. I suggest readers review SUNlite 3-6 prior to buying the nonsense that Gordon continues to peddle. I just wish that the local writers would look beyond the "Hanger one" headline and publish both versions of the story.

**Roger Marsh published a MUFON UFO story that had me scratching my head.** This happened in January and involved two young children with the ages of 14 and 12. They supposedly went outside after a snow fall and saw three triangular UFOs that hovered over them. On their way back to the house, they saw an "ape-like" creature that scared the younger of the two. According to Marsh, the witnesses went inside to watch "Hanger One" after all this transpired and then filed a report to MUFON. It appears that Marsh is confused. The witnesses filed the report six months later. They probably saw Hanger One and then filed their report. This raises an interesting question. Since "Hanger one" likes to present wild stories that are hard to believe, who is to say these youngsters did not dream up this story so they could appear on the television show? Is "Hanger one" the UFO version of "Keeping up with the Kardashians"? Like most UFO stories, this can not be verified and I doubt it ever will amount to much.

**This was followed by another Marsh special about a cigar shaped UFO seen near Tulsa.** It is no surprise that Oklahoma's MUFON investigator labeled it an unknown. They should have read SUNlite 6-6, where I discussed these kinds of UFOs. The video looks like an airplane contrail lit by the sun. It slowly moves towards the west just like a westbound aircraft would fly. I am not sure how it can be labeled "unknown" unless the investigator is interested in padding some statistics. This once again demonstrates that the

# Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

word "objective" or "critical" does not apply to MUFON.

**The Kingman UFO crash resurfaced in a blog entry.** Readers may recall that three years ago, the evidence for the crash surfaced as "block buster" news at a MUFON conference. Attendees at the conference were underwhelmed by the evidence presented by Harry Drew then and we are still underwhelmed today.

**Edgar Mitchell reportedly stated that aliens prevented a nuclear war between the United States and Soviet Union.** The basis for his claims appears to be his strong belief in the stories told by Robert Hastings' group of USAF officers who claim that aliens interfered with nuclear missiles. At no point have I ever heard about an attempt at launching nuclear weapons being stopped by UFOs. The closest event is the Big Sur story but that has been shown to be a distortion of actual history (See SUNlite 6-4). The UFO wasn't even capable of shooting down a dummy warhead or its missile. If they could not do this with a test flight, what luck would they have had against a salvo of missile launches by both sides? I disagree that UFOs are trying to prevent a nuclear war. In my opinion, they are trying to start one. UFOs are often reported as interfering with each nation's nuclear stockpile. It is amazing that they did not trigger a nuclear exchange by their meddling.

When Lee Spiegel contacted Mitchell about the article, Mitchell stated that he never said these things. When the author of the article was contacted, they stated they accurately reported what Mitchell told them. Is it possible that Dr. Mitchell is having a hard time remembering what he said to whom? I still remember his "BeWitness"

**James Carrion has issued a challenge to MUFON and CSI.** He wants MUFON to present their best UFO evidence to CSI and have them see if they can debunk it. The details seem to be that there will be judges to decide the outcome of this "best evidence" battle. I am not sure who the judges will be. Will they be scientists with no affiliation with the UFO community? If so, we know that the outcome will be that the evidence presented by MUFON, no matter how good they think it is, will not be good enough. This has happened throughout the history of UFOs. From Robertson to Sturrock, scientific panels have all agreed that UFOs do not present evidence of anything completely alien to scientific knowledge. I suspect, that MUFON will make the statement that not one event can prove their case and will, instead, list dozens of cases hoping one will not be explainable. This shotgun approach will fail because it implies that one case can not stand up on its own. The best MUFON could hope for would be a draw, which would not be a victory at all. Unless there is a stacked deck of judges, MUFON would be foolish to try and accept Carrion's challenge.

**Fausto Perez wrote an article and presented a video of a "floating humanoid" that his group had recorded over Los Angeles.** If you ask me, somebody recorded a balloon shaped like a person that was floating about. It sort of looks like a storm trooper but one can't say for sure. One has to wonder why pertinent azimuth, elevation, and angular size data was not provided for the event. Of course, it could be an actual alien floating in the sky. I would not put money on it.

**Seth Shostak dipped his toe into the UFOlogical waters again and commented about how UFOlogy is relying on a lot of old UFO cases as their primary evidence.** This is something I have commented about in the past. UFOlogists tend to present these old cases as evidence that "UFOs are real". There are a few cases that are from the 1990s and beyond but, just like the old faithfuls that populate most lists, they tend to fade under close examination. Using a mystery that UFOlogists feel they can't explain is not a substitute for hard factual data that can not be refuted. This appears to be Shostak's major point.

**Speaking of trying to improve UFOlogy, MUFON announced they were going to have a panel at their symposium that is going to discuss how to make UFOlogy respectable.** This is the same group that brought us "Hanger One"!!!! Are we really supposed to believe that they are interested in making UFOs respectable? Actions speak louder than words.

**Gilles Fernandez presented us with a good skeptical accounting of the Turkish UFO videos.** These have always looked fake to me but that was a gut feeling more than anything else. Gilles presents us with some information that indicates they probably are nothing more than a hoax. I doubt those supporting the case will accept his findings but, for those individuals interested in looking closer, his work is a must read.



# The Roswell Corner

## The Roswell Slides slow and painful death

After the release of SUNlite 7-4, the Roswell Slides debacle practically disappeared from the Internet. Maussan and his experts appeared to be still sticking to their guns regarding the supposed size of the body and that the body is not the mummy that was on display at Montezuma Castle/Mesa Verde. Most of their arguments are severely flawed as I pointed out in last issue. They have yet to hold their planned press conference, which was canceled last June. Maybe Maussan will hope that his failure will fade from memory and he can move on to the next UFO promotional event.

From what I have been able to understand, Schmitt and Carey did not mention the slides at the Roswell festival. In August, Carey finally appeared to tell everyone on the Jim Harold podcast that the case was not closed on the slides. His arguments were all the same nonsense spouted out prior to SUNlite 7-4. They are as weak as they are worthless. Carey then went out of his way to show disdain for certain members of the Roswell Slides Research Group. We rained on his parade and now he is attempting to demonize the group.

Meanwhile, the Carey and Schmitt apologists have figured a way to keep them credible. They are being excused for their woefully inadequate research by stating they were limited by Adam Dew's control of the slides. It is hard to believe such exaggerations because all of the promoters claimed to have access to the high quality scans of the slides prior to the event. Deblurring Bragalia's scans demonstrated the evidence was there for all to discover. They simply did not want to look.

This excuse of being fooled by Dew, if accurate, brings up a serious problem with Carey and Schmitt's research that they publish. If they were so easily fooled by a photograph of a mummy, what does it say for all those interviews they claim prove Roswell was the crash of an alien spaceship? Is it possible that some, most, or all of their witnesses have been fooling them as well? How much of what they write is just as inaccurate as the research they conducted on the slides themselves? Quite a few of the statements made by these two "respected researchers" before and after May 5th were so inaccurate and misleading that one has to really question just about anything they say or write about the subject. I have been under the opinion for many years that the writings in Schmitt and Carey's books are wild exaggerations and distortions. The Roswell slides fiasco confirmed that opinion.

## Ten "undeniable truths" about the Roswell slides

Based on how Tom Carey and Don Schmitt write their conclusions about Roswell, an "Undeniable truth" does not have to be a fact. It is just their opinion. With that in mind, I created some of my own "undeniable truths" regarding the Roswell slides. However, contrary to what Carey and Schmitt state about the Roswell case, many of these "truths" ARE facts. Others are opinions based on a preponderance of the evidence.

1. Tom Carey, after examining the slides, declared that the photographs were not taken in a museum setting even though there are numerous artifacts visible in the photograph that demonstrate it was a museum of some kind.
2. Don Schmitt conceded that the slides showed a mummy but reversed his opinion a few weeks later.
3. Tom Carey stated that skeptics could not admit when they are wrong but can not admit he might have made a mistake with the Roswell slides.
4. The placard, when deblurred, states that the body is that of a mummified two year old boy. This is a proven fact that many people have been able to replicate.
5. There was a mummified body of a two year old boy that was on display at Mesa Verde in early 1947. Photographs of this body in the records, despite objections by Carey, Schmitt, and Maussan, are a good match to the body seen in the Roswell slides.
6. The Rays visited Colorado during the mid to late 1940s as evidenced by their photographs from the region.
7. There is no evidence, that can be verified, which proves Bernard and Hilda Ray ever personally knew the Eisenhowers.
8. Jaimie Maussan has reneged on his reward for photographs that match the Roswell slides. He can make everyone think the body is not the same but the evidence indicates otherwise.
9. None of the scientists, employed by Maussan, have published any of their findings in independent scientific journals where their work is subject to criticism from qualified experts.
10. There is no evidence presented to date that the Roswell Slides are a photograph of an alien discovered at Roswell or that it is something that is not human.

## REVISITING THE KERMAN, CA UFO CASE OF MAY 13, 1978

In mid-June, Kevin Randle commented the Kerman UFO case of May 13, 1978 on his blog.<sup>1</sup> I decided to respond and pointed out how the UFO was probably a rocket launch from Vandenberg. I was somewhat surprised by the reaction of Mr. Randle and several of the posters. Despite the witness looking in the direction of the rocket launch and seeing the event at the same time of the rocket launch, they seemed overly dismissive of the explanation. After the Roswell slides debacle, I would think that the promoters of these cases would be a bit more discriminating and be, at a minimum, considering the possibility that the rocket launch might explain the event. This collective negativity to the Rocket explanation caught the eye of Ted Molczan, who decided to lend me a hand with computing an ephemeris/trajectory for the launch and compare it with what the witness had described.

### The event

The events were described in three different media outlets in 1978 and 1979. The first to report about it was the APRO bulletin (August 1978), followed by the International UFO Reporter (September 1978), and the Fresno Bee (February 23, 1979). There was an earlier Fresno Bee article for May 19, 1978 but it seemed to be uninformative.

The events are as described as follows in the three sources:

*APRO - Officer Amparano was in downtown Kerman when he spotted a glimmering light Southwest of town. Thinking it might be a fire, he drove to the corner of California and Del Norte Avenues to investigate. As he approached the light he realized it was not a fire, but something hovering about one hundred feet above a sixty-acre cotton field just south of the Southern Pacific railroad tracks.*

*Amparano drove to within 100 feet of the thing and looked at it for about five minutes. It appeared circular and about thirty feet in diameter. At times it appeared orange in color and sometimes in shimmering white. According to Amparano, who talked to Escobedo, a ray then shot down to the ground and the object zipped off into the Southwest and out of sight. During his visit to Kerman, Escobedo examined the site but found not evidence of burns.*

*Later that afternoon, Amparano visited the emergency room at Fresno Community Hospital for treatment of first degree burns on his face, neck and hands. He told the doctors who examined him that he'd gotten the burns staring at a UFO.<sup>2</sup>*

*IUR - Amparano was on Del Norte Ave. on the southwest out-skirts of Kerman at 3:32 AM, when he observed a reddish glow ahead of him. Thinking it was a fire, he drove to the site and pulled off the road by a cotton field near railroad tracks in time to see an unusual source of illumination about 45 degrees up in the southern sky. The source looked like a horizontally-oriented oval, twice as wide as it was high; it was crimson red in color, half as large looking as a full moon and uniformly illuminated. It was bright but the intensity did not hurt the policeman's eyes. As it hovered motionlessly and silently, Amparano watched it out his open side window (his car pointing towards the southwest) for about four minutes. Suddenly the light source momentarily shot out a beam of blue light, like a camera flash. The mysterious object then receded towards the southeast and cut straight up out of sight into the clear dark sky in seconds.*

*As Amparano drove back to the station, he was aware of a tingling sensation in his body but dismissed it as being due to the "cold night air". It wasn't until he met five other witnesses and a chaplain back at the station that he learned he was "sunburned" as red as a lobster. The effect lasted for four hours before fading down. At 7 PM on the same date, the officer went to the Fresno Community Hospital for treatment of third-degree burns on his arms, face, and neck.<sup>3</sup>*

*Fresno Bee - Amparano was southbound on Del Norte Avenue when he saw what he thought was a large fire at treetop level about a half-mile away....when he arrived at the intersection of Del Norte and California avenues he said he saw "a circular type thing, similar to a round fireball or a setting sun, about 100 to 150 feet off the ground."*

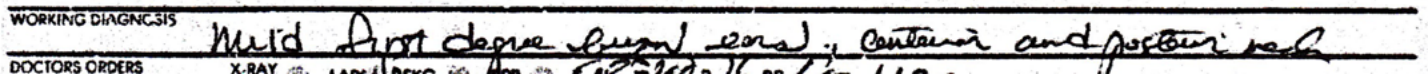
*The object was about 100 feet in front of the patrol car and Amparano decided to put his patrol's car spotlight on it. But before he could do so, it moved back and up at the same time, made a square turn and traveled in a southeasterly direction at a high rate of speed. He estimated it was about 25 to 50 feet in size.*

*....He recorded the time he had the object in view at four to five minutes. He also made a drawing of the object on a card, and that has become part of the official police report on the sighting which was recorded at 3:32 a.m. on May 13, 1978....*

*... Amparano's face and neck appeared burned although Amparano was unaware of it. The two officers took Amparano into a bathroom where he saw the condition in a mirror. His chest was burned through his shirt.....*

*....He went to the emergency room at the Fresno Community Hospital where his condition was reported as burns from an unknown source...<sup>4</sup>*

To summarize, Officer Amparano was southbound on Del Norte, when he saw a bright red object at treetop level. When he reached California Avenue, he saw the object hovering. After a few minutes, the object took a turn to the southeast and then disappeared with a flash of light. When he returned to the station, others noticed he was sunburned. When he went to the hospital, that evening, he was diagnosed with “mild first degree burns”.<sup>5</sup>



### The burns

As stated, the burn that Amparano received was described as “mild” by the emergency room doctor and was consistent with a sun burn. We have no real evidence that Amparano received this burn at 3:30 AM on the 13th. All we know is that others observed it that morning and that he was treated at the emergency room that evening for those burns. On May 17th, the doctor who examined Amparano also declared he had suffered first degree burns.<sup>6</sup>

To refresh people’s knowledge of what a “first degree burn” is, the Merriam-Webster’s dictionary describes it as:

*A mild burn characterized by heat, pain, and reddening of the burned surface but not exhibiting blistering or charring of tissues*<sup>7</sup>

In other words, it was little more than a sunburn and nothing that was serious. For some reason, these burns changed to third degree burns when the police chief filed the workman’s compensation form. It is possible the police chief erred and confused first and third degree burns or he did not have the information available to him.<sup>8</sup> It is very unlikely that Amparano had third degree burns on the 13th of May since this involves charred skin and severe injury to the body. The doctor would have made note of this.

Based on the available information, it is very likely that Mr. Amparano had nothing more than red skin similar to a sunburn. We can not prove or disprove that he received the burn from the UFO or some other source. There is insufficient evidence to conclude anything but there are other possible reasons, other than a UFO, for officer Amparano’s physical condition the evening of May 13th.

### The rocket launch

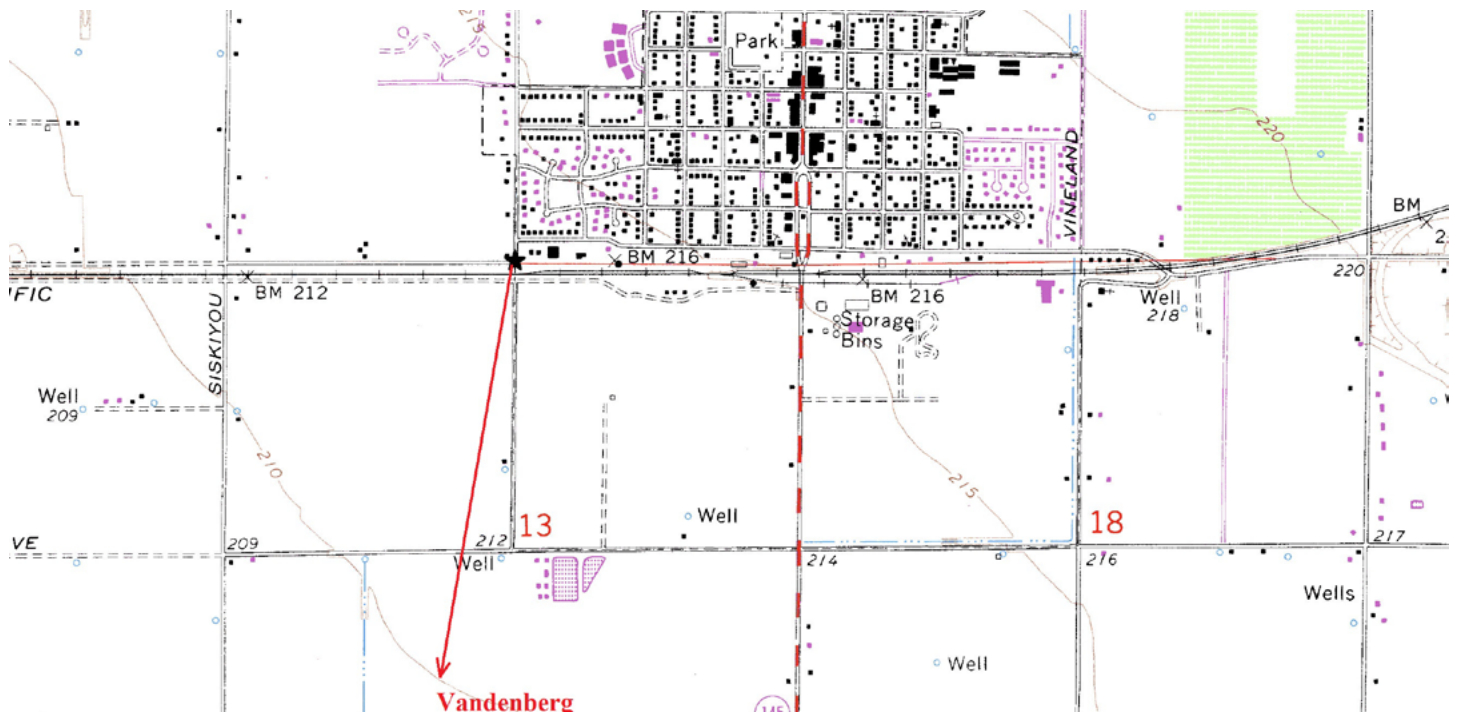
In SUNlite 2-3 and 2-4, I had noted that, at the same time Amparano was observing his ball of light in the southern sky, an Atlas rocket with a satellite was launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base. The direction to Vandenberg from the sighting location was to the South-South West. This brought up the possibility that the rocket could be the source of his UFO report.



Ted Molczan calculated a trajectory of the rocket launch based on the performance of other Atlas rocket launches.<sup>9</sup> He provided me with the scheduled track and how it would have appeared at the corner of Del Norte and California in Kerman.

The rocket would have risen over the trees to the South-Southwest. At the time of the Booster engine cutoff (two minutes after launch), the rocket would have been at an elevation of about 10 degrees. After Boost engine cutoff, the sustainer engine would continue firing for three more minutes and the rocket would arc towards the southeast until it went downrange. Peak elevation would have been almost 13 degrees. At the time of Sustainer Engine cutoff, the rocket would have been at an angle of elevation of five degrees.

While Molczan uses a modern Google street view, the housing and other items in the image did not exist in 1978. This 1981 topographical map shows the general layout of Kerman in 1978.<sup>10</sup> There was really nothing to the south of his position other than rail-



road tracks and open field. Any trees would have been distant and would not have blocked his view of the horizon.

Other than Amparano's description that the UFO was visible at an elevation angle of 45 degrees, his description is very close to what Molczan computed. The only question would be, "Could the rocket been bright enough to be seen by Amparano?"

### How bright?

One of the principal arguments against this being a rocket launch is that it would have been barely visible or not very prominent to appear the way Amparano described. Most of these kinds of comments come from people, who have little or no experience in observing rocket launches from the distances described or are blinded by their desire to believe that Amparano could not have been mistaken.

I have a lot of experience watching rocket launches from the distance described by Amparano. I grew up in Jacksonville, Florida, roughly 150 miles from Cape Canaveral. This is about the same distance Kerman is located from Vandenberg. It was common for my friends and I to go outside on the street corner to watch night rocket launches from the Cape in the 1970s. Back then, you knew only the time of launch. We would simply go to the street corner, which had a low horizon clear of trees and buildings, and wait ten to fifteen minutes hoping the launch was not delayed or canceled.

Two launches that stick in my mind were the launch of Pioneer 10 aboard an Atlas-Centaur and a Delta rocket launch in the summer of 1975. Both were very obvious to the eye and I was able to track the Delta visually for many minutes. I would have classified the brightness of these launches between the brightness of Venus or Jupiter to that of a first magnitude star depending on the time after launch.

Another 1970s launch, that I recall, involved a Titan rocket launch in June of 1976. Our astronomy club was out for our monthly dark sky observing session on the southern edge of Jacksonville. The launch was a military satellite that had not been publicly announced. I recall it being as bright as Venus.

In the late 1980s and mid-1990s, I spent a good deal of my astronomy time at a place called Chiefland, Florida, about 150 miles from the Cape. I remember viewing a few night time, as well as day time, launches from that location. Some of them were of the space shuttle but others were of satellites on boosters. They were always prominently visible to observers.

There are also two events, involving submarine launched missiles, that I distinctly recall being surprised by. One was in August of 1986 from a dark sky location south of Orlando. While the launch distance is hard to compute, I would estimate it was about 100 miles or more. Another was seen during the 1989 winter star party from the Florida Keys over 250 miles to the southwest of Cape Canaveral (the submarine was at sea off the coast). Both were quite spectacular events, which were easily seen by the observers who were present.

In more recent years, I have been able to see Wallops island, Virginia rocket launches from my home in Manchester, New Hampshire.



The LADEE launch aboard a Minotaur rocket was seen from a distance of over 300 miles away! It appeared as a bright first magnitude object that was low in the southern sky.

While these anecdotes are nice, they are not very good evidence. Videos can be more provocative. This on-line video was reportedly taken from 95 miles away.<sup>11</sup>

This same rocket launch was observed from Visalia, California, approximately 135 miles from Vandenberg and about 50 miles to the southeast of Kerman. The witnesses, who thought they had seen a UFO, described the event they witnessed:

*Two of my friends and I were playing basketball outside at a local church. We looked up at the south south west night sky and noticed an orange orb. It was 3 times bigger than commercial airliners that you would see flying at its highest point in the sky. We watched it as it was staying in the same spot and then it started emitting a very small trail and a haze of orange as it started moving slowly east. It then instantly disappeared.*

*A couple seconds later it reappeared instantly in the spot it disappeared. Another couple seconds went by and it disappeared again instantly. We never heard it making a sound during the whole 7 minute sighting. We watched for another 30 minutes to see if it would reappear again but it never did....<sup>12</sup>*

Doesn't this description sound familiar? While Visalia is not Kerman, the distance from Vandenberg is similar.

Another video of a rocket launch I found interesting was this Delta 4 rocket. It was recorded about 140 miles west of Cape Canaveral in Clearwater, Florida.<sup>13</sup> One can even see that the rocket is bright enough to be seen reflecting in the water!

While these videos help, they still are not an accurate representation of an Atlas F seen from Kerman, California. There was one other night launch of an Atlas F from Vandenberg that was worth examining. On December 10, 1978, another Atlas F was launched from Vandenberg. This was an evening launch and it produced UFO reports prompting the Air Force to make a statement that it was one of theirs.<sup>14</sup> There were probably no reports from the northern part of the state because of weather. San Francisco reports a mostly cloudy sky that evening.<sup>15</sup> I had to look for another launch that could be a better comparison than those I had already described.

The best comparison event I could find was an Atlas D launch that was seen from Cupertino, California on October 5, 1965.<sup>16</sup> The distance from the observer to Vandenberg was about 200 miles. It involved an ICBM test launch, which also had satellites being carried piggyback on the booster. When I pointed this case out to Ted Molczan, he was kind enough to compute its trajectory.<sup>17</sup> Ted did not have specifics so he computed two trajectories for the October 5, 1965 based on different launch profiles (one as an ICBM and another as a standard orbital launch). These two profiles are not significantly different as far as range to the rocket is considered. One must remember that the Atlas D was an earlier version that had engines that were not as powerful as the Atlas F. If the Atlas D could be seen from these kinds of distances, the Atlas F would also have been equally or more visible.

### 'Flaming UFO' Reported To Be Atlas Booster

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE (AP) — A satellite employing an Atlas space booster was launched Sunday night by an Air Force team from the Space and Missile Testing Center here, a spokesman said.

Sgt. Lee Hinchey said the booster was launched at 7:58 PST.

The sight of the rocket speeding on its course triggered a flurry of telephone calls to The Register and to police agencies.

Eyewitnesses described it variously as a UFO making a 90-degree turn, as something resembling a "blackened out" blimp; a small object heading for Newport Beach and giving off orange flame, and an object emitting blue flames on its trip "out to sea."

Meanwhile, authorities in Riverside and San Bernardino received numerous calls reporting a meteorite, comet or UFO streaking across the night sky.

One witness described the phenomenon as a "teardrop of flame." And a spokesman for Palomar Observatory, which also received many queries, said descriptions suggested a big meteor.

Hinchey, who observed the launch at the base, said one booster emitted a white glow in the sky. He said it should have been visible in the Los Angeles area as it moved south.

Date/Time	Event	Azimuth	Elevation	Range to rocket (km/mi)
10-5-65 090730UTC	Rise	154	0	310km / 193 mi
10-5-65 090927UTC	BECO	171	15	280km / 174 mi
10-5-65 091140UTC	SECO	278	27	568km / 352 mi
10-5-65 090730UTC	Rise	154	0	310km / 193 mi
10-5-65 090927UTC	BECO	166	11	283km / 176 mi
10-5-65 091200UTC	SECO	255	10	668km / 411 mi
5-13-78 103400UTC	Rise	192	0	237km / 147 mi
5-13-78 103604UTC	BECO	189	10	310km / 193 mi
5-13-78 103653UTC	----	179	13	434km / 270 mi
5-13-78 103729UTC	----	173	12	546km / 339 mi
5-13-78 103900UTC	SECO	162	5	974km / 605 mi

BECO = Booster engine cutoff SECO = Secondary engine cutoff

As one can see from the distances, the two events are comparable especially in the early phases of the launch leading to booster engine cutoff. In the October 5, 1965 event, the witness described the object as very bright (varying between a star and a very bright star), with a long elliptical tail. The size estimate was equivalent to a city block! This kind of description is not much different than the one Officer Amparano gave for his sighting over a decade later.

These examples, especially the October 5, 1965 event, demonstrate that Atlas rocket launches are quite prominent to observers within the visibility zone of a Vandenberg rocket launch. Contrary to what the promoters of this case are stating, the Atlas launch of May 13, 1978 should have put on a prominent display for those individuals in Kerman, who were looking in the direction of Vandenberg shortly after the rocket left the pad.

### Why wasn't this identified as a rocket launch?

It is interesting to note that this rocket launch is not mentioned anywhere in the Newspaper archive. FLIGHT International magazine, which reported most rocket launches, did not mention it until June 10th.<sup>18</sup> Since this was a military launch from Vandenberg, public announcements that a launch was going to occur, or had occurred, were probably not widely publicized outside of the immediate area of the launch. If the investigators were unaware that a launch coincided with the observations, they would not have been able to properly classify the report. It is interesting to note that Hendry, who apparently wrote the article for the International UFO Reporter, checked to see if Vandenberg had any rocket launches but received a negative report. Either he was relying on media outlets or his sources were unreliable. The important thing was that he considered a rocket launch was a potential source for this sighting. If he had that data in 1978, would he have explained the Amparano sighting as a rocket launch? I think he might have.

FLIGHT International, 10 June 1978
1739



A Boeing CH-47C with glass-fibre rotor blades flew for the first time on May 22. It will take part in a US Army qualification programme during the next few months. Glass-fibre blades will replace the existing metal units on CH-47Cs from 1980

### US Air Force launches second Navstar GPS . . .

THE US Air Force's Space and Missile Systems Organisation successfully launched the second Navstar Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite by Atlas F on May 13.

Preparation for launch from Vandenberg AFB had been delayed by failure of a rubidium-vapour atomic clock on board the first Navstar, launched in July 1977, which necessitated the removal and modification of two similar clocks on the second satellite. Designed primarily to increase the navigational accuracy of cruise missiles and to improve battlefield communications by providing timely use of anti-jamming equipment, the GPS will comprise a total 24 Navstar satellites in 12hr orbits by 1984. Four satellites will be in view at any one time, providing highly accurate navigation and timing functions for ground and airborne users.

### Eurofunds to back new airliners?

THE European Common Market Commission in Brussels is again suggesting that new airliners should be brought into the new air-countries, particularly Italy and Spain,

### Conclusion?

There is no good reason to reject the rocket launch hypothesis for the visual observations reported by Amparano. The inability of "reliable" and "expert" eyewitnesses to make accurate size, distance, or even elevation estimates has been documented in the past. Relying upon those estimates to disprove a rocket launch as the source of the UFO is using potentially unreliable data. The only thing that is reasonably reliable to use is the general direction the witness was facing and the time he estimated the event to have occurred. Those values, and the general description of what was reported by Amparano, do support the rocket launch hypothesis.

There is also no evidence presented that proves the UFO produced the "mild first degree burns" that Amparano received. There are other mundane sources that can produce a "sun burn". Without a positive link for the injury to the UFO sighting, one can not use it as evidence to eliminate the rocket launch hypothesis.

It appears that the only thing the promoters of this event are relying upon is the witness stating "I know what I saw". That is not good evidence. I can't positively prove that Amparano saw the rocket launch but the bulk of the evidence indicates that the source

of this visual sighting that morning was the Atlas F launch from Vandenberg. If people want to believe that Amparano saw a UFO but missed the rocket that was in the same area of the sky during this time period, then that is their right. However, it is the kind of thinking that led to the Roswell Slides debacle, where belief was used instead of rational thinking. If that is the reputation that UFOlogy wants, then they deserve the criticism heaped upon them from scientists and outside observers.

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# A DIFFERENT CASE WITH SIMILAR ARGUMENTS

Every so often I get dragged into a discussion with people about old UFO cases. The most recent occurrence of this involved an old sighting from 1959, which appears in Brad Sparks list of Blue Book “unknowns”. Brad adds to the existing list of 701 unknowns by selecting cases that, he has concluded, have no good explanation. He relies on the conclusions of Dr. James McDonald in quite a few instances. The case of July 9, 1959 appears to be one of those special cases Sparks felt Blue Book got wrong. Blue Book classified it as a Jupiter missile launch but Sparks listed it as “unidentified”. Reading the summary of his UFO bluebook unknowns, we really don’t have any reason why. He just lists it as:

*Case 1278: July 9, 1959. Bahamas. (Sparks; McDonald list)<sup>1</sup>*

While his footnotes appear thorough, the “lists” he give are not readily available for others to examine. It is almost as if Sparks is stating, “Don’t worry about why, just accept that I and Dr. McDonald said it had to be unidentified”. McDonald did provide lists of “Unknowns” at times in his published papers but none included this sighting. If he did, I could not find it. It is hard to determine why McDonald disagreed with the conclusions of Blue Book but Sparks tried to elaborate in this discussion.

## Sucked in

As I said, I don’t normally get involved into on-line arguments anymore because I feel they are a waste of time. Unfortunately, I was drawn into a debate with Brad Sparks by an e-mail from Herb Taylor. Taylor had been trying to convince Sparks that several of the cases on his list involved missile launches/tests. Sparks argued there was not enough information to draw this conclusion and that at least one of the cases could not be explained as a missile launch. This was the July 9th, 1959 sighting. I chose to respond to Herb with some points I thought Sparks had overlooked. The next thing I know, I was debating Sparks with Taylor acting as the go between.

## The sighting



The case file contains 17 pages and the record card.<sup>2</sup> Three of the sightings involve ships that were along the rocket trajectory. All reports occurred at 0110Z on the 10th (2010 local time on the 9th). They all reported seeing multiple lights. One reported the lights being surrounded by a “trail”. They also referred to the event as a rocket-like body.

There was an additional set of sightings from the north coast of the island of Jamaica.<sup>3</sup> The principal witness was a pilot. The pilot reported sighting the object at 0107Z and it was visible until 0115Z. During these eight minutes the object changed directions and was, at its brightest about 2nd magnitude (he would later revise this, a month later, to be as bright as a planet). It was described as a cigar shaped aura with a bright light at its northern end. The object disappeared in the northeast as it faded from sight. Another witness wrote a letter describing the same event.

The Kingston Gleaner<sup>4</sup> reported the event and contained an observation by the president of the local astronomy club. He saw the object with his telescope and reported it to be three lights in formation. He thought they were either aircraft or guided missiles in formation.

## The Blue Book answer

Blue Book had good reason to identify this as a Jupiter missile launch, which was launched at 0101GMT on the 10th (2001 local time on the 9th).<sup>5</sup> The times of the sightings and directions all appeared to correspond to the path of the missile and payload reflecting the sun as it followed its ballistic trajectory. The descriptions even appeared to be the same. Despite this pretty convincing evidence, Brad Sparks voiced his objections to this explanation in this e-mail exchange and thought what was seen was something exotic and could not be the Jupiter missile launch.



## Arguments against the explanation

Brad Sparks arguments evolved into a few major points and focused solely on the testimony of the pilot witness in Jamaica<sup>6</sup>:

1. The missile and warhead were too far away to be visually seen. They would only have been visible after the boost phase from Jamaica and would not reflect enough sunlight to be noticeable as they proceeded on their ballistic trajectory.
2. The description/sketch of the airline pilot, who was in Jamaica, showed a path that was not consistent with a ballistic trajectory.
3. The times did not align precisely with the missile launch. The witnesses stated the event occurred after launch.
4. The shape described by the witness indicated a large angular size. The Jupiter missile was too small to be seen at the distances involved.
5. Sparks added that it was not unusual for UFOs to appear at the same time as rocket launches and cited a completely different



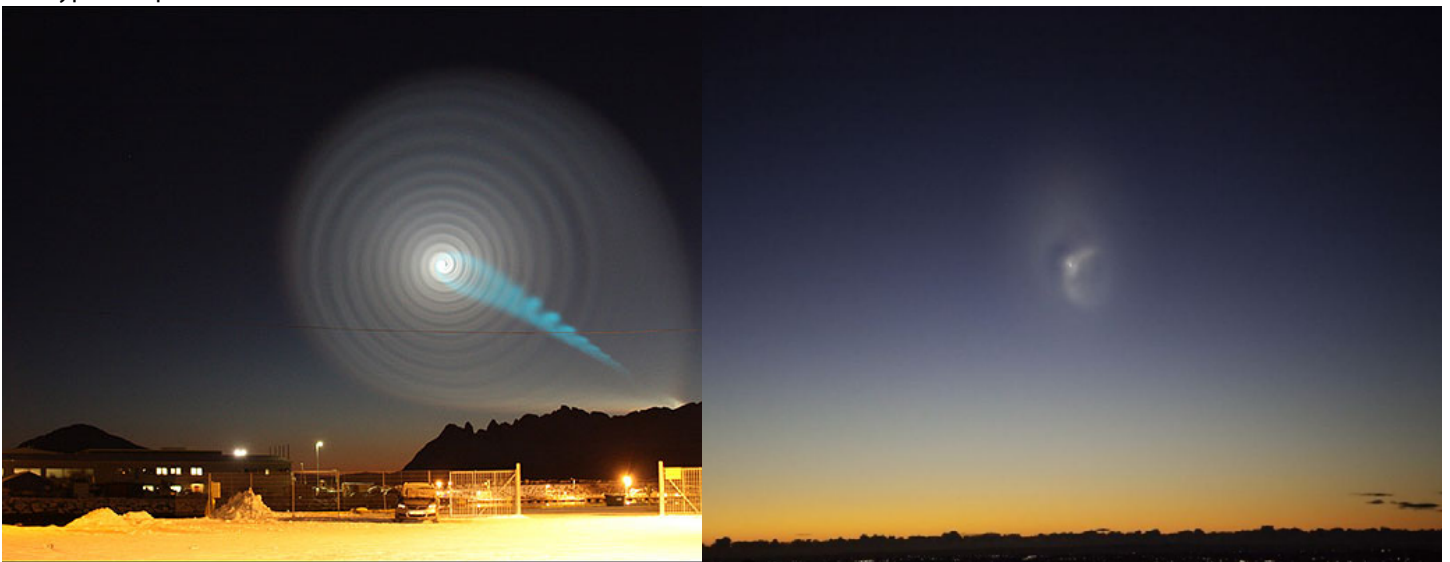
case where a radar contact was reported during a missile test.

Not surprisingly, I found his arguments less than convincing because they appeared to be based on assumptions that may or may not be accurate.

### Things not considered or dismissed

In my exchange with Sparks, via Taylor, I made the following observations/rebuttals to his arguments:

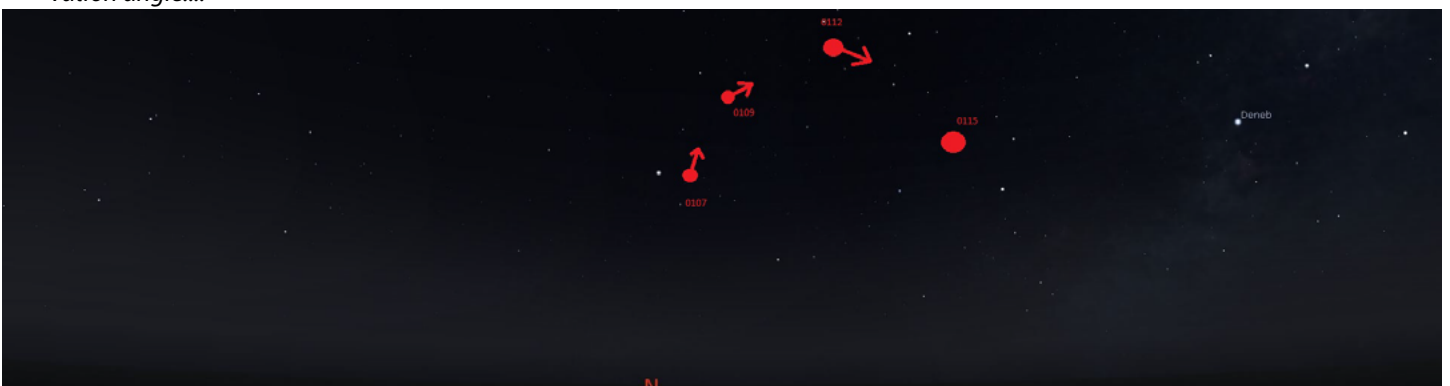
1. The missile was a liquid fueled rocket. After the rocket stopped firing, there was always some remaining unused fuel. This would vent out of the rocket body as it continued its trajectory and the warhead had separated. Such "vapor clouds" were commonly reported in ICBM missile tests involving liquid fueled rockets when seen down range from the launch point. It is interesting to note that the Norway spiral had been caused by a Russian submarine launched missile, which had a third stage that used liquid fuel. It was visible from over 500 miles away and was quite prominent.<sup>7</sup> Sparks countered that the Norway spiral could not be compared to the Jupiter because the fuels were different. I had to wonder if Sparks felt the liquid fuel in the Bulova was more reflective than that used in the Jupiter. I am sure the amount of fuel vented was greater but the reflective properties should be about the same. My point was that liquid fuels would form a cloud around the rocket body and warhead, making it appear large and that "cloud" would reflect light and create a larger/brighter object to observe. I have seen other such displays from rocket launches in the past. The image to the right is a Falcon 9 rocket venting fuel as it passed over Australia.<sup>8</sup> Suggesting that the venting fuel would not be visible appears to ignore what we know up such displays no matter what type of liquid-fueled rocket is involved.



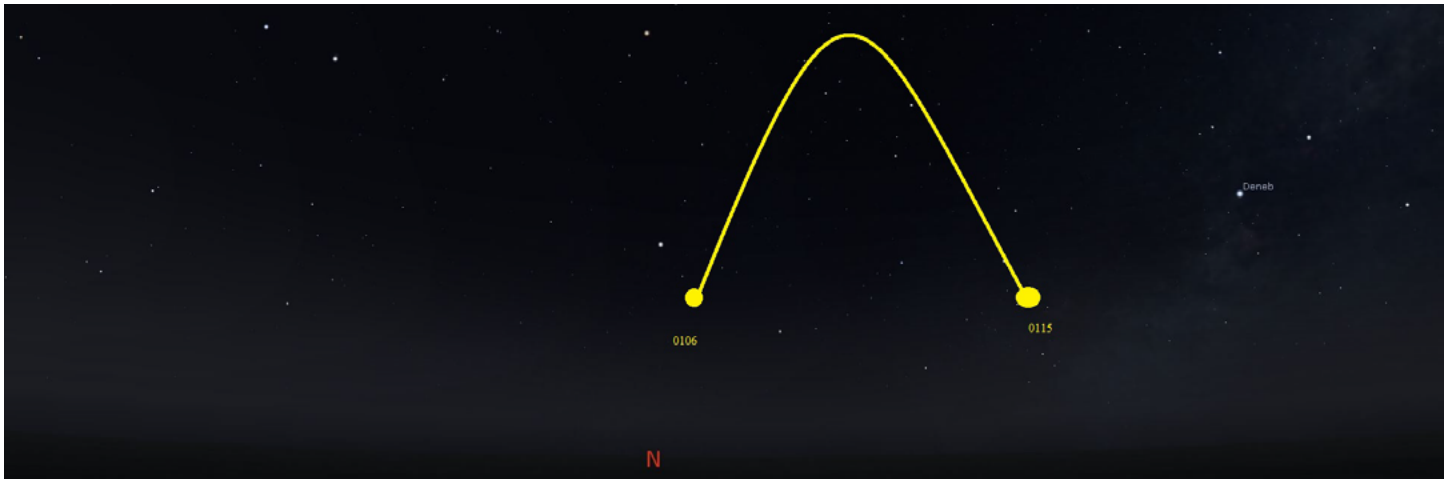
2. I felt this argument was poor since it is a proven fact that there is no such thing as a 100% reliable witness. Witnesses, no matter how reliable they are classified by UFOlogists, are human and are, therefore, subject to error in their recollections of what transpired. They may be correct in that they saw something but the details can not be accepted as 100% accurate. This is evident when one examines the sketch and compares it with what the two witnesses stated in their letters to Blue Book dated 10 July. I took the liberty of providing quotes and giving an approximate trajectory based on that description:

Pilot (Beckett): *The light was located slightly East of the North star on a course slightly East of South at an elevation of approximately 30 degrees...At 0109Z direction changed to South East and was maintained until 01.12 at which time direction changed again to North East in which direction the object became too dim to discern by 01.15Z.*

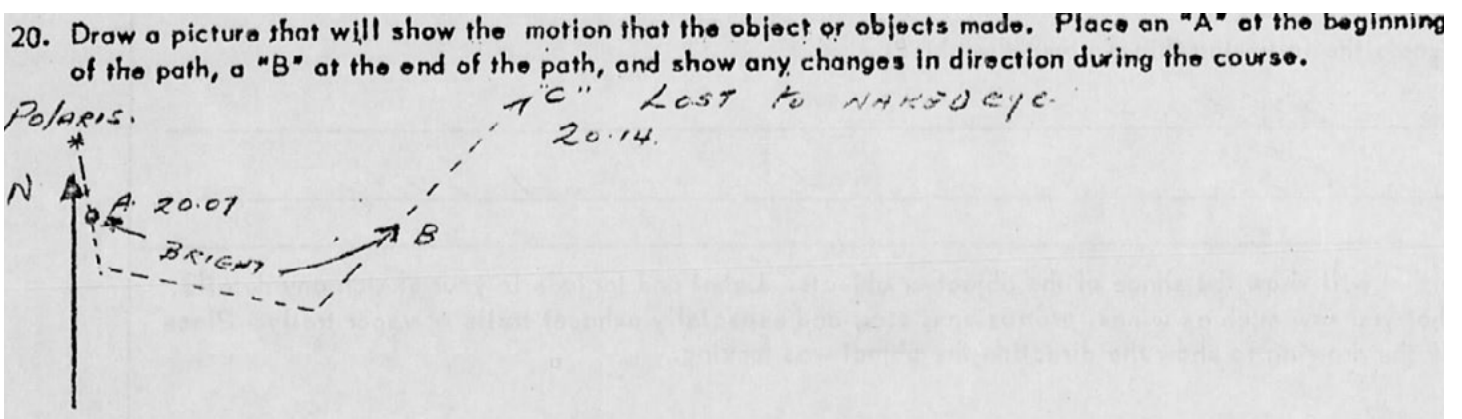
*During the observation the object changed position approximately 30° of horizontal angle while remaining at almost the same elevation angle....<sup>9</sup>*



Second witness (Street) : *The object appeared this time was moving almost due South. In the course of seven minutes the course was changed as in a large crescent changing course almost 180°....As it proceeded North and away from us, it disappeared in the distance...*<sup>10</sup>



These appear to describe a ballistic trajectory as one can see in these sketches I made based on their descriptions. Compare these descriptions with the sketch that Sparks found so compelling of this not being a ballistic trajectory<sup>11</sup>:



There seems to be a disconnect here between when the witness drew his sketch almost a month later (August 4) and his description made the day after the event (July 10). The details he mentions also seem to be at odds with the second witness (Street). To consider this sketch as a principle argument against this being a rocket launch is taking a very selective approach of the evidence.

3. The times were not that far off. We are not talking about tens of minutes but a few minutes or less. I doubt that the individuals were using atomic clocks to record their observations. A variation of a few minutes could be a case of the timepiece involved being off by that much or the witness not looking at a clock until after the event transpired. The time of 0107 GMT is consistent with the flight of the missile after the boost phase.
4. The shape could easily be attributed to the vented fuel cloud surrounding the rocket body/warhead.
5. This appears to be an effort by Sparks to justify this as it being possible that the UFO would be seen in the same direction and same general time as the rocket. Just because one event had a UFO reported at the same time a rocket launch happened does not mean that all UFO reports made during rocket launches can not be a misidentification of the rocket launch. It is false logic.

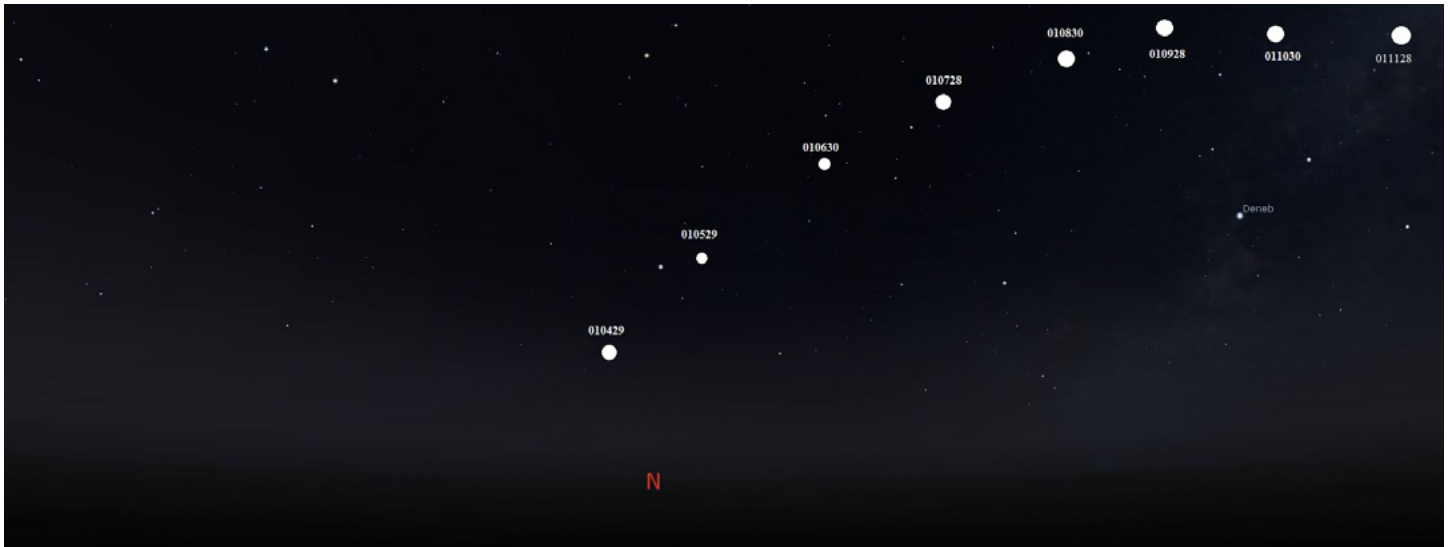
Mr. Sparks seemed to dismiss all the other observations by the ships and the astronomer. All gave the same general description as the pilot but never described the object changing course. This indicates the course change described by the pilot probably was a mistake. If Sparks was using this as his major selling point to list this case in his Blue Book Unknowns catalog, it really was a flimsy argument.

Brad Sparks response to my points seem to indicate that he did not think it was possible the Jupiter would be venting fuel after engine cutoff. He considered such an event "hypothetical" and did not give it much weight.

### Ted Molczan's examination of the event

When I read Brad Sparks initial arguments, I realized that I would need more information than I could gather and hoped Ted Molczan might give me assistance. I mentioned it to Herb that I would try and see if Ted could enlighten me on this. Taylor sent

that information to Sparks, who eventually contacted Ted as well. Molczan was very responsive to our requests and, after further research, shared his findings with the two of us.<sup>12</sup>



Ted drew a similar conclusion to the case as I did. He felt the case involved the Jupiter missile and the venting of the unused fuel resulted in the display reported in the Blue Book file. Ted's trajectory of the rocket was reasonably similar to the descriptions made on July 10th by the witnesses from Jamaica.

Molczan also found several other Blue Book cases, which were of Jupiter missile tests. One launch, on July 17, 1958, was seen by a ship that was further south than Jamaica.<sup>13</sup> This indicates that these events were visible from distant locations and could be brighter than computed.

Ted Molczan partially addressed the magnitude arguments made by Sparks. Sparks had computed an object that was around magnitude 4 using the rocket body. Ted agreed but pointed out that, based on his personal observations, these calculations are usually conservative and objects can appear brighter than calculated. Ted's computation indicated a peak magnitude of roughly 3.8. He also mentioned how rocket bodies venting fuel can create impressive displays visible from hundreds of miles away. His conclusion was that this "vapor cloud" was what drew the initial attention of the observers and they saw the individual objects inside the cloud as they attempted to see additional details. Despite this information, Sparks appears convinced that the rocket bodies were too faint and could not have been seen by the witnesses. Therefore, these observations were of something else that can not be identified.

### **Lather, Rinse, Repeat**

**B**rad Sparks may continue to support the theory that this is not a Jupiter missile launch but I think the weight of the evidence suggests that it was. Normally, I would not mention such a discussion here but I found it interesting because the same arguments that were used by some of the promoters of the Kerman case were also being used by Sparks:

- 1) The rocket was too far away and too faint to be seen
- 2) The witness was an expert and could not be mistaken.
- 3) The witness gave descriptions that did not precisely match the rocket launch.

All of these arguments are based on some fallacies regarding UFO reports. If anything has been learned from over six decades of UFO reports is that witnesses, no matter how "reliable" they are considered, can make mistakes or distort their observations of events they are not familiar with. If UFO proponents want to dismiss this information in order to prop up cases that have potential explanations, it is to their peril. Failing to weed out potential IFOs from their databases gives the impression they are more interested in padding statistics than objectively examining the evidence.

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# 11 ANGRY UFOLOGISTS AND A SKEPTIC

Shortly after the Roswell slides crashed to reality, some began to look at what the Roswell Slides Research Group (RSRG) did and wonder if this was the future of UFOlogy. Being part of the RSRG, I know how difficult it would be for the group to agree on anything if it were not clear cut. In the case of the Roswell slides, the evidence was clear and many in the group were already of the mindset the body was not an alien. Despite this common belief, we still had differences of opinion on various issues regarding the slides. I wonder how it would have played out if the case was not such obvious and some of the group members had opinions about the evidence that strongly differed from the others?

I sort of saw how events might transpire by watching the old movie, "Twelve Angry Men". For those who are not familiar with the film, I suggest you watch it. For those who are, you might find the following bit of fiction familiar.

## Fade in

Twelve individuals are seated in a room where they are carefully evaluating what has been described as "The best UFO case ever". The group has been assembled in order to evaluate the evidence. The group is diverse in order to meet the new standards of UFO investigations. In an effort to provide balance, a UFO skeptic was introduced into the mix. It was felt that, if the skeptic could be convinced, the case could be elevated to the lofty status of "the greatest UFO case ever".

Lead Investigator: I have presented the facts regarding the case and I feel this is clear cut evidence that this event describes something completely unknown to modern science. It may be aliens or it may be something else but it definitely can not be explained. I am interested in hearing everyone's opinions.

UFO Blogger: I agree. I have been chronicling the developments of this case since it was initially reported a year ago. I am stumped and can't explain any of it. It seems to me that some sort of huge craft was seen by multiple witnesses from many locations over a period of about an hour. I am not sure what they saw but it definitely was "not of this earth".

UFO author: I am of the opinion that this case is very compelling. I have written about many cases and this one is better than most. We have multiple witnesses, radar data, two video recordings, military personnel, and electromagnetic effects. There is just too much here to dismiss.

UFO film producer: I am intrigued. I have been working on a new project showing some of the most compelling UFO cases in history. I would love to include this in that film. I was hoping that some of you would be interested in providing your evaluations of the data for this project.

UFO speaker: I too am impressed and would love to appear in the film. I would even wave my usual fee to be part of it. I just want to discuss this case at the upcoming UFOCONFEST where I will be one of the feature speakers.

Lead Investigator: I would like to withhold any presentation of the case until I am ready. This is my case and I think I should have a say about how it should be presented. I am willing to provide the details but only if I get credit for my work. Otherwise, I will not release these items to the public.

UFO experimenter: That is your right but I want to point out that there are witnesses, who experienced this event and are demanding an answer. The government has dug its feet long enough and refuses to admit this was an extraordinary event. I don't want these individuals to live my life of frustrated answers to my two dozen documented UFO events over the past five years. I wish I wasn't in a different part of the country because I would have seen this event as well.

UFO scientist: Let's not get too carried away here. We need to focus on the case and not think about the presentation of the case to the public yet. Having provided some of the analysis for the data, I am confident this data is very convincing. I stand by my work.

UFO archivist: I have a database of 20,000 good UFO reports. I know this belongs in the database but it probably deserves a category reserved for only a few of my cases. That being the best of the best.

UFO journalist: It is sad that the mainstream media does not pick up on these things. I have been writing about UFO stories for years and they just laugh at me. After seeing this presentation, I will have the last laugh.

UFO activist: I have been actively pursuing for congress to hold hearings on UFOs. This case should be at the top of my list and should result in a breakthrough.

UFO agnostic: I have a problem with a lot of these UFO cases because they always seem to have a lot of missing data and rely solely on the testimony of the eyewitnesses. However, this case appears to have a lot of supporting data that confirms the witnesses did see something extraordinary.

UFO skeptic: It seems that I am the only person who is not so convinced by the evidence. There are many components of this case that do not appear to agree and the confirming evidence seems weak to me. I was asked to attend this briefing to provide feedback. If you don't want to listen, then feel free to classify this as "the best UFO case ever". Just don't expect me to sign off on it.

UFO experimenter: See.....this is why you never ask a debunker to look at a UFO case. He is saying the witnesses are lying about what they saw! I suppose you are going to say the UFO was Venus seen through swamp gas. What makes you so smart and the witnesses so dumb?



UFO skeptic: I am not calling UFO witnesses liars or dumb. I am just saying there are other possibilities for what they saw. If you want to accept their stories as 100% factual, then I suggest you need to look up the known problems with eyewitness testimony.

UFO experienter: So YOU ARE calling them liars! If they are not 100% accurate, you are saying they are making things up.

UFO skeptic: Again, you twist what I am saying. I am not saying they are making up stories. I believe they saw something but I just question that what they say they saw

was not actually what was seen.

Lead investigator: I am not sure what you mean by this skeptic. How do you know they were inaccurate? We have video recordings of the object and it certainly looks like one of those dark flying triangles they described seeing.

UFO skeptic: Yes, we do have a video but look closely at the recording. There are seven lights visible in the video but we don't see the dark structured craft the witnesses mention. In fact, there is indication that the lights were not attached to a fixed object. If you look closely, the light on the far right starts falling behind the other lights as time goes on and the light in the middle speeds ahead of the other lights. To mean this is an indication the lights were not attached to a massive craft and they were independent of each other.

UFO experienter: There you go again...You are now saying they made up the fact they saw a large object with lights attached to it.

UFO Skeptic: No.... I am not saying they made it up. I am saying they reported something they felt they had seen. This is very similar to the Zond IV case, and others, where witnesses took multiple light sources and thought those sources were attached to a large craft. There are other cases on record for this.

Lead Investigator: Hmmmm....I appeared to miss the fact these lights were not flying in unison. Still, it may be a case of optics or perspective that caused these things. The fact remains that these lights are moving like the UFO reported by the witnesses.

UFO skeptic: Yes, but it indicates that there may not have been a craft that was three football fields across as described by the witnesses.

Lead Investigator: But the UFO was reported to be only 500 feet away. It would be hard to conclude these observations were simply misperceptions.

UFO skeptic: How do we know the UFO was that close? It was night and I don't think that the witness can make an accurate assessment of the distance.

UFO film producer: But one of the dozen witnesses, who saw this object was a pilot. I am sure he can tell the difference of distances even at night.

UFO skeptic: I am sorry to bust your bubble but that is not the case. UFOlogy is full of "reliable" witnesses, who have been mistaken about the distance an object was from them. Without a frame of reference to use, one must assume the witness was guessing. It is not a reliable measurement at all.

UFO blogger: Oh yeah, what about the military witnesses at the nearby AF base? They were on guard duty and saw the UFO low on the horizon after sunset. They said it danced around in the trees and then disappeared after an hour or so. The time and direction matches what the witnesses reported. Since they were about five miles east of the other witnesses, then the object must have been really low.

UFO skeptic: Good point but are we sure they saw the same UFO? They reported a single light and not multiple ones. You mention they saw the UFO in the trees for about an hour but the other witnesses reported seeing the event for about five minutes. I did a preliminary check with an astronomer friend of mine about the location of bright stars and planets that night. He informed me that Venus was low on the horizon after twilight ended and set about an hour and a half later. This might have been what the military witnesses reported. It is a possible that the witnesses saw a completely different object.

UFO film producer: Now I talked to these young men. They were certain they saw some sort of craft in the tree line that was hovering there observing them. It shown a bright light in their direction and it went on and off several times.

UFO skeptic: All these effects can be explained by Venus being seen through the trees. The branches moving in the breeze could interrupt the light from Venus. I am not sure how the witnesses could determine that the UFO was watching them.

UFO experienter: More of calling the witnesses stupid...I knew inviting a debunker to this meeting was a mistake. They will always find a reason to reject any UFO case no matter how good the evidence is.





UFO skeptic: I am not saying they are stupid. I am just raising other possibilities that seem to be more likely than an alien spaceship.

UFO scientist: Nobody in here called it an alien spaceship. Now you are jumping to conclusions. BTW, what about the radar data. There is an obvious correlation from the FAA radar plots and the track of the UFO.

UFO skeptic: I am glad you mentioned this data because I wonder how good it really is and if it confirms the event at all. You managed to get ten minutes of radar contacts around the time of the sighting. In those ten minutes you managed to find four contacts that match the track of the UFO. However, there are actually fifty-two random contacts reported during this same time period. Taking four contacts and drawing a line be-

tween them is more a case of chance. What about the other forty-eight contacts? Can we draw a line between four or five of those and create another ground track that goes in the opposite or another direction? I did not try but it just does not make me feel that the radar data is as convincing as you make it. I am no expert on this. Have you bothered to get another radar expert to agree with your conclusions?

UFO scientist: I have yet to release the data. I discussed it with others but have yet to show them my findings.

UFO skeptic: So this is solely your interpretation of the data?

UFO scientist: Well, I asked about regarding how the data was obtained but, yes, I am the only one that has analyzed the actual data.

UFO activist: This is ridiculous. You can't stand to see this case being presented to the public because it would shatter your personal beliefs about the universe. I bet you don't believe it is possible that extraterrestrial life even exists.

UFO skeptic: Actually, I think it is very likely that life exists elsewhere but I have no proof of this. It just seems likely based on the odds. That being said, even if there was extraterrestrial life, and it was intelligent, I see no evidence that it was visiting earth.

UFO archivist: This is interesting skeptic but how do you explain the fact that two cars stopped working when the UFO passed over?

UFO skeptic: We don't know it was a fact that the cars stopping was caused by the UFO passing over. The UFO passed over a major road and there were plenty of cars coming and going in the nearby shopping center. Not all the cars reported being stopped. We only know that two did.

UFO speaker: But how do you explain the two cars stopping?

UFO skeptic: I don't. It is hard to say. Were the cars low on gas at the time? Did they have bad spark plugs or problems with their ignition system? All I see in the report is that the witnesses stated their cars stopped as they watched the UFO passed nearby. Isn't it possible the witnesses simply pulled over and stopped the cars without thinking?

UFO experience: Again, you are claiming the witnesses are lying. I will not listen to this debunking any more.

UFO agnostic: Now let's calm down. This is why we invited a skeptic in the first place. You may not like it but he is raising some valid points. I, for one, think the classification of the case as "the best ever" is now questionable.

UFO activist: I knew you were in cahoots with him. I have seen your type before. You shift your opinions with the wind. A short while ago, you said the witnesses saw something extraordinary. Now you are saying it was not the case.

UFO agnostic: Unlike you, I am willing to change my mind. I received a presentation that was rather one sided and did not have another point of view. I must admit, I feel ashamed for not noticing some of these things myself. I guess I was not paying attention. I appreciate the skeptic's keen observations and hope that the investigation will continue and investigate these points further.

UFO scientist: I agree agnostic. This seems to be a case of seeing what we wanted to see in the data. I have to admit, I feel that my end of the investigation with the radar data is pretty good but, after these points were raised by skeptic, I am going to have to look at the data again.

UFO film producer: I don't get it. How can you people ignore all these witnesses and the fact they saw something extraordinary. If they did not see a huge craft with lights, what did they see ..... a mirage?

UFO skeptic: We don't know what they saw without more data. Is it possible these were Chinese lanterns? What about a formation of aircraft? It may have been an alien spaceship but we need better data.

UFO scientist: I am not sure Chinese lanterns or a formation of aircraft are possible based on the radar data.

UFO skeptic: Are we sure? You only asked for data that involved "unknown contacts". Was there a flight of aircraft through the area at the time? Would Chinese lanterns even show up on radar? What about balloons with lights attached? Maybe they were birds reflecting light. I don't know but we have to examine such possibilities. Even if none of these are answers to what the witnesses saw,



it still does not mean that what they saw was an alien spaceship.

Lead Investigator: I never said it was an alien spaceship. I simply stated it was an unidentified craft not known to science.

UFO skeptic: Forgive me for jumping the gun again. You did call this an “unknown structured craft that was moving under intelligent control” in your written report. The wording had me drawing the conclusion you meant alien spaceship.

Lead Investigator: I want everyone to know that I examined a lot of these possibilities in my report. I found them weak explanations for the UFO reports I examined. The witnesses knew what they saw and it was not a flock of birds, Chinese lanterns, or a squadron of planes. I see no reason to listen to these debunker’s remarks and my report will be published with or without his signature.

UFO experienter: Hear!!! Hear!!! I am willing to sign off on this.

UFO film producer: If I can use it in my film, I am willing to sign the report.

UFO author: I have kept my mouth shut for the most part. While I feel the skeptic has his opinion, I think he is allowing his disbelief to interfere with his assessment of the case. I will sign the report.

UFO speaker: I have a conference to go to next week and need to get ready for it. I think the case is pretty good and will sign the report.

UFO journalist: I need a case to beat the drum in my column. If I don’t do that, the other writers will continue to ignore me. I am willing to point out the important facts about the case that makes it one of the best cases ever. I am going to endorse the report.

UFO activist: I don’t care what the debunker says. I already have a scheduled television interview about the case and hope to use the witnesses of this event to pressure congress for hearings about this event. Count me in as supporting the report.

UFO blogger: I am not persuaded by the pseudo-skeptic’s position. I have looked at this case for months and do not find his arguments against these reports very compelling at all. My stance has always been this is a great case and it still is. It would take a mountain of evidence to convince me that it was not an unknown craft being piloted by intelligent beings. I will put my signature on this and I will make sure my blog documents the negative opinions by the pelicanist down at the end of the table. He will regret his stance on this case.

UFO archivist: I still feel a need to put this at the top of my UFO case list. Is it “the best UFO case ever”? I don’t know but I am not going to say it was explained. I will sign this report as long as we use language that the case is a “true unknown”.

UFO scientist: I will take a look at the data again to see if I missed something. I suggest we remove my part of the report until I can examine it more closely. Meanwhile, I will endorse the rest of the report as it indicating something that is unidentified at this point.

UFO agnostic: While I admire everyone’s conviction on this, I have to abstain from signing this report. I think there are aspects of this case that might point towards a possible explanation.

UFO skeptic: I still am wondering why I am here. I guess the more UFOlogy wants to improve itself, the more it remains the same. Thanks for inviting me to this discussion group but I can’t sign anything that just does not meet my standards of evidence. Good luck with all your endeavors and maybe we will meet again for the next “best UFO case ever”.

### **End scene**

Some may find my portrayal of such a diverse group somewhat biased. However, I selected the characters, and their personalities, from various individuals I have either encountered or seen commenting/speaking over the years. I fear that there will never be a group that can judge UFO reports accurately. Even if there was, their opinions/conclusions may not be accepted. Organizations, such as MUFON, have determined they are the final arbiters on the status of UFO cases and evidence. They would not sit still for something they proclaimed to be an exotic event as something mundane. Even individual UFO researchers, who have no affiliations, will argue for the validity of their own prized cases even though the evidence for them may be less than compelling. Confirmation bias is a serious problem in UFO research.

I suppose I should have included a UFO disbeliever/UFO debunker to the mix but the original plan was to provide one skeptic to balance out a panel of UFO personalities interested in promoting a UFO case. Maybe the next time I will create a story with a title of “11 UFO disbelievers and a UFO proponent”. I am sure the outcome would be the same except on the other end of the spectrum.

### **Postscript**

After I wrote this I became involved with the Puerto Rico Research Review (PRRR), which included a far more diverse group than the RSRG. The discussions were very good but it was clear that some opinions about certain things were strong. I want to think that most of the members in the group were of the UFO agnostic and UFO skeptic persona. The group is still working on analyzing the video and trying to agree on the various aspects of the case. While our discussions have been pretty reasonable, we have received some rather negative comments from some of the SCU team (even though we have really published nothing) and members of other UFO organizations. Their comments mimic some of the opinions demonstrated by other characters in my story.



# CANADIAN UFO IDENTIFIED

Amid the usual fanfare, Chris Rutkowski announced the annual summary of 2014's Canadian UFO reports. I want to congratulate Chris and his associates for their hard work. I think they do a great job putting these reports together and identifying them. From what I can tell, they are the only UFO group that publicly tells everyone about their analysis of each case, which deserves praise. Most groups, like MUFON, simply collect the reports and that is the last you hear of them. If there is an investigation, it is kept quiet unless they want to appear in the news media. Those cases are often proclaimed to be some sort of exotic event and they hardly, if ever, explain a case as something mundane. The last thing MUFON wants is to tarnish its reputation as scientifically investigating UFOs by acting like a bunch of debunkers. That is not what the organization responsible for "Hanger one" is all about.

Getting back to the survey, I still think it could do a better job with the cases they list as "unidentified". I was glancing at the list of reports and this one caught my eye:

*Nov 27 2222 ET red crescent faded away not the moon<sup>1</sup>*

Why would they state it was "not the moon"? Was it possible that it could be the moon? I became interested and wanted to learn more about this sighting. This report came from MUFON. I went to their database and found the report:

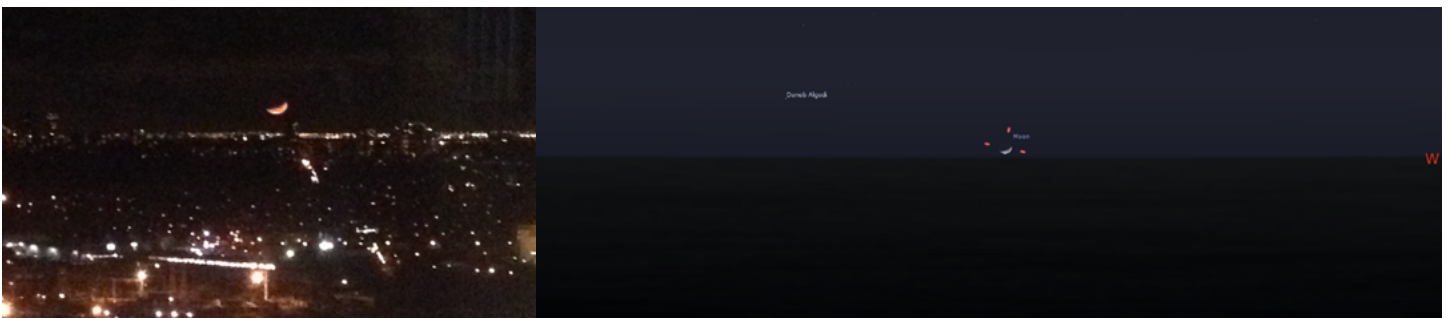
*While cooking dinner 35 stories above ground in east York Toronto I gazed out the window. I saw what appeared to be the hugest red crescent moon I've ever seen. I took a picture, messaged my brother and as I watched it started to fade away. The left(south) side fading first until just a red 'tip' on the north side was visible. It was the last part to fade to black. My apartment faces due west and due to the height I can see all the way to Mississauga on a clear night like tonight. I could see the clouds, but it definitely wasn't cloud cover blocking the glow. Then I realized at this time of night the moon should be in the east or overhead, not west and hovering on the horizon. This thing was massive. I could see it on either side of various apartment buildings on the horizon. It appeared to be more than a km or 2 wide (perhaps more). And was a reddish orange color. It steadily faded, no flickering or flashing. It truly looked like an eclipsing planet. I was transfixed by it. Couldn't walk away in case I missed it. Only looked away for quick texts to my brother hoping he could see what I was seeing. Left me with goosebumps.<sup>2</sup>*

The report also included a photograph (see below left). This looked a lot like the setting moon. Was the moon visible and setting in the west that night? Moon set at 2227 and the phase was very similar. You can see this image I got using Stellarium, and 2221 as the time. The potential for an error in time by a few minutes is to be considered probable. Instead of this not being the moon, we discover it WAS very likely the moon.<sup>3</sup>

The point of this article is not to demonstrate that all the "unidentifieds" in the Canadian UFO survey are identifiable. What I am trying to point out is that, while many UFO databases will contain interesting reports that are difficult to identify, they will also contain some "unidentifieds" that are actually IFOs not properly classified.

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3. "Toronto, Canada — Moonrise, moonset and moon phases, November 2014". Timeanddate.com. Available WWW: <http://www.timeanddate.com/moon/canada/toronto?month=11&year=2014>



## November 16, 1952 Landrum South Carolina

NICAP describes this event as follows:

*November 16, 1952--Nr. Landrum, S. C. Hundreds of people saw a huge disc, watched through binoculars by air traffic controller.<sup>1</sup>*

There is no footnote and no mention of where this information came from. However, there are other sources that gives us some information about this event. If hundreds of people saw this "huge disc", more information should be found in the local media.

### Newspaper reports

Looking in the newspaper archive, I found several papers describing the event. The object was described as a "tremendous glowing streak" that had been visible for roughly 10 minutes. It eventually disappeared in the southwest. The air traffic controller mentioned by NICAP was a man named John Ellis. He was quoted in the Lumberton, North Carolina Robesonian:

*John N. Ellis, aircraft communicator for the CAA for 11 years and a licensed pilot, said the object was "unlike anything I have ever seen.*

*Ellis said that, when he first saw the object, it was in the west at about 10,000 feet and that it slowly moved to the southwest before disappearing. He added that he watched it for six minutes which dispelled an early thought that it was a jet aircraft but lasted too long and moved too slowly," he said.*

*The CAA official described the object as glowing extremely brightly and likened its shape to a saucer tilted at an angle of about 30 degrees with a thin edge down and a heavier lip up. He said he heard no sound or heard no smoke.<sup>2</sup>*

Lumberton was 50 miles to the Northeast of Florence, South Carolina. The Florence morning news of November 17th gave this description of the object from an EAL pilot, who saw the event from the ground:

*...was with some 25 persons at the Florence Airport at 5:13 p.m. yesterday when "it" was sighted northwest of Florence. The captain said the craft was silver and one side had a hexagonal shape.*

*In giving his description, he said when the object was first sighted it appeared as a bright light; it passed the airfield tilted at a 30 degree angle and had the shape of a sphere.*

*The side, he said, that could be seen by the group, looked like a saucer, but had six sides, or edges. Because of the 30-degree tilt, he assumed the visible side to be the top of the craft.*

*He said the object reflected a silver light and left a "stream" or "trail" that was unlike the 'stream" left by jets flying at high altitudes.*

*The "stream" he described, and the one described by many of the 25 or more in the crowd, was more like "heavy fan tailed blast, some two miles long—or would be two miles long at the height the object was flying. It was visible until it was 30 degrees above the horizon, which would have been 50 or 60 miles from here<sup>3</sup>*

Sounds very interesting but, because it was visible for some time, one wonders why there were no photographs taken of the event. Was it really that strange or was it something else?

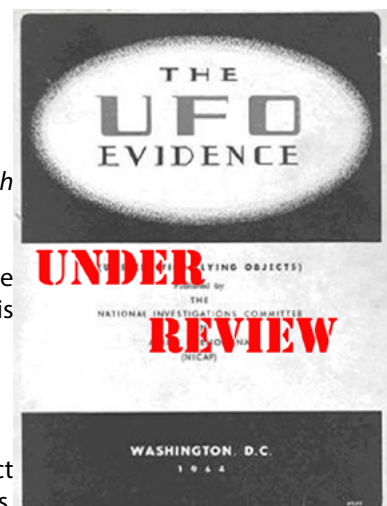
### Blue Book

Looking at the Blue Book file reveals that the UFO was recorded on film. The roll was sent to both the USAF and True magazine. It was shot from Landrum, South Carolina, which was over 150 miles to the north-northwest of Florence. The USAF noticed the following about the film:

*a. Only a few frames show anything that is discernible.*

*b. No movement of any object can be seen.*

*c. On the frames that something could be seen there were two blobs of bright light, apparently reflected from the sun. In that the films*



were taken at dusk and the sun was setting from the clouds, it is believed the light spots indicated in the film are reflections from the sun. This phenomenon sometimes called "mock sun" or "sun dog".<sup>4</sup>

Donald Keyhoe has a letter in the files, where a letter from the cameraman to his son was transcribed.

*When I glimpsed them first they were about the size of a conventional automobile tire and were the color of aluminum. I could not observe any forward speed at any time, but I did get the impression that they were traveling in a westerly direction, that is, away from us, and I have this on the fact that they diminished in size, from that of an auto tire to about the size of a tennis ball.*

*They did, however, show a definite north to south movement at times. At other times one would go straight up like an elevator while another would show a like downward descent. This up and down movement was quite marked both in speed and visibility. Some times several would disappear and at times we could see varying numbers of them although we never saw more than eleven and never less than three. The color when first seen by me was burnished silver which gradually changed to a burning orange. There was no noise, due no doubt to the great distance, nor were there any vapor trails to be seen.*<sup>5</sup>



Lumberton and Florence are pretty far away and one has to wonder if they are related to this event. NICAP seemed to think so because they mentioned the air traffic controller in Lumberton and linked it to the Landrum film. If these events were related, the large area of where the observations were made indicate the phenomenon observed was not close but probably far away. I did not see any images from the film in the files but the reported observations appear to be similar the "sun dog" explanation given by the USAF. It might not have been something as ordinary as a "sun dog" but it could have been some other form of parahelia.

Another possible theory is that it may have been an unusual airplane contrail similar to the ones reported as missiles and UFOs in the past.<sup>6</sup> A high flying aircraft might explain some of the descriptions made by the witnesses in Lumberton and Florence. Jet aircraft were not common in 1952 and contrails produced from new high altitude jets like the B-47, would look different than those being produced from propeller driven aircraft like the B-29 or B-36.

According to the Blue Book files, the film was also given to True magazine but they never, to the best of my knowledge, published the images from that film.<sup>7</sup> If it really showed something exotic, they would have published it. The lack of publication indicates the publishers felt this film was not that extraordinary.

## Conclusion

It is tough to call this one "explained". Without any images, one can not say exactly what was seen but I would tend to suggest it probably was an unusual airplane contrail or some sort of parahelia. The one thing that can be concluded is that this is not evidence that supports NICAP's conclusion that this proves UFOs are "intelligently controlled" and are "manifestations of extraterrestrial life".

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2. "Luminous Object Is Spotted In Sky South Of Lumberton". The Robesonian. Lumberton, North Carolina. November 17, 1952. P.1.
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### **A cylinder of unknown origin**

**A** ccording to Don Berliner's summary:

*Aug. 24, 1954; Egilstadir, Iceland. 8:30 p.m. Witness: one unnamed farmer. A cylinder, 2-2.5' long, 4-5' in diameter, made a loud whizzing sound, flew straight and level fast, then slow, then fell into sandbar.<sup>1</sup>*

This seems to be a rather interesting case. Is this a case where physical evidence was recovered? Was it a cylinder or was it something else?

### **Blue Book investigation**

**T**he file is very small and does not contain a lot of information. The USAF sent an investigative team to locate the "cylinder" but failed to find anything.<sup>2</sup> Even though they used a mine detector, its limited capabilities prevented them from seeing anything that was buried deep below the soil. Compounding the problem was that the witness did not mark the location until almost a week after the incident and that the river had rose and fell before the team investigated the area. It was assumed that the "cylinder" had been buried in the river bed somewhere. The USAF chose not to dig up the area as it would have been too expensive. Today, people would be appalled by this approach as it would destroy the natural environment of the river. The "UFO" might still be buried there today since nobody chose to look for it after this. Wouldn't this be a job for the great Roswell dig team?

### **Conclusions**

**W**hile we can't solve this one without the physical evidence, it seems highly unlikely that the object was anything incredible or unknown to science. So mundane is this event that Kevin Randle did not even mention it in his Appendix listing UFO crashes in his book "A history of UFO crashes".<sup>3</sup> Certainly this qualifies as a "UFO crash" or does it?

It was suggested that it might have been a bird or some sort of debris dropped from an aircraft. Research indicated there were no aircraft in the area but what if the time or date was not quite correct? Then again, it might have been some sort of airborne object that ejected from a volcano or some other possible source. I would hardly describe this as evidence of something truly exotic in nature. It can remain "unidentified" but one must consider the fact that it was only reported by one witness. Single witness observations tend to have a large potential for error. This makes it more a case of an "insufficient information" than "unknown".

### **Notes and references**

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## *BUY IT: HOW UFOs CONQUERED THE WORLD BY DAVID CLARKE*

Dr. Clarke was gracious enough to send me a copy of his latest book and I was eager to read the contents. Unfortunately, it arrived in May when I was busy focusing my attention on something else. Once the Roswell slides saga was over, I was able to take the time to enjoy his latest work.

One thing the reader will quickly discover is that this is not your standard UFO book, where we get to, once again, read the footnoted history of the various famous UFO cases over the world. Instead, while documenting UFO history, David also shares with us his personal encounters over the years and how they relate to that history. I found it a refreshing take.

Dr. Clarke's involvement with the Ministry of Defense (MOD) UFO files is well known. What is not that well known is his relationship with many of the people who worked at the MOD and their approach to the subject. David provides us a pretty good description of his involvement and some of the personalities involved. His description of the Condign report was very interesting and is required reading for those, who think this report is something significant.

I found Clarke's description of Dr. Paul Davies UFOlogical transformation fascinating. He recounts that Davies, as a PhD student in 1968, wrote a letter to Physics Today trying to refute the claims by Professor R.V. Jones about UFOs. The bulk of the letter relied heavily upon NICAP's UFO Evidence. Dr. Clarke then fast forwards to 2010, where Dr. Davies now refers to UFO sightings as "Ghost stories" that are a lot of fun to listen to but are not good evidence. The author notes that Davies 1960s commentary are very similar to the commentary used by UFO proponents today. The lesson here appears to be that UFO proponents just keep recycling the same arguments and have added nothing new for the past forty to fifty years.

As expected, the book makes a strong case for psychosocial hypothesis (PSH) and tends to be skeptical of many UFO claims. Dr. Clarke's final chapter sums it up well. In that section, he lists the ten basic truths for, what he calls, "the UFO syndrome":

1. There is no such thing as 'the UFO phenomenon' but there are lots of phenomena that caused UFOs.
2. There is no such thing as a 'true UFO'.
3. Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.
4. Accounts of UFO experiences form the core of the syndrome, but stories do not constitute 'evidence'. They are folklore.
5. Culture - not experience - creates the UFO interpretation but some experiences are independent of culture.
6. The UFO syndrome fulfills the role of the supernatural 'other'.
7. The extraterrestrial hypothesis and other exotic theories cannot explain UFOs.
8. The idea of a super-conspiracy to hide the truth about UFOs is unfalsifiable.
9. The common denominator in UFO stories is the human beings who see and believe in them.
10. People want to believe in UFOs.

Many UFO proponents would strongly disagree with these "truths" and then go on to list various UFO cases they find so compelling that they prove Clarke wrong. However, I find many of these arguments weak. Even the best UFO cases rely heavily on testimony and data that is open to interpretation. Quite a few of these cases start with a UFO investigator assuming the object was alien and then attempting to prove it. That is the wrong approach and is what sunk the Roswell slides story so quickly. Had they taken the approach described by David Clarke, they might have come up with a different answer than aliens.

David Clarke's book is a must read for any UFO aficionado. You may, or may not, agree with his conclusions but it is still an important book to add to any UFO library. It is a "Buy it" book.

