

SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs

PROJECT 10073 RECORD	
1. DATE - TIME GROUP 31 March 1966 31/1845Z	2. LOCATION Roy, Utah (5 Witnesses)
3. SOURCE Civilian	10. CONCLUSION Other (birds) Possible ^{OTHER} (gulls) <i>gull</i>
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS Eleven	
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 15 - 20 Minutes	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Observers reported sighting 11 object maneuvering above the area of observation point at 1845Z. The object were moving in diverse directions and individually and collectively fading from view. Three objects observed above and to the rear of approaching aircraft, two side by side, one following, 7 or 8 appeared to be moving in a circle at an extreme elevation. There were several aircraft in the area at the time of sighting. There was nothing unusual on radar reported.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground-Visual (BX)	
7. COURSE Varied	
8. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

FORM
FTD SEP 63 0-329 (TDE) Previous editions of this form may be used.

PROJECT 10073 RECORD	
1. DATE - TIME GROUP 23 Apr 66 24/0400Z	2. LOCATION Cloverdale, California
3. SOURCE Civilian	10. CONCLUSION Other (birds) <i>Very likely. gull</i>
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS 15	
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 20 minutes	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Observer noted vapor with dim masses of light in formation that were traveling toward the north. It appeared as white glowing masses and a white mist.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground Visual	
7. COURSE North	
8. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

FORM
FTD SEP 63 0-329 (TDE) Previous editions of this form may be used.

PROJECT 10073 RECORD	
1. DATE - TIME GROUP April 66	2. LOCATION Ely, Nevada
3. SOURCE Civilian	10. CONCLUSION Aircraft <i>Very prob. gull</i>
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS One	
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION minutes each	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Many objects in immediate area during this period. Some objects sighted at high altitudes, some under cloud cover. Objects reported to appear to hover and travel rapidly in various directions. Various colors of lights were reported. There are several low altitude high-speed Training A/C routes over the area. From the description of the objects conventional A/C appear to be responsible for the observations.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Visual	
7. COURSE	
8. PHOTOS	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE	

FORM
FTD SEP 63 0-329 (TDE) Previous editions of this form may be used.

PROJECT 10073 RECORD	
1. DATE - TIME GROUP 01/0130Z	2. LOCATION Toms River, New Jersey
3. SOURCE	10. CONCLUSION Possible (AIRCRAFT) <i>not even probable. gull</i>
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS	
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS As observer watched a high flying aircraft she noticed an object which appeared as a bright star that began to move SW direction. Object did not drop over the horizon as did the satellite she seen previous. Observer stated, the farther the object moved, the closer to the earth it appeared but did not travel in an arc.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION	
7. COURSE	
8. PHOTOS	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE	

FORM
FTD SEP 63 0-329 (TDE) Previous editions of this form may be used.

PROJECT 10073 RECORD	
1. DATE - TIME GROUP 20 April 66 21/0500Z	2. LOCATION Albany, Oregon (1 Witness)
3. SOURCE Civilian	10. CONCLUSION AIRCRAFT <i>Prob. gull</i>
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS One	
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION One Minute	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Object was described as round in shape, half the size of a dime held at arms length object trailing it. Object was moving then SSW and was out of sight in one minute.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground-Visual	
7. COURSE SSW	
8. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

FORM
FTD SEP 63 0-329 (TDE) Previous editions of this form may be used.

From limited data available, birds may be the explanation
gull

U.S. AIR FORCE TECHNICAL INFORMATION

This questionnaire has been prepared so that you can give the U.S. Air Force as much information as possible concerning the unidentified aerial phenomenon that you have observed. Please try to answer as many questions as you possibly can. The information that you give will be used for research purposes. Your name will not be used in connection with any statements, conclusions, or publications without your permission. We request this personal information so that if it is deemed necessary, we may contact you for further details.

In 19 years and more than 10,000 sightings recorded and classified, there appears to be no verified and fully satisfactory evidence of any case that is clearly outside the framework of presently known science and technology.

Special ad hoc committee review of Project Blue Book 1966



Caveat emptor

Cover: A sample of record cards and forms that Dr. Hynek reviewed and commented. It was interesting to see him agreeing with "possible" explanations as late as 1966.

Left: How hard is it to create a hoaxed UFO that might get past UFO investigators? I don't really know and have not tried. But this is an interesting demonstration of how one might do it using a simple cell phone camera without Photoshop or strings.

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Tom DeLonge has finally entered the UFOlogical fray by creating a business that will develop UFO-like technologies and sell DVDs, CDs, and other items that will reveal the truth about UFOs. You have to give him credit for the publicity that he was able to achieve. I also have to give DeLonge credit for discovering a new way to separate UFO aficionado's from their money. I doubt they will ever create their advanced spacecraft but I am sure they will probably make money by convincing everyone they can. May the buyer/investor beware of anybody making such promises.

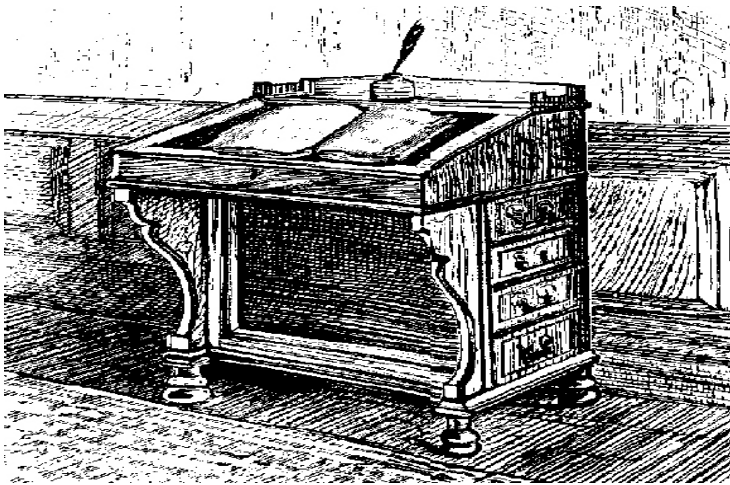
The Scientific Coalition for UFOlogy (SCU) has become an official organization that will now compete with the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) and the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) for promoting and investigating UFO reports. The words "caveat emptor" still apply when it comes to these sort of things. Many will probably blindly accept what these groups will state because they dress their reports/conclusions with the claim they are being scientific. It is important to note that all of these "scientific" investigations have never been formally presented to actual scientific journals independent of UFOlogy. Did the SCU every submit their Aquadilla video report to a journal like "Infrared physics and technology"? I don't think so and there is probably a good reason for it. Either they don't have the scientific clout to submit the report or they don't want it revealed that they made errors in their analysis. The SCU is nothing more than MUFON/CUFOS with a different name and group of individuals leading it. I predict that they will produce the same exact results that other UFO organizations have produced for the past seventy years.

Kevin Randle announced that an independent expert, Michael Primeau, had performed an analysis on the Ramey Memo for a program called "Expedition Unknown". Kevin was sort of shy on giving out details because it was part of the program. However, he did indicate the expert was leaning towards the word "viewing" over "victims". The program has no episode listed for this in season 1 and 2. Will we have to wait until season 3? Is this another case of "buyer beware" for those that think the "Ramey memo" is the Roswell smoking gun?

Many thanks to Mssrs. Rob   and Abrassart for their contribution this issue. Their analysis of a close encounter case was compelling. I was always a big fan of "The Twilight Zone" (as well as The Outer Limits) and it is interesting how their might be a link between the event and a popular episode from that series.

Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



The UFO Chronicles posted a new solution to the Kecksburg story. This time it was Dr. Bob Gross, who tried to reach a conclusion that the Kecksburg object was a man-made spacecraft. In this case, he determined it to be a film capsule carrying some form of nuclear payload from a Corona Satellite launched at 2110 UTC on 9 December from Vandenberg AFB. In order to make this story fit, Gross chooses to come up with some bizarre scenario where the rocket did not go south, but, instead, initially went northeast before performing a course correction and heading south again. The whole story is full of speculation and has quite a few holes in it. I recognized the fact that a rocket heading Northeast would result in the KH-4 not reaching its desired orbit. The records show that the payload reached a similar orbit to other KH-4s, which had been launched throughout 1965. The KH-4A launched on December 24th had almost an identical orbit to the KH-4A launched on December 9. This means the December 9th satellite was

not launched into an improper orbit and the December 24 KH-4A was probably put into the same type of orbit to perform the mission that the December 9 craft failed to accomplish.

I asked Ted Molczan to look into Gross' explanation. His response was that Gross was trying to force-fit a false theory to fit false facts. He pointed me to a document that had been classified "Top Secret", which describes the events of the KH-4A satellite launched on December 9, 1965. As I had guessed, based on the orbital elements, the satellite did reach the desired orbit. If the rocket had an initial trajectory towards the Northeast, as Gross claims, it would have been impossible for the payload to reach the desired orbit even if the rocket made some sort of magical course correction. This is not Star Trek/Star Wars where spacecraft are capable of making rapid turns. It appears that Gross' theory started with his belief in the wild exaggerated stories told by witnesses decades later. In order to satisfy these stories, he needed to create some sort of exotic event involving a nuclear device of some kind.

Robert Sheaffer added his critique of Gross' theory. The "nuclear experiment" that Gross turned into some sort of radioactive payload, was nothing more some film designed to record radiation in space. The payload clearly states it was a "nuclear emulsion". I guess Gross did not even equate the term "emulsion" to film. As far as his claims about the rocket having problems, he misinterpreted the statement that the satellite had an "erratic attitude" which required recovery, into some sort of launch anomaly. I would interpret this to mean the satellite had problems controlling its orientation after reaching orbit and not that the rocket had problems. In responding to Sheaffer's critique, he indicated that there was a lot of disinformation and implied that the documentation Molczan had presented was a lie in order to cover up the real truth. In other words, he was using the typical UFOlogical cop out where anything that disproves a claim is nothing more than government lies.

Because Kecksburg was now the topic of conversation, Frank Warren posted one of the witness reports from 1965 that supposedly states there were rapid changes in direction for the object seen that night. It was written by a witness, who was in an aircraft getting ready to land in Pittsburgh. The strange thing is the witness states they were looking east, which is not towards Kecksburg or Lake Erie. The description was the object was traveling horizontally and then moved at 70 degree angle towards the horizon. Total duration was 3-4 seconds. I suspect this was a description of the meteor and he was looking towards the west and not east. His "horizontal flight" was only glimpsed for a "split second" according to the witness, which means it probably was an illusion of horizontal flight as the meteor flared into visibility and then was seen moving in a downward angle. It definitely does not match the description given decades later where the object was zig-zagging across the sky for many seconds and slowing down to land at Kecksburg.

Frank would eventually tell me that he had been reading CIA documents that clearly demonstrated Gross' theory was wrong and Molczan was correct. I am not sure why UFOlogists feel a need to explain this event as something man-made or alien. The fireball perfectly explains all the visual observations reported in 1965. A misperception explains the events the belief that something landed in the woods. UFO promoters and story telling explains the claims that "something alien" landed in the woods, the military was heavily involved, and all the other wild tales that have become part of the Kecksburg mythology.

Some strange lights over Oahu appear to be military illumination flares being dropped to the west of the island. They were filmed from Honolulu and were quite bright. If one watches the film, one can see the lights drift downward and flicker.

Tom DeLonge finally made his great reveal. There was no "disclosure" but he did present his business venture, which he calls "To the stars". DeLonge's group has a lot of people with interesting titles that are preceded by the label "Former". If they were any good, why are they "former"? My experience is that individuals, who are good at their jobs in government and industry usually

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

advance to higher positions. It almost appears as if these individuals had no jobs and jumped onto the DeLonge gravy train. The group's mission is to *"build a revolutionary technology for the world, research the unknown and finally tell the "story of the millennia" through Feature Films"*. If you want to make this happen, all you have to do is "invest" in his organization! As always, UFOs is about the money. Leslie Kean is "ga-ga" for it. I wonder how much money she will invest in this scam. Some of the UFO faithful are quite gullible.

Jason Colavito pointed out that Tom DeLonge also makes a nice payday for the project using his name. He gets an annual paycheck of \$700,000! Of course, the rest of his "former" experts are not going to do it for free or minimum wage. I am sure all of them will be paid six figure values. The more you look at it, the more it looks like these individuals have created an organization that promises everything but will, more than likely, deliver nothing of significance. Other than "entertainment" (i.e. books, t-shirts, CDs, and videos), where will they get money to make the payroll? My guess is it will be all the money collect from gullible "investors". Meanwhile, UFO aficionados will be waiting anxiously for some form of disclosure or a magical craft that can act like those described in UFO reports.

During DeLonge's presentation, one of his experts, Chris Mellon, mentioned a UFO event that involved US Navy fighters, from the USS Nimitz, chasing a UFO. The story was told second hand but a video has been circulating for over a decade that supposedly shows the UFO recorded by the aircraft. It does not look like much to me as it indicates the aircraft was flying straight and level and not in any sort of pursuit. Isaac Koi has suggested it was a fake. Meanwhile, Robert Powell has been filing FOIAs in an effort to get more details. The best he has been able to do is get some verbal confirmation of the event but no actual documentation. Powell has now initiated an e-mail/letter writing campaign to have the government investigate this case. Considering all the success UFO proponents have had in the past getting congress to look into the subject of UFOs, I don't expect much. I am sure that something happened/was tracked but I don't think it was as "unearthly" as the UFOlogists have been promoting.

Tony Bragalia is back on the Wanaque reservoir case. He has found an original print of the famous photograph taken by Claude Coutant. Missing were the negatives, which means the photographic print could have been manipulated in the dark room to create a photo montage. To me, the image looks like a hoax but I have nothing to back up that claim. It is just a "gut feel" based on the cartoon appearance of the image but, since nobody other than Bragalia is promoting the photograph, I suspect many UFOlogists agree with this assessment. In any case, Bragalia has presented an "analysis" of this photograph by "French consultant" Christian Toussay. We have no idea what his qualifications are but we do know that he has done a lot of work trying to demonstrate that Oswald was not the shooter at the Kennedy assassination. Using, what appears to be, a computer software filter of some kind, he discovered, in a two dimension photograph, evidence that three-dimension "figures" were floating in the beam being projected by the UFO. There is no research paper demonstrating the techniques used or if an actual photo analysis expert agreed with what this "consultant" discovered. The key point in all of this is Bragalia, and his "consultant", were using a photographic print and not the original negative. Until Bragalia, and his consultant, produce the original negative, his article, and the "analysis, means very little. It is not the great revelation he appears to be promoting.

The Roswell Corner

The Roswell slides surface again

The latest Guardian article about the Roswell slides repeated some of the mythology regarding Schmitt and Carey's opinions about the slides. Once again, Carey and Schmitt claimed that Adam Dew purposefully manipulated the slides so they could not see that the slides were in a museum setting and prevented them from reading the placard. The truth of the matter is that placard could be deblurred and read. David Rudiak deblurred his copy of the placard once he saw how it was done and Tony Bragalia's image was deblurred by the Roswell Slides Research Group (RSRG) shortly after he posted them on the web. As for not noticing the museum setting, it was noted by many observers long before the slide debut on May 5th, based on the blurry frame grab that was circulated widely on the internet, that it looked exactly like a museum setting. If Schmitt and Carey were doing the proper diligence, they would have asked to see the full frame image. I am sure they did and they are only using this as an excuse for their poor work. The real truth is that Schmitt and Carey, as well as others, were blinded by their personal beliefs in promoting these slides. It is that "will to believe" that has sustained the Roswell myth.

Bragalia denies "creating fake stories" about Bernerd Ray

In recent communications with me, Anthony Bragalia denied "inventing" anything about the Rays. All one has to do is look at the articles he wrote about the Rays before BeWitness. His favorite statement was to say that, after 1947, Ray became a "ghost" in his profession and was not active after that time period. The truth is, Ray was active and the news accounts prove this. In fact, in 1976, Bernard Ray was given a life membership to the West Texas Geological society. He was described as a "longtime member". If he were a "ghost", then the West Texas Geological Society was unaware of it. Bragalia just never bothered to look beyond what he wanted to find.

CASE STUDY OF A CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE THIRD KIND (NANCY, FRANCE, 1969) : HALLUCINATION OR FALSE MEMORY?

Robé, R. & Abrassart, J.-M.

Abstract

This article is a UFO sighting case study in which we discuss, from a psychological point of view, a close encounter of the third kind that allegedly happened in the town of Nancy (France) in 1969. This case is of special interest because, on top of seeing a flying saucer with his occupants, the witness, Madame X, said that his hands and forehead swelled after the sighting. The subject also had a bump on her forehead that she attributed to the event. Years later she still had a scar at that spot. As we work inside the framework of the psychosocial paradigm, we will present what we think is the best psychosocial explanation for this case to date.

Presentation of the case

We will discuss in this article a close encounter of the third kind that allegedly happened in the town of Nancy (France) in 1969. In the classification proposed by J. Allen Hynek, close encounter of the third kind are UFO sightings in which at least one occupant or pilot of a UFO is present (Hynek, 1972, p. 158). The witness, Madame X, contacted in 1976 the Groupe Privé Ufologique Nancéien (GPUN) to testify. It was 7 years after the event. Following a very small wave of UFO sightings in that area in the summer of 1976, the GPUN had published at the time a call for witnesses in a local journal, the *Est Republicain*. Madame X thus came forward, but with a 7 years old sighting. The GPUN investigation report was redacted August 19th 1976. She was in her 50s at the time of the sighting.

Madame X's testimony is the following: on November 15th 1969, around 5PM, she went to the window's apartment to feed pigeons, as she used to do every day. She saw at that moment something behind the chimney of the neighbor's house, very close to rooftops. It was a small flying saucer, around 60cm (the size of a car's tire), with a dome where 2 extraterrestrials were looking at her. The saucer had lights under it, similar to car's headlights. She made a drawing of it, writing on it that the extraterrestrials were "2 smiling guys". There was also a strange smell, similar to acid odor. The small flying saucer left toward the sky, in the direction of two other flying saucers looking exactly like the first one waiting for her. After the event, Madame X found out that her hands and forehead swelled. On top of that, she had a big bump on her forehead, which she described to be "as big as a pigeon egg". When GPUN investigators met her 7 years after her sighting, she showed them a scar on her forehead, telling them it dated from the event. She also claimed that two other persons saw the flying saucer, but the first one died before 1976, so the investigators were unable to talk to him to know his version of the events. As for the second one, he was according to the witness a police officer, but Madame X didn't know his name.

Discussion

The Psychosocial Model explains the UFO phenomena with the following mechanisms: simple mistakes, elaborate mistakes, hallucinations, false memories and hoaxes (Abrassart, 2016). Most UFO sightings are simple mistakes with mundane stimuli, for example the moon, helicopters, skytracers, sky lanterns and so on. In those cases, witnesses can describe reliably what they saw: they only fail to identify what the mundane stimulus they saw was. Elaborate mistakes include subjective distortion of what was seen. The witness don't describe what they saw reliably. Based on available cultural narratives (Abrassart, 2014), those distortions can happen during the sighting itself (illusion), when the memory is remembered (confabulation) or during discussions with other people (suggestibility). If illusions are perceptive distortion of an objective stimulus, hallucinations are by definition perceptions without any stimulus. False memories are memories of events that never occurred. It is an extreme form of memory distortion. Finally, hoaxes are false testimonies.

Close encounters of the third kind can sometimes be simple mistakes or elaborate mistakes. In 1954, a French man shot his neighbor when he was repairing his car in the lights of his headlights, believing he was a Martian near his flying saucer (Toselli, 1982, p. 23). This can seem unbelievable at first glance, but each years they are hunters who shoots people mistaking them for bears or deer. We know today that it's how human perception works (Jimenez, 1994). In the Madame X sighting, the size of the flying saucer is especially surprising, as well as the size of its occupants. Nowadays, a drone would be the most obvious stimulus for this case to be a simple mistake. They are today many drones sold in toy shops that look like flying saucers, but in 1969 this explanation seems very unlikely...

We obviously don't know at this point what real extraterrestrials would look like, but this size calls more to mind the Little People of the Fairy Lore than the UFO Lore. Many writers have pointed out similarities between the Fairy Lore and the UFO Lore over the decades since Kenneth Arnold sightings in 1947. Some, like astronomer Jacques Vallée (1969), consider that Fairy sightings are ex-

plained by the extraterrestrial hypothesis. We consider, to the contrary, that the UFO Lore is the secularization and adaptation of the Fairy Lore to modernity. In this view, explaining Fairy sightings with the extraterrestrial hypothesis is projecting a modern myth on an older one. But if the drone hypothesis seems very unlikely, how can we explain this close encounter of the third kind?

What if, in the case of Madame X, the sighting didn't cause the head injury but it happened the other way around? In the medical literature, there are studies that seem to indicate that a severe closed head injury can lead to declarative memory difficulties, amnesia, confabulation and false memories (Melo, Winocur, & Moscovitch, 1999; Demery, Hanlon, & Bauer, 2001; Ries & Marks, 2006). Thus, our explanation would be the following: Madame X hurt her head that day on the window she opened to feed pigeons. She experienced a moment of confusion and later started to create a false memory to explain it. She had 7 years to do so before meeting GPUN's investigators. On top of that, the closed head injury created a scar that was also incorporated in the narrative. It's also possible that she had a hallucination following her closed head injury, but we think that a false memory is more probable.

In support of this hypothesis, we recently discovered that an episode of the TV show *The Twilight Zone* tells a very similar story than the Madame X sighting. It is the episode called *The Invaders* (season 2, episode 15) from 1960-1961. This very popular TV show has been broadcasted in France starting in 1965. We confirmed that fact by consulting two journals of the time with TV programs in it, respectively *Telerama* (February 1965) and *Télé7jours* (January 23rd 1965). In this episode, a woman alone sees a very small flying saucer with a dome landing on a roof. There are two extraterrestrials and one of them shoots at her. She goes back in her kitchen and she notices that she has marks on her hands and neck. Once again, this explanation can seem unbelievable at first glance, but the scientific literature on false memories suggest that confusing something seen on TV with a real memory is possible. There are indeed precedents in the fortaean literature for a confusion between something seen in a movie and a cryptid sightings. The first one is the George Spicer Loch Ness monster sighting in 1933 based on a sequence from the movie *King Kong* (Loxton, D. & Prothero, D., 2013, pp. 130-134). Another one is Madelyne Tolentino's Chupacabra sighting based on the movie *Species* (Radford, B., 2011).

Martin Kottmeyer (1990) proposed that Greys in the Betty and Barney Hill case were created based on an episode of *The Outer Limits* titled *The Bellerophon Shield* (broadcasted February 10th 1964). That episode was broadcasted on TV two weeks before Barney Hill talked about the Grey under hypnosis during the February 22nd 1964 session. Jason Colavito (2014) reexamined this explanation more recently and discovered that *The Outer Limits* episode that preceded and followed also contained elements that would later on appear in Barney Hill's testimony. According to Colavito, it's not only *The Bellerophon Shield* episode that influenced Barney Hill, but also *The Invisibles* and *The Children of Spider County*.

Based on the obvious similarities between the story in *The Invaders* and Madame X sighting, we think that the most plausible explanation for this case is the following: Madame X hurt her head on the window that day. She experienced a moment of confusion and later on started to create a false memory to explain it. That false memory is based on *The Twilight Zone* episode she must have seen around the same time on TV. There are only two elements that can go against this explanation. The first one is the two other witnesses, but we don't know at this point if they would have confirmed Madame X's testimony. If they saw something that day, it could possibly refute the false memory explanation that we're proposing here. But there is no way to now at this point. The second thing is that *The Invaders* episode of the TV show *The Twilight Zone* wasn't broadcasted in France until later. That being said, Madame X lived in Nancy, a French town near the Luxembourg border. We know that at the time people living in Nancy had access to the Luxembourg TV Channel. We thus think that she saw *The Invaders* episode not on the French TV Channel, but on the Luxembourg one. Unfortunately, we couldn't find the time of *The Invaders* episode broadcast on the Luxembourg TV Channel. At the end of the day, we think that the similarities between the narrative of *The Invaders* episode and Madame X sighting are more than enough to establish that she indeed saw it somewhere and that she created a false memory based on it.

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November 5 1957: The USCGC Sebago sighting

The chronology lists this case as:

November 5, 1957--Gulf of Mexico, off New Orleans. Coast Guard cutter Sebago repeatedly tracked UFO on radar, once saw planet-like speeding light. About same time, airman at Keesler AFB, Miss., saw elliptical UFO accelerate rapidly and disappear in clouds. [VIII]¹

Section VII is an extensive account, which lists NICAP's version of what happened:

November 5, 1957; Gulf of Mexico

Just after 5:00 a.m. the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Sebago was about 200 miles south of the Mississippi delta. At 5:10 the bridge radar suddenly showed an unidentified target at 246 degrees true, moving N to S, range 12,000 yards (almost 7 miles). On duty were Ensign Wayne Schotley, deck officer, Lt. (j.g.) Donald Schaefer, first class quartermaster Kenneth Smith, and radioman Thomas Kirk.

Interviewed in New Orleans, Ensign Schotley was asked how good the radar target was.

Schotley: "The ship's combat information center confirmed the sighting. At that point it was reported falling astern rapidly. It was a good pip target.. It was a very strong contact, considered good."

Cmdr. James N. Schrader, spokesman in New Orleans, said that at one point "in two minutes it went 33 miles straight away from the ship." (About 1020 mph.)

At 5:14 contact was lost.

At 5:16 contact was regained, object about 22 miles north.

At 5:18 object faded off radar screen, range about 55 miles.

At 5:20 contact regained, object appeared stationary, seven miles due north.

About this time, A/1C William J. Mey, an Electronics technician at Keesler AFB, Mississippi (about 320 miles to the north on the Gulf Coast) spotted an elliptical UFO. In his signed report to NICAP, A/1C Mey gives the time as approximately 5:20 a.m. Looking south, he saw the UFO approach on a northerly course at about the speed of a propeller airliner, then accelerate rapidly and disappear into some clouds.

This suggests that more than one UFO may have been operating in the area,, and that the Sebago's radar may have tracked more than one of them. A/1C Mey's report is fairly consistent with the 5:18 radar report of the UFO headed north at over 1000 mph. If Mey actually saw the UFO at 5:28, it would have averaged about 1590 mph., from the time it faded from the Sebago's radar screen. If he saw it precisely at 5:20 a.m., it would have had to accelerate to nearly 8000 mph. to cover the distance in that time).

At 5:21 the Sebago regained radar contact, and also saw the UFO visually for 3-5 seconds as a brilliant white object with no distinguishable shape. It was at a bearing of 270 degrees true (west), elevation about 31 degrees, moving horizontally from south to north. (A navigator obtained the elevation by noting a star at the same angle and taking a sextant reading of it). The UFO finally entered a cloud bank and disappeared.

At 5:37 the cutter reported its last radar contact with the object, about 175 miles to the north, traveling about 660 mph.²

The UFO investigator of January 1958 gave this description:

One of the most impressive sightings came from the Coast Guard, which considered it so important that a special press conference was held at its New Orleans office.

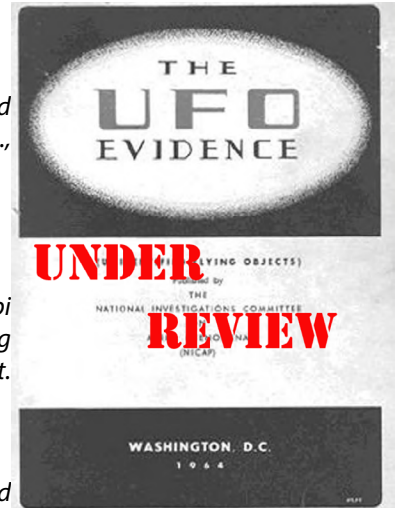
At 5:10 a.m. Tuesday morning in the Gulf of Mexico radar men on the Coast Guard cutter Sebago had picked up a strange flying object. According to Cdr. C.H. Waring, CO of the Sebago, the blips were very strong, indicating that the object was solid. At 5:21 a.m., after the UFO had been tracked maneuvering in concentric circles about the Sebago, the object glowing brightly was seen for three seconds by four men on deck: Lt. Donald Schaefer, Ensign Wayne Schotley, Quartermaster Kenneth Smith and Seaman-radioman Thomas Kirk. The object was moving horizontally at very high speed. The men could see no visible means of propulsion nor any vapor trail. During its maneuvers around the Sebago the unknown object at times reached a speed of almost 1000 mph. Once, briefly, it appeared to be stationary seven miles north of the vessel.

The last radar contact showed it to be 175 miles north heading towards Louisiana. It had covered this distance in 17 minutes as proved by the Sebago's official log.³

While there is no disputing the events happened, NICAP appears to have drawn the wrong conclusion that it was a single craft that circled the Sebago. They apparently wrote their account based on reports by the news media, which did not quite accurately report the events.

The Blue Book file

The Blue Book file contains the actual message that was transmitted shortly after the event. It presents a slightly different version of events than what was described in the UFO evidence. It indicated that contacts were separate targets and not one object:



Coast Guard Sights 'Object'

(More stories on page 3)
WASHINGTON, Nov. 5 (AP)—The Air Force said today its radar network has been alerted to watch for strange flying objects.

But, a spokesman said, "No radar reports of the so-called objects" have been received.

The air defense command, with radar installations ringing the United States and Canada, is "now watching" for whatever caused a flurry of "spook ship" reports from the Gulf of Mexico, Texas and New Mexico, he said.

The spokesman said an Air Force investigating team sent yesterday to check the original reports of a giant-sized, egg-shaped object in the southwest will take some time to complete its study.

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—The Coast Guard cutter Sebago sighted an unidentified flying object over the Gulf of Mexico at 5:21 a.m. (CST) today. The object, seen for about three seconds, resembled a brilliant planet moving at tremendous speed.

Coast Guard headquarters in New Orleans received a radio message about the sighting. The message said the object had been tracked on the Sebago's radar screen for 11 minutes before the visual contact and for 16 minutes afterward. During these periods, the object darted off the screen every few minutes but soon returned.

Cmdr. James Schrader, head of search and rescue operations in the gulf, said the object had been seen at latitude 25.47 north, longitude 89.24 west or about 200 miles directly south of the mouth of the Mississippi river.

Cmdr. Schrader said the radio message gave this log of the morning incident:

5:10 a.m. — The object was seen on the radar screen, moving north to south, about 14 miles from the cutter. The object continued to move closer, shifting toward the port side.

5:14 — Contact was lost.

5:16 — Contact was regained with the object about 22 miles north of the cutter.

5:18 — The object, about 55 miles from the Sebago, faded off the screen.

5:20 — Contact was regained. The object appeared stationary, seven miles due north.

5:21 — The object was seen, moving horizontally south to north. It was seen for about three seconds and resembled a brilliant planet with a high rate of speed.

5:21 — Radar contact was resumed.

5:37 — The cutter reported its last radar contact with the object about 175 miles north of the ship.

The Sebago is expected to report back to its home base in Mobile by Thursday.

0510 CST - Contact at 290 degree true bearing 14 miles distant moving from north to south. No visual or audible contact.

0513 CST - Contact 2 miles distant returned up port side of ship, moving south to north.

0514 CST - Contact lost

0516 CST - Contact regained at 188 degree true bearing. 22 miles distant.

0518 CST - Contact faded at 190 degree true bearing. 55 miles distant.


0520 CST - Contact regained at 350 degree true bearing. 7 miles distant and stationary.

0521 CST - Visual contact at 270 degree true bearing. 31 degree angle moving in northerly direction 270 to 310 degrees in approximately 3 seconds.

0537 CST - Last contact at 015 degree true bearing. 175 miles distant.⁴

As usual, Blue Book was criticized for their explanation for what was seen. On November 15th, they stated that some of the radar contacts were probably aircraft and possible spurious radar returns.⁵ After Blue Book took a closer look, they determined that the radar contacts were false targets and the visual sighting was probably just a meteor.⁶

NEWS RELEASE
PLEASE NOTE DATE



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Washington 25, D. C.

NO. 1105-97
LT 5-6700 Rev. 7/53

NOVEMBER 15, 1957

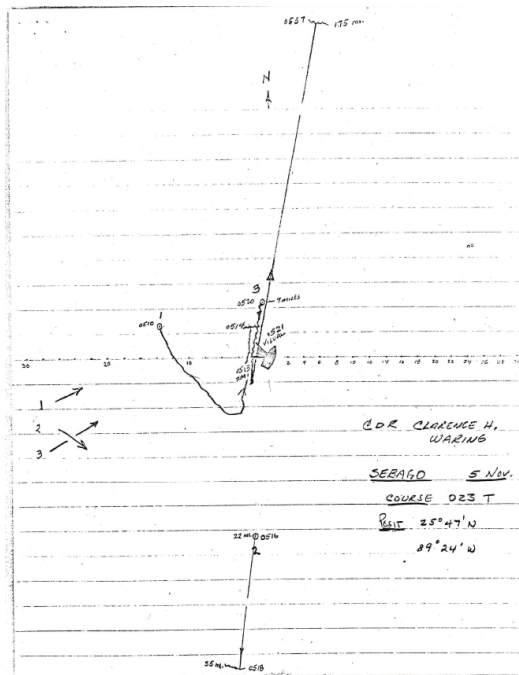
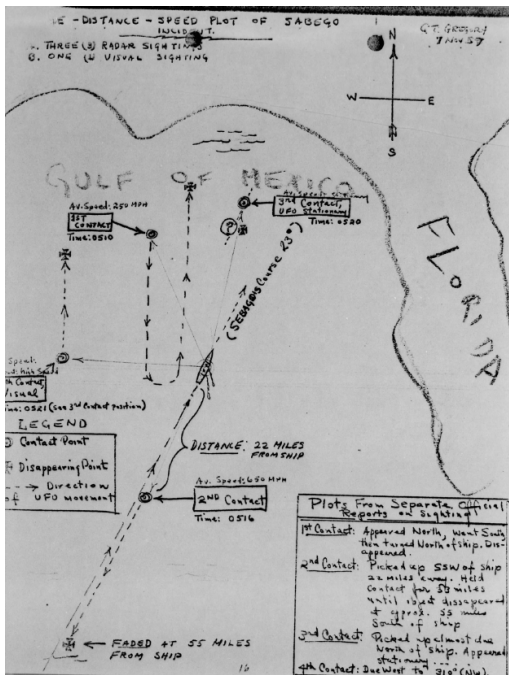
FOR THE PRESS:

As a result of inquiries concerning Air Force evaluation of recent unidentified flying objects reports, the following general aspects of certain reports have been ascertained:

1. LAKELAND, Texas: (Big Light, seen by "house," stalled auto)
Investigation on the scene revealed that only three persons, rather than "house," could be shown who saw the "Big Light." Preliminary reports have not revealed cause of "stalled" automobiles at this time, although this and electrical storms at the time of the reported sightings, affecting wet electrical circuits, could be cause. Object visible only few seconds, not sustained visibility as had been reported.
2. ALAMOGORDO, New Mexico: (10 stalled autos, radio radio-out, "boat" light and "no-burn")
Investigation of originator's report revealed no "submarine" effect from "boat" light, originator admitted radio call-out previously in same area; none of witnesses originator cited in other automobiles could be found after extensive search.
3. COAST GUARD CUTTER - Gulf of Mexico: (Object seen 3 seconds and radar contact)
Investigation based on data furnished by U. S. Coast Guard, indicated sighting four objects, three being radar and one visual, rather than one as has been widely reported. Radar returns on each of three contacts showed contact in almost direct opposite direction from preceding target, indicating spurious returns (false targets). However, a time-distance plot of two contacts indicated one target had approximate speed of 350 MPH and another a speed of 550 MPH, suggesting a propeller and jet type aircraft, respectively. The one visual sighting for three seconds, described as bright, like a planet, moving at high speed, horizontally, also indicated high speed aircraft. The area of the sightings is the scene of many flights and operations by the Air Force and Navy, too numerous to check out based on these reports.

EVALUATION: Aircraft, and possible spurious radar returns.

The file also contained a sketch of the radar contacts and track of the Sebago.⁷ This appears to have been drawn by Captain Gregory. It is somewhat similar to the sketch that Robert Todd received from his FOIA requests in 1975.⁸ That sketch was made by Commander Waring, the Commanding Officer of the Sebago.



Condon report evaluation

Dr. Gordon Thayer evaluated the Sebago case for the Condon report and drew the following conclusions:

The visual object was described as "like a brilliant planet;" it was undoubtedly a meteor, and in any event obviously was unrelated to radar target number three, the only radar target visible at the same time.

The radar targets were, with the possible exception of the first one, erratic and unpredictable in their movements. The second and third radar blips appeared suddenly, well within the normal pick-up range of the ship's radar. These two blips were probably caused by anomalous propagation. The two Key West profiles, although taken at some distance from the ship's position, are indicative of rather unusual atmospheric conditions in the area. Indeed, the 1800 LST profile is probably one of the most unusual radio refractive index profiles that has ever been observed. The atmospheric structure was apparently one of alternating very wet and very dry layers. Patterns of this sort are often very stable in these subtropical latitudes, and tend to extend in rather homogeneous form over large horizontal distances. The ray-tracing of this profile, Fig. 23a, shows even greater changes in ray curvature. Strong partial reflections should be expected under these conditions.

The first radar target behaved generally like an aircraft, and the AF investigators were of the opinion that it was an aircraft, probably from Eglin AFB to the north.

In summary, the weight of evidence points toward anomalous propagation as the cause of the radar echoes, the first possibly being an aircraft. The visual object was apparently a meteor.⁹

One problem I have with Thayer's analysis is that he mentions only the 2400Z (1800CST) profile as being important. The 1200Z (0600CST) readings did not show as strong an inversion as the 1800 profile but it still was significant. Another problem is the readings were from Key West roughly 350 miles away. Of course, it is hard to come by any data that was close to the ship. I did a check of the Radiosonde database and found there were readings at 1200Z from Burrwood, LA, Eglin AFB, Florida, and Tampa, Florida.¹⁰ These are roughly 275 miles, 350 miles, and 330 miles distant respectively. All of these soundings indicated temperature inversions of some kind between 1 and 2 KM altitude. This data, in conjunction with the Key West readings, indicates that most of the region had temperature inversions that could have produced false radar targets. Thayer seemed to be correct on that point.

Eglin AFB Fla			Burrwood LA			Tampa Fla		
Altitude M	Temp C	Dew Pt C	Altitude M	Temp C	Dew Pt C	Altitude M	Temp C	Dew Pt C
20	6.2	10.4	3	15.7	16.7	8	10.4	13.6
162	8.4	12.7	90	15.9	19.4	90	8.5	16
190	8.7	13	164	14.9	18.8	143	7.8	16.1
410	7.8	12.9	480	11.8	16.2	280	6.9	16.2
580	6.9	12.2	600	8.3	16.3	580	5.9	14.6
580	6.1	12.5	780	0.5	16.8	620	6	14.4
720	-3.4	14.9	980	12.8	16.5	900	-6.2	18.5
1049	-6.3	15.3	1062	12.5	16.1	1040	-5.6	17.6
1110	-5.5	15.5	1545	10.6	13.4	1526	-3.3	14.5
1532	6	12.9	2053	8.4	10.6	2034	-2.2	11.2
2038	5	9.6	2120	7.9	10.1	2450	0	9.6
2280	4	8.2	2279	-9	12	2560	-0.8	9.1
2450	3.4	8.8	2590	0	10.5	3140	-5.6	6.7
2580	3.3	8	3165	-1	7.2			
2960	2.6	5.8						
3140	-0.9	5.8						

Evaluation of radar contacts

There is little reason to reject the meteor explanation for the visual sighting and the radar contacts do not relate to that event. The three radar contacts need to be separately evaluated.

Radar contact 1

The Contact was first seen by the radar off the port bow of the ship. It was moving south at a distance of 14 miles and closed to within 2 miles when it turned north. With a 12 mile distance traveled in roughly three minutes, the speed of the object would have been roughly 240 mph. This is well within the speed of a normal aircraft. If it were an aircraft, I suspect it was a Navy patrol plane. The Navy had P2Vs flying from Dallas and Jacksonville Naval Air stations. The actions of the target appear to be the kind of

action one would expect from an aircraft investigating a ship. Once they determined what the ship was, they probably returned to their patrol.

Radar contact 2

This contact lasted two minutes and was not related to the first sighting. Its behavior was very transitory and suggests a false target.

Radar contact 3

This is somewhat confusing and it is not related to the second contact or the visual sighting. It might have been an aircraft or false target. The report states it was lost at 175 miles distance indicates that this contact may, or may not, have been related to the stationary target seen seventeen minutes prior to this.

Solved?

There is no indication that the radar contacts represented "manifestations of extraterrestrial life" as the UFO best evidence document states. However, there is enough evidence to suggest that the contacts were probably due to anomalous propagation and, possibly, an aircraft. The visual sighting appears to have been nothing more than a bright meteor. While the case cannot be conclusively solved, it certainly is not "best evidence" since there is a viable hypothesis that does not assume the existence of alien spaceships.

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THE 701 CLUB: CASE 1023 DECEMBER 7 1951 - SUNBURY, OHIO

Don Berliner describes the case as:

Dec. 7, 1951; Sunbury, Ohio. 4:30 p.m. Witness: amateur astronomer Carl Loar. One silvery sphere seen through telescope. Two specks sighted at sides, object seemed to explode and was replaced by a dark cloud and many specks. 30 minutes.'

Brad Sparks' entry provides no additional information that might shed more light on the subject.

The Blue Book file

The file is thin. It contains a newspaper clipping² and a summary sheet of the sighting. The summary sheet is just data obtained from the story in the paper.



PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD			
1. DATE 7 Dec 1951	2. LOCATION Sunbury, Ohio	12. CONCLUSIONS <input type="checkbox"/> Was Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Was Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Was Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>UNIDENTIFIED</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient Data for Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
3. DATE-TIME GROUP Local 1630 GMT 07/2130Z	4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION <input type="checkbox"/> Ground-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Air-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Ground-Radar <input type="checkbox"/> Air-Intercept Radar		
5. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	6. SOURCE Civilian		
7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 30 minutes	8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS Multiple	9. COURSE -- --	
10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING Group of weird shining objects at tremendous altitudes. Observed first faint specks, in north appeared to be stationary, then moved overhead. Two particles appeared from side of sphere. Object exploded, no flash. Other specks appeared in the area until at least 100 were in group. Object then travel to West where it disappeared behind a cloud bank. Observed through telescope. Total duration was 30 minutes. Report from newspaper.		11. COMMENTS UNIDENTIFIED <i>See Van Hook folder for possible explanation of this observation</i>	

ATTC FORM 329 (REV 26 SEP 52)

The story describes Carl Loar standing by his barn at 4:30 PM. He heard a jet plane fly by and looked up into the sky. Loar saw "a faint glinting speck" and got his telescope to examine the object. Mr. Loar describes the object he saw as a "shining silvery sphere", which was large and moved rapidly. He reported that two lights appeared on the side of the sphere and, shortly thereafter, there was an explosion of some kind. After the explosion, there was a cloud and approximately 100 specks of light. The sphere moved off into a cloud bank. The objects motion was from the north, to overhead, and, finally towards the west. The entire sighting was 30 minutes in length.

The newspaper article in the file shows a poor photograph of Loar with his telescope. One assumes that he was portraying how he observed the object. If this is accurate, it appears it was a hand held one to two-inch refractor with a narrow field of view. These were often referred to as "spyglasses". This kind of arrangement does not lead to stable observation and could give the misperception that there was rapid motion of the object. The motion may have been due to Loar not holding the telescope stable enough at high magnification.

While Blue Book listed this as "unidentified", the record card suggests a possible solution³. It makes reference to the "Hell Roarer" folder (Thanks to Curt Collins for deciphering the hand writing and providing the additional information about the aircraft).⁴ The "Hell Roarer" was an A/RB-26 invader aircraft that had a magnesium "torpedo" attached to the wing.⁵ The Magnesium was dumped into the tube and ignited. The resultant flame put out an incredible amount of light, which illuminated the ground below for night photography. The Magnesium lasted for about four minutes. While this was a very interesting possibility, this is not what the witness described and there is a more likely source.

Solution?

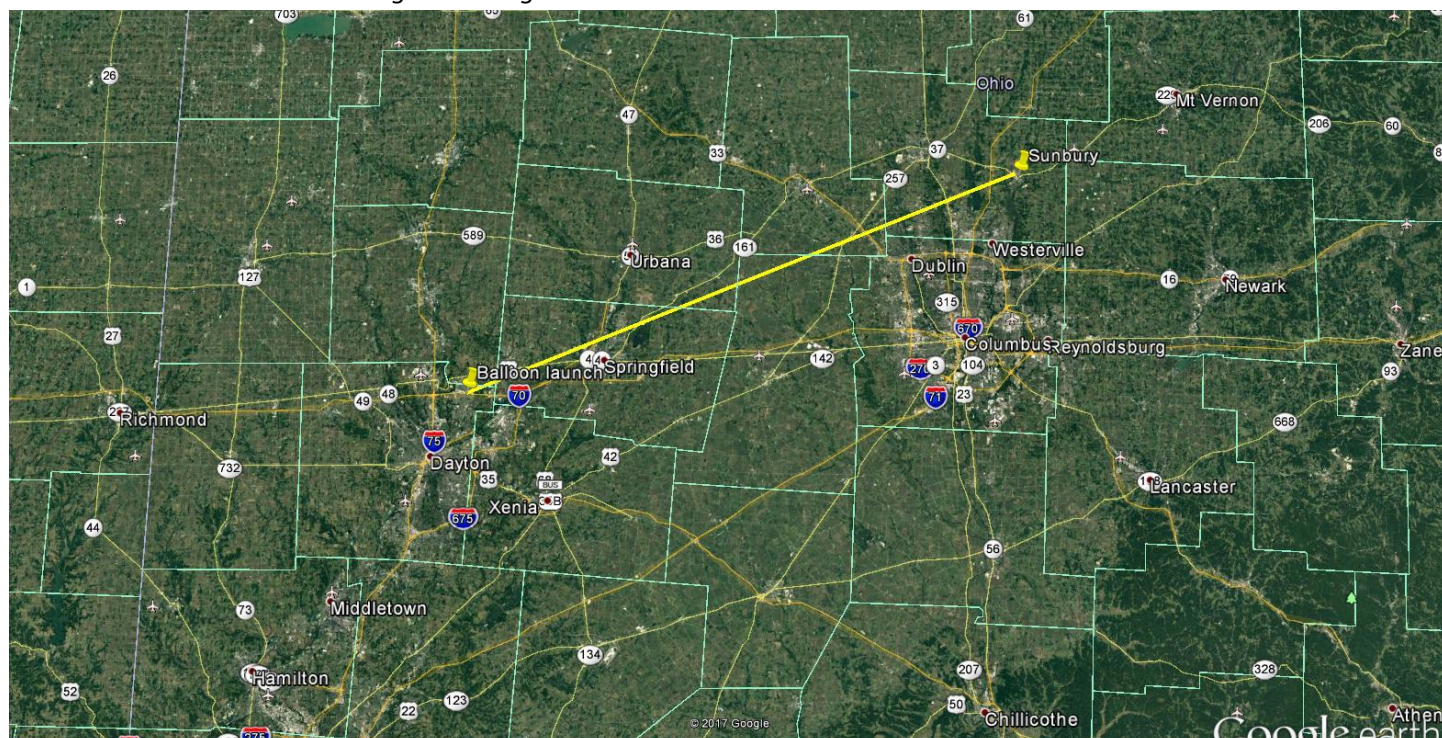
To me this sounds a lot like my observation last summer of a weather balloon reflecting the setting sun. I also saw it through a telescope and watched it burst into hundreds of specks of light. There are videos⁶ of weather balloons being observed through

telescopes and bursting⁷, which can be found on-line. These videos, and my observation, bear a strong resemblance to what Mr. Loar described.

A possible source of the balloon was from Dayton, Ohio. They had launched a weather balloon at 2100Z (1600/4PM EST) on 7 December, 1951⁸.

Altitude (meters)	Direction wind was coming from	Wind Speed (Knots)
297	203	10
560	225	15
1004	248	25
1480	248	40
1983	248	48
2520	248	48
3074	248	39

It had traveled towards the northeast and East-Northeast during its ascent (there are no wind directions after 7KM). It measured wind speeds between 40 and 48 knots during its ascent above 1KM. The last of the data was recorded at 8368 meters but that could have been due to the balloon being out of range or lost data.



This plot shows that the azimuth from Dayton balloon launch point to Sunbury, Ohio. It is roughly 68 degrees, which is consistent with the 248 degree wind direction the weather balloon launched at 1600 recorded. The distance is about 62 nautical miles. There is some evidence that there were higher speed winds in the upper troposphere (above 4000m) based on 8 December 00Z (1900 EST) radiosonde measurements from Nashville, Peoria, Pittsburgh and Flint.⁹ All wind directions were from the west or southwest.

Altitude (meters)	Nashville	Peoria	Pittsburgh	Flint
4000-5000	25	37	56	28
5000-6000	79	37	69	33
6000-7000	None	39	100	43
7000-8000	None	52	None	67
8000-9000	None	67	None	85
9000-10000	None	None	None	None

10000-11000	None	77	None	100
11000-12000	None	85	None	104
12000-13000	None	75	None	96
13000-14000	None	71	None	79
14000-15000	None	58	None	69
15000-16000	None	44	None	60

A search of documents from the period (1951) states that most weather balloons used during Operation Ranger burst above 16km.

*On January 25, the first of a series of maximum efforts was made without difficulty. All subsequent maximum efforts were met satisfactorily. In order to meet time deadlines, ML-391A balloons were used for daylight and nighttime observations, with total inflation weights in excess of 4000 g. Ascension rates of 450 to 490 m per minute were attained. Even with this excessive amount of hydrogen, most balloon bursts occurred above the 100-mb level (53,000 ft). Comparable results could not be obtained with ML-131 balloons during periods between maximum efforts.*¹⁰

This report indicates that these balloons were overinflated, which means a normally inflated balloon might go even higher before bursting.

Is it solved?

I think there is plenty of good evidence to suggest that a weather balloon was probably the source of this sighting. However, I am not positive that Dayton was the point of origin. An ascension rate of 200-500 m/min means it would have reached the 16 km altitude in about 30-80 minutes. The witness states his sighting happened around 1630, which is only 30 minutes after the scheduled launch time from Dayton. During that time, the distance traveled probably would have been about half the 70 miles needed to reach Sunbury. This means the source of the balloon may have come from elsewhere or the balloon from Dayton had several variables (early release time, high wind speeds in the region above 4KM) that would allow it to reach the Sunbury area sometime around 4:30 PM. Of course, there are also variables associated with the witness testimony. The time of observation might have been 1645 or 1700 when he saw the object and he might have gotten his directions reversed, which would mean the object appeared in the south and disappeared in the east. Therefore, there is a possibility that the Dayton balloon was the source but it requires some assumptions, which we can not verify. The most important point is that his description is what one would expect from a weather balloon that had burst. Based on the information available, I would reclassify this case as a probable balloon.

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THE BLUE BOOK CASE FILES:

UFO TREASURE OR UFO TRAP?

The Blue Book system contains over 12,000 case files, which include anything from letters from the individuals, who made the sighting, to high level correspondence between various commands discussing the case itself. The electronic files one finds at fold 3 are informative but they are not perfect. Some events are missing and others have been filed in the wrong folder. Despite this handicap, one can find most of the case files and see what effort, if any, was expended to investigate each report. I can't say that I have examined every incident but, from what I have examined, I see that many of the them contain insufficient information and quite a few of the investigations were not very good.

Despite the lack of solid information that can be found in these files, some UFO proponents consider them a source of vital information that contains a great scientific revelation. Brad Sparks has frequently supported this idea and recently stated:

*no one has scientifically sifted ALL of the 130,000 pages of BB files. You have no idea what is in there and I am telling you it is shocking...*¹

Exactly what does "scientifically sifted" mean? The Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS), which was headed by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, performed a "scientific sifting" in the 1970s. Instead of declaring that what they had found was earth shattering, they simply pointed out how many cases were unidentified and produced some statistics. Perhaps, Sparks' wants a better sifting headed by UFO proponents with a more "positive attitude".

The one item that is indisputable about the Blue Book files is that a certain residue of cases could not be explained. What is in dispute is the exact number of unexplained reports.

Possible, Probable, Identified

Many of the problems associated with Blue Book had to do with how the system worked. The staff at Blue Book was just a few people with an officer in charge. They relied upon the UFO officer at the local Air Force base, or members of the 4602nd Air Intelligence Service Squadron (AISS), to gather all the data and conduct an investigation, which was then forwarded to the Blue Book staff. The amount of information collected and degree of investigation was determined by these officers. Some were diligent in the conduct of this duty and others were not. The end result is what we see in the Blue Book files. A hodgepodge of incidents that are often confusing, had missing details, and/or lacked adequate investigation.

Using the information they collected, the project Blue Book staff were tasked with the job of identifying what these sightings represented. Over time, they discovered it was difficult to positively identify the source of a sighting based on the limited amount of data that was available. This resulted in Blue Book adopting a degree of certainty scale when identifying the source of the UFO report.

In the Blue Book files, there is the transcript of a briefing that Captain Ruppelt gave to the Air Defense Command in March 1953. In that briefing, Ruppelt explained how they determined the level of probability that the incident was explained

*In breaking down these reports, we use several degrees of certainty under each category. We'll take balloons, for example. We will classify them as a known balloon, a probable balloon, or a possible balloon. A known balloon means that we were definitely able to correlate the facts of the sighting with the data on a balloon track and there is no doubt that the object was a balloon. Probably a balloon means that we were not able to correlate all the data, but there is no doubt in our minds but what the reported object was a balloon. A possible balloon is where we check the report with the balloon data and cannot find a correlation yet we still believe the object was a balloon. This factor accounts for "lost" balloons, that is, balloons that may have developed slow leaks and floated great distances.*²

This methodology could be expanded to astronomical, planes, or other objects. It was subjective but, when examining what the project was trying to accomplish, it was a valid attempt to classify these sightings using the data that was provided.

During the Battelle study, those investigating each case decided to use two levels of classification for those cases that were "identified".

All possible identifications provided in the code system, except INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION and UNKNOWN, could be assigned according to two degrees of certainty, designated "Certain" and "doubtful".

A "certain" identification indicated a minimum amount of doubt regarding the validity of the evaluation. By "rule of thumb" reasoning, the probability of the identification being correct was better than 95 per cent. A "doubtful" identification indicated that the choice was

*less positive, but that there was a better than even chance of being correct.*³

This was another subjective system used to help those evaluating the cases based on the limited data that was available. One might be able to consider the Battelle group's classification of "doubtful" to be equivalent to Ruppelt's version of "Possible".

The scientists associated with The University of Colorado UFO project determined that it was not always possible to get a positive identification on the source of a UFO report. They came up with classification they referred to as "plausibly explained":

*Some investigators take the position that, where a plausible interpretation in terms of commonplace events can be made, then the UFO is regarded as having been identified. Others take the opposite view that an UFO cannot be regarded as having been given an ordinary identification unless there is complete and binding evidence amounting to certainty about the proposed identification... As a practical matter, we take the position that if an UFO report can be plausibly explained in ordinary terms, then we accept that explanation even though not enough evidence may be available to prove it beyond all doubt.*⁴

Again, this is a subjective measure to classify UFO reports. Like Blue Book, they seemed willing to take a "probable" or, perhaps, "possible", solution and declare it "identified".

All this means is that cases that bear the labels of "probable" or "possible" can be considered explained to a certain degree. For example, If a case was considered a "possible" meteor, it was usually due to the fact that the witness description indicated a meteor explanation was likely but there was no confirming report that a bright meteor was seen by others at the time indicated (see page 27).

Blue Book's attempts at classifying cases was subject to a lot of criticism from some UFO organizations and scientists, that had a personal belief that UFOs represented something unknown to science. They considered the use of "possible" and "probable" to be totally unsatisfactory.

Criticism of Blue Book's efforts

Probably the biggest critic of Blue Book was Donald Keyhoe and NICAP. While they ran a negative publicity campaign on the USAF effort, they also produced a document, which they referred to as their "Best evidence" for UFOs. While it is an interesting listing of UFO cases, quite a few of them were explained by Blue Book. I have also examined other reports in this collection, that were not in the Blue Book system, and found potential explanations for those as well. NICAP failed to achieve its goal of convincing people, outside of the UFO community, with this publication because they padded it with cases that were unconfirmed or could be explained.

While Keyhoe's organization had some clout, Dr. James McDonald, a prominent atmospheric physicist, was a real driving force in criticism of Blue Book. He quickly took the side that UFO reports were probably observations of alien spacecraft and used his high profile position to attack Blue Book every chance he could get. In 1967, Dr. McDonald stated:

*At Bluebook the most outrageously unscientific "explanations" were assigned to important sightings. Cases bearing not the slightest resemblance to feathered creatures were called "birds" and some of the most improbable "balloon" phenomena in all the history of ballooning can be found in the Bluebook files. "Astronomical" was tagged onto cases that are no more astronomical than ornithological, and so it went. The "percentage of unidentified" was, by the fist of scientifically untrained Bluebook officers, steadily "reduced to a minimum." And science be damned.*⁵

It is important to point out the Dr. McDonald was quite critical of the Air Force in other areas and he created a lot of problems for Major Quintanilla and his boss at ATIC. In this statement, he made some claims that appear exaggerated. McDonald gives the false impression that birds, astronomical, and balloon were used incorrectly to explain a lot of cases. I am sure there were events where the explanations were wrong but, from what I have seen, this was not as widespread as McDonald implied. For instance, I examined the "bird" explanations for 1964-1966. There were 21 cases labeled "birds" between 1964 and 1966. All could have been birds or flocks of birds. Dr. Hynek even agreed with some of these classifications by initialing the record cards. There is little doubt that Blue Book made mistakes in some of their classifications. However, McDonald's reliance on eyewitness testimony as being highly accurate often incorrectly lead him to consider cases, like the Chiles-Whitted sighting, as being evidence of alien spaceships. The pendulum can swing both ways in these arguments.

Despite McDonald's heavy handed approach, Blue Book still gave him full access to the files in their system. He used these files, along with NICAP's versions of events, to create a list of "best cases" that he thought would withstand scientific scrutiny. While he was capable of influencing many UFOlogists, he was less successful in convincing his fellow scientists. Dr. Carl Sagan wrote the following about McDonald's efforts:

In the middle 1960s I arranged for McDonald to present his best cases in a private meeting with leading physicists and astronomers who

had not staked a claim on the UFO issue. Not only did he fail to convince them that we were being visited by extraterrestrials; he failed even to excite their interest. And this was a group with a very high wonder quotient. It was simply that where McDonald saw aliens, they saw much more prosaic explanations.⁶

Dr. Jaques Vallee, a French astronomer and UFO proponent, was also critical of Blue Book. His favorite target appeared to be Sergeant Moody, who was charged with classifying cases in the mid-1960s:

*At one time, I joked with Dr. Hynek, I said, "Look, I'm going to write a book called "The Universe According to Sgt. Moody" because it was a remarkable universe where meteors made 90 degree turns, Venus rose in the north, and all kinds of strange things happened". Comets left depressions in the ground and all sorts of stuff. They could explain anything. At one time, Allen Hynek went there and said what about such and such a case, what happened to it? Sgt. Moody said, Well, I have explained it. Oh, well, what was it? He said I've explained it as an unknown. As long as I had a statistical category this case was closed. I used to go berserk with that. I would say look, these are the cases you should be passing on to scientists, you should be studying. They said no, it was just an unknown and there's only 2% unknown, so there's no reason to be alarmed in any way."*⁷

I find Vallee's claims about Moody's ignorance to physical laws rather interesting because Vallee, Hynek, and McDonald believed that UFOs could defy the laws of physics. The difference between the Blue Book staff and these scientists is that Blue Book felt these observations of objects performing exotic maneuvers were just inaccurate observations/reports. Based on what we know about eyewitness testimony and UFO reports, Blue Book seems to have been more correct in their approach.

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, who was Blue Book's scientific consultant, made additional accusations about Moody:

*[Moody] epitomized the conviction-before-trial method. Anything that he didn't understand or didn't like was immediately put into the psychological category, which meant "crackpot." He would not ever say that the person who reported a case was a fairly respectable person, maybe we should look into it, or maybe we should find out. He was also the master of the possible: possible balloon, possible aircraft, possible birds, which then became, by his own hand (and I argued with him violently at times), the probable; he said, well, we have no category "possible" aircraft. It is therefore either unidentified or aircraft. Well, it is more likely aircraft; therefore it is aircraft.... An "unidentified" to Moody was not a challenge for further research. To have it remain unidentified was a blot... and he did everything to remove it. He went back to cases from Captain Gregory's days and way back in Ruppelt's days and redid the files. A lot that were unidentified in those days he "identified" years and years later.*⁸

At no point do we have Hynek or Vallee state any specific cases where Moody performed these misdeeds. I suppose that it is likely that Moody did reclassify a few cases from the earlier years and he might have stated Venus was the probable source of a sighting when it wasn't. However, was it really as widespread and flagrant as Hynek and Vallee implied?

One of the claims was that Moody was misidentifying Venus when Venus could not be the source. Sergeant Moody served at Blue Book between 1963 and April of 1966, when he retired. I examined all the Venus cases during that time period to see if Moody was overzealous in his classification of these cases.⁹

Year	Classified as Venus	Confirmed as Venus	Probably Venus	Possibly Venus	Probably not Venus
1963	1	1	0	0	0
1964	21	13	4	3	1
1965	38	21	8	3	6
Through March 1966	17	12	2	3	0
Totals	77	47	14	9	7

Based on my count, only seven cases were probably not Venus. That is 9% of the sightings. These sightings do have some resemblance to Venus but there were comments made in these reports, which could not be dismissed as observational errors, that indicated it probably wasn't Venus. I also noticed that the information in some of these reports of "probably not Venus" were confusing making it difficult to determine what was seen.

Then next claim about Moody was that he turned "probable" and "possible" cases into explained cases. I noticed that during 1966, Hynek was personally reviewing some of the case files. He appeared to have approved quite a few possible classifications using terms such as "likely" and "probably". Was Hynek just as guilty of declaring a case as identified even though the evidence only suggested such an explanation was possible but not confirmed? This indicates that this was standard practice at Blue Book and singling out Moody was really not appropriate.¹⁰

Another statement by Hynek was Moody's use of the psychological classification. According to the Blue Book records, 23 cases were

PROJECT 10073 RECORD	
1. DATE - TIME GROUP 23 Apr 66 24/0400Z	2. LOCATION Cloverdale, California
3. SOURCE Civilian	10. CONCLUSION Other (birds) <i>Very likely. jst</i>
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS 15	
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 20 minutes	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Observer noted vapor with dim masses of light in formation that were traveling toward the north. It appeared as white glowing masses and a white mist.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground Visual	
7. COURSE North	From the information available it appears birds were responsible for the sighting. The moon was setting at approximately 2140 local mean time and was approaching the first quarter (27 Apr). Observer stated there was bright moon light. It appears that light from moon enabled observation of objects.
8. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

PROJECT 10073 RECORD	
1. DATE - TIME GROUP 20 Apr 66 21/0500Z	2. LOCATION Albany, Oregon (1 Witness)
3. SOURCE Civilian	10. CONCLUSION AIRCRAFT <i>(Prob. jst)</i>
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS One	Consistent with an aircraft sighting.
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION One Minute	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Object was described as round in shape, white in color, one half the size of a dime held at arms length and had another object trailing it. Object was moving very fast heading south then SSW and was out of sight in one minute.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground-Visual	
7. COURSE SSW	
8. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

PROJECT 10073 RECORD	
1. DATE - TIME GROUP March - April 66	2. LOCATION Ely, Nevada
3. SOURCE Civilian	10. CONCLUSION Aircraft <i>Very prob. jst</i>
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS Varied	
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 3 - 5 ⁺ minutes each	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Many objects in immediate area during this period. Some objects sighted at high altitudes, some under cloud cover. Objects reported to appear to hover and travel rapidly in various directions. Various colors of lights were reported. There are several low altitude high-speed Training A/C routes over the area. From the description of the objects conventional A/C appear to be responsible for the observations.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground Visual	
7. COURSE Varied	
8. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

PROJECT 10073 RECORD	
1. DATE - TIME GROUP 31 March 66 01/0130Z	2. LOCATION Toms River, New Jersey
3. SOURCE Civilian	10. CONCLUSION Possible (AIRCRAFT) <i>not even probable. jst.</i>
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS One	
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 10 - 15 Minutes	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS As observer watched a high flying aircraft she noticed another object which appeared as a bright star that began to move in SW direction. Object did not drop over the horizon as did the satellite she seen previous. Observer stated, the farther away the object moved, the closer to the earth it appeared, but did not travel in an arc.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground-Visual	
7. COURSE SW	
8. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

labeled as "Psychological/eccentric/imagination" between 1963 and April of 1966¹¹:

Date	Location	Description
3/20/63	Opa Locka, FL	Woman saw stars during daytime. Hynek and Col. Friend contacted and agreed she was just seeing "spots before her eyes".
12/63	Dixon, Ill.	Woman wrote a letter to President Johnson stating she had seen four flying saucers.
3/20/64	Shelton, CT	Could not locate file
4/4/64	Baltimore, MD	Witness reported seeing flying saucers appear on his television.
4/28/64	Albuquerque, NM	12 year old girl supposedly burned by ray guns
Summer 64	Willingboro, NJ	70 year old woman reported case one year after the fact. Luminous craft floating across her yard.
9/5/64	Cisco Grove, CA	Hunter escaping robots by climbing a tree and shooting an arrow at them.
12/21/64	Harrisonburg, VA	90 foot high saucer shaped like Beehive landed and took off. After interviewing the witness, Hynek, in a letter to Quintanilla, stated, "I think we need a psychiatrist here".
1/30/65	Mecca, CA	Witness submitted slides of UFO. UFO was just a light on the film. Letter accompanying slides indicated the individual might have been eccentric.
Feb 65	Rivesville, WV	Saucer landing with 3-4 foot tall beings coming out. Witness' mother saw this but witness was not present.
3/10-12/65	Youngstown, OH	Witness has been seeing UFOs for over 10 years. Investigating officer felt witness was under emotional strain.
3/20/65	Waverly, OH	Light that emitted balls of fire and exploded into multiple UFOs.
3/22/65	Peekskill, NY	Witness saw UFO observing Gemini 3 launch on TV.
6/5/65	Allentown, PA	Object with trail of fire and executing U-turn. When filling out the report form, witness added multiple UFO sightings from over the years. It was believed the initial sighting might be a fireball but other sightings were added and the observation was distorted by imagination of the witness.
8/3/65	Chicago, ILL	Witness reported seeing a UFO land on the moon through his 200X telescope.
8/6/65	Chicago, ILL	Witness interviewed by Vallee and Hynek. They considered him a paranoid. Hynek used the words "Complete nut".
8/11/65	Waterford, CT	Witness observed object orbiting the moon with the naked eye.

8/11-13/65	Urbana, OH	Witness reported multiple UFOs. It appears that anything seen by witness at night was a UFO.
10/16/65	Bexley, OH	Woman woke up at 3AM and saw light in yard for 10 seconds. Light was hovering and went straight up.
10/23/65	Lone Prairie, Min	Witness saw rocket landed on road. Car failed to work. Small creatures came out from behind rocket and observed witness before going into rocket and taking off.
1/7/66	Georgetown, AL	UFO hovered for 1-2 minutes and then took off. One witness.
1/11/66	Lewisburg, PA	Witness saw 3 flying saucers with 13 beings with wings and one eye. Appears to be sighting at mental hospital.
4/2/66	Brooklyn, NY	Witness feels UFO is following him. Made four reports in one week. Hynek initialed sighting indicating he approved of this "psychological" classification.

A common theme in many of these cases is that a spacecraft and/or alien beings were observed at close proximity. Based on examination of these files, many of these cases can be described as "imagination" or "psychological". I also noticed that at least two of these cases appeared in Hynek's book, *The Hynek UFO report*, as examples of Close Encounters. These are the Cisco Grove and Lone Prairie cases. When describing the Cisco Grove case, Hynek described it as "hard to believe" but considered the endorsement of the witness' story by a local astronomy instructor as important.¹² When Dr. Roy Craig examined the case, during the Condon study, he seemed unimpressed and implied that the witness may not have been overly truthful about what transpired.¹³ As for the Lone Prairie case, I would consider it also hard to believe. The supporting witness testimony may not have been observations of the same object. They certainly did not see the creatures or physical craft the witness reported. Looking at these cases objectively, can we really criticize Moody for being skeptical about the witness' mental stability?

One of the biggest charges hurled by Hynek was that Moody was going back in the records and reclassifying "a lot" of unexplained cases as "explained". Hynek did a reevaluation of the Blue Book system back in the 1970s. He published his count of "unknowns" in "The Hynek UFO report". While the USAF listed 701 "unknowns", Hynek only listed 640!¹⁴ Had Moody done what Hynek stated he had done, then the number of unidentifieds should have increased significantly. Instead, they decreased. However, Hynek made it clear it was the 1950s time frame, where Moody did his "dirty work" of "cooking the books. If we exclude 1952, Hynek did reclassify 46 more cases as unknown than Blue Book between the years 1948 and 1961. The greatest increase was 1956-58 (61 vice 38 for BB) Were these 23 extra cases the ones that Moody "fixed" or were they just cases that those present at Blue Book did not classify to Hynek's liking? Without a detailed account of what cases these were, it is hard to say. However, we can look at the case files and see if there were any changes over the years and what cases were changed.

I focused my attention on the years 1956-8. Interestingly, the number of unknowns changed between 1959 and 1963 before Moody was assigned:

Year	Unknowns in 1959 ¹⁵	Unknowns in 1961 ¹⁶	Unknowns 1962 ¹⁷	Official Unknowns ¹⁸
1956	17	16	XX	14
1957	20	19	XX	14
1958	5	5	12	10

In mid-1964 the USAF started using a new card (FTD Form Sep 63 0-329) for their case files. The previous forms found in the Blue Book files were ATIC form 329 (Rev 26 Sept 52) and AISOP form 5 (15 Oct 54). If there was a wide-spread classification of cases in the 1950s as claimed, Moody would have had to write over the existing cards or he would have to replace the cards with the new versions. He could have used old cards prior to the new ones being released or used up existing stock of old cards but, for the purposes of examining the claim, I had to use these clues to identify the cases where Moody might have changed the classification. If it were widespread, as Hynek indicated, there would have been a significant number of cases with these conditions. For the years 1955-1959, I found the following results¹⁹:

Year	No. of cases with new cards	No. of cases with pen and ink changes reclassifying case
1955	2	5
1956	2	5
1957	4	10
1958	4	4
1959	8	5

Many of the "new cards" were due to reports made by individuals a decade later in the 1960s. These cards were filled out and placed

into the system. In some cases they were labeled "For information only". Other cards may have been used to replace worn or lost cards. In any case, there were relatively few new cards in the files from the late 1950s. It is interesting to note that one of these cases reported almost a decade later made it into the "Unidentified" category even though the card states it should not be really classified as such due to the time delay.²⁰ If Hynek's claims were accurate, one would think Moody would have classified it as "insufficient information" or "Psychological". Somehow, this case got by the eagle eye of Moody and managed to make it into the list of 701 cases!

1. DATE - TIME GROUP 27 or 29 Jul 57 Sun Just rising		2. LOCATION Longmont, Colorado	
3. SOURCE Civilian		10. CONCLUSION UNIDENTIFIED	
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS One			
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 10 Minutes		11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Letter containing observation of object in 1957 sent to Dr Hynek in 1965. COMMENTS: This report was submitted to Dr Hynek after eight years delay, and while no plausible explanation is readily available to explain the sighting, it does not seem realistic to include a case as UNIDENTIFIED without the opportunity to investigate the sighting while it is still fresh in the mind of the witness.	
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground-Visual			
7. COURSE ENE, 35W			
8. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			

FORM
FTD SEP 63 0-329 (TDE) Previous editions of this form may be used.

The pen and ink changes are harder to pinpoint but many of the changes I found had to do with changing one classification to another after further review or if new information became available. The following cases were changed from unknown to either insufficient information or identified between 1955 and 1959²¹:

Date	Location	Reclassification	Comment
3/20/55	Tokyo, Japan	Temp Inversion	Spurious radar returns due to temperature inversion. This was the conclusion of the investigating officer for the ground radar returns but pilot interceptor picked up target on radar (but not visually). Target appeared to be solid target. This appears to have been changed in 1955 and not by Moody.
Late July - Early Aug 1955	Mulberry Corners, Ohio	Insufficient data	UFORC organization submitted this report of witnesses reporting a craft, with red and green lights, that hovered, emitted lights, and sounded like a fan. Investigation happened a year later and investigator impressed by witness' report. BB suggested it might be a helicopter but chose to give "insufficient data". Lack of date indicates insufficient data is correct. This was probably changed in 1956 and not by Moody.
5/22/56	Monroe, LA	Balloon	4602nd AISS determined, based on available information, that the object was a lit balloon launched from Shreveport, LA. This was probably changed in 1956-7 and not by Moody.
10/18/56	Wheelus AB Libya	Weather returns	Moody had sent the report to FTD electronics engineers for evaluation and they determined the lack of visual indicated the returns were due to "some sudden change in atmospheric conditions". Moody made the change based on technical input from an expert.

5/6/57	26deg 38'N 23 deg 22'W	Comet Arend-Roland	Comet Arend-Roland was a bright comet visible in western sky after sunset in late April/early May 1957. Blue Book/ The 4602nd AISS never could contact the crew to verify sighting. This was probably changed in 1957 and not by Moody.
6/3/57	Shreveport, LA	Aircraft	Witness reported airborne lights. 4602nd investigation revealed B-47s and KC-97s were conducting refueling operations in area. This was probably changed in 1957 and not by Moody.
7/25/57	Niagara Falls, NY	Probable Balloon	Very little data associated with sighting and in the folder. Seen by AF pilot and crew. Light with slow movement and then rapid climb. Comments on message describing recent weather bureau letter about balloons with lights. The hand written remarks also make reference to Hynek in Vandalia, Ohio the previous October. The only case for Vandalia in October was in 1959 indicating the change was before Moody's tenure at Blue Book.
3/9-10/58	Panama Canal zone	Balloon/False radar targets	Electronics experts at FTD determined this in April of 1958.
11/19/58	Montauk AFS, NY	Insufficient data	Moody had sent the report to FTD electronics engineers for evaluation and they determined there was not enough information in the initial report to make an analysis of the radar data. They state there was no range or elevation angle given. The report was just a telex message describing the incident. Moody made this change based on technical input from an expert.

The only two cases where we have Moody's fingerprints are when he was looking into radar cases and sent the report to FTD electronics experts for analysis. Based on this information, it seems that Moody was just doing his job of evaluating old cases to see if the classification was correct. Instead of doing it on his own, Moody had formally requested help to evaluate these old cases. There is no indication that his efforts to alter these cases were as nefarious as Hynek tried to portray.

Hynek's characterization of Moody may have been personal. Major Quintanilla mentioned Hynek's complaints about Moody in his unpublished manuscript of his time at Blue Book:

He complained to me that Dave Moody was not treating him according to his scientific stature or some crap like that. I talked to Dave about it the first couple of times and Dave would come back that he was too busy to baby sit or kiss the Doctor's ass and that if he would get busy and evaluate the cases that were referred to him, that he wouldn't have time to worry about scientific stature. Dr. Hynek and Dave had a thing going and I decided to study it. After I analyzed the situation, I had to agree with Dave. Dr. Hynek would come into the office and he would spend the first couple of hours socializing or gossiping or telling us a lot of nonsense about who was writing books, articles, etc. It was during one of these distracting sessions that I raised my voice and asked Dr. Hynek to confine his visit to case studies and let the rest of the staff proceed with their work.²²

I can relate to Moody's attitude towards Hynek. As an enlisted man, his main concern was getting the job he was assigned accomplished. Hynek was apparently distracting him or antagonizing him with his scientific wisdom about UFOs. During my twenty-plus years in the Navy, I had instances where I was combative with officers because of what I perceived as their interference with me trying to accomplish my tasks. I was sometimes a bit emotional in my handling of these situations and, in retrospect, I could have handled them better than I did. I suspect that Moody's confrontations with Hynek were of similar nature except Hynek was not even in his chain of command. He was a civilian, whose role at Blue Book was that of a consultant. I suspect that Moody probably tolerated Hynek but felt his presence was more annoyance than assistance.

Based on all of this information, can one really consider the opinions of McDonald, Hynek and Vallee as objective? Perhaps they were biased evaluations because the personnel at Blue Book did not hold the same opinion as they did regarding UFOs and/or they did not treat them with the respect they thought they deserved.

Scientists without an ax to grind

While we have heard the claims made by Vallee, McDonald, and Hynek, we have to examine what other scientific groups stated when they examined the Blue Book system.

The first examination of UFO cases by a scientific group was the Robertson panel in January 1953. While UFO proponents proclaim that this was a fixed hearing, it did include some prominent scientists, who were experts in their fields and could evaluate the data as it was presented. After seeing some of the best cases that Blue Book had, they stated:

"...that reasonable explanations could be suggested for most sightings and 'by deduction and scientific method it could be induced (given additional data) that other cases may be explained in a similar manner...there is no evidence that the phenomena indicates a need for the revision of current scientific concepts'"²³

These kinds of comments become a recurring theme in comments made by other scientific groups, who examined the files. In Project Blue Book's Special Report #14:

It can never be absolutely proven that "flying saucers" do not exist. This would be true if the data obtained were to include complete scientific measurements of the attributes of the each sighting, as well as complete and detailed descriptions of the objects sighted. It might be possible to demonstrate the existence of "flying saucers" with data of the type, IF they were to exist.

Although the reports considered in this study usually did not contain scientific measurements of the attributes of each sighting, it was possible to establish certain valid conclusions by the application of statistical methods in the treatment of the data. Scientifically evaluated and arranged, the data as a whole did not show any marked patterns or trends. The inaccuracies inherent in this type of data, in addition to the incompleteness of a large proportion of the reports, may have obscured any patterns or trends that otherwise would have been evident...

Therefore, on the basis of this evaluation of the information, it is considered to be highly improbable that any of the reports of unidentified aerial objects examined in this study represent observations of technological developments outside the range of present-day scientific knowledge."²⁴

Before the University of Colorado's UFO Project, there was a panel of scientists who evaluated Blue Book in order to make recommendations. They were referred to as the O'Brien committee. According to Quintanilla, they were allowed to review any records that were in the Blue Book files. The six members did review records, interview project personnel, and spent some time questioning Quintanilla. Unlike McDonald, their review did not appear to indicate that the case files contained cases that proved aliens were visiting earth. Instead, the committee wrote the following about the "unidentified cases" and if they indicated something exotic:

Although about 6% (646) of all sightings (10,147) in the years 1947 through 1965 are listed by the Air Force as "Unidentified", it appears to the Committee that most of the cases so listed are simply those in which the information available does not provide an adequate basis for analysis....In 19 years and more than 10,000 sightings recorded and classified, there appears to be no verified and fully satisfactory evidence of any case that is clearly outside the framework of presently known science and technology. The committee did criticize the classification of cases but not for the reasons cited by many UFO proponents....some of the case records which the Committee looked at that were listed as "identified" were sightings where the evidence collected was too meager or too indefinite to permit positive listing in the identified category."²⁵

Again, we get the comment that these reports did not indicate anything "unknown to science" was being seen. Additionally, their assessment of Blue Book implied that a significant number of "identified" and "unidentified" cases might fall into the "insufficient information" category. There just was not enough data in most of the reports to make an accurate assessment of what was seen.

What is an "unknown"?

When it comes to evaluating Blue Book, the arguments usually come down to the cases that were listed as "unknown/unexplained". Exactly what fell into this category was described by Ruppelt:

If the report contains a relatively good amount of data, it is then checked against the location of known objects, phenomena, etc. If none of these explain the sighting, it is classed as unknown."²⁶

Quintanilla gave a similar definition:

A sighting was considered UNIDENTIFIED when a report apparently contained all the data necessary to suggest a valid hypothesis, but its description could not be correlated with any known object or phenomenon."²⁷

Some UFOlogists have taken a different approach than Blue Book. They consider cases with probable and possible explanations as not explained and, therefore, they are also "unknowns":

According to Ruppelt the percentage of Unknowns was 26.94%. A scientific approach to these figures shows that only 11.21% were actually proven explained (total of column 1 which represents 179 cases) leaving, in actuality, 88.79% unexplained! These Blue Book figures (during the most serious time of it's life) were based on the then 1,593 sightings the Air Force had studied."²⁸

The Condon study disagreed with this mentality that possible and probable explanations are the same as "unknown". They stated

that if an incident can be “plausibly explained”²⁹, then the solution can be accepted. The Robertson panel also suggested the same approach when they mentioned “reasonable explanations” can be used to classify UFO sightings.³⁰

UFO proponents often have problems with any “reasonable/plausible explanation” for a UFO case. They will insist that any explanation must explain every detail associated with the case even though some of those details may be inaccurate. If UFO reports have taught us anything is that people make mistakes about their observations and these mistakes can hide the source of the UFO sighting. The use of possible or probable explanations seem justified as long as there is no good reason to reject that explanation. To put it another way, “If it acts like a balloon and looks like a balloon, it probably is a balloon”.

How many?

The desire to inflate the number of “unknowns” seems to have been a goal of many UFOlogists. They collect UFO cases like they are trading cards or postage stamps and appear to be interested in quantity over quality. In an effort to make it appear Blue Book was completely incompetent, they claim that there are thousands of “unidentifieds”. This is all based on the statement of Dr. James McDonald:

*The leading alternative to the extraterrestrial hypothesis is that of “misidentified natural phenomena,” viewed in terms broad enough to include conventional aircraft, satellites, balloons. The Bluebook position has for years been that UFOs are almost entirely such misidentifieds, and Bluebook has repeatedly asserted that their small percentage of unidentifieds would fall into that category if more adequate data were at hand. After studying hundreds of their cases, I do not agree. I say instead that adequate and open-minded scrutiny of the roughly 12,000 cases now on file at Air Force Project Bluebook would probably raise the percentage of unidentifieds from the currently acknowledged few per cent to perhaps 30-40 per cent.*³¹

While McDonald’s thoroughness is well known, one wonders how he could make this statement without providing evidence of how he arrived at this number. It appears to be more opinion than fact. UFOlogist Brad Sparks thinks the value is a number that McDonald arrived at through some form of statistical analysis:

*Much more disturbing are the indications from my incomplete review of BB cases that there may be as many as possibly 4,000 Unexplained UFO cases miscategorized as IFO’s in the BB files. McDonald similarly stated in 1968 at his CASI lecture that from his review of BB cases he estimated that 30-40% of 12,000 cases were Unexplained, or about 3,600 to 4,800 (round down and up to 3,000-5,000). These are mostly military cases and many involve radar. McDonald argued with Hynek on a number of occasions from 1966 onward that the number of Unknowns in the BB files was in reality “about an order of magnitude” greater than what the AF claimed (so instead of 500-600 Unidentifieds possibly as many as 5,000-6,000).*³²

Sparks has spent a great deal of time creating his own list of unknowns. As of 2016, he had a total of 1723 cases out of the 12,618 reports (Sparks states there is something like 15,000 reports). That is only about 14% (less if we use the 15,000 cases described by Sparks). One must realize that Sparks has been working on this list for years and has yet to reach the 30-40% number. It seems that McDonald’s 30-40% is an overinflated number, which was probably meant to make headlines.

Looking at Sparks’ list, I have to think his values are almost as inflated as McDonald’s 30-40%. He lists cases that have reasonable explanations for them, has added cases that have questionable information, and used cases that have very limited data. Based on these characteristics alone, his “unknowns” do not meet the requirements Ruppelt had used to define an “unknown”³³. The key words he used were “a good amount of data” and “if no known objects/phenomena can explain the sighting”. A letter written by somebody to Blue Book a decade after the event happened or a single one or two page teletype message is not what one would consider “a good amount of data”. I also have to question any case where a single witness reports an extraordinary event with little or no confirming evidence. Padding a list with poor quality “unknowns” only hides the truly good cases with a bunch of noise.

While Sparks sees Blue Book as a gold mine of unknowns, other UFOlogists have seen it differently. Alan Hendry stated the following about the CUFOS effort to re-evaluate the Blue Book files:

*When the Center made a case by case evaluation of the reports present in the Air Force files, only 5 per cent of them were worthy of the title “UFO.” Almost all of the rest were IFOs.*³⁴

It seems that how many “unknowns” there are is really based on what definition one uses. If we stick to how Blue Book defined it, we have to accept the value of 701 as the official value.

The 701

Hynek’s/CUFOS reevaluation of the Blue Book cases indicated that there were only 640 unknowns and not 701. That indicates that 61, or more, of the 701 have probable or possible explanations. I have endeavored to look at these cases in SUNlite in a

desire to see how many of the 701 really are “unexplainable”.

My own personal system of classifying reports during my review of the Blue Book ‘unknowns’ is similar to what Ruppelt states.

Classification	Level of certainty	How case is classified
Identified	95-100%	The solution matches the sighting at many critical points (i.e. time, general direction, date, general description)
Probable	75-95%	The description and the solution match in many ways. There is missing information about the solution or the sighting that prevents a firm conclusion being reached.
Possible	50-75%	A potential solution exists but there is missing information that prevents a more convincing argument for the solution. However, there is no good evidence in the report to reject this explanation.
Unidentified		Important information contained in the report, which should allow identification but description does not match any known solution
Insufficient information		Missing vital information like date, time, location, direction of sighting.

To date, I have examined 33 events. On the next page is a listing of all of them. To summarize the table:

Classification	Number
Identified	5
Probable	17
Possible	9
Unexplained	1
Insufficient information	3

Two of these incidents have multiple sightings (Cases 1011 and 1397), which results in them falling into multiple categories.

It seems that there is a certain percentage of these cases that can be explained just like CUFOS discovered. As a result, I continue to look at these “unknowns” to see if there are “reasonable explanations” for them.

The failures of Blue Book

In my opinion, Blue book was unfairly characterized by Vallee, McDonald, and Hynek. Coupling their opinions with the NICAP agenda, there is a mythology concerning Blue Book that persists to this day. There is no doubt that personnel at Blue Book made mistakes but the harsh criticism leveled at them for doing their job, as best they saw it, is unjust. One must remember that, according to AFR 200-2, Blue Book was given the following two objectives:

*The Air Force’s interest in unidentified flying objects is twofold: first as a potential threat to the United States and its forces, and second, to determine the technical aspects involved.*³⁵

The technical aspects had to do with discovering some new aviation technology from these observations. At no point did it state they were supposed to perform some detailed scientific study of the phenomenon. They did try to use all the resources they had at their disposal to identify these cases but the data being provided was the biggest problem. It is probable that, after examining so many cases of misperception, hoax, and wild stories, many of the Blue Book staff began to consider it possible that most cases could be explained. Perhaps, as Special Report 14 stated, those individuals may have become “saturated”:

*The reaction, mentioned above, that after reading a few reports, the reader is convinced that “Flying saucers” are real and are some form of sinister contrivance, is very misleading. As more and more of the reports are read, the feeling that “saucers” are real fades, and is replaced by a feeling of skepticism regarding their existence. The reader eventually reaches a point of a saturation, after which the reports contain no new information at all and are no longer of any interest.*³⁶

It would not be surprising that this “saturation” effect could have contributed to some of the mistakes that were made, which UFO proponents turned into incompetence or some form of grand conspiracy.

Despite the imperfections in the system, Blue Book did manage to properly identify a significant percentage of all cases and selected those reports they could not explain using their standards. Considering what they had to work with, I think that the staff did a reasonably good job. While their performance was not perfect, it could have been considered satisfactory.

701 Club cases covered in SUNlite

Case	Date	Location	SUNlite issue	Explanation
1011	11/18/51	Washington, DC	6-5	Possibly Venus and Saturn with meteor/Insufficient information
1023	12/7/51	Sunbury, OH	9-6	Probable weather balloon
1052	2/11/52	Pittsburgh, PA	8-1	Probable meteor
1124	4/17/52	Longmeadow, MA	6-2	Probably Mars rising
1168	4/29/52	Goodland, KS	8-2	Probable meteor
1227	5/25/52	Walnut Lake, MI	7-2	Probably setting crescent moon
1236	5/29/52	San Antonio, TX	9-3	Possible contrail/Sun dog
1250	6/2/52	Fulda, Germany	8-3	Possible balloon
1305	6/18/52	Walnut Lake, MI	7-2	Probable stars and planets
1397	7/6-12/52	Governor's Island, NY	9-4	Internal reflection of moon in two photographs/Insufficient information for other two photographs.
1482	7/17/52	Lockbourne, OH	7-3	Probably Jupiter
1628	7/26/52	Kansas City, MO	5-3	Possibly Arcturus
1920	8/18/52	Fairfield, CA	8-4	Possibly Capella or Jupiter (insufficient information to determine which)
2045	9/6/52	Lake Charles AFB, LA	5-5	Probably Capella
2077	9/12/52 (actually 9/11/52)	Allen, MD	8-5	Possibly Capella
2175	10/19/52	Pacific Ocean	9-5	Probable meteor
2315	1/1/53	Craig, MT	7-1	Possible meteor
2692	8/27/53	Greenville, MS	6-4	Probably Arcturus and Antares
3180	8/24/54	Egilstadir, Iceland	7-5	Insufficient information - no debris found to verify story
3427	2/10/55	Bethesda, MD	5-4	Probably moon rise seen through clouds
3893	12/21/55	Caribou, Me	8-6	Probable moon set
4050	4/4/56	McKinney, TX	6-3	Probable Grab Bag balloon
5227	11/6/57	Radium Springs, NM	7-6	Probably Sirius
6507	9/13/59	Bunker Hill AFB, Ind	5-6	Possibly/Probably a research balloon
6663	2/27/60	Rome, NY	6-1	Echo Satellite test launched from Wallops Island, VA.
6667	3/4/60	Dubuque, IA	5-3	Probably a flight of three B-52s
7741	11/21/61	Oldtown, Fla	4-5	Titan I missile launch from Cape Canaveral
8388	6/15/63	Indian Ocean (Berliner/Sparks mistakenly indicated it was the Atlantic Ocean)	5-2	Agna rocket venting fuel following launch from Vandenberg AFB.
8549	9/15/63	Vandalia, OH	6-6	Probable airplane contrail
9053	8/18/64	Atlantic Ocean	5-1	Scout rocket launch from Wallops Island, Va. Explanation found to be untenable after further examination (See SUNlite 5-2). Still unidentified.
10500	4/30/66	Sacramento, CA	9-2	Probably Venus
10693	6/27/66	Pacific ocean	4-6	Atlas missile launch from Vandenberg AFB
11394	2/20/67	Oxford, WI	9-1	Possible Moon set

The fact that there are “unexplained/unknown” cases does not mean very much. Are these reports any better than those that state they saw Bigfoot, the Loch Ness monster, or ghosts? Probably not, which means that an “unexplained/unknown” case is nothing more than something that could not be identified. To suggest they are evidence of alien visitation or something unknown to science is a great leap of faith.

It's a trap!

UFOlogists, who have been examining the Blue Book files for years, are looking for evidence to support their claim that UFOs represent something exotic or unearthly. They appear to be hoping to find that one magic case that will prove that what they state about UFOs is true or they are trying to accumulate a plethora of cases to create the argument that “all these people can't be wrong”. In both instances, the results are less than convincing. No single case has sufficient information to eliminate the potential for misidentification or hoax. Meanwhile, the accumulation of a large quantity of cases invites introduction of poor quality cases that are suspect or have potential explanations. This contaminates the pool and ruins whatever argument the collection is supposed to represent. The bottom line is, other than for historical research, there is no treasure buried in the files. These reports will never provide any convincing evidence that UFOs are something unknown to science. They will only indicate that something was seen that was unidentifiable. That makes them a UFOlogical trap.

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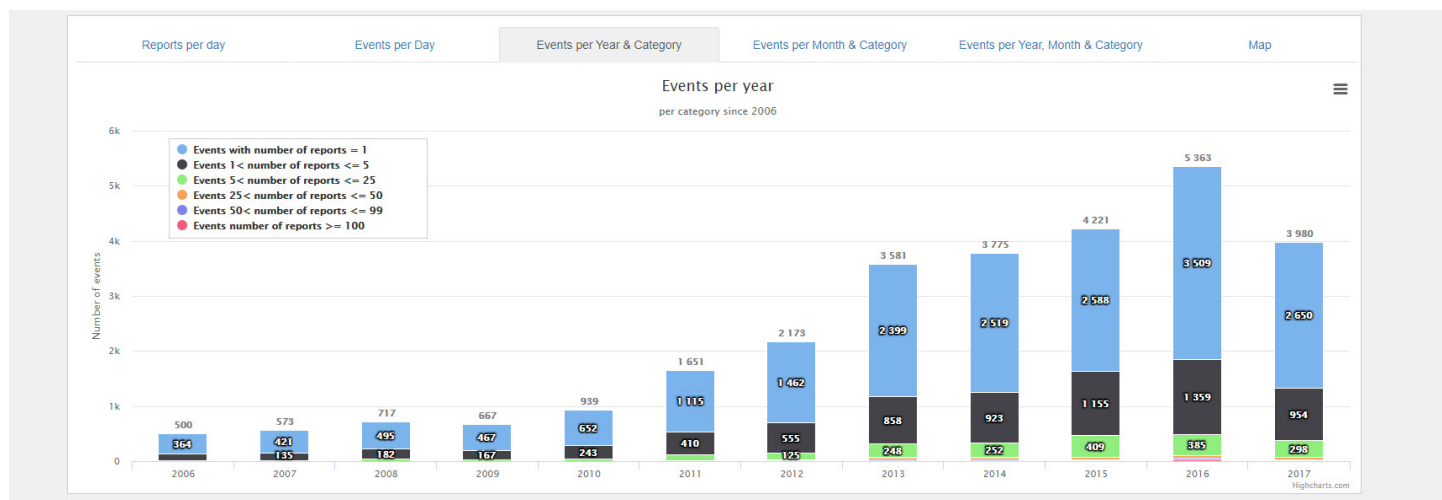
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THE “POSSIBLE/PROBABLE” METEOR

As I was looking at my reclassification of Blue Book unknowns, I noticed that I mentioned events as “possible meteors” in several cases. The reason I classified them as possible meteors is because they acted just like meteors (short duration, straight travel, visible at night) and could be explained as such except I could not confirm if a meteor was seen. The problem with meteors and fireballs is that they are not always seen by a large quantity of people. I remember seeing fireballs when I was out by myself or driving a car. I would later ask my fellow amateurs if they had seen the fireball. I can only recall one event that was seen by others. That meteor was a rather spectacular fireball that was widely seen in Florida in the late 1980s. Based on this anecdotal data, it was my opinion that a large percentage of fireballs were probably reported by only one or two individuals.

The American Meteor Society (AMS), has statistics for this and one can check them out at https://www.amsmeteors.org/members/imo_fireball_stats/. This is the statistics by year. The Blue indicates the number of fireball events that were reported by only one observer.



Roughly 60-70% of all fireball events are reported by only one observer, which makes it difficult to determine if a UFO report was from a fireball or not since there may be no other observers to that event. This is especially true when looking at old UFO events, like those found in the Blue Book files. One has to look at the description and determine if a meteor might have produced the report. If there is no good reason to reject the meteor explanation, it should be considered a possible or probable fireball.