

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

ON AERIAL PHENOMENA

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

TELEPHONE NORTH 7-9434

CABLE ADDRESS  
SKYLIGHT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES  
1536 CONNECTICUT AVE. N.W.

MAJOR DONALD E. KEYHOE  
USMC (RET) DIRECTOR

The undersigned testify that they were present at and during the entire interview conducted by Major Hector Quintanilla, Jr., of Wright-Patterson AFB, in the Portage County, Ohio, Court House in Ravenna, Ohio, on May 10, 1966. The interview lasted about two hours, and during the entire time, a tape recorder and microphone were across the room from Major Quintanilla, in his sight. The recorder was running the entire time, and Major Quintanilla made no objection to its being used to record the interview.

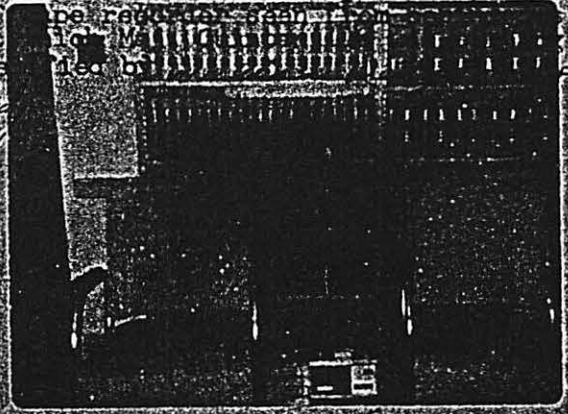
Signature	Title	Date
<i>William B. Whitel*</i>	<i>Special Investigator, NICAP</i>	<i>5-14-66</i>
<i>Robert D. Wilson B.S.</i>	<i>Deputy Sheriff</i>	<i>6-9-66</i>
<i>William L. Neff</i>	<i>Mounted Deputy</i>	<i>5-26-66</i>
<i>John S. ...</i>	<i>Deputy Sheriff</i>	<i>5-19-66</i>
<i>James H. ...</i>	<i>Sheriff</i>	<i>5-24-66</i>

*True photo, which partly covers my signature shows position of recorder.*

*\* Journalist photo interview, recording not touched or moved.*

*William B. Whitel  
Quintanilla conference 5/10/66 resident of ...*

Photograph verified: *Dale ... #15  
William L. Neff  
James H. ...  
Robert D. Wilson P.S.*



*A privately supported fact-finding body room.*

## VI. The Mantua Police Picture.

This picture, apparently honestly taken and reported, was an unfortunate diversion in the story — even William Weitzel said as much, as it cost him many many hours to no useful end.

As you will read, a police chief north of the primary event reported an object in approximately the proper space and time frame, and snapped a picture. He dutifully reported same, and the film was developed in somewhat private but formal (i.e. witnessed) circumstances. The resulting picture is more in the order of developer spills and film defects than UFOs, but it was taken seriously enough to be analyzed by ATIC at Wright Pat, as well as NICAP. Little advance in knowledge came from this, though, and whether what ~~Chief~~ Chief Buchert saw was even the same thing as what Spaur and Wolf chased is unknown.

REPORT BY TELEPHONE CONVERSATION 18 Apr 66

POLICEMAN GERALD BUCHERT, MANTUA, OHIO AREA CODE 216, phone 274-2251

He had called Lt Weisinger, FTD Duty Officer on 17 Apr 66. I have several prints and negative. The Lt said not to release them. Major explained that he was free to release them or do whatever he wished to do with them. He said the Lt didn't exactly say not to release them but said to hold onto them. Major explained to him that we would like to have the negatives so that we could blow them up. Said he would send them registered mail and asked that we send him a letter stating that we got them. Major explained that he was the officer in charge of the project. Buchert said he wasn't too sure how he should go about reporting his observation. Had a Dacon lens, with fixed lens at 14. No speed, 127 Black and White, thought it was Ansco film. Observed object for 15-20 minutes. It was stopped, didn't appear to be moving, when it did move then went up and down and went back to its same position, left to the right, like it was tilting, went SE, on state route 44. The pictures were taken in front of my farm. Major explained that he could do whatever he wanted to do with the film as far as releasing goes, he could even sell them. Buchert said he would feel kind of silly. He would send them to us registered mail along with ~~his~~ his police report. Said it wasn't a star, plane, or balloon. Looks like two saucers in prints. One object. Major told him we would send him an official report.

V66-14

UNCLASSIFIED

SUBJECT: UFO (Mantua, Ohio)

ANALYST: Major Quintanilla PI: Lt Benson DATE: 22 Apr 66

1. Both "images" fall into the same frame area.
2. Neither of the  $\min_{\text{US}}$  density images are distinct enough to analyze. Average background density 1.25. "Image density" 1.06.
3. If the object was "bright" against a dark sky the images should be plus density - they are not.
4. The entire roll of film is severely fogged which could cover up much detail.
5. The marks in the framing area of the film are outside the field of view of the lens, therefore, they couldn't be images.
6. UFO's are probably, <sup>the result of</sup> processing defects due to old fogged film and poor handling.

LLB RLC  
LLB RLC

UNCLASSIFIED

[This is an interoffice memo which passes from a lab in the base to the intelligence office of Quintanilla. Probably Bluebook used the photo labs of T-2 (the Intelligence wing) rather than T-3 (the Engineering wing) as that was normal procedure in earlier SIGW & GRUDGE days. LLB and RLC would then be the T-2 photo analysts on this job. LLB is probably Lt. Benson above.] MDS



FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY



FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

FTD (TDEW)  
Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio 45433  
25 April 1966

Chief Gerald Buchert  
Mantua Police Department  
Mantua, Ohio 44255

Dear Chief Buchert,

The most probable cause of the object which you were trying to photograph was the planet Venus and this was the reason that you were unable to photograph it with your camera. In order to photograph Venus, you would have had to photograph it with a time exposure. This cannot be done with the type of camera you were using.

Thank you for your cooperation and your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

  
HECTOR QUINTANILLA, Jr, Major, USAF  
Chief, Project Blue Book

On the morning of April 17, 1966, I assisted in the development of a roll of film owned by Gerald Buchert, Chief, Mantua Village Police, upon which he had shortly before attempted to expose ~~the~~ images of an unidentified flying object observed by him ~~and his wife~~, according to his account, southeast of his home in Mantua, Ohio. Participating in the development of this film, which was Ansco Pan 127, ASA 125, was Mr. Rex Lysyj, owner of the R&E Distributing Co., in Ravenna. The film was developed as follows: having been wound onto the take-up roll by Chief Buchert, and unloaded in this wound condition before coming to the place of development (the Portage County Sheriff's Office in Ravenna, Ohio), the paper backing was removed and the film loaded directly into the tank, with the latter pictures taken going in first. Since the emulsion side of the film was toward the axis of the tank, the images of the exposures were developed upside down. The film was processed for eight minutes in T-C 2 one-stop developer, with continuous agitation, at 69°. The developer was mixed fresh, diluted 2/1/4/1 one/one with water, as in the instructions. Mr. Lysyj supplied the fresh solution. Immediately after development, we rinsed the film, still in the roll tank, for five minutes. Then we soaked it for four minutes in Yankee Film Dryer, according to the instructions. We then squeegeed it once and let it dry. The images to the right (film oriented right side up) of the family pictures taken later this morning by Chief Buchert, were two tiny dark arcs surrounded by a lighter halo, lighter than the rest of the ~~film~~ in that area. (That is, dark arcs and light halos on the print; light arcs and dark halos on the negative.) At no time during the processing of the film were any irregularities allowed; instructions were followed throughout. T-C 2 was used intentionally to "push" development and raise the exposure index.

picture  
A

the office of My information on the communications between local officials and Major Hector Quintanilla of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, is as follows: Sunday afternoon, about 3:30, Major Q. called the Sheriff's office in Ravenna to inquire about the report of a photograph taken of the UFO sighted earlier that day. (April 17.) My next knowledge of communication from W-P AFB is that Tuesday afternoon, April 19, someone called to inquire why the film had not yet been sent to their office. This afternoon, April 22, I heard from a ~~the~~ reporter of a local newspaper office that Major Q. had explained the film's "UFO images" as a flaw in the negative, and this information was corroborated shortly afterwards, to me, by Chief Buchert, who said Major Q. had told him this about 3:10 this afternoon.

I have read this statement which I dictated to \_\_\_\_\_,  
W. B. Weitzel, NICAP (~~Police Officer~~)

and I find it to be exactly as I gave it to ~~him~~. This statement is true in every detail,  
him.

SO HELP ME GOD. I agree that this information may be submitted to NICAP and/or by them to a U. S. Congressional authority, but only confidentially.

WITNESSED BY:

April 22, 1966  
William Weitzel, NICAP  
J. A. [Signature] Deputy Sheriff  
(Signed)

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MAJOR DONALD E. KEYHOE  
USMC (RET.) DIRECTOR

INTERVIEW -- telephone notes May 6, 1966

Phone call to Gerald Buchert, Chief, Mantua Ohio Police Department, this date (216-274-2551) 5:00 - 5:20 PM EDST (Pittsburgh)(Beaver).

Buchert will send film to me in Pgh for NICAP analysis. Wants honest evaluation, even negative if that is the case.

He is aware of Stanton's interest, and the Record-Courier articles on this.

Copy of Hector Quintanilla's letter to him, dated April 22, on his photo:

(photocopy of a sheet:) UNCLASSIFIED V66-14 SUBJECT: UFO (Mantua, Ohio)

1) Both images fall into the same frame area. 2) Neither of the minus density images are distinct enough to analyze. Average background density is 1.25. Image density 1.06. 3) If the object was bright against the dark sky, the images should be plus density. They are not. 4) The entire roll of film is severely fogged, which could cover up much detail. 5) The marks in the framing area of the film are outside the field of view of the ~~f~~ lens. Therefore they couldn't be images. 6) UFO's are probably the result of processing defects due to old, fogged film and poor handling.

ANALYST: Major Quintanilla PI Lt. Benson LLB RLC

Letter to Gerald Buchert from Major Quintanilla: (no letterhead, plain sheet:)\* The most probable cause of the object which you were trying to photograph was the planet Venus. This was the reason that you were unable to photograph it with your camera. In order to photograph Venus you would have had to photograph it with a time exposure. This cannot be done with the type of camera you were using. Thank you for your cooperation and your interest in this matter. (signed) Maj. Hector Quintanilla, Jr. USAF  
Chief of Project Blue Book

Notes on Gerald Buchert's original police report, a copy of which was sent to Major Quintanilla: At 5:00 AM EST April 17, I heard radio traffic between Summit and Portage Counties on my cruiser radio, about a UFO reported in Summit County, a bright light coming east. At 5:04 I saw a bright light to the southeast. There was no fog and the sky was clear. The object moved left and right, and tilted as it did so, seeming then to be saucer-shaped. It also moved up and down. I went to my home and my wife watched it going through these maneuvers with me. I photographed it with a Kodak Brownie Starmite camera. ~~M~~

At this point in our conversation, someone came into the police station and Buchert interrupted the call to terminate it.

*Buchert wishes this information not to be released to the press. W. Waitzel*  
*A privately-supported fact-finding body serving the national public interest*

\*Marked "FTD TDEW Wright-Patterson AFB"



## NOTES ON BUCHERT SIGHTING

The film does not appear to corroborate either Buchert's or the P-13 sighting.

The UFO marks, as the W-P analysis correctly indicates, are of less density than the background. The background is at zero image density, there being no frame boundary areas which would contrast with even a minimal exposure. Therefore the UFO marks are the result neither of light striking the film to produce them, nor of a dark object silhouetted against a lighter sky. Note discrepancies with the W-P analysis density measurements. Negative density is a standardized quantity; there is some indication from the W-P analysis that the UFO marks in question were never measured. The W-P measurement of lowest density corresponds to one area on the film where there is a broad streak; this is the lowest density anywhere on the film, but is nowhere near the UFO marks.

The details of Buchert's sighting, which must be considered independent of any lack of photographic corroboration, do not consistently point to, or away, from a "Venus" interpretation. On the one hand, the object, though round and at times "saucer-shaped," appeared smaller than (as Buchert remembers) Venus, which he has seen before. Also, the UFO was in the general vicinity of the moon, though definitely above it, and to the moon's right. It appeared more distant from the moon when Buchert looked a second time, and tried to photograph it, from his front yard, but only about twice as distant as the first time; if the original distance was truly small, double that would have been within bounds of visual error. Also, Buchert first thought it was a star, but ruled this out because (only because) it did not flicker, and was much brighter than stars still visible to the west. Finally, Buchert saw, in addition to the UFO, only the moon. If Venus was visible that morning, he should have seen a third object.

On the other hand, Buchert claims the object elevated, descended, moved left, and moved right, and that its shape changed when it moved horizontally. (It performed these "maneuvers" only one time.) Furthermore, he expected no difficulty, and seemingly had none, in trying to photograph the object by itself, separated in the camera's field of view from the moon. Venus should have been close enough to the moon to make such a separation difficult, with Venus centered (Buchert centered the UFO in the viewfinder, this photo). Also, Buchert, after turning in a verbal report, continued his police duties, and looked later, around 6:00, for the UFO. It was gone, but the moon was still visible; indeed, this is what he used as a reference point for looking for the UFO. Why was Venus invisible? Buchert could still see stars in the west, at this time.

That Buchert's sighting does not corroborate the P-13 sighting is clear from the fact that his UFO was stationary while he heard radio traffic on the chase, which began while he was driving to his home after first observing his UFO.

There have been a number of intriguing explanations for the UFO marks, but none on which everyone will agree. They are, as yet, Unidentified Photographic Marks. But definitely not pictures; on this, there is universal agreement.

DENSITOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF CHIEF BUCHERT'S FILM

Using Weston Photographic Analyzer, Model #877; zero-adjusted (checked) after each reading. Probe aperture: 1.0 mm.

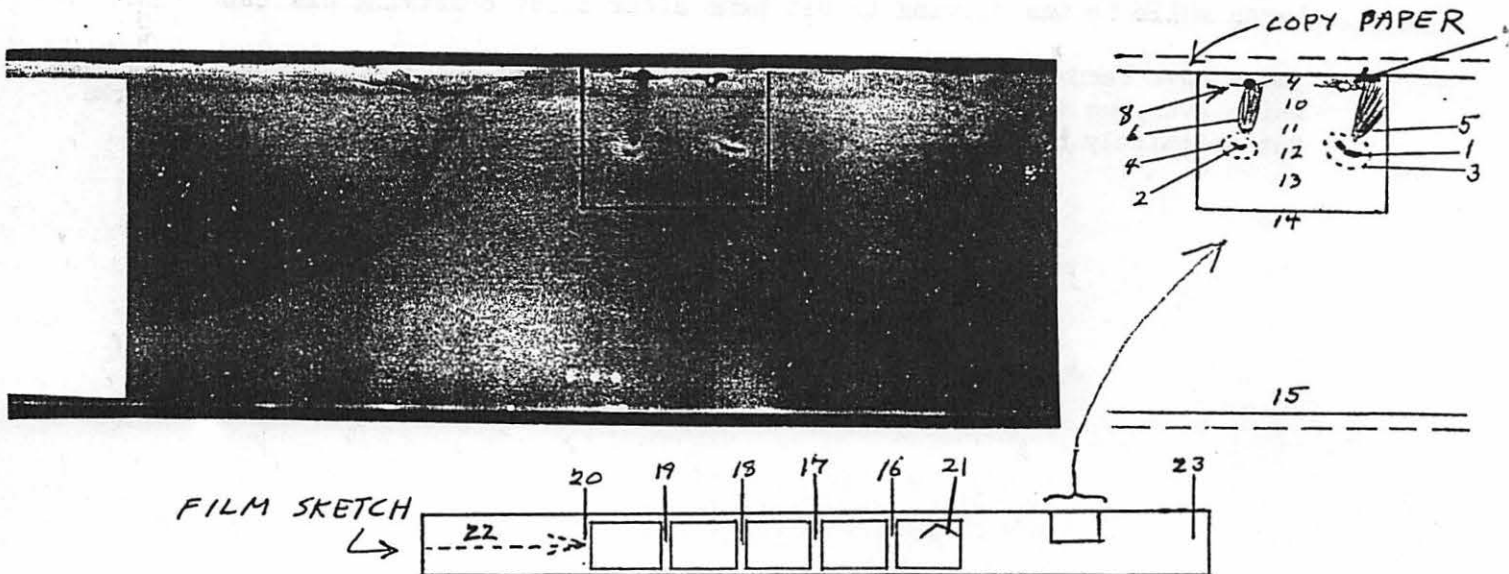
- 1 1.15 large UFO mark
- 2 1.21 small " "
- 3 1.21 light (dark on negative) space around large UFO mark
- 4 1.23 " " " " " " " small " " "
- 5 1.18 dark area fanning away from large UFO mark
- 6 1.20 " " " " " " small " "
- 7 1.13 uncleared emulsion, spot at edge of film
- 8 1.02 undeveloped, but cleared, spot at edge (NOTE: a one-stop chemical was used....??)
- 9 1.35 space between 7 and 8, in edge area
- 10 1.26 background, near edge
- 11 1.24 " farther from edge
- 12 1.20 " still " " " , between UFO marks
- 13 1.18 " " " " " " , beyond UFO area, on "line" between marks
- 14 1.14 18 mm from film edge, line between UFO marks
- 15 1.18 near opposite edge of film from marks
- 16 1.25 1st boundary space between family pictures, direction away from marks
- 17 1.18 2nd boundary space etc.
- 18 1.25 3rd etc.
- 19 1.22 4th etc.
- 20 1.16 what would be 5th boundary space etc.
- 21 1.93 dark area, white wood on house (dark on negative, light on print)
- 22 0.9 to 1.16 across from film left end to edge left picture ("left" -- "away from UFO marks")
- 23 1.06 minimum density, right side (UFO mark side), in chemical streak just at right edge of film

"Zero image density" (boundary areas, average) 1.25 max., 1.16 min. This represents zero exposure to light. Is high, rather than around 0.25, because of fogging.

Because UFO marks have less density than background in their area, they could not be due to a bright object in the camera's field of view, which would have exposed the film and darkened, increased the density, of the film.

Following is a reproduction of the contact print of the film, showing UFO mark area and a section of one of the family pictures Chief Buchert took 3 hours later; and a sketch (which shows better in copying) of the UFO mark area. Boxed area on print shows area enlarged -- see next page.

Film has been submitted to Ralph Rankow, NICAP Photographic Adviser, for further study



9

← 8

← 7

10

BUCHERT PHOTO  
x12 enlargement

11

← 6

12

← 4

13

← 2

← 5

← 3

← 1

[Yes, it's busy to look at. I thought that you might like a try  
at seeing what the whole messy-developed end-of-roll film  
looked like. Well, I tried, and it's the thought that counts. JDS]

VILLAGE OF MANTUA  
PORTAGE COUNTY  
MANTUA, OHIO 44255



DEPARTMENT OF POLICE  
POST OFFICE BOX 231  
TELEPHONE 274-2251

GERALD F. BUCHERT, Chief

October 7, 1966

National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena  
1536 Connecticut Avenue, North West  
Washington, D.C.  
20036

*Phoned  
Weitzel  
10-14-66  
Kent State Univ.  
Students  
claim  
Apr. 17 hour*

Dear Sir:

On May 11, 1966 I turned over to your investigator, William B. Weitzel, a strip of number 127 film uncut for analysis by your organization.

I feel that sufficient time has passed for your organization to have completed the analysis and would at this time like to have the film returned to me.

I am in hopes that the film was of some benefit to your investigation although I must admit that I was and still am surprised that anything appeared on the film because I really had not expected it to. Let me once more state that the object when I was looking at it appeared to be round and only looked like it does in the film when it went left or right. AT ALL OTHER TIMES IT APPEARED ROUND.

When I turned over the film to Mr. Weitzel I requested that in return I be sent a copy of your complete investigation report but as of the present I have not received same. I understand that the report is completed at the present and feel that it was only an oversight by Mr. Weitzel in not sending me a copy. However I would very much like to have a copy regardless of the results of the investigation being either good or bad.

In closing let me thank you for the courteous manner in which Mr Weitzel conducted his investigation. I personally was very impressed with the thoroughness of his investigation. I only wish that I could say the same for the other investigations which were made.

Please be advised that this letter is not to be released for any publication by any person or organization. Nor is any comment or part of this letter to be released for publication. Thank you for your co-operation.

Respectfully yours  
Gerald F. Buchert

## VIII. NICAP Investigator article, and the AFRO Bulletin.

Following is the NICAP Investigator article which appeared during the summer of 1966. (NICAP was often late with its publications so don't pay any attention to the March/April date — in that sense it established the UFO literature standard for almost all of us in our field, of never quite being able to get everything done on time). Note the end of the article which indicates how Weitzel's persistent work required the military to respond at the highest levels. (but still to no good end).

In the May-June 1966 AFRO BULLETIN, Coral Lorenzen was also on the ball, and presented AFRO members with an accurate nearly full-page report. Despite the fact that NICAP and AFRO did ~~not~~ not always get along, and Coral did not have access to Weitzel's in-depth investigation, her write-up is generally precise and her intuitions about USAF debunking and, even, the possibility of some sort of set-up or "plant" are obvious.

"officialdom has made a practise of denying the reality of the disks .... the TV-Radio industry seems determined to keep any pro-UFO information off the air .... [and regarding the original abandoned car at the Close Encounter site] It was carrying walkie talkies, recording equipment, and tape recordings .... it may have been a plant."

# U.F.O. Investigator

FACTS ABOUT UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Published by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena

Vol. III, No. 7

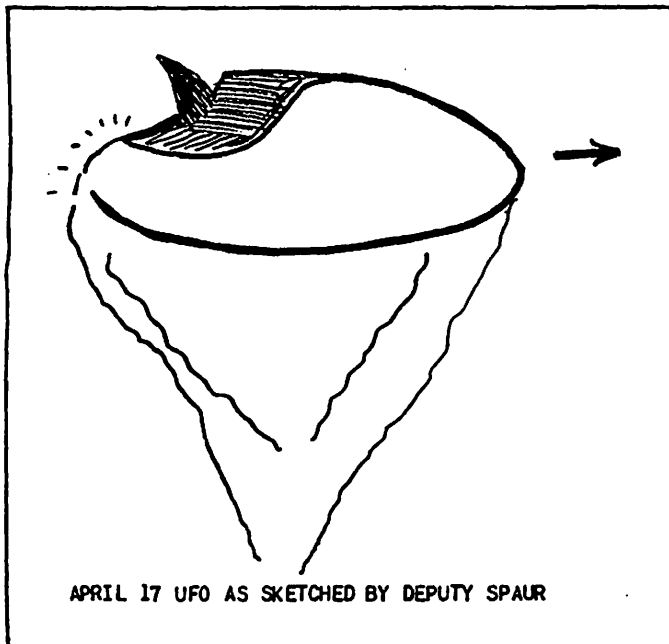
March-April, 1966

## POLICE CHASE LOW FLYING UFO

A series of incredible close-range UFO sightings during March and April has been reported by pilots, police officers, doctors, lawyers, and many others, continuing the intensified pattern of low-level operations which began last July. Statistical study of 27 sample cases between March 11 and April 18 reveals distinct patterns of appearance and behavior.

One of the clearest and best-witnessed cases began around dawn, April 17, when Portage County, Ohio, sheriffs Dale Spaur and W.L. Neff investigated citizens' reports of a UFO in the area of Ravenna. They quickly noticed a light hovering over a hill and stood watching it. The UFO suddenly moved directly toward them, illuminating the ground brightly, sending them fleeing to their patrol car for cover. As they radioed headquarters, the object — now seen as a distinct dislike object with a curved antenna-like projection on top — began moving away from them down the highway.

On instructions from the dispatcher, Spaur and Neff began following the object. The underside glowed bright blue-white; the top was a dark color. As they sped eastward in pursuit of the UFO at speeds up to 100 m.p.h., it repeatedly pulled out of sight. Then the sheriffs would encounter it again, hovering near the highway as if waiting for them. In the sunlight, the UFO appeared to have a metallic surface.



The chase continued for 85 miles, from Ravenna across the Pennsylvania border to the vicinity of Conway, as officers of other police departments along the way joined in. There were reports that jets were scrambled from an Air Force Reserve Squadron in Ohio, and that radar had detected the UFO. (Both the Air Force and FAA later denied the radar report.)

William Weitzel, chairman of the Pittsburgh NICAP Subcommittee, drove to Ravenna the following day and interviewed the witnesses. A widely circulated report that a police chief

had obtained a clear photograph of the UFO proved to be erroneous. The chief was not involved in the chase, saw only a distant light — possibly Venus — which he attempted to photograph. The print, viewed by Weitzel, shows two small arcs of light which could be accounted for in many ways. Copies have been obtained for further analysis.

On April 23 the Air Force released a statement attributing the sighting to a satellite, and a later confusion with Venus shining brightly in the SE sky. In a statement taped by Mr. Weitzel, Deputy Spaur said "I don't know how much investigation they made, but evidently it wasn't a very lengthy one or it didn't involve me." An AF Major, he said, had telephoned him twice talking with him for a total of about 4 minutes. "If it's ours, tell me it's ours," Spaur said, "and if it isn't, by God, they ought to help us find out what it is." No satellite would fly that low, he added, and he wasn't "quite that bad off" that he would be chasing Venus and "running wildly over the countryside."

The testimony most damaging to the USAF explanation came from East Palestine, Ohio, police officer Wayne Huston, situated near the Pennsylvania border. Huston had picked up the radio transmissions of the Portage County sheriffs and waited at an intersection that they would soon be passing. Shortly afterwards, he clearly saw the UFO pass by quickly followed by the sheriffs' cruiser. The UFO was shaped like a flattened cone, with the point of the cone downward. Officer Huston immediately joined the chase.

Mr. Weitzel also got reports that police had overheard radio transmissions from one of several pilots chasing the UFO, to the effect that the pilot had maneuvered directly above the object and estimated its size as 45 feet across. If this report can be verified, full details including the text of the transmission will be printed in the next issue.

On May 10, three weeks after the sighting, the Air Force first sent an investigator to the scene. Major Hector Quintanilla, chief of Project Blue Book, was ordered to re-investigate the case after strong protests to the Air Force by a Congressman and a judge who formerly was Congressman in the same district.

Calling the USAF satellite-Venus explanation "ridiculous," Common Pleas Court Judge Robert E. Cook wrote to Congressman William Stanton urging him to insist on a full investigation and reevaluation. "The Air Force has suffered a great loss of prestige in this community," Cook told Stanton. "People are not swallowing this explanation about Venus. . . (it) doesn't have form and an antenna. . . hover 100 feet off the ground and cast a bright light. . ."

Congressman Stanton responded with a statement May 5 saying "The Air Force failed in its responsibility in thoroughly investigating this incident. . . Once people entrusted with the public welfare no longer think the people can handle the truth, then the people, in turn, will no longer trust the government."

According to private sources, Stanton personally visited Lt. Col. John Spaulding in the Pentagon, who in turn set the wheels in motion which resulted in the belated visit to the scene to interview witnesses first-hand. Major Quintanilla's investigation, observed by a NICAP representative, again failed to include the significant elements of the officers' reports. After a few hours, Quintanilla stated he was still satisfied with his original explanation, and left.

Since NICAP membership, renewal, and "The UFO Evidence" Report are each \$5.00, please indicate on your checks or in a covering letter the purpose of your payment. We have received several \$5.00 checks with no explanation: They could be intended for any of the above, or a donation.

## The Ohio Police Chase

The prime example of reconnaissance of official land-based vehicles took place on an 85-mile strip of interconnecting highways between Ravenna, Ohio and Pittsburgh, Pa. on the 17th of April 1966. We are indebted to Attorney Carl Funk for his wrapup of certain important details. Although hundreds of people apparently spotted the object we will deal with the major sighting involving the police cars.

Press reports first quoted unidentified Air Force Reserve pilots at Youngstown, who reportedly said they had attempted to chase the object but its 100-mile-per-hour speed was too slow for their jet trainers. Later these reports were withdrawn when AF officials at Youngstown said no planes were scrambled. The first reports placed the object as travelling east along U. S. Highway 224 north of Canton.

At 5 a. m. Deputy Wayne Huston was cruising about East Palestine, Ohio when he heard a message on his car radio stating that a woman had reported from east of Akron having sighted a bright UFO which was apparently headed Eastward. Portage County (to the east) Deputy Dale Spaur received the message and with another Portage County deputy took off in search, and picked up the object near "Brady's Park going into Rochester"—on State Route 224. The vehicle followed the UFO at speeds of between 80 and 100 miles per hour, later leaving Route 224 and taking State Route 14 toward Pittsburgh. All the while, these deputies were using their radio and were listened to from the first by officer Wayne Huston of the East Palestine police.

As the chase passed East Palestine on Route 14 about 5:35 a. m., at the highway junction just north of the town, Huston joined the chase and all three, the UFO, the Portage deputies and the East Palestine cruiser, proceeded eastward toward Pittsburgh at 80-100 miles per hour. Attempts were made to rouse Pennsylvania officers without much success, due to differing radio systems between the states. However, on reaching Conway, Pennsylvania, contact was made with the local officers, and the matter was turned over to them.

The Pennsylvania Police became highly uncommunicative about what happened after Conway, but the following is known about the object and the "chase".

The object looked "like an ice cream cone, big end up", said one deputy. It was a bright white light, so bright they "could have driven without their own lights being on," they said. There were no windows, no irregular surface fea-

tures, no exhaust or contrails. The only noise was a whirring similar to that of a rapidly turning motor. The average height at which it travelled was about 800 feet but once or twice it dipped to 200 feet. Motion was not erratic or oscillating. The only variation was when it ascended which it did very rapidly.

The deputies assumed that it was intelligently controlled. It seemed to be able to go much faster but it held a speed of 80-100 miles per hour so it could be followed. The men in the cars felt that their radio communications were being monitored and their changes in procedure being anticipated.

At no time was there any interference with their engines' performance or the operation of the car radios.

One man, a Portage County deputy and also Chief of Police of Mantua Village, Gerald Buchert, obtained a photograph of the object and reportedly was told by the AF to keep it from the public. It went out on the press wires the next day (Tuesday) however. The photo does not appear to be anything spectacular, being merely a blob in news prints of same.

Some of the quotes by the men who chased the object are quite interesting:

The object was "about 35-40 feet in diameter".

Deputy Robert Wilson said that at one time during the chase, he heard Spaur say that the object had something like an antenna protruding from the bottom, as it hovered over the cruiser in which he (Spaur) and W. L. Neff were riding.

Buchert was quoted as saying the object looked round until it moved away, then it appeared like two saucers cupped together, lip to lip. The top half was very bright, the bottom half was dark.

At one point, when the deputies reached a highway interchange bridge, they had to slow down and the object appeared to slow and hover, waiting for them.

Spaur was a complete skeptic about UAOs prior to his experience but has since changed his mind.

Two developments during the ensuing week are interesting. One is explained, the other is not:

On the 23rd, the official word came out of Washington that the officers had chased a "double image" of Venus (whatever that is): They did qualify the statement with the word "probably", however. This development is explained, we believe, by the fact that officialdom has made a practice of denying the reality of the discs. Although considerable editorializing and general reporting on the happenings of the last year has convinced many people, the TV-Radio industry seems determined to keep any

pro-UFO information off the air.

The second item, which is unexplainable, is the apparently abandoned car found near the area where the object was first sighted. It was carrying walkie talkies, recording equipment and tape recordings. It was registered to a Robert W. Nelson of Edinboro, Pa., and a driver's temporary permit was found in the car, also, issued to Sanford Brown of Crawford. We have no further information on this vehicle and would appreciate any available. It may have no connection whatsoever with the incident, and it may have been a plant.

## The Wanaque Reservoir Incident

On the night of 11 January 1966, hundreds of residents of Wanaque, New Jersey reported observing a strange, large white light which maneuvered over the local Reservoir. Some of the many were Mayor Harry T. Wolfe, who was alerted by the police, and Councilman Arthur Barton and Warren Hagstrom. The object was seen from Oakland, Ringwood, Paterson, Totowa, Wayne and Butler. It was reported to have been seen in Oakland first, then over the Reservoir, then above Lakeland Regional High School, and over the Houdaille Sandpit in Haskell. It then appeared to move southeast toward Pines Lake in Wayne where it "disappeared."

The object was described as "gliding oddly" and changing color from white to red to green and back to white. Some described it as a very brilliant white light like a star except that it didn't flicker, and others said it was "oval."

Civil Defense Director Bentley Spencer and Richard Vrooman were also alerted by reservoir Patrolman George Dykman and went out to view the object. Spencer went to the top of the 1500-foot-long Raymond Dam with reservoir employee Fred Stennes and from that vantage point, he reported later, he observed a "bolt of light" which shot down, as if "attracted to the water." He said it appeared to be a beam of light emitted from a porthole. Hundreds of curious were turned back by reservoir police when they converged on the dam from both the north and the south to view the object.

Later news clippings carried the explanation by the Air Force that observers had been watching an AF helicopter, but it was later learned that the helicopter was not in that area at that time. Also suspect were Venus, in the evening sky, and Jupiter in the early morning sky. However, the appearance of these two planets does not coincide with the

(See Wanaque, page 4)



## VIII. Investigations' Aftermath.

What we have here is a mix of USAF and NICAP materials which followed the blow-up caused by the "Venus" conclusion. Note how apologetic Dr. Hynek's associate, William Bowers, is to Spawr and Jeff (yet nothing comes of it). Gerald Ford's letter indicates that there are bigger fish to fry (i.e. what became the Condon Project). The most significant pieces are Quintanilla's letters, very damning to USAF policy. Also, be sure to read the Weitzel/Hynek transcripts closely for some eye-openers (not so much about this case, but "things UFOlogical" in general). The Pentagon tries to deflect Congressman Stanton's concerns with flash and ignorance, but Weitzel responds in megaton force ... again, all to no good end. Dr. James McDonald tosses his considerable intellect into the fray, but despite the strongest case for doing so the USAF will not budge. This is what we have been facing folks. Zero consideration. Zero cooperation, at least in any public official way. Surprised that the soon-to-be initiated Condon Study was a farce?

May 4, 1966

Professor William Powers  
Dearborn Observatory  
Northwestern University  
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Professor Powers:

Enclosed is a partial collection of materials relating to the Ohio-Pennsylvania UFO "chase" of April 17, 1966. Included is the complete text of my letter of April 23 to Congressman Stanton, and a trial photo of a composite layout which was included with that letter. I am sorry not to be able to send more right now, but am in the middle of moving back into my Pittsburgh apartment from Franklin. I've had to shove and push quite a bit just to find a place to type.

Numbered spots on the map have the following significance:

1) Spaur and Neff first sighted the UFO here, between Atwater and Randolph, on Rte. 224. It appeared over some trees atop a small hill next to the road. They had been hearing some traffic on the radio about a UFO reported in Summit County, and Dale said, "There it is!" At this time it rapidly grew in size and came from over the trees, relatively small, to a point directly over their cruiser, quite large and bright. "Like high noon," quoted the Radio Operator in Ravenna who listened to their initial description and resulting chase. Spaur said the thing was round, about 45 feet across, and about 100 feet above them. Another radio operator reports that Spaur said it illuminated the ground so brightly that they would not have needed headlights. (I examined the area four days later; at that time of morning, 5:07 AM EST, the sky was blue-black, just barely light.)

Spaur and Neff had left their cruiser before seeing the UFO, to examine a parked (abandoned) car, and rapidly re-entered their car when the object came overhead. While they watched and radioed the description, it began to move down the road to the east, and accelerate forward. The radio operator in Ravenna told them to chase it. They did so. Its appearance now was rounded on top, with a cone-shaped light underneath. It continued to illuminate the ground over which it passed, tilting forward when it moved forward; the light followed it to the rear on the ground, whence Spaur's analogy with a flashlight which, when aimed down, throws a beam to the rear when tilted forward. Spaur did not see a beam in the air, only the illuminated ground. This does not seem to me to be unusual, granting the proximity and brightness of the object.

Both radio operators who monitored the chase (Ravenna and Salem) and Spaur and Neff themselves, described their emotional response as excited and frightened, but at no time did they lose their heads. Spaur was able to watch the UFO most of the time he was driving. When the Ravenna radio operator suggested to Neff that he take a shot at the UFO, Neff replied that it was like nothing he'd ever seen before, and implied he'd rather not try shooting.

Spaur's intention at this time was to try to identify the object. This motive was suspended until dawn, at which time it was frustrated.

2) At Canfield, or just outside the city, the UFO turned south. It seemed to "wait" for Spaur and Neff to catch up. It had done this, I forgot to mention, at Deerfield. It did again near Columbiana, where 165 intersects I4-46, and may have at Berlin Center (intersection of 534 with 14).

3) Jack E. Cramer, radio operator for Salem, Ohio, police, had been monitoring the pursuit, traffic between Spaur and Ravenna. As the cruiser sped down Rte. 14,

going toward Canfield, Ravenna asked Salem to see if someone could photograph the object. Both stations at this time believed Spaur to be traveling on 14A, which goes southeast from Deeffield to Salem. (This is one reason why there were not more witnesses.) When the pursuit vehicle passed 534, Salem expected them to arrive in the vicinity soon; 534 crosses both 14 and 14A. Two police officers in Salem, Lonnie Johnson and Ray Esterly, left the Salem Police Station and went in their cruiser to a hill nearby, watching the sky for something (they weren't clear as to just what they were looking for). Although they expected the object to arrive from the northwest, they suddenly saw, to the east, three jets chasing (or so it appeared to them) a large, bright object. One jet was behind it, seemingly at the same altitude, about a mile. The other two were arcing in from the left (north), coming toward the first jet. The object appeared about five times as large as the jet behind it. All three jets had contrails; the object did not. The four were traveling roughly southeast. The officers were facing in the general direction of Columbiana. They radioed in their sighting, continued to watch a short time, and returned to the station within 10 (ten) minutes. At this time, radio traffic indicated that Spaur and Neff had reached a point east of Columbiana, near Firestone Farms. After they called in, and before they returned, and at about 5:30 AM EST, radio operator Jack E. Cramer and police lieutenant Richard M. Whinnery heard a voice on the radio (Cramer states either 155 or 59.58 mc)(or MHz): "I'm going down to take a look at it. . . . I'm right above it, and it's about forty-five feet across; something trailing behind it. . . . like a ball of fire". This voice was louder than normal received traffic, did not identify itself, and came on only this one time.

The log at the base radio for Columbiana County Sheriff's Office, near Lisbon, indicates that at 5:35 Spaur and Neff were ~~near~~<sup>at</sup> the state line.

At intersection of 165 and 14-46, Spaur and Neff believed the object they were pursuing rose to an altitude of about 1000 feet.

Johnson and Esterly, the police officers watching the jets, estimated their altitude to be 10,000 to 20,000 feet. They were not certain the object was at the same altitude, although they said it looked to be. Johnson has had flying experience, in USAF (A2C). Both could clearly see the jets' outline, exhaust flame, and space between jets and contrails. Elevation was about twenty-five degrees; object was flying level. They watched for "less than two minutes".

All four men signed statements certifying the above, except the radio operator for Columbiana County (~~Scarry~~<sup>Criville</sup> Scarry), who allowed the complete log of the chase to be copied, such as it was (from 5:35 on). Neither Ravenna nor Salem logged any details of the chase; both radio operators, however, seem to have clear memories of it.

4) Patrolman Wayne Huston, East Palestine Police, had been listening to the traffic from Portage County, and on his own initiative, waited in Unity, Ohio, for Spaur and Neff to come by. His expectation was fulfilled. A few minutes before they passed him, he heard them on his radio. He saw the object coming from the northwest, over Rte. 14, and fly overhead. He estimated its altitude as 1000 feet. It appeared to have a "partly melted ice-cream cone" shape; dome-shaped top and bright cone-shaped bottom. Not certain, he said, whether the bottom was solid or not. P-13 (Spaur and Neff) were in hot pursuit immediately behind. He had been standing ~~beside~~<sup>beside</sup> beside his cruiser, OV-1, and when they passed, jumped in and followed, southeast on 14. It took some time to catch up. OV-1 communicated with P-13 by radio. Eventually they were bumper to bumper, comparing notes and commenting on

the UFO's behavior. They crossed the state line and continued from Ohio 14 onto Pa. 51. Someone radioed the Chippewa, Pa. State Patrol but no extra cars were available. While that radio operator was seeking help, he heard the cruisers, P-13 and OV-1, roar by. He looked out but apparently everything and everyone had disappeared down the road; he saw nothing. (Chippewa station is just off Pa. 51.)

When the Ravenna radio operator (Robert Wilson) realized learned from Lisbon (Orville Scarry, Columbiana County radio operator) that Spaur and Neff had reached the state line -- time on Lisbon log, 5:35 AM EST -- he advised that they return when another unit picked up the UFO. P-13 was now out of Portage radio range and communication was relayed through Lisbon. Unfortunately, no Pa. patrolman was contacted until they reached Conway.

5) Outside Rochester, Pa., steep hills rise on both sides of the road going southeast. It was here that the UFO elevated and disappeared. When Spaur, Neff and Huston approached Brady's Run Park, they encountered a treadle-triggered red traffic light set off by a Volkswagen leaving the park, and some trucks at the intersection. They got through this jam successfully, and negotiated some underpasses just outside Rochester. They had seen the UFO disappear over the hills, and were pessimistic about finding it again. But when they emerged from the bridge complex, there was the UFO, "waiting" for them over the road. It had dropped lower. As soon as they saw it, it sped away from them. They entered Freedom. At 5:50 AM EST, Lisbon logged this communication with Portage County: "What's the location of P-13?" "Just about into Freedom, Pa. Also OV-1 of East Palestine is running with him. Still observing the object. Bright Light with a rope or string attached to it. 1500 to 2000 feet in height. Traveling at speed over 100 miles an hour." "Have him 25 and return to base." "OK."

At 5:55, Lisbon relayed the order to return to Portage. Spaur said "Turning around now." But it was 6:15 until Spaur and Neff got back (west) past Freedom. In the meantime, they, Huston, and Frank Panzanella of Conway Police, had watched the object while standing in an Atlantic service station on Rte. 51 in Conway.

6) As Spaur approached Conway, his engine began sucking air in high gear. Spaur realized he was running low on fuel. Just then he saw Panzanella's patrol car, and Panzanella standing outside, across the road. He turned around and pulled up there, with Huston. Panzanella admitted (he had not been about to) that he had been watching the object, had at first thought a plane was in trouble, and had come down from a hill in Conway to observe from the highway. He radioed the Rochester radio operator, who handles traffic for several local communities, to call the airport. Spaur states the position of the object was left of the Moon, below it. He also saw a bright stationary point to the right, "Just opposite to the nose of the man in the Moon." The object did not seem to be moving, but suddenly it elevated rapidly to a point just opposite the Moon (still left). When a voice on Panzanella's cruiser receiver announced that jets were (to be) involved ("They're sending two up"), the object again elevated rapidly, and dwindled in size.

A Boeing 707 from the direction of the airport flew "under" it. Spaur was sure someone on the plane saw the object.

Spaur had not realized how far they had come, and was shocked when Panzanella told him how close the airport was.

At 6:15, Lisbon logged this from P-13: "Some government officials wants to talk to us. Advise my office. We are west of Freedom." At 7:30, Spaur thanked Lisbon for handling his traffic.

John Bieghey, radio operator at Rochester, denies transmitting a report that "two" had been sent up after the UFO. He did, however, call the control tower at Greater Pittsburgh Airport. He was told to wait his turn, as he said it was put, while someone from the Pa. State Patrol finished his business. When Bieghey reported the UFO, he was given a number to call. He relayed this to Panzanella. By this time, Panzanella had given Spaur some fuel, and Spaur decided to return. Panzanella stayed to watch the UFO disappearing, but when Bieghey called him with the number he had been given by someone at the control tower, Panzanella went after Spaur and Huston, intercepted them, and they went into Rochester to make the call. Huston states to "Some colonel". Spaur does not remember the identity or credentials of the person to whom he spoke, but Bieghey believes it was an Air Force officer. Spaur said the person offered several items for Spaur to compare his UFO to; "He didn't give me a chance to say what I saw," and promised the report would be forwarded to Wright-Patterson. No one else talked with this person.

When Spaur, Neff and Huston got to East Palestine, they stopped to say goodbye to each other. At this time they were joined by a Columbiana Deputy Sheriff, with whom I've talked. There is more in my notes about this but they are unavailable right now.

At 7:30 in Lisbon, this notation, not a communication, was entered in the Columbiana County radio log: "P-13 contacted a Pittsburgh PD unit and they scrambled some jets, that flew under the object." I have still not located the source of this report.

Further notes: At the beginning, and subsequently, of the sighting, a buzzing or humming noise seemed to be associated with the object. When it accelerated, the object's light intensity increased, and the humming noise went up in pitch.

Also at the beginning of the sighting, a deputy sheriff (who prefers to remain anonymous) on the other side of the hill, positioned in Atwater, saw a (the) UFO over the trees in the direction of Spaur and Neff, just as they saw it first.

At some times, when going east, Spaur watched the UFO out of his left window, to the north.

The UFO continued to illuminate the ground until dawn broke. Its apparent brightness dimmed when the sky lit up, but it continued to be brightly self-luminous, except for the top portion in the rear of the object.

Monday, April 18, an afternoon NBC news broadcast said a jet trainer with the 459th Troop Carrier Wing, ~~and~~ Youngstown AFR, flew near the UFO and heard a humming noise. I have no information on this. On this day also, the news carried a report (from ?) that the object had been a weather balloon.

On Friday, April 22, Major Hector Quintanilla called Mantua Village Police Chief Gerald Buchert at 3:10 PM to tell him the object he had thought he photographed to the southeast of Mantua, around the time Spaur and Neff were chasing the UFO, was a flaw in the negative. Sheriff Ross Dustman was informed that the object of the chase had been first a satellite, then Venus. Sheriff Dustman did not accept this explanation.

Chief Buchert photographed an object which was perhaps the same one Spaur and Neff chased, but more likely not. While he heard over his radio that they were in pursuit, it was moving up and down (relative to, actually above and below) near some power lines or phone wires in front of his home. The film seems inconclusive; two dark arcs are not separated by any frame boundaries.\* There is no warping, or was none when I examined it, at these points. They could not, however, as the Air Force implied, be an image of Venus. (\* Or to be interpreted as separate objects, either; there are no frame boundaries at all in this area.)

A densitometer examination of the negative should reveal whether the dark portion of the arcs which Buchert and the press assumed represented the UFO are darker or lighter than the background. If they are darker than the minimum exposure in that area (slight fogging), they could not be of any object at all, except one which emits negative light (a gratuitous, though ad hoc and scientifically unsound, qualification). The Air Force has issued several statements deprecating this peculiar image: flaw in negative, poor handling in development, old foggy film, and Venus-image. I do not know if a densitometer check was made. NICAP's Pittsburgh Subcommittee has this equipment, but I was able to examine the negative only in the presence of Chief Buchert. At any rate, I consider the film to be irrelevant because of the lack of correlation between Buchert's sighting, and that of Spaur and Neff, and between the peculiar image(s) on the film, and the deputies' description of the object. (Irrelevant to the P-13 sighting, that is.) The press gave this item much attention because there was a Photograph.

That's all for the moment, Prof. Powers. Sorry it isn't more complete. I have to listen to several tapes and make some more calls. If you want more, please write or call. Address: 5709 Woodmont St., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15217. Phone: 412-521-7675. I will get on top of this confusion (moving in) within a few days, and wrap up this phase.

Hoping to hear from you soon.

Cordially,

*Bill Weitzel*  
William B. Weitzel

**Enclosures**

PS None of the following associated with this UFO: color changes (only white); EM effects; physiological effects, either during or after, such as heat, tingling, disorientation, or the like; radioactivity -- Spaur and P-13 were checked by local CD unit just after sighting; I checked the 224 hovering site 16 hours later.

Dear Mr. Spaur and Mr. Neff,

I am the man who called from the Dearborn Observatory the night after the sighting and got Mr. Spaur's statement. I am an assistant to Dr. J. A. Hynek, director of the observatory and scientific consultant to the Air Force UFO investigating office.

Apparently I found out considerably more about this event than the Air Force investigator did, because I cannot agree with the evaluation publicly released a few days after the sighting. What you reported to me could not possibly lead to such a conclusion: a satellite satisfies none of the characteristics of your reported object. As a matter of fact, Dr. Hynek agrees with this. He was not consulted before this news release was put forth.

I thought at first that during the latter part of your experience, after you had lost the object and then re-acquired it, that you and Mr. Houston might have spotted Venus, and thought it was the same object at a higher altitude: I spoke to Major Quintenilla on the telephone at the time I gave him the results of my telephone interview, and told him of this idea. Now I have additional information, chiefly from Mr. William Weitzel, which appears to make that hypothesis incorrect. I now understand that you and other witnesses did notice Venus and the Moon, and saw the object in motion relative to them, as well as being able to see a shape. At no time, however, did I suppose that the earlier part of the sighting involved anything other than an airborne object.

As far as Dr. Hynek and I are concerned, this incident will require considerable additional ~~investigation~~ investigation, before any conclusion at all can be reached - assuming, of course, that some kind of explanation can be found, which seems highly doubtful.

I regret exceedingly that your report seemed to have been taken lightly, or even disbelieved. I can see no reason for your being insulted in this way, and I apologize for whatever part my report to the Air Force may have played in leading to such a result. I have no reason whatsoever to doubt that you saw exactly what you described.

In defense of the Air Force handling of his case, I would like to point out a fact that is not generally known: at the time of this sighting and the previous Michigan sightings, Project Bluebook had just lost its chief ( and essentially its only) field investigator, who had just retired. Hence Maj. Quintenilla had to rely on reports from inexperienced investigators, and was forced to do most of his own investigating by telephone. I can understand how he may have received false impressions himself via the telephone conversations, because when I read the detailed statements by yourself and other officers, given to Mr. Weitzel, I realized that there was much of importance that I had missed. I think you will agree that conditions on the night I called you were not ideal for a telephone interview! Also, you must realize that since the Michigan sightings, the Major has been flooded with letters and angry telephone calls - that press release may well be nothing more than a perfectly human reaction on the part of a man who has had to put up with some pretty disgusting insults himself. Dr. Hynek's "swamp gas" analysis was definitely not popular, although I tend to think it was a good guess, since I do know a lot about the circumstances surrounding those sightings.

Another factor that may help explain ( not excuse) the evaluation is the fact that only a few weeks ( or was it just a week?) before, a deputy sheriff in Washtenaw County, Michigan, took some time exposures of what he thought were two UFOs, which turned out to be Venus and the Moon. I'll stake my reputation, such as it is, on that



one, since I measured the trails, calculated the positions, and found that everything checks with that analysis. Everything, that is, but the deputy's idea of what he was photographing. Anyway, that one was really played up by the newspapers, who used blowups that exaggerated the length of the trails and cut out the hills and streetlights at the bottom of the picture, and gave everyone the impression that the dust-specks were stars. So when I said "Venus" that no doubt set off the expected train of thought.

Project Bluebook now has a new field investigator, a young lieutenant who seems pretty bright; he's coming to our Observatory so we can talk over with him the way an investigation has to be carried out if it is going to lead to respectable conclusions. For reasons I won't go into, I am sure he will work out much better than the previous man. If it is any comfort to you, your sighting and the subsequent news release may have been the combination needed to ~~xxxx~~ cause a significant improvement in the general handling of such cases. I hope you can still remember what it was like when you had never seen a UFO - it takes a long time for anyone, who has good sense, to absorb all the reports and gradually realize that there may be something really worth looking into among them. So many of them turn out to be ordinary objects, that one can easily get into the habit of writing them all off. You are very fortunate to have had first-hand contact with something unusual. A person who has not had such an experience, who must judge only on the basis of people's words, has a much harder time knowing what to believe.

One last word or two: judging from your statements after the press release, I would judge that you are not particularly anti-Air Force - you only want to be treated like honest men. I hope that you will see fit to consider this letter as between you and me. I have no desire to embarrass Project Bluebook: I just want to

see what I can do to help it work better. I think that the Air Force is probably the best-equipped organization for investigating UFOs, and we ought to aim at seeing what we can do to get that vast machinery moving a little more in the right direction. We won't do that by getting the press into a fight with Bluebook. A man on the defensive isn't going to listen to reason, and the Air Force is run by men, even as you and I. I don't see any harm in your letting the people around you know that your story is believed, and that the Air Force may possibly revise its opinion on the basis of more complete information, but I would think that it would be best for now not to get this in the papers. I'm writing this letter for your personal peace of mind, not to satisfy the casual curiosity of the public. Not that I think the public should be kept in the dark - it's just that the Air Force is in a ticklish position right now, and I want to give them a chance to clean their own house. Of course you don't have to do anything I say - I'm not in the Air Force or under their orders, and neither is Dr. Hynek. I hope you will think it over, though.

In the meantime, we're collecting all the information on the sighting that we can, here at Dearborn. If you find out any more, such as additional witnesses who might trust ~~xxxx~~ us enough to tell us their stories, we'd appreciate it. Just in case the file is re-opened. If it isn't re-opened - well, we'll deal with that when it happens, if it does.

Yours truly,

William T. Powers  
Systems Engineer  
Dearborn Observatory  
Northwestern University  
Evanston, Illinois

Please excuse my lousy typing - I wanted to get this letter off to you.

Congress of the United States  
Office of the Minority Leader  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

May 23, 1966

Mr. William B. Weitzel, Chairman  
NICAP Pittsburgh Subcommittee  
5709 Woodmont Street  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15217

Dear Mr. Weitzel:

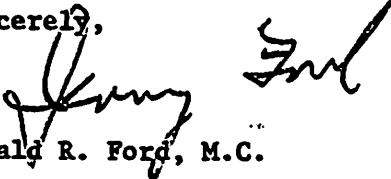
I wish to acknowledge and thank you for your letter of May 17th enclosing a copy of your letter to Congressman Stanton regarding the April 17th sighting.

While I appreciate having the information on this sighting, my main concern has been that a Congressional investigation be held, all the facts examined on the unexplained sightings, and that the report be made fully available to the public.

Because of my request, certain progress has been made. I am enclosing a release on that I thought you would like to see.

Kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,

  
Gerald R. Ford, M.C.

GRF:jb

enc.

hw

Errors corrected with  
check papers

NOT FOR  
QUOTATION

5709 Woodmont St.  
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15217

May 17, 1966

Major Hector Quintanilla, Jr.  
Wright-Patterson AFB  
Dayton, Ohio

Dear Major Quintanilla,

After our talk last week in Portage County, I was afraid you had gone away with some ill feeling, as you seemed to be angry that I was asking you questions following the meeting. Let me assure you that I was only concerned that you get the full picture of what happened on April 17, as I am still concerned. I am just as anxious as you are that an objective evaluation be made, and I do not see how it could be objective if insufficient data were collected. I am sure that you do not consider seriously reports of this sort: "I saw a light in the sky some time last year." But you seemed to be interpreting the report offered by the four police officers, particularly Dale Spaur, as this: "I saw a light in the sky the morning of April 17, and followed it southeast." Frankly, sir, I don't see that such a skimpy report would be worthy of your attention in the first place. If this is all you thought it was, it must have seemed a terrible waste of time to have to drive across Ohio and back just to have it repeated to you. If that is the case, I have much admiration for the patience you showed at that meeting, despite a little heat between us at the end.

I will, likewise, understand if you choose not to answer this letter. It is, I know, difficult to change your mind or admit an error; even if after reading my comments below, you still feel you are right, you will probably think it a waste of time to reply. However, I feel it is only fair to offer you the opportunity to change my mind. I am willing to have it changed; indeed, I would not have done a complete job of investigating this case unless I sought your informed opinion. I hope you will extend to me, then, the courtesy of proving me wrong, at least; or if on reconsideration you decide the opposite, of admitting it. I will not be happy to be proven wrong, of course. But that would be totally irrelevant to what should go into my record.

I shall offer my comments in this manner, or from this point of view. Assuming that you were aware of certain features of the testimony offered to you orally on May 10, and that these features, if taken seriously, would of course rule out the explanation of the sighting you have decided upon, you must have had some criterion, or criteria, for ruling out the features to rule in the explanation. Let me be a little more clear. I don't mean that you took the explanation first, then the data, and eliminated the data to fit the explanation; that would be ridiculous. I mean instead, that you must have seen fit (for other reasons than that the explanation had to be preserved) before making your evaluation, to eliminate those features.

On reading that over, I see a lack of objectivity. If it irritates you to see me assuming anything at all, from a scientific point of view, since it is unscientific to color a problem with assumptions, I will make this as well one of my questions, even though that is stretching objectivity a bit! (Some assumptions must be granted for a problem to even be seen!) But to be rigorous, I will begin there and not assume an answer from you one way or the other.

1. Did you choose to disregard those features of the testimony that did not fit your explanation?

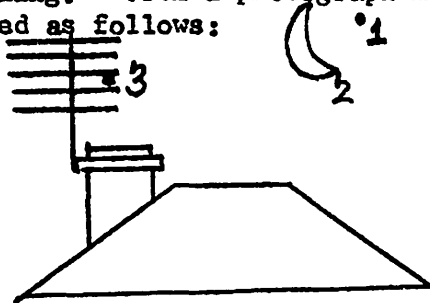
I must confess that if you answer "yes" there, I won't expect a reply from you, as the whole point of this letter is to have you fill in for the record your specific reasons for putting away certain parts of the testimony. Here are those parts; the points are meant as questions -- "What reason is there for not taking \_\_\_\_\_ into account in an evaluation?" For "\_\_\_\_\_", the following:

2. The UFO's size: "From berm to berm on 224" Spaur said. Rte. 224 is a good sized, 2-lane road. Also, he added when filling out the questionnaire, "As big as a three-bedroom ranch home." And, "Hell, it was big as a house!"
3. The UFO's brightness: "Like looking down the middle of hell, or something, for a minute. And it was very bright; it'd make your eyes water."
4. The UFO's change in brightness depending on its height: "It would get brighter when it would go up, and then it would seem like it would lose part of its intenseness, of the light, as it would come back down to us."
5. The UFO's sound: a humming noise that would change pitch.
6. The UFO's being seen to the north or south: from the enclosed map, and the statement that it was to their left when traveling toward Canfield, north; likewise, when they turned down 183 near Deerfield, it was behind them. At that time it then moved to their right, thus south. Also, after leaving Canfield, from Neff's testimony: "And we turned off to the right. And it was over to the right of us then, and that threw it back over to the left hand side of the cruiser. And it seemed like it just went off the road and quit; when we was going a little bit south, it turned and come right back with us. South."
7. The lit-up ground under the UFO: "It was no more, after it gained altitude, no more than between three and five hundred feet, 'cause it was light on the ground underneath of it. It was, the illumination from it, when it crossed that big crane, where the strip field is and stuff, you could see it just as plain as you can see that telephone. And this was before daylight."
8. The UFO's metallic appearance: "But that's the metallic part that you could see. You could see it vefy plain, and it was like an aluminum top that's been used for a while; it was definitely a silver, or light color, but it wasn't like chrome; it was silver color but it wasn't polished silver. Smoky silver. Dull silver, or whatever you'd ~~want~~ it; it was, I saw it very plainly."
9. The UFO's projection: "When it would do this, you could see this one projection on the back. Fifteen or eighteen feet long, it would appear to be. This is strictly an estimate."
10. The UFO's maneuvering: "This front part would change its angle of trim. . . . there was this one projection on it that we could see at any time; there were a couple times it made the same maneuver we couldn't see it." At this time the object appeared to be about 100 feet away.
11. The UFO's being more visible when it (the sky) became lighter: "Very clear, there was no problem at all, as a matter of fact, the lighter it got, the better we could see it." An object that was totally illuminated would have gone down in (relative) ~~brightness~~.
12. The nature of the UFO's disappearance: "We watched it through an antenna. . . . it went PGGSSHHHEW, straight up; and I mean, when it went up, friend, it didn't play no games; it went straight up."

There are two points about number 12, sir. First, the mobility of the UFO is indicated by its moving from between (in line of sight) TV antenna wires, to above them; then, in your own word, it "disappeared". (Spaur agreed to that word.) Second, would not radar from Oakdale or Greater Pittsburgh, which are hidden by tall hills to the south of the site of the sighting's terminal position, fail to pick up an object so low, which then rose rapidly without playing "no games"? The sweep might not have been covering that area when the UFO rose from its "hiding place" to out of sight.

This latter part of the event raises another problem: a second UFO: "There was one bright spot right off the, about where the nose would have been on the (man in the) moon, but the bright spot had been there, I don't know how long the bright spot had been there, it was quite a while. But when we were watching, it would have been, at this time, -- of course, that spot was awful small, it wasn't as big as this, that we were watching." From a photograph made from where Spaur stood, the three objects were placed as follows:

- 1) "Bright spot"
- 2) Crescent moon
- 3) UFO reported, seen here behind a TV antenna



Actually, the moon was a little higher.

There is one other thing I would like to ask, Major Quintanilla, following up a request I made after the May 10 meeting. The police officers in Ohio who observed three jets behind a large, bright ball going horizontally across the sky in Spaur's direction, for a minute or so, reported that the two jets in the rear were turning toward the first one (directly behind, about a mile, the object) from another direction. You said no jets were scrambled or diverted by anyone on the ground. Could it be that some pilot requested permission to chase an object, have permission granted, and then you would not get this information if you phrased your request something like, "were any jets scrambled?" This is why I thought a specific question from you would elicit a more direct reply, about a pilot radioing in some report not made under orders. Did you get an answer to your question? I'll make that number 13, just to be more formal:

13. Were any jets involved in any way with the UFO? If not under orders, as you indicated, did some pilot on his own initiative, or with permission, observe a UFO?

Of course, it would probably be almost impossible for you to find out if a pilot went off course during a practice, or otherwise, flight, to "chase a flying saucer"! You are probably well aware of how queasy pilots are about reporting such things.

That is all the questions I have, sir. Except for a request on behalf of Dale Spaur: if you release any further findings to the news media about this, he would appreciate it, I am sure, if you mention not only him, but also Wilbur Neff, Frank Panzanella, and Wayne Huston as observers. Spaur looks rather foolish to the public, and his ability to perform police duties has been eroded by publicity that he chased a planet. He wishes that the press (UPI, radio, etc.) had been fairer in naming the other officers involved. I am sure you will do this if the opportunity arises.

W

I'm afraid I forgot something, but this positively will be the last question.

14. What reason is there for not taking into account that Wayne Huston saw the object coming from the west (northwest) with Spaur and Neff directly behind it, then go overhead and down the road southeast as they followed it? "Anyway, this thing passes over another police car. He watches it go by, he's spotted it now." Huston was standing outside his car, expecting Spaur and Neff at any moment, having been listening to radio traffic. Perhaps this will be submitted by those checking in the Pittsburgh area for you, from either Oakdale or Greater Pittsburgh.

It may be that nearly all the points I raised could be easily explained by an inclusive answer, such as "hallucination". That is a very uncomfortable word, of course! And I realize that, being in the high position you are, you would prefer a less loaded term.

But as it stands, sir, the sighting reported by Spaur and discussed with him by you, has not been explained. Taking "sighting" as you did, when you told him to tell "what he saw". Now, you and I both know that what people see is not, sometimes, what is there. If there is any indication the four men were having an hallucination, or exaggeration of a stimulus, I think that should be said. Personally, I know of nothing indicating this. But if that is the situation, as seems to be implicit in your conclusion, I think it should be said in a forthright manner, and substantiated. I am sure you have data other than that which I have, about this event. It is only fair that you make known what it was that accounts for the points I raised above (except for number 13), whether one reason or many.

From your point of view, I hope it is one simple reason; that will make it the more easier to reply to me. But whether one reason or many, I hope you will reply soon.

Respectfully yours,

*William B. Weitzel*

William B. Weitzel

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66-16-71.18-7 o p o

**THE P-13 UFO**

**Pennsylvania Unit #1, Pittsburgh Investigative Subcommittee  
National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena**

**Summary Report of April 17, 1966 UFO "Chase" from  
Portage County, Ohio, into Conway, Pennsylvania**

**William B. Weitzel, Investigator**

**June 23, 1966**

**NOTE: Materials contained herein, with the exception of newspaper articles or newswire quotations, are CONFIDENTIAL and for release to the public only by express permission of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP).**



While on patrol S R 224, Deputy D. F. Spaur and Mounted Deputy Neff spotted a UFO about 50 feet off the ground over a heavily wooded area. This vehicle or object could and did move in any direction. I advised my sergeant, H. Shoenfelt, of what I had observed, having no camera of my own. The sergeant advised that I keep this (?) under observation and pursue same until we could contact a unit with a camera. The (?) was about 35 to 45 feet across the bottom and about 24 feet high. The (?) was very bright. The (?) seemed suspended on a beam of light. The only sound that could be heard was a faint humming. This might have come from a power line. I was shook up at this time.

We observed the vehicle or (?) go straight up to about 200 feet and start east. We followed this craft or (?). It moved upward to about 500 feet and increased its speed to about 80 mph ground speed. We followed the object. The sergeant advised if possible to stay with this (?). There was not much traffic so I stayed with the (?). It increased its speed to 103 mph ground speed. The vehicle never made any attempt to lose us or to make any change of direction. We followed the (?) to just outside of Pittsburgh, Pa.

We were about out of fuel as we spotted a Conway, Pa. Police Department car. After advising him of what we were chasing, he radioed his station. They contacted the airport. I got five gallons of fuel from this department and returned to my station.

Signed: Dale F. Spaur, #15                      April 17, 1966

PORTAGE COUNTY SHERIFF INVESTIGATION REPORT

CONTENTS

[All of this is not included here: much you have seen earlier as appropriate to the information flow of the case MBS]

PREFACE: PORTAGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S INVESTIGATION -- Dale Spaur's original report

INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION

THE CHASE

Section map of Portage County, Ohio; route of initial phase  
Section map of Ohio - Pennsylvania; total route  
Narrative -- "THE CHASE"  
Section map of Economy Borough, Pa.; terminal phase  
Log from base radio station, Columbiana County, Ohio, Sheriff's Office  
Log from Federal Aviation Agency, Greater Pittsburgh Airport

TESTIMONY

Explanation of numbered drawings  
Spaur-Neff drawings, and summary statements; the P-13 chase  
Neff interview, partial transcript; the P-13 chase  
Ruston statement and drawing; interception of P-13 chase  
Ruston interview, complete transcript (second interview)  
Wilson statement; radio traffic on chase  
Cramer statement; radio traffic on chase  
Cramer interview, partial transcript  
Brothers interview, partial transcript; attempt at participation  
Panzanella statement and drawing; sighting terminus, USAF report  
Panzanella interview, partial transcript (first interview)  
Kwiatanowski statement and drawing; UFO chasing jets  
Johnson-Esterly statement and drawing; jets chasing UFO  
Whinnery-Cramer statement; apparent reception of pilot's radio report on UFO  
Whinnery interview, partial transcript

NOTES ON SIGHTING TERMINUS

Comments by David Webb on Venus-Moon-UFO positions

DISCUSSION OF JET/RADAR INVOLVEMENT

SUMMARY OF INITIAL PHASE OF INVESTIGATION

SPAUR'S REACTION TO BLUE BOOK CONCLUSION

THE BUCHERT PHOTOGRAPHS

Notes on Buchert sighting  
Densitometric analysis of film  
Enlargement (x12) of UFO-marks area  
Letter from Major Quintanilla to Chief Buchert; W-P analysis  
Yokum statement on film handling, Maj. Quintanilla's phone calls  
Buchert certification of film's safe handling by NICAP

DISCUSSION OF THE ROLE OF PROJECT BLUE BOOK IN THE P-13 SIGHTING

THE MAY 10, 1966 QUINTANILLA HEARING

Notes on certification document -- Spaur's release  
Certification of Major Quintanilla's non-objection to tape recording  
Quintanilla hearing, partial transcript  
Weitzel -- Quintanilla, May 17, 1966 letter of inquiry

CONTENTS (cont.)

CONGRESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Note on Correspondence and News Articles

- W -- Stanton, April 23: comments on "Echo-Venus" explanation
- W -- Stanton, May 6: follow up on Cong. Stanton's reply (NICAP office, DC)
- W -- Stanton, May 11: report on Blue Book investigation
- W -- Stanton, May 17: further report, transcript
- W -- Ayers, Bates, Ford, Fulton, McCormack, Rivers, May 17: on correspondence
- Ford -- W, May 23: action already taken with Cong. Stanton
- Stanton -- W, June 8: acknowledgement of tape recording
- Stanton -- Clapp, June 8: ref. her articles, public concern
- Fulton -- W, June 9: referred to Pennsylvania Delegation
- W -- Stanton, June 12: Blue Book's second answer, request forward query
- Stanton -- W, June 16: request granted

NEWS ITEMS

- 4/18 UFO Chased into County
- 4/19 'Blue Book' Won't Visit County
- 4/23 Deputies Saw Venus, Not UFO, Air Force Says
- 4/27 NICAP Hits AF UFO Investigation
- 4/27 Stanton Joins in Push For Checking 'Saucer' Checkers
- 5/3 Judge Cook Requests Air Force UFO Probe
- 5/5 AF Should Check UFO's -- Stanton
- 5/7 AF Admits 'Error' (promises investigation)
- 5/11 Still Venus to Air Force: Blue Book Investigator Doesn't Change His Mind
- 5/11 NICAP Prober Raps Air Force
- 5/12 Judge Cook Raps UFO Probe
- 5/25 AF Explains UFO's As 'Natural' to Stanton
- 5/25 Stanton Calls for Expansion of Blue Book
- 5/26 Judge Cook Raps AF UFO Probe

NEWS ITEMS continued: Interview of Major Quintanilla

- 6/6 From Sign to Grudge to Blue Book
- 6/7 Socorro Sighting Stumps Blue Book
- 6/8 'Misinterpretation' Blamed For Many 'Saucer' Sightings
- 6/9 Temperature Inversions Can Confuse Inexperienced Radar Operators
- 6/10 Project Blue Book -- An Effective American Defense Tool or Just an Image?

## INTRODUCTION, AND CONCLUSION

This report documents the April 17, 1966 pursuit of an unidentified flying object from Portage County, Ohio, to Conway, Pennsylvania. The event caught world-wide attention, United States Congressional interest, and the normal outpourings of the public's expressions of curiosity, skepticism, ridicule, sympathy, indignation, resignation, and (not exactly an "outpouring") apathy, which accompany UFO sightings. The role of the United States Air Force's "Project Blue Book," charged with the responsibility of investigation and evaluation of UFO reports, was publicized to an unusual degree, and a substantial portion of this report documents that as well.

The reader is cautioned to keep in mind the possible differences, or non-identity, among the unidentified flying objects mentioned herein. Paradoxically, it is easy to confuse mutual unidentifiability as a common trait, and identify two unidentified items. There are at least four sightings involved in the brief (1½ hour) April 17 chase, and it may be that they are all due to different objects. It may also be that they are all due to conventional objects and natural phenomena of various (or of the same) sorts. All sorts of things "may be." NICAP's position on this event is that a solid, unconventional, perhaps extraterrestrially designed, object was chased. The Air Force's position, based on Project Blue Book's conclusion, is that the observation(s) were of Echo and Venus.

The report is incomplete. Investigative leads are still being followed up, and the controversy over the Air Force's conclusion is still alive. The account of the chase, transcripts of testimony, and written documents are intended to supplement each other; economy of time and materials forbade extension.

Transcripts contained herein are all from tape recordings made in the presence of, and with the permission of, those being interviewed or those interviewing ("or" should be "and").

A few notes of gratitude are appropriate -- Carol Clapp, through her articles in the Ravenna, Ohio Record-Courier (nearly thirty) kept Spaur's and Neff's fellow citizens not only informed, but concerned. Tom Schley, reporter with the Beaver, Pennsylvania County Times, besides his usual fine articles, assisted with much of the investigative work I could not do, including interviews and leads. Sheriff Ross Dustman, Portage County, Ohio, made his office's facilities available for my work there. Congressman William Stanton and Common Pleas Court Judge Robert Cook were decisive in getting much, that strongly needed to be, accomplished.

Since I have precluded a legitimate conclusion with my note on incompleteness, I will only say that, what has been done in this investigation, should never have had to have been done in the first place. I hope the materials in this report will help a little to make more of the same, less necessary.

William Weitzel  
Pennsylvania Unit #1  
NICAP

## THE CHASE

(NOTE: Details in this account are taken from about sixty hours of testimony, nearly all of it tape-recorded and/or in signed documents. Some of this material is reproduced in this Report.)

Deputy Sheriff Dale F. Spaur's week had been an ordinary one, except that for two days before April 17, he had taken a brief vacation from his extra job, in construction work, to enjoy some fishing and extra sleep, more than his usual six hour per day average. Otherwise, it was a normal schedule of police work. On the evening of the 16th, he had a couple of glasses of a beer-tomato juice mixture, a dinner of steak and eggs, took a 2-hour nap, awoke, and had two cups of coffee before reporting for duty at midnight, at the Portage County Sheriff's Office in Ravenna, Ohio. He was immediately dispatched to check a prowler complaint, with the assistance of police from Mogadore, in southwest Portage County. Nothing was found. He received a call to pick up Wilbur Neff at the station. "Barney" Neff is a local Thermo-King mechanic who rides with regular Deputy Sheriffs when he has an opportunity, as a Mounted Deputy. Spaur returned to the station, from whence he and Neff were dispatched to answer a call about a car shearing a utility pole near Atwater Center, on Rte. 183. They had the driver sent to a hospital, had the car towed, and an Ohio Edison man came to fix the pole. The deputies drove to Deerfield to get some coffee for the repairman; it was a brisk morning. At the Circle Pump in Deerfield, they assisted a motorist whose car had broken down, and arranged to have it towed. They returned with the coffee shortly before 5:00 AM EST, about 4:45.

While they were talking with the Ohio Edison man, they listened to radio traffic between Portage and Summit counties, concerning a woman in Summit County, Mrs. Harvey Hays, who reported a brightly lighted object "as big as a house" flying over her neighborhood, from Akron. The object was too low to be a plane, and too high for a street light, she said. Jokes were exchanged, over the radio among the radio operators and deputies Spaur and Neff, and with the repairman. Spaur had heard about "flying saucers" before, but did not take them seriously.

The deputies left the scene of the accident and headed west on Rte. 224, to make out an accident report at the hospital. When they reached a point on 224 (marked on the Portage County map with arrows 1 and 2), they saw a car parked on the berm on the south side of the road. They turned around to investigate, and parked behind the car. It was a rusty '59 white Ford, apparently abandoned. (The owner was found later.) As part of regular procedure, both men left their car, cruiser P-13, with the engine running, in case quick pursuit would be necessary. Neff waited by the front of the cruiser while Spaur advanced. Spaur looked over his right shoulder to check the surroundings.

Through the trees atop a small hill next to the berm, he noticed a light moving. It was coming from the west, toward them. At first he was mildly surprised, thinking, "Well, that must be the UFO that's been talked about!" The light came closer, and he called Neff's attention to it. It grew larger, came near the trees, then rose and changed its course, coming over the trees, and moved over the road, right above where they were standing. It passed over the road to the north side (map position 2)(arrows are direction-vectors), where it stopped, fifty to a hundred feet up. Both Spaur and Neff were petrified with fear and astonishment. The object was too bright, a brilliant blue-white light "almost as bright as a flashbulb", to look at for more than a few moments; it made Spaur's eyes water; but the thing was at least forty five feet across, perfectly round, and it lit up the ground around the cruiser "as bright as high noon." When Spaur involuntarily looked away from the object to the ground, he noticed that neither his clothes nor the grass were burning. He had not consciously expected burning, but he noticed its absence. After a short time, both men, without saying a word, simultaneously entered the cruiser as quickly as they could.

THE CHASE (two)

The time was 5:07 AM EST.

In Mantua Village, 18 miles northwest of P-13, Chief of Police Gerald Buchert, on patrol just outside of town to the south, on Rte. 44, had been hearing the radio traffic on the UFO seen in Summit County, and happened to see a bright light in the sky to the southeast. At first he thought it was a star, but it was much brighter than the other stars in the dawn sky, and did not twinkle. It was to the right of the moon, and somewhat above it. He watched for a minute or two, but the object did not go anywhere. Thinking this might be the reported UFO, he drove to his home and awakened his wife, to observe it with him. While they watched, the object moved left and right, and up and down above and below nearby phone wires. From his front yard, it appeared farther away from the moon, still to the right, than when he had first seen it. When it moved left or right, it appeared like two saucers facing each other, and the forward-moving edge tilted, in attitude, upward. When it was stopped, or moving up or down, it appeared to be spherical. His wife described it as a sphere with a ring around it, like Saturn, when it moved left or right. No other features were visible, and it was just big enough to make out those mentioned.

Buchert had with him a Brownie Starmite camera, used in his police work. He took three pictures of the object, one of it alone, one with the moon in the framing area, and one with a nearby telephone pole in the area. He telephoned a report into the Sheriff's Office; by this time there was excited talk on the car radio about Spaur and Neff chasing something. Having made his report, Chief Buchert returned to his regular duties. The object had not gone away. His wife stopped watching it. The time was about 5:20 AM.

Back to 5:07 -- "This thing could go, like I said before, it could change its angle, and then it would move forward with the front tilted downward, and this is why we pursued it, so no one would say we'd eaten too many cookies at the wrong time, or something. The light didn't have any effect on us; of course, your adrenalin comes up pretty good. I started sweating; I didn't know what was going to happen. It didn't harm either myself or my partner. Of course, we made a dash for the car. I don't know what we were gonna do once we got in it. I radioed the desk. This is when the sergeant asked us if we could observe the vehicle; I told him we could, very well. We watched it climb; we turned everything off in the car completely. There was sort of a whisper behind a humming noise, which seemed to come from the object. This thing went straight up to about 250 or 400 feet and came back to the south side of the highway, directly overhead." (Spaur 4/17)

The sergeant, H. Shoenfelt, instructed Spaur to keep the UFO under observation until a camera car could arrive. While they watched, the object moved from directly overhead to a point just over the center of the road, about 150 feet ahead, and "checked" its travel, hovering perfectly still. Spaur started the car down the road toward it. He could see now that it was from 18 to 24 feet thick, top to bottom. It was rounded on the bottom; the top could be seen dimly silouetted against the sky. The bottom and edges were a brilliant blue white color, and the road was illuminated underneath the object. Spaur had noticed that when it elevated, the humming noise had gone up in pitch, and the brightness had increased. When the UFO moved from the south side of the road, over them, to its center at a distance, the spot of light on the ground seemed thrown behind it, and the object tilted down in its forward direction of travel.

THE CHASE (three)

(See map position 3) As the men moved forward in P-13, the UFO rose to about 500 feet and receded from them slowly. They sped up. The UFO sped up. This jerky acceleration was repeated several times until, within about a mile, they were traveling about 80 mph, still behind the object. Deputy Sheriff Robert Wilson, Radio Operator, thinking this would be a good opportunity to see whether flying saucers were weather balloons, suggested Spaur use his .44 Magnum; he declined. Sgt. Shoenfelt commented, somewhat lightly, that it would be well not to "agitate" the object. Spaur's seriousness was quickly communicated to the men in the station, however, and they were all becoming quite excited. Wilson turned on the intercom so those at distant points within the station could hear his traffic.

When P-13 got to Rte. 183, Spaur had to make a quick turn; he chose to go south. The object stopped, just off 224, over a field (4). When Spaur turned back on 224, about a mile further, he and Neff watched the object come south, cross the road, and make a turn to the east about a hundred yards from the road. It was still illuminating the ground. Orville Scarry, Radio Operator of the Sheriff's Office in the Columbiana County Jail in Lisbon, Ohio, heard Spaur say the UFO was lighting the road so well that he wouldn't have needed headlights; when it passed over a construction site near Atwater Center, it lit up a large crane. It maintained its distance from the road until P-13 neared Berlin Reservoir; then it rose again, to nearly a thousand feet, and crossed the road to the north, before the twist, at the reservoir. (See 7, 8.) It remained due north for a few minutes; Spaur could see it out his left window as they headed due east; then it crossed the road again to the south, before they reached Canfield (9, 10). (It should be emphasized that both men were well aware of the phenomenon of relative motion, due to observer orientation changes, of distant objects; they mentioned this, as well, in their testimony.)

The UFO was now moving at an altitude of about 1000 feet, and Spaur's ground speed was nearly 100 mph. Fortunately, the road was clear, with hardly any traffic at this time of morning. Unfortunately, however, due to the necessity for close attention to the requirements of the pursuit, and the excitement of those in radio stations monitoring their position calls, a mixup occurred which hampered acquiring photographic evidence. Both Ravenna and Salem, Ohio radio operators pointed out that, when Spaur said he was on Rte. 14 (same here as 224) or "on 14 crossing 534," they interpreted this to mean Rte. 14A, which was once Rte. 14. 534 crosses both roads; 14A, near Salem. Those who did try to intercept or join in the pursuit, or use cameras, were frustrated. The camera car sent by Portage County had been outdistanced when P-13 reached Nahoning County (Berlin Reservoir). Deputy Sheriff Dave Brothers of Columbiana County was waiting outside of Salem on 14A; when he heard Spaur, or Neff, say they were at Canfield, he realized what had happened, and tried to reach a better vantage point by driving east on 14A, but it was too late.

When P-13 reached Canfield, the UFO was moving farther and farther south, still running east, to their right. Neff, who is familiar with the roads in that area, had Spaur turn right onto a traffic arc that bypasses Canfield. When they did this, the UFO kept on going a bit, over the road ahead of them (11); then, as they proceeded south, it changed its course and came back ahead of them (12), to the south, before the bypass actually began its curve. They followed the road until they could turn south again, and headed due south down 14-46, with the UFO ahead of them to the south.

## THE CHASE (four)

The deputies noted, and broadcast, that when they had to slow down for traffic lights, or other encumbrances, the UFO would slow also, as if to wait for them. This happened several times before the end of the chase, except near Rochester, when it went over a hill, but even then, and particularly then, when they emerged from obscuring objects, it had dropped and was hovering, "in wait." The deputies, mainly Spaur, were getting worried now. Orville Scarry heard their concern over no one else corroborating their observations, lest they be thought lying. "Boy is this wierd," Robert Wilson noted as a frequently repeated comment. More details were becoming apparent, as the object was better seen by reflected daylight (the sun rose at 5:20), and its silhouette had better contrast with the sky. They noted a projection, about 18 feet long and a foot or so wide at its base on the trailing top portion of the object; this "antenna" tilted to the rear and tapered to a near point. They saw this chiefly when the UFO changed speed or direction. The top appeared dome-shaped, except, according to Spaur (Neff disagrees only with this feature of the UFO's description), for a sharp drop-off near the "antenna". The front top half was still brilliantly self-illuminated, and so was the top tip of the rear, but now they could see a satiny metallic finish to the rest of the top. Spaur turned off his radio once or twice to check for the humming noise; he still heard it. Neff kept his head close to the windshield, watching the UFO high above.

As P-13 neared Columbiana, the UFO, getting distant, again changed its velocity, as if to keep with them; this was at the intersection of Rte. 165 (E-W) and Rte. 14-46.

In Columbiana, Patrolman Jack Haines was searching for a camera. He acquired one, but the deputies had passed, with a near disaster. The UFO had turned left\* onto (over) Rte. 14 where it goes left at a large intersection, of Rtes. 164 and 14A. When Spaur made a left turn, the cruiser hit gravel and nearly went off the road. Spaur is an excellent driver, however; he once raced cars, and has never (or had never, until April 17) lost in a pursuit. He negotiated the turn, and followed the UFO, which was going southeast now, over Rte. 14 toward Unity.

East Palestine Patrolman Wayne Huston, in cruiser OV-1, got into radio contact with Spaur. He parked his car, engine running, by Rte. 14, north of East Palestine, and asked Spaur where to look. Spaur replied, "Look out your left window, and up." Huston was standing by his car, talking with the extension microphone (standard equipment). He looked up 14 to the northwest, and saw a bright light approaching. The light took on detail. When it flew straight overhead, from the northwest (300°), it was going so fast, and so high, he could not study it, but he saw a "partly melted ice cream cone" shape; flattened dome, self-illuminated, and brilliant cone underneath. The cone, however, seemed not to be solid, but more like a tapered light beam diffusing through smoke. The cone was bent to the rear, of the direction of travel.

P-13 was just behind the object (on the ground). Huston watched them fly by, then jumped into his cruiser and took pursuit. It took several minutes to catch up. By this time, the chase had continued to Pennsylvania Rte. 51, and the road was heading downhill, toward distant hills. Huston asked his station to call the Pennsylvania State Police Barracks at Chippewa, which they did. The men had gotten out of range of Portage County radio, and calls were being relayed through Orville Scarry, in Lisbon. Scarry began logging the chase at 5:35, when P-13 was at the state line. There was no hope now of getting an Ohio cruiser to join the men.

\* About 100°



## THE CHASE (five)

At the Chippewa, Pa. State Police Barracks, Trooper Antonio J. Taglienti, at 5:35, received a phone call with a number of requests: call the airport; find out if anything is on their radar; have interceptors sent up; assign a Pennsylvania car to assist. Trooper Taglienti called the airport: "Nothing on our radar -- only available planes too fast -- will try to get visual contact from other aircraft." He could hear the chase traffic over his telephone: "The thing is still above us." While he was trying to muster aid, he heard the cruisers roar by; he looked out the window, but saw nothing unusual. No cruisers were near enough to help.

P-13 and OV-1 approached Brady's Run Park, a few miles out of Beaver, Pa. The UFO approached steep hills near the road. The road got quite narrow. A red Volkswagen came toward the park exit and hit a traffic light treadle. Three trucks were coming toward the intersection from the east, and two more loomed in front of the cruisers. Huston put on his siren. The light changed to red, the UFO went up to 2000 feet, passed over the hill, and dropped behind it, to their left. When P-13 and OV-1 got through the intersection, they thought they had probably lost the object, but they had a good deal of momentum left, and, hoping to see it on the other side of the hills, they continued down the narrow highway toward Rochester.

Just past Fallston, they passed through a railroad underpass, and the road widened. Huston had been giving Spaur intense attention, instructing him as to turns coming up. As they got out in the open, they spotted the object near Rochester. Huston was the first to notice it; Spaur had been watching him in his rear view mirror, and saw OV-1 nose down suddenly. "There it is!" Huston cried. Spaur looked ahead and saw the object directly ahead, hovering apparently still, over the highway. It had come down to a few hundred feet and, as before, appeared to be waiting for them. Spaur noticed that its apparent size was larger than that of his rear view mirror.

As they approached it, the object went straight up rapidly to about a thousand feet, then took off horizontally, ahead of them. They followed it into Freedom and towards Conway. Rte. 51 had changed to 65. The object diminished in size. Just before it took off horizontally, Huston caught sight of a projection on the top, on the right side. (NOTE: This would be consistent with earlier descriptions of the projection "to the rear", considering their speed, and that the highway turns left into Rochester, about a mile after the Fallston underpass.)

Spaur was receiving calls from Portage County, relayed through Lisbon, to return to base. He was running low on fuel, and his carburetor mixture was not rich enough at high speeds ("sucking air"). He said he would turn around. By this time they were approaching Conway. Spaur saw a police cruiser parked across the highway, up ahead.

Conway Policeman Frank Panzanella had been heading home, off duty, when (about 5:40) he saw what he thought was a burning airplane heading toward him, atop a hill next to Rte. 65. He drove downhill to escape a collision. The object was coming in his direction, from the southwest. As he reached the bottom of the hill and turned left, he saw, from his left window, a large, glowing object move across his field of view from the west, away from him, but headed south. It appeared to be about 35 feet across, looked something like a bisected football, and near the rear rim of the oval bottom, had several dark-circled light areas. A projection went off the object, away from him, at its rear. It might have been tilted, with a bottom view toward him, but it didn't make much sense to him. He drove to an Atlantic service station next to Rte. 65 and parked his car. When he got out, he saw the object move out over the Northern Lights Shopping Center, east of him.

THE CHASE (six)

The object appeared to Panzanella to be about an inch across at arm's length. He moved to the southeast corner of the station to get a closer look. Just then P-13 and OV-1 pulled up beside his car. The officers got out and asked if Panzanella had seen the object. "What object," he replied; it had seemed so strange to him he was reluctant to admit seeing it. When they told him they had chased it in from Ohio, he called John Beighey, Rochester Police Radio Operator, and told him to call the airport.

The four men stood and watched the object withdraw horizontally, directly away from them, until it was a dot, from 1/16" to 1/4" arm's length apparent size. It hovered. Spaur heard something on the radio about aircraft being scrambled. The object moved rapidly upwards until it was level with the crescent moon, off to its right. A bright spot, which the occupants of P-13 had noticed next to the concave portion of the crescent, for some time, was still there. Panzanella stood by his car, talking with Beighey. He could not see the moon.

At its first position, the UFO seemed about a thousand feet up. Actual angular elevation was around 11° from the horizon. After its first elevation, it appeared about 3,000 feet high. It remained motionless in this position while a jet commercial airliner flew underneath. Panzanella told this to Beighey, who relayed it to the airport. (NOTE: Somewhere along the line, this got reversed; in the FAA log, the airliner is above the UFO.) Then the observers saw what seemed to be jet vapor trails or contrails, arcing from the west or northwest, from the left of the object, somewhat towards it. A voice on Panzanella's radio announced that jets were being scrambled. The object shot straight up and disappeared. Whether it disappeared by dimming out, diminishing, or what, is not quite clear.

Panzanella had been trying to get other cruisers on his frequency to see the jets and/or the object.

After it went out of sight, Spaur decided to try to make it to Unity, where Huston could refuel him. The three men left. Panzanella waited to see if the object would return. As P-13 and OV-1 pulled away, Panzanella got a call from Beighey, instructing him to have everyone call 264-5000 (USAFR, Greater Pittsburgh Airport). Panzanella drove after the Ohio officers with his pursuit light on, and caught up to them about three minutes after they left, in Freedom. As he approached them, he heard a fading voice on his radio -- Henry Kwaitanowski, an Economy Borough Patrolman. "Hey, Frank, I saw two jets . . ."

Kwaitanowski was standing by his cruiser, about three miles from Conway, roughly southeast. He had been looking for jets, and trying to raise Panzanella on the radio, but the traffic was largely between Panzanella and Beighey at that time. Then Kwaitanowski saw two jets flying toward the sunrise, away from him, and behind them, a shiny, football-shaped object, keeping its distance, about the same size as the jets. He observed this for two or three minutes, then called Panzanella, the beginning of Kwaitanowski's observation seems close to the end of Panzanella's.

Huston and P-13 drove to the Rochester Police Station, where Spaur called the number at GPA. He was interviewed briefly by "some colonel" who hung up abruptly after what seemed to Spaur a perfunctory interrogation, filled with suggestions for comparisons of the UFO with familiar objects. The officer promised to forward the information to Wright-Patterson. (NOTE: Five hours later the UFO project office at the USAFR was unaware of the report.) No one else was interviewed. Neff, Spaur and Huston went with Panzanella to get Spaur refueled, then Spaur and Neff went back to Unity with Huston. There they talked briefly with Dave Brothers, the Deputy Sheriff who had tried unsuccessfully to intercept them earlier. As they drove back, they noticed several police cruisers parked at intersections, watching them.

THE CHASE (seven)

When Spaur and Neff returned to Ravenna, they and their cruiser were checked for radioactivity with a Geiger counter, by the Fire Chief and a Civil Defense official. Nothing unusual was found. The original site (of first sighting) was not checked. Buchert's film was developed at the photographic laboratory in the Court House, and four prints were made. By this time, the news had hit the national press and broadcast media, which picked up the story by monitoring the police radio traffic. Neff preferred to keep in seclusion from reporters, which kept him from Spaur's exhausting experience of having incessant interviews. Unfortunately, the news media concentrated largely on Spaur; with the exception of the Record Courier and the Beaver County Times, most papers and broadcasts, as time passed, failed to emphasize the corroboration from the other officers involved. A further distortion resulted from a hasty identification of Chief Buchert's pictures with the P-13 sighting. Little note was made of what seemed to the deputies the chief aspect of the event: an extensive instance of police cooperation crossing local boundaries. Had they been pursuing a bank robber, this aspect may have been more clearly seen.

One event that occurred during the chase deserves particularly close attention, and for that reason has been postponed until now: the apparent reception of a jet pilot's radio transmission, reporting a close observation of the P-13 UFO. When P-13 was traveling down Rte. 14-224, near Canfield, two patrolmen listening to the Salem, Ohio, police radio, decided to leave the station to watch for the UFO's arrival in Salem; the report, "we're crossing 534," was interpreted to mean 534's intersection of 14A, instead of 14, near that town. The patrolmen, Lonnie Johnson and Ray Esterly, expected to see the object come in from the northwest; but while they were looking, they saw a jet plane in the distance, at a small angle from the horizon, and then noticed an object in front of the aircraft. The jet was flying in a north-south direction, in the east. They watched the jet "pursue" the object, which looked like a bright ball, five times the size of the jet behind it, in level flight. Two more jets arced in from behind the first one. This sighting lasted a little over a minute, as they remembered; they radioed in what they were observing, about 5:30. Just after getting this report, the Radio Operator, Jack Cramer, and Police Lieutenant Richard Whinnery heard an unidentified voice break in on the regular traffic (the voice was louder than normal, and unrecognizable): "I'm going down to take a look at it. . . . I'm right above it. . . . It's about forty five feet across, and it's trailing something."

This transmission, from an as yet unidentified source, was received just five minutes before Orville Scarry, Radio Operator in Lisbon, logged the deputies crossing the state line. This would put them, at the time of the "voice", just east of the patrolmen watching from Salem.

The UFO in this case, however, seems to have been a different one: it was larger and higher than the one P-13 was following. (See statement, by Officers Johnson and Esterly, and their drawing.)

## NOTES ON CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE AND NEWS ARTICLES

These sections are almost exclusively related to the investigation performed by Major Quintanilla of Project Blue Book. The point of the correspondence with Congressman William Stanton was to inform him of the adverse reflection on the officers in his district, resulting from the U.S.A.F. - sponsored conclusion that the deputies had become hysterical at the sight of Echo, then chased Venus out of the state, and the lack of basis for that conclusion.

I informed other congressmen who have expressed an interest in the UFO topic, and the Air Force's role, of my communication with Congressman Stanton. The May 17 letter to Mendel Rivers was also sent, in substantially the same form, to Congressmen Ayers, Bates, Ford, Fulton, and McCormack. Speaker McCormack has, for many years, upheld the viewpoint that the Air Force's handling of UFO reports should be more open.

Some of these reproductions are of carbon copies; they may be of poorer quality; corrections were made on originals with chalk-paper.

The "enclosure" mentioned in the April 23 letter to Congressman Stanton, introducing me to him, referred to a newspaper clipping of an interview expressing my views on UFOs (conservative) and background.

Regarding personal opinions: It should be clear that I have expressed strong views and dissatisfaction with the Blue Book program. This dissatisfaction is based on close observation of the Portage County investigation as well as other sources. I have no reason to believe the Portage County investigation is atypical of Blue Book procedure. The Portage County case (including all participants in and out of the state) is ample grounds for dissatisfaction, aside from other well documented cases (see NICAP's publication, THE UFO EVIDENCE.) My opinion of Major Quintanilla is that he has a deep-rooted belief that no UFO has ever indicated the existence of advanced technological techniques. His stated criterion for persuasion to the contrary is testimony of astronomers who would report the approach of spaceships. This is part of the unfortunate stereotype of "UFO" -- if a UFO is not a spaceship, just arrived from a distant world, it must be a conventional object or natural phenomenon. Between these two poles there is a wealth of possibilities. One is reminded of Dr. Allen Hynek's April 5 testimony before the House Armed Services Committee (#55) this year, regarding "poverty of hypotheses."

Such a deep-rooted opinion is naturally going to stand in the way of an objective evaluation of data. As has so often happened, if a witness gives testimony that points to the existence of a device produced by an advanced technology, he must therefore be disbelieved; either his objective evidence is incomplete, or his subjective experience is out of whack with reality. Certainly, in this P-13 case, the "they're all conventional" opinion is out of whack with the observations. But why must the presumption be favored over the facts?

This is not of simply academic importance. UFO witnesses are subjects of a strange experience, apparently beyond the realm of conventional explanation. To refuse to widen the boundaries of that realm to include a (by now) monumental accumulation of reports, ill befits our scientific ideals. On the level of the individual citizen, be he a UFO witness or not, anxiety is increasing lest he be one; if he is, his anxiety becomes conscious pain, from social disapproval. Fortunately for the witnesses, but unfortunately for the Air Force, the disapproval is shifting from the data-producers to the data-explainers. The problem remains, however; the data-producers are discouraged from performing their role. A rather obvious answer to the frequent question, "If these things are flying around, why don't more people report them?"

*File 11/4 - 11/7 material  
wrapping case up.*

- SUMMARY:** NICAP attempt to have USAF re-re-evaluate April 17, 1966 chase of low-flying object from Ohio to Pennsylvania by Ohio police officers (called by the USAF, the "Ravenna case.") These notes post-date June 28 NICAP report.
- July 3 Letter to Lt. Col. John Spaulding<sup>1</sup>: Maj. Quintanilla's overlooking of details of sighting. Request for explanation, and estimate of probability that case will be fairly evaluated.
  - July 13 Letter to Maj. Quintanilla<sup>2</sup>: Request to answer May 17 letter.
  - July 14 Congressman William Stanton letter to WW: Expect to hear from Maj. Quintanilla fairly soon, according to (enclosed) letter from Col. Dwight W. Covell<sup>3</sup>.
  - July 15 Maj. Quintanilla letter to WW: Anxious to reach a scientific conclusion on April 17 case. Have weighed all points carefully. Witnesses saw a satellite coming from NW going SE, then fixed eyes on Venus and "chased" it. If Venus had been reported in addition to UFO, new light would have been shed on the case.
  - July 27 (July 14 and 15 letters delayed in forwarding to NICAP: received this date.) Letter to General Cruikshank<sup>4</sup>: Maj. Quintanilla has not evaluated data, such as that witnesses did report Venus besides the UFO, and it originally came from S, not NW. Request appropriate action.
  - July 29 Dr. James McDonald<sup>5</sup> phone call to Richard Hall: Talked with Maj. Quintanilla recently; he said he would classify April 17 case "unknown," would clear this through Washington, and get Dr. Hynek's approval. NICAP's June 28 report not in Blue Book file as expected; send another copy.
  - July 30 Letter to Col. Louis DeGoes<sup>6</sup>: Copy of June 28 report enclosed. Refer to letter to Gen. Cruikshank; Maj. Quintanilla has not evaluated the facts.
  - July 30 Letter to Col. Freeman<sup>7</sup>: Refer to letter to Col. Spaulding. Repeated query.
  - July 30 Letter to Congressman Stanton: Updated information on case. Seem to have reached dead end; please advise.
  - August 4 Dr. J. Allen Hynek<sup>8</sup> letter to HT, NICAP member in New York: Hynek not consulted officially on April 17 case, but told USAF anyway that it should be classified "unknown." HT had written to Dr. Hynek out of personal curiosity, but felt comments on April 17 case would be of interest to NICAP; forwarded letter and permission to use.
  - August 4 Phone call to Dr. McDonald: Maj. Quintanilla definitely told Dr. McDonald he would reclassify case "unknown." Expect Col. Freeman to have release now.
  - August 5 Phone call to Col. Freeman: He has heard nothing, but it may be in the works. Check with Col. Hippler, who would hear if so.
  - August 5 Phone call to Col. R. R. Hippler<sup>9</sup>: He would hear nothing unless involving major policy change of Blue Book. Check with Maj. Quintanilla.
  - August 5 Phone call to Maj. Quintanilla (in D.C. at this time): He never said he would change conclusion from "satellite-Venus." But he sent case files, including NICAP June 28 report, to Dr. Hynek in Ontario, where he is on vacation. If Dr. Hynek and Col. DeGoes concur, evaluation will be changed.
  - August 5 Phone call to Col. DeGoes: He claimed ignorance of any of these points, but promised to discuss them with Maj. Quintanilla when he returned from D.C. on Monday, August 8.

- August 5 Phone call to Col. Freeman: He promised to call NICAP as soon as some word came to his office about re-evaluation.
- August 6 Col. Florian A. Holm<sup>10</sup> letter to WW: Acknowledge receipt of July 27 letter to Gen. Cruikshank and July 30 letter to Col. DeGoes, and June 28 NICAP report. Continued evaluation of Blue Book depends on such material. (This letter dated August 3.)
- August 8 From reliable source, learned that Dr. Hynek had replied, prior to August 4, to Maj. Quintanilla's request for review of case material, with "unknown."
- August 9 Phone call to Mrs. Sara Hunt, SAFOI: She has heard nothing of any change of evaluation. She talked with Col. Freeman this morning; he is on leave, and she will notify me at NICAP if any word comes through.
- August 10 Visit to Mrs. Hunt at Pentagon: She called Blue Book: no change.
- August 11 Visit to Congressman Stanton: Discussion of how to get better response from Blue Book. He will send letter directly to someone there, after I supply summary of recent material and documents, this Monday, August 15.
- August 11 Phone call to Project Blue Book, Lt. Marley<sup>11</sup>: He has heard nothing about any change of evaluation. Will check with Maj. Quintanilla tomorrow.
- August 12 Phone call to Project Blue Book, Lt. Marley: He has just checked with Col. DeGoes, who has talked with Maj. Quintanilla. They have no plans to change conclusion, have read NICAP report. "The major is still firm." Marley does not know anything about Dr. Hynek's opinion; Dr. Hynek is in Ontario. I pointed out above facts. Marley said he would read the NICAP report when it was returned to files. He had no access to files to check on whether May 10 hearing had resulted in any material therein, but assumed it had. Then said Maj. Quintanilla was more interested in early material, collected April 17, and that this had contradictions about UFO direction. I reminded him that this interview lasted less than 3 minutes, and object was seen in different directions over 73 mile path. Noted other points of conflict with Blue Book conclusion, left word that NICAP not finished.
- August 12 "Final summary to date: Major Quintanilla and two other sources have testified to the major's intentions to present the case to Dr. Hynek. Dr. Hynek has said he considers the case unknown, and has both unofficially and officially indicated this to the Air Force. To date, after reviewing the NICAP material and presumably getting Dr. Hynek's official opinion to the contrary, the case is classified satellite-Venus."
- August 12 Maj. Donald Keyhoe lecture in Cleveland, Ohio: Mentioned that "NICAP has a letter from Dr. Hynek saying the April 17 case should be classified 'unknown'." Reported in local paper as Dr. Hynek's writing to NICAP.
- August 16 Editorial in Ravenna, Ohio Record-Courier: USAF has used Dr. Hynek to "rubber stamp" ridiculous conclusion to April 17 sighting. "In a civil dealing, this would be fraud." Mentioned Dr. Hynek's letter "to" NICAP.
- August 17 Article in Record-Courier, by Carol Clapp: Interview with Dr. Hynek -- He does not agree with USAF conclusion. Emphasized initial phase of sighting, deputies' observations in Portage County when object approached closely (50 feet). Stressed need for scientific study of UFO phenomena, as is being planned with university scientists, by USAF.

- August 18 Congressman Stanton letter to Maj. Quintanilla: Request for a change from "satellite-Venus" to "unknown" because, "in a close reading and analysis of the testimony, it certainly seems to me most significant that the officers reported seeing Venus as well as the other object which they described as being as big as an airplane. . ."
- August 23 NICAP Summary: Discussion of refusal of Blue Book to include Dr. Hynek's opinion after it was officially solicited. Maj. Quintanilla had said, in an interview with Carol Clapp published June 8, 1966 in the Record-Courier, that Dr. Hynek passes final judgment on all "astronomical" conclusions.
- August 26 Letter printed in Record-Courier from WW: Comments on August 16 editorial (clearing up point about Dr. Hynek's letter), expanding on degree to which Blue Book was overlooking key points, which Maj. Quintanilla had admitted would challenge his conclusion.
- August 30 Letter to Col. Holm: In view of Maj. Quintanilla's overlooking key points, and his ignoring Dr. Hynek's opinion, please take rectifying action.
- September 13 Letter to Col. Holm: Enclosed, transcript of May 10 hearing, with unedited tape recording from which it was made. Review of Maj. Quintanilla's investigation. Please answer these letters.
- October 4 Congressman Stanton letter to WW: Enclosed, September 30 letter from Col. Hayden P. Mims<sup>12</sup>, reviewing Blue Book's re-evaluation at Cong. Stanton's request to Maj. Quintanilla of August 18. (Cong. Stanton's letter to WW sent September 30.)
- October 4 Rebuttal to Col. Mims' letter, which contains a number of inaccuracies, and ~~the~~ the unfortunate statement, "Sheriff Spaur's statement is is purely subjective and impossible to duplicate." Rebuttal consists of 14 points, including, "GENERAL COMMENT: This letter from Colonel Mims indicates that Blue Book -- specifically, Major Quintanilla and the unknown re-evaluator -- overlooked corroborating testimony resting in Blue Book's files. It focuses on Dale Spaur as the chief witness, and belittles his testimony, with pejorative and erroneous references."
- October 4 Letter to Col. Hippler: Situation reviewed; please advise as to your or my appropriate action for correcting. Enclosures, from above material.
- October 5 Letter to Congressman Stanton: Comments on Col. Mims' letter with rebuttal and other enclosures from above material.
- October 5 Letter to Col. Freeman: Summary, and enclosures from above material.
- October 5 Letter to Mr. James Bersie<sup>13</sup>: Summary, and enclosures from above material.
- October 6 Letter to Col. Mims: Disagreement with letter to Congressman Stanton; you have "misrepresented, I have no doubt unknowingly, the facts of the case." Enclosures from above material, including rebuttal.
- October 6 Letter to Col. Holm: Comments on Col. Mims' letter. List of points made in May 17 letter to Maj. Quintanilla, still unanswered, among enclosures of above material. Please answer these (3) letters.
- October 7 Letter to Sheriff Dustman: Summary, enclosures from above material.

- October 8 Letter to Col. DeGoes: Summary, request inclusion in Blue Book files of enclosures, from above material.
- October 11 Col. Freeman letter to WW: Acknowledging letter and enclosures of October 5. Enclosed, USAF press release on University of Colorado study.
- October 20 Letter to Col. Holm: Will soon send to printer account of April 17 event similar to June 28 NICAP report, but for public consumption. Would like to have USAF response to following criticisms: (quoted)
1. That Major Quintanilla's concern to evaluate the event scientifically was minimal, or nil.
  2. That the major consciously rejected attempts to have called to his attention features of the sighting that were relevant and highly significant, by his own stated criteria.
  3. That the major rejected the solicited opinion of the Air Force's own scientific consultant, Dr. Hynek, on this case, and that the major went against his published word that Dr. Hynek passes final judgment on all cases whose designated conclusion is "astronomical."
  4. That the Air Force has misled Congressman William Stanton as to the facts of the case, in details of both testimony and Blue Book's efforts.
  5. That personnel connected with Project Blue Book, including those under whose purview that project falls, have pointedly ignored reasonable requests for an explanation for Major Quintanilla's failure to examine relevant testimony, particularly that from corroborating witnesses to the April 17 event. (close quote)
- Please reply within one week to these (4) letters. Enclosures from above material.
- October 20 Letter to Col. Hippler: Request answer to October 4 letter. Enclosures from above material.
- October 20 Letter to Col. DeGoes: Maj. Quintanilla's July 15 letter enclosed, with other material similarly unavailable October 8, last letter. Comments on Major Quintanilla's opinion that a "spaceship" was reported April 17.
- October 20 Received tape sent to Col. Holm September 23, in envelope with no postmark, USAF-franked, return address "SAFOI-C." No covering letter.
- October 21 Col. Gerald R. Jorgensen<sup>14</sup> letter to WW: His office is reviewing October 6 letter to Col. Mims, "prior to sending it to Project Blue Book where it will become a part of the permanent record. The material will receive careful attention at this headquarters and at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. You will be notified if analysis of the information in your letter warrants further comment or alters the Air Force position." (This letter sent October 19.)
- October 21 Letter to Col. Jorgensen: Appreciate response. More than routine effort may be required to bring attention of Blue Book to bear on case. Please comment on history of tape received yesterday.
- October 21 Letter to Congressman Stanton: Summary, including Col. Jorgensen's letter.
- October 24 Letter to Col. Jorgensen: Clarification of skepticism over Blue Book's handling of case.



October 24 Letter to Col. Freeman: Comments on October 7 release, about Colorado study. Comments on April 17 case's recent publicity in context of "hoax" claim.

*See 11/4 - 11/7 correspondence wrap-up.*

FINAL SUMMARY TO DATE: Col. Jorgensen's letter is a welcome development. NICAP hopes for a fair review of the available testimony offered by the several police officers involved, as radio listeners and as eye-witnesses, to the April 17 UFO sighting. The eyewitnesses described a very low-flying, solid, highly differentiated and unusual object. In NICAP's opinion, this testimony warrants the USAF classification, "unknown," in line with the definitions and reporting format of AFR 200-2, in line with Dr. Hynek's opinion based on an examination of the USAF files, and in line with common sense. Whether "unknown" in this case means "spaceship," as Maj. Quintanilla seems to believe it must, is problematical.

WEB

- 1 Lt. Col. John Spaulding, Community Relations Division, USAF, after a visit from Congressman Stanton, had Maj. Quintanilla conduct a hearing in Ravenna (May 10).
- 2 Maj. Hector Quintanilla, Jr., Chief of Project Blue Book.
- 3 Col. Dwight W. Covell, Congressional Inquiry Division, Office of Legislative Liaison, USAF.
- 4 General Cruikshank, Commander, Foreign Technology Division, Wright-Patterson AFB.
- 5 Dr. James E. McDonald, Senior Physicist, Institute of Atmospheric Physics, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.
- 6 Col. Louis DeGoes, FTD, Wright-Patterson AFB. After criticisms of Dr. McDonald about Blue Book's operations, assigned to internal investigative team to monitor and study Blue Book, report within 2-3 month period (over summer 1966).
- 7 Lt. Col. George P. Freeman, Chief, Civil Branch, Community Relations Division, USAF; SAFOI, Pentagon Room 4A120.
- 8 Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Dearborn Observatory Director, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. For 19 years, the USAF scientific consultant on UFOs.
- 9 Col. R. R. Hippler, Deputy Chief of Staff for Research and Development, USAF.
- 10 Col. Florian A. Holm, Commander, Foreign Technology Division, Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio. Successor to Gen. Cruikshank.
- 11 Lt. Marley, staff officer, Project Blue Book.
- 12 Col. Hayden P. Mims, Congressional Inquiry Division, Office of Legislative Liaison, USAF.
- 13 Mr. James Bersie, staff assistant, Congressman Gerald Ford's office. Involved in study of USAF handling of UFO problem, development of "university teams" program.
- 14 Col. Gerald R. Jorgensen, Chief, Community Relations Division, USAF.

NICAP

P-13 file

FTD (TDETR)  
Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio 45433  
15 July 1966

DUPLICATE -- NICAP  
(Answer to query May 17  
by William Weitzel, NICAP)

William B. Weitzel  
5709 Woodmont Street  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15217

Dear Mr. Weitzel,

Please excuse the delay, but I have been extremely busy for the past three months. I have been away from the office at least half the time, attending briefings, giving briefings, and trying to finalize the plans for our future scientific teams. Hopefully the teams should be complete by September, at least I hope so. I have also had numerous visitors in my office and this also pushes the correspondence back whenever this happens. My personal correspondence has been extremely heavy and I find myself way behind and unable to catch up. Please excuse the delay.

I am aware that we are both quite anxious to reach a definite objective conclusion in the Ravenna sighting. Achieving a scientific and objective explanation of all UFO reports is of great importance to me. In the case in question I have given much thought to the available data and feel that I have honestly weighed each factor to an appropriate degree in reaching my conclusion. I also believe that pertinent information was available to make such an evaluation.

I regret your feelings that certain factors of the report were disregarded. There was no attempt on my part to do so. Considering the lacking conclusive information to place a tangible object in the area, I find it quite difficult to reach a conclusion th substantiate the presence of an UFO.

I know of no jet aircraft that were involved with the alleged UFO whether scrambled or otherwise. We received no reports from any pilot in the area confirming observance of an UFO. This is a puzzling point that should be given due consideration. If Spaur observed jet aircraft in the vicinity of the UFO, doesn't it appear that such would have been reported at least to someone, if not our office.

It is still my belief that the witnesses observed the passage of a satellite over northeastern, Ohio. Considering there are over thirty satellites and satellite components visible to the naked eye, it is possible that one of these was in the area at the time of the sighting. As the satellite approached the southeast portion of the sky, the satellite disappeared and then the observers focused on the planet Venus. I ask you, why didn't any of the witnesses observe Venus which was definitely rising in the southeast? Had such an observance been made, new light would have been shed on the case. Venus, with a stellar magnitude of -3.9 would have been brighter than any of the stars and should have definitely been visible. Police Chief Buchert stated that there were no other stars, etc., in the area of the object. I ask you why wasn't Venus observed when the planet was definitely there? Without a reference point, Venus would have appeared to perform erratic maneuvers. As the witnesses were traveling toward the southeast how could they have any balancing point of reference to judge the movement of the planet?

You must agree the major discrepancy is that in no way can the scene be recreated. This factor alone leaves much to be desired. I leave this with you whether accepted or not, on no account did any information in the Ravenna sighting prove to me that an extraterrestrial vehicle was observed. I would need to have concrete evidence that actual spaceships are maneuvering about our planet at will and against all laws of space flight mechanics, to believe their existence.

Sincerely,

HECTOR QUINTANILLA, Jr. Major, USAF  
Chief, Project Blue Book

↑  
[Note that neither Weitzel nor Spaur are asking Q. to designate the sighting as an extraterrestrial vehicle, just unknown. MBS]

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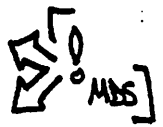
FTD (TDETR)  
Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio 45433  
28 July 1966

Dr. J. Allen Hynek  
Battle Point  
Blind River, Ontario  
Canada

Dear Allen,


I have just received the NICAP investigation of the Ravenna, Ohio case. There seems to be some contradictions within this report and with the model of the object. Take a look at it and give me your unofficial opinion of the report and if possible "nit-pick-it" for future reference.

I have just about come to the conclusion that it would do no good to reverse our evaluation on this case. I really cannot see any purpose in doing that at the present time, regardless of what Dr. McDonald thinks. I think that it would just open up old wounds, criticism, ridicule and nothing could be gained by this. This is my opinion. What do you think?

 MBS]

Please send the NICAP report back to the office whenever you are finished.

Sincerely,

  
HECTOR QUINTANILLA, Jr, Major, USAF  
Chief, Research and Aerial Phenomena Division

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August 11, 1966 4:00

M: Aerial Phenomena, Lt. Marley speaking.

W: Hello, is this Major Quintanilla's office?

M: Yes it is.

W: I'm calling from Washington, D. C., my name is Weitzel. I wanted to ask if you knew anything about a re-evaluation that's being made there of the April 17, Ohio to Pennsylvania UFO chase.

M: Uh, the uh, uh, is this the, uh, Ravenna Ohio —

W: Ravenna, right.

M: Uh, no, we, we're not making a re-evaluation of this case.

W: Well, I understood from Major Quintanilla last week that he had written to Dr. Hynek and had asked for his opinion on this, and that Dr. Hynek had written back to him, this we have from Dr. Hynek — uh, saying that he thought the case should be "unknown;" Major Quintanilla told me that this would depend on Dr. Hynek and Col. DeGoes. I talked with Col. DeGoes on Friday, and he said that he would discuss this with Major Quintanilla on Monday this week.

M: Yeah, well as, as far as I know, uh, this hasn't uh, been discussed yet.

W: Has not been discussed at all?

M: Yeah, no, well, not that I know of.

W: Mm hum.

M: I know the Major is, uh, is, uh, is real firm in his standing on this, uh, this case, uh, and I haven't heard any, uh, thing else, uh, to the contrary yet.

W: Mm hum. Ahh — what is your name, please, and rank?

M: Lt. Marley.

W: OK. Is there anyone there you could ask, or a file you could check to make sure that this hasn't been done? Because the major told me he would, uh —

M: Well, the secretary's here, uh, I'll uh, uh, ask her a second.

W: All right.

M: Uh, she said that, uh, any, any release, uh, any additional release on this case would come by way of, uh, SAFOI.

W: I've been in Col. Freeman's office, I was out there yesterday, and I couldn't get the information I wanted, specifically about whether Dr. Hynek's letter had been received at your office; apparently, he sent this over a week ago, —

M: Yes...

W: — before the third, I believe.

M: Well, now, I'm not, uh, I'm not aware of, uh, all the, uh, additional happenings that, uh, that have, that have to do with this case.

W: Mm hmmm.

M: Uh, I just, uh, I know the last time I talked with the major about this case, uh, he was uh, you know, firm in his, uh, standings on it.

W: Mm hmmm. When was that, please?

M: Uh -- I guess about two weeks ago.

W: Mm hmmm. Well this, uh, information came in last week, and we have a statement here from Dr. Hynek that he was never consulted about the case, but that he did inform the Air Force, uh, that he thought this should be "unknown", and I thought, I assumed that this meant he had informed Maj. Quintanilla. Then we got word later than that, that Maj. Quintanilla had sent Dr. Hynek the case files, including, uh, a report I wrote for the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena --

M: Yes...

W: -- and that Dr. Hynek had replied to this letter of inquiry, saying that he thought that the case should be classified "unknown" and this was what we were talking about with Maj. Quintanilla last week, and Col. DeGoos; and I was informed that this would be discussed on Monday, and that some conclusion would be made at that point about it.

M: Well, now, I mean I haven't heard anything, uh, whether that this, uh, discussion took, took place or not myself.

W: Mm hmmm. Is there any way you could check on that?

M: Uh, yes, I guess we could, uh, check in uh, I could get the major to call you back sometime.

W: Could he have, uh, could I have that done this afternoon?

M: Well the, uh, the major's not in today.

W: Oh, he's not in today.

M: I have to uh, I have to, uh, you know, see him first, 'cause I uh, --

W: Right.

M: -- I, uh, don't know anything about this at all, really.

W: Mm hmmm. Well, that's OK, I just, uh, I don't expect anything would be put up on the bulletin board or anything like that.

M: Yeah.

W: Well, I, I hoped I could find out this afternoon. If I need to call back, I will call back again tomorrow.

M: OK.

W: But I wish you would discuss it with him because, uh, I was told by Col. DeGoes that this would be discussed again out there, and we know that Dr. McDonald, who's been out there quite a bit, talked with Maj. Quintanilla, and the major told him that he was going to re-evaluate the material, or at least have Dr. Hynek and Col. DeGoes do this. And this occurred --

M: What day, uh, what, Dr. McDonald says the major's gonna re-evaluate it?

W: Yes, this is what he told us, and, uh, we talked with him by phone and he told this to us on the 14th of August and on the 29th of July.

M: Uh huh. OK, well, I'll see what I can find out and, uh, uh, when you give a call back here I can see what I can find out for you.

W: All right.

M: OK, well, thank you a lot then.

W: All right, thanks for talking. Bye bye.

(TERMINATED)

August 12, 3:15

M: Hello, Lt. Marley speaking.

W: Hello.

M: Uh, Mr. Weetzel.

W: Yes.

M: Uh, I was trying to call a little bit earlier but the lines were all tied up, and uh, they told us they were putting a two to three hour delay on the watch line, so uh --

W: Oh.

M: -- so I'm sorry to go and call you like this. (I.e., collect to NICAP)

W: Oh, that's all right.

M: Uh, I saw uh, Col. DeGoes, uh, a few minutes ago and uh, he has said he is, uh, looked over uh, your report and everything, and we've talked it over with the major, and, uh, as it stands now, they have no plans to, uh, reclassify the case.

W: I see.

M: What, uh, what he told me as of our conversation, uh, (indistinct)

W: Uh huh -- could you hold on minute, I'd like to shut an office door here, it's rather noisy.

M: All right.

W: I'll be right back. . . . OK, now you say you've, that there are no plans to reclassify it?

M: I know of no, uh, yes, uh, that's about what I mean, yes.

W: Uh huh. And Col. DeGoes told you this?

M: Uh, yes, uh, I've talked with him, uh, about, uh, few minutes ago.

W: Now how about, uh, Dr. Hynek, has he consented on this?

M: Uh, well, Dr. Hynek is still on vacation up in Canada.

W: Mm hum. Well, I understand that, um, Dr. Hynek has written, and we have this in a letter from him, that he had informed the Air Force of his opinion — that was before July 29 — and then from someone else, that Dr. Hynek had written to the Air Force in answer to Major Quintanilla's communication regarding the re-opening of the case. And that he had written back in reply, and said that in his opinion it should be classified "unknown".

M: Yes, well that, uh, the major hasn't, uh, made any indication that the case was going to be, uh, you know, re-opened. Uh, he's, uh, is standing firm in his uh, the evaluation of the case as they have now.

W: Mm hum. Did you know that he had sent Dr. Hynek the case file and my report to NICAP?

M: What, to Dr. Hynek?

W: Yes. That —

M: Uh, no.

W: — that the major had sent him those materials?

M: Uh, no, I didn't. He's been up —

W: He told me this —

M: — in Canada for the last five weeks, and, uh —

W: That's right, he told me he'd mailed them to him, up in Canada.

M: Uh huh.

W: And he told me this Friday, last week; uh, Dr. McDonald told us about two weeks ago, over two weeks ago, that he'd talked with the major; we had two phone conversations with Dr. McDonald, indicating that Major Quintanilla had said that he would submit the material to Dr. Hynek, and discuss it with Col. DeGoes, and that it would depend on their joint concurrence, whether the case would be reclassified or not.

M: Yes...

W: Dr. McDonald had the strong impression that Dr., that, uh, Major Quintanilla was going to change his conclusion.

M: Well, no, this is, uh, completely, uh, contrary to, to what I've been told, uh, uh, in myself talking to the major —

W: Mm hum.

M: And, uh, Col. DeGoes just, just finished telling me shortly, that we have (indistinct) no plans to reclassify the case.

W: Mm hmm. Uh, there are various points about this, that I've tried to communicate with Major Quintanilla over, and have been unable to get him to look at the material I've submitted. One of them is the fact that the witnesses reported that they saw Venus in addition to the object. And in a letter I have from Major Quintanilla dated July 15th, he says, "Why didn't the witnesses report Venus?" as part of their sighting. If they had, he says, new light would have been shed on the case.

M: Yes...

W: Ahh, we tape-recorded the testimony of the witnesses in Ohio, this is just the Ohio -- in the Ravenna area -- witnesses; they told him this twice during his interview with them, that they had seen a bright point of light in the sky for quite a while, to the right of the moon; it didn't move anywhere; this would have been Venus, and that they of course also saw the UFO, and they were distinguishing these two, uh, lights. I mailed the major a letter on the 17th of May, which he received, uh, it was mailed Certified Mail and he signed for it on the 20th, and I drew a picture of this, this situation with the three objects in the sky -- the moon, Venus, and the UFO; and made quite a point of that; and, uh, I'm very disturbed that the major has not heard this from the witnesses, or has read it as explicitly emphasized in my letter to him, and yet feels that if this were part of the testimony, it would shed new light on the case. Now that's three times he has had an opportunity to be aware of this, and claims that it would shed new light on the case, and yet he is unaware of it.

M: Yes, well I uh, I'm not, uh, I mean I'd, I couldn't comment on this.

W: No, I know you're in no position to say anything about that at all; but I'm trying to point out to you, um, why it is that we're trying to get through to this man, and make him aware of the facts of the case. As it stands right now, he apparently is making a presumption about what happened, and not taking the evidence into account.

M: But, uh, this, this I don't believe to be true, I mean, uh, uh, I think that he's made a very uh, uh, valid, uh, conclusion on this case.

W: All right, I'll point out some other things to you. The object was first seen coming from the south. It went directly over the road, due north, and then resumed its, or reversed its direction of travel, and hovered directly overhead for several minutes. A satellite, as Major Quintanilla pointed out, would have come from the northwest and gone toward the southeast. The object did not do this. It was also, uh, seen to be quite large, it illuminated the road such that their headlights made no difference in the illumination of the area. It was seen traveling directly east, and then was seen for several minutes, as they were traveling directly east, out their left window. This could not possibly have been Venus, nor could it have been a satellite. It was seen flying toward a police officer in Ohio, near the border, in Columbiana County; it was seen flying toward him from the northwest; it went directly overhead and toward the southeast. The officer observed this object coming, as he estimated, about a thousand feet off the road, it came over trees in the distance, went directly down the road, and into the distance. The deputies were following this object, and the officer had expected it, or had expected them to come through the area, and they did; they drove right by him, as the object had flown right overhead. He joined in the pursuit, and followed it with them. At one point afterwards, they saw the object hovering dead still over the road, only a few hundred feet up, at which point, while they watched it, themselves standing still, the object shot straight up in the air and took off again. It was then seen by a fourth policeman, coming toward him from the west: he watched it move



out over a shopping center, and hover. At this point, Venus was to the right of the moon, and the object was to the left of the moon. The object then took off straight up and one of the officers had the impression that it should have left a sonic boom, because of the length and rapidity of its travel. There was a fifth police officer who claimed to see this object following two jet planes into the distance, towards the rising sun. Whether that has anything to do with this or not -- but it is clear that at least three men were directly involved in the sighting of an airborne object which was not, by the details of the observation, if taken into account, the planet Venus. Venus does not come from the northwest, and travel directly overhead; it does not come from the south and go north; neither does a satellite; there are about thirteen points to this sighting --

M: Well there are --

W: -- that are not covered by the explanation.

M: All satellites do not travel with an exact easterly component.

W: No; that is correct. But no satellite goes overhead and comes back again, illuminating the road as bright as day -- and this is confirmed, at least their initial impression of it, by several people who were listening to the radio then -- it does not subtend the entire road, about fifty feet away. It does not have a probe or a projection of some kind coming off the back. It does not make a humming noise.

M: Points like this that you keep bringing up, in my, uh, initial reading of the case, uh, uh, I, statements that I read there, that these people, or a light that was coming over the car, then all of a sudden, these same people that report seeing a projection coming from the object, and all this type stuff --

W: Yes?

L: It seems that they, uh, that as these people were continually interviewed, the story seems to be changing somewhat.

W: Well -- that's quite true! Because the scene was changing; they were driving about eighty miles an hour, and they covered seventy three miles of ground. And it got brighter and they were able to make out more details on the object, which also rules out Venus, because Venus, the relative brightness of Venus, would have gone down as the sky became brighter; this object kept, became more visible. And it was not just a bright object! It was a huge object. And it was not just traveling across the sky, it was coming from south to north, back again, standing dead still for several minutes, then directly east for several minutes, illuminating the road, and this is, this is not the sort of thing, that you can say, uh, binocular vision does not apply here; because the object was within their capacity for binocular vision. And it was seen in so many different directions, and these, this is not due to road bending, because as they pointed out in the transcript of the hearing, which I have right in front of me, they were aware that sometimes when the road bent, the object would appear to go over the road; other times when they were going perfectly straight, the object would swing across the road, and be seen in an entirely different direction. No atmospheric variations, or "noise," as Major Quintanilla calls it, temperature effects in the air, nothing can cause this sort of movement; if it did, the moon would also swing around, due to the same type of process; no astronomical object is exempt from this kind of distortion. And no astronomical object will appear to swing 160° in the sky. Now I have pointed these points out to Major Quintanilla in my letter of May 17; I have tried to communicate with him about it, I have tried to be as patient as I can, I discussed this with him at the end of the hearing in Ohio. He did not hear. He did not attend to what I was trying to tell him, and he has not attended. The fact that Venus was seen in addition to the object, a condition which he himself claims would have shed new light on the case, and which he himself is not seeing, is incredible to me. Now, I'm not asking you for any comment, Lt. Marley, I am simply pointing out my concern over this, and the bases for it. Major Quintanilla has not considered the testimony.

He has accepted the case under an interpretation. His interpretation is, "A light in the sky." This is no more a simple light in the sky than a mushroom cloud is simply a cloud. There are many, many, many features of this which are not covered by a Venus-satellite explanation. Now, that is my position, it's backed up by testimony, tape-recorded testimony, reiteration many times, comments of the witnesses, the radio officers — radio men who were listening to the officers talk on the radio, corroboration by various people who saw the object in different directions such that a rough triangulation can be accomplished. I have pointed this out over and over again to Major Quintanilla, I have asked him to go through each of these points, point by point, and explain why each one of them was not taken into account. He has refused to do this. He says in his letter to me that the satellite went from northwest to southeast, refusing, or ignoring the fact that the object was seen coming from the south going north, coming back, hovering, et cetera et cetera et cetera; it, it is wearying, believe me, to go through this over and over again. The deputies have; I have listened to it over and over again; it has not changed, and I am willing to keep saying it over and over again to Major Quintanilla, to you, to Col. DeGoes, to anyone who will listen. And if people who should be listening will not listen, we are going to find ways to make them listen. It is apparent that Major Quintanilla has not listened to the facts. Now, if that seems a little strong to you, or I seem excited about it, I hope that on reflection you can understand why.

M: Well I mean, uh, uh, in my first reading of the report, that, uh, it seems that every time I see more about the report, there seems to be other, sometimes it comes from the west, sometimes it comes from the south, uh, —

W: Well, which parts of these are you talking about?

M: Well, now I'm not right off, I, uh, don't know for sure because I don't —

W: I don't know what material you have out there, frankly, because Major Quintanilla took absolutely no notes at this hearing. He received approximately three minutes of testimony from one of the four men who were directly involved in it, at first, I don't know what notes he took then, but he could not possibly have gotten very much detail out of it. I, I don't know what material you've seen, other than what's in my report; my report has been reviewed by Dr. Hynek, who agrees that there is only one minor inconsistency in it; that inconsistency has nothing to do with what we are talking about, and he agrees it's a minor one. It has been reviewed by several scientists, newspaper reporters, competent, reflective people in this office and elsewhere who can find nothing inconsistent or out of place or incomplete in the report. Every category of the reporting format section of 200-2 has been fulfilled. There is nothing missing from this report. And there are not inconsistencies. Now, I don't know, I don't have any idea to what you're referring; I'd be very happy to be enlightened, and I mean that sincerely; if you can find anything inconsistent in this.

M: Yes, it's, uh —

W: Who was it said this object came from the west?

M: Well that was, uh, from what I initially read on the report. What, uh, I recall; I haven't studied the report in great detail.

W: What report are you referring to, now?

M: Well, there are, the initial reports that, uh, we have.

W: Initial report from whom, though?

M: That was, uh, performed here.

W: That Major Quintanilla called these people up?

M: Yes.

W: Well, I don't know if he logged the time on it, but Deputy Spaur told me he began the interview, asking what the mirage was that they saw, and that he talked for less than three minutes. And he called back about three days later, and talked for less than two minutes, — if you're, uh, I'd be very curious to know just what is on record there, and why this record has not been supplemented by the material that was presented to Major Quintanilla in the hearing. I have listened to every word of that tape recording. And I can't find anything inconsistent on it. Now, I'd like to point out that I'm not pushing for any kind of conclusion. Major Quintanilla's letter suggests that I'm trying to get him to say they saw a spaceship, which is utterly ridiculous. I'm not interested in whether this was a spaceship or not. I'd be, excited if a spaceship had come down somewhere but this is completely out of the picture. The fact is, that an unidentified airborne object flew over that area, and I, I see no reason why it cannot be admitted. Has the maj — has, is anything in the records out there, does anything in the records have anything to do with the material that the major collected on May 10, in Ravenna?

M: Uh, yes, I, I'm sure it does, I mean I can't, I can't say uh, officially, because I, I don't know, uh, right off the, right off hand.

W: Mm hmm. Is any of that material within your access right now?

M: Uh, no it isn't.

W: Well, I'm sure, I must seem overly excited about this to you, but if you will look at it from my position, being aware of these facts ever since the sighting, over twelve weeks ago, watching Major Quintanilla ignore them, one by one and all together, I think you'll understand that it is something to be very upset about. I'm not asking you to be upset about it; as I say, you're not, uh, I understand your position there.

M: Well, I, uh, uh, I'll be glad to, uh, get your report, 'cause I mean, soon as, uh, Col. DeGoes and them, or, or they, you know, they have it now, they're, have been, uh, looking at it.

W: Yes.

M: And, uh, I'll, I'll eventually see it, to go through it myself, uh, I'll be glad to go through and —

W: Well, I wish you would; I, uh, —

M: And I can see what you have to say.

W: Mm hmm.

M: But, uh, right now, I just don't have any comments, or any, anything at all —

W: Mm hmm.

M: — to say.

W: Quite; quite understandable. Well, I'd like to leave with you, the message that I have not stopped. And NICAP has not stopped, and the people of Portage County are still waiting for an evaluation of what happened there.

M: OK.

W: All right. Thank you for talking. Goodbye. (TERMINATED)

H: Hello, this is Allen Hynek.

W: This is William Weitzel, at NICAP. You've maybe heard of me, I wrote a report on the Fortage Courty, April 17 sighting that I think you've seen.

H: Yes, I've seen that.

W: I've been trying to get in touch with you about the Ft. Smith, Arkansas sightings.

H: What's that?

W: Ft. Smith, Arkansas. Several thousand people saw UFOs for several hours.

H: Ft. Smith Arkansas? What is this about? (Aside) Do we have anything on UFO sightings in Ft. Smith, Arkansas? (Back) Major Quintanilla tells me there is a major there investigating now. What happened? When was this?

W: Well, several thousand people watched four large red lights in the sky, at the corners of an imaginary square, and several other lights, different colors, some steady, some blinking, one casting a beam, darted around from one of the red lights to another, for several hours. And an engineer at a transmitting station saw a football-shaped "dingy white" object hover in the west, then go south, then back to its original position. The two objects flew overhead parallel, then three, that came from the ground straight up, levelled off, and flew overhead due east. But we were told a Captain Ekter was investigating, from Little Rock AFB, had been there since Tuesday.

H: Captain Ekter? I don't know that name.

W: You don't know anything about this?

H: No, but when information is ready, it'll be released at SAFOI in Washington.

W: Well, I wasn't able to get any information from Sara Hunt there, so I tried to call you at Northwestern. I'm sorry to bother you there, but they referred my call to you.

H: Oh, I was wondering how you got to me here. By the way, while I'm still on the line, there's a rumor going around here that Major Keyhoe said I wrote him a letter, in his talk at Cleveland last week. Is that true?

W: No, sir. What might have happened -- I saw the newspaper item on that -- the major said he had, or had seen, a letter you apparently wrote to someone who had asked you some questions about UFOs, and said, in Cleveland, that he had a letter you wrote; the press statement might have indicated that he owned it; but he does not have any letter you wrote him.

H: Oh, is that it. OK. Well, about the Arkansas sightings, you can get the information from SAFOI. Is there anything else you wanted to talk about?

W: No, sir. Since you haven't heard -- there's nothing else.

H: Very well then. Goodbye.

W: Thank you. Goodbye.

2:15 PM 1966 August 19

August 19, 1966 —  
6:45 PM

Hello, Dr. Hynek?

Yes.

This is Bill Weitzel.

Oh yeah, hi, how are you?

Fine, how are you?

Pretty good.

How did things go today?

Oh, reasonably well, reasonably well. We had a lot of cases discussed, so, uh, no comment, no particular comment was made about your call, and I think the, uh, it did give them a chance, however, to, get, jump on the major somewhat (chuckle) to get him to hurry up. About the Ft. Smith sighting.

I'm glad that came up, as an opportunity; killed two birds with one stone.

MSJ

I didn't think it would be wise, however, to bring up the question of whether your report was better than the Air Force's. So I changed the format to the Keyhoe letter instead.

Oh, was that part of the rumor also?

Yes!

Well, I've been trying to track this down with several people, just trying to figure what happened. And no one I've talked to, I've talked with two or three people about it, and two of them were my parents, about that letter —

Yeah.

One thing, my mother called up when the letter arrived at home, and I was at work; and I asked her to read it to me, which she did, over the telephone. No one in the office has revealed any of the contents of that letter, or even that it exists, to anyone on the outside. No one coming in from outside has seen the letter.

Well, I'm not worried about that letter —

No; I'm just giving you background for what might have happened here, and as far as Sara Hunt goes, I, well, we figured it this way: I brought my report out to the Pentagon, to show to her. And I had rather a good talk with her, because I surprised her tremendously by laughing at the idea that UFOs were spaceships. This was in one of their summary reports, and I started chuckling when I read it; I said, "What's all this nonsense about spaceships?" "No one's ever seen a real spaceship, have they?" and this sort of thing. And then I showed her the Ravenna report, and I said, "Now here's something that's highly unusual, but does it look like a spaceship to you?" And she was very upset, because she thought all NICAP people automatically believe in spaceships. So I went through the report with her in a little bit of detail, I didn't show her any of the documents, but just some of the pictures, and I think that she might — now, this sounds fantastic — but it seemed possible to us, the only hypothesis that seemed to work, that either she or somebody at Project Blue Book made up the rumor to see how you would react to it.

[This is a bit strange. It seems to indicate that the Weitzel-Hynek call earlier in the day (see previous page) was a "set-up" between them to make some sort of impact on Quintanilla. Other things of interest occur in this call. MSJ.]

That's always possible, of course. But I don't think we should have to worry about that; I've been more concerned about any statements made in the bulletin about my having not been consulted on this case; and I really feel that I wouldn't want to go any farther than to have it said that it has been learned on good authority, or something like that, or Mrs. Clapp. I've turned over in my mind various things that could happen, and if you publish a direct statement from me, it just isn't going to sit well.

No, of course not. Major Keyhoe and I talked about this again today, in light of what you told me last night, and he's quite willing to leave the letter, and any direct statements you've made to anybody even remotely connected with NICAP, completely out of the picture; although he's very eager to use them.

Yeah, I think the time will come when it could be done more effectively and so forth; right now is not the time, I don't believe.

OK. I got ahold of Carol last night around midnight; she'd been out at a play somewhere; so she read me this over the phone; I copied it down, and I'll read it to you now, if you'd like.

Sure.

(Reads article.)

That was published?

Mm hmmm.

Uh huh. Well, I haven't heard any kickback from that. I would say, that if you pick any of that up, it's not taken out of context; I would like to have included that part about greater scientific attention, and so forth.

OK, I'll underline that.

I always like to have something positive come out of this, not emphasize the negative.

Well, this is one thing Major Keyhoe is very attracted to in your letter, the fact that you were pointing out that the Air Force is taking more, a more scientific approach to things.

This has been my aim and objective; and it's been a long, long struggle; because the military mind is, is, well it's the military mind!

That's a very meaningful tautology.

Yeah. So, uh, it is indeed; it's quite a, tautological redundancy! In any event, I'm depending on you to present this in a way that isn't going to raise too much hell with my relations with the Air Force.

Right. Well, the major is awfully concerned about that, he really is. And he doesn't want to jeopardize anything —

Yeah, well, well, give him my regards, and, now, one of these days, I expect I'll eventually meet him. But, uh, the — (mumble) what the hell I was going to say — Uh, yeah, the Ft. Smith thing; I am anxious to find out more information about that, although this time, I assure you — I sort of laughingly rubbed it in, to Quintanilla, I said, "For God's sake, this time, don't let the Pentagon put anything out until you're damn sure of something" — and I said it very laughingly — and this is the

method, you see; if I came to him and very seriously said, "Now, look, Major, you just can't do this, it's out of the question, blah blah blah," there'd be friction. But I just laughed, and I said, "Let's not," I don't think I said, "go off half cocked," but that was the general idea. And he said, "No," nothing's going to come out of it until they know what it's all about. This is the positive step, you see.

Sure. Did they have any information on it at all, out there?

No. None whatsoever. They're just waiting, they're turning it over to this major, or captain, or whatever he is — he said a major — and they want him to do the full investigation and a report on it. And apparently this time, Major Quintanilla simply doesn't want to get his hands burned at all; he's going to stay out of it. It'll be what the major down there says.

Well — that's OK, if he can get away with that — I don't mean get away, in the sense it's usually intended, but I hope he can keep his hands from getting burned.

Well, I, I, I, I, uh, I can feel sorry for the major, especially since he's suffering from the piles right now!

Oh, really?

He can hardly sit down .., or walk around; and that makes any man nervous and cross. So, I always figure these things, you have to look at the human side.

Certainly. It is a little hard, sometimes, being aware of the human side of other people that are dealing with him.

Well, there comes a time when you have to draw a line, and say, humanity is humanity, but facts are facts. This is true.

Well, I will talk with the major; he's going to, he knew that I was calling you, and he's going to call me soon, either tonight or tomorrow sometime, and I'll communicate your wishes and your intentions, and we will try to put together something that will, matches this. However, of course, our interest in this is trying to do something which will, from your point of view, absolve you from the connection that's been attached.

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Fine, fine; I hope it can be done; I hope it can be done gracefully, I, I would appreciate that very much, because I know that a number of people think that, well, what sort of stupe is this guy, anyway; he's an astronomer, and he allows this? And that's not right; on the other hand, I have ambivalent feelings, I feel a loyalty to the Air Force's interest; well, I feel loyal to the Air Force. But — and, as misguided as some of the efforts have been, I can understand, having been in it, I can understand how the military mind does.

Well, I think things will be a lot better when the military mind has the subject taken off its mind.

*[They are alluding to the coming University study of UFOs here MMS.]*

Oh, gosh — I don't have the slightest idea what university's going to get this; it's certainly not going to be Northwestern —

Yes, Bill Powers was telling me about that. I talked to Jim Bersie, the other day, in Ford's office, and he told me he'd gotten one inquiry that looked hopeful, and he wasn't too sure about that.

Well, I can honestly say they haven't given me a glimmer of information about it. In fact, I don't think Wright field knows. (indistinct) the Pentagon.

Are they going to push up their deadline on this, or what?

Well, I did go so far as to ask Quintanilla today, just when are they going to do something about this? He shrugged his shoulders, and said, "Well, they said some time September first. And that's all I know."

Hum. Well, if you wanted to talk to me again, I'm going to leave some time this weekend, or Monday morning. And I'll write up everything we've talked about and leave it with Major Keyhoe, and also talk to him on the phone. But if you want to talk with me any more about anything, I will be in Pittsburgh; my number is in the directory there; the address you have.

All right, good. If I think of anything I will. Next weekend I'll be down at our observatory in New Mexico, for a couple of weeks of observing, before I can get back to --

Oh! This reminds me of something -- do you know a fellow named Lee Katchen?

Yes.

Well, he told me that he has been talking to you about this Cuernavaca sighting --

Yeah.

-- and he collected some tapes --

Yes, a glow discharge, or arc --

Well, I tend to disagree with him, on the basis of electrical engineering principles; the report he gave me might have been twisted by the observers that were observing the electrical phenomena --

Well, I was going to meet, in Dallas, one of the witnesses, on the way down to Mexico, I'll stop in Dallas, so I'm going to spend a little time with Mr. Harrel, Judy Harrel.

Did you get the tape recordings that Lee sent you?

No; tape recordings that I -- well, obviously, I've got the tape recordings that I made! I did not get any other tapes, no.

Well Lee was worried about this, and he also mailed you a letter --

Well, wait a second; he said he was going to, and I left town; they may very well be at the office.

He wanted to dissuade you from making an unnecessary trip to Cuernavaca, and I think this was the only reason he sent these up.

Well, if I do go down, it'll be more of a vacation. My man at the Corrico station, I might persuade him to drive me down, take in some of the sights, but I don't know yet. I'll listen to the tapes, and see how this guy sounds. I did talk to Mr. Harrel, on the phone yesterday, about this, and he was aware of (indistinct), and he tells me



he's the only one down there who believes it was the arcing; the others down there believe quite otherwise.

Well, I heard some of the tape, and there were some pretty definite descriptions, of a disc-shaped, metallic-looking object; but, as far as the arcing goes, the description I heard, by this fellow who apparently had some scientific training, the arcing was across some points that were a meter or two meters apart. Well, this would involve a several million volt discharge.

Damn right it would. It would not be continuous, either; it would diminish.

Well, no; something would happen; this went on for twenty minutes or a half hour, I think. So —

And it also happened twice. Well, it only went on, I think about five minutes; Judy told me that, uh, she was out in the patio, she saw a light developing, over her left shoulder; it got brighter and brighter and brighter; when it got its brightest, the lights went out. Now, —

That's putting the cart before the horse, isn't it?

Yeah. The, uh, the whole thing — Yeah, this is true, now this is a good point; the lights did not go out until after the thing was quite bright. I'm going to re-check that point. However, the energies involved, are stupendous. I want to see if I can put some numbers to it. Well, in any event, if I do go down there, I will salve my conscience by saying it's not the sole purpose of my visit.

Well, I wanted to ask you if you had heard about another sighting, at Wright-Patterson.

Shoot.

OK. This is from a physicist, named Vasil Uzunoglu.

No sir. I certainly would remember that name.

(Chuckle) I guess you would! We all remember it very well here. I talked with him on the phone —

Did he report it to the Air Force?

Yes, he did. And we have a copy of the form he filled out for the Air Force. With his notations.

Well, it could be very well — what is the date?

August 1st.

Well, as a matter of fact, that explains it, because I got down to the end of June today. I haven't even gotten to the Presque Isle, or whatever it is, Erie thing.

Oh! This is something that we're very curious about. Do you know the report on that?

Yeah, I've got the file right here in my room. It's interesting. And, well, I was going to look at it later on tonight.

Well, we're wondering what they mean by saying that there was urine in the soil samples. We have some pictures of this stuff on the ground, up there, taken by the newspaper people. And it looks like some kind of sticky stuff. Urine, if anything had left it there, would have soaked up in the sand; it wouldn't have shown up in these pictures. But as to what the other material was, I don't know. And I don't know if any samples were taken, to standardize the conditions in the sand up there, anyway.

Well, after all, I suppose even space travellers have to urinate!

(Laughter) This was a humorous conjecture someone around here made, when we talked about it at first, but I never thought it would come out this way! And also, there was no mention in the report about what kind of urine it was; whether it was animal, or what kind of animal, or human, or what. And then the funny tripod markings, we talked to --

I'm looking forward to looking through those files tonight. I'm going out to dinner, be going to that fairly soon. Instead of reading Agatha Christie tonight, I think I'll read the Erie file.

OK. I'll just tell you briefly about this Uzunoglu thing:

Yeah, sure.

In case you don't run across it: (beltway, date, time, 50 feet, hot dog, coolie hat, have pictures here, yellow eye, hovering over housing development)/

Well, in Washington, you'd expect many other people would see it.

Of course; that's very true, but as you know, not many people report these things.

Yeah, this is true. I always tend to think that we underestimate the thing at this point; that it requires quite an inertial threshold to overcome; before people will report in the first place.

That's true. Well, this fellow has a very good scientific background --

Did he have any witnesses?

No, he didn't. This would have to go under "insufficient evidence," I guess!

Well, no, not necessarily; it would have to go under -- the only pressure would be the credibility factor of the witness.

Mm hmm. Well, I was being a little sarcastic there.

Oh; I, yeah.

I've asked them about this at the Pentagon several times; they've received nothing yet; Mrs. Hunt called Andrews AFB, and they said nothing had been reported to them -- but they also said, if something had been reported, and a base officer thought he knew what it was, it would not go on the log out there. Would not be reported any further.

Yeah. And, another thing that I think sometimes happens, when a really out-of-this-

that night thinks, "Aaah, some crackpot called up," and he doesn't pass it on, you see; and this is human nature; people will do that.

Well, one of the men on my subcommittee in Pittsburgh is a former ADC unit director in Pittsburgh, he had two units; and he said a lot of the UFO reports that came to them would go to some local base or would go to Boulder, Colorado, or something like that, the ADC, and would just stay there; would never get to Wright-Patterson at all.

This is true. I've always been impressed by the reports of sightings that are in Flying Saucer Review. Sometimes a shade more spectacular.

Right, well, even the SAB mentioned this in their report — I don't know how much tongue in cheek that was, but it is true, that a lot of spectacular things are reported, that don't seem to fill too much of the Air Force's repository.

Well -- OK, I guess I know where to get in touch with you, and, well, I guess that's it. So have a good weekend.

OK. I did want to ask you one other thing, very briefly — if you have any knowledge, or understanding, or even a whiff of something out there about the Ravenna case. Is it a dead issue, or what?

It was scrupulously not mentioned today.

Ah. I see.

Yes, scrupulously. I avoided it and Quintanilla avoided it!

Well -- OK.

I didn't, I suppose the next action will be to hear from Stanton, I suppose.

Mm hmm. I called his office today, and they said he had written, but they couldn't find a copy of the letter to read to me, so I don't know what it was he said.

If they heard about, if Quintanilla heard about it, he didn't tell me. He's terribly sensitive about it, and, so obviously I'm not going to bring up the subject. And if he doesn't, well — there you are.

Sure. I wish there were a way to push on this, without irritating him, but it's —

I think only time can do that. If we could only figure out a good way for him to save face. That's the old Chinese method, and a damn good one. But I can't see any way right now.

Well -- I won't hold you up any more. Thanks very much for talking, and I hope you enjoy your vacation.

Righto. Bye bye.

P-13 files.

FROM THE RAVENNA RECORD-COURIER: OPINION ON THE RAVENNA CASE & DR. HYNEK

BACKGROUND -- At a speech in Cleveland, Ohio, on August 11, 1966, NICAP's Director, Major Donald E. Keyhoe, USMC (Ret.) gave a speech on UFO's. At this time he revealed NICAP's possession of a letter written by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, the Air Force's UFO consultant, in which Dr. Hynek stated he had not been officially consulted on the Ravenna Case, but that he was aware of the details and had informed the Air Force of his disagreement with the official conclusion.

Dr. Hynek had written his letter to a party in New York, in response to several questions about UFO's. Unknown to Dr. Hynek, the party was a NICAP member, and he forwarded Dr. Hynek's letter to the Washington office, assuming the staff would be interested in some of the comments by the Air Force's scientific consultant. At this time NICAP was working on effecting a revision of the Air Force's conclusion on the Ravenna Case, and Dr. Hynek's statement was of considerable interest; the Chief of Project Blue Book, Major Hector Quintanilla, Jr., had recently stated that Dr. Hynek had passed judgment on that case in agreement with the Air Force. (In an interview with Major Quintanilla, published June 8, following up the sighting, the major said Dr. Hynek's approval was required for all "astronomical" conclusions.)

When Major Keyhoe mentioned this letter in Cleveland, he said, "NICAP has a letter written by Dr. Hynek, stating . . ." The press interpreted this to mean that the letter had been sent to NICAP, and this misinterpretation was involved in an editorial in the Ravenna Record-Courier on August 16. When NICAP became aware of the mistake, a correction was submitted as part of a letter discussing the recent Air Force disposition of the Ravenna Case.

The editorial, and letter, in their entirety, were as follows:

AUGUST 16 -- A MATTER OF TRUST

Either you are going to be scientific or you are not going to be.

The Air Force had been making show of being scientific in its investigation of Unidentified Flying Objects.

It has scientists who consult with it on important reportings of UFO's.

And when a scientist -- a profession which has the highest of standings in our society -- agrees with the Air Force that any given UFO siting (sic) is a hoax, it adds credence and support to the Air Force conclusion.

But now it seems that at least one scientific consultant has been used as a "rubber stamp" on at least one UFO siting (sic), that of two Portage County deputies who followed something they and others thought they saw all the way to Pennsylvania.

The National Investigations Committee for (sic) Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) has been told by the Air Force's chief consultant, Dr. J. Allen Hynek, that he did not concur with its conclusion that the Portage siting (sic) was a satellite or Venus.

This would mean that the Air Force simply used Dr. Hynek's prestige to buttress a conclusion which without it would carry much less weight.

In a civil dealing, this would be fraud.

(Continued)

When done by a branch of our Armed Forces, it is even worse, for it strikes at the very heart of the faith which we must be able to place in our government and the men who man its top positions.

An explanation is in order here -- did the Air Force misstate Dr. Hynek's views on the siting (sic)?

If so the consequences are much greater than simply one single UFO siting (sic).

How could we believe their intelligence reports on Viet Nam?

#### AUGUST 26 -- READER'S OPINION

Dear Sir: Congratulations on your fine editorial of August 16, entitled "A Matter of Trust."

Project Blue Book's actions regarding the April 17 UFO sighting which began in Portage County, have indeed been discouraging. Major Quintanilla, the project chief, has refused to consider many factors which do not agree with his conclusion, that the deputies and other police officers only observed an artificial satellite and the planet, Venus.

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Project Blue Book's scientific consultant, supposedly passes judgment on all astronomical conclusions. Major Quintanilla stated this to your reporter Carol Clapp, in an interview appearing in your paper on June 8. NICAP first became aware that Dr. Hynek had been ignored in this case, when a letter from him to another party was forwarded to NICAP.

His letter was a reply to some direct questions asked by that party. It was this letter to which Major Keyhoe, NICAP's director, referred in a recent speech in Cleveland.

Major Quintanilla told me on Aug. 5, that he had just sent Dr. Hynek the April 17 case files, including a 126-page report I wrote for NICAP, and had asked for his opinion. He was apparently dissatisfied with Dr. Hynek's disagreement; Dr. Hynek has gone on public record as not having been officially consulted.\* This is, indeed, embarrassing to Dr. Hynek, but the facts should be even more embarrassing to Major Quintanilla.

On May 10, in Ravenna, Major Quintanilla received testimony that the UFO had first moved in a northerly direction, then returned south to hover directly overhead. He also heard, several times, that Venus had been observed in addition to the UFO, during the chase. Yet in a letter to me, the major says a satellite went from northwest to southeast, and -- amazingly -- had the officers observed Venus, "new light would have been shed on the case."

This letter was a reply to one I had sent him 11 weeks before, in which I drew a picture of the positions of Venus and the UFO. Furthermore, about 12 other points of testimony were overlooked, in the major's conclusion.

It is ridiculous to have to belabor an obvious fact -- that several police officers observed a huge, bright, nearby airborne object. When it takes the efforts of Cong. William Stanton to bring Major Quintanilla's attention to this fact, it is worse than ridiculous. When the Air Force's own scientific expert is ignored because his opinion threatens an absurd explanation, it is outrageous.

(Continued)

The Air Force's move to turn over the UFO problem to a team of university scientists may correct a basic flaw in their UFO investigative program. But in this instance at least, their handling of the April 17 sighting, a more direct correction is still needed. NICAP is still working, and hoping, for that correction.

William B. Weitzel  
National Investigator (sic)  
Committee on Aerial Phenomena  
(NICAP)

\* Dr. Hynek's statement was published in the August 17 issue of the Record-Courier, in an interview with Carol Clapp. See attachment to separate paper, a NICAP summary on the USAF disposition of the Ravenna Case as of August 23, 1966.

1966 August 23: Disposition of the April 17, 1966 UFO chase, by the USAF

About three weeks ago, Major Hector Quintanilla, Jr., Chief of Project Blue Book, sent the USAF case file, including a 126-page NICAP report on the sighting, to Dr. J. Allen Hynek, the Blue Book scientific consultant (Dr. Hynek was at that time vacationing in Ontario.) (This, the first time Dr. Hynek was asked for an opinion, was fifteen weeks after the UFO sighting.)

Major Quintanilla told this to William Weitzel, NICAP Investigator, who called him on August 5. Major Quintanilla also told Weitzel that, were Dr. Hynek and Colonel DeGoes, the major's superior officer in the Foreign Technology Division, to concur on a re-evaluation, the "satellite-Venus" explanation would be dropped. The major denied having any responsibility for a change of evaluation. Colonel DeGoes told Weitzel on the phone, the same day (August 5), that an objective evaluation would be made.

On August 12, Weitzel called Project Blue Book. The other staff officer, Lieutenant Marley, said he had just talked with Major Quintanilla, and that the case had been re-evaluated with Colonel DeGoes; and that Major Quintanilla was still firm in his conclusion, that the sighting was an observation of an artificial satellite, then Venus. Yet, in statements to the press recently\*, Dr. Hynek claims he disagrees with this conclusion.

It is apparent that Major Quintanilla is ignoring not only Dr. Hynek's professional opinion based on the witnesses' testimony, but the testimony itself. On May 10, in a meeting in Ravenna, Ohio, the major heard from them repeatedly, that the UFO was seen in addition to Venus. Yet, in a letter to Weitzel dated 15 July, the major asked, "I ask you, why didn't any of the witnesses observe Venus which was definitely rising in the southeast? Had such an observance been made, new light would have been shed on the case. . . I ask you why wasn't Venus observed when the planet was definitely there? Without a reference point, Venus would have appeared to perform erratic maneuvers. As the witnesses were traveling toward the southeast how could they have any balancing point of reference to judge the movement of the planet."

Not only did the men testify to seeing Venus, which was near the horizon, they also stated (correctly) that it was to the right of the moon; a good "reference point." Furthermore, much of their travel was due east, at which time the UFO was seen to their left (north), on a course parallel to theirs. In the same letter, moreover, the major states, "the satellite approached the southeast portion of the sky," in describing the initial phase of the sighting. But the witnesses testified that the UFO first came from the south, going due north, then returned to hover directly overhead, and that it hummed and lit up the road brilliantly. Furthermore, the major's letter was a reply to one sent by Weitzel on May 17, in which was included a sketch of the moon-Venus-UFO situation, and all these and several other points from testimony to the major, which contradict his conclusion. The testimony was tape-recorded, and a copy is available for inspection in the NICAP office. In his 15 July letter, the major did not answer any of Weitzel's detailed, numbered points, though he said, "Achieving a scientific and objective explanation of all UFO reports is of great importance to me."

In an interview with reporter Carol Clapp, in the June 8, 1966 RECORD-COURIER (Ravenna, Ohio), Major Quintanilla said Dr. Hynek gives final approval or disapproval to all of Blue Book's astronomical conclusions. Blue Book published its "satellite-Venus" conclusion on April 23, and never consulted Dr. Hynek officially. When Dr. Hynek was finally asked for his opinion, however, based

\* Page 2/ on the complete USAF and NICAP case files, it was pointedly ignored.

From the Ravenna, Ohio RECORD-COURIER; to Carol Clapp; August 17, 1966:

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, chief consultant to the Air Force's Project Blue Book, UFO investigative unit, said today he was not consulted on the Portage County April 17 sighting, and did not concur with the Air Force conclusion of a "satellite and then Venus."

"I have some misgivings about the Air Force conclusion," Dr. Hynek said today. "If the testimony is correct, that of the police officers who said they saw the UFO, I do not concur with the conclusion," the astrophysicist and Director of Dearborn Observatory said. "It all hinges on the reliability of the testimony of the witnesses. I would be the last to doubt the word of a policeman. I do not see how, in the face of the evidence, they saw a satellite." The crucial question, Dr. Hynek indicated, was not the end of the sighting, which may or may not have involved Venus, but what did Deputy Dale Spaur see rise over the treetops?

Dr. Hynek said he has the report prepared by William Weitzel, chairman of the Pittsburgh Subcommittee of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena. "The Air Force is not primarily a scientific investigative body; its primary purpose is to defend the country. This is why I have been recommending that the Air Force give this, the UFO question generally, to a team of scientists for study." Dr. Hynek proposed the measures that have since been adopted by the Air Force's Scientific Advisory Board's recommendations to turn the question of the UFO phenomena over to teams of scientists from universities for detailed scientific study. This plan is now under way.



From the New Bedford, Massachusetts STANDARD-TIMES; to Greg Stone;  
August 21, 1966:

The top Air Force consultant on unidentified flying objects has called for a "put up or shut up" study of the UFO problem. And it looks as if the Air Force is taking notice. Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Chairman of the Astronomy Department of Northwestern University, and Air Force scientific consultant for eighteen years, said, "I'm getting to the point where I'd like to say, 'Let's put up or shut up.' After twenty years of confusion, I'd like to see it cleared up."

"The only way to clear it up," Dr. Hynek said, "is to have scientists take a good look at it -- not only physical scientists, but social scientists, psychologists, sociologists and so forth."

"Instead of having 'UFO' just a synonym for 'crackpot and ridicule', let's make it scientifically respectable, so a person can look at it without being laughed at. Then, if there's nothing to it, which is always likely, well, all right; an honest job has been done in looking at it."

"Way back in 1953, in papers to the Optical Society of America, I already then, guardedly, called for greater scientific attention," Dr. Hynek said. However, when it was noted he was taking a stronger stand now, Dr. Hynek said, "I am now, because the persistence of the phenomena bothers me, the persistence over all these years. You see, back in 1948 I would have just about taken any bets that, well, shucks, by 1952 or 1953 this will be over like any craze. Who thinks of hula hoops today, for instance. But the thing is persistent, not only in this country but in many other countries. So as a social phenomena if nothing else, it's worthy of study. I'm getting impatient with the perpetuation of confusion. I would say we should put as much effort on one of these puzzling cases as we would on a Brinks robbery or a kidnapping case. Let's get to the bottom of it."

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

SEP 30 1966

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

SEP 30 1966

Dear Mr. Stanton:

We refer to your further inquiry regarding the unidentified flying object (UFO) sighting in Portage County, Ohio, on April 17, 1966.

The Air Force has carefully considered your suggestion that the Portage County sighting should be changed to unknown. However, after again reviewing the statements submitted by all of the persons involved, it was determined that the original evaluation should stand.

Statements were received from personnel at the Greater Pittsburgh Airport, Pennsylvania, Chief of Police Buchert, Mantua, Ohio, and Deputy Sheriffs Dale Spaur and Wilbur Neff. We think it should be noted that Sheriff Neff's statement was exactly the same as that of Sheriff Spaur. The other statements did differ in a number of respects; however, this information must also be taken into consideration.

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Sheriff Spaur's statement is purely subjective and impossible to duplicate. He stated that the object was right over the Greater Pittsburgh Airport and that an aircraft had flown directly over the object. When a check was made with the tower operator to determine whether he had observed the object that Sheriff Spaur was reporting, he stated he did not see it. However, he asked the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) radar controller if they could make contact. The FAA controllers could not pick up the object that Sheriff Spaur was reporting. Two days after the observation, the Air Force contacted the radar site at Oakdale Army Installation, Oakdale, Pennsylvania, and asked if they had picked up any unusual radar tracks. Their reply was also negative.

Sheriff Spaur also made the statement that at daybreak, the object disappeared within a matter of two or three seconds

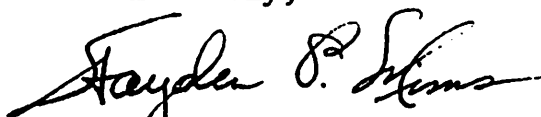
while traveling through a 90-degree arc. If this had been the case, we believe that someone in the vicinity would have heard a sonic boom. There were no reports of sonic booms in Pittsburgh or adjacent areas during that time.

Chief Buchert was involved in the sighting only at the beginning. The Air Force also took into consideration his report, his description of the object, and the photographs which he submitted to the Air Force. His statements regarding the object lead the Air Force to believe that he was observing Venus and that he also tried to photograph that planet.

We hope you will understand that the Air Force is not questioning the integrity of any of the observers; however, considering the information we have received about this experience or event, we must try to explain it in terms of the data available. You may be assured that the Air Force has tried to make an honest evaluation of what transpired with all the information which was collected.

If we may advise you further, please call on us.

Sincerely,



HAYDEN P. MIMS, Colonel, USAF  
Congressional Inquiry Division  
Office of Legislative Liaison

Honorable J. William Stanton

House of Representatives

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

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*dit he?*

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*dit he?*

*Allen Hynes's margin notes. MRSJ*

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Sincerely,  
Hayden P. Mims, Colonel, USAF  
Congressional Inquiry Division  
Office of Legislative Liason

Honorable J. William Stanton  
House of Representatives

COMMENTS ON LETTER SENT SEPTEMBER 30, 1966 FROM COLONEL HAYDEN P. MIMS TO  
CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM STANTON, REGARDING THE APRIL 17, 1966 CHASE OF A LOW-FLYING  
AERIAL OBJECT FROM OHIO TO PENNSYLVANIA:

1. Letter identifies subject as "sighting in Portage County, Ohio," but no reference is made to observations by the deputies in Portage County.
2. The only Portage County observation referred to is by Chief Gerald Buchert, who was 18 miles distant from the object reported by the deputies to be 50 feet directly overhead, then alternately hovering and moving. Buchert's observation was of an object at an elevation of about 30 degrees, which maintained its azimuth while the deputies' object was moving east on Rte. 114. Therefore Buchert's observation is irrelevant as far as disconfirmation of the deputies' sighting goes.
3. ". . . after again reviewing the statements submitted by all of the persons involved. . ." Letter makes no reference to statements in Major Quintanilla's possession by:  
Officer Wayne Huston, East Palestine Police  
Officer Frank Panzanella, Conway Police  
Deputy Sheriff Robert Wilson, Portage County

Huston, listening to radio traffic during the chase, waited for and observed coming toward him from the northwest, the object Spaur and Neff were chasing. He joined in pursuit. Frank Panzanella watched the object approach, and saw it move out over Conway, Pa., to hover, when the three officers arrived and stopped to watch it with him. Wilson was Spaur's radio operator in Ravenna.

Furthermore, testimony was available to Major Quintanilla from the following:

Radio operator Jack Cramer, Salem Police  
Radio operator Orville Scarry, Columbiana County Sheriff's Office  
Radio operator John Bieghey, Rochester Police  
Officer Lonnie Johnson, Salem Police  
Officer Ray Esterly, Salem Police  
Lieutenant Richard Whinnery, Salem Police  
Deputy Sheriff Dave Brothers, Columbiana County  
Officer Henry Kwaitanowski, Economy Borough Police

While these men were not interviewed directly by Major Quintanilla, their testimony, in signed statements, is part of the Blue Book file and was accepted as such from William Weitzel, NICAP, by Colonel Florian A. Holm, Commander, Foreign Technology Division at Wright-Patterson. Furthermore, Major Quintanilla admitted this testimony into the record by sending it to Dr. J. Allen Hynek for review, as part of the Blue Book file. (Letter from Colonel Holm August 3; statement by Major Quintanilla August 5.) Furthermore, a statement by Lieutenant Stephen Paquette, Oakdale Radar Installation, is relevant and was not, likewise, taken into account. (See Point 3C. Paquette's information included in NICAP report)

4. "He stated that the object was right over the Greater Pittsburgh Airport. . ." Not only does this contradict the major's explanation of "Venus," it was not reported by any of the witnesses. They testified they saw the object hovering over the Northern Lights Shopping Center, in Conway, Pennsylvania. The direction of this shopping center is almost 90° from that of GPA.
5. ". . . and that an aircraft had flown directly over the object." Spaur stated the aircraft flew under the object. From the May 10 hearing transcript: ". . . we watched it, it went up, stopped, the airliner went under it, and then it went straight up." Source of over may be the FAA report, which does say this. But this report was written third hand, from Frank Panzanella through John Bieghey. From the second hand point of view, Panzanella stated the airliner went under. This is significant, because the FAA asked the pilot to look underneath his plane. Furthermore, see Point 6.

6. The letter obscures the point that the FAA was involved to the extent of identifying the airliner reported and asking the pilot to look underneath. From the FAA log, it is clear that the FAA did not believe the object to be reported as hovering over GPA.
7. "Spaur's statement is purely subjective and impossible to duplicate." This is extremely vague, pejorative, and counter to fact under any interpretation. Spaur's statement is easy to duplicate. NICAP's report includes a transcript of his May 10 statement to Major Quintanilla. The only way, or sense, in which Spaur's statement can be legitimately called "subjective" is that it resulted from an observation made by a subject. But that is ridiculous. It is definitely not "subjective" if this means, "lacking objective support." Spaur's observation was corroborated by independent observers (see Point 3). The letter contradicts itself in paragraph two: Neff's statement was exactly the same as Spaur's, it says. This reference to Spaur's statement, furthermore, narrows down his testimony to a brief period of observation, the very end of the sighting. What other purpose can this restrictive, selective and pejorative reference serve, than to discredit Spaur's testimony?
8. ". . . after again reviewing. . . it was determined. . ." Who determined? Prior to the time of Congressman Stanton's request, which this letter answers, (or, rather, to which this letter is a reply), Major Quintanilla disclaimed all responsibility for "again reviewing" the case, which he said he had put in the hands of Colonel Stephen DeGoes and Dr. J. Allen Hynek. If these men concurred, he stated, the conclusion would be changed to "unknown." Dr. Hynek was mailed the Blue Book case file, including the 126-page NICAP report, to his vacation home in Canada, and asked for an evaluation. Major Quintanilla stated previously (in an interview published about June 8, 1966) that Dr. Hynek passes final judgment on all "astronomical" conclusions. Dr. Hynek has gone on public record as having examined the entire case file, including the NICAP report, and as disagreeing with the Blue Book conclusion. Who is responsible for this re-evaluation? Is it Colonel Mims?
9. ". . . he asked the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) radar controller if they could make contact." Spaur did not make this request, after seeing the object hover over Conway (or, as Colonel Mims incorrectly states, after seeing it hover over Greater Pittsburgh Airport.) He did ask, while in pursuit, that planes be sent up to observe the object. While watching it hover, Frank Panzanella made a similar request. The deputies and other officers, after this request had been made, heard a voice over their radio (in Panzanella's car) say, "They have it on radar, and they're sending two up." This entire paragraph (number four in the letter) gives an erroneous account -- by sequence, source of testimony, and by fact -- of Spaur's involvement. It is this paragraph, not Spaur's testimony, that is subjective.
10. Oakdale's report is said to have been negative. How relevant is this? The Oakdale UFO investigating officer and radar operator Lieutenant Stephen Paquette, told William Weitzel that he would not have expected Oakdale's radar to respond, considering the object's reported location.
11. ". . . at daybreak, the object disappeared within a matter of two or three seconds while traveling through a 90-degree arc." Thus, the letter implies, lack of a sonic boom means no object was seen. Does this mean Spaur was lying when he testified on May 10 to Major Quintanilla, ". . . it went up, stopped, the airliner went under it, and then it went straight up. Just as straight up as, well, straight up." What other impression can this passage in the letter give, than that Spaur was not telling the truth?

12. "... the Air Force is not questioning the integrity of any of the observers." Why, then, is their testimony discounted? Not only did they tell Major Quintanilla over a dozen things on May 10 that contradict the "satellite -- Venus" conclusion, but many other observers, not mentioned in this letter, but whose testimony Blue Book has in its files (see Point 3), corroborated and added to this testimony. If their integrity is not being questioned in discounting their statements, why are their statements discounted? On May 17, William Weitzel wrote Major Quintanilla a letter asking for specific explanations, for particular parts of testimony, why each part was discounted. There has been no answer to this request. The major's July 15 reply said, in effect, "I have looked at them fairly." His letter asked questions which Weitzel had answered in his May 17 letter, for example, Why was Venus not reported? If it had been reported, "new light would have been shed on the case." Weitzel had quoted from the May 10 transcript, showing that Venus had been reported, and drew a diagram based on a photo and diagram obtained early from Spaur. The diagram, the transcribed comments, the points raised were ignored. See separate document for this list of points contradicting the major's explanation, taken from the transcript. (Not out of context; the transcript and tape, unedited, were also submitted.)
13. Why is this letter written by Colonel Mims? Congressman Stanton had gotten Congressional Inquiry Division letters before, and because of his dissatisfaction with them, wrote his request to Major Quintanilla directly.
14. The importance of the May 10 testimony cannot be minimized. According to Lieutenant Marley, Major Quintanilla's assistant in Project Blue Book, the major prefers to heed only the testimony collected by him on April 17. (Lieutenant Marley's statement made to William Weitzel on August 12.) This early investigation by the major plays a strange role in his evaluation:  
 It lasted less than three minutes, according to Deputy Spaur, and was an interview of Deputy Spaur only.  
 According to former Air Force Community Relations Branch Director, Lt. Col. John Spaulding, the major's early investigation was poorly done; thus Colonel Spaulding had the major go to Ravenna for a more thorough investigation.  
 In Ravenna, on May 10, the major told Spaur the information he collected May 10 was identical with that collected April 17. The Ravenna hearing involved two hours of testimony, presented orally and in writing.  
 A single-spaced typewritten transcript of this testimony is 17 pages long. How can the 2 or 3 minutes of interviewing April 17 outweigh this?
15. GENERAL COMMENT: This letter from Colonel Mims indicates that Blue Book -- specifically, Major Quintanilla and the unknown re-evaluator -- overlooked corroborating testimony resting in Blue Book's files. It focuses on Dale Spaur as the chief witness, and belittles his testimony, with pejorative and erroneous references.

William B. Weitzel, Chairman  
 Pittsburgh Subcommittee, NICAP

October 4, 1966



# THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

TUCSON, ARIZONA 85721

October 5, 1966

INSTITUTE OF ATMOSPHERIC PHYSICS

Dear Dick:

This is for insertion in your file on the Ravenna case.

As part of some further checks on the Ravenna case, I contacted Frank Panzanella this morning. He is no longer with the Conway police. I located him through the Ambridge, Penna., Police Department, where he now works (AC 412 266-3270). They gave me his home phone (266-3187, but I eventually reached him at 869-3338.

To my question concerning his estimate of the total time he had the object under observation, he estimated perhaps 35 minutes, or maybe more. He first sighted, while driving in his patrol car up a hill. His recollection of directions was not good, but he recalled that it lay towards the sunrise. It was not possible to get across the concept of angular size, and he only repeated that in the early phases of his observation it looked "about 35 feet across." (He did later state that it became "smaller than a star" as it moved away, so that permitted me to backtrack to the initial angular size and he was emphatic that at the start it was "much larger than a star". Attempts to get an angular comparison with the moon failed.)

My interrogation was not intended to be very complete, since Weitzel's report covers many details. I sought general confirmation on a few main points. He described it as looking like "half a football" in the early stages, but later, in one of its successive moves, he said it took on more of the appearance of a cigar. At first it was stationary, then it moved away "about 3000 ft". I went briefly through the steps of the final upward acceleration and it was a simplified version of his testimony taped by Weitzel on 4/20/66, so I will not recount it here.

I was particularly concerned with the question of whether there had been any USAF inquiries to him subsequent to the May 18 interview reproduced by Weitzel. He stated that no one from the Air Force had been to see him since the 18th of May. No recent inquiries. Thus any recent Bluebook review of the Ravenna case has not included further interrogation of Panzanella.

This AM I also phoned Bill Weitzel, at Bradford. (AC 814, home phones are 368-5957 and 362-2733. School number is 362-3801, and his own office number is 368-9859.)

Bill summarized for me Col. Hayden P. Mims' letter from the Legislative Liaison office to Rep. Stanton. He indicates that it's full of errors, especially near the terminus. Spaur is said to be watching an object over Greater Pittsburgh Airport (90° off the true direction. And whereas all four officers testified that ~~the aircraft flew under the object~~ the aircraft flew under the object, Mims says Spaur had it going over the aircraft (thus making it agree with the FAA log and setting things up for a phony contradiction). Also says Spaur asked for a radar check, whereas it was actually Panzanella. Another point dealt with failure of the Oakdale Army Base radar to see it. Bill evidently queried the




~~xxxx~~  
Review - p. 2  
Letter of Oct 5, 1966

-2-

radar officer there shortly after the incident and was told by him that an object in the location and altitude of the UFO could not have been seen by their radar.

Sincerely,

  
J.E. McDonald

# Prominent Scientist Defends Portage UFO Sighting

10/5/66 Conclusion of Blue Book Irrational, Arizona Physicist Contends

By CAROL CLAPP

Pointing to the Portage County UFO sighting and "chase" in April as one of the best-documented cases in UFO annals, a prominent atmospheric physicist told a group of scientists at the University of Arizona today that "if the official explanation in this case is not changed in the immediate future, the Air Force will look more absurd than it does now."

Dr. James McDonald, director of the Institute of Atmospheric Physics at the University of Arizona in Tucson, reported to fellow scientists on an intensive six-month study of the UFO phenomenon he has just completed.

The Portage County sighting was one of the key cases

studied by Dr. McDonald, whose investigations took him to Project Blue Book in Dayton several times, to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; to Air Force headquarters in Washington D.C., and to the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) offices in Washington.

He said that as a result of his study, "I'm satisfied that the Air Force has information from its own investigators as well as from the NICAP report prepared by William B. Weitzel which completely rules out the explanation that police officers saw a satellite and then Venus.

"I don't understand how Project Blue Book could possibly let the Portage County

case remain in limbo.

"The fact that Project Blue Book has not changed its conclusion, as Maj. Hector Quintanilla, on July 22, indicated would be done in the face of the evidence, suggests to me that despite all the original flurry in early June to take a fresh look at Blue Book, you can't change their old way of looking at things, and they won't back off," Dr. McDonald charged.

"It's a sad commentary on the Air Force," he added.

"The Air Force has been telling the public and Congress for so long that UFO's are the hallucinations of kooks and crackpots that it (the Air Force) has become a victim of its own propaganda," Dr. McDonald contends.

"What appears to be a scientific problem of the greatest importance has become so discolored and misrepresented that virtually everyone in the country believes that the UFO phenomenon is a bunch of nonsense.

"But an intensive study indicates there is something going on completely beyond our scientific knowledge, and it must be run down."

Dr. McDonald said his six-month study of the UFO phenomenon convinced him that the "most acceptable hypothesis is that they are extraterrestrial," and that "car-buzzing incidents suggest some-

thing in the nature of a reconnaissance operation."

He will not speculate, however, as to the origin of the UFO's or their ultimate motives, determined to deal only with evidence and not "waste time" on speculation.

Dr. McDonald describes his decade-long interest in UFO's as a "low-power check" involving interviews during that period with some 150 observers in the Tucson area.

But several good sightings in November, followed by the Michigan sightings in March, triggered his determination to conduct an intensive investigation.

Dr. McDonald said that when he visited Blue Book headquarters in Dayton this summer, Maj. Quintanilla showed him the original and complete Robertson panel report of 1953 — the report which was later "sanitized" and released in a censored version several weeks ago.

In paragraph 4-B of the original report, Dr. McDonald said, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) insisted that, because there were so many UFO reports and intelligence channels were becoming clogged, a debunking process be put into effect in order to cut down the flow of UFO reports, such as those of July, 1952.

"Thus, the CIA was involved in the whole thing getting off

on the wrong foot. The whole problem went downhill from then on, and now, by admission of officers of the Air Force Foreign Technology Division and its Blue Book personnel, the project is a low-grade, low-priority operation."

As a result of Dr. McDonald's inquiries and his pointing out to FID officers the lack of investigation and scientifically unreasonable conclusions, two majors and a colonel were brought into Project Blue Book this summer to look into the UFO investigative procedures, he said.

Dr. McDonald, after checking a number of sighting reports, including that in Portage County, wrote a long memorandum concerning a number of changes that he felt should be made in the Portage County and other sighting conclusions.

Pleading for a new mode of attack in investigating the phenomenon, Dr. McDonald urged that it be placed in NASA's hands, "where it belongs."

"These are space-oriented scientists, and since by the Air Force's own admission, UFO's have never demonstrated hostility, the matter does not belong with the Air Force but with the NASA group."

Dr. McDonald admitted that he is "pessimistic about any early recognition by scientists at large of the real nature of this problem," because most scien-

tists fear ridicule by their colleagues and accept the authority of the Air Force statements.

As a result of his six-month investigation in which competent critics of the Air Force program are heard from, as well as Air Force representatives. This would differ from the investigation held in April in which these appearing were solely Air Force representatives, Dr. McDonald explained.

"This is the only answer," he believes, and adds that hopefully, such an investigation would result in the UFO investigations being turned over to NASA as the logical group to make a scientific study.

Dr. McDonald said he pointed out to scientific research people at the Air Force in Washington that "NICAP's investigations, in order of magnitude, are more competent than those of the Air Force.

"The Portage County case illustrates that in sharper outline than almost any other case. The Portage County case is outstanding — the Air Force was originally content with a four-minute telephone conversation, while UNICAP prepared a 120-page report including transcripts of 60 hours of testimony."

As proof of his respect for the NICAP report, he left copies with Blue Book and NASA personnel.

Dr. McDonald also assailed the timidity of the scientific community to take a good look at the evidence in the UFO phenomenon.

Dr. McDonald will speak Oct. 19 to the Washington, D. C. Chapter of the American Meteorological Society at the National Academy of Sciences on "The Problem of the UFO."

10/30/66

Statement for "RAVENNA CASE"

NICAP's

This summary of ~~the~~ very thorough investigation ~~of the~~ ~~of the~~ ~~of the~~ of the April, 17, 1966 sightings of an unidentified object near Ravenna, Ohio, is an outstanding contribution to present knowledge of the UFO phenomena. I believe that it will come to be known as one of the most important documents in the now rapidly expanding study of this fascinating scientific problem.

*J E McDonald*  
JEMcDonald

Dick: I've been letting the above slip by without getting at it. Will the above be pertinent for either a cover comment or a remark inside? I could write several pages, of course, and would be glad to try, but perhaps the publication job is now far enough along that a longer Foreword is not feasible. Let me know.

*And if about is n.g. let me know, at least in general, what you think the situation calls for.*

*[This was to be McDonald's brief "cover comment" for the NICAP publication on the case, which publication apparently never occurred. MBS]*

# INVESTIGATE Pacing Of Vehicles, Landings, Reported

## Police Sight UFO Near Indiana Hospital

Two Anderson, Indiana, police officers sighted a highly maneuverable UFO shortly after 2:00 a.m. September 30 after leaving Community Hospital. The incident was investigated by the Anderson NICAP Subcommittee; another NICAP member obtained a copy of the police log on the case.

Just after turning south on Madison Avenue, Officer Dave Lehr noticed an object in the western sky, moving south. He called it to the attention of his partner, Officer Phil Carr, who was driving. Officer Carr pulled the police cruiser to the side of the road and the two men observed the aerial phenomenon.

The UFO resembled a satellite, except that it was below the over-cast, and made a sharp turn to the southwest as they watched. It was a plain white color until it neared a group of trees to the SW; then it suddenly changed appearance to a red flashing light. Shortly afterwards, it hovered, then began descending toward the ground. For about 5 minutes, the UFO seemed to hover, at times rising and descending again.

A very large bluish-white light pulsated around the object as it maneuvered near the trees. Lehr and Carr radioed for another

cruiser to witness the UFO, but about 15 seconds before the second vehicle arrived, the object disappeared behind the trees.

Officers Lehr and Carr said they heard no sound from the UFO, but the head nurse at the hospital reported hearing a humming noise overhead just as the officers were pulling away. The sound lasted for several seconds, then faded away.

In October, most of the sightings seemed confined to the East Coast, from New York to Washington. Strange aerial objects also were observed over eastern Tennessee October 11, and again October 12 followed by a fall of so-called "angel's hair."

## FAA Investigates in Tennessee

Two UFOs, one of which appeared to "shoot out a straight beam of light" toward a plane, were sighted by Maxie J. Fox, a student at East Tennessee State University (ETSU), his mother, Mrs. Burnette S. Fox, and neighbors, at approximately 7:10 p.m., October 11 in Jonesboro, Tennessee, about five miles southwest of Johnson City. This and other reports from the Johnson City area were investigated by David Kammer, Chairman of NICAP's Tennessee Subcommittee, who flew up from Chattanooga to personally interview the witnesses. Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) officials responded to citizens' reports and attempted to verify them.

According to Fox, his mother first called his attention to a cigar-shaped object "about four times as long as a star." After watching it for about two minutes, it lit up brightly and moved quickly toward the north. Fox and his mother then drove to the home of a neighbor. Before Mrs. Melba Jones and her son, Steve, could get outside the object had disappeared. A few moments later, however, two other round objects appeared.

"You could see a bulge on top of them and a bright light came from the bottom," Fox said in his report to Kammer. "It changed from white to red to green. The objects looked like they were playing with each other."

Frightened, Fox called the Tri-Cities Airport and got the FAA approach control. The line was held open for the next two hours.

"We are sending a plane out," Fred Akin, FAA Supervisor, reportedly said. "Watch for it and let us know if you see it."

The witnesses saw the plane approach, but, as it got near the objects, the UFOs "just went out like a light."

"Keep watching," Akin urged, "we're sending another plane."

"We could hear the second plane," Fox wrote, "and this one put its landing lights on and the objects turned off or went out again. A third plane was sent out (actually these planes were coming into Tri-City airport and were rerouted over the area) and we directed the plane by phone toward the objects."

Fox was interrupted by the two ladies, who excitedly said the plane was closely approaching one of the objects, which was now egg-shaped.

"As the plane passed by the object," Fox stated, "we saw the object shoot out a straight beam of light - similar to the way a shooting star looks - toward the plane. The length of the beam of light was about three inches at arm's length. The pilot said he thought he saw a meteor."

Three FAA men, including Akin and John Bolus, investigated. They left word for the witnesses to call back if they sighted anything else unusual.

The NICAP investigator listened to the tapes of the air to ground communications, cleared for him by the FAA, but none of the pilots of the rerouted planes said they saw anything unusual.

The following noon, Mrs. Fox said she, Mrs. Jones, and some neighbors saw a number of silvery objects discharge "some substance in sheets" that broke into spider Web-like strands. Although NICAP is investigating the possibility of migrating spiders, there were some interesting physiological effects reported by Mrs. Fox.

"I caught some of the substance . . . in my hand . . . and it burned my little finger," Mrs. Fox said. "I tried to get it off quick but it was sticky and stuck to everything . . ."

"We all got a little nauseated and we all itched. Everyone itched that came in the yard until it rained Saturday. I got real sick that night and the next morning." (Continued on Page 6, Col. 1)

## The Ravenna Report

After allegedly reviewing all the evidence in the Ravenna case, due to scientific and Congressional pressures, the Air Force stated September 30 that its original evaluation—a satellite and the planet Venus—will stand. Portage County, Ohio sheriffs, other police officers and citizens across the state, had reported a disc-like object with large antenna on the top rear, operating at low level and illuminating the ground on the morning of April 17. The Air Force refusal to re-evaluate the case was reported in a letter to Congressman William Stanton from Colonel Hayden P. Mims, Congressional Inquiry Division, Office of Legislative Liaison.

One of the witnesses, Dale Spaur, received nation-wide publicity in October when an Ohio newspaper revealed that the pressures on him as a result of the sighting had caused a break-up of his marriage and the loss of his job. Spaur was pictured as severely disturbed by the specter of the strange object he saw. His partner in cruiser P-13, Deputy Sheriff Barney Neff, witnessed the UFO at the same time. Most readers have been sympathetic of Spaur's plight, and the fact that he has had emotional problems after the sighting in no way discredits the case. It still remains one of the best-witnessed and most thoroughly investigated cases on record.

Later a college student in Ohio received local headlines by claiming he hoaxed the April 17 witnesses. He described in detail a balloon, batteries, lights and balsa-wood frame gadget which, he claimed, was launched with the help of an unnamed accomplice the night before, powered by "escaping gas." Even Project Blue Book Chief, Major Quintanilla, was quick to discount the alleged hoax as an explanation. Examination of the aerodynamics of the device described by the student is sufficient to discredit his claim. When last seen, the UFO was making a rapid vertical climb after outspeeding police cruisers for over 70 miles.

As announced in the previous issue, NICAP plans to publish the full story in booklet form if enough advance orders are received to justify the costs. As of this writing, we have approximately 600 orders, short of the necessary 1000. Since this reminder will not be received until after the original October 31 deadline, we will extend it another 15 days after mailing of this issue. Then, if 1,000 orders have not been received, all checks will be returned.

In ordering, please write a separate check or money order (please do not combine with membership payments) at \$2.00 each copy for book rate mailing (\$2.50 if you wish first class mailing). Please write "The Ravenna Case" on your check. Enclose a slip with your name and address typed or clearly printed. Until a decision is made on publication, the envelopes are being bundled and stored. Please do not enclose anything other than your check, and your name and address.

## IX. The Hoax Issue.

This was another major diversion to the case, which didn't arise until October of 1966 six months after the event. Kent State University students, named and unnamed, allegedly constructed a weather-balloon-based contraption, which was the source of the whole sighting. Because Spaur, Neff, and Hurton described an "ice-cream cone-shaped" UFO ("i.e. à la a weather-balloon in semi-filled tear-drop form"), this hoax story superficially had some explanatory appeal.

The following documents include the newsclippings, certain letters trying to dig out the primary hoaxer, and the USAF and NICAP analyses. Note that neither the USAF nor NICAP took the claim seriously for several reasons. Unless one assumes that all the police officers were severely deranged vis-a-vis their sensory apparatus, the brightness of the object's light alone rejects any crude hoax involving batteries and auto headlights. Secondly, the motive power and velocity of the object is completely unexplained. Thirdly, the object's low vibratory sound remains a mystery. In the end, the college prank is a college prank, indeed, but not a concrete constructed one.

# PORTAGE UFO SIGHTING

## Constructed 'Saucer' as Prank

### KSU Students Claim They

# A HOAX ?

A group of Kent State University students claim they set up a "hoax" flying saucer chased by Portage County Sheriff's deputies and an East Palestine patrolman April 17, and viewed by a total of four police officers.

This was reported in an exclusive story in the Wooster Daily Record, a sister paper of the Record-Courier, who learned of the claimed prank through the mother of one of the boys.

The youth told this story:

In the spring, a few junior science fiction fans and physics students at Kent State University decided to create a stir on the campus. They secured an old weather balloon, an auto antenna, transistor batteries, a bicycle light and a few miscellaneous hardware items.

With their selected materials and a few tanks of gas, they set to work to make a "UFO" to be let loose over the campus on a Saturday night. They went out into a remote area in

the hills.

But the physics students underestimated the amount of bottled gas needed to float the assembled balloon with its weird cargo.

Twice the students made trips into town for gas. At last, in the small hours of Sunday morning, they accomplished the launching of their lighter-than-air craft on the first attempt.

The late hour ended the hopes of creating a sensation among the student body.

With a feeling of exhilaration, coupled with regret that their masterpiece would go unnoticed, the students loaded empty gas cylinders into their car trunk and went back to town and to sleep.

They felt they had given it the old college try. Even if no one saw the strange contraption, it did get airborne.

About noon the following day, phones began to ring in scattered rooming house throughout the city. "Turn on your radio," the word passed from house to house.

The incredulous pranksters heard from their unobserved object, they believed. The air waves were filled with news of a UFO sighting.

Police officers had followed a UFO into Pennsylvania and then it had risen quickly and disappeared.

Somehow the balloon the boys launched was never discovered, or perhaps someone did find the assorted bits of

plastic, batteries, antenna and bike lights and discounted it as the work of neighbor youngsters.

Back in college, studies put all thoughts of the near failure out of the minds of the balloon launchers, the spokesman claimed.

He said their invention cost \$15.95.

Deputies Dale Spaur and Wilbur Neff first spotted a bright glowing object rise from behind some trees on Rt. 224 near Randolph shortly after 5 a.m. April 17.

They said it moved over their car and hovered, lighting up the ground like "noon," and was as big as a house, then moved off to the east.

On orders from the Sheriff's Dept. the two deputies "pursued" the UFO for 86 miles, crossing into Pennsylvania, in an attempt to identify it.

They said the object seemed

to stop and wait for them on occasion. East Palestine Ptl. Wayne Huston joined the Portage County cruiser in the chase at more than 100 miles per hour and also observed the craft.

As the two police cars neared Conway, Pa., Spaur's auto nearly out of fuel, they pulled into a service station where Conway Ptl. Frank Panzanella was standing and watching the object.

Spaur later described the object as maneuvering beautifully, not fluttering.

Spaur resigned from Sheriff's Dept. Aug. 1, and Huston has left the area to take a job in Seattle, Wash.

Neff is still a special deputy with the department.

Mantua Police Chief Gerald Buchert, who saw a bright glowing object in the southern sky about the time the chase began, attempted to photograph it but was unsuccessful.

It has not been determined whether the object Buchert saw and attempted to photograph was the same object chased by the deputies.

RECORD-COURIER

# UFO Hoax Confessed By Students

By United Press International  
Authorities solved one "flying saucer" mystery and were immediately confronted with another Saturday.

At Wooster, Ohio, the Daily Record reported Friday that an unidentified flying object (UFO) which sent two Portage County deputy sheriffs on an 86-mile chase into Pennsylvania last spring was a hoax.

The Daily Record quoted a "reliable source" as saying the UFO was a device rigged by "a few science fiction fans and physics students at Kent State University" from an old weather balloon, a car radio antenna, a bicycle light and transistor batteries.

\* Meanwhile, police at Tomahawk, Wis., said a mysterious hard metal sphere found in a wooded area of nearby Vilas County Thursday will be sent to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, for examination.

Police said the Wisconsin object "showed the effects of intense heat, as though it had come back through the earth's atmosphere."

Air Force Maj. P. G. Scott of Antigo, Wis., who examined the sphere, said it had printed numerals on the outside and was of a non-magnetic metal  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{8}$  of an inch thick. The sphere, 47 inches in circumference, was "very hard," according to police, and hitting it with a hammer failed to dent it and a file failed to scratch it.

# Mom Wants Son to Tell All on UFO Hoax

The mother of a Kent State University freshman who says he and a group of friends sent up a bogus flying saucer April 17 is making an effort to have him reveal the whole story to the Portage County Sheriff's Dept.

The youth, for whom legal counsel is now being obtained, told the Wooster Daily Record Friday that he and three or four other boys sent up a glorified weather balloon that may have led two Portage County deputies on a wild goose chase all the way to Pittsburgh.

Deputies Dale Spaur and Wilbur Neff first spotted the unidentified flying object near Atwater early on the morning of April 17 and pursued for 86 miles to near Pittsburgh.

His mother told the Record-Courier today that both she and her son felt that he should make a complete account of the incident to the proper public authorities.

"He was directly involved in it," she admitted, adding that

three or four other youths were also involved.

The boy told the Daily Record that last spring, the group decided to create a stir on campus by sending a "UFO" over the area on a busy Saturday night. They secured an old weather balloon, an auto antenna, transistor batteries, a bicycle light, and other hardware items at a cost of \$15.95.

Adding a few tanks of lighter-than-air gas to their collection, they went to a remote area outside of Kent on the night of

April 16 to construct the object and launch it.

However, they found that more gas was needed to get it off the ground, and it wasn't until early Sunday morning (the 17) that the craft left the ground, they said.

Happy that the "UFO" had taken to the air, but regretting that no one would see it, the pranksters returned home and went to bed.

But later on Sunday, they heard numerous radio reports of the UFO that deputies

Spaur, Neff, and an East Palestine patrolman chased for 86 miles. The unbelieving youths felt that their homemade contraption had reached the pages of newspapers all over the country and the air waves of radio and TV stations.

Spaur and Neff first spotted a bright glowing object rise from behind some trees on Rt. 224 near Randolph shortly after 5 a.m. April 17.

They said it moved over their car and hovered, lighting up

the ground like "noon," and was as big as a house, then moved off to the east.

On orders from the Sheriff's Dept., the two men chased the UFO for 86 miles, crossing into Pennsylvania, in an attempt to identify it.

They told investigators that the object seemed to stop and wait for them on occasion when they got behind. East Palestine Patrolman Wayne Huston joined the Portage County cruiser in the chase at more

than 100 miles per hour and also observed the strange craft.

As the two police cars neared Conway, Pa., they pulled into a gas station, Spaur's car nearly out of gas. Conway Patrolman Frank Panzanelia was standing and watching the object.

Mantua Police Chief Gerald Buchert saw a bright object in the southern sky about the time the chase began and attempted to photograph it, but was unsuccessful.

KENT-RAVENNA, OHIO, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1966



1966

April 17

Ohio

(UFO)

WOOSTER, OHIO--A UFO THAT SENT TWO PORTAGE COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFFS ON AN 86-MILE CHASE INTO PENNSYLVANIA LAST SPRING WAS REPORTEDLY RIGGED BY "A FEW SCIENCE FICTION FANS AND PHYSICS STUDENTS AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY."

BUT TWO LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, INCLUDING ONE OF THE DEPUTY SHERIFFS SAID YESTERDAY THEY DID NOT BELIEVE THE EXPLANATION REPORTED BY "A RELIABLE" SOURCE IN THE WOOSTER DAILY RECORD.

THE RECORD SAID THE UFO WAS PUT TOGETHER BY STUDENTS FROM AN OLD WEATHER BALLOON, AUTOMOBILE ANTENNA, BICYCLE LIGHT, TRANSISTOR BATTERIES AND OTHER ITEMS.

THE BALLOON, LAUNCHED WITH BOTTLE COOKING GAS APRIL 17 FROM A HILL NEAR KENT WAS SPOTTED BY AT LEAST FIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS; INCLUDING THE TWO DEPUTY SHERIFFS.

"WIND CURRENTS WEREN'T STRONG ENOUGH ON THAT EARLY SUMMER MORNING TO BLOW A BALLOON THAT FAR," SAID FORMER DEPUTY DALE F. SPAUR. HE AND SPECIAL DEPUTY W. L. NEFF CHASED THE OBJECT AT SPEEDS UP TO A 100 M.P.H. ALMOST TO PITTSBURGH BEFORE THEY RAN OUT OF GASOLINE.

22 lb  
10 pm

MANTUA POLICE CHIEF GERALD B. BUCHER, WHO PHOTOGRAPHED THE OBJECT, SAID HE ALSO DOUBTED THE PRANK EXPLANATION.

THE U.S. AIR FORCE, WHICH INVESTIGATED THE SIGHTING, RULED THE UFO WAS A SATELLITE AND THEN THE PLANET VENUS.

'66  
10/15--TD120PED

Donald D. Wymer, 19

mother corresp for  
Wooster paper

UPI  
Perry  
UPIK

# A Record-Courier Exclusive Interview

# The Story of a Bogus

# 'Saucer'

## Two Balloons, Plus Balsa Frame, Plus Four Headlights . . .

Two used, six-foot weather balloons enclosed in a folding balsa wood frame, then adorned with four auto headlights powered by a six-volt lantern battery, may have been the UFO

**YOUNG WYMER  
FUN-LOVING DREAMER,  
MOM SAYS — PAGE 19**

sighted and chased by police officers April 17, a Kent State University student says.

Donald David Wymer, 19-year-old scholarship student from Albion, near Wooster, in an exclusive interview with the Record-Courier, referred to events he claims took place Saturday, April 16, in the "third person."

But at times he discussed details of the construction of the craft allegedly sent aloft that night in the first person.

Wymer, a pre-law student who plans to switch to a major in electrical engineering, indicated during the interview that he and another student at the university planned and executed the weather balloon launch with the specific purpose of "fooling" people.

Wymer claimed knowledge of

a similar hoax, which he believes was not as well executed as the one at KSU, in the now-famous Michigan "swamp gas" sightings in March. He was not involved in the Michigan escape.

Discussing the building and launching of the weird-looking contraption allegedly sent aloft from an abandoned farm south of the university about 10 p.m. April 16, Wymer, sometimes referring to "they" and sometimes to "I" or "we," gave the following account:

The other student who helped in the planning and building of the craft obtained two used, six-foot weather balloons. A hinged frame was made of balsa, a light wood often used for model airplanes.

Helium gas in small cans was purchased at discount stores under the pretense that it was to be used for blowing up balloons for a fraternity party. The empty cans were later returned for the deposit.

Valves were obtained for the weather balloons, along with four auto lamps, reflectors, a large sheet of plastic and a six-volt lantern battery.

The materials, including the folding balsa frame, were carried unobtrusively across campus to the silo of an abandoned farm, where they were stored

until needed.

The night of April 16, the students inflated the balloons with a mixture of helium and natural gas, placed the two balloons inside the balsa "cage," rigged up the auto lights and battery, and covered the entire contraption with a large sheet of plastic, allowing gas inside the plastic sheet to equalize air pressure.

Total weight of the object was about 22 pounds, Wymer said.

When completed, the contraption gave off a weird-looking glow which sometimes, depending on its movements with air currents, would appear to change from red to orange to white.

The students launched the craft at 10 p.m. and watched it head southeast.

But, Wymer said, they made no attempt to follow it or to wait to see what it would do. Instead, they returned to their dorms, went to bed and "forgot about it."

He explained they feared if they followed it, someone might connect them with the launching.

The next day, he said, they heard radio reports of Deputies Dale Spaur and Wilbur Neff sighting and chasing a UFO from Randolph eastward 86 miles into Pennsylvania.

The two Portage County deputies were joined during the chase by Ptl. Wayne Huston of East Palestine, and the trio then joined Ptl. Frank Panzanello of the Conway, Pa. Police in watching the object, which finally disappeared.

Wymer said he thought at the time it was possible — even probably — that the object the three officers chased and a fourth joined in watching, was their homemade creation.

But, he says, he read no newspaper accounts of the sighting or chase or subsequent news concerning the Portage County UFO. He explained that he "doesn't read newspapers."

Wymer claims all evidence of such a launching was removed from the silo of the abandoned barn. Refusing to divulge the name of the second student allegedly involved in creating the contraption, he said that if the other student were located and asked about it, he would probably disclaim any knowledge of it.

Wymer himself, although urged by his mother, this newspaper and the Sheriff's Dept. to make an official statement to the Sheriff's office, has declined to comment on the alleged balloon launching on the advice of his attorney.

Was the contraption Wymer says was launched the Unidentified Flying Object which the four police officers saw? Or was there, perhaps, another UFO in the area the same night . . . one which has not yet been explained? Or was the UFO the officers saw a "satellite and then Venus" as the Air Force says?

There are these points to be considered:

—Wymer says the students launched the balloon about 10 p.m. and that the contraption drifted southeast. He estimates it could reach an altitude of pos-

sibly 1,500 feet.

—Deputies Spaur and Neff saw a UFO rise over trees in the Randolph area shortly after 5 a.m. Sunday — some seven hours later. Shortly before, Summit County had received a UFO report from a woman in the Akron area — a report that said a strange object was heading east toward Portage County.

—Wymer said it is quite possible the balloons were buffeted about by shifting winds until the craft finally caught an easterly current which carried it along.

—The Air Force says winds up to 2,000 feet were, at the time of the sighting in the area of the chase, blowing from southeast to northwest at 15 miles per hour.

—Spaur and Neff "chased" the object they saw at speeds of more than 100 miles per hour east and southeast for 86 miles, crossing into Pennsylvania.

—Wymer explained the balloons launched "would accelerate faster and faster" due to escaping gas.

—Spaur and Neff described the object he and Neff saw and chased as "maneuvering beautifully and not drifting or tumbling.

—The two deputies described the object that hovered over their car and then sped away to the east as 35 to 45 feet across.

—Wymer said the entire craft he and the other student constructed was approximately seven by 13 feet.

—The deputies described the

object they saw as giving off a bright white glow which "lighted up the ground like noon" around their patrol car when it hovered above.

—Wymer said the balloons launched would have given variable red, orange and white glows.

—Mantua Police Chief Gerald Buchert reported seeing a bright white glowing object to the south about the same time Spaur and Neff reported spotting the UFO. Buchert attempted to photograph it but failed.

Wymer told the Record-Courier that the only reason he revealed the alleged "hoax" attempt to his mother was that "he" had to explain some things. He did not elaborate on what he had to explain.

He added that he planned a more intricate and baffling project for next September in Monterey, Calif. and indicated it may have some commercial value.

Then, he said, he plans to enroll in the winter of 1967 at the University of Melbourne in Australia.

## Young Wymer a Fun-Loving Tinkerer, His Mom Says

Donald Wymer's parents today described him as a fun-loving inventor who called them the night he and a companion reportedly launched their "UFO" and told them to listen to the radio.

"He called us the night that his launching took place and told us that the thing he had been talking about had happened," said Donald's mother, Mrs. Glenn Wymer, West Salem correspondent for the Wooster Daily Record.

Mrs. Wymer said her family had made no secret about the incident in their community "but I don't think that many people believed us."

She told Don Green, Daily Record city editor, her son had obtained some of the materials for his project, including Model A Ford light bulbs, at home.

"He was always talking about the project but I didn't pay much attention to him," she said.

In a motherly, affectionate way, Mrs. Wymer described her son as a screwball always tinkering with things and having things pop out at her from drawers. Donald's science teacher, she said, could verify that

he was quite a tinkerer.

Mrs. Wymer, whose hobby is writing, said Donald was an honor student at Black River High School where he graduated in 1964, and presently has a 3.1-point average at Kent State University despite some trouble with mathematics.

When told that Donald had talked about going to Australia, she said he was a dreamer and might very well go.

She said he never had been in trouble with the law except for arrests for traffic violations.

The Wymers live on a small farm in West Salem, which is a part of Ashland County, but the father works at the Faultless Rubber Co. in Ashland.

2 Other Puzzles

One UFO  
2015 OHIO  
Described as  
Student Hoax

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 16, 1966

CLEVELAND, Oct. 15 (UPI). — Authorities solved one "flying saucer" mystery and were immediately confronted with two others Saturday.

At Wooster, O., the Daily Record reported Friday that an unidentified flying object (UFO) which sent two Portage county deputy sheriffs on an 86-mile chase into Pennsylvania last spring was a hoax.

EXPLANATION DOUBTED

The Daily Record quoted a "reliable source" as saying the UFO was a device rigged by "a few science fiction fans and physics students at Kent State University" from an old weather balloon, a car radio antenna, bicycle light and transistor batteries.

Former Deputy Sheriff Dale F. Spaur doubted the Wooster Daily Record's explanation. He and Special Deputy W. L. Neid chased at speeds up to 100 miles an hour. Wind currents weren't strong enough that morning to blow a balloon that far, Spaur said.

Meanwhile, police at Tomahawk, Wis., said a mysterious metal sphere found in a wooded area of nearby Vilas county Thursday will be sent to Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, O., for examination.

EXAMINES SPHERE

Police said the Wisconsin object "showed the effects of intense heat, as though it had come back through the earth's atmosphere."

Air Force Maj. P. G. Scott, Antigo, Wis., who examined the sphere, said it had printed numerals on the outside and was of a nonmagnetic metal one-fourth to three-eighths of an inch thick.

At Wanaque, Passaic county, N. J., three persons reported seeing an unidentified flying object hovering over the town reservoir—scene of countless similar sightings during the last two years.

On Monday night five persons, four of them policemen, reported seeing a UFO near the reservoir.

KSU Students Claim They Rigged UFO in Portage

By Press State Service

WOOSTER—A group of Kent State University physics students have reported they rigged an unidentified flying object that sent a Portage County sheriff's deputy on an 86-mile chase into Pennsylvania Apr. 17.

The students revealed the prank to the Wooster Record which printed their story yesterday. The students, who were not named, indicated they admitted the prank because of a story printed this past week in some newspapers that the flying saucer chase had ruined the life of the deputy sheriff.

The Wooster Record story said the students constructed the UFO using a weather balloon and launched it with bottled cooking gas. They attached an automobile antenna, bicycle light, transistor batteries and other items.

The students claim they launched the balloon from a hill near Kent Apr. 17. Deputy Spaur said he first saw the object as he drove on Rt. 224 between Atwater and Randolph in Portage County.

But the deputy, Dale F. Spaur, who lives in Solon now, said he doubted the story of the students. He contended wind currents were not strong enough to blow the balloon 86 miles. He and another deputy had chased the object at speeds up to 100 miles per hour.

The Air Force, which investigated Spaur's claim, ruled that he saw a satellite and then the planet Venus that night.

Pa

# NICAP, Air Force Doubt Validity of Saucer Hoax

10/19/66

By CAROL CLAPP

"Show us."

This is the skeptical attitude of both the Air Force and the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) concerning a Kent State University student's claimed "hoax" in the April 17 UFO sighting and chase here.

Both the Air Force's Project Blue Book, the official UFO investigative unit, and NICAP, which conducted an extensive investigation of the Portage County sighting, expressed serious doubts as to whether an object such as that described by KSU student Donald D. Wymer could or would operate as he said it did.

Spokesmen for both groups indicated that they do not consider the "hoax" claim of Wymer as sufficiently plausible to warrant investigation. Both said they don't believe such an object was what the police officers saw and chased.

"Too many doubtful technical points" the two agencies seemed to agree.

But, both urged Wymer and his friend who allegedly perpetrated the hoax to show how he did it.

"If his claim is true, he should build another and show people how it operated," NICAP Assistant Director Richard Hall

said in Washington, D. C.

"Send us the exact specifications - we'll take it to our balloon research people and see if they can duplicate it," Major Boyce Smith, meteorologist for the Foreign Technology Division of the Air Force at Wright-Patterson Airbase in Dayton urged Wymer.

Maj. Hector Quintanilla, head of Project Blue Book, based in the FTD at Wright-Patterson, echoed Maj. Smith's invitation.

"We won't be interviewing him, but if he wants to send us the exact specifications of all the equipment used in the object, we'll be glad to try to duplicate it and check it out," Maj. Quintanilla said.

He added that he could prom-

ise that he would bring no charges against Wymer or his as yet unidentified friend. "We don't do that," he said.

Maj. Smith and Maj. Quintanilla, after hearing Wymer's account in the Record-Courier of how the object was constructed, said "there are a lot of technical points that need clarification and confirmation."

They questioned, for example, whether two six-foot weather balloons could lift and carry 22 pounds of weight aloft, as Wymer said they did.

They also questioned:

... Can a six-volt lantern battery power four auto headlamps, and if so, for how long?

... If "escaping gas" caused it to accelerate, how long could it remain airborne?

They also pointed out that such an object could not travel against the wind unless it had a means of propulsion, and expressed doubt that "escaping gas" would increase its speed at all.

"You can't make balloons go 100 miles per hour," Maj. Smith emphasized.

Hall, at NICAP headquarters in Washington, said "we consider this hoax claim so unlikely we would hesitate to even dignify it by trying to refute it. We are very suspicious of it.

"It is not unprecedented to have 'confessions of a hoax' made some considerable time after a UFO sighting," he added.

"I would challenge the young man to reproduce it."

Is it possible that an object such as this could be what the police officers saw and chased?

Hall says NICAP does not believe so, because of the reported speed (more than 100 miles per hour) and the distance of the chase (86 miles), as well as other descriptive points in the police officers' testimony:

NICAP in Washington does not intend to investigate the hoax claim of Wymer because they do consider it as a serious possibility, Hall said. He added that the investigator who handled the Portage County sighting investigation, William Weitzel, of Pittsburgh, may want to talk with Wymer.

## Sightings in Midwest

In the early morning of the 24th of September, several strange objects were observed by officials and residents in the Wisconsin-Illinois-Indiana area of the U. S. At 5:20 A.M., on the 24th, Officer Richard Koffel of Lisbon, Ohio, claimed he watched a glowing, disc-shaped object which was round, flat on the bottom and with a "little peak" at the top, over the Lisbon area. Koffel said the object was much larger than the full moon. He notified the sheriff's office then watched as the object appeared to change shape to a long shaft, like an elongated teardrop. It remained in the east until sunrise, dimming as the sky brightened.

At Chicago, at 4:00 and 4:30 A.M., policemen in northwest and north shore suburbs were alerted to watch an object over Lake Michigan, northeast of Chicago. James Murray, a Chicago American reporter, saw the object between 4:20 and 4:25 A.M., while driving in Prospect Heights. He described a large, black object with a white ring encircling it, and estimated its altitude as about 4,000 feet. The object made no noise and was headed east.

Four airline pilots reported to control at O'Hare Airport that they saw a brilliant light at an estimated 4,000 feet altitude about 100 miles east-northeast of Chicago.

Policemen Al Largo and Clyde Fazebaker of Kenilworth spotted a "huge ball, black in the center and surrounded by a white smoke ring" at 4:20 A.M.

Terry Zool, police dispatcher near Benton Harbor, Michigan, reported that 8 persons claimed they saw a "red and green and blue flashing object" in the sky about 11:35 P.M., on the 23rd of September.

At Anderson, Indiana, at about 4 A.M. in the early morning of the 24th, a security officer at Anderson College reported seeing a round, light blue object hovering over the football field for about 18 minutes. Fox said he attempted to shine his flashlight on the thing but that it would not reflect light. Others in the Anderson area reported seeing an object about the size of a basketball, surrounded by a blue-white haze.

Other points at which a bluish-white object was observed were Charlestown, Columbus, Shelbyville, Franklin, Portland, Redkey, Richmond, Anderson and Indianapolis, Indiana.

At Wallops Island, Virginia, a space experiment which involved a huge, multi-colored cloud was offered as a possible explanation for many of the sightings. The time of the experiment was 5:13 A.M., EDT and the clouds, which remained visible at heights of 310 and 570 miles above the earth for 45 minutes COULD have been responsible for at least a good portion of the phenomena observed throughout the midwest. The objects seen in the middle west could have been the rocket and

payload as it was released during the early stages of the experiment, except in those instances in which the time element does not jibe.

The possible connection between the Wallops Island experiment and the sightings in the midwest does not become immediately apparent unless one is familiar with the strange appearances of clouds or contrails under certain atmospheric conditions. In 1958 several hundred qualified technical and scientific people at Holloman AFB, White Sands and Alamogordo, including Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzen, were fooled by an F-102 coming in for a landing at Holloman. The craft was pulling a short contrail and the rotating amber beacon on the top of the craft gave an eerie effect. Only after interviewing pilots who were on the runway awaiting the plane's arrival, was the mystery solved. It had appeared as an amber-colored cigar-shaped object in the western sky, replete with port-holes.

## Ravenna Ohio Sighting Labeled "Hoax"

The case in Ohio in which Deputy Sheriff Dale Spaur and other law enforcement officers (April 17, 1966) chased a strange object at speeds up to 100 miles per hour, has been labelled a hoax by the Wooster, Ohio Daily Record. UPI circulated the story on the 13th of October that "a reliable source" had stated that the UFO was a device rigged by a "few science fiction fans and physics students at Kent State University" from an old weather balloon, a car radio antenna, a bicycle light and transistor batteries.

If any member has any further information on this, it would be helpful. Spaur commented that the winds aloft were not strong enough to have wafted the object at the high speed it attained.

It is to be hoped that some kind of regulation will be put into effect which will deter our "leaders of tomorrow" from such high jinks as the Daily Record claims took place last April 17th. The University of Colorado will have a rough enough time without having to contend with practical jokers.

See Page 40 of the 28 October 1966 issue of LIFE Magazine for an outstanding color photo of a top-shaped UAO snapped by an American executive while in Brazil.

## Lights Over Carolinas

The crew of the Charleston, S.C. harbor pilot boat and a harbor pilot reported seeing brilliant lights on the night of the 25th of July which they estimated to be traveling at 14,000 miles per hour.

The Air Force, police and coast guard received scores of calls about the lights shortly before 8 P.M. The Federal Aviation Agency announced that USAF jets

operating in the area may have been seen moving away from viewers, giving the effect described.

However, Captain John W. Gardner, a member of the Charleston Branch of the Pilot's Association, and Capt. Arthur Hogg, Master of the boat Charleston Pilot, and members of the crew, were in jetties on their way out to sea when they saw the lights.

Gardner said they watched the lights for 8 to 10 minutes. Using binoculars, he made a fix on the jetties and the object they were observing which he estimated to be 100 feet in diameter and hovering. "It was over the water between the jetties and Folly Beach," he told reporters, and said that the lights were so bright that he and his companions could make out the round shape of the object.

Hogg said the lights "twinkled," and when the object left it "took off, straight up," and "must have been doing 14,000 miles per hour." Both men declared the object could not have been a flare.

Objects which looked "almost like stars" but which were traveling too fast to be stars and changing colors from blue to red to white were reported by police at High Point, North Carolina. Other reports came from Asheboro, Ramsuer, Greensboro and Winston-Salem. Police in Asheboro and Ramsuer notified officials in other cities that the objects were headed in their direction and consequently many sightings of the fast-moving "lights" were made.

A spokesman at the Marine Corps Air Station at Beaufort, S. C., suggested on the 26th that flares used in Sidewinder missile firing practice by jet aircraft might account for the sightings. One military source told the Twin City Sentinel that it was unlikely that any of the flares would have been dropped that far inland. He refused to give his name.

## Wisconsin Officers Watch UAO

Officers in Chippewa and Pepin County and police in Drand, Wisconsin, reported observing an egg-shaped object at about 10 P.M. on the 7th of September. The first sighting took place in Pepin County and the information was relayed to Chippewa authorities. The Sheriff's office there called reserve officer Howard Gibbs who watched the object through binoculars and a 25-power telescope. The object was on the horizon above the tree tops and they watched it for about one half hour. The body of the object was white and it carried red and green lights which appeared much more brilliant than those of a normal airplane. It came from the southwest, moved across the sky to the northeast, turned west, then back to the southwest, thus making a looping maneuver over the area. This spectacle was watched from Pepin County by officers there and also by police officers in Durand.

From the Record - Courier, Ravenna, Ohio, Friday, October 14, 1966:

PORTAGE UFO SIGHTING A HOAX? (Banner headline in blue ink)  
KSU Students Claim They Constructed 'Saucer' as Prank (No byline)

A group of Kent State University students claim they set up a "hoax" flying saucer chased by Portage County Sheriff's deputies and an East Palestine patrolman April 17, and viewed by a total of four police officers.

This was reported in an exclusive story in the Wooster Daily Record, a sister paper of the Record-Courier, who learned of the claimed prank through the mother of one of the boys.

The youth told this story:

In the spring, a few junior science fiction fans and physics students at Kent State University decided to create a stir on the campus. They secured an old weather balloon, an auto antenna, transistor batteries, a bicycle light and a few miscellaneous hardware items.

With their selected materials and a few tanks of gas, they set to work to make a "UFO" to be let loose over the campus on a Saturday night. They went out into a remote area in the hills.

but the physics students underestimated the amount of bottled gas needed to float the assembled balloon with its wierd cargo.

Twice the students made trips into town for gas. At last, in the small hours of Sunday morning, they accomplished the launching of their lighter-than-air craft on the first attempt.

The late hour ended the hopes of creating a sensation among the student body.

With a feeling of exhilaration, coupled with regret that their masterpiece would go unnoticed, the students loaded empty gas cylinders into their car trunk and went back to town and to sleep.

They felt they had given it the old college try. Even if no one saw the strange contraption, it did get airborne.

About noon the following day, phones began to ring in scattered rooming house (sic) throughout the city. "Turn on your radio," the word passed from house to house.

The incredulous pranksters heard from their unobserved object, they believed. The air waves were filled with news of a UFO sighting.

Police officers had followed a UFO into Pennsylvania and then it had risen quickly and disappeared.

Somehow the balloon the boys launched was never discovered, or perhaps someone did find the assorted bits of plastic, batteries, antenna and bike lights and discounted it as the work of neighbor youngsters.

Back in college, studies put all thoughts of the near failure out of the minds of the balloon launchers, the spokesman claimed.

He said their invention cost \$15.95.

Deputies Spaur and Wilbur Neff first spotted a bright glowing object rise from behind some trees on Rt. 224 near Randolph shortly after 5 a.m. April 17.

They said it moved over their car and hovered, lighting up the ground like "noon" and was as big as a house, then moved off to the east.

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On orders from the Sheriff's Dept., the two deputies "pursued" the UFO for 86 miles, crossing into Pennsylvania, in an attempt to identify it.

They said the object seemed to stop and wait for them on occasion. East Palestine Ptl. Wayne Huston joined the Portage County cruiser in the chase at more than 100 miles per hour and also observed the craft.

As the two police cars neared Conway, Pa., Spaur's auto nearly out of fuel, they pulled into a service station where Conway Ptl. Frank Panzanella was standing and watching the object.

Spaur later described the object as maneuvering beautifully, not fluttering.

Spaur resigned from Sheriff's Dept. Aug. 1, and Huston has left the area to take a job in Seattle, Wash.

Neff is still a special deputy with the department.

Mantua Police Chief Gerald Buchert, who saw a bright glowing object in the southern sky about the time the chase began, attempted to photograph it but was unsuccessful.

It has not been determined whether the object Buchert saw and attempted to photograph was the same object chased by the deputies.

###

'We Didn't See a Balloon,' Say Spaur, Chief Buchert (10/14, no byline)

Two of the men most directly involved in the April 17 sighting of the unidentified flying object over Portage County today said that they doubted the story that several Kent State students set off a lighter-than-air craft which was actually the UFO.

Mantua Police Chief Gerald Buchert, who photographed the object, and former Portage County Sheriff's Deputy Dale Spaur, one of two men who chased it almost to Pittsburgh, both told the Record - Courier they find it hard to believe the report.

"In three days, it will be six months since I saw that thing, and I never heard this one," he said. "But I don't think it was a balloon."

He noted that he didn't feel the wind currents were strong enough on that early Sunday morning to blow a balloon from outside Kent to near Atwater where he first saw the strange object, a distance of approximately 20 miles.

"The Air Force investigators checked the wind that night and found that it was only about three and one-half miles in velocity," remarked Spaur.

"Nothing which was floating free could travel that far and that fast."

Buchert, when told of the new development in the Portage County UFO sighting, said once again that he "doesn't know what it was."

When asked if the object resembled a balloon when he photographed it, Buchert said that he couldn't say for sure.

"I don't know whether to accept this or not," he said, "but I have my doubts personally."

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October 20, 1966

From the Record - Courier, Ravenna, Ohio, October 15, 1966:

Mom Wants Son to Tell All on UFO Hoax (No byline)

The mother of a Kent State University freshman who says he and a group of friends sent up a bogus flying saucer April 17 is making an effort to have him reveal the whole story to the Portage County Sheriff's Dept.

The youth, for whom legal counsel is now being obtained, told the Wooster Daily Record Friday that he and three or four other boys sent up a glorified weather balloon that may have led two Portage County deputies on a wild goose chase all the way to Pittsburgh.

Deputies Dale Spaur and Wilbur Neff first spotted the unidentified flying object near Atwater early on the morning of April 17 and pursued for 86 miles to near Pittsburgh.

His mother told the Record-Courier today that both she and her son felt that he should make a complete account of the incident to the proper public authorities.

"He was directly involved in it," she admitted, adding that three or four other youths were also involved.

The boy told the Daily Record that last spring, the group decided to create a stir on campus by sending a "UFO" over the area on a busy Saturday night. They secured an old weather balloon, an auto antenna, transistor batteries, a bicycle light, and other hardware items at a cost of \$15.95.

Adding a few tanks of lighter-than-air gas to their collection, they went to a remote area outside of Kent on the night of April 16 to construct the object and launch it.

However, they found that more gas was needed to get it off the ground, and it wasn't until early Sunday morning (the 17th) that the craft left the ground, they said.

Happy that the "UFO" had taken to the air, but regretting that no one would see it, the pranksters returned home and went to bed.

But later on Sunday, they heard numerous radio reports of the UFO that deputies Spaur, Neff, and an East Palestine patrolman chased for 86 miles. The unbelieving youths felt that their homemade contraption had reached the pages of newspapers all over the country and the air waves of radio and TV stations.

Spaur and Neff first spotted a bright glowing object rise from behind some trees on Rt. 224 near Randolph shortly after 5 a.m. April 17.

They said it moved over their car and hovered, lighting up the ground like "noon," and was as big as a house, then moved off to the east.

On orders from the Sheriff's Dept., the two men chased the UFO for 86 miles, crossing into Pennsylvania, in an attempt to identify it.

They told investigators that the object seemed to stop and wait for them on occasion when they got behind. East Palestine Patrolman Wayne Huston joined the Portage County cruiser in the chase at more than 100 miles per hour and also observed the strange craft.

As the two police cars neared Conway, Pa., they pulled into a gas station, Spaur's car nearly out of gas. Conway Patrolman Frank Panzanella was standing and watching the object.

Mantua Police Chief Gerald Buchert saw a bright object in the southern sky about the time the chase began and attempted to photograph it, but was unsuccessful.

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1019 W Spruce St.  
Ravenna,  
Ohio

C; Weitzer ✓  
McD ✓

Dear Sirs,

On November 1, 1966 I sent a letter to the "Kent Stater", the student paper of Kent State University, concerning the alleged hoax perpetrated by one of the students. I am sending you a copy of the letter and the editorial that appeared in the paper.

The reason that I wrote the letter is because I know for a fact that Mr. Wymers did not even send up his "saucer" balloon. He and a friend of mine, by the name of Tom Greeley, had planned to send this balloon up but they decided not to.

After the story of this alleged hoax broke in the local paper Wymers went to Greeley to ask him to agree with his story. Greeley told Wymers that if his name was printed in the paper in connection with that story he would sue.

If you are at all interested in this story it can be verified, but Greeley has told me that he won't let his name be used because he doesn't want

to get involved in anything.

The account is sketchy but if you are interested you can contact me and I could fill you in.

I hope I have been of some help.

Yours truly,  
Larry Shank

# Hoax a Hoax

A letter on today's Stater editorial page expresses an opinion which has been rumored around campus for the last week; that Portage County's great flying saucer hoax is just that—a hoax!

The letter writer, whose name has been withheld on request, questions the saucer's credibility, and gives several reasons for his dis-belief. He claims in essence that what patrolmen Neff and Spaur saw and chased April 17 could not have been the "saucer" Kent student David Wymer reportedly sent aloft that spring night.

The writer, who seems to have researched the matter, claims the head of the UFO study for the Air Force immediately discounted the possibility of the object being a balloon. The "light" deputies chased at speeds in excess of 100 mph could not have been a weather balloon, he contends, as the wind at that time was blowing at 15 mph in the opposite direction.

"Name Withheld" asks why Mr. Wymer has refused to reveal his partner's name; why he has refused to send the Air Force his plans for the "saucer," and why he has refused

to talk to anyone but newspaper reporters.

Like the letter writer, we feel these questions should be answered lest Mr. Wymer's story forever remain on uncertainty. Mr. Wymer should make his invention known, clearing up the clouds surrounding the case. We feel the exact facts should be made public, and are offering Mr. Wymer use of this medium to explain his "saucer" to everyone. Was your story a hoax, Mr. Wymer? We and others would be interested to find out.

DKS

JAT

Kent State University

"Kent Stater"

Nov. 1, 1966

Editor's Mailbox

## Air Force Denies UFO; Is Confession Real Hoax?

Editor, The Stater:

I would like to ask the administration a question.

Why was Lowry's mailbox (which has been there for fifty-four years) removed? I understand that the reason given was that some of the mailboxes on campus would now be inaccessible. If Lowry's mailbox was taken, why wasn't Moulton's mailbox taken, too? Or, for that matter, the one in front of the Administration building?

THE ANSWER is that Hilltop Drive, the street where these buildings are located, is not affected by the new driving regulations. Hilltop Drive is a one-way street starting on South Lincoln and ending at Main Street.

Therefore, I come back to my original question.

Why was Lowry's mailbox removed?  
Barbara Hartenberg

Editor, The Stater:

Upon reading a letter by Dick Grimmert, special assistant to the President of the Student Body, which appeared in October 25th's issue, I would like to know why he is permitted to hold this office? If I am not mistaken, the job of the student government is to benefit the student and not slander them. This is what I feel Grimmert did.

IT SEEMS only natural that the Sailing Club, a student organization, should seek help from the Student Activities Board. Why then should an officer of student government condemn those who suffer from the

government's own breakdown in communications?

Why should the Special Assistant to the President spend his time writing ridiculous letters of ridicule and not spend his time assisting in the developing of better communications between the student government and the students? Terry L. Wilson

Editor, The Stater:

A few weeks ago you published a big expose on how a Kent State student pulled off a big "flying saucer hoax" and a subsequent cartoon on the same subject that leaves a person with the feeling that the Stater has swallowed this story.

If the Stater would have looked a little they could have followed up this story with one on how a clever student made the "local yokel" newspaper swallow a story that has no basis in fact.

If anyone would have bothered to take the time to check out the story they would have found that Air Force flatly denied that it was possible for such a balloon to maneuver in the way deputies Spaur and Neff reported.

The object the deputies chased exceeded speeds of 100 m.p.h., it hovered, and maneuvered around the patrol car. On that night the wind was blowing at 15 m.p.h. in the opposite direction.

Major Hector Quintella, head of the UFO study for the Air Force said that the idea of the object being a balloon was looked into when the sighting was first made and was immediately discounted

as being impossible.

Although Mr. Mymer may be sincere about having sent his "saucer" up a few things still bother me:

1) Why has he refused to reveal the name of his helper? He says it is because his helper would deny any knowledge of the incident. Strange?

2) Why has he refused to send the Air Force his plans for his "saucer" when the Air Force requested them so that they could check his claims out?

3) Why does he refuse to talk to anyone but a few newspaper reporters?

Has anyone ever stopped to think that maybe "the hoax" is in itself a hoax?

January 4, 1967

Mr. Larry Shank  
1014 W. Spruce Street  
Ravenna, Ohio

Dear Mr. Shank:

Thank you for writing to us about your knowledge of the alleged hoax connected with the Portage County UFO sighting.

I am referring your letter to the chairman of our Pittsburgh Subcommittee, who investigated the case originally, and he may have additional questions for you.

Sincerely,

Richard Hall  
Assistant Director

cc: W. B. Weitzel

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

JAN 23 1967

ON AERIAL PHENOMENA

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES:  
1536 CONNECTICUT AVE., N.W.

TELEPHONE: (202) 667-9434

PENNSYLVANIA UNIT #1  
45 Congress Street  
Bradford, Pa. 16701

MAJOR DONALD E. KEYHOE  
USMC (RET.) DIRECTOR

RICHARD H. HALL  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

January 18, 1967

Mr. Larry Shank  
1014 W. Spruce St.  
Ravenna, Ohio

Dear Mr. Shank:

Richard Hall has forwarded to me your letter with information about the alleged hoax concerning the April 17 Portage County UFO sighting. I have read this, and your letter and the editorial in the Kent Stater, with much interest.

As the NICAP investigator for the Portage County sighting, I would indeed be glad to accept your offer of information on the hoax claim of David Wymer. It would be most helpful to have verification that his balloon apparatus was not launched. NICAP does not accept the theory that such an event could have accounted for the UFO sighting, chiefly because of the wind velocity and direction that morning; but definite information that Mr. Wymer's plan never got off the ground, so to speak, would reduce to zero any obfuscation his story has produced.

From your letter it seems that Tom Greeley is reluctant to sign his name to any statement that Mr. Wymer and he decided not to send up the balloon. I can understand his reluctance to "get involved," as you put it. Let me assure you, and him, that if he signed such a statement and requested anonymity, his name would not be used. What NICAP would say would be something like, "NICAP has a signed statement from Mr. Wymer's potential collaborator to the effect that the hoax plan was called off, and the balloon never launched." Mr. Greeley's name need not be quoted.

For his account to have any weight in the rebuttal to Mr. Wymer's claim, however, it would be necessary for him to sign the statement. From that point on, NICAP's word that the statement had been signed, without identifying the signer, would be sufficient. The same condition applies, of course, in your case.

Please write as soon as you can, and fill me in on the details of what you know about the hoax plan. I have a number of questions I would like to ask, but you may answer them in your letter, and I may think of others after reading it.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

*William B. Weitzel*  
William B. Weitzel, Chairman  
Pennsylvania Unit #1, NICAP

*A privately-supported fact-finding body serving the national public interest*

P-13 file

1014 W. Spruce  
Ravenna, Ohio 44266



RECEIVED 3/14/67  
W.B.W. BRADFORD, PA.

Dear Mr. Weitzel,

I regret to say that I have been unable to get Tom Greeley to sign a statement regarding Mr. Wymer's Roak. Mr. Greeley wishes to have nothing to do with the entire incident.

The only facts that I can supply you with are these:

(1) Greeley and Wymer were lab partners for a physics class.

(2) Greeley suggested the idea of making a "saucer" to Wymer. Wymer liked the idea and he and Greeley drew up a lab report on the proposed experiment.

(3) They later decided to abandon the project because the



way it was set up it wouldn't have worked.

(4) After Greeley had heard news about Wymer's alleged hoax he was by Wymer. Wymer told him that he hadn't sent the "saucer" up. He said that his mother had in her possession their lab report and that she wanted to use Greeley's name to back up her son's story. It seems that Mrs. Wymer works for a branch of the Record-Courier, where the story broke. She had read an article about Dept. Spaw in the Akron Beacon Journal and that she felt sorry for him. She felt that this hoax story would help Spaw get away from the misfortunes that had befallen him as a result of his UFO sighting.

(5) Wymer asked Greeley if he would agree with his story and allow his name to be released in connection with his story. Greeley

told him no, and that if they printed  
his name he would sue them.

This is the story as I know it.  
I am sorry that I was unable to  
obtain a First Hand, signed account  
from Greeley but I hope that this  
is of some help to you.

Sincerely yours,

Larry Frank

From the Record - Courier, Ravenna, Ohio, October 15, 1966:

Blue Book Chief Skeptical About Balloon Story by Carol Clapp

"The winds don't check right for a balloon," Maj. Hector Quintanilla, head of the Air Force's Project Blue Book, said today regarding the possibility of a "hoax" in the April 1 UFO sighting here.

"I thought about this, and I checked this out pretty carefully at the time," the major said. "The thing that kept me away from a balloon explanation was the wind direction. They just weren't blowing that fast or in that direction at low altitudes."

Wind direction and velocity at the time of the sighting and chase from the Randolph area to Conway, Pa., a distance of 86 miles, don't support a balloon possibility, Maj. Quintanilla said.

At 2,000 feet and below, the wind was blowing out of the southeast at 15 miles per hour. The deputies chased the UFO in an easterly and southeasterly direction, which means the balloon, if that was what they chased, would have been drifting against the wind.

Deputies pursued the object at 103 miles per hour.

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The students claim that they filled two surplus radiosonde balloons with a mixture of natural gas and helium which they purchased for \$15.95. They say that in order to propel the balloons they cut small holes to let gas escape. The lights consisted of four automobile headlamps powered by one lantern battery: the whole assembly weighed 22 lb.

Dr. James McDonald, head of the Institute for Atmospheric Physics at the University of Arizona, says that the balloons in question can support four pounds apiece.

The automobile headlamps would exhaust the lantern battery in a few minutes.

The winds were at 15 mph. from the southeast to at least 2000 ft: Spaur, Neff, and Houston followed the object at speeds between 80 and 100 mph. travelling toward the southeast, for over an hour. When last seen the object was rising.

Conclusion: Publicity-seeking students

Summary of phone call from JEMcDonald to Carol ~~Clapp~~<sup>Clapp</sup>, Ravenna (11:45 Wed. 10/19/66)

The alleged hoaxer, Donald David Wymer, 19, of Albion, O., is now a pre-law student at Kent State. His mother works for a paper in Wooster and she broke the story. The reasons for his not previously disclosing the alleged hoax are obscure, but had something to do with his mother. Wymer, in speaking with Clapp, claimed that he and another student (unnamed by Wymer) carried off the hoax on the evening of April 16, and then simply went back to the dorm and went to bed. Claims he had not read anything of the following AM's UFO chase, and claims he is still uninformed about the chase. Asked Clapp for Weitzel's report so he could find out about it, etc. Clapp set up a session where Wymer was to make a signed statement to the sheriff, etc., but when time came, Wymer back-out emerged.

Carol noted that Wymer shifted from 1st to 3d person as he discussed the alleged hoax, sometimes saying "I" or "we", other times saying "they". He told her that if she did run into the other student, he'd probably deny any involvement. Since he'd not disclosed his name this was odd. He claimed, somewhat mysteriously, to have certain knowledge about the "swamp gas hoax up in Michigan", and said that they didn't do a very good job. (Clapp was unaware of whether he meant Hillsdale or Dexter, or whether he even distinguished between these two episodes.) He told her he has a new idea for something even better than his alleged rig used on April 16 PM. Said he is going to go out to Monterey, Calif, next year and release it from there. It will have commercial possibilities. Said then he plans to go on to Melbourne Univ., Australia. Also, he's planning to switch from pre-law to EE.

Clapp was under impression that he was a scholarship student. He told her he was working at some job under an "assumed name", but it proved to be use of his middle name rather than the first name. Reason was that his mother calls him up on the job all the time and he's lost jobs from too much telephone time. Has had five or six jobs in recent months, she said.

The description of the rig was improbable: Took two 6-foot weather balloons, filled them with a mixture of helium and natural gas. Then enclosed the pair of balloons in a framework made of balsawood ("hinged so that they could carry it across campus"). Then over this framework they put plastic and allegedly filled in interspace with gas "to equalize the pressure". This supposedly carried aloft a 22-lb payload including four automobile lamps powered by a lantern battery. (Y/I suggested to Clapp she call the local Fireston dealer and find how many ampere-hours he could get out of such a lantern, operating 4 headlamps. Sounds like only a hour or two to me.) The propulsion was supplied by "gas leaking out of the balloons".

Weather balloons of the type allegedly used carry a 2-lb payload of radio-sonde transmitting gear. A pair could carry up about 4 lbs. Thus his 22-lb figure looks five times too high. The alleged propulsion system might take such a rig a few tens of feet, if it could get it airborne (which appears impossible).. From Major Q and Major Boice Smith at FTD (meteorologist) Carol learned that the winds on the AM of the 17th were close to 15 mph from SE from surface up to about 2000'. This looks quite sensible to me judging from weather map for preceding day -- only one available today at Nicap. Since the mean speed of the reported chase was about 50 mph (86 miles in 1.5 hours), and since the winds were about 15 mph, the alleged hoax called for net airspeeds near 70 mph. The drag of any such plastic-covered rig as Wymer described would have high drag, and since his propulsion is absurd, the whole story falls apart. If it should have gotten airborne, despite above inferences, it would have drifted to NW, in wrong direction.

He gave a cost-figure of \$15.95 for his device.

## X. Final matters.

Here we have two rather different outrageous matters. One seems innocuous: the letter from the Condon Project's Bob Low to NICAP regarding material about the case to be used in the Project's work. The outrage is due to the refusal to use the case materials in the Colorado Project analysis. This sort of thing was a source of general amazement to both Jim McDonald and Allen Finkel: why most of the best and deepest investigated cases in UFOlogy were ignored by the Condon Report. Plus, specifically in this case, it may have served to redress the wrongs done to the police officers, and especially to Dale Spurr.

Secondly, there are two of the milder newsclippings on what became of Dale Spurr. They speak for themselves.

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
BOULDER, COLORADO 80302

AUG 1 1967  
M

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND ASTROPHYSICS

202 Woodbury Hall

28 July 1967

Mr. Stuart Nixon  
NICAP  
1536 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Stuart:

This is to confirm our telephone discussion this morning in which you agreed to let us use material from William Weitzel's investigation report of the Ravenna, Portage County, Ohio UFO Sighting Case.

Thanks very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

*Bob Low*

Robert J. Low  
Project Coordinator  
UFO Study

RJL:lbm

*in our final report*

# Flying Saucer Named Floyd Haunts Portage, O., Deputy

**EDITOR'S NOTE**—Last April 17 hundreds of persons in Ohio reported sighting an unidentified flying object. The Air Force said it was a satellite. But whatever it was, his encounter with the phenomenon proved a strange, grim turning point in the life of a deputy sheriff from Ravenna.

*A. MULLINS 2014/10/9/66*

By JOHN DE GROOT  
Akron. Beacon Journal Staff  
Writer

AKRON, Ohio (AP)—In his ruined world of loneliness and twisted nightmares, Dale Spaur wonders if the chase will ever end.

It began six months ago with seven steps to hell and a flying saucer named Floyd.

In the predawn hours of a gentle April morning, Spaur, a Portage County sheriff's deputy, chased a flying saucer 86 miles. Now the strange craft is chasing him.

And he is hiding from it, a bearded stranger peering past the limp curtains of a tiny motel room in Solon, Ohio.

He no longer is a deputy sheriff.

His marriage is shattered.

He has lost 40 pounds.

He lives on one bowl of cereal and a sandwich each day.

He walks three miles to an \$80-a-week painter's job. His motel room costs \$60 a week. The court has ordered him to pay his wife \$20 a week for the support of his two children.

That leaves Dale Spaur exactly nothing.

The flying saucer did it.

"If I could change all that I have done in my life," he said, "I would change just one thing. And that would be the night we chased that damn thing. That saucer."

He spit the word out. Saucer. An obscenity.

Others might understand.

Four other officers took part in the April drama.

Police Chief Gerald Buchert of Mantua saw the craft and photographed it. The pictures turned out badly, an odd fuzzy white thing suspended in blackness. Today, Chief Buchert

laughs nervously when he speaks of that night.

"I'd rather not talk about it," he says. "It's something that should be forgotten, left alone. I saw something, but I don't know what it was."

Special Deputy W. L. Neff rode with Spaur during the chase.

He won't talk about it.

His wife Jackelyne explains,

"I hope I never see him like he was after the chase. He was real white, almost in a state of shock. It was awful.

"And people made fun of him afterwards. He never talks about it anymore. Once he told me, 'If that thing landed in my back yard, I wouldn't tell a soul.' He's been through a wringer."

Patrolman Frank Panzanella saw the chase end in Conway, Pa., where he works. He saw the craft.

Now he is silent. Friends say he had his telephone removed because of calls about that April morning.

If Wayne Huston was a police officer in East Palestine, Ohio. He had worked there seven years. Several months after the saucer passed above him in the night, he resigned, going to Seattle, Wash., to drive a bus.

Huston now goes by Harold W. Huston. He tells you: "Sure I quit because of that thing. People laughed at me. And there was pressure. You couldn't put your finger on it, but the pressure was there. The city officials didn't like police officers chasing flying saucers."

Thus the story of the other officers. Three still wear badges, but do not speak of what they saw. Spaur and Huston have turned in their badges.

Now Spaur hides in Solon, a fugitive from a flying saucer named Floyd. He cannot escape the strange craft.

It remains with him, locked in his mind reappearing in nightly sweating dreams that are a bizarre mixture of reality and fantasy.

Of that night: He is driving car 13. Barney Neff is beside him. They are heading east along U.S. 224 between Ran-

dolph and Atwater when they spot a red and white 1959 Ford alongside the road.

Barney and Dale stop to check it out. The car is filled with walkie-talkies and other radios.

A strange emblem is painted on the side. A triangle with a bolt of lightning inside it. Above the emblem is written "Seven steps to hell."

Suddenly Spaur hears a humming sound behind him.

He turns and sees a huge, saucer-shaped craft rising out of a woods. The entire underside of the craft gleams with an intense, purplish-white light.

Spaur calls to Barney, who turns, sees the craft, then stands paralyzed.

Neither moves. Spaur is sure he can't move. That his limbs will not work. He does not know why he is sure of this. He just believes it.

The ship rises to about 150 feet and moves directly over the patrol car. Both men feel warm, pleasing heat from the light blazing from the bottom of the craft. But the light is so intense that tears stream from their eyes.

Spaur thinks about moving back to the car. Yet he does not. Some trace of a thought which seems to tell him that if he touches the car it will disappear.

Then the saucer moves away from the car and stops. As though on command, both men race to the cruiser. Later, Spaur thinks that is strange, that both would move at exactly the same instant.

Spaur radios in, telling the deskman what he has seen. Others reports have already flared over the radio.

"Shoot it," the radio man tells Spaur.

Again, some strange feeling tells Spaur not to get out of the cruiser and shoot at the craft.

It is about 50 feet across and maybe 15 to 20 feet high. On top of it is a large dome. An antenna juts out from the rear part of the dome.

The night sergeant comes on the radio and tells Spaur to chase it. The craft moves away and Spaur follows. Slowly at first.

Later, he hits speeds of more than 100 miles an hour racing eastward through Ohio and into Pennsylvania.

The craft seems to be letting Spaur follow it. It waits for him at intersections. Once, it seems to double back when he is forced to turn away from its eastward path.

Finally, after the sun has risen, the chase ends near Pittsburgh when Spaur runs out of gas. This is what happened, according to Spaur and Neff.

Now Spaur relives the chase each night in a twisting nightmare.

But in his dream, car 13 vanishes. Disappears when he touches it. And then Spaur stands alone beneath the huge ship.

At this moment, he awakens shivering and wet. Alone in his motel room.

As he speaks of the six months since he saw the flying saucer called Floyd, it is difficult to tell when the nightmare stops and reality begins.

Spaur does not know what happened to the sedan with "Seven Steps to Hell" written on its sides.

After the chase, his daily routine was washed away in a sea of reporters, television camera men, Air Force investigators, government officials, strange letters from places like Little Rock, Ark., and Australia that told him what to do if "the little green men" tried to contact him.

"My entire life came crashing down around my shoulders," he said.

"Everything changed. I still don't really know happened. But suddenly, it was as though everybody owned me and I no longer had anything for myself. My wife, my home, my children. They all seemed to fade away."

Spaur's wife Daneise now is alone with their two children. She has filed for divorce and is working as a waitress in a bar at Ravenna. *CONT'D*

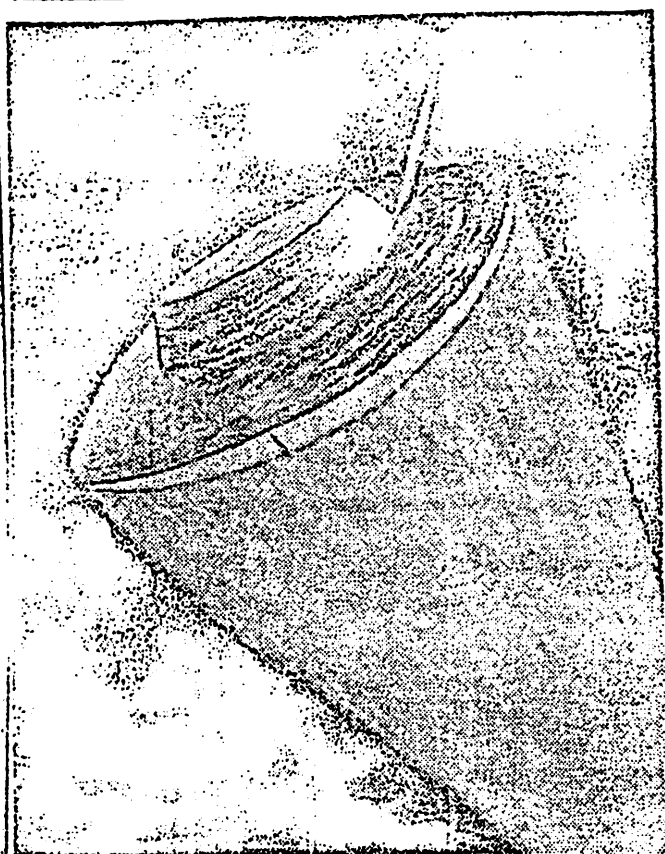


"Something happened to Dale, but I don't know what it was," she says. "He came home that day and I never saw him more frightened before. He acted strange, listless. He just sat around. He was very pale.

"Then later, he got real nervous. And he started to run away. He'd just disappear for days and days. I wouldn't see him.

"Our marriage fell apart. All sorts of people came to the house. Investigators, reporters. They kept him up all night. They kept after him, hounding him. They hounded him right into the ground.

"And he changed."



ITS NAME IS FLOYD — This is what a flying saucer named Floyd looked like to Dale Spaur. Spaur was a deputy sheriff when he and four other lawmen saw the object in the sky last April. Since then Spaur's world has collapsed. He now is pursued by the memory of that saucer, given the code name Floyd. Writer John DeGroot of the Akron Beacon Journal drew this sketch, based on sketches Spaur made for him.

(AP Wirephoto)

Then one night, Dale came home very late. He isn't sure what happened. He walked into the living room. There were some other people there. Things were very tense. Very confused.

He grabbed his wife and shook her. Hard. He kept shaking her. It left big ugly bruises on her arms.

He doesn't know how or why. That was the end of July.

Daneise filed assault and battery charges. Dale was jailed and turned in his badge. A newspaper printed a story about the deputy who chased the flying saucer being jailed for beating his wife. When he got out of jail, Dale left town, turned his back on everything. But the saucer followed him, locked in his dreams.

# Man Who Saw Saucer Not Around Anymore

COLUMBUS — (AP) — The nation's UFO fever seems to have vanished. So has a former deputy sheriff from a rural Ohio county.

Attempts to locate Dale Spaur have been as fruitless as speculation about a flying saucer he chased and where it went after suddenly disappearing following an 86-mile chase from Portage County to Conway, Pa., in 1966.

The people who either witnessed or heard about the strange chase collectively know only this:

**THE** object was a flying saucer. The object was not a flying saucer.

The deputy along with Spaur on his adventure, Apr. 17, 1966, has been reported seen in Alaska and Florida.

As for Spaur, 39, less than a year after the incident the father of two quit his job, was divorced and eventually dropped from sight. Attempts have been unsuccessful to locate him in Ohio by phone.

"After—I saw the damn thing, my entire life came crashing down around my shoulders," Spaur told a reporter in 1967.

**HE SAID** he saw the saucer, with the code name "Floyd," one more time before he quit his job. He believed that "Floyd" was following him.

"I didn't see it," said Ross Dustman, Portage county sheriff when the saucer reportedly tailed Spaur. "But I sure believed it. I really believe in them."

Dustman is now a bailiff in Portage county Common Pleas court and thinks Spaur is in the Lake Erie area. He also believes Floyd had nothing to do with Spaur's quitting his job.

**SPECIAL** Deputy W. L. Neff was with Spaur when the unidentified flying object reportedly rose directly over the patrol car, releasing heat and a light so intense it made tears stream from the eyes of both men.

At the time of the incident Spaur said they came across the object when they stopped to check an abandoned car, found to be filled with walkie-talkies and radios and with the legend painted on a door: "Seven Steps to Hell."

Spaur said he heard a humming sound, turned and saw a huge, saucer-shaped raft rising from nearby woods. IN 1967, Neff's wife, Jackelynne, told a newsman that after the chase her husband was "white, almost in a state of shock. It was awful." Dustman recalls, however, that Spaur was "all right" after the chase that brought television cameramen, the Air Force and government officials to the area. "There was a bunch of crazy mumbo-jumbo going on that night," recalled a police official at Conway, Pa., who didn't want to be identified.

**"EVERYONE** was chasing the 'flying saucer' and no one saw it. No one here where the chase ended seemed to take it seriously. I didn't see anything anyway."

But former Conway police officer Frank Panzanella said, "I saw something that morning. But I don't know what."

## XI. William Weitzel's Culminating document.

The superb NICH investigation ended with this piece by Weitzel which he hoped would be accepted for publication somewhere, perhaps in the pulp UFO magazines at the time. It was not; no proper venue could be found. A much shortened version appeared in the old Dell Flying Saucers magazine. It is the best over-all account of the case in normal authored form anywhere. Now it is part of the most significant documentation on the case possible (this packet).

The only thing that could markedly improve the material that you and I have in our hands today would be if we could locate Dale Spaur, and, after showing him our appreciation for all he went through out of duty and the search for truth, would ask for and receive a copy of his own write-up of his case, which he was working on after the event. This last manuscript "P-13", named after his cruiser, by Deputy Sheriff Dale Spaur, would make our case complete.

## THE PORTAGE COUNTY SIGHTING

An account of the UFO sighting and chase from Portage County, Ohio to Conway, Pennsylvania, on April 17, 1966, and the NICAP investigation and attempt to have USAF conclusion of "satellite-Venus" changed to "unknown."

This account, and supplementary material from the NICAP file on the sighting, are submitted for consideration of publication by the Dell Publishing Co., Inc., to Carmena Freeman, Editor, Flying Saucers, by William Weitzel.

William B. Weitzel, Chairman  
Pennsylvania Unit #1, NICAP  
April 8, 1967

## OUTLINE

### THE CHASE

Opening -- the UFO hovering overhead when first seen	1
Discussion -- brief background of Spaur and Neff, background of the sighting	2
The chase	
Initial events. The men ordered to pursue the UFO	3
Events along the chase route. Huston joins Spaur and Neff	66
Arrival in Conway. Fanzanella's observations	13
Returning to Ravenna. Meeting with Brothers. Back at Court House	16

### THE INVESTIGATIONS

My (Weitzel's) investigation	
Setting up NICAP subcommittee efforts	18
Visit to Ravenna. Chief Buchert's film unavailable	20
Interview with Spaur, in station and at site	28
Major Quintanilla's investigation, mine continued	
The major calls to interview Spaur and Buchert	24
My further interviews. The "UFO images" on Buchert's film	25
Project Blue Book's conclusion -- "Satellite-Venus"	28
Public reaction	
Congressman J. William Stanton, Judge Robert E. Cook, write letters	30
Harassment of the police officers	29,32
Jets seen, heard, pursuing UFO?	32

### THE HEARING

Congressman Stanton visits the Pentagon	35
Major Quintanilla comes to Ravenna	
The hearing, initial questioning	35
My interview with the major after the hearing	37
Reaction of the deputies, the sheriff, Chief Buchert	42
The tape recording	
"Satellite" forced?	43

OUTLINE (CONTINUED)

Reaction of Stanton and Cook	47
<u>THE RE-RE-EVALUATION</u>	
I begin writing letters, put together NICAP report	48
Working at NICAP office. Major Quintanilla's reply	51
Dr. McDonald's report -- the major had changed his mind	53
Red tape	54
Still "satellite-Venus." Argument with Lt. Marley	56
Dr. Hynek's disagreement	57
Stanton writes directly to Major Quintanilla	57
<u>THE RE-RE-RE-EVALUATION</u>	
New developments with Spaur and Huston	58
Brief discussion, why USAF won't change mind	
NICAP's position, USAF misinterpretation	58
The CIA report -- "debunk flying saucers"	59
Colonel Mims' "incredible" letter to Stanton	(62)
My discouragement	60
The rebuttal	63
A futile attempt	
Letter to Colonel Hoem -- answer these criticisms?	65
The final USAF reply	66
Lesson in futility. USAF conclusion will stay satellite-Venus "until new tangible evidence is discovered"	66

END

## THE CHASE

Deputy Sheriffs Dale Spaur and Wilbur Neff stood rooted to the spot, their heads tilted back, staring at the enormous, brilliant object above them. It seemed to be staring back, with its piercing white light. Neither man could speak or move, though it seemed to them both that they definitely should be somewhere else. Spaur looked down at his hands and clothes, expecting them to be on fire, but there was only the cold, brilliant light that illuminated a patch of ground around them and their cruiser, next to Ohio State Route 224. Perhaps it was just the contrast with an otherwise dark morning that made the light, which had moved over them just moments before, so bright; but it made the deputies' eyes water.

Both men sensed the eeriness of the situation. The huge object was only a few dozen feet up, but it made no sound except for a faint humming. Neither had ever seen anything like it. It had drifted level over the road, then back to hover directly over them. It seemed to be waiting for them to do something. A long, timeless moment passed -- then, without a word to each other, the men dashed for their cruiser. When Spaur touched the door handle, he was shocked. He realized he had expected the cruiser to disappear into thin air when he touched it, as though this were all a wild dream.

The men jumped inside and slammed the doors. Now, in familiar surroundings, the reality of the situation hit them and they began trembling. The object was

still above them, but it moved off down the road about a hundred feet and stopped. Again, it seemed to be waiting for something.

Deputy Spaur took the radio microphone in his shaking hand and pushed the button to "transmit," to report what was happening, but found he could say nothing.

What was happening?

Portage County Deputy Sheriff Dale Spaur and Mounted (auxiliary) Deputy Wilbur "Barney" Neff were a good team. Spaur had been with the Sheriff's department a year, and Neff had been on patrol with him and other deputies for some time, when he had time aside from his job as a local Thermo-King mechanic at a truck stop near Ravenna, Ohio. Spaur had a reputation for never losing a court case, nor a speeder, and was thought of most highly by his fellow deputies and by Sheriff Ross Dustman. Six feet four inches tall, 190 pounds, police experience in photography, fingerprinting and radio operations, three years experience in the Air Force as an in-flight refueling boom operator, and a former race-car driver, he was the model of a capable law enforcement officer.

The morning had been a routine one. A car had smashed into a utility pole near Atwater, in the southeastern part of the county. The men got the driver to a hospital, and the car towed. While they sat in P-13, their cruiser, they drank some coffee and talked with a repairman, who was working on the damaged pole and



lines. A call came over their radio about 4:50: "Woman in Summit County reports a low-flying bright object went over her property, headed east toward Portage County." After a comment by one of the men that the woman had had too much to drink, the repairman chuckled and suggested she had seen a flying saucer. The men laughed at the joke. "Yeah," Spaur said. "The wierd ones are out tonight!"

Spaur decided it was time to inspect a shopping center in the vicinity, part of their regular schedule of checks. He drove off with Deputy Neff, toward the western part of the county. After going a short distance, however, he noticed a car parked by the other side of the road, and turned around to check. There was almost no traffic that time of morning, and the car seemed to be deserted.

He parked on the broad berm beside the road, leaving the engine running and the headlights on. Neff got out and stood by the right headlight, ready in case any trouble should develop. Just ahead of them was the other car, a white 1959 Ford. Spaur advanced a few steps and looked inside, but no one was there. He looked around at the woods to his right, thinking perhaps the driver had gone off a short distance to relieve himself. Then he saw the light.

It was small at first, no bigger than a pinhead at arm's length would have appeared. It was coming from the west, on an imaginary line that would have extended not far south of the road. It grew larger rapidly, and within a short

time was almost due south of him. He called Neff's attention to it. "Look at that light, Barney! Maybe that's that flying saucer that we heard about a few minutes ago!" Neff turned halfway around and his jaw dropped. The light was much bigger now, and the area was getting brighter. The men said nothing as it swerved from its westerly path and came toward them from the south. It grew to immense size and went right over the road to the north. It stopped. Then it came back and hovered overhead, humming softly. After about a minute, the men bolted for the car.

Inside, Spaur finally decided what he would say for a report. "P-13 to base," he said. "I think we're watching this light that's been reported flying near here."

In Havenma, the radio operator for the Portage County Sheriff's Department, Deputy Robert Wilson, noted the time -- 5:07 am -- and asked for details.

"It's about a hundred feet ahead, over Route 224," said Spaur. "We're parked on the berm, headed east. It's about fifty feet across, and I can just make out a dome or something on the top, but that's very dark. The bottom is real bright, it's putting out a beam of light that makes a big spot underneath. It's like it's sitting on the beam. It was overhead a minute ago, and it was bright as day here; our headlights didn't make nearly as much light as it did. And this is no helicopter or anything like that; it's perfectly still and it just makes a humming noise."

Deputy Wilson didn't hear all the details; Spaur was excited and spoke rapidly. But he gathered that the men in P-13 were observing a "flying saucer." Wilson had heard that such sightings were often due to weather balloons, and thought of an easy test the men could perform. "P-13, Dale, do you have your .44 Magnum with you?" "I do," Spaur replied. "Take a shot at it!" Wilson suggested.

Spaur thought this over briefly. From what he had seen so far, he was quite impressed, and didn't want to risk irritating the object. It was as big as a house, and looked quite solid. It could easily come back and settle on the car, squashing it like an egg. "I don't think I want to do that," he radioed back, and repeated his description of the object. "Listen, Bob," he added, "this thing's a monster! It's like looking down the middle of hell!"

Now Wilson realized Spaur was dead serious. He called in the Sergeant, Hank Shoenfelt, and asked his advice. Shoenfelt got on the radio. "Keep an eye on that thing, and we'll dispatch a car with a camera, and get a picture of it." He proceeded to arrange for this. Spaur felt it was good advice. He put the cruiser in gear and moved slowly forward, to get a better view.

As he moved toward it, the object started moving away. It elevated a bit, then went off rather slowly, due east over Route 224. Spaur called in, "It's moving off. Shall we follow?" Sgt. Shoenfelt answered, "Stick with it until that camera car gets out there."

Spaur accelerated. The object accelerated. Spaur floored the gas pedal and began tearing after it. The object gathered more speed and within a minute, P-13 was barreling down the road at 85 miles an hour, in hot pursuit.

Spaur knew he was approaching an intersection, where Routes 183 and 224 go south together about a half mile. He decided, since he had to make a turn, to follow 224 south. As he slowed for the turn, the object shot out over a field bordered by 183. It kept going east, while Spaur turned right, following the road to the south. When 224 left 183, going east again, Spaur turned left to follow the object, which was now northeast of him. Just after he turned, it made a right angle turn and came south, going across the road ahead of him; then it turned left and sped eastward, to his right, while he drove east on 224.

The deputies noticed now that when the object moved forward, its leading edge tilted down. The light underneath it, on the ground, followed behind, just like the head of a flashlight aimed down were tilting forward and its beam casting a spot behind it. Now, too, the sky was becoming brighter, and they could see the top clearly silhouetted against the sky. There seemed to be an antenna or probe projecting from the top rear, about 20 feet long, tapering to a pointed tip. The object was about half as thick as it was wide, shaped something like a football in cross section. The bottom was still glowing brilliantly, and some construction equipment near the road was illuminated when it passed overhead.

Neff watched the object out his right window, to the southeast, until P-13 got to Deerfield. As they drove over a reservoir, it rose up to about 500 feet and turned north, going over the road above them. Now both P-13 and the object were racing due east toward Canfield, about 18 miles away, at nearly 100 miles an hour. There was practically no traffic and, except for an occasional dip or twist, the road was perfectly straight. The object kept on a course due north of the cruiser.

Spaur saw they were headed into Mahoning County, out of his jurisdiction. He radioed his base. "We just passed Deerfield circle, now on Route 14," he said. "This thing's right out my left window, and we're going about the same speed, almost 90 miles an hour. Please advise." Sgt. Shoenfelt called back, "Stay with it until that camera car gets there." "Will do," Spaur replied. "It's getting light now. I should be able to identify it pretty soon."

Unfortunately, Spaur's report of "Route 14" was misinterpreted by many listeners. They took Spaur to mean he was now traveling down Route 14A, which used to be called 14. As a result of this mixup, the camera car was sidetracked and several police officers in that part of the state directed their attention in the wrong direction. The mistake was cleared up when they got near Canfield and reported their location approaching that town.

As they got near Canfield, the object again crossed the road ahead of them, and headed southeast. Spaur turned right onto a large bypass loop that goes around Canfield. They had not gone far, gradually turning east again, when the object went across the loop to their left, still in a southeasterly direction. To match, as best he could, its southerly component of travel, Spaur turned right onto Route 14, now going directly south.

The object seemed to be receding to their left, but suddenly it swung around and headed south over the road ahead of them. Now Spaur began to feel a new kind of fear.

As long as the sky had been dark and visibility limited, the men could assume, after their initial fright, that they were witnessing an ordinary something-or-other under unusual lighting conditions. Spaur had hoped that when it became lighter he would recognize what it was they were chasing. But the sky was quite light now, and the object seemed even more mysterious. The top had a metallic surface, and its outline, with the "antenna," was much more visible.

And Spaur began to question whether they were chasing the object, or it was chasing them. When he would slow down to maneuver in traffic, it would slow down a bit, then speed up again. It seemed to be playing cat and mouse, and it was unclear who was the cat or the mouse. For the first time since the chase had begun, Spaur began to doubt his senses. Neff was still radioing in locations

and observational details, but he was obviously making an effort to keep cool. Spaur hoped desperately that someone would come to their assistance. He was out of his county, and would soon be out of the state, into Pennsylvania. But his sergeant told him to keep going, and he was intent on finding out what was playing this crazy game with them. So he raced on down Route 14 toward Columbiana, dodging occasional traffic at a mile a minute.

Suddenly it occurred to him that an airplane pilot would get a good view of the object. "Bob," he radioed Wilson, "can you get an airport to send up a plane?" Wilson called the Youngstown Air Force Base and made the request.

As the deputies passed through Columbiana, city patrolman Jack Haines, who had been listening to the radio traffic, finally found a camera he had been looking for. He drove to Route 14, but P-13 had passed. It was on its way to a near disaster. At the intersection of Routes 14 and 146, the object made a 100° turn to the left, going in the direction of Route 14. Spaur made an abrupt turn to follow it, and the cruiser slipped in some gravel. Spaur's racing experience paid off. He got the car back on the road, and headed east after the object. "Dale," Neff said, "we nearly turned over!" "Yeah," said Spaur, "can't you just see the obituary? 'Racked up while pursuing a flying saucer.' Barney, when are we gonna get some help on this?" Neff didn't answer.

He had his head pressed up against the windshield, looking almost straight up at the object, which had elevated and slowed down "for them."

As they approached Unity, Ohio, East Palestine patrolman Wayne Huston drove to the edge of Route 14 and waited to see if he could observe the subject of the last quarter hour of excited radio traffic. When the deputies' reports indicated they were approaching him, he called Spaur and asked where to look. "Look out your left window, and up," Spaur replied. Huston was standing next to his cruiser, OV-1, talking over his extension microphone. He looked to the northwest and saw a light approaching in the sky. It took on detail quickly and flew almost straight overhead about 900 feet up, going over 80 miles an hour. Huston saw what he later described as a flattened ice cream cone, a dark dome-like top and a cone shaped light from a bright bottom. The light looked like a focused beam in smoke or fog would look, and it was tilted to the rear of the object's direction of travel.

As the men sped by, Huston jumped into his cruiser and turned onto the road after them. It took several minutes to catch up, and he probably would not have, if P-13 had not been slowed down by traffic and the road, which was now narrower and more winding. The object had cooperated in its pursuit, also, by slowing up for its pursuers. "P-13," Huston radioed to Spaur and Neff, "this is OV-1. I see your object. I'm right behind you."



"At that time I wanted to kiss that man," Spaur said later. Here at last was a corroborating witness.

The men were getting out of radio range of the Portage County station.

Deputy Wilson began relaying messages through the Columbiana County Sheriff's radio in the county jail in Lisbon. Radio operator Orville Scarry began taking log notes at 5:35. "Portage County, your P-13 is at the Columbiana -- Pennsylvania line." Wilson replied, "O.K., advise when another unit picks it up, for him to return to base."

Patrolman Huston, now following Spaur and Neff close behind, called his base. "We're off Ohio Route 14, onto Pennsylvania 51. Call the Pennsylvania State Police for some support. Find out if someone can get after this thing in an airplane. And if it's being picked up on radar anywhere." A call was placed to the Chippewa Barracks of the Pennsylvania State Police, on Route 51 near the state line. Trooper Antonio Taglienti sorted out the requests and called the Greater Pittsburgh Airport. He was told that nothing unusual was on their radar, and that the only available planes were jet interceptors, which would be too slow. As he tried to get a State Police cruiser into the area, he heard the deputies and Huston roar by. He looked through the window, but the men were out of sight. He saw nothing unusual in the sky.

A few miles outside Beaver, Pennsylvania, P-13 and OV-1 approached Brady's Run Park, a public recreation area. Huston expected some traffic problems and put on his siren. A Volkswagen started to leave the park and ran across a treadle that controls a traffic light. Three trucks were coming toward the intersection from the east, and two more loomed ahead of the officers. The light changed to red, the Volkswagen left the park, and the men screeched to a halt behind the trucks. They watched the object elevate and fly over some tall hills not too far away. It seemed to drop down on the other side. None of the men had any thought of stopping their pursuit. They started up again and raced down the road toward Beaver. Huston kept his radio on "transmit" to give instructions to the deputies, who were unfamiliar with the terrain, and warned them of sharp curves ahead.

Just past the hills, they passed through an underpass outside Beaver, and the road turned into a broad stretch of highway that curved around to the right. Spaur had been watching Huston's cruiser through his rear view mirror to see if the East Palestine patrolman had come out of the turn all right. He saw the nose of Huston's cruiser dip suddenly as Huston braked. "There it is!" he shouted. Directly ahead of them, only a few hundred feet off the road, the object was hovering, still.

Huston noticed the projection on the rear of the object just before it shot up to about a thousand feet, stopped, and took off away from them in the direction of Rochester. The men followed it and the cat-and-mouse game began again, as they entered early morning traffic on the narrow road through Rochester and Freedom. When they had to slow down, the object would wait, but not long enough for them to catch up.

Outside Freedom, the road, now Route 65, broadened into a four lane highway, and the officers sped up again. But Spaur's cruiser started coughing, running low on gas. Then he saw a police car parked across the road in the distance, at an Atlantic gas station.

Conway, Pa. Patrolman Frank Panzanella had just left a restaurant and was on his way home after a night on duty. As he drove over the top of a hill near Route 51, he saw a bright light in the sky to the west. It seemed too big for a star and seemed to be moving, so he stopped to get a better look. It grew in size and he thought it was an airplane on fire. It seemed to be coming straight at him. "My God," he thought, "it's going to hit right here on the hill!" He turned the car around and drove back down the hill toward the highway. As he turned at an intersection near the road, he saw the thing out his left window, moving slowly now toward the Northern Lights shopping center, which borders on

the highway. He parked at the Atlantic station and got out. The object was making a swishing noise. Then the noise stopped and the object hovered not too far away. It had an outline like a football cut in half along its length, and the flat bottom was all lit up -- Panzanella thought he saw individual lights around the bottom rear when it passed nearby -- and an antenna-like projection at the rear. A penny held at arm's length would not have covered it. He could hardly believe his eyes, and decided he would not say anything to anyone about seeing it.

Two cars screamed to a stop on the road behind him. He turned and watched P-13 and OV-1 make a quick U-turn into the station. All three men jumped out and ran up. "Do you see it?" they asked. "See what?" he replied, still reluctant to admit he had been watching something so wierd. "That thing over there! We've been with it all the way from Ohio!" Huston pointed to the object. Panzanella admitted he had been looking at it.

As the four men stood there together the object receded horizontally. It hovered again in the east, in line with a television antenna on a nearby roof. The crescent moon was to its right, and Venus, the morning star, shone as a bright dot of light to the right of the moon. The sun was coming up.

Again the object moved, this time straight up, and hovered again. A large

commercial airliner, United Airlines flight 454 on route to Buffalo, New York, flew under the object. "Someone on that plane is bound to see it," Neff said.

Panzanella walked to his cruiser, still watching, and called the Rochester base radio station, which serves several surrounding communities, including Conway.

He asked the radio operator, John Bieghey, to call the airport, to see if anything was on the radar screen there, and to contact the pilot of the plane. He gave

a description of the object and asked if any interceptor planes could be sent up.

Bieghey did this, and called Panzanella back. "They've got it on radar, and are sending two up!" By coincidence, just as the planes were mentioned, the object accelerated upwards and shot straight out of sight.

The officers looked around and could see nothing else in the sky, except the moon and Venus, and the contrails from two jets to the northeast. The arcs were growing from north to south, toward the rising sun.

The Ohio officers left, while Panzanella stood by his cruiser, still looking for the object. As they drove off, he got a call from John Bieghey, requesting that the deputies call someone with the United States Air Force Reserve at the Greater Pittsburgh Airport, to report the object. He drove off after them and caught up with them in Freedom. On the way, his radio picked up a weak transmission from a patrolman in Economy Borough, Henry Kwiatkowski: "Hey, Frank, I just saw

two jets. . . ." The end of the call was indistinct; radio reception faded.

Kwiatanowski was standing on a high point of ground three miles southeast of the Atlantic station. He had been in touch previously with Panzanella, asking where to look for the object. Just after it left the Conway area, Kwiatanowski saw two jets northeast of him heading south, followed by a bright, football-shaped object. He watched until the trio got almost in front of the sun.

The four officers drove to the Rochester base station and Spaur called the number he had been given, 264-5000. He does not remember to whom he talked, only that he was an Air Force colonel, and that the officer, after about a minute of questioning, told him his report would be forwarded to Dayton, Ohio. Dayton is the location of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and Project Blue Book, the Air Force's official UFO investigating project.

When the call was finished, Panzanella took Spaur to a gas station and filled his tank. Spaur told him how glad he was Panzanella had been there at the end of the chase, and promised to reimburse him for the gas. Then he started the 73 mile trip back to Ohio with Neff and Huston. On the way, they noticed an ironic thing -- at many intersections on their route, local and state police cars were stopped, their occupants waving to them as they passed. If only they had been there for the chase!

At the police station in East Palestine, the officers stopped to have some

coffee with Wayne Huston, and discuss their experience. They were met by Columbiana County Deputy Sheriff Dave Brothers, who told them of his discouragement over being left out of the excitement. He had been waiting near Salem, Ohio to join in the chase. Salem is situated on Route 14A, the route which had earlier been mistaken as the one down which Spaur and Neff were traveling. When P-13 reported they were approaching Canfield and the mistake became apparent, Brothers tried to get to Route 14, but arrived too late. He did, however, hear most of the radio traffic from P-13, OV-1, and Portage County, from the start of the chase. He asked Spaur to describe his experience. "By God you're not gonna believe it," Spaur told him. "You're gonna think I'm lying!" Brothers believed him, however. Spaur seemed nervous; Brothers asked him how he felt. "It gives you a funny feeling in your stomach," he said. Huston concurred.

The deputies left East Palestine and returned to Ravenna, where the Sheriff's Department is located, in the County Court House. When they arrived, things were in a turmoil. Their radio reports had been heard by someone connected with the news media, and the station was flooded with phone calls and reporters. No one knew what to make of the incident; even their questions were incoherent. A Civil Defense official checked the cruiser and the men with a Geiger counter, but found nothing above normal background level.

Spaur typed his report, referring repeatedly to the object as "the (?)."

"The (?) was about 35 to 45 feet across the bottom and about 24 feet high.

The (?) was very bright. The (?) seemed suspended on a beam of light. . . .

I was shook up at this time." He was still shaking, four hours after the chase

began, and the sheriff sent him home for some rest. Neff was so upset, and

bothered by the excitement, that he went into seclusion.

THE INVESTIGATIONS

On the way to church later that morning, a news bulletin about the chase

came over my car radio. The winter trimester at the Bradford branch of the

University of Pittsburgh, where I teach philosophy, had just ended and I was

visiting in Pittsburgh with the minister whose service I was about to attend.

Both he and I are members of the local NICAP investigative subcommittee, so I

decided to wait until after the service to look into the UFO report, hoping he

could assist me.

At Rev. Shaw's home I first called all the members of the subcommittee to

learn what they might know of the UFO report, in addition to what I had heard

on the radio. As subcommittee chairman, I am usually called when one of them

thinks something should be investigated, but that morning I had been unavailable.

I found out that the report of the chase had gotten nationwide coverage, and that



the police chief of Mantua, Ohio, Gerald Buchert, had taken a picture early in the chase, which he thought showed the object. On hearing this, my interest rose considerably. A good UFO picture is a rarity; this one should be examined immediately, before it was mishandled or lost.

I called Richard Hall, NICAP's Assistant Director, at his home in Washington, to find out if any NICAP investigators in Ohio could get to Ravenna. Hall gave me the name of David Webb, in Alliance. I tried to reach him without success. Hall asked me to look into the report if Webb were unavailable, so I decided to go ahead with an investigation.

Chief Buchert was unavailable for comment when I phoned his office, but I was told he could meet me at the Portage County Court House in three hours. Rev. Shaw agreed to accompany me. Then, to get the very latest news, I called reporter Tom Schley of the Beaver County Times.

Schley had had a strong interest in UFOs since he broke the story on the now famous Lucci UFO photograph taken in Beaver, Pennsylvania in August 1965. I assumed Schley would already be digging into the case. He was indeed out collecting information, and called me back a few minutes later. He had just interviewed Officer Panzanella in Conway. We agreed to meet that afternoon, at the Court House in Ravenna.

Just before leaving, I arranged with Robert Schmidt, subcommittee member, that he would monitor the news on the radio and television, and take my calls to the subcommittee from Ohio. Then Rev. Shaw and I drove off in separate cars. He had to be back with his family that evening. I thought I would be back, too, but had little idea then how much of my vacation would be spent in Ohio.

We arrived in Ravenna about 4:45, and began interviewing Chief Buchert immediately. He had been in Mantua at the start of the chase, about 18 miles northwest of the spot on Route 224 where Spaur and Neff had first seen the object. He had seen a small light in the sky in the general direction of their location, and had taken four pictures. The light had seemed to bob around a bit, but was still there when the men were chasing their UFO down the road. Buchert showed me an 8x10 enlargement of the one part of his film that had an image on it among the four pictures he had taken. It showed only two dark, fuzzy arcs, with no other objects in the photograph to indicate elevation or apparent size. I asked to see the negative, but he said he preferred to show it to someone in the government first, in case he had photographed some kind of secret military device. He would not even allow Rev. Shaw to make a Polaroid copy of the print. I decided to wait until his qualms about secrecy were settled, and suggested he call Wright-Patterson AFB to see if anyone would be interested in looking at the picture. He did this

right away, and said a lieutenant named Weisinger had told him to lock up the prints and negative film until the next day.

Deputy Spaur was not in the station, but one of the officers called him and said he would be in shortly. Neff could not be reached. While I waited for Spaur, I shut myself in an office away from the mob of reporters and deputies, and took notes from his official report. It was then I found out about Officer Huston's role in the pursuit of the UFO. I tried unsuccessfully to call him and Frank Panzanella. I called Robert Schmidt. Some subcommittee members who had been planning to come out to Ravenna with instruments to measure radioactivity at the site on Route 224 could not make it. This discouraged me, for I felt a check should be made there as soon as possible.

Rev. Shaw left, and Tom Schley arrived a few minutes later. Since he had interviewed Panzanella and was going to talk to Wayne Huston soon, I decided to defer that part of my investigation until I could get some more information about the Buchert film. I knew Schley would take about as much from the officers as I would; he had a lot of experience interviewing UFO witnesses, and was a stickler for accuracy and thoroughness.

By this time, no reporters were being allowed into the rear of the station, where I had set up my tape recorder and other equipment, so Schley waited in the front. As it turned out, he intercepted Spaur first, when he arrived.

Detective Leland finally brought Spaur in, after he had talked with Schley a few minutes. I was almost sorry I had asked to see him. He had slept only about a half hour since morning, and was obviously exhausted. He looked like he had seen a ghost, and expected he wouldn't be believed. But he definitely believed what he had seen, and we were hardly introduced when he started right in with his account. I let him talk about his wierd experience for a while before I started in with detailed questions.

After a while, two representatives of the Akron Flying Saucer Investigating Committee, A. E. Candusso and Larry Moyers, came in. They had brought a Civil Defense radiation counter, and I asked if we could get to the site where the UFO was first observed, hovering near the ground. Spaur assented to leading us out there. On the way out of the station we were joined by Rick Hilberg, Glenn Barth, and Dave Olesko, of the Cleveland Ufology Project, another local group that collects interviews from UFO witnesses. We all drove to the exact spot on Route 224 and parked behind the abandoned Ford that Spaur and Neff had stopped to look at. It looked worth abandoning: rusty, battered, and the trunk lid held down with a spring attached to the rear bumper. Spaur, temporarily forgetting the UFO, looked inside for some evidence of ownership, but found none. (Some excitable flying saucer believers speculated for a few days that the owner had been kidnapped by little green men, but he was located in Meadville, Pa. The engine had thrown a rod.)

Candusso and Moyers found no radiation in the area above the expected background count. I asked Spaur to go through his story again, as to what had happened right at this spot. One of his responses really drove home the enormous size of the object, and the seriousness of Spaur's reaction. "Suppose you held your arm out straight," I asked, "and pretended you were holding the object between your thumb and forefinger. In other words, how big was the image of the object, at arm's length?" "Hell," Spaur said, mustering a weary chuckle, "I'd have to hold both arms up! One side was over the middle of the road, and the other side was over this hill next to the berm. That thing was only fifty feet up, and it would have covered the road!" He held both arms up at about a 45° angle, as though he were pointing to the opposite sides of the object. For the first time since we had gotten out there, I noticed it was an awfully cold night.

On the way back to the station I called Tom Schley, who had returned to Beaver to write up his story for the Monday paper. We exchanged notes. Back at the station things had calmed down somewhat, but no one seemed to know yet just how to interpret the morning's event. Sheriff Ross Dustman was there, and he supported Spaur without reservations, believing him to have seen just what he described. The other deputies joked with him, asking what he thought would have happened if he had shot at the UFO.

"I wouldn't have been surprised," Spaur said wryly, "if a big fly swatter had

stuck out the bottom of that thing, and SPLAT! I don't know why we felt safer when we got in the car; it really wouldn't have helped if that thing got mad. But getting something between us and it was better than just standing there."

Chief Buchert had left. It was near midnight, so I went to a motel.

Tomorrow I could see about getting a look at the negative of his picture.

The next day Major Hector Quintanilla, Jr., Chief of Project Blue Book, called the sheriff's office from Dayton and talked with Spaur and Buchert. He identified himself as "Mr. Quintanilla." "I was a little ticked off at him," Spaur told me. "Maybe he was trying to be easygoing, but he didn't talk for more than a couple of minutes, and he started with, 'Tell me about this mirage you saw.' When I started to tell him about what we chased, he asked, 'Did you have it in view for more than a few minutes?' I told him Barney and I had pursued it across several counties out of the state, for over a half hour. Then he kind of lost interest and the next question he asked was, 'Who has the pictures? I want possession of the pictures,' or 'We want possession of the pictures,' or something. I told him Gerry Buchert was here, and he asked to talk to him. That's all he asked me. Hell, I talked longer with that colonel Sunday morning, and he didn't ask much."

At the police station in Mantua, Chief Buchert told me Major Quintanilla had asked him to mail the negatives to Wright-Patterson, but that it was all right to give the prints to the press. At this time his office was besieged with newspaper and television reporters who wanted copies. He had only three that were made early yesterday morning, in the sheriff's darkroom, and was persuaded to make a few more for the news people before mailing the negative to Dayton. He conceded to letting me have contact copies made. Contact prints are of some help, in showing an object's angular size, compared to the camera's view angle in the picture frame.

When I looked at Chief Buchert's negative, I realized that the picture offered little corroboration. There were two light arcs on the film, representing a dark photographic subject. But the arcs were lighter than the background on the film, which had recorded so little light that dark morning that not even frame boundaries were visible near the "UFO images." The "images" could not be due to exposure to light, nor to a dark pair of objects in lighter surroundings. They must have resulted from some processing accident, either mechanical or chemical. I was sure the film had been handled carefully, but even a momentary folding of the film could have caused this effect, probably "cinch marks."

So the pictures were no good as evidence. This was not really too much of

a surprise; Buchert had been 18 miles away from what Spaur and Neff first reported, and the angular size of a 40 foot object at that distance would have been about one minute, a sixtieth of a degree, for Buchert. From where he stood in Mantua, the UFO would have been about one thousandth the apparent size of the moon. On Buchert's film, exposed through the lens of his Brownie Starmite camera, the image would have been less than 7/10,000 of an inch across.

Nevertheless, Chief Buchert had had the presence of mind to try to make a photograph, even including ground objects in the scene through the viewfinder. I thanked him for his cooperation, and had contact prints made anyway, just for the record.

During the week I sought out more witnesses. Neff remained unavailable until 10 days after his sighting with Spaur. One of the Portage County deputies said he had seen the UFO just before Spaur reported it, but wished his name to be kept confidential. The testimony of officers Wayne Huston and Frank Panzarella strongly corroborated that of Spaur and Neff. Huston's seemed crucial. He had seen the UFO flying from the northwest, go overhead, and continue to the southeast, and had chased it quite a distance with the deputies.

Spaur and I talked several times more. His story did not vary. He was emphatic about seeing the three objects -- the UFO, the moon, and Venus (which



he repeatedly described as "that one bright spot to the right of the moon") --  
at and near the end of the chase.

Spaur's sense of humor seemed to help him put his experience, and the ribbing he got about it, in a healthy perspective. During one of our interviews, I called his attention to the way he would tell his whole story in minute detail, seldom generalizing or summing up any part of his observations. "Well, I guess it's because I don't know what that thing was, or could even say what it's like," he explained. "Now, if I'd seen a particular car or airplane that I was familiar with, I could say, 'There goes a 1963 Ford,' or 'I saw a B-52 bomber,' or something. But this thing, I couldn't call it anything that would tell you what it was like. If I had to call it anything, well, since I saw it first, I'll call it by my middle name. 'Floyd.' That's it. We chased Floyd!" That's what he called the UFO frequently, and the name caught on among the deputies.

On April 19 a reporter for the Ravenna Record-Courier, Carol Clapp, called Major Quintanilla to see if he had made an evaluation yet. He said he was waiting to get Chief Buchert's film in the mail. Would he come to Portage County to interview the deputies in person? No, because "it would be impossible to recreate the scene," he told Mrs. Clapp. Late in the week, the major called Spaur again to ask if he had seen the UFO for more than a few minutes. He had asked this

before, but wanted to be sure Spaur was certain on that point. Spaur assured him he was. The major thanked him and hung up.

On Friday, April 22, Major Quintanilla called Sheriff Dustman to announce his evaluation. The sheriff "laughed out loud," when the major told him the deputies had initially observed an Echo satellite going from northwest to southeast, then had seen Venus in the southeast and had chased it into Pennsylvania, thinking it moved around in the sky as their relative direction on the road changed. Buchert's pictures were processing defects. The major had checked all the aerial activity on the morning of the 17th, he said, and the UFO could have been nothing else.

On Saturday, when the news story appeared, I interviewed Spaur for his reaction. He stated the following: "After hearing the Air Force release, well, it's, I don't know how much investigation they made but evidently it wasn't a very lengthy one or it didn't involve me. First of all I don't think we have a satellite that can go this low. . . . I'm definitely sure that I wasn't chasing Venus or observing Venus and running wildly over the countryside; I'm not quite that bad off. I don't think for a minute in my own mind since I think about what happened that morning that I would have gambled my life, my partner's life or any innocent person on the highway. . . . Also the same object that I observed and that Wayne Huston observed that another officer in Conway Pennsylvania could observe the same

thing still traveling from the west to the east and to the left of the moon -- and which as I understand it, Venus was to the right of the moon, I don't know anything about astronomy but I'm positive of what I was chasing, and I also don't agree it was Venus. I was a nonbeliever before this and never had any thought in my mind that the Air Force couldn't explain every one of these things. I believe in what I saw and nothing short of heaven or hell is going to change my mind."

No one familiar with the details of the UFO sighting took Blue Book's analysis seriously. But the effect of its conclusion was to make people take the deputies' report less seriously. Their sighting had become a joke. Spaur and Neff became the object of "well meaning" ridicule. Spaur wondered about the effect his testimony in court about seeing a certain license number on a speeding car might have, if a defense lawyer commented, "Aren't you the fellow who chased Venus into Pennsylvania?" His phone became tied up day and night. He got an unlisted number, but that only helped a short while. Eventually he had his phone removed, but letters still came to him at the station, from all over the country, even from abroad. Blue Book's statement to the press had made no mention of Neff, Huston, or Panzanella. Spaur felt very much alone.

I was somewhat irritated myself at Major Quintanilla's conclusion. I had spent several days several days interviewing witnesses, and while I had no idea of what had been chased, was certain that a few minutes' interrogation of just one of the

four chief witnesses could not be a good basis for concluding "satellite -- Venus."

Mrs. Clapp, at the Record-Courier, told me that Congressman William Stanton, of Ohio's 11th District wherein Portage County is located, was going to be interviewed in a few days by a television reporter, and decided he should know the facts. I prepared a long letter in the form of a rebuttal to the Air Force's evaluation, pointing out that it had had an "adverse reflection" on the integrity of the officers, and of the sheriff's department in his district. I noted the many observational details of the object, and the corroboration from the other officers. The letter was mailed April 24.

Congressman Stanton forwarded the letter to the Air Force and asked for an explanation. A few days later, Portage County Common Pleas Court Judge Robert E. Cook wrote to the congressman with a strong criticism of Blue Book's action, and a request for an on-the-spot investigation by someone from that office. "Their conclusion that the object sighted was the planet Venus is so ridiculous that the United States Air Force has suffered a great loss of prestige in this community. . . . I personally know the three officers involved. They are men of integrity and I feel it is grossly unfair to them for the Air Force to reach any conclusion in this matter until it has conducted an on-the-spot investigation and re-evaluated its findings after such a visit."

Mrs. Clapp reported Mr. Stanton's reply in the Record-Courier on May 5:

"Stanton said that the letter 'made an excellent point.-- not only has the Air Force failed in its responsibility in thoroughly investigating this incident, but in addition we have not heard, as of today, from the commanding general of the Air Force.' Stanton referred to a letter he forwarded last week to the Air Force Commanding General, along with a copy of a report of the investigation made up to that time by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). 'I'm a firm believer that if there is something the Air Force wants to hide, they are making a big mistake. . . . Once people entrusted with the public welfare no longer think the people can handle the truth, then the people, in turn, will no longer trust the government,' Stanton pointed out.

Judge Cook commented on Stanton's reply: "I am sure he will continue to follow up on his demands on the Air Force for an on-the-spot investigation. I am sure such an investigation will vindicate the statements made by Portage County police officers."

In the meantime, I had been trying to dig up more information on the sighting from other witnesses or those who had heard the radio reports. Schley and I worked together quite a bit toward the end of April. We both had a second interview with East Palestine Patrolman Wayne Huston, and found him to be rather bothered by the "satellite -- Venus" conclusion. He was sure he

had not chased a planet, but the newspaper and some public officials in his community had not felt it was proper for him to leave the area unprotected to assist another officer in pursuit of an object of doubtful reality. As was the case with Spaur, Huston was being harassed with phone calls and letters and incessant jokes. Schley and I were hard put to keep from sympathizing with him. We simply harassed him a little more, for a signed account of his observation, and left.

On April 27 and 28 I visited several state police, sheriff's office, and city police radio stations in eastern Ohio, to see if their operators had anything to offer. I got the following intriguing report at the Salem, Ohio police station, from officers Ray Esterly, Lonnie Johnson, Lt. Richard Whinnery, and radio operator Jack Cramer, who had all heard the radio traffic on the 17th. Here, also, I interviewed Deputy Sheriff Dave Brothers, who had not only listened to the traffic but had talked with Spaur, Neff and Huston on the return trip.

About 5:20 on the morning of April 17, officers Esterly and Johnson decided to go to a hill near Salem and watch for the UFO, as they expected it to come through that town on Route 14A. To their surprise, they saw instead a UFO in the east. At first they did not notice the object, but saw a jet plane flying from north to south almost due east, and (as they estimated) about 10 miles away from

the first jet, two more arcing in to follow it. Then they saw a bright dot of light in front of the first jet, about a mile away. At this time Spaur and Neff were passing through Columbiana County, near the Firestone Farms, in the same direction from Johnson and Esterly as the object they watched. The Salem officers reported their observation to Jack Cramer. Just after this, Cramer and Lt. Whinnery heard a strange voice on their radio, with no announcement or identification: "It looks like a ball of fire. I'm going down for a closer look." There was a short pause; then, excitedly: "I'm right above it! It's about 45 feet across, and it's trailing something." That was the last that was heard from the "voice."

I asked Cramer what he thought this was all about. "Well, it's pretty obvious, isn't it?" he said. "I mean, that was one of the planes that was following that thing those Portage County deputies were chasing."

The report interested me because the jets would have been coming from the direction of Youngstown, a few minutes after Deputy Robert Wilson requested that interceptors be sent up. A radio report the next morning said some had, and that one of the pilots had heard a buzzing noise in his cockpit when he approached the UFO. The Air Force denied the report promptly.

It is also interesting, but in a rather vague way, that at the same time this was happening in Salem, Deputy Wilson noted that Spaur's voice sounded strangely

garbled and high pitched, as though his transmission was being interfered with.

Radio operator Wilson said he thought it might have been due to Spaur's getting excited; I thought of "EM effect." UFOs sometimes cause electromagnetic effects on radios and other electrical systems. Could this one have affected Spaur's transmission and that of the jet plane's transmitter? Both units work by frequency modulation; the jet's at several hundred megacycles. An overloaded frequency multiplier circuit in the jet's transmitter, when it was close to the UFO, might have caused transmission at a lower frequency, such as that used by the Ohio police (39.58 mc). But this is just speculation. The main point of interest in the Salem police report is that jet planes were observed, apparently in pursuit of the UFO.

Deputy Brothers, whom Cramer called in, had a somewhat poignant note to add to his testimony. As he left the station, I asked him to get in touch with me if he heard anything more about the April 17 sighting. "The way they make you sound, you're better off not to," he said. "What do you mean?" I asked. "The way they make a fool of you, you're better off not to." I asked again what he meant. "Who makes a fool of you?" "Well, the things like they come up with, this 'chasing Venus.' I think that's ridiculous, for cryin' out -- they ought to just say they don't know, and be done with it. But I don't know whether they know." I gathered he was referring to Project Blue Book, but offered no comment.



THE HEARING

Congressman William Stanton finally concluded, after nearly two weeks, that he was not going to get a written reply from the Air Force, so he visited the Pentagon and talked with Lt. Col. John Spaulding, Chief of the Community Relations Division, USAF, which has handled inquiries about UFO reports in the past. The colonel admitted that Project Blue Book had made an "error" in not sending someone to Portage County, and promised that this would be done within a week.

On May 9, Deputy Spaur called to tell me Major Quintanilla was coming to Ravenna the next day, to interview him.

I phoned Huston and Panzanella immediately. Had any USAF representatives gotten testimony from them yet? No. Could they get to Ravenna tomorrow afternoon and back up Spaur's testimony? No. Panzanella was on duty at that time. Huston, no longer with the police force, was working full time and could not leave his job.

Spaur was worried that Major Quintanilla expected to interview only him, and not take corroborating testimony. He asked me to tape the session. I was ready with my recorder. While he had some trepidations about the meeting, he was glad to be able to confront the major directly and give his full story. For three weeks he had been worn down by jokes and questions about his experience, and he felt the Air Force's failure to acknowledge the reality of the object he'd chased had not

helped the situation.

Major Quintanilla showed surprise, and a little nervousness, when he met us in the sheriff's office. "I didn't expect all these people. I thought I'd just talk to officer Spaur." With Spaur were Sheriff Dustman, reporters Carol Clapp and Tom Schley, myself, and another NICAP investigator from Alliance, David Webb. We all crowded into a small elevator and went to the second floor of the Court House, and entered one of the offices. Shortly after we arrived, Deputies Wilson and Neff came in. The major gave his permission to record the interview; I turned on the machine, with a two-hour tape.

The major began: "I'm not here to conduct an inquisition. I just want you men to tell me in your own words what you saw. First I'd like you to fill out these forms." He passed out copies of the Air Force's UFO reporting form for witnesses, and Spaur and Neff began filling them out.

Spaur came to a question that amused him. "Here's a good question -- excuse me, sir -- 'We wish to know the angular size. Hold a match stick at arm's length in line with a known object, and note how much the object is covered by the head of the match.' It'd take a hell of a boxcar load of matches to cover that thing up. This is at the time we saw it?" "Mm hmm," the major replied. "You're not gonna believe it," Spaur said. "Put it down the way you experienced it," the major replied. "Don't, uh --" "The head of a match," Spaur said incredulously. "This

thing was like a three bedroom ranch home at the time right then." The major made no reply, but let the men continue filling out the forms. They offered a few more comments before they finished, adding details. Then the major asked Webb and me to leave the room, probably so as not to interfere with his oral interview with the deputies. "They can tell you all they know afterwards," he said.

Reporters Clapp and Schley had left a bit earlier on their own initiative, thinking their presence might confuse the interview. We all sat in the hall outside the hearing room until the end, keeping our fingers crossed that the tape recorder had not been turned off. A few times there were shouts and bursts of laughter from inside the office, but it was hard to tell what was being said. The laughter was especially perplexing.

When the four of us went back into the room, the officers looked baffled. I glanced over at the recorder -- it was still running. I asked Spaur if the major had finally agreed with him, and was astonished to learn that he still claimed the men had first seen an artificial satellite, then chased after Venus -- not only that, but he had tried to persuade them! I decided to ask the major some pertinent questions.

"Has anyone from your office interviewed Huston or Panzanella?" I asked first. "Who are they?" he replied. I told him; he wrote down their names and said he would send someone to talk with them. I asked about the report of a jet pilot getting

close enough to the object to describe it over the radio. "Who was the pilot?" the major asked. "I thought you could tell me that," I said. "No jets were scrambled," he said. I told him several police officers had seen jets chasing the object or had heard reports of this being done, during the chase. "Where were the jets from?" he asked. "I thought maybe you would have some information about that," I replied. "No jets were scrambled," he repeated.

The county solicitor brought in some welcome cups of coffee and passed them out. The atmosphere became almost convivial, the ten of us talking at once. But there was a lot of tension evident. I continued my questions. How did Major Quintanilla account for the maneuvers of the UFO?

"He had atmospheric noise, visual noise. This is the reason I carry binoculars with me at all times." I didn't see any binoculars, but knew what he meant.

Fluctuations of air density in the lower and upper atmosphere had distorted the image and apparent position of the satellite or Venus, causing it to appear to jump about. I tried to point out that the object had been seen in just about every direction of the compass, and had been seen on the other side of the moon from Venus, near the end of the sighting. "How about the fact that it was seen to the north, when they were driving east, and it seemed due south, when they were driving --" "They were changing directions," the major interrupted. "Yes, but they saw this to the north when they were going east; it was to their left. And

then when they were going south, it was ahead of them." "You have to get on the road," the major replied, "and I'm checking on the road, and this thing would have been to the left."

I had driven the route several times, and now I realized that Major Quintanilla was thinking about the early news reports, which had shown the deputies headed down Route 14A. That road does go southeast, at least until it reaches Salem. If they had been headed in that direction, Venus might indeed have been seen slightly to the left of their direction of travel. At this point, however, I was getting a bit confused, and believed the major to be claiming the men had been chasing a satellite down Route 14A. As a matter of fact, the more I discussed this with the major, the more I became confused over whether it was he or I that was confused. Fortunately, the tape recorder was running.

I knew the major was attributing the gross changes in direction of the UFO to changes in the road direction as well as to "atmospheric noise." I pointed out that at Canfield, the men had changed their travel in a right angle, from east to south, and that the object had moved around more than could be accounted for by changes of road direction. This is more or less what I had been saying already, but I tried a slightly different tack.

"This road had a right angle bend at Canfield," I said, "and they were going east; and the object was seen to the north -- following along side the road. And

then when they headed south, the object was ahead of them, to the south. If you're aimed south, and something's in front, then it's to the south; and if you're aimed east, and something's to the left, then it's north."

"Of course," said the major. Now I thought I could make my point.

"Then how could a satellite have been seen following them along the road to the north, and then when they turned and went south --" The major interrupted to point out that a satellite could not be seen for more than ten minutes, and this object was, he said (incorrectly) in view for an hour and thirty five minutes.

"How could that have been a satellite, then?" I noticed that the room had grown quieter; our discussion was gaining attention. But the major was near the end of his patience. "I didn't say that was a satellite, did I? I said his first observation, that caused his attention; but I don't want to get into a squabble."

"Well -- look --"

"No! Good afternoon!"

"You're not going to examine the data?" I plunged ahead.

"I've examined the data," the major said frostily.

"Did you examine the data that it moved relative to the --"

"Look, young fella, I'm finished with you!"

I couldn't stop. "Does Venus move relative to the moon?"

"No!"

"Well, this thing did."

"Of course, because Venus is on the ecliptic just the same as the moon is and just the same as Jupiter." The logic of this answer escaped me.

"Did they tell you that 'Venus,' that this object, rose at the left of the moon, that it was below it, it rose -- "

"Yes, it rose up and down, and to the left and to the right."

"And that's Venus."

"Yes."

"When they were standing still?"

"Son, if you don't know anything about atmospheric conditions, I'm sorry."

I could only make a half-hearted attempt at sarcasm: "Well, Major Quintanilla, if you don't know anything about language, I'm very sorry -- this is most remarkable!"

But he had left the room.

David Webb questioned Spaur. "Did you tell him you saw the moon, and what you thought was Venus, and also the object at the same time? What did he say to this?" Spaur answered sardonically, "He said I didn't see it. He said I had a misconception of a conventional aircraft, and hallucination of astronomical phenomena, or something. I don't know, it hurts a lot -- " And the room exploded in laughter, relieving the tension.

Several people from the radio and newspapers tried to get statements from Major Quintanilla and me that afternoon. The major had nothing to say, and I declined extensive comment until I could hear the entire tape recording. I did suggest, and now believe, that Major Quintanilla had come to Portage County with his conclusion ready, and only listened politely, which on the whole he did, to testimony. At no time while he was interviewing the men did anyone see him taking notes. The next day Chief Buchert told me he had been visited by the major after the hearing. He tried to convince the chief he had seen Venus, asking very few questions. It may be indeed that Buchert did see Venus, but the major seemed to think this planet accounted for everything that happened the morning of April 17. Buchert did not want to talk about the incident any more; he could not handle the telephone calls and curiosity seekers.

The deputies and Sheriff Dustman were fed up, and made no bones about their discouragement. "It's too bad when these things are running around through our skies and the Air Force doesn't know what they are," Dustman said in an interview to Carol Clapp. His private remarks were more caustic.

Spaur's attitude was uncommonly generous. "I respect the man as an officer," he said about Major Quintanilla. "He had a job to do, and he did it. I don't blame him for that. But I know damn well I wasn't chasing Venus!" Spaur would not



elaborate on what he thought it was Major Quintanilla's job to do, but it was clear he thought it had something to do with denying UFO reports. Perhaps this is the way one should interpret a later remark by the major to Carol Clapp: "My most unpleasant task is to tell people they didn't see what they thought they saw."

On the evening following the interview in the Court House, I listened to the tape recording of that part of the hearing from which I had been absent. I discovered that the major had received testimony three times that Venus was seen in addition to the object, on the other side of the moon. Neff had emphasized that he and Spaur had been aware of the difference between real and apparent changes of direction of the UFO. "We went into Canfield, it had come across the front of the road, and we turned off to the right. And it was over to the right of us then, and that threw it back over to the left hand side of the cruiser. And it seemed like it just went off the road and quit; when we were going a little bit south, it turned and came right back with us. South."

Once Major Quintanilla seemed to be trying to get Spaur to describe a satellite observation, at the beginning of the sighting. Spaur had been describing the movement of the object after they got into their cruiser. He used the term, "set," instead of "sat." "So we both went for the car, we got in the car, and we set there, I wouldn't even venture if it was ten seconds, thirty seconds, three

minutes. . . . I had some things to say, but I didn't. And it just set there, right out east of us, right straight sprung out in the center; I mean, it was low, and it was big, and great God Almighty, it was -- " "O.K., Dale," the major interrupted. "When it came up to the top, to where it set in the east -- didn't you say, it was going east and setting -- how long did that take?" The major stressed the words. Spaur seemed to catch the implication.

"It just moved right up and stopped; it didn't go any distance; it wasn't a hundred, two hundred fifty feet in front of the car. And everything was lit up, it was real bright, and it was low, and at this time if I'd have had to describe it, I'd have said it just looks like a, a, hell, it was big as a house! This thing was, uh, it was no toy; this thing is, I mean, you don't look up and say, a guy holds up and says, 'From this pin, how much would you say it was covered?' This thing is big enough to cover the road! This is 224 from berm to berm, this thing would have covered!"

Spaur told me later he was feeling rather frustrated at times during the interview. He believed Major Quintanilla was accusing him, indirectly, of having lost his wits after seeing an artificial satellite. At one point Spaur brought this to a head. The major had just finished giving a brief lecture on optical illusions and astronomy to the deputies, trying to persuade them they

had seen a satellite and Venus. Spaur continued his testimony. "O.K., granted, you have this. Now -- this thing is this large; this big and this low; and these people watched this thing over in the Mogadore area; they report it, and I follow it, and I have Barney with me, we're going down the road; so you're gonna discount, well, there's two nuts; we're running Venus. Now, Venus -- "

This seemed to irritate the major. "Now, wait a minute -- " But Spaur would not be stopped. "Well, wait a minute, let me speak -- " "You used the wrong word," the major said. Their voices raised in competition. "O.K.," Spaur began, "well -- " "I'm an officer in the United States Air Force -- " "Right, you definitely are!" Spaur rejoined -- "and I don't call anybody a nut!"

"No, O.K., then," Spaur said, "I have hallucinations then! But this is, what I've been saying, -- " The major interrupted again: "I didn't say you were having hallucinations." Spaur tried not to listen. "What I'm trying to say is this: I'm going down the road; now this thing, that I am following -- " "And treat me with the same respect that I treat you," Major Quintanilla added.

Spaur thought quickly of what his life had been like the past three weeks. "I will, sir, I am; I'll treat you with more respect than I've been treated the last twenty days!"

"I'm not calling you a nut; I'm not saying you had hallucinations!" The major was emphatic. "All right," Spaur said, tired of the diversion. "Anyway, this thing

passes over another police car. He watches it go by, he's spotted it now.

This is two cars, that's fixed on Venus. So we're going down the road. And we get into Conway, Pennsylvania, and this thing passes over the third car, that's sitting there. Not even on the same frequency, I never met, seen, spoke to before nor after this, another officer. He's watching the same thing as it goes over top of him, going towards Pittsburgh, as we come screaming in. Now: we watched it, four men, standing right there, four officers. Probably, you say anything you want, we stood right there, watched it, watched the plane go underneath of it, and watched it make a vertical climb straight up, and this, sir, my knowledge is God's truth. The only thing left to even look at, after we went to the station and called the guy, was the one bright spot that was there, . . . right straight off that moon."

"That was the mother ship," Wilson said jokingly.

"The other ship?"

"The mother ship!" Wilson repeated.

"Oh," said Spaur wearily. "The mother ship. You guys are gonna have me convinced pretty soon --- Aw, give me a tranquilizer and some coffee!"

That interchange had been the source of one of the outbursts of shouts and laughter I had heard earlier. The whole tape seemed to follow this general

pattern. The officers would give some testimony, Major Quintanilla would turn it aside or reinterpret it, and a joke would be made. It was amusing but, at the same time, appalling.

Congressman Stanton's attempt to redeem the situation had obviously gone awry. Judge Cook told Carol Clapp he was writing again to Mr. Stanton: "Let's tell the American people the truth about UFOs -- when the Air Force cannot identify object sighted in the skies by competent observers, they should admit it. . . . People are not swallowing this explanation about Venus. . . . There is no reason why, if the object cannot actually be identified, the Air Force should try and explain away each sighting other than to say it just doesn't know what the observer saw. There's no need to come up with an explanation just to have an explanation, ridiculous though it may be."

Stanton reacted by writing to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, urging that "serious consideration" be given to the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board's recommendation, which appeared in February last year, to expand UFO investigative efforts. Judge Cook again criticized the Blue Book investigation, and lauded Stanton's continued concern. "This is still a ridiculous conclusion -- Blue Book should be modified to not go to this degree in attempting to explain a sighting."

THE RE-RE-EVALUATION

I was a bit stunned at the turn of events on May 10. I had been hopeful that a re-evaluation would come out in favor of the officers. But I had little appreciation before then of the immovable object that was Project Blue Book. As this became evident, I took it upon myself to play the role of irresistible force, and see if I could solve the age-old riddle of what happens when one meets the other. The "force," naturally, could be only that of reason; on any other grounds, or in the air, there would be no contest. I was to see my true role to deteriorate to ineffective optimist, but in early May the issue seemed clearcut and capable of being settled. The facts pointed to one conclusion: the officers had seen a flying object that could not be identified by conventional means. If anything deserved the term "UFO," this thing did. Major Quintanilla apparently believed the contrary. All I had to do was to show him the light of reason.

First I wrote to Congressman Stanton to inform him his aim in bringing about the hearing had been frustrated. Before getting into the sad details, I emphasized that Major Quintanilla had been polite and cordial, and had expressed his regret that the officers had only chased Venus. He had reassured them that other people had made similar mistakes. Regardless of my strong disagreement with his conclusion, I wanted to make clear that he had been "an officer and a gentleman," in the best military tradition. I also pointed out that none of the testimony was explained by

his explanation. To back up that claim, I included a transcript I had typed of the major portion of the hearing, including all the testimony, and sent also an unedited copy of the tape recording from which the transcript was made. Mr. Stanton forwarded this material to the Air Force. He received no comment from anyone.

On May 17, the same day I sent the transcript to Congressman Stanton, I sent Major Quintanilla a four-page letter pointing out over a dozen points of testimony, which I quoted, from the May 10 hearing, which did not fit with his explanation. I drew a picture of the relative positions of the moon, Venus, and the UFO at the end of the sighting, which was based on a similar sketch Spaur had made on a photograph of the Conway area I showed him. I pointed out the references to this situation -- the relative positions of the three objects -- in the testimony. I also reminded him of the corroboration offered by Patrolmen Huston and Panzarella. The only word I got from him for quite a while was a signed Certified Mail receipt.

I then tried to assemble what material I had, including dozens of hours of tape recorded testimony, into a report for NICAP. I had been telephoning the Washington office regularly to keep them posted; but it was about time I put all the material in writing. On June 28 I sent a 126-page report which included transcripts of testimony from the major witnesses and officers involved in the sighting, letters, signed statements, discussions, the chief newspaper clippings,

and other documents. Almost all the clippings were the work of Carol Clapp, who had done an exemplary reporting job.

One point in particular I tried to emphasize was that I had no personal grudge against Project Blue Book, although this agency came out on the short end in the report. I was glad to be able to include a letter received about June 18, from Congressman Stanton, which said, "I have been completely impressed by your positive approach to the subject. It is this type of constructive attitude that accomplishes things rather than simply taking a destructive position in regard to the Air Force." It had been, and still is, my position that criticism for its own sake is worthless. Mine was always directed toward an accurate evaluation of the April 17 sighting.

I sent a copy of the report to Mr. Stanton, at the same time asking if he could find out why I had not heard from Major Quintanilla. I also wrote to Colonel Spaulding, asking that the April 17 case be re-examined. I summarized the situation to date.

On July 15 I moved to Washington to work at the NICAP office for a few weeks. Near the end of that month I received replies from Mr. Stanton and Major Quintanilla. Mr. Stanton had heard from Colonel Dwight Covell, in the office of Legislative Liason, USAF, that Major Quintanilla would be writing to me shortly. The major's letter arrived in the same mail. It was an enigma.



"Achieving a scientific and objective explanation of all UFO reports is of great importance to me," he wrote. "I regret your feeling that certain factors of the report were disregarded. There was no attempt on my part to do so."

What about the men seeing the UFO come initially from the southwest, then from the south, over the road to the north, returning to hover? They were watching a satellite coming from the northwest. "As the satellite approached the southeast portion of the sky, the satellite disappeared and then the observers focused on the planet Venus." What about the men telling him several times that Venus was seen on the opposite side of the moon from the UFO? What about the sketch I drew for the major in my May 17 letter, showing the three objects? "I ask you," he asked, "why didn't any of the witnesses observe Venus which was definitely rising in the southeast? Had such an observance been made, new light would have been shed on the case." I couldn't help laughing at the major's pun.

Again, "I ask you why wasn't Venus observed when the planet was definitely there? Without a reference point, Venus would have appeared to perform erratic maneuvers." Venus had been only  $9^{\circ}$ , less than a handbreadth at arm's length, from the moon that morning.

Finally, the major's concluding argument: "On no account did any information in the Ravenna sighting prove to me that an extraterrestrial vehicle was observed.

22

I would have to have concrete evidence that actual spaceships are maneuvering about our planet at will and against all laws of space flight mechanics, to believe their existence."

I sat for a long time and reflected on the letter. "I agree with you, Major," I imagined myself saying to him. "I agree 100% that none of the testimony proves the presence of a spaceship in Portage County on April 17. But --- Would you believe an unidentified flying object?"

In the NICAP office the next day, I drafted a reply to the major's letter. My arguments were logical, incisive, and absolutely incontrovertible. I showed the 3-page masterpiece to Richard Hall. "No good," he said. "You've covered too much ground. Now that you have that ridiculous comment about Venus to go on, just send back a brief note pointing out that Venus was reported separately from the object."

I tore up the letter and decided that further correspondence with Major Quintanilla was hopeless. As far as the Venus-moon-UFO situation was concerned, what more could one do than draw a picture?

Instead, I wrote a summary of the situation to date and sent it to General Cruikshank, Commander of the Foreign Technology Division at Wright-Patterson AFB, of which division Blue Book is a part. I asked if anything could be done "to

redeem the situation." I expected to wait another week or two for any more developments, and settled back down to the NICAP office routine of handling incoming UFO reports. It was by no means dull work, but I couldn't get the Portage County case off my mind.

Two days later, Richard Hall got a promising phone call from Dr. James E. McDonald, Senior Physicist at the University of Arizona's Institute of Atmospheric Physics. Dr. McDonald had become curious lately as to Blue Book's method of operation; he felt not enough was being done to investigate UFO reports by the government. He wanted to tell Hall about a real wing-ding of an argument he had gotten into recently with Major Quintanilla, during one of his visits, over the Portage County case. Dr. McDonald kept citing Patrolman Huston's observations as corroboration of the deputies' report. Finally the major promised he would change the conclusion from "satellite - Venus," if he got the support of his superior officer, Colonel Louis DeGoes, and Dr. J. Allen Hynek. I felt the "!" when I recalled a statement the major had made two months before, that Dr. Hynek passed final judgment on all "astronomical" conclusions of Project Blue Book. Major Quintanilla's statement appeared in a series of articles Carol Clapp wrote in the Record-Courier, after she visited Wright-Patterson AFB. It implied, of course, that Dr. Hynek had already "approved" this sighting.

Dr. McDonald encouraged me and Richard Hall to watch for a press release from

Blue Book any day now, reversing the conclusion to "unknown."

After several days with nothing forthcoming, I called Dr. McDonald to check on what he had told Hall. He affirmed the promise of Major Quintanilla. I called Colonel Freeman, USAF Chief of the Civil Branch, Community Relations Division, in the Pentagon. He had lately taken over handling UFO inquiries. He said if such a reversal had come through, it would be known by Colonel R. R. Hippler, in the office of Deputy Chief of Staff for Research and Development.

I called Colonel Hippler. He suggested calling Major Quintanilla. Fortunately the major was in Washington and I reached him in a few moments. He said the Portage County case was completely out of his hands, that the decision to re-re-evaluate rested with Colonel DeGoes and Dr. Hynek, to whom the major had mailed the USAF case file and the NICAP June 28 report, at his Ontario vacation home.

I called Colonel DeGoes at Wright-Patterson. He claimed he knew nothing of any re-re-evaluation, and reminded me that Dr. Hynek was on vacation. I told him what the major had told me, and reviewed the situation. He said he would look into it as soon as the major returned to the base.

I felt like I was on a merry-go-round, with the hopes for a re-re-evaluation about as big as a brass ring just beyond arm's length.

I called Colonel Freeman again to tell him what had transpired. He was a

reasonable man and pleasant to converse with. We got to talking about what I found most frustrating in Blue Book's explanation of the April 17 sighting; namely, what was due to Major Quintanilla's "most unpleasant task" -- the deputies being told they hadn't seen what they believed they had seen.

"It's as though your car had broken down on a highway," I said to the colonel, "and you walked to a service station at some distance to report the damage, and a mechanic said to you, 'You must be mistaken. I don't see anything wrong.'"

"Yeah," said Colonel Freeman. "That rod sticking out of the top of the engine doesn't mean a thing!" He said he would call as soon as he got word of any new action by Blue Book on the Portage County case.

The next day, August 6, a letter came from Colonel Florian A. Holm, new Commander of the Foreign Technology Division. He acknowledged receipt of my letters and report to General Cruikshank and Colonel DeGoes, but said nothing definite. On August 10 I visited Colonel Freeman's office at the Pentagon and talked with his secretary, Miss Sara Hunt. She called Wright-Patterson, but found no change of conclusion. The next day I went over to see Congressman Stanton at the Capitol. This was the first time we had met in person, and we had a good talk.

Mr. Stanton said he was still concerned over Blue Book's conclusion, but did not see what else could be done. I suggested a direct letter to Major Quintanilla. He said he would write one as soon as I could get him a summary of the way things

20

stood to date. When I got back to the NICAP office, I started in on this. I thought I ought to call Project Blue Book and find out for myself what was going on with the Portage County case, or what wasn't.

Lt. Marley, the other staff officer (besides Major Quintanilla) answered. He said he knew nothing of any projected change of conclusion; would check with Major Quintanilla when he got in the next day.

I called again August 12. Lt. Marley said he had just talked with Colonel DeGoes, who had discussed the case with Major Quintanilla. Lt. Marley said they had read the NICAP report, but were still standing firm, as he put it. No change of conclusion. Still "satellite - Venus."

Was Dr. Hynek consulted, I wanted to know. Lt. Marley said he was still on vacation in Ontario. In a remarkably calm tone of voice, I think, I ran through the history of all the events up to this moment, concerning the case. The lieutenant said he was not very familiar with the case, but had heard from Major Quintanilla that the deputies' testimony was confused: they had reported the object in several different directions. I explained this was because it had been in different positions.

Lt. Marley said the major was sticking with the testimony he had collected the first week after the sighting, rather than that obtained in Ravenna May 10.

What did Colonel Spaulding mean, I asked, in telling Mr. Stanton the major's early investigation had been in error, and why did the major go to Ravenna at all, if it were not to correct the error? How could the few minutes of testimony gotten the first week after the sighting stack up against what the major had heard in Ravenna, and taken as written reports? What about the testimony from Officers Huston and Panzanella?

Lt. Marley replied that he was not familiar with the details of the case, but was sure the major and Colonel DeGoes were "standing firm."

We went on like this for a while, but nothing was settled. I hung up wondering just what role Dr. Hynek was playing in this, why Major Quintanilla had mentioned him at all during the last few weeks.

On August 17, Dr. Hynek's views finally reached the public. Carol Clapp had interviewed him and found he had read the NICAP report, and disagreed with Blue Book's conclusion. To him, the crucial question was, "What did the deputies see rise over the treetops?"

On August 18, Congressman Stanton wrote to Major Quintanilla, asking for a review of his re-re-evaluation. "It certainly seems most significant to me," he stated, "that the officers reported seeing Venus as well as the other object which they described as being as large as an airplane. . . ."

THE RE-RE-RE-EVALUATION.

At about this time I got word on recent developments with Spaur and Huston.

The publicity of their experiences had been too much for them. Spaur had left his job as Deputy Sheriff and was "hiding" in a lonely Ohio motel. Huston had left the state entirely and moved out west. Certainly their UFO sighting was not the sole source of their problems; everybody has problems, but in their cases, the problems they already had were underscored by their finding it hard to lead a normal life.

A change of the Air Force's evaluation from "satellite-Venus" to "unknown" would do little to rectify whatever problems the witnesses had at this point, but it still seemed important, at least for the record, to have it acknowledged that their behavior on that morning four months ago was sensible, and not the result of irresponsible, hysterical stargazing.

It was clear that my being a member of NICAP was a disadvantage. Because NICAP holds that "extraterrestrial origin" is a reasonable hypothesis that explains observations of huge, apparently maneuvering, metallic-appearing aerial objects, and because NICAP had, in the past, challenged the Air Force's evaluations of UFO sightings (sometimes bringing about a change to "unknown," as in the famous Exeter, New Hampshire sighting of September 3, 1965, described in John Fuller's



Incident at Exeter)) it was apparently most difficult for Blue Book to agree with NICAP that what might have been a spaceship was the object of the Ohio officers' chase. There seemed to be other difficulties, too, in bringing about an evaluation more in line with testimony. One was Major Quintanilla's investigative rule of thumb, that precluded an "unknown" interpretation from the start, observational reports to the contrary. As he put it on May 10, "I've checked all the activity that morning (April 17), and no conventional flying objects were in the area. So it must have been an astronomical object." The officers' report of "activity" was irrelevant.

Another difficulty was less easy to put a finger on. For a long time, Blue Book had had a reputation for pooh-poohing UFO reports, almost as if a policy existed against acknowledging them. Two weeks after Congressman Stanton wrote to Major Quintanilla, some light was thrown on this situation by the Saturday Review, which published an article by John Lear about a "CIA document" on UFOs. As a result of a meeting of a panel of scientists and representatives of the CIA, held in 1953 for the purpose of deciding how the Air Force should continue to deal with UFO reports, this document recommended that the public be educated to shrug them off as insignificant. "The 'debunking' aim would result in reduction in public interest in 'flying saucers' which today evokes a strong psychological reaction. . . . Such a program should tend to reduce the current gullibility of the public," states a

version of this report edited, or "sanitized," by the CIA. But Blue Book had gone too far with the debunking, whose ostensible purpose was to keep the USAF information channels free from erroneous UFO reports. Many were not erroneous. "Floyd" seemed real enough.

In September, I moved back to Bradford to continue teaching, but kept in touch with the Portage County situation. Two letters to Colonel Holm, FTD Commander at Wright-Patterson, went unanswered. Then on October 4, a letter came from Congressman Stanton. He enclosed a letter he had gotten from the Air Force.

It was incredible.

Colonel Hayden Mims, in the USAF Congressional Inquiry Division, Office of Legislative Liason, had replied for Major Quintanilla to Mr. Stanton's August 18 inquiry. Colonel Mims's letter entirely misrepresented the April 17 sighting report. It read more like a rumor than a report. Still "satellite - Venus," of course.

My initial reaction on reading the letter was a dull discouragement. What was the use of all this? I would write a letter, Mr. Stanton would write a letter, some Air Force officer would write a letter, phone calls would be made, weeks would go by and then, with some small variation in sequence, the game would be repeated. Blue Book's general approach followed the motto, "My mind is made up; don't confuse me with facts." Clearly, if Blue Book wanted to say someone's UFO sighting were due to an overdose of tomato juice, it could say so without fear of contradiction.

The "immovable object" had better ways to spend its time than answer silly letters about flying saucers. Didn't I have better ways to spend mine than to write them?

NICAP had been differing for years with the Air Force about its conclusions to particular UFO sightings. What had it gotten NICAP? A reputation for arguing with the Air Force. What was this disagreement of mine getting me? I couldn't think of NICAP's successes, only my failure. What it was getting me was a minor role in a pointless melodrama. "Will the dauntless NICAP agent struggle through the marsh of red tape and hold Truth high, shining for all to see?" Phew! Who'd want to tune in tomorrow to that?

I naturally thought of various comments people had made about my challenging Blue Book's conclusion. A well known scientist interested in UFO phenomena had tried to discourage me. "It's obvious to any scientist who looks at the facts, that your report is valid," he said. "Don't muddy up the issue by trying to vindicate the police officers." And I recalled Dr. McDonald's encouragement to bring all the facts into the open for a fresh airing.

Things dropped into perspective. I wasn't fighting any great cause. The only great thing about the last five month's interchange of words was the number of words. The issue was as simple now as it had been at the beginning: Had the officers chased Venus? And I would not take "Yes" for an answer.

I re-read Colonel Mims' letter to Congressman Stanton carefully:

"The Air Force has carefully considered your suggestion that the Portage County sighting should be changed to unknown. However, after again reviewing the statements submitted by all of the persons involved, it was determined that the original evaluation should stand.

"Statements were received from personnel at the Greater Pittsburgh Airport, Pennsylvania, Chief of Police Buchert, Mantua, Ohio, and Deputy Sheriffs Dale Spaur and Wilbur Neff. We think it should be noted that Sheriff Neff's statement was exactly the same as that of Sheriff Spaur. The other statements did differ in a number of respects; however, this information must also be taken into consideration.

"Sheriff Spaur's statement is purely subjective and impossible to duplicate. He stated that the object was right over the Greater Pittsburgh Airport and that an aircraft had flown directly over the object. When a check was made with the tower operator to determine whether he had observed the object that Sheriff Spaur was reporting, he stated he did not see it. However, he asked the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) radar controllers if they could make contact. The FAA controllers could not pick up the object that Sheriff Spaur was reporting. Two days after the observation, the Air Force contacted the radar site at Oakdale Army Installation, Oakdale, Pennsylvania, and asked if they had picked up any unusual radar tracks. Their reply was also negative.

"Sheriff Spaur also made the statement that at daybreak, the object disappeared within a matter of two or three seconds while traveling through a 90-degree arc. If this had been the case, we believe that someone in the vicinity would have heard a sonic boom. There were no reports of sonic booms in Pittsburgh or adjacent areas during that time.

"Chief Buchert was involved in the sighting only at the beginning. The Air Force also took into consideration his report, his description of the object, and the photographs which he submitted to the Air Force. His statements regarding the object

lead the Air Force to believe that he was observing Venus and that he also tried to photograph that planet.

"We hope you will understand that the Air Force is not questioning the integrity of any of the observers; however, considering the information we have received about this experience or event, we must try to explain it in terms of the data available. You may be assured that the Air Force has tried to make an honest evaluation of what transpired with all the information which was collected."

It looked as though Colonel Mims had made a hasty phone call to Major Quintanilla, or the reverse, to get this information. One of the major's pet phrases, "90-degree climb," by which he means "straight up," could account for the error, "while traveling through a 90-degree arc." Of course, regarding that point, a sonic boom would not be expected in the first place; the shock wave would not have propagated in the right direction, from vertical movement. And the object could have disappeared in a fraction of a minute simply by "turning off its light," in the bright morning sky.

I wrote a long rebuttal, noting other points of discrepancy, and red herrings. One red herring was the argument based on lack of radar reports. The Air Force is itself working on radar absorbent materials (RAM), to render normally reflective objects "invisible" to any radar signals. Furthermore, Lt. Stephen Paquette, a radar operator and officer in charge of UFO reports at Oakdale, had told me he knew about the April 17 report and would not have expected Oakdale's radar to detect it!

The mistake about the airplane being seen flying over the object, and the error in its location ("over the Greater Pittsburgh Airport") led me to think the main source of information for Colonel Mims' letter was not the testimony from the deputies and police officers, but the official FAA report, which is skimpy and is the only record I know of with the mistake about the airplane. That report reads as follows:

"(5:58 AM EST) Rcvd call from State Police at BVR & Rochester Police. Seems that some Ohio police had spotted this flying object flying SE bnd in venty E Palestine. They took after it & were able to follow it by maintaining speed of approx 105 mph. It was large, round, had a large antenna sticking out of the top & several big white lights around it. They wer on Rt. 51 & they lost it as it crossed the river east bnd. They saw UA7454 lvg here enrt BUF & this object went blo United. It was approx 500', United was climbing to 19,000. Ckd & pilots didn't see anything. Referred to USAF for action. . . ."

Of course, if the UFO were over the airport, one would expect it to be seen under the airplane. But in fact it was 90<sup>60</sup> away -- the airport is due south of Conway; the object was seen to the east. Since it was close to the men, its line of sight elevation could have been <sup>higher</sup> ~~lower~~ than that of the plane. And their testimony was unequivocal on this point.

In summary, the rebuttal said: "This letter from Colonel Mims indicates that Blue Book -- specifically, Major Quintanilla and the unknown re-evaluator -- overlooked corroborating testimony resting in Blue Book's files. It focuses on Dale Spaur as the

chief witness, and belittles his testimony, with pejorative and erroneous references."

I sent a copy to Colonel Mims, Mr. Stanton, and several other interested parties, and began writing letters right and left to the USAF officers involved in the evaluation, whether directly involved or not.

I announced to Colonel Holm that NICAP was planning to publish a documented study of the case, which I would put together, and asked him to consider the objections to Blue Book's actions which would appear in that document:

"It is my concern to be completely fair in my discussion of Blue Book's handling of the April 17 event. I have no reason to believe, however, that the following criticisms are not sound and in realistic perspective:

1. That Major Quintanilla's concern to evaluate the event scientifically was minimal, or nil.
2. That the major consciously rejected attempts to have called to his attention features of the sighting that were relevant and highly significant, by his own stated criteria.
3. That the major rejected the solicited opinion of the Air Force's own scientific consultant, Dr. Hynek, on this case, and that the major went against his published word that Dr. Hynek passes final judgment on all cases whose designated conclusion is "astronomical."
4. That the Air Force has misled Congressman William Stanton as to the facts of the case, in details of both testimony and Blue Book's efforts.
5. That personnel connected with Project Blue Book, including those under whose purview that project falls, have pointedly ignored reasonable requests for an explanation for Major Quintanilla's failure to examine relevant testimony, particularly that from corroborating witnesses to the April 17 event.

"Let me emphasize that I have no intention of relating these criticisms to a charge of dishonesty on Major Quintanilla's part. In fact, I intend to make a point of my belief that the major has performed his role as Chief of Project Blue Book in what he sincerely believes to be a conscientious and competent manner. I do maintain, however, that his approach with regard to the April 17 event has shown a lack of scientific perspective and a strong prejudice concerning what counts as acceptable testimony, and that this bias has led to his making an intolerable mistake."

One day later, a letter arrived from Colonel Gerald Jorgensen, Chief of the Community Relations Division, USAF. The colonel indicated that the April 17 case was being re-re-re-evaluated. Or was it re-re-re-re-re-evaluated? I had lost track. His letter was so close on the heels of mine to Colonel Holm, it must only have been a reply to others I had sent, not quite so strong, in the last two weeks.

Things were looking up again, but I had good reason to squelch my optimism this time. Things had looked up before. At any rate, the tone of Colonel Jorgensen's letter was encouraging, and hinted at a full scale USAF review of the case. I waited impatiently, until November 7, when the following letter came from Colonel Freeman:

"I have undertaken this response relative to the Ravenna case and your recent letters to Colonel Holm, Colonel DeGoes, Colonel Jorgensen, Colonel Mims, Lt Colonel Hippler, Major Quintanilla and myself.

"The Ravenna case has been adjudged as presenting no evidence of a military threat to the United States and an explanation has been recorded as to the probable cause. Only in the event new tangible evidence is discovered will there be any reassessment of the case. In view of the lack of any physical evidence at any time to date such a reassessment is highly unlikely.



"We respect your right to disagree with Air Force findings in this case and understand your desire to convince us of the correctness of your assessment. We cannot agree, however, that continued review of portions of the case already well known to the principals can or will prove fruitful. Hence, correspondence toward that end is futile."

I called Colonel Freeman immediately to learn more about futility. (The ambiguity of that sentence is intended.) We talked for almost one and a half hours, having, as usual, a pleasant conversation. I must say that, of all the USAF officers I communicated with, in letters or on the phone, about the Portage County case, Colonel Freeman seemed like the voice of reason incarnate. In our talk, unfortunately, he admitted he had no knowledge of the specific details of the case; he had just been assigned to turn me down. He respected my disagreement in principle, and said I should feel free to publish or talk publicly about any aspects of it I wished. We indulged in a penetrating philosophical debate about the nature of evidence and criteria for evaluating observers' reports of their experiences. In the end, it came to this: Whether Blue Book's conclusion was true or not was of no concern to Blue Book. What mattered was whether the UFO had been a threat to the security of the United States. Since it had not, any explanation would do.

I wrote this, and the rest of the above, among other things, in a summary of our talk and mailed it to Colonel Freeman for his approval or disapproval. It has been five months since then, and he has not replied.

I no longer wait for an answer.

It was, I have to admit, a good lesson in futility.

END

## XII. Summary.

The UFO commentators in the period following the furor over the case have typically been very positive about the mysteriousness of the case, and that it is a definite "unknown". Allen Hynell featured it in his classic The UFO Experience, as did James McDonald in his article: UFOs: The Greatest Scientific Problem of Our Times?. Richard Hall gives it a few paragraphs in his Appendix on interesting cases in UFOlogy (Uninvited Guests). Both Margaret Sachs' and Ronald Story's encyclopedias have fine, accurate entries on the case (the latter by Dick Hall).

Because, perhaps, of the bad light that the case casts upon the USAF and debunking in general, the "professional" UFO debunkers have stayed away from it. The exception is Robert Schaeffer (The UFO Verdict) who devotes seventeen pages to it. If you have the stomach for it, I invite you to read this. You are now the expert with this pile of primary documentation in front of you; see if Mr. Schaeffer's views make any more sense than Quintanilla's. Regardless of what you decide, note something else that is almost a litmus test for this type of mentality: the astounding insensitivity to human beings who have misfortunes of whatever nature. Needless to say, Schaeffer ultimately (essentially) agrees with the USAF about Venus ... yes, I know ... bigger than a house, logging over both sides of the road, illuminating the ground and hurting the eyes, humming ... all those things that Venus does everyday in some people's reality. Quintanilla at least had some excuses: he was largely ignorant of the details and he was under orders. No one knows what motivates writers like Schaeffer.

There are obviously alternative hypotheses here, but satellites and Venus aren't among them. Satellites and Venus can not possibly deal with the initial experience of Spaur and Jeff. And, they can not deal with later elements of the "chase" either, since a third policeman (Houston) saw the same shaped object while the early phases of the chase were underway. Any alternative hypotheses have to deal with a:

- 1) large constructed object close to the ground, and
- 2) having a definite non-round shape,
- 3) having several parts,
- 4) having extremely bright lights,
- 5) making a sound, but not that of a normal engine, and
- 6) Capable of motive power and high altitude flight.

This is not Venus, orbiting satellites, nor (given the independence of the witnesses) hallucinations nor hoaxes. What we have is a real object made by somebody intelligent for purposes unknown.

The alternatives come in due to the fact that the object described is not at all beyond human manufacture. It is apparently beyond Kent State Pranksters manufacture, but not human manufacture. The alternatives are our old friends: a) ET vs. b) USA. It is well within my imagination to invent a "USA" balloon-based technology, which was doing "Lord knows what", and which could match (with a little help from human excitability) the case characteristics here. The fact that Wright Pat didn't bring it up or know about it, obviously does not disqualify the possibility. And, as an added "spin" to put on this: there is nothing to say that the government doesn't deliberately rig a UFO experience like this once in a while for intelligence reasons.

Regardless of what was really behind the Portage County UFO, it was and is a true UFO, and its prime importance to UFO research is that it is one of the clear evidences of the untrustworthy nature of U.S. Government investigations and publicity on our subject. The other important aspect of the case is its reminder that it is not only CSI/CIAM debunkers who are uncaring about their impacts on human beings, but that the USAF essentially sacrificed the feelings of Neff, Huston, and Spaur to their <sup>USAF's</sup> pride, their duty, their orders, or whatever was (and surely is) motivating them still. Someone in government should locate these good folks and do something to try to make it up to them for the pains they put them through.

The Portage County case was a UFO. No question. Whether it was an extraterrestrial vehicle is a whole other matter. If it was a terrestrial vehicle, it certainly was an odd one — but we make some odd ones, so we don't know. Suit yourself. Maybe you see something in the documents which tips the scales for you. It's part of the fun, the mystery, the "chase" of the unknown.

Mike Swords.