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MCIAXO-3/RRS/aw

7TH OCT '98

MCIAXO-3

Project "SIGN"

Chief of Staff
United States Air Force
Washington, 25, D. C.
ATTN: AFOIR
Collections Branch

1. On the 3 October 1948, the following representatives of this Command interrogated witnesses involved in the North Dakota incident of 1 October 1948 which occurred from 2100 to 2127 hours Central Standard Time.

- a. Lawrence H. Truettner, aeronautical engineer
& Project Engineer for Project "SIGN"
- b. Paul Kubala, Major, USAF
ATI Investigator

2. The first indication of this occurrence was received from 2 October 1948 press reports appearing in local papers. This material is retained in MCIAXO-3 files.

3. Investigation of the sighting by the above-mentioned representatives of this Command show the newspaper reports to be substantially correct. However, description of the object as a "disk" is inaccurate. All testimony from witnesses agree that one object was sighted and that it consisted only of a small round ball of clear white light with no physical form or shape attached. The object was about six to eight inches in diameter. At times it traveled faster than the F-51 and performed circular maneuvers in both evasive and aggressive manner. When first sighted the object was traveling at about 250 MPH at 1,000 feet altitude. Under this condition the light was not continuous but blinked off and on. At higher performance the white light was continuous.

4. The pilot of the F-51 aircraft was first attracted to the object when his attention was drawn to an intermittent white light about 3,000 feet below his 4,500 ft cruising altitude. He decided to investigate and began pursuit of the object in order to determine its nature.

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Subject: Project "SIGN"

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When the object began evasive tactics the F-51 pilot utilized maximum authorized power. (Engine seal for military power was not broken) However, the object out-turned, out-speeded and out-climbed the F-51 in every instance. Contact was lost twenty-seven minutes after the initial sighting when the F-51 went into a power stall at 14,000 feet altitude and the object continued to ascend almost vertically for another 3,000 ft. (up to 17,000 ft), at which time preparation for landing occupied the F-51 pilot.

5. Investigative personnel of this Command determined that local National Guard and GAA officials had already taken into account the possibilities of other aircraft having been in the vicinity, meteorological balloon releases and that Canadian "Vampire" jets had been in the vicinity. All these three factors of investigation were discredited. National Guard officials are familiar with the whistle of the "Vampire" jets and concur that the object made no noise, that no exhaust streaks were visible and that they noticed no odor.

6. Request was made by official telegram on 5th October 1948 to the Commanding Officer, Air National Guard, Fargo, North Dakota, 178th Fighter Sq for a Geiger check of all F-51 aircraft for comparison of affected aircraft with others in vicinity. (See Exhibit "E")

7. Other investigations and technical studies of time-consuming nature are being conducted on this incident and will be reported upon as speedily as possible as soon as results are available, by additional memorandums. A final report in brief form will be made when the incident is closed.

8. EVALUATION: Air Materiel Command evaluates the source as "A"; the factual data as "2". The overall evaluation is "A-2".

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

- 5 Incls
1. Exhibit "A"
 2. Exhibit "B"
 3. Exhibit "C"
 4. Exhibit "D"
 5. Exhibit "E"

H. K. McCoy
Colonel, USAF
Chief of Intelligence

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ATI FIELD OFFICE
INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS AIR MATERIEL COMMAND
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
Dayton, Ohio

PK/mlh

4 October 1948

INTERROGATION REPORT NO. 2

INTERROGATION OFFICER: Major Paul Kubala

Personal History of Person Interrogated:

NAME: Gorman, George F.
AGE: Twenty-five years.
ADDRESS: Building 18, Federal Housing Project, Fargo, N.D.
OCCUPATION: Manager of construction work.
MARITAL STATUS: Married, one child.
EDUCATION: Two and one-half years college - mechanical engineering and physics.

Military History of Person Interrogated:

RANK: 2nd Lieutenant.
SERIAL NUMBER: A0943873.
UNIT: North Dakota Air National Guard.
NUMBER YEARS' SERVICE: Two years with the National Guard.
WAR ASSIGNMENT: Pilot instructor for French military students.

Evaluation of Person Interrogated:

2nd Lt. Gorman did not make the impression of being a dreamer. He reads little, and only serious literature. He spends 90% of his free time hunting and fishing; drinks less than moderately; smokes normally; and does not use drugs. He appears to be a sincere and serious individual who was considerably puzzled by his experience and made no attempt to blow his story up.

Summary of Interrogation:

Lt. Gorman had been with his squadron on a cross-country flight. When the squadron returned at approximately 2030 hours, Lt. Gorman decided to remain in the air inasmuch as he wanted to do some night flying. He flew west as far as Valley City and returned to Fargo to watch the foot ball game from the air, his altitude being approximately 1500 feet at this time. Circling the foot ball field, he saw about 500 feet beneath him a Piper Cub. At approximately 2100 hours he decided to return to the field. He called the tower to find out if all was clear, and was told that one other ship was in the air, the aforementioned Piper Cub, which was flown by Dr. Cannon of Fargo, North Dakota.

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Exhibit "A"

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Interrogation Report No. 2, dated 4 Oct 48 (Cont'd)

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As he flew into the pattern preparatory to landing, what seemed to be the tail light of another airplane passed him from the right. He called the tower immediately and complained that they had misinformed him, that there was a third ship in the air. The tower came back with the information that no other aircraft was reported out, that they had just checked with all other air fields in the area. Lt. Gorman, seeing the tail light run just outside the Piper Cub, pulled up and cut towards the moving light in order to identify what he thought to be another aircraft. He saw the Piper Cub plainly outlined beneath him against the city lights, but saw no outline of anything around the moving light. Lt. Gorman then proceeded to move toward the object (he thinks that he was about 1000 yards from the object at this moment), which appeared then to be about 6 to 8 inches in diameter. The light was clear white, completely round without fuzz at the edges, and was, until then, blinking on and off. He then proceeded to follow the light which suddenly became steady and pulled into a sharp left bank, making what he thought to be a pass at the tower. Lt. Gorman dived after the light, bringing his manifold pressure to 50 inches and realizing 2000 RPM, which increased at the finish of the dive to 3000. He was unable to catch up with the object which began to gain altitude.

Lt. Gorman continued to follow the object, in the meantime calling the tower and advising them as to what was going on. The object continued gaining altitude and again made a left bank. Lt. Gorman then cut his P-51 into a sharp turn and tried to cut the object off in the turn. By that time he was to an altitude of 7000 feet. The object then made a sharp right turn and Lt. Gorman turned about and headed straight at the object which had completed its turn and was coming toward him. At the point where collision seemed imminent, Lt. Gorman got scared and went into a dive, the object passing over his canopy at approximately 500 feet. At this time he had 60 inches of manifold pressure and 3000 RPM. The object again made a left circle approximately 1000 feet above him and he again gave chase. He cut again sharply toward the object which was once more coming at him and, at the time when collision seemed imminent again, the object went straight into the air and he started climbing after it until he gained approximately 14000 feet, at which time his plane went into a power stall. The object then turned in a north-west northern heading and disappeared. It was then 2127 hours.

Lt. Gorman proceeded to return to the field, being so excited that he had to make two passes at the field before he could properly land. During these entire maneuvers, Lt. Gorman noticed no deviation on his instruments. His magnetic compass reacted normally, there was no interference with his radio. He heard no sounds, noticed no odors, and saw no exhaust trails.

PAUL KIBALA,
Major, USAF,
Chief, ATX Field Office.

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EXHIBIT "A"

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AIR FIELD OFFICE
INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS AIR MATERIEL COMMAND
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
Dayton, Ohio

PK/mlh

4 October 1948

INTERROGATION REPORT NO. 3

INTERROGATION OFFICER: Major Paul Kubala.

Personal History of Person Interrogated:

NAME: L.D. Jensen.
AGE: Twenty-eight years.
ADDRESS: 1423 Sixth Avenue, South, Fargo, N.D.
OCCUPATION: Airport traffic controller (CAA).
MARITAL STATUS: Married, one child.
EDUCATION: Two years' college.

Military History of Person Interrogated:

None - Civilian.

Evaluation of Person Interrogated:

Mr. Jensen is exactly what his name implies - typical quiet, steady, Scandinavian type of individual. He seems very reliable, deliberate and calculated in his observations. He is sober, does not smoke, use drugs, nor have any habits which could affect his normal way of thinking.

Summary of Interrogation:

Mr. Jensen was on duty since 1600 hours October 1, 1948, in the traffic control tower as traffic controller. There was not much traffic during the evening hours on that day, and, with the exception of the P-51, there was no other airplane from Fargo Air Field in the air. At 2050 hours he was advised from a privately owned field south of Fargo that Piper Cub No. 707, piloted by Dr. Cannon, had taken off and had asked for permission to land at Fargo Air Field to attend the ball game. At 2100 hours Lt. Gorman called the tower, asking if any other aircraft were in the air and he was given the position of the Piper Cub. Approximately 5 minutes after that Lt. Gorman called again and stated that there was another aircraft in the air at approximately the same altitude as the Cub; however, it could not be the Cub in view of its speed. He was advised that no other aircraft was in the air from Fargo Air Field and none other was signalled from other air fields.

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Exhibit "B"

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Interrogation Report No. 3, dated 4 Oct 48 (Cont'd)

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Lt. Gorman then called in again and stated that he was going to follow the other aircraft. Mr. Jensen then stepped to the south window of the tower and at that moment saw the object, approximately 1000 feet from the tower in a north-western direction, passing very fast over the field. Mr. Jensen happened to have, at this particular moment, a pair of binoculars in his hand, and he watched the object as it passed over the field. He was, however, unable to distinguish any shape or form other than what appeared to be the tail light of a very fast moving craft. Mr. Jensen did not see the maneuvers carried on by the object nor the F-51 of Lt. Gorman. He saw the object only once, and then only as it passed in a straight line over the field.

Mr. Jensen states that approximately 10 minutes prior to Lt. Gorman's call, the Weather Station at Fargo had released a lighted weather balloon; however, the balloon was at all times in sight by Mr. Sanderson of the Weather Station, the balloon flying slowly in a westerly direction at an altitude of about 500 feet. Mr. Jensen further states that the voice of Lt. Gorman became, at times, very garbled and he had to repeatedly ask him to speak clearer. He thinks, however, that during the diving and climbing maneuvers of the F-51, Lt. Gorman's throat microphone had probably slipped.

Mr. Jensen heard no sound from the object, noticed no odor, and saw no exhaust streaks in the air.

PAUL KUBALA
Major, USAF
Chief, ATTI Field Office.

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Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
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PK/alh

4 October 1948

INTERROGATION REPORT NO. 4

INTERROGATION OFFICER: Major Paul Kubala.

Personal History of Person Interrogated:

NAME: Manuel E. Johnson.
AGE: Thirty-four years.
ADDRESS: 1422 Broadway, Fargo, N.D.
OCCUPATION: Assistant airport traffic controller, Fargo Airport.
MARITAL STATUS: Married, no children.
EDUCATION: High School graduate.

Military History of Person Interrogated:

None - Civilian.

Evaluation of Person Interrogated:

Mr. Johnson is approximately of the same type as Mr. Jensen, stoical, quiet, Scandinavian type, not easily impressed, teetotaler, smokes pipe only, has never used habit-forming drugs.

Summary of Interrogation:

Mr. Johnson was on duty at the Fargo Airport tower since about 1600 hours, 1 October 1948, and was in the tower at the time the F-51 called in requesting information about local traffic. At the time when Lt. Gorman called the second time in regard to the object, Mr. Johnson walked to the rear of the receiver and, looking out of the south window, saw the object and the Cub. Object, at this particular time, was a little higher than the Piper Cub, and outside of him. Object seemed to be on a north heading and then turned northwest.

Mr. Johnson had no other information to offer in support of what Mr. Jensen had to say. He added, however, that Dr. Cannon and partner had, at the meantime, landed and come to the tower and that Dr. Cannon had walked on to the balcony of the tower and remained on the southeast corner watching the object. Mr. Johnson heard no sound from the object, noticed no exhaust, and saw no exhaust streaks.

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PAUL KUBALA
Major, USAF
Chief, ATTI Field Office.