

Gorman's Tiny Balloon was BLACK not White: Thus INVISIBLE at Night – Explodes Half Century of Debunking

By Brad Sparks

Extremely bad news for debunkers. Extremely bad. I recently obtained the full, complete weather records for the Gorman case (the Fargo reports are suspiciously missing from the BB files, of course) from NCDC, National Climatic Data Center, and the McDonald archives.

The weather balloon that debunkers have long claimed Lt George Gorman "fought" with, which they insinuated was a gigantic floodlit white balloon (see the graphic illustration in the bogus "Project Blue Book" tv series, below), was in fact a **BLACK** rubber balloon 2 feet in diameter which could not possibly have been seen **at night** when Gorman's UFO encounter in his F-51 fighter took place over Fargo, ND, on Oct 1, 1948.

STATION Fargo, N. Dak. (Hector Airport)		WFO Form 7310-A UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE WEATHER BUREAU WINDS ALOFT COMPUTATION SHEET (LAND STATION FORM) WBAN-90		WINDS ALOFT DATA																			
LAT. <u>46° 54' N</u> LONG. <u>96° 49' W</u>		Method of observation <u>single shot</u>		Time	Month	Day	Time																
# Aerobal. Bal. <u>931</u>		# of Balloons <u>1</u>		<u>7:50 AM</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2145</u>																
# of Balloons <u>1</u>		# of Balloons <u>1</u>		<u>C.C.T.</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0000</u>																
Observer <u>Wahler</u>		Recorder <u>Jenderson</u>		Remarks due to <u>Outman</u>																			
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Clouds</th> <th>Amount</th> <th>Type</th> <th>Direction</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CU</td> <td>0</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Altostratus</td> <td>0</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Low</td> <td>0</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Clouds	Amount	Type	Direction	CU	0			Altostratus	0			Low	0			Weight of balloon <u>0.000</u> grams Weight of basket <u>0.000</u> grams Weight of target or transmitter <u>0.000</u> grams Free lift <u>0.000</u> grams Total weight <u>5.4</u> grams		Altitude <u>18000 ft</u> Color of <u>black</u> Type of balloon <u>all grain</u> Type of target or transmitter		NOTES	
Clouds	Amount	Type	Direction																				
CU	0																						
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**"black" 30 gram
balloon Oct 1, 48
launch 2145 EST
(8:45 pm CST
Fargo time)**

The *Project Blue Book* program on the History Channel gives the debunker fantasy depiction of the 2-foot **black** Gorman weather balloon as a bright floodlit white object, like a gigantic light bulb 20 feet in size:



History Channel's *Project Blue Book* depiction of Gorman's purported balloon as a giant 20-foot white balloon.

The **black balloon** carried a tiny candle in a paper lantern suspended from a cord below the balloon which candle could be seen with a telescope theodolite tracker. But the candle is very difficult to see at night with the naked eye beyond about a mile and with a theodolite no more than about 3 to 6 miles

(*Monthly Weather Review*, Sept 1937, p. 328a). The tracking data establishes that the balloon was **always** 2 to 3 miles higher than Gorman's F-51 and even higher than the UFO too, meaning they (balloon and UFO) could not possibly have been one and the same object. Gorman could not possibly have seen the balloon or candle from 2-3 miles with the naked eye (he had no binoculars inside his fighter plane), and never got closer to the balloon even conceivably than that 2-3-mile altitude difference (the slant range was much greater than the 2-3 miles altitude difference).

At the start of Gorman's pursuit the UFO was at 1,000 feet, Gorman was at 4,000 feet, and the black balloon was at 14,000 feet. Thus the black balloon was 10,000 feet (~2 miles) higher than Gorman and hence at least that distance (2+ miles) away from him in slant range.

Gorman could not possibly have been positioned above the balloon at any time and so high that he could see it silhouetted against the ground (Gorman saw the UFO outlined against the city lights of Fargo below him at two different times early in the chase). Moreover, Gorman chased the UFO out to 25 miles southeast of Fargo while flying at 300 to 400 mph – a fact never mentioned and which shows that Gorman did not "dogfight" a slow-moving balloon in circles in the Fargo vicinity (the early dogfight with the UFO over Fargo happened only at the start of his 21-minute portion of the approx. 23-27-minute UFO sighting, during the first few minutes). Balloons cannot fly at 400 mph. Lastly, **Gorman had physics training** and was no hick dummy, another fact never mentioned.

In cases such as this of balloons that were at distances far beyond the limits of human visual acuity, the inevitable debunker arguments will desperately try to salvage this hopeless argument from physical impossibility by claiming that somehow the balloons could still be seen, by some "miracle" of debunker vision (to be doubly ironic). Yet they can *never* come up with anyone saying real-world things of the difficulties of sight at-the-limits – if the balloon was somehow really was at-the-limits and not far far beyond – such as, say, quote "It was very difficult to see, I would lose it from time to time because it was so tiny I could barely see it, I had to strain my eyes," etc. etc. **NO ONE** ever says that sort of thing in these purported balloon-at-the-limits-of-eyesight supposed instances such as the Mantell and Gorman cases (except when the *UFO* disappears in the distance of course; the *balloons* are actually always far beyond the eyesight limits and never within it). Gorman and the Control Tower witnesses and those in the Piper Cub aircraft never said that.

You know the tired old Sagan axiom about "extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof," which skeptics never apply to themselves, well if skeptics claim extraordinary abilities of human vision and balloon flight let's see the **extraordinary proof** of that, scientific, experimental proof. Like what Hynek urged be done back in 1949 in the Gorman case, that an experiment be carried out **at night** in which a "typical lighted weather balloon [is] engaged by aircraft at night, with a competent observer along to record apparent relative tactics of the balloon." This is what you do in the real world to ground yourself in rock hard reality.

The unreality of debunkerdom is astonishing. It is not the real world, and debunkery has no scientific checks and balances, nothing ever has to be factually checked or an experiment attempted (weather balloons for example could be launched to see how far away they can be seen at night with the unaided eye). These balloons were launched **every 6 hours** by the US Weather Bureau at Fargo's Hector Field. Why didn't the Control Tower and other Gorman case UFO witnesses notice they were seeing the same thing if what they had seen was only the periodic weather balloon not a UFO?? Every day, every week, every month, every year these same 6-hourly weather balloons (or larger and/or lighter-colored ones) were launched from Fargo, including when Project Sign UFO investigators visited repeatedly to investigate in Oct 1948. Why didn't someone notice these weather balloons looked like the Gorman UFO – if they did?? Because they did not. Because the pathetic

and invisibly tiny balloons were so small and insignificant or just not even visible at all that no one at Fargo took this desperate "explanation" seriously.

This History Channel atrocity *Project Blue Book* is worse than I had expected from the previews. After fictionalizing the Gorman case into a surreal X-Files style melodrama (with "Gorman's" psychotic break, spooky MIB conspiracy, Hynek-plane-crash that never happened), then they have the audacity to end the episode with false "Real Story" notes actually naming Gorman and the Oct 1, 1948, date and falsely claiming Ruppelt investigated the case. Ruppelt never went to Fargo, ND, to investigate the case (it was Project Sign years before his time). Ruppelt was a few months away from transferring out of BB when Hynek was rehired in the Fall of 1952, so there was little time or opportunity for joint investigations of the two of them. (The tv show falsely portrays Hynek as brand new to the UFO investigation when Ruppelt supposedly approaches him in March 1952 or so and twists his arm to work on BB. In fact Hynek already had worked for BB's predecessors Sign and Grudge in 1948-49.)

This show sensationalizes debunker fantasies like the gawdalmighty "lighted weather balloon," a BB debunker fiction made up out of whole cloth using misleading mental associations from the words "lighted" and "balloon" that are strung together (Ruppelt, p. 44, for example flatly claimed "Gorman fought a lighted balloon"). Weather balloons were not lighted up – they CARRIED tiny lights a few feet BELOW them for trackers to observe. The tiny lights are not there for lighting up the gas bag of the balloon but to project as much light as possible downwards towards the ground for the weather observers to see and track.

The tv show lingers on a scene of about a 20-foot white balloon (much larger than actual era 2-foot balloons) with the whole 20-foot balloon envelope brightly lit by floodlights from the ceiling of a hangar. (See previous pic above.) This is sheer fantasy. Where was this heavy floodlamp on the (actually fictitious) 20-foot balloon when it was up in the sky at 14,000 feet? Do airbase hangars fly too? Maybe floodlights can fly by themselves too, along with their power sources but with no means of propulsion? Again, the Gorman balloon was **black** not white and could not be "lighted" up. Weather balloons could not carry heavy floodlamps or **heavy metal reflectors so sturdy they supposedly hit and damaged Gorman's plane** as the tv show ridiculously portrays.

And again, Gorman chased the UFO at 300-400 mph in his F-51 out to 25 miles southeast of Fargo. Again, unpowered balloons cannot fly at 400 mph.

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