WE KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

Once upon a time it was simple. Col. George Garrett could sit at his desk in the Pentagon and envision the disks racing across Kenneth Arnold's line of sight and say: "Advanced aerial technology."

Alfred Loedding could imagine a spaceliner passing Chiles and Whitted's plane and superimpose Ludwig Prandtl's mathematics upon the case and say: "Advanced aerial technology."

Charles Moore and his theodolite, J. J. Kaliszewski in his balloon project chase plane, and Nash and Fortenberry in their TWA airliner could all say "Advanced aerial technology" about their sightings. Nuts and bolts. Metallic, strangely designed, aerodynamic vehicles. Extraterrestrial. Simple as that.

But things wouldn't stay so simple or well behaved. Noninertial motions and hovering that defied gravity soon appeared in sightings. Well, said the "can-do" minds of the engineers, all right, we'll be able to do it someday. What about reports with traces on the ground, electromagnetic effects, or paralysis? Yes, okay, very advanced indeed. And then instant disappearance, shape-changing and dividing, even mind-reading. Uh-oh.

Perhaps the UFOs were never so well behaved as Col. Garrett and Al Loedding pictured them. Surely we had our nonsense filters up and operating back then. Certain cases never made the files. In his later years, Aimé Michel said that the most shameful thing about his career as an investigator was that he just couldn't swallow some of the weirder stuff, and so ignored it. NICAP was certainly guilty of that. Today's Roswell enthusiasts still tend to want to carve the stranger part of the phenomenon away, and there are members of what might be called ufology's right wing who have troubles even with Roswell. Nuts and bolts, nice, well-behaved aerial technology: *That's* a real comfort zone.

I have nothing against this perspective. In fact, I believe that it's a good solid start in dealing with UFOs. So, at the beginning of everything, Garrett, Loedding, Moore, and Nash *were* correct. But much more appears to be real about UFOs as well.

Michael D. Swords is professor emeritus of the Environmental Institute, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.

One of the particular weird ideas that began creeping into researchers' minds was that many cases were instances of "display" by the phenomenon. It was, and is, an odd thought. Display to a witness seems much too subjective and dangerous to really credit. Coincidences happen all the time. We—who are essentially egocentric—often attribute causal linkages and personal significance to things that accidentally cross our path. With thousands of UFO incidents, certainly some rather spectacular coincidences are bound to have happened. And the mind is a wonder at creating syntheses and patterns out of nothing.

But still, some of these coincidences are very hard to dismiss. "Display" seems an operative word, although "performance" might be even more descriptive. The remainder of this article is about one, to me, very impressive form of display.

ALIGNMENT

All display or performance involves alignment, special geometric relationships between objects, environmental parameters, and the observers. These relationships create in the observer's mind the stage upon which the performance takes place. ("It was dead center as I looked out my window.") Time and timing also play a factor in the performance. ("Just as I looked, the object emerged from behind the hillside.") Because there are so many cases where the object was not initially dead center, nor appeared right on cue from stage left, it is usually pretty easy for us to shrug that element off. And I agree. We need to stay rational about this sort of claim. But I would like to present a subset of these cases that involve astronomical alignments that I feel is more difficult to wave off. I'd be interested in whether you agree.

Every category should probably have at least one anchor case, such as Levelland for vehicle interference, or Boianai (Father Gill) for CE3s. My choice for the alignment anchor occurred in 1955. The case record (a letter) originally went to Ted Bloecher at CSI-New York, and then to NICAP, and finally on to the CUFOS archives. I am going to leave names out because you can rarely find any indication in the old files as to whether the witness approved of public mention.

The letter-writer was a prominent engineer working for a big New York city company, an expert in aircraft technology and electronics. And he was an avid amateur astronomer. There were four other witnesses, all interested in amateur astronomy, one of whom was also expert in aircraft.

As a bit of background, a year previously the writer had observed a peculiar fireball, which he reported—for what it was worth—to a Maj. Geyer at Mitchell AFB in Hempstead, New York. The major thanked him for his interest but said that what would be more valuable to the Air Force would be for the writer to urge amateur astronomers to report *any* unusual aerial phenomenon when it occurred. Geyer said, "Anything that flies is our business, even a lame canary." As the writer went on to say to Bloecher, "What follows is the only phenomenon our local group has noted in several hundred hours of astronomical observing."

The sighting occurred at Lake Ronkonkoma on Long Island, between 8:30 and 9:30 p.m. on July 29, 1955. The viewing conditions were excellent and the Moon was two-thirds full. First and second magnitude stars were easily visible and the planet Saturn was prominent.

The UFO initially appeared to the five observers as a "2nd magnitude star" in the vicinity of Saturn. The observers watched, either with naked eyes or binoculars, as the star navigated a "perfect circle (of an apparent diameter of 1º) around Saturn." It then followed this looping performance by heading east until it got to the Moon, where it executed a half-circle pass, and then just disappeared.

Then the object reappeared 120º away and moved horizontally until taking an abrupt turn vertically. It disappeared again at about 70º above the horizon. Then it reappeared in a straight dive-like descent until reacquiring its original 30-degree elevation (see Figure 1). It proceeded horizontally again, made an abrupt angular shift again downwards and was lost in the trees. If it were at typical airliner height its speed would have been about three times that of a commercial flight. Through the binoculars the object looked spherical and yellowish, at least in its central area.

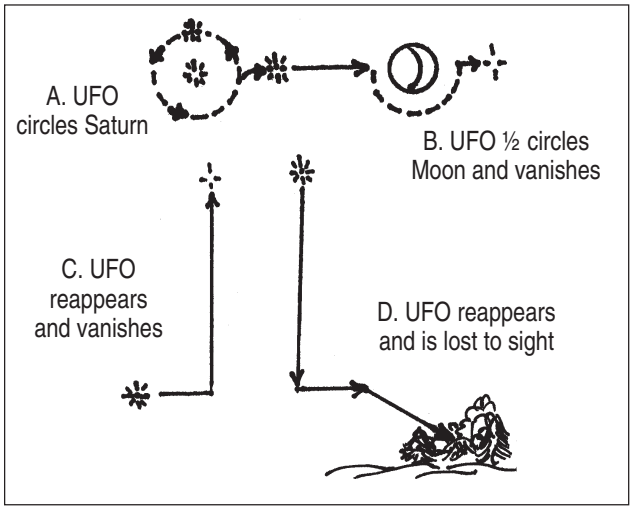


Figure 1.

The witness passed the report on to Bloecher (and presumably to Mitchell AFB) in an amazingly cool, understated way. One wonders how much he cogitated on the ramifications of what he was retelling.

It may be belaboring the obvious, but in order for our five witnesses to see the UFO maneuvering in relation to Saturn and then the Moon as described, they (*almost* certainly, as this depends upon the distance of the UFO) had to be in an extremely privileged viewing position. In the exaggerated cartoon of Figure 2, our observer at B can see the apparent circling of Saturn and the Moon from his location, and observers A and C could too *if the UFO were at astronomical distance* itself. But the closer the UFO is to the observer, the more exclusive such a viewing position becomes, until, at the near extreme in distance of, say, a firefly 10 feet away, only one person could see the circling geometry no matter how close the people tried to cram together. The actual UFO was somewhere between lunar and firefly distance, of course. It seemed similar to an airplane in a size (it did grow larger in the 7×50 binoculars used, though not greatly so), and the amateur astronomers judged it to be probably around normal aircraft altitude. But however large you want to draw an error bar on their estimate, the circle on earth from which you could see the traverse of Saturn and the Moon was pretty small. The UFO seemed to have aligned itself to perform specifically for them. And *that* would mean that it had to know where they were.

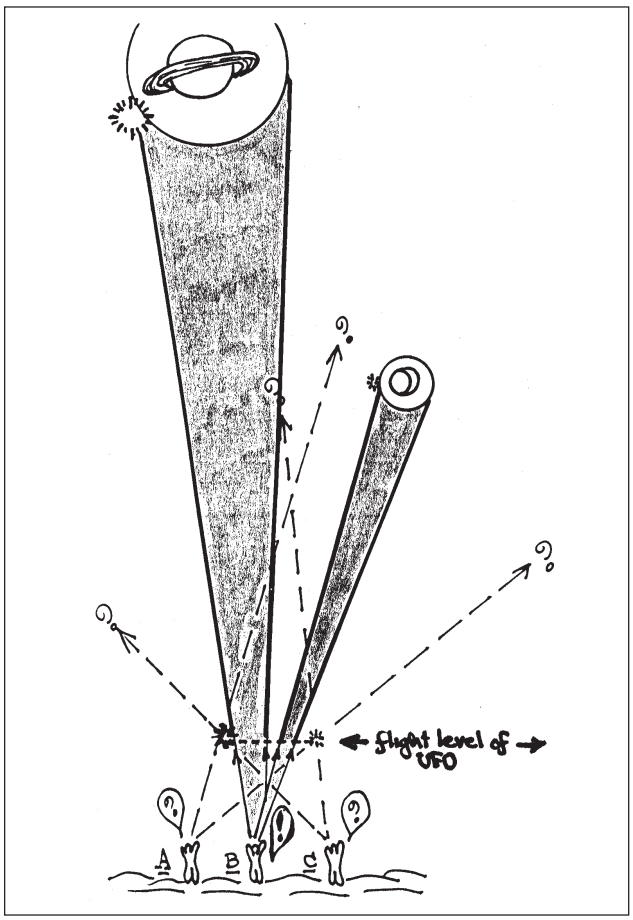


Figure 2.

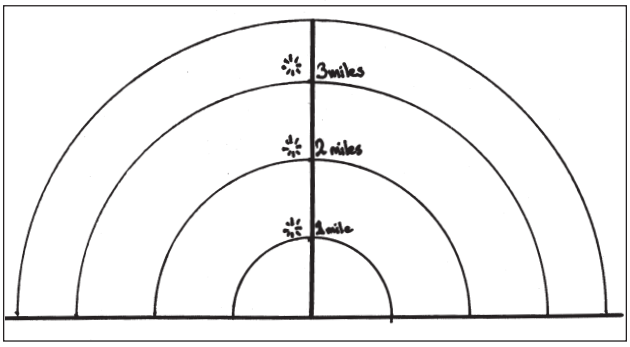


Figure 3.

Just for fun, how tight would that privileged viewing position have to be? If we take the witness guesses seriously, how wide would the area on the ground have to be if the object made a circle of 1º diameter? We can take a stab at it if we want to guess the object's distance (see Figure 3).

If the UFO were a mile high, that would translate into a dome of sky about 16,000 feet in circumference on which it was located; that one degree would then be about 90 feet. In other words, that is the diameter of the circle in which it would be moving as it seemed to circle Saturn. If two miles high, then 180 feet. Ten miles, 900 feet. To simplify the rest of this discussion, let's just assume that it was a mile high. This would mean that the person in the perfect viewing position would be standing, looking up at the image of Saturn in the center of this imaginary circle, while the UFO banked in a 90-foot turn around its circumference. You can imagine a narrow cone from the observer's eye toward Saturn which widens to 90 feet by the time it gets to the height of the UFO.

If you reverse the positions and invert the cone, from the UFO back to the Earth's surface, we get an area of privileged viewing, the same 90-foot diameter circle (Figure 4). But the *real* area of privileged viewing is only the area within which any observer would see the UFO *somewhere* within 1º of Saturn. For instance, standing near the edge of the area one would see the circling UFO run right across or eclipse Saturn at some point in its cycle. So, in order to see the UFO make a "perfect circle" of about 1º around Saturn, and have all five people see it that way, they would have to be in a much smaller area than the 90-foot circle.

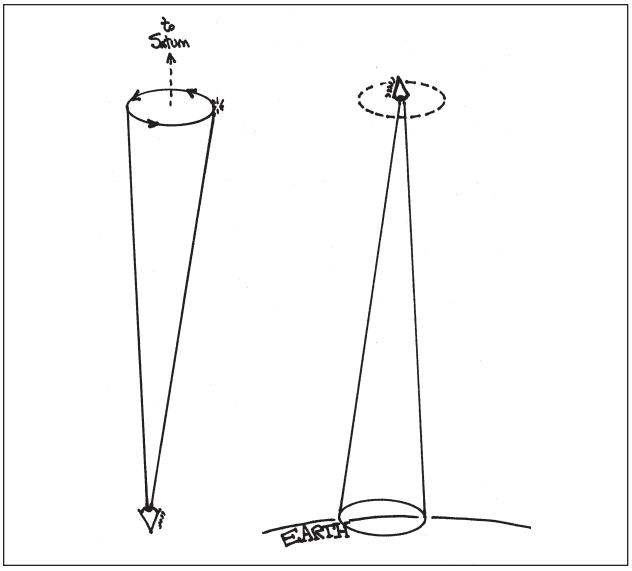


Figure 4.

In my opinion, for the observers to feel that the object circled Saturn perfectly and then perfectly half-circled the Moon, the apparent shift in image (i.e., the position of Saturn or the Moon out of dead center, relatively speaking) had to be *very small* from one observer to the next. I believe that if you walk more than 20% of the distance from the ideal viewing center toward the edge of the 90-foot circle, the apparent circling of the planet and Moon begins to look distinctly lopsided (see Figure 5). So, if you will humor me,

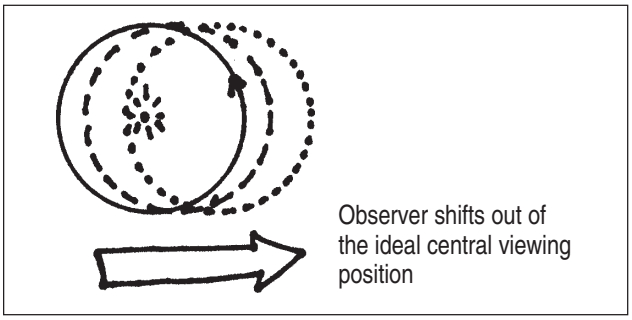


Figure 5.

let's say that the *actual* privileged viewing area for the group was only 20% of the greater diameter or less, which is only 18 feet or fewer. That is a reasonable sized area for five folks to be milling around in on a common activity that evening, but, more importantly, it is a very precise spot on this old planet. If the UFO were two miles high, then double it; three miles, triple it, and so forth.

Even then, it seems a very precise thing to be cruising along three miles above the ground and knowing that a group of people for whom you are about to put on a show are within a small circle below you. And speaking of precise, the UFO then had to move in a precise small circle, at altitude, aligned with Saturn and the Moon. Try that in a plane or even a helicopter.

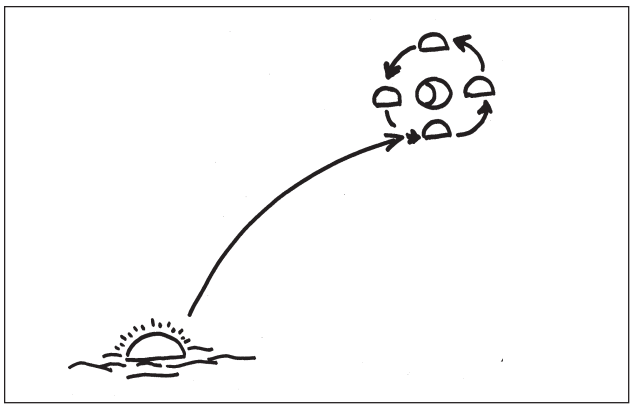
Other alignment cases

Hopefully, the first case—the anchor case—has persuaded you that something of this alignment nature actually *does* occur, and that is interesting in its implications. The case seems very sound: five witnesses, high-quality observers of the skies, and elaborate well-reported detail, with movement around two astronomical objects. What more can we ask for other than an ET flight manual with the flight plan? So, if we're somewhat comfortable with this case category, here are a few more of these cases, in brief.

Case Two. NICAP received a letter in 1967 addressed to Maj. Keyhoe. In either August or September of the

previous year, two men were returning from bowling in the middle of the afternoon in Norwood, Massachusetts. The Moon was visible at about three-quarter phase in the sky. Both glanced up and saw a group of six or seven disk-shaped objects moving horizontally toward the Moon. When the objects reached a position just below the Moon they looped it in an upward, back, and onward motion, then continued on their way.

Case Three: Frank Salisbury reports on a case from the UFO-filled Uintah Valley that occurred in 1967. The key element of circling is somewhat garbled in his 1974 book *The Utah UFO Display*, so I'm going to relate what he said clearly at the *Fate* International UFO Conference, held in 1977. On October 14, 1967, a father and son were returning from a fishing trip when they noticed an odd "burning" object parked in the desert. They stopped, got out of their car, and watched. The object lifted off immediately, looking like a half-moon in shape and size (in the air). It then went right over to the real Moon, visible in the sky, and flew a loop around it, keeping its flat side down. It then flew across the Moon's face and left to the northwest. As Salisbury said then, "It was responding to their being there." And it got the geometry precisely right.

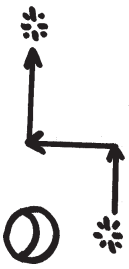


Case Three.

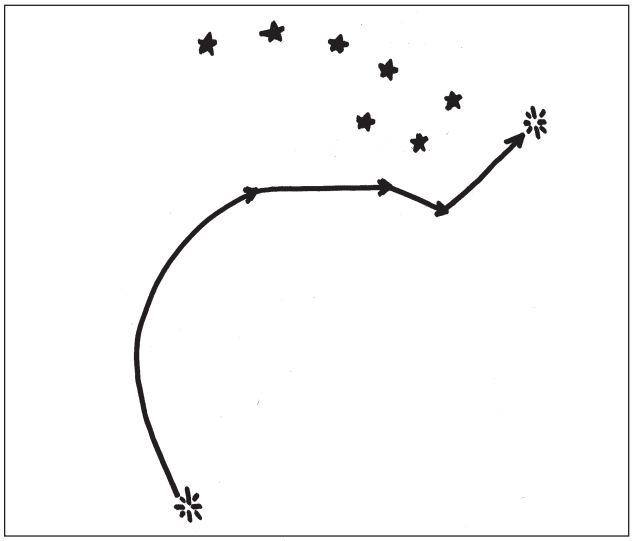
Case Four: The Air Force had less tolerance for this geometric nonsense. A case from Seattle, Washington, on August 12, 1965, was sent to the Air Force. The observer said that a solid star-like object was seen, first circling the Moon, after which it then left for the horizon. The USAF trashed it with the explanation of "overactive imagination."

Case Five: One night in the spring of 1961, Mother Nature was doing what comes naturally, and a young couple was parking outside of Millville, New Jersey. Despite having other things on his mind, the young man could not help being distracted by the antics of a large glowing "meteor" that was dancing around the sky. It was stopping, darting, reversing, and so he finally gave in and called his partner's attention to this insensitive intruder, and they watched together. At one point in its performance, the meteor raced directly at a star, abruptly stopped, drew a neat right-angled, half-box around it, and went racing on. Finally, it grew tired of its dance and boomed away across the sky in about five seconds. What the couple did next is not part of the record.

Case Six: On October 21, 1966, three junior high school kids were standing at one end of their street in Amsterdam, New York, when they noticed a star-like light to the right of the Moon. The star proceeded to draw a right-angle step around the Moon, and continue northward, where it joined two other objects. The three objects began to form 90º angles, equilateral triangles, and other geometrical figures. Two of the friends went home to get binoculars, and while they were away the sky show stopped. The objects remained to be viewed in binoculars, but did little else. The UFOs looked spherical with some sort of lighted, colored areas that rotated. The kids then got bored and went home.



Case Seven: On October 31, 1966, an observer in Gloucester, Massachusetts, saw a particularly bright star in the southwestern part of the sky. The star refused to behave and began to move in a pretty arc until it got below the Big Dipper. At that point it seemed to pace along under the Dipper, and after reaching the bucket end it dropped a bit, and then took a course approximately parallel to the front of the constellation. This one's a bit more of a stretch than the others, I agree, but I include it for consideration.

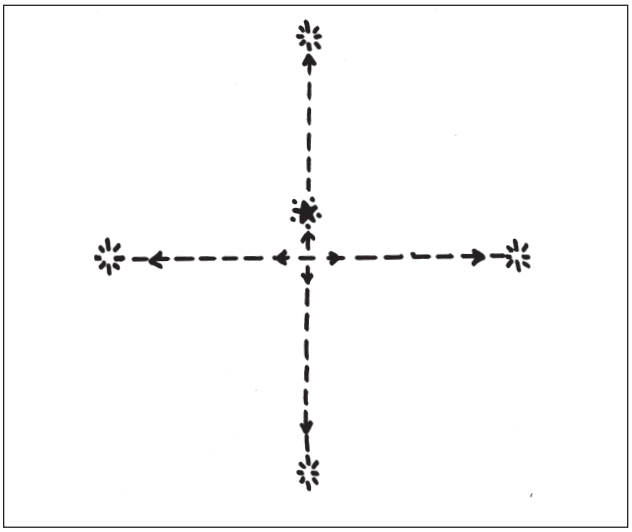


Case Seven.

Case Eight: Just after the peak of the big Michigan Swamp Gas flap in 1966 (Dexter was March 20, Hillsdale was March 21), my current hometown of Kalamazoo had its own series of UFO sightings. (I moved to town in 1971, so was a little late for the show.) These occurred pretty consistently night after night in the latter days of March, ending about April 4. In the middle of this, a wire story reported that students at Western Michigan University had seen a star-like object, which looked football-shaped in binoculars, moving in geometric angles around two bright stars, until it

shot straight up and disappeared. Hmmm. WMU students, eh? I taught them for 30 years. The date? April 1 . . . don't know about this one. But a policeman agreed that he watched it, too.

Case Nine: This is a Timmerman Files case. Sometime in August of about 1967, in Wapakoneta, Ohio, a man was returning to his mother's home at two in the morning. He saw a strangely bright star to the left of Polaris where no such thing should be. As he watched, the star grew a little brighter and began to move. It went directly beneath Polaris and then continued to the right. It repeated this in reverse, and then went under Polaris and stopped. The star then migrated north and south of the Pole Star, tracing out the other elements of a large cross. It did this rapidly several times. Then it came back below Polaris and just sat there. Then it would begin again. As it was getting close to 5 a.m., the witness decided to stop watching. At that, the star went up to Polaris and shot away to the left till it disappeared.



Case Nine.

These cases are a few in the alignment category. If you've looked at lots of cases you know of many more. Those reported here are the result of an almost random happenstance of my receiving a cluster of them in a much larger pile of "odd UFO behavior" cases sent by Frank John Reid of CUFOS (for which I thank him).

WHY DID I LOOK JUST THEN?

The last part of this article will briefly address the other part of these cases. It's all well and good for some weird object to put on an act, but the observer has to cooperate, doesn't he? How many times, though, have you read about the witness exclaiming, "For some reason I had the impulse to look up . . . or go outside . . . or turn around." Not to belabor something that is pretty well known, I'll just give you one such incident (which is *not* an alignment case in the sense of this article but does make the point).

On March 17, 1969, two pilots were flying a small private plane between Phoenix and Lake Havasu, Arizona. As is typical in a small plane, the pilots were slightly restricted in their ability to move about in their seats and had their seatbelts fastened. To their view forward and to the sides, nothing was going on. The pilot in the right seat suddenly had an urge to loosen his seatbelt, rise up, and look

ANOTHER TYPE OF UFO DISPLAY

Recently, by fortuitous coincidence, CUFOS received an older sighting report that is similar to the reports that Michael Swords writes about. The account comes from Mrs. Dianne Vezza, of Marietta, Ohio, who said we could use her name because "I am at an age now where I feel I should report what I saw so many years ago." We appreciate her candor.

The object she saw, along with two companions, was not a true UFO display using astronomical objects for alignment. However, it was certainly a geometrical display by the UFOs that probably could only have been seen from a limited area. For that reason, we reproduce it here, in a paraphrased description from the perspective of Mrs. Vezza.

The sighting

"We were three teen girls sitting on the grass in a backyard in Marietta, Ohio, in 1954 or 1955. It was a warm summer evening. We were laughing and talking when we saw a light like a star moving at an unbelievable speed in the sky. I remember the star coming to a dead stop. Then two other 'stars' sped in and also came to a dead stop. They formed a triangle in the sky—a perfect triangle!

"Almost immediately, an oval shape appeared that seemed to be an object of some sort. The (star- like) lights disappeared, and they were replaced by three of these oval objects in the triangular formation. They then began a light display, with brilliant wildly colored lights that continued for a few beautiful seconds. Then the brilliant lights went out and the UFOs beamed (each one) a bright white light to the center of the triangle. The beams met at the center for a few seconds, and then went out.

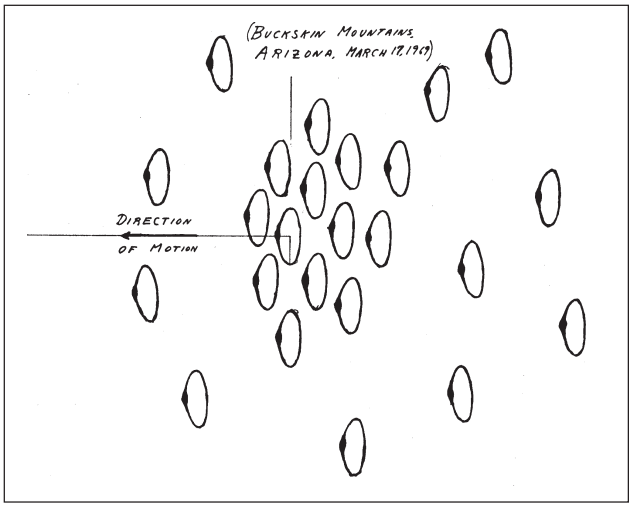
"Now the ovals disappeared and the star-like lights returned. Then, each star sped away into the sky in a different direction, faster than any plane is capable of, then or now. We never heard any sound during the whole incident, which lasted less than a minute.

"We had been conversing beforehand, but afterwards, no one said a sentence. One girl ran for the telephone to call the police.

"For years none of us spoke of what we had seen, believing our friends and families would think we were crazy. Finally, I got up the courage to mention it to the other two gals at a class reunion, and we all recalled the experience."

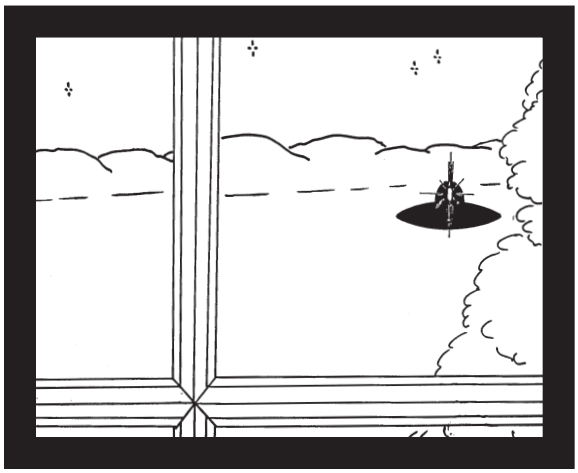
over his partner to the left. He still has no idea why he did this. Upon doing so, he spotted a whole fleet (perhaps as many as two dozen) of objects flying very low and in a rough formation. In a period of about 20 seconds, the two men watched the fleet pass well below their aircraft and beyond. They would never have noticed this cluster of UFOs had one of them not acted upon his mysterious urge to raise up and look across and down from the plane.

The UFOs were oval disks of a flat white color. There seemed to be a black blur around the edges of each object. There was a hint of a "blister" near the front. Their speed was about 300 to 400 mph. The only maneuvers they made were pitch and roll, which all the objects made instantly in perfect unison. This is a case that was checked out by Dr. James McDonald in his usual thorough manner.



So why did the pilot look when he did? Why do we? It reminded me of an aspect of my own UFO observation in (about) August 1959. My brother and I were listening to a report of a UFO live on radio station WCHS (I think that was the station) out of Charleston, West Virginia. Tom and I were sitting in our home (around dusk) and Hugh McPherson, a UFO-loving deejay, was allowing an off-duty station engineer to describe a UFO that he was viewing at the time. The report was coming over the beeper phone.

We'd gone out to look but saw nothing. (St. Albans, our town, was about 17 miles downriver from Charleston, and the engineer was further yet.) We went back in and after a while, the engineer, who was giving us the impression that the UFO was getting further away from him downriver, said that the object had begun moving rapidly to his left. Tom and I decided not to bother to go outside again but just walk to the north end of the house and look out. Our house was a long ranch and we had several feet to walk on its long axis. As I approached the door to that last bedroom, the hair prickled on the back of my neck and (I'm not going to swear to this next bit because it's so subjective, but . . .) it was as if a little voice said: "Hurry." For whatever reason, I ran the last steps to the end window and threw up the window shade. There—immediately on cue stage right—the UFO, a nice little



domed-disk with revolving top, appeared to cruise quietly across the window, tree to tree.

For years, I've held on to my objective view of that thing, and charged the side issues off to coincidence. But, reading so many other resonating cases, you have to wonder.

So what's it all about? Perhaps events like these and the alignment cases could be coincidence. Or it could be rare breakthroughs of a bit of clairvoyance in a normally non-psychic guy like me. Or, maybe, the UFO scriptwriters not only want to put on their plays but want the audience to be seated on time. The alignments seem to indicate that, if they want to, "they know exactly where you live." The occasional urges to be specifically somewhere and looking specifically some place at a certain time may reveal that the dramatists can tap into our consciousness at a distance as well.

All that should be plenty to give the UFO researcher pause. All that available information. All that manipulative ability. All that control. It is a far cry from Col. Mack McCoy at Wright-Patterson in the Project Sign days, when the UFOs were just flying metal disks operated by ET fly-boys just a little ahead of us. Many of our research colleagues still want them to be that simple. I would, too. It would give me more confidence in figuring this thing out without depending upon nibbles of handouts from a bunch of inscrutable dramatists who refuse to ever reveal the plot in which we play our roles. ✦

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