

PROJECT 10073 RECORD

1. DATE - TIME GROUP 18 August 66 19/0252Z	2. LOCATION Tijeras Canyon, New Mexico
3. SOURCE Civilian	10. CONCLUSION Possible (AIRCRAFT) <i>for</i>
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS One	No data presented to indicate object could not have been an A/C., but further investigation necessary.
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION Several Minutes	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS SEE CASE FILE.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground-Visual (BX)	Aircraft was over the area at 39,000 ft during the time of sighting. In view of excellent letter, case should be given more attention.
7. COURSE W	
8. PHOTOS ☐ Yes ☒ No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE ☐ Yes ☒ No	

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE SPECIAL WEAPONS CENTER (AFSC)
KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, NEW MEXICO 87117

19 Aug 66
Tijeras
Canyon



REPLY TO
ATTN OF: SWS

22 August 1966

SUBJECT: Unidentified Flying Object Report

TO: Major Quintanilla (TDEW)
Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio 45433

1. As per our telephone conversation 19 August 1966, attached is letter received from [REDACTED] concerning an "unusual airborne object."
2. I was unable to identify positively the lights he described. The weather at that time in the Albuquerque vicinity was 10,000 feet scattered, 60 miles visibility, temperature 69, dew point 61, surface winds 130 degrees at 5 knots with distant lightning north and northwest.
3. The FAA Tower at the Albuquerque Sunport does not have any information on over-flying aircraft. The Air Route Traffic Control Center advised that there was nothing on ultra high altitude over the area, however, they did have reference to an aircraft that overflew at 39,000 feet. The lights were seen at 0252 Zulu, 19 August 1966, from the local time indicated by [REDACTED]. E05
247-
5010
4. I interviewed [REDACTED]. He is 48 years old, employed as a research illustrator/photographer for Lovelace Foundation at Fission Products Inhalation Laboratory on Sandia Base. He was previously employed as a commercial pilot with 11,000 hours flying time, much of which was in Super G's (Constellation) and like aircraft for Pan American and other airlines. [REDACTED] expressed interest in the siting, but was not unduly disturbed by the siting. Official sunset was at 0152 Zulu, one hour before the siting.

FOR THE COMMANDER

Saul Faktorow
SAUL FAKTOROW, Major, USAF
Chief of Safety

1 Atch
Ltr, 19 Aug 66, [REDACTED]

19 August 1966

TO: Captain Thomas G. Seeberger
P. I. O. Officer, KAFB
Albuquerque, New Mexico

FROM: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Unusual Airborne Object

This will confirm our phone conversation of last evening in reference to the subject matter.

At about 1952 local time, Thursday evening, 18 August 1966, I was sitting on the second story sun deck of my home when I first observed a brilliant white object directly over Tijeras Canyon.

The sun had just disappeared over the western horizon a few minutes prior to my sighting of the object, so the sky was still relatively bright. There were a few scattered clouds in the following areas: (1) There were two cumulo-nimbus directly over the TV towers at Sandia Crest; (2) On the horizon, approximately 15 to 25 degrees to the west of true north was an active thunderstorm which was north of the mountain range at Los Alamos, New Mexico; (3) On the western horizon and to about 15 degrees above the western horizon were several cumulus clouds forming a weak frontal area. The west of the sky at that time (1952 M) was completely clear and a few stars were even visible immediately overhead.

When I first observed the brilliant object, I thought it to be a satellite, so I called my wife up to the sun deck to observe it with me. As we both observed it approaching from the east, it immediately became apparent to me that it could not be a satellite because it was tracking from east to west. All satellites, of which I have any knowledge, track west to east or in the polar orbits.

I assumed then that I had misjudged the sighting and determined, at that point, that we were observing a high flying aircraft at between 20 and 30 thousand feet, probably closer to 30,000 feet. It also flashed through my mind that it was most unusual for an airliner to be flying at that altitude, in relative daylight, with his nose landing light on continuously, as it was. I have had considerable experience in the past, as an airline pilot and this fact did not seem plausible to me.

I could not see any silhouette of an aircraft, even when it was directly overhead, although I could plainly see the complete silhouette of a multi-engine DC-7 which had preceded this sighting by some few minutes. The DC-7 was approximately 25,000 feet overhead when it passed over me.

The object, when observed almost directly overhead, exposed to view, not only the one large bright nose light (if it was a nose light and not a direct reflection from the setting sun), but also a smaller white light or reflective directly beneath the brilliant light. Also, immediately above the large white light, we observed a smaller red light. At least it appeared to be a red light.

We could still not make out any kind of a silhouette even though the object was plainly visible, in its entirety, both to the naked eye as well as through binoculars.

My wife gave up viewing at that point and went back into the house, but I continued to trail the object with the binoculars.

When it reached a point in the western area, approximately 60 degrees from overhead (or about 30 degrees above the western horizon), I observed a bright, rotating white light come on beneath all the lights previously mentioned. The rotating light lasted only for a few seconds when, suddenly, I observed nothing _____ no lights at all, no silhouette, no anything.

I couldn't believe my eyes for a moment! I had not moved my binoculars from the object. I had it directly in the center of my viewing field _____ and yet, in an instant it disappeared from view in clear, relatively bright sky.

I scanned the sky with my eyes and with the binoculars, but could see nothing more of what a moment before had been a series of bright lights, including a rotating white light.

After perhaps two minutes of scanning and not observing anything further of the object, I went into the house and phoned the FFA, ARTCC office at 298-7461 and talked with a man, whose name I did not get. I explained all I had seen and he checked the controller positions and reported he had nothing in the area I had been observing but he admitted that they could not track above 24,000 on their radar scopes. He suggested, however, I call you and advise you of what I had seen, which I did at 2010 M.

The sighting leaves me with the following questions:

1. If it had been a conventional aircraft, either prop or jet, why would it have been flying at that altitude in relative daylight with a nose landing light continuously on?
2. If it had been a conventional aircraft, why could I not see any silhouette of shape other than the bright lights or reflections?
3. If it had been a conventional aircraft, why did it have a bright, rotating white light underneath it instead of the normal rotating red light? Or _____ was it a rotating white light? Could it have been some reflection from the setting sun which appeared to be a rotating white light _____ possibly caused by some kind of turbulence?
4. Why did it suddenly disappear completely in relatively bright, clear sky and leave no silhouette to follow?
5. If it had been a conventional aircraft, why did I not hear any noise from it as it passed overhead? It was perfectly silent and yet, other aircraft, either prop or jet; military, or civilian, when passing overhead, even at greater altitudes than this object _____ always produce the sounds of the particular powerplant involved.

19 August 1966

Finally, I would guess-timate that its relative speed, at approximately 30,000 feet, to be about 700 knots ——— possibly a little faster, but not much. Also it followed a straight, level course throughout the entire time of observation.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED]
Albuquerque, New Mexico
[REDACTED]