K243.6012-1
6-30 Dec 1962

RETURN TO

Director
Aerospace Studies Inst
ATTN: Archives Branch
Maxwell AFB, Alabama

[redacted]
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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

5D-OSI/JWF/fmn

22

[redacted]
IRE INSPECTOR GENERAL, USAF
5TH DISTRICT OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, DAYTON, OHIO

IN REPLY REFER TO: 5D 24-4

14 January 1949

5 December 48
W. Mexico

SUBJECT: PROJECT "SIGN"

TO: Commanding General
Air Materiel Command
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
Dayton, Ohio
ATTN: Captain Sneider, MCIAXO-3

Forwarded herewith, as a matter pertaining to your office, is letter dated 21 December 1948, subject: "Sightings of Aerial Flares," with 3 inclosures.

1 Incl
Ltr dtd 21 Dec 48
w/3 incls

H. B. GIBSON
Colonel, USAF
District Commander

SMC

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

INCIDENT NO 223

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON
Office of Special Investigations
The Inspector General

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24-

SUBJECT: Sightings of Aerial Flares

TO: Commanding General, Air Materiel Command
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio

1. Forwarded herewith is one (1) copy of initial report of investigation regarding sightings of aerial flares or rockets.

2. There is also forwarded as inclosure two a letter from Dr. Lincoln La Paz, Director of the Institute of Meteoritics, University of New Mexico and Director of Southwest Section of American Meteor Society, stating his opinion of the aerial flares. Dr. La Paz has been associated with the Operations and Analysis Division, Headquarters, USAF, and is well known to Dr. H. E. Landsberg, Executive Director, Committee on Geophysics and Geography, Research and Development Board, Pentagon Building, Washington, D. C. It is also noted that Dr. La Paz has been cleared by Headquarters, Air Materiel Command for employment on USAF classified contracts (Incl. 3).

3. The OSI District Office at Kirtland Air Force Base has been instructed to keep this Headquarters informed of any new developments regarding this matter. It is requested that your Headquarters evaluate the information contained in the attached report of investigation and advise this office of your conclusions and any action desired by OSI.

BY COMMAND OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF:

Donald B. White
DONALD B. WHITE
Major, USAF
Asst. Executive, Special Investigations
The Inspector General, USAF

3 Incls.
1. Cy of Rpt of Invest, dtd 13 Dec 48
2. Cy of Ltr fr Dr. La Paz dtd 13 Dec 48
3. Cy of Ltr fr MCLMKC, AMC, 21 Jan 48

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HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

FILE NO. 24-8	DATE 13 Dec 48
REPORT MADE BY	CHARLES MATTZIGER, Jr.
REPORT MADE AT	DO #17, Kirtland AFB
PERIOD	6 - 9 December 1948
OFFICE OF ORIGIN	DO #17, Kirtland AFB
STATUS	PENDING

TITLE

UNKNOWN

(Aerial Phenomena)

CHARACTER

SPECIAL INQUIRY

REFERENCE

None, this is an initial report.

SYNOPSIS

Investigation requested by District Commander, 17th District OSI.

#1 AF Pilot
#2 Civilian Pilot

Telephonic report received from Security Officer at Kirtland Air Force Base, Kirtland Field, New Mexico, on 6 December 1948, advised that an Air Force Pilot had observed an unidentified object similar to a green flare on 5 December 1948, at 2105 hours, west of Las Vegas, New Mexico, and again at 2127 hours on the east slope of the Sandia Mountains near Albuquerque, New Mexico. A commercial pilot reported a similar incident at 2135 hours west of Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Pilot of C-47, AF-9921, is identified as Captain A. GOADE, AO-55483. Captain Pilot of Pioneer Flight No. 63 is identified as Mr. ERNEST VAN LLOYD.

New Mexico State Police, Santa Fe, New Mexico, were contacted and had no information to offer reference unusual aerial phenomena.

Mr. K. D. BLOCK, Forest Supervisor, Santa Fe National Forest, Santa Fe, New Mexico, stated he has received no reports of incidents of this type during the current year. However, in the summer of 1947 a Mrs. MADELINE G. MERCHANT had made numerous reports to him concerning unusual aerial manifestations in the area from Tierra Amarilla to Los Alamos, New Mexico.

DISTRIBUTION		ACTION COPY FORWARDED TO	FILE STAMP
CO, KAFB (Action Copy) (1 Incl)	4	CO, Kirtland AF Base	
OSI, Hq (1 Incl)	2		
10th District OSI (1 Incl)	2		
Holloman AFB Det (1 Incl)	1		
Walker AFB Det (1 Incl)	1		
File	2		

APPROVED

Doyle Rees

DOYLE REES
Lt. Col., USAF
DISTRICT COMMANDER

INCIDENT NO 229

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SYNOPSIS (Continued)

Chief MATT O'BRIEN, Chief of Police, Las Vegas, New Mexico, stated he had received no prior reports of unusual occurrences of this type.

Patrolman NOLAND UTZ, New Mexico State Police, Las Vegas, New Mexico, stated he had heard a rumor concerning aerial fliers in the neighborhood of Las Vegas.

Mrs. JOSEPH MARSHALL, Office Manager, Las Vegas Flying Service, Las Vegas, New Mexico, stated no night flying conducted from Watson Airport, Las Vegas, and she had heard no rumors concerning aerial flares.

Mr. J. D. MILLER, Chief Aircraft Communicator, CAA Municipal Airport, Las Vegas, New Mexico, stated he had heard of no incident of this nature and, in particular, had received no information from any aircraft on 5 December 1948.

Mr. JOHN J. NEWMAN, Mr. K. C. FRANCIS, Mr. C. T. RICH, and Mr. ROY W. TOLLIVER, Aircraft Communicators, CAA, Las Vegas, New Mexico, all stated no previous reports or knowledge of unusual aerial phenomena. These individuals were alerted to report future incidents to the proper investigative agency.

Mr. BILLIE R. WATSON, Manager Pioneer Air Lines, Las Vegas, New Mexico, stated he had heard only a rumor from one of his pilots and knew of no unusual incidents regarding flares or lights in the Las Vegas area. Mr. WATSON stated he would report future incidents to Mr. MILLER of CAA.

Mr. WILLIAM BRAINARD, Ranger, Las Vegas, New Mexico, stated he had no knowledge of any incidents of this type and will submit any future reports to Mr. FLOCK in Santa Fe.

Special Agents STAHL and NEEF observed an intense green light in the sky at approximately 13,500 feet altitude near Las Vegas, New Mexico, on 8 December 1948. Agents were unable to identify this object and could not estimate distance or size, since no other object was visible on which to base the comparison.

Col. WILLIAM P. HAYES, stated he has observed an unusual phenomena, bright, white in color, similar to a miniature sun somewhat larger, larger than a basketball, on three (3) different occasions in the vicinity of Vaughn, New Mexico. First observation was made late in 1947; second observation on 3 or 4 November 1948; third observation on 25 November 1948.

Dr. LINCOLN LA PAZ, Director, Institute of Meteoritics, University of New Mexico, stated that phenomena being investigated could not be explained by him, nor could they be considered as meteors. Dr. LA PAZ

SYNOPSIS (Continued)

mentioned three (3) previous anomalus incidents, the Memphis, Tennessee, incident of 7 May 1948; the Texas Observers' incident of 1948, 7 January, and the very remarkable "fireball" fall of 1948, 31 May, 3:42 a.m., MST, across the Los Alamos reservation which was probably meteoritic, but from which no meteorites have been secured in spite of careful search. Dr. LINCOLN LA PAZ personally witnessed the occurrence of a similar incident on 12 December 1948, at Las Vegas, N. M. A statement by Dr. LA PAZ is inclosed.

Col. HAROLD A. GUNN, Base Commanding Officer, Kirtland Air Force Base, Kirtland Field, New Mexico, advised that he knew of no manuvers being condnoted within this area.

Major WILLIAM P. GODSON, 4th Army Intelligence Liaison, Sandia Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico, advised that he knew of no manuvers being conducted within this area.

Mr. JOSEPH H. TOULOUSE, EMC Security, Sandia Base, observed a green flare directly over Sandia Base at 2255 hours, 6 December 1948.

DETAILS:

AT ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

1. This investigation predicated upon verbal request District Commander, 17th District Office of Special Investigations (10) USAF, Kirtland Air Force Base, Kirtland Field, New Mexico.

2. This is a joint investigation of Special Agents JOHN J. STAHL, Jr., HERMAN E. HUNTOON, MELVIN E. NEER, and the writer.

3. On 6 December 1948, Captain JOSEPH HANLEN, Security Officer, Kirtland Air Force Base, Kirtland Field, New Mexico, reported the following incidents:

5 Dec 48 Goade 2 2 3 c

At 2130 hours, 5 December 1948, a C-47, Number AF-9921, enroute from Lowry Air Force Base, Denver, Colorado, to Williams Air Force Base, Chandler, Arizona, reported his position to the Control Tower, Kirtland Air Force Base, as being approximately ten (10) miles east of Albuquerque. Pilot stated that he had seen a green flare arise from the ground to an altitude of approximately five hundred (500) feet on the east slope of the Sandia Mountains. This incident occurred at about 2127 hours. Pilot stated that he had seen the same type of flare at approximately 2105 hours just west of Las Vegas, New Mexico. No other information was offered by this pilot.

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At 2300 hours, 5 December 1948, the Control Tower, Kirtland Air Force Base, contacted Pioneer Air Flight #63, which had just completed a flight from Tucumcari, New Mexico, to Las Vegas, to Santa Fe, to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Captain of this flight stated he had seen a green light just west of Las Vegas at approximately 2135 hours. Pilot stated he had believed the light to be a shooting star at first, but, upon questioning, stated the opinion that the light was too near the ground to have been a shooting star. Pilot suggested that the light could have been a Very Pistol flare.

5 Dec 48

At 2320 hours, 5 December 1948, Captain VAN LLOYD, pilot of Pioneer Flight #63, reported by telephone to Kirtland Air Force Base Control Tower, stating that when he first saw the light it appeared to be coming straight toward his airplane and added that he had attempted to jerk the airplane from its course to avoid the light. VAN LLOYD said that the light appeared to be coming straight to the ship, then trailed off to the ground. The light was pale green and had a pale green trail. Captain VAN LLOYD said he was hesitant about reporting such incidents since they are generally not accepted.

4. On 6 December 1948, ERNEST VAN LLOYD, Captain and Pilot, JAMES L. SMITH, Co-pilot, and ELIZABETH CONNER, Flight Hostess, all

civilians, Pioneer Flight #63, were interviewed by S/A MELVIN E. NEEF. This interview was conducted at Pioneer Airline Operations, Kirtland Air Force Base, Kirtland Field, New Mexico. VAN LLOYD and SMITH advised that at 2135 hours, 5 December 1948, they were approaching Las Vegas, New Mexico, in a C-47 type airplane at an altitude of 9,000 feet, with a compass heading of 272 degrees. They observed directly ahead and slightly above their altitude, in the vicinity of the Montezuma Mission, a phenomena which first appeared as a bright white flash, then an object came into view which was described as being a whitish, orange color. This object at first appeared to be coming directly toward their airplane, then arched downward and disappeared from sight. This object was in view for only a few seconds and no estimate could be made of the size or distance of the object. Both VAN LLOYD and SMITH were of the opinion that it would have been impossible for anyone in the passenger compartment to have observed this phenomena. Miss CONNER stated that she did not observe this object and added that to the best of her knowledge all of the passengers were asleep.

NOTE: It is to be noted that there is a discrepancy in the color of Capt. VAN LLOYD's initial report and that obtained by interview.

5. On 9 December 1948, Colonel WILLIAM P. HAYES, Infantry, Civilian Component Affairs Officer, New Mexico Military District, was interviewed in his office, Building T-25, Kirtland Air Force Base, Kirtland Field, New Mexico. This interview was conducted by S/A JOHN J. STAHL, Jr., S/A MELVIN E. NEEF, and the writer. Colonel HAYES advised that he had first observed an unusual aerial phenomena during the latter part of 1947. This occurred in the vicinity of Vaughn, New Mexico. The phenomena appeared to be approximately four or five hundred feet above the ground when first observed and descending slowly and steadily in a vertical manner toward the earth. The object appeared to be slightly larger than a basketball, bright white in color, like a miniature sun. Upon reaching a point approximately two hundred feet above the surface of the earth, the object appeared to explode although no noise was apparent. Colonel HAYES stopped his automobile and got out to watch the object. At this time the explosion, or disintegration, appeared to be taking place some forty to sixty yards distant, and still no noise was noticed. At this time the fragments assumed a fiery red color and descended toward earth like numerous sparks, being extinguished before touching the ground. Colonel HAYES stated that he was on Highway #60 at this time, near a railroad and separated from the vicinity where the fragments were landing by a fence. Colonel HAYES did not cross the fence or investigate further.

6. Colonel HAYES advised that on either 3 or 4 November 1948, an again on 23 November 1948, he observed two similar phenomena as described previously. These observations were in the same vicinity of the original phenomena on Highway #60, near Vaughn, New Mexico. All three of these incidents occurred at approximately 2200 hours. Col. HAYES

also advised that as far as he knew no maneuvers were being held by the National Guard or the Reserve Units in New Mexico.

NOTE: Colonel HAYES did not report any of these incidents, but upon receiving information of similar occurences having been observed, did volunteer the information contained in this report.

7. On 9 December 1948, Dr. LINCOLN LA PAZ, Director, Institute of Meteoritics, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, was interviewed in his office by Special Agent MELVIN E. NEEF. Dr. LA PAZ produced his credentials which indicated that during the 2nd World War he was Technical Director, Operations Analysis Section, Hq., 2nd Air Force, and is closely associated in an official capacity with Dr. H. E. LANDSBERG, Executive Director, Committee on Geophysics and Geography, Research and Development Board, Pentagon, Washington, D. C. In connection with this capacity he has a secret and a top secret clearance by the Air Material Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

8. Dr. LA PAZ explained the behavior of meteors and stated that these phenomena being investigated could not be explained or be considered as meteors. He advised, in view of the unexplained Memphis, Tennessee, incident, the occurrence at Los Alamos, New Mexico, and the proclaimed meteorites fall in Russia, that has not been explained, that the present phenomena should be investigated and an attempt be made to identify them.

9. On 13 December 1948, Dr. LA PAZ gave a statement concerning an incident, which he witnessed at 9:03 p.m., on 12 December 1948. Dr. LA PAZ's statement is inclosed as Incl. No. 1.

10. On 11 December 1948, Major WILLIAM P. GODSOE, 4th Army Liaison Intelligence Officer, Sandia Base, New Mexico, advised S/A M. E. NEEF, that there were no maneuvers in this area, and no experiments involving the use of rockets or flares.

11. On 12 December 1948, Col. HAROLD A. GUNN, Base Commander, Kirtland Air Force Base, Kirtland Field, New Mexico, was interviewed by S/A MELVIN E. NEEF. Col. GUNN advised that he knows of no aerial maneuvers, and feels that in the event that there were, he would be so advised.

AT CHANDLER, ARIZONA

12. On 7 December 1948, S/A HERMAN E. MUNROE, reported from Williams Air Force Base, Chandler, Arizona, that Air Force C-47, Number AF-9921, was piloted by Captain A. GOADE, AO-55463. The co-pilot was determined to be Major R. M. CARTER, AO-40767, and the Flight Engineer was M/Sgt. R. G. WALTON, AF-299736 - (unknown in its entirety). All of the above personnal were reported to be permanently stationed at Randolph Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas, and were enroute from San Antonio,

Texas, to Williams Air Force Base, Arizona. Aircraft and crew departed for Mather Air Force Base, California, before an interview could be conducted.

AT SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

13. On 5 December 1948, Captain K. K. MILLER, New Mexico State Police, State Police Headquarters, Highway 85, Santa Fe, New Mexico, was interviewed reference possible previous reports concerning unusual aerial phenomena, flares, lights in the sky, etc. Captain MILLER stated no reports had been received by his office from any of the State Police stationed throughout the state of New Mexico.

NOTE: Captain MILLER stated that he would report any incidents of this type to the State Police Office in Albuquerque and request that they contact the Office Of Special Investigations, Kirtland Air Force Base, Kirtland Field, New Mexico.

14. On 5 December 1948, Mr. K. D. FLOCK, Forest Supervisor, Santa Fe National Forest, Federal Court House Building, Santa Fe, New Mexico, was interviewed reference possible previous reports concerning unusual aerial phenomena, flares, lights in the sky, etc. Mr. FLOCK stated that he had received no reports of incidents of these types during the current year; however, in the summer of 1947, a woman named [redacted], Santa Fe, New Mexico, had reported unusual aerial manifestations to him on numerous occasions. Mrs. [redacted], a writer, and her husband were prospecting throughout the State of New Mexico, and on at least five different occasions, during a period of five to six weeks, Mrs. [redacted] had visited Mr. FLOCK and reported having observed objects which she described as being "cigar-shaped with a glowing tip" in the sky. No information was available as to the altitude, size, speed, or frequency of these objects. Mrs. [redacted] stated that she had personally observed these objects from Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico, to Los Alamos, New Mexico. Mrs. [redacted] is believed to have contacted the military security personnel at Los Alamos Atomic Energy Commission (LEAD) installation, and also to have contacted the Governor of New Mexico reference her observations. It is not believed that Mrs. [redacted] is now residing at Santa Fe.

15. Mr. FLOCK stated that he had alerted his Forest Rangers to watch for unusual lights or objects in the sky, but to date had received no reports from them. Mr. FLOCK recommended that WILLIAM BRAINARD, Forest Ranger, Las Vegas, be contacted for a report of possible activities of this nature in the Las Vegas area.

NOTE: Mr. FLOCK was unusually cooperative and security-conscious. Mr. FLOCK stated that he would discreetly alert his Rangers again and have them report to him all incidents of this nature immediately. These reports will be transmitted in turn to the Office of Special Investigations, Kirtland Air Force Base, Kirtland Field, New Mexico. Mr. FLOCK stated also that he would be glad to cooperate by permitting members of the Office of Special Investigations to make use of temporarily inactive fire towers, or ranger stations, upon request.

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AT LAS VEGAS, NEW MEXICO

1. On 8 December 1948, Mr. Matt O'BRIEN, Chief of Police, Sixth and University, Las Vegas, New Mexico, was interviewed reference reports of unusual aerial phenomenon. Chief O'BRIEN stated that he had received no reports of this nature and added that this was the first he had heard of possible occurrences in the vicinity of Las Vegas. Chief O'BRIEN recommended that NOLAND UTZ, State Police, on duty in Las Vegas, be contacted.

2. On 8 December 1948, Patrolman NOLAND UTZ, New Mexico State Police, San Miguel County Court House (Old Town), Las Vegas, New Mexico, was interviewed reference reports on unusual aerial phenomenon. Mr. UTZ stated he had received no reports of this nature and added that only on one occasion had he overheard a conversation about aerial flares in the neighborhood of Las Vegas. This conversation occurred during a meeting of several enforcement agents and Mr. UTZ stated he had no idea who had mentioned the subject. Mr. UTZ stated if he received reports of this type he would report same to the proper Federal agency. Mr. UTZ said that possibly a man named 'HOUSE' who was flying a plane locally and doing advertising with a loud speaker attached to the plane could throw some light on the flares claimed to have been seen in the vicinity of Las Vegas.

3. On 8 December 1948, Mrs JOSEPH MARSHALL, Office Manager, Las Vegas Flying Service, Watson Airport, East County Road, Las Vegas, New Mexico, was interviewed reference reports of flares observed at night in the vicinity of Las Vegas. Mrs. MARSHALL stated that she was the wife of JOSEPH MARSHALL, Owner of Las Vegas Flying Service. Mrs. MARSHALL stated that business was unusually slow at the Watson Airport, due to the near-abolishment of training of student pilots under the G.I. Bill. No flying is conducted at night from this air field. Mrs. MARSHALL added that possibly information could be obtained from the local newspaper office and added that she had heard no reports on flares in the Las Vegas area.

NOTE: Contact was not made with the local newspaper due to a desire of keeping publicity about this investigation to a minimum.

4. On 8 December 1948, Mr. J. D. MILLER, Chief Aircraft Communicator, Department of Commerce, Civil Aeronautics Administration (hereinafter referred to as C.A.A.), Box 1029, Municipal Airport, Las Vegas, New Mexico, was interviewed reference possible previous reports of unusual aerial phenomenon. Mr. MILLER stated he had heard of no incident prior to this interview and added that he was very much interested in events of this nature. Mr. MILLER stated he had received no information from any aircraft on 5 December 1948. A check of the C.A.A. records for this date verified this statement. Mr. MILLER stated that beginning immediately he would alert his Aircraft Communicators to report promptly incidents of this nature to him. These reports would in turn be reported to the Office of Special Investigations, Kirtland AFB, Kirtland Field, New Mexico. If the reports appear to necessitate immediate investigative action, a report will be made to a Federal agent residing in Las Vegas. Mr. MILLER requested that four of

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his six Aircraft Communicators, on duty at time of interview, be interviewed collectively and informed briefly of the type of reports desired and the necessity for reporting such incidents immediately to Mr. MILLER.

5. On 8 December 1948, Mr. JOHN J. NEWMAN, Mr. K. C. FRANCIS, Mr. C. T. RICH, and Mr. ROY W. TOLLIVER, Aircraft Communicators, C.A.A. Municipal Airport, Las Vegas, New Mexico, were interviewed collectively and informed of the investigation being conducted relative to unusual aerial phenomena. None of these men had received previous reports of this nature. All of these men agreed to maintain this information on a discreet basis and to handle the information as being highly classified. Permission was granted to these four communicators to brief the two communicators absent at this time reference the information desired. The two men absent were listed as Mr. IRWIN L. MERICLE and Mr. ROBERT L. BISH. The four communicators interviewed stated that the only night flying at Municipal Airport, Las Vegas, was by the two commercial airlines located there; Pioneer Airlines and Continental Airlines. It was pointed out that a Mr. LLOYD BIBLE, Owner-Manager of a flying school located on Municipal Airport was not licensed to make night flights and was not authorized to permit his students to fly at night. It was further noted that Mr. WOODROW HOUSE, owner of a Piper Super Cruiser used for advertising purposes in the vicinity of Las Vegas, was not licensed to fly at night.

6. On 8 December 1948, Mr. BILLY R. WATSON, Manager, Pioneer Airlines, Municipal Airport, Las Vegas, New Mexico, was interviewed reference reports on unusual aerial phenomenon. Mr. WATSON was interviewed in his home, 816 Fourth Street, Las Vegas, New Mexico, and stated that with the exception of a rumor from one of his Pioneer pilots (Mr. [redacted]) he had heard of no unusual incidents regarding flares or lights in the sky in and around the Las Vegas area. Mr. WATSON stated that he would stay on the alert in an attempt to gather any future information from pilots or crew members of Pioneer Airlines, but added that he did not feel like confiding in his two assistants, since they were very youthful and would undoubtedly disclose information regarding this investigation. Mr. WATSON stated that a Mr. W. R. McGOVERN, home address, 1001 Sixth Street, Las Vegas, Manager of Continental Airlines was presently out of town but was due to return on Friday, 10 December 1948. Mr. WATSON, upon being requested to do so, stated he would discreetly brief Mr. McGOVERN as to the nature of reports desired, and would impress Mr. McGOVERN as to the confidential classification of this investigation. Mr. WATSON concluded by stating that any information he obtained, and information obtained by Mr. McGOVERN, would be reported to Mr. MILLER of C.A.A. for subsequent transmittal to the proper investigative agency.

7. On 8 December 1948, Mr. WILLIAM BRAINARD, Ranger, Santa Fe National Forest Service, Federal Post Office Building, Las Vegas, New Mexico, was interviewed reference possible previous reports of unusual aerial phenomenon. Mr. BRAINARD stated that at no time in the past since his assignment to Las Vegas in February 1948 had he received any report or observed any incident regarding occurrences of this nature. Mr. BRAINARD said he would report any future incidents of this type to Mr. FLOCK in Santa Fe, for subsequent transmittal to the investigative agency concerned.

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AT LAS VEGAS, NEW MEXICO

This is a joint investigation conducted by [redacted] and [redacted].

At 1745 on 8 December 1948, [redacted], both rated pilots, took off from Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico, in a T-7 type aircraft. At 1833 while flying at an indicated altitude of 11,500 feet, mean sea level, approximately 5,000 feet above terrain, a strange phenomenon was observed. The exact position of the aircraft at the time of the observation was 35° 31' North - 104° 51' West, approximately twenty (20) miles east of the Las Vegas, New Mexico, radio range station. At the time of the observation the aircraft was flying on a compass course of 90°, the indicated air-speed was one hundred sixty (160) miles per hour and the ground speed was approximately one hundred ninety miles per hour. [redacted] was flying as pilot and seated on the left side of the cockpit. [redacted] was flying as co-pilot and was seated on the right side of the cockpit. [redacted] first observed the phenomenon and a split second later [redacted] saw it. At an estimated altitude of 2,000 feet higher than the airplane or 13,500 feet above mean sea level a brilliant green light was observed coming toward the airplane at a rapid rate of speed from approximately 30° to the left of course, from 60° ENE, to 240° WSW. The object was similar in appearance to aburning green flare of common use in the Air Forces. However, the light was much more intense and the object appeared to be considerably larger than a normal flare. No estimate can be made of the distance or the size of the object since no other object was visible upon which to base a comparison. The object was definitely larger and more brilliant than a shooting star, meteor or flare. The trajectory of the object when first sighted was almost flat and parallel to the earth. The phenomenon last approximately two (2) seconds at the end of which the object seemed to burn out. The trajectory then dropped off rapidly and a trail of glowing fragments reddish orange in color was observed falling toward the ground. The fragments were visible for less than a second before disappearing. The phenomenon was of such intensity as to be visible from the very moment it ignited and was observed a split second later. It was not possible for the phenomenon to have been visible for longer than a split second before observation.

8 Dec 48 1841 MST

Weather at flight altitude was as follows; Ceiling unlimited, visibility, a minimum of seventy-five (75) miles, the wind, 30 miles per hour from 310° . The moon, in the first half, was approximately half way to its zenith and south, or to the right of course. The 1815 weather observation at Las Vegas, New Mexico, was clear, 30 miles visibility, temperature 30°, due point 17° , the wind from the NE at 6 miles per hour, the altimeter setting 30.06 inches of mercury. After the occurrence the aircraft remained in the same vicinity for approximately one and one-half hours but no further phenomena were observed.

On 9 December 1948, Special Agent STAHL accompanied by a crew chief took off from Kirtland Air Force Base at 1635 and flew to the area where the phenomenon had been observed the previous evening. A careful search of the terrain, both where the phenomenon was observed and in the direction from

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which it had appeared, was made. The terrain is barren and rough, and scarred by numerous dry washes and shallow canyons. Two or three widely separated buildings, apparently small ranch houses were noticed in the area. It appears that the land may be used for limited cattle raising. There are no indications of cultivation. The aircraft remained in the vicinity for several hours after sunset but no further phenomenon was observed. The weather conditions at flight altitude were high scattered cirrus clouds above 25,000 feet and visibility in excess of 40 miles.

On 11 December 1948, Mr. [redacted]. Security Representative, Sandia Base, gave Special Agent NUNN the following statement;

Statement

At approximately 2255 the evening of 6 December 1948, I observed a definite greenish flare in the sky almost directly overhead at Sandia Base. At the time of the flare I was driving west on D Street and had made the Stop sign at the Main Street. The flare appeared in the upper right hand corner of the windshield of the car slightly to the northwest.

The flare was approximately one-third the diameter of the moon and a slight arch ensued falling from east to west. The flaming tail appeared during this arch. The entire phenomenon lasted possibly two to three seconds after which it vanished.

[redacted]e
A.E.C. Security
Sandia Base

INCLOSURES

FOR CO, KIRTLAND AFB;
Signed statement of Dr. LINCOLN LA PAZ dated at Albuquerque, New Mexico, 13 December 1948.

FOR OSI, HQ., WASHINGTON, D.C.:
Signed statement of Dr. LINCOLN LA PAZ, dated at Albuquerque, New Mexico, 13 December 1948.

FOR DO #10, KELLY AFB;
Signed statement of Dr. LINCOLN LA PAZ, dated at Albuquerque, New Mexico, 13 December 1948.

FOR HOLLOMAN AFB DET;
Signed statement of Dr. LINCOLN LA PAZ, dated at Albuquerque, New Mexico, 13 December 1948.

FOR WALKER AFB DET;
Signed statement of Dr. LINCOLN LA PAZ, dated at Albuquerque, New Mexico, 13 December 1948.

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DISTRICT OFFICE #17, KIRTLAND AFB

AT SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Will interview Mrs. [redacted], reference reports made by her to Mr. FLOCK, Forest Supervisor, Santa Fe National Forest, during the summer of 1947. Any recent activities concerning aerial phenomenon observed by Mrs. [redacted] will be obtained.

AT LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO

Will interview the Chief of the Security Section, Los Alamos Atomic Energy Commission installation reference reports made to that organization by Mrs. [redacted] in 1947 and possibly in 1948. Will further ascertain from the Chief of Security if any other reports of unusual aerial phenomenon have been reported to the Los Alamos Atomic Energy Commission installation.

AT WALKER AIR FORCE BASE

Will determine if that base has been engaged in any maneuvers involving the use of any aerial flares or similar devices.

AT HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE

Will determine if that base has been engaged in any maneuvers involving the use of any aerial flares or similar devices.

DISTRICT OFFICE #10, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

AT SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Will interview Captain Goode, Major Carter and M/Sgt Walton concerning the flares, meteors or phenmenon observed by them at Las Vegas and on the eastern slope of the Sandia Mountains, New Mexico, on 5 December 1948; while enroute from Lowry AFB, Denver, Colorado, to Williams AFB, Chandler, Arizona.

AT EL PASO, TEXAS

Will determine whether or not Biggs AFB has been engaged in aerial maneuvers involving the use of aerial flares or similar devices.

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INCLOSURE NO. 1 TO INVESTIGATIVE REPORT #24-8, 17th DISTRICT OSI.

Report on incident of 1948, December 12, 9h. 2m. ± 30s., seen from Starvation Peak (Bernal), New Mexico. (Approximately 15 miles south and 4 miles west of Las Vegas, New Mexico.

The report of this incident should be prefaced with a statement of the fact that beginning on evening of December 9th, and as a direct result of the conference held on afternoon of December 9th with S/A Melvin E. Neef, the writer began systematic observations of the Geminid meteor shower, the only one of the recognized annual meteor showers active at this time. In spite of the quite unusual nature of the observation reported to me by S/A Neef (and of similar observations made known to me at the conference called by Col. Doyle Rees on December 11th), I felt certain that the observed phenomena somehow must be connected with the Geminid meteors which reach their maximum activity between December 10th and 12th, but are frequently seen in considerable numbers as early as December 3 - 4. However, visual observations made between the evening of December 9th and the morning of December 12th only served to confirm a statement made on December 9th to S/A Neef, viz., that the Geminids are not one of the showers producing numbers of extremely bright fireballs (of also Fletcher Watson, Between the Planets, Harvard Books on Action Series, p. 136 (1941)), and that I did not recall ever having seen a green Geminid fireball although bluish and bluish white Geminid had occasionally been noted. This latter impression was checked after my observations of December 9 - 12 were completed by an analysis of the colors assigned to all meteors both Geminid and non-Geminid that I have observed during periods of Geminid activity since December 1, 1945. A total of 414 such meteors had color reported and none of these were tabulated as either green or greenish.

With the above preface, I proceed to an account of the incident of December 12. Shortly before 9 on the evening of this date a staff car driven by Lt. Allan Clark of Sandia Base left Las Vegas headed for Santa Fe. Clark had as passengers Major C. L. Phillips and the undersigned. Phillips was in the back seat and I was in the right front seat. Just before reaching Bernal, New Mexico, the car passed through a cut and came out on a down slope facing approximately westward. On emerging from this cut a clear view to the right toward the north and northwest was afforded. I was watching the sky as I had been since darkness fell and my attention was directed to an area about 15° west of Σ-Cygni when, by indirect vision I became aware of a very bright green ball (apparent angular diameter 5') to the right of the area in the center of my field of view, moving from east to west very low on the horizon. Jerking my eyes to the right and pointing with my right hand I shouted, "Look", four times. (The fact that I point and repeated the word 4 times has been checked by both of my companions and reenactment of my motions and speech, timed by an Elgin AF stopwatch within 5m after the moment of appearance of the green ball, furnished measures of the duration of this fireball, ranging from 2.1 seconds to 2.3 seconds.

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The path of the green ball was almost exactly horizontal (Altitude estimated as only 3 or 4 degrees) until just a tenth of a second or so before it disappeared. During the last one or two tenths of a second of its visibility a slight but definite curvature downward developed in its path. From the very beginning the ball was very bright. Immediate comparison with Sorius (at a much greater altitude than the green fireball) indicates that during all but the last one or two tenths of a second of the fireball's visibility it was at least of apparent magnitude -4 (minus four). Just as curvature in its path developed the magnitude of the fireball rose slightly and it broke up into three or four smaller, but still bright green fragments which disappeared almost instantly.

Lt. Clark stopped the car the moment the fireball disappeared, spun it around and drove back into the cut; then turned and parked at the exact point where I first yelled "Look". Here the time as read immediately from a watch I had set at noon on December 12 with the master clock in the Santa Fe RR Station at Las Vegas, New Mexico, was 9h. 3m. as nearly as could be determined. Assuming that Clark's manuvers with the car took between half a minute and a minute and a half the actual time of appearance was between 9h. 1m. 30s. and 9h. 2m. 30s. I believe the earlier of these times is the more probable.

At the point where Lt. Clark stopped, an arrow was scratched in the shoulder of the roadway directed toward the point where the green fireball disappeared and white rocks were used to border this arrow. While performing this operation and for many minutes thereafter we stood outside the car and listened for meteritic detonations or rumblings, but absolutely nothing was heard. (There was no appreciable interference from traffic noise.)

At approximately 9:50 p.m., we reentered the staff car and drove first to Santa Fe (where we futily attempted to get in touch with night guards on duty at New Mexico State Prison in the hope of obtaining an additional line of sight to the point where the green ball had disappeared); and then to Los Alamos where I reported to Col. Carroll and other security officials what we had observed. Through their aid it was determined that what was unquestionably the same green ball seen by us had also been observed by at least two of the night guards at Los Alamos.

During the entire night of the 12th, meteors of all magnitudes from the first to the fifth and of various colors (with white and yellow predominating and with no evidence of green) were occasionally seen emanating from the Geminid radiant. This radiant was well above the horizon even at the time of the Starvation Peak incident. Consequently, the apparent paths of the meteors from the radiant appeared as luminous arcs of great circles diverging from the radiant point and passing downward to intersect the horizon under angles always large and for the most part approaching 90°, in value. In the sharpest contrast, the path of the bright green fireball seen from near Starvation Peak was very nearly, if

Incl No. 1 to Investigative Report #24-8 (Cont)

not exactly, parallel to the horizon. This green fireball certainly did not emanate from the Geminid radiant.

Subject to discovery that a new (non-Geminid) meteoric radiant emitting numerous very bright fireballs of a vivid green color (deeper and richer than the green of the beacon at the New Municipal Airport south of Santa Fe, New Mexico) has suddenly become active during the first half of December, I am now convinced the various "green Flare" incidents reported to the O.S.I. are not meteoric in nature.

This is a written statement given by Dr. La Paz in his own words.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO
ALBUQUERQUE

Institute of Meteoritics

December 13, 1948

To: Lt. Colonel Doyle Rees, Commanding Officer
District No. 17
Office of Special Investigations

From: Lincoln LaPaz, Director
Institute of Meteoritics

Subject: Anomalous luminous phenomena

Pursuant to conversations with Captain Neff under date of December 8, I should like to review the various luminous incidents which have been brought to my attention either as Director of the Institute of Meteoritics, University of New Mexico, or as Director of the Southwest section of the American Meteor Society; or through official channels such as those more specifically described hereinafter. After reviewing these instances, certain recommendations for more detailed investigations of the phenomena in question will be made in accordance with your request.

1. The writer's experience in observation of meteoritic phenomena dates from 1914 when he began as an observing member of the American Meteor Society. In addition to my own experience, I am able to rely also on that of many other specialists in this field. On the basis of all available observational evidence, it can be stated that an extraordinarily large number of fireballs has been reported recently, not only to the agencies that I direct but to other groups carrying out meteoritic studies. In spite of well organized and persistent field searches conducted, not only by the Institute of Meteoritics but also by other organizations, there has been only one case in which the actual recovery of fallen meteorites served to confirm the supposed meteoritic origin of an observed "fireball."

2. In addition to the evidence set forth in the preceding paragraph, the undersigned has on several occasions been requested by agencies, both military and otherwise, to express an opinion upon, or to actively investigate the occurrence of luminous phenomena, supposedly of meteoritic nature, but of such remarkable character that this explanation cannot be accepted without confirmation. In this connection, I should like to call attention to Colonel W. R. Clingerman's letters to me under date of 23 June and 20 July 1948 and Dr. H. E. Landsberg's letter to me under date of 30 March 1948, copies of which are enclosed herewith.

3. The incidents referred to in the above paragraphs, considered in connection with the special inquiry of the Office of Special Investigations under date of 10 December 1948, are of such puzzling nature, and may conceivably be of such serious import that I should like to make certain recommendations for a systematic study of all such incidents.

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4. First, it is recommended that orders be issued directing all U.S.A.F. night guards and other persons on night duty on the ground or in the air to immediately report any luminous phenomena which they may observe and which they have any reason to believe are not the result of an ordinary meteor (shooting star) fall. The same orders should be issued to those members of the service on duty by day with the qualifications that they do not report luminous objects directly traceable to reflections from meteorological balloons, or from the metal surfaces of airplanes.

Second, it is recommended that steps be taken to secure a similar report from the Security guards on duty at Sandia Base, Kirtland Air Base, Los Alamos, and at other installations throughout New Mexico. In this connection, I should like to note that the Institute has received excellent cooperation from the New Mexico Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, from Forest Rangers, and from night guards at the New Mexico Proving Ground.

Third, it is recommended that the Institute of Meteoritics be given official authorization to make public in newspapers and over radio-networks requests for observations of "fireballs." Such authorizations would seem to be necessary since requests of the nature alluded to, transmitted through Dr. Ward Fenley, Director of the University of New Mexico News Bureau to newspapers throughout New Mexico, in connection with the Las Vegas incident of 1020 PM, on the night of 5 December 1948, were not published, apparently because of pressure from other agencies also investigating this occurrence.

Fourth, it is recommended finally that where sufficient observations have been obtained to permit a determination of the probable area of fall, under the supposition that the incident under investigation is actually meteoritic in nature, a thorough-going field search be conducted in this area in the hope of recovering fallen meteorites and of thus establishing once and for all the true nature of the incident. In this connection, some provision should be made for putting into the area of fall radio-equipped vehicles, planes and ground searchers. Our experience, even in the difficult Four Corners area is that with these groups cooperating, an exhaustive search of an area of large size can be speedily completed.

In conclusion, I should like to point out that the staff of the Institute of Meteoritics is eager to cooperate in all such investigations as have been suggested above, subject only to authorization to do so from the President of the University of New Mexico. Such authorization will unquestionably be forthcoming, provided only an official request for Institute of Meteoritics participation in investigations specified to be of importance to the national defense is made of President Tom L. Popejoy.

/s/ Lincoln La Paz

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