Comments on Project Sign Case 144, Chiles-Whitted Case, 7/24/48

Case 144, Montgomery, Alabama, July 24, 1948

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Also, 144a & b, Blackstone, Virginia, same date

The famous EAL "space ship" sighting reported in incident 144 should be compared with 168(Arnheim, The Hague, 7/20/48) and 206 (Clark AF3, Ph. Islands, 11/ ? /48), slso with 144a & b (Blackstone, Va., 7/24/48) which together constitute a separate incident if facts are correct as given.

For 144, no astronomical explanation if we accept the report at face value. Sheer improbability of the facts as stated, particularly in the absense of any known aircraft in the vicinity, makes it necessary to see whether any other explanation, even though far-fetched, can be considered. The two reliable pilots obviously saw something. If one extracts from their reports parts of the description, "tremendous bursts of **smart** flame," "cigar-shaped," "disappeared into a cloud," "orange-red flame," "time in eight five to ten seconds," one sees that this much at least could be satisfied by a brilliant, slow-moving meteor. The orange-red flame **/ time in sight** cularly suggestive. It is pertinent also that the only passanger awake at the time the two pilots **smar** sighted the object gave a description that does not tally with that of a space ship but does arree with that of a meteor.

It will have to be left to psychologists to tell us **xxxx** whether the immediate train of a bright meteor could produce the subjective impression of a ship with lighted windows. Considering only the Chiles & Whitted sightings, the hypothesis seems very improvable. However, not included in the summary but mentioned in the vol collat met (sic) is the report of a qualified Robbins AFE observer (166) who stated that he saw a cylindrical object trailing a red flash of fire but did not discern any Windows or double deck. Time of this observation is exactly one hour earlier, if both times and given in ESF (as is stated). It is interesting to note, however, that hacon and hontrowery are both on the line of flight as described by the hontgomery **xituxszos** observers. If these two **frightAttax** sightings refer to the save object there are two possible interpretations. One is that the object was some type of known aircraft, regardless of its bizarre nature. The distance between hacon and hontgomery is approx. 200 miles. From all reports, the object traveled **x** definitely faster that 200 mph, so it would have covered the distance between the two points in much less time than that noted. (Schedule is of course correspondent for ordinary aircraft.)

Other possible explanation is that the object was a fireball, in which case it would have covered the distance from Macon to Lontgemery in a matter of a minute of two. If the Montgemery observers had been using Daylight Savings Time (do regular condicidal airlines connecting cities using daylight savings time op (sic) on it?) then there would be no discrepancy in the time.

The conclusion seems to be this: If the difference in time is real, the object was some sort of aircraft traveling at 200 mph. If there is no time difference, the object must have been some extraordinary meteor. The observations, from two such widely separated points, is the focal point of the investigation if one assumes that the same object was observed in the two cases. That there were two separate objects can be ruled **xwx** most unlikely by the sheer improbability of more than one such extraordinary object being seen on the same night, traveling over the same course, exactly one hour apart.

The object in 144a and 144 b (Blackstone, Virginia, 7/24) was very probably a meteor. It should be noted that this object was traveling in the same direction as the one reported in 144, although separated by some 400 miles. It is not unusual for a fireball to be seen along a path several hundred miles long. There is a time discrepancy between the two observations of 15 minutes, however; any connection between between 144 and 144a & b (in considering the meteor bypothesis) necessarily hinges on whether this time difference was real, or not.

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Incident #144 a and b

Blackstone, Virginia -- 24 July 1948

The object reported in incident #144a & #144b was very probably a meteor. It should be noted that this object was traveling in the same direction as the one reported in #144, although separated by some 400 miles. It is not unusual for a fireball to be seen along a path several hundred miles long. There is a time discrepancy of 15 minutes between the observations, however; any connection between #144 and 144a-b (in considering the meteoric hypothesis) necessarily hinges on whether this time difference was real, or not.

Source: Hynek, Project Grudge, Final Report, Appendix 3.

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Incident #	144	Near	Montgomery,	Alabama	 24 July 1948
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The famous "space ship" sighting reported in incident #144 should be compared to #168 and #206, and also with 144a and b, which together constitute a separate incident if facts are correct as given.

For #144, there is no astronomical explanation if we accept the report at face value. The sheer improbability of the facts, as stated, particularly in the absence of any known aircraft in the vicinity, makes it necessary to see whether any other explanation, even though far-fetched, can be considered. The two reliable pilots obviously saw something. If one extracts from their reports parts of the description -- "tremendous bursts of flame," "gigar-shaped," "disappeared into a cloud," "orange-colored flame," "time in sight five-to-ten seconds" -- one sees that this much, at least, could be satisfied by a brilliant, slowmoving meteor. The orange-red flame is particularly suggestive. It is pertinent also, that the only passenger awake at the time the two pilots sighted the object gave a description that does not tally with that of a "space ship" but does agree with that of a meteor.

It will have to be left to the psychologists to tell us whether the izicar immediate trail of a bright meteor could produce the subjective impression of a ship with lighted windows. Considering only the Chiles-Whitted sighting, the hypothesis seems very improbable. However, not included in the summary but mentioned in the voluminous collateral material is the report of a qualified Robins Air Jase observer, who stated that he saw a cylindrical object trailing a red flash of fire, but did not discern any windows or a double deck; (admittedly, from the ground he would have izem had less opportunity to do so). The time of his observation is exactly one hour earlier, if both times are given in EST (as is stated). It is interesting to note, however, that Macon, Georgia, and Montgomery, Alabama, are both on the line of flight as described by the Montgomery observers.

If these two sightings refer to the same object, there are the possible interpretations: One is that the object was some type of aircraft, regardless of its bizarre nature. The distance between Macon and Montgomery is approximately 200 miles. From all reports the object was traveling definitely faster that 200 MFH, so would have covered the distance between these two points in much less time than than noted. (The schedule is, of course, correct for an ordinary aircraft.)

The other possible explanation is that the object was a fireball, in which case it would have covered the distance from Macon to Montgomery in a matter of a minute or an two. If the Montgomery observers had been using daylight savings time (do regular commercial airlines connecting cities using daylight savings time operate on it?), then there would be no discrepancy in the time.

The conclusion seems to be this: If the difference in time is real, the object was some form of aircraft traveling at 200 MPH. If there is no time difference, the object must have been an extraordinary meteor. The observation from two such widely separated points is the focal point of the investigation -- if one assumes that the same object was observed in the two cases. That there were two separate objects can most likely be ruled out by the sheer improbability of more than one such extraordinary object being seen on the same night, travelling over the same course, exactly one hour apart.

Source: Hynek, Project Grudge, Final Report, Appendix B.