

The Top Five Most Credible Sightings of UFOs



Class

Professor

June 30, 2017

The term UFO stands, of course, for "unidentified flying object," which is often taken to refer to an alien from outer space. There have, of course, been no events where it has been possible to conclude with absolute certainty that aliens had been sighted. However, there have been quite a number of events where people have in fact seen UFOs, and there has been no plausible way to really account for them, other than to reluctantly assume that they belonged to aliens. The present essay will highlight five of the most credible sightings of UFOs in the world—that is, sightings which do not appear to be hoaxes, and which do not have reasonable alternative explanations.

1. The Chilles-Whitted Incident

One of the most credible UFO sightings in history happened on July 24th, 1948. There was a commercial airline flight underway, and as Ruppelt has indicated: "At about 2:45 A.M., when the flight was 20 miles southwest of Montgomery, the captain, Chiles, saw a light dead ahead and closing fast. . . . Both the pilot had gotten a good look at the UFO and were able to give a good description to the Air Force intelligence people."¹ One of the passengers was looking out the window at the time, and he reported seeing a streak of bright and intense light, although he could not make out details. The pilots, however, indicated that they clearly saw rows of illuminated windows on the object. Moreover, there were sightings from the ground that corroborated the story of the pilots: there were *two independent reports* of seeing a bright object streaking across the sky at about the same time that the call from the pilot of the airplane came in.

There has never been a good, non-UFO explanation for what actually happened, here. The best suggestion has been that the pilots had actually seen a meteor (also known as a shooting

¹ Edward J. Ruppelt, "Chilles-Whitted Case Report," *UFO Evidence*, n.d., <http://www.ufoevidence.org/cases/case117.htm> (accessed on June 30, 2017).

star). However, this explanation has generally been dismissed as absurd: the pilots themselves have confirmed that they have enough experience in the skies to not mistake a meteor for an aircraft, or to not somehow hallucinate that the meteor had windows. This case is thus unsolved, and it is difficult to fathom what else this UFO could have really been, if not an actual aircraft from outer space.

2. The Mantell Incident

On the 7th of January 1948, Thomas F. Mantell, an experienced member of the Air National Guard and a pilot at the Battle of Normandy, died chasing a UFO above Fort Knox, Kentucky. He flew too high while pursuing his target, in an era where pressurized cabins did not exist and pilots needed to be cautious about not having enough oxygen at such altitudes. There are a couple alternative theories about what exactly this UFO was. One theory suggests that it was actually the planet Venus, and that Mantell had merely mistaken it for a UFO. Another suggests that it was in reality an aircraft known as the Skyhook Balloon, which were being periodically launched during that time.

The balloon explanation would be plausible, except for how experienced Mantell actually was as a pilot, and the fact that he believed it was worth risking (and ultimately losing) his life in order to pursue this object. As Above Top Secret has pointed out: "Mantell was not one who was ignorant of simple sky phenomena and the dangers involved in air travel. He also was not one that would chase Venus or a balloon and risk his life doing so."² It is short, it is difficult to believe that Mantell would have made such a dramatic error of observation, especially given that before his death, he did in fact report that he got a clear sight of the object, which very much did seem to be an alien aircraft.

² Above Top Secret. "The Mantell UFO Incident." Author, May 16, 2009. <http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/thread463614/pg1> (accessed on June 30, 2017).

3. The Gorman Incident

It seems that the year 1948 was a good one for UFO sightings. On October 1st 1948, in the skies above North Dakota, George F. Gorman got into what has sometimes been called a "dogfight" with a UFO. Gorman saw the UFO and tried to keep up with it, but it turned out that he could not, even though he and the object passed each other several times. Later, Gorman reported that the object seemed to follow the laws of inertia and be driven by a conscious intention, but that its movements were too radical for Gorman to match with his own aircraft.³ The official explanation for this event has been that Gorman was either chasing a lighted weather balloon, or that he had mistaken the planet Jupiter for a UFO. It is true that a lighted weather balloon was in fact released at about that time. Again, though, as with the Mantell incident, it is difficult to believe that an experienced pilot such as Gorman would have really made the mistake of falling for the illusion of his own movements being the target object's movements.

4. The Green Fireball Sightings

Between December 1948 and April 1955, in the skies above New Mexico, there were sightings of what have come to be known as green fireballs. That's pretty descriptive of what was actually observed at the time. They seemed at first like meteors, but it is was later acknowledged by experts in any way that one would expect any natural object to move. To this day, people don't really know what these objects were. One plausible alternative explanation is that it was some sort of atmospheric phenomenon caused as a result of nuclear radiation, given that the deserts of New Mexico were a nuclear testing ground. However, accepting that conclusion would require about as much faith as anything else, given that there has been no scientific confirmation

³ Above Top Secret, "The Gorman Incident," Author, May 23, 2009, <http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/thread465964/pg1> (accessed on June 30, 2017).

that such a phenomenon actually exists, or that they would cause movements that do not resemble anything known in the natural world.⁴

5. The Washington Reports

Finally, between the 13th and 29th of July 1952, there were reports of UFOs in the skies over Washington, D.C. There were not only eyewitness accounts of such sightings, there were even disturbances picked up by two separate radar stations that would correspond with the kind of objects that people reported seeing. The official explanation was that the radar disturbances were caused by anomalies in the temperature of the weather during that time, which could at least theoretically lead to false data showing up on radars. As Foreman has pointed out, however, "This doesn't account for the eyewitness sightings, of course, or for the fact that temperature inversions are common but radars never pick them up."⁵ Moreover, it is worth noting that the people who were working the radar stations themselves did not buy the official explanation provided by the government. One gets the clear sense that there was something of a cover-up going on here, or at the very least that for reasons of its own, the government wanted people to stop thinking that there were in fact UFOs hovering in the skies above the nation's capital.

Conclusion: A Note on Methodology

In all these cases, there is no *direct* evidence that the UFOs involved were in fact related to aliens from outer space. That is, no actual UFO was brought down to the ground for investigation, and no alien bodies were found; in principle, it is possible that the people involved in the cases fell for hallucinations, or that one alternative explanation or another does in fact reflect the truth of what happened in any of the given situations. Moreover, it is worth bearing in

⁴ Seth Foreman, "5 UFO Sightings that Even Non-Crazy People Find Creepy," *Cracked*, August 9, 2010, http://www.cracked.com/article_18690_5-ufo-sightings-that-even-non-crazy-people-find-creepy.html (accessed on June 30, 2017).

⁵ *Ibid.*

mind that in science, it can be very difficult to prove a negative: that is, it would be almost impossible to definitively prove that the objects in these situations were *not* alien UFOs.

That being said, the cases discussed above do, when taken together, constitute something of a preponderance of circumstantial evidence. Were *all* of these people really mistaken about what they saw, and can alternative explanations really account for *all* of the anomalous sightings and data? Again, there is no direct evidence present, and the standard of evidence for accepting such an extreme theory as alien UFOs must be very high indeed. However, in the absence of plausible alternative explanations, one must at the very least wonder what is going on here. The simple fact is that we don't really know what happened within the cases discussed here.

Bibliography

- Above Top Secret. "The Gorman Incident." Author, May 23, 2009.
<http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/thread465964/pg1> (accessed on June 30, 2017).
- Above Top Secret. "The Mantell UFO Incident." Author, May 16, 2009.
<http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/thread463614/pg1> (accessed on June 30, 2017).
- Foreman, Seth. "5 UFO Sightings that Even Non-Crazy People Find Creepy." *Cracked*, August 9, 2010. http://www.cracked.com/article_18690_5-ufo-sightings-that-even-non-crazy-people-find-creepy.html (accessed on June 30, 2017).
- Ruppelt, Edward J. "Chilles-Whitted Case Report." *UFO Evidence*, n.d.
<http://www.ufoevidence.org/cases/case117.htm> (accessed on June 30, 2017).

Citation information

You are free to use this sample work for reference and research purposes. However, you **must cite it** and provide attribution to the author. The citation is provided below in Turabian format.

Ultius, Inc. "The Top Five Most Credible Sightings of UFOs." *Free Writing Samples / Ultius*. 30 Jun. 2017. Web.

If you need help with Turabian style, please visit the [Ultius citation style help section](#). Thanks for playing fairly.