

# SAUCERS OVER WASHINGTON, D.C.

HARRY G. BARNES, SENIOR AIR ROUTE TRAFFIC CONTROLLER FOR THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS ADMINISTRATION, WAS IN CHARGE OF THE NATIONAL AIRPORT, WASHINGTON, D.C., A.R.T. CONTROL CENTER ON THE NIGHT OF JULY 19, 1952. "BRIEFLY," HE STATES IN A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE, "...OUR JOB IS TO CONSTANTLY MONITOR THE SKIES AROUND THE NATION'S CAPITOL WITH THE ELECTRONIC EYE OF RADAR..." SHORTLY AFTER MIDNIGHT ON THAT DATE, SEVEN PIPS APPEARED SUDDENLY ON THE CONTROL CENTER'S SCOPE. ED NUGENT, JIM COPELAND, AND JIM RITCHEY, ALL EXPERIENCED RADAR CONTROLLERS, CHECKED THE OBSERVATIONS. THE AIRPORT CONTROL TOWER RADAR OPERATOR VERIFIED THE SAME SIGHTING. **THEY WERE OVER "THE RESTRICTED AREAS OF WASHINGTON, INCLUDING THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE CAPITOL..."**



CAPTAIN C.S. PIERMAN, A CAPITOL AIRLINES PILOT OF 17 YEARS FLYING EXPERIENCE, SHORTLY AFTER TAKING OFF, WAS ASKED TO CHECK THESE MYSTERIOUS OBJECTS. HE RADIOED BACK...

**THERE'S ONE... AND THERE IT GOES!**



PIERMAN DESCRIBED IT AS A BRIGHT LIGHT MOVING FASTER, AT TIMES, THAN A SHOOTING STAR...

BARNES STATES: "DURING THE NEXT 14 MINUTES, HE (PIERMAN) REPORTED THAT HE SAW SIX SUCH LIGHTS... EACH SIGHTING COINCIDED WITH A PIP WE COULD SEE NEAR HIS PLANE. WHEN HE REPORTED THAT THE LIGHT STREAKED OFF AT HIGH SPEED, IT DISAPPEARED FROM OUR SCOPE..."

THAT MEANS IT ZOOMED OUT OF OUR BEAM BETWEEN SWEEPS! IT ACCELERATED FROM 130 MILES PER HOUR TO ALMOST 500 IN LESS THAN 4 SECONDS...



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BARNES THEN STATES: "BEFORE NOTIFYING THE AIR FORCE... OUR TECHNICIANS HAD CAREFULLY CHECKED THE EQUIPMENT TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT IT WAS OPERATING PERFECTLY..."



"THERE IS NO OTHER CONCLUSION I CAN REACH BUT THAT FOR SIX HOURS ON THE MORNING OF THE 20TH OF JULY THERE WERE AT LEAST 10 UNIDENTIFIABLE OBJECTS MOVING OVER WASHINGTON. THEY WERE NOT ORDINARY AIRCRAFT. I COULD TELL THAT BY THEIR MOVEMENT ON THE SCOPE..."



"I CAN SAFELY DEDUCE THAT THEY PERFORMED GYRATIONS WHICH NO KNOWN AIRCRAFT COULD PERFORM. BY THIS I MEAN THAT OUR SCOPE SHOWED THAT THEY COULD MAKE RIGHT ANGLE TURNS..."



"...AND COMPLETE REVERSALS OF FLIGHT..."



"NOR IN MY OPINION COULD ANY NATURAL PHENOMENA SUCH AS SHOOTING STARS, ELECTRICAL DISTURBANCES, OR CLOUDS ACCOUNT FOR THESE SPOTS ON OUR RADAR..."



\*NOT TO MENTION PIERMAN'S ACTUAL VISIBLE SIGHTINGS OF THE OBJECTS—EDS.

THE AIR FORCE DUG DEEP IN AN EFFORT TO SQUIRM OUT OF THIS SIGHTING. AT 4 O'CLOCK ON JULY 29, 1952, A PRESS CONFERENCE WAS HELD...

GENTLEMEN! THE RADAR-SIGHTINGS OVER WASHINGTON WERE CAUSED BY TEMPERATURE INVERSION. THE OBJECTS WERE REFLECTIONS OF GROUND OBJECTS... CARS... TRAINS... ETC...



THIS WAS THE AIR FORCE'S GLIB ANSWER. THEY DREW UPON DR. DONALD H. MENZEL'S TEMPERATURE-INVERSION THEORY: WHEN A LAYER OF COOL AIR LIES BENEATH A LAYER OF WARM AIR, LIGHT RAYS ARE REFRACTED AS THEY PASS THROUGH. IF A TEMPERATURE-INVERSION IS STRONG ENOUGH... 10 TO 15 DEGREES DIFFERENCE... LIGHT RAYS MAY EVEN BE REFLECTED. THIS IS WHAT CAUSES MIRAGES ON DESERTS OR HEATED ROADS. LIKE LIGHT, RADAR WAVES ARE ALSO REFRACTED OR REFLECTED. "TEMPERATURE-INVERSION," THE AIR FORCE SAID, "WAS THE ANSWER."

JUST TWO POINTS, BOYS:

(1) THE ACTUAL TEMPERATURE-INVERSION OVER WASHINGTON ON THE NIGHT OF JULY 19, '52, WAS JUST ONE DEGREE FAHRENHEIT! AND (2) YOU FORGOT THE VISUAL SIGHTINGS! <sup>25</sup>