

SOCORRO CEIII

*(when I did it)*

not including NICAP/Hynek 1st drafts, working MSS, etc

"markings" = ground markings/traces

file # 1

NICAP lists of press clippings	8 pgs
Coral Lorenzen article, FATE Aug 64	12
Socorro resident's letter + cover to Keyhoe	3
Stewart letter to Sgt Moody USAF w answers	2
Maston Jacks USAF letter 8 Jan 65	1
Hall notes to NICAP writer on S. article	1

file # 2 grey folder

USAF memo to Capt Quintanilla	1
Hynek letter to Geo Earley	1
Hall/Stanford letters	17
Ray Stanford report + cover letter	5
Spalding USAF note to W. Webb 27 F 65	1
NICAP press release by Hall	2
NICAP interm statement	2
Capt Holder (Army) report, thermofax	4
NICAP internal notes on phone calls 26 Ap--28 Ap	3
Walt Webb synthesis account of case, 11/4/64	17
map; APRO illustr; telegram; Hynek press quotes	4
long-sheet copy(?) Holder report w. illustr's	12
NICAP memo re Stanford sample, by Hall	1
sheet ex letter from "JEM" (McDonald?) re fused sand at site claim	1
NASA letter on Stanford sample being nonmetallic map by ? (original)	2 1
Holder markings diagram	1
artist concept of craft (copyrighted?)	1
USAF report form (scribbled by Hynek w. Zamora's answers?)	9
US Geological Survey map w. event notations	3
<i>Stuart Nixon letter to Hynek re Klaus' local suspicions</i>	1

File # 3 brown

UPI article in Life? Look?	2
James McDonald letter on his followups	1
Quintanilla USAF memo to Col de Jonckheere	2

file # 4 accordion pleat

Menzel & Boyd letter to Hynek w. debunking attempt, 19 F 65	7
Hynek pupil's paper utilizing Socorro sources	12
Hynek letter to Menzel on case, 29 S 64	3
Holder first summary report (very poor legibility)	1
Menzel letter dismissing case, 18 S 64	2
USAF case summary	3
Aunt Ruby's letter from Socorro, 15 May 64	3
Hynek? note on removal of rocks fr. site	1
Advertisement of Astropower Inc (logo like the symbol, somewhat)	1
markings diagram + craft concept illus (copyright?)	1
Col. de Jonckheere USAF report, 28 May 64	6
Hynek: "Socorro revisited" Aug 64 + cover letter	9
Hynek: "Report on trip...Mar 12-13, 1965"	10
US Weather Bureau "winds aloft" 23 Apr 64	1
Hynek attempt to get the additional witnesses to write describing observations	6
USAF press release on case	2
UPI teletype account	1

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

next page

file # 5

IUR item on Kies & Kratzer (witnesses) testimony

1

file # 6

Ground Saucer Watch: "Socorro, New Mexico: revisited"  
(incomplete)

14

1. This typewriter is in need of cleaning/lubricating;  
also the tab mech is screwed on the left of the present  
setting.

## 2. SOCORRO FILES

Jerry sez there's a 20 May 64 report by Hynek; well it  
aint in files, nor in any of the occasional papers on  
the shelf under his name in Library. Private memo, sez Jerry.

Didn't Hynek write a formal report for BB?  
This is what the guy wants in the 1st instance.

Files are a mess (of course). Very little from BB.

Material from Holder (Army) is illegible, or seems  
incomplete.

GSW paper/publication incomplete: lacks photo section/map.

No photos in files. Where they all gone?

Hynek took a bunch.

Sequential pages are oft not sequential any more; betcha  
they're sometimes not in the same file.

Nervewracking duplication: where's the best copy? I  
constantly asked my self. Self was confused often.

Reread Stanford's book for amusement. First laugh: there  
DOES seem to be something problematic about the  
insignia reported; varia show up in local press accounts  
including of Hynek's statements.

Stanford & Hall argued in MUFON J; Stanford comes  
off as a nut trying to look applish.

Steiger's Project BB dupes stuff in our files (I think).  
Problem: let a customer know? He'd need other stuff ex  
files, anyway. Problem: was there a Hynek 1st report, or  
did Steiger's legman miss it?

Attached list is of non-clipping stuff of some interest to  
a historian; individual items might interest according to  
fineness of yer comb.

Complex case: much depends on discussions in lit.

Stanford metal samples claim stuff not too intelligible  
(or maybe: evaluable) sans his book, literature.

Jerry's account good, but not THE definitive-study. I  
wonder if there can be a definitive study.

Oughta discuss. FJR

EXTRA CREDIT: R. Hall got pissed at Stanford's claims of him screwing up  
w. the Socorro metal traces; Hall pub'd a column. Stanford replied in  
a two-part refutation. Stewart's MUFON INDEX does NOT put Hall's &  
Stanford's articles together under any category. Indexer perversity,  
probably due to several indexers or a break in work. Gaaaaa.

Keep

U.S.A.



"Usually one finds many contradictions or omissions in these reports," Dr. Hynek said.

"BUT MR. ZAMORA'S story is simply told, certainly without any intent to perpetrate a hoax. The story of course was told by a man who obviously was frightened badly by what he did see. He certainly must have seen something."

Dr. Hynek said he found little at the Socorro site.

"The area certainly has been thoroughly messed up by the tacticians. There's nothing to see there now."

He said soil samples had been taken to "see if there are any particles in the ashes or at the site that might be foreign to this area."

Dr. Hynek also was interested in the wedge-shaped impressions.

"FROM THE observations by Zamora and other authorities the impressions apparently were fresh," he said. "I just wish we had a picture of them. But with all the people tramping around there, there isn't anything to see now."

HE SAID THE lack of radar contact reports bothered him.

"So often he have such a contact and then can trace the object to some natural phenomena or aircraft," he said.

—Associated Press Wirephoto

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, left, astronomer professor at Northwestern University, talks with Jim Harvey, Air Force spokesman, on way to investigate unidentified flying object.

### Radar Angle Baffling

## 'Flying Egg' Puzzle—Can't Crack It

By Associated Press

SOCORRO, N.M., April 29—One of the things that bothers the scientist investigating New Mexico's unidentified flying object reports for the Air Force is the lack of mention of radar contacts.

"IT'S MY understanding New Mexico is infested with radar equipment," said Dr. J. Allen Hynek of Northwestern University, an astronomer who is a special consultant to the Air Force. "I am going to check to

see if there have been radar contacts that might tie into these reports."

Dr. Hynek visited Wednesday the secluded hill where Socorro policeman Lennie Zamora reported seeing an egg-shaped object fly away from a draw last Friday evening.

OTHER REPORTS have followed. The Socorro report and another at La Madera in northern New Mexico were similar in that state and military authorities confirmed a scorched area

where the object was supposed to have landed, and wedge-shaped impressions that appeared to have been left by some type of landing gear.

He would not offer an opinion on just what Zamora did see.

He said he had investigated many such sightings but "this is one of the best, no that's not the right word, just say it is one of the best, best substantiated reports as far as it goes

## No Space Ship—'Twas Gas Tank

PORTALES, N.M. (UPI)—A Portales, N.M. man reported to police Thursday night he had seen an unidentified object described as about 12-feet long, glowing white, and hovering just over the ground.

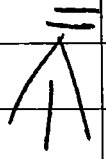
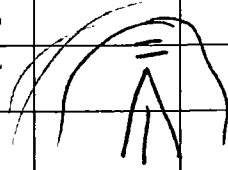
Police rushed to the spot and found the object, a newly painted butane tank.

with Binghamton, 25

(6 + A?) Landings  
To Tell the Truth -  
Mon 7:30 pm

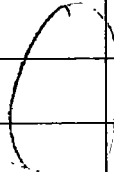
Baltimore talk

Marking on UFO,  
as drawn by  
Zamora - sketch  
by Hynak, 5-20-64

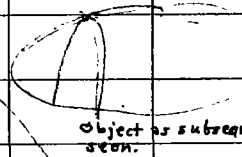


sometimes he draw with arc over it (representing the object itself?), sometimes not, as at night J.

Montana a "hoax"



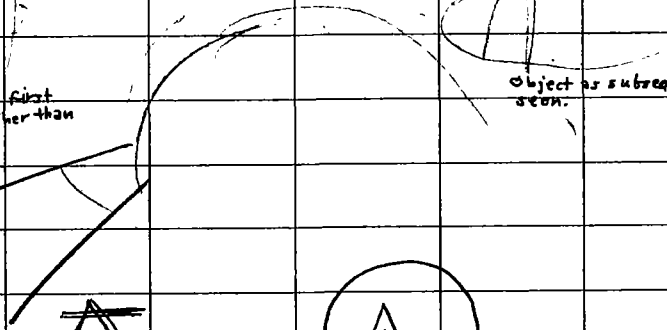
Object as first  
seen - higher than  
wide



Object as subsequently  
seen.

Gallegos

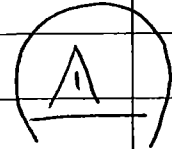
Sharon Stull's sunburn



Docomo - marking on side  
- soil samples

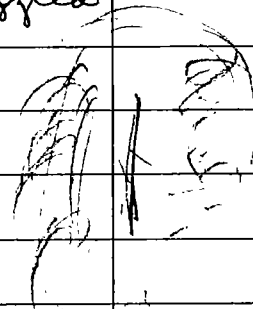


papers



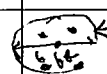
Talk to Adams (Edgewood, N.M.) re Morianty? (2 shots)  
(cf Booth) (E-M)  
Holder still puzzled

other passes at cars?

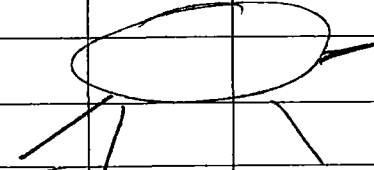


other E-M?

Baker Calif



"substantive"

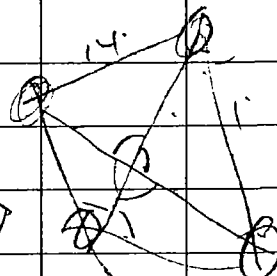


Legs of object, as drawn by Zamora  
(Hynak)

Irregular marks - Docomo

La Madra

Montana



Approximate pattern of  
imprints: irregular  
quadrangle, but the  
diagonals make a precise  
right angle with each  
other.

~~Effects~~  
affect

LITHOGRAPHED IN U.S.A. - ADDISON-WESLEY PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC. READING, MASS. A-W Ductylum © PLIO

## Socorro (N.M.) landing

Notes on remarks of J.A. Hyrek,  
5-20-64 (CONFIDENTIAL)

Capt. Quintanilla, present incumbent, <sup>at Blue Book,</sup> "is a cut under Major Friend."  
The AF is in a spot over Socorro. A vague statement identifying it as an ~~unspecified~~ <sup>unspecified</sup> U.S. experimental aircraft <sup>Congressional inquiries have been received, & Q. is under pressure for an answer.</sup> won't go down. He has suggested to them that they make it an "exercise left to the student" & have their investigators really investigate & try to identify.

The AF doesn't know what scene is.

I was met by a crowd at Albuquerque airport, where I flew on 3 hrs. notice. Major Connor at Kirtland AF Base - pompous chap. We got a flat tire during down to Socorro <sup>AF car had no jack -</sup> & I thumbed a ride & got there before the AF people. Found Zamora & Chavez were very anti-AF. I got rid of the AF people & got the story from them that night at the jail. (AF slow process - they ~~are~~ were not eager to talk at first.) The next morning we went & reenacted it at the spot. A NICAP person <sup>(Ray Stanford)</sup> was already there & lent me some bottles for taking specimens - I had brought nothing.

Z. is an unimaginative cop of an old Socorro family, incapable of hoax, and pretty sore at being regarded as a romancer. It took at least 1/2 an hour to throw him out.

Z. was chasing a speeder when he saw a funnel-shaped light descending with a roaring noise. He thought a nearby dynamite shack belonging to the Mayor

(2)

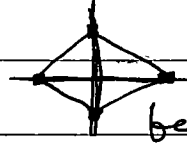
might have exploded. Doing a favor to the Mayor would be worth something to him — a powerful motivation. He therefore left the pursuit & drove off on a very rudimentary desert road.

Presently <sup>(550)</sup> between 2 low hills he saw what he thought was an overturned car — standing on its hood or trunk. Beside it, 2 people in white coveralls who looked like "large children or small adults" (judging by the object considered as a "car"). Then he lost it until he came up on a very low hill or mesa & saw it at 500' — still thought it was a car. Got within 200' when the road ended. It was on a shallow arroyo. He retraced the HQ & then started walking toward it. Then several thumps like a car door shutting; then (he was now 100' from it) it began to roar, <sup>& flames burst out.</sup> He realized now it was not a car, & <sup>panicked &</sup> ran — bumped into his car, lost his glasses, & ran another 50' or so, where he crouched down & hid his head. Then he looked & saw the thing rise fell "level with the car" — about 10 or 15' — still roaring. Then it fell silent, & took off horizontally down the canyon, missing the dynamite shack by only about a yard.

Colour "whitish-aluminum" ~~with an~~ egg-shaped, with 2 markings like an overturned V — like a typical cattleman's brand.

(3)

The marks left on ground: 4 rectangular scrapings as if a rectangular object had scraped along dragging into the ground — deeper at the end. The dragging was done away from the center in every case. The arrangement was not regular, but the diagonals were perfectly at right angles.



When I was there this had been all trampled up, in spite of a wall of stones that a Capt. Holder, an Army "downrange officer", had carefully built around them.

There was also burning of grass over the area, irregularly. When I was there, there was nothing of this, <sup>to be seen</sup> but a bit of charcoal here & there. "You planes fly mighty low here... If"

A tourist told a gas station attendant that ~~that~~ "that's a helicopter, it's the strangest one I ever saw." He said he saw a police car near it, & that it went down the same canyon Zamora pointed out. I have ~~suggested~~ they try to find if the man had a credit card.

I think this case may be the "Rosetta stone". There's never been a strong case with so unimpeachable a witness.

ILD asks: Montauk case? M: Pretty strongly asserted that it was a hoax — some 15-year-old boys confess playing a prank on a 13-year-old girl.

The girl who was "burned": she was the only



(4)

one to claim seeing it, although was in school with many other girls. And the eye inflammation appears to be conjunctivitis.

ILD: Baker, California landing? H: Don't know it.

(April 30: luminous, top-shaped object rose vertically, & left depression with prints arranged in an "X"

---

I am going over Quintanilla's head & talking to the Secretary about it - needing Blue Book for inability to identify.

Q.: The metallic fragment ~~found~~ collected by Ray Stanford & given to NICAP for analysis? H. : Don't know of it.

Q.: La Piz's attitude?

A.: Seemed rather miffed at not being the expert called in

22 December 1964

Major Hector Quintanilla  
Foreign Technology Division  
Box 9494  
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base  
Dayton, Ohio

Dear Major:

For what this is worth, I pass it on. It refers to the Socorro Case. My daughter Roxane was expatiating on the subject of Socorro to one of her dormitory mates at Jackson College and succeeded in rather frightening the roommates. The girl in question went home and told her father, who happens to work for AVCO. He was quite interested but said to the girl, "I can't tell you anything about this, but there is no need for you to worry. Just don't don't give it another thought."

Now either the father knows something that AVCO is doing which might have a bearing on this, or he is simply trying to play big know-it-all-papa who is trying to impress his daughter that he knows all government and other secrets. In any case, what do we know about what AVCO is doing? Is it at all possible that they are testing something like this? If so, how close to Socorro? Who do we know there, and who can we ask? I do know that one of the fellows (his name slips my mind right now - a Fred Something-or-other) who was one of the instigators of the big UFO Conference called by the National Security Board (the one attended by Robertson, Alvarez, and so forth who got out the official white paper) is now working for AVCO. If I can remember his name, I might be able to find out something through him. On the other hand, your official channels should have no difficulty with this, particularly if there is something to it. If there is something to it, it will take another two weeks!

I hope you managed to get down all the four hamburgers. Tell Dave to have the NCO Club stock pernod after this! Can't have our Washington guests thinking we are the great unwashed and the great untutored!

I hope that you can make it to Chicago next month.

Merry Christmas!

Allen

JAH:krf

*Ampl*

*Sher  
Power +  
Vallie this + my  
arrow*

560 N. St. N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20024  
January 12, 1967

Dr. J. Allen Hynek  
Dearborn Observatory  
Evanston, Ill. 60201

Dear Dr. Hynek:

It was most reassuring to receive your letter of Jan. 10, in reply to mine of Oct. 25. As the months passed by, I had begun to fear that perhaps you, like the Barney Hills, had been "kidnapped" by a flying saucer, but that instead of being released on "good behavior" after two hours, you had permanently departed this earth. This fear was seemingly confirmed when I read your Saturday Evening Post article. Its contents suggested that you might have been kidnapped sometime prior to August 22, for there was no reference to the Plasma-UFO theory in your article.

But now to the Socorro case. You speak of having made three visits. I have copies of your trip reports for April 28, 1964, and another made in August if my memory serves me well (for my files are at home now, and I'm writing from my office.) When did you make the third visit--was this recently?

The older I become, the more difficult I find it to really appraise a person's character and motivations, sometimes even in a gross sense. Do you agree?

I recently spent two days at Socorro, with Chavez, Zamora, et al. and recorded most of my interviews with these men.

You will, I'm sure, be interested to know that several interesting new features have recently been added by Zamora to his story:

1. He now reports that there was a "bubbly rock" or one that was "burned in two" roughly in the center of the "pad-prints"--and which mysteriously disappeared the next day. If you will re-read your reports, and that of Capt. Holder, you will not find any such reference. Sgt. Chavez, who claims to have been the first man down into the arroyo, FLATLY DENIES THE BURNED, BUBBLY ROCK.
2. When the "object" took off, Zamora NOW SAYS IT MADE A "BEEP, BEEP... BEEP...BEEP" sound. This differs considerably from his earlier description.
3. Zamora now claims that his two-way car radio FAILED TO OPERATE after the object took off, until it had cleared the dynamite shack. He had not mentioned this in any of the dozens of earlier interviews.
4. Zamora now flatly denies there was any flame visible to attract his attention when he was chasing the speeding car...only the roar and "swirling dust."

Dr. J. Allen Hynek

-2-

Jan. 12, 1967

I have been curious as to why you, or others, did not check Zamora's vision at a distance of 100 ft., using say three or four different insignia, to see precisely what he could or could not distinguish at that distance -- both WITH AND WITHOUT HIS GLASSES--for all reports are vague as to whether he saw the insignia before or after losing his glasses. DID YOU EVER OBTAIN HIS EYEGLASS PRESCRIPTION?


Finally, you will recall the sketch of the "object" that Zamora made immediately after the event, even before Chavez arrived. You will recall that it was egg-shaped with TWO LEGS VISIBLE.

May I suggest that you "model" the object, with "legs" in such position as to make the "pad-prints", then view the model from where Zamora was standing and tell me WHAT IS THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF LEGS AN OBSERVER WOULD HAVE TO SEE if the "object" did indeed have FOUR LEGS.

To assist you in answering this very interesting question, I enclose a photograph of a small model which I constructed the other evening--using the scale drawing prepared by your William T. Powers (which you see directly underneath the model.)

Since you yourself have urged scientists to have an "open mind" on the subject of UFOs, I trust you will reciprocate in spirit to some of the questions and ideas posed above.

Very truly yours,



Philip J. Klass

23 January 1967

Socorro  
March 1, 1967

Mr. Philip J. Klass  
560 N. St. N, W.  
Washington D. C. 20024

Dear Mr. Klass:

Thank you for your letter of January 12. I had hoped to see you at my talk at Goddard recently (which, by the way, surprised me in that nearly 1000 showed up for a talk to be held in a 200-person auditorium.) Closed circuit T.V. certainly helped out.) It is a constant surprise to me how many scientifically trained persons are taking an interest in this perplexing phenomenon.

As to the Socorro case: my third visit was made in connection with a conference at the New Mexico Institute of Technology and I made no official report on it.

I have never found Zamora communicative, and if <sup>you</sup> were able to get him to talk on a man-to-man basis, so much more power to you. I am not at all surprised that after this passage of time, Zamora does not repeat his story in broken record fashion. In fact, if he did, then I would certainly suspect a carefully memorized hoax.

I think we must really go back to the main point of whether Zamora saw anything at all. We have Chavez' testimony that Zamora was a fairly frightened man. What caused the fright? It is unusual for a lethargic cop who is chasing a speeder in the line of duty to become diverted in the reported manner.

Likewise with the insignia. It is the gross event that interests me, and not whether some markings run horizontally or vertically. Even trained observers describing much more mundane affairs like auto accidents cannot agree as to whether skid marks went one way or the other. They do agree, however, that there was an accident.

I did not obtain his eyeglass prescription and many other details because I did not feel privileged to invade his privacy. I concentrated more on his general character, questioning people who knew him for many years. He came away with a reasonably clean bill of health. However, I believe that a policeman who regularly and successfully discharges his duties of routine

police work, checking license plates and the various other things a policeman does when apprehending speeders, etc., makes it logical to suppose that he could not perform these duties if his eyesight were so bad that he could mistake a dust devil for a solid craft and become traumatically frightened at it. However, let me ask you the same question: now that you have been down there, did you check Zamora's eyeglass prescription?

No matter what we say about the Zamora case, it is still, because of its one-witness character, a low order case. It is a 15 C4 case in my classification system: taken at face value the report has a high strangeness index, but a low credibility rating primarily because I do not go above 5 in my scale of 1 to 9 if there is only one witness. It is a great pity that Chavez took the wrong turn and arrived on the spot just minutes too late. It is also a pity that Zamora did not have a camera in his squad car as standard equipment, what a different situation we would have if we had a photograph or two to examine. Even so, this would still not satisfy my credibility requirements for photographs, since I feel that for a photograph to be considered authentic, we should have two independent witnesses who can testify, by affidavit, that they saw the picture being taken and that they saw the object also. And, if we have the technical characteristics of the camera, we are in a position to begin to regard the photograph as authentic. No, the Zamora case is strange, but does not rank in my book as an outstanding case for detailed study simply because of the lack of witnesses. We have too many unknowns and not enough equations.

Are you writing a detailed report on your own Socorro trip? If so, I would would much appreciate a copy of it and I am sure that Major Quintanilla at Project Blue Book would also, as would, very probably, the Condon Committee. If you can establish that the Socorro case was indeed a hoax, or without reasonable doubt a hallucination, you will have done a real service. I hope that you will keep in mind that during all my investigations I have steadfastly called for only one thing, the necessity for thorough follow-ups and investigation. I am not trying to build a case in the manner of either a prosecuting or defense attorney. In the meantime, let's hope that we will meet one of these days and discuss these matters more fully.

Sincerely yours,

J. Allen Hynek

JAH:lp

cc: Mr. Robert J. Low  
Dr. D. H. Menzel  
Major H. Quintanilla

 **MUTUAL UFO NETWORK, INC.**

WALTER H. ANDRUS, JR.  
International Director  
103 Oldtowne Road  
Seguin, Texas 78155 U.S.A.  
Phone: (512) 379-9216

August 1, 1976

Please address reply to:

Center for UFO Studies  
924 Chicago Avenue  
Evanston, IL 60202

Elmer Kral  
1124 W. Koenig St.  
Grand Island, NE 68801

Dear Sir:

I need your immediate assistance, and you may secure a personal recommendation from Dr. Hynek, with whom I have been in touch recently.

For the slide presentation I am preparing for use by MUFON members, I need illustrations of the Lonnie Zamora report of Socorro, New Mexico, April 24, 1964.

Ted Phillips told me during a phone conversation today that he saw sketches of the observed craft and perhaps even sketches by Lonnie Zamora himself in the file in your office.

May I receive good xerox copies of all sketches in the <sup>Socorro</sup> file so I may determine if any will fit into my slide presentation?

If it would be helpful, you may call me by WATTS. I can usually be reached mid-morning at my home (308) 384-7195.

But I would appreciate immediate action on this matter, so I may confer about the sketches with Dr. Hynek, who is coming to Nebraska this weekend. I may want to have one or two original sketches photographed for use in the presentation. And it is in my interest to complete as much of the work as possible before I must return to teaching classes toward the end of August.

Thank you for your assistance. And I await a response from you.

Cordially,



Elmer Kral

Socorro  
of  
Klass

DEC 29 1972

PHILIP J. KLASS  
560 "N" STREET, S. W.  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20024

December 27, 1972

Dr. J. Allen Hynek  
Northwestern University  
Evanston, Ill.

Dear Allen:

Your discussion of the Socorro case in your book (p. 145) repeats a serious error in your original report to the USAF on the case. This involves the alleged witness who reportedly stopped for gas at the Opal Grinder gas station just north of town.

In your book, you write: "While at the gas station, he told of his encounter just south of town with a strange flying craft that was apparently in trouble and heading for a landing. He said that it must have been in trouble because he saw a squad car (Zamora's) going out across the sandy terrain toward it..."

In your original report to the USAF (p. 7), you wrote: "The man said further that the object had flown over his car. It actually was headed straight for the gully where it landed moments later. The tourist also commented that he had seen a police car heading up the hill. This was apparently Zamora's car."

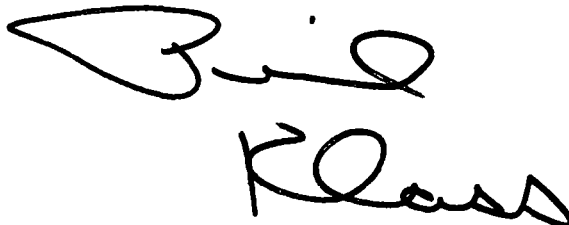
There is a very grave inconsistency between the account attributed to the alleged witness and the account by Zamora. To help you understand it, I am enclosing a scale map of Socorro.

Recall that Zamora said he was heading south (arrows), chasing a speeding car when, at point [1], he heard a loud noise and to the southwest he saw flame and dust coming from the mesa, from the vicinity of Mayor Bursom's dynamite shack. (Zamora said he first suspected the shack might have exploded.) Recall that Zamora did NOT report seeing any object, or craft, at that time--only flame and dust. So, if Zamora's account is factual, the UFO must have been landing at [3]. Now, Zamora decides to abandon the chase and head up the rocky road to the mesa. It would have taken him at least 30 seconds to go from point [1] to [8] where the alleged tourist claimed to have seen the police car just after the alleged UFO passed over his car [7].

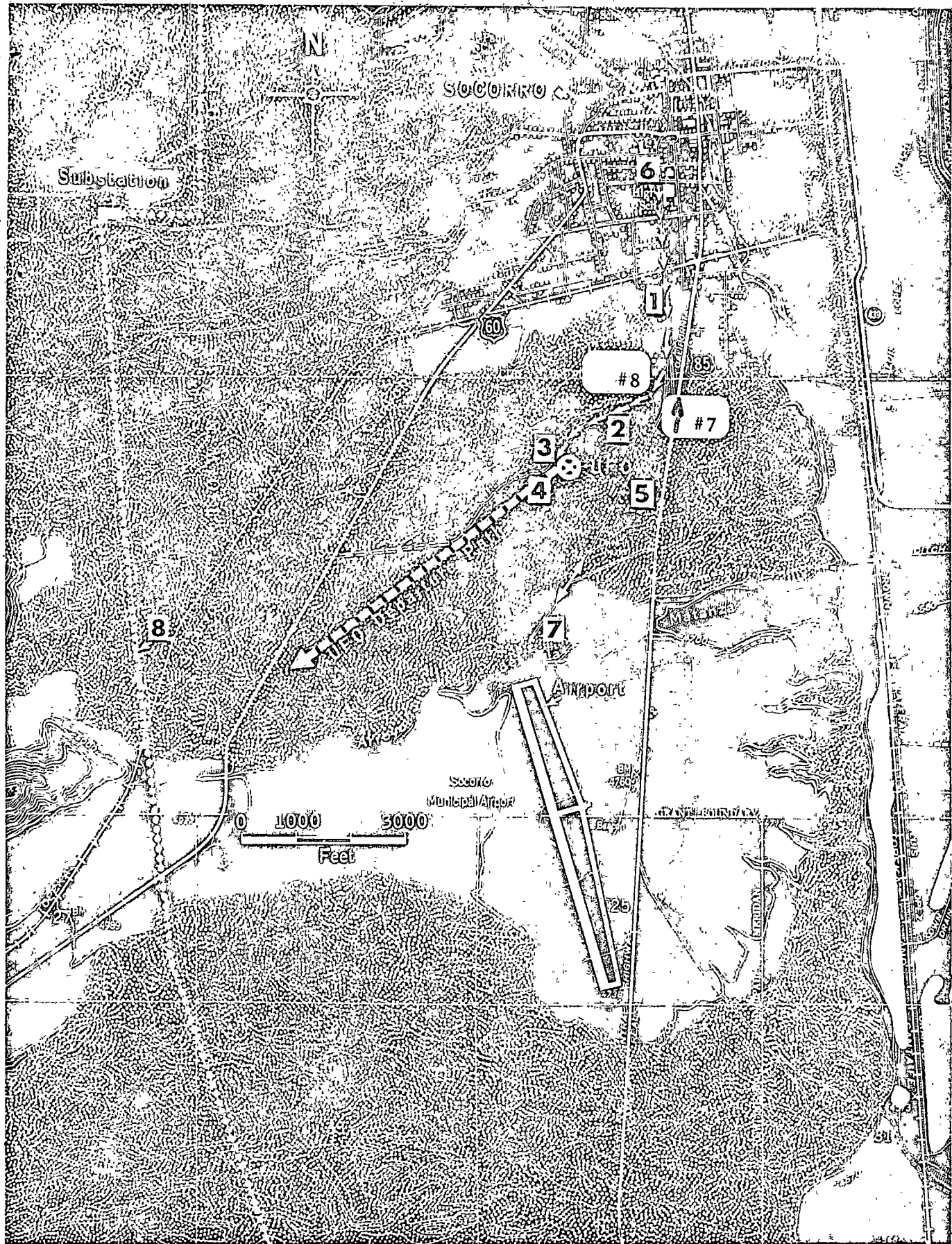
But if the witness story is true, how can we explain the noise, flame and dust that Zamora reported seeing coming from [3] many seconds earlier? What would have prompted him to have quit the chase much earlier to head up the hill. And why wouldn't Zamora have reported seeing a craft pass over a car headed north on Hwy. #85?

Either Zamora's story is false, or the story of the alleged witness is spurious. Perhaps it is a good thing that the USAF ignored your advice to launch an all-out search for the alleged witness.

Cordially,

  
Klass





REF: 10; 11111  
REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: TDEM/Capt H Quintanilla/69716

SUBJECT: Grants, New Mexico Sighting, 26 Apr 64

15 May 64

TO: Maj William C Harrison  
DO-161  
4510th Combat Crew Training Wing (Tac Ftr)  
Luke Air Force Base, Arizona

OFFICIAL FILE COPY

Reference your letter, Supplemental Information on UFO Report, TWX DO-161-2D 2030Z, 30 Apr 64, Luke AFB, Arizona. The film was developed and printed by the Kodak Company in Chicago, Illinois. Please return these slides to Mr. [REDACTED] Phoenix, Arizona, owner, thanking him on behalf of the Air Force for their use. We did not find any pictures which would be useful in identifying the reported UFO, in fact the slides are blank. However, the sighting and the object reported by Mr. [REDACTED] was an aircraft on a low level night photo reconnaissance mission for Project Cloud Gap. The unusual thing about the aircraft was its use of a strobe instead of the conventional lights and/or flares. We are returning the photos which were processed and returned to us by the Kodak Company.

FOR THE COMMANDER

ERIC T de JONCKHEERE  
Colonel, USAF  
Deputy for Technology  
and Subsystems

1 Atch  
Slides

*11111*  
*11111*

2000-0000

FORM 100 (REV 26 SEP 63)

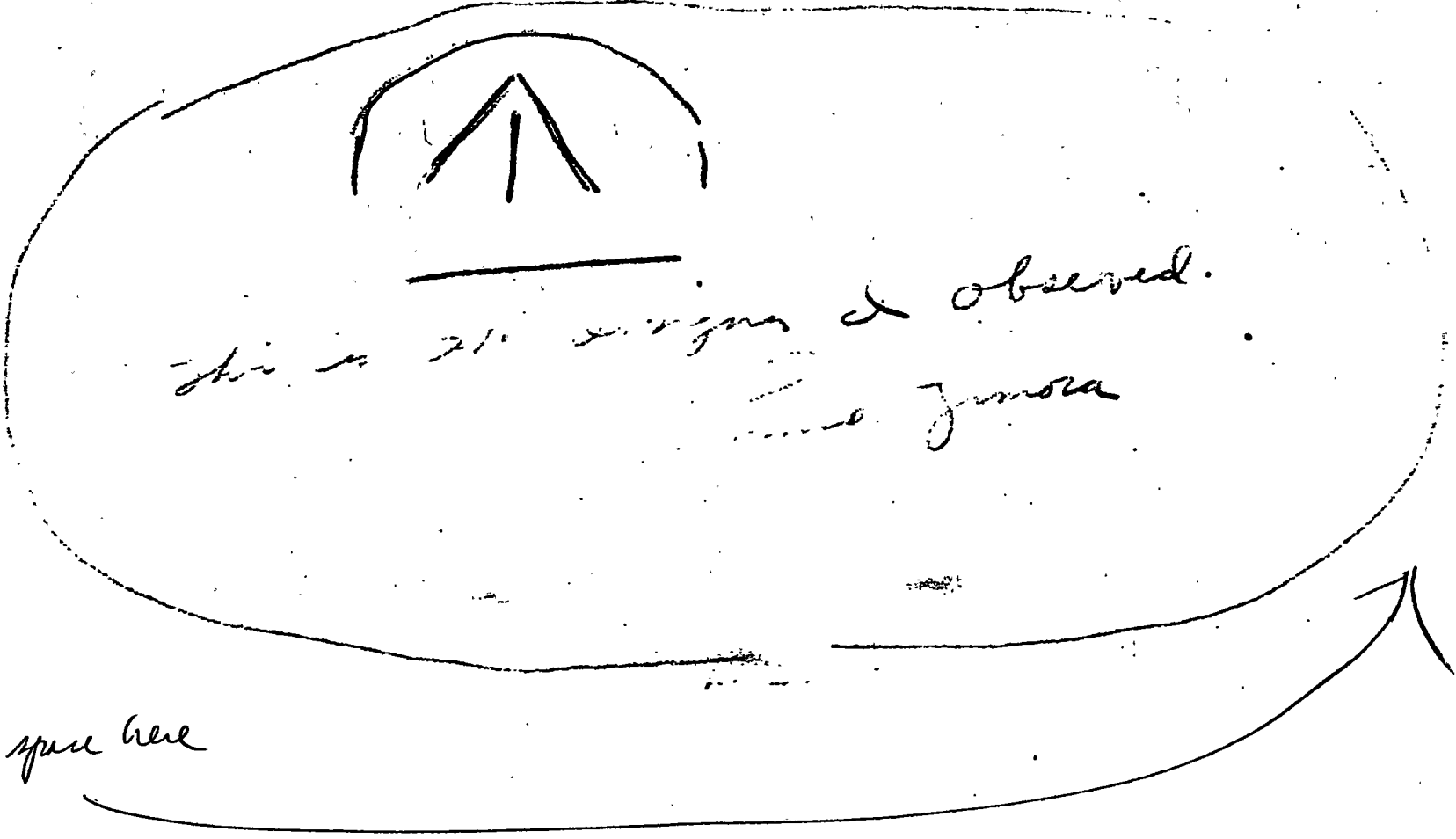
made of a shiny metallic substance, had no windows, and was as long as a telephone pole and about 14 feet in circumference. It was egg-shaped and resembled a large butane tank.

The next morning, feeling braver in the daylight, the family went out to take a look. The UFO was gone, though the ground was still smoldering! Local police were notified, and found a large charred area, strange marks in the ground resembling paw prints, and depressions similar to those found at Socorro. As a matter of fact, it is reliably reported that the ground was still smoldering twenty hours after the sighting! The charred area, seen by police, Air Force officials,

and many other people, was about 20 feet in diameter. Large rocks within the area showed evidence of extreme heat, while others a few feet away were not damaged at all. Even pieces of glass and metal were found melted and fused. A police officer ventured the opinion that no fuel presently known to mankind would leave the sort of traces found at La Madera. He also felt that the evidence indicated an extreme heat of short duration. We do not yet know what conclusions, if any, were formulated by the Air Force.

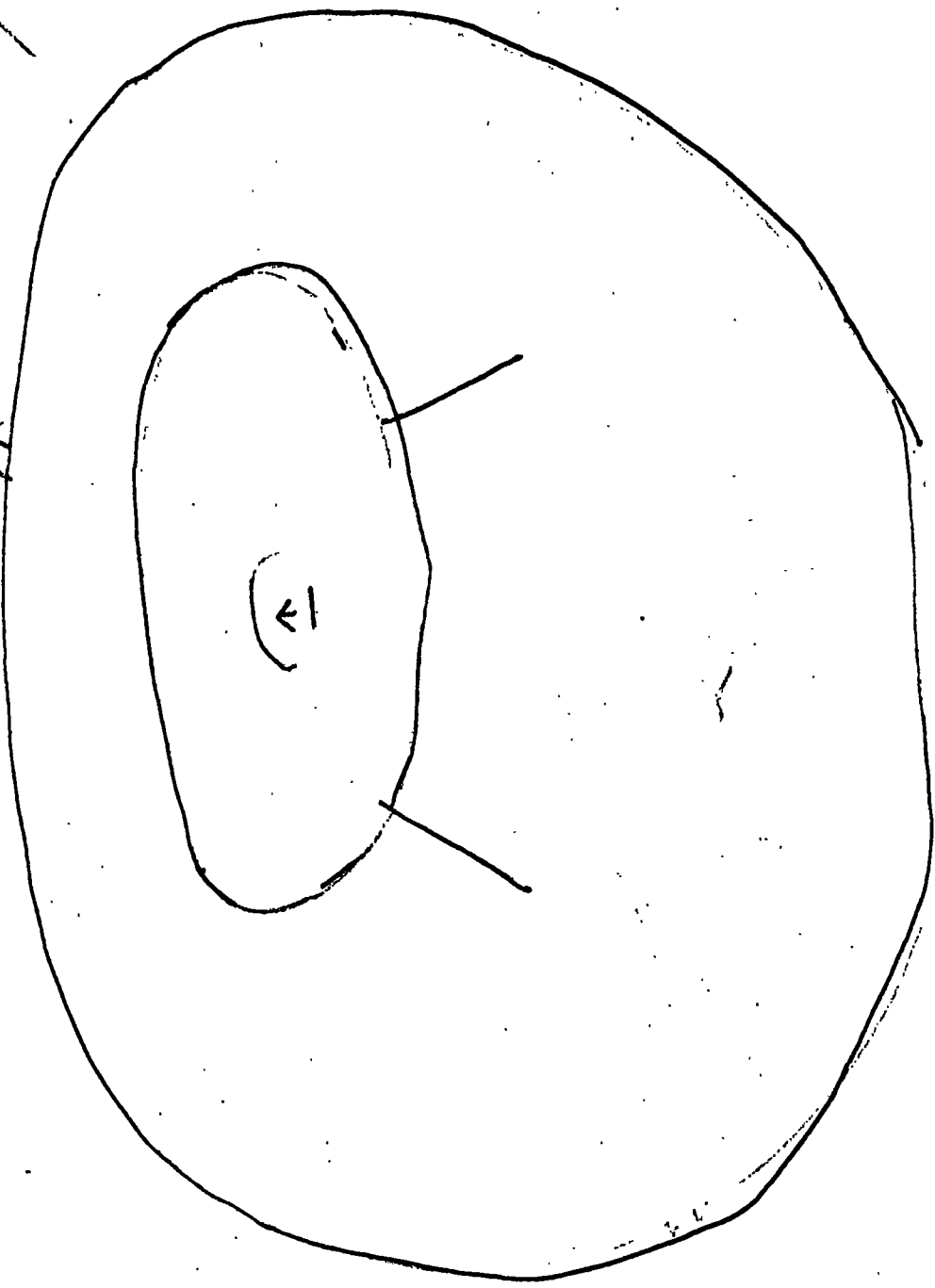
Jan Elmer Kral

OBSERVED "INSIGNA"  
LOCATED APPROXIMATELY AT  
CENTER OF OBJECT AS  
SEEN FROM ABOVE SIDE



allow more space here

we allow more room & space here → STATE & OBJECT  
FROM MY POSITION -  
AT APPROXIMATELY 103 FT.



that he was familiar with the situation because he owned the house in which Leonard and his mother lived.

After two lengthy discussions with Mr. and Mrs. P., I could only conclude that this scientifically talented, if somewhat erratic, young man had concocted his story after having read about plasma-UFOs and ball lightning in my book. I asked the neighbors not to ridicule Leonard, and expressed the hope that they would not discuss the matter with him or with other neighbors. Whether they respected my request I do not know, for I never wrote or called Leonard to tell him the result of my check with his neighbors. He never called or wrote to inquire.

It was not my first encounter with a UFO hoax, and it would not be my last, as we shall discuss in subsequent chapters. Invariably the perpetrator of the hoax is a nice, gentle, seemingly forthright individual and never an "obvious" hoaxer. People who are basically dishonest, I have found, normally do *not* engage in staging UFO hoaxes. They prefer to devote their skills and efforts to more financially rewarding ventures.



## 12 • The "Landing" at Socorro

The small town of Socorro in central New Mexico achieved international fame almost overnight as a result of a widely publicized report that an egg-shaped UFO had landed on the outskirts of town, leaving behind evidence on the ground that seemingly confirmed the story.\* The incident reportedly occurred on April 24, 1964, at 5:45 p.m., in broad daylight, as young police officer Lonnie Zamora was chasing a speeding motorist heading south on the outskirts of town. Suddenly, over the sound of his own racing car, Zamora said he heard a loud "roar." Looking for the source, he said he spotted a "flame in the sky" which seemed to be coming from a flat-top hill (mesa) approximately three-quarters of a mile southwest of his position.

Zamora said he recalled that there was a small shack on the

\* This case is discussed in more detail in my previous book *UFOs—Identified* but will be highlighted here to provide a benchmark for the similar "landing" case discussed in the following chapter, and for the benefit of readers who are unfamiliar with the Socorro case.

mesa near where the flame appeared which was used to store dynamite, so he assumed the dynamite had exploded. He said he abandoned the chase after the speeding motorist and headed up the steep, rough road to the top of the mesa. Reaching the mesa top, he drove southwest, seeing nothing at first except the undulating topography, partially covered by mesquite bushes. Then, he said, he spotted a "shiny-type object" in the distance and alongside the object what appeared to be "two people in white coveralls." Zamora said the object appeared to be "a car turned upside down." As he drove toward it, Zamora said, he called in by radio to headquarters to say that he was proceeding to investigate what appeared to be an auto accident.

By the time Zamora finished his radio call, he said, he had reached a clearing that was only one hundred feet from the object, which was sitting in an arroyo—a small gully which gradually sloped away from the road. Zamora said he did not try to get a good look at the object from the car because he planned to get out and walk over for a closer observation. But as he got out of the car, Zamora said, he heard "a very loud roar," and a giant blast of flame shot out from the underside of the object as it began to slowly rise straight up.

Zamora said the roar and flame made him fear an explosion and prompted him to run back toward the car in such haste that he bumped into the car, knocking off his prescription glasses, which he did not stop to recover. He said the roar soon subsided and was replaced by a "sharp-tone whine" which lasted only briefly. Then, he reported, the UFO flew off silently in a southwesterly direction, barely clearing the nearby dynamite shack, sailed over Highway #60 to the west and disappeared over the nearby mountains.

Then, Zamora said, he ran back to his car and called in to headquarters to report the incident and to ask for assistance. Curiously, Zamora specifically asked that Sergeant Sam Chavez of the New Mexico State Police be sent out, rather than a local police officer or someone from the sheriff's office. Zamora said that while he waited for Chavez to arrive, he went into the gully to investigate, and then he drew several sketches of the UFO. These showed an egg-shaped object

with two legs protruding and on the side of the object an insignia containing an arrow. The sketches showed no other details and resembled drawings made by a young child. Earlier, when Zamora had called in to report the incident and was asked to describe the object, he had said that it "looks like a balloon."

When Chavez arrived approximately ten minutes later, the two men explored the arroyo and reported finding four indentations in the soft sand as well as some slight evidence of burning on a mesquite bush and a clump of grass. Soon they were joined by Socorro Deputy Sheriff James Luckie, who had overheard Zamora's radio message and had decided to investigate. Another visitor who drove to the site was Federal Bureau of Investigation Agent J. Arthur Byrnes, Jr., who had been in Chavez' office at the time of Zamora's request for assistance. Out of curiosity, Byrnes had decided to drive out—in an unofficial capacity, he later emphasized to me.

The four indentations, or "pad-prints" as they were soon referred to in subsequent reports on the case, plus the slight evidence of burning on a mesquite bush and a clump of grass, ruled out any possibility that Zamora's UFO might really have been only Venus, a weather balloon or a meteor. Either a craft of extraordinary design had landed briefly on the outskirts of Socorro, or the case was a hoax. (During my subsequent investigation of the case, I briefly entertained the possibility that a plasma-UFO might be involved, but soon found a much more plausible explanation.)

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, the USAF's UFO consultant, was quickly requested to visit Socorro, and he arrived four days after the reported incident. Hynek was deeply impressed by the case, and this is evident in his official report to the USAF. He said the Socorro case was "one of the major UFO sightings in the history of the Air Force's consideration of this subject." And he warned that NICAP and other UFO groups "would consider this the best authenticated landing sighting on record," and would use it as leverage to try to obtain a long-sought Congressional investigation of the whole UFO question. Hynek's report said that Zamora was "basically

sincere, honest and reliable. He would not be capable of contriving a complex hoax. . . ." Hynek apparently failed to consider the possibility that *a hoax might have been contrived by others* and that Zamora might only have been an "accomplice."

Hynek's report indicates that in the spring of 1964 he did not even consider the possibility that the case might involve an extraterrestrial spaceship. Instead, he concluded that the object that Zamora had reported must have been a supersecret new military craft. Hynek therefore urged the USAF to locate the unusual egg-shaped craft and bring it back to Socorro so "movies [can] be taken of it departing in the manner described by Zamora. . . . This could then be played at any future [Congressional] hearings on flying saucers." The USAF followed Hynek's advice and even canvassed all of the nation's aerospace companies to see if any of them had secretly developed such a strange craft on their own, without telling the Defense Department. But no such craft was found, nor has one turned up since that time to match Zamora's account.

In recent years, since the USAF terminated its contract with Hynek to serve as a UFO consultant, he has repeatedly criticized the Air Force for its failure to conduct a thorough investigation of important cases. Yet despite Hynek's own recognition of the critical import of the Socorro case, he spent less than one day on the scene during his first visit. And it was not until nearly four months later that Hynek found time to return to Socorro for an equally brief visit.

During Hynek's second visit, he talked with one local resident who suggested that the case might be a hoax. The man was Mr. Felix Phillips, whose house is located only one thousand feet south of the spot where the UFO allegedly landed. Phillips said that he and his wife had been home at the time of the reported incident, and that several windows and doors had been open—yet neither of them had heard the loud roar that Zamora reported during UFO landing and later during takeoff. This was especially curious because Zamora's speeding car was four thousand feet away from the site and *the Phillips home was only one-quarter this distance.*

Hynek briefly mentioned the man's suspicions in his second trip report to the USAF, but he strongly rejected all possibility of a hoax.

Immediately following Hynek's first visit to Socorro, he was interviewed by the Associated Press to obtain his appraisal. Hynek was quoted as saying that the Socorro case was "one of the soundest, best substantiated reports as far as it goes. Usually one finds many contradictions or omissions in these reports. But Mr. Zamora's story is simply told, certainly without any intent to perpetuate a hoax." In the early 1960s, Hynek had the reputation of being a "debunker" of most UFO reports, so his acceptance of Zamora's account as being literally true and the inability of the USAF to locate a supersecret craft that matched Zamora's account quickly elevated the Socorro case to the status of a "classic." For UFO "believers," it seemed to be *the* long-awaited case that would prove beyond all doubt the existence of extraterrestrial spaceships. When UFOlogist Jacques Vallee surveyed numerous UFO groups and asked them to list the most impressive UFO case on record, their overwhelming first choice was Socorro.

At the time the Socorro incident had occurred, I had not been active in the field of UFOlogy, but soon after I entered it in mid-1966, it became apparent that I ought to visit Socorro for a firsthand investigation. This I did on December 16, 1966, spending two full days there interviewing all of the principals plus a number of other Socorro residents. My investigation led me to disagree sharply with Hynek's statement that the Socorro case was "one of the soundest, best substantiated reports." Contrary to Hynek's observation, I found "many contradictions or omissions."

For example, Zamora had reported seeing intense flame when he first heard the roar from atop the mesa, and again he reported a blast of intense flame when the UFO took off. *Yet there was no evidence of intense or widespread heat, or blast effects, at the "landing site."* Pictures taken by Sergeant Chavez on the following morning show only traces of burning on a mesquite bush and a clump of grass, while other bushes and grass at the site show absolutely no sign of intense heat!



The Chavez pictures also show small twigs that should have been burned to a crisp or blown away by the intense blast of flame reported by Zamora, still lying in the middle of the site unscathed. Both Byrnes and Phillips, who had also visited the site shortly after the incident, emphasized this discrepancy in our discussions. (See Plates 6a, 6b.)

Another curious discrepancy was that the "pad-print" indentations were significantly different from one another. The northeast indentation was shallow and irregular in shape and could be duplicated simply by removing one of the large rocks that abound in the sandy arroyo. The southwest indentation, however, was a moderately deep V-shaped trench that looked as if it had been formed using a small shovel. (At the time of my visit, I had not yet obtained copies of the original Chavez photos. When I asked Chavez to describe the appearance of the indentations, he went to his car and took out a small shovel and used it to make a V-shaped indentation which, I later found, closely matched the appearance of the southwest indentation and the more shallow northwest indentation.) The southeast indentation was a broader, irregular-shaped trench. If the indentations had been made by the landing pads of a craft, it was a curiously unsymmetrical set of landing gear because of the widely different distances between adjacent pairs of indentations. These range from 115.5 inches to 177.5 inches, based on measurements made shortly after the incident.

Another curious thing was that from the clearing where Zamora said he viewed the object, and from the position of the indentations, if they had been made by landing pads, Zamora would have been able to see at least three if not four legs. Yet his sketches showed only two legs. If a large egg-shaped craft had departed the arroyo shortly before 6 P.M., in broad daylight, and flown over Highway #60 to the west as Zamora reported, it seemed curious that it had not been seen by any motorists on that major highway.

There was a secondhand report of an unnamed motorist who had allegedly seen the UFO approaching from the east *before* it landed atop the mesa, which Hynek learned of during his first visit. The report came from the operator of a

filling station on the northern outskirts of the town, who said a motorist had stopped shortly before 6 P.M. and had commented about the strange craft that had flown low over Highway #85 as he drove north. The filling station operator told Hynek that the motorist said the UFO was headed west *toward* the mesa and that the motorist also reported seeing a police car driving up the mesa. Presumably this was Zamora's. In his recent book, Hynek sharply criticized the USAF for its failure to launch an all-out search to find this "missing witness."

In reality, the alleged report by this "missing witness" must be false because the sequence of events really contradicts rather than supports Zamora's account. (The reader is referred to Plate 7, which shows a map of Socorro.) Recall that while Zamora said he was still chasing the speeding motorist, he reported seeing flame which indicated that the UFO was then in the process of landing atop the mesa—some two thousand feet west of Highway #85. Not until some time later—I would estimate nearly a minute, from having personally retraced Zamora's path—could the police car have been seen driving up the mesa. So the "missing witness" could not possibly have seen a UFO fly over the highway and at the same time have seen Zamora driving up the mesa. Zamora could not have started up the mesa until some time later when he reportedly saw evidence of the "landing" far to the west. It therefore seems lucky that the USAF decided to ignore Hynek's suggestion that it launch an all-out search for the "missing witness," because it would have had no more success than it had in following Hynek's advice to search for a secret United States craft shaped like an egg.

During my two days in Socorro, I talked with many residents in addition to Zamora and Chavez, including several scientist-professors at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, the town's principal "industry." I was amazed to find that with one exception, these scientists exhibited no interest in the Socorro UFO case, despite the fact that it had achieved international fame and had brought thousands of curious tourists to the town. If the story was true, the most exciting scientific event of all time—a visit

from an extraterrestrial spaceship—had occurred almost within sight of the institute. How could these scientists be so uninterested?

When I pressed one man for an explanation, he urged me to “nose around a bit.” When I sought clarification, he pointed out that except for the Institute of Mining and Technology, Socorro had no industry, and some citizens feared that the town was “going to seed.” He noted that Socorro had a colorful history, having been one of the first Spanish settlements in what is now New Mexico. Although many tourists passed through town on the two highways (#60 and #85), few bothered to stop unless they needed gas or food. That night I came across a brief but interesting item in the Socorro newspaper, *El Defensor Chieftain*, the sort of item that is timeless and runs repeatedly. It read:

One of the best ways a community can boost its economy is to attract new industry. *Today, the fastest, most effective way to attract new industry is by first attracting tourists.* The reason is that industrialists, in selecting plant locations, are seeking for their employees the same kind of “community atmosphere” that appeals to tourists. (Emphasis added.)

An article that appeared in the *El Paso Times* on April 24, 1965, on the first anniversary of the Socorro UFO report, revealed that officials of the town were quick to recognize the tourist potential of the UFO incident. The article, by Jake Booher, Jr., who had visited Socorro prior to writing the story, was headlined: “Socorro To Use Flying Object As Tourist Catch.” Booher wrote that Zamora said he prefers to forget the whole incident, “but regardless of how much Zamora says he wants to forget, many of Socorro’s 7,000 residents have other ideas.” The article quoted City Clerk Ray Senn as saying, “We frankly intend to use it as a tourist attraction.” The article noted that “the road to the site, almost impassable last year, has been graded. Posters are being planned by the Chamber of Commerce for placement within Socorro’s businesses to alert tourists to the town’s claim to fame.”

The article reported that “a portion of a movie on UFOs was filmed earlier this year at Socorro. Much of the town’s hope for additional tourist dollars is based on this film, which Empire Films Studio of Hollywood had planned to premier at Socorro soon. Mayor Holm Bursum, Jr., said he had to go to Zamora and persuade him to re-enact the experience for Empire’s cameras. . . . Senn said he had spent \$200 out of his own pocket in assisting the film crews.”

If a spaceship from distant worlds just happened to land outside a town that was sorely in need of a tourist attraction to stop passing motorists, the officials of that town should not be blamed for promptly acting to exploit their good fortune. But my own investigation turned up several other curious “fortuitous” coincidences. The place where the UFO reportedly landed was especially convenient—almost midway between the two highways that bring tourists through Socorro—so it was relatively easy and inexpensive for city officials to provide an improved road that connected the site to the two highways. If the UFO had chanced to land only a few miles to the east or west, behind nearby mountain ranges, the site would have been all but inaccessible to tourists passing through Socorro.

The property where the UFO reportedly landed had, prior to the incident, been next to worthless “scrub land.” But now, if the site became a long-lived tourist attraction, there could be need for refreshment stands, perhaps even a motel for those who might like to spend the night near the spot where an extraterrestrial spaceship had seemingly landed. By a curious coincidence, the property where the UFO reportedly landed was owned by Mayor Bursum, officer Zamora’s boss! The mayor’s principal business? He is the town banker and as such would not be unhappy to see an influx of tourist dollars.

On March 16, 1972, *The New York Times* reported that the United States government had decided to build the world’s largest scientific instrument, a mammoth radio telescope, in the vicinity of Socorro. The reporter who wrote the article had talked with Mayor Bursum to get his reaction to the remarkable scientific facility to be constructed near

78  
would be  
been

Socorro. Bursum's comment: "[It] will definitely help our economy and give the area some publicity." In view of Socorro's economically depressed condition, one cannot blame its mayor for seeking publicity for his community.

A low report on  
the case.



## 13 • Another "Landing" at South Hill

On April 21, 1967, the small town of South Hill in southern Virginia, like Socorro nearly\* three years earlier, achieved instant fame when one of its respected residents reported that a UFO had landed on the outskirts of town, then taken off, leaving behind physical evidence of its visit. The following account of the incident was first carried by the *Richmond News Leader* and subsequently distributed by the Associated Press, appearing in numerous newspapers throughout the United States.

SOUTH HILL (AP)—A blackened circle of road tar remained as mute testimony Saturday to a report by a South Hill warehouse manager of an unidentified flying object that shot straight up with "a tremendous burst of white-looking fire." C. N. Crowder, manager of the Mobil Chemical Co. warehouse in this Mecklenburg County community, said he encountered the strange-looking object as he was driving home from the warehouse Friday about 9 P.M.