PROJECT 10073 RECORD

1. DATE / TIME GROUP 21 Apr 67 22/0200Z	2. LOCATION South Hill, Virginia one witness
3. SOURCE Civilian	10. CONCLUSION Unidentified ✓ Jet
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS One	
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION second or two	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Observer watched a large silver colored object, approximately 12 feet in diameter, sitting on the highway. All of a sudden the object disappeared instantaneously going straight up. As the object departed a brilliant white column of fire appeared beneath the object. It burnt a place on the road. In the center of the burnt area four matches were found. Chemical analysis revealed no unusual chemicals in the burnt area, or surrounding area. The case is being carried as unidentified; however, a hoax is possible.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground Visual	
7. COURSE Upwards	
8. PHOTOS ☐ Yes XX No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE XX Yes ☐ No	

FORM
FTD SEP 63 0-029 (TDE) Previous editions of this form may be used.

UNCLASSIFIED

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
STAFF MESSAGE BRANCH
INCOMING MESSAGE

AF IN: 13110 (23 Apr 67) S/csh

ACTION: RDC-4 INFO: XOP-1, XOPX-2, SAFOS-3, NIN-7, DIA-1 (19) ADV CY DIA
SMB E021CZCBVC9 75

PTTU JAW RUEDARB1220 1130850-UUUU--RUEDHQA.

ZNR UUUUU

P0230700Z APR 67

FM 632 RAD AR SQ ROANOKE RAPIDS AFS NC

TO RUWMFVA/ADC ENT AFB COLO

RUEDFIA/WRIGHT PATTERSON AFB OHIO

RUEDHQA/CSAF WASHINGTON DC

RUEDHQA/OSAF HQ USAF

RUEDARA/330AC FT LEE AFS VA

BT

UNCLAS 632OD C 03507 APR 67. FOR TDETR, AFRDC, SAF-OI, 330CO, FTD

IAW AFR 80-17 THE FOLLOWING UFO REPORT IS SUBMITTED FROM THE 632D RADAR SQUADRON, ROANOKE RAPIDS AFS, NC

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT:

(1) SILVER

(2) APPROXIMATELY 12 FEET IN DIAMETER. OVERALL HEIGHT 15 FEET.

(3) SILVER

(4) ONE

(5) N/A

AFHQ FORM JAN 65 0-309C

UNCLASSIFIED

KYL OBJECT WAS APPROXIMATELY 15 FEET IN HEIGHT INCLUDING FOUR

PAGE 2 RUEDARB1220 UNCLAS

LEGS WHICH WERE ESTIMATED TO BE APPROXIMATELY 3 1/2 FEET TALL.

OBJECT WAS SHAPED SIMILAR TO A WATER TANK WITH AN OVAL TOP.

(7) WHEN THE OBJECT LEFT THE GROUND THE EXHAUST WAS A WHITE

FIRE APPROXIMATELY 2 FEET IN DIAMETER.

(8) NONE HEARD

(9) N/A

B. DESCRIPTION OF COURSE OF OBJECT:

(1) OBSERVER ENTERED HARD SURFACE ROAD FROM A WAREHOUSE AND

SPOTTED THE OBJECT JUST AS HE CAME OVER THE CREST OF THE ROAD.

(2) ON THE GROUND

(3) OBSERVER WAS STILL IN HIS CAR AND THE OBJECT DISAPPEARED

GOING STRAIGHT UP.

(4) OBSERVER REPORTED THE OBJECT WENT STRAIGHT UP AND HE LOST

SIGHT OF IT AT APPROXIMATELY 2 OR 3 HUNDRED FEET DUE TO THE

LIMITED VISION FROM HIS CAR.

(5) INSTANTANEOUSLY GOING STRAIGHT UPWARDS.

(6) OBJECT WAS VISIBLE FOR ONLY A SECOND OR TWO.

C. MANNER OF OBSERVATION:

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
STAFF MESSAGE BRANCH
INCOMING MESSAGE

AF IN: 13110

KQL GROUND VISUAL FROM AN AUTOMOBILE AT A DISTANCE OF APPROXIMATELY 125 TO 150 FEET.

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(2) NONE

(3) N/A

D. TIME AND DATE OF SIGHTING

(1) 22 APRIL 1967/0200Z

(2) NIGHT

E. LOCATION OF OBSERVER: EAST FERRELL STREET (EXTENDED), SOUTH HILL, VIRGINIA. APPROXIMATELY 400 FEET FROM THE MOBILE CHEMICAL COMPANY WAREHOUSE.

F. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ON OBSERVER:

(1) CIVILIAN-MR [redacted] AGE 54, MAILING ADDRESS [redacted], SOUTH HILL, VIRGINIA, OCCUPATION MOBILE CHEMICAL COMPANY [redacted]ER. ESTIMATE OF RELIABILITY EXTREMELY RELIABLE.

(2) N/A

G. WEATHER AND WINDS-ALOFT CONDITIONS AT TIME AND PLACE OF SIGHTING:

(1) HAZY

AFHQ FORM JAN 65 0-309C

KWL SURFACE-CALM, 6,000 FEET-250/25, 10,000 FEET-270/40,

16,000 FEET-280/40, 20,000 FEET-270/30, 30,000 FEET 280/40

50,000 FEET-300/50, 80,000 FEET-270/5

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(3) 10,000 FEET BROKEN

(4) 10 MILES

(5) 6/10

(6) NONE

(7) N/A

H. NONE

I. NONE

J. NONE

K. LT COL DUANE J KRELL, COMMANDER 632 RADAR SQUADRON. THE OBJECT LEFT FOUR SMALL HOLES IN THE STREET APPROXIMATELY 9 1/2 FEET APART FORMING A SQUARE. HOLES WERE APPROXIMATLY 3/4 OF AN INCH IN DIAMETER AND ONE INCH DEEP IN THE PAVEMENT. OBJECT LEFT A BURNT SPOT APPROXIMATLY 4 FEET LONG AND 2 1/2 FEET WIDE ON THE TAR AND GRAVER STREET. OBSERVER SAID THE SPOT CONTINUED TO BURN FOR A COUPLE OF MINUTES AFTER THE OBJECT LEFT THE GROUND. TWO SOUTH HILL POLICEMEN WERE CONT-

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
STAFF MESSAGE BRANCH
INCOMING MESSAGE

CTED B Y THE OBSERVER AND RETURNED TO THE SPOT WHERE THE OBJECT WAS SIGHTED APPROXIMATELY 5 MINUTES AFTER IT DISAPPEARED. ONE OF THE POLICEMEN, OFFICER B. O. MURPHY WAS CONTACTED AND HE CONFIRMED MY ESTIMATE OF RELIABILITY OF THE OBSERVER. OFFICER

PAGE 5 RUEDARB1220 UNCLAS

[redacted] WAS UNABLE TO GIVE ANY OTHER DETAILS EXCEPT HE STATED THAT HE FOUND 3 PAPER MATCHES AND THE OTHER OFFICER FOUND ONE IN THE CENTER OF THE BURNT SPOT ON THE ROAD. OFFICER MURPHY STATED ALL FOUR MATCHES WERE BURNT TO A CRISP. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE BURNT MATCHES THE REPORT SEEMED TO BE RELIABLE, HOWEVER, THE BURNT MATCHES COULD POINT TO A POSSIBLE HOAX.

BT

NNNN

THE SUNDAY STAR
Washington, D. C., April 23, 1967

Virginian Tells of UFO Blast-Off From Highway

SOUTH HILL, Va. (AP)—"You can imagine how it felt to see a big thing like that sitting in the road in front of you, and all of a sudden a ball of fire flies at and it disappears."

This was the reaction of a South Hill warehouse manager in describing an Unidentified Flying Object which he said momentarily blocked the road as he was on his way home from work Friday night.

C. N. Crowder, manager of the Mobil Chemical Co. warehouse in this Southside Virginia town near the North Carolina line, said he was driving away from the warehouse about 9 p.m. when he saw the object sitting in the middle of the road.

He described it as looking like a metal storage tank about 12 feet in diameter, aluminum in color, sitting on legs that appeared to be about 3 to 3½ feet high.

"I turned on my bright lights and just about the time I did this, a tremendous burst of white-looking fire came from the bottom of the object and it went right straight up in the air like a bullet.

"It was just a flash and it was gone, but when I had my bright lights on, I got a perfect look at it."

Crowder said the macadam road where the object had been sitting caught on fire. When the fire died down, he said, he went to the police station and reported the incident.

"Two of the town police came back with me," he said. "We found a black burned spot in the road where the thing took off. The spot still in here in the road today."

Crowder said he talked with the driver of another car that had been near the scene and confirmed that "he saw the flash too."

Gen. Kendrick To Retire Friday

Retirement ceremonies for Maj. Gen. Douglas B. Kendrick, commander of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, will be held at 9 a.m. Friday in the gardens of the center.

Gen. Kendrick, who is retiring after 33 years of military service, served as physician to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur in Japan for three years. He will pass his hospital command to Brig. Gen. Phillip W. Mallory, now commander of Walter Reed General Hospital.

Gen. and Mrs. Kendrick will move to Atlanta, Ga., where he will become medical director of Grady Memorial Hospital.

—Associated Press

Police examine a burned spot on a road near South Hill, Va., where C. N. Crowder said he saw a big metallic object shoot up with a ball of fire and disappear Friday night.

MEMO FOR THE RECORD: 26 APRIL 1967

Contact with Lt. Colonel Krell revealed the following information pertaining to the South Hill, Virginia sighting of 21 April 1967. Lt. Colonel Krell said that he personnaly drove to the South Hill area and investigated the case. The four holes were odd. They were approximately 9 feet 6 inches apart forming a square. The burnt area was in the middle of the square. When the policemen arrived at the scene the pavement was cold. It was an asphalt highway. Lt. Colonel Krell could find no additional witness who saw the alleged UFO. The witness reported no sound at all; even after stopping the car and rolling down the window. Lt. Colonel Krell will contact the South Hill police department and obtain a written statement concerning what was found at the scene of the sighting.

UNCLASSIFIED PRIORITY

24 APR 29Z

ACT FTD

INFORMATION

PTTU JAN RUEDAR01222 1141830-UUUU--RUEDFIA.

ZNR UUUUU

P 241325Z APR 67

FM 6320 RADAR SQ ROANOKE RAPIDS AFS NC

TO RUWMFVA/AIR DEFENSE COMMAND ENT AFB COLO

RUEDFIA/WRIGHT PATTERSON AFB COLO

RUEDHQA/CASF WASHINGTON D C

RUEDHQA/OSAF HQ USAF

RUEDARA/330AC FT LEE AFS VA

BT

UNCLAS 6320DC 03508 APR 67. FOR FTD, TDETR, AFRDC, SAF-OI, 330CO.

REFERENCE MESSAGE 6320DC 03507 APR 67. MAKE THE FOLLOWING CHANGE TO THE ABOVE CITED MESSAGE. CHANGE ITEM C (1), GROUND VISUAL FROM AN AUTOMOBILE AT A DISTANCE OF APPROXIMATELY 125 TO 150 FEET. CHANGE SENTENCE TO READ: GROUND VISUAL FROM AN AUTOMOBILE AT A DISTANCE OF APPROXIMATELY 125 TO 150 YARDS.

BT

NNNN#

UNCLASSIFIED PRIORITY 010

DEARBORN OBSERVATORY
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

15 May 1967

FTD (TDETR)
Research and Aerial Phenomenon Division
Wright Patterson Air Force Base
Ohio 45433

Attn: Major Hector Quintanilla, Jr.

Dear Sir:

I am sending two reports (164), one by [redacted] and one by [redacted]. This is the sighting of April 21, 1967 at South Hill, Virginia.

Regards,

W. T. Powers

WTP:lh

U.S. AIR FORCE TECHNICAL INFORMATION

This questionnaire has been prepared so that you can give the U.S. Air Force as much information as possible concerning the unidentified aerial phenomenon that you have observed. Please try to answer as many questions as you possibly can. The information that you give will be used for research purposes. Your name will *not* be used in connection with any statements, conclusions, or publications without your permission. We request this personal information so that if it is deemed necessary, we may contact you for further details.

1. When did you see the object?

21 (Day) April (Month) 1967 (Year)

2. Time of day: Between 8:45 - 9:00
Hour Minutes

(Circle One): A.M. or (P.M.)

3. Time Zone:

(Circle One): a. Eastern
b. Central
c. Mountain
d. Pacific
e. Other _____

(Circle One): a. Daylight Saving
b. (Standard)

4. Where were you when you saw the object?

La Crosse, Va (Nearest Postal Address) Scottsville (City or Town) Va (State or County)

5. How long was object in sight? (Total Duration) _____ Hours _____ Minutes 10 Seconds

a. Certain
b. Fairly certain
c. Not very sure
d. (Just a guess)

5.1 How was time in sight determined? Just a guess

5.2 Was ~~light~~ in sight continuously? Yes ✓ No _____

6. What was the condition of the sky?

DAY	NIGHT
a. Bright	a. Bright
b. (~~Cloudy~~)	b. (Cloudy)

7. IF you saw the object during DAYLIGHT, where was the SUN located as you looked at the ~~object~~ light?

(Circle One): a. In front of you
b. In back of you
c. To your right
d. To your left
e. Overhead
f. Don't remember

of night

FORM FTD OCT 62 164 This form supersedes FTD 164, Jul 61, which is obsolete.

8. IF you saw the object at NIGHT, what did you notice concerning the STARS and MOON?

8.1 STARS *(Circle One)*:

a. None
b. A few
c. Many
d. Don't remember

8.2 MOON *(Circle One)*:

a. Bright moonlight
b. Dull moonlight
c. No moonlight (pitch dark)
d. Don't remember

9. What were the weather conditions at the time you saw the object?

CLOUDS *(Circle One)*:

a. Clear sky
b. Hazy
c. Scattered clouds
d. (Thick or heavy clouds)

WEATHER *(Circle One)*:

a. Dry
b. Fog, mist, or light rain
c. Moderate or heavy rain
d. Snow
e. Don't remember

10. The object appeared: *(Circle One)*:

a. Solid
b. Transparent
c. Vapor
d. (As a light)
e. Don't remember

11. If it appeared as a light, was it brighter than the brightest stars? *(Circle One)*:

a. (Brighter)
b. Dimmer
c. About the same
d. Don't know

11.1 Compare brightness to some common object:

Car lights only Brighter.

12. The edges of the object were:

(Circle One): a. Fuzzy or blurred
b. Like a bright star
c. Sharply outlined
d. Don't remember

e. Other Just as brightness on reflector

13. Did the object: *(Circle One for each question)*

a. Appear to stand still at any time?	Yes	No	Don't know
b. Suddenly speed up and rush away at any time?	(Yes)	No	Don't know
c. Break up into parts or explode?	Yes	No	Don't know
d. Give off smoke?	Yes	No	Don't know
e. Change brightness?	Yes	No	Don't know
f. Change shape?	Yes	No	Don't know
g. Flash or flicker?	Yes	No	Don't know
h. Disappear and reappear?	Yes	No	Don't know

14. Did the object disappear while you were watching it? If so, how?

The light disappeared as the object disappeared.

15. Did the ~~object~~ light move behind something at any time, particularly a cloud?

(Circle One): Yes (No) Don't Know. IF you answered YES, then tell what it moved behind: _____

16. Did the ~~object~~ light move in front of something at any time, particularly a cloud?

(Circle One): Yes (No) Don't Know. IF you answered YES, then tell what in front of: _____

17. Tell in a few words the following things about the object:

a. Sound _____

b. Color I only saw the glare of the object

18. We wish to know the angular size. Hold a match stick at arm's length in line with a known object and note how much of the object is covered by the head of the match. If you had performed this experiment at the time of the sighting, how much of the object would have been covered by the match head?

Didn't see of object.

19. Draw a picture that will show the shape of the object or objects. Label and include in your sketch any details of the object that you saw such as wings, protrusions, etc., and especially exhaust trails or vapor trails.

Place an arrow beside the drawing to show the direction the object was moving.

20. Do you think you can estimate the speed of the object?

(Circle One) Yes (No)

IF you answered YES, then what speed would you estimate? _____

21. Do you think you can estimate how far away from you the object was?

(Circle One) (Yes) No

IF you answered YES, then how far away would you say it was? about 400 yds.

22. Where were you located when you saw the object? (Circle One):

a. Inside a building
b. In a car
c. (Outdoors)
d. In an airplane (type)
e. At sea
f. Other _____

23. Were you (Circle One)

a. In the business section of a city?
b. In the residential section of a city?
c. In open countryside?
d. Near an airfield?
e. Flying over a city?
f. Flying over open country?
g. Other _____

24. IF you were MOVING IN AN AUTOMOBILE or other vehicle at the time, then complete the following questions:

24.1 What direction were you moving? (Circle One)

a. North c. East e. South g. West
b. Northeast d. Southeast f. Southwest h. Northwest

24.2 How fast were you moving? _____ miles per hour.

24.3 Did you stop at any time while you were looking at the object?

(Circle One) Yes No

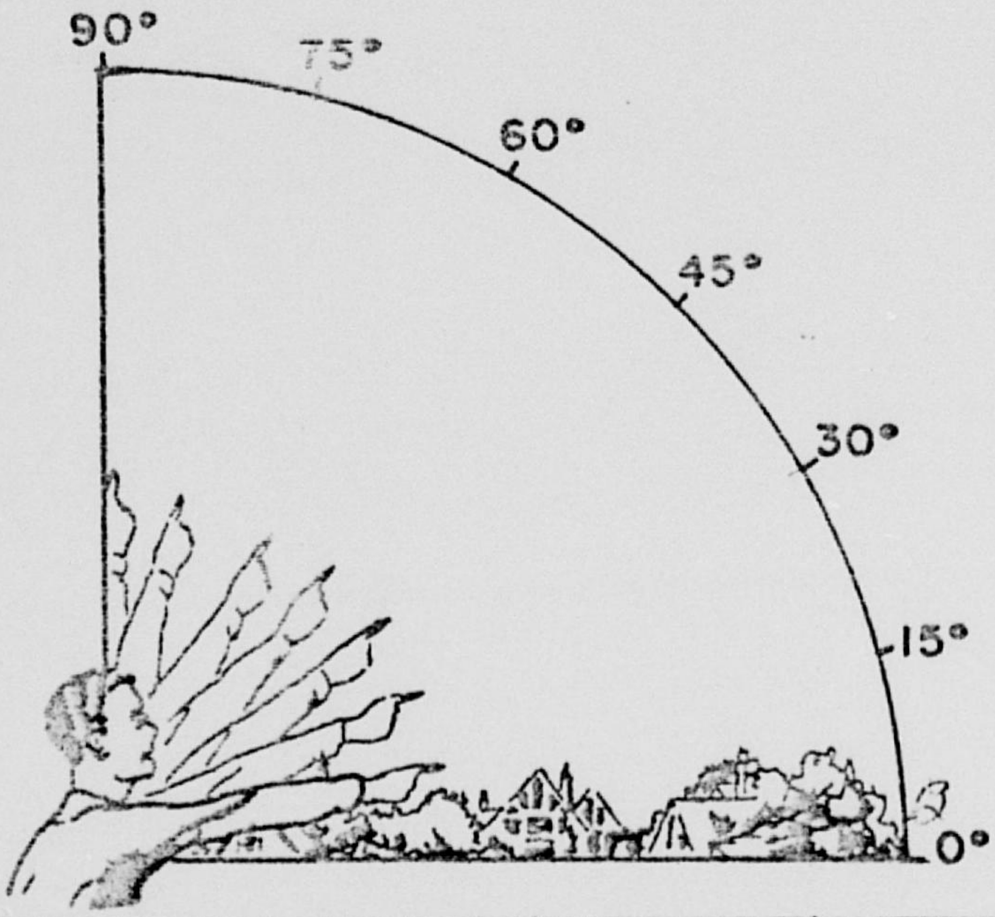
25. Did you observe the ~~object~~ light through any of the following?

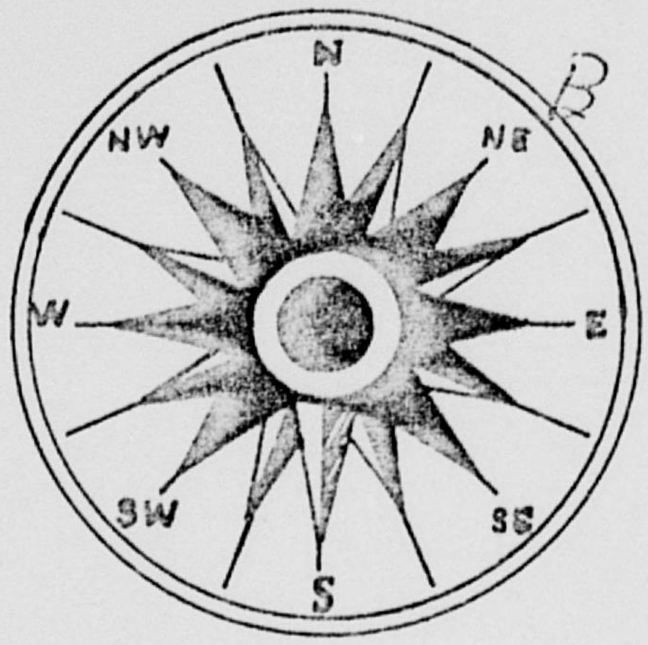
a. Eyeglasses	Yes	No	e. Binoculars	Yes	No
b. Sun glasses	Yes	No	f. Telescope	Yes	No
c. Windshield	Yes	No	g. Theodolite	Yes	No
d. Window glass	Yes	No	h. Other Own eyes		

26. In order that you can give as clear a picture as possible of what you saw, describe in your own words a common object or objects which, when placed up in the sky, would give the same appearance as the object which you saw.

It was a very bright reflection on an oak tree close by.

27. In the following sketch, imagine that you are at the point shown. Place an "A" on the curved line to show how high the object was above the horizon (skyline) when you *first* saw it. Place a "B" on the same curved line to show how high the object was above the horizon (skyline) when you *last* saw it. Place an "A" on the compass when you *first* saw it. Place a "B" on the compass where you *last* saw the ~~object~~ light.





28. Draw a picture that will show the motion that the object or objects made. Place an "A" at the beginning of the path, a "B" at the end of the path, and show any changes in direction during the course.

29. IF there was MORE THAN ONE object, then how many were there? _____
Draw a picture of how they were arranged, and put an arrow to show the direction that they were traveling.

30. Have you ever seen this, or a similar object before. If so give date or dates and location.

770

31. Was anyone else with you at the time you saw the object? *(Circle One)* Yes (No)

31.1 IF you answered YES, did they see the object too? *(Circle One)* Yes No

31.2 Please list their names and addresses:

32. Please give the following information about yourself:

NAME [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]
Last Name First Name Middle Name

ADDRESS [redacted] La Grange, South Fork City Zone Va. State

TELEPHONE NUMBER [redacted] AGE 54 SEX male

Indicate any additional information about yourself, including any special experience, which might be pertinent.

My mailing address is La Grange, Va but my residence is [redacted]

33. When and to whom did you report that you had seen the object? light or flare

22 April 1967
Day Month Year

34. Date you completed this questionnaire: 25 Day / April Month / 1967 Year

35. Information which you feel pertinent and which is not adequately covered in the specific points of the questionnaire or a narrative explanation of your sighting.

I saw the reflection of the object on a large oak tree near by.

I want to say I did not see the object at all, just a reflection from it on a large oak tree, as I think it was leaving the ground.

U.S. AIR FORCE TECHNICAL INFORMATION

This questionnaire has been prepared so that you can give the U.S. Air Force as much information as possible concerning the unidentified aerial phenomenon that you have observed. Please try to answer as many questions as you possibly can. The information that you give will be used for research purposes. Your name will *not* be used in connection with any statements, conclusions, or publications without your permission. We request this personal information so that if it is deemed necessary, we may contact you for further details.

1. When did you see the object?

21 (Day) Oct (Month) 1957 (Year)

2. Time of day: [illegible] (Hour) [illegible] (Minutes)

(Circle One): A.M. or (P.M.)

3. Time Zone:

(Circle One): (a. Eastern)
b. Central
c. Mountain
d. Pacific
e. Other _____

(Circle One): a. Daylight Saving
(b. Standard)

4. Where were you when you saw the object?

[illegible] (Nearest Postal Address) [illegible] (City or Town) [illegible] (State or County)

5. How long was object in sight? (Total Duration) _____ (Hours) _____ (Minutes) [illegible] (Seconds)

(a. Certain)
b. Fairly certain
c. Not very sure
d. Just a guess

5.1 How was time in sight determined? [illegible]

5.2 Was object in sight continuously? Yes 1 No _____

6. What was the condition of the sky?

DAY	NIGHT
a. Bright	a. Bright
b. Cloudy	(b. Cloudy)

7. IF you saw the object during DAYLIGHT, where was the SUN located as you looked at the object?

(Circle One):
a. In front of you
b. In back of you
c. To your right
d. To your left
e. Overhead
f. Don't remember

FORM FTD OCT 62 164 This form supersedes FTD 164, Jul 61, which is obsolete.

8. IF you saw the object at NIGHT, what did you notice concerning the STARS and MOON?

8.1 STARS *(Circle One)*:

a. None
b. A few
c. Many
d. Don't remember

8.2 MOON *(Circle One)*:

a. Bright moonlight
b. Dull moonlight
c. No moonlight – pitch dark
d. Don't remember

9. What were the weather conditions at the time you saw the object?

CLOUDS *(Circle One)*:

a. Clear sky
b. Hazy
c. Scattered clouds
d. Thick or heavy clouds

WEATHER *(Circle One)*:

a. Dry
b. Fog, mist, or light rain
c. Moderate or heavy rain
d. Snow
e. Don't remember

10. The object appeared: *(Circle One)*:

a. Solid
b. Transparent
c. Vapor
d. As a light
e. Don't remember

11. If it appeared as a light, was it brighter than the brightest stars? *(Circle One)*:

a. Brighter
b. Dimmer
c. About the same
d. Don't know

11.1 Compare brightness to some common object:

_____

12. The edges of the object were:

(Circle One):
a. Fuzzy or blurred
b. Like a bright star
c. Sharply outlined
d. Don't remember

e. Other _____

13. Did the object:

(Circle One for each question)

a. Appear to stand still at any time?	Yes	No	Don't know
b. Suddenly speed up and rush away at any time?	Yes	No	Don't know
c. Break up into parts or explode?	Yes	No	Don't know
d. Give off smoke?	Yes	No	Don't know
e. Change brightness?	Yes	No	Don't know
f. Change shape?	Yes	No	Don't know
g. Flash or ~~flicker~~?	Yes	No	Don't know
h. Disappear and ~~reappear~~?	Yes	No	Don't know

14. Did the object disappear while you were watching it? If so, how?

15. Did the object move behind something at any time, particularly a cloud?

(Circle One): Yes (No) Don't Know. IF you answered YES, then tell what it moved behind: ___

16. Did the object move in front of something at any time, particularly a cloud?

(Circle One): Yes (No) Don't Know. IF you answered YES, then tell what in front of: ___

17. Tell in a few words the following things about the object:

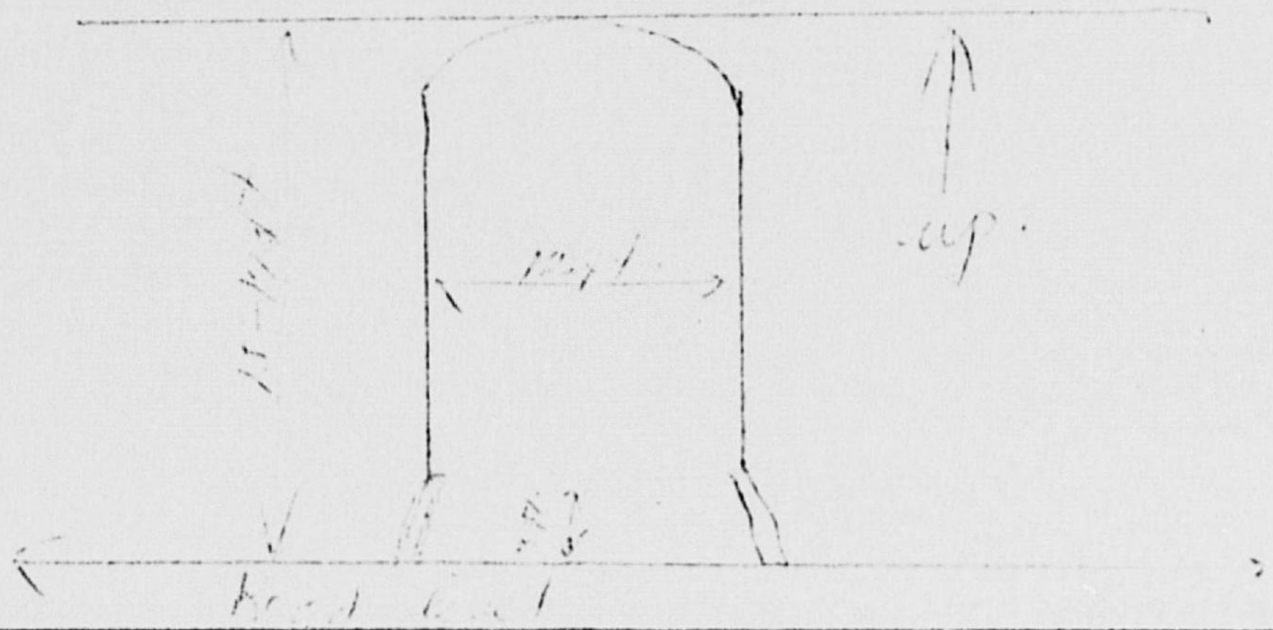
a. Sound

b. Color

18. We wish to know the angular size. Hold a match stick at arm's length in line with a known object and note how much of the object is covered by the head of the match. If you had performed this experiment at the time of the sighting, how much of the object would have been covered by the match head?

19. Draw a picture that will show the shape of the object or objects. Label and include in your sketch any details of the object that you saw such as wings, protrusions, etc., and especially exhaust trails or vapor trails.

Place an arrow beside the drawing to show the direction the object was moving.



20. Do you think you can estimate the speed of the object?

(Circle One) (Yes) No

IF you answered YES, then what speed would you estimate? _____

21. Do you think you can estimate how far away from you the object was?

(Circle One) (Yes) No

IF you answered YES, then how far away would you say it was? 400 - 500 ft

22. Where were you located when you saw the object? (Circle One):

a. Inside a building
(b. In a car)
c. Outdoors
d. In an airplane (type)
e. At sea
f. Other _____

23. Were you (Circle One)

a. In the business section of a city?
b. In the residential section of a city?
(c. In open countryside?)
d. Near an airfield?
e. Flying over a city?
f. Flying over open country?
g. Other _____

24. IF you were MOVING IN AN AUTOMOBILE or other vehicle at the time, then complete the following questions:

24.1 What direction were you moving? (Circle One)

a. North
b. Northeast
c. East
d. Southeast
e. South
f. Southwest
(g. West)
h. Northwest

24.2 How fast were you moving? 5 L. 60 miles per hour.

24.3 Did you stop at any time while you were looking at the object?

(Circle One) Yes (No)

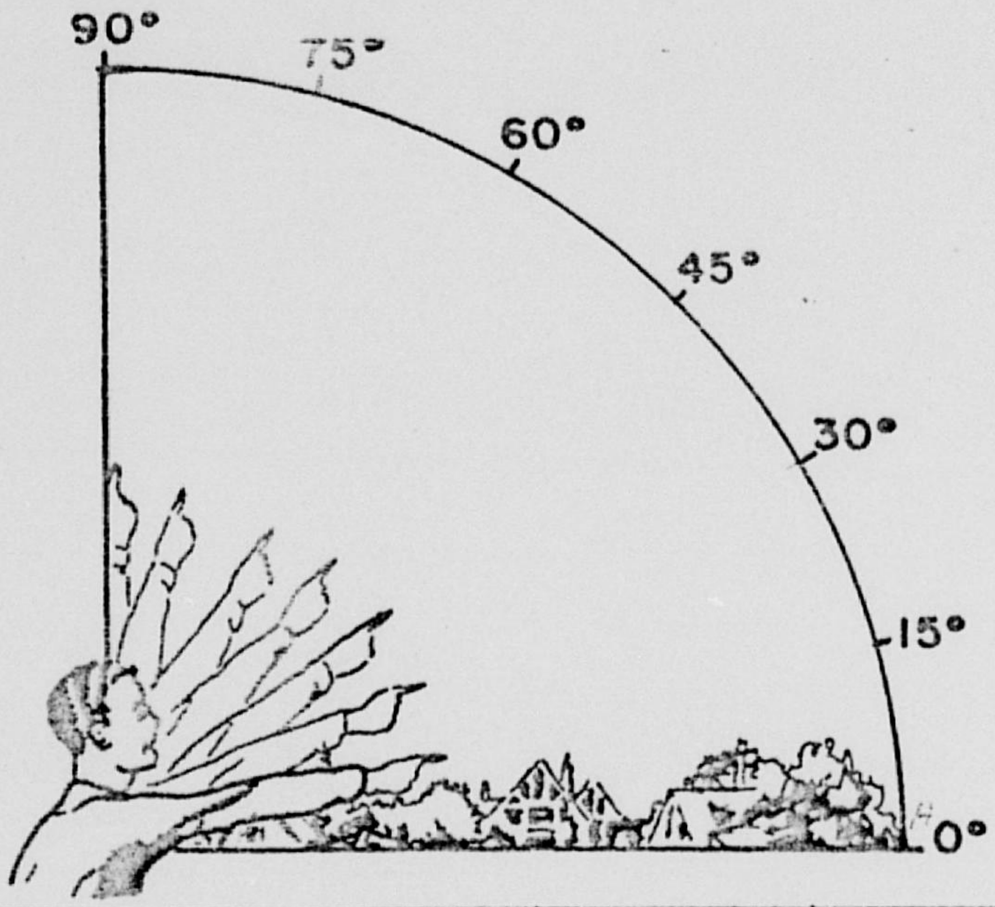
25. Did you observe the object through any of the following?

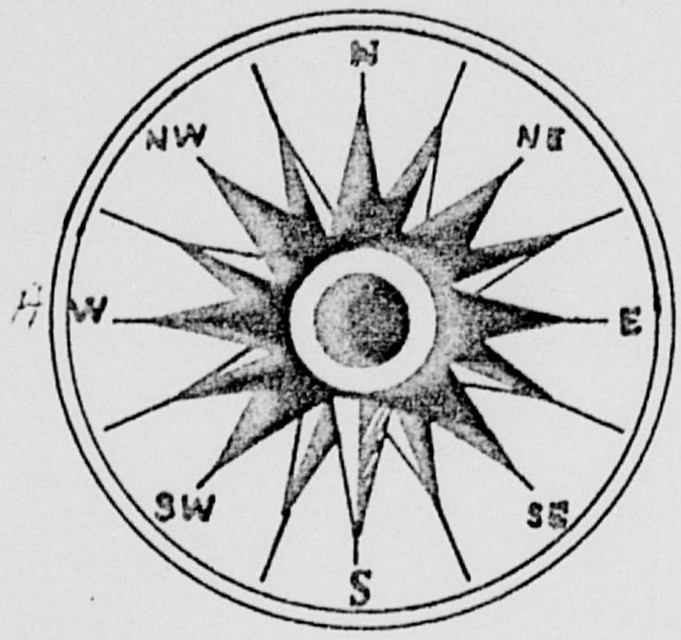
a. Eyeglasses	Yes	No	e. Binoculars	Yes	No
b. Sun glasses	Yes	No	f. Telescope	Yes	No
c. Windshield	(Yes)	No	g. Theodolite	Yes	No
d. Window glass	Yes	No	h. Other _____		

26. In order that you can give as clear a picture as possible of what you saw, describe in your own words a common object or objects which, when placed up in the sky, would give the same appearance as the object which you saw.

Looked like object flat on bottom with dome on top

27. In the following sketch, imagine that you are at the point shown. Place an "A" on the curved line to show how high the object was above the horizon (skyline) when you *first* saw it. Place a "B" on the same curved line to show how high the object was above the horizon (skyline) when you *last* saw it. Place an "A" on the compass when you *first* saw it. Place a "B" on the compass where you *last* saw the object.





28. Draw a picture that will show the motion that the object or objects made. Place an "A" at the beginning of the path, a "B" at the end of the path, and show any changes in direction during the course.

29. IF there was MORE THAN ONE object, then how many were there? _____
Draw a picture of how they were arranged, and put an arrow to show the direction that they were traveling.

30. Have you ever seen this, or a similar object before. If so give date or dates and location. No

31. Was anyone else with you at the time you saw the object? *(Circle One)* Yes (No)

31.1 IF you answered YES, did they see the object too? *(Circle One)* Yes No

31.2 Please list their names and addresses:

32. Please give the following information about yourself:

NAME [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]
Last Name First Name Middle Name

ADDRESS [redacted] Le Roi [redacted] [redacted]
Street City Zone State

TELEPHONE NUMBER [redacted] AGE 44 SEX M

Indicate any additional information about yourself, including any special experience, which might be pertinent.

33. When and to whom did you report that you had seen the object? [illegible]

21 / 10 / 1951
Day Month Year

34. Date you completed this questionnaire: 21 / 4 / 67
Day / Month / Year

35. Information which you feel pertinent and which is not adequately covered in the specific points of the questionnaire or a narrative explanation of your sighting.

1- After much thought and consideration I believe that the object was the moon. Slightly flattened appearance and lacking in the blue.

2- At the end of time watched with binoculars. Object appeared to

ANALYSIS TEST REPORT

Analytical Branch (MAYA)

SUBJECT
Analysis of Samples From Paved Road

TEST NR	TASK NR
7-885/888	6010212
SUBMITTED BY	**DATE RECEIVED**
William F. Marley, Jr. - TDET/UFO	

PURPOSE
To determine the presence of a flammable material in a sample removed from a road surface.

FACTUAL DATA
Two samples removed from a road surface were submitted for a chemical analysis. The initiator requested the analysis to determine if a flammable liquid could have been applied to the road surface and the liquid ignited. Sample 7-887 was taken from the burnt area, and sample 7-888 was submitted as a reference sample.

Both samples were extracted with carbon tetrachloride and an infrared spectrum obtained. The infrared spectrum of the extract was identified as a spectrum of asphalt. The spectrum of the extract from the burnt area was qualitatively identical to the extract of the reference sample.

CONCLUSIONS
The two samples were analyzed by infrared methods. The extract from the burnt area was identified as asphalt, and no flammable liquid could be detected. It should be noted that a very flammable liquid will burn rapidly and leave no detectable residue.

DATE REPORTED	SIGNATURE
15 May 1967	William J. Crawford WILLIAM J. CRAWFORD

AFML FORM MAY 64 13

SUBORDER (Ref ASDR 80-4)

1. TO (Supporting Element)	2. DATE	3. FOR SERVICE IN SUPPORT OF:	4. FILE OR LEDGER NO.
		SYSTEM NO.	INITIATING ELEMENT
5. DATE COMPLETION REQ.	6. PRIORITY R	PROJECT NO.	SUPPORTING ELEMENT 7-885/888
7. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF WORK REQUESTED UNCLASS	8. PRECEDENCE RATING	TASK NO. 6010212	
9. A/C TYPE, MODEL AND SERIAL NO.		PROGRAM STRUCTURE	OTHER
		TITLE Anal. of Samples & from Paved Road	

10. DESCRIPTION OF WORK

PERFORM CHEMICAL ANALYSIS OF INCLOSED 4 SAMPLES. TO DETERMINE PRESENCE OF ANY FLAMMABLE MATERIAL.

CONTINUED ON REVERSE SIDE ☐

FOR USE OF RESPONSIBLE ELEMENT

11. INITIATED BY	12. APPROVED BY	13. CHIEF (Responsible Element)
WILLIAM F. MARLEY JR.		
TDETIVFO ORGN SYMBOL EXT 70916	ORGN SYMBOL EXT	

FOR USE OF SUPPORTING ELEMENT

14. ESTIMATED COMPLETION	15. PROJECT ENGINEER OR PLANNER	16. CHIEF (Supporting Element)
DATE		
MAN-HOURS	ORGN SYMBOL EXT	

CLOSING ACTION

17. REASON: ☐ COMPLETED ☐ CANCELLED	20. CHIEF (Supporting Element)	21. CHIEF (Responsible Element)
18. DATE COMPL 15 May 67	FREEMAN F. BENTLEY, Chief Analytical Branch Materials Physics Division AF Materials Laboratory	
19. M/HRS EXP 8		

ASD FORM DEC 61 49

(MRXA/55236)

AFLC–WPAFB–AUG 65 60

DEARBORN OBSERVATORY
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

10 May 1967

FTD (TDETR)
Research and Aerial Phenomenon Division
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
Ohio 45433

Attn: Major Hector Quintanilla

Dear Major Quintanilla:

Enclosed is the report on my investigation of the sighting by C[redacted], South Hill, Virginia, 21 April 1967, together with newspaper accounts of the incident.

Yours truly,

William T. Powers

William T. Powers

WTP:lp
encl.

SIGHTING OF 21 APRIL, 1967
SOUTH HILL, VIRGINIA
by C. N. Crowder

Investigated by [redacted]

On Saturday, April 22, 1967, nationwide coverage was given by the press to reports of a sighting of a large UFO seen taking off from a road in South Hill, Virginia. The investigator arrived on the scene at about 9:00 a.m., April 23rd, 1967. He was met by Sgt. S. H. Raines of the Virginia State Police, who provided transportation and valuable assistance and advice during the entire investigation. Lt. Hedricks of State Police Headquarters in Appomatox, Virginia, had authorized full cooperation and had also conducted his own investigation, the results of which he made available. Cooperation from the Virginia State Police could not have been given more freely, and was of great help.

The principal witness was C[redacted] (703/447-4177) manager of a fertilizer warehouse just on the northeast corporate limits of South Hill. [redacted]wn, is married and has children; during the investigation many people including all the police indicated that [redacted] has excellent standing in the community, is a responsible citizen, and would by no means be involved in a hoax or falsehood. "If anyone but C[redacted]ad made the report," the comments ran, "I wouldn't have believed him, but i[redacted]says it happened, it happened."

The second witness, who saw a portion of the event, is Mr.[redacted], who owns extensive tobacco lands just south of and bordering on the road on which the incident took place. He was not as well known as Mr. Crowder, but seemed perfectly honest, even to the extent of sticking

/

by his story when at one point a serious discrepancy (later resolved) developed.

Mr. [redacted] report gives the following picture of the events of Friday night:

[redacted] had been working late on his books at the warehouse, and left at about 9:00 p.m. EST. At this time the sky was entirely dark. Crowder drove north out of the warehouse parking lot, along a dirt road perhaps 1/8 mile long, and turned west onto County Route 747. The road dead-ends at two residences just east of this point.

By reconstruction, the events that followed were timed. Three seconds after turning onto route 747, [redacted] saw in his headlights, about 500 feet ahead of him in the center of the road, a large object. Two legs were visible, each about 6 inches in diameter and angled out somewhat, supporting a cylindrical object with a flat bottom and a dome-shaped top. The vertical angular subtense of this object was about one inch at arm's length (30 inches), so the vertical size projected to the apparent location would be about 17 feet. [redacted] estimated the object to be 16 to 18 feet in vertical dimensions, not counting the legs which raised the object some three feet off the ground. The lateral dimension he estimated to be about 12 feet. In color the object resembled a dark aluminum, similar to a large nitrogen fertilizer tank near the warehouse.

In order to get a better look, [redacted] drove closer, to within about 250 feet of the object, which took about 9 seconds, and then switched on his bright headlights. After a delay of 4 or 5 seconds, there appeared

suddenly a brilliant white column of fire-like white-hot molten steel, directly under the object, the column being about 18 inches in diameter. The downward jet could be seen splashing off the pavement. At the same instant, the object appeared to rise, and was out of sight in "just a snap of the fingers." At no time did Crowder hear any sound; the car window was open next to him.

[redacted] did not actually see the object in flight; he says only that he could see "something going up." The white-hot flame did not travel upward, but disappeared an instant after it appeared, leaving the road burning with orange flames. When the "tremendous burst of white-hot gas or flame"appeared, [redacted]'s reaction was to stop his car. At this point he saw the lights of another car coming toward him from the west, and turn into Norman Martin's road, to the south.

[redacted] then drove past the smoldering patch on the road, which was still flickering in a few places the size of a hand; this was about 15 seconds after the initial burst of white fire. Apparently the flames on the burning road began to subside as soon as the flash was over. Crowder proceeded directly to the police station (state police) in South Hill.

[redacted] troopers Crawford and Murphy, and a newspaperman from town returned to the scene to search it. (The patch of burned tar was still warm to the touch when they returned.) The troopers first found three burned matches in the center of the burned spot (enclosed in brown envelope). The matches were of the paper book-type, and were completely consumed; they did not give the appearance of having been burned while held, but rather

NOT ACCORDING TO MURPHY

appeared uniformly carbonized from end to end.

A thorough search was then conducted on the road around the burned area, the shoulders of the road, and the wheat fields on either side of the road (in which the wheat was green and was perhaps 18 inches tall). Nothing at all unusual was found. The search was conducted with the aid of two cars' headlights and with hand-held six-cell flashlights.

The following morning, another inspection of the scene revealed four small holes (see enclosed diagram) spaced at the corners of a square approximately 11.5 feet on a side, centered on the burned area. Each hole was about 1/2 inch in diameter. Two of the holes (NE and SE) had straight cylindrical sides and blunt bottoms, and were about 3/4 inch deep. The other two were less well defined and were shallower, about 3/8 inches deep. Both troopers who had conducted the search the previous night are positive that the holes were not there during the first search. The holes, however, were small, and a test made at night using car headlights alone showed that they would not be visible under low-angle illumination, appearing as just another shadow among many. The troopers, however, insisted that they could not have overlooked the holes if they had been there on Friday night.

On Saturday morning, Crowder went to see Martin, to find out if Martin had seen anything the previous night. Crowder said that he was careful not to give anything away about what he had seen himself. Martin's story:

[redacted]amily had been visiting a sick relative in the hospital in town, and left there about 8:30. They arrived back a[redacted] house at about 8:45 to 9:00 p.m. Mrs[redacted]ent into the house, and Mr. [redacted]aused outside the house, in a position where he was looking north

over his wheat field toward the road. He saw a car's headlights coming from [redacted] warehouse, and while the body of the car was hidden by the wheat, the glow of the headlights was visible travelling along route 747 to the west. As the car travelled west, the large tree almost directly north of [redacted] suddenly was illuminated by a brilliant white light, which also lit up a large pine tree some seventy-five feet north of the road and from [redacted] viewpoint just to the left of the large tree at the roadside. The illumination was exceedingly bright, and appeared to rise, travelling rapidly up the tree. It then went out. [redacted] was puzzled by this phenomenon, but when nothing further happened he went into the house. He did not know at that time that [redacted] had seen the light, nor did Crowder know that Martin had seen it.

This testimony seemed to be in conflict with [redacted]'s story, for Crowder had said he saw car-headlights turning into the Martin driveway just <u>after</u> the brilliant flash of light; [redacted] could not possible have seen the same event. However neither man would change his story in the slightest when confronted with this discrepancy. Mr. [redacted] finally suggested that the headlights might have turned into a house just west of the entrance to his farm, so that [redacted] might have mistaken that location (only about 200 feet farther west) for the [redacted] road. That turned out to be the case. Mr. [redacted] who lived in the house in question, said that at about nine p.m. his wife, who was in the northwest bedroom (from which the scene of the sighting was not visible) saw lights as from a car's headlights turning into their driveway. However, nobody knocked on the door and she assumed that someone had merely turned around in the

driveway. If that were the case, then the discrepancy is cleared up. The occupants of that car may well have seen the phenomenon and turned away; if they were negroes, which is quite likely considering that the white occupants in that area are all accounted for, then they would have reason to refuse to approach bright lights flashing on a lonely road; this region is a sort of spiritual headquarters for the Ku Klux Klan, and there are frequent gatherings for the entertaining purpose of "listening to some nigger-talk" from one guest speaker or another.

[redacted]id not actually see the object which [redacted] reported; he saw only the unusually intense illumination of the trees. Since he saw Crowder's car going down the road at the same time, it is not possible that the illumination came from the car's headlights; not only would headlights be too dim, but they could not have illuminated the pine tree set well back from the road. Finally, as the car approached the trees, the illumination should have appeared to progress downward instead of upward.

TESTS

Two tests were performed by the investigator with the aid of Sgt. Raines. The first involved making a crude impact tester (see diagram) for the purpose of seeing how easily a 1/2-inch hole could be made in the road surface (tarred gravel).

The impact tester consisted of a weight mounted on the end of a board, the other end of which was hinged to a smaller double thickness of board on which a person could stand to hold the apparatus steady. Just beyond the weight a 1/2-inch bolt was fastened through the board, protruding

downward about 3/4 inch. A metal plate was used to distribute the impact. By allowing the weighted end of the board to fall from the verticle onto the pavement, the bolt could be driven into the surface with a reproducible and known impact.

The weight resting on the bolt with the board horizontal was 47.5 pounds, and the difference in height through which the weight fell was 30 inches. Our tests were made near the four existing holes, with depths of penetration as follows:

Test No.	Penetration, in units of 1/32 inch	
1	13	(near NE hole)
2	13.5	(near SE hole)
3	15	(near SW hole)
4	13	(near NW hole)
Average =	13.6/32 inch	

If it is assumed that the deceleration after impact was uniform, then the average force f required to stop a weight W (that has been accelerated by gravity downward through a distance h) acting over the penetration depth d, is simply

$$f = Wh/d.$$

The penetration will depend on the square of the velocity, so the weight of an object required to produce a given penetration will depend on the squared ratio of its impact velocity V to the impact velocity V_o in the test situation; V_o was 12.62 feet per second, by calculation. W_o indicates the test weight, and W the weight associated with velocity V:

$$W = 47.5\ (V/12.6)^2 \text{ per "leg", for 13/32" penetration.}$$

Examination of the results of the impact test showed significant differences between the impact holes and the northeast original hole, which was the most clearly delineated. The impact holes had sharp edges, and stones on the edges and in the walls of the holes had been sheared through: there were no signs of sheared-through rocks in the northeast original hole. Around the northeast original hole was a rim of tar which had apparently oozed up as the hole was made; the impact holes, on the other hand, showed sharp edges with no signs of flow of the tar. The impact holes were full of white powder from shattered rock; none was seen in the original holes, although 36 hours had passed before arrival of the investigator, and foreign matter had been blown or pushed into the holes.

The indications apparently are that the original holes were made at considerably lower velocity than the impact holes, which means in turn that the weight involved had to be larger than 84 pounds per leg (correcting for depth of original holes). In fact, if the velocity is guessed at as equal to 1/2, 1/4 and 1/10 that of the impact test, then the weight over the northeast mark must be approximately 84, 335, 1340 and 8400 pounds. At zero velocity the equation breaks down, and because of the flow characteristics of tar the higher weights (going with the lower velocities) should be corrected downward. I leave a more exact analysis to those better acquainted with hardness tests. Nevertheless the indications are that a rather heavy weight settled slowly onto the objects which made the marks, rather than a light weight (such as the end of a pickaxe) making a high-velocity impact with the road.

The second test involved attempts to reproduce the burn-mark on the

road. The first test, using kerosene, failed because the kerosene could not be lit with a match. A piece of burning paper finally started a fire, after perhaps twenty seconds of burning, and then the fire progressed in a narrow strip across the wetted patch of road, downwind, until it reached the other edge, where it went out. Total burning time was on the order of ten minutes.

A quart of gasoline was then spread over an area similar to the original, and set afire with a match. The first attempt to light it by dropping a burning match into the center failed, because there was not enough oxygen despite the brisk wind; the match was put out by the gasoline. The second match was applied at the edge of the wetted area, which then burst instantly into flame. The flame burned at essentially a constant rate for about fifty seconds, and died out at sixty-eight seconds of elapsed time. A heavy black smoke was created, which formed a black semicircular area about a foot in extent on the pavement downwind from the burning patch; a similar, but much lighter and barely visible, area was to be seen NNE of the original patch, the downwind direction for the night of the sighting.

The effect of the gasoline fire on the road was far greater than what the original burn showed (although comparison was somewhat difficult due to the lapse of time and failure to keep traffic off the evidence). The gasoline fire melted a great amount of tar, which formed into pools. No pools at all are evident in the original. The flow of tar in the gasoline test resulted in disappearance of many stones under a coating of tar; all the stones in the original patch remained visible and were

free of soot at least at the time of the comparison. The stones in the original patch each had a slightly raised rim of bright tar around the edges, as if molten tar had been blown up around the stones; the stones in the gasoline test, if they remained visible above the tar, showed no such raised-rim effects. The test area was burned the most in the upwind direction, the pooling of tar being greatest there; the original patch was essentially uniform over all its area.

There were, in other words, noticeable differences between the original patch and the results of the burn-test. It is possible to interpret the original patch as being the result of a high-temperature blast directed downward, playing over the surface of the road for a short time. The raised rims of tar around the stones suggest that the tar became hotter than the stones, owing perhaps to its black color and the generally light color of the stones. In the gasoline test the stones quickly acquired a coating of soot and were black as or blacker than the tar before the fire went out. The fire survived only a few seconds after exhaustion of the gasoline; the rapid dying out of the flames noted by Crowder could mean that a much smaller quantity of flammeable fluid was used (if a hoax was involved) or else that the tar was ignited strictly by a rise in its temperature, no foreign substances being involved.

Samples

Samples were taken from three areas (identified by slips of paper inside the packing in the three plastic containers). Material was taken from the center of the burned patch, from the center of an area which a trooper had blackened by applying a lighted flare to it, or fuse, and from an area well away from any affected part of the road. The samples were scraped up with the end of a tire-iron, which was painted black.

An attempt was then made to get casts of the three holes which were not as well-defined as the northeast hole. Sgt. Raines poured plaster of Paris into these holes with paper clips arranged to permit pulling out the plugs. It was anticipated that some difficulty might be encountered, so the best hole was left untouched. The southeast hole gave the most difficulty due to its depth; finally the road had to be chipped carefully away from the cast, not, however, without damaging the cast. All recoverable pieces are enclosed. Material which adhered to the casts was left on them. The other two casts were pulled out directly with only minor damage. These casts are wrapped in cotton in the empty cotton-box, which also contains the envelope with the matches in it. In retrospect, of course, one can think of several more intelligent ways to obtain impressions of the holes without damaging them, such as using modelling clay or PTV.

Conclusions

This is a peculiar case, primarily because of the apparently excellent reliability (in the sense of truthfulness) of the principal witness. If one takes the description of events as given by the witness at face value, then the physical evidence follows logically from the position, appearance, and behavior of the object. The object had legs; marks were left on the ground, The object was large; the marks could have been made by a heavy object settling slowly onto the pavement. The object departed with a blast of very high-temperature flame that splashed off the roadway; the tar was ignited by the flames died immediately away; the appearance of the burned area indicates a blast of heat.

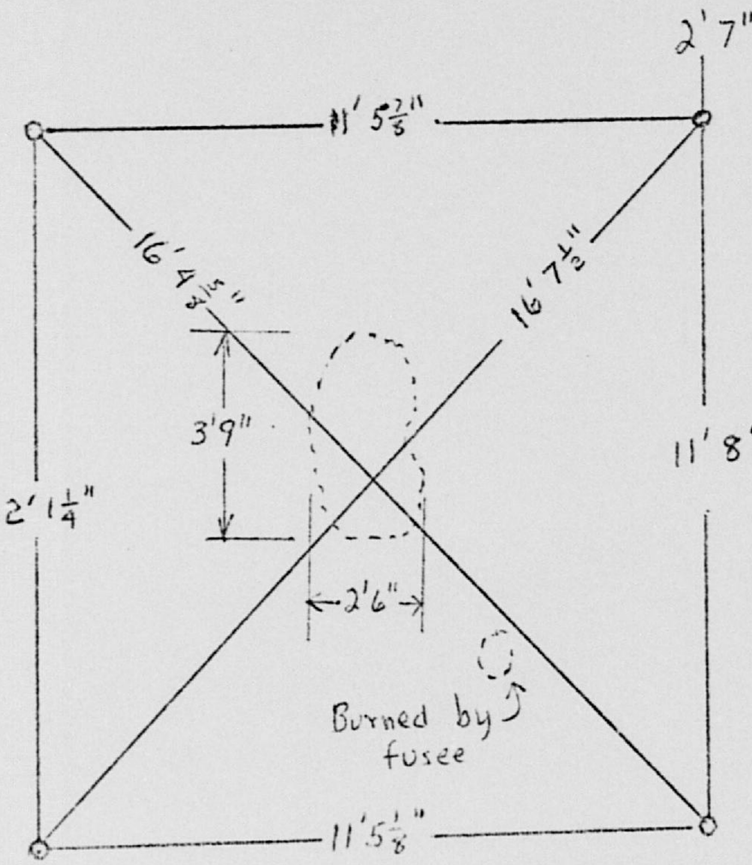
On the other hand, if one considered only the physical evidence so far available and so far analyzed, he would be bound to conclude that a hoax was highly probable. The presence of matches suggests that gasoline(but much less than a quart) was used to ignite a patch on the road; a clever and energetic enough person could have made the holes in the pavement. The fact that the holes were not discovered until the next day strongly suggests that they were put there after the sighting but before the inspection the following day. The irregular but sharp outlines of the burn and the uniformity of the burn argue against the idea that a downward jet played on the road, at least in one fixed position; the absence of any outward-directed blast-marks gives similar cause for doubt (although if the heat were applied directly as heat radiation there would be no blast marks). In other words, the appearance of the physical traces can be used to argue

against the factuality of the story told by Crowder. Against that, we must weigh the fact that [redacted]ord is considered unquestionable by everyone who knows him. Sgt. Raines, for example, has known Crowder for seven years and has the same high opinion of him.

At this writing, therefore, in the absence of any additional clues or the results of chemical analysis, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the witness probably did see something out of the ordinary, but that we cannot rule out the possibility that a hoax was perpetrated by some person or persons other than the principal witness. A possible hoax is involved, but evidence for it is not clear.

ROUTE
747
Tarred Gravel

16'



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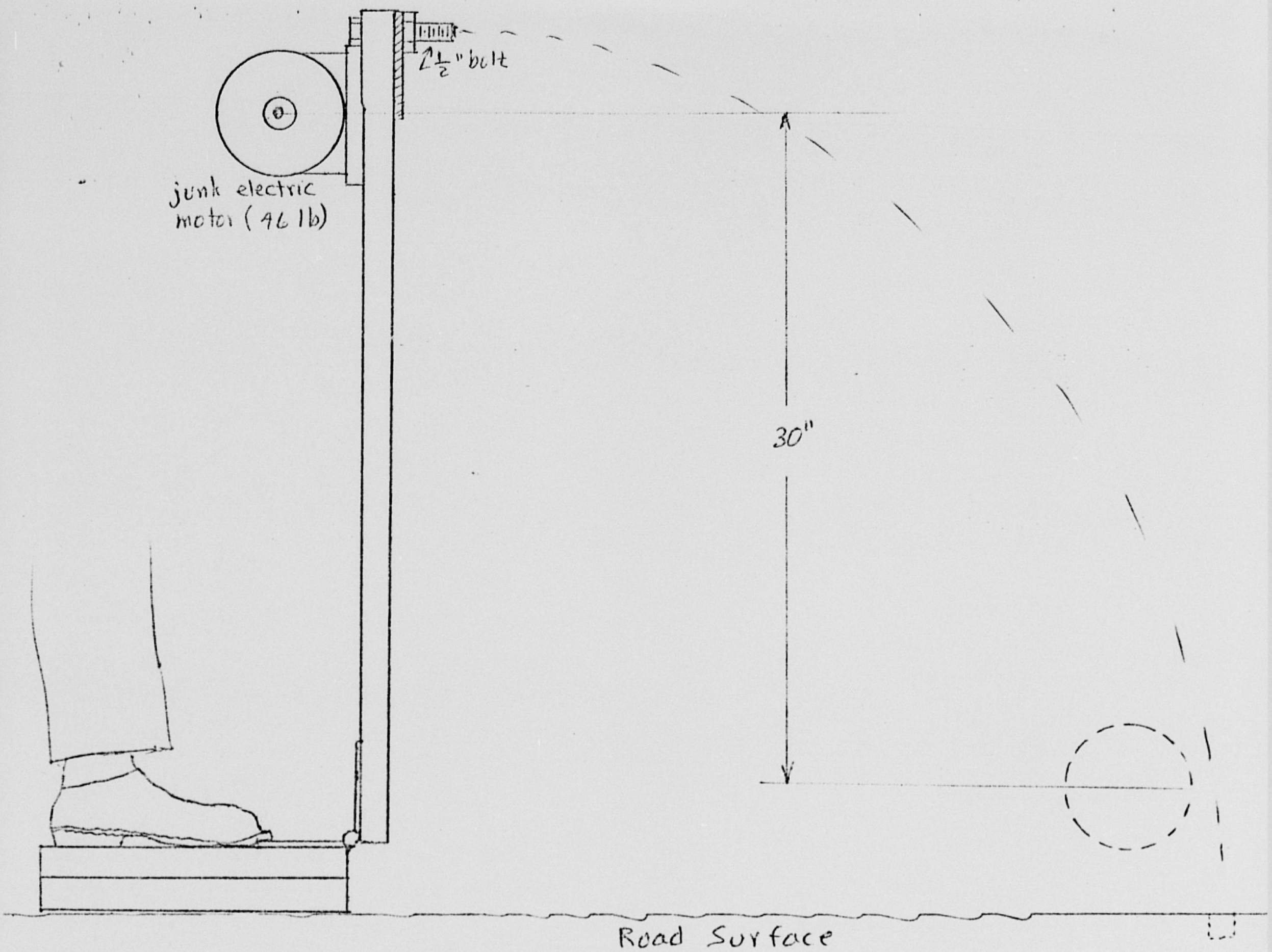


IMPACT TESTER

large pine

large tree

Route 747

stopped

sees white first

first sight

DEAD END

500 ft

King's house

1/4 mile

WHEAT FIELD

Warehouse

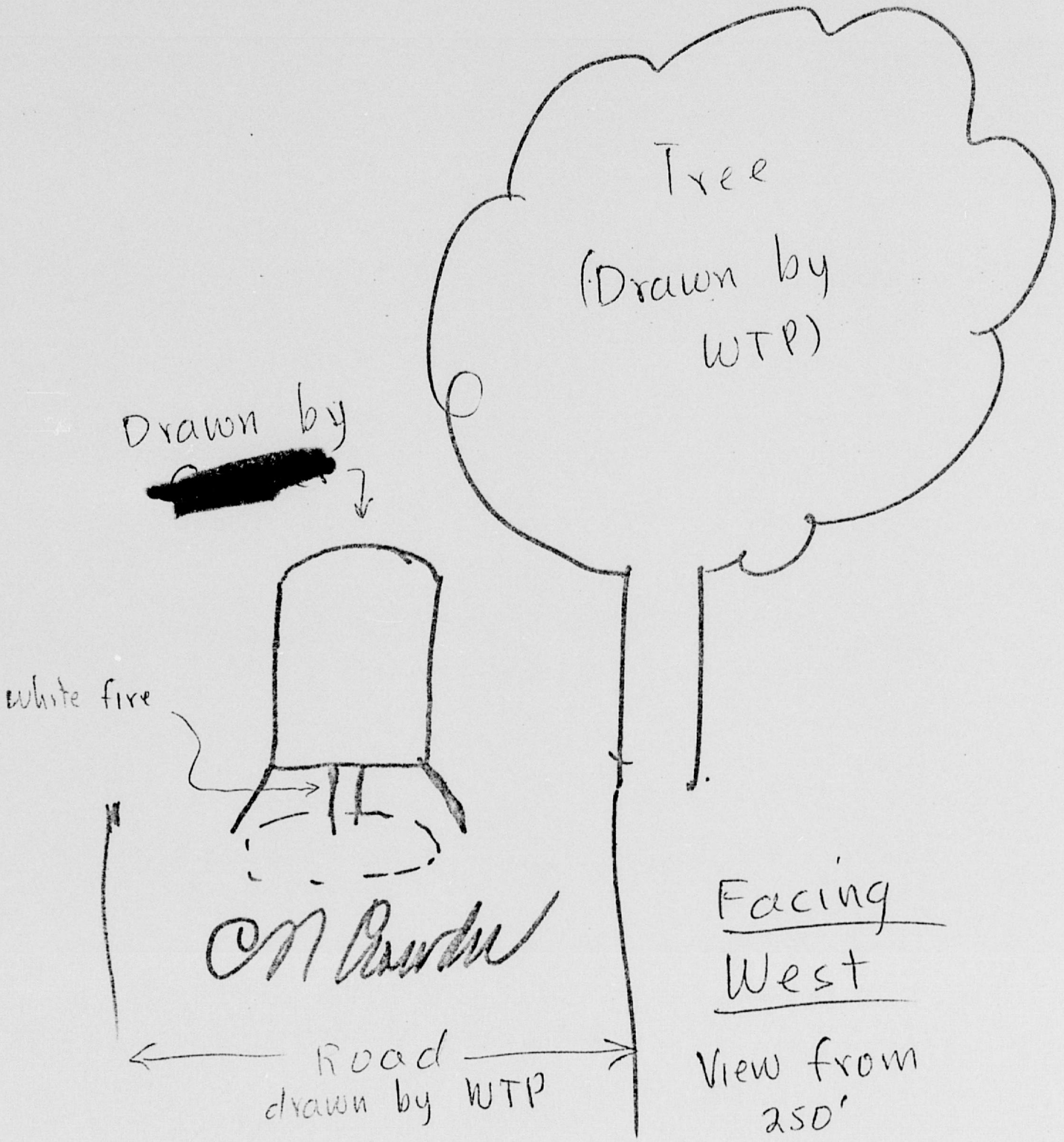
N

W E

S

To South Hill

X position



Note: Dimensions of drawn object are proportioned very close to actual size estimates given by Crowder: 12' dia, 16' high, 3' off ground, dia of flame or jet = 18". Legs, however, are too far apart & burned area (dotted) is too large.

3:35 PM [redacted]

I Officer [redacted]

On a Friday April 21, 1967 At
Approximatly 9:05 PM Received a call
From the Dispatcher to Come to the
Station [redacted] on Arrival At the Police
Station was [redacted] informed by A
M[redacted] of [redacted] K. Ave
South Hill, VA. That [redacted] Something had
Like A Rocket [redacted] Taking off on Ferral. St Officer
G.R. Tolbert Myself and C.N.
[redacted] Went to East Ferral, St
on Arrival there were No one there
Mr. [redacted] Pointed to A Black Spot in
the Street stating that is where
it took off from. I Put My hand
on this Spot in the Street And there
was No heat. the Spot was Burned
with what And how I do Not Know.
I Did find three Paper Matches
inside the Spot Approx: 6" inside
North East Side. And C.A. Crawford of the
State Police. Also found a match

On Monday Friday April 21, 1967 At
Approximatly 9:05 PM Received A call
From the Dispatcher to Come To the
Station [redacted] on Arrival At the Police
Station was [redacted] informed by Mr
[redacted] of [redacted] Ave
South Hill, VA. That [redacted] something had
[redacted] taking off on Ferral. St. Officer
Like A Rocket G.R. Tolbert Myself and C.N.
[redacted] Went to East Ferral St
on Arrival, there were No one there
Mr Crowder Pointed to A black Spot in
the Street stating that is where
it took off from. I Put My hand
on this Spot in the Street And there
was No heat - the Spot was Burned
with what And How I do Not Know.
I Did find three Popper Matches
inside the Spot Approx: 6" inside
North East Side. And In F. D [redacted] of the
State Police. Also found A match
More or less in or toward the Center
of the Spot. [redacted] r
stated at first that the flam was
Blue And then Again he state[illegible]

BM that the flam was White BM, the Matches were placed so that they could have been Covered with a half Dollor, the weather was Clear, BM

BM this was Located in the Center of East Terrace, STBM.

THE SOUTH HILL CASE

New evidence and insight into the UFO case that occurred on April 21, 1967, at South Hill, Va., was obtained during a two-day trip to that city on December 16-17 and from follow-up investigations. A dozen of the principals in the case, including Clifford Crowder who reported the sighting, were interviewed. The interviews were recorded on tape.

This report has been prepared, without charge, for use by the Air Force Project Blue Book and by the University of Colorado UFO Study Group. No other use or release is intended by the author, without specific written permission.

Even these two agencies are cautioned against public use or open publication of the few paragraphs marked with a triple asterisk (***) which contain candid quotations from the interviews or author conclusions.

It is assumed that the reader is familiar with the general details of the South Hill case and has read the official case report prepared by William T. Powers of Northwestern University for the Air Force, dated May 10, 1967.

This case seems to this author to be an especially interesting one for several reasons:

1. It demonstrates that physical evidence which may upon superficial examination seem to provide evidence of extra-terrestrial visitations can actually demonstrate quite a different conclusion.

2. It shows how failure to report the full details of a UFO case can mislead the general public into a false conclusion and add to the illusion that the Earth has entertained extra-terrestrial visitors.

3. It illustrates that mature adults with good reputations in a community are not necessarily beyond attempting a spurious UFO report, if only as a psychological experiment. (***)

Philip J. Klass
560 N Street SW
Washington D.C. 20024
January 9, 1968

The Evidence

The credibility of Clifford Crawford's story that he saw a large, tank-shaped object sitting on four legs on East Farrell St. shortly before 9 p.m. on the evening of April 21, 1967, and that the object suddenly disappeared with a blinding flash that left the asphalt-macadam road afire, rests on the following:

1. The burned spot on the road. According to some accounts, the rocks in the area were still warm to the touch when Crowder and the local police returned to the area a few minutes later.

2. Four tiny holes, or "padprints," measuring approximately ½ inch in diameter by ½ inch deep, which were found at the site the following morning but not on the evening of the incident.

3. The statement by Norman Martin, who lives 600 feet south of East Farrell St., that he saw bright illumination on trees near the burned spot for a brief interval at approximately the time that Crowder says the incident occurred.

4. Mr. Crowder's long-standing reputation in the community.

The Burned Spot

Crowder's story is that the brief but intense burst of fire emitted by the object when it took-off, or disappeared, set fire to the asphalt-macadam road. On at least fourteen occasions during two recorded interviews, Crowder referred to flame and fire on the road. For added confirmation, upon returning to Washington, I wrote him to ask if the road was merely smoking or if he saw actual flame; if so, how high were the flames and approximately how long they lasted.

Crowder replied: "The road was flaming after the flash of light. At first the flame was about 3 ft. high. When I passed the flame was going out; I would guess 2-5 inches high. When I first saw the flash I stopped my car at once...I would guess the time as 60 seconds or more from the time I saw the flash before I passed the burning pavement."

Other investigators have assumed that the asphalt was set afire. BUT ASPHALT WILL NOT SUPPORT COMBUSTION, according to Blake Cornthwaite, managing engineer of The Asphalt Institute in Washington D.C. Asphalt can be made to burn if its temperature is raised to 400-500F, but when the external source of heat is removed, THE ASPHALT WILL NOT CONTINUE TO BURN. "It cooks over and puts itself out," according to Cornthwaite.

It is true that fast-curing types of asphalt, which are dissolved in naptha, might briefly support combustion for several days after being laid. But within a week, 90% of the naptha will have evaporated. And the road on East Farrell St. was not freshly laid, even if fast-curing asphalt were used.

THIS MEANS THAT THE BURNED SPOT ON THE ROAD WAS PRODUCED BY SOME TYPE OF FLAMMABLE LIQUID OR MATERIAL. This, conceivably, could have been deposited by the "object", by Crowder himself, or by others.

If the flammable material was deposited by the "object," then it was ignited by the"object" in the process of take-off. If deposited by Crowder or others, it would have had to be ignited by more conventional means.

The Charred Matches

Some time after Crowder brought the local police to the site, he drove home to tell his family of the incident. While Crowder was absent, police officer B.O. Murphy discovered three completely charred paper matches within the burned spot on the road, "approximately 6 inches inside the northeast side," according to Murphy's written report. State Trooper James A. Crawford, who also was present at the time, found a fourth paper match in the burned area, also completely charred. Murphy said the three matches he found were so close together "they could have been covered with a half dollar," according to his report.

THE FACT THAT ALL FOUR MATCHES WERE COMPLETELY CHARRED INDICATES THAT THEY WERE ON THE ROAD AT THE TIME OF THE FIRE.

The discovery of these charred matches produced an interesting reaction, but not a surprising one, among those present. (Recall that Crowder was at home at the time.)

Trooper Crawford decided not to bother to report the incident (Crowder's UFO report) to his immediate superior, Sgt. S.H. Raines, head of the local office, "because I didn't think there was anything to it. That's my opinion after we found the matches," Crawford told me.

I asked Trooper Crawford if any of the other officers present also were suspicious. He replied: "I think everyone was...after we found the matches."

The law enforcement officers were not the only ones whose suspicions were aroused. Robert L. Harris, part-time reporter/photographer for the Richmond News-Leader, who was present when Murphy and Crawford found the matches, responded in this way when I asked whether the matches had aroused suspicions of a hoax: "In my mind it did, because I hesitated until 2 a.m. before I mailed my film into the newspaper. I just went and put my camera away and said (here Harris hesitated) well, you know, Crowder is a highly thought-of, upstanding man. I think he's a man of integrity, personally. I've known him...I lived in his home in an apartment when my wife and I were first married...I'm sure you've found Crowder is well thought of. But, I said, well, here's the matches, you know, I said, well, I've wasted my film. I don't even think I'll send it to the newspaper."

Then events took a strange twist. Harris discussed his suspicions with Harry Nanny, publisher of The South Hill Enterprise, a weekly newspaper, who also had come to the scene. "We began to talk," Harris said, "and between the two of us we decided that, ah, Crowder had seen us take these pictures and would expect to see something in the paper, you know. And we knew that he had seen something -- we didn't know what it was -- and so we decided to go ahead. So, at 2 a.m., I put my film on the bus to Richmond." The incident appeared in a feature story in the Richmond News Leader and was quickly picked up by the wire services and given national coverage.

The one person interviewed who attempted to minimize the significance of the charred matches was Crowder himself. Late in the interview, he casually mentioned the matches: "Now another thing they did find, I think, in that same spot, they found some matches, either one match or two matches, the charred remains. But you see there were so many people there smoking cigarettes that night...that was when the State Police got into it, you see, that is when they found, they claimed, these matches -- it was either two or three burned match sticks, these paper matches around the site."

"But to me that didn't mean a thing on God's earth, you know, so far as somebody starting a fire was concerned. As many people as there were around there smoking cigarettes and dropping matches, don't you see."

Later, I asked officer Murphy (who found the three matches) whether they could have been dropped by visitors at the scene after lighting cigarettes. He replied positively: "No, no...no. They had to have been there (before). It would have been impossible for someone to have lit a cigarette and the matches to have been burned like that." Harris agreed: "When we picked them up they just crumbled to ashes."

It is simply impossible that the charred matches or partially burned matches just happened to be clustered together on the precise spot that the UFO chose to land, and that they could have remained so clustered despite the landing and take-off (or explosion) of such an object.

It seems an interesting coincidence that Crowder himself smokes and he uses book (paper) matches to light his cigarettes.

The Four "Padprints"

Although the officers did discover the small, charred matches on the dark burned asphalt-macadam road on the night of April 21, they did not discover even one of the four holes within six feet of the burned spot. This raises the question of whether these "padprints" were indeed there on the night of April 21, or whether they were created in the pre-dawn hours of April 22.

If only one of the four holes had been discovered that night, it is probable that all four would have been found, so there were four "opportunities" for discovery. Trooper Crawford told me that he and Murphy made a careful search, bending down low over the road, using a 6-cell flashlight. Crawford finds it hard to believe that the holes could have been overlooked.

Sgt. Raines, who heads the local Virginia State Police office, acknowledges that Trooper Crawford "is a right thorough fellow, and ordinarily I'd say that when he says the holes weren't there, they weren't there." But Raines, who is a member of the same church as Crowder, says he is sure that the holes were not there that night.

He explains that the reason they were not found is that Crowder had described the UFO's legs as being 5-6 inches in diameter and so the officers naturally were looking for large indentations on the road, not tiny holes. Raines adds that the next morning when he was told of the four holes and went to the site, he still had trouble finding them in broad daylight.

But trooper Crawford says that when he heard about the holes the next day and returned to the site at night to see if he could spot them in the darkness, he said he did find them "without being shown where they were."

If the holes were there on Friday night, it would neither confirm nor deny the possibility of a hoax. But if the holes were NOT there Friday night, then the case is clearly a hoax, for this would mean that they were added sometime after midnight (when the officers left for the night) and the following morning.

If the "padprints" were added in the pre-dawn hours of April 22, it seems safe to conclude that this was done to provide additional evidence to support the original story and to counteract suspicions raised by the discovery of the charred matches. As of midnight, only a handful of people knew of the discovery of the charred matches. Clifford Crowder was one of this handful.

So far as is known, Crowder was the first man to return to the area the next morning, at approximately 7 a.m., while on his way to work. Although Crowder took time to stop and talk with Norman Martin about events of the previous night, Crowder insists that he did not stop at the site itself for even a brief inspection. It is surprising that Crowder would not show more curiosity, especially since he was so early for work on a Saturday morning and is the manager of the fertilizer warehouse.

But as a result,Crowder was not the first to discover the four small holes. Certainly he would have found them if he had stopped to inspect the site. Nor is it known who was the first to discover the holes. None of the dozen persons interviewed claimed this honor, nor did they know who had first spotted them.

Sgt. Raines said he was sitting in Crowder's office, only 1,000 ft. away from the site, when he received word about the four holes. Raines says he promptly left to visit the site and see the holes. But again, Crowder showed a surprising lack of curiosity about this important new discovery. He told me that it was not until an hour or two later, when he drove home for lunch, that he stopped to see the newly discovered holes.

During the first interview with Crowder, he spoke of "ashes" that had been found on the burned spot that night. (Apparently this was a reference to residue from "fusee" flares which the officers had used in an experiment to try to ignite the macadam road.) When asked if the ashes had been analyzed, Crowder explained that they had been washed away because it "poured down rain that night after this happened...came a good hard shower of rain sometime during the night."

If it had indeed rained between midnight and daylight the following day, and if the four holes had been there the night before, there should have been some rainwater in the holes when they were discovered Saturday morning.

I asked Sgt. Raines if he had found anything in the holes when he arrived at the site around 10-11 a.m. He replied: "There was nothing in them." Any water? "No sir," he responded. When I explained that Crowder had said that it rained that night, Raines responded heatedly: "Cliff's not sure about that, is he? That's an opinion. There wasn't any rain. There wasn't any rain."

Had it rained? Robert Harris, who said he remained at the site until shortly after midnight and who put his film on the 2 a.m. bus for Richmond, did not remember any rain. Nor did others, except for George Utley of radio station WJWS. Utley had worked until around 1 a.m., he recalled, and he remembered a little rain at the time he left for home. Everyone seemed to recall that Saturday morning had been bright and sunny.

Upon returning to Washington, I checked the Weather Bureau. They told me that their station at Raleigh, N.C., approximately 60 miles to the south of South Hill, had reported traces of precipitation from 3-5 a.m. followed by several hundredths of an inch starting around 5 a.m. Richmond, about 70 miles to the north, had reported a trace of rain at 3-4 a.m., followed by several hundredths of an inch starting at 4 a.m.

This suggests that Crowder was awake in the very early morning hours of April 22 since he was the only one to recall the "hard shower."

Norman Martin's Role

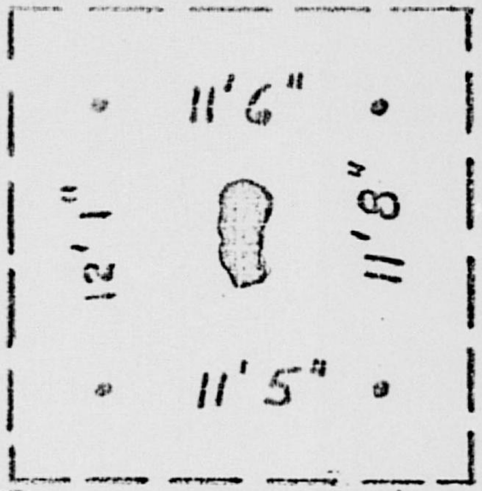
Mr. & Mrs. Norman Martin, who live approximately 600 ft. south of East Farrell St., were visiting Mr. Martin's mother in the local hospital on the evening of April 21. Mr. Martin says they over-stayed the normal 8:30 end of visiting hours by perhaps 10 minutes, which would mean they departed the hospital room at about 8:40 p.m.

Allowing 5 minutes for the Martins to walk to their car, and another 5 minutes to drive home, they should have arrived at their driveway and turned south from East Farrell St. at approximately 8:50 p.m.

Working backward for Crowder, he arrived at the local police station a few moments after 9 p.m. Allowing 5 minutes for him to drive to the station from the site, and a minute or two for the time he says he waited for the flames to die down, this would place the time of the incident at somewhere between 8:50 and 8:55 p.m.

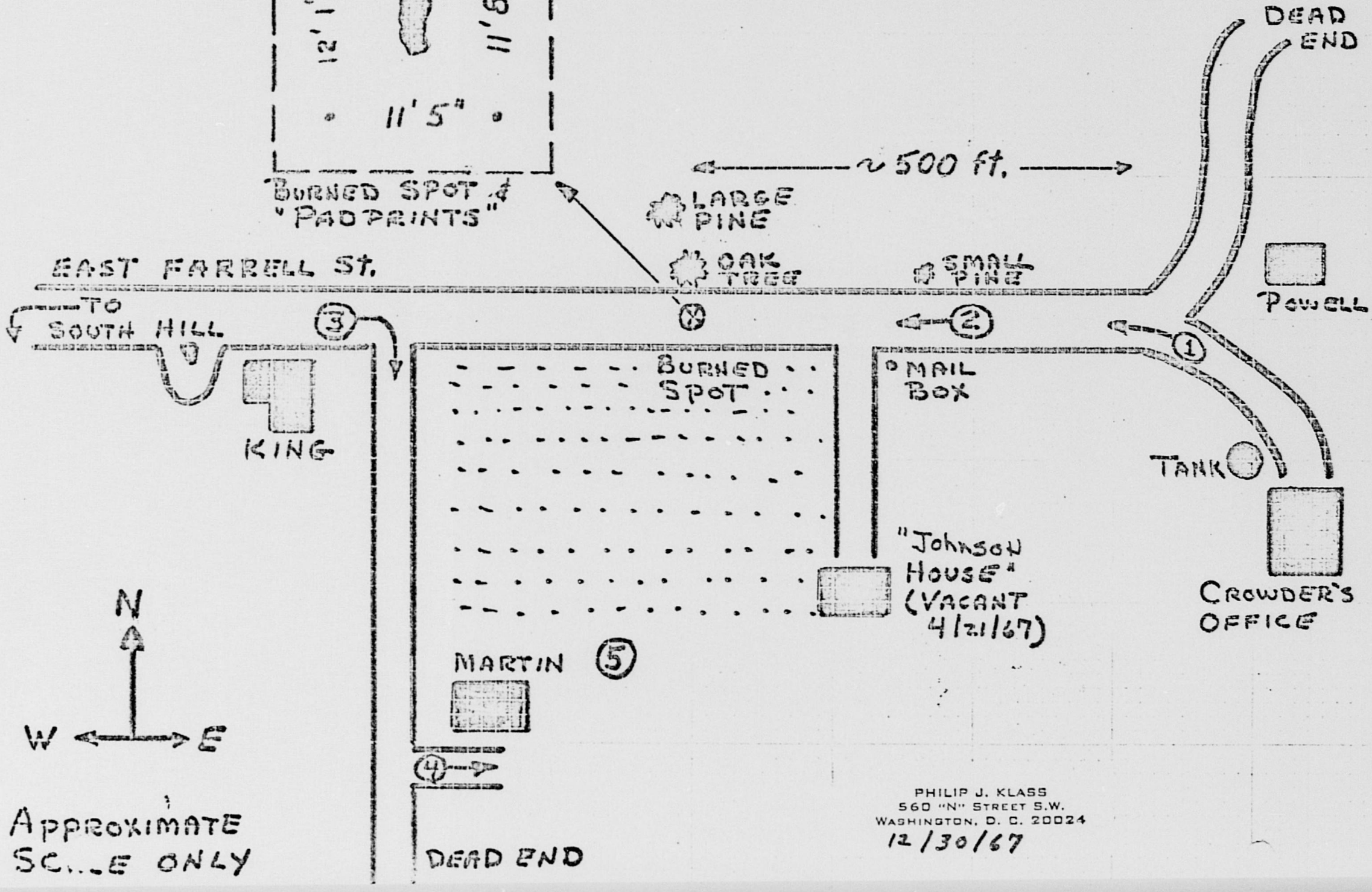
MAP #1

ELEVATION PROFILE



BURNED SPOT "PADPRINTS" #4

CROWDER'S ACCOUNT



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Thus the Martins were arriving home from the hospital at roughly the same time as the incident would have occurred, according to Crowder's account.

And Crowder says he saw the headlights of a car heading east just after the intense flash of light set fire to the road and that the car turned south, seemingly into the Martin driveway. (See Powers report, p. 5.)

IF THIS CAR WAS INDEED THE MARTINS, WHY DID THEY NOT SEE THE FLAMES ON THE ROAD? THEIR CAR WOULD HAVE BEEN ONLY 400 FEET AWAY AT THE TIME.

AND WHY DIDN'T THE MARTINS SEE THE HEADLIGHTS OF CROWDER'S CAR?

To resolve this hard-to-answer question and to explain the apparent conflict of Mr. Martin's statement that he saw an intense flash of light on the trees near the site while standing in his backyard, Powers and others have concluded that the car that Crowder saw was NOT the Martins.

Instead, the "mystery car" that Crowder saw is assumed to have turned south into the drive of the C.A. King residence, approximately 200 feet west of the Martin driveway. It is reasoned that Crowder could easily have erred in thinking the car turned into the Martin drive when in fact the "mystery car" merely turned around in the King drive and headed back toward South Hill.

Powers wrote in his report: "That turned out to be the case. Mr. King, who lived in the house in question, said that at about nine p.m. his wife, who was in the northwest bedroom (from which the scene of the sighting was not visible) saw lights as from a car's headlights turning into their driveway. However, nobody knocked on the door and she assumed that someone had merely turned around in the driveway. If that were the case, then the discrepancy is cleared up."

There are several flaws in this hypothesis. If a "mystery car" had merely turned into the U-shaped drive west of the King house to turn around, Crowder should have seen the headlights or tail-lights emerge in a matter of seconds and would then not have mistaken the car for the Martins.

Furthermore, there are no windows on the west side of the main house (front portion), so that anyone in the northwest portion could not have seen the lights from a car approaching from the west, unless they were looking out the front window.

Finally, in an interview with Mrs. C.A. King, she flatly denies that a car could have turned around in the yard that evening. Here are her own words:

"My daughter was in the front part of the house (facing East Farrell St.) cleaning and I was in the kitchen (back) and she said, 'Momma, I thought I saw lights flash and I thought a car is in the back...I'm sure it was a car pulled in.' But it wasn't, because we went out into the back and there wasn't anyone there.

Thinking perhaps that I had misunderstood, I asked: "So do you think it was a car that turned in?"

Mrs. King replied emphatically: "No, no, it wasn't a car, because we went out and looked and there wasn't a car anywhere because it wouldn't have had time to get out of sight...This is exactly the same thing I told this other man (?) who came by and wanted an interview." (The King house sits on a slight rise and this gives a clear view of traffic heading to/from South Hill.)

Before departing, I again asked: "You are quite sure then that there was no car that pulled into your driveway?" Mrs. King responded: "No, because my daughter and I both went out onto the back porch and she went clean out into the yard and there wasn't a car going or coming."

Illustrating the power of suggestion and the impact of this incident on some of the local residents, Mrs. King said that just before her daughter came in from the front of the house to report seeing a light, Mrs. King herself had seen "a light flashing in the back window." (This would be from the south, from the direction of Martin's house.) Mrs. King added that at the same moment, "I heard something sound exactly like a teeny baby, like an infant crying. Now my daughter had two children but they were both fast asleep." (Note: This is believed to be the first report of a UFO that made sounds like a crying baby!)

Despite this evidence that there was in fact no "mystery car," and that the car that Crowder said he saw was in fact Martin's car, it is possible to resolve most of the apparent conflicts between the accounts of Crowder and Martin, as will be explained shortly.

On at least several occasions, when Crowder has described his visit to Martin on the morning of April 22, Crowder has emphasized that he did not describe the UFO encounter to Martin before Martin volunteered that he had seen a brief intense flash of light.

Martin does not corroborate this. Here are Martin's own words: "He drove down here the next morning...We'd just gotten up, I'd say between 7 and 8 o'clock. Then he asked me did I see anything unusual around here. Well, there's nothing unusual for me. (Martin, a homespun humorist, laughed.) And I told him no, I didn't see anything unusual. And he got to telling me about this thing, and I said, 'Well, Cliff, I'll tell you, being as you mentioned it, I saw a terrible light up there last night'".

Martin explained: "After he brought this up, it made me think that I don't think they was car lights there (that he saw.)"

Which man is telling the truth? In the first of two interviews with Crowder he had volunteered the following comment about Martin: "Well, to *** tell you the truth, Martin is not considered a very reliable citizen... he's just a very ordinary share-cropper farmer...he's not considered a very substantial citizen." (***)

Later, when I asked Martin about Crowder's reputation, Martin replied: "If Mr. Crowder...(chuckles) I can't say the man is not telling the truth because I don't know of any one to have any dealings with him to say he would lie. But if he saw anything, then I saw the light from it."

On several other occasions, Martin leaned over backward to hedge his own claims to those of Crowder. For example: "Like I say, I don't know what it was. If he (Crowder) saw the real object then I saw the light from it."

Martin explained that after arriving home from the hospital, his wife had gone inside while he walked into the back yard. It was then, he said, that "I saw this glare go off there. It was actually quicker than a car light, but I just took it for granted it was somebody headed from that house and many times I've seen them down there come out and the car would shine on the trees there. Well, I didn't pay too much attention to it."

Martin volunteered an interesting comment about the remarkable similarity between the UFO, as described by Crowder, and the large aluminum tank used by Crowder to store liquid fertilizer which sits just outside his office window. "I was thinking some time after this happened, you know, Mr. Crowder's liquid nitrogen tank is sitting there right in front of his office, and I wondered, if he had set there so long and looked at that big tank sitting there...when he comes out he sees a tank sitting in the road."

(Approximately a mile away from Crowder's office is a large steel water tank that sits on four "legs". It also is readily visible when one drives to and from his office along East Farrell St.)

Although Martin says the light he saw was so brightly illuminating the oak tree near the burned spot that he "could have shot a sparrow sitting in the tree," his reactions at the time and his other statements indicate that the incident did not strike him as extrordinary at the time. For example, he did not take the trouble to walk 600 feet north to East Farrell St. to investigate that night. Nor did he stay outside long enough for the police to arrive at the site.

A Trial Hypothesis

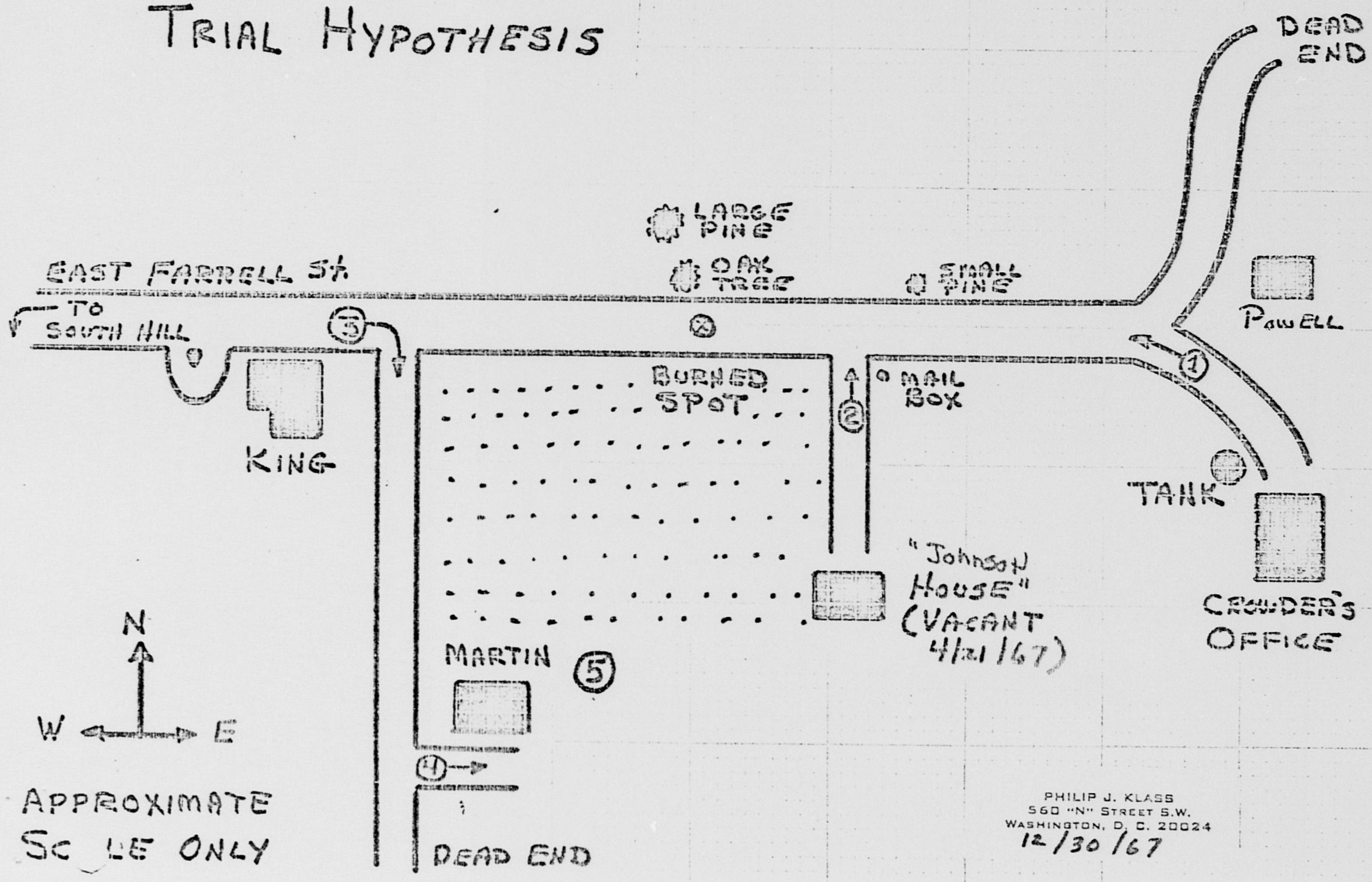
Returning again to the question of how it was possible for Crowder to see the Martin car while neither Mr. nor Mrs. Martin saw the burning road nor the headlights of Crowder's car, this question is readily resolved IF Crowder's car was not on East Farrell St. and IF his car lights were turned off, and if the road was not yet afire!

Referring to Map #2, IF Crowder's car had been parked in the drive-way to the then-vacant house (now occupied by a family named Johnson), and if Crowder's car lights were turned off, he could easily see the Martin car coming down East Farrell St. and see it turn into the Martin drive-way.

IF the incident is a hoax in which Crowder is the perpetrator, he

2# dHUH

TRIAL HYPOTHESIS



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would park his car while he poured flammable fluid on the road and lit it. It would be risky to park on East Farrell St. with the car lights on, for this would illuminate his activities and he might be seen by someone in the King house or the Powell house. Yet to park there without lights would risk a collision if another car suddenly came along.

It would be logical instead for Crowder to park in the driveway of the "Johnson house," knowing that it was then unoccupied, for he could then turn off the car lights. (Note that Crowder says he stopped his car roughly opposite this same driveway when the intense flash of light occurred.)

IF this hypothesis is correct, Crowder would be very alert to any approaching car while carrying out his mission, so he could quickly take cover. If the Martin car came over the rise near the King house while he was pouring the flammable liquid on the road, Crowder certainly would take cover and probably would not resume his activities until he saw the Martin car arrive home, its lights go out and then he would assume that both Mr. & Mrs. Martin (i.e. the car's occupants) had all gone inside.

After lighting the fluid, he would return to his car and wait for the flames to die down. Then, turning on his car lights he would turn west (left) onto East Farrell St. and drive to the police station. As Crowder's car turned onto East Farrell St., his car lights should illuminate the oak and pine trees near the burned spot and it would be this illumination that Martin reported seeing.

Because of a drop-off in elevation and the intervening wheat field, Martin would not be able to see Crowder's car -- only the illumination from its headlights. (This was checked by placing a car at the site and trying to see it from Martin's backyard.)

Since the "Johnson house" was then unoccupied, Martin would not expect there to be any cars coming out of its driveway. Recall Martin's statement: "...many times I've seen them down there come out and the car would shine on the trees there. Well, I didn't pay too much attention to it." Certainly it did not seem sufficiently unusual to prompt Martin to walk 600 feet north to East Farrell St. to investigate.

This trial hypothesis seems to fit quite well. But what of the other possibility, that Crowder was merely the victim of a hoax, not its perpetrator?

Immediately after the incident, Crowder said that he had seen a tank-shaped object sitting on legs. He described it as being metallic and he told me that it reflected light from the car headlights.

But more recently, and later in my interview, Crowder says that he believes the object "was a gas-filled flammable bag" which was designed to disintegrate when illuminated by car headlights. On several occasions he said that he now believes the object was "some psychological experiment that one of the branches of the armed forces is fooling with."

The question arises as to how good are Crowder's powers of observation? Prior to driving to South Hill I had prepared eight 35 mm. slides which were designed to test his powers of observation.

The slides, in color, were taken of an unfamiliar object or an unusual assemblage of objects at night against a darkened sky. The object was illuminated by two photoflood lamps, one on either side of the camera, to crudely simulate the illumination from two auto headlights. One object, for example, was an ancient warrior's helmet from Afghanistan; another was an Old Spice after-shave lotion bottle placed atop a plastic doughtnut. Still another was a highly polished chromium-plated cocktail shaker, not too different in shape from the Crowder UFO, according to his description. In addition, there were two slides showing laboratory plasmas and a picture of an unusual gas laser.

Crowder was told that each slide would be projected for approximately five seconds, corresponding to the time he had said he viewed the UFO. The slide would then be removed and he was to try to describe the object, not to identify it. During the tests, he seldom waited for the allotted five seconds before he was ready to describe what he had seen.

Crowder's descriptions were so accurate and perceptive that it seems quite unlikely that on the night of April 21 he really saw one or two human figures on the road and somehow mistook them for a large metal tank or balloon standing on four legs.

And Crowder insists that this is what he saw. He has modified his story only to the extent of saying that it might have been a large balloon which disintegrated suddenly (to explain its sudden disappearance.)

In recent months, someone has painted "P.V. 67 HOAX" alongside the burned spot on the road. The "P.V." stands for Park View High School, suggesting the sign is the work of local teen-agers. (Crowder himself has a teen-age daughter.)

I asked Crowder if he thought the incident of his UFO encounter could have been a hoax staged by high school students. He replied: "It was too complicated for some high school kids to have built some balloon. That's what I always thought it was (NOTE: Not according to his original description)...It appeared to be the size of the upper half of that nitrogen tank (outside his office) and it had those legs."

"Res Ipsa Loquitur" is a Common Law expression which means "Things Speak For Themselves," or "The Facts Speak For Themselves." This applies to the South Hill case, for there is only one possible explanation which is fully consistent with the known facts:

1. The charred matches found on the burned spot.

2. The fact that asphalt will not support combustion and Crowder's description of the high flames which he says persisted for an extended period.

3. Crowder's attempts to minimize the significance of the charred matches.

4. The delayed discovery of the "padprints" and Crowder's seeming indifference to their discovery.

5. The inconsistency of the size of the "padprints" for an object the size which Crowder reported, which would result in fantastically high pad loading (See Appendix "A"). And the imperfect symmetry of the "padprint" locations.

6. The lack of symmetry of the burned spot itself, a free-form shape which suggests it was formed by the chance flow of a flammable liquid.

7. The fact that Crowder reported seeing the Martin car immediately after the road was set afire, yet neither Mr. nor Mrs. Martin saw the flames or the headlights of Crowder's car.

Res Ipsa Loquitur.

But what of Clifford Crowder's high standing in the community? The truth is that an outside investigator is only able to determine what some of the local citizens now say about his reputation unless an in-depth study were made and no investigator, including this one, has attempted such a study.

It is a matter of record that Clifford Crowder is active in the affairs of his church, the South Hill Methodist Church. Beyond this it is difficult to tell how much of his present reputation is his own and how much of it stems from other relatives in the Crowder "clan".

One brother, J. Foster Crowder, is a member of the Virginia State Highway Dept. Another brother, J.L. Crowder, was a member of the Mecklenburg County Board of Supervisors at the time of the incident and was running for re-election. He was defeated in the primary held several months after the incident. A cousin, Charles W. Crowder, operates an insurance agency which, incidentally, is an advertiser in the local newspaper. Dr.Charles H. Crowder, an M.D., is a more distant relative, I was told.

Every person interviewed spoke highly of Clifford Crowder, and some volunteered a character endorsement without even being asked.

A stranger, meeting Clifford Crowder for the first time under more casual circumstances, almost certainly would give him a good character endorsement. A man of 55, he is soft-spoken, sincere and well-mannered.

Yet it is difficult to predict what any person will, or will not, do. Every bank attempts to hire only people of unquestioned character for positions of financial responsibility. Yet every year sees disclosures of embezzlements by just such people, followed by expressions of shocked surprise by friends and business associates.

So far as can be determined, Clifford Crowder was not and still is not, what could be termed a "UFO Buff."

But UFOs "were in the air" around South Hill. The town is within range of two American Broadcasting Company TV stations: WLEE (Channel 8) in Richmond and WRAL (Channel 5) in Raleigh, N.C. It was approximately six months before the South Hill incident that the new "flying saucer" program, "The Invaders" began on ABC's television network. (Mrs. C.A. King mentioned that some of the neighborhood children watch the show and were therefore quite excited over the Crowder UFO report.)

Probably a more influential program is one by Frank Edwards, called "Strangest of All," which is broadcast every afternoon at 1 o'clock by the South Hill radio station, WJWS. Although the Edwards program does not limit itself exclusively to flying saucers, they are featured prominently along with other supposedly true stories of the occult and supernatural.

The pastor of Crowder's church writes a regular column, entitled "Study Talk", for The South Hill Enterprise. In the April 27, 1967, issue, the first to appear after the incident, pastor William Mayton devoted his entire column to the subject of UFOs. One extract from this column is especially interesting: "The important thing is that one (UFO) made the scene at South Hill and South Hill is now really on the map."

This proved to be a masterful understatement. South Hill was deluged with visitors, thousands of them, immediately after the incident was reported in the local and national press, and for some weeks afterwards.

Crowder himself has achieved national, even international fame. He has received telephone calls from as far away as Australia, from UFO Buffs who want to hear him describe the incident in his own words!

Sgt. Raines says that Crowder has become "fed up" with all this attention and has, on occasion, said: "If I ever again see a UFO, I'll keep it to myself." But Crowder himself gave no indication of this attitude during our interviews. He cooperated fully, showed no reluctance to describe the experience for the Nth time and he displayed no obvious irritation at being questioned. (However, because I had no status as an "official investigator" and therefore had to rely upon his voluntary cooperation, I did not press him on such matters as the charred matches or other discrepancies.)

The Illusion

The South Hill case demonstrates how the illusion that UFOs must be extra-terrestrial spacecraft is promoted in the public mind by the intentional or unintentional omission of vital details in published accounts.

The four charred matches found on the burned spot raised grave suspicions of a hoax among police officers and reporters at the scene, by their own admissions. Harris himself said he almost didn't send his film and story to the Richmond Times-Dispatch and News Leader. Yet when the story did appear in the two newspapers, THERE WAS NOT A SINGLE MENTION OF THE CHARRED MATCHES.

As a result, the Associated Press story on the case which appeared in newspapers around the country made no mention of the charred matches.

It was not until William Powers visited South Hill on April 23 and mentioned this important finding in discussions with the Press that the charred matches were mentioned, somewhat casually, in the few newspapers that carried follow-up stories.

Three men from NICAP Headquarters, one a NASA physicist, visited South Hill on April 22. The results of their investigation were reported in a feature story in the March-April, 1967, issue of "The U.F.O. Investigator." The article mentions the burned spot and the four "padprints," but there is no mention of the charred matches. When APRO reported the case in the May-June, 1967, issue of "The A.P.R.O. Bulletin," there was no mention of the charred matches.

The new Frank Edwards book, "Flying Saucers -- Here and Now," devotes two full pages to the South Hill case. But again, there is no mention of the charred matches. It seems safe to predict that the South Hill case will be described in dozens of other UFO books, as yet unwritten, and that in most, if not all, there will be no mention of the charred matches.

The cause of public enlightenment is not well-served either by premature statements issued by "official investigators." For example:

* "Crowder is telling exactly what he saw and there is no reason to disbelieve him." This statement is attributed to William Powers in the April 27, 1967, issue of The South Hill Enterprise. It is quoted also in the Frank Edwards book.

* "(I) can't think of it being a hoax." Dr. J. Allen Hynek, as quoted in the May 10, 1967, issue of the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Obviously, it is not politic to dismiss the Press with a curt "no comment." But common prudence and past experience suggest that it would be better for an investigator to explain that it is premature to comment on the case until the investigation has been completed and that this will require some additional time.

A DESIGN ANALYSIS OF THE CROWDER UFO:

1. The tank-shaped UFO as described by Crowder was estimated to be approximately 12 ft. in diameter and 15 ft. high (excluding 3 ft. legs.) This would give it a volume of approximately 1,700 cu. ft.

2. The Apollo Lunar Module has somewhat similar overall dimensions, although it is not a simple cylinder. The Lunar Module is approximately 20 ft. high and 14 ft. in diameter. Assuming (for simplicity) that it is a simple cylinder, this would give it a volume of approximately 3,000 cu.ft. (Actual enclosed volume is somewhat less.)

3. The Lunar Module is expected to weigh approximately 30,000 lb. This would give it a specific weight of 10 lb./cu. ft. (By way of comparison, Cork has a specific weight of 15.5 lb./cu. ft.)

4. Assuming that the Crowder UFO had the same specific weight as the Lunar Module (10 lb./cu. ft.), then the Crowder UFO would weigh:

17,000 lb.

5. The Lunar Module has four landing pads, each 37 inches in diameter, giving it a total pad area of 4,280 sq. in.

6. This gives the Lunar Module a pad-loading of 7 psi. on earth.

7. But when landing on the Moon, which has only 1/6th earth gravity, the effective Lunar Module pad-loading will be:

1.2 psi.

8. The four "padprints" allegedly left by the Crowder UFO each measured approximately ½ inch in diameter. The total "padprint" area of the four is then approximately 1 sq. in.

9. This gives the Crowder UFO a pad-loading of approximately: 17,000 psi. (based on assumed specific weight of 10 lb./cu. ft.)

10. Four-lane concrete highways are stressed to withstand loads of 640 psi.

11. Thus, the "designer" of the Crowder UFO, by failing to use larger pads, ended up with a "craft" whose pad loading is 30 times too high to enable it to land on major highways without puncturing the concrete.

PHILIP J. KLASS
HARBOUR SQUARE
560 "N" ST. S. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20024

December 22, 1967

Mr. Clifford Crowder
617 No. Brunswick Ave.
South Hill, Va.

Dear Mr. Crowder:

First I should like to thank you for your kindness in spending so much time with us on your UFO encounter. I know that by this time you must be very weary of the whole matter after having repeated the story so many times.

Would you be kind enough to clarify a couple points for me?

1. After the intense flash of light and after the object had disappeared or disintegrated, and the road was set afire, did you see actual flame or was the spot merely smoking?

2. If you saw flame, approximately how high would you estimate the flame was, i.e. an inch, several inches, a foot?

3. If you saw flame, approximately how long did it last before going out, or until you felt it was safe to drive around and head for the police station?

Again, thanks for your assistance.

Cordially,

Philip Klass

1— The road was flaming after the flash of light

2— At first the flame was about 8 ft high, when I passed the flame was going out I would guess 2-5 inch high.

3— When I first saw the flash I stopped my car at once, went over the wheel so that I could look straight up then the glass, I expected to see something fall back, but didn't see anything but moon + stars

Clouds, I would guess the time as 60 seconds or
more from the time I saw the flash before
I passed the fruning pavement.

Very Truly Yours
O Moulton

THE SOUTH HILL CASE

An Analysis

By Philip J. Klass
Washington D.C.