

UFO FILES:
Black Box UFO Secrets

Wednesday, 11th August, 2006



The History Channel aired another new *UFO Files* episode this week and it was as fascinating and illuminating as any other part of this fantastic series.

Some of the most convincing evidence of UFOs comes from military and civilian pilots. These are well-trained professionals of the utmost regard, not prone to flights of fancy and regularly given the responsibility over the safety of hundreds of lives. If anybody should be listened to when they say they have seen something out of the ordinary, it is these guys. This episode, however did not just tell us stories of UFO sightings by pilots, it played us the actual recordings of conversations between them and Air Traffic Control (ATC).

Not only airline pilot reports were included, but also sightings from NASA astronauts from Gemini 7 in 1965 to STS-114 in 2005.

On November 17th, 1986, Japanese Airlines Flight 1628 (JAL 1628) was flying over Alaska, on a course for Anchorage, where it was to refuel for the final leg of its flight from Paris to Tokyo. At 5:11pm, the pilot, Captain Kenju Terauchi reported three unidentified objects, two thousand feet below his Boeing 747. There were two smaller objects and one larger craft, described as twice the size of an aircraft carrier and shaped like a 'shelled walnut'.

After several minutes, it became clear to the JAL crew that this trio of UFOs were matching the jumbo jet's speed of 600mph and apparently tracking them. Suddenly the craft began performing impossible manoeuvres and the two smaller objects approached so close to the jet that Terauchi said that the glow from them made his face feel warm. The captain requested with the ground controllers that he be allowed to deviate his course to avoid a collision with the UFOs.

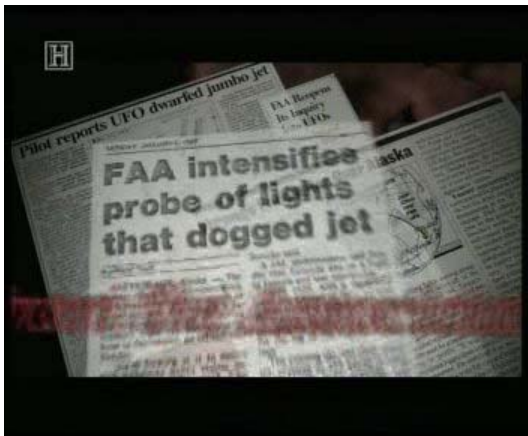


The plane's communications equipment went dead and all contact with ATC was lost. Then the objects rose sharply and vanished. When the radio link was restored, ATC

asked if Terauchi could still see the objects, but he replied that they had gone.

A few minutes later, the military radar operators at Elmendorf Air Force Base (AFB) contacted Anchorage ATC and informed them that the JAL flight was still being trailed by several unknown targets. The Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) requested that the Air Force scramble jets to intercept the unknown objects, but, bizarrely, they failed to do so. Thankfully, JAL 1628 landed safely at Anchorage at 6:20pm.

The incident received tremendous press coverage at the time, but the official FAA report mysteriously disappeared, according to researcher, Stanton Friedman.



A little over two months later, on January 30th, 1987, a US Air Force (USAF) KC-135, out of Elmendorf AFB, was en route to Eielson AFB in Fairbanks, Alaska, when it encountered something similar to the object seen by JAL 1628. The UFO approached to within only forty feet of the aircraft! The pilot of the plane even mentioned the Japanese

Airlines incident, asking if this sort of thing was seen regularly up in Alaska. The ground controller replied that it was rare. The FAA requested a report of the sighting from the pilots.

Less than twenty-four hours later, another sighting occurred over Alaska. Alaska Airlines Flight 53 (AS 53) reported brightly-lit, disc-shaped objects trailing them. Nothing was seen on radar from the ground. The pilot described the objects as suddenly moving away at about a mile per second and quickly disappearing.



Bill Birnes, publisher of *UFO Magazine (US)*, claimed that any pilot that tried to file an official report to the FAA or the military about a UFO sighting might as well hand in their license. The powers that be just do not want to know about these incidents.

Ever since man began powered flight, pilots have reported UFOs, but it was not until 1947, when Kenneth Arnold, a pilot from Boise, Idaho, made his historic sighting in Washington State that the general public became aware of these

incidents. He saw nine, crescent-shaped objects, flying at tremendous speed in an echelon formation. Their motion was described as being like 'saucers skipping across a pond'. The press, with their knack for latching onto useful puns, interpreted this as 'flying saucers'.



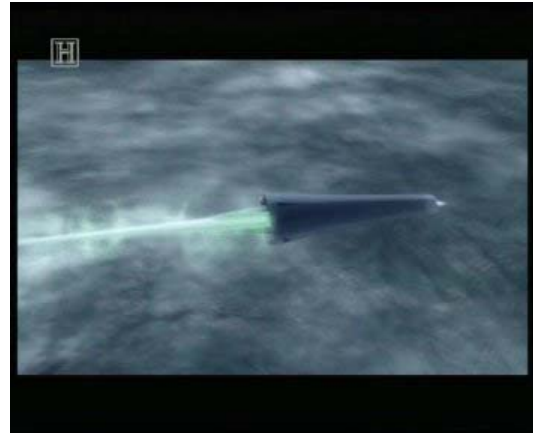
The US military had experimented with flight recorders since World War II, but it was not until 1956, and an airborne collision that killed 128 people, that civilian airlines began using cockpit voice recorders (CVRs).

Since then, there have been many recorded sightings of near-misses with UFOs, objects tracked on radar and other hair-raising incidents.

On November 18th, 1995, Lufthansa Flight 405 (LH 405) was flying over Long Island, New York, at 10:20pm. The pilot reported to Boston ATC that an unknown object had zipped by his jet. He described it as cylindrical, with a white light on the front and a long, green, comet-like tail. The UFO was also seen by British Airways Flight 226 (BA 226) and the pilot described a 'very strong vapour trail that looked more like

smoke' and a very bright light on the front of the object.

The UFO passed as close as two thousand feet above LH 405 and about a mile distant, very close in the busy air corridors of New York. The pilot of the German aircraft even said it 'looked like a UFO'.



Boston ATC contacted 'Giant Killer', the military surveillance facility that monitors US airspace in the north-east. On hearing a description of the reports from the two civilian carriers, Giant Killer suggested that what they had seen was a meteor. Boston passed this along to the airlines, but they were adamant that what they saw was no meteor. Neither the airlines involved nor the FAA have commented on this incident since.

On August 9th, 1997, Swissair Flight 127 (SR 127), a Boeing 747 en route to Zurich, Switzerland, was flying at about twenty-three thousand feet over New York with excellent visibility. Suddenly, an unknown object appeared, heading towards the jumbo jet and passed only two hundred feet or so above them. The pilot, Captain Philip Bobet, immediately got on the horn to

Boston ATC. He described what had passed close to their aircraft as looking like a rocket and incredibly fast, too fast for an aeroplane. Later, he would describe it as a bright, white, cylindrical object, wingless and resembling a shark.



Although classified in the reports as a UFO, the FAA concluded that what Bobet had seen was a weather balloon. Pilot and UFO researcher, Don Berliner, said that the weather balloon explanation holds no water, as pilots know a weather balloon when they see one.



February 28th, 1996, and the US Mid-West was inundated with reports of aeroplane-shaped objects flying around at amazing speeds. Two

flights in particular were noted, those of Air shuttle Flight 5959 and Mesaba Airlines Flight 3179.

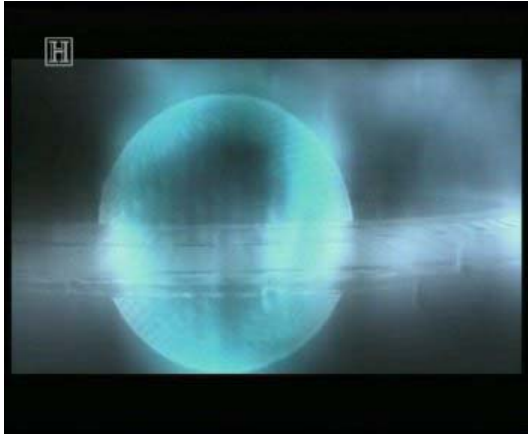
The Air Shuttle flight first reported a pulsating object below them, in between two cloud layers. Cleveland ATC replied that they had nothing on their radar and asked for an altitude from the pilot. He said that the object was perhaps two thousand feet below them and about ten miles distant. The pilot of Mesaba 3179 confirmed the sighting and reported that it appeared to be flickering.



It was suggested by Cleveland ATC that what they were seeing was a landing beacon, reflecting on the clouds. Both flights replied that it was a distinct light source that they were seeing. The Mesaba pilot said that it was flashing red and green lights, while the Air Shuttle pilot described it as looking like a bright, spinning Frisbee.

Flight 5959 descended beneath the object and viewed it from below, confirming that it was not something on the ground, reflecting into the cloud layers. Mesaba 3179 blinked its lights to see if there was any

reaction from the UFO, but there appeared to be none.



What was not covered in the program was that the Mesaba plane reported that one of their passengers had taken photographs of the object and that Cleveland ATC had expressed an interest in seeing them:

Mesaba 3179: Okay, 3179, we got a passenger taking a picture of it right now and, ah, we have a flight attendant who says that, ah, they might have saw the same thing the other night.

Cleveland ATC: Okay, so it's off your right side about two o'clock. I'd sure be interested to see those pictures. Can I, ah, get you an address that you might be able to send a copy, if you get a copy of them?

Mesaba 3179: Yeah, sure. We can do that and actually we made a right turn and he's off about ten to eleven o'clock.

Cleveland ATC: Okay, so he's off your left side. Okay.

Mesaba 3179: Okay, thirty-two-nine. We'll see ya. I wonder if those pictures will show anything.

Mesaba 3179: Air Cleveland, Mesaba 3179.

Cleveland ATC: Mesaba 3179, go ahead.

Mesaba 3179: I just want you to know that I took a picture, as captain, on the left side. I also took [garbled] of some of the stars above, so the lowest light on those pictures. The only single light at the bottom of the picture should be, ah, what you're looking at. And you might be able to get a position with the sky if you want to go that far.

Cleveland ATC: Okay, great. That's a good idea, I appreciate that.

Mesaba 3179: It was an instamatic camera. Good night, sir.

Cleveland ATC: Good night.

The North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) made history on May 25th, 1995, when it became one of the first governmental agencies to officially be involved in a UFO incident.

America West Airlines Flight 564 (HP 564) was cruising from Tampa, Florida to Las Vegas, Nevada. They were thirty-nine thousand feet over Bovina, Texas, when, at 10:25pm, a huge, cigar-shaped craft appeared about nine thousand feet below them.



The pilot, Captain Eugene Tollefson, and co-pilot, John G Waller, reported that it had a bright strobe that moved anti-clockwise around the massive, four to five hundred-foot long craft. It did not show up on radar at all.

Albuquerque ATC contacted Cannon AFB in New Mexico and they could not believe what they were told. Asking what the report meant, the ground controller at Albuquerque said: "I don't know, it's a UFO or something. It's that Roswell crap again!"



Soon afterwards, an F-117a Stealth Fighter, from Holloman AFB, was alerted to the report and the pilot radioed that he had seen something passing by his left side. Apparently,

this time, it was picked up on radar, as ground control confirmed this. Silhouetted against flashes of lightning, HP 564 saw the UFO pass very close to their aeroplane and described it as an 'eerie sight'. The craft then disappeared from view.

Albuquerque ATC contacted NORAD's Western Headquarters at McChord AFB in Washington State. The lady at NORAD claimed that they had nothing in the area that she knew about. The Albuquerque controller said that it was a 'definite UFO' and was 'right out of *The X-Files*'. All the lady could do to voice her amazement was to curse into the microphone about 'religious poo' – you get my drift.



Thirteen minutes later, she was back on the line to Albuquerque ATC, confirming that they had an unknown target in that area and had been tracking it for several minutes. NORAD later denied anything had been detected.

One of the most famous UFO cases of recent times is that of the New Zealand sighting of the night of December 31st, 1978, when a television camera crew captured

several unknown objects over the ocean. Ten days earlier, an aircraft had reported seeing strange lights over New Zealand's South Island. The objects had also been detected by Wellington ATC.

Channel 10 television despatched reporter, Quentin Fogarty and a camera crew to try and film the UFOs, if they appeared again. They did.



At around midnight, over the town of Kaikoura, what they captured on film was soon beamed all around the world. Soon after take-off from Blenheim Airport in Christchurch, Fogarty reported that they could see two very bright objects on their starboard side. They kept pace with the aircraft and were 'much brighter than any of the other stars in the sky'. Again, the sighting was confirmed by ground radar.



The pilot, Captain Bill Startup, reported that one of the objects began ahead of him, then moved at an incredible speed down the left-hand side of his aircraft. He banked left, in an attempt to keep the UFO in sight. Wellington ATC informed him that another target was on his left side and was closing in on his position. Fogarty recorded that he could see the object and that it flashed very bright white and green lights. Captain Startup said he could see that the UFO had an array of bright lights, pulsing in rapid succession. Then, somehow, the object began to increase to double its size. This was also confirmed by Wellington ATC before it returned to its previous appearance, thirty-six seconds later.



Fogarty reported that two more objects appeared, making three UFOs in their vicinity. They were now off the plane's right wing and had been following them for about ten minutes. Quentin was clearly shaken by what he was seeing and suggested that they had enough film and that they should return to Christchurch.

In 1979, Bruce Maccabee received a copy of the 16mm film from the television network and the complete, unedited footage has never been made publicly available before.



As we all know, Russian and American spacemen and women have reported UFOs in Earth orbit.

In 1965, Gemini 7, with astronauts Frank Borman and James Lovell aboard, was in orbit above Hawaii when both men reported a 'bogey' above their capsule. NASA maintained that what they saw was the Titan booster, but Lovell replied that he could see the booster as well as several other objects.

On September 13th, 1966, Pete Conrad and Richard Gordon, aboard

Gemini 11, photographed an unknown object outside their capsule. It was described as metallic and revolving at one revolution per second. Three images were snapped before the object dropped down in front of them and vanished.



NORAD suggested that it was a booster from a Russian satellite, but NASA rejected this hypothesis and the Gemini 11 case is the only one which the American space agency considers to be unidentified.

As the Apollo program progressed, it became clear that 'somebody' was taking an interest in our tiny ships hurtling towards the Moon. Each mission reported unknown objects, but for many years refused to talk about them, until Buzz Aldrin's startling revelations this year (see *Apollo 11: The Untold Story*).

Apollo 12 commander, Pete Conrad reported a tumbling object that had been following them for more than a day.

UFO sightings continued during the space shuttle era. One controversial incident occurred during STS-29 in March of 1989. Shuttle pilot, John

Blaha, was picked up by a Maryland ham radio operator as saying: "Houston, this is Discovery. We still have the alien spacecraft under observance." (It has been suggested that instead of 'under observance', Blaha said, 'on VFR', meaning Visual Flight Rules i.e. visible to the naked eye.)



NASA has never confirmed or denied whether this transmission is genuine.

For decades, NASA astronauts have had two communications channels available to them, a traditional radio channel, open to all and sundry, and an alternative channel, sometimes called the 'biological or medical channel' that could be used for private or medical conversations. UFO researcher, David Sereda, referred to this as 'an encrypted Department of Defence channel', but it is possible, some might say likely, that, since the more 'innocent' days of space exploration ended, an encrypted channel would be available to shuttle crews. Whatever the designation of this alternative channel, it does appear that NASA crews *do* have the ability to switch

channels to converse with the ground, unheard by the public.

In October, 1995, STS-73 mission specialist reported to Houston: "We have an unidentified flying object." The exchange was filmed, yet audio drops out immediately after her initial statement, yet it seems that she continues talking, suggesting that the frequency was switched so that the viewing public could not hear what was said.



Only last year, on August 6th, 2005, startling footage of a UFO was captured by mission STS-114. As *Discovery* orbited at eighteen thousand miles per hour, an object rushes into frame, moves in an arc and disappears back out of frame. What kind of natural phenomenon, such as meteors or debris, can change course in this manner? A still image cannot do justice to this amazing piece of footage, so go to Jeff Challender's Project P.R.O.V.E. website and see it in motion - <http://www.projectprove.com/Arts/114u/114u.php>

Yet again, *UFO Files* hits it out of the ballpark, with another excellent episode. Any sceptic can say that

Joe Bloggs seeing a UFO while out walking his dog was really seeing swamp gas or whatever, but when reports come from trained professionals such as airline pilots, ATC personnel and astronauts, you *have* to take them seriously. This program did that, presenting the facts (because that is what they were – actual, recorded facts) without bias and bringing to the public another facet of this fascinating UFO subject.

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