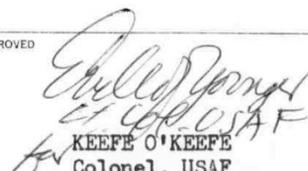


UNITED STATES AIR FORCE THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS REPORT OF INVESTIGATION		UNCLASSIFIED 24-168	DATE 28 March 1952
TITLE Photograph of an Unidentified Aerial Object Taken by Mr. , Riverside, California		REPORT MADE BY JESSE E. McSWAIN	
		REPORT MADE AT DO #18, Maywood, California	
		PERIOD 21, 22 & 24 March 1952	
		OFFICE OF ORIGIN DO #18, Maywood, California	
		STATUS CLOSED	
CHARACTER SPECIAL INQUIRY			
REFERENCE None, this is an initial report.			
SYNOPSIS <p>Investigation requested by CG, AMC, and predicated upon publication of photograph of alleged flying saucer taken by Riverside, Calif. TWX from CG, AMC, advised photo interpretation discloses belief object in photo is automobile hub-cap but findings not conclusive. TWX requested authenticity of photo be determined. Appointment made with for 22 Mar 52 not kept by because of his "imperative" need to be in Phoenix. Inquiry disclosed of questioned reliability and integrity and has reputation of being prankster. Mr. , person who sold photograph to newspapers, interviewed and declared photograph authentic in his opinion. Mr. reported personal sighting of numerous flying saucers over Riverside, California. Mr. contacted 24 March 1952 and consented to interview at March AFB. immediately declared photograph "phony"; was originally started as a gag, and mushroomed beyond his control. He reported object in photograph is tire cover from about 1937 Ford automobile and was buried at the site where photograph taken. Exact location presently unknown to .</p>			
DISTRIBUTION CG, AMC (Action Cys) 2 DO #5 2 Hqs OSI 2 File 2	ACTION COPY FORWARDED TO Commanding General Air Materiel Command Wright-Patterson AFB Ohio APPROVED  KEEPE O'KEEFE Colonel, USAF District Commander		FILE STAMP UNCLASSIFIED
Unauthorized disclosure of information contained in this report will be considered to be a violation of AFR-205-1.			

DETAILS:

[REDACTED] UNCLASSIFIED

1. This investigation was requested by the Commanding General, Air Materiel Command, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, and is predicated upon the publication in newspapers of a photograph of an alleged flying saucer. By TWX, the Commanding General of AMC requested that Mr. [REDACTED], Riverside, California, be contacted to determine the authenticity of the photograph reportedly taken by him. The TWX is quoted as follows:

"THE ATIC HAS A PHOTOGRAPH OF AN UNIDENTIFIED AERIAL OBJECT TAKEN BY A MR. [REDACTED] OF RIVERSIDE, CALIF. THE PHOTO WAS SOLD TO THE LOS ANGELES BUREAU OF THE ACME NEWS PICTURE, INC. THE NUMBERED IDENTIFICATION OF THE PHOTO IS LA 908C. PHOTO INTERPRETATION INDICATES OBJECT MAY BE AUTOMOBILE HUB-CAP, HOWEVER, DUE TO POOR DEFINITION IN UR PHOTO THIS ANALYSIS IS NOT CONCLUSIVE. REQUEST THAT MR. [REDACTED] BE CONTACTED AND DETAILS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES CONCERNING THE PHOTO BE OBTAINED. IF HE CANNOT BE LOCATED IN RIVERSIDE, CALIF., HE CAN BE LOCATED THROUGH ACME NEWS PICTURES, INC., IN LOS ANGELES. PROOF OF AUTHENTICITY OF THE PHOTO IS URGENTLY NEEDED. IN REPLY CITE PROJECT BLUEBOOK."

AT RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

2. Mr. [REDACTED], Riverside, California, was contacted telephonically in the late afternoon of 21 March 1952. Mr. [REDACTED] advised he could not make an appointment for interview on 21 March 1952 but would be available for interview at 0900 hours, 22 March 1952. He requested the interview be held at the March AFB Detachment OSI.

3. At 0850 hours, 22 March 1952, the writer stationed himself at the March AFB gate to meet Mr. MARQUAND. The sentry on duty delivered a note addressed to the writer and advised it had been delivered to him at about 0845 hours, 22 March 1952. The note is quoted:

"Mr. McSwain
OSI

Dear Sir -

I found it imperative to be in Phoenix for a few days and had to leave early this morning - I will contact you upon my return -

The camera used in the Photograph under discussion was Rolleicord, Super XX film, all the rest of the story can be obtained from the clipping in the Riverside Press - it's the straight story -

Respectfully

4. Mr. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Way, Riverside, and Mr. [REDACTED], were interviewed and advised

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] UNCLASSIFIED
they had known [REDACTED] up until recent years. They declared he has the reputation of being a prankster and practical joker and would be capable of performing a hoax and carrying it through to the ultimate end. Neither knew of any definite information concerning the photograph in question and were unable to furnish any information concerning [REDACTED]'s photographic ability or background. Both declared him to be of questionable reliability and integrity.

AT LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

5. This phase of the investigation was conducted by Special Agent FRED T. RAGSDALE, DC #18, Maywood, California.

6. The Acme News Pictures, Los Angeles, California, was contacted and advised they had purchased photograph LA 908C from Mr. [REDACTED] Riverside, California. Acme advised Mr. [REDACTED] is a "stringer", one who gets pictures and sells them.

AT RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

7. Mr. [REDACTED], commercial photographer, [REDACTED], Riverside, was interviewed and advised he had sold the photograph of the flying saucer which had been taken by [REDACTED]. Mr. [REDACTED] related that he had originally sold [REDACTED] the camera used and had printed the picture which appeared in the newspapers. He said that although [REDACTED] normally processed his films at [REDACTED] photo shop, the film in question had been processed through a commercial film finishing company. [REDACTED] declared that [REDACTED] had been very hesitant about bringing the negative to him because he, [REDACTED], did have the reputation of being a prankster and was afraid no one would believe that the photograph was not a hoax. He continued that [REDACTED] was extremely reluctant about any publicity concerning the photograph but finally, after being persuaded by [REDACTED], consented to its publication. [REDACTED] said he had studied the photograph and negative from every conceivable photographic standpoint, and is absolutely convinced the photograph had not been retouched and is not a fraud or hoax. He said some persons viewing the photo had questioned whether or not the object was a hub-cap from an automobile but their fears were dispelled when a laboratory in Riverside examined the dimensions and curvature of the object and declared it was not an automobile hub-cap. [REDACTED] averred he had checked the negative and the size of the object was in complete conformity with the focal length of the lens used in making the photograph. [REDACTED] swore the negative had not been retouched in any way when he made the prints from it and it was an actual photograph.

8. On 22 March 1952, a TWX was sent to the Commanding General, Air Materiel Command, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, with information copy to the District Commander, 5th District OSI. The TWX advised the action and information addressee of the facts as developed at that time.

9. On 24 March 1952, at 1000 hours, a telephone call was placed to the residence of Mr. [REDACTED]. The writer inquired of the individual answering the phone if [REDACTED], [REDACTED] nickname, was at home. The answering party

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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advised he was and called him to the telephone. The writer identified himself to Mr. [REDACTED] and requested permission to come to his home to talk to him. Mr. [REDACTED] asked if it was imperative that the writer speak to him. Advised that it was imperative from the viewpoint of the U.S. Air Force, Mr. [REDACTED] consented to the interview and promised to be at the March AFB gate at 1100 hours.

AT MARCH AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

10. Mr. [REDACTED], was interviewed in the March AFB Detachment OSI Office. When informed of the exact nature of the inquiry being made, Mr. [REDACTED] stated, "There's no sense in beating around the bush. The photograph is a phony." He then advised that he and three other young men from Riverside had been on the Palms to Pines Highway from Hemet, California, to Palm Springs, California. At a point approximately 15 or 20 miles east of the Idyllwild turn-off they had found the spare tire cover from about a 1937 Ford automobile. One of the individuals present with him had thrown the tire cover into the air and he, [REDACTED], had photographed it. He said he then decided to pull a gag on a friend of his, [REDACTED], by telling him he had actually photographed a flying saucer. In order to make his story more realistic, he had his film processed by a commercial film developing company, and then took the negative to [REDACTED]. He said [REDACTED] checked the negative thoroughly to assure himself it was not a hoax and then sold it to the Acme News Picture firm. Mr. [REDACTED] said he was sorry about it almost immediately but it mushroomed so fast that it was soon beyond his control. He averred that Mr. [REDACTED] does not even now know that the photograph is a hoax but still believes it is actually a flying saucer.

11. Mr. [REDACTED] stated he and his companions had buried the tire cover at the spot where they took the photograph. He said he does not now know the exact location of the site of the photograph and might not be able to find it. He declared he is extremely sorry the U.S. Air Force became involved in the matter and did not want to create any disturbance at all. For that reason, he said, he felt telling the truth to the Air Force investigators was the only thing for him to do. He said he would like to undo any damage that it might have caused. He reported the negative has been sent to Life magazine and, upon its return to him, will be submitted to the OSI if it is desired.

12. On 24 March 1952, a TWX was sent to the Commanding General, AMC, advising him that the photograph taken by [REDACTED] is not an authentic photograph of a flying saucer.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]