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It was a typical English night in Kent. The 406th Fighter Interceptor Wing had committed to Met sector (RAF) to have F-86D's stand alert as an operational requirement. The date was May 20, 1957, and our squadrons were considered combat qualified when they committed us to the operational requirement. My recollection seems to indicate that this function was rotated about England between the various RAF and USAF units. This particular night the 514th Fighter Interceptor had the alert duty. Two F-86D's were on 5 minute alert at the end of the runway at RAF Station Manston awaiting the signal to scramble. The hour was late as memory serves me and the weather was IFR. Looking back at the log book, a total of 30 minutes of Night Weather was logged on a 1 hour and 15 minute flight. The details such as exactly what hour the scramble occurred or what we were doing just prior to scramble totally escapes me, however, the Auxiliary Power Units (APU) were on and the power was transmitted to the aircraft. We were ready for an immediate scramble and eager for the flight time.

I can remember the call to scramble quite clearly, however, I cannot remember specifics such as the actual vector to turn to after take off. We were airborne well within the 5 minutes allotted to us and basically scrambled to about flight level 310. Our vector took us out over the North Sea just east of East Anglia. Normally, ~~the other member of the set~~ of two fighters would be the lead ship. I can only suggest that I was leading due to an in place turn of some sort. I remember in quite specific terms talking as lead ship to the GCI site (who's call sign I cannot recall). I was advised of the situation quite clearly. The initial briefing indicated that the ground was observing for a considerable time a blip that was orbiting the East Anglia area. There was very little movement and from my conversation with the GCI all the normal procedures of checking with all the controlling agencies revealed that this was an unidentified flying object with very unusual flight patterns. In the initial briefing it was suggested to us that the bogey actually was motionless for long intervals.

The instructions came to go "gate" to expedite the intercept. Gate was the term used to use maximum power (in the case of the F-86D that meant full afterburner) and to proceed to an Initial Point at about 32,000 feet. By this time my radar was on and I was looking prematurely for the bogey. The instructions came to report any visual observations, to which I replied "I'm in the soup and it is impossible to see anything!" The weather was probably high alto stratus, but between being over the North Sea and in the weather, no frame of reference was available. i.e. no stars, no lights, no silhouettes, in short nothing. GCI continued the vectoring and the dialogue describing the strange antics of the UFO.

The exact turns and maneuvers they gave me were all predicated to reach some theoretical point for a lead collision course type rocket release. I can remember reaching the level off and requesting to come out of afterburner only to be told to stay in afterburner. It wasn't very much later that I noticed my indicated mach number was about .92. This is about as fast as the F-86D could go straight and level.

Then the order came to fire a full salvo of rockets at the UFO. I was only a Lieutenant and very much aware of the gravity of the situation. To be quite candid I almost shit my pants! At any rate I had my hands full trying to fly, search for bogeys, and now selecting a hot load on the switches. I asked for authentication of the order to fire, and I received it. This further complicated my difficulty as the matrix of letters and numbers to find the correct authentication was on a piece of printed paper about 5 by 8 inches, with the print not much bigger than normal type. It was totally black, and the lights were down for night flying. I used my flashlight, still trying to fly and watch my radar. To put it quite candidly I felt very much like a one legged man in an ass kicking contest.

The authentication was valid, and I selected 24 rockets to salvo. I wasn't paying too much attention to ~~the~~ but I clearly remember him giving a "Roger" to all the transmissions. I can only suppose he was as busy as I was.

① DELETED TO PROTECT WITNESSES'  
IDENTITY

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The final turn was given, and instructions were give to look 30 degrees to the Port for my bogey. I did not have a hard time at all. There it was exactly where I was told it would be at 30 degrees and at 15 miles. The blip was burning a hole in the radar with its incredible intensity. It was similar to a blip I had received from B-52's and seemed to be a magnet of light. These things I remember very clearly. I ran the range gate marker over the blip, and the jizzle band faded as the marker super imposed over the blip. I had a lock on that had the proportions of a flying aircraft carrier. By that I mean the return on the radar was so strong that it could not be overlooked by the fire control system on the F-86D. I use in comparison other fighter aircraft and airliners. The airliner is easy to get a lock on while the fighter not being a good return is very difficult and, on that type aircraft, a lock on was only possible under 10 miles. The larger the airplane the easier the lock on. This blip almost locked itself. I cannot explain to the lay person exactly what I mean, save to say that it was the best target I could ever remember locking on to. I had locked on in just a few seconds, and I locked on exactly 15 miles which was the maximum range for lock on. I called to the GCI "Judy", which signified that I would take all further steering information from my radar computer.

Let me explain visually what I saw on my radar screen. Once lock on is accomplished, two circles of light appear on the screen. One was a complete circle in the center of the radar screen about an inch in diameter, the other about 3 inches in diameter with a half inch segment darkened to indicate the overtake speed. If the dark segment was at 12 o'clock it meant 0 overtake. If the segment was at 6 o'clock, then we had about 600 knots of overtake. The maximum overtake was in the 9 o'clock position. The overtake I had on this particular intercept was in the 7 or 8 o'clock position which indicate close to 800 knot overtake. I was really hauling coals. To complete the description of the radar scope there were two other significant pieces of data displayed. One is the horizontal indicator which gave a gyro stabilized reference to the horizon enabling the pilot to not have to refer to his flight instruments. The second is a steering dot, which was nothing more than computer data indicating which way the aircraft should fly to accomplish the intercept. i.e. if the dot was above the center, the stick should be pulled back to climb, if it was to the right then turn to the right to center the dot. The idea was to have the dot centered in the smaller circle.

A normal intercept proceeds from the lock on phase with the constant maneuvering to center the dot. When the aircraft is in a position to accomplish its intercept, the dot would be centered. The outer circle will start to shrink at 20 seconds from rocket release. The circle in the center shrinks to about a quarter inch, and keeping the dot centered requires small rapid maneuvers. At about the time the outer circle reaches three quarters of an inch in diameter a small quarter inch line appears in lieu of the inner circle. This is the signal to pull the trigger for rocket release, and to make only up and down corrections as the computer calculates the point of rocket release for the azimuth. With the trigger pulled and the switches set, the rockets are released by the computer.

Now back to the intercept of the UFO. As I said I had an overtake of 800 knots and my radar was rock stable. The dot was centered and only the slightest corrections were necessary. This was a very fast intercept and the circle started to shrink. I called "20 seconds" and the GCI indicated he was standing by. The overtake was still indicating in the 7 or 8 o'clock position. At about 10 seconds to go, I noticed that the overtake position was changing its position. It moved rapidly to the 6 o'clock then 3 o'clock then 12 o'clock and finally rested about the 11 o'clock position. This indicated a negative overtake of 200 knots (the maximum negative overtake displayed). There was no way of knowing of what the actual speed of the UFO was as he could be traveling at very high mach numbers and I would only see the 200 knot negative overtake. The circle, which was down to about an inch and a half in diameter, started to open up rapidly. Within seconds it was back to 3 inches in diameter, and the blip was visible in the blackened jizzle band moving up the scope. This meant that it was going away from me. I reported this to the GCI site and they replied by asking "Do you have a Tally Ho?" I replied that I was still in the soup and could see nothing. By this time the UFO had broke lock and I

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saw him leaving my 30 mile range. Again I reported that he was gone only to be told that he was now off their scope as well.

With the loss of the blip off their scope the mission was over. We were vectored back to home plate (Manston) and secured our switches. My last instructions were that they would contact me on the ground by land line.

Back in the alert tent I talked to Met sector. They advised me that the blip had gone off the scope in two sweeps at the GCI site and that they had instructions to tell me that the mission was considered classified. They also advised me that I would be contacted by some investigator. It was the next day before anyone showed up.

I had not the foggiest idea what had actually occurred, nor would anyone explain anything to me. In the squadron operations area, one of the sergeants came to me and brought me in to the hall way around the side of the pilots briefing room. He approached a civilian, who appeared from nowhere. The civilian looked like a well dressed IBM salesman, with a dark blue trenchcoat. (I can not remember his facial features, only to say he was in his 30's or early forties). He immediately jumped into asking questions about the previous days mission. I got the impression that he operated out of the states, but I don't know for sure. After my debriefing of the events he advised me that this would be considered highly classified and that I should not discuss it with anybody not even my commander. He threatened me with a national security breach if I breathed a word about it to anyone. He disappeared without so much as a good bye and that was that, as far as I was concerned. I was significantly impressed by the action of the cloak and dagger people and I have not spoke of this to anyone until the recent years.

My impression was that whatever the aircraft (or spacecraft) was it must have been traveling in 2 digit mach numbers to have done what I had witnessed. Perhaps the cloak of secrecy can be lifted in this day of enlightenment and all of us can have all the facts. This is my account to the best of my memory.