

# COMMERCIAL JET CREW SIGHTS UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT — Part 1

*Richard F. Haines*

**C**ASE SUMMARY: Flight XXX of a major United States air carrier was flying from San Francisco to John F. Kennedy airport in New York. At 4.45 p.m. local time the wide body L1011 aircraft was at 37,000 feet altitude under autopilot control. Its indicated airspeed was 275 knots, the true airspeed was 490 knots and its actual (calculated) ground speed was 540 knots which indicates the presence of a 50 knot tail wind.

Upon reaching a point about 80 n. miles from a radio navigation beacon named "Badger" (BAE) which is near Milwaukee, on airway J-34, the sky ahead and above was clear, calm, and blue. Below the aircraft was a fairly continuous cloud deck which obscured part of the lake's surface. The shore line of Michigan was clearly visible except for some haze. The flight crew was relaxing while also keeping watch outside the aircraft. Figure 1 shows the captain sitting almost as he said he sat when he first caught sight of the smooth, silvery disc ahead and to the upper side of his aircraft's flightpath. (See pages 4/5 for Figs. 1-4).

Captain P.S. noticed the apparently round metallic-appearing object suddenly, very near where he was looking. He remarked that it "...splashed into view full size." It was like it "...tore through the atmosphere ... like the atmosphere opened up."<sup>1</sup>

The shiny disc seemed to shift toward the lower right slightly as the pilot sat forward about 12 inches in his seat to get a better look. A photograph taken from the first officer's eye position of the captain in this second viewing position is shown in Figure 2. As the object continued to move more rapidly to the left downward along a smooth arcing path, he leaned farther forward yet until his chin was within about eight inches from the glare shield (shown in Figure 3) with his hands touching the glare shield. When in this viewing position he saw the object roll (relative to its path of motion) so that it could be seen from the side. It appeared to be about ten times wider than thick. Six evenly spaced, jet black, round "portholes" were

Date of Sighting: July 4, 1981
Time of Sighting: 20.45 GMT (16.45 CDST)
Location of Sighting: South central Lake Michigan
Duration of Sighting: Approx. 5 seconds
Number of UFOs: one
Number of Witnesses: two

seen along its edge. Then as it continued to pass the aircraft to the left, the captain leaned so far forward that his right cheek touched the top of the glare shield; he was looking 90° to the left from straight ahead at this point. Then an extremely bright reflection of sunlight seemed to come from the top left-hand end of the flattened disc. It lasted only a fraction of a second as the object slid out of sight behind the window post.

Quickly the captain leaned back in his seat again moving his head through an approximate distance of 20 inches and turning farther to his left to see the object almost centered in his left quarter window. Figure 4 shows the captain's head and body position at this point in the sighting. He is seen pointing to the approximate location where the object disappeared from view, apparently travelling radially away from the aircraft (perhaps) in a shallow climb.

As soon as the object disappeared the captain turned toward the first officer, who was already turned to his extreme left to talk with the flight engineer, and said, "Did you just see anything?" The first officer replied, "Yes, a very bright light flash."<sup>2</sup> The flight engineer did not see the object.

## Additional Facts

The flight leg on which the aircraft was flying during this sighting was between BAE (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) and SVM "Salem" near Detroit, Michigan. A copy of the computerized flight plan for this flight is

A NASA scientist, Dr. Haines has contributed several articles to the pages of *Flying Saucer Review*, and we are pleased to add to the list this excellent report of a recent observation from a commercial aircraft over the United States. Dr. Haines, who is a member of the Center for UFO Studies founded by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, writes that he has recently concluded spectral analyses of the Valentich (Australian pilot missing with his aircraft after UFO encounter) voice-ATC tape. A paper on this is due to appear in *The Journal of UFO Studies*. His published works include his book *Observing UFOs*, and an anthology, edited by him, entitled *UFO Phenomena and the Behavioral Scientist*.

EDITOR



**Figure 1: Captain P.S. in the cockpit of the L1011 jet airliner as he sat during the first second of the sighting. (t = 0 sec.)**



**Figure 2: The captain leans part-way forward to get a better view of the object. (t = 1.3 sec.)**

included as Appendix A\* with an explanation of the abbreviations. The author also obtained from the captain a U.S. High Altitude Chart (US/HI) 1 of the region, the relevant portion of which is included as Appendix B.‡ Referring to this chart it may be noted that check points Adale and Haste are not listed on the flight plan while check point Alpha is. The estimated time of arrival (ETA) at BAE was 20.33 GMT and the aircraft actually arrived there at 20.36 GMT.

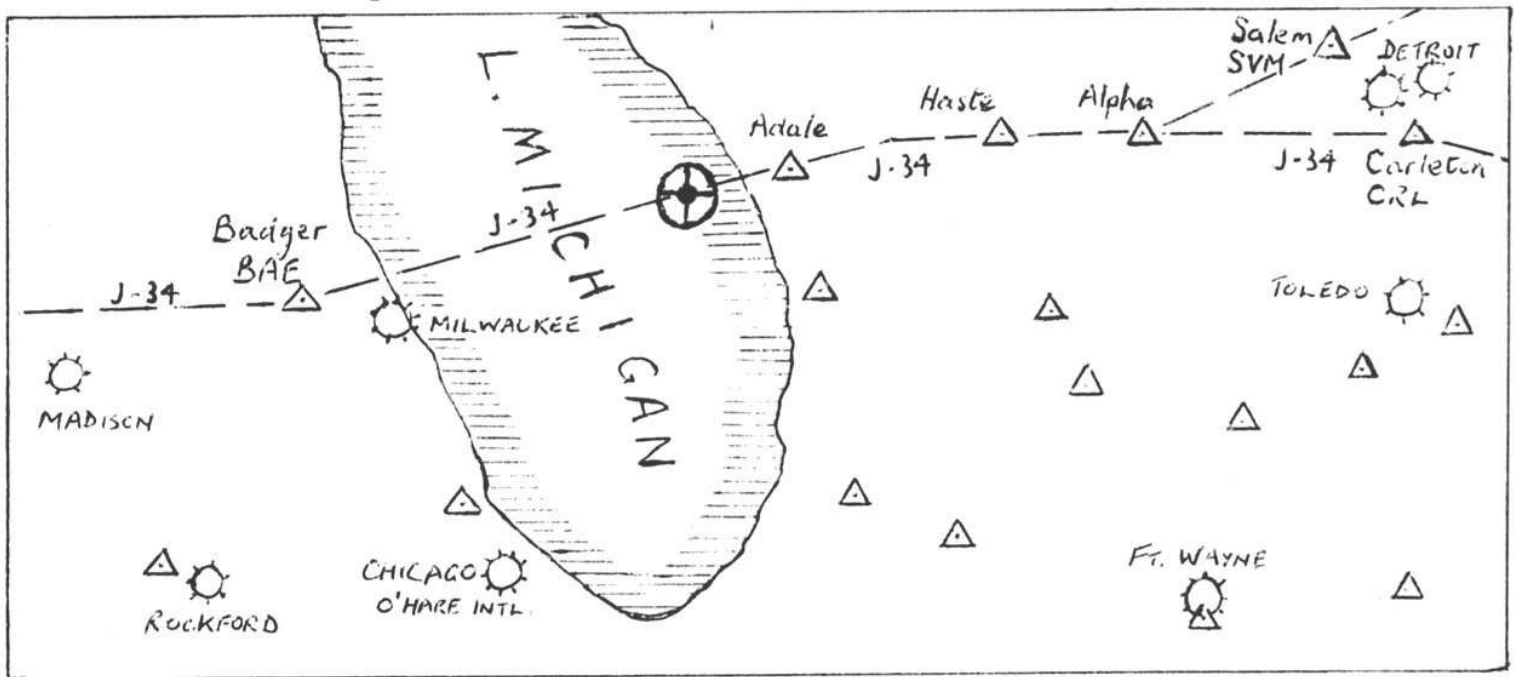
Captain P.S. said that the sighting took place almost exactly nine minutes past the BAE check point at 20.45 GMT. Flying at 540 knots ground speed the aircraft would have been 80 n. miles from BAE on a heading of 096° or approaching the Michigan state coastline near Holland, Michigan.

Weather details were obtained from three sources as described below. The captain remembered flying well above a heavy undercast in the Evanston, Illinois area to approximately half-way across Lake Michigan where the clouds thinned to permit him to see the lake's surface. When the sighting occurred he could see the Michigan coastline clearly except for some haze in all directions. There was no turbulence noted.

\* Too complicated to be set up in a box in our pages. We understand from Dr. Haines that, if required, details may be obtained from him at 325 Langton Avenue, Los Altos, California 94022, U.S.A. [International Reply coupons should be sent — EDITOR.]

‡ Too large for our pages. We have extracted the relative details for our sketch map, but understand that a Xerox copy of the relative section may be obtained from the author at the address as in the previous footnote.

**Route J-34, beacons and airfields Southern Lake Michigan area (from original Appendix B of manuscript).  
Extracted from TWA U.S. High Altitude Chart. The cross and circle mark area where sighting was made.**





**Figure 3: The captain leans far forward, with object at position 3 shown in Figure 7 — in part 2 of this article. (t = 2.2 sec.)**

The second source of basic weather information comes from the airline's flight plan in the 14th column labelled TP/W for temperature [degrees below zero (F)] and winds (knots). It indicates  $-51^{\circ}\text{F}$  air temperature at 37,000 feet altitude and a tail wind of about 50 knots. The third source of weather information was obtained from CUFOS.<sup>3</sup> Because of its completeness, this report is included as Appendix C. (See end of this article).

The flight plan showed that the Tropopause Height (TH) in column 5 showed a 4,000 foot altitude gradient within the 173 miles separating BAE from Alpha. Pilots try to stay above or well below this height because of the possible presence of clear air turbulence at TH. One other significance the TH has is that clouds normally do not form above it. The amount of water vapour that air can contain decreases exponentially with falling temperature. Thus, cooling (at high altitudes) condenses out water vapour and prevents the formation of clouds. While the aircraft was flying only 1,000 feet below TH no turbulence was encountered nor did the autopilot disconnect at any time between BAE and SVM, according to the captain.

*[Part 2 of this report will appear in the next issue of Flying Saucer Review — ED].*

#### Notes

1. This description was made on July 30, 1981, in the Sunnyvale, California office of Al Reed, the professional artist and MUFON field investigator who did an outstanding job reconstructing the basic shape and details of the object.
2. The first officer had been sitting facing the captain with his head turned to the rear of the cockpit talking with the flight engineer during about the first two seconds of the sighting. When the captain exclaimed, "What's that?" the first officer turned to the right in time to see the bright flash of light from the object. Apparently, he did not see



**Figure 4: The captain sitting part-way back with the object at position 6 shown in Figure 7. (t = 5 sec.)**

the object after this time because the captain's head was in the way.

3. This weather analysis was performed by Steven Toci for the Center for UFO Studies, Evanston, Illinois.

**Appendix A: See footnote under \*.**  
**Appendix B: See footnote under ‡.**

#### **Appendix C: A description of the weather over Southern Lake Michigan, July 4, 1981**

Surface conditions at 4.00 p.m.: The temperatures around Southern Lake Michigan ranged from the low 70s to the low 80s Fahrenheit. Milwaukee reported 76, O'Hare 83, South Bend 70, Benton Harbor 74 and Muskegon 80.

Cloud cover extended across the southern part of the lake. Overcast skies were reported at Benton harbor, South Bend, and Kalamazoo, with cloud deck bases of 3,000 ft., 10,000 ft. and 8,000 ft. respectively. South Bend reported scattered clouds at 1,900 ft. in addition. Although the thickest clouds were reported in Indiana and Michigan, scattered clouds at 10,000 ft. and 12,000 ft. and also some high thin cirrus were reported at Milwaukee, Ohio and Muskegon. So the cloud picture seems to be of a high, thin layer and a scattering of middle clouds (10,000 ft.) covering all of Southern Lake Michigan, with an overcast layer below that near Indiana and far south western Michigan. The boundary of the more significant clouds can be seen over the lake in the satellite view. Judging from the satellite shot, the boundary appears to be close to the co-ordinates of the sighting.

Winds around Southern Lake Michigan were generally from the east on the western shore and westerly on the eastern shore.

An inversion layer could have been set up over the lake due partly to the cooling of the air at the surface by the lake water, and partly to warming further up. The warming aloft would have been caused by air sinking out over the lake in response to the divergent winds at the shoreline.



Surface visibilities at shoreline station were good on the western shore, but poorer on the eastern shore south of Muskegon. South Bend, Benton Harbor, and Kalamazoo reported haze and visibilities of 2½ to 3 miles. The National Weather Service at Chicago, forecast light and variable winds over the lake (6-12 kt) and widespread fog for the afternoon and night of July 4th and also July 5th. And fog was reported by a ship with 2½ mile visibility near 42 N. and 86 W. at 7.00 p.m.

Some water temperatures: at 12 noon, Chicago reported 62°F, and Muskegon 57. At 7.00 p.m., St. Joseph, Mi. reported 49 and Michigan City reported 58 (and both of the latter reported calm seas). A Marseilles radar summary for (close to) the time of the sighting indicated thunderstorm activity in southern Wisconsin and north western Indiana, but nothing over southern Lake Michigan.

A look at the upper atmosphere shows a trough extending approximately northeast to northwest right over southern Lake Michigan (at 7.00 p.m.). The atmosphere was in general, relatively warm and moist, and wind speeds were low. Some figures estimated from upper air charts for the area: at 850 millibars (1486m) the temperature was 16°C, dew point 14°C winds SW or W 5-10kt. — at 700mb (3108m) the temperature was 6°C, dew point 2°C, winds W at 5-10kt.

— at 500mb (5800m) the temperature was -7°C, dew point -27°C, winds NW at 15-20kt. — at 300mb (9590m) the temperature was -34°C, with little or no moisture, winds W-NW at 45-50kt.

Finally, a sounding for 7.00 a.m. from Green Bay is enclosed — some features over Green Bay could have been advected south-eastward to the southern lake area by late afternoon behind the trough mentioned earlier. There is quite a bit of moisture and numerous alternating wetter and drier layers, also three small temperature inversion layers (720mb, 625mb, 560mb). Winds are light.

I don't feel that the 7.00 a.m. sounding from Green Bay will exactly represent the profile over southern Lake Michigan at 4.20 p.m. However, due to advection from that direction and due to the fact that the same air mass covers both areas, it seems that some of the features *may* be similar (at least above the lower layer where lake cooling and subsidence warming are taking place).

I may point out that the fact that moisture should mainly be under 500mb (5800m). The satellite picture indicates relatively warm (and low) cloud tops for the heavier clouds over southern Lake Michigan, at least low compared to the storms and high cloud tops obvious on the satellite picture to the south.

Steven Toci

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# M.I.B. ACTIVITY REPORTED FROM VICTORIA B.C.

Four "Men in Black" allegedly visit two separate UFO witnesses in Canada's western province

*Dr P.M.H. Edwards*

A welcome return to our pages is made by Dr Edwards who, now retired, was formerly Professor of Linguistics at the University of Victoria

THE city of Victoria, B.C., is at the southern tip of Vancouver Island, and is the Capital of British Columbia, Canada's westernmost Province, on the Pacific Ocean. This area has been largely neglected by UFOs in the past, and very few incidents have been reported from here, by comparison with many other regions. About 65 miles due north of Victoria B.C., but on the mainland, lies the large port of Vancouver B.C., terminus of Canada's transcontinental railroads and highways. The city of well over a million inhabitants, must not be confused with the far smaller township of Vancouver, Washington, (U.S.A.), which is across the Columbia River, north of Portland, Oregon.

On October 2, 1981, two major incidents occurred in Victoria B.C., involving two young men who were unknown to one another. The chief witness is Grant Breiland (16), 1507 Winchester Road, Victoria, B.C. V8N 2B6, Canada; he has supplied virtually all the information. The second witness (19) does not wish to be publicly identified, and has refused to be interviewed, preferring to "forget all about the whole thing," — which is regrettable: In this account, he will be given the code-initials *N.B.*; his real name, address, and phone-number are, however, on file.

Grant Breiland attends Mount Douglas High-school; the second witness, *N.B.*, works at a gasoline service-station downtown; they both live in North Victoria, a couple of miles' distance in each case from the writer's home. Grant is a somewhat unusual young man, in that he is of above-average intelligence, is an extremely keen observer of details, and owns his business (spare-time activity) known as "J. R. Security", which involves maintaining a staff of friends for inspecting the homes of absent people, and generally assisting in keeping law and order. (The other day, for instance, he helped arrest a man who was unlawfully trying to enter a parked car in Woodward's parking-lot; Grant handcuffed him, and they took him to the police station.) He not only carries a CB walkie-talkie radio with him, but he also has a two-way desk radio in his office at home, which he uses for running his business. I have also noticed that he is meticulous about keeping important items always under lock and key; and he has proved himself reliable in several

At the end of Dr Edwards' narrative, a note, added as a postscript, proved to be so important that we feel it should be drawn to the attention of readers before they read the full report. It appeared under the heading: **How this story was uncovered immediately after it occurred.** It read:—

"On the morning of Sunday, October 4, 1981, the writer received a phone call from a lady acquaintance, informing him that she had just found a small news item in that morning's Sunday issue of the *Victoria Times-Colonist* newspaper, to the effect that a certain Grant Raymond, 16, had photographed an alleged UFO the previous evening, between Mount Douglas and Mount Tolmie, in northern Victoria B.C. Usually, such announcements are of scant interest to investigators. However, on a mere hunch, I decided to write to Grant Raymond, c/o the newspaper, just in case there was something of greater interest behind that small news item. Within three days, Grant Breiland phoned me saying that the newspaper had quoted his last-name incorrectly, and that he would like to discuss his experience with me. Since then, we have met several times and — one hopes — covered all the important aspects of the events."

Dr Edwards is to be congratulated on following up his hunch so quickly and successfully. It is also gratifying to learn that this was not a case of an enthusiastic UFO buff with a sensational story seeking out a well-known investigator.

EDITOR

ways, besides. These are some of the reasons why I felt inclined to believe his story implicitly. He also told me that the only ufological literature he has ever read, was a book (whose author's name escapes him) called *UFOs and IFOs*; he read only a portion of that book; at that time, he was in Grade Seven at school, — i.e. about 12 years of age. He has read nothing else in our field.

Friday, October 2, 1981, was a windy, chilly and damp day. However, by 9.30 p.m., most of the clouds had drifted westwards towards the Sooke Hills in the