

# THE YORBA LINDA PHOTOGRAPH

*Ann Druffel*

YORBA LINDA is a small, isolated town near the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountain range, about forty miles southeast of the major American city, Los Angeles, California. With its attractive homes, rolling hills, and pleasant high-desert climate, it is a model American community. The town is on the outskirts of rapidly growing Orange County. The sparsely settled land beyond is dotted with high-tension power lines, oilfields, water reservoirs, railroad lines, farm and grazing lands, and a secluded U.S. missile site. Farther to the east and northeast is mountain wilderness.

On January 24, 1967, at twilight in this quiet setting, a fourteen-year-old boy was preparing to do his homework for his next day's eighth grade classes. He went upstairs in the new home in which his parents, his eleven-year-old sister and he lived on the edge of town. Glancing out of the window on that dark, rainy afternoon, he saw "something" that was to change his life.

Since the family prefers anonymity to avoid ridicule, we shall call the boy Tom X. Five months from the date of sighting, he was to give this statement to a NICAP investigator.

"At 5.25 p.m. on that date I came into this second storey bedroom to get something for my homework. I looked out and saw a black object that looked like a man's top hat hovering over the houses across the street.

"I grabbed a camera and stood back from the window because I didn't know if the object would see me or not. I snapped a photo of it and then ran downstairs to get my family to witness it with me. I had called down the stairs to them previously while the object was in sight, but no one heard. When we got back up here, the object was gone.

"The object seemed sort of metallic but also had a dull surface. You couldn't really tell. It was just black. I didn't see any reflection of light off of the object. It was solid black, but like you'd see maybe some aluminium foil from an angle. It doesn't look shiny, but then at another angle it might. The object was rounded. I saw four legs on it. The legs were out all the time. Only three tripod legs came out on the picture.

"The sky was cloudy that night. The clouds covered the whole skyline, and it was a dark day. I saw (the object) in the northeast. It was gigantic. It looked to be about as long as one and one-half of the houses right in back of my house. After I ran out of the room to get the camera, the object was further out toward the east. It didn't seem to move while I was taking the picture. It just hovered and that's all. There was no noise. It hovered motionless--no wavering or seesawing. From the place where I took the picture, it was about 1½ to 2 inches on a ruler at arm's length in diameter.

"There might have been a dome at the top. I'm not sure about that, but I think I saw a dome at the top. I don't think the dome was black. It was another colour--I couldn't tell. It blended in with the black, but it wasn't black.

"I had drawn some pictures before we had the photo developed by an amateur friend. At first we didn't think that anything would turn out on the picture at all because it was so cloudy that day, and it was almost dark. But when we got the photograph back, the object had come out very clear.

"I couldn't really tell how long I viewed it. It seemed to be for two or three minutes. In re-enacting the incident for NICAP, the time came out about 30 seconds."<sup>1</sup>

The above quotation is the beginning of a 40-page report, the result of an investigation which was started in July, 1967, and which continued unabated for four years. The report and photograph have lain in limbo. The principal witness, however, who is now 20, feels that by publishing the facts of the sighting and photograph, some vital information might be added to the growing UFO mystery.

The NICAP investigator on the case learned of the Yorba Linda photo through a brief article in a Santa Ana, California, paper.<sup>2</sup> Contacting the family on July 11, 1967, she began a collection of evidence, sketches, corroborative sightings, and photo analyst opinions which have grown into a massive and awkward collection filling four fat files. In these few FSR pages, we hope to condense the salient facts, draw the interest of other researchers to the problem, and, perhaps, somewhere seek out a solution.

The black "hat-shaped" object was not the first unusual sighting near the X. home. The whole flying saucer business came into the family's lives just twenty days prior to the taking of the January 24th photo. A giant, hovering object was seen on January 4, 1967, by the entire family. Tom saw it first, from the kitchen window, in the northeast, while getting ready for school. It seemed to "have just fallen from the sky." The object was a distinct, silvery football-shaped object which emitted a "hissing sound like air escaping from a tyre," as it stopped and hovered over a nearby house, some hundreds of yards away. It had what seemed to be "lighted windows, sequentially blinking around the centre." Tom rushed up to his parents' bedroom, awakening them in time to see the object throw on a gigantic, stationary red light above the windows. Tom's sister joined them, and his father watched the object with a pair of 2.5 opera glasses. He thought he saw a carriage on the underside, so later they called nearby El Toro Marine Base to inquire if there had been any blimps in the area. The answer was negative. With the four of them still watching, the object floated effortlessly towards the East, out of sight.

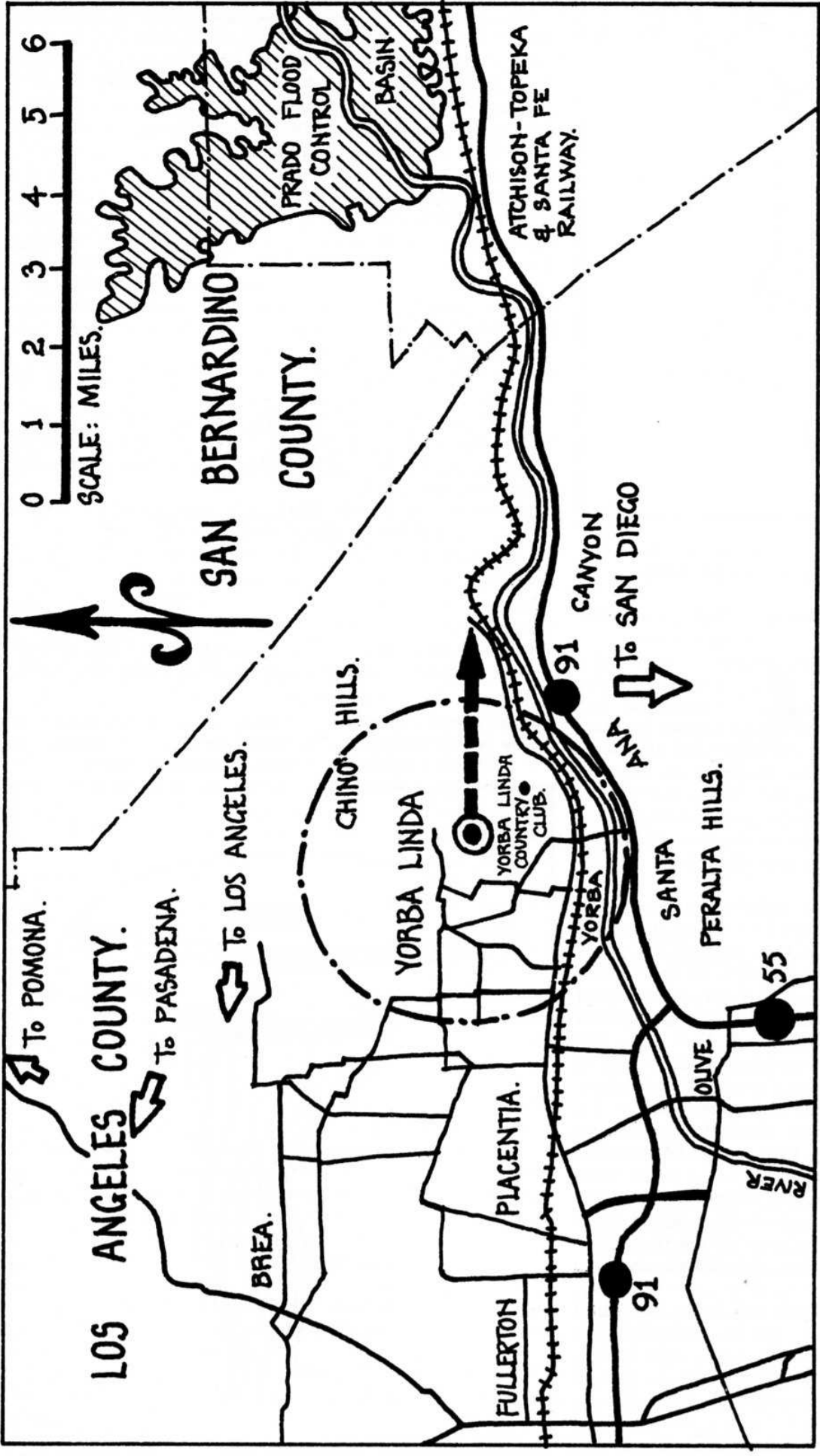


Fig. 1. Map of area showing location of Yorba Linda. Heavy broken line and arrow indicates the path of the object sighted on January 24th, 1967. At Fullerton, to the left and down from Yorba Linda, is the nearest airport.

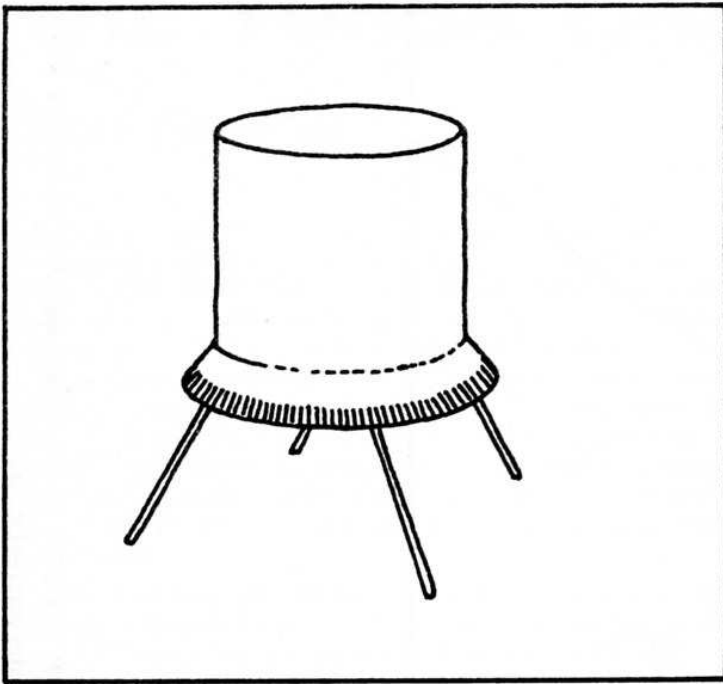


Fig. 2: Sketch of "black-hat" as sketched by Tom 'X' immediately after sighting on January 24, 1967.

Fascinated by his two sightings, Tom purchased Frank Edwards' *Flying Saucers: Serious Business* at a nearby store. This book encouraged him to investigate other possible sightings people may have had in the area. He started a "skywatch" with some of his friends, and it grew rather rapidly as others learned about it. In June 1967 one of the members of Tom's group called up the *Santa Ana Register* to request that a notice be placed regarding the club's next meeting. The newspaper, instead, sent out a reporter to write a story on the group. The newspaper publicity was not sought by Tom or any members of his family.

Up to the time of the first sighting, none of the family members had any interest in "flying saucers," considering them unreal and not a matter for speculation. For this reason, the photograph of the "black hat" took on added importance to Tom, who hoped that it could prove that he had, indeed, seen "something." Because of the darkness of the day, the family had little hope of the picture turning out. In the meantime, while still shaking from his experience, he drew a sketch of what he had seen (Figure 1).

In the next few days, Tom shot the remaining frames and took the roll of film to a 14-year-old friend for development. He was afraid to trust their regular mail order film processing company because they had lost a roll he had sent them a short time before. In case something did show up on the frame he had shot of the black object, he didn't want to risk losing it.

Tom's friend, whom we shall call Dave, arranged his developing apparatus neatly on his father's work bench in their garage. He and Tom hung dark sheets over the window and stuffed towels under the garage door to prevent light from coming in. There were a "few small cracks of light still entering", but Dave assured Tom it would be all right. When Dave was

finished, there it was: a contact print showing a portion of the window frame, telephone poles outside, and a small black object in the sky. Although the details did not show too well through the emulsion left on the negative, it was still possible to distinguish a black cylinder with three legs angling out from the bottom.

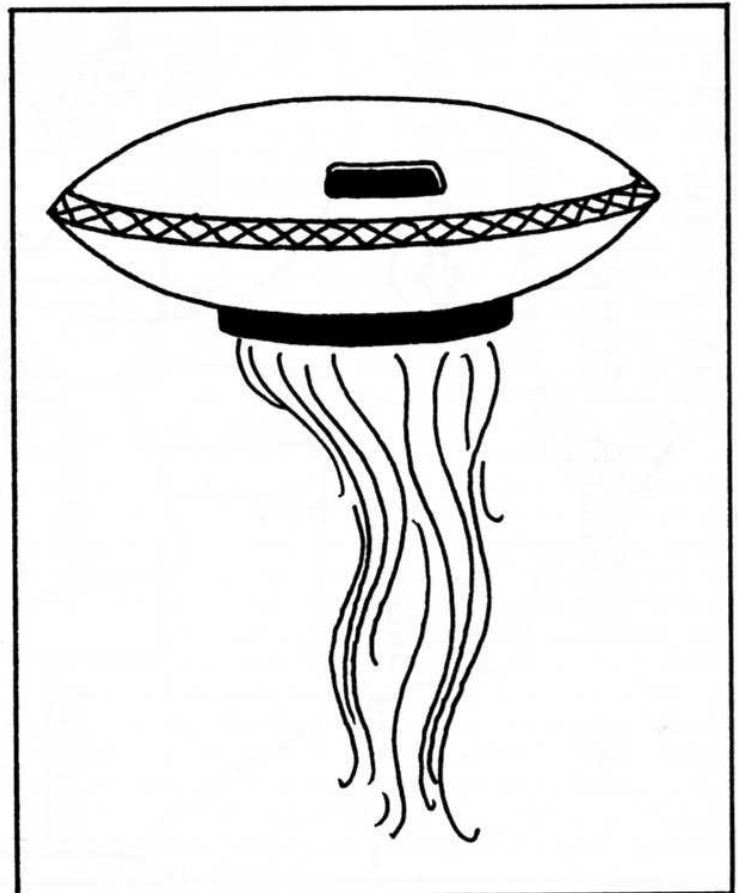
The amateur photo developer, Dave, had received his developing kit at Christmas, only a month before. He had developed only about five rolls of film previous to working on Tom's. He used a Tri-Chem Pac by Kodak, containing developer, stop-bath, and fixer. He estimated the temperature at 68 degrees and did not heat the chemicals. Being without a red bulb, he "felt his way around" and immersed the film according to package instructions. He "tried not to scrape the pictures too much" against the pie tin he used as a developing pan.

Tom released the negative to the NICAP investigator for study in August 1967. To aid in proper analysis of the photo, the following technical information was obtained.

**Camera:** A \$5.00 Mark XII camera, fixed-focus; 620 film from Sears' dated December 1968.

**Weather and Time:** Reported time of 5.25 p.m. was nine minutes after official sunset for the date. The U.S. Weather Bureau confirmed that the sky was heavily overcast with rain clouds at 400-1000 feet and higher. It had rained all day, stopping temporarily at time of sighting. Surface winds were from the northeast.

Fig. 3: Sketch by relative of Tom 'X' of object viewed by entire family on January 4, 1967. Drawing is composite of object's details as seen by members of family.



**Measurements inside room:**

1. Camera lens to window: 45 inches
2. Dimensions of window: length  $34\frac{1}{2}$  inches; height 33 inches. The window which frames object and reference points is the left half of a double window separated by a partition, width one inch.
3. Length of Tom's arm: 24 inches

**Measurements outside window:**

1. Window to nearest telephone pole (darkest on photo): 197 feet
2. Window to TV antenna below and to right of object: 82 feet
3. Window to nearest home: 70 feet
4. From left side of home to Tom's left to mid-point of second home on his right: 36.5 feet

During the initial interview, Tom's best judgement was that the object was hovering over the nearest homes to his east, and that the legs extended over a house and a half. He estimated the size when first seen as 11 inches on a ruler at arm's length, and approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches when he returned with the camera.

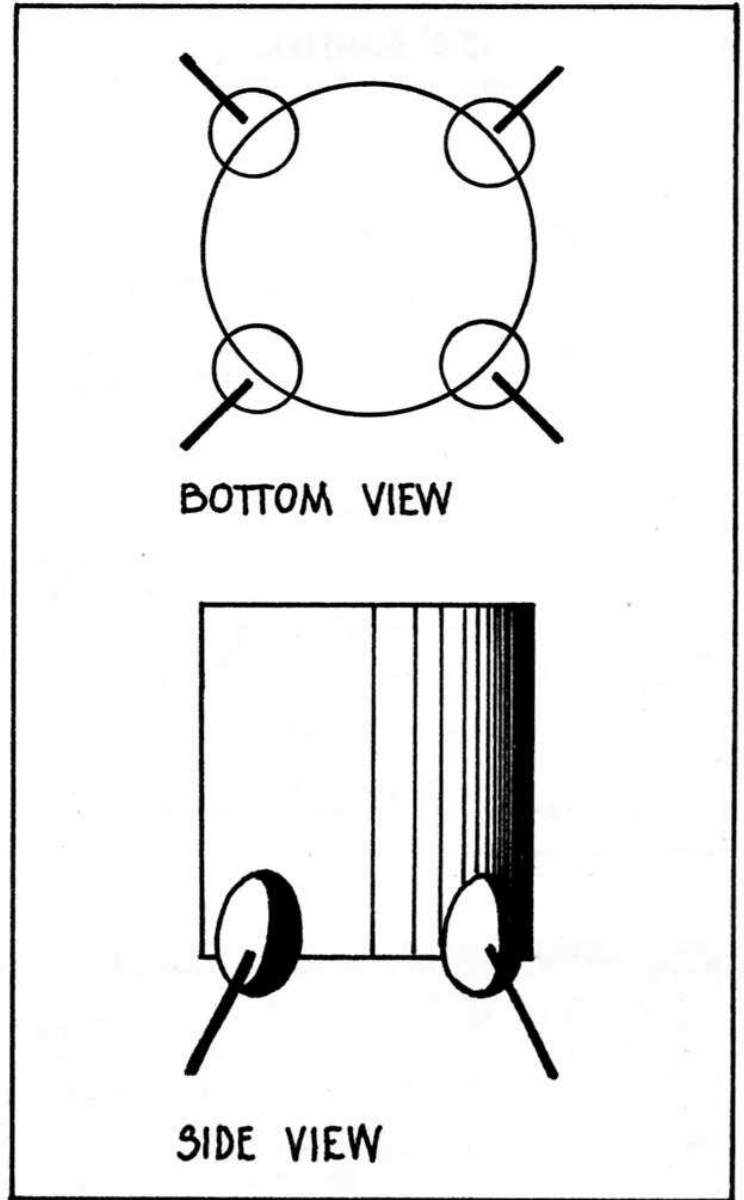
From the measurements above, it was first estimated that the object's actual diameter was 30+ feet, provided Tom's judgement of the distance was accurate. He had repeatedly stated, "It was gigantic!" However, in view of his frightened state, it is possible that a gross error in judging distance was made, accounting for the discrepancy in object's size which was discovered and reported below. It is important to mention here that the estimated size of 30+ feet was suggested by the NICAP investigator. Tom, when asked for an estimate of its size, always replied that he did not know, only that it looked "gigantic."

The negative was first analysed by Joseph Carson, a Los Angeles photographer known to the Los Angeles NICAP Subcommittee. He preferred to work with the negative in its original state, although it was covered with an emulsion which Dave had not known how to remove. Carson determined that the photo was lightstruck and/or fogged, caused probably by light striking it during the developing process or by the use of unfresh chemicals.

Carson considered the photograph a genuine image of an actual object, farther away than three feet. After studying it with a magnifier, he stated that sharpness of focus of the telephone poles, the window frame and object were essentially the same.

He ruled out ordinary kinds of hoax, such as hand-thrown, string-suspended, and cut-out models. He determined that the two long white lines above and below the object are true scratches, caused either by mishandling during development or by a faulty turning mechanism in the camera. Tom had reported that he had had to use pliers to turn the film from frame to frame. Working copies made by Carson revealed that the object's bottom seemed to consist of three or four egg-shaped protrusions spaced equilaterally around the bottom (Figure 4). From these, he conjectured, the legs emerged.<sup>3</sup>

Unknown to us at the time, Tom's "top hat" UFO description had been corroborated by a youth in Iowa, who had seen a similar object on March 22, 1967, and had reported it to the U.S. Air Force.

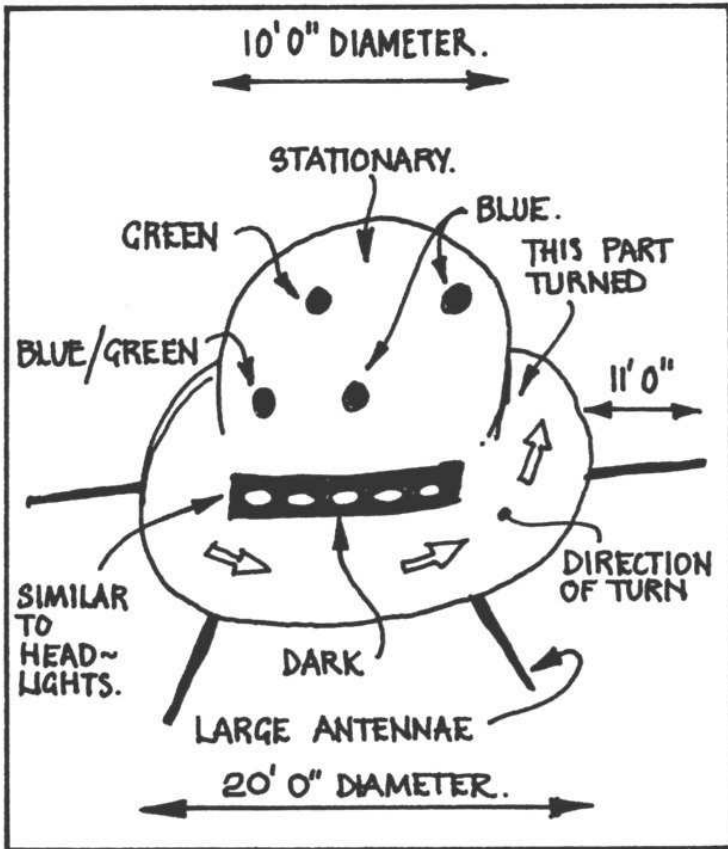


**Fig. 4: Part of statement and sketch by photographic analyst, including his conjecture of object's shape.**

Tom saw this witness's story and drawing in the December 1967 *New Report on Flying Saucers Magazine*.<sup>4</sup>

Carefully inspecting this art conception, which was strikingly like Tom's own sketch, he was able to make out the name, Douglas E., which the magazine had apparently, but unsuccessfully, tried to black out. Upon writing the witness, Tom learned that this boy was also fourteen years old, that Douglas had been outdoors at the time of sighting and had also seen four "antennae," as he called them, protruding from the bottom. It emitted a humming sound. His sighting had occurred at 10.20 p.m. and the object seemed self-luminous, with green, blue and white lights. He sent Tom a detailed sketch, including his estimate of the object's size (Figure 5).

The NICAP investigator also corresponded with Douglas, and obtained confirmation of the facts of the sighting. A copy of Tom's photo was sent to him, and he wrote back that it resembled very much the object he had seen. However, he said the bottom



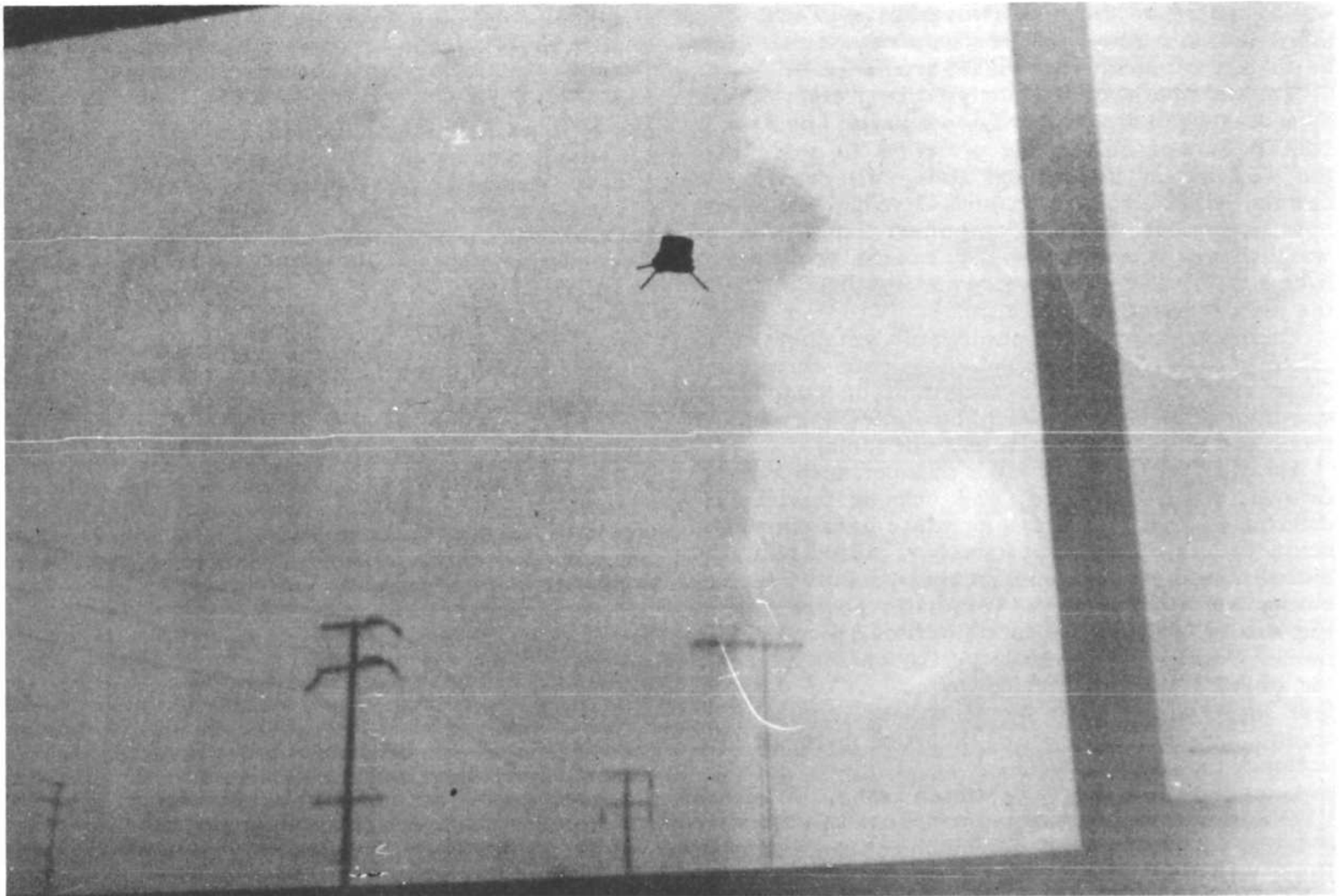
part was revolving, while the upper part stayed stationary. Could this be a clue as to why Tom saw the brim of his "top hat" as a continuous slope rather than the egg-shaped protrusions revealed in the photo?

Another possible corroborative sighting was described in a 1967 APRO Bulletin. At about 6.30 p.m. on October 12, 1967, in Dubuque, Iowa, a silvery, egg-shaped, red-lighted object, with tubular poles dangling down "like landing gears," hovered directly over the heads of two children. A similar object was described independently by several children in a neighbouring house. Adults later estimated the object(s)'s size as about ten feet long, at an altitude of fifty feet.<sup>5</sup>

A report on the case was sent to NICAP Headquarters. Some weeks later we were informed by Stuart Nixon, then NICAP's full-time photo consultant, that preliminary study suggested that the photo was a hoax, a cutout or small model at the window photographed with a closeup lens.

Spurred on by what seemed to be the corroborative sighting of Douglas E., the fact that Tom denied ever owning or using a closeup lens, and also the fact of the solid family backing given Tom, analysis of the photo was continued by the NICAP investigator. William Hamilton, a senior photographic  
**Fig. 5: Sketch by Douglas Eutsler of Wapello, Iowa of object seen March 22, 1967.**

**Fig. 6: The Tom 'X' photo after negative was cleaned professionally**



technician of twenty years' experience, was given the negative in February 1968. He cleaned off about 70% of the film coating or emulsion in hypo. The prints which resulted were far superior in quality and sharpness (Figure 6).

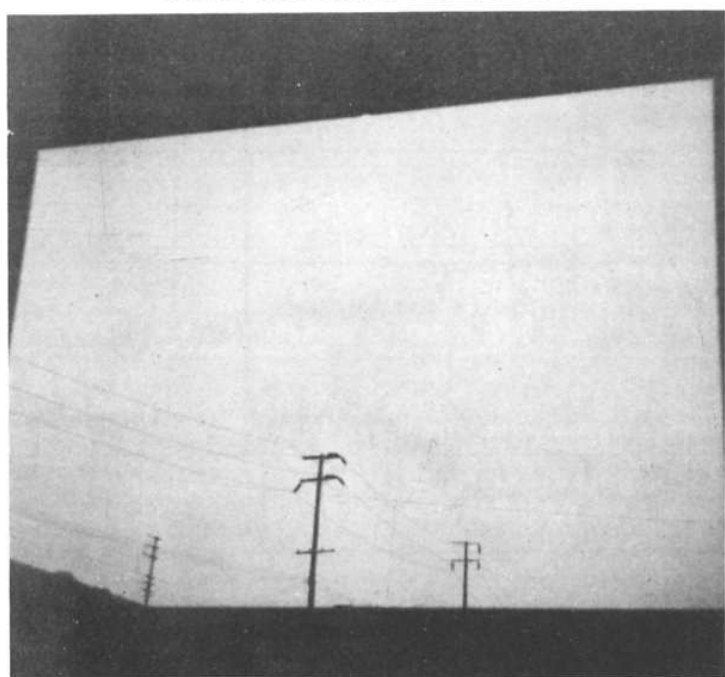
In Hamilton's opinion, the photo conformed to the witness-photographer's statement and was a genuine photographic image. He photographed, under almost exact lighting conditions, a cutout facsimile attached to a window with Tom's camera, using a Tiffen No. 1 closeup lens. This lens threw window frame, cutout, and background out of focus and also did not cover as wide an area as on Tom's photo. The cutout looked exactly like a cutout, whereas in Hamilton's experience with perspective and angle, the object in Tom's picture was three-dimensional.

Although Hamilton did not rule out the possibility that the object was a three-dimensional model close to the window, his studied opinion was that the object was at a much greater distance than the window pane, for the following reasons:

1. The object is in sharper focus than the centre partition, which is in a position to be essentially in equal focus as the object. Cleaning the negative had revealed that the object was in sharper focus than all reference points.

2. The telephone poles' images in the lower portion of the photo are somewhat out of focus and are low enough to be rendered such because of upward camera angle, plus distortion which could be caused by photographing through the window glass at this angle. The distortion could have been caused by the film being too tight in the camera, resulting in flattening the film plane from its slightly circular seat in the camera. Was the film inserted slightly off centre in the camera, accounting for Tom's difficulty in

**Fig.7: Comparison photo at scene taken July 11th, 1967 by Tom 'X' under supervision with investigator's Starflex camera. Mr. X. assumed same crouching position he reported when he snapped photo of object on January 24th, 1967.**



turning it? When the investigator used the same camera later for more comparison photos, she found the winding knob easy to turn.

3. The object would have to be at least six feet from the camera in order to be as sharp as it appears on the negative and could definitely be a large object, as any photo shot through a window will appear sharper at the centre than at the extreme edges.<sup>6</sup>

The third expert to analyse the negative was a commercial photographer of many years' experience. He is a producer of film strips for schools and encyclopaedia and was, at the time, a photo consultant to the Los Angeles NICAP Subcommittee.

He examined the negative on a densitometer reading board, as well as making mathematical calculations, based on an object negative size of 1½ to 2 mm. His opinion was that the object was free-flying, in the sense of not being suspended or hand-thrown. From his familiarity with densities of objects as photographed at differing distances and in different types of weather, he thought the object was much nearer than the nearest telephone pole. His best size and distance estimate was eight to twelve inches diameter at fifty feet. The absolute maximum of size and distance, in his opinion, was twenty inches diameter at one hundred feet, since the object was too sharply in focus to be any farther away.

In puzzling out the discrepancy in size, the following points are offered by the investigator for consideration: (See page 32/33.)

a. The object may have been right up to the window when first seen, obstructing most of the view. This would mean that its actual size was in the maximum range as determined by the third photo expert, i.e., approximately twenty inches in diameter. A combination of fright and other factors may have caused Tom to misjudge its distance.

b. The phenomenon of "size constancy," in which the brain can "zoom in like a telephoto lens, preventing objects shrinking with distance as much as they ought"<sup>7</sup> might be relevant here.

c. In situations of intense concentration, such as caused by fright or the viewing of unfamiliar objects, both of which are applicable to the case, the human eye tends to enlarge and bring the object closer.

d. It is possible that Tom's strong corrective glasses have a bearing on the case, though his optometrist, whom he consulted on the question on July 31, 1971, replied negatively. His right eye prescription is 7.50 = 0.50x15 and left eye is 8.00 = 0.50x30 (PD 63/). With his glasses, which he wears constantly, his vision is good.

As far as discrepancy on the number of "legs" on the object is concerned, the investigator fashioned a clay model on the shape suggested by Joseph Carson. When the model was tipped so that its silhouette conformed with the object in the photo, only three legs were visible, one being hidden behind the model.

The negative was also studied, early in the case, by a local aerospace scientist, who has requested anonymity. At first he could see no evidence of hoax. He suggested that the object was an experimental space craft being tested, as was Surveyor, suspended by a cable from a large balloon. However, thorough

investigation ruled this out for several reasons which space does not permit us to explain here. The possibility of the object's being an experimental plane was checked out also, with negative results.

The local scientist had a densitometer reading made of the photo, including object and reference points, after the emulsion had been cleaned off. He was puzzled by the degree of blackness of the object in relation to reference points, describing it as "mysterious." His private opinion, after learning of the mathematical calculations on the size of the object, and after interviewing the boy, was that the object was a model. But he was puzzled as to what a hoaxer could have used to cover a model, so that it would photograph so black.

During 1968, the investigator made a number of comparison photos at her home and at the scene of the sighting, under cloudy conditions, shortly after sunset (Figures 9, 10, 11). A three-dimensional model, 11½ inches across the widest horizontal diameter, covered with very black vinyl plastic, was used for Figures 9 and 10. A cutout of the same black vinyl was pasted on the window at the former X. home in Yorba Linda for Figure 10. Another comparison photo was made in broad daylight on a Los Angeles street (Figure 12) to determine sharpness of focus of the camera under optimum conditions. The leaves in the foreground are about three feet away, the palm tree in the upper left corner is approximately 200 feet away.

The image on the Figure 9 comparison photo taken at fifty feet distance was 1½ to 2 mm, backing up the expert's estimate of the size. But there was a major difference to contend with.

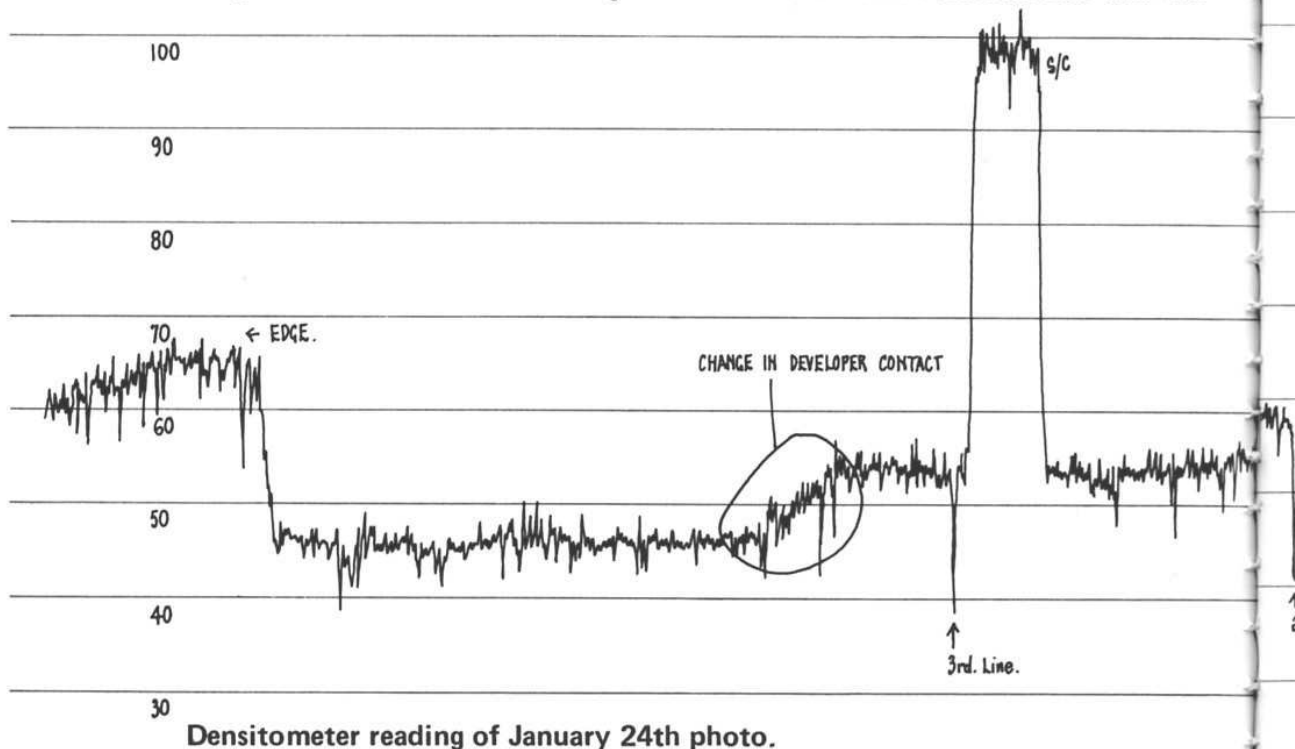
The density of blackness of all reference points and the model and cutout was essentially the same in comparison photos 9 through 11, in contrast to the Yorba Linda photo where the object photographed much blacker than the reference points. Thus we



**Fig.9: Comparison photo at Druffel home, made with Mr. X's camera shortly after sunset, clouded sky. Distance 50 feet.**

procured confirmation of the scientist's opinion expressed above that the object in Tom's picture photographed blacker than black should have photographed.

This phenomenon of degree of "blackness" remained a mystery for three years, defying all efforts to explain it. Then in October 1971 the photo was taken for study by Al Cocking, president of a Southern California geodetic survey company. After using advanced photogrammetric equipment on the photo, Cocking gave his opinion that the photograph was "of an actual object at a distance of ±100 feet away from the camera." He also stated that "the object seems to be three-dimensional and the



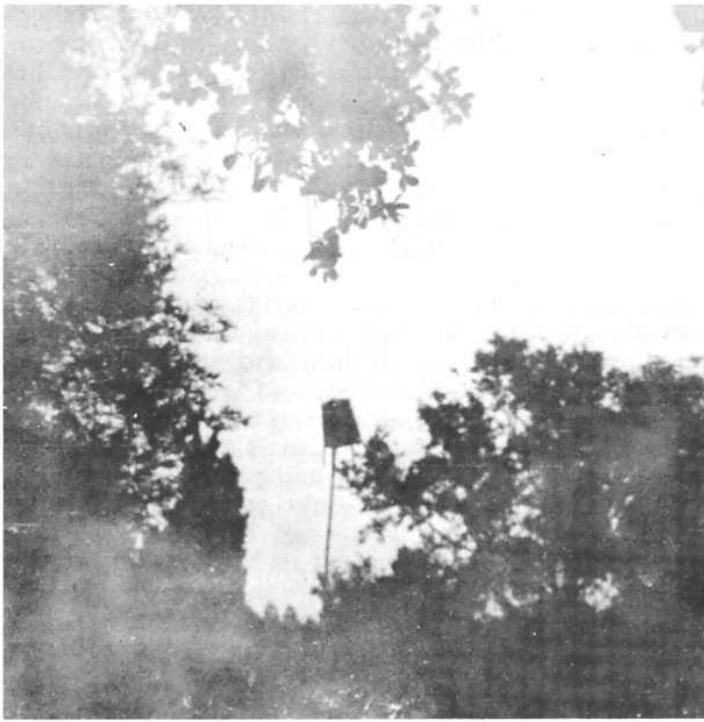


Fig. 10: Comparison photo at Druffel home, made with Tom 'X's camera, clouded sky. Distance 25 feet.

appendages are probably three in number rather than four." In other words, in his opinion, a fourth leg was not hidden behind the object as the investigator had surmised, but was probably not visible from *any* angle.

His statement went on: "Also it is quite possible that the reason the object photographed as black as it did was that its colour was probably red and the red colour of the object, plus the fact that it was filtered through ordinary window glass, would most

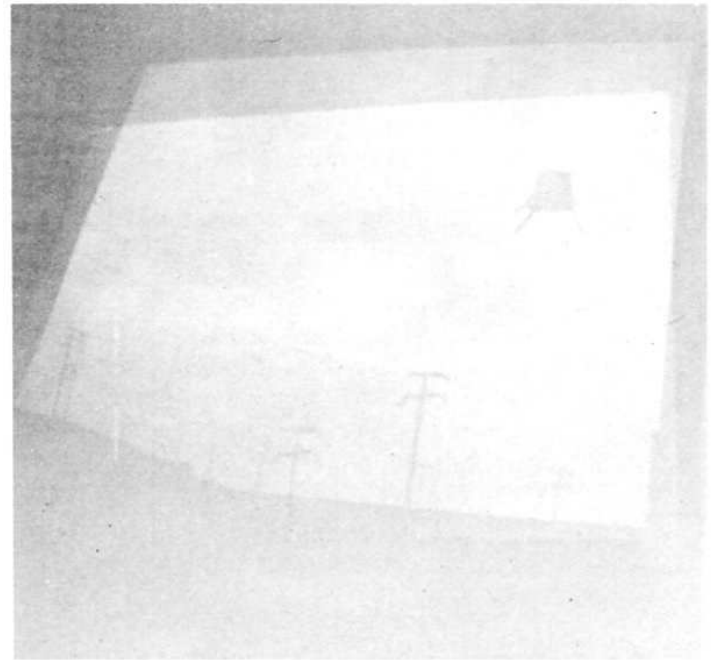
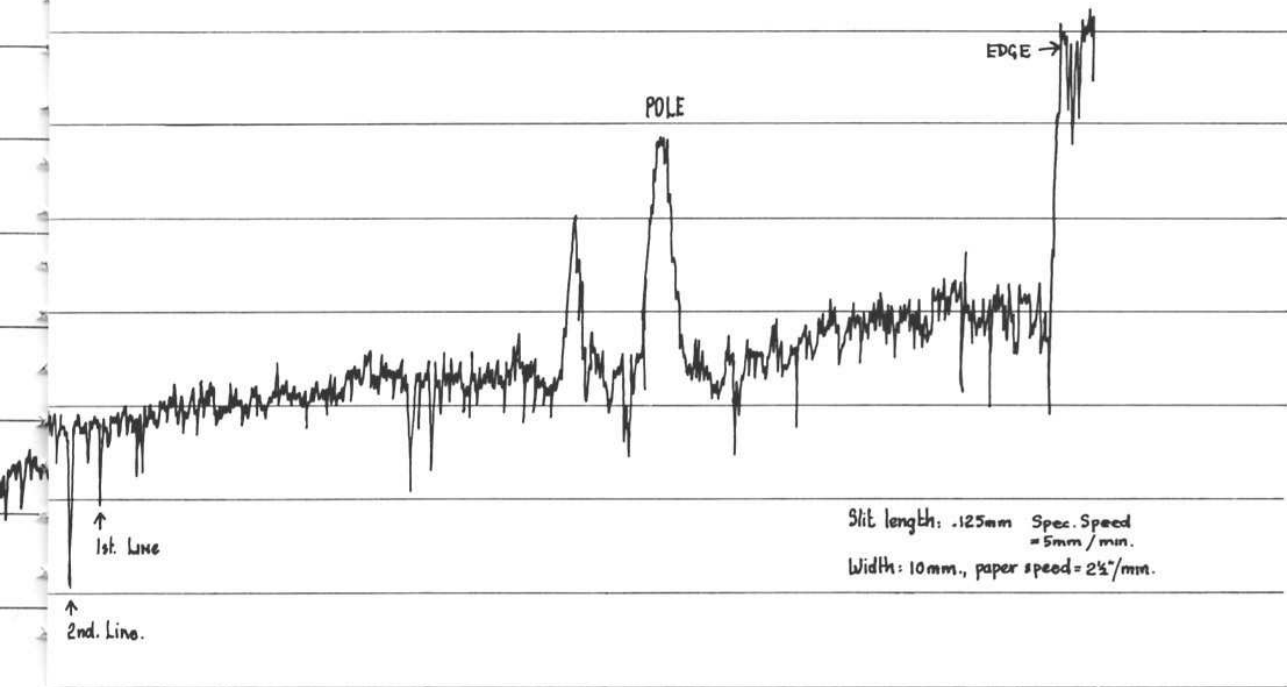


Fig. 11: Comparison photo taken by investigator at scene of sighting on April 16, 1968. Time was 6.31 pm, sunset was 6.25 pm that date. Cutout on window is made of very black vinyl. Clouded sky.

probably produce an image on the film blacker than a black object would be."<sup>8</sup>

Drawing a clue from the above, the X. family was approached again. It was learned from Tom, with the confirmation of Mrs. X., that his perception of colours is faulty. He cannot distinguish between red and green traffic lights, seeing both as white. But he can distinguish green from blue on a common checkered kitchen towel and differentiate shades of reds, pinks and purples on book covers. But he sees deep







**Fig.12: Comparison photo made in broad daylight on Los Angeles street with Mr. X's camera to determine sharpness of focus under optimum conditions. Leaves in foreground are about three feet away, palm tree in upper left corner is about 200 feet away (rough approximation).**

red or maroon automobiles as *black* "sometimes", but not always. Is there something about coloured lights and metals which can affect a person's colour perception while other coloured materials do not? Was the object made of metal and/or glowing red?

The Yorba Linda milieu includes more than reported visual sightings of unusual aerial objects. The X. family experienced a number of odd occurrences which, if not due to imagination or hallucination, are seemingly parapsychological in nature. These occurred at the Yorba Linda home from December 1966 through August 1967 and continued after the family moved to Santa Ana, some 15 miles to the southwest.

In late November or early December 1966, Mrs. X. was awakened from sleep before dawn by a voice calling her name. She saw a white, filmy figure hovering near her bed between her and the door. It had no distinct shape or facial features, but Mrs. X. had the impression it was a woman, and evil. As it came closer, she jumped from her bed, dashed *through* the figure to escape, and hurried out the door. Glancing back, she saw the figure had disappeared.

In late 1966, Mr. X. also heard his name called as he was preparing for bed. Thinking Tom was calling, he went into his son's bedroom. The boy was asleep. Mr. X. also heard footsteps in the Yorba Linda home at times when he was certain no other members of the family were walking about.

Tom's sister experienced occasional feelings of imminent danger, accompanied by abdominal pains and crying spells. These were invariably followed

by unexpected, unpleasant objective occurrences involving the family and other persons known to them. These occurred during the six-month period of UFO sightings and afterwards.

One of Tom's experiences was especially graphic, confided by Mrs. X. to the NICAP investigator in early 1968. The following is Tom's own description of the incident, recorded in 1971:

"While in the downstairs bathroom of my home in Yorba Linda I saw, from the corner of my eye, a figure walking through the closed door. I looked at it directly. It seemed to be a man. I can't remember whether I noticed his clothing and other details. He kept walking straight ahead, and went through the catty-corner to the door. I can't explain it, but I wasn't scared. When I came out, I asked reassurance of my mother if my father had walked in the bathroom, since this was the only explanation I could possibly think of at the time. Upon her negative answer, I related the incident to her. At the time of this occurrence, which was around the time of the UFO flap, I did not have any knowledge of the incidents which the other members of my family had experienced."

Since incidents of this kind were altogether new to the family, the parents did not discuss their own experiences with the children, for fear of frightening them. It was only after several months of visits to the home, on matters pertaining to the photo investigation, that Mrs. X. reluctantly shared the above facts with the investigator. By that time, Mrs. X. had read widely in UFO literature, including some of the more speculative authors, and thought there may be some possible link with the UFO incidents.

After the family moved in August 1967 other seemingly parapsychological incidents were reported. Most seemed to be in the form of poltergeist activity--crackling and rappings on walls and windows, a potted plant waving when there was no breeze, and a cat desperately frightened by something which couldn't be seen by human eyes.

It is important to state that the X. family impressed the investigator with their honesty and common sense. During the months of investigation they continued to be a close, typical upper-middle-class family. All are intelligent and well educated. These impressions were shared, during the intensive study period, by several experienced UFO researchers in the Los Angeles area who met the family and who supported the research.

It has been impossible to include all the salient facts regarding the Yorba Linda cases into a limited space. We have touched on only a fraction of the numerous sightings from January 1967 through June 1967, reported by at least fifteen persons in that area. There were many residents who were unaware that unusual things were being reported, as determined by door-to-door survey, but many families during the flap period did watch the sky with interest.

Returning to the matter of the January 24th 1967 photo, the main question remains: is the image of the three-legged object a hoax, or is it that of an unknown aerial object of alien design? The researchers concerned with the study are, at present, of different

minds.<sup>9</sup> The six-year study has produced no real answers. Even the expert who places the object at  $\pm 100$  feet from the camera speaks of the possibility of a hoax.

If a hoax, it could have been perpetrated in two ways:

1. by Tom and an accomplice, or 2. by an unknown hoaxer without Tom's knowledge.

If either of the above possibilities is true, exceedingly difficult obstacles would have had to be surmounted. If the object was a small model hung outside the window, the only permanent place it could be fastened was on the roof overhang, which did not extend beyond 12 inches from the window. This would put it *inside* the optimum focus range of the camera. The window screen could not be removed to permit access to the overhang from the inside, and Mrs. X. would surely have noticed a ladder in use, since the window was directly above the kitchen where she was preparing dinner at the time.

If an accomplice or hoaxer unknown to Tom was on Tom's roof, suspending a small model by means of a pole beyond the roof overhang, this could explain the sharp focus of the object.

However, the best estimates on the distance of object from the camera are 50 and 100 feet. Consider the angles involved here. The object was a reported 20° elevation when photographed. This angle has

been confirmed by comparison photos shot from the same position assumed by the witness-photographer. If the object was between 50-100 feet from the camera, the height of the object from the ground, calculated by sine function, would be 28-43 feet. There was nothing permanent in this vicinity which could have been used to suspend a model. The most logical way it could have been suspended would be from a long pole. The pole would have to be at least five feet higher than the object so that a string fastened to the end of the pole could be used as a connecting link. Even advanced photogrammetric equipment failed to detect the presence of any string.

If held from the ground, the angle at which the pole would have to be held would add to the height of pole needed. If held from an adjacent house or roof top, the angle from the horizontal would be decreased so that the pole's length would be even longer, even considering the height of the pole from the ground. A pole of such length would be a rarity indeed!

Other factors arguing against a hoax are these:

i) Sightings of other seemingly small UFOs were reported by independent witnesses shortly after the general time period of the Yorba Linda flap.

ii) The members of the X. family attested to Tom's extremely agitated state immediately after the reported sighting, and subsequent photo, of January 24th, 1967.

iii) The picture was the first one on the roll and the only one containing other than ordinary family scenes.

iv) Repeated interviews with the witness over a period of six years have failed to disclose any evidence or admission that the picture was hoaxed.

v) No effort has been made by any member of the family to gain any financial benefit from the photo,

and no published account has been made prior to this article.

Encouraged, however, by several eminent researchers with whom the investigator has corresponded, it has been decided that the Yorba Linda photo should not continue hidden from public view. Granted, the image in the photo is a "whatzit", a puzzle, a ufologist's nightmare. It does not conform to any UFO category and, indeed, does not even conform to the description of its own witness-photographer. But publication of these facts might bring out other "whatzits" from other files--images on film which have been lying in prejudicial purgatories because they happen to be too small, the wrong colour, or have too few or too many legs. It is hoped that further discussion and study by fresh minds might provide an answer to this controversial case.

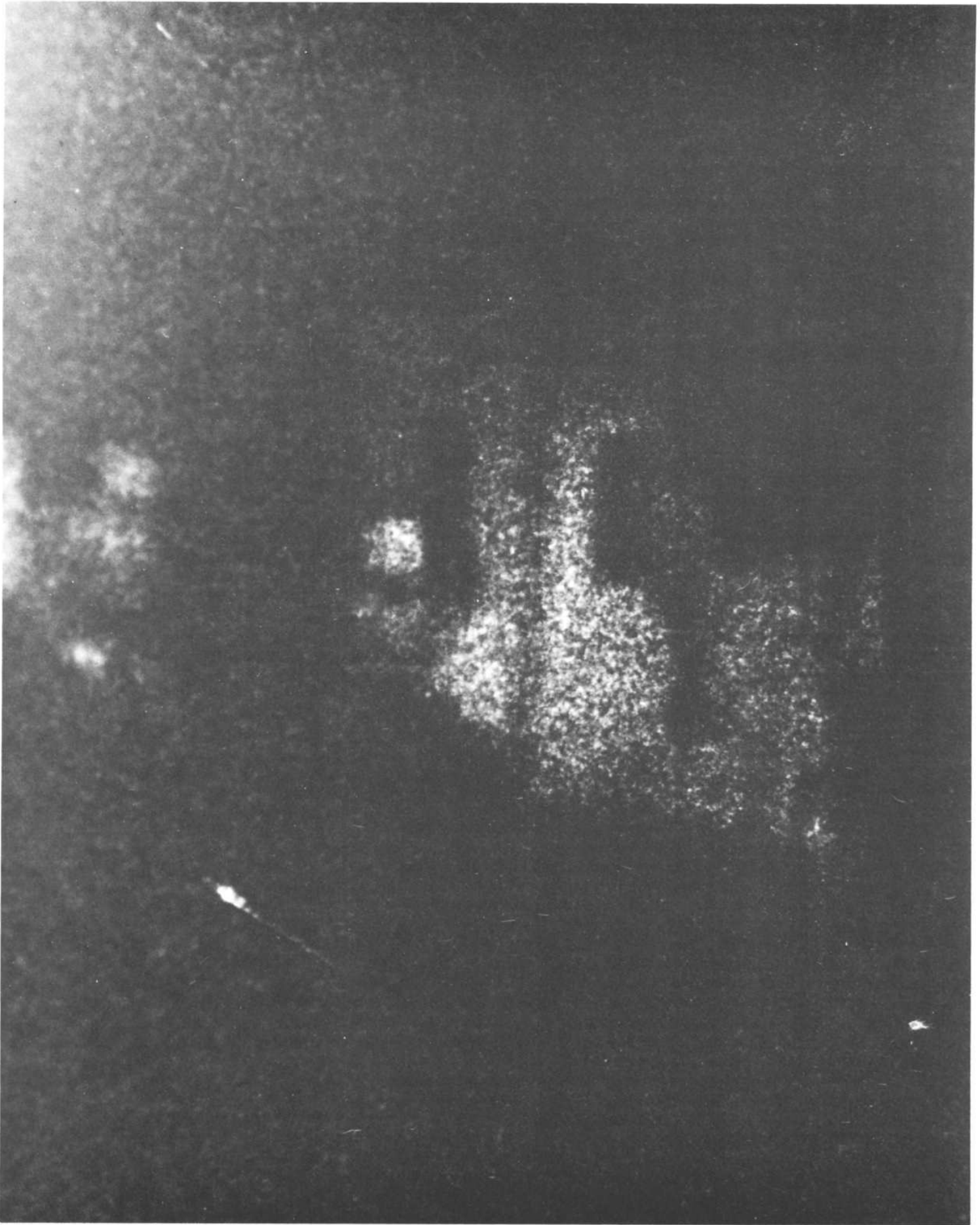
#### Notes on Author and Witness

Ann Druffel is a licensed professional social case worker in the state of California. She has researched and reported on UFOs in the Los Angeles area for the past sixteen years. For thirteen years she was a member of the Los Angeles NICAP Subcommittee, but now works as field investigator for MUFON, NICAP, and DATA-NET.

Tom 'X' is a published writer and radio news assistant, holding a second-class broadcasting licence. With two years of college education, he is currently a department manager at a large retail chain store.

#### Bibliography

- 1 Edited from one-hour-long tape recording made during initial interview with witness July 11, 1967.
- 2 *The Register*, Santa Ana, Calif., Wednesday (e), June 7, 1967, "Yorba Linda Teeners Join UFO Hunt", p. A14.
- 3 Signed statement dated July 31, 1967. (Copy in FSR files)
- 4 *New Report on Flying Saucers*, True Magazine (Issue No. 2), December 1967, p. 68, Fawcett Publications.
- 5 *APRO Bulletin*, published by Aerial Phenomena Research Organization, Tucson, Arizona, U.S.A., Sept.-Oct. 1967, "The States," p. 10
- 6 Statement signed by photographic technician dated February 3, 1968. (Copy in FSR files)
- 7 *Flying Saucer Review*, "Visual Perception of UFOs", July-August 1967, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 24-26
- 8 Statement in Druffel files. (Copy in FSR files)
- 9 Object was declared a "probable hoax" by Stuart Nixon of NICAP Headquarters in a letter and accompanying statement dated June 19, 1968. The classification was based on discrepancies encountered during investigation. This classification was changed in 1972 to "possible hoax".



Blow-up detail from a frame of Stella Lansing's film: See pages 3, 4 and 5.

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