

Sign Oral History Project

Oral History Interview with

Richard Clark (USAF, Staff Sergeant, ret.)

5th Bombardment Wing, Intelligence (Target Studies Officer),
Minot AFB, ND, 24 October 1968

Date: 11 July 2003

Interviewer: Thomas Tulien

TRT: 2:04 hours

Format: M-DV (2)

Copyright: AFS/Dialogue Productions LLC, Minneapolis, MN 55404.

Transcription by James Klotz with additional editing by Thomas Tulien.

NOTICE

This is a transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted for the Sign Oral History Project and is essentially a transcript of the spoken, rather than the written word.

RESTRICTIONS:

This oral history transcript may be read, quoted from, cited, and reproduced for purposes of research. It may not be published in whole or part except by permission of the copyright holder.

Thomas Tulien

Sign Oral History Project

RC Richard Clark

TT Thomas Tulien

[Mr. Clark is seated behind the desk in his office looking at prints of the B-52 radarscope images.]

TT Yeah, they're actually Kodak Picture Maker copies.

RC You say some of the crew is still alive and some of them are dead?

TT Only the Bomb Navigator's deceased, the rest of the crew's alive. We've interviewed all of them.

- RC What did they all say about it? I couldn't remember one of their names if my life depended on it.
- TT Well, you probably talked to Patrick McCaslin, who was the Navigator. And he describes it as it's always been described, that you know, it scared the hell out of them. When that thing came in on the plane, they were talking about taking emergency action—
- RC Yeah.
- TT —because they didn't know what the hell was coming in on them. Now you know, there were two pilots up front... actually there were three pilots on board. The commander of the plane, as soon as he heard over the radio that there was a UFO in the area, he said, 'guys, I've got an interview with Delta tomorrow, and I don't want to be part of a UFO incident,' and he went to the back until the plane landed and he never came out.
- RC [chuckles]
- TT But there still was a check pilot up front, and the co-pilot. And I don't know if you were aware of this, but they overflew the object on the ground—
- RC Yeah.
- TT —and got a pretty detailed look at it. The co-pilot seems to have gotten a better look at it than the check pilot but there's a bit of confusion there we're trying to work out all the details. It's kind of hard to reconstruct after so much time, recall being what it is.
- RC It's been forever. We computed how fast the thing was flying but I can't even remember.
- TT Well, it's in the Air Force documents. It's estimated at 3000 [MPH], and other people computed more than that, but can't be sure of the exact the distances—
- RC No. I was thinking, it was faster than anything that we had that could fly, like I say, I can't remember, but we computed based on the scope and the rings. These are not—I thought the pictures were much better than this.
- TT The originals might be a little bit better, but, you know. I went over with Bill and we made those copies, and they're pretty good, I mean, the exposure is good on them.
- RC Like I say, it's been a long—you know 35 years. [Using desktop calculator] 'cause it was '68, and its 2003. It's not quite 35 because it was October.
- TT Let's me start out and just get a little background, where you are from originally, where you went to school, what sort of training you had—how did you end up in the military?
- RC Well, originally pretty much from this area, and I worked for this company, and Vietnam came along... and I knew I was going to get drafted so I went down and I took some tests,

scored high enough in it that I got in to Air Force intelligence. So I signed up with the Air Force and went to basic training, and then I went out to Denver and went to intelligence school.

TT Can you tell me just a little bit about what's involved in that?

RC Oh, all kinds of things, you know as far as intelligence is concerned, you know, we did targeting. You know the intelligence people are the ones, I don't know if you are familiar, when they found the missiles down in Cuba years ago. It's the intelligence people that do things like that.

TT Analyzing the photography.

RC Yeah.

TT I mean did you go through a course in interpreting photographic evidence?

RC Yes. I was in Denver from October through June, the end of June. It was a six months course, or something like that.

TT Then do you specialize in a certain area when you go through that training?

RC No.

TT I mean, was your specialty radarscope—radar analysis?

RC No. In fact, until I went to Minot, I'd never even seen a radarscope. Well I had, but then you learned really fast, you know? [Laughs]

TT Yeah, you'd have to.

RC After intelligence school, I went down to Offutt, to SAC headquarters [Strategic Air Command Headquarters, Offutt AFB, Omaha NE], and from there I went over to Vietnam. I was in an intelligence outfit in Vietnam. We did all the targeting for all the targets bombed in North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

TT So you were stationed in Saigon?

RC Yeah, we were at Ton Son Nhut, at the air base.

TT So you didn't want to go to Vietnam, but ended up there anyway. [laughs] At least you weren't on the front lines

RC Yes, I was not on the front lines although we did do some crazy things, like we helped direct close air support and, one of my friends—

- TT Oh, doing targeting?
- RC Well yeah, we'd be on the helicopter, a Huey—the intelligence people helping direct close air support.
- TT Oh on radios.
- RC Yeah. And we'd actually operate one of the side guns too. But a friend of mine, he wanted to go on R&R, so I took his week doing that, he came back the next week and took mine and got shot down and killed. Yeah, but, you know, things like that happened. Then from Vietnam, I was transferred up to Minot, and I spent the last two years in the service up there.
- TT So you did four years.
- RC Three years—eleven months—28 days roughly. [Smiles]
- TT From Vietnam to the Great White North.
- RC Yes, I mean it was cold up there.
- TT Yeah, I know, I've heard some of the stories. Especially back then; it must have been hell in the winter.
- RC Hey, you know, you go up to North Dakota to Minot, and you go to one of the malls and they've got places to plug in your car heaters, because if you don't have a car heater, I mean, its 25 below zero, it's not going to start.
- TT So it was October '67 that you arrived at Minot?
- RC October '67. Yeah, the first part of October.
- TT When you came, were you assigned to fill a position?
- RC Yeah, I was in the intelligence operation for the bomber wing up there.
- TT Now, would that have been the 5th Bomb[ardment] Wing [Heavy]?
- RC It could have been, I can't remember what bomb wing...but I was in the intelligence operation for that, and...
- TT So, essentially you were connected to the B-52s, the KC-135s any of the air traffic?
- RC Right, primarily the 52's, 'cause we did all the targeting for the targets that our 52's were gonna be responsible for if we had to go to war with Russia, so we did all the targeting then.

- TT Oh, so you were doing all the projective targeting?
- RC Well, I shouldn't say we did the targeting. A target was picked out and we did all the work as to how they were going to get there, where to drop their bombs, and we actually did scope photos so that: 'this is how it's going to look on your radar scope,' and, you know—
- TT So each crew would train on that.
- RC Yes. And we did it for all the different crews that were up there.
- TT Were they training on that specific information when they were doing their training flights?
- RC On the normal training flights there would be places that they would supposedly bomb, OK?
- TT Were two of those places St. George and Bismarck—were those bombsites?
- RC I don't remember, one of them was Lexington, Kentucky.
- TT Let me ask you [TT pointing to bomb scope photo on desk]. Here it says Bismarck and St. George. And I'm just wondering if that's what that means. Do you know what those two refer to?
- RC No, not off the top of my head. Although they could have been making a bombing run on that. OK, yeah they could, because they would bomb different targets every time they went up, and then we scored them on how accurate their bombs were. And also they had what was referred to as Operational Readiness Inspections twice a year. And they'd have specific targets that they would be required to bomb for those ORI's, and then they were evaluated on those.
- TT Right, and that's how they got their place in the hierarchy.
- RC Yeah, right, one was bombing Lexington Nebraska, and also Cozad, Nebraska on one of the ORI's. But we scored their radar every single day, you know, not every plane's going to go up every day, but I mean, we were scoring radar every day.
- TT What was the process for doing that, what was the procedure?
- RC OK. We would get negative film, we would not get this [indicating the radarscope positive photographic prints], we would get negative film and there were film readers that we would put this up on, and basically, you're gonna get the radar returns, I mean, you don't see it on here [again indicating scope photos] but a town is going to give a radar return, metal silos are going to give radar returns. They would be assigned to bomb a

certain area, and when they released the bombs, it would tell you on the scope that the bombs were released at this particular instant. So then we can project where their bombs are going to land and how close they're going to be.

TT OK, so you just calculated airspeed, wind—

RC Yes, all that good stuff. It wasn't too difficult once you figured it out, you know. Once I got there, I'd never done any work with 52's I was working with fighter-bombers. It took me about two weeks.

TT Oh, OK. Why because with fighter-bombers you're using missiles?

RC Yeah... well, you know, you're using bombs too... but they don't bomb by radar, they bomb by sight. Now that was 35 years ago, now they've got these, laser-directed, so...

TT They didn't have them in the late 60's?

RC No, those didn't come until the 90's.

TT Yeah, I did interview a guy who worked on the Norden bomb sight, back in World War II, and it was interesting to hear him talk, because, before that it was just seat of your pants —'OK, let it go!'

RC Yep... it was in [unintelligible] close.

TT OK, day to day did you do eight-hour shifts five days a week?

RC Primarily.

TT So you guys had a pretty regular schedule compared to the flight crews.

RC Oh, yeah. We were at peacetime there so we had very regular schedules, you know, when the operational readiness inspections come they'd usually start those on a weekend, and we'd have five days of hell, then they'd go away. Over in Vietnam, I was on twelve on and twelve off, and we worked nights, it was pretty much seven days a week. You did get a day off if things slowed down or something,

TT Were you officially with SAC while you were in Vietnam?

RC No.

TT Oh, so you got transferred back into SAC.

RC Right, I was with what we referred to it as a Recce Tech wing [Reconnaissance Technical Squadron], and I don't even remember what Recce Tech wing it was back then.

- TT Did Minot have a Recce Tech too?
- RC No. We had no fighters up there at all.
- TT Only some interceptors. Now ADC was south of you, right? There was a SAGE site there—did you connect with them at all?
- RC No.
- TT No. They were awfully separate from everything weren't they?
- RC Yeah. They lived in their own world.
- TT Yeah, in the documents, they were trying to get information from them on whether they had any radar returns on this, and it's kind of odd because you'd think that the communications would be easy, but from seeing how they're trying to ask the question, they're not getting good response, you know, so the fighters were probably ADC.
- RC Yeah, we had no fighters at Minot. Just B-52's All we had was just the 52's and the 135's. We had a couple courier planes, but those were DC-3's.
- TT So, no fighters at all?
- RC No.
- TT Let's use these scope photos for an example, how much information can you discern from them?
- RC Well, basically the only thing, you can discern is here's an object in the air, and it's flying along with the 52. And then, it goes from one side to the other side, and we computed how fast it was going based on the time span on the clock here [pointing to clock on a scope photo], so that's pretty much what you can compute.
- TT Can you determine the size of the object?
- RC No.
- TT But a seasoned radar operator might be able to compare it to what he knows to be the size of a KC-135?
- RC Right, right. It's a good size in order to make the size of blip that it made.
- TT OK, good size meaning as big as at least what?

- RC The 52. We could have probably interpolated roughly how big it was, but we didn't... because the crew said, you know, we got this... and I can't remember what they thought it was as far as to size, but they thought it was...
- TT Oh, bigger than a KC-135—
- RC Yeah, well, we thought it was bigger than the 52, but, you know, we didn't see any reason to try to figure out. I mean, you got these scope lines and here's the blip, and even in a best-case scenario, we couldn't even come within 100 ft. of its size based on the scope.
- TT Let's get to when the B 52 lands after their incident. You probably didn't know anything about it before then, right?
- RC No, we didn't know anything about it. We got there, we heard about it, you know, we went over to the photo lab because they were processing the film and we got hard prints as well as—
- TT So it was ready when you came in the morning?
- RC Yeah, the prints weren't ready. I got there at 7:30 every day, so no the prints weren't ready and the film, they had just started processing it.
- TT The film comes out as a negative.
- RC Yes.
- TT And, now you have film readers there that you can put a roll in like a microfilm machine and you can hand roll it?
- RC Yeah, you hand roll it, and basically, the film is like so [indicating the width of 35 mm film], and the screen is like so [indicating a size about 3 ft. square]. You get a big picture of each individual—
- TT High resolution?
- RC No, fuzzy. You know, they didn't have the projection techniques that they have today, 35 years ago, but it was still good, but it's not your projection techniques that they'd have today by any stretch of the imagination.
- TT OK, so you heard about it first thing in the morning, when did you guys order the film— at that point?
- RC Yeah.

- TT Is that what you would normally do? That stuff would come to you during the day and you would have to work on it?
- RC Yeah, it would come to us during the day but we, you know—
- TT But this was more interesting?
- RC Yeah, you see, scoring the bomb runs was not our major priority. Our major priority was keeping up with the intelligence of the day, we were always—virtually always updating the bombing information for what we were going to do if we came to war and go over Russia, I mean this was not a—
- TT Oh, that was your priority.
- RC Yeah, that was the priority. We always got the film scored, but sometimes we'd be a day or two days behind because it's not going to make a huge difference. But this turned into a priority so we informed the photo lab that we wanted it now.
- TT Now you say it turned into a priority, can you explain that?
- RC Well, the people were concerned about what it was. The bomb wing people because the crew was a little bit upset about what they'd seen.
- TT Yeah. So what you're saying, is that there was concern, and it was passed on down to you to figure out—
- RC Take a look at the film. Because if I remember right, I think it was three alarms that went off in missile silos.
- TT You remember that?
- RC I believe so. I mean, I think there were three alarms that went off in different missile silos, and they never did find anything.
- TT At what point do you hear about that?
- RC That same day.
- TT Officially, or was it, you know, talk?
- RC [Pauses] I don't remember for sure.
- TT But that was part of the whole information package.
- RC Yeah that—and I don't even remember who the CO was at that time. See, there was a lieutenant—when I first went there, there was a lieutenant colonel that was in charge of

the intelligence operation—the bomb wing. And then we got this flaky major who had a drinking problem, and then he went away and then we got another major who was a real jerk, so I don't know. I can't remember when we lost the lieutenant colonel, whether this was before or after.

TT Well, you had been there for year, almost to the month.

RC Yeah, but I don't remember when the lieutenant colonel left, I really don't, because he got transferred down to SAC headquarters, he was a good guy.

TT So what would your procedure be now that you've got the negative back from the film lab? Was the film lab in the same building as you?

RC No, no we took a vehicle over there.

TT And you're right on base—right in the center of the base?

RC Well, we were at the headquarters building which was a blockhouse building, and we were not too far from where the bombers were that were on the ready pad.

TT I've seen an overhead and I know what you're talking about—long building.

RC Yeah, no windows. In the wintertime the only time we saw the sun was on weekends, because we'd be there at 7:30 and didn't get done until 5:30. And up there in the wintertime the sun doesn't come out until after eight, and it sets at 4:00. No, the photo lab was not in our building, we took one of those nice blue vans that the Air Force had and went and got the film, 'cause I remember I went and got it.

TT What were they shooting? 100 ft. rolls or variable lengths?

RC They were variable lengths, you know.

TT What was the standard length?

RC I think it was 100 feet.

TT So 100 feet, that's a lot of time at three seconds a pop. How much total footage did they shoot of this particular UFO incident? We've got thirteen [actually fourteen] frames here [referring to the photographic prints].

RC Yeah, there were a lot more than that.

TT "A lot more" meaning?

RC [sighs] I don't remember, Tom.

- TT A hundred total?
- RC I would think so.
- TT More?
- RC Yeah.
- TT Possibly more. So they were shooting long before, and after this group?
- RC Yeah, basically, not long before, because, you know, if I remember right, they saw it. See, there's no reason to have this camera on if they're not doing a bomb run.
- TT Yeah, they were coming in. I'm sure they were packing up.
- RC Yeah, it was off. They saw it, they turned it on, and if I remember right, they left it on until they landed... so I can't remember what the time frame was.
- TT I suppose that if they had film in it, they might just leave it on?
- RC Yeah, they left it on until they landed, but I don't remember how long it was from the time they saw it until the time they landed.
- TT Well the thing is they didn't just come in and land, they did a low approach and those were taken at 4:06.
- RC But the object wasn't on the film all that long.
- TT No, it wasn't—for a few minutes, probably from about 3:58 when their radios go out, that's when the object approached. When their radios came back on, that's when they were through with the radio, you know—they claim that's where they stopped—the documents say that's when they stopped filming, but they may be wrong about that point if you are saying they continued filming.
- RC I know.
- TT Well anyway the object dropped away. The radar operator says that to him the experience was that the thing dropped. They were coming down, penetrating, they were down at 14 [thousand feet] apparently it just kept going down, you know, then they leveled off, and once that happened, the radios came back, and that was about a four or five minute period that the thing was pacing the aircraft. But they couldn't have started filming when it first came up—
- RC No, they didn't.

- TT —so it had to be a minute or two after—they must have filmed at least five minutes, you know.
- RC Well, it was on, because I remember—[sighs] you know the other thing too was he turned the radar to the different scopes [modes].
- TT Do you remember what he was on?
- RC [shakes head no]
- TT Station Keep from the radar operators.
- RC Yeah. Well see, this is not [indicating sector scan frame with no frame counter imaged], but this is [indicating frame number 771]. That's a terrain scan [indicating sector scan frame]. That's a terrain scan on high gain. Why he went to that, I have no idea at all.
- TT Well maybe that's out of sequence with these shots, do you remember that being there next to those?
- RC I don't remember now off the top of my head [looking closely at prints]. But I just had them print out what I thought was relevant. So whether all—I just had, like I say, I just had them print what I felt were the relevant prints.
- TT Yeah. So you're the one who requested these thirteen [fourteen]?
- RC Yes.
- TT OK. And what did you do with the prints?
- RC I kept a set
- TT So you had two sets.
- RC Yes, and one set went into the folder.
- TT Oh, in your report. Now, how extensive was the report, and was it just sent up to your commander?
- RC Well, yeah, and it was minimal because they wanted to make sure that it was there, you know, [chuckles] and that the crew wasn't being a little flaky, well you know, I mean it's pretty evident that it's there. [holding up radarscope prints]. Yeah, and we sent up. Like I say, I cannot remember what speed that it was... but you know, we did compute an estimated speed, and it was faster than anything that we had at the time.
- TT Well like I said the documents say 3000 miles an hour.

- RC It could have been. That's what we computed?
- TT Yes.
- RC —'cause they got it from us.
- TT Let's go a step further from there. So you passed that report up, and was that the end of it as far as any of your involvement?
- RC Yeah.
- TT You never heard back? No one asked you for any additional information?
- RC [Shaking head no] "It's going to be looked into."
- TT That was the general response?
- RC Uh huh. And they had no explanation for it.
- TT Later? Oh, did you ask about it later?
- RC Yeah, basically, what I remember was that the reports were sent up, and at that time that they had no explanation for it, but they were going to investigate further and that's the last I heard.
- TT Yeah, well, the same with all the other witnesses, they're not going to report back to them—
- RC [makes sound indicating 'of course not']
- TT —but you know, it is odd that the following day the aircrew was called in for a debriefing. It wasn't a normal debriefing for these guys. I think they were in your building, and they don't usually go in there, or something like that?
- RC No, they come into our building all the time.
- TT OK, well then it wasn't your building, they went to some other building for this debriefing, I don't know where, they were out of their turf, and they didn't know the guy that was debriefing. But the odd thing is that this guy told them all kinds of things. I don't understand why they would debrief them, you know, to see what they knew, and the debriefing was odd because the gunner claims that when object moved behind the plane that he saw it on his 60 degree rear radar for a flash, he says he saw it. I don't know if that's an accurate recall by him but he said in the debriefing he didn't tell anybody that, because nobody asked. But he almost got the impression that the debriefing was more like to tell the crew what happened, you know what I mean? Because from the pilot and the co-pilot's point of view they were told all kinds of things that we haven't been able to

verify. Like for example that, I don't know if it was a camper crew or whatever, there was a crew out in a six pack, and the object came over the top of this truck and scared the hell out of these guys and they jumped out to run and nobody heard from these guys, they sent another security team down there and found the guys unconscious on the ground. Now here we've got a general or at least a colonel debriefing the crew and telling them stuff like that?

RC Well I heard—and that rings a bell. I heard that, and I don't know how accurate it is, and I can't remember who I heard it from but it had to be somebody in the wing. I heard that they sent a crew out to one of the missile silos after the alarms went off and that something similar to that happened to the crew, you know, the motor stopped, the lights went off, and—but I can't remember.

TT In what direction did that occur from the base?

RC I don't remember. I don't even remember which three silos went off.

TT So what you seem to remember is that three separate silos went off?

RC Three separate silos went off and they ended up, what I did hear was that they couldn't find anything

TT Now when you say “went off”—exterior alarms, interior alarms?

RC Yes, interior alarms. But they didn't find anything. Nobody could have been in there.

TT Here's what the documents say: at Oscar-6, which would have been from you northeast a bit, you know, not too far, actually Oscar-7, there was a camper team at Oscar-6—the perimeter alarms went off and the interior alarm. In other words, somebody opened the gate, unlatched it, went in, went to the navy hatch, unlocked it, opened it up and messed with the combination. Once the combination was messed with the alarm went off, you know changed, because it was set, right? Next day, they sent a team out there, could find no footprints, no evidence at all that anybody was in there.

RC Right.

TT Very strange.

RC Yeah, that's what I say, that the alarms went off but they couldn't find anything to justify the alarms going off.

TT In the documents they say ‘oh, it was probably some pranksters.’

RC No way!

- TT Yeah, but I mean, but they make a big thing about this being ‘oh, it was probably some AP’s who were pissed and they were playing a prank.’
- RC Wrong. Never happen.
- TT I don’t buy that either when you hear some of the other stories of the security there.
- RC Security was tight back then. There was a different mentality back then than there is today. The people that were there, first of all, if you were in the Air Force, you had to volunteer for it and you got to serve four years. Maybe you didn’t like being at Minot, but you still did your job. I don’t care who you were. And if you didn’t they got rid of you. There was a kid who worked for me, he was a 204 which is a glorified secretary in intelligence, you know, 206, those were the people that did the work, the 204, they typed up all the stuff for us. I mean, he was a flake and I got rid of him in less than two weeks. You just didn’t put up with that stuff back then because you didn’t have to. He went washing dishes. He lost his security clearance he lost everything.
- TT Yeah, the whole SAC regimen is pretty impressive, you know, I mean it is. It was amazingly efficient.
- RC So, you know, I don’t buy anything that it was any of our people.
- TT It is a puzzle, could off duty AP’s have those keys?
- RC No.
- TT I wouldn’t think so, you’d think there were key packets that were passed on and off when you checked in and out, so somebody would have had to literally—
- RC Yeah, not gonna happen. I mean, they don’t leave the possession of the people who are on duty, and when you go off duty, you give it to the next person who’s on duty.
- TT And the codes are changed on a regular basis.
- RC Yes and you don’t go to a hardware shop and make a new key. [Laughs]
- TT Do you recall any other interest from outside the base?
- RC No. It was almost like it never happened.
- TT Well the information wasn’t coming down, it was going up if anything.
- RC Yeah, and nothing was coming back. And you know, they didn’t come back in to talk to myself or any of the people that worked for me, or my boss.

- TT Yeah. Now the radar operator, the Navigator, his name is Patrick McCaslin, he says that the following day or the day after a group from Washington came—
- RC [Nodding yes].
- TT —and viewed the film and asked him questions, talked about it. He asked if he could talk about it, they said no problem, you know, they were pretty casual about the whole thing, but they didn't contact you or ask your opinion?
- RC No. They didn't come to see me. We had already put together our report, I mean we were done—2:00 in the afternoon, you know, had computed speeds and had done our report that same day, and nobody came to talk to us.
- TT In all your time, did you deal with other anomalies in your work?
- RC Not like this. I mean yeah, you're gonna see, on radar scopes some weird things, you know because if they're flying over an area and you're getting some feedback from different things, I mean, you know, it's going to appear on the scope, but nothing like this.
- TT Let me ask you, if they could shoot the ground, obviously you're going to have all kinds of problems if you're shooting down, right? At the time these were taken they were somewhere between 20 and 14 thousand [feet]. They were pretty high up. Would you have the same kind of problems with ground clutter and so forth at those kinds of altitudes?
- RC Ah, no and this is not ground clutter. You've never seen a radarscope paint I would imagine, but [gets paper and pen] you're going to have, depending on what it is, and I'm going to do this real quick. If you've got a town, a small town or something, it's going to paint dark. Flat land is not going to paint at all. Your town, or let's say it's a bunch of silos that they store corn in or something in, they're going to paint dark. If you're going into mountains, the mountains are going to paint and there's going to be a void behind them, because it can't see down below the mountain, depending on what your altitude is. So radarscopes are going to— looking at the ground, objects that reflect, mountains, towns, metal buildings, they're going to paint dark. The other objects—non-objects are going to be not there, there's nothing there.
- TT OK, that makes sense then that you do your analysis on the negative because you've got the right polarity to see what's going on?
- RC Yeah. So when we did the bombing pictures for them, when they are gonna go in at such and such an altitude, OK, we had these really sophisticated maps with all the mountains and stuff, because if you got a 10,000 ft. peak, and you're at 20,000 ft., it's gonna come down like this [indicating a downward slope with his hands] and part behind it you're not going to see. So we could paint the non-area so it would be clear where the mountain is going to be this. If you're at 15,000 ft., that non area is going to be longer than if you are

at ten. The higher you're up, the shorter the area is going to be. I don't know if that makes sense to you or not.

TT You'd never had another experience with anything of this nature.

RC No, this is nothing like anything—

TT Yeah, that's the irony about radar. Back in '52 they brought in this idea that a lot of these spurious radar cases were being caused by inversions, I mean there are mirages obviously and the angels and so on and so forth, but they started to use it as a general explanation for everything. Even on this case, the guy at FTD, one of his explanations for the case is that there was an inversion, and it's weak in this case but they still use it whether it's valid or not. His explanation for this is that was ball lightning. But, you know, explain how a ball lightning on a clear night can pace an aircraft.

RC Yeah, basically, trying to explain it away.

TT Ball lightning, was that something that you had any experience with—electrical discharges in the atmosphere you had to deal with when analyzing radar photos or anything like that?

RC Yeah, I mean, these guys flew in rain, they flew in lightning and stuff—not like that [pointing to radar scope photo], it's not that.

TT How about inversions? Where they a problem for you in analysis?

RC [Shakes head no].

TT No. How about angels where you get sort of like a truck on the ground bouncing off the inversion and picking it up on radar?

RC At this altitude [pointing to scope photos] if you were going to the ground, and it is a single truck you're not going to see it. Not at that altitude.

TT But at lower altitudes that could be an issue?

RC Yeah. It could be, you know, at that altitude you're not going to see a single truck

TT Is radar that problematic?

RC No, big, ground-based radar systems can be affected by more things, you know this is actually more sophisticated because it's covering a smaller area than what those ground based systems are.

TT Yeah, and it's controllable in range too. Yeah, the fact that he was within that station keep, which is 5 miles, puts it in the immediate area around the aircraft. These are the

images in which you were able to determine that the object moved at the speed that you computed. Which are the images, the two images that you did that analysis on?

RC I don't remember, I mean, here it's on one side, [frame 771], here it's the other side [frame 772]. I thought it was these two [frames 771 & 772], but I don't remember now [pointing at frame 772 and using desk calculator].

TT Here's another confusing part of it. Let me show you a map and I'll explain [gets small missile field map]. Basically, the B-52 went up near Bowbells, made a right-hand turn, was on its way back to Minot. They were flying up northwest. And as they were flying up, RAPCON said 'be on the lookout for a UFO one o'clock position,' so obviously they're headed this direction [northwest] and they're looking up here for the UFO, which is where all these guys were seeing it [ground witnesses]. They didn't see anything going up. When they got up here they did a right hand turn around the TACAN, and were headed straight back to Minot. As soon as they finished their turn and they were leveling out at 20,000 [feet] the object appeared. In the documents it says 'the object appeared 3 miles off their beam' which would be out here 3 miles and that it moved from 3 mi. out, to a mile and a quarter in one sweep [of the radar scope]. Now what you're saying and what everybody on the B-52 is telling me is that the object first appeared on the right, and moved to the left of the plane.

RC To the left, yeah.

TT But I don't see that evidence in these images. The object is always on the left here except for the one image, this one [772], otherwise, the object is always to the left of the airplane.

RC I don't remember myself.

TT I was afraid you'd say that.

RC You know, but isn't this what they're—it went from right to left.

TT That's what everybody on the plane is saying. But the documents aren't. They're saying it was on the left and moved into the airplane. They said it was 3 miles out and moved in to a mile quarter, a mile and a half within a sweep. They're implying that's where the 3000 mi. an hour analysis was performed. But see, that would've happened as soon as they made their turnaround. That wasn't at the time that these images were shot. It would have been long before these images were shot.

RC [Looking at scope images 771 and 772 and at calculator]. See, we computed the distance that it went in the time between scans and that's how we came up with the speed. I can't remember, it went from right to left. Here he's out 3 miles [frame 771], here it's out a mile and three quarters [frame 772], but it didn't go 4.75 miles.

TT Right, he changed the gain on the scan?

- RC Right. Well no. It would have had to have gone—in order to do that, it would have to go from here over to here [indicating a straight line path on frame 771], which it did not do. It went from here [blip position on frame 771] down to here [indicating approximately four o'clock position frame 771]. Because we had it up on the projection unit—
- TT I get you, so this is what you're using for the analysis from up here, which is on their heading almost—
- RC Yes.
- TT —in front of them, So it's in front of them on the right [frame 771], and it's moving back to their rear right [frame 772] and then over to the left [frame 773].
- RC Yes. See, because it was moving with them and it changed speed, changed direction within three seconds, and six seconds later it's here [frame 773]. I just don't remember, I mean we computed it based on the scope, the range, and that's how we came up with the speed. I thought it was faster than 3000 miles an hour, but I—
- TT Well, I think it is, but, you know, 3000 is fast enough for everybody.
- RC Yeah [using desk calculator]. See, I was thinking it was closer to 3900 miles an hour. I think we computed that in the time frame it went like 3—I want to say like 3.2 miles. Now if you convert that out, basically in three second increments, you're going to have in an hour there's 1200 three second increments so 3.25, that would be 3900 miles an hour, but I don't remember. I know it was over 3000 mi. an hour.
- TT OK. I mean, you ordered these prints so you told them first print is 771, because anything prior to that was not of any use?
- RC Right there was nothing on it.
- TT Oh, this object wasn't even on it?
- RC No. If I remember right, this is when he first turned on [frame 771].
- TT Ah.
- RC OK first turned it on in this mode where he could get it [frame 771]. Because, we computed the speed based on point A to point B. I had them print every significant image. That's why I'm positive that's what that is [un-numbered frame]. That is before he turned it on, that's the scan before he turned it there [frame 771]. There would have been no other reason for me to have it printed.
- TT Yeah, if it were at the end?

- RC Right. That's the scan before he started [un-numbered sector scan frame].
- TT I've got a couple of more questions here I'm going to run through. So you were in bombing intelligence for two years—basically doing radar analysis and targeting?
- RC [nodding]
- TT You don't remember the unit name?
- RC No, I don't.
- TT Was there a unit within the bomb wing intelligence that you were—?
- RC No, intelligence was assigned to the bomb wing, so we were with the bomb wing, we were not separate.
- TT You were directly subordinate to them?
- RC Yes. My colonel, well, whether it was a colonel or a major at the time I can't remember, but he reported directly to the wing commander.
- TT OK.
- RC When I was in Vietnam, it was separate, we were not with Seventh Air Force, we were independent, and it was a Recce Tech wing.
- TT Oh, right. So they just moved you around where they needed you.
- RC Yes.
- TT You don't recall any of the names of the people you worked with?
- RC Boy, well there was a lieutenant Wallach (sp?) that worked there...
- TT You guys didn't hang out after hours sort of thing? Did you have a family? Were you married?
- RC I was married at the time. I was living off base.
- TT Off base, so lot of guys lived on base or whatever.
- RC Yeah, all the single guys lived on base in base housing. The married people in my unit lived off base, other than the officers they lived on base.
- TT How old were you at the time?

- RC Twenty-two. I turned 21 in Vietnam.
- TT So, you did talk to the B-52 crew?
- RC Yes.
- TT To the whole crew or—?
- RC No, I don't recall who I talked to.
- TT Why would you talk to one of the crew? Was that a normal thing to do?
- RC Well yes and no, I mean the crews came into our facility all the time.
- TT So they would come off their missions, and come into your building.
- RC Sometimes, yeah.
- TT What would the radar operator do? I mean he must have to download the film after a mission?
- RC No, they don't do that. The people from the photo lab come over, you know, and get the film and all that stuff off the 52. My biggest connection was with the Bomb-Navigators because we scored them and we worked with them—
- TT That would have been Chuck Richey in this crew.
- RC —sometimes they'd have questions on our, you know on the bomb runs that we did for the Operational Readiness Inspections. Sometimes they'd want—they're scored on how well they do and we're the ones that drew up the scopes for us and, you know, they'd come in and they wanted to make sure that we had done a good job, because we're telling them 'this is what it's going to look like' and we're doing it from terrain maps, and, you know, all kinds of maps.
- TT So they're coming in to double-check your work?
- RC Yeah, to make sure we know what the hell we're talking about.
- TT So you had more contact with the Bomb-Navigator than anybody on the B-52.
- RC Yeah.
- TT I mean did you know them sort of first name basis over time?
- RC No, we were not first name basis.

- TT OK. I think you intimated earlier that you knew that a team came out from Washington, but you didn't talk to them, is that true?
- RC I heard about it.
- TT You heard about it.
- RC But I don't know, they didn't talk to me.
- TT When you say you 'heard about it' what do you recall?
- RC That they were sending somebody out from Washington to talk to the crew. You know, and I don't remember who asked me but they wanted to know if I was sure about this [indicating scope photos]. Because that's when they said that there was somebody coming out from Washington and wanted to know if I was sure about this. And I told them, "it's there in black and white," there's nothing else that it can be.
- TT Why did you keep duplicate images of these?
- RC I thought it was neat! [Smiles].
- TT And there was no problem with you doing that? These weren't classified?
- RC They were not classified. They may have classified them after the fact, but this was not classified material.
- TT I thought that any time film was exposed by anyone in the service or by contractors under the employ of the Air Force, for example like Land-Air used to do a lot of independent contract work for the Air force out at White Sands and so forth, any time they exposed film it became classified, and they were required to carry a side arm you know. That wasn't the case here?
- RC No. We had a lot of classified material. I had a Top Secret SIOP-ESI clearance and we burned classified material, you know, we did not have sophisticated cross-cut shredders back in those days—an officer and a NCO every week went out and burned classified material, literally.
- TT Would you be burning this stuff [indicating scope photos]?
- RC No, any of the film, or any of the prints from daily missions, hell, we'd throw them away. Those radar images are not going to mean anything to anybody. I mean, you couldn't tell a radar image of New York City compared to L.A., unless you knew it.

- TT You weren't aware that they came close—they were within 3200 feet [MSL] of the object above it, and it was either on the ground or hovering above the ground. Now... the instructor pilot on board saw it when they came around from the close approach, and he said as soon as they turned they could see it about 15 mi. ahead on the ground. It didn't move the whole time and when they came within a mile of it they turned to come back in and that's when they lost sight of it, but at that point they would have been almost right over it. You didn't know that at the time?
- RC No, I didn't.
- TT At the time and now, what do you think about the incident?
- RC Well, you know it had to have been a UFO. You know, we had nothing that could do the kind of speed that it had back then and to be able to change directions, I mean, flying with the plane and changing directions while still maintaining, I mean, you're going—
- TT The plane was going between 230 and 280.
- RC OK, yeah, I mean, it's going like this and then all of a sudden it's over here, and it's still going this way [indicating object motion with hand], I mean, even if we had something that could go that fast it could not—it's going to go that fast this way [indicating straight line motion with hand] and—
- TT In one direction.
- RC —but it can't go that way too. And that's why it was phenomenal.
- TT At the time, that's what impressed you?
- RC Well, like I say, it had to be something other than what we were aware of, you know, and I didn't think our technology had anything like that as far as capability, so it's got to be a UFO.
- TT Well, that's almost exactly what the radar-navigator said when he saw that. He realized it was something unique.
- RC And, how fast did it really do it, because you've got three seconds between the scans? Did it take it a second to do it? If so it's going three times as fast as what we computed. Did it take a second and half; did it take the whole three seconds? No, it didn't take the whole three seconds, so here's the minimum speed it could be going: over 3000 mi. an hour. You know if it took it a second you're looking at 10,000 miles an hour.
- TT —it only detected the lower limit.
- RC Yeah. Here's the minimum speed it can have been going, and that's over 3000 miles an hour. That's based on: it took its three seconds to go from point A to point B. Now we

can't tell anybody that it took three seconds, we know it didn't take longer than three seconds. If it took a second then it's going to go a lot faster, if it took a second and a half, but we had no way of knowing exactly how long it took, and neither did the crew, I mean the crew, from what I remember—

TT What do you recall? I mean, walk through what you remember the crew telling you after.

RC Alright. What I remember is that they said that it went from one side to the other side. It wasn't "in the blink of an eye," they didn't put it that way, but it was something like "almost instantaneously." I can't remember the exact words, but you know, they said it was here and then boom it's there [indicating locations with hand]. I think he said, and I can't remember who it was, they saw it over there and all of the sudden it was gone and it was over there.

TT Another question: were you ever asked not to discuss the incident?

RC Not to my knowledge.

TT Yeah.

RC It wasn't classified. Well, everything we dealt with was Top Secret, so, you know, my wife at the time had no idea what I did.

TT Did you do a complete analysis as far as you were concerned?

RC As complete as...

TT You satisfied everybody, obviously.

RC Right. And basically, the big question was, 'how fast is this puppy going?' Nothing about how big it is, they wanted to know—

TT They wanted to know performance.

RC Well, how fast it was going and what we felt it was. Hey, it's going over 3000 mi. an hour, it's a UFO guys; there's nothing else that could do it. I don't care what anybody says, there is no other explanation for that [indicating scope photos]. I mean, I don't believe that we have the technology today to do what that—

TT We're still building airplanes.

RC Yeah.

TT And like you said, good credible witness testimony.

RC Well, I mean you don't get the kind of security clearances that a lot of those people had, including myself.

TT You had a nuclear... what did you call it? An ESI?

RC It was Top Secret SIOP-ESI, that was the clearance, that's as good as it got, I mean top—

TT You were cleared to work with nuclear materials?

RC No. Any documents I could see. Pretty much so. It's just like at SAC headquarters, if you were on the main floor that was Top Secret, you go down to the underground you had to have a Top Secret SIOP-ESI clearance, otherwise you could not go down there. So somebody with—I mean, they talk about Confidential, Secret and Top Secret —Top Secret is nothing.

TT Yeah.

RC I mean, it gets much more—Top Secret SIOP is one level, Top Secret SIOP-ESI, that's as high a clearance as you can get. You've got Top Secret, and then you've got Top Secret SIOP, and then Top Secret SIOP-ESI. I mean where we worked, and we were in a block building up at Minot, there was people outside our door who had Top Secret clearance who could not come inside.

TT Oh really.

RC Yeah, and they were Intelligence types like myself, but they couldn't come inside where we were.

TT They didn't have a need to know.

RC No.

TT I think the B-52 guys had to have that to handle nuclear weapons...

RC Well, they didn't handle them, they dropped them. [smiles]

TT [chuckles] Well, I mean, they were in their possession for a while.

RC Yeah.

TT OK, thanks for your time.

[end of recording]