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ing a routine patrol for the North Dakota National Guard, and he jumped the tower at the Fargo Municipal Airport for clearance to land when he saw what seemed to be another plane's tail-light a thousand yards away. He queried the tower, and the men there reported that the only other aircraft over the field was a Piper Cub. Gorman could see the Cub plainly outlined below him. Curious, he flew toward the light. "It was about six to eight inches in diameter, clear white, and completely round, with a sort of fuzz at the edges," Gorman later told investigators, adding that he saw "no outline of anything" around the edges. "It was blinking on and off. As I approached, however, the light suddenly became steady and pulled into a sharp left bank. . . . I dived after it and brought my manifold pressure up to sixty inches, but I couldn't catch up with the thing. It started gaining altitude and again made a left bank. I put my F-51 into a sharp turn and tried to cut the light off in its turn. By then, we were at about seven thousand feet. Suddenly it made a sharp right turn and we headed straight at each other. Just when we were about to collide, I guess I got scared. I went into a dive and the light passed over my canopy at about five hundred feet. Then it made a left circle about a thousand feet above, and I gave chase again." Gorman followed the light up to fourteen thousand feet, where, after another near collision, his ship went into a power stall and the light disappeared to the northwest. Gorman noticed no sounds or exhaust-trail odors. He had gunned his plane up to four hundred miles an hour without gaining on the light. It was able to maintain an extremely steep angle of ascent, far greater than that of his Air Force fighter. "When I attempted to turn with [the light], I blacked out temporarily, due to excessive speed," he said. "I am in fairly good physical condition and I do not believe there are many, if any, pilots who could withstand the turn and speed effected by that light and remain conscious."

Project Saucer suspected that Gorman was tilting with a weather balloon. For one thing, it learned that the Fargo weather station had released a lighted balloon only ten minutes before Gorman's patrol stopped being routine. The object's steady, practically vertical climb suggested the behavior of a balloon. A technician who once worked on Project Saucer told me recently that chasing a weather balloon with an airplane is comparable to diving to the bottom of a pool after a hollow rubber