



CENTAURUS A

WHO: Centaurus A, also known as NGC 5128, is a galaxy with a supermassive black hole at its core.

WHAT: The giant black hole in Centaurus A is responsible for the huge jet of material blasting out of the galaxy, which is seen in X-rays.

WHERE: Centaurus A is located about 14 million light years from Earth. It is found in the constellation that shares its name, representing a mythical half-man, half-horse creature.

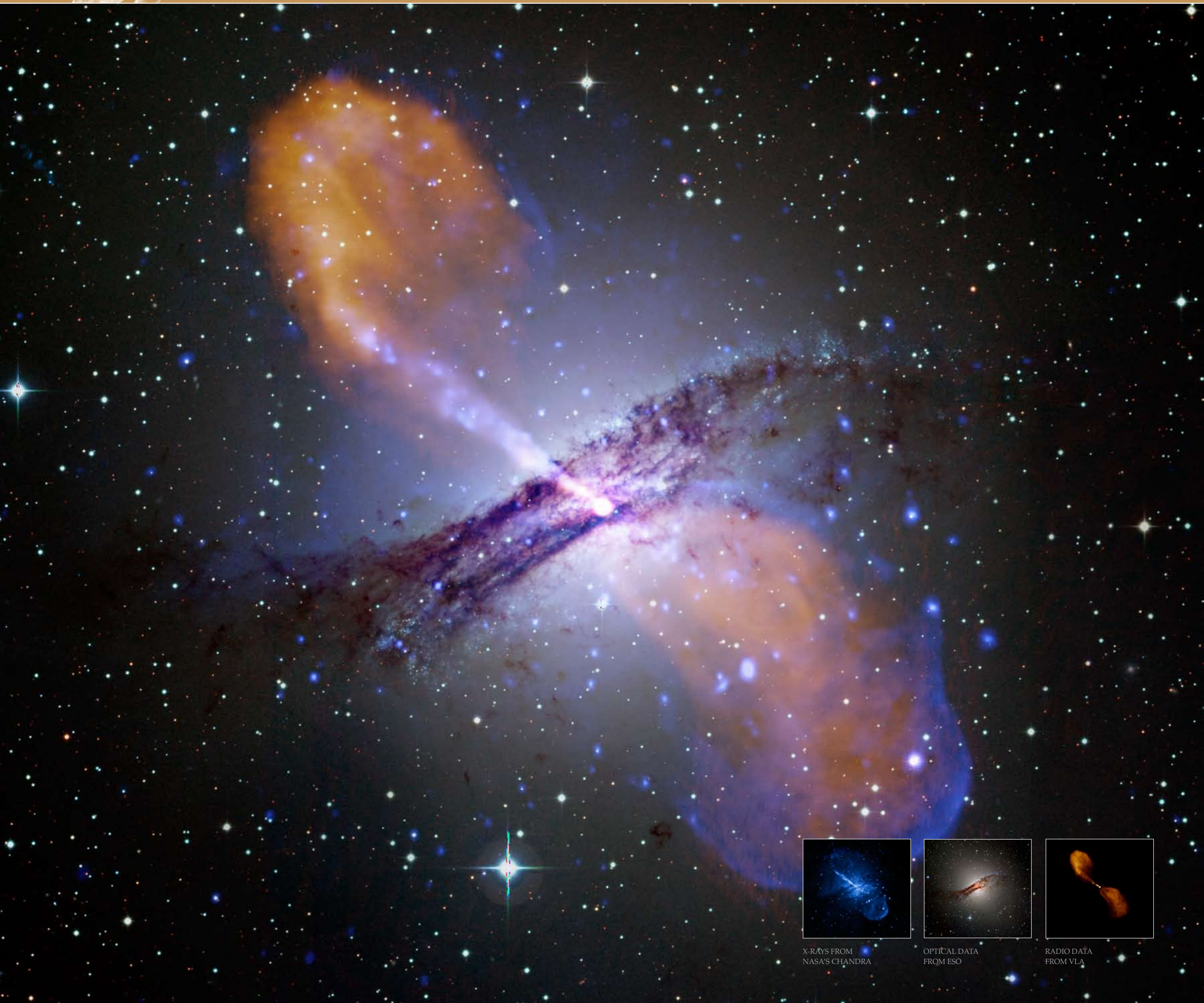
WHEN: The dark bands across the center of the galaxy were likely created when Centaurus A merged with

another galaxy perhaps 100 million years ago. The jet probably occurred much more recently.

HOW: These jets are thought to be powered by material falling toward a black hole, combined with the effects of strong magnetic fields and rapid rotation (see illustration below).

WHY: Astronomers think that these jets are responsible for transporting vast amounts of energy from the vicinity of a black hole to the rest of the galaxy and beyond. This process affects the rate at which stars form, the black hole grows, and ultimately how the galaxy evolves.

More at: <http://chandra.harvard.edu>



X-RAYS FROM NASA'S CHANDRA



OPTICAL DATA FROM ESO



RADIO DATA FROM VLA

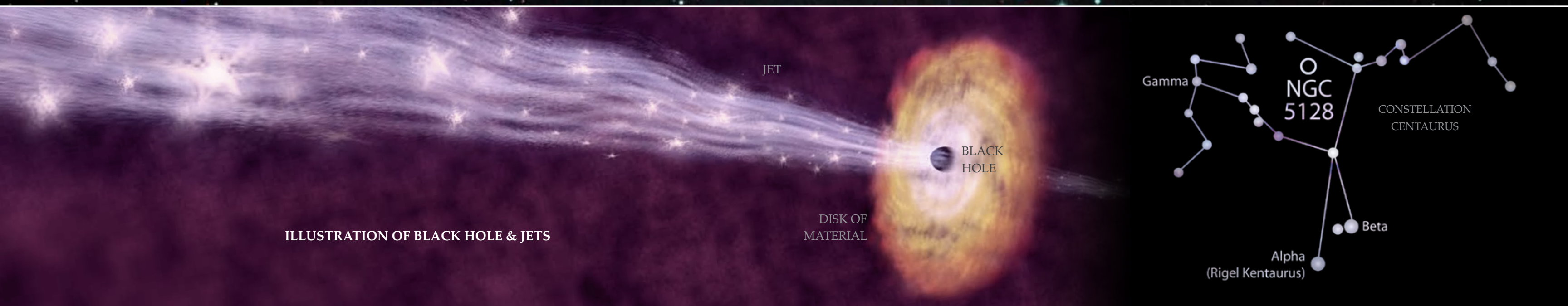
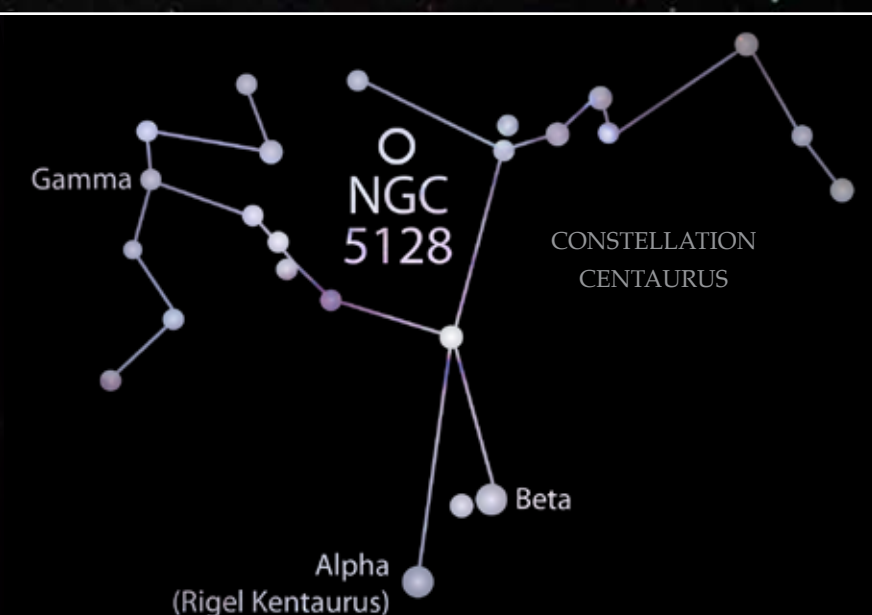


ILLUSTRATION OF BLACK HOLE & JETS

DISK OF MATERIAL

JET

BLACK HOLE



CONSTELLATION CENTAURUS

NGC 5128

Beta

Alpha (Rigel Kentaurus)