



# PROBE

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by Jess Stearn



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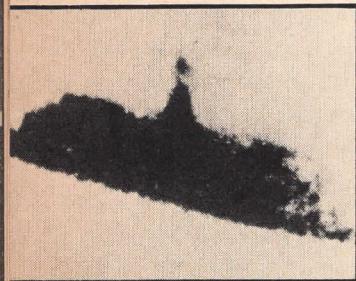
**ALIEN LIFE**



## **UFO FACEOFF**

### **Do they or don't they exist?**

by Robert B. Klinn



*A close encounter or  
an optical illusion?  
UFOs may, indeed,  
exist.*

• **W**hat is the most convincing evidence that has led you to conclude that UFOs are real, that UFOs do indeed exist?"

That was the question put to several of the top UFO experts in this country. But their answers, though learned and freely given, seem eclipsed in terms of clarity and vision by the eloquent lectures and precisely articulated statements of the most brilliant exponent of the UFO phenomenon, the late Dr. James E. McDonald.

And so, other than by performing your own research and investigations in the field, a conviction that UFOs exist can be most nearly achieved by following the detailed investigations of McDonald himself.

"Over 20 years of evidence suggests that *machine-like objects*—products of some technology rather than atmospheric optical or

electrical anomalies—have been repeatedly seen, often by observers of very high credibility," he once told the Astronautics Symposium of the Canadian Aeronautics and Space Institute. "I favor an extraterrestrial hypothesis for UFOs."

He died an untimely death in the early 70s, but the last four years of McDonald's life were largely spent trying to convince his scientist-colleagues of the seriousness of the problem.

With little fanfare, he personally investigated hundreds of cases in detail and brought his scientific expertise to bear against the pseudo-scientific explanations of certain scientist-skeptics.

Dr. McDonald was the senior physicist at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics, and professor of meteorology at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

He lectured during the last years of his life to such distinguished professional groups as the

*Photo Credit: Griffith Observatory*



*Lights in the sky, atmospheric anomalies, or perhaps the real thing? Science may soon provide the answer.*

American Meteorological Society, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the United Nations Outer Space Affairs Group, United Aircraft Research Laboratories, the Canadian Aeronautics and Space Institute, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, the Boeing Management Association, the Scientific Research Society of America, the Thomas Alva Edison Foundation, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Radar Meteorological Conference.

Speaking before the United Nations Outer Space Affairs Group, McDonald said, "there is a strong indication that the number of reports of close-range, low-altitude sightings of completely unconventional aerial objects exhibiting machine-like features and displaying inexplicable performance characteristics has been increasing in the past few years."

He rejected categorically the view that these are merely misidentified natural atmospheric or astronomical phenomena: "Many explanations to this effect are almost absurdly erroneous. Nor is it possible to explain all these sightings with hypotheses of advanced (human) technologies or secret test vehicles, with hypotheses of hoax or fraud or fabrication or with psychological hypotheses... There are an astonishing number of reports made by highly credible observers which cannot be explained away."

He believed that official ridicule should be replaced by high-caliber scientific scrutiny. "It seems indispensable to secure United Nations involvement in the study of this problem, the global importance of which may be truly enormous," stated McDonald.

The evidence that enables us with confidence to say UFOs EXIST can be appreciated by following McDonald's sound, in-depth investigations. For example, McDonald analyzed the United States Air Force RB-47 crew's sighting of September 19, 1957.

An Air Force RB-47 aircraft, equipped with electronic countermeasures gear, and manned by six officers, was followed over a total distance in excess of 600 miles and for a time period of more than an hour, as it flew from the vicinity of Gulfport, Mississippi, through Louisiana and Texas, and into southern Oklahoma. McDonald ascertained that the UFO was seen visually

by the cockpit crew, was followed by ground radar and was detected on electronic countermeasures monitoring gear aboard the RB-47.

Three of the crew were electronic warfare officers manning ECM gear in the aft portion of the aircraft.

McDonald held nine separate interviews with the six crew members who were: Lewis D. Chase, pilot, Spokane, Washington; James H. McCoid, copilot, Offutt Air Force Base; Thomas H. Hanley, navigator, Vandenburg Air Force Base; John J. Provenzano, No. 1 Monitor, Wichita; Frank B. McClure, No. 2 Monitor, Offutt Air Force Base; and Walter A. Tuchscherer, No. 3 Monitor, Topeka.

"All were experienced men at the time," McDonald told assembled members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at their 134th meeting in Boston. "Condon

operations is, he said, that of detecting the enemy radar and quantitatively identifying a number of relevant features of the radar system: Carrier frequency, pulse repetition frequency, scan rate, pulse width, and above all, its bearing relative to the aircraft heading. The bearing is identified by means of direction-finding antennas which pick up the enemy signal and display, on a monitor scope inside the reconnaissance aircraft, *a blip or lobe* that paints in the relative bearing from which the signal is coming.

McDonald first determined the precise technical nature of all the monitoring equipment inside the RB-47 aircraft.

Then he determined that, with respect to radar-frequency direction-finders, any legitimate signal from a fixed *ground* radar must move *downscope*, excluding the special cases in which the radar is dead ahead or dead astern.

As the lobe moved upscope, McClure told McDonald, the strength of the incoming signal and its pulse characteristics were at 2,800 megacycles. McDonald found that the UFO had made an upscope-downscope orbit of the RB-47.

McDonald learned that immediately after that, Chase and McCoid began talking about it on the interphone, and McClure, recalling the unusual 2,800-megacycle signal that he had seen over Gulfport, now mentioned that peculiar incident for the first time to Chase and McCoid.

"It occurred to McClure at that point to set his No. 2 Monitor to scan at 2,800 megacycles. On the first scan, McClure told me, he got a strong 2,800-megacycle signal from their 2 o'clock position, the bearing on which the luminous unknown object had blinked out moments earlier," reported McDonald.

Provenzano told McDonald that right after that, they had checked out the No. 2 Monitor on valid ground radar stations to be sure it was not malfunctioning, and it appeared to be in perfect order. He then checked his No. 1 Monitor and also got a signal from the same bearing.

"There remained, of course, the possibility that just by chance, this signal was from a *real* radar down on the ground," explained McDonald, "but as the minutes went by and the aircraft

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**Later, the men in the cockpit suddenly saw the bright red light flash on again, along the same flight path but lower, and simultaneously GCI got a target again . . .**

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Project investigators (University of Colorado-Air Force sponsored study of unidentified flying objects, headed by Dr. Edward U. Condon and reported on in PROBE's April issue), only talked with Chase, McCoid and McClure," he ascertained.

"Just as the aircraft crossed the Mississippi coast near Gulfport, McClure, manning the No. 2 Monitor, detected a signal near their 5 o'clock position (left of the starboard beam). It looked to him like a legitimate ground radar signal but corresponded to a position out in the Gulf," McDonald reported.

McDonald explained that under conditions of war, bombing aircraft entering hostile territory can be assisted in their penetrations if electronic countermeasures techniques are brought into action against ground-based enemy radar units. The initial step in all ECM

continued westward at about 500 knots, the relative bearing of the 2,800-megacycle source did *not* move down-scope on the No. 2 Monitor, but kept up with them.

"This quickly led to a situation in which the entire six-man crew focused all attention on the matter." McDonald learned that Chase varied speed, to see if the relative bearing would change, but nothing altered.

After over 100 miles of this, with the 2,800-megacycle source keeping pace with the aircraft, they were getting into the radar-coverage area of the Carswell Air Force Base Ground Controlled Intercept unit (GCI).

And Carswell GCI immediately reported back that there was apparently another aircraft about ten miles from them at their 2 o'clock position. "This information, each of the men emphasized to me in one way or another, made them a bit uneasy for the first time," McDonald discovered.

McDonald asked McClure if the signal from the UFO was in all respects comparable to that of a typical ground radar. "McClure told me that this was what baffled him the most, then and now.

"All the radar signature characteristics, as read out on his ALA-5 pulse analyzer, were completely normal, i.e., it had a pulse repetition frequency and pulse width like a CPS-6B and even simulated a scan rate! But its intensity, McClure pointed out, was so strong that *'it would have had to have an antenna bigger than a bomber to put out that much signal.'*"

McDonald concluded that the up-scope-downscope sweep of the No. 2 Monitor lobe implied that the UFO had flown a circle around the RB-47 at 30-35,000 feet altitude, while the aircraft was doing about 500 knots.

"Then McClure suddenly noted the lobe on the No. 2 Monitor was beginning to go upscope, and almost simultaneously, Chase told me, GCI called out that the second airborne target was starting to move forward.

"Keep in mind that (at this point) no visual target was observable here; after blinking out at the 12 o'clock position, following its lightning-like traverse across the nose of the aircraft, no light had been visible. The unknown now proceeded to move steadily around to the 12 o'clock position, followed all the

while on the No. 2 Monitor and on the GCI scope down at Carswell near Fort Worth."

And then Chase told McDonald that as soon as the unknown reached the 12 o'clock position, Chase and McCoid suddenly saw a bright red glow "*bigger than a house,*" and lying dead ahead. This was precisely the bearing shown on the passive radar direction-finder that McClure was on and precisely the bearing now indicated on the GCI scope, McDonald explained.

**"Three independent sensing systems** were at this juncture giving seemingly consistent indications: Two pairs of human eyes, a ground radar, and a direction-finding radar receiver in the aircraft."

Chase then went to maximum allowable power, he told McDonald, hoping to close with the unknown, but it just stayed ahead at about ten miles, as GCI

interphone that he'd lost the 2,800-megacycle signal, and the GCI said it had disappeared from their scope.

Later, the men in the cockpit suddenly saw the bright red light flash on again, along the same flight path but lower, and *simultaneously* GCI got a target again, and McClure started picking up a 2,800-megacycle signal at that bearing.

Chase then put the RB-47 nose down and had reached about 20,000 feet, when all of a sudden the light blinked out, the GCI lost it on their scope, and McClure reported loss of signal on the No. 2 Monitor. "Three-channel consistency once more," declared McDonald.

McDonald concluded that "here we have a well-reported, multi-channel, multiple-witness UFO report, coming, in fact, from within the Air Force itself, investigated by the Condon Report team, conceded to be unexplained, and yet it is, in the final analysis, ignored by Dr. Condon."

Well, it wasn't ignored by Dr. McDonald, and it surely provides a basis for understanding why prominent UFO analysts can come to conclude that UFOs exist.

"Such cases seem to cry out for the most intensive study," said McDonald, "and all the more so because they are actually so much more numerous than the scientific community yet realizes. There is a scientific mystery here that is being ignored and shoved under the rug."

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Dr. James E. McDonald  
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kept telling them. It sayed as a bright red light dead ahead, and it kept painting as a bright lobe on the top of McClure's ALA-6 scope.

Then Chase saw it veer to the right and head between Dallas and Fort Worth.

"Getting FAA clearance to alter Chase's own flight plan and make sure other jet traffic was out of his way, he followed its turn, and then realized he was beginning to close on it for the first time," McDonald reported.

"Almost immediately, GCI told him the unknown had stopped moving on the ground-radarscope."

Chase and McCoid watched as they came almost up to it. And Chase told McDonald that he'd estimated that it was just ahead of the RB-47 and definitely below them when it instantaneously blinked out. At that same moment McClure announced on the

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*Robert B. Klinn travels for the legal staff of the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Disaster Operations, Washington, D.C. His weekly column "The Continuing UFO" co-authored with David Branch, was the only investigative column on the subject appearing regularly in a major daily newspaper, The Santa Ana Register. His invited paper, "Photomicrography: How to Salvage Film Images of UFOs," presented before Dr. J. Allen Hynek's Center for UFO Studies, has been published in English and French. Klinn has also produced and directed radio news specials and documentaries for University of Illinois radio station WPGU in Champaign, Illinois.*



## UFO FACEOFF A SKEPTIC'S LOOK

by Ronald A. Oriti



Presently, the term *UFO* is synonymous with "extraterrestrial spacecraft." This prejudgets the case, claims the author. Is this a true *UFO* pictured here? It is a saucer, literally, being hurled through the air.

Photo courtesy of the author.

In religious matters, skepticism is akin to heresy; in science natural laws are continuously being doubted, tested, modified, and they are accepted, more or less tentatively, *only* when they have been sufficiently proved by the rigorous methods of science.

"A wise skepticism is the first attribute to a good critic," said the poet and essayist James Russell Lowell (1819-1891). Clearly, he viewed skepticism in a very positive light. The word skepticism originally came from the Greek word *skeptomai* which merely meant to "look at something carefully" and "examine" and "consider" it.

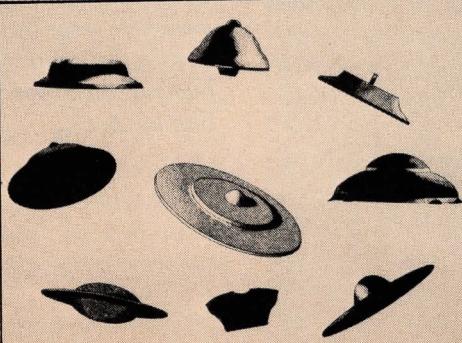
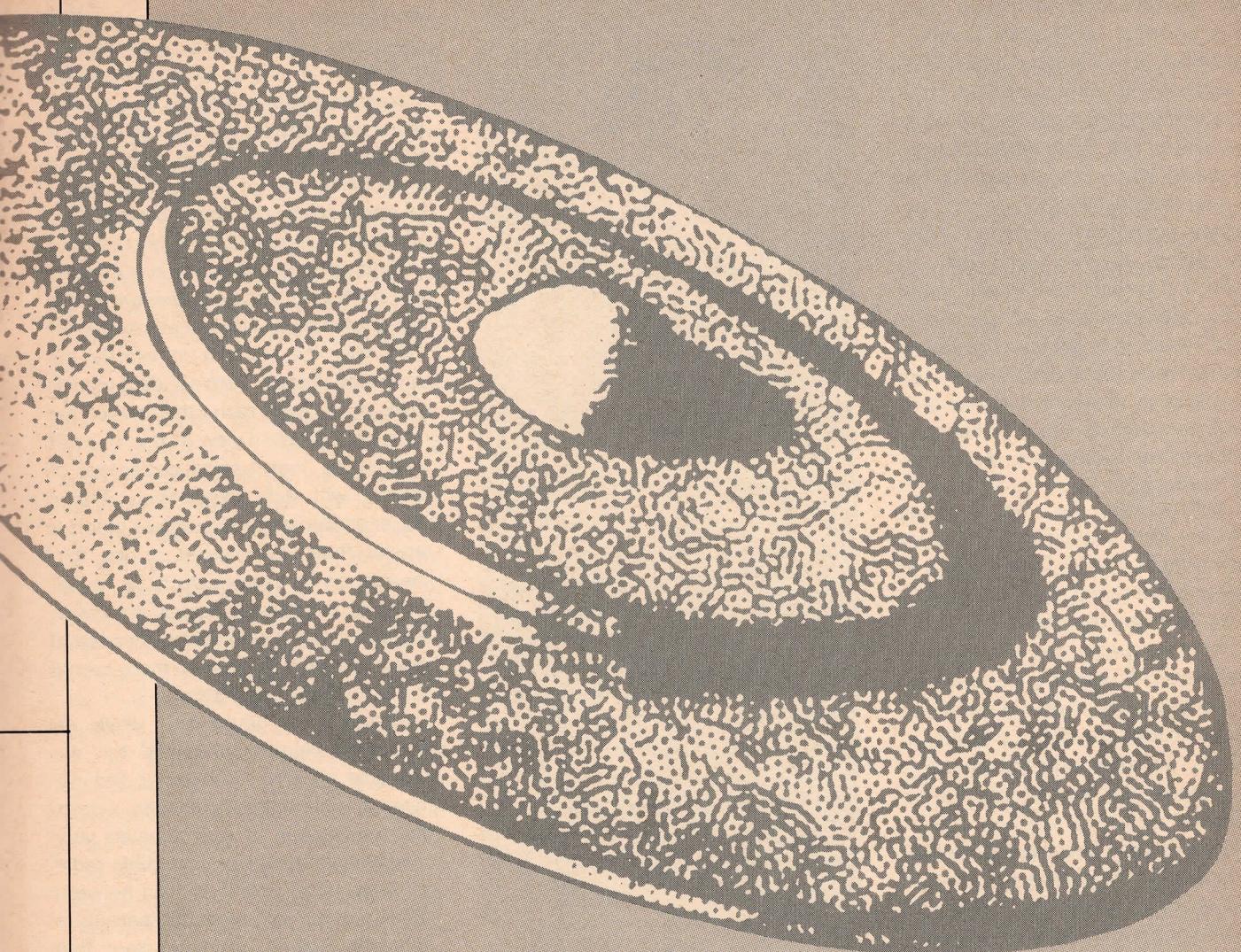
The Greek philosopher, Pyrrho (365-275 B.C.), founded a new school of thought based upon skepticism. He felt that our senses were admittedly unreliable, and therefore, we could never know the *true* nature of things. He is supposed to have advocated that we, more or less permanently, suspend

judgment regarding some topics. He probably would have included the subject of *UFOs* on that list.

As a modern skeptic, I not only believe that the subject of *UFOs* needs to be "carefully examined" and "considered," I also believe that it is wise to doubt, to test all hypotheses to explain them, and to discard hypotheses that cannot be proved by the rigorous methods of science.

Presently, the term *UFO* is synonymous with "extraterrestrial spacecraft." This is most unfortunate, indeed, because it clearly prejudgets the case. The term was originally intended to mean an "unidentified flying object." If a flying object is truly unidentified, then it is illogical to call it an extraterrestrial spacecraft, for that implies that the object has been identified. In practice, the term *UFO* is often applied to objects that are *not* flying, such as the planet Venus, or to phenomena that are

Photo credit: Griffith Observatory



*Any one of assorted "lids" can be photographed in such a way as to appear to be unidentifiable. If a flying object is truly unidentified, then it is illogical to call it an extraterrestrial spacecraft, for that implies the object has, in fact, been identified.*

not material, such as reflections of searchlights off clouds. Perhaps, a better definition of the term UFO is any unidentified aerial sighting.

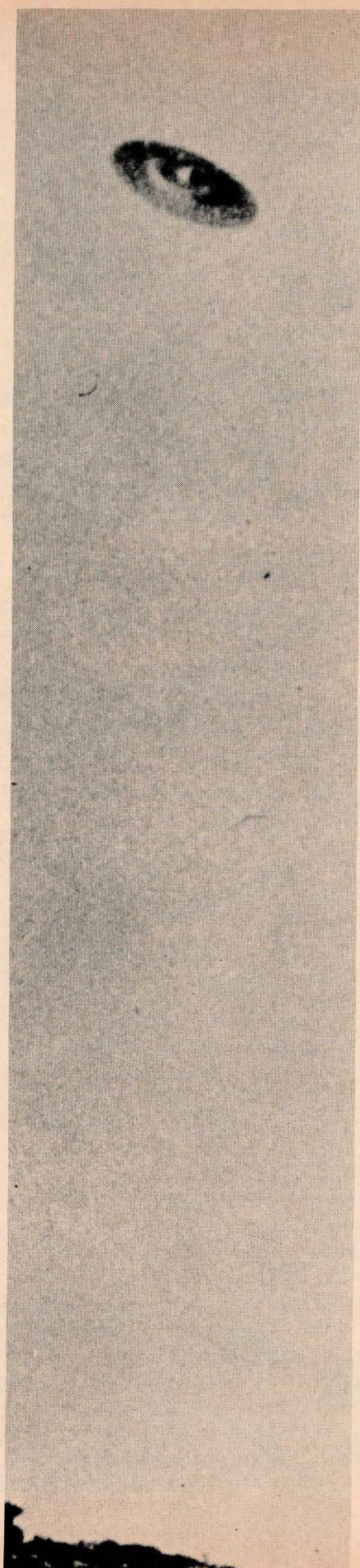
With this qualification in mind, there is no doubt that UFOs exist. Certainly we have all seen lights or other aerial phenomena that we couldn't identify. The more important question is whether or not any of the UFOs are extraterrestrial spacecraft, or "flying saucers," as they are often labeled. This is an exceedingly important question from many points of view, and there is virtually no rational person who would not be most interested, if not wildly excited, over the prospect of being visited by alien life forms. It would be natural enough to wonder whether such aliens meant to help us, or to harm us, or whether they had come to dispassionately observe us.

Is the evidence that we are being visited by aliens sufficient to stand up to scientific scrutiny? Does it exist at all? The answer is that so far there is nothing that can be offered in a scientific sense to prove the existence of extraterrestrial spacecraft. There are no flying saucers to be examined; there are no alien beings or their artifacts to study. All that does exist are reports—a most disheartening state of affairs for a scientist.

Try to imagine the state of geology as a science if there were no rocks to examine, only reports of rocks. Or consider the state of astronomy if there were no stars to observe, only reports of stars. But this is exactly the state in which we find the subject of flying saucers. There are no extraterrestrial spacecraft to examine, only reports of them, and most of these reports are made by people who are untrained both in observing and in reporting.

During the more than 20 years I have been at Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, I have had the opportunity to evaluate several thousand UFO reports. In the vast majority of such cases, the sightings were nothing more than a variety of natural, or man-made phenomena, such as the planet Venus, brilliant meteors, the moon, rockets, weather balloons, satellites and the like.

These phenomena were unique to the observers either because they were seen for the first time, or because they were seen under unusual circumstances. The list of different objects and phenomena



which at one time or another have been responsible for UFO reports, probably numbers more than 50.

In my own experience, I have not encountered one UFO report I felt could be best explained under the hypothesis that it was an extraterrestrial spacecraft sighted. That is not to say there were not some sightings difficult to rationalize. There will always be a small percentage of reports that cannot be easily explained, simply because they are either incomplete, or inaccurate.

Consider that when ten eyewitnesses to a traffic accident are interviewed, it is not surprising to find that no two of them saw the accident in exactly the same way. Indeed, such accident reports often differ from each other in even the most basic facts. In view of this, it is not unexpected that a small percentage of reports will defy explanation. Flying saucer enthusiasts often suggest that it is among these unexplained reports that the real flying saucers are to be found. They fail to realize, however, that if one assumes a world without extraterrestrial spacecraft flying around, there would still be unidentified sightings.

There is no doubt that while we recognize scientific evidence for the existence of flying saucers is lacking, there are, nonetheless, certain reports that when taken at face value are very compelling. Stories of incredible radar sightings, or of actual contact between aliens and humans seem too persuasive to dismiss lightly, until we learn that radar waves, like light waves, can be reflected and refracted and can produce the same kind of mirages and ghost

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*There is no doubt, however, according to the author, that there are certain reports that when taken at face value are most compelling. Stories of incredible radar sightings, for example, or of actual contact between aliens and humans often seem too persuasive to dismiss. But. . .*

images that ordinary light can produce, and that most of the so-called "close encounters of the third kind" turn out to be hoaxes or aberrant behavior by emotionally disturbed individuals. Even then the desire to believe may continue to be strong.

Why do so many people believe in flying saucers, even though they have never seen one, and even though no one can prove that they exist? Is it not like the family who continues to believe that their son, whose airplane was shot down in battle, may actually be alive somewhere and may someday suddenly appear? It is hope and desire that sustain them.

In the same way, there are some who are filled with hope and desire that flying saucers exist. For them it is a great comfort to believe that aliens of a benevolent nature and superior technology, may have come here to watch us and to help us with our problems. And when we consider the problems of crime, poverty, pollution, disease, war and moral decay that confront us, how comforting it is to believe that some day we may receive the wise counsel of a superior and benevolent race of aliens.

For others, the mere prospect of communication on a social level with advanced beings from other worlds is more than enough to sustain their faith that such beings exist. It is difficult for anyone having a predisposition to believe in flying saucers or anything else, for that matter, to be critical of data that contradict those views. We must continually be on guard to retain our objectivity.

Seeing does not occur with the eyes, but with the mind. What we see is interpreted by the brain, and that interpretation is based upon past experience. Where past experience is insufficient, the mind interprets the observation in terms of the familiar. Thus, a brilliant meteor whose diameter may exceed 100 yards, and whose length may exceed 50 miles, may appear, when seen from a distance of 200 miles, as a relatively nearby glow of light having roughly the size of an airplane and traveling with comparable speed.

The power of suggestion, when combined with the imagination, can strongly influence perception. This was demonstrated in the now famous radio broadcast by Orson Welles and the Mercury

Theater of the Air on Halloween eve, October 30, 1938. This program dramatized the half-century old thriller, *The War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells. To many people the broadcast was so convincing, they thought the earth really was under attack by Martians. In some places, people *saw* they actually saw the invasion.

One scared listener ran to the window and, seeing no cars in the street, concluded that they had all been obliterated by the Martians. Another saw the street teeming with traffic and assumed that everyone was fleeing for his life. The rumble of a truck down the street was mistaken for the sound of an army tank, and an excited neighbor pounding on the door was thought to be a Martian breaking into the house.

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In all cases, it was the imagination which caused people to jump to conclusions.

A question often asked of the flying saucer skeptic is, "How can you believe that in all the vast reaches of space, there are not beings out there vastly superior to ourselves?" The answer, of course, is simple. There may well be such superior beings, but their existence is entirely a separate question from that of the existence of extraterrestrial spacecraft visiting Earth. It is quite possible for advanced beings to live on other worlds, and for the earth to have never been visited by them, especially if such inhabited planets are as scarce as we think they are.

If the nearest planet inhabited by superior beings is several hundred light years away, the likelihood of a visitation

from that world would be exceedingly small. This follows from the fact that several hundred light years is an *incredibly* great distance. The Apollo astronauts took a little more than three days to reach the moon. At that rate, it would take one million years to reach the nearest star to our Sun, which is only about four and one-third light years distant. Even with much faster ships, the trip would most likely prove too impractical to be undertaken. We don't know this for sure, but it is one of the factors which adds to our skepticism.

Flying saucer enthusiasts frequently point out that the skeptic cannot prove that we are not being visited by aliens. This is quite true, but then the skeptic should not have to prove that flying saucers do not exist. The skeptic's position is simply that of not believing an unprovable hypothesis. Take, for example, the case of flying pink elephants. It would be unfair to ask the skeptic to prove that flying pink elephants do not exist. That would be an impossible task, for one cannot be everywhere at once. However, if one believes in their existence, then the burden of proof must lie with the believer.

In the case of flying saucers, the proof of their existence has not yet been found. What would the skeptic consider as proof? At the very least, one would require the existence of a spacecraft that would be accessible to public and scientific scrutiny, hopefully accompanied by the aliens themselves, and best of all, a demonstration flight when several scientists would be taken on a spin through the solar system.

Until that time comes, if it ever does, I shall remain a skeptic. ▲

**Ronald A. Oriti has been a full-time astronomer at the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles for over 20 years. An expert in meteoritics, he has what is considered one of the largest and finest meteor collections on the West Coast on display at the observatory. With an avid interest in astronomy, he was an enthusiastic co-founder of the History of Astronomy Society and is a member of the Meteoritic Society and numerous other scientific organizations. Oriti is co-author of the book Introduction to Astronomy published by Glencoe Press, a subsidiary of MacMillan.**

# ALIEN LIFE

## UFO UPDATE

Research into the many-faceted phenomenon popularly termed UFOs, and education to reduce the confusion surrounding the subject, are the objectives of the Center for UFO Studies located in Evanston, Illinois. The center is a non-profit corporation whose scientific board consists of recognized scientists from universities and scientific organizations in the United States and other countries, who have become intrigued by the challenge the UFO phenomenon presents.

The center was founded in 1973 by Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Chairman of the Astronomy Department at Northwestern University, as a civilian counterpart to the Air Force's now defunct Project Blue Book. Dr. Hynek had been scientific consultant to Blue Book during its entire history. He became increasingly dissatisfied with Blue Book policies and was determined that the center should remain free of military and other governmental influences. No governmental financial support has, therefore, been solicited or received. The center is supported entirely by tax-deductible contributions from persons interested in an unbiased investigation of the subject.

Data gathering and processing are the start of any scientific project. So the staff of the center welcomes all UFO reports; ridicule-free treatment is guaranteed, as is confidentiality, when requested. Most UFO reports reach the center via its UFO Hotline, a toll-free 24-hour telephone service for the exclusive use of U.S. law-enforcement agencies, FAA facilities, planetaria and other formal channels.

This system has provided the center

with about 1,000 current yearly reports from the U.S. alone. UFO reports also reach the organization via the news media and private correspondence from all over the world.

The center cooperates with the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) and with other civilian groups. Additionally, it maintains its own corps of investigators coordinated by Allan Hendry, chief investigator for the center and one of the editors of this UFO section of PROBE. The center maintains a computerized data bank (UFOCAT) which now has over 80,000 separate case entries, as well as a sizable UFO library which also includes microfilm copies of the U.S. Air Force's report files.

Just what is a UFO? A "UFO" is any anomalous aerial phenomenon whose appearance and/or behavior cannot be ascribed to conventional natural, or man-made, sources after study by analysts who possess technical qualifications the original witness(es) may lack. The "U" in UFO simply means "Unidentified"—but, it should be noted, unidentified by qualified experts.

The center also employs a six-category system developed by Dr. Hynek for the classification of UFO reports after the IFOs (Identified Flying Objects) have been weeded out:

**NL—Nocturnal Light:** Any distant anomalous source (usually illuminated) seen in the night sky.

**DD—Daylight Disc:** Any distant objects (often disc-shaped) seen under daylight conditions.

**RV—Radar/Visual:** UFOs seen simultaneously by vision and radar—good agreement between the two is essential.

**CE1—Close Encounter of the First Kind:** UFO seen within 500 feet.

**CE2—Close Encounter of the Second Kind:** CE1s that influence the environment—includes physical traces, physiological effects and electromagnetic (EM) interferences.

**CE3—Close Encounter of the Third Kind:** CE1 or 2 associated with creatures, humanoids or robots (UFOnauts).

The editors are pleased to announce that the UFO Center will from now on be presenting in the UFO Update section of PROBE, UFO sightings reported to the organization, and ones which it has considered sound enough to further investigate. What do you think?



Pictured above, one of several photos supporting UFO existence.

## U.S. SIGHTINGS

Highlights from January- February, 1980

### Was This Iowa Woman Abducted?

Type: CE2

Date: January 21, 1980

Time: About 11:40 p.m.

Duration: About 30 minutes

Witnesses: One, with six secondary witnesses

Place: Council Bluffs, Iowa

No one can accuse the primary witness in this case of exploiting her unusual experience to seek personal publicity! When a friend coerced her to reveal her story to a reporter of the Omaha *World Herald*, she refused to let her name be known; next, she spoke to an Omaha-based UFO researcher, and withheld her name from him as well. Now she refuses to speak to anyone, and friends say that she tries to write off the whole experience as something prosaic.

The nameless witness, a woman in her 50s, was playing bridge with Marilyn Anderson, 37, and six other women, as they do every two weeks. When the game broke up at 11:30 p.m., Anderson stuffed five of the women (including a nun) into her car. The main witness drove alone directly behind them.

As the lead car headed north on county road G66, the women could see a cluster of lights to their left in the western sky. "Nobody could see a shape," Anderson told Allan Hendry: She described seeing about five flashing lights, but driving the car occupied her attention.

Rita Sobetski, one of her passengers, said there were three or four square white lights and a flashing red one. The angular size of the light formation was huge, however, much larger than a full moon. Anderson estimated that it was hovering 200-300 feet above a bluff less than a city block away. When she stopped the car to get out and see it, it sped away to the southwest. The whole experience lasted about ten seconds. Since they were close to a landing pattern for Eppley Airfield, it was contemplated that this might have been an aircraft, but no one checked.

Ironically, the woman who would be the *sole* witness of the event to come didn't see this from her car, but had to be told about it by Mrs. Anderson, who ran back to tell her. Then she parted

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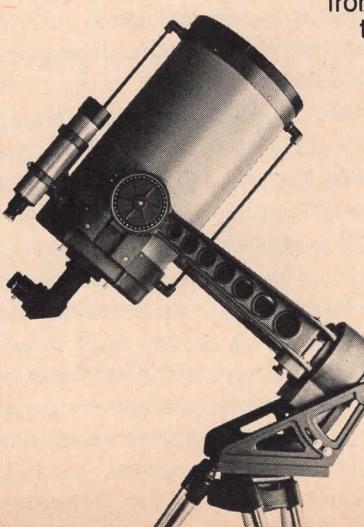


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company with them at the intersection of highways 92 and 275, heading toward her home near the Iowa School for the Deaf. She noted that it was 11:40 p.m. as she drove up Longview Drive not far from her home. As she came to a stop sign, her car stalled. Her attempt to dismiss this as a gas problem is unseemly, though, because her lights and radio also conked out. Furthermore, she was able to start the car again. As she drove another quarter-mile, the sky became a "sort of pinkish orange." The car stalled again. Stepping outside, she was "petrified" by the sight of a bright orange light about 300 yards away in a cornfield to her left. Its intensity hurt her eyes. The last thing she can clearly recall is jumping back into her car and locking the door.

What happened next is a mystery to her.

The fact that her car was now turned sideways across the road led her to assume she had skidded on the ice—but when? Driving the remaining distance home in her now-functioning car, she could still see the glow from the light, even from her kitchen window. What really shocked her was the sight of her own reflection in a bathroom mirror: Her face and hands looked as pink as scar tissue. Flat, thumbprint-size blotches covered her face as well; yet the redness was limited only to the exposed portions of her body. The part of her neck protected by her coat was unaffected.

She was sweating and suffered diarrhea and stomach upset. "I thought I was marred for life." Her head swimming, her temperature 102 degrees, she called her sister who had been at the party. Naturally, she was advised to see a doctor, but she decided to put that off until morning and let her husband sleep. Glancing at her watch as she made the phone call, she noted that the time was now 12:12 a.m. Yet, it should have taken less than five minutes to drive the remaining distance home at 11:40 p.m.

She remained awake the rest of the night. The redness and blotches began to fade by 4:00 a.m., she said, and were completely gone by 4:20 a.m. The woman stated that she had never undergone such symptoms before.

This case bears some resemblance to other recent experiences, such as the Deputy Johnson case in Minnesota (see this issue), and the police officer in

Kerman, California, who was burned by an unusual source in 1978. (See the Fall, 1979, issue of PROBE.)

Unfortunately, it took a while for the details to come to light, preventing examination of the woman's physical symptoms by a doctor, or at least additional witnesses. Checks with the County Sheriff's office by Michael Kelly revealed no additional UFO reports that night, though researcher Gary Lambert informs us that there was one sighting across the river in Omaha that same evening. Checks with two individuals living near the cornfield produced no new evidence. It seems that fear of ridicule remains a potent obstacle to UFO research, even in the '80s.

**A Domed Disc in Daylight**

**Type:** DD

**Date:** February 25, 1980

**Time:** 2:30 p.m.

**Duration:** 5-8 seconds

**Witnesses:** One

**Place:** Youngsville, Pennsylvania

Rusty Pennington, a 23-year-old oil pump worker and volunteer medical assistant to the local fire department, was sitting in his truck watching a well pump in a hilly, wooded area one-quarter mile west of the city limits. It was a tremendous explosion that first caught his attention, a sound mixed with a "whine" that lasted one split-second. Off to his left through his open side window, he saw the domed saucer, sketched (as illustrated) by his draftsman uncle under his direction. He couldn't see the underside of the form, only the profile, but he asserted it was clearly defined and there was a transparent bubble on the top. At its closest, it had an angular size that could have blocked out the sun; its real size was estimated to be six to eight feet high.

The saucer shot past him 150-200 yards to his left, at what appeared to be treetop level, flying at a downward slant from the southwest to the northeast. No noise could be heard now as it streaked through the sky against scattered clouds, disappearing in the distance. Pennington put the truck into gear and chased after it, wondering if its trajectory would cause it to crash, but there was no sign of it up ahead. He contributed the observation that its flight was aligned along the direction of a 250,000-volt power line in the area.

The witness checked with the Air

Force base in Warren, Pennsylvania, the same day, but was only referred to investigator Joan Jeffers. Air traffic controllers in the city of Erie professed no awareness of an unusual flight in that vicinity, and Youngsville police indicated they had no additional reports. The witness stated that he located two other men working lower in the valley who claimed to have heard the loud noise, but saw nothing.

#### FOREIGN FORUM

*Note: The editors cannot exert the same "first-hand" control over foreign cases as domestic ones. However, it is certainly of value, at least, to compare the reported characteristics of the phenomenon abroad to those sightings here in the United States.*

*Compare these two foreign cases with the "Lights that Attack by Night" cases that follow—noting particularly the dates of occurrence:*

#### Australia

Type: NL (or CE2?)

Date: August 20, 1979

Time: 9:20 p.m.

Duration: 3 minutes

Witnesses: One

Place: Between Queenstown and Burnie  
in Tasmania

Source: Res Bureaux Bulletin, No. 51

A former policewoman spotted a bright green light while driving on the Murchison Highway. Despite its apparent distance from the car, the light source brightly illuminated the vehicle's interior.

"For some reason, the car suddenly lost all power and no matter what I did, change gears or put my foot flat on the floorboards, it wouldn't go faster than 50 km/hr (30 MPH). I put my foot on the brake, but nothing happened."

Both her wristwatch and car clock stopped at 9:20 p.m. She could see the green light following her through her rear-view mirror for two to three minutes along the center of the road. Then it vanished, and the car returned to normal functioning again.

It was not until she arrived in Burnie, however, that her wristwatch was started once again. She also asserted that her gas tank should only have been one-third down by the time she reached Davenport. It was empty.

#### Canada

Type: CE2?

Date: August 17, 1979

Time: 9:00 p.m.

Duration: 5-8 minutes

Witnesses: Two

Place: Canadian airspace; 4,000 feet, 40 miles northeast of Ottawa, Ontario

Source: Res Bureaux Bulletin, No. 51

The pilot and passenger of a Cherokee Warrior first noticed the wings glowing red and the air speed indicator slowing down to "zero." Next the pilot discovered the controls were jammed, yet the plane was still flying. Then the passenger realized there was *something* looming directly over the plane, a "rolling 'energy ball' with a red radiant side and a white radiant side," which the pilot estimated to be approximately 300 feet in diameter and 50 feet thick.

On the plane, the propeller was windmilling, the compass was swinging about, the NDB beacon had flipped around and the witnesses felt the plane was being drawn upward. Then the object broke away and flew off into a cloud due west. The instruments began to return to normal and the plane could now drop in altitude. Once the altimeter started working again it read "5,000 feet," and the pilot estimated they had already come down 1,000 feet. The object was still visible, now passing out of the cloud in the distance and speeding toward the sunset.

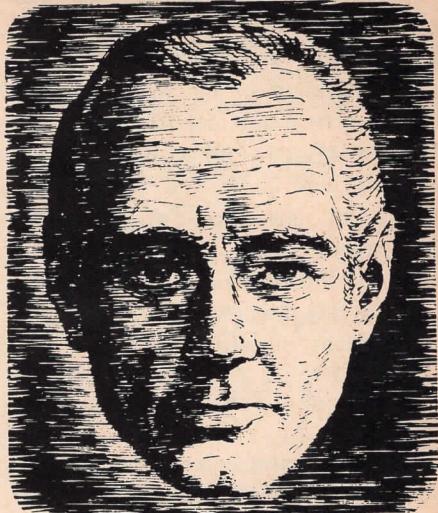
The pilot's springwound wristwatch stopped at the time of the encounter, but the passenger's electric watch continued to function. A letter regarding this case has reportedly been filed in the Non-Meteoritic Sighting File at the National Research Council in Ottawa as Case No. N79/071.

#### UFO PERSPECTIVE

##### Lights That Attack by Night

Many Close Encounters of the Second Kind are primarily luminous events in which no "craft" is seen. Witnesses will say the light was so bright that they couldn't make out the shape of the inferred craft. Last year, within a six-week time period, there were five such cases, all of which occurred in four adjacent North Central states. In each case, a "brilliant ball of light" seemingly attacked a moving vehicle, blinding the occupants and leaving some very definite evidence of the encounter.

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In each case, the circumstances were investigated as carefully as possible by Allan Hendry, J. Allen Hynek and associates of the Center for UFO Studies. Both the nature of the events and the stature of the witnesses were studied. The events are strikingly similar, and an examination of these comparisons may provide a clue to the nature of one facet of the UFO phenomenon. Were these five vehicles simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, or did the balls of light exhibit a clear "intent" toward them?

■ **August 29, 1979—Vermillion, South Dakota**

Start with this example. A blinding light source rushed toward a car driven by Russ Johnson who was driving alone along a lonely road at 2:00 a.m. (The role of the lonely witness traveling late at night is all too frequent, it does seem.)

When he first saw it, he thought it was merely an oncoming car with one headlight out. But in a matter of seconds or so, it was "upon him." The interior of the witness's car lit up brilliantly. "I thought I was in a light bulb," he asserted later.

He hit the brakes and the car swerved broadside to the road and stopped. The light rushed onward, climbed and disappeared, leaving a scared Russ Johnson to sit there, wondering what had happened.

Since the only effect of this case was to make Johnson hit the brakes and swerve the car across the road, it is more of a Close Encounter of the First Kind.

Not so with the others . . .

■ **October 6, 1979—Barnum, Minnesota**

A little more than one month later, some 30 miles southwest of Duluth, a retired man and his wife were cruising along the expressway in their '73 Buick Riviera. It was 9:30 p.m.—the *only* such incident to occur before midnight. The weather was calm, the moon visible through the broken clouds. Also visible—a ball of light rolling and bouncing toward them just above the trees.

After some ten seconds had elapsed, it rushed over their car and out of sight. Simultaneously, the Buick cut out at 60 MPH, coasting for 500 feet before literally conking out. There was not even enough power to operate the lights, but an unsuccessful attempt at

jumping the battery did give them enough power to use the CB-radio to call for help.

Examination at a GM service school subsequently revealed that the alternator's interior looked as though it had undergone a fire. But this was not the case with the car's exterior. Ball lightning? No thunderstorm at the time, although it had rained earlier in the day.

Could this theory apply to the other cases?

■ **September 9, 1979—Streamwood, Illinois**

At 4:30 a.m., a young medical technician was driving her neighbor's newspaper route on a clear, pre-dawn morning in this western Chicago suburb. As in the other cases, the witness spotted a bright amber light through her windshield, low above the western horizon. This light seemed more coy, even playful, however, approaching first, stopping and then retreating. It dipped to the left and right before approaching her again, floating downward and growing brighter, rather than rushing directly at the car. The center of this light was white, with colorful red and yellow spikes of light radiating from it.

Her face grew hot, "as if I was in the sun." Frightened, she made a sharp turn onto another street to get away. Through her rear window she could see light make an abrupt left turn and disappear rapidly to the north.

This sighting lasted much longer than the others, most of the time being taken with the approach of the light. The physical effects were directed toward the witness, not the car. By noon, her face felt sore and tight, and was visibly sunburned. The next day, the affected skin was easily peeled off, and she said she quickly recovered with no ill effects.

■ **September 20, 1979—Poplar Grove, Illinois**

Now to another pre-dawn Close Encounter with a bright light that seemed to know what it was doing. Yet, how can intelligence be ascribed to a mere ball of light?

A young mother routinely headed off to work at a nursing home just before dawn. The route was a rural one—through cornfields and by homes few and far between. The weather this day was fine. She hadn't driven far when she spotted an oval-shaped, blue light source surrounded by a white haze. For the next 15 seconds, the light was

stationary, about 20 degrees up in the northwest part of the sky. Suddenly it swept into action, briskly and silently curving down toward her windshield. Her car flooded with light; she tried to escape by flooring the accelerator. Yet the speedometer read no more than 40!

Now this witness claimed a strange effect *not* reported in the other three cases, but which had been noted in other Close Encounters. The woman told Hynek and Hendry that she felt a "sense of lightness," as if she and the car were floating a few inches above the road.

The next thing the witness knew, she was about six miles further down her intended route, but she had no conscious recollection of how she got there. She got out of her car and ran to a parked police car for help. Meanwhile, her husband was at home, listening to a police scanner radio. He chuckled when he overheard a report of a hysterical woman at Beaverton and Poplar Grove Roads—until it became clear the ranting woman was his wife! Her family doctor told Hendry that he had known her for ten years. She had a good marriage, he said, a stable personality and certainly no previous history of such behavior.

However, hysteria was retriggered when the family doctor tried to examine her eyes with a light probe, which apparently inspired the impression of two glowing eyes staring down at her. She knocked the probe out of the doctor's hands, yet she could offer no conscious assessment of her frightened behavior. This hysteria occurred a second time when she pointed out to authorities the area from which the light source had come. Then, a plane briefly reflecting the sunlight scared her greatly. What *really* happened on that otherwise calm morning to scare her so profoundly?

None of these four "attacking light" cases gained much publicity. They came to the attention of the Center for UFO Studies over its 24-hour Police UFO Hotline. But this fifth case certainly did. It was featured on network television three times and has been the subject of many newspaper and magazine articles.

■ **August 27, 1979—Marshall County, Minnesota**

Deputy Sheriff Val Johnson is no relation to the Johnson mentioned earlier, whose South Dakota sighting

was reported two days after the deputy's, but only one day before there was any press attention regarding it. This Encounter had a whole battery of physical effects associated with it: A shattered windshield, bent antennas, the witness knocked unconscious and his eyes inflamed; and perhaps strangest of all, a time delay of 14 minutes—as recorded on two separate timepieces.

Of course, it involves an "attacking" bright light. Deputy Johnson came on duty at 7:00 p.m., August 26, at which time he set his electric dashboard clock and windup wristwatch to the radio dispatcher's time. All was peacefully quiet around the flat, open countryside at 1:40 a.m., when the lawman spotted an "intense white light" in the distance, seemingly hovering over the highway. Then the light rushed at him from the front (as in the other cases), covering a mile's distance in what seemed a split-second. The only sound, however, was glass breaking and brakes locking as Johnson lost consciousness. He awoke about 40 minutes later, his eyes burning, and radioed in for assistance.

In the hospital, his eyes were too sensitive for the examining physician to even use a light probe. The doctor put salve into his reddened eyes and bandaged them, concluding that he suffered a "mild welder's burn." His car, spun sideways across the road (again), was operable, but damaged in "peculiar ways" along the driver's side only. Examination of the bent, stainless steel antennas by a materials testing lab in Minnesota, showed they were not subjected to heat, magnetic fields or radiation. If they were bent by physical force, why were there no scratches on the metal, no foreign debris? There is evidence that road debris was propelled by some means and caused the selective damage to the glass components in the front of the car, but not the antennas. Yet, there was no *real* damage to the car's bodywork.

Furthermore, a windshield expert from Ford Motor Company is still puzzled by the exact mechanism of the crack pattern in the windshield. It was as if the windshield was subjected to positive *and* negative forces—in a few thousandths of a second! How could the deputy's eyes be damaged by welder's burn, when the ultra-violet (UV) component of light that causes such damage was blocked out by the type of wind-

shield and glasses he was looking through?

Finally, and perhaps strangest of all, both Johnson's wristwatch and dashboard clock were delayed by 14 minutes each. Both now keep normal time.

What do all five of these cases have in common?

- Each happened at night, usually in the early morning;
- Each involved a ball of light;
- Each climaxed in an "attack" on a vehicle;
- Each took place within four adjacent states;
- Each occurred within a six-week period;
- Each occurred in a rural area;
- Each occurred in good weather.

There is yet a sixth case that took place within this time period. Again, a ball of light rushed downward and hit the pavement five feet in front of a city bus in Minneapolis during daylight hours. Upon impact, the two-foot "ball of many colors" erupted loudly and was accompanied by sparks, yet left no trace behind.

The catch is that it happened during a thunderstorm; thus, the event is arguably attributable to ball lightning. Indeed, there is a remote chance that *all* of these cases could be an outbreak of this ill-understood natural phenomenon. It has been known to occur in good weather, but that is rare. How contrived would it be to theorize that all the unusual effects noted to witnesses and vehicles alike were caused by such lightning, or, for that matter, any other simple solution? ▲

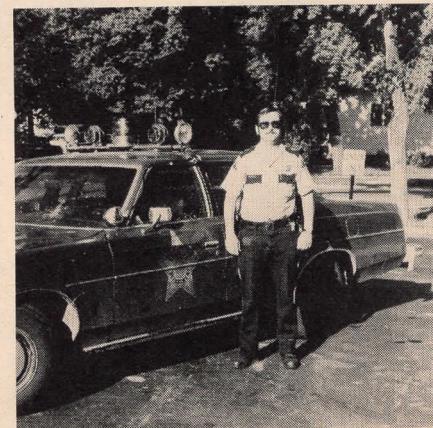


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Picture of Marshall County Police car.

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