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I've Never Seen A UFO But...

The blinding light of discovery that UFOs are real hit me in May 1975, a stunning breakthrough in thinking after decades of scoffing.

For seven years in the 1960s I was managing editor of a small daily newspaper in Virginia, and I never allowed any UFO stories to appear in the paper. The few that came in over the Associated Press wire were tossed in the wastebasket. A cigar-shaped craft? Nonsense.

Later I worked on four other, much larger newspapers, but in 1973 went to work for the National Enquirer tabloid, first as a writer on the rewrite desk and then as a reporter. Even though the Enquirer regularly published UFO stories at that time, I still thought only crazies or misguided people believed UFOs were real.

As a writer, I found it grating to have to write a UFO story based on information obtained by reporters. When I read their files, I was certain that they simply had not asked the right questions. If they had, it would be obvious what people were actually seeing, a planet, a satellite, a plane...

Writers and reporters had quite different jobs at the Enquirer at that time. The reporter's job was to get the story itself, to interview the people involved and do whatever else was required, and then write a comprehensive report running perhaps thousands of words. From start to finish, this could take from a few hours, if it could be done by phone, to weeks, depending on where in the world the reporter had to go to get the story.

Then, after the reporter's file had gone through several other steps in the editorial process, it was given to a writer who was told to tell that story in just a few hundred words.

IDLE REPORTER PUT TO WORK

Writers aren't necessarily better writers, but reporters are usually too emotionally involved with a story to be able to cut it down to a tenth of its original length or even much less. They've put in a lot of time and effort and nearly every part of the story is, to them, as important as the next. The editors reason, probably correctly, that most readers don't want to read long-winded stories.

In May 1975, a few months after I switched to reporting, the editor I was working for inherited the responsibility for UFO stories from another editor who had been promoted. A day or so later, my editor dropped ten unfinished UFO files on my desk, asked me to pick out the two most interesting ones, and work them. (I had nothing to do at the time and have sometimes wondered what my life would be like today if he had dropped those UFO files on another reporter's desk.)

One file seemed to have more promise than the others. A UFO reportedly had landed near a farmhouse east of Superior, Wisconsin. I phoned half a dozen people in Wisconsin and the family's claim began to take on credibility. I was told people were still seeing UFOs flying south down the St. Louis River, and some thought UFOs might have been using the bottom of the bay as a base.

That kind of thinking appeals to editors. Good headline: **SECRET UFO BASE FOUND**. My editor said go check it out. So I flew to Superior, which is in the northwestern corner of Wisconsin and just across the St. Louis River from Duluth, Minnesota. It was a trip that literally changed my life.



I remember thinking to myself that here was a chance to see what all this flying saucer nonsense was about. But the unexpected happened. In one week's time I got hooked on UFOs, and almost overnight I realized that it was a mystery of astounding proportions.

I got a lot of help that week from Eugene Lundholm, a librarian and psychology lecturer at the University of Wisconsin at Superior and a veteran UFO investigator. Gene had looked into not only the farm case but also many other UFO reports over the years, and he pointed me in the right directions.

I roamed all over northern Wisconsin, and also visited a couple of towns in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan as well as several small cities along the Minnesota shore of Lake Superior north of Duluth.

Altogether I talked with sixty to seventy men and women who had had encounters or sightings over the previous two years. Only a dozen or so were related to the farm landing case.

Putting my theory to the test – that with enough information I could determine exactly what people were seeing – I asked every one of those sixty to seventy people every question I could think of. And I was not able to explain what any of them had seen.

The realization was astonishing and very sobering. I've been chasing UFOs ever since... still trying to learn what's behind this intriguing mystery.



STIFF NECKS AND WATER TOWERS

After that week in Wisconsin and Minnesota, I went somewhat overboard on the subject of UFOs. It was as if I was the first person who'd ever discovered them. My family and friends must have been bored out of their minds, and for years some of my co-workers still asked if I'd seen any little green men lately. With a snicker, of course.

In the beginning it was obvious to me that UFOs could only be spacecraft from other worlds. But the more assignments I got and the more I stories I covered, the more I realized there is nothing obvious about UFOs at all.

For the next few years I nearly always got a stiff neck whenever I flew some place on a story assignment, which was fairly often. My eyes were always glued to the sky outside my airplane window, night or day, looking for UFOs that I knew had to be out there. But in flying some three hundred fifty thousand miles chasing down UFO stories over the next six years, I never saw anything, nor in the tens of thousands of miles since.

Then there were the water towers, the flattish round kind that stand atop a pedestal a couple of hundred feet high. On the horizon they look like big disc-shaped objects. I would fly into some city, rent a car and drive off across the countryside to carry out an assignment, and somewhere I'd always spot one of those water towers. I knew they were water towers, but I kept an eye on them anyway, just in case one decided to zip off across the sky.

It was, as someone once said, my "alien obsession."

More than twenty-seven years later I still have never seen a UFO, but I have talked to about two thousand people who have, and they long ago convinced me.

What happened that week in the Superior-Duluth area was that I "discovered" what so many others had before me, a genuine mystery that was then and still is far beyond comparison with anything else I know of. Something alien is definitely in our midst and has been for a very long time... decades, perhaps centuries.

Whether the craft and intelligence behind the phenomenon come from other planets or star systems or universes or whether they're native to this earth is something that, in my opinion, no one yet knows. Whatever it is, when the mystery is finally solved it, will undoubtedly be one of the greatest stories of all time.

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