

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,000

Professor McDonnell, the professor of atmospheric physics at the University of Arizona, sir,

2

00:00:06,000 --> 00:00:11,000

you said a moment ago that the subject requires considerable examination, rectification.

3

00:00:11,000 --> 00:00:16,000

Would you begin by telling us of how you first got interested and came to this opinion?

4

00:00:16,000 --> 00:00:22,000

Well, I've had a mild interest in this problem for perhaps a decade.

5

00:00:22,000 --> 00:00:27,000

My field is atmospheric physics, and a lot of the official explanations have centered around

6

00:00:27,000 --> 00:00:30,000

atmospheric physical phenomena, optical effects and so on.

7

00:00:30,000 --> 00:00:38,000

And this led me all in 1954, so to begin checking cases in the Southern Arizona area where I live and work.

8

00:00:38,000 --> 00:00:43,000

Let me take one case. This is now almost ten years ago.

9

00:00:43,000 --> 00:00:48,000

Another important case, probably many listeners will remember when it was headline news,

10

00:00:48,000 --> 00:00:55,000

occurred in Lumberland, Texas, the night of November 2nd and the morning of the 3rd, 1957.

11

00:00:55,000 --> 00:00:59,000

It involved some very interesting phenomena.

12

00:00:59,000 --> 00:01:09,000

I've interviewed some of the people who were involved, and I have a map here that will give us a little bit of a notion of the general geography.

13

00:01:09,000 --> 00:01:14,000

Here is Lumberland, Texas, a small town of about 30,000.

14

00:01:14,000 --> 00:01:17,000

The lines are highways running in and out of Lumberland.

15

00:01:17,000 --> 00:01:23,000

I'll tell you about the 11 o'clock at night on the 2nd till around 1 in the morning on the 3rd.

16

00:01:23,000 --> 00:01:30,000

A series of about ten independent sightings by ten persons, a couple of them were law enforcement officers,

17

00:01:30,000 --> 00:01:36,000

others were just drivers over here, there were two grain combines involved.

18

00:01:36,000 --> 00:01:44,000

In every one of these instances, the interesting thing that happened was that the driver of the vehicle suddenly came upon a very large,

19

00:01:44,000 --> 00:01:51,000

and when I say large, the reported sizes were the order of 100 to 200 feet diameter, glowing,

20

00:01:51,000 --> 00:01:55,000

sometimes reddy, sometimes bluish objects, hovering over fields or roads.

21

00:01:55,000 --> 00:02:03,000

The first effect on the vehicle was an interference with the lights, and then the ignition system failed.

22

00:02:03,000 --> 00:02:06,000

Excuse me, Doctor, I noticed that you have a lot of numbers out of math.

23

00:02:06,000 --> 00:02:09,000

You could point them on these places where the sightings commence.

24

00:02:09,000 --> 00:02:11,000

Yes, there are ten numbers on here.

25

00:02:11,000 --> 00:02:18,000

I won't bother the names of individuals, but ten miles is about the size of this pencil to give you some scale.

26

00:02:18,000 --> 00:02:24,000

And these are spread over a two-hour period, and each one of these numbers here is one, seven, they correspond to the names of the people,

27

00:02:24,000 --> 00:02:30,000

or instances in which cars were stopped and the lights went out.

28

00:02:30,000 --> 00:02:33,000

Now, as soon as the object took off, which is the characteristic pattern,

29

00:02:33,000 --> 00:02:39,000

so the car was stopped for two or three minutes, that then the objects rose from the ground, sometimes with enormous accelerations,

30

00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:46,000

then the lights came back on without any manipulation of the ignition key, and the driver found he could immediately start his car.

31

00:02:46,000 --> 00:02:48,000

This was common to all of these cases.

32

00:02:48,000 --> 00:02:56,000

Now, the official explanation of this Level in Texas case, based on the Air Force handling of the Project Blue Book investigation,

33

00:02:56,000 --> 00:03:07,000

was that this was ball-lighting, that's what accounted supposedly for these 200-foot diameter objects, plus wetting nations,

34

00:03:07,000 --> 00:03:10,000

and that was the official explanation of why the car stopped.

35

00:03:10,000 --> 00:03:15,000

Now, since we're all about the fact that cars, when they do get wet, don't usually start immediately,

36

00:03:15,000 --> 00:03:25,000

there's a bit of a problem there, but this is only secondary compared to what one finds when he looks, as I have, at the actual order data for the case in question.

37

00:03:25,000 --> 00:03:31,000

Excuse me, sir, before we get there, if it were ball-lighting, is it normal to have ball-lighting of that size,

38

00:03:31,000 --> 00:03:36,000

and then would that ball-lighting have the electromagnetic quality of stopping these engines?

39

00:03:36,000 --> 00:03:41,000

Well, there are, first of all, the typical size of ball-lighting, and, more importantly, it's a fairly rare phenomenon.

40

00:03:41,000 --> 00:03:45,000

Most of us have never seen it. I have never seen it, though that's very much in my field.

41

00:03:45,000 --> 00:03:56,000

The foot diameter is a typical phenomenon, but the cases of ball-lighting that are on record are strictly limited to extreme thunderstorm conditions,

42

00:03:56,000 --> 00:04:06,000

where you have an energy source, a high potential, high gradient, and there is no, I am not aware of any case where a vehicle stopped by ball-lighting.

43

00:04:06,000 --> 00:04:09,000

I could not assert that it could not occur.

44

00:04:09,000 --> 00:04:15,000

Well, then this is a question I asked. I discussed this problem with a colleague at Westinghouse who is an expert in these problems.

45

00:04:15,000 --> 00:04:22,000

He said, well, maybe in the event of a really severe thunderstorm, you could scale up ball-lighting through tens of feet, and maybe they made an error on the side.

46

00:04:22,000 --> 00:04:27,000

So I looked at the map, and I was quite startled as a person with meteorological training.

47

00:04:27,000 --> 00:04:34,000

Here is the map for the very time. This is 12 o'clock midnight, right in the middle of the level in Texas after weddings.

48

00:04:34,000 --> 00:04:41,000

This is a weather map. These are the ice bars. I think perhaps many persons looking on will be familiar with this from weather sessions.

49

00:04:41,000 --> 00:04:45,000

Here is the Gulf Coast, and the state of Texas is in here.

50

00:04:45,000 --> 00:04:50,000

Now, I'll point with my pencil to Leveland, Texas, which is in the Panhandle.

51

00:04:50,000 --> 00:05:02,000

And any of you who are familiar with meteorology will immediately be bothered by the fact that Leveland was being evaded by a large high pressure area pushing down over the Great Plains.

52

00:05:02,000 --> 00:05:09,000

The nearest front was down near San Angelo, hundreds of miles away. The nearest rain was about 100 miles away.

53

00:05:09,000 --> 00:05:17,000

The weather report for the nearest stations involved only scattered clouds in the Leveland area.

54

00:05:17,000 --> 00:05:21,000

There were no stations at the time of the outage. There even hadn't been rain.

55

00:05:21,000 --> 00:05:24,000

Two hours later, the one station had less than 100 per inch.

56

00:05:24,000 --> 00:05:28,000

And here is the selection of nations charging severe thunderstorms and wet ignitions.

57

00:05:28,000 --> 00:05:35,000

And I'm sorry, I'm not a scientist. And when I asked the people at Wright-Patterson, they really had no very good answer.

58

00:05:35,000 --> 00:05:41,000

And all I can say is that in cases of this sort, and I had a whole explanation, is almost pulled out of the blue.

59

00:05:41,000 --> 00:05:45,000

I have just seen it in too many instances to be happy with this.

60

00:05:45,000 --> 00:05:52,000

There are many very definite things that could be done in a scientific context to pursue this problem.

61

00:05:52,000 --> 00:05:55,000

And it badly needs the same attention in my opinion.

62

00:05:55,000 --> 00:05:58,000

Thank you very much, Professor McDonald.