

2 women tell of terror in what top investigator has called:

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Strangest UFO encounter ever

By RAFF KLINGER

A fun vacation for two young women turned into a terrifying nightmare in what eminent UFO investigator Timothy Green Beckley has called the "strangest UFO encounter ever."

Driving along a clear, lonely stretch of road in southern Wyoming, the women were suddenly confronted by sinister lights and even stranger visions of phantom trucks, weird creatures and a horrible black dog with eyes like glowing coals.

"This case is bizarre because

They faced a barrage of sinister lights, phantom trucks and dog with fiery eyes

there were so many weird shapes in it," says Beckley, who in 15 years has investigated 2,000 UFO-related cases.

Beckley included the incident in his "UFO Review," published by Global Communications of New York, saying he was convinced of the victims' sincerity.

UFO investigator John De Herrera, who interviewed the

women for 12 hours on four separate occasions, is convinced the story is true.

Beckley said: "It appears from this case that the pilots of UFOs have the ability to manipulate our minds."

"It's the first case I've ever heard where a UFO changed its shape into another object."

Beckley met and interviewed one of the women at a privately

sponsored UFO conference in San Diego, Calif., attended by the most prominent UFO investigators in the world.

Mickie Eckert, an Anaheim, Calif., woman in her mid-20s, was seeking an explanation for the terrifying journey she and her best friend, Kathy Echard, were taken on in July 1978.

The horrifying trip changed their lives.

They were heading east toward Nebraska and pulled to the side of the road to investigate what appeared to be an accident. Aiming their headlights on the scene, they were shocked to see three circular

came back with a stunned look on her face.

"I was anxious to know what she had said," recalls Mickie. "Kathy looked me in the eye and said, 'Turn around.'"

Mickie turned and her heart leaped in her chest. There was a large black dog, its eyes blazing.

Then Kathy yelled, and tore Mickie's attention from the dog. In the back seat of their car sat a strange-looking "kid, its arms all bunched up."

The women jumped out of their car. The dog and car had vanished. Then a distant rumbling sound reached their ears.

"Our hair stood on end," says Mickie. "Our skin was covered with goosebumps."

A group of lights appeared in the distance. As the sinister rumbling sound grew closer, the lights moved closer.

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...and pulled to the side of the road to investigate what appeared to be an accident. Aiming their headlights on the scene, they were shocked to see three circular objects hovering several feet above the ground.

"Right in front of our eyes, they turned into two sports cars that were coming toward us," recalls Mickie.

Shocked and frightened, the women leaped into their car and sped off. Suddenly behind them, headlights were glowing as two trucks appeared out of thin air and the sports cars vanished.

The women turned around and headed back toward Salt Lake City, but the trucks pursued them. After many miles they outdistanced the trucks and, finally, entered Salt Lake City. They stopped at a convenience store.

In the store, they breathed a sigh of relief and began to laugh it all off. But when they went out to the car, Mickie saw a little light, the size of a basketball, sitting in the parking lot.

Frightened, they leaped into their car and drove off. Nothing happened for the next several hundred miles until they were passing through a small town in central Wyoming.

Everything was closed and the lights were out. Suddenly two large UFOs — one orange-colored and the other yellowish-white — were keeping pace with the car. Mickie floored the gas pedal, but the car wouldn't go beyond a certain speed — as if some force had taken it over.

In the middle of nowhere, the car mysteriously died. Just as suddenly, a ball of light flew right through the open window and touched Kathy. Then it vanished along with the two UFOs.

Then two long caravans of trucks, traveling in both directions in the road, suddenly appeared. Without a warning, the trucks changed into triangular-shaped UFOs with dome tops flying six feet off the ground.

The women tried to still their panic, but after a sudden jolt, they discovered that their car had been lifted in the air and shoved about 20 feet down the road.

Another car appeared and pulled up behind them. Kathy got out to talk to the driver. She

Mickie. "Our skin was covered with goosebumps."

A group of lights appeared in the distance. As the sinister rumbling sound grew closer, the lights merged into one and became a massive spaceship.

Then they were blinded by an orange light like the sun coming up. Suddenly, it seemed as if they had been transported to another world.

"People started to appear out of nowhere, walking across the freeway carrying tubes or pipes," says Mickie.

"There were these blue lights and we knew something was going to happen," says Mickie. "We were terrified. We felt like we were going to be taken to another planet."

Everything vanished and a man appeared out of nowhere. He said he was heading for Chicago and offered the women, whose car would not start, a lift.

Stopping at a truck stop, they walked over to a motel and got a room. As they locked the door, the TV set switched on and the lights went out by themselves.

"This tiny little light flittered around the room and then we knew we hadn't escaped," says Mickie.

The women stayed awake that night and called police in the morning. When the officers drove them back to their car, the scene had changed.

The highway guard railing was different, so were the road signs and the scenery. In a nearby field were the corpses of a cow and a sheep. The cow was a skeleton and the sheep's skin had been peeled off.

After police listened to the women's story, "they shrugged and told us we'd seen swamp gas," says Mickie.

Since the incident, the women's lives were altered drastically. Best friends for 17 years, they grew apart.

Karen, only 31, has been hospitalized "at least 20 times" since, says Mickie. And the women's habits also changed. Kathy who had been sloppy became ultra neat and Mickie says she's now the sloppy one.

"It's almost as if we've exchanged personality traits," says Mickie.

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