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## 'What's That?' Police Ask After Sighting Orange Lights

ST. HELENS, Ore. (AP) — Police here were bewildered about bright orange lights they saw in the sky over the Columbia River between Portland and St. Helens.

Sgt. Russ Yokum of the St. Helens Police Department said he saw a light northeast of St. Helens at 4:10 a.m. Tuesday and called other officers.

He was joined by Trooper Tom McCartney of the Oregon State Police at Columbia City and three other officers, Yokum said.

McCartney said the light was dome-shaped, "as if the moon was coming up behind the hill."

Yokum said the officers and about 15 other people, some of them newspaper carriers, saw another light to the southeast at about the time the first light became obscured by the fog.

Yokum said a citizens band radio operator, Donald Atkin of Ridgefield, Wash., a few miles south of St. Helens, reported the second light was near his house and was emitting a whining sound.

McCartney and Yokum said they talked to Atkin over their police radio. They heard the sound in their radio receiver and tape-recorded the sound.

Yokum said Atkin, whose CB handle is "Lucky 13," reported seeing the light dip toward the river and heard a sound like a crash. A few minutes later, the officers said, Atkin reported the light moved away from the river and disappeared.

The officers said Atkin, who could not be reached on Tuesday, photographed the light.

McCartney and Yokum said there were no reports of aircraft in the area, and there were no reports of crashes.

The Coast Guard sent a boat from Portland that found nothing, and McCartney could not find anything when he drove to Reeder Beach at the north end of Sauvie Island.

Yokum said the second light was seen until about 5 a.m., shortly before daybreak.

"There were definitely two lights," Yokum said. "I don't know what it was. It could have been a solar reflection in the fog. It certainly was no hoax."

McCartney and Yokum said the Coast Guard speculated the light was made by a helicopter, possibly engaging in some illegal activity.

Longview, Wash. "News"

## Orange ball in sky still puzzling to authorities

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By Richard Spiro  
The Daily News

ST. HELENS — Was it a space ship from another solar system, that flaming orange ball seen about 4:30 a.m. Tuesday over the St. Helens and Ridgefield areas?

Trying to come up with an earthly explanation, police are continuing to investigate the incident.

They speculate the object, seen by local police and a CB operator in Ridgefield, Wash., might have been a helicopter engaged in drug trafficking or some other illegal activity.

Helicopters normally are fitted with bright white, not orange, landing lights, and police doubt that a helicopter bent on illegal activity would draw attention to itself with lights.

Oregon State Police Trooper Tom McCartney, who had reported the object, and St. Helens Police Sgt. Russ Yokum described a bright orange light, dome-shaped, as if a moon was coming up from behind a hill.

Two other police officers and several bystanders saw the same light.

The CB operator, Donald Atkin, said he saw the light over his home in Ridgefield, thought he saw the object crash into or near the Columbia River, then later heard it take off again. He recorded the noise, which was picked up through his radio by McCartney's tape recorder.

Played in the Columbia City office of the state police detachment, it sounded like static, a garbage grinder or food mixer, not a helicopter.

It was still dark, which rules out National Weather Service balloons, which are not equipped with orange lights.

It wasn't the moon, officials say, because the moon was high in the western sky.

There was no sign of any landing or crash when McCartney went to check the area where the object was thought to have come down.