

'Dear Joe: I've got a big problem with UFOs, however.

I saw 'em.'

incident, which occurred just outside the Whidbey Island Naval Station on Feb. 5, 1978.

The woman and her husband had gone to visit some friends whose house was "about a block and a half" from the naval station.

When the woman arose to use the bathroom during the night, she saw a bright light outside the window at the end of the hallway. "I went to the window," she said, "and there, good Lord, on the ground sat a big ship, a good big ship, in a light like a flame. . . . I couldn't move. I was so horrified."

When the woman finally did move, she fetched her husband, who arrived just as "the fluorescence started disappearing. It started to fade. The ship stayed right there, on the spot, but it just faded out."

That's the closest (and strangest) of the encounters anyone shared with me. The others fall into the category of "sightings" more than encounters. The bulk of them occurred near military installations and seemed more puzzling than anything else to the people reporting them.

I don't know what any of this proves, but I'd like to close with a paragraph from a man who, in December of 1964, was instructing advanced aviation students out of the U.S. Naval Air Station at Hutchinson, Kan., when he was ordered to chase some "unusual lights" that were widely observed and reported on the night in question. After describing, at length and in detail, what proved to be a fruitless chase, he writes:

"Anyway Joe, you are free to remain a skeptic about form and bodies and the like, but you had best adapt to the belief that there are phenomena out there — they do exist, they are real. Reliable people have observed them for many years. And for lack of a better term, they are referred to as UFOs."



Joe Mooney

— not to mention your job. Kooks on both sides of the UFO craze will shower you with trash. . . . Hang onto your marbles; you're in for a mind-blowing experience."

For my trouble, I received messages from people with Jonah-like reluctance to bear witness: "Now Joe, let me tell you from his field: "Psychology, drugs, and natural phenomena will explain most

Fortune, "Television Evangelists, and the Reagan Administration make skeptical a very wise bet. Some people don't even believe that Lotis and Longines are honest, let alone spirit channeling. I've got a big problem with UFOs, however. I saw 'em."

Naturally, I received sarcasm: "Send \$500 full pay 10 word story intergalactic flying rubabaga upper Washington! Exclude your paper movie rights reserved."

I received social and political commentary: ". . . Why would any aliens take us seriously when they can readily see that we are barbarians. We fail to look after our poor who are forced to sleep in cars or under cardboard near Pioneer Square. . . . No, thank you. If I were an alien, I'd avoid those two-legged beasts on earth with the white shirts and neckties."

I received business propositions: "I will buy you lunch if you will hear my story about when I thought I was a UFO after drinking a jar of jungle juice in New Guinea during WWII."

The same writer, a man with a Ph.D. in psychology, added some commentary from his field: "Psychology, drugs, and natural phenomena will explain most

reference to a green man (or woman or leahy vegetable). With one exception, the objects sighted were all flying, and any presumed operators of these objects remained discreetly inside.

The lone exception involved no visible aliens, but it did involve what was described as "a big ship" sitting on the ground. It was reported by a woman who phoned and said she took notes on the

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