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Port Charlotte, Florida Man Films Two UFOs

From: **Moderator UFO UpDates - Toronto**
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11/27/98

Port Charlotte man films two UFOs

'Ball of fire' not explained by meteor shower, experts say

Jim DeVoy, 38, of Port Charlotte, saw something astronomical on his way home the afternoon of Nov. 16.

As he was pulling into his driveway at 530 Lakehurst Ave., he looked up through the windshield of his '93 Dodge pickup truck and saw "a ball of fire" streaking slowly toward the horizon.

"It looked like something out of 'Armageddon,' " he said. "It was headed straight down."

He jumped out, dashed inside, grabbed his video camera and started filming the object.

About that time, he saw a second, smaller object in the sky. He couldn't film both at the same time, so he trained the camera on the "ball of fire."

"It was creeping toward the horizon for an entire minute," he said.

The videotape shows an object perhaps as broad as a thumbnail at arm's length traveling slowly toward the horizon, with a brightly illuminated, fan-shaped tail of vapor.

The image is jittery and comes in and out of focus as DeVoy adjusts the telephoto lens.

On the soundtrack, one can hear birds chirping, a passing car and DeVoy calling for his wife. "Kathy! Kathy!" he says.

There's no noise from the unidentified flying object.

After 60 seconds, the silhouette of rooftops of neighboring houses and trees come into view as if the object was flying well past them and far overhead. It disappears below the horizon.

Without stopping his camera, DeVoy swings around, looking for

the second object.

"I knew there was something else up there, but I couldn't take my eyes off the first one (until it was gone)," he said. "I panned over to the other one."

The second object seemed to be traveling faster, more like a rocket, he said. It was moving more southerly, from right to left, and lower in the horizon, so the paths of the two objects would have intersected beyond the horizon.

He filmed the second object until it passed behind some palm trees.

DeVoy's life hasn't been quite the same since.

He said he's shown the videotape to two television stations.

One ran a short clip of the first shot as promotion for its newscasts about the Leonid meteor shower that peaked last week.

The other news station rejected the film as a fake, after its meteorologist said the objects couldn't be asteroids.

But DeVoy's family members remain stunned by the film.

"My mother was like, '(The news stations) don't want to use it? Something's up,' " said DeVoy, grinning.

"I was really astounded by it," said his mother, Jean DeVoy. "I thought it was kind of frightening."

DeVoy's sister, Dianne DeVoy, said she expected to see a film of a "shooting star." But what she saw on the tape appeared much more ominous.

"I thought it was a meteor getting chased by a missile," she said.

DeVoy then brought the film to the Sun Herald. The newspaper posted the video clip on its Internet site (www.sunline.net/ufo/).

Dr. Ed Smith, an astronomy teacher at Edison Community College in Punta Gorda, said there are space objects large enough to appear like a ball of fire as they burn up in the atmosphere.

But they would be moving at some 500,000 mph -- like shooting stars. DeVoy's UFO didn't appear to be moving that fast.

"It was quite strange, I thought," said Dr. Brian Bowman, a professor of physics at Florida Gulf Coast University, after he viewed the video on the Internet.

Bowman majored in astrophysics and will be teaching a course on astronomy next spring.

"It appeared that the meteorite's profile didn't change. And the second one -- it doesn't even look real.

"The resolution wasn't good, but it looks like a white rod. ... It kind of looks fishy."

Meteors are particles the size of pebbles that have fallen off a comet. They leave narrow trails, appear more distant and move extremely fast, he said.

Asteroids are larger chunks of rock and are less common. They're big enough to leave huge craters if they hit the earth, like one in Arizona.

One of those hitting the earth would not go unnoticed, experts said.

What about a rocket? Bowman said their smoke trails don't look like the ones shown on the film, he said.

Cruise missiles? They fly like a jet, but leave no trail, he said.

"You want to minimize their visibility," he said. "There's a lot

of defense-minded activity associated with them."

Dave McQuade, president of the Southwest Florida Astronomical Society in Fort Myers, said he was very interested in seeing the video.

In fact, he has invited DeVoy to show the tape at the club's next meeting Thursday.

A NASA space station payload processing supervisor, Joe DeLai, will be the guest speaker at the event.

McQuade also said the object DeVoy described was moving too slow to be either an asteroid or a meteor.

"My hunch is what he probably saw is a satellite reflecting the sun," he said.

But, when told the object left a vapor trail, he said a commercial jet was "more plausible."

"There's no way it was a rocket," said Bruce Buckingham, a spokesman for NASA at the Kennedy Space Center. "I'd say it could look quite a bit like a rocket. It's not a rocket. There aren't any rockets that fly like that.

"You can look up into the clouds with the right light and, by golly, you're seeing a dragon," he added. "I'm sure it's just an optical trick."

A report of DeVoy's sighting was sent to the National UFO Reporting Center in Seattle.

Peter B. Davenport, director of the center, said last week he would have UFO investigators study the video before commenting on it.

But he said for the past 10 weeks, UFO sightings have hit all-time highs.

There have been 66 sightings this month, 127 in October, 164 in September and 56 in August. The center makes no claims about the authenticity of the reports.

Some of the objects reported were triangular, some round and one was "like an X on its side with the long parts connected."

Many are described as fast-moving lights that defy the typical, steady flight patterns of conventional aircraft or shooting stars.

There were half a dozen UFO sightings Monday and Tuesday as the meteor shower passed.

For example, at 11:41 p.m. Monday in Kansas City, Mo., a police supervisor reported getting a call from his girlfriend on his cellular phone.

She described a UFO as an "orange, glowing, round object leaving a trail behind it."

She felt as though it was coming after her, so she fled into a relative's house, the cop told the UFO center.

"We are honest, churchgoing people and have no need to be dishonest or phony," he wrote.

A man in Tavares, Fla., reported a UFO at 11:55 p.m. Tuesday. The craft passed silently at an altitude of 1,500 feet with all its lights out as if on a covert approach to Orlando International Airport, he said.

"It looked like a stealth aircraft," he said.

Davenport said the sightings have little to do with the meteor shower, which are remnants of the comet P/55 Tempel-Tuttle, which crossed near earth's orbit in February.

The only correlation between the meteor shower and UFO sightings is that more people were outside at night watching the sky because of the shower, Davenport said.

"It is rarely the case that a person mistakes a shooting star during a meteor shower for an intergalactic ship," he said.

He said the UFO center has tried to get national news organizations to investigate the rash of sightings to no avail.

"We've been inundated with UFO reports," Davenport said. "It is clearly the case, from our vantage point, that the government and the national press really don't want people to hear about this."

DeVoy's videotape may be sparking some national interest.

A week ago, DeVoy got a call from a reporter from "Dateline NBC." The national news magazine had DeVoy rush a tape of the UFOs via Federal Express to the station's offices in Manhattan.

By Greg Martin

Staff Writer

View DeVoy's video here:

<http://www.sunline.net/ufo/>

You can e-mail Greg Martin at gmartin@sunletter.com

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