UFO INCIDENT REPORT

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GLOWING RED SPHERE WITH YELLOW "SPARKLES" SEEN BY FARMER

Clarence has spent many an hour in the outdoors at night during his life. The chores that go along with operating the large family farm which he and his wife own near Lebanon, Missouri frequently requires him to be out until well after darkness has settled over the Ozarks countryside. In addition, he is an avid camper and has roamed the nearby ridges and valleys until the wee hours of the morning at every opportunity, listening as his hounds pursued the neighborhood raccoons relentlessly. As a result of the experience that he has gained from all these activities, Clarence felt reasonably confident that he would be familiar with anything he was likely to encounter on his property at night.

At least that is what he would have told you before the mild spring evening of April 11th, 1969.

A black Angus heifer which had gone well past the date he had calculated her calf to be due provided the primary incentive for Clarence to venture out into the large open pasture east of his house late that night. Adding even further to his concern was the fact that the animal had repeatedly exhibited signs of having some minor difficulties throughout her pregnancy. "It was about 10:30 or so before I ever got around to checking on her," Clarence said in an interview nearly three years later. "I would have gotten out there a lot sooner but we had company that night. As a matter of fact, that's the reason I can be so sure about the date. My oldest son and his family had come over and had supper with us for his birthday. It was almost ten o'clock before they left, so I just went ahead and watched the news and weather first."

The farmer, as was his custom, drove his pickup out into the pasture so its headlights could be used to check on the livestock. This requires stopping to open a gate next to the barn and it was while he was out of the truck performing this task that he got the first hint that something out of the ordinary was going on. "I could hear the cows bawling a lot more than they usually do at night, so I hurried up a little bit," Clarence explained. "The coyotes will get after a new calf every once in a while and I was afraid that was what was going on." He found the entire herd gathered near a pond at the southeastern corner of the pasture, including the heifer he had specifically come to check on. Standing beside her was a newborn bull calf, still rather unsteady on its feet but otherwise appearing to be perfectly healthy. The other cattle were still acting quite restless and Clarence was convinced that a pack of prowling coyotes remained the most likely cause. He decided to shut off the pickup and get out for a few minutes, his intention being to listen for the pack he suspected of being nearby.

"The battery in that old truck wasn't the best in the world, so I went ahead and shut off the lights, too," he continued. "It was pretty dark and as soon as I got out I noticed this red glow through the trees to the north. I thought that maybe it was a fire up on the neighbor's place so I got back in the truck and drove up that way to check on it."

Clarence went on to explain that the glow was dim enough to be almost impossible to detect while he was driving and had the pickup's headlights on, but became obvious once more when he had
stopped and turned them off. "It didn't really look like a fire because it was too dark of a red and didn't have any orange to it," he stated. Then when I got out of the truck I heard this sort of a crackling noise coming from off in that direction, so I figured it was a fire and the dark color was maybe because it was about burned out." The location where the glow seemed to originate was not as far into the woods as he had first estimated and was still on his property. He knew there should not be anything burning there and it concerned him to see what seemed to be a fire. He turned back around to get a flashlight out from under the seat of his pickup, his intention being to walk the rest of the way and investigate what he was now convinced might be a campfire set by someone trespassing on his property to hunt without permission. When he turned around just a few seconds later to do so he got, in his own words, "just about the biggest shock of my life."

"There was this great big red ball just hanging up there right above the trees, no more than fifty yards from me," is how Clarence described the sight that greeted him. "It wasn't very bright because it wasn't throwing much light on the trees... It was a kind of a dark red. The best way I know to describe it is that my wife has a set of old glasses made out of what she calls ruby glass and it was about that color."

The luminous object, which the witness described as being a perfectly smooth sphere an estimated twenty to possibly twenty-five feet in diameter, hovered only a few feet above the trees with a very slight up and down “bobbing” motion for approximately another forty-five seconds after it was first noticed. During this time Clarence reported experiencing a strong sensation that he was also being observed, although he could not see anything even remotely resembling a window of any sort interrupting the object's featureless surface. He was quick to admit, however, that this feeling may have resulted simply from the sphere’s behavior and its close proximity to where he stood.

The witness also made another interesting observation during the period while the object was hovering. "Every few seconds there was a kind of flickering, like yellow sparkles or something all over it," he remembered. "It was kind of like it was putting off static electricity or something like that. Every time it would give off those yellow sparkles it would make the same crackling noise that I had heard earlier and thought was a fire. Twice there was a yellow flash that was quite a bit brighter than the rest of the flickering, and both of them made a real sharp popping noise."

Following this period of hovering the glowing sphere abruptly began to move away from the witness, climbing at a steep angle toward the northwest. Clarence noted that the electrical discharges if indeed that was what the "yellow sparkles" were, ceased just at the same moment as this movement began. The object moved slowly at first but accelerated at a rather rapid rate once it got underway. Within a matter of approximately ten to twelve seconds, by the witness’s estimation, it was distant enough to appear as a dim reddish star high in the northwestern sky. A moment later it had faded from sight completely. Clarence stood there for another few minutes longer in the vain hope that the mysterious UFO would put in a second appearance, but it was apparently gone to stay. The entire episode had lasted a total of approximately one minute.
The farmer then got back into his pickup and returned to the house. As he drove past the herd of cattle he noticed that they appeared to be considerably calmer than they had been earlier, and were no longer bawling or milling about nervously. This observation would certainly seem to indicate that their restless demeanor of only a few minutes before had been the direct result of the UFO's presence nearby.

Clarence told his wife about his experience as soon as he got back to the house that night. "If it would have been after everybody around here started talking about UFOs and stuff like that she probably would have thought I was just pulling her leg, at least at first," he commented. "But the way it happened she knew I was serious. Besides, I guess I still looked kind of shook up when I walked in the house." His wife, who was present when Clarence was being interviewed, quickly confirmed this point. "He looked like he'd seen a ghost," she said.

(All the comment which Clarence made concerning local discussion about UFOs referred to the widespread publicity being generated at the time of the interview by a series of sightings and cattle mutilations in adjoining Webster County, Missouri.)

Clarence mentioned this incident to only his wife and a few of closest neighbors, people he trusted not to make light of his experience. He admitted that his sincere hope had been that he would locate at least one other person who had seen the luminous red sphere. Unfortunately, his efforts proved to be futile. He was perfectly willing from the start to report his sighting to someone, but had no idea who to contact with the information. Then, in late March of 1992, he heard the author interviewed on a local radio station and contacted him the next day.

As soon as the necessary chores had been completed on the morning following the sighting Clarence set out to do a little investigating of his own. He drove his pickup out to the same spot in the pasture from which he had watched the UFO less than twelve hours earlier and then walked into the woods toward where he had first seen the eerie glow he had assumed to be a fire. "This may not make any sense, but I didn't find anything," he said, "but I know I should have. I know it was down almost on the ground back in there but I couldn't even find so much as a broken limb that would prove it. That's what doesn't make any sense. I saw the thing and I know how big it was. There isn't one place in that whole patch of woods where you could set something that size down in there without breaking a whole bunch of limbs, because the trees are way too close together. Now you tell me how it did that."

Clarence also mentioned that he had to replace the battery in the old pickup he had driven out into the pasture approximately one week after the incident. This same occurrence has been reported by other witnesses over the years whose vehicles have been in relatively close proximity to a UFO which was hovering at low altitude. In this particular case, however, there is actually very little in the way of real evidence indicating a direct connection. The witness had no difficulty when starting the pickup immediately following the UFO's departure, and in fact had commented that he did not leave the lights on when the engine was not running due to the battery's age and poor condition. It seems just as likely that
the failure of the battery was no more than mere coincidence.

(The vehicle in question was described by the owner as being "just an old beat up piece of junk that I use to run errands around on the place here". It is an early sixties model which has not even been licensed for driving on the highway since 1962.)

This close encounter case certainly contains elements which will provide ample fuel for discussion and speculation. Perhaps the most controversial of these will be the fact that the UFO seemed to be a solid, physical object, yet it also appeared to have landed or at least been hovering just above the ground in a densely wooded area without leaving behind any detectable evidence of its presence. On the afternoon that Clarence was being interviewed at his home he took the author out to examine the location where the sighting had occurred for himself. He had not misrepresented the density of the wide band of forest in the slightest; for any solid object even half of the twenty foot diameter which the witness offered as his minimum estimate of its size to descend among those trees without either sustaining considerable damage or breaking a number of substantial limbs would have simply been a physical impossibility.

UFO sightings in which an object seems to perform variations of such almost magical feats in defiance of the known laws of physics are nothing new to ufologists, having been reported on numerous occasions throughout the history of the phenomenon. Before entering into speculative discussions about how these feats were accomplished during any particular incident, however, it is always necessary to first be reasonably certain that it did indeed occur just as reported and could not have simply been a misperception on the part of the witness, caused by some type of optical illusion or unusual perspective.

In this case the only conceivable possibility seemed to be that the spherical object had actually been located completely on the far side of the wooded area and its glow showed through, making it appear to be much closer. Although no precise measurements were taken, the walk across the patch of forest revealed it to be a minimum of approximately two hundred yards wide before it opened out into a small meadow. It was dense throughout the entire distance, the underbrush being thick enough in some places to make even walking difficult. Inspecting the site firsthand left no doubt in the author's mind that no illumination had been observed through this wooded area; if the glow that Clarence saw appeared to be within the trees, that is most certainly just exactly where it was.

One other possible scenario which came to mind concerned the glow Clarence observed being something that was separate from and yet somehow associated with the spherical UFO. The exact nature of such an additional source of luminosity remains a mystery; it obviously could not have been a fire, as he suspected when he first suspected when he saw it, or the burned debris it left behind would have been easily discovered during his thorough examination of the area on the following morning. This theory also raises the question of where the sphere was during this initial phase of the incident, since it was not visible at the time. It could have either been out of sight behind the trees, moving up over them while Clarence was turned around, or hovering in that spot with its glow extinguished.

The yellow "sparkles" and the crackling sound they produced are
another source of some interesting speculation. They were see-
mingly somehow connected to the hovering process, and association
indicated by the fact that it was seen to occur every few seconds
throughout the time that the object was stationary and then it
ceased entirely as soon as the UFO began to move. (Clarence also
mentioned hearing the crackling sound during the time when he
saw only the glow in the woods and had not yet seen the spherical
object. This could possibly lend support to the suggestion made
in the preceding paragraph that the UFO was hovering just beyond
the patch of trees at that point in the chain of events.) The
witness expressed a strong personal belief that the phenomenon
was electrical in nature, and from his description that conclu-
sion is certainly understandable.
Two additional elements which were included in this report will
be familiar to anyone who has studied many accounts of close en-
counters. The strange sensation of being watched without seeing
any sign of windows through which such an observation could be
made is often mentioned by witnesses, and some ufologists have
even gone so far as to speculate that this feeling is the result
or by-product of attempted telepathic communication from the oc-
cupants of a UFO. The suggestion made by Clarence, that it came
simply from the proximity of the object and its hovering so close
by, cannot be discounted either.
The display of restlessness or even outright fear on the part
of animals which are relatively close to a low altitude UFO is an
even more common aspect of such encounters. In this particular
case it happened to involve a herd of cattle but in past incidents
dogs, horses, and a variety of other animals have also been noted
to react in a very similar manner. Any attempt to explain this
frequently reported side effect is further complicated by the fact
that animals sometimes react in the opposite extreme, exhibiting
an unnatural silence in the presence of a nearby UFO. There is
strong evidence that something which many animals can detect but
humans can't, perhaps some type of sound outside of our range of
hearing, is the cause.

Analysis of Clarence's reported UFO experience resulted, as can
be surmised from the preceding paragraphs, in far more speculation
and firendly debate than firm conclusions. The sighting has been
given a classification of "unexplained" in AUN's incident files,
and the witness' testimony has been accepted as being no more or
less than an honest account of the night's events as he perceived
them. In addition, Clarence's impromptu survey of his neighbors
in an effort to locate any corroborating witnesses to his own ob-
servation was completely negative, an indication that no other
sightings had occurred nearby at the time and his was probably an
isolated incident. (This supposition is borne out by a check of
AUN files, which show virtually no activity in the entire Ozarks
region during the early months of 1989.)
Clarence will not speculate upon what the strange glowing sphere
was, but did comment that having the experience will make him "a
lot quicker to believe somebody when they say that something like
that has happened to them".