



Mystery Stalks The Prairie

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Chapter 10

One Big One, Four Little Ones

It was about 6 a.m., two days before Christmas, as a young woman was driving to work at the Great Falls International Airport. Although it was the season of the year for bright lights, she was in no way prepared for what she saw. As she topped the hill where the airport is located, she saw a strange craft that was either on the ground or barely above it. The size of the egg-shaped object, she told authorities later, was *as large as a two-story building*. It had three red lights in a cluster on top, she said, and there were windows in the bottom part.

Suddenly the strange object took off from in front of her car. It appeared to fly beside her for a time and then headed down the valley toward the city. She had watched it for a total of about ten minutes, giving her a pretty good opportunity to see what it looked like.

When she related her strange experience to one of the men in the Federal Aviation Administration tower, he admitted that he had seen it, too, but he was not going to talk about it!

The young woman felt differently. *I saw it and it was there and I don't care who believes me!* she told law officers.

Less than an hour later, at 6:45 a.m., another woman who works at the airport also saw something strange in the sky over the airport. Whether it was the same object as the previous woman had seen could not be established. The second woman said the craft had two bright white lights on each end and a triangular blinking red light in the middle. It seemed to be hovering a little higher than the airport tower and she estimated it was about three blocks away.

After watching the object for about five minutes, she went on into work as it continued to hover over the area. Perhaps seeing UFOs was beginning to be "old hat" for her because it was her second sighting that month and both times were at the airport. On December 11, as she was coming to work about 7 a.m., she saw a strange object ahead of her and beside the overpass. She said it seemed to be about ten feet above the ground and was stationary.

As she slowed down on approaching it, the UFO took off rapidly toward the west and soon disappeared. She had observed it for about three minutes. Drawing a sketch to illustrate what she saw, the woman told officers the large, oblong object had red lights on the sides and threw light beams to the ground. She added that it was definitely not a helicopter.

Reports of UFO sightings continued to come in and one of the most unusual incidents was that of a Fairfield area rancher who described a "hotel-size" UFO that was accompanied by four smaller ones. The man told authorities that he

and his family were returning to their home west of Fairfield about 9 p.m. the night of January 21, 1976, when his two teenage sons noticed an object in a field near their home. Using two pair of seven-power field glasses, the family watched as four separate craft, identifiable only as lights, seemed to cavort among a grove of trees about three-quarters of a mile away.

The rancher was interviewed by law officers and he related: *By this time, these lights were coming back and forth out from behind this row of trees. And they appeared at that time to be landing in the field and so forth. So we watched them for quite awhile, probably twenty minutes there with the field glasses on.*

About this time, we saw two red blinkers down on the highway and I said, 'Well, somebody has reported it and the sheriff or somebody is out there now with a patrol car watching them, so we'll go on down, too.'

So I took the two boys and jumped in the pickup and as we turned the corner of our approach onto the main highway, why these red things that we thought were patrol cars, they then floated off the highway over into this field still blinking, or they were then. So we drove on down there and then as we approached the field where they had gone, why we saw this structure that looked like a hotel - a two story hotel sitting out there in the field and the other lights were grouped around it. About four sets of lights grouped around it."

The rancher said the larger object appeared to be sitting on the ground. Although he could not make out the outline of the smaller objects, he said with the field glasses he was able to see the outline of the large UFO. He said it was a rectangular shape about 300 to 400 feet long and 60 feet in height, with two rows of windows, five to six feet high and two to three feet wide.

He added that he did not see anything moving inside the large UFO, but it gave the impression it had a very brilliantly lighted interior. As he and his boys watched, the smaller objects came close to the large UFO, hovered about it, changed places and darted away, only to return again. He said they seemed to be affiliated with it, but he did not actually see any of them enter the large object or any come out of it.

Occasionally some of the smaller objects would land in the stubble field. When they did, their light seemed to fade and grow dim and they actually seemed to shrink in size. As they watched, the objects would flare up and become very bright. The rancher compared them with an acetylene torch and said that it would hurt a person's eyes to look at them very long. At their largest size, the smaller UFOs appeared to be ten to fifteen feet in diameter.

At one point the man and his sons saw what they thought was a helicopter with flashing red lights approaching. *"We said, 'Well, here comes a helicopter to look at this stuff,' the man told officers. So, it came right over the field and (it was) not a helicopter. And then my boy said, 'That ain't no helicopter. It's just another one of those, isn't it?' And I said, 'Yes, it is.'"*

As they watched, the newest arrival tilted on its side while flying, revealing that it was flat on one side and round on the other, like a ball cut in half, or half a sphere. Slowly and gradually, the "hotel" UFO started moving away from the viewers and disappeared over the horizon into the Sun River Valley.

The smaller objects stayed in view for perhaps another 45 minutes as the man and his sons watched, and then they, too, disappeared in the same direction as the larger UFO.

The rancher and his boys got back in their pickup and drove father down the highway where they came upon a group of six small UFOs in a field. They believed this was a different group than the first ones they saw because the others had gone directly south and these, when they left, went east and south.

At one point, one of the objects started up the highway toward the pickup truck. "My youngest boy said, 'Dad, that one's going to come right over us, right on the highway,'" the farmer related. "But it didn't. It veered off and went back out in the field again."

He estimated that it came as close as 100 to 200 yards before turning. During all the rest of the sighting, the closest the man and his sons were able to get to the objects was about 500 yards. He was asked if the presence of the UFOs affected his motor, and he replied, *Never affected the lights. Never affected the motor or anything like that.* "At one point, he shut off the lights to try to get a better view of the UFOs.

The incident was not the rancher's first experience with UFOs. He told officers that about fourteen years ago, he saw one in approximately the same location. He said it was large and similar to the "hotel type" he had seen this time, but it did differ in that its windows were round instead of rectangular. He said he did not tell anyone except his family about it that time. But this time, he said, *I don't really care if anyone believes this or not. So I'm going to tell you what I saw.*"

A report of a UFO landing came in from the Simms area February 5, 1976, and for the first time in their long and frustrating investigation, officers arrived on the scene in time to see the object for themselves. But they were thwarted in their attempts to get a closer look.



Simms, to the west of Great Falls, and all the yellow-colored towns and regions were affected by whatever was stalking animals so intensely in 1975 to 1976 in Montana.

The call came in from a woman who was caring for some neighbor children while their parents were on a trip. She said she and her own two daughters were returning home from Simms when they saw a bright light behind the house and up on top of the hill. The woman stopped the car and they watched the light, which was very intense and pulsed when it was moving. It appeared to change color from a dull glow to a bright reddish orange. She described the object as about 300 feet long with rows of continuous lights along the top and bottom. She said the bottom lights pulsed alternately from left to right. One of the girls she was caring for, a 16-year-old, saw the glow from a second floor window of her home. After moving back and forth, the object left in a southwesterly direction, disappearing behind some buttes.

Shortly after officers arrived on the scene, they received a radio message from Sheriff Pete Howard, saying the lights were visible in the Sunny Slope area near Fairfield, not far from where the rancher and his two sons had watched the UFOs. They were able to see the light, but because of the hilly terrain, could not get closer to it. After two hours of trying to get closer, they lost sight of it entirely.

Teton County Sheriff Pete Howard received a report approximately two weeks later from a family who lives in the Rocky Mountains west of Choteau. While telling Sheriff Howard about a UFO they had seen the morning of February 22, the couple also said they had seen UFOs on at least five other occasions and

some of their employees had also seen some.

Most of the appearances were around 7 o'clock in the morning. In the case of the February 22 sighting, the man had just stepped out on the upper deck of their home to put up the flag when he noticed a very large object moving very slowly. It had apparently come out from behind one mountain and was starting to go behind another mountain peak. In his excitement, the man said he called to his wife and children to step outside and see it, but there was some delay as they didn't know at first what he wanted. Then they had trouble getting the door open. He estimated he watched the object for about 30 to 40 seconds, but the rest of the family saw it only about ten seconds.

The man said he didn't have an opportunity to get field glasses, but he described the object as large and elliptical in shape. He said it seemed to have a row of lights around the circumference. The incident was the fifth time since the first of the year that the couple had seen UFOs. In another instance, the object appeared to be very low in a canyon. Three sightings were in the mountains and the others on the flats below. The couple pointed out that each time they had seen a UFO was on an extremely windy day with very little cloud cover.

A Havre woman told how she and her son, while traveling near Chief Joseph Battleground, saw *an enormous ball in the sky*. She described it as bright kelly green with a tail of gold sparks like fireworks. A Helena woman wrote about seeing a gigantic light that lit up the entire western sky when she was driving near Helena.

On the same Sunday evening of early March, 1975, two Belt women who were returning home separately from Great Falls, each saw an unidentified flying object near the highway. The one woman, who was traveling alone, said she saw a white light as big as her car hovering over her about 20 feet above the highway. She told officers she drove the rest of the way to Belt at a high rate of speed, hoping to attract a highway patrolman.

The other woman had her two teenage daughters with her. At first she said they thought the bright light they saw was a helicopter, but when they got closer to it and it remained stationary, they decided it could not be a helicopter. The egg-shaped object had two lights beamed from the front of it to the ground, but the three people watching it were mystified by the fact there was *no circle of light on the ground where the beams were shining*.

The woman told Captain Wolverton that at first she was extremely frightened, but suddenly a strange feeling of calm came over her and the two girls. One of the girls even laid down in the seat of the car in order to look up under the object which was close beside the highway.

As suddenly as it had come, the feeling of calm left them and the woman said she "floor boarded" the car and got home as rapidly as possible. To corroborate their story, she had each of her daughters and herself separately tell her waiting husband what they had seen. Each told the same story, although the girls had a few more minor details. "I had to drive, you know," the woman said.

Both women waited until some time later to report the sightings, but the incidents took on added significance when the dates were checked and it was learned that each was mutilated apparently one or two nights before.

The place where the first woman saw the UFO was in the immediate area of the mutilation, while the second sighting was about four miles away.

Another unusual experience was related to law officers by a Bozeman man. He said he was driving south of Augusta just before dark on February 6, 1976, when he noticed a car about a half mile behind him. He said the area was flat with no turnoffs from the highway. He had been looking into his rear view mirror frequently and this car seemed to *appear out of nowhere*."

He said the car followed him for six or seven miles, so when he came to a turnoff, he pulled off to wait for it to go by. There was a dip in the highway just before the turnoff and he waited for the car to come out of the dip, but it didn't. He finally continued on down the road and the car appeared again. When he reached Bowman's Corner, he pulled off again and waited for it to go by, but again it never appeared. By strange coincidence, the same thing happened to his employer on an earlier night in almost the exact same spot.

To be continued in **Chapter 11 - Hairy Creatures, Eight Feet Tall**

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