

1963: IL/WI Stateline

CE1

19 May. On highway 131 about five miles south of the Illinois-Wisconsin State line. (about 10:15 p.m.)

Square windows.

Here is Rev. R. Dean Johnson's story:

"We had no indication as we left home that Sunday evening that within a few minutes we would have one of the strangest experiences of a lifetime. May 19, 1963, was a beautiful spring evening. The sky was clear and the absence of a breeze made it less chilly than usual for that time of year near Lake Michigan.

"Earlier in the evening we had visited a friend in the hospital. We drove along absorbed in our discussion of our friend's misfortune and how we might arrange our personal affairs so we could be of some help.

"We had left home in Zion, Illinois, and were on the western edge of Waukegan traveling south on Green Bay Road (Highway 131) about five miles south of the Illinois-Wisconsin line. This road runs parallel to Lake Michigan following a ridge some four miles inland, so that driving this route, one gets a panoramic view of the lakeshore area near Waukegan.

"It was about 10:15 p.m. when I happened to notice a bright white light off to the southeast, and called my wife's attention to it. She thought, except for its height and distance, it looked rather like a floodlight, such as is used at a ball park. It appeared to be stationary, and judging by the industrial smokestacks near the lake front, it must have been some six or seven miles out over Lake Michigan, and at an elevation of a couple of thousand feet or more. As the light appeared to get smaller, it became obvious that it was moving directly away from us, merely

giving the illusion of being stationary.

"In a few moments, however, it changed course, moving southwest as we continued driving south. As it came closer, it once again looked like a huge, somewhat elongated floodlight. I had been momentarily distracted by the oncoming traffic, when my wife excitedly said, 'It's on fire!' For just a moment, it looked like as if it might be an aircraft about to crash.

"By the time I could look up again, it obviously was not on fire, but was pulsating or flashing light, going off and on in a steady pattern. This was the only time when either of us felt even momentary fear. Our whole reaction was one of curiosity and excitement.

"We were beginning to realize we were seeing a sight few have ever witnessed. We had heard reports of sightings of strange things before, but we never had given enough real thought to the phenomenon to decide whether or not we even believed such reports to be true.

"By this time, the object was over northern Waukegan and coming in lower. By the time we had driven another five miles it was close enough to see that it was not a single light, but several, horizontally arranged lights—all of them white. As it continued to approach, we were startled to discover that they were not external lights, but windows, showing the interior of the craft brightly illuminated! Then the separate windows became more distinct. They were square! The entire object looked oblong, with windows on two levels, like the fuselage of a double decker airliner with the nose and tail chopped off square. There were no wings and no red or green lights, as is required of all authorized aircraft.

"As it came to within a couple of miles of us, it seemed to be getting longer and shorter in a steady rhythm, like an accordion. It continued to glide smoothly toward the southwest.

"As we crossed Highway 132, it was coming in toward us at very low altitude, and it was not until then that the various illusion became understandable. I drove another half mile, pulled off the road, and we both jumped out of the car as the strange craft passed slowly over our heads, close enough for us to see into the windows! There was just enough light from the highway and buildings to enable us to see its outline quite clearly. It was drum-shaped, with vertical sides, so that seen in profile, it looked oblong.

"I estimated it to be about 200 or 300 feet above us, possibly 80 feet in diameter, and 15 or 16 feet high. The entire craft revolved counter-clockwise at approximately one half revolution per second, and was gliding at the almost casual rate of about 40 miles per hour, well above the tree tops.

"The windows were evenly spaced all the way around on two levels, which appeared to be three feet across or slightly less, and horizontally spaced about that same distance apart. However, on each level there was a section, which either had no windows, or else there was a compartment which was not illuminated. In one position, the upper left windows were dark, and the lower right were dark. As the craft revolved 180 degrees, there were illuminated windows the full width on both levels. Hence, from a great distance, as the craft revolved it was alternately illuminated its full width and then only partially, which gave the accordion effect.

"Unfortunately, although we were close enough to actually see into the windows, we could see nothing but ceiling, as we were looking up at an angle of perhaps 60

degrees. Even so, it was enough to get a definite sense of depth within the structural form.

"Unless the craft was much higher than it appeared and therefore much larger in overall dimension, the ceiling height in each story must have been no greater than six feet, depending upon the thickness of the floors and ceiling.

"Because it was late evening it was difficult to get a clear idea of the shape of the underside or of the structural material. The lasting impression was its boxiness and angular lines. (I always had had a mental image of a 'flying saucer' as very sleek and streamlined, tapering out to a fine edge.)

"There was something very eerie, about this strange craft, beyond its unusual appearance, that neither of us quite identified until later. This enormous vehicle, as large as our church, floating just over our heads, *was absolutely silent!* There was no sign of either mechanical or jet propulsion and there was no air disturbance such as would have been caused by any device similar in principal to a helicopter.

"We got back into our car after it had passed by, and continued southward. Only a few hundred feet ahead, there was a stalled car on the shoulder of the road, and three men were bent over the fenders working on the engine. This huge craft had passed within 100 yards of them without their noticing it!

"Several other riders on the highway appeared to be following the course of the strange craft. A car load of boys went racing past us as one beat on the side of the car and yelled, 'Look at the flying saucer!' They too pulled their car off the road, as had others along the highway, in order to get a better look.

"The lighted craft continued in a southwesterly direction perhaps another mile, then turned southeast again, gaining somewhat in altitude and velocity. It passed over Green Bay Road again and over North Chicago and on out over North Chicago and out over the lake again. Finally, turning southwest, it continued this zig-zag pattern, still gaining in altitude. By the time we had driven another five miles or so, it appeared to be over Lake Forest or Highland Park, and we had to abandon the chase. In all, we had watched the craft for 15-20 minutes.

"Later that same evening, we talked with someone who had attended the stock car races at the Waukegan Speedway that evening, only about a half mile south of our closest sighting. Because of the bright floodlights there, the craft could not be seen clearly, but it was seen. Comparing the angle and direction of his view, it seemed that my estimate of the elevation of the craft, at least, was relatively accurate.

"I also tried calling the local newspaper and radio station that night, but there was no answer. I called again early the next morning and contacted Radio Station WKRS, Waukegan, to learn that there had been numerous reports of other sightings, but none so far had been at such close range. After an extended conversation I was asked if I would consent to having my description tape recorded. I agreed and he said he would have to call me back from a phone with a recorder attached. In spite of the rather detailed report that I then gave, not one word was published by either the radio station or its affiliate, the *Waukegan News-Sun!* This was my first personal experience with what I later learned to be the Pentagon's effort to censor all such reports. Others who had seen the strange craft the same night we did, but from a greater distance, said they had called the police and other civil agencies and got a variety of improbable explanations.

"At the time, I was priest-in-charge of All Souls Episcopal Church in Waukegan,

and for several years we had published a weekly church newspaper. That week I printed a brief account of our experience in our parish paper, to discover that several of my parishioners also had seen it. One lady, who attended the Wednesday morning Mass, mentioned that she not only had seen it on that Sunday, but also on the previous Saturday night and on both Monday and Tuesday—but always from a considerable distance. Needless to say, my wife and I resolved to go out that evening to watch. That night, we watched the sky for more than two hours, during which time planes constantly flew back and forth—often as many as six were to be seen at one time, and always at least two. With such an inquisitive (or hostile?) reception prepared, there was no sign of the strange vehicle.

“I heard of no further reports until about two weeks later, when four parishioners again spotted the craft before an electrical storm moved in off the lake.

“A flying saucer? It seems to me immaterial what you call it, but these facts seem obvious.

“1. It was not any known craft.

“2. It was maneuverable, yet not powered by any conventional method, nor blown by the wind.

“3. It was not towed by any other aircraft, and there were no aircraft in the vicinity at the time. Because it followed a zig-zag pattern, a tow craft would have to reverse its direction and still have the towed object move smoothly and continuously while making the corner.

“4. It could not have been a lighter-than-air craft. With compartments around the entire perimeter, there could not have been a sufficient volume for gas remaining in the center.

“5. It appeared to be intelligently controlled. Even coming in low, it easily cleared the electric high lines and maintained a safe altitude above the trees.

“6. Its flight seemed purposeful, if for nothing more than sightseeing. The craft glided back and forth over the more densely populated communities and industrial areas strung along the lake shore and traveled as far as U.S. Highway 41.

“7. The flight appeared to be casual and unhurried. There was no apparent effort at concealment, nor was there any sign of hostility.

“Where it was from, or why it was there remains a mystery.

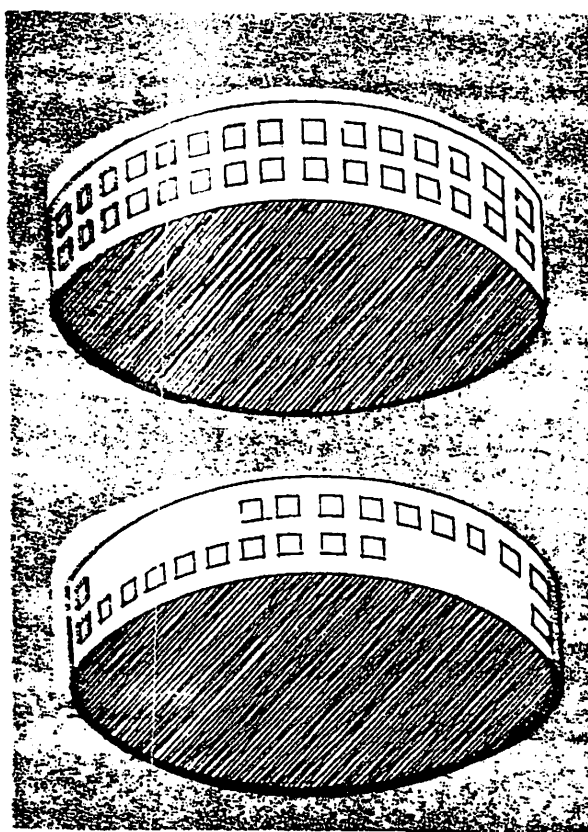
“We have wondered also about the darkened sections, the possibly unlighted compartments. Were they dark because it is easier to see out of a darkened room?” (xx.)

(xx.) Johnson, Rev. R. Dean. “The Priest and the Saucer.” *Fate*. January 1964. pp.27-31.

The editors of *Fate* added this statement to Rev. Johnson’s account:

“EDITOR’S NOTE: Neither the Pentagon nor any other federal agency ever has attempted to interfere with *Fate*’s continuing efforts to gather news of UFO sightings. In this case, Father Johnson was perhaps more the victim of coincidence than conspiracy. Dave Davis, WKRS news director, told *Fate* that he was the man who tape recorded Father Johnson’s exciting and ‘very believable’ ac-

Drum-shaped craft reported in accompanying article had brightly lit, square windows, evenly spaced in two rows. As craft revolved, it was seen that some of the windows in each row were dark, as shown in lower drawing. View up and into windows was from an angle of about 60 degrees.



count. Although the radio station recognized Father Johnson's status as a community leader, the recording was not used because it was thought to resemble too closely previous reports which had been found to originate in low level flights of a light aircraft displaying an advertising sign. The station's decision perhaps was influenced by the fact that the aircraft responsible for the earlier reports had been advertising a new, competitive radio station." (xx.) (See drawing of UFO)

(xx.) Johnson, Rev. R. Dean. "The Priest and the Saucer". *Fate*. January 1964. p.31.

The possibility that this UFO was an advertising plane can be entertained up to a point. (See clipping about such a plane operating in the New England region.) It should be noted, however, Rev. Johnson estimated the UFO passed overhead at a 60 degree angle and at an altitude of 200 to 300 feet, yet he makes no mention of any indication of discernable letters or words so it was total failure if it was a advertisement stunt, and the lit portion of the UFO faced outward, not downward, which is contrary to the design of the advertising light bulb array (To my knowledge—L.E. Gross). Moreover, Rev. claims he saw the object: "...quite clearly. It was drum shaped, with vertical sides." (xx.)

(xx.) p.28.

Furthermore, he said the object was spinning at one-half revolution per second. The advertising electric sign was a fixed display attached to the bottom of the plane. Also, no sound was heard

and an airplane should have been audible at low altitude.

It should be noted that the windows in the craft the Barney and Betty Hill claimed to have encountered were not continuous (or not lit up) around the outside. That was noticed since the craft rotated and created a "blinking effect," which compares with Rev. Johnson's "accordion effect." The windows reported by the Hill's were square, and so large the "figures" inside the ship were visible to the waist. Rev. Johnson estimated the windows he saw were about three feet across.

Flying Billboard May Account For Some UFOs

A new type of advertising device—a flying billboard—is probably responsible for about 25 percent of the recent flurry of unidentified flying object sightings in the South Shore area.

The remaining sightings, however, are still unsolved.

Airplane Flyer

"The flying billboard" is operated by a Boston advertising agency and consists of a lighted 45-foot-long panel hung from the bottom of a conventional small airplane, a Fine Tri-Pacer.

The panel unfolds from the bottom of the plane once in flight and opens to form a rectangle 45 feet long and about 10 feet high. On the panel are almost 500 small light bulbs which flash on and off to form words.

Joseph Budina, technical director of the firm, East Coast Advertising, and developer of the device, said, the Tri-Pacer itself carries a bright red beacon on its roof, in addition to the half-dozen or so required navigation lights. It usually flies at an altitude of about 1,200 feet, Budina told The Patriot Ledger.

On the night of July 3, when about 10 reports of a "strange

object with flickering lights" came in from South Shore towns, the plane was in the area and was probably responsible for the sightings, he said.

Circular Object

Other reports, however, described a circular or spherical object with an orange light on its bottom and a white light on its top flying in sharply rectangular patterns.

The same object was apparently photographed by Patriot Ledger Staff Reporter Richard Pothler. Several astronomers and UFO experts are now analyzing the photograph.

The Tri-Pacer, Budina declared, could not fly in the patterns photographed and is not the cause of this class of UFO sightings.

"The Flying Billboard," piloted by 22-year-old Daniel Vale of Londonderry, N.H., flies out of various airports and covers all of New England, its developer said.

Quincy, Massachusetts.
Patriot-Ledger
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