

# OUT OF THE PAST: An Incredible Light

Our knowledge of the UFO phenomenon often is based on the most fortuitous circumstance. A random meeting or chance encounter with a witness can lead to the unveiling of a long-hidden report. Here is such a case, one which occurred over ten years ago. Following a lecture in Boulder, Colorado, recently, Dr. Hynek met a lone witness. He was impressed with the sincerity and straightforward manner of the man and his account of the sighting, but was unable to conduct any investigation. Dr. Richard Sigismond kindly agreed to do a follow-up interview for the record and investigate the sighting as much as possible at this late date.

The event described below occurred during the last great UFO wave in the United States in 1973. Yet, the witness had never come forward to report his experience until he found himself with the perfect opportunity. How many other important and interesting events are unreported? Estimates are that only one in ten UFO sightings is reported to any authority, and even fewer than that are recorded in the UFO literature. Piecing together the UFO puzzle is made even more difficult by the existence of these literally thousands upon thousands of unreported sightings.

We are, therefore, fortunate that the present sighting has finally seen the light of day; it is a valuable case, despite the fact

by Mark Rodeghier

that there was only one witness. Both Hynek and Sigismond were impressed with the intelligence and precision with which the witness related his experience. Moreover, as has been noted so many times previously, if a witness wished to tell a "tall tale," why such a bland one? Why not include electromagnetic effects or humanoids or UFO chases with paralyzing light beams in their accounts? The reason, of course, is that almost all individuals who report a sighting are simply explaining, to the best of their recollection, what they experienced. They, also, remain puzzled.

**TYPE:** CE-1  
**DATE:** Oct. 12, 1973  
**TIME:** About 4:00 A.M.  
**DURATION:** 5-10 minutes  
**WITNESSES:** One, flying a light plane  
**PLACE:** Central eastern Arizona

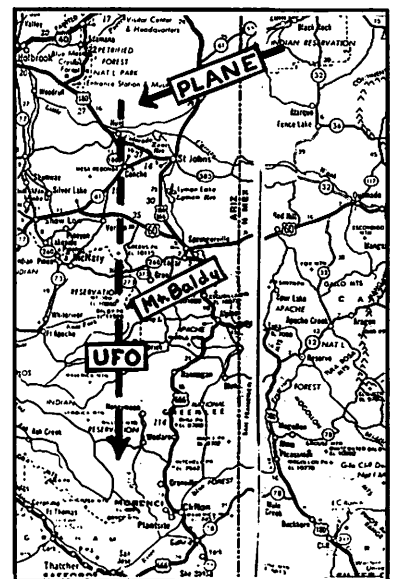
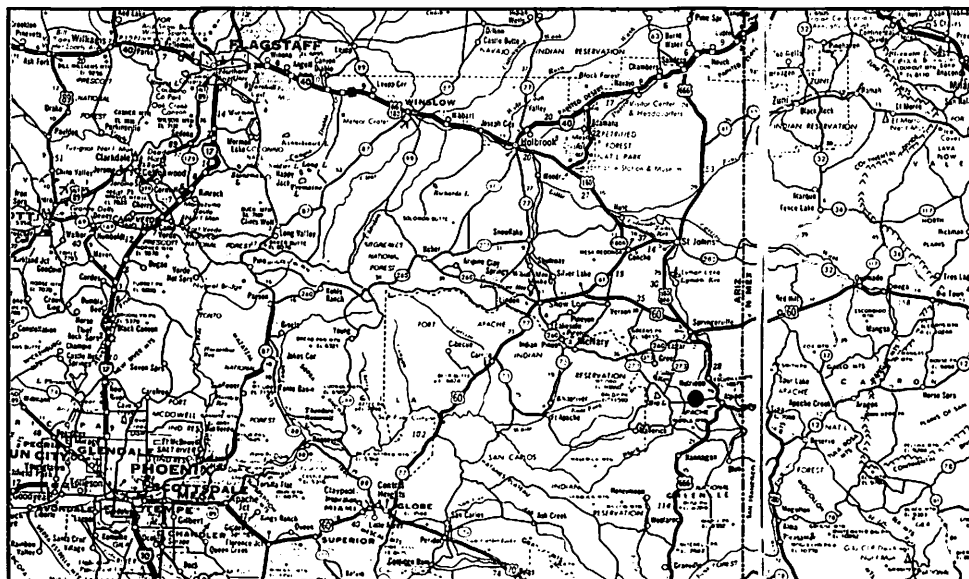
It was Oct. 12, 1973, the night of a full moon. Mr. TR (name on file at CUFOS), then 26 years of age, was a commercial, instrument-rated pilot. (Today he is a flight instructor.) He lived then in Leadville, Colorado, flying to various locations in the western United States and Mexico, depending upon the nature of his business. On this particular night he was scheduled to fly to

northern Mexico to pick-up some cargo and return it to Colorado.

TR recalls that the weather was beautiful: crisp, clear, and not a cloud in the sky. With the full moon in view, he was able to see all his surroundings quite clearly and thus had no difficulty navigating through the mountains. Flying a Piper Cherokee 6, he left Leadville around 2 a.m. and travelled south to Albuquerque, then turned directly west towards Phoenix. He crossed the Arizona-New Mexico border near the St. John VOR (Very-high frequency omnirange radio) signal at about 4 a.m. The flight had been uneventful.

As he was passing Mt. Baldy to the south (elevation 11,900 feet), flying at an altitude of 2,500 feet over the ground, he spotted a red flashing light on the ground. The light attracted his attention because he knew that there were "no roads, radio towers, homes, or buildings" in this area. (A check of the map reveals the isolation of the sighting locale, which is southeast of the Petrified Forest National Park.) He continued flying past the light for about two minutes, but curiosity got the better of him and he executed a 180° turn to examine the light more closely. TR thought, at this point, the light might be from a helicopter on the ground.

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## Light — cont.

Just as he finished his turn, the light began to move toward the south and instantaneously reached a speed TR estimated to be about that of his plane, 170 mph. The light appeared about twice as luminous as a standard rotating beacon on a plane or helicopter, flashing regularly at approximately 2 second intervals, a pattern which remained constant throughout the sighting.

The instantaneous acceleration was amazing, but even more so was what TR now observed. In his own words: "It appeared to be skimming over the ground ...any time there was even the most subtle undulation or elevation change, it would follow that change...my perception is that at no time did it even have any elevation... at all times it was skimming the ground." From 2,500 feet overhead it is difficult to be absolutely positive about altitude, but TR believes his perception to be correct, especially because of the non-level flight of the light.

Very intrigued now, TR put his plane into an intercept course with the light, diving down to convert altitude to air speed. He planned to buzz the light to determine just what it was. Within a few seconds of his change of course, the light accelerated instantaneously to about 800 mph, continuing on a path due south. At this point, the light had entered the Apache Indian Reservation, land that is quite sparsely populated. It moved up and over Mt. Baldy, hugging its slopes, never hesitating or gaining altitude. TR lined his plane up behind the light, headed south, and for the next few minutes observed it travel 50-60 miles, still appearing to skim the ground as it moved up and down various mountainsides. (TR had an unrestricted view of about 100 miles because of the excellent visibility and moonlight.) It was during these moments that "It began to occur to me (TR) that this was something different." He knew of no machine that could do what this light was accomplishing in such an effortless fashion.

Then, after about five minutes, the light suddenly made a right angle turn from the ground and accelerated vertically to a great speed. After eight or ten flashes, it disappeared (as TR said) "into outer

space." He has watched a launch of a rocket from Cape Canaveral and says that there is no comparison: the light had a speed "much greater than the rocket" and travelled straight into the atmosphere as if unaffected by gravity.

Nothing remained to be seen after the light had vanished, so TR resumed his flight. He did, however, have a feeling of elation, as he believed he had "seen something that was not of this earth." TR is convinced that the light (it never appeared to him as anything but that) was reacting directly to him, perhaps retreating rather than risking any close encounter with him. Neither before nor since has he seen anything remotely akin to what he observed that October night in 1973.

### Analysis

Several aspects of the present case parallel details of many other events and make this single witness report more convincing. The light displayed intelligence by reacting to TR just as he changed his course. It "skimmed over the ground" with essentially no altitude, as reported in other cases. No earthly machine can accomplish such a feat. Its "instantaneous acceleration," a classic feature of countless numbers of cases, is startling and inexplicable. It rose straight into the air and vanished, as if leaving the earth.

What might this light have been? A helicopter could perhaps explain the first half of the sighting, but surely not the second. A VTOL (vertical take-off and landing) jet, like a British Harrier, is impressive and can execute vertical accelerations, but cannot skim just yards over the ground while crossing rough and undulating terrain. A natural phenomenon, such as an electrically-generated plasma, is unlikely to remain stable over the times and distances involved. Nor is it able to rise vertically into the atmosphere, at least according to current theory, such as Persinger's work.

The government might be testing in secret a research vehicle or airplane. If so, why have we seen nothing the past 10 years of a marvelous device that performs as did this light? Moreover, this portion of Arizona is hundreds of miles from the nearest military base, thus a poor spot for any test. This explanation doesn't seem likely, either.

The event could, of course, be a clever

hoax by TR, but that is doubtful. Listening to his articulate and matter-of-fact report, one comes to the conclusion that, as with so many other witnesses, credible people are seeing incredible things. TR is intelligent, open, and puzzled: he feels he may have seen something "not of this earth," but he doesn't embellish his account.

We are left with another inexplicable event, involving characteristics — instantaneous acceleration, flight at zero altitude, no visible power source — which we cannot duplicate with our present technology. Consider, too, this question: what was that light "doing" at night in the middle of an unpopulated area in Arizona, and why did it seemingly flee as TR flew closer? How many other such lights have appeared in similar deserted locales unseen by human eyes? We do not know. Nor may we ever know until many more individuals such as TR step forward and make public their own personal encounters with the UFO phenomenon. □

## A.A.A.S. Meeting To Include UFO Phenomenon Talks

The 1984 Annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, scheduled to be held in New York City on May 29, 1984, will include a day of sessions devoted to topics generally referred to as "on the borderland" of the formal sciences.

In an invitation recently received, Dr. J. Allen Hynek has been selected to be one of two speakers that day to speak on the subject of the UFO phenomenon from their personal points of view. Dr. Hynek has selected as his topic, "Properties of the UFO Phenomenon."

The second speaker to share this subject with Dr. Hynek will be James Oberg, NASA staff-member and widely-known writer on the UFO phenomenon. His articles have frequently appeared in OMNI, THE SKEPTICAL ENQUIRER and other periodicals. Mr. Oberg's topic is yet to be announced.

Other subjects to be discussed on that day include parapsychology and SETI, the search for extraterrestrial life. Speakers on those subjects will be announced as they become available to CUFOS. □