

SELECTION I

Outer-Space Ghost Story

Vocabulary Review

Pulsating red lights
 the object *yawed*
erratic movements
ascribed to other causes
retracted into the disk
collusion seems improbable

1 At 2:24 A.M. on September 3, 1965, Norman Muscarello
 2 walked into the Exeter, N.H., police station, apparently
 3 near shock. Patrolman Reginald Toland, on duty at the
 4 desk, helped him light a cigarette before he was calm
 5 enough to talk.

6 Muscarello had been hitchhiking north on Route 150
 7 from Amesbury, Mass., to his home in Exeter, a distance of
 8 12 miles. Traffic was sparse, he said, and he was forced to
 9 walk most of the way. About 2:00 A.M., when he was passing
 10 an open field near Kensington, N.H., a huge object came
 11 out of the sky. Brilliant, pulsating red lights outlined its
 12 rim, which appeared to be 80 to 90 feet in diameter. The
 13 object wobbled, yawed, and floated directly toward him,
 14 making no noise whatever. Afraid that it was going to hit
 15 him, Muscarello dived off the road.

16 The object backed off slowly and hovered over the roof

17 of one of two nearby houses. Finally, it backed off far
 18 enough for Muscarello to make a run for one of the houses.
 19 He pounded on the door, screaming. No one answered. At
 20 that moment, a car came by and Muscarello hailed it
 21 frantically. A middle-aged couple picked him up and
 22 dropped him off at the Exeter police station.

23 "Look," he said to Toland, "I know you don't believe me.
 24 I don't blame you. But you've got to send somebody back
 25 with me!"

26 Impressed by Muscarello's sincerity, Toland called a
 27 cruising patrol car. Within five minutes, Patrolman
 28 Eugene Bertrand pulled into the station. After hearing
 29 Muscarello's story, Bertrand reported that about an hour
 30 earlier he had come across a car parked on a bypass ap-
 31 proximately two miles from Exeter. The woman at the
 32 wheel told him that a huge, silent, airborne object had
 33 trailed her from the town of Epping, nine miles away. The
 34 object had brilliant, flashing red lights, she said, and kept
 35 within a few feet of her car. When she reached the bypass,
 36 it suddenly picked up tremendous speed and soon disap-
 37 peared among the stars.

38 "I thought she was a kook," Bertrand told Toland. "So I
 39 didn't even bother to radio in." The object the woman
 40 described, Muscarello said, sounded exactly like what he
 41 had seen.

42 It was nearly 3:00 A.M. when Bertrand and Muscarello
 43 reached the field between the two houses. The moonless
 44 night was clear, there was no wind, and the stars were
 45 brilliant. Visibility was unlimited.

46 Bertrand parked his cruiser. He radioed back to Toland
 47 that Muscarello was still so tense that he was going to
 48 walk out on the field with him to investigate further. As
 49 they walked, Bertrand probed the distance with his
 50 flashlight. They saw nothing, and Bertrand tried to con-
 51 vince Muscarello that he must have seen a helicopter. But
 52 Muscarello insisted that he was familiar with all types of
 53 conventional aircraft and would have recognized a
 54 helicopter.

55 About 100 yards from the roadside was a corral, where
 56 farmer Carl Dining kept his horses. As Bertrand turned his
 57 back to the corral to shine his light toward the tree line
 58 north of them, the horses began kicking and whinnying.

59 Dogs in the nearby houses began howling. Muscarello
60 screamed, "I see it! I see it!"

61 Bertrand turned. Rising up slowly from behind two tall
62 pines beyond the corral was a brilliant, roundish object.
63 Soundless, it moved toward them like a leaf fluttering
64 from a tree, wobbling and yawing as it did so. The entire
65 area was bathed in brilliant red light. The white sides of
66 Carl Dining's house turned blood-red. Bertrand reached
67 for his .38, thought better of it and yanked Muscarello
68 toward the cruiser. He called Toland at the Exeter station.
69 "I see the damn thing myself!" he shouted.

70 From the cruiser, Bertrand and Muscarello watched the
71 object hover. It was about 100 feet above them, rocking
72 back and forth, and still absolutely silent. They found it
73 difficult to make out a definite shape because of the bril-
74 liance of the lights—"Like trying to describe a car coming
75 at you with its headlights on," Bertrand said later.

76 After several minutes, the object began moving slowly
77 eastward toward Hampton. Its movements were erratic,
78 defying all conventional aerodynamic patterns. "It
79 darted," says Bertrand. "It could turn on a dime."

80 As it began to move away, Patrolman David Hunt, in
81 another cruiser, pulled up. He had heard the radio conver-
82 sations between Bertrand and Toland.

83 "I could see that fluttering movement," Hunt says. "I
84 could see those pulsating lights. I could hear horses kick-
85 ing out there in the barn. After the thing moved out of
86 sight, a B-47 came over. You could tell the difference.
87 There was no comparison."

88 Moments after the object slid over the trees and out of
89 sight, Toland, at the police station, took a call from an
90 Exeter night switchboard operator. "Some man had just
91 called her, so hysterical that he could hardly talk
92 straight," says Toland. "He told her that a flying saucer
93 came right at him, but before he could finish, he was cut
94 off. I called the Hampton police, and they notified Pease
95 Air Force Base."

96 At one o'clock the next afternoon, Maj. David Griffin and
97 Lt. Alan Brandt arrived in Exeter from Pease. They went to
98 the scene of the sighting, interviewed Bertrand, Hunt and
99 Muscarello at length, and returned to the base with little
100 comment. By nightfall, a long series of phone calls was

101 coming into the Exeter police station, many from people
102 who had distrusted their own senses before the police
103 report.

104 Soon after, I began a search in the area that was to
105 continue for many weeks. My objective was to bring out
106 every fact possible in a single limited area regarding an
107 Unidentified Flying Object. No such intensive UFO inves-
108 tigation had ever been focused on a single area before.

109 I interviewed Ron Smith, 17, a high-school senior, who
110 a few weeks earlier had been driving with his mother and
111 his aunt, shortly after 11:00 P.M., not far from the spot
112 where Muscarello had been hitchhiking.

113 "All of a sudden, my aunt told me to look up at the sky,"
114 Smith told me. "I stopped the car, looked up and saw an
115 object. It had a red light on the top, and the bottom was
116 white. And it glowed. It passed over the car once, stopped,
117 then went back over again. It didn't make much noise, just
118 sort of a humming noise, like a cat purring."

119 Mrs. Virginia Hale, of Thomsen Road, Hampton, a UPI
120 stringer and a local news correspondent, kept a UFO in
121 clear view over a 10- to 20-minute period. "I was standing
122 by the sink, looking out the kitchen window, about 6:25 in
123 the evening. It caught my eye because it was bright and
124 going very slow. Then it stopped dead over by that house. I
125 marked my window here with a smear from the dishwasher
126 so I could remember where it lined up. Suddenly, this
127 thing cut back toward the southwest, losing altitude so
128 fast I thought it would crash. At this point, I could see that
129 it was dome-shaped and flat underneath."

130 At the home of Mrs. Rudy Pearce, on the Exeter-
131 Hampton line, I met with a delegation of neighboring
132 housewives. Their accounts of multiple sightings con-
133 tinued for more than an hour. Some of the women were
134 afraid to go out alone at night. "Some of these things," said
135 Mrs. Alfred Deyo, "sit in the air as long as half an hour.
136 Just sit there."

137 So many leads began coming in from the police blotter,
138 newspapers and ordinary citizens that it was impossible
139 to follow them all up. But I did record lengthy interviews
140 with more than 60 people. Certain common denominators
141 emerged:

142 Many observers were reluctant to report their findings
143 because of the fear of ridicule.

144 Most people reporting sightings were familiar with
145 commercial and military aircraft because of the constant
146 traffic at nearby Pease Air Force Base.

147 Most observers reported luminous, disk-shaped objects,
148 either white or orange, or changing in color. Many people
149 said they saw red, pulsating lights around the rim.

150 Most reported absolute silence by the objects, although
151 in some cases a high-frequency hum was heard.

152 A few noted odd behavior of animals, as well as electri-
153 cal, ignition and broadcast disturbances.

154 In some 200 pages of typed transcripts, 73 mentions
155 were made that the UFOs were observed near or over
156 high-power transmission lines.

157 None of this information is particularly new to NICAP
158 (the National Investigations Committee on Aerial
159 Phenomena, in Washington), a privately sponsored or-
160 ganization which has been collating reports from viewers
161 over the past 20 years and pushing demands for public
162 enlightenment on the subject of possible interplanetary
163 phenomena.

164 Any air base receiving a UFO report sends an officer to
165 investigate. The information is relayed to Wright-
166 Patterson Field in Dayton, Ohio, where it is analyzed by
167 scientists and technicians. The report is forwarded to the
168 Pentagon, which claims that only 6.4 percent of the thou-
169 sands of objects sighted remain unidentified. The rest of
170 the cases are ascribed to other causes such as temperature
171 inversion, weather balloons, mistaken identity of planes,
172 stars, planets, clouds, reflections and so forth.

173 Last November, I returned to Exeter to gather more
174 confirmation on the sightings. A particularly graphic re-
175 port came from Joseph Jalbert, 16, a high-school junior.
176 His house is almost under the poles supporting the power
177 lines on Route 107. One evening at dusk, toward the end of
178 October, he noticed a reddish, cigar-shaped object high in
179 the sky. In a moment, he saw a smaller, reddish-orange
180 disk emerge from it and begin a slow descent toward
181 earth. It drew nearer, then skimmed along the power lines
182 and stopped within 200 feet of him, just a few feet above
183 the wires. Then, very slowly, a silvery, pipe-like extension
184 descended from the disk until it touched the wire. It re-
185 mained in contact with the power line for several seconds,
186 then was retracted into the disk. Finally, the disk took off

187 toward the sky at tremendous speed and disappeared in-
188 side the cigar-shaped object again.

189 Confidential comments made to me by Coast Guards-
190 men and military men in the area support the laymen's
191 testimony. Collusion, hoax or mistaken identity by so
192 many people seems improbable. The continued official
193 reticence surrounding the subject of UFOs seems as mys-
194 terious as the Exeter story itself.

Selection 1 Comprehension Questions

Decide whether each of the following statements is true or false according to the selection. Then mark *T* or *F* in the appropriate place.

- ___ 1. Most UFO sightings are eventually ascribed to other causes.
- ___ 2. There seems to be a relationship between the UFOs and power lines.
- ___ 3. The police officers realized that Muscarello had been drinking.
- ___ 4. Most observers did not want to report their sightings because of fear of ridicule.
- ___ 5. NICAP is the name of the government organization that investigates UFOs.

Choose the correct answer for each of the following questions and circle the letter before it.

- 6. Which is not true about the UFOs that were sighted?
 - a. Some were dome- or disc-shaped.
 - b. Some had pulsating red lights.
 - c. They were relatively quiet.
 - d. One of them landed on an empty field.
- 7. As a result of the sighting, which did not happen?
 - a. Some women were afraid to go out alone at night.
 - b. Many people did not want to report what they saw for fear of being ridiculed.
 - c. Electrical power failures that lasted up to one-half hour occurred.
 - d. Pease Air Force Base made an investigation.
- 8. According to the article, which of the following did not investigate the sighting?

- a. The local university.
 - b. The author of the article.
 - c. The U.S. Air Force.
 - d. The Exeter, N.H., police department.
9. Which of the following is true according to this article?
- a. A UFO seemed to draw power from a local power line.
 - b. The investigating team claimed that what was sighted was really a weather balloon.
 - c. The Exeter police were never able to verify any UFO sighting.
 - d. According to official sources such as the Pentagon, most UFOs remain unidentified after careful analysis by scientists and technicians.
10. Which of the following did not sight a UFO?
- a. Patrolman Eugene Bertrand.
 - b. The couple that took Muscarello to the police station.
 - c. Ron Smith, student.
 - d. Mrs. Virginia Hale, news correspondent.