

2 women tell of terror in what top investigator has called:

# 1978 Strangest UFO encounter ever

By RAFE KLINGER

A fun vacation for two young women turned into a terrifying nightmare in what eminent UFO investigator Timothy Green Beckley has called the "strangest UFO encounter ever."

Driving along a clear, lonely stretch of road in southern Wyoming, the women were suddenly confronted by sinister lights and even stranger visions of phantom trucks, weird creatures and a horrible black dog with eyes like glowing coals.

"This case is bizarre because there were so many weird shapes in it," says Beckley, who in 15 years has investigated 2,000 UFO-related cases. Beckley included the incident in his "UFO Review," published by Global Communications of New York, saying he was convinced of the victims' sincerity.

UFO investigator John De Herrera, who interviewed the women for 12 hours on four separate occasions, is convinced the story is true. Beckley said: "It appears from this case that the pilots of UFOs have the ability to manipulate our minds. It's the first case I've ever heard where a UFO changed its shape into another object. Beckley met and interviewed one of the women at a privately

sponsored UFO conference in San Diego, Calif., attended by the most prominent UFO investigators in the world. Mickie Eckert, an Anaheim, Calif., woman in her mid-20s, was seeking an explanation for the terrifying journey she and her best friend, Kathy Echard, were taken on in July 1978. The horrifying trip changed their lives.

They were heading east toward Nebraska and pulled to the side of the road to investigate in the world. Mickie Eckert, an Anaheim, Calif., woman in her mid-20s, was seeking an explanation for the terrifying journey she and her best friend, Kathy Echard, were taken on in July 1978. The horrifying trip changed their lives.

Then Kathy yelled and tore Mickie's attention from the dog. In the back seat of their car sat a strange-looking "kid, its arms all bunched up. The women jumped out of their car. The dog and car had vanished. Then a distant rumbling sound reached their ears. "Our hair stood on end," says Mickie. "Our skin was covered with goosebumps."

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A group of lights appeared in the distance. As the sinister rumbling sound grew closer, the lights merged into one and became a massive spaceship.

Then they were blinded by an orange light like the sun coming up. Suddenly, it seemed as if they had been transported to another world.

"People started to appear out of nowhere, walking across the freeway carrying tubes or pipes," says Mickie.

"There were these blue lights and we knew something was going to happen," says Mickie. "We were terrified. We felt like we were going to be taken to another planet."

Everything vanished and a man appeared out of nowhere. He said he was heading for Chicago and offered the women, whose car would not start, a lift.

Stopping at a truck stop, they walked over to a motel and got a room. As they locked the door, the TV set switched on and the lights went out by themselves.

"This tiny little light flittered around the room and then we knew we hadn't escaped," says Mickie.

The women stayed awake that night and called police in the morning. When the officers drove them back to their car, the scene had changed.

The highway guard railing was different, so were the road signs and the scenery. In a nearby field were the corpses of a cow and a sheep. The cow was a skeleton and the sheep's skin had been peeled off.

After police listened to the women's story, "they shrugged and told us we'd seen swamp gas," says Mickie.

Since the incident, the women's lives were altered drastically. Best friends for 17 years, they grew apart.

Karen, only 31, has been hospitalized "at least 20 times" since, says Mickie. And the women's habits also changed. Kathy who had been sloppy became ultra neat and Mickie says she's now the sloppy one.

"It's almost as if we've exchanged personality traits," says Mickie.

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