

"BEAUTY OF THE NIGHT"

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WHILE researching a complex silent contactee, Mr. X¹ of northern New Jersey, I stumbled upon some interesting tangential data when X referred to two of his former acquaintances from the late 1950s. These men, now in middle age, recounted to me their UFO experiences in northern New Jersey and the Pocono Mountains of eastern Pennsylvania.

B.C., a fifty-three-year-old salesman, who had university training in engineering and business administration, was very active in ufology for a six-to-nine-month period in 1958. During that time he was involved with a highly publicized northern New Jersey contactee, some of whose claimed UFO experiences were, in B.C.'s opinion, frankly spurious, and others inexplicable. B.C. independently witnessed some purported associated UFO events. He vividly recalled four distinct episodes. It facilitated this study to learn that he was formerly from my home town, Montclair, and was currently living in a neighbouring community.

Three psychiatric interviews in my office and several extended telephone conversations with B.C., his wife, and other members of his family revealed him to be intelligent, truthful, and free of any relevant psychopathology. Although he currently has mild diabetes, which is being successfully treated with diet and oral medication, his UFO experiences occurred when he was in good general health. He has always had excellent vision and hearing. The following experiences are presented chronologically.

I—The radio

"My wife and I heard a WOR radio news bulletin which interrupted the regular programme for a few minutes but which no one else heard. We were driving from Montclair to Pluckemin, New Jersey, where a meeting on saucers was held every week. While I was listening to the regular programme, an announcer cut in and said, 'It's been reported that the British have communicated with a saucer in England and have made arrangements to meet with the occupants.'

"I turned to my wife and was stunned. When I asked her, 'Will you tell me what was just said on the radio?' She gave it to me just the way I had heard it.

"I inquired about this when we arrived at Pluckemin, and although the people there were also listening to that particular radio show, they hadn't heard what we did! I could hardly believe what I had heard. I never had an experience like that before or since. A hoax would have been very unlikely."

II—The death light

B.C. now moved on to the second incident:

"The contactee's son, aged twelve, was dying of brain cancer. The parents had given up on doctors and were using advice from the 'spacemen.' The boy was close to the end. My friend Rob* and I went up there to see if there was anything we could do.

"We were sitting in the kitchen and the boy was in the other room with the nurse, who was on twenty-four-hour duty. The sick boy then called urgently. His mother rushed into the room and we followed. The nurse took his pulse; it was very slow. The boy had a convulsion and a light started to show up above his bed. It began as a light blue, and was about eight inches from the wall but not casting any light on the wall. It was like a bar of light. It pulsated and grew whiter, and then it faded. The whole light manifestation lasted about one and a half minutes.

"The nurse left to call the doctor. Rob and I were alarmed. When the boy relaxed the light was white. By the time the doctor came there was no light and the boy was all right. When I saw the light, I turned my head sideways to make sure that it was not an optical illusion which would travel with me, but it was still there. I asked Rob what he had seen in the last several minutes and he described it to me the same way.

"The night of the column of light, I saw four men in luminous uniforms. They were about three hundred feet away on a hill-top in the pasture. They stood in front of a dark grove of trees behind a fence. It was a moon-lit night. They were on the edge of the rise walking and glowing. If they were stooges, it would have been a very strange and expensive hoax. The sick boy's mother was with us: the other children were too young and too small to fake this. The [contactee] father was in the house, as was everyone else whom we had met when we first came. The father might have been grieving over his very ill son and flipped,† but this would be hard to accept. It was not very cold that night."

This incident was independently confirmed by Rob, and the same light over the dying boy was seen under similar conditions at several different times by Mr. and Mrs. X, who independently volunteered this information, and who were quite mystified by it.

● The title "Beauty of the Night" is quoted from "God's World," a poem by C. B. Brailey, in *Secret of the Flying Saucers from Outer Space*, by Howard Menger, Pyramid Publications, Inc., New York City, 1959.

* This experience was independently and spontaneously confirmed by Rob and his wife.

The Xs recalled how, before the boy was completely blind (i.e., couldn't distinguish light from dark) and disfigured from the brain tumour, he could 'see' many people around him when the others claimed they saw the columns of light. The boy said, "they (the hallucinated phantoms?) are from the planet Orion and are coming to take me away." The mother and Mr. and Mrs. X had no idea where the boy received this information since the father and the rest of the family were unfamiliar with Orion and such concepts.

All who visited the boy were impressed with his composure in the face of death and with his intellectual brilliance. Although only twelve years old and blind, he could talk on a variety of subjects, and many people came from afar to see him, including, on one occasion a high-ranking Jesuit from Washington, D.C., who interviewed the boy in private and at length.

The account of Mr. and Mrs. X was fully corroborated by a three-hour psychiatric interview of the boy's mother. Her narrative and experiences included the episode with luminous entities that "could almost be seen through—and that seemed to hop around like the astronauts (whose Apollo XVI moon-walk was on television during the interview). There were no discrepancies between the mother's comments and the versions given by B.C., Rob, and the Xs.

The mother expatiated on other personal UFO and UFO-related experiences. She appeared to be an open, honest, co-operative, intelligent, middle-aged woman who was free of any gross psychopathology. From the interviews of her and of others, it would seem reasonable to suppose that the elements of later fraud and presumed serious psychopathy involving her husband, the publicised contactee, were an entirely different matter and a tragic story in themselves.

It is of interest that despite some dreadful life experiences, the woman's children have all done well in the world. The mother handled the truth and reality of the valid, early, family UFO experiences in a factual way—even though she had no explanation. The later alleged UFO material involving her husband alone, which she believed was fraudulent, she also handled on a reality plane. It can be conjectured that if she had not assumed such a course, her children (and she herself) would not have survived without serious emotional decompensation.

None of the people involved in the light experiences were spiritualists, adepts in psychic phenomena, or in any way accustomed to such events.

On telephone interview, the sick boy's physician claimed no knowledge of the light episode. Perhaps because his wife was flagrantly deceived by the publicised contactee's egregious stories, the physician dismissed everything and everybody associated with these alleged UFO-associated events as "bunk".

Karlis Osis,² the parapsychologist, has carefully analysed many deathbed experiences, some of which are possibly analogous to this. In his examples, the dying person had the vision, which was only rarely shared by others. Not one of his examples had multiple visions by observers on different occasions. However, Osis cited an amusing experiment by the Cambridge Society for Psychical Research: a Mr. Cornell once

masqueraded as a ghost by wearing a white garment and then walked in a lighted churchyard "in view of a street with much traffic." He next walked across a screen during a performance in a crowded movie theatre, and still later, using luminous cloth, he masqueraded at a garden party. Thirty-two per cent of the theatre audience did not notice him at all, and of those who did he was not interpreted as an apparition. Of the sixteen observers at the garden party, only the bartender (and he might have been under the influence of alcohol) took Mr. Cornell for an apparition.

The applicability of this experiment both to UFO data and in particular to the UFO-associated multiple-witness experiences of seeing luminous figures with peculiar astronaut-like gaits, as well as the columns of light, is evident. The framework of negative expectancy, which would tend to minimise or deny such experiences would tend to make any residue that is reported more significant. Therefore, because UFO experiencers are often ridiculed for reporting "such nonsense", it is likely that there are as many cases understated as there are overstated—even to the extent of the grievous omission of bizarre data.

Although there is nothing in Osis' accounts that are remotely reminiscent of UFOs, one might wonder about a possible UFO-parapsychological linkage. How does one find out unless he thinks of the possibility and has asked?

III—The ravine +

B.C. next recalled a personal sighting:

"This event happened late one winter night about six weeks after the death-light experience. It was snowing. We were near the Mt. Airy Lodge in an isolated area of the Pocono Mountains in eastern Pennsylvania. A group of us were in a cabin with a fire going and decided to experiment by having one of the fellows hypnotized. When entranced, he said that there would be [UFO] action in the region that night and that we should go to a ravine. Nobody, however, gave us a direct route. Rob, several other men, a few wives and I went to a ravine. It was snowing. The (publicized) contactee was not with us and knew nothing of what we were doing or what we had planned on the spur of the moment. We stood on a ridge, looking down into the gully while Rob § and the hotel desk clerk went down to see what was there. When they were about twelve feet into the clear area at the bottom of the ravine, a man's voice, seemingly from the brush on the side, said, 'Who's with you, Rob? Don't be afraid.' Rob and the

† H.W., who was a high school friend of the sick boy, recalled how the contactee father once brought the sick boy out into the pasture "to meet the spacemen and receive help. The boy, who was blind from the brain tumour, couldn't see the spacemen, and the father screamed and smacked his son." Because of this, H.W. felt that the father was a hoaxer. However, even superficial scrutiny of this unfortunate episode reveals other alternative and perhaps more plausible hypotheses: (1) the father had hallucinations and delusions of spacemen; (2) the father actually saw something and was furious and frustrated that his son couldn't share his experience either in reality or in an induced psychosis, folie à deux.

clerk ran back in panic. Rob was all shook up. Then the light business started.

"A light sprung out of the ground and shot up vertically, with a point at the top. It was about 12 to 15 feet high. The point then dropped and became an elliptical white light (Figure 1, a and b). It suddenly went back to the vertical shaft and then went out. It was most amazing. I have never seen anything like it. If this was a hoax, it would have cost thousands of dollars. The next morning, Rob and several other fellows went down to look for footprints and found nothing but some deer tracks. There was a stream running through the bottom of the ravine, the ground was soft, and there was some snow. It had stopped snowing before the light business started. The men also reported that the tree tops were broken and the bark on the lower limbs was scraped off. Something must have risen."

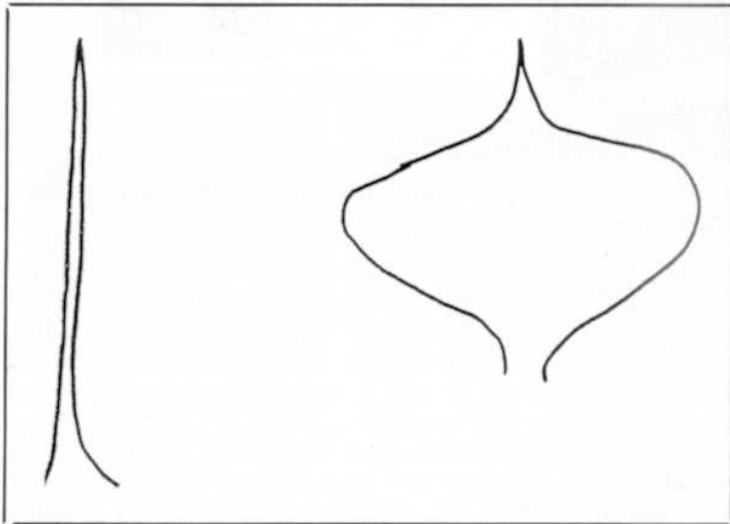


Figure 1 (a)

Figure 1 (b)

[It has proved difficult to fit the author's copious footnotes, so some of these will be found on pages following the indicating signs—EDITOR.]

+ My hour telephone interview of an anonymous physicist (Ph.D., Princeton; currently professor and chairman of a university department of physics) years later confirmed his similar experience of seeing a noiseless disc 3 feet in diameter, in a rural New Jersey ravine (near the home of the publicised contactee). The disc changed in colour for approximately 15 to 20 minutes and was observed at a distance of 6 to 8 feet. The physicist was unable to offer a plausible explanation, although he was aware of such hypotheses as Wood's light (ultra-violet) on fluorescent painted discs, etc. While a hoax seemed unlikely because of the intelligence of the people involved, the cost, and the technical difficulties, it was impossible to rule it out entirely. As a matter of fact, the physicist credited this experience with a significant influence on his life and career. It aroused his curiosity; but even though through the years he has interviewed many people who have had UFO experiences, few of his colleagues know of his personal UFO involvement.

The episode in the ravine was also witnessed by the young man H.W. (see footnote †), the friend of the publicised contactee's dying son. Direct interviews of

IV—Archbald Ufographs

This is the last of the four incidents recounted by B.C.: "These pictures (Figure 2, the four pictures from left to right) represent what I saw near Archbald, Pennsylvania, in 1958. Rob, the photographer, some others, and I were cruising around in our car late at night. Somebody said we should go to Archbald because that was where the action was. It is an isolated open-pit mining area with lunar-like craters—a grotesque place at night. There was no lake around. An unknown amateur photographer from a local town took the pictures. He had no tripod.

"The craft came out of nowhere. I only saw the outline and light beam which swept back and forth like a pendulum and then withdrew. The lights were never on us. The light beam stopped in mid-air and never went all the way to the ground. There was no sound, and it lasted only a few minutes. We had no warning. There were no physical effects. It occurred about midnight. There was no snow on the ground; it was a moonlit night.

"My friend Rob and a few others were with me and saw the same event. Rob and I got a set of prints a year and a half later and immediately recognized what we had seen in actuality. The word got out that the FBI came after the negatives, but the photographer had put them in a safe-deposit box. He later issued the prints to those who wanted them. Unfortunately, I have no details about the exact date, camera, the film, timing, etc. This is the only time in my life that I ever saw UFOs at such close range. Once, years ago in Montclair, I saw several star-like objects which moved rapidly and performed unusual zigzag manoeuvres."

B.C.'s photos were submitted to the ufographer August C. Roberts, who has a collection of more than 15,000 UFO and UFO-related pictures—both real and spurious. Roberts recognised B.C.'s four ufographs as being previously published. The photos were "erroneously associated with the UFO flap over the Wanaque Reservoir"³ (New Jersey) in 1966, and the four such pictures were published elsewhere in 1967⁴ (see Figure

H.W., of his father-in-law (a newspaper reporter) and of his mother-in-law, both of whom were thoroughly familiar with the whole bizarre publicised contactee's story, confirmed the physicist's account, allowing for some omissions (e.g., H.W. offered more details: "... a little light came out of the disc and circled around"). The reporter and his wife were high school classmates of my (B.E.S.) former college room-mate and friends of his parents, a psychiatrist and housewife, who were also well known to me. Mr. and Mrs. X and the contactee's former wife all recalled the essentials of this event and they also did not see how it could have been faked since the contactee did not have sufficient skills, electrical knowledge, finances, or friends suitably qualified to perpetrate such a hoax. According to these people (and even some state police officers whom I once interviewed on another matter), this contactee's later hoaxes were easily discovered and were quite crude.

§ This experience was independently and spontaneously confirmed by Rob.

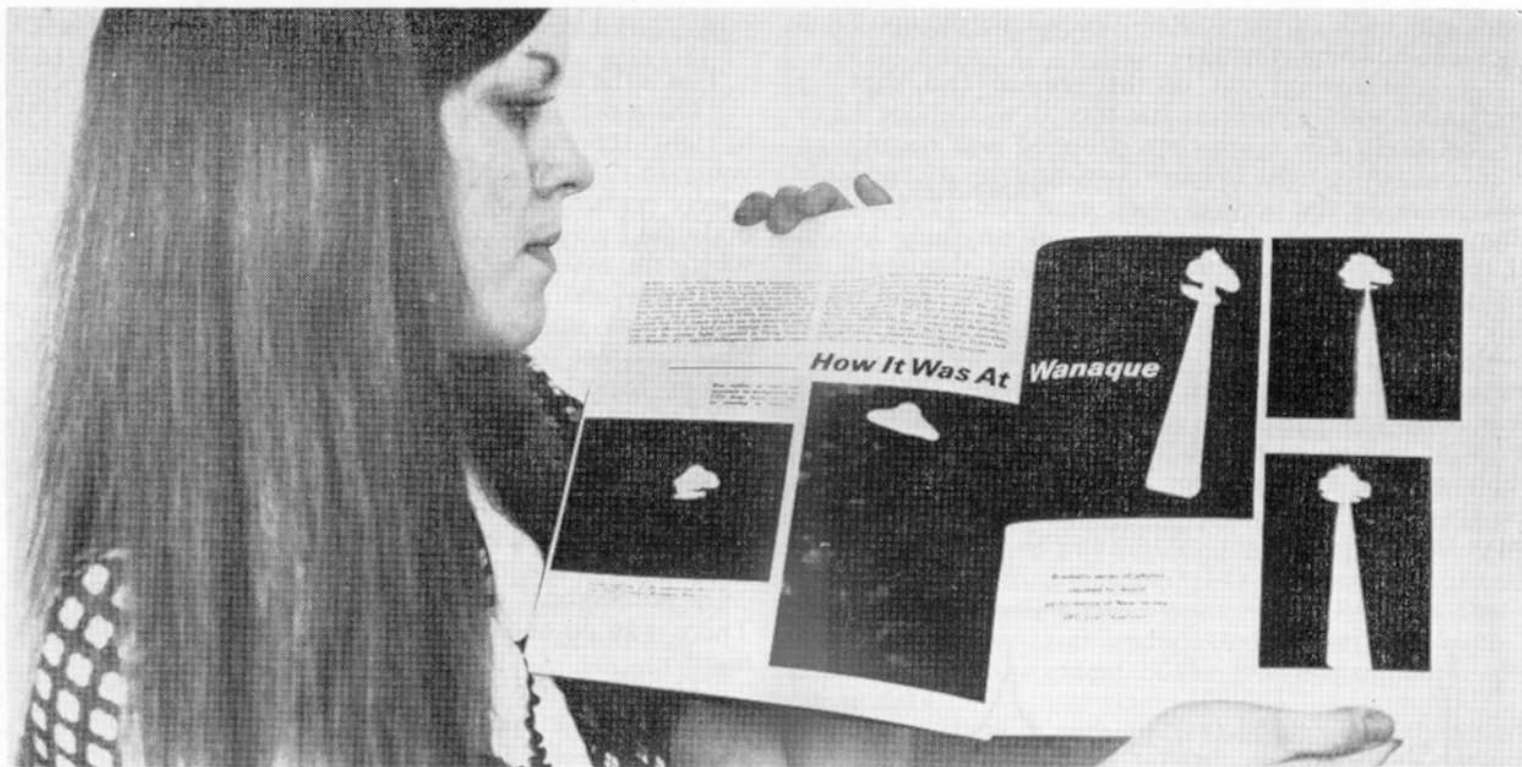


Figure 2: Erroneous attribution of B.C.'s UFO photographs to the Wanaque flap. The fifth photograph (lower right) was not taken by B.C.

2). At that later time they were linked to the then recent Wanaque sightings. Only part of the fifth picture of the series is published (Figure 3, ufograph at lower right-hand margin). The complete fifth picture, hitherto unpublished, is from the files of August C. Roberts (Figure 3). Note the round white area (artifact? UFO?) to the right of the beam of light.

According to Roberts, the five alleged ufographs were presented to the editor of the special UFO publication by the original photographer, who insisted on anonymity. After much detective work, Roberts tracked down the Wanaque alleged photographer but he was unable to prove conclusively that this man had taken any or all of the pictures. At first the mystery photographer refused to acknowledge his photographs because two of his former fellow employees (one of whom had also seen the beam of light hit the water) had lost their jobs.

Roberts, a professional photographer and pioneer ufographer, could not see how the UFO beam of light, which can be seen through, could easily be duplicated by technical means. The fifth ufograph (shown in its entirety in Figure 3) probably was taken over the Wanaque Reservoir because, according to Roberts, the mountain in the background and the water matched the actual locale. This is unlike the other four pictures. Furthermore, Roberts wondered if these particular ufographs were similar to the UFO reported from nearby Lake Hoptacong, New Jersey, a syndicated drawing of which was published by Otto Binder (see Figure 4) in 1966.

Since B.C., Rob, their wives, and others, owned the same set of four photos from the late 1950s, and these ufographs were obtained directly from the amateur photographer who accompanied them when they actually saw the UFOs, it is quite possible that four of the alleged Wanaque ufographs are actually not Wanaque

at all, but the earlier Pocono series. The text of the Wanaque article⁴ stated that the photographer was concerned about the confiscation of his negatives and since this account coincides with B.C.'s and Rob's independently given versions, one wonders about various hypotheses: the photographer might have been over-awed by his experience and then felt threatened by whatever the sources are that sought to purloin his photographs; however, after a safe period of several years had elapsed, he might have capitalised on his earlier ufographs by either selling them directly to the magazine as coming from the highly publicised and

**Figure 3:
The fifth
photograph in
full**



timely Wanaque flap, or he might have acted indirectly and dealt through a local intermediary (perhaps the ufographer of the intriguing fifth picture) for the ring of greater authenticity, possible profit for both, and increased anonymity for himself.

It is unfortunate but understandable that so many people are reluctant to give first-hand accounts of their UFO experiences, that some who are easily intimidated, or succumb to ridicule, risk losing their jobs, etc., but this is part of the problem and such sticky nuts-and-bolts sleuthing cannot be ducked if one aims to grapple with the often inexplicable, paradoxical, "mind polluting (?)" aspects of ufology.

Although final answers, as in this case, are not forthcoming, the spectacular nature of the evidence, even with its many admitted shortcomings, would seem to justify the preparation of some kind of a report. Perhaps this case illustrates the wealth of material that is hidden on somebody's closet shelf or in a desk drawer. Although much of the data in such instances cannot be accepted on face value, it is a folly to ignore and a challenge to explore.



Figure 4

Rob was visibly shocked at the time I interviewed him and he examined the silent contactee X's photographs of an alleged UFO with a changing and cut off beam of light. Although Rob had never before seen X's pictures, they resembled what he had seen in actuality when he was with B.C., near Archbald, Pennsylvania, in 1958 and his own set of photographs. Rob's account of various UFO experiences at that time was unusual. For example, he stated that on several occasions he received nocturnal "telepathic impressions to get up, dress, drive to an unanticipated location" where he met several other men who had similar alleged telepathic experiences. Then on one occasion, within a short time lapse, they all saw a tree-

height UFO with flashing lights. He said that at other times he was telepathically directed to various places where he discovered alleged dehydrated (?) vegetables, fruits, and nuts, which when rehydrated soon had the appearance and taste of fresh foods. This was long before dehydrated or freeze-dried vegetables were commercially available.

Although reluctant to let his name be used or even to be interviewed because of the effect of any possible adverse publicity on his business, he and his wife told quite a story. As another odd coincidence, Rob, who came from a distance away in New Jersey, was the brother-in-law of my wife's friend's neighbour at our summer cottage. It was through her that this interview was arranged.

Cursory psychiatric screening of Rob and his wife revealed no UFO-relevant psychopathology. He is a successful and respected businessman in his community. It would be desirable, however, in this instance, as well as in many other UFO-related witness claims, to have prolonged psychiatric study. Any additional data might throw light on the validity of the claims and the possible tie-in with psychodynamic and paranormal factors. Either way—acceptance or rejection—the potential information could be crucial. It is a much more complex problem than can be "solved" in a hit and miss fashion with short-term hypnotic interviews, sessions with a lie detector, or telephone interviews. Clinical psychotherapeutic practice verifies this assumption: the more time spent the more valid the impression.

Another example that I studied, and that involved films of UFOs which were allegedly confiscated by the FBI, happened early Thursday morning on September 20, 1962 (*Passaic-Herald*, 21/9/62, and subsequent editions), and again on Friday, at 3.45 a.m. William Stocks, a watchman at Braen's Quarry, Hawthorne, New Jersey, saw a brightly-lit object in the sky for approximately twenty-five minutes. The latter episode was corroborated by four policemen.

On several subsequent occasions a multi-coloured lighted object was again seen at the quarry by Stocks and many other people early in the morning. A photographer shot about eighteen feet of colour motion picture film of the coloured object, and, as he later told the watchman, the film was confiscated by people who claimed they were from the FBI. Mr. Stocks said, "The object hung in space, made no noise, lit up the whole area, moved quickly from side to side, and up and down, and out of the jeep's headlight beams. There were thousands of red particles that were drawn up through the machine from the quarry. For a day and a half following this, everything I went near, or touched, I'd get sparks from (static electricity?). I didn't see a physician." This experience was obtained by telephone interview of William Stocks on January 14, 1971; direct interview of his former Lodi, New Jersey, neighbour; telephone interview of his former employer's son; and the reading of several contemporary accounts kindly supplied by the employer's son. Mr. Stocks currently holds a position of trust and responsibility. On psychiatric screening he gave no evidence for past or current emotional illness.

In his lecture, "Common Features of 160 UFO Reports," to the Eastern UFO Symposium, Baltimore, Maryland, January 3, 1971 (Proceedings published in 1971 by Aerial Phenomena Research Organization, 3910 East Kleindale Road, Tucson, Arizona 85712), Thomas Olsen reported a UFO episode five years after the Hawthorne UFO hovering, in Springdale, Ohio, on October 9, 1956: "... with red objects, swarming like birds, flying straight, flopping over and over."

(Continued on page 17)