

The Highway 26 Structured Craft UFO

Primary Investigator: Douglas Helbling
Secondary Investigator: Kato Harris
Sighting Date: October 16, 2011
CMS Report Date: October 17, 2011
Case Report Date: January 22, 2012
Disposition: UNKNOWN OTHER

Case Summary

This case involved the sighting of a distant, but near earth light that came close and took on the appearance of a craft. The object was seen by a primary witness, her adult daughter, and by other motorists. The sighting took place near, and in fact directly on a busy freeway west of Portland, Oregon. The case disposition for this case is UNKNOWN OTHER.

Witness Narrative

Oregon resident Mercedes Corbin (pseudonym) was driving in her car west on Highway 26 toward North Plains, Oregon, at 6:10 AM when she saw a strange light in the sky ahead of her. Her adult daughter, Connie (pseudonym), also was traveling with her, and saw this light as well, once her mom woke her up to look at it. Within a moment the light moved from what Mercedes thought to be over 5 miles away to within a mile or so in distance. Then the object began moving still closer. By the time Mercedes reached the Jackson School Road overpass, the object was now close enough that she and her daughter could see what she described as a distinctly shaped craft.

This object was now hovering at about 450–600 feet above the open field just northwest of the Jackson School Road overpass. Mercedes slowed down to look at the object. She was nearly rear-ended by a truck that was traveling behind her and apparently watching the object instead of her. She noticed that two cars in the oncoming lanes of the divided highway had slowed nearly to a stop, also apparently to look at the object.

Mercedes described the object as a “sideways Washington Monument,” essentially a long rectangle with a pointy, pyramid top, only oriented sideways. She estimated the object to be approximately 40–60 yards in length. She reported that very intense white light emanated from the bottom of the craft. She provided a drawing of the craft. See **Figure 1 – Witness Drawing** for a redacted version of her picture. This

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picture was blacked out slightly to remove text narrative that included name information.

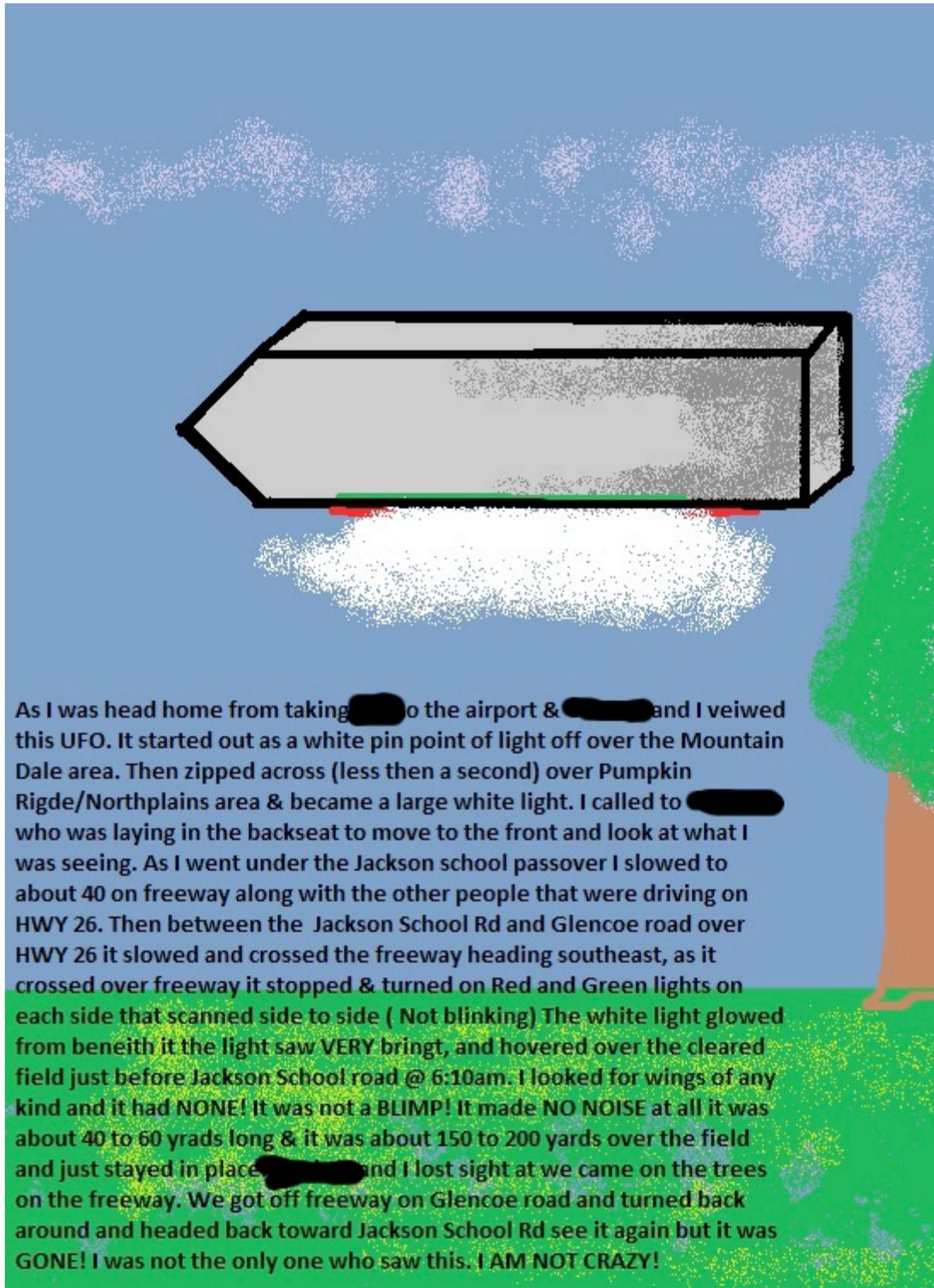


Figure 1 – Witness Drawing (with name redactions)

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While the witness was still driving, the object moved toward Highway 26. As it drew close to the road, alternating red and green bars appeared on the side of the object and moved along the length of the object. She was very specific in her description of these lights, saying that they “moved, but they did not blink.” At this point, the object moved across Highway 26 and hovered over the open area to the southwest of the Highway 26 and Jackson School Road interchange. Mercedes craned her neck to visually follow the object, while still driving forward, until she lost sight of it as trees blocked her view. She proceeded on to the next exit of Highway 26, at North Plains, then crossed over the freeway and headed back east to get another look at the craft. She estimated that this took about two minutes. By the time she got back to the same point on the eastbound lanes, the object had disappeared.

The primary investigator sent her a Google map of the sighting area to try to further pinpoint the location of the sighting to better understand where she and the object were relative to each other. She responded by providing a map of her own. See **Figure 2 – Witness Map**.

Mercedes reported that she and her daughter then returned home, both of them excited and perhaps even in a mild state of shock. They both started talking to her husband at the same time, attempting to relate the entire experience simultaneously. At this point, her husband suggested that they both take a couple of deep breaths, then each of them could tell him their account of what they saw, but without the other one present. She and her daughter then related their accounts to her husband, one at a time, and when they were finished, the three of them gathered to discuss what was said. Her husband reported that both she and her daughter told virtually identical accounts of what they saw. The differences were not substantial. A couple of the noteworthy differences:

- The daughter reported that the mother was so focused on watching the object that she nearly drove off the road at one point, at which time the daughter grabbed the steering wheel and yelled at her mother to pay attention to the road.
- The daughter reported that there were small lights on the pointy, pyramid-like end of the object, which she thought might have been windows. Mercedes does not remember seeing these lights, but does not dispute that they might have been there.

Mercedes participated in a forty five minute phone interview with the primary MUFON investigator (Doug) of the case. She appeared coherent and well-spoken. This interview was conducted about 55 hours after the initial event; at this time, she was still somewhat shaken up by the experience. She was also very concerned that someone at her workplace would find out about this incident, and her reporting of it, and that this might result in her losing her job. The primary investigator assured her

that her name and her daughter's name, as well as their contact information, were visible to only the state director and assistant state director plus the two investigators (the primary and also the chief investigator for Oregon). He further reassured her that MUFON took her privacy and the privacy of all witnesses very seriously, adding that her name would not be included in any report about this case without her permission.

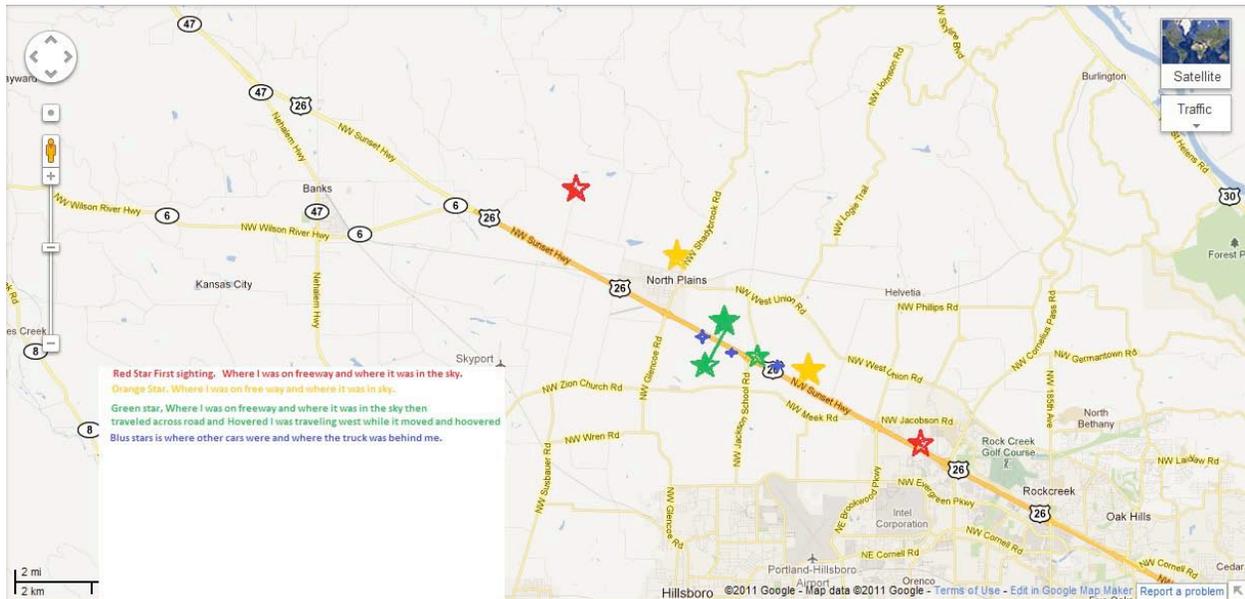


Figure 2 – Witness Map

The witness reported that later in the day of her sighting she looked at several dozen UFO information websites in an effort to find out if anyone else saw what she saw. She found one website that collected reports and showed a single line entry for a report in the Hillsboro area on the same date. The owner of that site was contacted by the primary investigator about that case. The site owner did not respond. It is a curious coincidence that this site owner declared he would no longer be updating his site. He made this declaration on his site the same date as this sighting occurred.

The primary investigator (Doug) posted a Portland craigslist.org ad soliciting witness confirmation of this sighting because Mercedes reported that a truck and two other cars also slowed down to watch the object seen near the Jackson School Road interchange. There were no witness responses to that Craigslist ad.

Case Investigation – Investigator Notes and Analysis

Mercedes' daughter had originally agreed to be interviewed, and then changed her mind. The daughter's email address was provided, but she also failed to respond to email inquiries. In a subsequent email exchange with Mercedes, the primary investigator was politely informed that the daughter was no longer interested in participating in the investigation and that she just wanted to "forget the whole thing."

Mercedes herself had originally agreed to participate in a follow-up interview, but then went "quiet" for some weeks, failing to return phone calls and failing to respond to emails. She did respond once more to emails after several weeks, and agreed to look at some photographs taken by the investigator of the sighting location, but she failed to respond to any subsequent emails which contain information on these photos.

The investigator visited the location of the sighting and took several dozen photographs of the area. Most of the open field areas to the north and south of Highway 26, the areas above which the object was seen hovering, were fenced off private property. The area on the south side of Highway 26 was slightly more accessible. The opinion of the primary investigator is that the witness was sincere and her experience was genuine. Her emotional response to this incident was intense, but that in no way reflected negatively on her credibility. She was clearly shaken on an intellectual and emotional level by this experience. But that did not stop her from providing a coherent, articulate account of her encounter.



Figure 3 – Field on Northwest Side of Highway 26 and Jackson School Road Interchange

As a curiosity note, while the primary investigator was photographing the area on the southwest side of the Highway 26 and Jackson School Road interchange, a black helicopter flew toward the investigator, and then disappeared to the south. This was more a source of amusement than anything else, since the approach path of the chopper in question was directly from the nearby Hillsboro Airport.

It is also worth mentioning that within CMS, the MUFON Case Management System, there are eight or more cases of other sightings in relatively close proximity to this one, dating back over a ten year period. Another interesting coincidence is that the only crop circle case known by the primary investigator to have occurred in the general area was just five or so miles due east of this sighting, also directly adjacent to Highway 26. See Keith Rowell's excellent **Sunset Highway Crop Formation** report on this case for more information:

- http://www.oregonmufon.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=77:sunset-highway-crop-formation&catid=44:crop-circles&Itemid=75



Figure 4 – Field on Southwest Side of Highway 26 and Jackson School Road Interchange

The primary witness reported that days after the sighting she was still experiencing dry eyes, skin irritation, and problems sleeping. She decided not go to a doctor about these symptoms, however.

Radar Data:

Tom Bowden, Oregon State Director for MUFON, submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to the FAA for radar data for the time and location of the sighting. This data was eventually released by the FAA. Tom and Doug, the primary investigator, examined this data, and received additional help with the data from William Puckett of UFOs Northwest as well as from Robert Powell, MUFON’s Director of Research. William

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and Robert both provided valuable information on how to decode the data sets sent by the FAA to determine if there was useful information within.

Preliminary analysis of this data has not been very revealing, but it did apparently indicate that there was no conventional, identified aircraft in the specific area of the sighting at the time the sighting occurred. Some possible non-identified radar returns in the data, apparently very near the sighting location, will be further examined over the coming weeks. A separate follow-up report on this additional analysis will be released to Oregon MUFON and appended to the case data in CMS. Some additional “how to” information on decoding the FAA data may be provided for future users of radar data. For now, the radar plot data included with the FAA data will be included in this report as a visual reference, though the information within is not extremely useful at this point.

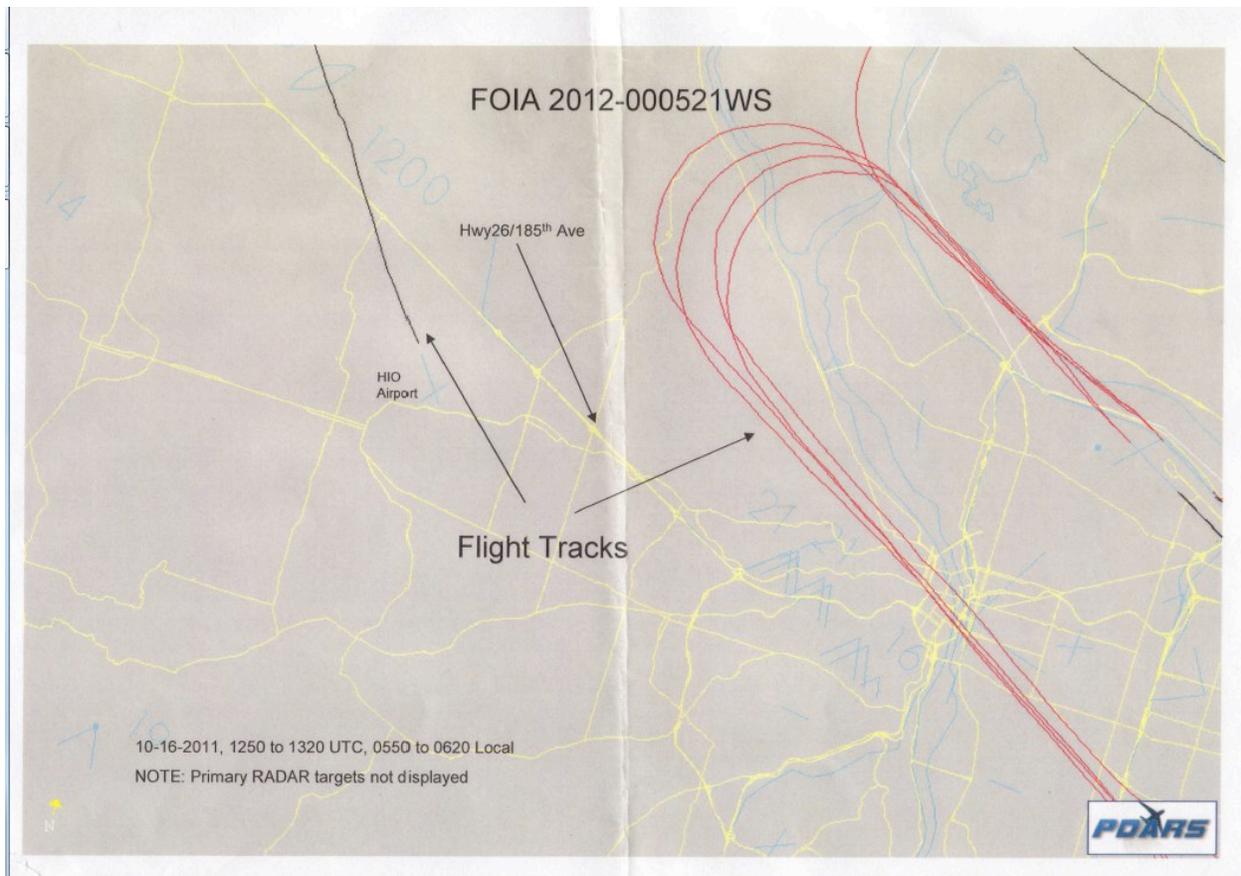


Figure 5 – FAA Radar Plot

BGE Data:

These are the Ballester–Guasp Report Evaluator results, as indicated from within the new CMS system:

Index	%	Value
Information Quality	100	1
Reliability	62	0.62
Strangeness	28.57	0.2857
Certainty	17.71	0.1771

Case Disposition:

This sighting is classified as UNKNOWN OTHER in consideration of the following:

- Not astronomical – The initial light seen in the sky could have been a bright star or a planet, but because of the relatively overcast sky, this is unlikely. Also, because of the object’s eventual relatively close proximity to the witnesses, a celestial object explanation does not make sense.
- Not atmospheric or city light on cloud effects – The original light that was spotted might have been caused by car or aircraft lights reflecting off of clouds, but again the eventual proximity of the apparently craft-shaped object rules this out as a complete explanation. Note that there is some form of aircraft navigation light on the north side of Highway 26 several miles west of (and therefore IN FRONT of) the witness’s original sighting location, but this could only account for the initial light sighting at best.
- Not conventional aircraft – The object’s appearance did not include anything resembling navigational lights, as would be expected to be seen on a conventional aircraft. The hovering and then slow movement of the craft, after its initial high speed movement, also rules out conventional aircraft. This is apparently further confirmed by the radar data, which does not appear to show any registered aircraft operating at the sighting location during the time of the incident. NOTE: Additional analysis of the radar data will be performed in the weeks following the release of this report.
- Not Balloons, RC aircraft, or other man-made miniature flying machines – The initial movement of the lights and the apparent size and movement of the craft-like object rule out the possibility of this being a smaller, man-made object. The intensity of light emanating from the object also makes this very unlikely.