

U.F.O.

I knew it, I knew it, I knew it! Respectable airline pilots and even astronauts are now saying they have actually seen UFO's. I guess they were afraid of being ridiculed in the past, but now they're too old for their careers to suffer and they're coming out of the alien closet, so to speak.

Well, now I can tell my own UFO story without worrying too much about my reputation, which I have always been so careful about since I got turned down for a job as a mental health assistant.

Here goes. It was a dark and stormy night ... really! ... when 84 year old neighbor Willard came down the road to my kitchen door. He was drenched, wet through and through, so of course I didn't want to let him in and have the floor get wet. He got mad at me, but I don't let the dog in either when she's soaking wet and that's why I have the nicest floors in the neighborhood.

Anyway, Willard was quite animated, shouting and gesticulating, hollering something I couldn't quite hear because of the wind and thunder and the rain sheeting off the edge of the roof and pouring down on his head and shoulders. Maybe some would think it cruel to let him stand out in the weather, but Willard

always wants to go for a walk when a storm comes up and if all of us in the neighborhood let him in every time he appeared at a kitchen door soaking wet, none of us would have very nice floors.

I told Willard I'd get on my rain gear and come out. When I walked out into the wild night in proper attire, he told me, "There's a strange aircraft in my front yard. I think it's a Buick."

"I don't think Buick makes airplanes, Willard."

"Well," he said, "then it's a Ford Flying Saucer with a Buick emblem on it. But it just landed ten minutes ago and beeped the horn like it was delivering a pizza."

Well, now I was all suited up in my lobstering pants and life vest. (I don't live near the ocean, but my brother sent them to me. He doesn't live near the ocean either.) So I told Willard I'd walk down to his house and tap on the starship to ask if they had brought pepperoni or plain cheese.

The craft didn't look like a Buick, but indeed it had the triple-shield symbol that seemed to vibrate while a series of blue and yellow lights whirled around the periphery of the saucer-shaped craft. Bizarre, yes, but somehow it didn't look too dangerous. I thought it might be some kid in a homemade car with those road-lights that shine down on the pavement underneath.

But when I reached out to tap on it, the little spacecraft instantly moved 20 feet away, faster than I can snap my fingers. That sort of scared me.

"Maybe we should call Earl," I said, referring to our local police force.

"On vacation," said Willard.

“How about the fire department?”

“Good idea,” said Willard, and after he placed the call, he came back out to join me. Soon we could hear the car doors slamming in the distance down at the local pub and the sirens began to wail.

The men arrived in good cheer and Chief Burguoyne, called the “General” because the way he looks in his fire hat, worn backwards, suggested they give the space taxi a blast with the fire hoses. I said I didn’t think that would work, but he insisted on trying. In a few minutes the firemen were squirting at the blue and yellow lights with streams of high pressure water. They began to advance on the craft as they dragged the hoses behind them,

Just then Bits, the fire department’s bomb expert, drove up in his pock-marked Taurus station wagon and parked right next to the saucer. I like Bits and always enjoy seeing him, not professionally of course. As an explosives expert, he “did bridges” in the First Gulf War and he has the funniest stories. He’s a born raconteur, with his happy smile, eye patch, his missing fingers and a whistling sound that comes from the hole in his throat when he laughs. After the war, he began training for a job as an air traffic controller, but he’s a little high strung and has a tendency to stutter when he gets nervous. After a few days of, “Flight 2-2-2-2 3 8, please drop to 4 1-1-1 zero feet and maintain a heading of 1-1-1 6 5-5-5 degrees,” the school gave him his money back.

Bits stepped forward with his Pike Pole, the hardwood stick with a steel spike and hook used by firemen the world over, and brought it down smartly on the end

of the spaceship with a clang. For a second, nothing happened. Then, with hardly a noise, the craft whooshed off down the road and out of sight. Well, it was raining hard and I couldn’t see all that well. Maybe it did gain a little altitude, but to me it looked like it just plain drove away.

“Willard,” I asked, “did you say it *landed*, meaning it came down from the sky?”

“It was raining pretty hard,” he said, a bit sheepishly.

General Burguoyne said, “Bits, what’s that thing in the road the Martian left behind.” Bits bent over the spot where the saucer had been parked and looked down at the flat white box. He opened it with his Pike Pole.

“L-L-Looks like P-P-Pepperoni and Cheese,” he said.

Willard had an amazed look on his face. “Well, I never!,” he said. “A flying saucer that can’t fly and delivers pizzas. Who’d of thought?”

Raining or not, you wouldn’t let him in your kitchen either.

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