

Empire Docks Close Encounter

An Oregon MUFON Case Study

by

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Abstract

Keywords: Close encounter — Possible abduction

Description	A close encounter involving two sisters sitting in their truck at night. Two separate reports from the two sisters differ considerably in details during the middle part of the experience, leading to the idea that an abduction may have occurred.
Witnesses	Cathy Jennings (pseudonym) and Jane Williams (pseudonym), sisters.
Date and Time	October 15, 2007. Around 11 PM PST. (Date and time are approximate.)
Place	From the Empire Docks near Coos Bay, Oregon.
Weather	Partly cloudy to clear in and around the approximate time of 11 PM.
Duration	Sighting duration indeterminate. See details of report.

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INTRODUCTION

This case study shows what can happen occasionally with simple “lights in the sky” cases when you realize that there might be something more than meets the eye. Two witnesses, who are sisters, entered separate CMS reports about nine months apart. The later sister wanted to “support” her sister even though she was the one less interested in UFOs. Comparing the reports of these two sisters along with additional interviews revealed there was a definite discrepancy in the timeline of events.

I would like to thank the witnesses, Cathy Jennings and Jane Williams, for being so patient and cooperative with me when I had questions and more questions for them in this investigation.

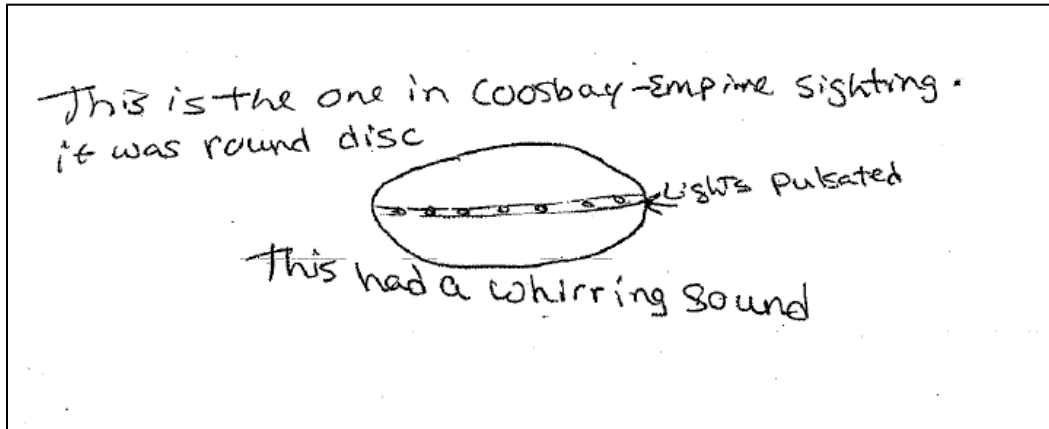
SIGHTING NARRATIVE

On or about the evening of October 15, 2007, Cathy Jennings (pseudonym) went with her sister Jane Williams (pseudonym) in Jane’s truck to the Empire Docks area of Coos Bay, Oregon. This area of a couple of docks is on the Coos Bay Channel, which connects the deep-water bay of Coos Bay with the Pacific Ocean. Locals sometimes use the docks for fishing and crabbing. The sisters planned an evening of relaxation and tending a crab pot or two off the docks.

Here’s what happened in two versions. First is Cathy’s version, followed by Jane’s. Two stories that should track pretty well have some problems when you look closer.

Cathy’s Version

“My sister and I drove to the docks [because] we were thinking about crabbing until we started talking about family stuff. I told Jane to look to the right, because there’s an object. I rolled the window down and sat on the door. I told her about the lights and how scared they made me feel. She told me she saw it also and was glad it wasn’t just her. For some reason we couldn’t quit watching it.” Cathy said she was mesmerized by what she was seeing. The object slowly got closer to them and it became a circular disk that “was silver-gray in color, and lighter than the night sky”. At its closest approach, it was only about half a mile away and was “as big as a house.” There were red, blue-green and yellow pulsating lights around its circumference, and it made a “whirling sound.” She said, “it gave off static electricity in the air...really strange.” Also she claimed that it was unusually humid that night. She watched as it eventually started getting smaller and smaller, then it darted around and shot straight up and disappeared. Cathy said she estimates the duration of the sighting to be around thirty minutes to an hour. See *Figure 1, Cathy Jennings’ Empire Docks UFO*.



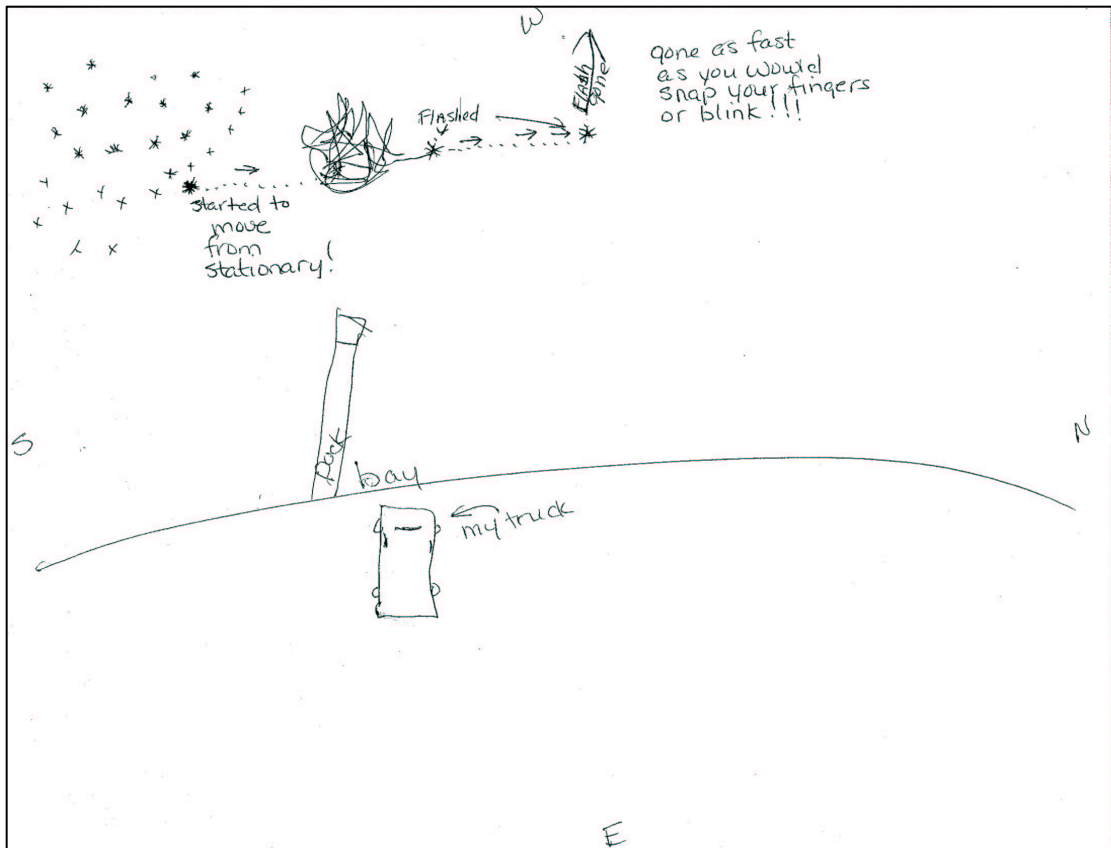
Source: Cathy Jennings

Figure 1. Cathy Jennings' Empire Docks UFO

Compare this drawing with Figure 2, Jane Williams' Star-Like Object. Note that Cathy's drawing unaccountably shows a pretty close, fairly detailed object whereas Jane's drawing shows a farther away impression of interesting lights in the sky.

Jane's Version

"My sister and I were parked by the docks in Coos Bay enjoying the evening. We were sitting looking at the sky. We were crabbing as well and it was cold, explaining why we were in the truck instead of sitting on the dock. I saw what looked like Venus then all of a sudden it started moving. It slowly moved north and then started moving erratically, going up and down and sideways. After about 20 seconds of that, it started moving north again, flashing colors of blue, white and red at me like Morse code. My sister and I watched it continue north again slowly and like a flash, it disappeared! It was last seen in the western sky. We were both amazed." See *Figure 2, Jane Williams' Star-like object.*



Source: Jane Williams

Figure 2. Jane Williams' Star-Like Object

Compare this drawing with Figure 1, Cathy Jennings' Empire Docks UFO. Note that Jane's drawing shows a far away impression of interesting lights in the sky whereas Cathy's drawing unaccountably shows a close, fairly detailed object.

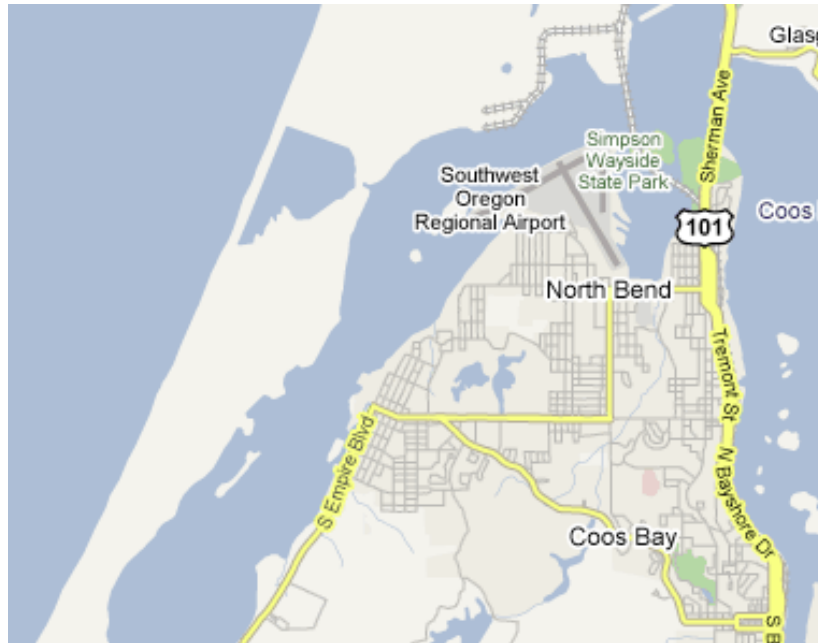
The Aftermath

Here we have two sisters together in one vehicle spending time together. An ordinary evening until they both see a star-like object that seems anomalous. One sister remained behind the wheel and viewed it through the windshield, and the other sister sat on the door with the window rolled down, with her upper body outside the truck having a totally unobstructed view of the sky. One sister describes a sighting that lasted a couple of minutes before the large "star" darts around and disappears. The other sister has a sighting of an object that darts around before coming closer and becoming a large unidentified craft at close proximity. After an observing period of thirty minutes or more, the craft then begins moving away before disappearing. The time durations and events point to Jane not having conscious recollection of thirty minutes or more. See the discussion in *ANALYSIS* later.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment for this sighting is the seacoast of a mid-sized Oregon town, Coos Bay, Oregon. The two sisters decided to relax in their truck while waiting for their crab pots to attract some crabs. They were sitting in their truck overlooking the Coos Bay Channel beyond the docks and just stargazing when they spotted their UFO. The ocean shore cannot actually be seen because it is blocked by the low, sandy

spit that forms the seven-mile long channel connecting to Coos Bay proper. The spit is more or less a mile wide. See *Figure 3, Coos Bay Channel Area*.



Source: Google Maps

Figure 3. Coos Bay Channel Area

The sighting location was at the spot where S. Empire Blvd turns abruptly south. The Coos Bay Channel and the spit beyond it block a view of the ocean. But the spit is low and does not rise over five-degree elevation from the sighting spot. (See later figures.)

Neighborhood

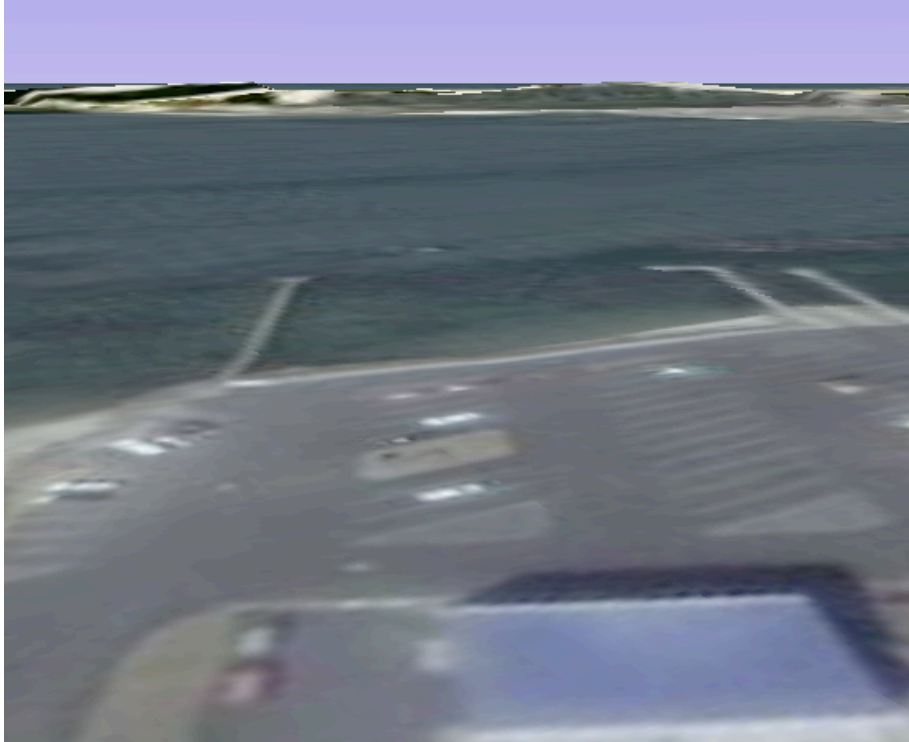
The immediate neighborhood of the sighting is mixed light industry (shipping/fishing related) and residential. Cathy and Jane were seated in their truck waiting for their crab pots to attract crabs. They were in the parking lot next to the Empire Docks. See *Figure 4, Empire Docks of Coos Bay, Oregon* and *Figure 5, Low Aerial View of Empire Docks Area*.



Source: Google Maps

Figure 4. Empire Docks of Coos Bay, Oregon

Cathy and her sister were sitting in their truck in the parking lot and looking more or less northeast across the Coos Bay Channel out beyond the docks seen here in the aerial photograph.



Source: Google Maps

Figure 5. Low Aerial View of Empire Docks Area

This low aerial view (29 meters above the surface) gives some idea of the view that the two sisters had while they were sitting in their car. The white objects in the foreground are cars in a parking lot. The docks and the Coos Bay Channel along with the spit are situated beyond the cars.

Weather

On October 15, 2007, the weather in the Coos Bay, Oregon, area was partly cloudy to clear with no precipitation. The winds were calm to five to ten mph out of the south and the temperature was around 50° F. (Note that the date of this sighting is marked as “approximate” in the MUFON CMS reporting database. In fact, the date of October 17, 2007, was a cloudy, overcast day in the evening so the star-like object could not be first perceived as a star as it was described. Thus, I have chosen the date closest to the approximate date that the sighting could have taken place in a clear sky.)

EVIDENCE

The evidence in this case consists of witness testimony and drawings by both of the witnesses. I have spent considerable time on the phone with both witnesses (over five hours total) with numerous emails between us. They have also shared with me some past experiences and sightings they have had. I find no reason to doubt the sincerity or truthfulness of either of these witnesses.

Their basic stories concerning the Empire Docks close encounter event do not differ substantially at the beginning and end, they only differ in the middle parts of the experience. This discrepancy has come to characterize the classic close encounter experience with possible abduction.

Witness Backgrounds

Cathy was an EMT for 22 years and a firefighter for 5 years. She has three years of college, and is currently working on a degree in psychology.

Jane has a criminology background and has worked for the Department of the Interior. She also has a Commercial Driver's License. Currently, she works in real estate.

Both women have college backgrounds and have held responsible positions within their communities. I find them intelligent and reliable witnesses.

ANALYSIS

Analysis of this case shows that there is a timeline discrepancy between the event descriptions of the two witnesses. This discrepancy is a common occurrence in cases of abduction when one (or more) witness is abducted. This case awaits further investigation into that possible aspect if the witnesses decide to pursue it. As always, witnesses should decide for themselves if or when they go further with exploring their own UFO events. Some witnesses decide to let things be. Others explore further.

Case Background

Cathy Jennings is the sister of Jane Williams. Originally, Cathy was reluctant to come forward and participate in her sister's case due to fear of ridicule, but decided to come forward to support her sister and to report what she saw that night.

In mid December, I began my correspondence with Cathy through email. I sent her the MUFON forms to gather more details than she filled out in the online MUFON CMS reporting system.

In early January of 2009, I received those forms back and a couple of drawings and her personal account. I was surprised to see the object she drew on her drawing, for it was not the star-like object her sister reported. The object was a large disc-shaped object with a row of multi-colored pulsating lights around its circumference! That night I called Cathy for additional information and to hear in her own words about the craft she saw.

I called Jane a few days later to ask her if she could tell me again what she saw that night and how long she observed the object. She retold the whole story with no deviation at all from her original story. I explained to her that I had received her sister's drawing and personal testimony and told her what Cathy saw. Jane could not understand how Cathy saw something different without her seeing it and got upset about how her sister's testimony could now affect the credibility of her own report.

In mid-January, I returned Cathy's call. She wanted to know if I had talked to her sister. I told her that I had and I wanted to tell her about the discrepancies in their testimonies regarding what they both witnessed. I explained to her that her sister saw a star-like object that she witnessed for only a couple of minutes. Cathy was also surprised that her sister did not see the craft, but, nevertheless, she said, "I know what I saw," and it was a craft "as big as a house." She seemed bewildered about the discrepancies and was at a loss to explain them. Cathy added that, "there wasn't any other air traffic in the area that night and I didn't see any Coast Guard out either", especially because the Southwest Oregon Regional Airport was only a couple of miles away from where they were parked. And finally she said, "I was afraid to go to sleep a few nights after the sighting." Both women have had problems sleeping for many years and Cathy is afraid of the dark.

Cathy says she is not particularly interested in UFOs so she was reluctant to come forward because she did not want anyone to think she was crazy for what she had seen. Other than her sister, I am the only one that she has told about the sighting.

I have found Jane to have a sharp mind for detail. And it was Jane who initially wanted this sighting (and her other sightings) to be filed in hopes of finding out what has gone on in her life with the many unexplained experiences she's had.

Research

Jane had originally reported the sighting as October of 2007. My investigation of Jane's case was in June of 2008, and so the sighting was already a historical one. After interviewing Cathy six months later, she couldn't remember what month the sighting actually took place in.

With the date in question, I could only research an approximate date of the fifteenth of October for astronomical and weather data. Both witnesses said it was a clear night with total visibility of the stars. I researched the Farmer's Almanac online and found that the moon set at 8:38 PM that night giving them a darker sky. The large "star" Jane thought was Venus at first could not have been Venus because it set at 4:45 PM that night. And it wasn't Jupiter either because it set at 9:14 PM—almost two hours before they saw the multi-colored "star". This could not have been a star at all if it moved in a straight-line path and then darted around before disappearing. The movements this object made also cast doubt on the theory that it was a conventional aircraft, even though an airport was a couple of miles away.

Not being familiar with the area, I had sent Jane a Google map of the docks of Coos Bay and had her circle the approximate area they were parked. She also confirmed the star-like object being about 70 degrees above the horizon.

Narrative Discrepancies

Although I did remember Jane's account of a star-like object, it wasn't until after the initial phone call to Cathy that I took out the files of her sister's account to compare the two. The discrepancies were evident. I found it odd that both women said it was each of them that alerted the other to look at the object. Below is a timeline of the events that I estimate happened from what was reported to the best of their knowledge.

Table 1. Timeline of Significant Events

Time	Event Per Cathy	Event Per Jane	Discrepancy	Time Elapsed
11:00	Sees star move	Sees star move	No	~3 Seconds
11:00	Object continues to move	Object continues to move	No	~15 Seconds
11:00	Object zigzags	Object zigzags	No	~20 Seconds
11:00	Sits on window ledge	Sits in truck	No	~15 Seconds
11:01	Object starts decent	??	Yes	~5 Seconds
11:02	Object coming closer	??	Yes	1 minute?
11:03	Object getting larger	??	Yes	1 minute?
11:04	Craft now visible	??	Yes	1 minute?
11:05	UFO lights pulsating	??	Yes	1 minute?
11:06	Static electricity in air	??	Yes	1 minute?
11:07	UFO only 1/4 mile away	??	Yes	1 minute?
11:08	Watches as UFO hovers	??	Yes	30 minutes?
11:40	Object flashes colors	Object flashes colors	No	~10 Seconds
11:40	Shoots up & disappears	Shoots up & disappears	No	~2 Seconds

Additional Sightings

Both women have had prior experiences that include seeing UFOs. In Jane's original report to MUFON she included some of her other past experiences. She also told me about these sightings over the phone, too. Here is what Jane reported:

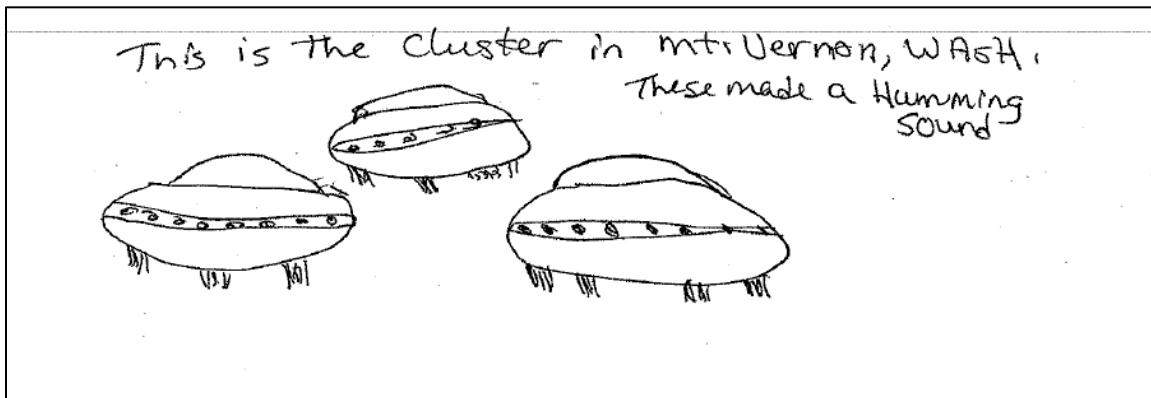
In July of 1979 at 3:30 AM, I saw a UFO in Colorado off the side of the road. I was really tired and I pulled off the side of the road and parked. I was getting ready to sleep, then decided to smoke a cigarette before sleeping. I lit the cigarette and was looking out over the fields at the ranch houses in the distance about a mile from where I was parked. All of a sudden, I saw a light come out of nowhere and shine down on the ground in the field below. I could not really see what it looked like because all I saw was the light shining down to the ground, which looked to be about 20 feet around. The light stayed on about 35 seconds and went off! I woke my husband up to look and it disappeared in 2 seconds into the sky! The whole thing lasted all of about 4 minutes from the time I first saw it to the time I tried to wake my husband. I was excited by what I saw but amazed at the same time.

In 1983, I was driving from Prospect, Oregon to Visalia, California. I used to spend three months with my parents in Oregon and three months in California so my son could see and visit with his father. When I was on my way to California, something changed. I remember the whole trip except 25 minutes past Ashland until I arrived in Sacramento. I do not remember approximately three hours of that trip. When I realized where I was, I felt scared to death and drove to the parking lot of a hospital. There I called my friend in Visalia. I was too afraid to drive home and had her drive from Visalia with her husband to drive me the rest of the way home! My son was also with me and he was 5 years old at the time.

I was living with friends in Visalia, California in 1983. My son slept in their daughter's bedroom in a bunk bed on the top and she on the bottom because he was older than her. My friends Dwayne and Jodie slept in their room and I slept on the couch. We all went to bed about 9:00 PM. I was dreaming that I was materialized through the ceiling. My next memory was uneasiness, and I was materialized back through the ceiling and dropped to the couch from a foot above. The shock of it made me gasp and woke me up! It was very real and I got up scared, turned on the light, looked around and saw nothing. I checked on the children and they were OK. I made some coffee and drank it. I was shook up. Dwayne came out of his room and asked what I was doing. I told him I could not sleep and after the cup of coffee, I was going to bed. He said OK and went back to bed. I never told him or his wife what happened. I looked at the clock and it was about 2:00 AM I have no idea what the time frame was.

Around November 10, 1996, approximately 11:00 PM, I was in Shady Cove, Oregon, living on Bond Road. There were a lot of people at my house, maybe 8 or 9, including my father. It was getting loud as everyone was drinking but me. I asked my friend if she wanted to go for a walk. She said yes, and we started walking down my long dirt driveway. We got about 75 feet away from the house in the dark and I heard a loud whirring sound that sounded eerie. I pushed the "on" button to light my watch and saw the hands spinning around very fast. I looked around and saw nothing, but felt as though something was watching me in the trees! We started back to the house and said nothing to anyone. The whole thing lasted about 3 minutes. After I got home, I was uneasy all night waiting for something or someone to appear. I slept with the lights on all night and my back against the wall.

Cathy also had a prior sighting that happened in 2003 near Mt. Vernon, Washington. She was with a group of people who all saw three objects at close range (two houses away) in a cluster formation. The objects made a humming noise. She writes, "The group of people I was with felt frozen. We could not move and before we knew it, an hour had passed and my watch stopped working. My memory was fading." She said the three craft had "exhaust-like jets" from power underneath that helped them push off the ground. See Figure 6, Cathy Jennings' Mt. Vernon, WA, Sighting.



Source: Cathy Jennings

Figure 6. Cathy Jennings' Mt. Vernon, WA, Sighting.

More Information Comes In

After the initial investigation, I continued to talk occasionally with Cathy. She informed me that her sister, Jane, had moved out of Oregon and that she was going to go join her.

On February 5, 2009, at around 9 PM, I received a call from Cathy. Her 13 year old niece, her sister, Jane, and she were traveling in a motor home going to Arkansas. Cathy was moving there to live with her sister.

At approximately 9:50PM near Phoenix, Arizona, on Highway 10, they noticed two lights in the sky that they quickly realized were not from an airplane. As they approached these lights, it was evident that the

lights were stationary. They ended up driving under the object that was “as big as a house.” They stated that it was oval shaped.

I could hear the excitement of the other two in the background. Cathy said, “Here, talk to my niece.” Her niece came on the phone and told me excitedly, “It’s my first sighting!” She told me it was oval shaped and had a gold-yellowish color. Cathy got back on the phone and said, “This time I didn’t feel afraid.” They were all amazed that they had the sighting. I asked them when they got home to document this sighting and they said they would.

Around a half hour later I received another call from Cathy. This time her voice had a level of anxiety in it as she told me they were going to stop to use a restroom near Casa Grande, Arizona, but that there was a large bright white light about a mile away in front of them that was stationary. Some items in the motor home started erratically blinking like the lights on the stairs, (which were moving in and out by themselves!) and on a toothbrush holder while the object was still in sight. She tried calling me she said, but her cell phone would not work. They were all very freaked out and the niece was crying. They decided not to stop but to continue to drive on to get away. After the object just “disappeared,” the electrical interferences stopped. Her cell phone now worked and she called me at that point. Jane got on the phone with me then and said she had to calm her niece down—telling her it’s going to be OK. Cathy got back on the phone and she said she wondered why they were seeing these things. Before we ended the call, I told them it was OK to call me anytime they needed to.

On June 2, 2009, at around 6:20 PM, I received another call from Jane and Cathy. Jane said they saw a UFO five minutes before she called me, so that puts the sighting at 8:15 PM. They were outside in front of their house enjoying the day, when she noticed two airplanes in the clear sky. One was an airplane that was fully recognizable in the NE section of the sky, and the other was really high up (approximately 35,000 feet up) in the west that was leaving a contrail behind it. She told her 2 year old nephew to “look at the planes.” It was then that she noticed a round, shiny, silver object “half the size of your fist” (at arm’s length). She said, “The sun reflected off the belly of it.” She also said it was about three quarters of a mile away and about 70 degrees above the horizon. Cathy got on the phone and confirmed what they all saw, including their 13 year old niece. The duration was about 25 seconds before it just disappeared!

CONCLUSION

The most reasonable identification candidates are the following:

- **Blimp/Dirigible.** I rule out a blimp or dirigible as a cause for this UFO sighting because there were no reports of them in this area at the time. Coos Bay, Oregon, is a town of only about 16,000 people and the appearance of a blimp or dirigible would be a big deal.
- **Star.** I rule this out because stars do not dart around and disappear “in a blink of an eye.” See *Figure 2, Jane Williams’ Star-Like Object*.
- **Aircraft.** This is also ruled out because no conventional craft looks like what Cathy saw. See *Figure 1, Cathy Jennings’ Empire Docks UFO*.

Since the identification candidates fail for the reasons just given, I believe that Jane and Cathy have experienced a genuine MUFON “unknown aerial vehicle.”

This case has the characteristics of a possible abduction because of the very close encounter and because of the serious discrepancy in the two sisters’ accounts. I believe that this case is a good candidate for further investigation as an abduction case. However, this is completely up to what the witnesses decide they want to do with their own experience, of course. At her request, I gave Jane the contact information for a MUFON-recommended hypnotherapist near her present residence.

In my experience of studying alien abduction for over thirty years, the time factor is not one that adheres to normal timelines. Something is amiss here. In other words, a witness can see an anomaly or UFO and swear a couple of minutes had only passed to find out later—either through concerted efforts at conscious recall or through appropriate hypnotherapist applied regression techniques—that much more time had

actually gone by. This apparent manipulation of time and/or memory has been one of the most interesting aspects of the very close encounter and abduction phenomenon that witnesses, researchers, and investigators alike have come across.

APPENDIX A: Witness CMS UFO Descriptions

The following are the witness's CMS UFO descriptions of their October 15, 2007, sighting. (The date is approximate.)

Jane Williams' October 15, 2007, Sighting

Short Description of UFO Event:

Made fast flashy movements and disappeared after 1 and a half minutes.

Detailed Description of the UFO Event:

My sister and I went to a place called Empire Lakes docks in Coos Bay. We were sitting looking at the sky and thinking about the death of our sister-in-law less than a year gone. We were crabbing as well and it was cold (explaining why we were in the truck instead of sitting on the dock.) As we were talking I was looking up and I saw a star moving in unusual ways. It was going up and down and sideways. It was also flashing, almost winking at me. I told my sister to look to see if she saw what I saw and she was amazed! The whole thing only lasted about a minute or a minute and a half and then it was gone in a flash! We were both amazed.

Cathy Jennings' October 15, 2007, Sighting

Short Description of UFO Event:

My sister and I saw a UFO over the ocean when we were sitting at the docks in Empire.

Detailed Description of the UFO Event:

When we were sitting at the Docks in Empire, I climbed out the window and sat on the door of her truck. We were conversing and we both saw this round object in the sky and it had lights on it. It kind of zig ziggged and then like a shot was gone. We were both mesmerized and were quiet, after it was gone, we went home and told her husband about it since he used to work for the Navy and he thought we were nuts. My sister gave you a statement and I was afraid to tell you about it for fear of being called nuts, but I did see it and what she said was the truth. I hope this helps in anyway.