

SCENT FROM ABOVE

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When the pungent fumes drifted up sheriff Donahue's nostrils, it caused his eyelids to spring open. The stench smelled familiar, but he couldn't quite identify it. The lawman did know, intuitively, the odor accompanied danger and he needed to get away from it immediately.

The sheriff struggled to set upright, but couldn't, and when he tried to move his arms and legs, they wouldn't. He could, however, control the movement of his eyes. A sweeping glance revealed a well-lit circular shaped room, void of furnishings except for the elevated table he laid upon. An inaudible voice inside his mind began to rapid-fire questions. *Where am I? What happened to me? Is this a hospital? What the hell is that stinky smell?* He couldn't remember being sick, nor could he recall being involved in any type of serious accident. Lying there paralyzed, his mind began to slowly put the pieces of the puzzle together.

Sheriff Donahue left his Office at 8:30 that morning to serve a Subpoena in the southern portion of Comanche County. At 8:55 a.m. he spotted a white 1996 Chevrolet pickup parked off the east side of highway 112. The officer pulled over, exited his patrol car and cautiously approached the vehicle. He peered through the windows and found nothing suspicious or out of the ordinary. He judged from the tire tracks in the snow that it couldn't have been parked there long. He studied the footprints by the driver's side door, which led into an open field next to the road.

Deer season wasn't scheduled to open for another ten days, so he decided to follow the tracks and see if the truck's driver just happened to be poaching.

The rotund officer labored across the meadow and entered a heavily wooded area. He continued following the footprints until they stopped at the edge of a large circular area without snow. Donahue walked the parameter of the clearing looking for the tracks, but there were none. The truck driver's footprints had mysteriously disappeared, as if they had vanished inside the circle.

The sheriff scoured the surrounding area thoroughly. Fifty yards outside the dry clearing, lying on the ground, he found a 308 Winchester with a broken scope. He picked up the rifle, wiped the snow from it and continued searching. A few minutes later he came upon a deep gully. Donahue peered into the trench and visually canvassed its floor. His pulse quickened when he spotted what appeared to be the carcass of a deer, or possibly a human body lying on the ground. The sides of the trench were too steep and slippery for him to climb down without assistance, so he decided to return to his vehicle for some rope.

The sheriff sucked it up and wasted no time getting back to the highway. After putting the Winchester rifle in the back seat of his SUV, he climbed behind the wheel and blew warm breath into his cupped palms. The fifty-three year old officer hated cold weather, and the temperature on that particular December morning had been cold enough to freeze the balls off a pool table. After one more blast of warm breath into his palms, Donahue rubbed his hands together, reached over to his two-way radio and snatched up the microphone.

“Unit-1 to Dispatch, do you copy?”

“10-4. Go ahead,” responded Janis Tuttle, the Sheriff's Department daytime dispatcher.

“I’m just north of the Turkey Creek Bridge on 112. I’ve come across something in a deep ravine, located about a mile east of the highway. I wasn’t able to climb down and check it out, so I came back for some rope. After I find out what it is, I’ll get back to you.”

“Roger that. Dispatch, standing by.”

The sheriff went to the rear of his vehicle, opened the hatch and grabbed a large coil of yellow nylon rope. He slung it over his right shoulder, slammed the tailgate shut and headed back across the field.

As he trekked through the meadow, powdery snowflakes sporadically cascaded to the ground, adding to the already existing three inches. Eastern Oklahoma’s first winter storm of the season had moved in like fog on a flat roof.

After arriving at the gully, the sheriff securely anchored the rope and hung on to it as he climbed down the side of the deep ravine. Near the bottom he stopped and looked back down at the carcass. It wasn’t a deer, or any other animal for that matter, but rather a nude human body. It laid face down in the snow, bleeding profusely. The lawman noticed the victim’s right leg twitch.

“THIS IS THE COMANCHE COUNTY SHERIFF. I’LL BE RIGHT THERE,” he called out. “YOU JUST HOLD ON!”

When his boot heels touched the gully floor the sheriff sprinted towards the victim. A strong odor hung in the air. The overpowering odor caused his pulse to quicken. He recognized it as the same stench associated with two previous cases, both of which still remained unsolved. The heady fragrance reminded him of both menthol and ammonia.

He slid to a stop, squatted down and carefully rolled the injured person over onto his back.

“Sweet Jesus,” he gasped, starring down at the ghostly pale face of sixteen-year-old Johnny Templeton. “Can you hear me, son? What happened?” The boy’s upper torso had a number of indentions, including a small circular hole near his navel. The sheriff quickly removed his thick insulated coat and placed it over the boy’s stomach and groin area. “Who did this to you?”

The boy strained to speak. “Four... little... grey---” His sentence ended prematurely and his hazel colored eyes took on a most peculiar gaze.

Sheriff Donahue stood up quickly, un-holstered his firearm and immediately went into a defensive crouch. With both arms extended and both hands holding his revolver steady, he turned in a full circle. The lawman knew exactly whom the young boy had tried to identify. Since the winter of 2005, mysterious lights and four-foot-tall, grayish colored creatures had been reported seen in the backwoods of Comanche County.

The sheriff knelt back down and pulled the coat over the victim’s head. He remained kneeling as his mind recalled a time when he questioned a local hillbilly that claimed to have encountered strange looking animals near that same vicinity.

“Four uh them weird lookin’ thangs come creepin up to tha side uh my jeep, an started beatin on the winders real hard,” he testified, “Them critters stunk ta high heaven. They smelled like Vicks salve that’d dun went an turned sour. If I wouldn’t uh had my winders rolled up an tha doors locked, they’d uh got me fer sure. I scrunched waaay down in tha front seat an used my foot ta honk tha horn. That’d probably be what scared em off. When I set back up, I saw em high-tailin it off into tha woods.”

Back inside the circular room, the sheriff's memories were disrupted by a shuffling sound nearby. *What was that?* From the corner of his right eye he saw four gray creatures grouped together watching him. Their oversized heads were pear-shaped with extremely large eyes, blacker than Satan's heart. Each of them clutched a shiny apparatus. The quartet was not musicians and those sinister looking tools were far from being musical instruments.

Sheriff Donahue's heart was beating faster than Ringo Starr's bass drum on the hit "Back In The USSR", and the inside of his mouth felt more parched than Death Valley in August. He rolled his eyes back to the left and forced his mind to think - to remember - to figure out what the hell was happening. After a few moments he forced his mind to recall the remainder of his interview with the hillbilly witness.

"Tell ya what, officer, I dun got me uh sneaky suspicion that them thar thangs was space aliens! In fact, I'd bet uh dollar to uh dime they'd be tied in with all them flashin lights we been uh seein up here in tha woods lately," he said with a nod and then added, "I'll guarantee ya one thang... this'll be tha last damn time you'll see me round this part of tha woods!"

The hillbilly's theory about space aliens must have been based on a local UFO sighting just a week earlier. That phenomenal event had been witnessed by hundreds of people living in the small town of Broken Hatchet. At 7:30 p.m. on July 27, residents watched a strange looking cylinder shaped object in the sky above their city. According to one eyewitness it was unlike anything he had ever seen.

"Well... it flew over the store at-uh-bout 20-miles-uh-nour, an it'd be flyin purty dad-gum low, bout treetop level, maybe a little higher. It sure tha hell didn't look like no kind uh airplane I ever did see," testified an employee of the Broken Hatchet Feed & Grain. The worker gazed eastward and pointed towards a nearby mountain ridge.

“It’d be headin towards tha Kelly place. You still member what happened to old lady Kelly, don’t cha sheriff?”

“Yep, I wont ever forget that case.”

On July 27 at 11:15 p.m. a loud rotating sound awakened eighty-one-year-old Vera Jean Kelly. The high-pitched noise also caught the attention of her nine-year-old Basset. The howling dog bolted from the front porch and raced off into the woods behind the singlewide trailer. A few moments later the loud barks morphed into a short series of distressful sounding yelps, followed by dead silence. Vera Jean crawled out of bed and limped over to the bedroom window to investigate the ruckus. She suspected a bobcat, raccoon, or other wild animal had come to pillage for food.

“YOU GET YOUR HIDE AWAY FROM HERE,” she yelled into the darkness. “YOU DAD-BLASTED VARMIT,” she added, slamming the window.

At ten past midnight the elderly woman awoke to a looming sight. Positioned around her bed were four, gray colored extraterrestrials. At first glance she thought they were large plastic blowup dolls with gigantic ebony buttons for eyes, but then she noticed the creatures moving. Hanging limply at their sides were exceptionally long arms, and their hands had skinny elongated fingers. The ET’s reeked of a putrid menthol fragrance that reminded Vera Jean of her sickly childhood days and the god-awful homemade ointment her mother use to always rub on her chest. All of a sudden Mrs. Kelly became terrified.

When the old girl tried to scream out, her voice wouldn’t cooperate. She attempted to set upright in bed, but an unseen force kept her down. All of a sudden her eyes began to water and anxiety overwhelmed her, followed by dizziness. Seconds later, she fainted.

The creatures snatched her limp body and dragged it from the mobile home and through the woods to a large clearing. Waiting there, perched on four metallic legs, stood a cylinder shaped craft that measured seventy-five feet in diameter. The abductors took the unconscious woman aboard the wingless ship and moments later it went airborne.

Inside the flying object the aliens wasted no time removing Vera Jean's cotton pajamas and strapping her nude body onto an elevated table. One of the aliens swabbed her chest and stomach area with a foul smelling greenish ointment, preparing her for examinations and surgery.

The creatures used shiny tool-like apparatus' to probe the frail woman. Two hours later, the wingless vessel returned to the wooded area near Vera Jean's singlewide trailer. As the craft hovered stealthily above the trees, a door on its underbelly retracted and moments later the senior citizen's body was dropped 50-feet to the frozen ground below.

The following morning a deer hunter found the crumbled corpse and notified authorities. Sheriff Donahue was dispatched to the scene and the witness gave him a brief statement.

“At first I thought somebody had field-dressed a deer, but as I got closer I could see it was - you know, a dead body,” he said, scrunching up his nose. “No disrespect, sir, but it stunk to high-heaven. It smelled really rank, like rotten pine... no, actually more like menthol mixed with piss. Anyhow, I got the hell away from there and high-tailed it up here to the gas station and called 911.”

“Did you see anyone suspicious in the area, or notice anything out of the ordinary?”

The hunter cocked his head. “Well, since you mentioned it---” he hesitated.

“Go on,” the sheriff ordered.

“You may think I’m hallucinating or something, but right before I found her body, I swear I saw a large, weird lookin’ object go flying over. It was fairly close to the ground, I’d say fifty or sixty feet above the trees, and it was making a loud whirling sound.”

One week later the sheriff received Mrs. Kelly’s autopsy report. The Medical Examiner determined that her liver and one kidney had been surgically cut away, and then mysteriously extracted through a 23-millimeter size hole near her belly button.

Sheriff Donahue’s memories were interrupted by high-pitched squeaky sounds. He rolled his watery eyes to the right and watched the small creatures shuffling slowly towards him. He quickly looked back up at the ceiling. All of a sudden his mind flashed on something else that happened down in the gully. He remembered that after placing his coat over the boy’s body, there had been a loud rotating sound coming from directly behind him. He also recalled standing straight up, tightly gripping his gun and spinning halfway around. When he came to a stop his mind felt like it kept on spinning. A few seconds later his vision blurred and he lost consciousness.

OH-MY-GOD*, cried the voice inside his head, when he saw the four aliens stationing themselves around him. Sheriff Donahue had just put the last piece of the puzzle into place and its picture terrified him. He desperately struggled to free himself. His mind screamed out. *OH SWEET JESUS, PLEASE DON’T LET THEM KILL ME!!!

At 12:35 p.m. deputy Louis Ortez, a rookie fresh out of the Police Academy, drove across the Turkey Creek Bridge and moments later pulled in behind Unit-1. When the sheriff failed to report back earlier that morning, Ortez had been sent to investigate.

He exited his squad car and cautiously approached the SUV, opened the driver's door and looked inside. There didn't appear to be anything out of the ordinary, except for an old rifle laying on the back seat, so he proceeded to inspect the pickup truck. He came up with the same results.

Ortez observed footprints leading away from both vehicles, disappearing into a large open field nearby. He concluded the larger footprints, with the pointed toes, were made by cowboy boots belonging to the sheriff.

The deputy returned to his patrol, retrieved a pair of high-powered binoculars and headed into the field. Two hundred yards inside the woods the tracks disappeared into a dry clearing, that span seventy-five yards in diameter. On the other side of the circle he found the sheriff's tracks, but couldn't locate the truck driver's. He followed Donahue's footprints, which eventually led him to the gully. Ortez spotted the yellow rope tied around the trunk of a nearby tree. He used his field glasses to scan the terrain below and quickly located the fallen body, which had been partially covered by a Sheriff's Department coat.

"SHERIFF DONAHUE?" he yelled out, "THIS IS DEPUTY ORTEZ. ARE YOU AROUND HERE?" When his calls produced no response, he grabbed hold of the rope and began repelling into the gully.

When the deputy reached the bottom, he immediately smelled a foul stench. The closer he got to the body, the stronger the scent. When the rookie reached the victim he bent down and slid the coat down to expose the frozen face of Johnny Templeton. One quick glance had been all the neophyte recruit could handle before experiencing nausea. He stood up on shaky legs and yelled for the sheriff again, but there was no response.

The pungent odor had made the deputy's eyes water. After wiping away tears with his handkerchief he surveyed the surrounding area. There were no footprints for the

victim. As for the sheriff's, only one set entered the gully and none left. The young lawman climbed back to the top of the gully and studied those footprints more closely. Sheriff Donahue's boots made distinctive tracks, which allowed Ortez to conclude there were two sets of them leading to the edge of gully, but only one returning to Unit-1. The deputy did the math in his head, as he walked back to the highway.

"This is Unit-2, calling Dispatch."

"Go ahead, Unit-2."

"I'm gonna need a coroner out here. I just located a dead body and it appears to be that of a male teenager. I couldn't locate the sheriff, but I did find his footprints at the scene. Something strange is going on out here," he told the dispatcher. "According to sheriff Donahue's tracks, he never left the scene. And if he did... he must have sprouted wings, because he sure didn't walk out of that gully."

"Roger, Unit-2," the dispatcher acknowledged, and then she continued with a somber sounding voice. "Deputy Ortez... I'm sorry I have to report bad news, but we just got off the phone with the Prosecuting Attorney over in Aztec County. He called to notify us they had found Sheriff Donahue about an hour ago, two miles east of Cherryville. The coroner will be sending his body to Oklahoma City for autopsy."

"Body? I - I don't know what to---" After a moment of dead silence he composed himself enough to continue. "Did they say how, you know... what happened to him?"

"Nothing official, but the Prosecutor did say that when the Game Warden found him his clothes were missing and there were a lot of marks on his chest and stomach, including a puncture wound the size of a nickel. Oh yeah, another thing... his body reeked of some strange odor."

“Odor? That’s a coincidence,” he told the dispatcher, “because the victim in the gully---” Ortez stopped talking when he heard a loud whirling sound coming from outside his patrol car.

“Could you repeat that, Unit-2, I lost part of your signal.”

“-----”

“Unit-2, do you copy?”

“-----”

“Unit-2, come in.”

“-----”