

On the freezing early morning of December 3, 1967, something felt deeply wrong in the small town of Ashland, Nebraska. Patrolman Herbert Schirmer couldn't shake the feeling as he drove through the darkness. Dogs were howling wildly. On the outskirts of town, a massive bull slammed itself against a corral gate in a panic. Schirmer stopped his cruiser, swept the area with his spotlight, and made sure the gate would hold before continuing his patrol.

Then, at approximately 2:30 A.M., everything changed.

As Schirmer approached the junction of Highways 6 and 63, he spotted what looked like a truck parked ahead of him. A strange row of flickering lights glowed in the darkness. But the moment he switched on his high beams, the object suddenly lifted off the ground and shot silently into the sky.

The stunned patrolman could barely process what he had just witnessed.

Schirmer was no attention-seeking dreamer. At only twenty-two years old, he was a Navy veteran and the son of a career Air Force serviceman. Flying saucers had never interested him. Yet when he returned to the police station around 3:00 A.M., he made a shocking entry in the official logbook:

"Saw a flying saucer at the junction of highways 6 and 63. Believe it or not!"

By the time he arrived home, Schirmer was suffering from a pounding headache and an odd buzzing noise inside his head that made sleep impossible. Even stranger, he discovered a red welt running down the nerve cord beneath his left ear.

At first, Schirmer dismissed the incident as nothing more than a bizarre sighting. But investigators with the Condon Committee later uncovered something chilling: twenty minutes of missing time in his police reports. Under hypnosis, Schirmer began recalling terrifying fragments of what may have happened during that unexplained gap.

After returning from sessions with the Condon Committee in Boulder, Schirmer resumed work in Ashland and quickly rose through the ranks, eventually becoming the youngest police chief in the Midwest. But the mystery of that December night consumed him.

"I simply was not paying attention to my job," Schirmer later admitted. "I kept wondering what had really happened that night. My headaches were getting pretty fierce; I was gobbling down aspirin like it was popcorn. You can't be a good policeman if you have personal problems. So I quit."

Desperate for answers, Schirmer was encouraged to contact UFO author Eric Norman, who had written extensively about unexplained encounters. Schirmer confessed to Norman that he believed far more had happened than he consciously remembered.

"It's down there somewhere in my mind," he said. "I just can't get it out."

Determined to uncover the truth, Norman arranged for professional hypnotist Loring G. Williams to conduct another regression session. On June 8, 1968, in Des Moines, Iowa, Schirmer was once again taken back to the predawn hours of December 3, 1967 — and what emerged from hypnosis would help turn the Herbert Schirmer case into one of the most chilling and debated UFO encounters in American history.

HYPNOSIS SESSION TRANSCRIPT

WILLIAMS: What time is it?

SCHIRMER: Two-thirty in the morning. Hmm . . . what's that up ahead . . . something on the road. Probably a trucker with a flat tire. I'll turn on my brights. Wha . . . hmm. The row of lights are very bright. They're flashing! The red lights are flashing real fast. My God! What is that thing? What . . . it's leaving the highway and going up in the air . . . hmm. That's an old field . . . nothing can land there. I'd better follow.

WILLIAMS: Where are you now?

SCHIRMER: Going up the mud road to the field, toward the light. It's very bright. The lights are flashing. I'll call. I'll call. . .

WILLIAMS: Who are you going to call?

SCHIRMER: The police at Wahoo [Nebraska], Wahoo . . . four oh eight. Come in Wahoo . . . Hmm, radio ain't working . . . What happened to the engine? Where's my lights? What is that thing!

WILLIAMS: Describe it for me.
SCHIRMER: It's made of metal and shaped like a football . . . a silverish glow around it . . . flashing light underneath. It came in over the field, hung there for a minute and it's flickering on and off. It's making a "whooshing" sound and the lights are flickering very rapidly

WILLIAMS: How fast are the lights flickering?

SCHIRMER: Jiminy Christmas! They must be going around twice a second. At least 120 times a minute . . . Oh, no – it can't be . . .

WILLIAMS: What's happening?

SCHIRMER: Legs shooting out underneath it. It's hard to see 'cause it's very bright. I think there are three legs coming out. They're telescoping. One . . . two . . . now it's settling on the ground.

WILLIAMS: Are you afraid?

SCHIRMER: You're damn right. My hand is shaking.

WILLIAMS: Why don't you start your cruiser and leave?

SCHIRMER: I am being prevented.

WILLIAMS: What do you mean being prevented?

SCHIRMER: Something in my mind . . . I wanna go home . . . Lord! Oh no! Oh no!

WILLIAMS: What's wrong now?

SCHIRMER: They're getting out. THEY'RE COMING TOWARD THE CAR! It can't be! . . . Trying to draw my revolver. I am being prevented. Something in my mind . . . The one in front of the car is holding up an object . . . stuff shoots out of it and goes all over the car . . .

WILLIAMS: What is this stuff? What color is it

SCHIRMER: It's funny stuff, like a greenish gas. My God! It can't be! Stuff all around the cruiser. Hmmm . . . What's he doing?

WILLIAMS: Who do you mean?

SCHIRMER: The one in front of the car. He's pulling something out of a holster . . . My God! He's pointing it at me! It's bright . . . very bright . . .

WILLIAMS: How bright?

SCHIRMER: Bright flash . . . like a camera bulb, only brighter . . .

WILLIAMS: Now what's happening?

SCHIRMER: Paralyzed . . . passing out . . . can't remember anything. It's all black . . .

The next thing Schirmer remembered was rolling down the window of his cruiser. One of the occupants grabbed him and pressed against the side of his neck:

SCHIRMER: . . . Oooh! It hurts . . . I can't remember if I passed out again or not . . . I'm opening the door and standing up outside the cruiser . . . the one is looking directly into my eyes. I don't like it . . . He's asking me, "Are you the watchman over this place?" . . . I wish he wouldn't stare at me like that . . . He's pointing to the power plant and asking "Is this the only source of power you have?" . . . asks about our water reservoir . . . I'm asking him if he's real . . . he squeezes my shoulder . . . Oh, Lord! I'm not dreaming! He is real! . . . He asks if I would shoot at a space ship . . . "No, sir . . ." He says I can come aboard for a few minutes . . .

Schirmer then walked with the occupant toward the craft. On the underside, a circle opened and a ladder descended. As he entered, Schirmer noticed that both the ladder metal and the interior were strangely cold.

Measured by our time, real time, Herbert Schirmer spent at most fifteen minutes on board the craft. During a "briefing" by the crew leader, it was explained to Schirmer that, as they talked, his mind was simultaneously receiving data input. He was told they do this with everyone they contact.

In the following extracts, paraphrased material is in italics.

Schirmer is standing in a room about 26 feet by 20; the ceiling is about 6 feet high. The lighting comes from strips in the ceiling and has a reddish glow. Two triangular-backed chairs are facing a control panel of some type. Above the panel, fixed to the wall, is a large "vision screen." There are portholes along the side of the craft.

The crewmen, who stand 4½ to 5 feet tall, are wearing close-fitting silvery-gray uniforms, boots and gloves. On the left side of the chest is an emblem: a winged serpent. Their suits come up around their heads like a pilot's helmet. On the left side of the helmet is a small antenna. Their heads are thin, and longer than a human head. The skin on their faces is gray-white, the nose flat, the mouth merely a slit which does not move. The eyes, slightly slanted, yet not like those of an Oriental, do not blink; the "pupils" widen and narrow, like a camera lens adjusting.

SCHIRMER: . . . He's asking me if I would like to see how some of their things work. In my mind I am thinking no, because I want to go home. But something tells me to say yes. He's showing me things that look like computer machines. He pushes a button and the tapes start running. I am starting to tingle . . . He is punching buttons on the machine. Through, my mind . . . somehow . . . he is telling me things . . . My mind hurts . . . there is something . . . he is speaking . . . he is telling me this is an observation craft with a crew of four men . . .

WILLIAMS: Is he communicating with you by voice or through the mind?

SCHIRMER: It seems to be both methods. It appears they do all their own speaking through the antenna devices on their helmets . . . The one who is talking with me speaks with a voice, with a sort of "broken" English. It is very strange-sounding and appears to come from deep inside him rather than from his mouth. I can't describe it. He is saying they study our languages on earth through some sort of machine. My mind tells me that they have computers to speak any language – somehow – wherever they may land.

WILLIAMS: Where are they from?

SCHIRMER: From a nearby galaxy. They have bases on Venus and some of the other planets in our galaxy.

WILLIAMS: Do they have bases on earth for their saucers?

SCHIRMER: Yes. There are definitely bases in the United States. There is a base located beneath the ocean off the coast of Florida which is a big thing . . . this would be used for our benefit and theirs. There is a base in the polar region – he did not say whether it was the North or South Pole. There is another big base right off the coast of Argentina. These bases are underground or under the water.

WILLIAMS: How do their craft operate?

SCHIRMER: The ship is operated through reversible electro-magnetism . . . A crystal-like rotor in the center of the ship is linked to two large columns . . . He said those were the reactors . . . Reversing magnetic and electrical energy allows them to control matter and overcome the forces of gravity . . .

WILLIAMS: Is there any defense against UFOs?

SCHIRMER: I would not even disclose that to the Air Force because they would try and destroy them . . . now they are telling me their ships have been knocked out of the air by radar . . . before they hit the ground the mother ship destroys them by a built-in mechanism that blows them up and burns them up.

WILLIAMS: How can radar knock them out?

SCHIRMER: I don't know . . . there's something . . . ioniz . . . it is a long word which I can't pronounce.

WILLIAMS: Ionization?

SCHIRMER: Yes. That's the word.

WILLIAMS: What do you know about "mother ships"?

SCHIRMER: They are huge affairs, what we would call interplanetary stations. All of their headquarters-type operations are carried out in them. They are the main observation stations . . . so high out in space that we cannot acknowledge them. The saucers arrive here carried by the mother ships; they are then released to bases on earth. Both mother ships and saucers use light beams to "look in" on anything on earth, into any factory, home or house. They also monitor our earth communications system . . .

Aboard the ship is a disc-shaped object about six feet in diameter. This disc is used for remote-controlled reconnaissance and surveillance, and transmits pictures and sound back to the "vision screen." The crew leader flicks a switch and the screen comes on, revealing the outside of the craft: two of the crew are walking back and forth like guards. They walk with a stiff, military posture that reminds Schirmer of men who have been in the armed service a long time. The crew leader presses another button: three saucers of a different shape appear flying in formation against a background of stars that includes the Big Dipper. Schirmer is told that these are "war ships" flying in outer space. The image has great depth and realism. Again the crew leader shifts the picture: the mother craft comes into focus, cigar-shaped, very long, far above the earth. The screen goes dark. Schirmer is now given a demonstration of how electricity can be extracted from a nearby power line.

SCHIRMER: He said I should look out one of the portholes. He pushed a button. I saw an antenna-like thing move down and around to where it pointed at the power line. He must have pushed another button or something because there is a sudden white spurt of electricity. It shot out of the electrical line and went right into the tip of the antenna. He said for me to look at the dials on this one gauge. They registered completely full, way over to the side. He said that they didn't take much electricity, but they have a problem storing it so they take it from our power lines. Later he put the electricity back in the power line and the gauge went down again.

WILLIAMS: Why extract small amounts of electricity from power lines?

SCHIRMER: When they land, an invisible force field is thrown around the ship in a circular pattern. He said that the electromagnetic field is a defense mechanism.

WILLIAMS: Did they mention anything about water?

SCHIRMER: They asked about the Lincoln City Water Reservoir, which is just down the hill. In some way which I do not understand, they draw a type of power from water. This is why we see them over rivers, lakes and large bodies of water.

WILLIAMS: How long have they been watching us?

SCHIRMER: They have been observing us for a long period of time and they think that if they slowly, slowly put out reports and have their contacts state the truth it will help them . . . They have no pattern for contacting people. It is by pure chance so the government cannot determine any patterns about them. There will be a lot more contacts . . . to a certain extent they want to puzzle people. They know they are being seen too frequently and they are trying to confuse the public's mind. He is telling me they want everyone to believe some in them so we will be open to their invasion and –

WILLIAMS: Think carefully now. Did he use the word "invasion"?

SCHIRMER: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Then this would mean they are operating to conquer the world?

SCHIRMER: (emphatically): Oh no, no, no. He used the word "invasion" but meant it in a friendly way. He said it would be the showing of themselves completely. The public should consider in their minds that they should have no fear of these beings because they are not hostile.

WILLIAMS: Did they tell you anything to say or do before you left? Were you programmed to say something in any manner?

SCHIRMER: Yes. He is looking directly into my eyes and saying: "I wish you would not tell that you have been aboard this ship. You are to tell that the ship landed below in the intersection of the highways, that you approached, and it shot up into the air and disappeared. You will tell this and nothing more. You will not speak wisely about this night. We will return to see you two more times . . ."

The crew leader's hand is on Schirmer's shoulder. He says a word unlike any Schirmer has ever heard before, then walks with him to the hatch. The two crew members who have remained outside climb aboard. Schirmer gets back into the police cruiser. The legs on the ship retract. A reddish-orange light emanates from the underside. There is a humming noise as the ship winds up and shoots up into the sky.

Patrolman Herbert Schirmer drives his cruiser back into Ashland. He arrives at the station at about 3 A.M. He writes in the logbook all that he remembers of the past half hour: "Saw a flying saucer at the junction of highways 6 and 63 – " Perhaps he hesitates a moment, then adds " – Believe it or not!"

As I [the author] was researching this, I had several long telephone conversations with Eric Norman, whose real name is Warren Smith. He told me he had found the landing site, an unplowed sloping field, not far from the highway. There were three-pointed marks where the tripod landing gear had sunk deep into the earth. "Patches of grass had been swirled and twisted into odd patterns," Warren told me, "as though the vegetation had been under powerful centrifugal pressure."

Much of Schirmer's story is in accord with current UFO speculation. The demonstration of energy being extracted from a power line coincides with the suspicion that UFOs sighted near high-tension wires in the Niagara Falls and New York areas might have been responsible for the great Northeast blackout, and other power failures that have never been explained.

Schirmer was told that all the "ships" were made from 100 percent pure magnesium. A piece of such magnesium – purer than any obtainable by our metallurgical processes – was recovered when a saucer reportedly "crashed" in September 1957 near Ubatuba, Brazil.

The scanning disks used by the ships suggest an advanced development of our "spy in the sky" satellites. The resolution from even our "primitive" recording satellites is so good that, during the Israeli-Arab Six-Day War, a picture was obtained showing the time on an Israeli captain's wristwatch. Small disks, similar to those described by Schirmer, are frequently reported hovering around atomic power stations and air force bases, and zipping along our highways.

The emblem of the winged serpent on the crew's uniform has been featured in the legends of diverse cultures and civilizations all over the earth. The ancient god and legendary ruler of Mexico, Quetzalcoatl (feathered serpent), is said to have given men the calendar, arts, science, and government. The symbol is still used by Mexico today.

It is not feasible to evaluate the information given to Schirmer. The odd discrepancies are covered by the warning of the crew leader himself: "to a certain extent . . . we want to puzzle people . . . we are trying to confuse the public's mind . . . we want everyone to believe some in us . . ." From reading and rereading the material, I get the feeling that we are being provided with a sophisticated blend: part extension of our own scientific techniques, part evidence that seems realistic since we are already predisposed by years of science-fiction writing to expect such things, and part fantasy introduced by the phenomenon for reasons of its own.

Herbert Schirmer, like most of the "good" contactees, has been meticulously checked out medically and psychologically; his health, his family, his work background are all impeccable. As a witness, he cannot be discredited, so how can we ignore his testimony?