

NOVEMBER 11, 1974 – MOUNT CROSS TENNESSEE

This case was reported by Ronald Drucker, a journalist in a special UFO issue of a men's magazine in 1975. He was also a writer for magazines such as "*Male*" and "*Saga*"

The late afternoon sun cast weird shadows on the gravel road which snaked up Tennessee's 3,534-foot Mount Cross. Billy Joe Lodnar was tense behind the wheel of the old pickup truck, alert for trouble on the dangerous road, anxious to make campsite by dark.

A 35-year-old hunter and out-doors-man with a healthy respect for every treacherous curve on the twisting mountain roadway, Lodnar was haunched low, his chin almost touching the steering wheel, when he first saw the UFO.

The luminous, rapidly-blinking object came rushing straight at him - a giant flying craft filling the sky like nothing he'd ever seen before.

Lodnar, employed as a shift foreman for a packaging plant in Knoxville, Tenn., had left his wife Sue for a lone weekend of camping and hunting. He bitterly resented any interruption of his plan to relax in the Tennessee mountains alone. His reaction was unusual – not fear, but angry indignation toward the blinking, cigar-shaped flying object.

"And it's real! That damned thing is real, all right."

Unlike most people- who see UFOs, Billy Lodnar already knew something about the mysterious craft now being seen by

more people, in more places, than ever before. He'd read books arguing that aliens from space are spying on Mankind from strange airborne platforms often called "flying saucers." Lodnar, however, was a trained observer; he'd been an enlisted bomber crewman in the Air Force and had known airmen who'd seen UFOs. A pilot friend of his had once reported seeing humanoid creatures peering from the portholes of an alien craft.

So Lodnar knew what he was seeing. And when the blinking orange UFO flew overhead and then whipped around to fly back toward his pickup Billy Lodnar bristled with resentment. "I was going to spend this weekend hunting!" he cursed aloud -- not yet aware that instead of deer, he would soon hunt the most dangerous game ever stalked by Man.

Known for his stubborn streak, Lodnar was acting in character. Securely strapped inside his pickup and armed with a Browning shotgun and a 30-06 scope-mounted rifle, he didn't feel he had to worry.

"No damned spaceship is going to spoil my weekend!"

He slammed on the brakes and his pickup veered sharply on the gravel. Yanking out the 30-06, he leaped out onto the roadway and dropped behind the front wheel.

The UFO descended vertically, filling the darkening sky above him. A glimmer of doubt gnawed at him. Suddenly he wasn't so sure of himself. "That thing is actually going to land!"

His first thought was for the teenagers he'd passed in a minibus down near the base of the mountain an hour ago. They might

not be reliable, but they were the only people he'd seen the entire afternoon and Billy Lodnar wanted witnesses if he was going to confront a UFO. He also knew of a State Forestry station a few miles back, but remembered, angrily, that it was closed this late in the year. The date was Nov. 11, 1974.

But he was worrying about the wrong thing.

There were witnesses -- plenty of them.

The zigzagging UFO had already been spotted by dozens of people along the sheer, tree-covered ridge lines near Knoxville. The pilot of a Marine A-4C Skyhawk on a cross-country flight from Beaufort, SC had radioed that the UFO was "acting dangerous" and "flying along just off my wingtip." Military and civilian radar installations tracked the craft for short periods of time, while the Knoxville police department was flooded with phone reports. Significantly, the UFO had hovered for more than a half hour near the top-secret Atomic Energy Commission installation at nearby Oak Ridge.

It's all documented. And it's frightening.

What's most disturbing of all, it seems the entire southern US has recently become the focal point for hundreds of similar UFO sightings. Judy Blum, co-author of *Beyond Earth, Man's Contact with UFOs*, claims that a startling number of UFO incidents have occurred south of the Mason-Dixon Line. Dr. Karl Dickins, astronomer at Tennessee Teacher's College says; "There's some special meaning to all these UFO sightings throughout the South."

Lodnar sucked in his breath and waited.

Across from his truck the road hung precariously over a sunken depression in the mountain slope where a V-shaped gully angled down toward a flat, bush-covered clearing. As Lodnar watched, the UFO settled silently in the open space, a brilliant circle of light standing out sharply among the lengthening shadows. Lodnar could now see that his impression of a cigar shape had been based upon the profile of the craft. It was a saucer, with a tear-like dome rising from its center.

Lodnar hefted his rifle and darted across the road. He dropped to his knees, careful to avoid exposing the silhouette on the skyline. Though the temperature was in the mid-30s, he felt sweat on his face. His grip on the rifle was vise-like. The UFO had settled on the ground and a door was opening on its side!

Something - somebody - was stepping out!

His crouching position was painful. Lodnar wished he'd brought binoculars. To put himself in a better position to cope with the alien visitor, he edged downhill until he reached an outcrop on the slope.

He now believed that the aliens hadn't noticed him. The craft seemed to have landed for some other reason. Maybe it's something like recharging batteries, he thought aware that this didn't make sense but he was unable to think of any other explanation.

The man - Lodnar knew it wasn't a man, not a human being - ambled down a ramp from the open doorway. The creature was small and stocky, with a bloated head that was disproportionately large in comparison to its skeletal body. Although 300 feet away and 40 feet uphill, Billy Lodnar could

see arms and legs as thin as pipe stems, a gray skin that impressed him as covered with scales, and the powerful protruding head with thin, slit-like eyes.

In stiff, jerky movements the creature walked downhill from the craft. Lodnar cradled his rifle and followed.

Even now, Lodnar has trouble recalling his emotions during the ensuing, tension-racked 20 minutes when he slipped through underbrush, staggered downhill, and drew closer to the alien creature. To skeptics who wonder if any of this ever happened, he insists that he felt a compulsion to follow. Two different times he centered the alien in the crosshairs of the scope mounted on his rifle.

The terrain was very tricky. It took Lodnar a while to realize that he was moving in a circle. When he was about 20 feet above and 100 feet away from the creature, he realized that the alien was returning to its craft.

The UFO hadn't moved, hadn't made a sound.

As the humanoid returned to the ramp extending from the UFO, all of Lodnar's pent-up frustrations churned inside him. The fear had been slow in coming but was now hitting him in waves. And there was resentment, anger. He's going to get away and nobody will ever believe I saw him! I'll be a laughing stock!

It was almost completely dark now, but the humanoid stood out sharply when Lodnar lined him up in the telescopic sight but the hunter couldn't make himself fire.

There was really no reason to shoot and, considering the unknown nature of the situation, plenty of cause not to.

Lodnar relaxed his trigger finger and watched as the alien entered the open doorway of the UFO.

A second creature appeared and seemed to grab the first, to pull him inside. It was as if the creature was being reprimanded by his partner for putting too much trust in the reactions of the curious human who he knew, through telepathy, was stalking him. The door closed and the UFO rose from the ground - in complete silence! Lodnar watched the craft shoot across the peak of Mount Cross, climbing into the night sky.

"It was an alien spaceship and it was real!" Lodnar insisted when a Knoxville reporter reached him two days later. "There were people on it - creatures. I mean -from somewhere. I could have shot one of them."

Lodnar, his wife, a reporter, two police officers, and an amateur UFO researcher in Knoxville returned to the mountain on November 15. In the gully where Lodnar had seen the UFO land, there were broken trees and scorch marks. A policeman, using a device called a cadometer, tried to determine whether the gully had sustained unusually high levels of gamma radiation.

Billy Lodnar insists he saw men from another world.

I found nothing about this case. Feel free to send any other details, photographs, etc.

**Reliability evaluation:
prank / false
possible journalistic invention,
I could not find any Billy Joe Lodnar,
more details are welcome to change evaluation**

