

The Strange Encounter With The Vista Metal-Man

Synopsis by

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A young police chief responds to an emergency phone call about an Unidentified Flying Object landing next the Atomic Research Center only to run into a huge lumbering metallic monstrosity, changing the course of his life, and possibly even leading to his death.

On the soft, autumn evening of October 17, 1973, Jeff Greenhaw then 26-year old chief of police of Vista, CA settles in with his wife for a well-deserved night of rest when just after 10pm he receives an emergency call. Little could he have imagined at the time that this phone call would change his life forever. The call is from a nearly hysterical (to this day anonymous) woman who claims that an Unidentified Flying Object had landed just outside of town in a field that was situated across from the local Atomic Research Center. Thus begins arguably one of the most bizarre cases of an alien encounter to come out of the American South

Although he was off duty, Greenhaw abiding by his sworn duty to protect and serve jumps up, snags his keys, cuffs, revolver, and, almost as an afterthought, his trusty Polaroid camera on the off chance that there might be something worth taking a picture of. He then hops into his truck, radios the call in, and rushes to the location of the alleged flying saucer landing.

When Greenhaw arrives on the scene he gets out of his truck and patrols the area but finds nothing out of the ordinary. The chief then returns to his vehicle and decides to take a drive around the field before returning home. Greenhaw cruises around the perimeter of the property, scanning the darkness for anything unusual but sees nothing of note in the murky blackness. He then turns down a narrow, gravel path for one final pass... that is when he comes face to face with something that would challenge his understanding of reality.

After traveling down the trail for about a hundred yards, Greenhaw sees the gigantic humanoid figure lumbering down an embankment ending in the middle of the road, about 75-feet away. The chief gets out of his truck and carefully approaches the figure, thinking that it may be someone in need of assistance. Its movements are laboured and unnatural with a torso that is hunched and bent forwards and legs that move in a strange and stiff gate as if they did not possess kneecaps its arms are fixed out in front of it completely immobile in a pose -- reminiscent of frankenstein's monster. He watches on in amazement as the figure finally reached the bottom of the embankment and then stepped out onto the road.

Greenhaw shouts to his strange companion, but it does not respond, no sound comes out of its mouth. Now brilliantly illuminated in his truck's high beams, the chief realizes that something

was very wrong. The entity appears to be wearing some kind of silvery, metallic suit that resembles thick aluminum foil, with an antenna sticking out from the top of its head, and has jerky and mechanical movements. It doesn't take long for the shocked Greenhaw to realize that he was dealing with something completely beyond his experience and pushing his panic aside with great effort aided by years of police training he has the presence of mind to pick up his instant camera and shoots four photographs of the entity in question.

The first Polaroid shows nothing but inky darkness and a flash of silver, but the next three images hit the jackpot. In the photos, one can clearly see a humanoid figure wearing a wrinkly, metallic suit or outer casing which reflected the flash from the Polaroid's bulb. Perhaps believing that it was being attacked by a human with some kind of "light-beam" weapon, the creature slowly turns to face the Greenhaw. He could now see the figure's face which was completely black the only facial features discernible within this apparent mask were a pair of red glowing eyes which slowly turned to meet his gaze. The chief reacts swiftly, darts back to his truck, and tries to start the engine.

Without warning Greenhaw sees the light coming from its red eyes, rapidly increasing intensity two narrow beams of energy suddenly travelled the short distance to his truck and struck the front of it the, young chief was immediately consumed by a paralyzing sensation becoming short of breath as if an immense force was crushing him from above this horrifying feeling began to subside a few moments later and the driver was suddenly aware of a burning odor he looked down and could see that acrid smoke was now pouring from the radio worse still the fingers on his right hand which had been holding onto the steering wheel were now bright pink and in severe pain as he massaged his right hand in a vain effort to make the pain go away.

He looked up to see that the Metal-Man has now started to shuffle off again slowly making its way towards the fencing surrounding the Atomic Research Center when it reached the metal barrier it suddenly stiffened in an apparent attempt to stand upright the figure then appeared to walk on directly through the chain-link fence it did not pause or seem to be impeded in any way passing through the obstruction as if it didn't exist before disappearing from view utterly consumed by fear and bewilderment Greenhaw sat motionless in his truck for a moment before starting the engine and driving home as quickly as possible.

When her husband staggered in through the front door an hour later Barbara Greenhaw had been sat waiting for him in the living room but as she began to launch a terrain of abuse at him for coming home late he immediately stopped herself ken's face was a mask of terror and confusion his injured hand held protectively close to his body she listened with apprehension about the encounter with the silver manas he poured himself a drink and then agreed that they should drive straight to the police station to report the matter.

Despite some initial skepticism the man's clearly distressed state was enough to persuade the officers there to react and he was quickly taken back to the scene prior to leaving the station the officers had found the Atomic Research Facility to notify them of the incident and they were slightly surprised to find a group of 20 security guards waiting for them at the site they were

struck by the lack of surprise or disbelief on the faces of these guards who insisted that Edward's point out the exact spot where he had seen the intruder for the next hour or so. Edwards and the police officers watched on as a security staff comb the ground either side of the fence where the silver man had emerged despite repeated requests they refused to allow the police officers access to the complex before announcing that there was nothing to support the allegation and asking everyone to leave.

Greenhaw found it impossible to sleep, the pain and burns to his right hand took much longer to fade and when he tried to take his radio in for repair he was informed it was too badly damaged. The engineer who examined it found that its internal workings had been completely destroyed by what appeared to be a massive surge of energy. Despite the absence of any assistance from the Atomic Research Center the local police continued their own investigation and find a circle of flattened grass at the top of the slope where Greenhaw has seen the Metal-Man the police also located the body of a dead rabbit close by there was no obvious cause of death for the creature which fueled speculation that it too had been struck by whatever force the entity had used to paralyze Greenhaw.

Greenhaw's experience is instantly met with skepticism, derision, and, at times, outright ridicule. Within months of revealing his bizarre encounter, the Chief of police is terminated by the town council, his marriage falls apart, and just when it must have seemed as if matters couldn't get any worse, his home is burned to the ground. The town starts to become uneasy as theories start to emanate, some believe that the Metal-Man was a robotic scout for what may have been an extraterrestrial landing craft; while skeptics maintain that it was all a hoax perpetrated by Greenhaw and an unknown accomplice who was clad in a tin foil costume or, perhaps more ambitiously, an asbestos fire suit. The images that Greenhaw snapped are collected and sent for analysis by a mysterious government group. The conclusion drawn by the group was that the encounter was most likely a fabrication probably inspired by all the furor surrounding a recent local program. Interestingly the negatives of the Greenhaw pictures that are now on the table being studied by mysterious men in suits, seem to show images of a "flying saucer" among them, although Greenhaw never claimed to have photographed the object initially reported.

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