

# POSSIBLE UFO-INDUCED TEMPORARY PARALYSIS

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A STATE of temporary paralysis, presumably caused by UFOs, has often been reported.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> This report explores various aspects of this baffling condition, as well as other purported UFO-associated physiological and psychic effects.

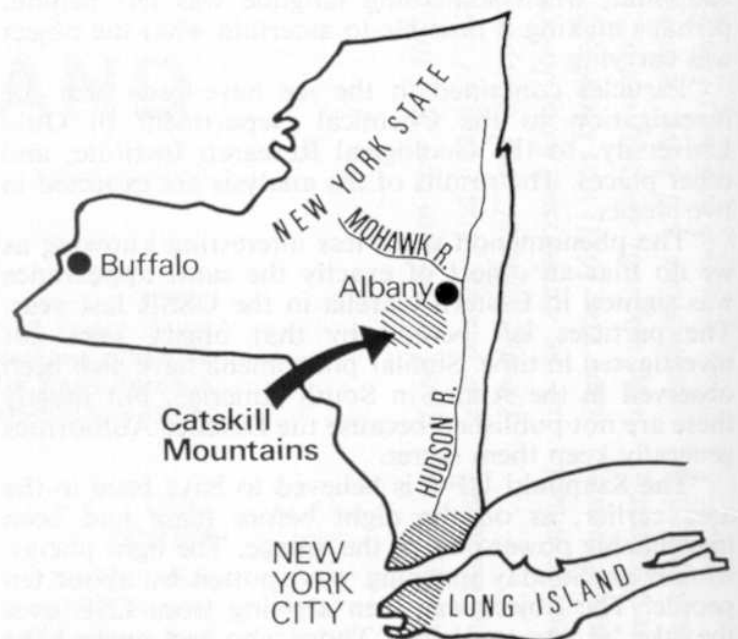
## I The Setting

On a field trip to study a family that had reported many terrifying UFO sightings, bizarre poltergeist manifestations, etc., the author travelled to a small Catskill Mountain community (in west-central New York State). When he stopped in a gift store to purchase some postal cards and make enquiries about the locale, a neatly groomed, pleasant, middle-aged woman customer told him about the strange UFO experience of temporary paralysis that happened to her lifelong friend, Mr. O.\*

## II The Experience

It was late in August, 1968, between 8.00 and 9.00 p.m., on a pitch-black night. Mr. M. O., age 58, a self-employed garage mechanic, a bachelor, and an elementary-school graduate, was alone on his farm in an isolated area of the Catskill Mountains of New York. As was his custom, he went outside with his French poodle to feed his horse some bread and honey. The dog was about five feet in front of him, and he had milk in his hand for the cat, who was then in the garage.

Suddenly, "I heard a shrill sound—a whining, like a dynamo. I could not move. I looked at the dog and he was standing motionless. The horse (Morgan gelding) was at the fence, standing still with his head in the air, turned toward the side of the hill. I lost all sense of time—it might have lasted seconds or five to ten minutes. I realised I wasn't moving, but I felt my body from the head down to my hips. It was pins and needles, like when you get a cold. I shook. I could not move—only my head. I could only watch, turning my head a bit, but I couldn't take a step. All of a sudden the noise



Sketch map of New York; location of the Catskill mountains

stopped, and I could move. When I looked around, the horse and the dog were also moving. I looked up the valley and saw nothing, but over the barn there were two holes in the sky, as white as snow. It was like looking into a barrel. They were perfectly round—automobile-tyre size and about three feet apart. They stayed still and didn't move for ten to fifteen minutes—then disappeared. The next morning I discovered that the cat didn't drink the milk I had put out for him the night before, and this was unusual. There was no effect on the household electric lights, clock (battery-powered), or radio, but there was something odd—the telephone didn't work when I went to make a call that night. It was all right the next day."

Shortly after arising in the morning, Mr. O. noted dysuria: "Burning urine, like a red-hot poker. Ten minutes later it was all right." Several hours after this symptom, he developed red streaks on the glans penis (uncircumcised). This disappeared in one day. There was no ostensible reason for these complaints, such as

\* The names and addresses of the witness, and of the other people interviewed, are on file with *Flying Saucer Review*—EDITOR.

cystitis, prostatitis, or various venereal diseases. There was no change in his sexual function before or following this experience.

Mr. O.'s general health was good, and he prided himself on his near-perfect work record of forty years. However, six months prior to this episode, he had had pain in the right sacrosciatic notch radiating along the sciatic nerve to his heel. Chiropractic manipulations were ineffective. However, the day after his nocturnal experience he was completely relieved of pain and he has been well until the present time (December, 1970).

Two weeks after his experience, Mr. O. suddenly "remembered the spot I had noticed in the field [one week before the episode] where the hay was flat in a round area about six feet in diameter. I noticed this when I was mowing. At the time I didn't associate this to anything, but later [after the episode] when I got out to the spot, I found that the grass was only four to five inches tall. I was amazed to see that the area was as dry as the floor and with all fine little stones—not cobbles as there are surrounding the area—unusual for this place."

Six telephone interviews with the subject and psychiatric and neurological examinations at Mr. O.'s place of business on March 3, 1970, and December 2, 1970, confirmed his general good health. There was no discernible reason, psychopathologically or neurologically, for his strange experience. There was no impairment of orientation, nor of various intellectual and memory functions. There was no objective evidence for a ruptured intervertebral disc. There was nothing to suggest untruthfulness or fabrication as an explanation. There was a past history for a healed duodenal ulcer<sup>‡</sup> that had prevented military service. In previous years he had had migraine: "I'm a great one to keep stuff inside of me." The overall picture of good health was supported by Mr. O.'s answers on the Cornell Medical Index Questionnaire and computerised Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory.

Shortly after the episode, Mr. O. told several neighbours and friends about his experience. On the telephone, the physician interviewed a distinguished actor and his wife; a lady acquaintance since Mr. O.'s boyhood (the author's original informant); a veterinarian and her secretary; and a close lady friend who is a medical technologist; plus several other people. They remembered hearing about the experience and had confidence in Mr. O.'s veracity.

The actor recalled Mr. O.'s peculiar genito-urinary history and sciatic pain. The actor's home, also on the same Catskill mountain ridge, was approximately 150 yards away from Mr. O.'s. The actor, too, saw the round, flattened area, and noted that the affected grass was very green and stunted. Once last year (one year after the episode) the actor telephoned Mr. O. to see if his outside spotlights were turned off (they were) because there was "a greenish, glowing light around your place." No further significance was attached to this event other than its uniqueness. It had not been noted in the past. Until the interview it was not related

<sup>‡</sup> It might be noted that during the playback sessions of hypnotic interviews, Barney Hill's duodenal ulcers flared up. (Fuller, J. G.: *The Interrupted Journey*, Dell Books, New York, 1967, pp. 312, 325.)

to the previous happenings. However, since then it has been observed on a few occasions and attributed to the stars by Mr. O. (?). The actor has had a distinguished career and is known and vouchsafed for by the author's friend, Joseph Dunninger.

Interview of the medical technologist on September 9, 1970, also confirmed all the history, including Mr. O.'s physical data. The technologist's mother was a highly regarded private duty nurse at Mountainside Hospital, Montclair, New Jersey, where the author was on the staff for ten years.

When the veterinarian and her assistant were contacted, they corroborated Mr. O.'s narrative, and also recalled the odd effects on the animals. They knew of no similar effects on other animals in their professional experience.\*

From the study of Mr. O., as well as the opinions of these five people, it was evident that Mr. O. had no previous experience or consuming interest in UFOs, science fiction, psychics, and the like. He was described as a hard-working, warm-hearted, extroverted auto mechanic and outdoorsman, without literary inclinations.

Although Mr. O.'s past experiences included some psychic phenomena, there was no more than is apparent

\* Gordon Creighton has recently catalogued "The Effects of UFOs on Animals, Birds, and Smaller Creatures" (FSR, Vol. 16, Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4, 1970). In another study (Delphieux, M., translated by Gordon Creighton: "Near-landing in Hérault", FSR, Vol. 16, No. 1, January/February, 1970, pp. 13-14) it was noted that a herd of goats following exposure to a UFO came in heat at closer intervals and that an excellent male goat for breeding purposes . . . was no longer doing his job. O., who was raised on a farm, did not observe any sexual changes in his animals. Close UFO sightings involving dogs, investigated by the author, are:

- (a) In a widely publicised case of Wednesday, November 13, 1957, Mrs. John Trasco of rural New Jersey, a nurse's aide, said: "One creature (little, small green man) came out and wanted the dog—had a glowing from each finger tip. They [UFO and two occupants] landed by the outhouse, which we don't use. The dog (a six-year-old partially blind, charcoal-coloured Belgian shepherd) howled, and was very frightened. (*Delaware Valley News*, November 15, 1957.)"
- (b) A close, tree-height sighting happened over an outdoor pool at White Rock Lake, New Jersey, on March 31, 1966, at 8.05 p.m. ([Dover] *Daily Advance*, Friday, April 1, 1966, p. 1), and Mrs. Connie Bateman's dog "howled and my sister's dog whined and tried to get into the house through a window."
- (c) On April 1, 1966, at 8.45 p.m. (UPI, April 4, 1966), Mrs. Carol Vander Plate, while in her home on a mountaintop at WLVP-FM, Hardyston Township (which is close to White Rock Lake), New Jersey, noted a UFO at tree height, and ". . . All of a sudden my two French poodles started barking and carrying on. They refused to obey. They went crazy, running in circles, and jumping over the furniture." ("UFOs in New Jersey", *The Journal of the Medical Society of New Jersey*, Vol. 66, No. 8, pp. 460-464, August, 1969.)
- (d) A close sighting lasted for one hour, beginning at 10.10 p.m. on a Wednesday in April, 1967, at Hacketts-town, New Jersey, directly over the houses at tree-height and over the fish hatchery, where Mrs. Lawrence Robinson's springer spaniel puppy "sat still on the ground, howling, and wouldn't move."



in many case histories. There were no associated psychic events or harassments with, or after, his experience. Mr. O. has had no previous dissociative states, time lapses, blackouts, seizures, hypnotic trances, head injuries, encephalopathies of any cause, injudicious use of alcohol, or drugs. He had taken no alcohol at the time of his episode. He could recall no dreams.

Careful scrutiny of the family history and of other significant people in Mr. O.'s background yielded no material for remotely similar UFO-related experiences.

### III Possible Mechanisms

#### (a) Paresthesias

Descriptively, it would seem that Mr. O., his horse, and his dog had catalepsy that correlated with the duration of a strange dynamo sound. Such UFO-related sounds are not uncommon, and the author has reports of similar sounds from investigations of the Split Rock and Wanaque Reservoir areas of northern New Jersey. Mr. O.'s paresthesia, or tingling pins-and-needles sensation, is a common symptom seen in medical practice, and is usually associated with an anxiety state. The anxiety causes unconscious overbreathing, which in turn, leads to alkalosis and latent tetany, or the physiological effects on the peripheral nerves: typically, paresthesias of the fingers, toes, and so forth. In many instances, the patient is aware of the cause-and-effect relationships—the overbreathing induced by anxiety, causing tingling.\*

Mr. O.'s paresthesia could have been a physiological reaction to his overwhelming anxiety.

#### (b) Catalepsy

As noted, UFO-associated temporary paralysis (catalepsy) and other neuromuscular effects are not uncommon. The rigid, immobile posture is a way of reacting to overwhelming emotional stimuli: fear, bereavement, catastrophe. It results when more active measures: i.e., fight, flight, would be too difficult. In some cases the catalepsy is associated with an alleged "ray" from the UFO. In one well-documented case of close exposure to a UFO, the subject, who did not have catalepsy, developed profound reversible muscular weakness and wasting and was hospitalised.<sup>4</sup>

#### (c) Question of Amnesia

Although Mr. O., apparently did not have amnesia from his experience, the uncertainty of the time-lapse suggests the need for further investigation by hypnosis, psychotherapy, and electroencephalography.<sup>5</sup> In acute brain syndromes, toxic confusion-states of various causes, and states of heightened anxiety, etc., the loss of the sense of time is often the first symptom.

#### (d) Psychological Seizures

Psychical seizures<sup>6</sup> (temporary lobe epilepsy) have some symptoms similar to Mr. O.'s experience: (1) disorientation, (2) behavioural response, (3) sometimes relatively prolonged episodes (unusual for psychical

seizures) and (4) rapid onset and termination. However, the nature of Mr. O.'s "attack" and the fact that he had only one such experience in his life, plus the involvement of the animals, and so on, makes a solitary psychical seizure very unlikely.

#### (e) Sleep Paralysis

"Sleep paralysis"<sup>7</sup> (cataplexy), which has been known in folklore throughout history as being caused by a nightly visitation of devils and demons, is characterised by a state where the subject feels awake and is aware of his surroundings but is incapable of voluntary movement. The attack usually lasts from several seconds to several minutes and is accompanied by terror, with or without hallucinations (see case report that follows). Cataplexy, however, would not explain the simultaneous animal effects in Mr. O.'s experience. Patients with sleep paralysis usually have many attacks, and unlike Mr. O., a definite psychopathological history.

#### (f) Genitourinary Effects

The dysuria and penile lesions would seem to be a complication of Mr. O.'s experience. Although there is only Mr. O.'s report of them, and no record from a trained observer, the "red streaks" were most unusual.<sup>8</sup> By description they were not psychosomatic or factitious (self-induced). This opinion was supported by George R. Read, M.D., urologist, who felt that the specific reported events, dysuria and lesions, were unlike those seen in practice.

Dr. Benjamin Simon<sup>9</sup> noted how in his treatment of the Hills, Barney had an inflammation of the small circle of warts that had developed in an almost geometrically perfect circle around his groin. Barney wondered if the warts were psychosomatic or if they were caused by the examination and instruments aboard the UFO (*ibid.*, pp. 283-284). Barney also recalled the cool sensation in his groin while being examined aboard the UFO, and Betty (his wife) had a bizarre "pregnancy test" in which a long needle was injected into her navel. Keel<sup>10</sup> described a spectacular contactee case involving a prominent Brazilian lawyer who allegedly went on a UFO trip during which he noted that he felt pain and cold in his genitals.

These examples, with the sexual motif, in addition to the extraordinary Villas Boas<sup>1</sup> case, and others,<sup>†</sup> raise the question of reality vs. delusions, hallucinations, and illusions. It is well known that in some emotional disorders there are often numerous sexual symptoms. The symptoms usually are the result of the (interpersonal) anxiety rather than the cause of it. Mr. O.'s rash and dysuria were not typical for an emotional or psychosomatic reaction. Moreover, there was a lack of

† In a New Jersey presumed-UFO-landing case of July 3, 1970, near Sandy Hook, with many extraordinary features, one of the witnesses, a young mother, following a nocturnal "smell of death" episode, had a terrifying dream of faceless forms trying to break into her house. She awoke with severe right sacrosciatic notch pain. At the time, the woman wondered if she had a needle puncture in the gluteal region. She told several members of her family and consulted her physician, who confirmed this history to the author.

\* Unfortunately, the demonstration of this relationship is seldom therapeutic, because of the deeper problems having to do with the patient's unconscious life.

any previous concatenation of events or a crisis leading up to his once-in-a-lifetime experience. There was neither a build up of tension nor a previous sexual problem. The UFO-effect hypothesis remains.

Mention should be made of the dramatic relief of Mr. O.'s sacrosciatic notch and sciatic nerve pain, following the nocturnal experience. From his past history, and upon direct examination, Mr. O. seemed to have a high pain threshold and he was not hyper-suggestible. Since his occupation called for rugged physical health and strong back, his backache was a serious threat to his livelihood. There was nothing to suggest any "purpose" (e.g., secondary gain, disability benefits, etc.) for such a backache. Manipulation of his back for months had been ineffective. Conversion was a most unlikely explanation because of the anatomical distribution of the pain, and because of the absence of previous similar episodes. Perhaps Mr. O.'s unusual therapeutic result is similar to a case reported by Finch,<sup>11</sup> in which a toothache was relieved following a UFO experience.

Keel described a widely publicised incident in which a Texas deputy sheriff's left index finger, painful, swollen, and bleeding from an alligator bite, was almost immediately relieved and healed following close exposure to a "great rectangular glob of purple light, about fifty feet in height" (*ibid.*, p. 254). †

### Possible Radiation

Although specific supporting data are lacking, it can be speculated that high-frequency electromagnetic (radar) waves, microwaves, or infrasound could have conceivably been causative factors. All of these modalities can produce a variety of physical effects. When told about Mr. O.'s case, Karl Olsson, an electrical engineer, conjectured that Mr. O.'s reaction was due to high-frequency radar combined with infrared (for directing the energy) from a twin-engine turboprop airplane. A particular U.S. experimental military reconnaissance aircraft can fly as slow as an estimated 50 m.p.h., and because of the turbines, makes a whining sound. The twin white lights over the barn could have been due to cabin lights from the plane reflected off the revolving propellers.

This explanation, although superficially attractive, is incomplete. For example, why would such an experimental aircraft, fifty miles from the nearest military base, be in this isolated area of the Catskills at that particular time, and be visibly stationary for ten to fifteen minutes? And if the purported effects were random, why were they not more widespread, or why was there not other physical evidence? Furthermore, how could such an explanation be reconciled with (1) the appearance of the circular, flattened-out area in the field, at the approximate time of Mr. O.'s experience and (2) the strange, green, luminescent effect around Mr. O.'s house one year after the event?

† Gordon Creighton has recently summarised this and several other UFO healing cases (FSR, Vol. 15, No. 5, September/October, 1969, pp. 20-23) and Aimé Michel has documented an extraordinary case involving a French doctor and his infant son (FSR, Special Issue, No. 3, September, 1969, pp. 3-16). It is hoped that many more examples can be collected.

Consultation with Keith Keeler, M.D., psychiatrist, and Hector Giancarlo, M.D., otologist, yielded no conclusive explanations for either the microwave or infrasound hypotheses. There were the same objections as with the hypothetical radar effect: how such an effect, as in Mr. O.'s case, could have been so selectively, and reversibly produced: e.g. without permanent thermal or hemorrhagic tissue damage, with resultant tinnitus and deafness, etc. Thus, if there was radiation, what was it? What was its source? Some experimental military craft, other sophisticated weaponry, or UFO? And then, how did the supposed radiation mediate the particular non-injurious biological effects?

### Psychic Red Herrings?

Another possible way that these effects could have been induced in Mr. O. and his animals may have been telepathic. For example, the following highly compressed vignettes, specific for Mr. O., illustrate this complex relationship.

1. A young woman patient, who was seen in psychotherapy for depression, came one day for her session, terrified. She stated that on Sunday, at 9.30 a.m., while at home in bed: "I suddenly tried, desperately, to get up but *I couldn't move*. It was very weird. I became panicky. I thought I was going to scream. You (physician) appeared like a vision. It came on through gauze—instead of projecting onto a screen, it came in backwards, like a camera behind the screen. It had a floating effect. It was a moving, floating face—ethereal. Only, it had just your head; nothing was said. It appeared out of nowhere, like those crazy horror stories or in séances where a head appears out of nowhere. Boom! That's the only way I can describe it."

At the time of this woman's experience, and unknown to her, the physician in his home, miles away from the patient, was visiting with Mr. Clement Tamburreno, psychic healer. He was discussing two specific points of urgent interest at that time (1) the UFO temporary paralysis of Mr. O., and his animals, and (2) materialisation of UFOs, apparitions, etc. It was wondered if Mr. Tamburreno, who lectures widely to interested groups, would know of someone who might have had similar experiences. The woman patient, who was *en rapport* with her therapist, had specific reasons to be upset at that time; for his part, the physician was keyed up about traumatic events in his own life, and sought some clues from his researches that might have a practical medical application. The conscious and unconscious needs of patient and physician telepathically served each other. †

As the patient related her presumed telepathic hallucinatory experience, the physician made a note on his pad of other similar examples. He jotted down the name of another patient, who had telepathically hallucinated a coffin.<sup>12</sup> Hardly had he finished than this patient telephoned long distance for an appointment. She had not been seen in many months. It was learned that she had no pressing problems at this time. It was speculated that she telepathically reacted to the possible use of her highly charged life example (of

† In the course of her psychotherapy there were numerous other presumed telepathic episodes.



which she was unaware): e.g., unconscious competition with the other lady patient.\*

Telepathy is not directly linked to Mr. O.'s temporary paralysis. However, telepathic claims are not at all infrequent in some UFO cases, and they could be capable of mediating all kinds of effects (telesomatic reactions<sup>13</sup>). It is difficult, if not impossible, as in Mr. O.'s case, to collect all the relevant data; but these examples show that what can and does happen in psychotherapy can also (and does?) happen in UFO cases. Since UFO experiences are often associated with terror and take place in awesome and emotionally splitting situations—the same substrates that seem to be prerequisites for many telepathic experiences—some or much of their (UFO) content could come from the unconscious minds of others (telepathic suggestion). Ehrenwald<sup>14</sup> has shown how such unconscious bias or telepathic leakage might be a factor of considerable significance in psychotherapy. By analogy, this could also be highly important to UFO investigations. To try to be objective without taking into account the subjective (i.e., one's unconscious bias) can fool the investigator of the best intentions. The following example of a possible telepathic linkage involving Mr. O. further illustrates this.

2. On Thursday, June 18, 1970, the physician was upset by serious illnesses in his family, and, perhaps as an escape from such grimness, he phantasied about the unusual O. case, and its interesting medical implications. He yearned to return to the Catskill Mountains to obtain more data. While he was thus musing, the friend who had originally invited him to the Catskills (where O. and the other case described in the beginning of this paper were located) telephoned, and again extended an invitation. This friend knew nothing of the physician's own pressing events and the invitation had to be declined. The frustration was aggravated by the physician's accidentally coming across for the first time, a large newspaper advertisement of the hit play in which Mr. O.'s neighbour was the leading actor. Hardly had these emotionally charged thoughts of desiring to see Mr. O. crystallised, than O. himself telephoned for the first and only time in our association. Thus, it can be supposed that telepathic linkages can account in this way for many of the strange "coincidences" or serendipity that one seems to find in ufology.

It may be asked: (1) can the awesome tracer-laden UFO events—as in Mr. O.'s case—account for the awareness of telepathy (and other psychic phenomena) or actually generate its happenings; or (2) could the hypothesised intelligent force behind the UFOs directly cause the telepathic and other psychic events, as is claimed in many instances; or (3) is it a phantasmogoria: a combination of both: i.e., an original telepathic stimulus setting up a chain reaction of psychic and other events that are coloured by psychopathological, experiential, cultural factors, and so forth?

\* The element of cut-off in some of these possible telepathic examples can extend to absurd lengths. For example, when the author was preparing the final draft of this report and wondering if the patient would make her next session, since she had travelled three hundred miles away for the week-end, a lady friend of her's 'phoned to say that the woman had just called her and asked that she confirm the appointment.



Autographed photograph of Joseph Dunninger and Vladimir Komorov, cosmonaut, who died April 24, 1967, when descending to earth and his space capsule parachute failed to open

### Dunninger

Since it is often the "forgotten" (Mr. O.'s confusion of time during the episode) that is accessible to the telepathist, possibly the gifted paragnost can make worthwhile contributions to ufology in this area. In the attempt to decipher this mystery, Joseph Dunninger, America's greatest telepathist, whose formal career has extended world-wide for over fifty years, graciously volunteered his skills. Dunninger is also a much-honoured magician, inventor of illusions, ‡ revealer of fraudulent séances, participant and witness to numerous unexplainable, extraordinary, presumed psychic events in and out of séances. After meeting Mr. O., on December 2, 1970, Dunninger felt that he was an honest man, and that his experiences involved no trick or illusion. Dunninger, whose highly developed and documented telepathic talents were occasionally used for the solution of crimes and the treatment of patients in medical school settings, received no telepathic impressions from Mr. O., but felt that from his experience Mr. O.'s case was unique and worthy of intensive scientific study.

In summary, temporary paralysis, among other

‡ Dunninger, who invented many of his friend Houdini's best illusions, had also developed, during World War II, a means of making a battleship invisible. He showed the author his correspondence with the U.S. Navy Department.

causes, can also be a UFO-associated condition with many ramifications which can be studied from a variety of viewpoints.

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# THE LANDING AT QUIPAPÁ

*Dr. Walter Buhler*

THIS interesting case occurred between 10.15 and 10.35 p.m. on February 25, 1966, at Quipapá,<sup>1</sup> a place near Garanhuns in the interior of the sugar-growing state of Pernambuco in north-eastern Brazil, and was the subject of a careful investigation conducted on the spot by Senhor Rubens do Couto Soares of Garanhuns on behalf of SBEDV, the Brazilian Society for the Study of Flying Saucers. Our report, based on the investigation, appeared in SBEDV Bulletin No. 54 (January/February 1967), and in this connection it is worth noting that the scene of this event is only 13 km. distant from Canhotinho, where an encounter with small UFO entities occurred on October 26, 1965.\*

There was also at São João, in the same area, on September 10, 1965, the case of Antônio Pau Ferro who saw the two small UFOs swoop down and land two little men quite close to him while he was working on his plantation of corn, beans, and tomatoes,† so we can say that this State of Pernambuco has had more than an average share of landings by little men.

In the Quipapá case there were three witnesses, all young women, namely Ofelia Versoa, aged 21, and two sisters, aged 20 and 17 respectively, bearing the curiously similar names of Maria Marlúce da Silva and Maria Marlucy da Silva. The two last-named live close by. The Águas Brancas Sugar Factory, employing 600 people, is near there, and Maria Marlúce works at the plant, partly as an assistant to the doctor in the first-aid post and partly in the accounts department. The younger sister, Maria Marlucy, stays at home and helps her

\* Case No. 65 in Gordon Creighton's "The Humanoids in Latin America" in *The Humanoids*.

† Case No. 59, "The Humanoids in Latin America."

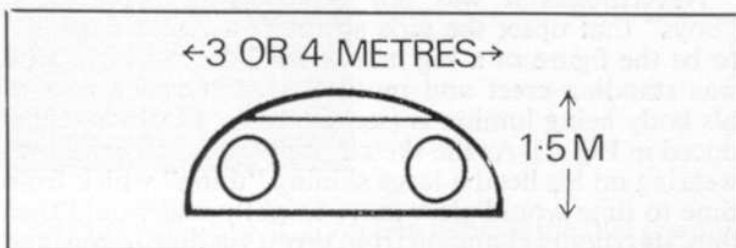


Fig. 1. Drawing based on sketch by Marlúce showing disc with two "headlamps"

mother with the housework, while the third witness, Ofelia Versoa, is from the nearby town of Igarapéba, and merely happened to be staying with her friends the da Silva girls during the days of Carnival.

#### The sighting

On the night in question, the three girls had been together on a visit to friends. At 10.10 p.m., they set off home, walking, as they habitually did, along a well-lit road which runs beside the narrow-gauge railway of the sugar factory, the home of the da Silva girls being located right beside this track. The level of the road is half a metre higher than the railway track.

Suddenly, about 100 metres ahead of them, they perceived some lights right in the middle of the road and concluded that it must be somebody engaged in repairing a broken-down vehicle, perhaps a jeep.

However, as they came up to a distance of less than 50 metres from the lights, they were alarmed by the sight of what they later described as a kind of large dish or cup, reversed, with two large headlamps (see sketch by Marlúce reproduced in Fig. 1). These two headlamps,