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N° 9

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EDITORIAL

In June and July, 1993, I visited the United States for a month during which time I attended two Conferences. One was Dr Leo Sprinkle's 'abductee' gathering in Laramie, Wyoming, and the other the annual MUFON Conference in Richmond, Virginia, where there were nearly 1000 attendees. I am going to discuss Dr Sprinkle's Conference later in an article about abductions.

At the MUFON Conference, Dr John Mack said, "Are UFOs real? I would like us to go beyond that level to looking at what this really means, accepting that something important is, in fact, going on that we do not understand."

I found this one of the most impressive statements at the Conference, for here was a man of the standing of John Mack, a professor of psychiatry at Cambridge Hospital, Harvard Medical School, who was publicly asking exactly what many of us lesser mortals have been asking for years.

Despite the pointing fingers of denigration from the general public; despite the fact that I have never had a UFO experience myself; despite the hoaxers and 'crazies' who get into this phenomenon, I have always been convinced that something untoward was happening. Even if, as we are so constantly being told, practically 99% of all sightings can be put down to anomalous aerial phenomena or the advanced technology of the Russians (previously) and the Americans.

If the phenomenon had been confined to one Continent, well then, yes, perhaps it was a form of hysteria in that particular country passed from one to another by media pressure or television viewing. But it is NOT confined to one Continent!

It occurs in the most outlandish places, like remote rural areas in Africa, and even remoter areas in China, and snow-covered lands where hardly anyone ever goes (except the aliens, of course!). If racial memories are to be blamed, as they might well be in some instances, then how is it possible that only in the UFO phenomenon, they go into the great depth of detail which

investigators are constantly reporting? It is easy enough to relate racial memory to a mother automatically breast-feeding her baby, or a dog turning round as though he was flattening the grass before lying down.

But how can gynaecological examinations (described in detail) connote with racial memory? In Betty Hill's case¹, in which a needle was inserted into her navel during her abduction experience (repeated in other cases around the world); where clothing is being replaced on people inside-out or back-to-front in alien ignorance of how we normally dress; or the insertion of an object as a monitoring device – as has been speculated – into the nasal passage or into the brain: how could these possibly be part of a racial memory?

Then let's assume it's an hysterical trauma; an hallucination induced by highly nervous states (always a possibility). But if such were the case, the pattern of hysteria is unconsciously strong in its repetition of events. But, if this is the answer, is it not worth an explicit study to find out what triggers the imagination in such an event?

After all, we are dealing here with a great variety of cultures, all of which treat experiences of this nature in an entirely different light.

Isn't it strange that Muchena in Zimbabwe, Maponga in South Africa, Malingwe in Kenya, and Beilo in Nigeria, all go through the same type of trauma, although according to their cultures, they interpret them differently? Surely a rich field for the psychologist, even if the ufologist is discarded?

When I spoke in Sheffield, United Kingdom, I noticed one reviewer reported me as saying that I no longer believed that these 'aliens' and their craft came from other planets; that I felt they were from another Time.

True, that is what I did say, but what the writer omitted to make clear was that I speculated; that this was merely a suggested opinion of mine, not a statement of fact!

¹ The Interrupted Journey, by John Fuller, New York, Berkeley Medallion Books, 1966.

Like most investigators involved with ufology, I do not know what is going on. But all those sceptics out there; those bitter and frustrated scientists who can be so rude and disparaging (although there are also many understanding and involved ones!) should sit back and have a good think about what they are saying.

I am reporting on a phenomenon which, whatever anyone might say, IS happening, and is happening NOW. Whatever it is, is not as important as the fact that many of us are recording the events. We are the historians of these case histories, irrespective of the results, and the next time some 'nasty' comes up to me to slay me, I will smile at him and joke a little. I can afford to be magnanimous, for long after he/she is dead, my records will be alive and well!

SOME PERSONAL THOUGHTS ON ALIENS

Sometimes I wonder why the aliens don't come to take me away to their planets of fun?
Or try and abduct me to some distant star to show me (with patience) how they travel so far.
But if I think clearly, I soon realise that I've lived a long life and grown quite wise, so maybe I'm discarded before they begin...
For their doorways are narrow and I'm not too thin!
Or maybe they feel that I'd try to resist or perhaps in reality, they just don't exist!

PILOT ENCOUNTERS UFO Case No 82

Bophuthatswana, Southern Africa.

On the 14th November 1989, an Air Force pilot, flying above Mafikeng in Bophuthatswana, saw a UFO. It moved away from him and when he followed it, it remained ahead of him, and much higher than the maximum height his craft allowed. When he turned, it followed him. It was a silver coloured object, shaped like a rugby ball and had great speed and power with flashing red and green lights.

TV announcer Danie Hefers later interviewed a 'spokesman' for CSIR², who said, "We make no special investigations into UFOs. Should an interesting observation occur, then CSIR would immediately institute an investigation."

In the South African TV programme AGENDA, it was revealed that the CSIR did not want to talk to Danie Hefers about their knowledge of UFOs. But they did say that no sightings had been reported since 1981 and there are logical explanations for these objects.

We here at AFRINEWS first heard of this report in late 1989 when James van Greunen started perpetrating his hoax about the UFO crash in the Kalahari desert. We managed, through our various contacts in South Africa, to hear about a Bophuthatswanian pilot who had seen a UFO, which at the time, van Greunen tied in with his report. We were able to ascertain the name of the pilot and his address and shortly afterwards your Editor telephoned him in Mafikeng to verify this. There was a short conversation but he did promise to reply to her letter if she would write to him asking for further details. This she did, but never received a reply, despite a follow-up from her at a later date.

² Council for Scientific & Industrial Research — the principal South African government research body. (WNNR in Afrikaans.)

Incidentally, the Van Greunen case is not yet closed as several investigators in Great Britain maintain that they have official documents and other material which proves that a crash did take place. Readers will remember that your Editor has never stated categorically that this did not happen: her contention was that the documents she saw, produced by Van Greunen, were faked.

The incident of the crashed UFO in the Kalahari was supposed to have occurred on the 7th May, 1989, four and a half years ago, and we cannot help but feel that if the material held to prove the reality of this event is genuine, surely by now the group involved should have produced the proof. What is the good of our trying to prove that UFOs exist if we don't come up with the evidence?

ISAAC ASIMOV SAYS:³

Most people think of UFOs as spaceships from other planets, but is there any chance of this? According to the best astronomical thinking today, there is a strong chance that life is very common in the Universe. Our own galaxy contains over one hundred billion stars and is only one of perhaps a hundred million galaxies.

One reasonable estimate advanced by an astronomer says that there might be as many as 640 000 000 planets in our galaxy alone that are Earth-like and bear life. The point to consider is how many of these planets have intelligent life? Using very stringent statistics, it is probable that as many as 100 different advanced civilisations exist in our galaxy alone.

³ The late Dr Isaac Asimov was a noted scientist and science writer who has written over 100 books popularising science. These pieces are taken from DELVE, the Ontario, Canada UFO publication edited by Gene Duplantier.

'MEXICAN HAT' Craft

Case N° 84

Kimberley, South Africa.

'What I experienced came as a real shock to me. To others it may seem a joke, but to me it was like a dream which became a reality.

It all happened on a very hot summer's night. I was very restless and thought I would sit at the window for a while. All of a sudden something bright and shining, and very large, flew slowly past. At first I was frightened, as I thought I would be taken in by this 'thing'. It started changing colours: first orange, then purple and red. It was travelling very slowly and I followed it. I came very close to it: I could actually see the bottom of it quite clearly. There were black circles that seemed like tripod legs on which it could land.

This was my first encounter with it, but after that it came back on four consecutive nights, during which it travelled in one direction only: from north to south. The whole of the first experience had taken place over a period of 30 minutes. There was no sound at all, but I could smell an extraordinary smell, like the smoke stack of a train running on coal.

I didn't try to wake anyone as they were all asleep in my house and I knew if I went to call them, the object might not be there when I returned. If I had had a camera with me, I could have taken some pictures, but I didn't and so have no proof of what I saw.

But I have managed to do some drawings of the actual object, and what I saw when I could see it from underneath.

I would be very grateful if you could identify what it was that I saw.'

COMMENTS

Kimberley, South Africa, is quite a large town, population approximately 85 000.

It is situated in the Cape Karoo and built around the 'Big Hole', the enormous hole created by the diamond diggers of the 19th Century; the very essence of the world-famous De Beers Corporation, founded by Cecil John Rhodes. Billions of dollars worth of diamonds have come out of this 'Big Hole', where the blue, waxy-looking material called kimberlite, indicates these precious stones.

There are wide open spaces outside the Town, mostly farming areas. In the summer, the dry, extreme heat of the Karoo can reach well over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (around 40 degrees Celsius).

There appears to be a similarity in shape to Case N° 42 (AFRINEWS N° 6) and the object seen by Audrey Howell of Mid-Rand, Transvaal, in late July/early August 1991.

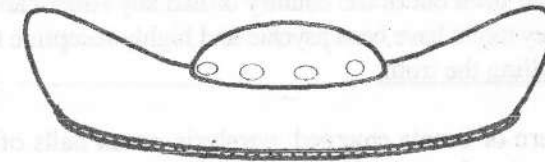


Figure 1 - 'Mexican Hat' Craft

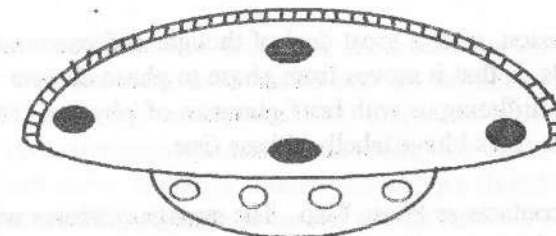


Figure 2 - Underside

ABDUCTIONS:

In late June 1987, when I returned to Africa after speaking at the Fund for UFO Research Conference in Washington, D.C., I was bemused by the numerous abduction reports we had listened to at the American University. I had my own Contact cases; most of these were well investigated and documented in the book UFOS-AFRICAN ENCOUNTERS. But 'abductions' where people were taken against their will, physically examined and scarred and sometimes aborted of live fetuses – this was something totally new to me! The strangest factor was that when I arrived home, the huge mail which normally awaits me and which includes many UFO sighting reports, had, for the first time, three abduction cases.

I was astounded because I realised only too well that none of these women could have had access to the reports I'd heard. So, if they were lying or hoaxing, it could only be because they had heard the reports in Washington. None of them had been out of the country or had any American contacts! Alternatively, they might have been psychic and highly receptive to telepathy! Or, they were telling the truth.

The same pattern of events emerged: paralysis, small balls of light which appeared to examine them physically; travelling through space and dipping into the future; the fear, the uncertainty and on occasions, the wish 'not to tell anyone.'

Thus the abduction syndrome in Africa was born!

My only conclusion, after a great deal of thought and examination of the history of UFOs, is that it moves from phase to phase all over our planet, commencing by titillating us with brief glimpses of 'physical craft' in many shapes and sizes. This I have labelled Phase One.

Then came the contacts as Phase Two. The strange creatures with no hair, ashen or grey-skinned, with elongated eyes and expressionless faces; physically afraid of the large homo sapiens, yet non-aggressive except in isolated cases.

Also the tall, blonde, handsome people, totally humanoid-looking, barely communicative and if so, assuring us of their peaceful intentions.

Phase Three is the abduction phase. We are no longer invited to join whoever they are; we are taken without an invitation, without our consent. This is an infringement of the sanctity of our bodies; treatment can be painful and scarring a regular feature.

There are also many lies. Where they live and what they are going to do, remains a secret and is never revealed. Just promises, promises, with no true end result.

I have disbelieved and questioned and half-believed and been disturbed. I have certainly never discarded the abduction syndrome and I worry about the methodology and the purpose.

And the most worrying of all is, for heaven's sake, what will Phase Four be?

STRANGE 'VISITOR'

Case N° 77

Masvingo, Zimbabwe.

After Susan's father's death, the family moved into a new house in Masvingo. She is not sure how old she was, but thinks she was about twelve or thirteen.

Every afternoon between 1 and 2 pm, she would rest on her bed. On this particular day she went to lie down and lay on her stomach facing the window, the wrong way round on the bed. She remembers falling asleep and then woke up as someone walked into the room. She could see the entity but she could not move; it was as though she was paralyzed. She remembers being extremely frightened because she couldn't move. The 'person' in the room did not say anything, but just stood there looking at her. She knew it was a man, but she can no longer recall what he looked like. Her bed was against the wall under the window, so she was looking directly into the light. The entity appeared tall although she cannot recall any facial features. The

clothing he wore appeared to be a one-piece outfit in a dark material. Thinking about it now, she feels that the light coming from behind him was too bright for ordinary daylight: she remembers little else except for the extreme brightness of the light.

The man then disappeared.

It was during the War of Independence in Zimbabwe and security was of the essence. Susan says when the man disappeared, the paralysis disappeared and she jumped up and ran to the kitchen, demanding from their house servant why she had let someone come into her room; why had they not waited in the living room? The maid swore she had no knowledge of anyone coming into the house, and Susan's brother laughed at her, although her mother was extremely concerned because it was during the war.

Susan admits that she had completely forgotten about the incident until she heard Cynthia Hind on the radio, where she spoke of abduction cases in the USA and gave some very cursory details of what was happening.

There must be more to be learned about Susan's visitor, but hypnosis, regressive or any other, is banned in Zimbabwe without a doctor's note recommending it for medical purposes.

ISABEL'S STORY Case N° 83

Harare, Zimbabwe.

I am a 34-year-old Zimbabwean, born and bred. My life between the ages of 11 and 22 saw some traumatic experiences which I had put aside. I recently read Budd Hopkins' book on Copley Woods [MISSING TIME], a book which triggered many memories and strong fear and nightmares. The following is a summary of these memories.

The death of my father when I was 11 was traumatic, yet none of the following events happened until I was in High School. i.e. 13 years of age.

The room I slept in was apparently 'haunted'. I heard heavy breathing moving around the room and coming very close to me at night. One night I saw a lamp, in black, grey and white, like an old biblical oil lamp. It was still there when I closed my eyes. I told no-one. A spiritualist working with my mother was told by guides that I was being haunted. This lady came the next evening 'to get rid of the spirit'. We stood at the bedroom entrance. I froze, but was conscious that I was immobilized. My mother said a man's voice spoke through me and gave details of what was happening at night. I don't remember speaking. The spirit was told to move on by the medium. All seemed well. No more breathing.

My mother, brother, Gran and I, attended this lady's circle meetings. I was sometimes used for power. I mention all this because I put what happened next down to haunting, yet for some reason, I never mentioned it to anyone and the medium never picked it up.

I was frequently woken up at night by the sounds of persons moving in the lounge and also by the sound of a sheet being shaken and put over me. I was very frightened but drifted off into sleep. One night I woke suddenly feeling as if I had just travelled down a long way to my bed, like falling. I saw faces looking at me: grey, high cheek-boned, with huge black eyes. The background was dark; I only focused on the eyes (pictures of aliens in Hopkins' book reminded me of this). I was terrified. I presumed I was being chased by little devils in the astral. Again I told no-one.

The result of all these happenings was that I was so terrified to go to bed that I physically froze and had to urge myself to get down the dark passage to my bedroom light. I didn't sleep well. I took tablets to sleep and was drowsy at school. I was frequently at the doctor suffering from anxiety, with stress problems affecting my physical body (abdominal pains, bad period pains – often taken home with these – sinus infections and migraines.) Back pain put me off sport for some time.

My memory is not clear. My communication with my family wasn't good, but some of the events must have been made known to the doctor as he advised moving house to try and help me. We subsequently did this when I was 15. When I was 28, strong chest pains on my left side were recognised as stemming from cervical spine damage from Scheumanns Disease. I am fortunate; I am not a hunchback.

At dusk one evening, we were leaving our house to go to a circle meeting. I heard a humming and turned to see a craft close by, about 15 metres away, above roof level. It was oval and had lights around it. I saw the outline, but the craft was see-through. I saw outlines of people looking through the windows. I waved and they waved back. (No-one else seemed interested in my delight at seeing the craft) We got into the car. As we drove off I saw it follow. I seem to recall my brother also seeing it from the car. This was a happy experience for me.

I was relieved when we moved house. I slept better.

I had a repetitive dream, but can't recall at what stage in the events. I dreamt of UFOs looking for me. I knew I couldn't hide. I knew they could read my thoughts and where I was. I was terrified to see them coming for me. Just as they reached me, they changed to some insignificant article, e.g. like a lighted match whose flame was going out.

At the new house I didn't hear things at night. Our domestic help used to sit outside her cottage in the evenings. She told my mother that every evening for over a month, this bright star overhead came close to our house; then it would rise up slowly, and suddenly speed off horizontally.

My brother and I were coming home one night when we saw a bright light shoot over the house to the left and then behind our house as we approached. It was too bright and consistent in size to be a shooting star; also too slow and horizontal.

When I was 15 I had a holiday job in a department store. I was called a number of times, but it was clearly from inside my head. Just my name, more like a deep male voice.

In the new house, I was aware that light shining in my room frightened me. It was like moonlight, but I had a feeling that someone was there.

Early childhood memories puzzled me. I had a series of nightmares. I slept in the same room as my brother, but he seemed all right. I ended up sleeping in my parents' bed, which did not please them.

After reading Hopkins' book INTRUDERS, I contacted Cynthia Hind for a chat. She suggested I try and remember events⁴ which I have written down here. Regarding Hopkins' book, it made me afraid to go to sleep. I had three nightmares all to do with the faces I saw and the abductions. Two days after seeing Cynthia (I wasn't thinking of aliens) I moved my kitchen curtain. A bright light (equivalent to someone focusing light from a mirror) exploded and shot off to the left of the veranda outside. Later that evening, I felt a slight tingling in my spine.

All my adult life I have been sensitive to sound – I sleep with earplugs. I have suffered anxiety and a slight distrust of people. I have my few selected friends. I do not like losing consciousness or sleeping. Sleeping to me is simply a necessity.

The night of writing this, I remembered when I was young, we were on our way by road to Durban in South Africa. We stopped at a dam to have a picnic. I went for a walk near the large dam wall and met a man with whom I had a conversation. When returning to my parents and recalling it, it seems there were no other cars around and no-one in the area when we went to look. I was less than 9 years old. There seemed nowhere from where the man could have appeared.

⁴ Hypnosis, for any but approved medical reasons, is prohibited in Zimbabwe. For this reason, I find that a taped or written report from the abductee will often produce recall which might otherwise not come to mind. – Ed. (See the Editorial)

LOCKED OUTSIDE IN THE DARK Case N° 85

Charmaine's Story. Natal, South Africa.

'Since the age of about four I can remember being terribly afraid of the dark. Even today, as an adult (24), I cannot bear to be outside in the garden or in our fields (I live on a very isolated farm) in the dark.

I refuse to walk down the passage or into a dark bedroom, unless my husband is with me, or there is a lamp on. My husband, although very understanding and sympathetic, finds it strange.

My first terrifying experience happened when I was 8 or 9. I went to bed as normal, tucked in by my mother. Before I say what happened to me, I must point out that I have never, ever, been a sleepwalker.

That night, I honestly don't know what happened. All I can remember is waking up, standing in the middle of our big garden, facing my house. I recall feeling very afraid and extremely cold, although it was during our summer vacation. I felt totally alone, a loneliness I have never felt the extent of again. I recall that I desperately wanted to run, but I couldn't, so I walked to our back door and stopped at the bottom step. My mother, who had woken to go to the bathroom had, as she usually did, checked on my brother and myself. Having found my bed empty and me nowhere inside, she told me she went to look outside and found me standing on the bottom step.

I remember her hugging me and putting me back to bed. Nothing was ever mentioned about this weird occurrence. The strangest part is that I could not reach the topmost bolt on the back or front doors, so how could I have got outside?

From that day onwards until we moved away about four years later, I could not bring myself to go to that part of the garden where I recall 'waking up'. (This was near an old garden shed.)

Even during the day time, with my brother or parents with me, I was terrified to go near there. To this day I cannot explain what I was afraid of.

I recall, sometime later, my father asking me to please go and fetch the garden rake which was in the shed. I remember walking towards the spot and being unable to go any further. My fear seemed absolute and terrifying. When my parents noticed my seemingly childish fear, they would often drag me by the hand towards the area I was afraid of, hoping to make me overcome my ridiculous fear. It didn't work! I remember being very happy when we moved away.

The second incident occurred when I was visiting my sister-in-law in Johannesburg, when I was 15. One night I retired to bed a little earlier than the rest of the family as I was tired from the day's activities. I fell asleep and then woke suddenly to see a huge, really huge, brilliant white light outside the window. The brown curtains were closed but I could clearly see this incredible light. I again felt very, very afraid and was too scared to move. I recall lying in bed on my back and my eyes staring at the light. I don't remember any more. The next morning I asked everyone if they had seen the huge blinding light but they all said No, and they thought I had been dreaming. I half wanted to believe it was a dream, but it was too real.

As you suggested, I have asked my mother repeatedly how I could have got to the garden alone in the middle of the night, but she just shrugs and dismisses it all. Although yesterday, when I spoke to her she remembered I had a long, paper-thin cut on the inner side of my thigh. She said it wasn't bleeding, but looked as if I had cut myself somehow, perhaps 3-4 days before. She didn't say much except that she thought it strange as she bathed me every night and should have noticed it before. My ankle-length white cotton nightie wasn't cut or torn either. I still have this scar on my thigh today; it's about 10 cm long and very, very thin. The only book about UFOs that I have read is Budd Hopkins' INTRUDERS⁵. Some parts of that book really scared me to the extent that for a long time I could not bring myself to finish it. I became so shaky and afraid from this that I don't want to read any others.

⁵ INTRUDERS. The Incredible Visitations at Copley Woods., by Budd Hopkins. Random House, New York, 1987.

STRANGERS IN THE GARDEN Case N° 80

Cape Town, South Africa

Interview with Janet by Pam Puxley

"We came to the Cape in 1978/79 and moved into Kirstenhof about two years after that. One morning I got up to get the two girls off to school and started doing the housework. I went to open the dining-room curtains and I could see across to my next-door neighbour's hedge, which separated our two houses. I saw what appeared to be two motorcycle guys, dressed in what looked like black leather. I wondered what they were doing there.

One was smaller than the other, and as I looked at them, wondering what they were doing at my neighbour's hedge, this funny feeling came over me. Their helmets really did not look like motorcycle helmets at all. They were black and shiny, but such a funny shape! It was like an egg shape, not coming to a point but it made their heads look too big for their bodies. The suits and helmets were black and of this strange shape and so I thought well, there's some mystery here.

I knew that Colleen, my neighbour, was on her own next door. So I decided to phone her. I turned round to the telephone and looked out again and they were still there; but I still had this strange feeling and I realised that I was quite frightened about it all. Anyway, I went to the phone, pulling it towards me and do you know, when I looked again, the guys had gone! Despite this, I still phoned Colleen and said, "Get out quick, you've got somebody eyeing your house."

I told her about the two men looking at her house, not mine. I described them to her and said that there was something weird about them. I said to her, "Colleen, I'm going to say something to you and don't think I am mad. But those two men looked just like those comic-strip characters, like alien beings."

She laughed at me and after a bit, she came out of the house with a big police baton, peeping around the corner; and I'm also laughing at her but then I went across the lawn to her.

"There should be footprints where they were, because they were right at your gate." I knew that there was quite a depth of loose soil around there. So she and I went around and looked but we couldn't find one single footprint.

Colleen went all goose-pimpled and I felt funny and we searched all round her garden but couldn't find a thing. I had not heard any sound; I didn't even hear the gate opened. And it was locked, so how could they have got inside. There was just nothing there.

When I think about it, I would say the shorter man was smaller than I am and the taller one about my height which is 1,65 metres. Their helmets were highly polished and what appeared to be the front was slightly domed, so I couldn't tell if it was the front or back of the helmet. I didn't think they were deep sea divers because my husband was a diver in the Navy and I've never seen helmets like those. When I looked out, I felt something was looking at me. I couldn't get it out of my mind.

That afternoon, I went out alone into the garden and I was saying, "If you are aliens, well, I'm not going to hurt you. You must be interested in something here. Why don't you come back!"

But I never saw them again and have never seen anything like it since. The feeling I had was like an exciting-cum-frightened feeling: real excitement and yet I was quite a bit afraid.

And then suddenly I thought about something that had happened to me in Gibraltar, even while I was talking to Colleen. I don't know why I should have thought of that, but I did.

It must have been in about 1974/5 and my husband and I were living in Gibraltar.

We lived in a military flat right on the harbour. At night, I would go out on the balcony and look at all the ships in the harbour and see all the stars.

One night in particular, I happened to see a red light going across the sky.

I thought, oh, there's a falling star, but then it was different, with lights which were flashing off it and sparking out, and it seemed as though it was coming towards me.

I shouted to Robert, my husband, and when he came out he said it was a falling star. It just went; vanished. I didn't think any more about it; then, it must have been a couple of nights later, when I was out there with Robert, we saw it again. I pointed out the red light and he could see it too, but he kept on identifying it as a falling star, despite its behaviour. I couldn't see what it was; just this light, and within seconds, it was gone. It happened to me about 6 or 7 times in Gibraltar and I was there for three and a half years. I could never make out what it was, although Robert, who was in the Navy, kept on identifying it as a 'falling star'.

I was quite certain there was more to it than that. It couldn't always be in the same place if it was a falling star!"

Janet told the interviewer that as a young girl she used to sleepwalk a lot, and often her family found her right at the back wall of the property, outside in the night. She also said that one day when she woke up, she found a big blister on the back of her left leg. Her mother suggested she had been burned by her hot water bottle and as it was winter, she just accepted what her mother said.

Janet went on to say that her elder daughter Sabine, when she was about 10 or 11, woke up and Janet asked her what was on her leg. She had a scar on her right leg, while Janet's is on the left.

Janet told Sabine it was probably her hot water bottle, but the bottle was well covered, so she wasn't quite sure how it happened, but assumed it was caused by the hot-water bottle.

Janet obviously has no conscious recollection of ever having been abducted, and the interviewer did not ask any leading questions with regard to this. But we hope that this will be an on-going interview and perhaps if hypnosis is used, a lot more will come to light.

Pam Puxley also spoke to Sabine, Janet's daughter, and although I don't feel that the fact of her having a scoop mark on the back of her right leg is sufficient evidence to show an attempt at an abduction, an interesting factor arose during the interview which readers might be able to identify.

Sabine was at school when she noticed the blister on the back of her leg as it became inflamed, and when it healed it turned into a scar, as it is now. Sabine has used vitamin E oil on it. It is now quite clear but has a red mark in the middle and sometimes it becomes more prominent than at other times. It looks something like a flower (a daisy) on a stem.

Sabine seems to have some sort of allergy which appears as welts on her body. They started in 1988 when she went into hospital with suspected penicillin poisoning. She had blood tests but they could not prove it was due to the penicillin.

After leaving hospital she was fine but used to get these flower-shaped marks all over her body, starting on one side and then moving across to the other. The marks looked like big, flat, open daisies, but they were not painful, only itchy. They used to come about every three months, but lately only come about twice a year, at certain times.

While they are there, she gets very sleepy. They usually come in July and then again in the spring. There is no definite pattern to it and there seems to be no medical cure. Antihistamines don't work, it just seems to take its course.

There seems to be no tie-up between the two (Janet and Sabine) but as Pam had interviewed Sabine and she mentioned this, we have added it as an addendum to the original interview. The whole abduction scene is so strange and so difficult to accept as it stands, that perhaps every little bit is a clue to its overall identification!

A SURVEY: UFO CATEGORIES

Having recently returned from a 3-month trip abroad, I realise that there are many divided thoughts and issues concerning UFOs among even the top level people involved with this phenomenon.

As a result of this, we have decided to carry out a small survey among our readers. Hopefully those of you who care will respond, on a postcard, to our address, selecting which category you feel represents your belief. We will then report the results in our N° 10 issue, scheduled for July, 1994.

The following categories appear to represent most of those interested in UFOs (if you have any further suggestions, we would be very pleased to hear of them).

- a) Those who are total disbelievers and denigrate even the most convincing of cases which they put down to natural aerial phenomena.
- b) Those who believe we are being visited by craft from other planets; probably benign, their purpose unknown.
- c) Those who believe we are being visited by craft from other planets who wish to:
 - i) remove our minerals;
 - ii) drain our water resources, and
 - iii) examine our flora and fauna for their own benefit.
- d) Those who believe we are being visited by craft from other planets so that they can convey a message of Earth's coming destruction.
- e) Those who believe we are being visited by craft from other planets to give the witness(es) a message for our betterment. Who, although they will not interfere with our way of life, do help us to advantage.

- f) Those who believe we are being visited, but do not subscribe to 'craft from other planets', and feel there is a much more complex and incredible explanation; one that we would have difficulty in understanding in our present limited way.
- g) Those who believe that where-ever ETs come from, their purpose is malevolent and that they are carrying out an experiment to produce a hybrid race and don't care what harm they do to humans in the cause of their own advancement.
- h) Those who believe that all visitations, in whatever form or shape, are from the Devil, and that the whole UFO syndrome is evil and allied to Satanism.

Please address your postcards to CATEGORIES, P O Box MP 49, Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe. You can place yourself in more than one category, if your feelings are ambivalent.

UFO INVESTIGATORS

Some are so arrogant and some are benign,
Some are most charming but move out of line.
Some are quite sharpish and never too kind,
And others attempt to blow out your mind!
There are quick ones and slow ones and ones who are rude,
Some others are clever, with a good attitude.
But the best ones are those who will listen to you,
Take note of your story and give you your due.
Sympathetic in nature (believing or not!)
You know they won't say, "It's a load of old rot."
They will try and be rational and hear what you've seen,
But do those exist, or is it only a dream?

'BUS' IN THE SKY

Case N° 78

Interview with Avril of Cape Town by Pam Puxley, July 10th, 1993.

It was June 20th this year, a Sunday afternoon, when three friends and I were sitting in the lounge having a drink. I looked out of the window across to the mountains and saw what looked like an omnibus coming straight across the top of the mountain. It didn't have a 'nose' in front as a normal bus would do; it was just that sort of shape, but it was out of proportion to the size of the mountain. It was white with black windows.

I said to my friends, "You'll all think I'm nuts, but there's a bus above the mountain and it's going straight across."

They all stood up and looked and they were shocked. They saw the same thing as I saw and could not believe what they were seeing.

It was going quite fast, and when it left that part of the mountain, as we looked, it went behind some trees and there was another part of the mountain when we saw it again, but this time it was black, with white windows!

This all happened at about three in the afternoon. The weather was fine and all four of us saw the same thing. After the second appearance it disappeared from our vision.

None of us could explain it, we just thought it was weird. It was bigger than a bus but like I said, it didn't have a 'nose': it was just the shape of a rectangle.

There were no other colours. only the white with black windows on the first occasion and black with white windows at the second sighting when it went round the corner.

It was coming from the direction of Cape Town and going towards Cape Point.'

Avril also told of an earlier sighting she had had a number of years before:

'One night I came home from a party at about two or three in the morning. I was coming up to my front lawn and turning around, I looked towards the East, where there was this massive ball of flame. It was huge, and it wasn't the sun. It was so big that it was just unbelievable; ten times bigger than the sun would have been. It just seemed a huge ball of flame, an orange-yellow glowing ball. It didn't move; it was just sitting there, stationary in the sky. I didn't stay to watch it, but there was another witness with me.

The next day in the newspaper there was a reported sighting of the same thing.

This may have been about 8 to 10 years ago.'

Avril is now a housewife but at the time she was a Home Economist.

COMMENTS

It is very difficult to assess a shape, especially when the witness relates it to an object, eg. a bus, and the people involved are not trained observers. There are many shapes and sizes to deal with in UFO reports: triangular, disc-shaped, boomerang, like a garage, the size of a building, cigar, worm, etc. etc.

But a 'bus' is certainly most uncommon, and what is the witnesses' perception of a bus?

It is a very unusual description for a UFO and I have only come across this once before: in UFOS-AFRICAN ENCOUNTERS⁶, there is the story about Henry Authers (a Bank Manager) and his father-in-law, L. Sealy, who were travelling from a prospecting site near the Ngesi River to Shabani, in Zimbabwe.

⁶ UFOS-AFRICAN ENCOUNTERS, Cynthia Hind, Harare Zimbabwe, Gemini Publishers, 1982.

It was about 18:10 hours and they were travelling fast on a strip road (two strips of tar which were used as roads in Zimbabwe some 20 years ago. They are now no longer in use).

About 14,5 km from Shabani the men noticed what appeared to be a bus, travelling towards Shabani. Sealy increased his speed to try and catch up and Authers thought he could see someone standing up and one person seated. He wondered why the person was standing, when the bus was practically empty. Henry also noticed that the bus was domed, with panoramic windows and the pillars inside were black and narrower than in a normal bus.

There was a very strong white light inside which appeared to throw the person they could see into silhouette.

The bus disappeared around a corner and when they came round the bend, they could see nothing; it had completely disappeared. In front of them was a level stretch for about one and a half kilometres; they could not smell any diesel oil or note any dust. There was nowhere the bus could have gone. The only turn-off led to a rifle range blocked by locked gates.

Both men had witnessed the same scene of a bus travelling in the direction they were going, which suddenly vanished into thin air.

This particular incident occurred on August 17th, 1975 during a UFO flap in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia).

L I T S (Lights in the Sky)

SEA LIGHT Case N° 81

Muizenberg, South Africa

Sandra interviewed by Pam Puxley.

'I can't recall the exact date of the incident, but it was sometime in April, 1993.

I always take my dogs for a walk on the beach at Muizenberg in the evenings. This time I went with a friend of my husband's and mine, Mark, and we were down at the bottom of the beach where the vlei (lake) goes into the sea, right at the joining point of vlei and sea.

I had been watching a white light for quite a while as we were walking towards Hangklip Mountains, and I said to Mark, 'What is that light?'

He was watching it too as we were walking, and where the water gets too deep, we stood and watched it. The light was stationary for a long time and we thought it might be on the top of an aerial or something they had put up because it was very bright, almost blinding.

Suddenly, it went upwards, very fast; stayed still, then dropped again and rushed off to the left, then to the right. By now we were transfixed; we couldn't figure out what it was.

We were standing looking at this 'thing' moving around when suddenly a beam came out of it: a very narrow beam, right from the centre of the light. The beam had a translucent sheen to it. The light itself was blinding but the beam was much gentler, lighting up only where it landed on the water, and not around it. I could see where it hit the water; it was a very thin beam.

The light, or whatever it was, was not too far above the sea, probably about 50 metres (150 ft) from where I was, and it was hovering very low, right at the base of the mountains. It was definitely not a helicopter.

While we watched, it stopped and remained stationary for a long time, then shot straight towards us at an incredible speed. I turned and bolted for the bathing boxes which are on the beach, further back: the light just came at us with an almost devastating rage! Mark was shouting, 'Don't run, don't run, let's see what it is.'

The bright white light was a transfixing thing, and that is what zoomed towards us. It was so blinding I couldn't see anything as it came. I turned to run and as I blinked, even with my eyes shut, I could still see the light inside my eyelids. It just came rushing at us and I didn't notice the beam or anything. I just turned and RAN!

Mark had offered to walk the dogs with me because I never go down there alone at night. But he didn't run; he just stood and watched the light recede as fast as it had come. It scooted back to the shelter of the mountain and then it sped off in the direction of the Airport, flying low, out of our sight.

There was no colour to the light; it was just a blinding white light. I don't remember watching the dogs at all, or whether they were aware of the light and if their behaviour changed.

But something strange did occur at the same time. For quite a while, Mark and I didn't even talk; we were both concentrating on this bright light zooming around, becoming more and more fascinated by it. It was a very cold night and the wind was blowing, so there was nobody on the sands. But after I ran and the light had gone back and disappeared, I walked back to where Mark was standing, still in the same place, and as I looked to my left, there was a man standing in the water! He had no waders on, though the water was up to his thighs. He just stood there, staring in our direction. He looked at us and then walked out of the water and 'disappeared'. He didn't have a fishing rod; he had no equipment at all. He was dressed in ordinary clothes: a jacket and pants, but no shoes.

We saw him clearly: just standing thigh-deep in the water. He was like an afterthought, but he was facing in the same direction as the light. I don't know how long he had been there, as we were not aware of him, being transfixed by the light blinding our eyes.

He didn't look at me; he just walked out of the water. Mark and I decided afterwards that he may have been trying to commit suicide and we disturbed him. He wasn't drunk and he didn't stagger. We watched him moving out of the vleis and that was very fast-moving water, but he didn't stagger at all.

He was only 10 metres (30ft) away from me but I could see his face had no expression on it, as if he was not with us; that's what made us think he might have been trying to commit suicide.

As I saw him, I got a heck of a fright, and went 'Oh!', but he just looked at me.

I said, 'Sorry, you gave me a fright', but he didn't react at all; he just turned his back and walked out and disappeared.

We could not help wondering if the two events were connected; the man was definitely watching the object, facing exactly the way we were facing.

Mark is overseas at the moment but when he comes back he will provide back-up for this story, as he was there; he saw it too and was astonished. He had been in the Air Force and he should have been able to identify the object if it had been a helicopter. But he couldn't. He thought it was just an aerial light, rushing around. At one time he thought it might be a search helicopter, but the rate of its rising and falling and moving left and right convinced him it was too erratic and too fast to be a helicopter. We could hardly follow its movements: one minute it was here, the next it zoomed there, then back again. It was over Somerset West bay, or somewhere like that, then it was up the mountains, over Hangklip, and then it went overland towards the Airport. I know that, because I have seen planes going that way.'

COMMENTS

Pam questioned Sandra further and found out that she had seen the 'light' several times. She said the shape was like 'an almost side-on Frisbee'. That night the weather was foul and the wind was howling and it had been raining. It was also very late, around 23:00 hours. Because one of the dogs is rather vicious, Sandra only goes out at odd hours.

To set the scene for those of you who don't know the area, Muizenberg is on False Bay, which is a horseshoe-like shaped Bay bounded on its two sides by mountains. Facing towards the Indian Ocean, Muizenberg is at the right hand curve of the arc, and Hangklip Mountains are on the left-hand side at the far end. False Bay is opposite Table Bay in Cape Town.

MINIATURE RED LIGHTS

Case N° 79

Karen of Cape Town, South Africa.
(Interview by Pam Puxley)

'I don't know exactly when the event took place because I waited so long before mentioning it, but it may have been a couple of months ago – April or May, 1993.

That night, I was in bed but definitely not asleep. I was lying on my left side, facing the window, when I heard a strange, high-pitched sort of electronic beep. I thought it was my husband's watch though it sounded as though he might have hidden it, so I turned over on my right side and about 50 cm (20 inches) above the floor there were two very small bright red lights which I watched for maybe one second. They then rose about 1,5 metres (5 ft) off the ground and were gone!

I must tell you there is nothing on that side of my bedroom which could reflect these lights; nothing that could explain them. The lights were something like the little alarms in cars that flash, but these were smaller. They were just in mid-air, about 50-75 cm off the floor.

The room was not quite pitch dark; there is always some light seeping through from outside.

The event didn't frighten me. I got up a bit later and just wondered what it was. But then, I don't know why, I became very secretive about it. I never mentioned it to anyone for ages.

Later, I said to my husband, 'You'll laugh at me' and then told him and he said, 'No, you're not the type to tell me you've got little red lights floating around the bed.

If you say you saw it, I believe you.'

In our shop, I work next to the radio. One day, I heard the same little noise. I thought it was coming out of the radio. I asked my husband if he had heard it but he said he hadn't. But the man who works for us and was quite a long way away from where I was standing, said he had heard it.

I believed it came from the radio, but a couple of days later when I was out of the shop, the man heard it again. It's not a radio noise; it's like a set watch with an alarm, although not the same rhythm as a watch alarm. It's very high-pitched but does not hurt the ears.'

Pam Puxley subsequently visited the house at night, and with Karen, re-enacted the event in the bedroom, with the curtains closed as they were in Karen's story. Pam was able to certify that no lights from anywhere could have produced the two bright red lights Karen saw.

Karen also recalled that a clock and a watch had stopped at the time of the incident.

COMMENTS

As Pam Puxley lives a long way from Zimbabwe, we have not yet had a reply to several further queries we would like to put to Karen. This will be reported on at a later date.

LIGHTS OVER MUDZI VILLAGE

Case N° 86

Zimbabwe

Investigator: Gunter Hofer

In August 1989, several hundred villagers witnessed a sharp-nosed white object pass overhead. The time was 19:00 hours and most people were still outside cooking their evening meal.

There were whitish flames coming out behind the object and it was followed by several smaller objects similar to the main light.

It was moving at a very fast speed, about 30 metres (90 ft) above the ground. There was no noise and no smell was discernible.

The main object (followed by the smaller ones) moved in a straight line from north to south.

The sighting was made at Mudzi village, in the Mudzi district, which is near to the river of that name; it is situated in the north-eastern part of Zimbabwe, close to the Mocambique border.

The witness who made the report was visiting his family at the time, and said he observed this phenomenon for about two seconds.

He thought it might have been a meteor, but could not explain the several similar objects following the main one; also, he felt that it was too low for a meteorite, as it would have hit the ground shortly after, and yet no sound or vibration was heard or felt.

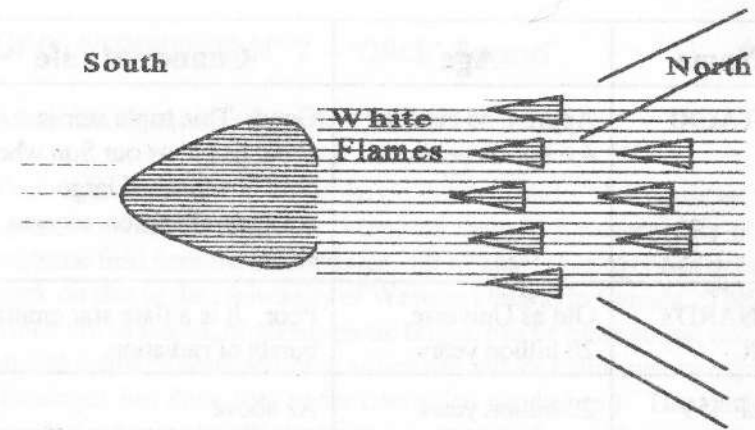


Figure 3 - LITS over Mudzi Village

A LITTLE BIT OF ASTRONOMY...

We hope to bring you, every now and then, information for the layman regarding astronomy.

This will not be high technology, but a taste of the pie in your sky. For those who are totally ignorant about the planets, stars and comets, it can only improve your education; for the highly qualified astronomer, please pass this section by.

The following table gives some information on the ten nearest stars to our Solar System and the chances that life might exist there.

THE TEN STARS NEAREST TO THE EARTH

Name	Age	Chance of Life
CENTAURI	Approx. as our Sun, 4,6 billion years	Good. This triple star is about as old as our Sun when our Universe had large amounts of carbon, oxygen, etc.
BERNARD'S STAR	Old as Universe, 20 billion years	Poor. It is a flare star emitting bursts of radiation.
WOLF 359	20 billion years	As above
LAL 21185	20 billion years	As above
SIRIUS	300 million years	Poor. A young star, life would be very primitive.
UV CETI	Uncertain	Poor. It is a flare star emitting bursts of lethal, ionizing radiation.
ROSS 154	Younger than our Sun?	Fair, if the star is not too young.
ROSS 248	20 billion years	Poor. Too old.
EPSILON ERIDANI	As our Sun	Good chance for planets and good chance for life. <u>BEST BET</u>
ROSS 128	As our Sun	Good chance for planets, fair chance for life.

VARIOUS QUERIES FROM PREVIOUS CASES

UFO AFRINEWS N° 7 – 'Click' Sound

Albert Budden writes from the U.K.:-

You report extensively about the mysterious 'clicks' that come up time and again in encounter reports. Many of these experiences take place in a magnetic field from the earth's strata. Dr Michael Persinger has done a lot of work on this in the University of Western Ontario in Canada. These fields, which are as stated, of geomagnetic origin, can be quite strong and produce altered states of consciousness which can induce hallucinatory experiences. (Persinger has done this under controlled conditions.) The 'click' that is reported is due to the effect of magnetostrictive forces. It is described in the scientific literature and is called the Page Effect. It is created when the ferrous materials in a room or other environments are subject to magnetic fields, and there is a sudden drop in the field causing physical materials to suddenly demagnetise. This resulting mechanical transient generates a sound wave. That is the 'click'. There is nothing mysterious about it. In fact, I am continually frustrated by the irritating habit of so many people in the field of UFO study to attribute a paranormal cause to a natural effect. It is sheer ignorance and it is clear that many such individuals are in their very own pre-scientific era.

EDITOR REPLIES:

If Mr Budden had read my report properly, he would realise that I had in fact suggested that the 'click' might induce an altered state of consciousness in the witness, and I quote: 'But for some time now, I have tended to believe that most witnesses go into an altered state of consciousness when they have a close encounter with a UFO or its occupants. So maybe when this action occurs, the 'click' is the triggering point. Of course it does not always occur but maybe the witness did not hear it, or was too bemused at the time to notice.'

It is true that I did not know of the Page Effect and indeed, I am grateful to Mr Budden for pointing this out to me, but here, remote as I am in Africa, I do not have access to all the explanatory material with regard to the UFO phenomenon, and I am delighted when people of Mr Budden's calibre take the trouble to write and point out a more feasible explanation than I have given. However, I did write to Dr Willie Smith about the 'click' sound, and he has access to a vast quantity of material in his computer, and yet he too seemed unaware of the Page Effect!

Case N° 48 in UFO AFRINEWS N° 7

This is the case of a woman living in South Africa, of Islamic faith, who says she has been visited by hooded people and repeatedly raped. She is paralysed when this happens, and despite screaming and struggling, no sound comes out and she cannot move her body or her limbs.

Albert Budden comments: 'I can explain the above case in terms of the effects of external radiation on the minds and bodies of the witnesses. The sense of a presence, for example, is a well-known effect of electrical fields on the temporal lobe of the brain. It again has been reproduced by Persinger in his experiments in 1990.

The other effects you report are covered in my book⁷.

⁷ THE ELECTROMAGNETIC INDICTMENT by Albert Budden

Case N° 49 in UFO AFRINEWS N° 7

This is the case of Jack Jones, travelling from Bloemfontein to Vanderbijlpark (near Johannesburg), South Africa. He was accompanied by a young apprentice and soon after they set off, they were aware of a large ball of flames accompanying them on their journey. It was about 20-25 metres off the ground and about 50 metres away from the car. The object was about 8-12 metres in diameter.

It followed them all the way, disappearing when they entered some of the larger towns and then re-appearing once they had passed through the town. At one time Jones wanted to shoot at it, but the young boy with him was terrified and started to cry, so he put his gun away. When he reached his destination, the ball of fire hovered over some trees near to his home and then, when Jones approached it, it moved off slowly following the contours of the road, until it disappeared from view.

Albert Budden comments: 'Jack Jones undeniably encountered a natural unidentified aerial phenomenon (UAP) but you say things like 'they must have understood' (p. 23), implying an intelligence. This is like believing that fairies really do construct the 'fairy rings' seen in pastures and are the result of fungal growth. It indicated your need to believe and it seems, like so many in the UFO study field, that the UFO phenomenon for you is like a sublimated religion.

You also ask why Jack Jones' UAP should disappear when his car reached the town of Kroonstad. There are a number of possibilities here.

- 1) The ambient electromagnetic field from the town affects UAPs and can, it would seem, change the 'mix' of the fields involved so that the visible part of the EM spectrum (i.e. the light) becomes invisible due to a shift of the frequencies involved.
- 2) The fields given off from the town (created by the electrical equipment) may produce an 'electromagnetic cloud' that repels the UAP so that it travels over the top as it were, at a higher altitude, and falls again when the town is passed.

There are other options that all relate to the EM field from the town. These types of explanation are especially likely as you report that there is a sub-station that provides electricity for the whole area. This would radiate a large electrical/EM field.'

EDITOR COMMENTS:

Again, Mr Budden is guilty of not reading Case N° 49 correctly. The whole report is made in the words of Jack Jones, so it is not the Editors who implied an 'intelligence' to the ball of flames, but Jones himself. What Mr Budden does not explain, and which leads me to agree with Mr Jones rather than with him on the 'intelligence' of the object, was: how come the ball of flames picked up Jones' car specifically as he left the Town? Mr Budden should bear in mind that despite it being night-time, this is a busy main thoroughfare from the Cape to the North. Hundreds of cars travel during the hours of darkness to avoid the excessive heat of the country during the day.

Kroonstad is a small town (population approx. 75000), an agriculturally rich area, and many cars would have been passing through at that time. Thus, how did this phenomenon (with no knowledge or recognition) know that it had to pick up Jack Jones' car when he reached the other side of the town?

With reference to the EM fields in the various towns Jones passed, the electrical sub-station was near Vanderbijlpark, over three hundred kilometres from Bloemfontein, so again, if one is allowed to question, how could that fire-ball (of huge proportions) know that there was going to be a sub-station at Jones' home?

Come off it, Mr Budden! I am prepared to accept a natural phenomenon explanation or any other reasonable hypothesis with regard to UFO -- or whatever -- reports, but on this occasion, I don't think you have given the case sufficient consideration.

We will be happy to grant space in future issues for logical alternative explanations on all three above cases.

CONCLUSION

During the investigation of the numerous UFO stories dealt with each year, one hears some very bizarre and normally unbelievable, stories. I have never been overly gullible, nor indeed, overly skeptical, but I have noticed something which really appals me.

As soon as the cases are recorded, (mostly in UFO AFRINEWS) there will be a response from other investigators; they think the case is marvellous, the witnesses 100% accurate and true to format, and are extremely excited about the overall picture.

Then there are those who criticise too readily; the witness is hoaxing or lying, the story has an impossible scenario, the incident should have been discarded before it ever reached print.

The astounding factor is that not one of these people has spoken to or seen the witness(es); they have not been near the site, nor evaluated the credibility of the character(s) involved: apart from what has been written down, they have no first hand experience of the event.

Admittedly, the investigators might have made several errors. After all, when one arrives on site, perhaps there is a feeling of excitement, of anticipation; of semi-belief that this case will at last, prove the existence of UFOs and their reality or not. So that one might forget to ask several critical questions. I don't deny this and the seasoned investigator, I'm sure, will agree with me. But herein lies my assertion that no case, simple as it might be, can be covered in one session. So when I get back to the office, I enter the case (as far as it has gone) into the computer, print it out and then carefully study what has been said and done. The follow-up will fill in the blanks. But often the case is so interesting that the first interview is sent out to various other investigators with whom I work. I welcome their comments and constructive suggestions.

What I do not want is the severe criticism in a sharp and ugly way, nor the overwhelming praise for what, after all, is only a first draft.

Often I ask myself: what has happened to ufology? Where is the pleasant banter, the helpfulness, the kindly assistance, which I remember so well from a decade or so ago.

I will never forget a devastating crit done on my UFO book (UFOS-AFRICAN ENCOUNTERS) by Frank Gillespie in THE JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR UFO STUDIES (Vol 6, N° 2, March/April 1985). He was probably right, but it was the way he said it! What he did not take into account was the fact that I was pretty raw and very much the lone investigator in this vast Continent of Africa.

I had not long been in the game and in my untrained and naïve way was doing the best I could.

I am not saying Gillespie should not have been critical. Of course, I would have accepted that because it could only have helped my development and spurred me to greater effort. But was the cruelty really necessary?

He said, in part: 'The standard of case investigation in this book is uniformly low.' 'Altogether, about half of the flap cases were probably caused by Venus.' He concluded, 'Read it - and weep.'

But the whole point of my telling this story is that someone came to my rescue, and someone at the time, whom I hardly knew.

None other than Hilary Evans, the well-known British investigator, who had only met and listened to me speak on one occasion, but was obviously aware of all the difficulties I experienced in my investigations in Africa. Not only was he supportive and thoughtful in his assessment, he was also honest in agreeing with Gillespie regarding my lack of experience. He concluded: 'If Africa boasted an effective investigative network, doubtless those shortcomings (in the critique) would not be in evidence; until then, let us be grateful that it has Cynthia Hind, for without her it would have no-one at all.'

Thank you, Hilary. I will never forget what you did, and the sad part is that one doesn't come across this sort of back-up very often to-day.

Two well-known investigators have recently castigated me again; not in an at all friendly way although I have thought of them as friends. They have been abrupt and often rude, and I'm beginning to wonder if ufology has a sort of adverse psychological effect on investigators. They start off in such a kindly manner; I like, admire and sometimes respect them all. But at one time or another, this monsterish element, like a Draculean invasion of their blood, creeps in and wham - they are part of those creatures of the night which terrify us all!

We should all consider: we need each other if we are to get anywhere at all with this fascinating but deeply ridiculed study.

Let the denigration, if it must, come from outside: not from within our midst.

THE UFO CONFERENCE

There are fat ones and thin ones and some one can't describe,
There are tall ones and small ones and some they should hide!
There are men in their fifties with ear-rings and curls,
and old ladies made up to pass off as girls.
There are beauties and toy-boys, a smattering of each,
and over-tanned women who make for the beach.
But there's one thing for certain; you need never ask why,
When a ufoe is sighted, all necks are craned high.
(For someone has spotted a plane passing by)
and all will shout loudly, "A Ufoe, my goodness,"
and retire with a sigh!

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