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UFO RESEARCH AND THE MASS MEDIA

Ufo researchers have, from time to time, made comments about the interaction between themselves and the mass media. Some have utilised the media for purposes of self-publicity, whilst others have bemoaned inaccuracies in reporting UFO cases. A third group have protested the lack of serious interest amongst the media as a whole. Whilst most of us cannot help but feel frustrated that despite vast amounts of money being spent on cases such as Mundrabilla, January 1988, by some sections of the media, almost no resources have been put into wider research, apart from the efforts of volunteer UFO research organisations.

We would suggest that it is time that ufologists carefully review the role of the media in society. It is proposed that their broad role is almost solely to merely "report the news" as it is said to happen. Radio station newsrooms rarely investigate stories. Basically they relay incoming news items to the public at large. Television station newsrooms likewise report, rather than investigate. Much of the daily newspaper is of similar content; only on Saturday and Sunday do "investigatory" pieces usually appear. Researched articles are more the domain of magazines, although the depth of research varies to a large degree.

The bottom line in all this is that the UFO researcher needs to decide on the precise purpose for the interaction with the media. UFO Research Australia has prepared two "fact" sheets for dissemination of background information. One discusses the UFO phenomenon in general, whilst another concentrates on abduction cases. These have proved useful to date and we expect them to be further utilised in 1989. In specific cases, UFORA has utilised the media to good effect. For example, within a few days of the October 17, 1988, Mundrabilla "UFO" we had distributed a media release with a full analysis of the case identifying it as an IFO. Details were subsequently publicised over two radio stations and two capital city daily newspapers. In addition, the updated Australian CE Catalogue and a new IFO Catalogue, to be shortly released, have been prepared to provide concise case summaries for journalists, amongst others.

What can we expect in the future? We can expect the media to continue reporting "news". If a psychic predicts an upsurge of UFO reports - it will be reported. If a "UFO buff" makes a statement that ETs are here - it will be reported. If a serious researcher submits either an explanation for a case or says "that one is a UFO" - it may be reported. We cannot expect mass media, in general, to accurately, and in depth, report the complex issues of modern ufology. This role will continue to fall into the area of specialised UFO journals like UFORAN.

THE MUNDRABILLA INCIDENT - AN UPDATE

BY KEITH BASTERFIELD AND RAY BROOKE

AN INTRODUCTION

The last edition of UFORAN contained all the information our investigation team had gathered to the end of May 1988. Since then the team has been able to interview the Knowles family themselves and truck driver Graham Henley. In addition, Richard Haines in the U.S.A. has released details of his testing of samples taken from the Knowles' vehicle. With the publishing of material here, readers will have as much information as us about the event, and thus be able to form their own conclusions.

Members of the investigation team have been the authors, Steve Bolton, Vladimir and Pony Godic in Adelaide; Garry Little in Melbourne; Joan Johnston in Perth and Bill Chalker in Sydney.

Firstly then, the event as related to us by the Knowles family.

THE KNOWLES' ACCOUNT

Mrs Faye Knowles, 43, and her sons Patrick, 24, Sean, 21, and Wayne, 18, lived in the suburb of Midland in Perth, Western Australia (WA). On January 19, 1988, they decided to undertake a 3,500 kilometre trip to Melbourne, Victoria, in order to visit Mrs Knowles' sister.

They informed us that their plans for the trip were made in about an hour. They merely threw some clothes into the boot of the car, went to the bank to draw some money, and then set off leaving a note for Mr Knowles. This was about 3pm on January 19.

They wished to make the trip as quickly as possible so they shared the driving and kept constantly moving. By 1.30am the next morning they reached a roadhouse, at a place called Caiguna, where they were seen

by the truck drivers who were to feature later in the story.

From here it was some 158km to Madura Pass and some 275km to the Mundrabilla Motel.

It was a clear night, no moon and the Knowles did not notice any thunderstorm activity at all.

THE EVENT

At a still undetermined point west of Mundrabilla (WA), Sean, the driver, saw what he at first took to be a truck's headlight, apparently along the road, approaching them from the east. They were all awake at this stage. As it approached, it then disappeared after "jumping about a bit". It became visible again and continued to approach their vehicle. Sean commented that it looked like a "spaceship". It became brighter and bigger. They kept driving towards it.

The object appeared to be white light. In shape it could best be described as an egg in an egg cup. In the centre of the egg was a yellow light. The only estimated dimension given was about 1 metre wide. Angular size-wise it was said to have blocked, at times, their view of the road.

At this stage another vehicle was seen coming the opposite way to the family. It was described as a white Holden HQ station wagon towing an ordinary sized caravan. Sean swerved to miss hitting the light and nearly hit this car and van.

The light was lost to their view, then seen behind them. They performed a U-turn and pursued the object. With the object on their left front they did another turn. Again they lost sight of the object.

Shortly after this, they believed, the object landed on the roof of the car and lifted the car off the road.

THE MUNDRABILLA INCIDENT

When questioned, they said they did not see the light approach them or land on the roof.

At this stage Mrs Knowles wound down her window and placed her right hand on the roof. She relates feeling a "spongy" substance present. She then retracted her hand. Immediately the back of her hand felt warm for a few seconds, after which the sensation of heat faded.

Asked how far the car was off the road, they were unable to formulate a guess. Asked if they had looked out of the window and seen the ground some distance below them, they said they had not. They had merely formed an opinion that the vehicle was off the road. Finally, after an indeterminate length of time, the object dropped car on the road where upon a tyre burst and they were forced to brake to a halt. At this stage Sean said he blacked out for a short period.

After the vehicle dropped on the road, Faye then wound the window down and "smoke stuff" came into the car. This smoke was said to be a "greyish-black mist".

During the period from where they sighted the light initially, to braking to a halt, they say a number of other events occurred.

The exact sequence of these events is very confused. Despite intensive questioning we have not been able to unravel the sequence.

These events were:

- The sound of their voices changing in pitch and appearing to slow down.
- A humming sound heard.
- Them all becoming hysterical, shouting and crying. Mrs Knowles said she believed they were going to die.

- Their two dogs going "crazy".

- A smell like "dead bodies" in the air.

- Them reporting that the car started shaking.

During this time Sean was driving, Patrick was in the front left seat, Wayne was behind Patrick and Faye behind Sean over the tyre which burst.

After a period of time, Sean stopped the car and they all got out to hide in adjacent scrub. They reported that the light/object remained in the vicinity of the car for a while before departing. Some fifteen minutes later, after stopping, they returned to the car and rapidly changed the tyre. From that point they drove to the Mundrabilla Motor Hotel (WA).

It should be emphasised that during the interviews the family admitted being unsure of the time and duration of the event, and could not even say, with any certainty, exactly where it all took place.

At Mundrabilla they stopped and talked to the truck drivers before travelling on to Ceduna, South Australia, where they were stopped and interviewed by the police. From there they travelled in their own car to Wudina where they talked to Channel 7 TV.

Some notes:

1. There were reports that the family had cassette tapes with them which were affected in some way. They deny this and say they had no tapes with them at all.
2. Their two dogs had clumps of hair fall out and were examined by a vet in Melbourne who pronounced they had fleas. The hair has since regrown. The dogs remained in Melbourne.
3. After the incident the Knowles noticed a red Torana vehicle, parked on the side of the road, with no sign of the occu-

THE MUNDRABILLA INCIDENT

pants. They had earlier seen this vehicle travelling along the road behind them.

4. Although they maintained at one stage that they had made two U-turns, at later interview they said 3 or 4 were made.

5. Sean, Patrick and Faye were hypnotised in Melbourne. It is understood no new details emerged. They were not told what they had said under hypnosis or given copy of transcript. It is hoped the Victorian UFO Research Society will release a transcript of this interview.

6. Faye and Patrick were later hypnotised in Adelaide. Again no new items emerged. There were no indications of an abduction scenario.

HENLEY'S ACCOUNT

Graham Henley was the driver of a truck several kilometres in front of the Knowles' vehicle. Bill Chalker interviewed Henley and his account follows.

Truck drivers Henley and De Jong (nicknamed Porky) had set out together, in separate trucks, from Norseman, Western Australia (WA). When they stopped at Caiguna (WA) they noticed a blue Telstar car pull in containing a woman and three young men. These people filled a round 5 litre tin with petrol and then departed heading eastwards. This was about 1.30am local time.

By 3.30am the two trucks had reached the Madura (WA) Pass. Henley noticed, at this point, that there were no clouds in the sky, with no thunder or lightning being evident.

Upon heading down the Pass, ahead of Porky, Henley tried to raise the other truck on his radio. He continued to try and reach Porky from here to a position about half way between Madura and Mundrabilla. Their radios had been working the previous evening. Over a distance of some 40 kilo-

metres Porky didn't answer. Henley said that he later found out this was because Porky was asleep and Anne (his co-driver) was driving.

At this later point Henley noticed a light in his mirror. It looked like a "big bright.....like a big egg, like a fried egg hung upside down..... it was more like a projection light". It was like looking at a ".....very high powered spotlight". This point is not correct. He saw no vehicle until he arrived at Mundrabilla. This observation of a light took place about 4am (3.55 - 4.10) and lasted some 5 minutes.

At first Henley thought that it was Porky playing a trick on him, but as he watched he thought, "It was too high up to be another truck or vehicle." It disappeared and reappeared. It was eventually lost to view behind the van.

Henley was travelling on to Mundrabilla arriving there about 4.30am (local WA daylight saving time). He was just walking to the back of his truck when a Telstar car pulled in.

The Telstar contained the same four people he had seen at Caiguna, some three hours earlier. They appeared scared, all trying to talk at once and tell their story. One said they had been burnt, another that they'd been grabbed by a flying saucer; yet another they'd been picked up and dropped. A fourth man's mouth opened and closed but only a garbled sound came out. He was white and seemed really frightened. Henley offered to put their vehicle in his empty refrigerator van and drive them to where they wanted to go. However, the family declined.

THE KNOWLES' STORY AS RELATED TO HENLEY

A big white light was sitting in the middle of the road. They slowed down. It started to lift, and they went to drive

under it. It closed on them and they turned and spun around and went back the way they had come. The light followed them and was very quick in its movements.

They turned around again and it flew over the top of them and parked in front of the car. They stopped and each one of these times, Henley said, he could see the U-turn at high speed. In daylight you could see where the Knowles had turned around 3-4 times. The last time it, sort of, came right over the top of them and hovered. They said there was a whirring sound audible. One of the family described this as like a chain saw, a high pitched scream. That's when it came down and picked up the car or rested on the car itself.

Mrs Knowles had quite severe burn on her hand, although it wasn't a burn. Henley felt her hand, it was absolutely dead cold. The same marks were evident on the TV interview. Mrs Knowles had been fairly heavily made up but this red colour was still on her cheeks, nose etc.

In the end, they said, the car dropped. The mark was facing back, towards Perth, on the south side of the road.

The Knowles said to Henley that there were cars there everywhere, but nobody in them. Henley put this down to people stopping their cars to sleep, thus appearing empty.

THE EVENT CONTINUED

The family had taken a fuel container and funnel, out of their vehicle, and poured petrol into the car's tank. Mrs Knowles took out a dress and changed in the women's toilets. One of the sons was noted to have bare and bleeding feet.

Henley's attention was drawn to a substance on the car termed 'ash' by one of the car's occupants. He picked some from the bottom of the wiper blades, and also saw it on the back of the slight spoiler built into the back boot of the vehicle. It

was also found on the back window. Henley described this substance as "..... silicon type sand.....very, very fine, almost like ground glass.....fine and dry and it was black, and had this horrible bakelite smell about it." Looking around the vehicle, he said that the substance was everywhere, both inside and outside the vehicle. He noticed a dog cowering inside the car.

At this stage it was just starting to break the first signs of a black-grey dawn. Henley took a torch and looked under the car. There were no signs of grass, neither under the vehicle nor in the tyres. Henley took this as an indication that there had not been a high speed spin out. He inspected the burst tyre and noticed it had burst on the inside, yet he was unable to detect any rubber that might have been flapping on the wheel well. He expressed an opinion that: "It was the most unusual burst tyre I had seen in my life."

Henley said he is familiar with racing cars and maintained he knew the difference between brake dust and the silicon-like dust he touched. He felt the indentation on the roof. He also picked up dust from the inside of the car and compared it to the old days of "bulldust". "It was just like the people had driven through the old days of the Nullarbor with the bulldust", he said.

There was a smell present, a horrible stench like bakelite. He was later told this was the smell electro-magnets give off.

The Knowles were not carrying any luggage on the roof. In fact there was no roof rack. He saw 4-5 loose bags in the boot, that was all.

He believes at the time of the encounter they were playing a cassette tape, one of the many they had with them. Subsequently the Knowles told him these tapes became distorted, just as their voices had been. The voice change sounded like they were completely slowed down, like playing a 78 rpm record at 33 rpm. Patrick said they all sounded horribly distorted and slow.

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Henley thought that the car was impounded by the police when it reached Wudina that night. He was suspicious of the police, suspecting they may have cleaned the car. He indicated there was still brake dust on the wheels. He guaranteed they had vacuumed out the car

Porky and Anne arrived at this stage and they had a look at the vehicle. Henley said that Porky came only within a short distance of the car, not right up to it. Anne came over and walked around the car. She commented on the smell, saying "Mum's old jug used to smell like that."

At this point, about 4am, the Knowles departed from Mundrabilla. There was the first pink of daylight in the sky as they left.

When questioned as to his knowledge of the Knowles' movements from here, he said he knew they had never travelled across the Nullarbor before. This fact explained why they did not stop at the police stations at Eucla (WA) and Penong (SA). However, by the time they got to the fruit fly inspection point at Ceduna the South Australian police were waiting for them.

Asked about vehicular traffic along the road between Madura and Mundrabilla, he said he was overtaken, or saw going the other way, only one vehicle. This had been some two kilometres east of Madura when a brown Caprice, or similar car, had passed him going westwards. No trucks had passed him. Henley advised that the driver of the Caprice told a West Australian newspaper that he had seen a bright white light, out towards the seaside, right about the time or half an hour to 20 minutes before the time the Knowles' had reached that point.

Henley did recall seeing 2 cars, one a small one, in parking bays along this stretch.

When the Knowles left Mundrabilla, Henley, Porky and Anne went back to the

spot to examine it. Everything the Knowles had said was confirmed. They found where they had run through the scrub and hidden under a bush. Their footprints were visible and they could see where the car had been dropped onto the road and where the tyre had exploded. The skid mark was only about two metres long. The place where they had driven off the road, with the flat tyre, was also evident. Henley said the Eucla police have plaster casts of the mark of the flat tyre. The three truck drivers were unable to locate a tyre jack or wheel brace.

Henley was asked about the Knowles' statement concerning a car and caravan. He himself had seen no such vehicle. He said there were some parking bays and tanks in that area where cars pull off the road. Somebody could have pulled out of a bay and onto the road, behind him but ahead of the Knowles.

After departing Mundrabilla, Henley travelled on to Adelaide where he was interviewed by the "Adelaide Advertiser" newspaper on January 20. At an interview he related that one of the persons present was introduced as a plain clothes policeman.

Henley's view of the whole affair was that it was a military episode. UFOs are not extraterrestrials but made on Earth by some sort of vast secret network of large multinationals and the military working on a new power source. In a later telephone conversation with Bill Chalker, Henley was asked where the Knowles' vehicle had stopped. He estimated the site to be some 70-75km west of the Mundrabilla Roadhouse. This differs from Porky's estimate of 40km.

These then are the accounts of the main percipients.

FOLLOW UP TO EARLIER LEADS

At the end of the previous UFORAN article we mentioned several leads we were following up. Here is an update on these:

THE MUNDRABILLA INCIDENT

1. No-one has yet been able to ascertain the identity of the occupant(s) of the car and caravan reported by the Knowles to have been present. None of the truck drivers report having seen such a vehicle.

Despite the media attention given to the Mundrabilla incident, and our appeal in the Perth Sunday paper, no-one has ever come forward. In addition, no-one has contacted the Knowles privately in this regard.

2. The South Australian Police Department finally contacted us in November 1988 re our request for custody of their sample. Following negotiations, we now have half their sample and are deciding the best way to analyse it. This sample consists of two "lift-off" tapes from the roof and boot of Knowles vehicle, taken 8 hours after the event, and as such is a very small sample to work on.

3. None of the hypothesis advanced by experts in meteorology have stood the test of comparison with available data.

THE TUNA BOAT CONNECTION

One side to the Knowles' family account was the media reported UFO observation by the crews of two tuna boats. Media reports described this UFO as a bright light which approached one boat. It was said that voices of the crew were "slowed and distorted" before the object departed. The crew of the other boat was said to have witnessed this event. A tuna boat spotter pilot was said to have had the sightings relayed to him from the boats.

We managed to locate and interview the pilot, in October 1988, after he returned from several months interstate. The pilot, Mr White, was employed as an aircraft "tuna fish spotter" at the time. He was operating with boats (100-160km of the coast) which were fishing in the Great Australian Bight, an ocean area of Ceduna, South

Australia. The aircraft flew out of an airstrip on a Nullarbor Plains homestead.

It should be stated at the outset that Mr White himself saw no UFO.

When interviewed he related the following:

One of the crew members of the tuna boat "Monica" was down in the galley, having a meal, when he felt the need to urinate, so he went up to the top deck to do so. At this stage a bright light started to appear and became brighter and brighter. He could see various colours in it. The man alerted other members of the crew and all 10 or 12 came up to have a look. It was estimated to be 1km distant. The light was changing colour - red, green, blue and yellow. The skipper asked someone to get his binoculars and a man went down to do so. As this man emerged from the wheelhouse, the light moved from where it was, crossed the sky in seconds and was lost to view.

Date of report:

The question arises as to when this incident occurred. Was it on January 20, i.e. the same time as Knowles observation? Mr White is adamant that he had been told about the tuna boat incident "a couple of days" before the Knowles' incident came on TV. The first TV interview was on the evening of January 20 with a full report on most channels on January 21. It was also in the state-wide paper on the morning of January 21.

The crews of tuna boats are hired from all over Australia and, after the tuna season, they return to their home states.

The skipper of the "Monica", at the time, was phoned by Keith Basterfield whose call was not returned. A follow up letter was also not acknowledged.

Summary:

In summary, Mr White's hearsay evidence,

THE MUNDRABILLA INCIDENT

unlike the media reports carried it, says that the crew of "Monica" witnessed a nocturnal light. There was no structured object, no electromagnetic effect, and no voice change. Although unsatisfactory as direct evidence, at this time we have been unable to locate and interview witnesses to the event. It should also be added that, back in early 1988, we did have a letter to the editor printed in the "Port Lincoln Times" calling for persons involved on these boats to contact us. There was no response. Also, media reports suggested that the local police were to interview the crew. We contacted the local police and were promised a copy of their interview notes, but this has never materialised.

SAMPLES TESTED

Dr Richard Haines of Lost Altos, California, USA, has released his findings after having analysed samples taken from the Knowles' vehicle. These samples were taken by the Victorian UFO Research Society from 1) the disc brakes, and 2) the

rear floor, and consisted of dust and dog hair. Richard advises that "..... the dust found inside the car was not the same dust obtained from the brake drums..." and ".....the dog hair appears to be normal in every respect." On the subject of the internal floor dust, "....it consists of elements found in abundance in Earth's surface." However, as no control samples were taken by the Victorian UFO Research Society, Richard states: "Until control samples are obtained from the same region of Australia and subjected to elemental analysis, it will not be known whether this dust is merely a normal accumulation from the trip across the Nullarbor Plain."

Consolidated Document

In order to meet the many requests, we have received for a complete copy of our documentation on this case, we will shortly be issuing one. It will consist of copies of our interviews with all parties, police and AMDEL reports, maps, correspondence and press clippings. Details of cost and availability will be announced in due course.■

forum



GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

SAY IT IN FORUM IN 500 WORDS OR LESS.

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM AND DISCUSSION

IS WELCOMED AND WILL BE PUBLISHED

WHENEVER SPACE PERMITS. - ED.■

THE TASMANIAN CONNECTION

BY KEITH ROBERTS

TASMANIAN UFO INVESTIGATION CENTRE

The Nullarbor events of January 20, 1988, blazed across the Australian newspapers like a brilliant meteor in the night sky. A mass of headlines followed by a tail of conflicting facts and rapid fire explanations. What a pity the media did not look further than the headlines as other reports surfaced from about the same time frame. However, it was left to the UFO fraternity to try and unravel what had occurred, a process that needs time and follow up on snippets of information.

The Tasmanian Connection was first referred to by the press when mention was made of a close encounter in Northern Tasmania on December 14, 1987. Sooty deposits were the "in thing". Some deposit had been mentioned in the Tasmanian case and of course it was reported in the media as being a sooty one. This, after investigation, was proved not to be the case. Soon after, on January 25, the North West Tasmanian newspaper "Advocate" ran a story on a Burnie man who had seen strange lights, on the same morning as the Knowles UFO, whilst driving across the Nullarbor. The third connection came after follow up tracked down detail of a sighting by Tasmanian yachtsmen in the Tall Ships race from Hobart to Sydney. They encountered a series of lights off Cape Perpendicular on the night of January 20-21.

All three sightings have been investigated by the Tasmanian UFO Investigation Centre to the best of our ability. However, we

would concede that a complete follow up has been beyond the resources of investigators - Keith Roberts, Ron Jolly, Paul Jackson and Don Macsween. On the other hand, the details collected indicate that puzzling events have occurred which, in some cases, have disturbed the witnesses.

Our first sighting occurred on the evening of December 14, about 9.30pm or maybe later. The event was complex with a number of strange points. The witness worried about the sighting and, not knowing who to tell, looked in a Melbourne telephone directory at work. He found the VUFORS contact number and after a call, during which he gave details of the sighting, it was suggested he contact TUFOIC. This he did on the same day.

Mr "A" was returning home in a Mercedes, a car he was using in connection with the motor dealership he worked for. He had been to an isolated area southeast of Launceston (30km) and was some 2km from the main road when he noticed lights behind the car. At this stage he did not take a great deal of notice assuming they were aircraft or helicopter lights.

About 1km from the road junction ahead, the lights passed over his vehicle and he saw a mass of light land on the road ahead. The car lights failed and the motor stopped. Mr "A" pulled on the handbrake stopping about 15 metres from the object that blocked the road ahead. A cigar to egg-like object, with bright glary lights below, was

estimated by "A" as being 5-6m wide and 2m high. The object, "A" thinks, was a grey coloured and behind the lights which were hard to look at.

He was now disturbed by the turn in events and left the car to hide behind roadside bushes. He said he was sick whilst behind these bushes. "A" now noticed that the car was being dragged down the road towards the object. It was pulled about 10m, he said, leaving rubber marks on the road. He found it hard to estimate how long he was out of the car but thinks after a few minutes another vehicle approached from the same direction he had come. A man in a Landcruiser pulled up as the vehicle's lights failed but the motor kept running. The driver thought there had been an accident but "A" came over and told him what happened.

A high pitched whining noise was now heard and the object took off, curving up and away, and disappeared in the southern sky. The Landcruiser driver said they should say nothing about the incident so "A" returned to his car which started at once. As he drove away, it looked as if the bitumen on the road had been melted, and in fact he found some bitumen splashed on the front of the car. On arriving home "A" had to contact a business associate. He rang him up at once and was surprised when the associate complained about the late hour of the call - it was about midnight. "A" was puzzled as it was only 20 minutes drive home from sighting point. The Mercedes needed electrical repairs before it was sold to a new owner. "A" returned to the sighting point and it looked to him like the road had been repaired. Follow up on road works found that the stretch of road had been repaired the week before the sighting. Some weeks passed before TUFOIC could visit the sighting location by which time any traces had been obliterated by passing traffic.

In our second report there certainly was a connection with the Knowles incident - "UFO Encounter? Coaster another victim" -

ran the "Advocate" article on January 25. The story being about a Burnie man who experienced car trouble, and saw bright lights, whilst crossing Nullarbor three hours before the Knowles sighting. The article goes on to tell how the Burnie man was crossing the Nullarbor early on Wednesday, January 20, after visiting friends in Perth.

They were travelling along the Eyre highway, between Penong and Ceduna, at 2.40am, when he heard a loud thump coming from above the vehicle.

"At first I thought it was the gas bottle off the top of the car, but there's no way it could come off because it's screwed down," he said. "There's stuff coming off that roof I still haven't found....I've gone 450,000 miles and they've never come off." He then saw a series of flashing lights in the sky which lasted for about 15 minutes.

"They were just white flashing lights coming towards earth and I didn't know what they were," he said. "It seemed funny that the wind picked up around that time."

The vehicle was simultaneously buffeted by near gale-force winds that shook parts of the roof and completely bent the aerial, but caused minimal damage.

The wind lasted for about an hour and they were blown all over the place. "It frightened the living daylights out of me," he said. He had a video camera and a normal camera but had run out of film. He woke his girlfriend and they continued driving, stopping only briefly to refuel from a jerry can.

They then drove to Adelaide where he related the incident to his uncle, who mentioned the fact that there had been another sighting about the same time.

"I didn't think it was the same thing as we were miles in front of them, but when I saw it on TV and I started wondering," he said. "I didn't think of UFOs till my uncle mentioned it."

He said he was still not sure as to the exact nature of his experience. "I don't know if it was a UFO or meteorites, and I think the Woomera range is around there somewhere."

Talking to the witness later, the Centre learned that the witness's vehicle lost power during the sighting - it would not go over 70km/h. The wind effect lasted only while the lights were in view, not for an hour as stated in the paper. The lights themselves looked like a row of bright white steady beams covering a wide area of the sky to the northeast. The car regained power and the wind effect stopped when the lights disappeared.

Our final case occurred at sea, a long way from the Nullarbor, but it was on the same night and similar to some other reports, about that time, which occurred at sea. It was the night of January 20-21, as one of the Tasmanian yachts in the tall ships race headed north of the New South Wales coast, near Cape Perpendicular. The sky was overcast and the seas rough.

Initially, our main witness saw a white light to the stern of the yacht and assumed it to be an aircraft. Then maybe a helicopter as it moved to the east and became stationary. The light appeared to be only 20-30m above the sea and, after going bright and dim, went out.

A second light was seen soon after by four witnesses. This had a perimeter of small white light which changed to red and dropped into the water below. The parent light then moved away at great speed.

A third light was now noted on the starboard bow. After 10 minutes it was abeam the yacht and looked very steady although the sea was rough. A beam of light was visible shining onto the water below. Inspection of this beam with binoculars showed nothing visible in the way of ship's superstructures.

Finally, 30 minutes later and now near 2am, a red light appeared low on the water off the port bow. This light appeared to be only 10 boatlengths away and 3 boatlengths out to the side. The light maintained its position even when the witness took his yacht into a 360 degree turn. The light was in front of the yacht for about one and half hours. Suddenly, a bright white light lit up above the red light, for about 5 seconds, then it went out and the red light also disappeared.

During the time the lights were seen, the vessel and the witnesses were full of static electricity to such an extent that sparks came off the steering wheel onto the witnesses hands. The next day all the stainless fittings and deckplate were covered in a red rust which the owner had great trouble in removing.

The witness has had the yacht for 5 years and done many thousands of miles of ocean sailing plus sailing in other parts of the world. He had never had an experience like this before and could not find an explanations for the events. No samples of the rust were taken and it was several months before the Centre learnt of the sighting and were able to obtain details about the report.

How many other sightings went unrecorded in late January ? The three cases above all include a wide range of the phenomena associated with reports of Unidentified Flying Objects.

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A POSSIBLE VEHICLE INTERFERENCE CASE

BY BRYAN DICKESON AND MOIRA MCGHEE

UFO RESEARCH AUSTRALIA NSW BRANCH

The following event occurred on Thursday September 22, 1988, near Walcha, New South Wales, at approximately 1930 hours. There was one witness whose experience lasted ten minutes. Later, at 2200 hours, three witnesses had an experience that also lasted for 10 minutes.

After completing work on the Thursday, Mr F. drove from Port Macquarie to Armidale via Walcha to collect his son and his son's friend, and returned to Port Macquarie (Mr F's son was then a 19 year old, second year liberal arts student at the local university).

Mr F. was travelling at a good speed of around 100-105km per hour in a WNW direction along a straight section of the Oxley Highway some 8-10km before Walcha, when his car suddenly lost power within a matter of seconds. His speed dropped to about 60km per hour (down to second gear), and Mr F. thought the car would start mis-firing and stop altogether (Position: 30 Dg 59' +0.5' South, 151 deg 39' +2' East). The power loss persisted for about ten minutes, until he was some 1-2km from Walcha (the lights of the township came clearly into view), when full engine power returned just as quickly as it had faded, and he continued through Walcha township, turned north onto the Uralla Road and carried on to Armidale without further problems.

The Oxley Highway and Uralla Road are little used by traffic during weekday evenings and Mr F. says he saw only one or two other vehicles on the road during the

entire journey. There was no other traffic in the area at the time.

This occurred after twilight, and Mr F. was concerned because at around 1930 hours, it would have been difficult for him to get mechanical help locally.

Mr F. did not have the car radio on at all, because reception in this area is usually poor.

Some moments before his car began to lose power, Mr F. had noticed a definite, bright reddish-orange light (a fairly steady point source like a large star) about 20 degrees up from the horizon in the early night sky, and directly ahead in his wind-screen. The colour was described as "more red than orange," but different to any traffic light colours.

Mr F. mentioned that there is a TV tower with a red light on it perched on a hill near to, but north of, Walcha (about 2 or 3km northwards of the township, Mr F. thought). The light is not always visible (depending on your relative position) but the tower is a prominent feature in the locality and well-known to Mr F. The road to Armidale skirts well clear of the hill and tower, to the south then the west as you go through Walcha.

Mr F. could not identify the red light in the sky as being the normal tower light (it was far too high up and too far south) and thought this was unusual at the time.

Mr F. believed the red light was considerably closer than the tower, somewhere

A POSSIBLE VEHICLE INTERFERENCE CASE

between his car and Walcha and possibly only a hundred metres or so up in the air; certainly lower than 300 metres. Once his car began misbehaving, he was unable to continue viewing the point source and could not remember exactly when he no longer noticed it.

Mr F. continued to Armidale, collected his son and his friend and made the return journey. After passing through Walcha, on the slight upward slope heading ESE away from the town, and at exactly the same position on the Oxley Highway as his car had "come right" on the way up, the car experienced exactly the same power loss as before. This occurred at a little after 2200 hours. The speedometer showed the same loss of velocity (100-105 to 60km per hour).

While the reduction in speed was taking place, the air temperature inside the car was rapidly dropping from "normal" to chilly ("It was like walking into a cool-room, or like getting out of the car when I made a trip to the Blue Mountains one winter's day some years ago - very eerie"). The windows were up and the car heaters only slightly on, mostly for ventilation (it was a mild evening). The other two people in the car noticed and referred to the same temperature drop.

There was no apparent change in air pressure, and no condensation formed on windows or car surfaces. The small airflow into the car seemed to continue at the "near-normal" temperature, but did not reduce the cold inside at all. It was cold enough to make them all want to start shivering after several minutes. There was no misting of the breath by the cooler air.

Glancing at the engine temperature gauge, Mr F. saw it drop steadily from 1/3 way round the dial (normal car running temperature at around 80 degrees Celsius) to zero, simultaneously with the power loss.

As before, Mr F. noticed a red point source of light through his windscreen (some 20 degrees up in the ESE night sky). He was unable to give this light much attention

during the ten minutes or so that the cooling and loss of power lasted.

When they came to the same point on the road where the car had first started to lose power on the way up to Armidale, the engine returned to normal. The temperature gauge rose from zero to normal, and the air inside the car soon warmed up. There was no other traffic on the road during this time.

The three then completed the remainder of their journey without further incident.

Mr F. has made the round trip to Armidale about a dozen times in the two years prior to September 1988, and several times since. The journey takes him just on three hours each way, and this particular round trip was no exception (i.e. there was very little or no extra time involved in this trip, no time not accounted for).

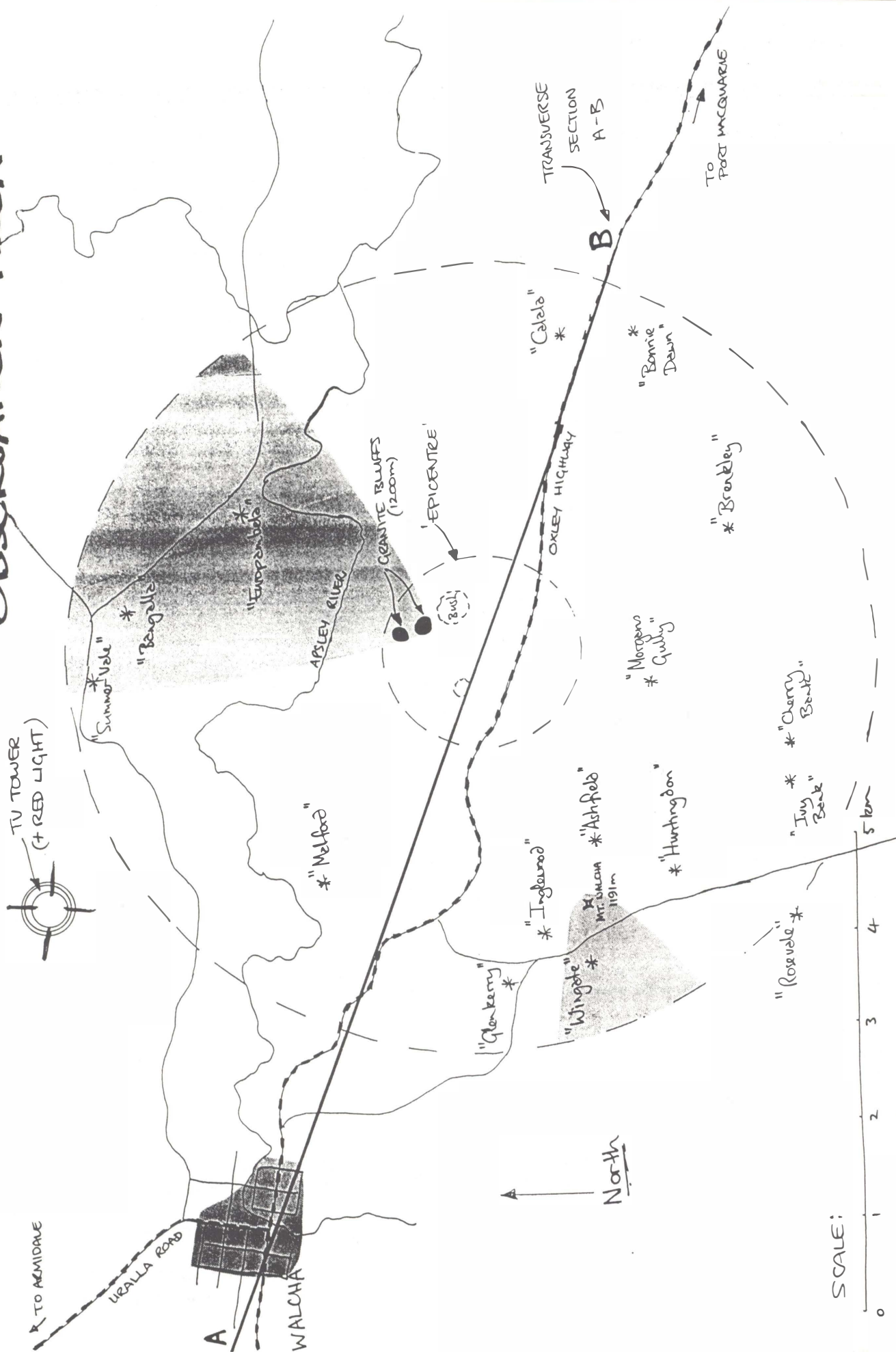
Mr F, his son and his son's friend all reported that they felt somewhat more tired than usual for about a week after the event, but that there were no other, enduring side effects.

Mr F's car is a 4 door, Chrysler Sigma GE (1979) with a 2 litre Astron OHC (overhead cam) engine, a 12V electrical system, and electronic ignition. The engine temperature gauge is a bimetallic strip and thermistor device.

(Mr F's particular model has a second thermistor circuit linked to a flashing light on the dashboard to indicate when fuel in the petrol tank is almost empty. This second system did not register anything unusual during the period of engine power loss, although it did operate normally and start blinking towards journey's end near Port Macquarie, when fuel was low.)

Mr F. does much of his own car servicing and has had no other vehicle troubles of the kind reported for the evening of September 22 (loss of power, temperature gauge malfunction), before or since.

OBSERVATION AREA:



ASTRONOMICAL CONSIDERATIONS - September 22, 1988.

(For 1930-1950 hours and 2155-2220 hours? Daylight saving began Sunday October 30, 1988.)

Sunset at 1751 hrs (dark by about 1810 hrs). Southern Vernal Equinox - September 23, 1988.

Next full moon - September 26, 1988, at 0507 hrs.

Planetary Positions:

Rises Sets

Mercury - 0636-1954 bright, but very low in W sky (less than 5 deg above horizon)

Venus - 0343-1426 not eligible

Mars - 1809-0629 not eligible

Jupiter - 2259-0911 not eligible

Saturn - 1022-0040 not eligible

Prominent Stars:

Vega (a-Lyrae) - Mag 0.0, bright white, less than 20 deg above NNW horizon at 1930.

Antares (a-Scorpii) - Mag 1.2, red giant, approx. 45 deg above WSW horizon at 1930.

Hamal (a-Arietis) - Mag 2.0, (colour not found), approx 10 deg above ENE horizon at 2155

Achernar (a-Eridani)- Mag 0.6, blue-white, approx 50 deg above SSE horizon at 2155

(Neither Mercury nor any of the prominent stars above are near to the object's position, as noted at either time by Mr F.)

Weather:

The local weather conditions for two days either side of 22/9 were stable and rain-free (caused by a slow-moving anticyclone situated to the NW OF N.S.W. state). This anticyclone produced a slight westerly airflow over the area around Walcha during the time of Mr F's trip.

Normal outdoor air temperature for the area at 1930 hours would have been around 21-23 degrees Celsius and the humidity less than 65 per cent; at 2200 hours between 15-20 degrees Celsius and the humidity less than 70 per cent.

Altitude and Terrain:

The particular stretch of road is at an altitude of between 1050 and 1100 metres, slightly undulating, with several cuttings. There is an overall gentle upward slope inland, heading westwards.

A transverse section of the area is attached. This indicates that on first approaching Walcha, the TV tower and light would have been very low on the horizon (sample lines of sights indicate below 5 degrees altitude, until well inside the affected zone and only a few kilometres from Walcha itself). Most of all, the rolling terrain mostly obscures the tower and light when approaching from the east.

Two prominent granite (1200 metre altitude) bluffs, just to the north of the road in the centre of the affected zone, are of some interest and would seem to indicate that the object was located between these and the road.

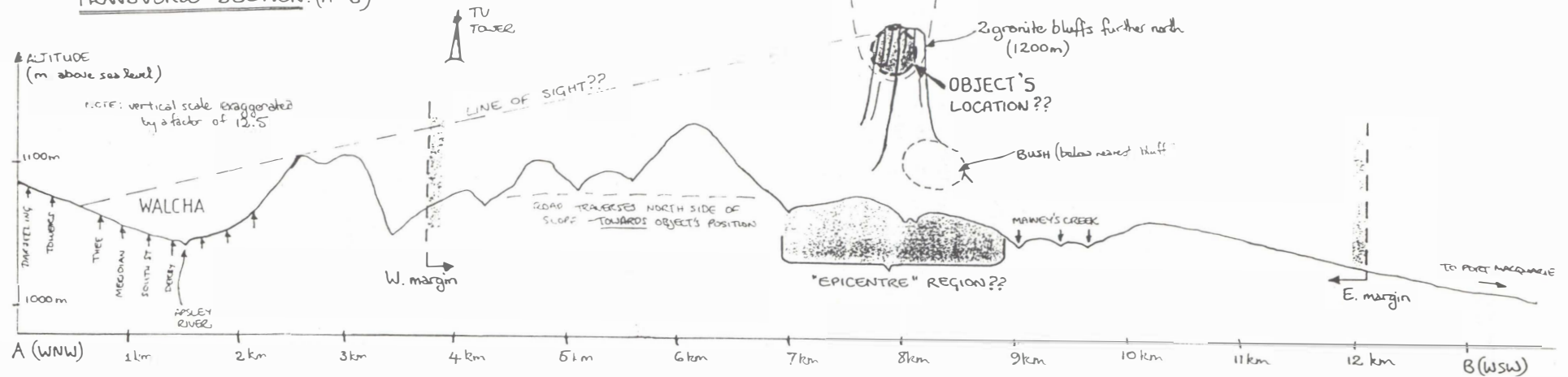
The local terrain comprises mostly rolling, open country with very occasional patches of scrub.

Geographically, the area comprises mostly lower Permian (ancient) migmatites (metamorphosed schists or gneiss); with occasional basaltic outcrops (bluffs) of more recent origin, i.e. tertiary intrusive alkaline basalt (dolerite)

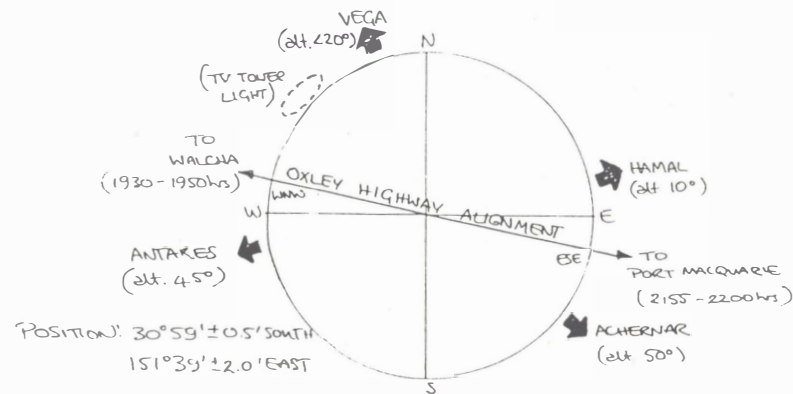
Walcha is a smallish town with a population of around 3400. It was a centre for Manganese mining earlier this century but the mines are now closed. The surrounding land still appears to contain a number of mining leases and concession areas.

Generally, the area is sparsely populated, with scattered farming properties.

TRANSVERSE SECTION: (A-B)



ASTRONOMICAL OBJECTS



THE FOUR UNUSUAL EFFECTS REPORTED WERE

A. Loss of Power by the Engine.

Crysler Sigma GE car manual lists four possible causes:

1. Wear and tear of the distributor contacts.
2. Failure of the vacuum advance unit.
3. Malfunction of the vacuum advance unit.
4. Failure of the electronic ignition system.

All causes require operator (i.e. mechanic) attention of varying degrees and except for 3. would recur without replacement of parts. (3. might require the reconnection of a loose vacuum pipe, for example)

B. Loss of Heat within Vehicle Interior.

There was no detectable atmospheric pressure loss, so the temperature drop cannot be attributed to a sudden loss of pressure. The temperature drop reported could have been of the order of 10 - 15 degrees Celcius.

The three common mechanisms for transfer of heat are conduction, convection, and radiation.

● Radiative heat loss to the outside atmosphere of 10 - 15 degrees over a few seconds is an unlikely cause of the cooling because the outside air temperature would have had to be a couple of hundred degrees below zero - this external temperature differential is extremely unlikely (as confirmed by Mr F). The figure of a 10 - 15 degrees reduction in temperature is conservatively suggested here, as this would not necessarily cause human breath to condense as a vapour, given the "normal" outside humidity range existing at the time.

● The car interior is (virtually) an enclosed air volume, so convection can be ruled out.

● Conduction effects are usually observed in solids (especially metal objects), contain-

ing a temperature differential, and occur relatively slowly.

Conventional heat transfer methods therefore seems unlikely.

C. Temporary Malfunction of Engine Thermometer.

There are no known physical effects which can extract the heat from a substantial metallic mass such as an engine block (and its integral water cooling system) and then return the same amount of energy to the block some minutes later. Therefore, it may be more useful to consider that the temperature monitor "malfunctioned" in some way.

The temperature gauge uses a bimetallic strip and a semiconductor thermistor type sending unit. When one end of the bimetallic strip is heated, it generates a small electric current which is stabilised by the sensitive thermistor and registered on the instrument panel. Semiconductor operations are easily effected by external electromagnetic fields which increase their electrical conductivity and greatly reduce their sensitivity. In the presence of an external electric field the heat gauge needle would drop. However, it should be noted that the metal body of the car bonnet would largely shield the thermistor from such an effect.

The low fuel registration thermistor operates on a slightly different principle to the temperature gauge. The thermistor is a small cylinder attached to the interior of the fuel tank and connected to the car 12 volt system so that a small current flows through it. Thermistors are susceptible to changes in temperature (their electrical resistance decreases!), so once the device is no longer bathed/cooled in petrol, the device is heated slightly by the electrical current, which further decreases the resistance. The increased current passing through the thermistor causes the petrol low level light to blink. This thermistor is totally surrounded by petrol tank (i.e. doubly metal-shielded from an external magnetic field) and might therefore not be affected by an external magnetic field.

D. Persisting Tiredness in Observers.

At this stage, it is almost impossible to assess the cause and extent of this reported effect. However, it deserves to be recorded for future reference.

ELECTROMAGNETIC EFFECTS MODELS

Where some aerial object may be implicated with vehicle interference effects, UFO investigators frequently try to attribute some electromagnetic effects as the cause.

Ideally, there is a preference for finding one or two electromagnetic "models" which combine and encompass all of the observed effects as neatly as possible. On this occasion, it is very difficult to find suitable candidates for all four of the effects reported.

Effects 1, 2, and 4 may be consistent with exposure to some high-intensity, high-frequency oscillating magnetic field.

It should be noted that electronic ignition systems were installed in all Sigma GEs after August 1978. These systems contain printed semiconductor circuitry which could be so affected by a strong external magnetic field as to cause temporary (but totally reversible) mistiming.

However, it would be difficult to recreate these three sorts of effects under controlled conditions, using present technical know-how.

The rapid cooling of air reported inside the car is extremely unusual. Of some 500 vehicle interference cases, Moira was able to find only six (just over 1 percent) involve cooling. (Unfortunately, most of these listing accounts do not include details of car ignition, wiring, or car type.)

Electromagnetic effects associated with thermal changes - thermoelectric effects - are usually restricted to small-scale, or lo-

calized electrical circuitry. Heating effects are quite common here, but cooling effects are much less frequent and probably irrelevant for our purposes.

Magnetocaloric effects involving heat removal by a magnetic field are extremely rare and reserved for small-scale, specialist laboratory applications. The only known effects which might be involved is called adiabatic demagnetization. In the laboratory adiabatic demagnetization is used to super-cool liquid helium to within a few degrees of absolute zero for experimental purposes.

The process involves placing a strongly paramagnetic substance (usually a salt) into an electromagnetic field. Under the influence of the magnetic field, the electrons, which make the salt paramagnetic, line up in an orderly way, releasing heat in the process. This excess heat is removed (by liquid helium coolant). When the magnetic field is switched off, the paramagnetic electrons un-align themselves, absorbing heat from their immediate environment.

The only reason why this process is worth considering here, is because atmospheric oxygen molecules are significantly paramagnetic. Under the influence of a very strong (and possibly oscillating) magnetic field, the magnetocaloric cooling effect could become significant.

However, the actual mechanisms and conditions involved for adiabatic demagnetization inside the car are unclear - whenever I make a few reasonable (?) assumptions and use the appropriate calculations, I get extremely high magnetic field values and frequencies. The metal of the car would have provided good magnetic shielding, so the actual values involved would have been much, much higher!

Furthermore, having suggested that the heat loss might be due to some induced thermal radiation of heat energy due to the paramagnetic properties of atmospheric oxygen within a metal cavity (the car), I have been unable to find any scientific evidence at all that this phenomenon can actually take place. Perhaps the preference of UFO

investigators for "electromagnetic effects" should be reviewed.

There are no accounts readily available in the literature of experimentation on paramagnetic substances (e.g. molecular oxygen) at very high field densities and frequencies.

During 1977-78, a number of unusual UFO incidents were reported from the New England area, well north of Walcha to the east of Armidale. In one instance, an object surrounded by an unusual mist was reported. The mist was considered unusual in this case because it seemed to be closely associated with the movement of the object observed. This may have been a case where induced cooling of the surrounding atmosphere (by the object) caused atmospheric water vapour to become visible. Unfortunately, the report contains little detail of the shape of the cloud around the object (this might indicate the shape of an electromagnetic field), or how the cloud changed in distribution and density as the object moved, or any details of vapour streaming that might be seen in such a cloud. Potentially, these "cloud and object" reports should be able to provide us with valuable details on how to visualize any electromagnetic fields present.

Meanwhile, the valuable detail available from reports such as this one should help us to refine the possible range of "electromagnetic effects" requiring discussion and clarification.

OBSERVATION ZONE

Mr F. has recently informed me that other people have mentioned unusual phenomena from the same area around the same time - someone out hunting observed a red light and had trouble starting their car. I have included an observation zone diagram indicating those dwellings around the "epicentre" where unusual effects might have been noted. For geographical reasons, it seems that some stations may have been out of observations range (Morgans Gully, and Calala are probably our best bets,

Malford, Ashfield, Brenkley and Inglewood would also be worth a try).

To try and get more corroborative material, and details, I shall approach the local paper, the "Walcha News", to see if they can ask people to contact us - shall keep you informed of developments.

UFO INSTANCES INVOLVING COOLING OF VEHICLE INTERIORS

(Six cases found for 500 vehicle interference cases listed)

August 4, 1963 Wayne City, Illinois (USA)
2330 hrs (CUFOS)

October 11, 1967 - Aldersyde, Alberta (Canada) 2000 hrs (CUFOS)

July 21, 1973 - Gavignano, Corsica (France)
2100 hrs (FSR vol.23, no.6)

September 24, 1974 - Eggardon Hill (Newport-Bridport, England) 0010 hrs (BUFORA)

July 1975 - Poatina Highway, Tasmania (Australia) 0320 hrs (ACUFOS)

June 22, 1977 - Gula, Canary Islands (Spain)
2130 Hrs (FSR vol.23, no.3)

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"I GOT AS FAR AS 'WE COME IN PEACE' AND THEY'D
ALL RUN OFF!"

BEDROOM VISITATION

On April 12, 1989, a German lady, resident in Australia for 7 months, reported observing an "alien" in her bedroom.

Mrs H. and her husband had been to work on April 7, came home and had dinner. She fell asleep in the dining room at about 2100 hrs and slept for some 30 minutes.

At about 2300 hrs the couple had gone to bed. Mr H. fell asleep within 5-10 minutes. However, Mrs H. remained awake, saying she couldn't sleep due to her husband's snoring. Their bedroom was slightly illuminated by external (street) lights, consequently the room was never completely dark. No room lights were on at the time of the incident.

About 0025 hrs, Mrs H. was aware of lying on her back, looking at the ceiling, when the incident occurred. Her right hand was under her head.

Suddenly, a strange noise, unlike anything she has ever encountered, started. It was very high pitched, loud and continuous. The noise covered up the sound of her husband's snoring, plus all the external noises. She was able only to hear this noise.

Upon hearing the noise, she turned to her right (she can't say why). On the right side of her bed is a night table some 40cm tall, then there is a wall. On her husband's side is the window through which a little light shone. On the table was a cup with a little tea in it, a wedding picture, an alarm clock and a box with her gold earrings in it. She became afraid and although she felt she could move if she wished, she chose not to do so.

By the table, and therefore her bed, was an entity - estimated as 60-70cm tall. It was semi-transparent, "like looking through a curtain." All around the body boundary was a pinkish colour. She noted it wore a bright neon green belt - a green ring (no buckle etc.).

It was holding her tea cup and looking into it. She concentrated her gaze on the cup and the entity's arm. Then she looked at the green belt. Returning her gaze to the cup she found that the entity had replaced it on the table. She then looked up but she is unable to describe a head etc. Whether this is because there wasn't one or whether she can't recall what she saw is not clear. She couldn't describe the hands either, e.g. how many fingers it had (if any). She did however say it moved as if in slow motion. The entity then picked up the small box with the earrings but didn't open it at all.

At this moment, due to fear, Mrs H. moved. The entity replaced the box. Then it touched its belt and disappeared. The disappearance was "like switching off a light." The unusual noise stopped at this point.

She then woke her husband and told him what happened. He checked the time and found it was 0029 hrs. He had heard and felt nothing at all.

Mrs H. has had no previous unusual experiences and nothing happened on subsequent nights up to 2000 hrs, April 12, when we interviewed her by phone. She was queried on how she knew she was awake. Although certain she was, she is unable to explain how she knew. ■

The Frontiers of Ufology

BY HILLARY EVANS

LONDON - ENGLAND

Kipling once wrote: 'What should they know of England, who only England know ?' With equal reason we may ask, what do they know of UFOs, who study nothing but UFOs?

Even if there is a such a thing as a UFO phenomenon per se, something that is not reducible to or explainable as anything else, it is nevertheless hedged around by other phenomena: and if the ufologist is to determine what is and what isn't a UFO, he must familiarise himself with what is happening on either side of the frontiers of ufology. Sometimes the adjacent regions are familiar enough; but others are still largely unexplored, and may contain some surprises for the ufologist who thinks he knows what is relevant to his research.

THE UFOLOGY/METEOROLOGY FRONTIER

Every ufologist is aware of the more obviously UFO-like natural phenomena, from lenticular clouds to the planet Venus. But nature contains more surprises than even the editor of "Nature" knows of; as witness the many volumes of Bill Corliss' "Sourcebook Project," which demonstrate just how many more things there are in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our ufology. His volume on 'luminous phenomena' should be required reading for the ufologist, with its dazzling array of anomalous sightings ranging from 'luminous aerial bubbles' to 'radar-stimulated phosphorescent displays'. His section on 'nocturnal lights' contains a rich choice of alternative explanations for lights-in-the-sky.

Pigeonholing a reported UFO as a 'probable natural phenomenon' is, of course, not at all the same thing as saying precisely what it is. Many of Corliss' anomalies are far from being well understood. Ball lightning, for instance, is often proposed as an explanation for UFO sightings, yet despite extensive research, it remains very imperfectly defined. Before we can confidently say of a specific UFO sighting that it is ball lightning, we need to know what we are saying. How large can ball lightning be? What is its maximum life-span? How stable is it? What limits are there to its capacity for movement? What altitude can it reach? Can it really penetrate matter without causing damage?

At present, any identification of UFO with ball lightning can only be tentative: it really amounts to little more than saying that we believe that particular UFO to be of natural origin, and in all probability meteorological. And even that may be pushing it too far. What, for instance, is the relationship - if any - between ball lightning and earthquake lights?

Ostensibly, the former is an atmospheric phenomenon - that seems clear enough, since it so often occurs in connection with thunderstorms: earthquake lights, on the other hand, as their name indicates, imply a geological origin. But this distinction may be more apparent than real. We must be ready to entertain the possibility that both types of event - a certain meteorological condition on the one hand, a certain geophysical condition on the other - are capable of generating the same kind of plasma-like phenomenon, which in turn may be related to the very similar phenomena

created in the process of certain advanced engineering operations. In an issue of "Pursuit", Vol 17 No 2, Harry Lebelson writes of the alarming tendency for 'ball lightning' to be accidentally generated in the course of particle beam weaponry research. Again we have to ask, are we really talking about the same phenomenon?

Many of nature's strangest happenings are rare and elusive. But the ufologist should still be aware of them, for, after all, so are UFOs!

THE UFOLOGY/GEOLOGY FRONTIER

I don't suppose any of us are in any doubt that geophysical phenomena of some kind are in some way associated with, and perhaps responsible for, at least a proportion of UFO reports. Both Paul Devereux and Michael Persinger claim to have established quantitative correlations between specific geological conditions on the one hand, and fluctuations in the number of UFO reports on the other. Devereux bases his claim on geographical data, Persinger on an analysis of events over given time-periods. Both sets of findings appear significant, and promise to give ufologists firm ground of a sort to stand on.

But even if proved valid, these findings are unlikely to lead us directly to clear-cut solutions, for they still leave us with many interpretations of their data to choose from. Here's just one conjectural example. We can reasonably accept that earth tremors and earthquakes are preceded by tectonic stress, and we know that they are accompanied on some occasions by earthquake lights, which we may suppose to be wholly physical in nature. But these geological events may simultaneously effect changes in the earth's atmosphere which can act on human brain: alteration in the quantity and proportion of charged particles can, for about one person in three, trigger off effects ranging from mild headaches through more painful migraines to alarming experience such as hallucinations; and of

course hallucinations are anything but physical in nature!

And things could get even more complicated, if we imagine circumstances in which a witness hallucinates as a direct result of seeing a physical light stimulus - like the earthquake light: this would be something like what happens when a witness sees the planet Venus and reports it as an alien spacecraft with windows and flashing lights. The witness is, as it were, grafting his hallucination onto something he really sees because it's really there!

Once again, it is essential that ufologist make himself aware of such possibilities. Fortunately, though this remains a largely unexplored region in which orthodox scientists are very reluctant to set foot, there are growing number of studies exploring the interface between events that are literally down-to-earth, and the processes of our human minds.

THE UFOLOGY/PSYCHOLOGY FRONTIER

Some knowledge of how the mind works will be useful to the ufologist in his most basic activity, field investigation: witness evaluation is impossible without some awareness of what the human mind is capable of.

These days, few of us likely to take a UFO report at its face value, no matter how straightforward it appears to be. We would regard some inquiry into the character of the witness as an essential part of preparing a report. And yet this is a very recent development: it is a sobering thought that the vast mass of UFO reports which form the data base of our research were gathered by investigators who made no attempt to assess the dependability of the person making the report - indeed, who would have thought this to be something quite outside their area of responsibility, even an impertinence. As recently as 1977, a senior BUFORA investigator was solemnly recording the amazing claims of self-styled

witnesses in the West Wales flap, without raising even one critical eyebrow, let alone considering what psychological factors might have been involved.

Fortunately that kind of naive approach is virtually a thing of the past, at any rate so far as responsible investigative organisations are concerned. The valuable work being done by Ken Phillips in England and Alex Keul of Austria, establishing a scientific approach to witness evaluation, is fortunately more characteristic for UFO investigators in the 1980s. But there is still a need for ufologists to be aware of the problems involved, even in such relatively straightforward matters such as the dependability of eyewitness testimony: Richard Haines' "Observing UFOs" provides an excellent introduction to the pitfalls we may encounter.

But 'what the witness saw' is only the first and the most accessible aspect of the problem. There is need, too, to ask 'why', for if there is a why, if a witness is emotionally predisposed to see one thing rather than another, this is liable to distort his account. (Equally, of course, this would apply to the investigator if he/she was motivated by anything less than an inspired pursuit of the Truth for its own sake!) Here, on the frontiers of psychology and sociology, is a tangled undergrowth of private preoccupations and cultural conditioners with which the ufologist must become familiar.

THE UFOLOGY/SOCIOLOGY FRONTIER

There is no better illustration of personal and social forces at work in an UFO situation than the landmark study, "When prophecy fails", which describes how a group of social scientists infiltrated an American UFO cult and obtained firsthand understanding of the motivating factors predisposing a certain category of UFO 'witnesses'. The cautious ufologist must learn to be on his guard against such

biases, which may not always be so manifest.

Whether we like it or not, the UFO - at any rate in its 'extraterrestrial visitor' guise - has become a symbol for our age, carrying a load of emotional meaning for people who are bored or frustrated by their terrestrial existence. People conditioned by exposure to extreme UFO beliefs will not, to put it mildly, make reliable witnesses. And yet how many cases in Keyhoe or Aime Michel, even in NICAP's "The UFO Evidence" or the Figuet & Ruchon "Dossier complet", may have been submitted by people with such undetected motivations?

The way in which people respond to UFO sightings is of course a measure of prevailing social attitudes, so these again are something with which the ufologist must acquaint himself. As we are all only too aware, society's attitude towards 'the unexplained' is ambivalent: the general public ranges from indifference to a starry-eyed fascination, the scientific establishment would prefer not to get involved for fear of making a fool of itself in uncharted fields when there are safer paths to tread, while the media, often sympathetic, are understandably greedy for 'good stories'... An excellent compilation from Keele University, "On the margins of science", looks at ufology and other fields of anomaly research from a sociological viewpoint.

THE UFOLOGY/RELIGIOUS BELIEFS FRONTIER

Social responses to UFOs are frequently colored by religious belief: there is still, for example, a substantial and highly vocal school of thought which holds that UFOs are sent by Satan, their thirty-year mission to boldly prepare the way for Antichrist and Armageddon. Yet another set of complicating factors to bedevil what might otherwise have been a nice straightforward investigation! There is no need for the ufologist to become an expert in theology and demonology, but he should at least be

aware of the basic beliefs of those who look at UFOs through quite different eyes than he does. Cynthia Hind has told us how radically different are the responses of the tribal communities in Africa: but we do not have to go so far afield. Fundamentalist Christians, even in the most highly sophisticated nations of the world, espouse beliefs hardly less primitive than tribespersons in the desert of Sudan or the Australian outback.

Religious beliefs are of course inherent in a class of phenomena which a good many ufologists would be apt to dismiss as irrelevant to their research: namely visions. But, as I have tried to show in my book "Visions, apparitions, alien visitors", there is no clear-cut line to distinguish one kind of sighting from another. It may be that the same mental process is involved when a teenage Catholic peasant girl claims to see the Virgin Mary, as when a worried American housewife claims to see an extraterrestrial alien. Even if he doesn't go along with this hypothesis, the ufologist must be aware of similarities between some kind of UFO report and parallel events in seemingly unrelated fields.

An obvious example is the Fatima sighting, in Portugal in 1917, when several peasant children claimed to see the Virgin Mary on several occasions, and when a great many people claimed to see some remarkable aerial phenomena. It has been suggested that this was in fact a ufological event; whether or not this is so, it is clearly verylike many UFO events. It has been shown statistically that there is correlation between UFO sightings and religious visions; these are facts the openminded ufologist has no right to ignore.

THE UFOLOGY/PARAPSYCHOLOGY FRONTIER

Many ufologists are reluctant to get involved with physic matters, relating them vaguely to the occult and all kinds of weird goings-on which clearly have no connection

with a hard scientific study such as ufology. Alas, such an attitude stems from ignorance. Serious psychical research today is a very feet-on-the-ground affair, as more and more links are forged between the physical and the physical.

For example, much interest is currently being shown in people who are 'electric-sensitive' - such as those in whose presence television sets spontaneously switch channels, streetlamps blink off, computers malfunction. These effects are real, however inexplicable: consequently, real energy is being deployed, a real force is involved. A few years ago, the "Probe" investigation team in Bristol encountered just such phenomena, in a case which involved both UFOs and poltergeists, clearly associated. We are a long way from understanding why a person who displays psychic ability should also be extra-labile to have UFO sightings; but once again, here is a correlation which it would not be not scientific to ignore. A knowledge of poltergeist phenomena, as embodied in a book like Gauld & Cornell's "Poltergeists", raises many questions which are relevant to UFO investigation.

THE UFOLOGY/MYTHOLOGY FRONTIER

So, too, does a study of mythology and folklore. The series of books by W R Drake, "Gods and spaceman in history" and so on, shows how many reports, strikingly similar to present-day UFO reports, are to be found in old chronicles: while Vallee's controversial "Passport to Magonia" seeks to draw conclusions from such material. Bertrand Meheust's brilliant study "Science fiction et soucoupes volantes", opens up another disturbing dimension, by showing how closely related today's UFO stories are to old sci-fi tales - to a degree which defies coincidence, yet cannot be explained in any cause-and-effect way.

Perhaps even more disturbing, though, is how closely related UFO happenings are to present-day political fact. The fascinating account of "The perfect cover-up" in

Yorkshire UFO Society's journal "Quest" (issues of Sep-Dec 1984) is a warning to the ufologists of what covert government practices may be clouding the UFO sky - though perhaps after "Clear intent" and "Sky crash" not many of us need such a warning! For obvious reasons, it isn't easy for the ufologist to acquaint himself with what the power-that-be are up to; it is only too easy, too, to be swept into paranoia of suspicion. But books like Peter Laurie's superb investigation "Beneath the city streets" and Donald Bain's disturbing "The control of Candy Jones" are salutary reminders of what we are having done to us by those whom we have appointed to run our world.

Much of this, you may feel, has little or nothing to do with ufology. Of course you are right; but that is precisely the point. If ufology is to progress, it must be isolated from irrelevant matters; but we shall not establish what is irrelevant simply by ignoring whatever seems, at first glance, to be so. The frontiers of ufology are not clearly marked: establishing what lies within them, and what without, calls for wide-ranging study and an open mind. It is vital that the ufologist be willing to explore the frontiers of his subject if only because - to conclude by quoting another poet, Robert Frost this time - 'good fences make good neighbours'.

RECOMMENDED READING

Bain, Donald, **The control of Candy Jones**, Playboy Press, 1976. How the CIA hypnotised and exploited an innocent member of the public.

Corliss, William, **The sourcebook project**. These wonderful books are a treasure-store of hard facts; most obviously relevant to the ufologist is the volume on Lightnings, auroras, nocturnal lights.

Devereux, Paul, **Earthlights**, Turnstone, 1982.

Evans, Hillary, **Visions, apparitions, alien visitors**, Aquarian, 1984. I have to list my own book because it's the only one I know which makes a comparative study of entity sightings.

Festinger, Riecken, Schachten, **When prophecy fails**, Harper Torchbooks, 1956.

Gauld, Alan, and Cornell, A.D. **Poltergeists**, Routledge, 1979. The most comprehensive study of this fascinating subject.

Haines Richard, **Observing UFOs**, Nelson-Hall, Chicago, 1980. Excellent manual by one of America's most knowledgeable investigators.

Laurie, Peter, **Beneath the city streets**, Penguin, 1970. Mind-boggling probe into what governments do without telling us.

McClure, Kevin, **The evidence for Visions of the Virgin Mary**, ASSAP/Aquarian, 1983. Impartial introduction to the most popular of all anomalous happenings.

Meheust, Bertrand, **Science-fiction et soucoupes volantes**, Mercure de France, 1978. One day some brave publisher will translate this splendid study; meanwhile, try out your French or the brief account in my Visions book.

Persinger, Michael A, and Lafreniere, Gyslaine F., **Space-Time transients and unusual events**, Nelson & Hall, Chicago, 1977. Seeks to put anomaly research on a statistical basis.

Soyka, Fred, **The ion effect**, Dutton, NY, 1977. Fascinating demonstration of the interaction between natural forces and mental processes.

Taylor, Gordon Rattray, **The natural history of the mind**, Secker & Warburg, 1979. The best account I know of how the mind works and what it's capable of.

Wallis, Roy (ed.) **On the margins of science**, Keele University, 1979.■

THE CRITIC DOESN'T COUNT

BY JOHN F. SCHUESSLER

HOUSTON - TEXAS U.S.A.



There seems to exist in mankind a natural fear of criticism. The critic causes fear and apprehension to run rampant in the average person.

Movie stars read the daily trade journals to see if a critic has gotten on their case. Politicians do crazy things to be accepted and to avoid criticism. Engineers hate to have their designs criticized. Cooks become irate if their culinary creation is not loved by all. UFO researchers will close out a case with only cursory investigation if a critic questions their endeavours.

The effort to please the critic is natural in a way. Human beings generally strive for perfection. When the critic questions that perfection the natural reaction is to neutralize the criticism. The easiest way to accomplish that is to give in and try to be liked by the critic. Hopefully then, the critic will pick on someone else as the target of their venom.

Actually, people should accept criticism only when it is done in a constructive manner. There is no inherent requirement for people to accept abusive behaviour, whether verbal or written.

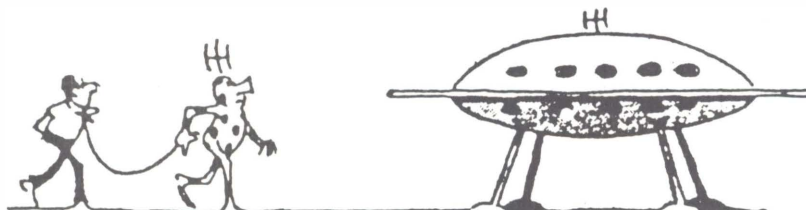
Maybe it would help to remember that the critic makes a living off of the people

that do the work. Naturally, the critic hopes to gain some personal recognition out of the interchange and often does. This is ill gotten gain.

In 1910, Theodore Roosevelt clearly defined the difference between the critic and the doer, as follows:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, and comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievements, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

In closing, consider how few monuments have been built in honour of critics. Apparently, the critic doesn't count.■



MOVING? IF SO, PLEASE LET US KNOW YOUR NEW ADDRESS AS
SOON AS POSSIBLE

reference library

DISNEYLAND OF THE GODS

By John A. Keel

(Paranormal Science - 182 pages)

Amok Press, PO BOX 51, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10276
US \$8.95

A book review by Pony Godic

DISNEYLAND OF THE GODS is a very interesting read embellished with many fascinating details, cryptic insights into human nature and, for me, the occasional belly laugh. But there is more to this book than entertainment. It more broadly seeks to dispel both our skepticism and gullibility, thus affording us the intellectual space to ask deeper questions. Afterall, "Charles Fort perceived a truth that had been ignored by scientists and historians. Our world has two sets of natural laws. One set tells us stupidly simple things about gravity and nature. The other tells us that space and time are constantly distorted in our reality, and that we are all subject to the still undefined laws of that second set."

Keel clearly indicates that UFOs should not be isolated from the cluttered spectrum of bizarre phenomena in which they occur for, as Damon Knight discovered when computer analysing 1,200 Fortean events:

"One salient fact about UFOs is missing from all modern accounts I have seen," Knight commented. "Fort's data show that they are not isolated phenomena. Unknown Flying Objects, unknown bodies seen in space, appearances and disappearances, poltergeist activity, falls of strange substances and organisms from the sky - all these things show strong positive correlations with each other. Taken together, they show evidence of rhythmic fluctuations."

Within this framework, Keel examines: Lightning bolts from a clear, cloudless sky which kill. Inexplicable crimes such as thefts of antique weather vanes. Animal mutilations. Stolen miles of copper cable taken from between supporting steel towers. Sea and Lake monsters. Phantom boatmen. Mysterious marsupials such as a kangaroo in Illinois. Unbelievable reptiles like the hoop and milk snakes. "Mothman." Hairy monsters etc.

This type of cross section does seem to be in context for: "Incredible though it may seem, sightings of sea serpents tend to occur simultaneously with sightings of unidentified flying objects, showers of frogs, worms ..."

So, against this background of bizarre indicators, Keel discusses: Ancient observatories. Possible communication from Epsilon Bootis, 103 million light years from Earth. A correlation between UFOs and fluctuations in the Earth's magnetism. Skyquakes. UFO routes. Neat, inexplicable holes in the ice of winter lakes and swamps. The Idaho Triangle with its lethal 10 miles of Interstate 15, driving unknowns, warps and time gaps.

Keel goes on to discuss Atlantis and other lost civilisations and the long history of UFO-nauts who have been called by many names throughout human history - fairies, gods etc.

After examining Ley lines and the work of Wilhelm Reich, Keel wonders: "Is it possible, we must ask, that these 'sky people' might have conned early man into constructing guideposts to aid them in their sorties over this planet? The leys were worthless as roads, but they did point out the flow of magnetic currents. Did the craft of the 'sky people' depend on these currents as a glider depends on air currents?"

During his historical evaluation of sky people, Keel goes on to examine an ancient civilisation in America which predates the Indian peoples. Then, in more recent history, the Indian legends of interaction with a race of giants. And also those of sexual union with the gods resulting in offspring.

If unworldly travellers moved amongst us in ancient times and continue to move amongst us today, we must ask why. This isn't a new question, but it remains a compelling one for they seem hell-bent on confusing us. In more ancient times, mortals interacting with the "gods" were fed ambrosia. Currently, it would seem that drugs are still an important part of said interaction. It appears that communicating with, and participating in the UFO-naut environment, is a very controlled, deliberately subjective, experience.

I was particularly interested in Keel's revelation that back in the 1960s he became aware of cases of abduction and sexual contact resulting in children, some of whom he has watched grow up. These children were more intelligent than their fellows, were inclined to suffer poltergeist manifestations, but otherwise were normal.

In summing up, Keel says: "Our studies of the UFO percipients and contactees are teaching us that these encounters are more hallucinatory than real, that some complex hypnotic process is involved, and that the real phenomenon is hiding behind a carefully engineered smokescreen of propaganda."

And in closing: "We are biochemical robots helplessly controlled by forces that can scramble our brains, destroy our memories and use us in any way they see fit. They have been doing it to us forever. We are caught up in a poker game being played with marked cards. Yet, in the closing years of this century, we are like the inveterate gambler who, when informed that the game is crooked, shrugs and says, 'I know...but it's the only game in town!'"

To me the UFO debate seems to centre around whether they are or are not from here. If they are from here, then I suspect they will prove to be a mix of rare natural phenomena, misperceived natural/mundane phenomena, or of a psychological origin. If not from here, then the debates on extraterrestrial or extra-dimensional are less galvanising when the non-earthly origins are accepted.

DISNEYLAND OF THE GODS is full of fascinating information, so much so that I tended to lose the thread of Keel's argument. Another title that would have suited this book is "Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About UFOs But Were Afraid To Ask."

I highly recommend DISNEYLAND OF THE GODS, it makes a positive contribution to the current spectrum of UFO controversy.

'ABDUCTION'

By Jenny Randles

London. Robert Hale. 240pp. Hardcover.

Our review copy courtesy Robert Hale

A book review by Keith Basterfield

English UFO researcher Jenny Randles has written an excellent review of the most puzzling portion of the UFO phenomenon - the abduction case.

Beginning the work with a look at 1950s claims of George Adamski and other contactees, Randles makes it clear that they were equal, willing partners in the events. By contrast abductees make it plain they are not willing, but as the name says, have been forced to participate. Two watershed abduction cases, namely Antonio Villas Boas and Betty and Barney Hill are briefly described.

In two following chapters we are treated to a look back in history to possible parallels with fairy lore; explore the question of the influence of science fiction as a trigger for abduction details; and examine some extremely bizarre accounts which make most cases mundane by comparison.

The next 36 pages are then taken up with providing details of cases from the United Kingdom which cover the spectrum from "time lapse events", through entity cases to actual abduction. Individual cases are reviewed in chapter 6. This is followed by a sampling of cases reported from a diverse number of countries throughout the world.

The meat in the work is chapter 10 titled: "The search for answers." Four possibilities for explanations for abductions cases are explored, namely:

1. A physically real event with extraterrestrial intelligence.
2. A psychological experience.
3. A mix of physical stimulation and triggering of a psychological event.
4. A psychological experience producing a "real" event.

Randles weaves her way through the pros and cons for these first hypotheses by pointing out that there are no cases of independent people witnessing an abduction, and that in at least 3 cases the percipient was observed by outsiders during the abduction period - they went nowhere. However, she rounds up her thoughts by suggesting that psychological explanations fall short of explaining abduction cases. Hypothesis 1 also falls short in Randles opinion.

In short, Randles opts for a "daring" hypothesis that: "A creatively visual person, who has a track record of strange experiences....., finds him/herself in a position to be contacted by an alien intelligence."

Randles' views on the abduction phenomenon are refreshing. She is one of a number researchers not hooked into the "aliens in spaceships are kidnapping us" syndrome. She also speaks from experience having been involved in investigating a number of claims.

She has identified some characteristics which do seem common to abductees and distinguish this group of people from the general population. These characteristics

are in the area of visual creativity and sit well with recent psychological research which this author has recently written about in the International UFO Reporter.

I found the work most stimulating and valuable contribution to the current debate on the nature of the abduction experience.

The book is available in Australia from: J.M. Dent Pty Ltd., PO Box 289, Ferntree Gully, Victoria 3156.

NEW BOOKS NOTED

'Abductions' by Jenny Randles, 1988. London. Robert Hale. 244pp. Hardcover. US \$24.95. Reviews what we know about abductions. Includes a Catalogue of British Cases, and a discussion covering a variety of hypotheses put forward to explain abductions.

'Abductions: a dangerous game', by Philip Klass. 1988. Buffalo Prometheus. Hardcover. US \$18.95. A sceptic's look at abductions. Examines alternative explanations to the ETH.

'Dimensions: a casebook of alien contact' by Jacques Vallee. 1988. Chicago. Contemporary books. 304 pp. Hardcover. US \$17.95. A revamping of Vallee's previous writings with some new material. An overview of his current thinking that the ETH is not bizarre enough an explanation for UFOs.

'Transformation: the breakthrough' by Whitley Strieber. 1988. New York. Beech Tree Books. 256 pp. Hardcover. US 18.95. Strieber's second book dealing with his interaction with visitors.

'A Disneyland of the gods' by John Keel. 1988. New York. Amok Press. 288 pp. Softbound. US \$8.95. A new book by Keel, the first for many years. A very broad look at ufology.

'Uninvited guests' by Richard Hall. 1988. Aurora Press. 384 pp. Softcover. US \$14.00. Long time researcher Hall has produced a well balanced overview of the subject suited to the person wanting an introduction to ufology.

'UFO abductions: the measure of a mystery'. Thomas Bullard. 1988. Arcturus Book service. 402 pp. Plastic spiral bound. US \$60.00. Volume 1 and volume 2. 240 pp. US \$40.00. A massive comparative study of abduction reports including in volume 2 summaries of 270 cases studied.



UFO RESEARCH AUSTRALIA

ORGANISATION:

UFORA operates as a network of interested persons and groups in all states sharing the information they acquire. Vladimir Godic co-ordinates general network administration and Keith Basterfield overall research.

AIMS:

The aims of UFO Research Australia are:

- (1) To stimulate Australian research into the UFO phenomenon, on a without prejudice basis, in order to better understand the cause(s) of the phenomenon.
- (2) To aid research by promoting co-operation between interested parties.

PUBLICATION:

A periodic newsletter is produced, edited by Vladimir Godic, known as UFO RESEARCH AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER (UFORAN). This publication is open to general public subscription and features the work of Australian and overseas researchers.

FILES:

Australian reports, going back approximately 30 years, are held by UFORA. About 1000 of these reports have been placed on a computerised data base which is located in Canberra and maintained by Andy Cole on behalf of Australian Researchers.

LIAISON:

UFORA liaises with many overseas organisations and individuals. Details of overseas reports appear in UFORAN.