

1983 Close Encounter at Varzi

Ed. Note: The following account of an Italian sighting comes to us from Antonio Chiumiento, who worked with three other investigators of the C.U.N. (Centro Ufologia Nazionale). They were able to carry out an on-site investigation only six days after the event, greatly decreasing the chances of distorted witness memories. As with every foreign case published in IUR, we must offer the disclaimer that, while we have the highest confidence in Mr. Chiumiento and his associates, we cannot confirm the details of the event as we generally can with a U.S. report. Nevertheless, the many features of this case which match those from other nations—the vapor, animal reaction, noiseless operation, and rotating dome—do place it firmly within the by now well-established pattern of UFO characteristics and behavior.

TYPE: CE-I (or DD)
DATE: June 5, 1983
TIME: about 5 a.m. CET
DURATION: over one hour
WITNESSES: 3
PLACE: Varzi, Pavia, Italy

by Antonio Chiumiento

The persistent, angry and prolonged barking of neighborhood dogs woke up Mario Claretto, 56, retired restaurant manager, at about 5 a.m. on a Sunday morning. Since he needed to prepare some food that morning, he decided to get out of bed and see why the dogs were barking. As he looked outside he saw, on a hill across the road from his house, a shining object with an orange "headlight" or "lamp." The object was hovering just over the tall alfalfa in a field across the road from his home. Claretto also noticed that the upper portion or dome of the object was slowly turning, showing consecutively a silver-bright section like tinfoil, a dark section, and then the orange light.

Claretto woke up his wife, Velia Bono, so that she also might see "a spectacular and extraordinary thing." She was not impressed, however, exclaiming that "probably the sun is the cause of all this" and returned to her bed.

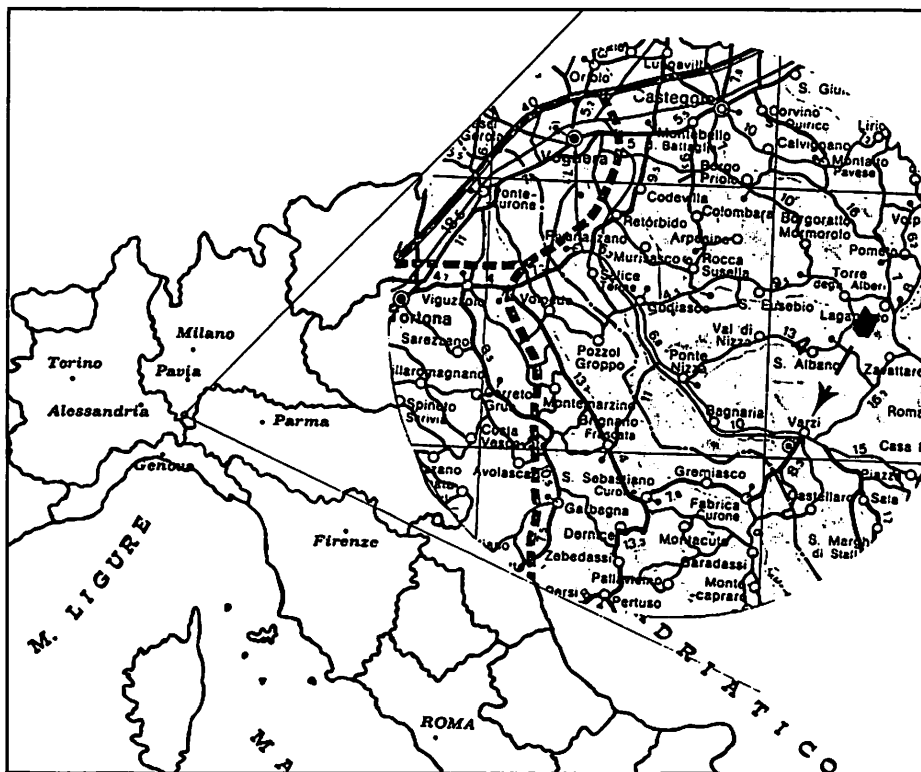
While still intrigued by the object, Claretto did not go into the field for a closer

observation. He suffers from a serious heart disease, and climbing a hill in the early morning would be a dangerous risk. Additionally, he still had to prepare the food for the day's guests. Compromising as best he could, he worked in his kitchen for the next few minutes, keeping his eye on the object from time to time.

When he finished his work, he resolved to have a closer look. As he entered his courtyard, ready to set out, he observed someone walking toward the object. The fellow approached quite near the object and then disappeared from view, due to the rather high alfalfa. Suddenly, Claretto saw him reappear, running like a madman, escaping down the road (Ed Note: continued inquiries by the investigators have failed to locate this individual).

For some reason it was only at this juncture that the idea that the object was a "flying object" crossed Claretto's mind. He told us later that he thought, "I bet it's now going to rise," and indeed, it did. As the "engine" (the term that Claretto used to describe the phenomenon) rose, he was able to observe its finer details (Ed Note: our cover illustration is based upon Claretto's description of the UFO as it rose). The object was flat, but had the form of a slightly overturned dish with a silver or tinfoil-colored top. The object did not rise vertically, but skimmed the grass at one or two meters in height for some distance. As it moved, the dome in its center receded, and a vapor or fog was emitted. Claretto had great difficulty in describing this fog, which looked to him like "something between smoke and dust" and had a brown or brick color.

As the vapor covered the object, its features became indistinct and, curiously, the phenomenon assumed the shape, and even the color, of a Havana cigar (Ed Note: this description is especially intriguing, given the many cigar-shaped UFOs that were reported in the 1950s). The grass was seemingly unaffected as the object moved above it. After a few more moments, the "engine" rose vertically to a height of 20 to 30 meters, hovered for a few seconds, and became clearly visible as the vapor dissipated. At this point the dome was extended again, rotating as before and exhibiting the orange-colored light. Then with no warning, the object departed in a south-southwest direction, increasing its apparent speed as



Italian Report

by Roberto Pinotti

Ed Note: Mr. Pinotti is our correspondent and contributing editor from Italy. Here he summarizes briefly for us the public and political impact of the recent Ufological Congress held in Genoa, Italy (May 4-5, 1984) and page 6 gives us an account of a cigar-shaped UFO seen over the Gargano Peninsula on the Adriatic in 1966 (but whose investigation was not made public until after the death of the principle witness) and compares this sighting to similar ones of historic interest.

CUN's Ufology National Congress in Genoa was the third such Congress in our organization's history. The first was held near Rimini, on the north Adriatic coast, in 1967, and the second at Toscolano Mademo (Garda Lake) in 1977.

The theme of the Genoa Congress was "UFOS AND MASS MEDIA; THE NEED FOR CORRECT INFORMATION," and its thrust was to get the national press, radio and TV involved in the subject of UFOs as never before. It cost about \$7,000 to mount, two thirds of this amount being paid by local firms, banks and public authorities. [Ed note: Imagine this being done in the U.S.!]

We were very pleased with the results: 50 articles in the national press, 11 radio and TV interviews on the national networks (RAI and TELEMONTECARLO). A direct result of this was a well-prepared political action by Congressmen Abete, Fiori, and Scaiola of the Christian Socialist Party, who in Parliament asked (mentioning CUN and the Congress) two questions of Premier Craxi and Defense Minister Spadolini. Their common answer was that Mr. Craxi is considering an opportunity to initiate a civilian scientific study project on UFOs, to be developed by Italy's National Research Council.

Quite apart from this possible development, the Genoa Congress had a unique feature: for the first time in Italy an astronomer (Prof. Vincenzo Croce, of the Monte Mario Observatory in Rome), a meteorolo-

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airport. While there they report that they saw something fitting the description of the UFO, hovering in the distance. It approached silently until it was overhead, when a slight droning sound was heard. When it came close to them they could discern that it was actually six Cessnas, which then broke formation and began to land.

They succeeded in obtaining a photograph of the lead plane, showing its registration number, which allowed them to trace its owner, which is something that DISCOVER did not discover, and published it.

Impressed by their investigations, the APRO investigators concluded that there is only a 10 percent chance that a genuine UFO was involved in the sightings, despite witnesses who feel otherwise.

The horns of the dilemma are: on one hand we have a group of flying "irresponsibles" getting their jollies from scaring those on the ground, causing near accidents on the roads beneath them; on the other, we have witnesses who describe large, silent, hovering, solid objects—in some cases so close, huge, and unusual that a group of light planes flying in formation seems a ludicrous and impossible explanation.

Finally, if one has read "EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY" by Elizabeth Loftus, one is made aware that no witness, technically trained or not, can be regarded as infallible. This, of course, applies equally well to those who reported something very strange and to those who saw what they took to be light planes.

It finally comes down to this: the mystery will remain until one or (preferably) more of the following points can be fully established:

1. The UFOs were seen 'before' the pilots began their formation flights.
2. Several witnesses saw 'both' the planes and the UFO, preferably at about the same time, and could clearly distinguish between the two.
3. The UFO was seen to hover 'directly overhead' for a significant time, preferably a minute or longer.
4. The UFO was seen on evenings when it was definitely established that the planes were not in the air.
5. The speed of the UFO, when flying with or across the wind, was definitely 'below' stall speed for light aircraft.
6. The identical sightings were made in other parts of the country.
7. The planes were in one part of the New York area while the UFO was being reported in another part.
8. On the night of the stakeout at Stormville airport, when the planes were actually seen to land, no responsible people 'saw' the UFO.
9. The flight path of the UFO did 'not' match that of the planes.

It would be costly in time, effort, and expense to establish these points, but unless they can be established, the prosaic explanation of light planes flying in formation as the cause of 'all' the pertinent UFO reports cannot be discarded. CUFOS intends to carry on with this perplexing investigation and, of course, will welcome help and cooperation from others. □

it sped away. Claretto said that, in the distance, it had the appearance of a "pear without a stalk" and was dull brown in color. Eventually, it was lost to view in the clear blue sky.

This interesting sighting received further confirmation from Bruno Stafforini, a farmer who lives near the Claretto family. He, too, heard the dogs barking at 5 a.m. and went to investigate. Stafforini described the dogs' behavior as highly agitated, one animal almost tearing free from its chain, the other running toward the field where the object was, barking furiously, and then returning to the farmer's feet. This behavior was particularly puzzling since at no time did either witness hear any noise from the object, and, at the beginning of the sighting, the object was barely visible over the tall alfalfa. In fact, Stafforini did not see the object until Claretto pointed it out to him, though his initial impression was that it was "only some tinfoil which glittered."

When the object rose into the air, Claretto again called out to Stafforini, who watched it from his courtyard. Stafforini described it as looking like an apple, presenting as it rotated the colors of silver, red, and black. He added the important detail that the dogs remained restless until the object had moved away from the hill.

Neither witness was able to make an accurate estimate of the object's size, though each placed its maximum dimension at no more than five meters. If Claretto's son-in-law can be believed, there is partial confirmation of these estimates. The son-in-law (Mr. G.C., who does not want his full name published) was staying at the Claretto's that weekend with his wife. When he arose at about 8:30 a.m. and was informed of the sighting, he immediately went to the field to look for traces of the object's presence. He says that he found a circular area about 2-3 meters in diameter in which the alfalfa was bent but not flattened. The circle was about ten meters from a nearby road, in exactly the spot that the witnesses indicated the object had landed (this position is about 160 meters from the Claretto home).

The alleged ground trace could not be verified by our investigators because, the day after the sighting, the farmer Tornari, who owned the field, cut down the alfalfa.

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The arrow points to the location of the shining object which Mario Claretto saw hovering over a field of alfalfa across the road from his home in Varzi, Italy.



Mario Claretto, r., talks with the investigator.

The Gargano Peninsula Cigar

by Roberto Pinotti, CUN (Centro Ufologico Nazionale)

In early September, 1966, on the coast of the Gargano Peninsula in southern Italy, a photograph was taken, in color, near sunset, of two luminous objects. One was spherical and under high magnification resembled the well-known Saturn-ringed object photographed by Barauna near the island of Trindade, Brazil. The other was of the classical cigar-shaped variety. Both were traveling across the sky, with the latter trailing the smaller spherical object.

The man who took the photo was a bank official of Bolgona whose name, we know now, was Gerardo Bagnulo. The CUN president at the time, Mario Maioli, in 1969 learned of this strange photo by mere chance through a common friend. During the previous three years Bagnulo had kept the photo, and particularly his name, secret. He wished to avoid the attentions of the mass media and of curiosity seekers. He was persuaded by Mr. Maioli, however, to submit the photograph to CUN for study, along with a signed statement as to the nature of the event, with the understanding that his name would not be divulged until after his death. He just didn't want his privacy disturbed, and CUN kept its promise.

Mr. Bagnulo has since died and the circumstances of the event can now be made public. Mr. Bagnulo was on a pleasure outing with members of his family when he saw the two objects moving through the sky. By luck he had his camera in hand and managed to get one shot before the objects disappeared from sight near the northwest horizon.

Commenting on his experience, Mr. Bagnulo said, "I am not in a position to express my opinion, since I have never occupied myself with such objects, my interest lying in other directions. All the same, the experience certainly made a profound impression upon me, inasmuch as any question of any sort of optical illusion is most categorically ruled out."

The original negative, however, was subjected to examination. It had been taken with a Zeiss Symbolica camera, a Tessar :2.8 lens, using AGFA color slide film. The photograph shown here was developed through an internegative directly from the original color slide. Through discreet and



This is an enlargement of the two objects photographed by Gerardo Bagnulo in September, 1966, along the coast of southern Italy.

thorough enquiries, CUN found no evidence of any kind that might tend to cast doubt on the genuineness of the photograph.

That being so, it is of interest to compare the Bagnulo sighting to three others in some detail:

As reported by Aime Michel, on Oct. 17, 1952, M. Yves Prigent and his family observed a large tubular object sending forth a swarm of metallic globes which traveled in pairs. This event in Oloron and its replica at Gaillac (Tarn) 10 days later was witnessed by hundreds of people in broad daylight and were investigated by French military authorities and their intelligence services in particular. In both cases, the two "cloud cigars" (as Aime Michel later defined them) spewed down a quantity of the mysterious substance known popularly as "angel hair."

Two years later, on Oct. 27, 1954, Mr. Lucchetti and Mr. Lastrucci were standing on the terrace of a hotel on the Piazza San Marco at Prato, when they noticed in the sky, two "cigars" or luminous "spindles," followed by a vivid white trail. Both objects were moving at a staggering speed, with a short distance between them. Then the rear object accelerated and drew level with the lead object. Now both objects did a 45 degree turn and vanished toward Florence.

A few minutes later there was a dramatic interruption of a football game between teams from Florence and Pistoia. First the 10,000 spectators, then the players, and

finally the referee himself, stood with their gaze riveted on two mysterious spherical objects passing over the stadium. Between 2:20 and 2:29 p.m., pairs of flying objects of this kind passed over Florence three times. Strange hairy filaments rained down upon the city, and the newspaper offices were inundated with excited phone calls. As we recall, at both Oloron and Gaillac, witnesses had been unable to make an analysis of the enigmatic strands of "angel hair" before they dissolved. At Florence, however, an engineering student had the presence of mind to clap some of the fibre into a sterilized glass tube and hasten with it to the director of the Institute of Chemical Analysis in the University of Florence. A rapid microscopic and spectroscopic analysis was made; the latter indicated the presence of boron, silicon, calcium and magnesium. These are the primary components of "boron-silicon glass."

It is the opinion of CUN that considered in conjunction with the French and Italian sightings described above, the Bagnulo sighting at Gargano takes on a greater significance, even though no "angel hair" was observed in the latter. Perhaps it may have fallen into the sea had there been any.

[Ed Note: Once again, apparently lack of funds and personnel prevented the detailed and in-depth investigation these "cloud cigars" and their emanations so desperately need to be of true scientific value. Still, we must do the best we can, as CUN has, despite limitations of funds, time, and personnel.] □

INVESTIGATION OVNI

Vincente-Juan Ballester-Olmos,

Plaza y Janes, Barcelona, Spain, 1984, 297 pages

by Willy Smith

This is the third book by this veteran Spanish writer on the UFO phenomenon, who again has produced a serious work well worth reading (if your Spanish is adequate). It is not merely aimed at reviewing recent cases for the public, but concentrates on methodology, analyzing how the investigation of the UFO phenomenon is done in Spain. He points out the difficulties and pitfalls of investigation with the avowed purpose of improving the quality of the investigative process, as well as providing the fine points that will be of help to investigators, particularly those new in the field.

In the process, Ballester-Olmos relates several Spanish cases of recent vintage, all of which have been carefully studied and analyzed by him personally and/or by his associates. He also castigates those professional writers (whose living is supported by this topic) who don't hesitate to distort the subject, creating sensational events from little substantive evidence. He cites journalists like J. J. Benitez who discredit not only themselves as serious writers, but also degrade the subject in the mind of the intelligent public and the scientific community.

For the American ufologist able to read Spanish, this book not only offers a few Spanish sightings practically unknown in this country but demonstrates how well qualified and scientifically-oriented many Spanish investigators are. For all but one of the individual cases described in the book, the witnesses are poor in education and culture...farmers, laborers, and the like... due perhaps to the tendency of UFO events to occur in rural areas. Investigation of each case has been superbly done, with meticulous attention to details and a respect for the scientific method often lacking in English-speaking countries. Three of the cases have been marked for inclusion in

UNICAT (the CUFOS catalogue of carefully selected cases now being compiled).

Several chapters are devoted to the discussion of the most common circumstances under which IFOs are mistaken for UFOs—the re-entry of satellites, incidents due to psychological problems of witnesses, the misinterpretation of photographs. One chapter is devoted entirely to ball lightning, summarizing information about it and specifying the parameters that one should normally expect to be associated with this phenomenon. Examples of cases reported as UFOs but now recognized as manifestations of ball lightning illustrate this chapter.

Another chapter is practically a manual on the proper way to conduct a scientific UFO investigation. The final chapter consists mainly of an evaluation of Ufology in Spain, and is, in our opinion, an accurate and realistic "estimate of the situation." It closes with a brief revue of the shortcomings of three popular explanations for the origin of UFO reports: the psychological hypothesis, the possibility of an unknown natural phenomenon, and the extra-terrestrial hypothesis.

A valuable review of UFO literature published in Spain between 1950 and 1980, compiled by Juan A. Fernandez, is included as an appendix. It is somewhat limited because it does not include the works of Latin-American ufologists, namely the significant contributions to the field by writers/investigators such as Banchs, Roncoroni, Robiou, Hourcade, and Uriondo.

The book suffers from a lack of an index, making it difficult to locate specific cases; as in this country, this is generally the fault of the publisher's attempt to cut costs. □

Close Encounter at Varzi — cont.

When we investigated the site five days later, no visible feature distinguished it from any other spot in the field.

There is a mysterious addendum to this report. Tornari told us that, two days after the landing, he saw a car with license plates from outside the province stop near his field while he was turning the already dry alfalfa. Two men, wearing white overalls, got out and proceeded to use some strange apparatus which they pointed at the spot where the object was said to have landed. As Tornari approached them, the men hastily departed. While this tale cannot be confirmed, there is no reason to doubt Mr. Tornari's sincerity or veracity (Ed note: shades of the men-in-black! Yet, as always, these stories can never be verified).

The aftermath of this sighting is similar to so many others. A local bee-keeper attempted to explain the sighting as a "voluminous swarm of bees which... alighted in the night...on the alfalfa of the farmer Tornari. In the morning, warmed by the sunbeams, the bees flew away with their typical buzzing." As usual, the skeptics never bother to examine the evidence.

On the other hand, the three witnesses (Mrs. Claretto did see the object briefly as it rose into the air, but since her account adds nothing to the essentials of the sighting, her report was omitted above) were struck by the beautiful sight the UFO presented, especially its "indescribable colors." Mr. Claretto said it was impossible to describe the orange color exactly, as it was a color "I had never seen before." This was true for all the colors, including that of the brownish vapor. Again, Mr. Claretto: "And the spectacle was just in this!... orange wasn't really orange, brown wasn't really brown, and so on."

The Claretos stated that, prior to the incident, they didn't believe in flying saucers or UFOs, and "afterwards we don't 'believe' either...now we 'know' that they exist." Both husband and wife, like so many other witnesses before them, hope to see once again that "wonderful spectacle." □

Gasser— cont.

headlines of the *Mattoon Daily Journal Gazette* has not been explained, and, in fact, opens interesting possibilities. The independently witnessed symptoms, such as vomiting and a great degree of excitation, have not been fully explained. The lack of cases on Sept. 7 and Sept. 11 has not been explained, and neither has the graph shown in Johnson's paper, which apparently peaks on Sept. 7, a day when no cases were reported.

Let us go back to the three possible hypotheses and try to use Occam's principle. In my opinion, the hysteria hypothesis is contrived; it not only fails to satisfy the evidence but implies that people who didn't know each other came up with similar descriptions, as in the cases prior to Sept. 5. These witnesses were of the same socio-economic and educational level, perhaps living in the same neighborhood, all of which suggests an activity localized in a given area by unknown parties. Moreover, the victims were young females, all but one married, an indication of selectivity by the perpetrator, which would be very unlikely to occur with an imaginary gasser.

The second hypothesis is more tenable. That word "first" in the newspaper cannot be lightly dismissed; after all, the press controlled the publicity given to the affair and finally spiked it when it got out of hand. I think it is quite possible that the original cases (which could have a simple explanation, such as a gas leak) inspired a young reporter to make a name for himself (remember, we are in 1944 during the war years), but the prank got out of control. Perhaps the editor of the paper got wise after a while, but what could he do, except what he did? That is, move the tone toward the jocular and finally let it go by the board. There is another item of evidence supporting this hypothesis: the lack of motivation. Nothing was stolen, the circumstances did not offer gratification to a peeper, and even the victims had no reason to come forward with false claims.

The third hypothesis has its points as well. A party or parties unknown (always the copycat is a possibility) started to terrorize young women, perhaps as a prank, perhaps out of obscure sexual motives. Then the community overreacted and after a few days, with the state police in the act, the prankster decided to quit before being caught. End of the incident. To this day, he is (if alive) recalling with nostalgia these incidents, and maybe smiling secretly (if he

reads the ufological press) every time he is mentioned in pro or con arguments on the existence of UFOs.

What is the bottom line? I would favor the third hypothesis, in a direct application of Occam's razor, because it is simple, possible and fits the evidence. The second hypothesis also has possibilities and I would not rule it out. It would be interesting to go back to Mattoon and dig in the morgue of the *Journal-Gazette* and try to obtain further information about the reporter(s) covering the case.

But one thing is certain, and it has been in Johnson's paper all these years for anyone to read; it was not a sequence of imaginary events triggered by another imaginary event, not even by a real one made

public only after some of the crucial cases had already occurred. If mass hysteria means what I think it means, then the case of Mattoon is not an example of it.

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More "Gassers"

by Jerome Clark

As one who has long been interested in the curious case of the "mad gasser of Mattoon," I find Willy Smith's paper a refreshing effort to cast a long, hard look at the standard cliches surrounding this episode.

In 1971, Loren Coleman and I went back to the original press accounts, especially those that appeared in the *Mattoon* and *Decatur, Ill.* papers. We even succeeded in interviewing several of the alleged anesthetist's victims. All stuck by their original stories and had no time for "hysteria" explanations, which they thought had been concocted by the authorities to escape blame after they failed to catch the prowler.

The hysteria explanation was proposed first, not by Donald M. Johnson, as Smith seems to be implying, but by Mattoon police chief E. C. Cole, who in a Sept. 12, 1944, press conference described the episode as "a mistake from beginning to end.... Hysteria must be blamed for such seemingly accurate accounts of supposed victims." Before then, police and reporters recognized that hysteria played a role in the affair, but at the same time they assumed that there was a real stimulus—a lunatic with a spray can—behind the panic.

It was not just victims who were skeptical of the hysteria explanation. The *Decatur Review*, for example, objected, "There was no explanation of why several screens had been cut prior to reported gassings by several persons."

It is important, I think, to understand that the scare had turned into a severe political embarrassment for the city fathers. Victims told us that after they reported experiences to the police, investigating officers tried to persuade them to retract their stories. In effect, victims were being asked to answer for their own victimization.

Who was the "mad gasser?" Those who saw him usually described him as "tall, dressed in dark clothing and wearing a tight-fitting cap." One victim we interviewed claimed to have chased the anesthetist several blocks; he said the prowler was dressed in black and had dark features. In the last reported attack, on Sept. 13, 1944, (I note that Johnson has the last attack on the 12th, but he is mistaken), we are told, weirdly enough, that a "woman dressed in man's clothing" sprayed gas into a victim's bedroom. The next day the victim and her son supposedly found imprints of high-heeled shoes near the bedroom window.

Whoever the gasser was, he (or she) did not make his (or her) first appearance in *Mattoon, Ill.*, in the late summer of 1944. The following Associated Press story was published in the *New York Times* on Jan. 22, 1934:

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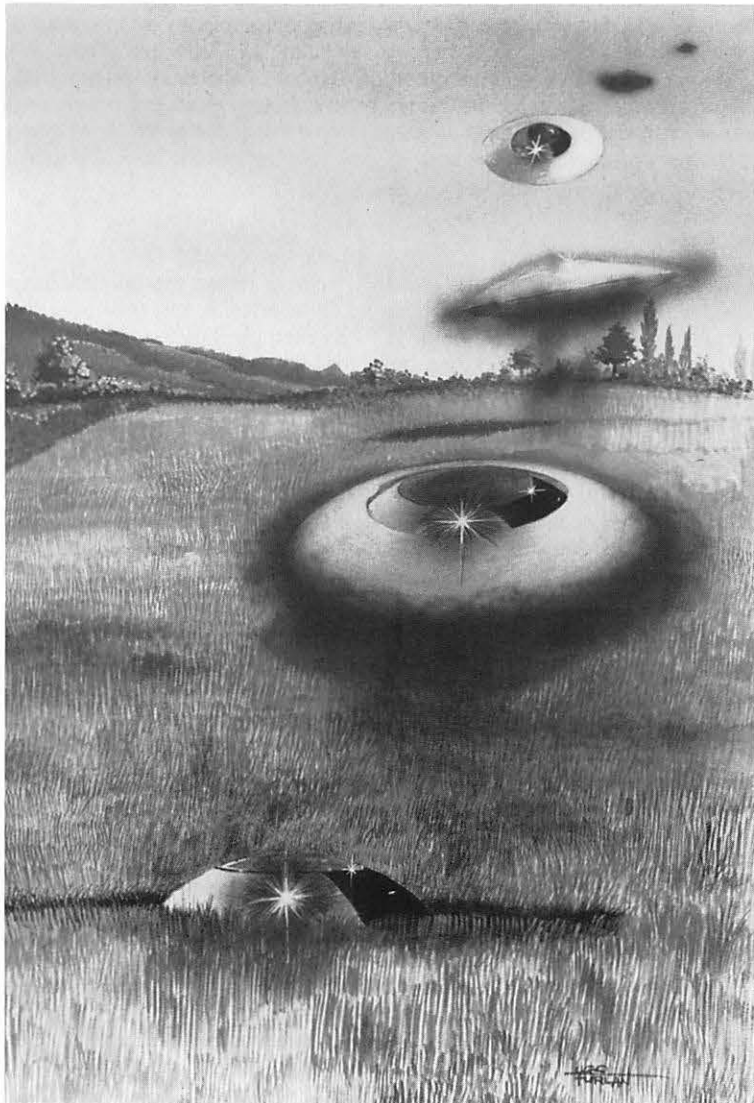
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EDITORIAL

Did "Discover" Discover?

by Allen Hynek

At the grocery the other morning, my eye was caught by the large block letters on a magazine cover spelling out "UFO MYSTERY," superimposed over a lurid drawing of what seemed to be two police officers staring upward as a circle of multicolored lights passed over their squad car. This bit of cheap sensationalism wasn't being used to push that week's issue of one of the tabloids generally found at the check-out counter, but to sell the November issue of TIME, Inc.'s magazine DISCOVER. This magazine immodestly styles itself the newsmagazine of science, but in this case it was well over a year late in bringing its public the news of the "Boomerang" sightings which started in March, 1983, the subject of its present article.

The article itself served to allow the magazine's editorial staff to take frequent snide jabs at the UFO investigators involved, jabs which were not supported by the meager and sloppy evidence presented. The "proof" offered by DISCOVER as science news, comprises a number of quotes from unnamed sources, a photograph of some planes on the ground, and a shot of an airport diner menu containing the selection "UFO Burger." Does this qualify as proof? I hardly think so. It is, however, sadly typical of the heavy-on-graphics, low-on-content style of what passes as fact in many of the popular newsstand magazines. In a sidebar to the main article a psychologist criticizes people interested in UFOs as being well-educated individuals completely immersed in science (!), or, as he calls them, 'scientists run amuck.'

In the same sidebar, a sociologist claims that UFO reports reflect the public's deep desire to believe in the friendly space aliens portrayed in science fiction (he gives the movies "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" and "E.T." as examples) quite forgetting that the major theme in science fiction movies has been just the opposite; hostile conflict between the earth and aliens has been the rule from H. G. Wells and Buck Rogers on. The two movies he quotes were notable exceptions to the "Body Snatchers from Outer Space" theme.

Despite the shockingly bad quality of the DISCOVER article, it is true that some pilots have been fooling around in the skies over Westchester and Putnam counties, in southern New York state, the scene of the UFO sightings. Indeed, this has been known to our readers for some time and is nothing new. The problem is: can it be established that *all* of the UFO sightings are due to slap-happy pilots?

An article about these sightings, several cuts above that in DISCOVER, appeared in a recent APRO Bulletin (Vol. 32, No. 6). In it, Dick Ruhl and his co-authors recount their investigations into these sightings. They provide some of the evidence lacking in the DISCOVER article. They spoke with a number of witnesses, some of whom, however, hardly support the plane theory. One spoke of "one huge solid object" and others remarked on its slow motion as well. Others, however, described what definitely does seem ascribable to light aircraft flying in formation, and therein lies our dilemma.

During their investigations, the APRO investigators ran into the same rumors our team in that area had encountered fully a year earlier. They too had staked out Stormville airport and observed suspicious light planes landing. The APRO investigators had a more direct experience: one night they saw a brilliant wedge-shaped object that upon closer inspection was resolved into six light aircraft, and so they staked out the nearby Stormville